

The Forgotten Jesus Podcast

S4E13

John The Baptist As The New Elijah - (Matthew 3:1-6)

Description – Today we'll look at the unique comparisons between John The Baptist and Elijah The Prophet.

Today we're looking at how the religious leaders investigated John

Not only is John preaching a distinct message with a distinct style of dress, even the locations he preached from had history and background to the people of Israel

John actually sets up his ministry outpost in three different spots:

1. **Dependence on God** - This first place was connecting John & Elijah and how they depended on the Lord for provision of his food and daily needs:
 - a. John 1:28 - ²⁸ All this happened in Bethany across the Jordan, where John was baptizing.
 - b. 1 Kings 17:5-7 - ⁵ So he proceeded to do what the LORD commanded. Elijah left and lived at the Wadi Cherith where it enters the Jordan. ⁶ The ravens kept bringing him bread and meat in the morning and in the evening, and he would drink from the wadi. ⁷ After a while, the wadi dried up because there had been no rain in the land.

2. **Decrease** - This second location John was in was the same place where Elijah passed on his calling and ministry to Elisha, roughly 8 miles south of Beersheba. Just as Elijah would pass on his ministry to Elisha, so John will pass on his ministry to Jesus. Aenon near Salim is where Elijah grew up. John said, "I must decrease, but he (Jesus) must Increase" (John 3:30). Both John & Elijah would decrease in ministry to hand it off.
 - a. John 3:23-24 - ²³ John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was plenty of water there. People were coming and being baptized, ²⁴ since John had not yet been thrown into prison.
 - b. 1 Kings 19:19 - ¹⁹ Elijah left there and found Elisha son of Shaphat as he was plowing. Twelve teams of oxen were in front of him, and he was with the twelfth team. Elijah walked by him and threw his mantle over him.

Question:

Could this have come from the source document for the gospels, Quelle or "Q," (Matthew, Mark, & Luke). (We discussed this back in S2 E14 - "How are the Gospels so similar to each other?")

Probably not, because the Jews knew the OT so well that they would have known exactly the history and "chapter / verse" of the places that John was baptizing in. That and the Quelle theory relates more to the writing of the Gospels of Matthew, Mark & Luke.

3. **Departure** - John and Elijah both in the wilderness of Judea. John & Elijah were building a ministry to hand off to someone else. (Elisha & Jesus). Elijah would depart and be taken to heaven in the whirlwind. John would be imprisoned by Herod and eventually lay down his life.

- a. Matthew 3:1-2, 7,10 - In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea ² and saying, "Repent, because the kingdom of heaven has come near!" ⁷ When he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? ¹⁰ The ax is already at the root of the trees. Therefore, every tree that doesn't produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.
- b. 2 Kings 2:11 - ¹¹ As they continued walking and talking, a chariot of fire with horses of fire suddenly appeared and separated the two of them. Then Elijah went up into heaven in the whirlwind.
- c. 1 Kings 19:20-21 - ²⁰ Elisha left the oxen, ran to follow Elijah, and said, "Please let me kiss my father and mother, and then I will follow you." "Go on back," he replied, "for what have I done to you?" ²¹ So he turned back from following him, took the team of oxen, and slaughtered them. With the oxen's wooden yoke and plow, he cooked the meat and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he left, followed Elijah, and served him.
- d. Luke 9:61-62 - ⁶¹ Another said, "I will follow you, Lord, but first let me go and say good-bye to those at my house." ⁶² But Jesus said to him, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."

Ultimately, we all want to live a life of significance and living a life that honors the Lord.