

THE MAN WHO USED A MANTLE TO CROSS A RIVER

BIBLE TEXT : I Kings 19:19-21; II Kings 2:1-18

LESSON 308 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "They that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful" (Revelation 17:14).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

1 Kings 19:19-21

¹⁹ So he departed thence, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who *was* plowing *with* twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth: and Elijah passed by him, and cast his mantle upon him.

²⁰ And he left the oxen, and ran after Elijah, and said, Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother, and *then* I will follow thee. And he said unto him, Go back again: for what have I done to thee?

²¹ And he returned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen, and slew them, and boiled their flesh with the instruments of the oxen, and gave unto the people, and they did eat. Then he arose, and went after Elijah, and ministered unto him.

2 Kings 2:1-18

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.

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.

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.

⁴ And Elijah said unto him, Elisha, tarry here, I pray thee; for the

BIBLE REFERENCES:

NOTES:

The Call

There comes a time in the life of everyone when the Spirit of God calls at the heart's door. It matters not what colour one's skin may be, what kind of work he does, how rich or poor he may be, nor how old or young. If one is old enough to realize what it means to sin against God, the Spirit of God is faithful to call and try to win his heart.

A young farmer received his call one day while out ploughing in the field. Twenty-four oxen were ploughing the field as Elisha followed down the furrow of freshly ploughed ground. Suddenly the oxen stood still, Elisha's hands let go of the plough and he ran across the field. The man of God, Elijah, had passed by and had thrown his mantle upon the young farmer. The touch of the mantle caused Elisha to be willing to leave the oxen, the plough, the partially ploughed field, and his father and mother, and to follow the Lord.

Did God's Spirit ever call at your heart's door? Have you ever felt that you ought to be saved? Did you fairly run to the altar of prayer in answer to the Spirit's call?

Farewell

Two of the oxen were slain and cooked over a fire built of the instruments of the oxen; a farewell feast was quickly prepared; a hurried good-bye was said to parents and friends — and farm work was forever forgotten by Elisha. New duties lay ahead for him.

To Bethel

Elijah's work on earth was finished and the time had come when the Lord would take him into Heaven (II Kings 2:1). From Gilgal he and Elisha started out together. "Tarry here," said Elijah, "for the LORD hath sent me to Bethel." With a strong determination to follow his master, Elisha said, "I will not leave thee." On and on they walked. Elisha knew that soon Elijah was to be taken into Heaven, and every minute of the time was precious — every mile of the long journey was dear to him.

When they reached Bethel, some young men, known as the sons of the prophets, called to Elisha and said, "Knowest thou that the LORD will take away thy master from thy head to day?" His answer was, "Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace."

To Jericho

Down the Jericho road walked the man of God, and close beside him walked Elisha. Again Elijah tested the determination of the young man who was soon to carry on his work. "Tarry, I pray thee, here; for the LORD hath sent me to Jordan." Stay in Jericho with the sons of the prophets? Be left behind while Elijah goes on? Miss the greatest blessing of all? Never! I shall not leave thee!"

To Jordan

At last they come to the banks of the River Jordan. Yonder in the distance stand fifty men of the school, watching. What do

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.

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.

⁶ And Elijah said unto him, Tarry, I pray thee, here; for the LORD hath sent me to Jordan. And he said, *As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee.* And they two went on.

⁷ And fifty men of the sons of the prophets went, and stood to view afar off: and they two stood by Jordan.

⁸ And Elijah took his mantle, and wrapped *it* together, and smote the waters, and they were divided hither and thither, so that they two went over on dry ground.

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.

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*.

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.

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:

they see? What does Elisha see? What do we see, as we picture this scene? Dear old Elijah takes his mantle, folds it together, and with it he smites the waters of that rushing, mighty river. The flow of the current stops. A dry path appears and the two walk through the river on dry ground.

Now you are repaid for following on, Elisha. The many miles of weary travel are not in vain. You have seen another miracle of the power of God that rests upon Elijah. But a greater reward is in store for you if you follow on.

One Last Request

Now on the other shore stand the two men. Elijah's hour has come to go to Heaven. But who will carry on the work here below? The sick must be healed, the people told about God, and the dead restored to life. Who will win the battles for the Lord? Elisha knew what he wanted and what he needed in order to carry on this important work. He must have it! So when Elijah said, "Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee," Elisha humbly answered, "I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me."

A wise request. What greater petition could he make? What greater desire could anyone have than to be filled with a double portion of the Spirit of God? Do you know that it is within the reach of everyone living today to receive an infilling of the Spirit and power of God? But when we seek for the mighty baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire it is just as Elijah said, "Thou hast asked a hard thing," Nevertheless, those who are saved and sanctified and fully consecrated, who seek in faith, are receiving this great blessing in these last days.

