

# Elijah's Mantle

by Richard E. Bieber

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*The mantle of Elijah is a symbol of the authority and power given to us by God to perform miracles and signs, and to bring hope and healing to the multitudes.*

**Scripture:** 2 Kings 2:1, Matthew 4:7, Matthew 28:18, Luke 3:16, John 14:12, Acts 1:8, Acts 2:2, Revelation 12:11

**Topics:** "Holy Spirit", "Discipleship"

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## Description

Richard E. Bieber preaches on the authority and power given by Jesus to make disciples of all nations, emphasizing the need for believers to operate under this authority to manifest the reality of Jesus in their lives. The sermon highlights the importance of pursuing and living under the mantle of Elijah, symbolizing the Spirit of the Lord, to bring healing, hope, and transformation to those in need. Through examples from Elisha, John the Baptist, and Jesus, the sermon encourages relentless pursuit of the Holy Spirit and bold, disruptive action in the power of God's Spirit to reveal the living Jesus to the world.

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## Transcript

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the end of the age." Matthew 28: 18-20

With this command comes the promise of power to enable us to make disciples. It is understood that every believer who goes out in obedience to this command goes out under this authority and power. "All authority has been given to me. Go therefore, and by that authority, and make disciples. I am with you." Whenever that power is present, it happens. And where that power is missing, all the eloquence in the world will never make it happen.

Our need, our great need, is to have this power to manifest the reality of Jesus. Not power for its own sake ... not power to push other people around ... not power to draw attention to ourselves.

Power to reveal, authority to lift the veil that hangs over the human mind so that it can see Jesus alive from the dead.

You're having lunch in the cafeteria, minding your own business. Along comes somebody you work with and plunks down beside you, and starts a conversation, "I hear you believe in Jesus." You swallow what's

left of your tuna fish sandwich, and answer, "Yes, I do." "Well, tell me about him. Can he really help me?"

You're not quite sure that they're on the level, but you have the sense that they're looking for something. So you try to come up with the right words. The next day you give them a book to read. The following week you invite them to a Bible study. By this time, their mood is changed. The pressure of the crisis, whatever it was, has lifted and they brush you away.

How different would it be, if when people come to us with their hunger, with their wounded souls, we would have the confidence from God to touch them as our Lord did.

I'm not talking about brazen conceit, or false confidence that rises out of self-righteousness. I'm talking about the power Jesus promises to give to his people, his Body on earth, that causes living water to flow from their mouths, and healing life to move from their hands as they reach out to bind up the wounds of the broken hearted, and set the captives free.

Elisha understood that his master Elijah had an authority that he did not have. He also understood that Elijah was about to leave. Elisha is saying, "How in the world am I going to be able to accomplish the work you are calling me into unless I have what you have?"

Now when the Lord was about to take up Elijah to heaven by a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal. And Elijah said to Elisha, "Tarry here, I pray you; 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. And the sons of the prophets who were in Bethel came out to Elisha, and said, "Do you know that today the Lord will take away your master from over you?" And he said, "Yes, I know it; hold your peace."

Elijah said to him, "Tarry here, I pray you; for the Lord has sent me to Jericho." But he said, "As the Lord lives, and you yourself also live, I will not leave you." So they came to Jericho. The sons of the prophets who were at Jericho drew near to Elisha, and said to him, "Do you know that the Lord will take away your master from over you?" And he answered, "Yes, I know it; hold your peace."

Then Elijah said to him, "Tarry here, I pray you; for the Lord has sent me to the Jordan." But he said, "As the Lord lives, and you yourself live, I will not leave you." So the two of them went on. Fifty men of the sons of the prophets also went, and stood at some distance from them, as they were both standing by the Jordan. Then Elijah took his mantle, and rolled it up, and struck the water, and the water was parted to the one side and to the other, till the two of them could go over on dry ground.

When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, "Ask what I shall do for you, before I am taken from you." And Elisha said, "I pray you, let me inherit a double share of your spirit." And he said, "You have asked a hard thing; yet, if you see me as I am being taken from you, it shall be so for you; but if you do not see me, it shall not be so." And as they still went on and talked, behold, a chariot of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them. And Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. And Elisha saw it and cried, "My father, my father! The chariots of Israel and its horsemen!" And he saw him no more.

Then he took hold of his own clothes and rent them in two pieces. And he took up the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and went back and stood at the bank of the Jordan. Then he took the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and struck the water, saying, "Where is the Lord, the God of Elijah?" And when he had struck the water, the water was parted to the one side and to the other; and Elisha went over. 2

Kings 2:1-15

When they went east over the Jordan it was Elijah that struck the water, and the water parted: when Elisha comes back alone over the Jordan, he makes the water part with Elijah's mantle. He has the mantle of Elijah, his master, meaning the Spirit of the Lord that was on Elijah is now on Elisha. There is no question in his mind as to whether he can move forward. Elisha is not wondering, "If I speak this message I've been given it will be confirmed by God?" He knows: He knows what is on him, and in him, and what he now can do under God.

This mantle of Elijah continues down through the generations to John the Baptist. John has this authority. When he speaks, people listen! Because they can see, they can feel the authority.

