

Finn-01 Profeetta Elia (Elijah the Prophet)

by Art Katz

God is waiting for a people who will speak His word with authority and power, bringing restoration and judgment to the world.

Duration: 43:25

Scripture: 1 Kings 17:1, 1 Kings 17:3, Matthew 28:19-20, Mark 16:15, Luke 9:23, Acts 1:8, Romans 10:14

Topics: "Elijah"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker begins by praying for God to speak a word and birth an event in the church and nation. He then turns to the story of Elijah in 1 Kings 17, highlighting the prophet's sudden appearance and authority to confront the powers opposed to God. The speaker shares his personal testimony of how God arrested his life when he was an atheist and ex-Marxist. He emphasizes the power of a word spoken in authority and how it can turn lives around. The sermon concludes with the story of Elijah's confrontation with the false prophets and the people's declaration that the Lord is God.

Transcript

Bless the Lord. What if... What if... God had greater intentions tonight than to bring a message? What if God intended an event? A mystery. A word spoken.

That you would not necessarily even understand. What needs to be spoken. Into the earth.

And before the elements. And this is the time and place that God has intended. Would you hold steady for that? I'm inviting you to share my predicaments.

It's so heavy I have to take off my coat. I have a certain weight of things in my heart. And I don't even understand it myself.

That somehow I should speak about Elijah. And I don't know what we're going to hear. But somehow it is necessary to speak that.

So will you be patient with us? And be participants with us? For that word to come forth. Because Jesus said it is necessary that Elijah must first come. Must restore all things.

Before the Son of Man comes again. I'm not sure what that means. But something must come.

In the spirit of Elijah. To bring restoration. To reconcile the hearts of the fathers to the sons and the sons to the fathers.

Whatever that means. Must come. So I want to pray.

That the Lord will bless this speaking. That a word will go forth. To somehow bring the reality of these things.

Does God mean another Elijah, a person as Elijah? Does He mean a church in the spirit of Elijah? Some corporate expression of the genius of Elijah? I don't know. I'm not required to know. I'm only required to obey.

Let's pray. How like you, precious God. To choose this night.

This occasion. This little church. This people.

This insignificant nation. To speak a word. To birth an event.

That must come. Must come. Do it, Lord, we pray.

Choose the foolishness that we are. Speaker and hearers together. Speakers and hearers together.

And we give you the praise and the glory and the honor. As we wait upon you. In Jesus name.

Amen. Let's turn to the text in first King 17. To the abrupt introduction of the prophet to us.

All of a sudden. In a point of time. Without preparation.

He comes. Fully formed. In the enormous authority of God.

To confront the powers that are. Which are completely opposed to God. And to turn and apostate Israel.

To the knowledge of their God again. And Jesus says Elijah must come. And he stands before King Ahab.

Who represents the political forces of the world. Wedded to Jezebel. Who represents the religious.

Who are those of the world. And unholy alliance. Of fearful alliance.

And one that has intimidated the nation Israel. Is that a picture for us? Of what it will be at the end of the age? Of what is already in formation. Of realities that are presently working.

Which will need to be confronted yet again. One more time. One final time.

In that same spirit. In order to release Israel. To the knowledge of their God.

Who will come as fire. I don't know. But what a man this is.

Who comes out of obscurity and hiddenness. Fully formed. In the full authority of God.

The man of ultimate faith. And ultimate authority. I'm Jewish.

And this much I know. This is what it's going to take. Someone of this stature.

This authority with God. This power. Nothing less.

Can speak to our Israel. And say. How long do you hold between two opinions? If God be God.

Follow Him. And the people answered Him. Not a word.

Their mouths were stopped. Maybe they thought till that time. They were serving God.

Only they mixed it together with a little of this and a little of that. And until they heard the word. They did not know that they were apostate and unbelieving.

They were religious and deceived. Until the word came. And they answered without a word.

Their mouths were stopped. His speaking constituted the fact. The reality of what actually was.

In which they themselves were seduced. And did not know it. Until the word came.

And this man can stand before the powers of this world. That have already killed the prophets of God. And yet be without fear.

Does that describe us? I think God is waiting for an Elijah people. Who cannot be intimidated. And are not afraid.

And how does it say? Do not love their lives unto death. The powers of the air must be confronted by such a people. Coming in the spirit of Elijah.

And in that authority. And that fearlessness. And such a one is formed in hiddenness and obscurity.

And brought forth in the moment of time. That God appoints to confront. These powers.

I think we would much rather send missionaries. Much rather finance programs. And feel in that that we have discharged our duty.

Then we can sing Aveinu Shalom Aleichem. And enjoy the mystique. And the atmosphere.

That so titillates our souls. And what was the first word that this prophet spoke? It shall not rain nor dew. But according to my word.

