

Elijah and Elisha
2 Kings 2:1-14



Elijah and Elisha #5

II King 2:1-14

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As you can see, we are learning about Elijah and Elisha in the context of relationship: Old Testament (God/man) and New Testament: God and his relationship with his church)

A PROPHET IS SOMEONE **CALLED** BY GOD TO SPEAK GOD'S TRUTH INTO THE PRESENT MOMENT SO GOD'S PEOPLE CAN RETURN TO HIM AND LIVE TOWARD HIS PROMISED FUTURE.

OLD TESTAMENT: A MESSENGER OF GOD

JESUS: THE WORD MADE FLESH

CHURCH: SPIRIT-EMPOWERED WITNESS

Previously in I Kings, Elijah was depressed, wanted to die, and followed instructions to replace himself by throwing his cloak over Elisha. Today, we see the end of Elijah and the beginning of Elisha's ministry.

Why cover these Old Testament prophets? What do they have to do with us today?

First, let's talk about what a prophet is; see the definition above. In the OT, these prophets are messages of God and they give people God's messages. Moses is considered the greatest prophet and refers to Jesus coming in the New Testament. Jesus fulfills the truth of God: He IS the truth of God. If you follow Jesus by saying you need Him for the forgiveness of sin, you are Spirit-empowered. You have the Spirit upon you: you don't have to have an office in the church; all believers still have prophetic callings.

1 Corinthians 14

14 Follow the way of love and eagerly desire gifts of the Spirit, **especially prophecy**. 2 For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to people but to God. Indeed, no one understands them; they utter mysteries by the Spirit. 3 But the one who **prophesies** speaks to people for their **strengthening, encouraging** and **comfort**. 4 Anyone who speaks in a tongue edifies themselves, but the one who prophesies edifies the church.

NOT to do something. Or it could include instructions: "You're doing a good job and here are some ways to keep moving forward." It's not telling someone that everything will work out OK for them: it's sitting with them and reminding them of Jesus's presence with them.

Paul shapes this calling in I Corinthians 14. If you have questions about speaking in tongues, find me at lunch.

Prophecies are for building up and strengthening something. This applies to all of you! This is something each of us should seek: if you see someone doing something and working hard, acknowledge them which encourages them. This is a different kind of prophecy than predicting the future: it's to **give courage to someone**. Also it could be telling them

Let's look at Elisha's calling of prophecy in II Kings 2: .

1 When the Lord was about to take **Elijah up to heaven in a whirlwind**, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from **Gilgal**. 2 Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here; the Lord has sent me to **Bethel**." But Elisha said, "*As surely as the Lord lives and as you live, I will not leave you.*" So they went down to Bethel. 3 The company of the prophets at Bethel came out to Elisha and asked, "*Do you know that the Lord is going to take your master from you today?*" "Yes, I know," Elisha replied, "**so be quiet.**"

4 Then Elijah said to him, "Stay here, Elisha; the Lord has sent me to **Jericho**." And he replied, "*As surely as the Lord lives and as you live, I will not leave you.*" So they went to Jericho. 5 The company of the prophets at Jericho went up to Elisha and asked him, "*Do you know that the Lord is going to take your master from you today?*" "Yes, I know," he replied, "**so be quiet.**" 6 Then Elijah said to him, "Stay here; the Lord has sent me to the **Jordan**." And he replied, "*As surely as the Lord lives and as you live, I will not leave you.*" So the two of them walked on.



The story above reminds me of the Village and Russ Lewis in particular. In 1998 or 1999 Russ was 19 or 20 and we attended another church (before the Village existed). We had a college ministry that was getting large and we believe God told us to go and meet separately. When I told this to Russ, he told me wherever I went, he would go, without knowing that I would fail him and that he would be stuck with me for the next 20 years.

Elijah kept trying to give Elisha an "out," yet Elisha kept staying. If you know the Village, you will find there is a group of people at this church who are willing to give up much to make this church transform Tucson one person at a time. No one knew how disappointed they might be... yet, they continued to stay and quieted the voices that were saying otherwise.

Today, you benefit from a group of people who made this commitment. We continue to say "we're not going anywhere, be quiet." If you have said this, you are like Elisha! Yet, if you are called to move on, savor what we have here and drink it up because it's really good.

Note: The *Chariots of Fire* in this passage are *the things that are shaping Israel that we cannot see*.

