(5-20) 1 Kings 19:17. Whom Did Elisha Slay?

There is no record of Elisha slaying anyone. This passage may mean that Elisha would prophesy the death of certain people. Of course, the Bible record as it is now is fragmentary at best, and the details of the incident referred to here may be lost.

(5-21) 1 Kings 19:19–21. Twelve Yoke of Oxen

Elisha must have been wealthy to have been plowing with twelve yokes of oxen, for each yoke pulled a plow and was driven by a servant. The feast of two oxen also indicates wealth. Eating the oxen and burning their equipment symbolically represents Elisha's rejection of worldly wealth as Elisha prepared to follow Elijah and to make the considerable material sacrifice involved in responding to the prophetic call.

(5-22) 1 Kings 19:19. What Was the Mantle of the Prophet That Was Placed on Elisha?

A mantle is a coat or similar covering.

“When Elijah walked up to the plow where Elisha was standing the prophet simply removed his rough mantle and placed it across the shoulders of Elisha. The astonished Elisha seemed to have known exactly what this emblematic gesture meant. He was being designated for the prophetic calling and being chosen as the understudy and future successor of Elijah. No lengthy discussion or art of persuasion was employed to induce Elisha to accept the call. It was not needed. He was one of the choice 7,000 referred to by the Lord who had not bowed the knee to Baal but respected the Holy Priesthood of God and accepted with enthusiasm the discipline and obedience required by such a calling.” (Skousen, Fourth Thousand Years, p. 359.)

Out of this simple act, the phrase “mantle of the prophet” has come to mean the calling and office of the prophet.

(5-23) 1 Kings 20:11. “Let Not Him That Girdeth on His Harness Boast”

This is like saying “Don’t boast of the deed until it is done.” The imagery comes from the harnessing of work animals. It would be easy for an ox to boast of how much he can plow while he is being harnessed in the morning, but the boast would be meaningful only after the work was done, that is, when the harness is taken off.

(5-24) 1 Kings 20, 22. Battles with Syria

These chapters detail two separate battles between Israel and Syria. Israel won the first battle but lost the second.


“There seems to be an allusion here to the opinion, prevalent among all heathen nations, that the different parts of the earth had different divinities. They had gods for the woods, for the mountains, for the seas, for the heavens, and for the lower regions. The Syrians seem to have received the impression that Jehovah was specially the God of the mountains; but he manifested to them that he ruled everywhere.” (James M. Freeman, Manners and Customs of the Bible, p. 165.)

(5-26) 1 Kings 20:38–43. Ahab’s Death Pronounced

In his encounter with the prophet of the Lord, Ahab unwittingly pronounced his own doom. The prophecy was fulfilled in the next battle with the Syrians (see 1 Kings 22:34–35). That was his reward for failing to slay Ben-hadad as the Lord had commanded.

(5-27) 1 Kings 21:2–24. Naboth’s Vineyard

Ahab’s offer to buy Naboth’s vineyard may seem fair at first glance, but Naboth could not sell. His land had been inherited from his forefathers, and the law of Moses did not permit the sale of one’s inheritance, except in cases of extreme destitution, and then it could be sold or mortgaged only until the time of jubilee, when it would be reclaimed. Ahab wished to