For all these years according to my word. And as his word was so it happened. He stopped the heavens.

From bringing rain. Is the same man who later opened the heavens. To bring fire.

By the same man. By the same word. What an authority.

It's almost like unto God himself. To command the elements. And to bring judgment by his word.

And Jesus says Elijah must come. Maybe this is God's ultimate mission program for Israel. To form such a one.

In the places of obscurity and hiddenness. That he might be brought forth. In the final hour of ultimate confrontation.

Against the religious and the political forces. To command the elements. To bring judgment into the earth.

And to raise a question. Which God's people cannot evade. How long do you hold between two opinions? Is that one being raised in your midst? In your obscurity? In your hiddenness? Does that characterize our church life? It's conducive to bringing forth prophets.

It lends itself. It's conducive to bringing forth prophets. It's not just the mere succession of Sunday services.

It's a people with a conscious intent. Viewing the end of all things. And that which must come.

And desiring to be part in it. Where Christianity is more than the sum total of all their services. What if Israel is waiting for that? They don't know it.

And yet this is the key. To their release and their restoration. It's such a one coming.

Who must come. In that spirit and in that power. Out of hiddenness.

Suddenly in the historic moments. To stand before the powers of the world. And to judge them.

This is more than Pentecostalism. This is more than what we ourselves desire. But I don't think that we can evade it.

It must come. And it perhaps is that it must come through us. We would be much more comfortable remaining in the pew.

Putting the few marks into the collection plate. Singing our choruses. And saying amen and hallelujah.

To someone else who speaks. What if God wants the church itself to be such a prophetic presence? That it's word itself is a judgment. It's word can compel fire from heaven to fall.

It's word can confront the backslitting. He said according to my word. How do we come to such a place? I think the Lord shows it.

He says the word of the Lord came to Elijah. Get away from here and turn eastward and hide by the brook sheriff. Verse three.

And you shall drink from the brook and I've commanded the ravens to feed you there. But that's not reasonable. That's not logical.

It's not even Jewish. Ravens are an unclean bird. Every ordinary Jew knows that.

How much more the prophet? This can't be God speaking. This will take me away from where the action is. Can I bring you to a yet more obscure place? And there the brook will dry up.

And there the ravens will not come. And I'll perish. So.

He went and did according to the word of the Lord. No ands, no ifs, no buts. No maybes.

No questions. The Lord spoke. He went and did.

Does that describe us? Our obedience? Our immediate obedience? That does not require an explanation. Even when it contradicts our reason. And what we think we know about God.

God is waiting for such a people. He speaks, we go. And only one who is obedient to such a word.

Can speak a word. To which others are required to be obedient. What is our authority? Tonight.

As the church of Jesus Christ. Celebrating the Holy Spirit. Build of the Holy Spirit.

At the gospel. What is our authority? Tonight. In the nation.

And in the earth. It's relative. It's proportionate.

To the degree to which we ourselves have been obedient to the word. And it's a word which is never convenient. It's a word that calls us away from convenience.

Away from the things that are familiar and dear. To where we have not been before. Another way, another brook, another feeding.

Whether by ravens or by a widow. So he arose and went. And did.

According to the word of the Lord. Elijah must come. First.

Are we holding back the program of God? Because we have no stomach for this kind of obedience. This kind of knowledge of God. This kind of relationship.

We prefer sentimentality. Both in our Pentecostalism. As well as in our relationship with Israel.

I spoke earlier today to a small audience of ministers. How God arrested my Jewish life. I was not even seeking him.

I was an atheist. And an ex-Marxist. A disillusioned modern cynic.

A humanist. An idealist. Trying to change the world in my history classroom.

And failing. For I could not even change myself. And came to a final crisis.

And took a year's leave of absence from the profession. And became a hitchhiker in the world. Looking for philosophical answers.

And in that condition. Because I was being prayed for. The hound of heaven was pursuing me.

And there came a critical moment. When a word came to me. From the mouth of an ordinary man.

There was nothing about him that was commanding it. But it was a word that turned my life. It was a word sent.

A word in authority and power. And penetration. That came in the critical moment.

From God through man. And is that a picture of what it will be? Such a word. To this people Israel.

Who have heard but not heard. Paul says in the mystery of Romans 9-11. How shall they call upon him of whom they have not heard? What does he mean? What modern Jew has not heard of Jesus? Of Christianity? They've heard.

But they've not heard. And he says how shall they hear except one preach? And how shall they preach except they be sent? For faith comes by hearing. And hearing by the word of the Lord.

Can I read to you from a Norwegian theologian? He was not very respected from the seminary from where I've recently come. But I was impressed. I was so impressed I wrote this in the margin of my Bible.

