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## 唤醒沉睡的信徒

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奇妙真相：研究表明，人如果超过 20 个小时不睡觉，其精神状态就相当于血液酒精浓度达 0.08 的状况。在美国，血液酒精浓度若达到该数值，则被视为酒驾。我国每年疲劳驾驶酿成的车祸超过十万起，死亡人数达 1550 人，受伤逾 71000 人，直接经济损失 125 亿美元。

在世界各地，都流传有类似“沉睡英雄”的传奇故事：安眠于群山之下的骑士，身穿耀眼铠甲，静候最佳时机，一举歼灭宿敌，拯救了他们的王国。在故事中，牧羊人常常会在深深的洞穴中有意思不到的“收获”——发现了正在打盹儿的、虚构的英雄人物。

一次，牧羊人发现一名伟大的战士正在睡觉，便将其唤醒。战士问：“乌鸦还在山顶上空盘旋吗？”

“是的。”牧人回答。

“走开，我的时间还没到！”英雄气愤愤地说。

上帝的子民，我们的教会——你已蒙召，成为末后的英雄。上帝将特殊的信息托付于我们，以便去预备世人，迎接最后的战斗，并进入上帝荣美的国度。然而，在这紧要关头，许多“战士”的灵性却已进入了昏睡状态。他们睡眼惺忪、含糊不清地说：“我的时间还没到。”

然而，有两位鼓舞人心的圣经人物，或许可以将我们从昏睡中唤醒。他们宣称“时候将到，如今就是了！”这两位英雄就是以利亚和施洗约翰——我们效学的榜样。

他们都生活在灵性严重滑坡的时代，也皆蒙上帝使用，去唤醒并预备人迎接那行将临到的大事。通过研究先贤们在灵性黑暗时代所树立的榜样，你会发现，他们有许多相似之处，而他们的共同特点，将有助于引导我们今日的生活，并唤醒我们，成为名副其实的上帝的“战士”。

### 玛拉基的预言

旧约圣经最后一卷书结尾处的两节经文，是一则震撼人心的预言。但却常常被人误解：

“看哪，耶和華大而可畏之日未到以前，我必差遣先知以利亞到你們那里去。他必使父親的心轉向兒女，女兒的心轉向父親，免得我來咒詛遍地。”（瑪 4:5,6）

在耶穌時代，很多人認為以利亞會從天而降，再次居住在地球上；或許會重新出生，成為一個新人。耶穌曾問祂的門徒：“‘眾人說我是誰？’”他們說：“有人說是施洗的約翰，有人說是以利亞，還有人說是古時的一個先知又活了。”（路 9:18,19）

猶太人期待以利亞早日歸來，宣告彌賽亞的降臨。然而，瑪拉基的預言並非暗示舊約的那先知要回來，乃是預示以利亞復興與改革的靈即將回歸。

論到施洗約翰的出生，天使加百列對撒加利亞說：“他必有**以利亞的心志能力**，行在主的在前面，叫為父的心轉向兒女，叫悖逆的人轉從義人的智慧，又為主預備合用的百姓。”（路 1:17）可見，施洗約翰將應驗瑪拉基的預言。

約翰要“行在主的在前面”，履行復興與改革的特殊使命。後來，耶穌證實：“眾先知和律法說預言，到約翰為止。你們若肯領受，**這人就是那應當來的以利亞。**”（太 11:13,14）

然而，瑪拉基的預言並沒有止於施洗約翰。請注意：“看哪，**耶和華大而可畏之日未到以前，我必差遣先知以利亞到你們那里去。**”（瑪 4:5）這“大而可畏之日”——也被稱為“忿怒的大日”，（啟 6:17）喻指基督復臨。這一預言最終會在基督復臨前夕應驗。

## 以利亞的心志能力

为了更好地理解这则预言，我们不妨回到以利亞的時代。第一個具備“以利亞心志能力”的人並非施洗約翰，而是以利亞的僕人以利沙。當時，上帝即將接以利亞升天，以利沙請求以利亞的靈“加倍地感動”他。（王下 2:9,10）

以利沙目睹以利亞被接升天，與此同時，他所祈求的也如願了：“住耶利亞的先知門徒從對面看見他，就說：‘感動以利亞的靈感動以利沙了。’”（王下 2:15）

以利亞的心志能力有何果效？“他必使父親的心轉向兒女，女兒的心轉向父親，免得我來咒詛遍地。”（瑪 4:6）真實的復興必定會改變我們的家庭，惠及我們的社區。以利亞的信息能革新家人的內心，恢復神聖的關係。

