

THE COMING OF THE ELIJAH MINISTRY

by Carter Conlon

Transfigured: Appearing in a completely changed form! The Scriptures tell us Jesus was instantaneously transformed before His disciples, causing His face to shine like the sun and His clothes to become white as light. What an incredible experience for these disciples, Peter, James and John, who had climbed the mountain with Jesus. Is it any wonder these disciples fell on their faces both in fear and awe. In that revelatory moment the same Moses who led the Israelites out of Egypt and the same Elijah who prayed down fire from heaven, were standing with Jesus in a transfigured state. The disciples were privileged to see and hear them in a conversation with Jesus regarding His upcoming death in Jerusalem.

As Peter, James and John made their way back down the mountain to the other disciples they asked Jesus a natural but intriguing question, "Why do the teachers of religious law insist that Elijah must return before the Messiah comes?" (Matthew 17:10 NLT). They must have believed they had just witnessed the fulfillment of what Malachi had written by the Holy Spirit when he said, "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse" (Malachi 4:5-6). They were probably asking if the transfiguration was a fulfillment of this passage concerning Elijah, or was there still something else to come. Jesus answered them

saying, "Elijah is indeed coming first to get everything ready. But I tell you, Elijah has already come, but he wasn't recognized, and they chose to abuse him. And in the same way they will also make the Son of Man suffer. **Then the disciples realized he was talking about John the Baptist**" (Matthew 17:11-13 NLT).

These prophets exemplified a self-serving attitude which completely permeated the nation, leaving the majority of the people in a state of complacency and hopelessness.

With this new awareness concerning John as having come in the spirit of Elijah, they would have immediately reflected back on his ministry. They knew and accepted him as a prophet who had the touch of God on his life from birth. His father, the priest Zechariah, was burning incense at the altar in the temple when the

angel Gabriel appeared to him and said, "Don't be afraid, Zechariah! God has heard your prayer. Your wife, Elizabeth, will give you a son, and you are to name him John. You will have great joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great in the eyes of the Lord. He must never touch wine or other alcoholic drinks. He will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even before his birth. And he will turn many Israelites to the Lord their God. **He will be a man with the spirit and power of Elijah.** He will prepare the people for the coming of the Lord. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and he will cause those who are rebellious to accept the wisdom of the godly" (Luke 1:13-17 NLT). In essence he would be anointed as Elijah and would preach a message of repentance causing people to return to God and to worship Him in truth.

■ ELIJAH – CALLING A NATION TO RETURN

During a time of deep spiritual darkness in Israel's history, the Holy Spirit empowered Elijah to call the nation back to the Lord. He proceeded to build an altar on Mt. Carmel bringing into proper view the true worship of God. Nationwide the Israelites had chosen to follow a self-seeking and self-gratifying gospel. This downward spiral of spirituality resulted in a society becoming completely compromised, causing false prophets to increase in the land. In fact 450 influential prophets were worshiping at the altar of Baal on Mt. Carmel. Their particular altar represented the counterfeit theology of great provision and personal

gain. In addition to these there were another 400 bogus prophets right inside the king's palace. They had gained the support of Jezebel, King Ahab's wife, and were banqueting at her table and influencing political matters. Collectively, all these prophets exemplified a self-serving attitude which completely permeated the nation, leaving the majority of the people in a state of complacency and hopelessness.

We see this same kind of movement in our culture today. There is now a generation of covetous ministers and people gravitating to a theology of lust and greed. This direction always leads to the detriment and harm of their fellowman. The poor go hungry, the fatherless are not cared for, and the widows are not visited in their grief. This is the result of a selfish pursuit, where people only want to know, "What's in it for me."

This is exactly what the ministry of Elijah is: a ministry or a voice pointing to Christ.

Elijah, in contrast to the false prophets of Baal, steadily built the right altar. His singular motive was to completely turn the hearts of the people from a false religion to God. In building it, he took twelve large stones representing the twelve tribes of Israel, and dug a trench around it. He poured multiple containers of water on the altar until it overflowed the trench. Then *"at the time of sacrifice, the prophet Elijah stepped forward and prayed: O Lord, God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it*

be known today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant and have done all these things at your command. Answer me, O Lord, answer me, so these people will know that you, O Lord, are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again. Then the fire of the Lord fell and burned up the sacrifice, the wood, the stones and the soil, and also licked up the water in the trench. When all the people saw this, they fell prostrate and cried, The Lord -he is God! The Lord -he is God! Then the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The Lord, he is the God; the Lord, he is the God" (1 Kings 18:36–39).

■ JOHN THE BAPTIST – CALLING THE PEOPLE TO REPENTANCE

This is the same call and anointing John the Baptist had when he ministered at the bank of the Jordan River, calling the people to repentance. This man was living and ministering in the perfect will of God. The angel of the Lord declared before his birth that he should never partake of wine and alcoholic drink. He would live and minister without being affected by the intoxicating influences around him. He was not in it for himself and he did not care what society thought of him. His primary concern was for men and women to be headed in the direction of the Messiah. When Jesus came to him to be baptized, John saw the heavens opened and the Holy Spirit descending upon Jesus. He heard the voice of God say, *"This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased"* (Matthew 3:17b). John immediately began to point to Jesus, proclaiming Him to be the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. John was not building his own kingdom and therefore was not trying to establish his own fame or credibility. Those who heard his message

repented and were baptized, and then they were directed to follow Jesus.

It is a time for you to receive the power of God so you can do whatever He says to do and to go wherever He sends you to go; even if it does not make sense to the natural mind.

