

the very tools with which he had ploughed and sacrifice them to death for the call of God! The clue to the genuineness of the whole situation is found in the word "instruments" which is actually a term in Hebrew suggesting the thought of "fully, wholly, totally." There was no holding back for Elisha. He was going all the way with the Lord. This is the crux of a call from God unto special service. It's like the words of Paul when he wrote that he was under a "woe" to preach the Word (1 Cor. 9:16). Anything less than this is an underestimation of the call of God for service! That he did not expect any of his offering to be for personal gain is seen by the fact that Elisha gave what he had prepared to those who were with him. It was as tho he celebrated before God and with the people his call! To him it was a joy to see his belongings burnt and boiled and consumed for God!

- c. By performance. It is only five words in the original Hebrew, but it takes 11 words to get it into the English. That's the final phrase of the text (v. 21). Elisha "arose, went, ministered," That word "minister" means to "wait upon." It was not the "kind" of work which was important, but the "call" to work which was of the essence of importance. From a plough to a pulpit--that was Elisha!

Conclusion The call to salvation is for all. The call to surrender is for all believers. The call to function unto the Lord is for all who are saved from sin. The call to special service is a unique and decisive concern of God for specific persons. Elisha was one of these. Are YOU? Amen.

BIOGRAPHICAL STUDIES ON ELIJAH

"Called by God"

1 Kings 19:15-21

Introduction

1. The Bible is a book concerning "calls." It is worthy of your notice that the following are important "calls" in the Bible:

- a. Call to salvation. Rev. 22:17.
- b. Call to surrender. Rom. 12:1, 2.
- c. Call to service. Here!

2. Whatever the call may be, God extends the call with utmost love and concern. His way is the best for us (Psa. 18:30). Being the Creator of the universe and all that is therein, He desires the best for what He has brought into being.

3. Remember that Elijah had run away from Jezebel (19:3). His final destination was a day's journey in the wilderness of the Negev (19:4) where he came to a place called Horeb, the mount of God (19:8). There God met with Elijah and issued a commission to him (19:15-17). There are four elements in that commission:

- a. A command to return (v. 15).
- b. A command to anoint (vv. 15-16).
- c. A command to watch (v. 17).
- d. A command to look (v. 18).

4. God's specific use of Elijah to call Elisha to service is recorded here. It gives some helpful considerations in how God actually moves to call anyone to special service. Here's how it was done:-

1. SPECIFICALLY. vv. 16, 19.

The object in this point is that God makes no mistake about whom He is calling for service.

- a. God finds His man. This is affirmed by the

testimony of the text which notes that Elijah found Elisha. This is the common verb in Hebrew for "find." It suggests that Elijah came upon Elisha. God knows just where we are! This principle is clearly laid down in the Word (Psa. 139:7-12). It is a truism that no man can hide from God.

b. God marks His man. The man God had in mind to be Elijah's successor was Elisha, son of Shaphat of Abelmeholah. No one could be more carefully marked than that man! There are five men in the Bible with this name which means "he has judged." but there is no mistake about which one is involved inasmuch as his hometown is given as Abelmeholah. This name signifies "meadow of dancing" and Jerome located it as about 10 miles south of Scythopolis which is the Biblical town of Bethshean. It is by all accounts in the Jordan valley. Like Elijah, his successor was to come from a rather insignificant place. It is not where a man comes from that is of a great magnitude, but where he is going!

c. God selects His man. Elisha was with 11 other men ploughing in the field. It is assumed by this number of yoke of oxen that Elijah was a prominent man and well-to-do. But God selected him out of the 12 men ploughing! This sounds much like God's special selection of David (1 Sam. 16:10 and 12)! It is certain that Elisha was God's final and definite choice in view of the "mantle" which was placed upon him. Elijah got up close to Elisha as the verb "passed" avers and made certain that the mantle lighted on none but God's choice. Incidentally, the verb "cast" is the Hifil form and is therefore causative indicating absolute assurance that the mantle fell on Elisha. That is a strong verb and used of being cast into a pit (Gen. 37:22).

2. SACRIFICIALLY. v. 20.

The object to this point is that when God calls a man, that person is not concerned with what it involves! He knows God wants him. Therefore, he is prepared to:-

- a. Leave his possessions. The primary idea in the verb which is employed in the text "left" is that of "cutting loose." Hence, Elijah cut himself loose from the constraints of earthly possessions. This is what a call from God will involve. It was so with Moses (Heb. 11:25, 26) and it has ever been the same (Phil. 3:7-9). Sometimes riches and possessions stand between a person and his personal salvation from sin (Luke 18:23) and other times these material benefits get between a child of God and his genuine commitment to the Lord (Mark 1:18; John 21:15).
- b. Leave his companions. If it is difficult for one to come to grips with what he owns in following the Lord in utter service, it is similarly pressing in the matter of one's dearest companions. How many have landed on the rocks of dedication because they did not fully resolve this matter! The Word is clear on this principle (Luke 18:28-30). No one can solidly read the Word without coming to grips with this tremendous truth that Christ and His call come before everyone else (Ruth 1:16; Luke 14:26; 9:57-62).

NOTE: It is grace that wins the heart. No amount of demand can dilute love. Real commitment to the Lord is effected in the life by the Holy Spirit (Luke 9:24; Rom. 6:1-13).

3. SEPIOUSLY. vv. 20, 21.

The object to this point is that when God calls a man, the evidence of that call will be exhibited by the person called. This is seen:

- a. By obedience. The prophet told the ploughing farmer to return to his family and make the arrangements necessary. But he also warned him to remember "what I have done to thee" (v. 20). This he did! This is the same sort of reaction which Samuel gave (1 Sam. 3:1-18).
- b. By substance. Elisha was prepared to take