

for him. Elisha had to take up the mission and work of Elijah when the latter was translated. And that he might be enabled to do this he was endowed, like his master, with power from on high; so that it was said of him: "The spirit of Elijah doth rest upon Elisha." So there is power for the servants of Christ. "If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." But this parting gift of our Lord (John 16. 7) may be had by all who ask. Luke 11. 13.

Bible Reading Lesson Analysis.

BY JOHN WILLIAMSON, M.D., D.D.

Elijah Translated. 2 Kings 2. 1-15.

1. "The Lord would take up Elijah into heaven." The absoluteness and mystery of Jehovah's purposes. "Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counselor hath taught him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and showed him the way of understanding?" Isa. 40. 13, 14; Dan. 4. 3; Mal. 4. 5; Deut. 29. 29; Matt. 24. 36.

2. "By a whirlwind." The place of instrumentalities in carrying out the divine purposes. "Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved." Acts 27. 31; 27. 23-31; 1 Kings 21. 19, with 1 Kings 22. 37. 38; Micah 5. 2, with Luke 2. 1-4.

3. "Into heaven." Heaven, to which the Lord purposed to translate Elijah in an instant. "And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him." Gen. 5. 24; 1 Kings 8. 39; Matt. 6. 9; Isa. 66. 1; John 14. 2.

4. "And Elijah said unto Elisha, tarry here, I pray thee." The modesty, humility, of Elijah to the last; he would have no one witness his glorification. "Hear me, O Lord, hear me; that this people may know that thou art the Lord God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again." 1 Kings 18. 37; Micah 6. 8; Exod. 3. 11; Isa. 6. 5; Jer. 1. 6.

5. "And Elisha said unto him, as the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee." Oaths the fidelity of love may properly swear. "And Jonathan said to David, go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the Lord, saying, The Lord be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed forever." 1 Sam. 20. 42; Heb. 6. 17; Lev. 19. 12; 1 Cor. 13. 8, 13; Heb. 11. 25.

6. "Tarry, I pray thee, here." The third and sufficient test of Elisha's fidelity and fitness to succeed Elijah. "Thine own friend, and thy father's friend, forsake not." Prov. 27. 10; 30. 6; Heb. 6. 10, 11; 1 Pet. 1. 7; Luke 8. 13.

7. "They were divided hither and thither." God was with Elijah at Jordan, and so he will be with us, his people. "And deliver them who through fear of death were all their life-time subject to bondage." Heb. 2. 13; 2 Tim. 1. 10; Phil. 1. 21; Psa. 48. 14; Rev. 14. 13.

8. "Ask what I shall do for thee." Let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me." Elijah's cautious invitation, and Elisha's wise response. "Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad." 1 Kings 3. 9; Luke 10. 42; Psa. 37. 4; 73. 25; Deut. 22. 5; Prov. 16. 16.

9. "If thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee." Watchfulness, vigilance, in duty God will reward. "And what I say unto you, I

say unto all, Watch." Mark 13. 37; Luke 12. 37; Matt. 24. 44-46; 25. 5, 8; Rev. 16. 15.

10. "And Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven." God sends for human souls as he pleases. "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death." Heb. 11. 5; Deut. 34. 4, 5; Gen. 25. 7; Luke 12. 20; Psa. 23. 4.

11. "He took up also the mantle of Elijah that fell from him." Elisha became Elijah's official successor. "And Elisha the son of Shaphat, of Abel-meholah, shall thou anoint to be prophet in thy room." 1 Kings 19. 16; 2 Kings 3. 17-20; 7. 1; 8. 10-13; 13. 14-19.

12. "Where is the Lord God of Elijah?" Elisha's prayer for divine recognition, of which he did not feel certain. "The priests said not, Where is the Lord?" Jer. 2. 8; Isa. 55. 6; Psa. 5. 2; 2 Chron. 30. 27; 1 Kings 18. 36.

Lessons:

1. It was not Elijah's merit that moved God to translate him, but his own sovereign and inexplicable pleasure. We may know the reason hereafter, ver. 1.

2. Elijah thoroughly tested Elisha. It was doubtless God's order. God would have him realize the awful significance of officially succeeding Elijah, ver. 2-6.

3. Elijah, too, would have his translation occur in private, for fear he, and not God, might be glorified of men.

4. Elisha's perseverance was a good illustration of the persistent devotion of love and reverence, ver. 2-6.

5. The young ministers attending the theological seminary at Beth-el were assured that a great day had come, the appearance of Elijah proved it.

6. To get to heaven even Elijah had to cross the Jordan. God aided him to accomplish it, and so he will aid all the rest of his saints. "Death like a narrow sea divides," etc.

7. Elisha had a golden opportunity, ver. 9, which he embraced ambitiously, but worthily. His choice gave him earthly immortality.

8. Whom God calls he commissions and uses, ver. 13-15.

Berean Methods.

Hints for the Teachers' Meeting and the Class.

Perhaps a good "key-thought" to our lesson might be found in verse 14. "Where is the Lord God of Elijah?"...Our lesson shows what God does for his people. 1. *He takes them to heaven when their work is done.* Ver. 1. See in the General Statement what Elijah's work had been, and how it was needed no longer. 2. *He calls forth new men to take the place of the old.* Compare Elijah and Elisha; and show how Elisha received training for his work. 3. *He enters into communion with his people;* revealing his will as to the "sons of the prophets." 4. *He gives power over nature and the world,* for example, Elijah's mantle sweeping the waters. 5. *He gives answer to prayer.* Elisha's desire was his prayer, and it was answered in the bestowment of "the double portion." 6. *He gives victory over death.* Show Elijah's triumph, as a picture of the triumph of every dying saint. 7. *He gives power among men.* Ver. 15. ...Another line of teaching may be found in Elisha's conduct, which showed: 1) *Self-sacrifice.* (See his choice in 1 Kings 19. 19-21. 2) *Lowly service.* (See 2 Kings 3. 11.) 3) *Holy companionship.* He went with Elijah, and thus partook of his spirit. 4) *Aspiration;* a noble ambition. Ver. 9. 5) *Spiritual insight.* Elisha saw, when others only "stood to view."

References. FREEMAN'S HAND-BOOK. Ver. 3: Schools of the prophets, 336. Ver. 12: Renting the clothes, 70. Ver. 13, 14: The prophet's mantle, 182.