

Bible Stories for Adults

Elijah Goes to Heaven

1 Kings 21 - 2 Kings 2

Opening

Gathering: Who is a modern-day Elijah that leads others to God even when they don't want to follow?

Today's Focus: God took Elijah to heaven for his faithfulness and called Elisha to continue His work.

Key Verses: *In a little while you will see Me no more, and then after a little while you will see Me.* John 16:16

Elijah was a man just like us. He prayed earnestly...Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover a multitude of sins. James 5:17, 20

Opening Prayer

Lesson

Past Weeks - *Elijah* (1 Kings 15-22)

Who was the most evil king of Israel (northern kingdom) and how evil was he?

1 Kings 16:30-31 = Ahab; Trivialized Jeroboam's sin, Married Jezebel, Worshipped Baal

Why did God send Elijah to Israel during Ahab's reign?

1 Kings 18:21 = To turn the people back to Him, away from Baal - Pick one, not both

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 close of a relationship did Elijah have with the leaders of Israel?

1 Kings 18:16-18 = Ahab called him the *Troubler of Israel*, Elijah turned it around

1 Kings 19:1-2 = Jezebel promised to kill Elijah

Was Ahab reformed by God's revelations through Elijah & did he turn to God?

1 Kings 21:25-26 = No, he remained the most evil man ever, urged on by Jezebel

Naboth's Vineyard (1 Kings 21:1-16)

Did Ahab's evil lead him to rule ruthlessly and abuse his power?

1 Kings 21:1-4 = No, he was more of a whiny kid

Then how did Ahab get a bad reputation besides his unfaithfulness to God?

1 Kings 21:7-11 (5-14) = Caused by his evil and ruthless wife, Jezebel

Did Ahab go along with Jezebel's plan?

1 Kings 21:15-16 = May not have known details, but didn't ask questions & accepted results

Ahab's Punishment (1 Kings 21:17-29)

How would Ahab be punished for his evil?

1 Kings 21:17-19 = He would be killed & dogs would lick his blood

How was this fulfilled?

1 Kings 22:34-38 (29-40) = Killed in battle with Aram, dogs licked blood from chariot

Was Ahab the only one to be punished for his evil?

1 Kings 21:20-24 = His family would be destroyed like Jeroboam's & Baasha's

Did this happen right away?

1 Kings 21:27-29 = God waited a generation since Ahab humbled self

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Ahab's Dynasty (2 Kings 9)

Who did God call later to carry out this punishment?

2 Kings 9:6-10 (1-10) = Commander Jehu was anointed as king, told to purge Ahab's house

Did Jehu take his calling seriously? = Naboth's sons had apparently been killed also

2 Kings 9:22-26 (11-29) = Blamed Jezebel's idolatry, Killed Joram & threw body in Naboth's field

What happened to Jezebel? = Zimri had taken throne 45 years earlier and destroyed Baasha's house

2 Kings 9:30-33 = Died when thrown from window in Jezreel

What became of Elijah's prophesy, *Dogs will devour Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel*?

2 Kings 9:34-37 = Dogs ate her body before they could bury it

Ahab and Aram (1 Kings 22:1-4)

What happened in last week's story when Israel was attacked by Aram (Syria)?

1 Kings 20:13, 21, 26, 28-29 = God gave Israel two victories to show Ahab that Yahweh is God

Did Ahab prevent further attacks by killing Ben-Hadad?

1 Kings 20:34, 42 = No, he made a treaty and set him free - against God's will

Did the treaty keep peace for the rest of Ahab's reign? = Ramoth Gilead was near Israel/Aram border

1 Kings 22:1-4 = No, Ahab decided to attack Aram to take back Ramoth Gilead

Satisfying Jehoshaphat (1 Kings 22:5-8)

Why would Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, agree to fight alongside Ahab?

2 Chronicles 18:1 = Allied with Israel by marrying son (Jehoram) to Ahab's daughter (Athaliah)

Did Jehoshaphat make any conditions for his support?

1 Kings 22:5-6 = He wanted to inquire of the Lord (Yahweh)

Did Ahab's prophets satisfy Jehoshaphat?

1 Kings 22:7-8 = No, he wanted to inquire of the Lord (Yahweh), not Baal

The Prophet's Word (1 Kings 22:9-40)

Did Micaiah tell Ahab to proceed with the attack?

1 Kings 22:12-15 = Yes

Was Ahab surprised at Micaiah's prophesy?

1 Kings 22:16-18 = No, he didn't trust Micaiah's sarcasm

Why had Micaiah said this?

1 Kings 22:19-23 = Because God wanted Ahab to go and receive his punishment

How did the Baal prophets feel about Micaiah calling them liars?

1 Kings 22:24-25 = They hated and ridiculed him for it

The Next King (1 Kings 1:41-53)

Who took over as king after Ahab died at Ramoth Gilead and how faithful was his reign?

1 Kings 22:40, 51-53 = Took over for father Ahab, Worshipped Baal

What country that was subject to Israel decided to rebel after Ahab died?