Where Paul speaks about how shall they call upon him of whom they've not heard? And how shall they hear except by the sent word? You know what he writes? One cannot hear unless an apostle speaks in place of Christ. Because he who has been sent speaks for Christ. Through him they hear Christ's voice.

And speech. It's no ordinary word. It's a special word.

It's not just a word of information. It's not a word about Christ. It's the very word of Christ.

It's a sent word. In the hearing of which faith comes. It's a word which is an event.

That can only come. In my opinion. Out of the mouth of one who is sent.

It's in the fullness of that apostolic and prophetic spirit. The word that is event. By those who have been led by the word.

Because the word that has come to them. Has been event for them. And so the word that they will speak.

Will be in time the event for others. Even the event of faith. For a people who are presently out of the faith.

Even the Jewish people. It's a word that has to come out of our corporate mouth so to speak. Of a church itself which is ascending.

An apostolic body. In apostolic reality. Apostolic authority.

It has gone beyond Pentecostalism. It's formed in hiddenness and obscurity. By a people who are obedient.

From obedience to obedience. From passivity to participation. In the mystery of God.

Elijah must come. Well we know that God led him to a widow's house. And a widow who was ready to perish.

Because there was famine in the land. And I think that is coming again. I think we're going to see worldwide economic crisis.

The bottom is going to fall out. And those that will survive. Are those that live by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

And who are led of him. And are obedient to him. In that time.

And so the word of the Lord came to the widow. And she did eat and her son. And Elijah also.

She did eat. And so her son also. And Elijah.

Because Elijah said that flour and oil will not run out. Until the day that the Lord sends rain on the earth. And she went and did according to the word of Elijah.

His word to her was an event. A life saving event. And she obeyed it.

Though it was foolish. And then her son became ill. Suddenly and mysteriously.

And she came down to him. What have I to do with thee thou man of God? Have you come to call my sins to repentance? In slaying my son? This is a Gentile woman speaking. Who has not been trained up in the things of God.

And recognizes the prophet sent of God. And somehow senses that the calamity of her son's death has to do with her sin. What a remarkable perception.

Would to God that the church itself had it. And could recognize the meaning of its calamities. As not in being accidental.

But related to the God of judgment. In accordance to our sins. Elijah did not know how to answer.

For God had not shown him this. This came without explanation. Without the word of the Lord to him.

It was sudden. And he took the son. Up to the place where he abode.

And stretched the dead son out on his own bed. And stretched himself out over the son. So to speak eyeball to eyeball and fingertip to fingertip.

And cried out to God three times. Let this child's soul come back to him. Verse 21.

I don't know what this represents. But I know this. It is a critical episode in the Elijah story.

And it is much further than we ourselves are willing to go. We may be willing to put some marks into the collection plate. And finance the missions.

And even that not well. But to take the dead body up to the place where we dwell. And to put it on our bed.

And to disturb our privacy. And our lifestyle. And to stretch ourselves over that death.

To exchange our life for it. That we are not yet willing. And Elijah must come.

A people like that. Who are willing. To go beyond convenience.

And to bring the dead right into their own bed. And themselves over it. So as to give their life for the other.

And God heard Elijah's cry. And he'll hear ours also. When it will be of that kind.

And life came back again into the son. Maybe that's what it's going to take. Our prostration.

Our extending of ourselves. Over the thing that is dead and lifeless. To give our life for it.

That's what Paul said. I would wish myself a curse. For my brethren's sake.

That they might know Christ. Have I come to that place myself. To be willing to forfeit my life.

For theirs. That they might live. That they might be brought forth out of death.

This is what God gives us. And Jesus says Elijah must come. And restore all things.

And restore that. That faith. That obedience.

That love. That willingness. It's beyond convenience.

It's beyond religion. It's beyond. And life came back again into this dead son.

And he brought the son down to the mother. And said see thy son liveth. And she was astonished.

She said to Elijah now. By this. I know that you are a man of God.

And the word of the Lord in your mouth is truth. May our hearts be branded by that. We who have been so simplistic.

To think that if we speak the correct word. The technical word. The scripturally appropriate word.

That somehow that makes it a sent word. A powerful word. A word of event.

That brings life. Jewish people are waiting for a word. It's the word of truth.

In your mouth. By this. The demonstration of life out of death.

By a people who have more than just a sentimental preoccupation with Israel. Or not relating to the Jew out of a guilty conscience. Or even out of direct response to the Jew.

Because they're attractive. Because they have a mystique. But it's a response out of God's heart.

In relationship to him. For them. It's a different kind of response.

This is beyond sentiment. Beyond responsibility. Beyond guilt.

I don't know that you're understanding me. And I don't know that you're required to. But that God wants to birth something.

That must come. We don't know very much about Elijah. Except that he was a Tishbite.

Of the inhabitants of Gilead. Up in the northern part of Israel. We can't even say with assurance that he was Jewish.

