

Prophets of Fire and Water



timothy tow

Prophets
of fire and
Water

timothy tow



CHRISTIAN LIFE PUBLISHERS

Prophets of Fire and Water
© Timothy Tow 1989

ISBN 9971-991-21-7

Cover Design by Charles Seet

Christian Life Publishers
Tampines South P.O. Box 54
Singapore 9152

Prophets of Fire and Water

A series of messages preached under the general theme
"Declaring all the Counsel of God in Perilous Times" at
Awana Country Club, Genting Highlands.
— (Sept. 5-9, 1988)

Edited by Timothy Tow

Contents

1. Preface
2. FEBC Conference Report
Linda Chan 9
3. Opening Message
"Declaring all the Counsel of God in Perilous
Times." *Dr S H Tow* 13
4. The Ministry of Declaring all the Counsel
of God in Perilous Times
Rev Charlie Tan 25
5. Elijah — Prophet of Fire
(Greatly motivated by the Word of God)
Dr Arthur E Steele 43
6. Lessons from the Life and Acts of Elisha
Prophet of Water
Rev Timothy Tow 93
7. The Making of the Man of God
Rev Tan Choon Seng 121
8. Closing Message
Further lessons of Elijah
Dr S H Tow 127

PREFACE

This book is a record of selected messages preached at the FEBC (Far Eastern Bible College) Bible Conference, Genting Highlands, September 5-9, 1988. The theme of the Conference is "Declaring All the Counsel of God in Perilous Times." While the "Perilous Times" mentioned in the Conference theme relates to the end of this age, we felt an exposition on the lives and acts of Elijah and Elisha, "Prophets of Fire and Water" during a perilous stage of Israelite history, might throw light on the crisis the Church is going through today. Hence the title "Prophets of Fire and Water." "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" (*Romans 15:4*).

This book is compiled with the two hundred and fifty conferees in view, to bring to their remembrance the lessons they have learnt. It is now offered to members of the greater Christian family for the strengthening of their faith that we might stand together against the apostasy in these end times before Jesus returns. Even so, come Lord Jesus.

Timothy Tow

Theme Song

The Battle For The Word Of God

Charles Seet

Daniel Pang



1. THE BAT-TLE FOR THE WORD OF GOD IS RA-GING ON TO - DAY.
2. DE - CLARE THE PRE-CIOUS TRUTH OF GOD, DE - FEND EACH - SMALL DE - TAIL.
3. THEN LET OUR HEARTS AND MINDS BE BOLD TO FALSE-HOOD, AP - PRE - HEND.



A TIDE OF UN - BE - LIEF HAS POURED AND LED MEN'S SOULS A - STRAY.
THOUGH DEAD - LY FOES COR - RUPT THE WORD HIS MES - SAGE MUST PRE - VAIL
THE FUN - DA - MEN - TAL TRUTHS UP - HOLD, AND ALL GOD'S WORD DE - FEND.



THE LORD'S COM - MAND IS CLEAR TO ALL: A - WAKE, JOIN IN THE FRAY;
A - LONE A - GAINST AN AWE - SOME HOST OUR STRENGTH WOULD SURE - LY FAIL,
IF WE ARE TRIED AND CAST A - WAY FOR THIS TEN - A - CIOUS STAND.



CON - TEND! THIS IS THE MAS - TER'S CALL TO ALL WHO WILL O - BEY.
BUT CHRIST HAS PLEDGED TO BE WITH THOSE WHO FACE THE MEN OF BAALI
WE CAN - NOT MUST NOT FALL A - WAY BUT KEEP FIRM TO THE END!





FEBIC BIBLE CONFERENCE REPORT

by Linda Chan

*"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is
for brethren to dwell together in unity!"*

(Psalm 133: 1)

Two hundred and forty campers set out on Monday morning, September 5, 1988, via coach, train and plane to converge at the beautiful Awana Country Club, eight miles Genting Highlands, to spend five days of sweet fellowship with one another and with our Risen Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Praise God for journey mercies to and from Awana. Our hearts are thankful to the Lord for the spiritual grounding in matters pertaining to "Declaring All the Counsel of God in Perilous Times," through the study of the great prophets of old, namely, Elijah and Elisha. Messages on "Elijah — the Prophet of Fire" and "Elisha — the Prophet of Water" were expounded by Dr Arthur Steele and our dear Pastor respectively.

We started each day with an hour of "Prayer and Devotions." Pastors from the various participating B-P churches led us in these "sweet hours of prayer." After being physically nourished by the buffet-style breakfast, we were spiritually fed on the "meat." Dr A. Steele's messages on "Elijah" specially thrilled and warmed our hearts as he related Elijah's experiences to his own real-life experiences. Dr Steele shared how, like Elijah, he had trusted the Lord who had ordered his steps, ordained the circumstances, protected and provided for him and his family, ever since the day he resigned from his secular job as a chemical engineer to serve the Lord full time. Dr Steele also exhorted us campers to be like Elijah who was powerfully motivated by God's Word and

whose faith was triumphantly rewarded at Mt. Carmel because he obeyed God each step of the way. After a half-hour break, Pastor Tow would speak on the miracles performed by "Elisha" and how the latter extended Elijah's ministry in the power of the Holy Spirit. I've come to treasure our Pastor's "pearls of wisdom" as I realise that like our PAP old guard, his days are numbered, and I dread to think of the day when I cannot hear him preach from the pulpit. Yes, we have to face reality. Dr S. H. Tow exhorted his fellow pastors and church leaders to study God's Word diligently, to be steadfast in the faith, and to feed their "precious flocks" purchased with a great price. They should not only feed them with a fully balanced Gospel, but also open their spiritual eyes to enemies attacking our separatist stand. Dr Tow also reminded the young leaders that one day the "old guard" would not be around to guide them. In perilous times, they (the young pastors) have to echo Elijah's stand — "How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow Him: but if Baal, then follow Him ..." (*1 Kings 18:21*).

For the early part of the afternoons, we were divided into five groups under various pastors and church leaders for group discussions. The topics discussed were "Neo-evangelicalism," "Biblical Separation" and "The English Bible — Which Version?" Many of the questions raised by the participating campers were competently answered and I believe most campers would agree with me that we have been spiritually enlightened on the various issues discussed. Regretfully, the discussion sessions were short. I pray that we may not forget what we learned from the various messages, but continue to hunger for the Word of God and study it diligently so that we may hide it in our hearts and in perilous times, our faith may not waver. Dr Tow left us with a thought-provoking question, "In five or ten years' time, can you stand faithful to the Gospel?"

Finally, I want to thank God for the sweet fellowship we had one with another as we gathered to "tuck in" the

buffet-style, sumptuous meals (4 a day), as we went on excursion by cable-car, as we wallowed in the jacuzzi and swimming pool, etc. Physically, we were well-rested. The Awana "ale" and "air" did wonders for our bodies. Above all, it was the satisfying of our spiritual hunger for the Word of God and our closer walk with the Lord that was most edifying, enriching and rewarding. The conference, as Dr Lim Teck Chye put it, was great value for money because nowhere else could we get to enjoy five days of fresh and cool mountain air, plus good food and first-class facilities, at such a considerably cheap rate. Credit must be given to our "Colonel", the camp-master Dr Patrick Tan, for running the conference with military precision, while we showed ourselves to be well-disciplined soldiers of Christ. If it is God's will, it would be good to have our Family Camp at Awana next year. As a veteran camper, this had been the best camp ever. Praise God for His many blessings!





“DECLARING ALL THE COUNSEL OF GOD IN PERILOUS TIMES”

Opening Message – Dr. S. H. Tow –

Text: Acts 20:22-32

Let us turn to God’s Word. In the Acts of the Apostles Chapter 20 we have the theme of our conference: “Declaring all the counsel of God in perilous times.”

The words we are going to read from verse 22 are the words which Paul the apostle spoke to the elders from the Ephesian Church. I believe these words hold much significance for us tonight. Why have we come all this distance for these four days? Surely the Lord has a purpose and if we will wait on Him, He will instruct us.

In verse 22-24, Paul says to the elders and to us:

“And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there:

Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me.

But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.”

Paul is on his third missionary journey, returning to Jerusalem. As he makes his way towards the capital and in every city as he waits on the Lord, the Holy Spirit

indicates to him that bonds and affliction await him in Jerusalem. Does this deter him? He knows for sure, as the Spirit of God has shown him, the things that will come. He knows and yet he is not deterred. He says, "None of these things move me." The ominous promptings of the Holy Spirit may have caused a lesser mortal to turn back and go elsewhere to escape. But not Paul!

I see Paul here following in the footsteps of the Lord Jesus, who when He was going to Jerusalem to die was warned by the Pharisees, "Do not go there! Herod will kill you!" What did the Lord say? "It cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem." That is the place of appointment. If the Lord has called you to a place of His appointment, you go regardless! We must learn that God directs our footsteps. If He does so, what is it to us? None of these things should stop us. "None of these things move me," says Paul, "neither count I my life dear unto myself."

What is it you value and treasure most? Is it your life? Or is it the course that you are running for the Lord? This is what Paul says, "Neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course." Most important to Paul is that he must finish the course. We are all running a race. God has given us a course. He has directed us.

The B-P Church, FEBC, your own church, non-BPs, God has given you a course. Run it with patience, steadfastly, even though you know it is something hazardous and unpopular. Never count your life more important than the work God has given you. Never count the popularity. We have members in our midst today facing parental objections, persecutions and ostracism. "I count not these things dear unto myself but I must do the things that God wants me to do – the course that God has set for me, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord." Fear not, therefore!

What ministry is it you have received, my friends? I speak to the pastors, ordinands and elders: What

ministry has God given to you? When the Lord called me and I knew He had called me, I followed – not that I have done anything spectacular or suffered anything – not at all. Nevertheless it is a course and a race to be run. Let us run it!

So, Paul says, “The ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus to testify the gospel of the grace of God.” It is so important. **There is only one thing God gave to any of His servants at any time, through all the ages ... and that is the Gospel of the Lord Jesus. It is unchanging and unchangeable. It is unswerving and unwavering. All who turn from it fall into another gospel. That is sad.**

Paul says, “Only this one thing matters – that I may run the course, finish the race, complete the ministry, even to testify the gospel of the grace of God.”

Verses 25-26, “And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men.” These are Paul’s intended last words. Last words from a man of God are always profound words. I see in our midst those who have led us for thirty-eight years. Let us value what they have to tell us. These words of Paul are precious. He says to them, “I take you to record. All these years I have been with you – working with you, labouring together with you – I am pure from the blood of all men.”

Can you say that? Only if you are faithful to the Gospel, to the ministry that God has given you. Never betray that Gospel! You are responsible for the souls of those entrusted to you, those you minister to, those who hear the gospel from your lips. What kind of gospel do you give them? If you give them the wrong gospel or if you give them the polluted, diluted or perverted gospel, then their salvation is at stake and their blood will be upon your heads! Paul says, “Witness! I have given you the pure Gospel. Therefore I am pure from the blood of all men.”

Now we come to the key verse, which is the theme of this conference. Verse 27, "For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." How precious a verse! There is much joy to read and learn from this man of God who says, "I have not shunned." Why should we when we live in comfortable Singapore with no one to persecute us? What have we to shun? Let us therefore never shun to declare all the counsel of God. We want to know every aspect of the Gospel – in defence, in attack, in feeding, in guarding the flock. There are many valuable, precious and deep facets of this counsel of God which we must not shun to declare.

Verse 28, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." Paul says to the elders that they are to take heed to two things: "Firstly, to yourselves. I have not shunned to declare to you, and you must not shun to declare to the others." Keep reminding yourself and keep telling yourself, for we are apt to forget. Sometimes we think that it is inconvenient and unpopular, and so we stifle part of the Gospel and accentuate on something else. And then we get unbalanced. We must not! So to the preachers and pastors, he says, "Take heed to yourselves. See that you yourself have the pure, full and balanced Gospel." Then "Take heed to all the flock. It is the precious flock that is purchased by the precious blood of Jesus Christ." I wonder if we always remind ourselves of this whenever we ascend the pulpit and preach to the people, that they are the flock of God. They are not ours, but they are God's flock, purchased and bought at great price, and they are put in our responsibility and entrusted to us. How do we treat them? The souls saved and entrusted to us in the congregations are put there by the Holy Ghost for us to look after.

Members of the congregation, you are the precious flock. Those of you elders, deacons, pastors and

preachers – when you think of the sheep who are helpless, hungry, looking for that food – what kind of food do you give them week after week, and year after year? What do you feed them with? It will not show in one week or in one year, but it will show in five and ten years. You must nurture the flock until they grow up strong, sturdy, steadfast, immovable, mature and perfect in Christ. That is our responsibility. Take heed therefore to yourselves and to all the flock. This is a trust we must not fail for it is God's trust given to us. **This trust is multiplied a hundred times in the Bible College. Teachers, take note: You have ten, twenty, fifty students in your class, and you are going to feed them. What you feed them today they will feed others in three or four years' time! How do you feed them?**

Verses 29-30 is the warning: "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of our own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." Paul is given that spiritual eyesight. What he said is applicable today, no less than it was two thousand years ago. Paul is going to leave that Church and he gives them a prediction. He has seen it coming. What has he seen? He says, "When I am gone . . ." All who are above fifty can say this to your congregation, "When I am gone . . ." We don't know when God is going to take us. But we must warn them constantly for we cannot be there all the time to watch. But while we are there, we watch and we warn. Warn them of the day coming when we won't be there.

Therefore with this kind of forewarning, I say to the pastors, "You keep on training your men." I try to do this at Calvary. I say, "Session, don't expect me to be with you forever. All of you must be strong, trained and ready to take over at any time." Are you doing that? Coming to Awana is a great experience, but if we merely enjoy ourselves and then go back, we are wasting our time. We must get down to the real issues, the problems.

The real issue today is that we are in the midst of a great downslide of the faith in the Church. You ask me what church? The B-P Church. Who said so? Paul said so and we say so. It is a perennial struggle to keep the faith. Regardless of how faithful you are and how vigilant you are, the creeping in of the apostasy must come. We saw this years ago and we see it more clearly today.

“Take heed therefore unto yourselves . . . For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.” Wolves among sheep! Only one conclusion – they are going to maul them, bite them and eat them up. We must therefore warn! Verse 30, “Also of your own selves . . .” **Satan’s strategy is to use trusted men. The best types that Satan uses are those who start off well. These men gain confidence and trust, but then in their hearts is the seed of apostasy. Eventually it comes out in small doses. Then, people are caught unawares because their track record has been good.**

I have said this and I repeat it, “The most dangerous poison is milk with a drop of arsenic.” You won’t taste it or know it. You feed them with small doses. Eventually the one who feeds on it will die. Satan is smarter than we think! No marvel, for he comes as an angel of light. What angel of light do you see walking around? These are the trusted pastors, elders, theologians – men who have gained much confidence but who now turn away from the truth. They bring in their error a little at a time. People believe them because they are so much taken up with these men that they do not suspect. These men come in and they begin to erode the Word of God. Satan’s method is the erosion of the Word of God, a little at a time. If that Sword of God is blunted and broken, you are finished! So, we hear things like “limited inerrancy.” They believe in inerrancy. If you were to ask them, “Do you believe?” they would say “Yes” but then it is limited. Or they say that there are grammatical errors. They bring these things in and they cause doubt.

Verse 30, "Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." I give you the example of Fuller Seminary. I have written this in the Banner but I raise the subject up once again for your information. Fuller Seminary was founded by Charles Fuller. It is a very famous seminary, the leading seminary in the United States of America.

In 1947, it was started as a fundamental institution by Charles Fuller, a great preacher of the Word of God. Within ten years, this institution began to be eroded by men of unsound faith, amongst whom was his own son. They brought in the craving for intellectual attainment and academic excellence. What does that mean? They wanted to have an institution as good as the best in the secular world. Therefore, "We must have scholarship, men of degrees, research, publications and bring it up to the highest level." This was Satan's trap, and they fell in.

Recall what Paul said, "I came not to you with excellency of speech or of wisdom." They forsook this and they said, "We will come to you with excellency of speech and wisdom." When you pursue that, the Devil comes in with the enticing words of man's wisdom and things begin to erode. Within ten years the foundations of Fuller were shaking. In fifteen years it crumbled altogether. Daniel Fuller was instrumental in destroying the institution started by his father. Today, Fuller is the centre of ecumenical and Catholic-Evangelical co-operation. It is the place where people go and learn the most up-to-date methods of ecumenical co-operation. It is the place where the social gospel thrives on the carcass of fundamentalism.

The President is Dr David Hubbard, advisor to the World Council of Churches. He is a champion of ecumenical co-operation. The School of World Mission offers courses on Signs and Wonders, and Church Growth, based on the observation that the Charismatic signs and wonders, faith-healing and exorcism are powerful tools for Church growth. Therefore they capi-

talise on this and bring in John Wimber and Peter Wagner to teach people around the world how they can make their churches grow with signs and wonders, faith-healing and exorcism.

In forty years Fuller Seminary, started as a fundamental institution, has become the world centre of New Evangelicalism and Neo-Orthodoxy. Eighty-five percent of their students polled five years ago did not believe in inerrancy. It is sad to have to recount these things but these are mentioned for our example, that what happened in USA can happen in Singapore. The Devil's activities are not circumscribed to America. He is smarter than we think!

I want to read to you a paragraph from an article by Dr. John Whitcomb: "It is a sad fact that the track record in Church history for theological seminaries is very dismal. In North America, not one theological seminary that stood for the truth of God's Word in the 1800s have survived into the 1900s. All of them went apostate. Every theological seminary in North America today that takes any significant stand for the Word of God has been started only in this century." That is what Dr. Whitcomb says but I will add a footnote to it. Of those which have been standing for the Word of God, so-called evangelical and fundamental institutions in America, almost all, except for a very few, have gone apostate, new-evangelical or liberal. This is a fact!

When we think of sending someone to America to study, we have to scratch our heads ten times until we have exhausted the list. Then you would say, "I am not sure where to send the person to." You can send a person to a school that is faithful today, but you don't know what will happen in one or two years' time. There is no guarantee. The downslide of the end times is upon us.

Verses 29-30: I want to repeat this because it is so significant. Paul says, "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples

after them." We see this in FEBC! We have had teachers who came along and taught various things, such as "The gospel is not unique", "The virgin birth is not unique", "The Bible may have grammatical errors." Things like the six-day creation and the universal flood are being questioned. Further they say that Charismatic tongues have ceased but ecstatic utterances and meaningful Holy Spirit utterances have not ceased. They also say that exorcism, miracles and faith healings are part of the teachings of Scripture. These things are coming in! So, I say this, "I know that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them."

We must take heed. There are perils ahead. We must know these perils. We must know the enemy and his methods. The enemy will attack the Bible insidiously – sideways, subtly, by devious methods. Secondly, the adversary will attack Biblical separation. If someone offers us the ecumenical movement we will say "No!" But the enemy will not do that. He will come with tempting and disguised baits, such as "Why not be our guest professor?" Or "Perhaps you should go and speak." Mutual honouring of one another is Satan's trap. Those who seek men's praise and honour fall into his trap.

Another of Satan's traps is social involvement: "Let's co-operate, let's do something together. Let us help one another." Drug rehabilitation is one. We go with good intentions, but in the course of years, we begin to talk the same things, and do the same things. Apostasy does not come all at once but in small doses. Social welfare services is another. It is slow erosion. You do not see it for five to ten years but give it ten to twenty years and things will happen. Why? After long years we feel that the work is wonderful and people are impressed. Eventually the stand of separation is forgotten.

I was impressed when Dn L.S. Pang from Life Church told me a couple of years ago after his operation, "If you and your brother do not do something, soon there will be no B-P Church." I wondered what he was talking about. But he repeated, "If you do nothing, the B-P Church won't be there soon!" My friends, we are not telling fairy tales, but we are facing reality. Thirty-eight years have passed. To everything under the heaven, there is a time and a season: a time to be established and a time to fall. Has that time come?

The Devil comes to us with devious methods: in 1978 it was co-operative evangelism. Do you know that at that time we nearly fell? We were attacked in Calvary. Some organised transport and brought flocks of people to the stadium for the great crusade. Except for the strenuous efforts of some, we would have fallen. If we agree to co-operate, to give an inch, they will take a foot, and then a yard, and the church will go down. That is the trap of co-operative evangelism.

You say, "The Billy Graham Crusade was in 1978 – ten years ago. That danger is past." My friends, it is not! Now we have OM. Our people are going to OM and OMF. It is happening. You say, "What's wrong with OM and OMF? They're saving souls, aren't they?" It is not that simple. When you join with a group, you align with the groups that the group is aligned with. When you align with a movement which says that Billy Graham, John Stott and Luis Palau are their partners in evangelism, you align with these big names. It is about time we understand what alignment is all about.

Jesus Christ has been betrayed by Billy Graham, John Stott and Luis Palau. And you say that these are your partners in evangelism? We are not talking about who is saving more souls. We ask, "Where is your loyalty?" These are the issues which face us today.

