

The Life of Elijah

Elijah - the Man

1 Kings 17:1-24

Elijah - Stirs our imagination - an Old Testament Rambo - 1 against 850

Calls down fire from heaven - leaves on a fiery chariot

Background - over 800 years before Christ

Jewish nation divided after King Solomon - Israel with 10 tribes and Judah with 2 tribes

Israel in the north followed Jeroboam and he molded a calf to worship

All the kings of the northern kingdom were evil and evil grew

The 6th King Omri **1 Kings 16:25** *But Omri did what was evil in the LORD's sight, even more than any of the kings before him.*

His son Ahab was the one on the throne

1 Kings 16:25 *But Ahab son of Omri did what was evil in the LORD's sight, even more than any of the before him.*

Ahab married Jezebel and Baal worship was installed as state religion

I. Outstanding Facts about Elijah

A. His birth and heritage - almost nothing is known

Gilead - east of Jordan River - mountainous (back woods)

Tisbe - unknown small town - meaning "the stranger here"

B. His Name - Elijah means "God is Lord" or "God is my Lord"

Nothing is written of His calling or upbringing

C. His Miracles - He prayed for drought and it came 3 ½ years

He raised the widow's son from death - He called down fire

There were four miracle periods in Bible times. They were clustered around critical periods in human history. Miracles were prominent in the days of Moses and Joshua, the time of Elijah and Elisha, the period of Daniel in exile, and the days of Christ and the Apostles.

Other long periods of Bible history are passed over without any record of unusual miracles.

For example, Abraham never performed a miracle; King David was not a miracle worker; John the Baptist did no miracles (**John 10:41**). God has protected the significance of miracles by the rarity of their occurrence.

Elijah was fed miraculously three times - Ravens (**1 Kings 17:6**), the widows unending flour and oil (**1 Kings 17:9**) and an angel (**1 Kings 19:5-8**)

D. His "death" chariot of fire - One of two who did not die

Enoch - **Genesis 5:24** Elijah - **2 Kings 2:11**

E. He appeared with Moses talking with Jesus - **Matthew 17:1-13**

II. Ordinary feelings of Elijah **James 5:17**

A. He was confused by God at times **1 Kings 17:20**

B. He was fearful for his life **1 Kings 19:3** *Elijah was afraid and fled for his life. He went to Beersheba, a town in Judah, and he left his servant there.*

He stood up to King Ahab and 850 false prophets but fled from Jezebel's threats

C. He was prone to depression

He wanted to die **1 Kings 19:4**

He imagined he was the only one serving God

He slept for days at a time - He fled far from everyone

He was filled with self-pity

III. Obedient following of Elijah

What made this ordinary man so extraordinary?

A. He was a man of prayer

He spoke to God "earnestly" openly and often

He spoke honestly - even complaining to God

He took God at His word - and told others

He trusted God even in His struggles - O God, my God

He asked for the impossible - no rain, resurrection, fire from God

B. He was aware of the presence and power of God

1 Kings 17:1 *Now Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the settlers of Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the LORD, the God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, surely there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word."*

As the Lord, the God of Israel lives - He was sure

Before whom I stand - are the words of Gabriel also **Luke 1:19**

Neither dew nor rain - God is in control

C. He was obedient even when he did not understand

Go to the King (who could kill you)

Hide yourself and I will feed you (ravens were unclean animals)

Go to Zarephath (in the land of Jezebel and Baal worship)

Let a widow feed you.

Lessons we should learn from Elijah the Man

1. God uses ordinary people - even those who struggle with physical or mental problems

2. It does not depend on our strength, intellect but our awareness of God and His power

3. God is looking for people to believe and obey His Word

4. With God we can overcome any foe even ourselves