

Prayer:

Slide # 1

Theme: *Christ the King*

Outline:

- Chps. 1-2 The Advent of the King. (Proving His LEGAL right to the throne by His genealogy.)
- Chp. 3 The Forerunner of the King and the King’s baptism.
- Chp. 4 The Test of the King. (Proving His MORAL right to the throne by not yielding to temptation; and exhibiting His kingdom resume.)
- Chps. 5-7 The Pronouncements of the King. (Proving His JUDICIAL right to the throne as seen in the wisdom of His kingdom teaching.)
- Chps. 8-10 The Power of the King. (Proving His PROPHETICAL right to the throne by fulfilling prophecy.)
- Chps. 11-12 The Rejection of the King.
- Chp. 13 The Parables of the King.
- Chps. 14-16 The Revelations of the King.
- Chps. 17-20 The Instructions of the King.**
- Chps. 21-23 Formal Rejection of the King.
- Chps. 24-25 The Predictions of the King.
- Chps. 26-27 The Passion of the King.
- Chp. 28 The Resurrection of the King.

At the end of Matthew 16 there is a mingling of themes related to the PERSON of Jesus as the Christ; the Son of the living God; the CROSS of Christ on the horizon; and the coming KINGDOM of Christ. The great question is: How does all this fit together?

At the end of Matthew 16 after emphasizing that He is about to die and be raised the 3rd day (16:21); and then qualifying the cost of true discipleship as involving denial of self, taking up your cross and following Him; then Jesus said this:

Slide # 2

Matthew 16:28 (NKJV)

28 Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom."

And then as we move into chapter 17 we see what Christ meant by some seeing the kingdom before death involved Peter, James, and John being given a kingdom preview on what is called the mount of transfiguration.

On this high mountain Jesus was suddenly transfigured before them in kingdom glory and Moses and Elijah appeared there in conversation with Him.

Peter loved the experience and babbled on about building 3 tabernacles, one for the Lord, one for Moses, and one for Elijah. The Father from heaven suddenly interrupted Peter and said of Jesus, "***This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!***" (17:5) Clearly, Jesus was not to be seen as merely one of the three equals, but in contrast He is ALL ALONE as the exalted Son of God Who bears the very nature of God. He as the divine one ALONE speaks with absolute authority. "***Hear Him!***"

The disciples fell on their faces in terror but then Jesus touched them and said, "***do not be afraid***" (17:8). The disciples then looking up saw Jesus ONLY. Properly, the focus was now on Jesus ALONE and His singular authority as the Son of God.

We now pick up the narrative at Matthew 17:9...

Matthew 17:9–13 (NKJV)

9 Now as they came down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, "Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man is risen from the dead."

This is the 5th and final time in Matthew that Jesus commands His disciples to be silent (cf. 8:4; 9:30; 12:16; 16:20; 17:9).

At this point the concern was evidently that telling this would only fan the flames of Messianic fever borne out of ignorance (cf. Jn. 6:14-15). At this point the nation of Israel led by her religious leaders had rejected Christ, He was headed for the cross, and the kingdom offer had been put on hold. To promote such a glorious experience as the mount of transfiguration at this point would only fuel misconceptions and not be helpful as far as the overall program of God.

Note when the Father said, “**Hear Him!**” and the disciples fell on their faces and that fear probably resonated through to this point. Note Christ **COMMANDED** them, it was not merely a suggestion. As the LORD He is ever in charge.

Note Christ described the experience on the mount of transfiguration as “the vision”.

The title “**Son of Man**” is consistently used as a Messianic title in Christ’s ministry tying Him back to the Messianic designation and prophecy in Dan. 7:13-14.

This is now the second time that Christ in a short span of time has mentioned His resurrection from the dead (see 16:21). And of course, “**risen from the dead**” necessitates the reality of death. It seems that the disciples heard the word “**death**” but didn’t quite follow through on the word “**risen**”. They got it that Christ was telling them He was going to die, but the truth about the resurrection didn’t really register until after it happened.

