

2 Kings 2

Verses 1-3

Now it came about, when the Lord was about to bring Elijah up by a whirlwind to heaven, that Elijah left Gilgal with Elisha. ² And Elijah said to Elisha, “Stay here please, for the Lord has sent me as far as Bethel.” But Elisha said, “As *surely* as the Lord lives and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.” So they went down to Bethel. ³ Then the sons of the prophets who were at Bethel went out to Elisha and said to him, “Are you aware that the Lord will take away your master from over you today?” And he said, “Yes, I am aware; say nothing *about it*.”

Now it came about, when the Lord was about to bring Elijah up by a whirlwind to heaven, that Elijah left Gilgal with Elisha.

Elijah never died as mankind normally dies. Instead, he was translated into heaven, in a similar manner to Enoch.

See Genesis 5:21-24

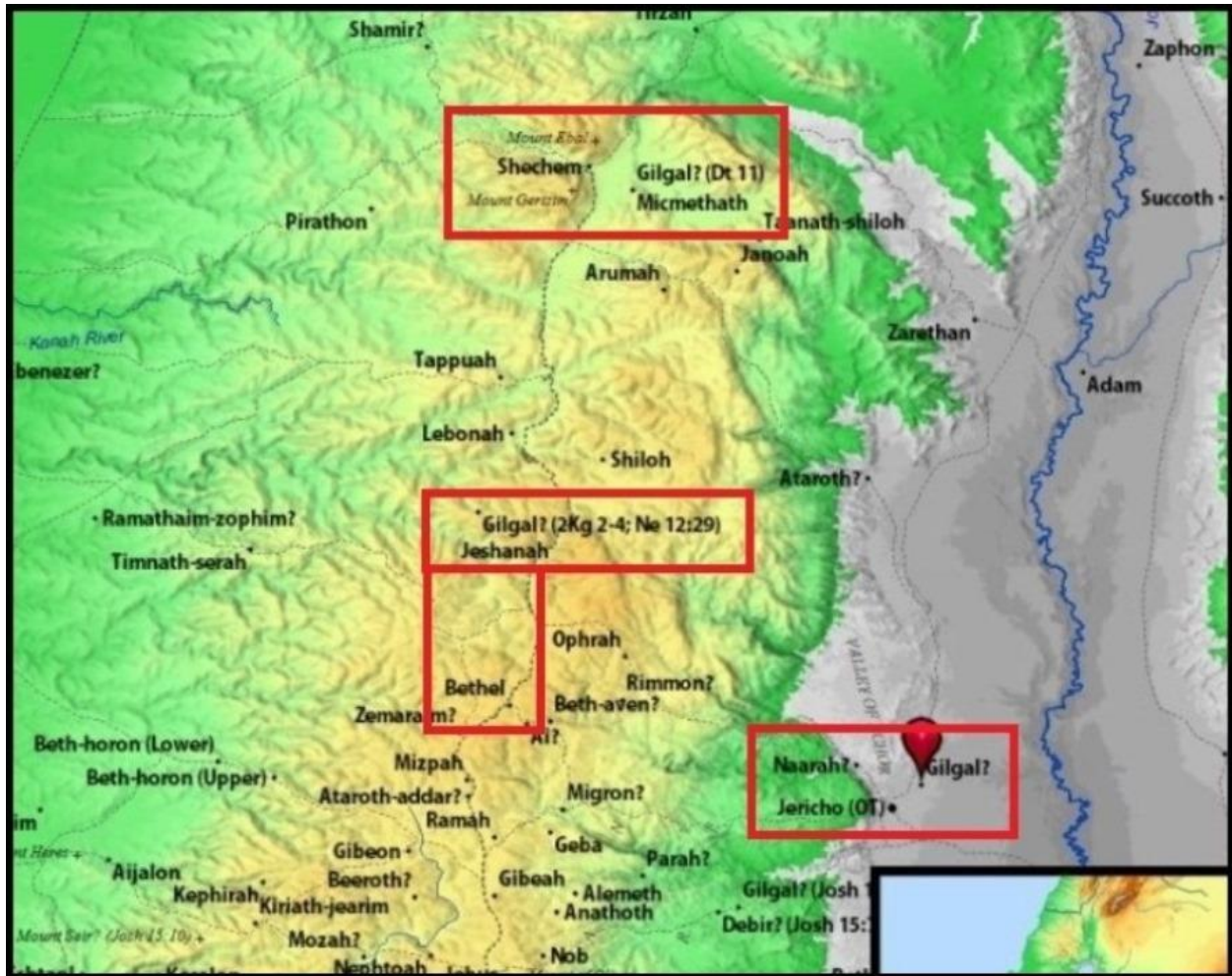
²¹ Now Enoch lived sixty-five years, and fathered Methuselah. ²² Then Enoch walked with God three hundred years after he fathered Methuselah, and he fathered *other* sons and daughters. ²³ So all the days of Enoch were 365 years. ²⁴ Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.

