

Last Sabbath we began a new series entitled *Elijah, Elisha & More*, and this is *Part 2*.

We ended in the story where it says that a prophet had gone to Ahab, king of Israel, and told him that the Eternal would deliver him from the great multitude that was coming down out of Syria led by king Ha-dad at that particular time, who had come down to make war with them.

And I like the way it phrases this as you go through and see this, "a prophet." It doesn't identify them, and yet other places prophets are identified even in a story later on about this time period that follows this. Another prophet is named that we're not going to mention at this particular time, nor later even because we're not going to go through that story. But the point is that generally they're pointed out as to who they are. In this case, it wasn't.

And a lot of that is for a purpose and for a reason of what God was doing and things that Elisha was going through and being trained by Elijah at this particular time.

So, it's an incredible story going through there and seeing that Elijah was at a point of absolute frustration in his life. He had spent his life... And it's hard for us to relate to some of these stories but it's understanding that in his mind at that time, what we'd call the present truth, his job, and it was his job and responsibility, was to be up in the area of Samaria, close to the capital region of all of Israel there in that particular region, and to preach or to teach about the Eternal in that particular part of the world, especially with the king at different times.

And everything that he went through, especially there in that story before that, before he took off so disillusioned, where he offered this offering up and God took everything, the rock, the water, nothing was left, and all the other prophets of Baal were over there screaming and hollering and trying to get their god to come down and take their offering.

So anyway, after seeing something like this and then seeing the people rally behind him for a short time to put to death all those prophets - because they had to help. They rounded them up and got them together to kill them. And after experiencing something like that, of God's intervention, of what He had done, he was still so disillusioned. Because even after all that, after all that had been done people went back to their normal ways. It didn't take very long. It didn't take very long Jezabel was out to kill him again (the next day) and had sent people out and they were willing to go out and look for him.

So, those things are hard. Those things are hard in life when you go through various things that we go through ourselves. We live various experiences, if you will, not the same. We go through a lot of different experiences and there are times that we have difficulties, we have

hardship. And that's a part of what the story was about in the first place as we went to James and talked about some of those kinds of things, "Is anyone going through hardship?" difficulty, trial that is hard to go through. And we all do from time to time.

And sometimes with relatives or friends, even within the Church, we experience things that aren't pleasant, especially as someone is turning away from this way of life and coming to a point of being separated from this way of life. Those things can rip apart at us inside and they are difficult.

And so, here it was he basically went just off into a totally different area, back to the area of Mount Sinai, and very despondent in that respect, very down. That's why it says in James he was like us. It wants to make that point clear, that we have problems, we go through trials, and we're to consider those who have gone before us because it's been this way for six thousand years, that people aren't going to listen.

What a blessing we understand that, and we understand why - unless God is drawing them. And at that time it was just a physical people in the sense of what was being dealt with. It wasn't a spiritual people. Elijah was being dealt with on a spiritual plane, but the people weren't, and so dealing with that at that time, I can't imagine. It would have to be a hard thing to go through, especially where that's where your heart is. You see them going the direction they are, farther and farther away from God, and yet your heart is with God, and you want people to listen to that, to receive that. And they didn't.

And again, we're to consider them and the things they went through in their time period because we go through things but on a different place because we understand God has to call. So, what a blessing to just have that kind of understanding. If God isn't drawing someone, calling someone they have to wait for another time when God does begin to work with them. And for those who choose to go away, we learn from that as well, just as we did through this Feast this year. People have choices and everybody is responsible for their own choices.

We want people to choose, especially those whom we love or have loved in times past, in the sense of being around them more and having a fellowship with them, that... The point of that is because we can't love them in the same way anymore. Once they're not a part you can't love. And that's the way it is with God. When God begins to give His love to us, begins to bless us with grace, and understanding what that means, to be able to be forgiven of sin and have a relationship, a fellowship with the Church, with brethren, with Him, and then to choose to go against that then that love stops.

When you're cut off from God's spirit the grace can come to an end. The love coming from God can come to an end, and we have to practice that as well. You cannot have the same relationship with them as you had in the past. That goes against God's way and God's law. And that's why I think of and have mentioned at different times, I think of some individuals that

after some ministers had been put out and they were friends with some other ministers those others were making comments that no one, basically, “No man is going to tell me who I can have fellowship with, who I can be around and who I can’t.” And they were gone very shortly. Their minds were already made up. They were already being cut off just for that attitude alone.

And the reality is then we follow God, we hope that others will, we hope they’ll receive Him, but the reality is even in the Great White Throne... My wife and I were talking about that on the way down here today. There are going to be people who make choices that are going to blow your mind, that they don’t want, won’t want God’s way of life. After all that’s going to be opened up to their thinking, their minds, and their understanding, they just don’t want it.

And sometimes that’s hard for people to understand because you don’t think that way. That’s why you can’t judge that way, because you can’t understand or examine things of insanity, of things that don’t make sense, that aren’t going in a right direction, of an unsound mind. Because that’s the whole point of an “unsound mind,” you can’t understand it.

That’s why I hate psychologists things, psychology things, psychiatrist or whatever, they try to go into the past and try to figure out why different ones did the things they did. It’s like, what’s the point? What is the point to understand an insane mind? That’s their problem, they’re unsound. They’re never going to be right if that’s what they’ve chosen. If that’s what’s in their mind, to live the kind of evil they live, you think you’re going to change them? It doesn’t happen.

And then even with God’s spirit, it’s a battle for a mind to be changed, to be transformed.

So, what a blessing going through a story like this, we see what he was dealing with on a physical plane and despondent to it at times. And God told him, basically, “What are you doing here?” Basically, “You’ve got work to do and you’re going to be on a long journey...” and performed another miracle. Had enough food that lasted him—what did it say—forty days? Sustained him that long on the journey he was on? Incredible, stories like that, of experiences like that.

And he needed that. He needed that encouragement. God gave it to him and so he got back on track on some of these things. But the point being is we go through things, we go through hard things, but you keep fighting and you can’t let yourself become despondent. You’ve got to fight against that.

And those are the examples. That’s why they’re there, to show what happened, to understand that’s not a good thing to do. You’ve got to fight and keep fighting.

So, here the story about Elijah and what he’d gone through to this point in time. And so, this other prophet now, as it mentions here, coming up to this story of him being sent out and

saying things, basically, to Israel, to the king if you will of that particular time, being sent on a job, a mission, if you will, to do that.

Then it's recorded that the children of Israel in this particular case... So, they were told that the battle is yours, the victory is yours, and they're coming up against you. And what an incredible thing. "And then you will know that I am God." What good did that ever do? The proof was there. It was obvious if someone would look at it and be honest about it, but they didn't want His way of life.

