

# Devotions

## Through the Water



### Background:

We often talk about the different types of books in the Bible. The books of 1st and 2nd Kings would fall under the category of history. Today, our history books tend to focus on leaders' accomplishments and failures in their own country and in their relationships with other countries. The 1st and 2nd book of Kings focuses instead on the relationships of the kings with God. For example, one of the book's most politically significant villains from a historical perspective was Omri, yet he is given only a few verses to explain that he did evil in the sight of the Lord. The other main characters in the book of Kings are the prophets, especially Elijah. Elijah had been prophet during the reigns of one of the most notorious Kings of Israel, Ahab, and his successor. Elijah had performed many miracles that displayed God's power. He had been the lifeline to those few who remained faithful to God during the reigns of evil kings. In this passage, Elijah is walking with his faithful servant and disciple, Elisha.

1

Walking with the Lord,  
through His Word and  
Prayer

2

Standing with other  
believers to worship  
God.

3

Sitting in the company  
of other believers,  
doing life together in  
groups

# The Word of God:

2 Kings 2 New International Version (NIV)

2 When the Lord was about to take Elijah up to heaven in a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal. 2 Elijah said to Elisha, “Stay here; the Lord has sent me to Bethel.”

But Elisha said, “As surely as the Lord lives and as you live, I will not leave you.” So they went down to Bethel.

3 The company of the prophets at Bethel came out to Elisha and asked, “Do you know that the Lord is going to take your master from you today?”

“Yes, I know,” Elisha replied, “so be quiet.”

4 Then Elijah said to him, “Stay here, Elisha; the Lord has sent me to Jericho.”

And he replied, “As surely as the Lord lives and as you live, I will not leave you.” So they went to Jericho.

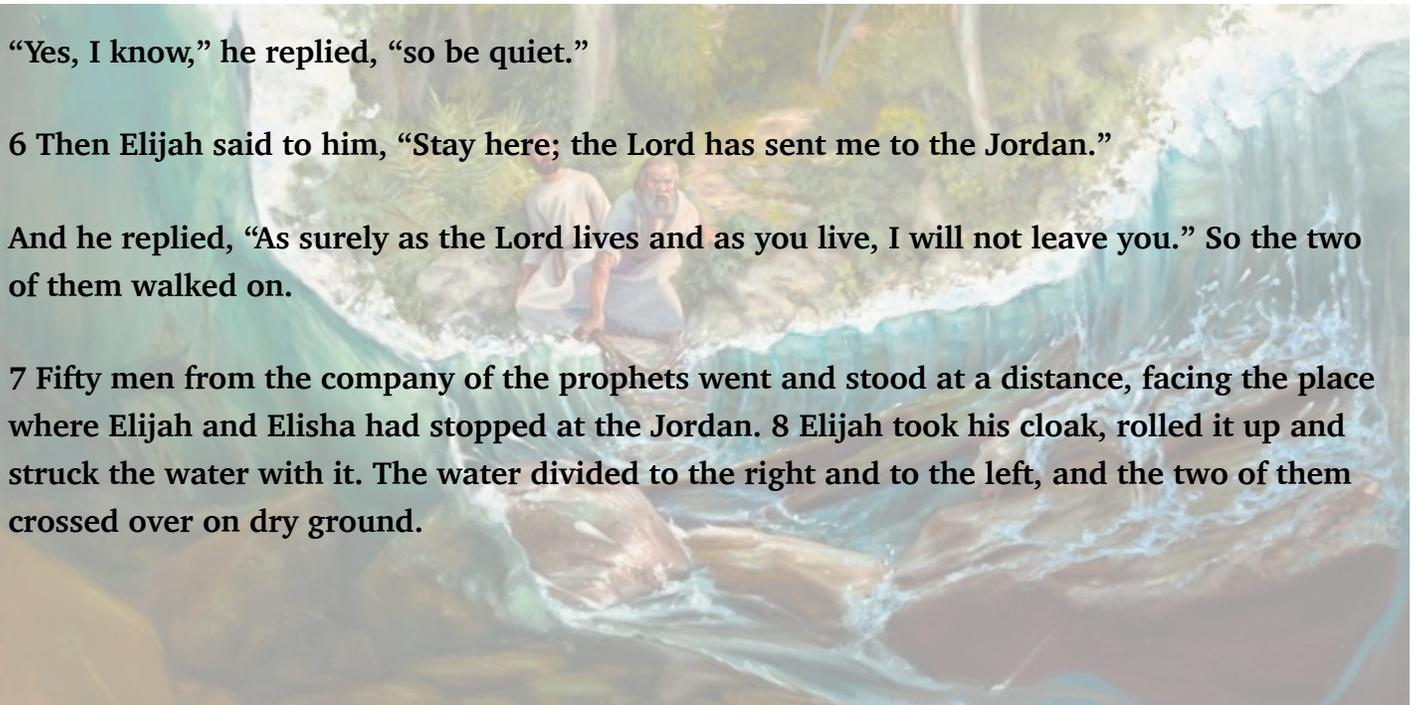
5 The company of the prophets at Jericho went up to Elisha and asked him, “Do you know that the Lord is going to take your master from you today?”

“Yes, I know,” he replied, “so be quiet.”

6 Then Elijah said to him, “Stay here; the Lord has sent me to the Jordan.”

And he replied, “As surely as the Lord lives and as you live, I will not leave you.” So the two of them walked on.

