**“As You Yourself Live”**

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Psalm 16:1-6

2 Kings 2:1-12

2 Corinthians 3:12-13; 4:1-6

Mark 9:2-9

 Transfiguration

From 2nd Kings chapter 2: “When the Lord was about to take Elijah up to heaven by a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal. And Elijah said to Elisha, ‘Please stay here, for the Lord has sent **me** as far as Bethel.’ But Elisha said, ‘**As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you**. So **they** went down to Bethel.”

Grace to you and peace from God, our Father, and from our Lord, and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Bridge

What first got my attention in Israel when I went (and I know that this got Ed McIntyre’s attention because we both stood there on that spot and talked about it) was **where Elijah met the obvious glory of the Lord**. From 1st Kings, chapter 17 until 2nd Kings 2 (our text for today, so 8 chapters running up to it), Elijah is **THE** (**original and official**) **prophet of God** sent to kings (him beginning with Ahab and his wife Jezebel then onto Ahab’s son Ahaziah). And when he had completed **his work**, he didn’t leave the Lord without voice … he was the first of **many**. But already by the end of just the 3rd of those chapters about him, he’d taken on an under-study (a “Robin” to his “Batman”). Before that though, he’d stood alone but not at all alone (with God) before the mighty odds of 450 pagan prophets and thousands of spectators standing with the glory of God on Mount Carmel. Ed and I, and Pat and Randy and Sandy Bricker, stood (on our 2nd day in the Holy land) where **Elijah with God’s glory stood** … and we were standing there talking about this **transfigurational event** at probably the same time of day when **God was there with Elijah displaying Himself in full glory** as, at **that time**, the force of fire shooting down from heaven.

Eight chapters of the Old Testament spoke first of **Elijah standing for and by the Lord God (and He him)**. Part, though, of one chapter in Mark (covered also in similar portions in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke and then talked about by Peter later in an epistle), **Elijah is recorded standing for and by the Lord God (and He him) AGAIN in glorious display**.

Text

I said “AGAIN” because Elijah came out to **stand with and for the Lord during THE TIME THAT HE WAS** **GIVEN-TO** (in **all occasions**, but first on the front end of what became the final 75 years of the existence of the Northern Kingdom of Israel). This **majority** of what had begun as the people who God saved and set aside to be His, **THEY** began to **destroy themselves**, and God wanted them **turned back from that** and **returned to Him**. He wanted to **restore them in every way that He’d blessed them**. But it wasn’t through poverty that they were done in. It wasn’t (for them) a pandemic or even civil unrest that caused their demise. For them, **lifestyle** it was, that they thought was fruitful. Freedom was all over the place (they could, literally, do and worship any way they wanted to, and it **should have been God who they worshipped**, but **it was all about THEM**). One could make their own way in a worldly way there and feel positive about themselves. **Self**-esteem there in the Northern Kingdom was encouraged and acquired. What many Americans might **give** for **SUCH A** 75 years after complaining so much over the casualties of just one year so far? But we may wish to consider what many Americans **have** **given-over-to** for **SUCH A** **SIMILAR** 75 years?

See, after 75 years, the warned kingdom **had** **destroyed itself**. When all **seemed** prosperous and in an earthly way “good”, all **ENDED A LOT FASTER THAN IT HAD STARTED**. Elijah, however, **stood with and for the Lord during THE TIME THAT HE WAS** **GIVEN TO DO THAT** … then passed the baton for others to **DO THE SAME**.

The **main character** in this event that previews the “**Great Transfiguration**” is, almost, **Elisha** … as it will then later become Peter, James, and John. The **“WHIRLWIND EVENT” DIDN’T SURPRISE ELIJAH’S UNDER-STUDY** … and **DISCIPLES TOOK IT ALL IN PERSPECTIVE**.

