

# Elijah Taken Up Into Heaven

2 Kings 2

**PPT Title**

## Elijah Taken Up Into Heaven

**Main Point:** God gives people what they need in order to do His will.

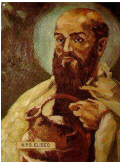
**Key Verse:** *"Please give me a double share of your spirit," Elisha replied. - 2 Kings 2:9b*

**Props:** Animal skin (fake fur is fine); small bowl of salt

**Teaching Option:** The two names of the prophets are very similar sounding. If you feel it would make the teaching more clear, you may want to call on an adult leader, and a well-behaved student to sit on two stools at the front of the classroom. As you begin the review section, introduce the adult leader as Elijah, and the student as Elisha. Begin with your animal skin on the adult leader, and transfer the skin to the student at the appropriate time. As you teach, point to the adult or student to clarify which prophet you are speaking about. Dismiss your adult leader when Elijah is "taken up." Make sure the students realize that Elisha was younger than Elijah, but he was a grown man.

### BACKGROUND/REVIEW

**Say:** We have learned about God's prophet Elijah (ee-LY-dzhuh). The Lord used him in a very mighty way. But when Elijah became discouraged and would not repent, God chose another man to take his place (1 Kings 19:16). The new prophet was Elisha (ee-LY-shuh). Elisha's name means "God is Salvation." God allowed plenty of time for Elisha to learn from Elijah. During this training period, God still had work for Elijah to do. Notice that Elijah was not allowed to quit being a prophet when he wanted to (1 Kings 19:4). The timing for Elijah's ministry was in God's hand, not in Elijah's.



At this time, there were actually prophet schools where young men were taught the ways of a prophet. The Bible calls these schools, "companies of prophets." (2 Kings 2:3, 9:1). Though there were many prophets, Elijah was known as the greatest of God's prophets. And all the lesser prophets knew that Elisha had been chosen by God to be specially trained by Elijah. Elisha went everywhere with Elijah, and served him loyally.



### ELIJAH'S FAREWELL (2 Kings 2:1-10)

**Say:** Elijah's time on earth had come to an end, but he was not going to die. God was about to take this prophet up into heaven in an amazing way. God had made it known to Elijah, Elisha, and the other prophets that Elijah was going to be taken away from Elisha on a certain day (2 Kings 2:3, 5). That day, Elijah went to visit the prophet schools in Bethel, Jericho, and beside the Jordan River. Perhaps Elijah had some final words of wisdom for the young prophets. Several times Elijah told Elisha to stay behind, but Elisha was determined to go with Elijah every step of the way. He said, "I won't leave you. And that's just as sure as the Lord and you are alive." (2 Kings 2:4) Then Elijah walked to the edge of the Jordan River, with Elisha right beside him.



*Fifty men from the company of the prophets followed them. The men stopped and stood not far away from them. They faced the place where Elijah and Elisha had stopped at*



the Jordan River. Elijah rolled his coat up. Then he struck the water with it. The water parted to the right and to the left. The two of them went across the river on dry ground.

After they had gone across, Elijah spoke to Elisha. He said, "Tell me. What can I do for you before I'm taken away from you?"

"Please give me a double share of your spirit," Elisha replied.

"You have asked me for something I can't give you," Elijah said. "Only the Lord can give it. But suppose you see me when I'm taken away from you. Then you will receive what you have asked for. If you don't see me, you won't receive it." - 2 Kings 7-10

**Say:** Then, Elijah rolled up his prophet's coat. This was a coat made of animal fur. When he struck the Jordan River with it, the water parted. **Ask:** When have we seen this happen before? *Moses and the Red Sea, Joshua and the Jordan.* **Say:** Each time we have seen waters part in the Bible, God is inviting His people into a new era, or a new beginning. When Moses parted the Red Sea, by faith the Israelites crossed out of slavery and into freedom. When Joshua parted the Jordan River, by faith, a new generation of Israelites crossed into the Land that God had promised to bless them with decades before. This time was no different. Elijah crossed the Jordan by faith, sure that he is going to a new place, where God wanted him to go. And back at the shore, some distance away, stood 50 of the lesser prophets. God had made it known to them that Elijah was about to leave. These prophets knew the amazing miracles God had performed through Elijah. Surely they wanted to see the way God would take Elijah from their presence.



**Say:** When Elijah offered to do anything for Elisha, Elisha asked for the best thing he could ask for. He wanted even more of God's Spirit than God had given to Elijah. It might seem to us that Elisha was being greedy, or that he wanted to become more famous than his master, Elijah. But that was not the case. In Bible times, a double-portion was the amount of property and belongings that a father gave to his oldest son. Now, Elijah was not Elisha's actual father, but Elijah had become like a spiritual father to Elisha. Elisha did not ask for anything that he could touch or hold. He knew that God's Spirit was better than anything this world has to offer, and he wanted as much as God would give him. Of course, this was not up to Elijah - it was up to God. Elijah told him that if God allowed him to see his master taken up into heaven, he would know that God had given him what he asked for.

**Application:** There is no such thing as greed when it comes to wanting more of God. Greed is wanting more of earthly things. **Ask:** What are some earthly things that people become greedy about? Money, games, sports abilities. **Say:** The Bible says that being greedy for worldly things is sinful (Isaiah 57:17). However, God does not refuse those who want more of Him (Exodus 33:18-19). Wanting to know God more, or be more controlled by the Holy Spirit, or wanting to see God's hand at work more is exactly where God wants us!

### **ELIJAH TAKEN UP TO HEAVEN** (2 Kings 2:11-12)



(Elijah and Elisha) kept walking along and talking together. Suddenly a chariot and horses appeared. Fire was all around them. The chariot and horses came between the two men. Then Elijah went up to heaven in a strong wind.