請注意加百列如何強調這一預言：“他要使許多以色列人回轉，歸於主他們的上帝。”（路 1:16,17）以利亞的信息不僅使家庭和睦；還能使地上違命的兒女與天父和好。

通過學習，我們發現這兩個人物有許多相似之處。更令人興奮的是，他們的使命對我們具有特別的教訓。上帝末後的兒女若要奮興，就該效法這二位古聖英雄人物。我們將步他們的後塵，從事相同的工作。

## 英勇無畏

以利亞和施洗約翰都曾無所畏懼地站在國王面前，放膽宣告所托付的信息。亞哈王指着以利亞說：“使以色列遭災的就是你。”（王上 18:17）以利亞置生死於不顧，勇敢地回答說：“使以色列遭災的不是我，乃是你和你的父家，因為你們離棄耶和華的誡命，去隨從巴力。”（王上 18:18）

施洗约翰拥有相同的勇气，他直指希律王不检点的生活：“你娶你兄弟的妻子是不合理的。”（可 6:18）然而，这一大无畏的谴责令他丢掉了性命。

耶稣曾预言，有朝一日，祂的门徒要像这二位先贤一样，直指罪名而无所忌惮。“但你们要谨慎，因为人要把你们交给公会，并且你们在会堂里要受鞭打，又为我的缘故站在诸侯与君王面前，对他们作见证。”（可 13:9）

倘若我们所传讲的信息旨在取悦听众，便终不能掀起轰轰烈烈的复兴。（见加 1:10）应当无所畏惧地宣扬清晰而坚定的真理，抵挡任何形式的罪恶，唤醒人的良知，并为洗心革面、脱胎换骨的改革铺平道路。

然而，这样的工作绝不会一帆风顺。保罗预言：“时候要到，人必厌烦纯正的道理，耳朵发痒，就随从自己的情欲，增添好些师傅，并且掩耳不听真道，偏向荒渺的言语。”（提后 4:3,4）

## 纯洁简朴

在生活方式上，以利亚与施洗约翰也有许多颇为相似之处。他们都在旷野长大，而非皇宫；（王上 17:1-5；约 1:23）二人的饮食简单；（王上 17:11；可 1:6）他们清醒的大脑、健壮的体魄均得益于艰苦朴素的生活，以便从事上帝所托付的、特别的工作。

同样，末后的教会要做最好的准备，效学以利亚的生活方式，从而分享他的信息。饮食与生活习惯会直接影响分辨并传扬真理的能力。事实上，我们抵挡试探的力量也往往与饮食习惯有关。

经上说以利亚和施洗约翰着装朴素。以利亚“身穿毛衣，腰束皮带”。（王下 1:8）同样，“约翰穿骆驼毛的衣服，腰束皮带。”（可 1:6）

朴素的着装是这两位改革者的标志之一，它也将成为现时代继续推动复兴之人的印记。如今，人们痴迷于时尚。大多数服装设计师在设法突出人性感的一面。人们很在意他人对自己的看法，却不看重在上帝眼中的价值。基督徒端庄得体的着装便是对世界无声的、爱的谴责。（见弗 4:24；提前 2:9）

二位先贤都体现了谦卑的精神。以利亚曾像仆人一样，毫不犹豫地国王的马车前面奔跑开路。施洗约翰曾说：“那在我以后来的，能力比我更大，我就是给祂提鞋也不配。”（太 3:11）披着虔诚外衣的、傲慢的工人无法从事改革的工作。改革源于一颗与上帝同行的“谦卑的心”。（弥 6:8）

## “使万民作我的门徒”

我们或许认为以利亚和施洗约翰均属于独行侠的类型，而事实绝非如此。以利亚拜访先知学校，并培养以利沙担任自己的接班人。（见王下 2:3-7）施洗约翰也训练门徒。（见约 1:35）他们都将属灵的教训和实际的工作与服务相结合。

末后，上帝在地上的大工，不会交由几个著名的领袖来完成。将末后信息传遍地极的工作并没有交在几个特选之人的手中。许多门徒和平信徒要受训，宣扬永远的福音。上帝要使用被圣灵充满之人——不论他们的社会地位如何——与人分享圣经。以利亚的信息包括训练与传扬、学习与服务。

