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## ELIJAH THE TISHBITE

Speaker: Bro. John Martin

The Departure of Elijah

Reading: 2 Kings 2:1-18

My beloved brethren and sisters and young people.

We come this evening, for our last look at this great prophet, before he once again, reappears on this earth. There are other things, brethren and sisters, that happened to Elijah, which we haven't dealt with, of course, in the course of our studies. We rather felt in the time that was available, it would be better for us to concentrate upon those weighty matters, which have to do with that wonderful example, and more especially, of that still small voice of which he is yet to be the vehicle.

When we come to his departure, brethren and sisters and young people, it is perhaps, something like ten years from the calling of Elisha, who is now of course, seen with him, as his close and constant companion. As a matter of fact, in 2 Kings chapter 3, we read in verse 11 at the end of that verse, 'that Elisha is known as 'he which poured water on the hands of Elijah'. A wonderful expression, brethren and sisters and young people, because it tells us so much about the character of Elisha.

The two men were fundamentally different; they were brought up in totally different circumstances. They were different in age, different in temperament, different in every way. As a matter of fact, such is the contrast between them, that the record seems again to be quite deliberate about this, that one, of course, was known for his shaggy mane and hair, and the other, a younger man was bald. And I believe that there is a study in intent in setting before us, the difference in these two men. Elijah, we know, came from the harsh escarpment of Gilead; we know, brethren and sisters, that he came into Israel having almost no possessions other than what he carried on his body. Whereas on the other hand, Elisha came from a place called 'Abel-meholah' which means, 'the meadow of dancing'. A name which expresses in itself, the delights of an agricultural society abundant in prosperity. The first sight of him was plowing with 12 yoke of oxen, evidently the son of a very rich family. And yet, brethren and sisters, he killed the oxen, burnt the instruments of agriculture, left his father and mother's house and here he is, a man from affluent circumstance, pouring water over the hands of this great and mighty prophet from Gilead, who in the eyes of all Israel, was of the lowest strata of society, but certainly not in the eyes of Elisha. And as we see these two together, brethren and sisters, our minds of course, go forward, do they not, to John the Baptist and to our Lord Jesus Christ?

And again the contrast is there; and you know, it wasn't as if, of course, that our Lord came to be servant to John. He didn't! But he came to take over from John, brethren and sisters. And whereas John's calling was in the deserts, close as he was like Elijah, like Elisha, the Lord Jesus Christ found Himself among different society. He moved among men and women, was seen in cities and villages and can mingle with men, that He might help them out of their difficulties as did Elisha. And it's with no mean importance when it says, when Elisha came back over Jordan, the spirits of Elijah rested upon him, and it certainly did, because he brought to bear upon Israel, the power of that still, small voice.

What a drama it was, to see these two make their way from Gilgal, to Beth-el, to Jericho and to Jordan. And that's the route they took, as Yahweh obviously intimated to Elijah in very strong terms, that he was to be taken out of the way. Gilgal is where they started from, we read of course, in verse 1 of 2 Kings 2. (It isn't the Gilgal, brethren and sisters, that we are familiar with, that is the Gilgal which is immediately over Jordan, where the children of Israel came with Joshua). There were two Gilgals; this one was north of Beth-el, between Shiloh and Shechem. It is of course, of significance that it bears the same name as the other town. The word 'Gilgal' means 'a wheel' 'a rolling away', and was so called that when the second generation of Israelites were circumcised, after they crossed the river Jordan, that there might be a memorial not simply, brethren and sisters, of the Exodus this time, but of a new generation, clean in the sight of God, with the flesh taken away that they in a very typical sense, might inherit the land of promise. Gilgal, and they rolled away, as the expression has it, the reproach of Egypt.

It's not without significance that Elijah commenced his departure from Gilgal. And you know, the record is very simple with what it says, 'Yahweh hath sent me to Beth-el'; Yahweh, he says in verse 4, hath sent me to Jericho, and in verse 6, Yahweh hath sent me to Jordan. Now it's fairly obvious, brethren and sisters, that if Elijah knew that he was to be taken, and he had to cross the river Jordan, he certainly didn't need directions on how to get there. There must have been a very definite purpose why he went to Beth-el, to Jericho and to Jordan, there had to be! We're not told what that purpose was, but this we know about those three centres; that all of them had a congregation of people known in the record of scripture, as the sons of the prophets. And it is powerfully obvious to me, brethren and sisters, that the last work that Yahweh had for Elijah, was to strengthen the things that were left! And it wasn't as if he needed directions to go to Jordan; he well knew the way, but Yahweh sent him there, there, and there, and in all those places, of course, were the sons of the prophets.

They (the sons of the prophets) had commenced, brethren and sisters, with Samuel the prophet. Most of us would be familiar with the fact, that in the record of scripture, Samuel is set before us, as the first of the prophets. He wasn't the first prophet; even Abraham was called a prophet. He wasn't the first prophet in the scripture, but he was the first of a new order of prophets, and we read about them in 1 Samuel chapter 19, (and I'd like you to turn these references up because some of our young people may not be familiar with this fact, and it's a wonderful thing to contemplate!) We have several

hints in this record, of the way in which Samuel organized this group of the sons of the prophets. In 1 Samuel 19 we read in verse 20 concerning Samuel, 'And Saul sent messengers to take David: and when they saw the company of the prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing as appointed over them, the Spirit of God was upon the messengers of Saul, and they also prophesied'. It's only a short reference, brethren and sisters and young people, but make a note of it, because it is eloquent as to what it has to tell us. That Samuel when he came upon the scene, and the people had requested a king, he saw the great change that had come over the people; they wanted to be like all the other nations. We want to be like all the other nations, they said, give us a king, and immediately Samuel commenced a bible school. And it's not being funny, brethren and sisters, to call the school of the prophets a 'bible school' because I say in every sense of the word, that's exactly what it was! They were there to study God's word. They didn't have the revelation that we have, but they had sections of it. They had the Law; and they were there to study the Word of God and that was commenced at a time when the rest of the ecclesia, wanted to be like the world! And when Samuel heard those dreadful and fearful words, 'give us a king, that we might be like all the other nations', he immediately gathered together the sons of the prophets. And if ever there was an exhortation in that, brethren and sisters, there it is for us! And three times in the New Testament, we have reference to the fact that Samuel commenced a new order of prophets.

