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BIBLE ADVENTURES SCRIPT:

**A1540 ~ Elijah and the Heavenly Chariot.**

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*Welcome to Bible Adventures. Help for today. Hope for tomorrow. Jesus is Lord of all.*

When each school year ends, final-year students look toward further study plans or getting a job. Those who want practical skills for jobs like building houses, seek out an apprenticeship with an experienced tradesman. If they are successful, they'll spend the next few years being taught all the different aspects of putting up buildings. After all of their exams are passed and they become a tradesman, they can start out in a building business of their own.

In today's *Bible Adventure*, Elijah went to seek out an apprentice or successor for himself after God had directed him to. While Elijah was at Mount Horeb after fleeing from Queen Jezebel, God told Elijah the young successor's name was Elisha, son of Shaphat. Elisha lived in a city close to the Jordan River about 10 miles away from Elijah's home town.

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Elisha's call to work for God came while he was busy ploughing a field. There was a saying that success comes to those who are too busy working to look for it. Certainly all those who love the Lord should be out doing kind and helpful things and not wasting time in idle pursuits. When Elijah's mantle fell onto Elisha's shoulders, Elisha knew what it meant. He went back to his family to say farewell and returned to become Elijah's companion from then on.

Elisha was eager and willing to learn all Elijah had to teach him. There are so many avenues of study these days that we all like to be willingly ignorant of some of them. Who, for example, needs to know the complex details of ocean mapping or satellite technology? Only those who are involved in such types of work need to study the fine detail.

But there are some areas of life we should make certain that we are not ignorant about. Taking good care of our bodies is one. Certainly, we should not neglect our health. In the Greek translation of Proverbs, Chapter 18 and in the second part of verse 9, it says: “He who does not use his endeavours to heal himself is brother to him who commits suicide.” If we desire our bodies to be the temple of the Holy Spirit, we must make every effort to overcome illness and injury.

Neither should we be willingly ignorant about our Creator God. Every year, many people around the world have their attention drawn to the celebrations of the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world. And a few months later, their attention is again drawn to Christ’s amazing victory over death when God raised Jesus back to life again. Jesus died once for all and will never die again. Yet for many, their disinterest, ignorance or laziness means that they’ll never take the trouble to find out why perfect Jesus came to die for them or what God expects from us His created people. Being willingly ignorant of this may seem convenient and time-saving now but in the long-term, there’s a bitter price to pay.

For 10 years, Elisha faithfully trained under Elijah’s teaching and helped him with many of the menial duties the older man needed assistance in. Then the day of parting came. 50 sons of the prophets stood watching at a distance to see Elijah go up to heaven in a chariot of fire. These men were witnesses and God needed them. Otherwise, if Elisha had been the only person to see Elijah go, his testimony would have been discredited.

Elijah wasn't the first person to go to heaven without dying. Back in Genesis, the first book of the Bible, Chapter 5 records the life of a faithful man called Enoch. He lived in continual fellowship with the Lord and God took him home without the death of his body. In the New Testament book of Hebrews, Chapter 11, it says: "By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death." Enoch's name is not as familiar as that of his famous son Methuselah, who became the oldest man who ever lived.

Because Elijah did not die in the normal way, there was an expectation that he would come back to earth sometime. In the last 2 verses of the Old Testament God Himself said He would send Elijah back to the people of Israel. In the first chapter of John's Gospel, John the Baptist was out in the countryside preaching. The priests and Pharisees travelled out to question him closely. They wanted to know who he was. They asked him, "Are you Elijah?" He denied it, yet he was fulfilling prophecies made by Elijah.

In Matthew's Gospel, Chapter 16, the Lord Jesus asked his disciples who the people thought He was. They answered that some thought Jesus was the prophet Elijah or one of the other prophets. This expectation of a prophet coming to them seemed to dull the people's interest in waiting for their Messiah to come.

Elijah did, however, make another extremely brief appearance on earth. In Chapter 17, the Lord Jesus took three of His disciples up onto a high mountain. There alone, the appearance of the Lord Jesus changed and His face shone like the sun. His clothing shone like light and Moses and Elijah appeared with Him. They talked together and a cloud of light overshadowed them. Then God spoke His approval and delight in the Lord Jesus and instructed the disciples to listen to Him. The frightened disciples fell on the ground face down in terror, yet when the Lord Jesus spoke to them directly, He was alone again.

In the last Bible book, Revelation, Chapter 11, there is an account of two witnesses who are given miraculous powers over the whole earth for three and a half years. They are then killed but God will raise them back to life three and a half days later, before calling them back to heaven. Many Christians believe that these two witnesses will be Enoch and Elijah.

When the Lord Jesus Christ in His risen body was taken back to heaven, God had 500 witnesses give testimony that Jesus actually returned to God. An American man was involved in an illegal plot last century. He said that there were only around 10 people who knew about the plot. If all the 10 people had kept quiet for three months, they would have gotten away with the shameful deed. But their secret came out and the man served time in jail for his part in the crime. The man realised in prison that if the account of the 500 witnesses to the Lord Jesus' ascension had been made up and was untrue, it would have been evident very quickly. He became convinced that the Lord Jesus had really risen from being dead in a grave. So he became a Christian.

How about you? Are you convinced that the Lord Jesus is King of kings and Lord of lords and one day, will be honoured by all people of all ages? In the New Testament book Philippians, Chapter 2, it says: "At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." If you've never given any time or thought to this before, do not remain willingly ignorant about it any longer. Ask the Lord Jesus to be your Saviour from sin today!

*The drama is from The Bible In Living Sound.*

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