

CORNERSTONECONNECTIONS
MARCH022024

never alone

Scripture Story: 1 Kings 17:1-16.
Commentary: *Prophets and Kings* (or *Royalty in Ruins*), chapters 9; 10 first part (pp. 119-132).

PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

The story of Elijah's ministry starts with his confrontation of King Ahab. Elijah suddenly appears in the Bible, makes a speech, and then disappears from sight, while Ahab is left to think on the rainless years ahead of him. Perhaps this startling beginning is what makes him one of the most well-known prophets in the Bible. Or perhaps it is the fact that he was taken up to heaven at the end of his ministry among the people of Israel without ever having to face death.

However, the story of Elijah is incredible, not just in that God provided for him in so many wonderful ways but that Elijah obeyed God even when it might have cost him his life. At only one point in his life did Elijah give way to the fears inside and run away from the work that God had given him.

Elijah was a normal human being with the same nature that we have (see James 5:17), but he chose to go against the flow of the idol-worshiping people around him and stand up for what he believed in. He nearly got killed for it. Several times he was chased down and hunted, but each time God kept an eye out and took care of him. People often wonder why God chooses to protect some people and yet allows others to be harmed. In a way, this lesson brings up this discussion once again. It isn't always this way. Sometimes the people who were working to spread God's message were killed, as were the other prophets in the time of Elijah (see 1 Kings 19:10), but Elijah was protected.

II. TARGET

The students will:

- Understand that while bad things happen, God will never leave them. *(Know)*
- Experience the freedom that a life with full trust in God gives. *(Feel)*
- Recommit themselves to God's safe care. *(Respond)*

III. EXPLORE

The Gift of Prophecy, Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental Beliefs, No. 18

"The Scriptures testify that one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is prophecy. This gift is an identifying mark of the remnant church and we believe it was manifested in the ministry of Ellen G. White. Her writings speak with prophetic authority and provide comfort, guidance, instruction, and correction to the church. They also make clear that the Bible is the standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested. (Num. 12:6; 2 Chron. 20:20; Amos 3:7; Joel 2:28, 29; Acts 2:14-21; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17; Heb. 1:1-3; Rev. 12:17; 19:10; 22:8, 9.)"

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity

Refer the students to the What Do You Think? *section of the student lesson. After they have completed it, discuss their responses.*

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

During the terrible days of the Blitz, a father, holding his small son by the hand, ran from a building that had been struck by a bomb. In the front yard was a shell hole. Seeking shelter as quickly as possible, the father jumped into the hole and held up his arms for his son to follow. Terrified, yet hearing his father's voice telling him to jump, the boy replied, "I can't see you!"

The father, looking up against the sky tinted red by the burning buildings, called to the silhouette of his son, "But I can see you. Jump!" The boy jumped, because he trusted his father. The Christian faith enables us to face life or meet death, not because we can see, but with the certainty that we are seen; not that we know all the answers, but that we are known.

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

There are times in your life when you have a glitch that comes, you don't know where to turn, and the only ways out don't seem that easy. So it was with Elijah, over and over again, but he trusted in God to get him out of the situation, relying on His way out. Even when God tells us to "jump," and it seems easier to do it our own way, His idea to step out in faith for Him is better in the end.

Out of the Story for Teachers

After you read the Into of the Story *section with your students, use the following in your own words to process it with them.*

- Have there been times in your life when you felt that God was really protecting you?
- What are some times when God helped you, but it wasn't your idea of a way out? What did you do?
- If you feel comfortable enough, share with the rest of the class your own experience(s) of a time when God has really looked out for you.
- Why do you think Elijah was taken to heaven? Explain.
- Elijah is one of the most well-known prophets in the Bible. Throughout the ministry of John the Baptist and later in Jesus' ministry as well, people questioned whether or not one of them was Elijah. Why do you think this is so?

With the students, explore the different times of Elijah's life and ministry, discussing the possible differences in emotions in each situation. Think of the incredible awe and happiness he must have felt on Mount Carmel (read the story in 1 Kings 18), and the terror he felt when King Ahab pursued him. Make Elijah real to the students, highlighting his high and low moments, the moments that stay in people's memories when they think of him. Then ask the students the following questions in your own words:

What strikes you most about the story of Elijah? Is it his obedience? God's watch care over him?

