

SRM14123      4<sup>th</sup> Advent Sunday, 12/21/2014  
 “Previews of Christmas: Elijah, Elisha, and Messiah;  
 to Life from Death 1 Kings 19 and others

This year during Advent we are seeing Christmas in a surprising way: previews of the coming of the Messiah in people who were types of Christ as recorded in the books of history in the Old Testament.

This is fitting because, as Bruce Theilman wrote, “Christmas is a time of surprises. There was a lady who was preparing her Christmas cookies. There was a knock at the door. She went to find a man, his clothes poor, obviously looking for some Christmas odd jobs. He asked her if there was anything he could do. She said, “Can you paint?” “Yes,” he said. “I’m a rather good painter.” “Well,” she said, “there are two gallons of green paint there and a brush, and there’s a porch out back that needs to be painted. Please do a good job. I’ll pay you what the job is worth.” He said, “Fine. I’ll be done quickly.” She went back to her cookie making and didn’t think much more about it until there was a knock at the door. She went, and the obviousness of his painting was evident: he had it on his clothes. She said, “Did you finish the job?” He said, “Yes.” She said, “Did you do a good job?” He said, “Yes. But lady, there’s one thing I’d like to point out to you. That’s not a Porsche back there. That’s a Mercedes.”

Two weeks ago we saw a preview of the coming Messiah in , Samuel, who prefigured the coming of Christ in his being a Prophet, Priest and a King.

Then last week we saw that David’s humble beginnings show us a humbled Savior, who comes to people who are humbled, David’s struggles are an invitation for the struggling to follow the Anointed one, and David’s victories call us to trust a victorious Savior.

Stuart Briscoe: “The spirit of Christmas needs to be superseded by the Spirit of Christ. The spirit of Christmas is annual; the Spirit of Christ is eternal. The spirit of Christmas is sentimental; the Spirit of Christ is supernatural. The spirit of Christmas is a human product; the Spirit of Christ is a divine person. That makes all the difference in the world.”

This morning I invite you to see a preview of the Savior in two Old Testament prophets, Elijah and Elisha. All three of these were conquerors of death.

The beginning of Elijah and Elisha’s ministries are previews of the Messiah’s beginnings. Elijah, Elisha and Jesus all overcame life threatening circumstances. And God used Elijah, Elisha and Jesus to all conquer Death itself.

1. The beginning of Elijah and Elisha’s ministries are previews of the Messiah’s beginnings.

A. Elijah was called by God out of the wilderness like John the Baptist and like Jesus Christ.

After his contest with the 400 prophets of Baal at Mt. Carmel, we find Elijah fleeing to the wilderness: 1 Kings 19:4-8 (NKJV) But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he prayed that he might die, and said, "It is enough! Now, LORD, take my life, for I am no better than my fathers!" Then as he lay and slept under a broom tree, suddenly an angel touched him, and said to him, "Arise and eat." Then he looked, and there by his head was a cake baked on coals, and a jar of water. So he ate and drank, and lay down again. And the angel of the LORD came back the second time, and touched him, and said, "Arise and eat, because the journey is too great for you." So he arose, and ate and drank; and he went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights as far as Horeb, the mountain of God."

In many ways, Elijah's ministry is a type of John the Baptist's, the forerunner of the Messiah, who, we are told in Matt. 3:1 (NKJV) "In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea".

But Jesus himself also began his ministry with a time in the desert: Mark 1:13 (NKJV) "And He was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan, and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered to Him."

When Elijah died, his ministry was carried on and expanded by Elisha, who, even more than Elijah, was a type of the Christ.

B. At the time of his calling, there are indications that Elisha came from wealth, and left it to follow Elijah: 1 Kings 19:19-21 (NKJV) "So [Elijah] departed from there, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he was with the twelfth. Then Elijah passed by him and threw his mantle on him. And he left the oxen and ran after Elijah, and said, "Please let me kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow you." And he said to him, "Go back again, for what have I done to you?" So Elisha turned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen and slaughtered them and boiled their flesh, using the oxen's equipment, and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he arose and followed Elijah, and became his servant."

