

The background of the cover is a textured, brownish-grey sand dune. The top of the dune is visible, with a soft gradient from light to dark brown. The sky above is a uniform, light grey color. The title 'Elijah to Come' is centered on the dune in a bold, orange, sans-serif font with a slight 3D effect.

Elijah to Come

by D. E. Isom

Elijah to Come
by D. E. Isom

Walk with the Word
P. O. Box 9265
Redlands, CA 92375
www.WalkWithTheWord.org
Servant@WalkWithTheWord.org

Scripture taken from the New American Standard Bible Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. (www.lockman.org) Used by Permission. All other content, materials, etc. are Copyright © 2015 by Walk with the Word. (www.WalkWithTheWord.org) Permission for personal and/or not-for-profit use freely granted. Any questions or comments should be directed to Servant@WalkWithTheWord.org

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
The Hermeneutic of Pattern	5
Pattern & Fulfillment.....	7
The First Reveals the Second	11
The Two Witnesses	15
Two Sides of the Same Coin	15
A Deeper Theological Reason.....	17
Similar in Deeds.....	19
The Mt. of Transfiguration	22
The Deeper Meaning.....	28
What Does This Mean?	30
Many Examples	33
The Strongest Scriptural Connection	35
A Final Point.....	37
The Hermeneutic of Synonyms.....	41
Scriptural Examples	42
Usage in Eschatology—The Textual Terms	44
Usage in Eschatology—The Mathematical Terms	46
An Obvious Example.....	50
The Specific Issue	52
The Literal, Historical Figures.....	55

Elijah & John	56
The Main Features of Elisha’s Ministry	60
The “Elisha” to Come.....	71
Elijah & Elisha in the New Testament.....	75
The Expectation of Elijah.....	79
All Israel Will Be Saved	81
The 144,000.....	82
The Two Witnesses	85
The Ministry of John the Baptist.....	89
The Same Purpose.....	89
The Same Message & Ministry.....	93
John’s Disciples Become Jesus’ Disciples	98
It Began With John	101
In Conclusion.....	103
Appendix “A”: Elijah, Elisha & John the Baptist in Scripture	111

This book may actually be more about hermeneutics—the principles and guidelines one employs in the course of interpreting God’s Word, than a strictly eschatological monograph on the Prophet Elijah. It is my lifelong observation that even many of the very best Evangelical teachers, scholars and authors we have been blessed with at certain times, on certain topics (and most often that seems to be eschatology), deviate from the way they ordinarily handle Scripture. I am not talking about outright false teachers or the “hirelings” who are less than wholly dedicated, but to the “good guys”, if you will. And in my estimation, the issue of how Elijah will return is a feature of the eschaton—the overall Second Coming of Christ, which is often found to stray to some degree from otherwise sound exegetical principles of interpretation employed for most other areas of biblical doctrine.

Most of the time, in the specific case of Elijah, this can be seen as a direct result of the teacher, scholar or author making the assumption that the starting place for anything to do with Elijah is the shared vision provided to Peter, James and John on what we commonly label the Mt. of Transfiguration, where Elijah is seen side-by-side with Moses. From there springs the almost near-universal presupposition that this pairing’s appearance unquestionably qualifies them as being the Two Witnesses of Revelation 11. I would respectfully point out that this is not only the wrong place to start when it comes to divining the identity of the Two Witnesses, but in almost any other study involving typology or even an old fashioned character study in the style of a Bible

dictionary entry, this beginning is contrary to the normal approach to Scripture.

When a person, place or thing is being studied to the depth of trying to draw together everything Scripture has to say about it, the normal starting point is with whichever passage provides the primary reference and background. One would not assemble a character study of Solomon by beginning with the handful of references to him in the New Testament, nor even by his contributions in the form of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes or Song of Songs; it would naturally begin with the historical accounts in Kings and Chronicles to which these other references and sources would be properly added. If one were studying the Antichrist, before looking at all the biblical examples which relate in some way to him, we would first exhaust the foundational information established in Revelation 13, 1 John and 2 Thessalonians at the least, and probably those passages directly referencing Satan. Just because Judas, like him, is also called the “son of perdition”, we would not center our whole study on that fact, but add it to the mix at the proper time after establishing the baseline material. But what seems to happen quite frequently is that instead of beginning with Revelation 11, the first and foremost authoritative textual basis for the Two Witnesses, the expositor in question treats this almost as an afterthought to what they hold to be the seminal starting point in the vision on the Mt. of Transfiguration. It is the hermeneutical equivalent of allowing the tail to wag the dog.

This is a long-winded way of attempting to communicate that what seems to be so often taught about Elijah—a figure who is expressly stated by Jesus to have not only functioned at His First Coming, but is returning to work again in the course of His Second Coming—rarely treats him as the individual who ministered in a lone capacity historically as Elijah, just as his protégé Elisha ministered singularly and picked up where Elijah left off, or in his spirit and power in the individual role of John the Baptist at Christ’s First Coming. Yet, all of the sudden, Elijah’s final appearance is designated as having to take

place as a member of a duo in the form of one of the Two Witnesses. Why does he suddenly break precedent and return the final time as a member of this particular pair?

A sizable issue which we will attempt to address is what happens if instead of starting with the Mt. of Transfiguration and all of the related assumptions from the outset, will that hypothesis still hold true if instead we begin with the foundational Scripture references in Revelation 11, and then explore the other scriptural examples of pairs of witnesses throughout the whole of God's Word? In other words, what happens if we handle this the way we "usually" handle such things? Of necessity, there will be much talk about the Two Witnesses before we can drill down properly to the topic of Elijah.

However, this is not strictly an academic exercise, because it is this author's belief that something which was prevalent at Christ's First Coming is already being woven into the Church's thinking in the shadow of His imminent Return. The very people who for generations studied and possessed God's Word had allowed assumptions and presuppositions to so deeply replace the fundamental, plain text meaning of Scripture that most of them could not identify the Messiah, His harbinger in John who prepared His way, nor the fulfillment of most of the more than 325 prophecies which would be resolved before their very eyes in the course of Christ's First Coming. Even without seeing most of the things related to the Second Coming fulfilled yet, one does not have to spend an inordinate amount of time at an online Christian forum, blog or website dedicated to any issue of eschatology without encountering the same kinds of dogma when it comes to the identity and activities of the Antichrist, False Prophet, Two Witnesses, Gog & Magog, or timing of the Rapture, much less the singular person of Elijah. The results can be devastating for those among God's people who insist, even in the presence of God's working, that "this" figure or "that" activity cannot possibly be a prophetic fulfillment of something which is contrary to their preconceived notions.

Let us learn from the collective past mistakes of those comprising our spiritual heritage and persistently seek not just the informational truth God's Word is intended to convey, but to put it to practice to such a degree that it reshapes our thinking and faith so as to meet the spiritual qualification the Prophet Daniel articulated as necessary for the End Times believer:

³“Those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever...¹⁰Many will be purged, purified and refined, but the wicked will act wickedly; and none of the wicked will understand, but those who have insight will understand. (Daniel 12:3, 10)

THE HERMENEUTIC OF PATTERN

⁵“Behold, ***I am going to send you Elijah the prophet*** before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD. ⁶***He will restore*** the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, so that I will not come and smite the land with a curse.” (Malachi 4:5–6)

¹²Zacharias was troubled when he saw the angel, and fear gripped him. ¹³But the angel said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your petition has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will give him the name John. ¹⁴You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. ¹⁵For he will be great in the sight of the Lord; and he will drink no wine or liquor, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit while yet in his mother’s womb. ¹⁶And ***he will turn many of the sons of Israel back*** to the Lord their God. ¹⁷It is ***he who will go as a forerunner before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah***, TO TURN THE HEARTS OF THE FATHERS BACK TO THE CHILDREN, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous, ***so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.***” (Luke 1:12–17)

⁷As these men were going away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John, “What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? ⁸But what did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Those who wear soft clothing are in kings’ palaces! ⁹But what did you go out to see? A prophet?

Yes, I tell you, and **one who is more than a prophet.**

¹⁰This is the one about whom it is written,

*'BEHOLD, I SEND MY MESSENGER AHEAD OF YOU,
WHO WILL PREPARE YOUR WAY BEFORE YOU.'*

¹¹"Truly I say to you, among those born of women there has not arisen anyone greater than John the Baptist! Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. ¹²From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and violent men take it by force. ¹³For all the prophets and the Law prophesied until John. ¹⁴And if you are willing to accept it, **John himself is Elijah who was to come.** ¹⁵He who has ears to hear, let him hear. (Matthew 11:7–15)

¹⁰And His disciples asked Him, "Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?" ¹¹And He answered and said, "**Elijah is coming and will restore all things;** ¹²**but I say to you that Elijah already came,** and they did not recognize him, but did to him whatever they wished. So also the Son of Man is going to suffer at their hands." ¹³Then **the disciples understood that He had spoken to them about John the Baptist.** (Matthew 17:10–13)

There are those who restrict their approach to biblical prophecy to being a one-time, specific fulfillment of a set prediction. While this may be true at times in Scripture, it is far more often the case that there are actually *multiple* fulfillments, each foreshadowing a final, *ultimate* fulfillment. What is often communicated through a prophet not only can have a literal, historical meaning for his time and place, but can have a further parallel revelation describing something yet to come in the future to his time, something which was to take place at the Messiah's First Coming, an event or activity of the Messiah's Second Coming, or even *all* of these conditions simultaneously. The first literal and historical fulfillment,

along with any subsequent repetitions of the same pattern, is a way in which the Holy Spirit is teaching us about the nature of the ultimate fulfillment to come.

In this case, Elijah provides the basis for John the Baptist's coming in his character, which Jesus Himself plainly tells us is a partial, *initial* fulfillment of an ultimate, *final* return of Elijah to take place yet again. Commentators most often tell us this will occur either with Elijah's literal reappearance, or someone in his character at the Second Coming in the same way as exemplified by John the Baptist coming in his character at the First Coming. There was Elijah, then Elisha, then John the Baptist, but they are all essentially precursors and shadows of the final "Elijah to come". These iterations are each partial fulfillments teaching something about the final, ultimate prophetic fulfillment yet to take place.

Pattern & Fulfillment

This is but one of many examples of this hermeneutic at work within Scripture and is not limited to Elijah alone. There was the original historic Babylon founded by Nimrod in Genesis 11 (also known as "Shinar") from which the world's false religions sprung, but this was followed many centuries later with the rise of the world kingdom of the same name. Many more centuries later, the Apostle Peter tells us that by New Testament times the character of Babylon and its continuing role to deceive both spiritually and politically was carried out by Rome. (1 Pe. 5:13) Alexander Hislop's seminal work, *The Two Babylons*, documents historically how the mystery religions birthed in the original iteration of Babylon in Nimrod's day migrated over time through Pergamum in modern-day Turkey (which in Revelation 2:13 Jesus identifies as the place "*where Satan's throne is*") and found their resting place in Rome and that empire's Pantheon accommodating all false gods. (This legacy continues in some way to this day as it has been absorbed and born by the Roman Catholic Church in its penchant for saints and the veneration of idols.) But then we are told through the Apostle John in Revelation that there is still

“*Babylon the Great*” yet to come. (Rev. 14:8; 16:19; 17:5; 18:2, 21) The original and all its repeated parallels throughout history combine to provide a picture of the final, ultimate fulfillment of Babylon still yet to come. Biblical prophecy is far more often found to be a pattern than simply predicting a single event on a given date, something Christ more likened to “*birth pangs*” increasingly coming closer and stronger in frequency until the final “birth”, or event, so to speak. (Mt. 24:8; Mk. 13:8)

The same phenomenon is repeated with Daniel’s revelation concerning the “Abomination of Desolation”. (Dan. 11:31; 12:1) The Maccabean Revolt (167-160 BC) during the Inter-Testamental Period was initiated when the Seleucid ruler Antiochus Epiphanes IV went into the Temple, not only erecting an image of Zeus using his own face in an act of self-deification, but sacrificing a pig and thus desecrating the altar. Before the First Coming of Christ there would be seen a second literal fulfillment of the Abomination by the Roman General Pompey in 63 BC. But then Christ, knowing of these previous historical fulfillments, speaking of Daniel’s Abomination of Desolation, says that it is going to happen yet again. And not only is this witnessed with Titus in the course of the Temple’s destruction of 70 AD, but Hadrian’s remodeling of Jerusalem and a temple built on that site to Jupiter in the 2nd century AD, and yet again in the 4th century A.D. by Constantine’s nephew Justinian the Apostate, who also tried to erect a temple. One could make the case that the Muslim Dome of the Rock erected on that site and standing there today after many centuries is a *perpetual* Abomination, especially considering that on its exterior is a quote from the Quran which essentially states, “God has no son”. In other words, there have been *many* Abominations of Desolation throughout history continuing up to the present, but Paul and Christ both tell us there is yet a final, *ultimate* Abomination of Desolation yet to come at the direction of the Antichrist himself; each teaches something about the last one to come.

One of the unfortunate reactions to Catholicism's way of handling Scripture, which has been handed down to us today from the Reformation, is a rule of interpretation declaring that any given Scripture can only have a single meaning and that the reader should seek no further explanation from the text; these are but a few unambiguous examples from God's Word which clearly refute that notion. The proper response to those of that legacy who allegorize Scripture to such an extreme that it is rendered historically ineffective is not to replace one bad hermeneutic with another, but to set things in their proper order. Scripture is rich with such examples providing the boundaries which keep us from exceeding what is acceptable, but there is definitely more taking place than a single, "look no further" interpretation. It has been perfectly expressed that this hermeneutic is properly used when limited to *illuminating* and *illustrating* existing doctrine and never misused to provide the sole basis for *defining* doctrine or creating a "new" one. When it is employed to create rather than illuminate, that is the point where error creeps in and begins to take over.

So Elijah's life and ministry, then passed on to Elisha with a "*double portion*" of Elijah's spirit, both provide the basic characteristics and activities not only of John the Baptist, but as confirmed by Christ, the final, ultimate Elijah yet to come, whose ministry will combine elements of the historical Elijah, Elisha and John the Baptist. Each contributes to our understanding of the nature and ministry of Elijah's final appearance which Christ unassailably states has a future fulfillment.

There are *many* antichrists in Scripture and history, each teaching about the ultimate, final Antichrist; there are *many* false prophets pointing to the ultimate, final False Prophet; there are *many* Abominations, each providing aspects of the final, ultimate Abomination of Desolation; there have been *many* iterations of Babylon to teach about the last one to come. These are a few of many such examples which conform to Jesus' teaching that the End Times

plays out in the character of birth pangs, each getting stronger and coming with ever greater frequency until birth is given to the ultimate, final fulfillment. (Mt. 24:8; Mk. 13:8) Likewise, the pattern of Elijah was played out at Christ's First Coming, but there is yet an *ultimate* one still to come at His Second Coming.

THE FIRST REVEALS THE SECOND

This should not come as a total surprise, therefore, that by extension of this foundational hermeneutic is the realization that what took place at Christ's First Coming ultimately foreshadows what will transpire at His Second Coming; the First is a pattern which teaches and reveals much about the Second.

- At His First Coming, a one-world government headed by a self-deified dictator operating out of Rome ruled not only politically but religiously; at His Second Coming we find this played out in the final fulfillment of the kingdom of the Antichrist.
- At His First Coming, a world ruler “marks” or numbers everyone for the purposes of financial control, the true purpose of a “census” in those days; at His Second Coming no one can buy or sell without the mark of the Beast. (Rev. 13)
- At His First Coming, the news of His arrival caused an antichrist ruler to seek out and destroy Him as evidenced in Herod's persecution of the children and the flight from Israel to Egypt; at His Second Coming this is replayed again when Satan seeks to destroy His offspring in the final activities described as a dragon who pursues God's people personified by the woman fleeing into the wilderness. (Rev. 12)

- At His First Coming, a harbinger in the character of Elijah prepared the way spiritually for Israel to accept the Messiah; at His Second Coming we are told of a spiritual revival among literal Israel when they look upon Him whom they pierced and in mourning accept Him, finally realizing and embracing the truth. (Zech. 12:10-14; Mt. 24:30; Rev. 1:7)

There are many, *many* aspects of Christ's First Coming which foreshadow events and activities at His Second Coming, and it is a wise observation that if we want to understand what will take place at the *Second* Coming, we need to learn as much as possible about the *First* Coming. One of the events which will recur at both, which is plainly spoken of in Scripture, is the return and ministry to Israel of Elijah.

*¹⁷"It is he who will go as a forerunner before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, TO TURN THE HEARTS OF THE FATHERS BACK TO THE CHILDREN, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous, **so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.**" (Luke 1:17)*

*²⁸"I say to you, among those born of women there is no one greater than John; yet he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he." ²⁹When all the people and the tax collectors heard this, they acknowledged God's justice, **having been baptized with the baptism of John.** ³⁰But the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected God's purpose for themselves, **not having been baptized by John.** (Luke 7:28-30)*

John did not perform anything we would call a sign, wonder or miracle in the supernatural sense, but he certainly carried out something extraordinary in the far greater spiritual arena, preparing Israel in advance of the Messiah's coming. While there is a near universal consensus among conservative Evangelical commentators that one of the greater purposes of the removal of the Church by way of the Rapture is to initiate God's returning of His focus exclusively

upon Israel to complete all His promises to them, there is great debate as to *how* this revival takes place, exactly *when* it will begin in the sequence of End Times events, and through *whom* it will come. Although it is not outright stated as such in Scripture, many attribute the final, prolific ministry of the Gospel to the Jews as coming from either the 144,000 “*from every tribe of the sons of Israel*” sealed by God in Revelation 7:4-8 or as part of the ministry of the Two Witnesses in Revelation 11:1-14. But the only person of whom it is *categorically* stated in Scripture to carry out this mission, and confirmed by Christ, is Elijah. Furthermore, it not only took place in the fulfillment of John the Baptist “*in the spirit and power of Elijah*” at the First Coming, but Jesus says it is going to take place again.

In other words, John the Baptist came in the character of Elijah to prepare Israel for the Messiah’s First Coming in a partial fulfillment of God’s promise concerning the return of Elijah, which foreshadows a *final* return of Elijah to complete that work among Israel for the Messiah’s Second Coming. The 144,000, the Two Witnesses or others may, quite naturally, preach the Gospel as every Christian indeed has a responsibility to do, but it is only Elijah who is specifically designated in Scripture as performing that task among unbelieving Israel. And just as each iteration of an antichrist figure in Scripture or history teaches something about the final one to come, or each Abomination of Desolation provides the common elements of what to look for in the last one to take place, so Elijah, Elisha and John the Baptist are the models for the final arrival and ministry of Elijah.

³*“And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for twelve hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth.” (Revelation 11:3)*

Two Sides of the Same Coin

For my entire Christian life I have been told that one of the Two Witnesses in Revelation 11 “has” to absolutely be Elijah, and the other “may” be Moses but cannot be verified beyond doubt because he “could also be” Enoch; there are a number of other options offered as to the identity of the second half of this End Times pair. Where do these assertions come from? What is the *scriptural* basis for these “facts”?

It seems that the first and most common argument made in favor of an “Elijah and Enoch” union is the fact that they were both literally raptured and never experienced physical death. There appears to be a presupposition introduced, yet cannot be overtly found stated as such in Scripture, that somehow the “books are out of balance” and God will not ultimately allow these two to escape physical death, therefore they will be “brought back”. Thus, in the course of the ministry of the Two Witnesses when they are killed and resurrected, (Rev. 11:11) everything will be “reconciled” and the only two figures in Scripture who never physically died will finally do so. The problem with this notion is that it completely contradicts what will take place in the Rapture concerning an *entire generation* of God’s people. Why do these two individuals “have” to come back to experience physical death when millions who will be raptured will not?

¹⁵*For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep.*
¹⁶*For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.*
¹⁷*Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and **so we shall always be with the Lord.** (1 Thessalonians 4:15–17)*

And the most common reason why the identity of the second Witness is presented as a variable and therefore may not be Moses is because it is frequently pointed out that Moses has already died physically, and the Two Witnesses at the end of their ministry will be put to death and resurrected, (Rev. 11:7-13) meaning Moses would experience physical death and resurrection *twice*. Most of the time, those holding to this idea cite the quotation in Hebrews which, on the surface appears to assert that no one can die physically more than once...

²⁷*And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment, (Hebrews 9:27)*

Such proposals assert that man only dies once, and since Moses already died, he therefore cannot return and experience a second physical death.

