

All In?

(Fully Committed; No Turning Back)

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We will begin with a study of 2 Kings 2:1-14, in which Elijah is taken up to heaven, while Elisha, his faithful understudy, refuses to leave him; and watches God's fiery chariot come for his master.

2 Kings 2:1-2¹

"And it came to pass, when the Lord was about to take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal. {2} Then Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here, please, for the Lord has sent me on to Bethel." But Elisha said, "As the Lord lives, and as your soul lives, I will not leave you!" So they went down to Bethel."

Elijah is aware that his time is short and he's ready to take a chariot ride to Heaven. He says to Elisha, "I need to go to Bethel. You stay here." Elisha replies, "Not on your life. I'm "All In." I will go with you all the way to the end!"

2 Kings 2:3-4

"Now the sons of the prophets who were at Bethel came out to Elisha, and said to him, "Do you know that the Lord will take away your master from over you today?" And he said, "Yes, I know; keep silent!" {4} Then Elijah said to him, "Elisha, stay here, please, for the Lord has sent me on to Jericho." But he said, "As the Lord lives, and as your soul lives, I will not leave you!" So they came to Jericho."

Elijah continues along toward his meeting with the fiery chariot that will take him to Heaven. He says, "I'm going to Jericho. You stay here." Again, Elisha replies, "Not a chance. "I'm All In!"

2 Kings 2:5-6

"Now the sons of the prophets who were at Jericho came to Elisha and said to him, "Do you know that the Lord will take away your master from over you today?" So he answered, "Yes, I know; keep silent!" {6} Then Elijah said to him, "Stay here, please, for the Lord has sent me on to the Jordan." But he said, "As the Lord lives, and as your soul lives, I will not leave you!" So the two of them went on."

¹ All Scriptures are NKJV unless otherwise noted.

The “sons of the prophets” ask Elisha whether he knows that Elijah is going away that very day? Elisha replies, “Of course I know. I’m going with him until he’s gone to Heaven. So keep silent, just zip your lips.”

2 Kings 2:7-9

“And fifty men of the sons of the prophets went and stood facing them at a distance, while the two of them stood by the Jordan. {8} Now Elijah took his mantle, rolled it up, and struck the water; and it was divided this way and that, so that the two of them crossed over on dry ground. {9} And so it was, when they had crossed over, that Elijah said to Elisha, “Ask! What may I do for you, before I am taken away from you?” Elisha said, “Please let a double portion of your spirit be upon me.””

Elijah strikes the water of the Jordan River and a path across it dries up. They walk to the other side. When they get there, Elijah looks at Elisha, who has faithfully stayed by his side. He says, “What can I do for you, before I go?” Elisha replies: “I’ve watched God’s hand on you. I know my purpose. I want twice what God has given you [an excellent spirit and prophetic power]!” (That’s the way it’s supposed to be when you faithfully have followed your mentor or leader and want what he or she has.)

2 Kings 2:10-14

“So 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} Then it happened, as they continued on and talked, that suddenly a chariot of fire appeared with horses of fire, and separated the two of them; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. {12} And Elisha saw it, and he cried out, “My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and its horsemen!” So he saw him no more. And he took hold of his own clothes and tore them into two pieces. {13} He also took up the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and went back and stood by the bank of the Jordan. {14} Then he took the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and struck the water, and said, “Where is the Lord God of Elijah?” And when he also had struck the water, it was divided this way and that; and Elisha crossed over.”

Elijah gets his fiery chariot ride to Heaven in the middle of a tornado sent from heaven (a whirlwind). Elisha watches this and realizes what a gift his mentor had been. He tears his clothes. It’s

a great loss to him. But now it's time to move ahead. He finds Elijah's mantle that had been left behind, strikes the water with it and says, "Where is the Lord God of Elijah?" By Elisha's actions, he was saying, "Hey God, are you there?" I'm "All In." God responds by drying up the river one more time and Elisha walks across, fully committed. We can imagine God's response. He might have thought, or said to the young prophet, "Elisha, I'm "All In" with you! Let's go and get it done!"

I have, on occasion, been called in to help unscramble confusion about church leadership. The confusion inevitably grows out of not understanding God's purpose in bringing people into leadership. It may surprise you to know that it's not only about serving. It's about who we will become as servant-leaders. God knows if we become what He wants us to be, we will do what He wants us to do. The question for every person who is part of the leadership in the local church is this:

Will you be "All In"?

