

- j. list of devastated cities
- 7. [Michael-discourse 5]: the final “day”
 - a. this “day” lasts for forty days
 - b. earthquakes and tremors
 - c. earth herself will testify against the wicked
- 8. Elijah-discourse 2: vision of the resurrection of the dead
- 9. Elijah-discourse 3: vision of the punishment of apostates and the wicked
- 10. Elijah-discourse 4: vision of the patriarchs and Land as Eden
- 11. Elijah-discourse 5: vision of the descent of the heavenly Jerusalem
- 12. Elijah-discourse 6: vision of the dwellings of the righteous

Sefer Elijah, or the *Book of Elijah*, was first published in an anthology of midrashic texts in Salonika in 1743. This version of the text was subsequently reprinted by Adolph Jellinek in his *Bet ha-Midrasch*.⁵ Another edition based on the version of the work found in Munich Ms. Hebr. 222, a manuscript dating from the fifteenth century⁶ containing an anthology of brief midrashim, was prepared by Moses Buttenwieser and published in 1897.⁷ Even-Shmuel published an eclectic version that combines and harmonizes the editions of Jellinek and Buttenwieser.⁸ The same author has also published a later, reworked version that is taken from a Yemenite manuscript of uncertain date.⁹ The present translation utilizes Buttenwieser as its base text with frequent reference in the notes to the variant renderings found in the edition published by Jellinek.

SEFER ELIJAH, MAY HIS MEMORY BE FOR A BLESSING

And he lay down and fell asleep beneath a broom-shrub. Then lo, this angel touched him and said, “Get up, eat!” (1 Kgs 19:5). Michael, “the great prince” of Israel,¹⁰ revealed this mystery to the prophet Elijah at Mount

⁵ Adolph Jellinek, ed., *Bet ha-Midrasch: Sammlung kleiner Midraschim und vermischter Abhandlungen aus der jüdischen Literatur* (6 vols.; Leipzig, 1853–77; repr., Jerusalem: Bamberger & Wahrmann, 1938), 3:65–68.

⁶ Fol. 65b–68b. Bearing the title ספר המעשים, it also contains versions of *Pirqa Mashiaḥ* (36b–46b) and *Secrets of R. Šimṓn b. Yoḥai* (107b–111a). See Moses Buttenwieser, *Die hebräische Elias-Apokalypse und ihre Stellung in der apokalyptischen Litteratur des rabbinischen Schrifttums und der Kirche* (Leipzig: Eduard Pfeiffer, 1897), 9.

⁷ Buttenwieser, *Elias-Apokalypse*, 15–26.

⁸ Yehudah Even-Shmuel, *Midreshey Ge'ullah* (2d ed.; Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1954), 41–48.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 49–54.

¹⁰ מיכאל השר הגדול העמד על בני עמך = מיכאל שרא רבא דישראל (Dan 12:1).

Carmel;¹¹ (namely), the eschaton and what was scheduled to transpire at the End of Days at the end of the four empires (and) the things that would take place during the reign of the fourth ruler.¹²

A wind from the Lord lifted me [i.e., Elijah] up and transported me to the southern part of the world, and I saw there a high place burning with fire where no creature was able to enter. Then the wind lifted me up and transported me to the eastern part of the world, and I saw there stars battling one another incessantly. Again the wind lifted me up and transported me to the western part of the world, and I saw there souls undergoing a painful judgment,¹³ each one in accordance with its deeds.¹⁴

Then Michael said to me,¹⁵ “The appointed time for the End of Days will occur during the reign of a king who will be named הרמלת.¹⁶ There are

¹¹ This clause is in Aramaic: רוא דנא גלא ליה מיכאל שרא רבא דישראל לאליהו הנביא בטורא דכרמל. Interestingly, a Hekhalot adjuration found in Ms. JTS 8128 and published by Peter Schäfer contains a reference to a revelation made to Elijah at Mount Carmel by the angel Malkiel: אילו השמות המפורשות שהם חקוקות בכסא הכבוד שמסר מלכאל המלאך שהוא עומד תמיד לפני הקב"ה לאליהו בהר הכרמל ובהם גתעלה, “these are the explicit names which are engraved on the Throne of Glory which the angel Malkiel transmitted to Elijah at Mount Carmel, and using them he was raised (to heaven).” Text quoted from Peter Schäfer, ed., *Synopse zur Hekhalot-Literatur* (TSAJ 2; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1981), 199 (§505). Note also the Genizah fragment JTSL ENA 3635.17 fol. 17a line 12: ומהם שנגלו לאליהו בהר הכרמל, “and some of them (i.e., powerful angelic and demonic names) were revealed to Elijah on Mount Carmel”; text cited from Peter Schäfer and Shaul Shaked, eds., *Magische Texte aus der Kairoer Geniza*, Band 1 (TSAJ 42; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1994), 19.

¹² The “four-empires” scheme, a prominent topos in Near Eastern apocalypticism, has its biblical basis in the familiar sequential progression recounted in the dream visions of the book of Daniel. For further discussion of this scheme’s background and influence, see especially Oded Irshai, “Dating the Eschaton: Jewish and Christian Apocalyptic Calculations in Late Antiquity,” in *Apocalyptic Time* (ed. Albert I. Baumgarten; Studies in the History of Religions 86; Leiden: Brill, 2000), 115 n. 6.

¹³ Jellinek: בצער גדול, “in great pain.” Frankfurter has pointed out that the association of the western quadrant with the abode of the dead is an Egyptian idea (*Elijah in Upper Egypt*, 45 n. 44).