7 Fifty men from the company of the prophets went and stood at a distance, facing the place where Elijah and Elisha had stopped at the Jordan. 8 Elijah took his cloak, rolled it up, and **struck the water** with it. **The water divided to the right and to the left**, and the two of them crossed over on dry ground. 9 When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, “Tell me, what can I do for you before I am taken from you?” “Let me **inherit a double portion of your spirit**,” Elisha replied. 10 “You have asked a difficult thing,” Elijah said, “yet if you see me when I am taken from you, it will be yours—otherwise, it will not.”

Back to II Kings 2:

The group of prophets finally figured things out. The inheritance is significant because first-born sons inherited a double portion (because they would need it to take care of everyone). Elisha is saying he wants Elijah’s *space*: he wants more than bringing fire down!

It’s not a bad thing to want a double portion of the relationship with God that your leaders have. You *should* long for a deeper and more intimate relationship with God. This is a good way to think!

I really do think a NT follower of Jesus should seek the gift of prophesy: *speaking the truth is a comforting and encouraging way.*



Here, I want to make a pitch for this book, Make Sense of Your Story by Adam Young. Read this book, especially in a group. It makes you face really hard things. I sat down with my whole house family together and we had to talk about the ways we impact ourselves and others. It was intense.

If you take a big-picture look at the story before Elijah leaves Elisha, you will notice that they are traveling in reverse order of their story in Israel:

Gilgal: Everyone left Egypt and the men got circumcised and rededicated themselves to the covenant they had made with God. In all stories, there is a *reclaiming of our identity with God*.

Bethel: A dramatic spot in Israel’s story: this is when the Northern Kingdom starts to worship Ba’al. This also happens in our stories: *we want to obey and we do the opposite*. Our story helps us understand what is happening in our present story.

Jericho: We thought *the situation was impossible and somehow, God changed it*. If you don’t remember this, we don’t remember that God acts at all in our life!

Jordan: The place where *we head into the promised land*. There are lots of beginnings where God parts the water in your life, setting a whole new direction. Seeing this in our story helps us to help others in their stories.

11 As they were walking along and talking together, suddenly a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared and separated the two of them, and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind. 12 Elisha saw this and cried out, "My father! My father! The chariots and horsemen of Israel!" And Elisha saw him no more. Then he took hold of his garment and tore it in two.

13 Elisha then picked up Elijah's cloak that had fallen from him and went back and stood on the bank of the Jordan. 14 He took the cloak that had fallen from Elijah and struck the water with it. "Where now is the Lord, the God of Elijah?" he asked. When he struck the water, it divided to the right and to the left, and he crossed over.

Next Steps:
(Pick One)

- Remember Where You Belong
- Keep Saying: I will not leave
- Keep Saying: Be quiet
- Walk backward through your Story
- Pick-up the Mantle and strike the water

Elijah brings them over the Jordan, Elisha brings them back. This story might seem crazy but Elijah's story is full of crazy things.

There is a grief in this story: Elisha loses Elijah ("his father"). Reality enters in the grief and Elisha sees the chariots.

Elisha struck the water with Elijah's cloak:

As you think about what you are pursuing as a follower of Jesus, you are to seek and practice prophecy. Here are some suggestions to do this:

1. **Remember** where you belong with affection, not seeking to get out of the situation. If you are a mom standing between two screaming kids, think of this. If you are a person in a job that doesn't pay enough, remember this. In every aspect of your life (of course, not abusive situations), you have the opportunity to remember *you belong there*: Elisha belonged next to Elijah. This is your first step:

2. Next, say **"I will not leave."** This might be also be a mental thing: You could be physically present but mentally checked out.

3. Elijah says **"be quiet."** Be willing to say this to the voices that counter you.

4. **Walk backwards through your story:** When did you make new statements, have worship divided, walk through Jordan? When you see these in your life, you can see these in other people's lives as well.

5. **Pick up the mantle and strike the water:** notice that he *tears his cloak*, the one thing he could cling to. He must pick up the mantle and strike the water. Pick up the mantle of the prophetic and practice striking the water: go over to someone and build them up, saying words of strength. You don't have to say "thus saith the Lord" but God may want to tell someone that he sees them. Encouragement means you study people; first, you must study yourself. This takes courage!

Pick-up the Mantle and strike the water

- Strengthen
- Encourage
- Comfort

Be a comfort to people deeper in their souls than on the surface: BE QUIET and ask good questions. Don't tell people how to fix it: Instead, "I see you, this is hard, God has sent me to sit with you." Knowing your calling and where you belong: pick up your mantle and act like a prophet.