Aside from the problem of misunderstanding the greater context of what is being taught in Hebrews, there is the matter that there have already been quite a number of people who have *all* physically died *twice*. Every single person in both Testaments who was raised from the dead died a first time and, in the end, a second time as well—even *Lazarus*. There is no doctrinal support for either side of this coin which, on one face, assumes figures who have been raptured and escaped physical death are automatically designated to return and do so, nor on the flip side that once someone has experienced that death

are automatically exempt and disqualified. This attempt to identify the Two Witnesses based on a record of physical death or past rapture exegetically fails on *both* counts.

A Deeper Theological Reason

However, there is a much more powerful argument for why *none* of the Two Witnesses can be a *literal* return of Elijah, Moses, Enoch, or *anyone* in history who has lived and *either* died or experienced rapture: Scripture does not support reincarnation.

While there have been many who have died twice, those being the ones who were raised from the dead and yet ultimately died again, they were not brought back by being physically born a second time into a second body. Not having attained an immortal form yet, as we are repeatedly promised in Scripture will take place after death, they were brought back to life in their mortal body.

For anyone such as Moses, whom we know has attained his immortal body because of his appearance in a vision on the Mt. of Transfiguration and, in spite of never meeting him, was recognized by the Apostles who were present, to come back literally as one of the Two Witnesses would require that his spirit be relieved of that immortal form and, for a second time, be born and raised from a baby into an adult. For Elijah or Enoch to return, who have likewise been translated into an immortal form (the Apostles also saw and recognized the literal Elijah at the Mt. of Transfiguration), he, too, would have to forsake the immortal to assume, for a second time, another mortal form. In this case, it would be theologically impossible for them to be born of a woman a second time and once again experience an earthly death and resurrection, which is explicitly going to happen to the Two Witnesses.

The argument as to whether there is a literal return of anyone who has already been resurrected or raptured is a distraction which keeps us from addressing the primary issue which refutes it to begin with, that no one can be literally born twice in what is substantially a variant of reincarnation. Yes, Christ came and assumed fleshly form a first time, but now having died and experienced resurrection, He assumed an

immortal form; when He returns a second time, He will not be born yet a second time of a woman, but as with all reappearances documented in Scripture upon His resurrection, may be visibly witnessed, but comes back in His immortal form.

The Apostle Paul could ascend into “*the third heaven*” (2 Co. 12:2) spiritually and return to earth physically because he was returning to a mortal form which had not expired and undergone transformation into the immortal; likewise the Apostle John experiences the same in the course of what took place on Patmos. This is not the case for anyone who has permanently crossed over such as Enoch, Moses or Elijah.

Gabriel announced that John the Baptist would come “*in the spirit and power of Elijah*” and would be the forerunner of the Messiah (Lk. 1:17); his father Zechariah prophesied similarly (Lk. 1:76-79); John himself confirmed the same. (Jn. 1:19-23) But this appearance as the lone harbinger of the Messiah in the First Coming is stated categorically by Jesus, “...*that Elijah already came, and they did not recognize him...*”, (Mt. 17:12) and is followed up by, “*Then the disciples understood that He had spoken to them about John the Baptist*”. (Mt. 17:13) John came in the character of Elijah, but Jesus Himself says that he was *the fulfillment* of Elijah to be expected at His First Coming.

But Jesus also says that even though “*Elijah already came*”, that “*Elijah is coming*” yet again. (Mt. 17:9-11) Therefore we know that it is not a literal reappearance of Elijah, just as at the First Coming it was not literal but “in the character of”, but yet a second working still to come through someone “*in the spirit and power of Elijah*”, or as we will later examine in detail, his protégé Elisha.

This is consistently true in each pattern of biblical prophecy. The last Babylon to come will not be a “reincarnation” of any of the previous iterations, but will be distinctly and uniquely different in its ultimate fulfillment as the last in a series; the final Abomination of Desolation echoes elements of all the ones which preceded it, but is not recast as a clone of any of the previous events; the ultimate Antichrist is not a reincarnation or literal return of any previous antichrist figure,

whether from Scripture or history, but a unique compilation of all their traits and characteristics, combining into a new, ultimate appearance. Likewise, the final “Elijah to come” is as unique and distinct in his final form as John the Baptist, identified by Christ as the fulfillment of Elijah in the First Coming, was unique and distinct in his own right. There are no examples of a person, place or event being “reincarnated” or copiously copied end-to-end so as to be an exact duplicate of itself; each stage of the pattern is intended to convey a little more information about the uniquely last one in the series.

But as to this notion of the literal Enoch, Moses or Elijah returning to live a second mortal life, Paul specifically teaches that the immediate effect of anyone being raptured or resurrected is that they are transformed into an *immortal* form:

*⁵¹Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, ⁵²in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. ⁵³**For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality.** (1 Corinthians 15:51–53)*

Therefore, Elijah and Moses, who have already been immortally translated and have already appeared so in a vision on the Mt. of Transfiguration as witnessed by the Apostles present cannot, and will not, literally return; at best, it is someone “*in the spirit and power*” of their character, but the final pair will at the same time be a uniquely “new” pair of human beings.

Similar in Deeds

*⁵And if anyone wants to harm them, fire flows out of their mouth and devours their enemies; so if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this way. ⁶**These have the power to shut up the sky, so that rain will not fall during the days of their prophesying;***

and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to strike the earth with every plague, as often as they desire. ⁷*When they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up out of the abyss will make war with them, and overcome them and kill them. (Revelation 11:5–7)*

While nowhere in Revelation does the Apostle John disclose to us the specific identity of the Two Witnesses, this is still probably the best scriptural argument in favor of their being Elijah and Moses. (Not literally, but in their character, of course.) Fire called to consume the enemy is a hallmark event in Elijah's conflict with Ahab and the prophets of Baal (1 Ki. 18:38) as well as withholding the rain (1 Ki. 17:1); turning water into blood and evoking plagues is famously connected with Moses in the Exodus account. It is hard to ignore the fact that the actions assigned to the Two Witnesses are the same ones originally carried out by the literal-historical Moses and Elijah, who then subsequently make an appearance with Christ on the Mt. of Transfiguration.

There is another possible textual case for their being identified with both Elijah and Moses in that Malachi's primary reference to Elijah's return also contains a reference to Moses. Obviously it is not an overt statement that Moses will also return, but the close proximity of their mention by Malachi in the same passage certainly warrants consideration as to whether there is a connection to their appearance together on the Mt. of Transfiguration.

⁴*Remember the law of Moses My servant, even the statutes and ordinances which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel. (Malachi 4:4)*

Because of the fact that we have clear, unambiguous statements by both the Prophet Malachi and Jesus Himself that Elijah will return, it is not at all difficult to understand why we would conclude that he is one of the Two Witnesses upon seeing the parallels in his life repeated in the actions assigned to this Last Days pair, especially when combined

with the wrong notion that since he has not yet tasted physical death, one of these two “must” be him. With Moses, however, it is a little more difficult because although they recapitulate the same signs originally wrought by God through him, there is a nervousness about his having to “die twice” and a bit of doubt creeps into the picture for many examining it this way. But that is what makes the selection of Enoch (or any other proposed candidate for that matter) even more puzzling since there are *no* signs or miracles attributed to him at all. In fact, unlike Elijah and Moses, who at least had to deal with an antichrist figure in the character of Ahab and Pharaoh respectively, as the ultimate Two Witnesses will likewise encounter the Antichrist himself, there really are no scriptural parallels in the life of Enoch to any of the milestones in the ministries of Elijah and Moses, much less those listed in Revelation 11 pertaining to the Two Witnesses.

It is worth taking note that a preoccupation throughout the ages as to the specific identity of the Antichrist is at least understandable in that we are challenged in Revelation 13:18 to “*calculate the number of the beast, for the number is that of a man; and his number is six hundred and sixty-six*”. Just as only the Magi at the First Coming understood the meaning of the sign of the Messiah’s arrival while it completely slipped past everyone else, there will come a time in the course of the Second Coming when the faithful remnant in Christ will unambiguously know the precise identity of the Antichrist. However, this is never promised in regards to either the Two Witnesses nor Elijah. What is provided in Scripture are the activities and characteristics *associated* with them so that we will recognize them not by name, but by word and deed.

In the end, the identity of the Two Witnesses is revealed and verified in that they will act in conformity with what has been revealed about them in God’s Word. In fact, the angel Gabriel, Jesus and John the Baptist himself all proclaim and confirm John’s fulfillment as the coming of Elijah, but he was not even named “Elijah” nor did he come from the same tribe, John being a Levite and Elijah a Benjamite. This

is further confirmation that “Elijah to come” is proven not by his literal name or physical reincarnation, but by fulfilling all the things which Scripture and his biblical forerunners ascribe to him, what Scripture means when it describes someone who is “*in the character of*” someone.

The Mt. of Transfiguration

The *primary* source, however, from which most assert that the Two Witnesses “must” be Elijah and Moses is the account of what took place on the Mt. of Transfiguration.

*¹Six days later Jesus took with Him Peter and James and John his brother, and led them up on a high mountain by themselves. ²And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light. ³And behold, **Moses and Elijah appeared to them**, talking with Him. ⁴Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, I will make three tabernacles here, one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” ⁵While he was still speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud said, “This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!” ⁶When the disciples heard this, they fell face down to the ground and were terrified. ⁷And Jesus came to them and touched them and said, “Get up, and do not be afraid.” ⁸And lifting up their eyes, they saw no one except Jesus Himself alone. (Matthew 17:1–8)*

While it is true that Moses and Elijah are specifically named here, the fact is that there are a *great many* examples of the presence of two witnesses throughout Scripture, some whose names are withheld and some who are not. (We will look at that list a little further on.) In other words, just as previously discussed concerning the phenomena of “many” antichrists, “many” false prophets, “many” Babylons and “many” abominations of desolation, there are “many” pairs of witnesses prolific throughout Scripture. This at least warrants a more

careful investigation as to why it is only *this* pair of two witnesses to which so many commentators insist must be assigned the identity of the ultimate, final Two Witnesses and why they rarely even consider the others illustrated in various places throughout both the Old and New Testaments.

In keeping with a consistent hermeneutic in our handling of Scripture, we need to identify the first and most literal meaning of what originally took place on the Mt. of Transfiguration before exploring possible deeper meanings to which this event may also point. A foundational principle when studying the Gospels is to examine what takes place just prior to or immediately after any particular event or teaching as it often illustrates or illuminates what is currently being said or done. When Jesus performs a miracle, the teaching and/or event taking place on either side of it is often a deeper, parallel explanation of what transpired, and a teaching or discourse on a subject is frequently illustrated by the miracle or event which comes just before or after. One of the reasons the sequential order in each of the Gospels is not identical is that each event or teaching is being explained by what is presented before and after as part of an overall theme and not offered in isolation from everything else because there is a running relationship connecting each individual item in the sequence to a greater combined whole.

In its primary and original meaning, the Mt. of Transfiguration is a significant event which comes on the heels of Christ's disciples' monumental spiritual breakthrough which took place just prior about a week earlier. As recorded in Matthew 16, a milestone was reached for them personally when Peter announced on behalf of all present, "*You are the Christ, the Son of the living God*". (Mt. 16:16) Here we see that the Mt. of Transfiguration illustrates the result of coming to faith in Jesus, the embodiment and literal fulfillment of the whole Word of God represented by those present: Moses as the Law, Elijah as the Prophets, the Apostles as the New Covenant. This is particularly powerful in light of God's command to all those present and

representative of the entire Word of God to, “*Listen to Him*”. It is an earthly illustration of what the Apostle John who was present at this event would later famously write concerning Christ, “*In the beginning was the Word and the Word was God*”. (Jn. 1:1)

There is also a very *literal* problem being addressed here which has to do with Elijah and Moses specifically as it relates both to Judaism and God’s Word, and which also has nothing at all to do with the final Two Witnesses of Revelation 11. These two figures are revered within Judaism almost more than any other. Peter’s offer to make everyone their own tabernacle is an attempt to set them all on equal footing with each other; it takes God’s direct intervention to establish Jesus’ superior authority and position by stating the difference and making the distinction, “*This is My beloved Son...listen to Him!*”

This has not only been an issue within classic Judaism even up to and including this very day, that Elijah and Moses are elevated above everyone else (they even set out an empty chair for Elijah at Passover and all kinds of traditions and beliefs are attached to his return), but from the earliest days of the Church up to the present time with the so-called “Messianic Movement” there have been “Judaizers”—ethnic Jews who come to faith in Christ but still maintain that everyone must live under *both* the Old and New Covenants simultaneously. Many of them are not content with making Christ equal with Moses and Elijah, the embodiment of the Law and the Prophets, but even attempt to subordinate Him to them. Although it would take the founding Apostles until Acts 15 to come to a doctrinal grip with this problem, God the Father establishes the precedent much earlier here on the Mt. of Transfiguration. The appearance of Moses and Elijah in this case as representing the Law and the Prophets in proper relationship to the Messiah is a critical and *literal* lesson taking place which does not connect exegetically to the Two Witnesses in Revelation. God establishes that Christ is not equal *with* them, but that *they* are subordinate *to* Him.

This might be further understood when we compare the parallel account of this event in Luke's Gospel, which divulges precisely what Moses and Elijah were discussing with Jesus:

³⁰*And behold, two men were talking with Him; and they were Moses and Elijah, ³¹who, appearing in glory, were **speaking of His departure which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.** (Luke 9:30–31)*

The topic of conversation was centered on “*His departure which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem*”. It was being specifically revealed to the Apostles who were present and party to this discussion that the work of the cross would conclude the Messiah's work of His First Coming and that there would have to be a second re-visitation to fulfill the work of what we now call His Second Coming. Moses and Elijah are categorically confirming that the First Coming is, as Jesus previously stated, the complete fulfillment of God's Word for His First Coming even though a gap would ensue before His Second Coming. The first and literal meaning of Moses' and Elijah's appearance here has to do with the First Coming, whereas the Two Witnesses are a feature of the Second Coming.

This “sign” on the Mt. of Transfiguration confirms Jesus' words in the previous encounter a week previous that, on the one hand, “*The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed and be raised up on the third day*” (Lk. 9:22)—a reference to the work of His First Coming, and, “*For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when He comes in His glory, and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels*” (Lk. 9:26)—a reference to the work of His Second Coming. What takes place on the Mt. of Transfiguration confirms the sequence of “one Messiah, two comings” as it had just been taught by Christ prior to this event.

¹⁷*Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; **I did not come to abolish but to fulfill.** ¹⁸For*

*truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away,
not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the
Law until all is accomplished. (Matthew 5:17–18)*

But Peter's actions bring an additional meaning to what was taking place in his desire to make tabernacles. By the time of Jesus' First Coming, Judaism had by and large overly focused on the prophecies concerning the work of the Messiah as a "Conquering King" to establish a Millennial Kingdom ruling the world from Jerusalem, and all but ignoring any references to His work as a "Suffering Servant" to address the issue of sin and repentance. They acknowledged theologically that the Messiah occupied the offices of Prophet, Priest and King, but they came to dwell almost exclusively on the King aspect. We now have the benefit of understanding clearly that there is one Messiah but two comings, and that He had to complete the work of the cross in His First Coming before returning to effect the Millennial Kingdom at His Second Coming—Judaism still does not fully recognize this, insisting to this day, as asserted then, that the Messiah must at the very least accomplish *both* at the same time in a single visit. Knowing that the Feast of Tabernacles on the Hebrew festal calendar was an illustration of the Messiah establishing the Millennial Kingdom, Peter thought he was witnessing its beginning, thus the suggestion to erect the tabernacles.

Peter was not wrong in his understanding of what the Messiah would accomplish except in failing to understand the overall timing. Jesus had just qualified his revelation that He was indeed the Messiah with the explicit follow-on explanation that He was about to go to Jerusalem, be crucified, and resurrected after being dead for three days, (Mt. 16:21) and Moses and Elijah were specifically discussing this work of the First Coming in front of Peter there on the mount; the work of the "Suffering Servant" would have to come *before* the work of the "Conquering King".

But that which Peter witnessed was, indeed, a powerful illustration of the Millennial Kingdom to come in that Moses and Elijah not only

represented the Law and the Prophets—the entire Word of God, but also represented all believers who would *experience* the Millennial Reign. Elijah represented all who will be raptured, Moses all who will be resurrected, and the Apostles those believers who are alive on earth as the final seven years of the eschaton concludes and the kingdom of Antichrist gives way to the thousand year Millennial Kingdom. These multi-level, literal interpretations of what was initially taking place illustrate what is to be expected from faith in Christ in this life and what it will yield for the next. The characteristics of Moses and Elijah on the Mt. of Transfiguration in these instances conform to their literal lives and yet can be leveraged for a greater spiritual meaning.

However, it is important to note that when it comes to our rules for how we handle God’s Word, *none* of these first-line explanations for Moses’ and Elijah’s presence necessarily and properly establish themselves as revealing the identity of the final Two Witnesses. In our first interpretation, Moses and Elijah as a representation of the Law and the Prophets is the same kind of device Paul uses in Galatians 4:21-31 where he explains that Sarah and Hagar—two literal historical figures from the Old Testament—*allegorically* illustrate two covenants. The second lesson is an illustration of the New Covenant taking precedence over the Old. The third meaning presented of Moses and Elijah representing all believers who are resurrected, and Elijah all those raptured, is a tool of interpretation called “corporate solidarity” where a single person represents a much larger group for a greater spiritual illustration. *None* of these things, however, are designated in Scripture as characteristics or activities assigned to the Two Witnesses of Revelation 11.

The hermeneutic of “corporate solidarity” is repeatedly seen throughout the Old Testament when God sometimes calls the nation “Jacob” and at other times “Israel”. “Jacob” is a picture of the conniver and sinner before he wrestled with the Angel of the Lord (an Old Testament appearance of Christ); “Israel” is the man forever changed going forward after his encounter with the Angel of the Lord, renamed

and now in a right relationship with God. Whenever God calls them “Jacob” through the Prophets, He is addressing them in the character of Jacob, backsliders who have returned to the old life and are acting like the old creation; when they are referred to as “Israel” it is in the character of the new creation, reconciled and reborn with a new name.

Another example of a corporate solidarity would be the way that Barabbas—whose name literally means “son of the father”, is set free so that the true “Son of the Father” can pay the price of sin in his place. Barabbas represents all of us in our original spiritual state—100% guilty and under sentence of death, but set free by Christ who takes that guilt upon Himself and dies in our place. But Barabbas and Jesus are *also* an *allegorical* fulfillment of what takes place on the Day of Atonement where one goat is set free and the other sacrificed. What happened literally in the exchange of Jesus for Barabbas has multiple, deeper spiritual meanings.

The explanations of what is taking place on the Mt. of Transfiguration makes use of *both* of the biblical hermeneutics of allegory and corporate solidarity, but do not automatically extend into a prophetic explanation of the final Two Witnesses of Revelation 11. While there are two witnesses present, just as there are *many* examples of a pair of witnesses at various events throughout both Testaments, the primary interpretations of what this event meant when it originally took place and how it applies to all generations going forward does not clearly link them to *THE* Two Witnesses at work in Revelation, nor specify that their identity “must” be Moses and Elijah.

The Deeper Meaning

As such, subsequent to the primary and literal meanings of what took place, the Mt. of Transfiguration is a deeper illustration of the ultimate event where believers of all ages are concerned, what in Greek is called the “*Parousia*”—that is the Return of Christ.

In his book *Harpazo*, Jacob Prasch of Moriel Ministries provides a detailed examination of this event, concluding that what is provided here is the clearest example provided of the “*Parousia*”—that event

Paul describes in 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 when all believers, resurrected and raptured alike, meet Christ in the air.

We have at least three direct and unambiguous reasons to understand the Transfiguration as a picture of the Resurrection and Harpazo and a preview of our future with the coming of the Lord at the Parousia.

First, we have two clear Scripture references connecting the eschatological passage of 1 Corinthians 15 dealing with the Resurrection and Harpazo—that is, the Parousia or revelation of Christ, with the Transfiguration of Christ. The same word employed by Paul for what will take place as “will be changed” (“metamorphoo”) is the same term used by Matthew to describe how Jesus was changed in the Transfiguration.

Secondly, Peter’s mistaken desire to build three booths can only be understood as his misunderstanding that the eschatological fulfillment of the Feast of Booths (known as Hag Sukkot) was taking place. As Jews, Peter, James and John knew that with the establishment of the Messianic Kingdom (the Millennial Reign of Christ), the Feast of Booths would be celebrated based on the prophecies of Zechariah 14, which follows the return of Christ described in Zechariah 12 and 13.

