

Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

When Does Elijah Come?

Scripture: Mark 9:9-13

Code: 41-44

So let's open the scriptures to Mark chapter 9 and we have a rather interesting portion of Scripture that falls to us today, as we systematically move through this historical account of the life of our Lord, written by John Mark. We find ourselves in chapter 9 at verses 9 through 13...Mark 9:9 through 13.

The distinguishing mark of the true church is the proclamation of the cross of Christ and His Resurrection. We understand that. The Apostle Paul said, "We preach Christ and Him crucified." The Bible says that if you want to be saved, you have to believe that Jesus is Lord, confess Him as Lord and believe in your heart God raised Him from the dead." It is the cross and the resurrection that we proclaim. Christ crucified, Christ risen. We love that truth, we celebrate that truth, we have sung about that truth in almost every song sung and heard this morning. In fact, if you go through the litany of Christian hymns, the greatest theme in all Christian hymns is the death and resurrection of Christ and His mighty work accomplished in salvation. We love that truth, we celebrate that truth, we rejoice in that truth, we fully embrace that truth.

But before the cross, the followers of Jesus found it to be an utterly repulsive, objectionable, unacceptable notion. When Jesus said to them, as recorded in chapter 8 of Mark and verse 31, that He would suffer many things, be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed and after three days rise again, immediately Peter carrying before the Lord the feelings of all His followers, stepped up and rebuked Jesus for such an unthinkable thought as dying. He then was rebuked by the Lord. He heard something that must have stunned him when the Lord looked at him and said, "Get behind Me, Satan, for you're not setting your mind on God's interest but man's." This was so hard for them to believe.

As we opened up chapter 9, we were there at the transfiguration. Moses and Elijah showed up in glorified forms and they're talking to the Lord. And they're talking about His death, His departure which is the theme of this whole section as both Mark and the Lord at the time conveys the importance of His death and resurrection. But Peter can't deal with that there either. And so all he can see is the glory and he comes up with the same motivation again and says, "Let's just build booths and make this permanent, let's settle the Kingdom right here and right now," which is another way of saying forget the suffering, forget the dying, let's just have it all now.

They had a terrible time accepting this. Again in chapter 9 verse 31, He is teaching His disciples and telling them the Son of Man is to be delivered into the hands of men and they will kill Him and when

He has been killed, He will rise three days later. They did not understand this statement and they were afraid to ask Him, they didn't want more detail because they were afraid that it might be true.

Later on in chapter 10 verse 33, He is saying, "We're going to Jerusalem, the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests, the scribes. They'll condemn Him to death, hand Him over to the Gentiles, mock Him, spit on Him, scourge Him, kill Him, and three days later He'll rise again." And you would think now that they have heard that, certainly the three times Mark records and probably many, many more times, almost daily in the intervening period, that they would have responded finally and said, "Tell us more." But instead, chapter 10 verse 35, James and John the two sons of Zebedee simply want the Lord to grant them a seat on His right and left hand in the glory. They had glory on the brain.

Glory was the dominating thought. And the transfiguration added to that because they saw Christ with a veil of His humanity pulled aside and they saw Him in transfigured Shekinah glory and they saw with Him Moses and Elijah. This even whetted their appetite and fed their already refined and fully collected eschatology, Messianic eschatology. They wanted glory, they wanted the Kingdom. There was no thought of the Messiah dying and then rising. That was alien to everything they had in their theology. They had a carefully crafted Messianic view. What they believed was what all the Jews believed, what the scribes believed, what the leaders of Israel believed, those who were students of Scripture and what they taught the people and therefore what the people came to believe, and that is that Messiah will come and when He comes it will be the day of the Lord experience, which is an Old Testament term for a judgment.

He will conquer His enemies. He will then bring salvation to the Jews. He will then elevate Israel to world supremacy. He will rule the world from Jerusalem. Having destroyed all of the enemies of Israel and all of the enemies of God, He will establish His Kingdom of righteousness, peace and knowledge which will fill the earth. Messiah will be worshiped and He will pour out divine blessing across the planet while crushing any rising evil.

The nature of life on earth would dramatically be altered and everything would be glorious and joyful and peaceful. They drew all that out of the Old Testament prophets. That's what they expected. And when they heard Jesus repeatedly say that He was going to suffer, be arrested, be mistreated and be killed, and then rise again, it was just not acceptable. It was a horrendous thought, a frightening thought.

