

Elijah and the journey to the whirlwind, 1 of 3 – 31 december 2022.

Hi all,

Today we talk about the process of our walk with the Father God and with the Lord Jesus.

Paul stated in I Corinthians 10:11 that the things that happened to Israel serve as examples for us. So today we will look at the real life events of Elijah and Elisha as they walked to Elijah's appointment with destiny.

The story is played out in II Kings 2.

Verse 11 says simply: "...as they walked and talked together, a chariot of fire led by horses of fire separated them." The King James Version uses the word 'whirlwind' but it is actually the word 'storm' or 'tempest', here seen as a fiery storm that disappeared as quickly as it came up.

At least one commentator makes the point the Hebrew could be translated that Elijah was 'consumed' by the fire which as a fire does, ascend into the sky. It would mirror his victory on the Mount in I Kings 18:38 when fire from heaven came down and consumed the offering, in this case Elijah offering himself to the Lord.

In other words, there is nothing to suggest Elijah's soul went to God's heaven, but rather he joined the rest of the dead in Paradise as his body was consumed in the fire storm as it dissipated into the heavens.

That's just something to think about, but this is our focus...

What we are interested in however, is the places they went to before that famous day.

Where they went before Elijah was taken away serves as an example to our own lives, to the processes God works in us as we mature. Some may recall I've shared how the Father told me once when I told Him that His life must be boring since He knows everything: "I enjoy the process."

Having Christ in us means He isn't 'out there' as a mildly interested 3rd party watching us go through things; no, Christ is in us, in our spirit, so He is walking WITH us and IN us as we together walk through life.

Their walk is shown in II Kings 2:1-11 as Elijah tells Elisha he may leave, even insists he leave, but Elisha refuses. They start in Gilgal, then walk to Bethel and then to Jericho, then 'to Jordan'. We are told in I Kings 17:1 that was where Elijah was born, so he was headed home to die or be taken.

Each stop along the way is an example to our own 'stops' along the walk to spiritual maturity. Elisha is given the opportunity to leave Elijah 3 times, and each time refuses. Haven't we all also had opportunities to leave our walk with the Lord, and you are reading this today because you refused? Even if you left for a time to get off the path of the Lord, it was just for a time and in the past. There it must stay.

Gilgal means 'wheel' or 'rolling' as a wheel rolls along: The end of one season and start of another

When Moses died and all that generation that came out of Egypt had died in the wilderness as well, their children entered the Promised Land under the leadership of Joshua. (Because of their obedience Joshua and Caleb were the only 2 from the generation that came out of Egypt to be allowed to enter the Promised Land)

Gilgal is where they stopped, on the border of the wilderness just east of Jericho, not yet in the Promised Land but no longer fully in the wilderness. There, the young men who had been born in the wilderness were circumcised, which means they newly entered into covenant with the Lord.

Romans 2:29 and Colossians 2:11 says circumcision is a type, an example for us of the 'circumcision of the heart' that happens when we are born again - our proof of covenant with the Lord, who also then seals us with the Holy Spirit. (Ephesians 1:13)

Joshua 5:8-10 records the event, and the Lord makes an interesting statement to Joshua: "Now the reproach of Egypt is off you."

Why? The act of circumcision for a male Hebrew is an act of making covenant with God, so it is the start of a new walk with God and leaving the past. But notice they were physically on the border between their past and their future. On the border this happened: Not only did their hearts change to go fully with the Lord, but physically they were making decisions and acting on them to move into their future with the Lord.

This is important. We first leave the wilderness in our hearts before we physically leave our situation.

It was in the wilderness these young people had suffered the loss of their parents and that whole generation that proceeded them. All their parent's friends were dead. All their relatives from that generation died one by one in the wilderness. Cousins, grandparents, aunts and uncles - all dead. Only their generation was left alive.

In our own wilderness experiences we too experience death; the death of things, habits, friendships we once considered close. We leave them all behind in order to walk to our Promised Land. At the time, these children who were born in the wilderness, now young adults, had only heard about this Promised Land. They had dreamed about it, talked about it, but only Joshua and Caleb had actually seen it. These 2 men were examples for these 'children' of how to live life - perhaps you have a person or two like that in your life - learn from them!