Human nature is a horrible thing, and it doesn't take long, you want things the way you want it and you don't want someone telling you about God and what God says you're to do. And that's a lifelong thing.

So, it says here that the children of Israel slew a hundred thousand footmen from Syria in one day, and then they went back to this one area of Aphek to, as they were fleeing, and it was a huge walled city. And then it says as they were there the walls fell down and killed another twenty-seven thousand people, footmen or soldiers anyway. And then at the same time then this Ben-Hadad, him and a few of the other rulers went deeper into the heart of the city to hide from the army that was there. And finally, decided that "This isn't going well; they're going to kill us all so let's put ash all over our faces, have a rope around our head, and go out before them and hope for mercy, and ask for mercy." And that's what he did and that's where we ended part of the story here. But this is where Ahab then let him go, had mercy on him.

Let's pick it up here in 1 Kings 20. Oh, and then we read the story as well (I want to interject that here), of where the example was given of a soldier who had come along with one that was captured from the other side and asked another soldier or told another soldier (so it shows a command here), and told him that he was to guard this individual, this one soldier, and if he let him go that his life would basically be for his for letting him go. And so, this is all here for a reason.

You know, when God tells us to do things, we're to do it. Everybody is worthy of death. All human beings from the very beginning of time have been worthy of death. And we have to understand that, that God says to live a certain way of life, and if people choose not to live that way—whether they have been called or not is immaterial—that's what we're worthy of. And people can begin to think, "Well, God is a harsh God." No, just driving the point home, especially by the time you're called.

And when you are called, if it's in the Great White Throne, and then you begin to learn what God is really like, the love, the might, the glory of God, and to recognize Him as God something is supposed to happen up here by choice. And so, I've known of people who have thought, "Well, God is pretty harsh. He's pretty tough." No, He's not. And some people may

think, "Well, that's unfair." That means unjust. God is righteous and God is just and has a right to do with His creation what He wills, primarily because the penalty of sin is death.

Started with Adam and Eve, right away they sinned. God didn't put them to death right away. He let them live out their physical life. And on and on it's been through history. But what we've all been worthy of?

That's why when we grasp when we're called the blessing of being able to be forgiven of sin it's such an awesome thing. To be able to be forgiven of all sin and not have death over us anymore, that's an awesome blessing. We are created beings by the Great Almighty Creator God, and we should listen to what He says. And so often even in God's Church people haven't, the majority haven't.

So, **1 Kings 20:42**—Then he, that prophet, speaking of that prophet, **said to him, Thus says the Eternal, Because you have let go out of your hand a man whom I appointed to utter destruction, therefore your life shall go for his life, and your people for his people.** In other words, your house, your home, your family. And candidly, the nation as well in time, but not for this particular reason.

So the king of Israel went to his house heavy. It means in a "depressed or a gloomy spirit," **and displeased... displeased as he went up to Samaria.** You think about some of this. What did he have to be displeased with? Well, I can think of one immediately. He thought he was being merciful, and he's being punished for being merciful. He let some go and now he's being punished by God.

I've known of people in God's Church who have had this attitude, this frame of mind. Feel justified in what they did when they've gone against instructions that have been given to them, and perhaps because they've shown mercy or done something else toward someone else when they've been told, in essence, as the example of disfellowshipment. Just showing love to them, that's bad, that's wrong? Yep, it sure is, because you're just disobeying God Almighty. You want to be a part of His Family; you do things His way.

Perhaps those individuals who have left, have left forever. Perhaps they've made a choice, and they will be gone forever. Resurrected in the Great White Throne. They may be gone forever. What does that mean? Is God unjust? Not at all. Horrible to think that way. God is righteous. God is just. And He desires, He desires that all of His creation would choose Him and obey Him because that's the only way to be able to change, to be able to grow.

So, we may want things for other people, but you are powerless to give this way to anyone if they choose against it. That's why you have to be willing to give up whatever, everything for God's way of life if we treasure it and love it and understand it. Awesome.

So, this isn't hard to see why he went up displeased. Self-righteous. Smug. It's a horrible thing in a physical world, in a carnal world like that. But it's far worse in the environment of God's Church.

So, 1 Kings 21 here continues, if we went into 21, continues with the story of Ahab, that he wanted now a vineyard that belonged to Naboth (was his name). And he was at a point that he offered another... offered to pay an exceedingly great price for it or another vineyard of his liking if he could just have that vineyard. Then he could choose any other thing and Ahab was going to give it to him because he wanted this particular vineyard so badly. Don't understand all that but it must have been quite a vineyard.

Anyway, Naboth didn't want to give it up. He wanted to keep it. Can you imagine? Here is a place you put all your life into, and you built it up to be as great as it is, as beautiful as it is, and somebody else, a ruler, wants it?

Anyway, so again, Ahab is despondent, down in the dumps, Naboth wouldn't listen to him. And then Jezebel hears about it, and she says, "Aren't you the king of Israel?!" I can just hear her in the background. She was always on him about anything and everything. He had no spine in that respect at all to stand up and do what he should do as a king in the right ways.

And so, again here, **1 Kings 21:7—Jezebel said to Ahab, Do you now govern the kingdom of Israel?** "Neah, neah, neah, neah, neah?" you know. **Arise and eat bread, and let your heart be happy.** "Don't be down! Be happy!" He's so despondent he didn't even want to eat, so down in the dumps.

For I will get you the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite. Leave it to her. He left a lot of things to her. "Go out and kill Elijah." "Go out and get him." "Go out and find him. He's been a pain in your rear end for a long, long time." So, that's the way she came at him. She was the one calling the shots. So, here she is again.

So, she conspired to have Naboth by deception, accusation, put to death. You can read the story if you want.

But picking it up then in **verse 16** again here. **Then it came to pass when Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, that Ahab rose up to go to the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite to take possession of it.** What a sick mind. Here, all of a sudden he's so happy now that he's dead, he can go down there and take it now and not feel bad, not feel guilty in any fashion or form. And that's what his attitude was.

Verse 17—Then the word of the Eternal came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, Arise... Now, here Elijah is being sent back down. What a wonderful thing. I'm sure Elijah was just elated. He's got to go up before Ahab again, Ahab who's wanted his head. He knows Jezebel is there and she wants him dead anyway.

And this is not an easy thing. He's told, "Go up there and you're to tell him such and such," and I'm sure this was hard. It wasn't easy. When you know your life is on the line it's not so easy to do something.

Then the word of the Eternal came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, Arise, go down to meet Ahab, the king of Israel, who is in Samaria. Behold, he is in the vineyard of Naboth, where he has gone down to take possession of it. And you shall tell him, saying, Thus says the Eternal... So, he's doing it. Have you killed and also taken possession? Then you shall tell him, saying, Thus says the Eternal, In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth, shall dogs lick your blood, even yours.