Elisha saw it. He cried out to Elijah, "My father! You are like a father to me! You are the true chariots and horsemen of Israel!"

Elisha didn't see Elijah anymore. Then Elisha took hold of his own clothes and tore them apart. - 2 Kings 2:11-12

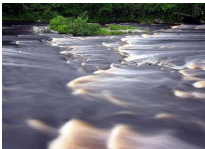
Wow! That must have been an amazing sight! A fiery chariot and horses rode between

the two prophets, and then God took Elijah up to heaven in a swirling windstorm. This entire sight was not visible to the other prophets who stood at a distance watching. But God allowed Elisha to see it, more than likely as sign that God was answering his request to have a double portion of God's Spirit. Elisha had been a wonderful and humble servant to Elijah. Even though this was a miraculous moment, Elisha was upset to see his master taken away. He tore his own clothes as a symbol of his great sadness. Elisha loved, admired, and respected Elijah, the great prophet of God. But, Elijah had to leave in order for Elisha to take his place.

**Application:** Sometimes, even though we are right in the middle of God's will, we can be sad about things that happen. For example, a missionary may have to leave his or her parents to go to another country and tell others the good news about Jesus. But, God promises to be with us. God gave Elisha a double portion of His Spirit, and He will be with us in the same way.

### **ELISHA TAKES ELIJAH'S PLACE** (2 Kings 2:13-18)

**Say:** As Elijah went up in the whirlwind, his prophet's coat fell to the ground. This coat would become a symbol for people to see that Elisha was taking Elijah's place as the most important prophet of that time.



*(Elisha) picked up the coat that had fallen from Elijah. He went back and stood on the bank of the Jordan River. Then he struck the water with Elijah's coat. "Where is the power of the Lord?" he asked. "Where is the power of the God of Elijah?" When Elisha struck the water, it parted to the right and to the left. He went across the river.*



*The company of the prophets from Jericho were watching. They said, "The spirit of Elijah has been given to Elisha." They went over to him. They bowed down to him with their faces toward the ground. "Look," they said. "We have 50 able men. Let them go and look for your master. Perhaps the Spirit of the Lord has lifted him up. Maybe He has put him down on a mountain or in a valley." - 2 Kings 2:13-16a*

Elisha knew that Elijah had been taken into heaven, so told the men not to bother looking for him. But the men kept insisting that they wanted to look for him. The men looked for three days, but of course, they did not find him.

**Say:** Elijah began his ministry with the same miracle that Elijah ended his with: He parted the Jordan River. It was clear to everyone watching that Elisha now had God's hand upon him, and he was to be greatly respected. This was just the beginning of the amazing plan God had for Elisha. Elisha would soon perform many more miracles, raise people from the dead, and help deliver the nation of God's people from enemy armies. But God never intended for Elisha to do these things in his own strength! God blessed Elisha with twice the amount of His Spirit than Elijah had. It was by God's strength that Elisha would live out this incredible plan.

**Application:** God gives people what they need in order to do His will. **Ask:** Does this still apply to us today? **Yes!** **Ask:** Does this apply to you and me? **Say:** Of course it does! God does not change! He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. He still has incredible plans. He wants SO many people to enter His Kingdom. He will use you and me to tell others about what Jesus did to free people from sin and bring them back to God. He does not expect us to do this in our own strength! He gives all believers His Holy Spirit, and He will give us everything else we need to do His work.

### **ELISHA PURIFIES THE WATER** (2 Kings 2:19 -25)

**Say:** The very next verses in the Bible tell us of another miracle God performed through Elisha.

*The men of Jericho spoke to Elisha. "Look," they said. "This town has a good location.*



*You can see that for yourself. But the spring of water here is bad. So the land doesn't produce anything."*

*"Bring me a new bowl," Elisha said. "Put some salt in it." So they brought it to him.*

*Then he went out to the spring. He threw the salt into it. **Teacher:** Take your small bowl of salt and throw pinches of it out in front of you. He told them, "The Lord says, 'I have made this water pure. It will never cause death again. It will never keep the land from producing crops again.' " The water has stayed pure to this very day. That's what Elisha had said would happen. - 2 Kings 2:19-22*

*He told them,  
"The Lord says,  
'I have made this  
water pure.'"*

**Say:** The water in Jericho was not good for drinking or watering crops. This water was good for nothing. People cannot exist in a town without a good water source, so the men of Jericho came to Elisha to present their problem. **Ask:** Look at our verse. Who made the water pure? *God did.* **Say:** It was not Elisha or the salt that made the water pure. It was God. Through Elisha, God purified the water, giving life to this entire city. Certainly, this fresh, clean, new water was a daily reminder for the people living in Jericho that God was a God of life. He brought living water to their city.

**Teaching for Older Students:** Next we are told that Elisha left Jericho and walked 25 miles to Bethel. A large crowd of young men came along and began to yell insults at him. These young men had no respect for the man God had appointed as His prophet. It would seem that they had no respect for God. God had warned His people about their disobedience and disrespect for His messengers (2 Chronicles 36:15-16). God even declared a punishment of wild animals against those who were hostile to Him (Leviticus 26:21-22). Elisha called down a curse on these men. Then two bears came out of the woods and attacked 42 of the men. Be sure that Elisha had no power over wild bears, but God did. It is clear that God was very serious about His prophet. After all, Elisha was appointed by God to speak the very words of God on His behalf. He was a man that should have been well respected.

**Application:** God is constantly sending out His message of new life. **He involves people - just like you and me - in His work.** Though God's prophets did amazing things, the Bible says they were not extraordinary people. They were people just like you and me (James 5:17-18). God fills us with His Spirit and gives us what we need to do His will, just like He did for Elijah and Elisha.

**PPT Key Verse**

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**PPT Main Point**

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