

OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY

LESSON SERIES

Old Testament Survey - Unit III
The Book of 1 & 2 Kings
Old Testament Survey - Unit IV
Prophets of Divided Kingdom – Elijah, Elisha

for

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THE BOOKS OF I AND II KINGS

INTRODUCTION

The book of I and II Kings is the sequel to I and II Samuel and should be read as a continuation of the historical account of the Hebrew nation contained in the former work.

As we have seen, the account of I and II Samuel covers a most important period of Hebrew History - from the birth of the prophet Samuel through the reign of David, or from about 1100 B.C. to about 974 B.C.

The narrative of I and II Kings covers the critical period from the death of King David, 974 B.C., to the Captivity and Exile of the Northern Kingdom, in 721 B.C., and the Fall and Exile of Judah or the Southern Kingdom, in 586 B.C.

The author of I and II Kings is unknown. However, tradition ascribes the authorship to Jeremiah. No doubt the appearance of chapters 24 and 25 of II Kings in the book of Jeremiah 39-42 and 52, has led to the conclusion that both books were written by the same person. Josephus, the Jewish historian of the first century A.D., ascribed the authorship to the "prophets." This is the view generally held today.

The composition of the books of I and II Kings was over a period of years. I Kings 8:8 indicates a time before Solomon's Temple was destroyed in 586 B.C., while II Kings 25:27 places the completion of the books after 560 B.C.

The contents of the books of I and II Kings fall naturally into three main divisions, as follows:

1. The reign of King Solomon, Chapters 1 - 11 of I Kings;
2. The Divided Kingdom: The Separate Parallel Histories of Judah and Israel, until the Assyrian Captivity and Exile of Israel, Chapters 12 - 22 of I Kings, and Chapters 1 - 17 of II Kings;
3. The Divided Kingdom: The History of Judah, until the Babylon-ion Capture and Exile, Chapters 18 - 25 of II Kings.

A. THE REIGN OF SOLOMON, CHAPTERS 1 - 11, I KINGS

- **SOLOMON CHOSEN AS DAVID'S SUCCESSOR**, Chapters 1 and 2
- **SOLOMON'S GLORY - THE REASON**, Chapter 3
 - Solomon is king and David is dead. Solomon goes to Gibeon where the tabernacle of the congregation is situated, (I Chron 16:39; 21:29). He offers 1,000 burnt offerings, yet he still is seeking to find his God (Micah 6:6-8). After this he began to commune with God is a dream. "Ask what I shall give you," said

God. Solomon did not immediately ask. Like the prodigal when he returned, his first reaction was "make me, then give me."

1. You have made your servant king (3:7).
2. Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart (3:12).
3. Solomon was not a prodigal. He was a juvenile and he confessed it and because he put right priorities on success, God made him succeed in every respect. **Seek and believe for wisdom and everything else will inevitably follow,** (James 1:5-8)

○ **SOLOMON'S GLORY - THE REVELATION**, Chapter 3:16-28

- The Lord had appeared to Solomon at the precise moment to prepare him for a God-given answer to a very important matter. It would be a test that perhaps would affect the welfare of the entire nation, **NOT JUST THE TWO HARLOTS**. Only God knows which of them lies and which of them tells the truth. Solomon's judgment, "Divide the child and give each of the harlots a half." Immediately the mother responds.
- Now what if both women had allowed the swordsman to slay the baby? Solomon would have been responsible for the death of the infant. The sensitivity of his father, David, would have been recalled toward another baby, and Solomon would have had a divided nation.
- That was an unmistakable **"word of wisdom"** to Solomon and obviously the young king did not have to first figure it out (II Cor 2:16). This was the first of 3,000 more words (4:32). **NOTE:** The New Testament makes a comparison to Jesus and his words (John 7:45-47). Solomon's words brought him fame and put him far beyond the wise men of other races. He spoke knowledgeably of botany, zoology, psychology, philosophy, and many, many other subjects (4:33-34).

