

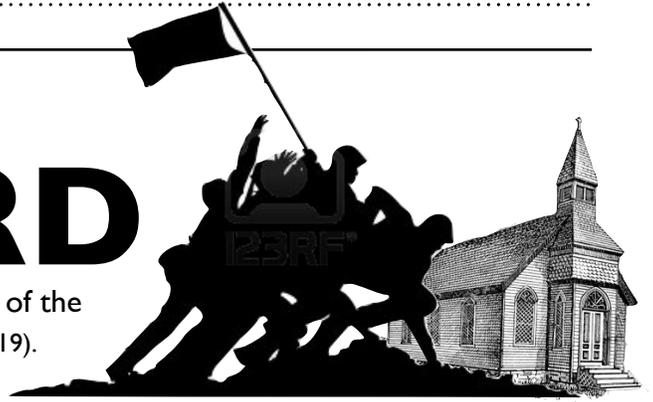


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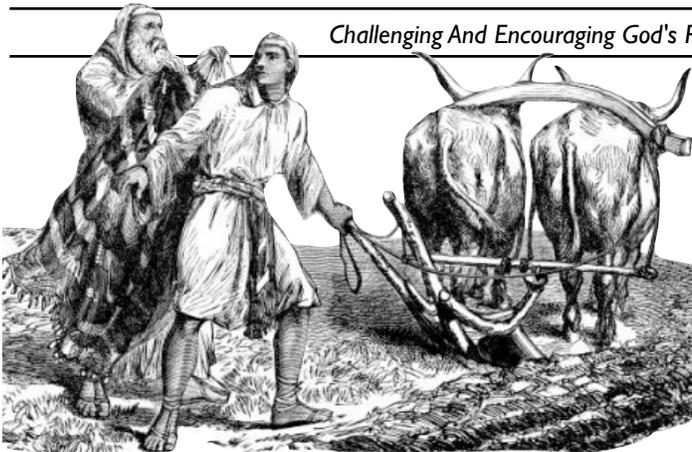
Lifting Up The STANDARD

"When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him" (Isaiah 59:19).



Challenging And Encouraging God's Remnant To Remain Faithful

Issue 19 - May 12, 2014



"And Elisha"

"And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me."

(Second Kings 2:9)

One word would describe the condition in Israel at the time of Second Kings, and that word would be "apostasy;" however, during the same period we find the phrase "**and Elisha**" twenty times.

It started out as just another day for him, then coming over the horizon Elisha saw a man approaching. He walked on the field and we read in First Kings 19:19 "Elijah 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." From that moment life for Elisha would never be the same.

First Kings 19:20,21,

"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? And he returned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen, and slew them, and boiled their flesh with the instruments of the oxen, and gave unto the people, and they did eat. Then he arose, and went after Elijah, and ministered unto him."

Elijah "cast the mantle" upon Elisha and then he simply walked on. There was no coaxing Elisha. It was time for him to choose what he would do. This was the first of many life-changing choices he would need to make in the service of the Lord.

Choice Number One

Would he be talked out of following Elijah? Elijah said, "Go back again: for what have I done to thee?"

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If Elisha knew he was called of God nothing would stop him. Israel had been plagued with false prophets. In Jeremiah 23:21 God declared, *“I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied.”*

Elisha made his decision public. He broke up the plow that was made out of wood, he made a fire with it he, sacrificed the oxen, and publicly declared that he was about to follow Elijah. Keep in mind that prophets were very unpopular in Israel at that time, and Ahab and Jezebel were especially interested in the death of Elijah.

Elisha left his number one position on a very well-to-do farm and became known as the servant that *“poured water on the hands of Elijah”* (Second Kings 3:11). He left the comforts, the security of the farm, he left his friends and the fellowship of his parents to serve the Lord. Elisha then became involved in a ten year training program with Elijah.

Elisha’s Final Tests Before Taking Over

Second Kings 2”1-5,

“I And it came to pass, when the LORD would take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal.

2 And Elijah said unto Elisha, Tarry here, I pray thee; for the LORD hath sent me to Bethel. And Elisha said unto him, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they went down to Bethel.

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

4 And Elijah said unto him, Elisha, tarry here, I pray thee; for the LORD hath sent me to Jericho. And he said, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they came to Jericho.

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.”

Passing The Test At Gilgal

After ten years of traveling together they arrived at Gilgal and Elijah suggested to Elisha that he remain there while he traveled on to Bethel. Gilgal was a very special place. It was where the children of Israel first camped after crossing the Jordan. It was here the reproach of Egypt was rolled away.