Now, you have to understand again, saying something that strong to a king who can have your head at any moment is not an easy thing to do. But he did what he was supposed to do. He said what he was supposed to say.

Verse 20—So Ahab said to Elijah, Have you found me, O my enemy? "You're at it again? You've come back again?" And after all this time. He's been gone for quite a while. He's seen some others. He's seen Elisha, or heard from Elisha, and he's gone through different things here, but "Now here is this Elijah again. He's been nothing but a pain to me."

And that's part of the attitude. "You found me? You're back..." It's like saying, "You're back again?!" That's exactly the expression we'd use today, "You're back again, O my enemy?!"

Then he answered, I have found you because you have sold yourself to work evil. So, "I'm back because of what you're doing. You're right back to your old tricks again. You're right back to the evil you've done in the past. You haven't changed a bit!" Now, he didn't add all that in it but that's what's being said. That's the message, **You're working evil again in the sight of the Eternal.** Because that's why you've suffered all this time. That's what's being driven home. "You've only suffered when you started doing evil again before the Eternal, because you're not living right before God."

Behold, I will bring evil upon you and will take away your posterity and will cut off from Ahab he who urinates against the wall and he who is shut up and left in Israel, and will make your house like the house of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who had been gone a long time.

But all the time this example of the kings of Israel, every time when they're spoken of and maybe for just a short period of time, it always refers to the fact that they followed the ways of the sins of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, because he's the one that set up holidays, if you will, in Israel at that time to keep people from worshipping on Holy Days and going down to Jerusalem.

And so, they set up different areas even, I think it was three, around the area of Israel that people could go to to the... And had them at different times so there wouldn't be any cross over there either, and that way you can just stay at home in your own region, not travel. "Don't travel all the way down to Jerusalem," even if you live in the southern part, which isn't too far. So, he had a place right down close so that people could just go there and no further.

So, they all did the same thing, all followed the same pattern, and all, basically, in a lot of cases, for the same reason. Because they didn't want people going back down to become a part with Judah again. Because that history is etched into their being. They still know who they are. The Israelites know of Judah. Judah knows of the Israelites to the north, the ten tribes that were up the north, and there is that relationship there.

Matter of fact, the kings got together - going to read a story in a little bit where the kings got together at times because they felt this kinship.

That's a lot like today, a kinship that people have no idea why they have it. Why does Israel have such a relationship with the United States? Why does the United States have such a relationship with Great Britain and parts of Eastern Europe, if you will? Mostly with Great Britain. Because they don't understand their history.

Oh, they know a bunch of them came out, then rebelled at one point, threw over some tea and got notoriety for it, wouldn't pay taxes. But all that swept under the carpet, the past. And this is what happened here. Through times certain things got swept under the carpet and it's like everything is... "But we have a kinship here. We're close." That's how they treated one another as time went along.

So again here **..and will make your house like the house of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha, the son of Ahijah, for the provocation wherewith you have provoked Me to anger and made Israel sin.** So, he's reminding him. What a... You think a job like that, going down and telling a king who can lop off your head, and Jezebel is probably in the back room... Anyway. Wants him dead anyway, has people scouring the countryside for him, had been. And said, "You're the one. You provoked the Eternal to anger because of your sins. You've turned against God. You're causing Israel to continue in sin, in the sins of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat."

Do you think he knew what he meant? Absolutely. He knew the history. He knew the history of what Judah was doing. He knew the history of their times of worship and so forth and what they had chosen to do, and they had chosen to worship Baal.

Verse 23—And the Eternal spoke unto Jezebel, saying... So, here is more of the message, The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel. He who dies of Ahab in the city, the

dogs shall eat, and he who dies in the field shall the fowls of the air eat. But there was none like unto Ahab which did sell himself to do wickedness in the sight of the Eternal, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up. She's back there behind him stirring him up to do evil things. She's the one that brought along the ideas of straying farther away than Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, did in the sense of Baal worship and promoting the worship of altars and everything else that had to do with Baal.

And he did abominably in following idols, according to all as the Amorites did, whom the Eternal cast out before the children of Israel. So, there were certain ones here, it says here, who were cast out, their gods, and now ... God got rid of them and now you choose to worship them? You brought them into Israel? You've gone a lot farther than Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, to make Israel sin.

And it came to pass when Ahab heard these words, that he rent his clothes and put sackcloth on his flesh, and fasted and lay in sackcloth, and went about mourning. So, this hit him, what Elijah told him. Because he'd seen enough to know that when Elijah is around and what Elijah says, it's always happened. His experience is that everything Elijah has ever told him has come to pass. And so, he believes what he's saying here about his family and what's going to come to pass with him and his wife and so forth.

Then the word of the Eternal came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, Look at how Ahab humbles himself before Me. Elijah probably had some mixed emotions about this. Being a physical human being as we are and seeing someone here now that's going through a process here of actually going before God in the sense of humbling himself and might have had some battle with some of this.

Because he humbles himself before Me, I will not bring the evil in his day. But in the days of his sons, I will bring the evil upon his house. So, God is going to show him mercy. Mercy that is totally undeserving, but He's going to show him mercy because he's humbling himself likely for the first time, especially to this degree, in all of his life. It never happened before but this time he responded to what Elijah had said.

So, I think of this on a physical plane. You think of something like this on a physical plane, how much more on a spiritual one for us? I mean, there are so many lessons as you go through these stories over and over again, some we're going to go into, some we'll pass over. But again, there are things we can see of how God calls us, works with us on a spiritual plane. With them on a physical plane only. Their hope is in a Great White Throne. They don't know that, didn't know that, but we know that. It's in the Great White Throne. It wasn't at that time.

And in this particular case here, someone on a physical plane because a prophet of God had come to them, and they believed what he said because it'd been proven to him over and over

again by the things he saw and witnessed that he believed what was going to come to pass. And so, he repented.

So, what about us when we go through various hardships or various trials or whatever it might be? Just go before God in fasting, humble yourself. I mean, that's one of the lessons we go through at different times over and over again in the New Testament. We're to humble our self before God. We're to continually go before God in a relationship in prayer, but especially when you're going through a hardship and trial, when you know that your help, your strength, what you need must come from God and you're beseeching God, you're looking to God to receive that, you desire that with all your being because of the hardship of what you're going through.

Because the reality is there are a lot of people in the Church who have never done that in times past. I hope none of us. But the reality is if that's the case then there are times to live this, to do this. And the reality is in times past, the evidence is, there is just a lot of people who never did this. This wasn't their custom. This wasn't their way.

