

We're now continuing in the series entitled *Elijah, Elisha, & More*, with this being *Part 3*.

Last Sabbath in 2 Chronicles we ended after covering the story of how Elijah had written to the king of Judah, to Jehoram around four years after he'd been taken up in the chariot of fire, as it's described, and transported to some other region.

Now, before he was taken up, he had been a prophet, again, in the land of Samaria, or Samaria was more the capital of where Israel was to the north, again, toward the people of Israel and primarily its kings, especially to Ahab. So, this was a little unusual for him to have done something like this, but God gave him to write to him, and to a king of Judah now, and we've, again, covered some of that.

But part of the reason for going through that was because a lot of people in the protestant world have long time taught about going to heaven, and they use that as one of the proofs that people go to heaven and he was taken up early, and some of the nonsense of some of those ideas and beliefs.

Anyway, we're going to continue on here today talking about some of these things. I'm going to, first of all, pick up the story here about when Elijah was about to pass on his place as prophet to Elisha.

I'm going to read that scripture again in **2 Kings 2:8. Then Elijah took his mantle, rolled it up, and struck the water; and it was divided.** So, we're talking here about the Jordan, **that was this way and that.** It talks about how the Jordan parted both sides, more on lines of the Red Sea than it was with what actually happened when they came into the promised land because in that account the water was just held back, and they went across on dry land. In this account here it uses that expression, "this way and that way so that they could walk across on dry land."

...so, the two men crossed over on dry ground. Now, before we continue on in this review of the occasion when Elijah was taken up in this chariot of fire (because we're going to go back there in a little while), I think it'd be good to pause and consider some things that apply to our time now or to this period of time toward the end-time, and it concerns Truth #39. Truth #39, the 18th during this period of PKG. It states:

39 (18) Herbert W. Armstrong was a "type" of the prophesied "Elijah to come"...

So again, interesting to note how the word is used again later on, the name is used again later on to describe some prophetic accounts that would take place later toward the end. And so, this one here going on to say:

...a "type" of the prophesied "Elijah to come," as he restored all truth essential to salvation to the Church of God during the Philadelphia Era.

So again, that's after Sardis and truth had been lost, and God used him to begin to restore truth into the Church and to give things that hadn't been given as well. Because we have learned over time here, especially in the last several years, that there were things given that the early apostles didn't know, they didn't understand; it wasn't given during their period of time. All the period of time following that, as a whole, these things were not given until Herbert Armstrong was called by God and served in that period of Philadelphia.

So, anyway, continuing on in what it says in that truth:

Very few in the Church that was scattered teach this today. Mr. Armstrong described himself as a voice crying out in the wilderness and stated in *Mystery of the Ages* that he had fulfilled the prophecies of the Elijah to Come.

So again, the reason for stating this as a truth and having it stated as a truth is because in essence the Church didn't really receive this, and this was lost, if you will, in large part as far as the Church is concerned. Concerning a truth, it wasn't recorded during that period of time as being a truth that was given.

I think of how the ministry treated some of these things that came from Herbert Armstrong, again, referring to him as "a good teacher," "that they learned a lot from him," those things that make, as I've made so many comments about, kind of make my blood boil when I start thinking about some of that and the attitude that went with it, the haughtiness, the pride, the being rich and increased with goods, just as it shows the spirit of Laodicea.

Because that's what took place. And so, they became more understanding, filled with greater knowledge than what had been given to them. It shows the hypocrisy, the lying, the foolishness of such things. And so, we lived through that period of time, and it became a truth that was stated as far as what PKG was given to teach.

This being "a 'type' of the prophesied 'Elijah to come,'" again, the importance of some of this in understanding what was given. We can read a story like Elijah and think about being taken up in a chariot of fire. I can't imagine being there, what he and what Elisha even saw then. Because the whole point was that if he saw certain things, if Elisha saw it, then he'd be given that extra portion he'd requested.

In this particular case, we can think about some of that and think what an incredible thing to see something like this, that you'd be able to see something of a spirit realm because it wasn't a physical thing, it was a spiritual thing. Elijah saw it and Elisha saw it. This thing of him being taken away and transported to another area, and we can, again, obviously be in awe of that (which we should be), of what Elisha saw, and we might contemplate how incredible such a thing would be.

And again, all well and good, but too often we're not moved with the same kind of awe and inspiration we need to be when grasping what we are blessed to see, truths of God. Just like this one here. What an incredible thing that so many in the Church lost this ability to even remember or think about the fact of what was stated before.

I think of something simple like the temple. Before he died he preached about the Church being the Temple. Now, it didn't go on with all the scriptures that talk about the end-time and things about the temple. That wasn't given yet to that point. That was added on to later. But that became totally lost, as it were, again, within the ministry, within the Church as a whole, and wasn't focused upon like it should have been. Because then when the Apostasy came there would be obvious things that it would answer as God gave us understanding of what this applied to, things about Elijah to come, and different things as far as truth was concerned that God gave.

The reason we're going through this truth and some other truths is for the purpose of helping us to contrast this with what was seen back then. Again, we can be in awe of miracles of God, children of Israel coming through the Red Sea, the Red Sea parting, the different things that took place here when Elisha and Elijah went across on dry ground in the Jordan, just like when they did when they came into the promised land. All these things that we can be in awe of.

But none of them compare, they truly do not compare with what God has given to us to see and understand on a spiritual plane. So, which is greater? Which is mightier? Something that is seen or understood partially on a physical plane, that's able to be seen spiritually even, or that which is truly spiritual in the sense of understanding what God blesses us to "see," which is a matter of the mind?

