

## Matthew 17:10-13 The Disciples' Question About Elijah

Introduction: The disciples in the text are Peter, James and John. As they come down from the mountain they asked Jesus a question about Elijah.

### I. The question and the reason the disciples asked, Verse 10.

- A. The question was, "Why do the scribes say that Elijah must come before the Messiah?"
  - 1. All of their lives they had heard the scribes teach this.
  - 2. They were familiar with the scripture which the scribes based this teaching on, Malachi 14:5-6.
- B. When the disciple saw Elijah there on the mountain taking with Jesus they thought he had come back to fulfill the prophecy in Malachi.
  - 1. In his own day Elijah was a mighty voice of God, calling a backslidden Israel to repentance.
  - 2. They expected him to go down the mountain with them and go to Jerusalem before them and once again call the nation of Israel to repentance.
- C. When Elijah disappeared, they were puzzled.

### II. The Lord's answer to their question, Verses 11-12.

- A. Jesus answered that the scribes were right; Elijah was to come before the Messiah, Verse 11.
- B. Jesus said that Elijah had already come, Verse 12.
  - 1. Just as Malachi said that he would.
  - 2. And he did what Malachi said he would.  
(He preached repentance and thus brought many in the nation to God.)
- C. But not everybody in Israel believed Elijah, Verse 12b.
  - 1. Jesus said they did not recognize him as the Elijah.
  - 2. They did with him "whatsoever they listed."  
(Whatever they wanted to; they killed him.)
- D. Jesus said that now the people of Israel would also abuse the Messiah, Verse 12b.

### III. The disciples coming to understand, Verse 13.

- A. They came to understand that Jesus was talking to them about John the Baptist as the promised Elijah.
  - 1. Elijah had not literally come back alive to preach.
  - 2. Rather John the Baptist had been a second Elijah.
  - 3. John was the one who preached repentance to the nation of Israel before the coming of Messiah.
- B. Perhaps the disciples finally remembered that earlier Jesus had said that John is the Elijah who would come, Matthew 11:11-14.
- C. Perhaps also they remembered that an angel had told Zacharias the same thing about John before John was born, Luke 1:17.
- D. The angel also clarified that John would not be Elijah in person but would come in the spirit and power of Elijah.

### IV. Another question about Elijah today.

- A. Some ask if Elijah is going to yet come back in person and be one of the two witnesses in Revelation 11:3.
- B. Others boldly assert that Elijah will be one of them.

- C. I really do not know, but I doubt it.
  - 1. I do not doubt that God could send Elijah back.
  - 2. I suspect that he will come merely in the spirit and power of Elijah as John did.

V. Some things that men need to understand.

- A. The need to understand that they are sinners before God and that they need to repent.
  - 1. Elijah preached repentance in his day.
  - 2. John the Baptist, the second Elijah, preached repentance in his day.
  - 3. It is just as important that men repent in our day, Luke 13:3.
- B. They need to understand that Jesus loved them and was willing to die for them.
  - 1. He knew that if He did not die for them they would not have a chance to be saved.
  - 2. But He willingly went down that mountain knowing that He would go to Jerusalem and die on the cross.
- C. You may have a thousand and one questions about the Bible, but the one thing you need to know above all else is that Jesus can save your soul.

Conclusion

- 1. I am going to call on you who are lost to trust in Jesus right now.
- 2. I am also calling upon those who are saved to seek the will of the Lord.

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