

2 Kings 2 Commentary

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Chart from recommended resource [Jensen's Survey of the OT](#) - used by permission
[1 Kings Chart](#) from Charles Swindoll

THE DOWNWARD SPIRAL

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(NOTE: Many consider Amaziah and Hezekiah as "good" kings)
SEE ALSO:
[ESV chart - kings of Israel - more information](#)
[ESV chart - kings of Judah - more information](#)
[Another Chart with Variable Dates for Reigns of Kings](#)

2 Kings 2:1 And it came about when the LORD was about to take up Elijah by a whirlwind to heaven, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal.

- KJV 2 Kings 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.
- BGT 2 Kings 2:1 κα γ νετο ν τ ν γειν κ ριον τ ν Ηλιου ν συσσεισμ ς ε ς τ ν ο ραν ν κα πορε θη Ηλιου κα Ελισαιε κ Γαλγαλων
- LXE 2 Kings 2:1 And it came to pass, when the Lord was going to take Eliu with a whirlwind as it were into heaven, that Eliu and Elisaie went out of Galgala.

NET 2 Kings 2:1 Just before the LORD took Elijah up to heaven in a windstorm, Elijah and Elisha were traveling from Gilgal.

CSB 2 Kings 2:1 The time had come for the LORD to take Elijah up to heaven in a whirlwind. Elijah and Elisha were traveling from Gilgal,

ESV 2 Kings 2:1 Now when the LORD was about to take Elijah up to heaven by a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal.

NIV 2 Kings 2:1 When the LORD was about to take Elijah up to heaven in a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal.

NLT 2 Kings 2:1 When the LORD was about to take Elijah up to heaven in a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were traveling from Gilgal.

- **take up:** Ge 5:24 1Ki 19:4 Lu 9:51 Ac 1:9 Heb 11:5 Rev 11:12
- **by a whirlwind:** 1Ki 18:12 19:11 Job 38:1
- **Elisha:** 1Ki 19:16-21
- **Gilgal:** Jos 4:19 5:9



Israel and Judah in 2 Kings
(Source: ESV maps)

PREPARATION OF PASSING BATON

And it came about when the LORD was about to take up Elijah by a whirlwind([sa'ar](#); Lxx - susseismos - commotion of air - 1Ki 19:11, Jer 23:19) **to heaven** - This gives us the time and circumstance context preparing us for this grand sovereign act of Yahweh. Elijah's ministry would soon experience termination by translation! Note that it is the whirlwind which impels Elijah to heaven, not the chariots of fire. 1Ki 2:11 affirms this by stating it was the chariots and horses of fire that separated Elijah and Elisha, but it was the **whirlwind** that actually took Elijah up to heaven. This is interesting as many commentaries and devotions make the assumption the chariots of fire took Elisha to heaven. The chariots were part of the scene but were not the mode of transportation!

Remember that it was not Elijah who choose Elisha but it was Yahweh as we saw in 1 Kings 19:16 where God told Elijah "Jehu the son of Nimshi you shall anoint king over Israel; and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah you shall anoint as prophet in your place."

That Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal - Note that this is not the Gilgal located in the Jordan Valley. Why do I say that? Notice the next verse says "went down to Bethel." **Gilgal** in the Jordan Valley is about 825 feet below sea level, near Jericho. **Bethel** is about 2900 feet above sea level. It follows that they were at another **Gilgal** located in the mountainous area explaining why it says they "went down to Bethel." See map above for possible location of the more elevated city of **Gilgal**. In this possible location, note it is not far from Bethel.

Rod Mattoon notes that Elisha "was to depart from Gilgal to go to Bethel and several other places as we will see. The journey would cover about 30 miles. That is a lot of ground to cover in one day so he would be busy and probably left very early in the morning. The fact they would be moving downward would help immensely. There are several places in the Bible referred to as Gilgal. The most famous is the Gilgal near the Jericho where the nation of Israel set up camp after they crossed the Jordan River into the Promised Land. That Gilgal is in a low region of Israel. It is about 850 feet above sea level. This is not the Gilgal being referred to

here. Verse two states they went down to Bethel, not up. This Gilgal in this chapter was located in a high region near Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim (Deuteronomy 11:29-30). It was about eight miles north of the town of Bethel and is approximately 2800 feet above sea level. A school for training prophets of God was located at this Gilgal. ([Treasures from Kings](#))

MacArthur adds that "Although some take this to be the Gilgal located W of the Jordan River near Jericho (cf. Jos 4:19; 5:9), the close affinity to Bethel (v. 2) and its distance from Jericho (v. 4) seem to indicate that the Gilgal mentioned here was located in the hill country of Ephraim about 7 mi. N of Bethel. (See [MacArthur Study Bible](#))

Wiersbe: Gilgal, Bethel, Jericho, and the Jordan River were important places in Hebrew history, each of them carrying a significant message. Before he left the land and went to heaven, Elijah wanted to visit these sites one last time and take Elisha with him. Our eternal God doesn't reside in special places, but we who are creatures of time and history need these visible reminders to help us remember and better understand what God has done for his people. The past is not an anchor to hold us back but a rudder to guide us, and the Lord can use these "tangible memories" to strengthen our faith. ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

Bob Utley - We must distinguish between **translation** – Enoch and Elijah; **resuscitation**, brought back to physical life but must die again and **resurrection**, a new body prepared for eternity (only Jesus, so far) (See [WHERE ARE THE DEAD?; THE HEAVENS AND THE THIRD HEAVEN](#)) "**by a whirlwind**" In Isaiah 66:15 both the chariot of God and the whirlwind are YHWH's servants in judgment, but here, for blessing. This same dualism is connected to the whirlwind.

1. for judgment – Ps. 107:25; Isa. 29:6; 40:24; 41:16; Jer. 23:19; 30:23; Ezek. 13:11,13; in Job 1:19 it is called "a great wind," in Jonah 1:4 called "a great wind. . .a great storm"
2. a symbol of YHWH's presence – Job 38:1; 40:6; Ps. 48:8; Ezek. 1:4; in Zech. 9:14 as "strong winds from the south"; in 1 Kgs. 19:11 it is called "a great and strong wind"

Peter Pett: The events that will follow, in which YHWH's power through his prophet Elisha is remarkably revealed, were crucial to the maintenance of faith in YHWH at a time of gross apostasy. Just as YHWH through Moses had boosted the faith of Israel at the Exodus with specific miracles, and just as Jesus Himself would evidence His Messiahship by even greater miracles (Matthew 11:2-6), followed by miracles which accredited His Apostles (Mark 16:17-18; Acts 4:29-30; Acts 5:12; Hebrews 2:3-4) so now in these perilous times for Yahwism (the worship of YHWH, the God of Israel), God encouraged the faithful by miracles, some of which were remarkably similar, although lesser in extent, to those of Jesus. To call them pointless, as some have done, is to ignore the privations and dangers facing the 'sons of the prophets' and all true Yahwists, dangers under which the very core of the faithful in Israel were living. Under such circumstances they needed their faith boosted in special ways.

Charles Cowman - 2 KINGS 2:1

The length of our life in this world is in the hands of God. We have no independent lease of life, so that we may decide of our own accord that we will remain for a year, or ten, or twenty years on earth. We have only a lease at the will of God.

Elijah went when God called him. The record does not say that when Elijah saw that his work was done, he decided that it was time for him to go to Heaven; there is nothing of the kind. It is simply written, "when the Lord would take Elijah up to Heaven."

Our lives are just as certainly at the disposal to God as was Elijah's, and we have no power that Elijah did not have to stay the hand of God when He would call us away.

James Smith - ELISHA; OR, EQUIPPED FOR SERVICE 2 KINGS 2:1–15

"Only work that is for God alone
Hath an increasing guerdon of delight;
A guerdon unaffected by the sight
Of great success, nor by its loss o'erthrown."
—Havergal.

While at the plough "Elijah cast his mantle upon him" (1 Kings 19:19). Having been overshadowed with the prophetic mantle, is the sure evidence of being "Called of God." Elisha did not preach as a candidate. The "Call" of God is always accompanied with the needed fitness (see Lev. 8. vv. 1, 6, 13, 24, 30; Isa. 6). Let us look at Elisha as a type of the faithful servant of Christ. He—

I. Follows his Master's Footsteps. "As thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee" (vv. 2–6). He followed his master from Bethel—the House of God—to Jordan, the place of Death and Separation. Personal devotion ought to keep us walking closely with the Master (Ruth 1:16). Peter followed afar off, and we know the consequence.

II. Shares his Master's Victory. "The waters were divided, and they two went over on dry ground" (v. 8). As with Elijah, so with Christ, the dark waters of death (Jordan) rolled between him and his ascension into Heaven, but he went through them. We, His followers, now share His victory (Rom. 6:4; Gal. 2:20; 1 Cor. 15:55–57).

III. Seeks his Master's Spirit. "Let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me" (v. 9). He loved to be with his master, now he seeks to be like him. This is always the outcome of knowing Jesus—the desire to be made conformable (Phil. 3:10). Every Christian has the common portion of the spirit (Rom. 8:9). How few seem to have the double portion (Acts 19:2; 1 John 2:27). Covet earnestly the best gifts.

IV. Witnesses his Master's Glory. "Behold there appeared a chariot of fire, and Elijah went up into Heaven. And Elisha saw it" (vv. 11, 12). Having followed Christ unto death and burial by faith, we become eye-witnesses of His Resurrection Glory (Rom. 6:11; 2 Peter 1:16, 17). Elisha must follow his master over Jordan to see him taken up. Before Christ lives in us we die with Him (Gal. 2:20). It was such a sight as made him rend his own clothes in pieces (Gen. 37:29).

V. Receives his Master's Gifts. "He took up the mantle of Elijah that fell from him" (v. 13). The mantle falling from the ascending master seems emblematic of the Holy Spirit's coming after Jesus was glorified. This holy mantle may be accepted or left-unused. To Elisha it was the token of his receiving a double portion of his master's spirit. Without this gift we can never, as we ought, beseech men in Christ's stead (2 Cor. 5:20).

VI. Overcomes in his Master's Name. "He took the mantle and smote the waters, and they parted hither and thither" (v. 14). He overcame by the gift from above. In the name of our Risen Lord, and with the anointing from above, great and mighty things are to be done (Eph. 3:20). See what Peter accomplished after the mantle of power fell upon him (Acts 2:14).

VII. Manifests his Master's Likeness. "When the sons of the prophets saw him, they said, The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha" (v. 15). He did his master's works, and so reflected his master's image. Does our life and testimony call forth such a confession (Acts 4:13). Let us rend our own clothes (self-will) in pieces and take up the mantle (Spirit) of our glorified Lord and Master, that we may show forth the power of His resurrection by doing His works (John 14:12–13).

J R Miller - " 2 Kings 2:1

When a godly man leaves the world—he does not cease to live. The Lord took Elijah to live in another country, a heavenly one. We are able actually to verify this statement. We have but to turn over to the Gospels to see him again, nearly nine hundred years later, alive, and active still in God's work. "Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus." Matthew 17:3

It is just as true of the Christians who die in our homes—as it was of this old prophet, that the Lord takes them up into heaven, and that they live on in blessedness forever.

One cold autumn day I saw an empty bird's-nest on a tree. It looked desolate and forsaken. But I knew the birds that once were there were living yet, living now in the warm South, beyond the reach of winter's storms, and singing there then sweet songs. There is an empty love nest in many a home, in many a heart—but we know that the dear Christian who is gone—is living with God in heaven. There is comfort in this.

There is a suggestion in the way God took Elijah from earth. It was "in a whirlwind." A whirlwind suggests terror. But this wild storm was God's chariot, and it took the prophet up into heaven. Death always seems terrible to nature. Sometimes it comes in form of great terror. But however it may come, it takes God's child home to glory!

2 Kings 2:1–15 - Croft Pentz

God worked in various ways through Elijah. Because Elijah was open to God, he was used by God. Elisha would need God's power to continue God's work. Elijah was like an evangelist while Elisha was like a pastor. Elisha worked for fourteen years with Elijah.

1. POWER REVEALED—vv. 1–8
2. POWER REQUESTED—vv. 9–11
3. POWER RECEIVED—vv. 12–15

God gives power to men to do His work. He never gives power to man so that it may be used for selfish reasons. Jesus said that we could do greater works—Matthew 12:28; John 14:12. Allow God to work through you.

Requirements for Service By Dr. Denis Lyle

Scripture: 2 Kings 2:1–18, especially verse 14 He took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him and struck the waters and said, "Where is the LORD, the God of Elijah?" And when he also had struck the waters, they were

divided here and there; and Elisha crossed over (NASB).

Introduction: Our text for today brings up a very relevant question: what are the requirements for serving the Lord? Elijah was ready to be with the Lord, having reached maturity, while Elisha was just blossoming out. Three requirements for service shine through for us in our passage:

1. The Recognition of Elijah's God. Notice Elisha's words, "Where is the LORD, the God of Elijah?" (v. 14). This is not a cry of despair or unbelief. It is the cry of dependence, which rises from the depths of Elisha's soul. Right at the beginning of his public ministry, Elisha calls on the name of the Lord for he was so conscious of his own unfitness for the task that God had called him to do. Elijah had been translated to a higher sphere of service, but the God of Elijah had not left the world. Elisha's task depended not on the reputation of Elijah, but on the resources of the living God! Elisha recognized that the God of Elijah was His God also.

2. The Reception of Elijah's Spirit. The only possession Elijah left behind was his mantle. The mantle is more than a piece of clothing. It's part of the very personality of the prophet. Elijah's mantle has spiritual significance. It was the symbol of spiritual power (v. 15) and reminds us of the Holy Spirit. (see John 15:26, 27; Acts 1:8). Elisha proved himself through:

A. The Test of Loyalty. What was the purpose of this long walk that took them from Gilgal to Jordan via Bethel and Jericho (vv. 2-6)? Why did Elijah say three times to Elisha, "Stay here please" (vv. 2, 4, 6)? Did he want privacy? Did he wish to spare Elisha the pain of parting? Possibly, but more probably it was to test Elisha's resolve, loyalty, and fidelity. God entrusts His Spirit to those who give their lives to Jesus. Are you loyal to go wherever He leads?

B. The Test of Loneliness. I wonder was there a little hint of jealousy from the other prophets, "Do you know the LORD will take away your master from over you today?" (v. 3). Perhaps they were implying that Elisha's greatness would be shrunk when he no longer lived under Elijah's shadow. Elisha surely felt alone. Ministry can be a lonely place, filled with opposition, criticism, and pain. Despite all of this, we must be committed to receive and obey the Spirit.

C. The Test of Love. In verse 9, it sounds as if Elijah was giving his associate a blank check. What would Elisha write in the box? What was his heart really set upon? What did he desire above all? When Elisha asked for a double portion of Elijah's spirit, he was asking that he might be equipped to fully represent his ascended master. He did not want to be a sensation, he wanted to be a servant. Would you pass this test? What is your heart really set upon? What would you write in the box? Do you long to have spiritual power in your ministry?

3. The Revelation of Elijah's Power. Following the example of Elijah, Elisha turned to the Jordan and struck its waters with the mantle. In his hand it became an instrument of power. Would anyone question our need for the power of the Holy Spirit today? Our lives are often barren, many churches dead, our service often ineffective; we desperately need the power of the Holy Spirit. We need His Spirit in our personal walk as we grow closer to the Savior. We need Him in our public service as we preach the gospel and serve others for His sake.

Conclusion: So, "Where is the LORD, the God of Elijah" (v. 14)? Elijah was gone, but his God is still here. Elisha realized this and we must as well! Are you available to God? Will you allow Him to take you, cleanse you, fill you, and use you to His glory?

2 Kings 2:2 Elijah said to Elisha, **"Stay here please, for the LORD has sent me as far as Bethel."** But Elisha said, **"As the LORD lives and as you yourself live, I will not leave you."** So they went down to Bethel.

KJV 2 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. So they went down to Bethel.

BGT 2 Kings 2:2 κα ε πεν Ηλιου πρ ς Ελισαιε κ του δ ντα θα τι κ ριος π σταλκ ν με ως Βαιθηλ κα ε πεν Ελισαιε ζ κ ριος κα ζ ψυχ σου ε καταλε ψω σε κα λθον ε ς Βαιθηλ

LXE 2 Kings 2:2 And Eliu said to Elisaie, Stay here, I pray thee; for God has sent me to Baethel. And Elisaie said, As the Lord lives and thy soul lives, I will not leave thee; so they came to Baethel.

NET 2 Kings 2:2 Elijah told Elisha, "Stay here, for the LORD has sent me to Bethel." But Elisha said, "As certainly as the LORD lives and as you live, I will not leave you." So they went down to Bethel.

CSB 2 Kings 2:2 and Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here; the LORD is sending me on to Bethel." But Elisha replied, "As the LORD lives and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So they went down to Bethel.

ESV 2 Kings 2:2 And Elijah said to Elisha, "Please stay here, for the LORD has sent me as far as Bethel." But Elisha said, "As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So they went down to Bethel.

NIV 2 Kings 2:2 Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here; the LORD has sent me to Bethel." But Elisha said, "As surely as the LORD lives and as you live, I will not leave you." So they went down to Bethel.

NLT 2 Kings 2:2 And Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here, for the LORD has told me to go to Bethel." But Elisha replied, "As surely as the LORD lives and you yourself live, I will never leave you!" So they went down together to Bethel.

- **Stay here please**,: Ru 1:15,16 2Sa 15:19,20 Joh 6:67,68
- **As the LORD lives**,: 2Ki 2:4,6 4:30 1Sa 1:26 17:55 25:26 Jer 4:2
- **I will not**: Ru 1:16-18 2Sa 15:21 1Jn 2:19
- **Bethel**: Ge 28:19 1Ki 12:29,33 13:1,2

YAHWEH SENDS ELIJAH TO BETHEL

Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here please - Elijah tells Elisha to stay put in Gilgal. Why? The text does not say but one writer thinks it was a test to determine how devoted Elisha was to Elijah. It is like saying "Here is your out if you want it!"

For (term of explanation) **the LORD has sent me as far as Bethel** - Yahweh's specific purpose for sending Elijah to Bethel ([see map above](#)) is not stated, but as we see the were other prophets there thus this may have been to encourage them.

Walton - Bethel. Bethel was the location of one of the calf shrines and was an important religious center. Its history included the patriarchs (Gen 28), the conquest and settlement (Joshua 8; Judges 1), and Samuel (1 Sam 7), and, for at least a short time, it housed the ark (Jdg 20:26-28)

But - Term of contrast. Elijah wants him to stay, but Elisha does not want to stay.

Elisha said, "As the LORD lives and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." - Elisha is saying there is no way he would let Elijah go with him going with him (cf Ruth's words to Naomi Ru 1:16-17+ even with an oath)! **As the LORD lives** is a classic oath formula, signifying that Elisha will do what he says -- not leave! Elisha is resolved to stick like glue to Elijah. This is the first of Elisha's threefold refusal to abandon Elijah and speaks of his loyalty.

AS THE LORD LIVES (VOW) - 35V - Jdg. 8:19; Ruth 3:13; 1 Sam. 14:39; 1 Sam. 14:45; 1 Sam. 19:6; 1 Sam. 20:3; 1 Sam. 20:21; 1 Sam. 25:26; 1 Sam. 26:10; 1 Sam. 26:16; 1 Sam. 28:10; 1 Sam. 29:6; 2 Sam. 4:9; 2 Sam. 12:5; 2 Sam. 14:11; 2 Sam. 15:21; 1 Ki. 1:29; 1 Ki. 2:24; 1 Ki. 22:14; 2 Ki. 2:2; 2 Ki. 2:4; 2 Ki. 2:6; 2 Ki. 4:30; 2 Ki. 5:16; 2 Ki. 5:20; 2 Chr. 18:13; Jer. 4:2; Jer. 5:2; Jer. 12:16; Jer. 16:14; Jer. 16:15; Jer. 23:7; Jer. 23:8; Jer. 38:16; Hos. 4:15. One writer (Cogan) prefers translating the phrase as "by the life of Yahweh" with Yahweh understood as sanctioning the oath, thus asserting the truth of the words spoken, with punishment meted out for any falsehood given.

Bob Utley - "As the Lord lives" This is a word play on the VERB "to be" (cf. Ex 3:14+) and the covenant name of God, YHWH ([Yahweh](#)), which is a form of this VERB. YHWH ([Yahweh](#)) is the only-living, ever-living God (**ED: AND "EVER LOVING" GOD!**).

So they went down to Bethel - As discussed in the previous passage, **went down** signifies they literally descended in elevation from Gilgal. Elijah allows Elisha to remain with him.

Peter Pett draws an interesting conclusion that "The significance of the details of the journey should not be overlooked. They moved from Bethel, to Jericho, to the Jordan, followed by the miraculous crossing of the Jordan, which was the precise reversal of what had happened when Israel had first taken possession of Canaan under Joshua. In view of the parallel miracle at the Jordan this surely cannot be coincidental. Elisha would then reverse the journey the opposite way round. It was an indication that YHWH was offering Israel, through Elisha, a new beginning, something which increases the significance of what then happened at Bethel.

QUESTION - [What is the significance of Bethel in the Bible?](#) | [GotQuestions.org](#)

ANSWER - Two towns named Bethel appear in the Bible. The Bethel of lesser significance, a village in the [Negev](#), is mentioned as one of the places where David sent spoils to his friends, the elders of Judah (1 Samuel 30:26–27). Another Bethel, a city of foremost importance in the Bible, was located about 11 miles north of Jerusalem near Ai. A major trading center, Bethel stood at a crossroads, with its north-south road passing through the central hill country from Hebron in the south to Shechem in the north, and its main east-west route leading from Jericho to the Mediterranean Sea. Only Jerusalem is mentioned more frequently than Bethel in the Old Testament.

The Hebrew name *Bethel* means “house of God” and refers to both the city and the site of a major sanctuary that was established there for the northern kingdom of Israel. Bethel sat at the boundary between the tribes of Ephraim and Benjamin and eventually delineated the border between the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah. Although Bethel was in the dry hill country, several natural springs supplied water in abundance for its residents.

