

10046

ELIJAH THE TISHBITE

Speaker: Bro. John Martin

Elijah - The Man of God

Reading: 1 Kings 16:29 - 17:1

Dear Brethren and Sisters and Young People,

As we launch out upon our study of Elijah the Tishbite, I feel, brethren and sisters, that we did so on a very good note, in the singing of hymn #215 or #120. For in that hymn we sang these words,

And now thine oracles we read
With earnest prayer and strong desire
More richly on thy words to feed
More strongly catch their living fire.

Now, brethren and sisters, if ever we have an example of earnest prayer and the living fire of God's word, we've got it in the life time of Elijah. And as we study that record, we are going to be hurt by it, because we have in it, some of the most powerful exhortations that could possibly be delivered to us, who live in the opulence of this 20th century. And being hurt by it, brethren and sisters, the words in the hymn are going to have an application where they say,

Deep wounded by the Spirit's sword
And then by Gilead's balm restored.

And it was out of Gilead that that prophet came, and how significant it was, that we will see, that he should come from that region of the land. You know, one writer has written of Elijah, concerning the record of him in the Old Testament scriptures. He's written these words, 'It is with the suddenness of a flash of lightning, and the roll of thunder out of the east, that Elijah the prophet, bursts upon us in the narrative of the Old Testament'. And so it is; we know absolutely nothing about him, brethren and sisters, before he appeared upon the scene. And then, all of a sudden, there he is! An amazing speaker, a dramatic speaker, a startling speaker, right in the court of Ahab, king of Israel. And that description of him, 'bursting upon the scene like a flash of lightning, and a roll of thunder out of the east sky', is very apt, brethren and sisters, because at this particular moment in time, amongst the ten tribes in the north of Israel, the sky had never been ever darker, brethren and sisters, than in this moment of time, when Ahab king of Israel, sat upon the throne of the kingdom. It had reached it's worst point; it

couldn't have got any worse, than it could then. It was absolutely shocking what was going on in God's ecclesia. And you know, many commentators have wondered why it is that in this particular moment of time, as in no other, we have the ministry of the prophets so graphically set before us, as we have it here. No other period, brethren and sisters, had the record of miracles and divine intervention as this period had. But, before we finish, now as we talk this afternoon, you're going to understand why it was, that the God of Israel had to intervene, with His naked arm manifest amongst that nation, because if He didn't, brethren and sisters, if He didn't, there would be no truth on the earth! It would have gone; it was almost completely gone when He intervened, and was swiftly going, as they had introduced some of the worst forms of abomination into that nation, that they had ever seen. And as we go through this study, it's going to be a study of great drama, brethren and sisters, not so much of death and profundity, but of great drama and exhortation. We are going to study this record together, fairly closely, and we're going to get a lot out of it, I feel, providing of course, for the effort we're going to put into it. We are going to learn, first and foremost, about Elijah the prophet himself, a man of like passions as we, said James. A man who could feel weakness, brethren and sisters, who could feel human weakness very much, yet was able at all times, to rise up above that weakness, for the cause of the truth, and if ever we need that exhortation, we need it in our life at this present moment of time. And with all those weaknesses which beset us, what we've all got to realize, and those of us who are here at this Easter camp, that everybody has to swallow differences, to get over personal feelings, to take personal offences and forget them, for the good of the common brethren and sisters that gather together in like occasions such as this. We must, brethren and sisters, do this or else we too, will lose the truth which we have. And the only divine intervention that we can expect, is the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and then it will be too late! It will be too late to hold together the precious things that we've enjoyed over the years.

There's a tremendous exhortation in this story of Elijah. It's going to be a blood-thirsty record too, brethren and sisters, and I'm going to spare nothing in this regard, because I want to show you the stark reality of this record. We have in this record some tremendous things, things that would almost make us feel ill when we consider them in their full import, but nonetheless, they've got to be considered. We must see the wrath of the God of Israel manifest against the abominations of the heathen as they were, and we must see in this record, brethren and sisters, the awful condemnation which rests upon us, if we fail to heed the message of God's Word. We are going to see in this record, some dreadful things; I believe we have in the record of the first of Kings, in the story of Elijah, one of the greatest condemnations of any person, which is written from Genesis to Revelation, as was dealt out to Jezebel, that woman who brought Israel to its knees. One of the foulest condemnations that you ever read of anybody, in the record of scripture, is poured out upon Jezebel, the Zidonian queen, because of her waywardness; because, brethren and sisters, of the way she brought the ecclesia to nothing and Christ warned us, 'you suffered that woman Jezebel to be called the ecclesia; you suffered her'. And yet look what she did to this nation!

These are the things that we're going to have to learn and absorb, and now we've got

this man, Elijah, bursting out of Gilead, coming from the east, brethren and sisters, and appearing in the court of Ahab, at this particular moment of history. And what was the particular moment of history? Well, of course, as you well realize, Elijah the prophet, concerned himself largely, with the ten tribes in the north of Israel. He had little or nothing to do with the kingdom of Judah, apart from the fact that before he moves away from the record of scripture, he wrote a letter to Jehoram. A most unusual thing for Elijah to do; he wrote a letter to Jehoram, king of Judah, to warn him of what had happened in the north, and it was going to happen in the south, because Jehoram, brethren and sisters, was related through Athaliah to Jezebel. Should never have been that too, but he was; and there he was, down there in the south, and before we pass along and lose sight of Elijah, the last time we hear of him, is writing a letter to the southern kingdom, warning the south what was going to happen, because of what had happened in the north.