○ **SOLOMON'S GLORY - THE ADMINISTRATION**, Chapter 5

- Solomon had a pact with Hiram by which the Israelite merchant fleet sailed abroad with the protection of the Tyrenian Navy (10:22). Every third year the ships came into home ports bringing an abundance of gold, silver, ivory, apes, peacocks, jewels and sandalwoods.
- The Lord bestowed upon Solomon riches and honor not because of his politics, but because of his righteous request (3:13). Judah and

Israel prospered peacefully and provisionally (4:25). Solomon kept his soldiers under arms (he did not disarm, and in the meantime he encouraged every kind of trade with other nations.

- He introduced into the Israeli army horses and chariots, not because of a new threat. It is said he had fourteen hundred chariots and twelve thousand horsemen, part of which he kept near Jerusalem, distributing the remainder to the chariot cities (10:26). Solomon was not belligerent, he was simply making the oppressors count the cost.

○ **SOLOMON'S GLORY - ASPIRATION**, Chapter 8

- David had longed to build a temple magnificent for the Lord.
- God had refused to allow David to build it. Now, however, Solomon set out to do it and it took seven years to build it. At the time of the dedication, the priests transferred many of the sacred vessels including the Ark of the Covenant into the temple.
- The glory of the Lord appeared in the inner sanctuary as Solomon faced the people and prayed - they sacrificed 22,000 oxen and 120,000 sheep and goats. For Solomon to witness the glory of the Lord after preparing a habitation for God must have been particularly satisfying (8:12). NOTE the humility of Solomon in his response (8:27).

○ **SOLOMON'S GLORY - ADMIRATION**, Chapter 10

- At the height of Solomon's glory, the queen of Sheba came with much wealth and hard questions. Two places by name of the Sheba are known to historians. One is in Africa and is the modern Ethiopia. The other is in Asia and is known today as Yeman. Incidentally, both countries have traditions that in ancient times, their queen visited Solomon. The queen of Sheba was absolutely overwhelmed by her encounter with King Solomon. Notice the things that impressed her.
 1. Vs. 3 - Charismatic words of wisdom and knowledge not acquired knowledge - imparted knowledge.
 2. Vs. 5 - Tremendous organization and demonstration.
NOTE: Charismatic is not an excuse for carelessness.
 3. vs. 5 - The ascent by which he went up into the house of the Lord. The word ascend (aliyyah) means uppermost place. Historians tell us that Solomon had a private way by

which he went up to the altar, but after his arrival he was on the same plane as everybody else.

- The queen of Sheba found that the living and true God who was the obvious source of Solomon's wisdom could only be approached via the burnt offering at the altar. The queen of Sheba had something of a spiritual experience there in Jerusalem, for why else, should she be upheld by Jesus as a judge of sinners in following generations (Matt. 12:42).

○ **SOLOMON'S GLORY - THE DETERIORATION**, Chapter 11

- "But king Solomon loved many strange women... And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines and his wives turned away his heart." I Kings 11:1,3.
- How very pitiful that Solomon became liberal in his marital affairs. One thousand women, wives and concubines, were just too much. They led his heart astray, and he found himself allowing them to worship pagan gods while he himself was emotionally involved with them. How can two walk together except they be agreed, let alone with one thousand Ammonites, Edomites, Hittites, Sidonians. Solomon's heart was turned after other gods. (vs 4).

○ **REHOBOAM AND THE DIVISION**

- God could not let Solomon carry on in this manner, thus Jeroboam became a thorn in his side. Jeroboam was promoted by Solomon (11:28). However, he secretly tried to organize resistance to the aging king. When Solomon knew it, Jeroboam fled to Egypt.
- But before he left Israel, the prophet Ahijah prophesied, rending a garment saying, "take ten pieces for the Lord will rend the kingdom and give ten tribes to you."
- Jeroboam remained in exile until the death of Solomon. Solomon dies and his oldest son, Rehoboam, became king. The northern tribes sent for Jeroboam. The people made a request of Rehoboam (12:4). In first seeking advice from the oldest advisors then turning to the young, he made a foolish decision (12:10, 11). Solomon, the wisest man, had a son who was one of the greatest fools.
- The northern tribes declared their independence. Rehoboam was not able to permit this without a fight. The prophet Shemaiah, reminded him that the Lord had already decreed it (12:23-24).
- **How pitiful from glorious direction to division!**