We are not told why these two men were blessed in this way but it was a very rare gift to receive. If it was based solely on service and character it seems Moses and maybe a few other bible characters would have been a candidate for this blessing.

² And Elijah said to Elisha, “Stay here please, for the Lord has sent me as far as Bethel.” But Elisha said, “As *surely* as the Lord lives and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.” So they went down to Bethel.

The two of them left Gilgal and went to Bethel. Before we look at the map it should be said that there may have been 5 places in the Old Testament that were called Gilgal but for right now we will only deal with 3 of them. It is not clear if any of them were a town or simply a place where the people of Israel meet or stayed for a period of time.

See map 205 3 Gilgal's



The Gilgal near Shechem is referenced in Deut.11:30

²⁹ “And it shall come about, when the Lord your God brings you into the land where you are entering to possess it, that you shall place the blessing on Mount Gerizim and the curse on Mount Ebal.³⁰ Are they not across the Jordan, west of the road toward the sunset, in the land of the Canaanites who live in the Arabah, opposite Gilgal, beside the ^[x]oaks of Moreh?

The Gilgal mentioned here in 2 Kings 2 is the one that was north of Bethel.

The Gilgal by Jericho is referenced in Joshua 4:19

¹⁹ Now the people came up from the Jordan on the tenth of the first month and camped at Gilgal, on the eastern edge of Jericho.

³ Then the sons of the prophets who were at Bethel went out to Elisha and said to him, “Are you aware that the Lord will take away your master from over you today?” And he said, “Yes, I am aware; say nothing *about it*.”

The sons of the prophets were students attending a school of the prophets.

Verses 4-6

And Elijah said to him, “Elisha, please stay here, for the Lord has sent me to Jericho.” But he said, “As *surely* as the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.” So they came to Jericho. ⁵ Then the sons of the prophets who were at Jericho approached Elisha and said to him, “Do you know that the Lord will take away your master from over you today?” And he answered, “Yes, I know; say nothing *about it*.” ⁶ And Elijah said to him, “Please stay here, for the Lord has sent me to the Jordan.” But he said, “As *surely* as the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.” So the two of them went on.

And Elijah said to him, “Elisha, please stay here, for the Lord has sent me to Jericho.” But he said, “As *surely* as the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.” So they came to Jericho.

Elisha followed Elijah from Gilgal to Bethel to Jericho, a distance of about 30 miles.

See Map 210



⁵ Then the sons of the prophets who were at Jericho approached Elisha and said to him, “Do you know that the Lord will take away your master from over you today?” And he answered, “Yes, I know; say nothing *about it*.”

It's interesting that the sons of the prophets in Bethel and Jericho both knew that the Lord was about to take Elisha to heaven. Either both groups received a revelation from the Lord or news traveled very quickly in those days.

⁶ And Elijah said to him, “Please stay here, for the Lord has sent me to the Jordan.” But he said, “As *surely as* the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.” So the two of them went on.

The distance from Jericho to the Jordan River was about 5 miles.

Verses 7-11

⁷ Now fifty men of the sons of the prophets went and stood opposite *them* at a distance, while the two of them stood by the Jordan. ⁸ And Elijah took his coat, folded it, and struck the waters, and they were divided here and there, so that the two of them crossed over on dry ground. ⁹ When they had crossed over, Elijah said to Elisha, “Ask *me* what I should do for you before I am taken from you.” And Elisha said, “Please let a double portion of your spirit be upon me.” ¹⁰ He said, “You have asked a hard thing. *Nevertheless*, if you see me when I am taken from you, it shall be so for you; but if not, it shall not be so.” ¹¹ And as they were walking along and talking, behold, a chariot of fire *appeared* with horses of fire, and they separated the two of them. Then Elijah went up by a whirlwind to heaven.

