

Elijah the Prophet

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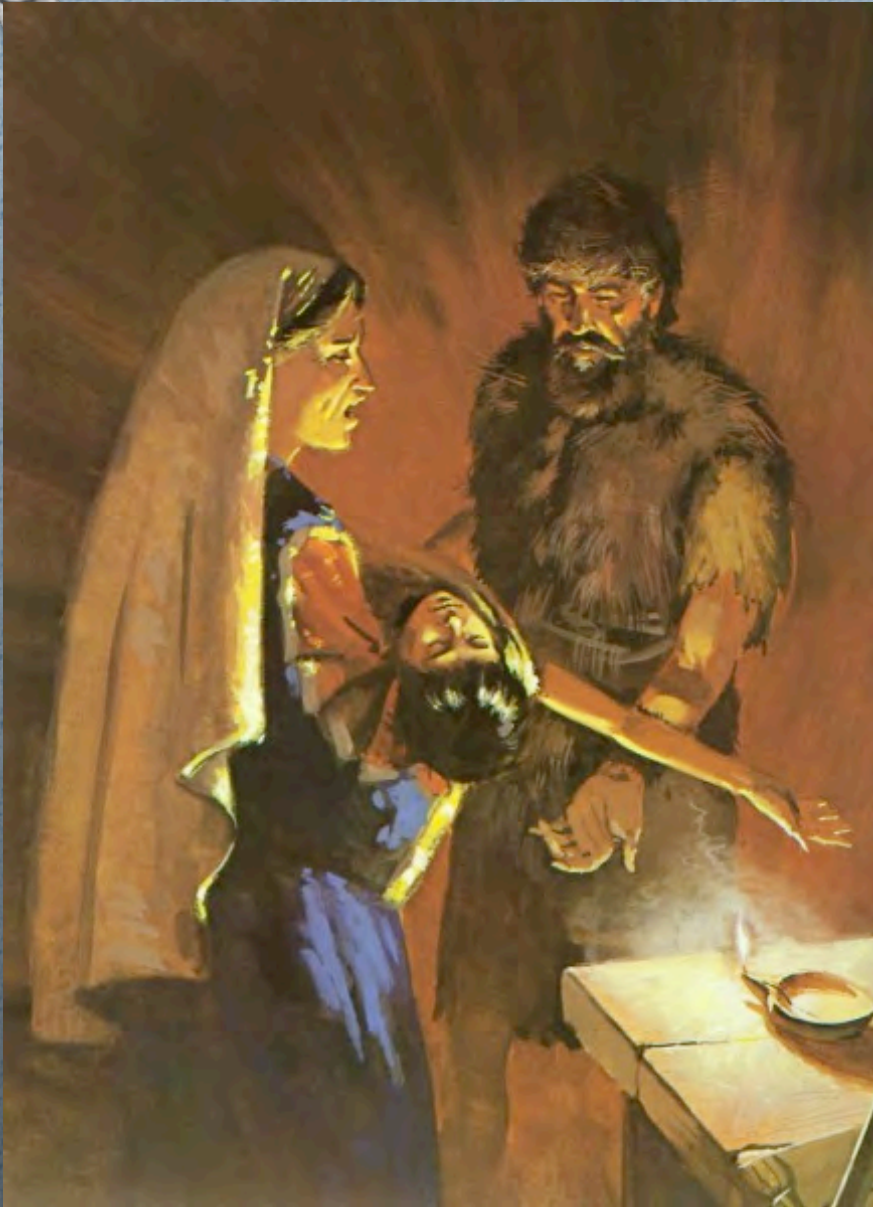
Now Elijah the Tishbite, of Tishbe in Gilead, said to Ahab, “As the LORD, the God of Israel, lives, before whom I stand, there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word.” (1 Kings 17:1)



And the word of the LORD came to him: “Depart from here and turn eastward and hide yourself by the brook Cherith, which is east of the Jordan. You shall drink from the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there.” (17:2-3)



“Thus says the LORD,
the God of Israel,
‘The jar of flour shall
not be spent, and
the jug of oil shall
not be empty, until
the day that the LORD
sends rain upon the
earth.’” (17:14)



And she said to Elijah, “What have you against me, O man of God? You have come to me to bring my sin to remembrance and to cause the death of my son!” And he said to her, “Give me your son.” (17:18-19)



And he cried to the LORD, “O LORD my God, have you brought calamity even upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by killing her son?...O LORD my God, let this child's life come into him again.” (17:19-21)



The LORD listened to the voice of Elijah. And the life of the child came into him again, and he revived... And Elijah said, “See, your son lives.” And the woman said to Elijah, “Now I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the LORD in your mouth is truth.” (17:22-24)



Obadiah said, “If I go and tell Ahab and he doesn’t find you, he will kill me. Yet I your servant have worshiped the LORD since my youth. Haven’t you heard, my lord, what I did while Jezebel was killing the prophets of the LORD? I hid a hundred of the LORD’s prophets in two caves, fifty in each, and supplied them with food and water. (18:12-13)



When Ahab saw Elijah, Ahab said to him, “Is it you, you troubler of Israel?” And he answered, “I have not troubled Israel, but you have, and your father's house, because you have abandoned the commandments of the LORD and followed the Baals. (18:17-18)



Elijah came near to all the people and said, “How long will you go limping between two different opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him.” And the people did not answer him a word.

