

"The Life and Miracles of Elisha"

Part 6

Introduction: In our study of the life of Elisha tonight we have now come to his miracles. The first miracle in the life of Elisha was the parting of the waters of the Jordan River. This was a test for Elisha after the catching up of Elijah. It was to test his faith in the power of God. He had requested a double portion of Elijah's spirit and now that he possessed that double portion he was immediately tested with crossing the Jordan River. Elisha passed the test and the waters were parted. After Elisha crossed back through the Jordan River bed he then returned to the city of Jericho.

Notice 2 Kings 2:13-18

This now brings us to our text for tonight.

I. **Healing the Waters at Jericho**

Notice 2 Kings 2:19-22

I want us to look at several points as we consider the meaning of this miracle.

1. **The City of Jericho.**

Jericho was the first city of resistance as Israel entered the land of Canaan. It was the first victory which Israel witnessed as they followed the commands of the Lord. After the city was destroyed in Joshua 6 God gave a very important command pertaining to the city of Jericho.

Joshua 6:24-26

²⁴ *And they burnt the city with fire, and all that was therein: only the silver, and the gold, and the vessels of brass and of iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the LORD.*

²⁵ *And Joshua saved Rahab the harlot alive, and her father's household, and all that she had; and she dwelleth in Israel even unto this day; because she hid the messengers, which Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.*

²⁶ *And Joshua adjured them at that time, saying, Cursed be the man before the LORD, that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho:*

The city of Jericho was not to be rebuilt. But we know that it was rebuilt because we see that it existed in the days of Elisha.

1 Kings 16:33-34

³³ *And Ahab made a grove; and Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him.*

³⁴ **In his days did Hiel the Bethelite build Jericho:**

In the days of Ahab, the city was rebuilt and what we need to hold on to was that the city was under a curse because it had been built against the will of God.

2. **The Conditions of the City.**

Notice 2 Kings 2:19

The men of the city came to Elisha and proclaimed to him the conditions of the city.

Application:

There is something here that I believe is very important for us to see. These men gravitated to Elisha because of his reputation. They viewed him as a man of God who could offer something that no one else could offer.

The lesson for us here is that we should be living our lives in a way that will seek us out when they experience unsolvable problems within their lives.

1 Peter 3:8-15

⁸ *Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous:*

⁹ *Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.*

¹⁰ *For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile:*

¹¹ *Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it.*

¹² *For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.*

¹³ *And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?*

¹⁴ *But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled;*

¹⁵ But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:

The people we have contact with should be able to see Christ in us. This kind of lifestyle will cause others to gravitate toward you when their lives fall apart. They may not be interested in what you have to say while all is well in their lives but when it all falls apart they will be seeking answers, and this gives us an opportunity to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Now let us get back to the conditions of the city.

Notice 2 Kings 2:19 again.

The city was "pleasant" which means its location and its appearance was very attractive. This is possibly why Hiel decided to rebuild the city. But the problem in the city was the water was "naught". The meaning of "naught" is "evil or wicked". The ground was barren and so life in the city was very difficult. The water of the city brought death.

If Jericho existed today it would be a place that we would drive by and we would desire to live there. It would look beautiful. The scenery would be spectacular, and the houses would be clean, and everything would look just right. But as we would get closer we would see there was barrenness. The flowers would not bloom, the trees would not bear fruit, and gardens would not produce. There would be fruit on the trees and on the plants, but it would die and rot before it ever reached the proper ripeness.

This city can not only represent a place, but it can also represent a person. This would be an individual that looked like they had it altogether. They have a beautiful home, they have a wonderful family, they have a good job, and from a distance they look like the pattern that most would want for themselves. But a closer examination would show us that their life proved to be very empty. There is no satisfaction and no fulfillment. They have lots of "STUFF" but they are not satisfied. The reason they have no satisfaction is because like the city of Jericho they are under the curse.

Genesis 3:16-19

¹⁶ Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

¹⁷ And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;

¹⁸ *Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field;*

¹⁹ *In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.*

With the curse that our world is under comes pain, sorrow, tears, monotony with whatever we do and death. No matter what a person possesses they still experience the curse. It is only Christ who can bring lasting satisfaction.

