

Great Commission



Baptist Church

Dr. Douglas E. Brown, Pastor/Teacher



The Rise and Decline of the Kingdom

**I Kings
Life Group Curriculum
April 2025 – June 2025**

The Book of I Kings

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Lesson I

Date: April 6, 2025

Lesson Scriptures: 1 Kings 15:9-24

The Reign of Asa

Lesson Aim: This week the student will learn how king Asa did right in the sight of the LORD.

Open It

1. In what areas of your life do you need to show more faithfulness and commitment to your values and beliefs?

Explore It

1. Asa became king of Judah in the twentieth year of Jeroboam's reign over Israel?

2. How long did Asa reign in Jerusalem?

3. How is Asa's heart described in relation to the Lord?

4. What did Asa do with the silver and gold from the treasuries of the Lord's temple and his own palace?

Cultural Concept:

Religious Reforms and Idolatry: In ancient Judah, the presence of idols and male shrine prostitutes was a significant cultural issue. King Asa's actions to remove these elements reflect the cultural and religious reforms aimed at returning to the worship of Yahweh. This highlights the ongoing struggle between monotheistic worship and the influence of surrounding polytheistic cultures.

Political Alliances and Diplomacy: Asa's alliance with Ben-Hadad, king of Aram, illustrates the importance of political alliances in the ancient Near East. Such alliances were often secured through gifts and treaties to gain military support against common enemies. This reflects the complex diplomatic relationships and the strategic use of resources to maintain power and security.

Summary: In this week's lesson, the student is introduced to king Asa. He began to rule as king of Judah during king Jeroboam tenure, and reigned forty-one years. Asa was a righteous king. The writer writes in verse 11, "And Asa did *that which was* right in the eyes of the LORD, as *did* David his father." The King James Version translated the English word *right* from the Hebrew word *Yashar* which means in the context of human behavior, it refers to living in accordance with God's laws and principles, embodying integrity and righteousness. He accomplished this by removing all the Sodomites and idols that his father had from their land. Asa removed his mother as queen because she bowed her knee to an idol in the grove. He took the idol and burnt it by the brook Kidron. The writer writes in verse 14, "But the high places were not removed: nevertheless, Asa's heart was perfect with the LORD all his days." The King James Version Bible translated the English word *perfect* from the Hebrew word *shalem* which concept is foundational in understanding the Hebrew notion of peace (shalom), which encompasses well-being, prosperity, and completeness.

There was a war between Asa and Bassaha, the third king of the northern tribe of Israel. Bassaha attempted to fortify the city of Ramah to prevent anyone from leaving or entering the territory of Asa king of Judah. With the wisdom of the LORD, king Asa was able to build an alliance with king of Aram who was ruling in Damascus. The king of Aram was given gifts of silver and gold to break the treaty he had with king Baasha. As a result, king Baasha withdrew his men who were building Ramah and withdrew to Tirzah. All the building materials left behind by Baasha's men were collected by king Asa and carried away to build up Geba in Benjamin and Mizpah. This portion of scripture teaches at least three biblical principles. The first biblical principle presented in this lesson is that the Almighty God rewards obedience. The second biblical principle is that the LORD is Sovereign over all his creation including kings. The third biblical principle is that the LORD is the source of biblical prosperity.

Lesson aim and summary written by Joseph Ellzey Jr., PhD

Lesson II

Date: April 13, 2025

Lesson Scriptures: 1 Kings 15:25-34

Nadab's Wicked Reign

Lesson Aim: Live in obedience to God. Examine our lives and the influences that shape us as we pray to God to root out anything that pulls us away from Him.

Open It

1. Are you using your influence to promote positive change or perpetuating harmful behaviors?
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Explore It

1. Who became king of Israel after Jeroboam?

2. How did Nadab's reign come to an end?

3. Why did Baasha kill Jeroboam's family?

4. Did Baasha follow the ways of the Lord?

Cultural Concept:

Dynastic Struggles and Assassinations: The passage highlights the violent nature of political transitions in ancient Israel. Nadab's assassination by Baasha and the subsequent extermination of Jeroboam's family reflect the brutal methods often used to secure and maintain power. This underscores the instability and danger associated with royal succession during this period.

Religious Continuity and Idolatry: Despite the change in leadership, Baasha continued in the sinful practices of Jeroboam, including idolatry. This persistence of idolatry highlights the cultural and religious challenges faced by the Israelites in maintaining their covenant with God. It also reflects the influence of surrounding cultures and the difficulty of eradicating deeply ingrained religious practices.

