

STUDY NUMBER EIGHT

II Kings 2:1-11

George
Schedule
D.B.
Camps
Ground B.
Ken & Jan

TEXT

- v. 1 And it came about when the Lord was about to take up Elijah by a whirlwind to heaven, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal.
- v. 2 And Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here please, 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.
- v. 3 Then the sons of the prophets who were at Bethel came out to Elisha and said to him, "Do you know that the Lord will take away your master from over you today?" And he said, "Yes, I know; be still."
- v. 4 And 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.
- v. 5 And the sons of the prophets who were at Jericho approached Elisha and said to him, "Do you know that the Lord will take away your master from over you today?" And he answered, "Yes, I know; be still."
- v. 6 Then Elijah said to him, "Please stay here, for the Lord has sent me to the Jordan." And he said, "As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So the two of them went on.
- v. 7 Now fifty men of the sons of the prophets went and stood opposite them at a distance, while the two of them stood by the Jordan.
- v. 8 And Elijah took his mantle and folded it together and struck the waters, and they were divided here and there, so that the two of them crossed over on dry ground.
- v. 9 Now it came about when they had crossed over, that Elijah said to Elisha, "Ask what I shall do for you before I am taken from you." And Elisha said, "Please, let a double portion of your spirit be upon me."
- v.10 And he said, "You have asked a hard thing. Nevertheless, if you see me when I am taken from you, it shall be so for you; but if not, it shall not be so."
- v.11 Then it came about as they were going along and talking, that behold, there appeared a chariot of fire and horses of fire which separated the two of them. And Elijah went up by a whirlwind to heaven.

INTRODUCTION

Sometimes when the day is ended, and it's round of duty's done,
I watch at the western windows, the gleam of the setting sun,
When my heart has been unquiet and it's longings unbeguiled
By the day's vexatious trials and cannot be reconciled,
I look on the slope of the mountains and o'er the restless sea,
And I think of the beautiful city that beth not far from me,
And my spirit is hushed in a moment as the twilight falls tender and sweet,
And I cross in fancy the river and kneel at the Master's feet,
And I rest in the shade that there falleth from the trees that with healing
are ripe,

That shadow the banks of the river, the river of water of life.
And sometime when the day is ended and the duty's He gave me are done,
I shall watch at life's western windows the gleam of the setting sun.
I shall ~~not~~ fall asleep in the twilight as I never have slept before,
To dream of the beautiful city, till I waken to sleep no more.
There will fall on my restless spirit a hush, Oh! so wonderfully sweet,
And I shall cross over the river to rest at the Master's feet.

TOPIC	REF #	TEXT
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Death

217-06

Always read books that will make you look
good if you die in the middle of it.²⁴

Epitaph over a dentist's grave:
*He is filling his last cavity.*²⁵

24. Adapted from *Reader's Digest*, June 1998.

25. *The Last Word: Tombstone Wit and Wisdom*, comp. Nicola Gillies
(Oxford, England: Dove Tail Books, 1997).

p. 19

Death

217-07

For years, I've shared a letter written by Dr. Harry Rimmer after he was on a radio show hosted by Dr. Charles Fuller. As far as I can tell, the story of the letter was first recorded by Al Smith of Greenville, South Carolina. Apparently, as Dr. Fuller was closing his radio program on the day Dr. Rimmer participated, he mentioned that the following week's show would focus on heaven. Later, Dr. Rimmer wrote Dr. Fuller this letter:

My Dear Charlie,

Next Sunday you are to talk about heaven. I am interested in that land, because I have had a clear title to a bit of property there for over fifty years. I did not buy it. It was given to me without money and without price. But the donor purchased it for me at tremendous cost.

I am not holding it for speculation, for the deed is not transferable. It is not a vacant lot, for I have been sending materials there for over fifty years out of which the greatest Architect and Builder of the universe has been building a home for me that will suit me perfectly and will never need to be repaired.

Termites cannot undermine its foundations, for it rests upon the "Rock of Ages."

Fire cannot destroy it.

Floods cannot wash it away.

No locks or bolts will ever be placed upon its doors, for no devious person can ever enter that land where my dwelling now stands, almost completed.

It is ready for me to enter in and rest in peace eternally without fear of being ejected.

