

# 2 Kings 02 - Annals of Israel: The Rapture of Elijah; Miracles of Elijah and Elisha

II. The divided kingdom from the North-South division until the Assyrian invasion (1 Kings 12:1—2 Kings 17:41)

(13) Israel during Elisha's Ministry (2 Kings 2:1—8:15)

(A) Elijah's rapture and Elisha receives the double portion (2:1-18)

(B) Elisha purifies the water and curses the disrespectful youths (2:19-25)

## 2 Kings 2

(13) Israel during Elisha's Ministry (2 Kings 2:1—8:15)

(A) Elijah's rapture and Elisha receives the double portion (2:1-18)

1 Now it came about, when the LORD was about to bring Elijah up by a whirlwind to heaven, that Elijah left Gilgal with Elisha.

1 And it came about when the LORD was about to take up Elijah by a whirlwind to heaven, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal.

1 As the time drew near when the LORD was about to take Elijah to heaven in a wind storm, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal.

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

- Departing from Gilgal in Israel, Elijah and his younger fellow prophet Elisha headed for Bethel on a mission from God

— This Gilgal may be the one between Jericho and the Jordan, or it may have been one about a few miles north of Bethel, since Elijah and Elisha went down to Bethel (v2)

2 And Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here please, for the LORD has sent me as far as Bethel." But Elisha said, "As *surely* as the LORD lives and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So they went down to Bethel.

2 Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here please, for the LORD has sent me as far as Bethel." But Elisha said, "As the LORD lives and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So they went down to Bethel.

2 Elijah instructed Elisha, "Remain here on this side, please, because the LORD is sending me as far as Bethel."

But Elisha replied, "As the LORD lives, I'm not going to leave you while you're still alive!" So they both went on to Bethel.

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.

- By granting Elisha permission to remain behind, Elijah was testing Elisha's commitment to himself and to his calling as Elijah's successor (Cf. Matt. 4:1-11; Luke 22:31-62; John 21:15-25)

— In spite of the exhortation, Elisha declared that he would go with Elijah, who was now to visit the three schools of the prophets to strengthen them against inroads of Baal worship

— The existence of these schools indicates that the prophets were organized into a type of guild

- Elisha had learned somehow (perhaps from Elijah himself) that this would be Elijah's last day on earth

— Determined to be with his father in the faith until the very end, Elisha refused Elijah's suggestion that he remain comfortably in Gilgal

— A dying person often pronounced blessings on others (Cf. Gen 49) and Elisha did not want to miss out on this opportunity to receive God's blessings on his life and ministry

3 Then the sons of the prophets who *were at* Bethel went out to Elisha and said to him, "Are you aware that the LORD will take away **your master** from over you today?" And he said, "Yes, I am aware; **say nothing about it.**"

3 Then the sons of the prophets who *were at* Bethel came out to Elisha and said to him, "Do you know that the LORD will take away your master from over you today?" And he said, "Yes, I know; be still."

3 When the Guild of Prophets who lived in Bethel came out to greet Elisha, they asked him, "You are aware, aren't you, that later today the LORD is going to remove your master from being your mentor?"

"Of course I'm aware of it," he said. "Calm down."

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.

- This account presupposes previous revelation, not in Scripture, that this day was to be Elijah's last day on earth

— Some prophets of the LORD living at Bethel also knew of Elijah's imminent departure, and told Elisha

— These groups or schools of the prophets had been established to teach the Israelites the revealed Word of God

- "...your master" - Elijah was Elisha's master in the sense of his being the younger prophet's mentor

- "...say nothing *about it*" - would seem to mean, "Do not add to my sorrow at this prospect by reminding me of it."

4 And Elijah said to him, "Elisha, please stay here, for the LORD has sent me to Jericho." But he said, "As *surely* as the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So they came to Jericho.

4 Elijah said to him, "Elisha, please stay here, for the LORD has sent me to Jericho." But he said, "As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So they came to Jericho.

4 Elijah also spoke to him, "Elisha, remain here on this side, please, because the LORD is sending me to Jericho."

But Elisha responded, "As the LORD lives, and while you're still alive, I'm not going to leave you!" So they went to Jericho.

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.

- Testing Elisha's commitment again, Elijah suggested that Elisha stay in Bethel rather than accompanying him to his next stop, Jericho

— Elisha showed his zeal by refusing to leave Elijah

— Elisha will not leave Elijah because he knows that Elijah is going to leave the earth that day. Elisha wants to be present when the Lord takes him home.

