

Finish Strong: Faithfulness and Legacy

Elijah: Part 5

Discussion Questions: Finish Strong (2 Kings 2:1–14)

1. In 1 Kings 18, Elijah experienced a major victory on Mount Carmel, but in chapter 19 he sat discouraged under a broom tree asking God to take his life. Why do you think intense spiritual victories or busy seasons are sometimes followed by deep exhaustion? How has God met you with practical care or grace during your own low moments?
2. The sermon emphasized that Elijah's lowest moment under the broom tree did not get the final word in his story. Are you currently allowing a past failure, regret, or difficult season to define your spiritual worth? How does receiving God's grace help you "get back up" and continue serving Him?
3. As Elijah traveled through Gilgal, Bethel, Jericho, and the Jordan, he repeatedly told Elisha to "stay here," but Elisha refused to leave his side. What does steadfast commitment to God look like when carrying out ministry or serving others gets difficult?
4. Elisha's request for a "double portion" of Elijah's spirit was a humble plea to inherit the responsibilities of a spiritual firstborn son and carry on the work. Who has acted as a spiritual father or mother in your faith journey? What godly characteristics did you see in them that you hope to carry forward?
5. As Elijah was taken into heaven, Elisha called him "the chariots and horsemen of Israel," recognizing that Elijah had served as a spiritual defender for the nation. Why is it valuable to acknowledge and learn from the faithful spiritual leaders who have gone before us?
6. After Elijah was taken, Elisha took Elijah's cloak, struck the Jordan River, and asked, "Where now is the Lord, the God of Elijah?" How does this event remind us that while human leaders come and go, God's presence and work remain constant?
7. In the second half of Elijah's life, his focus shifted from solitary work to investing in young prophets and mentoring Elisha. Who in your life—at home, church,

school, or work—might God be calling you to encourage and pour into?

8. What are some practical, simple ways you can begin walking alongside someone else spiritually this week (e.g., praying together, sharing Scripture, checking in, or inviting them into conversation)?
9. Elisha's miracle at the Jordan River proved that his strength came from the Lord of Elijah rather than his own abilities. In what area of your life or service are you currently tempted to rely on your own strength rather than trusting God's power?
10. Finishing strong over a lifetime comes down to taking the next faithful step. What concrete step of faith, obedience, or surrender is the Lord prompting you to take today?

Summary

To understand how to finish well, it helps to look at where God's prophet Elijah began. Before arriving at the end of Elijah's ministry in 2 Kings 2, a look back at 1 Kings 18 reveals one of his greatest victories. Elijah stood on Mount Carmel and single-handedly confronted 450 prophets of Baal. He prayed, fire fell from heaven, and the people fell on their faces declaring, "The Lord, He is God!" Shortly after, Elijah prayed for rain following three and a half years of severe drought in Israel. Though Baal was supposedly the god of the storm and rain, Baal could not bring a single drop. Elijah prayed to the true God, and the rain poured down.

One would expect this to be the turning point that sparked nationwide revival. Elijah expected King Ahab to return to the Lord, Jezebel to acknowledge God's power, and the nation to repent. Instead, Ahab remained weak and passive, while Jezebel issued a threat on Elijah's life. Overwhelmed, the prophet who had just faced 450 false prophets ran for his life. He sat down under a broom tree and prayed, "I've had enough, Lord. Take my life."

Yet God met Elijah not with judgment, but with grace and tenderness. God provided food and sleep—demonstrating that sometimes the most spiritual thing a person can do is eat something and get rest. God then led Elijah to Mount Horeb (Mount Sinai), the very place where He had previously met Moses after Israel's rebellion with the golden calf to reveal His compassion and commitment. At Horeb, God reminded Elijah who He was, confirmed that Elijah was not alone, and revealed that there was still work left to

do. Part of his new assignment was to anoint and mentor a successor named Elisha.

Setting the Scene: Elijah and Elisha

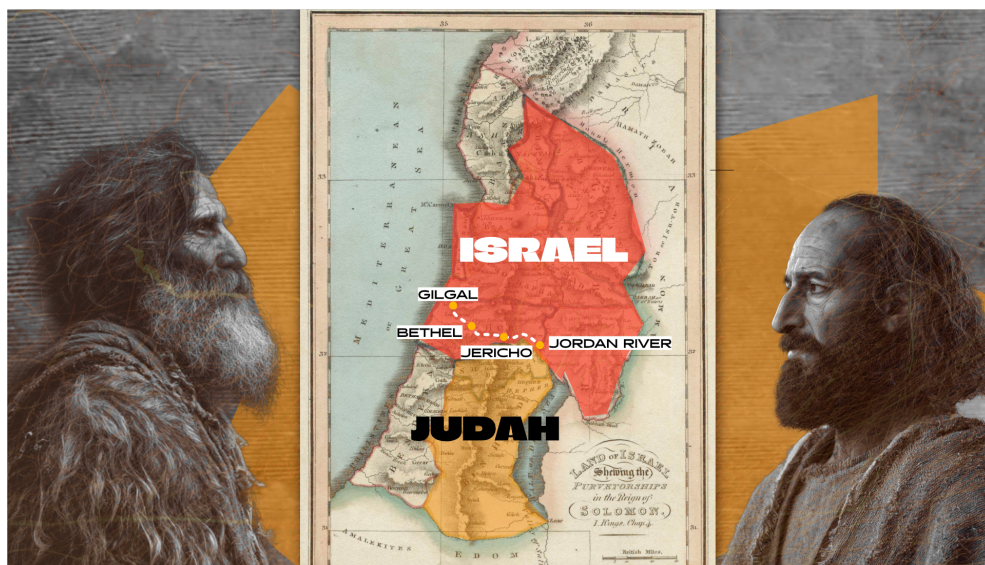
Between the events at Mount Horeb in 1 Kings 19 and the events of 2 Kings 2, roughly 10 to 18 years passed. During those years, Elijah faithfully served the Lord while pouring his life into Elisha—teaching him, walking alongside him, and preparing him for what was ahead.

