

“Elisha: The Double-Portion Prophet”

Who's the Boss? – A series on the Kings

2 Kings 2-8

Introduction: Take your Bible turn to 2 Kings 2, 2 Kings chapter 2.

We have before us this morning the life and ministry of Elisha the prophet. What we know about this prophet is scattered throughout 1-2 Kings. But there is a concentration of focus on his life in 2 Kings 2-8. I think this is done on purpose by the author of the book of 2 Kings to make an overarching point to his readers. That overarching point is that God sends grace and judgment, but always grace before judgment. I am going to warn you at the beginning that we are going to cover a lot of ground and it may feel a bit like a hot dog eating contest where we see how many events we can devour in the next 30-40 minutes, but the rabid pace will have a purpose. This does mean however, that we will not be pulling every truth and principle out of every text, and I will also be forced to make statements of conclusion about some texts that we won't have the time to develop. But I risk those things this morning because I am convinced there is a great lesson in the big picture of Elisha's life. And this God-glorifying lesson is that God sends grace and judgment, but always grace before judgment.

You see, in chapter 1 we began the downward descent by the nations of Israel and Judah into national judgment by Yahweh God in the form of exile in other lands. You will remember that the nation of Israel was God's chosen people. He had made a covenant with them and they with Him, that he would be their God and they would be his people. They were to dwell in the Promised Land and live according to His commands and display His great glory to the pagan and pluralistic nations around them. But by the time of their second king they had infused singular worship of Yahweh with the toleration of other gods being worshiped. Eventually 10 of the tribes split off and formed a rival kingdom which only served to propagate the idolatrous ways where the worship of Yahweh was one option among many. So along the way God had sent men who speak for Him and who bring about miraculous acts of God that prove that Yahweh God is the only true God. But, despite the clear words and testimony of these prophets of God, the nation of Israel continued its steady march into the judgment of God. God had promised that if they did not keep their side of the covenant stipulations that he would deal with them in just and severe ways. So, the life of Elijah, and his protégé Elisha, come right in the middle of this descent. By chapter 17 of 2 Kings the nation of Israel will be overthrown by the nation of Assyria and God's people will be under the curse of the covenant that they refused to heed. They will be in exile because of their vast sins of rebellion and disbelief. But before they reach that judgment of overthrow and exile, they will be given grace upon grace. This grace, and this judgment, will come through the ministry of Elisha in the book of 2 Kings. In fact, chapters 2-8 are a concentrated and focused account of these acts of grace and eventual judgment upon the nation of Israel to make the point that God sends grace before He sends judgment.

Now, the account of the life and ministry of Elisha started back in 1 Kings 19. There we read about how Elijah had fled to the wilderness after the great victory on Mt. Carmel. He had been agent of a dramatic display of Yahweh God's power, and yet the people, and especially the leaders of the nation did not singularly worship Yahweh. This sent Elijah on an intense journey to the Mount of Horeb to pour out his official complaint to the God of the covenant people. In response to Elijah's justified argument against his own people for their covenantal disobedience, God spoke and told Elijah what to do. He was to anoint Hazael to be king over Syria, and Jehu to be king over Israel, and Elisha to be the prophet in Elijah's place and these men were going to be used by God as instruments of judgment upon the nation of Israel, and in particular on the house of Ahab. But then God also gave Elijah a promise that he would leave a remnant of 7000 faithful in Israel who have not bowed to Baal. So, Elijah is to continue to minister as the prophet of God in a nation that is on a downward spiral at the hands of evil leadership who refuses to acknowledge the one true God. But in the midst of all of

this, God is raising up men to bring the judgment that is deserved and to rescue a remnant from the people. And the primary man through whom this will happen will prove to be Elisha. In fact, Elijah leaves Mt. Horeb and went and found Elisha and put his cloak on him which was a symbolic anointing of Elisha as the next prophet. You remember that Elisha then asks permission to go back to make an official and permanent break with his former life through the sacrificing of the team of oxen and boiling their meat by burning the yoke that used to hold them together. The whole family then feasted on steak that night as an official farewell dinner because Elisha's commitment to his life as a servant of Elijah was a complete commitment. He was officially severing his old ties, and so Elisha faithfully served at the side of Elijah until that fateful day in 2 Kings 2. They both knew it was coming, and so did all of the other sons of the prophets. Elisha continues to show his unending commitment to the work of the Lord through Elijah in that he will not leave his side even though Elijah urges him to. So much so, that chariots of fire and horses had to separate the two men and Elijah was carried into heaven. Right before Elijah is ushered immediately into the presence of God he asks Elisha what he can do for him before he is taken up. Elisha gives his answer in verse 9 where he says, "Please let there be a double portion of your spirit on me."