We'll have a look at one of them in Acts chapter 3; I want this to stick in your minds. We take a lot for granted I think, in talking to the generation with whom we grew up; but let the young people here take note of these references, because this is what Samuel did at a critical time in Israel's history. You note here that Samuel is spoken of as being the head of this new order of prophets, and in Acts 3 and at verse 24 we read, 'Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days'. And there is the definite statement 'all the prophets from Samuel', and it would seem that Samuel was the head of the new order of prophets, who grew up together, brethren and sisters, as students of the Word of God. And as you watch that school of the prophets develop, it's intensely interesting to see how that developed. And no wonder, that Yahweh said to the great prophet before he departed, 'Go to Beth-el, Jericho and Jordan', and these were the centres where the sons of the prophets were found. They were an unique class in Israel; they were bible students, and later on, brethren and sisters, in the life of Elisha, so great was the growth of that community of the sons of the prophets, that they had to build a new hall to house them, right down on the banks of the river Jordan, where a man lost his axe head in the water. He was building a new hall, because they didn't have enough room for the people that were coming along to hear the Word of God expounded. So great was the influence of the sons of the prophets, that when one of them died and left his wife behind, she came to Elisha and said, 'I'm a widow now, and I need sustenance', to which he replied, 'What have you got in your house?' And she, brethren and sisters, found in her house a pot of oil, and it wasn't cooking oil. It's a different word entirely; it was 'anointing oil'. It was that, that was a symbol of the Word of God, and because she was a wife of a bible student, she had in her house what no one else in her neighbourhood had, and she was told to go round 'filling up' all the empty vessels in Israel. And a woman who felt that she

was destitute, found that she had what no one else had. And all Israel were ignorant, brethren and sisters, of God's word in the northern kingdom, except that little school of the prophets, of which Samuel had been the founder.

Elijah and Elisha were two great bible students and study leaders in that congregation. And using that terminology of the twentieth century, brethren and sisters, is not out of place in that record, because it fits perfectly, because that's exactly what they were. And today, in a world, when the world is pressing so heavily upon our ecclesial life, and everywhere the truth is in disregard, and because this world and all its madness, brethren and sisters, doesn't permit us or should we say, we let it not permit us, to have time to get down to quiet meditation of the Word; it's high time that we started to get together more than ever before, as sons of the prophets, and to get down to the study of God's word. There is no greater joy or thrill, brethren and sisters, to do just that, to get right down to the study of God's word, and for this reason. God willing, we shall be able to leave the Easter camp and next April I have chosen for my subject 'Joshua', and the reason I've chosen it is because I know nothing about him. (Come April you might hear something different, but at the moment I know nothing about him) and that's why I want to do Joshua; because that's going to force me to get down to that book when I will just have to do that. Now, brethren and sisters, those are the things that we ought to be doing today with determination, and Elisha had wedded himself to that cause!

So when the time came for the great prophet from Gilead to move, ever as he was, the loner, the high one (the one who was aloft from his generation) different from all others, he didn't want the hindrance of this young man, even though, brethren and sisters, he had been told to anoint him in his role, there was still that hesitancy about the great prophet. And so he told Elisha, 'Look, you better go; I've got to go to Beth-el', but I want you to notice what Elisha said to him in that second verse of 2 Kings 2. A remarkable statement is made here, brethren and sisters, a familiar one but he never thought what it meant; 'Elijah said unto Elisha, Tarry here, I pray thee; for Yahweh hath sent me to Beth-el. And Elisha said unto him, As Yahweh liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they went down to Beth-el'. Now I believe that means this, when Elijah said to him, 'Look, I've got to go to Beth-el, Yahweh has sent me to Beth-el', this is what I believe that phrase means. 'Look, we know that Yahweh is the One great living God, and I see you as His manifestation'; as Yahweh liveth and as thy soul liveth. It was no great feat of intellect, brethren and sisters, to know that Elijah was alive, and the word 'soul' as we well know, does duty for many ideas in the scripture, and there are many contexts where it speaks of that which constitutes 'the whole man'. So Paul told the Thessalonians that it was in body, soul and spirit that they must be ready to meet the Lord at His coming. The Law of Moses demands that we serve God 'with all our heart and with all our soul and with all our strength'; and Elisha saw Elijah, brethren and sisters, as totally dedicated to God, and the living manifestation of He who lives in the heavens. No wonder he wasn't going to leave him!

Later on, you know, in his own life, the very phraseology which is offered here to Elijah, is offered to him. As a matter of fact, there are several sentences in this record which later on, find echoes in his own life, and the woman of Shunem said to Elisha, when she

wanted, of course, to get the 'power of God through him' 'As Yahweh liveth, and as thy soul liveth', and she saw him, brethren and sisters, as being absolutely dedicated to the will of His heavenly Father, to such an extent, that 'his soul lived with Yahweh'. What a wonderful expression that is! and that was the affinity between these two men. A remarkable affinity! Now, as they moved down from those centres, one sentence in this record, shows a little bit of jealousy arising among the sons of the prophets. And having said what we said about them as being bible students and gathering together to study the Word, brethren and sisters, it's as well that we take heed to the exhortation of the total record! All bible heroes are not all perfect; and there are warnings to be read in every section of God's word, and I suppose, that when you think about it in a rational way, among people who study the bible avidly together, the one thing that is likely to divide them, is pride and jealousy. And there are many bible students who have passed among us, who are no longer available, because of that problem.

Expounding the bible, brethren and sisters, is rather an attractive job! I'm speaking now according to sometimes how we think, according to our flesh. And being rather an attractive job, which attracts to itself the plaudits of those who listen, it's of no small wonder, that one of the great problems is pride and jealousy. It's powerfully obvious that there's a rather tense feeling between the sons of the prophets and Elisha at this time, because the question is, 'Who's going to get the big man's job?' And there were fifty sons of the prophets, who evidently aspired to that position; I'm not reading between the lines, I think it's clear what's in this record. It's not, brethren and sisters, just a mere flourish of the pen, that Elisha asked fervently for a double portion of that spirit. For two reasons I believe, first of all, he desired to be a servant of God, and secondly, he knew that if he didn't get it, there would be others who would desire it. They weren't as well equipped and hadn't had the prophetic authorization, 'Thou shalt anoint Elisha to be prophet in thy room'; the record is clear about some of the feelings that were between these men at this time. And we ought to be aware of that fact.

How did he get over those problems? You get over like the apostle Paul, brethren and sisters, when he was faced with a similar situation like that; and he had his friends and his enemies. His detractors were ever trying to pull him down because of his physical disabilities, and his friends were ever causing trouble because they were jealous about their affections to him, and rivalled each other as to who loved him the most in the ecclesia of Philippi. And he saw that problem on every hand, but he had a simple answer to it all, he said, 'By the grace of God, I am what I am'. He was no more or no less than the grace of God had made him; and he left on record for us, many exhortations that we slot into ecclesial life as hands and feet of mouths wherever God has put us, and we say once we've deserved that in all honesty, by 'the grace of God we are what we are'. And that I believe was the great lesson to learn from this fact, and fact it is, that these prophets evidently had a little bit of friction between them, as they saw Elijah going.