Elisha left wealth behind like Christ. 2 Corinthians 8:9 (NKJV) "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich."

And Jesus expects his disciples to leave the world behind: Matthew 4:18-22 (NKJV) "And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting

a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. Then He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." They immediately left their nets and followed Him. Going on from there, He saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets. He called them, and immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him."

C. Both Elijah and John the Baptist had spectacular ministries followed by a time of doubt and threat on their lives.

After Elijah defeated and killed the 400 prophets of Baal, he had to flee for his life from Queen Jezebel. During this time, Elijah came to doubt his calling: "It is enough ..."

And after John the Baptist's sensational ministry, he is arrested, and seems to doubt his calling: Matthew 11:2-6 (NKJV) "And when John had heard in prison about the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples and said to Him, "Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?" Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me."

Trans: The beginning of Elijah and Elisha's ministries are previews of the Messiah's beginnings.

2. Elijah, Elisha and Jesus all overcame life threatening circumstances.

A. Elisha and Jesus healed lepers.

Elisha, Naaman: 2 Kings 5:13-15 (NKJV) And his servants came near and spoke to him, and said, "My father, if the prophet had told you to do something great, would you not have done it? How much more then, when he says to you, 'Wash, and be clean'?" So he went down and dipped seven times in the Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God; and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean. And he returned to the man of God, he and all his aides, and came and stood before him; and he said, "Indeed, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, except in Israel."

Jesus: Matthew 8:1-3 (NKJV) "When He had come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him. And behold, a leper came and worshiped Him, saying, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean." Then Jesus put out His hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed." Immediately his leprosy was cleansed."

B. Elisha and Jesus multiplied food twice.

Elisha: 2 Kings 4:1-7 (NKJV) "A certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets cried out to Elisha, saying, "Your servant my husband is dead, and you know that your servant feared the LORD. And the creditor is coming to take my two sons to be his slaves." So Elisha said to her, "What shall I do for you? Tell me, what do you have in the house?" And she said, "Your maidservant has nothing in the house but a jar of oil." Then he said, "Go, borrow vessels from everywhere, from all your neighbors--empty vessels; do not gather just a few. And when you have come in, you shall shut the door behind you and your sons; then pour it into all those vessels, and set aside the full ones." So she went from him and shut the door behind her and her sons, who brought the vessels to her; and she poured it out. Now it came to pass, when the vessels were full, that she said to her son, "Bring me another vessel." And he said to her, "There is not another vessel." So the oil ceased. Then she came and told the man of God. And he said, "Go, sell the oil and pay your debt; and you and your sons live on the rest."

2 Kings 4:42-44 (NKJV) "Then a man came from Baal Shalisha, and brought the man of God bread of the firstfruits, twenty loaves of barley bread, and newly ripened grain in his knapsack. And he said, "Give it to the people, that they may eat." But his servant said, "What? Shall I set this before one hundred men?" He said again, "Give it to the people, that they may eat; for thus says the LORD: 'They shall eat and have some left over.' " So he

set it before them; and they ate and had some left over, according to the word of the LORD."

Jesus: Matthew 14:17-21 (NKJV) "And they said to Him, "We have here only five loaves and two fish." He said, "Bring them here to Me." Then He commanded the multitudes to sit down on the grass. And He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke and gave the loaves to the disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitudes. So they all ate and were filled, and they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments that remained. Now those who had eaten were about five thousand men, besides women and children."

Matthew 15:34-38 (NKJV) "Jesus said to them, "How many loaves do you have?" And they said, "Seven, and a few little fish." So He commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground. And He took the seven loaves and the fish and gave thanks, broke them and gave them to His disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitude. So they all ate and were filled, and they took up seven large baskets full of the fragments that were left. Now those who ate were four thousand men, besides women and children."

But Jesus does more than give bread. He is the bread of life.

C. Elisha and Jesus healed people on contact.

Elisha: 2 Kings 13:21 (NKJV) “So it was, as they were burying a man, that suddenly they spied a band of raiders; and they put the man in the tomb of Elisha; and when the man was let down and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived and stood on his feet.”

