

Elijah And John The Baptist

by John W. Ritenbaugh

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Moses writes in Deuteronomy 18:15-18:

The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear, according to all you desired of the Lord your God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, "Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, nor let me see this great fire anymore, lest I die." And the Lord said to me: "What they have spoken is good. I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him."

All of us desire to know the future so we can be prepared for it. We want to be in control of our destinies and not at the mercy of events. However, some have this desire so strongly that they set themselves up as channels through which the future is revealed.

Such people have misled many. Deuteronomy 18, along with chapter 13, warns against such people. Whether they are called diviners, charmers, spiritists, or channelers, using methods like reading tea leaves, casting lots, or conducting séances, they are to be seriously and carefully avoided because there is no godly reality to their prognostications. Those seeking to know are being misguided, putting themselves at the mercy of lying demons, or at the very least, imaginative men and women.

At other times, simply following a church tradition regarding a prophecy can also mislead a person. This occurs because someone in the past, sincerely believing he understood a particular prophecy, began preaching his belief, and many in his audience then believed without the resources to prove the interpretation wrong. Due to frequent repetition, it came to be accepted as truth.

It is important for us to understand that prophets were not merely temporary and occasional expedients God would turn to. They played a vital and continuing role in Israel, especially in those times before the Word of God was widely distributed. This is why God makes provision for them within the law. He shows in many places that those He appoints to the prophetic office will always preach the keeping of the commandments of God as evidence of the Source of their inspiration. They will teach the conservation of past truths even as they break new doctrinal ground.

They both forth-tell—that is, proclaim a message truthfully, clearly, and authoritatively to those for whom it is intended—and they will on occasion, but not always, foretell—that is, predict events before they take place.

It is misleading to believe these verses in Deuteronomy 18 apply only to Christ. His is undoubtedly their ultimate application, but the promise and description applies to all true, God-ordained prophets. Notice some of the identifiers in these verses:

1. God established the foundational pattern for the prophetic office in Moses ("like me").

2. God will raise a prophet up from among the Israelitish people. Later biblical sources show he might be drawn and appointed from any of the tribes and from any occupation. In other words, he did not have to be a Levite.

3. He will perform the function of a mediator between God and men (verses 16-18).

4. He will stand apart from the system already installed. He will not be antagonistic to the system, but he may be very antagonistic to the sins of those within the system, especially the leadership.

5. God will directly appoint and separate him for his office. Thus, the thrust of his service as God's representative is direct and authoritative. By contrast, the priest's function flowed from man to God by means of sacrifice—far less direct and more appealing and pleading than demanding. The New Testament ministry combines elements of both, but parallels the prophet's function more than the priest's.

Simply and broadly, a prophet is one who is given a message by another of greater authority and speaks for him to those for whom the message is intended. Thus, Moses was God's prophet, but Aaron was Moses' prophet.

Without a doubt, when we hear the word "prophet," we immediately think of the Old Testament. This is a natural reaction because that is where most of them appear in the Bible. Our memory instantaneously brings forth names like Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and David—all great men. However, without a doubt, the two greatest prophets of all time appear in the New Testament: John the Baptist and Jesus Christ. John the Baptist is the last and greatest under the Old Covenant, and Jesus Christ is the first and greatest of the New.

One will quickly concede the name of Jesus Christ, but John the Baptist? Compared to the other great Old Testament prophets, the Bible says hardly anything about him! Yet, in the judgment of the greatest One of all, John the Baptist is greater!

Great, Distinctive, Respected

In Matthew 11:7-11, Jesus says of John the Baptist:

What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? But what did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Indeed, those who wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and more than a prophet. For this is he of whom it is written: "Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, who will prepare Your way before You." Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

Despite the greatness of the Old Testament prophets that filters through the record of their deeds, Jesus declares that none was greater than His cousin, John. In fact, several commentaries contend that Jesus' statement literally means that John was the greatest of all men, not just the greatest prophet! When we consider the greatness of the other prophets, we must marvel at how great this man was! Yet we know so little of him.

The Greek literally says He was *much* more than a prophet. Part of the reason for this is that John fulfilled the prophecy given in Malachi 3:1. No other prophet, aside from Jesus Christ, was ever the fulfillment of a distinct prophecy—and such an important prophecy on top of that! There may be a great deal more to John than we ever considered.

Luke 1:5-7, 15-17 records some features of John's birth:

There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah. His wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both well advanced in years. . . . [The angel said to Zacharias,] "For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. 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."