5 Then the sons of the prophets who *were* at Jericho approached Elisha and said to him, "Do you know that the LORD will take away your master from over you today?" And he answered, "Yes, I know; say nothing *about it*."

5 The sons of the prophets who *were* at Jericho approached Elisha and said to him, "Do you know that the LORD will take away your master from over you today?" And he answered, "Yes, I know; be still."

5 The Guild of Prophets who lived in Jericho approached Elisha and asked him, "You are aware, aren't you, that later today the LORD is going to remove your master from being your mentor?"

Of course I'm aware of it," he said. "Calm down."

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.

- The interesting thing is that people, then as well as today, were turning to all kinds of people and places for information

— In that day fortunetellers and those who deal with the zodiac and the occult are handing out many suggestions. People are turning everywhere except to God.

— You won't get any information from these areas that you cannot get from God. The sons of the prophets had information that Elijah was going to leave, but Elisha already knew it. They could not tell him anything new.

6 And Elijah said to him, "Please stay here, for the LORD has sent me to the Jordan." But he said, "As *surely* as the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So the two of them went on.

6 Then Elijah said to him, "Please stay here, for the LORD has sent me to the Jordan." And he said, "As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So the two of them went on.

6 Elijah also spoke to him, "Elisha, remain here on this side, please, because the LORD is sending me to the Jordan River."

But Elisha responded, "As the LORD lives, and while you're still alive, I'm not going to leave you!" So they went on their way,

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.

7 Now fifty men of the sons of the prophets went and stood opposite *them* at a distance, while the two of them stood by the Jordan.

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7 accompanied by 50 men from the Guild of Prophets, who stood at a short distance from them while they were both standing by the Jordan.

7 And fifty men of the sons of the prophets went, and stood to view afar off: and they two stood by Jordan.

8 And Elijah took his **coat**, folded it, and struck the waters, and they were divided here and there, so that the two of them crossed over on dry ground.

8 Elijah took his mantle and folded it together and struck the waters, and they were divided here and there, so that the two of them crossed over on dry ground.

8 Elijah took off his ornamented cloak, wrapped it up in a roll, struck the water, and all of a sudden the water divided into two parts! One side of the river stood still opposite the other until the two of them crossed over on dry ground.

8 And Elijah took his mantle, and wrapped it together, and smote the waters, and they were divided hither and thither, so that they two went over on dry ground.

- "...coat" - the symbol of Elijah's authority as God's spokesman (Cf. 1 Kings 19:19)
- As Moses parted the Red Sea with his staff, Elijah parted the Jordan River with his coat (Cf. Ex 14:21-22)
- Elijah tested Elisha a third time, and Elisha again refused to put his own comfort ahead of the possibility of receiving a special blessing from God. So they went toward the Jordan River.
- As the day wore on 50 of the young prophets from Jericho, realizing that Elijah's departure was imminent, followed at a distance to observe what would happen to him
- The Lord had parted the River Jordan for Joshua and the people of Israel at least five hundred years before this; now He repeats the miracle for Elijah and Elisha (Cf. Ex 14:16,21-22) (his is one of many similarities between the ministries of Moses and Elijah)
- Elisha was reminded that the same God with the same power was still alive and active in Israel

9 When they had crossed over, Elijah said to Elisha, "Ask *me* what I should do for you before I am taken from you." And Elisha said, "Please let a **double portion** of your spirit be upon me."

9 When they had crossed over, Elijah said to Elisha, "Ask what I shall do for you before I am taken from you." And Elisha said, "Please, let a double portion of your spirit be upon me."

9 When they had crossed the Jordan River, Elijah invited Elisha, "Ask me what you want me to do for you before I'm taken away from you."

So Elisha asked, "Please, may there be a double portion of your spirit upon me!"

9 And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me.

- "...double portion" - Elisha's request was the privilege of God's richest blessing on his life, which customarily went to the first born (Cf. 1 Kings 3:3-9)

— This wasn't a request for twice as much Holy Spirit, or for a ministry twice as great as that of Elijah, but to be heir to the prophetic office and gifts of Elijah; to have the same attitude that enabled Elijah to touch lives so deeply.

— Elisha wanted *spiritual* rather than *material* blessing. He was not asking to be twice as popular as Elijah or to perform twice as many miracles. Elisha was asking to be the successor of Elijah and to be privileged to carry on his ministry under God.