You read of that in verse 3, 'And the sons of the prophets that were at Beth-el came forth to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that Yahweh will take away thy master from thy head today? And he said, Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace'. You see, they

don't come out to meet Elijah, they come out to meet Elisha; he's the first one they want to see, and they see the two of them together, and they all know and they've been told, the message has been passed on, the day has come when Elijah's going, so it's common knowledge, and they know that Elisha knows! But they want to remind him, 'thy master shall be taken away from thy head today, the Hebrew has it 'from over thy head'; so it's the terminology that they used, that Elijah was one who was over them as a head. It's fairly obvious what they're thinking! Elisha never said it, they did: 'thy master from over your head, today'.

There was a Hebrew expression, brethren and sisters, which was commonly used, you find it once or twice in the bible, when one was dependent upon another, he called him, 'the keeper of my head', as Achish called David on one occasion, the keeper of his head; it was an expression whereby one gave the ascent to the authority of the other. And there's no doubt about it whatever, that Elijah, of course, was clearly their head, but there was some doubt in their minds, as to who should succeed him obviously, because the answer Elisha gives when you look at it in the original Hebrew language, is rather terse, 'Yea, I also know it', is the Hebrew expression, in other words, I know it as well as you do, and the words 'hold your peace' is one Hebrew word which means 'hush' 'shhhush, be quiet'. Very tense, very abrupt, because he knew what they were thinking. 'I know it also, shhhush, be quiet'. It was a painful thing to him, brethren and sisters, to lose his master like he was about to lose him. It would have been even more painful, when that young man Elisha, who was known in the record of scripture, as being a wonderful, humble man, even more painful to have that friction arise at the time of his departure.

On they go to Jericho; Jericho, what a place Jericho is! Settled as it is, right down in the Jordan valley. It's a sub-tropical situation; intolerably hot in the summer of course, but magnificent in the winter. Jericho, brethren and sisters, is a magnificent sight; in the midst of the wilderness of Judeah, of course, which plants down to the Jordan valley, and the valley floor goes straight across the Jordan for about 10 or 12 miles, near Jericho. The floor of the valley is all barren, sharp stones, limestone, and there's no growth whatever, except at Jericho. And the wonderful spring of water, which is still there, waters that region and it became known as 'the city of palms'. The very word itself, Jericho, means 'fragrance' and yet, brethren and sisters, it was a city of a curse, wasn't it? It was the city of the Gentiles; it's not without significance, that at the time that Elijah left the earth, Jericho's spring was poisoned. It brought forth death, and it was the work of Elisha, that changed the character of that water. One man came, brethren and sisters, breathing out threatenings and slaughters as it were, because he thought, I, I only were left on the earth; the other man came to change the character of the water. And he turned the curse into a blessing, it was there that Elijah left, to go across the river Jordan, and it was there that Elisha commenced his great work among the 'sons of the prophets'.

And then they finally came, in verse 6, to Jordan. And here the drama was all worked out; Jordan, brethren and sisters, Jordan. Now what does Jordan stand for? Well, we're not left in any doubt at all about that; localities in the bible, brethren and sisters,

bear upon the very geographical centre of the earth. They bear upon themselves immense and wonderful lessons; Jordan, which literally means 'the descender' because it arises in the foothills of Mount Hermon some 4,000 odd feet above sea level. There are three sources to the river Jordan, which co-join above the Sea of Galilee, even above the Lake Huleh, and by the time the Jordan reaches the Lake of Galilee, it is already 600 feet below sea level, so it's 'the descender'. And then it commences a torturous course of only about 60 miles, as the crow flies, but it winds itself such, that it covers about 250 miles as it winds its torturous sinuous course down to the head of the Dead Sea, at which its 1392 feet below sea level. It is in the very sense of the word, 'the descender'. It rises, brethren and sisters, in the aqua sparkling jewelled water of the melting snow, and plummets into stagnation into water, that if you opened your eyes under the water, you would suffer serious burns to your eyes. Such is the heavy content of minerals in that water! The descender, it runs through Adam into the Dead Sea; you know, Jordan wasn't always like it is today. When Lot looked down there before the holocaust of Sodom and Gormorrah, the whole region was described as the 'garden of Yahweh'. And it's fairly obvious, brethren and sisters, from those that have made a study of it, that if you give a course of a river, as Jordan does, winding itself in just nothing more or less, than one S bend, after one S bend after another, that it didn't always tilt sharply, because if it did, it would have gone in a straight line. It had already wore the course of its bed and before the holocaust of Sodom and Gormorrah; something obviously happened at the bottom of that valley, when God blasted those two cities from off the face of the earth. And now it lies there, brethren and sisters, not like the garden of Yahweh, but like the serpent in the garden of Yahweh.

It's ever been noted in scripture as a barrier; it's never been noted in scripture for its beauty. No where is it spoken of for its beauty, except perhaps when you look at Jeremiah chapter 12, brethren and sisters, you may run away with the idea that it was beautiful, when Jeremiah uses this expression about Jordan. And I've got a reason for painting this picture of Jordan, brethren and sisters, because it has so much to do with the departure of Elijah. We need to understand what that river stood for; the expression in Jeremiah chapter 12 and verse 5, it goes like this, 'If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses? and if in the land of peace, wherein thou trustedst, they wearied thee, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?' The words 'swelling of Jordan' arising from the frequency of the river to flood during the course of the rains and the melting snow; also it has been rendered very often in the Hebrew by the word 'pride', the pride of Jordan. So the figure of Jeremiah is this, 'if when we're running with men we can't keep up with them, how are we going to keep up with horses'. That's obvious, that contrast is obvious, there's a contrast between men and horses. The next little figure is this, 'if in the land of peace, where you can trust the land, we've been wearied, how are we going to get on in the pride of Jordan?' So we're in the land of peace wherein we can trust, but we could never trust the swelling of Jordan. Why? because when you look down upon Jordan from the heights, either from the Judean hills or from the escarpment of Gilead, you look down upon a river which from a distance looks absolutely wonderful because all along its banks, are the little bracken bushes which grow to about 4 or 5 feet high and there are taller trees, but this bracken bush covers both sides of the banks, and from the top,

brethren and sisters, we see the sheen of the green leaves; it looks like a magnificent band of green in the middle of an arid valley. But all the green is just on top! if you went down there and went across to the river, you'd be up to your hocks in mud before you got underneath that bracken, and it wasn't ordinary mud because the Jordan rose and fell very rapidly because of the slopping terrain, and left, of course, all the debris there to rot; stinking muck out of which that bracken has arisen, and underneath the bracken, of course, underneath the canopy of green, all the dead branches matted together, and it was alive with snakes. And in the days of the prophets, lions roamed the district; 'if in the land of peace wherein you can trust, you couldn't get on, however are we to contend with the pride of Jordan'.