As you read further in the text you realize that this request is answered as Elisha does in fact see Elijah taken from him by chariots of fire and horses. Elisha then tears his own clothes into two pieces out of the distress and sorrow of losing Elijah. In verse 14 he takes the cloak of Elijah and strikes the Jordan and asks a pertinent question – "Where is the Lord, the God of Elijah?" Essentially what Elisha is asking here is, Is the God of Elijah my God too and does his power rest on me, or did his powerful work depart with Elijah. Well, the parted waters tell the story. God's powerful work is not limited to a man, but continues on even after a man's ministry is done. In verse 15 the sons of the prophets see this display of power in the parted Jordan and they declare that the spirit of Elijah does indeed rest on Elisha. In other words, God is with him just like he was with Elijah. This is then proven as the sons of the prophets want to send out a search party for Elijah just in case the chariots of fire had a hole in the bottom and Elijah accidentally dropped out onto some mountain somewhere, but Elisha assures them that they won't find Elijah anywhere. They send out the party anyways, and return a few days later only to fess up that Elisha was indeed right. He was right because he was God's primary prophet now.

God had taken Elijah, but his powerful working still remained and it now rested upon Elisha. At the end of chapter 2 there are two accounts given that set up the rest of the narrative about Elisha. These two incidents come right after Elisha is confirmed as God's prophet and they come right before a string of prolific events of God's work through Elisha. In verse 19 we read this – *Read 2:19-22.*

Apparently there was something deadly wrong with the water in Jericho – which is no surprise since the city had been cursed since the walls collapsed in the days of Joshua. But now the problem is that the water is causing physical death. So, Elisha uses physical symbols to heal the water. He asks for a new bowl full of salt and the salt gets thrown into the water and the water is healed so that it no longer causes death. This is not some magic show or sleight of hand, but rather this is God giving his people a tangible and physical thing to remember the day that Elisha cured the water at Jericho. What is more important is that this healing of the water was an act of grace. The city had been accursed since the walls were destroyed in the conquest, but you remember that Ahab requested that Hiel rebuild the city, and according to the word of the Lord, both Hiel's oldest and youngest sons died because of this. It is not a far leap then to assume that this water issue is somehow tied to the curse of God upon this city, but here is God, through His prophet bringing healing to the water so that this otherwise beautiful city can be a flourishing town once again. This was an act of God's grace!

And then Elisha goes up from Jericho to Bethel, and on his way he is accosted by a vile brood of riotous boys. *Read verses 23-25.* It might appear at first glance like Elisha needs to take a pill chill and not overreact to a few taunts. But the deeper you look into the text you realize that these boys deserved what they got. The location of Bethel is significant in that this is the town where Jeroboam had set up the calf worship. The size of the group is significant in that only 42 of them were eaten by the bears which means that many more escaped, which in

turn means that this was a large group. What they said was significant in that they obviously knew who he was as the prophet of God and so they called him baldhead, and in today's lingo what they are basically saying is "get lost old man!" Because they are from Bethel my assumption is that they are basically saying that there is no room in their town for the prophet of Yahweh because it is calf worship all the way in this town. This drove Elisha to call down a curse upon them in the name of the Lord, and apparently the Lord agreed because he immediately sent two she-bears to tear into the horde of boys. This is an account of judgment. Grace came first, and then judgment. The grace was undeserved, but the judgment was definitely deserved. These incidents pave the way for the next several chapters where we will see the grace of God put on display through the ministry of Elisha.

- Grace to Israel – 3:1-27
 - Grace to the Remnant – (4 episodes) – 4:1-44
 - Grace to a Gentile – 5:1-19a
 - Grace to the Remnant – 6:1-7
- Grace to Israel – 6:8-7:20

Right away in chapter 3 we have the first incident of God's grace being shown to the nation of Israel. Jehoram, who is the son of Ahab, is the king of Israel at the time and he gets together a three nation alliance to go and battle with Moab because of Moab's recent rebellion. Well, the three nation alliance finds themselves in the desert after a 7 day journey with no water and so Jehoshaphat the king of Judah asks if there is a prophet of the Lord around. For reasons unknown to us, Elisha happens to be traveling with them and so they summon him to tell them what to do. And then in verse 16 we see this word from the Lord. *Read verses 16-20.* Did you catch that in the text? It was a light thing for God to just give them water, so he decided to pour grace upon grace on the nation of Israel and not only give them water but also a miraculous victory. This miraculous victory came through the deluge of water as the Moabites march right into the camp of the three nation alliance only to be overwhelmingly defeated. This was grace to the nation of Israel.

