

1 ELIJAH—TYPE AND ANTITYPE

Br. Theodore A. Smith.

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If we are to have a study on Elijah, type and antitype, then we will have to consider carefully the Bible statements concerning Elijah, particularly those texts that seem to be singled out in the sacred record as having an antitypical significance.

In the very last book of the Old Testament, in fact the very last two verses of the Old Testament, Mal. 4:5, 6 we have a prophecy which reads, “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD [Jehovah]: 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.”

Now the Israelites would not know for sure whether this was to be taken literally, or that it might have a symbolic significance. For all they would know, this prophecy might mean that Elijah would be resurrected and perform a work of reformation, so that the earth would not be smitten with a curse.

In the previous chapter, chapter three, verses 1 to 3, there was another prophecy that predicted the sending of God’s messenger, the messenger of the covenant, the one the Israelites would delight in; but the presence of this messenger would bring about some serious judgment conditions: “But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner’s fire, and like fuller’s soap: and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.”

In this final prophecy of the Old Testament there are predictions of severe judgments upon the unrighteous, and predictions of relief and blessing to those who merit God’s approval. There is quite a bit written, but we shall quote just three verses, the first three verses of Malachi, 4th chapter: “For, behold the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD [Jehovah] of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch, But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord [Jehovah] of hosts.” One more verse, chapter 3, verse 18: “Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not.” This is translated by Fenton as “turn” not “return,” the thought being that in the future the conditions would be such that

it would be evident who were righteous and who were wicked—“who were serving God, and who served him not.”

Turning to Strong’s concordance we find Elijah referred to thirty times in the New Testament, only the name is spelled Elias, which is the Greek form of Elijah. The first reference is Matt. 11:14, “And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come.” In the immediate context, Jesus had been talking about John the Baptist. Let us quote verses 9 and 10, “But what went ye out to see: A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet. For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.” So our Lord was designating John the Baptist as the messenger of Mal. 3:1, that was preparing the way for our Lord; and he was acting as the Elias to the Jewish people to perform a reformation work, else their earth would be smitten with a curse.

The next occurrence of the name Elias is found in Matt. 16:14. So that we may get the proper setting we will quote the context, before and after—Matt. 16:13-16: “When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, but whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” So some were saying that he was Elias, and this same idea is found in Mark 6:15, Mark 8:28; Luke 9:8 and Luke 9:19.

The name Elias is found in the record of the transfiguration scene: Matt. 17:1-9; Mark 9:2-9 and Luke 9:28-36. Preceding each one of these accounts is Jesus’ statement, “There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.” So we are justified in saying that the transfiguration scene is a vision of the Son of man coming in his kingdom. Three of the disciples saw this vision—Peter, James and John his brother. The scene itself was “up into an high mountain.” These three disciples saw Jesus transfigured before them: his face shone as the sun, and his raiment was white as light. Moses and Elias appeared at the same time talking with Jesus. The transfiguration scene ended when “a bright cloud overshadowed the three figures: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.” When Jesus and the three disciples came down from the mountain, “Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead.”

After the transfiguration scene there is recorded a question the disciples asked Jesus, when they came down from the mountain: “Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come?” Jesus’ answer to this question is of great importance to our study: “Elias truly shall come, and restore all things. But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also

the Son of man suffer of them. Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist.” (Matt. 17:10-13) This declaration of our Lord is very similar to the one he made in the very first occurrence of the word Elias—in Matt. 11:9, 10, 14. John the Baptist was playing the role of the messenger who was announcing our Lord’s presence, and he was also acting in the same capacity to the Israelites as Elijah did when he brought about a change of sentiment as recorded in 1 Kings 18th chapter. After the three years drought Elijah met King Ahab and there was a test made as to who was the true God—Jehovah or Baal. We remember how the test ended—the Lord showed his approval of Elijah by sending down fire from heaven which consumed the sacrifice on the altar, consumed the altar of twelve stones, and licked up the water all around the altar. Then the sentiment of the Israelites changed from worship of Baal to the worship of Jehovah.