There is a valley of deep shadow between the place where I live in California and that to which I shall journey in a short time. I cannot reach my home in that city of gold without passing through this dark valley of shadows. But I am not afraid, because the best Friend I ever had went

TOPIC	REF #	TEXT
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through the same valley long ago and drove away its gloom. He has stuck with me through thick and thin since we first became acquainted fifty-five years ago, and I hold His promise in printed form never to forsake me nor to leave me alone. He will be with me as I walk through the valley of the shadows, and I shall not lose my way when He is with me.

I hope to hear your sermon on Sunday next from my home here, but ~~I have assurance that I shall~~. My ticket to heaven has no date stamped upon it, not return coupon, and no permit for baggage. I am all ready to go, and I may not be here when you are talking next Sunday, but if not, I shall meet you there someday.

According to the story, this letter arrived at Dr. Fuller's home on Wednesday. But "by that time, Dr. Rimmer was *already in that land* which is fairer than day, the land he had seen by faith for over fifty years."¹¹

11. This story, originally told by Al Smith, is used here with his permission.
pp. 101-103

Robinson, Haddon W. The Good Shepherd. Chicago: Moody Press. Copyright -
The Moody Bible Institute of Chicago, 1968. 32 pp.

Trials Probably the most familiar verse in Psalm 23 is this: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me." When the psalmist wrote these words, however, he probably was not thinking about death at all. What David is saying is that he had courage to go through the fearful experiences of life because he had a Shepherd who led him into those experiences and who would defend him from their dangers.

p. 21
(19-40)

Ray Stedman, in his book Secrets of the Spirit, says, "So many Christians seem to echo the fear and pessimism and despair of the world when they think of death as a sombre, gloomy occasion. Rather, it ought to be a time of triumph and of joy because a believer has gone to be with the Lord." I remember listening years ago to a radio broadcast of the Bible study hour when Dr. Donald Grey Barnhouse, pastor of a church in Philadelphia, was the speaker. I'll never forget his telling of the occasion when his first wife had died. After the funeral services, he was driving his motherless children home. They were naturally overcome with grief at the parting. Dr. Barnhouse said that as he was trying to think of some word of comfort to give them, a huge moving van passed them and the shadow of the truck swept over the car. As the truck pulled on in front of them, an inspiration came to Dr. Barnhouse. He said, "Would you rather be run over by a truck or by its shadow?" The children said, "Well, of course, Dad, we'd much rather be run over by the shadow. That can't hurt us at all." Dr. Barnhouse said, "Did you know that 2000 years ago, the truck of death ran over the Lord Jesus in order that only its shadow might run over us." And he went on to explain how David has said in the 23rd Psalm, "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for you are with me." This is a promise every believer has from the lips of Jesus himself. "I will come again and will take you to myself that where I am, you may be also."

Dwight L. Moody said, "If this is death, it is sweet. It is beautiful. This is my coronation day. Earth recedes, heaven opens, God is calling, and I must go."

J.I. Packer, speaking on this subject, says, "This is the deepest and clearest idea of heaven that the Bible gives us. Many scriptures point to it. Father, I desire that they also whom thou hast given me may be with me where I am to behold my glory. Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God. We shall see him as he is. They shall see his face. ...then, face to face. So shall we be forever with the Lord. We'll be like the day when the sick child is at last able to leave the hospital and finds Father and the whole family waiting outside to greet him, a family occasion if ever there was one."

"I see myself now at the end of my journey, my toilsome days are ended," said Bunyon's Mr. Standfast, as he stood half way into conduct that waits for me on the other side, doth lie as a glowing coal at my heart...I have formerly lived by hear-say, and faith, but now I go where I shall live by sight, and shall be with Him, in whose company I delight myself." What will make heaven to be heaven is the presence of Jesus, and of a reconciled divine Father who loves us for Jesus' sake no less than He loves Jesus Himself. Son, in company with the rest of God's vast family, is the whole essence of the Christian hope. As Richard Baxter put it in his poetical version of the covenant with God which his wife-to-be "subscribed with a cheerful will" on April 10, 1660:

My knowledge of that life is small;
The eye of faith is dim;
But it's enough that Christ knows all;
And I shall be with Him."

We come now to the consideration of the final chapter in Elijah's earthly pilgrimage.

