

The Story of Elijah Part 1

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Introduction

- We first read of Elijah in 1 Kgs. 17:1
- Later:
 - Malachi predicts that Elijah would come before the great and dreadful day of the Lord (Mal. 4:5).
 - Jesus says that John the baptizer fulfilled that prophecy (Matt. 11:14).

Also:

- At the transfiguration with Moses (Matt. 17:3)
- On the cross, when Jesus cried out, "My God, My God... some thought that He was crying for Elijah (Matt. 27:47, 49)
- James says that Elijah was a man with a nature like ours (Jas. 5:17).

The Historical setting

- 1st and 2nd Samuel record:
 - The establishment, consolidation and extension of the OT kingdom of God in the reigns of David and his son Solomon.
 - This was God's blessing for their obedience (Ex. 19:4-6; Deut. 4:6-11, 28-30)

The Historical setting

- Then Solomon who began well began to act foolishly in the middle of his reign:
 - Allowed idolatry through his wives
 - Added heavy taxes upon the people

David

was raised in the open, watching sheep, and later experienced the testings of a fugitive life.

became a king of action, aggressive and efficient, who could personally lead armies to victory.

His court never grew larger than the requirements of his government.

maintained a vibrant faith in God as a “man after God’s own heart.”

Solomon

knew only the ease of the palace, with its attendant luxuries

became a king of peace, happy to stay home and content merely to retain the land his father had gained.

became lavish to suit his tastes and expensive appetites. As a result, he needed more revenue and raised taxes.

began well spiritually, but failed to maintain this basic relationship before God.

The Historical setting

- The Kingdom divides
 - In the south – Rehoboam
 - A young man of wealth
 - In the north – Jeroboam
 - He and his successors never were faithful

The Historical setting

- Jeroboam was evil but by the time Ahab became king things were at an all time low.
- Idolatry reached an all-time high even to the point of seeking to stamp out the worship of God altogether.

Baal, the god of Canaan

- Baal, a Semitic word that means "lord, master, or owner," was the chief god worshipped by the Canaanites.

Baal, the god of Canaan

- Baal was the most popular because he was considered the god of fertility in all aspects of life--human, animal, and vegetable.

Baal, the god of Canaan

- Worship was localized so that each area worshipped its own Baal.
- Baal worship included:
 - The offering of incense and burnt sacrifices (Jer. 7:9)
 - Sometimes the offering of human sacrifices (Jer. 19:5)
 - It especially included licentious sexual activity--including sodomy (cf. 1 Kgs. 14:23-24; 15:12; with 22:46).

Elijah lived in tough times

- So do we! (Psa. 11:3, 1)
 - In our world our foundations are being destroyed by godless humanism.
 - The slaughter of innocent children and sodomy are sure indications that the foundations of a society have crumbled.