Bethel is first mentioned in the Bible in connection with [Abram](#), who built an altar to God there: “From there [Abram] went on toward the hills east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. There he built an altar to the LORD and called on the name of the LORD” (Genesis 12:8). After visiting Egypt, Abraham returned to Bethel and offered a sacrifice to God (Genesis 13:3–4).

Originally named Luz (Genesis 28:19; Judges 1:23), the city was renamed Bethel by [Jacob](#) after the patriarch experienced a remarkable dream there. While traveling from [Beersheba](#) to Haran to escape his brother Esau, Jacob stopped for the night in Luz. As he slept, he dreamed of a [stairway or ladder](#) that stretched up from earth to heaven. The angels of God were climbing up and down the ladder as God stood at the top (Genesis 28:10–13). The Lord spoke and revealed Himself to Jacob as the God of his fathers. When Jacob awoke, he declared, “How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven” (Genesis 28:17). Then Jacob set up a sacred pillar, named the place Bethel (verses 18–19), and consecrated the site as a place to worship God (verse 21).

Many years later, Jacob returned to Bethel, built an altar to God there, and called the place El-Bethel, which means “God of Bethel.” Bethel remained one of the main worship centers of Israel. The ark of the covenant was kept at Bethel for a time, and the people often went there to seek God during times of trouble (Judges 20:18–28). The Bible says Deborah, Rebekah’s nurse, was buried under an oak tree near Bethel (Genesis 35:8), and the better-known [Deborah](#), judge of Israel, held court at a site between [Ramah](#) and Bethel (Judges 4:5). During the time of the divided kingdoms, [King Jeroboam](#) of Israel established two temples for the northern kingdom, one at Bethel and the other at Dan. In these temples, he set up golden calves (1 Kings 12:26–33). God often sent prophets to preach at Bethel (1 Kings 13:1–10). Many of these prophets pronounced judgment and condemnation on Bethel as a center of idolatry (Amos 3:14; 5:5–6; Hosea 10:15).

On Elijah’s last day of ministry on earth, [he and Elisha](#) encountered a company of prophets at Bethel. These prophets confirmed Elijah’s soon departure: “Elijah said to Elisha, ‘Stay here; the LORD has sent me to Bethel.’ But Elisha said, ‘As surely as the LORD lives and as you live, I will not leave you.’ So they went down to Bethel. The company of the prophets at Bethel came out to Elisha and asked, ‘Do you know that the LORD is going to take your master from you today?’ ‘Yes, I know,’ Elisha replied, ‘so be quiet’” (2 Kings 2:2–3). Elisha refused to leave Elijah. He was fiercely committed to assuming the older prophet’s mantle and did not want to miss out on the opportunity.

After the northern kingdom of Israel fell to the [Assyrians](#), Bethel remained a home for priests (2 Kings 17:28–41). In the seventh century BC, the high places of Bethel were destroyed by [King Josiah](#) of Judah as part of his religious reforms (2 Kings 23:4, 13–19). Eventually, by the time of Ezra, the city of Bethel had been burned down and reduced to a small village (Ezra 2:28). Bethel is not referred to in the New Testament.

F B Meyer - Elisha, tarry here, I pray thee.

Thrice Elijah spoke thus to his friend and disciple, to test him. Perseverance, tenacity of purpose, a refusal to be content with anything short of the best, are indispensable conditions for the attainment of the highest possibilities of experience and service. And perpetually in our life’s discipline these words come back on us, Tarry here! Not that God desires us to tarry, but because He desires each onward step to be the choice and act of our own will.

Tarry here in Consecration.— “You have given so much; is it not time that you refrained from further sacrifices? Ungird your loins, sit down and rest, forbear from this strenuous following after. Spare thyself; this shall not come to thee.”

Tarry here in the Life of Prayer.— “It is waste time to spend so much time at the footstool of God. You have done more than most, desist from further intercession and supplication.”

Tarry here in the attainment of the likeness of Christ.— “It will cost you so much, if all that is not Christlike is to pass away from your life.”

Such voice’s are perpetually speaking to us all. And if we heed them, we are at once shut out of that crossing the Jordan, that rapturous intercourse with heaven, that reception of the double portion of the Spirit, which await those who have successfully stood the test. The law of the Christian life is always Advance; always leaving that which is behind; always reckoning that you have not attained; always following on to know the Lord, growing in grace and in the knowledge of the blessed Savior, and saying to the Spirit of God, as Elisha to Elijah, I will not leave thee.

Elisha was a spiritual pest. At least three times on the day of Elijah's departure, the younger prophet rebuffed requests to let the older prophet depart in solitude. Elijah was about to be "taken" by the Lord—though no one seemed sure exactly what that would look like—and he told his protégé to stay behind. But Elisha insisted on following his master through Bethel, through Jericho, and through the Jordan River. He would not be absent while God was doing something amazing.

God honors that kind of persistence, as pesky as it seems at the time. In fact, He strongly urges it. "Give the LORD no rest," He urged the praying watchmen of Jerusalem (Isaiah 62:7). "Keep on asking. . . . Keep on seeking. . . . Keep on knocking," Jesus commanded His disciples (Matthew 7:7). Jesus told parables of a noisy neighbor asking for bread at midnight (Luke 11:5-8) and a widow relentlessly pestering a judge for justice (Luke 18:1-8), describing them as pictures of prayer. He responded to a blind man who wouldn't quit yelling at him (Luke 18:35-43) and to a woman who kept asking for a favor, even after He had spoken discouraging words to her (Matthew 15:22-28). Both were rewarded with miracles. Apparently, God welcomes pests.

If you aren't content with a casual relationship with God and pester Him for something more, you are honored in His Kingdom. Never arrive at a place of saying, "Okay, that's enough. That's all of Him I need." Pursue higher levels, deeper depths, more of the Presence. You are promised that those who seek will find. And those who seek persistently will find more.

Lord, Elisha's words to Elijah are my words to You. I will never leave You. I will always want more and will always keep asking.

2 Kings 2:3 Then the sons of the prophets who were at Bethel came out to Elisha and said to him, "Do you know that the LORD will take away your master from over you today?" And he said, "Yes, I know; be still."

KJV 2 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.

BGT 2 Kings 2:3 κα λθον ο υ ο τ ν προφητ ν ο ν Βαιθηλ πρ ς Ελισαιε κα επον πρ ς ατ ν ε γνω ς τι κ ριος σ μερον λαμβ νει τ ν κ ρι ν σου π νωθεν τ ς κεφαλ ς σου κα ε πεν κ γ γνωκα σιωπ τε

LXE 2 Kings 2:3 And the sons of the prophets who were in Baethel came to Elisaie, and said to him, Dost thou know, that the Lord this day is going to take thy lord away from thy head? And he said, Yea, I know it; be silent.

NET 2 Kings 2:3 Some members of the prophetic guild in Bethel came out to Elisha and said, "Do you know that today the LORD is going to take your master from you?" He answered, "Yes, I know. Be quiet."

CSB 2 Kings 2:3 Then the sons of the prophets who were at Bethel came out to Elisha and said, "Do you know that the LORD will take your master away from you today?" He said, "Yes, I know. Be quiet."

ESV 2 Kings 2:3 And the sons of the prophets who were in Bethel came out to Elisha and said to him, "Do you know that today the LORD will take away your master from over you?" And he said, "Yes, I know it; keep quiet."

NIV 2 Kings 2:3 The company of the prophets at Bethel came out to Elisha and asked, "Do you know that the LORD is going to take your master from you today?" "Yes, I know," Elisha replied, "but do not speak of it."

NLT 2 Kings 2:3 The group of prophets from Bethel came to Elisha and asked him, "Did you know that the LORD is going to take your master away from you today?" "Of course I know," Elisha answered. "But be quiet about it."

- **And the sons:** 2Ki 2:5,7,15 4:1,38 9:1 1Sa 10:10-12 19:20 1Ki 18:4 20:35 Isa 8:18
- **master:** De 33:3 Ac 22:3

BETHEL PROPHETS PROPHECY ELIJAH'S DEPARTURE

Then the sons of the prophets (בְּנֵי הַנְּבִיאִים - benei ha-nevi'im) who were at [Bethel](#) came out to Elisha and said to him, "Do you know that the LORD will take away (laqach) your master from over you today?" - Apparently, knowing his departure was

imminent Elijah planned to visit a group of prophets in three different locations, surely to encourage them to keep on keeping on, for darker days were coming for Israel. These prophets prophesy the day of Elijah's departure but do not specify the manner by which Yahweh would take him away (by death, by whirlwind). The same verb **take away** used of Elijah's departure (Iaqaah - 2Ki 2:3, 5, 9, 10) was used to describe Enoch's translation, Moses recording "Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took (Iaqaah) him." (Ge 5:24+) What a way to go!!!

SONS OF THE PROPHETS - 11X/10V - 1 Ki. 20:35; 2 Ki. 2:3; 2 Ki. 2:5; 2 Ki. 2:7; 2 Ki. 2:15; 2 Ki. 4:1; 2 Ki. 4:38; 2 Ki. 5:22; 2 Ki. 6:1; 2 Ki. 9:1; Acts 3:25. Note that 10 of the 11 occurrences of this phrase refer to prophetic groups associated with Elisha. **Sons of the prophets** were more accurately understood as students, disciples, or members of prophetic guilds or schools. They were not biological sons of prophets (necessarily), but rather a community of prophetic apprentices or trainees, dedicated to following and learning the ways of the prophetic tradition and likely living in communal settings at places like Bethel, Jericho, and Gilgal. Think of them as kind of like seminary students or a prophetic order, much like a monastic or academic group. (See [School of prophets](#) below)

Note that [Bethel](#) is the site of Jeroboam's abominable golden calf worship and yet we see that God has his men (**the sons of the prophets**) in this dark place as lights in a crooked and perverse generation.

And he said, "Yes, I know; be still (be quiet, silent)." - The prophets at [Bethel](#) did not surprise Elisha who had received the same message about Elijah's imminent departure (and certainly is one reason he was not about to depart Elijah's side!) He is saying in essence "Don't remind me. Don't add to my sorrow in speaking of it." Elisha did not want to talk about the departure.

Elisha's dogged determination—in spite of Elijah's repeated dismissals, peer discouragement, and long travel—demonstrates his seriousness about his prophetic calling and his role as Elijah's successor.

August Konkell: Elijah and Elisha had a particular calling and mission during a critical period of Israel's history, when power of the Baal cult was extended through the alliances of Israel and Judah and the intermarriage of the royal families. The supporters of these two prophets in their struggle against the Baal cult were designated as "**sons of the prophets**." Prophecy manifested itself in a variety of forms in ancient Israel; its function was always to call for faithfulness to the covenant. Inspired prophecy was the means God used to confront false teaching at the highest levels of power. Followers of Elijah who had not bowed before Baal were both recipients of a revelation that the mantle would be transferred to another prophet and witnesses to the anointing of Elisha as the prophet who would bring an end to the power of the house of Omri. (See [1 and 2 Kings - Page 385](#))

QUESTION - [What was the school of prophets? | GotQuestions.org](#)

ANSWER - The Old Testament mentions a school of prophets in 1 Samuel 19:18–24 and in 2 Kings 2 and 2 Ki 4:38–44 (some translations say "company of prophets" or "sons of the prophets"). Also, the prophet Amos possibly mentions a prophetic school in stating his credentials (or lack thereof) to Amaziah the priest: "I was neither a prophet nor the son of a prophet" (Amos 7:14).

First Samuel 19 relates an account in which King Saul sends messengers to arrest David. When these men encountered a company of prophets under Samuel's leadership, the king's men also prophesied. This happened three times. Saul himself then went, and he, too, prophesied, leading people to ask, "Is Saul also among the prophets?" (1 Samuel 19:24), which became a saying in those days.

The "group of prophets" in 1 Samuel 19 was clearly comprised of students of the prophet Samuel. These students were likely [Levites](#) who served in roles related to the tabernacle and ceremonial worship. The content of their "prophesies" is not specified. Their messages could have been general teachings from God's laws in the Books of Moses, or they could have included additional revelation.

In 2 Kings 2 Elijah is traveling with Elisha, and a group of prophets from Bethel tells Elisha that Elijah would be taken from him that day (2Ki 2:3). Another group of prophets at Jericho repeats the prophecy (2Ki 2:5), and a third group of prophets near the Jordan River also delivers the same message (2Ki 2:7). This third group of 50 men may have been a subset of the group of prophets at Jericho. After Elijah was taken up into heaven, Elisha reluctantly sends 50 of these prophets to search for Elijah for three days (2Ki 2:15–18).

In 2 Kings 4:38–41 Elisha is in Gilgal during a time of famine. Elisha miraculously changes an inedible stew into a comestible dish for the group of prophets there. Chapter 4 ends with Elisha's turning 20 loaves of bread into more than enough food for 100 people. Nothing else is mentioned about this school of prophets, though it is clear they lived together in some kind of community and were known as sons of the prophets who worshiped the Lord.

These groups of men were likely leaders among those 7,000 Israelites who had not bowed down to Baal, as God had told Elijah (1 Kings 19:18). There were at least three schools or communities of these prophets and possibly more, consisting of men who were

devoted to God and served Him. They followed the teachings of Samuel, Elijah, and Elisha during the time of the prophets and were known as their “students.”

2 Kings 2:4 Elijah said to him, “Elisha, please **stay here, for the LORD has sent me to Jericho.” But he said, “As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.” So they came to Jericho.**

KJV 2 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.

BGT 2 Kings 2:4 κα ε πεν Ηλιου πρ ς Ελισαιε κ θου δ ντα θα τι κ ριος π σταλκ ν με ε ς Ιεριχω κα ε πεν Ελισαιε ζ κ ριος κα ζ ψυχ σου ε γκαταλε ψω σε κα λθον ε ς Ιεριχω

LXE 2 Kings 2:4 And Eliu said to Elisaie, Stay here, I pray thee; for the Lord has sent me to Jericho. And he said, As the Lord lives and thy soul lives, I will not leave thee. And they came to Jericho.

NET 2 Kings 2:4 Elijah said to him, "Elisha, stay here, for the LORD has sent me to Jericho." But he replied, "As certainly as the LORD lives and as you live, I will not leave you." So they went to Jericho.

CSB 2 Kings 2:4 Elijah said to him, "Elisha, stay here; the LORD is sending me to Jericho." But Elisha said, "As the LORD lives and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So they went to Jericho.

ESV 2 Kings 2:4 Elijah said to him, "Elisha, please stay here, for the LORD has sent me to Jericho." But he said, "As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So they came to Jericho.

NIV 2 Kings 2:4 Then Elijah said to him, "Stay here, Elisha; the LORD has sent me to Jericho." And he replied, "As surely as the LORD lives and as you live, I will not leave you." So they went to Jericho.

NLT 2 Kings 2:4 Then Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here, for the LORD has told me to go to Jericho." But Elisha replied again, "As surely as the LORD lives and you yourself live, I will never leave you." So they went on together to Jericho.

- **Jericho:** Jos 6:26 1Ki 16:34 Lu 19:1
- **As the Lord:** 2Ki 2:2 4:30 Ac 2:42 11:23

THE LOYALTY OF ELISHA

Elijah said to him, “Elisha, please **stay here, for the LORD has sent me to Jericho** - Yahweh's specific purpose for sending Elijah to Jericho is not stated, but as with Bethel there were other prophets in Jericho thus this very likely was to encourage them.

But he said, “As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.”- For a second time Elisha vows (**As the LORD lives**) he would not leave Elijah. Three times Elijah will command Elisha to stay and three times Elisha will say in essence "No way will I stay." (2Ki 2:2, 4, 6). What was the purpose? We cannot be dogmatic, but one purpose may have been to test the loyalty of Elisha because he clearly knew Elijah's departure was imminent. One writer says "Perhaps it was because he knew his time was short and he didn't want to worry his friend." (Getz)

So they came to Jericho ([See map above](#) - all these cities, Gilgal, Bethel, Jericho are generally in the central area of the Northern Kingdom) - The journey is about 18 miles and would have taken a full day. Surely they were speaking of Yahweh and ministry for His Name and glory as Elijah was in essence "discipling" Elisha.

The journey from Bethel to Jericho would have taken Elijah and Elisha through hill country and then down into the Jordan Valley, since Jericho is located in the lowest area on earth near the Jordan River. It's a descent in elevation of several thousand feet from Bethel's highlands (~3,000 ft above sea level) to Jericho (~800 ft below sea level). Given the downward slope walking would have been easier.

2 Kings 2:5 The sons of the prophets who were at Jericho approached Elisha and said to him, “Do you know that the LORD will take away your master from over you today?” And he answered, “Yes, I know; be still.”

KJV 2 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.

BGT 2 Kings 2:5 καὶ ἤγγισαν οὗτοι τοὺς προφῆτας τὸν ἐν Ἱεριχώ πρὸς Ἐλισαίαν καὶ ἐπώνοντες αὐτὸν ἐγνώριστον λαμβάνειν κύριόν σου πνέθην τὸ κεφάλαιόν σου καὶ ἐπὶν καὶ γέγονων σιωπῇ τε

LXE 2 Kings 2:5 And the sons of the prophets who were in Jericho drew near to Elisaie, and said to him, Dost thou know that the Lord is about to take away thy master to-day from thy head? And he said, Yea, I know it; hold your peace.

NET 2 Kings 2:5 Some members of the prophetic guild in Jericho approached Elisha and said, "Do you know that today the LORD is going to take your master from you?" He answered, "Yes, I know. Be quiet."

CSB 2 Kings 2:5 Then the sons of the prophets who were in Jericho came up to Elisha and said, "Do you know that the LORD will take your master away from you today?" He said, "Yes, I know. Be quiet."

ESV 2 Kings 2:5 The sons of the prophets who were at Jericho drew near to Elisha and said to him, "Do you know that today the LORD will take away your master from over you?" And he answered, "Yes, I know it; keep quiet."

NIV 2 Kings 2:5 The company of the prophets at Jericho went up to Elisha and asked him, "Do you know that the LORD is going to take your master from you today?" "Yes, I know," he replied, "but do not speak of it."

NLT 2 Kings 2:5 Then the group of prophets from Jericho came to Elisha and asked him, "Did you know that the LORD is going to take your master away from you today?" "Of course I know," Elisha answered. "But be quiet about it."

- **sons of the prophets**, ver. 2Ki 2:3 Jos 1:1,2 Lu 24:51 Joh 17:5-7 Ac 1:2,11 26:25
- **I know it**: Ge 48:19 Ec 3:7 Isa 41:1 Hab 2:20

JERICHO PROPHETS PREDICT ELIJAH'S IMMINENT DEPARTURE

The sons of the prophets who were at Jericho approached Elisha and said to him, “Do you know that the LORD will take away your master from over you today?” - These prophets give an identical prophesy as did the prophets in Bethel. This is a second witness (so to speak) which would authenticate this prophecy. But for a second time Elisha states he knows the prophecy which would in effect validate him as a legitimate prophet.

And he answered, “Yes, I know; **be still.”**(be quiet) - Elisha's patience may have been wearing thin by this time.

Warren Wiersbe on sons of the prophets - At Bethel, Jericho, and Gilgal, the two men visited the “sons of the prophets” (2Ki 2:5, 7, 15; 4:1, 38–40; 6:1, 7; 9:1; see 1 Kings 20:35), companies of dedicated men who were called of God to study the Scriptures and teach the people. Samuel led one of these “schools” at Ramah (1 Sam. 7:17; 28:3; see 1Sa 10:5, 10; 19:20–23). These groups would be similar to the mentoring groups in our churches, or even like our Bible schools and colleges. The work of the Lord is always one generation short of extinction and we must be faithful to obey 2 Timothy 2:2+—“And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also” (NKJV). These young prophets knew that their master was about to leave them, so these final meetings must have been very emotional. We have “farewell messages” in Scripture from Moses (the Book of Deuteronomy), Joshua (Josh. 23–24), David (1 Chron. 28–29), Jesus (John 13–16), and Paul (Acts 20:17–38 and 2 Tim.), but the Lord didn’t record for us what Elijah said to his beloved students. Certainly he told them to obey Elisha just as they had obeyed him, to remain true to the Word of God and to do everything God told them to do as they battled against idolatry in the land. It was their responsibility to call the people back to obeying God’s covenant (Deut. 27–30) so that He might be pleased to bless and heal their land....God has different ways of training His servants, but He still expects the older generation to pass along to the younger generation the treasures of truth that were given to them by those who went before, “the faith ... once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3, NKJV). ([Bible Exposition Commentary - Old Testament](#))

2 Kings 2:6 Then Elijah said to him, “Please stay here, for the LORD has sent me to the Jordan.” And he said, “As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.” So the two of them went on.

them crossed over on dry ground.

CSB 2 Kings 2:8 Elijah took his mantle, rolled it up, and struck the waters, which parted to the right and left. Then the two of them crossed over on dry ground.

ESV 2 Kings 2:8 Then Elijah took his cloak and rolled it up and struck the water, and the water was parted to the one side and to the other, till the two of them could go over on dry ground.

NIV 2 Kings 2:8 Elijah took his cloak, rolled it up and struck the water with it. The water divided to the right and to the left, and the two of them crossed over on dry ground.

NLT 2 Kings 2:8 Then Elijah folded his cloak together and struck the water with it. The river divided, and the two of them went across on dry ground!

- **his mantle:** 1Ki 19:13,19
- **were:** 2Ki 2:14 Ex 14:21-22 Jos 3:14-17 Ps 114:5-7 Isa 11:15 Heb 11:29 Rev 16:12

Related Passages:

Exodus 14:21-22+ Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD swept the sea back by a strong east wind all night and turned the sea into dry land, so the waters were divided. 22 The sons of Israel went through the midst of the sea on the dry land, and the waters were like a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.

Joshua 3:14-17+ So when the people set out from their tents to cross the Jordan with the priests carrying the ark of the covenant before the people, 15 and when those who carried the ark came into the Jordan, and the feet of the priests carrying the ark were dipped in the edge of the water (for the Jordan overflows all its banks all the days of harvest), 16 the waters which were flowing down from above stood and rose up in one heap, a great distance away at Adam, the city that is beside Zarethan; and those which were flowing down toward the sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, were completely cut off. So the people crossed opposite Jericho. 17 And the priests who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood firm on dry ground in the middle of the Jordan while all Israel crossed on dry ground, until all the nation had finished crossing the Jordan.