Then in chapter 4 we are given 4 different episodes that put on display God's grace to the remnant. Remember that God had told Elijah that he would raise up 7000 who would not bow to Baal, and now in chapter 4 we see grace upon grace given to certain segments of this remnant.

In verses 1-7 we read of the account of the widow of one of the sons of the prophets. The creditors are going to come and take all that she has and force her sons into slave labor to pay off the debts that her deceased husband has left. She has no hope and so she turns to God by looking to the prophet of God for an answer. After finding out that she has a little bit of oil left in the house he instructs her to gather many empty jars from her neighbors, shut her door, and start pouring out the oil. The oil doesn't stop flowing until the last jar is full and Elisha instructs her to sell the oil and pay off the debt and live on what is left. God lavished grace on the remnant as they looked to him for their simple and basic needs.

In verses 8-37 we have the account of the woman from Shunem who made an extra room on her house so that Elisha could have a place to stay. Elisha wanted to do something in return for this obviously wealthy family and found out that she had no children and her husband was old so the likelihood of ever having a child was small. Elisha prophesies to her in verse 16 that she will have a son by that time next year. The woman's response is a foreshadow of things to come as in a few years the boy becomes ill and dies. And her immediate response is to seek out Elisha and plead her case. So in verse 28 she says to Elisha, "Did I ask my lord for a son? Did I not say, 'Do not deceive me?'" God had lavished grace upon this woman and her family by giving the son, and now the son was dead. Sounds very much like an incident early in the life of Elijah doesn't it? And so Elisha sends Gehazi to go and lay Elisha's staff on the boy to see if this will bring him back to life. But the woman refuses to leave Elisha and so he decides he better go too. By the time you get to verse 37 Elisha has prayed to the Lord and lay on the child 2

different times before the Lord finally allowed the boy to come back to life. The Lord has lavished grace upon the remnant once again as he has given the son and resurrected the son from the dead.

In verses 38-41 we read about a deadly stew that had been made by one of the sons of the prophets. He unknowingly put a deadly gourd in the stew and now, in the midst of a drought they were going to have to throw the whole stew away – that is unless Elisha could do something about it. And so Elisha intervened, again with a physical symbol of putting flour into the soup, and the stew was healed. Grace once again to the remnant.

Then in verses 42-44 we have a man from Baal-Shalishah who seeks out Elisha to give him bread of the first fruits. In other words, though this man was surrounded by pagan worship and was forbidden to travel to the Temple to give his offering to the right God, he sought out the right God's prophet and gave him the offering of first fruits. Elisha then takes these twenty loaves and fresh ears of grain and miraculously feeds 100 men, with some left over. This was an act of God's grace upon the remnant. So these 4 episodes in chapter four taken together show us that God used Elisha to lavish grace upon the remnant of Israel.

Then in chapter 5 we have the most familiar account of them all. Naaman was a man of mighty valor in the Syrian army. Being a major enemy of Israel, Naaman had led many raids into Israel and had captured for himself a little girl who now served in his house as a slave. The problem with Naaman was that he had leprosy. The glory of the little girl is that she knows Yahweh God and she knows that he can heal Naaman through His prophet who lived in Samaria. Her faith propelled an international mission that almost caused an international incident. But Elisha intervened and told Naaman to dip in the Jordan River 7 times and he would be healed of his leprosy. Naaman didn't like the fact that Elisha didn't just come out and wave his hand over him and heal him. Naaman didn't like the fact that his cure could only come one way. He couldn't dip in the river of his choice, it had to be the Jordan. He was so upset that he almost gave up on the whole deal until his servant pointed out the simplicity of the cure to him by saying, "Has he actually said to you, 'Wash, and be clean?'" So, Naaman goes and dips in the water and on the seventh ascension from the water his flesh is healed and he was clean. This cleansing proves to be deeper than his skin as he goes back to Elisha and confesses singular faith in Yahweh God. He offers presents to Elisha, but Elisha refuses them because grace is not earned, otherwise it would no longer be grace. This is too much for Gehazi to bear and so he runs after Naaman and makes up a story so that he can get some of the goods for himself. Why he thought he could sneak this past the prophet of God is past me, but regardless of how I see it, he lied to Elisha about where he had been and this whole episode brings judgment upon Gehazi and his house. They will now bear the leprosy instead of Naaman. Chapter 5 is an expansion of grace beyond the walls of Israel to a Gentile from another land.

