

# The Last Journey of Elijah With Elisha

by T. Austin-Sparks

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*The sermon explores the life of Elijah and Elisha, highlighting the importance of zeal for the Lord and devotion in reaching heavenly fullness.*

**Scripture:** 2 Kings 2:1

**Topics:** "Zeal for God", "Heavenly Fullness"

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## Description

T. Austin-Sparks explores the profound journey of Elijah and Elisha, emphasizing the significance of zeal for the Lord as a pathway to heavenly fullness. He illustrates how Elijah's life, marked by a deep jealousy for God's rights, culminates in his ascension to heaven, while Elisha's unwavering commitment reflects the continuation of that divine purpose on earth. The sermon highlights the importance of setting aside the self-life, engaging in true fellowship, and overcoming spiritual challenges to embody the fullness of Christ. Sparks draws parallels between the journey from Gilgal to Jordan, representing stages of spiritual growth and victory over death, ultimately calling believers to a deeper devotion and expression of God's glory. The message encourages the church to actively pursue a life that reflects Christ's victory and presence in the world.

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## Transcript

Reading: 2 Kings 2:1-15.

"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." 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." 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. 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 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. And when the sons of the prophets which were to view at Jericho saw him, they said, "The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha." And they came to meet him, and bowed themselves to the ground before him."

In this meditation we have before us Elijah's last journey in company with Elisha, on the eve of Elijah's being raptured to heaven. We have seen that the keynote of Elijah's life is found in the words with which he twice made reply to the Lord: "I have been very jealous for the Lord..." His whole life is packed into what is represented by those words. We have also noted what jealousy for the Lord means, and to what it leads.

Heavenly fulness was reached personally by Elijah when he went up by a whirlwind into heaven, and was the glorious crown of a life poured out for the interests of the Lord, with the one consuming purpose that God should have His full place amongst His people, and have all His rights in them secured to Him. Elijah was the man who set aside all personal interests in order that this object might be attained and the Lord's people might stand as a testimony in the earth and the universe to the fact that God has that in which He enjoys His full rights. To that Elijah gave himself to the full, and that was the fire which burned in his bones, the fire of a great jealousy for God. That issued in his reaching heavenly fulness.

#### The Testimony To Be Established In This World

But, as we have indicated, that testimony was to be carried on in the world, and so Elisha was brought into relationship with Elijah before the latter's translation, and was to be the expression here of what Elijah was in heaven. Elijah had gone into heavenly fulness on the ground of having secured the Lord's rights amongst His people. Thus there was in heaven a man who had reached heavenly fulness on that ground, but there was to be in the earth the expression, not of what Elijah was before he went up, but of what Elijah was after he had gone; an expression here of heavenly fulness on the ground of the Lord having had His rights secured to Him fully and utterly in the midst of His people, as is set forth for us in the Carmel crisis of the life and ministry of Elijah.

Accordingly we find that Elisha was the instrument of that heavenly fulness, and wherever he went, and in connection with everything with which he had to do, heavenly fulness came in. We are not engaged with the life of Elisha at this time, though we make reference to it. We are considering the basis of that heavenly fulness which is but a type and an illustration of what obtains now in this present dispensation. The Lord Jesus is the counterpart or Anti-type of Elijah. He came to secure the rights of God in His universe. He fought the battle for the rights of God, and fought it through to a final issue. As Elijah fought to an issue at the altar of Carmel, so Christ fought this battle out to an issue on the Cross of Calvary, and having thus settled once for all the question of God's rights, having brought that issue to perfection, He

went up into heavenly fulness, He was received up into glory.

Further, there was also to be a counterpart of Elisha, and that counterpart is seen, or was intended to be seen, here on earth in the Body of Christ, the Church. The Church is intended to be an expression of heavenly fulness on earth. So many are looking for the day when we shall get to heaven and enjoy heavenly fulness. The Lord's thought is that we should know something of it now, that it should be expressed here on the earth as a testimony to the Man in the glory. That constitutes His present manifestation in this world. That is the Lord's desire. Heavenly fulness can be known in measure, and in large measure, here on this earth, but it can only be known and expressed on the same ground as that upon which Elisha stood, the ground where God has had all His rights secured to Him through His interests being served, and through His people giving Him His full place. In this chapter, therefore, which embraces the period between the end of Elijah's earthly life and the beginning of Elisha's ministry, we are shown in a typical or an illustrative way what is meant when we speak of God having His rights secured, and how this leads to heavenly fulness.

