

THE SECOND COMING OF ELIJAH (Preparing for Christmas)

Text: Matthew 17:1-13

Isaiah 40:3

Malachi 4:5, 6

God promised that when Elijah would make his return, he would restore all things. Jesus said in Matthew 17:11b, "...Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things." The word "restore" comes to us from the Greek word, "apokathistemi." This is a word that means to reconstitute in three ways: health, home or organization. This prophet will reconstitute (build up again from parts; reconstruct) our health, a promise of the fulfillment of Malachi 4:2b: "But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in his wings...." This is a healing spiritually, emotionally and, one day, physically. This great prophet will reconstitute our homes. Malachi 4:6a: "And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers...." This prophet will reconstitute our organization, i.e., laying the foundation for the church: "And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees..." (Matthew 3:10a). "He that hath the bride is the Bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth Him, rejoiceth greatly because of the Bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled" (John 3:29). It is most interesting to note that to this day, the orthodox Jew pours the "Cup of Elijah," inviting the ancient prophet to their Passover (Seder) meal. Then at the end of the meal, the cup is poured and the door is open and Elijah is invited to come in with the understood belief that Elijah will announce the coming of Messiah. According to Jesus, John the Baptist was the return of Elijah in spirit and power. Let's see why John's coming is so very important.

I. THE MIRACLE IN THE MAKING

Luke 1:5-37

A. Correct Lineage: Luke 1:5

God places us in the families that lead us into the plan of His will. God gives us the parents we need.

B. Correct Behavior: Luke 1:6

Our Lord never separates His blessing from our behavior. Psalm 84:11: "For the LORD God is a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly."

C. Correct Environment

1. Impossible circumstance: Luke 1:7, 37

When God wants to do something good, He starts with a difficulty. When He wants to do something great, He starts with impossibility.

2. Perfect Timing: Luke 1:8, 9

What may appear to be a regular routine often becomes our destination for Divine destiny!

3. Answered prayer: Luke 1:10-14

So often the answers to prayer are a long time in coming. Such is the case of Zacharias and Elisabeth who were “well stricken in years” (Luke 1:7, 18). It is so amazing to Zacharias that he reminds Gabriel of this fact. Are you ready to give up on an answer to prayer? Remember, God is more ready to answer our prayers in His will than we are willing to pray them.

II. THE MAN GOD USED

Luke 1:15-44; John 1:19-27; John 3:25-29

A. Separated: Luke 1:15a

Psalms 24:3, 4: “Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.”

Job 17:9: “The righteous also shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger.”

B. Spirit-filled: Luke 1:15b

A primary purpose of the in-filling of the Holy Spirit is to provide us power to be a witness of the validity and reality of Jesus.

John 15:26: “But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me.”

Acts 1:8: “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”

C. Soul-winner: Luke 1:16, 17

Proverbs 11:30: “The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise.”

D. Second Elijah

1. Humble John: John 1:19-23, 37

James 4:10: “Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.”

I Peter 5:6: “Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.”

2. Honest John: John 3:25-26, 29

Psalm 15:1: "LORD, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart."

3. Happy John: Luke 1:23-33; 39-44

What an unusual event! John the Baptist, while yet unborn, comes into the presence of Jesus our Lord who was also not yet born, and leaps for joy!

Isaiah 52:9: "Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem: for the LORD hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem."

When the ark of God was being brought back to Jerusalem, David could not restrain his joy. The Bible says, "And David danced before the LORD with all his might..." (II Samuel 6:14a). The word "danced" is from the Hebrew word, "karar," which means to leap for joy in a whirling manner. The Ark of the Covenant was the geographical point in the earth where the manifested presence of God came among His people. The king (David) was celebrating the True King who was coming into Jerusalem (Psalm 110:1; Luke 20:41-44).

Isaiah 51:11 "Therefore the redeemed of the LORD shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away."

Even as a babe, young John is given supernatural insight. He knew in a wonderful, mystical and marvelous way that he was in the presence of the Redeemer!

CONCLUSION:

John 1:6-8

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