ELIJAH'S MANTLE MIRACLE

Elijah took his mantle ([addereeth](#); Lxx - melote - sheepskin) **and folded it together and struck the waters, and they were divided here and there, so that the two of them crossed over on dry ground** - This miracle was not a magic trick but was carried out to show Elisha the power which the LORD might bestow on him. This gesture mimics Moses' stretching out his hand over the Red Sea (Ex 14:21-22+)

MacArthur: Elijah rolled up his cloak into a kind of rod and struck the water of the Jordan River. Immediately, the water parted, leaving a dry path through the river bed for the two prophets to cross. Elijah's act recalled Moses' parting of the Red Sea with his rod (Ex 14:21, 22) and the parting of the Jordan when Israel crossed over into the Land (Jos 3:14-17). The crossing put Elijah on the Jordan's East bank, the area where Moses' life came to an end (Dt 34:1-6). (See [The MacArthur Study Bible](#))

Rod Mattoon - God parted the water and He also dried their path across so they would not be trampling through a bunch of mud and filth. The river was an obstacle and God took care of it. By the way, the Lord can take care of your obstacles, too. F. B. Meyer said, "Where God's finger points, God's hand will make a way." He can clear a path through your difficulties. Amen! (cf Isa 43:16) Let me draw your attention to a great lesson here. Elijah is at the end of his life on earth before God takes him, but even in his senior years, he does great things for God. You may be in your senior years, but that does NOT mean God is finished with you. There are great things you can do for the Lord until He calls you home. You can work, invite people to church, witness for Christ, pray, sing, encourage others, write letters, give, and teach Bible truths to your family and friends. We have several of our missionaries that are in their eighties, still serving the Lord on the mission field. I know a number of preachers that are still pastoring and preaching and they are in their eighties. Praise the Lord! When it comes to serving the Lord, if you are on the bench you are there because you chose to be there. If you want to get in the game, then live for God and serve Him. Put Christ first in your life. If there are matters you need to get right with God or people, then get them right. Paul said in Romans 12:11, "Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord." You can be used of the Lord if you want to be used and be a blessing. You do play an important part.

Bob Utley - "struck the waters" This was to demonstrate his status as a prophet. This type of event occurred

1. during the exodus – Exodus 14; Ps. 114:3-5
2. crossing the Jordan by Joshua and Israel – Joshua 3-4
3. and now here
4. later in v. 14, where Elisha's leadership is confirmed

YHWH's control of water is a major theme of the OT. [WATERS](#)

Mantle (0155) **addereth** from adar = wide (Adar - this root connotes that which is superior to something else, and, therefore, that which is majestic). Esau's hairy garment (Ge 25:25). Prophet's hairy garment (Zech 13:4). A beautiful robe (Josh 7:21, 24) Used 5 times of Elijah's mantle (1Ki. 19:13; 1Ki. 19:19; 2Ki. 2:8; 2Ki. 2:13; 2Ki. 2:14). **Gilbrant** - "Most of the occurrences of 'addereth, are in references to the famous "mantle" or "cloak" which belonged to Elijah. The mantle of Elijah was equivalent to the staff of Moses. Elijah hid his face in this piece of clothing when he heard the "still small voice" of God (1 Ki. 19:13). Elijah called Elisha to follow him by placing the mantle on his shoulders. Before Elijah was carried away by a chariot of fire, he parted the waters of the Jordan by striking it with his mantle. After Elijah was transported to heaven, Elisha picked up the mantle and struck the Jordan in the same manner to cross back over. In this way it was made known that Elisha had taken up where Elijah left off (2 Kings 2). An unusual meaning of 'addereth is found in Ezek. 17:8. Apparently, the idea of magnificence or adornment is the connection between a garment and the "splendid," "magnificent" or "noble" vine in Ezekiel's parable. This association is also seen in Zech. 11:3. In this parable, which uses shepherds as characters, the KJV states their "glory" is destroyed. The NIV says their "rich" pastures are destroyed." ([Complete Biblical Library](#))

ADDERETH - 12X/12V - arment(1), glory(1), mantle(7), robe(2), splendid(1). Gen. 25:25; Jos. 7:21; Jos. 7:24; 1Ki. 19:13; 1Ki. 19:19; 2Ki. 2:8; 2Ki. 2:13; 2Ki. 2:14; Ezek. 17:8; Jon. 3:6; Zech. 11:3; Zech. 13:4

Easton's Dictionary - Heb. 'addereth, a large over-garment. This word is used of Elijah's mantle (1 Kings 19:13, 19; 2 Kings 2:8, 13, etc.), which was probably a sheepskin. It appears to have been his only garment, a strip of skin or leather binding it to his loins. 'Addereth twice occurs with the epithet "hairy" (Gen. 25:25; Zech. 13:4, R.V.). It is the word denoting the "goodly Babylonish garment" which Achan coveted (Josh. 7:21).

2 Kings 2:9 When they had crossed over, Elijah said to Elisha, "Ask what I shall do for you before I am taken from you." And Elisha said, "Please, let a double portion of your spirit be upon me."

KJV 2 Kings 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.

BGT 2 Kings 2:9 κα γ νετο ν τ διαβ ναι α το ς κα Ηλιου ε πεν πρ ς Ελισαιε α τησαι τ ποι σω σοι πρ ν ν αλημφθ ν α με π σο κα ε πεν Ελισαιε γενηθ τω δ διπλ ν πνε ματ σου π μ

LXE 2 Kings 2:9 And it came to pass while they were crossing over, that Eliu said to Elisaie, Ask what I shall do for thee before I am taken up from thee. And Elisaie said, Let there be, I pray thee, a double portion of thy spirit upon me.

NET 2 Kings 2:9 When they had crossed over, Elijah said to Elisha, "What can I do for you, before I am taken away from you?" Elisha answered, "May I receive a double portion of the prophetic spirit that energizes you."

CSB 2 Kings 2:9 After they had crossed over, Elijah said to Elisha, "Tell me what I can do for you before I am taken from you." So Elisha answered, "Please, let me inherit two shares of your spirit."

ESV 2 Kings 2:9 When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, "Ask what I shall do for you, before I am taken from you." And Elisha said, "Please let there be a double portion of your spirit on me."

NIV 2 Kings 2:9 When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, "Tell me, what can I do for you before I am taken from you?" "Let me inherit a double portion of your spirit," Elisha replied.

NLT 2 Kings 2:9 When they came to the other side, Elijah said to Elisha, "Tell me what I can do for you before I am taken away." And Elisha replied, "Please let me inherit a double share of your spirit and become your successor."

- **Elisha said:** Nu 11:17,25 1Ki 3:9 2Ch 1:9,10 Joh 14:12-14 16:7 1Co 12:31
- **a double portion:** . Nu 27:20 De 21:17 Zec 9:12 12:8 1Ti 5:17

Related Passages:

Deuteronomy 21:17+ "But he shall acknowledge the firstborn, the son of the unloved, by **giving him a double portion** of all that he has, for he is the beginning of his strength; to him belongs the right of the firstborn.

ELISHA'S REQUEST OF ELIJAH DOUBLE PORTION OF SPIRIT

When they had crossed over, Elijah said to Elisha, "Ask what I shall do for you before I am taken from you." One is reminded of 1Ki 3:9+ "In Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream at night; and God said, "Ask what you wish Me to give you."

F B Meyer suggests "It was with the object of testing the spirit of his friend that the departing seer had urged him again and again to leave him. And it was only when Elisha had stood the test with such unwavering resolution that Elijah was able to give him this *carte blanche*."

And Elisha said, "Please, let a double portion of your spirit be upon me- NET - "May I receive a double portion of the prophetic spirit that energizes you." **NLT** - "Please let me inherit a double share of your spirit and become your successor." Elisha was not being greedy and asking for a ministry as powerful as Elijah. It is interesting that the number of recorded miracles done by each one of these prophets has Elisha at about twice as many (Some say 28 to 14, Elisha to Elijah but others have lower numbers like 14 to 7).

Elisha may have been asking in keeping with the law respecting the first-born (see Dt 21:17+ above), who had the right to receive a double portion of the property of his father. In that regard it is notable that in 2Ki 2:12 Elisha twice addresses Elijah as "Father." Thus Elisha may have considered himself as the "first-born" of Elijah (so to speak), and thus requested a double portion of his spiritual influence. It would be something like Elisha saying "Let me be your rightful spiritual heir to carry on your prophetic ministry with the full blessing and authority of God's Spirit upon me." Elisha's request is clearly in the context of knowledge that Elijah was about to depart. And he had also just witnessed a powerful effect of God's Spirit in allowing Elijah to part the Jordan River. Finally, it was Elijah (surely being led by the Spirit) who was prompted to ask Elisha this question. He had a clear sense that this was a passing-of-the-mantle moment (literally and spiritually).

Believer's Study Bible - The request of Elisha was undoubtedly based upon Deut. 21:17, and meant that he wanted to be the spiritual heir of Elijah. Elijah himself, under God's command, had named Elisha as his successor for carrying on the prophetic word (1 Ki 19:16-21). Elisha's request may also indicate his recognition of the enormous task that lay before him, his great admiration of Elijah, and his awareness of his own limitations. If he was to fill Elijah's shoes, it would take an extra portion of God's enablement. Elijah realized that the request was not within his power, but was in the domain of God, and he left its fulfillment in His hands.

Scripture records exactly twice as many miracles through Elisha (28 miracles) as took place through Elijah (14 miracles).

Gotquestions adds "The request by [Elisha](#) for a double portion of Elijah's spirit in 2 Kings 2 referred likewise to being doubly blessed in his life and ministry. Interestingly, Scripture records exactly twice as many miracles through Elisha (28 miracles) as took place through Elijah (14 miracles)....The taking of Elijah to heaven, the parting of the water, the response of the company of prophets, and the two additional miracles recorded immediately afterwards all affirm that Elisha's request for a double portion was both honorable and granted by the Lord. Elisha's ministry was one of the most influential in the Bible and continues to be remembered today.

David Guzik: The idea of a double portion was not to ask for twice as much as Elijah had, but to ask for the portion that went to the firstborn son, as in Deuteronomy 21:17. Elisha asked for the right to be regarded as the successor of Elijah, as his firstborn son in regard to ministry. Yet Elisha had already been designated as Elijah's successor (1 Kings 19:19). This was a request for the spiritual power to fulfill the calling he already received.

Sermonwriter.com: most think that he is asking for the double-portion of the inheritance that is the right of the firstborn son (Deuteronomy 21:17). A double portion of an inheritance would not be twice the father's material worth. On the contrary, the father would divide the inheritance into equal parts—the number of parts equal to the number of sons plus one. For instance, a father with five sons would divide the inheritance into six parts. He would give the firstborn son two parts and every other son one part. The firstborn son would thus inherit twice as much as any of his brothers, but far less than his father's total worth—certainly not double

his father's worth.

QUESTION - [Why did Elisha request a double portion of Elijah's spirit?](#)

ANSWER - The idea of a [double portion](#) in the Bible is one of a double blessing. It was typically used in the Old Testament to refer to the [birthright](#), or the inheritance received by the oldest son. For example, Deuteronomy 21:17 says, "He shall acknowledge the firstborn, the son of the unloved, by giving him a double portion of all that he has, for he is the firstfruits of his strength. The right of the firstborn is his."

Hannah's husband gave her a double portion because of his love for her and because she could not have children (1 Samuel 1:5). Isaiah 61:7 promises a double portion of blessing upon Israel. After his sufferings, Job received twice as much as he had before (Job 42:10). Revelation 18:6 speaks negatively of a double portion of judgment.

The request by [Elisha](#) for a double portion of Elijah's spirit in 2 Kings 2 referred likewise to being doubly blessed in his life and ministry. Interestingly, Scripture records exactly twice as many miracles through Elisha (28 miracles) as took place through Elijah (14 miracles).

When Elisha first made his request, Elijah answered, "You have asked a hard thing; yet, if you see me as I am being taken from you, it shall be so for you, but if you do not see me, it shall not be so" (2 Kings 2:10). After Elisha watched Elijah taken up to heaven, he picked up Elijah's [cloak](#). Returning to the Jordan River, he called out to the Lord and struck the water with the cloak. The water opened up, and Elisha walked across on dry ground. This act affirmed the transition of the prophetic office from Elijah to Elisha as well as the fulfillment of Elisha's request.

The miraculous crossing of the Jordan was witnessed by men from the school of prophets. "Now when the sons of the prophets who were at Jericho saw him opposite them, they said, 'The spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha.' And they came to meet him and bowed to the ground before him" (2 Kings 2:15). From that point forward, these men appear to have followed Elisha as their spiritual leader (2 Kings 4:38–41).

Two other miracles soon follow the parting of the Jordan River to conclude this section of Scripture. First, Elisha turned bad water into clean water (2 Kings 2:19–22). Second, he cursed a group of young men who mocked him, and [two bears](#) came from the woods and attacked them (2Ki 2:23–24).

The taking of Elijah to heaven, the parting of the water, the response of the company of prophets, and the two additional miracles recorded immediately afterwards all affirm that Elisha's request for a double portion was both honorable and granted by the Lord. Elisha's ministry was one of the most influential in the Bible and continues to be remembered today.

QUESTION - [What does it mean to receive a double portion?](#)

ANSWER - Six times in the Bible, specific reference is made to a "double portion." When someone receives a double portion, he gets a gift twice as much as that given to others.

The concept of the double portion is first mentioned in the Law of Moses: "But he shall acknowledge the firstborn . . . by giving him a double portion of all that he has, for he is the firstfruits of his strength. The right of the firstborn is his" (Deuteronomy 21:17). A firstborn son was entitled to receive twice the inheritance of that of a father's other sons, in addition to the right of succession.

Because Hannah could not have children, her husband tried to assuage her grief with an extra blessing. "But to Hannah he gave a double portion, because he loved her" (1 Samuel 1:5).

Near the end of Elijah's time on earth, he offered his assistant Elisha a gift: "What can I do for you before I am taken from you?" Elisha answered, "Please let there be a double portion of your spirit on me" (2 Kings 2:9). [Elisha's request](#) was to be considered the successor of Elijah and to be "doubly blessed" with power in the prophetic office. Throughout 2 Kings, the many miracles Elisha performed confirm that he had indeed been granted a double portion.

Isaiah 61:7 promises a double portion of joy and blessing upon Israel: "Instead of your shame there shall be a double portion; instead of dishonor they shall rejoice in their lot; therefore in their land they shall possess a double portion; they shall have everlasting joy." The reign of the Messiah during the [millennium](#) will occasion everlasting joy. In a related passage, God restored to Job twice as much as he originally had before his time of testing: "And the LORD restored the fortunes of Job, when he had prayed for his friends. And the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before" (Job 42:10). It could be said that Job received a "double portion."

Not all double portions convey blessing, however. Revelation 18:6 speaks of judgment upon Babylon, stating, "Pay her back as

she herself has paid back others, and repay her double for her deeds; mix a double portion for her in the cup she mixed.” Here, the double portion indicates a heavy judgment. The idea behind the term is still that of a “great amount.”

Since the Mosaic Law stipulated a double portion for firstborn sons, the concept has been used throughout history to refer to God’s abundant blessing. Jesus Christ is called the “firstborn over all creation” (Colossians 1:15), a title that indicates His position as the Blessed One and rightful Heir of all things.

James Smith - A DOUBLE PORTION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT 2 Kings 2:9

The Double Portion was the eldest son’s portion, the portion allotted to the heir. Jacob treated his son Joseph as his eldest son by giving him a double portion. Elkanah, as a mark of his special affection for his wife Hannah, gave her a double portion (see R.V.) of sacrificial food. Job received a double portion when the Lord turned his captivity.

The Lord Jesus is God’s Firstborn, entitled to a double portion, and we are joint-heirs with Him.

By and by, when the Lord again takes up Jacob and his descendants, the Lord will give them a double portion (Isa. 61:7; Zech. 9:12; Isa. 40:2).

J R Miller - replied. 2 Kings 2:9

Elisha’s choice shows where his heart was. He did not ask for position, for wealth, for ease, for honor—but for more spiritual power. He had watched his master in his great work, his zeal for God, his heroism, his intense earnestness, and he wanted to have a large measure of the same spirit. He wanted most of all to be a better man, a more useful man, more active and mighty in the Lord’s work. Here is a good lesson for us. We ought to seek above all other things—the qualities and graces and beauties which make a noble character.

There is something else. Elisha greatly admired his master, Elijah, and his chief desire was to be like him. This is commendable. Christ, our Master, is the one great and perfect example, and all of us should imitate him. Any other model is too low. Yet he gives us in his true followers pictures of at least some fragments of his own beauty, and it is right for us to imitate these. Paul said: “Be imitators of me.” Every parent should live so that his child, imitating him, shall be ever following Christ and growing more like him. It is right when we see anything beautiful in another—to desire to have the same beauty in ourselves. Whether we will or not, we grow, even unconsciously, like those whom we admire and love.

Henry Blackaby - A Double Portion [Experiencing God Day by Day - Page 29](#)

After they had crossed over, Elijah said to Elisha, “Tell [me] what I can do for you before I am taken from you.”

So Elisha answered, “Please, let there be a double portion of your spirit on me.”—2 Kings 2:9

There had never been a man like Elijah. Elijah had raised the dead, called down fire from heaven, and revealed God’s plans for a devastating drought. The Israelites must have felt certain there would never be another prophet like Elijah, until Elisha came along. Moses was arguably the mightiest leader the Hebrews had ever followed, yet God prepared Joshua to accomplish what not even Moses had achieved. David’s reign marked a high point for the nation of Israel, yet it was Solomon who carried out the task that was denied his father, by building the spectacular temple.

We can be tempted to put more trust in the leaders God gives us than in God Himself. History teaches that, as wonderful as these godly people are, God always has another Moses, Elijah, or David. Often the successor will come with a double portion of their predecessors’ spirits.

God’s purposes do not depend on us. He has limitless ways to accomplish His will. The same God who led Moses could also use Joshua. If no one were willing to serve Him, the Lord would accomplish His work by His own divine power. We are not irreplaceable to the Lord. He will achieve His purposes. The question is this: Will we be a part of God’s activity, or will He find someone else? We deceive ourselves if we think we are indispensable to God. Service to the Lord is an honor God bestows on us, not a favor we do for God.

If you are mourning the loss of one of your leaders, do not despair. God has another leader, for He will see that His will is carried out. It may even be that He has been preparing you to be that leader.

Horatius Bonar - THE FAREWELL GIFT—2 KINGS 2:9–11. (from Light and Truth)

THIS is the parting of two friends; of the master and the servant, Elijah and Elisha. They journey together, they cross Jordan

together, they come up to the gate of heaven together. They must separate; the one to go up to heaven, the other to remain a little longer here. They part, not in anger like Paul and Barnabas, but like David and Jonathan,—in love. Elijah speaks first, and his love to his faithful companion shews itself in the words, “Ask what I shall do for thee before I be taken away from thee.” All that he possesses, all that is in his power, he will give.

But Elisha’s request goes beyond what he had expected, or what he could grant. “Thou hast asked a hard thing,” a thing beyond my power to give; a thing which only God can give. I must refer you to him; but I am permitted to give you this sign, “if you see me when taken;” that is to be the token that God grants your request; if not, then the request cannot be granted.

The sign was given. Elisha saw his master ascend; nay, was allowed to obtain the mantle of his master, in token of his receiving his spirit. And acknowledging this sign, he rends his own clothes into two parts, as if putting his former self aside and putting on Elijah.

But the request of Elisha is a striking one. It was not what Elijah expected or could grant; but it was in sympathy with his own feelings, and he therefore referred it to God. It was for the Spirit,—that Spirit that rested on and dwelt in Elijah,—nay, a double portion of that Spirit. He admired and loved his master; and his desire was to be like him; nay, to get beyond him; to rise higher; to do and say greater things than Elijah said or did.

In this narrative we find, in Elisha, the indication of such things as the following:—

I. Spiritual sympathy. He is of one mind and spirit with his master. He has been witness of his life and doings; he sees the spirit which has pervaded all his words and deeds; not merely the spirit of power and miracles, but of holiness, and zeal, and prayerfulness, and boldness. Sympathising with all these, he longs to have the same mind; to be filled with the same spirit. How well for us if our sympathies were thus with the men in whom the Spirit of God dwells or has dwelt in ages past! Not with this world, nor with the spirit of the world, but with the world to come, and with the spirit of it, should our sympathies be. Not with the men of the world’s genius, or science, or learning; not with earth’s poets or philosophers; but with prophets and apostles. Whatever there is of truth and beauty in Homer, or Plato, or Demosthenes, or Shakespeare, or Bacon, or Milton, or Wordsworth, or Tennyson, let us accept; but let our spiritual sympathies ascend far higher; let us realise our true oneness with Enoch, and Elijah, and Elisha, and Isaiah, and Ezekiel; our fellowship with that Holy Spirit which dwelt in them. The sympathies of this age are confessedly not with prophets and apostles. These are looked on as fragments of obsolete antiquity and old-fashioned narrow-mindedness. Let us, however, go back to these ancient times and men, not concerned to be “abreast of the age” if we be “abreast” of the Spirit.

II. Holy imitateness. His desire is to be like Elijah. He wishes not merely to have “the Spirit,” but “thy spirit,” the spirit that dwelt in Elijah. To be like him in the divine features of his character; like him in the possession of the Spirit and in that special form in which he possessed it; this was what he sought. There is certainly but one great model; but there are subordinate ones also. Paul said, “Be followers of me,” and the eleventh of Hebrews is a collection of models, a book of patterns, in each of which we may find something to copy. While copying Christ, then, let us not overlook the inferior models, either among the inspired men of Bible-days, or the uninspired worthies of later times. May the spirit of Elijah, and Paul, and John rest on us; the spirit also of Wicliffe and Huss, of Luther and Calvin, of Knox, and Welsh, and Rutherford, and Whitefield, and M’Cheyne, and Hewitson.