Then in chapter 6 we have another incident of grace lavished upon the remnant once again. In verses 1-7 we read of the sons of the prophets going to the Jordan to cut down trees to expand their living quarters with. While in the process one of the men's axe head flies off and sinks to the bottom of the Jordan. Now, this seems like no big deal to us because an axe is a pretty easy thing to replace, but for this time losing a borrowed axe head would be like having an accident with a borrowed car and totaling it in the process. But again, Elisha is an instrument of God's grace in the most normal and mundane areas of life. He again uses a physical symbol by throwing a stick into the water where the head fell off and the iron head floated to the top and the man grabbed it out. Now, honestly, this is a most mundane and run of the mill story. And yet, it is included as yet another example of the grace of God being given to the remnant through the ministry of Elisha.

Then in the rest of chapter 6 and all of chapter 7 we have yet another incident of God's grace being shown to Israel through two different accounts. In the first one, Elisha is doing long range reconnaissance as God is allowing him to know the next move of the king of Syria so that he can pass it along to the King of Israel and keep them protected from Syria's attacks. This so frustrates the king that he sends an army of men to hunt down Elisha. They siege Dothan, where Elisha is and Elisha's servant is rightly afraid. Elisha calmly asks the

Lord to show the servant the multitude of horses and chariots of fire that were all around Elisha so that the servant could be calmed by God's powerful presence. Elisha then prays to have the enemy army blinded, which the Lord answers. He then leads the enemy army to Samaria where he instructs the king of Israel to feed the enemy army and send them on their way. This results in the Syrians deciding that the raids were not the best method to defeat a nation with a prophet like Elisha. So, instead they decided to bring the whole army and besiege the city of Samaria. The siege lasted so long and was so effective that horrible things were happening in the capital city because food was so scarce. Things like two mothers agreeing that they would eat one of their sons on one day and the other son on the other day. And so Elisha prophesies that by this time tomorrow food will once again be available in the city. Through miraculous intervention the army of Syria is scared off in such a way that they don't even bother to take their food and provisions with them, and so the inhabitants of Samaria gather the spoil and food once again abounds in the city, just as Elisha had said it would. Once again, Israel is shown God's grace through the ministry of Elisha.

So, do you notice the pattern of the accounts of God's grace? They mirror each other. In chapter 3 we start out with grace to the mostly apostate nation of Israel. Then we move to grace to the remnant of Israel in chapter 4, and then in chapter 5 we have grace to the Gentile, Naaman. And then in chapter 6 we move back to grace to the remnant, which is followed up by grace to the entire nation again. Do you see how the structure of the text points us to the grace given to Naaman? His story stands at the center of these instances of grace. This is because the writer has a point to make about God and his grace, and Naaman makes that point better than anyone else.

Now, remember that the books of 1-2 Kings are being written to a nation that is in exile already. It is a historical retelling of how they as a nation had fallen from God's favor and were now experiencing God's righteous judgment. These books also serve to tell the nation in exile how they should think about where to put their trust and faith in the horrific conditions of exile. So, what are those lessons that the nation in exile needed to hear, and that we also need to hear? Well, all of the accounts in chapters 2-8 point us to these lessons, but focusing in on Naaman, like I think the author would have us do, we see 4 lessons to heed.