One of the BIG things that the disciples did NOT understand at this point and which would not be clear until after the resurrection, was that Jesus as the Messiah would have TWO comings and not just ONE. Hence, they were confused about Elijah.

10 And His disciples asked Him, saying, “Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?”

Understand where the disciples were coming from. They knew at this point that Jesus was the Christ via Peter’s confession. They knew that Jesus had the very nature of God via Peter’s confession that He is “Son of the living God” (Mt. 16:16), which was then powerfully affirmed by the Father’s mighty voice on the Mount of transfiguration.

They had just seen Elijah on the mount of transfiguration. They knew that the scribes taught that the prophet Malachi had said Elijah would come first before the Messiah. Again, they did not yet understand that there would be two comings for the Christ and so they were trying to make sense of this.

Was their experience with Elijah at the mount of transfiguration the fulfillment of the what the scribes were talking about? And if this was Elijah coming to restore all things how did that harmonize with the Messiah then being killed? That didn’t seem to fit. How does Elijah’s restoration ministry harmonize with Jesus emphasizing He is about to suffer and die?

The parallel in Mark 9 suggests confusion over how Jesus' death relates to the restoration ministry of Elijah which must come FIRST.

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Mark 9:11–12 (NKJV)

11 And they asked Him, saying, “Why do the scribes say that **Elijah must come first?**”

12 Then He answered and told them, “Indeed, Elijah is coming first and restores all things. **And how is it written concerning the Son of Man, that He must suffer** many things and be treated with contempt?”

Both are true when understood in the right order. Elijah must come first, but also it must be fulfilled that the Son of Man must suffer.

11 Jesus answered and said to them, “Indeed, Elijah is coming first and will restore all things.

Jesus affirmed that indeed on this point the scribes were right – ***“Indeed, Elijah is coming first and will restore all things.”*** Jesus here affirmed a yet future literal coming of Elijah which will come first prior to the Messiah and in this coming, he will restore all things.

Jesus spoke of what the prophet Malachi prophesied at the very end of the OT.

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Malachi 4:5–6 (NKJV)

5 Behold, I will **send you Elijah** the prophet **Before** the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.

6 And he will turn The hearts of the fathers to the children, And the hearts of the children to their fathers, Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.”

Elijah is referred to 29 times in the NT. He appeared with Jesus and Moses on the mount of transfiguration. Malachi predicted he would thunder onto the scene just prior to the coming of the Christ and would bring about revival in Israel as seen in the turning of hearts.

The experience on the mount of transfiguration is described by Jesus as a ***“vision”*** but it was not the fulfillment of Malachi's prophecy. This is yet future. The phrase ***“will restore all things”*** shows this is yet future.

No restoration had been affected in Israel by John the Baptist or the kingdom would have come. That was the problem, Israel did NOT repent – therefore there was no restoration.

This idea that Elijah would come first was so strong in the national consciousness that some thought the ministry of Jesus was actually that of Elijah risen from the dead as seen in Matt. 16:14 (cf. Lk. 9:7-8). On the cross when Jesus cried out “***Eli, Eli lama sabachatani***” (meaning “***My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?***”) some who stood at the cross thought He was calling for Elijah (Mt. 27:46-49).

They were definitely expecting Elijah and they were expecting him to show up before the Messiah. When John the Baptist said he was NOT Elijah (Jn. 1:21) that would seem to argue that Jesus was therefore not the Christ because BEFORE the Christ comes Elijah must first come on the scene. The result was the religious leaders ended up claiming that John the Baptist had a demon as seen in Matt. 11:18 because of his claim to be the forerunner to the Christ.

The Jews to this day are still waiting for Elijah to come and they still do not think the true Messiah has come at all. They are still waiting for this order of things to develop. First Elijah must come on the scene, and then following that the Messiah will come. So in Jewish thinking Jesus can't be the true Christ, because Elijah has yet to come and restore all things, and that must happen FIRST. And so they are still waiting...

For about 2500 years the Jews have anticipated the literal return of Elijah as the forerunner to the Messiah. At the Passover meal (called the seder) to this day they set an extra place setting and a **special cup** designated just for Elijah. The meal begins with prayer and then a member of the family is asked to go to the door, open it, and see if Elijah the prophet has come. Thus, the expectation of Elijah to come before the Messiah is constantly reinforced.

