

The Spirit & Power of Elijah

By Bill Scheidler

Introduction - Read Malachi 3:1; 4:5-6; Luke 1:17

Malachi prophesied of two seasons of visitation.

A. The first coming of Christ that was to be prepared by the Lord's messenger who had the spirit and power of Elijah.

"Behold, I send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight. Behold, He is coming," says the LORD of hosts. Malachi 3:1

Speaking of John the Baptist, the angel told Zechariah,

*He will also go before Him in the **spirit and power of Elijah**, "to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." Luke 1:17*

B. The second coming of Christ that was to be prepared by a ministry or a people with the same Elijah anointing.

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.

Malachi 4:5-6

Elijah's distinction as a ministry was his anointing for the miraculous. This Elijah anointing is to help prepare the way of the Lord's second coming.

In these past few weeks we seem to be hearing God saying the same things.

1. It is time for the glorious church to arise.
2. It is time for power to be restored to the church.
3. It is a time of Jubilee for the church to recover what was lost and be restored to its full inheritance.

The last days are going to be a time when the people of God should possess the power of Elijah.

The power of Elijah included some pretty spectacular things.

Notice these eight power elements to the life of Elijah:

1. Authority over the elements – rain

And Elijah the Tishbite, of the inhabitants of Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the LORD God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, except at my word." I Kings 17:1

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 land for three years and six months. James 1:17

2. Divine protection in the face of opposition

God miraculously preserved Elijah from the persecution of Ahab and from those who sought his life (I Kgs. 17:3; 18:10).

3. Divine provision in a time of tribulation

God gave Elijah miracle bread, meat and water to sustain him in famine for three and one half years in the midst of trouble (I Kgs. 17:6, 9).

4. Authority over sickness and disease

No less than eight miracles are recorded in Elijah's ministry including raising a young child from the dead (I Kgs. 17:20-24).

5. Authority to stand before kings

He confronted Ahab for his idolatry (I Kgs. 18:17-18).

6. Authority to confront the false religious systems of the day

On Mt. Carmel he challenged the priests of Baal and humiliated them and their false gods (I Kgs. 18:19-40).

7. Authority to call fire down from heaven

He called fire down from heaven on the altar soaked with water (I Kgs. 18:37) and twice on the kings messenger who didn't "ask nicely" (II Kgs. 1:9-15).

8. Authority over death

Not only did Elijah raise someone from the dead, but Elijah escaped his own appointment with death (II Kgs. 2:11). He was one of two men who never died. There is a generation that will escape its appointment with death.

The Power of Elijah is thrilling, and we must contend for it in these days, but at the same time we must prepare ourselves with the Spirit of Elijah. The power is something that must come from God; the Spirit of Elijah is something that we must allow God to work into us.

Manifesting the power of Elijah is God's part. We cannot do God's part.

Cultivating the spirit of Elijah is our part. God will not do our part.

The last days must be a time when the church possesses the Spirit of Elijah.

A. This combination of Spirit and Power was seen in Elijah, John the Baptist (although John only seemed to manifest the spirit of Elijah) and Jesus and it must also be seen in the Church.

1. If we only have the spirit of Elijah (the fruit of the Spirit) without the power of Elijah it limits our ability to do what God wants us to do.
2. However, if we only have the power of Elijah (the gifts of the Spirit) without the spirit of Elijah it will make us dangerous like James and John, the Sons of Thunder (wanting to call down fire on the wrong things) (Luke 9:51-56).

Now it came to pass, when the time had come for Him to be received up, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem, and sent messengers before His face. And as they went, they entered a village of the Samaritans, to prepare for Him. But they did not receive Him, because His face was set for the journey to Jerusalem. And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, "Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did?" But He turned and rebuked them, and said, "You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save them." And they went to another village.

B. The Spirit of Elijah is characterized by seven things that are seen in Elijah, John the Baptist, Jesus and the Early Church.

1. The Spirit of Self-denial, Separation and Sacrifice

a. Denial of self and a separation from the world.

- Elijah had rough clothing and a strange diet (II Kgs. 1:7-8). A different dress and a different diet.
- John lived in the desert and had rough clothing and a strange diet (Mt. 3:4). A different dress and a different diet.
- Jesus had no home (Luke 9:58).
- The Early Church lived a separated life (Acts 4:34-35).

Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works. Matthew 16:24-27

Bringing in the harvest is going to cost us something. Are we willing to pay the price?

b. Willing to suffer for righteousness

- Elijah was persecuted by Ahab and Jezebel (I Kgs. 7:1-8; 19:1-10).
- John was put in prison and killed (Mark 1:14; Mt. 14:3-12).
- Jesus suffered many things (Mark 9:31; Luke 22:42).
- The Early Church experienced the same.

