

“Life from the Dead”  
2 Kings 13:20-21  
(Preached at Trinity, June 5, 2022)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. **Verse 20** announces the death of Elisha. Israel has lost her great prophet. When he was on his deathbed King Joram came to his bedside weeping. He spoke these words: "My father, my father, the chariots of Israel and its horsemen!" He was implying that Elisha was a great source of protection for Israel, much greater than the armies of Israel. No sooner than he died the Moabites invaded.
2. With the death of Elisha God brought about another miracle. Remember, the miracles were used by God to verify His spokesmen.
  - A. God used miracles for specific purposes at specific times. They were used very seldom. Miracles were not used until the Exodus when God worked miracles to validate Moses.
  - B. After the passing of over 500 years God validated the prophetic ministries of Elijah and Elisha with miracles. When their ministries were over miracles would cease for another 850 years.
  - C. Miracles were again used during the ministry of Christ and of His Apostles, and then they again ceased.
3. This final miracle from Elisha is amazing because it took place after his death. It confirms that miracles were not by the word of the prophet but by the Word of God. God was pleased to use it to validate the life and ministry of Elisha. With the death of Elisha, it would appear the hope of Israel was gone. Righteousness had faded. The kings were all wicked. Had God abandoned His purpose? Elisha was dead, but God was not limited by the life or death of Elisha. God was able to do His holy will. God is also reminding Israel that His promises did not end with the death of His prophet.
4. An unidentified man had died. His identity is not relevant to the story. As his friends were preparing his burial, they looked in the distance and saw the invading band of Moabites. They needed to hide. Running for safety, they cast the body into a sepulcher. The word for "cast" literally means "to throw" or "hurl." It can even mean, "to throw away." It depicts a sudden action performed without much care. They picked him up and threw him in the grave. They weren't much concerned about being gentle. After all, he was dead.
5. It just so happened that this was the tomb where Elisha had been laid to rest. We aren't given any hint of how long it had been, but bones imply it had been a while. As soon as the corpse touched the bones of Elisha it was suddenly raised to life to the amazement of his friends. He probably joined them in their escape.
6. The entire scene is strange. It is so strange that some doubt its historicity. But we have no reason to doubt the historical accuracy of the Bible. As the Apostle Paul said:  
**Acts 26:8 NAU** - "Why is it considered incredible among you *people* if God does raise the dead?"

7. The passage is brief and short on detail and our imaginations are not fully satisfied. All we know is a dead man has been raised to life. It reminds us of a New Testament passage where the details are also limited: **Matthew 27:50-53 NAU** - "And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit. <sup>51</sup> And behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth shook and the rocks were split. <sup>52</sup> The tombs were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; <sup>53</sup> and coming out of the tombs after His resurrection they entered the holy city and appeared to many." Who were they? To whom did they appear? Were they raised to die no more? The important thing we need to see is life from the dead. This is also true in this Old Testament passage.
8. As always, our first concern when studying the Bible is to examine the intent of the author. What is he saying? What does he mean? What is his purpose? The first purpose of this passage is to affirm Elisha as God's prophet. Was his intent to give some magical power to Elisha's bones? No. Elisha's bones were just bones, the remnants of the prophet. But there is significance with what God is doing here. A man has been raised from the dead.
9. We find glimpses of Christ throughout the Old Covenant. God has continually weaved into history events that are meant to turn our eyes towards the Savior—the Gospel has often been preached in visible form.
- A. Did God not command Israel to fashion a brazen serpent so that all who looked upon it might be healed. Jesus said, **John 3:14-15 NAU** - "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; <sup>15</sup> so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life." **John 12:32 NAU** - "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself."
- B. Paul said the events of the Exodus were given for our benefit and instruction. **1 Corinthians 10:11 NAU** - "Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come."
10. We can surely see some elements here that draw our attention to Christ.
- A. Wasn't Jesus Christ God's Prophet? God's living Word. **Hebrews 1:1-3 NAU** - "God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, <sup>2</sup> in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. <sup>3</sup> And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,"
- B. Was not Jesus buried, placed in a tomb? **Acts 13:29 NAU** - "When they had carried out all that was written concerning Him, they took Him down from the cross and laid Him in a tomb."