10 He said, "You have asked a hard thing. *Nevertheless*, if you see me when I am taken from you, it shall be so for you; but if not, it shall not be so."

10 He said, "You have asked a hard thing. *Nevertheless*, if you see me when I am taken from you, it shall be so for you; but if not, it shall not be so."

10 "That's a hard thing to ask for," Elijah answered, "but if you see me while I'm being taken from you, it will happen for you. But if you don't see me, it won't happen."

**10** And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing: nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so.

- It would be a hard thing for Elijah to guarantee this double portion, since blessing with His Spirit was God's prerogative

— The sign that God would grant it would be Elisha's actually seeing Elijah being taken from him. This was not a condition for Elisha to receive the double portion but the evidence that he would.

### **Elijah's Miracles**

- (1) Stops the rains (1 Kings 17:1)
- (2) Multiplies a widow's food (1 Kings 17:14)
- (3) Restores the widow's son to life (1 Kings 17:21)
- (4) Calls down fire on Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18:38)
- (5) Restores rain to the land (1 Kings 18:41)
- (6) Calls down fire on soldiers (2 Kings 1:12)
- (7) Divides waters of the Jordan (2 Kings 2:8)

### **Elisha's Miracles**

- (1) Jordan River parted (2 Kings 2:14)
- (2) Jericho spring water purified (2 Kings 2:21)
- (3) Cursing jeering young men (2 Kings 2:24)
- (4) Filling ditches with water and winning a battle (2 Kings 3:15-26)**
- (5) Multiplying a widow's oil (2 Kings 4:1-7)
- (6) Promising a pregnancy (2 Kings 4:14-17)
- (7) Raising a Shunammite's son from the dead (2 Kings 4:32-37)
- (8) Making poison harmless (2 Kings 4:38-41)
- (9) Multiplying loaves (2 Kings 4:42-44)
- (10) Healing Naaman the leper (2 Kings 5:1-19); cursing Gehazi with leprosy (2 Kings 5:19,27)
- (11) Making an axhead float (2 Kings 6:1-6)
- (12) Blinding and trapping an Aramean army (2 Kings 6:8-23)
- (13) Showing his servant an angel army (2 Kings 6:15-17)
- (14) Predicting an excess of food for besieged Samaria (2 Kings 6:24—7:20)

11 And as they were walking along and talking, behold, a chariot of fire *appeared* with horses of fire, and they separated the two of them. Then Elijah went up by a whirlwind to

heaven.

11 As they were going along and talking, behold, *there appeared* a chariot of fire and horses of fire which separated the two of them. And Elijah went up by a whirlwind to heaven.

11 As they continued on, talking as they went, suddenly chariots blazing with fire and pulled by fiery horses appeared, separated the two of them, and Elijah ascended in a wind storm to heaven!

11 And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.

- Suddenly a fast-approaching chariot and horses of fire, symbolizing God's powerful heavenly army (Cf. Is 31:1; 34:8-9; Ex 14:9,17; 1 Kings 10:29; Ps 104:3-4), separated Elijah from Elisha

— This display of the instruments of spiritual warfare separated the two prophets and apparently could have frightened Elisha into running away and losing his desired blessing

— Elijah went up in the whirlwind in the presence of the Lord, not in the chariot (Cf. Mal 4:5-6; Matt 11:14)

— God was saying in this event that His power was far greater than any military might. It was this power that Elijah had demonstrated and which Elisha in his wisdom valued so highly (Cf. Ex 14:9,17; 1 Kings 10:29; Ps 104:3-4; Is 31:1).

— Like the pillar of cloud that led the Israelites in the wilderness (Ex 13:21), it represented God's presence. This is a spectacular conclusion of a spectacular life!

Elijah had thought he was indispensable to God at one point (1 Kings 19:10,14), but God had told him that He would remove him and work through others (1 Kings 19:11-18). Elijah's translation to heaven was a blessing for him since he entered heaven without dying.

12 And Elisha was watching *it* and he was crying out, "My father, my father, **the chariot of Israel and its horsemen!**" And he did not see Elijah again. Then he took hold of his own clothes and tore them in two pieces.

12 Elisha saw *it* and cried out, "My father, my father, the chariots of Israel and its horsemen!" And he saw Elijah no more. Then he took hold of his own clothes and tore them in two pieces.

12 As Elisha continued to watch, he cried out, "My father! My father! The chariots of Israel and its cavalry!" Then he did not see Elijah anymore.