This is the place, Gilgal, where II Kings 2:2 records Elijah first suggesting to Elisha that he stay there

Elisha refuses. He isn't content just to be in that border town. They are at Gilgal, 'wheel' or 'rolling', and Elisha wants to keep rolling along the path of his destiny.

He doesn't want to live with one foot in the past and one foot in the future, for he knows if he stays there he will never see the Promise. So he continues walking with Elijah, leaving the border time behind him and not looking back.

So too did the young Israelites, for after they were healed from their circumcision, the mighty city of Jericho was before them - first step into walking with God and they have a battle! Perhaps they thought walking with God would be easier, but no, the first thing on their walk with His will and it is the mighty walled city that must come down. Rather than shrink back in fear and uncertainty, they sought God, and He showed them how to win their first victory.

We will pick it up there next week, until then, blessings,
John Fenn

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Elijah and the whirlwind 2 of 3, The spiritual border lands – 7 januari 2023

Hi all,

We left Elijah and Elisha walking away from the border area, Gilgal. I've been sharing how we can't live with one foot in the past and one in the future. But there is more to the history of Gilgal, and it is important to us in our walk.

Long before Elijah and Elisha walked the area

The book of Judges, chapter 1, tells us that when the tribes of Israel entered the Promised Land they did not conquer the people who lived there, in disobedience to the Lord. They compromised with the pagans, thinking they were strong enough to resist their gods and worldly ways.

That compromise started almost as soon as they left the border area of Gilgal. They compromised with the people of the land, making treaties with them, and allowing them to serve their gods. The Lord told Israel they would be thorns in their flesh and snares to their walk with Him.

This is the way of sin. Repentance means a complete break with the past, but compromise often sets in before we truly move on with our new life in Christ. The Israelites were tired of fighting so they compromised, and that is an example we see in the lives of Christians today. "I can't conquer this so I'm just going to have this in my life until I die". Sometimes the addict thinks 'just a little' won't hurt. The New Testament phrase is: "A little leaven (yeast) leavens the whole lump (of dough)." 1 Corinthians 5:6 and Galatians 5:9

Leaving our own 'border area' with the past and sin onto our own 'Promised Land' is a process.

Elijah and Elisha had to walk away from the area. They didn't live in the border as we are not to live in our spiritual border land - they walked on. Gilgal remember, means 'wheel' or 'rolling'. So keep moving forward. The chorus in Margaret Becker's wonderful song entitled 'Clay and Water' says: "*I am clay and I am water, falling forward in this order, while the world spins 'round so fast, slowly I'm becoming who I am.*"

Slowly I'm becoming who I am. You get things rolling with God at Gilgal - a place of repentance and leaving the old for the new. But when Israel compromised with the pagans in the land, once they had compromised and settled in to the compromise, the Lord confronted them, and they repented.

And this adds another element - they repented, but their past compromises had been established for so long, they could not change things. The time to deal with the inhabitants of the land had passed, now they were stuck with the consequences of their decision - even though they repented - God didn't magically make up for their disobedience - they had to walk it out.

They were stuck with the consequences of their compromised life, though they repented.

The place the Lord confronted them near Gilgal is called 'Bochim', or 'weeping'.

Judges 2:1-3 tells us the Lord went from Gilgal to confront them, saying: "I will never break my covenant with you." He told them they had broken His command NOT to make treaties with the inhabitants of the land in direct disobedience and asked them directly: "Why have you done this?" They wept greatly in that border area, calling it Weeping (Bochim).

So when Elisha refused to leave Elijah, he was making a statement that he refuses to compromise; he would walk with Elijah to the end. He would not go back to his former life of

farming*. He would move forward into the call of God on his life. *(When called by Elijah, Elisha was plowing a field:I Kings 19:19)

More on the history of Gilgal:It is also the place Saul was made king:I Samuel 11:14

When Saul is made king, Samuel says, 'Let us go to Gilgal to renew the kingdom there'. This is the start of a new day for Israel - from Judges to having a King - and they 'renewed' the kingdom there, again a place of dedication and purposeful act of leaving the old for the new.

