Research on: Elijah healing a great drought

I Kings 17 and I Kings 18

This website called “Biblewalks” shows pictures of the area where Elijah lived and taught. It also has a timeline on the left side showing the events in Elijah’s life.

http://www.biblewalks.com/Info/Elijah.html

Here is a timeline of all the major events in Elijah’s life.

http://www.biblepgs.com/ver1/Elijah%20Timeline.pdf

I Kings 17:1

“A grander figure never stood out even against the Old Testament sky than that of Elijah. As Israel’s apostasy (the abandonment or renunciation of a religious or political belief) had reached its highest point in the time of Ahab, so the Old Testament antagonism to it in the person and mission of Elijah . . . As we view him as Jehovah’s representative, almost plenipotentiary, we recall unswerving faithfulness to, and absolutely fearless discharge of his trust” (Edersheim 185-186).

“**ELIJAH** (Heb. "my God is Jehovah"; E-LI-jah)

The first of the great Healing Prophets, he is considered by many

as the greatest of the Old Testament prophets. Just as Jezebel is

world famous for her depravity, Elijah is renowned for his vivid,

courageous denunciation of the corrupt King and Queen of Israel.

He earned the title "The Scourge of Kings," but he could be kind

and gentle too; as for instance, when he helped the poor widow of

Zarephath through the famine and later raised her son when he died.

During a period of great fear when Jezebel threatened his life, Elijah

communed with God on Mount Horeb and learned that He is not

to be found in violent material phenomena such as earthquakes,

wind and fire, but His is "a still small voice." Like Enoch, and

perhaps Moses too, Elijah was translated to the next experience

without going through the portal we call death. His successor,

Elisha, saw him disappear, took up his mantle and carried on the

important work that Elijah had begun.

“**AHAB** (Heb. "father's brother"; A-hab)

Omri's son not only married the heathen Princess Jezebel, but built

an altar for her Baal worship and worshiped with her, thus arousing

the wrath of the great Prophet Elijah. Ahab, a good statesman and

organizer, continued his father's policies thus giving his kingdom

much material prosperity while leading it into Baalism. He made

the mistake of trying to worship the Hebrew Jehovah at the same

time. . .

Ahab's most powerful enemy, King Benhadad

II of Syria, twice besieged Samaria and was defeated both

times. . . .

In the end, Ahab was accidently killed by a stray arrow while in battle” (Old Testament Made Easy, Tathem).

1And Elijah the Tishbite, *who was* of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, *As* the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.

“Gilead—properly “the rocky region” that lay on the east of Jordan. Open to the desert on the east, and itself comparatively wild, with but few cities scattered through it, it suited well the recluse dweller in the wilderness” (Ellicott’s Commentary,www.biblehub.com).

“Elijah, as the servant of the Lord also dares to declare that there will be ‘neither dew nor rain,’ except by his word. The servant of the Lord thus challenges the power of Baal directly, for drought is a sign of the powerlessness of Baal, according to Canaanite lore” (*NIBC* 3.126-127).

“*And Elijah the Tishbite,*— So bad was the character, both of the Israelites and their princes, as represented in the foregoing chapter, that one would have expected God should have cast off a people that had so cast him off; but as an evidence to the contrary, never was Israel so blessed with a good prophet as when it was so plagued with a bad king. Never was a king so bold to sin as Ahab, never was a prophet so bold to reprove and threaten as Elijah, whose story begins in this chapter, and is full of wonders. Scarce any part of the Old Testament history shines brighter than this, concerning the *spirit*and *power of Elias;*he only, of all the prophets, had the honour of Enoch, the first prophet, to be *translated that he should not see death;*and the honor of Moses, the great prophet, to attend our Savior in his transfiguration. Other prophets prophesied and wrote, he prophesied and acted, but wrote nothing; and his actings cast more luster on his name than their writings on theirs” (Benson Commentary, www.biblehub.com).

“**As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand** - This solemn formula, here first used, was well adapted to impress the king with the sacred character of the messenger, and the certain truth of his message. Elisha adopted the phrase with very slight modifications [2 Kings 3:14](http://biblehub.com/2_kings/3-14.htm); [2 Kings 5:16](http://biblehub.com/2_kings/5-16.htm).