And yet I think of all who have left, all who have gone by the wayside, they had the ability on a spiritual plane, not a physical one, to go before God, to have been called. Because God wants us to succeed to be in His Family, so far above and beyond anything physical that they experienced at that time, or that king Ahab was experiencing.

And I think of the wealth of what we've been given and the power that's there before us, and to be reminded it's the only way to change, it's the only way to grow, is to have God's constant help in our life. That's why we should constantly, consistently go before Him and seek His life, His power to be within us. Awesome, to understand these things, but far more awesome to live them, to live by faith.

So, next is the account about how Ahab asked Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, to go up with him in a battle against Syria to take back Israel. So, there was this relationship, this bond, this closeness that they felt this at times. So, here he is reaching out to the south, to Judah, and asking Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, to go with him into a battle. And this happened at different times, that they did this, they had this kind of relationship.

...to take back Israel's city of Ramoth of Gilead. So, it's an area kind of off to the northeast of Samaria, and evidently they'd conquered that area and hadn't given it back or they haven't taken it back, Israel hadn't taken it back. So, the city of Ramoth in the area of Gilead. And so, he's asking Jehoshaphat to go with him up against Syria to do this - and did so against what God had told them through another of His prophets.

So, let's notice what transpired here. So, Jehoshaphat and some of the kings of the south in Judah at different times were told not to do some of the things to help out Israel and not to

do certain things. And those who did it, they suffered for it because they disobeyed what God had told them through prophets.

So, 1 Kings 22:29—So the king of Israel, Ahab, and Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, went up to Ramoth Gilead. And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, I will disguise myself and go into battle; but you should put on your robes. Now, not the best thing in a particular battle if only one person is wearing robes, and they don't necessarily know there are two kings there. It's almost like he was set up. I really don't know. But anyway, this is what first came to my mind. I think, "Yeah, right, because they're going to be after you." That's what they wanted to target. If they could get through and break through and kill a king, that was generally the end of a battle.

So, the king of Israel disguised himself and went into battle. He wanted to go in. Because to go into battle, which in some respects you have to kind of hand it to him, he's going to go into battle and strike out against the Syrians, because if you paint yourself up, "I'm the target," you will be the target. So, he didn't want to look like... He wanted to look like the rest of the soldiers at least to have a level field to fight on. Makes sense? Okay.

Now the king of Syria, notice, all the more reason, notice what the king of Syria did. **He had commanded the thirty-two captains of his chariots, saying, Fight with no one small or great, but only with the king of Israel.** "He's the target." So, this is generally what took place in these wars anyway. They generally had these were the targets, but expressly stated out here so we don't miss it.

So it was, when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, that they said, Surely, it is the king of Israel! You know, here he is in all this garb, obviously the king, a king. They weren't thinking there was another king there. But obviously, he's the king and so they were out to get him. They were pressing through to go after him, to ignore everyone else around them in the battle. Don't engage in battle, engage him, and kill him.

Therefore, they turned aside to fight against him, and Jehoshaphat cried out. Doesn't say what he said. Probably did cry out. Here are these chariots are coming at you and they're not fighting with anybody else, and you know, you see the dirt in the air, and you see them coming full speed at you, he was probably crying out to go the other direction. "Get out of there!"

So, Jehoshaphat cried out. Then it happened when the captains of the chariots saw that it was not the king of Israel... Now, how they found this, maybe they got close enough to him, maybe they knew what... maybe in the color, I don't know, but somehow came to a point where they recognized this isn't the king of Israel, **that they turned back from pursuing him.**

Now, a certain man drew a bow at random... Interesting. Some of these stories are really incredible, the way they're put together, but it was all for a purpose. To them, it was a random thing. **...and struck the king of Israel, Ahab, between the joints in his armor.** So, it's bringing into the story here now he's out in battle and someone shoots an arrow into the air at random. You know, when they shoot arrows at an oncoming army it's not generally something that's close enough, that it's farther out, and one went through and struck him and he's there in a chariot.

So, **between the joints of his armor.** So, it not only didn't stop with his armor, it found the right spot. Coincidence? Chance? Hmm. Anyway. **So he said to the driver of his chariot, Turn around and take me out of the battle, for I have been wounded.**

The battle mounted that day; and the king was propped up in his chariot, facing the Syrians, and died in the evening. So, in this particular case here, whether they tied him up to be able to stand up, gave him support, whatever it was, but that's what it's saying here, so that he could continue on, to whether it be in appearance or whatever to the rest of the men there, don't know, it doesn't say. But he finally died in the evening.

The blood ran out from the wound onto the floor of the chariot. Then, as the sun was going down, a shout went throughout the army, saying, Every man to his city, and every man to his own country! So, in other words, it's over, the king is dead. Basically, everybody is to go back. Those of you in Judah, go on back to your country. Those who are fighting there in Israel, go back to your own regions.

So the king died and was brought to Samaria, and they buried the king in Samaria. Then someone washed the chariot in a pool in Samaria, and the dogs licked up his blood while the harlots bathed, according to the word of the Eternal which He had spoken. So, the things that were given to the prophet and given to him and told to him in time, these things were fulfilled.

Verse 39—Now the rest of the acts of Ahab, and all that he did, the ivory house which he built and all the cities which he built, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? So Ahab lay with his fathers. Then Ahaziah his son reigned in his place. So again here, just a continuation of the rulership here but now had gone to his son.

Then dropping on down in **verse 51** it says, **Ahaziah, the son of Ahab, became king over Israel in Samaria in the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, and he reigned two years over Israel.** So, it didn't last very long but he was there for two years as the king.

And surprise, surprise, it says, **And he did evil in the sight of the Eternal and walked in the way of his father and in the way of his mother and in the way of Jeroboam, the son of**

Nebat. So, just continued on with everything that he'd seen his father had done. Hadn't changed. Didn't change any of that, as it says here. ...**who had made Israel to sin.**

For he served Baal. Incredible, some of these kinds of stories. And he was around. He knew what had gone on in times past. He knew exactly what happened when Elijah... Because all the rulers were there and you know that his sons were there at that time when they had all the rulers, different rulers there, and had all the priests of Baal and they're trying to offer up a sacrifice or have their god take the sacrifice.

And then Elijah is there building his and putting water on it and then having more water on it and then more water poured on it and then it's just taken up by fire all of a sudden. They witnessed... He witnessed these things. No fear whatsoever toward God. Going to continue on exactly as he always had.

For he served Baal, and worshiped him, and provoked the Eternal God of Israel to anger, according to all that his father had done. So, on a physical plane without excuse, because those examples have been there.