Awana would be a waste of time if we go home thinking everything is fine. There are things which are going to crack up the whole B-P Church. Some will be led

astray and their blood will be upon your head! But Paul says, "I am pure from the blood of all men." How can he say this? He can say this in verse 26 because he can also say verse 27: "I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." This is our theme. Let us search our own hearts. History will judge us. We cannot just happily say: "Nothing is going to happen." Things may not happen now, but we will be judged by what we do today five to ten years hence, and those things will come boomeranging back on us.

We close with the last couple of verses – 31 & 32: "Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears. And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified." Have you warned with tears? When we warn, people laugh. When I first published the Banner in 1975, one of the B-P Churches said, "Let us dissociate from this paper because we don't think it is saying the right thing." At that time I warned against the Charismatic Movement. This is not a laughing matter. Paul says, "I warned every one night and day with tears." Do you warn anyone? Do you warn night and day with tears?

May the grace of God protect you, surround you, defend you and keep you. Brethren, my heart's desire is that five years hence, ten years hence, till the Lord comes, you will stand faithful to the trust given to you, and to the gospel. How can this be? Brother Charlie Tan asked me, "How can you ensure that in future our people will remain firm and steadfast and will not go astray?" I said, "We cannot. Each believer must fight the battle for himself." We pass from the scene and the next generation comes up. They have to fight the battle themselves. Everyone must fight it himself and be convinced in his own heart that what he does is right.

Remember Athanasius. There was a movement to dethrone the Lord Jesus Christ, to say that He was only a

created being. Athanasius wrote to defend the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ against his opponents: "If the world is against Athanasius, Athanasius is against the world." This must be our conviction. Never say, "I will do what the brethren in the Synod tell me to do. Let them pass a motion first." Let not our convictions depend upon other people's motions. If we have a conviction of the truth, stand by it! Be an Athanasius! God's Church needs men of valour, men of truth, and not men who wave with the wind, waiting for motions, resolutions and rules to be passed. These are not worthy of the Name of Jesus Christ.

May God preserve you. May God the Holy Spirit guide and defend you. May you be attentive every day hearing what He has to say to you. The Word of God alone – *SOLA SCRIPTURA* – is that which can defend you. If you love the Word, defend the Word, hold fast to the Word, stick to the Word and hang on to the end. That Word is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified. Amen.





The Ministry of “DECLARING ALL THE COUNSEL OF GOD IN PERILOUS TIMES”

**Message Delivered by Rev Charlie Tan
on 7th September 1988**

The Meaning of the Phrase “Perilous Times”

This evening I am going to ask you to turn with me to II Tim. 3. I want to address you on the topic which we have chosen for this Conference: “Declaring all the counsel of God in perilous times.” Paul says, “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.” We have to ask ourselves what Paul meant when he used the words “perilous times”. A corresponding passage is found in I Timothy 4: 1, “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.” What is this phrase “perilous times”?

I would like to suggest that this is in fact a prophecy. If we see these times happening, this prophecy is then being fulfilled. Paul is not merely describing a situation that perhaps will come. He is giving a direct prophecy because he says, “The Spirit speaketh expressly.” So “perilous times” must be seen in the context of prophecy. It is prophecy in the last days before Jesus returns.

Paul was not the only one warning about the end days. In the same vein, Jude warned about the end days in the context of false teachings and false teachers. So did Peter and so did Jesus.

Why do we call it "perilous times"? The word "perilous" can also be translated "violent". It really means that in the end days we are going to see a tremendous struggle which will be difficult and hard for everybody.

It is called "perilous" because many people even in the days of Paul had already either departed from the faith, made shipwreck of their faith or had actually been ensnared by the devil! So, we are talking about it being dangerous because it will affect our very standing before God and our lives as Christians.

The thrust of what Paul is telling Timothy is not a description of the world. In Rom. 1, Paul had told the Romans that the world is made up of people who do not know God and is already under the wrath of God. Jesus told His disciples that in the world they will have tribulation. This warning that Paul gives to Timothy is not a warning about the world. The days are even more perilous because the context that Paul was talking about is the context of the church. The people described are people who belong to the church and who are in the church. This is what makes it most dangerous. II Tim. 3:2 tells us that these people are lovers of their own selves, covetous, boastful, proud, blasphemous, disobedient to parents, unthankful and unholy. Then in verse 5, "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away."

We call this "perilous times" because we cannot stop this prophecy from being fulfilled.

This being a Far Eastern Bible College Conference, I would like to address the students at this point of time. All of you have given up something. Some of you have left your professions. All of you have given up your lives for a very definite reason. Do not lose sight of the reason! What is this thing that we dare not lose sight of? Ultimately, we are talking about not losing sight of what it means to belong to the Lord Jesus Christ in these last days. If we lose sight of the peculiar stand which FEBC stands for as a separatist school and you go out into the

world and declare a word which does not contain the whole counsel of God, you would have really learnt nothing. Three-quarters of God's Word is not all the counsel of God! Ninety five percent is not all the counsel of God! Selective obedience is still disobedience. We have given up our lives. Let us make that life count!

The Challenge in Facing Perilous Times

We move on to consider how we are to face this situation. This is the second portion of my message. Having understood that we are living in perilous times, let us now consider how we may address ourselves to this situation.

What do we mean by "Declaring all the counsel of God"? Who may declare the counsel of God? What are his qualifications? What must he have to declare? The book of Ezekiel gives us some good ideas as to how we may declare the whole counsel of God.

The Need to be Instructed in the Whole Counsel of God

Ezekiel 2:1–3a, "And he said unto me, Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak unto thee.

And the spirit entered into me when he spake unto me, and set me upon my feet, that I heard him that spake unto me.

And he said unto me . . ."

If we are going to declare the whole counsel of God, the first thing we must do is to be instructed by God Himself. If we do not have that instruction, there is no

message that we can give. If you read through the Old Testament, this phrase keeps coming: "The Word of the Lord came unto Jeremiah", "The Word of the Lord came to Elijah", "The Word of the Lord came unto Ezekiel", etc. If there is no full instruction of the Word of God, you can at best give a Gospel message. However, we are talking about the whole counsel of God. Without this instruction, there is not going to be any effectiveness even though we desire to declare His Word. God's work is not going to be won by mere wishing or mere desiring. The people are not going to have their faith grow unless they have that Word of God given. We need this instruction badly. Isn't this why the Bible College was set up? It is to fill the hearts and minds of people so that they know the whole counsel of God.

Therefore the challenge to us is as Paul tells Timothy, "Study to show thyself approved unto God." The word "study" means "spare no effort" and "give all diligence". We need that instruction so badly. The battle is not going to be won by rhetorics. The battle is going to be won only when we know how to declare that Word of God.

A Proper Understanding of the Ministry of God

We need to have a proper understanding of the ministry of God. When I first entered Bible College, I had all kinds of idealistic concepts. I thought that I would be trained as a pastor and would preach the gospel. I assumed that people will all be so very moved. I failed to have a proper understanding of what the ministry of God really involved.

Boldly Declaring the Full Counsel of God

Ezekiel 2:3–4, “And he said unto me, Son of man, I send thee to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation that hath rebelled against me: they and their fathers have transgressed against me, even unto this very day.

For they are impudent children and stiffhearted.

I do send thee unto them; and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD.”

What? Are we going to preach to such people? Isn't this the world? No! They are called “children of Israel”. I just cannot help but feel that when FEBC and the B-P Church stand up and tell people such doctrines people will tell us to convert our energies to other things like soul-winning. But this is all part of the counsel of God's Word. To be forewarned is to be forearmed.

Ezekiel 2:6, “And thou, son of man, be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words, though briers and thorns be with thee, and thou dost dwell among scorpions: be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house.”

This involves confrontation. At times, it involves head-on collision. There are many times when we try to avoid conflict because we feel that as God's people, we should not quarrel with each other. I wonder how Ezekiel must have felt when God told him such things.

Let's move on to talk about Ezekiel's understanding of the ministry. In Ezek. 2:7, God told him that he is to speak His words: “And thou shalt speak my words unto them.” Further in Ezekiel 3:4, “And he said unto me, Son

of man, go, get thee unto the house of Israel, and speak with my words unto them." Also in Ezekiel 3: 10–11a, "Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, all my words that I shall speak unto thee receive in thine heart, and hear with thine ears. And go, get thee to them of the captivity, unto the children of thy people, and speak unto them, and tell them." The content of the message is not for us to determine. It is already told to us. The content value is all the counsel of God.

The B-P Church doctrine on separation stands out as a sore-thumb only because very few people preach this doctrine. It is not because it is over-placed or mis-managed. It is because a lot of other churches do not do it. But if this is part of God's counsel then, we must declare.

Digesting the Word of God

How much do we study of God's Word? I am not thinking in terms of academic qualifications. Let's look at Ezek. 2 and see how Ezekiel was instructed on this matter.

Ezekiel 2: 8, "But thou, son of man, hear what I say unto thee:

Be not thou rebellious like that rebellious house: open thy mouth, and eat that I give thee."

If Ezekiel does not digest what God is saying to him, he too will be classified as a rebellious person, regardless of the fact that he is a priest and a prophet.

Ezekiel 2: 9–10; 3: 1–4,

"And when I looked, behold, an hand was sent unto me; and, lo, a roll of a book was therein; And he spread it before me; and it was written within and without: and there was written therein

lamentations, and mourning, and woe.

Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, eat that thou findest; eat this roll, and go speak unto the house of Israel.

So I opened my mouth, and he caused me to eat that roll.

And he said unto me, Son of man, cause thy belly to eat, and fill thy bowels with this roll that I give thee. Then did I eat it; and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness.

And he said unto me, Son of man, go, get thee unto the house of Israel, and speak with my words unto them."

The only way we can declare the whole counsel of God is when we have done our part in fully digesting the issues at stake and we have understood the Word of God in depth. It is not enough to take a position or to take a stance. What are we standing for? Do you seriously know? It is possible to take a stance or position without clear understanding. One of these days, we will then see it being seriously questioned and then we will start to shiver and shake because in the first place, the foundation was not properly laid.

We need to go back to God's Word. Isn't this what Bible College is all about? I am not talking about formal instruction. I am talking about the Bible College student or any student of the Bible spending time with God's Word – thinking, praying and digesting – as he should be doing.

In the book of Acts, it is recorded that Peter said to the people that it is not right for them to leave the Word of God and prayer, and to go and serve tables. It is not that there is anything wrong with serving tables. But God has given us a definite ministry – and it has to do with the Word of God.

Do we spend enough time with God's Word so that we can be described like Ezekiel to be one who is eating and

digesting the Word of God? If we want to talk about declaring God's Word, this is a pre-requisite.

Dependence upon the Spirit of God

Ezekiel 3:14, "So the spirit lifted me up, and took me away, and I went in bitterness, in the heat of my spirit; but the hand of the LORD was strong upon me."

This is the initial reaction. To respond only humanly so that our hearts are angry in that God's Name is dishonored is not good. This is why God had to restrain Ezekiel. The hand of the Lord was upon Ezekiel. God's work was not yet done in Ezekiel's life.

Ezekiel 3:22, "And the hand of the LORD was there upon me; and he said unto me, Arise, go forth into the plain, and I will there talk with thee."

There was need for further instruction.

Ezek. 8:1, "The hand of the Lord GOD fell there upon me."

Ezek. 11:1, "Moreover the spirit lifted me up . . ."

Ezek. 11:5, "And the Spirit of the LORD fell upon me . . ."

All these verses have but one main point. God's work must be done in God's way. It has to be done when the servant of God is Spirit-filled and Spirit-led. Any other attempt to handle God's work will lead to disaster. The Spirit of God must come strongly upon the heart of the individual. The hand of the Lord must be upon this person. In what way?

It is by control of the person. The Spirit of God must control the servant of God. The Spirit of God must guide the servant of God. The Spirit of God must fill the person. If man is allowed to have his spirit carried away, he will

do harm to God's work. He will enter into fanaticism and will end up quarreling with many people over non-issues.

The Work of the Ministry

What is that ministry we are talking about? There are some glimpses given in the book of Ezekiel.

Being A Watchman

Ezekiel 3:17, "Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me."

Here is a first glimpse of the work. It is the work of a watchman. A watchman cannot afford to be sleeping. He cannot afford to be unfaithful. He has to be absolutely super alert. The life of the city for which he is a watchman depends entirely on him.

The servant of the Lord who does not wait upon God for that Word to be declared is an unfaithful watchman!

Ezekiel's ministry was to warn the people and not to worry about the results. A lot of people are quite happy to serve God but they are not prepared to take up all aspects of God's work. They are prepared to do part of the counsel of God but not the whole counsel. In order to be faithful to the whole counsel, the part of the warning ministry must be included. If this part of the ministry is removed, the whole counsel of God is then not being declared.

What is that message?

Ezek. 5:8-9, "Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I, even I, am against thee, and will execute judgments in the midst of thee in the sight of the nations.

And I will do in thee that which I have not

done, and whereunto I will not do any more the like, because of all thine abominations."

This was a hard message for Ezekiel to deliver.

Ezek. 6:9–10, "And they that escape of you shall remember me among the nations whither they shall be carried captives, because I am broken with their whorish heart, which hath departed from me, and with their eyes, which go a-whoring after their idols: and they shall loathe themselves for the evils which they have committed in all their abominations.

And they shall know that I am the LORD, and that I have not said in vain that I would do this evil unto them."

It was a hard message; a message that God is angry with His people. A lot of people cannot contemplate that God can be angry with His people. Israel learned that lesson when it was destroyed. Judah also learned that lesson when it too was destroyed. Now the captives in Babylon are going to learn this lesson all over again: Is it possible that God can be angry?

When was the last time that you heard a message on the anger of God upon people who will not fellowship with Him and who are not walking with Him and obeying His Word? Nobody likes to scold, but if this is part of the whole counsel of God, it has to be preached!

A. Warning to the People

Ezekiel was given another piece of work. He had to preach a message saying that God will not spare.

Ezekiel 7:9, "And mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity: I will recompense thee according

to thy ways and thine abominations that are in the midst of thee; and ye shall know that I am the LORD that smiteth."

Such a message has to be declared in that it is part of God's Word.

Ezekiel 8: 18, "Therefore will I also deal in fury; mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity: and though they cry in mine ears with a loud voice, yet will I not hear them."

This message is to the children of Israel in general.

A Warning to the Leaders

Ezek. 8: 1, "And it came to pass in the sixth year, in the sixth month, in the fifth day of the month, as I sat in mine house, and the elders of Judah sat before me, that the hand of the Lord GOD fell there upon me."

We see here that it is the leaders of the people.

Ezek. 8: 7 – 12, 16,

"And he brought me to the door of the court; and when I looked, behold a hole in the wall.

Then said he unto me, Son of man, dig now in the wall: and when I had digged in the wall, behold a door. And he said unto me, Go in, and behold the wicked abominations that they do here. So I went in and saw; and behold every form of creeping things, and abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel, pourtrayed upon the wall round about.

And there stood before them seventy men of the ancients of the house of Israel, and in the midst of

them stood Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan, with every man his censer in his hand; and a thick cloud of incense went up.

Then said he unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen what the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the chambers of his imagery? for they say, The LORD seeth us not; the LORD hath forsaken the earth.

And he brought me into the inner court of the LORD'S house, and, behold, at the door of the temple of the LORD, between the porch and the altar, were about five and twenty men, with their backs toward the temple of the LORD, and their faces toward the east; and they worshipped the sun toward the east."

Ezekiel 11:1–2,4,

"Moreover the spirit lifted me up, and brought me unto the east gate of the LORD'S house, which looketh eastward: and behold at the door of the gate five and twenty men; among whom I saw Jaazaniah the son of Azur, and Pelatiah the son of Benaiah, princes of the people.

Then said he unto me, Son of man, these are the men that devise mischief, and give wicked counsel in this city.

Therefore prophesy against them, prophesy, O son of man."

Ezekiel had to fight with the elders and the princes (influential people).

Ezekiel 13:2–3, 6–10,

"Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel that prophesy, and say thou unto them that prophesy out of their own hearts, Hear ye the word of the LORD;

Thus saith the Lord GOD; Woe unto the foolish prophets, that follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing!

They have seen vanity and lying divination, saying, The LORD saith: and the LORD hath not sent them: and they have made others to hope that they would confirm the word.

Have ye not seen a vain vision, and have ye not spoken a lying divination, whereas ye say, The LORD saith it; albeit I have not spoken?

Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because ye have spoken vanity, and seen lies, therefore, behold, I am against you, saith the Lord GOD.

And mine hand shall be upon the prophets that see vanity, and that divine lies: they shall not be in the assembly of my people, neither shall they be written in the writing of the house of Israel; neither shall they enter into the land of Israel; and ye shall know that I am the Lord GOD.

Because, even because they have seduced my people, saying, Peace; and there was no peace; and one built up a wall, and, lo, others daubed it with untempered mortar:"

This battle that we are engaged in focuses on declaring the whole counsel of God's Word which will include speaking to such people. These are the end days. All sorts of peculiar forms will arise.

Ezekiel 14:1 – 3,7 – 8,

"Then came certain of the elders of Israel unto me, and sat before me.

And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their heart, and put the stumblingblock of their iniquity before their face: should I be inquired of at all by them?

For every one of the house of Israel, or of the stranger that sojourneth in Israel, which separateth himself from me, and setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumblingblock of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to a prophet to inquire

of him concerning me; I the LORD will answer him by myself:

And I will set my face against that man, and will make him a sign and a proverb, and I will cut him off from the midst of my people; and ye shall know that I am the LORD.”

This is a serious situation of the end days. How bad can it get?

Ezekiel 14: 13 – 14,20,

“Son of man, when the land sinneth against me by trespassing grievously, then will I stretch out mine hand upon it, and will break the staff of the bread thereof, and will send famine upon it, and will cut off man and beast from it:

Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord GOD.

Though, Noah, Daniel and Job, were in it, as I live, saith the Lord GOD, they shall deliver neither son nor daughter; they shall but deliver their own souls by their righteousness.”

There will come a time when even our intercessory prayer work is not going to be heard by the Lord!

We are talking about perilous times. If we are living in the days of prophecy, if we are living in these last days, more is at stake than just the B-P Church. More is at stake than just taking a Biblical position. More is at stake than just having a theological persuasion. Whenever we speak about the truth of the Lord’s Word, as we read in the book of Ezekiel, the glory of the Lord is present.

Positive Steps to be Taken

I want to come to the third and last part of this message. We must solemnly understand the nature of Paul’s prophecy to Timothy. We must also understand

the input that Ezekiel has for us. We live in perilous times and the only way we can survive is not just to thank God that we are preserved in our faith but we have to take positive action. How we respond will affect the future of the B-P Church. How we respond will affect our very relationship with God. The call to all is: Please devote yourself to the study of God's Word. Cut down unnecessary activities. Spend time with God and His Word. To all who love God's Word, God tells us to go and declare the whole counsel of God. If you feel terribly inadequate, there are pastors, teachers, Bible College Classes and libraries available. Will you persuade yourself to study God's Word? The present leadership will go home to be with the Lord. Do not let posterity judge this present generation as having failed to hold fast to that trust given to us.

How do we preach God's Word? We have to do it when we are strengthened. In Ezek. 3, God said to Ezekiel that he has made his face like an adamant and stronger than flint. You have to have that strength of character to go on. Your heart and spirit must be made strong by the Lord to do this work. It is getting harder and harder to stand for the Word of Truth. Ezekiel was told not to be afraid of the people's looks and words. He was also told not to be afraid of briars, thorns and scorpions. There has to be courage to stand firm for the Lord.

There has to be a desire to be filled with the Spirit of God. And there is no way you are going to be filled with the Spirit of God unless you spend sufficient time on your knees before God. When was the last time when you spent several good hours before God? Dr Tow has reminded me several times. He said, "Charlie, please preach the Word with love." I thought over this. Please do not mistake strength of voice with non-love. Just because a person preaches with all his heart, it does not mean that he is not loving. If I see my son about to fall into a ditch, I am going to yell at him with my loudest voice and I am going to be the most loving father. What is

love? Love is when I see a man willing to give up much of himself to serve God and it is a thankless task. There are several people who have deeply impressed me along these lines. One such person is Dr Tow. On one occasion I spoke to him about what is hurting the B-P Church. It was very early in the morning. There was no prayer meeting that morning but I was there. We spent about an hour talking. As I was speaking to him, I began to realise that he was crying. That really moved me and spoke to my heart. I don't see why he should want to get involved in God's work to such an extent. I can understand a pastor who is paid doing that. I don't see why a person of his standing wants to go and risk his name and reputation and waste all his energy and effort except that he must love the Lord. I cannot speak of myself in this area because I am a full-time worker. If I do my work, it is because of my commitments to my vocation and ministry. I learnt about love in a different way that day. Love means devotion to God's work no matter how much it hurts. Love means spending and being spent for the Lord. Is there any other way of doing it? Why do you think we preach God's Word? Is it not because of love for the Lord? Is it not because we love the brethren? If we do not preach the whole counsel of God's Word, God's wrath will fall upon people who are called "children of God". It is in love that we tell people earnestly and urgently not to walk in paths which are wrong. We plead with people to walk with the Lord, to be holy and to be separate. Is this not love?

