

# Abide in Me

**John 15:4**  
*Bible studies for disciples  
who make disciples*



Volume 9 - Number 4

The Week of October 29, 2023

*Unrivaled*  
**Up, Up and Away!**  
2 Kings 2:1-18

Welcome to the final discussion in our series on the life of Elijah. Elijah was not the first prophet to arise in Israel, but he was the standard by which all other prophets would be measured. He was a man like us with obvious shortcomings, but he was jealous for the Lord Almighty. During his career he was the point of God's spear for confronting the idolatry and degradation of his generation. Now the old prophet's days were coming to an end. In the last scene of Elijah's earthly ministry, we watch with interest and surprise how he spends his remaining days and the nature of his extraordinary departure.

## **OBSERVATION** (*What does the passage say?*)

Before meeting with your Growth Group, read through the passage at least twice and perform the following prompts:

- Double underline the word *whirlwind* in verses 1 and 11.
- Place a box around each location mentioned.
- Set a parenthesis around Elijah's order to Elisha in verses 2, 4, and 6.
- Underline Elisha's persistence in each verse above.
- Circle each reference to *the sons of the prophets*.
- Place a bracket around Elisha's "hard" request in verse 9.
- In the left margin of verse 9 write Deuteronomy 21:15-17.
- Circle the word *cloak* in verses 8, 13, and 14.

<sup>1</sup> Now when the Lord was about to take Elijah up to heaven by a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal. <sup>2</sup> And Elijah said to Elisha, "Please stay here, for the Lord has sent me as far as Bethel." But Elisha said, "As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So they went down to Bethel. <sup>3</sup> And the sons of the prophets who were in Bethel came out to Elisha and said to him, "Do you know that today the Lord will take away your master from over you?" And he said, "Yes, I know it; keep quiet."

<sup>4</sup> Elijah said to him, "Elisha, please stay here, for the Lord has sent me to Jericho." But he said, "As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So they came to Jericho. <sup>5</sup> The sons of the prophets who were at Jericho drew near to Elisha and said to him, "Do you know that today the Lord will take away your master from over you?" And he answered, "Yes, I know it; keep quiet."

<sup>6</sup> Then Elijah said to him, "Please stay here, for the Lord has sent me to the Jordan." But he said, "As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So the two of them went on. <sup>7</sup> Fifty men of the sons of the prophets also went and stood at some distance from them, as they both were standing by the Jordan. <sup>8</sup> Then Elijah took his cloak and rolled it up and struck the water, and the water was parted to the one side and to the other, till the two of them could go over on dry ground.

<sup>9</sup> When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, “Ask what I shall do for you, before I am taken from you.” And Elisha said, “Please let there be a double portion of your spirit on me.” <sup>10</sup> And he said, “You have asked a hard thing; yet, if you see me as I am being taken from you, it shall be so for you, but if you do not see me, it shall not be so.” <sup>11</sup> And as they still went on and talked, behold, chariots of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them. And Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. <sup>12</sup> And Elisha saw it and he cried, “My father, my father! The chariots of Israel and its horsemen!” And he saw him no more.

Then he took hold of his own clothes and tore them in two pieces. <sup>13</sup> And he took up the cloak of Elijah that had fallen from him and went back and stood on the bank of the Jordan. <sup>14</sup> Then he took the cloak of Elijah that had fallen from him and struck the water, saying, “Where is the Lord, the God of Elijah?” And when he had struck the water, the water was parted to the one side and to the other, and Elisha went over.

<sup>15</sup> Now when the sons of the prophets who were at Jericho saw him opposite them, they said, “The spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha.” And they came to meet him and bowed to the ground before him. <sup>16</sup> And they said to him, “Behold now, there are with your servants fifty strong men. Please let them go and seek your master. It may be that the Spirit of the Lord has caught him up and cast him upon some mountain or into some valley.” And he said, “You shall not send.” <sup>17</sup> But when they urged him till he was ashamed, he said, “Send.” They sent therefore fifty men. And for three days they sought him but did not find him. <sup>18</sup> And they came back to him while he was staying at Jericho, and he said to them, “Did I not say to you, ‘Do not go’?”

*Discussion Starter:* If you knew your time on earth was short, how would you spend your remaining days?

### **INTERPRETATION** (*What does the passage mean?*)

1. What were the key locations Elijah visited before his departure?

- Why were these places historically significant?
- What do you think he did while there?

2. Three times Elijah asked Elisha to stay behind and three times Elisha refused to leave his side. What is going on here?

3. What do you make of the parting of the Jordan River and of Elijah’s departure from earth on the eastern side of the Jordan?

4. What did it mean for Elisha to ask for a double portion of Elijah’s spirit? In what way did Elijah mean that Elisha’s request was *hard*?

5. Describe how Elijah went up into heaven. Discuss the significance of his departure for what it forecasts about Jesus and every believer. (see Acts 1:9-11; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18)

6. Why is it significant that Elijah departed from this world without dying? In what ways does Elijah reappear in the story of redemption? (see Malachi 4:5-6; Matthew 17:1-8; Matthew 17:9-13; Revelation 11:3-12 [why do many Bible students think Elijah will be one of the two witnesses?])

**APPLICATION** (*How does the passage apply to our lives?*)

1. What application do you draw from the relationship between Elijah and Elisha?

2. Why is spiritual mentorship an important part of our Christian walk? What does this look like in practical terms?

3. How does the request for a double portion of Elijah's spirit inspire your own spiritual life and commitment?

4. How does knowing that you will one day be raised up affect your life today?

5. How has the study of Elijah's prophetic career helped you understand God better?

6. What life principles stand out to you from this series?

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