

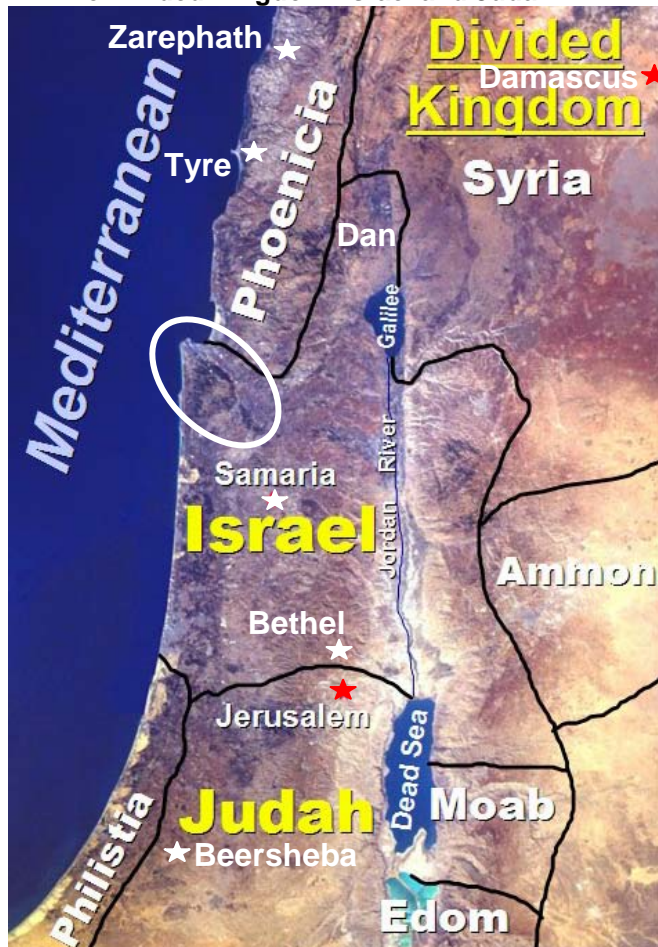
## #28: Elijah and Ahab

Monte F. Shelley, 1 Aug 2010

### Quotes

- How long halt ye between two opinions? (1 Kgs 18:21)
- The darkest hour has only 60 minutes!
- Discouragement is like a new baby. If you nurse it, it will grow.

### 1. The Divided Kingdom: Israel and Judah



Judah= **Judah**, (capital) Jerusalem, (king) Rehoboam

Israel= **Ephraim**, (capital) Samaria, (king) Jeroboam (Ephraimite)

### Why was the kingdom divided?

#### Which of the 12 tribes were part of Judah?

Rehoboam ... gathered ... *Judah* and *Benjamin* ... to fight against Israel, that he might bring the kingdom again to Rehoboam. <sup>2</sup> But the word of the LORD came to Shemaiah the man of God, saying, <sup>3</sup> Speak unto Rehoboam ... and to ... Judah and Benjamin, saying, <sup>4</sup> Thus saith the LORD, Ye shall not ... fight against your brethren: ... for this thing is done of me. And they obeyed the words of the LORD. ... <sup>14</sup> The *Levites* ... came to Judah and Jerusalem: for Jeroboam ... had cast them off from executing the priest's office ... <sup>16</sup> And after them *out of all the tribes of Israel* such as set their hearts to seek the LORD God of Israel came to Jerusalem, to sacrifice unto the LORD. (2 Chr 11:1-4, 13-16)

### 2. Sins of Jeroboam

**Golden Calves** were set up in Bethel and Dan. "The calves represented false and illegitimate images connected with Jehovah and his power, and were not originally intended to represent other gods." (JWOT 248)

**Priests:** Jeroboam "made priests of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi" (1 Kgs 12:31). Jeroboam cast

off the Levite priests "from executing the priest's office unto the LORD: And he ordained him priests for the high places ... and for the calves which he had made" (2 Chr 11:14-15; 13:19).

Jeroboam also acted as a priest (1 Kgs 12:33).