III. Divine ambition. Elijah was not only full of admiration for his master, not only wished to be like him, but desired to get far beyond him. He asked a “double portion” of his spirit. This is true ambition; this is coveting earnestly the best gifts of which Paul speaks, and in connection with which he points out the more excellent way of “charity,” in which especially Elisha seems to have risen higher than his master, Elisha’s ministry being more one of love than Elijah’s. In such things as these let us be ambitious. There is no fear of aiming too high or seeking too much. Let us not give way to the false humility which says, “Oh that we had but the hundredth part of what Elijah had!” let us rather at once, with Elisha, seek to have far more. Let us seek a double portion of his spirit. This is true humility. It is desiring to be what God wishes us to be. It is honouring his fulness and his generosity. It is acknowledging the extent of blessing in reserve; reckoning on it as quite illimitable, and therefore not confining ourselves to what others have had before us, but going up into the divine fulness, for far more than has ever yet been obtained even by the fullest.

IV. Quiet expectation. He speaks and acts like one who fully expected to get what he asked. Elijah had referred him to God for “the hard thing” he had asked; it was in God’s hand alone. “It is not mine to give” (as if anticipating the Lord’s words). Elisha owns the divine sovereignty, and is calm; but he realises the divine love, and expects. He believes, and therefore does not make haste, but goes quietly on beside his master to see the end. He believes, and therefore he assures himself that God is not likely to be less gracious than his master, nor to deny him what Elijah would gladly give if he could. Let us believe! Have faith in God. Trust Him for much, for he is able to do for us exceeding abundantly above all we ask or think.

V. Conscious possession. He accepts the sign: he sees the prophet caught up; he seizes his mantle, and returns by the way he came, conscious of having received the “double portion.” He believes, and therefore he speaks and acts. The sign promised has been given; can he doubt that the thing promised is also given? He may have nothing new in feeling to corroborate it, but that matters not. He has it in simple faith in the bare word of the true God. The “double portion” is mine, he says to himself; and he goes back to exercise his prophetic calling, in the calm consciousness of possessing more than his master did. What is Jordan to him

now? A stroke of the mantle divides it; and henceforth his life is to be one of mighty and gracious miracle. Let us speak and act as men who believe that God fulfils His word to us. Let us trust that word when we use it. There is more in it than in Elijah's mantle. It is living and divine. Let us not blunt or deaden it by our want of confidence in its power.

2 Kings 2:9-14 STEP ASIDE GRACEFULLY

In the summer of 1993 the Atlanta Braves baseball team traded some of their minor league players for the All-Star first baseman of the San Diego Padres, Fred McGriff. He brought the Braves the firepower they needed to make a serious run for the pennant.

But what about the man McGriff replaced? Sid Bream, a believer in Christ, was the Braves regular first baseman. He had helped Atlanta get to the World Series in 1992, but with McGriff coming he was headed for the bench. "There's no doubt something like this hurts your pride and your ego," said Bream. "But the one thing I'm counting on is that there's something better ahead."

When we've done a job well for many years, it can be difficult to step aside for someone younger or better qualified. Elijah was in that kind of situation. His ministry was coming to an end. His attitude, however, revealed his trust in God. He said to Elisha, his successor, "Ask! What may I do for you, before I am taken away from you?" (2 Kings 2:9)

Maybe the time has come for you to give up a position you've held for a long while. It could be at work or even in a ministry at church. Ask God for the grace to accept His plan for you. And then step aside gracefully. --D C Egnor (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

When God asks you to lay aside
Some cherished work you loved to do,
Accept His choice of someone else
And let Him give new work to you.
--Fasick

There is no limit to the good we can do if we don't care who gets the credit.

2 Kings 2:10 He said, "You have asked a hard thing. Nevertheless, if you see me when I am taken from you, it shall be so for you; but if not, it shall not be so."

KJV 2 Kings 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.

BGT 2 Kings 2:10 κα ε πεν Ηλιου σκλ ρυνας το α τ σασθαι ν δ ς με ναλαμβαν μενον π σο κα σται σοι ο τως κα ν μ ο μ γ νηται

LXE 2 Kings 2:10 And Eliu said, Thou hast asked a hard thing: if thou shalt see me when I am taken up from thee, then shall it be so to thee; and if not, it shall not be so.

NET 2 Kings 2:10 Elijah replied, "That's a difficult request! If you see me taken from you, may it be so, but if you don't, it will not happen."

CSB 2 Kings 2:10 Elijah replied, "You have asked for something difficult. If you see me being taken from you, you will have it. If not, you won't."

ESV 2 Kings 2:10 And he said, "You have asked a hard thing; yet, if you see me as I am being taken from you, it shall be so for you, but if you do not see me, it shall not be so."

NIV 2 Kings 2:10 "You have asked a difficult thing," Elijah said, "yet if you see me when I am taken from you, it will be yours--otherwise not."

NLT 2 Kings 2:10 "You have asked a difficult thing," Elijah replied. "If you see me when I am taken from you, then you will get your request. But if not, then you won't."

- **You have asked a hard thing:** Mk 11:22-24 Joh 16:24
- **if you see me when I am taken from you:** 2Ki 2:12 Ac 1:9,10

**ELIJAH GIVES ELISHA CONDITION
FOR RECEIVING REQUEST**

He said, “You have asked a hard thing - NET - "That's a difficult request!" Elijah's point is that Elisha's request was not something Elijah himself could bestow, but only God could bestow. Elijah knew he did not have the authority to answer this request. But "if" Elisha was allowed by YHWH to see the spiritual realm (i.e., 2 Kings 6), then the request would be granted.

Nevertheless, if you see me when I am taken from you, it shall be so for you; but if not, it shall not be so - Elijah's "condition" was not based on anything Elisha had to do, but only depended on what he saw. Clearly that indicates that Elijah is leaving it to the LORD to answer the request. The LORD could make Elijah vanish and the answer would be "No." On the other hand, the LORD could make Elijah's departure visible which would signify Elisha would receive a double portion of Elijah's spirit.

2 Kings 2:11 As they were going along and talking, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire and horses of fire which separated the two of them. And Elijah went up by a whirlwind to heaven.

KJV 2 Kings 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.

BGT 2 Kings 2:11 καὶ γένοιτο αὐτοῖς πορεύουσιν πορευόντο καὶ ἄλουν καὶ δορυμα πυρὸς καὶ πτοί πυρὸς καὶ διστέλαν ἑκαστὸν ἑξ ἑαυτῶν καὶ ἐλμυθὴ ἡλίου ἐκσσεῖσιν ἐξ ἑαυτῶν

LXE 2 Kings 2:11 And it came to pass as they were going, they went on talking; and, behold, a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and it separated between them both; and Eliu was taken up in a whirlwind as it were into heaven.

NET 2 Kings 2:11 As they were walking along and talking, suddenly a fiery chariot pulled by fiery horses appeared. They went between Elijah and Elisha, and Elijah went up to heaven in a windstorm.

CSB 2 Kings 2:11 As they continued walking and talking, a chariot of fire with horses of fire suddenly appeared and separated the two of them. Then Elijah went up into heaven in the whirlwind.

ESV 2 Kings 2:11 And as they still went on and talked, behold, chariots of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them. And Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.

NIV 2 Kings 2:11 As they were walking along and talking together, suddenly a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared and separated the two of them, and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind.

NLT 2 Kings 2:11 As they were walking along and talking, suddenly a chariot of fire appeared, drawn by horses of fire. It drove between the two men, separating them, and Elijah was carried by a whirlwind into heaven.

NRS 2 Kings 2:11 As they continued walking and talking, a chariot of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them, and Elijah ascended in a whirlwind into heaven.

NJB 2 Kings 2:11 Now as they walked on, talking as they went, a chariot of fire appeared and horses of fire coming between the two of them; and Elijah went up to heaven in the whirlwind.

NAB 2 Kings 2:11 As they walked on conversing, a flaming chariot and flaming horses came between them, and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind.

YLT 2 Kings 2:11 And it cometh to pass, they are going, going on and speaking, and lo, a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and they separate between them both, and Elijah goeth up in a whirlwind, to the heavens.

GWN 2 Kings 2:11 As they continued walking and talking, a fiery chariot with fiery horses separated the two of them, and Elijah went to heaven in a windstorm.

BBE 2 Kings 2:11 And while they went on their way, going on talking together, suddenly there were carriages and horses of fire separating them from one another and Elijah went up to heaven in a great wind.

RSV 2 Kings 2:11 And as they still went on and talked, behold, a chariot of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them. And Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.

NKJ 2 Kings 2:11 Then it happened, as they continued on and talked, that suddenly a chariot of fire appeared with horses of fire, and separated the two of them; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.

ASV 2 Kings 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, which parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.

DBY 2 Kings 2:11 And it came to pass as they went on, and talked, that behold, a chariot of fire and horses of fire; and they parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into the heavens.

- 2Ki 6:17 Ps 68:17 104:3,4 Eze 1:4-28 10:9-22 Hab 3:8 Zec 3:8 Zec 6:1-8 Heb 1:14
- **by a whirlwind:** 2Ki 2:1
- **into heaven:** Mk 16:19

Related Passages:

1 Kings 19:11-13+ So He said, "Go forth and stand on the mountain before the LORD." And behold, the LORD was passing by! And a great and strong wind was rending the mountains and breaking in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind. And after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. 12 After the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire; and after the fire **a sound of a gentle blowing**. 13 When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood in the entrance of the cave. And behold, a voice came to him and said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

Genesis 5:22-24+ Then Enoch walked with God three hundred years after he became the father of Methuselah, and he had other sons and daughters. 23 So all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years. 24 Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.



THE MAN WHO DID NOT DIE

As they were going along and talking - This is amazing. Walking and talking and suddenly interrupted by a fiery chariot and horses.

Behold, ([hinneh](#); Lxx - [idou](#)) - This word signifies "Pay attention!" If there was ever a scene to pay attention to, it would be this one!

There appeared a chariot of fire and horses of fire which separated the two of them - The literal Hebrew says "and they made a division between the two of them." This is one of those grand passages in Scripture that does not need much commentary. The walking and talking ceased immediately. The mantle had been effectively passed from the heaven bound prophet to the earth bound prophet. The transfer of power had occurred. This vision would surely serve to motivate and empower Elisha's ministry for the rest of his life!

Bob Utley - "a chariot of fire and the horses of fire" This chariot of fire was a manifestation of the presence of YHWH. It is similar to the portable throne chariot of Ezekiel 1 and 10. It may also be imagery for YHWH as the Divine Warrior on Israel's behalf (i.e., from the Conquest Period of Holy War).

And Elijah went up by a whirlwind ([sa'ar](#); Lxx - *susseismos* - commotion of air - 1Ki 19:11, Jer 23:19) **to heaven** - Not only did God provide a chariot and horses of fire but He even provided a whirlwind to translate Elijah to heaven! Notice that the beautiful artwork above is (like so many religious paintings) is not totally accurate (never get your theology from art!) because Elijah was not taken up in a chariot (at least that is not definitely stated) but twice (here and 2Ki 2:1) is said to be taken up **by a whirlwind**. The purpose of the **chariot of fire and horses of fire** was to separate Elijah from Elisha.

THOUGHT - Two men were taken up to heaven without dying, Enoch and Elijah. But the day is coming (and could be imminent) when all living believers will be translated to heaven without dying in the event known as the **Rapture** (cf 1Co 15:51-55+; 1Th 4:17-18+)! This begs the question - Are you ready? Are you ready and waiting (with anticipation) (see Titus 2:13+ where "*looking*" = [prosdechomai](#) in present tense = looking as a lifestyle!)? What you are looking for will (should) impact what (Who) you are living for! (See the important impact Vertical Vision can have on Horizontal Living)

*Elijah's home-going was as dramatic
as the events that characterized his life!*
-- Gene Getz

It is interesting that Gotquestions.org, a site I love to quote because they are almost always Biblically accurate, seems to be slightly off on this passage for their question asks [Why did God take Elijah to heaven in a chariot of fire?](#) The text actually states **Elijah went up by a whirlwind**. In fairness, could Elijah have gone up in the chariot lifted up by the whirlwind? I suppose that cannot be dogmatically excluded. Heaven will be a fascinating place for many reasons, of course the main one being that we see and fellowship with our Savior forever, but it also may provide resolution to some of the questions we have now such as how Elijah was translated to heaven. Gotquestions.org does have a pertinent comment on this event noting that "God's awesome display of power to Elisha fitted him for service. Such a display is reminiscent of God's revealing His power to Moses at the [burning bush](#), fitting Moses for service (Exodus 3:1–10). Heavenly fire is associated with angels in other places in Scripture. When God opened the eyes of Elisha's servant, he saw an angelic host, described as "horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha" (2 Kings 6:17)."

Rod Mattoon - Once the two men were separated, Elijah was taken up into Heaven, **not by the chariot but by a whirlwind** or the winds of a severe storm. (Bolding added)

*These did not bear Elijah into heaven;
a whirlwind did that.*

[Bible Knowledge Commentary](#) - Suddenly a fast-approaching chariot... and horses of fire... separated Elijah from Elisha. **These did not bear Elijah into heaven; a whirlwind did that.** The fiery horses and chariot were symbols of God's power in battle. Horses and chariots were the mightiest means of warfare in that day. God was saying in this event that His power was far greater than any military might. It was this power that Elijah had demonstrated and which Elisha in his wisdom valued so highly (cf. Ex. 14:9, 17; 1 Kings 10:29; Ps. 104:3-4; Isa. 31:1). The whirlwind was actually a storm with lightning and thunder. Like the pillar of cloud that led the Israelites in the wilderness (Ex. 13:21), it represented God's presence. (Bolding added)

How fascinatingly ironic that Elijah who had experienced Yahweh in a gentle breeze (1Ki 19:12+) would now experienced Him in a whirlwind.

Henry Morris - This was a unique event in history, and was altogether miraculous. [Enoch](#), who had also served as God's prophet in a time of deep apostasy, had likewise been taken into heaven (the "third heaven" where God's throne is located) without dying, but evidently no one had actually observed his translation (Genesis 5:24; Hebrews 11:5) as did Elisha at the translation of Elijah. Enoch's ministry had been to the whole world, essentially at the mid-point of the period from Adam to Abraham. Elijah's ministry had been to Israel, essentially at the midpoint of the period from Abraham to Christ. Elijah was taken up in a fiery tornado that seemed to surround a fiery horse-drawn chariot as he went up until he was out of Elisha's sight. It has been assumed that Elijah and Enoch have both been supernaturally preserved alive in heaven ever since that time in their natural bodies. When the Lord Jesus returns, both dead and living believers will be translated into His presence, their bodies supernaturally changed into immortal bodies (1 Thessalonians 4:16,17; 1 Corinthians 15:51-54; Philippians 3:20,21). If Elijah and Enoch are presently in natural bodies, then it is possible that they will also return at this time to serve as His "two witnesses" on the earth during the 1260 days of great plagues that will quickly follow Jesus' return (see notes on Revelation 11:2-12). They will continue to be preserved alive to finish their unfinished testimony to both Israel and the Gentile world during that period. Finally, they will be slain and then they also will be raptured into heaven with immortalized bodies.

Whirlwind ([05591](#)) (sa'ar from verb **saar** = to storm, rage) refers to a gale, heavy windstorm. God's wrath is often symbolized by stormy conditions in order to illustrate the power of his judgment (Ps. 107:25, 29; Isa. 29:6; Ezek. 1:4; Zech. 9:14), and sometimes He used actual storms to visit justice upon the wicked (Ezek. 13:11, 13). Therefore, the elements and the weather of the earth are ultimately subject to the wishes of the Almighty Creator (Ps. 148:8).

Patterson - **sa'ar** means "storm." It may reflect an original nominal root which underlies the Akkadian šārum "windstorm" and of which sa'ar is a by-form. If so, se'ārâ is a feminine derivative and sā'ar, a denominative verb. The root must be differentiated from the homonyms šā'ar "be acquainted with," and šā'ar "bristle."

sa'ar denotes a literal storm (Jonah 1:4, 12) or describes the Lord's wrath against the lying prophet (Jeremiah 23:19) or enemy nation (Amos 1:14), especially in the end times (Jeremiah 25:32; Jeremiah 30:23). The Psalmist prays for deliverance from the storms of life (Psalm 55:8 [H 9]).

se'ārâ. Windstorm. Used of a literal storm (Psalm 107:25ff.; Psalm 148:8) sometimes as a symbol of God's judgment (Isaiah 29:6). Its use as a theophany (Job 38:1; Job 40:6), renders more understandable Elijah's translation into heaven in a whirlwind (2 Kings 2:1, 11).

sā'ar. To storm. The root idea is found only in connection with the storm which occurred during Jonah's sea flight (Jonah 1:11ff.).

Taking its meaning from a physical storm, sā'ar usually appears in contexts of upheaval and distress. The Assyrian king is "enraged" at having his secret plans for ambushing the Israelites thwarted (2 Kings 6:11). Habakkuk (Habakkuk 3:14) cites part of an ancient epic poem in describing God's triumph over his enemies who come like a "storm" against his people. While Hosea (Hosea 13:2-3) warns the Israelites of his day that because of their idolatry, God would send them away into exile as chaff driven by a "tempest" (cf. Zech. 2:8-13), Isaiah (Isaiah 54:11-14) prophesies that the God of all grace and compassion will yet restore his "storm" tossed and troubled people and establish them in righteousness in a land of unsurpassing beauty and safety. (See online [Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament](#))

Baker - sa'ar, סַעַר se'ārāh: I. A masculine noun meaning a stormy wind, a tempest, a whirlwind. It refers to a strong gale, a windstorm. It is used figuratively of one's enemies (Ps. 55:8[9]); of God's pursuit of them (Ps. 83:15[16]); and God's wrath in judgment (Jer. 23:19; Amos 1:14). It refers to a storm at sea (Jon. 1:4, 12).

II. A feminine noun indicating a strong wind, a tempest, a whirlwind. It is similar to I. It indicates a powerful gale, high winds, a windstorm. It was such a whirlwind that took Elijah up to heaven (2 Ki. 2:1, 11). The Lord speaks from such a windstorm (Job 38:1; 40:6); and uses it to shield His presence (Ezek. 1:4; Zech. 9:14). It was God's tool at the Exodus (Ps. 107:25, 29); and His tool in judgment (Isa. 29:6; 40:24; Jer. 30:23). ([The Complete Word Study Dictionary – Old Testament.](#))

SA'AR - 16V - storm(6), storm winds(1), stormy(2), tempest(2), violent(2), whirlwind(3). 2 Ki. 2:1; 2 Ki. 2:11; Job 38:1; Job 40:6; Ps. 107:25; Ps. 107:29; Ps. 148:8; Isa. 29:6; Isa. 40:24; Isa. 41:16; Jer. 23:19; Jer. 30:23; Ezek. 1:4; Ezek. 13:11; Ezek. 13:13; Zech. 9:14

SA'AR IN KJV - 2 Ki. 2:1; 2 Ki. 2:11; Job 38:1; Job 40:6; Ps. 55:8; Ps. 83:15; Ps. 107:25; Ps. 107:29; Ps. 148:8; Isa. 29:6; Isa. 40:24; Isa. 41:16; Jer. 23:19; Jer. 25:32; Jer. 30:23; Ezek. 1:4; Ezek. 13:11; Ezek. 13:13; Amos 1:14; Jon. 1:4; Jon. 1:12; Zech. 9:14

James Smith - CHRIST'S ASCENSION AND ELIJAH'S 2 Kings 2:11

1. Elijah did not ascend; he was carried up. Jesus did ascend, without any outward sign to accompany His slow upward movement through the quiet air.
2. The Lord Jesus went up by His own power; not so Elijah.
3. Elijah left his cloak; the Lord Jesus left a benediction and sent His Holy Spirit.
4. When Christ went up on High He relinquished nothing of His activity for us; Elijah's work was done when he was carried up on High.

MacDuff - It was in a chariot of fire Elijah was taken to heaven (**ED**: POSSIBLY BUT PERHAPS IT WAS THE WHIRLWIND!). Is it not in a similar chariot, in a figurative sense, God takes many of His people still? He brings them, as He did Elijah, to the brink of Jordan; keeps them for years hovering amid the rough, rugged glens and gorges of trial; seats them in a flaming equipage; reins in the fiery horses until, in the fire, they are refined and purified as gold, and fitted for their radiant crowns.... It is the chariot of fire. As God's loved ones enter it, He whispers in their ear, "Through much tribulation ye shall enter into the kingdom."

J R Miller - " 2 Kings 2:11

So the most loving friends must sometimes be parted. We walk on together, talking of a thousand things, not dreaming of separation, when suddenly, as we turn some sharp corner in the way, the 'chariot' is waiting, and one is taken and the other left! We ought not to forget the certainty of separation in every friendship we form. Some day one of the two will be taken, and the other must be left to weep by a grave and to walk on lonely and sorrowing after that.

Another thought suggested here is, that heaven is not far away. One of the 'chariots' from the King's country came down that day to carry Elijah home. Another came down to the door of your house when your godly father died, or when mother or brother or sister died. We shall not leave this world as Elijah did, missing death; we shall have to pass through the valley of the shadow of death; but we shall have the heavenly chariot to bear away our freed spirit just as truly as he did.

Spurgeon - "Then Elijah went up into heaven in the whirlwind." Preparing to die is the greatest thing we have to do, and we have to do it soon. First, we must learn to hold all things with a loose hand. Why should I grip so tightly that which death must and will tear

from me? Why should I set my affections so ardently on a dying thing that will melt before my eyes? I cannot carry it with me when I am called to go. The next thing is to go and see about our work. If we have a feeling at all that we are going home, let us set our house in order. What did Elijah do? He went to the two colleges he had founded at Bethel and at Jericho, and of which he was their principal instructor, and he addressed the young men once more before he was taken from them. I should like to have been a student there to listen to the professor's last lecture. I guarantee it was not an ordinary one! There was nothing in it dry, dusty, dead, and dreary. We have so little time to live, let us live like those who are dying. Elijah also said to his friend Elisha, "Tell me what I can do for you before I am taken from you" (2:9). If we have anything we can do for our friends, we should do it now. "Whatever your hands find to do, do with all your strength" (Ec 9:10). And see that Elijah and Elisha were talking as they walked—holding communion with each other. Elijah had a great deal to say to Elisha. He was about to leave in perilous times, so he talked fast to the man who was to bear the burden and heat of the day. And no doubt Elisha asked him many questions and was informed by him about many knotty points. Let our talk always be like their talk, and then it will be well to die talking. "Those who feared the LORD spoke to one another. The LORD took notice and listened. So a book of remembrance was written before him for those who feared the LORD and had high regard for his name" (Mal 3:16).