I would like to conclude this message by appealing not to an emotional response. Rather let us make a life commitment to be faithful, especially in these perilous times – not only to God but to the ministry which God has given to us – that we ought to declare the whole counsel of God in the power of the Spirit of God, in the full understanding of the Word of God and in the might and strength that God will give to us. Will you make this commitment? It is only with this commitment that we will see the B-P Church survive the crisis that we are facing.

We are not out to axe anybody or to cast out anybody, but we are out only to plead: Let us be faithful to the task given to us. We are the only group of churches that talks about Biblical separation so very strenuously the last 38 years. Will you make a commitment this evening?





"ELIJAH – PROPHET OF FIRE"

Greatly Motivated by the Word of God Dr. Arthur E. Steele

"The prophet Elijah towers up like a mountain in Gilead above all the other prophets."

"There is a solitary grandeur about Elijah that is all his own."

"Elijah – he was a Mount Sinai of a man."

These are quotations by Bible scholar Alexander Whyte in his book, *Whyte's Bible Characters*, Volume I, pages 362, 363, published by Zondervan, 1956. Alexander Whyte was Principal of new College, Free Church of Scotland, 1909-1918. Here is another quotation concerning Elijah from a far more scholarly and reliable source, the Bible: "Elias (Elijah) was a man subject to like passions as we are . . ." James 5:17a.

Each of these statements is true. Because these statements, and especially James 5:17, are true, the account of the life of Elijah that God chose to include in the Bible, is a great source of encouragement to Christians today in their own lives and ministries.

Note in the first verse of I Kings 17 how the Holy Spirit introduces Elijah to us, "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, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my Word." Elijah is introduced to us as "the Tishbite" with a message from the Lord God of Israel to Ahab the wicked King of Israel.

All indications are that the area of Tishbe was a place of no consequence and added nothing to the status of someone from there. I think it is possible that the area was so insignificant that the word "Tishbite" could be used as a word of derision, to belittle a person. The city of Nazareth in the New Testament gave that connotation to someone from there. King Ahaziah who succeeded Ahab seemed to use the term in that manner as his messengers brought a rebuke from Elijah, whom they could not identify. "And they answered him, He was an hairy man, and girt with a girdle of leather about his loins. And he (King Ahaziah) said, It is Elijah the Tishbite." II Kings 1:8.

Elijah was great in the sight of God because he was a man God could use. He was truly "a Mount Sinai of a man." Lest we today regard Elijah as somehow endowed uniquely with superhuman qualities that could never be attained by the Lord's servants today, the Holy Spirit chose to introduce him in the Old Testament as Elijah the Tishbite. Today the world might say, Elijah was a nobody. The Holy Spirit guided, in His infinite wisdom, the writing of each word in the Bible, in the Old Testament and in the New. He introduced Elijah as the Tishbite and ended His reference to Elijah in James 5:17 with the words "Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are." The account of Elijah, therefore, is a tremendous source of encouragement to ministers and all Christians during these latter days as we face the awful apostasy, wickedness and activities of Satan.

I am deeply grateful for the book entitled *Elijah the Tishbite* given to me by Dr. Timothy Tow, who spoke and wrote on Elisha the Prophet of Water. The book was written nearly 150 years ago by F. W. Krummacher who lived 1796 – 1868. His 458-page book reprinted by Baker Book House in 1977 has apparently been used by many preachers of the gospel. Many of his statements, which I have used, I recognize in messages by other ministers. I particularly want to acknowledge that three of the four principles that I substantially use concerning Elijah, and

which are so evident in his life, I first heard from Pastor Ingles, a Presbyterian Pastor in Tampa, Florida. These begin with the statement "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord" from Psalm 37:23. Pastor Ingles also used the fitting expression, "Elijah was a man powerfully motivated by the Word of God."

If I were to write a superscription above the life of Elijah, I also would write, "Elijah was a man powerfully motivated by the Word of God." We see this motivation each step in the life of Elijah from Gilead to the contest with the prophets of God and Ahab on Mount Carmel.

II. *From Gilead to Samaria*

Elijah the Tishbite, from Tishbe, lived in the mountains of Gilead during his years of preparation before encountering Ahab, king of the wicked and apostate Northern kingdom, Israel. The first words we read in the Bible concerning Elijah are an amazing combination of words, "and Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab . . ." I Kings 17a. This could be paraphrased saying, "Elijah, a nobody in the sight of man, spoke strong words of warning to the powerful wicked, and ruthless King Ahab of Israel." Elijah was powerfully motivated even to considering doing what he did. That motivation came from God's Word. Here then is the message Elijah gave to Ahab:

"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, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word."

I Kings 17:1.

Elijah had a burden, an overwhelming burden for the restoration of the northern kingdom, which is known as Israel. The awful idolatry was everywhere. With the

idolatry came wickedness almost beyond imagination. God's name was profaned and His holy law not observed. Jezebel, from the city of Zidon, headquarters of Baal worship, became the queen, the wife of King Ahab in Samaria. To please her, Ahab built a temple to Baal and an altar to Baal in the capital of the northern kingdom. We read the account in I Kings 16:30–33.

“And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the Lord above all that were before him. And 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 king of the Zidonians, and 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.”

While we know little about Elijah's youth, we know that his father gave him a name that reveals something about his family. The name Elijah means “the Lord is my God”, or “Jehovah is God.” You can see this from the “El” which is an abbreviation for Elohim and from “Jah”, the abbreviation for Jehovah. This name reflects indeed the convictions of Elijah. He knew God's word, he dwelt on God's Word and he saw clearly how it applied to Ahab and the land of Israel. Jeremiah's words fit Elijah, “Thy words were found and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by the name, O Lord God of Hosts.” Jeremiah 15:16.

There can be no doubt that the warning and promise of God to Moses in Deut. 11:13–17 were well known to Elijah. In this passage, God promised that He would give rain and adequate crops to his people when they “hearkened diligently” unto His commandments, and that He would also withhold the rain when they failed to do so. The situation in Israel called for such divine

intervention by the Lord God of Israel. As we consider Elijah in the hills of Gilead meditating on the Word of God, and praying about the awful wickedness and apostasy in Israel, we can see how God motivated Elijah through His Word.

In summary, borrowing some thoughts from Pastor Ingles, we can say this about Elijah:

1. He had a compelling conviction that Jehovah his God was alive, irrespective of anything.
2. He had the confirmation in his heart, his head, and in his total being that what God said was true, irrespective of anything.
3. He had the assurance that he must act on the basis of the Word that was revealed to him and sealed within him.
4. He prayed earnestly about the condition of the land and God gave him the assurance that his prayers were in the will of God and that God would answer his prayer.
5. He received God's commission and his command to take the Word of God to King Ahab.

Elijah delivered the message to Ahab and Ahab received the message without any question and for three or more years, the name Elijah was synonymous with the drought and famine in the land. The rain was withheld for a total of three and a half years.

Elijah was a man fervent in the Word and fervent in prayer in the hills of Gilead. His understanding of God's statements concerning rain in Deuteronomy 11 was clear during those days. He was a man of prayer long before he met King Ahab. This suggests that Elijah prayed that rain be withheld while he was yet in Gilead. If this is the case, Elijah would have been stirred as he noted that there was no change in the King nor in the Israelites in the face of months of drought and impending famine. I can imagine Elijah praying fervently that God would send him with a message of warning to Ahab.

There are great timeless principles that we see in the life of Elijah that are also true in the life of the surrendered servant of the Lord today.

Elijah was a man greatly motivated, greatly motivated by the Word. There are at least four principles in the life of Elijah that are evident and which reveal the sovereignty of God in his life as he is motivated by God's Word.

**Principle 1 –
The steps of a good man are
ordered by the Lord.**

“The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and he delighteth in his way.” Psalms 37:23.

God ordered the steps of Elijah from Gilead to the palace in Samaria. Satan surely was furious. Satan claimed the Northern kingdom as his domain. His wicked King was on the throne. Jezebel was established with her own temple, her own altar, and with four hundred prophets of her own in the capital city Samaria. Satan must have felt very secure. I can imagine his sense of victory when Jezebel slew so many of the prophets of God. And now Elijah, the Tishbite, thinks that he can upset the conquests of Satan! But, the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord. Krummacher and Ingles pointed out the likely fury and strategy of Satan in an effort to derail Elijah.

I believe that Satan stalked Elijah each step of the way over those forty miles from the hills of Gilead to the palace of Samaria. From experiences in our own lives, we can imagine Satan raising disturbing questions such as the following:

- a. *What on earth are you trying to do, Elijah? Who do you think you are – you Tishbite; don't you know that you don't have a chance? Ahab will kill you just*

as Jezebel has killed the prophets of the Lord. You will never make it, Elijah. Don't be so foolish."

I well remember the days at Faith Theological Seminary in Philadelphia where at the age of 36 and with four children, I was studying for the Lord's work. Prior to that, I was in business as a chemical engineer. The Lord's call to the ministry was so clear and definite. At first, I did not know how or where I would serve Him. I had practically no encouragement to obey the Lord's call except from my wife and from my pastor, Dr. James Hollowood. Satan, however, raised many questions in my own mind and through well-meaning friends. I can imagine many likely questions that Satan likely raised to Elijah:

- b. *"Even if you come out alive, Elijah, what if it rains? You will be the laughing stock of everyone if it rains. You will be finished as a prophet. And further, Elijah, what if you backslide. You know all too well what kind of a person you are, you are subject to like passions like everyone else. Further, you may feel real strong now but what about tomorrow? You are not going to make it, Elijah; face it."*

Borrowing again from personal experiences, when I resigned from my company Air Products, Inc., in Allentown, Pennsylvania, the President of the company told me to "go ahead and enroll in seminary and the company will continue your salary." I am sure he was thinking that I would shortly change my mind and be back in my former position. I want to add here that I did not accept this generous offer.

- c. *"Even if you are not worried about your own reputation, Elijah, you're putting God's reputation on the line. You will make your kind of fundamentalists look like a bunch of radicals, Elijah. If it rains, you will discredit them all."*

My friends and relatives made similar statements, such as, "You've got to think of others and you've got to think

of your family, your church, your company, the good engineering education and the cost of that education from your father."

A missionary speaker at one of the chapel services at Clearwater Christian College made the statement that if it were not for his assurance of his salvation and his assurance that God had definitely called him to his ministry, he would have long since quit the mission field. I have heard other pastors make similar statements. It is true, "the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord."

Principle 2 – God ordains the circumstances in the steps that He orders.

What would happen to Elijah as he faced the guard at the palace gate in Samaria? God ordained the circumstances. Someday we might ask Elijah about that conversation. The guards when they looked at the interesting attire of Elijah hardly considered him worthy of talking with the king. There possibly had been a drought for six months or so. Elijah may have said that he had a word from the Lord God of Israel about Ahab and the rain. God opened the door and Elijah stood before Ahab. He did so because he had stood before the Lord.

"... 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" (*1 Kings 17: 1*).

The Holy Spirit preserved Elijah's words for us today. Elijah spoke these exact words. We can say the same about the other words spoken in the Bible. They too are the exact words spoken. Disturbing indeed are the views of those who say that the words spoken in the Bible might not be the words of the speaker. There are evangelicals who make statements like that today but who would not have thought of saying or thinking such

things twenty, thirty, or forty years ago. Back in the 1930's and 1940's, those were the kind of statements made by the neo-orthodox who said, "The Bible is not the Word of God, but contains the Word of God." There are professors in Christian colleges who refer to themselves as new evangelicals who in effect take the same view. They say that the words spoken are true even if the speaker did not say them. They might state that Elijah may not have said the actual words recorded in the Bible, but rather that the writer of I Kings used these words, claiming that they were just as true as if Elijah had said them. These are the same men who suggest that the words in the Great Commission in Matthew 28 may not have been the actual words of Jesus. The New Evangelicals call this process "Redaction Criticism." These are the same men who have re-defined the term, "inerrancy." They say that the term, "inerrancy," means that the Bible is true in "all that it affirms" or "the Bible is true when it speaks of eternal matters." That is the same position of the neo-orthodox who said the Bible is not the Word of God but contains the Word of God. The New Evangelicalism is the modern dress of Neo Orthodoxy.

Here, then, are the words and thrust of the message of Elijah to Ahab. He began with the key words, "As the Lord God of Israel liveth." He put Ahab on record that it is the Lord God Almighty Who is the sovereign of all nations and of the universe, thus showing that Ahab was on the throne only because of God's permissive will. Elijah made it clear that he was God's ambassador with the message he delivered. Elijah, with great authority, said to Ahab, "As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before Whom I stand . . ." His words clearly declared that his orders were from the Lord God of Israel, and further that he was there with a message from a power far above his. He then gave him the amazing words, "There shall be no dew nor rain these years but according to my Word." I am sure that Ahab recognized the note of authority as Elijah spoke these words. He was not to forget these words during the three years or so of drought and

famine. They would haunt him until his consuming goal would be to seize and slay Elijah. Ahab recognized that when Elijah used the expression, "according to my word," he was speaking of the Word he received from God. Elijah knew this without question.

As we think of these authoritative words of Elijah, we see the great responsibility the Christian minister has to whom is committed the teaching and preaching of the Word of God. This commitment calls for complete surrender of body, soul, spirit and mind to the Lord. Christians who teach and preach God's Word have a great privilege and with that a very great responsibility. They speak with great authority.

Principle 3 – God provides and protects in the steps He orders and in the circumstances He ordains.

As Elijah approached King Ahab, one wave of Ahab's hand and Elijah would be dead. Elijah was a man powerfully motivated by the Word of God. Since he was "in the way," in obedience to God's will, he was indeed immortal. When we have the clear conviction in our heart that we are in the will of God and called in some way to minister to Him, we are under the protection of God as well. We are indeed immortal also when we are surrendered to the Lord and in the process of carrying out His orders. It is a real joy to read the testimonies of Christian statesmen over the centuries who have suffered greatly and have been protected under the hand of the Lord. We also read of many who were martyred through the centuries for the Word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. We recognize that God determines the life span of His servants. When God gives us a specific command, we have His protection and His provision as we obey. We see this further in the life and ministry of Elijah.

**Principle 4 –
God’s purposes are always fulfilled in the steps
He orders and in the circumstances He ordains.**

Ahab was given God’s Word directly by God’s prophet Elijah. Ahab had no excuse for continued rebellion and continued wickedness and idolatry. Surely the words of Elijah would flash back to Ahab daily during the long drought. Also as iniquity worked in his heart, he would be enflamed to the point where God would cause him to agree to Elijah’s amazing demand to prepare for the contest on Mount Carmel with four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal. The steps God ordered and circumstances he ordained were important in preparing Elijah for the specific ministry God had for him. We are grateful to God for recording these accounts of how He prepared Elijah. They are invaluable for us today, “For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of scripture might have hope.” Romans 15:4.

Elijah was a man mightily motivated by the Word of God.

Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are.

II. ELIJAH At The BROOK CHERITH

“And the Word of the Lord came unto him saying, Get thee hence and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan. And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there. So he went and did according unto the Word of the Lord: for he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith that is before Jordan. And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning and

bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook." 1 Kings 17:2-6.

**Principle 1 –
The steps of a good man are
ordered by the Lord.**

Elijah was a man powerfully motivated by the Word of God. The Word of the Lord came to Elijah instructing him to hide by the brook Cherith. This command of God on the surface seems contrary to reason. Why should he hide, and from whom should he hide? God is sovereign and Ahab is really subject to God. Elijah may also have reasoned that if he had to hide and wait, he would have preferred doing so in the mountains of Gilead. But Elijah "went and did according unto the Word of the Lord."

God ordered Elijah to Cherith which was the only place for Elijah. It was God's place for him. How servants of the Lord need to realize that the place of ministry God gives is the right place for them even though they may think otherwise. I'm reminded of a restaurant where I once stopped enroute from Philadelphia to Florida. There was a sign on the wall which read "There is no place anywhere around this place like this place, so this must be the place." When we are in the place where God places us, then there is no place anywhere like that place.

**Principle 2 –
God ordains the circumstances
in the steps He orders.**

There was only one place for Elijah at this time in his ministry. The place was near the brook Cherith, a brook

God ordained to supply water to Elijah during a time of severe drought and for possibly a year or more. Any other place would have been the wrong place for Elijah.

God also ordained the ravens to provide food for Elijah every morning and every evening. God surely ordained the circumstances and the steps that He ordered for his servant Elijah. God created the ravens and He created the water that flowed in the brook. God the creator designed the birds of the air and the fish in the sea into a marvelous navigational system. It was no problem for Him to re-program the navigational system of the ravens and change their nature to supply food for Elijah. It would be most interesting to see where the ravens obtained the bread and the flesh which they brought each morning and each evening, and I'm sure right on time. I can assure you that it was neither moldy bread nor old meat. I believe Elijah received delicious nourishing dark whole grain bread that met the needs of his body. I believe the same could be said of the flesh which was prepared just right for his need.

God also ordained the length of time Elijah would be in this location beside the brook Cherith.

**Principle 3 –
God provides and protects in the circumstances
He ordains and in the steps He orders.**

This was the place of protection and provision and the only place of protection and provision for Elijah. He learned this and many lessons from the Lord during his stay at Cherith. Elijah was public enemy number one and surely was marked for death by Ahab.

Obadiah, an administrator of Ahab, whom Elijah would eventually meet said to Elijah, "As the Lord thy God liveth, there is no nation or kingdom, whither my Lord

(Ahab) hath not sent to seek thee." 1 Kings 18:10. King Ahab had rejected God, God's Word and prophet of God as well. He hated Elijah and wanted him dead.

Elijah was a man greatly motivated by the Word of God. That is why he delivered the prophetic message concerning rain to Ahab at Samaria. It was the same motivation from God's Word that caused him to go to Cherith and be content to remain there so long. It is interesting to reflect on the days and months when Elijah was assigned to the areas beside the brook Cherith. The first week might have been very interesting and especially enjoyable. Perhaps the same could be said for the second and third week. It is possible Elijah could have been a bit impatient after that. James said, "Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are." It is so easy and natural to become impatient during periods of inactivity and isolation. We become restless and may even get to the point where we question the wisdom of God. Elijah saw the great need in the Northern kingdom to proclaim the Word of God and God's sure judgment against the awful idolatry and evil in the land. Surely Elijah may have had periods of restlessness especially during the early months at Cherith. We need to remember however, that Elijah was a man greatly motivated by the Word of God. It took great motivation for him to remain at Cherith, learning from God and waiting for God's further Word.

I well remember a young married student at the college where I served as President some years ago. After a little over one year at college he felt that it would be a waste of time to remain since he felt he was ready to serve as a pastor of a church. He said to me that since he had eighty four sermons ready to deliver he decided to quit college. Against our advice he left the college and tried to pastor a church. I was invited to speak at a week of meetings at his church and soon realized how unprepared he was. There were no special prayer meetings scheduled and no evidence of a burden for the

lost in his town nor for his own congregation. It was not surprising to me that he left that church. He volunteered for the foreign mission field! After the excitement and challenge of visiting churches for support, he and his family went abroad to study the foreign language that he would need. Again I was not surprised after considerable expenditure of funds "he felt led" to leave language school and enter the evangelistic ministry. He saw his need to continue his education and did so at another college, however, his restlessness continued. The last I heard was that he tried two other ministries. This young man has great abilities, a fine personality and able to speak well. Only God knows his heart. He seemed to want to serve the Lord. Could it be that God had a place called Cherith for him, but impatience and restlessness prevailed? This was not so with Elijah.

**Principle 4 —
God's purposes are fulfilled in the steps that He orders
and in the circumstances He ordains.**

At Cherith Elijah learned lessons that he did not know that he needed to learn. He learned the truths in Psalm 37:

"The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and he delighteth in his ways." Psalm 37:23.

"Commit thy way unto the Lord, trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass." Psalm 37:5.

"Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for him; fret not thyself because of him that prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass." Psalm 37:7.

The schooling Elijah received at Cherith was rich indeed. Here are three great lessons he learned, among others:

1. He learned to wait patiently for the Lord and for his instruction.

God was developing Elijah and making him ready for the tremendous ministry ahead. He had to learn complete and implicit obedience to the Lord. He indeed had lessons to learn that he did not know that he needed to learn. I'm sure Elijah thought he was ready long before this time. Since the period without rain was three and a half years, it is reasonable to assume that Elijah was in this isolated situation at Cherith for a year or more. God is always on time. He is never in a hurry. We need to realize this because character is built slowly. So often we have traits that interfere with our own ministries and these are traits that we do not see ourselves. God is so willing to deal with us but He generally does this at a place like Cherith.

2. He learned to commit his way unto the Lord even though he did not understand the total plan nor the blueprint.

I'm sure there are many times that he asked himself why God had placed him in this particular setting and under these particular circumstances. I am quite sure that he felt this way when God in the next phase of his waiting ordered him to a very strange location, to Zarephath in Zidon, the center of Baal worship.

