

# Elijah

## God's man to a nation in crisis

### Stopping Short!

#### Lesson 10

Michael K. Hudson Sr. - Senior Pastor - Christ Independent Methodist Church  
4078 Silver Lake Drive, Palatka, FL 32177

2 KINGS 2:9 KJV "AND IT CAME TO PASS, WHEN THEY WERE GONE OVER, THAT ELIJAH SAID UNTO ELISHA, ASK WHAT I SHALL DO FOR THEE, BEFORE I BE TAKEN AWAY FROM THEE. AND ELISHA SAID, I PRAY THEE, LET A DOUBLE PORTION OF THY SPIRIT BE UPON ME."

2 Kings 2:1-18

The end of Elijah's life is near. Soon, he will be taken to heaven by the angels of the Lord and Elisha, his successor, will be left to continue in the ministry without Elijah's direction and help. It will be a difficult time for Elisha but it is a time that many in the ministry will face as their mentor will be taken home and they must stand by themselves.

This final event in the life of Elijah is more about Elisha than Elijah. Elisha, called into the ministry, is now faced with several choices. As Elijah travels to the place of his departure, he asks Elisha to stop and stay in different places while he travels on. In each place, Elisha refuses to stop and continues to follow Elijah to the final departure place. Each stopping place represents a type of place that a Christian might be tempted to stop in his walk with the Lord. Each city represents a point in the life of the Christian. Some will stop at the first place while others will stop at a place down the road. But, if one is going to reach his potential for Jesus Christ, he must not stop short anywhere along the path of his life.

## I. Stopping short in Gilgal

2 Kings 2:1-3 KJV "And it came to pass, when the LORD would take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal. And Elijah said unto Elisha, Tarry here, I pray thee; for the LORD hath sent me to Bethel. And Elisha said unto him, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they went down to Bethel. And the sons of the prophets that were at Bethel came forth to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the LORD will take away thy master from thy head to day? And he said, Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace."

### A. Elisha chosen as Elijah's successor

1 Kings 19:19-21 KJV "So he departed thence, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth: and Elijah passed by him, and cast his mantle upon him. And he left the oxen, and ran after Elijah, and said, Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow thee.

And he said unto him, Go back again: for what have I done to thee? And he returned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen, and slew them, and boiled their flesh with the instruments of the oxen, and gave unto the people, and they did eat. Then he arose, and went after Elijah, and ministered unto him."

Following the commandment of the Lord, Elijah goes by Elisha and cast his mantle upon his shoulders, which is a sign of adoption. Elijah was adopting Elisha as his spiritual son or successor.

Elisha understood that Elijah was calling him into Christian service. He knew the cost of this calling so Elisha makes a normal request to tell his parents goodbye. Elijah waits while Elisha slays his set of oxen, burns the instruments, and tells his parents goodbye. This action of Elisha signifies that he was saying goodbye to his secular life and was going forward in the ministry to serve the Lord. His actions showed his choice and dedication to following God's will for his life.

#### B. Elisha's refusal to stop in Gilgal

Joshua 4:19 KJV "And the people came up out of Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, and encamped in Gilgal, in the east border of Jericho."

Gilgal is a city that is mentioned the Old Testament. It was the first place that the nation of Israel stopped at after entering the Promise Land after crossing the Jordan River. The city of Gilgal represents the beginning of the Christian life. When Israel departed from the wilderness of sin and crossed the Jordan River, it is a picture of a person leaving the old life behind and becoming a new person in Jesus Christ. Gilgal represents the early portion of the Christian life.

When Elisha refused to stop in Gilgal, he

is showing his dedication to continue in the ministry and growing in the Lord.

There are many Christians who are tempted to stop in Gilgal and many do stop. They come to know Christ as their saviour; yet, they never go beyond the point of conversion. They do not grow in Christ. They do not become spiritually mature. They are more of a liability than a benefit. They remain babies in Christ. They require attention like a baby. They act like a baby, selfish. They accomplish very little for the Lord.

Hebrews 5:12-6:2 KJV "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment."

This is why many Christians act just like the world because they are nothing more than babies in Christ, not understanding the deep things of the Scriptures. They act selfishly, childish, and cannot be used to teach others because they need someone to constantly teach them.

The temptation here is to sit back and take it easy. The Christian knows that he is saved and all he wants to do is make it to heaven.

## II. Stopping short in Bethel

2 Kings 2:4-5 KJV "And Elijah said unto him, Elisha, tarry here, I pray thee; for the LORD hath sent me to Jericho. And he said, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they came to Jericho. And the sons of the prophets that were at Jericho came to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the LORD will take away thy master from thy head to day? And he answered, Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace."

From Gilgal, Elijah and Elisha travel to Bethel. In Bethel, Elijah tells Elisha to stop there while he goes on to Jericho. Elisha refuses to stop but continues on with Elijah.