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When you put all the Scriptures together it is clear that John the Baptist was not literally Elijah. There is no such thing as reincarnation. There are at least 3 reasons that argue persuasively that John the Baptist was not literally Elijah.

- 1) The angel Gabriel announced to Zacharias that his son John the Baptist would go before the Lord “in the spirit and power of Elijah” as seen in Luke 1:17. He would come in the “spirit and power of Elijah” but he would not literally be Elijah.
- 2) After John the Baptist died the Lord here in Matthew 17:11 announced that “Elijah is coming first and will restore all things”. Thus, Jesus interpreted Malachi 4:5, “Behold, I will send Elijah the prophet” literally showing that this prophecy must yet be fulfilled literally in the person of Elijah.
- 3) When the religious leaders of Israel confronted John the Baptist with a direct question as to whether he was Elijah his answer was an unequivocal “no” as seen in John 1:21.

The restoration ministry of Elijah is yet future. As Jesus affirmed, “Indeed, Elijah is coming first, and will restore all things.” (Matt. 17:11).

Note the precision with which Malachi speaks....

Slide # 6

Malachi 4:5 (NKJV)

5 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.

The 70th week of Daniel, commonly called the Tribulation Period is broken up into two parts. At the midpoint of the 7-year Tribulation the Antichrist will go into the rebuilt Jewish temple and will declare himself to be God (cf. Dan. 9:27; 2 Thess. 2:3-4). This is called the height of abomination in Daniel 9:27 which Jesus referred to as “the abomination of desolation” in Matthew 24:15. Jesus said, this will mark a transition to “great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.” (Mt. 24:21) This last half of the tribulation period is specifically “the great and dreadful day of the LORD”. It is the time of GREAT tribulation.

Note the DOUBLE emphasis in Malachi 4:5 – “**before the GREAT and TERRIBLE day of the LORD.**” That is descriptive of the time of GREAT unparalleled time of Tribulation. Elijah shows up before this time – in other words Elijah will minister during the first half of the tribulation period.

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It is for this reason that many dispensational commentators in our camp believe Elijah is most probably one of the two witnesses mentioned in Revelation 11.

Slide # 8

Revelation 11:3–4 (NKJV)

3 And I will give **power to my two witnesses**, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth.”

4 These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the God of the earth.

Zechariah 4 prophetically mentioned these 2 olive trees – also called the two lampstands and the “two anointed ones”. In Zechariah’s time it is thought that application is made to Zerubbabel the governor of the kingly line of David, and Joshua the High Priest. But prophetically the book of Revelation makes application to the 2 special witnesses in Rev. 11.

The olive tree symbolism represents Spirit empowered witnesses, and the lampstands represent the light of their witness. Anointed ones in the OT were special chosen representatives of God who were anointed with oil representing a special empowerment by the Spirit.

In the context of describing the two special witnesses of Zechariah 4 we have the key verse of the chapter as seen in verse 6.

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Zechariah 4:6 (NKJV)

6 So he answered and said to me: "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' Says the LORD of hosts.

God will accomplish His purposes by His Spirit working through special chosen instruments. As applied to the two witnesses in Revelation 11 these will be the two most powerful witnesses on earth.

Lots of discussion has revolved around who these two witnesses in Rev. 11 will be. Most agree that most probably one of them will be Elijah because of the prophecy of Malachi 4:5-6. As for the second witness Enoch is often suggested as a candidate because neither Enoch nor Elijah died a normal death.

But note that the entire context of Rev. 11 is Jewish in orientation having much to do with the temple and the city of Jerusalem. Enoch lived before the time of the flood and hence long before the time of Israel. He did not have a Jewish ministry because he existed before the time of Israel's existence.

If one of the two witnesses is indeed Elijah, as most all of us suspect, then what do we make of his bodily appearance after about 3000 years of having been off the scene. In Revelation 11 after 3 and ½ years of ministry the Antichrist will have both witnesses killed in Jerusalem where their dead bodies will lay for 3 and ½ days. The world will rejoice over their death and send gifts to one another – kind of like we do at Christmas – "Here is your gift – happy dead witnesses day".

