

Apocalypse of Elijah

The **Apocalypse of Elijah** is an anonymous apocryphal work presenting itself as a revelation given by an angel. Two versions are known today: a Coptic Christian fragmentary version and a Hebrew Jewish version. The title derives from mentions of Elijah within the text, although there is no other reason to assume that he is meant to be the author.



The Apocalypse of Elijah purports to be a revelation given to Elijah by an angel.

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Dating and provenance

This apocalypse is mentioned in the Apostolic Constitutions, the List of the Sixty Books, the Synopsis of Pseudo-Athanasius, the Stichometry of Nicephorus, and the Armenian list of Mechithar. Origen, Ambrosiaster, and Euthalius ascribe First Epistle to the Corinthians 2:9 to it:

Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

If they are right, the apocalypse is pre-Pauline. The peculiar form in which this quotation appears in Clement of Alexandria, *Protrepticus* x. 94, and the *Apostolic Constitutions* vii. 32, shows that both have the same source, probably this apocalypse.

Epiphanius^[1] ascribes to this work Eph. 5:14:

Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

The Jewish version of the Apocalypse of Elijah was published by Adolf Jellinek^[2] in 1855 and Moses Bittenwieser in 1897. Theodor Zahn^[3] assigns this apocalypse to the 2nd century AD^[4] but other scholars reject such an early date.^[5]

The two extant versions are thought to be derived from the same original, which would be the one quoted by Paul the Apostle. The Coptic version has been Christianized and the Hebrew version abridged.

Text

The Christian version is essentially a redaction of five originally separate works:

- A treatise on fasting and prayer
- A prophecy concerning the Assyrians, of events that had actually already happened by the time the text was written. The kings mentioned within the section have not been identified with certainty.

- An account of the future arrival of a "son of lawlessness", later re-edited by a Christian to refer to the Antichrist. It describes the Antichrist/*son-of-lawlessness* in detail, including mentioning that his *eyebrows will reach to his ears*, he is skinny legged, young but bald bar a tuft of grey hair at the front, and that he has a bare spot on the front of his hands.
- An account of martyrdoms of Elijah and Enoch (based on the death of the two witnesses in the Book of Revelation), the martyrdom of Tabitha (from the Acts of the Apostles), and sixty other men.
- An account of the destruction of the "son of lawlessness" after the last judgement, later re-edited by a Christian to refer to the Antichrist.

Notes

1. *Haer.* xlii., ed. Oehler, vol. ii. 678.
2. *Bet ha-Midrash*, 1855, iii. 65-68.
3. *Gesch. des N. T. Kanons*, ii. 801-810
4. See Emil Schürer, iii. 267-271
5. <http://www.earlyjewishwritings.com/apocelijah.html>

External links

- Article (<http://www.earlyjewishwritings.com/apocelijah.html>) at earlyjewishwritings.com
- *Sefer Elijah* (https://web.archive.org/web/20070526123451/http://www.religiousstudies.uncc.edu/jcreeves/sefer_elijah.htm)
- Apocalypse of Elijah Versification (<https://web.archive.org/web/20080829163141/http://www.bombaxo.com/apocel.html>)
- Apocalypse of Elijah (Christian version) (<http://www.3-in-1.net/Pseudepigrapha/Apocalypse%20of%20Elijah/The%20Apocalypse%20of%20Elijah.htm>)

See Wikipedia "Chester Beatty Papyri." The year 1981 saw the publication of a manuscript of the CB papyri, number 1493, containing some text of the Apocalypse of Elijah. That ms. contains the otherwise missing Apoc Elijah 2:15b-2:30a. See the discussion in O.S. Wintermute "Apocalypse of Elijah" in James Charlesworth, ed. *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (Doubleday: 1983)1:721-53; esp. PP.727, 733.

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from the Pseudepigrapha
The Apocalypse of Elijah

I ¹The word of YHWH came to me saying, "Son of man, say to his people, 'why do you add sin to your sins and anger the Lord God who created you?' " ²Don't love the world or the things which are in the world, for the boasting of the world and its destruction belong to the devil.

³Remember that the Lord of glory, Who created everything, had mercy upon you so that He might save us from the captivity of this age. ⁴For many times the devil desired not to let the sun rise above the earth and not to let the earth yield fruit, since he desires to consume men like a fire which rages in stubble, and he desires to swallow them like water.