Robert Morgan - Swing Low, Sweet Chariot [Near to the Heart of God: Meditations on 366 Best-Loved Hymns](#)

Fisk University in Nashville was established after the Civil War to provide training for newly liberated African Americans who wanted to gain an education. The school's treasurer, George Leonard White, a devout Christian, put together a singing group that came to be known as the Jubilee Singers. One of White's finest singers, Ella Sheppard, brought him this song, "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot," claiming her mother had written it in slavery. On the evening of October 5, 1871, White and his singers gathered for prayer, and the next morning they took off from the Nashville train station, hoping that a string of concerts would raise much-needed funds for the school. No one dreamed they were about to introduce the world to a new genre of Christian music—the Negro spiritual.

OCTOBER 5

I looked over Jordan and what did I see
Coming for to carry me home
A band of angels coming after me
Coming for to carry me home

Sometimes I'm up and sometimes I'm down
Coming for to carry me home
But still my soul feels heavenly bound
Coming for to carry me home

The brightest day that I can say
Coming for to carry me home
When Jesus washed my sins away
Coming for to carry me home

Swing low, sweet chariot
Coming for to carry me home
Swing low, sweet chariot
Coming for to carry me home

H A Ironside - 2 Kings 2:11

It was a glorious consummation to a noble life. Surely Elijah must have rejoiced in the hour of his ascension that his petulant prayer when he was under the juniper tree was not answered. He prayed to die, but God had something far better for him. He was the only man since Enoch who was carried up to Heaven without passing through death. And so God is often better than our faith and deals with us according to the lovingkindness of His great heart rather than according to our poor thoughts and our just rewards. He would have us learn to trust Him to do the best for us and to know that if He does not grant our exact requests it is because He has something better in store for us.

He was better to me than all my hopes,
He was better than all my fears;
He made a bridge of my broken works,
And a rainbow of my tears.
The billows that guarded my sea-girt path

But carried my Lord on their crest;
When I dwell on the days of my wilderness march
I can lean on His love for the rest.
—Anna Shipton

2 Kings 2:12 Elisha saw it and cried out, “My father, my father, the chariots of Israel and its horsemen!” And he saw Elijah no more. Then he took hold of his own clothes and tore them in two pieces.

KJV 2 Kings 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.

BGT 2 Kings 2:12 κα Ελισαιε ρα κα βαπτερπτερρμα Ισραηλ κα ππε ρα το κα ο κ ε δ εν α τ ν π κα
πελ βετο τ ν ματ ων α το κα δι ρρη ξεν α τ ε ρ δ ο γμα τα

LXE 2 Kings 2:12 And Elisaie saw, and cried, Father, father, the chariot of Israel, and the horseman thereof! And he saw him no more: and he took hold of his garments, and rent them into two pieces.

NET 2 Kings 2:12 While Elisha was watching, he was crying out, "My father, my father! The chariot and horsemen of Israel!" Then he could no longer see him. He grabbed his clothes and tore them in two.

CSB 2 Kings 2:12 As Elisha watched, he kept crying out, "My father, my father, the chariots and horsemen of Israel!" Then he never saw Elijah again. He took hold of his own clothes and tore them into two pieces.

ESV 2 Kings 2:12 And Elisha saw it and he cried, "My father, my father! The chariots of Israel and its horsemen!" And he saw him no more. Then he took hold of his own clothes and tore them in two pieces.

NIV 2 Kings 2:12 Elisha saw this and cried out, "My father! My father! The chariots and horsemen of Israel!" And Elisha saw him no more. Then he took hold of his own clothes and tore them apart.

NLT 2 Kings 2:12 Elisha saw it and cried out, "My father! My father! I see the chariots and charioteers of Israel!" And as they disappeared from sight, Elisha tore his clothes in distress.

NRS 2 Kings 2:12 Elisha kept watching and crying out, "Father, father! The chariots of Israel and its horsemen!" But when he could no longer see him, he grasped his own clothes and tore them in two pieces.

NJB 2 Kings 2:12 Elisha saw it, and shouted, 'My father! My father! Chariot of Israel and its chargers!' Then he lost sight of him, and taking hold of his own clothes he tore them in half.

NAB 2 Kings 2:12 When Elisha saw it happen he cried out, "My father! my father! Israel's chariots and drivers!" But when he could no longer see him, Elisha gripped his own garment and tore it in two.

YLT 2 Kings 2:12 And Elisha is seeing, and he is crying, 'My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and its horsemen;' and he hath not seen him again; and he taketh hold on his garments, and rendeth them into two pieces.

GWN 2 Kings 2:12 When Elisha saw this, he cried out, "Master! Master! Israel's chariot and horses!" When he couldn't see Elijah anymore, he grabbed his own garment and tore it in two to show his grief.

BBE 2 Kings 2:12 And when Elisha saw it he gave a cry, My father, my father, the carriages of Israel and its horsemen! And he saw him no longer; and he was full of grief.

- **saw it:** 2Ki 2:10
- **My father:** 2Ki 13:14 Job 22:30 Pr 11:11 Ec 7:19 9:16-18 Isa 37:4,15,21 Ac 27:24
- **he saw him:** Pr 30:4 Mk 16:19 Lu 2:15 24:51 Joh 3:13 Ac 1:9 2Co 5:2,4 Eph 4:8 Rev 11:12
- **tore them in two pieces:** Job 1:20,21 Isa 57:1,2 Ac 8:2

Related Passages:

2 Kings 13:14 When Elisha became sick with the illness of which he was to die, Joash the king of Israel came down to him and wept over him and said, “**My father, my father, the chariots of Israel and its horsemen!**”

ELISHA'S CRY AND RESPONSE

AT ELIJAH'S DEPARTURE

Elisha saw it - The sight was confirmation that God had bestowed a double portion of Elijah's spirit on Elisha.

And cried out, "My father, my father, the chariots of Israel and its horsemen!" - In ancient times, "father" was a title of **deep respect** and spiritual authority (2Ki 6:21; 13:14). This exclamation appears to be an expression of grief as well as affection for Elijah and speaks of the intimacy of their relationship. Note that Elisha calls Elijah **the chariots of Israel and its horsemen**. **The chariots of Israel and its horsemen** depict Elijah's prophetic power which (like chariots and horsemen) served to protect Israel in this time of spiritual darkness and apostasy.

Ryrie on the chariots of Israel and its horsemen - Elijah was the strongest instrument of God's power for Israel (just as the chariot was the mightiest military weapon of the nation).

NET Note on my father, the chariots of Israel and its horsemen - Elisha may be referring to the fiery chariot(s) and horses as the Lord's spiritual army that fights on behalf of Israel (see 2 Kgs 6:15–17; 7:6). However, the juxtaposition with "my father" (clearly a reference to Elijah as Elisha's mentor), and the parallel in 2 Kgs 13:14 (where the king addresses Elisha with these words), suggests that Elisha is referring to Elijah. **In this case Elijah is viewed as a one man army, as it were.** When the Lord spoke through him, his prophetic word was as powerful as an army of chariots and horses. (Bolding added)

J H Stek - When Elijah was taken, Elisha was there, and he saw. And Elijah's mantle remained! Elisha's investiture was of Yahweh. Hailing the departing Elijah as "**father**" and as the "**chariots and horsemen of Israel**"—Israel's true source of strength—he took up Elijah's mantle and returned in the spirit and power of Elijah back across the Jordan to the scene of Elijah's labors. There he was greeted by the sons of the prophets as Elijah's successor (v 15). (SEE [International Standard Bible Encyclopedia - Volume 2 - Page 70](#))

Bible Knowledge Commentary - Elisha's reference to **the chariots and horsemen of Israel** shows that he regarded Elijah as a powerful instrument whom God had used to wage war against the idolatry in Israel.

G Campbell Morgan draws an interesting conclusion - "Elisha saw that the strength of Israel had been that of the presence of the prophet of God. It is more than a coincidence that when presently Elisha himself passed away, Joash, the reigning king, uttered the same exclamation (2 Kings 13:14)."

And he saw Elijah no more. Then he took hold of his own clothes and tore them in two pieces - (cf. Ge 37:29, 34; 44:13; Josh 7:6; Esther 4:1; Job 1:20; 2:12) Elisha tears his clothes in sorrow over the loss of Elijah's physical presence. Note in tearing his own clothes, there is a picture of him laying aside his old identity and fully committing to the office that is now bestowed to him by God.

Tearing one's clothes in the Bible is seen in several settings: In Jacob's grief when he thinks Joseph is dead (Ge 37:34) In shock and/or distress Job tore his robe when disaster struck his family and possessions (Job 1:20). King Josiah tore his clothes when he heard the book of the Law had been found and he heard Yahweh's words (2 Kings 22:11)

Warren Wiersbe - We never know when a friend and fellow worker will be taken from us. God told Elisha that Elijah was leaving him, but we don't know when it is our time or a friend's time to go to heaven. What great opportunities we miss by wasting time on trifles when we could be learning from each other about the Lord and His Word! It rejoices my heart when I see younger Christians and Christian workers appreciating the "senior saints," the veterans of Christian service, and learning from them. One day, these "giants" will be called home and we'll no longer be able to learn from them. These two men represented different generations and opposite personalities, yet they were able to walk together. What a rebuke this is to those in the church who label the generations and separate them from each other. I heard one youthful pastor say that he didn't want anybody in his church over the age of forty, and I wondered where he would get the wise counsel that usually comes with maturity. I thank God for the "Elijahs" in my life who were patient with me and took time to instruct me. Now I'm trying to share that same blessing with others. ([Bible Exposition Commentary - Old Testament](#))

G Campbell Morgan - 2 Kings 2. 12.

There is something weirdly pathetic in the final movements of Elijah. Accompanied by Elisha, and watched by the prophets, he moved from place to place. It would seem as though he endeavored to escape into complete loneliness for that translation which he knew was at hand. Elisha, upon whom his mantle had already been cast, followed him loyally, determined to stand by him to the last. It was permitted to him to do so, and to see the chariot and horses of fire, which parted them as Elijah was caught up to heaven by a whirlwind. Then this great cry escaped from the man who was left. That cry almost certainly took this particular form as the result of the vision, but its reference was not to the fiery chariot and horses upon which he had looked but to Elijah. Elisha saw that the

strength of Israel had been that of the presence of the prophet of God. It is more than a coincidence that when presently Elisha himself passed away, Joash, the reigning king, uttered the same exclamation (2 Kings 13:14). This is ever so. The last line of strength in national life is never that of munitions or money, nor even of men. It is that of the word of the living God, declared, interpreted, applied, by messengers whom He calls and sends. It is by this word that men live, are strong, and overcome. Without the guidance of this word, munitions, money, and men are employed to no purpose. Under the direction of this word, they all contribute to the reaching of true national strength and stability.

Charles Swindoll - MANTLE OF POWER Read 2 Kings 2:12–15 [Great Days with the Great Lives: Daily Insight from Great ... - Page 188](#)

Elijah's no-death contract suddenly went into effect. Elijah, prophet of power—gone. Elisha, prophet of double power—here, ready, and about to be used greatly by his God.

When a man or woman of God dies, nothing of God dies. We tend to forget that. We get so caught up in the lives of certain individuals that we begin to think we cannot do without them. What limited thinking! When even a mighty servant is gone, God has seven thousand who have never bowed the knee to Baal. He has them ready, waiting in the wings. Classic case in point: Elisha. God always has a back-up plan.

Think about it. Through the ages He has had His men and women in every era to carry on His work. Never once has God been frustrated, wondering, What will My people do now that he's gone? Now that she's no longer with them? Our Creator-God is omnipotent. He is never caught shorthanded.

Elisha may have been momentarily surprised and stunned, but that didn't last long. Remembering Elijah's words, he reached down and picked up the prophet's cloak. Claiming the power that now was his, he crossed back over the Jordan and began his own prophetic ministry. God's plan never missed a beat. Exit Elijah. Enter Elisha.

We can't help but wonder if, in the years to come, Elisha didn't stop and study that old mantle, calling to mind those great days of the past when his mentor and friend stood alone, representing God's presence and proclaiming God's message. The memory of the older Elijah—a man of heroism and humility—served to strengthen the younger Elisha, whom God destined to serve in even greater ways.

There are times, to this day, when I call to mind my granddaddy, L. O. Lundy. His wise words of counsel still linger. His life of quiet, deep character sometimes seems so close to me I can almost feel his warm breath on the back of my neck. Yes, to this day I miss him, but the mantle of his memory spurs me on to greater heights and deeper devotion.

The good news is this: I will one day see him. And we, together, will worship the same Lord face to face, “. . . and thus we shall always be with the Lord” (1 Thessalonians 4:17).

Whose mantle have you received? And what will you do with its inherited influence?

Charles Swindoll - REDIRECTING OUR GAZE Read 2 Kings 2:12–15; Matthew 17:1–13 [Great Days with the Great Lives: Daily Insight from Great ... - Page 189](#)

The Christian's greatest goal is to be like Christ. We want to emulate His exemplary life, model His method of teaching, resist temptation as He resisted it, handle conflicts as He did, focus on the mission God calls us to accomplish as Christ focused on His. And certainly it is our desire to commune with the Father as the Son did throughout His ministry and suffering. No greater compliment can be given than this one: “When I am with that person, it's as if I'm in the presence of Jesus Himself.”

Throughout this study of Elijah, I have often thought of how closely the great prophet's life resembled the Messiah, who was yet to come: the way he spent time alone; the courage he showed as he stood in the presence of his enemy and delivered God's message; the power he exhibited when it took a miracle to convince his audience that he was a man with a message from God—the one true God; the compassion he demonstrated when he cared about the widow's grief and brought her son back to life; even the anguish he felt in his own Gethsemane as he wrestled in his soul. And finally, how much like Christ was his departure. As others stood staring, he was taken up to heaven out of their sight.

Is it any surprise, then, that when our Savior asked His disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” the answer from some was, “Elijah.” Why, of course! Small wonder, for in many ways their lives paralleled. And when the two men appeared before Jesus and three of His disciples on the Mount of Transfiguration, one was Moses, and the other was none other than Elijah (Matthew 17:3).

Elijah's heroic and humble life urges us to be like Christ—to lift our eyes from the grit and grind of today's woes and to turn our

attention to the glory and hope of another land. Immanuel's land! And in that frame of mind, we'll redirect our gaze from who gets the glory to who gives the grace. Then, while fully focused on Him—our King of grace, the gentle Lamb of God—the deepest longings of our souls will be satisfied.

If you compare your life to Christ, how long would your list be of matching characteristics?

Oswald Chambers - This experience must come

And he saw him no more. 2 Kings 2:12.

It is not wrong to depend upon Elijah as long as God gives him to you, but remember the time will come when he will have to go; when he stands no more to you as your guide and leader, because God does not intend he should. You say—"I cannot go on without Elijah." God says you must.

Alone at your Jordan. v. 14. Jordan is the type of separation where there is no fellowship with anyone else, and where no one can take the responsibility for you. You have to put to the test now what you learned when you were with your Elijah. You have been to Jordan over and over again with Elijah, but now you are up against it alone. It is no use saying you cannot go; this experience has come, and you must go. If you want to know whether God is the God you have faith to believe Him to be, then go through your Jordan alone.

Alone at your Jericho. v. 15. Jericho is the place where you have seen your Elijah do great things. When you come to your Jericho you have a strong disinclination to take the initiative and trust in God, you want someone else to take it for you. If you remain true to what you learned with Elijah, you will get the sign that God is with you.

Alone at your Bethel. v. 23. At your Bethel you will find yourself at your wits' end and at the beginning of God's wisdom. When you get to your wits' end and feel inclined to succumb to panic, don't; stand true to God and He will bring His truth out in a way that will make your life a sacrament. Put into practice what you learned with your Elijah, use his cloak and pray. Determine to trust in God and do not look for Elijah any more.

Oswald Chambers - This Experience Must Come 2 Kings 2:12-23

And he saw him no more. 2 Kings 2:12

"And he saw him no more"—in the way of leadership. If you have been learning a truth with a man or woman of God, there comes a time when you see him or her no more, not necessarily physically, but in your spiritual experience they stand no more to you as your guide and leader because God does not intend they should. That is the time you accuse God of making blunders—"I can't go on without Elijah." God says you must.

1. Alone at Your Jordan (2 Kings 2:13-14)—Your Seal

Your "Jordan" is some type of separation in which no one can have any fellowship with you, and no one can take the responsibility for you; you have to put to the test what you learned when you were in communion with your "Elijah." As a saint in God's work, your experience is that you have been to Jordan over and over again with your Elijah, he taught you wonderfully how God did things, and you saw how God worked through him, but now you are up against it alone. There is no use saying you cannot go on without him, this experience has come and you must.

What did Elisha do? He took up the mantle and did exactly what he had seen Elijah do. In the discipline of fellowship God always makes us go first as apprentices. He gives us comrades and leaders and guides whom we depend upon up to a certain stage, then there comes the experience of going alone. It is not wrong to depend on Elijah so long as God gives him to you, take all you can get from him, but remember the time will come when he will have to go. Beware then that you don't look for Elijah, don't look for any assistance, but call on God and He will give you your seal. "The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha" (2 Kings 2:15). There is no sentiment here, but reality. If you want to know whether God is the real God you have faith to believe He is, then go through your Jordan alone. Jordan is taken to mean death, but here it means the threshold of life. We have to go through our Jordan as men and women who have really learned of God.

2. Alone at Your Jericho (2 Kings 2:16-22)—Your Sin.

Jericho is the place where you have seen your Elijah do great things. There are times in your life when Redemption and rationalism come into conflict, and your faith in God seems the most feeble and ludicrous thing there is. If you have learned well of your Elijah, you will never trust your reason, or wits, or anyone else's wits, you will remain true to what you learned with Elijah, and you will get the sign that God is with you; but you must go there alone. When you are up against your Jericho, you have a strong disinclination to

take the initiative and trust in God, you want someone else to take the responsibility. While you are with your Elijah he takes the responsibility, but you come to the place where Elijah is no more use. Whether it be your Jordan or your Jericho, stand true to what you learned with your Elijah, and don't side with the clamour of the educated prophets.

3. Alone at Your Beth-El (2 Kings 2:23)—Your Sacrament

"And he went up from thence unto Beth-el." Beth-el stands for the house of God, the place where God revealed Himself to Jacob. Elisha had been with Elijah to all these places—"and they two went on," and now Elisha goes alone, and at Beth-el he is slandered and treated as a hypocrite. At your Beth-el you will find yourself at your wits' end and at the beginning of God's wisdom. When you get to your wits' end and feel inclined to succumb to panic, don't. In spiritual matters never do what you feel inclined to do naturally. If you knuckle down to the tyranny of physical conditions, it is all up with learning God's lesson at that particular Beth-el. Stand steadfastly true to God, and God will bring His truth out in a way that will make your life a sacrament, i.e., the abiding presence of God will come through the simple elements of your life, but you must wait for Him.

Perhaps this experience has come in your life, not in a sentimental way that makes you interested in yourself, but in reality, and you are up against it. The only thing to do is to put into vogue what you learned with your Elijah—use his cloak and pray; determine to trust in God and don't look for Elijah any more. When God removes His servants He never allows any time to mourn over them. "Moses My servant is dead; now therefore arise. .

David Guzik: Both Moses and Elijah:

1. Stood alone for righteousness.
2. Were associated with fire upon mountains.
3. Were associated with the desert.
4. Met God on Sinai.
5. Were chased out of their countries by pagan rulers.
6. Knew God's miraculous provision for food and water.
7. Wandered in the desert for a period measured by 40.
8. Fasted for 40 days.
9. Were powerful examples of praying men.
10. Parted waters.
11. Had close associates who succeeded them.
12. Had successors who parted waters also.
13. Had mysterious or strange deaths.

Wiersbe has a similar comparison of Moses and Elijah - Both opened bodies of water, Moses the Red Sea (Ex. 14:16, 21, 26) and Elijah the Jordan River. Both called down fire from heaven (Ex. 9:24; Lev. 9:24; Num. 11:1 and 16:35), Both men saw the Lord provide food, Moses the manna (Ex. 16) and quails (Num. 11), and Elijah the oil and flour for the widow, plus his own meals (1 Kings 17:1–16). In the land of Egypt, Moses prayed and God altered the weather, and Elijah prayed and God stopped the rain and then three years later started the rain again. Moses gave the law to the people of Israel and Elijah called them to repent and return to the true and living God. Both were associated with mountains (Sinai and Carmel), and both made journeys through the wilderness. Both men had unique endings to their lives: God buried Moses in a grave nobody can find, and God carried Elijah to heaven by a whirlwind. Both Moses and Elijah were privileged to be present with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matt. 17:4; Mark 9:5; Luke 9:33). ([Bible Exposition Commentary - Old Testament](#))

2 Kings 2:13 He also took up the mantle of Elijah that fell from him and returned and stood by the bank of the Jordan.

- **the mantle of Elijah:** 2Ki 2:8 1Ki 19:19
- **bank:** Heb. lip, 1Ki 9:26

TEARING THE OLD ELISHA TAKING UP THE NEW

He also took up the mantle ([addereth](#); Lxx - melote - sheepskin) **of Elijah that fell from him** - What a fascinating detail. The two men were separated by the fiery chariot and horses, but the **mantle** just "happened to fall off" (God's providence) of Elijah and was now taken up by the new prophet. Elijah's **mantle** was clearly the outward symbol of Elisha taking over Elijah's prophetic office.

Warren Wiersbe observes that "in taking up Elijah's mantle, Elisha was making clear that he accepted the responsibilities involved as he succeeded the great prophet and continued his work. By using the mantle to open the waters of the Jordan, he was declaring that his faith was not in the departed prophet but in the ever-present living God." ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

And returned and stood by the bank of the Jordan - It is interesting and surely not a coincidence that this entire transfer of power has occurred at the Jordan River, the place in which the children of Israel had first entered into the promised land.