The last anyone saw of Elijah he was taken up into heaven in a whirlwind (2 Kg. 2:11). But then what happened when he vanished out of sight. Does this mean he went bodily to the third heaven where God dwells? The Bible speaks of 3 heavens, 1) the heaven where the birds fly, 2) the heaven of outer space where the planets are; and 3) the heaven where God's most intimate presence dwells (cf. 2 Cor. 12:2).

We should not assume that Elijah went bodily straight to the third heaven at this point. For starters when the OT saints departed from this life they did not go to heaven as do the NT saints. They went to the Paradise realm of departed spirits in the center of the earth called Sheol in the OT or Hades in the NT. Hades had 2 compartments – a paradise section for the saved and a torment section for the lost (cf. Lk. 16).

The OT saints lived in anticipation of the coming Christ, but they never really knew the full and total forgiveness that was actualized at the cross. They lived in the “shadowland” where nothing was yet complete. They lived in an era of “barriers” where yes they had relationship with God, and yet nothing was made perfect under the Law as it says in Heb. 7:19. They never were able to get too close to God. They never had absolute confirmation. There were always more sacrifices to be made and things always remained incomplete.

Into that void stepped Jesus to become the sacrifice for the sins of the entire world including all those committed prior to the cross (cf. Jn. 1:29, Rom. 3:24-26).

Hebrews 9:15 indicates that something radically changed in conjunction with the OT saints at the death of Christ (cf. Rom. 3:24-26).

Slide # 10

Hebrews 9:15 (NKJV)

15 And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, **for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant,** that those who are called **may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.**

All the barriers of the OT are now removed. Now the OT saints have entered into the good of many aspects of this eternal inheritance which first and foremost involves unlimited access and intimate relationship with God.

Hebrews 12:22-24 affirms this because in heaven along with the church of the first born are now “*the spirits of just men made perfect*” which many believe is a reference to the OT saints. Under the Law nothing was “perfect” – including their destiny at the time of death. But now they have entered into the “perfection” provided by Christ at the cross and in the resurrection Christ transitioned all the OT saints to heaven (cf. 1 Pet. 3:19; 2 Pet. 2:4; Col. 2:15; Eph. 4:8-10).

But this is all post-cross when at the resurrection as Christ “ascended on high” and “led captivity captive” meaning He unleashed all the New Covenant blessings that now are the inheritance for God’s people.

But neither Elijah or Enoch knew these benefits – not yet! The OT saints were saved “on credit” but they did not yet know the benefits of a New Covenant relationship with God based on the blood of Christ.

This may well explain the discussion that Moses and Elijah had with Christ on the mount of transfiguration.

Slide # 11

Luke 9:30–31 (NKJV)

30 And behold, two men talked with Him, who were Moses and Elijah,
31 who appeared in glory and spoke of His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.

They were thinking and talking in terms of Christ’s decease and what He was going to ACCOMPLISH on their behalf as well as for all believers.

But from their perspective their full redemption was yet to be accomplished which would be of great interest to them– and of course this would ultimately include the reality of future glorification involving a glorified body which neither one had yet.

The implication is that neither Enoch nor Elijah had a glorified body at this point which is necessary to live bodily in God’s presence in the third heaven. This is a necessary deduction for 2 reasons.

Slide # 12

John 3:13 (NKJV)

13 No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven.

Jesus plainly said that no one up to that point at the time of His earthly ministry had ascended bodily into heaven. So I take it that neither Elijah nor Enoch actually went bodily to live in the third heaven with God. But there is another even more compelling reason to think this is true.

