

2 Kings Chapter 02 Commentary

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. 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. 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 today? And he said, Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace."

This is a most amazing occurrence going on. Elijah, Elisha, and many others, know that this is the day that God will take Elijah from the earth. Elijah tries to persuade Elisha to remain at Gilgal, while he went to be received into heaven. Elisha knowing what is happening will not be persuaded to leave Elijah. This brings to remembrance the scripture in **Lu 9:62 "And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."** Reminding us that when we are born again, we are to turn our backs upon the inherited sin nature and follow the leading of the new nature of Christ in us.

When the sons of the prophets tell Elisha what is happening, Elisha tells them, he knows what is happening. Some people will say that no one knows when they are going to die, to which I reply, some people do. We knew a woman, Sister Lucile Johnson, a member of Bethesda PB Church, who told her son one morning, "I am going home to heaven today." That evening she passed from this life to her eternal home with Jesus. And I have heard of others, who knew they were going to pass at a certain time, and it happened. God can reveal to his people when they are going to pass from this life, just as God made it known to Elijah, Elisha, and many others, revealed in this chapter.

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. 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 today? And he answered, Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace."

Elisha refuses to stop and they go on together to Jericho, where the sons of the prophets tell him the same thing. Again, he tells them that he already knows what is happening.

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

Elijah tells Elisha that the LORD has sent him to Jordan, and Elisha tells Elijah that he will not leave him. Elijah has been under the tutelage of Elijah and is showing his loyalty to his master.

When they come to Jordan, Elijah takes his mantle and smites the waters of Jordan, which part and they go over on dry land. This is the second time that we know of in scripture that the waters of Jordan have parted for the Israelites. The first time being when they entered into the land of promise.

On an aside, have you noticed in scripture that it is recognized as a "**land of promise?**" As the land of promise was for Israel, so the New Testament Church is for us today, a "**land of promise.**" This world is not our home. We have an eternal home, which is the place Jesus has gone to prepare for us, but here in time, we just have the promise of that eternal abode in Christ, and we sojourn in a "**land of promise,**" which is the New Testament Church.

The happenings of this chapter are one of the reasons that people speak of passing from this life as crossing over the river Jordan. Why? Because just as Israel had to cross over Jordan to enter the land of promise, we must pass through the river of death to enter our eternal home, except that Jesus return first and then we shall be changed.

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."

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. **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. **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."

When they have passed through Jordan, Elijah asks Elisha what Elisha wants him to do for him before Elijah is taken away. Elijah asks for a double portion of the spirit that is upon Elijah to be upon himself. Elijah tells him that if you see me when I am taken up it shall be so. Why would Elisha ask for this gift? Elisha was aware of the law seen in **De 21:17** "**But he shall acknowledge the son of the hated for the firstborn, by giving him a double portion of all that he hath: for he is the beginning of his strength; the right of the firstborn is his.**" Which gave him the right to claim to be the firstborn son of Elijah, as Elijah had already cast his mantle upon him. Elisha is just asking for what he needs to fulfill the work of God. He even claims Elijah as his father seen verse 12 "**My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof.**" Elisha rends his own clothes as a sign of mourning for the passing of his master.

Elijah's ascension into heaven is a prophetic picture of the ascension of Christ back to heaven after his resurrection. Elisha was granted the privilege of seeing this event, and thus secured the double portion of the spirit of God upon himself. We also see the prophetic picture of Christ sending the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, to take his place on earth, and continuing the ministry of God.

There is another scene that has this same principle in the New Testament in **Ac 1:8-9; 8** "**But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. 9 And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.**" Just as God gave Elisha the gift, of the power of God to be upon him, as he had requested, so Jesus gave his disciples the gift of the power of God to be upon them.

13 ¶ "He took up also the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and went back, and stood by the bank of Jordan; **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."

Elisha takes up the mantle of Elijah, which was left behind, and returns to Jordan. Elijah smites the waters of Jordan with the mantle just as Elijah did, and then he asks the question "**Where is the LORD God of Elijah?**" This question is directed to God, requesting that God affirm to him that his request of a double portion of the spirit of God that was upon Elijah, had truly been gifted to him. When Elijah smote the waters they parted before him, just as they did for Elijah, and he returned to the other side.