And he burst upon us like that, and he fades out of the picture in a letter, warning about the same thing. And in the northern kingdom, brethren and sisters, as you well know, Israel never had one single, good king. There were a few in Judah; there were a few in Judah; Asa, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, Josiah; there were a few of them, but there was not one solid good king, in the northern kingdom, and that's where Elijah worked. And by the time we come to Ahab, they had reached the zenith of their apostacy. Do you know, brethren and sisters, that in the southern tribes, the southern two tribes of Judah; the dynasty never changed at all; it was always in the house of David, and one king succeeded another. It always remained in the house of David, but the dynasty changed no less than 9 times in the northern kingdom. And here we come to the first of Kings chapter 16, and we're introduced to Elijah. We are already in the fourth dynasty, and there's only 50 years of history gone by. We are already in the fourth dynasty; it is the fourth family that's taken over the reigns of monarchy in the northern kingdom. And the whole record has been a record of bloodshed and misery and decline. And Elijah came upon the scene in the fourth dynasty.

And Ahab and Jezebel were reminded by the prophet later on, that they indeed, although they were the fourth dynasty in Israel, they were reminded of what happened in the previous three dynasties, and every one of those dynasties, brethren and sisters, had gone out of existence in violence and bloodshed, as God had swept them out of the way, and they were reminded about that! And you look at those dynasties; Jeroboam the son of Nebat was the first one, of course. We know him; as he wrenched away from Rehoboam and the ten tribes in the north, in accordance with the prophecy of Elijah, and he took the ten tribes of the north. 'Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin', and he set the pattern, as time and time again, we have that statement 'like Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin'. And how did he make them to sin? He commenced an apostacy, brethren and sisters, in a most subtle way; he commenced an apostacy in a very subtle and cunning fashion. So subtle was it, that there were not too many that discerned it. Ah! he didn't do like Ahab did; he didn't introduce a Zidonian queen, and a false, foreign worship which was strange to the people. Oh, no, he wouldn't do a thing like that! All Jeroboam did, brethren and sisters, was take the statement of faith which Israel had, and just make a few significant

alterations. Ah, he wouldn't deny the truth of God! of course, he wouldn't. God's word had said that only the sons of Aaron would be the priests. Well, Jeroboam thought that we've got to have a priest because the Law of Moses said so, but why should one family only have the priesthood? I'll let all God's people be priests. Why should we have these fellows, who are teaching us all the time, let's give everybody a go! and of course, everybody applauded Jeroboam !! (claps his hands) for what a wonderful chap he was. Very benevolent; he let everyone come and be teachers, and of course, brethren and sisters, you can well and truly imagine, that when he gave everybody a go, you can imagine what happened to the standards of the teaching. They just went out the window; never mind about the standards of the truth, give everybody a go, says Jeroboam. And this is exactly what happened, and as he commenced his kingdom, brethren and sisters, he could put into the field of over a million men, and in fifty years Ahab could fill ten thousand.

Down in the south, Rehoboam had no where near that number, and in fifty years, Jehoshaphat could put in the field with Ahab, one million, six hundred thousand, as the people swarmed out of the north, down to the south, because they lost heart. Because the teachers of God's word were drawn from all the ranks of Israel, and nobody knew what they were talking about, consequently the nation lost confidence in the Word of truth, and streamed down over the border into Judah. This is what Jeroboam commenced. When it came to the Law of Moses, it said, 'Look, the people must keep the feast of Tabernacles in the seventh month'; Jeroboam didn't deny that, his apostacy, as I said before, was not a strange religion, it was a perversion of the truth. And he knew, brethren and sisters, that if he let Israel go down to the feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem, he was in bother! He knew he was in bother because when they crossed the southern border and they met their brethren and sisters at the bible schools, which were held down in Jerusalem, and I'm not using that term 'bible schools' to be facetious, I mean what I say, because that's exactly what they were. They'd gather together for the (feasts) Passovers, Pentecosts and the Tabernacles to study the bible. And because they poured down there, Jeroboam knew that if they got down there and they studied the Word of God together, as brethren and sisters, it wouldn't be long before they would be talking unity and strength, and he'd lose his position in the north. So what did he do? He proclaimed a feast in the eighth month. Oh, he didn't deny the Word of God, he just, you know, twisted it a little bit! Nobody would notice; and instead of having the seventh month, he'd have one in the eighth month. And of course, the people thought, Right oh! this is good enough for us, we'll have our picnic in the eighth month; as the feast of Tabernacles was a picnic feast. So nobody missed the feast in the seventh month, and Jeroboam and all the brethren and sisters, to hold that, at the very southern extremity of his kingdom, and he put a golden calf at Dan, the very northern extremity of his kingdom, so that he would hold the nation within the bounds of Israel, to hold them together. He didn't deny that God led them out of Egypt; I don't believe for a moment that Jeroboam put those calves there to represent other gods than Yahweh of Israel. He didn't at all! He did it for what Aaron did it for, to represent God. 'These be your gods', and I believe by that, he meant Yahweh, but he knew, brethren and sisters, that if he didn't give the people some material object, which could represent God, then they'd go down to Judah and he'd lose them.

