



## INTRODUCTION

Friendship is a wonderful blessing of God. By the end of their ministry together Elijah and Elisha became inseparable. What binds people together and makes for a strong friendship? Can you think of any other exemplary friendships in Scripture?

## ELIJAH TAKEN UP TO HEAVEN

**2 Kings 2:1-6** When the LORD was about to take Elijah up to heaven in a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal. <sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> 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, "but do not speak of it." <sup>4</sup> 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. <sup>5</sup> 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, "but do not speak of it." <sup>6</sup> 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.

1.) Recall where Bethel was located and its role in idolatry in the Northern Kingdom. What does it say that there are schools of the prophets at Bethel and Jericho?

2.) When will God take us (or our loved ones) home? What is he waiting for?

**Psalms 139:16** All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.

**Acts 13:36** "When David had served God's purpose in his own generation, he fell asleep."

**Jeremiah 29:11** "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

3.) Why do you think Elijah tried these three times to turn Elisha aside?

**2 Kings 2:7-12** Fifty men of the company of the prophets went and stood at a distance, facing the place where Elijah and Elisha had stopped at the Jordan. <sup>8</sup> 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. <sup>9</sup> 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<sup>1</sup>,” Elisha replied. <sup>10</sup> “You have asked a difficult thing,” Elijah said, “yet if you see me when I am taken from you, it will be yours—otherwise not.”

<sup>11</sup> 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. <sup>12</sup> 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 own clothes and tore them apart.

1.) What was Elisha’s estimation of Elijah?

**2 Kings 13:14** Now Elisha was suffering from the illness from which he died. Jehoash king of Israel went down to see him and wept over him. “My father! My father!” he cried. “The chariots and horsemen of Israel!”

**2 Kings 2:13-18** [Elisha] picked up the cloak that had fallen from Elijah and went back and stood on the bank of the Jordan. <sup>14</sup> Then he took the cloak that had fallen from him 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.

<sup>15</sup> The company of the prophets from Jericho, who were watching, said, “The spirit of Elijah is resting on Elisha.” And they went to meet him and bowed to the ground before him. <sup>16</sup> “Look,” they said, “we your servants have fifty able men. Let them go and look for your master. Perhaps the Spirit of the LORD has picked him up and set him down on some mountain or in some valley.” <sup>17</sup> “No,” Elisha replied, “do not send them.” <sup>17</sup> But they persisted until he was too ashamed to refuse. So he said, “Send them.” And they sent fifty men, who searched for three days but did not find him. <sup>18</sup> When they returned to Elisha, who was staying in Jericho, he said to them, “Didn’t I tell you not to go?”

1.) Throughout this chapter we get the sense that the prophets in training are standing at a distance, always watching. What are some specific ways that the example of adults and church leaders can have a positive spiritual influence on the young?

2.) Upon finding Elijah’s cloak and splitting the waters of the Jordan with it, Elisha knew it was now his turn and time to lead God’s people. When have you felt it was “your turn” to assume Christian responsibility?

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<sup>1</sup> A father would usually give a double portion of inheritance to his eldest son. In other words, before he died, he would divide his inheritance by one more unit than he had sons. The eldest son would receive two portions, the other sons would each receive one. “Make me only half the prophet you are!”

<sup>2</sup> Cf. The Spirit’s taking Philip away to Azotus in Acts 8.

3.) What events and example in Elijah's life would have encouraged Elisha after he succeeded him as prophet?

## ELISHA FOLLOWS IN ELIJAH'S FOOTSTEPS

**2 Kings 2:13-18** The men of the city [Jericho] said to Elisha, "Look, our lord, this town is well situated, as you can see, but the water is bad and the land is unproductive." <sup>20</sup> "Bring me a new bowl," he said, "and put salt in it." So they brought it to him. <sup>21</sup> Then he went out to the spring and threw the salt into it, saying, "This is what the LORD says: 'I have healed this water. Never again will it cause death or make the land unproductive.'" <sup>22</sup> And the water has remained wholesome to this day, according to the word Elisha had spoken.

1.) What "problem" had Jericho had since the days of Joshua? How was God's actions through Elisha a sign of continued grace?

**Joshua 6:26** At that time Joshua pronounced this solemn oath: "Cursed before the LORD is the man who undertakes to rebuild this city, Jericho: "At the cost of his firstborn son will he lay its foundations; at the cost of his youngest will he set up its gates."

**2 Kings 2:13-18** From there Elisha went up to Bethel. As he was walking along the road, some youths came out of the town and jeered at him. "Go on up, you baldhead!" they said. "Go on up, you baldhead!" <sup>24</sup> He turned around, looked at them and called down a curse on them in the name of the LORD. Then two bears came out of the woods and mauled forty-two of the youths. <sup>25</sup> And he went on to Mount Carmel and from there returned to Samaria.

- Apparently, baldness was uncommon among the ancient Jews. It is unclear if this mob was simply harassing an old man, or if they recognized him as a prophet of the LORD. In either case it shows that they had lost all sense of respect for authority.

## PRAYER