

Theme: The Word of God is the power of blessing and life to those who believe and receive it; it is the power of condemnation to those who mock and reject it. That power rests perfectly in the living Word, Jesus Christ.

Background: A passage that exhilarates and terrifies; revealing the power of God's Word in grace and in judgment.

Introduction: When everyone knows what is happening, but no one is talking about it?

I. Elijah's Ascension

A. An Uncertain Future (for Israel, not for Elijah)

1. Farewell speeches
 - In Bethel and Jericho
 - Elisha is warned – Elijah is leaving
2. The big question – Will the Spirit of the Lord still be with them?

B. An "Heir Apparent"

1. Called to follow 1 Kings 19:18ff
2. Faithful to the end
 - “I will not leave you.” **2,4,6**

C. Crossing the Jordan

1. Parting the waters **8**
 - a. The cloak – symbol of God's presence with him (power?)
 - b. The faithful watch from afar **7**
 - c. Like Joshua and Moses before him (Joshua 2,3; Exodus 14)
2. Elisha's request **9, 10**
 - a. The “double” portion
 - The inheritance of the 1st born – the *heir!*
 - b. Not in Elijah's power to grant
 - Only the Lord can confirm

D. Exalting the Word and the Prophet **11,12**

Big question: Why is Elijah seen ascending to the heavens?

1. Chariots of fire!
 - Not a peaceful, quiet parting
 - But no fear in Elijah

NOTE: The storm held no judgment for him.

2. God's *Word* is exalted, not just Elijah
3. To point us to Christ's ascension
4. Elisha's exclamation
 - It is a *title* (cf. 2 Kings 13:14)
 - Elijah was the defender of Israel
5. Elisha's affirmation

II. In the Spirit of Elijah **13-18**

A. Taking the Mantle of Elijah

1. Crossing the Jordan
 - a. In faith! **14**
 - b. Spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha!

NOTE: The Spirit of God is still at work in Israel. A faithful witness remains.

APPLICATION:

God raises up faithful witnesses and voices of the truth in every age. Changing circumstances are no obstruction to God's plans and servants.

2. Speaking the truth
 - a. "You won't find him!"
 - b. A glorified body – Not one that is left behind

B. Taking the Ministry of Elijah

NOTE: Retracing their steps -crossing the Jordan, to Jericho, to Bethel

Healing comes...

1. To Jericho **19-22**
 - a. A city under a curse (Joshua 6:26; 1 Kings 16:34)
 - 1) A lovely setting
 - 2) Deadly water
 - b. The word of grace, favor
 - The water is "healed" **21**
 - c. The Word of God overturns the curse

APPLICATION: God's Word can bring healing and blessing where the curse once reigned.

Judgment comes...

2. To Bethel
 - a. An unpleasant "welcome"
 - 1) 80 years in the grip of Bull/Idol worship
 - 2) Greeted by a young "mob"
 - 3) Jeering and mocking the prophet *and Yahweh*
 - b. A righteous response
 - Cursed "in the name of the Lord"
 - The judgment of covenant breakers (Leviticus 26:22)

III. Serving a Holy God

A. In Humble Submission

1. Elisha's Authority
 - Preaching "the whole counsel of God"
2. Proclaiming his grace **19-22**
3. Declaring his judgment **23-25**
 - Keep Jericho and Bethel *both* in view

B. In Holy Fear

1. God will not be mocked (Galatians 6:7,8)
 - You reap what you sow
2. God's wrath is poured out on his Son
 - It is not just an Old Testament attribute of God
 - Trust in him to be delivered from the curse
 - Deny him and face his judgment (Matthew 13:41-43)

He who has ears, let him hear!