

Elijah, the Tishbite

Mt. Carmel

1 Kings 18:36–46

Elijah Prays — Twice

The people assemble upon Mount Carmel, a place of beauty when the dew and rain fall upon it causing it to flourish; but now its beauty is languishing under the curse of God. Upon this mount, which was the excellency of groves and flowers, Baal's prophets had erected altars for their pagan worship. This mountain was conspicuous; it overlooked the surrounding countries and was in sight of a large portion of the kingdom. As God had been signally dishonored by the idolatrous worship carried on here, Elijah chose this as the most conspicuous place for the display of God's power and to vindicate His honor.

(3T 279.3)

Elijah — A Man of Prayer

Unbelief was fast separating the chosen nation from the Source of their strength. **Viewing this apostasy** from his mountain retreat, Elijah was overwhelmed with sorrow. In anguish of soul **he besought God** to arrest the once-favored people in their wicked course, to visit them with judgments, if need be, that they might be led to see in its true light their departure from Heaven.

(PK 119.2)

While Israel was apostatizing, Elijah remained a loyal and true prophet of God. His faithful soul was greatly distressed as he saw that unbelief and infidelity were fast separating the children of Israel from God, and **he prayed that God would save His people**. He entreated that the Lord would not wholly cast away His sinning people, but that He would by judgments if necessary arouse them to repentance and not permit them to go to still greater lengths in sin and thus provoke Him to destroy them as a nation. (*3T 273.2*)

Through the long years of drought and famine, **Elijah prayed earnestly** that the hearts of Israel might be turned from idolatry to allegiance to God. Patiently the prophet waited, while the hand of the Lord rested heavily on the stricken land. As he saw evidences of suffering and want multiplying on every side, his heart was wrung with sorrow, and he longed for power to bring about a reformation quickly. But God Himself was working out His plan, and all that His servant could do was to pray on in faith and await the time for decided action. (*PK 133*)

While engaged in our daily work, we should lift the soul to heaven in prayer. These silent petitions rise like incense before the throne of grace; and the enemy is baffled. The Christian whose heart is thus stayed upon God cannot be overcome. No evil arts can destroy his peace. All the promises of God's word, all the power of divine grace, all the resources of Jehovah, are pledged to secure his deliverance. It was thus that Enoch walked with God. And God was with him, a present help in every time of need. (*GW* 254.2)

When Elijah came to the widow of Sarepta, she shared her morsel with the prophet of God, and he wrought a miracle, and caused that in that act of making a home for his servant, and sharing her morsel with him, she herself was sustained, and her life and **that of her son preserved**. Thus will it prove in the case of many, if they do this cheerfully, for the glory of God. (*2T 28.2*)

Sarepta. That is, Zarephath, a city on the seacoast about 15 mi. north of Tyre. Christ related the incident here mentioned as His first illustration of the truth He sought to convey . . . [that] it was lack of faith on the part of the townsfolk of Nazareth that prevented Him from performing miracles there (Mark 6:5, 6). (R. F. Cottrell, *SDA BC*)

I have heard many excuse themselves from inviting to their homes and hearts the saints of God. “Why, I have nothing prepared, I have nothing cooked; they must go to some other place.” And at that place there may be some other excuse invented for not receiving those who need hospitality, and the feelings of the visitors are deeply grieved, and they leave with unpleasant impressions in regard to the hospitality of these professed brethren and sisters. (*2T 28.2*)

The widow of Sarepta shared her morsel with Elijah, and in return her life and that of her son were preserved. And to all who in time of trial and want give sympathy and assistance to others more needy, God has promised great blessing. He has not changed. His power is no less now than in the days of Elijah. And no less sure now than when spoken by our Saviour is the promise, “He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet’s reward.” (*RH* August 28, 1913, par. 9)

He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. (Matthew 10:41)

Receiveth a prophet. That is, receives a prophet into his home and treats him as a prophet.

In the name of a prophet. That is, because he is a prophet, or is recognized as a prophet. The widow of Zarephath undoubtedly received Elijah as a prophet, because he was a prophet; otherwise, she would likely have refused to extend to him the hospitality he requested of her. The same was true of the Shunammite woman who received Elisha into her home.

A prophet's reward. Probably meaning a reward worthy to be bestowed by a prophet or upon one. The widow of Zarephath received an ample supply of food in the midst of a drought, and her son was restored to life. Similarly, the Shunammite woman received a bountiful reward, having been granted a son by God and having received him back alive when he died. (R. F. Cottrell, *SDA BC*)



That God who sent the ravens to feed Elijah by the brook Cherith, will not pass by one of His faithful, self-sacrificing children. Of him that walketh righteously it is written, “Bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure.” “They shall not be ashamed in the evil time; and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied.” “He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?” (*ST* November 4, 1903, par. 1)

He who lightened the cares and anxieties of His widowed mother, and helped to provide for the household of Nazareth, sympathizes with every mother in her struggle to provide her children food. He who had compassion on the multitude because they “fainted and were scattered abroad,” still has compassion on the suffering poor. His hand is stretched out toward them in blessing and in the very prayer which He gave His disciples, He teaches us to remember the poor. (*ST* November 4, 1903, par. 1)

