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Israel Unveiled: Mount Carmel

<https://youtu.be/CA1WfWGyX34?si=NINyu1M-6voMCd-9>



Well, Shalom from the top of Mount Carmel. Mount Carmel, one of my favorite places not only in the Bible, but in the land of Israel, of course. Carmel in Hebrew is actually a combination of two Hebrew words, *Kerem* and *El*, the “vineyard of God.” It’s always been a symbol of prosperity, tranquility, and fertility in the Scriptures. It is exactly why many times the prophets will say “You should be like Mount Carmel” when they wanted to bless someone to be fertile and prosperous and tranquil. And we hear in more than one of the prophets how green Mount Carmel was: the prophet Jeremiah speaking of grazing on the pastures of the greens of on Mount Carmel; and the prophet Isaiah spoke in chapter

35 of the glory and the majesty of Mount Carmel. And we know that definitely we are talking about a symbol of something good, a symbol of the blessing of the Lord.

And it’s very interesting that Mount Carmel, which is by the way, 25 miles long, five miles wide and has a range 1,700 feet above the sea level, is not the highest mountain in Israel, not at all. But it stands in a very beautiful and strategic position, towering all the way from the Mediterranean all the way into the Jezreel Valley which is right behind me. The Jezreel Valley,

known to many Christians as the valley of Armageddon. Mount Carmel was actually the territory of the tribe of Asher. However, down below there were several other tribes: the tribe of Zebulun, the tribe of Issachar, and the tribe of Manasseh were in this area. At one point, you can actually take a look and see four of the twelve tribes of Israel. Quite amazing. That tells you of not only the strategic location, but of the commanding view that that mountain had not only towards the north, towards the west, but certainly towards the east, towards the valley itself, towards Jordan and that area.

So, we're speaking of a very, very important mountain; a very important place in the Scriptures both in the Old and New Testaments. And our story this morning takes us all the way to the time that the children of Israel already had a king, flesh and blood, reigning over them. We all remember that when Samuel was the prophet, towards the end of Samuel's life, the children of Israel were actually demanding a king, flesh and blood. We know that they used the excuse of having Samuel's sons being not fit to take the position of the leaders of the land. And, in a very interesting way, the children of Israel didn't want a religious leader anymore. They wanted actually a political leader and a new position was born: a king, just like all the others had. Bear in mind, every time the children of Israel wanted to be just like everybody else they always fell in that snare; that that was the biggest downfall in history. Even today, by the way, every time we want to be accepted by the nations, every time we want to be just like all the others, we tend to compromise, and we tend to actually throw away our significant identity in God's Word and in God's plan.

So we're coming to the point where the children of Israel are now choosing a king and we know that the first one was King Saul who was not really fit to reign, but the only good thing about him maybe was his looks. We're talking about a very tall and handsome man. Then we know that David became the king. And David was a king after God's own heart. He wasn't perfect. David

we know, sinned and actually committed a very, very tragic sin. Just when he became the king finally, from just standing there on the rooftop of his palace, just when everything was right and everything was finally okay, the enemy got him there. But David's heart was always to serve the Lord, and he confessed his sin, and he came clean, and God forgave him. And there were consequences for that sin. But, nevertheless, David continued to be a man after God's own heart. And, after David, came Solomon which we know he started well, but hmm, I guess when you have more than 800 mothers-in-law, how normal can you be? [Tour group: Laughter] And that, of course, we know, Solomon started well, but didn't end up well. And then, of course, ladies and gentlemen, Solomon's son, Rehoboam, became the king of Israel. And Rehoboam realized that he must get the support of the people or else he would not be able to effectively rule them. But there are two ways to get the support of the people: there is the way of listening to them, understanding their needs, taking care of business as government should; or there's a way of ignoring, imposing your will, and making sure that by the power of the iron fist, they will actually fear you and that will cause them to serve you in a more effective way. We all know that he came to the people of Israel, and he said to them, "My father whips you with whips. I will scourge you with scorpions." In other words, "Life is not going to be easier with me. I'll actually be worse than my father was, and if you complain about my father, wait until you see what I have for you." And that is the point where the children of Israel said, "Well, if that's the case, adiós amigos." And the kingdom split.

