



Lessons from Elijah's Life

Waiting for the Whirlwind

Date: Thursday, 28 May 2020 – Elijah20

Text: 2 Kings 2:7-12

Key Lesson: God gives us a preview of the Rapture.

Crossing Jordon

- One of the last mentoring lessons Elijah gave to Elisha was when he divided the Jordan River so they could walk across on dry ground (v.8). Other young prophets watched from afar (v.7).
 - Perhaps the main reason that God granted that miracle was to challenge Elisha with the need of great faith in God. Our God is mighty, but we so often lack faith in Him.
 - A secondary reason was so that the 50 sons of the prophets (Bible college students) who were watching would be able to compare Elisha's miracle with that of Elijah to assure them that God has passed on the baton to Elisha.

Elijah's Offer

- Elijah offered to do something special for Elisha before God took him away (v.9). It was as if he offered him one gift that he wanted more than anything else.
- Elisha did not hesitate. Perhaps he had been pondering how he would fill the shoes of the great prophet Elijah. Elisha quickly asked for a double portion of the spirit of Elijah. He was not asking for twice as much of the Holy Spirit. He was not asking to become a greater prophet. Warren Wiersbe puts it this way, "The only inheritance he desired was a double measure of his master's inner spirit of courage, faithfulness, faith in God and obedience to God's will." Years earlier, God asked Solomon what he wanted most and Solomon asked for wisdom. Both of these men made prudent requests.
- Elijah said that he had requested a hard thing (v.10). Yet at the same time, he did not discount it. He assured him that if he saw the Lord take him, then God would grant his request.

Elijah's Rapture

- They still went on and talked. Elijah's mentoring did not stop until God took him home. Elisha's thirst to learn all that he could from Elijah did not diminish until Elijah was gone. We can learn much from godly elderly Christians if we will take the time to talk to them and encourage them to share their spiritual knowledge with us.
- As they talked, God sent His chariot of fire pulled by horses of fire that swiftly passed between the men followed by a whirlwind that swept Elijah into heaven like a tornado (v.11). A careful reading of the text reveals that God did not take Elijah to heaven in a chariot of fire, but in a whirlwind (cf, v.1).
- It will be wonderful if God takes us to heaven in the Rapture; however, that may not happen in our lifetime. We may die like those who have gone before us. This should not cause us fear.
 - For the Christian, God considers death to be precious (Ps 116:15).
 - For the Christian, to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord (2Co 5:8).
 - For the Christian, to die is gain (Php 1:21).
 - For the Christian, to depart and be with Christ is far better (Php 1:23).
 - For the Christian, one day, death will be swallowed up in victory (1Co 15:54).
 - For the Christian, one day there will be no more sorrow, crying, pain or death (Re 21:4).

Elisha's Response

- God first tells us "he saw it" (v.12). In other words, God was going to grant the desire of his heart for a double portion of the godly spirit of Elijah. God was going to answer his prayer.
- Elisha then cried or called out, "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof." This statement is not an excited remark at what he saw for the same was said by king Joash when Elisha was about to die. (2 Kings 13:14) "Now Elisha was fallen sick of his sickness whereof he died. And Joash the king of Israel came down unto him, and wept over his face, and said, O my father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof." Each of these prophets was a greater defence for Israel through their preaching and praying than were many chariots and horsemen. At your death, you could not receive a greater eulogy than to be proclaimed to be the spiritual chariot and horseman of our community or our nation. Seek to be the spiritual leader that God wants you to be!
- Though he knew God had taken Elijah to heaven, having him gone was a grief to his heart (v.12). Thus, he tore his clothes as a symbol of grief and mourning. Grieving when a loved one passes is normal. God has created the emotion of grief to help us heal when a loved one is no longer with us.