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II Kings 2: Scrutinizing a "prophetic succession"

Abstract

The story about Elijah's ascension in IIKgs 2 marks the transition between the Elijah- and Elisha-cycle. The aim of this paper is to outline the function of this chapter as a redactional connection between the Elijah- and Elisha-stories.

The manifold literary reminiscences within IIKgs 2 refer to different biblical stories from the torah. The paper will discuss these connections and their meaning for the dating of IIKgs 2 and based on that for the Elisha-cycle as such.

The prophetic succession we find depicted in this chapter is according to the author rather a literary device than a historically based event. Proof of that will be given by the comparison of different motives for the "prophetic succession" that occur in IIKgs 2 and in IKgs 19. These motives, in turn, will be compared to other OT succession stories.

Due to the observations concerning the redactional surroundings of IIKgs 2, it seems obvious that the passage in IIKgs 2 can be counted amongst the youngest parts of the entire Elijah- and Elisha-complex. The paper aims to show how the story has been editorially prefixed to the Elisha-cycle in order to serve as a redactional joint between the formally independent Elijah- and the Elisha-cycle.

Moreover, a closer look on the narrative structure of the passage will reveal that IIKgs 2 has to be understood as a part of the Elisha-cycle rather than being a part of the Elijah-cycle.