⁵Therefore, on account of this, the God of glory had mercy upon us, and He sent His Son to the world so that He might save us from the captivity. ⁶He did not inform an angel or an archangel or any principality when He was about to come to us, but He changed Himself to be like a man when He was about to come to us so that He might save us [from flesh].

⁷Therefore become sons to Him since He is a father to you.

⁸Remember that He has prepared thrones and crowns for you in heaven, saying, "Everyone who will obey Me will receive thrones and crowns among those who are Mine." ⁹The Lord said, "I will write My name upon their forehead and I will seal their right hand, and they will not hunger or thirst. ¹⁰Neither will the son of lawlessness prevail over them, nor will the thrones hinder them, but they will walk with the angels up to My city." ¹¹Now as for the sinners, they will be shamed and they will not pass by the thrones, but the thrones of death will seize them and rule over them because the angels will not agree with them. ¹²They have alienated themselves from His dwellings.

¹³Hear, O wise men of the land, concerning the deceivers who will multiply in the last times so that they will set down for themselves doctrines which do not belong to God, setting aside the Law of God, those who have made their belly their God, saying, "The fast does not exist, nor did God create it," making themselves strangers to the covenant of God and robbing themselves of the glorious promises. ¹⁴Now these are not ever correctly established in the firm faith. Therefore don't let those people lead you astray.

¹⁵Remember that from the time when He created the heavens, the Lord created the fast for a benefit to men on account of the passions and desires which fight against you so that the evil will not inflame you. ¹⁶"But it is a pure fast which I have created," said the Lord. ¹⁷The one who fasts continually will not sin although jealousy and strife are within him. ¹⁸Let the pure one fast, but whenever the one who fasts is not pure he has angered the Lord and also the angels. ¹⁹And he has grieved his soul, gathering up wrath for himself for the day of wrath.

²⁰ But a pure fast is what I created, with a pure heart and pure hands. ²¹It releases sin. It heals diseases. It casts out demons. ²²It is effective up to the throne of God for an ointment and for a release from sin by means of a pure prayer.

²³Who among you, if he is honored in his craft, will go forth to the field without a tool in his hand? Or who will go forth to the battle to fight without a breastplate on? ²⁴If he is found, will he not be killed because he despised the service of the king? ²⁵Likewise no one is able to enter the holy place if he is double minded. ²⁶The one who is double minded in his prayer is darkness to himself. And even the angels do not trust him. ²⁷Therefore be single-minded in the Lord at all times so that you might know every moment.

II ¹Furthermore, concerning the kings of Assyria and the dissolution of the heaven and the earth and the things beneath the earth.

²"now therefore <those who are Mine> will not be overcome" says the Lord, "nor will they fear in the battle." ³When they see [a king] who rises in the north, [who will be called] "the king of [Assyria]" and] "the king of injustice," [he will increase] his battles and his disturbances against Egypt. ⁴The land will groan together because your children will be seized.

⁵Many will desire death in those days, but death will flee from them.

⁶And a king who will be called "the king of peace" will rise up in the west. ⁷He will run upon the sea like a roaring lion.

⁸He will kill the king of injustice, and he will take vengeance on Egypt with battles and much bloodshed.

⁹It will come to pass in those days that he will command a p[ea]ce and a [vain] gift in Egypt. ¹⁰[He will give] peace to these who are holy, [saying], "The name of [God] is one." ¹¹[He will] give honors to the s[aints] and] an exalting to the places of the saints. ¹²He will give vain gifts to the house of God. ¹³He will wander around in the cities of Egypt with guile, without their knowing. ¹⁴He will take count of the holy places. He will weigh the idols of the heathen. He will take count of their wealth. He will establish priests for them. ¹⁵He will command that the wise men and the great ones of the people be seized, and they will be brought to the metropolis which is by the sea, saying, "There is but one language."

¹⁶But when you hear, "Peace and joy exist," I will...

¹⁷Now I will tell you his signs so that you might know him. ¹⁸For he has two sons: one on his right and one on his left.

