

TEXT 2 Kings 2:1-15

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES 2 Kings 4:1-7, 18-37; 6:1-7

OBJECTIVE The students will be able to explain that Elisha's gift of "a double portion" of the Spirit enabled him to lead a more triumphant life and also perform a greater number of miracles than any other prophet except Moses. They will recognize the importance of asking for a full measure of God's power upon their lives.

KEY VERSE FOR ANSWER I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me. — 2 Kings 2:9

KEY VERSE FOR SEARCH And he took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and smote the waters, and said, Where is the LORD God of Elijah? and when he also had smitten the waters, they parted hither and thither: and Elisha went over. — 2 Kings 2:14

**ANSWER
TITLE:** **God's Power**
**SEARCH
TITLE:** **Elisha**

REFERENCE INFORMATION

The first we hear of Elisha is when we read that God told the prophet Elijah to anoint Elisha, the son of Shaphat of Abelmeholah, to be prophet in his stead. Judging from the twelve yoke of oxen Elisha was plowing with when Elijah found him, he was probably from a wealthy family. But he bade his family goodbye and followed after the man of God. We are not told how long it was from this time until Elijah was translated, but in this interval, evidently Elisha was simply a servant of Elijah. Just before Elijah was taken into Heaven, Elisha asked for a double portion of his spirit.

Elisha was like Elijah in many ways. Both men parted the waters of the Jordan, brought moisture in times of drought,

increased a widow's supply of food, raised a boy from the dead, performed miracles for Gentiles, pronounced doom upon kings, and destroyed their enemies with supernatural power. But there were also differences in their characters. While, at times, Elijah fell under stress, Elisha had an attitude of triumph and confidence. He never seemed to complain or lose courage.

Elisha's first recorded miracle was to take Elijah's mantle and strike the River Jordan, and it parted for him as it had for Elijah. It is interesting to note that we have seven miracles recorded by the prophet Elijah and fourteen by Elisha, if we count the resurrection of the dead man, who revived when he was thrown into Elisha's sepulchre.

YOUR OPENER

Elisha

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KEY VERSE: And he took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and smote the waters, and said, Where is the LORD God of Elijah? and when he also had smitten the waters, they parted hither and thither: and Elisha went over. — 2 Kings 2:14

RESPONSES

1. He was industrious, laboring with his hands. It appears that Elisha was of a prosperous family, for he was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen. However, upon receiving God's call, he left everything behind and followed Elijah. He exhibited willingness in so doing. Bring out that each Christian has the call of God on his life. To be used of God, he must consecrate to follow Him wholly, just as Elisha did.

2. He was ministering to Elijah as his servant during this time. Discuss the fact that one must first be willing to do the small things that are not seen or heard about, before one can be spiritually qualified to do greater things. If you wish, use George Hughes' testimony in tract A5, "From a Mining Town to Far Countries," as another example.

3. Elisha was walking side by side with Elijah. The sons of the prophets were viewing from afar. Go to next question.

4. List the students' answers, such as doubt, fear, or loss of faith and trust with the danger of eventual backsliding. As your class discusses the dangers listed, mention the fact that Peter was following Jesus afar off prior to his denial of Him (Matthew 26:58). Elisha never would have received the power had he followed afar off.

5. The sons of the prophets and Elijah himself told Elisha to stay behind. In spite of this, Elisha purposed he would not leave Elijah but would follow him until he received the power. Another example of this type of perseverance is Jacob's telling the angel, in Genesis 32:26, that he would not let the angel go until he blessed him. Discuss with your students why it is necessary for us to have this same determination if we are to receive God's power in our lives.

God commissioned Elijah to anoint Elisha to be the prophet in his place. Elisha was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen when Elijah found him. The symbol of Elijah's authority was the mantle he wore. This he cast upon Elisha as he passed by him, fulfilling God's command. When Elijah was taken by God into Heaven, without dying, Elisha received his mantle and was God's prophet in Israel for many years.

1. What desirable attributes do we find exhibited by Elisha when Elijah cast his mantle upon him, showing God had chosen the right man? See 1 Kings 19:19-21.

2. We hear nothing more of Elisha for several years. What was he doing? Had he gone back home? See 1 Kings 19:21 and 2 Kings 3:11.

3. Explain the difference between the way Elijah was followed by Elisha and by the sons of the prophets, considering they all knew he was to be taken from them that day.

4. What are some of the dangers involved in following God afar off in our day?

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ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES

5. We find Elisha facing several discouragements, some from Elijah himself, in his quest for a double portion of the power that was manifested in Elijah's life. What were they, and how did he overcome them?

