

of Man will suffer and die. To this He explains, **“13 "But I say to you, that Elijah has indeed come, and they did to him whatever they wished, just as it is written of him.”** Jesus here making reference to **John the Baptist**, who indeed was the **forerunner** of Jesus spoken of by Malachi (3:1), of whom Elijah was a foreshadow. In essence Jesus is saying, that John the Baptist was a fulfilment of Malachi’s prophecy.

Malachi 3:1 - "Behold, I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple; and the messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight, behold, He is coming," says the Lord of hosts. NASB

Malachi’s **latter** reference to the **forerunner** (4:5-6) would seem to be speaking of **Elijah** the prophet’s ministry before the **Second Coming** of Christ. But this enigma is not unraveled by Jesus here, only that John the Baptist is in some sense a fulfilment of Elijah’s prophecy, as He says, **“13 "But I say to you, that Elijah has indeed come, and they did to him whatever they wished, just as it is written of him.”** Without digging into His First and Second Comings, He simply wants them to see John the Baptist as His forerunner and to know also that He will soon suffer and be mistreated, **“12 is it written of the Son of Man that He should suffer many things and be treated with contempt?”** He will shortly bring the matter up again in a second conversation **9:30-32**. But first they will need to learn a valuable lesson about being **devoted** on **prayer** and fully **trusting** in **God** with **faith**.

Mark 9:14-29 - 14 And when they came back to the disciples, they saw a large crowd around them, and some scribes arguing with them. 15 And immediately, when the entire crowd saw Him, they were amazed, and began running up to greet Him. 16 And He asked them, "What are you discussing with them?" 17 And one of the crowd answered Him, "Teacher, I brought You my son, possessed with a spirit which makes him mute; 18 and whenever it seizes him, it dashes him to the ground and he foams at the mouth, and grinds his teeth, and stiffens out. And I told Your disciples to cast it out, and they could not do it." 19 And He answered them and said, "O unbelieving generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring him to Me!" 20 And they brought the boy to Him. And when he saw Him, immediately the spirit threw him into a convulsion, and falling to the ground, he began rolling about and foaming at the mouth. 21 And He asked his father, "How long has this been happening to him?" And he said, "From childhood. 22 "And it has often thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him. But if You can do anything, take pity on us and help us!" 23 And Jesus said to him, "'If You can!' All things are possible to him who believes." 24 Immediately the boy's father cried out and began saying, "I do believe; help my

unbelief." 25 And when Jesus saw that a crowd was rapidly gathering, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "You deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, come out of him and do not enter him again." 26 And after crying out and throwing him into terrible convulsions, it came out; and the boy became so much like a corpse that most of them said, "He is dead!" 27 But Jesus took him by the hand and raised him; and he got up. 28 And when He had come into the house, His disciples began questioning Him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?" 29 And He said to them, "This kind cannot come out by anything but prayer."

Having been gone for a few days from the rest of the Twelve, they now return to see a crowd and an argument. **"14 And when they came back to the disciples, they saw a large crowd around them, and some scribes arguing with them."** See here more opposition from the **religious leaders**, even while Jesus is away. Even though the disciples had received authority from Jesus to cast out demons and heal, yet it wasn't always effective and this will stand as a lesson for them about being fully equipped to carry out their ministry. **"15 And immediately, when the entire crowd saw Him, they were amazed, and began running up to greet Him. 16 And He asked them, "What are you discussing with them?" 17 And one of the crowd answered Him, "Teacher, I brought You my son, possessed with a spirit which makes him mute; 18 and whenever it seizes him, it dashes him to the ground and he foams at the mouth, and grinds his teeth, and stiffens out. And I told Your disciples to cast it out, and they could not do it."** Apparently seeking help from Jesus, but only finding His disciples, the **desperate man** brought his demon possessed son, but the disciples could not cast it out. To this Jesus replies **"19 And He answered them and said, "O unbelieving generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring him to Me!"** Jesus here brings a sharp **rebuke** on the entire crowd, including His **own disciples** that they seem to be greatly **lacking faith**, **"O unbelieving generation."** And how often we identify with them in our weakness and doubting, often languishing in doubt, rather than persevering in prayer with faith. The situation escalates in front of Jesus, **"20 And they brought the boy to Him. And when he saw Him, immediately the spirit threw him into a convulsion, and falling to the ground, he began rolling about and foaming at the mouth. 21 And He asked his father, "How long has this been happening to him?" And he said, "From childhood. 22 "And it has often thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him. But if You can do anything, take pity on us and help us!"** Jesus here uses the occasion to teach a valuable lesson in faith, in one of His most memorable quotes, **"23 And Jesus said to him, "If You can!" All things are possible to him who believes." 24 Immediately the boy's father cried out and began saying, "I do believe; help my unbelief."**

As if we were all to know that Jesus can, He points beyond His own ability and willingness to the faith of the one who requests, **“If You can! All things are possible to him who believes.”** And with words that every one of us can identify with the desperate father replies, **“I do believe; help my unbelief.”** See here the genuine **struggle** of every believer in **faith**. Calvin comments, *“He declares that he believes, and yet acknowledges himself to have unbelief. These two statements may appear to contradict each other, but there is none of us that does not experience both of them in himself. As our faith is never perfect, it follows that we are partly unbelievers; but God forgives us, and exercises such forbearance towards us, as to reckon us believers on account of a small portion of faith. It is our duty, in the meantime, carefully to shake off the remains of infidelity which adhere to us, to strive against them, and to pray to God to correct them, and, as often as we are engaged in this conflict, to fly to him for aid.”* **End quote.** See here that God has supplied everything we need for life as we come to Him in faith trusting upon Christ. Jesus has secured for us every necessary blessing for all who are in Him (Eph 1:3, 2 Pet 1:2-4). Jesus here with a word answers the man’s request. **“25 And when Jesus saw that a crowd was rapidly gathering, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, “You deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, come out of him and do not enter him again.” 26 And after crying out and throwing him into terrible convulsions, it came out; and the boy became so much like a corpse that most of them said, “He is dead!” 27 But Jesus took him by the hand and raised him; and he got up.”** The power of Jesus is **amazing** indeed, won’t you stop for a moment and be amazed with the crowd, but then respond by **seeking** the **Lord** to **increase** your **faith**. It is a simple and honest request, **“I do believe; help my unbelief.”** Astounded by what had happened, the disciples seek the Lord for answers, **“28 And when He had come into the house, His disciples began questioning Him privately, “Why could we not cast it out?” 29 And He said to them, “This kind cannot come out by anything but prayer.”** Yet another lesson even for these who had been **commissioned** and **gifted** by the Lord, that sometimes successful ministry can only happen by devotion in prayer. May we also seek the Lord not only to **increase** our **faith**, but also our **devotion** in **prayer**.

Mark 9:30-32 - 30 And from there they went out and began to go through Galilee, and He was unwilling for anyone to know about it. 31 For He was 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." 32 But they did not understand this statement, and they were afraid to ask Him.