

Calvary Chapel  Philadelphia



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY TEACHER'S PACKET

Kindergarten

Sunday Morning

Study 39

Elijah and Elisha

Elijah and Elisha

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 The goal of this lesson is to show the students through the story of Elijah and Elisha that God can use any of us.

Key Verses

2 Kings 2:1-22—Main Teaching Passage

1 Kings 19:19-21 (Background)

Memory Verse - Proverbs 3:12 (June Memory Verse)

"For whom the LORD loves He corrects,
Just as a father the son in whom he delights."

Hook

Ask the class to name the most spiritual person they can think of. He or she can be a missionary, Sunday School teacher, parent, Bible character, etc. Then ask if they think that they could ever do what these "spiritual giants" did.

Today, we are going to be looking at a "spiritual giant" named Elijah and the man who followed him, Elisha. Let's see if Elisha is able to follow in his master's footsteps.

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

We saw last week that Elijah was a mighty prophet whom the Lord used in powerful ways. He had a ministry of calling Ahab, Jezebel, and the rest of the people of Israel back to the Lord. In 1 Kings 19:19-21, we find out that he had chosen a man named Elisha to follow him. Many years passed and it was time for Elijah's ministry to come to an end. Elijah knew it was his time to go, and so he traveled through Israel and across the Jordan. He gave Elisha several opportunities to stay behind, but Elisha insisted on following his friend and mentor until the end.

When they reached the Jordan, Elijah rolled up his mantel (cloak) and struck the Jordan, causing it to split and allowing them to pass through. Once they got across, Elijah asked Elisha to ask for whatever he wanted before Elijah was taken away. Elisha asked for a double portion of his master's spirit, which Elijah said he would try to grant. Then, a fiery chariot took Elijah up to heaven before Elisha. Elisha then took Elijah's mantel and struck the Jordan and it parted, just as it did for Elijah.

A group of prophets told Elisha that they were going to search for Elijah's body, but Elisha knew his friend was gone. He eventually allowed them to go, and as expected, they could not find him. The story ends with Elisha in Jericho, where the water supply had gone bad and the ground was barren. Elisha took a bowl of salt and threw it in the water source, and the water and land were healed in the city.

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

LOOK

Elijah was a spiritual giant in his day. He was one of the only righteous men in all of Israel. He performed countless miracles. He rebuked the king and queen and led the Israelites to destroy the prophets of Baal. In today's story, it was time for him to go. Imagine how Elisha must have felt. It would probably seem like an impossible task trying to follow him as the new prophet of the Lord in Israel. Talk about big shoes to fill!

We might have expected Elisha to be afraid to take on this new role, but in fact that was not the case. When offered anything from Elijah, he asked for a double portion of Elijah's spirit. We might have expected him to be content even to be mentioned alongside the great prophet, let alone try to measure up to him. But that was not enough for Elisha. He wanted to do even greater things for the Lord than his predecessor.

At the conclusion of the story, we see that God granted Elisha what he asked and Elisha didn't skip a beat. Immediately after Elijah was taken, Elisha was able to do the same exact miracle that his mentor had done earlier, parting the Jordan River by striking it with his mantel. Later, we

LOOK (Continued)

see him healing the water and land for the people of Jericho. He was able to perform miracles, just like Elijah. It was clear to all that while God's messenger had passed on, His ministry and power had not. The Lord was still working in Israel, He was just using a new servant to do His work.

It can be easy for us to look up to "spiritual giants" and think that the Lord could never use us the way He uses them. We can hear about preachers and missionaries and look at our parents, pastors, or Sunday School teachers and think that we could never love and serve God the way they do. However, this story shows us that such a belief is dead wrong. The Lord can use anyone, no matter their age, size, strength, or intelligence. All that the Lord needs is a heart that is ready and willing to serve Him. We can have confidence like Elisha had that if we trust in the Lord, God will be able to use us to do great things. God's work does not depend on any one person or just the "super-spiritual," or even only on adults. God can use anyone to do great things for Him.

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

Review the lesson by asking the class how the Lord used Elisha in today's story. Ask how He might be able to use the students.