I was thirty-six years old when the Lord led so clearly that I should resign my position as an engineer and enroll in seminary. We had four children and a godly mother-in-law living with us. There were seven around the table each day. Our resources were limited, but the call was clear and definite. As I have mentioned, the specific leading was to resign my position and enroll at Faith Theological Seminary in Philadelphia. I wanted the Lord to reveal His entire plan before I committed myself.

I wanted Him to reveal how I would support my family and also reveal the nature of my ministry after seminary. I also wanted to know where I would live and how much I

would be paid. What a typical natural humanistic evaluation of the call of the Lord, even though the call was so clear and definite. I suppose I also felt that I should review God's plan and give Him some sort of approval. I'm sure that at least subconsciously, I might have thought that way. The more my wife and I prayed, the more sure we were that God would only reveal one step at a time. What a great lesson we learned from that. The step of faith is one step at a time or it is not a step of faith at all. How good the Lord has been and how rich has been our ministry. There indeed is a powerful motivation in God's Word.

3. Elijah learned complete submission to the Lord.

He learned the valuable lesson that the kind of courage and strength that counts and which he sorely needed in the years ahead comes from God alone. Elijah learned the lessons well by being alone with God.

One of the great privileges I had during my first ministry in Singapore was to visit the room and prayer chamber where John Sung stayed during his ministry in Singapore. John Sung coveted times to be alone with the Lord. He would exhaust the oil supply in his lamp in his room as he studied and prayed alone long into the night.

Elijah was being prepared because he had been commissioned by the Lord to stand alone before Ahab and before the prophets of Baal and the prophets of Jezebel at Mount Carmel. He would be outnumbered 850 to one. He learned many lessons that he did not know that he needed to learn. He was a man of action but his activities were controlled by God. He was a man powerfully motivated by the Word of God. He was learning the lessons of courage, conviction and complete trust in the Word of God.

“And it came to pass after a while, that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land. And the Word of the Lord came unto him, saying, Arise, get thee to Zarephath which be-

longeth to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a woman there to sustain thee."

I Kings 17:7-9.

As the brook Cherith began to dry up, I am sure there was a measure of anticipation and excitement. Remembering that he was a man "subject to like passions as we are", we can imagine him feeling that he was now ready to preach and prophesy against the awful idolatry and wickedness in the Northern kingdom. That was his great desire. Then came God's instruction to him, which surely came as somewhat of a surprise and contrary to his own reason.

III. ELIJAH AT ZAREPHATH

Elijah was a man greatly motivated by the Word of God to go from Cherith to Zarephath.

"And the Word of the Lord came unto him, saying, Arise, get thee to Zarephath." I Kings 17:8.

I can easily imagine Elijah thinking in his mind that God was sending him in the wrong direction to the wrong place and to the wrong kind of person to offer protection and provision. This reminds me of the reply of Peter to the Lord after Peter and his companions had fished all night and caught nothing. When the Lord told Peter to launch out into the deep and let down their nets for a draught of fishes, Peter gave his very natural and human reply, in Luke 5:5:

"And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net."

Principle 1 --
The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord

Elijah headed west which seemed like the wrong direction. He came to Zarephath in Zidon which seemed to be the wrong place. There he looked for a certain widow who surely must have seemed like the wrong person to sustain him for the long period ahead.

As Elijah walked some seventy miles across a deserted area, I can imagine Satan again stalking him each step of the way, hoping to derail him from the purpose God had for him. This trip which took several days indeed was a further test for Elijah. He passed the test.

Principle 2 –
God ordains the circumstances in
the steps that He orders

As Elijah came near the city, he met the widow gathering sticks just as God arranged and ordained. The widow God had chosen to minister to Elijah was at the gate of the city at the precise time Elijah arrived. There was an instant awareness that this was the special widow. When God calls, He arranges both ends of the mission and each step along the way. What a sense of comfort and encouragement as we respond to the Lord's leading in our lives.

There must have been a real sense of joy as Elijah called out to the woman. "and he called to her, and said, Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink." I Kings 17: 10. The example we see here is a great lesson for us all in our everyday lives.

Not many years ago, I began the practice of praying concerning just about anything and everything, even things which may seem trivial. God created everything whether large or small, including things so small that they cannot be seen with the most powerful microscope. I realized that God is vitally interested in every detail in the life of a Christian. Each time I lift the receiver of the telephone now, I pray not only about what I should say, but about the reception by the person on the other end. This very simple act of faith is very effective. I have seen how moods and responses have been changed in a most striking manner during conversations. We should pray as we engage in any conversation and especially as we write letters. God is interested in every part of our lives and will guide and intercede for us.

As president of a college for many years, the Lord has impressed upon me an important ministry that any of us can have. As we respond to letters, especially letters of complaint and criticism, I have found that God will give us a spirit-directed response to such letters. It seems necessary to me to wait over night or one full day before responding to letters of criticism. Heart-searching prayer and earnest sincere prayer for the writer is important. The right kind of response in the spirit and not in the flesh, will often result in a very needful and helpful ministry to the troubled who write such letters.

**Principle 3 –
God provides and protects in the steps that He orders
and in the circumstances that He ordains.**

Elijah was cared for by the widow at Zarephath in all probability for well over one year. The drought lasted for three and a half years. This was the place of protection and provision for Elijah, even though a most unusual

place in the mind of Elijah. He obeyed God's Word and was submissive to God's Word irrespective of the place, the poverty, the poor widow, or anything.

As Elijah met the widow, his request seemed strange, even presumptuous and unkind, except that his words and the response of the widow were directed by the Spirit of God.

“And as she was going to fetch it, he called to her, and said, Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand. And she said, As the Lord thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse: and, behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die. And Elijah said unto her, Fear not; go and do as thou hast said: but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son.”

I Kings 17: 11 – 13.

There was a ring of authority in the words of Elijah. This was because his words were the words of God in his mouth. God had also prepared the heart of the widow to respond. God gave him the same sense of authority in his word when he first spoke to King Ahab at Samaria. He would be speaking again with great authority when he would meet the prophet Obadiah and then as he would give instructions to Ahab and the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel.

What an important lesson this is for the servants of the Lord today. When our hearts and minds are full of the Word of God and our will is surrendered completely to Him, He will enable us to proclaim His Word with the same authority. People need to hear the Word of God. There is a tendency to substitute what we think the Word says, rather than declaring “thus saith the Lord.” This trend is evident today in some evangelical colleges and seminaries which actually teach that the words of the

Bible may not actually be the words God's spokesman said. This teaching comes in the name of scholarship but short-circuits the power of God to Christians and destroys confidence in the Bible. This is the new evangelicalism today. It is even more subtle than ever.

After Elijah's unusual request to the poor widow whose provision was virtually exhausted, God revealed that He, as the creator of the universe, could and would supply the need.

"For thus saith the Lord God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth. And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat many days. And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the Word of the Lord, which he spake by Elijah." 1 Kings 17: 14-16.

This was a powerful declaration by Elijah. He had a clear vision of his mission. He stated, "For thus saith the Lord God of Israel, the barrel of meal shall not waste neither shall the cruse of oil fail until the day the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth." He knew that day was coming although he may not have known that the rain would be withheld for a period of three and a half years. That was a long time to wait but he waited and he learned what God knew he needed to learn. He was powerfully motivated by the Word of God.

Elijah was now faced with a very severe test given to him in the providence of God. The widow's son fell sick and died. He was indeed at a crossroad in his life.

"And it came to pass after these things, that the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, fell sick; and his sickness was so sore, that there was no breath left in him. And she said unto Elijah, What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? art thou

come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son? I Kings 17:17–18.

There seems to be no doubt that Elijah was a great prophet of the Lord in the eyes of the widow. She had seen his consistent godly living for a long time, perhaps a year or two years. These were months of blessings in the widow's house as they saw God's daily miraculous provision. Now everything seems to have changed.

This same widow turns on Elijah and blames him for what has happened to her son. From the tone of her conversation she probably was sorry she had ever heard of Elijah. It is probably true that every faithful servant of the Lord whether a pastor, an administrator, missionary, Christian school teacher, etc, who has served the Lord for many years has experienced unjust, unnecessary, and unexplainable criticism such as Elijah received from the widow. The days and months of miracles and blessings and faithful teaching the Word of God seemed to have evaporated. Now Elijah received criticism and blame.

Many of us have heard of godly ministers who, after many years of faithful service receive undeserved criticism and an unexplainable turning of affection from those they have served well. Such times often are the most severe trials servants of the Lord face. Elijah faced this. Some ministers have thrown up their hands and departed from the ministry, and in the process have blamed God.

Elijah was now faced with a very severe test given to him in the providence of God. The widow's son fell sick and died. He was indeed at a crossroad in his life. A strange thing happened in my life. The Apostle Peter put it this way, in I Peter 4:12, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you."

Elijah was a man powerfully motivated by the Word of God. He brought this matter to the Lord and then did as the Lord revealed.

“And he said unto her, Give me thy son, And he took him out of her bosom, and carried him up into a loft, where he abode, and laid him upon his own bed. And he cried unto the Lord and said, O Lord my God, hast thou also brought evil upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by slaying her son? And he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto the Lord, and said O Lord, my God, I pray thee, let this child’s soul come into him again. And the Lord heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came unto him again, and he revived, And Elijah took the child, and brought him down out of the chamber into the house, and delivered him unto his mother: and Elijah said; see, thy son liveth. And the woman said to Elijah, Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the Word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth.” I Kings 18:19-24.

We see now a great triumph of faith in the life of Elijah as he trusted God’s Word completely. He came to a serious crossroad which was a real test. It was part of the circumstances God ordained. Elijah was now ready for the next command from God, “Go, shew thyself unto Ahab.”

IV. Zarephath to Mt. Carmel

“And it came to pass after many days, that the word of the Lord came to Elijah in the third year, saying, Go, shew thyself unto Ahab; and I will send rain upon the earth”. I Kings 18:1.

Elijah was a prophet that God prepared for a great mission, a confrontation with King Ahab and a witness to God’s sovereignty and the immutability of His Word. God’s Word meant everything to Elijah. Because of the Word of God, Elijah prayed that God would withhold rain

upon the land. Because of the Word of God, Elijah delivered God's message in person to King Ahab. Because of the Word of God Elijah went and dwelt patiently in Cherith where he learned complete submission to the Word of God and to the will of God. Because of the Word of God, Elijah, perhaps contrary to reason, went to Zarephath to be cared for by a poor widow who was ready to die.

"The Word of the Lord came to Elijah" and Elijah obeyed and was ready for God's instruction. God told Elijah to "go shew thyself unto Ahab." This was the time of "showing for Elijah. About three years prior to this, was the time "for hiding" for Elijah. In each case Elijah was powerfully motivated by God's Word. In each step it is evident that Elijah had to learn that which he did not know that he needed to learn. God sees us where we can not see ourselves. How vital it is for us to obey God's Word implicitly if we want to be used of Him. His way is best. So often we think we can see what others need to learn, and conversely others seem to see what we need to learn. It is really difficult for us to see ourselves and what we need to learn. David said, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." Psalm 139:23-24. The Holy Spirit delights in searching our hearts and pointing out to us where we have spiritual needs.

Go show thyself and go hide thyself, both were commands given by God to Elijah. What a great difference between these commands. So often Christians prefer the showing over the hiding. We also see this in some new graduates from Bible Colleges and Seminaries.

A pastor friend of mine felt the best way to make an impact in his city was to place a full-page ad in the local newspaper announcing his grandiose plans. The ad illustrated his plans for an expanded church, a Christian college, a Christian day school, a large athletic field and a Christian retirement home. Featured also in the ad was

his photograph. It seems that he felt that it was necessary "to show himself". His ideas were noble but his timing was not God's timing. The church purchased a large tract of land, started a college, erected one building, built a football field; and then they faced serious financial problems. It was necessary for them to close the college and sell the land. This dear pastor publicly admitted that he had not waited on the Lord. He has a good ministry in another town today. A "time of waiting" is so essential before a "time of showing."

I think of a case, similar in principle; of a young man new in the ministry. A pastor of a large church in Pennsylvania hired this able young man who just graduated from one of our best theological schools. When the young man reported for his ministry, the pastor explained that one of his duties was to handle the Sunday School bus ministry. The pastor told me that the young man was greatly taken back and assumed that the pastor did not realize what a good theological training he had. He told the pastor that he expected to have a preaching ministry in the church as his assistant. He obviously resented the idea of having anything to do with the church buses. The young man was ready in his mind for a "time of showing" instead of a "time of hiding." How we need to learn the lesson that we should not despise a work which seems to be beneath us — such as may occur as we start out in a ministry. We also need to learn the lesson that we should not despise times of relative inactivity and unimportance that we may face between ministries. I believe that it is appropriate to state here that we should not regard bigness as evidence of the Lord's approval. It is quite possible to develop a work by one's own ingenuity and resourcefulness. It is possible to build a large church without the Lord's help just as it is possible to build a large business. We can see this in some of the liberal churches and in the various cults.

Elijah was a prophet greatly motivated by the Word of God. The Word of God came to Elijah instructing him to

go show himself to Ahab and in obedience to God's will, he left Zarephath for Samaria.

After three and a half years of drought, famine and great hardship, the anger of Ahab must have been great. Ahab's top priority was the capture and no doubt death of Elijah. I can imagine the tactics Satan used at this time. He no doubt tried to convince Elijah that it would be foolish and certain death for him to meet with Ahab. He reminded him that he was public enemy number one and that there was in effect an all-points bulletin throughout the nation for his capture. What would have been our thinking and our reaction if we were Elijah at this point? How wonderful to realize that God knows us and will prepare us for any ministry to which he calls us. Our strength is the Lord.

Principle 1 — The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord.

The Lord led Elijah each step of the way and Elijah lived so close to the Lord that he followed each step. He knew the truth of Psalms 37: 23 "the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord and he delighteth in his way." As Elijah stepped out in obedience to the Lord, God led him to the prophet Obadiah on his way to meet Ahab. God preserved in his Holy Word Elijah's encounter and conversation with Obadiah, a prophet of God in Israel, where Ahab was king. Obadiah was also a governor in Ahab's house. Since God gave this account, it is evident that this is for our instruction and learning.

"And Ahab called Obadiah, which was the governor of his house. (Now Obadiah feared the Lord greatly: For it was so, when Jezebel cut off the prophets of the Lord, that Obadiah took an hundred

prophets, and hid them, by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water.) And Ahab said unto Obadiah, Go into the land, unto all fountains of water, and unto all brooks: peradventure we may find grass to save the horses and mules alive, that we lose not all the beasts. So they divided the land between them to pass throughout it: Ahab went one way by himself, and Obadiah went another way by himself. And as Obadiah was in the way, behold, Elijah met him: and he knew him, and fell on his face, and said, Art thou that my lord Elijah? And he answered him, I am: go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here." I Kings 18:3–8.

The face-to-face meeting of the two prophets of God, Elijah and Obadiah, sandwiched in between Zarephath and Carmel is an account of great contrast. Today in the evangelical world we can safely say that there are many ministers similar to Obadiah, but few similar to Elijah.

Permit me to list a number of good things we can say about Obadiah from this account in the Bible.

1. Obadiah had great respect for Elijah and his office. 'And as Obadiah was in the way, behold, Elijah met him and he knew him and fell on his face, and said, Art thou that my Lord Elijah?' I Kings 18:7.
2. Obadiah feared God greatly and feared God from his youth according to verse 3 and verse 12 of I Kings 18.

Verse 3 tells us that Obadiah really did fear the Lord. This is not what Obadiah said about himself, but what the Bible said about Obadiah. From this we can state that Obadiah was orthodox and would have been glad to sign a sound Biblical doctrinal statement. I would hesitate in calling him a fundamentalist because a fundamentalist is one who is not only orthodox, but who is obedient to God's Word. The test of fundamentalism is obedience.

3. Obadiah did good works.

At great risk he saved one hundred prophets of the Lord and risked the wrath of Jezebel as he hid them in the cave and fed them.

4. Obadiah was a very capable administrator since he was governor of Ahab's house.

Since Obadiah feared God greatly he was careful in his personal life and no doubt maintained his testimony and thus was protected by God. In all probability he was an exceptionally capable and an efficient administrator. Ahab likely recognized this and put up with his orthodoxy since it would be foolish to let such a good administrator go. We think also of Joseph and his valuable administrative position in Egypt and the same for Daniel in Babylon. We see in these cases the sovereignty of God at work.

Obadiah would really look good in the viewpoint of many Christians today, but the Lord seeth not as man seeth. How we need to see the great contrast between these two prophets of the Lord as God reveals them to us in this account.

The Bible states that Obadiah feared God greatly however, the Bible account also states that Obadiah feared Ahab greatly. He feared Ahab more than he feared God as is evident in his reply to Elijah's command to go tell Ahab that he is here in verse 12, "when I come and tell Ahab and he cannot find thee, he shall slay me; but I thy servant fear the Lord from my youth". This verse exposes the conflict in the heart of Obadiah and also his attempt to justify himself. Obadiah is not referred to again even at the great contest to follow on Mt. Carmel.

An attorney from a large Presbyterian church in Ohio, a member of the National Council of Churches asked me to meet with him and the members of the session concerning the liberalism in his church. I met with them at the Country Club in that city and listened to the examples of unbelief preached from the pulpit and

taught through the Sunday school literature. The session felt that it was time for action. I tried to explain, with evidence, that the denomination was beyond the point of returning to the fundamentals of the faith because the colleges and seminaries which train the pastors and leaders of that denomination were committed to "another gospel", "another Bible" and "another Christ."

When I was asked for my recommended action, I stated firmly that the only course was ecclesiastical separation according to II Corinthians 6, which I reviewed with them. Since they seemed to be committed to the reformed faith, I recommended that they move elsewhere in the city and establish a new church that would be true to the Word of God. I suggested that they paint the word 'Bible' before the name Presbyterian on the sign of a new church. When I met some months later with the same attorney, he stated that the pressure from the wives and children of the session was great. He said that since they had many friends within that church, they felt that they needed to stay together and try to work from within. He pointed out that the church windows are inscribed with the names of their grandparents and that plaques on the church organ and furniture contain the names of family members who have gone to be with the Lord. They felt that they really could not abandon all that. The capitulation was tragic. The former concerns of the session about the apostasy in their church seemed to evaporate. In the end they would not pay the price. While they spoke of veneration of their ancestors, they in effect were repudiating the convictions and love for the Word of God that those same ancestors held. Theirs was the spirit of Obadiah.

"The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord." God ordered the steps of Elijah to Ahab, but first to a conversation with the prophet Obadiah. Obadiah tried his best to avoid going to Ahab with the message from Elijah. Elijah finally stated, "As the Lord of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, I will surely shew myself unto him

to day." I Kings 18:15. It was only then that Obadiah agreed to carry the message to Ahab.

God has a purpose in each step that He orders and in the circumstances that He ordains. Obadiah was a prophet of God and Elijah was a prophet of God. Here Elijah met his peer. Peer pressure has always been very real and has been effective in derailing many Christians on their way to do God's will. Obadiah could have been the last obstacle, thus a last test of Elijah's total surrender to the God he loved and knew so well. Also, we can see that Obadiah was the right man to announce to Ahab that Elijah was coming to meet him. This also provided the right interval of time between the announcement and the confrontation in person with Elijah. The message was given and Ahab came personally to meet Elijah and during that process, we see the intervention of God.

**Principle 2 –
God ordains the circumstances in the steps that He
orders.**

We see this principle so clearly first in Elijah's meeting with Obadiah, but then in the control God exercised over the will and mind of King Ahab.

As soon as Ahab appeared with the statement "Art thou he that troubleth Israel?" I Kings 18:17, Elijah immediately addressed the heart of the problem. "And he answered, I have not troubled Israel: but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Baalim." The next two verses, 19 and 20, are amazing beyond comprehension. Here it is Elijah who issues the orders to the wicked King Ahab. The king had named Elijah public enemy number one and placed the death sentence upon him. That is amazing enough, but verse 20 shows the

amazing compliance by Ahab to Elijah's orders. God indeed ordains the circumstances in the steps that he orders no matter what these steps are. The Lord God Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth is indeed sovereign over all of his creation and besides all that, He is our Lord and Saviour and dwells within the heart of every believer. Logic alone concludes that anything but complete surrender and submission to God's will is illogical.

“Now therefore send, and gather to me all Israel unto Mt. Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the groves four hundred, which eat at Jezebel's table. So Ahab sent unto all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together unto Mt. Carmel.”

1 Kings 18:19–20.

Pause and think about what must have taken place and the activity after Elijah's order in verse 19 to accomplish all that is recorded in verse 20. The command of King Ahab went throughout the land. His command went also to two groups of false prophets, totaling eight hundred and fifty! The determination of Ahab to accomplish this is also truly amazing. He brought it all about and they indeed did convene on the top of Mt. Carmel before Elijah! Ahab was an instrument in God's hand. All that took place was God at work, as He had been right along from Gilead to Carmel. Oh that Christians today would see these great principles concerning God's sovereignty in action in the lives of Christians.

Principle 3 – God provides and protects in the circumstances that He ordains.

The confrontation on Mt. Carmel is familiar to Christians who read the Bible. God provided everything that Elijah needed. He gave him the physical strength, the

courage, the overwhelming sense of commission and the conviction that God was working through him. He knew that God was his strength.