And the Word of God is significant when it says, 'the people went to worship even before the one which was at Dan'; and Dan means 'judgment', whereas Bethel means 'the house of God'. And Jeroboam lost the people to the house of God, and they went to judgment. And this was the commencement of the grand apostacy. Nadab, his son, succeeded him to the throne, and the end of Jeroboam's dynasty came, brethren and sisters, in that second generation, when Baasha, the king, came forth and murdered Nadab and took over the dynasty, and the house of Jeroboam was utterly exterminated because of what he had commenced. What Jeroboam commenced, brethren and sisters, was accelerated. And this is the point I want to get home to you; this is the point we want to absorb this weekend, what Jeroboam commenced relatively speaking, was ever so much small. He didn't come straight out of the door with the Word of God, he just altered it in a few significant places, and for those who were unwary, uneducated in the things of God, they would never have told the difference. But it wasn't long before acceleration began, and once, brethren and sisters, you relax the standards of the truth, and once people lose confidence in the scriptures, and once the teachers of the scriptures are unable to expound them, to the people's satisfaction to enlarge their minds in the things of God, look! it will accelerate and accelerate, as it did in the days of Ahab, to reach its absolute zenith. And this is what Jeroboam started, and the first dynasty finished in qualms and bloodshed when Baasha took over.

Baasha was succeeded by Elah and the second dynasty came to a violent and bloody end, brethren and sisters, when Zimri came forth and murdered Elah, and Zimri reigned for a full week. He reigned for a week, but it wasn't long before the fourth dynasty loomed on the horizon, and a man by the name of Omri, the father of Ahab, out fighting a battle for Israel, saw his opportunity to come back to Tirzah in Samaria, there to besiege Zimri in his castle, to take over the dynasty of Israel, and he came and besieged Zimri in his castle. And Zimri seeing that his number was up, burnt the whole castle around himself and he perished in the holocaust, and the third dynasty came to a violent end, and now Omri's in control.

And Omri, brethren and sisters, was a very industrious king. He was, as we learn in the scripture, the father of Ahab. And we read concerning him in 1 Kings chapter 16 and verse 25. We read concerning him, 'But Omri did evil in the eyes of the Lord, and did worse than all that were before him', he did worse than all that were before him. And this man of course, is the father of Ahab. And you think upon a progression of ideas, one king doing worse than the other, and you come back to 1 Kings chapter 14 and verse 9, speaking here of Jeroboam it says, 'That thou hast done evil above all that were before thee'(note that). Thou hast done evil above all that were before thee, so Jeroboam, brethren and sisters, completely out strips what Solomon has done, now we come to this statement that we read concerning Omri, in the 16th chapter and verse 25, 'That Omri wrought evil in the eyes of the Lord and did worse than all that were before him, so he outstripped Jeroboam. And then of course, we read don't we? in the 30th verse of the same chapter, 'That Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of Yahweh above all that were before him'. So we, first of all, have Jeroboam establishing this apostacy; it grows in the days of Omri, and it grows more and more in the days of Ahab, and

nobody, brethren and sisters and young people, nobody outstrips Ahab.

He was champion of this apostacy; nobody else outstripped him, and I'm going to tell you now, and you're going to see this proved above all contradiction, why it was that Ahab was the worse king that ever sat upon the throne of Israel. There was none worse than Ahab, brethren and sisters and young people; nobody got anywhere near him, and do you know why he was branded as the worse king? Because he was better than all the rest! That's a fact. He was branded the worse because he was better; that is, he knew better; he had better feelings; he showed in his lifetime, brethren and sisters, that he was prepared to stand behind God. He showed by his very actions, that he condoned what Elijah had done. He stood up as the chairman of truth; he rode in triumph into Jezreel, and Elijah honoured him by running before him. And time and time and time again, Ahab showed us, brethren and sisters, that he had the truth in him, and that's why he was the worst king that ever was, because he knew the truth, he gave lip service to it, he had better feelings but because of the flesh and the very weakness of his nature, he allowed the things of the world to get the better of him. And so the heavier condemnation rested upon him.

We are going to see before this study is out, the character of Ahab clearly portrayed before us. He was a tool in the hands of a merciless and a cruel woman. He had a nature, brethren and sisters, which was extremely weak; he gave lip service as I said before, to the truth, he even acted on behalf of the truth. He exceeded to what Elijah had done; I believe he took a permanent part in the slaying of the prophets of Baal, and at the moment he was exalted above the heavens, and he knew that Yahweh was God, but he, deep down inside of him, he didn't have the determination and the strength of character to put those things into practice, but he had a wife who had strength of character like you've never seen before. She was a powerful woman and because he was weak, brethren and sisters, she impelled him on courses which went against his conscience, and so the Word of God indicts him in a way, which it indicts no other man. It indicts him in a fashion like it indicts no other man, because he knew better. And the responsibility which came upon him, was commensurate with his understanding of the truth, and so it will be with us!, brethren and sisters. WE KNOW BETTER, we know the truth, we very often give lip service to it, but doubtless there's amongst us all, those with weak characters, who, in their fight with the issues of life, and the crisis that come upon us, can be impelled upon a course of action, which prostitute their conscience, because we haven't got the intestinal fortitude, to stand up to other people. AND THAT'S WHAT WAS WRONG WITH AHAB! And God, blazingly indicts him because of that. There was none that ever would be as weak as this man, because he was better than all of them, but he didn't have the strength of character to carry out, brethren and sisters, what he knew to be right. And I'm going to show you little allusions in this record, when issues were brought up before Ahab, when he avoided mentioning certain words because he knew, that if he brought these controversies to a head, where they should have been brought, he didn't have the strength of character to fight it out. And time and again, he capitulated, he gave in, and became owner of that infamous title, of Israel's worst king. It's worst king!