“Drought was one of the punishments threatened by the Law, if Israel forsook Yahweh and turned after other gods ([Deuteronomy 11:17](http://biblehub.com/deuteronomy/11-17.htm); [Deuteronomy 28:23](http://biblehub.com/deuteronomy/28-23.htm); [Leviticus 26:19](http://biblehub.com/leviticus/26-19.htm), etc.)” (Barnes’ Notes, [www.biblehub.com)](http://www.biblehub.com)).

“**said unto Ahab**—The prophet appears to have been warning this apostate king how fatal both to himself and people would be the reckless course he was pursuing. The failure of Elijah's efforts to make an impression on the obstinate heart of Ahab is shown by the penal prediction uttered at parting.

“**before whom I stand**—that is, whom I serve (De 18:5).

“**there shall not be dew nor rain these years**—not absolutely; but the dew and the rain would not fall in the usual and necessary quantities. Such a suspension of moisture was sufficient to answer the corrective purposes of God, while an absolute drought would have converted the whole country into an uninhabitable waste” (Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Commentary, www.biblehub.com).

I Kings 18:1, 2, 41-46

1 And it came to pass *after* many days, that the word of the Lord came to Elijah in the third year, saying, Go, shew thyself unto Ahab; and I will send rain upon the earth.

“The third year - i. e., in the third year of his sojourn with the widow. The whole period of drought was three years and a half , [Luke 4:25](http://biblehub.com/luke/4-25.htm); [James 5:17](http://biblehub.com/james/5-17.htm) : of this, probably about one year was passed by Elijah in the torrent-course of Cherith, and two years and a half at Sarepta” (Barnes’ Notes, [www.biblehub.com)](http://www.biblehub.com)).

“Go, show thyself unto Ahab—The king had remained obdurate and impenitent. Another opportunity was to be given him of repentance, and Elijah was sent in order to declare to him the cause of the national judgment, and to promise him, on condition of his removing it, the immediate blessing of rain. Elijah in the extremity of famine is sent to Ahab” (Jamieson-Faussett-Brown, www.biblehub.com).

2 And Elijah went to shew himself unto Ahab. And *there was* a sore famine in Samaria.

“*Elijah went —*In this he showed strong faith, resolute obedience, and invincible courage, in that he durst, at God’s command, run into the mouth of this raging lion. *There was a sore famine in Samaria —*Which made it the more dangerous for him to appear in Ahab’s presence; lest, being so sorely afflicted, he should in his rage cause him to be killed before he could deliver his message to him” (Benson Commentary, [www.biblehub.com)](http://www.biblehub.com)).

“Elijah went—a marvelous proof of the natural intrepidity of this prophet, of his moral courage, and his unfaltering confidence in the protecting care of God, that he ventured to approach the presence of the raging lion.

“there was a sore famine in Samaria—Elijah found that the famine was pressing with intense severity in the capital. Corn must have been obtained for the people from Egypt or the adjoining countries, else life could not have been sustained for three years” (Jamieson-Faussett-Brown, www.biblehub.com).

41 And Elijah said unto Ahab, Get thee up, eat and drink; for *there is* a sound of abundance of rain.

“Get thee up, eat and drink - Ahab had descended the hill-side with Elijah, and witnessed the slaughter of the priests. Elijah now bade him ascend the hill again, and partake of the feast which was already prepared, and which always followed upon a sacrifice.

“There is a sound of abundance of rain - Either the wind, which in the East usually heralds rain, had begun to rise, and sighed through the forests of Carmel - or perhaps the sound was simply in the prophet's ears, a mysterious intimation to him that the drought was to end, and rain to come that day” (Barnes’ Notes, www.biblehub.com).

42 So Ahab went up to eat and to drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and he cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees,

“*Elijah went up to the top of Carmel —*Where he might pour out his prayers unto God; and whence he might look toward the sea. He had a large prospect of the sea from hence: the sailors at this day call it Cape Carmel. *Between his knees*— That is, bowed his head so low, that it touched his knees; thus abasing himself in the sense of his own meanness, now God had thus honored him” (Benson Commentary, www.biblehub.com).