Slide # 13

1 Corinthians 15:20 (NKJV)

20 But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

1 Corinthians 15:23 (NKJV)

23 But each one in his own order: **Christ the firstfruits**, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming.

Christ is the firstfruits of those who have a glorified body that is suited for glory. No one else preceded Him in this including Elijah and Enoch. I take it that both Elijah and Enoch, neither of whom died a natural death, ended up in the paradise section of Hades which is the realm of departed believers prior to the perfection of all things in Christ. Just like Samuel in 1 Sam. 28:15 Moses and Elijah at the mount of transfiguration were supernaturally visibly "brought up" out of their resting place in the pre-Christ place of paradise (cf. Matt. 12:40; Lk. 16:22; 23:43; Acts 2:27; 1 Pet. 3:19).

Time is no issue to God. Lazarus after 4 days was already stinking with decomposition, but Christ restored him to physical life where he picked up just where he had left off (cf. Jn. 11:39). And later Lazarus had to once again die a physical death. And God is able to do this with Elijah even after 3000 years of time – and He will. Nothing is impossible with God. Elijah will in the latter days be brought back to physical life in his mortal body to serve as one of God's special witnesses.

I am not dogmatic about this, but I am firm in my own thinking that the two witnesses in Rev. 11 will probably be Moses and Elijah. And the key reason for this is because of the character of their ministries as described in Rev. 11 which mirrors what they had carried out in the OT.

The first two types of judgments listed correspond to Elijah like miracles. In the OT Elijah called down fire from heaven to destroy people (2 Kg. 1:10, 12). He also prayed, causing it not to rain and causing drought (1 Kg. 17:1). These are Elijah like miracles.

Slide # 14**Revelation 11:5–6 (NKJV)**

5 And if anyone wants to harm them, **fire proceeds from their mouth and devours their enemies**. And if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this manner.

6 These have **power to shut heaven, so that no rain falls** in the days of their prophecy; and they have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire.

The second two types of miraculous judgments involve turning water into blood and striking the earth with a variety of plagues. This is indicative of Moses and what God allowed him to do in the OT in relation to the plagues that were brought on Egypt (cf. Ex. 7-12).

Slide # 15

Revelation 11:6 (NKJV)

6 These have power to shut heaven, so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy; and they have **power over waters to turn them to blood**, and to **strike the earth with all plagues**, as often as they desire.

In terms of miracles of judgment Moses and Elijah are unique in the OT and what is described here in Rev. 11 is indicative of their ministries. My conclusion is that these two witnesses are most likely Moses and Elijah.

And they will be effective! In the OT when Elijah challenged the prophets of Baal saying, “the God who answers by fire, He is God” (1 Kg. 18:24). The prophets of Baal had no answer. But then Elijah prayed...

Slide # 16

1 Kings 18:37–39 (NKJV)

37 Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that You are the LORD God, and that You have **turned** their hearts back to You again.”

38 Then the **fire of the LORD fell** and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood and the stones and the dust, and it licked up the water that was in the trench.

39 Now when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, “**The LORD, He is God! The LORD, He is God!**”

When the fire fell the people came to repentance and so will it be in the latter days when the fire begins to fall through Elijah’s resumed ministry the people will once again come to repentance on a national level. Indeed, Elijah will be used by God to bring about the restoration of all things.

As a footnote: These miracles at the hands of Moses and Elijah in the OT which will continue on in the Tribulation Period, are the greatest of miracles in the history of the world performed at the hands of people. But that needs to be qualified.

Christ did the greatest of all miracles and has no peer. But Christ's miracles were all benevolent – they were not miracles of judgment. But now Elijah and Moses will minister in the context of the Day of the Lord which is a time of judgment. And their miracles will be unique in terms of judgment.

Of course, God is behind all miracles, but done through the hands of people these 2 witnesses will be unique and will be used of God to bring about the process of restoration in Israel.

At the time of the Rapture absolutely every believer will be removed from the earth. There won't be a single believer left here. It will be a context of total and absolute apostasy and unbelief. But God never leaves Himself without a witness on this earth. Suddenly 2 witnesses will appear in Jerusalem and begin to be a powerful witness for the LORD.

Therefore, there will be no one to train these two witnesses, and not time to train them. They must be men already possessing full knowledge of the Scriptures and well-seasoned for such a demanding ministry. Moses was the lawgiver; Elijah was the law-enforcer. Both will be men of experience. They will be perfectly equipped for a ministry to Israel before a world-wide audience.

