

## **ASK FOR THE OLD PATHS #7**

### **Introduction**

I want to move on with a 7<sup>th</sup> message on 'Ask for the Old Paths' and begin with a bold statement. I believe the Bible teaches that...

**Before Christ comes down, an 'Elijah' ministry must rise up, preparing the way of the Lord by restoring the generational connection between the fathers and their children.**

I'm taking my text from the Book of Malachi, the last 2 verses in the Old Testament...a prophecy about something that must happen *before* the coming of the Lord...

### **Malachi 4:5-6**

**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, or else I will come and strike the land with a curse.**

The prophecy is very plain-BEFORE the coming of the Lord-God will send ELIJAH. First, as we shall see, God was not saying he would send a resurrected Elijah.

### **Matthew Henry**

**Elijah that prophesied in Israel in the days of Ahab shall come again to be the forerunner of the Messiah; not the same person, but another of the same spirit.**

Second, since there are 2 'comings' of Christ, this prophecy will have a 'double fulfilment'.

In the 1<sup>st</sup> coming of Christ, Elijah refers to the ministry of John the Baptist. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming of Christ, it will refer to a ministry that rises up in the spirit and power of Elijah. So I want to entitle this teaching...

### **"The Return of the Spirit of Elijah"**

## I. The Double Fulfilment of the Prophecy of Malachi

### A. God Sent the Spirit of Elijah Before The First Coming of Christ

1. 400 years after Malachi's prophecy, the Angel of the Lord appears to a man named Zacharias with a prophecy about his soon-to-be-born son, who would be known as John the Baptist...

**Luke 1:16**

**He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God.**

**Luke 1:17**

**He 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.**

**Hawker's Poor Man's Commentary**

**John the Baptist was not Elijah, but he came in the spirit and power of Elijah, commissioned by the Holy Ghost.**

2. John was God's 'Elijah' who prepared the way for the 1<sup>st</sup> coming of Christ;; but Jesus Himself tells us there will be another 'Elijah' to prepare the way for His 2<sup>nd</sup> coming!

**Matthew 17:10-12**

**And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?" Jesus answered and said to them, "Indeed, Elijah is coming first and will restore all things. But I say to you that Elijah has come already, and they did not know him but did to him whatever they wished.**

3. Don't miss this! Jesus says 'Elijah IS COMING first to 'restore all things'. But then He says, 'Elijah HAS COME ALREADY'. There is the double-fulfilment!

- a. Elijah IS COMING 'to restore all things' is in the FUTURE.
- b. But then He says 'Elijah HAS COME ALREADY' refers to the PAST.
- c. Jesus then identifies the one who has 'already come'...

**Matthew 17:13**

**Then the disciples understood that He spoke to them of John the Baptist.**

4. Don't miss this! Jesus tells them that John was the Elijah has come already preparing the way for His first coming; BUT HE ALSO CONFIRMS THAT ANOTHER ELIJAH IS COMING to prepare the way for His SECOND COMING.

a. There are 2 comings; there must be 2 'Elijah's'; and the ministry of the Elijah to come will be greater than John because he will do things John did not do! Compare various translations...

**Matthew 17:11-12 NASB**

**"Elijah is coming and will restore all things...**

**Matt 17:11-12 BBE**

**Elijah truly has to come and put all things right...**

**Matt 17:11-12 GWT**

**"Elijah is coming and will put everything in order again...**

**Matt 17:11-12 NCV**

**Jesus answered, "They are right to say that Elijah is coming and that he will make everything the way it should be..."**

5. Jesus makes them understand that John is the Elijah who has 'come already' that they did not recognize; but John CANNOT be the Elijah who is coming because the Elijah who is coming will *restore everything...put all things right...make everything the way it should be.*

**R.T. Kendall**

**John cannot be the Elijah who is coming because John restored nothing.**

6. Strictly speaking, John did turn the hearts of the Jews back to God with his preaching of repentance and the Kingdom of God.

a. But the Elijah who is coming before Christ's 2<sup>nd</sup> coming will restore all things.

7. Some of God's people are sitting at the airport waiting for the Rapture. But I hate to tell you the flight's been delayed. Christ isn't coming until an Elijah ministry comes before Him to restore all things, as confirmed by the Apostle Peter's words to the Jews in Acts 3...

### **Acts 3:19-21**

**Now repent of your sins and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped away. Then times of refreshment will come from the presence of the Lord, and he will again send you Jesus, your appointed Messiah. For he must remain in heaven until the time for the final restoration of all things, as God promised long ago through his holy prophets.**

a. Notice Peter preached the same words Jesus used about the delayed coming of the Lord awaiting a time when there will be a final 'restoration of all things'.