Pray: Thank God for using all kinds of people to do His will. Ask Him to use each student to glorify Him.

Parent Question: How did God continue to work in Israel once Elijah was gone?

FURTHER STUDY

Commentary on 2 Kings 2:1-22 by David Guzik

ELIJAH'S ASCENSION

A. Elijah ascends to heaven.

1. ([2 Kings 2:1-3](#)) The awareness of Elijah's coming departure.

And it came to pass, when the LORD was about to take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal. Then Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here, please, for the LORD has sent me on to Bethel." But Elisha said, "As the LORD lives, and as your soul lives, I will not leave you!" So they went down to Bethel. Now the sons of the prophets who were at Bethel came out to Elisha, and said to him, "Do you know that the LORD will take away your master from over you today?" And he said, "Yes, I know; keep silent!"

a. **When the LORD was about to take Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind:** Apparently, this was somewhat common knowledge. Elijah, Elisha, and the **sons of the prophets** each knew that Elijah would soon be carried **into heaven by a whirlwind**; presumably there was a prophecy announcing this that at least some knew.

b. **As the LORD lives, and as your soul lives, I will not leave you:** Elijah seemed to test the devotion of Elisha. Since it was known that Elijah would soon depart to heaven in an unusual way, Elisha wanted to stay as close as possible to his mentor.

2. ([2 Kings 2:4-7](#)) The awareness of Elijah's departure at Jericho and the Jordan.

Then Elijah said to him, "Elisha, stay here, please, for the LORD has sent me on to Jericho." But he said, "As the LORD lives, and as your soul lives, I will not leave you!" So they came to Jericho. Now the sons of the prophets who were at Jericho came to Elisha and said to him, "Do you know that the LORD will take away your master from over you today?" So he answered, "Yes, I know; keep silent!" Then Elijah said to him, "Stay here, please, for the LORD has sent me on to the Jordan." But he said, "As the LORD lives, and as your soul lives, I will not leave you!" So the two of them went on. And fifty men of the sons of the prophets went and stood facing *them* at a distance, while the two of them stood by the Jordan.

a. **Elisha, stay here, please, for the LORD has sent me on to Jericho:** Elijah continued to test the devotion of Elisha, and Elisha continued to stay with his mentor until his anticipated unusual departure.

i. Elijah knew that God had a dramatic plan for the end of his earthly life, yet he was perfectly willing to allow it all to take place privately, without anyone else knowing. "The prophet's evident desire to die alone shames us, when we remember how eager we are to tell men, by every available medium, of what we are doing for the Lord." (Meyer)

b. **The two of them went on:** Elisha would not leave his mentor until *God* took him away in the dramatic way promised.

3. ([2 Kings 2:8-10](#)) Elisha asks for a double portion.

Now Elijah took his mantle, rolled *it* up, and struck the water; and it was divided this way and that, so that the two of them crossed over on dry ground. And so it was, when they had crossed over, that Elijah said to Elisha, "Ask! What may I do for you, before I am taken away from you?" Elisha said, "Please

let a double portion of your spirit be upon me.” So he said, “You have asked a hard thing. Nevertheless, if you see me when I am taken from you, it shall be so for you; but if not, it shall not be so.”

a. **Elijah took his mantle, rolled it up, and struck the water; and it was divided this way and that, so that the two of them crossed over on dry ground:** This was a strange and unique miracle on a day of strange and unique miracles. Elijah walked in the steps of Moses and Joshua as ones whom God used to miraculously part waters.

b. **Ask! What may I do for you, before I am taken away from you:** This was a big invitation, but Elisha had demonstrated his tenacity by refusing to leave his mentor.

i. “It was with the object of testing the spirit of his friend that the departing seer had urged him again and again to leave him. And it was only when Elisha had stood the test with such unwavering resolution that Elijah was able to give him this *carte blanche*.” (Meyer)

c. **Please let a double portion of your spirit be upon me:** When invited to make a request, Elisha asked for a big thing — a **double portion** of the mighty **spirit** of Elijah. Elisha saw how greatly the Spirit of God worked through Elijah, and he wanted the same for himself.

