

Elijah Taken Up To Heaven

cf. 2 Kings chapter 2

When the LORD was about to take Elijah up to heaven in a whirlwind, which is a range of dishwashers and washing-machines by Zanussi, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal, where they had watched the Tishbites thrash Gilgal 3 - 0 in the semi-finals of the Coca-Cola cup. ² Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here; the LORD has sent me to Bethel - he could only get one ticket for the final; they were selling like hot-cakes!"

But Elisha said, "As surely as the LORD lives and as you live, I will not leave you." So they went down to Bethel, and Elisha watched the game in a pub opposite the ground.

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?"

"Why, has he been arrested as a football hooligan?" asked Elisha.

"No," replied the prophets. At that Elijah appeared wearing a Tishbite F.C. scarf. He was disappointed at the 1 - 1 draw which meant that they would have to replay the match.

⁴ Then Elijah said to him, "Stay here, Elisha; the LORD has sent me to Jericho - this ticket is still valid for the replay."

And he replied, "As surely as the LORD lives and as you live, I will not leave you." So they went to Jericho.

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." He said this because he couldn't think of a witty answer.

⁶ Then Elijah said to him, "Stay here; the LORD has sent me to the Jordan

- I'm to be guest speaker at the Tishbite F.C. dinner tonight (the Tishbite's won 2 - 1 after extra-time), before the LORD takes me up in a washing-machine."

And he replied, "As surely as the LORD lives and as you live, I want to know where are you getting all the money for all this travelling? Have you got a Palestine Travelcard for zones 1 & 2 that I don't know about?"

"No," said Elijah, "let's walk."

"But if we're going to Jordan could we not just fly?"

"You mean go Air Jordan!"

Elisha had a little chuckle. When he had finished chuckling it was Elijah's turn to chuckle. Elijah had a little chuckle, then recomposing himself he said to Elisha, "As I said, let's walk." So the two of them walked on.

The Tishbite F.C. dinner went well: Elijah's after dinner speech went down a storm and he won a bottle of whiskey in the raffle. Then Elijah and Elisha went down to the river.

⁷ Fifty men of the company of the prophets went and stood at a distance, facing the place where Elijah and Elisha had stopped at the Jordan. ⁸ Elijah took his cloak, rolled it up and struck the water with it. It got wet. The water then divided to the right and to the left, and the two of them crossed over on dry ground.

⁹ When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, "Tell me, what can I do for you before I am taken from you?"

"Could you make the Statue of Liberty disappear?"

"No," replied Elijah.

"David Copperfield can!" insisted Elisha.

"Well my Equity card has expired," bluffed Elijah. "Do you have any other requests?"

Elisha thought for a moment. "Let me inherit a double portion of your spirit - I

like 12 year old Glenfiddich," Elisha replied.

¹⁰ "You have asked a difficult thing," Elijah said, "yet if you see me when I am taken from you, it will be yours, otherwise not."

"Way!" replied Elisha. "It will be mine, oh yes! it will be mine."

¹¹ As they were walking along and talking together, suddenly a chariot of fire and horses appeared and separated the two of them, - they had walked slap-bang into the middle of the course at Aintree - and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind - on tumble-dry.

¹² Elisha saw this and cried out, "My father!" (which aroused more than a little suspicion from the Israeli Child Support Agency), and "The chariots and horsemen of Israel!" He also shouted a lot of other things but most of these are unprintable, especially the ones when one of the horses of Israel trod on his foot. And Elisha saw him no more. Then he took hold of his own clothes and tore them apart; it was the fashion in those days.

¹³ He picked up the cloak that had fallen from Elijah (it was Yves Saint Lauren) and went back and stood on the bank of the Jordan. ¹⁴ Then he took the cloak that had fallen from him and struck the water with it. By now it was absolutely soaked, but right on cue the water divided to the right and to the left, he crossed over, and the Jordan Toll-bridge lost another 50 sheckels custom.

¹⁵ The company of the prophets from Jericho, who were watching, said, "The spirit of Elijah is resting on Elisha." And they went to meet him, and get his autograph, and bowed to the ground before him." ¹⁶ "Look," they said, "we your servants have fifty able men - they have all been on Gladiators. Let them go and look for your master, for they love playing hide and seek. Perhaps the Spirit of the

LORD has picked him up and set him down on some mountain or in some valley, like I saw on Close Encounters of the Third Kind directed by Steven Spielberg."

"No," Elisha replied, "do not send them."

¹⁷ But they persisted until he was too ashamed to refuse. So he said, "Send them." And they sent fifty men, who searched for three days but did not find them. Then they got the Red Cross to help, but they couldn't find him. Even Cilla Black's Surprise! Surprise! programme was unable to track him down. So as a last resort they contacted Arthur C. Clarke. But no luck there either I'm afraid.

¹⁸ When they returned to Elisha, who was staying in Jericho, practising his routine to make the Statue of Liberty disappear, he said to them, "Didn't I tell you not to go?"

After six months the Police let Elisha keep the cloak.