Thirdly, the Transfiguration narrative is preceded in Mark 9:1, Matthew 16:28 and Luke 9:27 by the words of Jesus that some of His disciples would not taste biological death, which is exactly reiterated in the resurrection chapter of 1 Corinthians 15 by St. Paul, “We will not all sleep”. (1 Co. 15:51)

The direct links of these three factors indicate unmistakably that the Transfiguration of Jesus is a typological foreshadowing of the Resurrection and Harpazo events predicted by St. Paul in 1 Corinthians 15 and alluded to in 1 Thessalonians 4:15.¹

Here we see the result of coming to faith in Jesus, the embodiment and fulfillment of the whole Word of God, and how the resurrected, the raptured and the believers living at the time of Christ's Return are all ultimately gathered together with Him and jointly assume the Millennial Kingdom together. It is both a deep and elegant illustration of what is to be reaped for the *next* life by faith in Christ in *this* life.

What Does This Mean?

- First and foremost this is a teaching about the entire Word of God—the Law, the Prophets and even the New Covenant—all coming together in the singular fulfillment of Christ.
- Second is the preeminence of Christ over the Old Covenant because He is the literal fulfillment of it and confirmed by God the Father.
- Third is an illustration of what faith in the Word accomplishes in the ultimate gathering together of all believers of all ages, whether resurrected, raptured, or enduring Daniel's 70th Week as they enter together with Christ into the Millennial Kingdom.
- Finally, we are provided what may be the best scriptural illustration of the *Parousia*, when both the resurrected and raptured meet Christ in the air as depicted by this gathering

¹ Prasch, James Jacob, Harpazo, Pittsburgh, PA: Moriel Ministries, 2014.

on Mt. Herman, the highest point in Israel, the summit of which often extends above the clouds.

As far as extracting Moses' and Elijah's presence from this situation and attaching it to the work and identity of the Two Witnesses, this last illustration actually militates even further *against* their being Moses and Elijah.

If Moses and Elijah are more than just a corporate solidarity representing the resurrected and the raptured at the *Parousia*, this would mean that the literal, final Two Witnesses would *also* be present at this event. The problem with this conclusion is that this would require the death and resurrection of the Two Witnesses predicted to take place to precisely coincide with the removal of the Church. (Rev. 11:7-13) Not only is this synchronicity not specified in Scripture (and, arguably, even seems opposed to it), but it would open the door to being able to set the precise date for Christ's Return, when Christ Himself plainly established the rule that this is not possible.

³⁶“But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone. (Matthew 24:36)

The death and resurrection of the Two Witnesses is something which most likely takes place *after* the resurrected and raptured are gathered to Christ as it is specified to not take place until a time between the 6th and 7th Trumpet judgments. (Rev. 11:7-14) This skews toward an explanation that although Moses' and Elijah's presence are *illustrations* of the fulfillment of the whole Word of God in Christ, and additionally provide a corporate solidarity for all those resurrected and raptured, as an illustration of the *Parousia* their presence and participation in that event preclude them from being the *actual* Two Witnesses whose ministries extend beyond it. In other words, it is far more likely that Moses and Elijah appear on the Mt. of Transfiguration

for reasons not directly connected to the identity and role of the final
Two Witnesses of Revelation 11.

I maintain that the most fundamental principle of Bible interpretation is to first and foremost allow Scripture to interpret Scripture. This is especially true when it comes to God's prophetic Word as we have already discussed, where a pattern is repeated in the character of birth pangs, getting stronger and more frequent until the ultimate and final fulfillment takes place. But it is rare when we cannot find a pattern or explanation within God's Word itself for what takes place in the Last Days.

For instance, it has been noted by both Jacob Prasch and Harry Ironside that the pattern of Revelation—a seven opening into another seven, along with other key features, is originally present in the Battle of Jericho. (Josh. 6) They marched around the city once a day for six days, but on the seventh day marched seven times—a “seven” opening into another “seven”; there is a similar use of silence, a shout, trumpets sounding, a rescue of a remnant represented by Rahab and her family, and even the presence of two witnesses in the character of the two spies among the list of major similarities. There are the literal-historical lessons to be learned from the account of Jericho, but it also contains a deeper eschatological pattern foreshadowing what will ultimately take place in Revelation with the seal, bowl and trumpet judgments.

This is why it was stated earlier that although Moses and Elijah appear as two witnesses on the Mt. of Transfiguration, it does not automatically mean that they are the literal, final Two Witnesses of Revelation 11 because there are *multiple* instances of a pair of witnesses throughout Scripture. In order to fully understand the identity and ministry of this final pair, we need to acknowledge the many examples provided.

- At Sodom and Gomorrah are the two angels. (Gen. 18-19)
- In the Exodus account are Moses and Aaron.
- Pairs of spies are originally sent in to scout the Promised Land, of which we have the two who were faithful, Caleb and Joshua. (Num. 13-14)
- At the battle of Jericho we find the two spies. (Josh. 2)
- The Apostles were sent out in pairs. (Mk. 6:7)
- The Seventy were sent out in pairs. (Lk. 10:1)
- It was Simeon (Lk. 2:25-35) and Anna (Lk. 2:36-38) who testified to the arrival of the Messiah in the Nativity Narrative.
- On the Mt. of Transfiguration are Moses and Elijah. (Mt. 17:1-8)
- It was a pair of angels found present at Jesus' empty tomb. (Jn. 20:12)
- It was a pair of angels who were also present at Christ's Ascension into heaven. (Acts 1:9-11)

We can find many more such examples throughout Scripture such as the two cherubim covering the mercy seat on the Ark of the Covenant, Michael and Gabriel mentioned as the two archangels, or the many pairings we see of such prominent figures such as Paul and

Barnabas, Peter and John, etc. There is a pattern of a pair of witnesses which teaches something about the final Two Witnesses to come, but none of these are the first and foremost most important and primary *scriptural* examples of the Two Witnesses. There is one pair of literal-historical figures, however, who are *specifically* tied to the ultimate Two Witnesses to come in a direct, scriptural manner like no other., and it is not Moses and Elijah on the Mt. of Transfiguration.

The Strongest Scriptural Connection

³*“And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for twelve hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth.”* ***4******These are the two olive trees** and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth. (Revelation 11:3–4)*

¹¹*Then I said to him, “**What are these two olive trees** on the right of the lampstand and on its left?”* ¹²*And I answered the second time and said to him, “What are the two olive branches which are beside the two golden pipes, which empty the golden oil from themselves?”* ¹³*So he answered me, saying, “Do you not know what these are?” And I said, “No, my lord.”* ¹⁴*Then he said, “These are the two anointed ones who are standing by the Lord of the whole earth.” (Zechariah 4:11–14)*

The final Two Witnesses in Revelation 11 are identified as the “*two olive trees*”, a designation which took place previously in Scripture in Zechariah 4. Like nearly every person, place and thing mentioned in Revelation, it is rare to *not* find corresponding counterparts in the rest of Scripture, often not only bearing the exact, same description, but providing an explanation as to the meaning. There are such parallels between the beasts in Revelation and those in Daniel, the plagues in the Exodus account and the last ones to come in Revelation, and many other such things which Scripture connects directly together by parallel accounts with other Scripture. For instance, if you want to know the

most important aspects of the character and nature of the Antichrist, learn all you can about Judas. Judas and the Antichrist are the only figures in history who are both called by the same name—“*the son of perdition*” (Jn. 17:12; 2 Th. 2:3), and who are both not merely demonically possessed, but *satanically* possessed by Satan himself. (Jn. 13:2, 27; 2 Th. 2:9, Rev. 13:2) Likewise, the only pair of figures in Scripture who are identified in the exact, same way as the Two Witnesses in Revelation are Zerubbabel and Joshua in Zechariah 3-4.

I realize we have devoted a great deal of space to the topic of the Two Witnesses, but we really have only barely scratched the surface on the subject. This book is not intended as an exhaustive treatment on the Two Witnesses, but enough time was needed to be devoted to this issue because of the fact that it is most commonly asserted that Elijah “must” be one of them. The more significant point is that while the appearance of Moses and Elijah on the Mt. of Transfiguration is yet another example of “two witnesses”, they are but one appearance in a sequence of quite a number of such pairings and not *uniquely* or even *specifically* designated in Scripture as being *THE* ultimate Two Witnesses; the most important and direct scriptural connection is attached to Zerubbabel (a political leader directly descended from David) and Joshua (the High Priest directly descended from Aaron).

In this regard they are much more in the character of Moses and Aaron, and further reading about them in Ezra and Zechariah reveals them to be intrinsically involved in the construction of the Second Temple and the reestablishment of its operation in much the same way Moses and Aaron initiated the original priesthood and oversaw the Tabernacle coming into existence. In the same manner that Moses and Aaron provided Israel a new beginning coming out of their Egyptian Captivity, Zerubbabel and Joshua parallel the same kind of new spiritual start for Israel returning from the Babylonian Captivity. It is therefore not beyond reason to expect the final Two Witnesses to be intrinsically involved in the Tribulational Temple to come in some way, especially as it involves ethnic Israel.

But if we wanted to develop a combined, final picture of the Two Witnesses, we would begin by first exhaustively examining what Scripture states about the final, literal pair in Revelation 11 in tandem with whomever they are directly associated by the text, in this case the other pairing identically referred to as “*the two olive trees*”, before proceeding to supplement our overall understanding with all the additional types of two witnesses throughout the whole of God’s Word subsequent to that starting point. If we were to do so, we would be able to see *many* commonalities providing insight into the final pair, such as how they are always working in advance of the coming work of God, they often speak to God’s people first, their time of activity or ministry usually overlaps and extends into the next stage of activities to come, they often perform signs or wonders, and they have a very specific message for their particular time, place and circumstance.

When examining Elijah, particularly as he is understood to have come the first time in the person and ministry of John the Baptist, it is easy to see that some of these characteristics are mutually shared, particularly in the way John’s ministry preceded and overlapped that of Christ’s. However, there is a major, glaring issue when it comes to Elijah’s candidacy as one of the Two Witnesses: he *never* works in tandem with someone else as a unified pair. Neither the ministries nor lives of Elijah, Elisha nor John the Baptist are ever conjoined with anyone else; they always come and work *alone*. There is no reason—that is, no scriptural hint or indication, that the final “Elijah to come” will break precedent and return for the first time paired with another. None of the many types and examples of the Two Witnesses work apart; none of the iterations of Elijah operate except as lone, single figures. Neither should we expect “Elijah to come” to arrive and function differently.

A Final Point

¹⁰And His disciples asked Him, “Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?” ¹¹And He

*answered and said, "**Elijah is coming and will restore all things**; (Matthew 17:10–11)*

*⁵"Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD. **He will restore the hearts** of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, so that I will not come and smite the land with a curse." (Malachi 4:5–6)*

*²"Leave out the court which is outside the temple and do not measure it, for it has been given to the nations; and they will tread under foot the holy city for forty-two months. ³"And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and **they will prophesy** for twelve hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth." ⁴These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth. ⁵And if anyone wants to harm them, fire flows out of their mouth and devours their enemies; so if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this way. ⁶These have the power to shut up the sky, so that rain will not fall **during the days of their prophesying**; and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to strike the earth with every plague, as often as they desire. ⁷**When they have finished their testimony**, the beast that comes up out of the abyss will make war with them, and overcome them and kill them. (Revelation 11:2–7)*

What I have underlined in these passages shows a sharp difference in the ministry and purpose of Elijah from that of the Two Witnesses. While it is true that the Two Witnesses perform signs and wonders, such are carried out in the context of prophecy and testimony, they are designated specifically as "witnesses" because prophesying and testifying is actually their greater role and purpose. This stands in stark contrast to the restoration ministry of Elijah as preliminarily seen at the First Coming in the ministry of John the Baptist. In keeping with

the well-established pattern of the whole of God's Word, the signs of the Two Witnesses are not their primary work in and of itself, but a confirmation of the message. This is the way it was with Moses and Aaron in Egypt as well as Christ's First Coming to Israel. But in contrast, Elijah's role is alternatively differentiated as spiritual restoration.

*⁹Those from the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations will look at their dead bodies for three and a half days, and will not permit their dead bodies to be laid in a tomb. ¹⁰And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and celebrate; and they will send gifts to one another, **because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth.** (Revelation 11:9–10)*

In other words, their “prophesy” and “testimony” results in something drastically and completely incompatible with the notion of their working as evangelists who are facilitating a revival. This same term for “*tormented*”—“*basanizo*”, is used again in Revelation 14:10 to describe what will ultimately be experienced by anyone who worships the beast and takes his mark (“...and he will be ***tormented*** with fire and brimstone...”), and by Satan, the Antichrist and False Prophet when they meet their ultimate fate:

*¹⁰And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be **tormented** day and night forever and ever. (Revelation 20:10)*

I know that it is popularly taught that the 144,000 Israelites sealed in Revelation 7 and 14 are “super evangelists” who will preach the Gospel and lead a worldwide revival after the Church is removed, but that is not actually stated in Scripture—it is an assumption not specifically documented in the text. It is also not unusual to be told that this is also the function of the Two Witnesses, which is likewise

offered as taking place after the Rapture of the Church. These ideas have come about because God's Word is very clear that there is a final, ultimate revival of Israel yet to come when they will finally accept Jesus as their Messiah and God will complete all the as-yet-unfulfilled promises in Scripture, and the assumption is that this is accomplished by one or both of these parties. But the only person *specifically* assigned this role in Scripture is Elijah, while the role of the Two Witnesses, as discussed, is otherwise focused, and actually described as a *torment* to those on the earth. As to the 144,000, they are further described in Revelation 14:4 as "*first fruits*", the Old Testament way of referring to the first of many more to come, a very biblical term specifically relating to ethnic Israel. It is far more likely that the 144,000 are the beginning of the return of Israel to Christ and not an army of evangelists to the world in general.

The sealing in Revelation 7:4-8, which is directly followed by the Rapture in Revelation 7:9-17, is a necessary milestone to indicate that *everything* God has promised in His Word is being fulfilled, not just for the onset of "*the day of the Lord*" when His wrath is poured out on the earth and the kingdom of Antichrist, but the final spiritual restoration of Israel. The prelude of the seals leading up to "*the day of the Lord*" in the trumpet and bowl judgments indicates that the whole work of God among Israel, the nations and the kingdom of Antichrist are all coming to a unified conclusion as a transition to the Millennial Kingdom. Just as this fell upon John the Baptist to so lead Israel "*in the spirit and power of Elijah*" (Lk. 1:17) at the First Coming, it will ultimately rest again on the "Elijah to come" at the Second Coming.

It is worth noting that commentators across the board seem to focus on someone of an ethnic Jewish background initiating this revival in the wake of the Church's removal, be they the 144,000 or the Two Witnesses, but practically universally ignore that just as this was the role of John in the character of Elijah in the First Coming, it is the most exegetically plausible solution for the Second Coming, especially since Jesus Himself promised Elijah would come again.

Before we pursue a detailed scriptural exploration of Elijah, Elisha and John the Baptist as a foundation for understanding the “Elijah to come”, I regret that we have to take a slightly painful “nerd” detour into a side issue concerning biblical interpretation. But please stick with this as it is actually necessary, especially for establishing the final reason why Elijah really is *not* one of the Two Witnesses. This technical adjunct was actually the starting point which sparked an eventual forest fire permanently altering the landscape of my overall interpretation where Elijah is concerned, so I hope you will find this useful. But it begins with an examination of how Scripture uses synonyms.

Every good writer knows that one of the worst sins they can commit is to keep using the same word or phrase over and over. Good writers are known for their ability to keep things interesting by using colorful alternatives for an oft-repeated term or phrase. I would get a very bad mark from my English teacher if I turned in, “My *really big* nose experienced a *really big* itch which resulted in a *really big* sneeze ejecting a *really big* booger”. Four consecutive uses of “really big” make this sentence grosser than the actual topic. No, I would get a much better grade if instead I submitted, “My Pinocchio-like proboscis, experiencing an irresistible and exasperating itch, eventually produced a herculean eruption catapulting into planetary orbit a capacious booger”. (I don’t care who you are; that’s good writing!) Although in secular literature synonyms are used to keep the reader’s attention and the topic interesting, this is *not* how it works in biblical literature.

One of the blessings and curses which came out of the Reformation was a way of handling Scripture called “Grammatical-Historical

Exegesis” and is probably the most common approach to interpretation employed today. Like all hermeneutics, it can be used to great effectiveness or misused to great harm. The Reformers set us on the right path by studying the Scriptures in their original languages of Greek, Hebrew and Aramaic instead of an often bad Latin translation, and by seeking to understand the original historical and cultural setting in which each book of the Bible was written. Their primary goal was to restore literalness to Scripture so as to be rid of the crazy and fanciful allegorization and symbolism popularly superimposed for so long which characterized teaching within the Catholic church from which they were separating.

A problem with this approach develops when someone employs it as if the Bible is just another book of human literature instead of first establishing its divine origin as inspired by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit chose to use *many* authors and different types of literature, but He is absolutely 100% consistent across them all. In other words, the Holy Spirit does not “get tired” of using the same word over and over again and thus selects a pleasing synonym just to keep the reader interested. The *same* word is used to specifically describe the *same* person, place or thing across the whole of God’s Word because, regardless of the type of literature any book of the Bible employs, it is ultimately holding to the exact, same unchangeable Truth from an unchangeable God regardless of the time, place or author of each book.

Scriptural Examples

For instance, there are three words which are related, but not actually identical synonyms for each other: “sin”, “transgression” and “iniquity”. Underlying each instance of these English translations is an individually unique Greek or Hebrew word which reveals a *relationship* to each other, but at the same time specifies that they are each addressing something intrinsically *unique* from each other.

- “Sin” means to “fall short” of the standard. Anyone and everyone is held accountable to the standard as

established by God's Word, so anyone and everyone can "fall short" of it.

- "Transgression" means to "rebel" against the standard. So this is identifying the behavior of those who on some level acknowledge what the standard is, yet consciously decline to adhere to it. There is something more to behavior involving "transgression" than merely "falling short" which constitutes the conscious act of rebellion.
- "Iniquity" means to "twist" the standard. This specifically addresses someone who not only knows what the standard is, but is actively attempting to revise it to justify themselves or somehow create an "exemption" or "loop hole". It is a far more intricate behavior than just "falling short" or even "rebellious" because they are not just failing to live up to the truth, but attempting to redefine it to suit themselves.

Once we understand what these specific words mean, then we can better understand the greater context of their usage each and every time they appear throughout God's Word, regardless of the time, author or literary genre of the specific book in which they are found. In this case, knowing the proper definition of "iniquity" informs us that whenever it is used, it is always in the context of addressing people who claim to know and adhere to God's standard but through various attempts are trying to twist it into a new or alternate meaning to suit themselves. The Holy Spirit did not get "tired" of using "sin" and switched over to "transgression" to make the reading more interesting, nor to "iniquity" just to change things up. Regardless of the type of literature used in in the sixty-six books of the Bible, specific terms are used consistently across them all to address the same situation; synonyms as a human writer employs them are not a literary device employed by the Holy

Spirit. But as we will discuss further on, many wrongly treat Scripture as if He does.

There are times, however, when multiple terms *do* describe the same person, place or thing, but this is always done in order to teach about different spiritual aspects of the *same thing*. A good example which was previously discussed is when God, through the Old Testament Prophets, calls His people “Jacob” as opposed to “Israel”. “Jacob” is the backslidden sinner who lied, connived and deceived in order to get whatever he wanted, “Israel” is the “new creation”, so to speak, after he wrestled with the Angel of the Lord (an Old Testament appearance of Christ) and was forever changed going forward and given a new name.

Likewise we see this kind of usage with the terms “Jerusalem” and “Zion” to describe the same thing as either a fallen earthly institution or its potential perfect heavenly counterpart. The Antichrist is referred to not only as “*the son of perdition*”—meaning “destined for destruction”, but “*the lawless one*” to describe the earthly actions which justify his ultimate fate and overall character. There are many names of Christ revealed throughout Scripture to teach about the various characteristics and facets of the One, ultimate Messiah.

So there are words and/or terms which have an obvious relationship to each other but which ultimately describe something unique such as “sin”, “transgression” and “iniquity”, and then there are those which address a different spiritual aspect of the same thing such as “Jerusalem” and “Zion” or all the names of Christ. However, although most conservative Evangelical scholars teach and believe this, it is a hermeneutic which more often than not is thrown out the window when it comes to interpreting the *prophetic* portions of God’s Word.

