

July 6–12: 2 Kings 2–7, “There is a Prophet in Israel”

Elisha Receives the Mantle

In last week's lesson, we learned that Elijah sought out Elisha to pass the mantle of the priesthood on to him.

1King 19:16,19-20

16 And Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel: and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room.

19 ¶ So he departed thence, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth: and Elijah passed by him, and cast his mantle upon him.

20 And he left the oxen, and ran after Elijah, and said, Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow thee. And he said unto him, Go back again: for what have I done to thee?

What do these verses teach us about Elisha and his character?

- He was wealthy (plowing with 12 yoke of oxen with 11 servants)
- He was willing to leave all his belongings to learn from Elijah (he left the oxen, and ran after Elijah)

The time has come for Elijah to be taken from the earth. After miraculously crossing the Jordan River, Elijah offers Elisha a final opportunity to ask for a blessing.

2King 2:5-10

5 And the sons of the prophets that were at Jericho came to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy master from thy head to day? And he answered, Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace.

6 And Elijah said unto him, Tarry, I pray thee, here; for the Lord hath sent me to Jordan. And he said, As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And they two went on.

7 And fifty men of the sons of the prophets went, and stood to view afar off: and they two stood by Jordan.

8 And Elijah took his mantle, and wrapped it together, and smote the waters, and they were divided hither and thither, so that they two went over on dry ground.

9 ¶ And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me.

10 And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing; nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so.

Why do you think Elisha valued spiritual gifts more than any other blessing Elijah might have offered?

Douglas L. Callister

"The true Church of Jesus Christ is filled with life. The voice, Spirit, and power of God are found in our worship services, or whenever the ordinances of the holy priesthood are administered.

"Elijah inquired of Elisha, 'Ask what I shall do for thee.' Elisha said, 'I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me.' He could not have asked for anything greater....

"With our confirmation as Church members, the door is opened for us to pursue this heavenly endowment. This should be an urgent and lifelong quest.

"As we become more conversant with the Holy Spirit, our lives become refined. The sordid and base have no attraction. It is developed spirituality which separates us from the secular world." (CR, Oct. 2000)

Why do you think Elijah considered Elisha's request for "a double portion of thy spirit" to be "a hard thing"?

-Despite all the power Elijah had received, this was beyond his ability to grant.

John Taylor

"Elisha, knowing that he had something to do and that he was about to be left alone, and that he might be the better prepared to perform the work before him, requested Elijah to let a double portion of his spirit rest upon him. But could Elijah grant his request? No, he could not." (JD 21:249)

What was significant about the sign Elisha would receive if his request were granted?

John Taylor

"[Elijah] knew that the Melchizedek Priesthood holds the keys of the mysteries and the revelations of God; and that if he could see him as he ascended, it would be an evidence to him that the Lord had granted his request, although he himself had not power to grant it, Elisha would then know that his prayer was heard." (JD 21:249)

Who were the "sons of the prophets" mentioned in verse 5?

James E. Talmage

"Samuel, who was established in the eyes of all Israel as a prophet of the Lord, organized the prophets into a society for common instruction and edification. He established schools for the prophets, where men were trained in things pertaining to holy offices; the students were generally called 'sons of the prophets' (1 Kings 20:35; 2 Kings 2:3, 5, 7; 4:1, 38; 9:1). The

members seem to have lived together as a society (2 Kings 6:1-4). In the present dispensation, a similar organization was effected under the direction of the prophet Joseph Smith; this also received the name of the School of the Prophets.” (Articles of Faith, pg. 444)

We will see that these sons of the prophets did not have the same priesthood authority or keys as Elijah and Elisha.

Elijah is taken into haven and Elisha receives the mantle of authority

2King 2:11-15

11 And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.

12 ¶ And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof. And he saw him no more: and he took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in two pieces.

13 He took up also the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and went back, and stood by the bank of Jordan;

14 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.

15 And when the sons of the prophets which were to view at Jericho saw him, they said, The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha. And they came to meet him, and bowed themselves to the ground before him.

How did the Lord confirm to Elisha that he had received Elijah’s mantle of authority?