We notice very carefully what Jesus said in reply to the disciples’ question—“Elias shall truly come and restore all things.” However this is not all there is to the story. In addition to this is a minor fulfillment, and that was in the work of John the Baptist. John the Baptist did not “restore all things,” but he did act as a reformer in the spirit of Elijah. The greater fulfillment of the prophecy will be on a grand scale, far beyond anything that was ever done by John the Baptist. He, The Christ will indeed “restore all things,” and that is something John the Baptist was not able to do.

It is interesting to note what the angel said unto Zacharias who was to be the father of John the Baptist—his wife. Elizabeth was to bear this son even when she was well along in age. We shall quote briefly what the angel said (Luke 1:16, 17): “And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. 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.” This is the very language used in the prophecy of Malachi, last two verses in the Old Testament. So Jesus was confirming the prophecy concerning John the Baptist—that he was one acting in the “Spirit of Elias.”

As a further enlightenment of the subject, we consider the question that was asked of John the Baptist, and his reply—in this reply he flatly said that he was not Elias. So we are forced to the conclusion that there is more to the Elijah prophecy than was fulfilled by John the Baptist. We turn now to John 1:19 to 23: “And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ. And they asked him, What then: Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No. Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias.”

John made no extravagant claims for himself, but merely claimed to be a voice crying in the wilderness. There certainly was a wilderness condition in Israel when the scribes and Pharisees were preaching the traditions of men in place of the Word of the Lord. John was proclaiming the presence of the Messiah, the Lamb of God, the Head of the antitypical Elijah.

Before we consider the remarkable explanation and interpretation concerning the antitypical Elijah, in the fullest sense, let us finish the verses containing the name Elias, so as to have our record complete.

In Matt. 27:45-49 we find an account of the death of our Lord on the cross. He finally cried, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” And “some of them that stood there, when they heard that, said, This man calleth for Elias. And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink. The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him. Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the spirit.” This was peculiar that they thought Jesus was calling for Elias and they wanted to see what would happen—whether Elias would come to deliver Jesus from the cross. The same account exactly is found in Mark 15:35, 36.

There is another occurrence of the name Elias found in Luke 9:51-56. Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem and he sent messengers before him and they went into a village of the Samaritans to make ready for him. But the Samaritans did not receive him because he was headed in the direction of Jerusalem. “And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? But Jesus turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them. And they went to another village.”

We find a record of this calling down fire from heaven by Elijah in 2 Kings, first chapter. It seems the king of Samaria had fallen from an upper story of a building and injured himself. He sent messengers to inquire of Baalzebub the god of Ekron whether he should recover or not. But the angel of the Lord instructed Elijah the Tishbite to intercept the messengers to rebuke the king for asking such a question of Baalzebub. He should have made inquiry of Jehovah; and the messengers were to inform the king that he would not recover from his fall. The messengers reported back to the king and he readily perceived that it must have been Elijah who sent the message. The king sent a captain with fifty men and they found Elijah seated upon a hill. The captain addressed Elijah in these words, “Thou man of God, the king hath said, Come down.” “And Elijah answered and said to the captain of fifty, If I be a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And there came down fire from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty.” The king sent another captain and his fifty, and the same thing happened. The king was a very determined man and sent still another captain and his

fifty. But this captain approached Elijah in an entirely different manner. He “came and fell on his knees before Elijah, and besought him, and said unto him, O man of God, I pray thee, let my life and the life of these fifty thy servants, be precious in thy sight.” And the angel of the Lord instructed Elijah to go down with the captain to the king.

In view of the way the Lord used Elijah to manifest his mighty power on several occasions, it is no wonder that Elijah occupied a very prominent place in the history of the Israelites and in the minds of the people. Possibly this explains why some thought that Elijah might come and deliver our Lord from the cross.

There are two more references to Elijah in the New Testament—Rom. 11:2 and James 5:17, but they are not related to our subject, so we shall pass them by.

