

Calvary Chapel of Philadelphia



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY TEACHER'S PACKET

3rd - 5th Grade

Sunday Morning

Study 11

Taken to Heaven

Taken to Heaven

The Objective is the key concept for this week's lesson. It should be the main focus of the study.

These are the key verses that you will find helpful in teaching your study this week. The "Main passage" is the basis of the study, where the other verses support the objective of the lesson.

There is a memory verse for the students that relates to every study. If a student can memorize the verse for the following week you may give them a prize from the "reward box" found on your cart.

An introductory activity or question that will settle the class, draw their attention to the study and prepare their hearts for God's Word.

Objective To teach the students that Elijah never died. He was simply taken up to heaven. One day the Church will also be taken to heaven.

Key Verses

2 Kings 2—Main Teaching Passage

1 Thessalonians 4:16-18

1 John 3:3

Revelation 22:20

Memory Verse - 1 Thessalonians 4:17

"Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord."

Hook

Review last week's memory verse, 1 Peter 5:6.

What if you knew you only had one day left on earth, not because you were going to die, but because Jesus was going to take you up to heaven? What would you do? Who would you talk to? What would you say?

We don't know when Jesus will take us to heaven, but Elijah did. Today we are going to see that Elijah never died, and this points to the hope we have in Jesus' promise to return for His Church.

What does the Bible say? This is where we will read a passage or series of passages that teach on the subject of the day.

BOOK

Elijah was coming to the end of his ministry. We won't see him again until he and Moses stood with Jesus on the mount of transfiguration. Elijah had been told the Lord was going to take him to heaven, and he journeys from Gilgal, to Bethel, to Jericho, down to the Jordan River. At each stop he told Elisha to stay behind, but Elisha refused and continued to follow, and at each stop, "the sons of the prophets" told Elisha that Elijah would be taken by the LORD today.

As they came to the Jordan, Elijah rolled up his mantle and struck the river with it. It divided and they crossed on dry ground. Elijah then asked Elisha, "Ask! What shall I do for you before I am taken away from you?" And Elisha asked for a double portion of Elijah's spirit. Elijah told him that his request would be granted only if he saw Elijah taken. Suddenly, a chariot and horses of fire separated them, and Elijah was taken to heaven in a whirlwind. Elisha saw it, tore his clothes, and picked up the mantle that had been left behind. He struck the river as Elijah had and shouted, "Where is the LORD God of Elijah?" As he did, the river separated, and he walked back across on dry ground.

The sons of the prophets saw him return and asked to go and search for Elijah, in case the LORD had only taken him away to some mountain or valley. At first, Elisha told them not to go, but then allowed them to search after they kept asking. They searched for three days, but failed to find him. He had been taken to heaven!

LOOK

There are two men in the Bible who never died. God just took them. One of them was Enoch, who we are told "walked with God; and he was not, for God took him" (Genesis 5:24). The other is Elijah. All throughout today's story, it is clear that Elijah knew that God was going to take him on a specific day. Elisha also knew. So did the "sons of the prophets." (These were students at various schools of the prophets that had been established in several cities).

Elisha loved Elijah, and wanted to spend every last minute with him. Elijah repeatedly told him to stay, but that seems to have been a test for Elisha, who had promised he would follow Elijah (1 Kings 19:20). He didn't want to miss seeing Elijah off. So Elijah asks him to request one thing. "What may I do for you before I am taken?" Elisha seemed to be ready for the answer, much like Solomon was when the Lord asked him what he wanted. Elisha wanted a double portion of Elijah's spirit.

This means he wanted to have an even more Spirit-filled and empowered ministry than Elijah! That was a tall order, something only the Lord could provide! So Elijah said it would be so if Elisha saw him taken. As they are speaking with one another a fiery chariot drawn by

The interpretation/
exegesis of the passage.
What does this passage
mean? How does this
passage apply to my
life?

LOOK (Continued)

fiery horses separated them, and in a gush of wind Elijah was taken into heaven! What a shock this must have been! Elisha knew his master would be taken, but what a ride! What he saw meant that his request for a double portion of Elijah's spirit was answered. He would go on to do more miracles than Elijah. In fact, the only person who does more miracles than Elisha in the Bible is Jesus Christ!

But consider what that must have been like. It won't be so different when Jesus returns for His Church. We are not told what hour or day, but He told us He is coming. Why is Jesus coming? To take all His followers to be with Him. When He comes, millions of Christians will suddenly disappear. They will be caught up to be with Him once and for all. Imagine talking with someone who suddenly disappears. All that is left is a pile of clothes! People in planes, in schools, in hospitals, in the grocery store, riding cars. We will be caught up. I wonder if fiery chariots will take us...

