

Calvary Chapel of Philadelphia



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY TEACHER'S PACKET

3rd - 5th Grade

Sunday Morning

Study 1

The Times of Elijah

The Times of Elijah

The Objective is the key concept for this week's lesson. It should be the main focus of the study.

These are the key verses that you will find helpful in teaching your study this week. The "Main passage" is the basis of the study, where the other verses support the objective of the lesson.

There is a memory verse for the students that relates to every study. If a student can memorize the verse for the following week you may give them a prize from the "reward box" found on your cart.

An introductory activity or question that will settle the class, draw their attention to the study and prepare their hearts for God's Word.

Objective To show what the nation of Israel was like at the time of Elijah's ministry and to introduce the prophet Elijah.

Key Verses

1 Kings 16:29-17:1—Main Teaching Passage
Deuteronomy 11:13-17

Memory Verse - James 5:17

"Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months."

Hook

Review last week's memory verse, James 5:16b.

Ask the students, "Have you ever been in a situation where you felt pressured to do something you knew was wrong?" Have them share and discuss. Maybe even share a time when you experienced this. What did you do? How did you respond? Whether you did the right or wrong thing, was it worth it?

Today we are going to see the nation of Israel living in rebellion against God, and God will send an important messenger to declare His Word to them.

What does the Bible say? This is where we will read a passage or series of passages that teach on the subject of the day.

BOOK

Last week, as we finished James and learned about the importance of persistent prayer. James used the prophet Elijah as an example. There is much to learn from the life of Elijah, and for the next several weeks we will study his life. But before we learn about Elijah himself, it's important to understand what the world was like during his time.

Ever since the reign of King Rehoboam (King Solomon's son), the nation of Israel was divided into two kingdoms: Judah (the southern kingdom) and Israel (the northern kingdom). Judah had some good kings as well as some bad kings, but Israel only ever had wicked kings, the worst of which was King Ahab.

We are told that King Ahab "did evil in the sight of the LORD, more than all who were before him," and he married Jezebel, a woman who was even more wicked than he was. He worshipped her false god, Baal, and commanded the entire nation to do the same. He set up altars and built a temple for Baal, doing "more to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him," while his wife had all those who served Israel's God killed. It is at this time that Elijah stepped onto the scene. God's response to this great sin and rebellion was to send a message of judgment. Elijah came to King Ahab and declared that "the LORD God of Israel lives," and by the word of the LORD there would be a terrible drought for years.

The interpretation/
exegesis of the passage.
What does this passage
mean? How does this
passage apply to my
life?

LOOK

It's hard for us to imagine what it would be like to live under the rule of wicked kings who punish those who serve the true and living God, but try to imagine. All through the land the people of Israel, who had been miraculously delivered from bondage in Egypt, God's chosen people who were supposed to follow God's commands and live in such a way that all the other nations knew the God of Israel was the one true God, quickly became just like all the surrounding nations. It's easy for that to happen, isn't it?

Maybe you have experienced this. And if you haven't, try to imagine. Imagine you've been going to church all your life. You move to a new school where it doesn't look like anyone cares about God. Maybe the other kids even make fun of you when you mention that certain things are wrong or that your family goes to church. Wouldn't it be tempting to start acting like everyone else so you could blend in? What if even your teacher or your principle commanded you to stop talking about Jesus or acting as if God is real? It's easy for us to give in to peer pressure to seem normal, but God teaches us that doing the right thing is always worth it in the end.

LOOK (Continued)

What we don't read in this chapter is something that God made very clear to the people of Israel when He was preparing to bring them into the promised land. In Deuteronomy 11:13-17, God told His people to be careful to obey His commandments and keep His law, to love Him and serve Him with all their heart and soul. If they failed to do this and turned to serve other gods, He would judge their rebellion by shutting up the heavens so that it wouldn't rain, causing famine to come to the land.

So that is what Elijah came to declare: God's message of judgment for King Ahab's sin and rebellion. And that is what a prophet is and does. God gives special messages to His prophets, and they share that message with everyone else. That message often comes at a time of disobedience and rebellion to remind God's people that He is still there, still in control, still alive, still the God of Israel, and will be faithful to keep the promises that He made to them in His Word.

This is important for us to remember. No matter how much people disobey God, turn away from Him, or pretend that He doesn't exist, He is still the true and living God. He does not change and remains true to His Word. But His desire for us isn't judgment. That's why He sent His Son. God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. When He does correct us, He does so as a father corrects his children, in love to bring us back to Him. In His presence is fullness of joy! So when everyone around us is determined to live as if God doesn't exist, we can find courage and boldness knowing that God is with us, that He sees us, and He will reward us for loving and obeying Him even when it's hard. And as we'll see later, we're probably not as alone as we think.

What is my response to this passage of Scripture? How should my life change according to what this passage teaches me? What are the practical things I can do throughout the week to make this true in my life?