I. Don't Reject God's Grace

- a. The first is don't neglect God's grace. This is essentially the heart of the message of these many chapters. As the children of Israel sit in captivity and look back on their heritage as it is recorded in 1-2 Kings they see generation after generation of kings reject the grace of God. Even though God had intervened in saving King Jehoram and the rest of the three nation alliance in chapter three, the obituary of his life says this – "He did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, though not like his father and mother, for he put away the pillar of Baal that his father had made. Nevertheless, he clung to the sin of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which he made Israel to sin; he did not depart from it." He had been shown great grace by God through the ministry of Elisha, and yet he still rejected this grace. The writer of 2 Kings is saying – don't do this! Then in chapters 6 and 7 we are again confronted with the lavish grace of God and a king who doesn't care. We don't know the name of the king because we are never told, but his name is unimportant. After having the army of Syria delivered into his hands at Samaria through the blinding of their eyes at the request of Elisha, the king still cannot believe in God when those same soldiers come back and besiege the city. He makes statements like, "May God do so to me and more also, if the head of Elisha the son of Shaphat remains on his shoulders today." And "This trouble is from the lord! Why should I wait for the Lord any longer?" He rejected the very grace that had already been given, and even so, God lavished out more upon his people.
- b. And so, sandwiched in between these unbelieving kings is Naaman. This Gentile commander of the army of an enemy nation responded rightly to the grace of God. It was lavished upon him through the ministry of Elisha and he responded rightly by confessing faith and loyalty to Yahweh alone. We read about this in verses 15-19. *Read 5:15-19.* Do you see his singular faith? He

says that he now knows that there is no God in all the earth but in Israel. If only the kings of God's own people would have confessed this very thing. Arguably they had seen greater displays of God's grace than this simple healing from leprosy, and yet their hardened hearts kept them aloof from God's grace. But not Naaman. He is so committed to this singular worship of Yahweh God that he asks if he can take two mule loads of dirt back to his home land so that he can sacrifice to Yahweh God on this land. Again, there is a physical symbol that is important. There is nothing magical in the dirt, but Naaman desires that physical connection to the land where Yahweh's people live. This is evidence of true belief. And then he asks Elisha if he would be pardoned by the Lord for having to fulfill his duties to his master back in Syria. You see his master requires Naaman's presence with him when he goes into the temple of the god Rimmon and when he goes and the master leans on his arm Naaman must bow himself. Naaman is concerned that this act will incur the wrath of the one and only God, Yahweh. In other words, Naaman is so committed to God that he is concerned about how he should live out his faith at work when his boss demands his presence at the worship of another god. This is true faith in Yahweh God!

- c. Maybe you are here this morning and the grace of God surrounds you. Maybe you have seen God at work in the lives of others, and you have even known this grace in your life. Don't walk away today like the kings of Israel. Don't reject God's grace! Rather, like Naaman express exclusive belief in the one true God of Heaven.

II. Seek God's Grace

- a. The second lesson is seek God's grace. This is what Naaman did. He sought out the prophet of God for a cure to his disease. He then heard the word and obeyed that word and found the cure. This is the path for grace in your life – seeking God and then heeding His Word when it is given. Naaman was cured because of this. This is also what we see in the instances recorded where the remnant is shown God's grace. The widow sought the Lord's help through Elisha and then obeyed the word of the Lord and did as she was told and received grace to help in her time of need. The Shunammite woman sought after God's help when the son he had given died in her arms. She clung to God's prophet until he would come with her and seek the Lord on her behalf. Elisha himself displayed this seeking of God's grace when the boy wasn't immediately raised. He prayed and then acted in faith that God would raise him from the dead. This seeking after God's grace is what the sons of the prophets did when the stew was deadly. This is what the man from Baal-Shalishah did when he sought after the prophet with his sacrifice and then obediently distributed it to the 100 men. This is what the son of the prophet did when his borrowed axe head flew into the Jordan. He sought after God through the ministry of Elisha. Do you see the point? Seek God. Seek after his grace in your time of need. Run to Him and to no other. Do not run to your own devices or to your doctor or to your family or to your friends – run to God by seeking Him in His Word. His Word has answers and direction and help. His grace is available through the ministry of His Word, and when he gives it, obey it and watch the powerful hand of God at work in your life.

III. Don't Blaspheme the God of Grace

- a. The third lesson from Naaman's story is don't blaspheme the God of grace. This is what Gehazi did. He couldn't stand the fact that Elisha wouldn't accept the lavish presents that Naaman brought and so he took matters into his own hands and made up a story about how Elisha now needed those some of those presents because two sons of the prophets had just come. It is quite possible that Naaman saw through the story and himself thought that Elisha had reconsidered and was willing to take just a little bit of the gift that was brought. But even if he didn't, it was certainly communicated to him that Elisha's dependence in the situation quickly shifted from Yahweh God to man's ability to provide. This then blasphemed the God of grace. Through

