

IF YOU ARE WILLING TO RECEIVE AND ACCEPT IT

YAHSHUA affirmed to the disciples that if they were willing to receive and accept it, John was Elijah. After the wonderful experience the three disciples had at the Mount of Transfiguration, on their way down they asked YAHSHUA an interesting question: Why do the Scribes say that it is necessary for Elijah to come first? YAHSHUA then answered: Elijah, it is true, does come first to restore all things and set them to rights. And how is it written of the Son of Man that He will suffer many things and be utterly despised and be treated with contempt and rejected? But I tell you that Elijah has already come, and (people) did to him whatever they desired, as it is written of him (Mark 9:11-13). What did He mean by that? Was John the incarnated Elijah? It is natural for us to think that for lack of scriptural knowledge related to the subject. But as it is, Isaiah specifically prophesized about John saying: Behold, I send my **messenger** before your face, **who will make ready your way. A voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare the way of the Lord, make His beaten tracks straight** (Mark 1:2-3) prophecy from the Isaiah chapter 40:3).

We read in Mark 1: 2-8 the fulfilment of this prophecy, exactly. John, according to Mark, appeared in the wilderness preaching a baptism [obligating] repentance in order to obtain forgiveness of and release from sins. People kept going out to him all the country of Judea and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, as they were confessing their sins. He wore clothing woven of camel's hair and had a leather girdle around his loins and ate locusts and wild honey. And he preached, saying, After me comes he Who is stronger than I, the strap of Whose sandals I am not worthy or fit to stoop down and unloose. I have baptized you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit (Mark 1: 2-8). No deceit was found in the life of John. He came as the messenger with the goal to prepare the way for the Messiah. He was the voice of repentance to change the hearts of people to receive Messiah. Although the nation did not receive the message, a few of them did. YAHSHUA praised John and confirmed the prophet Isaiah's words by saying, What did you go out in the wilderness to see? A reed swayed by the wind? What did you go out to see then? A man clothed in soft garments? Behold, those who wear soft clothing are in the houses of kings. But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and one superior to a prophet. This is the one of whom it is written, Behold, I send My messenger ahead of You, who shall make ready Your way before You (Matt. 11: 9-10).

John stood firmly in fulfilling that which was prophesized of him. Before his birth the angel Gabriel announced to his father Zachariah that he was to be great and distinguished in the sight of the Lord. He must drink no wine nor strong drink, and he will be filled with and controlled by the Holy Spirit even in and from his mother's womb. And (he also said), he will turn back and cause to return many of the sons of Israel to the Lord their God. And he will go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn back the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient and incredulous and unpersuadable to the wisdom of the upright- in order to make ready for the Lord a people prepared (Luke 1: 15-17). So do we have here in this passage the understanding of what YAHSHUA was referring to about John. He did not equate the reference

of the “spirit and power of Elijah” to John to mean that he was the incarnation of Elijah. No such thing. The Prophet Elijah was a great prophet of God, who had a relationship with God; He lived a supernatural life, noticed by the miracles he performed. He showed to have zeal for the true God when he challenged the prophets of Baal and had all of them killed, 450 in all and 400 prophets of Asherah (I Kings 18). He challenged kings who were idolatrous; wicked king Ahab and his wife did not escape him. His ministry was marked by the beginning of the end of Baal worship. According to the word of the Lord, he prophesized drought in the land of Israel; he was supernaturally provided for during those years of drought. He raised the dead to life (I Kings 17) and lastly he was translated to heaven. He did not see death. His power was transferred to the prophet Elisha on his way up to heaven when he threw his mantle out to him. James says this of him: Elijah was a human being with a nature such as we have and he prayed earnestly for it not to rain, and no rain fell on the earth for three years and six months. And [then] he prayed again and the heavens supplied rain and the land produced its crops (James 5: 17-18).

John the Baptist preached repentance for baptism. He testified to be a voice in the wilderness, calling all to repentance to be baptized. When asked who he was, he testified that he was not the Christ, that he was not Elijah, that he was not the Prophet. Then they asked why was he baptizing, if he was not the Christ, nor Elijah nor the Prophet, he said I baptize in water. Among you there stands One Whom you do not recognize and with whom you are not acquainted and of Whom you know nothing. It is He who coming after me, is preferred before me, the string of whose sandal I am not worthy to unloose (John 1:19-26). He magnified YAHSHUA and revealed Him to have come from heaven by saying, He must increase, but I must decrease; He Who comes from above is above all; he who comes from the earth belongs to earth, and talks the language of the earth. He Who comes from heaven is above all others. Whoever receives His testimony has set his seal of approval to this: God is true (John 3:30,33). John, like Elijah sternly rebuked the religious leaders of his days. When he confronted Herod on the account of his brother’s wife to whom John said it was not lawful for him to have her He was arrested and put in prison (Matt. 14). While he baptized many who had come to him confessing their sins, he reprimanded the Sadducees and Pharisees who had come for baptism without repentance and confession of their sin. When seeing how many of them had come, he said to them, You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee and escape from the wrath and indignation that is coming? Bring forth fruit that is consistent with repentance and do not presume to say to yourselves, We have Abraham for our forefather; for I tell you, God is able to raise up descendants for Abraham from these stones! And already the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire (Matt. 3: 6-10). These were the terms YAHSHUA directed to Israel’s religious leaders later. The ministries of John and YAHSHUA existed in harmony of message and purpose. John was the messenger who was to come ahead of Him to prepare the hearts of men to receive the Messiah, YAHSHUA. His and YAHSHUA’S ministries lasted three and a half years each, fulfilling the prophecy of the seventy weeks of years or 490 years of Daniel’s prophecy in its period of the 69th weeks of years. There is one more week of years which will take place in the life of the Jewish nation when God will purge the sins of the nation; when transgression and sin will end and expiation and reconciliation for sin will happen to bring an everlasting righteousness (Dan. 9:24).

John opened his ministry by saying, "Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand;" and since there would not be a kingdom without a king, he was referring YAHSHUA to be the king. The words of YAHSHUA to the disciples, If you are willing to receive and accept it, John is Elijah who was to come are understood in the character of their ministry. While John heralded kingdom did not happen, Elijah will herald the kingdom that will take place after "the great dreadful day of the Lord." (Malachi 4:5).

If you are willing and accept it, I say, YAHSHUA is the Messiah Who came and Who will return to earth. Salvation exists only through Him. Accept Him today!

(Matthew 11:14-15; Mark 9: 11-13)