This is exactly what the ministry of Elijah is: a ministry or a voice pointing to Christ. Just like Isaiah said, *"The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God"* (Isaiah 40:3). When John was asked who he was, he did not focus on himself or his ministry, in fact he replied he was not even worthy to untie the shoelaces of Jesus. John had a right self-perception and did not consider himself some great man of God. He called himself what we all are: unworthy and simply a voice for God. John communicated that he was a messenger telling men and women there is a Messiah who needs to be revered, a hell to be shunned and a heaven to be gained. This is the work and spirit of the Elijah ministry.

If ever there was a need for this kind of voice and ministry it is today. Do

not be ashamed of Christ in your workplace and do not be silent when people are dying in their sin. It is not a time to be walking down the street unmoved by the human need all around you. It is not a time to be pre-occupied with a self-focused religion or intoxicated with the spirit of this age. It is a time for you to receive the power of God so you can do whatever He says to do and to go wherever He sends you to go; even if it does not make sense to the natural mind.

■ THE UPPER ROOM – CALLING THE PEOPLE TO RESTORATION

You have just read how Elijah caused Israel to return to true worship and how John the Baptist came in that same anointing calling the people to repentance. Taking a closer look at the words of Jesus as He came down the mountain with His three disciples, where He said, “*Elias [Elijah] truly shall first come, and restore all things*” (Matthew 17:11). It is interesting to note the word used here is “restore” which means to bring back to its former condition; to restore health and soundness; to reform something; to bring back a lost dominion and authority. With this understanding you can see how the Elijah ministry is also a ministry of restoration.

The same power of the Holy Spirit, which was given to Elijah and again to John, was now demonstrated on the Day of Pentecost in the lives of those in the upper room. They were 120 fearful people gathered together in a locked room praying and waiting on God. These were ordinary people; many were poor and uneducated. They knew they were unworthy, but were longing to be voices for God. The Holy Spirit descended empowering them with His strength and authority to deliver the message that would restore the hearts of the people back to God. This power gave them the ability to go places they could never go in their own might. They were not seeking their own

prosperity or position in society, they were pointing clearly to Christ as their source of strength. They were worshiping at the right altar.

When the 120 were baptized with the Holy Spirit, faith exploded in their hearts. They were then compelled to go into the streets and publicly proclaim that Christ had risen from the dead. The people responded, “What must I do to be saved?” Over 3,000 people came to Christ in that one single day. I do believe we can honestly say then, that the fire which fell upon those in the upper room is the same fire which fell upon the altar of Elijah and consumed the sacrifice; the nation then returned to God shouting, “The Lord He is God! The Lord He is God!” It is the same anointing John the Baptist ministered under as he preached repentance allowing the people to follow Christ. This was the Elijah ministry in action.

*This same
Elijah ministry
is available to
every person
who is willing
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■ WALKING IN THE ELIJAH MINISTRY

Now, the same ministry of restoration was for all those ordinary people in the upper room and for the thousands who responded to their preaching. This same Elijah ministry is available to every person who is willing to abandon themselves to the

will of God, which is the heart of this message. You too can have this same power to stand in a world on the brink of disaster, calling men and women to return to the true worship of God. If this is your desire, ask the Lord for His heart for the lost. Ask Him for the authority to establish you as a witness of Christ in your home, your workplace and in the community in which you live. You can only do this by allowing the Holy Spirit to fill you every day and every moment. This is the constant cry of my own heart. My prayer is, “Jesus fill me, empower me, use me, and take me where I could never go. Make me what I could never become in my own strength and anoint the words you put in my heart to speak.” And here is my question to you: If the 120 could change the known world of their day by the power of the Holy Spirit, how much more can you change and influence your world by this same empowering?

Carter Conlon
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Dear friend,

Have you considered how powerful the ministry of encouragement is? Perhaps you have never regarded it as the great spiritual gift that it is. When Moses was to appoint Joshua as his successor, the Lord told him to “...charge Joshua, and encourage him, and strengthen him: for he shall go over before this people, and he shall cause them to inherit the land which thou shalt see” (Deuteronomy 3:28).

To encourage someone is to help them see their future from the perspective of what God has spoken. We fulfill this ministry when we enable others to have the courage to begin something new, or to continue when they are weary, or to get back up when they have faltered. Without the ministry of the encourager many people may never reach the full potential the Lord has for their lives.

Think about who you could encourage today. Often a simple visit, a kind letter, or even just a phone call will make the vital difference in someone’s future.

Remember this principle: “with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you” (Mark 4:24). David’s psalms were filled with encouragement for others. Then, during a lonely season in his own life, God gave him the power to *encourage himself* in the Lord! (1 Samuel 30:6).

The Lord will make sure you are encouraged in your time of need so you will be able to encourage those around you.

Yours in Christ,



Carter Conlon
Senior Pastor.

This message is an edited version of “The Coming of the Elijah Ministry,” a sermon given on **September 21, 2008** in the sanctuary of Times Square Church in New York City. Other sermons are available by visiting our website at tscnyc.org. You can also write to: Times Square Church, Sermon Ministry, 1657 Broadway, New York, NY 10019. You are welcome to make additional copies of this sermon for free distribution to friends. However, for all other forms of reproduction or electronic transmission existing copyright laws apply. This sermon cannot be posted on any website or webpage without written permission from Times Square Church. Unless otherwise noted, all scripture references are from the King James Version.

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TIMES SQUARE CHURCH

Times Square Church was founded in 1987 by Pastor David Wilkerson, author of “The Cross and the Switchblade.” It is an interdenominational church located in the heart of New York City.

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WEEKLY SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Sunday	10:00AM	3:00PM	6:00PM
Tuesday	7:00PM	Church Service	
Thursday	7:00PM	Prayer Meeting	
Friday	7:00PM	Church Service	

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