



Elijah

“The Faithful”

"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." I Kings 17:1

As a youth, I think the only thing I knew about Elijah was a bad joke that was sometimes used in Bible Quizzes. It said that the automobile was first mentioned in the Bible when “Elijah went up on high.” (We had high gear in cars in those days!) But I’m getting far ahead of the story.

Elijah was a faithful servant even to the point of endangering his own life. One day he appeared to Ahab, a wicked king who had been greatly influenced by his wife Jezebel. Jezebel worshipped Baal and she had convinced Ahab to leave the God of Israel and worship Baal.

After Elijah delivered God’s message Ahab, God told him to go away and He would provide for him. He went to a ravine east of the Jordan River and stayed there. The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning and bread and meat in the evening, and he drank from the brook.

Eventually the river dried up because there was no rain, so God told him to stay with a widow named Zarephath and her son. The New Testament is filled with the miracles of Christ, but there are so many miracles in the Old Testament also where God gave power to his faithful followers and protected them. We all know of the miracles of Moses and Aaron when they had to convince the king to let their people go, but do you know about the woman and her oil that never ran out? That woman was Zarephath.

When Elijah arrived at the home of Zarephath, he saw her at the gate of the city gathering sticks for a fire. Elijah asked her for water. Then as she started to get the water, he added that she should also bring him some bread to eat. She replied that she only had a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a bottle. Elijah told her not to worry just make him a biscuit first and then she would have enough to make some for her son and for her. It seems rather cruel, but she did as Elijah commanded. He also told her the God of Israel would provide for them and the flour and the oil would never run dry, and it didn’t. But the son became ill and died. Elijah called upon God to bring him back to life and He did. Then the woman knew for sure and told Elijah she realized that he truly was “a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth.” I Kings 17:24.

After three years of drought God sent Elijah back to Ahab. He asked the king to assemble all the false prophets, 850 of them. Then he placed a sacrificial bull on an altar and poured barrels of water on it. He prayed to God “Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that You are God in Israel and I am Your servant, and that I have done all these things at Your word. Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that You are the Lord God, and that You have turned their hearts back to You again.” (1 Kings 18:36, 37) The fire not only consumed the altar and the bull, but Elijah had all the false prophets killed. Others fell on their faces and acknowledged that God was the true God of Israel, and that evening it rained.

Jezebel was upset. The prophets who had been killed were her friends and servants and she threatened Elijah’s life. God sent Elijah away again for safety. Again God proved food and strength. But Elijah was still upset’ he felt alone. God told him to go stand on the mountain and He would speak to him. Hurricane winds ripped by and shattered rock, but God wasn’t in the wind. There was an earthquake, but God wasn’t in the earthquake, and there was a fire, but God wasn’t in the fire. After the fire was a gentle whisper and God spoke to Elijah. God told him that there were more than 7,000 who had become believers in the true God and he had to go back to anoint the new kings and anoint a man named Elisha to be his successor.

Perhaps the most controversial event of Elijah’s life happened after this. As he was talking with Elisha, a strong wind arose and he was carried away in a chariot and horses of fire. As far as we know, he never saw death as we know it. Elijah vanished more mysteriously than he had first appeared. We do know that he appeared with Christ and Moses at the transfiguration.

Prayer: Dear God. Thank You for the revelations that You have given us in Your Holy Word. Although we don’t always understand, we know that You are powerful and will always be there for us, sometimes not in the way we want, but if we allow You to be in charge, You will always be there. Help us to show others by our never running from a situation where we can witness for You that You are our Lord and Saviour. Amen

1. We know the entire lineage of Christ, why not Elijah?

2. We are told in I Kings 19:11-18 that God appeared to Elijah in a still small voice. Does He ever appear to you in your silence?
3. Elijah sought the Lord. Is there a danger in our seeking the Lord and His will for our lives?
4. What is the purpose of the miracles performed for a by Elijah for then? And for us today?
5. If a prophet gave you a warning, how would you receive the news? Remember that the warning can come from another person like Elijah. It doesn't always come from an angel!

*The name is Elijah in Hebrew as found in the Old Testament, and Elias in Greek as found in the New Testament.

© Gail Kennedy Keffer