

THE THIRD ELIJAH

One of the major events to occur just before the return of Christ as conquering King is the appearance of a third Elijah on the world scene. Although most Bible students have read about the prophet Elijah, the office of Elijah, and the prophetic coming of Elijah, few understand that he plays a significant role in delivering a message from the Sovereign God in the end times.

There are many options as to exactly who or what this Elijah will be. Among Orthodox Jews there are beliefs that the prophetic Elijah will come to restore national Israel as a world power and will either be the resurrected Prophet Elijah or King David or their long awaited Messiah. Some believe he will be a Christian prophet that will rise from their midst to foretell the second advent of the Messiah. While others believe that the prophetic Elijah is an office, which will be the collective work of the congregations of God that will proclaim the gospel message in the end of the age.

However, both religions agree that the prophetic Elijah will have a major impact on world events. But

does it really matter if you are able to recognize the prophetic Elijah when he appears on the world scene? The answer is yes, That is, if you are living in the end times, because being able to recognize the prophetic Elijah and the validity of what he says and does could mean the difference between your physical and spiritual life and death. Therefore, you might want to pay careful attention to the information about the prophetic Elijah contained in this broadcast.

Because both the first and second Elijah were real people who did an individual work, it seems unlikely that this precedent would be changed. And because there are no examples in the Bible of a prophet of ancient Israel being brought back from the dead to begin a public ministry, it is also unlikely that this precedent would change. Therefore, it seems highly likely that the third Elijah will also be a real person who is selected by God for a special task right before Christ returns.

THE MESSENGER

Along with a strong warning for all Israelites to repent, return to God, and begin to worship him in truth, the prophet Malachi was inspired to record many major events that would occur just prior to Christ returns, one of which was the sending of a messenger to prepare the way for this return.

The prophet Malachi relates this message from the Creator God concerning the end time Elijah:

"See, I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come," says the Lord Almighty. But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner's fire or a launderer's soap. He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. Then the Lord will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness" (Mal.3:1-3 NIV).

Malachi's prophecy contains information about when and how Christ will return. When the messenger has completed his task, Jesus Christ will come very quickly to his temple. Because he will come to his temple, it should be clear that the sending of the third Elijah depends on the events right before and during the existence of a temple in Jerusalem for the worship of the true God. Moreover, Jesus will return as a refiner of metal, which means he will come with great power and wrath to purge his people and the earth of evil before establishing his Father's government and worship system in Jerusalem.

Continuing this prophecy, God said:

"Behold I am sending you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the sons, and the heart of the sons to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with utter destruction" (Mal.4:5-6 Para.).

We are not told how long before the day of the Lord that Elijah will be sent, or how long his ministry

will last. We are only told that he will be sent before this time, and that he is charged with preaching a message of repentance and restoration of the faith once delivered. He is sent to preach this message in order to convince people to return to God, so that God will not completely destroy the earth.

There can be no doubt that the third Elijah has an extremely important responsibility and mission concerning the return of Christ and the survival of humanity. Clearly, the third Elijah is the messenger who is sent to prepare the way for Christ's return and perform a great spiritual work of the restoration of truth.

In order to recognize the third Elijah and understand the impact that he will have upon the Jews, the ten tribes of Israel, and the world's inhabitants, it is necessary to review the lives and ministries of Elijah the Tishbite and Elijah in the person of John the Baptist.

THE FIRST ELIJAH

The first Elijah was a prophet to the house of Israel during the reigns of King Ahab (874-854 B.C.), his son Ahaziah (853-852 B.C.), and the beginning of Joram's reign in 852 B.C. He was also a prophet to the house of Judah sometime after 848 B.C:

Notice that the first Elijah is God's messenger through which he punishes the house of Israel. We read this in first kings, chapter 17, verse one:

"And Elijah the Tishbite, and inhabitant of Gilead, said to Ahab, As the Lord, the God of Israel, lives, whom I serve, there will be neither dew nor rain in these years, except by my word" (1.Kgs.17:1 Para.).

Elijah is one of the most dynamic men in the entire Bible, yet in this first mention of him, he is merely introduced as Elijah the Tishbite, an inhabitant of Gilead. As a Tishbite he was from Tishbe, a village in Gilead east of the Jordan River, which was the area originally given to the tribe of Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh. This is all of the background information that is given about the original Elijah.