What a day that will be. Jesus instructed us to watch and to wait for His return. To live like He is coming back. 1 John 3:3 says that those who hope in Jesus' return purify their lives. They want their King to find them busy carrying out the orders of the King when He returns, not sleeping on the job or breaking His laws. Are you ready for His return? It could be today. How will you be remembered by those who are left behind? I pray all of our lives will point others to Jesus, even after we're gone.

What is my response to this passage of Scripture? How should my life change according to what this passage teaches me? What are the practical things I can do throughout the week to make this true in my life?

TOOK

As a class, memorize 1 Thessalonians 4:17.

Pray: Thank God for making a way for us all to be received up to heaven through the life, death, and resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ.

Parent Question: How is what happened to Elijah similar to what will happen to the Church when Jesus comes back?

FURTHER STUDY

Commentary on 2 Kings 2 by David Guzik

ELIJAH'S ASCENSION

A. Elijah ascends to heaven.

1. ([2Ki 2:1-3](#)) The awareness of Elijah's coming departure.

And it came to pass, when the Lord was about to take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal. Then Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here, please, for the Lord has sent me on to Bethel." But Elisha said, "As the Lord lives, and as your soul lives, I will not leave you!" So they went down to Bethel. Now 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; keep silent!"

a. **When the Lord was about to take Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind:** Apparently, this was somewhat common knowledge. Elijah, Elisha, and the **sons of the prophets** each knew that Elijah would soon be carried **into heaven by a whirlwind**; presumably there was a prophecy announcing this that at least some knew.

b. **As the Lord lives, and as your soul lives, I will not leave you:** Elijah seemed to test the devotion of Elisha. Since it was known that Elijah would soon depart to heaven in an unusual way, Elisha wanted to stay as close as possible to his mentor.

2. ([2Ki 2:4-7](#)) The awareness of Elijah's departure at Jericho and the Jordan.

Then Elijah said to him, "Elisha, stay here, please, for the Lord has sent me on to Jericho." But he said, "As the Lord lives, and as your soul lives, I will not leave you!" So they came to Jericho. Now the sons of the prophets who *were* at Jericho came to Elisha and said to him, "Do you know that the Lord will take away your master from over you today?" So he answered, "Yes, I know; keep silent!" Then Elijah said to him, "Stay here, please, for the Lord has sent me on to the Jordan." But he said, "As the Lord lives, and as your soul lives, I will not leave you!" So the two of them went on. And fifty men of the sons of the prophets went and stood facing *them* at a distance, while the two of them stood by the Jordan.

a. **Elisha, stay here, please, for the Lord has sent me on to Jericho:** Elijah continued to test the devotion of Elisha, and Elisha continued to stay with his mentor until his anticipated unusual departure.

i. Elijah knew that God had a dramatic plan for the end of his earthly life, yet he was perfectly willing to allow it all to take place privately, without anyone else knowing. “The prophet’s evident desire to die alone shames us, when we remember how eager we are to tell men, by every available medium, of what we are doing for the Lord.” (Meyer)

b. **The two of them went on:** Elisha would not leave his mentor until *God* took him away in the dramatic way promised.

3. ([2Ki 2:8-10](#)) Elisha asks for a double portion.

Now Elijah took his mantle, rolled it up, and struck the water; and it was divided this way and that, so that the two of them crossed over on dry ground. And so it was, when they had crossed over, that Elijah said to Elisha, “Ask! What may I do for you, before I am taken away from you?” Elisha said, “Please let a double portion of your spirit be upon me.” So 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.”

a. **Elijah took his mantle, rolled it up, and struck the water; and it was divided this way and that, so that the two of them crossed over on dry ground:** This was a strange and unique miracle on a day of strange and unique miracles. Elijah walked in the steps of Moses and Joshua as ones whom God used to miraculously part waters.

b. **Ask! What may I do for you, before I am taken away from you?** This was a big invitation, but Elisha demonstrated his tenacity by refusing to leave his mentor.

i. “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*.” (Meyer)

c. **Please let a double portion of your spirit be upon me:** When invited to make a request, Elisha asked for a big thing – a **double portion** of the mighty **spirit** of Elijah. Elisha saw how greatly the Spirit of God worked through Elijah, and he wanted the same for himself.

i. He could have asked for anything, but he asked for this. “He sought neither wealth, nor position, nor worldly power; nor a share in those advantages on which he had turned his back for ever.” (Meyer)

ii. 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.

iii. It is worthwhile to consider if this was generally a *good* or a *bad* thing. Normally we don't think of one person inheriting the ministry of another. The relation between Elijah and Elisha – and God's apparent blessing on their ministries – shows that at least *sometimes* God intends one person to inherit the ministry of another.

d. **If you see me when I am taken from you, it shall be for you:** Elijah tested the devotion of his mentor by seeing if he would persistently stay with him through these last remarkable hours. If the devotion of Elisha remained strong through the testing, his request to be the successor of the first prophet would be fulfilled.

