

2 Kings chapters 1 thru 3: Elijah's Cloak for Elisha

These chapters in 2 Kings are rich with Game of Thrones style violence, supernatural intervention, and relational alliances. It is a window into what happens when a Kingdom is divided and there are needs, opportunities and greed in the mix.

One of the components common in today's stories goes beyond miracles and violence. It is Symbol. I think symbol is the key to getting the most out of what these stories have been preserved to give us.

As I have shared with you before, numbers are one of the **fingerprints** that God himself has left on the various writings compiled into the Bible. The fact that these numbers symbolize the same things regardless of who wrote the book, what language, culture or time period they wrote it in, is further evidence in my view of an unseen editor behind the writings.

Let's review the story of Ahaziah's fall and look at a few of the numbers, what they symbolize, and what God's Spirit may want to say today to us:

I Kings 1

1 After Ahab's death, Moab rebelled against Israel. **2** Now Ahaziah had fallen through the lattice of his upper room in Samaria and injured himself. So he sent messengers, saying to them, "Go and consult Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron, to see if I will recover from this injury."

3 But the angel of the LORD said to Elijah the Tishbite, "Go up and meet the messengers of the king of Samaria and ask them, 'Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are going off to consult Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron?' **4** Therefore this is what the LORD says: 'You will not leave the bed you are lying on. You will certainly die!'" So Elijah went.

5 When the messengers returned to the king, he asked them, "Why have you come back?"

⁶ “A man came to meet us,” they replied. “And he said to us, ‘Go back to the king who sent you and tell him, ‘This is what the LORD says: Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are sending messengers to consult Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you will not leave the bed you are lying on. You will certainly die!’’”

⁷ The king asked them, “What kind of man was it who came to meet you and told you this?”

⁸ They replied, “He had a garment of hair^{אַ} and had a leather belt around his waist.”

The king said, “That was Elijah the Tishbite.”

⁹ Then he sent to Elijah a captain with his company of fifty men. The captain went up to Elijah, who was sitting on the top of a hill, and said to him, “Man of God, the king says, ‘Come down!’”

¹⁰ Elijah answered the captain, “If I am a man of God, may fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty men!” Then fire fell from heaven and consumed the captain and his men.

¹¹ At this the king sent to Elijah another captain with his fifty men. The captain said to him, “Man of God, this is what the king says, ‘Come down at once!’”

¹² “If I am a man of God,” Elijah replied, “may fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty men!” Then the fire of God fell from heaven and consumed him and his fifty men.

¹³ So the king sent a **third captain** with his fifty men. **This third captain** went up and fell on his knees before Elijah. “Man of God,” he begged, “please have respect for my life and the lives of these fifty men, your servants! ¹⁴ See, fire has fallen from heaven and consumed the first two captains and all their men. But now have respect for my life!”

¹⁵ The angel of the LORD said to Elijah, “Go down with him; do not be afraid of him.” So Elijah got up and went down with him to the king.

¹⁶ He told the king, “This is what the LORD says: Is it because there is no God in Israel for you to consult that you have sent messengers to consult Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron? Because you have done this, you will never leave the bed you

are lying on. You will certainly die!" ¹⁷ So he died, according to the word of the LORD that Elijah had spoken.

Because Ahaziah had no son, Joram¹⁸ succeeded him as king in the second year of Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah. ¹⁸ As for all the other events of Ahaziah's reign, and what he did, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Israel?

These kinds of stories tend to have either challenging to define applications, or very obvious applications. Looking and some of the reoccurring numbers present in them can unearth the most profound applications. For instance:

Two is the number of witness. Two witnesses establish truth and credibility: For example there are

- Two testaments to testify the truth of Jesus
 - Jesus is in the OT concealed and in the NT revealed.
 - Jesus is in the OT contained, and in the NT explained.
- The testimony of two witnesses is required to establish truth and decide a case for or against someone. (Dt 19:15)
- Two witnesses in Revelations 11
- Two witness at the Transfiguration: Moses & Elijah (representing the witness of Christ by the Law & the Prophets)
- Two "get up and eats" from the angel when Elijah was fleeing Jezebel.
- Two pronouncements of Ahaziah's fate by Elijah (by a second person as well).

Message: Don't believe everything you think, are told, or you happen to read. This includes your critics and your family.

- Use the counsel of 2 or more. Ben Merold's advice if someone calls you a Jackass:
 1. If one person calls you a jackass, Ignore him

- 2. If someone else calls you a jackass, go check the mirror.
- 3. If a 3rd person calls you a jackass, saddle up.
- Use the Bible as a witness to truth, in addition to the prompting of God's spirit and/or the counsel of another person.