Elijah was in control of the scene on Mount Carmel with Ahab, 850 prophets and the people assembled. He was in control because God was controlling. Elijah immediately joined the basic issue before the people. "And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow Him: and if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word." I Kings 18:21.

How easy it is in the Lord's work to deal with peripheral things and not join the central issue of man's personal relationship with God and God's Word. Rain was a peripheral issue. It was not the main issue although that seemed to be on everyone's mind. May God give us ministers, teachers and evangelists who live close to the Lord and in His Word so that they can address the same issue that God sees in any situation.

The futile efforts of the false prophets, the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, over a period of seven or eight hours to call the gods to bring fire down upon the altar was indeed ugly and gruesome for all to see. The Christian world today is full of false prophets whose religious exercises are abhorrent and equally ugly and gruesome in God's sight. Jesus accurately describes the religious false prophets of His day in Matthew 23:27: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness." To "fellowship with false religious leaders today such as those in the ecumenical movement who deny the deity of Christ, His virgin birth, etc. come under the same condemnation of the Lord." "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." Ephesians 5:11.

When Elijah stepped forward his words were few and the fire fell.

“. . . , Lord God of Abraham, Isaac and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the Lord God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again. Then the fire of the Lord fell . . .”

I Kings 18:36b – 38a.

Somewhere in that large group, I am sure there was a wagon with precious drinking water for the day. In the minds of the people, the issue was rain. Elijah with great boldness ordered that four barrels of precious water be removed from the wagon and poured on the altar. Surely now he was going too far. He called for four additional barrels of water and poured them on the altar also. He was sure to deplete the supply of precious drinking water. He then ordered that four more barrels of water be brought and poured over the offering: “And the water ran around about the altar; and he filled the trench also with water.” I Kings 18:35.

Elijah’s great burden was not simply to have a great demonstration and personal vindication of his word, but that there would be genuine revival in the land. His prayer is monumental. His consuming burden was revival. “Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the Lord God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again.” I Kings 18:37.

When the fire fell, the people fell on their faces, “and they said, The Lord, he is the God; the Lord, He is the God.” verse 39. There may well have been some that turned to God, but none of the prophets budged from their awful wicked position.

God indeed ordained the circumstances in the steps that he ordered for Elijah. Elijah commanded that everyone of the prophets of Baal be put to death, and this

was done at the brook Kishon. God was in control and Elijah ordered the people to take the prophets and slay them, and they actually did. God's sovereignty was evident. God can control and direct the heart of anyone from King to servant.

This account in verse 40 may seem like a terrible slaughter and indeed it was, but we can say without question that this was the judgment of God upon them. If these same prophets lived out a normal life, they would have faced the terrible judgment of God after death. God chose at this time to reveal the sure judgment upon apostasy and upon false prophets for all of us to read. As we study this account, we see that God was fair and just. We can say also that He was loving because they had before them a great demonstration of the power of God which was preceded by a message calling for repentance by Elijah. The rejection of God by the false prophets was personal and definite.

God's Word prevailed and was manifest to all the people. God does not always bring judgment down upon false religious leaders, but He did in this case as He did in the death of Ananias and Sapphira due to spiritual hypocrisy. These recorded accounts are sign posts for us to see God's attitude about spiritual hypocrisy and apostasy. These accounts are given for our instruction and admonition.

We may ask, what about the rain? Rain was not the basic issue. God had promised that he would send rain according to the word of Elijah. There could be no question in the mind of Ahab or the prophets that rain was withheld by God. There could be no question that rain would be sent by God and sent through Elijah. If God had returned the rain some other way, God's Word would not have been established, and that was the real issue. Elijah prayed fervently and effectively and God sent rain.

**Principle 4 –
God’s purpose is revealed and taught through the steps
He orders and in the circumstances that He orders and
ordains.**

There are many lessons for us today as we read and study the contest on Mt. Carmel. We learn great lessons about the effectiveness of prayer as we see Elijah praying for rain. Elijah was a man greatly motivated by the Word of God.

1. Elijah prayed in faith.

Faith is not based on something that we would like to happen, but faith is always based upon the Word of God.

2. Elijah’s faith was not shaken by contrary evidence.

The ratios on Mt. Carmel were not in his favour, eight hundred and fifty to one. Faith in God’s Word enables us to see the answer as Elijah by faith heard the rain coming, “I hear the abundance of rain.” verse 41. He heard what no one else heard. “Faith is the evidence of things not seen.” Hebrews 11:1. When we are in the Word of God and in His will, we will see that which others about us may not see. Quite often Christians may be alone as spokesmen for God and in leadership roles.

3. Elijah prayed in secret humility.

In verse 42, we find that he prayed alone with his face between his knees.

4. Elijah prayed specifically and earnestly.

There was no vagueness in his prayers when he was on Mt. Gilead and prayed that rain would be withheld. On Mount Carmel, Elijah also prayed specifically that God would send rain and God did.

5. Elijah prayed persistently seven times.

Elijah instructed his servant to go up and look towards the sea for evidence of rain. He knew it would come and it did.

Words are inadequate to describe adequately the spectacular scene and all that took place on Mt. Carmel. Elijah stood as the prophet of God and in total control of the assembly consisting of Ahab, 450 prophets of Baal, 400 prophets who sat at the table of Jezebel, Ahab's guards, plus a multitude of Israelites. What a scene, what a great man was Elijah, indeed a "Mount Sinai of a man." In view of all this, without taking anything from the facts, God chose to close the Biblical account of Elijah in the book of James with words that He chose for a purpose. I'm sure He gave these words for us today. As we see our own frailties, these become words of encouragement to us.

"Elias (Elijah) was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit." James 5:17–18.

V. Elijah at Mt. Horeb

"Elijah was a Mt. Sinai of a man", stated Alexander Whyte. Elijah was a great prophet, greatly motivated by the Word of God. He was zealous for God's righteousness, and burdened for the Northern kingdom, Israel. Elijah was a prophet God could use. He was teachable. He was obedient to God's Word. All this is true yet James states "Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are." Today God is looking for men and women with the same spirit as Elijah. The entire account of Elijah in the Bible is a testimony to the transforming power of God

available to Christians who submit themselves totally to Him.

I Kings 19 is a testimony to the inspiration of scripture by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit not only gave God's Word and kept the writers of scripture free from error or contradiction but He selected that which would be included in God's Holy Word, the Bible.

Chapters 17,18 and the accounts following chapter 19 are a great testimony to Elijah, but these are an even greater testimony to the sovereignty of God. At first glance, chapter 19 seems to dwell on what appears to be a great weakness in Elijah. It is a testimony to the truth of James 5: "Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are."

At first, chapter 19, seems to undo or upset all that we have read about Elijah, however in God's sight, Elijah was the same person. God saw him perfectly. We may say Elijah really changed, but this is not likely.

When Ahab returned from the great confrontation and the slaying of the prophets of Baal, followed by the miraculous return of rain in answer to the prayers of Elijah, he no doubt felt that in some way, this would result in a transforming change upon his wicked wife Jezebel. That did not take place.

"And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and withal how he had slain all the prophets with the sword. Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time." I Kings 19:1-2.

These unexpected words from Jezebel came to Elijah and produced upon him a great state of disappointment. This is not what he had expected. The burden of Elijah beginning back in the hills of Gilead was that God's Word would be brought to Ahab and to the people in the Northern Kingdom with great power, resulting in great conviction and great revival. He wanted more than

anything else for the Northern Kingdom to be restored to God and be the great and righteous nation that God intended. For three and a half years he prayed, had sweet communion with God, and saw God marvelously and miraculously move in his behalf. Now the great contest on Mt. Carmel with the greatest demonstration that he could imagine had taken place. He was outnumbered by the masses and outnumbered by the false prophets, eight hundred fifty to one. He stood alone yet he was not alone. He felt the sense of God's power and authority as he delivered God's message to the people. He challenged them to face the issue, to choose between God or Baal.

Elijah had no doubt that God would answer by fire upon the altar he had prepared. God did so. Now there could be no doubt by any that the God of Abraham, Israel was the only and true God and the God of Elijah. In all this, Elijah also saw that there was no impact upon the false prophets and no change. Elijah instructed the people to slay the false prophets, and they did. They did so with the full knowledge of the king and his military guard!

Elijah was further assured and vindicated when God according to His own Word poured down rain at the end of that tremendous confrontation. There could be no doubt whatsoever that God had moved on the scene. Elijah expected that the great revival would now begin. He must have thought, "what a perfect way for God to reach the hearts and minds of the people." Something big will do it, he may have thought. Something miraculous will do it. Some tremendous demonstration like the world has never seen will start the revival. In this, we can see that Elijah was a man of like passions as we are.

Elijah had learned much over three and a half years, but God knew that he needed to learn more fully God's means for reaching the heart, just as we need to learn this today.

Verse three of chapter 19 begins with the expression "When he saw that." What he saw was that there was no change in the heart and mind of Jezebel toward the Lord. Instead Jezebel had more hatred for God and God's servant than ever. Jezebel was now determined to kill Elijah and he knew it. At this point, he must have said over and over again in his mind, "Why, why, why?"

Principle 1 – The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord

Psalm 37:23 is still true. When Elijah heard the words of Jezebel, he left immediately with his servant and headed south for safety. He went alone further south to Horeb near Mt. Sinai, about three hundred miles away. Our limited view of God's sovereignty so often hinders our evaluation of a situation such as this. The question arises, "Did God order his steps to flee from Jezebel and travel to Horeb?" I find myself making this statement, "the steps of Elijah were his, and the grace of God went with him each step." These steps were surely within the permissible will of God. We should not be surprised some day to find that those steps of Elijah were also ordered by God.

Elijah and his servant headed due south, literally escaping from Jezebel into the southern kingdom. They did not stop at the border but went about fifty miles south of Jerusalem into the southern part of the kingdom. This part of the trip was over one hundred miles through difficult terrain. The trip could have taken anywhere from four or five days to over a week. We can imagine the thoughts of Elijah and his conversation with his servant as he was sorting out and trying out various assumptions and ideas he may have had concerning the past three and a half years and especially concerning the

events on Mt. Carmel. Satan would surely stalk Elijah and accuse him of weakness and much more. Such is the activity of Satan as all of us know too well. Elijah therefore was not devoid of negative thoughts and ideas which are contrary to the word of God. If these expressions had little or no effect on Elijah, they may have found root in the servant. I am sure any comments from the servant were not at all satisfying and profitable to Elijah, a man of discernment. It probably was an easy decision for Elijah to leave the servant at Beersheba.

The minister and servant of God today must be extremely cautious during a period of disappointment. He must give high priority and high value to those daily sessions alone "in the secret place of the most High." "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." Psalms 91: 1. During difficult times, it is not only important to cherish our personal times with the Lord, but to be extremely cautious when sharing disappointments and difficulties with others who may not be as close to the Lord as we think. So often Satan directs his strategy through associates who may be carnal Christians.

**Principle 2 —
God ordains the circumstances in the steps that He
orders.**

God's eyes and ears were open to Elijah as he travelled south to Beersheba, and then went on alone a day's journey into the wilderness.

"But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might

die; and said, It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers." Kings 19:4.

It seems that Elijah during his journey focused on himself, attempting some sort of spiritual self-examination, even comparing himself with others that God had used. There could be only one conclusion according to his rationale, "It is enough, my ministry has come to an end." How familiar these words sound. God heard it all.

God in His love and mercy dispatched an angel to his side complete with "a cake baked on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head." (verse 6). Elijah was sound asleep and the angel touched him with the words, "arise and eat." There is no indication in this passage that Elijah was sensitive to the angel's presence and God's providence. He went back to sleep.

"And the angel of the Lord came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee." I Kings 19:7. God in His foreknowledge knew the journey and the experiences that were ahead during the next forty days for Elijah. God indeed ordains the circumstances, even in the steps that seem to be ours as we serve Him. We are in the palm of His hand constantly and so was Elijah.

Each of the forty days and forty nights ahead were days of miracles. The food that was provided the second time by the angel lasted and was sufficient for that entire period. Elijah "went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the Mount of God." (verse 8). The trip was long and I am sure the inner conflict of Elijah was great; however, in all this Elijah "sinned not nor charged God foolishly." This great man of God had a lesson to learn that he did not know that he had to learn. If this was true of Elijah, how much more of us in the Lord's work.

**Principle 3 —
God provides and protects in the circumstances
he ordains and in the steps that He orders.**

God provided and protected and we might add, directed Elijah each step during the flight from Jezereel to Beersheba through the wilderness and to Mt. Horeb. God provided the cave in the mountain. That is where the Word of the Lord came to him.

**Principle 4 —
God's purposes are accomplished in the steps that He
orders.**

Elijah's conversation with God began with these words "what doest thou here, Elijah?" (verse 9). Elijah readily recited to God that which he had concluded during the past 40 days and 40 nights. He gave God his spiritual self-evaluation. "And he said, I have been very jealous for the Lord God of Hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away." I Kings 19:10. God already knew all that Elijah said. God knew his heart and mind in every detail. God then taught Elijah, in his condition and understanding, the great unchanging truth concerning revival and conversion. He needed to be settled that it is the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the individual that produces regeneration, conviction and conversion, and not by demonstrations. David said in Psalms 19 that all of creation gives ample and continuous evidence of God's presence, wisdom and sovereignty. Elijah was about to learn the great lesson "Not by might nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts." Zechariah 4:6.

It was by the grace of God that Elijah was cared for and protected during his long journey to Mt. Horeb. God in his goodness and his mercy saw the heart of the real Elijah, the same Elijah that was at Gilead, Cherith, Zarephath and Carmel. He saw Elijah just as he sees you and me today and every servant of the Lord.

In the cave God said to Elijah "go forth and stand upon the Mount before the Lord." Elijah was a man who stood before King Ahab and stood before the eight hundred and fifty false prophets and the multitude on Mt. Carmel, all because he stood before God. He stood at attention. He was ready to learn. He was teachable. He was and still was a man God could use. Here is what God said, verses 11 and 12

"And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the Lord. And, behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake: And after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice." I Kings 19: 11 – 12.

As Elijah waited for the teaching from the Lord, there appeared before him a great and strong wind. The wind was much stronger than any hurricane in recorded history. The sustained winds of a hurricane are between 75 miles an hour and over with gusts probably up to 200 miles per hour. 200 miles per hour would be a very severe hurricane, but it is not likely to break up great rocks and divide a mountain. Elijah had never witnessed anything like that. He knew that this was the hand of God because he was ordered to stand and view this great demonstration.

The next demonstration was equally spectacular. The ground around him literally shook yet the cave remained intact. Before him, he saw great cracks in the earth which widened. The hills, the landscape, the rocks churned in

great convulsions and seemed to swallow themselves. He had never seen anything like that, yet he knew that this was a demonstration from God. The third demonstration left no question at all of God's activity. He recognized well the fire that God sends . . . It could have been the same kind of fire that he saw which came from heaven on Mt. Carmel and consumed the altar so completely.

After the great demonstrations, God caused a great stillness to engulf Elijah. There was no wind, no tremors in the ground and no fire. All was still and all was quiet, then Elijah heard the voice of God. God spoke to Elijah, and he heard and he learned. He learned that only as the Holy Spirit opens the heart of the individual will man repent and turn to God. Jezebel remained unchanged because her heart was unchanged. All the hurricanes, earthquakes, and fire would not have changed Jezebel, nor Ahab or the prophets of Baal.

Today is a day of bigness, massive demonstration, noise, and religious carnivals, all supposedly in the name of God.

Concluding remarks

It is true so often that the preacher receives the greatest benefit from the message he prepares and delivers. As I reviewed and prepared for typing the messages I delivered on Elijah at the AWANA Bible Conference in Malaysia, I received the greatest blessing, rejoicing in the sovereignty of God. The messages covered the ministry of Elijah, from the Mountains of Gilead to Samaria, to Cherith, to Zarephath, to Mount Carmel, and to Mount Horeb. At Cherith and Zarephath, Elijah learned much, and much that he did not know that he needed to learn. This was also true at Mount Horeb, after the great confrontation on Mount Carmel. God in His goodness and His graciousness at Mt. Horeb,

prepared Elijah for the balance in his ministry. Elijah was reassured that he was indeed called of God. Somewhere between Beersheba and Horeb, Elijah felt that he was at the end of his ministry. Elijah was reassured and was ready now for God's specific instructions to him. Elijah learned well that God's ways are higher than his ways.

God's great unchanging principles were at work again in the life of Elijah. "And the Lord said unto him, Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus; and when thou comest, anoint Hazael to be king over Syria: And Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel: and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abelmeholah shall thou anoint to be prophet in thy room" I Kings 19: 15.

God's threefold instructions to Elijah were clear. First, Hazael, king of Syria, to the north of Israel, was to be anointed by Elijah. Humanly speaking this did not seem to be logical, but Elijah realized that this was God's way of providing His instrument of chastisement and judgement upon Israel. Elijah transmitted this mission to Elisha who actually brought this to pass. Second, as God ordered Elijah, he told him to anoint Jehu as king over Israel. Jehu would complete the chastisement by King Hazael and bring judgment to the house of Ahab. Jehu killed seventy sons of Ahab in one day. Third, Elijah was also ordered to anoint Elisha in his stead.

Elijah accomplished all that the Lord had instructed him to do. During the course of his mission, it appears that Elijah saw the need and established a school of the prophets.

The Holy Spirit, who directed the writing of Scripture, included an account in II Kings chapter 1 which I believe is intended for the encouragement of God's servants. Ahaziah, the short-lived wicked successor to his father King Ahab, received a fatal injury in a fall from the upper chamber in his home. God instructed Elijah to intercept the messengers of Ahaziah telling him that he would surely die.

Ahaziah knew about Elijah and sent fifty soldiers to seize Elijah. Ahaziah, like his father Ahab, had no regard for the sovereignty of God and God's Word.

“. . . and he sent messengers, and said unto them, Go, enquire of Baalzebub the god of Ekron whether I shall recover of this disease" II Kings 1:2b.

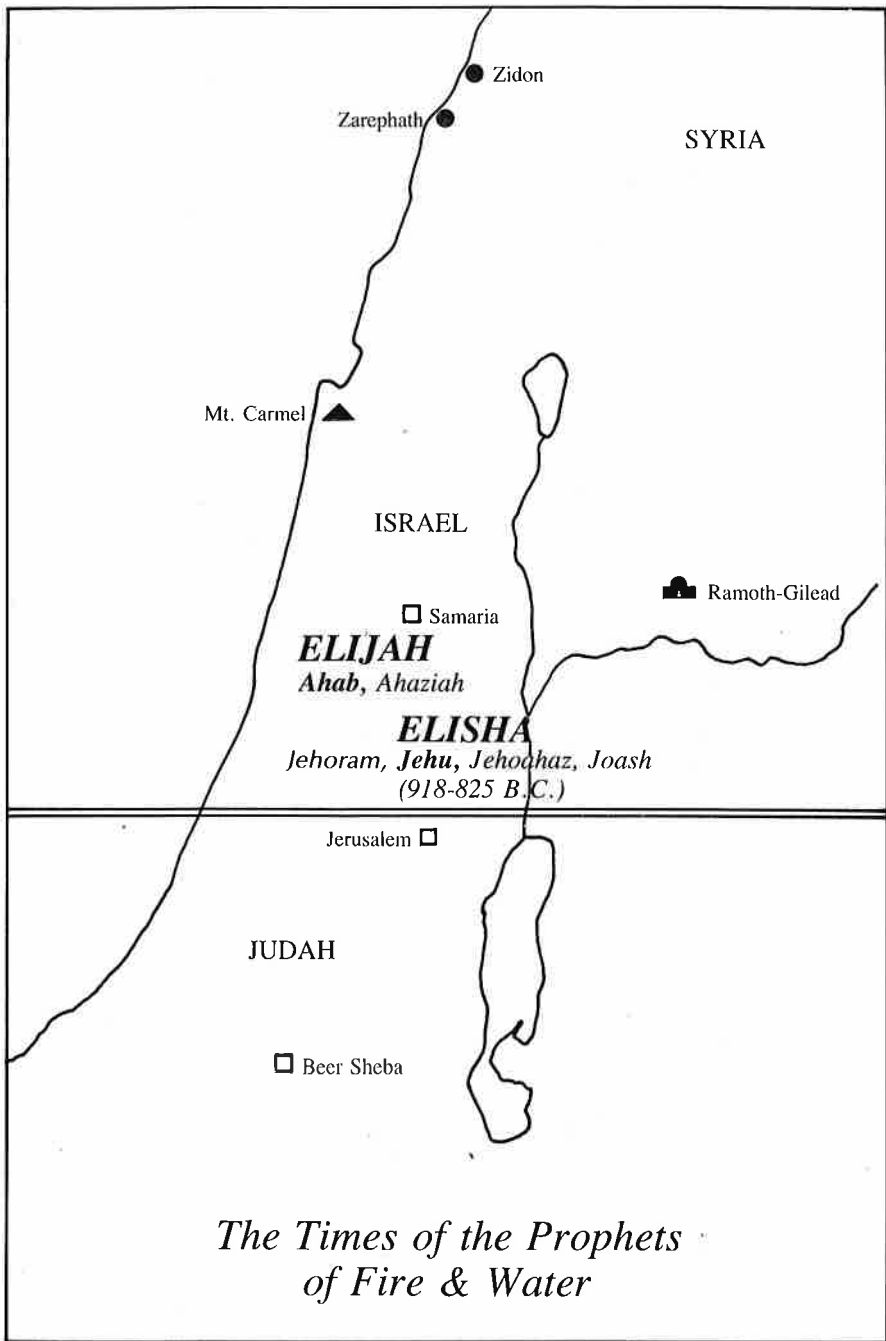
When Elijah heard that fifty soldiers had come for him, he was a picture of great serenity and complete trust in God. Elijah was a man greatly motivated by the Word of God. "And Elijah answered and said unto the captain of fifty, If I be a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And there came down fire from Heaven and consumed him and his fifty." II Kings 1:10. The hardness of King Ahaziah is seen in his order to send fifty more soldiers as if it had been a light thing to hear the account of how Elijah called fire down upon those soldiers and their captain. Elijah also called fire down upon those fifty soldiers also. This account concludes with the words "So he (Ahaziah) died according to the word of the Lord which Elijah had spoken." II Kings 1:17a.