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The She Bears And The Children



The bears did not attack “little children.” Be sure and see our upcoming article concerning the fact that it was adults that mocked Elisha and it was adults who the bears attacked.

“The Sons of The Prophets”

The phrase *“the sons of the prophets”* occurs nine times in the Word of God. **They are always mentioned in a negative light.**

A Double Portion??? **“Asked A Hard Thing”**

Elijah was not telling Elisha it would be hard for him (Elijah) to do this. He was saying if you get a double portion of my power you will double the persecution as well. Think it over carefully Elisha, when you take up that mantle you take up the persecution with it. Perhaps this is why so few want to really take up their God-given mantle today.

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Joshua 5:9,

“And the LORD said unto Joshua, This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you. Wherefore the name of the place is called Gilgal.”

Things changed at Gilgal. It was there that God’s people came to Samuel and said they wanted to do things like the world did things. It was at Gilgal they demanded a king.

First Samuel 8:19,

“The people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay; but we will have a king over us.”

First Samuel 8:7,

“And the LORD said unto Samuel...they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.”

“The Sons of The Prophets”

The “sons of the prophets” are mentioned nine times in First and Second Kings. Nothing good is recorded about them although several negative things are found. When Elijah and Elisha arrived at Gilgal the first time they determined there was a “death in the pot.” The students had “found a wild vine, and gathered thereof wild gourds” (Second Kings 4:39). They were recorded as “sitting” except when they were gathering “wild gourds from a wild vine.” Elisha had no problem passing this test when Elijah suggested that he “tarry here.” Elisha wanted nothing to do with these compromising “sons of the prophets.”

Passing The Test At Bethel And Jordan

“So they went down to Bethel.”

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

4 And Elijah said unto him, Elisha, tarry here, I pray thee; for the LORD hath sent me to Jericho. And he said, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they came to Jericho.

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.

Bethel



Bethel means “House of God” Over the years it had become so wicked that Hosea changed the name to “Bethaven” which means “House of Vanity.”

Hosea 10:5,

“The inhabitants of Samaria shall fear because of the calves of Bethaven: for the people thereof shall mourn over it...the glory thereof...is departed from it.”



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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.

The first thing we learn about Bethel is there are more “sons of the prophets.” They ask Elisha if he knew “that the LORD will take away thy master from thy head to day? And he said, Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace.” These students felt they had more perception of what was happening than Elisha had. The phrase “knowest thou” has been translated “perceive” eighteen times. He simply told them to keep quiet.

Things had changed at Bethel. It once was referred to the house of God.

In First Kings 12 we read “they forsook the counsel of the old men and accepted “the counsel of the young men” (v.13,14). Bethel, “the house of God” had become a hotbed of apostasy. Jeroboam had set up a golden calf at Bethel (First Kings 12:28-30). We read he “made priests of the lowest of the people” (v.31). Elisha wanted nothing to do with these compromisers at Bethel. so we read “they two went on”

Passing The Test At Jericho

Second Kings 2:4-6,

4 So they came to Jericho.

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.

Another school at Jericho, and once again Elisha was confronted with the “sons of the prophets.” Once again Elisha was questioned about his perception concerning spiritual things. Jericho was the first place of opposition against the advancement of God’s people after they crossed the Jordan, which is a symbol of death to self. It is no surprise that at Jericho, the sons of the prophets stood “to view.” and they “stood afar off” (v.7).

Elisha wanted nothing to do with these compromisers. And so we read “they two stood by Jordan...they two went over.”

In our next issue we will follow Elijah and Elisha across the Jordan.

The Jordan River

During the flood stage, when Elijah and Elisha passed through the Jordan, it swelled to more than double it’s normal size.

Normally it was 180 feet wide. In the spring it went to more that 360 feet wide.

The Jordan drops 600 feet over a distance of sixty-five miles causing twenty-seven very aggressive rapids. The current rose from four MPH to ten MPH in the spring.

The river travels through a ravine that measures 200 to 300 yards wide and fifty to one hundred and fifty yards high.

My wife and I have had the privilege of standing in the spot where our guide told us they would have crossed. She pointed to an obvious high water mark on the rocks of the cliff that she said would have been the height of the river in the springtime. It was two-thirds up the ravine.

We read “they two stood by Jordan...they two went over.”

Elisha And Elijah

*“They two stood by Jordan”
(Second Kings 2:7)*

Sons of The Prophets

*“Stood to view afar off”
(Second Kings 2:7)*