**High places:** Jeroboam "made an house of high places" (1 Kgs 12:31). "Judah did evil ... they also built them high places, and images, and groves on every high hill." (1 Kgs 14:22-23)

"A 'high place' ... was a local, often open-air, shrine near a city; it had an altar, priests, and other cultic features, such as standing stones and an '*asherah*' (a symbol of Asherah). The Israelites worshipped Jehovah at their own high places for much of their history in the land of Israel (e.g., 1 Sam 9:19, 25; 1 Kgs 3:3-5), but king Josiah eventually shut these down for religious and political reasons (2 Kgs 23:5-9) Thus a high place was not inherently 'bad.' It depended on how it was used. Similarly, the Israelites were commanded to destroy Canaanite 'standing stones' or 'pillars'. ... But the Bible reports Israelite ancestors had utilized such stones in worshipping Jehovah (Gen 35:15; Ex 24:4)." (JWOT 167-8)

**Holy Day:** Jeroboam ordained a feast on the 15<sup>th</sup> of the 8<sup>th</sup> month like the feast of tabernacles in Judah on 7/15. (1 K 12:32)

### 3. Evaluation of the kings

Kings of Judah		Kings of Israel	
Rehoboam	930-913 BC	<b>Jeroboam I</b>	930-909 BC
Abijam	913-910 BC		
<b>Asa</b>	910-869 BC	Nadab	909-908 BC
		<b>Baasha</b>	908-886 BC
		Elah	886-885 BC
		Zimri	885 BC
		Tibni	885-880 BC
		<b>Omri</b>	885-874 BC
<b>Jehoshaphat</b>	872-848 BC	Ahab	874-853 BC
		<b>Elijah, Elisha</b>	
		Ahaziah	853-852 BC
		Joram/Jehoram	852-841 BC

Dates are approximate. (BD, OT-I) Righteous kings in bold italics.

"Asa did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, as did David his father. And he ... removed all the idols ... But the high places were not removed." (1 Kgs 15:11-14)

Jehoshaphat (= *Jehovah is judge*) "walked in all the ways of Asa his father ... doing that which was right in the eyes of the LORD: nevertheless the high places were not taken away; for the people offered and burnt incense yet in the high places." (1 Kgs 22:43)

### 4. Ahab and Jezebel (1 Kgs 16)

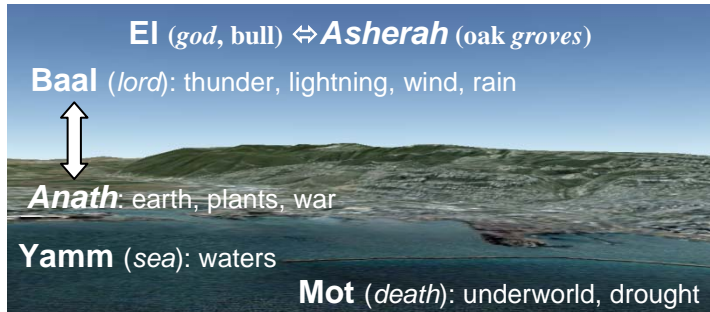
<sup>25</sup> Omri wrought evil in the eyes of the LORD, and did worse than all that *were* before him. <sup>26</sup> For he walked in all the way of Jeroboam. ... <sup>30</sup> Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD above all that were before him. ... <sup>31</sup> He took to wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Zidonians, and went and served Baal, and worshipped him. <sup>32</sup> And he reared up an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he had built in Samaria. <sup>33</sup> And Ahab made a grove; and Ahab did more to provoke the LORD ... to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him. ... <sup>18:3,13</sup> Jezebel slew the prophets of the LORD.

### 5. Canaanite religious practices

"Canaanites prayed to their gods, celebrated holy days, built temples, had priests, offered ... sacrifices ... burned incense, and practiced various forms of divination to determine the will of the

gods. ... In Canaan, the productivity of the land depended on rain, not river irrigation. ... The Bible reports a number of droughts. ... This helps explain why Baal, god of storms, was so popular in Canaan. Canaanites worshipped Baal and other deities at 'high places' as well as at formal temples. A 'high place' ... had an altar, priests, and other cultic features, such as standing stones and an *'asherah* (a symbol of Asherah)." (JWOT 167–168)

## 6. Canaanite Gods



In 1929, at Ras Shamra, Syria (ancient Ugarit), a 14<sup>th</sup> ... century B.C. library [about 400–500 years before Elijah] was discovered that has shed ... light on the beliefs of the peoples who lived in Syro-Palestine before the Israelites. ... The Canaanite pantheon comprised a large number of nature deities, each one responsible for his or her segment of the universe.