8. We need to pause a moment and review what we've said so far.

### **REVIEW**

**There are 2 'comings' of Christ**

**Each coming must be preceded by an Elijah ministry**

**John was the 1<sup>st</sup>, ministering 'in the spirit and power of Elijah**

**So the great question is: WHO IS THE 'ELIJAH TO COME'?**

### **B. The Coming Elijah Ministry (Elijah Must First Come)**

1. Some are looking for the Elijah to come in one man, one individual person; I think this may be a mistake.

2. The nature of the prophecy indicates that it will be fulfilled through the generation of God's people who will be alive when Christ comes again.

3. The 'restoration of all things' cannot be accomplished by one person! It will take an entire generation of God's people, moving in the 'spirit and power of Elijah'.

### **Sadhu Sundar Selvaraj**

**Just as the spirit and power of Elijah came upon the prophets Elisha and John the Baptist, so will it come upon the prophetic generation of the last days.**

4. Just as John prepared the way of the Lord in His first coming, ministering in the 'spirit and power of Elijah', so will this Jesus generation prepare the way of the Lord in His second coming, ministering in the 'spirit and power of Elijah'.

5. I know many of God's people have given up on changing this world. They are looking for the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming of Christ as their only hope. But Jesus tells us to look for the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming of the Elijah ministry that has to come first.

6. Many are expecting more and more defeat; they're looking for Christ to return and restore all things. But we should be expecting more and more victory, looking for an Elijah generation that will return and restore all things.

7. I don't know if we are that generation. But when I look at the timing of the political climate in the days of Elijah, I believe we could be!

### **Sadhu Sundar Selvaraj**

**The moral and spiritual conditions that exists in the world in these present times are no different from the moral and spiritual decline that existed during the time when Elijah made his appearance, as recorded in the Old Testament.**

8. Let's take some time to look at the political climate in the Old Testament as to the timing of the arrival of the Prophet Elijah and compare it with the political climate today.

### **C. The Discerning the Signs of the Times: Political Timing**

1. God raised up the prophet Elijah during the reign of King Ahab, who was the worst king Israel ever had.

#### **1 Kings 16:30**

**Now Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the Lord, more than all who were before him.**

- a. America now has the worst President we've ever had.
- b. In many ways, America has a modern version of evil King Ahab!

2. Ahab took the nation away from God. He replaced the God of Israel with idols, provoking the anger of God.

#### **1 Kings 16:33**

**And Ahab made a wooden image. Ahab did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him.**

a. History is repeating itself! America now has its own 'Ahab's' who are seeking to displace God from our government and turn the nation toward idols.

3. Ahab's first sin was to totally disregard God's commandment by rebuilding the city of Jericho.

a. The evil city of Jericho represents everything God hates in a political system. It was the first city Israel had to destroy to possess the Promised Land.

b. Joshua had utterly destroyed the city of Jericho and pronounced a curse upon any who rebuilt it.

**Joshua 6:26**

**Then Joshua charged them at that time, saying, "Cursed be the man before the Lord who rises up and builds this city Jericho; he shall lay its foundation with his firstborn, and with his youngest he shall set up its gates.**

c. But Ahab ignored God's judgment upon Jericho; his first act as King was to send his delegate Hiel to rebuild it, at the cost of his children.

**1 Kings 16:34**

**In Ahab's time, Hiel of Bethel rebuilt Jericho. He laid its foundations at the cost of his firstborn son Abiram, and he set up its gates at the cost of his youngest son Segub, in accordance with the word of the Lord spoken by Joshua.**

d. The new American 'Ahab's' are seeking to rebuild what God had cursed and destroyed-even though it will come at the cost of future generations!

e. The present policies of the politicians in power, left unchecked, will bring doom upon our children and our grandchildren.

f. The current President has already suffered the death of one son.

g. Ahab's leadership took his nation farther from God than any previous king Israel ever had.

4. But he was just getting warmed up. He chose Jezebel as his 'running mate'!

**1 Kings 16:31-32**

And it came to pass, as though it had been a trivial thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took as wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians; and Ahab went and served Baal and worshiped him. Then he set up an altar for Baal in the temple of Baal, which he had built in Samaria.

5. Jezebel, in the Bible, is not just a person. Jezebel is a spirit!

a. Her father was Ethbaal, whose name means 'toward the idol' or 'with Baal'.