After Elijah the prophet cast his mantel upon Elisha and after he had fulfilled his mission, he was translated into Heaven by a chariot of fire and horses of fire. "... behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven." II Kings 2:11b. God in His wisdom, in His love, and in His sovereignty gave us the account of Elijah for our learning and for our instruction. Surely there are many lessons similar to the lessons Elijah learned that we need to learn also. Many of these lessons are probably also lessons that many of us do not know that we really need to learn. Elijah, that great prophet of fire, was a man greatly motivated by the Word of God.

"Know now that there shall fall unto the earth nothing of the word of the Lord, which the Lord

spake concerning the house of Ahab: for the Lord hath done that which he spake by his servant Elijah." II Kings 10: 10.







LESSONS FROM THE LIFE AND ACTS OF ELISHA — Prophet of Water

*Synopsis of three messages delivered by
Rev Timothy Tow*

In conjunction with the theme of the FEBC Bible Conference on Genting Highlands, viz., "Declaring all the Counsel of God in Perilous Times," we have chosen the lives and acts of Elijah and Elisha for our learning and admonition. These two greatest oral prophets, who stood for their God in days of darkest apostasy in the history of the Northern Kingdom of Israel (918-825 B.C.), have much to teach us in times like these.

While Dr Arthur Steele deals with Elijah, it is my lot to draw lessons from the life and acts of Elisha. Elijah, who precedes Elisha as his teacher, is known as "the prophet of fire." Elisha his pupil, by contrast, is aptly called "the prophet of water."

After the earth-shaking contest on Mount Carmel with the four hundred and fifty Baal prophets, Elijah retreated to the seclusion of the Sinai desert. There, he received a new mandate from the Lord, viz., to ordain Elisha as his successor (*1 Ki. 19: 16*). As Moses had groomed Joshua according to God's commandment (*Num. 27: 15-23*), so it is for Elijah to train Elisha, that there may be continuation in the prophetic line. For an aging Christian leader to cling jealously to his position without making preparation for the transfer of leadership is to commit ecclesiastical delinquency, to say the least. The cultivation of a second generation leadership is also shown in the New Testament Church. As Elijah has Elisha, so Paul has

Timothy. We are for younger leaders to train and take our place. Hence the FEBC! "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." (*II Tim. 2:2*).

Now, the years of Elisha's discipleship are shrouded in silence. From his call in I Kings 19: 19 – 21 where we see him forsake his farm and oxen and bid farewell to his parents, to his reappearance in II Kings 2 following hard after Elijah, according to Scofield, a decade had slipped into oblivion. So it is in the will of God that a disciple must abide in his role of a disciple, to bury himself in lowly application, like an instrument going through the process of manufacture in a factory. Thus the training period of our Lord was hidden in nonentity, from his keeping the passover at the age of twelve to the beginning of His public ministry at Cana at the age of thirty. As the Chinese saying goes, "It takes long years to make a great vessel." And another, "It takes a decade to plant a tree, yea, even a century to nurture a man." (十年樹木，百年樹人)

No man can be a successful leader without first becoming a loyal disciple. Elisha's following hard on the heels of Elijah, from Gilgal to Bethel, from Bethel to Jericho, from Jericho across Jordan, finds a promise of reward from the master at their parting. When asked what he would, Elisha wished for a double portion of Elijah's spirit (*II Ki. 2:9*). Though this is "a hard thing" to ask, according to his master, it nevertheless shows Elisha's inexorable faith, which is well pleasing to God. "And I say unto you, 'Ask, and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you. For everyone that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.'" (*Lk. 11:9,10*).

When suddenly there appeared "a chariot of fire and horses of fire" and swept Elijah to heaven in a whirlwind (*II Kings 2:11*) the mantle of Elijah was seen to **fall on**

Elisha. The Spirit of Elijah — does it come doubly upon Elisha, as he had wished? According to Scofield's listing, insofar as the number of miracles are concerned, Elisha seems to double the miracles performed by Elijah. As to length of service, Elijah had flourished in the reigns of Ahab and Ahaziah, whereas Elisha served through the reigns of four kings, viz., Jehoram, Jehu, Jehoahaz and Jehoash, a period of about 60 years. The story is told of an English Presbyterian missionary, Rev. Thomas Barclay, M.A., D.D., who had laboured for the Lord most eminently in Taiwan, 1874 – 1935. After his death, it was discovered how he had expressed his devotion to the Lord by signing "a covenant on his sixteenth birthday." This he did every year for seventy years without a break. How many years have we served our Saviour? And how many times have we rededicated ourselves to Him?

In regard to the miracles of Elijah and Elisha, Elicott comments, "In all these cases, the outward and visible sign is made the channel of the invisible and spiritual force of faith." Jesus says, "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you" (*Matt. 17:20*). Hence, as we study the twelve miracles of Elisha, we find that it is the inward faith that substantiates the outward sign. Faith is by far the most important! Faith is the greatest! According to Calvin in his "Institutes of the Christian Religion", faith is a "43-facet diamond." Faith is the victory!

If we have Elisha's faith, though we may not work out the same visible signs today, yet we are no less effectual in dimensions not visible to the human eye. We can do what Elisha did! Jesus Christ is the same today as yesterday; let us take courage in the Lord's service. Let us go down from this mountain to the plain revived with a new zeal and perseverance for God's Kingdom. Jesus says, "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do . . ." *Jn. 14:12*. In the words of William Carey, Father

of modern missions (1792), "Expect great things from God. Attempt great things for God."

This is a day when we need to re-live the times of the Prophets of Fire and Water.

I.

Dividing of Jordan II Kings 2:9 – 18)

Elisha, though holding Elijah's mantle, seemed unsure as he hit the waters of Jordan, "Where is the Lord God of Elijah?" *II Kings 2:14*. This is what Dr Chia Yu Ming, my teacher in China, described as "inexperienced faith." Many of us have faith, but it is inexperienced, trembling faith. Now, as the waters of Jordan part "hither and thither" so that we can cross over with Elisha dryshod, we have "experienced faith." As for Elisha, whose memories of the many miracles wrought by Elijah are ten times fortified by this one resounding through Elijah's mantle in his hand, what a breakthrough of faith it is! Now he has that superlative faith that needs no experience. Elisha has surmounted a great obstacle that blocks his prophetic path. Henceforth, God will help him through every vicissitude and more so, together with us, in invisible dimensions. "With God all things are possible" *Matt. 19:26*. And what we need today is "the breakthrough of faith." "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" *Heb. 11:6*.

Does God dry up the waters of Jordan today, for you and for me? To God's glory, let me testify for Life B-P Church that He does. In 1979, the Singapore Government invited tenders for a piece of land at Woodlands for a church. Our Church had hardly any savings. But the people had faith. One year before the tenders were

closed, the people started to give. (To start making the Bomb when the war is declared will be too late.) When it was announced that we had won in the tender, we had collected by then \$700,000. But the price of the land totalled \$933,000. In less than three weeks we had, by God's grace, gathered enough to meet the demand. When the Church Complex was completed in October 1983, the whole project amounted to \$3 million. This sum was wholly paid for in good time with the help of interest-free loans, so that we were enabled not only to cross our Jordan but also a Sea of Red ink! Without Elisha's "breakthrough of faith," Lifers could not have surmounted this ordeal.

When the "sons of prophets" saw Elisha cross Jordan in the spirit of Elijah, they bowed themselves to the ground before him. Elisha's authority over his younger colleagues is established. If we have spiritual power and draw men to God and not to ourselves, then God will honour our ministry. And by corollary, moral power is more important than money power.

II

Cure of Waters of Jericho (II Kings 2: 19 – 22)

When Elisha came to the other side of Jordan, he entered Jericho, the city of palm trees. Though the City is beautifully located, the water supply is brackish. Elisha says to the men of the city, "Bring me a new cruse and put salt therein." And they brought it to him. And he went forth unto the spring of the waters, and cast the salt in there, and said, "Thus saith the Lord, I have healed these waters; there shall not be from thence any more death and barren land" II Kings 2: 20, 21.

Matthew Henry comments, "Prophets should endeavour to make every place to which they come better,

for them, endeavouring to sweeten bitter spirits, and make barren souls fruitful, by the due application of God's Word. Elisha will heal their waters; but they must furnish him with salt in a new cruse But those who would be helped must be employed, and their faith and obedience tried. Elisha cast the salt into the spring and so healed the streams, and the ground they watered. The way to reforming men's lives is to renew their hearts; let those be seasoned with the salt of grace, for out of them are the issues of life. Purify the heart and that will cleanse the hands. He did not pretend to do this by his own power, but in God's name: Thus saith the Lord, I have healed the waters. He is but the instrument, the channel through which God is pleased to convey this healing virtue. It is an apt emblem of the effect produced by the grace of God on the sinful heart of man. When that remedy is communicated, a blessed change takes place through all the powers of the soul: repentance, faith and love of God and man will issue in good works, regulated according to the holy law of God and the example of the Redeemer. Whole families, towns, and cities, sometimes assume a new appearance through the preaching of the gospel"

The story is told of Dr A. B. Dodd (my teacher in Nanking), how he would never depart a town or village he visited without leaving behind a tract. A paralytic girl read one of his tracts and became converted. Later she became one of the ten most famous woman writers in China. By giving out a tract, an act no more strenuous than Elisha's sprinkling of salt, the American missionary had influenced not only a village, but a whole nation! You can never tell what will happen to every deed of kindness you sow in the hearts of men and women as you go along life's way. "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereunto I sent it" *Isa. 55: 11*.

The healing of the waters of Jericho by Elisha has continued to this day. Visitors to the ruins of ancient

Jericho are shown side by side the fountains of Elisha, a gurgling stream bringing succour to the city of palm trees. "They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing" *Ps. 92: 14.*

III

Cursing of the Children of Jericho (*II Kings 2: 23 – 25*)

In regard to the third miracle, viz., cursing of the mocking children of Jericho, Dr Graham Scroggie in his masterpiece "The Unfolding Drama of Redemption" seems to regard this episode as belonging to "some of which present moral difficulties which we should not deny, or attempt to evade" (p. 332). He cannot equate the heart of a prophet of water with a mouth that curses "little children." Dr Scroggie's difficulties seem to stem from his dispensational theology and from a misunderstanding of the King James translation: "little children." The Hebrew literally does give the connotation "little children," but such is their idiom, just as we say in English of those much younger than ourselves that they are "babies."

Now, the NIV and the New King James Version translate the same words as "youths," and this is what "little children" in Hebrew actually means. This is attested by the same terminology in I Kings 3:7 where King Solomon in his dream at Gibeon, when asking God for wisdom, said of himself, "And I am but a 'little child'." Solomon could not be a child of, say, seven or eight. He was more probably in his teens, for here at Gibeon he was leading his nation in a holy convocation of worship and he made a great speech. Elicott comments, "He calls himself 'a little child' — his age is variously estimated from twelve to twenty at this time."

Edersheim thinks Solomon to be "about twenty years old."

Disagreeing with Dr Scroggie, I'd take my stand with Matthew Henry who sees in Elisha's curse on the scornful young people of Bethel an act of divine judgment: "For," says Matthew Henry, "it was not a curse causeless. Mocking the messenger of the Lord, and misusing the prophets, was one of the crying sins of Israel, as II Chron. 36: 16: 'But they mocked the messenger of God, and despised his words, and misused His prophets, until the wrath of the Lord rose against His people, till there was no remedy.' These youths had doubtless been trained up in idolatry, and taught to despise and ridicule the prophets of the Lord"

"Elisha heard their taunts: at length the fire of holy zeal for God was kindled, and he turned and looked upon them, but they were not ashamed, therefore he imprecated and denounced the following judgment: not in personal revenge for the indignity to himself, but as the mouth of Divine justice to punish the dishonour to God. His summons was immediately obeyed. Two she-bears came out of an adjacent wood and killed forty-two of these young persons If the Holy Spirit had not dictated Elisha's solemn curse, the providence of God would not have followed it with a judgment."

It is to be further noted that Bethel was the capital of gold-calf worship from the days of Jeroboam. The curse on the Bethel hooligans was necessary for a show-down of True Worship over false worship. In today's context we have Dr David Jenkins, Bishop of Durham, blaspheming Christ's person and works, and within seventy-two hours his Cathedral was struck by lightning and burnt down on one side. It cost him £1 million to repair the damage. No doubt this was an act of God whom he blasphemed. In this "age of Grace," God's judgment can be swift and sure.

In these perilous times of the last days, our Lord is again blasphemed by Martin Scorsese's film, "The Last

Temptation of Christ," which is based on a 1955 book by Greek author Nikos Kazantzakis. Though denounced by Christian leaders in Britain, the latest news is that it will be shown to the English people. This can spell only evil to Britain. Do the British people take Jesus lightly as the young upstarts of Bethel treated Elisha? In this connection we commend our Singapore Government for banning the film. Even the Muslims have voiced their protest in the Straits Times Forum Page through a letter sent by the President of the Muslim Converts Association, dated September 12, 1988, captioned "Christ Film Morally Offensive to Muslims as well."

IV

Bringing Water to the Stranded Armies (II Kings 3: 1–20)

II Kings 3 records the unholy alliance of three kings, Jehoram son of Ahab and Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and the king of Edom in an expedition against the king of Moab, who revolted against Jehoram at the death of his father Ahab. Had not Jehoshaphat learned his bitter lesson when he went to battle with Ahab against the Syrians and was almost killed *II Chron. 18:31*? Though according to human judgment Jehoshaphat should be stranded with Jehoram and the king of Edom in the waterless desert, God was merciful to send Elisha incognito into the allied expeditionary force. Matthew Henry comments, "God suffers His people, by their own improvidence, to bring themselves into distress, that the wisdom, power and goodness of His providence may be glorified in their relief."

It was well for Jehoshaphat to call on the Lord in time of trouble, but it had been better if he did so earlier before setting out. When the kings inquired of Elisha,

Jehoram lost face at Elisha's reply, "What have I to do with thee? Get thee to the prophets of thy father [Ahab], and to the prophets of thy mother [Jezebel]." For Jehoshaphat's sake, because he was of the house of David, Elisha sought the Word of the Lord through the strings of a minstrel. (Sacred music can dispel the Devil, says Martin Luther.) Then he said, "Thus saith the Lord, Make this valley full of ditches. For thus saith the Lord, Ye shall not see wind, neither shall ye see rain, yet that valley shall be filled with water, that ye may drink, both ye and your cattle, and your beasts" *II Kings 3: 16,17*. This was to try their faith and obedience. This was a miracle of God giving water in a thirsty desert to His people as He did in the days of Moses.

"They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way; they found no city to dwell in.

Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them.

Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and He delivered them out of their distresses.

And he led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation.

Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!" *Psalm 107:4-8*

Oftentimes we leaders of the Church are in league, knowingly or unknowingly, with unbelief and compromise in an unequal yoke. In today's situation, with Ecumenicals, Liberals and New-evangelicals, Roman Catholics and Charismatics. Yet the Lord has not dealt with us severely, but instead comes and delivers us. Does that sanction our continuance in unholy alliance with the wayward? God forbid! The salvation of the three kings was purely a matter of grace. Elisha's miracle of bringing water to the stranded armies is to overwhelm the erring children of God, that they might return to Him henceforth. When will those of our B-P Church who go about

with New-evangelicals, giving support and comfort to their inclusivist programmes with Ecumenicals, learn this hard lesson of the three kings?

“It is of the Lord’s mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.” *Lam. 3:22, 23*

V

Fountains of Cooking Oil ***(II Kings 4:1 – 7)***

With regard to the widow of a theological student whose dead husband had saddled her with a heavy debt that could not be paid for except by selling her two sons, Elisha rescued her with a miracle of mercy. Not only had the prophet performed great wonders, but also granted great favours.

The fountains of cooking oil that flow from the Word of God, like the mountains of fish sandwiches from the mouth of our Lord, are marvellous acts of God, but more important are the spiritual lessons of eternal value we must learn from this sacred account for our day-to-day living.

1. As the prophet multiplied the oil that she had in her house, this teaches that the poor must also help themselves. Self-help, with God’s help, is the best help.
2. We cannot enjoy any bounty until all our debts are paid. A Christian must not be a burden to others, not even his close relatives, inasmuch as Paul has so commanded: “Owe no man anything” *Rom. 13:8*.
3. The oil was to be increased by pouring as the widow of Zarephath had in feeding Elijah with meal and oil. The

way to prosperity is not by hoarding, but by trading. Wesley, quoted by Mrs Margaret Thatcher, says "Gain all you can, save all you can, give all you can." This is the economy that promotes prosperity.

4. The oil kept on flowing as long as the widow had empty vessels to receive. It stopped when her supply of vessels ended. We are limited in ourselves to receive, but God is infinite to give. God gives above what we ask. "The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it" *Prov. 10:22*.

"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" *Philippians 4:6,7*.

Today there are those who claim to work signs and wonders, not for the charitable relief of the poor and suffering, but for their own aggrandisement. Thus they have fallen from their high pedestals, prophets of their own intoxications. But Elisha, "the prophet of water" comes flowing gently to the needs of the lowliest and teaches us spiritual truths that are of more lasting value than the fountains of cooking oil. God granted the prophets the power to do miracles as He gave to the apostles, both with the purpose of establishing the church. Today, He withdraws from us this power because the Church is established, and He so decrees to His own glory.

VI

Raising of the Shunamite's Son ***(II Kings 4:8 – 37)***

This miracle of Elisha giving to the "great woman" a son by prophecy and of raising him from the dead speaks

of Elisha as an exemplary pastor. It is a testimony of the prophet's integrity inasmuch as what the widow of Zarephath said of Elijah after her son was brought back to life. She said to the prophet, "Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth." Today there are charismatic charlatans (like Richard the son of Oral Roberts) who claim to raise the dead without number, but there is not a single confirmation from a dependable source to this effect. One by one, these who claim to perform miracles in the Name of the Lord have fallen.

Let us now look at the prophet's life and work, then at his twin-miracles at the Shunamite home. A true man of God, wherever he goes in his itinerant ministry, must bring blessing of peace to his host. Jesus says to His disciples, "And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, enquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go thence. And when ye come into an house, salute it. And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you" *Matt. 10: 11–13*. Elisha's blessing led to the birth of a son to the childless woman and Elisha's prayer raised the same son who died of a severe headache. Whenever we (pastors) visit a house, let us never leave our host or hostess without praying, "according to Thy Promise, let Thy blessing rest and abound in this place." "And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you" *Matt. 10: 13*.

As for the lay people who delight to entertain God's servants, here are our Lord's reciprocal blessings, "He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward" *Matt. 10: 41,42*.

Sad to say, there are those of the Chinese Church who treat pastors like amahs while Deacons make themselves

overlords. Can such haughty Church administrators be blessed? This is one sin in the Church denounced by John Sung.

VII

Antidote to the Poisonous Pottage (II Kings 4:38 – 41)

In regard to the healing of the pot of wild vegetable soup, the flour Elisha used to neutralise the poisonous substances therein was only a sign, but the power of cleansing was directly from God. May we draw from this miracle a parable of imbibing only the good doctrines that are expounded from God's Word. Any unsound doctrine either taught in the classroom or preached from the pulpit can only bring death. A word of wisdom from John Sung to his Preaching Bands, "Be careful who are the speakers you invite to your pulpit. To starve will not die. To eat poison will die." Now that many poisonous substances have crept into the Church through spurious translations of the Bible and liberal commentaries, it is our job to put the meal of God's infallible and inerrant Word into the pottage to neutralise the harm done by poisonous teachings — "by reproof, by correction, by instruction" (*II Tim. 3:16*). As flour is the staff of life, so orthodox teaching, comparing Scripture with Scripture, is the only way to counter the inroads of the wild philosophies of false professors appearing as angels of light. As Principal of FEBC, I have had to contend with heresies once every few years — not in my wisdom but by the Word of God! To my sorrow, it is from our own young people who have gone to the West for higher learning. And from books of the newest vintage creeping into their study. One example of hidden poison in such modern Bible scholarship as the NIV Study Bible and NKJV Ryrie Study Bible (p1044) is this foot-note on

Isaiah 7:14: "VIRGIN: May refer to a young woman betrothed to Isaiah (8:3) who was to become his second wife (his first wife presumably having died after Shear-Jashub was born). In Ge. 24:43 the same Hebrew word ('almah) refers to a woman about to be married (see also *Pr. 30:19*). Mt. 1:23 apparently understood the woman mentioned to be a type (foreshadowing) of the Virgin Mary."