“So they departed for the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.” Acts 5:41

Paul said, “I am ready not only to be bound, but to die for the name of the Lord Jesus.” Act 21:13

Do not think that everyone is going to be thrilled when the church stands up. It is going to be opposed by established religion. It will be opposed by the devil. Great victories come out of great warfare!

2. The Spirit of Humility

This leaves no room for personal ambition or exaltation of self.

- Elijah said, “I am no better than my fathers” (I Kgs. 19:4).
- John the Baptist said, “He must increase but I must decrease” (John 3:30).
- Jesus clothed Himself in humility (Phil. 2:5-8).
- The Early Church

When Peter saw this, he said to them: “Men of Israel, why does this surprise you? Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk?” Acts 3:12(NIV)

Men, why are you doing this? We too are only men, human like you. We are bringing you good news, telling you to turn from these worthless things to the living God, who made heaven and earth and sea and everything in them.

Acts 14:15 (NIV)

Our goal is that men might see Jesus. The mistakes of past generations have had to do with taking glory unto oneself.

3. The Spirit of Compassion

What is the motivation behind wanting a miracle? Is it because you hurt with those who hurt? Is it to relieve suffering? It is for the sake of others?

- Elijah spread himself out on the boy who was dead (I Kgs. 17:17-23).
- John's ministry was to turn men's hearts to their children (Luke 1:17).
- Jesus was continually moved with compassion as He ministered to others (Mt. 14:14; 15:32; 20:34).

4. The Spirit of Obedience

- Elijah lived a life of obedience to the word of the Lord (I Kgs. 17:5). God gave instructions and he followed them.
- John followed the instructions given to him by the Lord. And his ministry was to turn the "disobedient to the wisdom of the just" (Luke 1:17).
- Jesus did only those things that the Father told Him to do (John 4:34; 5:19, 30; 6:38; 8:28; 12:49). This was the key to His success, absolute harmony with the Father.

Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner.

John 5:19

- Our command it still to teach people to observe all things that He has commanded (Mt. 28:20).

God must initiate. He is in charge. Gifts are used as the Spirit wills (I Cor. 12:11).

5. The Spirit of Prayer

Prayer keeps the pipeline of the Spirit open.

- Elijah knew how to pray for rain in the time of rain (Jam. 5:17; I Kgs. 18:42-45).
- John spent much of his early life waiting on God in the wilderness (Luke 3:2).
- Jesus waited on God in prayer and fasting before coming forth in the power of the Spirit (Luke 4:1-2, 14).
- Prayer was a vital part of the NT Church experience (Acts 2:42).

6. The Spirit of Faith

This is a spirit of faith that is able to believe God for the impossible.

- Elijah believed for things unseen (the miracle provision of food at the widow's house, I Kgs. 17:13-14).
- John was able to preach the coming of the Lord before any miracles were manifest in Jesus life.
- Jesus operated by the same faith that you and I must have.
- NT Church

A spirit of faith is a spirit of expectancy. Do you expect God to do something when you pray?

7. The Spirit of Fervency

a. This involves boldness

- Elijah had to be able to speak authoritatively to the highest ruler in the land (I Kgs. 17:1).
- John spoke boldly to the religious leaders of his day (Mt. 3:7-12).
- Jesus challenged the religious institutions of his day (Mt. 23).
- The NT Church prayed for and received the boldness of the Holy Ghost in their preaching (Acts 4:13, 29-33).

Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus." And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness. Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common. And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all.

b. This involves a passion for righteousness.

- Elijah zealously attacked the prophets of Baal (I Kgs. 18:40).
- John preached righteousness with a passion (Mt. 3:7).
- It was said of Jesus that zeal for the Lord and His house had eaten him up (John 2:17).

- Purity in the early Church was a key to both harvest and healing (Acts 5:11-16). After the cleansing of the church (temple) there is a new release of power in the church.

So great fear came upon all the church and upon all who heard these things. 12 And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people. And they were all with one accord in Solomon's Porch. 13 Yet none of the rest dared join them, but the people esteemed them highly. 14 And believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women, 15 so that they brought the sick out into the streets and laid them on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might fall on some of them. 16 Also a multitude gathered from the surrounding cities to Jerusalem, bringing sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all healed.

- c. **This involves a release of joy and rejoicing, and a passion for worship.**

Conclusion

Elijah was a man with a nature like ours (James 5:17). He had to face the same challenges of faith. But he was greatly used of God in his day. We want that same spirit to be upon us.