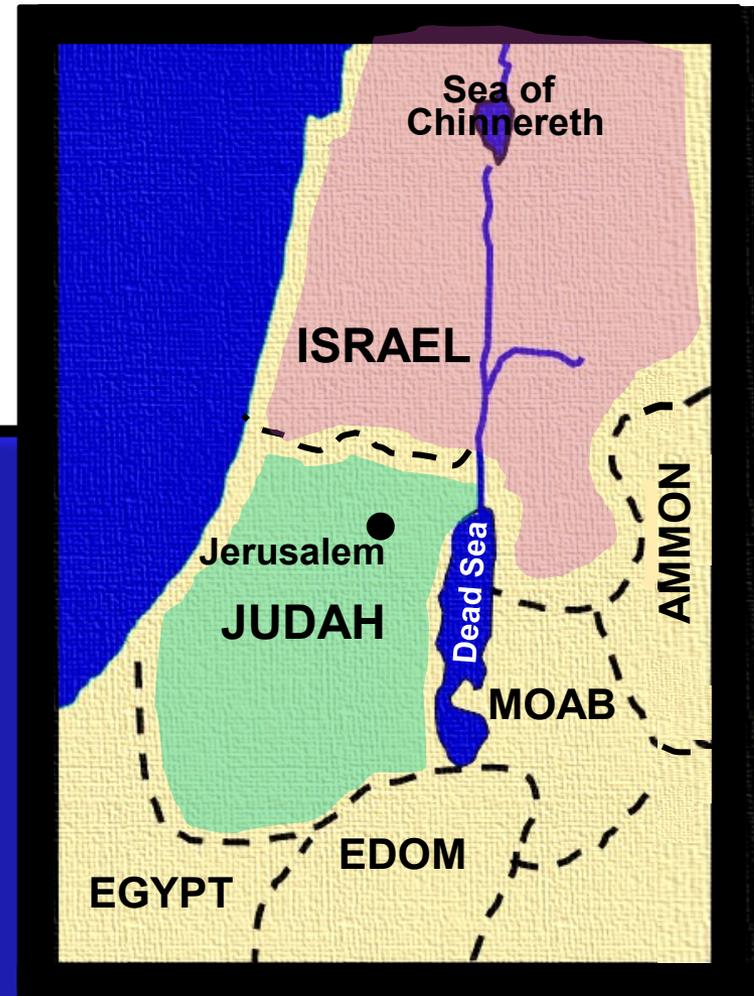


Lesson 6

The Story of the She-Bears

Previous lessons focused on the kingdom dividing under the reigns of Rehoboam and Jeroboam.

The Scriptures revealed interesting stories about these two Kings.



The next kings of whom the Scriptures reveal considerable details are **Jehoshaphat** King of Judah and **Ahab** King of Israel.

Elijah the prophet began his ministry under these two kings.

KINGS OF ISRAEL

Jeroboam	975-954
Nadab	954-953
Baasha	953-930
Elah	930-929
Zimri	929
Omri	929-918
Ahab	918-897
Ahaziah	897-896
Joram	896-884
Jehu	884-856
Jehoahaz	856-841
Joash	841-825
Jeroboam II	825-784
Zechariah	773
Shallum	772
Menahem	772-762
Pekahiah	762-760
Pekah	760-740
Hoshea	730-721

KINGS OF JUDAH

Rehoboam	975-958
Abijah	958-955
Asa	955-914
Jehoshaphat	914-892
Jehoram	892-884
Ahaziah	885
Athaliah	885-878
Joash	878-839
Amaziah	839-810
Uzziah	810-758
Jotham	758-742
Ahaz	742-726
Hezekiah	726-698
Manasseh	698-643
Amon	643-641
Josiah	641-610
Jehoahaz	610
Jehoiakim	610-599
Jehoiachin	599
Zedekiah	599-586

Elisha was tutored by
Elijah and their
combined ministries
extended through the
reigns of the kings
indicated on
this chart.

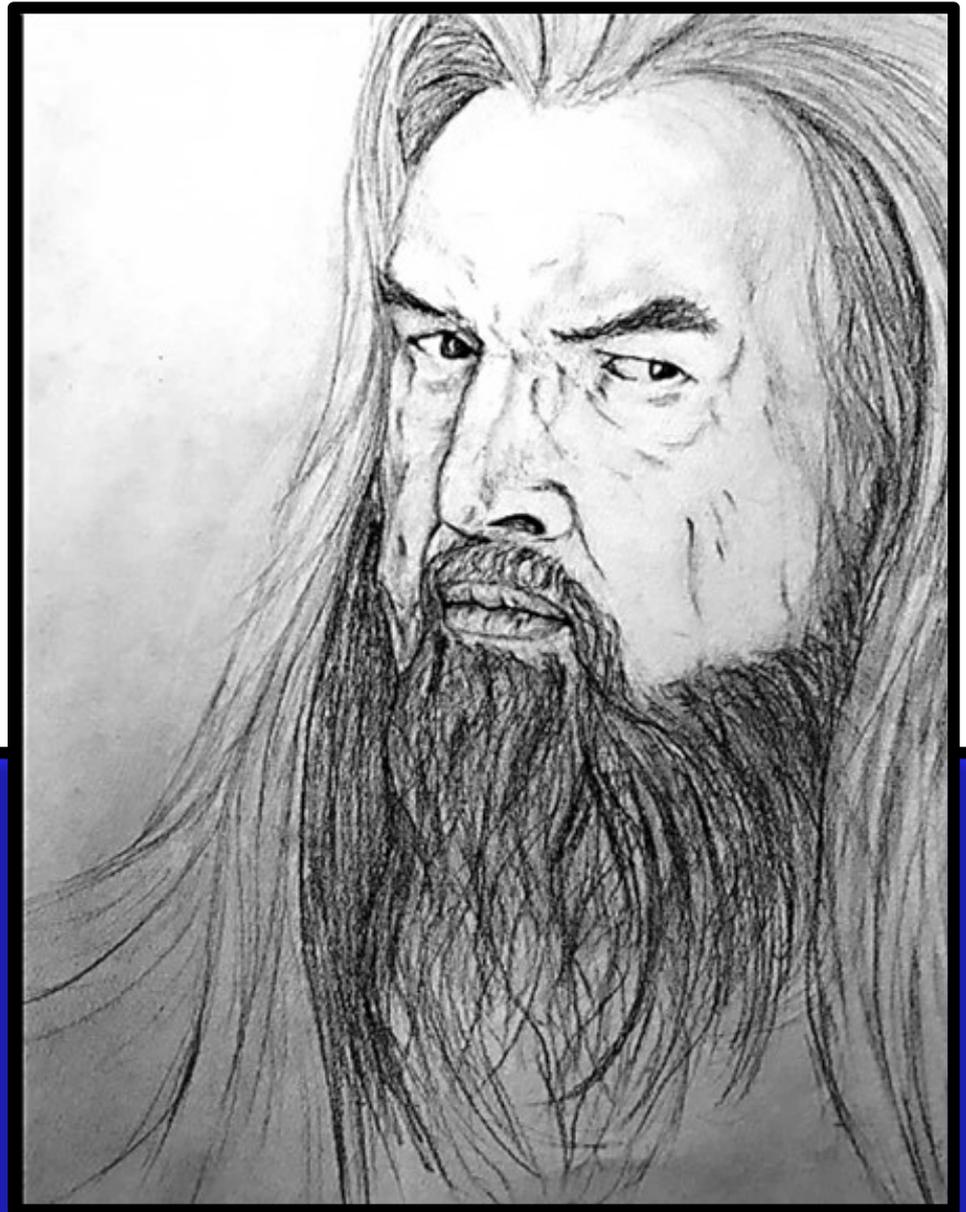
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KINGS OF JUDAH