B. THE DIVIDED KINGDOM

- The division of the kingdom came as a result of Solomon's apostasy and idolatry. For David's sake, judgment was postponed until the death of Solomon. Rehoboam had to suffer the consequences. (I Kings 11:9-13). As a result of the actual division of the kingdom, priests and Levites from various parts of the nation came into the southern kingdom of Judah (II Chron 11:13-17). The thing that precipitated the division of the kingdom of Solomon was, Rehoboam had been asked to lower Solomon's taxes. The elders recommended it, but he increased taxation on the advice of his young contemporaries. The southern kingdom of Judah declined rapidly under his leadership. **NOTE the need for the experience of the old and the expression of the young in the purposes of God (Acts 2:17).**
- After the death of Solomon, at the invitation of Israeli elders, Jeroboam became the first king of the northern kingdom now known as Israel.
- Jeroboam was a strong leader, but led his people astray in instituting false worship in Israel. Why, you may well ask. (I Kings 12:27). Because he feared if the people went to Jerusalem to worship in Solomon's temple, their hearts would be turned to Rehoboam. Obviously Jeroboam disbelieved the prophecy of the rent garment and ceased to prosper (II Chron 20:20).

CHRONOLOGY OF THE KINGS OF THE DIVIDED KINGDOM

<u>Kings</u>	<u>Reign</u>	<u>Morals</u>	<u>Prophet</u>
Jeroboam	B.C. 934-913	Bad	Ahijah
Nadab	913-912	Bad	
Baasha	912-889	Bad	
Elah	889-887	Bad	
Zimri	887	Bad	
Ahab	875-854	Bad	
Ahaziah	855- 854	Bad	Elijah
Jehoram	854-843	Bad	Micaiah
Jehu	843-816	Bad	Elisha
Jehoahaz	820-804	Bad	
Joash	804-879	Bad	
Jeroboam II	789-749	Bad	
Zechariah	748	Bad	Jonah
Shallum	748	Bad	Amos
Menahem	748-738	Bad	Hosea
Pekahiab	738-736	Bad	
Pekah	748-730	Bad	
Hoshea	730-721	Bad	

(Assyrian Captivity, 721 B.C.)

KINGS OF JUDAH

<u>Kings</u>	<u>Reign</u>	<u>Morals</u>	<u>Prophet</u>
Rehoboam	B.C. 934-917	Bad	Shemaiah
Abijah	917-915	Bad	
Asa	914-874	Good	
Jehoshaphat	875-852	Good	
Jehoram	852-845	Bad	
Ahaziah	845	Bad	
Athaliah	845-839	Bad	
Jehoash	839-805	Good	
Amaziah	805-777	Good	Joel
Azariah (or Uzziah)	791-740	Good	
	751-736	Good	
Jotham	741-726	Bad	Isaiah
Ahaz	726-697	Good	Micah
Hezekiah	697-642	Bad	
Manasseh	642-640	Bad	
Amon	639-608	Good	
Josiah	608	Bad	Nahum
Jehoahaz	608-597	Bad	Habakkuk
Jehoiakim	597	Bad	Zephaniah
Jeholachin	597-586	Bad	Jeremiah
Zedekiah			

(Babylonian Captivity, Destruction of Jerusalem B.C. 586)

Apparent discrepancies in dates of kingships are usually accounted for by overlapping reigns where an incapacitated father would be assisted by the heir apparent, his son, or parts of years counted as whole years, or periods of anarchy when there was no lawful king.