Three is another number notable to 1 Kings 1. The number three represents the triune identity of God and their connection to another triad: the death, burial and resurrection.

Our faith is not a self-improvement plan, but a death, burial and resurrection plan. We went to make our selves better to get what we want or win God's blessing in our lives. God invites us to pick up our cross, follow Jesus into a death of self, burial of our own efforts and plans, and be resurrected to a new man restored to life by God, usable for his purposes. Death, burial and resurrection is the path of transformation (rebirth), not our own effort.

The connection between God as 3 and the 3-fold path of death, burial and resurrection is as follows:

God:	Father	Son	Holy Spirit
Transformation:	Death penalty	Payment/Burial	Resurrection

And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you. –Romans 8:11

The number 3 is present when the death burial and resurrection of someone or something is taking place: For Example:

- Three days in the fish for Jonah's hopes to save Israel die and he is resurrected into a missionary to save Ninevah.
- It takes 3 days for Abraham to receive his son Isaac back from the dead (from the time he was told to sacrifice him to the time he received him back).

- Jesus was resurrected on the 3rd day.
- Three gifts of the Magi to describe the DBR transformation of Jesus as well as his triune nature:
 - Father=King
 - Son=Priest
 - Holy Spirit=Prophet
- Saul the Pharisee was blind for 3 days before he received his sight and a new identity as Paul the Apostle.

-Notice how many times 50 soldiers are sent. Two groups die and are presumably buried until the “third captain” arrives, a detail underscored by repetition. Then, the 3rd group of soldiers returns home alive but with Elijah.

That’s how it works in our lives as well. We will only experience death in this fallen world, not just physically, but of our ambitions as well until they are fully surrendered and we become dead to them. Then they return but with God’s presence and protection.

TS-There is another 3 in the refusal of Elisha to leave Elijah before he is taken to heaven (resurrection)

Elijah Taken Up to Heaven

2 When the LORD was about to take Elijah up to heaven in a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal. **²Elijah said to Elisha, “Stay here; the LORD has sent me to Bethel.”**

But Elisha said, “As surely as the LORD lives and as you live, I will not leave you.” So they went down to Bethel.

³The company of the prophets at Bethel came out to Elisha and asked, “Do you know that the LORD is going to take your master from you today?”

“Yes, I know,” Elisha replied, “so be quiet.”

⁴Then Elijah said to him, “Stay here, Elisha; the LORD has sent me to Jericho.”

And he replied, “As surely as the LORD lives and as you live, I will not leave you.” So they went to Jericho.

(Lady who came late to church but didn't want a chair I offered her, until the 3rd time)

⁵The company of the prophets at Jericho went up to Elisha and asked him, “Do you know that the LORD is going to take your master from you today?”

“Yes, I know,” he replied, “so be quiet.”

⁶Then Elijah said to him, “Stay here; the LORD has sent me to the Jordan.”

And he replied, “As surely as the LORD lives and as you live, I will not leave you.” So the two of them walked on.

3rd time=Elijah is about to experience a rebirth of sorts by becoming a heavenly being. Elisha is going to transform from student into the leader of the school of the prophets.

⁷**Fifty men** from the company of the prophets went and stood at a distance, facing the place where Elijah and Elisha had stopped at the Jordan. ⁸Elijah took his cloak, rolled it up and struck the water with it. The water divided to the right and to the left, and the two of them crossed over on dry ground.

⁹When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, “Tell me, what can I do for you before I am taken from you?”

“Let me inherit a double portion of your spirit,” Elisha replied.

¹⁰“You have asked a difficult thing,” Elijah said, “yet if you see me when I am taken from you, it will be yours—otherwise, it will not.”

¹¹As they were walking along and talking together, suddenly a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared and separated the two of them, and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind. ¹²Elisha saw this and cried out, “My father! My father! The chariots and horsemen of Israel!” And Elisha saw him no more. Then he took hold of his garment and tore it in two.

¹³Elisha then picked up Elijah’s cloak that had fallen from him and went back and stood on the bank of the Jordan. ¹⁴He took the cloak that had fallen from Elijah and struck the water with it. “Where now is the LORD, the God of Elijah?”

he asked. When he struck the water, it divided to the right and to the left, and he crossed over.

¹⁵The company of the prophets from Jericho, who were watching, said, “The spirit of Elijah is resting on Elisha.” And they went to meet him and bowed to the ground before him. ¹⁶“Look,” they said, “we your servants have **fifty able men**. Let them go and look for your master. Perhaps the Spirit of the LORD has picked him up and set him down on some mountain or in some valley.”

“No,” Elisha replied, “do not send them.”