Summary: Nothing is any more remarkable than the arrogant and stupid perversity (a deliberate desire to behave in an unreasonable or unacceptable way) of the kings of Israel, who could not have been ignorant of the fact that the families of preceding kings were mercilessly liquidated upon the direct commandment of God because of their idolatry in the worship of the calves, and of the fact that the succeeding king, in each case, became God's instrument of punishment and destruction. And yet, those succeeding kings took up and promoted the very same sinful idolatry for which God had destroyed their predecessors. Surely Satan himself must have blinded such men, whose ambition to reign as king appears to have been the sole motivation that prevented their return to the true worship of God and to their allegiance to the house of David.

In this week's lesson the writer now goes back in time to the 2nd year of King Asa's reign where Nadab, the son of Jeroboam becomes king over Israel; and what we find is that Nadab's reign is very short lived and for good reason. Nadab was a wicked king of Israel who followed in the footsteps of his father, Jeroboam. See, there was an opportunity for Jeroboam to repent and turn away from his idolatry and return to the worship of God. However, that opportunity for mercy was continually rejected and because it was, the Lord brought down a heavy verdict. He mentioned that there would be a king to arise who would kill every descendant of Jeroboam as a consequence of the sins of Jeroboam. Nadab became crown prince after his brother Abijah died. Nadab did what was evil in the Lord's sight. He continued to seek help from false gods, just like his father, who had led Israel to sin. We see that phrase again, "He walked in the ways of his father", meaning that idolatrous worship continued on with Jeroboam's descendant. Nadab's reign was marked by evil and turmoil, and he was eventually assassinated by his own commander, Baasha. Baasha then killed all of Jeroboam's family, as prophesied by the prophet Ahijah. Nadab's story illustrate the consequences of rejecting God and choosing to follow evil.

It's in verses 27-30 that we find the background story as to how Jeroboam's entire lineage was eradicated. Baasha makes the extra effort of removing any and all threats to his rule on the throne by killing Jeroboam's male descendants. All of this fulfilled what the God spoke to Ahijah the prophet regarding Jeroboam. Once again, a testimony to the word of the Lord not returning to Him void! Verse 31 quickly concludes the short-lived reign of Nadab as King. One would think that this change in leadership from Nadab to Baasha would have been better, however as we saw some verses prior Baasha wasn't any better. Yet, he did evil in the sight of the Lord, and walked in the way of Jeroboam and in his sin which he made Israel sin.

As a matter of fact, within his 24 years of reign throughout Israel he continued to "walk in the ways of Jeroboam" as if Jeroboam's example of leadership wasn't example enough of what NOT to do! However, what we are seeing is how power, control, and prestige can get the best of someone and drive them to independence from God. Therefore, this lesson shows the destructive consequences of turning away from God and worshiping idols.

Lesson aim and summary written by Brenda F. Moore

Lesson III

Date: April 20, 2025

Lesson Scriptures: 1 Kings 16:1-14

The Evil Reign of Baasha and Elah

Lesson Aim: Demonstrate the consequences of disobedience to God. Violence and idolatry lead to a swift and brutal downfall.

Open It

1. How do you respond to warnings or advice from others, especially when it comes to making important decisions?

Explore It

1. Who delivered the word of the Lord against Baasha?

2. What did the Lord say would happen to Baasha's family?

3. What was the fate of those belonging to Baasha who died in the city and in the country?

4. Who conspired against Elah, Baasha's son, and what was the outcome?

Word Study:

“Dogs” (Hebrew: כָּלֵב, kelev):

Meaning: This term refers to dogs, which in ancient Israelite culture were often seen as scavengers. The mention of dogs eating the dead signifies disgrace and a lack of proper burial.

"Birds" (Hebrew: עוֹף, oph):

Meaning: This word refers to birds, often used in the context of scavengers that consume the dead. It symbolizes dishonor and divine judgment.

Summary: The "evil reign of Baasha and Elah" refers to the consecutive reigns of Kings Baasha and his son Elah over the Kingdom of Israel, both considered wicked rulers who heavily promoted idol worship and led the people astray from God, ultimately resulting in the destruction of their dynasty as prophesied by the prophet Jehu.

