

## 2 Kings Lesson 2

### 2 Kings Chapter 2

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Memory verses for this week: *Rom 13:8 Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.*

**Introduction:** Last week we covered the story concerning Elijah and King Ahaziah. Just as Elijah prophesied, King Ahaziah died. In 2 Kings Chapter 2 we find the record of the translation of Elijah to heaven and the beginning of the ministry of Elisha. Record is also made of the confusion of Elijah's young students at the departure of their master. Two miracles are performed at the hand of Elisha.

### I. The Translation of Elijah

*2Ki 2:1 And it came to pass, when the LORD would take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal.*

*2Ki 2:2 And Elijah said unto Elisha, Tarry here, I pray thee; for the LORD hath sent me to Bethel. And Elisha said unto him, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they went down to Bethel.*

It seems that both Elijah and Elisha were aware of the imminent departure of Elijah. It also seems that Elijah had foreknowledge that his translation to heaven would be by a whirlwind. Whether this would be by a tornado or some lesser type of whirlwind is not clear. Tornadoes are primarily a North American phenomena. However, God could produce such where ever He desires.

The setting is at Gilgal, which is in the Jordan River valley, not far from Jericho. Elijah instructs Elisha to stay at Gilgal while he goes up into the highlands to Bethel as God had directed him. Elisha swore by Jehovah's name that he would not depart from Elijah, so they both went up into the highlands and then descended into the shallow valley to Bethel.

*2Ki 2:3 And the sons of the prophets that were at Bethel came forth to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the LORD will take away thy master from thy head to day? And he said, Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace.*

*2Ki 2:4 And Elijah said unto him, Elisha, tarry here, I pray thee; for the LORD hath sent me to Jericho. And he said, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they came to Jericho.*

In verse 3, upon arriving at Bethel, the sons of the prophets came forth to Elisha,

and said unto him, "Knowest thou that the LORD will take away thy master from thy head to day?" Though Jeroboam had made Bethel an idolatrous city, it seems that Elijah may have also established a school of the prophets there to counteract the idolatry of the land. Of interest is that these young prophets also were aware that God was about to take Elijah to heaven. They confronted Elisha with the news, referring to the event as removing Elijah from Elisha's head. The implication is that Elijah was as a crown to Elisha.

Apparently, God had by revelation made known to this group of prophets what was about to happen to Elijah. Upon hearing this, Elisha essentially acknowledged he already knew it and told them to hush. The tone of his comments is not clear. He may have been quite sharp in rebuking them. Implied is that this was a sore matter for Elisha. Elijah therefore directed Elisha to stay at Jericho because the Lord had sent him down to Jericho.

Once again, Elisha swore by the name of Jehovah that he would not leave him. He knew the time of Elijah's departure was at hand and he wanted to receive a double blessing of his spirit when that time came. What also seems clear is that Elijah seemed to be testing Elisha and his call to the ministry. It is evident that Elisha was determined to receive the blessing of God upon himself at Elijah's departure.

*2Ki 2:5 And the sons of the prophets that were at Jericho came to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the LORD will take away thy master from thy head to day? And he answered, Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace.*

*2Ki 2:6 And Elijah said unto him, Tarry, I pray thee, here; for the LORD hath sent me to Jordan. And he said, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And they two went on.*

*2Ki 2:7 And fifty men of the sons of the prophets went, and stood to view afar off: and they two stood by Jordan.*

*2Ki 2:8 And Elijah took his mantle, and wrapped it together, and smote the waters, and they were divided hither and thither, so that they two went over on dry ground.*

In fashion almost identical to what happened at Bethel, the prophets at Jericho informed Elisha of Elijah's imminent departure. In a similar manner as before, he rebuked them as well. Again, Elijah sought to test Elisha. This time, Elijah informed Elisha that he was heading to the Jordan River, several miles to the east. Again, Elisha refused to leave him.

In verse 7, we find fifty men of the sons of the prophets went, and stood to view afar off as the two prophets stood by Jordan. It seems clear that the prophets of God in the region all knew that Elijah was about to be taken to heaven seeing that fifty of them followed behind, hoping to catch a glimpse of Elijah's rapture.

Elijah rolled it up his mantle and struck the waters of the Jordan River. They immediately divided before them and they both walked across on a completely dry river bed. The mantle referenced was an outer garment such as a cloak.

*2Ki 2:9 And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me.*

*2Ki 2:10 And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing: nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so.*

*2Ki 2:11 And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.*

And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, "Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee." And Elisha said, "I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me." It seems that Elisha had passed the test as far as Elijah was concerned. He asked what Elisha wished prior to his departure. Elisha's request was for a double portion of the prophet's spirit upon him.

This may be a reference to the Holy Spirit or it may simply refer to the gift of prophecy which Elijah obviously had. Elijah acknowledged that this was a difficult request. However, he informed Elisha that if he saw him taken up to heaven, his request would be granted. Implicit is that if Elisha was so privileged to see his translation that the Lord would so grant his request.

Elisha receiving his request may rest solely on whether he is a true believer or not. This event reminds me of the rapture when we will be taken up to meet the Lord. Unbelievers will not see or understand due to the absence of true faith. As the two prophets walked along, God sent a chariot of fire drawn by horses of fire which took Elijah. In conjunction with that, Elijah was drawn up by a whirlwind. It may be that the whirlwind drew Elijah into the chariot and thus took him to heaven.