Usage in Eschatology—The Textual Terms

This would take an entire dedicated book to fully explain as well, but the short version is that there are seven basic terms associated with the Last Days, and how they are defined not only determines the “ism”

under which their assigned eschatology is published, but qualifies to what degree their interpretation of God's prophetic Word is ultimately right or not:

- Daniel's 70th Week (Dan. 9:24-27)
- "Tribulation" (Mt. 24:9, 29; Jn. 16:33; Rev. 1:9)
- "Great Tribulation" (Mt. 24:21; Rev. 7:14)
- "The Day of the Lord" (Is. 13:6-16, 61:2, 63:1-6; Jer. 46:1-12; Eze. 30:1-3; Joel 1:14-20, 2:1-11, 28-32; Amos 5:18-20; Oba. 15; Zeph. 1:1-18; Mal. 4:5-6; Mt. 24:29-31; Mk. 13:24-27; Lk. 21:25-28; Acts 2:14-21; Rom. 2:1-11; 1 Th. 5:1-11; 2 Th. 2:1-12; 2 Pe. 3:10-13; Rev. 6:12-17, 16:13-16)
- "The Times of the Gentiles" (Lk. 21:24; Rev. 11:1-2)
- "The Fullness of the Gentiles" (Rom. 11:25)
- "The Time of Jacob's Trouble" (Jer. 30:7)

Per the previous discussion, some of these may be like "sin", "transgression" and "iniquity" in that they have a relationship to each other but ultimately describe something unique to each one, or if they do refer to the same event or time period are purposely used by the Holy Spirit to teach about *different* spiritual aspects of the same thing like "Jerusalem" and "Zion". But how each of these is interpreted as a whole combines to provide the foundation upon which *every* eschatology is ultimately derived and elicits their mutual points of agreement and disagreement with competing interpretations.

For instance, probably the defining difference between someone who holds to Pre-Tribulationism and another devoted to Pre-Wrath is their drastically opposing definitions when it comes “*the day of the Lord*”. Pre-Tribulationists maintain that Daniel’s 70th Week, the entire final seven year tribulational period leading into the Millennial Reign, is the exact same thing as “*the day of the Lord*” and therefore the Rapture occurs before the whole of the final seven years; Pre-Wrath holds that the onset of “*the day of the Lord*” does not take place until between the 6th and 7th Seals and therefore the Church will not be raptured until it experiences at least part of the Tribulation. They maintain that “*the day of the Lord*” does not commence until the 7th Seal from which all the trumpet and bowl judgments spring. From such drastically different interpretations of these two terms is derived entirely separate positions.

Usage in Eschatology—The Mathematical Terms

The interpretation of these fundamental terms is usually found to be the source of the difference between the different schools of thought when it comes to the very deep issue of eschatology, and I cannot stress enough the importance of our study of these defining labels, hopefully that we will mutually pray and seek the answer as corroborated by other Scripture. However, in addition to these seven textual terms, to show just how involved this becomes, there are eight additional what I call “mathematical expressions” of duration used in Scripture, all of which may or may not precisely correspond to the above labels:

- Seven years (Dan. 9:27)
- “*Time, times and half a time*” (or 3-1/2 years) (Dan. 7:25, 12:7; Rev. 12:14)
- “*Three years, six months*” (Lk. 4:25; Ja. 5:17)

- “*42 months*” (Rev. 11:2; 13:4-7)
- “*1,260 days*” (Rev. 11:3; 12:6)
- “*1,290 days*” (Dan. 12:11)
- “*1,335 days*” (Dan. 12:12)
- “*2,300 evenings and mornings*” (Dan. 8:13-14)

The biblical calendar is based on a lunar year consisting of 360 days each, so based on that model, 3-1/2 lunar years consist of 42 months of 30 days each which elicits a total of 1,260 days. On the face of it, at least, it would appear that “*time, times and half a time*”, “*three years, six months*”, “*42 months*” and “*1,260 days*” are mathematically equal to each other. But is this a case of “synonyms” as found in human literature? Did the Holy Spirit get tired of using one expression and, to make the reading interesting, switch to an alternate term? No, it is more likely that even if some or all of these things are equal in quantity to each other that they are being used to describe a *different spiritual aspect* of the same thing by the Holy Spirit and therefore cannot be substituted for each other.

Now I am going to perform a disservice by announcing that, in reality and by biblical standards, these things are *not* mathematically equal to each other without providing but the briefest of explanations. But it is important for the purpose of understanding that these may be *similar*, but not 100% *identical*, because the Holy Spirit has a greater purpose which is consistent with similar things throughout Scripture.

Remember, we are dealing with a *lunar* calendar. Let’s take the easiest one first, the “*2,300 evenings and mornings*”, because this is the Scripture which was famously used by the Millerites in 1843 who were convinced this was the year of Christ’s Return, one of the earliest examples of date setting in the modern era. This was calculated by

multiplying the “2,300” by years, estimating the original year in which this all began as revealed to Daniel, and arriving at an end date of 1843. When it did not happen, many realized they forgot to account for the difference between “BC” and “AD” and therefore did not count the year “0”, so many of them went out and, believe it or not, did it all over again in 1844. Many cults sprung from the Millerites, most notably the Jehovah’s Witnesses and the Seventh-day Adventists, neither of which has overcome their roots when it comes to this inauspicious beginning.

The most basic of hermeneutics was overlooked in this case, because the text *categorically* states “*evenings and mornings*”. This is actually the specific biblical definition of a single, literal day and why Jews have always calculated a day in this manner; it goes back to the Creation Narrative. Over and over again in Genesis God would work and Scripture says, “*And there was evening and there was morning, one day*”. (Gen. 1:5) And at the end of the second day, “*And there was evening and there was morning, a second day*”, (Gen. 1:8) and likewise for each of the days of Creation. A biblical “day” is defined not as we in Western society construct it as spanning from midnight to midnight in twenty-four one hour increments, but in the character of the Creation Narrative as “*an evening and a morning*”. The Millerites took a *literal* quantity and assigned it a new, non-scriptural allegorical value. Their eschatology was wrong because of this basic error in their theology.

Likewise, the notion that every lunar year contains 360 days is wrong because not every lunar month has a full 30 days. A lunar year may be calculated as “twelve new moons” or months, but a lunar month is on average 29.5 days, meaning some have 30 days, but some only 29. Because the operation of the Old Testament Temple required a sacrifice for the appearance of each new moon, this was a very big deal to ancient Israelites who lived in a country so small that inclement weather could cover the whole nation and make confirmation of a new moon difficult. The Talmud has detailed instructions for how to

address this issue, along with a set of rules for determining exactly what makes up a year. In fact, during the Second Temple Period leading up to Jesus' First Coming and the Temple's ultimate destruction in 70 AD, the rule was that no year could have more than 10, nor less than 4, 30-day months. In other words, every lunar year was actually a 350-356 day year—*not* 360; each 3-1/2 year period was therefore 1,225 to 1,246 days, *not* 1,260!

It is obvious that it would not take very long for a lunar calendar to become completely disassociated with the seasons and the solar cycle, so the solution was to introduce "leap months" as needed. In such cases, an additional month of Adar was added to make up the difference, which under certain circumstances could mean that a 3-1/2 year period could have *more* than 1,260 days and the balance would carry over. Oh, but wait...if a leap month was added, that particular 3-1/2 year period actually had 43 months instead of 42! Can you see what happens when we start to handle these things biblically? They are probably not mathematically equal at all, or in order to be would warrant very special circumstances to align themselves just so. The constant adjustments to a lunar calendar means that both the number of days and months in any given 3-1/2 year period actually varies from each other.

Jacob Prasch points out that the answer to the difference between "1,260 days" and "1,290 days" may simply be an accounting for a leap month, an extra month of Adar. He further stipulates that although it is rare, it is not unprecedented for a 3-1/2 year period to contain *two* leap months due to the timing of the preceding 3-1/2 year period and the current one—that would provide us with 1,320 days, just 15 days short of the "1,335 days". He also notes, interestingly enough, the eschatological overtones of Mordecai and the Book of Esther, and the fact that although Purim is first celebrated on the 14th of Adar, in walled cities such as Jerusalem it is celebrated on the 15th of Adar—the same month which is used as a "leap month" to bring the calendar back into balance. This definitely warrants further investigation as it may

turn out that these numbers have a much simpler scriptural explanation than previously postulated, and are not as supernaturally derived as appear at first blush.

An Obvious Example

OK, OK, OK...the nerd's point is taken; these are not synonyms for the *exact, same thing* nor precisely interchangeable for each other. Aside from rendering practically every End Times chart ever produced as moot whenever they willy-nilly substitute these quantities for each other, what is the *actual* and *practical* application of all this jibber-jabber? How does this ultimately bear on the discussion of "Elijah to come" and/or the Two Witnesses?

In the course of taking dictation for a book with an eschatological theme which I was editing, the author says something *he* has said a thousand times, which *I* have said a thousand times, which I have *heard* and *read* a thousand times, and it felt so right that I typed it in without the slightest doubt that it was true: "...yada-yada-yada...Daniel's 70th Week, which consists of two halves of 1,260 days...yada-yada-yada..." At the end of each session I would proof the text and enter the verse numbers for any biblical references such as this. So I open up my super-duper Bible software with the digital concordance and search features which make even online search engines envious and I am completely perplexed; *nowhere* in Daniel is there a mention of "1,260 days". How can Daniel's 70th Week consist of *two halves* of 1,260 days if Daniel never, *ever* mentions "1,260 days"? I thought I had gone temporarily insane or perhaps experienced some kind of textual myopia where I just could not see the words I was looking for. I further discovered that neither does Daniel *ever* use the term "42 months". It is *only John* in Revelation who uses "1,260 days" and "42 months"; Daniel uses "seven years", "1,290 days", "1,335 days" and "2,300 evenings and mornings", and both use "time, times and half a time".

Why does the Holy Spirit only use one term which is common to both Daniel and Revelation, but employs unique terms independent of each? What is He trying to teach us? Remember, there are no

synonyms in Scripture in the secular literary sense, so they are being independently employed for a purpose. Again, without endlessly bogging us down in this, let us take the easiest example, going back to our hermeneutic of how Scripture handles synonyms.

John only uses “*1,260 days*” for two specific things: the ministry of the Two Witnesses (Rev. 11:3) and the escape of Israel into the wilderness (Rev. 12:6); he only uses “*42 months*” to describe “The Times of the Gentiles” (Rev. 11:2) and the Antichrist (Rev. 13:5). These are four completely separate and unique entities with their associated activities. When I showed this to Jacob, he instantly saw the distinction which I had not, that “*1,260 days*” refers to “good guys”—Israel and the Two Witnesses, while “*42 months*” refers to the “bad guys”—the Gentile nations trampling Jerusalem and the Antichrist! Even if these quantities align themselves on top of each other and point simultaneously to the same time period, they are still being used *separately* by the Holy Spirit in order to communicate something about a greater spiritual work taking place.

In fact, with further research, we came to realize that “42” was a number used in Scripture to identify apostasy, a number arrived at by multiplying “6” (the number of man) times “7” (the number of perfection) so as to provide a deeper meaning as to what “apostasy” means, the way man corrupts what would ordinarily be perfect in the same character as what took place at the beginning in Eden. Furthermore...

- ...it was 42 apostate youths who specifically taunted Elisha about the rapture of Elijah and who were devoured by the bears. (2 Ki. 2:24)
- ...it was 42 sons of an apostate king of the northern kingdom of Israel who were killed by Jehu, God’s assassin. (2 Ki. 10:14)

- ...it was 42,000 apostate Benjamites who were killed by the Gileadites so that Israel purged their apostasy from among them. (Jg. 12:6)
- ...it was 42 places where the unfaithful generation stopped in the wilderness without gaining entrance into the Promised Land. (Num. 22)

Here is a prime example, first of all, of how Scripture uses specific terms which are referring to uniquely different items so as to convey a greater, spiritual lesson, and a confirmation of why we cannot simply substitute such things at our own discretion, one for another, because we end up attaching meanings to them which are absolutely not Holy Spirit authored, much less scripturally supported.

The Specific Issue

Believe it or not, this overall examination of End Times “mathematical expressions” of time not only relates to Elijah, but as stated before, is the spark which ignited this line of interpretation to begin with. Interestingly enough, it was pointed out to me that Elijah is spoken of eschatologically by both Jesus and James, but assigned a completely *different* “mathematical expression” than everyone else!

²⁵*“But I say to you in truth, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the sky was shut up for **three years and six months**, when a great famine came over all the land; ²⁶and yet Elijah was sent to none of them, but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. (Luke 4:25–26)*

¹⁷*Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the earth for **three years and six months.***

¹⁸*Then he prayed again, and the sky poured rain and the earth produced its fruit. (James 5:17–18)*

Remember, Scripture has assigned a completely *different* expression to the Two Witnesses...

³*“And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for **twelve hundred and sixty days**, clothed in sackcloth.” (Revelation 11:3)*

If Elijah is one of the Two Witnesses, what is the Holy Spirit trying to convey by using one term for the *pair* but a *different, exclusive* term for just Elijah by *himself*? Or is this telling us that he is *not* either of the Two Witnesses and actually *independent* from them?

The first and literal Elijah worked by himself, ultimately seeing God provide a double portion of his spirit in the process of his rapture to Elisha, who also worked independently and without a partner. When John the Baptist came as the first fulfillment of the return of Elijah, he worked with no other, beginning his ministry before the formal appearance of Christ and overlapping it by quite some time. (I have often wondered if John’s total ministry was 3-1/2 years, but there is no indication of this in Scripture. But he was active for some time before Christ’s public ministry and could have been around for as long as two years afterward before his execution.) The final “Elijah to come” is here provided with an *individual* designation *unique* from that of the Two Witnesses: it’s not “1,260 days”, but rather “*three years, six months*”.

This has been a long and tiring exercise in biblical mathematics as it relates to hermeneutics, but the purpose is to establish that we handle Scripture the exact, same way consistently and do not make “exceptions” to suit our presuppositions or by introducing something outside of the biblical text. Elijah, Elisha, John the Baptist, and “Elijah to come” are all singularly unique and independent of *any* kind of pairing. While the final “Elijah to come” may or may not minister for the same length of time and simultaneously with other events and/or persons designated with a similar but different 3-1/2 year designation, we cannot look past the fact that the Holy Spirit purposely uses these

different terms, at the very least, to separate and highlight something spiritually set apart.

At Christ's First Coming, just as John the Baptist came as a lone harbinger preparing Israel for the arrival of the Messiah, so it would seem that at His Second Coming "Elijah to come" will replay that work, preparing Israel for the Messiah's Second Coming. What took place literally and historically with Elijah, Elisha and John the Baptist foreshadows the ultimate and final work of "Elijah to come". And the reference to "*three years, six months*" outside of Revelation, in contrast to the Two Witnesses who are associated with "*1,260 days*", may be confirming that Elijah's ministry in the Second Coming is separate and overlapping in the character of John the Baptist in the First Coming, whereas the Two Witnesses are wholly contained within the final seven year Tribulation period itself.

This additional role of preparing Israel is no small point to be lost among all these others, as there is nearly endless debate as to precisely how and when the final spiritual revival of literal Israel will take place within the scheme of every eschatology. This discussion is nearly always centered on either the 144,000 sealed, or the Two Witnesses, or a combination of both; although not unprecedented, it is very rare that anyone entertains the notion of it coming through a separate return and ministry of Elijah independent of them, even though there is no past precedent on which to base it. But when we look at all the texts connected with either the 144,000 or the Two Witnesses, there is not one scriptural scrap of a statement assigning them any kind of a role of evangelism to Israel specifically, much less to the whole world in general; this is a presupposition which must be superimposed on them, something which must be read *into* Scripture (a bad method of interpretation called "eisegesis") rather than drawn *out* through proper "exegesis". This was the role of John the Baptist—the Elijah who came at Christ's First Coming, and will again be realized in the promised "Elijah to come" in the same capacity at His Second Coming, only as we will see, with much greater effectiveness.

THE LITERAL, HISTORICAL FIGURES

Both Elijah and his successor Elisha have the most space devoted to prophets in the Old Testament for whom there is no separate, dedicated book. This may be more than a coincidence as the record of their working is simultaneous with that of prominent people and events in Israel, overlapping what is taking place much the same way that John the Baptist will minister at Christ's First Coming, and recapitulated by "Elijah to come" at His Second Coming. But it is worth noting that while there are parallels between all three historical figures, there are certainly differences, and one of the more prominent questions to be resolved is the particular relationship between Elijah and Elisha in what appears to be a very unique serial sequence set apart from all others in Scripture.

We will see that not only are there a great many events unique to Elisha which do not have a parallel in the life of Elijah his predecessor, but that after being anointed with a double portion of Elijah's spirit, Elisha's ministry picks up where both Elijah's and John the Baptist's left off. Whereas John's activities occurred in the wilderness beyond the Jordan (Mt. 3:5), and similarly Elijah's ministry ends in the same place (2 Ki. 2:6), this is where Elisha's *begins*. Extraordinarily, the route Elisha then takes as he crosses the Jordan back into Israel and assumes his own ministry is that originally followed by Joshua in the historical conquest of Canaan.

This metaphorical re-conquest of the Promised Land in tandem with the activities Elisha immediately undertakes, which are unique to him and not found in the lives of either Elisha nor John, seem to map out for us the difference between John as "Elijah to come" in the First Coming from the final "Elijah to come" in the Second Coming. In

other words, at the very point Elijah's ministry came to an *end* and Elisha's *began* and continued with a double portion of Elijah's spirit, the "Elijah to come" picks up where John the Baptist left off in the character of Elisha. Whereas a remnant of Israel was saved in the course of John's ministry, "Elijah to come", with an even more powerful ministry because of a double portion of his spirit, successfully reaches far more in Israel in the course of the Second Coming.

Elijah & John

Elijah's first introduction to us in Scripture begins with a supernatural drought. (1 Ki. 17:1). Metaphorically, different types of liquids correspond to different aspects of the Holy Spirit, such as oil for the anointing of the Spirit (Is. 61:1-2; 1 Jn. 2:20, 27) and the living water as the Holy Spirit outpoured. (Is. 44:3; Jn. 4:10-14; 7:39) Symbolically, the rain in Israel goes into the water table and becomes the living water, but the rain withheld speaks of a spiritual drought taking place. More than 400 years passed after the death of Malachi, the last authentic anointed Prophet to Israel, before the arrival of John the Baptist in the character of Elijah, whom we now understand to be the final Prophet of the Old Testament as a harbinger of the Messiah at His First Coming. There had been quite a spiritual drought of the Holy Spirit leading up to John's arrival and public ministry. The *literal* drought commencing with Elijah's ministry reflects the *spiritual* drought taking place both in his own time and the one to come which subsequently set the stage for the arrival and working of John.

Elijah comes into conflict with Ahab and his wicked consort Jezebel in the course of his victory over the prophets of Baal. (1 Ki. 18) Ahab was a king who violated the standards of God's Word by marrying the foreign daughter of the King of Tyre and was thus spiritually seduced away from the One, True God; in John's time, Herod the tetrarch was a king who violated the standards of God's Word and illegally married his brother's wife who would ultimately deceive him into executing John, and who will meet his end because of his confrontation with Herod at the behest of his wicked woman,

Herodias. (Mt. 14:3-12; Mk. 6:14-29; Lk. 9:7-9) Similarly, Elisha encounters Queen Athaliah as one of the features which all figures have in common, a precursor to the final recapitulation of an evil seductress, also personified in Revelation as Jezebel. (Rev. 2:20) However, what might be different for Elisha from the others, and which may have an End Times meaning, is that the seductress he is dealing with in Queen Athaliah was attempting to rule Israel independently without a spousal king, having murdered nearly everyone between her and the succession to the throne.

⁹Then he came there to a cave and lodged there; and behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and He said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" ¹⁰He said, "I have been very zealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the sons of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars and killed Your prophets with the sword. And I alone am left; and they seek my life, to take it away." (1 Kings 19:9-10)

Although Elijah defeated the prophets of Baal, there was no accompanying major revival of the general population of Israel, statistically speaking. In fact, Elijah flees to the wilderness to Mt. Horeb where God corrects his belief that he is the sole faithful Israelite remaining and informs him that there is still a faithful remnant of 7,000 among what may have been an overall citizenry of several million at the time. (1 Ki. 19:18) Considering the size of the population and the several years of ministry during which both John and Jesus were heard by a great many in Israel, it was but a small remnant of a few hundred who were actually following Christ in the immediate wake of His Resurrection. (1 Co. 15:3-8) Even at its height, the Early Church, composed almost exclusively of ethnic Jews, would never attain to a majority of Israelites and ultimately, as Jesus specifically illustrated through the lives of Elijah and Elisha, (Lk. 4:24-27) the Church would become Gentile-centric with Jewish believers occupying but the smallest of remnants within it. This issue of the existence of but a

remnant of the faithful was also reinforced in Elijah's encounter with Obadiah who hid a hundred prophets by fifties in a cave (1 Ki. 18:4, 13) and the even smaller presence of fifty prophets in the narrative of Elijah's rapture. (2 Ki. 2:3, 5, 7)

Elijah is described as "*a hairy man with a leather girdle bound about his loins*" (2 Ki. 1:8) and of John it is said he "*had a garment of camel's hair and a leather belt around his waist*". (Mt. 3:4) John's ministry mainly took place in the same distant place beyond the Jordan (Mt. 3:6) where Elijah's also came to an end. (2 Ki. 2:7) Curiously, this is the point where Elisha's activities were inaugurated and commenced.