It is in the border area that we actually make the change. The word 'repent' means to have a change of mind. This change happens while we are still in our sin, in our compromise, in our spiritual border area. It is in our hearts, a simple change, that we establish Who is king in our lives. As Saul was crowned king in the border area and near the place of weeping to be crowned king, so too we decide Who will be king in our lives while we are in that in-between land. Now we just have to walk it out.

It was in Gilgal:I Samuel 13:11-13...that

...Saul offered a sacrifice to the Lord when Samuel had told him explicitly to wait for him. He usurped Samuel's authority due to his fear of man, as the people were afraid. Instead of starting a new season of his life by leaving his old fears behind, he 'fell' into the old sin. By doing so, by refusing to grow up in the Lord and conquer his past, he lost the kingdom from his family line. He was still king and could live out his life with that level of spiritual and personal growth, but the kingship would not stay with his family.

Up to that point God would have made the kings of Israel in Saul's line of Benjamin, but because he compromised himself to make an offering in sin, **he lost ground**. Many Christian feel like this, like they were called of God early in life and then as the saying goes, life happened. Now they are old and that time of being able to make changes in life are gone, and they are discouraged that they failed God.

The good news is that we are in New Testament times, which reveal Christ in us and that there are 'ages to come' according to Ephesians 2:7 and others. That means if you missed it in this life, God's word for you will come to pass but it may take another 200 years, 500 years or more - but you will walk in what He called you too. We are already in eternity, so our best days are ahead of us.

One last part about Gilgal:I Samuel 15:11-13, Saul did it again - He had been commanded not to compromise with the people, but he disobeyed because he never conquered the fear of man. He kept the animals to sacrifice to the Lord at Gilgal. He thought he could get around obedience by making a sacrifice to God and that God would be happy with that.

It was here that Samuel told him in v22-23:"To obey is better than sacrifice...for rebellion is like witchcraft (witch craft manipulates God's Word and facts to fit one's own agenda), and stubbornness as idolatry and iniquity."

All of that was involved with Elijah and Elisha as they walked away from Gilgal. Away from the border lands. Away from the past. Elisha didn't know exactly what lay ahead, but he knew he would never again return to the border area of one foot in the past and one foot in the future. It was time to move towards his future, and he would not leave Elijah's side until his future was revealed to him! We pick it up there next week, until then,

Blessings,
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Elijah & Elisha, 3 of 3– 14 januari 2023

Hi all,

Elijah and Elisha have now left Gilgal in II Kings 2, and arrive in Bethel. Bethel means 'house of God'.

Bethel is where Jacob saw a vision of angels ascending and descending. (Gen 28)

Later in Jacob's life in Genesis 35:1, the Lord would appear to him and tell him to return to Bethel, reminding Jacob he had gone there when he fled the wrath of his brother Esau (before they were reconciled) - and met God when least expected.

Isn't that so like the Lord? Like Jacob, sometimes we find our destiny when we are running from it. We find 'the house of God' in the midst of fear and conflict, in the midst of running away from something or someone; and we run right into God.

Elijah asks Elisha if he wants to stay, but he refused. Refreshment at Bethel is nice, but Elisha had to keep moving to find his destiny. Even God can't steer a parked car.

They arrive in Jericho - the place of victory.

You will recall that years earlier Joshua had led Israel into the Promised Land, only to find the walled city of Jericho. We can see the progression for Elisha: From Gilgal the border area in the north, walking south to a place of weeping, further on to the house of God and refreshment. Now to Jericho, the first border land Israel experienced, the first battle which God won for them, a type of the first battle He won for us after we were born again. The walls seemed insurmountable, but God did it for you, He brought down those walls! Such joy!

Elijah asks him to stay. Nope. No way. Elijah tells him the Lord is sending him to the Jordan river, and Elisha says he will go too. II Kings 2:6

Years before when Joshua was leading the young nation out of the wilderness, the priests carrying the Ark of the Covenant stepped into the Jordan. The waters parted and they entered the Promised Land on dry ground between the waters (Joshua 3:15-17).

