

## Chariots of Fire

### I. Slide1 Announce:

- A. Slide2 Next Wed Night is last Fam Night of the Summer.
- B. Slide3 C@Rsk - *Marjorie Saylor* sharing about pos of a local home for trafficked women
- C. Slide4 Fam Beach day - 8/26
- D. Slide5 Day Church Baptism & Fam Day - 9/10
- E. Slide6 *Pray for* 5 yr old neighbor boy, just 2 blocks from our church, in grave condition.
  1. Extremely unsanitary conditions (removed 11 dogs, 4 cat from residence). *Mur couple charged w/willful harm to a child, infliction of great bodily injury & torture.*
  2. *Pray for MPD & MFD* (hardest w/children, esp extreme case).

### II. Slide7 Intro:

- A. If you visit a hydroelectric dam, you realize it isn't the water spilling over the top that provides the power, no that's just **froth**. Way below the surface turbines and generators transform the power of tons and tons of water to electricity - quietly, without notice, **not** like the **flashy froth** on top. *I believe the Holy Spirit works the same way in our lives.*
- B. D.L.Moody was to have a campaign in England. An elderly pastor protested, *Why do we need this 'Mr. Moody'? He's uneducated, inexperienced, etc. Who does he think he is anyway? Does he think he has a monopoly on the Holy Spirit?*
  1. A younger, wiser pastor rose and responded, *No, but the Holy Spirit has a monopoly on Mr. Moody.*

### III. Slide8 THE LAST DAYS OF ELIJAH (1-11)

- A. CHARIOTS OF FIRE (1-11) or, *Taken Alive*
- B. (3) Spectators vs. someone right in the middle of it.
  1. They were just spectators **but** were trying to tell the prophet what was going on
  2. What good is our knowledge of spiritual things if it doesn't make a difference in our lives?
- C. (2,4,6) Stay here - what a good leader, testing his apprentice...Do you want to drop off? Here's your out if you wish.

1. Difficulties in Christian living frequently suggest or turning back.
  2. If we comply, we missed the radiant vision and mighty endowment.
  3. Let us dare to persevere, with undeviating & unswerving faith, till we are clothed in living power.
- D. (8) Elijah performs his final miracle by parting its waters.
1. Elijah learned this *technique* in gym class :)
- E. (9) Elisha asks to become Elijah's *rightful successor*.
1. The Hebrew phrase used here (*lit.* rendered *according to two shares*), echoes the legal terminology of Deut 21:17...according to which the firstborn was to receive **a double share** of the inheritance.
  2. Elisha desires for *his spiritual inheritance* to be like that of a firstborn son, *double in share in comparison to* Elijah's other spiritual children, such as other prophets. [Interestingly, the Bible reports Elisha did twice as many miracles as Elijah (14 compared to 7) ]
  3. The oldest son and successor of his father was given a double portion.
- F. As with Moses, the spirit of Elijah is transferrable to others.
1. Slide9a Num 11:16 *So the Lord said to Moses: "Gather to Me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them; bring them to the tabernacle of meeting, that they may stand there with you. 17 Then I will come down and talk with you there. I will take of the Spirit that is upon you and will put the same upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, that you may not bear it yourself alone.*
    - a) Slide9b Explain: *with/in/upon*. Jn.14:17 *the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.* [Acts 1:8 *But you shall receive power when the HS has come upon u*]
  2. The office of **head prophet** is transferred from Elijah to Elisha - **just as** the office of **commander of Israel** is transferred from Moses to Joshua.
  3. Note, Yahweh was the one who originally made this decision (1 Kgs 19:16).
  4. \*Share my story of taking over CM...
- G. Don't miss this...Elisha wanted to be fully equipped! (for the high service he was called to)

1. Do you desire that? Have you been trying it on your own smarts?
- H. (10) Elijah tells Elisha that he will receive his request if he witnesses Elijah's departure.
- I. Slide10 (11) A chariot of fire appeared with horses of fire - again, *fire* in the OT is associated with God's presence. The chariots and horses belong to Yahweh (Hab 3:8 *O Lord, were You displeased with the rivers, Was Your anger against the rivers, Was Your wrath against the sea, That You rode on Your horses, Your chariots of salvation?*)
    1. I think it was apropos for the prophet who repeatedly asked for *fire* to come down *from heaven*, would now be escorted *into heaven* by *God's fiery incandescence*. So God sends a special vehicle to bring him home to His palace.
  - J. For those of you sitting in the shadow of *despair or death*...there are days of rapture and transfiguration in store for you, only be still and wait patiently. *Your God will come!*<sup>1</sup>
    1. *The waters* shall part before you, & *the fire* shall bear you to your home. *Be strong!*

#### IV. Slide11 THE FIRST DAYS OF ELISHA (12-25)

- A. Remember, *Elisha* was a young farmer living with his parents when he was called to be Elijah's successor (1 Kgs 19:19-21).
- B. Note the difference in these 2 prophets: *Elijah's* ministry focused on matters of state. *Elisha* ministered primarily to the common people of the land.
  1. *Elijah* is a type of forerunner of Jesus (John the Baptist).
  2. *Elisha's* ministry what's more like the work of Jesus, *who went through all the towns and villages, teaching in healing every disease and sickness*. Mt.9:35
- C. It is not wrong for you to depend on your *Elijah* for as long as God gives him to you.<sup>2</sup>
  1. But remember that the time will come when *he must leave* and will no longer be your *guide* and your *leader*, because God does not intend for him to stay.
  2. We realize then, God can take your mentor, your husband, your wife...anyone whom you lean upon, rely upon (emotionally, financially, spiritually).