I am acquainted with a widow who has two small children to support, wholly by the use of her needle. She looks pale and careworn. All through the hard winter she has struggled to sustain herself and her children. She has received a little help, but who would feel any lack if a still greater interest were manifested in this case? Here are her two boys, aged about nine and eleven years, who need homes. Who are willing to give them homes for Christ's sake? The mother should be released from this care and close confinement to her needle. (*2T 30.1*)

Jezebel's prophets, eight hundred and fifty in number, like a regiment of soldiers prepared for battle, march out in a body with instrumental music and imposing display. But there is trembling in their hearts as they consider that at the word of this prophet of Jehovah the land of Israel has been destitute of dew and rain three years. They feel that some fearful crisis is at hand. They had trusted in their gods, but could not unsay the words of Elijah and prove him false. Their gods were indifferent to their frantic cries, prayers, and sacrifices. (*3T 279.4*)

I will *call* upon the name . . . (v. 24)

- *Call*—the root *qr*² denotes primarily the stating of a message and the expectation of a response.
- It can also mean giving the name to something. In Genesis 1:5, God does this.
- In Genesis 2:19, Adam does this also.

When we call upon the Lord . . .

- It usually has to do with a critical need—Psalm 34:6
- God responds to all who thus call on him—Psalm 145:18
- God's people (including the stranger—1 Kings 8:43) are admonished to call upon him and are assured that God will abundantly pardon (Isa 55:6, 13)
- Psalm 18:3; 2 Samuel 22:4
- Before they call, he will answer—Isaiah 65:24
- God also calls to us—Isaiah 65:12
- Psalm 79:6—God condemns us when we do not call upon him

Reminding the people of the long-continued apostasy that has awakened the wrath of Jehovah, Elijah calls upon them to humble their hearts and turn to the God of their fathers, that the curse upon the land of Israel may be removed. Then, bowing reverently before the unseen God, **he raises his hands toward heaven and offers a simple prayer.** (*PK 152.1*)

Baal's priests have screamed and foamed and leaped, from early morning until late in the afternoon; but as Elijah prays, no senseless shrieks resound over Carmel's height. He prays as if he knows Jehovah is there, a witness to the scene, a listener to his appeal. The prophets of Baal have prayed wildly, incoherently. **Elijah prays simply and fervently**, asking God to show His superiority over Baal, that Israel may be led to turn to Him. (*PK 152.1*)

No sooner is the prayer of Elijah ended than flames of fire, like brilliant flashes of lightning, descend from heaven . . . (*PK* 152.4)





And Elijah said unto them, Take the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape. And they took them: and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there.
(1 Kings 18:40)

The priests of Baal witness with consternation the wonderful revelation of Jehovah's power. Yet even in their discomfiture and in the presence of divine glory, they refuse to repent of their evil-doing. They would still remain the prophets of Baal. Thus they showed themselves ripe for destruction. That repentant Israel may be protected from the allurements of those who have taught them to worship Baal, Elijah is directed by the Lord to destroy these false teachers. (*PK 153.2*)

The anger of **the people** has already been aroused against the leaders in transgression; and when Elijah gives the command, “Take the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape,” **they** are ready to obey. They seize the priests, and take them to the brook Kishon, and there, before the close of the day that marked the beginning of decided reform, the ministers of Baal are slain. Not one is permitted to live. (*PK 153.2*)

Elijah will not have the people's zeal waste itself in mere words. He requires that they show their conversion and conviction by deeds — deeds which might bring upon them the wrath of the unholy queen, but which, once committed, will make a break between them and the cause of Baal. As a result of the wonderful manifestations of that day the multitude had acknowledged the fact that Jehovah is God — all except the priests of Baal, who had refused to repent. Elijah's summary execution of these priests was a fearful vengeance, but it was necessary and showed God's indignation against those who persist in rebellion, and who are willing to corrupt and demoralize an entire people for selfish ends. The sentence against them served both as an example and a warning. God is not to be trifled with, and a terrible retribution awaits all who will sell their souls for the corruption of the world. (E. R. Thiele, *SDA BC*)



And Elijah said unto
Ahab, Get thee up,
eat and drink; for
there is a sound of
abundance of rain.
(1 Kings 18:41)

The sound was not in the prophet's ears but in his heart. By faith he knew that rain was about to fall. The repentance of the people had removed the cause for judgment, and Elijah perceived that the longed-for showers were consequently due to fall. Elijah lived a life of faith and a life of prayer. When God sent him to announce the drought, he knew that it would be even according to the word of the Lord. The same Spirit that had placed in his mouth the one prediction, now gave to him the other. (E. R. Thiele, *SDA BC*)

. . . the people had confessed their sins, and had acknowledged the God of their fathers as the living God; and now the curse of Heaven was to be withdrawn, and the temporal blessings of life renewed. The land was to be refreshed with rain. “Get thee up, eat and drink,” Elijah said to Ahab; “for there is a sound of abundance of rain.” Then the prophet went to the top of the mount to pray.
(*PK 155.1*)