We have walked with Elijah out of the lands of Gilead into the palace to confront Ahab with the judgment of no rain for three and a half years, and from there to the drying brook Cherith, and from there to Zarephath to the house of the widow lady and her son, and after the three and a half years had transpired, we went with Elijah back to the palace. There we met Ahab and Obadiah, and then from there to the super bowl on Mount Carmel. After the glorious victory on Carmel, our prophet prays for rain, and the Lord refreshed the earth, but Elijah, from fear of Jezebel, runs out of God's will for a time, and it is at Mount Horeb that the Lord reveals himself to his prophet and gives him some new assignments, and he has been faithful now these ten years that have transpired since then to carry out each of these assignments and to work the works of him who sent him while it is day. We have been able to capture a couple of glimpses of our prophet in Naboth's vineyard pronouncing judgment on the house of Ahab and then calling fire from heaven to consume the soldiers of Ahaziah, the sick king who was worshipping the god Baal.

It is shortly after this experience recorded in last weeks study that we now pick up today's record in II Kings chapter 2, verses 1-11.

Verse 1: "And it came about when the Lord was about to take up Elijah by a whirlwind to heaven, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal."

I want us to meditate a moment on the phrase 'when the Lord was about to take up Elijah.' To me this is a statement of divine sovereignty, or of divine providence. It is the realization that our lives are really in His hands. Our lives are at the disposal of the Lord. It does not say, "And it came about when Elijah was about ready to go," it says, "It came about when the Lord was about to take up Elijah." Ahab, Ahaziah

Our lives and the living of them and the usefulness of them is at the Lord's discretion, and when assignments are finished here, there's new work in heaven to be begun.

So teach us to number our days and to apply our hearts to wisdom, for your life is even as a vapor that appears for a little time and then passes away.

The scene of our study opens today at Gilgal. This is one of the three locations chosen by Elijah the prophet to locate schools for the prophets.

The three schools were located in Gilgal, Bethel, and Jericho.

Knowing that his time had come, Elijah delivered his farewell address to the school in Gilgal. Gilgal is the first beach head for the children of Israel in the land. It is sort of home base, and Elijah was in Gilgal when he had this realization from the Lord that his time had come to be called home.

Verse 2: "And Elijah said to Elisha, 'Stay here please, 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."

Elijah feels called of the Lord after presenting his final challenge to the men in Gilgal to go to Bethel and to be with the prophets there.

Elijah asks Elisha to stay in Gilgal and the reason he gives is "for the Lord has sent me as far as Bethel."

Holiness

On a quiet December evening in the oncology unit at Georgetown University Hospital, a man lay critically ill. The patient was Jack Swigert, who had piloted the Apollo 13 lunar mission in 1970 and was now congressman-elect from Colorado's 6th Congressional District. Cancer, the great leveler, waged its deadly assault on his body.

With the dying man was a tall, quiet visitor, sitting in the spot he had occupied almost every night since Swigert had been admitted. Bill Armstrong, U. S. Senator from Colorado and chairman of the Senate subcommittee handling Washington's hottest issue, Social Security, was one of the busiest and most powerful men in Washington. But he was not visiting this room as a politician. He was here as a deeply committed Christian and as Jack Swigert's friend, fulfilling a responsibility he would not delegate or shirk.

This night Bill leaned over the bed and spoke quietly to his friend. "Jack, God loves you. I love you. You're surrounded by friends who are praying for you. You're going to be all right." The only response was Jack's tortured and uneven breathing.

Bill pulled his chair close to the bed and opened his Bible. "Psalm 23," he began to read in a steady voice. "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. . . ."

Time passed. "Psalm 150," Bill began, then his skin prickled. Jack's ragged breath had stopped. Bill leaned over the bed, then called for help. As he watched the nurse examining Jack, Bill knew his friend was dead.

Politicians are busy people, especially Senate committee chairmen. Yet it never occurred to Bill Armstrong that he was too busy to be at the hospital. Nothing dramatic or heroic about his decision--just a friend doing what he could.

