

ELISHA

Making the Bible Come Alive

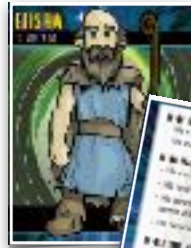
The mighty one

WHO WAS THIS PERSON?

- Elisha was a prophet in Israel. We find him in the Old Testament.
- Elisha was the son of Shaphat. He was from Abel Meholah in the Jordan Valley (1 Kings 19:16).
- The name Elisha means "God is my salvation".
- Elisha was bald (2 Kings 2:23).
- Elisha was Elijah's pupil and also his successor (1 Kings 19:16, 19-21; 2 Kings 5:8).
- Elisha did not wander as much as Elijah; he had a house in Samaria (2 Kings 6:32).
- Elisha advised four kings. His ministry was to all classes of people, poor and rich, noble and peasant, Jew and foreigner.
- Elisha led schools of prophets (2 Kings 4:38-44, 2 Kings 6:1-7).
- Elisha performed many miracles, but he remained humble and faithful to God, refusing any monetary gain while serving the Lord (2 Kings 5:16).
- Elisha died of an illness (2 Kings 13:14).
- Even in death, God used him. A man who was dead touched Elisha's body and he came back to life (2 Kings 13:20-21).

WHAT IS THIS PERSON KNOWN FOR?

- Elisha was called to follow Elijah (1 Kings 19:19). Elijah obeyed God's word and found Elisha plowing the land with oxen. Elijah put his cloak around Elisha as a sign that Elijah's responsibilities would now fall on Elisha. Elisha left his oxen and ran after the prophet. All Elisha wanted to do was say goodbye to his family. So Elisha returned to his family, slaughtered his oxen and burned his equipment. He passed around the meat to the townspeople, and they all ate and then followed Elijah as his servant. Elisha answered the call immediately (1 Kings 19:21).
- Elisha loved Elijah like a father. He refused to leave Elijah before he was taken to heaven, despite the fact that Elijah had told him to stay behind. Elijah finally allowed Elisha to stay with him and asked him what he could do for him before he left. Elisha asked for a double





portion of Elijah's spirit. Elijah told Elisha that if he saw him at the time he would be taken away, then the double portion would be for him. Elisha did see the chariot of fire and the horses of fire that separated the two men and he saw Elijah taken up to heaven in a whirlwind. Elisha took the cloak that Elijah had dropped. At the Jordan River, Elisha struck the water with that cloak and it divided as it had done for Elijah. The other prophets who witnessed this event recognized that Elijah's spirit was now resting on Elisha. (2 Kings 2:1-18).

- He cleansed the waters of Jericho (2 Kings 2:19-21).
- Some young men mocked him. He cursed them and bears killed them (2 Kings 2:23-25).
- He asked a widow to go to all her neighbours to borrow as many empty jars as possible. A miracle allowed her to fill all those jars by pouring olive oil from her own jar. She was able to sell enough of this precious oil to pay off her creditor so that he would not take her two children and make them his slaves. They finally lived off the rest of the profits (2 Kings 4:1-7).
- He prophesied a son to a Shunammite family who welcomed him. He later resurrected that same son (2 Kings 4:8-37).
- Elisha also removed poison from a pot of soup by throwing in flour (2 Kings 4:38-41).
- He multiplied twenty barley loaves to feed a hundred men (2 Kings 4:42-44).
- He healed Naaman, the leader of the king of Syria's army, of leprosy (2 Kings 5).
- Il a fait flotter une tête de hache empruntée (2 Rois 6:1-7).
- Elisha warned the king of the movements of the king of Aram. When the king of Aram discovered that it was Elisha who was thwarting his plans, he sought to capture him. When Elisha's servant Gehazi saw the Aramaeans coming against them, he was afraid. But Elisha told him not to be afraid, for "Don't be afraid!" Elisha told him. "For there are more on our side than on theirs!" Elisha prayed, "O Lord, open his eyes and let him see!" The Lord opened the servant's eyes and he saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire (2 Kings 6:16-17). Elisha then prayed that the Arameans would be struck blind. Elisha led them to Samaria, the capital of Israel, before asking the Lord to open their eyes. The king of Israel wondered if he should kill them, but Elisha advised him to prepare a meal for them instead. When they finished the feast, the

Aramaeans returned to their master and the troops of the Syrians did not return to the territory of Israel.