Note that the last miracle performed by Elijah, is the first miracle performed by Elisha. This tells us, Elisha is just continuing the work that God had required of Elijah, and now God requires the same service of Elisha. This is prophetic of the power of Jesus placed upon his disciples, who were also enabled to perform miracles. The power of miracles was also given to the twelve apostles.

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. **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. **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. **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?"

When the sons of the prophets saw the waters of Jordan parted for Elisha, they testified that the spirit of Elijah doth rest upon Elisha. This is something that I have witnessed in my own life that the gift from one is passed to another. One time there was a sing at Brother Tollie Lee's and his father, Uncle Silas, who was the sing leader for many years, started out leading the sing, then passed it off for me to lead the rest. Brother David had

recorded the sing, and he took a couple of songs led by Uncle Silas and then a couple led by me, and he played them back to me. You could not tell hardly any difference in the pitching and leading, even in the sound of the voices, and their strength. It was amazing thing to listen to, which helped us understand that the gift that Uncle Silas had had been passed to me, as the mantle of Elijah was passed to Elisha. We have also seen this in the ministry that similar gifts were passed from one generation to the next.

The sons of the prophets requested to go search for the body of Elijah, but Elisha told them not to go. They pressed him until he gave them permission to go. They returned and did not find anything, and Elisha told them, "***Did I not say unto you, Go not?***" It is amazing that God had revealed to so many that Elijah would go to heaven on that day, that the thought of searching for a body would even cross their minds. Oh, the unbelief of man. It is such a burden when we just have to do things our own way, and then suffer the shame of our unbelief.

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. 20 And he said, Bring me a new cruse, and put salt therein. And they brought it to him. 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. 22 So the waters were healed unto this day, according to the saying of Elisha which he spake."

The men of the city asked Elisha to heal the waters of the land that it might be fruitful, for the current water was bad. Elisha tells them to bring a new cruse, and put salt in it. Elisha went to the spring of the waters, the water source, and cast the salt therein, and pronounced in the name of the LORD, that the waters were healed and would not bring forth any more death or barrenness. They were healed forever, just as every child of God who is born again, being salted with the grace of God is healed forever.

In this we see the fulfillment of the sacrificial law, and the springing forth of the waters of the gospel of Jesus Christ. In the gospel of Jesus Christ, there is no death nor barrenness, but rather life and fruitfulness of the Spirit of God manifested.

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. 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. 25 And he went from thence to mount Carmel, and from thence he returned to Samaria."

As he leaves on his way to Bethel, little children came out and mocked him. Elisha looked back and cursed them in the name of the LORD, and God sent two she bears out of the woods and killed forty-two of the children. Why would Elisha curse these mockers? Because they were blaspheming, casting shame with unbelief on the name of LORD. We understand that these mockers were not God's people, but unbelievers who were trying to bring shame upon Elisha, and thus discrediting the name of the LORD. There is a reminder here for us as to the duty of parents as seen in ***Eph 6:1-4; 1 ¶ "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. 2 Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) 3 That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. 4 And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."*** Obviously, the actions of these children, who mocked Elisha, had been learned from their parents.

It is amazing to see that his first miracle performed was healing of the waters, and the second was the death of those who mocked him, and thereby they mocked God. I would point out; Elisha did not kill these mockers. They were killed by God for their sin against Elisha and for desecrating the name of God.

Do you see the picture of Christ, who while he was here, healed the fountain of waters, setting forth the Gospel of Jesus Christ? After the mocking of the unbelievers, Jesus was crucified, buried, and resurrected, and when he ascended back to the throne of God in heaven, left a curse upon all who do not believe in God and Christ. A curse of eternal death to everyone who does not believe in Jesus.

Elisha moves on to mount Carmel and then to Samaria, which we presume was where the head prophet lived. May God grant that we be found as faithful as Elijah and Elisha, as we are about our Father's business. Amen!