### The Path To Fulness

We have summed it all up in one word, "zeal". Elijah had been very jealous for the Lord. It can at once be seen that this same zeal is a mark of Elisha, when we look at 2 Kings 2. "And Elijah said unto Elisha, "Tarry here, I pray thee; for Jehovah hath sent me as far as Bethel." And Elisha said, "As Jehovah liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee." So they went down to Bethel" (verse 2). At Bethel, Elijah said the same thing to Elisha in relation to Jericho, and Elisha's reply was as before. They went on together therefore to Jericho, and there the same thing occurred again with reference to their proceeding to Jordan.

But we have not yet noted all, for as they went, Elijah said to Elisha, "Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken from thee" (verse 9). Elisha, as though he had already calculated and preconsidered the matter, promptly answered, "I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me." To this request Elijah in turn replied, "Thou hast asked a hard thing; nevertheless if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee..." (verse 10). So they went through Jordan to the other side. Elijah was then caught up by the whirlwind into heaven, and in order that Elijah should know that he was there, Elisha cried, "My father, my father, the chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof" (verse 12). I am here! I want you to know that I am here! You tried to shake me off, but I am here! You have tested me as to whether I really meant business; you have tried me, to see if I would go all the way, and I am here! Very clearly do we there see the zeal of the Lord. There is a man who really gave diligence to make his calling and election sure. There was zeal to go on to God's full thought; not merely to go so far and then to stop; not to go but a third of the way, nor two thirds of the way, but the whole way. "As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee." Those are the words of a man consumed by the zeal of the Lord. That is a good foundation for ministry, and on that ground Elisha entered into the enlargement, the heavenly fulness.

That is where we begin. We can put it in many ways. We may speak about zeal to go on. We may speak about utterness of devotion. We may speak of meaning business with God. In whatever way we express it, the thing itself is basic to God's heavenly fulness, and it will only be such individuals and such assemblies of God's people as are after this kind that will truly represent here on the earth what Christ is in heaven.

It is not, in the first place, a case of how much we see. We may be incapable of comprehending, apprehending, or understanding all the truth that we hear, all that is brought to us in the way of teaching. If we have thought it to be necessary for us to understand everything before we can come into the Lord's

fulness, we have made a mistake, because, in the first instance, it is not how much we see that is basic to heavenly fullness, it is how much we mean. God knows our meaning. God knows how utter we are. God knows exactly the measure of our abandonment to go on, and He takes us up on that ground. It is not the measure of our understanding of truth but the measure of our utterness for God that gives Him the opportunity of taking us on to increasing fullness in Christ.

Let us remember that God is toward us what we are toward Him. "With the pure Thou wilt show Thyself pure; and with the perverse Thou wilt show Thyself froward" (Psa. 18:26). If we are utter toward the Lord, the Lord will be utter toward us. If we are half-hearted toward Him, we shall find that the Lord Himself will be limited to our measure. He cannot be other with us; He cannot be more for us. He cannot show more to us, or lead us into more than we are really purposing by His grace to come into.

Thus in the case of Elisha, though it is his later life that represents heavenly fullness, he came to it as being a man who had always meant business with God. Our first glimpse of Elisha, before ever he came into association with Elijah, shows him to be such a man. Elijah was passing by, and he saw Elisha the son of Shaphat ploughing with twelve yoke of oxen. Here was a man who had all his resources in the field. He had brought out into action, into operation, all that he had at his command. He was putting everything into his business. Why should the Holy Spirit record that? Surely He is not interested in merely embellishing narratives with interesting details. This man was ploughing, and he was ploughing with twelve yoke of oxen. The Holy Spirit takes account of what sort of a man he is, and of whether he means business or not. Elisha was found to be such a man, a man of purpose who put all that he had into commission. God met him, and found that to be a suitable avenue for His self-expression in that man's life spiritually in service of another kind. So we first find this man ploughing with twelve yoke of oxen, and then later in another connection refusing to be turned aside, but persisting right up to the point where he could go no further. He was a man who went as far as he possibly could.