Seeing physical things or seeing miracles or things happen that we can be in awe of, they're great, and that's how God worked with people for a long, long time to mold and fashion. But to understand what has been taking place in the Church, especially toward the end-time with Herbert Armstrong and on, these are awesome things.

That's why the type of the Elijah to come is so important, to understand why those names were used, to understand what it says about John the Baptist, to understand what was said later on, to understand what God was giving, how awesome it was, of what was taking place to prepare for Joshua the Christ the first time and the second time. These things are far, far greater in God's plan, in the scheme of those things, and the work that's gone into it through the ages.

So, we have to look at ourselves—that's what this is about—and what is in the mind. What do we think? How moved are we by what we've been given? Because truths are your strength. Every one that God has given to the Church, these are your strength. It's the mind of God being revealed to us about His plan and His purpose. The more we're at one with those things

everything else fills in its place. But those things take precedence, they truly do, things that so many of the Church have never even grasped.

I think of number one attributed to Herbert Armstrong, government, and it was the most misunderstood, most misused, most misapplied truth within the Church - or not even applied. That might be a better way of saying it. It wasn't even applied as it should have been. Because if it had been seen and known for what it was all the ministry that went through Laodicea and up to the Apostasy wouldn't have done the things that took place. Incredible, what we've gone through.

But we had to go through that period to learn what it's like to become lukewarm and to understand that being partway there, kind of on the fence, straddling the fence, we're on both sides of it, God doesn't accept it. It can't be in God's Kingdom to be on both sides of the fence, one leg over here and one leg over there. That's what Laodicea was, and God wouldn't accept Laodicea. He said, "You're going to be spewed out of My mouth!" That's what happened because God wouldn't accept it.

It kind of ties in (if we understand) with what was given at the Feast of Tabernacles this year, to comprehend the importance of judgment, to understand and comprehend the importance of what it means when God gives us instruction, guidance, and direction, and if we don't apply it exactly, strive to apply it and live it exactly the way God gives it without human reasoning, without human justification to alter and change and move things around.

Because that's been the greatest problem of all in the last two thousand years within the environment of God's Church. That's why so many have gone by the wayside through time. We're blessed to be able to have these things more deeply embedded into our being, into our minds, and to know that history and to remember those things and to grow from that because of what God's molding and fashioning in us. Awesome!

So, another truth:

30 (9) Matthew 24 is first and foremost about the Church at the end-time.

That was an incredible thing that was given to us very early on, to understand what Matthew 24 is all about. Because that's why some things in Revelation were kind of... Well, we just weren't there yet because it wasn't God's time because God is the one that has to give understanding to be able to "see" certain things at certain times. God has to give that. That's the way it is here with Matthew 24.

But there were things in Revelation that had to do with the Seals and understanding of some of those things, of what was taking place, the destruction that would happen in the end-time, and not understanding that there are physical things and there are spiritual. That's why so many of those things in the beginning were about the Church. We didn't know that back in Philadelphia or during Laodicea. God gave us to understand that later on. What an awesome

thing that He brought us to where we could see what the Seals of Revelation were about, and on we go, and how these things fit together with things like Matthew 24.

These are not small things. They're far greater than watching a chariot go up into the sky. A lot greater than watching water - although those things are incredible - to see water separate because a mantle was put there and then two people were able to walk across on dry ground. I mean, that's awesome and that's inspiring for us as we read it, but what we're living is far greater. What we see is far greater and far more important.

That was for then, and we can be inspired by the story, but what does it mean for today?

30 (9) Matthew 24 is first and foremost about the Church at the end-time. As Joshua the Christ gave prophecy concerning events that would lead up to his coming as the Messiah, he first spoke of events that would occur in the Church (vs. 4-21). These events have been believed to be about physical events that would happen on earth...

So, we weren't allowed to see this yet until after the Apostasy because it's been about the Church in the beginning, the things that happened. The first four Seals, if you go back and read those things and to understand what it's saying, it's all about the Church. And so, things, the Apostasy that took place, we weren't allowed to see what it was all about. We weren't allowed to see things like Matthew 24 for what it meant and for what it was all about. We weren't allowed to see things about the Seals, and on it goes, and how it all fit together.

And yet God gave Herbert Armstrong an incredible ability as far as an outline of so much of the things that were given in Revelation, but not all. There was a lot more. It was reserved for later on. It was reserved for you to see. He couldn't see it because it wasn't given to him at that time. He was given other things to see which are awesome and inspiring and moving. We're the product of that, of what was grounded during that period of time and given through him, number 3 through 21, if you will.

Awesome, what we've been blessed to see that so much of the scattered Church has totally lost today as a whole. Maybe certain parts they talk about, but as a whole, so much of it was just totally lost.

How blessed are you to see it, still see it? Not a one-time event of something going up into the sky, but a continuing part of your life. That's inspiring. That's moving. That's your life. It's your strength. That's why I've harped on these things and talked about these things so often about the truths that God has given to us because without those you wouldn't be here.

These events have been believed to be about physical events that would happen on earth, but they are about the Church and the spiritual meaning of those events.

Troubles in the Church began in the 1970s. Ministers began to rebel against Mr. Armstrong and the Laodicean condition began to slowly set in.