With all of that, I want to impress you with what Jordan stood for, brethren and sisters, and which of course, was given its last and greatest significance, when our Lord Jesus Christ stepped into that water, to proclaim 'all flesh is grass'; and from Adam into the stagnation of the Dead Sea, He stood in the stream of humanity! Jordan stood for all that the flesh stands for; it's impressive when you look at the externals, but when you get beneath the canopy, the mire or flesh is made up of stinking mud, biting serpents and fierce, ravenous lions. Best to stay, brethren and sisters, in the land of peace.

When Joshua came there, as we well know the story, (which we're not going to turn up for that reason), and the priest's feet bearing the Ark of the Covenant of Yahweh, touched the river Jordan, Psalm 114 says, 'Jordan was driven back', and they stopped the flow of waters from Adam to the Dead Sea, and in effect, sent them back in the other direction, and the feet of the priests bearing the Covenant of the LORD of all the earth, as the expression has it, was the means whereby a passage was made across the river Jordan, and Joshua commanded the children of Israel on that day, according to the commandment of Yahweh, to take the twelve stones from the river bed, and to make a cairn of stones on the other side of twelve stones, to remind the children of Israel, that Yahweh alone can bring men and women from the degradations of humanity, to stand in the Promised Land. And God is able of any stones, however deeply covered in the things of the flesh, brethren and sisters, however buried in the stinking mud of the bed of Jordan, Yahweh alone can make of any stone, children unto Abraham, as John the Baptist said, in that very locality. And when they looked at those twelve stones, and once the water had come back again, and rushed head long down to its course, and it was the time of the flooding; once the waters rushed back and over its banks carrying all the debris with them, tumbling over itself as it gurgled its way down to the Dead Sea, they'd look at those stones and they'd know that Yahweh alone discovered the foundations of the earth, and took out of them, a people for His Name. That was the significance, brethren and sisters, of Jordan.

And here they come, these two great prophets together, to that scene! And if we haven't got that in our minds, as we think about Jordan, we will never see the significance of the crossing and re-crossing of that river. And as they came there, we read in verse 7 of 2 Kings chapter 2, 'Fifty men of the sons of the prophets went, and stood to view afar off: and they two stood by Jordan', a rather interesting point in that, you know, brethren and sisters, because those sons of the prophets were not ordinary sons of the prophets,



because verse 16 describes them as 'fifty strong men'. The Hebrew in the margin seems to say the same thing when it says 'men of strength'; Rotherham, picking up the intensity of the Hebrew says, 'they were sons of Bela' and it's fairly obvious when you read that record, why they were there! There were fifty contenders for the crown; sons of Bela, and they watched the two of them, and they went down to an advantage point, stood on the brow of probably one of the lower hills of the wilderness of Judeah, which some of them stretch out over the valley a bit, and looking in the distance they'd see these two figures. Let's watch! We're not going to have anything put over on us! We're sons of Bela! AND THOSE TWO STOOD BY JORDAN!

Can you see that scene? I can! The two of them standing there, brethren and sisters, as the Hebrew has it, 'on the lip of Jordan', on a lip, standing on its very lip, feet right next to that water, and the water tearing underneath their feet. And Elijah is going to be taken from the earth; both men would know that that river was charred with significance. And what was in the mind of the great prophet at this time? Well, in verse 8, I believe, we have an indication of what was in his mind; 'And Elijah took his mantle, and wrapped it together, and smote the waters, and they were divided hither and thither, so that they two went over on dry ground'. Isn't that interesting! Because, you see, brethren and sisters, that mantle that he had, was the mantle of his prophetic office; nothing like this happened of course, but I want to show you what he did with it. It was a hairy garment, and it was a symbol of his prophetic office; Zechariah 13, remember? that the false prophets that wear a garment of hair to deceive, not that Elijah was a false prophet, but that verse of scripture is the bases upon which we say, that the hairy garment which he had was a 'symbol of the prophetic office'. He takes it off his shoulder, stands there on the lip of Jordan, and he got a hold of that mantle, (he shows them how he wrapped up the mantle) and do you know, brethren and sisters, the only occurrence of that Hebrew word in the bible is to describe a baby in his mother's womb. I'll tell you what, you'd never see the thing screwed up like that! The only other occurrence of that Hebrew word is an expression used in Psalm 139 and verse 16, and it reads like this, 'My substance yet being unperfect', that phrase is that one word. And how is a baby wrapped up in its mother's womb? Wound up inside its mother, and it's fairly obvious, brethren and sisters, what's in that prophet's mind, when he took that mantle, and said, 'Yes, I suppose someone will take over for me; I wonder, if anyone could ever do this, because I think that I, I, I, only am a prophet of Yahweh. Do you know what happened to that mantle? It fell out of his hand; He didn't drop it, he didn't leave it, he didn't give it to Elisha. Verse 13 says, 'it fell out of his hand', and he wasn't the only one left, brethren and sisters. And it would seem to me, that the education of our great prophet, even at that stage, was not altogether over.

It fell out of his hand, it's that incredible! And with that mantle, that was all wound up, brethren and sisters, he smote that river and the waters were divided hither and thither, so the two went over on dry ground', so you can figure that the 50 sons of the prophets were saying, 'well, now, did you see that! boy, I tell you, there's no doubt about that man; he was our head! Did you see that river? the waters hither and thither, the expression itself, of course, denoting the miraculous way in which it was done. And they went over on dry ground, brethren and sisters, is the very language of the Exodus. And

no doubt the sons of the prophets were thinking about that; they went over on dry ground is the language of the Exodus, but there's only one problem! He's going in the wrong direction. Not of course, that he shouldn't have been, because he was told to do that. But if they're looking for the fulfillment of God's purpose in Exodus, he's going the wrong way! He went, brethren and sisters, from west to east; the children of Israel when they came out of Egypt and into the Promised Land, came the other direction; but over they went on dry ground.

And as they went on, in verse 9, 'And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me'. Now we know, I suppose, the law of the firstborn! Let's have a look at it, Deuteronomy 21, brethren and sisters, a subject in itself of course, the law of the firstborn; those of us, years ago together with myself, studied this subject, not for ourselves (we were taught it) thrilled to the subject as we saw it open up in relation to our Lord Jesus Christ, as the only begotten of the Father. But in Deuteronomy 21 and at verse 15, 'If a man have two wives, one beloved, and another hated, and they have born him children, both the beloved and the hated; and if the firstborn son be hers that was hated: Then it shall be, when he maketh his sons to inherit that which he hath, that he may not make the son of the beloved firstborn before the son of the hated, which is indeed the firstborn: But he shall acknowledge the son of the hated for the firstborn, by giving him a double portion of all that he hath: for he is the beginning of his strength; the right of the firstborn is his'. And so when the father divided the inheritance, brethren and sisters, he gave a double portion to the eldest son, that he might acknowledge him as the true eldest son in that family; but it didn't always happen, he wasn't always acknowledged as the firstborn, and not only was our Lord Jesus Christ, by His own personal merit, brethren and sisters, not only was He elevated to take the firstborn's position, but being born like He was, He was not only the first but the only son of God, in that respect, and therefore, gained the firstborn's right. And Psalm 89 verse 27 said, 'I will make Him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth.'