How many people in life had ever seen such things? How many people have ever been witness of something so dramatic, of someone saying that ever whose sacrifice is taken up, that theirs, the one who does it is truly God? Can't see another story exactly like this.

You think, even on a physical plane you see something like this. It's, to me, it's like the insanity of the children of Israel going through the Red Sea and they go through safely, they go through on dry ground. How is that possible? With all the carts and everything else, nothing else bogged down in mud. It was dry. They were able to go right across to the other side. And then they see the Egyptians going in there, the army on chariots, and they see them consumed and get bogged down in the mud. They made it through.

You think, how many people have ever witnessed such a thing? Well, a bunch of the Israelites did who were on the other side. Not everyone. There are too many. They couldn't have all been on the shore seeing that take place. But so many did. And how long did it take and they're murmuring and complaining already. "God's brought us out here to die! Where is the water? Where is the food?" Give me a break! Your head could be on a platter right now. Which is worse?

So, you go through stories like this, and you think, of all the things they've seen? Now, when I go through this I can't help but think of things that we've seen. And sometimes we think we never would have done that, we never would have continued on in the way we were if we'd seen some of these things. And Ahaziah, seeing what he saw, knowing about Elijah, knowing things that his father had been told, he was being trained, prepared to be king. So, he wasn't

kept out here in some area by himself, living ever how he wanted to live. He was being molded and fashioned to take his father's place. He knew of these things. Choices, choices.

And so, we'll come back to this thing about the Church later on, things that we have seen that sometimes we don't esteem as much as we're supposed to, as much as we should, because they're far greater than what they experienced.

Going on in the story flow here now. **2 Kings 1:1—Then Moab rebelled against Israel after the death of Ahab.** This was often what took place. One king who had had victory in certain battles - and God had given him some victory and the other nations around there knew that - and so Moab knew this (and they were off to the east here, southeast of Israel, Samaria, of Israel), and here they had been subjected to in the sense, to king Ahab, to pay taxes, if you will. And so, that's a part of the story here that it's going through.

But after this, now Ahab is dead, it's like, "Let's change this." Because they were giving a lot. So, it's like, "Let's change this. This is our chance. Ahaziah, he's young. He doesn't know so here is our chance to get rid of this oppression we have over us." And this is exactly how they... This is repeated over and over and over through time in history.

Now Ahaziah fell through the lattice in his upper room in Samaria and was injured; so he sent messengers and said to them, Go, inquire of Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron, whether I shall recover from this injury. Hadn't learned a thing. Still believed this Baal was god, even after all he saw and all these priests that were dancing around, screaming and hollering, cutting themselves, and blood gushing all over the place.

And after seeing all that and all of them put to death and he still prefers to go to them. Why? Because of the lifestyle. You can live whatever you want to live. You can do whatever you want to do. You don't have to obey God. You don't have to have a guilty conscience.

But an angel of the Eternal said to Elijah the Tishbite, Arise, go up to meet the messengers of the king of Samaria, and say to them... So, he's to meet them on the road because they have been sent up to inquire of these priests of Baal if you will, and so Elijah is being told to meet them on the way. And so, he comes to them and says to them, **Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are going to inquire of Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron?**

I wish I could remember what that word... I think of... We hear the term "Beelzebub" and people don't realize this is where it was, and they think of some weird things out there that have gone through history and change in time, and stories and the like. And yeah, "zebub" means "flies." God of flies. Now, that's something you want to get behind. The god of flies, how annoying they are. And yet they want to worship. Hard to understand.

So, quite a switch from Baal-Zebub here to Beelzebub today in the world as people would think about him and all the stupid things of Hollywood and the like.

Verse 4—Now, therefore, thus says the Eternal, You shall not come down from the bed to which you have gone up, but you shall surely die. So, this is what Elijah was telling them and they're to take back this message. Don't bother going on up to Baal-Zebub or the god Baal-Zebub and the priests of them, just go back and give this message.

So Elijah departed. So, when the messengers returned to him, to the king, Ahaziah, he said to them, Why have you come back? So, they came back early because... So he's "Why are you back here for?"

So they said to him, A man came up to meet us, and said to us, Go, return to the king who sent you, and say to him, Thus says the Eternal, Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are sending to inquire of Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore, you shall not come down from the bed to which you have gone up, but you shall surely die.

Then he said to them, What kind of man was it who came up to meet you and told you these words? I think he probably already knew. **So they answered him, A hairy man wearing a leather belt around his waist.** So, it was a large... They were familiar with the large leather belt that he had. **Then he said, It is Elijah the Tishbite.** So, he knew exactly who it was, had that suspicion already, obviously, and then this just confirmed it, it is Elijah. He's up to his old tricks.

So the king sent to him a captain of fifty with his fifty men. So he went up to him; and there he was, sitting on the top of a hill. So, he said to him, Man of God, the king has said, Come down! Then Elijah answered and said to the captain of fifty... And it's for one purpose. It's to kill him. **If I am a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty men. So, fire came down from heaven and consumed him and his fifty.**

Now, there had to be someone else around there who witnessed these things because the message gets back. So, although these are dead, it's very clear that the message went back as to what had happened.

So, going on here in verse 11—So he sent to him another captain of fifty with his fifty men. And he responded and said to him, Man of God, thus has the king said, Come down quickly! Then Elijah answered and said to them, **If I am a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty men. So, the fire of God came down from heaven and consumed him and his fifty men.**

Again, he sent a third captain of fifty, and his fifty men. And the third captain of fifty went up and came and fell on his knees before Elijah. Because he had already seen what

had happened to the two before and he was a believer that he was next if this didn't go right. Because somehow there were those who did see it and it got back to them. They knew full well that two other groups had come up here and they were all destroyed by fire.

...and he pleaded to him, and said to him, Man of God... So, he addressed him. Man of God, please, let my life and the life of these fifty servants of yours be precious in your sight. Look, fire has come down from heaven and burned up the first two captains of fifty and their fifties. So, he knew full well. So ever how this got back, we don't know, it doesn't say. But he knew this full well what had already happened. A hundred have already died and the captains have died. **But let my life now be precious in your sight.**

So, when you go through something like that it has a way of changing attitudes.

Verse 15—Then the angel of the Eternal said to Elijah, Go down with him; do not be afraid of him. Pretty important here because Elijah had had enough experience with his father, Ahab, and knew why they had come up there in the first place. It wasn't good. But now there is one that has been spared, his life has been spared, and so it changes the dynamics of these things.

So, he rose and went down with him to the king. Then he said to him, Thus says the Eternal, Because you have sent messengers to inquire of Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron, is it because there is no God in Israel to inquire at His word? Therefore, you shall not come down from the bed to which you have gone up, but you shall surely die. Not great news.