The kingdom split and we also know from the book of 1 Kings that Rehoboam did not do well in the sight of the Lord. We know that Rehoboam wasn't really serving God. He didn't have the right heart. And that caused God to bring upon Israel, Shishak, the Pharaoh of Egypt, who came and actually took over much of the treasures of the temple. The Bible says, in **1 Kings 14:25–26**, ²⁵ **It happened in the fifth year of King Rehoboam that Shishak king of Egypt came up**

against Jerusalem. ²⁶ And he took away the treasures of the house of the LORD and the treasures of the king's house; he took away everything....” And that of course, because of what’s written in verse 22 that says; [**1Kings 14:22**] “²² Now Judah did evil in the sight of the LORD, and they provoked Him to jealousy with their sins which they committed, more than all that their fathers had done.” Can you imagine? The children of Israel had done so much evil in the sight of the Lord, and yet now when they have everything; now when they have a king; now when they have a kingdom; now when they dwell safely; now when the kingdom of Solomon was the largest ever in their history—so they have a lot of land, a lot of territory, a lot of treasures—now they actually do evil *more* than any other time before. And no wonder why God allowed their enemies to come and take all the treasures. And that is, of course, what we hear in that story.

But, again, we have to remember one of the most difficult things that happened in the land of Israel at that time was that the kingdom split, and ten tribes followed the man called Jeroboam, the son of Nebat. And Jeroboam said in his heart the following thing in verse 27, [**1 Kings 12:27–31**] “²⁷ ‘If these people go up to offer sacrifices in the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, then the heart of this people will turn back to their lord, Rehoboam king of Judah, and they will kill me and go back to Rehoboam king of Judah.’” Isn’t that amazing? All he cared about is that he would lose the people and they would go back to their, I would say, legal king, if anything. Look what he did: “²⁸ Therefore the king asked advice, made two calves of gold, and said to the people,” Now, listen to this, we all remember what the children of Israel had right below Mount Sinai and how they described the golden calf. But look what he said. He said this to the people of Israel: “²⁸... ‘It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Here are your gods, O Israel, which brought you up from the land of Egypt!’ ²⁹ And he set up one in Bethel, and the other he put in Dan. ³⁰ Now this thing became a sin, for the people went to worship before

the one as far as Dan. ³¹ He made shrines on the high places, and made priests from every class of people, who were not of the sons of Levi.” Of course, the Levites remained in Jerusalem. So he had no Levites there and now he just contracted that position and gave it to anyone he could. ³² Jeroboam ordained a feast on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, like the feast that was in Judah, and offered sacrifices on the altar.” So, he really followed the real date and he tried to make them feel that they’re doing the right thing. The people were fooled, the people were deceived that they were actually worshiping God the right way. And that is why the Bible says that Jeroboam was so bad, no one was as bad as Jeroboam. You don’t want your name to be mentioned in the Bible in that context.

And of course, after Jeroboam came more kings and none of them were really good. But then we’re introduced to a new king, and he went a step further. We’re introduced in the **1 Kings 16:29–31**, ²⁹ In the thirty-eighth year of Asa king of Judah, Ahab the son of Omri became king over Israel; and Ahab the son of Omri reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty-two years. ³⁰ Now Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD, more than all who were before him.” Wow! If that wasn’t enough, look this guy goes a step further, and look what he did. He did this: ³¹ And it came to pass, as though it had been a trivial thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took as wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians;” Sidon is a city in Lebanon today. And remember the prophets always warned that from the north the evil shall come. Many of the Babylonian deities eventually made it through Lebanon into Israel. That was part of what we call the Fertile Crescent. That was the main road. So, it came from Babylon and Assyria, up towards the Turkish area, down through Syria and Lebanon into the land of Israel. Indeed, from the north the evil came. That may explain to you why that cave in the area of Caesarea Philippi was known by the locals as, “The Gates of Hell.” It was

facing the north. And so, here we are, the Bible says that He married “³¹ **...Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians; and he went and served Baal and worshiped him.**” Now

watch this; everybody really, kind of, blamed Jezebel for everything. “The spirit of Jezebel” and



all of that. And that’s fine, but look at the active approach not a passive approach of this king. He *went* and worshiped Baal. He’s the king and he *went* and worshiped Baal.

You know, sometimes leaders of the world might

be passive and allow some stuff to happen and maybe turn a blind eye. And it’s another thing when that leader *actively* worships something else because that will lead the whole nation to destruction.

