

The feast of the Prophet Elisha at the Patriarchate



On Friday, the 14th/27th of June 2025, the commemoration of the Holy Prophet Elisha was celebrated by the Patriarchate at the Holy Monastery bearing his name, situated beside the sycomore tree of Zacchaeus in Jericho.

Concerning the Prophet Elisha, the Church, drawing from the Old Testament, hands down that he was the son of Shaphat, from the town of Abel-meholah in the land of Manasseh, and by trade a farmer. Having received a divine command, the Prophet Elijah anointed him as a prophet, bestowing upon him a double portion of grace. Elisha then slew twelve yoke of oxen and gave them as food to his people, and faithfully followed the Prophet Elijah.

The environs of Jericho were the place of his prophetic ministry, where he wrought many signs and wonders. Among these was the transformation of the waters of Jericho from bitter and deadly into sweet and healthful. The Prophet Elisha followed Elijah as far as the Jordan River, when, by divine power and favour, Elijah was taken up into heaven “by a chariot of fire,” as a charioteer of flame. At that moment,

Elisha asked for and received a double portion of his spirit through the prophet's mantle, which he cast upon him. With this mantle, Elisha crossed the Jordan River on dry ground, "O Lord, how marvellous are Thy works, in all the world, yea, even in Thy prophets!"

In honour of his holy memory, a festal Divine Liturgy was celebrated at the aforementioned Holy Monastery in Jericho, presided over by His Beatitude, our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem, Theophilos III. Concelebrating with him were His Eminence Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, the Chief Secretary of the Patriarchate, His Eminence Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, His Eminence Metropolitan Makarios of Ptolemaïs, and Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, among whom was the Elder Dragoman Archimandrite Matthew, and Archimandrites Klaudios and Christodoulos. along with Hieromonks from neighbouring Monasteries, Archimandrite Onouphrios, Fr Kyriakos and Fr Chrysogonos. Also concelebrating was the Head of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission (MISSIA), Archimandrite Vassianos, while present in prayer were His Eminence Metropolitan Benediktos of Diocaesarea, and Spiritual Fathers from the Monasteries of Saint Sabbas the Sanctified, Abba Gerasimos of the Jordan, and Beit Jala: Fr Eudokimos, Fr Chrysostomos, and Fr Ignatios.

The chanting was led by the chief cantor of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Deacon Eustathios in Greek and the local Byzantine choir in Arabic, with the participation of the faithful from the local area and pilgrims from Jerusalem and other regions, in the presence of the Consul of the Greek General Consulate in Jerusalem, Mr Petros Anagnostaras.

Before the Holy Communion, His Beatitude delivered the following Sermon:

"By divine foresight, the great Elijah drew thee to himself, O wise Elisha, as a disciple, manifesting thee to be a prophet, illumined by the Spirit; wherefore, today we celebrate thy most holy memory, reverently honouring thee, O glorious one," the hymnographer of the Church proclaims (Matins, Ode 3, Troparion1).

Beloved in Christ brethren,
Pious Christians and pilgrims,

The Holy Spirit, which illumined the Prophet Elisha, has gathered us all today at the monastery dedicated to his name, in the most ancient and scriptural city of Jericho, that we may solemnly celebrate his sacred commemoration.

Elisha was a disciple of the Prophet Elijah, by whom he was anointed a prophet, according to the commandment of the Lord: "And the Lord said unto him (Elijah),

Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus... and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room... and he (Elijah) departed thence, and found Elisha... and cast his mantle upon him... And Elisha arose, and went after Elijah, and ministered unto him” (cf. 1 Kings 19:15-21). Through his mantle, the Prophet Elijah transmitted to Elisha his spirit, that is, his prophetic mission.

It is noteworthy that the prophets prophesied by the enlightening energy of the Holy Spirit, as is attested by the Apostle Peter, who said: “For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (2 Peter 1:21). Commenting on this, Saint Cyril of Alexandria said: “He clearly showeth that the act of prophesying is an operation of the Holy Spirit.”

From the foregoing, it is shown that the wondrous Elisha was the chosen one, the holy man of God, who spoke prophecy, being inspired and guided by the Holy Spirit. In other words, the marvellous Elisha became a minister of the Holy Spirit. Many great signs, his biographer says, did God work by the hand of the Prophet Elisha.

