

2Kings 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.

2Kings 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.

The time came that Elijah knew that his time of ministry was ending. As we continue to read, it also seems clear that he knew the LORD was going to take him away in a miraculous way. The writer is recording past events and notes that it would be through a whirlwind—e.g., a hurricane or tornado.

As the two prophets headed out of Gilgal, Elijah told Elisha to stay because the LORD had told him to go to Bethel. Elisha declared in the name of the living LORD that as long as Elijah lived, he would not leave him. So they both went to Bethel.

2Kings 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.

2Kings 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.

When they came to Bethel, the sons of the prophets in that city came to Elisha and asked him if he knew that the LORD was going to take Elijah away from him that very day. Elisha answered that he did know it and asked them not to say any more about it.

It seems that the LORD had not only told Elijah that this was his last day of ministry, He had also informed Elisha and many other of the prophets. Maybe the purpose was to establish a platform to affirm Elisha as Elijah's successor to the other prophets.

Elijah then told Elisha that he should stay in Bethel because the LORD had told him to go to Jericho. Again, Elisha declared that he would not leave Elijah as long as he was alive. So they both went to Jericho.

2Kings 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.

2Kings 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.

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

2Kings 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.

As in Bethel, the sons of the prophets in Jericho came to Elisha and asked him if he knew that the LORD was going to take Elijah away from him that day. He answered them the same as he did the prophets in Bethel.

Elijah then declared his intention to go to the Jordan River at the LORD's command and urged Elisha to stay in Jericho. Again, Elisha refused to be separated from Elijah.

Why did Elijah keep telling Elisha to stay behind? Was it some sort of commitment test?

We are told that 50 of the sons of the prophets watched from afar as the two prophets stood by the Jordan River. Elijah took off his mantle or robe, folded it and struck the waters of the river. The waters divided so that the prophets could cross over on dry ground.

I read some commentators that likened Elijah's mantle to the rod of Moses and stating that it had "the divinely operating power of the Spirit." I agree that the two were similar, but I disagree that the objects were empowered. I believe that it was the faith of the two prophets that was the power behind the miracles accomplished using both objects.

2Kings 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. 2Kings 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.

2Kings 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.

2Kings 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.

After they had crossed the river, Elijah turned to Elisha and asked what he would like him to do for him before he was taken away. Elisha was ready with an answer; he wanted to receive a double portion of Elijah's spirit. I remember hearing Joe Focht say that he thought this meant that Elisha was asking to be recognized as Elijah's spiritual heir.

Elijah declared that Elisha had asked a hard thing. He then told Elisha that if he saw him when he was taken away from him, his request would be granted; if he did not see him, it would not be granted.

Suddenly, as they were walking and talking, a chariot of fire pulled by horses of fire, came between them and took Elijah to heaven in a whirlwind.

Elisha saw it and cried out calling Elijah his father (spiritual father is implied)

and noting that he saw the chariot of Israel and its horsemen. Then Elijah disappeared from sight.

Elisha took hold of his clothes and tore them in an act of mourning.

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

2Kings 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.

2Kings 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.

2Kings 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.

2Kings 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.

2Kings 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?

Elisha picked up Elijah's robe that had fallen to the ground and returned to the Jordan and struck the waters. As he did so, he asked, "Where is the LORD God of Elijah?" My paraphrase—Aren't you going to do the same for me as you did for Elijah since I saw when Elijah was taken away?

The waters parted, and Elisha crossed over. When the sons of the prophets of Jericho saw him, they recognized that he had inherited the spirit of Elijah; so they came to meet him and bowed before him.

I like Guzik's thoughts: "Think of what it was like for Elisha to pick up that mantle. The mantle did not fall from heaven and rest on his shoulders; he had to *decide* to pick it up and put it on. He had to decide: *do I really want to put this on?* Elijah's ministry was one of great power, but also of great pressure and responsibility."

The prophets identified themselves as Elisha's servants and asked permission to send 50 strong men to go and look for Elijah in case the Spirit of the LORD that took him away had set him down on some mountain or in some valley. Elisha said no. The prophets persisted in their request so that Elisha began to feel ashamed because he thought they would think him uncaring; so he told them to go.

The men searched for three days but did not find Elijah. When they returned to Jericho to report to him, he reminded them that he never wanted them to go in the first place.