Now, I want you to read with me from the 31st verse of the 16th chapter of 1 Kings, 'It came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took to wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal, and worshipped him'. This, brethren and sisters, was the greatest tragedy of his life. And one of the greatest exhortations for our young people. Young people, do never, never ever, marry outside of the truth! Look, don't marry outside the truth; if ever there's a lesson for us in this record, here it is! 'As if it were a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam, he took to wife Jezebel, who was the daughter of the king of the Zidonians, and he went and worshipped Baal. You might say to me, 'Well, what was that worse than what Jeroboam did?' It was like this; you see, this is what was worse; Israel had just come into that land, relatively speaking. They hadn't been long in the Holy Land; they had hardly established their commonwealth there. The religion of Judah isn't what they had, of course, based upon the Law of Moses, it was a new religion, brethren and sisters, unnamed by the inhabitants of Canaan. Jeroboam's apostasy was bad enough; it was a breaking down of the standards of the truth, within the truth. But Ahab went and did this; he went and got a Zidonian princess, who in her own day, was the living representative of a religion that had been known for hundreds of years in this region. A religion which had swept the western seaboard of the Mediterranean; had gone right up in the confines of Europe where civilization had penetrated. Had absolutely saturated the land of Canaan, and had gone right across the Arabian plateau, and was known clear down through Egypt. It was a religion, brethren and sisters, that had been long established and highly popular, and Ahab brought that right into the middle of God's ecclesia. And a dangerous situation arose, because God could see, brethren and sisters, that here was the weapon, like no other weapon, that could blot out the Christadelphians, because it was a long established and popular religion of the day. Popular because it allowed the foulest forms of abomination, in which the flesh delights. And he went and married that, and brought it into the temple of the living God, and so he earned that title, 'there was none that did worse than Ahab, king of Israel; none that did worse than him.

And his household, the house of Omri and Ahab, have been noted down through the centuries of Israel's history, as being the outstanding form of apostasy, which if God had not interrupted, in the work of Elijah, would have exterminated that nation. Now, you look at the 6th chapter of Micah and verse 16, have a look at what this prophet says concerning the house of Omri. In the 6th chapter of Micah in verse 16 the prophet says, 'For the statues of Omri are kept, and all the works of the house of Ahab, and ye walk in their counsels; that I should make thee a desolation, and the inhabitants thereof an hissing: therefore ye shall bear the reproach of my people'. Look what Micah says, brethren and sisters, the statutes of Omri are kept and the works of the house of Ahab, and they became a byword in Israel, that the dynasty of Omri commenced false worship in a way that it had never been done before in Israel, and you see, Ahab his son, followed on with what his father had done; not only was it the religion, but he established it in practice. The statutes of Omri are kept, and the works of the house of Ahab, and there's doctrine and practice, and they go hand in glove. They go hand in glove, and my dear brethren and sisters and young people, as pure as we are in doctrine, so as pure shall we be in practice! And as impure as we are in doctrine, so

shall we be in practice! And there's what Micah is saying, 'the statutes of Omri and the works of the house of Ahab', and these are the things, of course, which Elijah came to condemn.

Do you know what Omri means? Omri's name means 'to heap up' and that's exactly what he did. He heaped up the measure of wickedness of his father. Heaped it up as it never had been done before in Israel, and do you know what Ahab's name means? 'His father's brother' there was the statutes of Omri, and he'd heaped them all up and they were the works of the house of Ahab. He was like his father! His father's brother; and the dynasty of Omri was a shocking dynasty for the people of Israel.

Now, I want to have a brief look at Jezebel, and the introduction of our talk, because she's going to play a leading part in the drama of the life of Elijah. I want you to come back to the 1st of Kings chapter 16 with me. I want to have a little look at Jezebel, and we'll begin to understand why it was, that God moved as He did, in the work of Elijah. We read concerning her, first of all, that her name was Jezebel, or as the Hebrew perhaps, expresses it a little more clearly as we would in the English rather than the Hebrew, Isabelle, (but because we know a Isabelle, we won't sort of use that title!, we'll call her Jezebel. The Isabelle that I know was not a bad little kid anyway!) But, this Jezebel, brethren and sisters, do you know what her name means? Now, not in a hundred years would you guess it right; but her name literally means, 'chastised', 'a virgin'. And believe me, she was anything but that! Chastised, without co-habitation, and she came from Zidon as a chastised virgin, or so she projected herself upon Israel as such. She was chastised, and do you know something else about her? In the 18th chapter of 1 Kings and at verse 4 we read, 'For so it was so, when Jezebel cut off the prophets of Yahweh, that Obadiah took an hundred prophets, and hid them by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water'. Now, learn this; Jezebel cut off the prophets of Yahweh. Now I'm going to use the covenant name right throughout these talks; I'm not going to do so because I believe that everybody else should use it, but I'm going to do so, brethren and sisters, because I believe that in the record of Kings, we need to distinguish between Yahweh and Baal, as you're going to see in a moment, because Israel mixed up those names. They got confused about the usage of the titles, and because they got into the habit of calling God, 'lord' which in the Hebrew is 'baal', they got their worship mixed up. And Elijah comes forth and his name means, 'my God is Yahweh', that was the challenge of the age! But here we have Isabelle or Jezebel, the chastised virgin, now what did she do? she cut off the prophets of Yahweh. Do you know, brethren and sisters, that is the first recorded incident in the scriptures of truth of persecution by the civil authority against the saints of God. Did you know that? It's the first recorded incident of persecution of the saints of God by the civil authority. I want you to turn to the 18th chapter of Revelation and the last verse, and have a look at this; speaking of Babylon the Great, and all the abominations that she had committed, the last verse of Revelation chapter 18 says, 'And in her was found the blood of the prophets, and of the saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth', and if that's not a reference to the apostacy of Jezebel, I never read one! because she is the first woman in civil authority, to be recorded in the bible, as persecuting the prophets and the saints of God. And in the book of Revelation we have here, I believe, words which were based

