

ELIJAH & THE CHARIOT OF FIRE. 2 KN. 2. 7/16/23. #03.

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And it came to pass, when the LORD was about to take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal. <sup>2</sup>Then Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here, please, for the LORD has sent me on to Bethel." But Elisha said, "As the LORD lives, and as your soul lives, I will not leave you!" So they went down to Bethel. <sup>3</sup>Now the sons of the prophets who were at Bethel came out to Elisha, and said to him, "Do you know that the LORD will take away your master from over you today?" And he said, "Yes, I know; keep silent!" <sup>4</sup>Then Elijah said to him, "Elisha, stay here, please, for the LORD has sent me on to Jericho." But he said, "As the LORD lives, and as your soul lives, I will not leave you!" So they came to Jericho. <sup>5</sup>Now the sons of the prophets who were at Jericho came to Elisha and said to him, "Do you know that the LORD will take away your master from over you today?" So he answered, "Yes, I know; keep silent!" <sup>6</sup>Then Elijah said to him, "Stay here, please, for the LORD has sent me on to the Jordan." But he said, "As the LORD lives, and as your soul lives, I will not leave you!" So the two of them went on. <sup>7</sup>And fifty men of the sons of the prophets went and stood facing them at a distance, while the two of them stood by the Jordan. <sup>8</sup>Now Elijah took his mantle, rolled it up, and struck the water; and it was divided this way and that, so that the two of them crossed over on dry ground. <sup>9</sup>And so it was, when they had crossed over, that Elijah said to Elisha, "Ask! What may I do for you, before I am taken away from you?" Elisha said, "Please let a double portion of your spirit be upon me." <sup>10</sup>So he said, "You have asked a hard thing. Nevertheless, if you see me when I am taken from you, it shall be so for you; but if not, it shall not be so." <sup>11</sup>Then it happened, as they continued on and talked, that suddenly a chariot of fire appeared with horses of fire, and separated the two of them; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. <sup>12</sup>And Elisha saw it, and he cried out, "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and its horsemen!" So he saw him no more. And he took hold of his own clothes and tore them into two pieces. <sup>13</sup>He also took up the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and went back and stood by the bank of the Jordan. <sup>14</sup>Then he took the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and struck the water, and said, "Where is the LORD God of Elijah?" And when he also had struck the water, it was divided this way and that; and Elisha crossed over. <sup>15</sup>Now when the sons of the prophets who were from Jericho saw him, they said, "The spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha." And they came to meet him, and bowed to the ground before him. <sup>16</sup>Then they said to him, "Look now, there are fifty strong men with your servants. Please let them go and search for your master, lest perhaps the Spirit of the LORD has taken him up and cast him upon some mountain or into some valley." And he said, "You shall not send anyone." <sup>17</sup>But when they urged him till he was ashamed, he said, "Send them!" Therefore they sent fifty men, and they searched for three days but did not find him. <sup>18</sup>And when they came back to him, for he had stayed in Jericho, he said to them, "Did I not say to you, 'Do not go'?"  
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1. The parting of ways

- a. God tells Elijah that He is going to take him up to heaven in a whirlwind
 - a1. Elijah is not going to die
 - a2. We find out in Malachi 4 that Elijah will return to earth before "that great & terrible day of the Lord"
- b. Elijah wants to be translated to heaven privately
 - a1. Elisha & all the prophets know that Elijah was going to be taken by God this day
 - a2. Elijah tells Elisha to stay at Bethel while he goes alone to Jericho, but Elisha refuses to leave Elijah
- c. Twice the prophets inform Elisha that God was going to take Elijah away
 - a1. He tells them that he knows, so they should stay quiet
 - a2. Elisha is upset that Elijah was leaving, & annoyed that others pointed it out

2. Parting is such sweet sorrow

- a. Nothing is permanent in this life
- b. Obviously, Elijah & Elisha would be reunited permanently in heaven, but the grief of parting is still real
 - a1. Death & separations bring a great level of sadness, loneliness, & sense of loss
 - a2. Even for believers who understand that the separation is temporary, there's a sense of finality about our broken earthly relations
- c. For unbelievers parting is permanent
 - a1. The sense of loss is irrevocably final
 - a2. Sadness often devolves into hopeless despair & anguish

3. Passing on the mantle

- a. Elijah tried to convince Elisha to stay in Jericho, but Elisha would not part from his master
- b. Elijah struck the Jordan & the waters departed like they did for Joshua when he entered the land
 - a1. Elijah & Elisha walked over on dry land
 - a2. Elisha wanted to stay with Elijah until last possible moment
- c. Elijah asks Elisha what his request is
 - a1. Elisha wanted a double portion of Elijah's spirit (a difficult request)
 - a2. If Elisha would see Elijah ascend, then his request would be granted
- d. Suddenly, fiery horses drawing a chariot separated the 2 men & Elijah is taken up in whirlwind
 - a1. Elisha cries out in anguish
 - a2. Elijah's mantle falls to Elisha
- e. There is always a passing on of God's work to disciples who in turn become mentors (Moses to Joshua, Jesus to the apostles, Paul to Timothy...)
- f. The 50 prophets want to go look for Elijah
 - a1. Elisha saw him go up into heaven
 - a2. The prophet thought God had dropped him
 - a3. Finally, Elisha consents to the search & for 3 days they searched & could not find him
- g. Elisha now is to carry on the ministry (no protégé)