

Lesson 94

God Calls Elisha

Elisha left his home to follow Elijah and to become a prophet of God.

Studying God's Word

Don't forget! Review the Optional Supplements and determine where you can use them.

Introduction

Refer to Elijah on the Exodus to Malachi Timeline. We've been learning about one of the great Old Testament prophets, Elijah. Elijah was called by God to deliver messages of judgment and encouragement to the people of Israel, to perform miracles that showed God's power, and to lead people in true worship of the Lord.

Elijah had to deliver a message of judgment to one of the most wicked kings of Israel. Who was that? Ahab.

Slide #3

Slide #4

Refer to Lesson 92 Theme Poster. Ahab and his wife, Jezebel, brought Baal worship to Israel and appointed false prophets and priests who led the people away from God. Elijah challenged these false prophets on Mount Carmel.

How did God show his power over Baal in the contest on Mount Carmel? He sent fire from heaven to consume Elijah's sacrifice, the altar, and even the water around the altar.

The people of Israel saw that the Lord was the true God, and the prophets of Baal were destroyed. But this amazing miracle didn't change Queen Jezebel's heart. She still believed in her false gods. What did she threaten to do to Elijah? Kill him.

Refer to Lesson 93 Theme Poster. Elijah fled for his life and became very discouraged that things hadn't changed in Israel. God sent an angel to give him food, then Elijah traveled south to Mount Horeb. Here on the mountain, God spoke to him and encouraged him that he was not alone. One of the new tasks God gave Elijah was to find a man named Elisha and anoint him to be prophet in his place.

Pass out the Class Notes to the students.

God Called Elisha

Today, we'll read about Elisha's calling and some miracles God performed through him.

Slide #5

Slide #6

Slide #7

1 Kings 19:19-21

Refer to the Books of the Bible Poster. Open your Bibles to 1 Kings 19:19. Who will read verses 19–21? Assign a reader.

When Elijah found Elisha, what was Elisha doing? Plowing a field.

Elisha was farming, preparing a field for planting.

What did Elijah do to show he was choosing Elisha to follow him to become a prophet? Cast his cloak upon him.

Elisha understood that Elijah threw his cloak over him as a sign that God was calling him to leave his home and follow Elijah.

What did Elisha ask to do before he left? Kiss his father and mother.

Elisha wanted to say goodbye to his family. He sacrificed his oxen and had a farewell feast with his friends and family. He was leaving his life as a farmer to follow Elijah and learn from him. Elisha began about a 20-year period of training. During this time, Elisha assisted Elijah and traveled with him.

God Took Elijah

God told Elijah that he would be taken up to heaven soon, and Elisha promised to stay with Elijah until that time. As they traveled, other prophets of God came and told Elisha that God would take Elijah away that day. But Elisha already knew this.

Slide #8

Slide #9

Slide #10

Slide #11

Slide #12

2 Kings 2:6–14

Let's read what happened from 2 Kings 2. We'll read verses 6–14. Assign readers, or you read the passage and have students follow along.

Elijah told Elisha to stay behind while he went to the Jordan River. But Elisha stayed with him. What did Elijah do when he reached the water in verse 8? He took his cloak and struck the water, and the water parted so that the two of them could cross on dry ground.

Wow! What an amazing miracle!

Who else did God part waters for in Israel's history? Moses and Joshua.

Refer to the Exodus through Malachi Timeline. God parted the Red Sea for Moses when the Israelites were escaping from the Egyptians. Then God parted the Jordan River for Joshua when he led the Israelites into the land of Canaan.

Let's go back to our passage. What did Elisha ask of Elijah before he was taken? 2 Kings 2:9. A double portion of Elijah's spirit.

Elisha understood that he was chosen to take Elijah's place. Knowing that he could never continue Elijah's remarkable ministry on his own, he wanted God's special power to work through him.

What did Elijah say Elisha had to do to receive this special power? See Elijah as he was taken from him.

As they were walking and talking, what happened to separate them?

Chariots and horses of fire came between them.

And how was Elijah taken up to heaven? In a whirlwind.

Did Elisha see Elijah taken from him? Yes.

How do we know that Elisha received a double portion of Elijah's spirit like he asked? What miracle did he perform just like Elijah? Elisha took Elijah's cloak and struck the water of the Jordan, and it parted for him.

