

***THE SPIRIT OF ELIJAH AND THE END OF THE AGE – SAMUEL CLOUGH***  
***THE CLEAR CALL TO RAISE UP “SONS OF THE PROPHETS”***

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***Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. 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. – Malachi 4:5-6***

***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? But I say to you that Elijah has also come, and they did to him whatever they wished, as it is written of him. – Mark 9:12-13***

**I. THE MINISTRY OF PROPHETS AT THE END OF THE AGE**

- A. It is very apparent that the great need of the hour is prophets. The absence of the kind of prophets that are needed is a painful reality for the church. This is not to say that prophets do not exist in our day or that the gift of prophecy is not operating, but simply to say that there is a desperate need for the Lord to release prophets again that of the same stature of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. The prophetic ministry we have is good, and we should honor it, but we stand at the brink of a crisis that will demand a prophetic ministry that has been extremely rare in our day.
- B. In His mercy, God sent prophets to Israel before and during their greatest hour of crisis. While the prophetic ministry always existed in Israel, the unique ministry of the oracular prophets was given for a specific time and season. *The release of prophets in unique periods of history is a divine pattern because there is a direct relationship between a prophet’s ministry and the time period in which they live.*
  - 1. The prophetic ministry cannot be separated from the time period in which it operates. There are many overarching characteristics of prophets, both in the Old Testament and the New Testament, but there are other characteristics of prophetic ministry that are directly related to the time period in which the prophet prophesies and not to the prophetic gift in general.
  - 2. Many have tried to understand prophets and prophetic ministry purely on the basis of the prophet’s function or the context of the Old or New Testament, but it must be understood that the time period a prophet lives in determines the characteristics of a prophet’s ministry as much as the prophetic gift in general does.
- C. As we enter in the last days, God will again follow the divine pattern. As nations increasingly come to the brink of national judgments and the earth as a whole races towards the Day of the Lord, the ultimate judgment of which all previous judgments are a foreshadow, God will again flood the earth with prophets of the same kind as those recorded for us in the Old Testament.
  - 1. This time one of the most significant differences will be that the prophets that are coming will not be confined to Israel but will be sent to every nation of the earth.

2. In times past, Israel alone carried the mysteries of God when prophets were sent. We are living in a time period where the gospel is being proclaimed to every nation on earth. *Every nation has been brought into the revelation that was given to Israel and therefore every nation will be held accountable to this revelation by a company of prophets.* Prophets will not just be sent to Israel at the end of the age, but to the nations of the earth.
- D. We should expect that the Word of the Lord will again come to these prophets just as it has in times past.
1. If the Lord released this kind of ministry to prepare Israel for a national judgment, what kind of ministry will He release on the earth to prepare every nation for the Day of the Lord, a period that Jesus warned would be un-survivable unless He shortened the time period (Matthew 24:21-22)?
  2. The prophets of the Old Testament were a prototype, but the divine pattern will again play out at the end of the age.
  3. Again, this will be something different than the gift of prophecy, which is also vitally needed, but it will be a unique prophetic unction that belongs to these last days. This will even be unique from how prophets functioned in the New Testament. This will be a unique prophetic ministry that will be given because of the unique dynamics of the end of the age.
  4. Just as the prophetic ministry in the Old Testament was filled with diversity, so too the prophetic ministry at the end of the age will be filled with diversity. It will clearly be God’s work and not the work of a single ministry or a single movement. He will raise up prophets from different nations with different ethnicities, vocations, social status, callings, spheres, and ministries. *This diversity will be a test, as some will resist the Word of the Lord entirely because of the messenger who delivers the message.*
  5. It should be noted that there will be some differences from the oracular prophets of the Old Testament, though they will carry the same mantle as the prophets of the Old Testament and will be the same kind of vessel as the prophets of old.
    - a. It must be said that the prophets at the end of the age will not be receiving “new revelation” that does not agree with Scripture, nor will they be adding to Scripture.
    - b. There will also be some differences because Israel is not in the same place as it was when the Old Testament prophets were sent. This is true, the issue is that many have assumed that Old Testament prophets were entirely different from New Testament prophets.
    - c. While there are some very valid differences, one must take into account the time period that the prophet lives in. The oracular prophets of the Old Testament lived in a time period that was a shadow of the end of the age. Because of this, though some differences will exist, when we enter into the time period those prophets prophesied towards, we should expect prophets of that same kind to emerge again.