THE PROPHETS OF THE PERIOD OF THE DIVIDED KINGDOM

INTRODUCTION

Beginning with Samuel and continuing up to the close of the Old Testament Canon prophets played a major role in the old Testament history. We remember that Samuel established several schools of prophets during the period in which he judged Israel. There were schools of prophets at Naioth (a suburb of Ramah), Bethel, Gilgal, Jericho, and possible elsewhere (I Samuel 10:5-10; 19:18-20; II Kings 2:1-7; 4:38).

This prophetic band under Samuel's leadership must have wielded considerable influence (I Samuel 19:18-24). Most likely it was from one of these schools that Nathan, Gad, Ahijah, Shemaiah, Elijah, Micaiah, Elisha and the other prophets active during the period from David until the Southern Kingdom went into exile, came with God's message.

Through these prophets God raised up a standard of prophetic spokesmen to speak to their day and to keep the kings in line as much as possible. An Old Testament Survey course would not be complete without taking a look at the two most active of the prophets mentioned in the Books of Kings, Elijah and Elisha, as well as place in their proper order the Books of the prophets of this period.

ELIJAH, THE PROPHET

Elijah is introduced into the history of Israel in I Kings, chapter 17. Elijah's birth and family are unknown. He came from Tishbeth in Gilead, a mountainous region east of Jordan. He came upon the stage of Israel's history like a crash of thunder. He disappeared from the world in a whirlwind, truly a man of lightning, thunder, fire and whirlwind.

NOTE: In Matthew 16:13-14, Jesus was thought by some to be Elijah returned to earth.

Elijah was sent by God (I Kings 17:1) to Ahab's palace declaring a drought which would be terminated only by his word (James 5:17). His announcement of no rain went like an arrow to the soul of Ahab, and Elijah goes into hiding. **NOTE:** For Elijah to declare a drought was an outright attack on the power of Baal. This pagan god was often called the storm god. Baal allegedly brought rain and guaranteed fertility in the fields and flocks. (cf. James 1:17).

A. FED BY RAVEN, I Kings 17:2-7

For Elijah to avoid the wrath of Jezebel during 3½ years of drought and then pray for rain, meant going into hiding (vs. 3). God said at the Brook Cherith (meaning cutting place where water seeps down and cuts its way through the rock), "I have commanded the raven to feed thee there." (vs. 4). For Elijah, this prospect must have been somewhat repulsive. Ravens are regarded as omens of misfortune and tragedy in the Orient and Occident. In the Hebrew tradition they were regarded as unclean and an abomination because of their scavenging habits. Normally, they could only have brought Elijah scraps of flesh from rotting carcasses, but God promised bread, too.

B. TO THE WIDOW AT ZAREPHATH, I Kings 17:8-16

The brook dried up. Further steps of faith: Zarephath - Zidon - a widow (vs. 9). Zarephath was Jezebel's hometown, this was courting disaster.

Zarephath means place of refining. It required great faith and direction for Elijah to confront that widow for sustenance (vs.10-12). Elijah knew that this was to effect his future blessing, even if it was presuming upon a widow (Deut. 24:19).

C. RAISING THE WIDOW'S SON, I Kings 17:17-24

Notice verse 18 - thou art come - to call my sin to remembrance and slay my son. This Old Testament concept was prevalent prior to Jesus. It wasn't God who did it (John 10:10). Elijah, however, would have none of that. What Elijah did was one of the most magnanimous gestures in the Old Testament. In greatness, generosity, and gentleness, he took the dead body of the child into his own embrace. He and she were in this suffering together (Lev. 21:1-4). **NOTE:** He was fulfilling the law of Christ (Gal. 6:2) in actual identification. **RESULTS: Life returned to the dead body.**

D. TROUBLER OF ISRAEL, I Kings 18:17

Elijah returned from Zarephath to meet Ahab. Instead, he meets Obadiah, the king's chamberlain. Obadiah was a bewildering character. He held wicked Ahab in respect, yet appears to reverence Jehovah. Obadiah sheltered one hundred prophets when Jezebel was exterminating them. Even though afraid, Obadiab obeys Elijah and went to the king. Ahab did not insist that Elijah be brought before him. Instead he went to the man of God. When the king charged Elijah with troubling Israel, the prophet boldly reprimanded Ahab for neglecting the commandments of God. Elijah accuses Ahab of being the troubler by repudiating and violating God's law.