Zeal for the Lord, devotion, is a great factor. Elisha's reality was tested. The Lord always puts our declarations to the test. He subjects them to test after test, tries us by what we say, to see if we are really in earnest. Another rebuff comes, another set back, another check, another discouragement, another experience which seems to say that the Lord does not want us. It may be a strange way of putting things, but I believe that the Lord sometimes brings us to the place where we have to take the attitude that we will not be put off by Him. Perhaps you do not understand that language. I can put it in another way. We sometimes have to come to the position where we say, Well, we are going on, whatever the appearances may be; and it may even seem that the Lord is discouraging us and working against us. The enemy may interpret things in that way, and, were we to yield to things as we find them, to the circumstances, to the experiences, we should simply give up and cease to go on. At such times we have to say in cold deliberateness, without anything to encourage, without any inspiration, without anything at all to support us, We are going on! God allows us to come to positions like that, and tests us in that way. When the Lord gets men and women who, despite every kind of discouragement, every lack of encouragement, even from the Lord Himself for the time being, say, Well, in spite of all, we are going on, He has something there that gives Him an opportunity, and such lives will come into His greater fullnesses.

We mark then these things which lead to fullness. It is most interesting to note the inner history of the spiritual life that this story reveals, and the lessons are not difficult to read. When Elisha had been subjected to testing as to his reality, as to whether he were really in earnest, and had shown himself approved, then we are able to see that these occasions of his testing themselves represent the advancing stages of fullness toward final fullness. The very places mentioned in this journey indicate heavenly

fulness. We look at them briefly, to get the main thought connected with them.

### The Meaning Of Gilgal

You notice, in the first place, that they started from Gilgal. We are not told that they came to Gilgal, but it appears rather that they had their residence there. Then, further, it is stated that Elijah went with Elisha, not that Elisha went with Elijah. It is a good thing to remember that the initiative is with the Lord. From the Lord's side the position as a start is made may be thus expressed: Now, you come with Me! Thereafter it is a following of the Lord, a going on with Him. It is always a means of great strength to be able to point to the fact that it was the Lord Who initiated the work--"...He which began a good work in you will perfect it..." (Phil. 1:6), "For it is God Which worketh in you both to will and to work..." (Phil. 2:13). What He works in us we have to work out; there comes the Elisha side, the following.

Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal. That was their starting point, and perhaps their place of residence. Maybe you know the meaning of Gilgal. Gilgal has two aspects. Firstly, it stands for the setting aside of the flesh. Turning again to the Book of Joshua, we see that at Gilgal the new generation which had grown up in the wilderness was circumcised. There, in a typical way, the flesh was set aside, in order that they might come into the land and possess its fulness. The very first step toward heavenly fulness is the setting aside of the flesh. This speaks of the separating work of the Cross, the cutting off of the whole body of the flesh, the self-life.

I prefer the use of the term "the self-life," because when we talk about the flesh, many people have no other thought but of all that wicked, evil, base sort of thing that everyone is glad to get rid of, that is recognized by everyone as evil, and cannot be tolerated. Those ideas are associated with the term "the flesh." But what is the flesh? The comprehensive definition of the flesh is the self-life, and if you know all the aspects of the self-life, you know a great deal! Who can comprehend the self-life? It comprises self-will, self-energy, self-glory; there is no end to the catalogue once we attempt to define.

The will of the flesh, which is the will of ourselves as a part of the old creation, stands in the way of heavenly fulness. The more serious aspect of this, in the light of what the Lord is saying to us about His rights and His interests, is that self-life in any form destroys the testimony to what Christ is in heaven. Christ is in heaven because of what He is, because of the utter repudiation of the self-life in every way. He emptied Himself, humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death. He repudiated every suggestion to act from His own human life apart from the Father. Every evil offer made to Him, every temptation presented to Him which had in it the thought of serving Himself, His own interests, was immediately quenched. "All these things will I give thee..." said the Devil pointing to the kingdoms of this world (Matt. 4:9). To have heeded the appeal at such a time, and from such a source, would have been a serving of Himself.