And watch this: the Bible says, and it came to pass not only that he worshipped him, [**1 Kings 16:32–34**] “**Then he set up an altar for Baal in the temple of Baal, which he had built in**

Samaria.” You know, in Lebanon there is a town called Baalbek. There’s a town named after

Baal. They used to worship Baal there. Now what did he do? He imported the worship of Baal and

literally built a temple for Baal. Where? In Samaria. “³³ **And Ahab made a wooden image. Ahab**

did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel who were

before him. ³⁴ **In his days Hiel of Bethel built Jericho. He laid its foundation with Abiram his**

firstborn, and with his youngest son Segub he set up its gates, according to the word of the

LORD, which He had spoken through Joshua the son of Nun.” If you remember, when Joshua

came and took Jericho and destroyed it, in Joshua 6:26, he said that “Cursed will be the one who

is going to rebuild the city.” His firstborn will build it and his last will even place the doors there.

And we see it had to take a cursed king for a cursed man to do a cursed thing. That shows you a

whole pattern of how Israel did everything wrong, going all the way back to that which God could see that they were going to do even in the days of Joshua. Wow!

And so, [1 Kings 17:1–3] **“¹ And Elijah the Tishbite, of the inhabitants of Gilead, said to Ahab, ‘As the LORD God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, except at my word.’”** And then he said, **“² Then the word of the LORD came to him, saying, ³ ‘Get away from here and turn eastward, and hide by the Brook Cherith, which flows into the Jordan.’”** So, we can clearly see that Elijah the prophet, for the first time introduced to us in chapter 17 of 1 Kings, understood that the drought that the land of Israel was going through was directly related to the spiritual state of the nation. I’ll make it very clear: many natural disasters, many famines and pestilences, many droughts are indeed related—related directly—to the sinful state of a nation or even of the whole world.

I’m being reminded of that which the Bible is telling us in **Romans, 8:22–23**; it says, **“²² For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. ²³ Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.”** The Rapture, the redemption of our body, we are eagerly waiting for the redemption of our body. But not only we, the whole creation. And what we see as far as natural disasters are part of what the Bible says in Romans 8, birth pangs. And that, of course, related to the spiritual, dark state of the world.

And so, now we come to chapter 18. That was just the introduction. Now we come to our chapter. I need you to understand that it’s a horrible feeling to think that you’re the only one who is doing the right thing. And not because you’re perfect, [but] because God tells you. God talks to you. God speaks through you. You know, the prophets in those days, let me tell you, were not people of calmness and easygoing. They would be on Prozac if they could. I mean, I’m just saying

think about it, they never really said what they wanted to say. God spoke through them. They were very, I call them, tragic figures. I can quote to you **2 Peter 1:20**, it says, “²⁰... **knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation,** ²¹ **for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.**” It wasn’t



their will. It wasn’t their intention. It wasn’t their stuff, their thing. They were tormented people. They were on highs and lows more than any other person. But God spoke through them. They were conduits through which God was speaking. God, the Holy

Spirit, speaks through them. And it is a terrible feeling to think, “Man, God speaks through me. Nobody is listening!” But take a look around you, people are just celebrating as if it’s 1999. And I want you to know that there was a strong famine, the Bible says, in **1 Kings 18:1–2**, “¹ **And it came to pass after many days that the word of the LORD came to Elijah, in the third year, saying, ‘Go, present yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on the earth.’**” In other words, God says to Elijah, “I know you don’t like Ahab, and I know surely he doesn’t like you. But you need to go and confront him or else there will be no rain. If you go and confront him, I will send rain.” “² **So Elijah went to present himself to Ahab; and there was a severe famine in Samaria.**” Now make sure you understand, and this is important. It’s sort of a vicious cycle. Think about it. There’s famine in the land. You would think that the famine would cause the people to get right with the Lord because they know that the rain comes as a blessing from God. But what is it that they do? Instead of worshiping the Lord, they said, “Well, if there’s famine, we need to worship the goddess of fertility and the god of rain, Ashtaroth and Baal.” Instead of worshiping the Lord God of Israel, they are so spiritually blinded that actually they blaspheme God—who can actually