Listen to John the Baptist as he speaks under Elijah's mantle:

"You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruit that befits repentance, and do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to untie, he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire." Matthew 4:7-11

In other words, "I have the mantle now, but very soon the mantle that is on me will pass to the One from whom it came, the Messiah. And when he has that mantle, he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. He will give the mantle to all who belong to him."

And when Jesus was baptized, he went up immediately from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and alighting on him...

Now the mantle is on Jesus. And Jesus, God the Son, divested of all his divine prerogatives, truly a man, relies utterly now on the Holy Spirit, which is the mantle of Elijah.

After he is driven into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil, Jesus comes out and begins to use that mantle. But his use of this power of God is different from anyone else's - very different from Elijah or John the Baptist. Jesus does not come up against the kings and the princes. He remains immersed in the multitudes. In fact, he is so immersed, almost invisible in the multitudes that John the Baptist, now in prison, begins to wonder if Jesus knows what he is doing.

So he sends some disciples of his to Jesus, to ask, "Are you the one who is to come, or do we look for another?" And Jesus says, "Go and tell John the things you see and hear. The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have the good news preached to them."

The mantle is at work, power is flowing out greater than Elijah, but it is moving in a different direction. It is not going up toward king's palaces and council chambers; it is going down to the very foundations of society. Soon those foundations are going to shake so violently that every king on this earth is going to tremble with fear.

Jesus' use of the mantle of Elijah caused the rulers of Israel, the Roman governor, and Satan himself to put Jesus on that cross and kill him, not realizing the awesome victory which would be won when this took place.

Jesus comes forth from the dead on the third day, clothed now only in that mantle and nothing else: a mantle of pure light! Holiness! Mercy! Joy! And for forty days he appears and reappears to the disciples. Before he leaves he says, "Don't leave the city until you get the mantle."

Ten days later the mantle falls.

They were all together in one place and there came the sound from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared cloven tongues like as of fire resting on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. Acts 2: 2-4

And for twenty centuries, every redemptive move, every holy restoration brought into human life, comes through men and women who are under the mantle of Elijah. Not those who talk about the mantle, but those who wear it.

So what do we have to do to get this mantle on and to use it?

Two simple things:

First, we have to pursue that mantle.

Notice how Elisha pursues it. Elijah tries three times to shake him off. "Elisha, why don't you stay here? The Lord has sent me as far as Bethel... Elisha, why don't you stay here? I'm supposed to go to Jericho. Elisha stay here, I'm going to the Jordan."

Each time, Elisha answers, "No way! As you live, as the Lord lives, I'm not going to leave you." Once it's clear to Elijah that he's not going to be able to shake Elisha off, he says, "Ok, what do you want?" "I want your mantle. I want a double portion of your Spirit."

Jesus encourages us to cry out for this very thing. Ask for the mantle. Pursue it. Ask for the Holy Spirit. Keep asking until you receive this gift---and you will.

"Lord, unless I am anointed with your Spirit, unless I am clothed with this mantle, unless I am filled with your light, how am I going to feed these hungry, or bring hope to these desolate, or bind up these wounded ones who come to me?"

Not half-baked asking. Relentless asking - that follows Elijah to Bethel, to Jericho, to the Jordan, to the wilderness, wherever he goes, and refuses to let go.

"Lord God, I have to have this bread to feed the hungry. I must have this Spirit. I'm not going to give you any peace until I am anointed with your Spirit, unless I am clothed with this mantle, unless I am filled with your light."

The second thing you have to do is enter into its life! Live under the mantle!

And he took up the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and went back and stood at the bank of the Jordan. Then he took the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and struck the water, saying, "Where is the Lord, the God of Elijah?" And when he had struck the water, the water was parted to the one side and to the other; and Elisha went over.

He takes this mantle, and rolls it up just like Elijah did, and BANG, he hits the water, "Where is the God of Elijah?", and the waters obey.

And they were all filled with the Spirit, and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Immediately they moved into the life of the Spirit. They obeyed. They acted. They didn't sit there and look at each other and have a nice time. They moved quickly outside that building and they shook up the whole city.

The Spirit of God is waiting to do the same for us.

After receiving the Spirit, do we go out into the world and tiptoe softly, so we won't wake anybody up, or get anybody mad at us? No! We manifest the kingdom of God in the way we live and in the things we say, We take the mantle, and we put it on, and start rattling cages

Let's get used to it. If we put on the mantle of Elijah, we will be as disruptive to our world as he was to his. And as unpopular.

That's our problem. We don't want to accept rejection.

They are not going to put you on television because you have become a follower of Jesus. They are going to put you on a cross with Jesus ... sooner or later. And by that power, you will overcome evil. You will have victory.

As we go out and move in the Spirit, and speak in the Spirit, and think in the Spirit, and act in the Spirit, one thing will happen: the world around us will get a different view of who Jesus is. They will no longer be able to hold to the view of Jesus with the pious look --- the "Jesus" they see in funeral homes.

They will see eyes that burn like fire. And hear the voice that sounds like the voice of many waters. And they will know that Jesus is alive from the dead.

That's why he gives us the mantle: in order that the life flowing forth from his people, bringing help to the hungry, and the broken, and the forgotten, and the sick, and the dead, anybody who has an honest eye and an honest mind will know that Jesus is alive from the dead.

Every heart that earnestly thirsts for God will hear his call, and find their way into the kingdom.

God help us to pursue the mantle, put it on, and to use it.

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