upon the typical history of Jezebel, 'in her was found' the blood of all the prophets and all the saints that were slain upon the earth. And what Revelation is saying is this, not that Jezebel has lived down through the centuries of time, to instigate persecution, but because the scripture makes her 'the first person in civil authority' to persecute the saints of God; she stands in that record as a type of those, who have forever been in opposition to the truth. And we're going to learn a lot of that about Jezebel. There's a lot to be admired in Jezebel's character, in this sense, if Ahab was as determined and had the strength of purpose as that woman, Israel would have risen to a pinnacle of glory. She had strength of character, brethren and sisters, that makes you stand in awe of her. She was afraid of nothing; she knew exactly where she was going; she had a determined purpose in life, and nothing in this life was going to stand in front of her, and she rode roughshod over Ahab. Absolutely rode roughshod over him, and instigated this dreadful persecution against the saints of God.

Come back again, to that sad news revelation, keep one hand in it, and come back here to 1 Kings chapter 16. (You're going to need 3 hands because we're going to quote another scripture in a minute). But in 1 Kings 16 we read in verse 31, the latter part of it, 'that Ahab went and served Baal and worshipped him. And he reared up an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he had built in Samaria. And Ahab made a grove; and Ahab did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him.' Now, Ahab built a house of Baal, but he also reared up what the AV calls 'a grove'. Now, what I have done is this, he built a house of Baal in Samaria, where the 400 prophets of Baal, over whom he presided, held their public meetings. I'll tell you a little bit more about this house later! but they held their public meetings in the house of Baal, which Ahab built in Samaria.

But I believe, in Jezreel, he established his palace, perhaps the ivory palace, we're not sure, which is spoken of later on in the 22nd chapter of 1 Kings. He established in Jezreel another palace, where he installed Jezebel with her 400 prophets of the groves. Now in the 18th chapter, in verse 19, we see that they had two separate forms of worship. Ahab had one, and Jezebel had another; in 1 Kings 18 and verse 19 he says, 'Now therefore send, and gather to me all Israel unto mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the groves four hundred, which eat at Jezebel's table'. Now I want you to get a picture of this; here's Ahab with his 450 prophets of Baal with the house of Baal established in Samaria, and there's Jezebel in the wonderful, beautiful picturesque city of Jezreel, at the head of the valley of Jezreel, reaching down to the Jordan, at this picturesque valley. At the head of this valley she had her 400 boyfriends; the prophets of the grove who ate at Jezebel's table. Now, just to get this picture clear in our minds; you turn to 2 Kings 3 and verse 13, where once again we have an indication that there were separate forms of worship between the king and the queen.

2 Kings 3:13, 'And Elisha said unto the king of Israel, What have I to do with thee? get thee to the prophets of thy father, and to the prophets of thy mother. And the king of Israel said unto him, Nay: for Yahweh hath called these three kings together, to deliver them into the hand of Moab'. Notice what Elisha says to Jehoram, 'get you to your mother's prophets and to your father's prophets'. Now there were his mother's prophets,

his father's prophets, now you see, this was the abomination that was being set up in Israel. You see, brethren and sisters, Baal was the 'god of productivity', but he was not merely the god of productivity, Baal was worshipped under many aspects as we'll see later on, as Elijah accused Ahab of worshipping him. Baal worship was in Israel before Ahab had introduced it. Baal worship was well and truly established there, and it had been worshipped under many aspects, but now, associated with Baal was the worship of what the AV calls 'the worship of the grove'. Now that word 'grove' would indicate to us, would it not, that there was a worship associated with a 'grove of trees', as an idolatrous place. But you know, decency forbids me to tell you what the worship of the groves really was. For if I did, brethren and sisters, you would definitely ask me not to continue for the rest of this weekend, because it would outrage your conscience. But, believe me when I say this, that the word 'grove' does not indicate a 'place of trees' at all. It's obviously used in parts of the scripture, as a wooden idol. And the wooden idol represented the foul abominable worship of the 'asherah' or 'astarta', of whom Jezebel was the princess. And if you knew, what that worship represented and that Jezebel could sit at a table with 400 men, devoted to what that object was saying, she must have been one of the most foulest creatures, that ever came out of God's earth, and she has in the record of Kings, brethren and sisters, a condemnation. And I'm going to point it out to you, when we get to it, that'll make your blood run cold, as the hand of God condemns her.