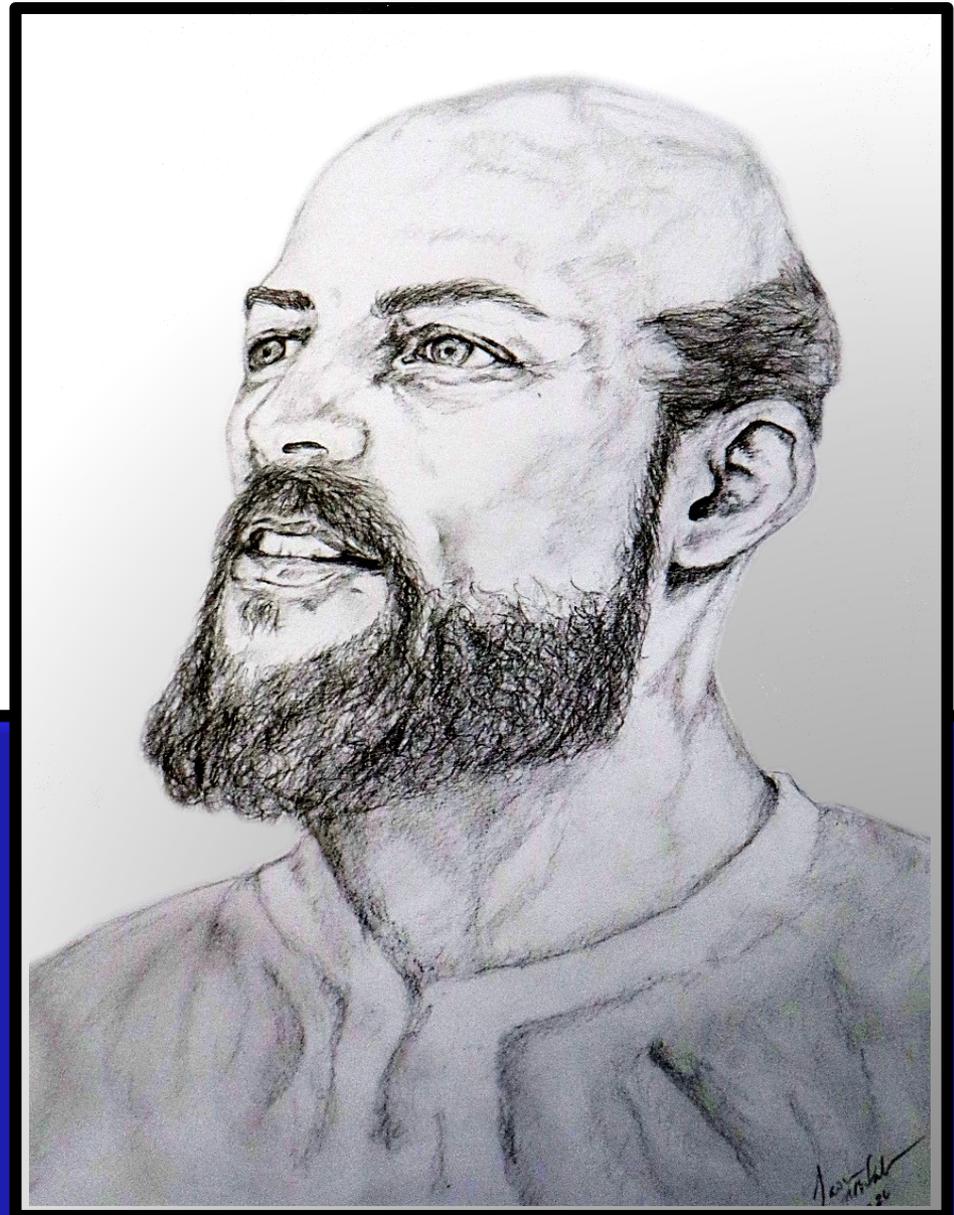
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Elijah was a fiery prophet, a man of the wilderness who wore camel hair (rustic clothing) and ate locusts and wild honey.



Artwork by Jason McDade

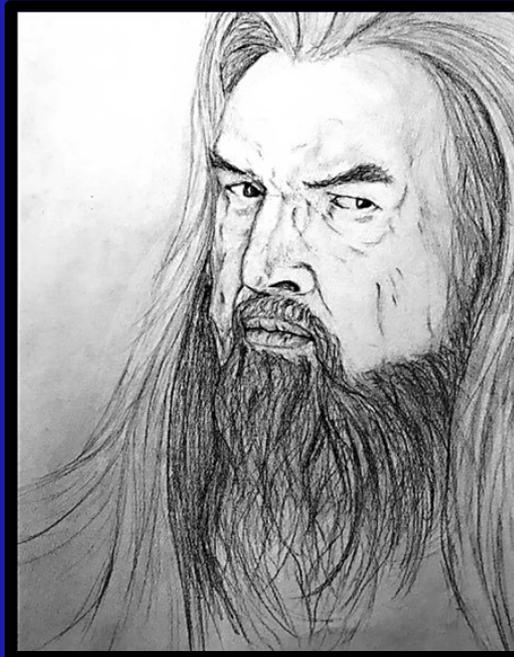
Elisha was a farmer that was called by God to be trained by Elijah and follow in his footsteps, and that he did. They were inseparable companions.



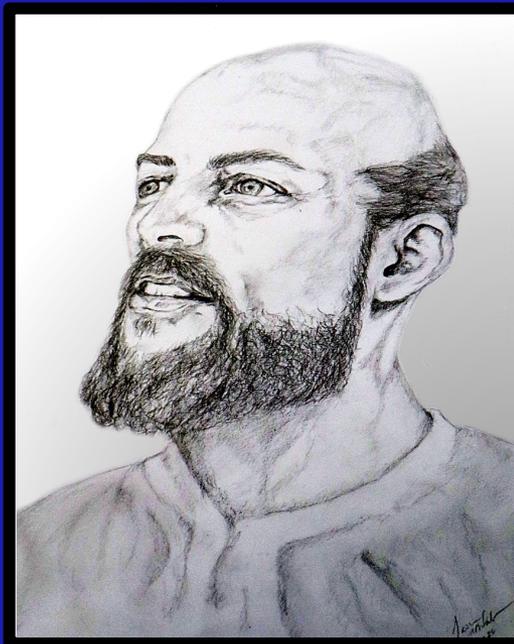
Elijah was given the peculiar honor of being translated rather than dying. He and Enoch (Genesis 5:24) were the only two men in the Bible to never die.

Also, it was him that appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration along with Moses (Matthew 17:1-13). Yet, his successor, Elisha, was granted his request to have twice the power of Elijah.

Elijah and Elisha have been likened to John the Baptist and Jesus. In fact, John the Baptist was actually called Elijah in Matthew 11:14.