¹⁹The one on his right will receive a demonic face, (and) he will fight against the name of God. ²⁰Now four kings will descend from that king. ²¹In his thirtieth year he will come up to Memphis, (and) he will build a temple in Memphis. ²²On that day his own son will rise up against him and kill him. ²³The whole land will be disturbed.

²⁴On that day he will issue an order over the whole land so that the priests of the land and all of the saints will be seized, saying, "You will repay doubly every gift and all of the good things which my father gave to you." ²⁵He will shut up the holy places. He will take their houses. He will take their sons prisoner. ²⁶He will order and sacrifices and abominations and bitter evils will be done in the land. ²⁷He will appear before the sun and the moon. ²⁸On that day the priests of the land will tear their clothes.

²⁹Woe to you, O rulers of Egypt, in those days because your day has passed. ³⁰The violence (being done to) the poor will turn against you, and your children will be seized as plunder. ³¹In those days the cities of Egypt will groan for the voice of the one who sells and the one who buys will not be heard. The markets of the cities of Egypt will become dusty. ³²Those who are in Egypt will weep together. They will desire death, (but) death will flee and leave them.

³³In those days, they will run up to the rocks and leap off, saying, "Fall upon us." And still they will not die. ³⁴A double affliction will multiply upon the whole land.

³⁵In those days, the king will command, and all the nursing women will be seized and brought to him bound. They will suckle serpents. And their blood will be drawn from their breasts, and it will be applied as poison to the arrows. ³⁶On account of their distress of the cities, he will command again, and all the young lads from twelve years and under will be seized and presented in order to teach them to shoot arrows. ³⁷The midwife who is upon the earth will grieve. The woman who has given birth will lift her eyes to heaven, saying, "Why did I sit upon the birthstool, to bring forth a son to the earth?" ³⁸The barren woman and the virgin will rejoice, saying, "It is our time to rejoice, because we have no child upon the earth, but our children are in heaven."

³⁹In those days, three kings will arise among the Persians, and they will take captive the Jews who are in Egypt. They will bring them to Jerusalem, and they will inhabit it and dwell there.

⁴⁰Then when you hear that there is security in Jerusalem, tear your garments, O priests of the land, because the son of perdition will soon come.

⁴¹In those days, the lawless one will appear in the holy places ---

⁴²In (those) days the kings of the Persians will hasten and they will stand to fight with the kings of Assyria. Four kings will fight with three. ⁴³They will spend three years in that place until they carry off the wealth of the temple which is in that place.

⁴⁴In those days, blood will flow from Kos to Memphis. The river of Egypt will become blood, and they will not be able to drink from it for three days.

⁴⁵Woe to Egypt and those who are in it.

⁴⁶In those days, a king will arise in the city which is called "the city of the sun," and the whole land will be disturbed. <He will> flee to Memphis (with the Persians).

⁴⁷In the sixth year, the Persian kings will plot an ambush in Memphis. They will kill the Assyrian king. ⁴⁸The Persians will take vengeance on the land, and they will command to kill all the heathen and the lawless ones. They will command to build the temples of the saints. ⁴⁹They will give double gifts to the house of God. They will say, "The name of God is one." ⁵⁰The whole land will hail the Persians.

⁵¹Even the remnant, who did not die under the afflictions, will say, "The Lord has sent us a righteous king so that the land will not become a desert" ⁵²He will command that no royal matter be presented for three years and six months. The land will be full of good in an abundant well-being.

⁵³Those who are alive will go to those who are dead, saying, "Rise up and be with us in this rest."



1. In the fourth year of that king, the son of lawlessness will appear, saying, "I am the Christ," although he is not. Don't believe him!

2. When the Christ comes, He will come in the manner of a covey of doves with the crown of doves surrounding Him. He will walk upon the heaven's vaults with the sign of the cross leading Him.

3. The whole world will behold Him like the sun which shines from the eastern horizon to the western.

4. This is how He will come, with all his angels surrounding Him.

5. But the son of lawlessness will begin to stand again in the holy places.

6. He will say to the sun, "Fall," and it will fall.
He will say, "Shine," and it will do it.

He will say, "Darken," and it will do it.

