

The Elijah Enigma: The Prophet, King Ahab and the Rebirth of Monotheism in the Book of Kings

Hillel I. Millgram

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An analysis of the intertwining tales of Elijah and Ahab--mercurial prophet and Machiavellian king--this book is an accessible treatment of one of the most dramatic and well-known episodes in the Bible. In contrast to the popular image of Elijah as a courageous wonder-worker who calls down fire from heaven and ascends to heaven in a fiery chariot, this book contends that the prophet was a deeply conflicted man, torn between a burning idealism and a deep disillusionment over his failure to achieve his ideals. Despite his profound sense of failure, Elijah's struggle against the paganizing regime of King Ahab and his queen, Jezebel, managed to save monotheism from eclipse, and in so doing alter the course of human history. This work further proposes that the tale presented by the Bible is more than an account of an ancient battle between two historic figures: it is a paradigm of the struggle between the ideals of human dignity and justice, and the alternative of expediency in the pursuit of power, a conflict that pervades human life to this very day.



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