

(Mal. 4:5). Elijah gradually assumed the role of precursor of the Messiah and the messenger announcing his advent. Some of the contemporaries of Jesus (cf. Matt. 16:13–14) seem to have thought that he might be Elijah (Matt. 11:14; 17:10–13) in a manner that suggests that John the Baptist, as the forerunner and announcer of the Messiah, was Elijah (namely, fulfilled his eschatological function). Later apocryphal writings (e.g., *The Apocalypse of Elijah*) connect the “revelations” concerning the last things they report with Elijah. Elements from the Jewish Elijah traditions and legends were also adopted and developed in different ways by Islam.

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Postbiblical Jewish sources are conveniently collected in Louis Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, Vol. 6, 3rd reprint. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1967, pp. 133–35 (under “Elijah”). A very good summary can be found in M. J. Stiasny, “Le Prophète Élie dans le Judaïsme,” in *Élie le Prophète*, Études Carmélitaines, Vol. 2 (1956):199–255.

For Islamic traditions, see “Ilyas” and “al-Khadir” in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*.

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ELIJAH, SPIRIT OF

For members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the spirit of Elijah is the spirit of family kinship and unity. It is the spirit that motivates the concern to search out ancestral family members through FAMILY HISTORY; and, on their behalf, to perform proxy baptisms, temple ENDOWMENTS, AND SEALING ordinances (HC 6:252). This is seen as fulfillment of the prophecy of Malachi that in the last days Elijah “will turn the heart [in Hebrew, the innermost part, as the soul, the affections] of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers” (Mal. 4:5–6).

The appearance of Elijah to the Prophet Joseph SMITH and Oliver COWDERY in the KIRTLAND TEMPLE in 1836 inaugurated anew this spirit (D&C 110:13). The spirit of Elijah is active in the impetus anyone feels toward finding and cherishing family members and family ties past and present. In the global sense, the spirit of Elijah is the spirit of love that may eventually overcome all human family estrangements. Then the priesthood power can bind generations together in eternal family rela-

tionships and “seal the children to the fathers and fathers to the children” within the gospel of Jesus Christ (WJS, p. 329).

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ELOHIM

Elohim (God; gods; Heavenly Father) is the plural form of the singular noun *’eloah* (compare Arabic *Allah*) in the Hebrew Bible, where it is used 2,570 times as compared to 57 times for its singular. But as one commentator has noted, why this “plural form for ‘God’ is used has not yet been explained satisfactorily” (Botterweck, Vol. 1, p. 272).

SINGULAR USAGE. Elohim appears in the Hebrew Bible as a common noun identifying Israel’s God: “In the beginning God [*’elohim*] created [singular verb] the heaven and the earth” (Gen. 1:1). It was also frequently used interchangeably with Jehovah, the proper name for Israel’s God: “And Jacob said, O God [*’elohim*] of my father Abraham, . . . the LORD [Jehovah] which saidst unto me, Return unto thy country” (Gen. 32:9; *see also* JEHOVAH, JESUS CHRIST).

Latter-day Saints use the name Elohim in a more restrictive sense as a proper name-title identifying the Father in Heaven (*see* GOD THE FATHER). The First Presidency of the Church has written, “God the Eternal Father, whom we designate by the exalted name-title ‘Elohim,’ is the literal Parent of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and of the spirits of the human race” (MFP 5:26; *see also* Doctrinal Expositions of the First Presidency, “The Father and the Son,” appendices, Vol. 4).

PLURAL USAGE. Ancient Israelites used *’elohim* also as a proper plural form to refer to gods of nations other than Israel. At such times, the accompanying verbs and adjectives used were also plural. “Thou shalt have no other gods before me” (Ex. 20:3; here “other” is a plural adjective).

Occasionally, Latter-day Saints use Elohim in its plural sense as a common noun to refer to the plurality of gods known to exist (TPJS, pp. 371–74). However, despite their belief that many lords