There was something Elisha must do: "If thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so." Elisha had followed to Bethel; he had followed on to Jericho; then to the River Jordan. This was no time to take his eyes off his master. He could not miss receiving the blessing, now that he had come this far.

Can those who are saved or those who are also sanctified afford to turn back Can the sanctified afford to neglect to seek the fullness of the Spirit of God, the mighty baptism of the Holy Ghost? Then after receiving it, is there ever a time when Christians dare to take their eyes off the Lord and Master? Can they afford to lose sight of the goal that lies just ahead? They may miss the Rapture if they do.

The Chariot of Fire

"They still went on, and talked." We are sure their conversation was of the Lord and Heaven. Suddenly "there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire." This scene cannot be described, but one can only imagine its thrilling splendour. Just as suddenly as the chariot of fire had appeared, it disappeared in a whirlwind, and into Heaven went Elijah, one of the only two men to go from this world into the next without dying. No death for Elijah; but, like Enoch, he "was not found, because God had translated him" (Hebrews 11:5).

Today when loved ones are taken from our side, we are stunned by their departure. Although Elisha had known that Elijah should be taken into Heaven that day, yet as he stood and watched the chariot of fire, bearing his master, disappear into the blue sky, Elisha was amazed, for we read that "he took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in two pieces."

The Mantle

Down from the sky dropped the mantle of Elijah. This was the mantle that had touched Elisha that day in the field; this was the

and he took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in two pieces.

¹³ He took up also the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and went back, and stood by the bank of Jordan;

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.

¹⁵ And when the sons of the prophets which *were* to view at Jericho saw him, they said, The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha. And they came to meet him, and bowed themselves to the ground before him.

¹⁶ And they said unto him, Behold now, there be with thy servants fifty strong men; let them go, we pray thee, and seek thy master: lest peradventure the Spirit of the LORD hath taken him up, and cast him upon some mountain, or into some valley. And he said, Ye shall not send.

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.

¹⁸ And when they came again to him, (for he tarried at Jericho,) he said unto them, Did I not say unto you, Go not?

mantle his master had worn; this was the mantle Elijah had wrapped together and with it had smitten the waters of the River Jordan. Now it belonged to Elisha. Did he have what he had asked of his master? Did he have a double portion of the spirit of Elijah? Set us see.

Back to the banks of the river he went. There in the sand, perhaps, were the footprints left by Elijah, who had gone to Heaven. But Elijah's God was there, for as Elisha smote the waters with the mantle, the same Lord answered and parted the waters. Elisha was not alone as he walked through the path in the river. His eyes could not see the One who led him on, yet Elisha's spiritual eyes were upon none other than the Lord God. Elisha had the mantle; he had the power; he had the answer to his request: "a double portion" of the spirit of Elijah.

Elisha needed that double portion, and he used it, too. He performed a great many miracles, as we shall learn in future lessons. Although not all the mighty works done through the power of God are written in the Bible, in God's Word we find recorded double the number of miracles wrought by Elisha as are recorded concerning Elijah.

Unbelief

The young men, the sons of the prophets at Jericho, recognized that the spirit of Elijah rested upon Elisha. However, they wondered whether Elijah had really gone to Heaven. They begged Elisha to let them go and search for him upon the mountains and in the valleys. Elisha said they should not go, but when they insisted, he let them go. For three days the fifty strong men sought, but they could not find the man of God, for he had gone to Heaven.

The Rapture

This scene will some day be repeated when the Rapture takes place. Those left behind will not believe that the Bride of Christ has been taken away. They will search for the Bride – to no avail. Not only the preacher or prophet of God will go up at the Rapture of the Church, but also all who have prepared themselves for His coming by having their sins forgiven, their heart cleansed by the sanctifying Blood, and by receiving the gift of power that comes at the baptism of the Holy Ghost. If you would be one of them, follow Jesus closely. Have a purpose, as Elisha had, "I will not leave thee." Today the Bride of Christ is looking for the coming of the Lord, and we may be among those who will not see death but "shall be caught up . . . to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (I Thessalonians 4:17).

QUESTIONS

1. What did Elijah do to Elisha as he was ploughing?
2. Tell what Elisha did then.
3. What great experience was about to come to Elijah?
4. Did Elisha know of this? Why?
5. Tell of his determination to follow Elijah.
6. What happened at the River Jordan?
7. What was Elisha's request of Elijah before his translation?
8. How do we know whether or not this was granted?
9. By what means did Elijah go to Heaven?
10. What evidence do we have that the spirit of Elijah rested upon Elisha?