E. CONTEST WITH BAAL, I Kings 18:19-40

Elijah was not content to charge Ahab, but challenged Ahab to gather the prophets of Baal and Ashteroth, 450 and 400 respectively. Elijah was determined to exorcise and eradicate all evil forces from Israel in one confrontation.

Elijah did not demand a lamb or a kid or a pair of turtle doves which could have inferred a sacrifice for himself only. He demanded a bullock signifying his identification with the house of Israel (Lev.16:6). This also was typical of Dan. 9:3-6. Verse 24, "Let the God that answers by fire!"

God did answer by fire. It was all over in a few short seconds. Now stood only a burned blackened depression and molten rocks to prove it. Israel was convinced, the prophets of Baal were taken and slain at the Brook Kishon (meaning the ensnared).

F. ELIJAH AFRAID, I Kings 19:1-7

The prophets of Baal were slain. Elijah prayed 7 times and God sent the rain. Elijah then outran Ahab's chariot some sixteen miles to Jezreel. In fact, he ran a total of about two hundred miles because of Jezebel's threat upon his life, (I Kings 19:4). Elijah is suggesting to God that death now according to his father's life span would be normal. How convenient! However, he only needed good sleep and a good meal and then another sleep. **NOTE:** Why did not God provide an angelic waiter instead of ravens 3½ years ago? Surely God is a God of variety! Finally, there is an unearthliness about Elijah that seems to overawe us as we read and maybe cannot relate in practical outworking today. The Holy Spirit knew this and thus inspired James the Lord's brother to write the following:

James 5:16-17.

G. ELIJAH ON SINAI, I Kings 19:8-18

Vs. 9 - Notice a cave is mentioned here on the mount of God and Horeb. Is this the same place Moses in his depressed condition repaired to? Moses was hidden in the clift of the rock (clift meaning prepared place) only to be covered by the hand of God as God passed by (Exodus 33:21-23). ONE THING WE DO KNOW, this was no accident as an exhausted man might wander. Elijah was here by divine appointment. **Notice** his statement - vs 10 - a contrast to the response of chapter 18:39. Was Israel committed to God now? Let us make no mistake, Elijah knew their decision, but also knew of their need for restoration and sanctification (Heb. 6:1).

God was preparing him for a new ministry of anointing. This ministry of anointing would take him five hundred miles further to anoint a king in Syria, a nation who would later chasten and scourge Israel. He must then anoint the unlikely Jehu as the new king over Israel. Then he must anoint one in his own place, Elisha, unknown and unsuspecting. The insignificant voice assured him of 7,000 others also and the prophet was mightier than the monarch. I believe that when Elijah left Horeb, he was not the same man, he had a different dimension of faith.

H. ELIJAH'S MANTLE TRANSFERABLE, I Kings 19:19

Elisha was to be servant and successor to Elijah. He was the son of Shaphat, who must have been very wealthy. Few people after the drought could have twelve yoke of oxen to plow with. Young Elisha was hard at work. Recent rains had softened the soil - what an inopportune time to be called into the ministry. Without challenging or coaxing or prophesying or even stopping, Elijah anointed Elisha - not with a horn of oil like a king, but with his mantle. Elisha, in a single, sudden, severe stroke of severance gave up family, friends, farm, and burned his plow. **NOTE:** This was the first step in his future fifty years ministry of plowing up the fallow ground of the hard-hearted Israelites.

