

20:20 Vision Ministries -- Devotions by Roger Browning Week 28 (July 7-13, 2013)

We will continue to see miracles of God from the Old Testament as we study the ministry of Elisha, the man God chooses to replace Elijah.

Sunday -- July 7 (1 Kings 19:18-21)

To counter Elijah's complaint that he is alone in serving the Lord (v. 10 & 14), God informs His prophet that He has 7,000 believers who have not bowed down to Baal (v. 18). Compare this to Jesus' sad question in Luke 18:8 when our Lord contemplates **His** return to this earth. God has chosen Elisha (v. 16) to succeed Elijah who has taken his eyes off the prize before him and placed them on Jezebel instead (see Hebrews 12:1-3). The name Elisha means, "**my God is salvation.**" All of us who get tired and depressed need to realize that **salvation** comes from God and not from us! (Don't miss the question Elijah asks in v. 20 indicating he is still not completely over his depression and discouragement.) Elijah throws his cloak around Elisha designating him as his successor (v. 19). Elisha knows the permanence of this calling, so he says farewell to his family and slaughters his oxen (v. 20-21). There is no going back from a true call of God (see Luke 9:62).

Monday -- July 8 (2 Kings 2:1-9)

Elisha's time of walking with Elijah and learning from him is coming to an end. The younger prophet is about to take over the ministry (v. 1). As you can imagine, Elisha wants to stay very close to his mentor during the last days (v. 2). The other prophets try to warn Elisha that Elijah's days are numbered, but he doesn't want to talk about it (v. 3-6). As the two prophets approach the Jordan, fifty men of the company of the prophets watch to see what will happen (v. 7). Elijah rolls up his cloak and strikes the water. God responds with a miracle by dividing the water so that His two men walk over on dry ground (v. 8). The senior prophet asks his young trainee if he has any final requests. Elisha's answer to that question sets the stage for the rest of our studies on his ministry of miracles (v. 9).

Tuesday -- July 9 (2 Kings 2:10-18)

Elijah is not sure that God will grant Elisha's request to have twice as much power and to do twice as many miracles as he has done (v. 9-10). Elisha **does** see Elijah depart this earth in a chariot of fire (v. 10-11). This event is a preview of the **Rapture** when Jesus calls His true Church up to Heaven (see John 14:1-4; 1 Corinthians 15:50-55; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). Elisha mourns his mentor's departure (v. 12), but he picks up Elijah's cloak and strikes the water of the Jordan River with it as his mentor had done. God honors his faith and divides the water again (v. 14). The other prophets insist on searching for Elijah, but to no avail (v. 15-18). Elijah does not appear again until the transfiguration of Jesus (see Matthew 17:1-3) when James, John and Peter see him talking to our Lord. He will appear once more during the tribulation when he will be one of the prophets who lead Israel during their turmoil (see Revelation 11:1-13).

Wednesday -- July 10 (2 Kings 2:19-25)

The first challenge this new prophet encounters comes as a result of a well-situated city that has a water problem (v. 19). Elisha puts salt into the water and it becomes permanently useful for drinking as well as for watering the land (v. 20-22). The picture here is great! As Christians, we are the **salt of the earth** (see Matthew 5:13). Just as the salt gave new life to the water, the presence of the Holy Spirit living in us is keeping the world from total evil (see 2 Thessalonians 2:5-8). When we leave in the Rapture, only evil will be left because the Spirit leaves with us. The rest of today's text is rather humorous. The company of the prophets had accepted Elisha as their new leader (v.15), but he is jeered by the youth (v. 23). The prophet calls down a curse on them and two bears come out of the woods and maul 42 of the youth (v. 24). Parents, you may want to encourage your children to respect the preacher!

Thursday -- July 11 (2 Kings 4:1-7)

A widow approaches Elisha with an urgent need. Her husband was one of the company of the prophets when he passed away leaving his wife and two boys without an income (v. 1). Elisha takes inventory and finds that the woman has only a little oil (v. 2). God does not care how little you have; He cares only that you are willing to bring it to Him and trust Him to do the miracle. God's man tells her to ask the neighbors for jars to pour the oil into in the privacy of her home (v. 3-4). Miraculously, the oil flows until she runs out of jars (v. 5-6). She must have thought, "if only I had asked for more jars!" At any rate, she is able to pay off her entire debt in addition to having enough for her family to live on (v. 7). Jesus teaches us to pray, "Give us today our daily bread" (Matthew 6:11). Are you trusting God to supply all your needs (see Philippians 4:19)?

Friday -- July 12 (2 Kings 4:8-17)

A well-to-do woman is so impressed with the ministry of Elisha that she asks her husband to provide him with a place to stay in their home (v. 8-10). The prophet is so grateful that he wants to do something special for her (v. 11-13). Gehazi, the servant of Elisha, points out that the woman has no son and her husband is getting old (v. 14). Elisha prophesies that a son will be born to the woman within a year (v. 15-16). She doesn't have enough faith to claim this promise, but God gives her a son anyway (v. 17). The size of our God matters a lot more than the size of our faith! Jesus teaches that the Father can produce wonderful miracles out of faith the size of a mustard seed (see Matthew 17:20). Are you ready to claim His promises?

Saturday -- July 13 (2 Kings 4:18-37)

The miracle child develops a pain in his head while he is with his father in the field. You ladies will be quick to tell me that the dad's response is typical (v. 18-19). The boy dies in his mother's loving arms (v. 20-21). She goes to look for Elisha, and when she finds him, she falls at his feet in anguish (v. 27). The reason for her distress is kept from the prophet until she questions (v. 28), "Did I ask you for a son, my lord?" Elisha sends Gehazi to the house to lay his staff on the boy's face while he follows the woman back into town (v. 29-30). The servant is unable to rouse the boy, so Elisha performs the **second** artificial respiration (see 1 Kings 17:20-21) **following a time of prayer** (v. 31-35). The lady is called in to rejoice with her son who has come back from the dead (v. 36-37). I hope you have learned, like Elisha, to pray before you attempt to do any task. Only then will you experience the full power of God!