

Elisha, the Prophet of Grace

1) What does Grace Ministry look like?

*'So he departed from there, and found Elisha
the son of Shaphat,
who was plowing with twelve yoke of
oxen before him, and he was with the twelfth.
Then Elijah passed by him and threw his mantle
on him. And he left the oxen and ran after
Elijah, and said, "Please let me kiss my father
and my mother, and then I will follow you." And
he said to him, "Go back again, for what have I
done to you?" So Elisha turned back from him,
and took a yoke of oxen and slaughtered them
and boiled their flesh, using the oxen's
equipment, and gave it to the people, and they
ate. Then he arose and followed Elijah, and
became his servant'*

(1 Kings 19:19-21)

- ✓ **The ministry of Elisha is a type of the ministry of grace to the world through the Church**
- ✓ **Israel was at an all time low. But when man shows what is in his heart, God shows what is in His heart**
- ✓ **Elisha shows that God has grace for all who will receive it**
- ✓ **Far more miracles were wrought by Elisha than by any other prophet**
- ✓ **When the priesthood failed (Eli's sons), the kings came. When these failed, God raised up the prophets**

- ✓ **Both priests and kings had successors. But not the prophets. They were emergency men, raised up for the moment**
- ✓ **But the prophet Elijah was an exception. He did have a successor - Elisha. Their ministries are connected. When Elijah ascended into heaven, Elisha continued his ministry**
- ✓ **Elisha was called in 1 Kings 19:19; but not sent until 2 Kings 2:9. Similarly the disciples were called before they were sent**

'And it came to pass, when the LORD was about to take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal. Then Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here, please, for the LORD has sent me on to Bethel." But Elisha said, "As the LORD lives, and as your soul lives, I will not leave you!" So they went down to Bethel. Now the sons of the prophets who were at Bethel came out to Elisha, and said to him, "Do you know that the LORD will take away your master from over you today?" And he said, "Yes, I know; keep silent!" Then Elijah said to him, "Elisha, stay here, please, for the LORD has sent me on to Jericho." But he said, "As the LORD lives, and as your soul lives, I will not leave you!" So they came to Jericho. Now the sons of the prophets who were at Jericho came to Elisha and said to him, "Do you know that the LORD will take away your master from over you today?" So he answered, "Yes, I know; keep silent!" ...

...Then Elijah said to him, "Stay here, please, for the LORD has sent me on to the Jordan." But he said, "As the LORD lives, and as your soul lives, I will not leave you!" So the two of them went on. And fifty men of the sons of the prophets went and stood facing them at a distance, while the two of them stood by the Jordan. Now Elijah took his mantle, rolled it up, and struck the water; and it was divided this way and that, so that the two of them crossed over on dry ground. And so it was, when they had crossed over, that Elijah said to Elisha, "Ask! What may I do for you, before I am taken away from you?" Elisha said, "Please let a double portion of your spirit be upon me." So he said, "You have asked a hard thing. Nevertheless, if you see me when I am taken from you, it shall be so for you; but if not, it shall not be so."

(2 Kings 2:1-10)

A walk down memory lane

- ✓ **Gilgal is where Israel's history in the land began. Gilgal speaks of identity. Here their reproach was rolled away through circumcision**
- ✓ **Circumcision speaks of separation unto God**
- ✓ ***'In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead' (Col.2:11-12)***
- ✓ **Not only has God dealt with what we *did*, but at the cross He dealt with who we were. We have been crucified with Christ**

- ✓ **Bethel means 'the house of God.'** But now it had become defiled through Jeroboam's idolatrous calf. Bethel represents a return to the one true gospel
- ✓ **Jericho was a place where God revealed Himself as the Captain of the Lord's host, i.e. it is His battle, not our.** *'For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings'* (Heb.2:10)
- ✓ **Jordan speaks of entry and exit. Jordan miraculously parted to let Israel in. Now it was the place where Elijah departed. It was necessary for Christ to go so the Spirit could come upon the Church**

✓ **Elisha stubbornly sticks with Elijah. 'Ask what you will', i.e. what was his heart really set upon. Elisha asks for a double portion of Elijah's spirit, i.e. the firstborn blessing. We are the 'church of the firstborn' (Heb.12:23)**

✓ **'...if you see me when I am taken from you...'**
Elisha saw the ascension of Elijah and received the double portion mantle

✓ **In contrast, the other prophets looked for a dead body. We must move on from the cross, to Christ's resurrection and ascension ministry**

'Then it happened, as they continued on and talked, that suddenly a chariot of fire appeared with horses of fire, and separated the two of them; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. And Elisha saw it, and he cried out, "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and its horsemen!" So he saw him no more. And he took hold of his own clothes and tore them into two pieces. He also took up the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and went back and stood by the bank of the Jordan. Then he took the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and struck the water, and said, "Where is the LORD God of Elijah?" And when he also had struck the water, it was divided this way and that; and Elisha crossed over...

'...Now when the sons of the prophets who were from Jericho saw him, they said, "The spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha." And they came to meet him, and bowed to the ground before him. Then they said to him, "Look now, there are fifty strong men with your servants. Please let them go and search for your master, lest perhaps the Spirit of the LORD has taken him up and cast him upon some mountain or into some valley." And he said, "You shall not send anyone." But when they urged him till he was ashamed, he said, "Send them!" Therefore they sent fifty men, and they searched for three days but did not find him. And when they came back to him, for he had stayed in Jericho, he said to them, "Did I not say to you, 'Do not go'?"'

(2 Kings 2:11-18)

**`My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof', i.e. Israel's defence*

**Compare, 'Elisha had become sick with the illness of which he would die. Then Joash the king of Israel came down to him, and wept over his face, and said, "O my father, my father, the chariots of Israel and their horsemen!"' (2 Kings 13:14)*

***He rent his own clothes and then took hold of the mantle of Elijah, i.e. he divested himself of any reliance upon himself and trusted wholly in the Spirit**

***Not, 'where is Elijah?' but, '*Where is the Lord God of Elijah?*'**

***The sons of the prophets looked for Elijah. Elisha asked, 'Where is the Lord God of Elijah?' They looked the Spirit of God in another, instead of themselves**

***Elisha did twice as many miracles as Elijah. They were miracles of grace, restoration and healing. Jesus promised, '*Greater works shall you do...*' .**

***As Elisha moved through the land, the curse was broken, a widow's needs were met, a barren woman became fruitful, the dead were raised, the hungry were fed, enemies were overcome, famine was broken, out of death came life...**

****'And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever— the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you'* (John 14:16-18)**



***'Of His fullness have we all received' (John 1:16)**

***'Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus' (Acts 4:13). 'And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke...And all who sat in the council, looking steadfastly at him, saw his face as the face of an angel' (Acts 6:10,15)**

***Where is the Lord God of Elijah? He is with us. Will we take up the mantle?**