But maybe something both Jewish and Gentile. Coming from a place where one would not expect a great prophet of God. And not an accident.

But a picture. A suggestion. Of that prophetic thing for which God is yet waiting.

Come out of that which is Jewish and Gentile. The mystery of the church itself. In its weakness.

Hidden this obscurity. Such a presence coming forth. Such an authority.

Such an ability to prevail over death. To cry out. And to be heard by God.

Who answers. Because it itself hears from God. And obeys.

Willing to move toward that? Together. That we will be prepared for the final showdown. When between the false prophets and ourselves.

They are much greater in number than we. And they jump and dance on their sacrifice. But fire does not come.

Though they expected it. And were so deceived. And thought that they were in real communication with a God.

Who could not answer. Who did not answer. And then Elijah called all Israel to himself.

Come up to me. And saturate this sacrifice with water. And that did they with twelve barrels full.

The number of the tribes of Israel. The apostolic number. The foundations of the faith.

And then he cried out to God. Hear me oh Lord hear me. That this people might know.

That you've turned their hearts back to you again. Everything was staked on a final moment. That God would hear him.

Because if God did not answer. He himself was finished. It would have been the true prophet of God slain that day.

Instead of the false. Hear me. Elijah cried to God.

And the prophet who heard God. Was heard by God. And the fire fell.

And the sacrifice was consumed. And when the people saw that. They cried out with one voice.

The Lord he is God. The Lord he is God. These are remarkable episodes.

Each one significant. Not only for our understanding of the past. But for the final future.

For Elijah must first come. Who can bring again fire from heaven. Over a saturated sacrifice.

Consumed by God. And when the people saw that. An apostate people.

Torn between many alternatives. They cried out with one voice. The Lord he is God.

The Lord he is God. I think it's going to take that again. Such a demonstration.

Such a fire from heaven. Maybe the Lord himself coming down. The God himself who is a consuming fire.

Waiting for such a sacrifice. Maybe it will not be an ox. It may be us.

Saturated. With the apostolic life. Twelve barrels full.

Who is waiting for the restoration of all things. Maybe that sacrifice is that statement. And when he has that on the earth.

God himself will come. As fire. As demonstration.

Even the most unbelieving. To hear the cry. The Lord he is God.

The Lord he is God. I didn't prepare this tonight. I'm only trying to be obedient myself.

It's in my heart. Elijah must first come. Of whom it says in James.
He was flesh and blood like as we. And yet when he prayed. God answered.
This is an invitation tonight. For those who really love God. Israel.
Not because Israel is attractive. Or a sentimental darling. But because God loves them.
And we love the God who loves. So much so that we're willing to be inconvenienced. Stretched out.
Even over death. It's more than the few marks in the collection. It's a call to inconvenience.
So he arose and he went. He got up and he did. He left the security of the pew.
And the religion of convenience. By whatever name we have called it. To obey God.
So let's pray tonight. For the Elijah that must come. Even if we ourselves must be part of him.
Such a people. Such a church. Such a prophetic presence.
Such an authority. Such a word. It costs something to produce this.
And will cost us also. But there's a dead son waiting. For such a one to come.
A man of God. In whose mouth God's word is truth. Let's pray for that.
And ask God. That we ourselves might be part. Let's bow before him.
Thank you Jesus. Lord. Have your way.
Let there again be on the earth. Such a one as this. Even a corporate one.
In such obedience. Such faith. Such authority.
Such power. That is not afraid. That lives by the word of God.
Bring forth the Elijah that must come. To restore all these things. That you might come again.
And be the revealed king of Israel. And hear the great cry of your people. The Lord he is God.
The Lord he is God. Receive us tonight. As many as will.
Who will be fashioned at your hand. In the hidden place. To constitute such a one.
This is the event. Your response. How many will.
Go beyond convenience. Beyond security. Beyond religious familiarity.
Into a new place. In the wilderness. To be formed as such a one.
Are you willing? Where are you? Raise your hand before God. Where are you? Stand before God. To say
me.
Stand before God. Right now. I'm very conscious right now of the extraordinary presence of God.

I'm not an American who has come with evangelical tricks. This is a holy moment before God. The Lord wants to transact.

With those who will say. Send me. Form me.

Whatever the cost. Even my own life. That Elijah might come.

Don't stand lightly. God will require this. Precious heavenly father.

In the name of Jesus. Seal. These who have stood.

To your call. They have not understood all that has been said. They have been mystified and perplexed.

It has not spoken to their minds. But to their spirits. A word has come.

A call. An event. Something that must come.

Out of hiddenness and out of obscurity. To a people like this. Collection blood.

Like Elijah. See them. Hear them.

Call them. Seal them. Send them.

In Jesus name.

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