

THE CALLING OF ELISHA. 1 KN. 19:19-21. 4/02/23. #53.

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<sup>19</sup> So he departed from there, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who *was* plowing *with* twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he was with the twelfth. Then Elijah passed by him and threw his mantle on him. <sup>20</sup> And he left the oxen and ran after Elijah, and said, "Please let me kiss my father and my mother, and *then* I will follow you." And he said to him, "Go back again, for what have I done to you?" <sup>21</sup> So *Elisha* turned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen and slaughtered them and boiled their flesh, using the oxen's equipment, and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he arose and followed Elijah, and became his servant.  
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1. God responds to Elijah

- a. After the great display of God's power on Mt. Carmel & the execution of Baal's prophets, Jezebel threatens Elijah's life

- a1. Elijah flees to Beersheba
- a2. Elijah travels to Mt. Horeb to complain

b. Elijah has 3 complaints

- a1. Israel has broken their covenant with God, destroyed his altars, & killed the prophets
- a2. Elijah believes that he is the only one left
- a3. They are trying to kill him

c. God responds in 3 ways:

- a1. Showing Elijah that he does not always work through fire, thunder, & wind; but with a whisper
- a2. God informs Elijah that there were 7,000 others who had not worshipped Baal
- a3. He gives Elijah tasks to perform (anointing of Elisha, Hazael, & Jehu)

d. God neither comforts nor explain to Elijah

- a1. God expects faith to conquer doubts
- a2. Trust in the storm is hard, but necessary

2. Elisha, a man of response

- a. Elijah throws his mantle on Elisha—God is salvation
 - a1. Symbol of passing the ministry to him

a2. Elisha is chosen to be Elijah's successor

b. Elisha immediately responds favorably

- a1. Elisha will become Elijah's apprentice
- a2. God always was chosen people to rise up to continue the work (Paul to Timothy, Peter to Mark, John to Clements...)

c. Several things we learn about Elisha here

- a1. He was faithful to God even though Elijah felt that he was the last one left
- a2. His heart was prepared to follow God
- a3. He probably recognized Elijah
- a4. He was a wealthy man (12 yoke of oxen is owned only by men of substance)
- a5. He was ready to respond to God's call

d. Elisha's request

- a1. Elisha requests to be allowed to say goodbye to his parents & then he would follow
- a2. Elijah tells him that he is not constraining him from doing so
 - b1. Elisha is a young man
 - b2. Elisha recognizes the call of God (it is important to seek & recognize the call of God – Mt. 7:7-8)

e. Elisha roasted a yoke of oxen for his servants, using the yoke, goad, & poles as firewood

- a1. After the farewell feast, Elisha left
- a2. Elisha turned his back on his prosperous life with his parents

3. A lonely road

- a. Elisha consciously left a comfortable life to follow God into an uncertain future
- b. Many of God's servants throughout the ages have shunned prosperity, acclaim, & acceptance to pursue a life of deprivation, loneliness, & ridicule in the service of God
- c. Elisha had to trust in the calling, God, & God's daily leading
- d. Unlike Moses, Jeremiah, Jonah, Elisha never seems to question God's plan & leading