With the mantle of his teacher, the Prophet Elijah, he parted the waters of the Jordan and passed through them. Because of this act, “the sons of the prophets” recognised that the spirit of Elijah rested upon Elisha, and they bowed themselves to the ground before him (cf. 2 Kings 2:13-15).

The prophetic grace of the righteous Elisha is accompanied by extraordinary acts and manifold wonders. He turned the brackish waters of a certain spring near Jericho into drinkable water: “So the waters were healed unto this day, according to the saying of Elisha which he spake” (2 Kings 2:19-22). He cursed the mocking children, who were then torn by two she-bears (2 Kings 2:23-25). He multiplied the oil of a poor widow so that she might be delivered from grievous debt (2 Kings 4:1-7). He raised to life the son of the wealthy Shunammite woman who had hosted him (2 Kings 4:18-37). He healed Naaman, the Syrian general, of his leprosy (2 Kings 5:1-14). He chastised his deceitful and covetous servant Gehazi with that same disease (2 Kings 5:20-27). He made an iron axe head float upon the waters of the Jordan (2 Kings 6:6-7), and performed many other miracles. Remarkably, even after his death, he wrought a miracle, raising a dead man who was cast into his grave and touched his bones: “And when the man was let down and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived, and stood up on his feet” (2 Kings 13:20-21).

Blessed Elisha, like his teacher Elijah the Thesbite, was distinguished by his

fearlessness and supernatural power, as it is written in the book of the Wisdom of Sirach: “Elias it was, who was wrapped in a whirlwind: and Elisha was filled with his spirit; he did not tremble before any ruler, neither was any man able to bring him into subjection. Nothing could overcome him, and in his death, his body prophesied. He did wonders in his life, and at death his works were marvellous” (Ecclesiasticus 48:12–14).

Among the mighty works, or more fittingly, the living operations of Elisha, was his uprooting of idolatry in general, and in particular the worship of Baal, which included even human sacrifices. This testifies to the godliness of Elisha, who, upon his calling to the prophetic office, demonstrated both obedience to the will of God and perfect self-denial, as well as purity of heart, which receives the light of true divine vision. “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God” (Matthew 5:8), the Lord says.

Both the prophets of the Old Covenant and the apostles of the New were vessels of the Holy Spirit, having been called by God; therefore, power was given unto them to work signs and wonders.

Let us also heed the voice of the hymnographer who proclaims: “Having received a double portion of grace from the Spirit, thou wast shown to be a wondrous prophet unto all the ends of the earth, delivering them that hymn thee from perils, and bestowing the grace of thy miracles upon those who approach with faith, crying unto thee: Rejoice, O wondrous Prophet” (Kontakion).

The Holy Church of Christ honours and exalts the sacred memory of the Prophet Elisha, for he was verily an instrument of the Holy Spirit—that is, of the Spirit of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ—and a vessel of divine Revelation, having foretold the great mystery of the divine Providence. In other words, the God-inspired Elisha is recognised as the theologian among the prophets, for he received a double portion of grace, namely the enlightening energy of the Holy Spirit, and became a herald of divine righteousness.

Wherefore, let us beseech the “man of God,” the wondrous Elisha, that together with the intercessions of the Theotokos and Mother of God, he may entreat the merciful Lord on our behalf, that we may be made worthy of the salvation of our souls, and of the establishment of peace in our afflicted region and in the whole world. Amen. Many happy returns, in peace and grace!”

Following the dismissal, His Beatitude read the blessing for the fruits of the season—grapes, figs, and other produce—there in Jericho.

Thereafter, the newly appointed Hegoumen, Hieromonk Dositheos, hosted His Beatitude and the congregation.

At midday, the Jericho community, together with the Hegoumen, offered a festal meal.

Upon the conclusion of the feast, His Beatitude, accompanied by His honourable entourage, visited the newly constructed Clergy-Retirement-home in Jericho, a project of His Eminence Metropolitan Benedictos of Diocaesarea, with the benefaction of Mr Samer Khoury.

From the Chief Secretariat

































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