

## Commentary on the Gospel for Sat, Dec 14th 2013

What an amazing and vibrant image we have of Elijah from the first reading. His words are on fire! He actually brought down fire from the heavens by the power of God. His zeal was inspiring. He was destined to put an end to wrath and enmity so people could accept Jesus when he came. He was a harbinger of the Lord and a necessary step in the coming. Elijah was taken up to heaven in a chariot of fire. How could anyone fail to recognize his importance, especially with all that fire surrounding him.

But in the gospel, we find out that people did not recognize him. Despite all the fire, the people did not recognize him or his importance. When the disciples say it is written that Elijah must come first, Jesus says Elijah has already come, but was not recognized. Elijah was destined to restore all things in preparation for Jesus, and came in all his fire and glory, but was not recognized as the harbinger he was. John the Baptist came to prepare the way, but the people didn't recognize his importance or heed his words. And when Jesus did come, the harbingers were not recognized and not heeded, and Jesus himself was not recognized, despite his glory. And he will suffer at the hands of men who did not recognize the signs, did not heed the harbingers, and do not recognize the Lord in their midst.

The psalm begs, Lord, let us see your face and we shall be saved. But when we saw Elijah, we did not recognize him. When we saw John the Baptist, we did not recognize him. When we saw Jesus, we did not recognize him. Jesus says the Elijah has come in John the Baptist, and was not recognized, and the importance of his words was not heeded, so the men will not recognize Jesus or realize his importance.

We are in Advent now, preparing for the arrival of the Lord. And what will happen when he comes again? Is Elijah already here, speaking fire, preparing the way, but unheeded and unrecognized? Will we recognize the signs? Will we recognize Jesus when he comes?

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