The scriptures do not tell us any thing about Elijah's lineage or his bloodline, or if he was even an Israelite. However, it seems logical that he was an Israelite because of the importance of his mission to Israel and the negative attitude of Israelites toward non-Israelites during that age.

Elijah Punishes Israel

In first kings, the eighteenth, verse one and two, God gives these instructions to Elijah:

"After a long time, in the third year [third year of drought], the word of the Lord came to Elijah: "Go and present yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on the land." So Elijah went to present himself to Ahab. Now the famine was severe in Samaria" (1.Kgs.18:1-2 NIV).

Three years after Elijah had caused a drought to come upon Israel, God sends him to tell king Ahab to repent. Because it was no secret who had caused the drought and why he had caused it, one would think that king Ahab would have known that his actions were not acceptable to God, and that God was punishing him because he was allowing Israel to become paganized. However, the first thing Ahab does is accuse Elijah of being a troublemaker:

Continuing in chapter 18 verse 16:

"And Ahab went to meet Elijah. When he saw Elijah, he said to him, "Is that you, you troubler of Israel?" Elijah replied, "I have not made trouble for Israel," "But you and your father's family have. You have abandoned the Lord's commands and have followed the Baals" (1.Kgs.18:16-18 NIV).

Elijah tells Ahab that his departure from the ways of God is the reason for the drought and famine. Here, we see Elijah bringing a very direct and forthright message to the civil leader of Israel concerning his and Israel's sins before God and the subsequent punishment for their wicked and rebellious behavior.

Ancient Israel and its leaders had a proclivity to forget God's laws and to accept and worship false gods.

7:49.842 tone becomes brassy again

Today, the same situation exists among the Israelitish peoples; they have forgotten their God and are steeped in many different worship systems that are in opposition to the Sovereign God and Jesus Christ.

Elijah tells King Ahab, "Now summon the people from all over Israel to meet me on Mount Carmel. And bring the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and the four hundred prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel's table" (1.Kgs.18:19 Para.).

God's Instrument Against Evil

At Mount Carmel, with Ahab and 850 pagan prophets and priests present, Elijah tells them to prepare a sacrifice and ask their gods to show that they are true by consuming the sacrifice. After many hours of incantations, crying, yelling, leaping, dancing, and cutting their flesh in order to get their gods to respond, nothing happened to their sacrifices.

When it was evident that the pagan prophets and priests had failed to summon their gods, Elijah prepared a simple rock altar, placed the wood and bullock on it, and had four barrels of water poured on the whole thing. After all of this preparation, Elijah asked the Creator God to show these people that he was the true God and that he had sent him to say and do the things that he did:

In First Kings chapter 18, verses 36-39, we read:

"And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the sacrifice, that Elijah came near and said, Lord, God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known today that you are God in Israel and that I have done all these things at your word. Answer me, O Lord, answer me; and this people shall know that you are the Lord God, and that you shall turn their hearts back again. And fire fell from the Lord God and consumed the burnt offering, and the wood, and the stones and the dust, and the water that was in the trench was licked up by it. And the people saw, and fell on their faces, and said, The Lord, he is God! the Lord he is God!" (1.Kgs.18:36-39 Para.).

With a demonstration of great power, God showed his acceptance of Elijah's offering and that, when Elijah asked something of him, he would take action to fulfill his request. Elijah had a tremendous amount of authority and power from God, which he could use at his discretion for the purpose of turning the Israelites away from evil and toward righteousness.

"Then Elijah commanded them, "Seize the prophets of Baal [all these religious leaders, all 850 of them]. Don't let anyone get away!" They seized them, and Elijah had them brought down to the Kishon Valley and slaughtered them there" (1.Kgs.18:40 NIV).

Elijah did not hesitate to use his authority and power as a prophet of God to punish wicked and rebellious behavior in order to deliver the message of repentance that God had given him. He aggressively reprimanded both civil and religious leaders who were in opposition to the true God and he eliminated those he perceived as a threat to his mission. See 2.Kgs.1:1-12.