Holiness is obeying God--loving one another as He loved us.

p. 54
(99-H-5)

The response given by Elisha is that he will not leave Elijah but go and be with him wherever he is. Elisha had been sitting at the feet of Elijah for ten years. He has seen a mighty servant of the Lord at work, and he was not going to leave him now. Ruth 1:16 and 17. "But Ruth said, 'Do not urge me to leave you or turn back from following you, for where you go, I will go, and where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people shall be my people and your God, my God. Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. Thus may the Lord do to me and worse if anything but death parts you and me.'"

Elijah had the feeling that death was a private affair, and it would be better for Elisha not to be with him, but Elisha also knows that his spiritual father is going to be taken from him soon, and so he wants to spend every possible moment with him.

So they went down to Bethel. Whereas Gilgal was home base, Bethel, which means the house of God, is the place where Jacob made most of the major decisions in his life.

This is the location of the second school of the prophets.

Verse 3: "Then the sons of the prophets who were at Bethel came out to Elisha and said to him, 'Do you know that the Lord will take away your master from over you today?' And he said, 'Yes, I know; be still.'"

The spiritual sons of the prophets who were there at Bethel came to ask Elisha a question, and their question is, "Do you know that the Lord will take away your master from over you today?" And then Elisha confesses with his own lips, "Yes, I know; be still."

This is not something that is just known to Elijah, but also to Elisha and the rest of the prophets that the time had come for the Lord to take away Elijah from them today.

I'm sure it would have been a real thrill to have been in the audience and to have heard Elijah's farewell sermon to these schools of the prophets. In my mind's eye, I'm sure he challenged them in a similar fashion as the Lord did in the upper room and on the way to the garden of Gethsemane, the twelve who followed him so closely. "Stop being troubled in your hearts; you believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many dwelling places, and if it were not so, I would have told you. I'm going to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I'm going to come again and receive you unto myself that where I am, there you may be also."

I'm sure Elijah in recounting his life in challenging these prophets, he reminded them of how great God is, and shared from his own experience of the Lord's power and of his provision and of his protection. He shared with them of his experiences at Cherith and on Carmel, and confessed the consequences of being out of his will. He challenged them to a like commitment, to a living God in the midst of a sinful generation. He called them to a three-fold commitment: 1.) to prayer 2.) to obedience, and 3.) to courage. Be faithful to death; teach the scriptures, tear down the idols, exalt Jehovah, speak as men who are sent by him. I bid you a fond and an affectionate farewell.

R. E. Lee to the troops:

Verse 4: "And 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."

We come now to the third location, the place of the first battle in the land for the children of Israel and the location of the third school of the prophets.

My, how Elijah must have reflected back to that moment of depression when he said, "I alone am left." And now, just ten short years later, he has the privilege of visiting three schools, and challenging them with a future commitment to the loving God. How good and how faithful God is to those who are willing to trust Him.

Some of the 3,000

Verse 5: "And the sons of the prophets who were at Jericho approached Elisha and said to him, 'Do you know that the Lord will take away your master from over you today?' And he answered, 'Yes, I know; be still.'"

As soon as Elisha arrives on the scene, he is met by a group of the prophets and they pose the same question to Elisha that he had heard at Bethel, and he gives them the same response: "Yes, I know; be still." In other words, this is something very personal, and let's do not spend our time talking about it, but instead, let's hear what the Lord has to say through Elijah while he is still here with us.

Verse 6: "Then Elijah said to him, 'Please stay here, for the Lord has sent me to the Jordan.' And he said, 'As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.' So the two of them went on."

After the conclusion of his message and challenge to the prophets in Jericho, our servant seems to be urged onward, and the Lord calls him to Jordan. So once again he tells Elisha to remain, and with probably a sense of urgency, wanting to be certain that if he continued any further, it would be obvious that the Lord wanted him with him for the remaining time that he was going to be here on earth. Elisha's commitment to Elijah is similar to that of Peter when three times he is asked if he loves the Lord, and Peter responds with the three-fold confession. So Elisha speaks, "As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So the two of them went on.

Verse 7: "Now fifty men of the sons of the prophets went and stood opposite them at a distance, while the two of them stood by the Jordan."

A group of the men so profoundly touched by this final message that the prophet was ever to deliver began to follow Elisha and Elijah at a distance. They, too, felt that the event of Elijah's departure was very near and they were wanting to witness what the Lord was going to do.

