

Elijah & Elisha #8

The End

II Kings 13:14-21

(Notes by Sue Cepin)

Eric Cepin

June 7, 2026



Today is the end of the Elijah & Elisha series. We talk about these guys, because they are the superheroes or the wizards of the Old Testament. A prophet tells people what God is thinking and what God is going to do. 1 Cor 14 tells us as people of the church to seek the gift of prophecy: to strengthen, comfort, and encourage. We are looking to these prophets to seek what that might look like.

2 Kings 13:14 Now **Elisha** had been suffering from the illness from which he **died**.

Elijah was taken up in a chariot and didn't die. But Elijah, at the end of his life, is sick and dying. I want to talk about that kind of weakness.

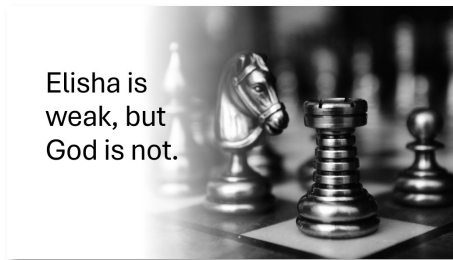
Elisha had been used by God to heal others. He raised the **Shunammite woman's son**. He healed **Naaman of leprosy**. He **multiplied food and oil**. He stood in the middle of famine, war, and fear as a **living reminder that the God of Israel was still present**.

But Elisha cannot heal himself.

God was not going to allow Elisha to heal himself, although he had healed many people and done many miracles. He was weak and about to die.

From my own story: when I was in my twenties, I was a mental health tech at Tucson General Hospital. More significantly, I was known as the bouncer. If anything went wrong, I was called in to tackle people. I took pride in my strength. Now, at the age of 54, I am in charge of the box maze at Maker's Camp. This will require getting down on my knees. When I do this, my knees announce my age to me. I am aware of my weakness.

By my mid-thirties, I had realized my weakness. I remember walking down Fourth Avenue with Ryan McCulley when two guys came out of a bar fighting. By that time, I didn't want to get hurt. Instead of trying to break up the fight, Ryan and I turned and walked the other way.



We tend to think that if we are strong, God will be strong for us but that if we are weak, God will abandon us. This is not how it works.

Weakness

2 Corinthians 12:9 But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. **10** That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

In the New Testament, as followers of Jesus, we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit. The Apostle Paul has some weakness he refers to as the thorn in his flesh. He prays three times for this to be removed, but God tells Paul that his weakness is a place for God's power to be revealed. So Paul glories in his weakness. I do not like this. It means that I have to express vulnerability and acknowledge my limitations.

1. Weakness does not disqualify us.
2. Exhaustion, grief, sickness, age, and failure do not mean the story is over.
3. Frailty is not failure.
4. God is not embarrassed by weak servants.

In this text, we see that one of the greatest prophets, Elisha, is not disqualified by weakness. Nor are we disqualified by weakness. Pay attention to number four: God is not embarrassed by our weakness. His strength shows up in your weakness.



When we are weak, we try to construct ways to keep ourselves safe.

2 Kings 13:14 Jehoash king of Israel went down to see him and wept over him. "My father! My father!" he cried. "The chariots and horsemen of Israel!"

Elijah stood against Ahab and Jezebel when Israel was being seduced by Baal.
Elisha stood in the middle of political collapse, famine, military threat, and idolatry.
They were not kings, but kings came to them.
They were not generals, but armies were exposed by them.
They did not sit on the throne, but they carried the word that judged the throne.

The king of Israel, Jehoash, goes down to see Elisha and weeps over him. He speaks the same words that Elijah had spoken over Elisha at the time of his departure.

I remember hearing on NPR back in the day that Gen-Xers were 60% republican, but their favorite president was Ronald Reagan, a republican, because Ronald Reagan was a grandfather. He was seen as someone who would take care of everything. In the same way, Elisha is the caretaker of Israel. Jehoash does not want to lose him. Elisha is seen as the source of spiritual power who takes care of everyone.

Israel's **weapons** are not Israel's real **defense**.

1. Israel had kings.
2. Israel had armies.
3. Israel had horses and chariots.
 1. The real protection of Israel was **the presence and word of God**.