The king of the gods was *El* (meaning “god” or “strong one”), who is depicted ... as a bearded, graying old man, dwelling on an island and noted for his wisdom. His wife was Asherah, a fertility goddess whose name means “grove.” The groves (generally of oak or terebinth trees) condemned so frequently in the Bible were dedicated to her worship. ...

*Baal* is a title meaning “lord,” but also “husband.” He also bore the name Hadad, “thunderer,” for he was the weather god, responsible for lightning, thunder, wind, and rain. [“Baal, often depicted with a lightening bolt in his hand, was the Canaanite storm god. As such, he brought the rains necessary for animal and human life and fertility.” (JWOT 258)]

*Anath* is sometimes called “the virgin,” but as the “mother of nations” she is often depicted as the wife of her brother Baal. Her name means “surface (of the earth),” and as such she received the rains sent down by Baal to produce vegetation. She is therefore a fertility goddess, like her mother, Asherah. Considered a very powerful being, Anath was also the goddess of war. ...

*Yamm* (“sea”) was the god of the waters on and under the earth. Many natural phenomena were interpreted in terms of his struggle with Baal for power. For example, sea storms were thought to occur when Yamm cast his waves up toward Baal. Baal would respond by throwing down winds, rain, and lightning and shouting with his voice of thunder. In the end ... the calm sea [was] the victor. [Yamm cast waters on the earth only to recede leaving the unmoved earth or Anath as victor.]

*Mot* (“death”) was the god of the underworld, where the spirits of the dead were sent. [“Mot... was the... god of death, infertility, and drought. ... Mot was the Lord of the desert dryness, the underworld, and all that is opposed to life.” (NWE)] He was the antithesis of Baal, the god of life-giving processes, and though brothers, they were enemies.

One of the most important Canaanite myths ... concerns the death of Baal. In the texts, the sky-god sponsored a banquet in his

palace atop Mount Zaphon. During the banquet he brought a platter of food and “stood before El.” The idiom meant that he not only served his father, but that he was also the heir apparent of El.

During the course of the banquet, messengers arrived from Yamm, who, being Baal’s sworn enemy, had not been invited. Yamm challenged Baal to a duel to the death. Baal left the banquet to meet the challenge and was slain by Yamm. Anath brought the tragic news to her father, El. The elderly king thereupon left his throne to sit in ashes on the ground, where he began making incisions in his skin with a sharp stone. ...

As time went by, the death of Baal proved to be disastrous, for without rain, the earth languished in drought and famine. Something had happened to Baal, but the earth’s inhabitants, according to the Ugaritic texts, were uncertain as to whether he was asleep, dead, or off hunting with his lightning spears.

While others debated the issue, Anath took action to solve the problem. First, she slew Yamm. Then she descended into the underworld to strike a bargain with Mot. The god of the dead, of course, had something to lose in this matter, too. Once all vegetation disappeared from the earth’s surface, so, too, would animal and human life, and he would receive no more subjects into his dominion. Anath convinced him that it was in the best interests of all to allow Baal to return to the sky. At length, Mot agreed that Baal could remain in the sky for six months out of the year, providing rain to nourish the earth. During the other six, he would have to return to the underworld, while the earth’s surface dried from lack of rain. This story was the Canaanite means of explaining the annual vegetation and rain cycles. (Tv 1990)

## 7. Israel’s Climate

“There are two seasons in Israel: winter—the cold, rainy season from about October to April, and summer—the hot, dry season when rain is virtually non-existent. ... In Jerusalem ... the rainfall is equivalent to London ... although Israel gets their rain all at once! An annual average of [26] inches of rain falls in Israel during the months of December, January and February.” (Rona #28) Utah gets about 13 inches per year.

“The former or first rains of the Bible [come] during the latter part of October and the month of November. There is a brief lull during part of December. ... The latter rains [come] mostly during ... January and February and part of March. ... [They] are generally heavier ... and also last a bit longer. Occasionally, the rains will begin as early as September and they sometimes end as late as April. But, generally speaking, rain falls during only six months of the year. Moreover, about 90% of the rainfall comes during the months of November through February. This means that most of the year is dry and, consequently, vegetation is unable to survive the long hot summer and dries up.” (Tv 2006)

## 8. Elijah’s Miracles (1 Kgs 17)

Elijah ... 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*.

*The LORD ... before whom I stand*: Baal “stood before El” means he served his father and was his heir apparent. (Tv 90).