This is death in the pot. What equivalence is there between a virgin who will be married to a man and the Virgin who knows not a man? The virgin of Isaiah 7:14, according to Matthew, refers not to Isaiah's second wife (where's the evidence?) but to none other than our Lord's Virgin Mother. "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!" (*Isa. 5:20,21*).

VIII

Can Twenty Loaves Feed One Hundred Men? (II Kings 4:42 – 44)

If Jesus had fed five thousand with five loaves and two fishes, there was no problem for Elisha to multiply twenty loaves to feed one hundred men, for the same Power that multiplied a mountain of food was there to help Elisha furnish a table for a College of young men. The same Power has sustained us at the Far Eastern Bible College, but not necessarily in a visible, physical multiplication. We have the story of George Mueller and his Bristol orphanage of two thousand that must be prescribed for our own students for reading. As we rely on the Lord on the same principles of "trust and obey," we have seen God's Almighty Hand supplying the needs of the College through a quarter century, without fail. We have never

been driven to that tight corner of writing "prayer" letters to beg for funds from the public. In the words of Hudson Taylor, "God's work, done in God's way, shall not lack God's support." But "seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (*Matt. 6:33*). Everyone called to serve the Lord full-time must learn to live by the Lord.

"But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (*Phil. 4:19*).

IX

Miracle of Cure and Curse *(II Kings 5:1 – 27)*

The healing of Naaman the Leper (*II Ki. 5:1–27*) is mentioned by our Lord in Luke 4:27: "And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian."

Now, when Naaman spoke derisively of Jordan as not being equal to Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, it was true Jordan was a muddy river by comparison. There is no particular virtue in the Jordan water to cure leprosy per se. What cured Naaman was his obedience to God's Word. Obedience is faith in action. "But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" (*Heb. 11:6*). For people to sell water bottled from Jordan or to go all the way to Jordan for baptism seems to reflect a sort of pious superstition.

When we were on sabbatical leave in the Holy Land in 1969, Professor Fague Springmann visited us with a young man whom he had led to Christ along the way. He asked if I could baptise that young man in the River Jordan. I said, "No! For this baptism will be witnessed by

just the few of us and by birds and squirrels along the banks. Much better were he baptised at home in the United States, in his Church, before a congregation of perhaps several hundred, a living witness before men. (For there is no special virtue in the waters of Jordan.)"

While we thank God for the cleansing of Naaman's leprosy by his faithful obedience, it is more salutary to learn from the four characters that are involved in the story. They are the little maid from Israel taken captive to serve Naaman's wife, Naaman himself, Elisha and Gehazi.

1. What we learn of the little maid from Israel is her witness to the God of Elisha. Every Christian, no matter how little in the sight of God and man, can speak a word for Christ. It can lead a lost soul to the Saviour. At Life Church where I am the pastor, we have a slogan, "Do Something Good for Jesus Every day." This has yielded fruitful results, e.g. through members of the Evangelistic Band who go out to evangelise every Sunday afternoon. Now, if you can't go out, you can give a tract to someone every day, or seven tracts in a week. That was Moody's vow to the Lord. He must speak to at least one soul daily. Isn't the little maid's witness to the God of Elisha instrumental in Naaman's cleansing?

Let me give you an illustration from Chinese Chess. On our chessboard we have a river that separates the "reds" and the "blacks." Facing each other are the frontline soldiers. Backing the soldiers on the baseline are two tanks. Now, the tank is the most powerful weapon of attack. It can hit from baseline to baseline. As for the soldier, it can move forward one square at a time. But once it crosses the river into enemy territory, until it penetrates the palace, it can checkmate or even "eat up" the King. So there's a saying, "When a soldier crosses the river, he is as good as a tank." The little maid who witnessed in Naaman's home played a part no lesser than the prophet's in God's sight.

2. Naaman's bringing along ten talents of silver, six thousand gold coins and ten changes of raiment, and his

offer to Elisha after his cleansing in Jordan shows a grateful heart. Ingratitude, on the other hand, is an almost unpardonable sin. As the Chinese saying goes, "After crossing the stream, he kicks the wooden beam into the ditch." Did not our Lord heal ten lepers, but only one, a Samaritan, turned back to worship Jesus (*Luke 17:11–19*)? Nine-tenths of us who have been delivered from sickness or death do not take God seriously as when we needed Him. It is said that when a sick man needs a doctor, he sees him as an angel. When he is cured by the doctor, he sees him as he sees God. When the doctor gives him his bill, he sees him as the Devil! Lord, have mercy!

"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thine diseases; Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies" (*Ps. 103:2–4*).

3. Elisha's refusal to take from Naaman's hand is reciprocally exemplary. It is not that God's servant cannot accept anything from grateful people whom they have helped. Elisha, in the passage of Scripture immediately preceding Naaman's story, accepted twenty barley loaves from a man from Baal-shalisha for his pupils. What reason then was it that he did not take up Naaman's offer? There is a parallel in Abraham's not taking even a shoe-string from the king of Sodom "lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich" (*Gen. 14:23*). Naaman, though a grateful man, was a Gentile. Elisha told Gehazi his servant this was not the occasion to make oneself rich. Naaman might give of a cheerful heart, but how would the Syrians, Israel's enemy, react?

In this matter, Edersheim remarks, "But in the present instance, it was of the utmost importance to show — in contradistinction to heathen soothsayers — that, as the prophet of God did not work miracles in his own power, not by his own will, so he did it not for reward, and that

the gift of God could not be purchased with money. Indeed we can scarcely exaggerate the impression which the refusal of Elisha must have made both on the followers of Naaman and generally in Israel. One of the Fathers has here marked in the prophet's conduct the same principle which underlay the direction of our Lord when He sent His disciples with this injunction: "Freely ye have received; freely give (*Matt. 10:8*)."

Money, says Wang Ming Tao, is a first temptation to every man of God. And see how the great American televangelists have fallen, one by one. Nor can we accept every offer that is made by the Church or Church members. Be very careful about money! The story is told of John Sung, how he rejected a sum of money presented to him by an unsaved admirer in Bogor, Indonesia (read "Flame for God" by Leslie Lyall, p. 126, and "John Sung My Teacher," p. 226). Why?

4. All these injunctions against graft Gehazi has heard from Elisha's mouth umpteen times, but now, with all the glittering gems before him, he fell to the temptation. So he caught up with Naaman who was now heading home to demand a gift for two new students that had come to join Elisha's College. Covetousness leads to lying. For yielding to temptation, Gehazi justly deserves contracting Naaman's disease which affects his children to many generations. A pastor who serves the Lord with his belly and not with his heart (*Rom. 16:18*) and "whose religion is his kitchen" (says Calvin) has never had enough to satiate his appetite. And because he calculates his income alongside the secular, he will remain forever a servant, and in Gehazi's case, a Naamite leper.

A concluding remark by Edersheim on this episode: "The Syrian had become an Israelite in heart and spirit, and he was healed of his leprosy in Israel's waters. The Israelite had become heathen in heart and spirit, and he and his children were struck with the leprosy of the Syrian, whose money he had coveted for himself and his family. What each had sown, that did he reap. And this

also was not only for just judgment, but for a testimony to God and to His servant."

X

Can Iron Swim? (II Kings 6:1-7)

As Elisha's school of prophets grew, the sons of prophets took initiative to go to Jordan to cut wood to make an extension (*II Ki. 6:1-7*). Elisha went along to show his approval of their honest labour and practical economy. As God's servants, we must pick up even the crumbs that are left on the ground after the feeding of the five thousand, "that nothing be lost" (*Jn. 6:12*). This is the way of the Lord, the way of the cross. "Economy is the mother of prosperity" is one maxim well known at Far Eastern Bible College.

Dr Arthur Steele is a man after my own heart in this respect: When he founded Clearwater Christian College, he had to stinge every dollar to make ends meet. He would go to the secondhand goods store in town and bring home used but sturdy furniture, costing \$10 a piece, to furnish the dormitories. At FEBC we didn't have to pay anything because we received them brought to our doors by Church members. Praise the Lord! And like Elisha receiving the barley loaves for his school, we would humbly call the young men and women to supper from the surplus brought home from some smorgasbord, wholesome and good. And we all eat with a thankful heart. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (*James 1:17*).

Now, while someone was hewing a branch of a tree overhanging the river, the axe head plunged, plop, into the water. To recover it would be, as the Chinese saying

goes, "trying to grope for a needle in the sea." Why was it so important to recover the axe head? Because it was borrowed! To the owner that axe head had more than material value that could never be replaced with a new one. For example, I have an old pair of scissors that my first wife gave me, which I treasure for sentimental reasons. Here, let us learn a lesson never to borrow. As the saying goes, "Who goeth a-borrowing, goeth a-sorrowing." And Prov. 22:7, "The borrower is servant to the lender."

Can iron swim? How about the fish Peter caught at Jesus' behest, who predicted the same fish's mouth carried a coin enough to pay for the Temple tax (*Matt. 17:27*)? These miracles were wrought to strengthen the faith of the disciples and ours, but above all to the glory of God. With God, nothing is impossible! "There is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few" (*I Sam. 14:6*).

XI

One Shall Chase a Thousand ***(II Ki. 6:8-23)***

When the Syrians surrounded Dothan to take Elisha because he was a hindrance to their war plans (*II Kings. 6:8-17*), Elisha's servant was greatly troubled. Said Elisha to his assistant, "Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them" (*II Kings 6:16*). As he prayed, the Lord opened the eyes of the young man and he saw, and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha!

Though we say we are living in perilous times of the last days, the Lord has specially given peace to Singapore and Malaysia, so that we become complacent and delinquent. But, any time disaster can strike! War;

famine, earthquake, flood! In such circumstances can we remain calm like Elisha? Can we say like David, "Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise up against me, in this will I be confident" (*Ps. 27:3*). "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them" (*Ps. 34:7*). Let us be further strengthened by the Word of the Apostle, "Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world" (*I Jn. 4:4*).

In these perilous times of the last days, Satan will persecute the Church through the secular powers (*Matt. 24:9*). The preaching of the Gospel will be restricted more and more. But our Lord assures us of His presence, "But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you" (*Matt. 10:19,20*).

Indeed, the Lord has given us who serve in His army the strength of one to put a thousand, and two, ten thousand, to flight (*Deut. 32:30*): "Nay, in all these things, we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us" (*Rom. 8:37*).

Encamped along the hills of light,
Ye Christian soldiers, rise,
And press the battle ere the night
Shall veil the glowing skies.
Against the foe in vales below
Let all our strength be hurled;
Faith is the victory, we know,
That overcomes the world.

Chorus

Faith is the victory!
Faith is the victory!
O glorious victory that overcomes the world.

On every hand the foe we find
 Drawn up in dread array;
 Let tents of ease be left behind,
 And onward to the fray!
 Salvation's helmet on each head,
 With truth all girt about:
 The earth shall tremble 'neath our tread
 And echo with our shout.

XII

He Being Dead, Yet Worketh (II Ki. 13:20–21)

There is a Chinese saying, "Call no man great before he is dead" (蓋棺論定), this is to say, one who is to be our model or example must have a successful career to the very end. Gehazi, while he served Elisha his master faithfully, was great in the eyes of Israel, but sad to say, he veered off and fell in his greed for Naaman's wealth. As for Elisha, he was faithful unto death during a period of 60 years' ministry. And though he was dead, yet he worketh, and he speaks to us with Abel to this day.

The death and burial of Elisha at a ripe old age is recorded in II Ki, 13:20–21. Now, the way of burial in Israel was not like ours today, "six feet under the ground," but rather above the ground. For, the dead were laid, row after row, in caves sealed with a great stone (*Jn. 11:39*). What makes it to the sacred record about Elisha after his death was the reviving of a corpse that stood erect upon touching the bones of Elisha (*II Ki, 13:21*). This miracle by Elisha after his death more than measures up to the standard of the Chinese saying above. His influence extends to us living in these perilous times of the last days. He speaks to us

with Abel that we must serve the Lord fervently throughout our life, to the very end. That is what the Apostle to the Hebrews tells us too, "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation" (*Heb. 13:7*).

"Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And departing, leave behind us,
Footprints on the sands of time." — Longfellow

The life and acts of Elijah and of Elisha have influenced many in our generation to answer God's call to greater service. I was saved under the ministry of Dr John Sung and was inspired by his example to serve the Lord wherever He would lead me. While making research into the life and work of Rev. Ting Li Mei (1871-1936) who preceded John Sung by thirty years, I was so touched by Rev. Ting's testimony that I included him in "Asian Awakening," a new book after "John Sung My Teacher." His mighty work in leading "a thousand souls to Christ each month" motivated me to start an Evangelistic Band for Life Church. One year has just passed, and we have 25-30 faithfully going out every Sunday afternoon to evangelise Toa Payoh. To date, our young evangelists have covered 150 blocks of this Town, door by door. Would Rev. Ting have visualised that his work should follow after him in Singapore while he was an evangelist in North China? Elisha is dead, yet his good work continues to this day, to bless this Bible Conference.

With the Apostle Paul, Elisha could also say, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing" (*II Tim. 4:78*). Will you be able to sing this paean of Paul with Elisha at the end of your life?

ELISHA THE PROPHET OF WATER

(To the tune of "Come Out From the Church Apostate")

Elisha followed his master,
And he followed to the end.
He who is a faithful servant
Will become his master's friend.
A double portion o' his spirit
He shall surely inherit.

While God used Elijah as fire,
Elisha's a healing stream.
He sweetened Jericho's fountain:
The mantle had fallen on him.
All Israel to him did bow
E'en those of the golden cow.

When three kings did Moab invade,
And lost their way in the sand,
Elisha saved them by water
From Jehovah's mighty hand.
The widow's oil he multiplied:
Hungry mouths he satisfied.

A great woman lived at Shunem
Who made him a prophet's room.
Here Elisha was wont to stay,
Here he prayed for her a son.
When the son grew up and died,
The woman on him relied.

Elisha by earnest prayer,
Shunem's sick son he did save.
He removed death from the pottage,
Bread to a hundred he gave.
Naaman's leprosy he cleansed,
Gehazi he recompensed.

He made a lost axe-head to swim,
He revealed Benhadad's plans:
Thus he helped Israel's king to win
'Gainst the Syrian hordes and clans.
Dothan was God's scene of victory,
With Him is majority.

Elisha was sure of victory
O'er all the Syrian around.
"Tomorrow," he told the king's man
"Wheat and barley shall abound."
He who spurned the Word of God
Died a quick death from the Lord.

Elisha was on his sickbed,
When king Joash came to him
To seek his help from the Syrians.
The prophet was determined
To fight God's wars to the end —
Elisha's God us defend!

For sixty long years Elisha
Served his Lord with all his might;
In life or in death he served Him,
His dark tomb he turned to light.
O what a glorious life he lived,
So can we if we'd believe. Amen.

Each Step of the Way

Eb Bb7

1. I'm fol - low - ing Je - sus one step at a time,
 2. The path - way is nar - row, but He leads me on,

Bb9sus Bb F7 Bb7 Eb

I live for the mo - ment in His love di - vine;
 I walk in His shad - ow, my fears are all gone;

Eb7 Ab

Why think of to - mor - row? just live for to - day!
 My spir - it grows strong - er each moment, each day,

A⁰ Eb Bb Bb7 Eb

I'm fol - low - ing Je - sus each step of the way,
 For Je - sus is lead - ing each step of the way,

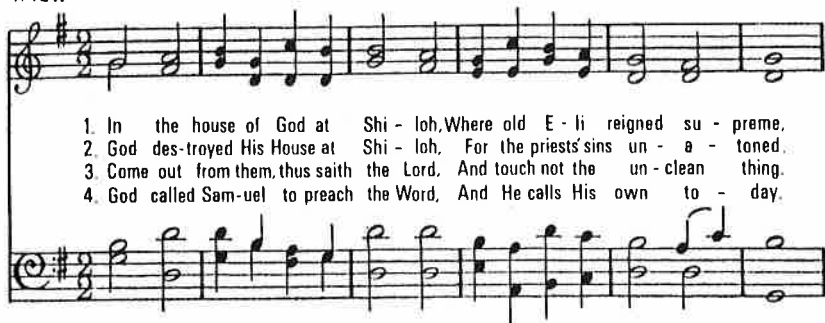
3. Help me, Lord, to press on
 O'er each hill and dale.
 Help me, Lord, to conquer;
 With You I'll not fail.
 A task You have given
 Each child of Your care;
 Give me strength and courage
 My burden to bear.

4. Soon life's journ'ing's over
 And our work is done;
 I can hear my Saviour
 Calling all and one.
 Leave me not behind, Lord,
 Till my race is won;
 Help me do my homework
 Till the task is done.

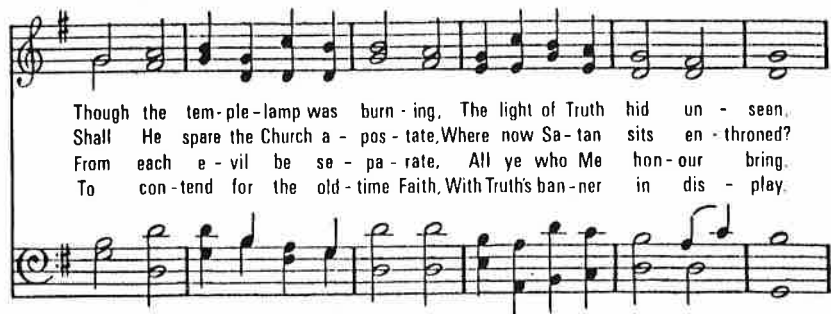
Come Out From The Church Apostate

T. Tow

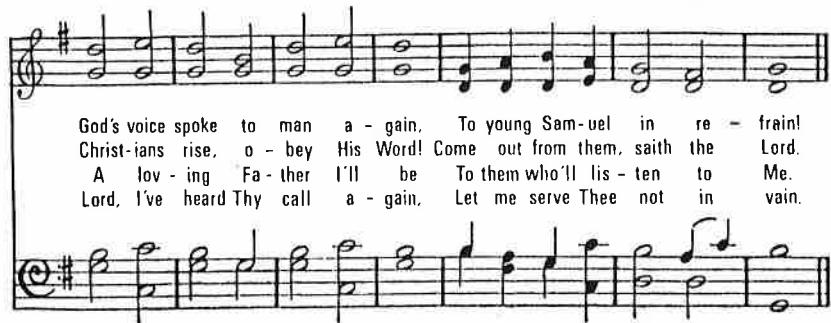
Lowell Mason



1. In the house of God at Shi - loh, Where old E - li reigned su - preme,
2. God des - troyed His House at Shi - loh, For the priests' sins un - a - toned.
3. Come out from them, thus saith the Lord, And touch not the un - clean thing,
4. God called Sam - uel to preach the Word, And He calls His own to - day,



Though the tem - ple - lamp was burn - ing, The light of Truth hid un - seen,
Shall He spare the Church a - pos - tate, Where now Sa - tan sits en - throned?
From each e - vil be se - pa - rate, All ye who Me hon - our bring,
To con - tend for the old - time Faith, With Truth's ban - ner in dis - play.



God's voice spoke to man a - gain, To young Sam - uel in re - frain!
Christ - ians rise, o - bey His Word! Come out from them, saith the Lord.
A lov - ing Fa - ther I'll be To them who'll lis - ten to Me.
Lord, I've heard Thy call a - gain, Let me serve Thee not in vain.



THE MAKING OF THE MAN OF GOD

(Message preached by Rev. Tan Choon Seng at the FEBC Bible Conference, Awana Country Club Genting Highlands)

TEXT: 1 Samuel 16: 1 – 13

Introduction

Yesterday morning we heard a message on Daniel and his three friends. This morning I would like to draw our attention to David. David is one of my favourite Bible characters because many times I can identify myself with him. David has been known as the man who was well-liked and well-loved by God. In fact, David was a type of Christ. In 2 Chronicles 8:14 David is called the man of God. Deep within our heart I am sure many of us yearn to be the man of God. Now, let us look at David, a portrait of the real man of God. The topic for my message today is "The Making of the Man of God."

God's Choice of the Man of God

Before looking into what makes a man or woman of God, let us see what God's choice of His man is. In 1 Sam. 16:1, we are told that God had already rejected Saul as King. He commanded Samuel to go and anoint Jesse's son to be the next King. Samuel obeyed and went (v. 5). In v. 6 when Samuel looked upon Eliab, he said, "Surely

the Lord's anointed is before him." Samuel's choice is very much the choice of the people today in their selection of leaders. The first thing that struck Samuel was: This must be the man — tall and handsome. But God told Samuel, "Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him" (v. 7a). Eliab is not the man. God's choice is different from Samuel's, "for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance but the Lord looketh on the heart" (v. 7b). God's choice of the man of God is not based on the external but rather on the internal. When God selects a person, He looks at what is inside, and not what is outside. This is something we have to learn in selecting leaders.