stop that—by worshipping other gods. Now that is an amazing picture of what the future is going to be during the Tribulation. Allow me to take you to Revelation 16. And in **Revelation 16:8–9** the Bible says, “**8 Then the fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and power was given to him to scorch men with fire. 9 And men were scorched with great heat, and they blasphemed the name of God who has power over these plagues; and they did not repent and give Him glory.**” Isn’t that amazing? You see the world is going to be so deceived by the Antichrist that instead of understanding and knowing that God has the power over these things, that God sends it, what do they do? They blaspheme and they do not repent. And this is the power of a king, of a ruler, of a leader. He can cause a whole nation to be completely deceived and blind. Do I need to tell you? Do I need to tell Americans in the year 2016 what it means for a nation to be deceived and blinded by a regime and president? All I’m saying is that the power of a leader can deceive tremendously a whole nation.

Now, of course, just like Elijah, there’s always those few that God leaves who will not bow to the Baal. But unfortunately they are a minority and remnant. Now watch this, **1 Kings 18:17**, “**17 Then it happened, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said to him, ‘Is that you, O troubler of Israel?’**” Now isn’t that interesting that always those idol worshipers will look at godly people as the troublemakers? Always those who go to other gods, other deities, other idols will look at godly people as a problem. You probably know that, by the way, if you want an indication of going the wrong way, it’s when you start feeling uncomfortable next to godly people. When you start feeling uncomfortable at church, when you start feeling uncomfortable next to other believers, when you start feeling uncomfortable praying, you are in a very bad territory. That means you’re in the wrong way. And then the road to accuse those people as the troublemakers is very short. And I can tell you one thing: once the Rapture will take place everybody will say, “Good riddance.” Everybody



will say, “These are the troublemakers. Because of them, the world looks so bad. Because of them, people don’t have the freedom they need. Because of them, we are so primitive, we’re so backwards. Thank God, they’re gone. Now we really can be progressive and do things the right way.” They will be dancing in the streets, I guess. Think for a minute.

And we can clearly see that Elijah is not afraid! What a bold man. He stands right in front of the king of Israel, and he says to him, [1 Kings 18:18–19] **“I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father’s house have, in that you have forsaken the commandments of the LORD and have followed the Baals. ¹⁹ Now therefore, send and gather all Israel to me on Mount Carmel, the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, and the four hundred prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel’s table.”** Now watch this. Not only that he is giving a certain number of both Baal and Asherah. Those who worship the god of rain, Baal; and those who worship the goddess of fertility, Asherah, from which Ashtaroth came, and then Ishtar, and then Easter—that’s why you have bunnies and eggs on Easter; a symbol of fertility, by the way. It has nothing to do with Christ at all. And it’s interesting because what did he say? He said, “Not only that you tolerate those, you actually have them eating at the table of your wife.” That means that the leader surrounds himself with people that he prefers, that he feels comfortable with. And an ungodly man will never feel comfortable next to godly people. He will always surround himself with people of that same nature.

And this is why the Bible begins the book of Psalms with something very, very distinct. He says, **Psalm 1:1–3: “¹ Blessed is the man...”** You see, a blessing is coming when you, **“¹ ... who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the**

seat of the scornful; ² but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night. ³ He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper.” And then it ends up with the ungodly and it says they shall perish. You see the beginning is blessed and the last is they shall perish. It starts with blessing. It ends up with perishing. If you’re walking in the ways of the Lord, you’ll be blessed. If you’re ungodly you’ll perish.

And, interestingly enough, now we come to the point where Elijah the prophet is summoning everyone to the top of Mount Carmel. Mount Carmel, which is the symbol of God’s blessing, prosperity, tranquility, and fertility is now the gathering place of three different parties: (1) Elijah; (2) the people of Israel; (3) the prophets of Baal and Asherah. Make sure you understand because Elijah is not even talking to the prophets. You see, they already chose their way. They already have their way. He’s not there to persuade them. See, now all of them are on Mount Carmel, [1 Kings 18:20–33, 36–42, 44–46] ²⁰ **So Ahab sent for all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together on Mount Carmel. ²¹ And Elijah came to all the people,**” not to the prophets, and he said to the people, ²¹ ... **‘How long will you falter between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him.’**” What did Jesus say about being lukewarm? Remember? Exactly; “I’ll spit him out of the mouth” which means either cold or hot. “If you’re not with Me, you are? Against Me!” So, you can’t sit on the fence, and you can’t just wet your finger and see where the wind is blowing and decide then. “Okay, I’ll go today here, tomorrow there.” I know so many people, so many people are like that. They don’t have those deep roots in the Bible and deep roots in doctrine. Every time somebody comes in with a new theory, every time something exciting goes on, they’ll be following it. And Elijah is challenging the people. Bear in mind, he’s talking to the people! “How long will you falter between the two

