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2 Kings 2:1-12

"If Today Were My Last Day: No Regrets"

Pastor Gary Hamrick

The "home-going" of the prophet Elijah is without question one of the most remarkable accounts in the Bible. The image of a chariot of fire and horses of fire taking him to his heavenly home is certainly dramatic and miraculous!

In this study Pastor Gary is going to remind us of the importance of being right with the Lord, right with others, and ready to go, should today be our last day on earth.

Historical Background

1. Elijah's name appears 40 times in the Bible *after* he is was taken up to heaven.
 - a. Paul mentions Elijah in [Romans 11:1-4](#) concerning how he was part of the remnant of Believers.
 - b. James mentions Elijah in [James 5:17-18](#) concerning his powerful prayer life, which we are to emulate.
 - c. An angel mentions Elijah in [Luke 1:17](#) concerning the birth of John the Baptist, and how John would come in the *"spirit and power of Elijah."*
 - i. *"And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous - to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."*
 - d. Jesus mentions Elijah in [Luke 4:24-26](#) concerning one of Elijah's miracles.
 - e. Elijah is also mentioned in Matthew, Mark, and Luke for actually appearing on the Mt. of Transfiguration with Jesus and Moses.
 - i. [Mark 9:2-6](#) - *"After six days Jesus took Peter, James and John with him and led them up a high mountain, where they were all alone. There he was transfigured before them. His clothes became dazzling white, whiter*

than anyone in the world could bleach them. And there appeared before them Elijah and Moses, who were talking with Jesus. Peter said this to Jesus, 'Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters - one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.' (He did not know what to say, they were so frightened.)"

2. In [Revelation 11:1-14](#), we read that Elijah and Moses will appear together as the two witnesses of God.
 - a. Elijah and Moses will appear for the first 3½ years of the Tribulation.
 - b. God will send them to evangelize.
 - c. Fire will come from their mouths!
 - d. They will have power to shut up the heavens so it won't rain for 3½ years.
 - e. The Antichrist will slay them and their bodies will lie in the streets of Jerusalem for 3½ days, at which time the breath of God will bring them to life, and they will rise up and be taken up to heaven in full view of everyone.

Elijah's "Good Exit"

3. Pastor Gary said the thing that he loved more than the example of Elijah, was how Elijah made a "good exit."
4. It's clear in the Bible account that Elijah, Elisha, and many others knew that this was going to be Elijah's last day on earth.
5. We don't know whether or not he knew what method God would use to take him, or if he knew he would be taken without physically dying.
6. In those days, probably due to the influence of Elijah, there were companies of prophets or more literally, schools of prophets, which were located in various towns in Israel.
 - a. [2 Kings 2:3](#) - *"The company of the prophets at Bethel..."*
 - b. [2 Kings 2:5](#) - *"The company of the prophets at Jericho..."*
 - c. These were like small Bible colleges or seminaries set up for the purpose of training up young men who had the gift of prophecy.
 - d. Today, we would see Elijah as being like an Academic Dean or a revered older professor.
7. Elijah spent his last day "making the rounds" visiting these schools to say, "Goodbye," share final words of encouragement, and announce that Elisha was going to be taking his place.

8. When Elijah arrived, the students would ask Elisha, “What do you think about how God is going to take Elijah today?!”
 - a. **2 Kings 2:3** - *“The company of the prophets at Bethel came out to Elisha and asked, ‘Do you know that the Lord is going to take your master from you today?’ ‘Yes, I know,’ Elisha replied, ‘but do not speak of it.’ ”*
 - b. **2 Kings 2:5** - *“The company of the prophets at Jericho went up to Elisha and asked him, ‘Do you know that the Lord is going to take your master from you today?’ ‘Yes, I know,’ he replied, ‘but do not speak of it.’ ”*
9. It must have been painful for Elisha to know that his best friend, as well as his mentor, was going to be taken from him and the fact that everyone was reminding him of this make it all the more painful.
10. The list of things we don’t see Elijah doing on the last day of his life on earth, includes:
 - a. He wasn’t crying over a life of regrets.
 - b. He wasn’t trying to get his life right with God at the last minute.
 - c. He wasn’t running around making amends with people he had offended.
 - d. He wasn’t spending time with family members he had neglected.
 - e. He wasn’t saying things he should have been saying all along to the people he loved.
11. He lived his life from day-to-day in such a way that, except for saying some goodbyes, he really didn’t need to do anything differently, which meant he didn’t need to run around making up for lost time.

How Should We Live?

12. Pastor Gary encouraged us to live our life in such a way that if today were our last day, we would have no regrets and no unfinished business.
13. If we walked with the Lord and lived like this we wouldn’t need to:
 - a. Make amends with anyone, because we would have already done so.
 - b. Say, “I love you,” to those we care about, because we would regularly do so.
 - c. Spend more time with our family members, because we would already have been consistently spending time with them.
 - d. “Get right with God,” because we already would be!
14. People “in the church,” so to speak, aren’t the only ones asking this question.
 - a. The Internet search result for this question (“How would you live your life if you had one day to live?”) was 1.1 billion!

- b. These results are helpful for comparison's sake:
- i. Katy Perry – 182 million
 - ii. Justin Bieber – 192 million
 - iii. Barack Obama – 219 million
 - iv. What is ISIS? – 221 million
 - v. How old is the earth – 684 million

Discussion Questions

1. Review the introduction to the study guide with your group to provide the appropriate background.
2. Read [2 Kings 2:1-12](#) to provide the foundation for this study.
3. Spend time talking about what you would do if you knew today was your last day on earth.
4. If today were your last day on earth, would you be in scramble mode or would you have a measure of peace about your relationships with others, etc.?
5. If today were your last day on earth, would be at peace with the Lord and in right relationship with him?
6. Do you think it's healthy or unhealthy to talk about death?
7. Read and discuss [John 5:24](#), and focus on the assurance Christians have of a home in heaven when this life ends.
8. Read and discuss [Ecclesiastes 7:2](#) (CEV – Contemporary English Version) – *"It's better to go to a funeral than to attend a feast; funerals remind us that we all must die."*
9. Read and discuss the lyrics to Nickelback's song, *If Today Was Your Last Day*.¹
10. Read and discuss the lyrics to Wallis Willis's song, *Swing Low, Sweet Chariot*.²
11. What are some of the ways you live your life with your eyes on Jesus and his promise of eternal life in heaven?

¹ <http://www.songlyrics.com/nickelback/if-today-was-your-last-day-lyrics/>

² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swing_Low,_Sweet_Chariot#Traditional_lyrics

12. Close your time in prayer by asking the Holy Spirit to help each person: intentionally live their life in such a way that it would be okay if any given day were to be their last day on earth; intentionally make every effort to mend broken relationships, settle differences and keep “short accounts” with family and friends; thank the Lord for his precious promise of a home in heaven!