

2 Kings 2:1-12

Good Shepherd

February, 2024

Imagine what it must have been like for Elisha to watch Elijah go to heaven in a whirlwind with fiery horses and a fiery chariot near by! If I had been Elisha, I would have remembered that for the rest of my life!

Peter, James and John never forgot the sight of Jesus being transfigured before them while talking to Moses and Elijah. Scripture describes Jesus: His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them. Peter was there and heard the Father say, This is My Son whom I love, with Him I am well pleased. John was moved to write, We have seen the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. It would have been awesome to see Jesus in all His glory!

When someone you love, a believer in Jesus dies, God sends angels to bring him/her to their heavenly home. We may not see fiery horses and fiery chariots when we die, but we will see Jesus in His glory. Do we have to wait until we die to experience the glory of the Lord in our lives? No. We have the gospel of Jesus Christ and it shows us God's glory. Let's take a closer look at the glory of the Lord that filled the lives of Elijah and Elisha. That **Glory of the Lord** is present in our lives, too.

The Lord made it clear to Elijah that his life on earth was soon to end. Elijah had been training Elisha to take his place. Elisha didn't want his friend and teacher to leave. We can understand that. We miss those who go to heaven! But we will see them again!

If you read about Elijah in Scripture, you will see that he had an interesting life. On Mount Carmel Elijah called down fire from heaven to consume a sacrifice and it even burned up the stones of the altar and proved that God was the true God. Elijah was hunted down by King Ahab and God had Elijah stay in the wilderness and used birds to bring him food. Elisha was privileged to see the glory of the Lord shining through his friend and teacher.

At the time of Elijah, there were three theological schools located at Gilgal, Jericho, and Bethel. These schools trained men to serve as teachers of God's people. The students knew that Elijah was going to heaven. Elisha wanted to spend as much time as he could with Elijah. So the two of them walked on together. I **think** they spoke about the Lord and His mercy, kindness and His love that never fails. (encouragement for Elisha) It is natural for people who love God to share the joy of salvation with others!

Think of the time you have spent with people who know Jesus and what He did for your salvation. To share your faith with someone who believes as you do is awesome! The miracles that Elisha saw Elijah perform are insignificant compared to the miracles that we have seen with our eyes of faith.

On Easter evening Jesus appeared to His disciples. He showed them His hands and feet and the disciples were happy to see Jesus alive. Then Jesus spoke: Because you have seen Me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen Me and yet have believed.

- *We weren't in the stable where Jesus was born, but we believe what Scripture says about His birth.*
- *We read how Jesus healed the sick and raised the dead and we know that Jesus was true God.*
- *We didn't watch Jesus die on the cross, but we believe His death paid for our sins.*
- *When Jesus was transfigured and Moses and Elijah encouraged Him, our eyes of faith see what the disciples saw – the true God.*
- *Our eyes of faith have seen the glory of the Lord!*

Elijah and Elisha walked to the Jordan River. Elijah rolled up his coat and struck the water. The waters divided and they walked across. There was no squishy mud under their sandals. They walked on dry ground. After crossing, Elijah asked Elisha, What can I do for you before I am taken from you? Elisha answered, Let me inherit a double portion of your spirit.

This request may seem strange to us. It was not easy being a

prophet of God at the time of Elijah. Israel was rotting from within, destroying itself spiritually and morally. Elijah had rebuked the sins of Israel and pointed the people to the true God. But it was difficult work! Now his ministry was coming to an end. The Holy Spirit had strengthened Elijah to do God's will. Elisha wanted to be like Elijah. He wanted that same Spirit. He wanted to serve God. We could pray to be like Elijah; it is a request that pleases God.

It was time for Elijah to go home to his Savior. One day it will be time for us to say goodbye to those we love. And then we will see the smiling face of Jesus!

God's Word describes what happened. Suddenly a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared and separated the two of them and Elijah went to heaven in a whirlwind. Elijah did not die. Why? Because of the grace of God! Elijah was sinful, like us. We don't know why Elijah was given this privilege.

Elisha exclaimed, My father! My father! The chariots and horsemen of Israel. Elijah had been the spiritual father of Israel. God used Elijah to defend God's people so that the false worship of Baal did not take over completely in Israel. May God continue to give the church faithful pastors and teachers like Elijah who strengthen us with God's Word!

God's angels seem to be involved with taking people home to Jesus when they die. When poor Lazarus died, Jesus said, the angels carried him to Abraham's side. That will happen to us one day.

Some 20 years ago I sat holding my mother's hand as she died. Her soul was taken to Jesus and she saw the face of her Savior who showed Mom her new home!

When we die, we probably won't see chariots and horses of fire, but we will see Jesus. When Jesus returns to raise our bodies to life and reunite us with our souls, we will enjoy a glorious life with all the saints of God!

Until that day comes, we are light of the world. We need to shine brightly. Brought to faith in the Savior by the grace of God, we are left to do what Elijah did – proclaim the will, the wonders, and the glory of our Lord. We carry the Gospel to the world – in our memory, on our lips, and throughout our lives. The gospel is the only defense against spiritual destruction.

In time the world will see us no more. The angels will carry us to our new home. Pray for strength as we walk together in this life, sharing our faith and encouraging others until we see our Lord in His glory!