TOOK

As a class, memorize James 5:17.

Pray: Thank God for being true to His Word and keeping His promises. Ask for His help to love Him with all you heart, soul, mind, and strength even when it seems no one else is.

Parent Question: Why did God stop providing rain for Israel?

FURTHER STUDY

Commentary on 1 Kings 16:29-17:1 & Deuteronomy 11:13-17 by David Guzik

2. ([1Ki 16:29-34](#)) Ahab begins his 22 year reign.

In the thirty-eighth year of Asa king of Judah, Ahab the son of Omri became king over Israel; and Ahab the son of Omri reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty-two years. Now Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the Lord, more than all who *were* before him. And it came to pass, as though it had been a trivial thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took as wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians; and he went and served Baal and worshiped him. Then he set up an altar for Baal in the temple of Baal, which he had built in Samaria. And Ahab made a wooden image. Ahab did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him. In his days Hiel of Bethel built Jericho. He laid its foundation with Abiram his firstborn, and with his youngest son Segub he set up its gates, according to the word of the Lord, which He had spoken through Joshua the son of Nun.

a. **In the thirty-eighth year of Asa king of Judah:** Asa reigned for 41 years in total ([1 Kings 15:10](#)). During his 41 years there were seven different kings of Israel.

b. **Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the Lord, more than all who were before him:** Each of the previous kings of Israel walked in the wicked pattern of Jeroboam. Ahab distinguished himself in being *worse* than Jeroboam.

i. His father Omri was a political and economic success for Israel but a spiritual failure. Ahab picked up where his father left off. “Reinforcing the father-son relationship is the name *Ahab*, which can be translated ‘brother of the father’ or ‘resembling the father.’” (Dilday) It can be said of some sons, “He has his father’s eyes.” It could be said of Ahab, “He has his father’s lies.”

ii. Jeroboam intended to serve the Lord through idolatrous images (such as the golden calf) and in disobedient ways (altars and high places other than Jerusalem). Ahab introduced the worship of completely new, pagan gods. In his disobedience Jeroboam said, “I will worship the Lord, but do it my way.” Ahab said, “I want to forget about the Lord completely and worship Baal.”

iii. In his later years, Solomon tragically worshipped pagan gods. Yet Omri and Ahab were far worse in that they *commanded* the worship of idols. “He made *statutes* in favour of idolatry, and obliged the people by law to commit it. See [Micah 6:16](#), where this seems to be intended: *For the statutes of Omri are kept, and all the works of the house of Ahab.*” (Clarke)

c. **He took as wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians; and he went and served Baal and worshiped him:** Even as the foreign wives of Solomon led to his spiritual downfall, so Ahab’s foreign wife **Jezebel** led him and the nation into deep idolatry.

i. Ethbaal means, *With Baal*. “Jezebel’s name may come from a cultic cry used in the worship of Baal meaning

'Where is Baal?' Translated into Hebrew the name was also a verbal pun that the Israelites must have relished. *Zebel* in Hebrew means dung!" (Dilday)

ii. Jezebel was "A woman infamous for her idolatry, and cruelty, and sorcery, and filthiness." (Poole)

iii. Meyer on the bad reign of Ahab: "This came to pass, not so much because his character was more depraved: but because he was a weak man, the tool of a crafty, unscrupulous, and cruel woman: and some of the worst crimes that have ever been committed have been wrought by weak men, at the instigation of worse – but stronger – spirits than themselves."

iv. "So well known was the hostility of Jezebel to all good, that his marrying her was esteemed the highest pitch of vice, and an act the most provoking to God, and destructive to the prosperity of the kingdom." (Clarke)

v. "Had a secular historian been recording these events, the marriage of Ahab and Jezebel would likely have been applauded as a prudent political move. Both Phoenicia and Israel were being threatened by Syria, and the marriage gave Ahab a powerful military ally at a crucial time." (Dilday)

vi. It seemed like the marriage partnership between Tyre and Israel was ideal for Israel. Tyre was at the height of its glory. "Her colonies dotted the shores of the Mediterranean as far as Spain; her ships whitened every sea with their sails, and ventured to the coasts of our own Cornwall for tin; her daughter, Carthage, nursed the lion-cup Hannibal, and was strong enough to make Rome tremble." (Meyer)

d. **In his days Hiel of Bethel built Jericho:** It seems that Ahab wanted to challenge the prophecy of Joshua after the destruction of the city. *Then Joshua charged them at that time, saying, "Cursed be the man before the Lord who rises up and builds this city Jericho; he shall lay its foundation with his firstborn, and with his youngest he shall set up its gates."* ([Joshua 6:26](#)) If Ahab did think that he could rebuild Jericho without being affected by this curse, he was wrong: **He laid its foundation with Abiram his firstborn, and with his youngest son Segub he set up its gates, according to the word of the Lord, which He had spoken through Joshua the son of Nun.**

i. We don't know how the sons of Hiel died; they may have died as a curse or Hiel may have sacrificed them. "Archaeological excavations have uncovered evidence of a practice in ancient biblical times called 'foundation sacrifices' in which children were buried, maybe alive, in the foundations of buildings." (Dilday)

ii. This was a merciful warning to Ahab that he ignored. God told him, "You cannot go against my word without paying the price. Hiel of Bethel, the man you directed to rebuild Jericho, has found this to be true. Take this warning seriously." Yet Ahab did not take this warning seriously.

