



## BIBLE RADIO PRODUCTIONS

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BIBLE ADVENTURES SCRIPT:

**A2318 ~ Elijah and the Heavenly Chariot.**

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

Elijah had been a prophet of God for about 27 years, and probably from 875 BC to 848 BC. During his last years of ministry to the northern kingdom of Israel, Elijah trained an assistant to replace him: he was Elisha, son of Shaphat. Elisha was called to follow Elijah while ploughing a field on his father's farm in 1<sup>st</sup> Kings, Chapter 19. Elisha left everything in response and went with Elijah to learn God's ways for the work God was calling him to do.

In 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings, Chapter 2, the time came for Elijah's days on earth to come to an end.

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DRAMA - [The Bible In Living Sound](#).

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From the time of Samuel, God's first major prophet for His Hebrew people, and before there were any kings in Israel, Samuel had organised and led three groups of God's prophets to stay true to God. These groups or schools of prophets lived in Gilgal, Bethel and Jericho.

Before Elijah's time came to leave this world, God sent him to visit these three groups of prophets as they had been among the 7,000 faithful people who hadn't bowed down to worship Baal. God told Elijah this after Elijah had fled from a death threat made by Queen Jezebel.

Elijah asked Elisha not to go with him when he visited these prophets. In asking this, Elijah was really testing Elisha's faithfulness. Each time Elisha was asked to stay behind, he refused and he continued on with Elijah all day. The final place the Lord sent Elijah on his last day on earth was to the Jordan River. Elijah was busy doing the Lord's work until the very end of his earthly life; in this, he set a good example for all the Lord's servants to follow. In this generation, some of the more experienced Christians may want to retire, take life easy and idle away whatever time they may have left. However, in Ephesians, Chapter 5, Christians are told to redeem the time and make the most of every opportunity.

The prophets in each group told Elisha that Elijah was going home that day. Elisha already knew this, but he told them not to speak of it. Elijah wanted no ceremonies, no remembrances and no praise; his departing, like his living, was for the sake of God's glory alone. Elijah did his work for the Lord in the power and the spirit of the Lord, and he did not look for success as the world rates success.

When Elijah and Elisha came to the Jordan River, they were still in sight of the Jericho prophets. Elijah used his rolled-up cloak to strike the water and it parted to allow them to cross over on dry land. Suddenly a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared and Elijah was swept up to heaven in a whirlwind. The chariot and horses were a visual representation of God's heavenly power, which had been with Elijah throughout his ministry. Now they were lifting Elijah to heaven. Like Enoch, a patriarch of God from long before, Elijah was taken into heaven without experiencing bodily death. Because of this, the Israelite people wondered if at some future time, Elijah might return to earth.

In the last book of the Old Testament of the Bible, the prophet Malachi called on the now hard-pressed Israelites, who had returned from exile in Babylon, to repent and to turn to God to enjoy His blessings again. In Chapter 4, God also said: "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord."

In Luke's Gospel, Chapter 1, and more than 400 years later, the angel Gabriel spoke to the old, devout priest Zachariah as he ministered in the Temple of God in Jerusalem. Childless Zachariah was told that he was going to have a son, who would be a man with the spirit and power of Elijah. The angel said: "He will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even before his birth. He will prepare the people for the coming of the Lord (Jesus)."

Later when John the Baptist was a grown man and had begun his ministry of calling the Israelites back to God, the religious leaders came to him in John's Gospel, Chapter 1, and asked him if he was Elijah. He denied it. The actual reason for John's denial is that John was avoiding being acclaimed as Elijah resurrected in the flesh, as the Jews in Jesus' day expected Elijah himself to come to them as God's messenger. John the Baptist's identification as being Elijah by the people was not so much about him being the actual Elijah, but rather, as how they should response to him and his role. In this sense, John denied that he was 'Elijah'; however, he had come "in the spirit and power of Elijah."

Because the Jews had misunderstood the Elijah prophecy in Malachi, John the Baptist applied to himself a parallel prophecy in Isaiah, Chapter 40. He replied to the Jewish religious leaders: "I am a voice shouting in the wilderness, 'Clear the way for the Lord's coming!'" When Jesus said that John was 'Elijah', He meant the same thing; namely, that John was to fulfil the same role in his day as Elijah had in his time of calling the nation of Israel to repentance. To those who were willing to believe in Jesus, John the Baptist functioned as an Elijah, for they believed in Jesus as Lord. To the religious leaders who rejected Jesus, John the Baptist didn't perform this function at all.

Long after John the Baptist had been killed by King Herod, Elijah was briefly seen on the earth again. In Matthew's Gospel, Chapter 17, and Mark's Gospel, Chapter 9, the Lord Jesus took three of His disciples up to a high mountain alone. There they saw Jesus change into a glorified form. Having confessed that Jesus was truly the Christ, now Jesus confirmed these disciples' faith by appearing to them as the glorified Son of God. Moses and Elijah then also appeared as transfigurations with Jesus in glorious splendour. In Luke, Chapter 9, they talked with Jesus about His coming departure from earth: His death, resurrection and ascension back into heaven.

Jesus' transfiguration was a sign that He was the Christ, the Son of God. This was further confirmed by God the Father speaking from a cloud. God said: "This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to Him!" This was the second time a voice from heaven had confirmed Jesus as God's Son. The first time was at His baptism. This mountain top experience left those three disciples in no doubt that Jesus is the Christ or Messiah. But they didn't know what Jesus meant when He talked about "rising from the dead." They didn't understand that Jesus first had to suffer and die, and only then would He rise from the dead.

Having seen Elijah on the mountain with Jesus, the disciples recalled that in the Old Testament, the prophet Malachi had written that Elijah would come to earth again before the coming of the Messiah. If Jesus was the Messiah, then why hadn't Elijah come, the disciples wanted to know. The Jews believed that Elijah would come to anoint the Messiah as king of Israel. John the Baptist did prepare the people for the coming of the Messiah by calling them to repentance from sin and producing the fruits of repentance but not everyone recognized his role.

In Revelation, Chapter 3, Verse 10, the Lord Jesus says: "Because you have obeyed my command to persevere, I will protect you from the great time of testing that will come upon the whole world to test those who belong to this world. I am coming soon." Are you ready?

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

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