Anybody that goes back to that time, how can you not but hear when he would say, "I wonder if fifty percent of you get it!" After God brought him back from the heart attack and the illnesses and the weakness, maybe weakness is a better word, and he came back stronger than ever, and you watch him walk across a stage and see a feeble, older man, and he would get up there and he would bang the podium with his fist, and you would see the wrinkles in his skin, the way they were when you get up in that age. Awesome, the power that was there and the things he spoke and the things he gave.

So, again here:

...began to rebel against Mr. Armstrong and the Laodicean condition began to slowly set in. While Mr. Armstrong tried to put the Church "back on track,"...

You hear those words. You see him talking about that, putting the Church back on track, because he's talking about what took place while he was ill, while he was away. The vast majority of that was because of things the evangelists in the Church were doing. Not all of them, but a large portion of them were doing at that particular time. Vying for power. His own son! Incredible, what took place.

..."back on track," as he stated many times, he openly doubted just how many people really got it.

So again, that fifty percent. Then before he died, toward the end, "I wonder if ten percent of you get it!" Now, that's awesome when you think about it because God gave him that because that's where we were as a Church! That's what was happening within the Church, massively so. Fifty percent already Laodicean? You bet! Ninety percent by the time he died? You bet! Then it didn't take long after that the entirety of the Church living up to its name, Laodicea.

That's why it's been so hard for so many who have been given opportunity to be a part at the end here, from the time we began to this time now, of so many... Thousands. A few thousand, if you will, candidly, people who began a process and quit quickly, or people who even started the process and didn't last that long.

The hardest thing for a lot of people was when they started hearing about it and began to wonder and begin to converse about some of it, even ministers, they couldn't accept the fact that they were Laodicea. It was too hard to humble oneself to say, "I was Laodicean."

I lived that. I know that. What it said, asleep, falling asleep, and I struggled with that. I thought, "Yeah, I could see starting to fall asleep but not asleep." Just kidding myself. Because it took me a while to have my eyes opened to the reality, yep, fell into the same thing. We all did. To acknowledge that before God because that's the only way you can begin to make progress.

All those at some point in time who lived during that period of time, one of the first things they're going to have to do is acknowledge, "I fell asleep. I was a Laodicean. I wasn't a

Philadelphian.” Most of them don’t even think about being Philadelphian anymore. Isn’t it amazing what you see, the history we have, what we have lived? These things are powerful, they really are.

He warned the Church many times they were falling asleep during the 1970s and 1980s, up until his death in 1986. This is what was being spoken of in the verses before Matthew 24:14. It speaks of wars and rumors of wars...

Not about the world. In the Church! Because they’re on a spiritual plane. Sometimes it’s hard to grasp things in a spirit realm if you will and what takes place in people’s lives. If people begin to work against the very thing that was given to them because of Christ’s sacrifice and they begin to turn against him and begin to become antichrist, which was what was taking place in a very powerful way, incredible!

Wars. Fighting. The root problem, the reason God blessed Herbert Armstrong in going to Arizona was because of what was brewing, and then finally did explode because of some in the ministry. Because they started all this mess, this garbage, because they had already begun to turn against. Wars, fighting, congregations, some people trying to hold on to certain things, and others trying to teach them something totally different wherever and whatever area it might have been in that these things took place.

Earthquakes? Because we think of (carnal human beings), “Yeah, it must be a 6.2 or you know, a 7 point. It’s going to have to be a big earthquake...” In other words, it’s all physical, not understanding the word has to do with shaking. Just shaking the tar out of the Church because of that, because of wars and rumors of wars, rumors of something, some church areas doing something that you know is wrong, some minister maybe that’s saying something but can’t pinpoint him. “‘Shakings’ within the Church.” God blessed us to see that.

...“but the end is not yet.”

We’re still waiting and we’re still longing for it, and we see things happening in the world and things in the news. You understand and comprehend that we are so close to a world war that we’re on the verge. It’s just a matter of God’s timing. It’s a lot about, still about us because the Church in the last two thousand years has always been God’s primary focus. The world primarily has another time. A lot of it, yes, going on into the Millennium, but a whole lot more has to do with the Great White Throne.

After Mr. Armstrong died and the gospel had been preached “into all the world”...

That’s one of the main things that wasn’t grasped and understood in that first three and a half years after the Apostasy, when people were trying to find where is the Church, what is going on, what is happening now, what do we do, how do we work to help people that are hurting and suffering? Then all the different groups began to spring up and it just got worse and worse and worse.

One of the big problems was this wasn't believed. This wasn't believed by the vast majority within the Church, that the gospel had been preached into all the world to the level, to the degree that God Almighty wanted it to through His servant Herbert Armstrong at that time, through *The Plain Truth*, through television and radio. That was his job in a very powerful way, and nobody has even come close to trying to duplicate that, though they're trying.

They believe they have to do that. That's why magazines had to be printed right away that sounds almost like *The World Tomorrow* or *Tomorrow's World*, and all these names have to be thrown out there to be like what was done because you're the one continuing on with what wasn't finished because "He didn't finish it. We have to finish it!"

Then you think, "Yeah, and where are the 144,000 going to come from?" Did you lose that one somewhere along the way?" If you understand what I'm saying. Because the reality is if you really believe with all your being that you're fulfilling something that he didn't fulfill and you still comprehend or believe in your mind that there have to be 144,000 that come out of the Church then seven thousand doesn't get it, fifteen thousand doesn't come close. Numbers mean nothing then. The truth is the truth.

But you can see it. How blessed are you? How much greater is that than seeing a chariot go up into the sky one time?