And that's what Ahab brought into Israel! Now in the book of Revelation chapter 2 and verse 20, Christ warns of those in the ecclesia, who could bring into our ecclesia, the very thing that Jezebel introduced. And this is the tremendous warning which He issues to us. In Revelation 2:20, He said, 'Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols', and believe me, it was nobody's business what went on at Jezreel. Nobody's business at all, and brethren and sisters, it was poetic justice that Jezebel should tumble down from a building in Jezreel, bouncing off the wall as she went, splattering her blood all over that palace, and that Jehu should ride over her, and grind her into the dust. It was poetic justice that that woman's blood should be there, because you can only just imagine, what went on inside that palace, with her 400 boyfriends. The subject of discussion was fornication, both in theory and in demonstration. And there was the woman that Ahab had brought into the ecclesia, and Christ warns us, brethren and sisters, 'you suffer that woman Jezebel', and we do suffer her, when we release the standards of the truth, my dear brethren and sisters and young people. When we allow our young people to run with the world, and to marry outside the truth, thinking, well, perhaps they'll bring the other people into the truth, and sometimes they do, by just dipping them in water and dragging them out again, and saying they're a brother or sister in Christ, only to find, tragedy in the house. When the children are divided between mother and father. When the ecclesia of God suffers because they haven't enough commonsense to see, that unless the principles of God's word are in our hearts, and impelling these feet, to walk in the ways of the truth, brethren and sisters, then it's of no value! And that's what Ahab did, and he threw himself on his knees in front of this woman and to her determination.

It's awe inspiring to see it in this record; you turn to 1 Kings chapter 21 and verse 25 and see the determination of this woman, as she impelled Ahab along this course of ruin and devastation. 1 Kings 21:25 we read, 'But there was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of Yahweh, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up', notice what the scripture says, brethren and sisters. You see, when Jezebel 'incited' as that Hebrew word 'stirred up' means, she incited him to revolt, she did so by making him sell himself. Now, if that man had no better feelings, the record is telling us! If wasn't as if Ahab had volunteered to do these things; it wasn't as if Ahab, perhaps if he'd been encouraged in the right way, and had been put in the right circumstances, may have acted differently. But, of course, basically his character was weak and God wished to highlight that! but it wasn't as if Ahab would have done those things. No! Ahab sold something; and he had something to sell, and that something was his better self, but he was prepared to sell it for that woman. AND SHE BOUGHT IT, brethren and sisters, oh! did she ever buy it, and she incited that man to do things, which brought him absolutely to the dust of the ground. And this is the woman that he brought into the ecclesia of God.

And she stood aloof from Elijah; she was the only one; when Elijah was alone on top, she was the one who challenged him, brethren and sisters, she had no fear nor compunction. She challenged his authority, and she drove him eventually out of Horeb. She stood alone in Israel, this woman, and this is what Ahab brought into the ecclesia of God, and this is why God had to act in the way that He did. If He didn't, that woman would have exterminated the truth.

Now, I want to finish off with a little picture of Elijah entering into this picture. Just picture the scene; Ahab has built a house of Baal in Samaria. When the record of the story of Elijah finishes, we find that the public house of worship that Ahab built, became a public toilet. That's exactly what Jehu made it; a public toilet! to show his abhorance of that. But, there it was in Samaria, this beautiful house of Baal, and Samaria was a beautiful city. And up in Jezreel there was this palace of Ahab in which he installed Jezebel. She had this wonderful dining room where she sat down with the 400 prophets of the grove or the Asherah, and they spoke about the abominations which they practised. Ahab had his ivory palace, which we read of in other parts of the Word of God, and there we have a picture once, with his ivory palace, the beautiful house of Baal, we learn of Jezebel and her 400 boyfriends sitting down at this huge table, and we learn from the secular history, brethren and sisters, of the prophets of the groves were gorgeously apparelled as no doubt, the very right to be worshipped would demand to make them attractive to each other, in all the abominations they committed. And there was the picture of opulence, luxury, and all these wonderful things, that appealed to the flesh, and in strode this character from Gilead. And, can you imagine, the reaction of Ahab, as one day as he sits there in his ivory palace, and all we learn is, that Elijah the Tishbite, the Word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite. And he went into the court of Ahab we learn, in the 17th chapter of 1 Kings and verse 1, 'And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand', (and you can just picture him, brethren and sisters, let's read a description of Elijah, 2 Kings 1:8. Just picture him starting into this court; He was readily

recognized all over Israel by his very appearance. When the messengers of Ahaziah the king of Israel came to him and they said, verse 7, 'He said unto them, What manner of man was he which came up to meet you and told you these words? And they answered him, He was a hairy man, and girt with a girdle of leather about his loins. And he said, It is Elijah the Tishbite'. He didn't have to hear more than that; now you look into the scriptures! He was a hairy man, and girt with a girdle of leather about his loins; now the word 'hairy man', brethren and sisters, is a Hebrew word signifying 'a lord of hair' 'baal saar', lord of hair. And the word 'hair' here, is a Hebrew word signifying 'that which is tossed and disheveling', so he was the 'lord of hair'; and he had a mop of hair, I believe, running over his back, tossed and disheveling. And he was the 'lord of hair', and remember the 42 young men who cursed Elisha saying 'go up bald head, go up bald head', because he was the very opposite to his predecessor. So Elijah was noted for his tossed and disheveling hair, which streamed over his back; he's described as having a girdle of leather around his loins and girt about him with leather. I believe, he had perhaps the under garments, the only garments he ever wore were of leather, and yet he has thonged leather tied around his loins, and we're not told in the second book of Kings, but he also had, brethren and sisters, his well-renowned mantle, of which we often read in the Word of God. The mantle of Elijah, which he threw upon Elisha's shoulders, which he hid his face in down in Horeb, which fell from the chariots of fire when he was taken up into heaven. And this mantle which he had, is another word which means 'a hairy garment'; it's used of Esau. Esau is spoken of as a man who was like a hairy garment, and this great hairy garment or mantle was put over Elisha's shoulders. So just picture the prophet; his hair tossed and disheveling all over him, streaming over his back; rock leather clothing him, tied around with a thong of leather, and this rock garment of hair hanging about him, and he strides into the court of Ahab with all his opulence. 'As truly as I live, the Lord God of Israel said....'. you'll never leave Judah alive, except according to my word'. And off he goes! (Who's next?). By my words, in three years, brethren and sisters, they were hunting him all over the world, looking for him, trying to find just one glimpse of that man. If only we could find him because they knew that on him rested the prosperity of Israel. And this great fellow from Gilead, who came breezing into this court of Ahab, my word ! what a figure he must have presented!

