

The Ascension of Elijah and the Transfer of His Ministry to Elisha: A Picture of Total Commitment to God and of God's Power 2 Kings 02:01–25

1. *Elijah's last day on earth and his ascension into heaven: A lesson on commitment to service*

- a. Elijah tested Elisha, sought to confirm and strengthen his commitment to God's call
 - 1) Elijah suggested that Elisha stay in Gilgal
 - 2) Elisha refused to stay
- b. Elijah spent time with the young prophets at Bethel
 - 1) They were aware of Elijah's imminent departure
 - 2) Elisha, also aware, instructed them to say nothing
- c. Elijah tested Elisha a second time, seeking to strengthen his commitment to God's call: Again, Elisha proved his commitment
- d. Elijah spent some final moments of exhortation with the young prophets at Jericho
 - 1) They, too, were aware of Elijah's imminent departure
 - 2) Elisha instructed them to keep silent
- e. Elijah tested Elisha a third time, seeking to use every opportunity to strengthen his commitment: Elisha proved that his commitment was strong

- 1 When the LORD was about to take Elijah up to heaven in a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal.
- 2 Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here; the LORD has sent me to Bethel." But Elisha said, "As surely as the LORD lives and as you live, I will not leave you." So they went down to Bethel.
- 3 The company of the prophets at Bethel came out to Elisha and asked, "Do you know that the LORD is going to take your master from you today?" "Yes, I know," Elisha replied, "so be quiet."
- 4 Then Elijah said to him, "Stay here, Elisha; the LORD has sent me to Jericho." And he replied, "As surely as the LORD lives and as you live, I will not leave you." So they went to Jericho.
- 5 The company of the prophets at Jericho went up to Elisha and asked him, "Do you know that the LORD is going to take your master from you today?" "Yes, I know," he replied, "so be quiet."
- 6 Then Elijah said to him, "Stay here; the LORD has sent me to the Jordan." And he replied, "As surely as the LORD lives and as you live, I will not leave you." So the two of them walked on.

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| <p>f. Elijah spent his final moments alone with his chosen disciple</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Fifty prophets followed from a distance 2) Elijah rolled up his cloak and struck the water of the Jordan: The waters divided and the two prophets crossed over on dry ground <p>g. Elijah wanted to meet whatever final need Elisha felt</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Elisha asked for a double portion of Elijah's spirit 2) Elijah's response: His request would be granted if he saw the LORD's taking him <p>h. Elijah was transported into heaven</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Elijah was transported in a chariot of fire pulled by horses of fire 2) The impact upon Elisha <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cried out a tribute to Elijah and Israel's protector • Expressed sorrow: Tore his clothes <p>2. Elisha replacing Elijah proven: A picture of God's power</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Proof 1 — Elisha picked up Elijah's fallen cloak b. Proof 2 — dividing the Jordan: God's power to guide <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Elisha took the cloak and struck the Jordan River <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He cried out to the LORD • The LORD divided the water | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7 Fifty men from the company of the prophets went and stood at a distance, facing the place where Elijah and Elisha had stopped at the Jordan. 8 Elijah took his cloak, rolled it up and struck the water with it. The water divided to the right and to the left, and the two of them crossed over on dry ground. 9 When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, "Tell me, what can I do for you before I am taken from you?" "Let me inherit a double portion of your spirit," Elisha replied. 10 "You have asked a difficult thing," Elijah said, "yet if you see me when I am taken from you, it will be yours — otherwise, it will not." 11 As they were walking along and talking together, suddenly a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared and separated the two of them, and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind. 12 Elisha saw this and cried out, "My father! My father! The chariots and horsemen of Israel!" And Elisha saw him no more. Then he took hold of his garment and tore it in two. 13 Elisha then picked up Elijah's cloak that had fallen from him and went back and stood on the bank of the Jordan. 14 He took the cloak that had fallen from Elijah and struck the water with it. "Where now is the LORD, the God of Elijah?" he asked. When he struck the water, it divided to the right and to the left, and he crossed over. |
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| <p>2) The fifty prophets from Jericho witnessed the miracle</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledged Elisha's call to replace Elijah • Bowed in respect: Accepted Elisha's leadership <p>c. Proof 3 — verifying Elisha's word: God's power to give His servant spiritual knowledge</p> <p>1) The prophets insisted on looking for Elijah</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elisha protested and refused their request • The prophets repeatedly insisted until Elisha gave in • The fifty prophets failed to find Elijah after a three-day search <p>2) The word and spiritual knowledge of God's servant was proven, verified</p> <p>d. Proof 4 — purifying the contaminated water of Jericho: God's power to provide the basic needs of life</p> <p>1) The bad water problem was presented to Elisha</p> <p>2) The prophet requested a new bowl with salt in it</p> <p>3) The prophet went to the spring and threw the salt into the water</p> <p>4) The prophet declared the LORD's miraculous power</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He had purified the bad water | <p>15 The company of the prophets from Jericho, who were watching, said, "The spirit of Elijah is resting on Elisha." And they went to meet him and bowed to the ground before him.</p> <p>16 "Look," they said, "we your servants have fifty able men. Let them go and look for your master. Perhaps the Spirit of the LORD has picked him up and set him down on some mountain or in some valley." "No," Elisha replied, "do not send them."</p> <p>17 But they persisted until he was too embarrassed to refuse. So he said, "Send them." And they sent fifty men, who searched for three days but did not find him.</p> <p>18 When they returned to Elisha, who was staying in Jericho, he said to them, "Didn't I tell you not to go?"</p> <p>19 The people of the city said to Elisha, "Look, our lord, this town is well situated, as you can see, but the water is bad and the land is unproductive."</p> <p>20 "Bring me a new bowl," he said, "and put salt in it." So they brought it to him.</p> <p>21 Then he went out to the spring and threw the salt into it, saying, "This is what the LORD says: 'I have healed this water. Never again will it cause death or make the land unproductive.'"</p> |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He had purified the water permanently, up to the time of writing Second Kings <p>e. Proof 5 — pronouncing judgment upon a large, threatening gang of hoodlums: God's power to protect and deliver His servant</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The gang mocked, threatened Elisha the prophet 2) The prophet cursed them in the name of the LORD (Lev 26:21-22; 2 Chr 36:16) 3) The hoodlums — 42 of them — were mauled by two bears 4) The prophet travelled safely home to Mt. Carmel then to Samaria (4:23; 5:3) | <p>22 And the water has remained pure to this day, according to the word Elisha had spoken.</p> <p>23 From there Elisha went up to Bethel. As he was walking along the road, some boys came out of the town and jeered at him. "Get out of here, baldy!" they said. "Get out of here, baldy!"</p> <p>24 He turned around, looked at them and called down a curse on them in the name of the LORD. Then two bears came out of the woods and mauled forty-two of the boys.</p> <p>25 And he went on to Mount Carmel and from there returned to Samaria.</p> |
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