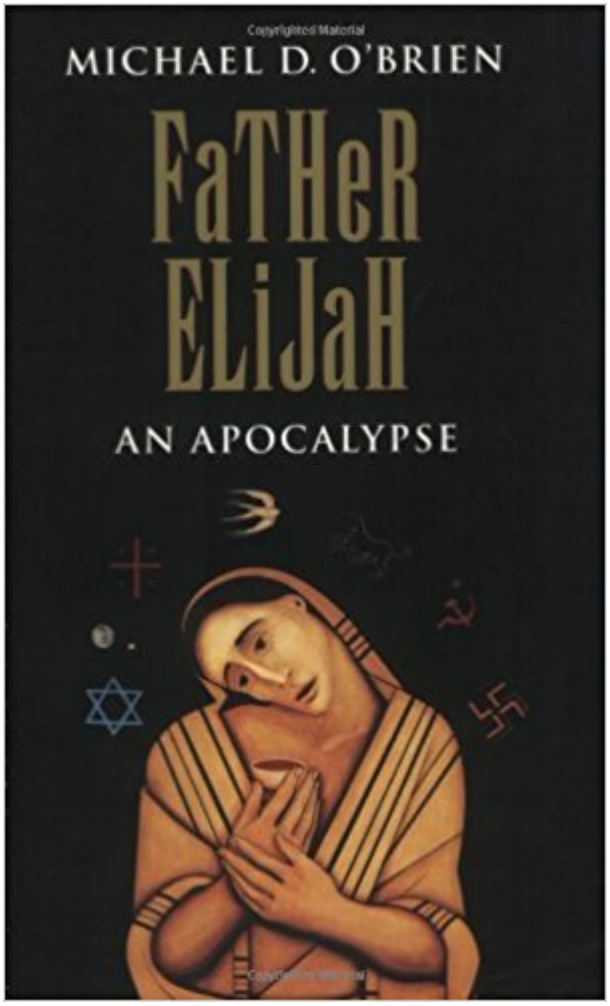
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Father Elijah: An Apocalypse



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Synopsis

Michael O’Brien presents a thrilling apocalyptic novel about the condition of the Roman Catholic Church at the end of time. It explores the state of the modern world, and the strengths and weaknesses of the contemporary religious scene, by taking his central character, Father Elijah Schafer, a Carmelite priest, on a secret mission for the Vatican which embroils him in a series of crises and subterfuges affecting the ultimate destiny of the Church.Father Elijah is a convert from Judaism, a survivor of the Holocaust, a man once powerful in Israel. For twenty years he has been "buried in the dark night of Carmel" on the mountain of the prophet Elijah. The Pope and the Cardinal Secretary of State call him out of obscurity and give him a task of the highest sensitivity: to penetrate into the inner circles of a man whom they believe may be the Antichrist. Their purpose: to call the Man of Sin to repentance, and thus to postpone the great tribulation long enough to preach the Gospel to the whole world.In this richly textured tale, Father Elijah crosses Europe and the Middle East, moves through the echelons of world power, meets saints and sinners, presidents, judges, mystics, embattled Catholic journalists, faithful priests and a conspiracy of traitors within the very House of God. This is an apocalypse in the old literary sense, but one that was written in the light of Christian revelation.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"I’ve read thousands of books, and this is one of the great ones. I hope tens of thousands read it, and are shaken as I have been. It’s a novel that grips one like a thriller -- indeed it is a thriller, but also something far deeper. There are love and friendship, interwoven with drama, but what it is

essentially is faith, faith in the Christ." ---Sheldon Vanauken, Author, A Severe Mercy"Father Elijah is that rare thing, a great novel which is also a testimony to orthodox Catholicism. But it is more even than this. Basing himself squarely on Scripture and human experience, O'Brien has produced a prophetic work and a manual of spiritual warfare. This compelling masterpiece will stretch your imagination in the right direction. Read it and pray." ---Stratford Caldecott, Centre for Faith and Culture, Oxford"I guarantee you that once you take up this book you will not put it down until the end of the world. Here is a meaty page-turner with the pace of a thriller, beautifully written, and that something more that turns entertainment into literature." ---Ralph McInerny, Author, Fr. Dowling Mysteries

