

Elisha, the Prophet of Grace

11) After The Rapture

'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!" And Elisha said to him, "Take a bow and some arrows." So he took himself a bow and some arrows. Then he said to the king of Israel, "Put your hand on the bow." So he put his hand on it, and Elisha put his hands on the king's hands. And he said, "Open the east window"; and he opened it. Then Elisha said, "Shoot"; and he shot. And he said, "The arrow of the LORD's deliverance and the arrow of deliverance from Syria; for you must strike the Syrians at Aphek till you have destroyed them"'

(2 Kings 13:14-17)

- ✓ **Elisha had a long ministry of some 60 years. It is now coming to an end. There is silence regarding his life and ministry for some 40 years. He seems to have been forgotten, and the nation slips more into apostasy**
- ✓ **Yet, he is still the salt of the earth**
- ✓ **Even the ungodly king, Joash, realizes his importance and impact. *'O my father, my father, the chariots of Israel and their horsemen!'* He knew his death would be a great loss to the nation**
- ✓ **The same was said to Elijah. Christ ascended but the Church continued in His place**

But what about when the Church is raptured?

***'For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming'
(2 Thes.2:7-8)***

✓ **It was an ancient custom to shoot an arrow, or cast a spear, into the country which an army intended to invade**

✓ **Elisha referred to the arrow as, *'the arrow of the Lord's deliverance'*. Victory would be from God, yet Joash and his army would be involved in the battles. God works through His people**

✓ **Elisha put his hands on the king's hands. By this symbolic action, Elisha was saying to him, 'As you go out to battle remember that the battle is not yours, but God's'. Of Joseph it was said, *'The archers have bitterly grieved him, shot at him and hated him. But his bow remained in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the Mighty God of Jacob'* (**Gen.49:23-24**)**

✓ *'He teaches my hands to make war, so that my arms can bend a bow of bronze'* (Psa.18:34)

✓ **The key to understanding spiritual warfare is to know that we are not working towards victory, but from a place of victory**

✓ **The battle was fought and won at Calvary. We are standing in the benefits of the finished work of Christ**

✓ **Spiritual warfare is training for reigning**

'Then he said, "Take the arrows"; so he took them. And he said to the king of Israel, "Strike the ground"; so he struck three times, and stopped. And the man of God was angry with him, and said, "You should have struck five or six times; then you would have struck Syria till you had destroyed it! But now you will strike Syria only three times"'

(2 Kings 13:18-19)

- ✓ **Strike the ground, i.e. in the sense of arrows being fired into the air and falling to the ground**
- ✓ **Elisha was enacting a prophetic parable. It is clear that the instruction to fire the arrows was symbolic of victories God would give to Israel over the Syrians, because Elisha said, *'The arrow of the LORD's deliverance and the arrow of deliverance from Syria; for you must strike the Syrians at Aphek till you have destroyed them'***

✓ **But the king was half-hearted, indicating a lack of real faith. He set the limits on God through his unbelief.** *'...again and again they tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel. They did not remember His power: the day when He redeemed them from the enemy'* (Psa.78:41-42)

✓ **He did not smite the ground as Elisha smote the waters**

✓ **Israel would enjoy only three victories over the Syrian army, instead of the many more they could have enjoyed**

- ✓ **Like this symbolic action we cannot see what happens in the spiritual realm. It is then that we are tempted to cease praying, preaching, serving, etc.**
- ✓ **But we know that we are aligning ourselves with the purposes of God on earth**
- ✓ **Some Christians expect little from God, ask little, and therefore receive little and are content with little. Some give up altogether**
- ✓ **There is a trial of our faith**

□ 'Cast your bread upon the waters, for you will find it after many days... He who observes the wind will not sow, and he who regards the clouds will not reap. As you do not know what is the way of the wind, or how the bones grow in the womb of her who is with child, so you do not know the works of God who makes everything. In the morning sow your seed, and in the evening do not withhold your hand; for you do not know which will prosper, either this or that, or whether both alike will be good'

(Ecc.11:1-6)

'Then Elisha died, and they buried him. And the raiding bands from Moab invaded the land in the spring of the year. So it was, as they were burying a man, that suddenly they spied a band of raiders; and they put the man in the tomb of Elisha; and when the man was let down and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived and stood on his feet'

(2 Kings 13:20-21)

***Unlike Elijah who was carried up to heaven in a chariot of fire, Elisha grew old, sick, died and was buried**

***Some time later, the corpse of a dead man was cast into the tomb of Elisha. When it came into contact with his bones it sprang into life**

***This miracle is a prophecy of the resurrection, and restoration of Israel, the dead nation**

***Ezekiel 37 - the vision of the valley of dry bones**

***After the rapture of the Church, God's attention will turn to Israel again. Like the body of this man they are dead, spiritually. But their blindness will be removed and they will believe in Jesus**

****'For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved' (Rom.11:25-26)***

Summary of Elisha the Prophet of Grace

***We see him in every condition of life and with all kinds of people**

***Wherever he is, in whatever circumstances he is found, his mission is to make known and minister the grace of God**

***Let us understand our purpose in life - to be a vessel through which the grace of God is manifested**