



# SHARING SCRIPTURE

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## Turning Hearts in the End Time

**For use: June 23 - June 29, 2019**

**Texts:** Malachi 4:5, 6; Matthew 11:14, 15; 17:10; 1 Kings 16:29–17:24; 18:20–45; Matthew 3:2

Scotland was recently eliminated from the Women's World Cup because of a VAR, a Video Assistant Referee. After judgments had been made, VAR revealed the goalkeeper moved a few inches just a few moments too early. If you follow women's soccer, you probably have already established your opinions of the decision.

You may have strong sentiments regarding the ruling. If you are not a follower of the sport, it may not matter at all to you. Still, there is one important aspect of this event that has application for us today.

A rule change had recently been put into effect, and that probably impacted the goalkeeper's actions. She had practiced and played a certain way for much of her career. She learned to act rapidly for the best results. But the rule change meant modifying her behavior. When one has learned how to react under pressure, it takes thousands of reps for muscle memory to change. [1]

With that in mind, changes in actions, in turning from behavior, may not be instantaneous and immediately permanent.

In our theme this week, we encounter stories that have common attributes. In all of these, we find people waiting, people in need of change, and finally, people changing. Change does not often come about when people are contented in maintaining what has become familiar. Something usually happens to move people from "dead center," where they have grown comfortable, to a place of change.

The voice of Elijah relayed God's message to repent. He reminded God's people that something was missing in the relationship God wanted to have with them. What happened with Elijah was extraordinary, to say the least. When oil and flour lasted, a boy was brought back to life, and fire consumed not only the sacrifice, but the water surrounding the altar, it was nothing short of miraculous.

We find Elijah promised again, but this time, Elijah does not actually come. Instead, change is heralded in the voice of John the Baptist, a voice pointing the way to the Lord. When change occurs, the natural progression is to desire that change for those close,

for family. Hearts turned to God desire for those close to them to also experience the joy of hearts turned to God.

An important aspect to remember in this process of working to turn hearts, is that change isn't easy for many. Change may take time. Change may take repeated attempts, but it is always worth the patience and prayer.

~Joy Veverka

[1] <https://www.msn.com/en-us/sports/fifa-womens-world-cup/a-terrible-var-decision-eliminated-scotland-from-the-womens-world-cup/ar-AAD85OA?ocid=spartandhp>

## For Reflection

**Connecting:** Using two sticky notes per person, ask class members to name a trait, habit, or new skill on one note. On the other sticky note, write how long it took for that new skill or habit to become permanent. Have class members try to match the skill with the amount of time it took.

**Sharing:** Read Malachi 4:5, 6, in which Malachi relays a message from God. How does God say hearts will be changed?

1. Hearts are changed when we repeatedly tell others what they should be doing
2. People's hearts change immediately when they read the instructions God gave through Moses
3. God changes the hearts of parents to their children and the hearts of children to their parents through the message that came through Elijah, John the Baptist, and the Lord
4. If people don't change right away, there is no hope for them
5. A life filled with love for others will never bring hearts to God but instead will take repeated reminding and admonishing
6. Other:

**Applying:** Look at the demographics of the neighborhood around your church. What needs does this community have that your Sabbath school class could help meet? Prioritize a list of things that could be done to help your neighborhood. Ideas might include parenting classes, VBS, a car wash to get acquainted with the neighbors, etc.

**Valuing:** Think about your family. Are there family members with whom you would like to restore a relationship? Pray specifically for an opportunity to reestablish a positive relationship with that individual. Ask God that the Holy Spirit might speak to both your hearts.

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Three decades ago, we created this resource for small groups and Sabbath school classes, and it continues to bless so many people worldwide. Thank you for your continued interest in these biblical themes and what they mean to your life and those people with whom you share it.

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Executive Director

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