From my studies in prophecy, I believe that Elijah yet has ministry to come on

planet earth during the last seven years before Jesus returns to earth to establish His kingdom.

Malachi 4:5 "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD...."

I believe he is one of the two witnesses referenced in Revelation.

Revelation 11:3–6 "And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth. And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will."

2Kings 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.

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

2Kings 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*.

2Kings 2:22 So the waters were healed unto this day, according to the saying of Elisha which he spake.

The men of Jericho told Elisha that though their city was in a good location, the water was bad and the ground barren of fruit. They obviously wanted him to do something to fix it.

Elisha told them to bring him a new vessel and put salt in it—which they did. He then went to the spring of waters and threw the salt into the spring. He then declared that the LORD had healed the waters; it would no more cause death or be unfruitful.

The writer notes that the waters were still good (as of his writing) in accordance with what Elisha had said.

2Kings 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.

2Kings 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.

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

Elisha then left Jericho and headed back to Bethel. Along the way, a group of

“little children” came out of the city and mocked him by calling him bald head and telling him to go away. The Hebrew also allows an interpretation of “lowly servants.” In other words, those who should have known better.

Guzik offers some good insight: “The ancient Hebrew word translated **youths** here means young men in a very broad sense. This term applied to Joseph when he was 39, to Absalom as an adult and to Solomon when he was 20.” My note: These three instances all make use of the same Hebrew word used here in 2Kings.

*Genesis 41:10–16 “Pharaoh was wroth with his servants, and put me in ward in the captain of the guard’s house, both me and the chief baker: And we dreamed a dream in one night, I and he; we dreamed each man according to the interpretation of his dream. And there was there with us a **young man**, an Hebrew, servant to the captain of the guard; and we told him, and he interpreted to us our dreams; to each man according to his dream he did interpret. And it came to pass, as he interpreted to us, so it was; me he restored unto mine office, and him he hanged. Then Pharaoh sent and called **Joseph**, and they brought him hastily out of the dungeon: and he shaved himself, and changed his raiment, and came in unto Pharaoh. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I have dreamed a dream, and there is none that can interpret it: and I have heard say of thee, that thou canst understand a dream to interpret it. And Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, It is not in me: God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace.”*

*2 Samuel 14:21–24 “And the king said unto Joab, Behold now, I have done this thing: go therefore, bring the **young man Absalom** again. And Joab fell to the ground on his face, and bowed himself, and thanked the king: and Joab said, To day thy servant knoweth that I have found grace in thy sight, my lord, O king, in that the king hath fulfilled the request of his servant. So Joab arose and went to Geshur, and brought Absalom to Jerusalem. And the king said, Let him turn to his own house, and let him not see my face. So Absalom returned to his own house, and saw not the king’s face.”*

*1 Kings 3:6–9 “And **Solomon** said....And now, O LORD my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a **little child**: I know not how to go out or come in. And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude. Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?”*

The mockers also told Elisha to “go up” twice. After looking at the Hebrew, I thought they just meant go away. Gill has another explanation: “...having heard of Elijah going up to heaven, as was said, they jeeringly bid him go up to heaven after him, and then they should have a good riddance of them both; thus at the same time mocking at him for his baldness, and making a jest of the wondrous work of God, the assumption of Elijah....”

As he passed them, Elisha turned back and cursed them in the name of the LORD. Then two female bears came out of the woods and ripped open 42 of the mockers. (The wording seems to imply that there were even more.)

Elisha continued on his way to Mount Carmel en route to Samaria.

Guzik noted several similarities between the ministries of Moses and Elijah. They both:

- Stood alone for righteousness
- Were associated with fire upon mountains
- Were associated with the desert
- Met God on Sinai
- Were chased out of their countries by pagan rulers
- Knew God's miraculous provision for food and water
- Wandered in the desert for a period measured by 40
- Fasted for 40 days
- Were powerful examples of prayer
- Parted waters
- Had close associates who succeeded them
- Had successors that parted waters also
- Had mysterious or strange deaths

For what it's worth—I also think that Moses will be the prophet that serves with Elijah as God's two witnesses during the tribulation. They were also the two that appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration with Jesus.

Matthew 17:1–3 “And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him.” Elias = Elijah