Today the world's standard for a leader is eloquence, a charming personality, charisma, etc. All these are not wrong in themselves, but if these are the only criteria, then we have fallen short of what the Bible teaches. When we select a leader, we must not just look at the outward qualities of the man.

God chose David instead to be the next ruler of Israel. What was it in David that set him apart from the rest? What was it in David that God saw was the man of God? God saw something in David which Samuel did not see.

What Makes the Man of God

Firstly, we see that David, in spite of his faults, was "man after God's own heart" (*1 Sam. 3:14; cf. Acts 13:22*). David was a man who was true and upright in heart, one who was attuned to God. David became the yardstick for all the kings of Israel and Judah, for example, for Solomon (*1 Ki. 11:4*), Jeroboam (*1 Ki. 14:7–8*), Abijam (*1 Ki. 15:3*), Asa (*1 Ki. 15:11*). David was held up as the standard for all the kings. This morning, do we yearn to seek after God? Are we true? Are we upright? Are we obedient to God and His Word? Though many times

David strayed away from God, yet each time when God spoke to him, he turned back to God. It is just like a compass. You take a compass and try to turn it to any direction, yet it will still point in one particular direction. No matter how David went away from God, he came back to Him. No wonder God said that David was a man after His own heart.

Secondly, he was a man who honoured God. In I Samuel 17 the Philistines came up to battle against Israel. Goliath the giant was their champion. He taunted and defamed Israel (*I Sam. 17: 8–10*). He not only defamed Israel as a nation, but also Jehovah their God. As a result the nation of Israel was paralysed with fear. They lost their will to fight. Today, the enemies of God still seek to instill fear in the lives of God's people. They intimidate us with big names, great influence and wide followings.

David could not stand by idly to see the enemy hurling blasphemies against God. He had to uphold God's honour. To him, God's enemies were also his enemies: "Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee? And am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee? I hate them with perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies" (*Psalms 139: 21,22*). Here was a man who loved God, a man who sought to honour God at any price. David knew he was going against great odds. He was up against the champion of the Philistines. David was a nobody. Yesterday we heard from Dr Steele that Elijah was a Tishbite, also a nobody. In the eyes of Goliath, David was nothing. He was just a small boy (*I Sam. 17: 4–7*). But in God's hand, David was somebody. David, with God, was majority. Goliath, with all the armies of the Philistines, could not stand against David and his God. We need to recognise that if you and I stand with God, we are the majority even though physically we may be outnumbered.

However, there is a price to pay for honouring God. David was rebuked by his eldest brother (*I Sam. 17: 28*). He was also ridiculed and intimidated by Goliath (*I Sam. 17: 41–44*). When a person upholds God's name,

whether it refers to the Living or the Written Word, you find that he will come under the enemy's attack, sometimes from within, sometimes from without. There is a price to pay. It is not a simple task to honour God's name.

It is important to note that in upholding God's honour, David sought the strength of the Lord (*1 Sam. 17:45*). David also recognised that it was God's battle. Hence, he went with the confidence that the Lord would fight for him. Let those who are called to defend God's honour be not discouraged nor be fearful, because when God calls you to battle, He will fight with you and for you.

David not only honoured God, but he honoured God's anointed as well. King Saul, who had been rejected by God, was seeking David's life. In spite of this, David still considered him God's anointed. Twice David spared Saul's life. The first time was at Engedi and the second time in the wilderness of Zin. Even though David had the opportunity to kill Saul, he restrained himself. Instead, he warned his men not to touch the Lord's anointed, though Saul was wicked and hopelessly gone astray. The man who honours God will also honour those who are anointed of the Lord. It is very sad to see people having little respect for pastors. Members in the church sometimes treat their pastors in a most disrespectful way. As members of a church, how do you treat your pastor? How do you relate to him? Do you respect him? We respect pastors because they are called of God, anointed of God. Full-time students, do you respect pastors and ministers? I am not saying this because I am a pastor. I apply this to myself that I, too, need to respect those who are anointed of God. It is sad to observe full-time students who put themselves on an equal footing with their seniors. The way they treat the pastors reveal their lack of respect for them. It is important that as you are going through training now you should learn to cultivate respect for God's anointed. The day may come when you would be in their shoes. Unless and until you learn to

respect them now, you will find it difficult to command respect from others later. How about ministers? Do you respect your fellow pastors? Do you recognise that God has also called them just as He has called you?

David honoured God and His anointed, and God greatly blessed him (*I Chron. 29:26–28*). “For them that honour me I will honour” (*I Sam. 2:30*). Is God’s honour foremost in our lives today?

Thirdly, he is a man well-beloved. David was well-beloved by Saul (*I Sam. 16:21–22*), Jonathan (*I Sam. 18:1,3*), the people of the nation (*I Sam. 18:5–7*), and Saul’s daughter. What is the secret of his being well-loved? In *I Sam. 18:4,5* we are told that David behaved himself wisely before the people. I believe it is not only behaving wisely, not just having good PR with others, but rather it was the presence of God in his life that made David a man well-beloved (*cf. I Sam. 16:18; 18:12*). Are we well-beloved by people? Do we exude the presence and glory of God in our life? If God is present in our life, people will see Christ in us and be drawn closer to us. Our lives will be a blessing to others, just as David’s life was to his people.

Fourthly, he was a man of prayer. Before making a decision, he would first commit it to God in prayer (*I Sam. 30:8*). He would enquire for God’s will and direction for his life (*II Sam. 2:1*) and before he went to battle (*II Sam. 5:19,23*). When confronted with a crisis, he would turn to God for deliverance (*II Sam. 15:31*). David had learned in his life to commit all things to God in prayer. Those times of quiet communion with God had built him up to withstand all the trials of his life. If you read the Book of Psalms, you will notice that David’s psalms often reflect his intimate relationship with his God. It was this close communion with God in prayer, in His Word, that made David a man of God. Let us ask ourselves, “Am I a man or woman of prayer?” Yes, one of the most difficult problems to overcome in our lives is prayerlessness. Whether we are in the ministry or in

secular work, we are often so caught up with our work that we tend to cut down our time with God. This eats into our communion with God. Only through constant communion and waiting upon the Lord can we face the challenges of the day.

Lastly, he was a man with a repentant spirit. This is seen in the account of David's sin of adultery (*I Sam. 12*). David had committed adultery with Bathsheba. For almost a year, his relationship with God was severed. Finally, God sent the prophet Nathan to rebuke David. When he was confronted by the prophet, David acknowledged his sin and repented (*II Sam. 12: 13*). No wonder it was said that David "was a man after God's own heart." He had gone far away from God, but when God confronted him, he turned back in repentance immediately.

Another account is David's sin of numbering the people (*II Sam. 24*). Again when David was rebuked for his sin, he repented and he turned to God. Furthermore, when God dealt with him, David was not bitter but instead accepted the consequences and punishment for his sins.

Have we cultivated that spirit of repentance before God? Are we sensitive to sin? When God speaks to us and convicts us of sin, do we turn to Him or do we still stubbornly cling to our own sinful ways? Pharaoh hardened his heart. Saul also hardened his heart. It was difficult for them to turn to God. But David was a man with a repentant spirit. This morning, as we consider the making of a man of God, let us be encouraged by the example of David and let us strive to emulate him, that we too may receive the favour of the Lord.





FURTHER LESSONS OF ELIJAH

(Closing message)

By Dr. S H Tow

We have come to the inevitable last day. To everything there is season. We have all learned a lot about Elijah and Elisha. I want to ask you just one question to see if you have learnt well: Who was the greater prophet – Elijah or Elisha?

My friends, let us turn to God's Word, Luke Chapter 9. If we count greatness by the number of miracles, we would say Elisha. But it is not by the number of miracles but by God's seal on the person. In Luke 9:28 – 30, we are going to see the Old Testament prophet appear in the New Testament: "And it came to pass about eight days after these sayings, he took Peter and John and James and went up into a mountain to pray. And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening. And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elijah." Elijah, taken up to heaven in a chariot of fire, had reappeared with Moses and the transfigured Christ!

Now back to I Kings. I have been much blessed in the study of the life of Elijah. And so, as a parting message, let us try and revise and re-inforce what we have learnt these few days about Elijah. What kind of a man was Elijah? I think many of us learnt something new. Elijah was a Tishbite – unknown, insignificant, a mere nobody. Out of him, God made a very great man. He was one out of only two who did not see death in the Old Testament. What sort of a man was Elijah?

The first point is that he was a **man of the Word**. We see that in I Kings 17:2, "And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying," The Lord's Word will not come to a man who is not a man of God. My friends, does God speak to you? If you are a man of God, constantly waiting on the Lord, humbling yourself, pouring out your heart to Him, confessing your sins, and before Him you say "Lord, I want to receive Your Word" and that is your prayer, true and sincere, then the Word of the Lord will come to you. Do not trust in dreams and visions. Do not trust in sixth sense, premonitions and "prophecies." Trust only in the Lord and His Written Word.

In I Kings 18:1, we see again, "And it came to pass after many days, that the word of the LORD came to Elijah . . ." The Word speaks to us. It has an instruction and it must be obeyed. What did the Word say? I Kings 17:3, "Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan." In I Kings 18:1, it says, "Go, shew thyself unto Ahab . . ." The word comes with a command. So often we read God's Word and we miss God's command. There is an order, something meant for us. We often just read it routinely. "I have the minutes, I will read it quickly and then I'm off." No! Wait on the Lord and hear what He has to say to you. The Word of the Lord is precious and comes to us very clearly in the morning. What time were you up this morning? When you hear the Word of God, you must meditate, ponder and obey.

The second point about Elijah: he was a **man of faith**. When you say "I am a man of faith" then you are also a man of obedience. Faith without obedience is false. I Kings 17:5, "So he went and did according unto the word of the LORD: for he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith." In I Kings 18:2, we read, "And Elijah went . . ." God had a command. When God says "Do" and you say "No" your faith is useless. What a wonderful man Elijah was. Even though the thing to do was unreasonable at first sight and something dangerous, Elijah was a man of

faith and he obeyed. Are you a man of faith in deed or only a man of faith in name?

Thirdly, Elijah was a **man of prayer**. This is so important. He was a man of prayer as we see in I Kings 17: 20, "And he cried unto the LORD, and said, O LORD my God." Verse 21, "And he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto the LORD, and said, O LORD my God." That is prayer – crying to the Lord. How often do we do that? Our prayers are too often just words from mouth level. This is so sad but it is true. I confess my own sin. Prayer must be from heart level, from its depths. The whole heart, soul, mind and strength must go into your prayer. How do you do it? I don't know. But you must pray; pray that the Holy Spirit will come to you and teach you how to pray. I cannot teach you. Elijah was a man of prayer and when he prayed, it is said that the heavens were shut and there was no rain for three years and six months.

The fourth point about Elijah was that he was a **man of God**. I Kings 17:24. You see the woman's son has died. There was calamity. The woman said, "I have fed you all these days. But you have brought me bad luck! My son has died." Elijah prayed and God restored the son. The woman said in verse 24, "Now I know." She should have known before then, how the flour and oil never exhausted for those two years. They were able to eat every day and had enough to live. She should have known that he was a man of God, but this clinched her faith. Verse 24, "And the woman said to Elijah, Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and the word of the LORD in thy mouth is truth." How wonderful if someone should say to you, "Now I know that you are a man of God and you are not just showpiece, someone who acts like a man of God." We all must be men of God – genuine through and through, saying what we mean and meaning what we say. Let us not double-talk. This is the cause of trouble in the church today.

The fifth point: Elijah was a **man of courage**. Courage is tested under strenuous circumstances, dangerous and perilous circumstances. When you stand and don't move, that is courage. When there is no challenge and no risk, it is hard to prove one's courage.

In I Kings 18: 17, we read, "And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, Art thou he that troubleth Israel? When the Lord said, "Go and shew yourself to that fellow Ahab," Elijah obeyed and went, knowing that he was alone, against the king and all his servants. He went and confronted the wicked king. Ahab said to him, "Are you the one that troubleth Israel?" What would you say in those circumstances? What did Elijah say? Verse 18, "And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the LORD and thou hast followed Baalim." Verse 21, "And Elijah came unto all the people . . ." and he challenged all the people besides confronting the king. Here is true courage. He says to the assembled multitude, the eight hundred and fifty wicked priests of idolatry, and all the people of Israel, "How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word." Elijah stood his ground. That is courage.

This reminds me of the Synod Meetings of last year. When that Word of truth was spoken, there was silence in the Synod. "The people answered him not a word." But Elijah held his ground. If you know a thing is true, hold your ground! Suppose Ahab had ordered his men, saying "Kill him right away," what does it matter? None of these things move me. What is life? What is this mortal body? "The body they may kill: God's truth abideth still." Elijah was a man of courage. He stood his ground.

Now the sixth point about Elijah is this: he was a **man of action**. In I Kings 18:40 the confrontation brought down fire from heaven. God sent the fire. By then it was proven beyond doubt. The people saw the fire and they

knew. God answered from heaven: Elijah was the man of God. Now, if Elijah at that moment had said, "Well, friends, let us forget and forgive. Let us talk love and reconcile. You go and burn your idols," that would have been disastrous. No! That was not what he said. Verse 40, "And Elisha said unto them, Take the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape. And they took them: and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there." Friends, to everything there is a season and a time to every purpose under heaven. There is a time to build and a time to break down; a time to heal and a time to kill. The time had come and Elijah, the man of God took action. You may say that he was merciless. By no means! Obey God and not your feelings.

Now you say, "What a wonderful man. I wish I was like Elijah, but Elijah was special and superhuman." Was he? I would like to conclude the study of Elijah's character by saying that he was like one of us. He was like you and me. I Kings 19:2-4, "Then Jezebel sent a messenger onto Elijah, saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to morrow about this time. And when he saw that, he arose, and went for his life, and came to Beersheba, which belongeth to Judah, and left his servant there. But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life." Yes, some of us say that don't we? When the pressure is on, that mortal self in us will sometimes bend and we almost give up. James in his epistle says, "Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are." A man of faith in the hands of God is a terrible instrument. You can be that terrible instrument in the hand of God. Only be like Elijah.

Now let us sum up the character of Elijah to see what kind of a man he was. He was a man very jealous for the Lord God of Hosts: He knew whom he served. He knew who his Saviour was. He knew where his eternal destiny

lay: the Lord God of Hosts, and that is all that matters today!

Whom do you serve? If you are very sure that you are serving the Lord God of Hosts, and He is the One who loves you, saves you, keeps you, calls you – I say then, “Be very jealous for that God.” If anyone attacks that God of mine, and I sit down and fold my arms, I am not jealous for Him. How can I face Him one day? If someone attacks the Son of this God of mine and His character, and I do nothing, and I go fraternizing with the one who attacks the Son of God, I am nothing and good for nothing! If someone attacks the Word of this God of mine and says that the Word may or may not be true, and I do nothing, then I am not jealous for this God of mine. Are you very jealous for the Lord God of Hosts today? If I value men’s friendship above the Lord God of Hosts, I am not jealous for my God at all. If I honour my son more than the Lord God of Hosts, then I cannot be very jealous for the Lord God of Hosts. You see, all these are practical tests. You test yourself, my friends.

We end this conference searching our souls, searching our hearts. What are we serving the Lord for? Is it to be on good terms with people? Is it to have a congregation that every Sunday says, “What a wonderful pastor you are?” Is it just to go on guarding an institution called the “Synod” and so-called “unity?” People pat you on the back saying, “Marvellous B-P Church, fastest growing evangelical church in Singapore.” Rubbish! Are you jealous for the Lord God of Hosts or for the name of BPCs? What is it that is most important to you: the Lord God of Hosts and His honour, His name and His Word? Or, is it a system, an institution?

I Kings 19:9–10: “And he came thither unto a cave and lodged there: and, behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah? And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of Hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and

slain thy prophets with the sword: and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life to take it away."

Oh yes, my friends, when you hear that within the B-P Church there are those who consort, fraternise and honour those who are aiding the enemies of Christ and you do nothing, you are not jealous for the Lord God of Hosts. It is good to begin well but you must end well. You serve the Lord for fifty years, you began well but you must also end well. It is better for a person to begin poorly and to end well. But don't begin well and end badly! The final reckoning is how you serve the Lord to the very end.

What of the future? Is there hope? If I read God's Word correctly, I say "There is hope." God's Word says, "Let the ministers of the Lord weep between the porch and the altar." That is the prescription in Joel. Let them say, "Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not Thine heritage to reproach." People in Singapore are laughing at us! Separatist Church – compromised! Everybody knows it. "Against the Billy Graham Crusade but honouring those on the Committee." Where is the separation? Friends, search yourself! Let the ministers of the Lord weep between the porch and the altar. Repent! Let them say, "Lord, spare Thy people. Give not Thine heritage to reproach." Then will the Lord pity His people. Then will the Lord pity the BPCs. If not, the end has come, for there is rebellion and treachery in the camp, even in high places. I have been told that the conflict of fourteen years, from 1974, is solidifying. I hope it is not, but if there is no repentance, no renunciation of the evil being brought on the Bible-Presbyterian Church, then I say, "The time has come!" To everything there is a season and a time to every purpose; a time to build up and a time to break down. What is the BPCs? I say, "It is nothing!" but God's honour and Name is everything. For anyone to put the BPCS above the honour of God and His truth – it is idolatry.

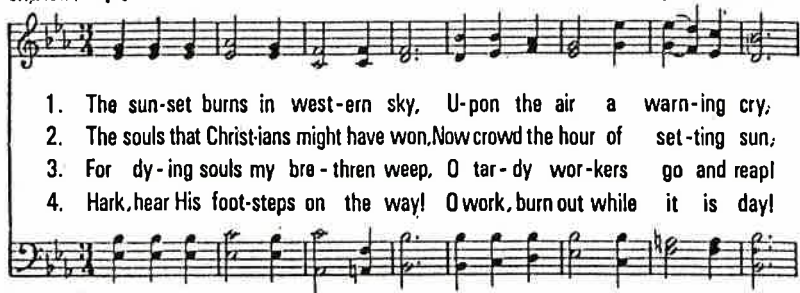
Friends, let us turn back. It is not too late, if there are eyes that can shed tears, if there are hearts that can soften and melt and say "Lord, we have sinned. We have done what we ought not to have done. Lord, forgive." He is plenteous in mercy and He will forgive us our sins. Amen.



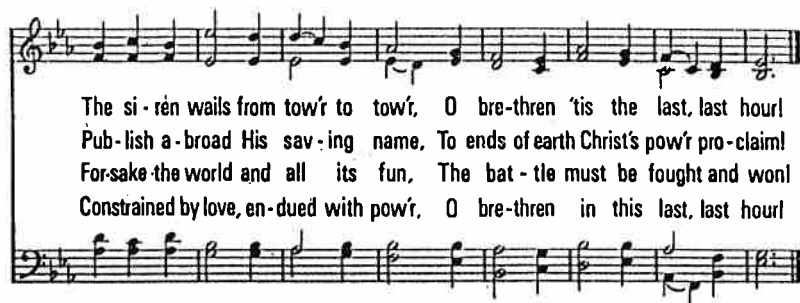
The Last Last Hour

S. H. Tow (adapted)

H. Percy Smith, 1825-1898



1. The sun-set burns in west-ern sky, U-pun the air a warn-ing cry;
2. The souls that Christ-ians might have won, Now crowd the hour of set-ting sun;
3. For dy-ing souls my bre - thren weep, O tar - dy wor - kers go and reap!
4. Hark, hear His foot-steps on the way! O work, burn out while it is day!



The si - ren wails from tow'r to tow'r, O bre - thren 'tis the last, last hour!
Pub - lish a - broad His sav - ing name, To ends of earth Christ's pow'r pro - claim!
For - sake the world and all its fun, The bat - tle must be fought and won!
Constrained by love, en - dued with pow'r, O bre - thren in this last, last hour!

Jesus said,

I must work the works of him that sent me,
while it is day: the night cometh when no man can work.

John 9 : 4



This book is a record of selected messages preached at the FEBC (Far Eastern Bible College) Bible Conference, Genting Highlands, September 5-9, 1988. The theme of the Conference is "Declaring All the Counsel of God in Perilous Times." While the "Perilous Times" mentioned in the Conference theme relates to the end of this age, we felt an exposition on the lives and acts of Elijah and Elisha, "Prophets of Fire and Water" during a perilous stage of Israelite history, might throw light on the crisis the Church is going through today. Hence the title "Prophets of Fire and Water." "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" (*Romans 15:4*).

This book is compiled with the two hundred and fifty conferees in view, to bring to their remembrance the lessons they have learnt. It is now offered to members of the greater Christian family for the strengthening of their faith that we might stand together against the apostasy in these end times before Jesus returns. Even so, come Lord Jesus.

Timothy Tow

