

## WHERE IS THE LORD GOD OF ELIJAH?

### **TEXT: II KINGS 2:1-15**

#### **Introduction:**

1. The great preacher, F.B. Meyer, called the translation of Elijah "one of the most sublime scenes in the Old Testament."
2. Three years ago, at a ceremony at the Oklahoma Cowboy Hall of Fame, Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin signed a bill into law making a beloved old song the official Oklahoma State Gospel Song.

*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.*

*Swing low, sweet chariot*

*Coming for to carry me home,*

*Swing low, sweet chariot,*

*Coming for to carry me home.*

3. Elijah was one of Israel's greatest prophets. But eventually the time came for him to finish his ministry, and God chose Elisha to succeed him (cf. I Kings 19:19-21).
4. Note: "mantle" (I Kings 19:19; II Kings 2:8, 13, 14). Elijah's mantle signified his authority as the prophet of God. His mantle was passed on to Elisha so that everyone would know that Elisha was now his successor, and that he would exercise all the powers of Elijah.
5. Encouraged by Elijah to make a final request, Elisha asked for "a double portion of thy spirit" (II Kings 2:9), i.e. the Holy Spirit, referred to in II Kings 2:16 as "the Spirit of the LORD."
6. The "double portion" was the right of the firstborn son (cf. Deut. 21:17). Elisha, knowing he was going to succeed Elijah, asked for "a double portion" of God's Spirit (2:9).
7. Elisha knew he needed that same power in his life if he was going to succeed the prophet Elijah. And so he asked for a double portion.
8. And he received his double portion. Elijah told him, "Thou hast asked a hard thing: nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee" (2:10).
9. Then in verse 12 we read, "And Elisha saw it."
10. Interestingly, Elisha performed twice as many miracles (28 miracles) as Elijah (14 miracles).

## **I. ELIJAH'S DEPARTURE**

1. Elijah never died. There was no funeral service and no burial. Elijah went straight up to heaven in a chariot of fire (2:11).
2. Elijah made an impressive entrance in I Kings 17:1, but his departure from this world was even more striking and remarkable!
3. The supernatural character of his exit was a fitting finale to his dramatic ministry.
4. There are only two men in the Old Testament who never died. These two men went straight into the presence of God in heaven without passing through the portals of death.
5. The first man was Enoch (Genesis 5:23, 24; cf. Hebrews 11:5), and the other man was Elijah.
6. There is coming a day, and it could be very soon, that every Christian on this earth will be translated into heaven just like Enoch and Elijah (cf. I Thess. 4:13-18). First Corinthians 15:51 says, "We shall not all sleep (die), but we shall all be changed."
7. Elijah's supernatural translation into heaven is a pledge, and a picture and type of the rapture.
8. Before Elijah ascended into heaven, he traveled with Elisha from Gilgal (II Kings 2:1). Oftentimes we read through this passage without considering the significance of these places.
9. Gilgal (2:1) symbolizes separation from sin. Joshua 5:9 says, "And the LORD said unto Joshua, This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you. Wherefore the name of the place is called Gilgal unto this day."
10. The old flesh must be "rolled away," in order for the reproach of Egypt to be removed. Deuteronomy 10:16 says, "Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiffnecked."
11. Bethel (2:2) means "house of God," and signifies dedication to God. Bethel is where the LORD had first appeared unto Jacob, when He showed him the ladder reaching from earth to heaven, and the angels of God ascending and descending on it (Genesis 28).
12. Jericho (2:4) signifies walking by faith. It was when the people of God, walked by faith and obeyed God, that the walls of Jericho fell down (Joshua 6).
13. The Jordan River (2:7, 8) signifies death to self.
14. So as we look at all of these stopping places on the route that led to Elijah's translation into heaven, we see the steps of faith for all of God's children -- separation from sin, dedication to God, death to self, and walking by faith.

