

Elijah Passes His Mantle to Elisha and Is Taken Up In A Whirlwind

2 Kings 2

Group ¹	C	V	Description
Elijah Taken to Heaven	2	1-3	Elisha travels to Gilgal with Elijah and is told Elijah is about to be taken by God
		4-6	Elisha Travels to Jericho with Elijah and then went across the Jordan
		7-8	Elijah divides the waters of the Jordan by striking it with his cloak
		9-14	Elisha asks for a double portion of Elijah's spirit, it would be given if he sees Elijah taken up; Elijah is taken up in a whirlwind from a chariot of fire; Elisha takes up Elijah's mantle, divides the Jordan
Elisha Succeeds Elijah	2	15-18	The sons of the prophets search for Elijah to no avail, even though Elisha told them not to look
		19-22	Elisha purifies the well of Jericho
		23-25	Children mock Elisha's bald head and forty-two are killed by two bears

Reflections

Any transition of leadership, no matter what the organization, can be fraught with difficulties. In some countries, there is great turmoil and even bloodshed when one administration takes the place of a previous one. Here in America, we hold elections on a regular basis and most of the time the transition happens without much disruption to everyday life for most people. When it happens, there are usually parties and other events celebrating the passage of leadership from one administration to the next.

In this chapter, we find that Elijah is about to pass the office of prophet to Elisha. Elijah travels to Elisha in Gilgal. Upon arriving, Elijah tells Elisha that he should stay in Gilgal while Elijah travels to Bethel. Elisha refuses and they travel to Bethel. Again Elijah tells Elisha to stay there as Elijah is to continue on to Jericho but Elisha refuses and they travel to Jericho. There Elijah tells Elisha that he is to go on to the Jordan and again Elisha refuses to stay. They then travel on to the Jordan river.

When they stopped in Bethel and Jericho, Elisha is told that the Lord would be taking Elijah today and Elisha always responds with "Yes I know; be still." When they are leaving Jericho, 50 sons of the prophets follow them at a distance to watch what was to take place.

Upon reaching the Jordan, Elijah takes his mantle (A kind of cloak or loose garment to be worn over other garments)² and folded it and then struck the waters of the Jordan and the waters parted and they crossed over on dry ground.

Elijah asks what Elisha what he would have him do for him. Elisha asks for a double portion of Elijah's spirit to be upon him. Elijah tells him he is asking for a difficult thing but it would happen if Elisha saw Elijah taken by the Lord. Then a chariot of fire and a whirlwind appeared between Elijah and Elisha and Elijah is taken up in the whirlwind.

I don't mean to be sacrilegious but doesn't this sound like something out of a futuristic, science fiction movie where a some kind of ship appears and someone is beamed up in a transporter bean of some kind. Thanks to Star Trek that's the only frame of reference most of us have with which to imagine

¹ (NASB) "Group" column from the headings in the NASB text.

² (Webster "mantle")

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what the events were like as no one has ever seen something like this happen. I know some would argue with that notion but for now let's just agree this was something strange to see. Elijah was right there when it happened. Just think what the 50 sons of the prophets were thinking when they saw the same events from a distance?

Wiersbe³ pointed out that it was appropriate that Elijah would be taken up in the whirlwind from a chariot of fire and horses of fire since he called down fire from God on people a few times proving that he was truly a prophet from God.

- **1 Kings 18** – during the confrontation with the prophets of Baal
- **2 Kings 1** – when Ahaziah sent soldiers to bring Elijah to him while he was on his sick bed (twice)

After the dust settled, Elisha picks up Elijah's mantle that was laying on the ground and walks to the Jordan. Then, following the example of his mentor, Elisha folds it and strikes the water. While he is striking the water, Elisha declares, "Where is the LORD, the God of Elijah?" Then the waters parted and he crossed over. When the sons of the prophets saw this they declared, "The spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha." Thus Elijah's promise and prediction came true.

The sons of the prophets wanted to go and search for Elijah but Elisha repeatedly told them they shouldn't until finally he tells them to send the men to look for him. Upon returning, they told Elisha they couldn't find him and he reminded them that he told them not to look for him.

So far we have seen one miracle performed by Elisha confirming the passing of Elijah's spirit to him and now a second will be performed when the people of Jericho ask him to purify the water of the town's well. Elisha asks for a new jar filled with salt to be brought to him. Upon receiving it, Elisha takes some of the salt and throws it in the well and proclaims it to be clean and thus it was from then on.

The last even in the chapter is a strange one. Some children decided to make fun of Elisha because he was bald and then two bears came out and attacked forty-two of them.

From there Elisha traveled to Mt Carmel and then to Samaria.

So how do you make some sort of application from this chapter?

First, the persistence of Elisha to continue with Elijah to the end is an example for us to pay attention to. Learning to persevere to the end, no matter what, is important and will reap rewards that we will only realize when we have done it. Consider the following.

Romans 5:3-5 NASB And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; **4** and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; **5** and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

Romans 15:4-6 NASB For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. **5** Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus, **6** so that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 6:14-18 NASB Stand firm therefore, HAVING GIRDED YOUR LOINS WITH

3 (Wiersbe 510)

Elijah Passes His Mantle to Elisha and Is Taken Up In A Whirlwind

TRUTH, and HAVING PUT ON THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, 15 and having shod YOUR FEET WITH THE PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE; 16 in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil *one*. 17 And take THE HELMET OF SALVATION, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. 18 With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints,

1 Timothy 6:6-11 NASB But godliness *actually* is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment. 7 For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. 8 If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content. 9 But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. 10 For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. 11 But flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance *and* gentleness.

2 Peter 1:5-8 NASB Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in *your* moral excellence, knowledge, 6 and in *your* knowledge, self-control, and in *your* self-control, perseverance, and in *your* perseverance, godliness, 7 and in *your* godliness, brotherly kindness, and in *your* brotherly kindness, love. 8 For if these *qualities* are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Second, when strange things happen, just go with it but be wise and discerning. God will never ask or expect you to do anything that is inconsistent with His desire for us to live godly and holy lives in His presence, so if the events around you are leading you in the direction of sin, they're **not** from God. Be wise and discern the spirits.

Proverbs 2:1-9 NASB My son, if you will receive my words And treasure my commandments within you, 2 Make your ear attentive to wisdom, Incline your heart to understanding; 3 For if you cry for discernment, Lift your voice for understanding; 4 If you seek her as silver And search for her as for hidden treasures; 5 Then you will discern the fear of the LORD And discover the knowledge of God. 6 For the LORD gives wisdom; From His mouth *come* knowledge and understanding. 7 He stores up sound wisdom for the upright; *He is* a shield to those who walk in integrity, 8 Guarding the paths of justice, And He preserves the way of His godly ones. 9 Then you will discern righteousness and justice And equity *and* every good course.

Hebrews 5:12-14 NASB For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. 13 For everyone who partakes *only* of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant. 14 But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.

1 John 4:1-3 NASB Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. 2 By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; 3 and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not

Elijah Passes His Mantle to Elisha and Is Taken Up In A Whirlwind

from God; this is the *spirit* of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world.

Finally, don't make fun of someone who is bald, especially if he just parted the waters of a river and purified a water well with a jar of salt.

Key Words: Old Testament, History, 2 Kings, Elijah, Elisha, Spirit, Whirlwind, Prophets, Fire



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