

Now, with the buildup of one that looks like Elijah (2 Kings 1:8; Mark 1:6) fulfilling the promise, apparently, of Elijah (Malachi 4) just after producing a prophecy from Malachi that precedes this very same promise of Elijah, one might wonder if there is something to this exchange of Jesus and the soon-to-be apostles reminding the reader of Elijah. Then, when we know that the last time somebody told another to “follow him” was Elijah, it really takes on an interesting twist.

What is it, again, that reminds the reader of Mark of Elijah the O.T. prophet when he reads concerning John the Baptist and Jesus? There are some wonderful things that are inherently Christ-like.

1. Elijah becomes a foreign missionary (to Sidon; 1 Kings 17:9)

Mark 7:24 From there He arose and went to the region of Tyre and Sidon. And He entered a house and wanted no one to know it, but He could not be hidden. 25 For a woman whose young daughter had an unclean spirit heard about Him, and she came and fell at His feet.

2. Elijah provides food for the hungry (1 Kings 17:12-16).

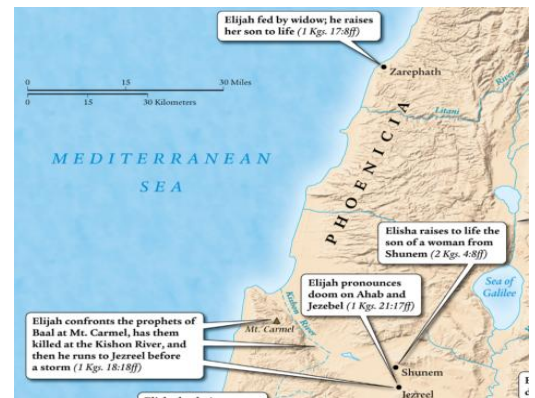
*Mark 8:2 “I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now continued with Me three days and have nothing to eat. 3 And if I send them away hungry to their own houses, **they will faint on the way**; for some of them have come from afar.”*

3. Elijah is a man of prayer (1 Kings 17:21; 1 Kings 18:36).

Mark 1:35 Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed.

4. Elijah gives life to the dead (1 Kings 17:17-24).

*Mark 6:35 While He was still speaking, some came from the ruler of the synagogue’s house who said, “Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?” 36 As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, He said to the ruler of the synagogue, “Do not be afraid; only believe.”...40 And they ridiculed Him. But when He had put them all outside, He took the father and the mother of the child, and those who were with Him, and entered where the child was lying. 41 Then He took the child by the hand, and said to her... “**Little girl, I say to you, arise.**” 42 Immediately the girl arose and walked...*



5. Elijah moves at the Spirit’s whim (1 Kings 18:12).

*Mark 1:11 Then a voice came from heaven, “You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” 12 Immediately **the Spirit drove Him** into the wilderness.*

6. Elijah tells the truth (1 Kings 18:18-19).

Mark 12:24 Jesus answered and said to them, “Are you not therefore mistaken, because you do not know the Scriptures nor the power of God?...26 You are therefore greatly mistaken.”

1 Kings 18:20 So Ahab sent for all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together How many? According to the previous verse, 450 (verse 22). **on Mount Carmel.**

7. Elijah called for a decision (1 Kings 18:21).

Mark 10:21 Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, "One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me."

18:28-30

28 So they cried aloud, and cut themselves, as was their custom, with knives and lances, until the blood gushed out on them. That's what pagans do: Pagans destroy their bodies. **29 And when midday was past, they prophesied until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice. But there was no voice; no one answered, no one paid attention.** Just as verse 27 says, so the sadness of empty idolatry is here emphasized. Does it not grip you that people are hoping that their gods answer them in the time of trouble? Does it not grip you that there are those who are spending money they don't have to buy things they don't need to impress people that they don't like?

I am so sorry that many of us have bowed to gods that will not answer in difficulty:

1. We have sought contentment in having more.
2. We have sought companionship in having somebody else.
3. We have sought consolation in leaving our troublesome times.
4. We have sought comfort in the arms of those we feel will have us.
5. We have sought completion in gods of hasty movements.
6. We have sought control in gods of threats, vendettas, and ultimatums.
7. We have sought candor in the gods of secret relationships.
8. We have sought compassion in the gods of fantasy and solitude.
9. We have sought credentials in the gods of busy-ness and so-called progress.
10. We have sought concern in the gods of much speaking and rumor.

...and these gods do not answer. They provide thirst and emptiness, and we all must be reminded that you can cut yourself and maim yourself, and find nothing.

And where does this come from? It comes from a mentality that "Sunday is an extension of Monday-Friday."

1. I try to get ahead on Monday, so I see how I can make connections for business...on Sunday.
2. I hang out with my friends on Tuesday, so I'll be at the church they attend...on Sunday.
3. I concoct vacation with people on Wednesday, and I consider them when we talk weekend plans...on Sunday.
4. I pay for services and dues on Thursday, so I expect certain things if I give...on Sunday.
5. I try different restaurants if I feel like it on Friday, so I feel like I have a right to try different stuff...on Sunday.
6. I curse and swear when I feel like it on Monday, so I sometimes struggle with how I communicate with my family...on Sunday.