It wasn't just that they loved Jesus and wanted to be with Him, it wasn't just that He has so endeared Himself to them personally that He became the most important one in their lives, it was that that was true and then all of their messianic expectations on top of that made the notion of death unthinkable. They did know, however, that things were not progressing toward their sort of realized eschatology. Things weren't going down the path that they would have expected them to go down at this point.

After all, the leaders of Israel were making plans to kill Him, and they knew that. The leaders of Israel rejected Him and rejected them, and they knew that. The people were curious but unconvinced and unconverted. In fact, some of the disciples said to Jesus, "Are only a few being saved?" because it was obvious that their group was a very small group.

But now in the midst of this disappointment, He throws in the fact that He's going to die and that is a huge stumbling block to them, as Paul calls it in 1 Corinthians chapter 1, and it's little wonder that Peter on behalf of all of them says, "No, no, no, Lord, that's not going to happen."

And then later at the transfiguration he says, "Let's just get the glory right here and stay here. Everything that is going on is contrary to what they expected. Our Lord mitigated their shock in a very powerful, supernatural way. He spoke of His coming glory in chapter 8 verse 38, He said, "I'll give you a preview to some of you, three of you, of My coming glory," and the transfiguration took place with Peter, James and John there and this was a preview of the coming glory. So He said the fact that I'm going to die and rise again doesn't mean there will be no glory. So they know now that He is the Son of God, they've made that confession. That confession has been affirmed by what they saw and what they heard on the Mount of Transfiguration. And they now know that there will be glory, but they still don't know the role that death and resurrection plays.

They needed to listen to Him because He would explain it, He would tell them. That's why at the Transfiguration, the Father came in the form of a cloud, verse 7 of chapter 9, and said, "This is My beloved Son, listen to Him." That is not a generic command, that is a specific command. Listen to what He has to say about His death because that was the topic of conversation between Jesus and Moses and Elijah. They were talking about His departure, or His death. Listen to Him. It's another way of saying, "Stop talking and start listening to what He says about the cross." The cross is critical. The cross is essential. There can be no Kingdom for anyone, no salvation for anyone, no heaven for anyone apart from the cross and the resurrection.

Now as we come to the text before us, verses 9 to 13, our Lord is still endeavoring to communicate to them the importance of His death. And He does it in a very unique way, as we will see. Let me read the text, verse 9. "As they were coming down from the mountain, He gave them orders not to relate to anyone what they had seen until the Son of Man had rose from the dead. They seized upon that statement, discussing with one another what rising from the dead meant. They asked Him, saying, 'Why is it that the scribes say that Elijah must come first?' And He said to them, 'Elijah does first come and restore all things.'

"And yet how is it written of the Son of Man that He will suffer many things and be treated with contempt? But I say to you, Elijah has indeed come and they did to him whatever they wished just as it is written of him... just as it is written of him."

Now you read that and it's just a little cryptic, isn't it? You think to yourself, "Something's missing in here, there's some jumps here and I can't see the link."

I'll try to help you with that. I just want you to see three features here, just kind of segment it out a little bit so we can work it a little more understandably. Number one is a prohibition that comes from Christ...a prohibition that comes from Christ, that's the first feature of this text. The second feature is prophecies that come from Scripture. And third, a preview that comes by way of John the Baptist.

First all of all the prohibition that comes from Christ. They're coming down the mountain. They have just experienced something that filled them with holy terror, they fell over in a sort of a semi-coma that knocked them flat to the ground, the way the Apostle Paul was knocked flat when he saw the glorified Christ, the way Ezekiel fell, the way Isaiah fell, the way John fell in Revelation 1, under the overwhelming presence of God, or the Lord. They had been stunned in holy terror. They had been picked up out of the dirt and dusted off by the compassion of the Lord who touched them and lifted them up. And now they're coming down trying to process what they just saw. They saw the Shekinah appear and the voice of God come out of it. They saw a glorified Moses and Elijah representing the Law and the Prophets, giving testimony to Christ as Messiah. They saw Christ in full blazing glory.

They heard Him talking about the cross. All of those things are swirling in their minds. They are perhaps, as they begin to come down, speechless for a little while, still in wonder, maybe feeling a little bit like Moses who after seeing the glory of God in Exodus came down with the glory on His face. They in some way are filled with the realization of the Shekinah that they had just seen. They walk now in the truth of their confession, having been solidified by what they saw and what they heard. He is the Son of God. He is the Christ.

