

## Lesson 80: Elijah taken up to Heaven

Scripture: 1 Kings 19:19-21

Memory verse: And Elijah was carried by a whirlwind into heaven. 2 Kings 2:11

Aim: To teach about God's miracles, and his faithfulness in providing Elisha as one to succeed Elijah.

The human kings of Israel and Judah were generally quite awful. Rather than representing God and His ways, they primarily led people away from Him. God therefore chose to represent himself through prophets as a way of delivering truth, and displaying His faithfulness to His people. In recent lessons, we've learned about the life and ministry of Elijah. This week we'll learn how Elijah left earth (in a miraculous way), but not before God provided another prophet, who would come after Elijah to represent God to His chosen people.

By God's direction, Elijah appointed Elisha to be the prophet who would come after him. Elijah delivered the news to Elisha by placing his cloak across Elisha's shoulders. This was a way of showing that it would soon be Elisha's turn to take on the responsibilities that Elijah had carried.

Not long after that, when the LORD was about to take Elijah up to heaven in a whirlwind, God told Elijah to visit several places, and Elisha came along with him. First, they went to Bethel, next they visited Jericho, and then finally the Jordan River. At each of the places they met other prophets of God who knew that Elijah was going to be taken away in a whirlwind. (Yet they didn't know the full story because after Elijah was taken up in a whirlwind, they went to try to find him).

At the Jordan River Elijah folded his cloak together and struck the water with it. The river divided, and he and Elisha went across on dry ground!

When they came to the other side of the Jordan River, Elijah asked Elisha if there was anything he wanted before Elijah left. Elisha replied, "Please let me inherit a double share of your spirit and become your successor."

"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."

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. Elisha saw it all, and he was upset over losing his friend.

As soon as Elijah left, God sent His Spirit to Elisha, who began working miracles almost immediately. The first miracle was to cross back over the Jordan River on dry ground. Later, the leaders of Jericho visited Elisha and told him that the town's water supply was bad. Elisha had them bring a new bowl with salt in it, and then he went out the spring supplying the water and threw the salt into it. And he said, "This is what the LORD says: I have purified this water. And the water has remained pure ever since, just as Elisha said.

Next, Elisha left Jericho and went up to Bethel. As he was walking along the road, a group of young men from the town began mocking and making fun of him. "Go away, baldy!" they chanted. "Go away, baldy!" Elisha knew that by doing this, the young men were mocking God. So he turned around and looked at them, and he cursed them in the name of the LORD. Then two bears came out of the woods and mauled forty-two of them. From there Elisha went to Mount Carmel and finally returned to Samaria.

God performed powerful miracles through Elijah to help guide His people back to Himself. Though the kings and people continued to be rebellious, God showed how He was faithful, by appointing Elisha as a powerful prophet to come after Elijah.