With all this background information, we will now proceed to consider the larger antitypical significance of the prophecy concerning Elijah that is found in the last two verses of the Old Testament. It is nothing short of amazing to note the comprehension that our Pastor had concerning the fulfillment of this prophecy in its antitypical sense. Surely the Lord knew what he was doing when he selected our Pastor to give us our meat in due season.

John the Baptist played his part in a minor fulfillment of the prophecy—he was the announcer of our Lord—the messenger of God to declare our Lord in the first place. And he acted as a reformer to the Israelites, just as Elijah did centuries before. The very first words of John the Baptist were “Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand.” He endeavored to reform the nation, but, except for a small remnant, he was not successful and the predicted curse came upon the nation of Israel when Titus came against the nation in the year A.D. 70.

Jesus in the flesh was the forerunner of the Messiah in glory and power, and who will take this great power and reign in the opening of the millennial age; and THE Christ will be of many members—Jesus the head, the church his body, in kingdom glory. (R3477-6) Thus Jesus was the forerunner of something greater than just himself—he was the forerunner of the great Messiah in glory, composed of Jesus, himself as the head, and the church as the body members.

Similarly John the Baptist was a forerunner of a greater one than himself—a more important witness composed of many members, witnessing over a period of nineteen centuries, preparing the way for Messiah’s kingdom, and announcing it. John in the flesh introduced Jesus in the flesh; but the greater than John, the Elijah of many members, will introduce the greater, the glorious Christ of many members. (R3477-6)

The real antitypical Elijah (greater than John the Baptist) has been fulfilling the

predictions of Malachi, the prophet. This real Elijah has been composed of many faithful witnesses for Christ throughout the entire Gospel age. Jesus in the flesh began this witness before Pilate and before the Jewish nation. The apostles continued the witness; and all down through the Gospel age, the Lord's people, in the flesh have witnessed—have witnessed against sin, witnessed in favor of righteousness, witnessed the necessity for turning from sin to righteousness in order to be prepared for a share in the Kingdom. The Lord's people have witnessed that the kingdom of the Lord is to be established in the hands of the glorified Christ and that it will bring in everlasting righteousness and fulfill the Lord's prayer, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven." (R3477:2-1)

It is the work of the greater Elijah to draw attention to the great Christ and the great work to be accomplished by him. It was the mission of John the Baptist to the Jewish nation, to call attention to Jesus in the flesh, and in this sense of the word he was the Elijah to those who received it, because to them he did the work of Elijah. (R3477:2-2)

We see a grand work performed by the antitypical Elijah—the church in the flesh, witnessing throughout this Gospel age, and preparing for the establishment of the Kingdom in the end of the age; and we see the great work of Messiah, head and body, bridegroom and bride, which will follow this testimony. (R3477:2-2)

The Prophet Malachi declared that one of two things would follow the work of the true Elijah—either it would turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and of the children to the fathers, i.e. bring into full accord and loving harmony the people—or else it would result in the bringing of a great curse upon the people and great tribulation. The world must be made ready for Messiah's kingdom either by repentance and true conversion to the Lord, or by judgments of the Lord. (R3477:2-2, 3)

Malachi does not state which way the results will be accomplished, but other Scriptures clearly indicate that the work of the antitypical Elijah would not succeed, would not convert the world, and that as a result the establishment of Messiah's kingdom would come in connection with a time of trouble such as was not since there was a nation—the curse mentioned by Malachi, the great tribulation mentioned by our Lord. (R3477:2-3)

We can look upon John the Baptist as a part of the typical Elijah, and the church in the flesh as the antitypical—and in so doing we may draw important lessons of humility, of zeal and of faithfulness from the course of John. He made the preaching of the Gospel the chief object of life, but he was humble about all that he did. His main mission in life was to prepare the people for the Messiah and to point them to Him. Our own success as members of the antitypical Elijah will be in proportion as self is ignored and Christ is made the theme of our discourses, the center of our teachings. (R3477:2-last)

For about the last five minutes I have given you a brief outline of the interpretation of our Pastor for the Elijah type. It fits all the facts perfectly and is accepted as a correct solution.

