Defending the accuracy of the Bible

Chapter 4 The Two Witnesses by Bill Perkins

Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD. Malachi 4:5

For the first time in the history of modern Israel, she was at peace with her sworn enemies. The national excitement of the guaranteed peace was enough to begin moving the tiny country past the post-rapture fears associated with the Russian/Iranian invasion, decimation of the United States and subsequent massacre of her enemies the Arabs. "Shalom, shalom!" was being shouted from the lips of every citizen. (Ezek. 13:9, 10)

Then, seemingly on cue, two men showed up out of nowhere on the Mount of Olives creating quite a stir in Jerusalem. One claimed to be Elijah, returning as prophesied in the Old Testament scripture in Malachi, and the other claimed to be John from the New Testament. This

immediately raised a red-flag alert within the Ultra-Orthodox Jews.

The Jews had been patiently waiting for Elijah to return to earth after his departure in a fiery chariot over 2800 years earlier. Every year at Passover, Jewish families in each home had set an extra place-setting at the table for Elijah. And every year, just before eating, they sent their children to the door to see if Elijah might be there. (2 Kgs. 2:11; Mal. 4:5)



View from the Mount of Olives to Temple Mount in Jerusalem.

So this reported return of Elijah and the appearance of John was incredible news to everyone in Israel, but it was of greatest concern to the the Ultra-Orthodox Jews. These highly religious men, exempt from having to join the work force or the military, devoted their entire lives to studying the Torah.

And they were a force to be reckoned with. They fathered large families, averaging 5 or 6 kids per couple, and although they only comprised about 10% of the total population, they powerfully influenced Israel's political coalitions and therefore elections.

But more importantly, they were also the self-proclaimed watchdogs for false prophets. With their extensive knowledge of scripture, they were quick to spot and expose impostors. Through the years scores of false prophets claiming to be Elijah or the Messiah had fallen under their scrutiny and been properly dismissed.

But Elijah and John sure *looked* like ancient prophets. They were dressed in what could only be described

as linen sackcloth, much like what the Old Testament prophets wore as a symbol of the office of Prophet when they preached repentance. (Rev. 11:3, Mal. 4:5, Mat. 3:1)

They appeared to be older men, albeit quite fit, as they took up residence at the southern tip of the Mount of Olives overlooking the over one million tombs on the western side. The view of the Temple Mount from that area was mesmerizing.

So when news of the two men claiming to be Elijah and John spread through Jerusalem, the Ultra-Orthodox immediately began making plans to confront them. Always ready to expose impostors, the Ultra-Orthodox decided

to pay them a visit to dispel the rumors that Elijah had returned.

The Ultra-Orthodox leaders, as always, were dressed in their traditional and unique head-to-toe black suits and hats. Arriving at the top of the Mount of Olives, the group of about 50 wove their way to the area the men in question were occupying.

Following at the end of the "Black Hat" procession were two representatives from the Prime Minister's office, dressed in well-manicured

suits, presumably to also figure out who these men actually were. Members of Israeli Defense Force (IDF) were also scattered around the area but appeared not to be interfering with the confrontation.

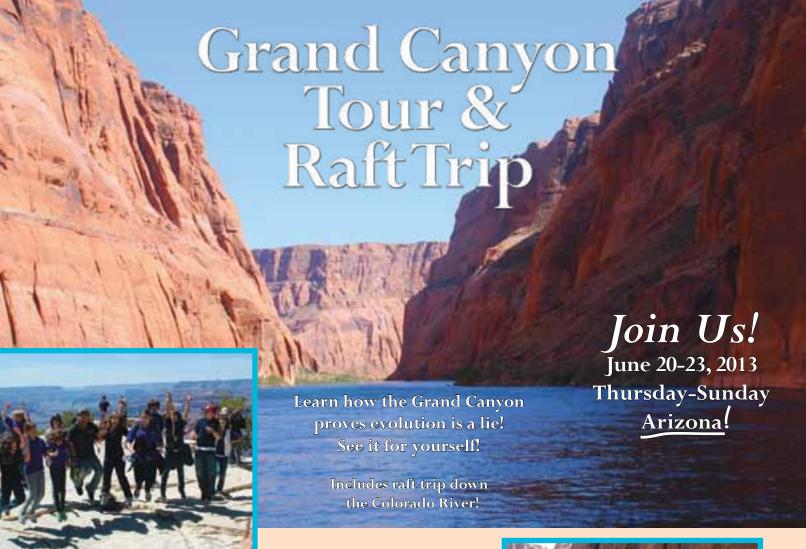
"Shalom!" the head of the Ultras spoke as he approached the two shaggily-dressed men.

"Shalom!" the two men responded in unison as they scanned the group, peering deeply into each pair of eyes. "What do you want from us?" one of the two men asked.