opinions? Make up your mind, and make up your mind today. Do you want to see rain? If you want to see the blessing of God, make up your mind.” And it’s interesting because, “²¹ **...But the people answered him not a word.**” Wow! Really! They were convicted, and they had nothing to say. Literally, they had nothing to say. Why? Because they know that they really don’t follow God, and they know that they are there as spectators to see who wins. And they’ll follow the winner. That’s all. So they’re there to watch. All right? Now watch this. They answered him not. “²² **Then Elijah said to the people, ‘I alone am left a prophet of the LORD; but Baal’s prophets are four hundred and fifty men.** ²³**Therefore let them give us two bulls; and let them choose one**



bull for themselves, cut it in pieces, and lay it on the wood, but put no fire under it; and I will prepare the other bull, and lay it on the wood, but put no fire under it. ²⁴ **Then you call on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name**

of the LORD; and the God who answers by fire, He is God.’” This is why the monastery here is called *Muhraqa* in Arabic, the place of the fire. It’s all about the fire.

It’s interesting because I know a monk that lived here. And there was a Christmas Eve a few years ago. You’ve seen lightning in Israel. You know it can be intense. And a lightning [bolt] hit the top of the roof and cut a round stone that was holding the cross in two. And the half that held the cross is still there, the other half fell. And the monk took off and ran away. He was so scared. And I asked him, “What are you scared of? Are you okay with God? You shouldn’t be scared.” But that tells you if just one lightning [bolt]— Can you imagine what it could be if the fire of God came down? Now watch this: “²⁴ **...So all the people answered and said, ‘It is well spoken.’** ²⁵ **Now Elijah said to the prophets of Baal,**” Now he speaks to them, “²⁵ **...‘Choose one**

bull for yourselves and prepare it first, for you are many; and call on the name of your god, but put no fire under it.’ ²⁶ **So they took the bull which was given them, and they prepared it, and called on the name of Baal from morning even till noon, saying, ‘O Baal, hear us!’ But there was no voice; no one answered. Then they leaped about the altar which they had made.** ²⁷ **And so it was, at noon, that Elijah mocked them and said, ‘Cry aloud, for he is a god; either he is meditating, or he is busy, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is sleeping and must be awakened.’** ²⁸ **So they cried aloud, and...**” Not only cried aloud, one of the things that cults normally do, and we see that even in the Shiite Islam, when they want to get the attention of their god, they actually start taking knives or some lances and start cutting themselves until they bleed, so the blood may enhance the whole thing. And in that trance of bleeding, and crying, and singing—by the way, there are Catholic ceremonies just like that. I know that for a fact. There are parades of Catholics on certain holidays where they actually do that to themselves. And then the Shiite Muslims do that. It’s called Ashura. And so here the prophets of Baal are cutting themselves and blood started gushing and yet nothing happened. ²⁹ **And when midday was past, they prophesied until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice. But there was no voice; no one answered, no one paid attention.**” The Bible says that these people have gods, but they have mouths that they cannot speak. It’s just dead. ³⁰ **Then Elijah said to all the people, ‘Come near to me.’ So all the people came near to him. And he repaired the altar of the LORD that was broken down.** ³¹ **And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the word of the LORD had come, saying, ‘Israel shall be your name.’** ³² **Then with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD; and he made a trench around the altar large enough to hold two seahs of seed.** ³³ **And he put the wood in order, cut**

the bull in pieces, and laid it on the wood, and said, ‘Fill four waterpots with water, and pour it on the burnt sacrifice and on the wood.’”