Now, we're told in the scriptures, that John the Baptist came in 'the spirit and power of Elijah'. We're told that John was in the wilderness; that he had honey and locust for his food; we're told also, that he was girt about with a leather girdle, the same as Elijah, and he had a raiment of camel's hair, we're told. And of course, we're not told what sort of skins Elijah wore, but I don't think there's any question that he would have had the same garment as John, or rather that John did as he did, so we can say that Elijah, in all probability, this mantle was a camel's hair mantle. And what is the camel noted for, brethren and sisters? for it's fortitude. It's an animal of the desert and it can endure long periods of drought, because it soaks up the water. And striding into the court of Ahab, came one who was use to the desert; he'd just look like an animal, and there he was 'the camel of Israel'. He wasn't going to be worried about a drought because God was going to preserve him because he drank deeply of the water of life, and he says, 'As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain

these years, but according to my word'. They didn't believe him then; three years later they did, because Ahab was everywhere looking for him to get rain. And this prophet, who gave no appearance, brethren and sisters, of being anything else but a wild man of the desert, proved to be one of the greatest men who ever walked into Ahab's court; that ever walked on the scene of Israel's history, and we're going to live with him and we're going to love him; we're going to find out a lot about him. And I hope, brethren and sisters, that when we move away, we're going to be more like him!

Now, what did he stand for? The very fact that we know nothing about him, his eloquence, to me, is what he stood for. Finally, we have our answers in the first chapter of John, where we have as it were, the record of the one who came in 'his spirit and power'. In John 1, you see, Elijah was an non-entity; he was a nobody; he belonged to no social class or clique. He certainly didn't belong in the king's court, as the Lord Jesus Christ pointed out, by John the Baptist. He said, 'those that be in king's palaces are gorgeously apparelled'; Elijah didn't belong in Ahab's court, brethren and sisters, he'd have no part nor parcel with it. So where did he belong? He belonged to nobody nor no where; he was out in the blues as it were. You know what John said in the first of John chapter 1 verse 19, and this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, 'Who are thou?' (Good question!) 'And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ. And they asked him, 'What then? Art thou Elijah?' And he said, 'I am not. Art thou the prophet?' (And I don't believe 'the prophet' here is Elijah, but the prophet spoken of in Deuteronomy chapter 18, 'the prophet like unto Moses') 'And he answered, NO.' Now, I want you to notice something; which I think, brethren and sisters, is of the utmost importance. Here's the one who 'came in the spirit and power of Elijah', now what is the spirit of Elijah? We're going to say a lot about this as time goes on, but first of all, let's pick up its basic, fundamental issue. What is the spirit of Elijah?

Now, you listen to John; They said, 'who are you? Are you the Christ'. He said, (now you listen) 'I am not the Christ'; I AM NOT THE CHRIST. (Five words). 'Are you Elijah?' I AM NOT (three words) 'Are you the prophet?' NO (one word). Well then, who are you? I AM THE VOICE. In other words he's saying, I'm in the abstract! Now, notice how John, as he answers the people that simple question, he says less and less and less, until finally they say, 'Who are you? if you're not Elijah, you're not the Christ, you're not the prophets. Nobody! I AM A VOICE crying in the wilderness'. And that's why I believe, brethren and sisters, Elijah appeared to be, nothing more, nothing less, than a voice. The voice of Yahweh and, to me, it is of the utmost significance that when the final spirit and power of Elijah was implanted upon him, and I don't believe it was ever done until he came to mount Horeb, that it should be by a still small voice, that sent him all the 260 miles back from where he came from, to do the work he had neglected to do, and to become what God had intended him to be, right from the very beginning, the Word made flesh. Nothing more, nothing less, and that's why I believe we know nothing about him. All we know is that he was of the inhabitants of Gilead, and he's called the Tishbite. There's been many theories written about what it means by the word 'Tishbite'. The word itself has been taken variously to mean, the village of Tishbeh in Gilead. Perhaps it could be, because they say the construction of the word is very

similar. But the word 'Tishbite' comes from the Hebrew root 'toshab' which means a 'sojourner'. Elijah was a 'sojourner' brethren and sisters; so he was! He was of the inhabitants of Gilead; the word 'inhabitants' comes from the same root as the word 'Tishbite', so you have a sojourner who was of the sojourners of Gilead. And he walked into Israel; he was a sojourner, my dear brethren and sisters, and a sojourner such as we could never understand, and this is one of the first lessons that we learn in this camp.