I. NABOTH'S VINEYARD, I Kings 21:1-29

Despite all that the Lord had done, Ahab and vicious Jezebel drifted further in debauchery. The end came finally as they desired a tiny plot of ground near the palace, belonging to a poor farmer named Naboth. By deceit and lies Jezebel arranges for Naboth to be accused of Blasphemy against God and the king, for which he was stoned. Ahab then strolled down to see the land to which he laid claim when suddenly Elijah confronts him. "You have found me out again, my enemy."

Elijah who had fled in fear from this spot approximately seven years previously, **NOW FEARLESSLY** pronounces doom on Ahab and Jezebel and their family. Ahab, after ten years of resisting Elijah, now humbles himself (vs. 29). This postpones the inevitable. Ahab was later slain in battle, and the dogs licked up his blood from his chariot precisely where Naboth was stoned. As for Jezebel, her body never received a royal burial. Flung from a place window, she was trampled under Jehu's horses feet and scavenging dogs consumed her corpse until only her hands and feet and skull remained as a grim reminder of her cruel and ungodly rule (II Kings 9:30)

ELISHA - THE DOUBLE PORTION PROPHET

Possibly for ten years, Elijah and Elisha had been inseparable companions. God had put them together. **NOTE:** Often great men are loners, but not great men in the church of Jesus Christ and not so for Elijah. Before Elijah had the final revelation for Elisha, it could well be that he felt Elisha needed some personal experience, not as a protege. From Bethel to Jericho to Jordan, Elijah seemed to discourage the young prophet from following. **NOTE:** Apparently, Elijah journeyed to these places as a last act of encouragement to the sons of the prophets, and they were not following their Master. Elijah and Elisha cross over the Jordan (**Jordan denotes death to self**). As Elijah is taken up his mantle falls on Elisha and Elisha was driven by the anointing from then on.

A. ELISHA OPENS THE JORDAN, II Kings 2:14-15

Elisha smote the Jordan with the mantle of anointing. Notice immediately afterward God allows his weakness to be evident although the anointing resting on him was obvious (vs. 15-is).

B. ELISHA HEALS THE WATER, II Kings 2:19-22

The men of the city refers to Jericho (vs. 19). Something in the water caused the trees to be barren or to prematurely shed their fruit. Herbs likewise did not conceive or miscarried. Barrenness or abortion spread to the people of Jericho. It is thought that the problem was a result of a carry-over of Joshua's curse. The curse was upon the rebuilders, so God graciously performed a miracle through Elisha (vs. 22). **NOTE:** There is a spring today Ames-Sultan which is thought to be the same one. This spring continues to be a source of life to the plain of Jericho. Maybe God directed Elisha to first use salt, but only as a symbol of preservation or permanence, maybe even to this day.

C. ELISHA PERSECUTED AND AVENGED, II KINGS 2:2

At Jericho, Elisha is received with new respect. At Bethel (house of God) he is held in contempt, for if the young reiterate it, the parents most likely already believe it. God here was giving warning that he held his prophets in high esteem, as lights in a dark world (Ir Chron. 36:16). This can be likened to the wrath of God following the reaction and rapture of the church in the near future. **NOTE:** Skeptics have long since used this example as an inconsistency in the dealings of God. We must never forget the goodness and severity of God (Proverbs 26:2).

D. ELISHA ON THE BATTLEFIELD, II Kings 3

Now on the international scene, Jehoram reigns instead of his father King Ahab. He was not quite as wicked as his father and his mother Jezebel. Apparently, he sought to purge the worship of Baal. His reforms were not very successful, however, due to the continuing strong influence of his mother, Jezebel. The Moabites were required by Ahab to pay an annual tribute to Israel - 100,000 lambs and the wool of 100,000 more lambs. They refused because of a new king.

Jehoram enlisted Jehoshaphat of Judah and Edom as a military coalition to attack Moab. They chose to cross south of the dead Sea, but because of drought there were no water supplies. Jehoram despaired, but Jehoshaphat called on the them to turn to Elisha for

help. For Jehoshaphat's sake he did. Elisha called for a minstrel and began to prophecy (vs. 16-19). Elisha's prophecy was fulfilled to the letter.

