

Elisha

Elisha means “God is salvation,” his father’s name was Shaphat and his occupation was a farmer, [1 Kings 19:19-21], and was still only young when Elijah sought him out to serve the people with him.

Elisha’s ministry, if we date it from his call, extended through the reigns of Ahab, Ahaziah, Jehoram, Jehu, Jehoahaz and Jehoash, a period of more than fifty years.

Elisha’s call was **not** so much an anointing as an ordination with Elijah’s prophet mantle.

Until Elijah’s translation Elisha remained Elijah’s servant, [1 Kings 19:21].

The narratives of Elisha’s ministry do not betray the same tension between Yahweh and Baal worship as those of Elijah, it is a ministry conducted at the head of the prophetic schools which consist of a display of signs and wonders both at a personal level as well as a national level.

Elisha emerges as a kind of seer in the tradition of Samuel to whom peasants and kings alike turned for help.

The ministry of Elisha is recorded in **1 Kings chapter 19; 2 Kings chapter 2 to chapter 9 and chapter 13.**

Elisha’s assumption of the role of his master Elijah is recorded in **2 Kings 2:1-18.**

The double portion of the Holy Spirit upon Elisha recalls the language and thought of **Deuteronomy 21:15-17**, while the whole episode is reminiscent of the replacement of Moses by Joshua as leader of Israel secured the allegiance of Israel by participating in the same spirit as Moses and demonstrating his fitness for office by a miraculous river crossing, [**Deuteronomy 39:9; Joshua 9:14**].

Elisha, who was Elijah’s replacement as God’s prophet to Israel, was willing to follow and learn in order to gain the knowledge and the power to do the work to which God had called him.

Both Elijah and Elisha concentrated their efforts on the particular needs of the people around them.

The fiery Elijah confronted and exposed idolatry, helping to create an atmosphere where people could freely and publicly worship the true Creator God.

Elisha then moved in to demonstrate God’s powerful, yet caring, nature to all who came to Him for help.

Elisha spent less time in conflict with evil and more in compassionate care of people.

Elisha saw more **in** life than most people because he recognised that with God in them there was more **to** life.

The miracles that occurred during Elisha’s ministry put people in touch with a personal and all-powerful Creator God.

The examples of Elijah and Elisha tells us that we must resist the tendency to think about the limitations of our family background or environment when we surrender our lives to Him and ask Him to use us as only He can, [Romans 12:1-2].

Additional lessons we can learn from Elisha's life –

In God's eyes a measure of greatness in the willingness to serve all who are in need, the poor as well as the rich and powerful, [Matthew 20:26-28].

An effective replacement not only learns from his master, but also builds on his master's achievements, [John 14:12-14].

Elisha was an example of a man of integrity who did not try to enrich himself at others' expense.

Elisha's ministry directly anticipates the compassionate ministry of our Saviour Jesus Christ, a fine example for us to follow.