

Elisha ~ Part 2

In my last post, we began our study of **Elisha** by returning to **2 Kings 2:13-18** where **Elisha** picks up the mantle of **Eliyahu** and **Parts the Yarden River**. In this post, we continue to explore the ministry of Elisha by examining his second miracle in **2 Kings 2:19-22 ~ Healing of Bad Water**.

"¹⁹ The men of the city said to Elisha, "My lord can see that this is a pleasant city [Yericho] to live in; but the water is bad so that the ground is causing miscarriages."²⁰ "Bring me a new jug," he said, "and put salt in it." They brought it to him. ²¹ He went out to the source of the water, threw salt into it and said, "This is what Adonai says: 'I have healed this water; it will no longer cause death or miscarrying.'"²² The water was healed and has remained healed to this day, in keeping with Elisha's spoken word." ~ 2 Kings 2:19-22 (CJB)

Healing the Bad Water

I don't know about you, but I am not a fan of salt water. We live in an area that has hard water, so we have a water softener. And what do I have to do about every six to eight weeks? Heft forty-pound bags of water softener salt into the tank. Go figure!

The passage describes **Elisha's** role as a channel for God's works by performing his second miracle ~ one that demonstrated the practical benefits of God's great acts. Not only did **Elisha** enjoy the loyalty of the **guild prophets**, but the leaders of **Yericho** also respected him and sought his help. It should be no surprise to us that the water at **Yericho** was distasteful and the soil unproductive, for the city was under a curse (Joshua 6:26).

The history of the water problem at the Ain es-Sultan spring by **Yericho** can be reviewed in the comments on Joshua 6:26 and 1 Kings 16:34. An alternative to the parasite theory suggested in those comments is that the geological shifts that could have been related to the fall of **Yericho** brought the spring water into contact with radioactivity in the rock layers that polluted the water and caused sterility. ¹

This miracle reminds us of the miracle at **Marah** ("*bitter*"), when Moshe threw in a piece of wood and healed the water (Exodus 15:22-26). At **Marah**, God revealed Himself to His people as "**Adonai Roph'ekha** (Rapha) ~ **The Lord Who Heals**."

The miracle was an "action sermon" that reminded the people that the blessings of God were for a nation that was loyal to His covenant. To disobey His law meant to forfeit His blessings (Deuteronomy 28:15ff).

If you are permitted to visit **Yericho** today, tour guides will point out **Elisha's** fountain and invite you to take a drink.

In my next post, we continue to explore the life of **Elisha**. In this post, **Elisha** curses those who call him Baldy in 2 Kings 2:23-25.

¹ The IVP Bible Background Commentary – Old Testament.