

Elijah — The Prophet Who Confronted a Silent Heaven

Primary Passages: 1 Kings 17–19; 2 Kings 2; Malachi 4; Matthew 11, 17; Luke 9

I. Elijah's Sudden Appearance: Authority Without Introduction

(1 Kings 17:1)

- **v. 1** Elijah the Tishbite appears without genealogy or prior narrative and announces drought in the name of the LORD.
- **v. 1** Elijah identifies himself as standing “before the LORD God of Israel,” grounding authority in covenant standing rather than office or lineage.
- **v. 1** The drought is declared to occur “according to my word,” emphasizing prophetic authority as enforcement of Yahweh’s will.

II. Elijah's Ministry of Withholding: Judgment Through Absence

(1 Kings 17–18)

- **17:1** Heaven is shut in direct fulfillment of covenant warnings concerning disobedience.
 - **Deut. 11:16–17** Drought promised as judgment for turning aside to other gods.
 - **Deut. 28:23–24** Heaven described as brass and earth as iron under covenant curse.
- **1 Kings 17:2–6** Elijah is commanded to hide by the brook Cherith and is fed by ravens.
- **1 Kings 17:7** The brook dries up, showing that the prophet is not exempt from the judgment he announces.
- **1 Kings 17:8–16** Elijah is sustained by a widow in Zarephath through a continual supply of meal and oil.
- **1 Kings 17:17–24** Elijah raises the widow’s son, demonstrating Yahweh’s authority over life and death even outside Israel.

III. Mount Carmel: Public Proof, Not Philosophical Debate

(1 Kings 18)

- **vv. 1–2** After many days, the LORD commands Elijah to present himself to Ahab.
- **vv. 17–18** Elijah rejects Ahab’s accusation and places responsibility for trouble squarely on Israel’s apostasy.
- **v. 21** Elijah confronts the people’s indecision, demanding exclusive allegiance.
- **vv. 22–24** Terms of the contest are established; the God who answers by fire is declared to be God.
- **vv. 26–29** The prophets of Baal cry out in vain, underscoring divine silence.
- **vv. 30–35** Elijah repairs the altar of the LORD using twelve stones, recalling covenant unity.
- **vv. 36–38** Fire falls in response to Elijah’s prayer, consuming sacrifice, altar, and water.
- **v. 39** The people confess the LORD as God.
- **v. 40** The prophets of Baal are executed according to covenant law.
- **vv. 41–45** Elijah prays, and rain returns, showing judgment and mercy proceeding

by the same authority.

IV. Elijah's Collapse: A Prophet Who Expects Too Much From Revival

(1 Kings 19:1–8)

- **vv. 1–2** Jezebel threatens Elijah, revealing that Carmel did not produce national repentance.
- **v. 3** Elijah flees for his life, abandoning public ministry.
- **v. 4** Elijah requests death, expressing exhaustion rather than unbelief.
- **vv. 5–7** An angel provides food and rest without rebuke.
- **v. 8** Elijah journeys forty days to Horeb in the strength of what God provided.

V. The Quiet Correction: God Is Still Working Without Elijah

(1 Kings 19:9–18)

- **vv. 9–10** Elijah complains of isolation and failure.
- **vv. 11–12** Wind, earthquake, and fire pass, but the LORD is not in them.
- **v. 13** The LORD addresses Elijah in quietness, drawing him into reflection rather than spectacle.
- **v. 14** Elijah repeats his complaint, revealing fixed perception.
- **vv. 15–17** Elijah is instructed to anoint Hazael, Jehu, and Elisha, showing judgment already in motion.
- **v. 18** The LORD reveals the existence of seven thousand faithful, correcting Elijah’s assumption of total apostasy.

VI. Elijah's Translation: A Prophet Who Does Not Die

(2 Kings 2)

- **vv. 1–6** Elijah travels from Gilgal to Bethel, Jericho, and the Jordan, repeatedly telling Elisha to remain behind; Elisha refuses each time.
- **v. 7** Fifty sons of the prophets observe from a distance as Elijah and Elisha stand by the Jordan.
- **v. 8** Elijah strikes the Jordan with his mantle, and the waters part so they cross on dry ground.
- **vv. 9–10** Elijah invites Elisha’s final request; Elisha asks for a double portion; Elijah conditions it on witnessing his departure.
- **vv. 11–12a** Elijah is separated from Elisha by chariot and horses of fire and is taken up into heaven by a whirlwind.

VII. Elijah's Enduring Impact: A Prophet Who Keeps Returning

(Malachi 4; Matthew 11; Matthew 17; Luke 9)

- **Malachi 4:5–6** Elijah is promised as a forerunner before the day of the LORD.
- **Matthew 11:13–14** Jesus identifies John the Baptist as fulfilling the Elijah expectation in function.
- **Matthew 17:1–3** Elijah appears with Moses at the Transfiguration.
- **Luke 9:30–31** Elijah speaks with Jesus concerning His departure.