God miraculously caused John's conception and birth, even as He did Isaac's and Jesus'. Jesus' conception in a virgin woman without the involvement of a human male is an exception. Isaac and John's conceptions were normally produced except that Sarah and Elizabeth were beyond childbearing age.

John appears in each of the four gospels, and in each case, his story is subordinated to that of Jesus. This is as it should be, yet John was quite effective in what he did in preparing the way before the Christ. Even Josephus writes about him. Though Josephus pens only a vague few sentences about Christ, he devotes an intriguing, longer paragraph to John. By putting together what Josephus records with what the Bible provides, we get a picture of a vigorous man of God who was turning the small nation of Judea on its spiritual ear.

Judeans had no radio or television, but knowledge of him spread quickly by word of mouth. His ministry appears to have been short, perhaps about the same length as the three and a half years allotted to Jesus. Some authorities feel John's ministry may have only been one year long. If so, he must have been an electrifying speaker! However long he preached, most of it occurred before Christ began His ministry.

Mark 1:1-8 gives these descriptions:

The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in the Prophets: "Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, who will prepare Your way before You." "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make His paths straight.'" John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. And all the land of Judea, and those from Jerusalem, went out to him and were all baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel's hair and with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. And he preached, saying, "There comes One after me who is mightier than I, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to stoop down and loose. I indeed baptized you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

In his dress and diet, he was distinctive from what was normal for the times. His dress was durable and serviceable—what would normally be associated with the clothing of the poorest of the land. The same is true of his diet. His diet would be unusual for us but common for the poor folk of his time.

Regarding how he lived, Luke 1:80 adds, "So the child grew and became strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his manifestation to Israel." Mark 2:18 shows that he and his disciples lived an ascetic lifestyle. Taken together, these verses indicate that despite John's greatness, God kept him a poor man. People who live their entire lives in the desert do not usually become rich. His home, though undoubtedly not a hovel, was certainly nowhere near what we are familiar with in wealthy, modern Israel. From this we can learn that God does not owe us what we would like to have, but He provides what we need to serve His purpose for us.

We can be assured that since he had God's Spirit from birth, as Luke 1:15 states, he was in no way the almost wild man he is usually perceived as in movies. Paul says in II Timothy 1:7, "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind."

Also note that, though John was of the Aaronic line from both parents, no direct connection is ever made between him and the already installed system of Temple worship.

Mark 1:1 says, "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." The Bible positions John's ministry as the starting point of Christ's gospel, not because John literally preached the gospel, but apparently because of his preparatory work to Jesus preaching it. Verse 5 records, "And all the land of Judea, and those from Jerusalem went out to him and were all baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins." This reveals the impact of his ministry: All Judea, including folk from Jerusalem, went out to hear and be baptized by him, believing he was a prophet. While "all" does not mean every last person, it indicates a sizeable majority of the population was conversant about John and his message.

Mark 11:32 provides insight as to how the people perceived him: "[T]hey [the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders] feared the people, for all counted John to have been a prophet indeed." Clearly, the common people considered John a prophet, and indeed, he was. This also shows that the highest Jewish authorities were fully aware of his reputation as a prophet and feared it. We can begin to see that in many respects the magnitude of John's work was similar to Jesus'.

Mark 1:9-11 speaks of Jesus and John's first recorded contact:

It came to pass in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And immediately, coming from the water, He saw the heavens parting and the Spirit descending upon Him like a dove. Then a voice came from heaven, "You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

The "all" of verse 5 includes Jesus both as believing his message and being baptized of him. God at this time fully revealed to John who the Messiah was. However, verses 7-8 make it plain that, before baptizing Jesus, he already knew he was preceding someone. The prophecy given to his father Zacharias (Luke 1:76) had undoubtedly been communicated to him.

Despite the fact that he was no wild man, he was radically alienated from those who were part of the system God had installed during the time of David a thousand years earlier, reestablished under Hezekiah and Josiah, and then later still reinstated under Ezra following the Jews' return from Babylon.

Powerful Foes

As mentioned earlier, the prophets tended to operate outside the priestly system established by God. Nowhere is this more evident than in the lives of John, Jeremiah, and Amos. Jeremiah 15:17 records the prophet's complaint about his solitude: "I did not sit in the assembly of the mockers, nor did I rejoice; I sat alone because of Your hand, for You have filled me with indignation." Amos provides us with his experience when receiving God's calling: "Then Amos answered, and said to Amaziah: 'I was no prophet, nor was I a son of a prophet, but I was a herdsman and a tender of sycamore fruit. Then the Lord took me as I followed the flock, and the Lord said to me, "Go, prophesy to My people Israel"' (Amos 7:14-15).