This miracle was a sign that God had chosen Elisha to carry on Elijah's ministry. Some other prophets of God saw Elisha's miracle and recognized that he was their new leader and teacher. They asked to go look for the body of Elijah, but Elisha knew they wouldn't find it. The prophets searched for three days but couldn't find any trace of Elijah. He was gone!

NOTE: It is commonly believed that Elijah went to be with God at this point. Others theorize that Elijah was not taken into heaven as is traditionally understood but simply transported elsewhere, like Philip was after baptizing the Ethiopian (Acts 8). This is because 2 Chronicles 21:12 records Elijah writing a letter during the reign of Jehoram, the next king of Judah. As we saw in our study of creation, the word "heaven" actually refers to three different areas—the atmosphere or sky, outer space, and God's realm. So this passage could be saying that the whirlwind carried Elijah into the sky (the same word in Hebrew) rather than to be with God in heaven. He may have still been alive somewhere else to write the letter to Jehoram.

Slide #13

Slide #14

Let's start the Class Notes. You will circle the correct bold word to complete each sentence. Who will read #1 and tell us which word is correct? Choose a reader. Prophet. Have students complete #1.

And #2? What was Elisha doing when Elijah found him? Choose a reader. Plowing. Complete #2.

Who will read #3 about Elijah's miracle parting the waters? Choose a reader. Cloak. Complete #3.

And #4? Which word is correct there? Choose a reader. Whirlwind. Complete #4.

Who will read #5 about Elisha? Choose a reader. Parted the waters of the Jordan. Complete #5.

God Performed Miracles Through Elisha

We've already read how Elisha parted the Jordan River just like Elijah did. Next, we'll see a few miracles God performed through Elisha to help people in need and to bring glory to God. The first miracle was for a family in a desperate situation, and it involved oil.

Have copies of the Widow's Oil Skit printed and props ready. Prepare to show olive oil and olives.

Show the olive oil. The oil in this miracle is like this olive oil, not like the oil we put in our cars. Olive oil is made by pressing olives. Show picture of olives or a jar of olives, if available. Oil back in Bible times was really important. People used it for lighting lamps and cooking and as medicine, perfume, skin treatment, and anointing oil, like the oil the prophet Samuel used to anoint David.

Widow's Oil Skit(Based on 2 Kings 4:1–7)

We'll act out this miracle. I need five volunteers for the main parts. Pass out five copies of the skit to the volunteers and keep one for you as the narrator. Follow the directions in the Widow's Oil Skit to set up the scene then perform the skit.

Let's see if you can answer some questions about this miracle. You may look in 2 Kings 4:1–7 for answers if you don't remember from the skit.

Who was in trouble and asked Elisha for help? A widow of one of the prophets.

2 Kings 4:1 says that this man who died was one of the sons of the prophets. The phrase "sons of the prophets" refers to a group of prophets who met together for learning and service. Back in Bible times, men who were prophets would gather, usually around a great prophet like Elijah or Elisha, to learn. You might say it was like an ancient Bible college with the great prophet as the teacher. The prophet who died was likely learning from Elisha since the widow said to Elisha, "You know [my husband] feared the Lord" (2 Kings 4:1). His wife was a widow with two sons to provide for. Even worse, her husband owed money to someone. This person, called a creditor, could legally take her sons to work as his slaves in order to repay their father's debt. What a desperate situation for the family!

What did Elisha tell her to do when he found out she had a jar of oil in her house? 2 Kings 4:3. To borrow vessels (e.g., jars, bowls, pots) from her neighbors, shut the door, and pour oil from her jar into the vessels.

What happened when the widow followed his instructions? She filled up all the borrowed vessels with oil.

What happened when she ran out of vessels to fill? The oil stopped flowing from her jar.

How would this oil help the widow solve her problem with the creditor?

She could sell the oil and pay off the debt, keep her children, and live on the extra money from the sale.

Slide #15

Show the Lesson Theme Poster. God provided for this widow in her time of need. She had lost her husband, a faithful prophet, and was about to lose her children as slaves. Elisha told her to borrow as many vessels as she

could. Her sons brought her vessel after vessel, and she kept pouring the oil. The oil God gave them saved them from slavery and poverty!

Elisha's next miracle was also for a woman, but this woman was married and wealthy, unlike the poor widow who received the oil. This wealthy woman lived in the town of Shunem (in the territory of Issachar), so we'll call her the Shunammite woman since we don't know her name.

