

## **LIFTED BY WHIRLWIND OUT OF SIGHT EXPERIENCES OF ELIJAH THE PROPHET**

– II KINGS 2:1-11. – MARCH 5. –

**"Enoch walked with God and he was not." – Genesis 5:24.**

THE Bible tells of three notable men who disappeared – God took them. One of these, Enoch, we are told, did not die. Another of them, Moses, we are told, died and was buried. Of the third one, the special subject of our lesson, it is not stated whether he died or not. But it is our understanding that he did die.

The heaven to which Elijah was taken by a whirlwind was the aerial heaven, in which the birds fly. His taking away after this manner was in order to complete the typical features of his life, as we shall see. That neither he nor Enoch went to heaven, in the sense of passing into the heavenly or spiritual state and into the presence of God, is clearly testified to by Jesus, who declared, "No man hath ascended up to heaven, save he who came down from heaven, even the Son of man." (John 3:13.) Although of Enoch it is declared that he was translated that he should not see death, it is not stated that he was translated to heaven. And our Lord's words assure us that he was not. Where he now is no man knows. We can merely by faith accept the fact.

The object served in the translation of Enoch probably is to show by and by that it was quite possible for God to have maintained our race in life perpetually – that only because of sin was it necessary for Adam and his family to die; that when sin and death shall be abolished by Messiah during his Kingdom, and when the willing and obedient of mankind shall have been brought to human perfection again, they will never need to die. The preservation of Enoch, an imperfect man, for five thousand years, by Divine power, will be an evidence to mankind and an assistance to their faith while the work of restitution will be progressing. Enoch himself is one of those Ancient Worthies who,

during the Millennium, will be one of the "princes" or rulers in the earth, representatives of Messiah's invisible Kingdom. "Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth."  
– Psalm 45:16.

## **ELIJAH A TYPE OF THE CHURCH**

As Melchisedec (a King and Priest at the time) represented or typified the Church in glory, so Bible students understand that Elijah, the Prophet, typified or represented the Church in the flesh – this side the veil – from Jesus to the present. Thus long after Elijah's death God, through the Prophet, declared to Israel, Behold, I send you Elijah the Prophet before the great and notable day of the Lord, and if he do not turn the hearts of the Fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers, then the earth shall be smitten with a curse – a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation. (Malachi 4:5,6.) John the Baptist, as the forerunner of Jesus in the flesh, typified this greater Elijah (the Church in the flesh), the forerunner of the Messiah of glory. As John the Baptist did not succeed in bringing the people into harmony with the fathers (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, etc.), so likewise the Church in the flesh, as God foresaw, has not been successful in bringing peace to the world.

As John the Baptist's failure with Israel was followed by the overthrow of their national polity in A.D. 70, so, we believe, the failure of his antitype, the Church in the flesh, to bring in harmony and righteousness, is by Divine intention to be followed by the world-wide trouble which will humble man and prepare the way for the establishment of the Messianic Kingdom in power and great glory.

## **CAUGHT UP IN A WHIRLWIND**

Many Christians have not noticed that there is not only a difference between the heavenly salvation, which God has provided for the Church, and the earthly restitution (Acts 3:19-21) which God has provided for the world, but additionally there are two distinct classes of

the Church brought to our attention in the Bible. First, we have the faithful Royal Priesthood styled "The Body of Christ," of which Jesus is the Head. These have the promise that they shall sit with Christ in his throne and be judges of the world during the Messianic Kingdom. The other class of saved ones on the spirit plane, the Scriptures designate as a "great company, whose number no one knows." (Rev. 7:9.) These are different from the elect, whose number is positively fixed by Divine predestination – one hundred and forty-four thousand. As that company is Scripturally styled a "little flock" and a "royal priesthood," so the "great company" in the Bible is styled antitypical Levites. While the elect sit upon the Throne with Christ, this secondary class of the saved will serve before the Throne. While the saintly few will wear crowns of glory, the greater company of their brethren, before the Throne, will have no crowns, but instead have palms of victory. While the elect are the living stones of the temple of God soon to be brought together in the **[R4757 : page 42]** "first resurrection," to be the meeting-place between God and men for a thousand years, the "great company," the Levitical class, are neither living stones nor pillars in this Temple, though they will be blessed with the glorious opportunity of serving God in this Temple day and night.

Having located Elijah as the type of the "elect" class, Bible Students are inclined to consider Elisha as probably a typical character; also a representative of the greater spiritual class, the antitypical Levites. It was toward the close of Elijah's experience that Elisha became his servant and companion. The various instances in which Elijah suggested to Elisha that he should tarry behind are supposed to represent the trials and difficulties in the pathway of the Church here, which will suggest to the "great company," the Elisha class, that they continue not to follow their more zealous brethren of the Elijah class. These various stoppages and suggestions represent sifting or separating work, and all who continue on may be understood to belong to the Elisha class. Any falling away are not of either class.

## CHARIOTS AND HORSEMEN OF FIRE

If these interpretations of Elijah as a type be correct, the lesson is that the close of the Church's career in the flesh will come suddenly, abruptly. The fiery chariot may prove to be fiery trials or sharp persecutions, separating between the Elijah and the Elisha classes. The whirlwind which carried up Elijah to heaven is a type or figure, very uniformly used in the Scriptures to represent great confusion and strife – a cyclone.

The denouement will not be entirely unexpected, either by the Elisha class or by the sons of the prophets, who would represent here a respectable class of Bible students who have not made a full consecration of their lives to the Lord, and who will not be eligible to the heavenly condition as members either of the Elijah or the Elisha class.

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