

The Elijah Company

By George Davis and Michael Clark

John was a mystery to everyone but Christ. Most of what we know about him is extrapolated from Christ's teachings. He was a prophetic representation of the end-time messengers God will send in the spirit and power of Elijah. Every detail regarding his life and ministry is significant, as we shall see shortly.

Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, in the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John, the son of Zacharias, in the wilderness. He came into all the region around the Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for remission of sins. As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Make ready the way of the Lord. Make his paths straight. (Luke 3:1-4)



The passage above begins by listing the political and religious rulers who reigned over Israel during Christ's earthly ministry, the sum-total of the governments of that day. This small privileged class represented all that the world considered noble, mighty and wise.

Nonetheless, the word of the Lord bypassed emperor's thrones, king's palaces, the courts of the tetrarchs and the dynasty of the high priestly family, and came to a cryptic figure, dressed in camel hair in the wilderness. Can you see the divine irony here? After Luke names all these high and lofty men, he says, "The word of God came to John in the wilderness."

Unlike the rulers of the day, John claimed no titles. He lived like a pauper and had a reputation for

being a bit odd. John rejected the religious establishment and they rejected him, but it was to HIM that the word of God was revealed. As far as men were concerned, he was the outcast of outcasts. Nevertheless it was this peculiar man that God chose to prepare the way for His Son. This same spirit was in Paul when he said, "[But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.](#)" (Galatians 6:14, NKJV).

Little is known about John the Baptist. His early years were spent in silent preparation for this time in the wilderness. He was a messenger prepared and sent from God. He did not speak of himself. When asked who he was, his reply was, "I am the voice of one crying. . ." John did not come to build a ministry but to prepare the way for Christ. He was just a voice, and THAT voice spoke for God.

John was a mystery to everyone but Christ. Most of what we know about him is extrapolated from Christ's teachings. He was a prophetic representation of the end-time messengers God will send in the spirit and power of Elijah. Every detail regarding his life and ministry is significant, as we shall see shortly.

What Did You Go Out Into the Wilderness to See?

Jesus asked the multitudes a number of revealing questions concerning John. "[What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? But what did you go out to see? A man in soft clothing? Behold, those who wear soft clothing are in king's houses. But why did you go out? To see a prophet? Yes, I tell you, and much more than a prophet](#)" (Matthew 11:7-9). In His typical form, Jesus asked questions that searched the heart of the hearer. Had they gone forth to see a prophet? Yes! But John was "more than a prophet!"

John was a walking, living, illustrated message. Everything about him was prophetic, pointing both to the past and the future. He was a visual aid to the understanding of end-time prophetic events. What was it that they had gone out to see? His clothes, the location where he ministered, the river in which he baptized the people and the message that he preached all spoke of the spirit in which he came. All these things were a part of the message that John brought.

John's clothing was the first thing that Jesus addressed. John's clothes were very much a part of his message. Instead of wearing the soft garments of a king, he wore the

coarse aesthetic garb much like that of Elijah (see 2 Kings 1:8) and probably wore a long beard. Today, John would probably be considered a vagrant and a madman and ushered out of our churches before he had a chance to sit down. He would not be the sort of fellow that you would stop and pick up if he were thumbing along the highway.

Then there was John's diet. Locusts are a kosher food (Lev 11:22) and were eaten by the very poorest people. John was born into a priestly family and could have lived a comparatively upper-middle-class lifestyle. Instead he chose the life and diet of the poor. He cared for none of the things that people ordinarily live for, "what you shall eat, what you shall put on." His life was dedicated to one purpose -- the increase of Christ. His self-renunciation was a visible rebuke of the worldliness of his day.

The location of John's ministry was also significant. The Jordan valley is a 100 mile long, 10 to 15 miles wide depression in the earth's surface, reaching its greatest depth in the Dead Sea (1,300 feet below sea level). The Jordan River where John baptized the people flows from the Sea of Galilee south down the Jordan valley to the Dead Sea, and is a geographical parable of spiritual things. It signifies John's character and ministry. Jordan (Yarden) means, "the descender" or to "go down" or "be prostrated." The Jordan River wound down the deepest valley in the center of the country, ever descending, ever decreasing.