⁷ Now fifty men of the sons of the prophets went and stood opposite *them* at a distance, while the two of them stood by the Jordan.

These 50 men had followed the two prophets from Jericho to the Jordan River.

⁸ And Elijah took his coat, folded it, and struck the waters, and they were divided here and there, so that the two of them crossed over on dry ground.

This was the last miracle that Elijah would perform.

⁹ When they had crossed over, Elijah said to Elisha, “Ask *me* what I should do for you before I am taken from you.” And Elisha said, “Please let a double portion of your spirit be upon me.”

Like Solomon, Elisha did not ask for worldly things but rather a heavenly gift.

See 1 Kings 3:10-13

¹⁰ Now it was pleasing in the sight of the Lord that Solomon had asked this thing.

¹¹ And God said to him, “Because you have asked this thing, and have not asked for yourself a long life, nor have asked riches for yourself, nor have you asked for the lives of your enemies, but have asked for yourself discernment to understand justice, ¹² behold, I have done according to your words. Behold, I have given you a wise and discerning heart, so that there has been no one like you before you, nor shall one like you arise after you. ¹³ I have also given you what you have not asked, both riches and honor, so that there will not be any among the kings like you all your days.

¹⁰ He said, “You have asked a hard thing. *Nevertheless*, if you see me when I am taken from you, it shall be so for you; but if not, it shall not be so.

This was a hard thing because only God could grant such a request.

¹¹ And as they were walking along and talking, behold, a chariot of fire appeared with horses of fire, and they separated the two of them. Then Elijah went up by a whirlwind to heaven.

The chariot and horses “of fire” and the whirlwind were used to bridge the gap between the physical world that man currently occupies and the spiritual world that will one day be revealed.

When Elisha dies he will be buried but there will be a spectacular miracle after his death.

See 2 Kings 13:21

²⁰ And Elisha died, and they buried him. Now the marauding bands of the Moabites would invade the land in the spring of the year. ²¹ And as they were burying a man, behold, they saw a marauding band; and they threw the man into the grave of Elisha. And when the man touched the bones of Elisha he revived and stood up on his feet.

This is a good time to summarize the miracles of Elijah.

See chart 215

Under the “other” column there are several abbreviations.

7n represents the 7th king of the North (when his reign began).

The 4s means the 4th king of the south.

And m1 stands for the 1st miracle of Elijah.

Miracles of Elijah

1st Kings timeline

Ch.	Event	Other	Year
16	Ahab king of Israel	7n	874
22	Jehoshaphat king of Judah	4s	870
17	Elijah fed by Ravens	m1	
17	Widow of Zarephath	m2	A period
17	Widows son raised from dead	m3	of 3.5 years
18	Fire of the Lord / Baal prophets killed	m4	
18	Rain	m5	
19	The call of Elisha		
20	Ben-Hadad attacks Samaria		
20	Ben-Hadad attacks again in the spring		
21	Naboth's vineyard		
22	Ahab killed at Ramoth Gilead		853

2nd Kings timeline

Ch.	Event	Other	Year
1	Ahaziah king of Israel	8n	853
1	Fire from Heaven	m6	
1	Fire from Heaven	m7	
1	Joram king of Israel	9n	852
2	The water divided	m8	
2	Elijah taken up to heaven		

Verses 12-14

¹² And Elisha was watching *it* and he was crying out, “My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and its horsemen!” And he did not see Elijah again. Then he took hold of his own clothes and tore them in two pieces. ¹³ He also took up the coat of Elijah that had fallen from him, and he went back and stood by the bank of the Jordan. ¹⁴ Then he took the coat of Elijah that had fallen from him and struck the waters, and said, “Where is the Lord, the God of Elijah?” And when he also had struck the waters, they were divided here and there; and Elisha crossed over.