After this, Elisha gripped his clothes that he was wearing, tore them apart into two pieces,

**12** And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof. And he saw him no more: and he took hold of his own clothes, and rent

them in two pieces.

- God swept Elijah off the face of the earth into His presence. And Elisha saw the event.

— Elijah had been Elisha's spiritual father, his predecessor in the ministry of calling people back to God

- "...the chariot of Israel and its horsemen" - Elisha probably meant that Elijah's prophetic powers and spiritual depth were the nation's true strength. He regarded Elijah as a powerful instrument whom God had used to wage war against the idolatry in Israel.

- Elisha tore his own clothes as an act of mourning (Cf. Gen 37:29,34; 44:13; Joshua 7:6; Esther 4:1; Job 1:20; 2:12) over the loss of this great spiritual warrior

13 He also took up the coat of Elijah that had fallen from him, and he went back and stood by the bank of the Jordan.

13 He also took up the mantle of Elijah that fell from him and returned and stood by the bank of the Jordan.

13 picked up Elijah's ornamented cloak that had fallen from him, and went back to stand on the bank of the Jordan River.

13 He took up also the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and went back, and stood by the bank of Jordan;

- From then on Elisha would wear Elijah's cloak and would serve with the authority and power it symbolized

14 Then he took the coat of Elijah that had fallen from him and struck the waters, and said, **"Where is the LORD, the God of Elijah?"** And when he also had struck the waters, they were divided here and there; and Elisha crossed over.

14 He took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him and struck the waters and said, "Where is the LORD, the God of Elijah?" And when he also had struck the waters, they were divided here and there; and Elisha crossed over.

14 Elisha took hold of Elijah's ornamental cloak that had been left behind, struck the water, and cried out: "Where is the LORD God of Elijah?" All of a sudden, after he had struck the water, the water divided into two parts! One side of the river stood opposite the other, and Elisha crossed over.

14 And he took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and smote the waters, and said, Where is the LORD God of Elijah? and when he also had smitten the waters, they parted hither and thither: and Elisha went over.

- "...Where is the LORD, the God of Elijah?" - Elisha was calling out to *Yahweh* to demonstrate His power through him as He had done through Elijah

Parallels with the story of Israel's entrance into the Promised Land suggest that the writer wanted his readers to connect Elijah with Moses and Elisha with Joshua. Even the meanings of their names is similar: "Elisha" meaning "God saves" and "Joshua" meaning "Yahweh saves."

**15** Now when the sons of the prophets who *were* at Jericho opposite *him* saw him, they said, "The spirit of Elijah has settled on Elisha." And they came to meet him and bowed down to the ground before him.

**15** Now when the sons of the prophets who *were* at Jericho opposite *him* saw him, they said, "The spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha." And they came to meet him and bowed themselves to the ground before him.

**15** As soon as the Guild of Prophets who lived adjacent to Jericho saw Elisha, they began to announce, "The spirit of Elijah is at rest on Elisha!" So they came out to meet him and they greeted him by bowing low to the ground in front of him.

**15** And when the sons of the prophets which were to view at Jericho saw him, they said, The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha. And they came to meet him, and bowed themselves to the ground before him.

- The same Spirit that had empowered Elijah now rested on Elisha

— Had Elijah still be alive on the earth, Elisha could not have exercised authority as his successor

— The 50 prophets from Jericho (Cf. v7), observing the whirlwind and the parting of the Jordan both times, concluded that Elijah's spiritual gifts had been passed on to Elisha. Out of respect for his special calling they bowed before him.

**16** Then they said to him, "Behold now, there are with your servants fifty strong men; please let them go and search for your master, in case the Spirit of the LORD has taken him up and cast him on some mountain or into some valley." But he said, "You shall not send *anyone*."

**16** They said to him, "Behold now, there are with your servants fifty strong men, please let them go and search for your master; perhaps the Spirit of the LORD has taken him up and cast him on some mountain or into some valley." And he said, "You shall not send."

**16** Then they asked Elisha, "Look! We have 50 valiant men here with your servant! Please let them go out and search for your master Elijah. Perhaps the Spirit of the LORD has taken him up on a mountain or into a valley."

Elisha responded, "Don't bother searching."

**16** And they said unto him, Behold now, there be with thy servants fifty strong men; let them go, we pray thee, and seek thy master: lest peradventure the Spirit of the LORD hath taken him up, and cast him upon some mountain, or into some valley. And he said, Ye shall not send.