Now, this is what Elisha was requesting, a double portion, and you know, the portion that the Lord got, brethren and sisters, do you know the portion that He got, that acknowledged Him as Yahweh's firstborn? It's noted in the scriptures, it says it very plainly. In a famous psalm which speaks about God not allowing His holy One to see corruption, he said that his lines had fallen, the borders of the inheritance had fallen to him in goodly places; his inheritance, he said, 'Yahweh is the portion of mine inheritance'; that's a double portion, brethren and sisters, isn't it? That's a double portion. Yahweh Himself taking His Son unto Himself, co-substantial with Him; one with the Father, mentally, morally and now physically, at the right hand of the Father, all the world to bow before Him, brethren and sisters, all power in heaven and earth given to Him; doesn't that mark Him out as the firstborn, and this was the law of the firstborn, so as the apostle notes, 'He was the firstborn of every creature, being firstborn from the dead'. And this is what Elisha wanted; he didn't want a double portion to be richer than the rest. He'd left riches, brethren and sister, for the life of a nomad to wander around the earth with Elijah. He wasn't asking for anything like that; he was asking to be able to

serve God to the best of his ability, and to be a worthy servant of God. It's not wrong for brethren and sisters to have aspirations; if we aspire to be servants of God, brethren and sisters, so be it! if we can avoid the pitfalls of pride and jealousy, and with a pure motive aspire to excel in the service of God, then aspire in that regard, and God be with you all, in those aspirations!

And this is what Elisha aspired to, and he got that double portion! Oh, he asked a hard thing; that's right he did, and after all is said and done, that man Elijah, I mean he may not have been, I, I only, he wasn't right about that, but you know, brethren and sisters, although he wasn't the only one left, it is absolutely true, that of all who were left, he was the head of them all! It was a very difficult thing that he asked, wasn't it? A very, very difficult thing, indeed. You know, the facts of the scriptures are, that Elijah performed eight miracles and Elisha performed sixteen. So even in that respect, the divine seal of approval was on him, and he worked with God with signs following, God bearing him witness with those signs, that he did have a double portion of Elijah's spirit.

What was the qualification to be able to achieve it? You look what Elijah told him. In verse 10, we come back into the record, and he says, 'You've asked a hard thing; nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so'. So the qualification, brethren and sisters, for the servants of God to serve God acceptably, is to never lose sight of the man who ascended up on high. Never lose sight of the One that we can't see with the natural eye; Elisha, of course, would have seen him with the natural eye, until he was no longer visible. But the lesson for all of us, that 'if we are risen with Christ, brethren and sisters, let's seek those things that are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. All those so looking, not literally of course, but spiritually, so elevated in thought and in spiritual vision, will be given a double portion of God's spirit in the kingdom, immortality. Made alive once, and made alive again, and with life more abundant! As long as we never lose sight, brethren and sisters, of the One who has ascended up on high! If we lose sight of Him, 'it shall not be so unto us'.

A very simple formula, wasn't it? A remarkably simple formula. Elisha's success is in the hands of God, and dependent upon his eye of faith; you might say, Oh, well, he would see him alright, wouldn't he? He went up in the eye of a storm, and it wouldn't have been a local shower. He went up in a whirlwind, more expressly, a fierce storm; ever been out in a fierce storm? The blinding rain, the heavens black with the clouds, the roaring wind, brethren and sisters, everything swirling around you, but eyes fastened on him. And nothing deterred that eye of faith, it fixed rigidly upon the object of his faith, and the storms of life, brethren and sisters, swirl around us, the rains pelt into our face, winds of doctrine have changed and blow viciously, whipping up around us the dust of humanity, casting it in our eyes, and we very often stumble around, seeing nothing but that which we can see, the ground, the earth, and all it stands for. But looking up, an impossibility! And that's what he had to do; Aye, it would not have been easy. You know, it says in verse 11, 'And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked', that's a quaint expression in the Hebrew, they tell us, rather a quaint expression and it means, 'they were walking and talking'. Alright, it says that I know, but the expression in the

Hebrew, they say, is a rather quaint one of a very great intimacy between two men; walking and talking, they went on walking and talking. You see, they were absorbed in each other. You get absorbed in someone, and you'll ever be conscious of that person; even when you're separated from them. If you're absorbed with someone, you'll ever have them on your mind; if we're walking and talking with God, 'how can two walk together, except they be agreed?', says the prophet Amos, and these were agreed.

And they were walking and talking, and in the drama of it all, ah! what a wonderful drama! 'And it came to pass, as they were walking and talking, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire'. See them coming, brethren and sisters; see them coming! Now if they were walking and talking as they crossed the river Jordan in a westerly direction, they'd have been walking straight at the wall of the escarpment of Gilead; that's where they would have been walking. The prophet had come into the land, brethren and sisters, in a storm and there appearing ahead of him, was a remarkable sight, a chariot ablaze with fire; look at it, brethren and sisters. Flames shooting out of that chariot, roaring out of it, horses breathing fire, giving off flames, what an incredible sight that was! Charging straight at them, what for? Just about every one that I've read on the prophet Elijah, makes this mistake; I don't think I've read anyone on this record, that hasn't made this mistake. They all saw the purpose of those chariots to take Elijah into heaven; and nowhere does it say that! Here was the purpose of the chariots, brethren and sisters, at the end of verse 11, 'they parted them both asunder'. Now, those two were walking and talking, nothing less than a chariot and fire and horses of fire could get them apart. That's why you have that quaint Hebrew expression, because these two men were deeply bonded together in the spirit of the truth! And nothing but, brethren and sisters, the intervention of God could ever get them separated. And the chariot would have gone straight between them; what an experience if you've ever thought about it! You walk closely with a friend of yours sometime, do it as a spiritual exercise, imagine the two of you walking along and a chariot of fire comes at you, imagine that! You'd be transfixed and it comes charging straight at you, it's not going to stop; the thing's not going to stop, and next minute, whish....! you're here and your friend's gone. He's way over there somewhere, and the purpose of the chariots, brethren and sisters, was to separate them.