(there appeared a chariot of fire.. and Elijah went up... into heaven
he took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and smote the waters
the sons of the prophets... said the spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha)

Why was it necessary for Elijah to be taken to heaven without tasting death?

Alma P. Burton

Because Christ was the first resurrected being, any prophet who had to perform earthly ordinances before his resurrection had to be preserved in the flesh. Thus, the Lord preserved Moses and Elijah in the flesh so they could confer the keys they held upon Peter, James, and John on the Mount of Transfiguration. ("Why was it necessary for Elijah to be taken into heaven," Ensign, Oct. 1973)

How does the passing of Elijah’s mantle to Elisha compare to the succession of prophets in the latter days?

Spencer W. Kimball

"Upon Elisha fell the mantle of Elijah.

"And likewise, the mantle of Joseph Smith fell on Brigham Young when seemed to be transformed before the people who seemed to hear the voice of Joseph and see the person of Joseph. This remarkable miracle was attested to by great numbers of people. The mantle of Joseph fell from Brigham to John Taylor, to Wilford Woodruff, to Lorenzo Snow, to Joseph F. Smith, to Heber J. Grant, to George Albert Smith, and to our Prophet today." (CR, Oct. 1966)

God's Power Through Elisha

Chapters 3 and 4 emphasize the Lord's power working through Elisha to provide for His people and preserve life:

- He provides water for the armies of Israel, Judah, and Edom, enabling them to defeat their enemies.
- He blesses a barren woman with a son.
- He raises a child from the dead.
- He multiplies a widow's small supply of oil, allowing her to pay her debts and provide for her sons.
- He feeds one hundred men with only twenty loaves of bread.

Elisha and Naaman

We also see this priesthood power demonstrated when Elisha heals Naaman of his leprosy.

2King 5:1-4

1 Now Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honourable, because by him the Lord had given deliverance unto Syria: he was also a mighty man in valour, but he was a leper.

2 And the Syrians had gone out by companies, and had brought away captive out of the land of Israel a little maid; and she waited on Naaman's wife

3 And she said unto her mistress, Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy.

4 And one went in, and told his lord, saying, Thus and thus said the maid that is of the land of Israel.

What do we learn about Naaman from these verses?

(captain of the host of the king of Syria [Not an Israelite]
honorable, because by him the Lord had given deliverance unto Syria
he was also a mighty man in valour
he was a leper)
-He was willing to harken to "little maid" taken from Israel

Susan H. Porter

“In the book of 2 Kings, we read of 'a little maid'.... She spoke two sentences with the power of God, testifying to Naaman’s wife: 'Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy.'

“Her words of faith were relayed to Naaman, who acted on her words, allowing him to be healed both physically and spiritually.

“We often focus on the servants who convinced Naaman to bathe in the river Jordan, as the prophet Elisha directed, but Naaman would not have even been at Elisha’s door without 'a little maid.'” (CR, April 2022)

Elisha’s response was not what Naaman had hoped for or expected.

2King 5:9-12

9 So Naaman came with his horses and with his chariot, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha.

10 And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean.

11 But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper.

12 Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage.

What about Elisha’s response offended Naaman and caused him to leave in a rage?

(I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand
call on the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place
Are not rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel)

Victor L. Brown

"Naaman being a man of high position was insulted that Elisha would send a messenger and not show him the respect of coming himself. In addition, the simple nature of the message offended him....

Naaman needed to have the faith of a child to be obedient as a child before his flesh became clean as a little child’s." (CR, April 1985)

One of Naaman’s servants gave him some wise advice.

2King 5:13-14

13 And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean?

14 Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the

saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.

Why did Naaman's servant say he should obey Elisha, even though the command seemed simple?

(if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it?)

Neal A. Maxwell

"Too many of the partially committed, like Naaman, wait for the Lord to bid them to 'do some great thing,' while declining His biddings in small things. When he was humbled and corrected, not only did Naaman's flesh become like that of a little child, but his heart also. Failure to serve the Master in small ways estranges us from Him." (CR, April 2001)

Ralph W. Hardy Jr.

