

The Double Portion

1 Kings 19:16, 19-21 + 2 Kings 2:8-25

¹⁶“Also you shall anoint Jehu the son of Nimshi as king over Israel. And Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel Meholah you shall anoint as prophet in your place.”

¹⁹So he departed from there, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he was with the twelfth. Then Elijah passed by him and threw his mantle on him. ²⁰And he left the oxen and ran after Elijah, and said, “Please let me kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow you.”

And he said to him, “Go back again, for what have I done to you?”

²¹So Elisha turned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen and slaughtered them and boiled their flesh, using the oxen’s equipment, and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he arose and followed Elijah, and became his servant.

—1 Kings 19:16, 19–21

⁸Now Elijah took his mantle, rolled it up, and struck the water; and it was divided this way and that, so that the two of them crossed over on dry ground. ⁹And so it was, when they had crossed over, that Elijah said to Elisha, “Ask! What may I do for you, before I am taken away from you?” Elisha said, “Please let a double portion of your spirit be upon me.”

¹⁰So 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.” ¹¹Then it happened, as they continued on and talked, that suddenly a chariot of fire appeared with horses of fire, and separated the two of them; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. ¹²And 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. ¹³He also took up the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and went back and stood by the bank of the Jordan. ¹⁴Then 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. ¹⁵Now when the sons of the prophets who were from 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. ¹⁶Then 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." ¹⁷But 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. ¹⁸And 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?'"

¹⁹Then 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."

²⁰And he said, "Bring me a new bowl, and put salt in it." So they brought it to him. ²¹Then 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.'" ²²So the water remains healed to this day, according to the word of Elisha which he spoke.

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

—2 Kings 2:8–25

Read 1 Kings 19:16, 19–21 and 2 Kings 2:8–25

Most of us have read or heard about a great work of God in the past. Such wondrous reports often make us wonder, *Will He do it again?* Perhaps this was the question that pressed most upon the heart of Elisha. No doubt he had heard of or even witnessed the anointing on Elijah's life. As Elijah's successor, could Elisha expect the same power, anointing, and experience? When Elisha approached the Jordan River alone, he raised the mantle that had fallen from Elijah and struck the water and asked, *Where is the LORD God of Elijah?* At this gesture, the Jordan River parted for Elisha just as it had for the prophet Elijah.

What is to be our response to the great reports of what God has done? It is to pray, seek God's anointing, and step out boldly in faith. We have the mantle of God's abiding presence in our lives. The same anointing and power that previous generations received from God is available to us. *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever* (Hebrews 13:8). It is not about the person or the prophet, but about the Lord God of Elijah, Elisha, and us. God wants to work powerfully through each one of us if we will only make Him the supreme Lord God of our lives!

As you read 1 Kings 19:16, 19–21 and 2 Kings 2:8–25, consider these two distinct aspects of Elisha's new ministry:

- How intimidating taking on the role of Elijah would have been
- God's faithful confirmation of His newly appointed prophet

1. What did God disclose to Elijah concerning Elisha?
1 Kings 19:16

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

God gave the discouraged and depressed prophet a friend and a successor. Elijah needed a friend; the core of his complaint before God was that he was alone. Elijah also needed hope, and since Elisha would be raised up as a successor to Elijah's prophetic office, Elijah then knew that his work would continue even after his death.¹

—David Guzik

**FOOD
FOR THOUGHT**

A mantle was most likely made from the skin of an animal or some coarse material and functioned as a coat.

**FOOD
FOR THOUGHT**

The *Sons of the Prophets* were not sons or prophets, per se, but they were probably a cultural community formed to worship and seek the Lord during dark and pagan times.

2. Answer the following questions from 1 Kings 19:19:
 - a. What was Elisha doing when Elijah *passed by him*?

 - b. In what unusual and unique way did Elijah call Elisha?
 - 1) How does this minister to you about God's call on your life?

3. Use 1 Kings 19:20–21 to note and comment on Elisha's:
 - a. Response

 - b. Request

 - c. Sacrifice

 - d. Service
 - 1) What do you find most intriguing about Elisha's call?

4. From 2 Kings 2:11, describe what Elisha saw.
- a. How was this an answer to and verification of his request to Elijah? 2 Kings 2:9–10
5. Use 2 Kings 2:12–14 to comment on Elisha's response to Elijah's departure:
- a. Verse 12
- b. Verse 13
- c. Verse 14
6. Summarize the interaction of Elisha with:
- a. The Sons of the Prophets (verses 15–18)
- b. The men of the city (verses 19–22)
- c. The youths (verses 23–24)

**FOOD
FOR THOUGHT**

Elisha must have had a considerable estate, when he kept twelve yoke of oxen to till the ground. If, therefore, he obeyed the prophetic call, he did it to considerable secular loss.²

—David Guzik

**FOOD
FOR THOUGHT**

By asking to receive a double-portion of Elijah's spirit, Elisha was essentially asking to be his heir and successor according to the law of Moses (see Deuteronomy 21:17).

"It was a noble request. He was evidentially called to succeed Elijah's work, but he felt that he dare not undertake its responsibilities or face its inevitable perils, unless he were specially equipped with spiritual power."³

—F. B. Meyer

