

#19 Elijah | June 17, 2018

Leading Up to Elijah

- After the death of King Solomon, the Jewish nation split into the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah.
- The Northern Kingdom (with 10 tribes) never had a good king. The Kingdom was rebellious from the beginning and rejected God's promise for an everlasting Kingdom through David's dynasty.
- Though prophets were selected and used by God at least since the days of Enoch, the period of the divided monarchy through John the Baptist was the age in which God chiefly spoke to man through prophets. Elijah was the first major prophet of this time period.

Israel Leading Up to Elijah

- Jeroboam was the first King, and created his own religion.
- Nadab continued the idolatry, until assassinated by his military commander, Baasha.
- Baasha, reigned over 20 years of bloodshed.
- Elah, a drunk killed by his servant, Zimri.
- Zimri, had a seven day reign of fear.
- Omri, a 12-year reign of more evil than anyone before him.
- Ahab, the worst of the worst, who did more to provoke the Lord than any other king – 1 Kings 16:33-34.
 - Elijah's ministry was during the time of Ahab and directed against Ahab.

Introducing Elijah | 1 Kings 17

- Our first introduction to Elijah is in his declaration that will not rain except at his word – v. 1.
- During the drought, God first provided for Elijah through the ravens at the brook called Cherith – vv. 2-7.
- After the brook dried, God provided miraculously, also providing for a widow at Zerephath – vv. 8-16.
 - In Luke 4:25-28, Jesus commends this widow.
 - Why does Jesus mention her and Naaman, and why does such a mention elicit feelings of wrath from the local Nazareans?

- An interesting possibility is that the Jewish Rabbis taught that Jonah, son of Ammattai, of nearby Gath-Hepher (2 Kings 14:25) was the son of this widow. Could it be that during the famine the people of the region around Nazareth did not provide for the widow of Ammatai, so she had to flee to Zarephath (like Naomi) for provision?
- Furthermore, the Rabbis teach that Naaman was the "certain man" of 1 Kings 22:34.
- If these two things are correct, then the local Nazareans would have "baggage" with both of these individuals.

Elijah's Great Confrontation | 1 Kings 18:17-40

- Elijah was considered the "troubler of Israel" by Ahab, but the idolatry of Ahab was the real trouble – 1 Kings 18:17-18.
- Elijah confronted the idolatry of Israel head on – 1 Kings 18:19-21.
- The confrontation ended in a mass recognition that God was sovereign - 1 Kings 18:22-40.

Elijah's "Rapture" | 2 Kings 2:1-11

- Knowing he would soon be taken to heaven, Elijah sought to go alone to the place of his departure, but Elisha, his apprentice, insisted on following – 2 Kings 2:1-10.
- Elijah became the second man who went to heaven without experiencing physical death – 2 Kings 2:11.
- The "rapture" of Elijah has become a symbol of encouragement for those in troubled times.
- The "rapture" of Elijah gives speculation that Elijah may be one of the Two Witnesses who will **have power to shut up heaven, that it may not rain** and to call down the other plagues of the Tribulation time, for a period of 3 ½ years – Revelation 11:6.

Things You May Not Know

- At every Passover seder, the Jewish people invite Elijah the Prophet to their meal. There are several reasons for this, but the chief is that Elijah is the one who will usher in the Messianic Kingdom (Malachi 4:5-6).
- The Jewish people believe that Elijah will be the one who informs each Jew of their tribal ancestry.
- In the KJV New Testament, the Greek form of Elijah is used, *Elias*. They are the same person, but Joseph Smith, founder of the Mormon church, did not know this, and spoke of a time when both Elias and Elijah came to him as two different men at the same vision.