7 Fifty men from the company of the prophets went and stood at a distance, facing the place where Elijah and Elisha had stopped at the Jordan. 8 Elijah took his cloak, rolled it up and struck the water with it. The water divided to the right and to the left, and the two of them crossed over on dry ground.



## Discussion:

Have you ever dreaded a departure? Most of us have had to say goodbye to someone in our life who played an important role.

A boss who retired

A favorite teacher who took another job

A pastor who moved away

A parent or mentor who went to be with the Lord

## It is not easy to let go.

My heart goes out to Elisha in this story. He had been following Elijah closely for a few years. He had served him faithfully and had witnessed close-up his astonishing life of bold miracles. Somehow, he knew that their time was coming to an end. More than once, Elijah offered to go on ahead without his friend, and Elisha refused to leave his side. He wanted every last minute with this man. The other prophets knew the hour approached as well and kept reminding Elisha. “Be quiet, “ he would tell them. I don’t think he was in denial. On the contrary, Elisha knew there would be a time to grieve, but right now he wanted to soak up every last moment with his dear friend and continue to learn from him.

With Elisha beside him, Elijah performed his last miracle: the parting of the waters of the Jordan river. I think there was an important message for Elisha in this. Moses had parted the waters for God’s people to pass through. Joshua, the leader who followed Moses, did the same thing. God was showing Elisha that though the men God had chosen to lead his people had changed, God had not.

## Application:

Have you faced a painful change? Saying goodbye is not only sad, it also can be anxiety- and fear-inducing. How do you face tomorrow when your fearless leader is gone? How do you make a decision when your faithful guide is not a phone call away?

**I do believe that our personal heroes of the faith, from Moses to my own parents, would desperately want us to understand one thing: *they were fearless and faithful because of whom they walked with.***

It was their relationship with the Almighty God that equipped and empowered them, and though they may be gone, he is not. God is unchanging, he will never leave you nor forsake you; learn to cling to him. He will be your dearest friend.



# Day 2

## Through the Water



### Background:

As was noted in the last study, Elijah was a prophet. Recorded in the Bible are sixteen miracles of Elijah, including causing a jug of oil and jar of flour to hold an endless supply for a widow and her son, and raising the child back to life. One of my favorite accounts of Elijah details the contest he set up between God and the prophets of the idol Baal (1 Kings 18:16-46).

Elisha had been chosen by God to replace Elijah. When Elijah called Elisha, the new apprentice left a wealthy family and vocation and became the prophet's aide. Now, approaching their separation, Elisha has a bold request of his master.

## The Word of God:

2 Kings 2:7-15

7 Fifty men from the company of the prophets went and stood at a distance, facing the place where Elijah and Elisha had stopped at the Jordan. 8 Elijah took his cloak, rolled it up and struck the water with it. The water divided to the right and to the left, and the two of them crossed over on dry ground.

9 When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, “Tell me, what can I do for you before I am taken from you?”

“Let me inherit a double portion of your spirit,” Elisha replied.

10 “You have asked a difficult thing,” Elijah said, “yet if you see me when I am taken from you, it will be yours—otherwise, it will not.”

11 As they were walking along and talking together, suddenly a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared and separated the two of them, and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind.

12 Elisha saw this and cried out, “My father! My father! The chariots and horsemen of Israel!” And Elisha saw him no more. Then he took hold of his garment and tore it in two.

13 Elisha then picked up Elijah’s cloak that had fallen from him and went back and stood on the bank of the Jordan. 14 He took the cloak that had fallen from Elijah and struck the water with it. “Where now is the Lord, the God of Elijah?” he asked. When he struck the water, it divided to the right and to the left, and he crossed over.

15 The company of the prophets from Jericho, who were watching, said, “The spirit of Elijah is resting on Elisha.” And they went to meet him and bowed to the ground before him.

## Discussion:

A former mentor of my husband’s liked to say,

**“If you don’t ask, the answer is already no.”**

There is truth in that advice that can make any of us a little bolder.

Elijah and Elisha had just crossed the Jordan River by a miracle of God when the older prophet asks what he can do for his faithful friend. It might sound like Elisha's request is a little improper, but it wasn't. He thought of Elijah as his father. In those days, a firstborn son was given a double portion of the estate as well as the name and business of the estate. It was as if he were saying, I want to carry on your ministry. Like any of us who takes on a business from a parent or mentor, we don't just want to take it over, but rather we want to make them proud by making it even bigger and better.

Elijah couldn't make any promises and left the matter in God's hands. As it turned out, God chose to bless Elisha as he had requested. Something very interesting happens after Elijah is taken up. As Elisha approaches the Jordan, the path he had just crossed was gone. Once again, the river is flowing, blocking his travel. Elisha asks another bold question, "Where now is the God of Elijah?" It is rhetorical, yet as he strikes the river with the cloak, the waters part once more. Remember, there are fifty other prophets watching. This could have been a very embarrassing moment! Crossing the river on dry land puts Elijah in the company of Moses and Joshua. If this had failed to happen for Elisha, everyone would determine he was not to be a prophet like the others. But Elisha wasn't worried about that. He asked boldly in faith, he believed when God answered, and he immediately went out in that power.

Do we do that?

## Application:

Do you want to be equipped to do work for God's kingdom? Don't just imitate those who have lead you. If Elisha had only said goodbye to his leader and then tried to act like him in his own power, he would not have performed the 32 (twice as many as Elijah) miracles we read about in the Bible. Ask God for his Holy Spirit too so that He might work in and through you for the glory of Jesus Christ.