## **II. ELIJAH'S POWER**

1. Elijah's power was the power of the Holy Spirit. This same power came upon Elisha (2:12-15).
2. This same power was upon John the Baptist (Luke 1:13-17).
3. This same power is available to each and every child of God (cf. Luke 11:13; Acts 1:8).
4. When we think of Elijah and Elisha and John the Baptist, we think of their boldness. This boldness came from the Holy Spirit.
5. The boldness of Elijah in denouncing King Ahab to his face, and in confronting Jezebel's false prophets, must not be attributed to his natural constitution but ascribed to the power of the Holy Spirit.
6. Elisha boldly confronted King Jehoram, and said to the wicked king of Israel, "What have I to do with thee? get thee to the prophets of thy father, and to the prophets of thy mother" (II Kings 3:13).
7. John the Baptist boldly confronted Herod over his adultery. He said to him, "It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife" (Mark 6:18). This boldness comes from God.
8. In Acts 4:29 we see the disciples praying and asking God for boldness so that they could declare the Word of God.
9. The Lord immediately answered that prayer, and we read in Acts 4:31, "And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness."
10. Some of the most encouraging words in Scripture are found in James 5:17 -- "Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are..."

## **III. ELIJAH'S TESTIMONY**

1. The widow woman of Zarephath said to Elijah the prophet, "Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the LORD in thy mouth is truth" (I Kings 17:24).
2. Elijah was a man who walked by faith and not by sight. It was faith in God which enabled Elijah to go by the brook Cherith, there to be fed by the ravens.
3. And it was faith that led him to go to Zarephath.
4. Elijah was separated from the evil that surrounded him. Elijah would not hobnob and fraternize with King Ahab or Queen Jezebel or the prophets of Baal, or any of the wicked and worldly people of his day.
5. Ephesians 5:11 says, "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them."

6. R. G. Lee, in his great sermon, "Payday Someday," said, Elijah "was God's tall cedar that wrestled with the paganistic cyclones of his day without bending or breaking. He was God's granite wall that stood up and out against the rising tides of the apostasy of his day. Though much alone, he was sometimes attended by the invisible hosts of God. He grieved only when God's cause seemed tottering. He passed from earth without dying into celestial glory. Everywhere courage is admired and manhood honored and service appreciated, he is honored as one of earth's greatest heroes and one of heaven's greatest saints. He was a seer who saw clearly. He was a great heart who felt deeply. He was a hero who dared valiantly."
7. As Elijah was getting ready to depart in his chariot of fire, fifty men of the sons of the prophets were watching from the other side of the Jordan River (II Kings 2:7).
8. And as they stood and watched, they saw that the Spirit of Elijah rested on Elisha (2:7-15).
9. Beloved, we have neighbors and friends watching to see if God's power is resting on us. They want to know if our religion is real or if we are just worldly church members.
10. They are watching to see if we are consistent. To see if our religion affects the way we live.
11. And let me say this – when God moves and saints are stirred and souls are saved, people take notice.
12. We need to ask God for a double portion of His power and then unsaved people will take notice!
13. Elisha asked for a double portion and God gave it to him.
14. Let's not underestimate what God can do. The same God of Elijah is our God! The same God of Elisha is our God!

### **CONCLUSION:**

1. Christmas Evans was a Baptist preacher. He was from Wales, and he was known as a preacher who preached with great power. He was 72 years old, and had been in the ministry for 53 years, when he preached his last sermon.
2. It was on a Monday evening, July 16, 1838. After he finished his message he was heard to say as he walked down the steps from his pulpit, "This is my last sermon!" and so it was.
3. He went home, and his health rapidly declined. A few days later he died in bed, and his last words were "Goodbye, Drive on!"

4. Those standing around his bedside were surprised by his words, but many were convinced that the soul of Christmas Evans had gone up to heaven in heaven's chariot. And he was ready!
5. In telling this story, F.B. Meyer said, the great Welsh preacher, "majestically waved his hand to the bystanders and looked upward with a smile and uttered these last words, 'Drive on!'"
6. Our Lord said in Luke 16:22 that "the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom."
7. The same angels who carried the beggar Lazarus into heaven are the same angels who carried Christmas Evans into heaven.
8. And they carried Elijah into heaven.
9. And if you are saved, they will take you to heaven too.
10. The Bible says, "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (I Thess. 4:16, 17).
11. Are you ready to leave this world?