***Life of Elijah***

The Kingdom of Israel was split after the death of King Solomon. His son, Rehoboam, controlled the Southern part called Judah while Jeroboam, a prior servant of King Solomon, ruled the northern territory called Israel. God had supported Jeroboam initially but Jeroboam did not keep his conditions and fell into idolatry. Thus the northern 10 tribes were ultimately destroyed by the Assyrians. The southern part called Judah was relatively more faithful and so endured to this day.

So the prophet Elijah was sent to Israel to save the 10 tribes from being conquered and destroyed. Their worship of Baal had so indoctrinated the people that they were completely estranged from Jehovah. So Elijah and King Ahab, the Israel king at the time, agreed to clearly demonstrate who had superior power, whether gods of Baal or Jehovah by a test of fire over the sacrifice on Mount Carmel. The result was clear: gods of Baal failed while Jehovah showed His power in a whirlwind of fire. The following biblical account gives details.

**1 King 18:16…**

King Ahab (of Israel) went to meet Elijah. **17**When he saw Elijah, he said to him, “Is that you, you troubler of Israel?”

**18**“I have not made trouble for Israel,” Elijah replied. “But you and your father’s family have. You have abandoned the Lord’s commands and have followed the Baals. **19**Now summon the people from all over Israel to meet me on Mount Carmel. And bring the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and the four hundred prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel’s table.”

**20**So Ahab sent word throughout all Israel and assembled the prophets on Mount Carmel. **21**Elijah went before the people and said, “How long will you waver between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him.”

But the people said nothing.

**22**Then Elijah said to them, “I am the only one of the Lord’s prophets left, but Baal has four hundred and fifty prophets. **23**Get two bulls for us. Let Baal’s prophets choose one for themselves, and let them cut it into pieces and put it on the wood but not set fire to it. I will prepare the other bull and put it on the wood but not set fire to it. **24**Then you call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of the Lord. The god who answers by fire—he is God.”

Then all the people said, “What you say is good.”

**25**Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, “Choose one of the bulls and prepare it first, since there are so many of you. Call on the name of your god, but do not light the fire.” **26**So they took the bull given them and prepared it.

Then they called on the name of Baal from morning till noon. “Baal, answer us!” they shouted. But there was no response; no one answered. And they danced around the altar they had made.

**27**At noon Elijah began to taunt them. “Shout louder!” he said. “Surely he is a god! Perhaps he is deep in thought, or busy, or traveling. Maybe he is sleeping and must be awakened.” **28**So they shouted louder and slashed themselves with swords and spears, as was their custom, until their blood flowed. **29**Midday passed, and they continued their frantic prophesying until the time for the evening sacrifice. But there was no response, no one answered, no one paid attention.

**30**Then Elijah said to all the people, “Come here to me.” They came to him, and he repaired the altar of the Lord, which had been torn down. **31**Elijah took twelve stones, one for each of the tribes descended from Jacob, to whom the word of the Lord had come, saying, “Your name shall be Israel.” **32**With the stones he built an altar in the name of the Lord, and he dug a trench around it large enough to hold two seahs[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Kings%2018&version=NIV#fen-NIV-9374a)] of seed. **33**He arranged the wood, cut the bull into pieces and laid it on the wood. Then he said to them, “Fill four large jars with water and pour it on the offering and on the wood.”

**34**“Do it again,” he said, and they did it again.

“Do it a third time,” he ordered, and they did it the third time. **35**The water ran down around the altar and even filled the trench.

**36**At the time of sacrifice, the prophet Elijah stepped forward and prayed: “Lord, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant and have done all these things at your command. **37**Answer me, Lord, answer me, so these people will know that you, Lord, are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again.”

**38**Then the fire of the Lord fell and burned up the sacrifice, the wood, the stones and the soil, and also licked up the water in the trench.

**39**When all the people saw this, they fell prostrate and cried, “The Lord—he is God! The Lord—he is God!”

**40**Then Elijah commanded them, “Seize the prophets of Baal. Don’t let anyone get away!” They seized them, and Elijah had them brought down to the Kishon Valley and slaughtered there.

Even then, Elijah was not heeded and king Ahab and his wicked wife, Jezebel, sought to kill him.

Elijah was distraught. Yes, even prophets commissioned by God can have their down days, depressed days, and days where their faith is shaken. So God says, “your work is not in vain. Find successor, Elisha, and I will do the ‘heavy lifting’”. (Ed. Note: God may not have said those exact words, but being that no one can vouch for exactly what God said, only the main thrust of His message, one can surmise and paraphrase what God said. That was an editorial prerogative. Another point to note is that much of scripture was based on oral tradition and when it was time to write things down permanently, there was always a question of which story or version of a story is more authoritative or authentic. Sometimes the decision is made to include both, as was the case for the creation story. This explain why there seems to be two creation stories where God created the world and then He created the world again. Read Chapter 1 and 2 of the book of Genesis.

**1 King 17-19 tells a fascinating story of the prophet Elijah.**

 In summary, Prophet Elijah was sent to restore the Israelites’ faith in Jehovah. All the prophets that sent were killed and he was the past one. This means this is the last chance for Israel to regain faith in Jehovah or be lost to the false gods of Baal forever. This was the last days.

 The last days of one era can be seen as the beginning of a new era. If the king and the people would have repented and turn to Jehovah once again, a new history would have emerged. As it was, Elijah’s mission can be said to have failed in its goal. The objective was not reached. The people of Israel did not repent and did not welcome God’s promise which was always to build the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth.

 This failure to accomplish such a goal would be left to Elijah’s 2nd Coming, as predicted in Malachi 4:5. God said, “I will send you the prophet Elijah” before the Coming of the Great and dreadful Day of the Lord. The outcome is never predetermined. Because men are fickle and may or may not obey God and His commandments, even God can not predict what will happen, thus the bible often gives dual prophecies. If we read Deuteronomy 28, it is clear that the outcome depends on man’s fulfilling his responsibility to do God’s Will. If he remains faithful, good things or God’s blessing will rain down upon us. But if man falters and goes astray and starts to worship Gods of Baal, like money and power and position, to name a few of the vices, then lawlessness and destruction may ensue.

 Elijah finally ascended into heaven in a whirlwind, some add whirlwind of fire, while others prefer fiery chariot. Read 2 King 2.

 From that time forward, the Jewish faithful awaits the return of Elijah in their annual Passover celebration by setting aside an offering for Elijah.