## **II. The Spirit who was upon Elijah rests upon Elisha**

*2Ki 2:12 And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof. And he saw him no more: and he took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in two pieces.*

*2Ki 2:13 He took up also the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and went back, and stood by the bank of Jordan;*

*2Ki 2:14 And he took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and smote the waters, and said, Where is the LORD God of Elijah? and when he also had smitten the waters, they parted hither and thither: and Elisha went over.*

*2Ki 2:15 And when the sons of the prophets which were to view at Jericho saw him, they said, The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha. And they came to meet him, and bowed themselves to the ground before him.*

Though Elisha had longed to see the translation of his master Elijah, it seems that when he did, he was struck by his loss. It would seem that his cry, "My father, my father," was of Elijah. While he was not his biological father, Elijah

had been as a spiritual father to him. Some hold the view that Elisha's reference to "the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof" is to the God of Israel and his defense thereof as by a chariot and horsemen of fire. The rending of his clothes seemed to be Elisha's public mourning over the loss of his mentor. As Elijah was taken up, his mantle fell from him to Elisha.

In verse 14, upon arriving back at the banks of the Jordan River, Elisha took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and smote the waters, and said, "Where is the LORD God of Elijah?" and when he also had smitten the waters, they parted hither and thither: and Elisha went over. As his predecessor had done, Elisha smote the waters of the Jordan, asking for the power of the God of Elijah.

Just as God had done for Elijah, he did for Elisha. The river parted before him and he crossed to the other side. God clearly had placed his approval upon the ministry of Elisha. The fifty prophets watching from the west bank became aware of God's power upon Elisha and they therefore bowed before him. It is unclear if they saw Elijah's translation to heaven. But they certainly saw the parting of the river at Elisha's return.

*2Ki 2:16 And they said unto him, Behold now, there be with thy servants fifty strong men; let them go, we pray thee, and seek thy master: lest peradventure the Spirit of the LORD hath taken him up, and cast him upon some mountain, or into some valley. And he said, Ye shall not send.*

*2Ki 2:17 And when they urged him till he was ashamed, he said, Send. They sent therefore fifty men; and they sought three days, but found him not.*

*2Ki 2:18 And when they came again to him, (for he tarried at Jericho,) he said unto them, Did I not say unto you, Go not?*

These young prophets, though aware that the Lord would take Elijah to heaven, thought that he would soon be deposited back, perhaps upon a mountain top or into some valley. The region around Jericho abounds with both. However, Elisha said forget it. He knew better. Notwithstanding his decision against searching for Elijah, the young prophets continued to urge him until he was embarrassed to say no. They evidently were quite persuasive. Therefore, he allowed them to search which they did for three days. However, their search proved futile.

### **III. Elisha's Second Miracle**

*2Ki 2:19 And the men of the city said unto Elisha, Behold, I pray thee, the situation of this city is pleasant, as my lord seeth: but the water is naught, and the ground barren.*

*2Ki 2:20 And he said, Bring me a new cruse, and put salt therein. And they brought it to him.*

*2Ki 2:21 And he went forth unto the spring of the waters, and cast the salt in there, and said, Thus saith the LORD, I have healed these waters; there shall not be from thence any more death or barren land.*

*2Ki 2:22 So the waters were healed unto this day, according to the saying of Elisha*

*which he spake.*

While at Jericho, the men of the city said unto Elisha, Behold, I pray thee, the situation of this city is pleasant, as my lord seeth: but the water is naught, and the ground barren. Jericho is in the Jordan River valley not far from where the river empties into the Dead Sea. It is east of the coastal mountains and therefore typically semiarid. It may be that water from the Dead Sea had seeped into the local ground water and the water therefore was bitter. The word translated as naught (er rah) can be rendered as absent or 'unfit.'

Elisha calls for a new cruse and fills it with salt. He goes to the water source and casts the salt in and said, "Thus saith the LORD, I have healed these waters; there shall not be from thence any more death or barren land." To this day, there is good water at Jericho.

#### **IV. The Irreverence of the Children Cursed**

*2Ki 2:23 And he went up from thence unto Bethel: and as he was going up by the way, there came forth little children out of the city, and mocked him, and said unto him, Go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head.*

*2Ki 2:24 And he turned back, and looked on them, and cursed them in the name of the LORD. And there came forth two she bears out of the wood, and tare forty and two children of them.*

*2Ki 2:25 And he went from thence to mount Carmel, and from thence he returned to Samaria.*

As Elisha ascended up into the highlands toward the city of Bethel, youngsters of the city came out and mocked him. They likely were young adolescents. It is evident that Elisha was bald. Their taunts likely referred to their hearing of the story of Elijah's translation to heaven. They jeered at Elisha to do the same thing.

The utter disrespect to this prophet and the God he represented is apparent. Quite evidently with God's permission, Elisha placed a curse upon these blasphemous youths in the name of Jehovah. Two sow bears came out of the woods and killed forty two of the insolent adolescents. Clearly, Elisha was not welcome at Bethel, so Elisha traveled westward to Mount Carmel and then eventually back to the area of Samaria.

Those who know they are going to heaven should be concerned for those they are leaving behind to carry on Gods service and to leave with them experience, counsel, prayer and testimony.

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*Prov 4:18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.*

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