

Sermon Outline

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Title: Elijah (Heroes of Faith Series)

Sub-Title: The Power of Prayer

Introduction

Elijah appeared in the Land of Israel at a most crucial time when Ahab, son of Omri was king of the Northern Kingdom. Yes, Ahab sat as king, but the true ruler of the land was his wife, Jezebel. She was a Phoenician princess born to King Ethbaal who could also have served as Phoenician priest. Some scholars suggest that Jezebel could also have served as a priestess when she was growing up. She never gave up her Phoenician way of life. Her influence was very great not merely over her husband, but throughout the kingdom, and as a result, the worship of Baal, the god of the Phoenicians, spread with ever greater force, and was the cause of much trouble that befell the land of Israel.

There is need to understand Baal worship for you to understand how great a man Prophet Elijah was. Baal was the supreme male divinity of the Phoenicians and Canaanites. He was also called the Lord of Rain and Dew, the two forms of moisture that were indispensable for fertile soil in Canaan. Because agriculture was the mainstay of the Canaanites all farmers believed that Baal worship increased the soil moisture content and fertility and the overall crop yield. So Baal worship was not just a religious activity, but commercial force at the time Elijah jumps on to the scene. Let me introduce you to the man.

At the end of this sermon I want you to remember Elijah as a man of powerful prayers. This is what prayer achieved for Elijah:

1. Paralyzes the Evil System

Elijah's first prayer project was to paralyze Baalism which had become institutionalized with 850 prophets on government payroll. Because everyone believed Baal was responsible for rain, Elijah arbitrarily closed all the tapes and took away the keys to the brook of Cherith for 3,5 years. In verse 1, Elijah said to Ahab, *"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." Meaning the prayer that locked the tapes will be the only key to unlock them.

From that day years of drought and famine began in the Land of Israel. The famine spread even abroad, beyond the borders of the land, so that no bread could be purchased for its weight in gold!

2. Prayer Makes Provisions

While he was in the brook, Elijah prayed and his prayer released miraculous food. Indeed, twice daily, in the morning and in the evening, the ravens came and brought him bread and meat from the royal table of the King of Judah. Imagine the king's surprise when the ravens swooped down upon his table and disappeared again with part of his meal! When this became a regular occurrence the king ordered that a special portion of bread and meat be served with his meals, and the ravens never failed to pick it up.

3. Prayer Multiplies Provisions

When Elijah reached the gates of Zarephath in the land of Sidon, he saw a woman gathering sticks. Elijah called to her, "Please bring me a little water and a morsel of bread". "All I have," answered the good woman, "is a handful of meal in a jar and a little oil in a cruse. I was just going to prepare the last meal for my child and myself. Shall I give it to you?" "Fear not," the Prophet assured her. "Go and bake a little cake for me first, and then you will bake some cake for yourself and your son. For these are the words of God: 'The jar of meal shall not waste, nor shall the cruse of oil fail, until God sends rain and the famine will be over!'"

4. Prayer Restores Life

Before Elijah left the widow, he had occasion to repay her for her kindness over and above the miraculous provision of flour and oil. It came to pass that her little son fell very sick and was about to die. As all hopes to save his life seemed at an end, Elijah prayed to God and revived him.

5. Prayer Brings Down Fire from Heaven

We have heard about how Jezebel's 850 prophets who had enjoyed her protection and hospitality for several years were slaughtered by Elijah at Kishon Valley after their prayers failed to bring down fire at Mount Carmel.

6. Prayer Calls into Existence Things that are NOT

In 1Kings 18 v 41 Elijah said to Ahab, "Go, eat and drink, for there is the sound of a heavy rain." ⁴² So Ahab went off to eat and drink, but Elijah climbed to the top of Carmel, bent down to the ground and put his face between his knees. When he sent his servant to give him a weather update, there was nothing until the seventh time when prayer caused a small cloud to develop in the sky which later developed into a storm.

7. Prayer Accelerates

The Bible shows how prayer caused divine acceleration in Elijah.

⁴⁵ Meanwhile, the sky grew black with clouds, the wind rose, a heavy rain started falling and Ahab rode off to Jezreel. ⁴⁶ The power of the LORD came on Elijah and, tucking his cloak into his belt, he ran ahead of Ahab all the way to Jezreel.

8. Prayer Releases Everlasting Anointing

Elijah had anointing that could be passed on from generation to generation. When he passed on his mantle to Elisha, the latter did twice as many miracles as he did, including raising a dead man just by contact with his remains.

Conclusion

James 5:16-17

"Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man has great power to prevail. **17** Elijah was a man just like us. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years..."

We can as well experience the Power of Prayer in our dispensation.