– *Dr. John C. Whitcomb*

The OT required 2 witnesses as a legal testimony involving anything of great significance (cf. Deut. 17:9; 19:15; Num. 35:30; Heb. 10:28; Matt. 18:16; Jn. 8:17; 2 Cor. 13:1; 1 Tim. 5:19). These 2 witnesses with their background will be a very POWERFUL confirmation of the prophetic truth of God and will be used of God to bring about revival in Israel and a powerful testimony to the entire world. They will be unstoppable – for 3 and ½ years – the first half of the tribulation period.

This restoration will begin to happen early in the Tribulation Period although it will involve a process. So much so that by the middle of the Tribulation Period a great remnant will flee from the Antichrist per the instruction of Christ in Matthew 24 concerning the abomination of desolation committed by the Antichrist in the temple (cf. Matt. 24:15-21).

Slide # 17

Isaiah 66:8 (NKJV)

8 Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things? Shall the earth be made to **give birth in one day**? Or shall **a nation be born at once**? For **as soon as Zion was in labor**, [*The Tribulation Period*] She gave birth to her children.

12 But I say to you that Elijah has come already, and they did not know him but did to him whatever they wished. Likewise the Son of Man is also about to suffer at their hands.”

This is where an inductive (all inclusive) study of the Scriptures comes in – and where it is necessary to rightly divide the Word.

Slide # 18

v. 11 – “Elijah is coming...” (Future)

v. 12 – “Elijah has come already” (Past)

How can both be true? On the surface this may sound like a contradiction, but it is not. When you put all the scriptures together it makes sense. Verse 13 makes it very clear that in verse 12 Jesus is talking about John the Baptist.

13 Then the disciples understood that He spoke to them of John the Baptist.

How can it be that John plainly said he was NOT Elijah in John 1:21 and yet Jesus both in Matthew 11:14 and here again in Matthew 17:12-13 indicated that John the Baptist was Elijah?

In John 1 John the Baptist said he was not Elijah but rather was “***The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Make straight the way of the LORD***” in fulfillment of Isaiah 40:3. In Luke 1:17 Zacharias was told that John the Baptist would go before the LORD “in the spirit and power of Elijah”.

John was not Elijah but he was a type of Elijah! That is the point! Keep Isaiah 40:3 distinct from Mal. 4:5.

Slide # 19

Isaiah 40:3 (NKJV)

3 The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the LORD; Make straight in the desert A highway for our God.

Malachi 4:5 (NKJV)

5 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.

When you put it all together – there are two comings with two forerunners. John went before the LORD calling the people to repentance. They did not repent – they as a nation were not restored.

But one day Elijah will come back on the scene prior to the second coming and he will be successful. He will see the great restoration of God's people. Then there will be a great turning to God in Israel which will be reflected in the families of Israel.

John the Baptist did two things: 1) He called the people to repentance in preparation to receive the LORD Who came offering the kingdom on the condition of repentance. 2) John then introduced Jesus to Israel saying it was on Him they should believe (cf. Jn. 1:29).

Slide # 20

Acts 19:4 (NKJV)

4 Then Paul said, "John indeed baptized with a baptism of **repentance**, saying to the people that they should **believe** on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus."

Jesus said the Jews for a time rejoiced in John's light but in the end they said he had a demon (cf. Jn. 5:33-35; Mt. 11:18). In Matthew 11:14 Jesus indicated that had the people responded with repentance John would have fulfilled the Elijah prophecies of being the forerunner. The kingdom offer was legit, but alas the people rejected John the forerunner and they rejected the Christ He prepared the way for. And of course, God sovereignly knew what they were going to do all along.

So goes the forerunner with Israel so goes the Christ. At His first coming John came in the spirit and power of Elijah but the Israel's leaders rejected Him and so would they do with the Son of Man – which they did.

But prior to the second coming Elijah himself will come as the forerunner and this time Israel will accept the forerunners testimony and there will be a great turning to God in Israel and at His second coming Israel will receive Jesus saying, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD" (Mt. 23:39). Thus, Elijah's ministry will be the trigger for the restoration of all things.