They are swept up in the glory of the event and they probably are not talking about His death and His suffering. It is at that point as they were coming down the mountain, verse 9 says, He gave them orders. He gave them orders. He gives them a command, charges them. With a negative, this verb is a prohibition and it is a negative. He gave them a command and the command is a "not to" command, not to relate to anyone what they had seen until the Son of Man had rose from the dead.

I can't imagine how hard that would be. I don't know whether I could do that. There had been other commands to silence, chapter 5 verse 43, chapter 7 verse 36, chapter 8 verse 30. These are commands to silence. We talked about those. When Jesus did certain miracles and certain healings, He said, "Don't tell anybody." When Peter gave the confession on behalf of all of them, "You're the Christ, the Son of the living God," He warned them, "Don't tell anybody."

And now they come down the mountain having had this amazing experience, indescribable experience, something like being caught up in the third heaven, I'm sure. And they can't wait to talk

about this and they're told to say nothing...to say nothing...nothing at all until after the resurrection.

There would always be the temptation and there are people who think this is the message of Jesus, that Jesus is a healer. There would always be the temptation to present Jesus as God, as the Messiah, as the Lord, but those are incomplete. That's not the gospel. The gospel is that Jesus died and rose again. And He restrains those people who are His followers from giving an incomplete message. Don't say anything until you get the full message. It's only after His death and resurrection that the great commission comes, to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. It's only after that that the Spirit comes and they become witnesses to the glories of the gospel which the heart of the gospel, of course, is the cross and the resurrection, as indicated in Acts 1:8 and they spread that message around the world.

The message is not that Jesus is a healer. The message is not that Jesus is a political liberator, which is what the Jews thought. This would have added fuel to their fire. This would have poured gas on the fire. This would have fanned the flames of Jewish Messianic expectation for a liberator. Already thousands of Jews have been killed in insurrections and rebellions against Rome, trying to throw the Roman occupation. This is the wrong message because the important message is the cross and the resurrection. Not only do they not understand that that is the important message, they don't even like the idea of it happening.

If they went down the hill, they would be three witnesses that would verify testimony among the Jews because they knew Deuteronomy 19:15 said, "You confirm something in the mouth of two or three witnesses. It would have been a moving experience for them to spread around that they saw Christ glorified and Moses and Elijah there. It would have fanned the flames, as I said, of Messianic expectation and very likely could have resulted in what happened in John 6 verse 15 after Jesus fed the five thousand men, they would have forced Him to become a King, and again He might have had to escape out of their clutches and away from their misguided efforts.

So, don't say anything until the Son of Man rose from the dead. Why the experience then? Why have such an experience as the transfiguration if you can't tell about it? Well obviously to fix their faith, to seal their confession, "You're the Christ, the Son of the living God." They said it because it was revealed to them by the Father and now they have seen it and heard it. Never again will these men be shaken in their confidence as to who Jesus is. They are shaken by what happens to Him. They are shaken by the plan. But they never waver as to the person. No disappointment, no humiliation, no dishonor and no suffering on His part or theirs will ever make them doubt who Jesus is. They have seen His true glory.

So the "don't say anything" points to the absolute requirement that there is no message concerning Jesus without the cross and the resurrection. There is no gospel without the cross and the resurrection. It has to be the right person, Jesus, Messiah, God the Son, but it has to include the

cross and the resurrection. It is not the message of a healer and a compassionate man, it is not the message of a good teacher, a man of wisdom and knowledge, it not the message of a liberator, it is the message of the cross and the resurrection. Without it there is no salvation, there is no Kingdom, there is no hope, and there's no heaven for anyone.

Interestingly enough, as hard as it must have been, they obeyed. Luke 9:36 says, "And they kept silent and repeated to no one in those days any of the things they had seen." It must have been good that they could talk to each other about it. But they didn't talk to anyone else. Without the cross and without the resurrection, there is no good news, there is no salvation, there is no Kingdom.

Well they're captivated by this. This thought of His death and resurrection, He brings it up again on the way down. Don't say anything until the resurrection has already happened. Verse 10 says, "They seized upon that statement, discussing with one another what rising from the dead meant."

