



Introduction – What do you already know about Elijah and Elisha? Any Bible stories or events that come to mind?

Historical Introduction

- After the reign of Solomon, the nation of Isreal split in two with Israel in the north and Judah in the south (930 BC). Jerusalem was the capital and spiritual center of the south and eventually Ahab's father, Omri, established Samaria as the capital of the north. (see graphic, see map)
- Jeroboam, the first king of Isreal, sought to prop up his political power by promoting idol worship. He set up golden calf idols at Bethel and Dan to keep the Israelites from worshipping the LORD at Jerusalem. This started a downward slide towards idolatry from which the northern kingdom in general (and its rulers in particular) never extricated themselves.
- Within 45 years the throne of the Northern Kingdom had violently changed hands four times.
- A time of spiritual apostasy in Israel, spearheaded by Ahab and Jezebel that spreads to Judah. Yet over time as a result of God's working through their ministry there is also a resurgence of worship of the LORD in Israel.
- Elijah and Elisha's consecutive ministries correspond to the duration of Ahab and his dynasty.

The Prophet Elijah

- Name means, "My God Is the LORD" // *Elisha* ("My God is Salvation")
- From Tishbe in Gilead, exact location unknown (see map)
- Unmarried, ministered from approximately 875 - 848 BC
- Distinct garb with a leather belt and coat of hair
- God's spokesman empowered in word and deed against idol worship

The Reign of King Ahab and Queen Jezebel (874-853 BC)

1 Kings 16:29-33 In the thirty-eighth year of Asa king of Judah, Ahab son of Omri became king of Israel, and he reigned in Samaria over Israel twenty-two years. ³⁰ Ahab son of Omri did more evil in the eyes of the LORD than any of those before him. ³¹ He not only considered it trivial to commit

the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat, but he also married Jezebel daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians, and began to serve Baal and worship him. ³² He set up an altar for Baal in the temple of Baal that he built in Samaria. ³³ Ahab also made an Asherah pole and did more to provoke the LORD, the God of Israel, to anger than did all the kings of Israel before him.

1 Kings 18: 4 While Jezebel was killing off the LORD's prophets...

- 1.) Jezebel "imported" her family's Canaanite religion to Israel. How did Ahab and Jezebel take idolatry in the northern kingdom to the "next level"?
- 2.) God has instituted government to maintain peace and order. He established the Church to proclaim his Word. Give examples of how godly officials can shape a nation in a positive way. Give examples of how ungodly rulers can affect the opposite.
- 3.) The worship of Baal and Asherah were a familiar topic in our minor prophets study last year. Who/what were Baal and Asherah? Why did they prove such a snare for the Israelites?
- 4.) What had God promised would happen if they broke his covenant and worshiped other gods?

Deuteronomy 11:16-17 Be careful, or you will be enticed to turn away and worship other gods and bow down to them. ¹⁷ Then the LORD's anger will burn against you, and he will shut the heavens so that it will not rain and the ground will yield no produce, and you will soon perish from the good land the LORD is giving you.

Deuteronomy 28:15, 23-24 However, if you do not obey the Lord your God and do not carefully follow all his commands and decrees I am giving you today, all these curses will come upon you and overtake you: ... ²³ The sky over your head will be bronze, the ground beneath you iron. ²⁴ The Lord will turn the rain of your country into dust and powder; it will come down from the skies until you are destroyed.

- 5.) What similar idols pervade in our culture and can ensnare us?
- 6.) What is our response as children of God for ourselves and for the people of our culture?

ELIJAH FED BY RAVENS

1 Kings 17:1-6 Now Elijah the Tishbite, from Tishbe in Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the LORD, the God of Israel, lives, whom I serve, there will be neither dew nor rain in the next few years except at

my word.” ² Then the word of the LORD came to Elijah: ³ “Leave here, turn eastward and hide in the Kerith Ravine, east of the Jordan. ⁴ You will drink from the brook, and I have ordered the ravens to feed you there.” ⁵ So he did what the LORD had told him. He went to the Kerith Ravine, east of the Jordan, and stayed there. ⁶ The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning and bread and meat in the evening, and he drank from the brook.

- 1.) What assertions did Elijah set before Ahab in verse 1?
- 2.) Did Elijah’s words have this power on their own of himself? (cf. 1 Kings 18:42-45)

James 5:17-18 Elijah was a man just like us. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. ¹⁸ Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.

- 3.) What were the LORD’s directions thereafter?
- 4.) What Bible principles and directives guide our response to persecution and God’s providence?

Matthew 6:9-13 “This, then, is how you should pray: ‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, ¹⁰ your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. ¹¹ Give us today our daily bread. ¹² Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. ¹³ And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.’”

Matthew 10:17-20 “Be on your guard against men; they will hand you over to the local councils and flog you in their synagogues. ¹⁸ On my account you will be brought before governors and kings as witnesses to them and to the Gentiles. ¹⁹ But when they arrest you, do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time you will be given what to say, ²⁰ for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.”

Matthew 10:23 “When you are persecuted in one place, flee to another.”

Acts 8:1; 11:19-21 On that day a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. ... ^{11:19} Now those who had been scattered by the persecution in connection with Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, telling the message only to Jews. ²⁰ Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus. ²¹ The Lord’s hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord.

PRAYER