

[R5779 : page 299]

## **ELISHA'S RESTITUTION MINISTRY**

– *OCTOBER 17. – 2 KINGS 4, 5. –*

ELISHA SUCCEEDS ELIJAH – THE TYPICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS – HEALS THE SPRING OF WATER – ENCOUNTERS YOUNG HOODLUMS – PRONOUNCES SENTENCE AGAINST THEM – THEIR PENALTY – REWARDS FAITH OF A WIDOW – HEALS GENERAL NAAMAN'S LEPROSY – IS CONSULTED RESPECTING NAAMAN'S FUTURE.

**"I am Jehovah that healeth thee." – Exodus 15:26.**

FOR more than six thousand years our earth has been under a Divine condemnation because of Father Adam's sin and its propagation through his posterity, and because of God's sentence against sin. For these reasons, as the Apostle declares, our world has been under a "reign of Sin and Death." (Romans 5:14-19.) And it still is; for the curse, or penalty, has not yet been lifted. Thank God, the Bible abounds with precious promises that a better Day is soon to dawn! That glorious Epoch is to be inaugurated by Messiah's Kingdom, for which Jesus taught His people to pray, "Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth, even as it is done in Heaven." Then will come a glorious change to the world. Satan shall be bound for a thousand years. [R5780 : page 299] The reign of Sin and Death will cease, and a Reign of Righteousness and Life will begin.

That Reign is to last a thousand years. We have the words of Jesus Himself that its result will be the entire removal of the curse – the freeing of mankind from every difficulty and ailment which came upon the world as a penalty for Father Adam's sin, etc. From the very beginning of Messiah's Reign God's blessing will begin to

come to the world through Him, and correspondingly the curse will begin to fade away; but the full blessing will not be here, and the curse will not be entirely removed, until about the close of the Millennium. It will be a grand work. The promise of Jesus is that eventually there shall be no more sighing, no more crying, no more dying; for the former things of sin and death will have passed away and He will have made all things new, as the great King of kings and Lord of lords. – Revelation 21:4,5; 19:16; 1 Corinthians 15:26,54.

### **ELISHA'S WORK A TYPE OF RESTITUTION BLESSINGS**

In a previous lesson we pointed out that Bible students understand Elijah's career to have been typical of the experiences of the Church in the flesh, ending with glorification. Appropriately we might expect that Elisha, the companion of Elijah, upon whom fell Elijah's mantle of power and authority as the Lord's representative, prefigured a class. Our thought is that he typified two classes: first, that he typified those who now are associated with the Elijah class; and that, after the taking of Elijah and his recrossing Jordan, he became a type of those in whose charge will be the dispensing of Restitution blessings during the Millennium. Let us notice a few of his figurative doings.

### **PURE WATER – PURE TRUTH**

(1) A certain stream carried brackish water through an otherwise favored district. Elisha took a handful of salt, went to the head of the brook and poured it in there, commanding in the name of the Lord that it should henceforth be pure water. Looking for a typical significance of this in the Millennium, we remember that a stream of water represents a stream of Truth, and that brackish water would represent impure doctrines. A purification of the stream at its fountain would well represent what the Lord has promised through the Prophet respecting Messiah's Day: "Then

will I turn unto the people a [R5780 : page 300] pure Message, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve Him with one consent." – Zeph. 3:9.

The salt cast into the spring reminds us of the Master's words respecting His true followers, "Ye are the salt of the earth." (Matthew 5:13.) It will be in and through the glorified Salt of the Earth that the blessing will come, the streams of Truth for human refreshment for a thousand years. The light of the knowledge of the glory of God will be made to fill the whole earth, as the waters cover the great deep. – Isaiah 11:9; Hab. 2:14.

### **HURT FIGHTING BEARS**

(2) As Elisha proceeded on his journey, some young hoodlums accosted him, saying, "Go up, thou bald head!" These were youths – not children, not babies. Elisha turned and pronounced upon them a punishment, translated in our text a curse. He denounced their conduct as wrong and declared that it would have a punishment. The punishment came speedily. Two she-bears came upon them and tore them, wounded them. There is no suggestion that the bears ate them or killed them; but the forty-two young ruffians all experienced wounds from their conflict with the bears, and this apparently was the punishment for their wrongdoing.

After some such manner there will be judgments in the world during the Millennium – punishments for every wrong course, rewards for every right deed. Thus, through chastisements, called in the Bible judgments, the world will be taught right and wrong for a thousand years. As it is written, "When the judgments of the Lord are abroad in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness." (Isaiah 26:9.) It is for this reason that the Millennial Age is called the world's Day of Judgment. St. Peter explains that a Day with the Lord is as a thousand years. (2 Peter 3:8.) St. Paul tells us that "God hath appointed a Day [a thousand

years], in the which He will judge the world in righteousness." (Acts 17:31.) The judgment will be in the nature of rewards and punishments wisely administered, that the people may learn righteousness and abhor sin.

