

2 Kings 2
Elijah to Elisha
Jay Hohfeler

Elijah Taken to Heaven

2 Now when the Lord was about to take Elijah up to heaven by a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal. ² And Elijah said to Elisha, "Please stay here, for the Lord has sent me as far as Bethel." But Elisha said, "As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So they went down to Bethel. ³ And the sons of the prophets who were in Bethel came out to Elisha and said to him, "Do you know that today the Lord will take away your master from over you?" And he said, "Yes, I know it; keep quiet."



⁴ Elijah said to him, "Elisha, please stay here, for the Lord has sent me to Jericho." But he said, "As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So they came to Jericho. ⁵ The sons of the prophets who were at Jericho drew near to Elisha and said to him, "Do you know that today the Lord will take away your master from over you?" And he answered, "Yes, I know it; keep quiet."

⁶ Then Elijah said to him, "Please stay here, for the Lord has sent me to the Jordan." But he said, "As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So the two of them went on. ⁷ Fifty men of the sons of the prophets also went and stood at some distance from them, as they both were standing by the Jordan. ⁸ Then Elijah took his cloak and rolled it up and struck the water, and the water was parted to the one side and to the other, till the two of them could go over on dry ground.

Elisha exhibits a character attribute of FIRM RESOLVE. Examples?

The Call of Elisha – 1 Kings 19

¹⁹ So he [Elijah] departed from there and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen in front of him, and he was with the twelfth. Elijah passed by him and cast his cloak upon him. ²⁰ And he left the oxen and ran after Elijah and said, "Let me kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow you." And he said to him, "Go back again, for what have I done to you?" ²¹ And he returned from following him and took the yoke of oxen and sacrificed them and boiled their flesh with the yokes of the oxen and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he arose and went after Elijah and assisted him.

Do you know your Lord called you to Himself?

- That His Holy Spirit drew you to Himself and made you able to love Him?
- That you are safe and loved
- That you matter to Him? That you are a "somebody" in His eyes?
- That He has gone to prepare a place for you when He calls you home?

ELISHA'S FIRM RESOLVE

1. Loyalty; solidarity of purpose
2. Would not be swayed by doom and gloom and human pessimism.

⁹ When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, "Ask what I shall do for you, before I am taken from you." And Elisha said, "Please let there be a double portion of your spirit on me." ¹⁰ And he said, "You have asked a hard thing; yet, if you see me as I am being taken from you, it shall be so for you, but if you do not see me, it shall not be so." ¹¹ And as they still went on and talked, behold, chariots of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them. And Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. ¹² And Elisha saw it and he cried, "My father, my father! The chariots of Israel and its horsemen!" And he saw him no more.

Then he took hold of his own clothes and tore them in two pieces. ¹³ And he took up the cloak of Elijah that had fallen from him and went back and stood on the bank of the Jordan. ¹⁴ Then he took the cloak of Elijah that had fallen from him and struck the water, saying, "Where is the Lord, the God of Elijah?" And when he had struck the water, the water was parted to the one side and to the other, and Elisha went over.

Elisha's call is confirmed; his request is granted. He witnesses the awesome spectacle of Elijah's ascension into heaven. The supernatural chariots and horses of fire—symbols of God's sovereign glory—are revealed to him. God's invisible presence and awesome power are made manifest. For a brief moment the boundary between this world and the next becomes transparent, and the spiritual powers of the unseen world become visible. Elisha is given a gift that few human beings are ever granted: he's allowed to see beyond the shadows of this world into ultimate reality. He witnesses Elijah's translation into heaven.

Rev David Bast
Words of Hope

"In ancient Canaan, Baal was known as "The Rider of the Clouds". He was a warlike weather deity. The billowing dark clouds of a storm were viewed as the battle chariot in which Baal rode, thundering forth his voice and carrying lightening as his spear."

Raymond B. Dillard
Faith in the Face of Apostasy

God was doing something else with this succession of Elijah to Elisha. He was establishing big-picture principles:

- God's cause is ultimately going to prevail.
- God's power is not tied to a certain person
- Our help comes from the Lord, not from a person's charisma
- Leaders change. God's power persists

"Calvin had given definite instructions for his funeral. Nothing must distinguish it from that of any other citizen. His body was to be sewn into a white shroud and laid in a simple pine coffin. At the grave there were to be neither words nor song.

The wishes of the deceased were scrupulously carried out. But although in accordance to his will all pomp was avoided, an unnumbered multitude followed the coffin to the cemetery Plainpalais with deep respect and silent grief.

He who was averse to all ambition did not even want a tombstone. Just a few months later when foreign students desired to visit the place where the Reformer's earthly remains rest, the place could no longer be pointed out among fresh mounds."

Emanuel Stickelberger
John Calvin (Cambridge: James Clarke, 1959)

...on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Jesus of Nazareth, (Matthew 16:19)