



# ELIJAH AND ELISHA

MESSENGERS IN WORD AND DEED

# Turn the Hearts

- Elijah's goal was to turn the hearts of God's people back to Him.
- Malachi 4:5–6 and Luke 1:13–17
- Elijah is the most influential prophet of the Old Testament besides Moses.

# Turn the Hearts

- Elijah did great miracles, challenged the 450 prophets of Baal, and never died but was taken up into heaven in a whirlwind by a chariot of fire.
- Ever since Malachi was written, Jews have believed that Moses (representing the law) and Elijah (representing the prophets) will return before the Messiah and the end times (Deuteronomy 18:15–22; Malachi 4:5–6).



# Turn the Hearts

- Jews sing about the return of Elijah at the end of every Sabbath and pray for his return “speedily in our time.”
- At the end of the Passover Seder, they pour a glass of wine for Elijah and open the door to invite him in, reflecting their hope in the coming of the Messiah one day
- When Jesus was transfigured on the mountain, it was Moses and Elijah who appeared and talked with Him.

# Elijah Cup



# Turn the Hearts

- Elijah and Elisha are central characters in the books of Kings.
- Elijah is only briefly mentioned in Chronicles because, although it covers the same period of history, the theological purpose of Chronicles is different.
- Kings was written during the Exile, reflecting on why God sent His people into exile.

# Turn the Hearts

- Chronicles was written after the Exile; it emphasized temple worship, the Davidic line, and Judah's spiritual life (Elijah and Elisha preached to Israel, not Judah).
- Kings emphasized the sin and idolatry of Israel and Judah, but Chronicles is a positive retelling of the history, focusing on the themes of hope and restoration.

# Turn the Hearts

- Elijah's name means "Yahweh is my God," while Elisha means "Yahweh is salvation."
- In the New Testament, John the Baptist came "in the spirit and power of Elijah" (Luke 1:17).
- He was also like Elijah in his physical appearance and lifestyle, living an austere life in the wilderness.

# Elijah and John the Baptist



# Turn the Hearts

- Both wore a garment of camel's hair and a leather belt, rugged and coarse in deliberate contrast to the soft luxury fabrics of the king and his well-paid prophets.
- Like Israel in the wilderness, they both lived off food provided supernaturally by God, emphasizing dependance on Him.

# Turn the Hearts

- Elijah preached repentance to God's people during a time of widespread idolatry under Ahab and Jezebel.
- John the Baptist preached during a time of spiritual corruption under Herod and Herodias.
- Both confronted corrupt rulers boldly and publicly, facing persecution and death, though Elijah was taken up to heaven, while John the Baptist was beheaded.

# Turn the Hearts

- Both served as prophetic forerunners, but Elijah's ministry wasn't technically "successful" because the people didn't really repent.
- On Mount Carmel, they did confess that Yahweh was the true God, but their repentance was brief and shallow.
- God revealed to Elijah that there was a remnant of 7,000 Israelites who had not bowed to Baal.

# Turn the Hearts

- But that doesn't mean Elijah's ministry was futile.
- Elijah's story shows us the negative result of not repenting.
- The Northern Kingdom continued in idolatry, Israel was taken into exile, and the Ten Tribes of Israel were "lost."
- By the time of Jesus, the people there were "Samaritans," a mix of people groups and religions.

# Turn the Hearts

- Jesus described John the Baptist as “the Elijah who is to come” (Matthew 11:14).
- Their message was the same, but John was successful, not because John was any better than Elijah but because of Jesus.
- The “failure” of Elijah’s ministry shows us that the law cannot save.

# Turn the Hearts

- The ministry of Jesus shows us that God didn't give up on the Ten Tribes that were lost.
- The longest theological conversation Jesus had was with a Samaritan woman whose theology was a little bit of Israelite religion distorted and mixed with paganism.
- Jesus returned to the land where Elijah "failed" and redeemed his ministry.

# Turn the Hearts

- Elijah prophesied a drought; Jesus told the Samaritan woman He was the living water (John 4:10–14).
- Elijah called Israel to worship the true God on Mount Carmel; when the Samaritan woman asked which mountain to worship on, Jesus called her to worship in spirit and in truth (John 4:23).

# Turn the Hearts

- Where Elijah saw stubborn hearts, Jesus saw the fields ripe for harvest (John 4:35). Elijah confronted the nation and only a remnant believed, but Jesus talked to one woman and many believed (John 4:39).
- Elijah's ministry wasn't a failure; it just wasn't finished. Jesus fulfilled what Elijah had preached almost a thousand years before.

# God is our Provider

- God is our provider and our hiding place in times of trouble.
- 1 Kings 17:1–6
- Just after Kings tells us that Ahab did more evil than any ruler before him by his worship of Baal and Asherah, God's prophet Elijah came, prophesying drought.