¹⁵The LORD said to him, "Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus, and when you have arrived, you shall anoint Hazael king over Aram; ¹⁶and Jehu the son of Nimshi you shall anoint king over Israel; and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah you shall anoint as prophet in your place. ¹⁷It shall come about, the one who escapes from the sword of Hazael, Jehu shall put to death, and the one who escapes from the sword of Jehu, Elisha shall put to death. ¹⁸Yet I will leave 7,000 in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal and every mouth that has not kissed him." (1 Kings 19:15–18)

It is crucial to note that Elijah is directed by God to initiate work in regard to three things which will not be completed until *after* Elijah's rapture in the form of the anointing of Hazael as king over Aram, the anointing of Jehu as king over the Northern Kingdom of Israel, and the anointing of Elisha in his place, none of whom will actively take up those positions until *after* Elijah is removed. It is noteworthy that what Elijah could not complete, God would thus finish through Elisha. It takes this pair working in two contiguous phases to achieve a single, overlapping body of work, thus reflecting a future fulfillment in the spirit of Elijah for both the First and Second Comings. In other words, what began as a "first phase" with John the Baptist is completed in a "second phase" with "Elijah to come".

It would be Elisha who actually met and prophesied over Hazael (2 Ki. 8:7-13) and gave instructions regarding the anointing of Jehu, (2 Ki. 9:1-10) and the faithful remnant of both the 7,000 and the previously highlighted small groups of prophets would function more in the course of Elisha's time than Elijah's. This is powerful textual proof that just as Elijah's ministry could only be completed in two phases, first beginning with him but then picked up and completed by his protégé Elisha, John the Baptist in the character of Elijah would begin something in the First Coming which can only be completed by the "Elijah to come" in the Second Coming with even greater efficacy.

We need to recognize that something unique in Scripture is taking place between Elijah and Elisha. It is very unusual to see an individual pick up the specific ministry of another and then continue on in the same character in either Testament. This is not the same as a royal family member assuming the throne or a son of Aaron becoming the next High Priest. In this particular case, it takes people of the same spirit, carrying out separate ministries where one begins at the exact point where the other concludes, to combine to make a single, complete whole.

Given the fact that Elijah was specifically promised to come again, and that Jesus Himself confirms that not only did Elijah come once in the character of John the Baptist at His First Coming, but would come yet a second time in the course of His Second Coming, taken together with the particular differences in the emphases of each of their ministries, it is far more than mere conjecture that we are being shown what "Elijah to come" will accomplish in his final visitation in the Last Days. Elijah seems to be a picture of the harbinger of Christ in the First Coming, and Elisha the same for the Second Coming. They share some common characteristics and similar events, but there are many more which stand apart separately from each other.

The Main Features of Elisha's Ministry

⁹When they had crossed over, Elijah said to Elisha, "Ask what I shall do for you before I am taken from you." And Elisha said, "Please, let a double portion of your spirit be upon me." ¹⁰He said, "You have asked a hard thing. Nevertheless, if you see me when I am taken from you, it shall be so for you; but if not, it shall not be so." ¹¹As they were going along and talking, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire and horses of fire which separated the two of them. And Elijah went up by a whirlwind to heaven. ¹²Elisha saw it and cried out, "My father, my father, the chariots of Israel and its horsemen!" And he saw Elijah no more. Then he took hold of his own clothes and tore them in two pieces. ¹³He also took up the mantle of Elijah that fell from him and returned and stood by the bank of the Jordan. ¹⁴He took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him and struck the waters and said, "Where is the LORD, the God of Elijah?" And when he also had struck the waters, they were divided here and there; and Elisha crossed over.

¹⁵Now when the sons of the prophets who were at Jericho opposite him saw him, they said, "The spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha." And they came to meet him and bowed themselves to the ground before him. (2 Kings 2:9–15)

As stated previously, Elisha's ministry begins where that of Elijah and John the Baptist functionally ended, on the other side of the Jordan. Then, in a replay of Joshua's conquest of the Promised Land, there is a supernatural crossing of the Jordan with an initial visit to Jericho, site of the first major battle for the conquest of Canaan. But what follows is even more remarkable in that so many of the milestones of Elisha's ministry are not just unique to him alone, but in the way in which they so frequently echo major characteristics of the overall

Second Coming, especially in the role and working of the “Elijah to come” as a final harbinger of the Return and final acceptance by Israel of Yeshua their Messiah.

*¹⁶They said to him, “Behold now, there are with your servants fifty strong men, please let them go and search for your master; perhaps the Spirit of the LORD has taken him up and cast him on some mountain or into some valley.” And he said, “You shall not send.”
¹⁷But when they urged him until he was ashamed, he said, “Send.” They sent therefore fifty men; and they searched three days but did not find him. ¹⁸They returned to him while he was staying at Jericho; and he said to them, “Did I not say to you, ‘Do not go’?” (2 Kings 2:16–18)*

The very first thing with which Elisha has to deal is the settling of the question of the *rapture!* This is particularly interesting since it was known, at least among these small groups, that this rapture was imminent; so much so, in fact, that they kept warning about it themselves.

³Then the sons of the prophets who were at Bethel came out to Elisha and said to him, “Do you know that the LORD will take away your master from over you today?” And he said, “Yes, I know; be still.” (2 Kings 2:3)

⁵The sons of the prophets who were at Jericho approached Elisha and said to him, “Do you know that the LORD will take away your master from over you today?” And he answered, “Yes, I know; be still.” (2 Kings 2:5)

This behavior foreshadows exactly what Jesus said in the Olivet Discourse, that when the time of these events grows near, we will consciously anticipate it and should be looking for its fulfillment. This behavior in Elisha’s day also specifically conforms to the pattern that

“every eye will see Him” (Zech. 12:10-14; Rev. 1:7) and that there will be a cosmological sign signaling the event (Mt. 24:30). Just as at Elijah’s rapture there was a faithful remnant who knew and for whom there was a sign, the same type of thing takes place in the Nativity Narrative at Christ’s First Coming with the Magi, and so it will find an ultimate fulfillment in the course of His Second Coming. (Notice how they knew the nearness of the rapture without being able to predict the day or hour, and yet it did not happen in “secret” without accompanying visible signs.)

¹⁹Then the men of the city said to Elisha, “Behold now, the situation of this city is pleasant, as my lord sees; but the water is bad and the land is unfruitful.” ²⁰He said, “Bring me a new jar, and put salt in it.” So they brought it to him. ²¹He went out to the spring of water and threw salt in it and said, “Thus says the LORD, ‘I have purified these waters; there shall not be from there death or unfruitfulness any longer.’” ²²So the waters have been purified to this day, according to the word of Elisha which he spoke. (2 Kings 2:19–22)

Whereas Elijah begins his ministry with a drought where water is concerned, Elisha must first deal with purifying what has become not just bad water, but the source of what is responsible for rendering the land “*unfruitful*”. Instead of “no fruit” due to a drought, the problem here is “bad fruit” due to bad water. This speaks very strongly to the apostasy—the falling away of the faithful, and the depth of deception which we are told to anticipate leading up to Christ’s Return. (2 Th. 2:3)

Typologically, whereas Joshua embarked on a literal campaign to rid the land of the residents who were specifically identified as spiritual influences who would lead Israel astray, Elisha likewise embarks on a similar mission from a spiritual point of view, initiating a series of actions which symbolize purifying the land and people of Israel of the false spiritual influences. In his first stop at Jericho we have an

illustration of the working of the Holy Spirit “*by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit*”. (Eph. 5:26; Titus 3:5) Salt is closely associated in the Old Testament with making a covenant (Num. 18:19; 2 Chr. 13:5), and as we shall see with subsequent events on Elisha’s itinerary, this is a powerful foreshadowing of the New Covenant to be facilitated through the “Elijah to come” with Israel in the Last Days. What begins here with the water and the salt is but the first in a series of potent biblical illustrations all describing spiritual restoration through repentance and a return to God’s Word.

²³Then he went up from there to Bethel; and as he was going up by the way, young lads came out from the city and mocked him and said to him, “Go up, you baldhead; go up, you baldhead!” ²⁴When he looked behind him and saw them, he cursed them in the name of the LORD. Then two female bears came out of the woods and tore up forty-two lads of their number. ²⁵He went from there to Mount Carmel, and from there he returned to Samaria. (2 Kings 2:23–25)

Whereas Elisha initially had to deal with the question of the rapture where those who knew about it and anticipated it were concerned, now he has to deal with *ridicule* of the rapture from the unbelieving apostates! As noted previously, throughout Scripture, the number “42” is often associated with apostasy [see “Usage in Eschatology—The Mathematical Terms”], and their taunt to “*Go up*” is a sarcastic challenge for Elisha to duplicate Elijah’s rapture for himself.

There is an ironic parallel here with the fact that at Christ’s crucifixion, there was not only a taunting for Him to prove His divinity by coming down and saving Himself from the cross, but a mistaken belief that He was calling for the aid of Elijah to come save Him. (Mt. 27:46-49; Mk. 15:33-36) But Elisha finds himself, yet again, having to deal with the issue of the rapture, but now from the opposite view of unbelief and scorn.

At times, Elisha's life somewhat mimics that of Elijah's. Whereas Elijah takes care of a Gentile widow's needs supernaturally (1 Ki. 17:8-16), so Elisha takes care of one of the sons of the prophet's widow's and her sons' needs. (2 Ki. 4:1-7) Elijah will bring back to life the son of the Gentile woman (1 Ki. 17:17-24) while Elisha will bring back from the dead the son of the Shunammite woman. (2 Ki. 4:18-37).

It is worth noting that Jesus specifically cites the example of Elijah as a parallel to his own life as a warning that although Israel will reject Him at His First Coming, He will be accepted by the Gentiles in a replay of Elijah's life when he was rejected, fled Israel, and ministered to a Gentile woman. (Lk. 4:23-26) At His First Coming, Israel would reject Christ who would take, in figure, a Gentile Bride in the form of the Church until Israel's repentance and return to Him in the Last Days; the spiritual return for the whole of Israel does not take place, according to God's prophetic Word, until the advent of the Second Coming.

³⁸When Elisha returned to Gilgal, there was a famine in the land. As the sons of the prophets were sitting before him, he said to his servant, "Put on the large pot and boil stew for the sons of the prophets." ³⁹Then one went out into the field to gather herbs, and found a wild vine and gathered from it his lap full of wild gourds, and came and sliced them into the pot of stew, for they did not know what they were. ⁴⁰So they poured it out for the men to eat. And as they were eating of the stew, they cried out and said, "O man of God, there is death in the pot." And they were unable to eat. ⁴¹But he said, "Now bring meal." He threw it into the pot and said, "Pour it out for the people that they may eat." Then there was no harm in the pot. (2 Kings 4:38-41)

Whereas Elijah deals with a drought and all that this implies both literally and spiritually, Elisha deals with a famine. Throughout Scripture, food is the repeated symbol of God's Word, and famine

symbolizes the lack of His Word. This theme increasingly unfolds in each stage of Elisha's ministry.

¹¹*"Behold, days are coming," declares the Lord GOD,
"When I will send a famine on the land,
Not a famine for bread or a thirst for water,
But rather for hearing the words of the LORD.
¹²People will stagger from sea to sea
And from the north even to the east;
They will go to and fro to seek the word of the LORD,
But they will not find it. (Amos 8:11–12)*

What began metaphorically with the purification of the waters at Jericho continues with a deeper, second stage illustrated by the cleansing of the pot. Grain is a recurrent symbol of the Word, so this introduction of ground grain into the pot to counter the poison is an illustration of the introduction of God's Word—true, scriptural teaching necessary to nullify the effect of the poison, a representation of false teaching and deception. Food in general is a teaching not only of God's Word but of Christ Himself as the ultimate spiritual nourishment.

³*"He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD. (Deuteronomy 8:3)*

³⁵*Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst. (John 6:35)*

The salt in the course of cleansing the waters at Jericho typifies the making of a covenant, and the establishing of that covenant is here further illustrated by the introduction of the Word to counteract the false teaching from which they are in danger of dying. This is not just

about recovering from *physical* death, but even more so from permanent *spiritual* death; it is not just about a physical recovery, but pointing to a spiritual restoration.

⁴²Now a man came from Baal-shalishah, and brought the man of God bread of the first fruits, twenty loaves of barley and fresh ears of grain in his sack. And he said, "Give them to the people that they may eat."

⁴³His attendant said, "What, will I set this before a hundred men?" But he said, "Give them to the people that they may eat, for thus says the LORD, 'They shall eat and have some left over.'" ⁴⁴So he set it before them, and they ate and had some left over, according to the word of the LORD. (2 Kings 4:42–44)

This lesson of the proper feeding of God's Word is even further reinforced by not just counteracting the poison of false teaching with the introduction of right, biblical teaching, but of what will be a recapitulation by Christ Himself of the feeding of the 5,000, (Mt. 14:15-21; Mk. 6:33-44; Lk. 9:12-17; Jn. 6:1-14) which Jesus explained was an illustration demonstrating His being the Bread of Life. (Jn. 6:32-35) Elisha has graduated from not just addressing the deleterious effects of error and false doctrine to establishing a regular diet of God's Word by proactively *feeding* God's people.

The miracle following this, the healing of Naaman from leprosy, (2 Ki. 5:1-14) allegorically continues this theme of a spiritual revival as leprosy is one of the most powerful symbols of sin. It is important to note the connection between the requirement for Naaman to undertake a literal kind of baptism in the Jordan River in a similar vein to the use of baptism in the Jordan by John the Baptist. Naaman's healing symbolizes a cure for sin in the same way that John's baptism expressed a public confession of sin so as to prepare everyone spiritually for the acceptance of the Messiah on the verge of arrival. Likewise we might infer this role for the "Elijah to come" in preparation of Israel in the shadow of the Messiah's Second Coming.

This healing is a very powerful statement when taken in combination with the preceding lessons concerning the restoration of the Word, because every revival throughout history contains both a sincere repentance of sin accompanied by a committed return to God's Word. But just as John in the character of Elijah practiced a baptism of repentance to prepare Israel for the First Coming of the Messiah, Naaman's baptism in the time of Elisha may indicate how the "Elijah to come" will do the same as a forerunner of the Second Coming of the Messiah.

But the next event in the sequence of Elisha's life is a particularly powerful culmination of this series of illustrations of what will be accomplished within literal Israel by a sincere repentance and concerted return to the Word of God:

¹Now the sons of the prophets said to Elisha, "Behold now, the place before you where we are living is too limited for us. ²Please let us go to the Jordan and each of us take from there a beam, and let us make a place there for ourselves where we may live." So he said, "Go." ³Then one said, "Please be willing to go with your servants." And he answered, "I shall go." ⁴So he went with them; and when they came to the Jordan, they cut down trees. ⁵But as one was felling a beam, the axe head fell into the water; and he cried out and said, "Alas, my master! For it was borrowed." ⁶Then the man of God said, "Where did it fall?" And when he showed him the place, he cut off a stick and threw it in there, and made the iron float. ⁷He said, "Take it up for yourself." So he put out his hand and took it. (2 Kings 6:1-7)

The axe head symbolizes something which is impossible to retrieve; large bodies of water throughout Scripture are illustrative of the Gentile nations. What, from a human point of view, will be irretrievably lost, swallowed so completely and enveloped by the nations that its recovery is beyond hope? This describes the nation

Israel after the Temple and Jerusalem were destroyed and the Jewish population is dispersed thoroughly throughout the world in the Diaspora. But how will Israel be retrieved? How will it be restored after so long a time? That is where the meaning comes into play of the old “stick” off of which the axe head flew and the new one used to supernaturally retrieve it? As always, when we have a question as to how to interpret Scripture, it is best to turn to Scripture itself.

¹⁵The word of the LORD came again to me saying,
¹⁶“And you, son of man, take for yourself one stick and write on it, ‘For Judah and for the sons of Israel, his companions’; then take another stick and write on it, ‘For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim and all the house of Israel, his companions.’ ¹⁷Then join them for yourself one to another into one stick, that they may become one in your hand. ¹⁸When the sons of your people speak to you saying, ‘Will you not declare to us what you mean by these?’ ¹⁹say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD, “Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel, his companions; and I will put them with it, with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they will be one in My hand.”’ ²⁰The sticks on which you write will be in your hand before their eyes. ²¹Say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD, “Behold, I will take the sons of Israel from among the nations where they have gone, and I will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land; ²²and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king will be king for all of them; and they will no longer be two nations and no longer be divided into two kingdoms. ²³They will no longer defile themselves with their idols, or with their detestable things, or with any of their transgressions; but I will deliver them from all their dwelling places in which they have sinned, and will cleanse them. And they will be My people, and I will be their God.

²⁴“My servant David will be king over them, and they will all have one shepherd; and they will walk in My ordinances and keep My statutes and observe them. ²⁵They will live on the land that I gave to Jacob My servant, in which your fathers lived; and they will live on it, they, and their sons and their sons’ sons, forever; and David My servant will be their prince forever. ²⁶I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant with them. And I will place them and multiply them, and will set My sanctuary in their midst forever. ²⁷My dwelling place also will be with them; and I will be their God, and they will be My people. ²⁸And the nations will know that I am the LORD who sanctifies Israel, when My sanctuary is in their midst forever.”” (Ezekiel 37:15–28)

The “old” stick is the *Old* Covenant, while the “new” stick is the *New* Covenant! They fly off the “old” and are irretrievably lost until spiritually recovered by the “new”. This event in Elisha’s life signifies the pinnacle achievement of the spiritual restoration of Israel to take place in the Last Days during the final ministry of “Elijah to come” in the character of John the Baptist. Arriving with a double portion of John’s spirit, akin to Elisha vis a vis Elijah, the “Elisha to come” will replay Joshua’s conquest on a spiritual level, restoring God’s Word and engendering repentance, as well as feeding them with His Word in tandem with Israel’s final acceptance of Yeshua as their Messiah, thus completing not just the *literal* return of Jews to the land of Israel, but the even more important goal of their *spiritual* return through the New Covenant promised originally and exclusively to them. (Jer. 31:31-34)

This miraculous recovery finds its parallel in Ezekiel’s vision of the valley of dry bones (Eze. 37) where it was not merely someone freshly dead who comes back to life, but hopelessly dry bones reanimated and once again given flesh and blood. No nation, like the modern state of Israel, has ever reconstituted politically after such a dispersal, in effect coming back from dry bones or being miraculously retrieved from the bottom of the ocean. But political statehood is not the real miracle yet

to take place; the far *greater* work still to come, facilitated by the promised return of Elijah and his ministry, is a *spiritual* return to Yeshua their Messiah. What has begun to take place physically and literally in terms of the nation-state of Israel is but a shadow of what is to be anticipated on the far more important spiritual level in the course of the overall events assigned to the final Return of Christ.

This event may be laying a foundation by which it can be connected to the final mention of Elisha in the Old Testament so as to explain the greater meaning of a spiritual resurrection so powerful that it brings back to life what was thought to be hopelessly dead.

²⁰Elisha died, and they buried him. Now the bands of the Moabites would invade the land in the spring of the year. ²¹As they were burying a man, behold, they saw a marauding band; and they cast the man into the grave of Elisha. And when the man touched the bones of Elisha he revived and stood up on his feet. (2 Kings 13:20–21)

There is much conjecture by commentators as to what this means, some assigning it to be a confirmation of the prophecy Elisha made to Jehoahaz just prior, some saying this proves the efficacy of the “double portion” Elisha possessed over Elijah, and on and on. All, some, or none of these and other corollary explanations may be correct, but typologically speaking, these events seem to foreshadow the unique aspect of Elijah/Elisha in that no other Prophet in Scripture is empowered to function in more than one lifetime or in more than one historical period. Normally, all activity would cease upon death, but his “ministry”, so to speak, is still active. The fact that events continue to take place even after Elisha’s death may not only be pointing out that Elijah who once lived and died will return, but ever more miraculously as confirmed by Christ Himself, has already come and will come again. Until the combined missions of Elijah and Elisha are completed, they are technically still active, at least where Israel is concerned

The “Elisha” to Come

There are more events for Elisha’s time coming after these things, such as war with Aram, restoration of the Shunammite’s land, Elisha’s encounter with Hazael, the anointing and working of Jehu, and the rise and fall of the wicked Queen Athaliah. While there are various points of common contact with the life and ministry of Elijah and even perhaps with some aspects of John the Baptist, Elisha obviously replays events according to an overall different agenda, picking up from the exact point where Elijah left off; together they portray a complete work which is accomplished in two phases with many items unique to each. Just as the Abomination of Desolation is recapitulated in an ultimate fulfillment of its precursors but each iteration is not an identical clone of each other, so we have a similar construction around John the Baptist and the “Elijah to come” foreshadowed first by the complimentary ministries of Elijah and Elisha.