And as Elisha looked around at his friend, 'as Yahweh liveth and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee', that was his feeling, brethren and sisters, as he saw his friend, now yards away from him, he saw something else too! He saw the storm coming. The clouds enfolding themselves as they would have done, rolling towards them, the roar of the rain and the lightning and the thunder, and sweeping him up. Away..... he went; but what happened to the chariots? Where did they go? They didn't go anywhere! In 2 Kings 6, Elisha was in the city of Dothan; the Syrians had compassed about the city, and his servant was frightened. Verse 15, 'And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, a host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do? And he (Elisha) answered him, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. And Elisha prayed, and said, Yahweh, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see' (which by the way, brethren and sisters, proves that when Elisha saw Elijah leave the

earth with his eyes open, he'd never closed them again, had he? because he could always see. 'And Yahweh opened the eyes of the young man and he saw and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha'. They hadn't gone anywhere; and as the chariots separated the two of them, brethren and sisters, shooting Elijah to one side, so the storm picked him up, and whirled him out of the world, the chariots wheeled around Elisha, and he was hovered with those chariots.

Now, you put yourself in Dothan; you're a servant looking over the wall of the city. And there's all the Syrians; you run off and tell your master; 'we've had it!' Don't worry about it; we're well and truly covered. 'Open his eyes, Yahweh'. The young man opens his eyes and he sees a large wheel around him, like a great circle of chariots of fire and horsemen. Brethren and sisters, he didn't see them round about the Syrians, he didn't see them round about the city, he saw them around and about Elisha! How would he know that? how would he know that? Because as soon as he saw those chariots, he recognized them for what they were, and he looked at his master and thought, 'he's the axle of that wheel! they're round about him!'

And they were; now why did they do that? Well, because, as he saw Elijah departing, brethren and sisters, in verse 12, 'And Elisha saw it' the record says, in fact, it's in the continuous tense, 'he was seeing it and shouting', and he was running along, brethren and sisters, evidently seeing it all the time. Not just once, he just didn't see it happen; he was seeing it, it was a continuous thing. He kept looking and running and he was calling out something. What was he calling out? 'My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof'. What was he saying? Well, you see, brethren and sisters, the word for 'chariot' rekeb is the word from whence we get the word 'cherub' or 'cherubim', and when Solomon made his temple, he described the cherubim in the Most Holy Place, as the chariot of the cherubim. Let's just get all this together, and we'll see what Elisha was saying. So the chariots therefore, are allied to the cherubim, and the idea of the word 'cherubim' is 'in which to ride'. And 'Yahweh rode upon the wind, yea, He rode upon the cherubim and did fly' said Psalm 18 verse 10, so the cherubim therefore, are the vehicles in which Yahweh rides. What for? These strange figures of the cherubim with their four faces and wings, and with all the other symbology of which we cannot now speak particularly, what do they stand for, brethren and sisters? And when we finish with all the details, if we haven't got this one detail, we know nothing about the cherubim! For there is one great mighty significance attached to them, as when we first come across them, they stood in the garden of Eden to keep the way to the tree of life! Not to block it, not to lock it, not to dig it up, or anything else; they were first introduced into the earth, brethren and sisters, as those creatures who stood there with a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep open the way of the tree of life, but only open to those who walked according to the sword of that spirit. Cherubim, therefore, what ever else they may symbolize in their wonderful detail, basically and fundamentally, speak about those people in the earth, who are dedicated to keep the purity of the faith, that men and women might understand the way to the tree of life. And as Elisha saw him go, he was virtually saying, 'I acknowledge you as the father of us all, the faithful father of us all, representing the Father in the heavens, who has shown us the way of truth, and kept that pure from all the perversions of Ahab and Jezebel; that men might know the

way which they must go. You know, brethren and sisters, as the aging Elisha, years later, lay on his bed dying, and the King Joash came to him, and he was dying in the King's arms, and he said to him, 'My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen therefore'. And he saw Elisha as Elisha saw Elijah, as he who was driving the chariot of the cherubim, the one who directed God's will in the earth, keeping everyone hedged in and on their way to the kingdom. And today, brethren and sisters, we don't have to wait till the future age, to be the cherubim of God, true it is, of course, that the spirit of the cherubim which we saw in Ezekiel, is the perfected saints, but every true brother and sister, who warns his fellow brother and sister, who preaches the truth to the world, is one who is guiding the chariot of Israel to such an extent that they're saying, 'this is the way; walk ye in it!' And everyone of us, brethren and sisters, ought to be dedicated to that work.

And having done all that, as we saw in verse 13, the mantle fell from Elijah, and back went Elisha and stood by the lip of Jordan. Ah, what a remarkable thing now! The fifty sons of the prophets watching this time, what's going to happen now, brethren and sisters? And taking up that mantle, in verse 14, that fell from Elijah, 'he smote the waters and said, Where is Yahweh Elohim of Elijah?' Now, that would seem a rather strange statement to us; we'd think, 'Well, heck, how's God going to bless Elisha with a doubt like that? Where is Yahweh Elohim of Elijah? as if it was a question, Is God with me, or is He not? Does God give men double portions of His spirit with that attitude? But you see, brethren and sisters, the expression there as we would interpret it, is not what the bible sees it as. It's in Jeremiah chapter 2 that that expression is explained, and you see the sense in which it is used. In the second chapter of Jeremiah's prophecy we find there how the expression is used, 'where is Yahweh?' It's not a question of doubt, in verse 6, 'Neither said they, Where is Yahweh that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, that led us through the wilderness, through a land of deserts and of pits, through a land of drought, and of the shadow of death, through a land that no man passed through, and where no man dwelt? And I brought you into a plentiful country, to eat the fruit thereof and the goodness thereof; but when ye entered, ye defiled my land, and made mine heritage an abomination. The priest said not, Where is Yahweh, and they that handled the law knew Me not'. So the expression then, is not one of doubt, brethren and sisters, it's one of diligent and zealous search. 'The priests said not, Where is Yahweh? but they handled His law wrongfully'; we, brethren and sisters, should be full of that zeal which when we open the bible we say, Where is Yahweh? It's not a question of saying, 'Well, do I believe or don't I believe? it's looking for Him, that's what the Hebrew expression meant, as expounded by Jeremiah. God is pleased when people came and sought Him and said, 'Where is Yahweh?' and when Elisha smote that mantle upon the waters, brethren and sisters, it was as it were, his calling upon God; he'd fulfilled the condition, he'd seen the great prophet go, now he said, let's search for God and let's search for His authorization.