THE EARLY MINISTRY OF ELIJAH

A. Elijah prays for drought and experiences God's provision.

1. ([1Ki 17:1](#)) Elijah tells of the Lord's judgment.

And Elijah the Tishbite, of the inhabitants of Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the Lord God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, except at my word."

a. **Elijah the Tishbite:** At this crucial time in the history of Judah and Israel, the Prophet **Elijah** suddenly appeared. He became the dominant spiritual force in Israel during the dark days of Ahab's apostasy.

i. The name **Elijah** means, *Yahweh is my God*. In the days when Ahab's government officially supported the worship of Baal and other gods, even the *name* of this prophet told the truth.

ii. It was a crucial time in the history of Israel. It looked as if the worship of the true God might be completely eliminated in the northern kingdom. "The land swarmed with the priests of Baal and of the groves – proud of Court favour; glorying in their sudden rise to power; insolent, greedy, licentious, and debased. The fires of persecution were lit, and began to burn with fury." (Meyer)

iii. "The whole land seemed apostate. Of all the thousands of Israel, only seven thousand remained who had not bowed the knee or kissed the hand to Baal. But they were paralysed with fear; and kept so still, that their very existence was unknown by Elijah in the hour of his great loneliness." (Meyer)

b. **There shall not be dew nor rain these years, except at my word:** This was a dramatic demonstration against the pagan god Baal, who was thought to be the sky god, the god of the weather. Elijah showed that through his prayers to the God of Israel, Yahweh was mightier than Baal.

i. "The old religion against the new; the child of nature against the effeminate child of the courts; camel's hair against soft clothing; moral strength against moral weakness." (Meyer)

ii. Elijah was not merely the *prophet* of this drought – in the sense of prayer, he was *the cause* of the drought. He prayed and it happened. [James 5:17-18](#) makes this clear: *Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.*

c. **As the Lord God of Israel lives, before whom I stand:** This statement of Elijah shows the source of his strength. It is specifically said *Elijah was a man with a nature like ours* ([James 5:17](#)). Yet he showed a strength greater than most of us in our life with God. We must pay attention to these indications to the source of Elijah's strength.

i. **As the Lord God of Israel lives:** Everyone else felt that the Lord was dead, but for Elijah the Lord lived. He was the supreme reality of Elijah's life.

ii. **Before whom I stand:** He stood in the presence of Ahab, but he was conscious of the presence of someone greater than any earthly king. Gabriel himself could not choose a higher title ([Luke 1:19](#)).

Deuteronomy 11:13-17

c. **If you earnestly obey My commandments:** God simply promised to provide for Israel if chose to obey Him and put Him first. As Jesus said: *seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you* ([Matthew 6:33](#)).

i. The promise of the blessing of rain was important, because one of the attractive of the Canaanite gods was *Baal* - the god who was said to control the weather and rain. Perhaps the Israelites would be tempted to think, "well, we are in Canaan, and if we want rain, we should worship the Canaanite god of rain." But the LORD makes it clear that if they would worship and obey Him, He would supply abundant rain.

d. **The early raid and the latter rain:** The **early rain** fell in October and November, and was important to help soften the ground for plowing and preparing the soil for the seed. The **latter rain** fell about April, and helped the crops come to final harvest.

e. **A land for which the LORD your God cares; the eyes of the LORD your God are always on it, from the beginning of the year to the very end of the year:** God declared His special care for the land of Israel, both then and now.

3. ([Deu 11:16-17](#)) The danger of blessing: Turning from God in times of prosperity.

Take heed to yourselves, lest your heart be deceived, and you turn aside and serve other gods and worship them, lest the Lord's anger be aroused against you, and He shut up the heavens so that there be no rain, and the land yield no produce, and you perish quickly from the good land which the LORD is giving you.

a. **Lest your heart be deceived:** God had to warn Israel against the deceptions of prosperity. The person who turns from God in prosperity is simply deceived. They believe they are somehow responsible for the blessings received, and become proud and self-reliant.

b. **He shut up the heavens so that there be no rain:** Just such a judgment came upon Israel in the days of Ahab, the wicked king over Israel in the time Elijah was a prophet ([1 Kings 17:1](#)).

i. The constant need for rain kept Israel in constant dependence on the LORD. It is good for us to have things that keep us in constant dependence on the LORD. We should never despise those things and long for the day when we will no longer need to depend on God as much.