Selected by God

From what is recorded about Elijah, it is clear that God selected him as a prophet and communicated directly with him. Notice that at Mount Carmel, Elijah announces that his authority and power to do the things that he did came from the Creator God. Notice also that one of Elijah's responsibilities was delivering God's message of repentance, so that God could turn the Israelites away from paganism to his teachings:

Elijah had a very powerful ministry and worked many miracles through the awesome power that God gave him. The following are some of those miracles:

1. He caused the rain to cease for three and a half years.
2. He caused it to rain after three and a half years of drought.
3. He created food as an act of mercy.
4. He resurrected a dead child as a very special blessing.
5. He caused God to consume his offering with

- fire as a display of his authority
6. He caused fire to consume two different groups of soldiers that came to arrest him
 7. He parted the Jordan River at the completion of his active ministry in Israel.

Many people believe and teach that after Elijah's mission to Israel was finished, he went to heaven and is there today, but is this really true? Where did Elijah actually go after he disappeared into the heavens in a fiery chariot?

After Elijah had finished his primary work in Israel, he was sent to the house of Judah to continue his ministry as a prophet. We know this is so; because, the Bible documents that after Elijah left Israel in a fiery chariot, he sent a letter from Judah to king Jehoram who was the king of the house of Israel, and who began to reign in 848 B.C., which is about four years after Elijah disappeared into the heavens. The letter foretold a punishment from God to come upon Jehoram and the nation of Israel for their wickedness and rebellion against him. Elijah did not go to Heaven as many teach today he was still alive and actively preaching a message of repentance to the covenant people after he left Israel in the fiery chariot.

Article Offer:

If you want to know why Elijah did not go to heaven to be with God and where he is today, write for my study "Are Enoch and Elijah in Heaven".

THE SECOND ELIJAH WAS JOHN THE BAPTIST

In the first chapter of the gospel of Luke we are told this about the second Elijah:

"In the time of Herod king of Judea there was a priest named Zacharias, who belonged to the priestly division of Abijah; his wife Elizabeth was also a descendant of Aaron. Both of them were upright in the sight of God, observing all the Lord's commandments and regulations blamelessly" (Lk.1:5-6 NIV).

John the Baptist's mother was of the Aaronic bloodline and his father was a priest of the course of Abijah, which meant that he was also of the Aaronic bloodline. Therefore, both of the parents of John the Baptist were of the tribe of Levi.

Selected by God

Before John was born, his father was told that he would have a son, and that this son would herald the coming of the Messiah who would bring salvation to the world.

A messenger from God told Zacharias the following about his future son:

"He will be a joy and a delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. . . and he will be filled with the holy spirit even from birth. Many of the people of Israel will he bring back to the Lord their God. And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord" (Lk.1:14-17 NIV).

John was selected before his conception to announce the advent of the Messiah. Notice also that, just as with the first Elijah, God chose John the Baptist to turn the hearts of the people to righteousness.

Shortly after John's birth, his father was inspired by the holy spirit to utter the following prophecy concerning John.

"And you, child, shall be called the prophet of the Highest [the Sovereign God]: for you shall go before the face of the Lord [Jesus Christ] to prepare his ways; To give knowledge of salvation to his people by the remission of their sins,. . . To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace" (Lk.1:76-77,79 KJV). See also Matt.1:18-22.

Here, we see that John the Baptist was a representative of Sovereign God, who is God the Father, whereas the first Elijah was a representative

of the Creator God who became the Messiah. This is an important understanding, because the third Elijah will represent both God the Father and Jesus Christ.

Mark said the following about John's Mission:

"As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before my face, which shall prepare your way before you. The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare you the way of the Lord, make his paths straight" (Mk.1:2-3 KJV). See also Isa.40:3-5; Matt.11:7-10; Lk.3:2-4.

John's mission was to lay the foundation for God the Father's messenger (the Messiah) to build upon. John was to make the announcement of the coming message and the messenger and to set the boundaries of the message that the messenger would give. Therefore, John's message contained the foundational elements of the things that Jesus Christ would teach, such as repentance, forgiveness of sin, baptism, and the Kingdom of God:

Matthew tells us that, John the Baptist began his ministry preaching in the wilderness of Judea, And saying, Repent you: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt.3:1-2 KJV).

When Jesus came he did not deviate from the message that John announced that he would proclaim. From the beginning to the end of Jesus ministry, Jesus explained in great detail the things that concern repentance, pardon of sin, baptism, and the Kingdom of God.

THE WORD AND THE LIGHT

The apostle John clearly says that Jesus was sent from the Sovereign God to illuminate the world with spiritual insight, and that John the Baptist was the one who God sent to prepare the way for the coming of the Light (i.e., Jesus Christ).