Without question John was the descender. Like the Jordan River, he was ever decreasing. We love to quote his famous words, "[He \(Jesus\) must increase, but I must decrease](#)" (John 3:30). John prepared the way for Christ and then he got out of the way for Christ. John did not promote his own ministry as is so common today even among those calling themselves prophets. God has always chosen the lowly and the detestable to manifest Himself to the world. He chooses the backdrop of death to set apart the manifestation of His Spirit life. The Spirit of God drew the crowds to John because he was only a lowly messenger pointing the way to God's own Son.

Jerusalem and all Judea "[went out to him. . .and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins](#)" (See Matthew 3:5-6). The crowds went out to John. He did not send out flyers, rent stadiums, or hold campaigns in the larger, more affluent cities where it would be easy to draw a crowd. No one invited him to be the keynote speaker at special gatherings. In fact, he didn't come to town at all. If you wanted to see and

hear John, you had to go out into the wilderness. For the word of the Lord came to John in the wilderness, and there he chose to remain.

John the Baptist had none of the outward trappings of a respectable minister of his day nor a willingness to employ their methods. He had no fancy buildings for folks to meet in. He had no swanky robes that set him apart from the masses, no lofty podiums nor pulpit, no priestly titles, no recognized eldership, no human covering or authority structure that sent him out, and no accreditation (all of which men in ministry cling to today!). He never performed any miracles that we know of, but news about him spread far and wide, and people throughout the region around Jerusalem and the Jordan came to see and hear him.

John was a humble man but his humility was not measured by his submission to the priesthood of his day. By today's standard, his speech would be classified as rebellious. If he were here today, he would be accused of having a root of bitterness. He often resorted to name-calling when unrepentant religious leadership came out to spy on his ministry to the poor. Seeing them he said, "[Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?](#)"

John the Baptist was the messenger who came in the prototype of Elijah. God honored John by calling him "my messenger." John came suddenly out of the wilderness of Judea, in much the same way that Elijah came from the wilderness of Gilead. John bore the same strange appearance as his predecessor; the message of John was very similar to that of Elijah, "[If Yahweh \[is\] God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him.](#)" The history of John the Baptist was the fulfillment of that of Elijah in "the fullness of time." Yet there is one more fulfillment still to come.

My Messenger. . . preparing the way

Jesus went on to speak of John by quoting from the Old Testament. "[For this is he, of whom it is written, 'Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you.'](#)" (Matthew 11:10)

He was quoting the prophet Malachi. "[Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me; and the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, behold, he comes!](#)" says Yahweh of hosts." (Malachi 3:1)

Notice that there are two messengers foretold here. The first prepares the way for the second. With the advent of John in the wilderness, the people of Israel expected that Messiah would soon appear. And He did. John was sent to prepare the way for Christ by calling all Israel to repentance, just as Isaiah had prophesied seven hundred and forty years earlier saying, "The voice of him who cries in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of Jehovah; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; and the knoll shall be a level place, and the rough places a plain.'" (Isaiah 40:3-5, Luke 3:3-6, LITV).

This passage reveals the nature of John's ministry and defines the repentance that God is calling for today. Just as there was a need for a forerunner to prepare the way before Jesus came the first time, so it is before He comes again. God is the great equalizer. The ground at the foot of the cross is perfectly level. Notice that the highway of our God is found out in the waste places of the desert! It is not found in the palaces and temples of self-exalted men. John equated the elevated ones to the lowest of beasts, calling them snakes and vipers. This theme of equality is the earmark of God who opposes the proud and gives grace to the lowly. Godly repentance is best described by the words, "Every valley shall be exalted and every mountain and hill brought low."

How do you build a highway? You bring down the mountains, fill in the valleys. You straighten the crooked places but still that is not enough. You must remove the topsoil and get down to something solid. Only then can you start laying the roadbed for the new highway. You can't build a highway for Christ without removing the humus of the kingdoms of men. All those proud mountains that exalt themselves and the despondent and downtrodden valleys must be brought to grade. Jesus came as a suffering servant that He might break every yoke and let the captives go free. Free to do what? Free to serve one another and the Father in all humility as the family of God. Those mountains that are above such servanthood must be brought low. Those valleys that are debased and devalued shall be exalted.