Looking down on the bank of the river, the prophets see the two men standing side by side with the river flowing in front of them.

Verse 8: "And Elijah took his mantle and folded it together and struck the waters, and they were divided here and there, so that the two of them crossed

over on dry ground."

This parting of Jordan reminds us of an earlier experience of the children of Israel, when under Joshua's leadership, they entered into an earthly Canaan, and so this parting of Jordan is preparation for entrance into a heavenly Canaan on the part of our servant Elijah.

In this experience, we see true faith in action, for there is faith in parting and passing through the waters, and faith as the waters continued to pile up, and they walked across on dry ground.

Here Elijah is returning to his native country in Gilead where all of this began. This is the place of his departure. Elijah did not wish to have anyone present to witness his glorification without being well-assured that it was in accordance with the will of God, and this is the reason he has endeavored to discourage Elisha to this point.

Verse 9: "Now it came about when they had crossed over, that Elijah said to Elisha, 'Ask what I shall do for you before I am taken from you.' And Elisha said, 'Please, let a double portion of your spirit be upon me.'"

As soon as they cross over the river, Elijah turns to Elisha and gives him the opportunity to ask what he would like for the older prophet to do for him before he is taken away.

Elisha's response to this is a request. "Please let a double portion of your spirit be upon me."

Elisha is trembling over the responsibility which is going to be his in taking the place of Elijah upon whom he has grown to depend over the last ten years, and he is saying to Elijah, "You have been visiting your spiritual sons, the prophets in all three of these cities. Now let me be as a first-born among them."

The law, in the book of Deuteronomy that had to do with the matters of inheritance, stated that the oldest son would get two thirds of the inheritance and the youngest, one third. What he wants is the two thirds, or the double portion to fit him for the task of his father who is about to be taken from him.

It is not a question of him getting more of the spirit. This is never the experience of the child of God. The Holy Spirit is a person who comes in to our lives at the moment of salvation and the question that comes before each of us in this regard is how much does the Holy Spirit have of us. Is he resident or president?

By the very fact that we see in the life of Elisha a ministry twice as long as that of Elijah and that there are twice as many miracles that he performed, we can catch a little glimpse of what the Lord has done in answering this request of Elisha at this crucial moment.

You have blessed all them in the schools, now bless me before your departure.

Peter
Not men with a monopoly. but the Spirit
Mono. the Man
Eph. 5:18

Verse 10: "And he said, 'You have asked a hard thing. Nevertheless, if you see me when I am taken from you, it shall be so for you; but if not, it shall not be so.'"

Elijah confesses that Elisha has asked for a very hard thing. The answer to this is seen in Jer. 32:27, "Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh. Is there anything too hard for me?" 33:3 *Call unto me. . . .*

Elijah then places a stipulation upon this request, and this would be a sign from God that his request had been granted. That is, if he saw him when he was taken from him, and if he wasn't able to behold him, then it would not be so.

Verse 11: "Then it came about as they were going along and talking, that behold, there appeared a chariot of fire and horses of fire which separated the two of them. And Elijah went up by a whirlwind to heaven."

Oh how marvelous would have been the experience of walking with these two men in these final moments of Elijah's life here on earth; to have heard of their conversation as Elijah prepares Elisha for his departure. I'm sure he recounts again how faithful God has been to him in showing him the way he should go and in providing for every need, and also protecting him from every enemy, charging him with a concern about being faithful in the midst of difficult circumstances, sharing some of the lessons that he had learned when he had been unfaithful in running away from the Lord's will.

Then it is we have the sign from the Lord that Elisha's prayer has been answered, that "behold, there appeared a chariot of fire and horses of fire which separated the two of them. And Elijah went up by a whirlwind to heaven."

II Kings 6:16 and 17, "So he answered, 'Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them.' Then Elisha prayed and said, 'Oh Lord, I pray, open his eyes that he may see.' And the Lord opened the servants eyes, and he saw, and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha."

ISA. 55: *Jacob, Joseph, Abraham, Peter, Moses.*

How different are man's ways from God's ways. Ten years earlier it was Elijah's desire to die and to depart in the wilderness laying under a juniper tree and how beautifully God has revealed his better plan ten years later by this marvelous manifestation of his power and grace in calling his servant home.

