

Well Done Faithful Servant

Text: II Kings 2:1-11 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. 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. 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.

Hebrews 10:36-39 For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. 37 For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. 38 Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. 39 But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.

Introduction: 1st I want to speak, momentarily, on the STORY'S ENDING – THE FIERY CHARIOT II Kings 2:11 ... 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.

IF YOU BELIEVE THE BIBLE TO BE TRUE, YOU MUST WHOLEHEARTEDLY ACCEPT THE FACT THAT THIS EVENT ACTUALLY HAPPENED. IT IS NOT A FAIRYTELL STORY BUT AN HISTORICAL EVENT. THE ONLY OTHER ALTERNATIVE IS TO BELIEVE THAT THE BIBLE ISN'T REALLY TRUE AT ALL!

- ***Elijah's Rapture was a SMALL-SCALE VERSION of the coming RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH!***
I Thessalonians 4:15-17 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord
- *Notice the suddenness of the event – it happened quickly. In a few seconds, it went from being a future event into an event of the past! Such shall be the story of the Rapture of the Church - **IN A MOMENT!***
- *Elijah knew the day but not the exact moment – Elijah knew the DAY but NOT the HOUR!*
*The Church does not know either the day nor the hour! **Matthew 25:13** Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.*
- *Notice the power of this event:*
 - *a man with his body's natural weight was transported above the clouds and into the sky*
 - *he defied the earth's gravitational force and went up into space without a rocket engine*
 - *he wasn't injured or dropped anywhere short of heaven – we know that he made it there because Elijah is seen with Moses in a meeting with Jesus at the Mount of Transfiguration!*

I. Please note a few historical facts about Elijah and Elisha, the two most powerful prophets in the Bible!

- *Elijah*: born ~ 900 BC (?) -- carried alive in a fiery chariot into heaven ~ 849 BC (?)
-- 30 plus yrs of ministry – 16 mighty miracles recorded in the Bible
- *Elisha*: born ~ 892 BC (?) -- servant to Elijah ~ 6 years (?) -- died (?) an old man full of days?
-- 60 plus yrs (?) of ministry – 32 mighty miracles recorded in the Bible
- They both served God during a time of great apostasy - the Kingdom of Israel did not have temple worship and were ruled by BAD Kings (*19 kings ruled the Kingdom of Israel – none were good*)

II. Now, Let's Look at our Story – Beginning with ELIJAH'S LAST DAY ON EARTH –

Question: What would we do if we knew the exact day of our death?

How would we spend our last day on earth?

- Many would have a nervous breakdown – scream and pray like King Hezekiah
- Grandma Tutor last season - diagnosed with cancer and knew she was going to die – she was upset about it for one day, but afterwards, she accepted it without question
- My Sister Libby - diagnosed with cancer too, she would laugh and joke that she was going to beat us all to heaven and see all our loved ones before us
- Many would spend their day in prayer – trying to bargain w/God or make themselves ready

ELIJAH SPENT HIS LAST DAY ON EARTH IN A MARATHON DAY OF WALKING – 26 miles in totality

He Simply was traveling in obedience to God's Commandment:

II Kings 2:2 the LORD hath sent me to Bethel

II Kings 2:4 the LORD hath sent me to Jericho

II Kings 2:6 the LORD hath sent me to Jordan

Why did he spend his last day traveling to different places? We may never know the real answer to this question but please allow me to speculate on a few points to consider:

(1) God wanted to Remind Elijah of His Past Faithfulness – TOUCHSTONES OF PAST MIRACLES

Notice the significance of the chosen places:

- i. **Gilgal – Along the Jordan River** – the place where it all began – the place where Joshua 1st crossed the Jordan River – where the 1st steps were taken into the Promise Land – where the river divided and they crossed over on dry ground – where the stones were taken out of the river as a memorial to God - where the people were circumcised and cast off Egypt and entered into covenant with God anew – where the army's 1st basecamp was established for conquering the land as promised by God.
- ii. **Bethel — 8 miles inland from Gilgal** - means: "House of God" – a SACRED PLACE – a place of RESPECT and REVERENCE TOWARD GOD – where Jacob had his dream – (**Genesis 28:16-17**) And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew it not. 17 And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.
- iii. **Jericho – 12 miles from Bethel** – a place of Israel's 1st victory – where Joshua met the CAPTAIN of the LORD'S HOST - a reminder that OBEDIENCE to God and following GOD were the keys for VICTORY – where God taught them their 1st lesson in FAITH – marching forward around the city for 7 days - even when it didn't possible that God would do the miraculous!
- iv. **Jordan – 6 miles from Jericho** - a full circle from where they had started at Gilgal – the end of the TEST – THE PASSING OF THE MANTEL - the end of the journey for Elijah – the start of ELISHA'S MINISTRY – the place where the mantel is dropped by one – the place where the mantel is picked up by the STUDENT – THE WORK CONTINUES BECAUSE SOMEONE HAS A DESIRE TO FOLLOW GOD –

(2) As a Final Test for Elisha – Elisha's Exam before receiving his "Prophet Credentials"

This Test was given in 4 different places: *GILGAL - BETHEL – JERICO – JORDAN*

(a) A Test of Elisha's Faithfulness:

II Kings 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

II Kings 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.