So he died, according to the word of the Eternal which Elijah had spoken. And because he had no son, Jehoram, another son of Ahab here, Jehoram became king in his place, in the second year of Jehoram, who is the king of Judah. Now, this gets a little confusing. Some of these kings and their children had the same names that they used. There are a couple places it's like you have to really be watching what is being said to know who they are. And this is one of those cases, and we'll come to another one later on here.

But again here, just to understand that at the same time that this Jehoram has been made king over Israel, it says **Jehoram became king in his place, in the second year of Jehoram, son of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah.** So, now there is this other Jehoram now that's been king of Judah for two years to this point in time, and he's been made king over Israel.

Now the rest of the acts of Ahaziah which he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

So again here, after Ahab's death, Ahaziah reigned two years. Then it says here that, again Jehoram, the next son, reigned over Israel.

Okay, **2 Kings 2:1**—**So it came to pass, when the Eternal was about to take up Elijah into heaven by a...** it says, **“whirlwind.”** It was not a whirlwind. It’s like he’s going around in circles, I mean, like a tornado or something, you know. That’s not what the word is at all. It just has to do with strong wind. It’s very obvious here going through some of the stories here and reading other places that this is used, it’s talking about there was with this event a very strong wind that came along.

And it says a **strong wind. ...that Elijah went with... Before he was taken up by the strong wind that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal.** Now, it’s kind of a strange story here as it goes around. It doesn’t fill in a lot of detail but here they’re just going back and forth in some of these different towns that aren’t too far apart. They’re an easy journey to them when you talk about Gilgal here.

Then Elijah said to Elisha, Stay here, please, for the Eternal has sent me to Bethel. Not that far between Gilgal and Bethel. And then Elisha’s response... **But Elisha said, As the Eternal lives, and as you live, I will not leave you!** “I’m not going to leave you. I’m going with you.” So, why this conversation goes on like this, not really sure, but it goes on quite a lot here.

So they went down to Bethel. Which is north of Jerusalem a ways. It’s not that far. It’s that same region where Jacob had a dream, if you remember, the ladder, the stairway, if you will, to heaven. So, this is that same area where the angels were descending on it. So it had great significance to them, the area of Bethel, and so he’s going to Bethel.

Now the sons of the prophets who were at Bethel came out to Elisha. So, there are different ones mentioned here that were prophets. Don’t know what happened to different ones at different times. There were so many killed in the area of Israel, put to death because of Jezebel and Ahab, but after some time had gone by there were others there. Whether they... I don’t know where they came from. God makes it clear very early on He had quite a few reserved for Him, for Himself. And so, these were there, regardless, in Bethel.

And they came out, it says here, **to Elisha, and said to him, Do you know that the Eternal will take away your master from over you today? So he said, Yes, I know; keep silent!** So, kind of a strange response here but it’s like they’re coming out with this news. They know something. Well, how did they know this? Because God gave it to them. And so, they came out there to talk to Elisha, knew who he was, and addressed him and said, “Do you know what’s going to happen to Elijah today? He’s going to be taken away from you.”

Then Elijah said to him, Elisha, stay here, please, for the Eternal has sent me to Jericho. So, right back in the same direction, just down a little way into Jericho. So, you know the area where they crossed into the promised land in the first place, which is very close

northeast of Jerusalem there, and Bethel a little bit farther to the west, and Gilgal off to the east there. But all these areas really close, zig-zagging back and forth.

But he said, As the Eternal lives, and as you live, I will not leave you! So, they went to Jericho. Now, the sons of the prophets who were at Jericho came to Elisha and said to him, Do you know that the Eternal will take away your master from over you today? So he answered, Yes, I know; keep silent! It's akin to saying, "Shut your mouth!" "Keep silent!" "Say no more."

Then Elijah said to him, Stay here, please, for the Eternal has sent me on to the Jordan. But he said... So, we're talking about the river there. We know Jericho is right in that same area so they're staying in the same area moving around. **But he said, As the Eternal lives, and as you live, I will not leave you! So the two of them went on.**

Verse 7—Now, fifty men of the sons of the prophets went and stood facing at a distance while the two of them stood by the Jordan. So here we have Elijah and Elisha, it says, down by the Jordan River. **Then Elijah took a mantle, so this that he was wearing, that was recognizable by everyone who ever saw him. Took the mantle, rolled up, and struck the water, and it was divided this way and that way.**

So, in other words, it's just like what happened to Israel when they came into the promised land and the ark on one side, and they came down to the water and the water parted on one end in this particular case. Stopped the waters up farther up so that they wouldn't continue to come down, and the Israelites came on into that area of the promised land.

But in this case, here it's saying, basically, the water just divided on one side and on the other. Don't understand it, what took place, but this is what it's saying. **So, the water was moved aside for both of them, this way and that way so that the two of them crossed over on dry ground.** Here we go again. God showing He's with them.

What an incredible thing when we receive that kind of encouragement from God in things we go through. They'd gone through a lot. God was going to show them a whole lot more right now on this particular day, of something that was very important to the flow of history, if you will, to the flow of stories that God wanted recorded.

You have to understand, there are so many things that have happened through time that God has planned long, long before, things to come to pass. The children of Israel crossing the Red Sea. It wasn't just decided the last minute and somehow they found themselves down in Egypt for as long as they did. That was all decided a long, long time ago.

It's like this great big blueprint, page after page. I don't know how many of you have ever seen some huge construction project or building projects and all the different kind of

blueprints that go with electrical, plumbing, the structure, basic structure, and on and on it goes, and one page after another, just huge.

God is so far beyond that of things that He has mapped out through time, planned out through time, and He brings them to pass and they're to be written about. They're to be recorded.

Not just happening to deal with things as they come along. "What am I going to do now?" God has it all planned out. He knows. So, what an awesome thing to be led, guided, and directed through this maze of time. And if we follow God, obey God, awesome! And that's left to us.

So, they crossed over on dry ground. Then 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? He knew he was going to be taken away. Those prophets that came out of the city, they knew it. And it's like almost to the point of, "Do you know it, Elisha? Do you know it, Elijah?" They went like, "Better go tell Elijah. No, he already knew. You don't have to bother with that because he already knows.

So, 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. Awesome! What a thing to ask for. After everything he had seen and saw how God was working with him, and to ask for something like that.

So he said, You have asked a hard thing. In other words, like, "I can't give that to you. I can't grant that." So, this is what he says, **If you see me when I am taken from you, it shall be so for you; but if not, it will not be so.** So, "If you see me taken up from you, you're going to be given the double portion. If not? This is something that God has to reveal, as to whether you see it or not."