After Mr. Armstrong died and the gospel had been preached "into all the world," Laodicea and the final end-time began. Verses 15-28 describe the Church being scattered, fleeing into the mountains...

Always seen as a physical thing, not as a spiritual thing, not understanding mountains is about government and governments, all these different governments popping up out there claiming to be governments. Well, there's only one, and that's from God, from Christ.

...fleeing into the mountains (different governing Church organizations that sprang up out of the scattering), and of greater trials upon the Church, including spiritual warfare, deception, and famine.

That was just the beginning, the Apostasy. It got ramped up after that. All these people out there trying to build bridges and then finally coming down to where there is such a mixture and a quagmire of stuff. It's like the protestant world, "Well, God's working with us," with whichever of the two or three larger groups, "and working with us in different ways to all get us to where we need to go." That's what the protestant world believes, as a whole. "You can be in that church or that church but God's working with us all the different ways because we're so different and we're all going to be there when it's all said and done." Give me a break!

"...and of greater trials upon the Church, including spiritual warfare, deception, and famine." It just got worse and worse and worse, these people wanting to build bridges. One of my pet peeves. Because when you have different things that you believe, and you want to kind of mix it all together. What a horrible thing to live through.

Events like these will occur in the world, but these scriptures apply more fully to the Church.

God has now shown that there is a duality concerning both the Church and the world that applies to verses 21 and 22. All these prophesied events in Matthew 24 lead up to the time of the very coming of the Messiah to this earth (vs. 29-31).

So again, Matthew 24, quite a thing when we came to understand what this was all about and the end-time, and comprehending that which is physical, that it wasn't physical, but it's all about that which is us, the Church through the period of time of Herbert Armstrong on.

So again, it would be good to remind ourselves of John the Baptist in the regard to the use of the name "Elijah." Because, you see, we can read the stories of Elijah and Elisha and they're awesome, but they carry on through time because of what they reveal and why God used the names.

Luke 1:8—It came to pass that while he, speaking of Zacharias, executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course... So, there was this rotating of courses, of times when Levites served in specific areas and then be off for a long period of time, and then came back again during their particular course, whatever that period of time was allocated to different ones.

...according to the custom of the priest's office. His lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord. What an incredible thing that there were lots, there were different ones that had specific types of jobs within the temple to perform, but all something physical. Again, picturing things that are spiritual later on. Awesome!

Verse 10—As a whole multitude of the people was praying outside at the time of incense. There appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. Then when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled and overwhelmed with fear. Well, you see something like that, and this is not a regular occasion. People just don't see such a thing through long periods of time as far as when God has worked with them. Then he saw what he saw that was revealed to him.

Then when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled and overwhelmed with fear. But the angel said unto him, Do not fear, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. Awesome! Incredible. Just almost sends chills up and down my spine just talking about this. That occasion, how awesome that was, that event.

And you shall have joy and happiness, and many shall rejoice in his birth. For he will be great in the sight of the Lord and will drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the holy spirit, even from his mother's womb. Now, that's an awesome thing right there. From the very beginning, a measure of God's spirit from the very beginning dwelling in him.

And many of the children of Israel he will turn to the Lord their God. So, you think about what he did and what he preached and preached the importance of repentance and baptism. Not on a spiritual plane like we know within the Church that had to follow up later on from some who had been baptized before. Because there were different ones who came into the Church who had been baptized by John, because later on it was a matter of laying on of hands and receiving of God's holy spirit, the impregnation of God's spirit as understanding was given to them.

"And many of the children of Israel will turn to the Lord their God." So, because of John's work God was going to draw people, begin to draw people. Some may be more along the lines of co-workers if you will. They see a bit, they see a part, they're moved by certain things that he says, but not necessarily for the purpose of being brought on into the Church. So, there were a lot of people like that as well at that particular time who went through this.

He will also go before Him... Because there are other scriptures and things that had to be fulfilled even leading up to Christ coming into Jerusalem.

He will also go before Him, before God, in the spirit and the power of Elijah. "Elias," it says here, "Elijah." It's referring to Elijah, knowing what the word means: "My God is Yahweh." "My God is Yahweh." What an awesome thing to understand the meaning of it and what's been carried on through time here, why it's so important. Our God is Yahweh. What an awesome thing to understand.

...to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children. What an incredible thing that we never really understood this fully. We came to a point, and that's because of what God reveals in His time. We could see certain things on a physical plane, hence the desire and the importance of different things that were done to work with Y.E.S. and Y.O.U. and various other organizations within the Church, and activities that were held within the Church and feeling like a lot of this had to do with that.

When in reality, that's not what it was talking about. It's not. We came to understand it on a spiritual plane that it's a matter of how God works with us, when God begins to draw us, how our minds begin to be turned to the fathers, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, whomever through time. Because that's where the truth was given as God continued to give us scripture, if you will, events that took place through time, and to understand it's when our hearts and our minds begin to be opened up and we begin to be turned to the things that God has given and worked with people for a long, long time, that He began to give us the ability to see, or for them two thousand years ago nearly to begin to see and understand.

... to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just. Because we're all disobedient. We're all filled with sin, and to be turned to God, to be turned to that which is just in how you live your life.

...and to make ready a people prepared for the Lord. So, his first coming, that's what John was doing. Awesome, awesome, awesome that we can see such things and be moved by such things, to understand what now you're a part of because the same sort of thing has been taking place since Herbert Armstrong and what God was doing through him in restoring truth to the Church in the manner that He did. Awesome, truths that we could see, that people could see on a spiritual plane.

