

# Who Was Elijah?

Sermon by Andy Sochor

Text: James 5:16-18

Prophets played an important part in the Bible, particularly in the Old Testament. One of the prophets who had a major role during the days of the divided kingdom was Elijah. There are many events from Elijah's life that we can learn from. We will highlight a few in this lesson.

## **Faithful in Prayer (James 5:16-18)**

- James encouraged his readers of the importance of prayer – it is effective if we have faith (James 1:5-7); he used Elijah as an example because he had “a nature like ours” (James 5:17); prayer is not “effective” because of the one praying, but because of the one to whom we pray
- Important point about prayer – we are to pray in faith (James 1:6); faith is based upon God's word (Romans 10:17); to pray in faith, we must pray according to God's will (1 John 5:14-15)
- This is what Elijah did in the example James cited (James 5:18) – he prayed after God told him His plan (1 Kings 18:41-45, 1); he did not pray for his will but for God's will

## **A Bold Contender (1 Kings 18:17-19)**

- Elijah challenged the prophets of Baal to a contest on Mount Carmel – he was greatly outnumbered; he challenged the people to choose a side, but they refused (1 Kings 18:20-22); he issued a challenge to the prophets of Baal and they agreed (1 Kings 18:23-24)
- Not surprisingly, Baal did not answer (1 Kings 18:25-29) – Elijah wanted God's answer to be unmistakable (1 Kings 18:30-35); the people were convinced (1 Kings 18:36-39)
- He seized the prophets of Baal and had them killed (1 Kings 18:40) – why? ... this was the penalty under the old law (Deuteronomy 13:1-5)

## **A Weary Servant (1 Kings 19:1-4)**

- After the decisive victory in the contest with the prophets of Baal, instead of feeling “on top of the world,” he found himself depressed under a juniper tree
- He believed he had done all he could do and that his time of usefulness was over (1 Kings 19:14) – he seemed to feel that all of his efforts had been in vain (1 Kings 19:14); yet this was not true (1 Kings 19:18)
- God still had work for him to do (1 Kings 19:15-16) – God would take him when He was done with him (2 Kings 2:11-12)

## **Follow Elijah's Example**

- Be devoted to prayer (Romans 12:12) – “constant in prayer” (ESV), “continuing instant” (KJV); without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17); “faithful in prayer” (NIV); in faith, according to God’s will (1 John 5:14-15); in hope, through trials
- Contend earnestly for the faith (Jude 3) – we are in the midst of a spiritual battle (2 Corinthians 10:3-4), and taking thoughts captive (2 Corinthians 10:5); Elijah called the people to make a choice (1 Kings 18:21); we do the same thing (2 Corinthians 5:11)
- Be faithful until death (Revelation 2:10) – we are going to face difficulties (Acts 14:22) – do not give up; we need endurance (Hebrews 10:35-36); we continue despite the hardships by looking to Jesus (Hebrews 12:1-3)

## **Conclusion**

- Who was Elijah? – he was faithful in prayer, a bold contender, and a weary servant; he had a nature like all of us; he suffered discouragement, but God encouraged him to continue
- We may face opposition and times when we feel like our efforts are futile and that we should just give up – let us continue praying in faith and fighting the good fight as we endure the trials that come our way