

II Kings 13:20-21; II Kings 4:32-37; The Last Enemy Defeated I. A Dead Man Meets Elisha's Bones II. Our Dead Bones Meet Elisha's Lord

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, what will you be remembered for? What will be your legacy or the heritage that you leave behind? When people talk about you after you are gone, what will they say? Although it is interesting and instructive to think about what we will be remembered for, I am fairly certain that when people spoke of Elisha after he was gone, they never failed to recount the narrative of today! Our passage is so unique- so striking- that it is hard to forget! He would be known as the prophet who provided healing and life! But when does death bring life? When do people who have died bring life to others? Can dead people save others? Or as God asked Ezekiel in Ezekiel 37- can these bones live again? Only you know, LORD! As Ezekiel learned, the dead can be raised! Dry bones can be revived and turned into a mighty army! The connection between death and life is illustrated in the process of planting. When a seed is taken and placed into the ground, that seed is dead and buried. But it is only after the seed is dead and buried that the seed can produce life! A harvest is only possible after death and burial! Without death, there can be no increase! No harvest without the death of the seed! So today we find this theme: the death of God's prophet is used by God to bring life!

### **I. A Dead Man Meets Elisha's Bones**

In our first point, we consider the dead man who comes into contact with Elisha's bones. As we step back into our text, we remember that the context is that of Elisha's sickness and now death. So Elisha- the man who healed and raised the dead- is now himself dead. And he remains dead- no power and no life in himself is to be found. And it happens that in God's providence, a band of Moabite raiders are invading the land. Traveling from the desert in the east, the Moabites would sweep into the land every spring to steal and pillage what they can. They would take any crops or animals that they could get their hands on- and kill anyone who stood in their way. So a marauding band of men is entering the land- and things are not looking good. Withing Israel- the LORD would send these groups into the land because of

Israel's sin and rebellion. The LORD God is chastening and disciplining His child because of their idolatry- that is why this Moabite band is here. This is again a defeat and oppression because of Israel's rebellion. But even with this man- why is this man dead? Generally speaking, this man is dead because this man is a sinner! Sin leads to death- and all sinners die! So this man, generally speaking- is a sinner who died as a consequence of sin. He remains an unknown man- like many in our series- a man without a name. We know almost nothing about him- except that he is dead! Well, this man's friends and family are in the midst of funeral procession when lo and behold, a band of Moabites appear on the horizon. Knowing that these raiders will have no compassion on them even if they are burying their dead, they decide to quickly borrow the nearest tomb so that they can flee! In their haste, they throw- literally toss -their loved one into the nearest grave. Remember that these tombs were little caves in the side of a cliff. So they roll back a stone, throw their loved one in, and run. They dump the body if you will- thinking to come back later and finish the burial rites. Not a very ceremonial way to burry your day- but they are pressed for time! And they run away in fear- to hide from this advancing band of bandits. So we have Elisha- who died and was buried- who bones are now exposed. And we have this dead man- tossed into the same tomb- who suddenly rises from the grave! As soon as the man touched the bones of Elisha, the unnamed dead man is revived and stands on his feet! Much to his own surprise- and to the surprise of his family and friends who will find out later- a dead man is raised!

Now remember, we are in the OT here. This was a sign of future things to come- things that are clear to us who live after the coming of Jesus and the pouring out of the Spirit. But you can see something of the future breaking into II Kings 13. There is something that is familiar here- something of a growing pattern. As we found [back in II Kings 4](#) with the Shunamite woman's son, when Elisha's body had contact with the dead boy- only then was the boy revived! Elisha had to lay upon his body and then the boy revived. Grieving was turned to joy- tears to laughter! Now we have another body- laid on top of Elisha's bones. And another dead person has been made alive because of their contact with the LORD's

Prophet! Now I know that you are a prophet of the LORD- as the widow would say to Elijah after raising her son. But there is also something abnormal here- something unique! The man who performs the miracle is dead! This is the only time in the OT when a dead man raises someone else to life! Or, as we know, that the LORD uses a dead man's bones to raise the dead. And as this man will prove, God is able to raise the dead and conquer death! He could almost say- I do not know how this happened! I was dead and now I am alive! This is such a clear testimony to God's power over the grave! It is also a verification of this prophet's obedience and identity! God can use the prophet- even after the prophet is dead! So in the context of the bondage of Israel- the suffering under Syria- and now the death of the LORD'S prophet- we have the words of hope from Elisha in our ears! The LORD'S arrow of victory! Not only victory over Syria, but victory over a greater and more sinister enemy! We catch a glimpse of a future and final victory! God's arrow of victory would fly into the heart of the last and final enemy! And that last enemy is death itself as I Cor. 15 puts it. So here, in the OT, we have a picture of a future victory that God gives His people- a victory over all our enemies- and even a victory over death itself! But like all OT types and signs, this resurrection would remain a temporary one. This unnamed man, just like the Shunamite's son, would die again one day. Even Lazarus, raised by Jesus himself, would not live on in the flesh in its current state. So this miraculous resurrection remains a passing picture- a sign of greater things to come- to whet our appetite for great blessings and lasting life!

