



NG Study Guide: 2Kings 2:12-24 “The Double Portion Life” [Pt. 2] [9.13.20]

Love God + know the Bible better:

1. Read the passage cited above, and try to answer the questions below before your group meets. 2. *Leader note: Please review the brief instructions for leaders at the bottom.*

The Study

Thesis: Elisha is the prophet of grace. He is used by God primarily to display God’s grace to man.

In contrast, Elijah’s ministry primarily foretold God’s coming judgment. Here we will consider of Elisha’s miracles that minister to people.

Context: There were no miracles performed by Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, or Isaiah.

There are very few people in the Bible who performed miracles, and they are generally clustered to signal transitions in God’s dealings with man. Moses and Aaron signal the transition to the law, Jesus and the Apostles the transition to grace, and the Two Witnesses of Revelation 11 signal the transition to the Kingdom Age. Elijah and Elisha are signaling the last chance for God’s people to repent before God’s judgement by Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome. Both Elijah and Elisha were prophets to the Northern Kingdom of Israel where Samaria was the capital.

¹² And Elisha saw it, and he cried out, “My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and its horsemen!” So he saw him no more. And he took hold of his own clothes and tore them into two pieces. ¹³ He also took up the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and went back and stood by the bank of the Jordan. ¹⁴ Then he took the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and struck the water, and said, “Where is the LORD God of Elijah?” And when he also had struck the water, it was divided this way and that; and Elisha crossed over.

1. The parting of the Jordan River [2Ki. 2:12-18]

Elisha’s first miracle was Elijah’s last, the parting of the water. Elisha was grieving the loss of Elijah who had been taken up by God in the whirlwind [12]. It is appropriate to grieve loss, and there is also a time to get to God’s work. Elisha took Elijah’s mantle and returned to the Jordan River [13]. Crossing the Jordan is symbolically a place of new beginning. Consider, Joshua and God’s people [Josh. 3], and Jesus’ baptism [Matt. 3]. Elisha asks where is God? [14]. He has associated God’s power with Elijah and the mantle, but will discover God is still on His throne. It is God’s power, not Elijah nor the mantle. Sometimes, the work that God does through a leader can cause God’s people to rely on a leader rather than rely on God and be used by God. It wasn’t until the passing of good king Uzziah that Isaiah saw the Lord seated on His throne [Is. 6:1].

- A. The First Miracle that Elisha performed, was the last miracle that Elijah performed because we learn from those who disciple us. (Luke 6:40)
- B. God demonstrates His power through Elisha.
 - 1. The power to part the Jordan did not lie in Elijah himself, but in God. God has now demonstrated to Elisha that it is HIS power at work in Elisha.

- C. Elisha is now crossing back over the Jordan in obedience, to minister to those God has called him to minister to.

He's going back *changed*. He's returning to the people that God has called him to love and minister to, but he's going back *changed*. Living the double portion life requires living actively on mission, or in active obedience to what God is calling you to do. How selfish would it have been if Elisha receives the mantle from Elijah as a representation of the passing of God's anointing, and Elisha simply keeps to himself and ignores what God is calling him to do. That wouldn't make any sense to stifle what God is doing in His life. Many of us have been drafted by God, we have been extended an offer to live the double portioned life, to receive the inheritance of God, but it's so much easier to stay on the sidelines. God didn't save you to sit on the sidelines. Elisha is a perfect example of someone who has not only received God's anointing, but was willing to live his life on mission and do what God is calling him to do. He's going back to his people.

We see this same idea illustrated by Jesus in Matthew 25 where we see the parable of the talents. There is a wealthy man going on a trip and he gives 3 men, 10 talents, 5 talents, and 1 talent. When he returns the one who was given 10 now has 20. The one who was given 5 now has 10, and the one who was given 1, had buried it in the ground and still only had 1 talent when the master returned. He was then rebuked, saying "You wicked and lazy servant." And I would love to sugar coat it and stay, so go out and live on mission doing what God is calling you to do, but if you don't you'll just be rebuked with a slap on the wrist, but I can't. Because Jesus goes on to say, "30 And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." You guys, this is serious. We have work to do. We've been saved for a purpose. And again, Elisha is a perfect example of someone who is not only received God's anointing, but was willing to live his life on mission and do what God was calling him to do.

Are you willing to:

- Go where God wants you to go?
- Do what God wants you to do?
- Use our time in the ways that God wants you to use it?
- Use your resources in the ways that God wants you to use them?
- Listen to His still quiet voice, and be obedient to the mission that He is calling you to do?

Verses 15-18 - Elisha is obedient in delivering God's message despite the other prophets desires.

¹⁵ Now when the sons of the prophets who were from^[u] Jericho saw him, they said, "The spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha." And they came to meet him, and bowed to the ground before him. ¹⁶ Then they said to him, "Look now, there are fifty strong men with your servants. Please let them go and search for your master, lest perhaps the Spirit of the LORD has taken him up and cast him upon some mountain or into some valley." And he said, "You shall not send anyone."¹⁷ But when they urged him till he was ashamed, he said, "Send *them!*" Therefore they sent fifty men, and they searched for three days but did not find him. ¹⁸ And when they came back to him, for he had stayed in Jericho, he said to them, "Did I not say to you, 'Do not go?'"