(1 Kings 18:21)



Elijah said, “Fill four jars with water and pour it on the burnt offering and on the wood.” And he said, “Do it a second time.” And they did it a second time. And he said, “Do it a third time.” And they did it a third time. And the water ran around the altar and filled the trench also with water.
(18:33-35)



“Answer me, O LORD, answer me, that this people may know that you, O LORD, are God, and that you have turned their hearts back.” Then the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt offering and the wood and the stones and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. (18:37-38)



Elijah said to his servant, “Go up now, look toward the sea.” And he went up and looked and said, “There is nothing.” And he said, “Go again,” seven times. And at the seventh time he said, “Behold, a little cloud like a man's hand is rising from the sea.” And he said, “Go up, say to Ahab, ‘Prepare your chariot and go down, lest the rain stop you.’”

(18:43-44)

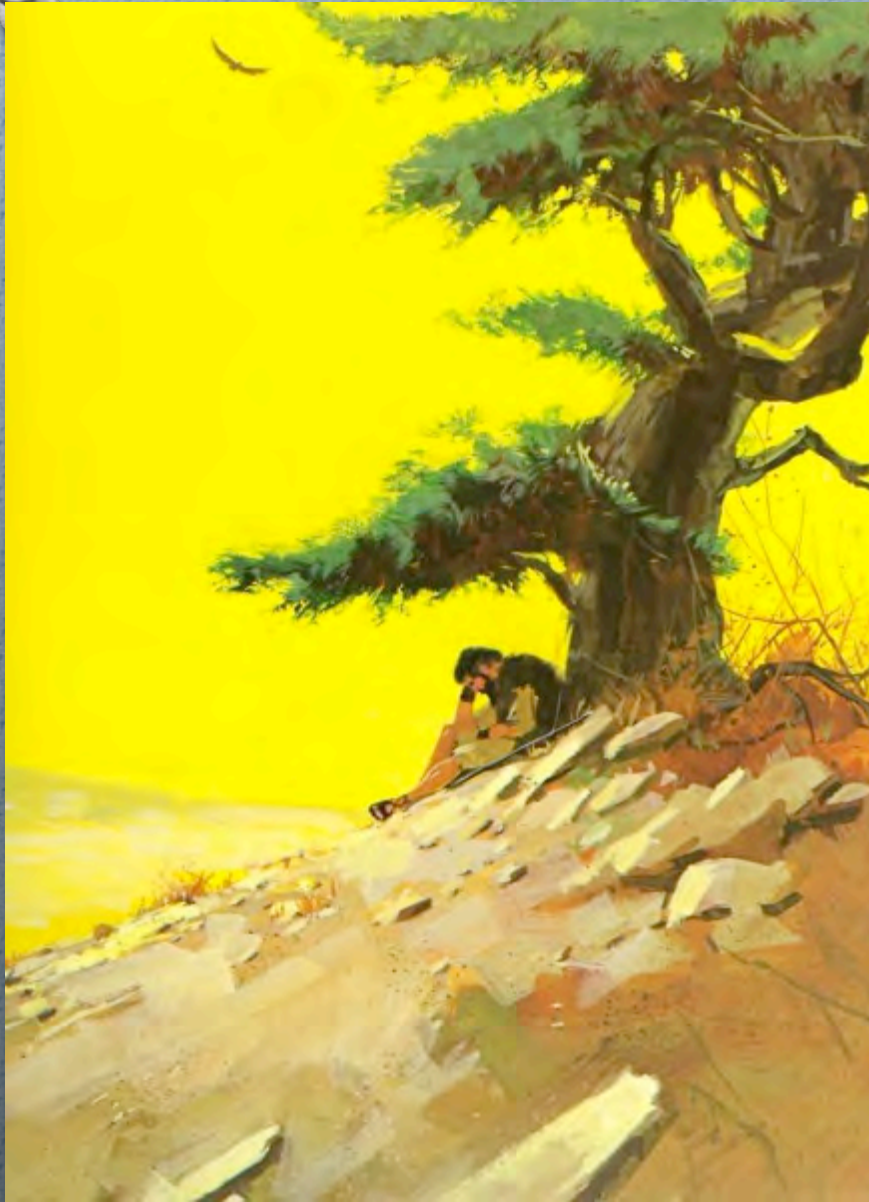


And in a little while the heavens grew black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode and went to Jezreel. And the hand of the LORD was on Elijah, and he gathered up his garment and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel. (18:45-46)

Elijah's recent highlights

- Speaks the word that stops all rain.
- Receives food from God-sent birds
- Eats widow's food that doesn't run out
- Raised dead boy to life
- Tells off a nasty king to his face
- Calls down fire from heaven
- Wipes out idol-worshiping priests
- Speaks the prayer that brings rain
- Outruns the king's fastest horses

¹ Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. ² Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, “So may the gods do to me and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by this time tomorrow.” ³ Then he was afraid, and he arose and ran for his life and came to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah, and left his servant there.



