

John the Baptist Was Elias

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John the Baptist Was Elias
(*Matthew 11:14*)

John the Baptist Was Not Elias
(*John 1:21*)

Almighty God proclaimed, through an angel, that John the Baptist was predestined to do the same work that Elijah the prophet had done previously.

But the angel said to him, 'Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. ¹⁴And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. ¹⁵For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink (i.e. Nazirite vow; cf. Nu. 6:1-21). He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. ¹⁶And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. ¹⁷**He will also go before Him (Almighty God) 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' (Lk. 1:13-17; NKJV used throughout unless otherwise noted; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Elijah's work was focused on exposing the sins of Israel in the hope they would repent and begin obeying God. However, even after Elijah performed a miracle that exposed the priests of Baal as charlatans (1Kgs. 18:20-40), the nation of Israel continued living contrary to the law and commandments of God, and eventually went into captivity (2Kgs. 17:6-23).

In the case of John the Baptist, he warned the leadership and nation of Judah that they needed to repent.

Then he (John) said to the multitudes that came out to be baptized by him, 'Brood (offspring) of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? ⁸Therefore **bear fruits worthy of repentance**, and do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones' (Lk. 3:7-8; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

The Pharisees and Sadducees claimed their righteousness through a physical lineage dating back to the time of their forefather Abraham. However, their claim did not have any credibility because Abraham, and the "fathers" of Israel that followed him, trusted and obeyed Almighty God, while works of the Pharisees and Sadducees declared that they did not (Mt. 16:12).

Then Israel (Jacob) stretched out his right hand and laid it on Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand on Manasseh's head, guiding his hands knowingly, for Manasseh was the firstborn. ¹⁵And he blessed Joseph, and said: '**God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked**, the God who has fed me all my life long to this day, ¹⁶The Angel (of the Lord; Nu. 20:16; Jgs. 2:1; 2:4; cf. 1Cor. 10:1-4; Ex. 14:14, 19; Jn. 5:37; Isa. 58:8) who has redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads: **Let my name be named upon them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac;** and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth' (Gen. 48:14-16; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

It was to these future descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that Elijah was sent as well as John the Baptist. Prior to Christ's return to rule

this planet, another work of Elijah will take place in the hope that the descendants, or children of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, will repent and return to the obedient attitude their forefathers had toward God. If this repentance occurs, there will be a restoration of families and nations. If this does not occur, there will be considerable destruction.

Behold, I (Almighty God) will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. ⁶And 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 (SHD 2764; utter destruction) (Mal. 4:5-6; Ed. note in parenthesis).

With this background, it should be easier to understand what Jesus Christ was saying about John the Baptist, when he compared him to Elijah, metaphorically.

And if you are willing to receive it, he (John) is Elijah (metaphorically) who is to come (Mt. 11:14; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Christ was explaining that the generation during the time of his ministry had an opportunity to repent and be reconciled to God through John's preaching; just as ancient Israel had the opportunity when Elijah was alive. However, when the Jewish religious leaders asked John the Baptist whether he was Elijah, they were commenting on their understanding of "the Elijah" mentioned in Malachi 4:5-6. They knew that utter destruction could occur if John was the one fulfilling this prophecy and they didn't repent. Also, it would have been proof that the Messiah's appearance was near, in which case the Jewish leaders expected the Roman occupation to end suddenly. However, John stated clearly that he was not fulfilling the work of an end-time Elijah, per Malachi 4:5-6. This is

due to the fact that Christ's first coming was not to judge the world (Jn. 3:17; 12:47). That would be Christ's next commission when he returns to rule this planet and establish his Father's law and commandments.

Now this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, 'Who are you?' ²⁰He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, 'I am not the Christ.' ²¹And they asked him, 'What then? Are you Elijah?' He said, 'I am not.' 'Are you the Prophet (Dt. 18:15, 18)?' And he answered, 'No' (Jn. 1:19-21; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Christ confirmed that someone would be doing the work of an end-time Elijah, but this would not occur during his earthly ministry. He also pointed out that John the Baptist was fulfilling aspects of the work that the original Elijah did, but John was executed in the process.

And his (Christ's) disciples asked him, saying, 'Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?' ¹¹Then Jesus answered and said to them, 'Elijah truly is coming (future sense because John the Baptist had already been executed at this point; cf. Jn. 14:1-12) and will restore all things. ¹²But I say to you that Elijah has come already (metaphorically in the form of John the Baptist), and they did not know him (recognize his commission) but did to him whatever they wished (killed him). Likewise (in like manner) the Son of Man (Christ) is also about to suffer at their hands.' ¹³**Then the disciples understood that he (Christ) spoke to them of (about) John the Baptist** (Mt. 17:10-13; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Although Christ's disciples did not understand immediately that Christ was referring to John the Baptist as being a "type" of Elijah, and that a future "type" of Elijah would follow, they finally

were able to decipher what Christ was teaching. Sadly, those who use certain scriptures in this study to claim there is a contradiction in God's Word, do not understand how figurative language is used in the Bible. Also, unless there is a correct understanding of the different commissions Almighty God gave Jesus Christ, the references to Elijah can appear confusing. However, when the context and timing of these commissions is understood, the identity of Elijah should become clear.

In conclusion, Elijah preached repentance during his lifetime. John the Baptist continued the same work that Elijah was commissioned to do during the time of Christ's earthly ministry, but was executed in the process. In the future, another work of Elijah will arise and it will be followed by the return of Jesus Christ to rule this planet and banish the Adversary, who will then await judgment along with all who have sinned (see study: Satan's Removal and the Sabbath Rest).

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