¹⁹So he departed from there and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, while he was plowing with twelve pairs of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth. And Elijah passed over to him and threw his mantle on him. ²⁰He left the oxen and ran after Elijah and said, “Please let me kiss my father and my mother, then I will follow you.” And he said to him, “Go back again, for what have I done to you?” ²¹So he returned from following him, and took the pair of oxen and sacrificed them and boiled their flesh with the implements of the oxen, and gave it to the people and they ate. Then he arose and followed Elijah and ministered to him. (1 Kings 19:19–21)

As pointed out previously, although Elijah was instructed to anoint Hazael and Jehu, this would actually be accomplished in the course of Elisha’s ministry. But when Elijah leaves Mt. Horeb where he received these commands, he does indeed follow through with the anointing of Elisha (the meaning of throwing his mantle on him), although Elisha is not mentioned again until just prior to Elijah’s rapture.

Something worth mentioning, because it is so often taken out of context, is that it is here that Elijah is “anointed” for ministry, just as kings of Israel and other Prophets were likewise anointed for service, but what Elisha would later ask Elijah for was not a “double anointing”, but a “*double **portion** of your spirit*”. (2 Ki. 2:9) There is a prevalent false teaching that Elisha received a “double anointing”, confusing both the issue of the purpose and implementation of biblical anointing and the fact that this double portion did not come about by human transfer, but divine agency. This false teaching wants us to believe that a “double anointing” can be conveyed by the laying on of hands or some such thing, when in the middle of the plain text recording this event Elijah categorically states it has nothing to do with him and beyond his ability to do so.

Notice that although Elisha is anointed for service in 1 Kings 19 and leaves his old life behind, the events of Elijah’s life and ministry continue on in 1 Kings 20-22 without a single mention of Elisha. There is war with Aram involving Ahab and Jehoshaphat, all manner of interaction with Ahab and Jezebel, particularly over the issue of Naboth’s vineyard, and the rise of Ahaziah as King of the Northern Kingdom of Israel and his coming into conflict with Elijah in 2 Kings 1. In the opening chapter of that book we have the famous account of the three groups of fifty soldiers sent to retrieve Elijah on behalf of Ahaziah, the first two being supernaturally destroyed by fire called down from heaven. (It might be interesting to study these groups of fifty versus the groups of fifty prophets to come.)

This issue of being identified and anointed by God’s command, but not immediately entering into service may remind us of a couple of other instances where something very similar took place. Samuel was called by God early on but would not assume the office of his calling until many years later, and likewise the same would take place with David, anointed by Samuel at God’s direction but not attaining to the royal throne for at least another twenty years hence. In Elisha’s case, it does not appear that, like Samuel and David, he was called as a child

or young teen who in all practicality needed to mature into adulthood, but it is not unprecedented to be anointed years in advance of actually becoming active in the role and calling of that assignment.

In Elisha's case, this may yet be another typological confirmation of the greater, dual work to come in two distinct, overlapping phases with the Messiah's First and Second Comings. Elijah and Elisha are not going to be active simultaneously, nor are they going to actually overlap each other, but one will immediately take up where the other leaves off. Rather than a "succession" or an overlapping of similar ministries, they are going to "interface" or "dovetail" together to form a cohesive whole. But in the case of this being replayed again by John the Baptist and the "Elijah to come" in the First and Second Comings respectively, there is a long break between the two in the same character as experienced between the Testaments and the work of "one Messiah, but two comings", and a long break again between the First and Second Comings.

One additional possible explanation for the interplay between Elijah and Elisha is that in the course of the Second Coming, Elijah represents the Church which is removed by Rapture and whose roots extend to John the Baptist in the character of Elijah, and the events in the life of historical Elisha then commence in those of the "Elijah to come", replaying the spiritual conquest of unbelieving Israel. "Elijah to come" has to deal with those anticipating and sensing the *Harpazo* is near, those who are openly dismissing it, and proceeds to re-establish reconciliation to Christ through the acts of purifying the water, cleansing the pot, baptism and repentance of sins (in the figure of Naaman), the proper feeding of God's Word, and altogether resulting in the miraculous recovery accomplished by the "new stick"—the New Covenant.

Nonetheless, it is obvious that the character and events of Elijah's life and ministry foreshadow what he recapitulated in his return at Christ's First Coming in the character of John the Baptist, and that Elisha's parallel those of the "Elijah to come" whom Jesus says to expect

at His Second Coming, particularly in his repeated dealings with the Rapture in general, and the spiritual restoration of Israel in particular. What takes place with the purification of the water, the healing of the poisoned pot and the subsequent supernatural feeding, are the elements of an overall ministry summarized in the miracle of the axe head. Just as John the Baptist prepared the way spiritually for acceptance of the Messiah at His First Coming, “Elijah to come” prepares them through the New Covenant in the shadow of His re-arrival at His Second Coming.

ELIJAH & ELISHA IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

²³And He said to them, "No doubt you will quote this proverb to Me, 'Physician, heal yourself! Whatever we heard was done at Capernaum, do here in your hometown as well.'" ²⁴And He said, "Truly I say to you, no prophet is welcome in his hometown. ²⁵But I say to you in truth, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the sky was shut up for three years and six months, when a great famine came over all the land; ²⁶and yet Elijah was sent to none of them, but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. ²⁷And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian."

²⁸And all the people in the synagogue were filled with rage as they heard these things; ²⁹and they got up and drove Him out of the city, and led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city had been built, in order to throw Him down the cliff. ³⁰But passing through their midst, He went His way. (Luke 4:23–30)

¹⁷Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months. ¹⁸Then he prayed again, and the sky poured rain and the earth produced its fruit. (James 5:17–18)

Luke records Christ's reference to Elijah and Elisha in the context of an illustration of His First Coming. The residents of His hometown became so incensed at the notion that Gentiles could take their place that they decided to undertake the ultimate approach to "silence the messenger" by attempting to kill Him. But in James' Epistle in chapter 5, in which another reference to Elijah is found, the main topic of discussion is the Second Coming of Christ. In other words, *both* references are eschatological, it's just that the first provided by Christ pertains to the eschatology of His First Coming, and the following by James to the eschatology of His Second Coming. There are many examples throughout God's prophetic Word where a single thing is recapitulated in related but slightly different ways for *both* Christ's First and Second Comings.

Add to this the fact that in Jesus' usage pertaining to His First Coming, the emphasis is on the withholding of rain and the ensuing famine, but James provides the added qualification of not just making it rain again, but ending the famine so that "*the earth produced its fruit*". Whereas Christ's example leaves off with His rejection in keeping with the results of His First Coming and comparing it to a drought and famine, James' usage picks up in parallel with the restoration promised to come in conjunction with Christ's Second Coming and is not just identified with ending the drought and famine, but invoking a season of fruitfulness.

As previously mentioned, [See "Usage in Eschatology—The Mathematical Terms"] these two passages contain a unique biblical measurement for Elijah—"three years and six months", which is distinct from all other references thought to be the equivalent of "3-1/2 years". As discussed at length in the chapter, "The Hermeneutic of Synonyms", this either indicates that if "Elijah to come" is, indeed, one of the final Two Witnesses of Revelation 11, that there is some kind of distinction to which the Holy Spirit is singling out for just him alone,

separate from the other Witness, or that he is distinct and not actually one of them. Obviously this author subscribes to the latter.

In either case, it presents a further interesting question as to the timing of this “*three years and six months*” because the parallel to John the Baptist is unavoidable in either case. It is very difficult to find a chart depicting the events of the End Times—(and a Google Internet image search on the term “Tribulation Chart” will net you *hundreds* upon *hundreds* of examples), which does *not* carefully and precisely overlay each and every item assigned a 3-1/2 year quantity neatly on top of one another. Whether it is “*42 months*”, “*1,260 days*”, “*time, times and half a time*”, or “*three years and six months*”, the repeated behavior is to ascertain how to tailor fit them on top of each other so that they exclusively occupy the first or second half of the final seven year tribulational period, providing some kind of justification so as to prevent them from overlapping in any fashion, or to avoid being assigned to the perceived “wrong” half of Daniel’s 70th Week.

First of all, we have to recognize the fact that John the Baptist’s ministry not only began well *before* that of Christ’s, but overlapped and extended *into* it for a significant amount of time. Although we are not provided with precise dates, it is not uncommon to find those who have put together parallels of the four Gospels who estimate that John’s death did not take place until some point during the second year of Christ’s ministry. In other words, if this is correct, and if John had only been baptizing and preaching beyond the Jordan for 18 months prior to Jesus’ baptism and the start of His ministry, it’s very possible that John operated for a 3-1/2 year period which *greatly overlapped* the 3-1/2 year ministry of Jesus. Even if it was not exactly 3-1/2 years, we nonetheless cannot avoid the fact that John’s ministry did not precisely begin and end in synchronous harmony with that of Jesus’, and therefore should have no expectation that the timing of “Elijah to come” will break precedent, whether it overlaps a little or a lot.

In Scripture there are a variety of things which are specifically assigned a duration equivalent of approximately 3-1/2 years: “*the times*

of the Gentiles” (Rev. 11:2), the Antichrist/Beast (Dan. 7:25; Rev. 13:4-7), “*the woman in the wilderness*” (which is a picture of Israel—Rev. 12:6, 14), the Two Witnesses (Rev. 11:3), the time which Daniel states will span between the Abomination of Desolation at the midway point of the final seven years until the end (Dan. 12:6-7), and the references to Elijah by Jesus (Lk. 4:26) and James (Ja. 5:17).

It is very possible that some of these things do, indeed, precisely take place in parallel with each other, sharing the exact, same beginning and end points, but we cannot ignore the fact that this was not the case for the 3-1/2 year span of Christ’s First Coming and the multi-year public appearance of His forerunner in the character of Elijah, John the Baptist. At the very least, we cannot expect that the replay of John in the Second Coming by the “Elijah to come” will break precedent and suddenly synchronize when the first did not, but that it will once again overlap, beginning *ahead* of the final sequence of events to come and extending into it. And if we are absolutely honest about it, where there is one overlap, we at least have to consider what factors may be indicating that perhaps some of these things cannot be stacked one upon the other as traditionally presented in our customary End Times charts.

This phenomenon may help to explain why Daniel refers to two specifications which are absolutely *not* equal to 3-1/2 standard years, “*1,290 days*” (Dan. 12:11) and “*1,335 days*” (Dan. 12:12), and a term which is *not* equivalent to either 3-1/2 or 7 years, “*2,300 evenings and mornings*”, (Dan. 8:13-14) which by biblical standards equals just under 6.4 lunar years. One of the possibilities we should seriously consider in tandem with any other biblical examples which we can find of these things is that they fit together in an *overlapping* fashion rather as a strictly synchronized string of end-to-end windows, even if the overlaps are small. Or perhaps since Daniel’s “*1,290 days*” and “*1,335 days*” refer to the second half of that week of years from the midpoint of the Abomination of Desolation to the end, we are being told that the first half is not precisely equal to the second.

The Expectation of Elijah

⁵*“Behold, **I am going to send you Elijah the prophet** before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD. ⁶He will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, so that I will not come and smite the land with a curse.” (Malachi 4:5–6)*

¹⁴*And King Herod heard of it, for His name had become well known; and people were saying, “John the Baptist has risen from the dead, and that is why these miraculous powers are at work in Him.” ¹⁵But **others were saying, “He is Elijah.”** And others were saying, “He is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old.” (Mark 6:14–15)*

¹⁹*This is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent to him priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, “Who are you?” ²⁰And he confessed and did not deny, but confessed, “I am not the Christ.” ²¹They asked him, “What then? **Are you Elijah?**” And he said, “I am not.” “Are you the Prophet?” And he answered, “No.” (John 1:19–21)*

¹³*Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He was asking His disciples, “**Who do people say that the Son of Man is?**” ¹⁴And they said, “**Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah**; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.” (Matthew 16:13–14)*

The belief in Elijah’s return was not something merely confined to academic circles at Christ’s First Coming, but one of the most commonly held beliefs among the general population. Explanations for the activities and teachings of both John and Jesus were proposed to be fulfillments of the expected return of Elijah.

Over the intervening centuries between Malachi's prophecy and the arrival of John the Baptist and Jesus, the Jews did not limit their expectation of what Elijah would do upon his return to just what was contained within the brief text which Malachi provided. There were many notions and traditions which became institutionalized in their thoughts and practices, such as putting out an empty chair for Elijah at Passover, or the belief that Elijah would return at Hanukkah to give instructions as to what to do with the desecrated altar they removed from the Temple when Antiochus Epiphanes IV committed the Abomination of Desolation upon it, precipitating the Maccabean Revolt nearly 200 years earlier. There were various notions about Elijah coming to perform a variety of signs and tasks which actually persist within classic Judaism to this day.

Whereas Malachi emphatically highlighted a ministry of spiritual reconciliation, the beliefs which sprung up around Elijah's return, much as they still remain today, mostly attached signs and wonders and many such visible types of working rather than the greater spiritual goal to restore the heart. Just as they ignored Scripture pointing to a Messiah who would first come to die for sin and instead over-realized the Scriptures for His Second Coming establishment of a Millennial Kingdom, the same kind of mindset re-cast their definition of what a return of Elijah would look like. Scripture explicitly assigns Elijah a role of spiritual reconciliation, but tradition heaped upon him all manner of supernatural speculation.

It is very likely, therefore, that the same confusion will be the hallmark of the final ministry of the "Elijah to come". On the one hand, within most circles of the various sects of Judaism, there is still an expected return of Elijah which is very often attached to an association with miracles and signs. Jews will probably challenge the authority and authenticity of this figure should, like John before him, his emphasis be on the preaching of a message stressing a baptism of repentance in preparation of the coming of the Messiah rather than working signs and wonders. But since he is so prolifically assigned to

be one of the Two Witnesses by so many Christian factions, a pair directly attributed by Scripture to publicly perform signs and wonders as part of their prophetic ministry, many from that other side of the aisle are likely to discredit such a one replaying John's ministry, even with a double portion of his spirit.

Just as there was much confusion and conjecture at the First Coming as to someone coming as either the Messiah, Elijah, some kind of other prophet, or even the reincarnation of sorts of John the Baptist himself, it is very likely that this is replayed again not just strictly by ethnic Jews alone, but as a response from Gentile sources as well, even from within the Church.

All Israel Will Be Saved

*²⁵For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery—so that you will not be wise in your own estimation—that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in;
²⁶and so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written,*

*“THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION,
HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB.”
²⁷“THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM,
WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS.” (Romans 11:25–27)*

There are many parallel supporting Scriptures, but here Paul sums up for us what is actually God's greater purpose for the Rapture of the Church. The work of the Church Age which began on the Day of Pentecost, here called “*the fullness of the Gentiles*”, is completed with the removal of the Church via the Rapture, and God's focus returns to Israel that He may fulfill all His promises to them and complete His work. Notice that Paul says this work comes specifically through Christ—“*the Deliverer*”, who will remove their ungodliness and take away their sins through the New Covenant. Israel will finally accept Yeshua and what He did for their sin at His First Coming as a crucial

fulfillment of *all* He will subsequently accomplish at His Second Coming.

Unless someone subscribes to one of the forms of Replacementism, which wrongly asserts that Israel had their chance and blew it, hence God is finished with them, and therefore every scriptural reference to “Israel” should now be read as pertaining instead to the Church—in others words, the “Church” has *replaced* “Israel”, it is difficult to find a teacher or scholar who does not believe in this End Times return of God’s focus upon Israel in the wake of the departure of the Church. Even the majority of those holding to competing eschatologies agree that a major hallmark of the Last Days is an unprecedented, yet anticipated, revival among ethnic Israel when on a large scale they finally accept Yeshua as Messiah. Or as Zechariah expressed it, “...*they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the weeping over a firstborn*”. (Zech. 12:10) The major point of conjecture and disagreement arises when it comes to the discussion of *how* this revival will take place and through *whom*.

The 144,000

*⁴And I heard the number of those who were sealed, one hundred and forty-four thousand sealed **from every tribe of the sons of Israel:** (Revelation 7:4)*

*¹Then I looked, and behold, the Lamb was standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads. ²And I heard a voice from heaven, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder, and the voice which I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps. ³And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders; and no one could learn the song except the one hundred and forty-four thousand **who had been purchased from***

the earth. ⁴*These are the ones who have not been defiled with women, for they have kept themselves chaste. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. **These have been purchased from among men as first fruits to God and to the Lamb.***
⁵*And no lie was found in their mouth; they are blameless. (Revelation 14:1–5)*

This role is most often assigned to the 144,000 ethnic Jews who are sealed in Revelation 7:4-8, 12,000 coming from each of the 12 tribes subsequently listed in the passage. It is not uncommon for commentators to label them as “super evangelists” and state that their purpose is not limited to just preaching the Gospel to Israel alone, but that they will be evangelists to the entire world. If this is true, it is an assumption that is never referenced in Scripture. Nowhere in the two passages of Revelation 7 and 14 directly referencing the 144,000 is the activity of evangelization even hinted. For some reason, there is a feeling that someone has to fill in the void left by the just-removed Church to preach the Gospel in their place, and this perceived “vacuum” is most often assigned to the 144,000 even though it is never stated as such in Scripture. I would argue that “sealing” is not associated in Scripture with anointing someone with any kind of teaching or preaching ministry and has a scripturally specified alternative purpose.

³*Then the glory of the God of Israel went up from the cherub on which it had been, to the threshold of the temple. And He called to the man clothed in linen at whose loins was the writing case. ⁴The LORD said to him, “Go through the midst of the city, even through the midst of Jerusalem, and **put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and groan over all the abominations which are being committed in its midst.**” ⁵But to the others He said in my hearing, “Go through the city after him and strike; do not let your eye have pity and do not spare. (Ezekiel 9:3–5)*

In preparation for the wrath of God's final judgment upon Israel leading up to its being given over to the Babylonian Captivity, God undertook the same kind of "marking" or "sealing" in Ezekiel's day; notice that He marks the *faithful*, those "*who sigh and groan over all the abominations which are being committed in its midst*". Does this marking then empower them to undertake some kind of ministry to those not so marked? No, it only exempts them individually from the wrath to come. This same thing happens in Revelation, such as when the angel of the 5th Trumpet judgment is told to strike "*only the men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads*". (Rev. 9:4)

This is further stipulated for the 144,000 if we take note of the fact that in Revelation 14:4 they are specifically described, "*These have been purchased from among men as first fruits to God and to the Lamb*". This term "*first fruits*" is extremely Jewish-concentric in Scripture, and always means the first and best of many more to come. One of the earliest commandments given to Israel in the Exodus account was the requirement that every firstborn belongs to the Lord and must be redeemed. (Ex. 13:11-16) It is far more likely that the 144,000 represents the first of a wholesale return of Israel to the Lord and speaks of the anticipated prolific spiritual reconciliation expected rather than an inauguration of evangelists, which is not actually attributed to them in Scripture.

A textual issue concerning the 144,000 in Revelation 7:4-8 which nags at me and for which I have never read a completely satisfying answer, is that if the 144,000 become born-again in Christ at this point, why are they then left behind and not taken along with the multitude in the succeeding passage in Revelation 7:9-17? They cannot have been taken because they are obviously present in Revelation 14. Is the answer that they are sealed before the Church's removal, but come to faith after in the character of the prophets in the wake of Elijah's rapture? [I mention this for honesty's sake and so readers will know that, like everyone else, I'm still a work in progress.]

The Two Witnesses

¹Then there was given me a measuring rod like a staff; and someone said, "Get up and measure the temple of God and the altar, and those who worship in it.

²"Leave out the court which is outside the temple and do not measure it, for it has been given to the nations; and they will tread under foot the holy city for forty-two months.

³"And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and **they will prophesy** for twelve hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth." ⁴These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth. ⁵And if anyone wants to harm them, fire flows out of their mouth and devours their enemies; so if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this way. ⁶These have the power to shut up the sky, so that rain will not fall **during the days of their prophesying**; and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to strike the earth with every plague, as often as they desire.

