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are made to feel utterly silly if they don't accept anti-Christian attitudes and views. The result is we have a situation very similar to the situation that Israel was in when Elijah (was living). Now God sent two men -- Elijah and Elisha, and how different these two men were from one another. In the providence of God I think it's (one of) the most marvelous thing that Elijah came first and Elisha came second. Their influence would not be a fifth as much if they had come in the opposite way. Elijah came to a people who had turned from God, and wanted to put God out of their thoughts and to forget him. And Elijah came with a great powerful voice doing great miracles, standing for God against the multitudes, attracting tremendous attention. And Elijah focused the attention of the people on the fact of God's power, God's control, God's reality. Then when Elijah passed off the scene Elisha took over and travelled back and forth up and down through the land, visiting, talking, teaching here and there, here and there healing the sick raising the dead, doing the little things that help people to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord. Now if Elisha had come first nobody would have listened to him. Oh this old messiah, what does he know? We're following Baal, we're following the king and his queen in their general approach. Elisha could have gathered a little group of people about him, he could have had some influence but not a fraction of the influence that he had. Elijah was needed first. But if Elijah had come and stopped and Elisha had not come there would not have been a fraction of the effect that was made. The difference in the effect is brought out very clearly when we look at the death scene of these two great men.

In Elijah's death we read in 2 Ki. 2:12 how Elisha and Elijah were standing there out in the desert, and God sent the chariots and horses of fire to take Elijah up to heaven and Elisha saw it and cried, My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof. Well now is he referring to the horses that took him up to heaven? Is he referring to the chariots of fire that took him up to heaven? If this is all we have - this verse - you might think that's what he referred to. But it isn't. He is here saying, Elijah is the great bulwark of this land. This land was headed for misery and destruction. Elijah is God's chariot, God's horsemen, God's force of protection that has delivered this land. Now since it comes right after the reference to the chariot of fire, and horse of fire that is not obvious as you look at it.

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