E. ELISHA AND THE WIDOWS'S OIL, II Kings 4:1-7

This miracle followed, I believe, in order for us to see God manifest not only internationally, but personally and compassionately. **NOTE** verse 1 - Maybe one of the schools of the prophets, a student of Elijah, deceased perhaps during Elisha's international debut. A widow in need is also a New Testament precept (Acts 6:1). Elisha has no ready-made answer (vs. 2). **NOTE:** The pot of oil was almost certainly the pot of anointing oil used following the washing of the body.

The emphasis here is multiplication of anointing which can only be accompanied by:

- Gathering empty vessels (Joel 2:15-17 & 23-24).
- Pouring out (Is. 53:12).
- Paying the debt (Rom 1:14).

NOTE: The motive for God's abundance is so that we may adequately pay our debt spiritually.

F. ELISHA AND THE SHUNAMITE WOMAN'S SON, II Kings 4:18-37

The sequence of these miracles prove God's grace. **NOTICE:** Elisha had previously identified himself with a widow. Now God sees to it that a women of wealth endeavors to make him feel part of their family, offering comfort and hospitality. Thus God ministers to his needs. This woman had no other motive but to bless the servant of God, and thus she was blessed (Matt 10:40-42). She seemed as if she had no need, but God gave her the desire of her heart.

The story moves ahead several years, and the young son dies. The mother hastens to Elisha and answers Gehazi first, "It is well." This statement shows her peace, her faith. However before Elisha, she seems to weaken in faith. Elisha first sends Gehazi and then goes himself.

Elisha first has only partial results (vs. 34). God though had mercy and honored that woman. The significance of the seven sneezes of the child is not told us. However seven speaks of completeness and something is now complete.

G. ELISHA - HEALING THE DEADLY THING, II Kings 4:38-44

Elisha was visiting the school of the prophets. It was a time of dearth and famine so different to when Israel prospered under David and Solomon. It was discovered that the vegetable stew was deadly and could not be eaten. **NOTE:** Elisha did not put on a performance of the miraculous as some have done by quoting Scripture (Mark 16:18) and then proceed to eat the poison food, etc. Genesis 3:17 maintains the ground was cursed because of Adam's sin. Now if satan can turn that curse into our destruction and we unwittingly fall victim to it, we can claim deliverance from it (Mark 16:18).

Elisha vs. 41 asks for meal to be brought and he cast it into the pot.

NOTE: Meal in the Old Testament was a type of Christ portrayed in the meat (i.e. meal) offering of Leviticus, chapter 2. In other words, by the coming of Jesus into the sin-cursed pot of this world, we are safe (Luke 10:19). Furthermore, our rejoicing is not in demonstration but in redemption and sanctification. **NOTE:** In the midst of dearth and famine, they had the means obviously for a meal offering. In the midst of difficulty, we have Jesus to turn the tables (Acts 28:3-6).

H. ELISHA - FEEDING THE MULTITUDE, II Kings 4:42-44

A man from Shalisha brought of the first-fruits of his crops to Elisha, it appears, to feed the sons of the prophets. This man was not a prophet, any more than the boy whose lunch Jesus blessed was an apostle. But God used them at the precise time of need. **NOTE:** Elisha uses the precise statement that Jesus used instructing his disciples (vs. 42).

"Give ye them to eat." (Mark 6:37). Elisha has same opposition which Jesus had from his disciples (vs. 43). In vs. 44 we see the God of the over plus.

I. ELISHA - HEALING THE LEPER, II Kings 5

Verse 1 provides a description of Naaman's greatness. He was held in the highest esteem by his master, the king of Syria. But all this greatness was marred by his being a leper. However, Naaman was given hope by the testimony of a Israelite slave girl who testified regardless.