- C. Is it not true that each of us are in a state of death. The man in this passage was completely void of life. **Verse 21** describes a funeral. The corpse had been prepared for burial and was being carried towards a tomb.
- D. Most important, is not Christ the giver of life?  
**John 14:6 NAU** - "Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me."  
**John 1:4 NAU** - "In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men."
- E. The scene describes a resurrection. It describes being transformed from death to life. It was immediate. It was sudden. It was whole.
- I. We are all subject to death, both physical and spiritual death – death is the result of sin
- A. This man was dead
1. **Verse 21** describes a burial.  
You don't bury living men.
  2. His body had been prepared for burial. It describes a typical funeral.  
There was a finality. With the approaching Moabites, the men fled to save their life. There was no effort to save the dead man. They cast him into the tomb and ran.
  3. When his body touched the bones of Elisha he stood up – He was alive!
- B. The Bible teaches us that we were dead.
1. We were born spiritually dead, fully dead.  
It wasn't a partial death.
  2. Arminianism insists that spiritual death is limited and partial.  
They teach that we are not left without any ability. That we still have the ability to reach out to Christ. That we have the ability to exercise our faith.
  3. The truth is, we aren't just sick, or even comatose. There is no life in us.  
We are cold, dead, decaying corpses.
- C. We were marching towards eternity as spiritually dead corpses.
1. Death was the result of sin  
**Genesis 2:17 NAU** - "but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die."  
**Romans 6:23 NAU** - "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."
  2. The ultimate end is hell.  
Like this dead man, we will be cast aside.  
**John 15:6 NAU** - "If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned."  
**Matthew 13:49-50 NAU** - "So it will be at the end of the age; the angels will come forth and take out the wicked from among the righteous, <sup>50</sup> and will throw them into the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

II. We have been brought to life through the death of another

A. This passage was a message of hope for Israel

1. Israel had fallen into hopeless corruption. Each king was more wicked than the previous kings. They were about to be cast into exile. The word for "cast" is used again later to refer to this exile.  
**2 Kings 17:20 NAU** - "The LORD rejected all the descendants of Israel and afflicted them and gave them into the hand of plunderers, until He had cast them out of His sight."  
**2 Kings 24:20 NAU** - "For through the anger of the LORD *this* came about in Jerusalem and Judah until He cast them out from His presence."
2. We even see it in **Verse 23**:  
**2 Kings 13:23 NAU** - "But the LORD was gracious to them and had compassion on them and turned to them because of His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and would not destroy them or cast them from His presence until now."
3. God is saying, you are being cast out, thrown away, but there is hope of restoration.
4. The restoration was ultimately through the life of another. The ultimate answer was God's Deliverer, the Lord Jesus Christ, God's Covenant promise.

B. For those united with Christ there is the hope of life

**Romans 6:3-5 NAU** - "Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? <sup>4</sup> Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. <sup>5</sup> For if we have become united with *Him* in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be *in the likeness* of His resurrection,"

1. In Christ there is redemption, resurrection, newness. There is full restoration.
2. Our new life is full and complete.  
 In Christ we have victory over death. In Christ we have abundant life.  
**John 10:10-11 NAU** - "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have *it* abundantly. <sup>11</sup> "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep."
3. In Christ we are going to a place where death will be no more.  
**Revelation 21:4 NAU** - "and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be *any* death; there will no longer be *any* mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away."

Conclusion:

1. Through Jesus Christ there is victory over death. There is reconciliation and forgiveness. Through faith in Christ there is life eternal.  
**John 5:25-26 NAU** - "Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live.  
<sup>26</sup> "For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself;"
2. This restoration is available for all who will come to Christ and embrace Him. It is significant that the dead man in this story was a nobody. He wasn't a king. He wasn't a mighty or wealthy man. His funeral was not accompanied by pomp as if he was a celebrity. We don't even know his name. And when the Moabite band was seen approaching, the dead man was tossed away in haste.
3. Salvation in Christ isn't reserved for the rich or mighty. It is reserved for the poor in spirit.  
**1 Corinthians 1:26-29 NAU** - "For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; <sup>27</sup> but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, <sup>28</sup> and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are, <sup>29</sup> so that no man may boast before God."
4. You must embrace Christ. You must identify with Him. There is salvation in none other. \ **Acts 4:12 NAU** - "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved."