1. Introduction

Apart from the traditions about Elijah and Elisha, the Books of Kings have left few traces in the New Testament. The most important and most interesting use of these traditions is found in the gospels, but even outside them, Elijah and Elisha are those figures from the Books of Kings who seems to have influenced the authors of the New Testament the most.1

Paul, for instance, retells 1 Kgs 19:10, 14 and 19:18, in an abridged form, in Rom 11:3–4, in a discussion of whether God has rejected the people of Israel or not.2 As N. T. Wright has argued, it is possible that Paul’s allusion to Elijah and the Baal worshippers indicates that Elijah actually functioned as a kind of role model for Paul.3 When dealing with prayers for the sick, James (5:17–18) refers to the story in 1 Kgs 17–18, when Elijah prayed for drought and later for rain.4 This motif from 1 Kings is also taken up in Rev 11:6, where two eschatological witnesses have “authority to shut the sky, so that no rain may fall during the days of their prophecy” (1 Kgs 17:1).5 The context, Rev 11:3–14, contains several allusions to Elijah. In fact, the two witnesses seem to be

1 With the exception of David, who admittedly is mentioned in the Books of Kings ninety times and in the New Testament fifty-nine times, but the stories of David belong, of course, to the Books of Samuel.
5 Scripture quotations are from the NRSV.
modeled after Moses and Elijah: “fire pours from their mouth” (11:5),
and they have “authority over the waters to turn them into blood” (11:6).
In 11:13 there is a possible allusion to the story of Elijah and the seven
thousand faithful who did not embrace idolatry (1 Kgs 19:18), but here
in an inverted form – all but seven thousand will give glory to God.

In Heb 11:32–34, the author mentions Gideon, Barak, Samson,
Jephthah, David, Samuel and the prophets as examples of what faith
can accomplish and it is likely that Elijah and Elisha are among those
prophets the author had in mind.

With the exception of the traditions about Elijah there are a few
more references to the Books of Kings in the New Testament. Solomon's
glory (1 Kgs 10) is referred to in Matt 6:29 (par. Luke 12:27) and his
Luke 11:31) the queen of Sheba (1 Kgs 10:1–13) is also mentioned and
referred to as “the queen of the South” which she is never called in the
Hebrew Bible, but is in T. Sol. 19:3 and 21:1. Acts 2:29 mentions the
death of David (1 Kings 2:10) and in 7:47 we are informed that Solomon
was the one who built the Temple (1 Kgs 6). The narrative of Stephen's
condemnation in Acts 6:9–14, 7:58a seems to involve an adaptation of
Naboth's condemnation in 1 Kgs 21:8–13. Stephen's questioning of
the Temple (Acts 7:48) seems to allude to Solomon's exclamation in
1 Kgs 8:27, but the author of Acts instead lets Stephen build his case
on Isa 66:1–2.

Some modern translations of the New Testament may list several
more parallels between the Book of Kings and the New Testament but
we must conclude that the majority of such parallels or allusions are

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7 Cf. Exod 7:17, 19, 20.