The end of ourselves is the beginning of God.
Carter Conlon

He must increase, but I must decrease.
John the Baptist
John 3:30

First Love Ministries, Inc. of Perry, GA USA
Prayer Study #507

THE MANTLE AND THE DOUBLE PORTION

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. **[Elisha, since called by God, had now been with Elijah for approximately 10 years.]** *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.* **[Elisha knew that Elijah was about to be taken by God, but not how this would happen. He did not want Elijah out of his sight. *Beth-el* means *House of God.]*** *Now the sons of the prophets who were in 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!" Then Elisha said to him, "Elisha, stay here, please, for the LORD has sent me on to Jericho."* **{*Jericho* means *place of fragrance* or *his fragrance.*}** *But he said, "As the LORD lives, and as your soul lives, I will not leave you!" So they came to Jericho. 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!"* **[They obviously knew this by prophesy.]** *Then Elijah said to him, "Stay here, please, for the LORD has sent me on to the Jordan.* **[*Jordan* means *their descent* or *descending.* The Jordan is a type of dying to self or to the flesh nature so that the Spirit can fill us with Himself.]** *But he said, "As the LORD lives, and as your soul lives, I will not leave you!" So the two of them went on.* **[Notice from this passage how important it is to be persistent in the things of God.]** *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. Now Elijah took his mantle, rolled it up, and struck the water, and it was divided this way and that, so that the two if them crossed over on dry ground.* **[Elijah's mantle represents the power of God that was in his life.]** *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." So he said, "You have asked a hard thing. **[The word *hard* in the Hebrew actually means *"you have made a great claim."* Too often the modern church makes no claim about the power of God.]** *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."* **[Do we see the power of God or do we see the worldly things around us.]** *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.* **[The original Hebrew there is no mention of a whirlwind. It says that Elijah was taken up in a storm into the heavens. There are only two people in the Bible that passed from earth to heaven with out dying. They are Elijah and Enoch.]** *And Elisha saw it, and he cried out, "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and its horsemen!"* **[Elijah had been the spiritual leader of Israel. He also was Elisha's spiritual father.]** *So he saw him no more. And he took hold of his own clothes and tore them into pieces.* **[Elisha is saying by this action that he no longer is a learner in the school of the Prophets. He is now the Prophet.}** *He also took up the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him and went back and stood by the bank of the Jordan. 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 Elijah crossed over.* **[The mantle was Elijah's outer garment. The act of striking the Jordan with Elijah's mantle gave Elisha the assurance he needed to take up the position of Elijah.]** *Now then the sons of the prophets who were from Jericho saw him, they said, "The spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha." And they came to meet him and bowed to the ground before him."* **[The sons of the prophets recognized that the power of God was on Elisha, and now he was the prophet of Israel. Yet Elisha never had the true stature of Elijah. There will be an Elijah company at the end of the age who will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to the fathers. The New Testament type of the Elijah ministry is John the Baptist.]**

The *Prophet's Dictionary* defines a mantle as follows:
"…a loose-fitting garment worn by prophets and other officials in authority to signify their position and power to exercise dominion. Mantles reflect latitude, stature, prestige, and provisions of the wearer, as well as the license to act."

The actual Hebrew word translated *mantle* is *addereth* and means: *garment, glory, goodly, mantle,* and *robe*

The editors of the *New King James Bible,* tells us, *"Elisha's request for a double portion is based on Old Testament inheritance laws in which the firstborn son received two shares of the estate. Elisha was asking to become Elijah's successor." The firstborn was given twice as much because it was his responsibility to take over as the head of the family when the father died. Since Elisha had been selected to take over Elijah's ministry, he was asking for twice as much of the prophetic spirit of Elijah as the other members of the school of the prophets had. This was not greedy or prideful on Elisha's part. In fact, it shows Elisha's faith, dependence on God, and humility. Elisha knew he could not do the job that he was called to do without the double portion or double anointing.*"

I don't recall any other passage of scripture where it is so obvious that a man received a mantle from his mentor. Certainly Timothy must have received Paul's mantle, Joshua must have received Moses', and arguments can be made for others, such as David's mantle going to Solomon, but scripture is not specific about this. I also am not sure that we have the right to pass on our mantles to others. Perhaps only God can give a mantle, but again scripture to me is not clear about this.