Jesus: Matt. 9:18-22 (NKJV) “While He spoke these things to them, behold, a ruler came and worshiped Him, saying, “My daughter has just died, but come and lay Your hand on her and she will live.” So Jesus arose and followed him, and so did His disciples. And suddenly, a woman who had a flow of blood for twelve years came from behind and touched the hem of His garment. For she said to herself, “If only I may touch His garment, I shall be made well.” But Jesus turned around, and when He saw her He said, “Be of good cheer, daughter; your faith has made you well.” And the woman was made well from that hour.”

Trans: So the beginning of Elijah and Elisha’s ministries are previews of the Messiah’s beginnings, and Elijah and Elisha overcame life threatening circumstances, previewing miracles of Jesus, and ...

3. God used Elijah, Elisha and Jesus to conquer Death itself.

All 3 Confronted and overcame the death of children.

A. Elijah and Jesus raised widows sons.

Elijah: 1 Kings 17:17-24 (NKJV) “Now it happened after these things that the son of the woman who owned the house became sick. And his sickness was so serious that there was no breath left in him. So she said to Elijah, “What have I to do with you, O man of God? Have you come to me to bring my sin to remembrance, and to kill my son?” And he said to her, “Give me your son.” So he took him out of her arms and carried him to the upper room where he was staying, and laid him on his own bed. Then he cried out to the LORD and said, “O LORD my God, have You also brought tragedy on the widow with whom I lodge, by killing her son?” And he stretched himself out on the child three times, and cried out to the LORD and said, “O LORD my God, I pray, let this child's soul come back to him.” Then the LORD heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came back to him, and he revived. And Elijah took the child and brought him down from the upper room into the house, and gave him to his mother. And Elijah said, “See, your son lives!” Then the woman said to Elijah, “Now by this I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the LORD in your mouth is the truth.”

Jesus: Luke 7:11-17 (NKJV) “Now it happened, the day after, that He went into a city called Nain; and many of His disciples went with Him, and a large crowd. And when He came near the gate of

the city, behold, a dead man was being carried out, the only son of his mother; and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the city was with her. When the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her and said to her, "Do not weep." Then He came and touched the open coffin, and those who carried him stood still. And He said, "Young man, I say to you, arise." So he who was dead sat up and began to speak. And He presented him to his mother. Then fear came upon all, and they glorified God, saying, "A great prophet has risen up among us"; and, "God has visited His people." And this report about Him went throughout all Judea and all the surrounding region."

B. Elisha and Jesus each raised the child of prominent persons.

Elisha: 2 Kings 4:8-37 A prominent Shunammite woman extends hospitality to him. He wants to bless her, and prophesies that she who was childless will have a child. She does, but the child dies. Elisha brings the child back to life.

Jesus heals the daughter of Jairus, a prominent ruler of the synagogue in Luke 8:41-55 .

C. Finally, we have Elijah one of only two examples in the Old Testament of not going through death, and Jesus, whose substitutionary death spares all who trust in Him.

Elijah: 2 Kings 2:9-12 (NKJV) "And so it was, when they had crossed over, that Elijah said to Elisha, "Ask! What may I do for you, before I am taken away from you?" Elisha said, "Please let a double portion of your spirit be upon me." So he said, You have asked a hard thing. Nevertheless, if you see me when I am taken from you, it shall be so for you; but if not, it shall not be so." Then it happened, as they continued on and talked, that suddenly a chariot of fire appeared with horses of fire, and separated the two of them; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. And Elisha saw it, and he cried out, "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and its horsemen!" So he saw him no more."

Jesus: 1 Corinthians 15:20-26 (NKJV) "But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming. Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be destroyed is death."

Elijah and Elisha's ministries are previews of the Messiah's beginnings, and Elijah and Elisha overcame life threatening circumstances, previewing miracles of Jesus, and God used Elijah, Elisha and Jesus to conquer Death itself.

Action: Ask, "What would Jesus ask me to leave in order to more effectively follow him?", and give it to him today.

Trust Jesus Christ with the trial or trials that threaten your life.

Trust in Jesus Christ to deliver you from death, and thank Him for doing so.