# God is our Provider

- Elijah was from Tishbe in Gilead, in the Transjordan, east of the Jordan River. This was technically outside of the Promised Land.
- It was not part of the original allotment of the 12 tribes, but some of the tribes asked Moses to settle there, and he allowed it.
- This made Elijah somewhat of an “outsider.”

# God is our Provider

- This was not a random prophecy; drought was one of the curses of breaking the covenant, as rain was a blessing for keeping it (Deuteronomy 28:24).
- The curses were not unfair; this was a normal part of ancient covenants.
- Every covenant had stipulations, with blessings for keeping them and curses for breaking them.

# God is our Provider

- Theologically, the drought/rain as a curse/blessing shows us that following God brings life and flourishing, while turning away from Him brings death and destruction.
- When God made the covenant with Israel at Sinai, they committed to these terms, including the curses if they disobeyed. Elijah was simply pronouncing a punishment to which they had already agreed.

# God is our Provider

- The drought was also a direct challenge to Baal, whom the pagans believed controlled the rain.
- By withholding rain and having it come at only His prophet's word, God showed His supremacy over the false "gods" of the nations.
- Only Yahweh has the power to control the rain; these "gods" were no gods at all (Deuteronomy 32:17).

# God is our Provider

- God told Elijah to hide by the brook of Cherith so he could drink directly from it.
- Even when there was drought, Elijah would have water because he put his trust in God.
- The ravens brought Elijah bread and meat in the morning and in the evening, echoing how God provided for the Israelites in the wilderness after the Exodus.

# God is our Provider

- James used this story to reflect on the power of the prayers of “the righteous.”
- A Gospel definition of righteous isn’t about our own righteous works but about our faith in the Righteous One (Romans 3:22).
- Elijah was a prophet, but he wasn’t magic; he was “a man with a nature like ours.”

# God is our Provider

- When he prayed for drought, it did not rain, and when he prayed for rain, the heavens opened. Elijah's effectiveness wasn't related to any superhuman power, but the fact that he prayed with intensity for what God told him to pray.
- There is an important theological distinction to be made here. This isn't saying that if you're righteous enough, God will give you whatever you ask for.

# God is our Provider

- God told Elijah to go into hiding where God would provide for him and protect him from Ahab and Jezebel, who would have been seeking to kill him because of his condemnation of their idolatry.
- This reminds us of the way the Psalms talk about God as our refuge or hiding place, especially when David wrote about hiding from Saul when Saul was trying to kill him.

# God is our Provider

- God cares for the vulnerable and loves His enemies.
- 1 Kings 17:7–16
- God supernaturally provided for Elijah in hiding by the brook of Cherith until the brook dried up.
- Then God told him to go to Zarephath in Sidon, where Jezebel was from, where her father was the king.

# The Two Kingdoms

Mt. Carmel

Zarephath

Sea of Galilee

Jerusalem



Kingdom of Israel

Kingdom of Judah

UPPER GALILEE

LOWER GALILEE

SAMARIA

JUDEA

IDUMEA

EDOM

MOAB

MISHOR

PHOENICIA

BASHAN

AMMON

GILGAD

AMMON

AMMON

AMMON

AMMON

AMMON

AMMON

AMMON

AMMON

AMMON

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AMMON

AMMON

# God is our Provider

- Elijah went from hiding from Ahab and Jezebel right into enemy territory.
- Jezebel led God's people in worshipping Baal and Asherah, yet the person God ordained for Elijah to meet there stands in contrast to Jezebel.
- Jezebel was a wealthy, powerful queen; the widow of Zarephath was poor and powerless.

# God is our Provider

- Widows were typically poor when they didn't have a grown son to care for them, but this widow and her son were on the brink of starvation.
- She only had a handful of flour and a tiny bit of oil to prepare their last "meal" before they died.
- Yet Elijah asked her to use it to make a tiny cake for him.

# God is our Provider

- He said the Lord of Israel promised her oil and flour would not run out until the drought was over.
- This was a big ask of faith.
- She wasn't from Israel; she may not have even known about Israel's God. She could have easily thought he was crazy, yet she trusted and obeyed God's prophet.

# God is our Provider

- Jezebel had rejected the message of the prophet of the God of Israel even though she was the queen of Israel, but the poor widow embraced God's message.
- Jezebel sought to kill the Lord's prophets, but the widow gave Elijah the last little bit of food she had.

# God is our Provider

- Jezebel had every advantage – wealth, power and knowledge of Israel's God, but she rejected Him. The widow had no wealth, no power, no knowledge of God, yet she believed.
- Jezebel died in the street, but the widow received life.
- God's Word divides the proud from the humble, and the humble receive life and blessing.

# Resources