John's separation from the system is clearly noticeable in Matthew 3:7-10:

But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said them, "Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not think to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones. And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."

Notice that his scathing attack is against both the Pharisees and Sadducees: The Pharisees had public power because they tended to be successful people in private life. In spite of this, they also had the admiration of the people. The Sadducees were largely from the priesthood and thus controlled the Temple. Consequently, they pretty much controlled the religious life of the people. Yet, because they also tended to be wealthy but haughty in disposition, the feelings of the people were prejudiced against them.

John courageously confronts the establishment's leadership. His was an unpopular message of judgment aimed directly at the powerful, and they did not take kindly to what he said. "And when all the people heard Him, even the tax collectors justified God, having been baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God for themselves, not having been baptized by him" (Luke 7:29-30).

Matthew 21:32 confirms John's rejection when Jesus speaks to the chief priests and elders at the Temple: "For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him; but tax collectors and harlots believed him; and when you saw it, you did not afterward relent and believe him." The powerful knew John was speaking about them, so in disdainful anger, they rejected him, while the publicans and harlots accepted his teaching.

His most powerful foe was Herod Antipas, the tetrarch of Galilee. Herod and John had an interesting relationship because Herod respected John, yet at the same time he feared what he perceived to be John's growing political power because of the prophet's popularity.

Josephus provides a bit of background the Bible lacks. Herod was married to the daughter of Aretas, king of Petra. However, before John became a popular figure, Herod divorced her and married his sister-in-law, Herodias. This caused a problem, as Herodias was already married to Herod's brother, Philip. At this point, a convergence takes place between John's rising influence with the people and Herod and Herodias' adulterous and incestuous marriage, which clearly violates the sexual purity laws in Leviticus 18.

Mark 6:17-20 explains:

For Herod himself had sent and laid hold of John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife; for he had married her. For John had said to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." Therefore Herodias held it against him and wanted to kill him, but she could not; for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just and holy man, and he protected him. And when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly.

Josephus writes that Herod took John prisoner because he feared the prophet's prominence, believing that rebellion against his rule was growing in response to John's preaching. Apparently, during John's captivity, he warned Herod that he and Herodias were in an adulterous relationship.

This made Herodias boil with anger. Verses 21-27 add:

Then an opportune day came when Herod on his birthday gave a feast for his nobles, the high officers, and the chief men of Galilee. And when Herodias' daughter herself came in and danced, and pleased Herod and those who sat with him, the king said to the girl, "Ask me whatever you want, and I will give it to you," He also swore to her, "Whatever you ask of me, I will give you, up to half my kingdom." So she went out and said to her mother, "What shall I ask?" And she said, "The head of John the Baptist!" Immediately she came in with haste to the king and asked, saying, "I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter." And the king was exceedingly sorry; yet, because of the oaths and because of those who sat with him, he did not want to refuse her. And immediately the king sent an executioner and commanded his head to be brought. And he went and beheaded him in prison.

Thus, when a convenient occasion presented itself, she took her revenge, getting away with John's murder because of Herod's foolish timidity. Subsequently, Aretas came against Herod in war, seeking revenge for Herod divorcing his daughter. Josephus writes that Aretas soundly defeated Herod's forces. The people of Judea concluded that Herod's defeat was God's punishment for taking John's life.

More on John's Greatness

Luke gives the most comprehensive account of John's birth. Luke 1:5-25 covers the announcement of John's birth to his father Zechariah, and verses 68-79 record Zechariah's hymn of praise to God for John. However, verses 76-79 comprise a prophecy devoted without qualification to John and his work:

And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Highest; for you will go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways, to give knowledge of salvation to His people by the

remission of their sins, through the tender mercy of our God, with which the Dayspring from on high has visited us; to give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.

From the very beginning, John and Jesus are allied in the salvation scheme. However, the Bible shows in interesting ways how John is subordinate to Jesus. For instance, in Luke 1:36, Mary and Elizabeth are shown to be related, probably cousins. Both women conceive in a miraculous way, but Mary's conception of Jesus by the Holy Spirit is far more miraculous. Then, when Elizabeth greets Mary (Luke 1:39-41), John, while still in her womb, leaps for joy in the presence of our Lord in His mother's womb. Finally, Luke 1:76 shows John to be only a prophet, but verses 32-35 show Jesus to be the Son of God and Heir to the throne of David.