It wasn't long in coming, was it? And again, the waters parted hither and thither, and he went over. Elisha went over. Now, brethren and sisters, we come to what I believe, is a classic in this chapter here before us, as far as exposition is concerned. You just think about this, now you just think carefully about this! I know three men, who when they

crossed Jordan, were magnified in the eyes of the children of Israel. Let's take this one first, in verse 15, 'And when the sons of the prophets which were to view at Jericho saw him, they said, The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha'. That's one man; come back to Joshua chapter 3 and read these words with me; now you think about this, and listen carefully, because this is absolutely magnificent. Where would you ever find in the bible, a consistency of teaching like this? Joshua 3 verses 7 and 8, 'And Yahweh said unto Joshua, This day will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee. And thou shalt command the priests that bear the ark of the covenant, saying, When ye are come to the brink of the water of Jordan, ye shall stand still in Jordan. THIS DAY I WILL BEGIN TO MAGNIFY THEE IN THE SIGHT OF ALL ISRAEL'; and when they saw Elisha cross the river of Jordan, they knew that the spirit of Elijah had rested upon him; and the other man, brethren and sisters, is our Lord Jesus Christ, who when He came up out of Jordan, straight way the heavens were open, and God said, 'THIS IS MY BELOVED SON IN WHOM I AM WELL PLEASED'. Well, what's the point? The point is, that all three, the meaning of all three names, is identical; for Joshua is the name of Jesus in Greek form, Yahweh will save, and Elisha is just simply the change in the title, from the name to the title, God will save. Well, so what?

Brethren and sisters, God's salvation will only ever be seen in men and women who can get through Jordan, that's what? And God's salvation was seen, brethren and sisters, in the victory over the flesh, and He magnified His Son, because His Son put to death all that Jordan stood for. It wasn't until Joshua crossed, that God magnified him, it wasn't until Elisha came up out of Jordan, that they saw that the spirit of Elijah was upon him, and it wasn't until that man got out of the water, that God said, 'This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased'; they got out of Jordan! And all the names mean the same, and it isn't because their names mean the same, it's what it means, GOD WILL SAVE! And when that truth is burnt into our minds, brethren and sisters, that God alone can save us, what are we doing but stepping out of the water. See the point? It's not simply the meaning of the names but what it means. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself; that's a truth! GOD DID IT, that no flesh should glory in His presence; for we are of Him, of the Lord Jesus, who is of God, that no Jordan, no flesh should glory in His presence. When you believe that truth, you step up out of the river! And that, brethren and sisters, that wonderful doctrine was embellished in those three men, that came up out of that water.

And do you know what they said, the sons of the prophets? They said, 'the spirit of Elijah doth rest upon Elisha'. And the word there is used of the settling of birds, the settling of birds. And we know, brethren and sisters, that when He came up out of that water, there was a dove from heaven that lighted upon Him. And among other things that we know about the dove, the two things that are preeminent in this symbology is, one, it has fastidious, clean habits, and the other is, that it is of the pigeon family, and it has strong homing instincts. And He who got up out of that water, shaking off the mud from His feet, had lived a moral life, that was perfect, clean as driven snow, and the Spirit homed unto Him. What else would it do? And the spirit of Elijah lighted upon him, because his spirit was the same as the one that left. They were homed together, like

birds settling upon him.

But still the sons of the prophets weren't satisfied with that, brethren and sisters. They didn't see Elijah go, did they? Had they seen him go, they would never have instigated the search; those fifty men of valour, sons of valour, didn't have the spiritual vision that Elisha had, did they? So they wanted to go search for him. We won't spend a lot of time on the details, you know what it was; it was a very terse situation. Elisha answered them very bluntly, 'don't go! 'don't go', but they kept pressing him until the record says he was embarrassed. What was he embarrassed about? Well, it was obvious, brethren and sisters, that if they kept pressing him all the time, and he says, don't go, he's got something to hide maybe. And he got embarrassed, the record says, as if he thought they'd think he's covering up. Alright, he says, you go! Three days later, they couldn't find the body; I'll say that again, three days later they couldn't find the body. And when they couldn't find the body after three days, it proved to them two things, brethren and sisters, that Elijah had ascended and he was still alive in Elisha. And it took them three days to prove that; I surely wouldn't have to point out the significance as far as our Lord Jesus Christ was concerned, would I, brethren and sisters? Three days later it was proven, at least to His disciples satisfaction, that He'd gone to the Father, and those Roman authorities, along with the elders of the Jews, who instigated their search, saw that He had not only gone to the Father, but that He was alive in the person of His disciples. A remarkable story, brethren and sisters, quite a remarkable story. 'Did I not say unto you, go not? Did I not say unto you, go not; and from that moment onwards, the sons of the prophets address Elisha as Adon, my lord, because the spirit of Elijah rested upon him.

And so, brethren and sisters, we come to the end of our story of the great prophet Elijah. What can we say when we look back over the life of the grand prophet? Only this, that we who have studied it here at the end of 1982, and now, on the first day of 1983, I've just talked about a man, that in a few short days perhaps, weeks maybe, hours maybe, will be here again. And what seems to us to be ancient history, brethren and sisters, an old story buried in the pages of God's word, is a very real story! And search where we will for 3 or 30 days, and we can only come up with the conclusion, that we have before us, a living and a remarkable character. I'm not going to enter into any controversy with anyone as to where Elijah is now, because I think it's irrelevant to us, it's not our prerogative to know or understand why or how or where he is. You've got your view, I may have mine; let it stand there, what's important, brethren and sisters, is this, we've always got to remember, the Law of Moses which God commanded him in Horeb, with all the statues and judgments, for which reason God said to Israel, 'behold, I send you Elijah'. Who when he bursts forth back into this earth again, brethren and sisters, he will be again, as far as Israel will be concerned, in a storm. And the whirlwind and the storm that took him, will bring him. I believe he'll stand with us all at the judgment, for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ, and there's no exceptions to that. And when he is immortalized as truly as he will be, I believe he will take over the reins of the administration of the affairs of Israel for Michael the archangel. And he will have the jurisdiction over the head of all the helpers that will be given to him. Not to go to the tents of Judah, which the Lord will save first, but to those ten tribes of



Israel, who like a sharpened arrow, are ready to be fitted into the bow of Judah, or as a goodly horse on the day of battle, to be saddled as the chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof. Or as the battleaxe, brethren and sisters, to hack their way through the Gentiles who opposed them in their trek back to the Holy Land.

And the great prophet, the great prophet, mellowed now by the experiences of life, never to be forgotten, that he had learned in the confines of Sinai, with his face pressed in the mantle, and to hear the persuading insistence of the glorious voice in the wilderness, What are you doing here, Elijah? Or to think, brethren and sisters, of the day that he needed to be fed twice, and helped to stumble through the desert for 40 days. Now, with the children of Israel, like flocks of sheep, coming from the north and the south, the Euphrates dried up for them, the river Nile dried up for them, pouring in from Russia and America and other countries, the day of the two great concentrations, to join together in the valley of Achor, by which time the great prophet, passing them all under the rod, like a shepherd counting his sheep, and putting the red spot on their back to identify them; might pass them beneath the rod that the flock of God's heritage might be gathered together, and all the black sheep, the rebels, purged out. And then, brethren and sisters, to march them up the valley of Achor, Hosea chapter 2.

