

Bible Stories for Adults

God Sends Elijah

1 Kings 14 - 17

Opening

Gathering: What are the Baals of today's society? What false gods do people worship today?

Today's Focus: Despite being called and blessed by God to lead His people faithfully, the kings of Israel rejected Him and caused the people to reject Him also. In His longing love for them, God sent prophets, beginning with Elijah, to call them back to Him.

Key Verses: *The Lord is with you when you are with Him. If you seek Him, He will be found by you, but if you forsake him, he will forsake you.* 2 Chronicles 15:2

He did evil in the eyes of the Lord, walking in the ways of Jeroboam and in his sin, which he had caused Israel to commit. 1 Kings 15:34

Opening Prayer

Lesson

Last Week - *The Divided Kingdom (1 Kings 11)*

What great sin of Solomon led to *The Divided Kingdom*?

1 Kings 11:1-4 (1-8) = Had many wives who led him astray, built shrines for his wives' gods

How did God decide to punish Solomon for this evil? = Would save 1 tribe for David's sake

1 Kings 11:11-13 (9-13) = He'd tear away 10 tribes of Israel & give them to a servant

Who was the subordinate God chose?

1 Kings 11:28 (26-33) = Jeroboam, leader of Solomon's labor force

What promise did God make to Jeroboam?

1 Kings 11:31, 38 (29-40) = Build dynasty like David's if he stays faithful

Jeroboam, First King of Israel (*1 Kings 12-14*)

How faithful was Jeroboam as king of Israel? = Didn't trust God's promise

1 Kings 12:26-31 (26-33) = Created his own religion with calves, priests & festivals

How did God decide to punish Jeroboam for this evil?

1 Kings 14:7-11 (1-14) = Destroy and cut off the household of Jeroboam

How would God punish the people of Israel for their part in this sin? = 200 years later

1 Kings 14:15-16 = Uproot from the land & scatter beyond the Euphrates River

Rehoboam, First King of Judah (*1 Kings 14; 2 Chronicles 12*)

How faithful was Solomon's son, Rehoboam, as king of Judah?

2 Chronicles 12:1 = Abandoned God as soon as was secure as king

In what ways did Rehoboam and the people of Judah abandon God?

1 Kings 14:23-24 (22-24) = Set up shrines & people worshipped other gods

How did God respond to Rehoboam's rejection? = Treasures of temple and palace taken to Egypt

1 Kings 14:25-26 (2 Chronicles 12) = He sent Shishak to make Rehoboam & Judah subject

How well did the divided kingdoms of Israel and Judah get along?

1 Kings 14:30 = Continual warfare; Not a full civil war, but intermittent skirmishes

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The First Kings of Judah (*1 Kings 15; 2 Chronicles 13-16*) = List on board under Judah (see table on page 4)

Who succeeded Rehoboam as king of Judah and how faithful was he?

1 Kings 15:1, 3 = Abijah, Walked in the sins of his father

To what royal line did Abijah's mother belong?

1 Kings 15:2 = Absalom's granddaughter, David's great granddaughter, Rehoboam's 2nd cousin

Did God decide to wipe out Abijah's family as he had Jeroboam's?

1 Kings 15:4 = No, gave him a descendant for David's sake

Note: 2 Chronicles 13 has interesting story on battle between Abijah & Jeroboam

Who succeeded Abijah as king of Judah and how faithful was he?

1 Kings 15:9, 11 = Asa – Abijah's son, Did what was right as David had done

How did Asa work to reform the evils of his father and grandfather?

1 Kings 15:12-13 = Purged Judah of idols and shrine prostitutes, even deposed his grandmother

Did Asa remain faithful like David his entire life?

2 Chronicles 16:2-3, 7, 9 (1-14) = No, he turned to king of Aram (Syria) for help instead of God

Note: 2 Chronicles 14-16 has stories on Asa's extensive reforms & conflict with Israel

The First Kings of Israel (*1 Kings 15-16*) = List on board under Israel (see table on page 4)

Who succeeded Jeroboam as king of Israel and how faithful was he?

1 Kings 15:25-26 = Nadab, Jeroboam's son, Walked in faithless ways of his father

Why did Nadab reign only 2 years?

1 Kings 15:27-28 = Assassinated & succeeded by Baasha

How did Baasha fulfill God's promise of punishment to Jeroboam?

1 Kings 15:29-30 = He destroyed all of Jeroboam's family

How faithful was Baasha as king of Israel?

1 Kings 15:33-34 = Did evil & walked in the ways of Jeroboam

How did God decide to punish Baasha for this evil?

1 Kings 16:1-4 = Destroy Baasha's household just like Jeroboam's

Who succeeded Baasha as king of Israel?

1 Kings 16:8 = Elah, his son

Why did Elah reign only 2 years?

1 Kings 16:9-10 = Assassinated and succeeded by Zimri, an official

How did Zimri fulfill God's promise of punishment to Baasha?

1 Kings 16:11-12 = He destroyed all of Baasha's family

How long did Zimri reign as king of Israel and why?

1 Kings 16:15-17 = 7 days, besieged by army (Omri was commander)

How was the siege ended?

1 Kings 16:18 = Zimri burned palace around him

Who became the next king of Israel?

1 Kings 16:21-22 = Omri, after challenger Tibni died (*so Tibni died...*)

What notable change happened during Omri's reign?