Elisha was the son of Shaphat andn of the tribe of Issachar. He was the servant/companion, by his own free will, of Elijah, the great prophet, and he, as the previous scriptures from 2nd Kings 2, tell us. According to Herbert Lockyer in *All the Men of the Bible,* Elijah's name means *Jehovah our God* and suggests the LAW. Elisha's name, on the other hand, means *Jehovah my Savior* and suggests GRACE. While Elijah's ministry was mainly prophetical, Elisha's ministry was mainly miraculous, and indeed, there are twice as many miracles recorded in scripture that Elisha did than Elijah did. Elijah experienced 16 miracles, and Elisha experienced 32 and often Elisha's miracles were twice as great. These miracles include the widow's oil, the Shunamite woman who was blessed with a child who died but was raised from the dead, Naaman's cure from leprosy, revelation from Elisha of the Syrians' war plans, the floating ax head, the servant's eyes opened to the spiritual warriors with them, and the raising of the dead man thrown into Elisha's tomb. Elijah was the one who gave stern denunciations to a wicked nation and was a messenger of God's judgment and vengeance. Elisha, on the other hand, was a teacher and a messenger of God's mercy.

Elisha responded to the call to go into full time ministry when Elijah called him as he was out plowing his father's fields. This was right after the show down with Jezebel's prophets of Baal and right after the rain came following the 3 ½ years of drought. At the end of Elijah's life, he tested Elisha three times and gave him the chance to stay behind, (and thus not take up the mantle of Elijah) and three times Elisha swore that he would serve him and stay with him as long as Elijah was alive.

Closely related to the mantle is the anointing. According to Bill Gothard, the expression found in II Kings 2:9 "let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me" literally means "…*let a mouth or two of thy spirit be upon me."* This same Hebrew idiom appears in Deuteronomy 21:17 and refers to the first born son's right to receive twice the inheritance of his younger brothers. The first born was given twice as much because it was his responsibility to take over as head of the family when the father died. Since Elisha had been selected to take over Elijah's ministry, he was asking for twice as much of the prophetic spirit of Elijah as the other members of the school of the prophets had. This was not greed on Elisha's part. It signaled Elisha's faith, dependence on God, and humility, knowing that he could not do the job that he was called to do without the double portion or double anointing.

The word for *anoint* most often used in the Bible is *mashach* and refers to pouring or smearing oil on someone or something in order to consecrate it for divine service. Anointing imparted God's spirit in a greater way to the anointed. Anointing is an act of God and signals a bestowal of divine favor (Psalm 23:5, Psalm 92:10) or appointment to a special place or function in the purpose of God (Psalm 105:15, Isaiah 45:1). It is associated with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (1st Samuel 10:1, Isaiah 61:1, Zechariah 4:1-4, Acts 10:38, 1st John 2:20 and 2:27). Anointed ones are expected to walk in holiness and be separated unto God. The gifts, we know, are without recompense and never taken back by the Lord. I personally believe, however, that anointing can be taken away when one is not walking in obedience. Therefore, anointing is not a *gift*, as such, from the Lord but an *equipping* for greater service. People who were anointed in the Bible were expected to walk in obedience and not break the covenant they had made. Moses' failure to circumcise his sons after being anointed by the Lord to deliver His people Israel was an oversight that nearly costs Moses his life, as the Lord impressed on Moses the importance of following His law faithfully. Anointing from the Lord brings forth empowerment and enhancement, and there are almost always, if not always, results when a person is ministering under the anointing.