Now look. You should be able to understand that statement. What rising from the dead meant? They didn't mean, what did it mean to be dead and be alive again, they knew what that meant, they had seen resurrections. He had done them. Matthew 10:8, Matthew 11:5, Jesus says, "Part of My ministry is to raise the dead. You know I've raised the dead, you were there." That isn't the issue.

And they also understood a general resurrection was coming because they were students of the Old Testament. They knew, for example, that Job said, "Though worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God whom I shall see for myself and not another." Job spoke of his own resurrection.

They knew the psalmist said that God would not allow His Holy One to suffer decay, but would show Him the path of life. And in Daniel chapter 12, they were fully aware of the promise of God that there would be a resurrection of righteous people and a resurrection of unrighteous people at the end of the age. They aren't having a discussion about the nature of a resurrection. They're having a discussion about the resurrection of Jesus because they don't have that in their Messianic view. It's about His death and His rising that they are confused. And they are so provoked as to seize on this statement and it becomes that which they hold in their minds, trying to sort it out it becomes the subject of their thinking and consequently the topic of their conversation. And it must be imminent, it must be near. They didn't know how much, just a few months. But they do know that they can't say anything until after it happens so it's got to be soon because they can't hold it in very long. Certainly it's going to be in their lifetime because they're going to be able to speak about it.

This is all going to happen fast. So their assumption is, He's going to die, He's going to rise. And then comes the glory and then it's going to happen really fast. They're trying to fit the death and resurrection in to what they think is the imminence of the Kingdom. That's why in Acts 1 they say, "Are You at this time going to reveal the Kingdom? Is the Kingdom coming now?" You going to rise, You're going to die, You're going to rise, and then the glory.

So the prohibition is “Don’t say anything because the message has to be the cross and resurrection. Until you get that, until you see that, until you understand that, until that takes place, you don’t say anything, then everything would be understood.” The second feature in this conversation our Lord has with them regards the prophecies of Scripture...the prophecies of Scripture. They’re still bent on avoiding suffering. They don’t want to talk about the death of Messiah, although they can’t escape it. But they’re still confused and hoping for immediate glory. They assume that if He is going to die and rise, the glory is going to come right after that. And they have a question. Verse 11, “They asked Him, saying, ‘Why is it that the scribes...basically the experts in the Law, the experts in Scripture...say Elijah must come first?’” Now this comes from an accurate understanding of the Old Testament, very accurate understanding.

Teachers of the Old Testament taught this because it was written in the prophet Malachi, the prophet Malachi. Turn for a moment to Malachi, the last Old Testament book in our Bibles. And in verse 1 of chapter 3, “The Lord says, ‘Behold, I’m going to send My messenger and He’ll clear the way before Me.’” The Lord is going to come, that’s a great part of the message of Malachi, the Lord is going to come, but before He comes He’s going to send a messenger, a forerunner, a herald to clear the way.

What’s this about? In ancient near-eastern life, monarchs, kings and rulers, didn’t arrive in town unannounced, they not only arrived with an entourage, they were preceded by a herald. They were preceded by a forerunner, we often say. He was sent ahead to prepare everything for the arrival of the monarch, to straighten out things as Isaiah 40 verses 3 to 5 describes this, “A voice in the wilderness, prepare the way.” Make the crooked thing straight, flatten the hills, the King is coming.

So the forerunner, the herald would come to ready the people for the auspicious arrival of the monarch. So before the coming of Jesus, that’s what 3:1 is saying, before Messiah comes there will come His messenger who will be what Isaiah calls the voice of one crying in the wilderness.

Now that messenger is further identified at the very end of Malachi, look at chapter 4 verses 5 and 6. Here’s the identification of this messenger. “Behold, I’m 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 their children to their fathers so that I will not come and smite the land with a curse.”

Before the day of the Lord, before the final judgment of the ungodly on the face of the earth and the establishment of the Kingdom, before the Lord comes to do that, Elijah will come. Elijah will come to restore, to bring the message of repentance. The people will believe and they will escape the curse. That’s the prophecy. He will restore the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to the fathers. He will bring people together around the faithful belief in the true and living God.