⁴ But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he asked that he might die, saying, "It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life, for I am no better than my fathers."



⁵ And he lay down and slept under a broom tree. And behold, an angel touched him and said to him, “Arise and eat.” ⁶ And he looked, and behold, there was at his head a cake baked on hot stones and a jar of water. And he ate and drank and lay down again.



⁷ And the angel of the LORD came again a second time and touched him and said, “Arise and eat, for the journey is too great for you.” ⁸ And he arose and ate and drank, and went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb, the mount of God.



⁹ There he came to a cave and lodged in it. And behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and he said to him, “What are you doing here, Elijah?”

¹⁰ He said, “I have been very jealous for the LORD, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away.”

¹¹ And he said, “Go out and stand on the mount before the LORD.” And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind tore the mountains and broke in pieces the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. And after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake.



¹² And after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire the sound of a low whisper. ¹³ And when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave.

And behold, there came a voice to him and said, “What are you doing here, Elijah?” ¹⁴ He said, “I have been very jealous for the LORD, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away.”

¹⁵ And the LORD said to him, “Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus. And when you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael to be king over Syria. ¹⁶ And Jehu the son of Nimshi you shall anoint to be king over Israel, and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah you shall anoint to be prophet in your place. ¹⁷ And the one who escapes from the sword of Hazael shall Jehu put to death, and the one who escapes from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha put to death.”



18 "Yet I will leave seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him."

Burnout and breakdown

- A mountaintop high gives way to a dreadful low. A thrilling triumph one day seems to make no difference the next day.
- A dark, cold fog of despair clouds your spirit.
- Society is getting worse and worse.
- The government is hurting, not helping.
- The church is rotting and shriveling.
- I'm a loser. My life is a miserable failure.
- It's hopeless. It's no use. I wish I was dead.

A man with a nature like ours

- Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the earth bore its fruit. (James 5:17-18)
- Our prayers can have power like Elijah's.
- When we become depressed and feel like giving up, we are in good company: Elijah, Jeremiah, and others felt that way at times.

What Elijah needed

- **A worn down body needs to be refreshed.**
 - ✓ Nutrition: food and drink
 - ✓ Rest: plenty of sleep
- **A burnt out spirit needs to be renewed.**
 - ✓ Get away from the hassles and troubles.
 - ✓ Go spend time with God.
 - ✓ Hear God's voice.
 - ✓ Experience God's presence.
 - ✓ Rejoin God's mission.

Invisible whisperer

- Signs and wonders seldom change hearts: Jezebel's reaction to fire from heaven was to order Elijah's death.
- God controls wind, earthquake, and fire, but his presence and will are rarely expressed in noisy, flashy displays of power.
- The still, small voice of God coming near is worth more than outward fireworks.
- The Invisible Whisperer, though quiet and often ignored, shapes the destiny of nations.

What lonely Elijah forgot

- God has people in unlikely places. Obadiah was Ahab's and Jezebel's chief official! A godly politician is not a prophet.
- God has other prophets: at least 100 had been rescued.
- God's always keeps at least a remnant, and it may be much bigger than a discouraged leader might think. Seven thousand never bowed to Baal at all. And who knows how many turned back from Baal to Yahweh?

Has God rejected his people?

God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew. Do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he appeals to God against Israel? “Lord, they have killed your prophets, they have demolished your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life.” But what is God's reply to him? “I have kept for myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal.” So too at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace. (Rom 11:2-5)

Will God's cause die with me?

- Elijah thinks he is alone, yet God already has Elijah's successor in mind. In fact, Elisha will do even greater miracles than Elijah.
- As a follower of Jesus, I am dear to God, and He can do great things through me—but His work on earth goes on when I'm gone.
- Never forget: God's kingdom keeps going on earth, and you will live forever in heaven.
- Elijah prayed to die—but he never did. Later God took him straight to heaven.



As they were walking along and talking together, suddenly a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared and separated the two of them, and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind. (2 Kings 2:11-12)

No more pity party

Crowns and thrones may perish,
Kingdoms rise and wane,
But the church of Jesus
constant will remain.

Gates of hell can never
'gainst that church prevail.

We have God's own promise,
And that cannot fail.