4. ([2Ki 2:11-13](#)) Elijah ascends into heaven.

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. And Elisha saw it, and he cried out, "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and its horsemen!" So he saw him no more. And he took hold of his own clothes and tore them into two pieces. He also took up the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and went back and stood by the bank of the Jordan.

a. **As they continued on and talked:** "What sublime themes must have engaged them, standing as they did on the very confines of heaven, and in the vestibule of eternity! The apostasy of Israel and its approaching doom; the ministry just closing, with its solemn warnings; the outlook towards the work upon which Elisha was preparing to enter – these and cognate subjects must have occupied them." (Meyer)

b. **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:** This was a strange and unique miracle. As the two prophets walked some fiery object **separated the two of them**, and then carried Elijah up to heaven.

i. "It was meet that a whirlwind-man should sweep to heaven in the very element of his life... what a contrast to the gentle upward motion of the ascending Saviour!" (Meyer)

ii. "Elijah was taken up to heaven in the *whirlwind*, not in the *chariot of fire and horses of fire* which merely 'came between the two of them' (Hebrew) and cut him off from human sight.

These *chariots* and *horsemen* symbolized strong protection as well as the forces of God's spiritual presence which were the true safety of Israel." (Wiseman)

c. **My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and its horsemen!** With these words Elisha recognized the *true* strength of Israel. "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 ([2Ki 13:14](#))." (Morgan)

i. "Who by thy example, and counsels, and prayers, and power with God, didst more for the defence and preservation of Israel, than all their chariots and horses, or other warlike provisions." (Poole)

ii. This was the end of a remarkable ministry, one that was in many ways similar to the ministry of Moses. Both Moses and Elijah:

- Stood alone for righteousness
- Were associated with fire upon mountains
- Were associated with the desert
- Met God on Sinai
- Were chased out of their countries by pagan rulers
- Knew God's miraculous provision for food and water
- Wandered in the desert for a period measured by 40
- Fasted for 40 days
- Were powerful examples of prayer
- Parted waters
- Had close associates who succeeded them
- Had successors that parted waters also
- Had mysterious or strange deaths

d. **And Elisha saw it:** This fulfilled the requirement mentioned in [2 Kings 2:10](#). Elisha would indeed inherit the prophetic ministry of Elijah. Yet Elisha wasn't happy when this happened; he **took hold of his own clothes and tore them into two pieces** as an expression of deep mourning.

e. **He also took up the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him:** Since the mantle was the special mark of a prophet, this was a demonstration of the truth that Elisha truly had inherited the ministry of Elijah.

i. Think of what it was like for Elisha to pick up that mantle. The mantle did not fall from heaven and rest on his shoulders; he had to *decide* to pick it up and put it on. He had to decide: *do I really want to put this on?* Elijah's ministry was one of great power, but also of great pressure and responsibility.

B. The beginning of the ministry of the Prophet Elisha.

1. ([2Ki 2:14-15](#)) Elisha continues after the pattern of Elijah.

Then he took the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and struck the water, and said, "Where is the Lord God of Elijah?" And when he also had struck the water, it was divided this way and that; and Elisha crossed over. Now when the sons of the prophets who were from Jericho saw him, they said, "The spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha." And they came to meet him, and bowed to the ground before him.

a. **Where is the Lord God of Elijah?** Elisha knew that the power in prophetic ministry did not rest in mantles or fiery chariots. It rested in the presence and work of the Living God. If the **Lord God of Elijah** was also with Elisha, then he would inherit the same power and direction of ministry.

i. This was a great question to ask. If God expected Elisha to continue on the ministry of Elijah, then He must be present for the junior prophet in the same ways He was for the senior prophet. It was as if Elisha could have asked the question more specifically:

- Where is the God who kept Elijah faithful when the whole nation turned from God?
- Where is the God who mightily answered prayer from Elijah?

- Where is the God who provided miraculously for Elijah?
- Where is the God who raised the dead through Elijah?
- Where is the God who answers prayer by sending fire from heaven?
- Where is the God who encouraged the discouraged prophet?
- Where is the God who carried Elijah away into heaven?

b. **When he also struck the water, it was divided:** This shows that Elisha immediately had the same power in ministry that Elijah had. He went back over a divided Jordan River the same way that he and Elijah first came over the river.

i. “And when you have got their mantle, do not waste precious time in lamentations about them any more; *get to your business*. There is a river in your way; what then? Well, go to the Jordan as the prophet Elisha did, and try to pass it. Say not, ‘Where is Elijah?’ but ‘Where is the Lord God of Elijah?’ Elijah is gone, but his God is not; Elijah has gone away, but Jehovah is present, still.” (Spurgeon)

c. **The spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha:** The succession of Elisha to the power and office of Elijah was *apparent to others*. Elisha didn’t need to persuade or convince them of this with words. God’s blessing on his actions was enough to prove it.