ELIJAH



ELISHA

SUMMARY OF ELIJAH AND ELISHA'S MINISTERIES

ELIJAH'S MIRACLES, WONDERS AND DEEDS

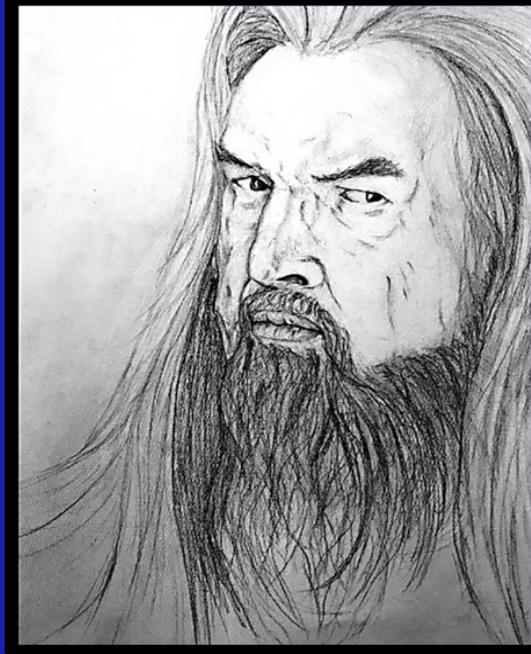
Three years of drought
Fed by ravens
Oil & meal (widow of Zarephath)
Healed widow of Zarephath's son
Fire from heaven on the altar
Ran down from Mt. Carmel
Fire from heaven on the 50
Parting of Jordan
Ascension in whirlwind
Mount of Transfiguration

ELISHA'S MIRACLES, WONDERS, AND DEEDS

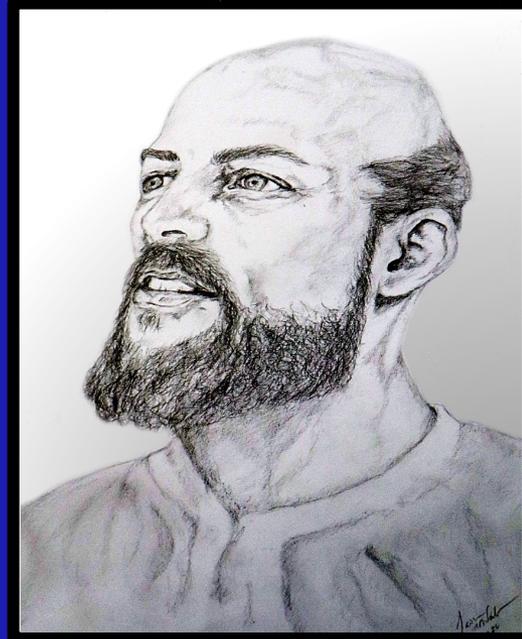
Parting of Jordan
Healed spring of water
42 children killed by 2 bears
Miracle of water for 3 armies
The widow's oil was increased
The Shunammite's son raised
Poisonous pottage healed
Loaves of bread multiplied
Naaman's leprosy healed
Struck Gehazi with leprosy
The axe head was made to swim
Predicted Syrian's military moves
Ring of fiery horses
Struck the Syrian army with blindness
Miracle of the arrows
His bones raised the dead

It is hard to choose a favorite story from the lives of Elijah and Elisha, for there are so many dramatic accounts of their courage and faithfulness.

In an attempt to avoid the most familiar narratives, the “She-Bears” story, though short, is a gripping account. It occurs not long after Elijah was translated and Elisha was left to continue his ministry.



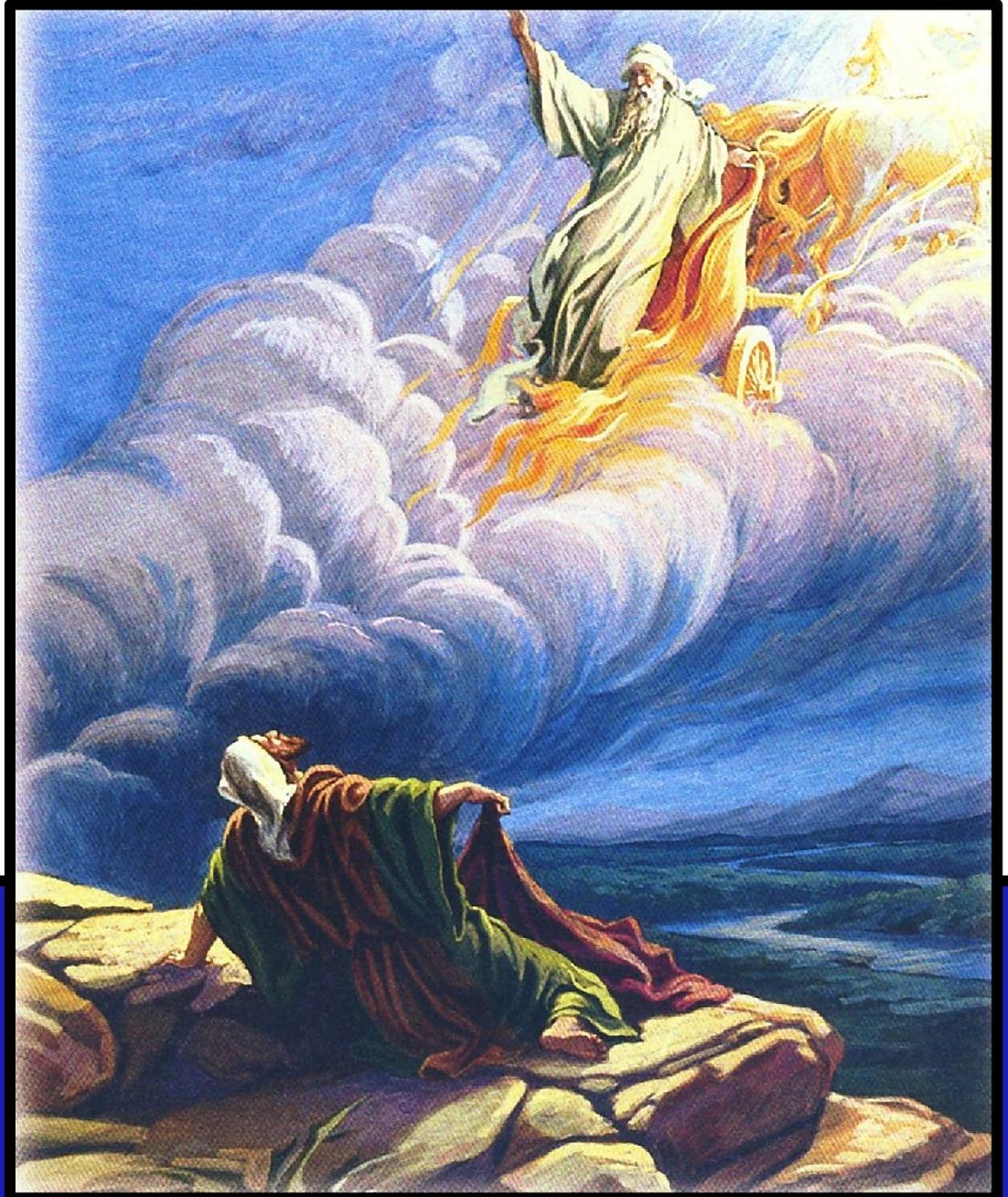
ELIJAH



ELISHA

When Elijah was translated Elisha saw him as he was taken up in a chariot by a whirlwind.

This confirmed that he would be granted a double portion of the spirit of Elijah.



II Kings 2:10-13

¹⁰ And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing: nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so.

¹¹ And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.