⁷**When they have finished their testimony**, the beast that comes up out of the abyss will make war with them, and overcome them and kill them. ⁸And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which mystically is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified. ⁹Those from the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations will look at their dead bodies for three and a half days, and will not permit their dead bodies to be laid in a tomb. ¹⁰And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and celebrate; and they will send gifts to one another, because **these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth**. ¹¹But after the three and a half days, the breath of life from God came into them, and they stood on their feet; and great fear fell upon those who were watching them. ¹²And they heard a loud

voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here." Then they went up into heaven in the cloud, and their enemies watched them. ¹³And in that hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell; seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven. (Revelation 11:1–13)

The second most popularly taught assertion as to who will bring spiritual revival to ethnic Israel after the Church is removed is assigned to the Two Witnesses. The highlighted points in the above passage, which is the only section of Scripture devoted to them in literal, unambiguous detail, do not reference evangelization or any kind of preaching of the Gospel to anyone. They provide a "*testimony*" which is specifically characterized as "*prophesy*" and "*prophesying*", and their chief activity is categorically stated to be that they "*tormented those who dwell on the earth*".

While it is true that they seem to operate out of Jerusalem, and this is where they will be killed and resurrected, there is no textual connection to their facilitating a spiritual revival of any kind; in fact, it would seem that they are a source of angst and conflict. As a matter of record, in Revelation 11:1-2 just prior to this, a description is given of the "*times of the Gentiles*" (Lk. 21:24), when Jerusalem is "*tread under foot*" by the nations—the *Gentiles*. Assigning them a role of evangelizing anyone, especially Israel, is an idea that has to be introduced by a presupposition originating completely outside of this text and, if such is the case, they do not appear to have much success in that regard in Jerusalem where they are active.

It is worth noting that none of the forerunners of "Elijah to come" in Elijah, Elisha or John the Baptist are ever found working in Jerusalem. This aspect of the Two Witnesses' association with Jerusalem is another textual proof that they are not working in the character of Elijah and are instead something independent of him entirely.

What these activities lend themselves to is a parallel to the primary type of these Two Witnesses as discussed previously, Joshua and Zerubbabel in Zechariah 4:11-14. [See, “The Strongest Scriptural Connection”] Ezra, Zechariah and Haggai record their primary struggle with the Temple and non-Jews in the land either wanting to participate in its operation or hinder it completely, historical events which seem likely to be recapitulated in the activities of the final Two Witnesses in Revelation 11. Neither Joshua and Zerubbabel, the “*two olive trees*” in Zechariah 4, nor these Two Witnesses identically referred to in Revelation 11 as the “*two olive trees*”, undertake roles as evangelists to anyone, but are rather antagonists.

In fact, if we revisit all the primary examples of a pair of witnesses, we find this activity consistently absent in them as well, and they are all also found to be operating in parallel eschatological contexts: the two angels at Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 18-19), Moses and Aaron in the Exodus account, and the two spies at Jericho (Josh. 2). [See “Many Examples”] Of all the many more minor but supporting examples, the only case where preaching the Gospel was involved is found in Jesus’ sending out the Apostles and then the Seventy in pairs, of which it could be argued that although operating in pairs, they are part of a much larger group rather than strictly operating in isolated duos.

⁶And I saw another angel flying in midheaven, having an eternal gospel to preach to those who live on the earth, and to every nation and tribe and tongue and people; ⁷and he said with a loud voice, “Fear God, and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come; worship Him who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of waters.”
(Revelation 14:6–7)

But going back to the question of the role of the Two Witnesses in Revelation 11, if they, or the 144,000 for that matter, are functioning as “super evangelists” not just to Israel but the entire world, why is the

only mention of any kind of communication of the Gospel after the removal of the Church is limited to *angelic* agency when it is presented in the interlude between the trumpet and bowl judgments?

There is only one figure in Scripture to whom this role is specifically assigned, that of Elijah. And it is Jesus Himself who not only says that Elijah came and executed it at the First Coming in the form of John the Baptist, but follows up categorically stating that Elijah will come yet again. And just as this function in the First Coming was focused and limited to *only* literal Israel, so after the Church is removed in the course of the Second Coming will “Elijah to come” likewise address *only* literal Israel yet again. In the character of Joseph’s brothers who finally recognized him in their second meeting with him (after the Gentile servants were sent away in Genesis 44-45) and openly mourned and wept in the course of finally being reconciled to him after their obvious initial rejection of him, so the whole of the twelve tribes they spawned will likewise finally accept Yeshua in a similar manner under parallel circumstances.

THE MINISTRY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

The Same Purpose

¹³But the angel said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your petition has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will give him the name John. ¹⁴You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. ¹⁵For he will be great in the sight of the Lord; and he will drink no wine or liquor, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit while yet in his mother’s womb. ¹⁶And he will turn many of the sons of Israel back to the Lord their God. ¹⁷It is he who will go as a forerunner before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, *TO TURN THE HEARTS OF THE FATHERS BACK TO THE CHILDREN, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous, so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.*” (Luke 1:13–17)

The Old Testament ends with Malachi’s promise of Elijah’s return, and the Gospels begin after more than four hundred years of ensuing silence by fulfilling that very promise. The major objectives of John’s ministry in the First Coming most certainly reveal what is to be expected of “Elijah to come” in the Second Coming:

- “...*he will turn many of the sons of Israel back to the Lord their God.*”
- “...*will go as a forerunner before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah...*”

- “...turn the hearts of the fathers back to the children...”
- “...turn...the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous...”
- “...make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”

These obviously combine to reveal a ministry of spiritual revival and reconciliation, something distinctly different from that assigned to either the 144,000 or the Two Witnesses. Gabriel incorporates what was originally revealed through Malachi into an expanded description affirming a ministry not based on signs and wonders, but a message centered on “turning back” spiritually. To be biblically prepared for the arrival of the Messiah requires a change of heart and attitude.

⁶⁷And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying:

⁶⁸“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,
For He has visited us and accomplished redemption
for His people,

⁶⁹And has raised up a horn of salvation for us
In the house of David His servant—

⁷⁰As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from
of old—

⁷¹Salvation FROM OUR ENEMIES,
And FROM THE HAND OF ALL WHO HATE US;

⁷²To show mercy toward our fathers,
And to remember His holy covenant,

⁷³The oath which He swore to Abraham our father,

⁷⁴To grant us that we, being rescued from the hand of
our enemies,

Might serve Him without fear,

⁷⁵In holiness and righteousness before Him all our
days. (Luke 1:67–75)

Remember, the repeated problem Jesus faced at His First Coming is that they over-realized the prophecies associated with the Millennial Kingdom and His Second Coming to the point that they completely overlooked the work of the Messiah which needed to first take place, the work of salvation from sin; instead, what they wanted was “salvation” in terms of freedom from the Romans—a *political* rescue. But note from the outset of Zacharias’ prophetic response the spiritual state they needed to be in if they were indeed to be “*rescued from the hand of our enemies*”: “*To grant us that we...might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him all our days.*” Gabriel expanded upon Malachi to establish the issue first and foremost as one of a right heart and attitude, and Zacharias further prophesies that such is intended to produce right service to God “*in holiness and righteousness*”.

This may be especially important to consider in light of the fact that we have large, detailed passages of Scripture explaining the special service and work assigned to Israel during the Millennial Reign which comes *after* Daniel’s 70th Week draws to a close. Israel is not only being prepared individually from the heart, but corporately for service as well. But even when the Messiah returns to establish the Millennial Kingdom, they will still need to have accomplished from the heart spiritually the work of the Messiah in His First Coming. This requirement will not be waived and will once again be the main purpose of the “Elijah to come”, replaying John the Baptist. The same spiritual work initiated by John the Baptist to prepare hearts for the arrival of the Messiah still has to be completed by “Elijah to come”, even more so, for His arrival in the Second Coming.

⁷⁶*“And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High;*

For you will go on BEFORE THE LORD TO PREPARE HIS WAYS;

⁷⁷*To give to His people the knowledge of salvation*

By the forgiveness of their sins,

⁷⁸*Because of the tender mercy of our God,*

With which the Sunrise from on high will visit us,
⁷⁹TO SHINE UPON THOSE WHO SIT IN DARKNESS AND THE
SHADOW OF DEATH,
To guide our feet into the way of peace.” (Luke 1:76–
79)

Again, “*the knowledge of salvation*” only comes about “*by the forgiveness of sins*”. There is no *national* restoration which can be substituted for *spiritual* restoration. Their current spiritual state is so severe that it is described as “*those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death*”. Zacharias quotes Malachi to cite John’s primary purpose as spiritual preparation:

¹“Behold, I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple; and the messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight, behold, He is coming,” says the LORD of hosts. ²But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner’s fire and like fullers’ soap. ³He will sit as a smelter and purifier of silver, and He will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, **so that they may present to the LORD offerings in righteousness.** ⁴Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years. (Malachi 3:1–4)

Notice that in verse 3 the overall goal is “*righteousness*”, and this will come about through a spiritual refining process. But also take note that their spiritual state up to this time is so dreadful that their offerings—their practice of Judaism due to the condition of their hearts, is something which has not been pleasing to God for quite some time. This same condition replays itself in the Second Coming through “Elijah to come” in the same way it originally transpired under John the Baptist. What was predicted for John foreshadows what we should

expect even more so from “Elijah to come”. I would argue that these same spiritual conditions are at the least also present today within ethnic Israel at large, and to a much worse degree.

The Same Message & Ministry

³And he came into all the district around the Jordan,
preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness
of sins; ⁴as 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.

⁵EVERY RAVINE WILL BE FILLED,
AND EVERY MOUNTAIN AND HILL WILL BE BROUGHT LOW;
THE CROOKED WILL BECOME STRAIGHT,
AND THE ROUGH ROADS SMOOTH;

⁶AND ALL FLESH WILL SEE THE SALVATION OF GOD.” (Luke
3:3–6)

In his introduction of John’s ministry, Luke builds even further upon the common theme established by Malachi and supplemented by Gabriel and Zacharias. Allegorically this is describing what needs to take place spiritually to be properly prepared to accept the Messiah. It addresses a variety of spiritual problems, some of which require serious work to fix as they are depicted as deep voids which need to be filled in (“*every ravine*”) or large obstacles which need to be brought low (“*every mountain*”), but some of which need an approach of fine tuning and less drastic adjustment in making the crooked straight and the rough smooth.

As an aside, it is well worth noting that this is why we should understand that a very great sign of the nearness of the Return of Christ is the *spiritual* return of Israel. If we fully appreciated the emphasis that Scripture places on this work, we would not allow ourselves to only focus on the more spectacular fireworks with which we identify the

Last Days. We should realize this was a major mistake among God's people at Christ's First Coming which seems to again be replaying itself in the present shadow of His Second Coming. It is not as much about getting ethnic Israel back to within the borders of the physical land of Israel as it is to return them spiritually into a right relationship with their Messiah. We should not shirk our responsibility for evangelism in the here and now, thinking where Israel is concerned it is up to someone else.

*⁷So he began saying to the crowds who were going out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? ⁸Therefore **bear fruits in keeping with repentance**, and do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham for our father,' for I say to you that from these stones God is able to raise up children to Abraham. ⁹Indeed the axe is already laid at the root of the trees; so **every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.**" (Luke 3:7-9)*

The proof of repentance is visibly proven by a changed life, which is often expressed biblically as producing good fruit. (Mt. 7:17-20; Gal. 5:22-23) In order to achieve the spiritual goals established by Malachi, Zacharias and Isaiah (as quoted by Luke), repentance has to be accompanied with a change in lifestyle from sin and the world's ways to righteousness and God's ways. Or as the Apostle Paul would later explain...

*¹⁷But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, ¹⁸and having been **freed from sin**, you became **slaves of righteousness**. (Romans 6:17-18)*

John the Baptist makes the specific stipulation, "*Do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham for our father'*". Then and now there are those who think a genetic heritage is enough, which John clearly

dismisses. Paul will later categorically state, “...it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham”. (Gal. 3:7) They need to not just repent, but prove they have done so sincerely by following up with changed lives. This is the important aspect of baptism, that it is not a means to “get clean”, but a public testimony identifying that one has been cleansed and will make every effort to never return back to their previous way of life.

¹⁰And the crowds were questioning him, saying, “Then what shall we do?” ¹¹And he would answer and say to them, “The man who has two tunics is to share with him who has none; and he who has food is to do likewise.”

¹²And some tax collectors also came to be baptized, and they said to him, “Teacher, what shall we do?” ¹³And he said to them, “Collect no more than what you have been ordered to.”

¹⁴Some soldiers were questioning him, saying, “And what about us, what shall we do?” And he said to them, “Do not take money from anyone by force, or accuse anyone falsely, and be content with your wages.” (Luke 3:10–14)

What do all these examples have in common? Interestingly enough, they all have to do with treatment of others—an application of loving our neighbor as our self. *Anyone* can say they love God, but this is actually proven in the course of our love (or not) of others. John’s definition of a repentance which produces the right fruit is in how one stops mistreating and abusing others and instead fulfills the biblical mandate to “*love your neighbor as yourself*”. (Lev. 19:18)

¹⁵Now while the people were in a state of expectation and all were wondering in their hearts about John, as to whether he was the Christ, ¹⁶John answered and said to them all, “As for me, I baptize you with water;

but One is coming who is mightier than I, and I am not fit to untie the thong of His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.¹⁷ His winnowing fork is in His hand to thoroughly clear His threshing floor, and to gather the wheat into His barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.” (Luke 3:15–17)

John’s message for the First Coming will be an even more powerful and meaningful message given by “Elijah to come” in the shadow of the Second Coming, because the winnowing, threshing, gathering and burning will be about to literally and ultimately take place. But it is only John, who was confirmed by Christ to have come in the character of Elijah and further establishes that Elijah will come yet again, who conveys a message and ministry of spiritual reconciliation to Israel. Again, there is nothing mentioned in regard to this for the 144,000, only that they are “*first fruits*” (Rev. 14:4), the first of many from among ethnic Israel, and it is certainly a near opposite contrast to the stated purpose of the Two Witnesses, “*these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth*”. (Rev. 11:10)

In fact, this activity described as “torment” comports with many of the examples of two witnesses through Scripture rather than Elijah or his counterparts. The two angels at Sodom and Gomorrah effected a rescue of God’s people, but certainly brought destruction on the “earth-dwellers”; the two spies at Jericho effected a rescue of Rahab and her family, but certainly played a part in the destruction of the city; Moses and Aaron effected the rescue of Israel out of Egypt, but certainly played a role in the terror brought upon Pharaoh and the Egyptians. And it would be quite difficult in these instances to make a case that any of these examples were effecting some kind of revival or spiritual restoration.

We have to be careful that we do not become so obsessed with assigning the wrong things to the wrong figures that we set ourselves up for deception. I have more than a passing familiarity with a popular Christian conference speaker who happens to be ethnically Jewish who

has been approached a number of times by people inquiring whether or not he is one of the Two Witnesses. Within all eschatologies there seems to be a sizable faction dogmatically devoted to identifying and seeking the arrival of these two figures. I can only imagine that when they arrive, and they do not effect a spiritual revival among Israel, that it is those with this presupposition who will openly dispute their authority and identity, and compound the error further by challenging the notion of Elijah's singular return.

*¹⁹This is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent to him priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" ²⁰And he confessed and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ." ²¹They asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" And he said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No." ²²Then they said to him, "Who are you, so that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?" ²³He said, "**I am A VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS, 'MAKE STRAIGHT THE WAY OF THE LORD,'** as Isaiah the prophet said." (John 1:19–23)*

What may be particularly interesting is to note what is stated in Isaiah 40 *after* this quote by both the Apostle John and Luke:

*⁶A voice says, "Call out."
Then he answered, "What shall I call out?"
All flesh is grass, and all its loveliness is like the flower
of the field.
⁷The grass withers, the flower fades,
When the breath of the LORD blows upon it;
Surely the people are grass.
⁸The grass withers, the flower fades,
But the word of our God stands forever.

⁹Get yourself up on a high mountain,
O Zion, bearer of good news,*

*Lift up your voice mightily, O Jerusalem, bearer of
good news;
Lift it up, do not fear.
Say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God!"
¹⁰Behold, the Lord GOD will come with might,
With His arm ruling for Him.
Behold, His reward is with Him
And His recompense before Him.
¹¹Like a shepherd He will tend His flock,
In His arm He will gather the lambs
And carry them in His bosom;
He will gently lead the nursing ewes. (Isaiah 40:6–11)*

The preceding verses covering the parable of preparation where the spiritual valleys need to be filled in, the mountains brought low, the crooked made straight and the rough smooth all speak of the work of the Messiah in His First Coming. What comes after is called “*good news*” of the imminent arrival of the Messiah and appears to be speaking more pointedly to the Second Coming. In other words, at the First Coming, John the Baptist in the character of Elijah preaches the first part of Isaiah 40 to a point, and the “Elijah to come” in the Second Coming will pick up with the additional message of the Messiah-Shepherd returning for His sheep.

John’s Disciples Become Jesus’ Disciples

A recurring theme throughout the New Testament is the necessity of embracing John’s ministry in preparation for that of Christ’s. It was John’s identification of Jesus as the Messiah which caused two of John’s disciples, one of them being Andrew, to immediately begin following Jesus. (Jn. 1:35-40) Almost immediately this widens to include Peter, Philip and Nathanael. (Jn. 1:41-51) This prior association with John the Baptist becomes the prerequisite used to replace Judas with another authentic, founding Apostle.

²¹*“Therefore it is necessary that of the men who have
accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went*

*in and out among us— ²²**beginning with the baptism of John** until the day that He was taken up from us— one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection.” (Acts 1:21–22)*

But this was not something unique and strictly limited to the Apostles. When Jesus Himself is explaining to the people who John is, He specifies:

²⁶“But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and one who is more than a prophet. ²⁷This is the one about whom it is written,

*‘BEHOLD, I SEND MY MESSENGER AHEAD OF YOU,
WHO WILL PREPARE YOUR WAY BEFORE YOU.’*

*²⁸“I say to you, among those born of women there is no one greater than John; yet he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.” ²⁹When all the people and the tax collectors heard this, they acknowledged God’s justice, **having been baptized with the baptism of John**. ³⁰But the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected God’s purpose for themselves, **not having been baptized by John**. (Luke 7:26–30)*

Observe the dual qualification which is stated for those who on the one hand “*acknowledged God’s justice*” but on the other “*rejected God’s purpose for themselves*”, and how it is intrinsically tied to “*the baptism of John*”. For Israel, at a time in pre-Church history when the Holy Spirit was still operating on an individual, case-by-case basis, this baptism served a very important function in displaying the kind of changed heart for which Elijah in the First Coming was sent.

This may be something particularly important in the shadow, and actual removal, of the Church, when Paul explains to us that the Holy Spirit is basically going to return to working in that previous manner again. (2 Th. 2:5-6) This may be why Elijah *needs* to be sent once more, because the spiritual environment, once the Restrainer (the Holy

Spirit) no longer convicts the world of sin and returns to working on an individual basis, the same kind of ministry provided through John the Baptist must be necessarily replayed once again through “Elijah to come” on behalf of Israel.

*²⁷They came again to Jerusalem. And as He was walking in the temple, the chief priests and the scribes and the elders came to Him, ²⁸and began saying to Him, “By what authority are You doing these things, or who gave You this authority to do these things?” ²⁹And Jesus said to them, “I will ask you one question, and you answer Me, and then I will tell you by what authority I do these things. ³⁰**Was the baptism of John from heaven, or from men?** Answer Me.” ³¹They began reasoning among themselves, saying, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ He will say, ‘Then why did you not believe him?’ ³²But shall we say, ‘From men?’”—they were afraid of the people, for everyone considered John to have been a real prophet. ³³Answering Jesus, they said, “**We do not know.**” And Jesus said to them, “Nor will I tell you by what authority I do these things.” (Mark 11:27–33)*

From a slightly different perspective, Jesus confirms this necessary connection to John the Baptist, teaching that at that time, Jesus’ authority could not be accepted by anyone not first accepting that of John’s. This is a very important aspect of the anticipated ministry of “Elijah to come” at a point where the Church has been removed (or on the verge of removal), the Holy Spirit’s restraining role is lifted, and “*a real prophet*” prepares Israel for the Messiah’s final Return.