Acts 1:9, "And after he had said these things, he was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received him out of their sight."

Acts 8:39, "And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more, but went on his way rejoicing."

Gen. 5:24, "And Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him."

II Cor 12:2-4, "I know a man in Christ who 14 years ago, whether in the body I do not know or out of the body, I do not know; God knows. Such a man was caught up to the third heaven, and I know how such a man, whether in the body

*despair
down
depressed
let God
do it His
way.*

or apart from the body, I do not know, God knows, was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words which a man is not permitted to speak."

Thief on the Cross.

I Thess. 4:16 and 17, "For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first, then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord."

I Cor. 15:51-54, "Behold, I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye at the last trumpet, for the trumpet will sound and the dead will be raised imperishable and we shall be changed, for this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. And when this perishable will have put on the imperishable and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, death is swallowed up in victory."

John 14, "Stop being troubled in your hearts; believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many dwelling places. If it were not so, I would have told you, for I go to prepare a place for you and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am there you may be also."

The servant is removed, but God remains and ministers through Elisha the prophet.

Pray up! Pack up! Look up! We're going up! Come Lord Jesus!

Who can measure the joy of this glorious moment of entrance into glory. I'm sure the fulfillment of Elijah is similar to that of the apostle: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but to all them also that love his appearing."

CONCLUSION

What are some of the lessons that we can learn from this experience today? I believe first of all, we can learn that our lives are in his hands, and when it is time for us to depart, this is the time chosen by him and not by us. How quickly life speeds by, the buds begin to burst, and now before you know it, the leaves begin to fall. So teach us to number our days, and to apply our hearts to wisdom.

①

Death for the believer is a triumphal entry into his heavenly inheritance. "Mortal, cease from fear and sorrow, God prepareth for the morrow." Compose yourselves. Yield to the will of Jehovah and do not sadden my heart.

②

Anes. while changing bodies / I Cor. 2:14 / Stephen.

③

In this passage, we have a picture of the translation of the church to glory which is a foreshadowing of the next prophetic event on God's calendar.

④

The Lord's way of doing things is better than our way. For Elijah, it was death in the wilderness ten years earlier, and for the Lord, it is glorious triumph in being taken home at the conclusion of his ministry.

⑤

Elijah performed a faithful ministry of reproducing himself in the lives of a

An old theologian once said, "Who chides a servant for taking away the first course of a feast when the second consists of far greater delicacies?" Who then can regret that this present world passes away when he sees that an eternal world of joy is coming? The first course is race, but the second is glory, and that is as much better as the fruit is better than the blossom.

CHARLES SPURGEON

p. 201

Nancy Leigh DeMoss — Surrender

In the 1924 Paris Olympics, a twenty-two-year-old Scottish athlete made headlines when he determined to say *No* to self and *Yes* to God. Eric Liddell made a decision that would have been unthinkable for most—to drop out of his best event, the hundred-yard-dash, because the qualifying heats were being held on a Sunday. While his competitors were participating in the heats, Liddell was preaching a sermon at a nearby church.

Subsequently, Liddell entered himself in the 400-yard dash, a race for which he had not trained. He ran the race, finished five yards ahead of his nearest competitor and setting a new world record. However, that Olympic gold medal, earned under such extraordinary circumstances, was far from Eric Liddell's greatest accomplishment.

His obedience to God in Paris was just one of the lifelong series of surrenders that earned Eric the applause of heaven. After his Olympic triumph, he returned to China where he had been raised, to serve as a missionary. In 1943, he was interned in a Japanese concentration camp in China, where he continued to serve God and joyfully ministered to his fellow prisoners. While still in the camp, Liddell suffered a brain tumor that ravaged his body and left him partially paralyzed.

On February 21, 1945, Eric lay on a hospital bed, struggling to breathe and moving in and out of consciousness. Finally, he went into a convulsion; the nurse who had been by his side took him into her arms as he managed to breathe his final words: "Annie," he said, his voice barely audible, "it's complete surrender."