On that principle, self, in every form, and shape, and suggestion, was set aside in the interests of the Father. It was not mere æstheticism, as of one who was denying himself and being an æsthetic on the basis of other worldliness. No! He was positively living unto the interests of His Father--"...make not My Father's house a house of merchandise" (John 2:16). It was then that the disciples remembered that it was written, "The zeal of Thine house shall eat me up" (verse 17). On the ground of His complete triumph in thus setting aside all that could have been the expression of His own life, as apart from the Father, He is what He is in glory.

That is to have an expression here in the Church which is His Body, and in its individual members. But that testimony to what Christ is in glory is eclipsed, is hidden, is marred, when you or I are actuated by anything of the self-life. It is a searching thought. When we consult ourselves, what we would like or what we would not like, what we want or do not want; when in any matter we refer to our own feelings and consult our own inclinations in the presence of something that is of the Lord the testimony is spoiled in us personally, spoiled in our homes, and in any other direction where we are living with a self-interest of any kind. And it is only as we are brought to the place where we ourselves are ruled out that we perceive in what measure the Lord was seeking to work, whilst we were holding fast the ground in our own interests; consulting our own will, our own preference. In that realm heavenly fulness can never be ours. We shall be as the children of Israel were, limping from one side to the other; crippled, unsettled, restless; never coming to an established position, because this question of the Lord's interests has not been fully settled.

Gilgal is the place where that question is settled. The Cross has cut off the whole body of the flesh. Perhaps we do not know how selfish we are. We can only discover that at the Cross. Most of us have a blind spot about ourselves, but at the Cross we shall discover our own hearts.

### Gilgal And The World

But there is another side to Gilgal. It says that at Gilgal the reproach of Egypt was rolled away. What was the reproach of Egypt? If Egypt is the world, in type, what is the reproach of the world? For what are the people of God reproached by the world? The most common thing that the world is ready to pounce upon, and to cast back at any child of God, is inconsistency. The world has a very shrewd idea of what things ought to be. It has a good conception of consistency. It knows when anyone professes to be something, and is not what he professes to be. The world knows. Israel came under reproach for contradiction, inconsistency, denial of their own God, their own testimony. That is very true. They became a reproach; they are a reproach today. Ah, but not Israel only. Is it not true of many, and to some extent of the whole Church? The reproach is that it is not what it claims to be, is not what God meant it to be, nor what God has made possible it should be. It is something other, a contradiction; and that is its reproach. How has this reproach and contradiction come about? Because of the flesh, the personal interests, the personal elements! Look at it where you will, it largely speaks of that. Our inconsistency finds its cause there, that God wants one thing and we want another; that God means one thing and we do not mean that; that God has called us by a certain name and we are not coming up to it. He has called us by the name of His Son and we do not bear that name with honour. We are a reproach simply because of these personal, fleshly elements.

Gilgal must get rid of that, that the reproach should be rolled away, and the glory of the Lord should be seen in the place of the reproach.

We are dealing with very solemn things. It is so easy for us to speak of being very zealous for the Lord, of wanting to be out and out, wholly consecrated. We can use this language so easily, and no doubt if it were put as a personal question, the response would be, Yes, I mean to be out and out for the Lord. How are you giving expression to your zeal for the Lord? Is it by a multitude of religious activities? That is not the root of things. We may be in such activities for our own pleasure, for our own satisfaction. It may greatly gratify us to be in that realm of things. The question is a deeper one than that. It is our jealousy for God that counts. Does our jealousy for God really mean that we are setting ourselves aside, what we want or do not want, what we like or do not like? Do we come into the matter in any connection whatever? Are we found not accepting God's will for us on any point because we have made ourselves believe that it is not

God's will? Because we do not like it, do not want it, therefore it is not God's will for us! Let us be honest. To be jealous for God means that we have set aside ourselves altogether to give God a full place. In any situation can we say, Now, Lord, this thing may be the last thing in the world that I want and that I like, but dost Thou want it? Is Thy will in that direction? If so, there is no argument, no controversy, I gladly accept Thy will. That is being zealous for the Lord; that is giving the Lord His rights. Oh, how zeal for the Lord has been misinterpreted and made an external thing. The people who think they are very zealous for the Lord may be the most self-willed with regard to things which are bound up with the Lord's testimony in their lives, in their homes, in their families, in their businesses. To give God a full, clear way, not merely in a resigned manner that says, Oh, well, the Lord can have His way! but in one which comes in with the Lord to co operate, that is zeal for God. Gilgal brings us there.