**International Standard Bible Encyclopedia**

**Baal was the god of Tyre and the possessor of dazzling wealth. Through Jezebel, Baal was to have an equal place with Yahweh, the God of Israel**

b. By the way, the verb form of the name of Jezebel's father (in Hebrew) means 'to control', or 'be lord over'.

**Remember this: When you are dealing with Jezebelic governments, it's all about power and control. Sound familiar?**

c. Whoever heard of 'government mandates' up to now???

d. Ahab and Jezebel governments reject the government of God; they seek to overturn the history of Israel and replace it with a totally new culture, imported from other nations.

**International Standard Bible Encyclopedia**

**In Jezebel, his Phoenician wife, Ahab found a champion of the foreign culture, who was as imperious and able as she was vindictive and unscrupulous. She was the patron of the prophets of Baal and of the devotees of Asherah. She ordered that the altars of Yahweh be torn down.**

6. Idolatry flourished in Israel under the reign of Ahab and Jezebel.

### **Fausset's Bible Dictionary**

So prevalent was idolatry that Baal had 450 prophets, and Asherah had 400, whom Jezebel entertained at her own table.

7. Another mark of the ministry of Jezebel is that she seeks to persecute God's people and kill God's prophets.

### **International Standard Bible Encyclopedia**

Jezebel inaugurated the first great religious persecution of the church, killing off the prophets of Yahweh with the sword. In all this she aimed at more than a combining of the two religions; she planned to destroy the religion of Yahweh root and branch and put that of Baal in its place. In this Ahab did not oppose her but is guilty of conniving at the policy of his unprincipled wife, if not of heartily concurring in it.

a. Ahab, though he was King, was not really in control; he was under the control of Jezebel.

8. God sent Elijah during the days of Ahab and Jezebel, which is a perfect prophetic picture of the political climate of our own day! Think of it...

### **IS IT TIME FOR THE COMING OF ANOTHER ELIJAH?**

- Leadership: We have our own Ahab and Jezebel
- They have their false prophets: The mainstream media
  - They have their false gods: Marxist Socialism
- They have an evil agenda: Take the nation away from its Godly beginnings

9. On top of all that, there is the way in which they attack those who oppose them. As the nation falls apart, Ahab comes face to face with Elijah:

### **1 Kings 18:17-18**

When Ahab saw Elijah, Ahab said to him, "Is it you, you troubler of Israel?"

(Jezebelic governments will never take responsibility for their sins!)

And Elijah answered, "I have not troubled Israel, but you have, and your father's house, because you have abandoned the commandments of the Lord and followed the Baals."



10. History is repeating itself: the spirit of Ahab and the spirit of Jezebel are running the government. They are following the Marxist playbook...

### **Joseph Goebbels**

**Accuse the other side of that which you are guilty.**

a. They condemn America as systemically racist while promoting the racist teachings of Critical Race Theory in our military, our schools and businesses.

b. The current political party in power has always been the party of racism.

**History clearly reveals that the roots of racism in American politics, including the Ku Klux Klan, are found in the Democrat Party. It was a Republican President that freed the slaves!**

11. Ahab accused Elijah as the cause of the nation's woes, when it was the policies of Ahab and Jezebel destroying the country.

12. The bad news is that this is all happening today; the good news is that this is exactly when God sends His Elijah!

### **III. Close**

#### **A. Review**

1. We began with this theme...

#### **Theme**

**Before Christ comes down, an 'Elijah' ministry must rise up, preparing the way of the Lord by restoring the generational connection between the fathers and their children.**

2. We confirmed it with the last words of the Old Testament.

#### **Malachi 4:5-6**

**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, or else I will come and strike the land with a curse.**

3. We looked at the words of Jesus; that Elijah had come in the ministry of John the Baptist before His 1<sup>st</sup> coming; and will come again to restore all things before His 2<sup>nd</sup> coming.

**Matthew 17:10-11**

**And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?" Jesus answered and said to them, "Indeed, Elijah is coming first and will restore all things.**

4. Based on this, we look for the restoration of all things through a generation on earth moving in 'the spirit and power of Elijah. An old Puritan writer described what it would look like..

**The Biblical Illustrator**

**The object and effect of Elijah's mission is to reform mankind and bring the world back to those elementary principles and the institutes ordered of old that bring human improvement and salvation.**

5. The Elijah ministry return us to the old paths, reconnect the generations, and restore all things. It will come. Has it come now?

**Closing Prayer**

**Title**