How can you relate his story to your life now?

Do miraculous things (e.g., the resurrection of the widow of Zarapheth's son [read 1 Kings 17:17–24], the ravens feeding Elijah, or the fire that came down from heaven and consumed the sacrifice) happen nowadays? Or is it something that is just reserved to the Bible times?

Sharing Context and Background

Use the following information to shed more light on the story for your students. Share it in your own words.

- Elijah's ministry is set in Israel during the Omride dynasty (ninth century B.C.), a period marked by relative peace and prosperity. Elijah is presented as the powerful champion of Yahweh against the royal house's worship of Baal.
- The face of the historical Elijah himself, however, lies hidden behind a veil of miraculous moments. Even the prophet's name ("Yahweh is my God") has been seen by some as a name that is reflective of his zeal. He is regularly called "the Tishbite," but the word is of uncertain meaning.
- Elijah displays many of the traits characteristic of prophetic figures throughout Israel's history. He is a miracle worker whose word of power can produce joy or woe (1 Kings 17:1, 16; 2 Kings 1:10, 12; 2:8). He is a powerful intercessor for individuals or the whole people (1 Kings 17:20–22; 18:42–45). He confronts the king with condemnation for religious infidelity and for social injustice (1 Kings 17:1;

Tips for Top-Notch Teaching

RABBI 101

Take Time

The top-notch teacher will give the Holy Spirit time to help them prepare the lesson. A hurried survey of the lesson on Friday night may give enough knowledge to be able to talk to your students for 30 or 40 minutes. But is it enough time for you to truly perceive the message that just may make a difference in the life of one or more of your young people?

Well-known author Bruce Wilkinson recommends putting down the teacher's guide, picking up a pad of paper, and just thinking. "Record your thoughts on paper about the possible timeless truths. Spread your meditations throughout the week before you teach. Don't expect to have the greatest insights the first time. Plan at least three times during the week to meditate and you'll get more insights than the same amount of time focused at one sitting."[1]

18:18; 21:20–22; 2 Kings 1:16).

- Allusions to the stories of the Exodus pervade 1 Kings 17–19 and establish a parallel between the ministries of Elijah and Moses. The geographical framework of the three chapters recalls Moses' wanderings: each prophet begins his journey with a flight eastward to escape a king's wrath; each finds safety with a family. Each returns to his country to face and challenge the king and to awaken faith among the Israelites. Each leaves the country again on a journey to Sinai/Horeb, where he experiences a meeting with God. Each then departs for Israel via Transjordan.
- Elijah's mysterious assumption to heaven in a whirlwind occurs once the Jordan has been crossed. In 1 Kings 19, Elijah had made an earlier, solitary pilgrimage to Horeb, whence he returned with new tasks including the commissioning of his successor. This time the journey is Elisha's. He accompanies his master on the outward road to the place of power where Elijah is translated. This is the moment of supernatural encounter from which Elisha returns transformed and empowered.

III. CLOSING

Activity

Close with an activity and debrief it in your own words.

Divide the students into groups of two or four and ask them to discuss together the possible reasoning behind God's choice to take Enoch and Elijah to heaven. Have each group pick a person to discuss and give them the following Bible verses for helpful tips on the matter. Then discuss with

Teaching From . . .

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

- **Key Text**
  Invite the students to share the key text with the class if they have committed it to memory
- **Flashlight**
  Read the Flashlight *statement, pointing out that most of the time it is from the commentary on this week's story found in the book* Prophets and Kings. *Ask what relationship they see between the statement and what they have just discussed from* Out of the Story.
- **Punch Lines**
  Point out to your students the verses listed in their lesson that relate to this week's story. Have them share the verse that speaks most directly to them and allow them to explain why they chose it.
- **Further Insight**
  Ask them how the quote in Further Insight *conveys the point of the story in this lesson.*

the whole class the ideas that the students came up with.

Enoch: (Genesis 5:18–24; Hebrews 11:5)

Elijah: (2 Kings 2)

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

Just because God doesn't necessarily provide for you in the same miraculous ways as He did for Elijah, doesn't mean that God isn't with you. Turning your life over to Him means that He will never leave you; your life is in His hands. Bad things happen in life, sometimes things go wrong, but trusting in God will get you out on the right end.