The Spirit of Elijah

John the Baptist was both a fulfillment of prophecy and a prophetic picture, foretelling future events. Jesus spoke of this mystery in Matthew 17:11-13. "Elijah is indeed coming (future tense), and will be restoring all. Yet I am saying to you that Elijah *came*

already (past tense), and they did not recognize him, but they do to him whatever they will. Thus the Son of Mankind also is about to be suffering by them" (CLNT).(Emphasis ours)

Here Jesus is speaking of the coming of Elijah in both the future and past tenses. He is indeed coming but he has already come. He had come the first time as Elijah. He had come the second time as John the Baptist, and he will yet come in the future to restore all things.

When the angel of the Lord came to Zacharias and informed him that his wife, Elizabeth, would bear a son and that they should call his name John, he also quoted a prophecy from Malachi 4:5-6, revealing the spirit in which John would minister. "He will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord, their God. He will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children." (Luke 1:14-17)

John was the fulfillment of Malachi's prophecy. In Matthew 11:13-14, Jesus removed any doubt as to who this Elijah was. "For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. If you are willing to receive it, this is Elijah, who is to come." The word spirit is often used to describe a person's character, disposition or nature and passion. John came in the spirit, in the passion of Elijah. It is that spirit and passion that motivated and impelled him.

The Friend of the Bridegroom

The following passage reveals the heart attitude and character of this messenger who was sent from God. In the declining days of John's ministry, some Jews created strife with John's disciples about baptism. This is what followed.

They [John's disciples] came to John, and said to him, "Rabbi, he who was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom you have testified, behold, the same baptizes, and everyone is coming to him." John answered, "A man can receive nothing, unless it has been given him from heaven. You yourselves testify that I said, 'I am not the Christ,' but, 'I have been sent before him.' He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. This, my joy, therefore is made full. He must increase, but I must decrease. He who comes from above is above all." (John 3:25-36)

John the Baptist is the ideal messenger. His faithfulness is nothing short of inspirational. His famous words, "He [Jesus] must increase, but I must decrease" were descriptive of his single passion, the spirit in which he came. Do we really know what these words mean? Do we know it on the level that John did? This is John's mission statement. It was his goal from the outset. It never entered his mind to establish and maintain a high-profile ministry. He was simply an anonymous voice crying in the wilderness. He found his identity in Christ, not in his calling and ministry. From the shores of Jordan, where he first saw the One whose shoelaces he was not worthy to unloose, John never stopped heralding, he never stopped pointing; he never stopped directing the eyes and hearts of the hearers to Jesus. He never stopped saying, "Behold the Lamb of God!"

But the time came for John to decrease even further. His job was done and he saw the need to disappear. He had prepared the way for Jesus and now it was time for him to make way for the Bridegroom. He knew that if he stayed he would find himself in competition with Jesus.

John's followers had not yet left him and gone after Jesus, and now they were tempting him. Their words were filled with jealousy against Christ. "He who was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom you have testified, behold, He is baptizing, and all are coming to Him!" They wanted John to get with the program; to compete with the very one he was called to serve. Couldn't John see that his ministry was failing? That people were no longer coming to him? Perhaps they were attempting to get John to hold more meetings, to do what had worked for him in the past. Get up! Do something! Can't you see that all are coming to Him?

John's reply is teeming with significance. He reminded his disciples that "a man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven." John did acknowledge that he had (past tense) been sent before Christ, but that time was over. John reminded his disciples what his ministry was all about when he said, "He who has the bride is the bridegroom." In the context of the traditional Hebrew wedding ceremony, John saw himself as the friend of the bridegroom, who helped in any way he could to present the bride unmolested, as a chaste virgin, to the Groom.

The final act of the friend of the bridegroom was on that long awaited night when the groom came to steal the bride away. When she heard the cry, "The bridegroom comes,

go out to meet him," she was swept away to the house that the Groom had been long preparing.

According to the Jewish tradition, the friend of the bridegroom followed the wedding procession at a distance. When the groom took the bride into the bridal chamber, the friend of the bridegroom drew near. Standing just outside the bridal suite, he listened to the sound of lovemaking and at the first note of joy in the Bridegroom's voice, the friend of the Bridegroom danced and shouted for joy. His job over, the groom's friend turned and walked away.

So we see in John a perfect messenger with a perfect heart. May God help us to be such friends and messengers of the Bridegroom today and walk away from any clamoring after our own gain under the guise of ministry!