- The 50 prophets did not realize that Elijah had been taken into the presence of God and had not returned to the earth, so they requested permission to send out search parties to locate him

— They, like Obadiah, thought he might have been transported by the Spirit of the LORD (Cf. 1 Kings 18:12), perhaps to some remote mountain or valley

— Knowing their search would be futile, Elisha tried to dissuade them but they insisted. In order to avoid appearing heartless, Elisha finally gave them permission.

17 Yet when they urged him until he was ashamed *to refuse*, he said, "Send *them*." So they sent fifty men; and they searched for three days, but did not find him.

17 But when they urged him until he was ashamed, he said, "Send." They sent therefore fifty men; and they searched three days but did not find him.

17 But they persisted until he was frustrated, so he said, "Send them out!" So they sent out the 50 men, and they looked around for three days but did not find Elijah.

**17** And when they urged him till he was ashamed, he said, Send. They sent therefore fifty men; and they sought three days, but found him not.

18 They returned to him while he was staying in Jericho; and he said to them, "Did I not say to you, 'Do not go'?"

18 They returned to him while he was staying at Jericho; and he said to them, "Did I not say to you, 'Do not go'?"

18 By the time they returned, Elisha<sup>18</sup> was living in Jericho. Then Elisha asked them, "Didn't I tell you not to go?"

18 And when they came again to him, (for he tarried at Jericho,) he said unto them, Did I not say unto you, Go not?

(B) Elisha purifies the water and curses the disrespectful youths (2:19-25)

**19** Then the men of the city said to Elisha, "Behold now, the site of the city is pleasant, as my lord sees; but the water is bad and the land is unfruitful."

**19** Then the men of the city said to Elisha, "Behold now, the situation of this city is pleasant, as my lord sees; but the water is bad and the land is unfruitful."

**19** The men who lived in the city addressed Elisha. "Look now," they said, "our city's location is good, as you have been observing, but the water springs here are bad and the land isn't sustaining crops."

**19** And the men of the city said unto Elisha, Behold, I pray thee, the situation of this city is pleasant, as my lord seeth: but the water is naught, and the ground barren.

- The physical condition of the town was symbolic of the spiritual condition of the nation

— Apparently word about him had spread for now all the citizens of the city knew of Elisha's power. The leading men came to him with a practical problem that gave him opportunity to demonstrate the Lord's desire and ability to bless the people.

— Jericho had many natural advantages since it was located in a fertile area of the Jordan Valley. But the water from a major spring had turned bad, perhaps brackish, and when used for irrigation it killed the crops rather than nourishing them.

20 And he said, "Bring me a **new jar**, and put **salt** in it." So they brought *it* to him.

20 He said, "Bring me a new jar, and put salt in it." So they brought *it* to him.

20 Elisha ordered them, "Bring me a new bowl and put some salt in it." So they brought him what he had requested.

**20** And he said, Bring me a new cruse, and put salt therein. And they brought it to him.

- "...new jar" - the new jar represented Elisha, the new instrument in God's hand

- "...salt" - known by the Israelites to preserve and purify; it was used in each of their daily grain offerings to the Lord (Cf. Lev 2:13)

— But adding salt to water normally makes water worse, not better, but when the salt was put into the Jericho water the situation miraculously improved

— This miracle showed the people of Jericho that the Lord, not Baal, the so-called god of fertility, could heal their barrenness

21 Then he went out to the spring of water and threw salt in it and said, "This is what the LORD says: 'I have purified these waters; there shall not come from there death or unfruitfulness any longer.'"

21 He went out to the spring of water and threw salt in it and said, "Thus says the LORD, 'I have purified these waters; there shall not be from there death or unfruitfulness any longer.'"

21 Elisha went out to the springs, threw the salt into them, and declared, "This is what the LORD says: 'I have purified these waters. Neither death nor barrenness is to flow from them anymore.'"

21 And he went forth unto the spring of the waters, and cast the salt in there, and said, Thus saith the LORD, I have healed these waters; there shall not be from thence any more death or barren land.

22 So the waters have been purified to this day, in accordance with the word of Elisha which he spoke.

22 So the waters have been purified to this day, according to the word of Elisha which he spoke.

22 As a result, the water springs remain pure to this day, just as Elisha had declared.

22 So the waters were healed unto this day, according to the saying of Elisha which he spake.

- God's permanent work on the spring would serve as a perpetual reminder of His ability to bring fruitfulness and blessing out of the barrenness and sterility caused by idolatry

— This was Elisha's his second miracle. Today you can see these waters in the valley at Jericho.