Elijah...hum...they then expected Elijah to come. If Jesus is the Messiah, the question is, "Where is Elijah? Where is he?" You remember the prophet Elijah, well he's going to come back and they just took that at its face value. That belief gathered momentum through the years, and it was embellished with all kinds of traditional things that were going to be the duties of Elijah when he got here to make things ready for Messiah. They now know Jesus is Messiah. They know that. They have confessed it. It has been revealed to them internally and externally. They're sure of it. Where is Elijah?, they ask. They're just trying to fill in the blanks in their eschatology here. Shouldn't he have proceeded your arrival? Okay, you're the Messiah. Okay, we saw Your glory. Yes, You're going to come in Your glory as He said in verse 38 in chapter 8. Yes, we saw a preview of that glory, but where's Elijah? Where is he? And where's the restoration? Where's the revival?

That's a very good question. So He answers in verse 12, "He said to them, 'Elijah does first come and restore all things.'" Our Lord affirms the veracity of Scripture, the truthfulness of Scripture. The Word of God through Malachi is absolutely accurate. Before the great and terrible day of the Lord, a day of judgment as well as the day of salvation and the establishment of the Kingdom, Elijah does first come and he will come and he will restore all things. He will play a role of bringing the people to repentance. He will prepare them for the Messiah's arrival to establish His Kingdom.

Well that...that's the right affirmation of Scripture but that doesn't do anything to dispel their perplexity for the moment because they now know Jesus is the Messiah. They think the Kingdom is going to come very soon, if it is preceded by His death and resurrection. So where's Elijah? Where is he? But before the Lord answers the query, He says, "While we're talking about prophecy, let me give you another one," middle of verse 12...

"And yet, how is it written of the Son of Man that He will suffer many things and be treated with contempt?" What He does here is shift them. You're all caught up in a prophecy regarding Elijah and I want you to focus on prophecies concerning My suffering. Again, trying to get the to comprehend this most objectionable reality. "How is it written," and that's a direct reference to the Old Testament, often used by New Testament writers and by our Lord Himself, "that the Son of Man," the Messianic title from Daniel 7:13, "will suffer many things and be treated with contempt?"

So here they are concerned about Elijah's prophecy fitting in, and He moves them to a much weightier, much more important, much more immediate prophecy regarding His own contemptuous mistreatment and suffering. What's He referring to? Where is that written? Well it could include Psalm 22, details of His death are there. It could include Psalm 69, more details of His death are there. It could include Zachariah 12:10, more details of His death are there. But surely He has in mind that overwhelming fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. Listen to that chapter.

Verse 3, "He was despised and forsaken of men," looks forward to the Messiah. "A man of sorrows, acquainted with grief and like one from whom men hide their face, He was despised and we did not esteem Him. Surely our griefs He Himself bore and our sorrows He carried, yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted, but He was pierced through for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities. The chastening for our well being fell upon Him and by His scourging we are healed. Each of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way but the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him. He was oppressed. He was afflicted, yet He didn't open His mouth, like a lamb that is led to slaughter and like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, so He didn't open His mouth. By oppression and judgment He was taken away and as for His generation, who considered that He was cut off out of the land of the living for the transgression of My people to whom the stroke was due." The Lord was pleased to crush Him, putting him to grief if he would render himself as a guilt offering. Even His resurrection is there. "He will see His offspring. He will prolong His days and the good pleasure of the Lord will prosper in His hand." That's referring to the resurrection as well.

How can You be Messiah if Elijah hasn't come?...say the disciples. To which Jesus says, "How can I be Messiah if I don't suffer? That's the bigger question." How can You be Messiah when Elijah hasn't come? How can I be Messiah if I don't die in your place?

Two prophecies. The Elijah prophecy, that will come to pass...

that will come to pass before the day of the Lord, which hasn't happened yet. At the return of the Lord Jesus Christ, Malachi will be fulfilled. Some think that Elijah will be one of the two witnesses in Revelation 11:5 and 6. Elijah will come. Elijah must come. Scripture says it, but more importantly the Messiah will die, the Messiah must die because Scripture says it.

That leads us to a final thought, the preview provided by John the Baptist. Verse 13 is very interesting, I could spend a lot of time on it, but I won't. Verse 13, "But I say to you that Elijah has indeed come." What? What do you mean? "Elijah has indeed come and they did to him whatever they wished as it is written of him." That may seem a strange verse. If you just look at this verse and you don't pull the rest of the Scripture and what Jesus said about Elijah, together you could be confused by it. No hesitation, straight forward, Jesus says Elijah has indeed come.

