

FIRST READING: 2 Kings 2:1,2,6-14 Elijah taken to heaven (NIVUK)

² When the LORD was about to take Elijah up to heaven in a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal. ² Elijah said to Elisha, 'Stay here; the LORD has sent me to Bethel.' But Elisha said, 'As surely as the LORD lives and as you live, I will not leave you.' So they went down to Bethel. ⁶ Then Elijah said to him, 'Stay here; the LORD has sent me to the Jordan.' And he replied, 'As surely as the LORD lives and as you live, I will not leave you.' So the two of them walked on. ⁷ Fifty men from 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. The water 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?' 'Let me inherit a double portion of your spirit,' 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, it will not.' ¹¹ As they were walking along and talking together, suddenly a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared and separated the two of them, and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind. ¹² Elisha saw this and cried out, 'My father! My father! The chariots and horsemen of Israel!' And Elisha saw him no more. Then he took hold of his garment and tore it in two. ¹³ Elisha then picked up Elijah's cloak that had fallen from him and went back and stood on the bank of the Jordan. ¹⁴ He took the cloak that had fallen from Elijah and struck the water with it. 'Where now is the LORD, the God of Elijah?' he asked. When he struck the water, it divided to the right and to the left, and he crossed over.

PSALM 77:1,2,11-20 (NIVUK)

¹ I cried out to God for help; I cried out to God to hear me. ² When I was in distress, I sought the Lord; at night I stretched out untiring hands, and I would not be comforted. ¹¹ I will remember the deeds of the LORD; yes, I will remember your miracles of long ago. ¹² I will consider all your works and meditate on all your mighty deeds.' ¹³ Your ways, God, are holy. What god is as great as our God? ¹⁴ You are the God who performs miracles; you display your power among the peoples. ¹⁵ With your mighty arm you redeemed your people, the descendants of Jacob and Joseph. ¹⁶ The waters saw you, God, the waters saw you and writhed; the very depths were convulsed. ¹⁷ The clouds poured down water, the heavens resounded with thunder; your arrows flashed back and forth. ¹⁸ Your thunder was heard in the whirlwind, your lightning lit up the world; the earth trembled and quaked. ¹⁹ Your path led through the sea, your way through the mighty waters, though your footprints were not seen. ²⁰ You led your people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

SECOND READING: Galatians 5:1,13-25 Freedom in Christ to live by the Spirit (NIVUK)

⁵It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery. ¹³You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh^[a]; rather, serve one another humbly in love. ¹⁴For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.'^[b] ¹⁵If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other. ¹⁶So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever^[c] you want. ¹⁸But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. ¹⁹The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; ²⁰idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions ²¹and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. ²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. ²⁴Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

GOSPEL: Luke 9:51-62 The cost of following Jesus (NIVUK)

⁵¹As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem. ⁵²And he sent messengers on ahead, who went into a Samaritan village to get things ready for him; ⁵³but the people there did not welcome him, because he was heading for Jerusalem. ⁵⁴When the disciples James and John saw this, they asked, 'Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them^[a]?' ⁵⁵But Jesus turned and rebuked them. ⁵⁶Then he and his disciples went to another village. ⁵⁷As they were walking along the road, a man said to him, 'I will follow you wherever you go.' ⁵⁸Jesus replied, 'Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.' ⁵⁹He said to another man, 'Follow me.' But he replied, 'Lord, first let me go and bury my father.' ⁶⁰Jesus said to him, 'Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God.' ⁶¹Still another said, 'I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go back and say goodbye to my family.' ⁶²Jesus replied, 'No one who puts a hand to the plough and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.'