I think we are all familiar with the recording of the departing of Elijah. This is found in the second chapter of 2nd Kings. Before the departure Elijah and Elisha walked along together from Gilgal to three places: Bethel, Jericho and Jordan. In an article dated Sept. 15, 1915 on Reprint page 5771, entitled ELIJAH'S FIERY CHARIOT the Pastor suggests a possible interpretation. This interpretation had to do with four different dates and was concerning the possible hope that the church would be finally changed at each one of these dates. The starting date was 1874, when our Lord was due to start his second advent—this was the first place—Gilgal. Next was 1878, the time parallel to our Lord's assuming office—Bethel. The third date, 1881, the time parallel to the time when the door was thrown open to the Gentiles and Cornelius—Jericho. The last date was 1914, the close of the Times of the Gentiles—Jordan.

After Jordan the two men walked on together with no particular destination (or date) before them. Suddenly there appeared a chariot of fire and horses of fire which separated the two men, and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. (2 Kings 2:11) I shall quote now the precise words of the Pastor: "In symbolic language, this seems to signify that the Elijah class will be involved in very fiery trouble, persecution, and will thus be separated from their fellows. The next symbol of a whirlwind taking Elijah to heaven also implies further trouble. Prophecies are generally understood after their fulfillment—and only vaguely before. It was thus at our Lord's first advent in respect to the prophecies then being fulfilled. We may not hope to clearly understand in advance the full import of the fiery chariot nor of the whirlwind." I shall leave it this way as I don't feel wise enough to add any comments. Our Pastor made some other interesting comments on this final event in Elijah's life—these are found in the seventh Reprint, on page 5846, top half of the page. You can also find this listed under Elijah in the subject index in the back of the Reprints.

On page 256 of Volume II is a list of striking coincidences in the life of Elijah and the Christian church. These are worth reviewing:

Elijah

Elijah was persecuted for fidelity to truth and righteousness.

His principal persecutor was Jezebel, the wicked queen of Israel, who is mentioned by name as the type of the enemy of the saints.—Rev. 2:20

Jezebel's persecuting power was exercised through her husband, Ahab the king.

Elijah fled from Jezebel and Ahab, into the wilderness, to a place prepared of God, where he was miraculously nourished.—1 Kings 17:5-9

Elijah was "three years and six months" in the wilderness, and during that time there was no rain and a great famine was in the land—James 5:17; 1 Kings 17:7; 18:2

After the three and a half years, 1260 days, when Elijah returned from the wilderness, the errors of Jezebel's priests were manifested, the true God was honored, and copious rains followed.—1 Kings 18:41-45

The king and the people at first rejoiced, and Elijah and his God were honored; but the spirit of Jezebel was unchanged. She still sought Elijah's life, and he was again compelled to flee into the wilderness.—1 Kings 18:40, 45, 46; 19:1-4

Elijah's career ended by his being taken from the earth.

The Church

The Church was persecuted for fidelity to truth and righteousness.

The principal persecutor was the Apostate Church of Rome, which claims to be a "queen" and ruler over spiritual Israel.—Rev. 18:7

Papacy's persecuting power was exercised through the Roman Empire, to which she was joined.

The true Church fled into the symbolic wilderness—or condition of isolation—to her place, prepared of God, where she was sustained.—Rev. 12:6, 16

The Church was three and a half symbolic years (a day for a year—1260 literal years) in the wilderness condition, during which there was a spiritual famine because of the lack of truth—the living water—Compare Rev. 12:6; 11:3, Amos 8:11

At the end of the 1260 years the power of the truth and its witnesses was manifested (A.D. 1799); and since then the truth has flowed at the rate of millions of Bibles every year, refreshing the world and bringing forth fruit.

The Bible has brought such blessings that the empires of earth recognize the Lord's hand; yet the principles of Papacy—Jezebel—in so-called Protestant sects compel the saints again to flee into the wilderness condition.

The saints will be changed from earthly to heavenly conditions.