¹² And Elisha was watching *it* and he was crying out, “My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and its horsemen!” And he did not see Elijah again. Then he took hold of his own clothes and tore them in two pieces.

The same words were used by Joash at the death of Elisha.

See 2 Kings 13:14

¹⁴ When Elisha became sick with the illness of which he was to die, Joash the king of Israel came down to him, and wept over him and said, “My father, my father, the chariots of Israel and its horsemen!”

However, we know that Elisha was not taken up to heaven in a whirlwind.

The tearing of his clothes was symbolic of his grief for the loss of Elijah.

¹⁴ Then he took the coat of Elijah that had fallen from him and struck the waters, and said, “Where is the Lord, the God of Elijah?” And when he also had struck the waters, they were divided here and there; and Elisha crossed over.

There are two events here that were symbolic of Elisha taking over for Elijah.

1. The coat falling from Elijah and now being the possession of Elisha.
2. The last miracle performed by Elijah was also the first miracle performed by Elisha.

Elisha had asked for a double portion of Elijah’s spirit to be upon him and that is what he was given. Elisha will perform twice as many miracles as Elijah

See chart 220

Miracles of Elisha

2nd Kings timeline

2	The water divided	m1	852
2	The water made pure	m2	
2	2 bears mauled 42 boys	m3	
3	Moab rebels		
4	Water from Edom	m4	
4	The widows olive oil	m5	
4	Son of rich woman brought back to life	m6	A
4	Bad stew made good	m7	period
4	Feeding of 100 people	m8	of
5	Naaman healed of Leprosy	m9	4 years
6	An ax head floats	m10	
6	Army struck with blindness	m11	
6	Famine in Samaria		
7	Arameans hear sound of a great army	m12	
7	Famine ends	m13	
7	Unbelieving Officer gets trampled	m14	848
8	Rich woman gets income back	m15	842
8	Hazael becomes king of Aram		842
8	Ahaziah king of Judah	6s	841
13	body touches Elisha's bones and comes alive	m16	797

Someone might argue that God performed the last miracle not Elisha and that is a true statement but that argument could be used for all of the miracles of both men.

There are a few interesting observations in the lives of these two men.

1. The first 5 miracles of Elijah take place during a 3 and 1/2 year period and the last three during a 1 or 2 year period from 853 to 852.
2. 14 of Elisha's 16 miracles take place over a 4 year period from 852 to 848 BC.
3. 22 of the 24 miracles performed by these two prophets occurred during a period of about 9 years.

Verses 15-18

¹⁵ Now when the sons of the prophets who *were* at Jericho opposite *him* saw him, they said, “The spirit of Elijah has settled on Elisha.” And they came to meet him and bowed down to the ground before him. ¹⁶ Then they said to him, “Behold now, there are with your servants fifty strong men; please let them go and search for your master, in case the Spirit of the Lord has taken him up and cast him on some mountain or into some valley.” But he said, “You shall not send *anyone*.”

¹⁷ Yet when they urged him until he was ashamed *to refuse*, he said, “Send *them*.” So they sent fifty men; and they searched for three days, but did not find him.

¹⁸ They returned to him while he was staying in Jericho; and he said to them, “Did I not say to you, ‘Do not go’?”

¹⁵ Now when the sons of the prophets who *were* at Jericho opposite *him* saw him, they said, “The spirit of Elijah has settled on Elisha.” And they came to meet him and bowed down to the ground before him.

It seems likely that these are not the same men that had followed Elijah and Elisha from Jericho to the Jordan River (see verse 7) but were those that had remained there.

¹⁶ Then they said to him, “Behold now, there are with your servants fifty strong men; please let them go and search for your master, in case the Spirit of the Lord has taken him up and cast him on some mountain or into some valley.” But he said, “You shall not send *anyone*.”

Earlier, these same men had asked Elisha if he knew that Elijah would be taken from him. Now they want to go looking for him! It must have been difficult for them to believe that the prophet they loved and respected would no longer be with them.

However, there was a bit of reasoning to believe he might still be alive because Elijah had been transported to another place more than once in the past and they hoped that this was another example of that kind of phenomenon.

¹⁷ Yet when they urged him until he was ashamed *to refuse*, he said, “Send *them*.” So they sent fifty men; and they searched for three days, but did not find him.