### **Elisha Rebukes Some Mockers**

**23** Now he went up from there to **Bethel**; and as he was going up by the road, *some young boys* came out from the city and ridiculed him and said to him, "**Go up, you bald head; go up, you bald head!**"

**23** Then he went up from there to Bethel; and as he was going up by the way, young lads came out from the city and mocked him and said to him, "Go up, you baldhead; go up, you baldhead!"

**23** Later, Elisha left there to go up to Bethel, and as he was traveling along the road, some insignificant young men came from the city and started mocking him. They told him, "Get on up, baldy! Get on up, baldy!"

**23** And he went up from thence unto Bethel: and as he was going up by the way, there came forth little children out of the city, and mocked him, and said unto him, Go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head.

- "...Bethel" - the center of idolatry in Israel; one of the sites of the golden calf

- "...young boys" - *na'ar* or *nahar* in Hebrew. It is used of Isaac when he was 28, of Joseph when he was 39, also for the Sodomites who attacked the home of Lot.

— You will find it used in other places in Scripture; it does not refer to little children as we think of them

— When Samuel came to anoint as king one of the sons of Jesse, you will remember that his sons were grown. As they passed by Samuel one by one, he said to Jesse, "Are these all thy children?" Well, the word "children" is the same word used in 2 Kings 2:23. It is used to describe Jesse's grown sons.

— Both Solomon (1 Kings 3:7) and Jeremiah (Jer 1:6-7) are called *na'ar* (singular). These were young adults, with moral responsibility.

— These young men were typical of a nation that "mocked the messengers of God, despised His words, and scoffed at His prophets" (2 Chr 36:16)

- "...Go up" - basically they were telling Elisha to "disappear" like Elijah did

— They were implying that if Elisha were a great prophet like Elijah was, he should go to heaven like Elijah did

- "...bald head" [2x] - an epithet; may have been a form of scorn, for baldness was undesirable (Cf. Is 3:17,24). Since it was customary for men to cover their heads, the

young men probably could not tell if Elisha was bald or not. They regarded God's prophet with contempt.

24 When he looked behind him and saw them, he cursed them in the name of the LORD. Then two female bears came out of the woods and tore up forty-two of the boys.

24 When he looked behind him and saw them, he cursed them in the name of the LORD. Then two female bears came out of the woods and tore up forty-two lads of their number.

24 He looked behind him, took note of the young men, and cursed them in the name of the LORD. Suddenly two female bears emerged from the woods and mauled 42 of the young men.

**24** And he turned back, and looked on them, and cursed them in the name of the LORD. And there came forth two she bears out of the wood, and tare forty and two children of them.

- Elisha pronounced a curse upon the hecklers because of their disrespect for the LORD as reflected by their treatment of His spokesman (Cf. 2 Peter 3:3-7)

— Again God used wild animals to execute His judgment (Cf. 1 Kings 13:24). That 42 men were mauled by the two bears suggests that a mass demonstration had been organized against God and Elisha.

— One of the covenant warnings was that God would send wild beasts to attack the people (Cf. Lev 26:21-22)

— After the bears did their work, nobody else around Bethel ridiculed Elisha

These early miracles identified Elisha as God's spokesman who possessed Yahweh's power to bless or to curse. They set the tone of Elisha's whole ministry. He would be a source of blessing to the needy, but he would be a source of judgment to those who did not fear Yahweh.

25 He then went on from there to Mount Carmel, and from there he returned to Samaria.

25 He went from there to Mount Carmel, and from there he returned to Samaria.

25 After this, he left from there to go to Mt. Carmel, and from there he went back to Samaria.

**25** And he went from thence to mount Carmel, and from thence he returned to Samaria.

- Elisha then journeyed on from Bethel to Mount Carmel...

— There among other activities he undoubtedly reviewed God's mighty vindication of Himself through his mentor, Elijah (1 Kings 18:19-46). Elisha's ministry would continue what Elijah had begun (1 Kings 19:16).

- From Mount Carmel Elisha returned to Samaria. This city, capital of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, was to be the site of many of Elisha's mighty deeds.

- These early miracles in Elisha's ministry identified him as a unique spokesman for God with the authority and power of Elijah, one worthy of the greatest respect as a representative of the living God.