Elijah Prays Again

It was not because of any outward evidence that the showers were about to fall, that Elijah could so confidently bid Ahab prepare for rain. The prophet saw no clouds in the heavens; he heard no thunder. He simply spoke the word that the Spirit of the Lord had moved him to speak in response to his own strong faith. (*PK 155.2*)

Throughout the day he had unflinchingly performed the will of God and had revealed his implicit confidence in the prophecies of God's word; and now, having done all that was in his power to do, he knew that Heaven would freely bestow the blessings foretold. The same God who had sent the drought had promised an abundance of rain as the reward of rightdoing; and now Elijah waited for the promised outpouring. In an attitude of humility, "his face between his knees," he interceded with God in behalf of penitent Israel. (*PK 155.2*)



The servant
watched while
Elijah prayed.

Again and again Elijah sent his servant to a point overlooking the Mediterranean, to learn whether there were any visible token that God had heard his prayer. (*PK* 156.1)

Six times the servant returned with the word that
there was no sign of rain in the brassy heavens.
(*PK* 156.1)



He kept reviewing his life, to see where he had failed to honor God, he confessed his sins, and thus continued to afflict his soul before God, while watching for a token that his prayer was answered. As he searched his heart, he seemed to be less and less, both in his own estimation and in the sight of God. It seemed to him that he was nothing, and that God was everything; and **when he reached the point of renouncing self, while he clung to the Saviour as his only strength and righteousness, the answer came.**
— (*The Review and Herald*, May 26, 1891.) (*Pr* 140.2)

Undaunted, Elijah sent him forth once more; and this time the servant returned with the word, “Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea like a man’s hand.” (*PK* 156.1)

This was enough. Elijah did not wait for the heavens to gather blackness. In that small cloud he beheld by faith an abundance of rain; and he acted in harmony with his faith, sending his servant quickly to Ahab with the message, “Prepare thy chariot, and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not.” (*PK* 156.2)

It was because Elijah was a man of large faith that God could use him in this grave crisis in the history of Israel. As he prayed, his faith reached out and grasped the promises of Heaven, and **he persevered in prayer until his petitions were answered.** He did not wait for the full evidence that God had heard him, but was willing to venture all on the slightest token of divine favor. And yet what he was enabled to do under God, all may do in their sphere of activity in God's service; for of the prophet from the mountains of Gilead it is written: "Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months." James 5:17. (*PK 156.3*)

Faith such as this is needed in the world today — faith that will lay hold on the promises of God's word and refuse to let go until Heaven hears. Faith such as this connects us closely with Heaven, and brings us strength for coping with the powers of darkness.

Through faith God's children have “subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.” Hebrews 11:33, 34. And through faith we today are to reach the heights of God's purpose for us. “If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.” Mark 9:23.

(PK 157.1)

Faith is an essential element of prevailing prayer. “He that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.” “If we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us: and if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him.” Hebrews 11:6; 1 John 5:14, 15. With the **persevering faith of Jacob**, with the unyielding **persistence of Elijah**, we may present our petitions to the Father, claiming all that He has promised. **The honor of His throne is staked for the fulfillment of His word.** (*PK 157.2*)

To walk with God and have the witness that their ways please Him **is an experience not to be confined** to Enoch, to Elijah, to patriarchs, to prophets, to apostles, and to martyrs. It is not only the privilege but the duty of every follower of Christ to have Jesus enshrined in the heart, to carry Him with them in their lives, and they will indeed be fruit-bearing trees. (*15LtMs*, Ms 43, 1900, par. 9)

Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is. (Mark 13:33)

Christ's ministers must watch unto prayer. They may come with boldness to the throne of grace, lifting up holy hands without wrath or doubting. In faith they may supplicate the Father in heaven for wisdom and grace, that they may know how to work, how to deal with minds. (*GW* 254.3)

Prayer is the breath of the soul. It is the secret of spiritual power. No other means of grace can be substituted, and the health of the soul be preserved. Prayer brings the heart into immediate contact with the Well-spring of life, and strengthens the sinew and muscle of the religious experience. Neglect the exercise of prayer, or engage in prayer spasmodically, now and then, as seems convenient, and you lose your hold on God. The spiritual faculties lose their vitality, the religious experience lacks health and vigor. (*GW* 254.4)

It is only at the altar of God that we can kindle our tapers with divine fire. It is only the divine light that will reveal the littleness, the incompetence, of human ability, and give clear views of the perfection and purity of Christ. It is only as we behold Jesus that we desire to be like Him, only as we view His righteousness that we hunger and thirst to possess it; and **it is only as we ask in earnest prayer, that God will grant us our heart's desire.** (*GW* 255.1)

When men are as devoted as Elijah was and possess the faith that he had, God will reveal Himself as He did then. When men plead with the Lord as did Jacob, the results that were seen then will again be seen. Power will come from God in answer to the prayer of faith. (*GW* 255.3)