### The Vital Reality And Meaning Of The House Of God

When Gilgal has set aside the body of the flesh, and rolled away the reproach, and put us on ground consistent with our testimony, and with what Christ is, we can move on. That opens the way for heavenly fulness, and we can then move from Gilgal to Bethel. Gilgal leads to Bethel.

You must remember that the Word of God is written by a non-progressive mind. The mind of God is not a progressive mind. The mind of God is full and final at one instant. It has comprehended everything. There is no room for improving the mind of God. In the mind of God, Bethel is one with Gilgal; that is, the House of God is intimately associated with the Cross. If we go on with God, the Cross leads us immediately to the House of God. The Cross opens the way to the House of God, to Bethel, and the House of God depends for its full meaning upon whether the Cross has done its work. A great many people think that the Church, the House of God, or whatever you may term it, is a doctrine, a part of a system of Christian truth. Have you thought that? Well, let me say that you are wrong. What is the House of God? We may first name a number of things which it is not. The House of God is not a part of a system of Christian truth or teaching. It is not a congregation with religious services. It is not a Christian society with a membership. It is not a religious association for religious purposes. Yet these are the ideas that are in so many minds when we speak of the House of God. People think of it as a place where religious observances are carried on, or as a society set up for religious purposes. The House of God is the spiritual relatedness of believers.

"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body..." (1 Cor. 12:13). That is the House of God, a spiritual relatedness. But it is more. The House of God is the recognized and active relatedness of believers. It is not a nebulous thing. It is not an abstract idea. The spiritual relatedness of believers is very wonderful, but there must be a recognition of it, and that relatedness must be made an active thing. That is the House of God.

Then the House of God represents a greater measure of Christ than is possible to any number of separate individuals. Separate individuals can never come to the Lord's fulness. It will necessitate all the believers for the Lord's fulness to be entered into, but to come to it believers must needs be in a relatedness, and that an active relatedness. That is very practical. Any life that is a free lance, independent, detached, will be limited, even though there may be belief in the spiritual relatedness of all believers. This thing has to become practical, an actual working thing. Fellowship is essential to fulness.

We know that is why the enemy has never ceased trying to scatter the Lord's people; to divide, subdivide, and divide again. He is always after that, because he knows that actual relatedness is the way to the fulness of Christ, the way in which what Christ is in heaven becomes expressed here on the earth.

Fellowship, relatedness after a practical sort is an important thing on the earth, and it cannot be repudiated. We cannot, without robbing the Lord of something, pass it off as something which has irreparably broken down and can never again find an expression. Not at all. The Lord has not taken that attitude. That represents surrender to the Devil, the Devil's triumph amongst the Lord's people. Actual relatedness, persistent fellowship is the way of heavenly fulness. That is Bethel, the House of God, the heavenly fellowship of born-again children of God here on this earth.

You see that a feature of the House of God is fellowship, actual fellowship. Given that, another feature arises and becomes manifest, and that is life. Oh, what life there is in fellowship, the life of the Lord, His risen life, is manifested in fellowship, and that is a feature of the House of God. And is not the House of God, the Body of Christ, intended to be the expression in a corporate way of the fact that Christ is alive, is risen?

Then life leads to light, and in the fellowship of the Lord's people there is a ground for the Lord to communicate the knowledge of Himself, in a way that He cannot do to isolated individuals; that is, if they are isolated by their own fault. We are not talking just now about that geographical isolation which cannot be avoided, but we are dealing with spiritual isolation, separateness. The Lord reveals Himself in the midst of His people in His greater fulnesses.

Thus the House of God is a very practical thing, bringing us on the way to heavenly fulness, and we have to recognize that we are under a great responsibility for what the House of God represents in the matter of spiritual fellowship. There is no Bethel until there has been a Gilgal, the place where the personal is put out and we no longer live unto ourselves but unto one another, unto Christ, for Christ, in order that there may be an increase of Christ.