<sup>1</sup> F.B.Meyer, pg.179 (adapted)

<sup>2</sup> Adapted from Oswald Chambers 8/11

3. **Take**...maybe take them home (heaven). Maybe take them away (they move). Of course the question is...**will you fully lean on God's Spirit?**
- So God tests him at the **Jordan, Jericho, Bethel**. (walking back alone to the last 3 places he was with his mentor) *Alone at Jordan. Alone at Jericho. Alone at Bethel.*
  - Maybe not even a *test* to see *how you will do...but instead* God showing you *how you will do* as you lean on the Holy Spirit. God showing you a...*you can do it reminder.*

D. **Slide12 FIRST MIRACLE** (12-14) *Parting of Jordan River*

E. Elisha took Elijah's mantle and dared to trust God for the power to do the impossible.

- It was one thing to cross Jordan with Elijah, **but** quite another to step out by faith by himself.
- We are not supposed to live **in** the past, **on** the past, or **for** the past. *www*
  - Accept the heritage of the past, honor the past, but trust the living God for power today.

F. (12) Reminds us, **God's servants** will leave us...**but** God's **Spirit** goes on working.

G. (13) **He also took up the mantle** - the office of prophet wasn't always a pleasant one.

- Sometimes you** have to **speak hard truths** to leaders (Elijah/Ahab).
- Sometimes you** feel all **alone** (I'm the only 1 left).
- Sometimes you** have to deal with **rejection** (most rejected Elijah's message).
- Sometimes you** have to **run** for your very life (from Jezebel).
  - But Elisha, **at the moment of decision to walk away or take up the mantle of prophethood, took up the mantle & the anointing of the HS & the rejecting of the world and all its offers.**

H. (14) Elisha's repetition of this action demonstrates his ability to take Elijah's place.

- This account parallels **Joshua's** parting of the Jordan, **which likewise** demonstrated God's presence with **Joshua** shortly after he succeeded **Moses**.
- Slide13 That same Spirit is for us.** This is the meaning of Pentecost. Acts 2:38,39 *Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall*

*receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.*

- I. This 1st miracle proved to the young men in the school of the prophets that Elisha was truly God's prophet, and they honored him. **However**, they were not so sure that Elijah was really gone. In (16-18) we have their unbelief and folly recorded.
- J. **Slide14a LETTING GO** (16-18)
- K. **Reluctantly Elisha permits 50 prophets to search for Elijah.** They are unsuccessful.
1. Sometimes in leadership it's best to let them learn for themselves when they won't listen to you.
- L. **Slide14b HEALING WATERS** (19-22) **The healing of the waters** by the salt is quite a **contrast** to Elijah's miracle of stopping the rain for 3 1/2 years.
1. This also draws a parallel between Elisha and **Moses**, who made bitter water sweet by throwing a log into the waters of **Marah** (Exod 15:23-25).
  2. **Elisha** began his ministry by taking **bad** water and making **good**.  
**Jesus** began His ministry by making **already good water**, even **better**.
- M. **Can you be salt to someone's bad water situation?**
- N. **Slide14c BALD IS BEAUTIFUL** (23-25) Rick Mossa story
- O. Keep in mind that these were *young men*, not children, and therefore responsible for their deeds (same word is used for **Joseph** at age 39 & **Rehoboam** at age 40).
1. **Bethel was a headquarters for idolatry** (1Kngs12:28-33, **golden calf** in Dan/Bethel).
    - a) This sacred place had been desecrated and the young men were actually ridiculing God's Word and God's servants.
  2. **The fact that 42 of them met together suggests an organized plan.**
    - a) Calling the prophet **baldhead** was one of the lowest forms of insults.
    - b) And the words **go up** obviously point to their ridicule of Elijah's *rapture* to heaven.
  3. The bears **mauled** them, **but** we do not know if any of the young men were killed.

- a) It was a divine rebuke to the flippant attitude of wicked men who should have known better.
- b) Today, God is patient with mockers...but one day His judgement will fall on them.

- P. Ask: What 3 tests would you say that Elisha was getting tested on in his life/ministry?
1. Perseverance.
  2. Will you try to do this on your own or w/God's Sp?
  3. What will you do after you grieve the lost of a friend/mentor?