Warren Wiersbe - Elijah is a good model for believers to imitate when it comes to the inevitability of one day leaving this earth, either through death or the rapture of the church. He didn't sit around and do nothing, but instead visited three of the prophetic schools and no doubt ministered to the students. He didn't say to his successor "I'm going to leave you" and thus dwell on the negative, but said "I'm going to Bethel—to Jericho—to the Jordan" and kept busy until the very moment the Lord called him. Even more, he didn't ask his successor to give him anything, because we can't take anything in our hands from earth to heaven (1 Tim. 6:7), but instead he offered to give Elisha a gift before the end came. One of the best gifts we can leave is a prepared servant of God to take our place! ([Bible Exposition Commentary - Old Testament](#))

J R Miller - 2 Kings 2:13

We are continually seeing useful lives removed from earth. The loss seems irreparable. But there are no accidents in God's providence. Everyone's life is a plan of God, and no faithful servant is taken away—until his part in the great plan is finished. There is abundance of work remaining—but it is the work of others, not of him who is gone. His mantle falls at someone's feet—yours, perhaps.

A godly father dies, and there is grief in the home. How he will be missed! Yes, but an elder son stands by the coffin, strong and gifted, blessed with the blessing of the father's life and teaching. At his feet the mantle falls from the father's shoulders. He must take it up, and with it lift the burdens and responsibilities of manhood. He must become now his mother's protector, and the shelter and defender of his younger brothers and sisters.

A godly mother dies, and when a gentle mother goes out of a home—the loss indeed seems irreparable. But if there is an elder daughter in the sorrowing group at the grave, at her feet the mantle falls.

So it is in all the breaches which death makes in Christian homes and communities, in every case the mantle falls at someone's feet. God makes provision that his work shall not suffer, unless his servants fail in their duty. We must be ready always to take up what is ours.

2 Kings 2:14 He took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him and struck the waters and said, "Where is the LORD, the God of Elijah?" And when he also had struck the waters, they were divided here and there; and Elisha crossed over.

KJV 2 Kings 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.

BGT 2 Kings 2:14 καὶ λαβὼν τὴν μὴλωτὶν Ἡλίου πέσεν πρὸς τὸ ὕδωρ καὶ ὁ θεὸς ἐποίησε τὸ ὕδωρ διαιρεῖσθαι ἐν τῇ μέσῃ καὶ ἐν τῇ ἄλλῃ καὶ ἔβη Ἐλισαῖος

LXE 2 Kings 2:14 and he took the mantle of Eliu, which fell from off him, and smote the water, and said, Where is the Lord God of Eliu? and he smote the waters, and they were divided hither and thither; and Elisaie went over.

NET 2 Kings 2:14 He took the cloak that had fallen off Elijah, hit the water with it, and said, "Where is the LORD, THE God of Elijah?" When he hit the water, it divided and Elisha crossed over.

CSB 2 Kings 2:14 Then he took the mantle Elijah had dropped and struck the waters. "Where is the LORD God of Elijah?" he asked. He struck the waters himself, and they parted to the right and the left, and Elisha crossed over.

ESV 2 Kings 2:14 Then he took the cloak of Elijah that had fallen from him and struck the water, saying, "Where is the LORD, the God of Elijah?" And when he had struck the water, the water was parted to the one side and to the other, and Elisha went over.

NIV 2 Kings 2:14 Then he took the cloak that had fallen from him and struck the water with it. "Where now is the LORD, the God of Elijah?" he asked. When he struck the water, it divided to the right and to the left, and he crossed over.

NLT 2 Kings 2:14 He struck the water with Elijah's cloak and cried out, "Where is the LORD, the God of Elijah?" Then the river divided, and Elisha went across.

NRS 2 Kings 2:14 He took the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and struck the water, saying, "Where is the LORD, the God of Elijah?" When he had struck the water, the water was parted to the one side and to the other, and Elisha went over.

NJB 2 Kings 2:14 He took Elijah's cloak and struck the water. "Where is Yahweh, the God of Elijah?" he cried. As he struck the water it divided to right and left, and Elisha crossed over.

NAB 2 Kings 2:14 Wielding the mantle which had fallen from Elijah, he struck the water in his turn and said, "Where is the LORD, the God of Elijah?" When Elisha struck the water it divided and he crossed over.

YLT 2 Kings 2:14 and he taketh the robe of Elijah that fell from off him, and smiteth the waters, and saith, 'Where is Jehovah, God of Elijah -- even He?' and he smiteth the waters, and they are halved, hither and thither, and Elisha passeth over.

GWN 2 Kings 2:14 He took the coat and struck the water with it. He asked, "Where is the LORD God of Elijah?" As he struck the water, it divided to his left and his right, and Elisha crossed the river.

- **Struck:** 2Ki 2:8-10 Jos 1:1-9 Mk 16:20 Joh 14:12 Ac 2:33 3:12,13
- **Where is:** Jdg 6:13 1Ki 18:36-39 Ps 42:2,10 115:2 Joe 2:17

ELISHA CRIES OUT FOR GOD'S PRESENCE & POWER

He took the mantle ([addereeth](#); Lxx - melote - sheepskin) **of Elijah that fell from him and struck the waters and said, "Where is the LORD, the God of Elijah?"** - Immediately Elisha puts the mantle to work and steps out in faith, trusting the LORD for the power to do the impossible. This is not a question of doubt, but more an acknowledgement of Elisha's trust and dependence on Yahweh. Elisha's question (**Where is the LORD, the God of Elijah?**) is in effect asking Yahweh if He would be with him, as He was with Elijah. He is asking for a sign of confirmation and continuation of Elijah's ministry. Notice he does not say "Where is Elijah," but shows that he understands his authority comes from Yahweh not Elijah. And he doesn't just speak but he then acts.

*"Here is the prophet's mantle;
but where is Jehovah, God of Elijah?"*
-- C H Spurgeon

[Brian Bell](#) points out that "This account parallels Joshua's parting of the Jordan, which likewise demonstrated God's presence with Joshua shortly after he succeeded Moses."

[Bob Utley](#) - **"Where is the Lord, the God of Elijah?"** In English this seems to be a statement of Elisha's lack of faith, but contextually it relates to YHWH's performing signs so that the prophetic band still watching on the hill would know for certain that Elisha is the successor of Elijah (cf. v. 15).

Dale Ralph Davis: Just as Joshua 1 addresses the question, How shall we go on now that Moses has died?, so 2 Kings 2 raises—and answers—the question, How can we go on when Elijah is going to be taken from us? . . . So Elijah has been 'taken'. But it's all left—power and wisdom, grace and judgment. Elisha asked the right question: Where is the God of Elijah? Answer: Right here, with his struggling, suffering servants. Elijah is gone, Yahweh remains. ([1-2 Kings](#))

And when he also had struck the waters - Elisha is acting in faith, trusting that God would answer him with a clear sign. Would the same mantle in his hands have the same miraculous effect it had in Elijah's hands?

They were divided here and there and Elisha crossed over - God was in effect saying through the parting of the waters "I am with you, just as I was with Elijah." This was God's way of commissioning Elisha. The parting of the waters when struck by Elijah's mantle would confirm to Elisha that he had received spiritual power like Elijah. And it would also show the 50 sons of the prophets that Elisha was indeed heir to Elijah's prophetic ministry.

Wiersbe points out that the fifty prophets "saw Elijah open the waters of the Jordan and close them again, and they saw Elisha repeat the miracle, but they didn't see what Elisha saw when the whirlwind took Elijah to heaven. The fifty men were spectators that saw only part of what happened, but Elisha was a participant in the miracle and the heir to Elijah's ministry." ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

Vance Havner - "The Good Old Days"

Where is the Lord God of Elijah? II Kings 2:14.

Elisha did not ask for the return of Elijah or sigh for the good old days of Elijah. Some of us are like Saul trying to call up departed Samuels. "What would Moody do today? Oh, for the times we used to have!"

A subscriber wrote to a magazine editor, "Your magazine is not as good as it used to be." The editor replied, "It never has been." The times have never been as good as they used to be! The Early Church, fresh from Pentecost, had barely started, when "there arose a murmuring." Look at Corinth! Don't forget Ananias and Sapphira, the Galatians and Colossians, Euodia and Syntyche, the plight of Ephesus, Sardis, Laodicea. It has always been so, yet God has carried on.

Looking back to the good old days is not the way out. Looking up to the God of All the Days is.

Elijah goes, but "thou, O Lord, remainest."

"Where is the LORD God of Elijah?"

For if we do not find God in all these things, what have we found? Nothing.

Spurgeon - "Where is the LORD God of Elijah?" The courts of the Lord's house are dull and dreary if the Lord himself is not there. In reading a Christian book, or in engaging in private devotion, or in coming into the great assemblies of God's house, our chief question is, "Where is the LORD God of Elijah?" For if we do not find God in all these things, what have we found? Nothing. Or we have mere husks, whereas the precious, priceless kernel is lost to us. A great weight of responsibility had fallen on Elisha. He had to do what scarcely any other person had ever done before: he had to follow one who seemed to be one of a kind. He had to be successor of the prophet of fire—the man of God, Elijah. He had Elijah's mantle, and there is something in that. If I could ever feel any great reverence for relics, I would like to have Elijah's mantle. Elisha had it, but what was the use of having the mantle of Elijah unless he could also have his God? Though he was called to take the mantle and with it to strike the waters, yet he knew where his strength must lie; and his prayer, his cry, was, "Here is the prophet's mantle; but where is Jehovah, God of Elijah?" We learn from Elisha's question that we must ask after God when we are beginning any new work or when some great difficulty is in our way.

Where Is the Lord God of Elijah? - Robert Morgan Borrow [More Real Stories for the Soul: 101 Incredible True Stories ... - Page 94](#)

Seven young men sailed to a small island off the coast of mainland China to evangelize the fishing village of Mei-hwa. It was the 1920s, and the group was led by a promising young evangelist named Watchman Nee, later to become one of China's most powerful Christian leaders. It was a pagan village, but at least one Christian lived there, a midwife, the surrogate mother of one of the young men. It was she who had asked them to come.

Despite intense effort, the young men didn't see the slightest results to their witnessing. The villagers ignored them. Finally the youngest of the evangelists, Kuo-ching Lee, shouted to a crowd in frustration, "What's wrong with you? Why don't you believe?"

"Oh, we do believe," came back a reply. "We believe in our great king, the god Ta-Wang. He never fails us."

As Kuo-ching questioned the crowd, he learned that every year the village staged a great festival for their god, Ta-Wang. For the last 286 years it had not rained on that annual festival day. And as it turned out, the celebration was only two days away, on January 11. Impulsively Kuo-ching Lee announced, "Then I promise you, our God, who is the true God, will make it rain on the eleventh."

The crowd took up his challenge. "Say no more," they replied. "If there is rain on the eleventh, then your Jesus is indeed God. We will be ready to hear Him."

When Watchman Nee heard about the exchange he was deeply troubled, and he started to rebuke Kuo-ching Lee for his rashness. But instead he stole away for a time of prayer. "Father, have we gone too far?" he asked. "Should we leave this village now before Your Name is maligned? Should we turn these people over to themselves?"

Instantly a phrase from 2 Kings 2:14 came to his mind: Where is the Lord God of Elijah? Watchman Nee thought of the contest between Elijah and the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel, recorded in 1 Kings 18. He began wondering if God intended to do

something similar in the village of Mei-hwa. The next day during his prayer time the same verse returned to his heart with unusual tenacity: Where is the Lord God of Elijah?

Convinced that God intended to perform a miracle on the eleventh, Watchman instructed his young men to broadcast the challenge throughout the area. The Lord God of Elijah would send rain on January 11, a day that had not seen a drop of rain in almost three centuries.

The news spread quickly, and everyone in the village became caught up in the excitement of the contest. It was the subject of every conversation.

When January 11 dawned, it was a perfect day. The sun rose in a cloudless sky, and Watchman Nee had to shield his eyes from its brightness. The villagers, assured that Ta-Wang was the true god after all, scurried about preparing for their festival. Deeply disturbed, Watchman began to pray, "Lord, this doesn't look like the rain that You...." Suddenly his prayer was interrupted by 2 Kings 2:14: Where is the Lord God of Elijah?

Quickly dressing, Watchman joined his companions at the breakfast table. As they bowed their heads over the food, he offered a simple blessing: "Father, please accept our prayer as a gentle reminder that You promised to answer the challenge of the demon-god today. Even though not a cloud appears in the sky, we trust in Your promise."

Before Watchman pronounced the "Amen," the seven young men heard a few drops hitting the tiled roof. As the rain began falling, villagers hurried to protect their false god, hoisting him onto a platform to be carried down the street. As they started off, the rain fell in sheets, then in a torrential downpour. Water rose in the streets until it reached the porches of many houses, and as the false priests tried to carry their heavy statue, they slipped in the deluge, and their idol crashed to the pavement, breaking its arm and head.

When the storm finally abated, the pagan priest quickly repaired the idol and announced he had made a grave mistake. The annual celebration, he said, was to have fallen, not on January 11, but on January 14.

"Lord," Watchman Nee prayed, "give us good weather until that hour. We have much to do." During the next three days, the seven young men evangelized around the clock, and thirty villagers confessed Christ as Lord.

When the revised day arrived, exactly at the appointed hour, another mammoth storm hit Mei-hwa. From that moment, paganism's hold on the island was broken. A church was established. And the faith of seven young men was dramatically strengthened for their years of ministry to come.

C H Spurgeon - sermon notes - 2 Kings 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?"

The great object to be desired is God, Jehovah, Elijah's God. With him all things flourish. His absence is our decline and death.

Those entering on any holy work should seek for the God who was with their predecessors. What a mercy that the God of Elijah is also the God of Elisha! He will also be with us, for "this God is our God, for ever and ever, he will be our guide even unto death." Ps. 48:14.

In great difficulties no name will help but that of God. How else can Jordan be divided but by Jehovah, God of Elijah?

Elisha sought first for the Lord, and enquired, "Where is he?" Elijah was gone, and he did not seek him, but his God.

He used Elijah's old mantle, and did not invent novelties; desiring to have the aid of the same God, he was content to wear the mantle of his predecessor. The true is not new.

Still we do not need antiquities from the past, nor novelties of the present, nor marvels for the future; we only want the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and we shall then see among us wonders equal to those of Elijah's age. "Where is the Lord God of Elijah?" The old mantle, used with faith in the same God, parted the waters hither and thither. The power is where it used to be.

I. THE QUESTION TURNED INTO PRAYER. It is as though he cried—O thou, who wast with Elijah, be thou also with me! At this day our one need is Elijah's God

1. The God who kept him faithful must make us stand firm should we be left alone in the truth. 1 Cor. 1:8.
2. The God who heard his prayer must give us also the effectual inwrought prayer of the righteous man. James 5:16.
3. The God who provided for him at Cherith and Zarephath, and in the wilderness, must also supply all our needs. Ps. 23:1.
4. The God who raised the dead by him must cause us to bring men up from their death in sin. 1 Kings 17:23.

5. The God who answered by fire must put life, energy, and enthusiasm into our hearts. 1 Kings 18:38.
6. The God who gave him food for a long journey must fit us for the pilgrimage of life, and preserve us to the end. 1 Kings 19:8.
7. The God who gave him courage to face kings must also make us very bold, so as to be free from the fear of man. 1 Kings 21:20.
8. The God who divided Jordan for the prophet will not fail us when we are crossing into our Canaan. 2 Kings 2:8.
9. The God who took him away in a chariot of fire will send a convoy of angels, and we shall enter into glory.

II. THE QUESTION ANSWERED. The Lord God of Elijah is not dead, nor sleeping, nor on a journey

1. He is still in heaven regarding his own reserved ones. They may be hidden in caves, but the Lord knoweth them that are his.
2. He is still to be moved by prayer to bless a thirsty land.
3. He is still able to keep us faithful in the midst of a faithless generation, so that we shall not bow the knee to Baal.
4. He is still in the still small voice. Quietly he speaks to reverent minds: by calm and brave spirits he is achieving his purposes.
5. He is still reigning in providence to overturn oppressors (1 Kings 21:18, 19), to preserve his own servants (2 Kings 1:10), and to secure a succession of faithful men. 1 Kings 19:16.
6. He is coming in vengeance. Hear ye not his chariot-wheels?

He will bear away his people, but, sorely, O ye unbelievers! shall ye rue the day wherein ye cried in scorn, "Where is the Lord God of Elijah?"

Oh, to be so engaged that we can court the presence of God!

Oh, to be so consecrated that we may expect his benediction!

Oh, to have that presence, so as to be girded with his strength!

Oh, to live so as never more to ask this question!

AUXILIARY EXTRACTS

"God of Queen Clotilda," cried out the infidel Clovis I. of France, when in trouble on the field of battle, "God of Queen Clotilda! grant me the victory!" Why did he not call upon his own god? Saunderson, who was a great admirer of Sir Isaac Newton's talents, and who made light of his religion in health, was, nevertheless, heard to say in dismal accents on a dying-bed, "God of Sir Isaac Newton, have mercy on me!" Why this changing of gods in a dying hour?—"Addresses to Young Men," by Rev. Daniel Baker.

1. The God of Elijah gave him the sweet experience of keeping warm and lively in a very cold and dead generation; so that he was best when others were worst.... But where is the Lord God of Elijah in these dregs of time, wherein professors generally are carried away, with the stream of impiety, from all their liveliness and tenderness that aforetime have been among them, when the more wickedness sets up its head, the more piety is made to hide its head? It is a sad evidence that God is gone from us, when the standard of wickedness makes advances, and that of shining holiness is retreating, and can hardly get hands to hold it up.

2. The God of Elijah gave him the sweet experience of the power of prayer: James 5:17.... But where is the God of Elijah, while the trade with heaven by prayer is so very low? Alas, for the dead, cold, and flat prayers that come from the lips of professors at this day, so weak and languishing that they cannot reach heaven!

3. The God of Elijah gave him the experience of the sweet fruits of dependence on the Lord, and of a little going far, with his blessing: 1 Kings 17:16.... But where is the God of Elijah at this day, when what we have seems to be blown upon, that it goes in effect for nothing? Our table is plentifully covered, yet our souls are starved; our goodness sometimes looks as a morning cloud, it blackens the face of the heavens, and promises a heavy shower, but quickly proves as a little cloud, like unto a man's hand, which is ready to go for nothing; yea, this generation is blinded by the means that have a natural tendency to give light Ah! "Where is the Lord God of Elijah?"

4. The God of Elijah gave him the experience of a gracious boldness to face the most daring wickedness of the generation he lived in, though it was one of the worst. This eminently appeared in his encounter with Ahab: 1 Kings 18:1.... But where is the God of Elijah now, while the iniquities of our day meet with such faint resistance, while a brave brow for the cause of God, a tongue to speak for him, and a heart to act, are so much wanting? The wicked of the world, though they have an ill cause in hand, yet they pursue it boldly; but, alas! the people of God shame their honest cause by their cowardice and faint appearing in it. If God give us not another spirit, more fitted for such a day, we shall betray our trust, and bring the curse of the succeeding generation on us.

5. The God of Elijah gave him the experience of a glorious and powerful manifestation of himself in a solemn ordinance, even at the sacrifice on Mount Carmel, which was ushered in with the spirit of prayer in Elijah: 1 Kings 18:37-39.... But where is the God of Elijah, when so little of the Spirit's influences is found in ordinances, even solemn ordinances? Here is the mantle, but where is the

God of Elijah? Here are the grave-clothes, in which sometimes the Lord was wrapt up, but where is he himself? Communion-days have sometimes been glorious days in Scotland, and sometimes the gospel hath done much good, so that ministers have had almost as much to do to heal broken hearts as now to get hard hearts broken; but where now is the God of Elijah?

6. The God of Elijah gave him the experience of being enabled to go far upon a meal: 1 Kings 19:8. But where now are such experiences, while there is so little strength in the spiritual meals to which we now sit down? This is a time wherein there is much need of such an experience; the Lord seems to be saying to his people, "Rise and eat, for the journey is long"; and what a hard journey some may have, ere they get another meal, who knows? Oh, for more feeding power in the doctrine preached among us!

7. The God of Elijah gave him the experience of the Lord's removing difficulties out of his way, when he himself could do nothing at them: Jordan divided. So Peter had the iron gate opened to him of its own accord: for when the Lord takes the work in hand, were it never so desperate as to us, it will succeed well with him. Sure we have need of this experience this day. How is the case of many souls so embarrassed at this day that they cannot extricate themselves, by reason of long and continued departures from God, so that all they can do is that they are fleeing and going backward! Ah! where is the God of Elijah, to dry up those devouring deeps? Enemies have surrounded the church, and brought her to the brow of the hill, ready to cast her over; where is the God of Elijah, to make a way for her escape?—Thomas Boston.

2 Kings 2:15 Now when the sons of the prophets who were at Jericho opposite him saw him, they said, "The spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha." And they came to meet him and bowed themselves to the ground before him.

- saw him 2Ki 2:7
- **The spirit of Elijah** Nu 11:25-29 27:20 Jos 3:7 Isa 11:2 59:21 Joh 15:26,27 Ac 1:8 2Co 12:9 1Pe 4:14
- bowed: 2Ki 2:19 4:1-4,37 6:1-7 Jos 4:14

Now when the sons of the prophets who were at Jericho opposite him saw him- These are the 50 prophets from 2Ki 2:7 who had witnessed the transfer of power in the miraculous dividing of the Jordan.

they said, "The spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha." - They have just witnessed the same miracle Elijah had performed with the mantle clearly attesting to the 50 that Elisha was Elijah's successor. Thus they recognized Yahweh's power was still available through Elisha.

And they came to meet him and bowed themselves to the ground before him - The 50 honor him and bow in submission to him as Elijah's replacement in Israel.

Bob Deffinbaugh: The section we are dealing with in 2 Kings describes the transition of power from Elijah to Elisha. While there were a number of prophets in Israel, it would seem that Elijah was the "senior prophet" of his time. After his departure, it was necessary that his successor be designated in a way that would make it clear he was the one in whom the spirit of Elijah had come to abide. ([2 Kings 1:1-2:18 Life and Times of Elijah the Prophet-Chariots of Fire](#))

Chris Tiegreen - Salvation Story [The One Year Heaven on Earth Devotional: 365 Daily ... - Page 278](#)

When the group of prophets from Jericho saw from a distance what happened, they exclaimed, "Elijah's spirit rests upon Elisha!" 2 Kings 2:15

IN WORD

Elijah's name means "Yahweh is God," which was exactly the message he preached. He was zealous for pure worship of the one true Lord, both in his own life and in the national culture of God's people. He was outraged that the God of Israel, who had carefully chosen and powerfully delivered His people, was being brazenly rejected in favor of idols of wood and stone. He had a jealous spirit for God.