"Latter-day Saints know, as a people, what the Lord's commandments are and, as never before, are able to hear them from apostles and prophets. We must listen to them. The commandments are relatively easy to understand and simple to follow if we are prepared to accept them with a childlike faith.

"Elisha did not ask Naaman to do 'some great thing.' What was required? To humble himself and do strictly as he had been commanded. We are required to do the same." ("Naaman and Gehazi", Ensign, Aug. 2002)

By exercising faith and obedience, Naaman gains a testimony.

2King 5:15-16

15 ¶ And he returned to the man of God, he and all his company, and came, and stood before him: and he said, Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel: now therefore, I pray thee, take a blessing of thy servant
16 But he said, As the Lord liveth, before whom I stand, I will receive none. And he urged him to take it; but he refused.

What does Naaman come to understand as a result of his experience?

(now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel)

Ralph W. Hardy Jr.

"The now humbled Naaman accepted his enlightened servants' advice and, in an act of great faith, chose to obey.... Returning to Elisha with his retinue of soldiers and servants, Naaman joined his testimony with that of the little Israelite maid: 'Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel.' With his physical leprosy gone, Naaman was also healed of his spiritual leprosy by an awakening of faith in the true God." ("Naaman and

Gehazi", Ensign, Aug. 2002)

M. Russell Ballard

"What a humbling thing it must have been for Naaman to realize how close he came to allowing his own pride and his unwillingness to listen to the counsel of the prophet to prevent him from receiving such a great, cleansing blessing. And what a humbling thing it is to contemplate how many of us might miss out on great and promised blessings because we do not listen and then do the relatively simple things our prophet is telling us to do today." (CR, April 2001)

What can we learn from Elisha refusing to "take a blessing" from Naaman?

John H. Vandenberg

"Naaman went back to the Prophet Elisha, filled with gratitude, and offered to pay him for making him whole. But Elisha knew it was by the power of God that Naaman was made well and declined the gift." (CR, Oct. 1964)

Naaman has a request and a question for Elisha

2King 5:17-19

17 And Naaman said, Shall there not then, I pray thee, be given to thy servant two mules' burden of earth? for thy servant will henceforth offer neither burnt offering nor sacrifice unto other gods, but unto the Lord.

18 In this thing the Lord pardon thy servant, that when my master goeth into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he leaneth on my hand, and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon: when I bow down myself in the house of Rimmon, the Lord pardon thy servant in this thing.

19 And he said unto him, Go in peace. So he departed from him a little way.

Why do you think Naaman wanted to take soil from Israel back to Syria?

(for thy servant will henceforth offer neither burnt offering nor sacrifice unto other gods, but unto the Lord)

-He wanted holy (untainted) ground to offer sacrifices.

What does this passage teach us about faithfully worshiping the Lord in a hostile environment?

(I bow down myself in the house of Rimmon
Go in peace)

-This demonstrates to me that the Lord judges us according to our sincere desire to worship Him faithfully.

Chariots of Fire Fight For Elisha

When the Syrian army surrounds Dothan, Elisha's servant fears they are trapped. Elisha then prays that his servant's eyes will be opened so he can understand why Elisha is not afraid.

2King 6:15-18

15 And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do?

16 And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them.

17 And Elisha prayed, and said, Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.

18 And when they came down to him, Elisha prayed unto the Lord, and said, Smite this people, I pray thee, with blindness. And he smote them with blindness according to the word of Elisha.

What did Elisha want his servant to see and understand?

(Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them)

Neal A. Maxwell

“The young lad didn’t, initially, see what the prophet saw, but that through the help and prayer of the prophet he was able to see; his eyes were opened too.

“There will be other times when we simply have to trust the prophet, for he will see things we do not see.” (“Teaching Opportunities from the Old Testament”, Ensign, Apr. 1981)

Michelle D. Craig

"There may be times when you, like the servant, find yourself struggling to see how God is working in your life—times when you feel under siege—when the trials of mortality bring you to your knees. Wait and trust in God and in His timing, because you can trust His heart with all of yours. But there is a second lesson here.... you too can pray for the Lord to open your eyes to see things you would not normally see." (CR, Oct. 2020)