In giving God his life, and in obeying Him even if the situation was dangerous, Elijah was entrusting himself to God's care. He did doubt, at one point in his life, whether God was really going to protect him, even asking for God Himself to kill him. But God showed Elijah that even then, when Elijah's faith failed him, He would not leave him.

Turning our lives over to God so that He may use us as tools to spread His message as Elijah did may be dangerous and frightening at times, but as long as we stay close to Him, we can know that He will never, ever leave us.

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[1] Wilkinson, Bruce. *The Seven Laws of the Learner: How to Teach Almost Anything to Practically Anyone!* (Sisters, Oreg.: Multnomah Press, 1992).



Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is *Prophets and Kings* (or *Royalty in Ruins*), chapters 9; 10 first part.

LESSON 9

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STUDENT LESSON

Scripture Story: 1 Kings 17:1–16.
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Photo by Audrey Goforth

keytext

" 'It shall be that you will drink of the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to provide for you there.' So he went and did according to the word of the LORD. . . . The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning and bread and meat in the evening, and he would drink from the brook."

(1 Kings 17:4–6, NASB)

flashlight

"The word of faith and power was upon his [Elijah's] lips, and his whole life was devoted to the work of reform. His was the voice of one crying in the wilderness to rebuke sin and press back the tide of evil. And while he came to the people as a reprover of sin, his message offered the balm of Gilead to the sin-sick souls of all who desired to be healed" (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 119).

what do you think?

God sometimes refers to Himself as a father, or a mother, and Jesus even refers to Himself as a brother. If you were in a hard, difficult, or even life-threatening situation in your life, who would you want to be there with you? Rank them in order of importance from 1 being the highest to 5 being the lowest.

___ Mother
___ Father
___ Sister
___ Brother
___ Best friend

did you know?

The Old Testament is not the only place where we see Elijah. In fact, he appears to Peter and John at the Transfiguration on the Mount of Olives, talking with Jesus. Elijah was not alone, though; with him appeared Moses. Jesus told His two accompanying disciples not to tell anyone about the incident until after His death. This incident is told in three of the four Gospel accounts with very little variation in the retelling, showing that it was a very important incident in Jesus' life and ministry. God obviously cared a lot about Elijah, and at the end of his ministry, God took Elijah away from this earth so that he could live with Him.

INTO THE STORY

"Now Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the settlers of Gilead, said to Ahab, 'As the LORD, the God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, surely there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word.' The word of the LORD came to him, saying, 'Go away from here and turn eastward, and hide yourself by the brook Cherith, which is east of the Jordan. It shall be that you will drink of the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to provide for you there.' So he went and did according to the word of the LORD, for he went and lived by the brook Cherith, which is east of the Jordan. The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning and bread and meat in the evening, and he would drink from the brook. It happened after a while that the brook dried up, because there was no rain in the land.

"Then the word of the LORD came to him, saying, 'Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and stay there; behold, I have commanded a widow there to provide for you.' So he arose and went to Zarephath, and when he came to the gate of the city, behold, a widow was there gathering sticks; and he called to her and said, 'Please get me a little water in a jar, that I may drink.' As she was going to get it, he called to her and said, 'Please bring me a piece of bread in your hand.' But she said, 'As the LORD your God lives, I have no bread, only a handful of flour in the bowl and a little oil in the jar; and behold, I am gathering a few sticks that I may go in and prepare for me and my son, that we may eat it and die.' Then Elijah said to her, 'Do not fear; go, do as you have said, but make me a little bread cake from it first and bring it out to me, and afterward you may make one for yourself and for your son. For thus says the LORD God of Israel, "The bowl of flour shall not be exhausted, nor shall the jar of oil be empty, until the day that the LORD sends rain on the face of the earth." ' So she went and did according to the word of Elijah, and she and he and her household ate for many days. The bowl of flour was not exhausted nor did the jar of oil become empty, according to the word of the LORD which He spoke through Elijah."

(1 Kings 17:1–16, NASB)

OUT OF THE STORY

How has God provided for you in your life?

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_____
_____

Have you ever had a time when He worked something out for you, or when you felt Him just when you needed Him?

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_____
_____

What were some other times in Elijah's life where God provided for him?

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How did it strengthen Elijah's faith in God when God helped him out?

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_____

It took courage for the widow to feed Elijah when she barely had enough food for herself and her son. How can we exhibit that courage in our lives?