Elisha received the Spirit that was working in Elijah, but the message came out different. After Elijah preached uncompromising truth, Elisha demonstrated the mercy of God in the midst of a cursed land. Elijah declared the sins of the nation; Elisha remedied them. Elisha did things like heal lepers, bless cursed cities, promote reconciliation, feed a multitude, and raise the dead. (That should all sound familiar to anyone who has read the Gospels.) And Elisha's name reflects the message of his life: "God saves."

We see that dynamic often in Scripture. Moses, the prophet of the Law, took God's people to the edge of the Promised Land; Joshua (whose name also means "God saves") took them in. The captivity disciplined the nation; Joshua the high priest (same name, same meaning) led the worship of God's people afterward. John the Baptist pointed out the sins of the nation; Jesus (whose name also means "God saves") came to heal them. The Old Testament emphasizes why we need a Savior; the New Testament

gives us one. In every case, uncompromising righteousness is followed by fulfillment.

IN DEED

Elijah and Elisha illustrate the heart of God. God never compromises His righteousness, but He is always willing to redeem and satisfy our lack of it. In fact, Elisha —the mercy emphasis in the prophetic duo —received a double portion of the Spirit. God's mercy is always a higher priority to Him than judgment (James 2:13). God's heart will always draw Him to those who need His grace.

2 Kings 2:16 They said to him, “**Behold** now, there are with your servants fifty strong men, please let them go and search for your master; perhaps the Spirit of the LORD has taken him up and cast him on some mountain or into some valley.” And he said, “You shall not send.”

- **the Spirit:** 1Ki 18:12 Eze 3:14 8:3 11:24 40:2 Ac 8:39 2Co 12:2,3

PROPHETS NOT SURE

ELIJAH TRULY GONE

They said to him, “**Behold**, ([hinneh](#); Lxx - [idou](#)) now, there are with your servants fifty strong men (Heb. sons of strength), please let them go and search for your master; perhaps the Spirit of the LORD has taken him up and cast him on some mountain or into some valley.” And he said, “You shall not send.” - Their request indicates that they did not see what Elisha saw (cf 2Ki 2:10), that Elijah had been translated to heaven body, soul and spirit! Their search for a body would be futile and Elisha knew it which is why he said do **not send** out the 50 men.

[Bob Utley](#) - "the Spirit of the Lord" This suggestion by the sons of the prophets related to the Spirit transporting someone goes back to 1Ki 18:12+ (also note Acts 8:39+).

2 Kings 2:17 But when they urged him until he was ashamed, he said, “Send.” They sent therefore fifty men; and they searched three days but did not find him.

KJV 2 Kings 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.

BGT 2 Kings 2:17 κα παρεβι σαντο α τ ν ως του σχ νετο κα επεν ποστε λατε κα π στειλαν πεντ κοντα νδρας κα ζ τησαν τρε ς μ ρας κα ο χ ε ρον α τ ν

LXE 2 Kings 2:17 And they pressed him until he was ashamed; and he said, Send. And they sent fifty men, and sought three days, and found him not.

NET 2 Kings 2:17 But they were so insistent, he became embarrassed. So he said, "Send them out." They sent the fifty men out and they looked for three days, but could not find Elijah.

CSB 2 Kings 2:17 However, they urged him to the point of embarrassment, so he said, "Send them." They sent 50 men, who looked for three days but did not find him.

ESV 2 Kings 2:17 But when they urged him till he was ashamed, he said, "Send." They sent therefore fifty men. And for three days they sought him but did not find him.

NIV 2 Kings 2:17 But they persisted until he was too ashamed to refuse. So he said, "Send them." And they sent fifty men, who searched for three days but did not find him.

NLT 2 Kings 2:17 But they kept urging him until they shamed him into agreeing, and he finally said, "All right, send them." So fifty men searched for three days but did not find Elijah.

- **they urged:** 2Sa 18:22,23 Lu 11:8 Ro 10:2
- **found him not:** Heb 11:5

ELISHA CAVES IN TO THEIR REQUEST

But when they urged him until he was ashamed, he said, “Send.” - NLT = "They kept urging him until they shamed him into agreeing, and he finally said, "All right, send them."

They sent therefore fifty men; and they searched three days but did not find him - They did not find Elijah because he was in heaven.

Chris Tiegreen - Faith [The One Year Heaven on Earth Devotional: 365 Daily ... - Page 280](#)

So fifty men searched for three days but did not find Elijah. Elisha was still at Jericho when they returned. "Didn't I tell you not to go?" he asked. 2 Kings 2:17-18

IN WORD

The company of prophets wanted to check it out, just to make sure. Maybe the whirlwind had dropped Elijah unceremoniously somewhere in the desert sand. Maybe the visible evidence of Elijah's spirit resting on Elisha didn't necessarily imply that Elijah had departed. Maybe they would have among them two prophets fully endowed with God's Spirit, even though they had already prophesied Elijah's translation into heaven. Maybe they just couldn't believe what had allegedly taken place. So, consistent with human nature, they had to go see for themselves.

Elisha knew what they'd find: nothing. He knew what he'd seen. For the younger prophet, there was no need to verify what had already been foretold and then clearly witnessed with his own eyes. Searching for evidence to make sure God really did what He said He would do is a futile endeavor. Miracles can't be discounted by search parties.

IN DEED

Faith knows what it has seen. It's fine to speculate about what God has done or what He might do in the future, but faith is not swayed by speculation. It has eyes to see truth, never needing to try to explain away a miracle or look for evidence to contradict it. Faith isn't gullible, of course; but when God has clearly done something, supporting evidence is superfluous.

In what areas of your faith are you still looking for evidence? Nothing is wrong with discernment; we are all required to be wise in what we embrace as coming from God. But once God has answered a prayer, are you skeptical about whether it was really Him? Do you secretly search for alternate explanations? Do you play the role of the seeker until God answers, then play the role of the skeptic afterward?

Many believers do. Elisha didn't. The eyes of faith see God clearly enough to be satisfied. When you have seen God work, be confident in what you have seen.

2 Kings 2:18 They returned to him while he was staying at Jericho; and he said to them, “Did I not say to you, ‘Do not go’?”

LEARN TO LISTEN TO THE MASTER

They returned to him while he was staying at Jericho; and he said to them, “Did I not say to you, ‘Do not go’?”- Elisha does a little educating to the prophets, saying essentially "You should have listened to me."

2 Kings 2:19 Then the men of the city said to Elisha, “Behold now, the situation of this city is pleasant, as my lord sees; but the water is bad and the land is unfruitful.”

KJV 2 Kings 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.

BGT 2 Kings 2:19 κα επον ο νδρες τ ς π λεως πρ ς Ελισαιε δο κατο κησις τ ς π λεως γαθ καθ ς κ ριος βλ πει κα τ δατα πονηρ κα γ τεκνουμ νη

LXE 2 Kings 2:19 And the men of the city said to Elisaie, Behold, the situation of the city is good, as our lord sees; but the waters are bad, and the ground barren.

NET 2 Kings 2:19 The men of the city said to Elisha, "Look, the city has a good location, as our master can

see. But the water is bad and the land doesn't produce crops."

CSB 2 Kings 2:19 Then the men of the city said to Elisha, "Even though our lord can see that the city's location is good, the water is bad and the land unfruitful."

ESV 2 Kings 2:19 Now the men of the city said to Elisha, "Behold, the situation of this city is pleasant, as my lord sees, but the water is bad, and the land is unfruitful."

NIV 2 Kings 2:19 The men of the city said to Elisha, "Look, our lord, this town is well situated, as you can see, but the water is bad and the land is unproductive."

NLT 2 Kings 2:19 One day the leaders of the town of Jericho visited Elisha. "We have a problem, my lord," they told him. "This town is located in pleasant surroundings, as you can see. But the water is bad, and the land is unproductive."

- **my Lord see:** Nu 12:11 1Ki 18:7,13 1Ti 5:17
- **the water:** Ex 7:19 15:23 Jos 6:17,26 1Ki 16:34
- **the water is bad and the land is unfruitful:** Ex 23:26 De 28:2-4,11,15-18 Ho 9:14

THE SETTING - BAD WATER IN A PLEASANT CITY

Then the men of the city said to Elisha They came to him because they had seen the power of God on his life. They recognized that God had anointed him. They knew that he spoke for God.

"Behold, ([hinneh](#); Lxx - [idou](#)) **now, the situation of this city is pleasant, as my lord sees; but the water is bad and the land is unfruitful** ([shakol](#); Lxx - *ateknōo* - to make childless, barren) - Elisha is presented with a problem of bad water and an unfruitful land (? frequent miscarriages in light of a common use of [shakol](#)). The implication is the men of the city knew Elisha had the power to rectify this situation.

Bob Utley on purpose of this miracle - To promote and verify Elisha's ministry of blessing, YHWH "healed" this stream. No more problem for man or beast. Later in history a good spring near Jericho is called "[Elisha's spring](#)."

Unfruitful ([07921](#))([shakol](#)) means to be bereaved, make childless, miscarry. "to be decimated," "to be reduced." It denotes the "action of losing a child" or other living member of one's estate. This can happen postnatal in the form of death of children, which is a proclamation of divine judgment. It can also happen in the womb, as it was understood in OT times that a stillborn or miscarried fetus was a judgment from Yahweh. This view was common in the ancient Near East, as there are numerous tablets in Akkadian dealing with malformed fetuses and the message that the gods were trying to convey to humans through their unusual occurrences.

Baker - A verb meaning to be bereft of (children), deprived of (children). It means to be deprived of children (Gen. 27:45; 43:14; Lev. 26:22; 1 Sam. 15:33). It also means to miscarry (Ex. 23:26; Job 21:10). The sword and war bereaved parents of their children (Deut. 32:25). With reference to land, it can mean barren, unfruitful (2 Ki. 2:19); with reference to vines, it refers to casting off, losing their fruit (Mal. 3:11). God Himself would bereave His people of their children as punishment for their rebellions (Jer. 15:7; Ezek. 5:17; Hos. 9:12, 14). ([The Complete Word Study Dictionary – Old Testament](#).)

Gilbrant - *Shākhōl* is generally used of humans. It appears in the context of covenant curses and blessings. In the idyllic world of covenant faithfulness on the part of the Israelites, Yahweh promised that all diseases would disappear and that none would miscarry (Exo. 23:26). However, should the Covenant be violated, then as a curse, wild animals would make the Israelites childless (Lev. 26:22).

Indeed, as the prophets brought charges against the people for covenant infidelity, the curse of childlessness did abound. The elite of Judah had made the impoverished childless, a condition of judgment which would ensure this practice would stop (Ezek. 36:12ff). Hosea proclaimed that Israel would be made childless as judgment against idolatry and oppression of the weak (Hos. 9:12). Indeed, the Israelites experienced miscarrying wombs and dried breasts (v. 14). For the breaking of the Covenant, the people were promised the coming of wild beasts to make them childless (Ezek. 5:17; 14:15). Yahweh declared through Jeremiah that Jerusalem had been winnowed, made childless, as judgment for its violation of the Covenant (Jer. 15:7), a state which the prophet lamented (Lam. 1:20).

Death by murder or battle can make a person childless. Rebekah encouraged Jacob to flee the wrath of his brother, lest she become childless in a single day (Gen. 27:45). Jacob feared that his sons would all die at the

hand of the official from Pharaoh's court, unaware that it was his long-lost son Joseph (43:14). Likewise, Yahweh in judgment desired to make the Israelites childless by means of the sword, according to the Song of Moses (Deut. 32:25). Samuel addressed Agag, the king of the Amalekites, just before he killed him (1 Sam. 15:33). Saul had spared Agag, contrary to the command of Yahweh. His rationale was likely twofold, as his magnanimity might one day spare his own life, and second, kings were valuable in terms of ransom. Samuel killed Agag, after disavowing Saul of a dynasty, by declaring that just as Agag's sword had made other mothers childless, so too would his mother be made childless.

Shākhōl is also used of nonhuman subjects. Jacob responded to the false accusation of Laban in regard to his motives and work by declaring that none of his she goats had miscarried, thanks to the diligence of Jacob (Gen. 31:38). Job lamented that the cows of the wicked did not miscarry, as the wicked simply became more and more wealthy (Job 21:10). Elisha healed the spring of Jericho, blamed for human miscarriages and lack of agricultural produce (2 Ki. 2:19ff). Finally, Malachi declared that in the restored world of Judah, vines would not miscarry (Mal. 3:11). ([Complete Biblical Library](#))

SHAKOL - 22V - abort(1), been(1), bereave(2), bereave them of children(2), bereave you of your children(1), bereave you of children(1), bereave your of children(1), bereaved(2), bereaved me of my children(1), bereaved of my children(1), bereaved your of children(1), cast(1), childless(1), depopulated(1), made...childless(1), miscarried(1), miscarrying(2), slays(1), unfruitful(1), unfruitfulness(1). Gen. 27:45; Gen. 31:38; Gen. 42:36; Gen. 43:14; Exod. 23:26; Lev. 26:22; Deut. 32:25; 1 Sam. 15:33; 2 Ki. 2:19; 2 Ki. 2:21; Job 21:10; Isa. 49:21; Jer. 15:7; Lam. 1:20; Ezek. 5:17; Ezek. 14:15; Ezek. 36:12; Ezek. 36:13; Ezek. 36:14; Hos. 9:12; Hos. 9:14; Mal. 3:11

James Smith - THE HEALING OF THE WATERS 2 KINGS 2:19–22

“He always wins who sides with God,
To him no chance is lost;
God’s will is sweet to him when
It triumphs at his cost.”
—Faber.

Jericho had come under the blight of the divine curse. Like this sin-ruined world, it could only be restored by the sacrifice of a first-born (Josh. 6:26; Col. 1:14, 15). All the wealth and wisdom in Jericho could not remove its plague of “bitter waters,” neither can the power or wisdom of men stop the outflow, or change the nature, of the bitter waters of sin. The power of the LORD alone is sufficient for all this (v. 21). The need of this city represents the need of every sin-polluted life—divine healing.

I. Its Condition. This is viewed in two different aspects—

1. ITS SITUATION WAS PLEASANT (v. 9). As far as outward privileges were concerned, everything was favourable. The soil was rich in possibilities, the climate was the finest, the site of the city was delightful. What a picture of a sinner in the midst of favourable circumstances! What possibilities lie within the reach of the soul of man! “The situation is pleasant” of all who are surrounded with Gospel privileges. But these in themselves are not enough.

2.—ITS GROUND WAS BARREN. Labour as they may, their toil did not bring satisfaction. Those “brackish” waters continually failed to yield them the desire of their hearts. Such is the state of those whose hearts have not been healed by the Word of God. The figs of true satisfaction and the grapes of holy joy cannot grow on the thistle and thorns of man’s unrenewed nature. Out of the heart are the issues of life (James 3:11). An evil heart will always send out bitter waters in the sight of God (Matt. 15:19, 20). Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?

II. The Remedy.

1.—ITS NATURE. “A new cruse with salt therein” (v. 20). This “new cruse” may be a fit emblem of the New Testament, with Christ as the salt of salvation therein. The prophet here signifies that the salt represents the healing virtue of Jehovah (v. 21). This salt has never lost its savour. “There is none other name under Heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”

2.—ITS APPLICATION. “He cast the salt into the spring” (v. 21). He did not attempt to heal the streams apart from the fountain. He went straight to the source of the evil at once. The salt could work no healing miracle on the spring until it got into contact with it. Those who go about to establish their own righteousness are trying to

purify the stream while the spring remains unhealed. It is not Christ in the Bible that saves, but Christ in the heart. Our Lord cast the salt into the spring of life when He said to Nicodemus, "Ye must be born again!" "Have salt in yourselves" (Mark 9:50). "Christ in you the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27).

III. The Results.

1.—THERE WAS HEALING. "So the waters were healed" (v. 22). The streams were healed, because the fountain head was regenerated. Make the tree good and the fruit will be good. If the heart springs are pure, the streams of action will be pure and healthful. The waters may not be more copious than they were, but they will be much more welcome and beneficial. So will it be with the outcome of the life when Christ comes into the spring of the heart and renews the waters of actions. The healed waters may abide in the same channel, but oh, how different the results! It is a passing from death unto life.

2.—THERE WAS FRUITFULNESS. "There shall not be from thence any more death or barren land" (v. 21). Death and barrenness are turned into life and fruitfulness when the power of the divine transformer gets into the being. It is easy to bring forth good fruits when the disease of sin and uncleanness have been taken out of the life. Fruit is the outcome of what we are more than of what we do (John 15:4). A polluted heart makes a barren heart. These poisonous waters were changed suddenly, they did not gradually grow better. It was the expulsive power of a new infection. If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His.

Larry Richards - It's difficult when a significant leader dies. Yet God raises up leaders from the next generation to continue His work. The roster of human leaders constantly changes, but God remains the same. He is the One on whom we must always depend.

Two miracles symbolize Elisha's ministry. Its comforting and compassionate nature are shown in the purifying of Jericho's waters. The act symbolized the blessing that could be Israel's through relationship with God the Healer.

The death of the youths (not children, as the KJV implies) who jeered Elisha symbolized that prophet's role as representative of the holy God. God yearns to bless His people. But God must be respected as Lord.

2 Kings 2:20 He said, "Bring me a new jar, and put salt in it." So they brought it to him.

- salt: Jdg 9:45 Eze 47:11 Zep 2:9

ELISHA'S SALT REQUEST

He said, "Bring me a new jar, and put salt in it." So they brought it to him. - No questions asked even though it was a strange request. Apparently Elisha presented the picture of a man with authority.

J J Knap - Salt in the Spring of Waters 2 Kings 2:20

The prophet Elisha was visited by the men of Jericho, the city of palms, which waters were poisoned, so that the whole region languished. A curse rested upon the region. Wherever the unhealthy waters flowed, the land was struck with barrenness. Elisha had a cruse brought, in which salt was put. He did not turn to the diverted waters with it, but to the spring itself from which they issued, and threw the salt in it. However, to make sure everyone would know that the healing of the waters was not a magic trick of Elisha, but a miracle of the Lord, the prophet explained his action with the words: "Thus saith the LORD, I have healed these waters,"—and indeed, the water became healthy.

Salt in the spring of waters. We can apply this word in more than one way. The healing, potent salt is of course an image of the gospel of Jesus Christ, that in a spiritual sense has the same effect as the spoilage preventing salt in a natural sense. There is no doubt that our society shows a rather sorry state of affairs. Moral decay is increasing alarmingly amongst us. The different classes, that God wanted, have become different casts, so that employers and employees often oppose each other with enmity in the heart. Respect for authority is disappearing rapidly. The Sabbath as well as the Name of the Lord are desecrated. In many circles people no longer ask for the ways of the Lord. What is needed now, is the salt of the gospel. However, it has to be cast into the spring, from which society is fed; and that spring is the family. Let family life be sanctified again, the Holy Scriptures be honoured, the family altar be re-established,—and we shall see that in that way national life, that buds forth from family life, shall be healed again.

Salt in the spring of waters. This also applies to our personal life. Also in this respect poisonous waters are flowing forth that made life to wither. Unholy thoughts that cross our mind. Unclean passions that spoil our innermost. Evil lusts that rob us of the blessing of God's communion. If we were to attack each of these sinful movements one by one, where would be the end; we would never get done. No, the salt must be cast into the spring from which all this corruption issues forth; and that spring is the corrupt heart (Jer 17:9). Once the salt of the gospel sinks into it, the evil is affected at the root, the springs of our life, and with it our life itself, shall become whole,—it shall become a voluntary submission under the yoke of Christ, and a walking in His laws.

2 Kings 2:21 He went out to the spring of water and threw salt in it and said, "Thus says the LORD, 'I have purified these waters; there shall not be from there death or unfruitfulness any longer.'"

KJV 2 Kings 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.

BGT 2 Kings 2:21 καὶ ἔλθεν Ελισαίε εἰς τὴν διόξον τῶν ὁρίων καὶ ῥίψεν κεῖ αὐτὸν καὶ ἔειπεν τὸ θεῶν κρείσσον αὐτὸν ὅτι οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν τῇ θανάτου καὶ τεκνοῦν νῦν

LXE 2 Kings 2:21 And Elisaie went out to the spring of the waters, and cast salt therein, and says, Thus saith the Lord, I have healed these waters; there shall not be any longer death thence or barren land.

NET 2 Kings 2:21 He went out to the spring and threw the salt in. Then he said, "This is what the LORD says, 'I have purified this water. It will no longer cause death or fail to produce crops.'"

CSB 2 Kings 2:21 Elisha went out to the spring of water, threw salt in it, and said, "This is what the LORD says: 'I have healed this water. No longer will death or unfruitfulness result from it.'"

ESV 2 Kings 2:21 Then he went to the spring of water and threw salt in it and said, "Thus says the LORD, I have healed this water; from now on neither death nor miscarriage shall come from it."

NIV 2 Kings 2:21 Then he went out to the spring and threw the salt into it, saying, "This is what the LORD says: 'I have healed this water. Never again will it cause death or make the land unproductive.'"

NLT 2 Kings 2:21 Then he went out to the spring that supplied the town with water and threw the salt into it. And he said, "This is what the LORD says: I have purified this water. It will no longer cause death or infertility."

NRS 2 Kings 2:21 Then he went to the spring of water and threw the salt into it, and said, "Thus says the LORD, I have made this water wholesome; from now on neither death nor miscarriage shall come from it."

NJB 2 Kings 2:21 Then he went to the source of the water, threw salt into it and said, 'Yahweh says this, "I make this water wholesome: neither death nor miscarriage shall come from it any more."'