This was my third time I read this book. I was amazed at the depth of this book. The first time, it was a faith-filled page turner that could be read again, because it was written on more than one level. The second time, I could see the depth, but I was reading it with my husband, so I was interested in what he thought of it. This time, I decided to reread it before reading Elijah in Jerusalem. I can't believe all that I missed. The plot is excellent, but that is just the tip of the iceberg. On the surface, it would seem that the subject matter is dated. The book was written twenty years ago when people were speculating on what would happen at the turn of the millennium. However, Michael D. O'Brien has written a timeless story where the characters struggle with faith in the real world. Father Elijah has suffered the loss of his family in childhood and lost faith. He has experienced conversion yet he still struggles with keeping the Faith when confronted with evil. His friend, Anna has lost the Faith, because it seems incompatible with the modern world. Other characters within the Church struggle with good and evil. Ultimately, what amazed me the most was the recurring themes of free will, salvation, and trust in God rather than our own strength, especially in the face of evil. Seemingly minor characters, such as the Holy Father, Father Prior, and Don Matteo, are a great source of wisdom for Father Elijah, because they remind him that everyone, even the President of the EuroParliament, is a child of God, who was free will to love and follow God or to reject Him. We must also remember this when dealing with souls who choose evil over good causing others pain and loss. We must forgive. That is a big challenge. Realizing that we are not expected to do this without God is therapeutic. The book is so well researched and well written that I can only scratch the surface in this review. That's what is so amazing. Read the book. Read it!

This is my first O'Brien, and there will be many more.While I suppose the heavy Catholic /Christian themes may put some off reading this, it serves up rich rewards to those who stay the course. The

character development is dense and structured, the plot lines carry enough surprise to make for an interesting story, and the prose itself is beautiful and a joy to read.For the Christian there are the added experiences of a well-known story arch being mirrored in the novel, with an epic struggle between Good and Evil, with a charismatic but very human priest as protagonist, and generally some lovely scenes in Rome and Italy.If the Catholic setting does not disqualify you, this is a rare and powerful treat.

This was my first Michael OÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢Brien book, and there are things I donÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t like. His conversations feel wooden, his heroes all seem to be priests (who are in short supply in Churches. ThatÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s where theyÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢re needed), and everything is presented from a perspective that is more than Catholic. It would have to be called Clericalist. His presentation of Vatican intrigues is, well, intriguing, though not nearly at the level of someone like Malachi Martin, who sets the standard for that stuff.With that out of the way, there are things I do like. The faith struggles that the characters have are presented in a believable way. More than that. It comes across as tender, and moving. And I was truly moved by the sequence where they find MaryÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s tomb. IÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢d have to rate OÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢BrienÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s strength principally in how he deals with faith on a personal level. And that alone makes it worth the read.

O’Brien has written a highly unusual novel: an apocalyptic spiritual fantasy set in the late 20th century. Unlike Left Behind (which really shouldn’t be compared to this book) O’Brien is less concerned with charting the spectacular rise of the Antichrist and his subsequent downfall. He is more concerned with portraying each person’s own apocalyptic struggle for his or her own soul. We are treated to extended sequences where Father Elijah, the titular character and hero of the book, is involved not only in fighting for the souls of the people he interacts with, but also for his very own soul.Unfortunately, while the dialogues and monologues are well-written, I found the plotline a bit weak and was mainly there to shuttle Father Elijah from one encounter to another. Perhaps it would be better to characterise the book as a set of philosophical/theological/religious Platonic dialogues held together by a very loose plot.1 star off for the plot; otherwise, highly enjoyable.

It has been some time since I have read anything of this high caliber - both in story, character development, plot development and my inability to put the book down. Father Elijah is a true hero - selfless but well aware of his flaws, fears and the consequences of his actions. The author has the

ability to put you into the story and I even caught myself silently trying to help the main character. Now that is storytelling.

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