

Elisha

My name is Elisha. I was called to be a prophet as the ministry of Elijah was coming to an end. No, we are not related. My name means "God is salvation," His name means "God Jehovah." I guess our parents had some sort of premonition of our vocations when naming us.

I was plowing when Elijah threw his mantle around my shoulders. I knew who he was. Everybody knew who he was! He had successfully challenged the prophets of Baal and Asherah to a contest on Mount Carmel. Each side was to call down fire from heaven. That drew a crowd! Elijah and the LORD won – it wasn't even close. But afterwards, we didn't see Elijah for a long time and even though Ahab and Jezebel and their gods had been discredited, the evil couple continued to reign.

When the end of Elijah's time on earth was near and this fact had been revealed to both of us, we were together. I would not leave him. He said, "Tell me, what can I do for you before I am taken from you?" I said, "Let me inherit a double portion of your spirit." He said that if I saw him leave, it would happen. I then saw a chariot and horses of fire and a whirlwind which took him up.

His cloak fell to the ground. I picked it up, struck the Jordan with it, and it parted. That convinced me that the promise was true. I was then able to cure a poisoned water supply with salt – and the power of the LORD! I found out that the power could be used for death as well as life, when a group of youths jeered me. After I cursed them, two bears came out of the woods and mauled 42 of them.

I was then called by Jehoshaphat king of Judah, Aram king of Israel and the king of Edom who were on a campaign to punish Moab. Their armies had run out of water. I asked for a harpist, then called for ditches to appear in the valley. The next morning, without any sign of rain, the ditches were filled with water, flowing from the direction of Edom. The Moabites saw it from a distance and thought it was blood. They supposed that the three armies had slaughtered each other. Rushing in to plunder the battlefield, they were surprised to find a very much alive army, who defeated them easily.

Another time a widow of a fellow prophet cried out to me that the creditors were about to take her sons. She only had a little oil so I told her to borrow as many containers as she could. From her jar of oil, all the containers were filled and when she sold the oil, her debt was paid.

Once I went to Shunam as the guest of a rich couple who provided a room where I could stay. I asked my servant, Gehazi, to find out what I could do for them. It turns out that they had no children and I prophesied a son by the next year. It came true and the child grew and thrived until he ran out to his father in the field one day and cried out, "My head, my head!" He was carried to his mother and died in her arms.

She came on a donkey to me at Mount Carmel, distraught. Gehazi asked what happened but she would not tell him. She came to me and only said, "Did I desire a son of my lord? Did I not say, 'Do not deceive me?'" I gave my staff to Gehazi and told him to run and place it on the boy's face. When I got there, the boy was dead, lying on the bed. I prayed, lay down on top of him, got up and lay down again before he sneezed seven times, opened his eyes and was returned alive to his mother.

There were two food related miracles, one was curing a poisoned stew with flour – and the power of the LORD, of course. Another was feeding one hundred men with 20 small loaves.

Then there was the healing of Naaman, commander of the army of Aram, who had leprosy. He came with rich gifts and letter from his king. He terrified our king when he handed him the letter saying, "I am sending my servant Naaman to you so that you may cure him of his leprosy." I was told of the arrival of this man and sent word that he should come to me.

The LORD had to deal with this distinguished warrior spiritually as well as physically and addressed his pride by having me send word indirectly to him to wash seven times in the Jordan. He just about turned around in disgust to go back home but his retinue convinced him to try it, and he emerged the 7th time from that muddy water not only clean but converted! He asked for soil to bring home so he could construct an altar to Jehovah and asked forgiveness for following his civic duty of accompanying his king to the pagan altar.

A side story was the foolishness of my servant, Gehazi, who decided to acquire some of the gifts I had refused by running after Naaman and claiming that two young prophets had just arrived and could use clothing and money. When Gehazi returned to me – and denied having done anything improper -- I announced that Naaman's leprosy was now his.

The company of the prophets was cutting wood when an ax head flew off and sank in the Jordan. I threw a stick towards the area and ax head floated. I have lost count of the miracles – is this a double portion yet?

The LORD continued to perform wonders for the evil kings of Israel in the hope they would repent. He gave me knowledge of where the enemies would be. So it got to the point that the king of Aram realized someone was giving away his movements. So he tried to surround and capture me. When my servant woke up to see the vast enemy camp, he was terrified. Then the LORD opened his eyes to a vast army of angels. I struck the Arameans blind, directed them into the city and restored their sight to reveal that they were captured. I told the king not to kill them but give them a feast and then release them to return home. I can only imagine the story they told their king, but the raids stopped for a while after that.

Later, when Ben-Hadad besieged the city of Samaria, it had gone on so long that cannibalism was starting. The king blamed me and was about to execute me when I prophesied that the famine would end the next day, but added that the king would not eat of the bounty. Four lepers decided to walk out the gate and face sudden death rather than slow starvation in the city. They found the camp empty. The army had heard the sound of chariots and horses and, suspecting an Egyptian attack, had fled in great disarray. After eating their fill and hiding some loot, the lepers remembered the plight of the people of the city and called to the gatekeepers. The king sent out a scouting party to confirm that it was not a trick, then let the people out. There was a stampede and the king was trampled – as predicted, he did not eat of the bounty.

The Shunamite woman had moved together with her family, at my direction, to a far country during a 7 year famine and appealed to the king, Joram, for restoration of her land and its income. He was capable of doing good, even though he did not know and trust the LORD.

Ben-Hadad sent Hazael to inquire of me regarding his illness. Maybe Naaman had convinced him of the reality of the LORD. It was revealed to me that Ben-Hadad would not get well but also that Hazael would do great harm to Israel, as king of Aram. Hazael returned to Ben-Hadad and smothered him in his bed, succeeding him as king.

My last task was to send a young prophet to anoint Jehu as king of Israel. Jehu was a violent man but was selected to exact justice on Joram, son of Ahab, Jezebel the evil queen and all the remaining prophets of Baal. He even used trickery to flush out all those false prophets by pretending to perform a great sacrifice to Baal, then, having them gathered on one place, slaughtered them all.

As I was about to die, Jehoash, came to me, and cried out, "The chariots and horsemen of Israel!" That is exactly what I had said when Elijah left me. I asked the king of Israel to shoot an arrow, then

strike the ground. He struck it 3 times and would get 3 victories over Aram. He could have gotten more victories if he had struck more.

I was not taken up in a whirlwind and saw no chariots of fire as Elijah did. I was told about something that happened after I was promoted to the eternal world. The body of an Israelite man killed by Moabite raiders was thrown on my grave and he came back to life.

I was privileged to be a prophet and stopped keeping score of who had more miracles, Elijah or me. I worked my entire career in a county with evil rulers. Yet the LORD allowed me to show his power to those evil kings, to even give them victory over their enemies, in hopes that they would repent. I cannot say that I converted any kings but I know that Naaman became a worshipper of the LORD. All this at a time when Baal and Asherah were being worshipped in Israel. And only the LORD knows how much that healed and changed man, Naaman, spread the word in his native country of Aram.

1 Kings 19, 2 Kings 2-13