

## July 20th. The Holy and Glorious Prophet Elias

### Readings at Great Vespers

(1) The Reading is from the Third Book of Kings. [17:1-24]

The word of the Lord came to the Prophet Elias and he said to Ahab, ‘As the Lord the God of powers lives, the God of Israel, before whom I stand today, there shall be neither dew nor rain during these years, except by the word of my mouth.’ The word of the Lord came to Elias, saying, ‘Go from here towards the east, and hide yourself in the brook Horrath, which is opposite the Jordan. You shall drink the water of the brook, and I am commanding the ravens to feed you there.’ So Elias went and obeyed the word of the Lord, and settled by the brook Horrath, which is opposite the Jordan. The ravens brought him bread in the morning, and meat in the evening; and he drank water from the brook. And it came to pass after some days that the brook dried up, because there was no rain on the earth. Then the word of the Lord came to Elias, saying, ‘Arise and go to Sarepta of Sidon, and settle there; for see, I am commanding a widow there to feed you.’ And he arose and went to Sarepta of Sidon, and came to the gate of the city. And a widow was there gathering sticks. And Elias called after her, and said to her, ‘Bring me, I pray you, a little water in a vessel, so that I may drink.’ As she was going to bring it, he called after her and said, ‘Bring me, I pray you, a morsel of bread in your hand.’ But the woman said, ‘As the Lord your God lives, I have nothing baked, only a handful of flour in the jar, and a little oil in the jug; and I am now gathering a couple of sticks, so that I may go home and prepare it for myself and my children, that we may eat it, and die.’ Elias said to her, ‘Take courage. Go and do as you have said; but first make me a little cake of it and bring it to me, and afterwards make something for yourself and your children. For thus says the Lord the God of Israel: The jar of flour will not fail and the jug of oil will not grow less until the day that the Lord sends rain on the whole land.’ The woman went and did as Elias said, and he and she and her children ate. And from that day the jar of flour did not fail, neither did the jug of oil grow less, according to the word of the Lord that he spoke by Elias. And it came to pass after this that the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, became ill; his illness was so severe that there was no breath left in him. The woman then said to Elias, ‘Why do you trouble me, man of God? Have you come to me to bring my sins to remembrance, and to cause the death of my son?’ But Elias said to the woman, ‘Give me your son.’ And he took him from her bosom, carried him up into the upper chamber where he was lodging, and laid him on his own bed. He cried out to the Lord, and said, ‘Woe is me, O Lord, the witness of the widow with whom I am staying: you have brought calamity, by killing her son.’ Then he breathed on the child three times, and called on the Lord and said, ‘O Lord my God, let the soul of this child come into him again.’ And so it happened, and Elias cried out. And the Lord listened to the voice of Elias; the soul of the child came into him again, and he

lived. Elias took the child, brought him down from the upper chamber into the house, and gave him to his mother. Then Elias said to her, 'See, your son is alive.' So the woman said to Elias, 'Now I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in your mouth is true.'

**(2)** The Reading is from the Third Book of Kings [18:1, 17-46 & 19:1-6]

The word of the Lord came to Elias the Thesbite in the third year of the reign of Ahab, saying, 'Go, and appear before Ahab, and I will give rain on the face of the earth. And it came to pass that Ahab saw Elias, and said to him, 'Is it you, the one who is troubling Israel?' Elias answered, 'I am not troubling Israel; but you are, and your father's house, by forsaking the Lord your God and following after Baal. Now therefore have all Israel assemble to me at Mount Carmel, with the four hundred and fifty shameful prophets of Baal and the four hundred prophets of the groves, who eat at Jezebel's table.' When Elias had spoken Ahab sent to all Israel, and assembled the prophets at Mount Carmel, and Elias came before them all. And Elias said to them, 'How long will you go limping between two different opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him.' But the people did not answer a word. Then Elias said to the people, 'I alone am left a prophet of the Lord; but the prophets of Baal are four hundred and fifty and the prophets of the groves are four hundred.' Then Elias said, 'Let two bulls be given to us; let them choose one for themselves, cut it in pieces, and lay it on the wood, but put no fire to it; I will prepare the other bull, and lay it on the wood, but put no fire to it. Then you shall call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of the Lord my God, and the god who answers by fire, he shall be God.' and all the people answered and said, 'The word of Elias is good: as you have spoken so let it be.' Then Elias said to the prophets of shame, 'Choose for yourselves one bull and prepare it first, for there are many of you, and call on the name of your god, but put no fire to it.' So they took the bull, prepared it, and called on the name of Baal from morning until noon, crying, 'Hear us, O Baal, hear us!' But there was no voice, and no hearing. And they ran upon the altar that they had made. When noon came Elias the Thesbite mocked them, saying, 'Cry aloud! For it is not a feast of your god: so perhaps he is working elsewhere, or perhaps he is asleep and needs to be awakened.' And they cried with a loud voice, and cut themselves in with knives and lancets in accordance with their custom so that blood gushed out on them. And they prophesied until the evening came. And when the time of the offering of the oblation came, there was no voice. Then Elias the Thesbite spoke to the prophets of shame, saying 'Stand aside now, and I will offer my sacrifice'. And they stood aside and departed. Then Elias said to the people, stones, according to the number of the sons of Israel, to whom had come the word of the Lord: 'Israel shall be your name'. And he built the stones in the name of the Lord, and repaired the altar that had been cast down. Then he made a trench around the altar, large enough to contain two measures of seed. Next he put the pieces of wood on the altar he had made, cut the sacrifice in