The difference between being "All In" and just going along for the ride for a while is like the old story of ham and eggs. The chicken is just involved; but the pig is "All In." When you're just involved, you're merely taking part in something. When you're "All In" you've fully committed yourself far beyond just merely participating at some level of your own choosing. "All In" means you commit yourself to take part without holding anything back or turning back. You are willing to pay any price. Unfortunately, it's often true that...

"HUMAN BEINGS... ARE PRONE TO SEEK THE LOWEST LEVEL OF COMMITMENT TO ANYTHING WHILE STILL CLAIMING MEMBERSHIP."²

Though gambling of any kind is an unrighteous act, and we never condone it, but always condemn it, the actions of gamblers going "All In" can be instructive for this study. There is a popular TV series that takes place in Las Vegas, Nevada, in the U.S.A., called "The World Series of Poker." It pits a

² Taken from "Follow Me", by Jan David Hettinga, ©1966 by Jan David Hettinga, Nav Press, Colorado Springs. This quote comes from P.67.

number of professional card players against each other. These gamblers may have hundreds of thousands, if not millions of dollars worth of chips on the card table. At some point, one of the players will try to capture the advantage. He or she takes a risk, pushes all his or her chips into the middle of the table, and says, "I'm "All In."" There's no turning back. Win or lose, it is total commitment. The gambler has gone beyond the point of no return. There are three kinds of people that you will find in a church. They can be compared to the actions of the players and spectators in a poker game.

- (1) There are those who are not in at all. They're just watchers.
- (2) There are those who say, "I'm All In," but there's no substance to their hand. They're just bluffing!
- (3) Those who are "All In" at any price and whatever the cost may be. There's no turning back. They have made their choice. Their commitment is heartfelt, it's real, and it's complete.

WHAT KEEPS US, AS RIGHTEOUS BELIEVERS, FROM BEING "ALL IN" WITH OUR COMMITMENT TO JESUS?"

Here are eight typical reasons or excuses why we hold something back. We justify it by saying things like the following:

1. "I need to keep enough room in my life to have a way of escape. If I don't like what I have committed to, or when I feel offended, or maybe I just get tired of it... I want a way out."
2. "I don't want to miss an opportunity to find something more attractive somewhere else; so I will reserve a part of my commitment, just in case."
3. "I deserve more than just a small part in something. I want to be noticed."
4. "It doesn't feel good, I don't like it, and really don't want to do it. In fact, I won't do it."
5. "I agreed to be part of this, but I will not make a covenant commitment in my heart to be "All In." Instead, I will be willing to walk away from my commitments, if I don't feel like honoring them. After all, it's my life. I have free will to do what I want."
6. "There's always someone else who can do what I don't feel like doing. Besides, I'm really just a little lazy, and this isn't as

- exciting as I thought it would be. I don't want to be bothered.”
7. “I'm not getting *my* needs met. It's not fair.”
 8. “I'm afraid that I may be stuck here and can't move on when it's time.”

James 5:8b

“Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.”

My Amplified Paraphrase of James 5b:

Permanently impress and always confirm an “All In” commitment to God within your heart. Stand on the truths of the Bible. Never waver or be tempted to believe the lies of the devil. Be ready when Christ comes, because He's close by and that “Day” could happen at any moment.

Take a second look at my comments on 2 Kings 2:11-14. (They begin at the bottom of Page 2.) Here's what I wrote:

“Elijah gets his fiery chariot ride to Heaven in the middle of a tornado sent from heaven (a whirlwind). Elisha watches this and realizes what a gift his mentor had been. He tears his clothes. It's a great loss to him. But now it's time to move ahead. He finds Elijah's mantle that had been left behind, strikes the water with it and says, “Where is the Lord God of Elijah?” By Elisha's actions, he was saying, “Hey God, are you there?” I'm “All In.” God responds by drying up the river one more time and Elisha walks across, fully committed. We can imagine God's response. He might have thought, or said to the young prophet, “Elisha, I'm “All In” with you! Let's go and get it done!””

You are destined to be a winner and a champion for Jesus. Don't settle for less. Decide that you are “All In” for Jesus. Then, demonstrate your commitment to Him by your words and deeds. You will surely hear Him say, “I'm “All In” with you! Let's go and get it done!”