¹⁷But they persisted until he was too embarrassed to refuse. So he said, “Send them.” And they sent **fifty men**, who searched for **three days** but did not find him.¹⁸When they returned to Elisha, who was staying in Jericho, he said to them, “Didn’t I tell you not to go?”

They searched for three days but didn’t find him because he had been transformed into a heavenly being by God.

Did you notice how many times the number 50 takes place in these first three chapters? Three times in this story alone as the 50 prophets search for Elijah. What is the meaning of 50?

5 is the number of atonement: We see the number five throughout the structure of the tabernacle in the wilderness. The pillars were five cubits apart and five cubits high. The brazen altar was five cubits by five cubits. There were five pillars at the end of the Holy Place. The sides of the tabernacle were reinforced by five bars on each side (**Exodus 26:26-27**). The inner covering of the tabernacle was composed of five curtains which were attached to five other curtains for a total of ten curtains (**Exodus 26:3**). Notice the double five pattern. There were five original priests: Aaron and his four sons (**Exodus 28:1**).

10 is the number of Judgment (plagues of Egypt, 10 commandments we are judged by, 10 brothers who judged Joseph, 10 generations before the Flood, Passover Lamb on 10th of the month, 10 spies, Jesus parables, Toes on statues, Horns on Beast in Revelation).

50 = 5 X 10: atonement for judgment. (meaning of 50 men)

- 1st 50 We pay OT
- 2nd He pays NT

30 = 3 x 10 God is judged, and DBR. When did that happen?

30 pieces of silver.

Read more about the numerical symbols at this website:

<http://www.biblestudy.org/bibleref/meaning-of-numbers-in-bible/1.html>

Moab Revolts

3 Joram⁴ son of Ahab became king of Israel in Samaria in the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and he reigned twelve years. ²He did evil in the eyes of the LORD, but not as his father and mother had done. He got rid of the sacred stone of Baal that his father had made. ³Nevertheless he clung to the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat, which he had caused Israel to commit; he did not turn away from them.

⁴Now Mesha king of Moab raised sheep, and he had to pay the king of Israel a tribute of a hundred thousand lambs and the wool of a hundred thousand rams.⁵But after Ahab died, the king of Moab rebelled against the king of Israel. ⁶So at that time King Joram set out from Samaria and mobilized all Israel. ⁷He also sent this message to Jehoshaphat king of Judah: “The king of Moab has rebelled against me. Will you go with me to fight against Moab?”

“I will go with you,” he replied. “I am as you are, my people as your people, my horses as your horses.”

⁸“By what route shall we attack?” he asked.

“Through the Desert of Edom,” he answered.

⁹So the king of Israel set out with the king of Judah and the king of Edom. After a roundabout march of seven days, the army had no more water for themselves or for the animals with them.

¹⁰“What!” exclaimed the king of Israel. “Has the LORD called us **three kings** together only to deliver us into the hands of Moab?”

¹¹ But Jehoshaphat asked, “Is there no prophet of the LORD here, through whom we may inquire of the LORD?”

An officer of the king of Israel answered, “Elisha son of Shaphat is here. He used to pour water on the hands of Elijah.^b”

¹² Jehoshaphat said, “The word of the LORD is with him.” So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat and the king of Edom went down to him.

¹³ Elisha said to the king of Israel, “Why do you want to involve me? Go to the prophets of your father and the prophets of your mother.”

“No,” the king of Israel answered, “because it was the LORD who called us three kings together to deliver us into the hands of Moab.”

¹⁴ Elisha said, “As surely as the LORD Almighty lives, whom I serve, if I did not have respect for the presence of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, I would not pay any attention to you. ¹⁵ But now bring me a harpist.” (WHAT????)

While the harpist was playing, the hand of the LORD came on Elisha ¹⁶ and he said, “This is what the LORD says: I will fill this valley with pools of water. ¹⁷ For this is what the LORD says: You will see neither wind nor rain, yet this valley will be filled with water, and you, your cattle and your other animals will drink. ¹⁸ This is an easything in the eyes of the LORD; he will also deliver Moab into your hands. ¹⁹ You will overthrow every fortified city and every major town. You will cut down every good tree, stop up all the springs, and ruin every good field with stones.”

²⁰ The next morning, about the time for offering the sacrifice, there it was—water flowing from the direction of Edom! And the land was filled with water.

²¹ Now all the Moabites had heard that the kings had come to fight against them; so every man, young and old, who could bear arms was called up and stationed on the border. ²² When they got up early in the morning, the sun was shining on the water. To the Moabites across the way, the water looked red—like blood.²³ “That’s blood!” they said. “Those kings must have fought and slaughtered each other. Now to the plunder, Moab!”