As a result of the slave girl's testimony, Naaman came with a diplomatic yet almost demanding approach to King Jehoram (Ahab's son) who was previously rebuked by Elisha. Elisha agreed to receive Naaman upon hearing of Jehoram's dilemma. Naaman almost missed being healed by refusing Elisha's command to dip seven times in the Jordan. **NOTE:** The Jordan has special significance in the Bible, but not because of its healing properties. Jordan has the spiritual meaning of dying to self, judging self. People came to John confessing their sins prior to baptism in the Jordan. Jesus alluded to baptism as death (Luke 12:50). Naaman, however, humbly complied to dipping himself seven times in the Jordan.

J. ELISHA - THE IRON AXE HEAD FLOATS, II Kings 6:1-7

With so many varied miracles, here is a brief insight into Elisha's ministry - the school of prophets. **NOTE:** Making no provision for ministry is not God's will. Verse 1 seems to suggest that they respectfully called Elisha's attention to a real need - cramped quarters. As they are cutting down trees to make lumber, one looses his axe head which happened to be a borrowed one. Elisha cast a stick into the water and the axe head floats and is recovered.

K. ELISHA'S PRAYER - EYES WITH NEW SIGHT, II Kings 6:8-23

While Elisha lived at Dothan, his servant rushed into his presence and declared a hopeless situation. They were surrounded by the Syrians. Vs. 16 and 17 - Elisha is so gracious with his servant, saying "Fear not." Then he did not rebuke or even command - he prayed. His prayer was not for the Lord to change the circumstances, but that the Lord would open his eyes that he may see (Hebrews 1:14). Elisha prays another two prayers - one to bind and another to loose as far as the Syrian's sight is affected.

I. ELISHA PROMISES FOOD, II Kings 7:1-20

Following Elisha's merciful attitude toward the Syrian host, King Jehoram seems confused and certainly harassed. Why now, if Elisha knows the strategy of Israel's enemies, are they besieged in Samaria by Benhadad again? The people of Samaria were starving, even boiling their own children and paying exorbitant prices for repulsive sustenance. Chapter 6, verse 32 - Jehoram's anger explode against Elisha.

Chapter 7, verse 1 - Elisha now prophesies victory and indeed plenty within twenty-four hours. One of the king's lords scorned it, and within that time, he is killed in the rush of the people to partake of it. The Syrians had hastily vacated their camp for the Lord had caused them to believe a rumor upon hearing the noise of chariots, which obviously the angels of the Lord sounded.

J. ELISHA FULFILLS ANOTHER PROPHECY, II Kings 8:7-15

When Elijah was on the mountain with his head wrapped about with his mantle of anointing, he was told to anoint Hazael king over Syria and thus punish Israel (I Kings 19:15). Now Elisha before his departure had to fulfill this. Through the healing of Naaman, Elisha is known as a man of God even in Damascus. Elisha makes a visit to Damascus. When Benhadad heard this he sent his servant Hazael to Elisha with many gifts. Hazael made inquiry of Elisha whether his king would recover from his illness. The prophet fulfilled the commission of Elijah by confiding to Hazael that he would be the next king of Syria. Hazael smothered his ailing king with a wet blanket and seized the throne of Syria (as God had told Elijah so long before).

K. JEHU - KING OF ISRAEL, Chapter 9 and 10

Elisha now comes on the Israeli national scene again. He sent one of his prophets to anoint Jehu to be king of Israel. Jehu was proclaimed king and attacks Jezreel, and Jehoram is fatally wounded where Ahab, his father, split Naboth's blood. Queen Jezebel appealed to Jehu. She was thrown out of the upstairs window to her death and Jehu (a furious driver) mangled her body beneath his chariot wheels. Scavenger dogs fulfilled prophecy literally, thus destroying the complete family of Ahab according to the word of the Lord.

L. ELISHA'S DECEASE, II Kings 13:14; 20-21

Elisha becomes sick and dies of that sickness. Later another funeral service is disturbed by invading Moabites. In their haste they place the corpse of the dead man on top of Elisha's bones, and the man revived and stood upon his feet. Even in death Elisha was anointed.

END of Lesson

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