

Elisha

Non-Writing Prophets · Biblical Prophets

Elisha son of Shaphat received Elijah's mantle—literally and figuratively—when the elder prophet was taken to heaven. Having asked for 'a double portion' of Elijah's spirit (the firstborn's inheritance share), Elisha's ministry was marked by twice as many recorded miracles as his master's.

While Elijah's ministry emphasized judgment, Elisha's demonstrated grace: purifying poisoned water, multiplying a widow's oil to pay her debts, providing food during famine, healing Naaman the Syrian leper, raising the Shunammite's son, and causing an iron axe head to float. His ministry extended beyond Israel's borders—he wept knowing the evil Hazael would do to Israel, yet anointed him king of Syria as God commanded.

He served as Israel's true defense: 'My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof!' When Syrian armies surrounded Dothan to capture him, Elisha's servant panicked until the prophet prayed that his eyes be opened to see the mountain filled with horses and chariots of fire. Elisha then led the blinded Syrian army into Samaria, where he commanded Israel to feed rather than slay them. His influence continued even after death: a corpse thrown into his grave revived upon touching his bones, demonstrating that prophetic power derived from God, not human vitality.

Note: Elisha's 'double portion' request was not for twice Elijah's power but for the recognized inheritance of the firstborn son—the right of prophetic succession. His miracles often parallel and exceed Elijah's: Elijah multiplied meal and oil for one widow; Elisha did likewise and additionally raised her son. The contrast between Elijah's severity and Elisha's compassion may reflect different emphases within unified prophetic tradition. Naaman's healing prefigures Gentile inclusion: Christ cited it as evidence that 'no prophet is accepted in his own country' (Luke 4:27).

Key Verses

2 Kings 2:9

And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me.

2 Kings 6:16-17

And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.

2 Kings 5:14

Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.

2 Kings 4:43-44

And his servitor said, What, should I set this before an hundred men? He said again, Give the people, that they may eat: for thus saith the LORD, They shall eat, and shall leave thereof. So he set it before them, and they did eat, and left thereof, according to the word of the LORD.