

July 20

.. + *Holy Glorious Prophet Elijah*



He was born in Tishbe (in Palestine), the son of Shobach, from the family of Levi. According to the tradition which has reached us from St. Epiphanius of Cyprus, when Elijah was born, his father had a mysterious vision, that noble men greeted the child, wrapped him in swaddling clothes of fire and gave him a fiery flame to eat. Shobach declared this vision to the Jerusalem priests who said to him: "Fear not, thy son will dwell in light and judge the Israelites with sword and with fire". Really, St. Elijah, chosen a vessel of the grace of the Holy Spirit since his very birth, was one of the most flaming adherents to true faith and piety, so that he could never indifferently know the impious, who left the true God and His law, and he was ready to exterminate them immediately if he did not see them repenting and turning to God. Although "Elijah was a person who suffered like us", he, "having cleansed his mind from every impurity, was holy in everything, leading all to the divine light". Elijah was called by God for prophetic service during the reign of the Israelite King Ahab (for 900 years before Christ). After this calling "Elijah the wonderful prophet", "having instantly created a virtuous and pure way of life for God", became a great and marvelous source doing wonders. For teaching the impious King Ahab and the Israelite people seduced by him, Elijah struck the earth with a three year drought, "ended by prayer to the heavens". After this, according to the word of God, he "hid himself by the brook Cherith" where "ravens brought him bread and meat every morning and evening" for his livelihood. Within a year "the Divine Prophet" wonderfully satisfied the Zarephath "widow and son with a jar of flour and a cruse of oil increased through prayer" and "resurrected her son through prayer". Then, St. Elijah through prayer "brought down fire from the heavens" on the offering on Mount Carmel and proved to those people that Yahweh is the true God; after this by earnest prayers he stopped the rain on the ground thirsting from a prolonged drought, and "burning with zeal he slew the priests of shame (priests of Baal and Astarte who seduced the people into idolatry) with his own blameless hands". On Mount Horeb the great prophet was worthy as far as it is possible for one in the flesh of human nature to

contemplate God face to face. By these great miracles Elijah contributed much to the maintenance of the true faith in God among the Israelite people and to the destruction of idolatry and prepared the way for the One who was the expectation of Israel and of all the world. Flaming zeal for the glory of God (Sir. 48:1) sufficient to consume (Lk. 9:54), the unconditional obedience to the word of God, the complete self-deepening in his highest calling, the pure and undefiled life, the love for prayer and self-renunciation are those distinctive properties of this most remarkable Israelite prophet. His contemporaries, clearly seeing the grace of God in him, called him a man of God and in a sign of special awesomeness for him during a meeting with them he prostrated to the ground. Because of his saintly life and for his extraordinary flaming zeal for the glory of God St. Elijah was taken into heaven alive. For us this mysterious taking of Elijah alive into the upper world, according to the explanation of the Holy Church, "assures that the dead will arise" and serves "as a proof of the general resurrection of the dead and the translation alive on the final day of judgment". According to the belief of the Church, Elijah together with Enoch will be the forerunners of the second coming of Christ and at that time they will taste bodily death according to general human fate and law. "The human mind" cannot "worthily praise" Elijah as he is "the great prophet, an earthly angel" who "more than the intelligent ranks" was magnified, "seeing the transfiguration of Christ", was "the ruler over passions", "a pillar of piety", "the first-fruits of purity and virginity with divine growth", for he was the first in the Old Testament known as a glorious virgin _). (For details about his life and miracles see the 3rd and 4th Books of Kings; also refer to 2 Chr. 21:12 ff.; Mal. 4:5; Mt. 16:14; 17:3, 11-12; Sir. 48:1-11; Mk. 9:3; 13:28; Lk. 1:17; 9:19, 30; Jn. 1:21; Rev. 11:3-12).