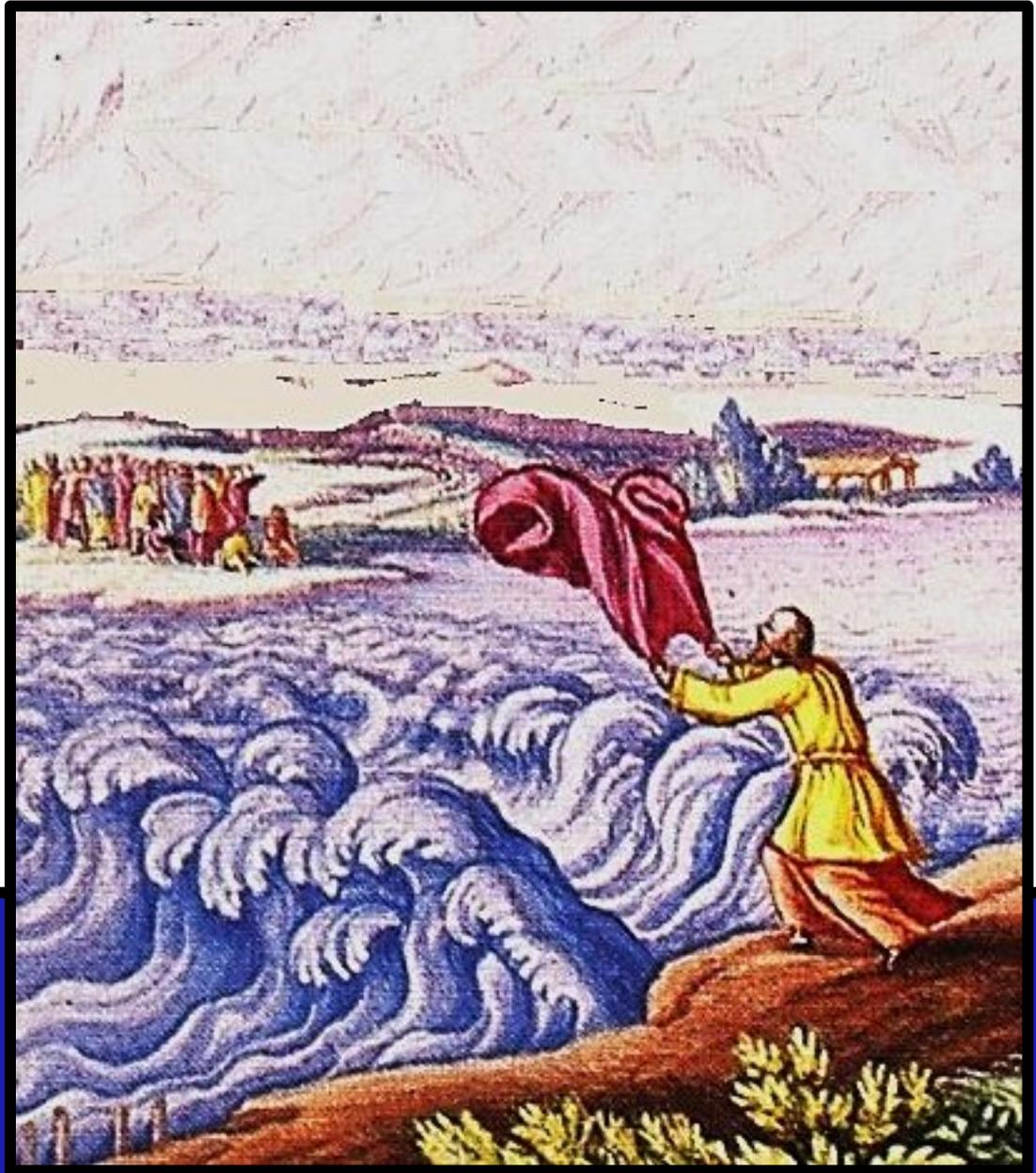
¹² And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the



horsemen thereof. And he saw him no more: and he took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in two pieces.

¹³ He took up also the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and went back, and stood by the bank of Jordan.”

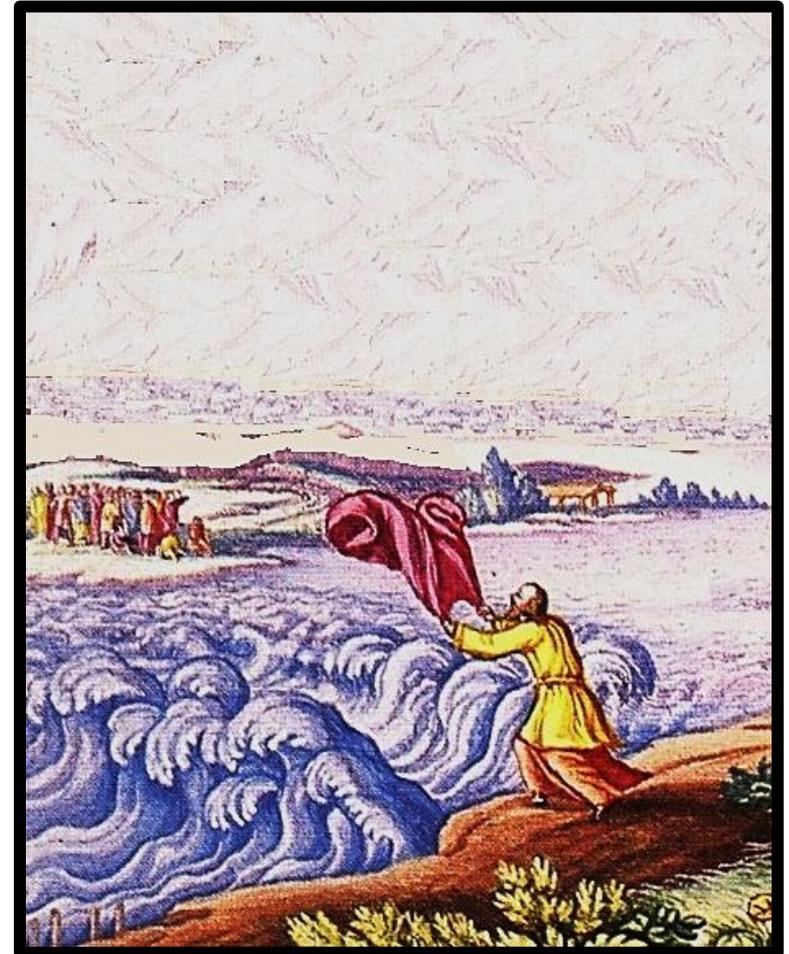
Elijah's cloak had fallen from him and Elisha used it to part the Jordan River. Some of the sons of the prophets saw the miracle and knew he had the spirit of Elijah.



