

# Elijah and the Day of the Lord

By Rich Jacobs, MD

*Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD. Malachi 4:5, NASB*

## OLD TESTAMENT ELIJAH

1. Elijah was an Old Testament prophet.
  - a. He was born in Tishbe, a village in the northern region of Israel, in Gilead. Gilead refers to the mountainous region east of the Jordan River, located in modern Jordan. (**1 Kings 17:1**)
  - b. He lived in the 9th century B.C., during the reign of King Ahab, an evil king who ruled over the northern kingdom of Israel for 23 years. (**1 Kings 16:29**) His name means “Yahweh is my God.”
  - c. He was said to be a “hairy man”, who wore a leather belt. (**2 Kings 1:8**)
  - d. His life and ministry was singular.
    - i. He proclaimed a severe 3-year drought in Israel. This also resulted in a severe famine. (**1 Kings 17:1; 18:1, 2**)
    - ii. At God’s direction, he lived near a small stream (Cherith) while the ravens brought him bread and meat to eat twice a day. (**1 Kings 17:2-6**)
    - iii. At God’s direction, he lived with a widow and her family in Zarephath during much of the 3-year drought. A small jar of oil and a small bowl of flour miraculously fed them during this time. (**1 Kings 17:10-16**)
    - iv. He raised the son of his widow host from the dead. (**1 Kings 17:17-24**)
    - v. He called fire down from Heaven to consume his sacrifice to the Lord, thus exposing the false prophets of Baal and leading to their execution (**1 Kings 18:18-41**).
    - vi. He was ministered to by an angel in the wilderness in Beersheba when he was fleeing the death threat of Jezebel. (**1 Kings 19:3-7**)
    - vii. God appeared before him in a gentle breeze and voice while on the mountains of Horeb. (**1 Kings 19:8-14**)
    - viii. Anoints Hazael as king of Aram, Jehu as king of Israel, and Elisha as a prophet to take his place. (**1 Kings 19:15, 16**)
    - ix. He curses King Ahab and Queen Jezebel and prophesied their deaths. (**1 Kings 21:16-26**)
    - x. He prophesied the death of King Ahaziah. (**2 Kings 1:2-8**)



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- xi. He ordered fire from Heaven to consume soldiers sent to arrest him. (2 **Kings 1:9-12**)
- xii. Parted the waters of the River Jordan to cross it on dry land (2 **Kings 2:8**)
- xiii. Was taken up to Heaven in a whirlwind in the presence of Elisha and chariots and horses of fire from Heaven (2 **Kings 2:11, 12**)
- xiv. He judged and cursed King Jehoram because of his wickedness. Jehoram died at age 40 years after a long bowel illness. (2 **Chronicles 21:1-20**).

## **“ELIJAH” IN CHRIST’S DAY**

*They asked Him, saying, “Why is it that the scribes say that Elijah must come first?” And He said to them, “Elijah does first come and restore all things. And yet how is it written of the Son of Man that He will suffer many things and be treated with contempt? But I say to you that Elijah has indeed come, and they did to him whatever they wished, just as it is written of him.”* **Mark 9:11-13, NASB**

(Jesus said,) *“And if you are willing to accept it, John himself is Elijah who was to come.”* **Matthew 11:15, NASB**

- 2. The “Elijah Role” in the New Testament - John the Baptist.
  - a. Speaking of John the Baptist, Jesus said “. . . *Elijah has indeed come . . .* “ (**Mark 9:11-13**; also, **Matthew 17**)
    - i. Jesus said, *“And if you are willing to accept it, John himself is Elijah who was to come.”* (**Matthew 11:14, NASB**)
    - ii. He wore a garment of camel’s hair and a leather belt around his waist (**Matthew 3:4**). Compare this to Elijah’s appearance, which was similar (2 **Kings 1:8**).
    - iii. John confronted wicked leaders who were leading Israel astray, as did Elijah. (**Matthew 3:7-12; 14:3-10**)
    - iv. John the Baptist’s ministry preceded Christ’s so that he could prepare the way for the Lord (as prophesied in **Malachi** and **Isaiah 40:3**. Also, see **Matthew 3:1-3**)
    - v. John preached the Kingdom of God, calling people to repent of their sins and be baptized (**Matthew 3:2**), thus preparing them to receive Christ
      - (1) Sin deceives us, hardens us, (**Hebrews 3:13**) and separates us from God (**Isaiah 59:2**), but repentance restores us to God’s fellowship and to life (**Ezekiel 18:30**).
      - (2) John’s baptism was for repentance (**Matthew 3:2**) and to turn the people back to righteousness and make them ready for the Lord (**Luke 1:17**).
      - (3) Many of the common people repented because of John’s ministry (**Luke 1:16**). Many of the Jewish leaders and intellectuals did not repent. As a result, they did not see God in Christ and sought His crucifixion.
      - (4) Scripture says John was sent by God “. . . *as a witness, to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through him.*” (**John 1:6, 7, NASB**) John’s witness, together with the witness of the Holy Spirit (**Matthew 3:16, 17; Mark 1:10, 11; Luke 3:22; John 1: 30-34**) confirmed the claims that Christ was the Messiah, since the testimony of two or more witnesses were required by the Law (**Deuteronomy 19:15**).
  - b. But John was not literally Elijah, returned to earth from Heaven.
    - i. John himself said he was not Elijah (**John 1:19-23**).