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_____

Read 1 Kings 19. How did God show Elijah that He would always be there for him?

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_____
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Does God still do things like that in modern times? If so, what instances do you know of?

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_____

punch lines

"Do not fear, for I am with you; do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand" **(Isaiah 41:10, NASB).**

"Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend to heaven, You are there; if I make my bed in Sheol, behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the dawn, if I dwell in the remotest part of the sea, even there Your hand will lead me, and Your right hand will lay hold of me" **(Psalm 139:7–10, NASB).**

"Then the woman said to Elijah, 'Now I know that you are a man of God and that the word of the LORD in your mouth is truth' " **(1 Kings 17:24, NASB).**

"It is he who will go as a forerunner before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, TO TURN THE HEARTS OF THE FATHERS BACK TO THE CHILDREN, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous, so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord" **(Luke 1:17, NASB).**

"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 earth for three years and six months" **(James 5:17, NASB).**

further insight

"And to all who, in time of trial and want, give sympathy and assistance to others more needy, God has promised great blessing. He has not changed. His power is no less now than in the days of Elijah."

—Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings*, p. 131

Sabbath

Read Isaiah 41:10.

When you are frightened or in a bad situation it is comforting to have a close person like a family member to offer a hug or a kind word. In the *What Do You Think?* section of this week's lesson you thought about who you would really want to be there with you in a dangerous or scary situation.

How does it make you feel to know that God will never ever leave you, even if there is no one else there for you?

Sunday

Read James 5:17.

All through Elijah's life God provided for and looked out for him. Even when Elijah ran away from his work, God was still with him. At the end of his life, God decided to take Elijah to his real home: heaven. God cared for him so much that He wanted him to live with Him eternally in heaven, and not die here on earth. How would you feel about having that kind of relationship with God? Write your thoughts in a letter to God. (You can use the Notes pages in the back of your study guide if you need additional space.)

Monday

Read 1 Kings 17:4–6.

Read this week's *Key Text*. Can you imagine how much courage it took to walk up to the king of Israel and tell him that there would be no rain until he, the king, gave up being sinful, along with the entire nation that he ruled? But Elijah did! God told him what to do, and he obeyed. God kept Elijah safe from Ahab and later He answered Elijah's prayer for rain. He never let Elijah down. Thank God for the times when He has helped you out, even if it wasn't so dramatic as Elijah's experiences. Write your thanks as a prayer.

Tuesday

Read Luke 1:17.

The *Flashlight* section for this week really shows what an incredible kind of person Elijah was. He had God's message to tell, and he was going to tell it! Years later another prophet was compared to him. Some even thought that he *was* Elijah. John the Baptist preached in the wilderness, turning people back to God. He preached with such zeal and enthusiasm that people began wondering if he was Elijah. How do you think that kind of zeal and enthusiasm would be met today? Do you know anyone who exhibits that much passion for God and His kingdom?

Wednesday

Read Psalm 139.

Psalm 139 gives us a background glimpse of what David is talking about. God takes care of people. He knows everything about us down to the last hair on our heads. Doesn't it feel comforting to know that we have a God who loves us so much? Look through the Psalms and find other examples of God's love and care for us.

Psalm _____

Psalm _____

Psalm _____

Thursday

Read Isaiah 41:10.

If there was one point in your lifetime when you were especially in need of help, when was it? Did someone come and give you the help you needed or were you left to fend for yourself? Being in a situation that proves difficult and dealing with it alone isn't easy. What did you do in that difficult situation? Did you call on God? Did He answer your call?

Friday

Read Philippians 4:6, 7.

One of the most difficult things for people in their lives is the hard times where they have to completely rely on God for help. Naturally, as humans, we like to try to take things into our own hands and try to do it our way. God repeatedly told the children of Israel to put their faith in Him. Many times they did and were blessed, but often they tried to do things their own way and ended up in a lot of trouble. When are some times when God did come through for you? Was it in a way that you expected? Or was it in a way that worked out well but wasn't exactly what you had in mind? Why do you think it happened that way?

this week's reading*

Prophets and Kings (or *Royalty in Ruins*), chapters 9; 10 first part (pp. 119-132).

**Royalty in Ruins* is a special adaptation of *Prophets and Kings*, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press®. Get more information about it at www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#.URlhF1rBO9s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.