Elijah’s Departure

I. Introduction
   a. We don’t like to think about leaving this world
   b. But someday it will happen to all of us
   c. Our lesson today is a study of the departure of Elijah from this world
      i. One of the most unique exits in all of human history
      ii. But even though it is unique it is not that different from ours

II. KEY THOUGHT: There are some ways in which our departure will be like Elijah’s and other ways in which it should be like Elijah’s.

III. Elijah’s departure
   a. Was in the Lord’s time and in the Lord’s way (2:1)
      i. The same with us
      ii. We don’t know when and how we will depart
      iii. But if God takes care of those details, it will be fine
   b. Included the presence of a caring and devoted companion (2:2, 4, 6)
      i. Elisha – Elijah’s closest friend and companion
      ii. A true and righteous man
      iii. A fellow servant of God
      iv. If we could have one such companion at our death it would be a great blessing
      v. But even if we die without a human being to comfort us
      vi. We have our Savior by our side
         1. I will never leave you nor forsake you (Heb 13:5-6)
         2. I hold the keys of death and Hades (Rev 1:18)
   c. Was known in advance by many (2:3, 5)
      i. We may or may not have advance warning
      ii. If Christ comes, we will have no warning at all (1 Th. 5:1-8)
      iii. We must be prepared
   d. Left those closest to Elijah with the support of many caring and concerned friends (2:7)
      i. One of the hardest part of the thought of leaving this world is the knowledge that we will not be able to personally take care of those we love
      ii. It is comforting to know there are many standing by to assist
      iii. In the church, we know that our loved ones will be cared for and supported
         1. Orphans?
         2. Widows?
         3. They are taken care of (James 1:27)
   e. Was accompanied by great miracles (2:8, 11-12)
      i. If we depart the world with Jesus, there will be many miracles also (1 Th. 4:13-18)
      ii. But if not, does it really matter?
      iii. If we are departing to be with Christ, do we need fanfare?
f. Included leaving a heritage and a blessing to those who would come after (2:9-10, 13)
   i. What a comfort it would be in our last hours to know we have provided for every need of our loved ones
   ii. To a large extent, we cannot be sure of that, because it is out of our control
   iii. But if we have left our loved ones a spiritual heritage
      1. They have something that cannot be taken away from them regardless of the circumstances
      2. AND they have everything they really need
   iv. Peter’s example (2 Pet. 1:12-15)

g. Included close fellowship until the end (2:11)
   i. They walked and talked together
   ii. What a beautiful picture!
   iii. This is another aspect of our departure that we do not have control over
   iv. But whether we have someone to walk and talk with us until our moment of death,
   v. God is with us (Ps. 23:4)
   vi. The instant we leave this life, as a child of God, we have someone to walk and talk with us forever

h. Strengthened the faith of those left behind (2:12)
   i. What a shame it would be if our faith and spiritual strength gave out in our last hours!
   ii. What a discouragement to those left behind!
   iii. What a blessing it is to those left behind to see their loved one responding to the trials and sufferings of death with courage, grace and faith
   iv. In this way, we can strengthen the faith of our loved ones
   v. To be faithful until death, we must be faithful in life. (Rev. 2:10)

i. Left behind those who would carry on the Lord’s work in the next generation (2:14-15)
   i. God will always have someone to carry on His work
   ii. But the primary way God prepares new generations of servants is through their laboring alongside the previous generation
   iii. Timothy’s example (2 Tim. 2:2)
   iv. What a comfort it was to Elijah to know he was leaving a man like Elisha to labor in his place
      1. He was hopeless before
      2. Now he is hopeful

j. Was also an arrival
   i. To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord
   ii. 2 Cor 5:6-10

IV. Conclusion
   a. We will certainly not leave this world in the same way as Elijah
b. But the most important and desirable features of his departure can be an example to us.

c. Invitation
   i. We all have an appointment with death
   ii. We will keep it whether we are prepared or not
   iii. Are you ready?