有趣的是，以利亚和施洗约翰都与约旦河有关。以利亚对以利沙说，“耶和華差遣我往约旦河去，你可以在这里等候。”（王下 2:6）当然，施洗约翰大部分的工作都在约旦河边。“那时，耶路撒冷和犹太全地，并约旦河一带地方的人，都出去到约翰那里，承认他们的罪，在约旦河里受他的洗。”（太 3:5,6）

出埃及之后，以色列人奇迹般地穿越了旷野，过了约旦河，进入了应许之地。约旦河象征着旧生活到新生活的一个过渡，正如洗礼。

当施洗约翰传扬复兴的信息时，众人纷纷悔罪，认罪。这是进入水中——代表向自我“死去”——之前的一个必要步骤。

同样，在末后，当我们向世界宣扬复兴的信息时，众人将感受到沉重的负罪感压在心头，于是纷纷转向基督，离弃旧有的生活方式。正如早期教会一样，圣灵要沛降，成千上万的人要受洗归主，寻求在耶稣里新生活的自由。（见太 28:19）

## 恢复敬拜，尊荣上帝

以利亚和施洗约翰竭力引人归回上帝。在迦密山上，“以利亚对众民说：‘你们到我这里来。’众民就到他那里。他便重修已经毁坏耶和华的坛。”（王上 18:30）这坛久已失修是因为上帝的子民转而敬拜巴力。同样，施洗约翰也用所传的信息唤醒犹太人，他说：“天国近了，你们应当悔改。”（太 3:2）

二位改革者关注的焦点并非自己，而是将众人引向上帝。以利亚祷告说：“耶和华啊，求祢应允我，应允我！使这民知道祢耶和华是上帝，又知道是祢叫这民的心回转。”（王上 18:37）施洗约翰论到耶稣，说：“祂必兴旺，我必衰微。”（约 3:30）约翰将百姓引向基督。“看哪，上帝的羔羊，除去世人罪孽的。”（约 1:29）传扬以利亚信息的人会将荣耀上帝作为人生首要的宗旨，他们绝不会为高举自我留有余地。

## 工作的果效

在迦密山上，以利亚祈求火从天降，烧灭祭物，上帝垂听了他的祷告。“众民看见了，就俯伏在地，说：‘耶和华是上帝！耶和华是上帝！’”（王上 18:39）施洗约翰呼吁以色列人要悔改，“犹太全地和耶路撒冷的人都出去到约翰那里，承认他们的罪，在约旦河里受他的洗。”（可 1:5）可见，他们的信息在上帝的子民中间掀起了复兴与改革。

今天，许多基督徒之所以越发软弱，乃是因为他们在灵性上昏昏欲睡，以犯罪为儿戏。由于“审判要从上帝的家起首”，（见结 9:6；彼前 4:17）以利亚的信息也必须先传给教会。当基督徒与天上的使者合作之时，福音传遍天下便指日可待了。复兴始于基督的身体。这工作须即刻开工！

以色列人在迦密山上悔改之后，以利亚向上帝求雨，于是久旱逢甘雨。同样，我们若从昏睡中醒起，也会领受晚雨的圣灵。（雅 5:7）时候将到，如今就是了，我们要从沉睡中醒来，预备百姓迎见基督复临。（路 1:17）

## Wakening the Slumbering Saints

By Pastor Doug Batchelor

An Amazing Fact: Studies show that being awake for more than 20 hours in a row is little different than having a blood alcohol level of 0.08, the legal limit in all states. More than 100,000 car accidents each year are caused by drowsy driving and result in 1,550 deaths, 71,000 injuries, and \$12.5 billion in losses!

Dozens of legends across many cultures of the world tell of sleeping heroes, knights in shining armor, who lay drowsily under vast mountains, awaiting the right moment to arise and save their kingdoms. These snoozing fictional characters are often discovered deep in underground caverns by unsuspecting herdsmen.

In one version, a shepherd finds a great warrior asleep. When the soldier awakens, he asks the shepherd, “Do the ravens still circle the mountaintop?”

The herdsmen answers, “Yes.”

The hero replies, “Go away, for my time has not yet come!”

God’s people, the church—you!—are called to be the heroes in these last days. We have been given a special message to prepare the world for the final battle of the ages and the ushering in of God’s glorious kingdom. But many of these warrior-saints are spiritually asleep. They mumble to others, “My time has not yet come.”

