

RECEPTION OF PROPHET ELIJAH BY MEANS OF CARMELITAN SPIRITUALITY

Summary

Prophet Elijah was active mainly in Trans-Jordan in the 9th century B.C. He lived in the time of economic, political and religious disorders in the Northern Kingdom, as the faith of Israel in God JHWH was in danger from Baal cult, promoted by the Phoenician princess Jezebel.

The Old Testament, and this work, describe the following important events from Elijah's life: the prophet's hide near Kerith, his stay with the widow of Zarephath, his struggle with Baal's priests on Mount Carmel, followed by cease of a long period of draught, Elijah's journey to Mount Horeb, meeting with the Lord on the mountain, and Elijah's ride to heaven. These events are mentioned because I consider them essential for understanding the spirituality of the Carmelite Order that has Elijah for one of its models.

The Carmelite Order derives its existence from a community of hermits on Mount Carmel, who saw in the prophet Elijah archetype and model for religious life, and who received their rules from Albert of Jerusalem In the first years of the 13th century.

Prophet Elijah was inspiring also for great Carmelites as St. John of the Cross and St. Therese of Avila, who named Elijah Father of the Carmelites and saw in him model of contemplative prayer and following God, as well as for Titus Brandsma or Edith Stein, who, as Elijah, did not give in to the tyrants of the 20th century, imitating Elijah's example of life in prayer in the middle of intense activity.

Prophet Elijah is also mentioned in the statutes of the Carmelite Order that relate to him as model for contemplation, a mystic and a bold champion of the Divine law against the false idols, but also a man who performed works of charity.

Key words: Elijah, prophets, Carmelitans, spirituality, baalism

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