Troparion, tone 4

**In the flesh an angel, the foundation of prophets,
The second forerunner of the coming of Christ, Elijah the glorious,
By sending down grace from on high to Elisha,
Drives out diseases, and cleanses lepers:
Therefore, for those who honor him, he pours out healing.**

Kontakion, tone 2

**O Foreteller and Foreseer of the mighty works of our God,
O Greatly Eminent Elijah,
Who with your words stopped the rain-shedding clouds,
Intercede for us with the Only Lover of mankind.**

In the Anthology issued in Lvov in 1686, there is a special magnification to the prophet Elijah:

**We magnify thee,
O Prophet and Forerunner of the coming of the Lord, Elijah the glorious,
And we honor thy fiery ascension in the flesh into heaven.**

In the booklet issued by the Pochaev Laura in 1763, there is this magnification, sung after the Polyeleon of feasts, for this day:

**We magnify thee,
O glorious Prophet of God Elijah,
And honor as well thy fiery ascension in the flesh into the heavens.**

These are the verses at this magnification:

- 1) **Behold I would wander afar, and I would settle down in the wilderness** (*Ps. 54:8*).
- 2) **My soul thirsts for Thee, as my flesh longs for Thee** (*Ps. 62:2*).
- 3) **I have spoken of Thy truth and Thy salvation** (*Ps. 39:11*).
- 4) **I have not hidden Thy mercy and Thy truth from the assembly** (*Ps. 39:11*).
- 5) **I have not hid Thy truths within my heart** (*Ps. 39:11*).
- 6) **And my tongue shall tell of Thy righteousness, and of Thy praise all the day long** (*Ps. 34:28*).

If the temple is of the Holy Prophet Elijah, or if the rector desires, a vigil is done.

Paramoea 1) 3 Kg. 17:1-23, 2) 3 Kg. 18:1, 17, 41, 44, 42, 45-46; 19:1-16.
3) 3 Kg. 19:19-21; 4 Kg. 2:1, 6-14. **Matins and Liturgy Gospel:** Lk. 4:22-30; sel. 14. **Epistle:** Jas. 5:10-20; sel. 57.

Ven. Abramius of Galicia

A disciple of the Ven. Sergius of Radonezh, who was to practice his asceticism with the special ascetical effort of silence, he, with his love for silence, left for the country of Galicia (near Lake Chukhlomsk), and here founded one of four monasteries: the first monastery is on the shore of Lake Galich, opposite Galich (abolished in 1775, it is now the Dormition Village), the second is 60 versts (about 40 miles) to the North and east from the first (abolished in 1764, it is now the Ozerki Village), the third is 15 versts (about 10 miles) to the West from the second, on the Bega River (abolished at the end of the 17th and the beginning of the 18th century, it is now the Verkhniaia Pustyn Village), the fourth is the Gorodets Monastery (see Kostroma Diocese),

where the icon of the Mother of God was wondrously revealed to St. Abramius. He died in peace on July 20, 1375 in the Gorodets Monastery founded by him. His relics rest in a hidden place in his monastery in the chapel of his name.

Icon of the Mother of God of Abalatsia - Of the Sign

This icon was written in the year 1637 by the Tobolsk Protodeacon Matthew by private hand of the wonderful vision of one pious widow. Now it is found in the Abalatsia Monastery (see Tobolsk Diocese) and serves as the object of reverent honor not only in Siberia but also in the provinces of European Russia.

Icon of the Mother of God of Chukhlomsk

This icon appeared to St. Abramius of Galicia in about the year 1350.

_) We pray to the Prophet Elijah for sending down rain during a drought. In view of the biblical tales people believe that Elijah is the direct manager of the awesome and beneficial forces of nature: drought and flood, crops, thunder and lightning are under his authority. According to the intercession for the people, it is as if the Prophet Elijah rides his fiery chariot through heaven to make thunder. On the day of Elijah the people always wait for storms and thunder. Ancestors from deep antiquity especially revered this God-pleasing man and during pre-Christian times in Kiev there was a church in the name of the Holy Prophet Elijah. Consequently frequent examples of the punishment of God for disrespect of the feast in honor of St. Elijah, the people believe that it is sinful and dangerous to work on this day, especially in the fields.

*S. V. Bulgakov, Handbook for Church Servers, 2nd ed., 1274pp. (Kharkov, 1900), pp 0249-251
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