6. What similarities do we find in Elisha's receiving a double portion of Elijah's spirit, and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit recorded in Acts 2:4?

7. After Elisha received a double portion of Elijah's spirit, what were some of the results in his life?

8. What virtues does Elisha exhibit in many of the miracles he performed, including the four he performed in 2 Kings, chapters 4 and 5?

9. Although both Elijah and Elisha were prophets who were filled with the Spirit of God and who performed miracles, there were distinct differences in their personalities and life styles. Name some of these.

10. In 2 Kings 13:20,21, what is revealed regarding the power of Elisha and God's honoring him?

6. In both instances those seeking the blessing were in the center of God's will, they were in unity, they were asking for God's power, they were there when the power fell, and they used the power that was given to them. The sons of the prophets recognized that the spirit of Elijah rested on Elisha (2 Kings 2:15). The rulers of the people took knowledge that the Apostles had been with Jesus (Acts 4:13). Impress upon the students that the same requirements prevail today in order to receive the power of God on our lives, and we must use it when we receive it.

7. The double portion was evidenced by the performing of miracles, even to the raising of a dead child to life (2 Kings 4:35). Fourteen miracles by Elisha are recorded in Scripture—about double the number of recorded miracles performed by Elijah. Responses might also include his prophecies which came to pass.

8. He showed humility, love, concern, and compassion for others. Eight of the miracles he performed were for the help and encouragement of someone else. None were for his own personal gain. In the account of Naaman, Elisha refused the valuable gifts that were offered him. Explain to the students that these are virtues attainable by each of us, and we are encouraged to spread God's love to others in any way we can.

9. Elijah was an outspoken, rough, and fiery sort of man who lived in the wilderness and was considered an enemy by kings. At times he showed qualities of fear and despair. Elisha was a pleasant man, who associated with others and lived in a house, and was consulted by kings. Show that God can use all types and personalities, but only if we obey His Word and follow His will.

10. There was power even in his bones to raise a dead man to life. In Hebrews 11:4 we read that Abel, even being dead, yet speaketh. Mention some of the godly men and women who have died but left testimonies that are encouraging to others. Each one of us can live a life that others will take note of and remember, if we use the power God has given us, mixed with love and faith.

YOUR WRAP-UP

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

What did Elisha mean when he said, "let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me"?

How can we be like Elisha in our daily walk for the Lord?

What makes you think Elisha was both enthusiastic and determined to serve the Lord?

Why do you suppose the sons of the prophets didn't also follow Elijah?

What character traits did Elisha have that we, too, should develop?

What did the sons of the prophets have to say about Elisha when he came back across Jordan?

In what ways may God's Spirit be seen in the lives of Christians today?

Why did Elisha continue to follow Elijah even when Elijah told him to stay? What does this tell us about Elisha?

What work does God call us to do today? How can we be prepared as Elisha was?

In our ANSWER story, who is the storyteller?

THINGS TO DO

Help students list on a chalkboard things that Elijah did. Compare these to the double portion Elisha received and the things he did. Twice as much!

As Elijah was a good influence on Elisha, let the students know that they should seek to fellowship with those who will encourage them spiritually. Ask your students to name some people who have had a positive influence on their lives. How? Let each student plan a special way to say "Thank You" to someone who has encouraged him in a good way (card, letter, chore, etc.). Or, ask each stu-

dent to write (on a card you will provide) what the Lord could do for him and with him if he had a double portion of that person's spirit.

Draw a chart made up of fifteen boxes (more or less, depending upon the number of miracles chosen). Choose five of Elijah's miracles and ten of Elisha's (a double portion). Mix them up and write them on the chart, one per box. Have your students state which miracle was done by which man. (You can find a list of the miracles in the Thompson Chain Reference Bible.)

Answers for ANSWER

I Want More!

Wanting more of God's Spirit on your life is a good thing. This way God can help you do more for Him. Elisha is a good example for us to follow. Each sentence below contains a hidden word from our lesson. A list is given but the words are not in correct order. We have found the first word for you. Have fun!

Money was given to help Art Edwards buy a bike.
Judy finally found her lost cat on Circle Avenue.
I have a complete set of the presidents' pictures on stamps.
Mom said I have to finish all my homework before I can play ball.
I need to decide what stuff I really need and what I can throw away.
Tell Bill I've thrown his old shoes away.
I told her to add one cup of sugar but she added two.
At the airport, I once saw a military bomber.

FIRE
HEAD
SONS
LEAVE
SHALL
LIVETH
PARTED
PORTION