They really wanted to believe that Elijah might be alive and it didn't do any harm to give them a little more time to realize the truth.

Verses 19-22

¹⁹ Then the men of the city said to Elisha, “Behold now, the site of the city is pleasant, as my lord sees; but the water is bad and the land is unfruitful.” ²⁰ And he said, “Bring me a new jar, and put salt in it.” So they brought *it* to him. ²¹ Then he went out to the spring of water and threw salt in it and said, “This is what the Lord says: ‘I have purified these waters; there shall not come from there death or unfruitfulness any longer.’” ²² So the waters have been purified to this day, in accordance with the word of Elisha which he spoke.

¹⁹ Then the men of the city said to Elisha, “Behold now, the site of the city is pleasant, as my lord sees; but the water is bad and the land is unfruitful.”

Since Jericho receives less than 10 inches of rain annually, the bad water was a serious problem for the town. It not only tasted bad but it was also harmful to the crops.

This spring is still active in Jericho.

See video 225 9.28 The spring of Jericho

<https://www.levickfamily.com/9.28.html>

²⁰ And he said, “Bring me a new jar, and put salt in it.” So they brought *it* to him.

Some people may question why it needed to be a new jar since all they did was put salt in it. This is similar to Naaman being told to dip 7 times in the Jordan River. Why not one time? It didn't make sense to Naaman but this is what God said to do.

²¹ Then he went out to the spring of water and threw salt in it and said, “This is what the Lord says: ‘I have purified these waters; there shall not come from there death or unfruitfulness any longer.’” ²² So the waters have been purified to this day, in accordance with the word of Elisha which he spoke.

It is true that God purified the waters but this miracle took place because the people obeyed Elisha doing exactly what he had told them to do.

If 1st and 2nd kings were written by Ezra then the spring had been pure for over 400 years when this was written. It has been an additional 2400 years since the time of Ezra and it is still providing pure water to the inhabitants of Jericho.

Verses 23-25

Now he went up from there to Bethel; and as he was going up by the road, *some* young boys came out from the city and ridiculed him and said to him, “Go up, you baldhead; go up, you baldhead!”²⁴ When he looked behind him and saw them, he cursed them in the name of the Lord. Then two female bears came out of the woods and tore up forty-two of the boys.²⁵ He then went on from there to Mount Carmel, and from there he returned to Samaria.

Now he went up from there to Bethel; and as he was going up by the road, *some* young boys came out from the city and ridiculed him and said to him, “Go up, you baldhead; go up, you baldhead!”

Note to self.....It's not a good idea to insult someone who can do miracles. ☺

Maybe it would have gone better if they had said, Go up you follicly challenged. ☺

²⁴ When he looked behind him and saw them, he cursed them in the name of the Lord. Then two female bears came out of the woods and tore up forty-two of the boys.

This was a fairly large group of boys and it makes one wonder what they were doing outside the city without any parental supervision.

While their taunting was wrong, it seems like their punishment was much too severe. According to the Law of Moses the punishment should fit the crime i.e., eye for an eye. However, it seems like this punishment came from the Lord so there may be more to this story than meets the eye (no pun intended).

²⁵ He then went on from there to Mount Carmel, and from there he returned to Samaria.

The life of a prophet was not easy. In this chapter alone Elisha had traveled over 140 miles. This included travels thru the desert, over mountains, and it was all done on foot. There were no motels or restaurants and worst of all no cell phones. ☹ However, he did have a direct line to God. ☺

See chart 230

**The travels of Elijah and Elisha
in Chapter 2**

Person	Book	Verse	Place			Miles
Both	2 Kings	2:1-2	Gilgal	to	Bethel	14
Both	2 Kings	2:4	Bethel	to	Jericho	15
Both	2 Kings	2:6	Jericho	to	Jordan	5
Elisha	2 Kings	2:15	Jordan	to	Jericho	5
Elisha	2 Kings	2:23	Jericho	to	Bethel	15
Elisha	2 Kings	2:25	Bethel	to	Mt Carmel	60
Elisha	2 Kings	2:25	Mt Carmel	to	Samaria	27
					Total	141