*according to my word*: “the sealing power by which Elijah was able to close the heavens.” (Joseph Fielding Smith, *DOS*, 2:102)

**WHEN would be good time for the drought to start?**

**How did Elijah survive during first part of the drought?**

**How did Elijah survive when the brook dried up?**

**What happened to the widow’s son?**

## 9. Elijah and prophets of Baal and Asherah (1 Kgs 18)

<sup>1</sup> After many days ... 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. ...

<sup>17</sup> When Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, *Art thou he that troubleth Israel?* <sup>18</sup> And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou ... ye have forsaken the commandments of the LORD, and thou hast followed Baalim. <sup>19</sup> ... Gather ... all Israel unto mount Carmel, and the [450] prophets of Baal ... and the [400] prophets of the groves [HEB Asherah] ... which eat at Jezebel's table. ...

<sup>21</sup> Elijah [HEB *my God is Jehovah*] came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD *be* God, follow him: but if Baal [HEB *lord*], *then* follow him. And the people answered him not a word. <sup>22</sup> Then said Elijah ... I only, remain a prophet of the LORD; but Baal's prophets *are* [450] men.

Elijah and Baal's prophets were each to kill a bull [Eli], put it on an altar over oak wood [Asherah], and call on their god. "The God that answereth by fire [Baal], let him be God." The people agreed.

**Priests of Baal** called on ... Baal from morning ... until noon, saying, O Baal, [NIV answer] us. But *there was no voice*, nor any that answered. And they leaped upon the altar which was made.

<sup>27</sup> At noon Elijah began to taunt them. "Shout louder!" he said. "Surely he is a god! Perhaps he is deep in thought, or busy, or traveling. Maybe he is sleeping and must be awakened." <sup>28</sup> So they shouted louder and slashed themselves with swords and spears, as was their custom, until their blood flowed. <sup>29</sup> ... They continued their frantic prophesying until the time for the evening sacrifice. But there was no response, no one answered, no one paid attention. (NIV)

**Elijah:** <sup>30</sup> All the people came near. ... [Elijah] repaired the altar of the LORD *that was* broken down." He used 12 stones representing the 12 tribes of Israel to build the altar. He put a trench around the altar. He put the pieces of a bull over (probably oak) wood on the altar and then poured 12 barrels of water over the bull and the wood until the trench was filled.

<sup>36</sup> At the time ... of the evening sacrifice ... Elijah the prophet ... said, LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou *art* God in Israel, and *that I am* thy servant. ...

<sup>38</sup> Then the fire of the LORD fell [Baal], and consumed the burnt sacrifice [Eli], and the wood [Asherah], and the stones, and the dust [Anath], and licked up the water [Yam] *that was* in the trench. <sup>39</sup> And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The LORD, he is the God; the LORD, he is the God.

<sup>40</sup> And Elijah said ... Take the prophets of Baal; ... and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there.

<sup>41</sup> Elijah said unto Ahab, Get thee up, eat and drink; for *there is* a sound of abundance of rain. <sup>42</sup> ... Elijah went up to the top of Carmel ... and put his face between his knees, <sup>43</sup> And said to his servant, Go up now, look toward the sea. ... <sup>44</sup> The seventh time, ... [the servant] said, Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand. And [Elijah] said, Go up, say unto Ahab, Prepare thy chariot, and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not.

<sup>45</sup> ... The heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel. <sup>46</sup> And the hand of the LORD was on Elijah; and he girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel.

NIV The power of the Lord came upon Elijah and, tucking his cloak into his belt, he ran ahead of Ahab all the way to Jezreel.

## 10. Elijah at Horeb (1 Kgs 19)

<sup>2</sup> Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let the gods do *to me*, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to morrow about this time. <sup>3</sup> And when he saw *that*, he ... [fled] to Beer-sheba ... and left his servant there. <sup>4</sup> But he ... went a day's journey into the wilderness, ... and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested ... that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers. <sup>5</sup> And as he ... slept ... an angel ... said ..., Arise *and* eat. <sup>6</sup> And he looked, and ... *there was* a cake baked on the coals, and a cruse of water. ... <sup>7</sup> And the angel ... came again ... said, Arise *and* eat; because the journey *is* too great for thee. <sup>8</sup> And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God. <sup>9</sup> He came ... unto a cave, and ... the LORD ... said ... What doest thou here, Elijah? <sup>10</sup> And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God ... for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and ... I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away. <sup>11</sup> And he said, ... stand upon the mount before the LORD. ... The LORD passed by, and a ... strong wind [Baal] ... brake in pieces the rocks ...; *but* the LORD *was* not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake [Anath]; *but* the LORD *was* not in the earthquake: <sup>12</sup> And after the earthquake a fire; *but* the LORD *was* not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice.