As 2 Kings 2 opens, Elijah's ministry on earth is drawing to a close. Understanding their names helps clarify their roles and relationship:

- **Elijah** means "My God is the Lord." He is the older prophet who had served for decades.
- **Elisha** means "My God is salvation". He is the younger prophet who followed and learned from Elijah.
 - Alphabetically, "J" comes before "S," which can help keep Elijah (the predecessor) and Elisha (the successor) straight.

The central question of 2 Kings 2 is not simply how Elijah leaves this earth, but how he finishes his race—and what it looks like for believers today to finish strong.

The Journey from Gilgal to the Jordan



In 2 Kings 2:1–8, Elijah and Elisha set out together from Gilgal. Their route takes them through a specific series of locations: Gilgal, Bethel, Jericho, and finally to the Jordan River.

This specific path is significant because Elijah is making a reverse journey through the key locations connected to Israel's initial entry into the Promised Land under Joshua, who was Moses' successor. Just as Moses' ministry ended and Joshua stepped forward to cross the Jordan River and lead the people, Elijah's ministry is ending, and Elisha will soon cross back over the Jordan to continue God's work in Israel.

At every stop along the journey, a distinct pattern unfolds:

1. Elijah tells Elisha, "Stay here; the Lord has sent me to..." (Bethel, Jericho, or the Jordan).
2. Elisha repeatedly responds, "As surely as the Lord lives and as you live, I will not leave you."
3. Groups from the company of the prophets at Bethel and Jericho approach Elisha and ask if he knows the Lord will take his master away that day. Elisha answers, "Yes, I know, so be quiet."

Elijah was testing Elisha's commitment. Elisha had surrendered to his calling years earlier, but stepping into the primary prophetic role carried a far greater spiritual weight than merely following behind another leader. By refusing to leave Elijah's side, Elisha proved he was willing to stay the course all the way to the end.

When they reached the Jordan River, fifty men from the company of prophets watched from a distance. Elijah took his cloak, rolled it up, and struck the water. The Jordan River divided to the right and left, allowing both men to cross over on dry ground—recalling past miracles where God parted waters for His servants.

The Inheritance of a Spiritual Son

Once they crossed the river, Elijah turned to his successor and asked, "Tell me, what can I do for you before I am taken from you?" Elisha replied, "Let me inherit a double portion of your spirit."

While a "double portion" might sound like a request for superior status or power, it refers directly to the inheritance rights of a firstborn son. For instance, if an inheritance were split among three sons, it would be divided into four parts, with the oldest son receiving two parts (a double portion).

Elisha was not asking to outshine Elijah. Rather, he was declaring, "You have been a spiritual father to me, and I want to be your spiritual son. I want to inherit the spiritual responsibility God entrusted to you and carry on the work". Elijah acknowledged the

gravity of the request, stating, "You have asked a difficult thing... yet if you see me when I am taken from you, it will be yours—otherwise, it will not."

Taken Up in a Whirlwind

As the two walked and talked together, a chariot of fire and horses of fire suddenly appeared and separated them. Elijah was taken up into heaven in a whirlwind.

Seeing this, Elisha cried out, "My father! My father! The chariots and horsemen of Israel!"

Elisha was mourning the loss of his spiritual father and mentor. Furthermore, by referring to him as "the chariots and horsemen of Israel," Elisha recognized that Elijah had acted as a spiritual defense force for the nation—a faithful warrior who stood against spiritual darkness and idolatry.

After Elijah was gone from his sight, Elisha tore his clothes in grief. He then picked up Elijah's fallen cloak, walked back to the bank of the Jordan River, and struck the water, asking: "Where now is the Lord, the God of Elijah?" Immediately, the water divided to the right and left, and Elisha crossed back over.

Elijah was gone, but the God of Elijah remained as present and powerful as ever.

Three Takeaways for Finishing Strong

Elijah's life and transition yield three vital principles for staying faithful over the long haul:

1. Do not let your low moments define you. Elijah experienced deep discouragement under the broom tree in 1 Kings 19, making false assertions that he was the only faithful servant left and begging for his life to end. Yet God met him, nourished him, restored him, and gave him a new assignment. Elijah got back up and obeyed. A single season, failure, or sin does not have to be the final word of your life; God's grace invites you to confess, receive forgiveness, and get back to work.

2. Invest in others. The second half of Elijah's ministry shifted from solitary confrontations to relational investment. He visited schools of prophets and spent over a decade mentoring Elisha. Finishing strong requires looking beyond personal achievements to pour into the next generation—whether through formal discipleship, workplace Bible studies, youth mentorship, or walking alongside fellow believers.

3. Rely on God's strength, not your own. When Elisha stood at the Jordan River, he did not call out for Elijah; he asked, "Where now is the Lord, the God of Elijah?" Human leaders pass away, but God's strength remains unbroken. Faithfulness over a lifetime comes from trusting in the enduring power, grace, and presence of the Lord rather than relying on personal energy.

Taking the Next Step

Finishing well begins with the step taken today. For some, the next step is getting back up after a season of spiritual exhaustion or failure, knowing God is not finished yet. For others, it means intentionally investing time into someone else's spiritual growth. For many, it is simply choosing to surrender control of the future and trust in the God who sustained Elijah. Whatever step the Lord is prompting, trust His power and press forward to finish strong.