This is taken from **Malichi 4:5-6—Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Eternal.** Not about John the Baptist! Yes, he had to come before that would take place. Yes, but it's even more so about what would happen toward the end. But Christ had to come first as Passover, to be put to death to fulfill that part, that role, if you will, because he's going to fulfill something far greater later on - the King of kings and the Lord of lords. ...**before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Eternal.**

And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers. So, people would turn on the dial sometimes and be traveling at nighttime (going way back), and there would be this voice being broadcast. Because at nighttime there are certain periods of time I think they were able to amp up or jack up the power that was going out by certain stations if I remember right the story. I may have it all messed up. But at some point there it happened to where some of these were a long way away and people could hear on the radios, whether it be in a vehicle or in their home, Herbert Armstrong, a voice crying out in the wilderness.

That happened to thousands and thousands, and that's where they began to hear, and the hearts began to be changed to things that God had done and revealed through time.

Awesome!

The Plain Truth. I think of different stories. Some of the most incredible stories back during Worldwide days was hearing how people were called and some of the most incredible things when people came across a *Plain Truth*. I think of one guy that was walking down the street and big wind came up and blew one right into his chest. Read it, was drawn into the Church. That's where it started.

You know, people that find it in the laundromat, in a phone booth. All these stories that ring out in my mind. One man who was working on a diesel engine of a semi and there is a *Plain Truth* in there. Somehow got in there around the engine area and he found *The Plain Truth* and began to be drawn by God. Incredible stories!

When God calls someone out of the world into the Church - not growing up in the Church, that's a different experience - but when you're called out of the world there's something huge that takes place in the mind. That's why I've mentioned so often when I first heard it when it was my time because I'd heard it before. I remember working in a store going to

college, working at a couple different jobs trying to pay my way through college at that time, through a junior college, and listening in the store because I always enjoyed working in this one particular area.

At that particular time, it was Garner Ted, a voice that was coming across. I thought it was really interesting, but nothing gelled, nothing happened, and if I'd been called at that moment, if I had heard somebody in the Church come up to me and start talking to me about the Holy Days and the Sabbath and Israel, I'd think, "Man, you are really out there. You're kind of a religious freak!" I know that was my mind at that time. And on and on it goes.

Then finally, when your mind is opened up and it's time for you, incredible. I remember going and washing my clothes at a laundromat—some of you probably don't even know what a laundromat is—and there were *Plain Truths* in there, and I remember flipping through some and finding some things interesting. Nothing until it's time, and then all of a sudden you know it's true, you know it's true. Awesome!

...then he shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the heart of the children to the fathers lest I come, or I would come and smite the earth with a curse. In other words, it has to happen or it's worthy to be destroyed in other words, if this didn't happen. But it happened because it's part of God's plan and God's purpose, of how He worked and how He calls and the ones He raised up to do what they were to do.

It still amazes me how many people you come across at times, and even some of you since Worldwide, you had no knowledge of those things, and you remember *The Plain Truth* or having heard Herbert Armstrong. It's amazing how many people there are still out there that have that, even as youngsters that heard certain things, that are not youngsters anymore.

Matthew 17:10—Then his disciples asked him, saying, Then why do the scribes say that Elias/Elijah must first come? So, here they're questioning him about some of this. And so, Joshua answered and said to them, Elias truly shall come first and restore all things. But I say to you that Elias has already come. We learn in time that this was a "type" of a fulfillment, but not what was fully spoken of as what would happen later on as we get closer to the end and the things that have to happen on this earth as a matter of God's judgment on mankind that's stated over and over again in scripture, of things that would happen in this period of time because it's about a time of an end of man's rule and the beginning of God's, and it takes great power to do that.

That's why there have to be so many that come to a certain point of destruction, and those who are destroying the earth must be destroyed before the Kingdom is fully set up. It's going to be here. But there is going to be a lot of destruction even after all the fighting and so forth between the nations is taking place.

But I say to you that Elias/Elijah has already come, and they did not know him but have done to him whatever they wished/willed. Likewise, also the Son of Man shall suffer of them. Then the disciples understood that he spoke to them of John the Baptist. So, that's all they were able to see at this point in what he had to say, that he was referring to some things about "he's already come." God had to give that into their minds to see that even, that it's about John the Baptist, that that's who he was speaking of when he said, "he has already come," because it's about what Christ was to fulfill and what had to go out before Christ was put to death to fulfill the Passover.

And so, they only understood in part because they didn't have the impregnation of God's spirit yet, but God was working with them, molding and fashioning them, preparing them for their jobs they would have later on. Awesome!

Well, let's return once again to part of the story of when Elijah passed on his place as prophet to Elisha. Now, other prophets, but he was the prophet that God was working through above and beyond the others, on another plane.

2 Kings 2:8—Then Elijah took his mantle, rolled it up, and struck the water; and it was divided this way and that, that the two of them crossed over on dry ground. Then it was, when he had crossed over, that Elijah said to Elisha, Ask! What may I do for you, before I am taken up away from you? And Elisha said, Please, let a double portion of your spirit be upon me. So he said, You have asked a hard thing. If you see me when I am taken from you, it shall be for you; but if not, it will not be.

So, we know the story here. He saw it. He saw the chariot of fire. So, that was his answer.