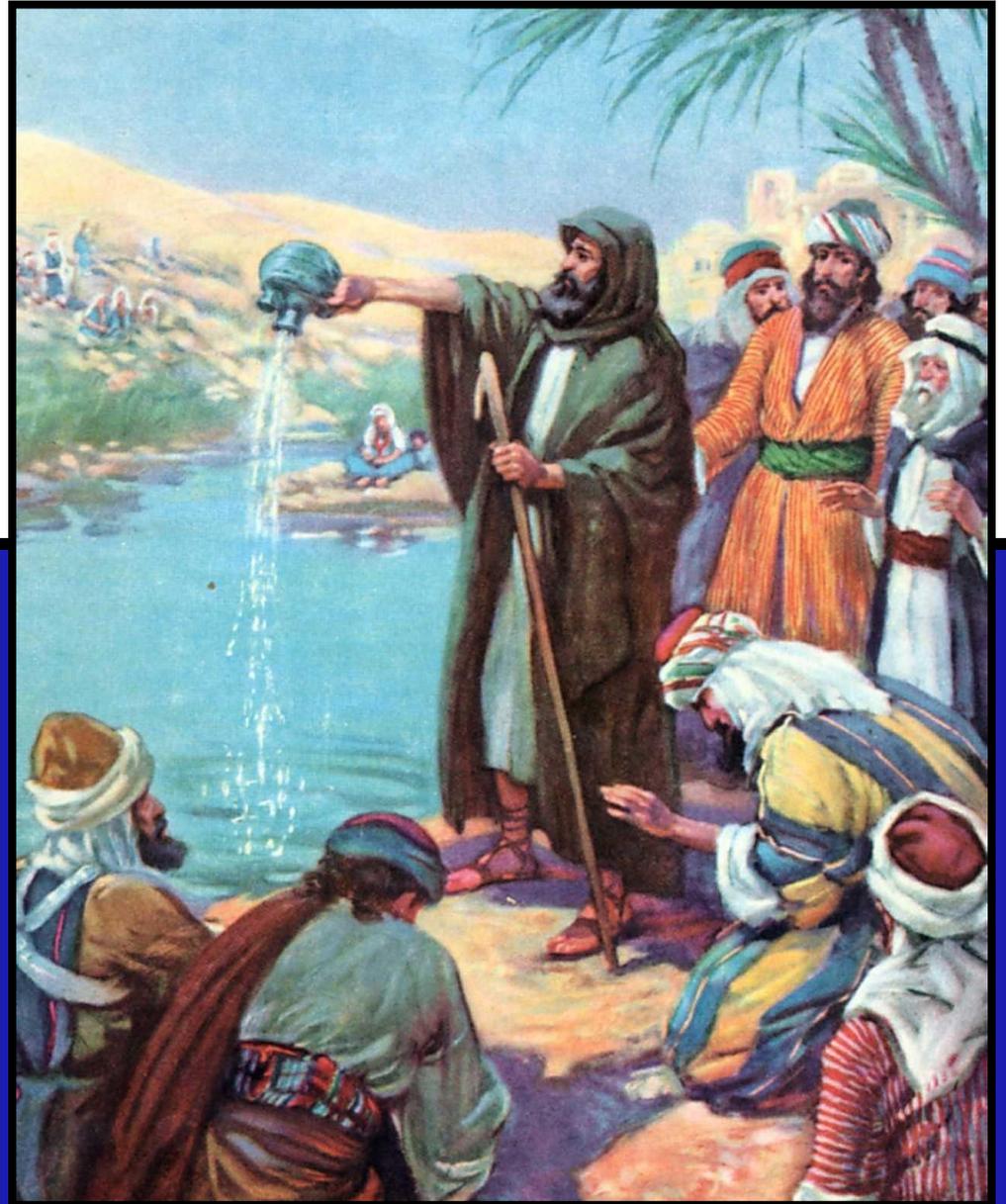
II Kings 2:14-15

“¹⁴ And he took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and smote the waters, and said, Where is the Lord God of Elijah? and when he also had smitten the waters, they parted hither and thither: and Elisha went over.

¹⁵ And when the sons of the prophets which were to view at Jericho saw him, they said, The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha. And they came to meet him, and bowed themselves to the ground before him.”

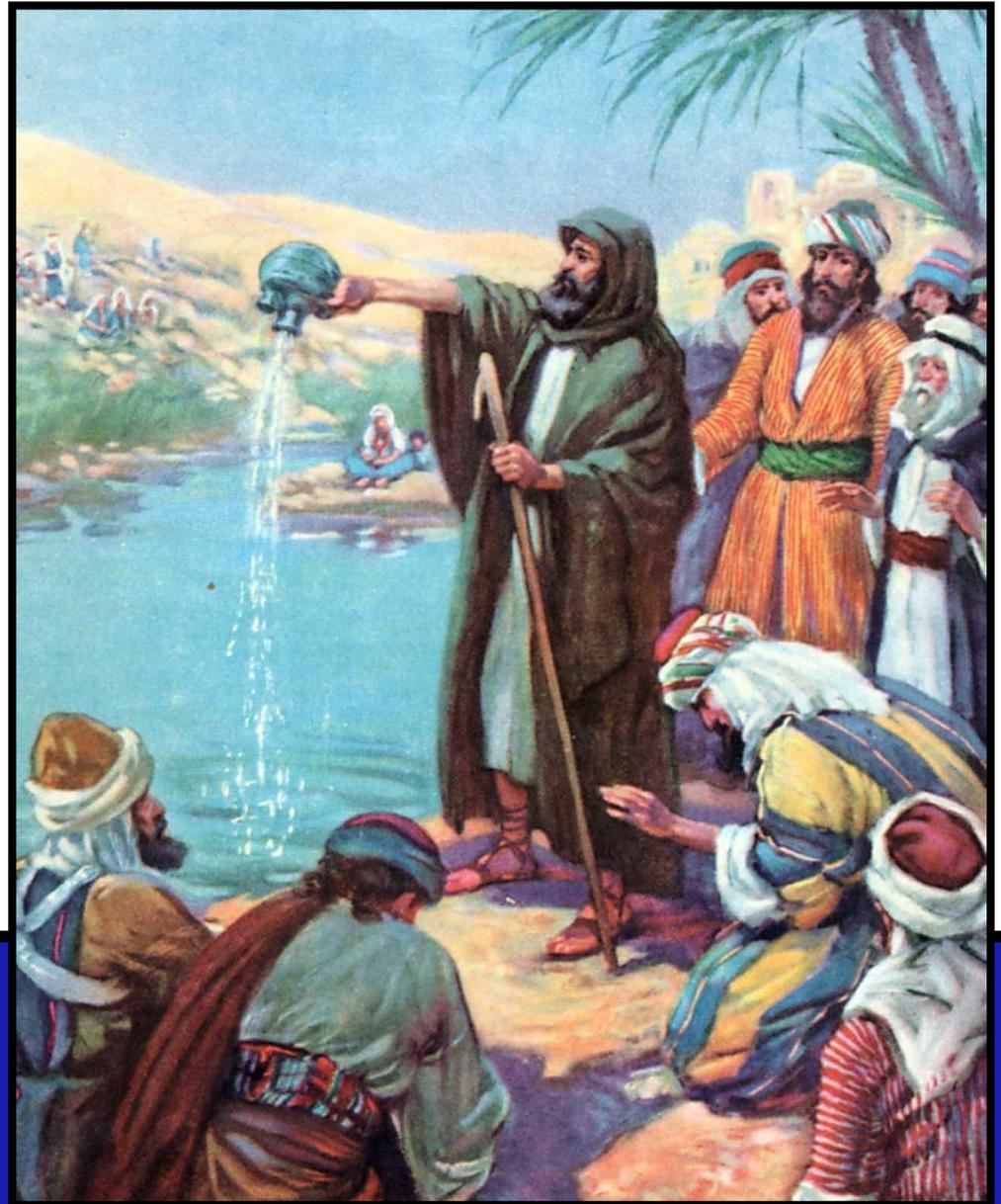


Not long after Elisha parted the Jordan River with Elijah's coat he did another miracle; the healing of a spring of water at Jericho.



These two miracles that Elisha performed verified that he had the power of Elijah.

