

Theodore Epp:

2 Kings 2:1-11

The closing incident in Elijah's life was perhaps the most touching in his whole history. He was translated to heaven without having to die.

His ministry may have covered 15 or 20 years, but the public aspect of it was much briefer than that.

At a time of great depression in his life, when lying under a juniper tree, he had prayed for death, but when the time of his translation came, he was thankful that God had not answered that prayer.

The prophet's translation was to be at a specially designated place. Elijah had learned long ago that absolute obedience to God's directions was necessary for God's blessings.

Elijah began his journey from Gilgal to the place of his ascension, and Elisha insisted on going with him. This journey involved a great test for Elisha, who was to be Elijah's successor.

From the account you may be led to think that Elijah was reluctant to have Elisha go with him, but this may well have been part of the test for the younger man.

Elijah was alone in his ministry, and he was humble, and he may have felt that his coming translation was too sacred a matter to be witnessed by others.

We can learn valuable lessons from this experience. If we wish to behold the glory of God and to be fit vessels to participate in God's work, we must go on to maturity in Christ.

"Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4:17).