- **threw:** 2Ki 4:41 6:6 Ex 15:25,26 Lev 2:13 Mt 5:11 Mk 9:50 Joh 9:6
- **I have purified:** Eze 47:8-11 1Co 1:18-28 Rev 22:2,3
- **there shall:** Ps 107:33-38 Rev 21:4

SALTED WATER SOLUTION

He went out to the spring of water and threw salt in it and said, "Thus says the LORD, 'I have purified these waters; there shall not be from there death or unfruitfulness any longer - The miracle of course is that adding salt should have made the water undrinkable, but it had the opposite effect to purify the water. It is interesting that Elisha does not take credit for purifying the waters but gives credit to Yahweh by quoting the words He had given to his prophet.

THOUGHT - Note that Elisha, God's instrument of the miracle, gave the glory to Yahweh for the miracle. This is a good pattern for all believers -- when we are privileged to play a part in some supernatural work, we need to be careful to give credit entirely to the Supernatural One! As 2Ti 2:21+ says by the Spirit's doing each believer is simply "a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work." As Jesus commanded believers "**Let** your light **shine** ([aorist imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) before men in such a way (THE "ELISHA WAY" - ALWAYS CREDITING YAHWEH) that they may see your good works (THOSE Eph 2:10+ WORKS THAT GOD GIVES US THE PRIVILEGE TO CARRY OUT), and glorify (YOUR VISIBLE SUPERNATURAL WORKS GIVING A PROPER OPINION OF THE UNSEEN

SUPERNATURAL GOD) your Father Who is in heaven." (Mt 5:16+).

*Death and barrenness are turned into life and fruitfulness
when the power of the divine transformer gets into the being*
-- James Smith

John MacArthur makes an interesting observation - The healing of Jericho's water, through Elisha, freed the city from Joshua's curse, making it habitable for humans once again (cf. Jos 6:26; 1 Ki 16:34). (See [MacArthur Study Bible](#))

Brian Bell - The healing of the waters by the salt is quite a contrast to Elijah's miracle of stopping the rain for 3 1/2 years. 1. This also draws a parallel between Elisha and Moses, who made bitter water sweet by throwing a log into the waters of Marah (Exod 15:23-25). 2. Elisha began his ministry by taking bad water and making good. Jesus began His ministry by making already good water, even better. M. Can you be salt to someone's bad water situation?

2 Kings 2:22 So the waters have been purified to this day, according to the word of Elisha which he spoke.

PURIFIED WATERS CONTINUE TO TESTIFY

So the waters have been purified to this day, according to the word of Elisha which he spoke- The water remained pure, and thus the story of Elisha's miracle was recounted thereafter as a reminder of Yahweh's power to bring fruitfulness to barrenness. This was surely an object lesson that the same power of Yahweh could bring blessing to individuals and to the land of Israel which was spiritually barren because it was dying from Baal worship. In some ways this miracle continues to testify to the power of Yahweh, for even today a good spring near Jericho is called "[Elisha's spring](#)."

2 Kings 2:23 Then he went up from there to Bethel; and as he was going up by the way, young lads came out from the city and mocked him and said to him, "Go up, you baldhead; go up, you baldhead!"

- **Bethel:** 1Ki 12:28-32 Ho 4:15 10:5,15 Am 3:14 4:4 5:5 7:13
- **young lads:** Job 19:18 30:1,8-31 Pr 20:11 22:6,15 Ec 11:10 Isa 1:4 3:5 Jer 7:18
- **mocked:** Ge 21:9 2Ch 36:16 Job 30:1,8,9 Ps 35:15 Isa 57:3,4 Ga 4:29 Heb 11:36
- **Go up:** 2Ki 2:11 Mt 27:29-31,40-43

MOCKING LADS MAKE BIG MISTAKE!

Then he went up from there to Bethel; and as he was going up by the way, young lads came out from the city and mocked (imperfect tense in Hebrew and Greek = mocking him over and over!) **him and said to him, "Go up, you baldhead; go up, you baldhead!"** - Elisha goes back to the headquarters of idolatry in Israel (1Ki 12:28-33), a place of deep spiritual darkness! Keep that context in mind as we see the **young lads** begin to mock him and keep on mocking him!

Mocking God's prophet was sadly something was just a picture of what the entire nation of Israel would do to God's prophets, the writer of Chronicles explaining "they continually **mocked the messengers of God, despised His words and scoffed at His prophets**, until the wrath of the LORD arose against His people, until there was no remedy." (2Ch 36:16)

Brian Bell on **young lads** - Keep in mind that these were young men, not children, and therefore responsible for their deeds (same word is used for Joseph at age 39 & Rehoboam at age 40)....This sacred place had been desecrated and the young men were actually ridiculing God's Word and God's servants. 2. The fact that 42 of them met together suggests an organized plan. a) Calling the prophet baldhead was one of the lowest forms of insults. b) And the words go up obviously point to their ridicule of Elijah's rapture to heaven.

Dillard: The lack of hair was not a result of old age; since he lived about fifty years after this incident, he was at the time a relatively young man. Elisha's baldness must have been in striking contrast to Elijah's hairy appearance. (See [The Preacher's Commentary - 1 and 2 Kings - Page 62](#))

Peter Pett: Hair was seen as a sign of virility, and long hair was a sign of being dedicated to YHWH (Numbers 6:5; Judges 13:5). . .

Thus the suggestion that he was 'bald' was a deliberate denigration of his status. It was saying that his claim to dedication was false. There may be behind this the idea that without Elijah being with him he was to be seen as 'shorn', and therefore helpless. This would tie in with their suggestion that he should 'go up' as Elijah had. They may well have been belittling the idea of his succession to Elijah as the prophet of YHWH supreme and suggesting that if he really was he should demonstrate it by copying him.

August Konkell: The stories that initiate the prophetic role of Elisha (2Ki 2:19–25) have a parallel with the final challenge of Ahaziah against Elijah (1:9–14). The status of the prophet is challenged in both episodes. Elijah is ordered to come down from Carmel to face Ahaziah (2Ki 1:9) and Elisha is taunted by the disbelieving juveniles to go up to Carmel (2Ki 2:23). Elijah is described as "hairy" (2Ki 1:8) while Elisha is ridiculed for being bald (2Ki 2:23). The judgment in each case is described in parallel phrases. Fire came down from heaven and consumed the king's soldiers (2Ki 1:10), while two female bears come out from the forest and maul the insolent taunters (2Ki 2:24). Together, the two chapters constitute a succession of the prophetic office. (See [NIVAC](#))

The words {nearim ketanim} not only signify little children but young men; for {katon} signifies not only little, but young, in opposition to old; and {naar} signifies not only a child, but a young man grown to years of maturity: thus Isaac is called {naar} when twenty-eight years old, Joseph when thirty-nine, and Rehoboam when forty. These idolatrous young men, having heard of the ascension of Elijah, without believing it, blasphemously bade Elisha to follow him. The venerable prophet, from a Divine impulse, pronounced a curse "in the name of the Lord," which was immediately followed by the most terrible judgment; thus evincing the Source from which it flowed.

Bible Knowledge Commentary: These youths were typical of a nation that "mocked the messengers of God, despised His words and scoffed at His prophets" (2 Chron. 36:16). Not motivated by personal pride but by a desire for God's glory, Elisha pronounced God's curse on them for their disrespect of His prophet and Himself (v. 24; cf. 2 Peter 3:3-7). As before, God used wild animals to judge the rebels (cf. 1 Kings 13:24).

Bob Deffinbaugh: It was, indeed, a long, hot twenty-five mile trek from Jericho (some 1300 feet below sea level) to Bethel (which was 2,000 feet above sea level). Bethel was not just any Israelite city, either. Bethel was one of two cities that Jeroboam had designated as places of worship for the northern kingdom of Israel when Solomon's kingdom was divided between his son Rehoboam and his enemy, Jeroboam. Jeroboam feared that these two kingdoms might be tempted to re-unite because of the one central place of worship (Jerusalem) which was located in Judah. And so Jeroboam made a bold move—he established two places of counterfeit worship in Israel. One was in Dan, at the northern edge of Israel. The other was in Bethel, at the southern edge of Israel, a mere 12 miles from Jerusalem. One of the golden calves Jeroboam had provided for Israel to worship was placed in Bethel (see 1 Kings 12). This was a very pagan place, where God and His Word were no longer revered. The disrespect which Elisha received by these young Bethel boys was typical of the attitude of the general population in Bethel toward any true prophet of God. . . These were not innocent little boys, naively teasing a prophet in an inappropriate fashion. Elisha was not needlessly harsh, nor was God. God's judgment was poured out on those who rebelled against God, who disobeyed His Word, and who mocked His servants, the prophets. If there was one lesson that the people of Bethel learned that day, it was that they must reverence God and His spokesmen. ([2 Kings 2:19-3:27 Life & Times of Elisha the Prophet-Elisha's Accreditation](#))

2 Kings 2:24 When he looked behind him and saw them, he cursed them in the name of the LORD. Then two female bears came out of the woods and tore up forty-two lads of their number.

- **cursed them:** 2Ki 1:10-12 Ge 9:25 De 28:15-26 Jdg 9:20,57 Jer 28:16 29:21-23 La 3:65 Am 7:17 Mk 11:14,21 Ac 5:5,9 8:20 13:9-11 2Co 10:6
- **female bears:** 2Sa 17:8 Pr 17:12 28:15 Ho 13:8
- **tore up forty-two lads of their number:** Ex 20:5 1Ki 13:24 19:17 20:36

DON'T MOCK THE MAN OF GOD!

When he looked behind him and saw them, he cursed them in the name of the LORD- Yes he cursed them, but it was God Who followed up on Elisha's words. Again we see the interaction of man's part and God's part (sovereignty).

Bob Utley - Elisha is immediately presented as compassionate (HEALS THE WATER) but a man of YHWH to be respected. He distributed both blessings and cursings in YHWH's name. Although we are uncertain of the motives and implications of the term "baldheaded," it is obvious that this was an attack on YHWH and His sovereignty! This was not just a name calling incident .

NET Note - Heb "he cursed them in the name of the LORD." A curse was a formal appeal to a higher authority (here the Lord) to vindicate one's cause through judgment. As in chapter one, this account makes it clear that disrespect for the Lord's designated spokesmen can be deadly, for it is ultimately rejection of the Lord's authority.

Then two female bears came out of the woods and tore up forty-two lads of their number- God is sovereign over all creation, including female bears, and He permitted (or sent) the bears to maul the young men. **Tore up possibly** means they were terminated, but we cannot be dogmatic and they may have just been severely mauled (left "*barely* alive!" bad pun!) At the very least they would have had a few scars to remind them of their stupidity.

John Schultz: Elisha did not call for bears to come and devour the boys; that was God's doing. In cursing them he took them, so to speak, out from under the umbrella of God's blessing upon Israel. And, as suggested above, we could see this as God's punishment upon those who had turned from His worship to the service of idols.

Bob Utley - "**two female bears came out of the woods**" At this period the area of the Jordan Valley was wooded and had Syrian bears. Why "two female bears" is uncertain, unless they were protective of their cubs in the woods.

Dale Ralph Davis: Had Elisha been wrong to curse, one would assume Yahweh would not have fulfilled the curse. That Yahweh did so validates Elisha's curse. Here is not an irritable prophet but a judging God. ([1-2 Kings](#))

John Whitcomb: No wild animals could match the savage cruelty that would be heaped upon this hardened people by that specially-prepared rod of God's anger, the Assyrian army; and that rod would strike within four generations. (Borrow [Solomon to the Exile](#))

August Konkell: The first event confirming the anointing of Elisha demonstrates the power of prophetic blessing to those who affirm the prophet. (HEALING THE WATER IN JERICHO) The second event demonstrates the power of a curse that rests on all who deny him. (See [NIVAC](#))

QUESTION - [Why did the Prophet Elisha curse the "youths" for making fun of his his baldness \(2 Kings 2:23-24\)?](#)

ANSWER - There are a few key issues we must understand in regards to this account of the youths cursing Elisha. The text reads, "From there Elisha went up to Bethel. As he was walking along the road, some youths came out of the town and jeered at him. 'Go on up, you baldhead!' they said. 'Go on up, you baldhead!' He turned around, looked at them and called down a curse on them in the name of the LORD. Then two bears came out of the woods and mauled forty-two of the youths." It seems unbelievable that God would cause two bears to maul a group of children for making fun of a man for being bald.

First, **the King James Version has done us a disservice by translated the term as "children."** The Hebrew word can refer to children, but rather more specifically means "young men." The NIV, quoted here, uses the word "youths." Second, the fact that the bears mauled 42 of the youths indicates that there were more than 42 youths involved. This was not a small group of children making fun of a bald man. Rather, it was a large demonstration of young men who assembled for the purpose of mocking a prophet of God. Third, the mocking of "go on up, you baldhead," is more than making fun of baldness. The baldness of Elisha referred to here may be: 1) natural loss of hair; 2) a shaved head denoting his separation to the prophetic office; or more likely, 3) an epithet of scorn and contempt, Elisha not being literally bald. The phrase "go up" likely was a reference to Elijah, Elisha's mentor, being taken up to heaven earlier in 2 Kings chapter 2:11-12. These youths were sarcastically taunting and insulting the Lord's prophet by telling him to repeat Elijah's translation.

In summary, 2 Kings 2:23-24 is not an account of God mauling young children for making fun of a bald man. Rather, it is a record of an insulting demonstration against God's prophet by a large group of young men. Because these young people of about 20 years of age or older (the same term is used of Solomon in 1 Kings 3:7) so despised the prophet of the Lord, Elisha called upon the Lord to deal with the rebels as He saw fit. The Lord's punishment was the mauling of 42 of them by two female bears. The penalty was clearly justified, for to ridicule Elisha was to ridicule the Lord Himself. The seriousness of the crime was indicated by the seriousness of the punishment. The appalling judgment was God's warning to all who would scorn the prophets of the Lord.

Gleason Archer - The young men who mocked Elisha because he was bald were cursed, and forty-two of them were killed by two she-bears (2 Kings 2:23-24). How could a man of God curse people for such a mild personal offense?

A careful study of this incident in context shows that it was far more serious than a "mild personal offense." It was a situation of serious public danger, quite as grave as the large youth gangs that roam the ghetto sections of our modern American cities. If these young hoodlums were ranging about in packs of fifty or more, derisive towards respectable adults and ready to mock even a well-known man of God, there is no telling what violence they might have inflicted on the citizenry of the religious center of the kingdom of Israel (as Bethel was), had they been allowed to continue their riotous course. Perhaps it was for this reason that God saw fit to

put forty-two of them to death in this spectacular fashion (there is no evidence that Elisha himself, in imposing a curse, prayed for this specific mode of punishment), in order to strike terror into other youth gangs that were infesting the city and to make them realize that neither Yahweh Himself nor any of His anointed prophets were to be threatened or treated with contempt.

Certainly from that time on, the whole Israelite community became convinced that Elisha was a true prophet and that he bore an authoritative word from God. Even the ungodly king Jehoram son of Ahab treated him with great deference and respect (see 2 Kings 3:11–13) after this had taken place.

Walter Kaiser - 2 Kings 2:23–24 A Cruel Punishment for Childhood Pranks?

The way many read this text, a mild personal offense by some innocent little children was turned into a federal case by a crotchety old prophet as short on hair as he was on humor. Put in its sharpest form, the complaint goes: How can I believe in a God who would send bears to devour little children for innocently teasing an old man whose appearance probably was unusual even for that day?

At first reading, it appears the prophet chanced on guileless children merrily playing on the outskirts of Bethel. Seeing this strange-looking man, they began to chant in merriment, “Go on up, you baldhead! Go on up, you baldhead!” Instead of viewing the situation for what it was, the old prophet became enraged (as some would tell the story), whirled around and, with eyes flashing anger, shouted a curse in the name of the Lord.

But this is a false reconstruction of the event. The problem begins with the two Hebrew words for “little children,” as many older translations term the youths. If we are to untangle this puzzling incident, the age and accountability level of these children must take first priority. “Little children” is an unfortunate translation. The Hebrew expression *ne’ûrîm qetannîm* is best rendered “young lads” or “young men.” From numerous examples where ages are specified in the Old Testament, we know that these were boys from twelve to thirty years old. One of these words described Isaac at his sacrifice in Genesis 22:12, when he was easily in his early twenties. It described Joseph in Genesis 37:2 when he was seventeen years old. In fact, the same word described army men in 1 Kings 20:14–15.

If someone objects, yes, but the word *qetannîm* (which is translated “little” in some versions) makes the difference in this context, I will answer that it is best translated “young,” not “little.” Furthermore, these words have a good deal of elasticity to them. For example, Samuel asked Jesse, “Are these all your children *ne’ûrîm*?” But Jesse replied, “There is still the youngest [*qāṭān*].” But David was old enough to keep sheep and fight a giant soon after (1 Sam 16:11–12).

“Little children,” then, does not mean toddlers or even elementary-school-aged youngsters; these are young men aged between twelve and thirty!

But was Elisha an old man short on patience and a sense of humor? This charge is also distorted, for Elisha can hardly have been more than twenty-five when this incident happened. He lived nearly sixty years after this, since it seems to have taken place shortly after Elijah’s translation into heaven. Some would place Elijah’s translation around 860 B.C. and Elisha’s death around 795 B.C. While Elijah’s ministry had lasted less than a decade, Elisha’s extended at least fifty-five years, through the reigns of Jehoram, Jehu, Jehoahaz and Joash.

Did Elisha lose his temper? What was so wrong in calling him a “baldhead,” even if he might not have been bald, being less than thirty?

The word baldhead was a term of scorn in the Old Testament (Is 3:17, 24). Natural baldness was very rare in the ancient Near East. So scarce was baldness that it carried with it a suspicion of leprosy.

Whether Elisha was prematurely bald or not, it is clear that the epithet was used in utter contempt, as a word of insult marking him as despicable.

But since it is highly improbable that Elisha was prematurely bald, the insult was aimed not so much at the prophet as at the God who had sent him. The point is clear from the other phrase. “Go on up,” they clamored. “Go on up!” These were not topographical references to the uphill grade of the Bethel road. Instead, the youths were alluding to Elijah’s translation to heaven. This they did not believe or acknowledge as God’s work in their midst. To put it in modern terms, they jeered, “Blast off! Blast off! You go too. Get out of here. We are tired of both of you.” These Bethel ruffians used the same Hebrew verb used at the beginning of the second chapter of 2 Kings to describe the taking up of Elijah into heaven. The connection cannot be missed.

Apparently, news of Elijah’s ascension to glory traveled near and far but was greeted with contemptuous disbelief by many, including this youthful mob. The attack was on God, not his prophet.

Elisha uses no profanity in placing a curse on these young men. He merely cited the law of God, which the inhabitants of Bethel

knew well. Moses had taught, "If you remain hostile toward me and refuse to listen to me, ... I will send wild animals against you, and they will rob you of your children" (Lev 26:21–22).

Elisha did not abuse these young men, nor did he revile them; he was content to leave the work of judging to God. He pronounced a judgment on them and asked God to carry out the action which he had promised when his name, his cause and his word were under attack. No doubt these young men only reflected what they heard at the dinner table each evening as the population went further and further away from God.

The savagery of wild animals was brutal enough, but it was mild compared to the legendary cruelty of the Assyrians who would appear to complete God's judgment in 722 B.C. The disastrous fall of Samaria would have been avoided had the people repented after the bear attack and the increasingly severe divine judgments that followed it. But instead of turning back to God, Israel, as would Judah in a later day, "mocked God's messengers, despised his words and scoffed at his prophets until the wrath of the LORD was aroused against his people and there was no remedy" (2 Chron 36:16).

Instead of demonstrating unleashed cruelty, the bear attack shows God trying repeatedly to bring his people back to himself through smaller judgments until the people's sin is too great and judgment must come full force.

Norman Geisler - [When Critics Ask](#) - 2 KINGS 2:23–24—How could a man of God curse these 42 young men so that they were mauled by she-bears?

PROBLEM: As Elisha was going up to Bethel, he was confronted by some young people who mocked him saying, "Go up, you baldhead!" When Elisha heard this, he turned and pronounced a curse on them, and two she-bears came out of the wood and mauled 42 of the young men. How could a man of God curse these young men for such a minor offense?

SOLUTION: First of all, this was no minor offense, for these young men held God's prophet in contempt. Since the prophet was God's mouthpiece to His people, God Himself was being most wickedly insulted in the person of His prophet.

Second, these were not small, innocent children. They were wicked young men, comparable to a modern street gang. Hence, the life of the prophet was endangered by their number, the nature of their sin, and their obvious disrespect for authority.

Third, Elisha's action was designed to strike fear in the hearts of any other such gang members. If these young gang members were not afraid to mock a venerable man of God such as Elisha, then they would have been a threat to the lives of all God's people.

Fourth, some commentators note that their statements were designed to challenge Elisha's claim to be a prophet. They were essentially saying, "If you are a man of God, why don't you go on up to heaven like Elijah did?" The term "baldhead" might be a reference to the fact that lepers shaved their heads. Such a comment would indicate that these young men looked upon Elisha as a detestable outcast.

Fifth, it was not Elijah who took their lives, but God Who alone could have providentially directed the bears to attack them. It is evident that by mocking this man of God, these young men were revealing their true attitudes toward God Himself. Such contempt for the Lord was punishable by death. The Scriptures do not say that Elisha prayed for this kind of punishment. It was clearly an act of God in judgment upon this impious gang.

2 Kings 2:25 He went from there to Mount Carmel, and from there he returned to Samaria.

- **mount Carmel:** 2Ki 4:25 1Ki 18:19,42

He went from there to Mount Carmel, and from there he returned to Samaria- Why Mount Carmel? Surely it was like a pilgrimage, a trip to remind him of his "father's" victory over Baal. Then he goes to the capital of the nation practicing Baal worship!

NET Note - The two brief episodes recorded in vv. 19–25 demonstrate Elisha's authority and prove that he is the legitimate prophetic heir of Elijah. He has the capacity to bring life and blessing to those who recognize his authority, or death and judgment to those who reject him

Iain Provan: The succession narrative ends with Elisha's trip to Mount Carmel (v. 25), the scene of Elijah's great victory over the priests of Baal. It is an appropriate ending since it reminds us of Elisha's place in the story of Israel taken as a whole. His prophetic credentials having been established, he is now ready to pick up where Elijah left off in the war against Baal. It is to pursue that war that he returns to Samaria. (See [1 & 2 Kings Understanding the Bible Commentary Series - Page 33](#))