Verse 11—Then it happened, as they continued on and talked, that suddenly a chariot of fire appeared with horses of fire and separated the two of them; and Elijah went up by a strong wind into the heaven. So, the protestant world, "He went up into heaven." There are three heavens spoken of in scripture and the one is just the one in our immediate atmosphere. We understand these things. Then that which goes out into time and space, if you will, space. Then, God's throne. It uses the same word over and over again but until God calls people and begins to give people understanding there are things that people just can't grasp and can't put together.

How blessed are we that we understand that alone and what this is talking about? He was just taken up. We don't know how high. Twenty foot? Thirty? We don't know. It didn't have to be way, way, way up there. It wasn't like when Christ was taken up. This was different. So, it just had to be taken up and he slowly disappeared in the horizon.

...taken up in a strong wind into heaven. And Elisha saw it, and he cried out, My Father, my Father, the chariot of Israel and its horsemen! Awesome, the power just in reading that statement and what he felt inside, what was coming out of him because of his blessing of

being able to see such a thing, to be able to experience such a thing concerning his teacher, Elijah. He was deeply moved by that, and I'm moved by reading it, but it's not to be compared with what you see. So often we don't grasp that on the same plane, that which is lasting and continuing on that has to do with truth that's in the mind.

So he saw him no more. Then he took hold of his own clothes and tore them into pieces.

Verse 13, continuing on. He also took up the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him and went back and stood by the bank of the Jordan. So, they'd been on one side, they'd crossed through, now he's coming back. Then he took the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and struck the water, and said, **Where is the Eternal God of Elijah?** He was already being helped. He was already being given help in what he saw because what he sees from now on isn't a matter of an event that was made manifest to him of a chariot, but it's what God gave in his mind that he could see as God communicated those things to him.

Where is the Eternal God of Elijah? So, when he also had struck the water... Why did he do that? God was working with him very powerfully at that point. From that point on that double portion, that power of God's holy spirit working in him and communicating to his mind, he knew what he was to do. You don't just do things on your own, of your own will and call it of God. It has to be from God.

When he also had struck the water it was divided this way and that; and Elisha crossed over. Awesome! What an experience. God revealed that He was now working through Elisha as the prophet to Israel. Today, it's by the revelation or through how truth is given to God's Church. Hopefully, we all see that and grasp that and understand that.

Verse 15—Now, when the sons of the prophets who were from Jericho saw him... They saw that event when he came back. They saw the same thing happen as when they left; they were right there in that area. ...**they said, The spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha.**

So, what they saw was very physical, but it was that which convicted them on a physical plane, if you will, that here Elisha has come back, Elijah hasn't, and they see something that's taking place here, that Elijah had done going across and now Elisha coming back and they already had made comment that they already knew - How? God gave it to them. - that Elijah was going to be taken from Elisha that day.

Do you remember the different spots that they went? Awesome. They knew this. It's like Elisha didn't know. Yeah, Elisha knew already as well because God had given it in his mind to know and to understand that, that Elijah was going to be taken away that day. That's the only way you can know these kinds of things, that God has to give it. That's why Elisha told them, basically, "Be quiet," or "Shut up." He probably said it nicely, I don't know. Maybe he didn't. But the point was there's more to this story as well, but we won't go there.

Then they went to meet him and bowed to the ground before him. Then they said to him, Look now, there are fifty strong men with your servants. Please let them go and search for your master, lest perhaps the spirit of the Eternal has taken him up and cast him upon some mountain or in some valley. In other words, it's like, "He may need help. He's out there alone perhaps somewhere and it'd be good to know where God took him."

And he said, You shall not send anyone. Hmm. First big test. They failed. Just like when he told them to be quiet. Now this is happening. And so, he tells them no.

But when they urged him, a word that means "pressed on" him. They didn't give up. They just kept pressing on him. Now, if they could understand things on a spiritual plane like we do today they wouldn't have continued doing that, but they did because there are lessons in this.

They pressed on him; they urged him to do this until he was ashamed. Now, that's not really the right translation. He wasn't "ashamed," but this was basically what they were trying to make him feel. That's why sometimes when some things are translated they have the words, but they don't know how it's applied. They don't know. They don't grasp and understand the context of the story and what's truly happening. This is an occasion here where they just kept pushing at him to where he finally said, "Okay, go." He already knew what the truth was that nobody was supposed to find him. Nobody was to know where he was. But you just keep pushing, you keep pushing. Okay, go on.

He said, Send them! I've done things like this. Therefore, they sent fifty men, and they searched for three days but did not find him. Then when they came back to him, for he had stayed in Jericho, he said to them, Didn't I say to you, don't go? You wasted all that time because he knew what was going to happen. But he let them go because they have to learn the hard way, "You should have listened to Elisha. If you believe what you said you believed when he came back across then you should have listened to Elisha. But you didn't, you kept pressing him. You kept wanting your way. You kept thinking your way was better instead of receiving what God was giving through him to you." Now, this is a powerful lesson in God's Church because this has happened through time. Awesome!

Verse 19—Then the men of the city said to Elisha, As you can see, the location of the city is a pleasant one, "This is a pleasant area." But the water is bad, and the ground barren. So, he said, Bring me a bowl and put salt in it. So they brought it to him. Then he went out to the source of the water, and cast the salt there, and said, Thus says the Eternal...

Now, again, how can he know this? It's from God, it's not from him. That's what he's telling them. "This is what God is doing." **This says the Eternal, I have healed this water; from it there shall be no more death nor be barren anymore.** Because of what was taking place in the things concerning the region there and things that wouldn't grow as well.

