

# Elijah and the Whirlwind

1Ki 2:1-12

## Introduction:

1. For most people the end of life's journey is morbid
2. They have no hope, only horror
3. The departure of a believer can be triumphant and we sorrow not as others who have no hope
4. It is hard to give up on Elijah, but it is not unpleasant to see the whirlwind and the chariot take him away
5. What a journey Elijah had been on
  - a. Trained at Cherith
  - b. Shaped and refined at Zarephath
  - c. Used magnificently on Mount Carmel
  - d. Powerfully anointed to stand before King Ahab
6. The heroic and humble prophet is going to dodge death
  - a. The grim reaper's scythe would miss him altogether
  - b. Missing death puts Elijah in a rare category of "deathless" departures
7. Up to this time, only Enoch has left earth without passing through the jaws of death

## I. The Pathway of Elijah

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 to day? And he said, Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace. 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 to day? And he answered, Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace. 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.

## **A. The Area of the Pathway**

1. Gilgal
  - a) *Elijah spend his last day visiting the schools of the prophets*
  - b) *There was a miraculous crossing of the Jordan*
  - c) *The area covered was about 30-35 miles and that would be a pretty good distance on foot*
  - d) *Gilgal is the starting place for the journey of Elijah*
  - e) *There were several cities with that name in Scripture, but the most famous is the place where the children of Israel rested after crossing the Jordan to enter Canaan*
2. Bethel
  - a) *Bethel was important for Jacob's dream of a ladder to heaven*
  - b) *There Jacob wrestled with God*
  - c) *In Elijah's day it was known for apostasy since that is where Jereboam instituted calf worship after the split between north and south*
3. Jericho
  - a) *The cursed city*
  - b) *Destroyed in the days of Joshua*
4. Jordan – most famous river in the Bible

## **B. The Authority on the Pathway**

1. The steps of Elijah were guided by the Lord
  - a) *We read often that the Word of the Lord came to him telling him to go*
  - b) *1Ki 17:2,3,5,8-10; 18:1,2*
2. The Lord sent him to Jericho, Bethel, Jordan
3. When the end of life comes there is no better way to be than in God's will
4. The secret to dying in God's will is living in God's will

## **C. The Associate on the Pathway**

1. Persistence of Elisha
  - a) *For several years Elisha had been following Elijah and Elijah was grooming him for later ministry*
  - b) *Elisha was very faithful since he remained with Elijah all the way on this journey and could have left several times*
  - c) *3x (vs 2,4,6) Elisha was tested and 3x he did not leave*
  - d) *Such commitment is needed today in many areas of life, especially marriage*

2. Promise for Elisha – vs 7-10

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. 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.

- a) *Faithfulness has it's rewards and Elijah promised to give Elisha whatever he wanted*
- b) *Elisha did not ask for fortunes, fame, or physical blessings*
- c) *It was not out of pride that Elisha asked for a double portion*
- d) *"Double portion" referred to the inheritance of the oldest son who received twice as much as the others – Deut 21:17*
- e) *When the father died, the first born took the place of the father and Elisha knew he would take the place of Elijah and he wanted the spiritual power of Elijah*
- f) *We often forget that we need God's power and we try to do it ourselves in our own power*
- g) *Elisha would get what he wanted if he saw Elijah go*

**D. The Attitude on the Pathway**

1. Tranquility

- a) *Elijah did not show any fear about leaving the earth*
- b) *Anyone who lives like Elijah won't have to fear*

2. Humility

- a) *Elijah did not glory in his soon departure*
- b) *He did not seek special attention in it*
- c) *We want to tell men what we are doing for the Lord*
- d) *We want to parade our talents as though we were responsible for them*
- e) *Many today would have a press conference to announce the departure of at least send out a press release*
- f) *Elijah was not thinking about his own glory, but God's*

## **E. The Academies on the Pathway**

1. Conversation Problem
  - a) *The sons of the prophets knew about the departure of Elijah along with Elisha and Elijah – vs 3*
  - b) *They seemed to want to impress Elisha and Elijah with their knowledge*
2. Committee Problem
  - a) *Some of the prophets in Jericho wanted to follow Elijah and Elisha to catch Elijah leaving*
  - b) *They saw Elijah leave and thought that someone should go look for him*

## **F. The Accomplishment on the Pathway**

1. A Challenge
  - a) *This great accomplishment of Elijah was done near the end of his life on earth*
  - b) *Elijah had not retired from serving God and he wasn't sitting around twiddling his thumbs talking about what he had done*
2. A Censure – “dry ground”
3. A Consolation
  - a) *The incident encourages those who are walking in the path that God has let them*
  - b) *Sometimes there are obstacles and if God points across the Jordan, then His finger will make the way open*
  - c) *Our concern is not with the parting of the Jordan, but with being in the will of God*

## **II. The Parting of Elijah**

### **A. Circumstances of the Parting**

1. The Time
  - a) *Sometimes Scripture does not give a lot of space to important parts*
  - b) *God has a way of saying a lot with a few words*
  - c) *Once Elijah prayed for God to take him and God didn't*
  - d) *Now it is time for God to take him*
2. The Place
  - a) *Was an obscure location east of the Jordan River*
  - b) *Human reasoning might have Elijah leave from a more prominent place where all could see*

## **B. Character of the Parting**

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.

### 1. It's Uniqueness

#### a) *It's Accompaniments – vs 1*

- (1) A whirlwind
- (2) A chariot of fire and horses of fire – vs 11

#### b) *It's Accomplishments*

- (1) Only Enoch had departed without dying
- (2) This pictures the rapture

### 2. It's Appropriateness

#### a) *Elijah's leaving was appropriate for his ministry for he was a whirlwind*

#### b) *Elijah's life had been stormy*