In the first chapter of John, beginning in verse 1, John says this about the God who became a man.

John 1:1-5;10-14 KJV

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shined in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not" (vs.1-5).

John tells us that Jesus was the word that was sent to earth by the Sovereign God, then he says this about John the Baptist.

"There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light, which lights every man that comes into the world" (Jn.1:6-9 KJV).

While speaking to a large crowd of people, Jesus said this of John the Baptist:

"What did you come out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written: 'I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you. I tell you the truth: Among those born of women there has not risen a greater than John the Baptist: yet he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he'" (Matt.11:9-11 Para.).

John was a great man. He had impeccable character and performed a great work for God. The birth and ministry of John the Baptist was the second most important birth and ministry that has ever happened on earth, because John made the announcement of the coming of the Messiah who would reveal and proclaim the good news from God the Father.

How did John the Baptist prepare the way for the first advent of Jesus? John made the announcement of the coming of the Messiah to redeem humanity. Among other things, John's message contained the foundational elements of the things that Jesus would teach, such as repentance, forgiveness of sin, baptism, and the Kingdom of God.

THE FIRST TWO ELIJAH'S MISSIONS

There are some significant differences between the missions of Elijah and John the Baptist are as follows:

1. Elijah was sent primarily to the house of Israel. John was sent primarily to the house of Judah.
2. Elijah called for the civil and religious leadership and the people of Israel to repent and worship the true God. John called for the Jews and their religious leaders to repent, worship the true God, and prepare to receive the Messiah.
3. Elijah was authorized to use God's great power and he used it to work many miracles. John the Baptist worked no miracles.
4. Elijah did not preach the coming Kingdom of God. John preached about the coming Kingdom of God.

The following are some of the similarities between the missions of Elijah and John the Baptist:

1. Both preached the adherence to the laws, precepts, and principles of God.
2. Both preached repentance and a return to the faith once delivered.
3. Both had limited success in convincing people to repent and worship the true God.

THE THIRD ELIJAH

But, why must a third Elijah come on the world scene before Christ returns?

The disciples were well versed in the prophecies as many of their day were; however, they did not understand them. They knew that the prophet Malachi foretold that God would send Elijah before the advent of the Messiah; therefore, this is the reason for their question concerning Elijah:

The disciples asked Jesus, 'Why do the Scribes say that Elijah must come first? Jesus replied, Elijah truly will come first and restore all things. But I tell you, Elijah has already come, and they did not

recognize him, but have done to him what ever they wanted to do. Likewise shall the Son of Man suffer at their hands.' Then the disciples understood that he was speaking to them about John the Baptist" (Matt.17:10-13 Para.). See also Matt.11:10-14; Mk.9:11-13.

Jesus clearly says that John the Baptist was the prophetic Elijah who was to come before the Messiah. When he said, "Elijah truly will come first and restore all things." Jesus clearly reveals that there would be yet another Elijah to come after John the Baptist. The reason another Elijah must come is that John the Baptist did not come to restore anything; however, when the third Elijah comes he will be involved in the restoration of all things. But just what are these things that he will restore?

The Prophecy

The only clear prophecies concerning Elijah's ministry during the time just prior to Christ's return as Lord of lords and King of kings are found in the prophecies of Malachi and Matthew:

Malachi chapter 3, verse 1 says this:

"Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me. . ." (Mal.3:1 KJV).

Jesus said in Matthew chapter 4, verses 5 and 6

"Behold I am sending you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the sons, and the heart of the sons to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with utter destruction" (Mal.4:5-6 Para.).

Jesus said to his disciples, "Elijah truly will come first and restore all things" (Matt.17:11 Para.).

Within these three prophecies are the keys to understanding the ministry of the third Elijah during the end of the age. Notice that he will prepare the way before Christ returns, and that he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the sons and the sons to the fathers.

The Fathers and the Sons

The prophetic reference to fathers and the sons by Malachi is partially a reference to the fathers who taught the truth of God, such as the Patriarchs, Moses, the Aaronic priesthood, and the Apostles. The sons are a reference to those who are taught the righteous ways of God through these teachers of righteousness.

The Things to be Restored

The prophetic reference by Jesus of the restoration of all things is a reference to the restoration of God's worship system. The restoration of God's worship system includes the sacrifices and Jesus' teachings concerning the salvation of humanity and the spiritual relationship between God the Father and his elect children.

