

ETHAN TEMPLE MINISTRIES TOOLS FOR LIFE

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SPIRIT BAPTISM AND PREPARING THE WAY FOR CHRIST'S ADVENT

The prophet Malachi foretold that God would send Elijah, referring to an "Elijah message," just prior to the coming of Jesus Christ.

"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord" (Mal. 4:5).

This prophecy has two applications. One applies to Christ's first advent; the other applies to His second coming.

The gospel writer, Luke, tells us that John the Baptist fulfilled the first application of this prophecy of Malachi:

"And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, 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" (Luke 1:17).

John the Baptist went forward in ministry in the "spirit and power" of Elijah. To what did this refer? It meant that he was Spirit-filled and preached a Spirit-anointed message to prepare the people of his day for the Messiah, who would soon appear:

"For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb" (Luke 1:15).

The power of the Holy Spirit attended John's preaching. Multitudes came to hear him, and many were baptized:

"In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, and saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey. Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins" (Matt. 3:1 – 6).

Jesus was well aware of Malachi's prophecy, and He applied it to the mission and message of John the Baptist:

“For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear” (Matt. 11:13-15).

Malachi's prophecy has a second application, referring to a people who will give a serious warning message just before Jesus comes, which is called the three angels' messages:

“And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters. And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus” (Rev. 14: 6-12).

This last-day Elijah message is intended to prepare men and women for Christ's second coming. As John the Baptist had to be Spirit-filled to give the Elijah message of his day, so God's last-day believers must be Spirit-filled to give the last-day Elijah message to the world today. This last-day message of warning that will be given by a Spirit-filled people will go forth in the “spirit and power” of Elijah, as did John's message.

Why hasn't this final message yet been given with such power? It has been

preached for more than 150 years. Millions of dollars have been, and are being, spent to give it. What's wrong? I personally believe our lack of understanding and experiencing the baptism of the Holy Spirit is the answer. I don't mean that God has not blessed our efforts to warn the world of Christ's second coming and the issues involved in these last days. I am saying that we have not yet tapped into the mighty blessing and power that awaits us when God's people become a Spirit-filled people. When that happens the last-day message of Elijah will go forth in the "spirit and power" of Elijah.

Personal Reflection and Discussion

What are the two applications of Malachi's prophecy about Elijah?

How was the first application of Malachi's prophecy fulfilled?

What did John the Baptist have that enabled him to give the Elijah message in his day?

What is the Elijah message for today?

What spiritual experience is necessary for the second application of Malachi's prophecy to be fulfilled?

What will happen when God's last message is given in the "spirit and power" of Elijah?

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