7. He will say to the moon, "Become bloody," and it will do it.

8. He will go forth with them from the sky.
He will walk upon the sea and the rivers as upon dry land.

9. He will cause the lame to walk.
He will cause the deaf to hear.
He will cause the dumb to speak.
He will cause the blind to see.

10. The lepers he will cleanse.
The ill he will heal.
The demons he will cast out.

11. He will multiply his signs and his wonders in the presence of everyone.
12. He will do the works which the Christ did, except for raising the dead alone.
13. In this you will know that he is the son of lawlessness, because he is unable to give life.
14. For behold I will tell you his signs so that you might know him.
15. He is a ...of a skinny-legged young lad, having a tuft of gray hair at the front of his bald head. His eyebrows will reach to his ears. There is a leprous bare spot on the front of his hands.
16. He will transform himself in the presence of those who see him. He will become a young child. He will become old.
17. He will transform himself in every sign. But the signs of his head will not be able to change.
18. Therin you will know that he is the son of lawlessness.

IV

1. The virgin, whose name is Tabitha, will hear that the shameless one has revealed himself in the holy places. And she will put on her garment of fine linen.
2. And she will pursue him up to Judea, scolding him up to Jerusalem, saying, "O shameless one, O son of lawlessness, O you who have been hostile to all the saints.
3. Then the shameless one will be angry at the virgin. He will pursue her up to the regions of the sunset. He will suck her blood in the evening.
4. And he will cast her upon the temple, and she will become a healing for the people.
5. She will rise up at dawn. And she will live and scold him, saying, "o shameless one, you have no power against my soul or my body, because I live in the Lord always.
6. And also my blood which you have cast upon the temple has become a healing for the people."
7. Then when Elijah and Enoch hear that the shameless one has revealed himself in the holy place, they will come down and fight with him saying,

8. Are you indeed not ashamed? When you attach yourself to the saints, because you are always estranged.

9. you have been hostile to those who belong to heaven. you have acted against those belonging to the earth.

10. You have been hostile to the thrones. you have acted against the angels. you are always a stranger.

11. you have fallen from heaven like the morning stars. you were changed, and your tribe became dark for you.

12. But you are not ashamed, when you stand firmly against God you are a devil.

13. The shameless one will hear and he will be angry, and he will fight with them in the market place of the great city. And he will spend seven days fighting with them.
14. And they will spend three and one half days in the market place dead, while all the people see them
15. But on the fourth day they will rise up and they will scold him saying. "O shameless one, O son of lawlessness. Are you indeed not ashamed of yourself since you are leading astray the people of God for whom you did not suffer? Do you not know that we live in the Lord?"
16. As the words were spoken, they prevailed over him, saying, "Furthermore, we will lay down before the flesh for the spirit, and we will kill you since you are unable to speak on that day because we are always strong in the Lord. But you are always hostile to God.
17. The shameless one will hear, and he will be angry and fight them.
18. And the whole city will surround them.
19. On that day they will shout up to heaven as they shine while all the people and all the world see them.
20. The son of lawlessness will not prevail over them. He will be angry at the land, and he will seek to sin against the people.
21. He will pursue all of the saints. They and the priests of the land will be brought back bound.
22. He will kill them and destroy them...them. And their eyes will be removed with iron spikes.
23. He will remove their skin from their heads. He will remove their nails one by one. He will command that vinegar and lime be put in their nose.

24. Now those who are unable to bear up under the tortures of that king will take gold and flee over the fords to the desert places. They will lie down as one who sleeps.

25. The Lord will receive their spirits and their souls to Himself.

26. Their flesh will petrify. No wild animals will eat them until the last day of the great judgment.

27. And they will rise up and find a place of rest. but they will not be in the kingdom of the Christ as those who have endured because the Lord said, "I will grant to them that they sit on my right hand."

28. They will receive favor over others, and they will triumph over the son of lawlessness. And they will witness the dissolution of heaven and earth.

29. They will receive the thrones of glory and the crowns.

30. The sixty righteous ones who are prepared for this hour will hear.

31. And they will gird on the breastplate of YHWH, and they will run to Jerusalem and fight with the shameless one, saying, "All powers which the prophets have done from the beginning you have done. But you were unable to raise the dead because **you have no power to give life**. Therein we have known that you are the son of lawlessness."