Bethel is one of the most prominent cities in the Old Testament, being mentioned more than any city other than Jerusalem. Several things happened at Bethel. Abraham built his second altar there (Genesis 12:8). Jacob had his vision of angels ascending and descending at Bethel (Genesis 28:11-22). Some twenty years later, Jacob erected an altar there and called the place Beth-el (Genesis 35:27)

Bethel is known as the place where Jacob dreamed. Bethel can represent the place where the Christian gets a greater glimpse of God but does not go any further. If the Christian stops in Bethel and goes no further, Bethel becomes the place where the Christian only dreams about living for the Lord.

There are many Christian in the church who only dreams about serving the Lord. They dream about witnessing. They dream about teaching. They dream about serving.

---

*Dreams are not usually brought to fruition unless the whole heart is willing to do its part toward implementing them. -- Catherine Marshall, Christian Reader, Vol. 32, no. 1.*

---

Remember the equation: DREAMS + WORKS = REALITY.

The temptation here is to sit back and

dream about what you could accomplish for the Lord.

## III. Stopping short at Jericho

2 Kings 2:6 KJV "And Elijah said unto him, Tarry, I pray thee, here; for the LORD hath sent me to Jordan. And he said, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And they two went on."

As Elijah and Elisha leave Bethel and arrive in Jericho, Elijah once again asks Elisha to stop while he goes on. Elisha refuses to stop in Jericho.

Jericho is a well-known city to the Bible student. Jericho is the first city that the nation of Israel gained victory over as they entered the Promised Land. It was the place where the nation of Israel had to fully obey the Lord in order to have a great victory over the enemy. The children of Israel walked around the city for seven days before they had complete victory over the city. They had to be obedient to the instructions of the Lord in order to have the victory over the enemies.

For the Christian who stops his Christian walk in Jericho is living in the past victories. If he does not go beyond Jericho, all he can remember are the past victories over Satan, world, and flesh. He lives in the past, old pastors, old churches, old programs, old events, old revivals. He has fought only one battle and does not continue to fight any more battles.

Phil 3:13-14 KJV "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

Paul, the Apostle, had some great victories in his past, but he does not stop there.

He continued to strive to please the Lord and win the victories over the flesh, world, and Satan. The Christian who goes beyond, looks to the future service for the Lord. The Christian is not called to sit still but to advance for the calling of Jesus Christ.

The temptation here is to quit fighting and just sit back and remember the glory days.

## IV. Refusing to stop short leads one to a greater ministry

2 Kings 2:7-14 KJV "And fifty men of the sons of the prophets went, and stood to view afar off: and they two stood by Jordan. And Elijah took his mantle, and wrapped it together, and smote the waters, and they were divided hither and thither, so that they two went over on dry ground. And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me. And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing: nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so. And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof. And he saw him no more: and he took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in two pieces. He took up also the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and went back, and stood by the bank of Jordan; And he took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and smote the waters, and

Michael K. Hudson © 2009

said, Where is the LORD God of Elijah? and when he also had smitten the waters, they parted hither and thither: and Elisha went over."

When Elisha refused to stop and stay in Jericho, Elijah and Elisha continued on and crossed over the Jordan River. As they approached the time that Elijah would be taken to heaven, Elijah asked Elisha what could he do for him before he goes to heaven. Here Elisha was one last chance to make a request of his mentor. What would you have asked for?

Elisha asked that a double portion of the spirit of Elijah would be upon him and his ministry. He asked for something that Elijah could not do, only the Lord could accomplish it. So Elijah answered Elisha that if God allowed Elisha to see him go to heaven, then his request would be granted.

Elisha's request was not for a doubling of the miracles and spirit that Elijah had but rather a first-born's inheritance from a father. Elisha was asking Elijah who was his spiritual father to bless him with a first-born's inheritance.

Deuteronomy 21:17 KJV "But he shall acknowledge the son of the hated for the firstborn, by giving him a double portion of all that he hath: for he is the beginning of his strength; the right of the firstborn is his."

Elisha request was not for worldly influence, fame, money, or earthly possessions. Elisha request was for the ministry, for serving the Lord. Elisha asked for the right thing.

Elisha wanted to grow deeper in his walk with the Lord and in his ministry. He did not want anything to hinder or deter him from doing what God has called him to do.

Christians must guard against the temptation to stop along the way in their Christian walk and ministry. When a person comes to know Christ as his saviour, there will be times in his Christian life that he will be tempted to stop and stand still. The Chris-

tian must guard against anything that would hinder his Christian walk.

## V. Lessons

A. Throughout your Christian walk, there will be temptations to stop short. To stop serving, to stop giving, to stop living, to stop witnessing, the temptations will be there along the way. One must be like Elisha and refuse to stop short but go all the way for the Lord.

B. When we ask God for things, we must ask for the right things. Right things are those that further the ministry of the Lord, not those things that promote sinfulness or selfishness.

James 4:3 Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.

1 John 3:22 KJV "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight."