Abraham's Faithful Servant

In Genesis 24, we read the story of a similar servant, with the same passions. He also was the friend of the bridegroom. He was sent by Abraham back to his homeland to get a bride for his son, Isaac. Abraham gave this man ten camel loads of wealth, the bride's price, to purchase a bride for his son. The man is just a servant, has no wealth of his own, and nothing personally to gain! Yet he goes for great distance (some say it was about 470 miles) and weeks of travel with a king's ransom and no supervision to pick out a wife for Isaac. When he gets there he fell on his face and cried out to God that he might choose the right woman for his master's son. He put forth a test and Rebekah passed with flying colors. The servant gave all the wealth to Rebekah and her father, and took her back to Isaac. He never had the slightest thing to gain from the journey other than the knowledge that God had given to his master's son a bride of His choosing. In that only did he rejoice! (See Genesis 24:10-22).

As they approached Beer Lahai Roi, they came upon Isaac. When Rebekah saw Isaac she dismounted and said to the servant, "Who is the man who is walking in the field to meet us?" The servant presented the bride to the groom as a chaste virgin by identifying him. "It is my master." (See Genesis 24:61-65)

Like John the Baptist, this faithful servant knew that the bride belongs to the Bridegroom. We see this heart also in Apostle Paul, who wrote, "[For I am jealous as to](#)

you with a jealousy, which is of God; for I have espoused you unto one man, to present you a chaste virgin to Christ" (2 Corinthians 11:2 Darby)

What a lesson these servants provide us! God is looking for such servants to serve the Body of Christ today. He is looking for those who will bring forth a Bride worthy of the Son - one that is without spots or bruises from the manhandling of presumptuous ministers. He seeks servants who will not spend the Bride's price on themselves, or sully the bride for their own pleasures. God seeks those who will not set up their own kingdom with the Father's wealth, but are good stewards of all that is given into their hands, delivering it where it belongs. For these servants who share the Father's heart, bringing forth a Bride for the Son's good pleasure is reward enough. In this their joy is fulfilled.

God often gives us an Old Testament prototype (as seen above) that exhibits the essential features of a later type. The New Covenant fulfillment is in Christ, but it does not stop there. The continuous work of the Holy Spirit is to form, fill and fulfill all things that the prototype prefigured. Such is the case with Elijah, John and the end-time Elijah Company. Elijah and John are prophetic of an end-time company that God WILL send to restore all things.

The End-Time Elijah Compan

But in what form will Elijah come in these final days? Will he be a single high-profile entity? Or will he be a whole company of dear saints that are flat out in love with Jesus and want to see Him get what He so deserves as Savior and Lord? We believe Revelation shows this final coming of Elijah to be a company of people, not just a single man, this being depicted by the "two witnesses" (a sign of plurality). The whole of the New Testament points to the Spirit's anointing being on a body of believers, not just one or two empowered ones (see Acts 4:31-33, 20:32, 26:29, Romans 8:32, 1 Corinthians 3:21-23, 12:5-7, 11-13, 14:31, Galatians 3:28, Ephesians 1:22-23, 3:8-11, 17-19, 4:10-16, 25, 1 John 2:20, 27).

In what way is this end-time company like Elijah and John the Baptist? In what way will this Elijah Company sum-up or consummate the ministries of these forerunners? The heart of their message will be the same.

Every word John spoke pointed the way to that Prince that was not of this world, to that other kingdom that is to come. His opening volley down at the Jordan River was, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." When Jesus came to be baptized, John pointed to Him and said, "This is the ONE!" When his disciples still refused to follow the ONE he scolded them. He said, "A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven." John pointed to the Bridegroom and insisted that the bride belonged to Jesus, not himself.

Who can be part of the Elijah Company? Can we make ourselves part of this end-time prophetic ministry? Can we go to some school of the prophets and learn the techniques necessary to walk in the footsteps of these great men? NO! A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven. The calling, the preparation, the severing from this world, the message and finally the work all come down from heaven. God is still sovereign and it is HE who chooses, prepares, empowers and sends forth His messengers. He is looking for hearts that seek only the Son.

Those who are of the Elijah Company, like Elijah and John, will also find that they are in a direct confrontation with the political and religious systems of this world. As we can see from the lives of these messengers, *all* the kingdoms of men rejected them and finally tried to kill them.

