

THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH IN ELIJAH

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HANDOUT

IMPORTANT POINTS TO UNDERSTAND

ELIJAH

Elijah is a *type* of the Church.

The events of his life depict the history of the Church during the Gospel age. There is ample evidence to support this assertion. As a starting point, see the chart on B256 or R0557 which show the many parallels between Elijah and the Church.

Elijah was commissioned to do a work of reformation among the Children of Israel. He was to turn their hearts away from the worship of Baal and back to Jehovah.

JOHN THE BAPTIST

John the Baptist is said to be “a finishing out, in a measure, of the type begun in the person and work of Elijah” (B253.2).

He was a “partial fulfilment” of Malachi 4:5-6 (see Matthew 11:14; 17:10-13). His experience in some ways illustrate the experiences of the true Church.

John the Baptist did a two-part “Elijah work” to the nation of Israel—preparation and announcement.

PREPARATION—

John the Baptist was commissioned to do a reformation work to Israel in order to prepare the hearts of the people for the First Advent of our Lord (Matthew 3:3; Mark 1:3; Luke 3:4; John 1:23; Luke 1:16-17). However, John failed to convert the hearts of all but a remnant.

Since Malachi 4:5-6 is a conditional statement, John’s failure meant the nation would be smitten with the “curse” mentioned. That is, they would be required to suffer a “time of trouble” in which their national polity was destroyed (R0557.8; R3292.9).

ANNOUNCEMENT—

John announced the presence of the Lord (John 1:29-34; B253.1).

John the Baptist began to “decrease” as soon as he announced the “one who standeth among you” (John 1:26; 3:30). This foreshadowed the closing work of the Church at the second advent. (B253.2; B260.2-B261.2)

After the announcement of the Messiah, John the Baptist was put in prison for denouncing the improper union between Herod and Herodias. He was later beheaded by Herod because of the maneuvering of Herodias through Salome.

THE CHURCH IN THE FLESH

The true Church, while in the flesh, is the antitypical Elias or Elijah, which introduces and prepares the way of the true Spiritual Church—the Christ in glory (R0968.7).

During the Gospel age, the true Church does an “Elijah work” on a larger scale—for the whole world. This includes:

PREPARATION—

The true Church was commissioned to preach the Gospel to the whole world in order to find those who would become the Little Flock. Their mission was to reprove error and sin, and to point to the coming Kingdom of glory (B252.1).

As time went on, the commission to preach morphed into the belief that the mission of the Church was to convert the world (Luke 1:16-17; B250.1-B254.1). And—like Elijah—this conversion work was only partially successful.

Since the world was not reformed, the curse of Malachi 4:5-6 became necessary. The world has been smitten “with a curse”, i.e., they are subjected to a “time of trouble” in which symbolic “fire” destroys the polity of the old order and establishes the Mediatorial reign (R0557.9).

The character of the nominal Church at the end of the age is described by 2 Timothy 3:1-3; 4:3.

ANNOUNCEMENT—

The Church does an Elijah work to the world by announcing the Second Advent and the presence of our Lord (B253.1; R0557.4).

The work of the Elijah class closes with the announcement that the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand, and that the King is present. John 1:26 ; Matt 3:12 (B260.2; R0968.10)

As John **decreased** after his message was delivered—so the Church **in the flesh** must decrease on this side of the veil until the last member has laid down his consecrated life, and passed beyond the veil into “glory.”

As John said that Jesus must **increase**, likewise the Kingdom of Christ—head and body—must increase until it fills the earth (B261.1; B264.3; R0968.11). The numbers of the Church on this side of the veil have grown steadily smaller, while the Church beyond the second veil has grown steadily larger.

THE CHURCH IN POWER AND GLORY

During the Millennial age, the same Elijah class, only now glorified and empowered, will bless and teach the world and restore all things (Acts 3:19-21). However, the name and the likeness to the Elijah type will cease (B254.1).

The work of Elias—the church glorified—will be successful and will put down all opposition and then restore and bless. (R0557.10)

The work in which the Church is now engaged is merely preliminary to its future work—in its kingly office the Church shall accomplish for the world what it fails to do as the Elias class. (B252.1)