You know, when we chose this subject, I thought to myself when I hadn't even got half way through this study, that it's almost impossible for us to learn the lesson of Elijah. It's almost impossible in this 20th century, here we are up at this camp, and we're roughing it up here. You want to go through the life of this fellow and see what he did, brethren and sisters. The distances he covered; the time which he covered them; the things he existed on; the man was super human for what he does, because he lives strongly on the power of God's word. He was in every sense of the word, a sojourner!

Now, I want to show you something which I think is absolutely terrific; you turn, because here's the lesson of Elijah life right from the very beginning. You look at this lesson; in the 12th chapter of Luke, I want you to note with me, the allusions in this chapter to the life of Elijah, just the way in which the Lord Jesus Christ, in speaking to His disciples, alludes to the life of Elijah. For example, verse 24, 'Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap' (well, we say, OK, Elijah was fed by the ravens, that's not any proof or allusion to the life of Elijah and I don't suppose that it is, brethren and sisters, but you just wait!) Verse 35, 'Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning'; he girded up his loins and raced before the chariot of Ahab. That doesn't necessarily prove that that's an allusion to the life of Elijah. What about this verse 49? 'I am come to send fire on the earth'; who called down fire from heaven to consume a man and his 50, on two occasions? ELIJAH! What about verse 54, 'And he said also to the people, When ye see a cloud rise out of the west, straightway you say, There cometh rain and so it is'. Who stood on mount Carmel and sent his servant up to see the cloud rising out of the west?. Now time and time again in the 12th chapter of Luke, not only in the 12th chapter, but here is an exercise for the brethren and sisters, and believe me if you couldn't enter into a more profitable exercise; you go in your leisure time here, and read carefully word for word, Luke chapter 7 through to chapter 12, and make a list of all the allusions to the life of Elijah and see how many you finish with. And here's the Lord alluding to the lifetime of Elijah, what for, brethren and sisters? What is the burden of Luke chapter 12? And it's in verse 15, it 's in answer to a question, and He said unto them, 'Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth', and in order to underline that lesson, as he drew upon parables and stories to reinforce that lesson, there was the constant allusion to Elijah the sojourner of Gilead, who breezed into Ahab's court, with nothing else, brethren and sisters, but leather and a garment of camel's hair. And he was the greatest man on the earth at that time, as far as the kingdom of Israel was concerned. A man's life doesn't consist in the abundance of things which he possesses, and do you know, brethren and sisters and young people, every day that goes by, in the advancement of mankind, and we say this advisedly, every day that goes by in the

advancement of mankind, and the comforts of life which are showered upon us, is a day further which could develop our characters AWAY FROM the kingdom of God. And we live in a most dangerous age, and you've only got to keep your ears open around this camp, to hear of the complaints that are made. You don't even have to keep your ears open to the petty, trivial, ridiculous complaints that are made, that we're here and we're roughing it! And you go through the life of this man, goodness me, brethren and sisters, we ought to hang our heads in shame, as we follow this prophet from place to place, ten times in the record, the Word of the Lord came saying, 'go there'. Go there, go here, and ten times in the record he went, never questioning as to why he should go, or the difficulties that faced him. He only moved on one occasion without the Word of the Lord telling him to. And that's going to be interesting, but the other 10 times, impelled him within a course all around Israel, in circumstances not only difficult but dangerous. And the Lord Jesus Christ highlights the lessons of his life! He was a man who had a life, brethren and sisters, which did not consist in the abundance of things which he possessed. HE HAD NOTHING! and yet it was him, and Moses that were chosen by the Spirit to stand with the Lord Jesus Christ in glory, on the mount of transfiguration. And there the Lord Jesus Christ was transfigured (transformed) into a glorious immortal being, glistening with divine glory and majesty, and along side of him, the man with the tossed, disheveling mane, leather girdle and rock garment of hair around him, standing in glory, brethren and sisters, and he'll be in glory; he'll be in the kingdom. IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD , he'll be, an immortal being, because he stood up for what was right and he spoke the word of truth. And when he was challenged, he answered that challenge, and if anybody wanted to know who he was, he said, 'I am nothing; I'm a voice; I'm the voice of God in Israel'. And that's exactly what he was. And as we launch into a consideration of his life, brethren and sisters, let us hope that we'll be able to extract from the lessons of his character, things which are going to help us on our way to the kingdom of God. And I am sure, that if we enter into the spirit of this study, that we will be able to absorb the power of that man's life.

Look, when we follow him down to Horeb, for example, which we hope to do, God willing, on Sunday morning, when we follow him to Horeb, our hearts will beat with every step that he takes, as we see that man, so wonderfully portrayed upon the pages of God's word. We read his very thoughts, I believe, as he went down to mount Horeb, to learn the greatest lesson of his life, a lesson that's going to be impressed upon each and everyone of us, in the age and generation that we live, that we must go forward, brethren and sisters, to do all in our power to rescue people, from the power of sin and death, by the still small voice of God's Truth. Winning men and women back, from the ways of unrighteousness to the ways of the God of Israel. Let us hope and pray, that we shall so learn from this study, that at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, not only will Moses and Elijah stand there in glory with Him, brethren and sisters, but we shall stand right alongside that wonderful prophet, and feel we've been part and parcel with him, even in this 20th century, that we're able to declare, that a man's life does not consist in the abundance that he has, BUT A MAN'S LIFE CONSISTS OF EVERY WORD WHICH DROPS FROM THE MOUTH OF YAHWEH.