¹⁴ Buttenwieser suggests that the description of Enoch’s journeys through heaven and hell as pro-vided in *1 Enoch* serves as the source for this paragraph (*Elias-Apokalypse*, 15 n. 8). See also idem, *Outline of the Neo-Hebraic Apocalyptic Literature* (Cincinnati: Jennings & Pye, 1901), 31. Cf. *1 En.* 18:6; 21:7; 22:11, none of which, however, displays the close relationship he posits. Nevertheless, Buttenwieser’s supposition of an Enochic influence on this section of the apocalypse has been uncritically accepted and extended by Richard Bauckham, “Early Jewish Visions of Hell,” *JTS* 41 (1990): 362–65, 375–77. More pertinent parallels are supplied by Michael E. Stone and John Strugnell, *The Books of Elijah: Parts 1–2* (SBLTT 18; Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1979), 14–24, 25 n. 1; note also Frankfurter, *Elijah in Upper Egypt*, 45–46. For Elijah’s popularity as a revealer or recipient of visions concerning Gehinnom and its suffering inhabitants, see Martha Himmelfarb, *Tours of Hell: An Apocalyptic Form in Jewish and Christian Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983; repr., Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 30–37.

¹⁵ This is the only place in the apocalypse where Michael directly addresses the visionary. It is probably not accidental; see the following note.

¹⁶ A resumptive repetition of much of the final line of the first paragraph, a literary device in Hebrew prose that frequently serves to frame a later insertion within an integral narrative composi-

some that say that תרמילא will be his name.”¹⁷ R. Simai says הכשרת will be his name. R. Eleazar says הרתחשסתא (Artaxerxes)¹⁸ will be his name. R. Judah b. Betira says כורש (Cyrus) will be his name.¹⁹ R. Šimʿōn b. Yoḥai says הכסרא (Khusrau) will be his name. The halakhah in this case follows R. Šimʿōn who said “Khusrau” will be his name.²⁰

The last king who rules Persia shall come up against the Romans three successive years until he expands (his gains) against them for twelve months. Three mighty warriors will come up to oppose him from the west, but they will be handed over into his control. Then the lowliest of the kings, the son of a slave woman and whose name is Gīgīt, will confront him from the west.²¹ These will be his signs, for Daniel has already foreseen him:²² his face will be long, there will be a bald patch between his eyes,²³ he will be very tall,²⁴ the soles of his feet will be high [*sic*], and his thighs will be thin.²⁵ At that time he will attack the faithful people,²⁶ and he will provoke at that time three agitations. All the constellations will be gathered together and move to one place. They will plunder houses and rob fields and strike the orphan and the widow in the bazaar, but if they perform penitence they will be forgiven.

tion. For a brief discussion of this technique, see Shemaryahu Talmon, “The Presentation of Synchronicity and Simultaneity in Biblical Narrative,” in *Studies in Hebrew Narrative Art Throughout the Ages* (ed. Joseph Heinemann and Shmuel Werses; ScrHier 28; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1978), 12–17. Note also Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Myth and Rabbinic Mythmaking* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 136 n. 8.

¹⁷ Jellinek (*BHM* 3:xviii) suggests that these two designations refer to Armilos, the principal villain found in the roughly contemporary *Sefer Zerubbabel* and its derivative literature; his suggestion is seconded by Samuel Krauss, “Der römisch-persische Krieg in der jüdischen Elia-Apokalypse,” *JQR* o.s. 14 (1902): 362. Bittenwieser argues that הרמלת is a corrupt reference to Hurmuz, son of Shāpūr I; see his *Elias-Apokalypse*, 77–78; Even-Shmuel, *Midreshey Geʿullah*, 34 n. 12.

¹⁸ Cf. Ezra 4:7, 8, 11, 23; 6:14; 7:1, 11, 12, 21, 23; 8:1; Neh 2:1; 5:14; 13:6.

¹⁹ See Isa 44:28; 45:1; but contrast *b. Meg.* 12a. Wilken calls attention to the “uncanny correspondence” between the names of the Persian liberators Cyrus and Khusrau; see his *Land Called Holy*, 204.

²⁰ Either Khusrau Anūšīrwān (531–79 CE) or Khusrau Aparwīz (591–628 CE), if a historical personage is intended. In Arabic historical literature, the proper name Kisrā (derived from a Syriac rendition of Khusrau) functions as a generic title for all Persian rulers just as Qayṣar (i.e., Caesar) is employed for all rulers of Rome and Byzantium. An analogous usage may be intended here.

²¹ Probably to be identified with the Byzantine emperor Phokas (602–610); so Even-Shmuel, *Midreshey Geʿullah*, 37; Michael Avi-Yonah, *The Jews of Palestine: A Political History from the Bar Kokhba War to the Arab Conquest* (New York: Schocken, 1976), 261.

²² Presumably Dan 7:8; see below.

²³ Read גבהות in place of גבוהות; see Bittenwieser, *Elias-Apokalypse*, 16 n. 12.

²⁴ Cf. *Apoc. El. (C)* 3:15 and Frankfurter, *Elijah in Upper Egypt*, 315 n. 63.

²⁵ See Stone and Strugnell, *Books of Elijah*, 38; Frankfurter, *Elijah in Upper Egypt*, 121–22.

²⁶ Cf. Hos 12:1. Wilken (*Land Called Holy*, 322 n. 54) suggests that Heraclius is the intended referent.