

Homily for December 11, 2021

*The Two Elijah's*

The reading from Sirach speaks about times in Israel's story where God's guidance was made visible during challenging stretches in the history of the Northern country Israel. Sirach summarizes God's guidance through the ministry of Elijah. He proclaimed the word of the Lord during the reign of the corrupt and evil king, Ahab. With his deplorable wife Jezebel this terrible duo caused great distress to the people of the land. During these years God's judgment was expressed through the hand of his prophet Elijah whose prayer brought about a famine and drought which represented how the people were spiritually parched and famished, intimidated and frightened as they were by Ahab and his wife, Jezebel.

In summarizing the ministry of Ezekiel Sirach refers to prophet's assumption into heaven:

*You were taken up by a whirlwind of fire,  
in a chariot with horses of fire.<sup>1</sup>*

and the way he influenced the people positively during a very corrupt time in the life of Israel

*At the appointed time, it is written, you are destined  
to calm the wrath of God before it breaks out in fury,  
to turn the hearts of parents to their children,  
and to restore the tribes of Jacob.*

*<sup>11</sup> Happy are those who saw you  
and were adorned with your love!  
For we also shall surely live<sup>2</sup>*

Not only do these verses summarize the work and ministry of Elijah, they also anticipate the work St John the Baptist would do as the Elijah who would prepare the way of the Lord Jesus. He would indeed make the way for the one who would not come in wrath, but in mercy. As people gathered in the Judean wilderness John was gathering the tribes of Jacob together and people were happy to see him, for he announced the one in whom they could have life, Jesus. And while, as was true with Elijah of old, and John the Baptist, evil kings tried to silence them, Ahab and Jezebel through intimidation, and Herod through decapitation, the message of the two Elijah's could not be thwarted, because it was ordained by God.

In our time, when there is so much that unsettles our spirits, with a world filled with great challenges and uncertainty that can lead us to worry and anxiety, may we remember that we are part of the story that has at its centre the Author of Life. May we be open to the voice of God as

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<sup>1</sup> [The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version](#). (1989). (Sir 48:9). Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers.

<sup>2</sup> [The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version](#). (1989). (Sir 48:10–11). Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers.

he speaks to us reassuringly through His Word and the living voice of the Church, so we can trustingly ask the Lord as we prayed in today's Collect:

***May the splendour of your glory dawn in our hearts that all the shadows of the night may be scattered and we may be shown to be children of the light by the Advent of your Only Begotten Son.***

The two Elijah's were children of the light. May we shine with the loving radiance of the one whose life will be imparted to us in the Eucharist we will receive at this Mass.