

DAYS OF ELIJAH

“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. (Malachi 4:5, NKJV)

Introduction

Malachi prophesied that the “great and dreadful day of the Lord” or, as it is also known, the “day of wrath” would be preceded by the coming of Elijah the prophet

- Jesus confirmed this prophecy when He said, *“Indeed, **Elijah is coming first and will restore all things.**”* (Matthew 17:11)
- But Jesus also said in the next verse, *“But I say to you that **Elijah** has come already, and they did not know him, but did to him whatever they wished.”* (Matthew 17:12)

This was in reference to John the Baptist who fulfilled this prophecy for our Lord’s First Coming

- The spirit of Elijah is to precede both the First and Second Coming of Jesus Christ
- The first time through John the Baptist, and now through the Body of Christ

The Prophecies

The two primary prophecies about Elijah preceding the comings of the Lord are found in Isaiah and Malachi

- *The voice of one crying in the wilderness: “**Prepare the way of the LORD**; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted and every mountain and hill brought low; The crooked places shall be made straight and the rough places smooth; the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”* (Isaiah 40:3-5)
- *Behold, I send **My messenger**, and he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight. Behold, He is coming,” says the LORD of hosts.* (Malachi 3:1)
- *Behold, I will send you **Elijah** the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. and he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.”* (Malachi 4:5-6)

And these were confirmed by the angel Gabriel who told Zacharias that his wife Elizabeth would bear a son whom they should name John who will:

- *“... turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. ¹⁷He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of **Elijah**, ‘to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,’ and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to **make ready a people prepared for the Lord.**”* (Luke 1:16-17)

And, it was Elijah who appeared with Moses to Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:3)

Why Elijah?

There were many great Old Testament prophets, so why is it the Spirit of Elijah that precedes the coming of the Lord? To answer that question, we need to do a quick study of Elijah’s ministry:

- Elijah the Tishbite first appears in 1Kings 17:1 when he prophesied to King Ahab that, *“there shall not be dew nor rain these years, except at my word.”*
- The Lord then told him to *“get away from here and turn eastward and hide by the brook of Cherith which flows into the river Jordan. And it will be that you shall drink from the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there.”* (17:2-3)
- When the brook dried up due to the lack of rain prophesied by Elijah, the Lord sent him to a poor widow’s house who had only one day’s supply of flour and oil left. But the Lord told Elijah, *“The bin of flour shall not be used up, nor shall the jar of oil run dry, until the day the Lord sends rain on the earth.”* (17:14)

- Meanwhile, Queen Jezebel had massacred all the “*prophets of the Lord*” except for 100 that Obadiah hid in two caves (18:4). She then fully instituted the worship of Baal and Asherah.
- In the third year of the drought, the word of the Lord came to Elijah saying, “*Go, present yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on the earth.*” (18:1)
- Now, Elijah was afraid of being killed, but nevertheless was obedient to the call and presented a challenge to King Ahab who called Elijah the, “*troubler of Israel.*” Elijah answered, “*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. 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.*” (18:17-19)
- Elijah then challenged them to a duel: whose god would come down and consume a sacrificial bull on an altar; the other 850 prophets went first to no avail; then it was Elijah’s turn.
 - “*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.*” *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 saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, “The LORD, He is God! The LORD, He is God!”* (18:36-39)
- Following this great triumph, Elijah had the 850 false prophets killed, called in rain to end the 3.5 year drought and ran in his excitement ahead of King Ahab back to Jezreel. (18:40-46)
- After Ahab told Jezebel what had happened, she sent a messenger to Elijah saying she would have him killed. (19:1-2) So what did the great prophet do right after this tremendous triumph? He ran away and hid in a cave! (19:9)
 - Such is the influence of Jezebel over the prophets of this day as well
- So the Lord called to Elijah, “*What are you doing here, Elijah?*” And Elijah whined in response, “*I have been very zealous for the LORD God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life.*” (19:9-10)
 - This is why James wrote (5:17) that, “*Elijah was a man with a nature like ours.*” That is, a human nature that forgets the miracles that God does for us and flees from the devil instead of the other way around as James prescribed in 4:7, “*Submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.*”
- The Lord told Elijah to anoint Elisha as his successor and Jehu as King over Israel. (19:15-16)
- Later, Elijah was taken up “*into heaven by a whirlwind*” at which time his mantle fell onto Elisha as well as “*the spirit of Elijah*” (2Kings 2:13-15)