2. ([2Ki 2:16-18](#)) A futile search for Elijah.

Then they said to him, “Look now, there are fifty strong men with your servants. Please let them go and search for your master, lest perhaps the Spirit of the Lord has taken him up and cast him upon some mountain or into some valley.” And he said, “You shall not send anyone.” But when they urged him till he was ashamed, he said, “Send *them!*” Therefore they sent fifty men, and they searched for three days but did not find him. And when they came back to him, for he had stayed in Jericho, he said to them, “Did I not say to you, ‘Do not go’?”

a. **Please let them go and search for your master:** The sons of the prophets wondered if the chariot of fire had not merely taken Elijah to another place in Israel. Elisha knew that it had carried him to heaven, so he was hesitant to give permission for what he knew would be a futile mission.

b. **Did I not say to you, “Do not go”?** Elisha knew that the mission would be futile and it was. Elijah was carried up to *heaven*, not some other place on this earth.

3. ([2Ki 2:19-22](#)) The waters of Jericho are healed

Then the men of the city said to Elisha, “Please notice, the situation of this city *is* pleasant, as my lord sees; but the water *is* bad, and the ground barren.” And he said, “Bring me a new bowl, and put salt in it.” So they brought *it* to him. Then he went out to the source of the water, and cast in the salt there, and said, “Thus says the Lord: ‘I have healed this water; from it there shall be no more death or barrenness.’” So the water remains healed to this day, according to the word of Elisha which he spoke.

a. **The water is bad, and the ground barren:** At this time Jericho had a poor water supply. This made agriculture impossible and life very difficult.

b. **Thus says the Lord: “I have healed this water; from it there shall be no more death or barrenness”:** The miracle did not happen because Elisha wanted to impress others or because *he* thought it would be good to do it. This was a work of the Lord, and it was a word from the Lord that announced the healing of the water.

i. “If God casteth into our hearts but one cruseful of the salt of his Spirit, we are whole.” (Trapp)

4. ([2Ki 2:23-25](#)) Judgment upon the youths of Bethel.

Then he went up from there to Bethel; and as he was going up the road, some youths came from the city and mocked him, and said to him, “Go up, you baldhead! Go up, you baldhead!” So he turned around and looked at them, and pronounced a curse on them in the name of the Lord. And two female bears came out of the woods and mauled forty-two of the youths. Then he went from there to Mount Carmel, and from there he returned to Samaria.

a. **Some youths came from the city and mocked him:** The ancient Hebrew word translated **youths** here means young men in a very broad sense. This term applied to Joseph when he was 39 ([Genesis 41:12](#)), to Absalom as an adult ([2 Samuel 14:21](#); [18:5](#)), and to Solomon when he was 20 ([1 Kings 3:7](#)).

i. These youths were from **Bethel**, and their mocking presence shows the continuing opposition to a true prophet in Bethel, the chief center of pagan calf-worship.” (Wiseman)

b. **Go up, you baldhead!** This both mocked Elisha because of his apparent baldness, but also because of his connection with the prophet Elijah. The idea behind the words, “**Go up**” was that Elisha should **go up** to heaven like Elijah did. It mocked Elisha, his mentor Elijah, and the God they served.

i. “*Go up; go up* into heaven, whither thou pretendest that Elijah is gone. Why didst not thou accompany thy friend and master into heaven? Oh that the same Spirit would take thee up also, that thou mightest not trouble us nor our Israel, as Elijah did!” (Poole)

ii. “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.” (Dilday)

c. **So he turned around and looked at them, and pronounced a curse on them in the name of the Lord:** Elisha knew these young men mocked his ministry, Elijah’s ministry, and the God they both faithfully served. Yet he left any correction up with God by pronouncing **a curse on them in the name of the Lord**.

d. **Two female bears came out of the woods and mauled forty-two of the youths:** In response to the curse of Elisha, God sent **two female bears** and they **mauled** (literally, *cut up*) the young men.

i. "*Bears* are attested in the hill ranges until mediaeval times." (Wiseman)

ii. "Since forty-two of the boys were struck by the bears, the group may have been quite large and therefore dangerously out of control. Elisha may have needed miraculous intervention to escape." (Dilday)

iii. "[Verse 24](#) does not say that the victims were killed. The Hebrew word translated 'mauled' might indicate less serious injuries. The ultimate outcome of the miracle was to break up the gang, frighten the offenders and the entire village." (Dilday)