So the water remains healed to this day. When this was compiled, when this was written and things were being recorded, it's showing that even to that point in time this is the way it still was. **...according to the word of Elisha which he spoke.** God's just driving the point home Elisha is now the prophet, giving him that to give to the people, and especially to the different ones in different areas. So, it started right there in that immediate area.

Verse 23—Then he went up from there to Bethel; and as he was going up the road, some youths came from the city and mocked him, and said to him, Go up, you baldhead! Go up, you baldhead! So basically, some translate this as "Go away." It's probably more akin to, in the context here, "Just keep going, keep going," you know, the mocking him and making fun of him and so forth being bald-headed. "You baldhead! You baldhead!"

So he turned around and looked at them, and it says, **and pronounced a curse,** as it says in one particular translation, **on them.** King James says that he just cursed them, but it's about what was spoken against them is what the word really has to do with. It's about what he spoke against them, in essence, that would come to pass.

...in the name of the Eternal. So again, coming from God, not him but from God, in the authority. That's what it means so often when it talks about "In the name of the Eternal." It has to do because of his place as a prophet, and this is in the name of. So, whether this was potentially from him, but still he knew it was of God's will.

And two female bears came out of the woods and mauled forty-two of the youths. Wow, what a tough lesson in life to have something like that happen, but back then God working with people in a very physical way. It put a fear in that region because of the story and they knew what had happened because of that disrespect and what they had done, and it wasn't a light thing before God. So, they were worked with on a physical plane.

Then he went from there to Mount Carmel, and from there he returned to Samaria.

Now, all these accounts, again, we've been reading, were for the purpose of making it clear, as clear as possible, more on a physical plane than anything else (because they didn't have God's spirit working within them), that Elisha was indeed God's prophet. That's why these things are repeated over and over again, showing the evidence is there that he's God's prophet and that God was working with him as Elijah's replacement.

2 Kings 3:1—Now, Jehoram, the son of Ahab, became king over Israel. So again, to the north here, the other Jehoram. **...at Samaria in the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah.** So this, again, speaking about **and he reigned for twelve years,** so how long he actually reigned. It's just showing here some of the lineage, not the timing. It says, **And he did evil in the sight of the Eternal.** We're going back in time here a little bit. **...but not like his father and mother; for he put away the sacred pillar of Baal that his father had made.** It's showing here he did better than his father, but still not good.

Nevertheless, he persisted in the sins of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat. Over and over again, every king it says this, of Israel, did the same thing. ...who made Israel sin; and did not depart from them.

So, at this point, I think it would be good to point out part of what was happening after the death of Ahab. Last week we read in 2 Kings 1:1 that Moab had rebelled from that very point, after this started taking place, against Israel after the death of Ahab. I just mentioned that in part there and didn't have time to get into the story and where it's going.

But again, Moab is an area to the east of Samaria, Israel, where Israel was, and in this particular account here they were paying pretty large amounts to the king as being subject to the king. Then the account went on to tell how Ahaziah only reigned for two years and how he'd fallen through the lattice—so you know the story, remember the story - from the upper room there, and then he sent out to question if he was going to die or not, and died soon after because of having sent to inquire of Baal-Zebub if he would live or not.

And so, we come down to **2 Kings 3:4**, going on, **Now, Mesha, king of Moab, was a sheep breeder, and he regularly paid the king of Israel one hundred thousand lambs.** That's mindboggling. So, this is what the country was giving to them, to be subject to and under the rule of Ahab at that time. They didn't want to go against him and so to do that you need to pay your fair share. **...and the wool of one hundred thousand rams.** So, this is not a small thing.

But it happened, when Ahab died, that the king of Moab rebelled against the king of Israel. Again, a thing that repeated itself throughout history of things when a powerful king or oppressive king would die and then others would try to take back... Understandable.

So, Jehoram, the king, sent out of Samaria at that time and numbered all Israel. So, here we're up to, we're past Ahaziah, now we're up to Jehoram. So that expression, "go out to number them" means they're preparing for war and they're taking a count a number that can be part of this army. And so, "Jehoram the king went out of Samaria at that time and numbered all Israel," meaning went out of the area where he resided, known as the royal area, if you will, and that's referred to as Samaria.

Then he went and sent to Jehoshaphat king of Judah, saying, The king of Moab has rebelled against me. Will you go with me and fight against Moab? So, he said, I will go up; I am as you are, my people as your people, my horses as your horses. So, when I read this I can't help but think of alliances they don't even know why, whether it be parts of Europe and the U.S., and all these different alliances that happen at different times and the feelings of the comradery because a lot of the migrants and people that came over.

You talk about Great Britain and the U.S., and they get into these conflicts and they're the ones fighting together. So, he says the same thing, "Your people are my people. We come

from the same place.” They don’t believe the same thing, but this is kind of the thought here and “my horses are your horses,” so, “Yes, we’re going to help you out.”

Then he said, Which way shall we go up? So he answered, By the way of the Wilderness of Edom. Now, if you were to look at a map they were actually going to go south on the west side of Jordan, if you will, the west side of the Dead Sea, and they’re going to stay on the west side of the Dead Sea and go down into Edom and there pick up the king of Edom that’s going to go with them. Then just as soon as they start coming back up on the other side, on the east side of the Dead Sea, that’s where Moab begins. So, this is where they were going, a wilderness area indeed, on the south side of that Dead Sea area and come up against Moab from that particular direction. That’s what’s being said here.