Eric Liddell slipped into a coma and then into eternity, where the bondservant bowed the knee before the Master He loved so dearly and for whom he had labored so faithfully.

p. 172-3

Day Light Savings 3/e

TOPIC	REF #	TEXT
Death	554-01	I'm dying. Sometimes I forget that. Don't misunderstand: I am not, at present, suffering from a terminal illness or a mortal wound. I have no virus breeding, thick and septic, in my bloodstream, no genetic disease swarming, swift and capricious, in my flesh. I am not, to my knowledge, dying soon. But I am, as the apostle Paul puts it, "outwardly wasting away" (see 2 Corinthians 4:16). That's what I sometimes forget: my mortality, my frailty, my life's brevity. <i>I will be the exception</i>, I think, the one who evades death at each turn, slips its every snare, snatches hold of Elijah's chariot or Enoch's robe and, whisked into the wild blue yonder, remains unscathed by the grim reaper's scythe. But that's laughable: I'm dying, and you're dying, and that's that. p. 9
Death	554-06	Her last days were spent in the hospital. Room 318. The local ministers call it the death chamber because it is reserved for those <i>in extremis</i>, in the last harrowing or oblivious moments of life. But for Marlene, it was sanctuary. A strange peace was in the place. Despite the massiveness of her cancer, she was without pain. She lay propped up against many pillows, tubes for oxygen and medicine streaming into her. Her family and some close friends were there, often silent—most words had worn out—though sometimes they sang one of her favorite hymns. She had one last prayer: to see her newest grandchild before she died. Marlene's daughter Cindy—already with six children—was due, and tottered under the weight of it. But the baby slept on, serene inside his mother, and Marlene's life now was water cupped in the hand, running swiftly out. Then, that morning, the water broke. Not Marlene's. Cindy's. Her husband, Bob, brought her to the hospital and, one floor beneath where her mother lay dying, Cindy gave birth to little Eli. The nurses in attendance, at Cindy's urging, quickly swaddled the baby, placed mother and child in a wheelchair, and let Bob wheel them up a floor, to room 318. Marlene cradled Eli in her thin arms, and in her thin voice welcomed him to this world. <u>Now, sovereign Lord, dismiss Your servant in peace.</u> Somewhere in those last days, Marlene's friend Eugene (I tell his story on page 83) leaned close to her. He took her papery, willowy hand—her cold, cold hand—in his, and held it tight. Too tight. Marlene could barely turn her head, but she looked toward him. And then she spoke in a voice surprising in its clarity and strength. "It's all right, Gene. You can let go. Don't you

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		understand? I've lived my entire life for this moment.” But one thing wasn't right. Marlene had a regret. She brooded with a huge worry, wrestled with a taunting fear. It was about her husband, Al. She wasn't sure how he would manage without her. They had, for better or for worse, in sickness and in health, in riches and in want, been one flesh; her leaving was a rendering of that, a tearing of him in half. She had always sorted him out, kept him disentangled from the sheer messiness of his own complex life. She felt her death a kind of betrayal or abandonment of him. But her vow to him was “until death doth part us,” and death would wait no longer. Al sat beside her. He held her hand. He didn't notice its coldness. He read [to] her from Psalm 121: “I lift up my eyes to the hills—where does my help come from? My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth.” “Marlene,” he said, “ <u>thank you for forty-five years of marriage.</u> ” He paused only a moment, and then spoke the words she longed to hear: “ <u>Run into the arms of Jesus.</u> ” Joy flooded her. In that single instant, youth came back to her: a brightness, a freshness, a wonder-struck expectancy that swept away her haggardness and pallor. Her body grew light. She sat up straight, jaunty, like a child waking after a good sound sleep. <u>I've lived my entire life for this moment.</u> <u>And she was gone.</u> <u>Heaven-bent.</u> pp. 234-6

My Savior First
of all #662

Verses 1 + 2
(before)

Verses 3 + 4
close

lot of men represented in the three schools at Gilgal, Bethel, and Jericho. II Tim. 2:2, "And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also."

- ⑥ Elisha's desire in the passage is granted to have a double portion of the spirit of Elijah.

I trust the Lord has used this study today to comfort you, to encourage, to strengthen your heart in view of the ministry and responsibility that he has before you, and that from the life of Elijah, your heart has been strangely warmed as you have seen this man faithful in his service for God.

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- ① God
 - ② Mantle
 - ③ Spirit
 - ④ work

- ⑦ Ours with Elisha to pick up the mantle of Elijah & carry on the task.