- E. In the last days, Isaiah and Jeremiah will be critical books for the church.
  - 1. Isaiah is critical because Isaiah consistently gives clear prophecies about the Day of the Lord and the condition of the earth in the last days. Isaiah gives us a window into several key events of the last days. In the book of Isaiah, God paints clear pictures about many events of the last days. Isaiah paints a very clear picture of the judgments of the Lord and the clear emergence of prayer and worship on the earth in the midst of those judgments.
  - 2. Jeremiah is critical because of the life that he lived as a prophet. Jeremiah lived through a period of history that foreshadowed what will come at the end of the age. In the last days God will raise up a Jeremiah ministry that will call the people to be unoffended and agree with God’s judgments rather than resist them. The last generation will be tendered hearted, as Jeremiah was, but also be given a fierce message and endure fierce opposition.

## II. THE SPIRIT OF ELIJAH

- A. Though Elijah will come, it is also clear from Scripture that the spirit of Elijah will rest on an entire generation at the end of the age. Just as John the Baptist operated in the spirit of Elijah, but was not the actual reemergence of Elijah, so too a company of prophets like John the Baptist will operate in the spirit of Elijah preceding the appearance of the Elijah at the final hour of human history.
- B. The spirit of Elijah is properly understood as a turning of the fathers to the children and the children to the fathers, but it can only be completely understood in the context of the prophetic ministry at the end of the age. In other words, there will be a widespread turning of fathers to the children and children to the fathers, but *there will also be a specific turning of hearts that is directly related to the prophetic ministry that the Lord will release at the end of the age.*
- C. Jesus says of Elijah that he comes to “restore all things.” (Mark 9:12)
  - 1. We know clearly that Jesus is the actual one who will restore the earth. This means the ministry of Elijah that Jesus is prophesying is a ministry of restoration that works in partnership with Jesus’ return.
  - 2. Not only is this ministry in partnership with Jesus at the moment of the transition of the age, it is also a ministry that prepares the earth to receive Jesus. This means the ministry of Elijah will not just partner with Jesus when He returns, but that it will actually prepare men and women to receive Jesus.
- D. A critical component of receiving Jesus at the end of the age is not just being ready for His actual appearing, but preparation for enduring the pressures of the end of the age and agreeing with the dramatic and difficult process that God is going to use to display His power and enthrone Jesus in Jerusalem.

***“He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, ‘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.” – Luke 1:17***

1. Jesus has been waiting since creation for a bride that will agree with Him and be His partner in the restoration of all things. He does not need anyone to help Him, but it wants us to partner with Him in the process.
2. One of the primary functions of the spirit of Elijah at the end of the age will be to prepare people to be an unoffended bride at the end of the age. *The pressures that will come on the earth in the transition to the age to come are so far beyond what we can imagine that it will require a prophetic ministry unlike what we have known to prepare the earth.*
3. The prophetic ministry at the end of the age operating in the spirit of Elijah can be summarized by two primary ministries:
  - a. Prepare people to be unoffended during the pressures of the end of the age and love Jesus deeply longing for His return.
  - b. Prepare a people who can partner with Jesus in the restoration of all things. While Jesus alone accomplishes the redemption of the earth, He also has a company with Him that He desires to partner with Him at the end of the age and into the Millennium (Revelation 19:14).

### III. THE “SONS OF THE PROPHETS”

***Now the sons of the prophets who were at Bethel came out to Elisha and said...Now the sons of the prophets who were at Jericho came to Elisha and said...And fifty men of the sons of the prophets went and stood facing them at a distance, while the two of them stood by the Jordan. – 2 Kings 2:3,5,7***

- A. 2 Kings 2 contains the story of Elijah’s removal from the earth and the establishment of Elisha as the prophetic heir of Elijah’s ministry. The entire context of the story is Elisha’s pursuit of Elijah in order to receive a son’s inheritance from Elijah. The inheritance Elisha desired was not Elijah’s possessions, but rather Elijah’s prophetic authority.