1 Kings 16:24 = He relocated capital from Tirzah to Samaria, where it remained

How faithful was Omri's reign?

1 Kings 16:25-26 = More evil than the kings before him

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The Worst King of Israel (1 Kings 16:29-34)

Who succeeded Omri as king of Israel and how faithful was he?

1 Kings 16:29-30 = Omri's son Ahab, more evil than those before him

How was Ahab more evil than those before him?

1 Kings 16:31-33 = Trivialized Jeroboam's sin, Married Jezebel, Baal and Asherah worship

Did Ahab intend Baal to supplement or replace God?

1 Kings 18:4 = Jezebel worked to kill all of God's prophets

What notable construction happened during Ahab's reign?

1 Kings 16:34 = Jericho was rebuilt at cost of Hiel's sons

How did this fulfill God's word as spoken by Joshua?

Joshua 6:26 = Joshua cursed the rebuilders of Jericho, Cost of sons

Baal

Baal meant *lord* or *god*

Every pagan locality had its own *Baal*

Shrines to Baals were built on high places in the area

Baal of Sidon (Phoenicia) was brought to Israel by Jezebel

Controlled rainfall - Critical to agricultural society

Was happy & gave rain when he mated with his wife Asherah (Astarte)

Temple sex induced Baal & Asherah to mate so it would rain

Sacrifices included children under extraordinary conditions

Priests would dance around altar in frenzy and slash selves with knives

God of Rain (1 Kings 17:1-6)

What did God plan in order to prove that He is the God of the rain & all creation?

1 Kings 17:1 = Sent Elijah to Ahab to say He was sending a long-term drought

What did *Elijah's* name mean and why was it significant?

1 Kings 18:39 = *Elijah* means *Yahweh is God*. He came to show this

How would Elijah be taken care of during this drought? = Cherith Brook near Tishbe

1 Kings 17:2-6 = God sent bread & meat via ravens & water in brook

Elijah Goes to Baal's Home (1 Kings 17:7-16)

How did God take care of Elijah when the drought dried up the brook?

1 Kings 17:7-9 = Sent to a widow in Zarephath (10 mi south of Sidon - home of Jezebel's Baal)

How hard did Elijah have to search to find this woman in Zarephath?

1 Kings 17:10-11 = Met her as soon as he reached the town gate

Had the drought affected Zarephath?

1 Kings 17:12 = Yes. The woman was planning to prepare and eat her last meal

How did God use this condition to show His power?

1 Kings 17:13-14 = He would keep flour in the jar and oil in the jug

Did the woman have faith in Elijah's promise?

1 Kings 17:15-16 = She did as Elijah told her and had food every day

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Elijah Brings the Widow's Son Back to Life (*1 Kings 17:17-24*)

What happened to the widow's son and what did she believe to be its cause?

1 Kings 17:17-18 = He died, Thought it was punishment for her sinfulness in contrast to Elijah

How did Elijah respond to her reasoning?

1 Kings 17:19-23 = He asked God to restore the boy to life, He did

What was the real reason that the boy had died?

1 Kings 17:24 = To show God's power to her & build her faith

Did Jesus support the idea that illness & death result from specific sins?

John 9:1-3 = Man was blind, not because of a sin, but to show God's work in his life

Note: The Book of Job addresses the question of why bad things happen

<u>Judah (South)</u>			<u>Israel (North)</u>	
<u>Yr BC</u>	<u>King</u>	<u>Yrs Rule</u>	<u>King</u>	<u>Yrs Rule</u>
931	Rehoboam	17 Bad Mostly	Jeroboam	22 Bad
913	Abijah	3 Bad Mostly	"	
911	Asa	41 Good	"	
910	"		Nadab	2 Bad
909	"		Baasha	24 Bad
888	"		Elah	2 Bad
887	"		Zimri	7d Bad
886	"		Omri	12 Extra Bad
876	"		Ahab (Jezebel)	22 The Worst
871	Jehoshaphat	25 Good	"	

Closing Prayer

Response - Consider and meditate on one each day this week

1. In what ways do I do what is right in the eyes of the Lord as David had done?
(*1 Kings 15:11; 1 Corinthians 11:1; Philippians 4:8-9; Hebrews 6:12, 13:7*)
2. In what ways do I do what is evil in the eyes of the Lord, walking in the ways and sin of Jeroboam?
(*1 Kings 15:34; Leviticus 18:1-5; 2 Kings 17; Matthew 6:5-8; 23:3; 3 John 11*)
3. What have I done with the opportunities God has given me to lead others into faith?
(*1 Kings 14:16; Matthew 28:19-20; Luke 21:13-15; Acts 1:8; 2 Cor. 5:11-15; Col. 4:5; 1 Peter 3:15*)
4. What Baals have I placed before God?
(*1 Kings 15:30-33; Exodus 20:2-6; Joshua 24:14-15; Matthew 6:24; 10:32-37, 38-39*)
5. Elijah's name revealed his purpose - to remind the Israelites that the Lord is God.
Do I understand and follow the purpose that God has for me?
(*1 Kings 18:39; Esther 4:14; Jer. 29:11; Luke 7:30; 1 Cor. 12; 2 Cor. 5:5; Eph. 3:8-11; 4:7-16*)