

**People of the Promise:  
Elijah: Holy War  
1 Kings 17-2 Kings 2**

**Introduction**

Elijah—*my God is Yahweh (not Baal)*

Elijah—Called to serve as a prophet of Yahweh in the northern tribes who were given to idolatry, notably Baal and Ashteroth

His life was a life of holy war (courageous confrontation and conflict) for the honor of Yahweh over against the worship of Baal

Why was Baal worship so appealing to many?

- Royal sanction—Jezebel and Ahab
- Long history (tradition) dating back before Israel entered the land
- Relevant blessings—god of storm, fire, and fertility, to make your family large and your harvests successful
- Sensual Pleasure—mix of worship with sexual immorality with cult prostitutes
- Deification of Human Desire vs submission to God's Holy law

**Timeline Overview**

1 Kings 17:1-4: Decree of Famine

1 Kings 17:8-12: Provision of Food—Unclean Ravens and a Gentile Widow

## 1 Kings 17:17-22: Resurrection of Widow's Son

### 1 Kings 17:1-4

<sup>1</sup> 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." <sup>2</sup> And the word of the LORD came to him: <sup>3</sup> "Depart from here and turn eastward and hide yourself by the brook Cherith, which is east of the Jordan. <sup>4</sup> You shall drink from the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there."

### 1 Kings 17:8-9

<sup>8</sup> Then the word of the LORD came to him, <sup>9</sup> "Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and dwell there. Behold, I have commanded a widow there to feed you."

### 1 Kings 17:22-24

<sup>22</sup> And the LORD listened to the voice of Elijah. And the life of the child came into him again, and he revived. <sup>23</sup> And Elijah took the child and brought him down from the upper chamber into the house and delivered him to his mother. And Elijah said, "See, your son lives." <sup>24</sup> 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."

*A nation who belonged to Yahweh had forsaken Yahweh for Baal. A widow who lived in a land dedicated to Baal (Jezebel's homeland) came to trust in Yahweh.* Elijah was sent beyond the borders of Israel to a Gentile woman living in a land of idols, just as the gospel the Messiah would one day go beyond the Jews to all ethnicities. When Jesus talked about this action of Yahweh in His hometown synagogue of Nazareth, His fellow townsfolk were enraged and tried to kill him.

1 Kings 18:1-4: Promise of Rain (another faithful servant, Obadiah)

1 Kings 18:17-19: Troubler of Israel

1 Kings 18:20-40: Contest with Prophets of Baal, Fire from Heaven, Rain

1 Kings 18:1

After many days the word of the LORD came to Elijah, in the third year, saying, "Go, show yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain upon the earth."

1 Kings 18:17-19

<sup>17</sup> When Ahab saw Elijah, Ahab said to him, "Is it you, you troubler of Israel?" <sup>18</sup> 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. <sup>19</sup> Now therefore send and gather all Israel to me at Mount Carmel, and the 450 prophets of Baal

and the 400 prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel's table."

1 Kings 18:37-39

**37** 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." **38** 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. **39** And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces and said, "The LORD, he is God; the LORD, he is God."

1 Kings 19:1-8: Fearful and Discouraged Fugitive

1 Kings 19:9-21: Yahweh's Encouragement, Call of Elisha

1 Kings 19:1-4

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."

1 Kings 19:7

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."

1 Kings 19:9-10

<sup>9</sup> 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?" <sup>10</sup> He said, "I have been very 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."

Wind, earthquake—but the LORD was not in either

1 Kings 19:12

And after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire the sound of a low whisper.

1 Kings 19:17-18

<sup>17</sup> 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."

1 Kings 21: Theft and Murder of Naboth;  
Yahweh's Condemnation; Ahab's Repentance  
2 Kings 1: Rebuke of King Ahaziah, Fire from Heaven  
2 Kings 2: Elijah Taken to Heaven; Elisha Empowered to Succeed Him

1 Kings 21:17-19

**17** Then the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, **18** "Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, who is in Samaria; behold, he is in the vineyard of Naboth, where he has gone to take possession. **19** And you shall say to him, 'Thus says the LORD, "Have you killed and also taken possession?"' And you shall say to him, 'Thus says the LORD: "In the place where dogs licked up the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick your own blood.'"

2 Kings 1:3-4

**3** But the angel of the LORD said to Elijah the Tishbite, "Arise, go up to meet the messengers of the king of Samaria, and say to them, 'Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are going to inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron? **4** Now therefore thus says the LORD, You shall not come down from

the bed to which you have gone up, but you shall surely die.” So Elijah went.

### 2 Kings 1:13-15

**13** Again the king sent the captain of a third fifty with his fifty. And the third captain of fifty went up and came and fell on his knees before Elijah and entreated him, “O man of God, please let my life, and the life of these fifty servants of yours, be precious in your sight. **14** Behold, fire came down from heaven and consumed the two former captains of fifty men with their fifties, but now let my life be precious in your sight.” **15** Then the angel of the LORD said to Elijah, “Go down with him; do not be afraid of him.” So he arose and went down with him to the king.

### 2 Kings 2:9-11

**9** When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, “Ask what I shall do for you, before I am taken from you.” And Elisha said, “Please let there be a double portion of your spirit on me.” **10** And he said, “You have asked a hard thing; yet, if you see me as I am being taken from you, it shall be so for you, but if you do not see me, it shall not be so.” **11** And as they still went on and talked, behold, chariots of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them. And Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.

**Elijah's success and survival depended entirely on God's Word and Actions.**

God sent Elijah to give God's Word to Ahab.  
God sent the famine (and the promise of it).  
God sent the ravens.  
God sent Elijah to the widow of Zarephath.  
God miraculously provided for her.  
God gave life to her dead son.  
God sent fire on the altar.  
God sent rain after 3.5 years of drought.  
God encouraged His discouraged prophet.  
God selected Elisha.  
God sent fire on the soldiers sent to arrest Elijah.  
God took Elijah to heaven in a whirlwind and fiery chariot.  
God destroyed Jezebel and the house of Ahab.

Not everyone is called to do what Elijah did. Obadiah was a faithful servant of God, too, but his ministry was different. The life and ministry of the 7,000 who had not bowed the knee to Baal were different from Elijah's, too.

Elijah's life was dedicated to calling a nation to repentance. John the Baptist would come in the spirit and power of Elijah to call his generation to repentance as well.

You and I do not have exactly the same calling as Elijah or John the Baptist, but if we belong to God through Christ and are serving



Him, there are truths from Elijah's life that apply to our lives, too.

1. Yahweh is the only true God, and He will allow no rivals.
2. God's power backs God's Word (Promises).
3. God uses natural and unexpected things and people to bring about His purposes (drought, rain, fire, ravens, widows, Elijah, Obadiah). He has everything and everybody in the universe at His disposal.
4. God calls us to do hard things at times that require obedient courage.
5. God understands our needs and cares for us.
6. We are immortal till God is done with us—and then He takes us home to heaven.
7. We too are entirely dependent on God's word and action for survival and success.