In order to live our lives on mission, we have to understand what the mission is. These prophets were men of God. They were godly men, and yet they were still stubborn and wanted to do things their own way, without listening to what God was telling them through Elisha. How often are we stubborn in our lives and do things the way that we want to do them?

2. The healing of water at Jericho [2Ki. 2:19-22]

¹⁹ Then the men of the city said to Elisha, "Please notice, the situation of this city is pleasant, as my lord sees; but the water is bad, and the ground barren." ²⁰ And he said, "Bring me a new bowl, and put salt in it." So they brought it to him. ²¹ Then he went out to the source of the water, and cast in the salt there, and said, "Thus says the LORD: 'I have healed this water; from it there shall be no more death or barrenness.'" ²² So the water remains healed to this day, according to the word of Elisha which he spoke.

Jericho was pleasant in Elisha's day but the water was bad, and there was no good water to irrigate crops [19]. Elisha calls for a bowl of salt, and throws it in at the source. Elisha declares that God has healed the waters, and now they will bring forth life [20-21]. The waters were restored and continued to produce good, life-giving streams just as Elisha foretold [22]. The miracle of healing the water is counter-intuitive, as are many of God's ways. God is demonstrating His power through Elisha. He is doing something that can only be accomplished by supernatural power. Not through human cunning to understanding. He did the same thing Elijah and the prophets of Baal. Elijah poured water on the sacrifice that he was trying to burn. It makes no sense, except that Elijah, and here Elisha were both being obedient to what God was calling them to do. James observes that salt water kills and fresh gives life [Ja. 3]. However, salt is a symbol of God's power working [Num. 18:19]. Salt purifies and preserves. God's people are to be the salt of the earth, but if we are diluted or impure we lose our influence for God and for doing good [Matt. 5:12-13].

Like Elisha, God is calling each of us to bring healing salt to a world that needs healing. Are you willing to live your life on mission? Are you willing to be obedient to what God is calling you to do? Are you willing to get off the sidelines and play in the game? The world needs to see God's power demonstrated through you!

3. The curse of the bears [2Ki. 23-24]

²³Then he went up from there to Bethel; and as he was going up the road, some youths came from the city and mocked him, and said to him, "Go up, you baldhead! Go up, you baldhead!" ²⁴So he turned around and looked at them, and pronounced a curse on them in the name of the LORD. And two female bears came out of the woods and mauled forty-two of the youths.

There is a stark contrast between how these men and the prophets of Jericho respond to God's representative. These men mocked him, while the others bowed down in reverence. By extension, these men mocked God, and He deserves our full awe, respect, fear, and honor.

We serve a God who is the creator of all things, He has the power to speak the world into creation. He is seated on His throne forever with angels around Him singing holy, holy, holy. Elisha is God's anointed prophet, He is God's representative on earth, a representation of God himself. And we serve a God who deserves our utmost respect, fear, awe, and honor. And even though our God is THAT holy, by His grace He allows us to know him, and enter into His presence. What a privilege! And his desire is to use us to fulfill His mission. But if we truly fear God, if we are truly in awe of Him, we will live our lives in obedience to him, carrying out the mission that He has called us to, just like Elisha.

Study Guide Qs

Q1. Who are the major "teachers" in your life? (Anyone you allow to have influence. Authors, authorities, friends, pastors, etc.) Are they helping you become more like Jesus?

Q2. Do you have clarity on what mission God is specifically calling you to? How can you get off the sidelines and live out that mission?

Q3. How do we find the balance of fearing God as our King and loving him as our Savior and Father?

"Digging Deeper" (optional or alternative study)

Here is an additional resource to help with studying this passage:

https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/archives/guzik_david/StudyGuide_2Ki/2Ki_2.cfm

Love your neighbor *outside* the group better:

1. Who would like to share how they sought to befriend or build relationship with their neighbors where they live, work, study, or play this past week?
2. Are there some needs that can provide us an opportunity to love our neighbor outside the group?
3. Here is a neighboring idea(s) for us to consider for the week(s) ahead:

Go out of your way to seek out and have a “non surface level” conversation. Ask for a way to be praying for them.

Love your neighbor *inside* the group better:

1. Are there some needs in our group that can provide us an opportunity to love our neighbor within the group? 2. What might we do about that need to help?

Prayer [Loving God and Neighbors better]:

Close the NG meeting with a time of group prayer. Encourage each participant to pray, but don't force anyone to pray. Encourage the group to keep their prayers brief so that each person can pray.

Leader Notes:

- 1. Seek to involve as many group participants as possible.** A good group discussion time allows people to get to know the passage and one another better.
- 2. Feel free to pre-select the discussion questions that you want to focus on** in case there isn't enough time to answer them all.
- 3. The “Digging Deeper” section provides some optional or alternative study and discussion activities.** As a group leader, you can choose to focus on the “Digging Deeper” section, include part of that section in your group meeting, or not use it at all. Try to give the group sufficient notice so they can be prepared for the meeting.
- 4. Every time you meet consider asking:**
 - a. What about this passage is particularly exciting, challenging, or confusing?** If a leader is uncertain about a question of doctrine or theology don't hesitate to follow-up with your coach during the week. Then revisit the issue(s) when the group gathers next time.