And I can tell you that as Sandy Ridge Baptist Church, we will one day get to the point where we flip that on its head and begin our week instead of end our week...on Sunday.

1. I enjoy eternal truth on Sunday, so I fill my heart and mind with that same truth on Monday.
2. I love to sing about Christ my Savior on Sunday, so I listen to that same soul-stirring music on Tuesday.
3. I bless the Lord for the forgiveness freely given to me on Calvary on Sunday, so I offer that same forgiveness to my family on Wednesday.
4. I feel challenged and convicted about the Gospel's good news of reconciliation for rebels on Sunday, so I stay ready for reconciliation with those who have done me wrong on Thursday.
5. I find comfort in my God Who never leaves me or bids me leave Him on Sunday, so I never say harmful words to my spouse or children on Friday.

So there lays the bullock...bloody...soaked in blood. There lay the stones...disheveled and bloody. There stand the idolaters...beaten, bruised, and bloody—panting, tired....failures. And their "god": silent.

...450? What we have today, and we stare at one another and Elijah steps forward in the sheer silence of exhaustion and motions for the people to draw closer to him as he repairs and with his actions and with his prayers he seems to be saying..."Don't you think this is a tad ridiculous? Haven't you worn yourselves out for no apparent reason? Has your god satisfied you? Do you feel appreciated?"

And I want to ask you..."always looking over the fence on your phone or your computer toward your god of pornography...has your god provided lasting peace and answers and satisfaction?"

I want to ask some of you ladies with your strange fascination with "shades of grey movies" and "romance novels"—has your Hollywood god served you and brought you lasting contentment in the man in your life?"

I want to ask some of you teens with your sexting and rebellion and petting and touching and caressing your little boyfriend...has your god with a cute profile picture brought you feelings of meaning that will last into your senior years when you ain't so cute any longer?

I want to ask some of you hard working men and women with your two sets of words—one a cussing worldling and the other that which you hope your children never hear...how's that "god of acceptance among the hellions of the world" responding to you? When you go home at night and know you've lived a duplicit life...how does it feel as blood drips and your god stays silent?

You've gone after other gods...and one day...with your hands on your knees and your life spent and your body and soul torn to shreds...He's going to reach down and turn your heart toward Him.

30 Then Elijah said to all the people, "Come near to me." "Gather around and watch me do the work of the Lord!" So all the people came near to him. And he repaired the altar of the LORD This was not that altar used by the others. We worship nothing alike. There is a discernible difference in the way we worship our God. It is thoughtful and rational and logical and orderly and volitional and emotional. It is not erratic and thoughtless and destructive as the pagans. It is worship that we hope our children exercise long after we're buried and gone. **that was broken down.**

Here, then, is the expectation of the reader of Mark. Listen to this passage of Scripture:

*Malachi 4:5 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. 6 And he will turn **The hearts of the fathers to the children, And the hearts of the children to their fathers,** Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.*

What does this mean? The restoration of trust between generations to carry on the faith of Jehovah—allegiance to the Creator of Heaven and earth; a culture of multi-generational, life-changing allegiance to God.

18:39-40

39 Now when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, "The LORD, He is God! The LORD, He is God!" There is no longer a "split opinion" from the people. Their hearts have been turned. And if their hearts had been turned, then their descendants—several hundred years later—would turn their hearts to God? When? When they turned their hearts towards the actions of their repentant fathers (Malachi 4). When? When John the Baptist came to town. How did John the Baptist come to town? He required them to repent towards Jehovah God because His King was coming.

40 And Elijah said to them, "Seize the prophets of Baal! Do not let one of them escape!" So they seized them; and Elijah brought them down to the Brook Kishon and executed them there. And here is when Ahab's ministerial association became a "non prophet corporation."

What exactly is going on here? God shuts off the rain because of their love for the “Canannaite god of rain and fertility” named Baal (1 Kings 16:32, 17:1).¹ God “turns their hearts” toward Him (18:37), and what happens? The rain comes (18:41-45). From who? God. When? When the hearts were turned to God. In John the Baptist’s day, we have a prophecy that this would happen multigenerationally (Malachi 4:5-6; Luke 1:17-18).

Fathers and sons believing the Gospel together! Getting baptized together! Following the Rabbi together! Want to know what was happening when Peter and Andrew left their boats with their father? Want to know what happened when James and John left their boat with Zebedee? God was moulding fathers and sons to work together for the coming King. They were finding rain from the source.

*The prize You sought for so long is finally Yours
Your dark and gloom have hounded me
For so long now that I can't see
I surrender all those things You've taken from me
Came back a voice that did not take him for your heart
I only wanted You to seek them in my all.²*

I’m speaking to many of you who seek for all the benefits of heaven at the hands of strange gods.

¹NIV Archaeological Study Bible (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 514.

²http://www.lyricsfreak.com/m/michael+card/hound+of+heaven_20216390.html [accessed February 7, 2017].