Elijah is basically blocking any possible chance that they will blame the fire on the hot weather. By what? By soaking everything, the wood and the bull with water. And bear in mind, where can you get water? That’s why we believe we’re in the right place. The only place in Mount Carmel in this area high enough to see both the ocean—Mediterranean—and the Kishon Brook down below is that place where the monastery from 1883 is standing today. And it’s interesting because down below we found a well that had water even then. So he brought the water, he soaked the altar, and he soaked the wood. And now Elijah said the following thing, he said, “³⁶ ... **‘LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that You are God in Israel and I am Your servant, and that I have done all these things at Your word. ³⁷ Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that You are the LORD God, and that You have turned their hearts back to You again.’ ³⁸ Then the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood and the stones and the dust, and it licked up the water that was in the trench. ³⁹ Now when all the people...**” not the prophets, all the people, “**when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, ‘The LORD, He is God! The LORD, He is God!’ ⁴⁰ And Elijah said to them,**” the people, “**‘Seize the prophets of Baal! Do not let one of them escape!’**” So they seized them; and Elijah brought them down to the Brook Kishon and executed them there. ⁴¹ Then Elijah said to Ahab, **‘Go up, eat and drink; for there is the sound of abundance of rain.’”**

See, there was no rain, not even a sound of rain, but there was a promise, the promise from God: “Go and meet Ahab and I will send rain.” So, Elijah, in that amazing act of faith, in that boldness that could only come from above, is challenging the king although he saw no cloud! What

faith! What amazing, amazing boldness! And he says, “The sound of abundance of rain.” Can you imagine? The sky is clear, not even a single cloud, and he says to him, “There is the sound of abundance of rain.” Probably Ahab thought that Elijah is on drugs or something. And think about it for a second, **“⁴² ...Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; then he bowed down on the ground, and put his face between his knees, ⁴³ and said to his servant, ‘Go up now, look toward the sea.’”** And, as you can see where we are, we’re on a viewpoint where you can see the sea on one side and the valley where the Brook Kishon is on the other side. So he says, “Go and look.” He didn’t even want to look. He’s praying. “You go and look.” Sometimes we pray and pray, and we just let others check and see if something happened. And “Go and look!” And he went one time, a second time. How many times did he have to look? Seven times! Man, what an amazing faith! Six times the guy came down and he thought Elijah is really on drugs. “Nothing!” The seventh time it happened. The sky became black with clouds and wind and there was a heavy rain. But, of course, before that, what did he say? He kind of saw a little cloud in the size of man’s hand coming (in verse 44) towards them. And then he says, **“⁴⁴ ... ‘Go up, say to Ahab, ‘Prepare your chariot, and go down before the rain stops you.’” ⁴⁵ Now it happened in the meantime that the sky became black with clouds and wind, and there was a heavy rain. So Ahab rode away and went to Jezreel.”** Jezreel, in the middle of the Jezreel Valley; that’s what we call it the Jezreel Valley. **“⁴⁶ Then the hand of the LORD came upon Elijah; and he girded up his loins and ran ahead of Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel.”** Man! He ran ahead. The guy was in shape. Up and down, up and down on mountains and he ran ahead of a chariot. That reminds me of what the Bible says about the children of Israel, that He bore them on eagle’s wings. Wow! And we’re surprised that God took him up when already while he was here there were some unbelievable events? Eventually, we know that the story ended with Elijah being rewarded in ways that only two people

in the Old Testament had gone through: Enoch and Elijah. We're speaking of people who never saw corruption. They never died and they were taken up to Heaven. And this is an amazing reward to someone who had an amazing life.

You know, the fire of God once again is going to come during the trial when Messiah will come back. The Bible says in **1 Corinthians 3:12–15**: **“¹² Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, ¹³ each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. ¹⁴ If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. ¹⁵ If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.”** How do we want to stand before Christ when the day comes, when He tests all of that we did and said? Do we want to be rewarded? Because what do we do with that reward? We lay [it] down at His feet. Or do we want to just be saved as through fire with nothing in our hands to give Him as a gift.

And so, that fire of God came and tested the hearts of the people of Israel. I hope that every one of us believers will understand that everything we do and say, all of the hidden intentions of our hearts, one day will be revealed through the fire. I hope and pray that the day will come when Jesus will tell me and you, “Well done, good and faithful servant.” May we all remember the story of the fire of God that happened here on Mount Carmel. And may we all remember that all of our lives are just one big Mount Carmel full of blessings of the Lord. Yet, the fire will test everything when the time comes. May God give us the strength to go through these lives, living for Him, and having the Holy Spirit direct our steps, and that everything we do and say will give Him glory and honor, and will usher our way into His kingdom. God bless you.

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** Scripture is taken from the New King James Version unless noted otherwise.*

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