²⁴ But when the Moabites came to the camp of Israel, the Israelites rose up and fought them until they fled. And the Israelites invaded the land and slaughtered the Moabites. ²⁵ They destroyed the towns, and each man threw a stone on

every good field until it was covered. They stopped up all the springs and cut down every good tree. Only KirHareseth was left with its stones in place, but men armed with slings surrounded it and attacked it.

²⁶ When the king of Moab saw that the battle had gone against him, he took with him seven hundred swordsmen to break through to the king of Edom, but they failed. ²⁷ Then he took his firstborn son, who was to succeed him as king, and offered him as a sacrifice on the city wall. The fury against Israel was great; they withdrew and returned to their own land.

Human sacrifice was practiced by Mayans, Vikings, and Aztecs up until 500 years ago.

So what can we take away from these supernatural and violent passages with the help of the symbolism these numbers offer?

1. Our progress comes not from trying harder but trusting harder (The number 3)

Baptism represent the death burial & resurrection plan in 3 ways:

- Jesus past death burial and resurrection
- Your present death burial and resurrection
- Your future death burial and resurrection

Challenge: -remembering the 1 second you were held under water. That is the moment of complete surrender and trust in the hands of another. Its your burial.

In other words: we use our trust harder muscles, not our try harder muscles to move forward as followers of Jesus.

“Bring me a Harpist”. Music is used to make to still us and to worship.

“Be still I will fight for you” God to Moses at the Red Sea.

“Be still and know that I am God”Psalm 46

My heart is not proud, LORD,
my eyes are not haughty;
I do not concern myself with great matters
or things too wonderful for me.

² But I have calmed and quieted myself,
I am like a weaned child with its mother;
like a weaned child I am content.

³ Israel, put your hope in the LORD
both now and forevermore.-Psalm 131

Weaned means sated and equipped, not just dependent and vulnerable.

Personal Death, Burial and Resurrection is about surrender and surrender created a vacuum for something needed to live a resurrection life which leads me to the final takeaway:

2. Seek the double portion of the spirit of Elijah.

There was another symbol of in these stories: water. Water filled a valley, and water filled a river.

Water is a symbol of the Spirit:

- Gen 1 The Spirit hovered over the waters as creation began. God breathed (the word for spirit is the word for breath) into man and he came alive.
- John 3 Jesus says we need to be born again, of water and the spirit (rebirth)
- It shouldn't surprise us that water is used in the form of baptism to symbolize the incubator or womb of rebirth in the spirit.

Water filled the valley when their lives were at risk. This means God's spirit is a resource to live.

Water had to be split to cross a river-The spirit's power is what it takes to conquer. God responding to you!

Lets face it: the spirit of Elijah was the spirit of God. He had no power of his own. When we surrender our lives to Jesus, he gives us his Spirit (the Spirit of Elijah). Jesus said that we would do greater things than he did when he went to be with his Father because of the power of the Spirit that we would receive. That is the double portion!

The Cloak: clothing was uniform in their culture. It said who you are. When you are clothed with Christ who are him in the same way that Elisha was Elijah.

How to live in the spirit and power of Elijah:

- a. Listen to promptings
- b. Act on them with humility
- c. Be skeptical of what you want and what you already know.
- d. Ask for filling (hand/palm exercise)-Elisha was bold
- e. Ask God to do bold things
- f. Do bold things that require him to show up.

Story of Giovanni and Angelo:

- Finding my grandma's family in Italy thru Ancestry.com
- Angelo and Lisa come to Eastside. Doing Next Steps over Skype. Kids think they're crazy.
- Hardships of late 2017:
 - Decline of Mortgage Industry,
 - Gio's accident and back,
 - Lisa's surgery
 - Josie's death and dependents
 - Lisa sons and schizophrenia (brother's death from same)
- Gio works leaves his career due to back injury and joins his dad in the mortgage industry which tanks.
- My prayer for God to show him he is there.
- Man at escrow mixer he doesn't know asks if he can pray for him the next day. He is healed and helps his dad start a restaurant. His atheist girlfriend Stephanie now has questions.

Erwin McMannus had to sign a proof of life form in Syria when ISIS was close to the border. What is your proof of Life?

Every Covenant has a sign:

- Marriage=A ring,
- Old Covenant=circumcision (These signs are circular, cyclical, like the seasons)
- New Covenant=the Spirit
 - It's supposed to be as intimate as a ring and circumcision and as physical too. It's your proof of life

Stay surrendered (vacuum) and act on the spirit's prompting with confidence. Then you will be like Elisha who asked for a double portion and got it.

It all leads to the prayer that was your memory verse.

Ephesians 3:16

I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you through his spirit in your inner being.