So here we find the last stop for Elijah and Elisha, and once again the waters part as Elijah takes his outer coat and slaps the water. As they reach the other side a whirlwind of fire divides them and Elijah is seen no more. His coat falls to the ground, and Elisha picks it up to make it his own. II Kings 2:8

Elijah represents all the prophets and prophetic words of the Old Testament. On the Mount of Transfiguration it was Moses (the Law) and Elijah (the prophets) who spoke out of the law and prophets to Jesus about His death. (Luke 9:30-31)

Elijah is directly linked to John the Baptist, who, Jesus said, was a type of Elijah. (Matthew 11:14) This means Elijah was all about bringing Israel to repentance. If Elijah then represents repentance, Elisha represents salvation and life in Christ, 'the next step' after repentance, which is 'faith towards God'. (Hebrews 6:1-2)

Elisha did 2x the miracles of Elijah, and most of them were 'social' miracles.

Most of the miracles Elisha did were not personal healings that affected no one but the person healed. Most of his miracles were what we'd call 'social' miracles, which is a type of Jesus and where our own attention for 'miracles' should be directed.

II Kings 4 starts with the widow with 2 sons, left heavily in debt by the unexpected death of her husband. Elisha had her use every container she owned and could borrow, and

miraculously the oil was multiplied to fill every container. She then sold the oil to pay off the debts. A grieving family could live debt free, a 'social' miracle.

A large group had made a pot of soup only to find it was poisonous and making them sick near death. Elisha supernaturally neutralized the poison so they could eat their soup.

In II Kings 5 we have the leprous Naaman, general of the whole Syrian army, get healed, bringing safety to the whole nation of Israel and setting Syria in awe of the God of Israel.

In II Kings 6 a group is cutting wood to build some homes, and the axe head flew off the handle into the water. Elisha made the axe head float so it could be retrieved, benefitting everyone so they could continue their construction projects.

Most of the church wants a 'personal' or self-centered miracle rather than one blessing whole groups of people.

Certainly miracles are personal, and individual. With the ministry of Elisha which is a type of Jesus and the body of Christ, we see miracles directly benefiting groups of people, and the nation.

Consider Jesus fed thousands by multiplying food not once, but twice. He turned water into wine not for an individual, but for dozens gathered for the wedding feast. The man with the withered arm once healed, could return to work to support himself and his family. The widow of Nain's only son had died which would have left her destitute, so Jesus raised him from the dead.

The man with legions of demons was terrorizing the whole town as he could not be bound even with chains - Jesus delivered him bringing peace and salvation to him, and peace for the whole region. The healing of the Centurion's chief servant brought order once again to this important officer's home, and so it goes.

In Acts 9 the seamstress Dorcas was raised from the dead after mourners showed Peter all she had sewn for local body of Christ and how important she was to them. In Acts 20:8-12 Paul raised a young man from the dead who had fallen asleep because Paul kept talking - of course the Lord would raise him from the dead! So no one could blame Paul or the Lord for his death, and for the whole body to see the power of God.

Miracles are first and foremost a confirmation that Jesus is Who He claims to be Miracles are heaven's confirmation of the message of the gospel. (Mark 16:20) Secondly, miracles are for family, friends, coworkers and friends in the faith. Lastly, miracles are strictly singular, for the individual only.

What I've shared here in this last part is some of what the Lord shared with me during a visitation a couple of years ago when He said home churches would be the main place miracles would be found. Part of His reasoning is that when you have a small group of people walking through life together, when one is blessed all are blessed, when one hurts all hurt. So His priority is as seen in scripture as listed above.

The season is now upon us in the body of Christ that the miracles we see in our midst, will be individual yes, but in many cases 'social miracles', for the whole body and those affected most. Times are coming when food will be multiplied for families and larger 'church' meetings in homes. Miracles like jobs and provision will be seen more commonly. When we change our priorities to those of the Lord's priorities, we'll start looking for Him in different places than we have in the past, and we'll see miracles in ways we haven't seen in the past.

I hope this has been interesting and thought provoking - blessings! New subject next week,
until then,
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