3. The Miracle and the Means.

Notice 2 Kings 2:20-22

Elisha had the men bring to him a new cruse and he put salt within the cruse and he then poured the salt in the springs of waters and the waters were healed. Now it was not the salt that healed the waters, but it was the Lord who healed the waters. From that time forth there would be no more death or barrenness. In other words, the fruit would live until it became ripe. There would now be fulfillment within the city. The waters now brought life.

4. The Meaning of the Miracle.

Now, let me just say that God could have performed this miracle without the cruse and the salt. Elisha could have just prayed, and God could have used his prayer and healed the waters but instead he chooses to use the cruse and the salt. The question then is "Why?"

God did this for you and me. There is a picture within this miracle that God desires for us to see and the picture pertains to our lives as believers.

To see the meaning we need to consider the condition of the city again. The city and its condition are a picture of the unsaved world around us. The world is under the curse and so people are striving to find satisfaction in the things of the world only to find it is all emptiness. The world is living the experiment that Solomon recorded. Not the conclusion of Solomon's attempt to find satisfaction in what the world has to offer.

Ecclesiastes 2:9-11

⁹ *So I was great, and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem: also my wisdom remained with me.*

¹⁰ **And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them, I withheld not my heart from any joy: for my heart rejoiced in all my labour: and this was my portion of all my labour.**

¹¹ *Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do: and, behold, all was **vanity and vexation of spirit**, and there was no profit under the sun.*

This is where the world is today. They are feeding upon what the world has to offer and their lives may look good with all the "STUFF" they have gathered but their lives are empty. They have no LIFE (spiritual).

There is yet another point we need to see that was recorded earlier.

Notice 2 Kings 2:17

The strong men who were with the prophets sought Elijah for THREE DAYS and then they returned. It is after the THREE-DAY search that the miracle takes place. I believe the miracle took place on the THIRD DAY. In the Bible the THIRD DAY points to the resurrection for Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead on the THIRD DAY.

This is a picture of how the miracle takes place in the power of the THIRD DAY or the resurrection power.

Now let us consider the cruse and the salt. The word for "cruse" means "jar or pot". The cruse also had to be NEW which means it was clean. The cruse is a picture of the born-again believer for we too are clay pots/jars. Notice what Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians.

2 Corinthians 4:7

⁷ *But we have this treasure in **earthen vessels**, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.*

The salt in the cruse represents the effects we as believers have in this world.

Matthew 5:13

¹³ ***Ye are the salt of the earth**: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.*

Let me show you some of the ways that salt is a picture of the believer's life.

- a. **Salt is pure.**

Germs cannot live in salt. In the same way we as believers are to live pure, uncontaminated lives.

Romans 12:1-2

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

² ***And be not conformed to this world:*** but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

b. **Salt purifies.**

Salt fights off bacteria and keeps meat from spoiling. When Jesus told His disciples, they were the "salt" of the earth He was speaking of their responsibility to stand amid the world and proclaim the Truth of God's Word. As they carried out this responsibility they would be as "salt" for it would be through their labors in studying the Word and teaching the Word that the body of Christ would be kept free from contamination and the unsaved would be impacted.

Today we are called to be the salt of the earth and do the same thing. Our stand for the Truth has an impact upon the lives of others.

c. **Salt produces a thirst.**

We all know what salt can do when it is used in our food. It will make us very thirsty. The picture here is that we as believers are to live our lives in a way that it makes others thirsty for the "Living Water".

1 Peter 2:12

¹² *Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, **they may by your good works**, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.*

d. **Salt can dissolve in water, but its quality still remains.**

You can place salt crystals in a glass of water and they dissolve but the quality of the salt is still there for the water becomes salty. We as believers must be in the world but at the same time we must remain separated so as not to lose our witness. We are at all times to live our lives in a way that the unsaved world will thirst after the Living Water.

e. **Salt can be exposed to extreme heat and will never lose its quality.**

If you place salt in water, it seems to disappear but if tasted it is still there. If you then place that pan of water on high heat and boil it completely dry you will find that while the water has evaporated the salt will be in the bottom of the pan and will still taste salty.

In the same way you and I as believers are called to endure the heat of persecution and through it all we are never to lose our flavor (testimony).

Let me pull this altogether. When we walk in the power of the resurrection and we step into the lives of those who are searching for satisfaction then God uses us to help others to see Jesus Christ and possibly come to Him for salvation. That is the way God performs miracles today. We are clay pots and we must remain clean if we are going to be used by God.

Conclusion:

Let me end with an illustration of what salt can do.