### **OIL ACCORDING TO HER FAITH**

(3) A poor widow in distress because of debt appealed to the Prophet Elisha for aid. She found that her resources were exhausted, except that she had some olive oil. He directed her to take all the vessels that she had and to borrow from her neighbors and to pour the oil into these until they were filled, then to sell the oil for money wherewith to pay her debts and to use the remainder for the wherewithal to live.

This story may illustrate for us the blessed rewards of faith that the Lord will grant during the Millennium. Indeed, it illustrates the general principle on which the Lord operates. The debt was to be paid. Justice was not to be violated, and any miracle to be performed would be preferably by the blessing of something already possessed. Thus doubtless it will be during the Millennium. The Lord will bless what people may have according to their faith in using it in harmony with His will; and it will increase with that for the full supply of all their needs.

Our Lord Jesus illustrated this in some of His miracles; and we should not forget that He made it plain that His miracles typified, or foreshadowed, His coming in the glory and the majesty of His Kingdom work. (John 2:11.) One of these was the feeding of the five thousand people from the small quantity of fish already at hand. Every person has something of a talent, or possession. The lesson to us would be: Use what you have, asking God's blessing, and seek to use it in harmony with His Word, nothing doubting. The Lord always rewards faith. In the case of this widow the oil was quite sufficient to fill all the vessels she had borrowed, as well as all of her own vessels. Then it stopped.

## **SYRIAN GENERAL CURED OF LEPROSY**

(4) In the Far East leprosy is one of the most dreaded diseases and is generally accepted as incurable. The Bible seems to refer to leprosy as a figure, or type, of sin because it is incurable, except by Divine miracle. Naaman, the chief commander of the Syrian king's forces, was a leper. In his family was a little Hebrew housemaid, who had been captured in one of the battles between the Syrians and the Israelites. She noted her master's plight, and remarked to her mistress about the great Prophet in Israel, Elisha, who could do anything, she believed. She suggested that he be applied to.

What seemed like idle talk was seized upon by General Naaman as a last and only hope. From his king he obtained a letter of introduction to the King of Israel, which in substance said: "I am sending this letter by the hand of my chief general, Naaman, who is a leper; and I desire you to see that he is healed." The king of Israel was appalled. He knew that he had no power over such a disease, and that it was ranked as incurable. He concluded that the Syrian king was trying to pick a quarrel with him, and that this meant war, great trouble. He rent his outer garment, as was the custom of the time, in indication of his great distress. The matter was told to the Prophet Elisha, who immediately sent the king word not to be disturbed, but to send the general to him. This was done.

When the general arrived at the Prophet's home with quite a caravan of servants, costly presents, etc., he sent word to the Prophet respecting his errand and that he had been sent by the king to him. Elisha curtly sent him word to go to the River Jordan and wash seven times. Naaman was angry. He said, "This man does not even treat me civilly. Why did he not come down to see me and make some kind of recognition of my rank and of the nation which I represent?" He then declared that there were rivers in Syria of

much better water than the Jordan, and that Elisha was trifling with him.

While Elisha's conduct undoubtedly was proper and directed of God and turned out well, nevertheless it would not be a wise course for the Lord's people generally to follow. In the New Testament the Apostles urge that the servants of God should be courteous toward all and render honor to whom honor is due. However, the matter worked out well. The servants of the general suggested to him that he had to go by Jordan any way on his return home, and why not try, as the Prophet of Israel had said. It could do no harm and might do some good. Any way the Prophet evidently had not been trying to make money out of him, nor to get the costly presents which he had brought, and which he knew he would gladly give for such a cure. The anger of the general cooled. He bathed seven times in Jordan, as directed. The result was a miraculous cure.

Naaman was not thankless. He returned to the home of the Prophet to thank him and to urge him to accept the presents he had brought; but the Prophet would accept nothing. He was merely acting as a Divine representative. His powers were not for sale. They were Divine blessings. Let the General acknowledge them to God! And this General Naaman did. He confessed that no other God than Jehovah could perform such a miracle. He was apparently ready to do the will of God heartily, and asked respecting his future course. The Prophet did not tell him to become a Jew and to renounce the heathen **[R5781 : page 301]** religion of his own land, but encouraged him to return to his home and to continue in his office.

General Naaman inquired as to his responsibility. If he worshiped the true God, what must he do when in the company of his king and the latter wished to go to the house of a false god? Elisha's answer in substance was that if the general made full

profession of his faith in the true God, it would not be improper for him to accompany his master to the house of the false god; for his own adherence to Jehovah God would be recognized.

