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*Saint Mark's Church
Sunday School*

The Life of Elijah the Mighty Prophet(2)
Code: 10/OT/4
(Elijah taken to heaven)
(2Kings 2)

1. General Aims of the unit

Better Understanding of the "Old Testament" and detailed study the life of great prophets

2. Special aims of the lesson

I. Quick revision of the life of Elijah

2. Fully explore the events and significance of the ascension of Elijah to heaven, and the others who were taken alive to heaven

3. Highlight the heavens as our residence at the end of our lives here and the relation between the ascension of Elijah and this fact.

4. Stress the correlation between the persistence of Elisha and receiving double of the spirit of Elijah

3. Outcomes

By the end of this lesson the teens are able to:

1. Name the three persons who ascended to heaven alive (Enoch – Elijah – Jesus Christ)

2. Identify the heavenly bodies

3. Describe the celebrations of heaven and earth to receive Elijah.

4. Practice some aspects of Elijah's life that lead him to ascend to heaven.

5. Discuss some practical ways to imitate Elisha in receiving double of the spirit of Elijah.

4. Verses :

1. *2Kings 2:11*

2. *Gen. 5:24*

3. *Rev. 21:1-3*

Notes to the servant

1. Elijah was one of the strongest prophets to the Northern Kingdom (Israel) ,where the people left the worship of God as they were ordered by their kings to forget the temple of Solomon in Jerusalem , sacrifices , feasts and all the traditions of worshipping the Lord God. Instead their Kings built for them statues to worship as the two golden calves ordered by king Jerobaam (Refer to 1 Kings 12:28-29) . He prophesied to Israel for about 27 years between 875BC – 848 BC

2. May be the Lord God elected Elijah to ascend to heaven without passing through the gate of death for the following reasons:
 - ◆ To distinguish him as a man whom the King of Kings is delighted to honour for his obedience and faithfulness for His message.
 - ◆ To give a physical proof of the life after death.
 - ◆ To give a type and a figure of the ascension of Christ to heaven.

3. The schools of the sons of prophets were the centres to gather and train the prophets and established by Samuel the prophet. They started to be the centres of worshipping the Lord in the time of general apostasy. Elijah visited these centres before his ascension to encourage them to continue their message and to institute Elisha as his replacement.

4. It is amazing - even in the OT- how the Holy Spirit sent the message of departure of Elijah to heaven to all the centres of the sons of the prophets . Elisha himself was aware of the events. Compare this with what happened in birthday of Jesus Christ when the angels ,the shepherds , Simeon , Anna , and the Wise men received the good news. This is echoed in the history of the Church when some Saints announce the departure of another Saint or the occurrence of unexpected events. So, heaven and earth were ready to the ascension of Elijah to heaven.

5. Elijah called Elisha to follow him according to the instructions of the Lord God (1 Kings 19:19-21) . The events of the last day of Elijah on earth showed very clearly the personality of his disciple Elisha, his keenness to follow his teacher , his open senses to the messages of the Lord, and his ambitions and vision to the future. The Lord granted him his request (two portions of the power of the Holy spirit which was upon Elijah) .

6. The places which Elijah visited before his ascension were : From Gilgal → Bethel → Jerico → The Jordan → and then crossed the river. Each of these places had significance .
+ **Gilgal** : the place where Joshua circumcised the children of Israel before entering the promised land, as all who were born in the wilderness were not circumcised. The Lord said to them there “ *this day I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you therefore the name of this place is Gilgal* ” (Joshua 5:9)

+ **Bethel** : it was an old place where Abraham erected his tent in it (Gen. 12:18 ,13:3) . Jacob saw his vision there (Ge. 28:11-19 , 31 :13) . The arc of covenant stayed there for some time (Judges 20:27) . King Jerbaam who revolted against Rehobaam the son of Solomon and became the king of Israel (10 tribes) , put one of the statues of the calves he built there and ordered the people to worship there rather going to Jerusalem to the temple of the Lord. In this city there was a school of the children of the prophets.

+ **Jerico** : it was the first city they overcame in the western bank of the river Jordan as they turned around its strong walls seven times , then the walls fall down and the city was burned (Joshua Ch. 6)

+ **The river Jordan** : it is suggested that this was the same spot where Joshua crossed the Jordan with the people of Israel to inherit the promised land.

7. It is clear that before we inherit heaven , we have to be circumcised (baptised) [Gilgal], consecrate the places where we met the Lord and make our woes [Bethel] , live in the victory of the Lord who destruct the walls of sins before us[Jerico], and then cross the water of Jordan (death) to the promised land .
8. May be Elijah tried to keep his disciple away from watching him ascending to heaven for some of these reasons:
 - ◆ Feeling of humility as he did not like him to see his glorious ascension in the chariot of fire.
 - ◆ To check his resilience as he will be the prophet of Israel.
9. The bodies in the next coming may be explained by using the analogy of water and water vapour. Get water in a kettle , you can see the water . Then boil it till it became vapour. You can not see it although it is there. Water and vapour are of the same nature but in different phases. In the next coming of Christ in the cloud , our bodies will go to another phase , ‘the heavenly bodies’ easy to fly against the gravity , meet Christ in the clouds. The body of Christ after resurrection is an example of these bodies. Elijah was an example in the OT.