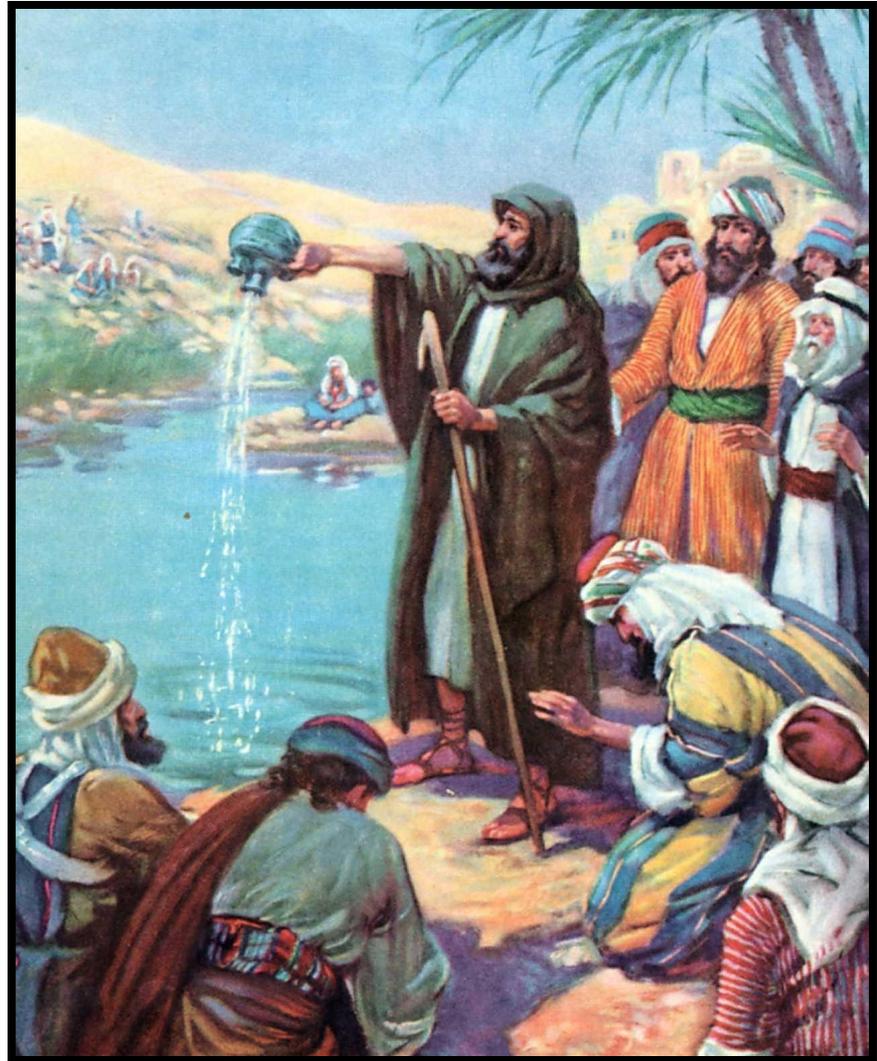
Healing the spring with a “thus saith the Lord” also caused the people to be more willing to receive from Elisha a reproof, admonition or command.



TAKE A LOOK AT THE TEXT FOR THE HEALING OF THE WATER AT JERICHO

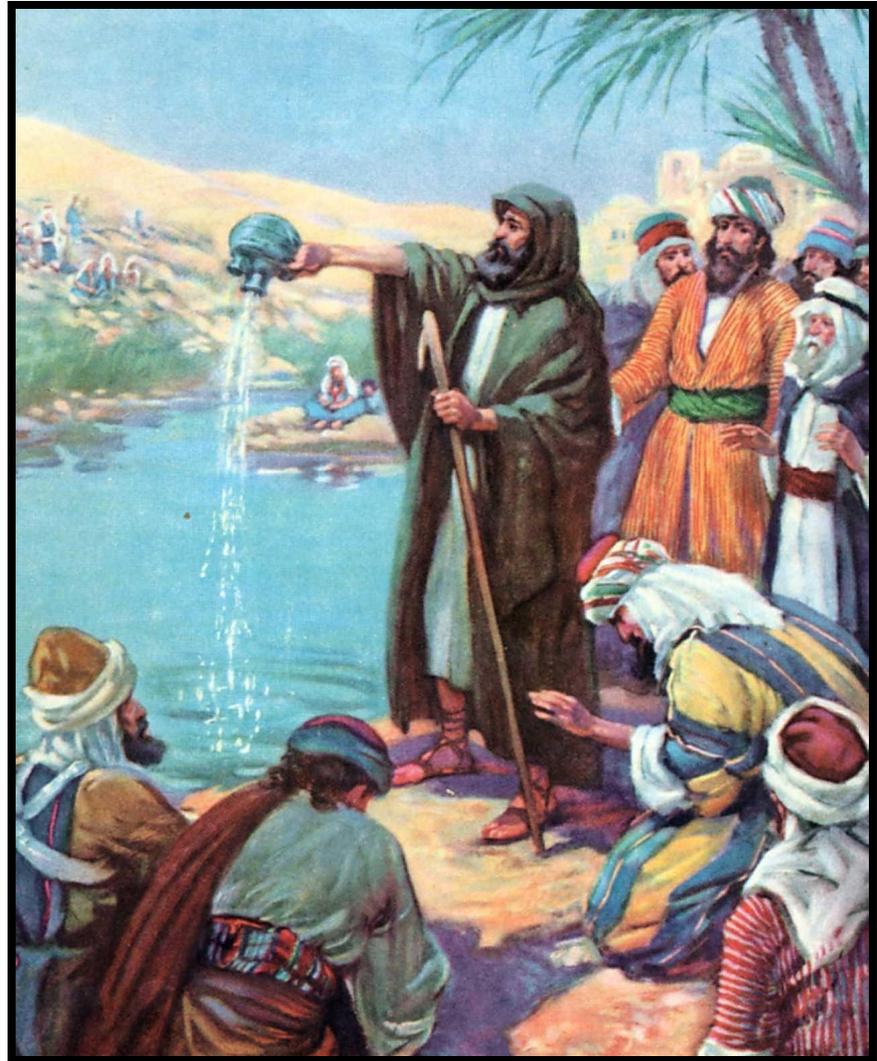
II Kings 2

“¹⁹And the men of the city said unto Elisha, Behold, I pray thee, the situation of this city is pleasant, as my lord seeth: but the water is naught, and the ground barren. ²⁰And he said, Bring me a new cruse, and put salt therein. And they brought it to him.”



II Kings 2

“²¹And he went forth unto the spring of the waters, and cast the salt in there, and said, Thus saith the Lord, I have healed these waters; there shall not be from thence any more death or barren land. ²²So the waters were healed unto this day, according to the saying of Elisha which he spake.”



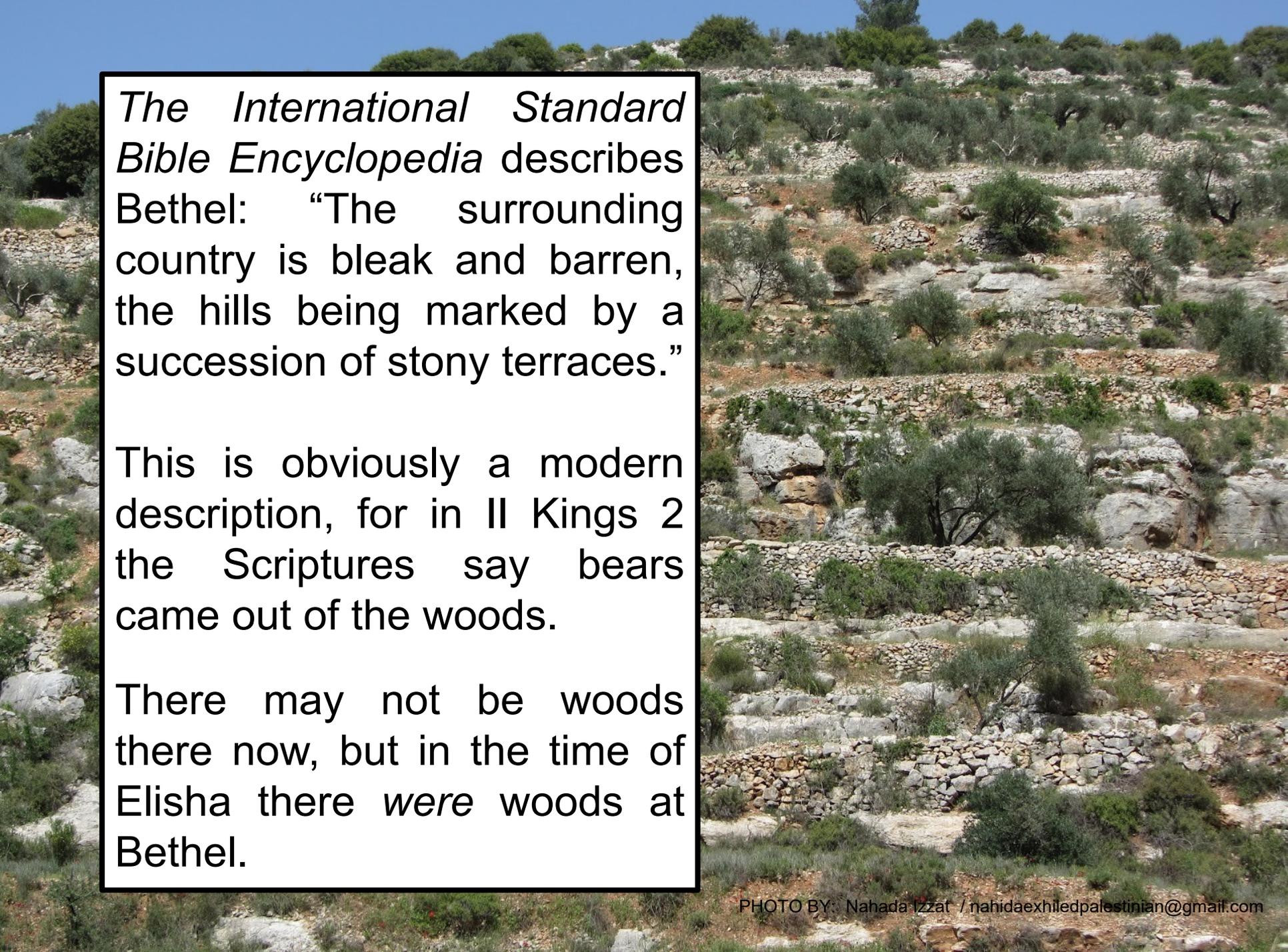
Elisha had gained the confidence of the people and the other prophets.

