

Church of God Sunday School

ELIJAH AND THE CHARIOT OF FIRE

1 Kings 19:19-21; 2 Kings 2:1-18

Elijah, the prophet of God, had been told by God to find the man named Elisha, the son of Shaphat. God said he was to be the next one to succeed Elijah as the chosen prophet.

Elijah set out to find Elisha. When Elijah found Elisha, he was in a field, plowing with twelve yoke of oxen. Elijah walked by Elisha and threw his mantle, or cloak, on Elisha's shoulders. Elisha knew what that meant: the responsibility of being the next leader of the prophets of God was being passed to him. He also knew the importance of that position.

Elisha left the oxen and ran to Elijah. He said, "Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow thee." Elisha went back home long enough to tell his family and friends goodbye, then he went with Elijah.

Elisha learned from Elijah how to be a good prophet of the Lord. Elisha did much to help Elijah too, for Elijah was getting old. Elisha loved Elijah.

But after several more years had passed, the time came for Elijah to leave this world. Elijah and Elisha were in Gilgal. God told Elijah to go to Bethel, to visit a school for young prophets. He may have told them goodbye too. When Elijah got ready to leave Gilgal, he told Elisha to stay there, but Elisha would not leave Elijah. So both Elijah and Elisha went to Bethel.

The young men who were learning to be prophets of the Lord said to Elisha, "Knowest thou that the LORD will take away thy master from thy head to day?"

Elisha said, "Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace." In other words, "Do not say anymore about it; do not remind me." Elisha did not want to think that Elijah

would soon be going where he could not talk to him or advise him anymore.

After they had visited Bethel, the Lord told Elijah to go to Jericho. Elijah told Elisha to stay at Bethel, but again, Elisha would not stay behind, so to Jericho they went. At Jericho, there was another school for the sons of the prophets. Those men, too, told Elisha that God was going to take Elijah away from him that day. But Elisha just said, "Yea; I know it; hold ye your peace." He did not like to think about Elijah leaving.

Then Elijah told Elisha that God wanted him to go to Jordan and that he should stay at Jericho. But Elisha would not hear of it! He wanted to go with Elijah! He stated plainly: "As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee." Elisha did not want Elijah to be out of his sight! They both traveled on. Fifty sons of the prophets followed them also, to see what would happen, but they followed at a certain distance behind.

When Elijah and Elisha reached the Jordan River, they stopped. Elijah took his mantle, wrapped it up, and struck the water with it. The waters separated, as the waters in the Red

Sea had separated for Moses. Elijah and Elisha walked into the river on dry ground and crossed to the other side!

When they walked out onto the shore, on the opposite side of the river, Elijah said to Elisha, "Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee."

Elisha turned to Elijah and said, "I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me."

Elijah knew that only God could fulfill Elisha's request, but he replied, "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."

Elijah and Elisha continued to walk on and talk. Suddenly, there appeared a chariot and horses. They came right between Elijah and Elisha, separating the two men! This was no ordinary chariot. It was a chariot of fire! A chariot of fire? Yes! With horses of fire! Oh! What a sight to see that must have been!

Did Elisha watch the chariot? Elisha may have thought that some distraction might occur at the time Elijah was taken. He had been preparing himself for it. Therefore, he kept his eyes fixed on Elijah. He kept watching him all the time, no matter what else might happen. He remembered what Elijah had said about seeing him leave and receiving the double portion of his spirit. Elisha wanted a double portion of Elijah's spirit. That was his goal.

Then, just as suddenly as the chariot appeared, a great whirlwind, a great whirling windstorm, caught up Elijah! It carried him up, up, up, and up, out of Elisha's sight! Elijah was taken to Heaven in that whirlwind, and Elisha got to see it happen!

Elisha cried, "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof." But Elijah was gone! Oh, how sad Elisha was to see that Elijah had departed, never to come back. Elisha took hold of his clothes and tore them in two pieces to show his sorrow of heart. But Elisha did not stop to mourn. He saw the mantle of Elijah lying on the ground, where it had fallen from Elijah. Elisha picked it up; then he went back to the river and stood beside it.

Standing by the river, Elisha took the mantle and struck the waters, saying at the same time, "Where is the LORD God of Elijah?" Elisha knew that he had work to do. He wanted to know if God was with him as He had been with Elijah. God answered Elisha by parting the waters, just as He had done for Elijah. Elisha walked over on dry ground!

When the sons of the prophets saw Elisha, after he had returned from across the river, they said, "The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha." They could see the evidence of Elijah's spirit on Elisha's face. They came up to him and bowed, showing their respect to him as they had to Elijah. Elisha was the new master or teacher to the young prophets.

The prophets asked Elisha to send some men to look for Elijah's body. They thought, maybe, the Holy Spirit had left his body on some mountain or in some valley. But Elisha told them not to go. Still they urged him until he said, "Send."