The apostle John subordinates John the Baptist to Jesus in John 1:6-9:

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light which gives light to every man who comes into the world.

To appreciate this subordination of John, we must relate what is said here to the cultural environment in which these books were written. We must consider what the apostles wrote from the perspective of first-century Jews who witnessed John the Baptist's ministry.

In the twentieth century, we tend to think that John's ministry was little more than a blip on a radar screen. However, in terms of impact and importance, there was no true ministry greater than his except Jesus'. Thinking that John's ministry was insignificant flirts with diminishing what Jesus says about none born of a woman being greater than John.

In God's own estimation, recorded in Luke 1:15—the very first thing said about him by the angel speaking for God—John would be great! He was the prophesied messenger who fulfilled Isaiah 40:3, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God'" (see Matthew 3:3; Mark 1:3; Luke 1:76; 3:4; John 1:23). He also fulfilled Malachi 3:1, "Behold, I send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me" (see Matthew 11:10; Mark 1:2; Luke 1:76; 7:27).

His greatness lay:

1. in the office he filled;
2. in the subject he dealt with (repentance and true knowledge of the Messiah);
3. in his humility in calling no attention to himself and voluntarily receding into the background when the Messiah appeared (John 3:30), as well as his great zeal in performing his function;
4. in his personal attributes of character, above reproach in terms of sin;
5. in his self-denial in terms of his manner of life;

6. in his courage in the face of opposition;

7. in his lifelong service to God.

John was the crown of a long line of Old Testament prophets.

John Is *the* Elijah

The angel tells Zacharias before John's birth, "He will 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). "In the spirit and power of Elijah" indicates he resembled Elijah in doing a similar work of revealing the true God through a ministry devoted to preaching repentance and the certainty of things contained in the Scriptures regarding Christ. Perhaps it also includes working with a similar zeal, though he accomplished his function without miracles (John 10:41). Obviously, God does not measure a man's greatness by the miracles he does.

On two separate occasions, in Matthew 11:13-15 and again in Matthew 17:10-13, Jesus says John is the Elijah to come. Notice first Matthew 11:13-15: "For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if you are willing to receive it, he is Elijah who is to come. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!" Let him who has ears, listen! Jesus wants His audience to pay the utmost attention. To what? To the fact that John is the Elijah to come! He had fulfilled Malachi 4:5-6.

Notice, too, Jesus' introductory comment in verse 14, "And if you are willing to receive it. . . ." This strongly suggests that He was about to say something different than what His listeners expected. They supposed Elijah would appear in person! This explains why, when John was asked by the delegation from Jerusalem whether he was Elijah, he replied, "I am not" (John 1:21). Though he was Elijah in spirit and power, he was not the literal Elijah they were expecting. The Jews of Jesus' day were just as wrong about Elijah as are many today who are looking for another Elijah to appear before Jesus' second coming. Yet, Jesus gives no indication that anyone will follow John in that office.

Matthew 17:10-13 is the second occasion Jesus declared John as Elijah. Again, He gives no indication that He expected yet another Elijah to appear.

And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?" Jesus answered and said to them, "Indeed, Elijah truly is coming first and will restore all things. But I say to you that Elijah has come already, and they did not know him but did to him whatever they wished. Likewise the Son of Man is also about to suffer at their hands." Then the disciples understood that He spoke to them of John the Baptist.

This is Jesus' commentary on Malachi 4:5-6. He is neither indicating there will be another Elijah to come, nor contradicting what He said earlier in Matthew 11. In verse 11, He speaks in a future sense because that is how Malachi 4:5-6 is written. He also did it to emphasize that the scribes had correctly interpreted the prophecy in terms of Elijah preceding the arrival of the Messiah.

Jesus begins the next sentence of His reply with "but," an adversative conjunction indicating disagreement. *But* means "on the contrary," "conversely," or "however," and it is used here to

indicate an exception. Jesus makes it clear He did not agree with the scribes beyond the point that they had correctly taught Elijah must come first. He clarifies further by saying that the scribes did not recognize Elijah when he came and badly mistreated him. Matthew 17:13 clearly establishes that the disciples understood He meant that John was the Elijah of Malachi 4:5-6. In other words, Jesus is saying Malachi 4:5-6 has already occurred—the greatest of the Old Testament prophets already fulfilled it.