The message of the third Elijah is centered around the restoration of the truth of God. Therefore, we should expect the third Elijah to restore an understanding of how the worship system that God instituted at Mount Sinai and the worship system that Jesus instituted at Jerusalem work together in the salvation of any who will believe and worship God the Father in truth.

When these two aspects of the Father's worship system are restored and understood in the light of his plan for the salvation of humanity and are believed by those whom he calls to salvation, it can truly be said that the hearts of the fathers are turned to the sons and the sons to the fathers, because belief in and adherence to God's true worship system results in a return to a harmonious relationship between the fathers who taught righteousness (i.e., the Patriarchs, Moses, Aaron, the Apostles, and others) and the sons (i.e., those who are taught righteousness and believe).

To Whom is the Third Elijah Sent?

The first Elijah and second Elijah (who was John the Baptist) were both sent to the covenant people (who are the Israelites). All the prophecies concerning national Israel just prior to Christ's return clearly show a powerful warning and witness

message being given to the house of Judah (that is the Jews) and the house of Israel (that is the ten scattered tribes of Israel). From these prophecies, we can see that the third Elijah will also proclaim God's message to Israel. If indeed the third Elijah is sent to modern day Israel, his message will be heard loud and clear in the Jewish nation of Israel as well as Israelitish nations, which include the United States, Great Britain, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the nations of Northwestern Europe.

Just what will be the third Elijah's message?

When we review the ministries of the first Elijah and the second Elijah, we find that both had one major thing in common; they both preached a powerful warning message of repentance to God's covenant people and called for them to return to the true and uncorrupted worship of the true God, so that they would not have to face the wrath of God.

The primary emphasis of their ministries concerned the establishment and/or restoration of a spiritual relationship between God and his chosen people. It is also evident by what is said of the third Elijah's ministry that this will also be one of his messages.

A Warning of Punishment

Before God administers punishment, he always sends a prophet to warn his covenant people that he is about to punish them for their wickedness and rebellion against him. Therefore, because the third Elijah will be a prophet, it seems logical that, along with his call for Israel to repent and return to their God, he will give them a warning message concerning the consequences of not repenting.

If the third Elijah comes with the same type of authority and discretionary power as the first Elijah, he will more than likely use this power like the first Elijah did in the performance of his responsibilities.

Because the second Elijah was not recognized until Christ revealed that he was John the Baptist, a logical question would be: How will the third Elijah be recognized for who and what he is? There are three major things that will help one to recognize the prophet Elijah:

1. His message of the restoration of the spiritual truths concerning God's first covenant with national Israel and the new covenant that God the Father established through Jesus Christ.
2. His call for the civil and religious leaders and the people of the houses of Judah and Israel to repent and return to the true worship of God.
3. His knowledge, understanding, and proclamation of the true gospel message as set forth by Jesus Christ, the apostles, and the unified spirit-filled body of Christ.

There is a tremendous difference between what the Bible actually says concerning prophetic events, the Sovereign God's worship system, what is required in order to be counted as one having their name written in the Sovereign God's book of life, and what is popularly believed and taught by most people today.

Why is this so? The Bible reveals that it is Satan the Devil and his ministers who have counterfeited God's word and message to humanity with a perverted version.

Jesus told the aged apostle John that it is: "That old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which is deceiving the whole world".Rev.12:9 Para.

This powerful spirit-being known as the Devil (Satan) and other evil spirits are actively deceiving the entire world politically, philosophically, and religiously.

The Bible reveals that there are two distinct paths that a person can follow during one's life here on earth. One leads to eternal life and the other to eternal death

Because most people have been greatly deceived, concerning the Sovereign God's good news message and his worship system, they simply do not believe what Jesus Christ said or the early church taught concerning the end of the age; therefore, most will not recognize the third Elijah or his message from the Sovereign God.

However, you do not have to be deceived and you will be able to recognize the third Elijah and his message if you follow the instructions given in the Bible concerning, who is and who is not God, and what is and is not the Sovereign God's worship system and way of life for mankind.

I see that my time is up.

If you want to know more about Bible prophecy or the other subjects that I have briefly touched on in this in this broadcast, Write to me at the at the address given in the following announcement. Until next time this is Bud Cocherell for Bible Research .org.

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