***And so it was, when they had crossed over, that Elijah said to Elisha, “Ask! What may I do for you, before I am taken away from you?” Elisha said, “Please let a double portion of your spirit be upon me.” – 2 Kings 2:9***
- B. Elisha was not asking for double Elijah’s power. He was asking for the inheritance of the oldest son.
  1. The oldest son received a double portion because he was responsible for carrying on the father’s legacy. Elisha wanted the double portion because we wanted to carry Elijah’s prophetic authority and step into the place that Elijah had occupied.

2. The story is clear that there were other prophets who were aware of Elijah’s imminent departure because the chapter repeatedly mentions the “sons of the prophets.” These young prophets were even present at Elijah’s departure and observed it. The record of Elisha’s interactions with other prophets is intentionally included in order to give us proper context for the story.
  3. The context of the entire story is prophetic sons. Elisha, as Elijah’s assistant, is clearly positioned to be the “oldest son” but there are many other prophetic sons in the story interacting with Elisha and, presumably, Elijah.
  4. Elisha is determined to get the inheritance of the oldest son, which was rightfully his because Elijah had appointed him as successor, but there are also many other prophetic sons that are looking to Elijah and, no doubt, hoping for an inheritance.
- C. The initial evidence of Elisha’s inheritance is the miraculous power he was given, but Elisha also steps into Elijah’s position as a prophetic father to prophetic sons.
1. It is clear from subsequent stories from Elisha’s life in 2 Kings that he has a continuing relationship with the sons of the prophets. It is clear that he is a father figure among the prophets.
  2. It can be clearly deduced that Elisha received the mantle of Elijah, not just in the realm of the miraculous, but also in the way that he became a father to the sons of the prophets in the same way that Elijah had carried the anointing of a prophetic father.
- D. The spirit of Elijah rested on Elisha and gave him the ability to serve as a father to prophetic sons. This spirit of Elijah is what Malachi prophesied.
1. While Malachi’s prophecy no doubt includes broader expressions of affection and respect between fathers and children, his prophecy must also include an expression of prophetic ministry between prophetic fathers and sons as exemplified by Elijah. *The context of 2 Kings 2 is sons, but to be clear when the word “sons” is used here I believe there will be both men and women who are used as prophetic vessels in the last days. Just as believers are called “sons of God,” there will be “fathers of the prophets” and “sons of the prophets” who will be both men and women.*
  2. It is significant that the only mention we have of fathers and sons within the life of Elijah is within the context of the prophetic ministry and the transfer of prophetic authority from one generation to the next. In addition to other meanings, Malachi’s prophecy of the spirit of Elijah must also be understood in the context of developing and stewarding the prophetic ministry.
- E. Based on the Scripture it should be expected that the prophetic ministry at the end of the age will contain a unique ministry of prophetic fathers and prophetic sons. The prophetic ministry at the end of the age will emerge in the form of both fathers and sons. *This codependence will be the only way for prophetic vessels to survive the pressures that will come at the end of the age.* Neither Isaiah nor Jeremiah lived through the pressures that are coming.