i. He could have asked for anything, but he asked for this. “He sought neither wealth, nor position, nor worldly power; nor a share in those advantages on which he had turned his back for ever.” (Meyer)

ii. The idea of a **double portion** was not to ask for *twice as much* as Elijah had, but to ask for the portion that went to the firstborn son, as in [Deuteronomy 21:17](#). Elisha asked for the right to be regarded as the successor of Elijah, as his firstborn son in regard to ministry. Yet Elisha had *already* been designated as Elijah’s successor ([1 Kings 19:19](#)). This was a request for the *spiritual power to fulfill* the calling he already received.

iii. It is worthwhile to consider if this was generally a *good* or a *bad* thing. Normally we don’t think of one person inheriting the ministry of another. The relation between Elijah and Elisha — and God’s apparent blessing on their ministries — shows that at least *sometimes* God intends one person to inherit the ministry of another.

d. **If you see me when I am taken from you, it shall be for you:** Elijah tested the devotion of his disciple by seeing if he would persistently stay with him through these last remarkable hours. If the devotion of Elisha remained strong through the testing, his request to be the successor of the first prophet would be fulfilled.

4. ([2 Kings 2:11-13](#)) Elijah ascends into heaven.

Then it happened, as they continued on and talked, that suddenly a chariot of fire appeared with horses of fire, and separated the two of them; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. And Elisha saw it, and he cried out, “My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and its horsemen!” So he saw him no more. And he took hold of his own clothes and tore them into two pieces. He also took up the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and went back and stood by the bank of the Jordan.

a. **As they continued on and talked:** “What sublime themes must have engaged them, standing as they did on the very confines of heaven, and in the vestibule of eternity! The apostasy of Israel and its approaching doom; the ministry just closing, with its solemn warnings; the outlook towards the work upon which Elisha was preparing to enter — these and cognate subjects must have occupied them.” (Meyer)

b. **Suddenly a chariot of fire appeared with horses of fire, and separated the two of them; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven:** This was a strange and unique miracle. As the two prophets walked, some fiery object **separated the two of them** and then carried Elijah up to heaven.

i. “It was meet that a whirlwind-man should sweep to heaven in the very element of his life... What a contrast to the gentle upward motion of the ascending Saviour!” (Meyer)

ii. “Elijah was taken up to heaven in the *whirlwind*, not in the *chariot of fire and horses of fire* which merely ‘came between the two of them’ (Hebrew) and cut him off from human sight.

These *chariots* and *horsemen* symbolized strong protection as well as the forces of God's spiritual presence which were the true safety of Israel." (Wiseman)

c. **My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and its horsemen:** With these words Elisha recognized the *true* strength of Israel. "Elisha saw that the strength of Israel had been that of the presence of the prophet of God. It is more than a coincidence that when presently Elisha himself passed away, Joash, the reigning king, uttered the same exclamation (13:14)." (Morgan)

i. "Who by thy example, and counsels, and prayers, and power with God, didst more for the defence and preservation of Israel, than all their chariots and horses, or other warlike provisions." (Poole)

ii. This was the end of a remarkable ministry, one that was in many ways similar to the ministry of Moses. Both Moses and Elijah:

- Stood alone for righteousness.
- Were associated with fire upon mountains.
- Were associated with the desert.
- Met God on Sinai.
- Were chased out of their countries by pagan rulers.
- Knew God's miraculous provision for food and water.
- Wandered in the desert for a period measured by 40.
- Fasted for 40 days.
- Were powerful examples of praying men.
- Parted waters.
- Had close associates who succeeded them.
- Had successors who parted waters also.
- Had mysterious or strange deaths.

d. **And Elisha saw it:** This fulfilled the requirement mentioned in [2 Kings 2:10](#). Elisha would indeed inherit the prophetic ministry of Elijah. Yet Elisha wasn't happy when this happened; he **took hold of his own clothes and tore them into two pieces** as an expression of deep mourning.

e. **He also took up the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him:** Since the mantle was the special mark of a prophet, this was a demonstration of the truth that Elisha truly had inherited the ministry of Elijah.

i. Think of what it was like for Elisha to pick up that mantle. The mantle did not fall from heaven and rest on his shoulders; he had to *decide* to pick it up and put it on. He had to decide: *Do I really want to put this on?* Elijah's ministry was one of great power, but also of great pressure and responsibility.