After this event he left Jericho and went to Bethel where there was a school of the prophets.



The ancient location of Bethel today is in Palestinian territory. To visit you must pass through checkpoints. The terrain is rocky with few trees; certainly, no forests.





The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia describes Bethel: “The surrounding country is bleak and barren, the hills being marked by a succession of stony terraces.”

This is obviously a modern description, for in II Kings 2 the Scriptures say bears came out of the woods.

There may not be woods there now, but in the time of Elisha there *were* woods at Bethel.

Bible locations have greatly changed due to war and abuse by the inhabitants. In ancient times there were minerals, forests, and beasts that are no longer there.



At Bethel the prophets welcomed Elisha with all possible respect, but the townsmen were abusive to him.

One of the golden calves that Jeroboam worshipped many decades before was still at Bethel; the people were proud of their idol and hated those that reproved them.



We may suppose it was their usual practice to jeer at the prophets as they went along the streets, call them names, and try to drive them out of their town.

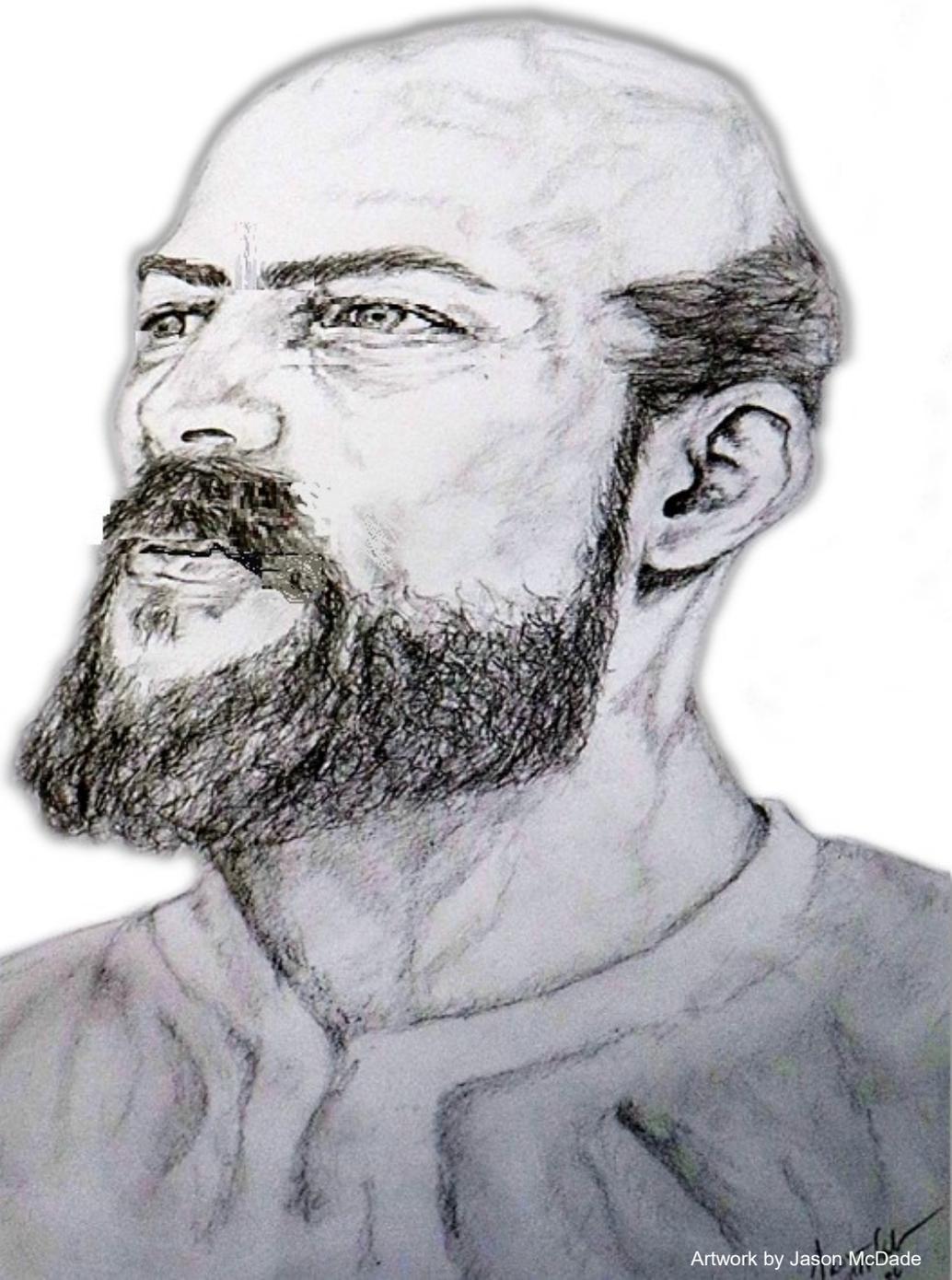
II Chronicles 36

“¹⁶But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets”



II Kings 2

“²³And he [Elisha] went up from thence unto Bethel: and as he was going up by the way, there came forth little children out of the city, and mocked him, and said unto him, Go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head.”



II Kings 2

“²⁴And he turned back, and looked on them, and cursed them in the name of the Lord. **And there came forth two she bears out of the wood, and tare forty and two children of them.** ²⁵And he went from thence to mount Carmel, and from thence he returned to Samaria.”





Only 2 bears killed 42 children!

Were there more children that were
able to escape?