The conflict happening in Israel is actually a conflict of spiritual forces, not physical battles.

Weapons

Ephesians 6:10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. 11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. 12 For our struggle is **not against flesh and blood**, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

This is true for us as well. Each of us has opinions about physical conflicts that are happening around the world. But these conflicts are governed by dark spiritual forces. Like the OT prophets, by the power of the Holy Spirit we have access to the divine conversation. You are called not to put your faith in the things you can control but to proclaim the light (like this year's Maker's Camp song). One thing you can do instead of arguing with other people is to ask God to fight against the forces of evil in our and other countries.

2 Kings 13:15 Elisha said, "Get a bow and some arrows," and he did so. 16 "Take the bow in your hands," he said to the king of Israel. When he had taken it, **Elisha put his hands on the king's hands**. 17 "Open the east window," he said, and he opened it. "Shoot!" Elisha said, and he shot. "The **Lord's arrow of victory**, the arrow of victory over Aram!" Elisha declared. "You will completely destroy the Arameans at Aphek."

The text shows us another way forward as well. Notice that Elijah doesn't get out of bed. He tells Jehoash to open the window and take out an arrow: the Lord's arrow of victory. Elisha tells him to fire it out the window.

Do Not Stop Striking

2 Kings 13:18 Then he said, "Take the arrows," and the king took them. Elisha told him, "Strike the ground." **He struck it three times and stopped.** 19 The man of God was angry with him and said, "You should have struck the ground five or six times; then you would have defeated Aram and completely destroyed it. But now you will defeat it only three times."

Elisha then tells Jehoash to strike the ground with the remaining arrows (fire them out the window as well). The king fires three arrows and quits, although he probably has at least 6 arrows in his quiver. I find myself in this place sometimes as well.

I have heard it said that the kingdom of God is in the present. This means that whatever moment you are in, you have an opportunity to shoot all the arrows. Are you all in? It can look like being fully present and engaged or dodging the moment, trying to get what you want out of it, etc. I would say that the choices we have made in the past may have consequences, but they do not keep God from showing up or keep you from firing all the arrows.

Elisha dies,
but God is
still present.



Jehoash is afraid that when Elisha dies, God will "leave the building."

This next story, I think, is in the text to show that God is still present after Elisha's death.

Death does not get the final word.

20 Elisha died and was buried. Now Moabite raiders used to enter the country every spring. 21 Once while some Israelites were burying a man, suddenly they saw a band of raiders; so they threw the man's body into Elisha's tomb. When the body touched Elisha's bones, the man came to life and stood up on his feet.

If this were to happen today, we would interview this man on CNN.

What this makes me think about is the connection between Elisha and Jesus. Jesus is the only person with more recorded miracles than Elisha. And even in Elisha's death, someone is resurrected. But God didn't need Elisha to be alive to remind people that He is present. We tend to believe that God isn't going to show up in our weakness.

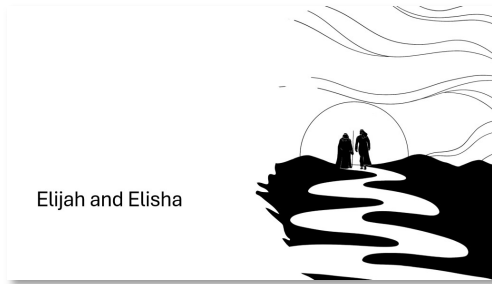
Jesus

He takes on weakness, stands before the weapons of the world, bears faithful witness, enters death, and rises in victory.

1. We open the window.
2. We take up the arrows.
3. We trust the risen Christ. (Are you all in?)

Jesus walked in weakness with joy. In your weakness, are you going to open the window and follow the instructions? Elisha, even while lying in bed at the end of his life, is

willing to give hope to a scared king. I see myself in the king's response. I get excited about what God is calling me to do. But will I open the window and stop shooting at three arrows? To be "all in" requires full allegiance to God.



So let's consider this. In weakness, we think we are less valuable. We try to draw strength from other sources. What do you depend on? Are you willing to take a risk that God might not show up the way you want Him to if you spend it all?