



Elisha

*“Taking up the mantle :
A transition of power”*

WEEK THREE - GROWING IN GOD'S CALLING

Reading: 2 Kings 3

In last week's study we looked briefly at verse 11 of this chapter in relation to Elisha's time of preparation for his calling. Remember that Elijah had been involved with King Ahab, constantly admonishing, and trying to get him and the people of Israel to turn back to God. Now we see Elisha becoming the prophet on whom kings called for God's direction, usually relating to battles.

It was clear that Elisha was recognised as the anointed successor to Elijah, having given evidence of the transition of God's power when he took up Elijah's mantle and struck the waters of the Jordan and they opened for him to cross. The first occasion on which Elisha was summoned to meet with kings was an unusual one in that it involved the two kings, Jehoram king of Israel and Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and the king of Edom. The Edomites were the descendants of Esau, son of Isaac, who sold his inheritance to his younger brother Jacob, for food (Genesis 25). The word Edom means 'red', the colour of Esau's hair. The country was situated in what is now southwestern Jordan, between the Dead Sea and the Gulf of Aqaba.

The two kings of the divided kingdoms of Israel and Judah were uneasy allies and to include Edom would not have been an easy decision. However, they had a common enemy, Moab. The relationship between Israel and Moab had for centuries, been complex. They worshipped different Gods, but their history was intertwined. For example, Ruth, was a Moabite who on leaving her country with her mother-in-law, declared that Naomi's God, Jehovah, would be her God. (Ruth 1:16)

The battle between the allied armies and Edom was going very badly. They found themselves deep in the desert and without any water. At that point they decided to call on Elisha.

- Do we get into situations from which we try to extricate ourselves but fail to do so? Why is it that we tend to try and sort things out ourselves and only turn to God when that doesn't work?

Read verses 10-15

Elisha is very dismissive of the request telling them he wanted no part of this situation, but King Joram of Israel said it was the Lord who had called them. The NLT says: *"I want no part of you, Elisha said to the king of Israel ... As surely as the Lord Almighty lives, whom I serve, I would not bother with you except for my respect for King Jehoshaphat of Judah. Now bring me someone who can play the harp."*

It was whilst he was listening that the power of the Lord came upon Elisha.

Read verses 16-20

- What was the promise God gave them through Elisha?
- Can you think of other instances of God performing such a miracle? (Look at: Judges 6:11-22, Exodus 14:21-23, Exodus 17:4-6, Joshua 6)
- Is there a lesson in this for us?
- Do we give time and opportunity for God to speak to us?
- Elisha was developing his ministry and moving in God's calling. How do we discern God's call on our lives?
- What might prevent us from moving forward in our Christian walk?

Prayer

Thank you that you have called each one of us to serve and work for you. Help us to understand your direction for our lives and may we be willing to follow where you lead us.