“Which way should we go up,” and he said, “By the Wilderness of Edom.” **So, the king of Israel went up with the king of Judah and the king of Edom, and they marched on that roundabout route.** Good way of describing it, roundabout... Anyway, **seven days.** So, it took them seven days to get there. **And there was no water for the army, nor for the animals that followed them.** Good planning. There wasn’t any there where they were going. Ought to have known the geography of the area already. There is no water out there.

So, the king of Israel (Jehoram) spoke, declaring that the Eternal has called these three kings together to deliver them into the hand of Moab. In other words, all of a sudden, things turned really negative. “God’s brought us here to die.” God wasn’t involved in this at all, in that respect. So, he’s saying, “God’s brought us here to die. It’s the Eternal. He’s the one. All three of us, the three kings here.” There are some attitudes in some thinking some people aren’t too positive in their outlooks of things in life, and he’s a good example of one that’s a real downer. But anyway.

Verse 11—But Jehoshaphat replied, Is there no prophet of the Eternal that’s here, that we may inquire of the Eternal by him? “You’re saying this about the Eternal, the Eternal has brought us here to die. Well, is there a prophet of the Eternal to ask?”

So one of the servants of the king of Israel answered and said, Elisha the son of Shaphat is here, who poured water into the hands of Elijah. Then Jehoshaphat said, The word of the Eternal is with him. So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat and the king of Edom went down to him. Then Elisha said to the king of Israel, to Jehoram, What have I to do with you? Go to the prophets of your father and the prophets of your mother. But the king of Israel said to him, No, for the Eternal has called these three kings together to deliver them into the hand of Moab.

There is no point in going to them and he’s telling the same old story, “We’re just out here to die.” That’s about the basis of it.

So, Elisha said, As the Eternal of hosts lives, before whom I stand, surely were it not that I regarded the presence of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, I would not look at you, nor see you. In other words, "You wouldn't be given any help, and you would be out there to die." But now bring me a musician.

Then it happened, it says, when the musician played, that the hand of the Eternal was upon him. Then he said, Thus says the Eternal, Make the valley full of ditches. For thus says the Eternal... So again, he's presiding as the prophet, "This is what the Eternal is saying that you're to do. Go out there and make ditches in this area."

Thus says the Eternal. You shall not see wind, nor shall you see rain, yet that valley shall be filled with water. So, they don't understand but they went ahead and did it. So, it's like no rain, not going to see anything, and yet this is all going to be filled with water.

...so that you, your cattle, and your animals may drink. For this is a simple matter in the sight of the Eternal. "This is a small thing for God to do."

He will also deliver the Moabites into your hand. Also, you shall attack every fortified city and every choice city, and shall cut down every good tree, and stop up every spring of water, and ruin every good piece of land with stones. So, "Moab isn't to rise up again." That's what this is all about. "Do this because it's been given to you."

Now it happened in the morning when the grain offering was offered, that suddenly water came by way of Edom. So, it came up, farther up out of Edom, and the land was filled with water.

Now, when all the Moabites heard that the kings had come up to fight against them, all who were able to bear arms and older were gathered; and they stood at the border. Then they rose up early in the morning, and the sun was shining on the water, and the Moabites saw the water on the other side as red as blood. So, as they were looking on it this is what they saw, looked like blood was all over the region there. So they said, This is blood; the kings have surely struck swords and have killed one another; now, therefore, Moab, to the spoil! Didn't last too long, did it?

So, when they came to the camp of Israel, Israel rose up and attacked the Moabites, so that they fled before them; and they entered their land, killing the Moabites. Then they destroyed the cities, and every man threw a stone on every good piece of land and filled it, and they stopped up all the springs of water and cut down all the good trees. But they left the stones of Kir Haraseth (the royal city of the Moabites). So often they never followed through, made reasons why they weren't to do certain things. And you think, another time you're just not listening, you just don't get it. When God says to do something you're supposed to do it. It comes back to bite them later in time.

However, the slingers surrounded and attacked it. So, when the king of Moab saw the battle was too fierce for him, he took with him seven hundred men who drew swords, to break through to the king of Edom, but they could not. So, kind of a last-ditch effort to make a stand.

Then he took his eldest son, when knew there was total defeat in front of them, **who would have reigned in his place, and offered him as a burnt offering.** This is how perverted their minds were. Insanity. Such an ugly thing. **...and offered him for a burnt offering upon the wall,** for everyone to see, **and there was great indignation against Israel.**

So, you think, absolute, just perverted thinking. That's the way it was through so many in this region and how the mind worked and some of the evil things they did. I think of some of the Old Testament scriptures that talk about offering their children upon the altar to Moloch, different gods that they served, and how they thought, and what they did to their children, what they practiced. And sadly, some things haven't changed a whole lot.

So they departed from him and returned to their own land. So again here, just going through some of the story.

I want to stop there in that particular spot to pick it up next Sabbath, to continue on. But for us during this following week to think about some of the analogies that were given about things that you see, and understanding, to compare that with something physical in that respect.

And yeah, it was spiritual that Elisha saw that chariot of fire, and to be moved by that, which every time I read it and hear what he said in response, "My Father, My Father," and it talks about God in a unique way, of seeing something that God was doing and understanding what he was now going to be given. Because he understood what was going to be given to him because Elijah told him "You're going to receive that portion if you see this event take place."

Then for us to understand how blessed, how awesome it is what we see. You can't compare it with that.