Elijah made his **retirement journey** from Gilgal south through Bethel, south then through Jericho, then onto the east and just beyond the Jordan (he had to go through water to get there). Elisha would not be deterred from matter-of-factly **accompanying Elijah** on this **movement from earthly life to an everlasting one**, but **all** **that (and this is worth noting)** **known as “to God’s glory and from His glorified life to ours”**.

**What came for Elijah** did not **surprise** **Elisha**. “Please stay here, Elisha, for the Lord has sent me as far as Bethel … then Jericho … then through the Jordan”, and all along the way the “sons of the prophets” in those places told Elisha (**as if he didn’t already know**) that **the Lord would receive Elijah “away from him” for the time … till he’d get to join him in Heaven**. “Shush! I know!” Elisha always responded to it that way. **“As the Lord lives (and I KNOW THAT HE DOES), and as you yourself do, Elijah (and I KNOW THAT YOU DO … AND I DO … AND WE ALWAYS WILL BECAUSE THE LORD LIVES), Elisha said, “I will not leave you”**.

I don’t think that Peter, James, and John were really all that **SURPRISED** by the **life and glory shown in Jesus and (because of Him) Moses also and Elijah**. They just said: “It **is Good, Lord, that we are here**. Let us make three tents, one for You and one for Moses and one for Elijah.”

Application

In application to the matter-of-factness by which believers have always known the life of the Lord (and Him specifically incarnate in the Son, Jesus) and ourselves alive now and eternally **because of that**, I’d like to read from a couple of authors … and **use their points**. First, “noting the reality of Heaven and the fact that it is **the Living God who takes us there**—whether by heavenly chariot, fire, and whirlwind or by the more familiar vehicle of physical death—these are striking aspects **presented by** Elijah, Elisha, sons of the prophets, Moses, Peter, James, John, and **obviously Jesus**. Note the quiet and unquestioning confidence that everyone has in the glory God shown for us and in people like us. **God is the Maker of all situations, and His life carries people from this life into life forever**.”

**Life (as the Lord lives)** and **life as “we ourselves do because of Him”** is the **point** so **ASSUMED** as the process caused no **alarm**, chariots of fire and people aglow not only **expected** but **put into perspective** and with the last from an author who was one of those men (Peter): “We did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you” (he later wrote in his Epistle) “the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but **we were eyewitnesses of the Lord’s majesty**. For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to Him by the Majestic Glory, ‘This is My beloved Son, with Whom I am well pleased,’ we ourselves **heard and were with Him on the holy mountain**. And” (and **here’s the biggest news here**) “we have something **more sure (and maybe, in that, more SURPRISING), the PROPHETIC WORD” he writes … God’s Words / Scripture … “to which you will do well to PAY ATTENTION TO as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the Morning Star rises in your hearts**.” ….

It might have been great to have been up on a mountain at the Transfiguration of our Lord with Moses and Elijah also perfected in flesh and them glowing and recognizable and **alive … forevermore alive**. It might have been great to have watched Elijah whisked up into Heaven by Chariots of Fire. But the fact is that **we’ve all seen the Lord in His glory (and, probably, if we’d all just think about it, we can ourselves tell about and put into perspective the events where that became more obvious than at other times)**.

The “**more sure thing**”, though, is **the Word that we have every time we hear it and read it and enjoy it and cling to it** … “it is **Good, Lord, that we are here in IT**”. It doesn’t take quite the exercise, then, of **experience** or **discernment**, but only the **promise of what it is**. And that’s what Peter reminded us of … and not long before he traveled to what was his then Heavenly **full life because of Christ’s** through the “familiar vehicle” of his own death.

“God, in the glorious Transfiguration of Your beloved Son You confirmed the mysteries of the faith by the testimony of Moses and Elijah (and that’s what that was: **their prophetic testimony**). In the voice that came from the bright cloud You wonderfully, God, foreshowed our adoption by grace (because that’s what you say of us in baptism: ‘beloved sons and daughters’). Mercifully make us co-heirs with the King **in His glory** and bring us to the **fullness** of **our inheritance in Heaven**; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who **does** live and reign with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. In His name, +Jesus. Amen.”