pieces, and laid them on the pieces of wood and piled them on the altar. And Elias said, 'Bring me four jars of water and pour it on the sacrifice and on the pieces of wood.' And they did so. Then he said, 'Do it a second time'; and they did it a second time. Again he said, 'Do it a third time'; and they did it a third time, so that the water ran all around the altar, and filled the trench with water. And Elias cried aloud to heaven and said, 'O Lord, the God of Abraham and Isaac and Israel, hear me, O Lord; hear me today by fire. And let all this people know that you alone are the Lord, the God of Israel, and that I am your servant, and that I have done all these things for your sake, and that you have turned back the heart of this people to you.' Then fire from the Lord fell from heaven and consumed the sacrifice and the wood and the stones and the dust and the water that was in the trench: the fire engulfed them all. And the people fell on their faces and said, 'Truly the Lord is God; he is God.' And Elias said to the people, 'Seize the prophets of Baal; do not let one of them escape from you.' Then they seized them; and Elias brought them down to the brook Kisson, and killed them there. And after this Elias said to Ahab, 'There is a sound of rushing rain. Harness your chariot and go down, lest the rain catch you.' Then Elias went up to the top of Carmel, and bowed himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees and prayed to the Lord. And the heavens grew black with clouds and wind, and there was a heavy rain. Ahab wept, and went to Jezreel. And the hand of the Lord was on Elias, and he girded his loins and ran before Ahab to Jezreel. Ahab told Jezebel his wife all that Elias had done, and how he has killed the prophets with the sword. Then Jezebel sent to Elias, saying, 'Tomorrow at this same hour I will sacrifice your life like one of them.' And Elias heard and was afraid; he arose and fled for his life, and came to Beersheba, in the land of Judah. He left his servant there, but he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a broom tree, and prayed concerning his life, that he might die, saying, 'It is enough for me, O Lord. Take my life from me, for I am no better than my fathers.' Then he lay down under the broom tree and fell asleep. Suddenly an angel of the Lord touched him and said to him, 'Arise, eat and drink.' Elias looked, and there at his head was a cake of flour and a jar of water. He arose, and ate, and drank, and slept again. The angel of the Lord came a second time, touched him, and said, 'Arise, eat and drink, for you have a long journey.' He arose, and ate and drank; and he went in the strength of that food for forty days and forty nights to mount Horeb. There he entered a cave, and dwelt in it. Then the word of the Lord came to him, and the Lord said to him, 'What are you doing here, Elias?' Elias answered, 'I have been very zealous for the Lord God Almighty; for the children of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking my life, to take it away.' Then the Angel said to him, 'You shall go out tomorrow and stand on the mountain before the Lord, for see, the Lord will pass by.' And a great and strong wind tore the mountain, crushing the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind came an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came

a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire. After the fire came the sound of a gentle breeze; and the Lord was there. And when Elias heard it he wrapped his face in his mantle and went and stood at the entrance to the cave. And then a voice came to him, and said, 'What are you doing here, Elias?' Elias answered, 'I have been very zealous for the Lord God Almighty; for the children of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking my life, to take it away.' And the Lord said to him, 'Go, return to your way and you will come to the desert way of Damascus; and you shall anoint Azael to be king of Syria; you shall anoint Jehu the son of Namessi to be king of Israel, and you shall anoint Elissaios the son of Saphat to be prophet in your place.'

**(3)** The Reading is from the Third Book of Kings. [*19:19-21 & 4 Kings 2:1.6-14*]

It came to pass in those days that Elias found Elissaios the son of Saphat, and he was ploughing with oxen. Elias passed by him and threw his mantle over him. Elissaios left the oxen, ran after Elias, and ministered to him. And it came to pass, when the Lord took Elias in a whirlwind as though up to heaven, that Elias went with Elissaios to Galgala. Elias said to Elissaios, 'Stay here; for the Lord has sent me as far as the Jordan.' But Elissaios said, 'As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.' So the two of them went on. Fifty men of the sons of the prophets came, and stood at some distance from them, as they both were standing by the Jordan. Then Elias took his mantle and rolled it up, and struck the water with it; and the water was parted to the one side and to the other, and the two of them crossed on dry ground. When they had crossed, Elias said to Elissaios, 'Ask me what I may do for you, before I am taken from you.' Elissaios said, 'Let a double portion of your spirit come upon me.' Elias said, 'You have asked a hard thing; yet, if you see me as I am being taken up from you, it will be granted you; but if not, it will not.' It came to pass that as they continued walking and talking, a chariot of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them, and Elias was taken up in a whirlwind as if into heaven. Elissaios kept watching and crying out, 'Father, father! The chariots of Israel and its horsemen!' But when he could no longer see him, Elissaios grasped his own clothes and tore them in two pieces. And Elissaios picked up the mantle of Elias that had fallen from him, and went back and stood on the bank of the Jordan. Elissaios took the mantle of Elias that had fallen from him, and struck the water, saying, 'Where then is the God of Elias, Appho?' And so Elissaios struck the water a second time, and the water was parted, and Elissaios went over on dry ground.