So, what is it, then, about Elijah that it is his spirit that preceded the first coming of our Lord and will do so again the second time

1. Elijah confronted evil and challenged the false gods in the Name of the Lord before all of Israel
2. He brought the message of repentance to Israel
 - “*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.***” (1Kings 18:37)
 - John the Baptist conveyed a similar message: “*Repent, for the Kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe in the Gospel.*” (Mark 1:15)
3. He brought rain back to end the drought which is a type and shadow of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the last days
4. He didn’t die, but his spirit lived on (to be one of the two witnesses?)

The First Fulfillment

John the Baptist fulfilled all the prophecies about Elijah coming back before the first incarnation

- Like Elijah, he was a man of the wilderness, wild and hairy, with a leather belt (2Kings 1:8)
- He was the forerunner/messenger that Isaiah and Malachi prophesied
- He prepared the way for the Lord, the “*voice of one crying in the wilderness, “Prepare the way of the Lord.”*”
- He “*turned the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers.*”
- As a type and shadow of the second coming of Christ, the “*great and dreadful day of the Lord*” came in 70 A.D. when the temple was destroyed and Jerusalem was overtaken by the Romans, stricken “*with a curse*” as Malachi prophesied

The Next Fulfillment

So, why do we call these days the “days of Elijah”?

- There are many signs that we are in the last days leading up to the Great Tribulation (we’ll talk about these next week)
- We see the spirit being poured out “*on all flesh*” as prophesied in Joel 2:28 with a tremendous increase in the number of men and women prophesying, having visions and dreaming prophetic dreams
- This spirit being poured out is the Elijah Spirit – i.e. the prophetic anointing
- Therefore, we are the voice crying out in the wilderness – i.e. the spiritual dryness and drought
- And, therefore, we are the ones who must “*prepare ye the way of the Lord*”

The Opposing Spirit – Jezebel

However, the Devil is not just sitting idly by awaiting the day of his doom

- His strategy remains the same: 1) keep people from getting saved; 2) incapacitate Christians so that they are ineffective and unproductive (2Peter 1:8)
- But he needed a spirit to counteract the Elijah spirit – and that’s Jezebel, just as in the Old Testament
- This is the same Jezebel the Lord warned us about in Revelation 2:20-23
 - “*Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols.* ²¹*And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent.* ²²*Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds.* ²³*I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works.”*
- The primary function of today’s Jezebel spirit is to destroy the prophetic anointing, just as she tried to destroy Elijah
- The Jezebel spirit is controlling, seductive, manipulative and invokes great fear – just as she scared Elijah
- We see a lot more of the Jezebel spirit in people (men and women) these days than ever before

Raising up an Army of the Lord

The Lord has prophesied over me for the last 4 years or so that I would help raise up an army to prepare the way for the Lord – that’s what the Lion of Judah is all about

- It’s not my doing, it’s the Lord’s, and just like the troops He is calling upon, we are nothing special – in fact, the Lord is once again choosing “*the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise and... the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty.*” (1Corinthians 1:27)

- Not only will we raise up an army, but we'll train it and put it to work!

Doing what?

- Exactly what Elijah did, anointed by the Elijah spirit:
 - Confront the evil of the day (demonic stronghold, witches, Satanists, Territorial Spirits, Jezebel, etc.)
 - Challenge the gods of this age (New Age, Eastern, Mormonism, Freemasonry, Jehovah's Witness, etc.)
 - Tear down the "high and lofty walls" of strongholds in society that "exalt themselves above the knowledge of God" (materialism, greed, carnal individualism, pride, abortion, sexual perversion, selfishness, etc.)
 - Bring the Truth and the one True God into the world – "declaring the Word of the Lord"
 - Issue a message of repentance to the world, stand in the gap (2Chronicles 7:14)
 - Usher in the latter rain of the Holy Spirit to fall and bring about revival, transformation & reformation