Two inspiring Bible characters are to rouse us from our lethargy, telling us, “The time is now!” Elijah and John the Baptist stand before us as heroes we need to emulate. They both lived in times of serious spiritual decline and were used by God to awaken and prepare others for momentous events. As we look at their examples in these difficult spiritual days, you’ll discover parallels in their ministries that can guide our lives today and awaken us as God’s warriors.

### **Malachi’s Prophecy**

The last words of the Old Testament make known a stirring and powerful prophecy that has often been misunderstood:

“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a curse” (Malachi 4:5, 6).

In the time of Jesus, many believed that Elijah would literally come down from heaven to live again on the earth, or possibly be reborn into a new man. Jesus asked the disciples, “ ‘Who do the crowds say that I am?’ So they answered and said, ‘John the Baptist, but some say Elijah; and others say that one of the old prophets has risen again’ ” (Luke 9:18, 19).

The Jews had anticipated that Elijah would soon come to announce the advent of the Messiah. But Malachi’s prophecy wasn’t intended to imply that the Old Testament prophet would return. Instead, it was Elijah’s spirit of revival and reformation that was predicted to return.

Speaking of the birth of John the Baptist, the angel Gabriel said to Zacharias, “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” (Luke 1:17, emphasis added). Gabriel was pointing out that John the Baptist fulfilled Malachi’s prophecy.

John was to precede the Lord to do a special work of revival and reformation. Jesus later confirmed, “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” (Matthew 11:13, 14).

But Malachi’s prophecy does not end with the Baptist. Notice: “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD” (emphasis added). This “great and dreadful day,” also called “the great day of His wrath” (Revelation 6:17), is synonymous with the second coming. The final fulfillment of this prophecy happens just before Christ returns!

### **The Spirit and Power of Elijah**

To better understand this prophecy, let’s go back to the time of Elijah. The first person filled with the “spirit and power of Elijah” was not John the Baptist, but rather Elisha, the servant of Elijah. When God revealed that He would soon take Elijah up to heaven, Elisha asked to receive a double portion of Elijah’s spirit (2 Kings 2:9, 10).

As Elisha witnessed Elijah’s rapture, he was baptized with a double portion of Elijah’s spirit. “Now when the sons of the prophets who were from Jericho saw him, they said, ‘The spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha’ ” (2 Kings 2:15).

What will the spirit and power of Elijah do? “He will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers” (Malachi 4:6). True revival transforms our homes and spreads into our communities. The Elijah message regenerates the hearts of families and reestablishes godly relationships.

Notice how Gabriel deepens this prophecy: “He will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God” (Luke 1:16, 17, emphasis added). The Elijah message doesn’t just help to reunite families; it also brings disobedient earthly children into connection with their heavenly Father.

In my studies of Elijah and John, I’ve found many interesting parallels. But even more exciting are the ways in which their ministries speak to our day. These ancient Bible heroes have characteristics that need to awaken in our hearts here in these last days if we are to thrive as God’s people. Their work is to be our work.

### **Bold and Fearless**

Elijah and John the Baptist fearlessly stood before kings and spoke a bold message. When King Ahab accused Elijah of creating problems in Israel, Elijah courageously replied, “I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father’s house have, in that you have forsaken the commandments of the LORD and have followed the Baals” (1 Kings 18:18).

With the same fortitude, John spoke against King Herod’s immoral relationship when he told him, “It is not lawful for you to have your brother’s wife” (Mark 6:18). He literally lost his head over this daring charge.

Jesus predicted that His followers would someday preach straight messages in the same way: “Watch out for yourselves, for they will deliver you up to councils, and you will be beaten in the synagogues. You will be brought before rulers and kings for My sake, for a testimony to them” (Mark 13:9).

Great revivals do not come when messages are aimed to please people (see Galatians 1:10). Bold proclamations of clear, uncompromising truth that defy sin in all its forms awaken the conscience and pave the way for life-changing reforms.

Paul warned of resistance to this work: “The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables” (2 Timothy 4:3, 4).

### **Pure and Humble**

There are also strong similarities between the lifestyles of Elijah and John the Baptist. Neither of them grew up in king’s palaces but lived in the wilderness (1 Kings 17:1–5; John 1:23). Both had very simple diets (1 Kings 17:11; Mark 1:6). The unassuming rigors of their lives kept their minds clear and their bodies strong for the special work God called them to do.

Likewise, the church in the last days will be best prepared to share the Elijah message by living the Elijah lifestyle—pure and humble. Our diets and living habits directly affect our ability to discern and communicate God’s truths. Even the power to resist temptation is often traceable to what we eat.