So now we know: There are two comings for the Messiah and two forerunners. The first was a type of Elijah in the form of John the Baptist fulfilling the Isa. 40:3 passage but did not see repentance and restoration; the second will be the actual Elijah fulfilling the Mal. 4:5-6 passage and will bring about true repentance and restoration (cf. Acts 3:19-21; Rom. 11:12, 15, 25-29).

Application:

Both Moses and Elijah ministered in deep dark days of apostasy during the course of their earthly ministries. We live in the Church Age. The Church began suddenly and signlessly and it will end the same way. Christ could come at any time for the Church. We are to live ready!

There are no defining signs for the Church Age although we do see trends. And the key “sign” (if you want to call it that) that we are getting closer to the end is the growing apostasy. This is the defining mark of the last days of the Church age as revealed by Paul in 2 Tim. 3-4. In the last days perilous times of apostasy will come to the church and professing Christians will no longer endure sound doctrine. We are there!

Right now the alarm is being sounded all over in the conservative world of Christianity about what is called “**Progressive Christianity**” – which in truth is the same old liberal Christianity. In truth it is not genuine Christianity, but it claims to be. It is the stuff right out of 2 Tim. 3- 4.

Progressive Christians do not reject the Biblical authority outright; rather they purport to walk a middle path with the Bible in one hand and cultural sensitivity in the other. To put it clearly: Progressive Christianity interprets the Bible through the lens of culture; it does not critique the culture through the lens of the Bible. – **Erwin Lutzer**

That is EXACTLY BACKWARDS! And the result is deep/dark apostasy that no longer endures sound doctrine.

It is in the context of darkening apostasy that Christ will remove the TRUE Church out of the world and the false Church will become the bride of the Antichrist. Make no mistake about WHO Christ is removing and what defines the TRUE Church.

Slide # 21

Revelation 3:10 (NKJV)

10 Because you have **kept My command to persevere**, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.

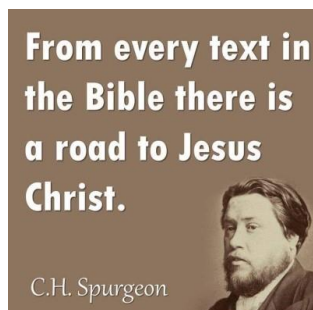
The true Church does not apostatize – not completely. But as the true Church is taken out of the world all that remains is a world of total unbelief – a world of total apostasy.

The false Church will be in union with Antichrist and Israel will sign a firm 7-year covenant with Antichrist which is called “a covenant with death” in Isaiah 28:15.

It is into this context of APOSTASY that Elijah (the two witnesses) will step onto the stage of history. And they will be successful. From their witness will come 144,000 thousand Jews who will serve to evangelize the entire world eventuating in an innumerable number of souls in heaven as seen in Revelation 7.

But here is the point: Just as sure as all the prophecies related to Christ’s first coming have literally been fulfilled – so will yet also all the prophecies related to His second coming be fulfilled. The first assures the second! Just as sure as John the Baptist fulfilled his “Elijah like role” as the forerunner in relation to Christ’s first coming; so also will the actual Elijah yet fulfill his God ordained forerunner role in relation to Christ’s second coming.

Slide # 22



Historically the road to Jesus comes through the prophesied forerunner. And we see that just as there are two comings, there are two forerunners.

The way to the kingdom is through the testimony of the forerunners! They are KEY witnesses! Listen to the testimony of John the Baptist who testified of Jesus saying, “**this is the Son of God**” (Jn. 1:34); and who said, “**Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!**” (Jn. 1:29).

We not only have the testimony of the forerunner, we also have the full testimony of Scripture, and the issue becomes what will we do with their witness?

Slide # 23

John 1:11–12 (NKJV)

11 He came to His own, and His own did **not receive Him**.

12 But as many as **received Him**, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who **believe** in His name:

Have you received Him? Have you believed on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ? Receive Him by faith today and you too will become a child of God.