

## **ELIJAH'S FLIGHT AND VISION**

**- *SEPTEMBER 12. - 1 KINGS 19:8-18. -***

JEZEBEL UNREPENTANT – AHAB UPHOLDS HER – ELIJAH'S LIFE THREATENED – HE FLEES, DISCOURAGED – GOD GRANTED HIM A VISION OF THE FUTURE – THE WIND, THE EARTHQUAKE, THE FIRE, THE STILL, SMALL VOICE – WHAT THESE THINGS SIGNIFY NOW TO THE ANTITYPICAL ELIJAH CLASS.

ELIJAH expected that, after three and a half years of Divine chastisement, followed by a special manifestation of Divine Power against the representatives of Baal, the true God and the true religion would have a measure of prosperity with the people. He was surprised to find Queen Jezebel bitter and murderous as ever and King Ahab fully dominated by her influence. He fled, sadly discouraged. After a long sleep, relieving his nervous strain, the Lord gave him, through an angel, a special message of comfort and food which lasted forty days, until he came to the Mount of God – Horeb.

There Elijah went through a series of experiences (whether literal or in vision we may not be too certain), in which the Lord was to reveal Himself. First came the winds, rending the rocks; but God was not in the winds. Next came the earthquake, with destructive force; but God was not in the earthquake. Then followed the devouring fire, but God was not in the fire. Finally came the still, small Voice, which Luther's translation renders, "The Voice of Eden." God was in the Voice – it really and truly represented Him. This narrative multiplies in its force to Bible students when they realize that all these things which occurred to Elijah foreshadowed experiences with which the Church of Christ in the flesh is intimately connected.

Jezebel still represents a form of godliness great and boastful, and supported by earthly power, represented in King Ahab. The picture intimates to us that the great social and religious upheaval of a century ago did not deeply affect or greatly alter the outward attitude of the Church nominal and the world toward the true Church of Christ in the flesh, represented typically by the Prophet Elijah. The reformation was partial only. Great institutions still upheld many of the serious errors of the past. The Elijah class again passed out of public view, though not out of communion and fellowship with God, Divine supervision providing for their necessities of rest and spiritual refreshment.

Mount Horeb, otherwise called the "Mount of God," fitly represented in the picture Messiah's Kingdom. The coming of Elijah to it portrayed the fact that the Church will be in and under the Kingdom administration while still in the flesh, although the last members of the Church [R5753 : page 254] will not fully participate in the Kingdom honors and blessings until they shall have experienced the great resurrection "change" noted by St. Paul in the words, "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed," for "flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God." – 1 Corinthians 15:50-52.

### **WHAT THE ANTITYPICAL ELIJAH SEES**

Many Bible students understand that chronologically Messiah's Kingdom began its operation in the world in the year 1878, while the last members of the Elijah class are still in the flesh. How soon the entire company of the Elijah class will pass beyond the veil and the Kingdom be ushered in with power and great glory is not definitely stated in the Bible.

While in this condition Bible students the world over have been receiving of the Lord a special vision of the future. That is to say, through Bible study they have been learning that Messiah's Kingdom is to be inaugurated in a Time of Trouble such as was

not since there was a nation – no, nor ever shall be afterward. (Daniel 12:1; Matthew 24:21.) They have learned that the winds of strife, the present war, have been held back for years by Divine Power, during the time when God's people have been assisted in Bible study, symbolically spoken of as the sealing of the saints in their foreheads. Revelation 7:1-4. These see the four parts of the great Divine Program which will usher in the Kingdom of God, for which so long God's saints have prayed, "Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth, even as in Heaven." They see that the winds represent the war; that the earthquake of Elijah's vision represents a great social revolution, which will follow the great war, lapping upon it, perhaps. They see that, following the revolution, anarchy is to be expected, symbolized by fire, consuming, destroying, the present order of things – symbolically represented by St. Peter as consuming the ecclesiastical heavens and the social, financial and political earth, giving place to the new heavens, Messiah's Kingdom, and the new earth, society upon a new basis approved by the Kingdom. – 2 Peter 3:10-13.

In none of these great experiences coming to the world will God be manifest. They will all be merely preparatory, terrible experiences, to fit and prepare man for the Voice of Eden, which will subsequently be heard, bringing the message which will be "the desire of all nations." The same Voice of Eden is mentioned by the Lord through Zephaniah the Prophet, saying that first the fire of God's jealousy will consume the present order of things; and that then, following the fire, God will "turn to the people a pure Message, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve Him with one consent." – Zephaniah 3:8,9.

### **FULFILMENT OF THE VISION BEGUN**

Bible students understand that these four great features of God's Plan portrayed to Elijah have already begun a fulfilment – that the present European war is the letting loose of "the four

winds of heaven" – winds of strife. It is unnecessary to say that no such war has ever before been. Official reports show that more than twelve millions of men have already been either killed, wounded or captured, in the army. The world has been getting ready for this war for forty years and wondering why it did not come sooner. The newspapers have been declaring year after year that it would surely come before Fall or before Spring. Now we see why it has been held off – that the angels were commanded of the Lord not to loose the winds until the servants of God should be "sealed in their foreheads."

This intellectual appreciation of God's Plan our Lord clearly foretold, saying to His people now living, "When ye see these things begin to come to pass, then lift up your heads and rejoice; for your deliverance draweth nigh." Bible students see these things beginning in the present war. They know what to expect in the near future. The fact that Elijah saw these things before he was taken up in the chariot of fire should not be understood to mean that all these experiences will be past before the Church will be translated, "changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," but rather that all these things were shown to Elijah on the Mount of God as identified with the inauguration of the Kingdom. Then he had other experiences before he left. **[R5753 : page 255]**

Some are inquiring why God permits such a great war. The Bible answer is that this war and all the other death experiences of our race are parts of a great Divine lesson on the exceeding sinfulness of sin. There is no war in Heaven – no sickness, no death, no sorrow, no pain, no insane asylums, no sanitariums, no doctors – because there is no sin there. But we have all these terrible conditions on earth because sin entered the world, as the Bible tells us, six thousand years ago, and because death is the penalty for sin – not eternal torment, as we were once taught. "The wages of sin is death"; "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." (Romans 6:23; Ezekiel 18:4.) The resurrection of the dead is the

hope of the world, and is built upon the great sacrifice which Jesus gave when He died for our sins.

## **THE ANTITYPICAL ELIJAH ENCOURAGED**

St. Paul, as well as Jesus, tells us about our day. He not only describes it as a day of symbolical fire, but he also assures us that all who are truly the Lord's people will be granted an opening of the eyes of their understanding to appreciate where we are. "The fire of that Day shall try every man's work of what sort it is." He tells us that all who build their faith and character with the gold, silver and precious stones of Divine Truth will pass through the fiery ordeal of this time safe – "kept by the power of God." Others who have built their faith and hope with the wood, hay and stubble of human tradition will suffer loss, though themselves may be saved by the fire. (1 Corinthians 3:11-15.) He tells us that that Day shall come upon all the world as a thief and as a snare. "But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that Day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all children of the light and children of the Day." Let us, therefore, walk in the light, as children of the light. – 1 Thessalonians 5:1-6.

As Elijah was discouraged until the Lord gave him the vision showing how He ultimately would be revealed through the winds, the earthquake, the fire and the still, small Voice, so it has been with the Church. There was a time during which much discouragement was felt, until the Lord began to make clear the Divine Plan by which Messiah's Kingdom would be inaugurated. Seeing this Plan, the Bible students are now lifting up their heads and rejoicing, as Jesus instructed, knowing that their deliverance will be inaugurated through the great Time of Trouble, of which they see only the beginning.

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