“Israel, being so far reformed as to acknowledge the Lord to be God, and to consent to the execution of Baal's prophets, was so far accepted, that God poured out blessing upon the land. Elijah long continued praying” (Matthew Henrys Commentary, [www.biblehub.com)](http://www.biblehub.com)).

“Ahab went up to eat and to drink—Ahab, kept in painful excitement by the agonizing scene, had eaten nothing all the day. He was recommended to refresh himself without a moment's delay; and, while the king was thus occupied, the prophet, far from taking rest, was absorbed in prayer for the fulfilment of the promise (1Ki 18:1).

“put his face between his knees—a posture of earnest supplication still used” (Jamaieson-Fausset-Brown Commentary, www.biblehub.com).

43 And said to his servant, Go up now, look toward the sea. And he went up, and looked, and said, *There is* nothing. And he said, Go again seven times.

*“Go up now,* While I continue praying. *Look toward the sea —*Whence clouds and vapors usually arise. Elijah desired to have timely notice of the first appearance of rain, not out of vanity, but that Ahab and the people might know that it was obtained from Jehovah by his prayers, and thereby be confirmed in the true religion. *He looked and said, There is nothing —*We must not be dejected for some disappointments; but, though the answer of our fervent supplications do not come presently, yet we must continue instant in prayer, waiting on God, and not faint or grow weary, for at the end *the vision shall speak and not lie” (Benson Commentary, www.biblehub.com).*

44 And it came to pass at the seventh time, that he said, Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man’s hand. And he said, Go up, say unto Ahab, Prepare *thy chariot,* and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not.

“A little cloud ... - Sailors know full well that such a cloud on the far horizon is often the forerunner of a violent storm” (Barnes’ Notes, [www.biblehub.com)](http://www.biblehub.com)).

“The clearness of the sky renders the smallest speck distinctly visible; and this is in Palestine the uniform precursor of rain. It rises higher and higher, and becomes larger and larger with astonishing celerity, till the whole heaven is black, and the cloud bursts in a deluge of rain.

“Prepare thy chariot, and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not—either by the river Kishon being suddenly so swollen as to be impassable, or from the deep layer of dust in the arid plain being turned into thick mud, so as to impede the wheels” (Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, www.biblehub.com).

45 And it came to pass in the mean while, that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel.

“J**ezreel.**—This is the first mention of the city Jezreel, a city of Issachar ([Joshua 19:18](http://biblehub.com/joshua/19-18.htm)), as a royal city. The name (signifying “Jehovah hath sown”) was applied to the whole of the rich plain, the garden and battlefield of northern Palestine. (See [Judges 6:33](http://biblehub.com/judges/6-33.htm) : [1Samuel 29:1](http://biblehub.com/1_samuel/29-1.htm); [2Samuel 2:9](http://biblehub.com/2_samuel/2-9.htm).) The city was made a royal residence by Ahab, as Samaria by Omri. It stands in a position of some strength and great beauty, supplied by unfailing springs of water, visible from Carmel, and commanding views east and west far over the plain” (Ellicott’s Commentary, www.biblehub.com).

46 And the hand of the Lord was on Elijah; and he girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel.

“Divinely directed, and divinely upheld, Elijah, instead of resting, ran in advance of the king's chariot the entire distance of at least 16 miles to the entrance of Jezreel. He thus showed himself ready to countenance and uphold the irresolute monarch, if he would turn from his evil courses, and proceed to carry out the religious reformation which the events of the day had inaugurated.

“The entrance of Jezreel - Modern "Zerin." Ahab had not removed the capital from Samaria [1 Kings 22:10](http://biblehub.com/1_kings/22-10.htm), [1 Kings 22:37](http://biblehub.com/1_kings/22-37.htm); but he had built himself a palace at Jezreel [1 Kings 21:1](http://biblehub.com/1_kings/21-1.htm), and appears to have resided there ordinarily. A contemporary Assyrian inscription speaks of him as "Ahab of Jezreel."

“Elijah's caution in accompanying Ahab only to "the entrance" is like that of the modern Arabs, who can seldom be induced to trust themselves within walls. He rested on the outskirts of the town, waiting to learn what Jezebel would say or do, knowing that it was she, and not Ahab, who really governed the country” (Barnes’ Notes, www.biblehub.com).

Sources:

[www.biblehub.com](http://www.biblehub.com)

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