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- ii. Luke wrote of John the Baptist, *“It is he who will go as a forerunner before Him (i.e. Christ) in the spirit and power of Elijah . . . ”* (**Luke 1:17**)
- iii. I believe the John and Elijah were both empowered with the Holy Spirit of God and were anointed for their specific ministries by God’s Holy Spirit.

### **ELIJAH AND THE FINAL DAYS**

*Six days later Jesus \*took with Him Peter and James and John his brother, and led them up on a high mountain by themselves. And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. **Matthew 17:1-3, NASB***

*And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for twelve hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth. And if anyone wants to harm them, fire flows out of their mouth and devours their enemies; so if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this way. These have the power to shut up the sky, so that rain will not fall during the days of their prophesying; and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to strike the earth with every plague, as often as they desire. When they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up out of the abyss will make war with them, and overcome them and kill them. And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which mystically is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified. Those from the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations will look at their dead bodies for three and a half days, and will not permit their dead bodies to be laid in a tomb. And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and celebrate; and they will send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth. But after the three and a half days, the breath of life from God came into them, and they stood on their feet; and great fear fell upon those who were watching them. And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, *“Come up here.”* Then they went up into heaven in the cloud, and their enemies watched them. **Revelation 11:3-12, NASB***

3. Elijah has a vital role in the end-times for the redemption of Israel. As we already read in Malachi, he will APPEAR *“before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD.”* There is substantial evidence that he is one of the two witnesses of **Revelation 11**.
  - a. The two witnesses minister during the last half (1260 days) of the last 7 years. The place of their ministry is Jerusalem (*“where also their Lord was crucified”*). Astonishingly, Jerusalem is the Harlot of Babylon, the capital of Antichrist’s Kingdom.
  - b. The two witnesses will be divinely protected from Antichrist and the demonically preoccupied end-times world, just as Moses and Elijah seemed to be divinely protected in the midst of the wicked worldly power of Pharaoh and Ahab.
    - i. They will openly oppose Antichrist and be responsible to the Trumpet Judgment Plagues of **Revelation**.
      - (1) Moses openly opposed antichrist Pharaoh, pronounced plagues of blood, flies, *etc.* and ultimately led Israel in deliverance. Since Moses appeared with Christ during the Transfiguration, I believe he is one of the witnesses of **Revelation 11**. (Moses would die twice in this scenario, but Lazaus, and others, also did so.)

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- (2) Elijah openly opposed wicked rulers, pronounced plagues of drought and famine, called fire down from Heaven to destroy ungodly men, and led Israel into a kind of repentance. Elijah also proved that God could feed and sustain a poor widow with almost nothing for three years. Since Elijah appeared Christ during the Transfiguration, I believe he is one of the witnesses of **Revelation 11**.
- ii. The World will hate the two witnesses because of the plagues these two witnesses bring the terrible Trumpet plagues upon them.
- c. They are the 2 "*Olive Trees*" prophesied in **Zechariah 4:2-14**. In addition to their testimony against an ungodly world, they will be witnesses to the remnant of Israel for salvation by grace through Christ.
  - i. The two witnesses are anointed and empowered by the Lord for their 42 month ministry in Jerusalem. (**Zechariah 4:13, 14**)
  - ii. The two witnesses will encourage the beleaguered remnant of Israel to rely on the counsel of the Holy Spirit to escape destruction by Antichrist ("*. . . not by might, nor by power, but by My Holy Spirit, says the Lord of hosts*") **Zechariah 4:6**).
  - iii. The remnant of Israel will be hiding in the desert during these last 3.5 years, where they will be divinely protected by God from Antichrist (**Revelation 12:6-16**. Note: the "woman" in **Revelation 12** symbolizes Israel.)
    - (1) Israel will be witnessing the successful opposition of their two champions to Antichrist during their 3.5 years of hiding.
    - (2) Since these two godly witnesses are successfully opposing and rebuking Antichrist with impunity, Israel will place great confidence in them for their deliverance.
    - (3) Their confidence will be enhanced because the deeds and words of the two witnesses will mirror those of Moses and Elijah. In fact, Israel's expectations and hope will rest on Moses and Elijah delivering them from wicked gentile leaders again.
    - (4) When Antichrist finally kills the two witnesses and a wicked world parties and celebrates, Israel's hopes will be dashed. Stunned, Israel will mourn, seek God in desperate prayer and fasting, and search the Scriptures for deliverance from destruction.
    - (5) In prayer and repentance, now unblinded by the Holy Spirit to the full truth of God's Word, Israel will realize that Jesus, whom they crucified is their Messiah. (**Zechariah 12:9-14**).
    - (6) After Israel's 3 days of mourning, fasting, prayer, and repentance, Christ will come to the remnant of Israel to be their God and King (**Hosea 6:1-3**). At this time, all Israel will be saved (**Romans 11:26**), and the Age of the Gentiles will end. The prophet Jonah symbolizes Israel, who is delivered from the Sea Monster's belly on the third day! This is the "sign of Jonah".
- IV. The Trumpet Plagues, resembling the Plagues of Egypt, brought on by the "Moses-like witness", together with the judgments and plagues commanded by "Elijah-like witness", their successful opposition of Antichrist, created false hopes in Israel that, when dashed, finally prepared them for Christ. Persecution could not have accomplished this in an Israel accustomed to 4000 years of persecution!
- V. Israel's final redemption ushers in the Millennial reign of Christ and His Church on earth.