B. The beginning of the ministry of the prophet Elisha.

1. ([2 Kings 2:14-15](#)) Elisha continues after the pattern of Elijah.

Then he took the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and struck the water, and said, "Where is the LORD God of Elijah?" And when he also had struck the water, it was divided this way and that; and Elisha crossed over. Now when the sons of the prophets who were from Jericho saw him, they said, "The spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha." And they came to meet him, and bowed to the ground before him.

a. **Where is the LORD God of Elijah:** Elisha knew that the power in prophetic ministry did not rest in mantles

or fiery chariots. It rested in the presence and work of the Living God. If the **LORD God of Elijah** were also with Elisha, then he would inherit the same power and direction of ministry.

i. This was a great question to ask. If God expected Elisha to continue on the ministry of Elijah, then He must be present for the junior prophet in the same ways He was for the senior prophet. It was as if Elisha could have asked the question more specifically:

- Where is the God who kept Elijah faithful when the whole nation turned from God?
- Where is the God who mightily answered prayer from Elijah?
- Where is the God who provided miraculously for Elijah?
- Where is the God who raised the dead through Elijah?
- Where is the God who answers prayer by sending fire from heaven?
- Where is the God who encouraged the discouraged prophet?
- Where is the God who carried Elijah away into heaven?

b. **When he also struck the water, it was divided:** This shows that Elisha immediately had the same power in ministry that Elijah had. He went back over a divided Jordan River the same way that he and Elijah first came over the river.

i. “And when you have got their mantle, do not waste precious time in lamentations about them any more; *get to your business*. There is a river in your way; what then? Well, go to the Jordan as the prophet Elisha did, and try to pass it. Say not, ‘Where is Elijah?’ but ‘Where is the Lord God of Elijah?’ Elijah is gone, but his God is not; Elijah has gone away, but Jehovah is present, still.” (Spurgeon)

c. **The spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha:** The succession of Elisha to the power and office of Elijah was *apparent to others*. Elisha didn’t need to persuade or convince them of this with words. God’s blessing on his actions was enough to prove it.

2. [\(2 Kings 2:16-18\)](#) A futile search for Elijah.

Then they said to him, “Look now, there are fifty strong men with your servants. Please let them go and search for your master, lest perhaps the Spirit of the LORD has taken him up and cast him upon some mountain or into some valley.” And he said, “You shall not send anyone.” But when they urged him till he was ashamed, he said, “Send them!” Therefore they sent fifty men, and they searched for three days but did not find him. And when they came back to him, for he had stayed in Jericho, he said to them, “Did I not say to you, ‘Do not go?’”

a. **Please let them go and search for your master:** The sons of the prophets wondered if the chariot of fire had not merely taken Elijah to another place in Israel. Elisha knew that it had carried him to heaven, so he was hesitant to give permission for what he knew would be a futile mission.

b. **Did I not say to you, “Do not go”:** Elisha knew that the mission would be futile and it was. Elijah was carried up to *heaven*, not some other place on this earth.

3. [\(2 Kings 2:19-22\)](#) The waters of Jericho are healed.

Then the men of the city said to Elisha, “Please notice, the situation of this city is pleasant, as my lord sees; but the water is bad, and the ground barren.” And he said, “Bring me a new bowl, and put salt in it.” So they brought it to him. Then he went out to the source of the water, and cast in the salt there, and said, “Thus says the LORD: ‘I have healed this water; from it there shall be no more death or barrenness.’” So the water remains healed to this day, according to the word of Elisha which he spoke.

a. **The water is bad, and the ground barren:** At this time Jericho had a poor water supply. This made agriculture impossible and life very difficult.

b. **Thus says the LORD: "I have healed this water; from it there shall be no more death or barrenness":** The miracle did not happen because Elisha wanted to impress others or because *he* thought it would be good to do it. This was a work of the LORD, and it was a word from the LORD that announced the healing of the water.

i. "If God casteth into our hearts but one cruseful of the salt of his Spirit, we are whole." (Trapp)