²⁴Now a Jew named Apollos, an Alexandrian by birth, an eloquent man, came to Ephesus; and he was mighty in the Scriptures. ²⁵This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he was speaking and teaching accurately the things concerning Jesus, being acquainted only with

the baptism of John; ²⁶and he began to speak out boldly in the synagogue. But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately. (Acts 18:24–26)

¹It happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the upper country and came to Ephesus, and found some disciples. ²He said to them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” And they said to him, “No, we have not even heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.” ³And he said, “Into what then were you baptized?” And they said, “Into John’s baptism.” ⁴Paul said, “John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in Him who was coming after him, that is, in Jesus.” ⁵When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ⁶And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking with tongues and prophesying. ⁷There were in all about twelve men. (Acts 19:1–7)

What began with John needed to be completed in Christ, but his ministry was so efficacious as to produce disciples who were discovered long after the Day of Pentecost. In each case, the foundation laid by John always led back to Christ, or as he would famously state to his disciples about Jesus, “*He must increase, but I must decrease*”. (Jn. 3:30)

It Began With John

*³⁴Opening his mouth, Peter said: “I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality, ³⁵but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him. ³⁶The word which He sent to the sons of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ (He is Lord of all)— ³⁷you yourselves know the thing which took place throughout all Judea, **starting from Galilee, after the baptism which John proclaimed.** (Acts 10:34–37)*

It is important to keep in mind that when John the Baptist in the character of Elijah came the first time, there was as yet no Church; his work was strictly with Israel proper. Or as Paul explains, the Gospel is for "*the Jew first*". (Rom. 1:16) It is not beyond reason that this is yet again the work of "Elijah to come" in the Second Coming, to fulfill all the Scriptures promising Israel's wholesale reconciliation to their Messiah, and further explains the references in Revelation to the reaction of the rest of the world, which is always characterized by a *lack* of repentance. (Rev. 9:20-21; 16:8-11)

There are a number of changes which are coming in the End Times, chief among them a time when the Church is removed and God's focus returns to Israel. The Church's removal comes at a time when the Holy Spirit no longer restrains in the way established at Pentecost and is more like that between His Resurrection and Ascension, when He personally imparted the Spirit to them, and a time of unprecedented spiritual darkness which is scripturally anticipated and even now creeps upon us.

The ethnic Jews who accept Jesus as their Messiah during the Church Age are, in fact, part of the Church and will experience the Rapture as well. There is a popular notion that the Rapture itself will be a powerful enough event in and of itself that people will, on their own, see the truth, fall to their knees, and instantly repent to spark a worldwide revival, but such has never been the case throughout the whole of history and is never explicitly stated as such in God's Word. This is because, "*So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ*", (Rom. 10:17) not by simply seeing something. Just as it was at the First Coming, where Israel is concerned, someone has to prepare the way spiritually by preaching what is necessary to induce hearts willing to finally accept Yeshua as their Savior.

This author highly recommends that the reader obtain a copy of Jacob Prasch's book, *Harpazo—The Intra-Seal Rapture of the Church*, so as to receive a very detailed and thorough explanation of exactly what the Rapture is doctrinally, and how it will actually transpire literally. Contrary to much of what is taught in so-called books self-identifying as “Christian Fiction” and the myriad of Hollywood productions on the subject, this book explains in depth from Scripture alone why this author does not, among other things associated with that topic, subscribe to the notion of a “secret” Rapture.

This is a very important aspect, I believe, supporting the greater reason why Elijah is coming again as a lone harbinger in the manner of John the Baptist to prepare Israel for the Return of Jesus. The Rapture will take place between the 6th and 7th Seals (Rev. 7:9-17) at a time of ever-growing spiritual darkness in conjunction with a change in the role of the Holy Spirit no longer restraining evil nor empowering a unified Church as currently enjoyed. But in the Olivet Discourse, Jesus made very clear that what is plainly associated with the 6th Seal will be “*the sign of the Son of Man*” which will “*appear in the sky*”. The Rapture is an event which visually denotes the onset of “*the day of the Lord*”, a time devoted to God's wrath on the Antichrist and his kingdom.

²⁶“So if they say to you, ‘Behold, He is in the wilderness,’ do not go out, or, ‘Behold, He is in the inner rooms,’ do not believe them. ²⁷For just as the lightning comes from the east and flashes even to the west, so will the coming of the Son of Man be. ²⁸Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather. ²⁹But immediately after the tribulation of

those days **THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT, AND THE STARS WILL FALL from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.**
³⁰And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory.
³¹And He will send forth His angels with A GREAT TRUMPET and THEY WILL GATHER TOGETHER His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.
(Matthew 24:26–31)

¹²I looked when He broke the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth made of hair, and the whole moon became like blood; ¹³and the stars of the sky fell to the earth, as a fig tree casts its unripe figs when shaken by a great wind. ¹⁴The sky was split apart like a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. ¹⁵Then the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and the strong and every slave and free man hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains; **¹⁶and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; ¹⁷for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?”** (Revelation 6:12–17)

The effects of this event are further reinforced by both the Apostle John and the Prophet Zechariah, and there are quite a few parallel passages on “*the day of the Lord*” which identify these same activities with this ultimate closing period of time. The mourning of the Gentile nations is likened to men trying to hide themselves and is more of an expression of regret and fear, but the mourning of Israel is one more

closely associated with someone who is sincerely repentant in every sense of the biblical definition.

⁷BEHOLD, HE IS COMING WITH THE CLOUDS, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and **all the tribes of the earth will mourn** over Him. So it is to be. Amen. (Revelation 1:7)

¹⁰"I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and **they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn.** (Zechariah 12:10)

There are those who propose on the one hand that the anticipated revival of Israel will take place immediately within the wake of the Rapture, not infrequently by inferring that the 144,000 are active *before* the 7th Seal, going all the way back to the first day of Daniel's 70th Week. This assertion most often comes from Pre-Tribulationists, many of whom then also contrarily state that the Rapture could come years, even decades *before* the final seven years of the final week of years (one well-known proponent having claimed to calculate that it could not be more than 38 years prior to the start of that period). It is never explained how something identified as categorically taking place *after* the seal judgments have begun (the sealing of the 144,000) is actually working years *before* the final week of the eschaton even starts. Others assert that Israel's revival does not take place until just at the very end of Daniel's 70th Week in the shadow of Christ's final Return through Edom to the Mt. of Olives in close proximity to what is popularly called "The Battle of Armageddon".

There are other Israel-centric events in the Last Days, not the least of which is a mass escape out of the land of Israel into the wilderness (Rev. 12:1-6) before their ultimate return to the land. If their flight takes place in a sequence closely associated with the revealing of the

Antichrist at the Abomination of Desolation (the midway point of Daniel's 70th Week), followed shortly thereafter by the Rapture of the Church, there is still time for Elijah to minister for "*three years and six months*" and employ that time to prepare the persecuted Jewish people for the Messiah's Return. But like John's ministry which greatly overlapped Jesus', this could well be the case again. Consider this in association with the ministry timeline of Elisha, whose life will recapitulate the Second Coming:

- Elisha picks up at the Jordan River where both Elijah and John the Baptist left off. (2 Ki. 2:7-8)
- Elisha surfaces for good at a time when many are anticipating a rapture is about to take place. (2 Ki. 2:1-8)
- As he begins the spiritual re-conquest of Israel along the same route as Joshua, the very first thing Elisha has to deal with is the question of the Rapture. (2 Ki. 2:15-18)
- He begins the spiritual restoration process with the purification of the waters at Jericho. (2 Ki. 19-22)
- Elisha is then confronted with persecution over the issue of a rapture. (2 Ki. 2:23-24)
- He cures the poison stew with the introduction of grain, a biblical metaphor for replacing wrong and false doctrine with right doctrine. (2 Ki. 4:38-41)
- He performs a miraculous feeding, another metaphor for the giving of God's Word. (2 Ki. 4:42-44)

- He replays the baptism of John in the healing of Naaman's leprosy by immersion in the Jordan River, leprosy being a symbol of sin and the baptism an illustration of the need for repentance of sin. (2 Ki. 5:1-14)
- Finally, Israel, represented by the axe head which is hopelessly lost at the bottom of a great body of water, itself a representation of the Gentile nations of the world, is miraculously recovered. (2 Ki. 6:1-7) The "old" stick off which they flew represents the Old Covenant and the "new" stick used to retrieve them is the New Covenant. This is a complete picture of the spiritual revival to be expected from the "Elijah to come".

There may be a reason why we so often fixate on the Two Witnesses and forgo the plainly stated fact by Christ Himself that Elijah will come again, and that may have to do with our own focus on what is going to happen to *us*, the Church, up until the Rapture actually takes place, versus what comes *after* once we are removed.

While there is great debate as to whether the Two Witnesses operate mainly during the first half or the second half of the final seven years, it appears that "Elijah to come" operates largely in the second half, but we cannot discount an overlap which does not precisely synchronize with just the first or second half. Just as Elisha does not become fully active until the rapture of Elijah, the "Elijah to come" may not initiate his ministry until the removal of the Church, or at least in very close proximity to it. The promise through Malachi is for Elijah to return "*before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD*", but there is a window of opportunity for this to happen shortly after the midway point of the 70th Week. Daniel tells us that the last half is actually "*1,335 days*" in length, meaning there is still a 75 day window to accommodate a ministry of "*three years and six months*"

which can still start *after* the midway point, should his ministry be concentrated in that second half of Daniel's 70th Week.

If, like this author, we subscribe to the notion that the Two Witnesses are not precisely synchronized with either the first or second halves of that week of years because their death and resurrection takes place between the 6th and 7th Trumpets (the "*second woe*" in Rev. 11:14), and furthermore understand that the primary prophetic role of these two men is to have "*tormented those who dwell on the earth*", (Rev. 11:10) it may actually be the things the Two Witnesses say and do during their time in Jerusalem which are leveraged by "Elijah to come" and combine with the act of witnessing the Rapture take place which launches the final End Times revival among Israel. There may be a relationship between these activities while still maintaining a distinctively separate ministry and appearance of the Two Witnesses versus "Elijah to come".

It is often pointed out that Matthew tends to emphasize things which were of greater interest to the original all-Jewish audience to which he was writing at the time, whereas Luke caters more to the interests of a mixed, but numerically larger Gentile readership. The difference in each Gospel's presentation of the Sermon on the Mount and the Olivet Discourse are often offered as primary examples of these different emphases. If this is a valid hermeneutic, it is worth noting that in Luke's account of the Mt. of Transfiguration there is no identification of Elijah with John the Baptist nor any mention of Elijah's ministry in either the First or Second Coming; this is exclusively found in Matthew alone. In keeping with the other examples, this may be telling us something about the timing of the return of "Elijah to come" and that the timing of this ministry occurs more likely *after* the removal of the mainly Gentile Church than before.

The biggest benefit for us is in refining our understanding of the true roles of the 144,000 and the Two Witnesses, and not improperly

assigning traits and activities which could lead to a misidentification of what *does* intrinsically affect us.

¹⁹This is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent to him priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, **“Who are you?”** ²⁰And he confessed and did not deny, but confessed, “I am not the Christ.” ²¹They asked him, “What then? Are you Elijah?” And he said, “I am not.” “Are you the Prophet?” And he answered, “No.” ²²Then they said to him, “Who are you, so that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?” ²³He said, “I am A VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS, ‘MAKE STRAIGHT THE WAY OF THE LORD,’ as Isaiah the prophet said.” ²⁴Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. (John 1:19–24)

¹On one of the days while He was teaching the people in the temple and preaching the gospel, the chief priests and the scribes with the elders confronted Him, ²and they spoke, saying to Him, **“Tell us by what authority You are doing these things, or who is the one who gave You this authority?”** ³Jesus answered and said to them, “I will also ask you a question, and you tell Me: ⁴Was the baptism of John from heaven or from men?” ⁵They reasoned among themselves, saying, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ He will say, ‘Why did you not believe him?’ ⁶But if we say, ‘From men,’ all the people will stone us to death, for they are convinced that John was a prophet.” ⁷So they answered that they did not know where it came from. ⁸And Jesus said to them, “Nor will I tell you by what authority I do these things.” (Luke 20:1–8)

There is a basic problem which is replaying itself in these Last Days exactly as it took place during the First Coming: presuppositions. We want to earnestly desire to avoid repeating the same mistakes of introducing into our study of God’s Word assumptions and presuppositions of our own making, otherwise we’re in danger of not

recognizing the actual fulfillment of God's prophetic Word when it comes about in much the same way as the religious authorities cited above, and related instances of people in general throughout the Gospel accounts. Just as they did not recognize the cosmological sign announcing the arrival of Christ at His birth, neither will such fully recognize similar events at His Second Coming until it is too late. Understanding the difference between "Elijah to come" and the Two Witnesses may be critical for accurately understanding *what* is taking place, and *when*, in these Last Hours, especially if what we experience of these things comes within a relatively small window of time within the overall sequence. The Two Witnesses may have "1,260 days" in which to operate, and Elijah "three years and six months", but there is sufficient textual proof that the Church may only witness these fulfillments for a very brief, yet critical, part of that time.

APPENDIX "A": ELIJAH, ELISHA & JOHN THE BAPTIST IN
SCRIPTURE

<i>Elijah</i>	
<u>Event</u>	<u>Reference</u>
Predicts a Drought	1 Ki. 17:1
Fed by the Ravens (East of the Jordan)	1 Ki. 17:2-7
Fed by the Widow at Zarephath (Sidon)	1 Ki. 17:8-16
Raises the Widow's Son from the Dead	1 Ki. 17:17-24
Elijah Returns & Meets Obadiah	1 Ki. 18:1-16
Elijah Meets Ahab	1 Ki. 18:17-19
Elijah & the Prophets of Baal at Mt. Carmel	1 Ki. 18:20-40
Elijah Ends the Drought	1 Ki. 18:41-46
Elijah Flees from Jezebel	1 Ki. 19:1-8
Elijah at Mt. Horeb	1 Ki. 19:9-14
The Lord's Promise of Jehu, Elisha & 7,000	1 Ki. 19:15-18
Elisha Joins with Elijah	1 Ki. 19:19-21
War with Aram	1 Ki. 20
Ahab Takes Naboth's Vineyard (Jezebel)	1 Ki. 21:1-16
Elijah Prophesies About Ahab & Jezebel	1 Ki. 21:17-26
Ahab's Repentance	1 Ki. 21:27-29
Ahab & Jehoshaphat Battle Aram	1 Ki. 22:1-36
The Death of Ahab	1 Ki. 22:37-40
The Death of Jehoshaphat	1 Ki. 22:41-50
The Reign & Death of Ahaziah, Son of Ahab	1 Ki. 22:51-53
Elijah & Ahaziah's Three Groups of Fifty	2 Ki. 1:1-16
Ahaziah's Death & Jehoram's Reign	2 Ki. 1:17-18
Elijah & Elisha Go to Gilgal	2 Ki. 2:1
Elijah & Elisha Go to Bethel	2 Ki. 2:2-3

Elijah & Elisha Go to Jericho	2 Ki. 2:4-6
Elijah & Elisha Cross the Jordan	2 Ki. 2:7-8
The Rapture of Elijah	2 Ki. 2:9-12
The Promise of Elijah's Return	Mal. 4:5-6
Gabriel Declares John Will Come in the Spirit & Power of Elijah	Lk. 1:13-17
Elijah Mentioned by Christ Eschatologically	Lk. 4:22-26
Elijah Mentioned by the People	Mk. 6:14-16
Elijah Mentioned by Christ as Having Come as John the Baptist	Mt. 11:7-15
Elijah Mentioned by the Disciples	Mt. 16:13-16 Mk. 8:27-30 Lk. 9:18-22
Elijah on the Mt. of Transfiguration	Mt. 17:1-15 Mk. 9:2-13 Lk. 9:29-36
Elijah Mentioned at the Cross	Mt. 27:46-49 Mk. 15:33-36
Elijah Mentioned by Paul	Rom. 11:1-6
Elijah Mentioned by James	Ja. 5:16-17

Elisha

<u>Event</u>	<u>Reference</u>
The Lord's Promise of Jehu, Elisha & 7,000	1 Ki. 19:14-18
Elisha Joins with Elijah	1 Ki. 19:19-21
Elijah & Elisha Go to Gilgal	2 Ki. 2:1
Elijah & Elisha Go to Bethel	2 Ki. 2:2-3
Elijah & Elisha Go to Jericho	2 Ki. 2:4-6
Elijah & Elisha Cross the Jordan	2 Ki. 2:7-8
The Rapture of Elijah	2 Ki. 2:9-12
Elisha Receives Elijah's Mantle at the Jordan	2 Ki. 2:13
Elisha Crosses the Jordan	2 Ki. 2:14
The Fifty Search for Elijah	2 Ki. 2:15-18
Elisha Purifies the Waters at Jericho	2 Ki. 2:19-22
42 Youths Taunt Elisha at Bethel	2 Ki. 2:23-24
Elisha Returns to Mt. Carmel & Samaria	2 Ki. 2:25
Jehoram, Jehoshaphat & Edom vs. Moab	2 Ki. 3:1-8
The Consultation of Elisha	2 Ki. 3:9-20

Victory Over Moab	2 Ki. 3:21-27
The Miracle of the Widow's Oil	2 Ki. 4:1-7
The Shunammite Woman	2 Ki. 4:8-17
The Shunammite's Son Raised from the Dead	2 Ki. 4:18-37
The Poisonous Stew Cured at Gilgal	2 Ki. 4:38-41
The Miraculous Feeding	2 Ki. 4:42-44
The Healing of Naaman	2 Ki. 5:1-14
The Curse on Gehazi	2 Ki. 5:15-27
The Recovery of the Axe Head	2 Ki. 6:1-7
The Attempt to Capture Elisha by Aram	2 Ki. 6:8-23
The Siege of Samaria & Defeat of Aram	2 Ki. 6:24-7:20
The Shunammite's Land Restored	2 Ki. 8:1-6
Elisha Prophecies About Hazael (Aram)	2 Ki. 8:7-15
The Reign & Death of Jehoram (Israel)	2 Ki. 8:16-23
Elisha's Anointing of Jehu (Israel)	2 Ki. 9:1-13
Jehu Defeats Joram (Israel)	2 Ki. 9:14-26
Jehu Assassinate Ahaziah (Judah)	2 Ki. 9:27-28
The Death of Jezebel	2 Ki. 9:29-37
Judgment on Ahab's House through Jehu	2 Ki. 10:1-11
Jehu Kills 42 Relatives of Ahaziah (Judah)	2 Ki. 10:12-14
Jehu Joins with Jonadab Against Ahab's House	2 Ki. 10:15-17
Jehu Destroys the Baal Worshipers	2 Ki. 10:18-28
Assessment of Jehu's Character	2 Ki. 10:29-31
Portions of Israel Begin to Be Cut Off	2 Ki. 10:32-33
Death of Jehu	2 Ki. 10:34-36
The Reign of Queen Athaliah (Judah)	2 Ki. 11:1-3
Jehoiada & King Joash (Judah)	2 Ki. 11:4-21
The Reign of Joash (Judah)	2 Ki. 12:1-18
The Reign of Amaziah (Judah)	2 Ki. 12:19-21
The Reign of Jehoahaz (Israel)	2 Ki. 13:1-9
The Reign of Jehoash (Israel)	2 Ki. 13:10-13
The Death of Elisha	2 Ki. 13:14-19
The Man Raised from the Dead	2 Ki. 13:20-21
Elisha Mentioned by Christ	Lk. 4:25-27

John the Baptist

<u>Event</u>	<u>MT</u>	<u>MK</u>	<u>LK</u>	<u>JN</u>
Birth of John Foretold			1:5-23	
Elizabeth Becomes Pregnant			1:24-25	
Mary Visits Elizabeth			1:39-45	
Birth of John			1:57-79	
John's Childhood & Pre-Ministry Life			1:80	
John's Role & Relationship Explained				1:6-18
Ministry of John the Baptist	3:1-12	1:2-8	3:1-17	
John Baptizes Jesus	3:13-17	1:9-11	3:21-22	
Officials Inquire of John				1:19-28
John's Testimony Concerning Jesus				1:29-34
Jesus' First Disciples from John's Disciples				1:35-42
John's Final Testimony				3:22-36
Jesus' Increase Over John				4:1-2
John Imprisoned by Herod	4:12-13	1:14-15	3:18-20	
John's Disciples Question Jesus	9:14-17	2:18-22	5:31-38	
The Delegation Sent to Jesus by John	11:2-6		7:18-23	
Jesus' Discourse on John	11:7-19		7:24-35	
John's Final Fate	14:3-12	6:14-29	9:7-9	
Reference to John's Discipleship			11:1	
Reference to John's Ministry			16:16-17	
Jesus' Return to the Jordan				10:40-42
Jesus' Question Concerning John	21:23-27	11:27-33	20:1-8	
The Parable of the Two Sons	21:28-32			
The Baptism of John	Acts 1:4-5			
John as a Qualification for Apostleship	Acts 1:21-22			
Peter's Testimony Concerning John's Ministry	Acts 10:36-37			
Peter's Reference at Cornelius' House	Acts 11:15-17			
Stephen's Testimony Concerning John	Acts 13:22-25			
Apollos' Relationship to John	Acts 18:24-28			
Disciples of John in Ephesus	Acts 19:1-7			