He has? What do you mean he has? Turn to Luke 1...Luke 1:13, "An angel comes to Zacharias who is a priest, he's a very old man, his wife, Elizabeth, very old and they've never had a child. The angel says, 'You'll bear a son, you'll give him the name John..this is John the Baptist. You will have joy and gladness, many will rejoice at his birth.'" And then it describes him. "He'll be great in the sight of the Lord. He will drink no wine or liquor. He will be filled with the Holy Spirit while yet in his mother's womb. He will turn many of the sons of Israel back to the Lord their God." That's what John did, he had a ministry of repentance, didn't he? "It is he who will go as the forerunner before Him in the spirit

and power of Elijah.”

Oh, now we get it. It's not literal Elijah. In John 1:21 when it was suggested that John the Baptist was Elijah, he says, “No, I'm not Elijah.” But he came in the spirit and power of Elijah. He is a prophet of great power, like Elijah. He is a divinely inspired prophet like Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers back to the children, and that's a direct quote from Malachi. And the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

John then becomes a preview of the final Elijah. There will be the coming of Elijah before the Lord comes to judge and establish the Kingdom, but when he came the first time, there was a forerunner who came in the spirit and power of Elijah to prepare a people for the arrival of Messiah. He was that Elijah-like prophet. Matthew chapter 17, a very important that's a parallel passage to the one that we're looking at in Mark, and in verse 12, “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.” He is that Elijah-like prophet that came. They didn't recognize him. They did to him whatever they wished, which, of course, as you know was to cut his head off. So also the Son of Man is going to suffer at their hands, verse 13, “Then the disciples understood that he had spoken to them about John the Baptist.” He is not the actual Elijah but, believe me, from his youth his father must have told him a thousand times about the angelic visit, that he would come in the spirit and power of Elijah as the forerunner to the Messiah and prepare people for His arrival.

In Matthew 11, just to complete the texts that relate to this, Jesus says in verse 11 of chapter 11 of Matthew, “I say you that among those born of women, there has not risen a greater than John the Baptist, yet the one who is least in the Kingdom of heaven is greater than he.” And then he says in verse 14, “If you're willing to accept it, or willing to accept the truth, John himself is Elijah who was to come.”

Hypothetically if you had accepted him and accepted his message and accepted the Messiah, he would have fulfilled that Elijah prophecy. But that couldn't happen. That's pure hypothesis because if they had accepted John and accepted Jesus and there was no cross, there would be no salvation. But what our Lord is saying there is, he is not the final coming of Elijah. He only could have been if you had accepted. That's not the plan. So he's a preview. He's Elijah-like. He's in the spirit and power of Elijah.

Now you go back to Mark. “Elijah indeed has come in the form of John the Baptist.” And as the Old Testament says in 1 Kings 19:1 to 10, “As it is written of him,” meaning Elijah, “they did to him whatever they wished.” This is an interesting statement. They did to John whatever they wished and they did to John what they wished to do to Elijah. Nineteen... 1 Kings 19:1 to 10, they wanted to kill him, they wanted to kill him, they wanted to kill him, just as they wanted to kill Elijah, but God took him to heaven in a chariot. They wanted to kill John and succeeded and they killed John. And as we read

from Matthew, they'll also kill Me.

So our Lord is saying Elijah will come before the Second Coming. John was a preview. And even the way they treated John was consistent with the way they treated Elijah. So he comes in the spirit and power of Elijah and is treated the way Elijah was treated. And our Lord in this is clarifying the true Messianic plan. This is the way it's going to be. The forerunner preview version comes, John the Baptist, is rejected, killed. The Messiah rejected, killed, rises in the future. The prophesied Elijah comes and the Kingdom is established.

What we need to learn from this is the tremendous consistency of Scripture's pattern. The death and resurrection of Christ, the coming glory, are all assured realities affirmed by the Old Testament, even as to the individual players, affirmed by our Lord Jesus, affirmed by the presence of the glorified saints... Moses and Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration, affirmed by the Father Himself, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased," the full statement, "Listen to Him as He tells you about His cross." Let it be said clearly then, beloved, there's no glory without the cross and the resurrection. There's no gospel without the cross and the resurrection. They needed to understand it and they needed to know it all fit with the prophecies. That's why we're here today.

On the other side, we love the cross, don't we? We celebrate the cross. We have in the front where you can see it as you worship the Lord, a huge cross. Our joy is in the cross because we now know on this side of it, its centrality for our salvation. Father, we thank You for what You've done in the cross of Christ. Amen.

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