Let's finish our story, brethren and sisters, with this wonderful picture, because I believe that Elijah's deeply involved in this prophecy. What a marvellous picture, we finish with of the work of Elijah. There's hints in these verses of the work of Elijah, brethren and sisters, a wonderful work. And in the day when Yahweh will bring His children home again, His bride to Himself, we read in Hosea chapter 2 and verse 13, 'I will visit upon her the days of Baalim (remember that word? when he went to Ahab and said, 'you serve Baalim', baal in the plural) wherein she burned incense to them, and she decked herself with her earrings and her jewels, and she went after her lovers, and forgot Me, saith Yahweh (like Jezebel did, who brought all that falsity into Israel). And verse 15 says, 'And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope: and she shall sing there as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt'. And what will the valley of Achor become a door of hope for, brethren and sisters? Because there in the valley of Achor when Elijah brings them forth, we read in the prophecy of Isaiah, that the flocks and the herds of the valley of Achor, shall come up and eat acceptance on my altar', in other words, brethren and sisters, men will choose their sacrifices from that valley. Why that valley? because there Achan, the troubler of Israel, who brought that curse upon the nation, which had its repercussions in the days of Ahab, when Halud the Bethlehite, built the city of Jericho, under his patronage. But the same troubler of Israel, brethren and sisters, and you may strongly disagree with this, you have your prerogative, but I believe strangely enough, that that man will be there in that day. Why? because you see, Joshua gave him his opportunity, didn't he? 'My son' (these are his expressions) 'give glory unto Yahweh. I saw, I coveted, I took', and I believe, brethren and sisters, there's the hinges of the door. This is only a personal opinion, I've got no more proof than the references I'm alluding to, but I believe they're eloquent. Why should the valley of Achor become a door of hope? because when a man goes there, and he takes of the flocks and the herds that are there, he brings it up to God's altar, and that animal with his hand upon its head, is

saying to God, 'I saw, I coveted, and I took' and he gives glory to Yahweh in that confession. And up that valley will come the great Elijah! to bring his people home. And then in verse 19, 'And I will betroth thee unto Me forever; yea, saith God, I will betroth thee unto Me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies. Why? says God, 'I will even betroth thee unto Me in faithfulness', you see, brethren and sisters, it's what a husband and wife vow to each other! There's no way in the wide world that we can ever in our own sense be righteous, we can't execute judgment, it's not up to us, brethren and sisters, to show loving kindness and mercy to God; that's plainly ridiculous! Verse 19 says, As far as my betrothal vows go, says God, My vow says I will betroth thee unto Me in righteousness! He will give us His righteousness, in vindication, as the word 'judgment' there means in the context, with His loving kindness and His mercy, brethren and sisters. And then the Bride has her say; 'Why, says God, I will even betroth thee unto Me' and she will be in faithfulness. And that's something that belongs to her; that's something she can do, and if there's one thing that Israel was not, in the days of Elijah, was faithful. And that's all that a man could ask of his wife, because it conjures up all else; he's providing the masculine aspects of that marriage, with all his vows in which she is dependent upon him, she only has to express her faithfulness. What a wonderful picture that is, and I believe, it's the echoes there of Elijah.

Now, listen to this! Verse 21, 'And it shall come to pass in that day, I will hear, saith Yahweh, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth; And the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil; and they shall hear Jezreel. And I will sow her (Jezreel, God sows) unto Me in the earth; and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art My people; and they shall say, Thou art my God'. We know that Paul quotes those words to prove that Gentiles will be called, but primarily, brethren and sisters, they applied to Israel, without a shadow of a doubt. That is the reason why Paul quotes it, but we can't deal with it now, but do you see the personification, Yahweh will hear, hear what? The heavens. The heavens will listen to the earth, the earth will give hark unto the corn, the wine and the oil. What's the picture? The picture, brethren and sisters, is a drought! The heavens are crying unto Yahweh for moisture, the earth beneath is calling to the heavens for rain, and the corn and the wine and the oil, the products of the earth, are screaming to the earth for germination; 'And I will sow her unto Me in the earth' and you see, on top of Carmel, his face and forehead on the ground, head between his knees, brethren and sisters, and a dusty world. He's identified with the earth, he feels the dryness beneath him, the heavens are like burnished brass above him, crying for moisture, and Yahweh is above the heavens, and there's a connection right the way through, of interdependence all the way through; and Elijah stood and leaped between heaven and earth, and he raced down that dust bowl of Jezreel, saturated now with the rain, 'God sows'. Disappointed he was then, brethren and sisters, but never again. And here he will see Jezreel like he's never seen Jezreel; and Jezreel undoubtedly, like the rest of the land will be changed. But he will see the vineyards of Israel's inheritance, and he will see, brethren and sisters, those vineyard's on a scale that Naboth never visualized. And he will know that God's blessing is in the earth, and the great prophet from Gilead will drink in the grandeur of that kingdom, and he will, brethren and sisters,

go down in history, never to be forgotten, not only as a historical figure in the Old Testament, but now as an immortal man, never again to see the article of death, and he, brethren and sisters, will have the inestimable joy, not only of experiencing immortality in the glory of the kingdom, but of knowing that in every case upon the earth, where God had sent His prophets to Israel, apart from the remnant that would return, there was a failure. And he will look over God's children and he will know, that the heart of the fathers is with their children, because the prophet Isaiah has told them, 'Look at the work of My hands; there are your children, the work of My hands, and they will see their seed and be satisfied. And Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the fathers of Israel, will look at the spiritual seed that's been developed, brethren and sisters, and their heart will go out to them. And Elijah will look at the children of Israel, now Israel after the spirit, not immortalized yet, but certainly spiritualized through their experiences under him, and he will see that they have turned in their wisdom, to the obedience of faith, and seen the obedience of faith that has justified their fathers, and to have that satisfaction, brethren and sisters, of knowing that the great work has been accomplished.

And another opinion of mine, is this, that I believe in that day, when that work is performed, no longer will it be said, 'that John has come in the spirit and power of Elijah', but that Elijah has returned in his own spirit and in his own power'. And it was said of the forerunner, 'in the days of His flesh' that those born among women, as far as prophets were concerned, there were none greater than John. If that was said, brethren and sisters, about the forerunner of the days of His flesh, I believe that that title, must inevitably go to Elijah who was the forerunner in the days of His spirit, that of those born among women, 'there has arisen no greater prophet than the one from Gilead!

May we be there in that glorious day, brethren and sisters, to see him as he is, and may his spirit and his power, the spirit of the still small voice, and the persuasive power of God's truth, ever go with us, keeping fathers and children together; father's hearts with their children, and children's wisdom in following in the footsteps of those who have been justified by the power of faith!