2 Kings 1:1 = Moab (Lot's son), ruled by Israel since David

How did this contrast with what happened in Judah? = Jehoshaphat was faithful, given peace

1 Kings 22:44, 46-47 = Edom became subject to Judah (lost since Solomon – 1 Kings 11:14-22)

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King Ahaziah (2 Kings 1:1-8)

- What happened to Ahaziah and what did he do in response? = Baal-Zebub & Dagon: chief Philistine gods
2 Kings 1:2 = Injured from fall, Consulted Baal-Zebub (god of flies - controlled diseases)
- How did God respond to Ahaziah's action?
2 Kings 1:3-4 = Sent Elijah to foretell death for calling on Baal
- Did Ahaziah's messengers know who Elijah was?
2 Kings 1:5-8 = No, but Ahaziah did & thought Elijah had issued the curse against him

Elijah and Ahaziah's Soldiers (2 Kings 1:9-17)

- How did Ahaziah try to get Elijah to take back the curse?
2 Kings 1:9 = Sent an army captain with 50 men to capture Elijah
- How did Elijah show that his message was from God and not just a personal curse? = Stronger command
2 Kings 1:10-12 = Sent fire from heaven to consume troop, Repeated
- Note: Sidon's Baal was considered to be over fire and rain. Yahweh showed He was in control (1 K 17-18)
- Did the third captain give an even more forceful command to Elijah?
2 Kings 1:13-14 = Asked Elijah for mercy, not to kill them and to come
- How did Elijah respond to the captain?
2 Kings 1:15 = He went with him as instructed by God
- Was Ahaziah successful in getting Elijah to take back the curse?
2 Kings 1:16-17 = No, it was God's punishment for his idolatry

Elijah's Last Day (2 Kings 2:1-8)

- Was Elijah's job done once Ahab and Ahaziah died? = v20 – Call was from God, not from Elijah
1 Kings 19:15a, 16b, 19-21 = No, God had Elijah anoint Elisha to succeed him
- How did Elisha reply to Elijah's request not to follow him on his last day?
2 Kings 2:1-2 = He swore he would not leave Elijah's side
- Did anyone other than Elijah know that he would be taken by God that day?
2 Kings 2:3 = Prophets at Bethel and Elisha did
2 Kings 2:4-5 = Prophets at Jericho also knew
- Did anyone join Elijah and Elisha as they continued traveling east?
2 Kings 2:6-7 = 50 prophets followed at a distance and watched
- How did Elijah show his powerful faith once more?
2 Kings 2:8 = Struck Jordan with his cloak and parted the water
- How did this show Elijah's faith?
Matthew 17:20 = With faith of a mustard seed, you can move a mountain

Elijah's Inheritance (2 Kings 2:9-10)

- What did Elisha want when Elijah asked if there were any last requests?
2 Kings 2:9 = To inherit a double portion of his spirit
- For what was Elisha asking?
Deuteronomy 21:17 = To inherit the role of top prophet and God's spirit as a first-born son
- Why did Elijah have trouble with this request?
2 Kings 2:10 = It was not his right to give, but God's - God would control Elisha's presence
- Was it God's plan for Elisha to succeed Elijah?
1 Kings 19:16b = Yes, God had Elijah anoint Elisha as his successor 8 years earlier

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Elijah Goes to Heaven (2 Kings 2:11-18)

How was Elijah taken away?

2 Kings 2:11 = Chariot of fire took him to heaven in a whirlwind

Was Elisha able to see this and therefore inherit Elijah's role?

2 Kings 2:12 = Yes, he called Elijah his spiritual father and protector of Israel

How was it made known that Elisha was now Elijah's successor?

2 Kings 2:13-15 = Elisha repeated the miracle of parting the Jordan

Why did Elisha not want the prophets to go search for Elijah's body?

2 Kings 2:16-18 = He knew it would be fruitless

Had anyone else ever been taken to heaven without dying?

Genesis 5:24 (Hebrews 11:5) = Enoch

Will it ever happen again?

Matthew 24:40-41 = Two working, one will be taken and the other left

Elijah, God's Faithful Prophet

Does the end of the Old Testament indicate that Elijah's work was done? = Last 2 verses of OT

Malachi 4:5-6 = I will send Elijah before the day of the Lord

Who did some people believe was the return of Elijah?

Matthew 16:13-14 = Some thought Jesus was Elijah

Has Elijah yet returned as promised?

Luke 1:13, 17 = Yes, his spirit and power came back in John the Baptist

Did the people recognize Elijah when he returned?

Matthew 17:10-13 = No

Were the people told that Elijah had returned?

Matthew 11:7, 11, 14 (1-15) = Jesus told the crowd that John was Elijah

How did spectators misunderstand Jesus' cries from the cross? = Psalm 22 - Jews recited in desperation

Matthew 27:46-49 = They thought he was calling Elijah to save him

What role did Elijah play as Jesus neared his crucifixion?

Matthew 16:21; 17:1-5 = He came with Moses to speak with Jesus

Does God have any more work remaining for Elijah? = Elijah (stop rain) & Moses (send plagues)

Revelation 11:3-6 = To prophesy with Moses at end times

Did Elijah's power mean that he was more than just a man?

James 5:16-18 = No, he was a faithful man who prayed – same power is available to us

Closing Prayer

Response - Consider and meditate on one each day this week

1. Who is my Jezebel? When have I followed someone against God's will?
(1 Kings 16:29-33; Matthew 23; 1 Corinthians 10:11-13; 1 John 3:7-10)
2. When have I been a Jezebel and tempted others?
(1 Kings 21:25; Matthew 18:6-9; Luke 17:1-2; 1 Corinthians 10:32; James 3:1)
3. Do I consider whether the advice I receive from others is from God?
(1 Kings 12; 22; Proverbs 12:5, 15; Isaiah 8:19; 1 Timothy 1:15-16)
4. What servant of God is a model for me?
(2 Kings 2:9; 1 Corinthians 11:1; Philippians 2:5; 3:17; 4:9)
5. In what ways am I a model for others?
(2 Kings 2:12; 1 Corinthians 4:16; 1 Timothy 4:12; Titus 2:7-8; Hebrews 11; 1 Peter 5:1-3)