Then it happened, as they continued on and talked, then suddenly a chariot of fire appeared with horses of fire. Not something physical, something of spirit power. But God let him see it, chariot, the horses, and so forth. So, he was going to be given what he asked for. This is the point of all this, God let him see it.

...and separated the two of them, and Elijah went up in a strong wind into the heaven. And Elisha saw it, and he cried out... Every time I read this I have a hard time. **My father, my father...** Don't know why, but it does. **...the chariot of Israel and its horsemen!** He was so moved by what he saw. It was so powerful to him in the sense of what moved him inside that he had this fondness, if you will, for Elijah who had been training him, teaching him, knowing what was going to be given to him. And Elijah had been there all along this way working with him and then he sees something so incredible as this, and being one led by God's spirit, drawn by God's spirit, it was an incredibly moving event for him.

And what an awesome thing to be able to see something like this, because he would always be able to look back at that, what God let him see.

There are some things in our lives... That's why I talk about our calling. There are certain events in our lives that we should never, never, never forget. When you recognize that this is not normal - and I've said it so many times - we all have different experiences, we have different things that happen to us in life, but to come to be able to see what is true not because we figured it out but because we knew there was that time or period of time where God was revealing to us things that others in the world can't see. Can't see it. Can't know what is true.

That's why I've made so many comments nights past around ten o'clock one night, all of a sudden I knew the nations of Israel had been taken into captivity. I knew the Sabbath day. I knew the Holy Days when I'd just heard about it. I didn't have to look up anything in scripture. I didn't look up anything in scripture. I didn't read a book. It was just told to me in words, and I knew it.

When you have things like that happen in your life and you come to understand a lot through time, came to understand it more deeply later on, that doesn't matter what it is, that we cannot understand God's way of life unless He reveals it to us. We can't figure it out on our own.

I used to have such a difficult time sometimes with some people who would begin telling a story of how they came into the Church and how they came to understand the Sabbath and they proved the Sabbath to themselves, and the Holy Days, and I think, "Well, whoa, wait a minute. You did not. God gave it to you in your mind You didn't figure out diddly squat on your own. None of us did."

And if we were so blessed to be able to see certain things about the Sabbath before it was revealed to us it's because there is a process of God working with us to bring us to be able to see certain things. Sometimes it's to go...

People talk about having gone to these many different churches. Well, what's the purpose in that? To learn how wrong, how bad certain things are so that when your mind is opened up you can say, "Boy, all that was a bunch of garbage," you know, things that they're teaching, and on and on it goes.

Just like the thing we read about the whirlwind. There are people who go through in times past... I was kind of surprised because I know why some so-called scholars out there have changed some of the things they say that they before in the past had misrepresented. Because the idea of Elijah going into heaven was used "Because people go to heaven. Heaven

is the place where people are going to go when they die so God took him. It was his time to be taken.” Duh.

Anyway, the only one who began to make changes in that, to begin to tell the truth about that was Herbert W. Armstrong, and he did it in radio broadcasts, he did it in TV, he did it in publications. And after a time people had to come... It was like one, I think of one particular minister in the world who has been on TV. I think he might be dead now, I’m not sure. But in the world.

And anyway, only one who finally admitted that Christ was in the grave three days and three nights because of what Herbert Armstrong had said and written proving it. And only one person ever responded that I know of as far as the world is concerned on a physical plane to say, “That’s right.” Because he’d changed from what he’d been preaching before that.

And so, sometimes we don’t realize the impact of certain things in life but going back and looking at some of this about the story of Elijah, I kind of thought, man, there’s amazing how many picked up on this. They’re getting a little bit of book smart. Scholarly? Well, thanks to Herbert Armstrong and what God gave to him. But that’s where the truth came from.

So again here, in the story, **So Elisha saw it, making it very clear here he’s going to be given the double portion, what he asked for, and he cried out, My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and its horsemen! And he saw him no more. Then he took hold of his own clothes and tore them in two pieces.**

Now, we’re going to take time here now to look at a part of the story because I’d mentioned here that some have misused this in traditional Christianity to talk about different ones that are taken off to heaven or it’s their time and God was merciful to him and he didn’t have to see death, and He took him right to heaven. Anyway.

Read the story in 2 Chronicles. We’ll take the time today to go into 2 Chronicles 21 and just read this story. Kind of interesting. Very interesting.

2 Chronicles 21. Now, we’re coming up to the time of Jehoram, king of Judah. So, it’s talking about **Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, says, (2 Chronicles 21:1) slept with his fathers**, so he had died. So, we’d already mentioned how Jehoram, his son, took his place. It says **and was buried with his fathers in the city of David**. So, this is in Jerusalem.

And Jehoram his son reigned in his stead. He had brothers, the sons of Jehoshaphat: Azariah, Jehiel, Zechariah, Azaryahu, you notice it’s kind of mentioned twice here. One had two names. But anyway, **and Michael, and Shephatiah**. I don’t even know how to pronounce it. I don’t have the foggiest idea.

Anyway, all these the sons of Jehoshaphat king of Israel. Their father gave them great gifts of silver and gold and precious things, and fenced cities in Judah, but the kingdom he gave to Jehoram because he was the firstborn.

Now, when Jehoram was raised up to the kingdom of his father, he strengthened himself and slew all of his brothers with the sword (except one). So, the other brothers mentioned here before, and also of the princes of Israel. So again here, if anybody is a threat, to ensure your longevity it's amazing how many through time have done things like this. You go back through some of the things that have happened with kings in Europe, England, and so forth.

Jehoram was thirty-two years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem. He walked in the way of the kings of Israel. Not a good thing. So, here he is in Judah, but he's walking in the ways of the kings of Israel, so it's already letting you know, and it goes on to say, **like as the house of Ahab did.** So, again, this is Israel.

...For he had the daughter of Ahab to wife. Oh, isn't this great. So, here already several strikes against him. And he's listening to her. What influence did she have? His daughter? Jezebel. **...and he worked that which was evil in the sight of the Eternal. Howbeit, the Eternal would not destroy the house of David.** So again here, God had mercy on him through a period of time here, not long, but a period of time here. He served eight years **because of the covenant He had made, it says, with David, and as He promised to give a light to him and to his sons forever.**

So again here, just because people go in a certain direction God is making it clear here there is that which He made covenant in concerning Judah, concerning the kings that would come out of Judah, in that respect, and that they would reign until Christ's return. And incredible to understand some of these things.

So, God, because of those promises, I think of Ephraim and Manasseh, because of the promises God gave to Abraham, that there are certain things of wealth and prosperity that we've been blessed to be part of in this country or those over there when it used to be great in history. And all because God promised He was going to give that to them, especially if you look at the end-time and things that are said about the end.