1. Just as Elisha was a product of the investment of Elijah in him, so too prophetic fathers will raise up young prophets that will emerge at the end of the age. Elijah’s will again raise up young Elisha’s.
2. Just as Elisha’s recorded ministry exceeded Elijah’s in many ways, so too the final generation of prophets will likely have a ministry of power that will exceed that of their prophetic fathers. Just as the two witnesses will be given great power at the very end of the age, it is also very likely that the same anointing of power that exists in fullness on the two witnesses will exist in lesser measure on a company of prophetic witnesses at the end of the age.  
*“And I will give power to my two witnesses...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.” – Revelation 11:3a, 6*
3. The ministry of these young prophets will not come to fullness without a generation of prophets who will be fathers to the final generation of prophets. It is my conviction that prophets who serve as fathers will be a support to young prophets at the end of the age.
4. In Elijah’s case, Elisha’s ministry began once Elijah’s ministry ended. At the end of the age, it is more likely that fathers and sons will exist together within the prophetic ministry all the way to the end of the age. In the spirit of Elijah, fathers will gladly give their lives to raising up sons that will likely exceed them in their public ministry. Sons likewise, will require the strength and support of prophetic fathers to full exercise their ministry.
5. Just as Malachi prophesied, God is orchestrating a divine dependence between fathers and sons in the prophetic ministry at the end of the age.
  - a. Prophetic fathers will be required to develop prophetic sons whose ministries will exceed their own. Their test of humility will be to invest themselves fully into vessels who will likely be given more power and greater public platforms than they have.
  - b. Prophetic sons will be required who will honor and receive from prophetic fathers so that their ministry may come to fullness. Their test of humility will be to remain in relationship with fathers who may have smaller spheres of ministry influence or a smaller measure of power, but much to give them from their experience of life in God.
  - c. Prophetic fathers who do not invest in sons will not be operating in the fullness of their gift and ministry. Prophetic sons who refuse to receive and relate to prophetic fathers will find their ministry lacking in the fullness that they are called to.
  - d. This mutual interdependence will test the issues of pride, ambition, humility, and an independent egocentric spirit and enable prophetic voices to withstand the pressure of the last days.

#### IV. THE PROPHETIC MINISTRY AT THE END OF THE AGE

- A. When Malachi 4:5-6 is viewed in parallel with Mark 9:12-13, it becomes clear that the ministry of Elijah that is coming will involve both fathers and sons that are set in the prophetic ministry.
- B. This is not to say that Elijah himself is not coming, because he is. However, just as John the Baptist came in the spirit of Elijah to announce Jesus’ first coming, so too a John the Baptist company will emerge at the end of the age that will operate in the same spirit as Elijah. When we examine Elijah’s life with Elisha and the context of 2 Kings 2 and Elisha’s subsequent ministry, it becomes clear that this spirit will raise up prophetic sons.
- C. Joel continues this same theme in his prophecy related to the outpouring of the spirit at the end of the age. Joel specifically references “sons and daughters” operating in the spirit of prophecy and includes both old and young men in his description of prophetic activity at the end of the age. It is clear that the Spirit’s outpouring is communal across the generations. Peter quoted this same prophecy when describing the prophetic activity of the Holy Spirit that was released at Pentecost (Acts . This activity will intensify at the end of the age.

***And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days. – Joel 2:28-29 NKJV***

***But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: ‘And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams. And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; and they shall prophesy. – Acts 2:16-18 NKJV***

- D. John operated in the spirit of Elijah to prepare Israel to receive Jesus at His first coming. Jesus is coming again to “restore all things,” and this coming will affect every nation on the earth. Israel alone had the witness of the Scripture when John came, but when Jesus comes again, it is clear that all peoples will have the witness of Jesus (Matthew 24:14). Because all will have a witness, God will also release a final prophetic witness to every nation. There will not be just one John the Baptist in the spirit of Elijah, but rather thousands like John who will be sent out to prepare the nations of the earth to receive the One who will “restore all things.”
1. One voice prepared Israel for the suffering servant.
  2. Many voices will be required to prepare the entire globe for the one who will “restore all things” through a process that will physically affect all peoples in a radically different way than the first coming did.

3. The prophetic ministry that Jesus has in mind to prepare the people for His coming and for the “restoration of all things” will be under such pressure that it will require these kinds of prophets. Neither fathers nor sons alone will be able to carry out what the Lord will require. Once a mutually dependent ministry will be capable of releasing the Word of the Lord to all peoples and releasing the ministry of preparation for the Day of the Lord.
  
4. *It is critical for the coming days that we understand this aspect of the "Spirit of Elijah" and labor for it until it comes forth.*