Gehazi's actions he lied about the God that he represented. He presented him as a God who was not able to provide for his prophet. Or if Naaman saw through the story then he presented God as one who received gifts in exchange for his grace. This is how every other god was. If you wanted their favor you brought lavish gifts. But this is not how the one true God is. His grace is not contingent upon the gifts we bring. We cannot earn his work on our behalf by bribing him to act. This is why Gehazi's actions are so reprehensible. He blasphemed God by representing him as a God who takes bribes in exchange for his grace. And this act of greed that lied about the very character of God was met with stern punishment from the Lord. This stern punishment upon Gehazi and his household is a foreshadowing of the judgment that is coming upon the nation if they continue to reject God's grace and blaspheme his name. They too will find themselves under His righteous wrath as they continue on in unbelief, rebellion, and pride.

- b. So, learn the lesson from them. Don't blaspheme the God of grace – it is a grave error. We do this anytime we present that Gospel as anything other than faith in the work of Jesus Christ alone. When we attach something else to this Gospel then we have blasphemed God. When we add good works, or identity with the right people, or certain nuances of theology – when we add any of this or anything else to the Gospel of Jesus Christ we blaspheme the God of grace. We also blaspheme the God of grace when we ourselves do not walk in this grace. When we present to others a life that is saved by grace but sanctified by our own efforts we blaspheme God. We must not misrepresent this God who has saved us by His grace. Learn from Gehazi. Learn from the nation of Israel. Misrepresenting God is a serious thing!

IV. Look to the Final Prophet of Grace & Judgment

- a. The last lesson for us this morning is to look to the Final Prophet of grace and judgment. Do you remember when you were younger and you hid somewhere in the house so that you could jump out and scare someone in your family. Do you remember hearing their footsteps as they approached, or seeing their shadow coming closer and closer and closer, and then bam – you jumped out and scared them?! Those footsteps are what Elisha is to the final prophet who was yet to come. Elisha is the approaching shadow. You can't yet see the person, but you know they are coming by their ever increasing shadow. So, Elisha is to Jesus. Elisha's life and ministry of grace and judgment are the footsteps that give the indication that the final prophet is on his way.
- b. Elisha ministered God's grace by healing the water in Jericho. Jesus will one day sit at a well just outside of Samaria and offer himself as the living water of which, if one drinks, they will never thirst again. Elisha, through much travail was able to raise the son of the Shunammite from the dead. Jesus, raised many simply by a word or by a touch. Elisha fed 100 men with too few provisions. Jesus fed 4000 and then again 5000 with a few loaves and a few fish. Elisha was used to cure Naaman of leprosy. How many hundreds or thousands did Jesus cure? In a passage that we didn't deal with in chapter 8 we see Elisha weeping over the fact that Hazael will murder Ben-Hadad and eventually be a tool that Yahweh God will use to bring the punishment to Israel that they have earned by their rebellious actions. In this weeping we see the heart of Jesus. He who wept over Jerusalem because of their unbelief and impending doom. You see, like Elisha, so in the ministry of Jesus grace comes before judgment and this judgment that is coming is brought with weeping. The judgment is coming, but grace precedes and so do the tears.
- c. As we close, turn with me to 2 Kings 13. In verse 20 we read this. *Read vs. 20-21*. Why did this happen? Why did God allow a man to come back to life simply through touching the bones of Elisha the prophet? The simplest answer is that God did this to point forward to the One Prophet through whom many would receive life through His death. Just like Jesus brings life to us through His own death, so Elisha brought life to this one man through his dead body. This resurrected man in 2 Kings 13 is a foreshadow of the many who will receive resurrected life

through the death of Jesus Christ. But this man in 2 Kings 13 died again. His resurrection to life was temporary. This is because Elisha had done nothing to bring forgiveness of sins. Elisha's life could not bring redemption from sin and justification before God on behalf of another. In fact, Elisha himself needed a Savior because of his own sins. And Jesus is that Savior. His perfect life. His substitutionary death, and his powerful resurrection from the dead provide final salvation for many. As Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15, "Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Conclusion: I wonder, do you know this final victory through the final prophet? Don't reject His grace today – come by faith to Jesus Christ and know this final victory over sin and death and hell. Christian, worship at the throne of your victorious Savior. See in Elisha a glimpse of the Savior you know and love. Look to the final prophet of grace and judgment and rejoice today that grace indeed has come before judgment, and that because of this grace you will never have to face eternal judgment because this final prophet took that judgment for you on the Cross of Calvary. Let's pray!