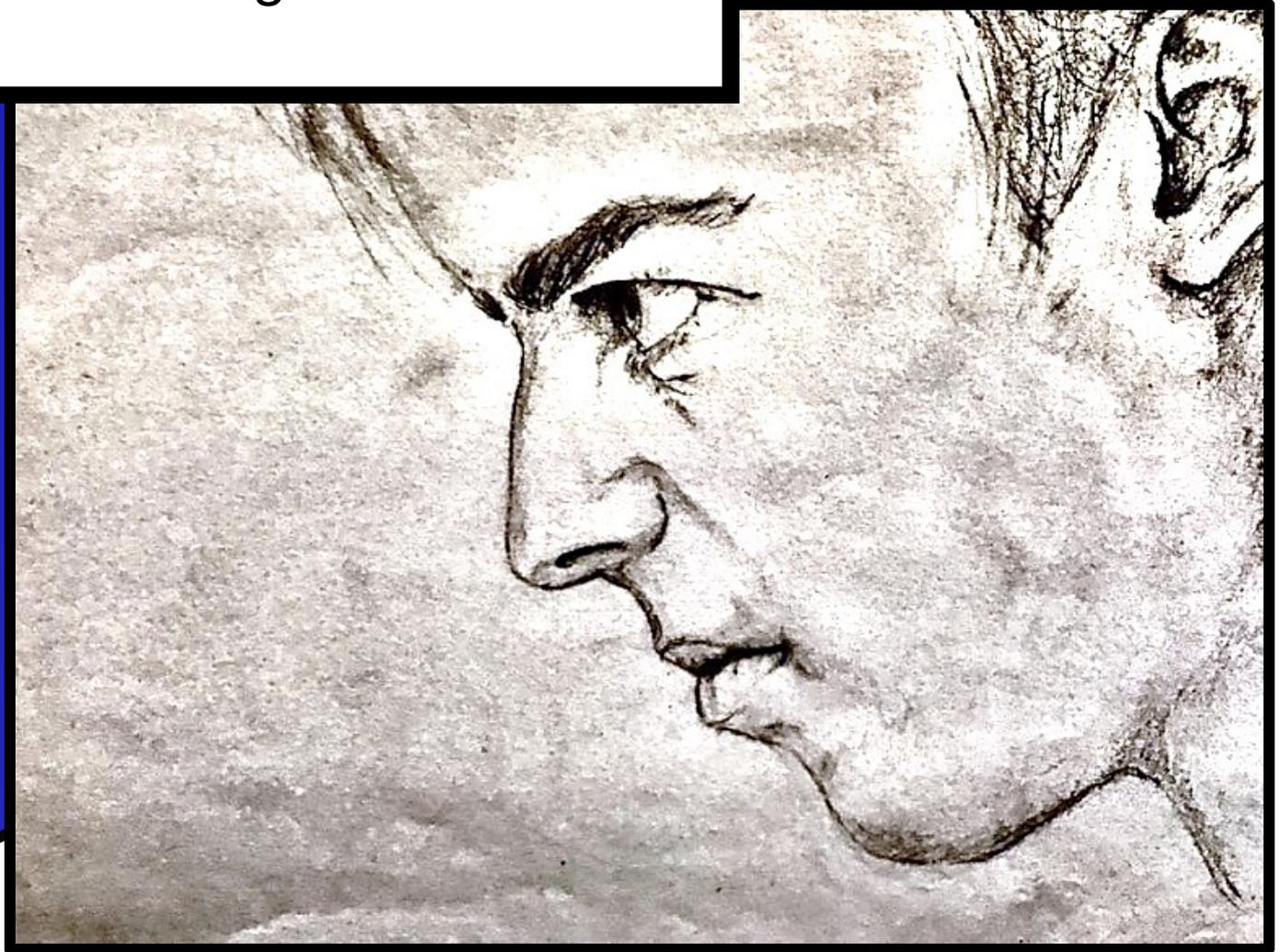
or

Did some watch as their friends
were killed only for the bears to turn
on them that watched?

The death of these children also punished their parents who had taught their children with their own examples of hatred toward the prophets.



In vain do we grieve for children whose parents have turned them over to Satan with their neglect and evil ways.

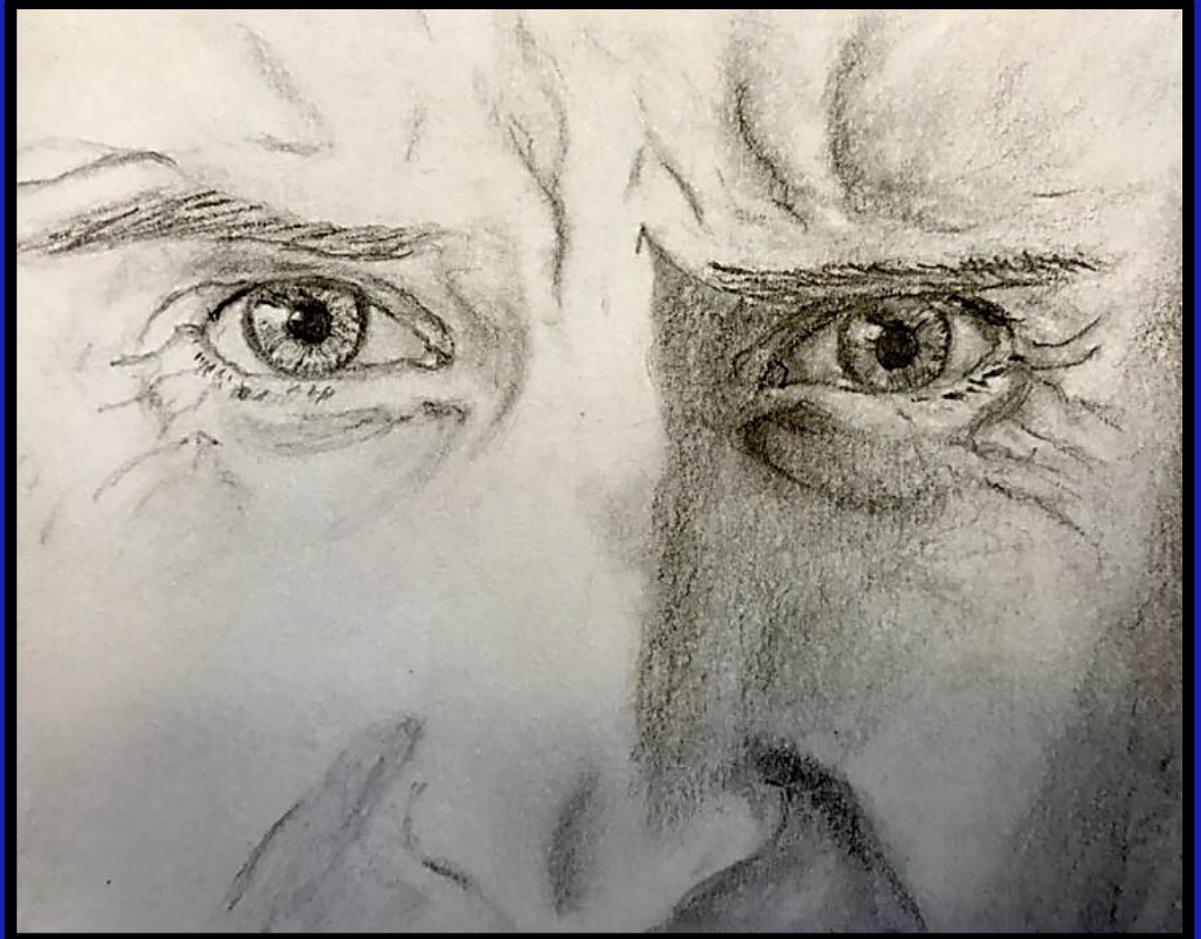


Artwork by Jason McDade

God chose this end to the lives of these children who doubtless would have been worse than verbally abusive to the prophets should they have lived to be adults.

Matthew Henry in his commentary says about them,

“Let the wicked wretched brood make our flesh tremble for fear of God.”



THE END