## **II. Our Dead Bones Meet Elisha's Lord**

So what future blessings is being brought to mind here? What future victory over death should we expect to see? Well, as I said, in our passage we see that the death of God's prophet is the context in which life is secured for another. But Elisha's death did not really secure this resurrection- it was not Elisha per se- that raised this man to live. No, the bones of Elisha remained just bones- the remains of a dead man. There is nothing magic about his bones in themselves. If you were to find his bones today and put a dead person's body on those bones- nothing would happen. These bones do not retain power

in themselves. No, it is the God of Elisha that performs this miracle. However, as our theme states, there is a moment in history where the death of God's prophet does in fact secure- actually bringing about the life and resurrection of others. Consider for a moment the wonderful words of Mt. 27:51-54. Here we find two things taking place- at the death of Jesus there was an earthquake by which the tombs were opened and the rocks split! The bones of the dead were exposed! And when Jesus rose, we have all these formerly dead saints now raised from the dead showing up in the city of Jerusalem! Many bodies were raised- many saints brought back to life! Likely some prophets of old as well- coming back to life and walking around in the city! I mean, imagine it! Crowds of former dead people walking around praising God! This is a literal fulfillment of Ez. 37- dry bones come to life and become a mighty army- appearing to many in Jerusalem after Jesus' resurrection! Proving the power of Jesus at His resurrection! All these bones came to life because Jesus died and rose again! The power of Jesus is the power of life- of indestructible life! These were saints- believers that were raised! They had looked forward to the coming of Jesus- longed for His arrival- and now they were raised to witness the very event that they had longed for! His resurrection becomes their resurrection. They have a foretaste- if you will- of their eternal future! The Lord of Life brought them to life!

Now we, then, like these saints in Jerusalem, need to have the power of Jesus applied to our bodies as well! His resurrected body of Jesus applied to us! His death attributed to our account so that we too might be delivered from death! Or I could say it this way, if you throw yourself upon the body of Jesus by faith, then you too will be delivered from death! Elisha's death did not secure this man's life!

However, the death of Jesus does secure our life! In His death, we die! Since He died for us, we no longer die in the soul but we already live! And one day, we will be raised in the body as well- raised just like this man was raised! But also raised better! Where this man in our passage would die again, those who are raised to new life by Jesus will never die but will live forever in the flesh with Him in glory! That is the benefit found in I Cor. 15! Those who die in the LORD will be raised- they will be given an

indestructible life! Made like Jesus! The perishable putting on immortality! When the trumpet sounds, the dead in Christ will be brought forth- to share in the resurrection life that Jesus has secured for them! And at this death, death itself will be defeated! The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God who gives us victory through our Lord Jesus Christ! So Jesus defeated death- the last enemy- when He died and rose again! This, the great enemy of the church, has now lost its sting and power! This enemy has no hold on us- cannot keep us in the grave. And one day, when Jesus returns, this final enemy will be cast into the bottomless pit- removed from the face of this earth! For in the new kingdom, there will be no more weeping, pain or death! That is the hope that we have- the good news that we long for! Praise God for sending His prophet who has overcome death by His death!

To conclude, the end of Elisha's ministry reminds us of man's deepest need. We need forgiveness and life! The bondage and slavery need to be dealt with- victory needs to be secured so that we can live! Not only is the arch enemy of Israel- the Syrian army- going to be defeated. Not only will the raiding bands of the Moabites be done away with. No, the greatest enemy needs to be dealt with! Death itself needs to be defeated! And our passage gives us a little glimpse into the power of God- a little taste of what God can and has done for us in Jesus! Our God is able to save and deliver and restore- even revive those who have fallen asleep! He can speak to the bones in Ez. 37- and He can speak to our bones when Jesus returns on that last day! Can God make a mighty army from these bones? Can a dead man live again? Can we be raised in the flesh? Here you find your answer! As our theme states, the death of God's prophet is used by God to bring life! So the seed was laid in the grave- Jesus body was placed in the tomb- the seed died- His body expired. He breathed His last. But on the third day He rose- victorious! The seed produced a harvest! The stone was rolled away! Death no longer is the stronger! Death cannot keep its prey- for up from the grave He rose and so we too will rise!