So, going on here, **verse 8—In the days the Edomites revolted from under the power of Judah, and made themselves a king. So Jehoram...** I think I went past part of this other story before but this shows again here the same sort of thing that takes place. But anyway, **So, Jehoram went forth with princes, and all his chariots with him. And he rose up by night and struck down the Edomites, which enriched him.** So, we'll be coming back to some of the other story about Israel a little bit later here.

And it says, **and the captains of the chariots. So, the Edomites revolted from under the hand of Judah unto this day**, meaning as these things are being gone through. It doesn't mean to this day, but to the time of the accumulation of the writing of the things that were here.

The same also, Libnah revolted from under his hand, because he had forsaken the Eternal God of his fathers. Moreover, he made high places in the mountains of Judah and caused the inhabitants of Jerusalem to commit fornication, and compelled Judah also.

Verse 12—Then there came a writing to him from Elijah. Now, this is four years after he'd been taken up, and this is known because of the time of the ruling of the kings here, when they ruled. And here now it says that Elijah is writing him.

So, Elijah in times past dealt with Israel, but now God had given him a job to write to the king of Judah, to write a letter to him. So, wherever he was, we have no idea. If he's around others, we have no idea. How he sent the letter, we have no idea. But this is true. This is what took place.

So, There came a writing to him from Elijah the prophet, saying, Thus says the Eternal God of David, your father. In other words, your forefathers, of things that you're not living but you have the throne because of that.

Because you have not walked in the ways of Jehoshaphat your father, nor in the ways of Asa king of Judah, but have walked in the way of the kings of Israel... So, the others, that's why they're mentioned here, gave a totally different focus for Judah and how they should live their lives, in that respect. And now here is one that's going to change things and he's following the ways of those in the north, and a lot of that because of his wife and because of surrendering to various things which so often takes place in situations like this.

...and have made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to go a whoring like the whoredoms of the house of Ahab, and also have slain your brothers. In other words, turning away from God and going to do other things and even worshiping other gods and so forth.

...and also have slain your brothers of your father's house. So, for that as well, "Those who were of the lineage of David, you've killed them." So, not a small thing. God's letting him know this.

...which were better than yourself. He's saying they were better than you are.

...behold, With a great plague the Eternal will strike down your people—and your children, and your wives, and all your goods. Even you will have great sickness by disease of your bowels, until your bowels fall out by reason of the sickness, day by day. So, he's going to

suffer for a time. He has caused Judah to suffer. Because when people turn from God they begin to suffer. That's the way of life.

The more you turn away from God, and even on a physical plane and things like this, the more they suffered because they weren't going to receive the blessings they would receive, obviously, through a striving to obey or live by certain principles and truths that were there as far as the history of Judah was concerned. And so, this is part of the story.

Moreover, the Eternal stirred up against Jehoram the spirit of the Philistines and of the Arabians... So, already they're going to go through some horrible things because of this, even the whole nation. ...that were near the Ethiopians. They came up into Judah and broke into it, and carried away all the substance that was found in the king's house, and his sons also and his wives so that there was not left a son to him except Jehoahaz, the youngest of his sons. So, it was Jehoahaz, I'm sorry.

...Jehoahaz, the youngest of his sons. Then after all this, the Eternal struck him in his bowels with an incurable disease. So it came to pass in the process of time, after the end of two years... Can you imagine going through this and the way it describes this? ...his bowels fell out by reason of his sickness. So, it was a pretty ugly thing that he went through and that's what God wanted written.

Over and over we read things in scripture that there are things we don't comprehend, don't understand, that might seem... This is a lot. But what did he deserve from the very beginning? Death. And for what he was doing as the king of Judah, even more so. And so, he was allowed to suffer. One day he's going to be resurrected, don't know what choices he might make. We don't know what people are going to choose. But he's going to remember this.

So he died of sore diseases. And his people made no burning for him, like the burning of his fathers. He was thirty-two years old when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem eight years, so until he was right up around forty, and departed without being desired. In other words, he was not going to be missed because of what he'd done and because of what happened to Judah as a result of these nations then turning against them and they had no ability to fight back.

You know, Judah went through a lot of different things. Even Israel did. They knew when God was on their side, when God gave them victory. God says... He told Ahab. "I'll give you victory. You will know that I am the Eternal." Didn't do a whole lot of good but at least the evidence was there, you know, it was written there, and his son should have known that. And on and on we go.

So, how much more then for the kings of Judah who were still in that respect, closer to the things of God because of the Sabbath and the Holy Days that were being observed there and the Levitical system that was at work there?

So, it says here, **Howbeit they buried him in the city of David, but not in the sepulchers of the kings.** So, makes it very clear here that he wasn't going to receive the same honor of those who were before him. God saw to that, he wasn't going to have that kind of honor, to receive that kind of honor.

And so, the only reason we've gone through this story here is just to show again here, different choices that people make sometimes when they have everything going for them.

Because you think of what Jehoram had. Jehoshaphat, his father, who had lived as he had and went through the things that he experienced, and yet his son turns out this way, to turn against God, to marry Ahab's daughter and be influenced in the way that he was to turn to other gods. Quite a heinous thing for Judah, in that respect, and the things he pushed off on those around Judah and Jerusalem.

Because those in areas of responsibility and power, they have... They can abuse and misuse power to where others will latch on to that in thinking that's what they should do. And this has happened within the Church too much in times past. Those who have certain responsibilities and power.

My mind goes immediately to different areas. I think of some of the regional pastors at one time. I think of the one in the Washington, D.C. area, took well over a thousand people out of the churches in that region because of the garbage he was spewing out toward them. Because people tend to follow those who they've gotten to know, like various kings here. That begins to be their measure of... They begin to be broken down because they're not teaching things as they should.

You think, how could someone come along like this, Jehoram, and in such a short time turn different ones away from God that they would want to begin worshiping Baal? Because that's what he did. Because it says he was more like Ahab and far beyond, following the ways of Israel to the north and what they were doing. And so, God was going to bring that back under a better control than what it had been before because of Judah and the things that were to happen in the history of Judah.

So again, going through some of these stories I can't help but think about nations today and how they interact. In reality, on a physical plane, they're really not much different than they were back then. When you think of Judah and Israel to the north you think of traditional Christianity and the way people live and what a mess. But the relationship some of them have and they don't even understand why they have this feeling or this comradery with different

ones to the level they do, to the point of willingness to even go to war or support in war. And that's kind of fickle nowadays, but at least at the beginning. And think of things that are coming.

But anyway, I'm going to stop there today, and we'll pick up from this and go back into the flow of those things happening to Elijah and Elisha as it brought out. Next Sabbath, *Part 3*.