

I & II Kings



Lesson 6 – 1 Kings 22:41–2 Kings 7:20

Elisha

In our previous lesson, we encountered Elijah, one of God's greatest prophets. Later, we also encountered Elisha, the prophet whom God selected to succeed Elijah (1 Kings 19:16). We read how Elijah "passed by him and cast his cloak upon him" (19:19). Elijah's cloak symbolized his prophetic office. Elisha knew what the "casting" of such a cloak represented. It meant that God wanted him to follow and train under the older prophet. Elisha made his "casting" into a celebratory event complete with a sacrifice and a fellowship meal before saying goodbye to his parents (vv. 20–21).

An essential part of God's prophetic office is speaking on God's behalf. A prophet speaks not his own words; he speaks God's words (2 Peter 1:21). A common phrase unites God's Old Testament prophets: "This is what the Lord says..." This phrase alone appears more than twenty times in 1 and 2 Kings. Other Old Testament books also record this phrase nearly two hundred times.

Prophets came from almost all occupations: farmers like Elisha (1 Kings 19:19), and priests like Ezekiel (Ezekiel 1:3). However, the true test of a prophet of God was that his prophecies were fulfilled (Deuteronomy 18:22). Elijah was indeed a prophet. We are about to learn the plans God had for a new prophet, a prophet named Elisha.

Jehoshaphat and Ahaziah

The Book of 1 Kings closes with the accounts of two kings, Jehoshaphat in the Southern Kingdom of Judah and Ahaziah in the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Recall how Jehoshaphat allied with Ahab in the battle of Ramoth-gilead (22:29). Note also that Ahab convinced Jehoshaphat to wear Ahab's royal robes in a vain attempt to misdirect Elijah's prophecy against him (see 22:30 and 21:19). Jehoshaphat survived the masquerade; Ahab did not, his life ended when "a certain man drew his bow at random and struck the king of Israel between the scale armor and the breastplate" (22:34).

Read 1 Kings 22:41–53. In these few verses, the inspired writer presents the lives of two kings. Historically, we can fix the time of these events at circa 850 BC.

60. The differences between Jehoshaphat and Ahaziah appear as if in an obituary. Compare and contrast these two kings as the inspired writer presents each one.

The Final Days of Elijah

Read 2 Kings 1:1–2:25. In the Hebrew Bible, 1 and 2 Kings made up one document and not the two separate books we find today. The evidence of their unity becomes apparent when we note how easily 1 Kings flows into 2 Kings as one continuous story.

61. Ahaziah's reign lasts but two years. What action on his part prompted Elijah to utter the words "Thus says the LORD..." and prophesy against him (1:16)?

"Sons of the prophets" (2:5) may refer to a school of prophets where boys learned spiritual matters from the prophets themselves.

62. In what way did Elisha express his desire to follow in the spiritual footsteps of Elijah (2:9) and how would Elisha know his desire was fulfilled (2:10)?
63. When did Elijah appear again in his glorified body (Matthew 17:3)?

Elisha, Bringer of God's Grace

Read 2 Kings 3:1–4:44. Jehoram succeeded his father, Ahaziah, as king in Israel. Jehoram implemented several changes, yet a return to worshiping the one true God in Jerusalem was not among them (3:3). Take a moment to note the hideous sacrifice offered by the king of Moab (3:27).

64. Widows and orphans hold a special place in God's heart (Deuteronomy 10:18). Explain how Elisha shows God's mercy to the widow and her son (2 Kings 4:1–7).
65. A Shunammite couple showed kindness to Elisha. At the death of her son, the Shunammite woman did not seek help from any local heathen gods, but turned to Elisha. How did God bless this woman of faith (4:32–37)?

God's Grace to Naaman

Read 2 Kings 5:1–27. This story involves the faith of a child, Elisha the man of God, and Naaman, a Syrian commander.

66. Leprosy (which included a variety of skin diseases) was incurable in Elisha's day. What was Elisha's prescription (5:10)?
67. Eight hundred years later, another prophet baptized in the Jordan River; identify him (Luke 3:3).

War with Syria

Read 2 Kings 6:1–7:20. Israel continually warred with Syria, and we find two incidents recorded here.

68. Explain how God made His presence known to Elisha's servant as Syrian forces surrounded them (6:17).
69. Ben-hadad besieged the city of Samaria, leading to cannibalism among her people (vv. 28–29). How does God show His glory by lifting the siege (7:6–8)?

God's Word for Today

Through the ages, God's prophets have faithfully guided God's Church, while false prophets have plagued her.

70. Read 1 John 4:1–3. What criteria does John supply for knowing “the Spirit of God” (vv. 2–3)?
71. Christians rejoice that God continues to speak through faithful preachers and teachers. Where might we find God's prophetic words today? (See 2 Timothy 3:16–17.)

In Closing

- † Learn more about Jehu, king of Israel, by consulting a Bible dictionary or other reliable resource.
- † Discuss the parts of Elisha's ministry that foreshadowed that of Jesus Christ.
- † Read **2 Kings 8:1–12:21** to prepare for the next session.