## 11. Elijah to anoint Elisha (God will save) (1 Kgs 19)

<sup>15</sup> And the LORD said unto him, Go, return ... [to] Damascus: and ... anoint Hazael to be king over Syria: <sup>16</sup> And Jehu ... anoint to be king over Israel: and Elisha ... anoint to be prophet in thy room. ... <sup>18</sup> Yet I have ... [7,000] in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal. ... <sup>19</sup> So he departed thence, and found Elisha ... who *was* plowing *with* twelve yoke of oxen ... and Elijah passed by him, and cast his mantle upon him. <sup>20</sup> And he left the oxen, and ran after Elijah.

## 12. Ahab desires vineyard of Naboth (1 Kgs 21)

Ahab spake unto Naboth, ... Give me thy vineyard ... and I will give thee for it a better vineyard than it; *or* ... I will give thee the worth of it in money. <sup>3</sup> And Naboth said to Ahab, The LORD forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee. <sup>4</sup> And Ahab came into his house heavy and displeased. ... And he laid him down upon his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no bread. <sup>5</sup> But Jezebel his wife ... said unto him, Why is thy spirit so sad ...? <sup>6</sup> And he said unto her, Because ... Naboth ... answered, I will not give thee my vineyard. <sup>7</sup> And Jezebel ... [said] ... I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth.

### When did Ahab's desire become coveting?

### How did Jezebel give Ahab the vineyard?

<sup>17</sup> The word of the LORD came to Elijah ... saying, <sup>18</sup> Arise, go down to meet Ahab ... in the vineyard of Naboth. ... <sup>19</sup> [and say:] Thus saith the LORD, Hast thou killed, and also taken possession? ... In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood. ... <sup>20</sup> Elijah, ... [said to Ahab] because thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the LORD. <sup>21</sup> Behold, I will bring evil upon thee, and will take away thy posterity. ... <sup>22</sup> And will make thine house like the house of Jeroboam ... and like the house of Baasha ... for the provocation wherewith thou hast provoked *me* to anger, and made Israel to sin. <sup>23</sup> And of Jezebel also spake the LORD, saying, The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel. <sup>24</sup> Him that dieth of Ahab in the city the dogs shall eat; and him that dieth in the field shall the fowls of the air eat.

### 13. King Ahaziah, son of Ahab (2 Kgs 1)

<sup>2</sup> Ahaziah ... was sick: and he sent messengers, and said ... Go, enquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron whether I shall recover of this disease. ... <sup>16</sup> [Elijah] said unto [Ahaziah], Thus saith the LORD, Forasmuch as thou hast sent messengers to enquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron, *is it* not because *there is* no God in Israel to enquire of his word? therefore thou shalt not come down off that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die.

His son Jehoram was later killed by Jehu (2 Kgs 9:24).

### 14. Why is Elijah important to the Jews and to us?

“A special chair is set aside for Elijah at circumcisions, as he is called the protector of children, and the upholder of the covenant between God and Israel, and Elijah is supposed to visit every Jewish home on Passover, so a special cup of wine is set aside for him. And ... when the time is right, it will be Elijah who will herald the coming of the Messiah.” (*EJ Jr.*) (Rona #28)

When Israel separated from Judah and began worshipping other gods, Israel was cut off from (a) God, (b) His Temple, (c) the other tribes, and (d) the “promises made to their fathers” (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob). Elijah came to restore the sealing power needed seal and reunite the seed of Abraham by planting in their hearts “the promises made to their fathers.” (*Hidden* 181–187)

### 15. Elijah was a type of Christ

- The elements obeyed his word (1 Kgs 17:1)
- He multiplied a little food to feed faithful (1 Kgs 17:9–16)
- Raised a child from the dead (1 Kgs 17:17–24)
- Fasted 40 days and nights (1 Kgs 19:8)
- Passed his authority to one who followed him (1 Kgs 19:19+)
- Ascended to heaven, in sight of followers (2 Kgs 2:11)
- His return was promised (Mal 4:5–6) (*Hidden* 254–255)

Moses is mentioned in preceding verse.

