

Elijah the Prophet

I Kings

When it was time to present the meal offering, the prophet Elijah came forward and said, “O LORD, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel! Let it be known today that You are God in Israel and that I am Your servant, and that I have done all these things at Your bidding. ³⁷Answer me, O LORD, answer me, that this people may know that You, O LORD, are God; for You have turned their hearts backward.”

³⁸Then fire from the LORD descended and consumed the burnt offering, the wood, the stones, and the earth; and it licked up the water that was in the trench. ³⁹When they saw this, all the people flung themselves on their faces and cried out: “The LORD alone is God, The LORD alone is God!”

⁴⁰Then Elijah said to them, “Seize the prophets of Baal, let not a single one of them get away.” They seized them, and Elijah took them down to the Wadi Kishon and slaughtered them there.

When Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done and how he had put all the prophets to the sword, Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, “Thus and more may the gods do if by this time tomorrow I have not made you like one of them...”

Then the word of the LORD came to him. He said to him, “Why are you here, Elijah?” ¹⁰He replied, “I am moved by zeal for the LORD, the God of Hosts, for the Israelites have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and put Your prophets to the sword. I alone am left, and they are out to take my life.” ¹¹“Come out,” He called, “and stand on the mountain before the LORD.”

And lo, the LORD passed by. There was a great and mighty wind, splitting mountains and shattering rocks by the power of the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind—an earthquake; but the LORD was not in the earthquake. ¹²After the earthquake—fire; but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire—a soft murmuring sound. ¹³When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his mantle about his face and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. Then a voice addressed him: “Why are you here, Elijah?” ¹⁴He answered, “I am moved by zeal for the LORD, the God of Hosts; for the Israelites have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and have put Your prophets to the sword. I alone am left, and they are out to take my life.”

The LORD said to him... “anoint Elisha son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah to succeed you as prophet.

[The following events] occurred sometime afterward: Naboth the Jezreelite owned a vineyard in Jezreel, adjoining the palace of King Ahab of Samaria. ²Ahab said to Naboth, “Give me your vineyard, so that I may have it as a vegetable garden, since it is right next to my palace. I will give you a better vineyard in exchange; or, if you prefer, I will pay you the price in money.” ³But Naboth replied, “The LORD forbid that I should give up to you what I have inherited from my fathers!” ⁴Ahab went home dispirited and sullen because of the answer that Naboth the Jezreelite had given him: “I will not give up to you what I have inherited from my fathers!” He lay down on his bed and turned away his face, and he would not eat. ⁵His wife Jezebel came to him and asked him, “Why are you so dispirited that you won’t eat?” ⁶So he told her...

⁸So she wrote letters in Ahab’s name and sealed them with his seal, and sent the letters to the elders and the nobles who lived in the same town with Naboth. ⁹In the letters she wrote as follows: “Proclaim a fast and seat Naboth at the front of the assembly. ¹⁰And seat two scoundrels

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opposite him, and let them testify against him: ‘You have reviled God and king!’ Then take him out and stone him to death....”

¹⁷Then the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite: ¹⁸“Go down and confront King Ahab of Israel who [resides] in Samaria. He is now in Naboth’s vineyard; he has gone down there to take possession of it. ¹⁹Say to him, ‘Thus said the LORD: Would you murder and take possession? Thus said the LORD: In the very place where the dogs lapped up Naboth’s blood, the dogs will lap up your blood too.’”

Malachi 3

Behold, I am sending My messenger to clear the way before Me, and the Lord whom you seek shall come to His Temple suddenly. As for the angel of the covenant that you desire, he is already coming.... ¹

Lo, I will send the prophet Elijah to you before the coming of the awesome, fearful day of the LORD. ²⁴He shall reconcile parents with children and children with their parents, so that, when I come, I do not strike the whole land with utter destruction.

Lo, I will send the prophet Elijah to you before
the coming of the awesome, fearful day of the LORD.²

Malbim

He showed him that God is not to be found in the camp of wind, earthquake and fire; [He is to be found] only in a small, silent voice. From this God's emissaries and prophets are to learn that they should not "raise a storm," nor cause the earth to quake, nor cause fire to burn (as Eliyahu did in his zealotry for the Lord of Hosts – by shutting up the heavens and by slaughtering the prophets of Ba'al). God sends His prophets to go to [the people] with a silent voice – (i.e.,) to draw the nation with cords of love and with soft words.

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And Elijah got up and fled from the land of Israel and took refuge, as it said: And he got up, ate and drank.’ (1 Kings 19:8) And the Holy One, Blessed be He, revealed Himself to him and said: ‘Why are you here, Elijah?’ (Ibid. 9) And Elijah responded: ‘I am moved by zeal for the Lord.’ (Ibid. 10) God replied: ‘You are always zealous. You were jealous at Shittim over sexual impropriety.’ [See Numbers 25:11. The midrash identifies Elijah with Pinhas.] And now, you are jealous again? By your life, Israel will not perform a single brit milah that you will not see with your own eyes! From this we learn that the Sages decreed that a seat of honor be set aside for the Angel of the covenant [who is identified with Elijah], as it is written: ‘As for the angel of the covenant that you desire, he is already coming.’

¹ Jewish Publication Society. (1985). *Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures* (Mal 3:1). Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society.² Jewish Publication Society. (1985). *Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures* (Mal 3:23–24). Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society.

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