- He was the instigator and leader of Jehu's revolt against the house of Omri, a revolt marked by a bloodbath at Jezreel, during which the king of Israel Ahab and his family were slaughtered (2 Kings 9-10).
- Elisha asked Joash to take a bow and arrow and shoot them through the window. When Joash did so, Elisha told him that it was God's arrow of victory over Aram. Elisha told the king to hit the ground with the arrows, but Joash stopped after only three shots. Elisha was furious. If Joash had struck the ground five or six times, he would have completely destroyed Aram, but he did so only three times (2 Kings 13:14-19).
- Elisha had a disease. He died of it. Joash, king of Israel, went down to him and wept on his face. "Then Elisha died and was buried." But this was not the end, for "Groups of Moabite raiders used to invade the land each spring. Once when some Israelites were burying a man, they spied a band of these raiders. So they hastily threw the corpse into the tomb of Elisha and fled. But as soon as the body touched Elisha's bones, the dead man revived and jumped to his feet!" (2 Kings 13:20-21)

WHY DO YOU THINK THIS PERSON HAS BEEN INCLUDED IN GOD'S STORY?

- **God does not prevent problems and trials in our lives.** Elisha performed many miracles among the people who faced sickness, mortality, financial need and hunger. God used these opportunities to increase their faith and trust in him. They served as learning experiences and spiritual growth. We can be encouraged and understand that God is willing and able to help us (2 Corinthians 9:8). We can learn to come before him in time of need (John 14:12-15; Hebrews 4:14-16) and trust that he will meet our needs. Those who trust in God must live by faith and not by sight (2 Corinthians 5:7). We must pray for God's help and seek his Spirit as Elisha did.
- **God wants us to seek him first.** When Elijah asked him what he wanted before he left the earth, he asked for a double portion of his spirit. He did not ask for wealth or fame. This was no small thing according to Elijah. Elisha had the faith to ask God for great things (2 Kings 2:9). Because of this request, he received it and had the faith to do many miracles. He could not have performed them without his faith in God. Many of these miracles were physically and scientifically impossible. But Elisha





believed. Just as Jesus asks us to do, we must also seek first the Kingdom of God and He will give us everything we need.

- **God wants us to fear him and not men.** Elisha was not afraid of people. He was not even afraid of the army of Aram when they surrounded the city to capture him (2 Kings 6:8-23). The source of his courage was God. He knew that God was in control and that He was protecting him. He was aware that his life was in God's hands, so he was not afraid of people. Jesus said that we should fear God and not men who mock us for believing in him. When people mock us for believing in God, we must remember that God is with us (Matthew 10:28; 2 Timothy 1:7; Matthew 5:11).
- **God wants us to love everyone.** Elisha helped everyone who came to him for help. He helped the helpless. He helped those who could not pay back. He helped those who were rich too. "Pure and genuine religion in the sight of God the Father means caring for orphans and widows in their distress and refusing to let the world corrupt you." (James 1:27) Elisha was also willing to help people, even with small things. In one case, a man came to him because he had borrowed an axe from his neighbor and accidentally lost his head in the Jordan River. Elisha miraculously helped him to recover it (2 Kings 6:1-7).
- **God wants us to be loyal to our leaders.** Before Elisha was powerful, he learned to be loyal to Elijah (1 Kings 19:21, 2:2,4,6). He served him as soon as he was called to do so. He stayed with him until Elijah was taken up to heaven. He did not seek his own glory, but wholeheartedly followed the leader God had placed over him. He learned respect from Elijah (Romans 13:1; Titus 3:1; Matthew 18:15).

LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

Pose the following two questions to your children, one at a time. Allow for interaction and discussion, letting them share their thoughts while you guide the conversation.

- What life lessons can I learn from this Bible character about how I should and should not live?
- Based on what I have learned from this Bible character, how can I live in a way that is pleasing to God.

MORE IN GOD'S WORD

Challenge yourself to find five minutes each day for a week, to quiet your spirit, finding a spot where you are not distracted, and practice just listening to God and being in tune with Him. Take your Bible to that quiet place. Use some of that time to pray, and some time to just meditate on His Word. Keep your ears and your heart open to what God is wanting to say to you. It's not a matter if IF He wants to talk to you. He does want to speak. But, He also wants you to be ready and positioned for listening, so you can actually hear in your heart what He is saying. Then, respond in obedience with a heart that is open to what God would have you to do. God called Samuel three times. How many times is He calling you? The more you spend time in His presence, the less He will have to try calling you over and over again. Maybe you will hear His voice the very first time He calls!