What about "restore all things"? Does it refer to doctrine? Not specifically. It is a very general statement. The Greek word means "to put back again," "to reorganize," "to set up," "to bring back," "to reclaim." It can refer to health, authority, or government—or, for that matter, to straightening out or bringing back true conceptions about the Messiah. What did the original Elijah do? He straightened out—restored—right conceptions about who God is because the Israelites had lost sight of Him.

Who says "restore all things?" Jesus does. This is mentioned in no other place in reference to John the Baptist or Elijah. The Bible's marginal references refer us to Luke 1:17 and Malachi 4:6 where nothing is said directly about either Elijah or John restoring all things. Remember, this is Jesus' commentary on what John did. Even as Elijah restored right conceptions about God in his day, John the Baptist restored right conceptions about the Messiah, God with us.

That is not all. John, the Elijah of Malachi 4:5-6, turned the hearts of the fathers to the children and the children to the fathers. Logic demands this refer to his preaching as having a positive impact upon family life. Turning hearts is a fruit, an effect, that happens alongside preparing a people to receive the Messiah.

Malachi 2:14-15 reveals that in Malachi's day the Jewish community was having serious marriage problems:

Yet you say, "For what reason?" Because the Lord has been witness between you and the wife of your youth, with whom you have dealt treacherously; yet she is your companion and your wife by covenant. But did He not make them one, having a remnant of the Spirit? And why one? He seeks godly offspring. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously with the wife of his youth.

Family problems were extant, and they continued among the Jews down to John's day.

Secondly, this cannot refer to "the Fathers" in terms of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob because they were dead, and when they died, their thoughts perished. Their hearts cannot turn to the children. What John restored in anticipation of the Messiah's coming were right conceptions about Him, and his preaching of repentance led to right relationships within human families and within the Family of God.

What is lacking in the Bible by God's express design is a detailed review of all John preached. We know only that he was very effective in what he did. We do not know all that he restored, but we can understand that he restored everything necessary for the Messiah to be recognized and received. To take "restore all things" beyond the scope of what was prophesied to be the extent of John's ministry is getting into the area of fanciful interpretations because Jesus confirms both that John was the Elijah to come and that his ministry was great. Who can argue with that?

What about the phrase in Malachi 4:5, "before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord"? This lures people into interpreting this as occurring just before Christ's second coming. However, the verse does not say "immediately before"—that is an assumption—it only says "before." The apostle John writes that the world was passing away in his day 2,000 years ago (I John 2:17)! In terms of time, verse 18 is even more incredible because John says that by biblical reckoning it was already the last *hour* (Romans 13:11-12; I Peter 4:7)! It is imperative we learn to consider time as God does rather than men.

The last days began with the arrival of Jesus Christ. John the Baptist, the prophesied Elijah, appeared as one epoch ended and the next began. He was the last and greatest of the Old Testament prophets, his preaching turned the hearts of the fathers to the children, and he prepared the way for the Messiah. He most certainly came before the great and dreadful day of the Lord.

Only one commentary delved into the possibility of a "second" Elijah. Even as it did so, it claimed the concept was weak since Jesus made His case so clearly. Matthew 16:18, often used to support this concept, does not say quite what we assume it does. In it, Jesus proclaims, "And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." Does this say the church will never die out? Yes, but only indirectly.

The translation of one word, "prevail," alters the focus of what Jesus says. It could also be rendered "stand." By choosing to translate the word as "prevail," it changes the church from being on the offensive against the kingdom of Satan, represented by the word "Hades," to being on the defensive, as continually under attack.

Jesus is promising that He would enable His church to be on the offensive and triumphant against Satan and death. Is the church constantly under attack? Of course it is, and there have been several times that, as far as we know, it has almost died out, but it has always emerged triumphant and continued on.

How was this accomplished? Jesus Christ would raise up a man to preach the gospel once again. Peter Waldo is one of the clearer examples. In the process, he became the one God used to call others into His truth, and around him, He formed a continuation of the church of God. The commentary remarked that, using this interpretation, even the first-century apostles, as they took the gospel into new areas, became weak types of Elijah—as did all the men God used down through the ages, like Peter Waldo.

Each of them, in type, had to reestablish things and preach repentance in preparation for the receiving of the gospel and the Messiah. But not a single one of them was the Elijah to come because that office and prophecy—by Jesus' own words—has already been fulfilled, and there is no higher authority.