The plain clothing of Elijah and John are also spoken of in the Bible. Elijah is described as clothed with a garment made of hair and “wearing a leather belt” (2 Kings 1:8). Likewise, “John was clothed with camel’s hair and with a leather belt around his waist” (Mark 1:6).

Modest dress marked these reformers and will be hallmarks for those who carry on the work of revival in our time. People today are obsessed with fashion. Most clothing designers highlight a person’s sexuality. In a search for love we fall captive to looking to others for significance instead of looking to God. The church can give the world a loving rebuke, without saying a word, simply by dressing modestly. (See Ephesians 4:24 and 1 Timothy 2:9.)

A humble spirit was also exhibited by both Elijah and John. The former prophet didn’t hesitate to run before the king’s chariot like a servant. John once said of Jesus, “He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry” (Matthew 3:11). The work of reform is not led by proud workers covered in a false religious cloak. It originates from hearts that “walk humbly” with God (Micah 6:8).

### **Baptizing and Discipling**

We might assume that Elijah and John the Baptist were Lone Ranger types, but that is far from the truth. Elijah visited the schools of the prophets and mentored Elisha to continue his work (see 2 Kings 2:3–7). John also had students (disciples) that he trained (see John 1:35). Both combined spiritual instruction with practical work and service to others.

God's last great work on earth will not be carried by a few prominent leaders. It is not in the hands of a select group of clergy that the final message is carried throughout the world. Many disciples and laypersons will be trained to proclaim the everlasting gospel. God will use Spirit-filled followers, regardless of social class, to share the Bible. The Elijah message involves both training and proclaiming, both study and service.

It's interesting that both Elijah and John have connections to the Jordan River. Elijah told Elisha, "Stay here, please, for the LORD has sent me on to the Jordan" (2 Kings 2:6). John, of course, did much of his work by this river. "Then Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the region around the Jordan went out to him and were baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins" (Matthew 3:5, 6).

The Israelites miraculously passed through the Jordan after leaving Egypt and the wilderness and before entering the Promised Land. The Jordan symbolized a transition between an old life and a new life. It is a fitting representation of baptism.

When John preached his revival sermons to the crowds, the people were convicted of sin and confessed their transgressions. It was a necessary step before being lowered into the water, which depicts "dying" to self.

So also in the last days, when a message of revival is shared with the world, people will feel the guilt of sin weighing on their hearts and, in response, they will turn to Christ, repenting of their old way of life. Like the early church, the Holy Spirit will be poured out and thousands will be baptized in huge numbers, seeking the cleansing freedom of a new life in Jesus (see Matthew 28:19).

### **Restoring Worship and Glorifying God**

Both Elijah and John the Baptist worked to bring people back to God. This is what Elijah did at Mount Carmel: "Elijah said to all the people, 'Come near to me.' So all the people came near to him. And he repaired the altar of the LORD that was broken down" (1 Kings 18:30). The altar was in disrepair because God's people had turned to the worship of Baal. So also, John gave the Jews a wake-up call, saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 3:2).

The focus of these reformers was not on themselves. They pointed others to God. Elijah prayed, "Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that You are the LORD God" (1 Kings 18:37). John said of Jesus, "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30). He directed people to Christ. "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29). Those who preach the Elijah message will make glorifying God their top priority. There will be no room for exalting self.

### **Results of the Work**

When Elijah prayed on Mount Carmel and fire came down and consumed the sacrifice, the people "fell on their faces; and they said, 'The LORD, He is God! The LORD, He is God!'" (1 Kings 18:39). When John the Baptist called Israel to repent, "Then all the land of Judea, and those from Jerusalem, went out to him and were all baptized" (Mark 1:5). These two brave prophets delivered a message that sparked revival and reformation among God's people.

Today, many Christians languish in spiritual drowsiness and casual sin. Because judgment will begin with the house of God (see Ezekiel 9:6; 1 Peter 4:17), the Elijah message must first go to the church. God's plan to reach



the entire world happens when Christians cooperate with heavenly agencies. Revival begins in the body of Christ. It must begin now!

After Israel repented at Mount Carmel, Elijah prayed for rain and God poured out His blessing. We, too, may receive a latter rain of the Holy Spirit (James 5:7) if we will wake up, for our time has come to arouse from our drowsiness and prepare a people ready to meet our coming King (Luke 1:17).