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When Elijah comes

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"Elias Truly Shall First Come" (Matthew 17:11).

Thus spake Immanuel, the Greatest of all the Prophets, reminding us of the certainty that Elijah shall come again to the earth before the Lord returns in glory.

Few realise the wondrous fact that Elijah is coming in the weakness of the flesh, tough with super-natural powers, to testify to the truth of thee Scriptures in the last days.

The coming of Elijah is mentioned several times in the Scriptures. In Malachi we find the plain and clear statement that Elijah shall come before the Lord Jesus is revealed in judgment (Malachi 4:5). The disciples believed, though they did not then fully understand this Scripture. Therefore they were perplexed, and asked the Lord, in effect, "As Thou art the Christ, why has not Elijah first come?" They were not then able to distinguish clearly between the first and second comings of the Lord.

Elijah Expected According to Old Testament

In each of the Gospels the coming of Elijah is mentioned. It is recorded in the first chapter of John that some of the Jews thought that John the Baptist was Elijah. They had reasons for so thinking. He was the herald, and forerunner of Christ; he came to prepare the way of the Lord Jesus (Isaiah 40:3) ; and he came in the spirit and power of Elijah, as was foretold at his birth (Luke 1:17) and explained by the Lord to the disciples (Matt. 17:10-13). But He said, in answer, to the question, "Art thou Elias?" "I am not" (John 1:21).

When the Saviour hung on the Cross, it was thought, mistakenly, that He called on Elijah for help, and that Elijah might come to save Him from His enemies. Israel did not know that Elijah, and Moses also, had come to the earth, and had conversed with the Lord Jesus about His death, in the presence of the disciples. Elijah had come, but he had borne no testimony to Israel, nor had he "restored all things"; and Christ had appeared before he came. Therefore the prophecy of Malachi is not yet fulfilled.

Moreover, the Antichrist, the Man of Sin (2 Thess. 2:3-12) the last great autocrat, must arise, whom Elijah will resist even unto death.

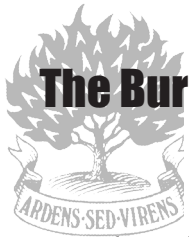
"Moses and Elias" (Matthew 17:3)

And with Elijah will be his fellow-witness, whose name Scripture withholds.

Who will he be? Most probably Moses. Men are denying the inspired writings of Moses. What will they say if he, himself, appears to testify to the Scriptures, and to prove God's power to fulfil His Word? What will scoffers and men of modern thought feel when the two witnesses call down from Heaven the awful judgments recorded in the book of Revelation ?

The appearance of Elijah will be rebuke and condemnation to Christendom, though his testimony will be sent chiefly to Israel. Of course the "tares" will reject and despise, for they never truly receive God's Word. But what of the "wheat"? Most of God's true people refuse to accept prophetic truth. What will they do when it is being fulfilled in every detail of judgment before their eyes?

If Christians are so deluded as to mistake latitudinarianism (indifference toward doctrinal truth) for millennial unity, and strive for a universal brotherhood of man (in bold disobedience to such a Scripture as 2 Corinthians 6:14-18) will they be likely to believe in these witnesses when they appear? Although we may expect an exception to this ignorance and unbelief, in the revival of truth foreshadowed by our Lord in the parable of the pearl (Matt. 13:45).



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The Nature of Elijah's Testimony

It is evident that he is not sent to preach the Gospel. Fire, not grace is on the lips of the witnesses (Rev. 11:5). As Elijah stood before Ahab, so he will confront the Antichrist. And will he not testify to prophetic truth ?

Some say the world is making progress, but "Progress! Whither?" was a question asked by Lord Beaconsfield. Prophetic Scripture answers the question, reveals the future, and tells us what will be the condition of the world when Elijah appears.

World Conditions at that Time

The wealth and commercial prosperity of Europe will have reverted to the East; and Babylon, rebuilt, will have become the metropolis of the world (Zechariah 5:5-11, and Revelation 17 and 18).

The ten kingdoms of the Roman empire will be united under Antichrist, who will be reigning over them as King of Babylon, and autocrat of the world (Revelation 13 and 17:12, 13). It is painful to foresee that our own country (England) will be one of the nations in this federation of Europe and the East.

Israel, returned to their own land in idolatry and unbelief (Isaiah 2:6-9), will have accepted the Antichrist as their King (John 5:43).

The Temple will have been rebuilt in Jerusalem, and the image of Antichrist will be worshipped there by all men in his dominions (Matt. 24:15, and Revelation 13:15).

The great apostasy from truth will have culminated; and the period when the Gospel is preached as a witness to all nations (Matt. 24:14) will be nearing its close.

No attempt is made to state these prophetic events in order of occurrence; but they are existing when Elijah comes.

Antichrist will drive Christianity out of his empire; but he cannot silence the witnesses until the end. Elijah's testimony will be bitter and terrible to him. How will the great King bear to have himself and all his mighty acts proved to be in fulfilment of Scripture, and his doom proclaimed? (Isaiah 14).

What will Christendom Say?

And will not Elijah's testimony be bitter to Christendom also? Having rejected prophetic truth, many of God's people say that the Lord Jesus may return at any moment! They thus deny His words, "Elijah truly shall first come," and they reject all that He taught respecting the events that must transpire before He appears.

What will they say when Elijah has come, and is testifying? He will be able to point to Christendom's evil history in the 13th of Matthew, fulfilled as the Lord Jesus predicted.

Elijah will see the "tares" grown to full maturity, and about to meet their end in the "furnace of fire." He will see the "mustard tree" of Christendom in its full age of prosperous growth ready to fall by the axe of judgment. He will find that Christendom has fed on the leavened meal that the professing church mixed, and is filled to the full with error (Matt. 13:33).

Christendom will "sleep" as foretold by the Lord in the parable of the ten virgins. The "talent" of precious prophetic truth which was delivered to the Church (Revelation 1:1) will have been hidden in the earth by many an unprofitable servant (Matthew 25).

Preparation for Israel's Return

God sends Elijah to prepare His nation Israel for the Coming of the Lord Jesus, their Messiah, and their King (Malachi 4:5, 6). God will have gathered them back to their own land and city for terrible judgment, see



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Ezekiel 22:17-22.

Signs of this gathering now appear; and we are reminded of our Lord's prophecy concerning it in Matthew 12:43-45. The seven-fold power of Satan will occupy Israel at the last. But God will seal a remnant (Revelation 7:3) who will mourn for and wait for their Messiah till He comes to save and convert them (Zechariah 12:10-14).