

Elijah Taken Up Into Heaven

by C.I. Scofield

The sermon highlights the significance of Elijah's rapture and the importance of a Christian life being a unity with a climax, but not anti-climax.

Scripture: Romans 6:1

Topics: "Rapture Of Church", "Eternal Life"

Description

C.I. Scofield preaches on the powerful journey of Elijah and Elisha, highlighting the walk to Jordan as a walk to power, the crossing of Jordan symbolizing our death with Christ and resurrection life, and the rapture of Elijah as an illustration of the future rapture of the church. The lesson emphasizes that a Christian life is a unity with a climax, not an anti-climax, and that in Elijah's translation, we see proof that death is not inevitable for believers and that life continues in heaven. The deeper truths lie in Elisha's journey, starting at Gilgal for separation from the world, progressing to Bethel for spiritual insight, and culminating at Jordan for a real experience of being crucified with Christ and receiving power.

Transcript

(2 Kings ii:1-11.)

I. The Analysis.

1. The Walk to Jordan (verses 1-7).--The walks of Scripture would furnish material for a series of wonderfully helpful meditations. This is one of the most significant of them--the walk to power. The sons of the prophets make a poor figure here: they have knowledge (verse 5), but are utterly destitute of faith, and they seek to discourage the one earnest man in the land.

2. The Crossing of Jordan (verse 8).--As the Red Sea stands for Christ's death for us, so the crossing of Jordan signifies our death with Him (Rom. vi:1-5) as the coming up out of Jordan speaks of resurrection life shared with Him.

3. The Rapture of Elijah (verses 9-11).--Elijah is here an illustration of the future rapture of the church (1 Thess. iv:1-16).

II. The Heart of the Lesson.

If we think of Elijah only, or even chiefly, the two great outstanding truths of this lesson are, first, that a Christian life--any Christian life--is a unity; it has a climax, but not anti-climax. If Elijah had died under the juniper tree, as he desired to do, that would have been indeed a sad anti-climax to a life so full of the whirlwind and of fire. And the other truth is that in the translation of Elijah we have at once a proof that death is not inevitable to the believer (1 Cor. xv:51, 52), and that life survives the change from earth to heaven, for, centuries after, this same Elijah is with Christ in the Transfiguration.

But, dramatic as is the whole scene which the lesson brings before us, and central as is Elijah in that drama, I cannot but feel that we shall find the deeper and more abiding truths of the lesson in what is there said of Elisha. There is something most significant in the order of places along the line of Elisha's last walk with the elder prophet.

That fateful walk of Elijah to glory, and of Elisha to mighty power, follows an order which must, essentially, be reproduced in the experience of every child of God who enters into a vital experience of God's best. That walk began at Gilgal. The typical significance of Gilgal cannot be mistaken by any reader of Joshua. Gilgal was the place where a redeemed people rolled away "the reproach of Egypt" (Joshua v:1-11). The reproach of Egypt was that there the Israelites had neglected circumcision, the divinely commanded sign of their separation as a people; and typically Gilgal stands for practical separation from the world, and unto God. We may say, therefore, that as a separated man, Elisha began the quest of power.

The next stage was Bethel, "house of God," the place of vision, of spiritual insight, for Bethel was the place where Jehovah gave to Jacob the great ladder vision (Gen. xxviii:11-19). To have tarried at Bethel would have been analogous to that satisfaction with mere knowledge of divine things--a snare to-day to thousands of the best instructed believers. No soul can thrive on the mere knowledge of positional truth. There is an experience corresponding to position, and he who would go into the fulness of Christian blessing must not be satisfied with being in the land, but must eat the old corn of that land--a Christ in glory. He must go on from Bethel to Jordan.

Jordan stands for the New Testament truth, "crucified with Christ." This truth, too, may be held as a mere Bible doctrine; but there is a making of that truth real in experience, a "receiving of the sentence of death in self," a "bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus" which is very different from merely reiterating a doctrine. There, on the resurrection side of Jordan, the gift of power awaited the prophet.

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