II Kings 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.

*****NOTE: GOD LOVES FAITHFULNESS** – the FACT of this statement repeats itself, time and again, throughout the entire Bible! The story of **ELIJAH and ELISHA** is a good example of this FACT!

What is faithfulness? Two Definitions on FAITHFULNESS

Definition No. 1 -- the quality of being faithful (ref. Oxford Dictionary)

Definition No. 2 -- the quality of being true to one's word, as to what one has pledged to do or professes to believe, - the quality of being dedicated & steadfast in performing one's duty (ref. Dictionary.com)

DOESN'T GOD TEST US IN A SIMILAR WAY TO SEE IF WE WILL TRULY FOLLOW HIM ALL THROUGHOUT OUR LIFE ON EARTH, EVEN UNTO THE END?

Although much is taught about FAITH throughout the Bible & FAITH is an essential ingredient for “pleasing God” (**Hebs. 11:6**), ***FAITHFULNESS IS AN ESSENTIAL INGREDIENT OF FAITH – FAITHFULNESS IS FAITH'S OUTWARD MOTION OR ACTION!***

FAITHFULNESS IS AN OUTWARD MANIFESTATION OF AN INWARD FAITH!

(b) Elisha's Test also included, How to Deal with Distractions

Other people tried to distract Elisha from following Elijah - II Kings 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.

II Kings 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.

DOESN'T GOD TEST US IN A SIMILAR WAY?

Do we really want to Walk in TOTAL Obedience to God or only part of the way?

How much does it take to distract us from reaching our GOAL of HEAVEN?

(c) Also, Elijah wanted to test Elisha's Heart Desire – A POWERFUL GIFT - “double portion”!

II Kings 2:9-10 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.

ELISHA PASSED HIS FINAL EXAM! -- Elisha's Response –

II Kings 2:2 As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee.

II Kings 2:4 As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee.

II Kings 2:6 As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee.

NOTHING SHORT OF DEATH WOULD STOP ELISHA FROM FULFILLING HIS MISSION!

(3) Sadly, ELISHA did not have a servant equal to himself – II Kings 5:20-27 But **Gehazi, the servant of Elisha** the man of God, said, Behold, my master hath spared Naaman this Syrian, in not receiving at his hands that which he brought: but, as the LORD liveth, I will run after him, and take somewhat of him. So Gehazi followed after Naaman. And when Naaman saw him running after him, he lighted down from the chariot to meet him, and said, Is all well? And he said, All is well. My master hath sent me, saying, Behold, even now there be come to me from mount Ephraim two young men of the sons of the prophets: give them,

I pray thee, a talent of silver, and two changes of garments. And Naaman said, Be content, take two talents. And he urged him, and bound two talents of silver in two bags, with two changes of garments, and laid them upon two of his servants; and they bare them before him. And when he came to the tower, he took them from their hand, and bestowed them in the house: and he let the men go, and they departed. But he went in, and stood before his master. *And Elisha said unto him, Whence comest thou, Gehazi? And he said, Thy servant went no whither. And he said unto him, Went not mine heart with thee, when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee? Is it a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and oliveyards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and maidservants? The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed for ever. And he went out from his presence a leper as white as snow.*

**CLOSING: A Simple Reminder – WE TOO WILL BE JUDGED BY OUR GREAT CREATOR!
WE TOO MUST PASS OUR OWN CHRISTIAN EXAM!**

**FAITHFULNESS in LIFE is our EXAM – JESUS is our EXAMPLE - The HOLY SPIRIT is our
TEACHER - The BIBLE is our GUIDEBOOK – GOD is our EXAMINER and JUDGE**

I have served with many faithful fellow Christians like Elisha but, sadly, I have also seen many Gehazi who turned back and stopped short of the goal!

Like Elisha I would also think, “Went not mine heart with thee, when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee? They turned back to their old ways!

Hebrews 10:36-39 For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.

**We too WILL PASS OUR OWN PERSONAL TEST AND GAIN ETERNAL LIFE if we continue to
“WALK BY FAITH” and do not “draw back” or quit short of TOTAL VICTORY!**