



**THE VISIBLE HAND**  
— OF THE INVISIBLE GOD —

**PART NINE**

## **Sermon Overview**

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## PART NINE

For Christians, absence from the body is presence with the Lord, and our eternal life is guaranteed by the very resurrection of Jesus from the dead. In the Old Testament, God showed believers that their eternity was secured by taking Elijah to Heaven in a whirlwind.

*1 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, "but do not speak of it."*

*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, "but do not speak of it."*

*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 of 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 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 own clothes and tore them apart.*

## **2 KINGS 2:1-12**

### **HEAVEN OR HELL**

Today, 60% of professing Christians do not believe that Jesus is the only way to get to Heaven; this is a deception. Scripture makes it clear that only those who have repented of their sins and received Jesus as their only savior, redeemer, and Lord will go to Heaven. Conversely, all who reject Christ will go to Hell upon death.

## **A SPIRITUAL JOURNEY**

Elijah had been given a Word from the Lord that he was going to be taken from the Earth. He brought his successor, Elisha, who refused to leave him, to different locations where there were people to encourage in the Lord. This journey can also be seen as a summary of Elijah's ministry.

### **Gilgal**

*Gilgal was a place of beginning, safety, and security, and the place where God dried up the Jordan River for the Israelites to enter the Promised Land. For Elijah, Gilgal was a reminder of the beginning of his obedience to God.*

### **Bethel**

*Bethel means "House of God." It was the place where Abraham and Jacob had built altars and sacrificed to God. For Elijah, it was a reminder of his obedient service to God.*

### **Jericho**

*Jericho was a place of God's victory in battle in the Promised Land. For Elijah, it was a reminder of all of the battles he had fought in his ministry.*

Regardless of which of these locations a Christian finds themselves in spiritually, we can rest assured that God will bring victory.

## **NAME IT AND CLAIM IT... THE CORRECT WAY**

Elisha refused to let Elijah revisit these locations alone. He exhibited

true friendship, commitment, and devotion, and was rewarded by God for it. Instead of asking for great power, Elisha asked for God's spirit in abundance, exhibiting great wisdom.

There are many ministries that teach that Christians should "name it and claim it," praying for selfish and worldly things. A Christian ought to dare to ask God for big things, but in service to the Kingdom of God.

## **ELIJAH AND CHRIST**

Elijah's ascension to Heaven is similar to Jesus's in that they were both witnessed only by those who had faith, and they were followed by a spiritual outpouring. Elisha received the Spirit of God, and all who follow Christ were given the Holy Spirit.

We live in terrible times, but we can trust that our eternity is secure. Just as Old Testament believers could look to biblical examples like Enoch and Elijah for hope in their eternal security, we can look to Jesus's final ascension for hope and assurance of ours.