In the book of Revelation, the two witnesses preach the kingdom of God in the streets of apostate Jerusalem and prevail for a season, but when they are finally slain, a great party is held in celebration of their demise. This is again a type of the antagonism that exists between the kingdoms of the prince of this world and the kingdom of God. As Jesus said so well, "[He who comes from above is above all; he who is of the earth is earthly and speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all. And what He has seen and heard, that He testifies; and no one receives His testimony.](#)"

What passion inspires and propels these chosen ones of the Elijah Company? Is it to build a great ministry? NO! They only want to see Jesus' kingdom increase. They understand that for this to happen they must decrease. They must lose their lives and identity, lest they be found stealing the attention of the Bride away from the Bridegroom and defeating their very callings.

God is looking for those, like Abraham's faithful servant, who are willing to deny themselves to bring forth a bride without spot or wrinkle, fit for the Son. Individuals

whose heart-desire is to build a ministry in their own name and for their own glory can never be faithful friends of the Bridegroom. They try to woo and possess the bride for their own gratification. To such unfaithful servants, the following words of John are a scalding rebuke. "He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease."

On the other hand, true friends of the bridegroom eagerly wait for those times of intimacy when the groom takes the bride into His chambers. They rejoice when the bride follows passionately after the Groom, when He sweeps her away to that place of intimate communion. In this their joy is made full! They live for the Groom's fulfillment. Hearing His satisfied voice is the delight of their ears. They dance and shout for joy at the very thought of the union of the bride and the Groom, even knowing that it marks the end of their work. Their lives have been spent in preparation for this very moment.

They have eagerly worked themselves out of a job. Having prepared the way for Christ, now it is time for them to get out of the way for Christ. Only the faithful friend of the bridegroom will turn and walk away. The unfaithful servant tries to maintain his place and his ministry at all cost. He will fight to keep the bride to himself. This is the very point that John was making when He told his disciples, "He who has the bride is the bridegroom." Only such friends will deliver an unmolested bride to the Groom. Only such friends can fully rejoice in that union. This is the spirit of Elijah!

The Power of Elijah

Some might ask here, "But what about the power of Elijah? Won't this end-time Elijah Company come in the power of Elijah as well?" We believe so, but only when their passion is in full alignment with the Spirit's passion. The Spirit does not squander His power on those with private ambition. The scriptures fail to yield one instance where God commanded anyone to seek power. Fleshly men want the power, but few have the passion for the Bridegroom that is behind the power of Elijah and John. These two men's hearts were altars upon which the heavenly fire descended. It was the effectual fervent prayer proceeding from the hearts and mouths of such messengers that moved the hand of God. Their desire was not miracles, but turning hearts toward God. Elijah did not independently seek power, but the power came as he sought the restoration of all things. What would make us any different from Simon, who tried to purchase power

from Peter, if our quest is for power? Would we not likewise bring ourselves under a curse?

Today we see high-profile men in ministry posturing and selling "power." They holding expensive seminars for the prophetic and apostolic ministers "so they too, can receive the power." They often promise their adherents that if they support them, then these supporters will be given their own power ministry. We have even seen personal prophecies sold for seventy-five dollars a pop. O dear Christian, it is time to weep between the porch and the altar (see Joel 2:17)!

The Spirit of God brings a selfless passion for the exaltation of Jesus before He brings any power to those who are called. First "to will" THEN "to do," first the passion, then the power. Without the cross in the lives of these called-out ones, there will never be an impartation of passion or power. The natural man cannot receive the things of the Spirit or God's kingdom, so kingdom power cannot be wielded by fleshly ambition.

As we see Christendom today so permeated with private ambition, and worse yet, see the residue of that same ambition in our own hearts, we tend to become cynical. We question whether the purity and passion of heart that was found in Elijah and John the Baptist could ever be found in contemporary Christianity.

In spite of our doubts, God is doing it once again! He is bypassing the scholars and would-be kings. To the chagrin of many, He is also bypassing those who sit in the seats of ecclesiastical power. "Who is this coming up out of the wilderness leaning on her beloved?" What is this fire glowing in the desert night? It is the lowly and humble wilderness-dwellers, a company preparing the way. They are nameless! They are voices crying! They seek no identity, no ministry and no fame. They are coming in passion, a passion to see the Bridegroom receive His bride! These are also coming in the power of Elijah!