#### Faith That Overcomes

From Bethel we move to Jericho. It almost looks as if there is a going backward as we note the order in the Book of Joshua; but we are in the spiritual course of things now, and are going onward. It is onward from Bethel to Jericho, not backward. What is the meaning of Jericho? Jericho stands for the faith which overcomes. When you really come into the spiritual meaning of the Church, the House of God, the Body of Christ, it is not long before you find that you are verily in touch with principalities and powers. It is a costly thing to stand on the ground of the Church, which is His Body. You cannot accept that merely as teaching. If you really accept that in your heart you will meet something before long, and you will find you come to the endless "I," and can only get through by being stripped of everything that is not Christ. When you get on to that ground you find you are in touch with the naked forces of evil, principalities and powers, world rulers of this darkness and spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenlies. That is the realm of the Church, as we know from the Letter to the Ephesians. You have come to Bethel, the Church, and now to Jericho. What is represented by Jericho? Jericho is the faith which overcomes the principalities and powers, and is the outcome of Gilgal and Bethel.

"The chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof!" What is the meaning of this? So many have thought that the chariot had come to fetch Elijah, but it had not; he went up to heaven by a whirlwind. You will find that the chariot of Israel and the horsemen come upon the scene in connection with Elisha. They appeared three times in the life of Elisha. They were the symbols of heavenly supremacy. Whenever the chariot of Israel and the horsemen appeared to Elisha there was victory in view; it was triumph every time. The Lord opened the young man's eyes when the city was besieged. He could only see the earthly forces before his

eyes were opened, and then he saw that the mountain was full of chariots, a fact which told of forces superior to those that were besieging and hemming in on the earth. The last view of the chariot was at Elisha's deathbed. The king came in, and there was the question of Assyria and victory. As the king came in to the deathbed of Elisha he cried: "...the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof." Then you remember the story of the bow and the arrows, and the smiting. Victory was in view.

Jericho is the faith which overcomes in the spiritual realm. You come to that when you come to Bethel; you come to the heavenlies and to the heavenly victory in Christ. Heavenly fulness by faith is represented by Jericho.

If you are contemplating the forces of evil, and wondering what is the secret of victory, let me suggest to you never to launch yourself against the enemy until you have been to Gilgal and come to Bethel, or you will be smashed, you will be broken. Get the flesh out of the way. That is the ground of the enemy to beat you. Get the self-life put away, or else he will have the advantage over you: come to the place where you can say, "...the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me" (John 14:30). It is only when the Cross has dealt with the self-life that we are in the way of advantage, of ascendancy over the enemy. But that is not all. It requires fellowship, it requires the corporate action of the Lord's people to deal with spiritual forces. We have to come to Bethel, the House of God. We shall never, as isolated individuals, bring down the forces of evil. If we try we shall have a bitter experience. We must act on the principle of the Church, which is His Body: "...I will build My church; and the gates of hades shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18). Get out of fellowship and the enemy will worst you; come into fellowship and you stand and withstand, and having done all you stand.

### The Conquest Of Death

Finally we look at Jordan. This is not going backward, although it may look like it. It is onward still. What is the lesson of Jordan? Jordan stands for victory over death. Is that a step backward? No, it speaks of moving onward. Elijah and Elisha came to Jordan together, and at Jordan, death in type, in representation was overcome; its power was broken, and two men went through. One man went up to glory, triumphant over death, and the other took up that victory and went round quenching death wherever he went. Elisha retraced his steps over this way back to Jericho, encountered death and turned death to life.

We are called to that. That is a fulness of Christ; not just victory over physical death, but victory in physical death it may be; and victory over death itself, whatever its form may be, spiritual or physical. Death is conquered in Christ. That Man in the glory has entered into the fulness which speaks of victory over death; He has vanquished it, He has swallowed up death victoriously. The Apostle writes, "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:58). Wherefore? Because He has swallowed up death victoriously. That is for present experience. That is heavenly fulness for the Church now.

You see the issue; heavenly fulness. You see the way; utterness for the Lord. You see what that means; Gilgal, Bethel, Jericho, Jordan. The Lord teach us what it means and keep it alive in our hearts.

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

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