Fifty men were sent out from Jericho to look for Elijah's body. For three days they searched; then they came back to Jericho. Elisha was staying there. When they told him they could not find Elijah's body, Elisha just told them, "Did I not say unto you, Go not?" God had already taken care of Elijah.

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**MEMORY VERSE:**  
*"There appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven."*  
—2 Kings 2:11  
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Match the Letter on Page 3 with the Story Description

_____ **The Widow's Son Made Well**

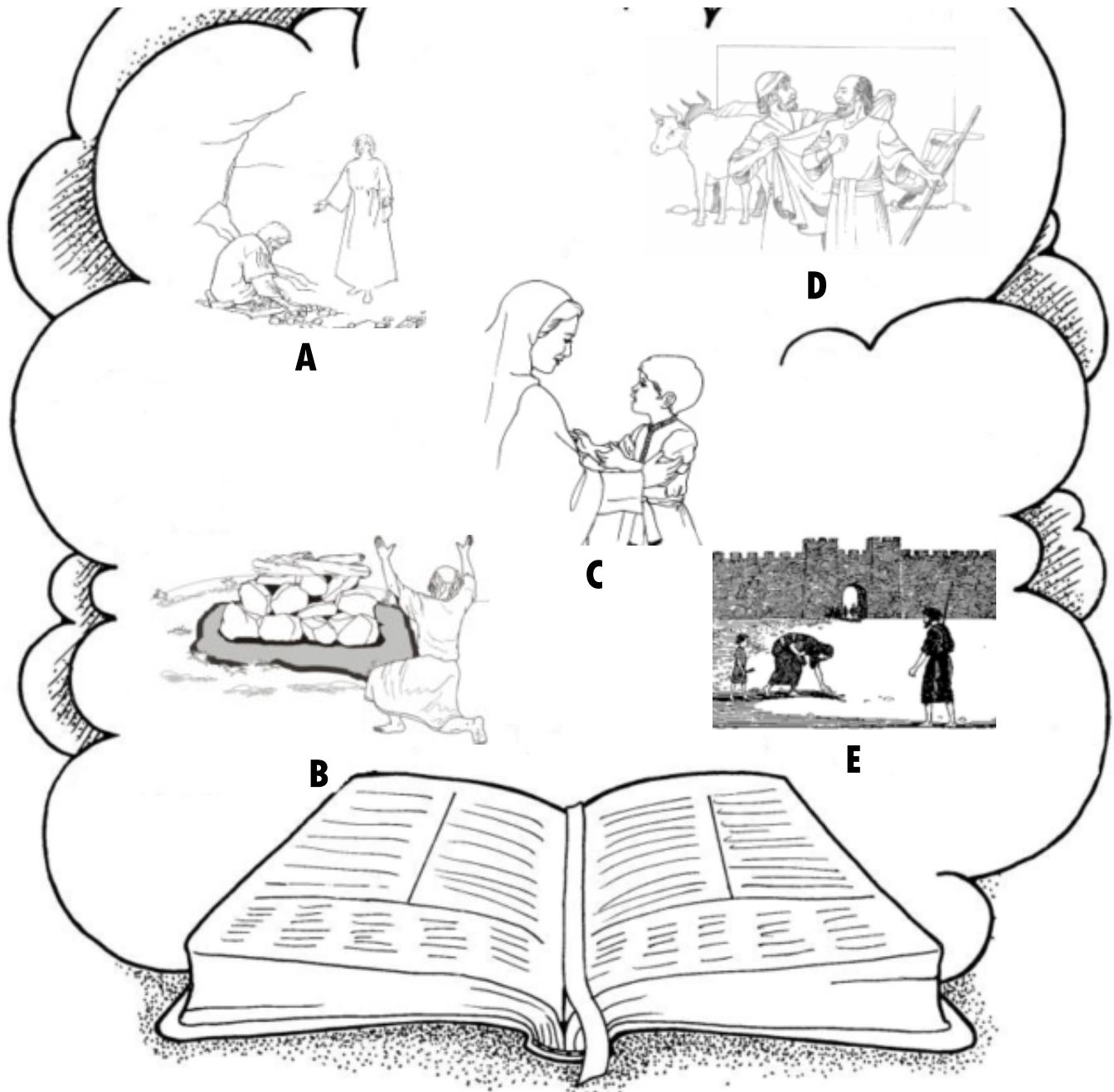
_____ **Elijah Throws His Mantle Around Elisha's Shoulders**

_____ **Elijah and the Widow of Zarephath**

_____ **God Provides for Elijah**

_____ **Elijah Prepares an Altar on Mount Carmel**

The Life of Elijah





Elijah Goes to Heaven in a Whirlwind