Research: Elisha cruse and salt

II Kings 2:19-22

“Elisha labored for approximately fifty years under four of the kings

of Israel: Jehoram, Jehu, Jehoahaz, and Jehoash. Like Elijah, he was the

mouthpiece of God’s will, voicing the divine displeasure at the iniquitous.

“The many miracles of Elisha’s ministry, all of which took place after

he received the double portion of the Spirit, evidenced the grace, mercy,

and goodness of God, working blessings to men in the common walks of

life.

“At Jericho he purified the waters of a spring;

He multiplied the widow’s oil to the saving of her house;

He comforted the Shunammite woman with the promise of a son;

He raised her son from the dead;

He rendered poisoned pottage harmless;

With twenty loaves he fed a hundred men;

He healed Naaman the Syrian of leprosy, but punished his own

 servant Gehazi for abusing his master’s name;

He caused an iron axe head to float;

Elisha’s bones restored a dead man to life.

Elisha fulfilled two of the commissions given Elijah at Horeb: to

appoint Hazael king of Syria and to anoint Jehu king of Israel (II Ki.

8:7–13; 9:1–10). Through Hazael’s wars against Israel, Israel was

weakened; through Jehu the house of Ahab was totally destroyed, the

wickedness of Jezebel against God’s prophets was avenged, and Baal

worship was exterminated in the Kingdom of Israel.”

19 And 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* nought, and the ground barren.

“Jericho, “the city of palms” had a fine position, “rising like an oasis from a broad plain of sand.

Situation is mowshab (Strong’s 4186) in Hebrew which means “dwelling place, location.”

Nought is ra’ (7451) which means “bad, disagreeable, malignant, displeasing, evil”

“And the ground barren - Translate "and the land apt to miscarry." The stream was thought to be the cause of untimely births, abortions, and the like, among the cattle, perhaps also among the people, that drank of it” (Barnes’ Notes, [www.biblehub.com)](http://www.biblehub.com))

 “The sources of thought and action have become impure in many a modern community. . . the very springs of life have become corrupted so that the fruits of men have become diseased. Elisha made those waters pure by the infusion of salt. Jesus told his disciples they were to be the ‘salt of the earth’ (Matt.5:13). Everywhere salt is nature’s perpetual foe of decay” (AB.3.196).

20 And he said, Bring me a new cruse, and put salt therein. And they brought *it* to him.

“**A new cruse.**—*Vessel*; either *dish, bowl,* or*cup;* only here. A *new* one, because the holy purpose demanded an instrument uncontaminated by use” (Ellicott’s Commentary, www.biblehub.com).

“Salt. A preservative and a symbol of wholesomeness and purity” (Dummelow 229).

“The role of [**salt**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edible_salt)**in the**[**Bible**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bible) is relevant to understanding Hebrew society during the [Old Testament](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_Testament) and [New Testament](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Testament) periods. Salt is a necessity of life and was a mineral that was used since ancient times in many cultures as a [seasoning](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seasoning), a [preservative](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Preservative), a [disinfectant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Disinfectant), a component of ceremonial offerings, and as a unit of exchange. The Bible contains numerous references to salt. In various contexts, it is used [metaphorically](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metaphorically) to signify [permanence](https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/permanence), [loyalty](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Loyalty), [durability](https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/durability), [fidelity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fidelity), [usefulness](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Usefulness), [value](https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/value), and [purification](https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/purification)” (Wikipedia).

“*And put salt therein —*A most improper remedy; for salt naturally makes waters brackish, and lands barren, Hereby therefore he intended to show, that the change desired was to be effected, not by any natural means, but solely by the divine power, which could work either without means or against them” (Benson Commentary, [www.biblehub.com)](http://www.biblehub.com)).

“The "new cruse" and the "salt" are evidently chosen from a regard to symbolism. The foul stream represents sin, and to cleanse it emblems of purity must be taken. Hence, the clean "new" dish previously unused, and thus untainted; and the salt, a common Scriptural symbol of incorruption” (Barnes’ Notes, [www.biblehub.com)](http://www.biblehub.com)).

“The pouring in of the salt was a symbolic act with which Elisha accompanied the word of the Lord, by which the spring was healed” (Jamieson-Fausset-Brown, [www.biblehub.com)](http://www.biblehub.com)).

21 And 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*.

“Therefore he says, *Thus saith the Lord God, I have healed these waters —*He himself; the new cruise and the salt were no more than mere instruments, or channels through which God was pleased to convey this healing virtue. *There shall not be from thence any more death —*Hurt or danger, to man or beast, by drinking the water. *So the waters were healed unto this day —*There is a fountain at this very day, toward the west of Jericho, which rises about three quarters of a league above the town in the way to Jerusalem, and, yielding a great deal of water, very excellent in its kind, runs along and fructifies the plain: and many authors speak of the extraordinary fruitfulness and pleasantness of the country hereabouts, after this time” (Benson Commentary, www.biblehub.com).

22 So the waters were healed unto this day, according to the saying of Elisha which he spake.

“So the waters were healed unto this day, according to the saying of Elisha which he spake. It was not a mere temporary, but a permanent, benefit which Elisha bestowed upon the town” (Pulpit Commentary, www.biblehub.com).