### 16. Moses and Elijah Similarities

Moses	Elijah
Announced the plagues of Egypt	Announced a drought in land
Called down fire from heaven	Called down fire from heaven
Caused the Red Sea to part	Caused Jordan River to part
After passing through the Red Sea, he saw Pharaoh's chariots trapped by the waters	After crossing the Jordan River, he was taken to heaven by horses and a chariot of fire
Fasted 40 days and 40 nights atop mount Horeb, conversing with the Lord amid earthquake, fire, and smoke	Fasted 40 days and 40 nights atop mount Horeb, conversing with the Lord amid wind, earthquake, and fire
Taken to heaven without tasting death at mount Nebo on east side of Jordan River near Jericho	Taken to heaven without tasting death on the east side of Jordan River, near Jericho
Appeared to Christ and his leading apostles on the mount of transfiguration and “gave the keys to Peter, James, and John” ( <i>HC</i> 3:387)	
Appeared to Joseph and Oliver in the Kirtland Temple to restore keys on 3 April 1836, (D&C 110:11) Passover Sunday that year.	

Similarities between Moses and his successor Joshua and Elijah and his successor Elisha.

Moses/Joshua	Elijah/Elisha
Moses chose his successor, Joshua (“Jehovah saves”)	Elijah chose his successor, Elisha (“God saves”)
Moses placed some of his own “honour” on Joshua	Elijah cast his mantle on Elisha

“Joshua . . . was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him”	Elisha asked for “a double portion” of Elijah’s spirit. Others saw he had “the spirit of Elijah”
Jordan River stopped flowing so Joshua and people could cross westward near Gilgal and Jericho	Jordan River stopped flowing so Elisha could cross westward near Gilgal and Jericho
Moses cast wood into bitter water to make it sweet	Elisha cast salt into water to “heal” it
Joshua built an altar atop Mount Ebal	Elijah rebuilt an altar atop Mount Carmel
Joshua used twelve stones to build a monument at Gilgal	Elijah used twelve stones for the altar he rebuilt
	Elijah multiplied oil and meal for a widow, while Elisha multiplied oil for a widow
	Elijah brought a child back to life as did Elisha

### Quotes

**Neal A. Maxwell:** The stirring words of various prophets ... urge us to choose, to decide, and not to halt. ... Elijah’s message has tremendous relevancy today, for all must finally choose between the gods of this world and the God of eternity”

**Ezra Taft Benson:** When we put God first, all other things fall into their proper place or drop out of our lives. Our love of the Lord will govern the claims for our affection, the demands on our time, the interests we pursue, and the order of our priorities. ... May God bless us to put [him] first and, as a result, reap peace in this life and eternal life with a fulness of joy in the life to come. (*Ensign*, May 1988, 4, 6)

**Neal A. Maxwell:** There will be... times when we simply have to trust the prophet, for he will see things we do not see. Just as Elijah knew torrential rains were coming when there was not a cloud in the sky: (quotes 1 Kgs. 18:41–45.) Prophets can see major implications in developments when these are no bigger than a man’s hand! (*Ensign*, Apr. 1981, 59)

**Gordon B. Hinckley:** When a news reporter asked how he communicates with God, the prophet responded, “I think the best way I could describe the process is to liken it to the experience of Elijah as set forth in the book of First Kings. Elijah spoke to the Lord, and there was a wind, a great wind, and the Lord was not in the wind. And there was an earthquake, and the Lord was not in the earthquake. And there was a fire, and the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire a still, small voice, which I describe as the whisperings of the Spirit” (*Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 51).

**Ezra Taft Benson:** Do you take time to listen to the promptings of the Spirit? Answers to prayer come most often by a still voice and are discerned by our deepest, innermost *feelings*. I tell you that you can know the will of God concerning yourselves if you will take the time to pray and to listen. (*Ensign*, Nov. 1977, 32)

**Boyd K. Packer:** The Spirit does not get our attention by shouting or shaking us with a heavy hand. Rather it whispers. It caresses so gently that if we are preoccupied we may not feel it at all. (“The Candle of the Lord,” *Ensign*, Jan. 1983, 53)

**Joseph:** Elijah was the last Prophet that held the keys of the Priesthood, and who will, before the last dispensation, restore the authority and deliver the keys of the Priesthood ... to receive, obtain, and perform all the ordinances belonging to the kingdom of God, even unto the turning of ... the hearts of the children unto the fathers, even those who are in heaven. (*TPJS* 172)