Whenever Elisha passed by, he would stop at her house for food. The Shunammite woman recognized that Elisha was a man of God, so she made him a special guest room where he could stay whenever he visited. She fixed an upper room on the roof of her house and furnished it with a bed, a table, a chair, and a lamp.

Elisha and his servant Gehazi were really grateful for this safe and comfortable place to stay. Elisha asked Gehazi what nice thing they could do for her to show their thankfulness. Gehazi said, "She has no son, and her husband is old." Elisha called for the Shunammite woman and told her that about the same time next year she would have a son. At first, she didn't believe it, but she had a son the next year just as Elisha had said. Who else have we read about in the Bible who received a child from God, even when it seemed impossible? Abraham and Sarah's son—Isaac, Isaac and Rebekah's twins—Esau and Jacob, Jacob and Rachel's sons—Joseph and Benjamin, Hannah's son—Samuel.

God answered the prayers of many couples in the Bible by giving them a child.

Well, the Shunammite woman was overjoyed to have a son. Her husband had an heir to carry on the family name, and she could finally be a mother. But one day, something terrible happened! When her son was older but still a child, he was out in the field with his father and the workers, and he cried out, "Oh, my head, my head!"

Something was wrong! His father had a servant take the boy to his mother, but there was nothing she could do. He sat on her lap for a little while and then died.

How could this happen? This son was a gift from God. Why would God give her a son just to take him away so soon?

But the Shunammite woman didn't panic or weep. Instead, she laid her dead son on the bed in Elisha's room, saddled her donkey, and rode straight to Elisha. When Elisha heard what had happened, he gave his staff to his servant Gehazi and told him to go lay it on the face of the child. But the Shunammite woman wouldn't leave unless Elisha came with her.

Gehazi ran ahead and laid Elisha's staff on the face of the child, but nothing happened!

Was the boy gone for good? Or would God perform another miracle through Elisha?

Slide #16

Slide #17

Slide #18

Slide #19

2 Kings 4:32–37

Turn to 2 Kings 4:32. Who will read 32–37? Assign readers.

What happened the first time Elisha prayed and then lay on the child? The flesh of the child became warm.

And what happened the second time? The boy sneezed seven times and then woke up/came back to life!

Was anyone in the room with Elisha and the boy? No, Elisha shut the door behind them.

How did the Shunammite woman feel to get her son back? Grateful, happy. She bowed at Elisha's feet.

God showed his mighty power over death by enabling Elisha to bring this boy back to life! Only our all-powerful, omnipotent God could do a miracle like this. God was with Elisha, and this miracle showed this family, their town, and even the whole area that God was the only true God.

Slide #20

Slide #21

Let's finish the Class Notes. Who will read #6 about the miracle for the widow and her sons? Choose a reader. Oil. Have students complete #6.

Who will read #7 and give us the answer? Choose a reader. Elisha.

Complete #7.

And #8? What did Elisha do for the Shunammite woman's son? Choose a reader. From the dead. Complete #8.

Application

Slide #22

Refer to the Lesson Theme Poster. Elijah served God faithfully and trained Elisha to be God's prophet after him. Elisha helped a poor widow by giving her enough oil to repay a debt, keep her children, and support her family. Then, he blessed the Shunammite woman with a son because of her hospitality toward him. When her son died as a child, Elisha came and prayed for God to raise him up again—and God answered! The boy came back to life and was returned to his mother.

The Bible records many of the miracles that the prophets did. Remember, prophets were able to do these miracles only by God's power. They had no power of their own. They trusted God, and God used them to accomplish his plans. These men weren't perfect, but they were willing and obedient as God called them. Elijah and Elisha (and many others) were true prophets of God. Their words, works, and miracles declared the glory of God to the people, and many hearts were turned to the one true God because of them.

We may not be prophets like these men in the Old Testament, but as children of God we are commanded to bring glory to God, too. What are

some ways we can be witnesses for God today? Allow discussion. Elisha gave up his home, his family, and his life of farming to follow Elijah. What are some things we may have to give up to follow God? Allow discussion. Mention things like popularity, friends, comfort, acceptance, earthly pleasures, etc.

We may have to give up some things, but we can be examples to others in how we speak, act, and love one another. When we obey God's commands and follow him, we will be different from those around us who don't love God. In everything that we do, we are called to bring glory to God (1 Corinthians 10:31). Like the prophets, God can use us to turn people's hearts to him!

Lesson Review

We encourage you to play a lesson review game.

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