"It is said that one of you claims to be Elijah the Prophet," the leader of the Ultras responded. "What are your credentials? What proof do you have of who you are?"

The slightly smaller of the two men answered first, "I am Elijah. I come fulfilling the testimony of Malachi that I would return to earth. I am sent by God to proclaim the name of Jesus the Messiah and to call all of Abraham's offspring back to the Promised Land from around the world."

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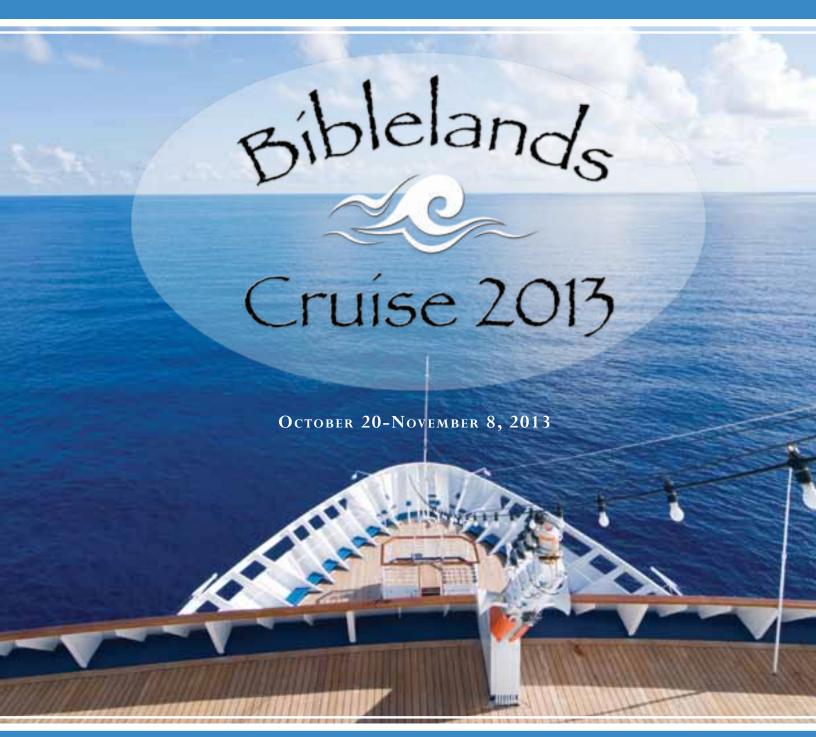
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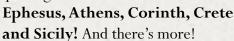
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- 21-Oct Arrive Israel, overnight Tel Aviv.
- 22-Oct Mediterranean Coast: Caesarea, Aqueducts, Mt. Carmel, Valley of Armageddon, Nazareth, Cana, Mt. Arbel. Overnight Galilee.
- 23-Oct Galilee: Sea of Galilee boat ride and Bible study, Ancient Boat, walk Mt. of Beatitudes, Capernaum, Golan Heights, Baptisms in the Jordan River. Overnight Galilee.
- 24-Oct Dead Sea: Bet Shen, lunch at Qumran, Dead Sea Swim. Overnight Jerusalem.
- 25-Oct Jerusalem: Temple Mount, Wailing Wall, Southern Steps, Jewish Quarter, Pools of Bethesda, Bethlehem overlook.
- 26-Oct Jerusalem: Mount of Olives, Palm Sunday Road, Garden of Gethsemane, Caiphas House, Antonia Fortress, Via Dolorosa, Golgotha, Empty Tomb.
- 27-Oct Fly home or travel to Rome to begin cruise.

MEDITERRANEAN CRUISE ITINERARY

- 25 Oct Depart USA.
- 26 Oct Arrive Rome.
- 27-Oct AM: Rome tour, PM: Board ship.
- 28-Oct Sicily.
- 29-Oct At-Sea: Free Day/Optional fun Bible studies.
- 30-Oct Athens & Corinth, Greece.
- 31-Oct Ephesus, Turkey.
- 1-Nov Crete, Greece.
- 2-Nov At-Sea: Free Day//Optional fun Bible studies.
- 3-Nov Disembark in Rome, visit the Vatican.
- 4-Nov Fly home or continue on to *Taste of Italy* option.

TASTE OF ITALY POST-CRUISE OPTION

- 4-Nov Travel to historic Florence.
- 5-Nov Leaning Tower of Pisa, Michelangelo's The David.
- 6-Nov Travel through Tuscany via train to Venice.
- 7-Nov The picturesque canals of Venice.
- 8-Nov Travel home.



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Oct 20-Nov 8	□ Israel + Cruise +	Tast	e of I	taly \$5,99	95 <i>See details for Israel</i> , Bibleland	s Cruise and Taste of Italy above.
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