32. He will hear, and he will be angry and command to kindle altars

33. And the righteous ones will be bound. They will be lifted up and burned.

V

1. And on that day the heart of many will harden and they will flee from him, saying, "This is not the Christ. The Christ does not kill the righteous. He does not pursue men so that he might seek them, but He persuades them with signs and wonders."

2. On that day the Christ will pity those who are His own. And He will send from heaven his sixty-four thousand angels, each of whom has six wings.

3. The sound will move heaven and earth when they give praise and glorify.

4. Now those upon whose forehead the name of Christ is written and upon whose hand is the seal both the small and the great, will be taken up upon their wings and lifted up before his wrath.

5. Then Gabriel and Uriel will become a pillar of light leading them into the holy land.

6. It will be granted to them to eat from the tree of life. They will wear white garments...and angels will watch over them.

They will not thirst, nor will the son of lawlessness be able to prevail over them.

7. And on that day the earth will be disturbed, and the sun will darken, and peace will be removed from the earth.

8. The birds will fall on the earth, dead.

9. The earth will be dry. The waters of the sea will dry up.

10. The sinners will groan upon the earth saying, "What have you done to us, O son of lawlessness, saying I am the Christ, when you are the devil?"

11. You are unable to save yourself so that you might save us. You produced signs in our presence until you alienated us from the Christ who created us. Woe to us because we listened to you.

12. Lo now we will die in a famine. Where indeed is now the trace of a righteous one and we will worship him, or where indeed is the one who will teach us and we will appeal to him.

13. Now indeed we will be wrathfully destroyed because we disobeyed YHWH.

14. We went to the deep places of the sea, and we did not find water. We dug in the rivers and papyrus reeds, and we did not find water."

15. Then on that day, the shameless one will speak, saying, "Woe to me because my time has passed by for me while I was saying that my time would not pass by for me.

16. My years became months and my days have passed away as dust passes away. Now therefore I will perish together with you.

17. Now therefore run forth to the desert. Seize the robbers and kill them.

18. Bring up the saints. For because of them, the earth yields fruit. for because of them the sun shines upon the earth.

For because of them the dew will come upon the earth."

19. The sinners will weep saying, "You made us hostile to YHWH. If you are able, rise up and pursue them."

20. Then he will take his fiery wings and fly out after the saints. He will fight with them again.

21. The angels will hear and come down. They will fight with him a battle of many swords.

22. It will come to pass on that day that the Lord will hear and command the heaven and the earth with great wrath. And they will send for fire.

23. And the fire will prevail over the earth seventy-two cubits. It will consume the sinners and the devils like stubble.

24. A true judgment will occur.

25. On that day, the mountains and the earth will utter speech. The byways will speak with one another, saying, "Have you heard today the voice of a man who walks who has not come to the judgment of the Son of YHWH."

26. The sins of each one will stand against him in the place where they were committed, whether those of the day or of the night.

27. Those who belong to the righteous and ... will see the sinners and those who persecuted them and those who handed them over to death in their torments.

28. Then the sinners [in torment] will see the place of the righteous.

29. And thus grace will occur. In those days, that which the righteous will ask for many times will be given to them.

30. On that day, YHWH will judge the heaven and the earth. He will judge those who transgressed in heaven, and those who did so on earth.

³¹·He will judge the shepherds of the people. He will ask about the flock of sheep, and they will be given to Him, without any deadly guile existing in them.

³²·After these things, Elijah and Enoch will come down. They will lay down the flesh of the world, and they will receive their spiritual flesh. They will pursue the son of lawlessness and kill him since he is not able to speak.

³³·On that day, he will dissolve in their presence like ice which was dissolved by a fire. He will perish like a serpent which has no breath in it.

³⁴·They will say to him, "Your time has passed by for you. Now therefore you wand those who believe you will perish."

³⁵·They will be cast into the bottom of the abyss and it will be closed for them.

³⁶·On that day, the Christ, the King and all His saints will come forth from heaven.

³⁷·He will burn the earth. He will spend a thousand years upon it.

³⁸·Because the sinners prevailed over it, He will create a new heaven and a new earth. No deadly devil will exist in them.

³⁹·He will rule with His saints, ascending and descending, while they are always with the angels and they are with the Christ for a thousand years.