Our lesson follows the line of kings who assumed the throne of Israel after Jeroboam and his son Nadab. Their names were Baasha, Elah and Zimri. All of them were wicked and under their leadership, the nation of Israel moved further and further away from God and His commandments. Baasha Rise to Power by seizing the throne after assassinating King Nadab, the son of Jeroboam, and continued the same idolatrous practices as his predecessor. Baasha, was the instrument of judgment God used to bring justice to the house of Jeroboam. Though Baasha was not a blood descendant of Jeroboam, but he was a spiritual descendent of this great idolater of the northern kingdom. Because he walked in the way of Jeroboam, the house of Baasha would face the same judgment as the house of Jeroboam. The prophet Jehu, son of Hanani, delivered a message from God to Baasha, condemning his evil deeds and declaring that his entire family would be wiped out due to his wickedness.

Elah, Baasha's son, inherited the throne, but had a short reign, yet he continued his father's corrupt ways, further provoking God's anger. Zimri, one of Baasha's military commanders, an army officer, a chariot commander, rebelled and assassinated Elah, subsequently destroying the entire family of Baasha, fulfilling the prophecy against them causing the fall of the dynasty. Zimri's reign was short-lived, lasting only seven days. This is considered significant, as we see a "Pattern of Corruption". Baasha and Elah were both kings of Israel who reigned during evil times. Baasha Reigned for 24 years, did evil in the eyes of the Lord, continued Jeroboam's cult, assassinated Nadab, and destroyed Jeroboam's dynasty. Here we see the reigns of Baasha and Elah which exemplify a recurring theme in the books of Kings, where many Israelite kings chose to abandon God's laws and lead the people into idol worship, resulting in negative consequences. The Bible tells us that by nature, God is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in mercy (Psalm 103:8). Because He is slow to anger, it took a lot of wickedness on the part of Baasha to succeed in provoking Him to anger. Our lesson also shows Divine Justice, as it highlights the idea that God holds rulers accountable for their actions and will bring judgment upon those who actively disobey His commands. God did not bless Baasha's dynasty because he was a wicked king. Zimri killed all of Baasha's family including relatives and friends in fulfillment of the Lord's word through the prophet Jehu, the son of Hanani. Both Baasha and Elah provoked the Lord to anger by their sins and by making Israel commit sins. The Bible records the events of Baasha and Elah's reigns in the official records of the kings of Israel.

Lesson aim and summary written by Brenda F. Moore

Lesson IV

Date: April 27, 2025

Lesson Scriptures: 1 Kings 16:15-34

The Evil Reign of Zimri, Omri and Ahab

Lesson Aim: To follow God's commands and better understand the consequences of disobedience to God and the dangers of idolatry.

Open It

1. How do you balance ambition with ethical behavior in your personal and professional life?
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Explore It

1. What did Zimri do when he saw that the city was taken?

2. Who became king of Israel after Zimri?

3. How is Omri's reign described in terms of his actions in the eyes of the Lord?

4. Who succeeded Omri as king, and what was notable about his reign?

Word Study:

Citadel (Hebrew: אֶרְמוֹן, armon):

Meaning: This term refers to a fortified palace or stronghold.

Followers" (Hebrew: עַם, am):

Meaning: This term means people or followers, often used to describe a group of supporters.

Summary: 1 Kings 16 follows the line of some of the kings who assumed the throne of Israel after Jeroboam and his son Nadab. All of them were wicked and under their leadership, the nation of Israel moved further and further away from God and His commandments.

In 1 Kings 16:15-34, the narrative focuses on the reigns of Zimri, Omri, and Ahab, highlighting their wickedness. The lesson for this week recounts the rebuilding of Jericho and the rise and fall of several kings, including Zimri, Omri, and Ahab. It highlights the wickedness and the consequences of their actions of the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the fulfillment of God's pronouncements against them. The Bible does not portray Zimri as righteous or of integrity, as he ascended to the throne through assassination.

The detailed breakdown of Zimri's short reign and death is found in verses 15-20; where we find Zimri, a commander of the army, murders King Elah who was Baasha's son. Zimri, a servant and commander under King Elah, orchestrated a coup to seize the throne and becomes king. Zimri, like his predecessors, also followed the example of Jeroboam in his evil deeds, leading Israel into sin. His rule lasts only seven days, marking a brief reign characterized by evil, political instability and internal strife before he commits suicide by burning himself in the king's house after seeing the city taken by Omri.

Then, we learn of Omri's reign and wickedness in verses 21-29. Omri, a general, is chosen by the people as king, and he reigns for 12 years, 6 in Tirzah, and then buys the hill of Samaria and builds a city there, calling it Samaria and continuing the wicked practices of Jeroboam.

In verses 30-33, along comes, Ahab's, whose reign included the introduction of Jezebel. The chapter also introduces Jezebel, Ahab's wife, who is a powerful figure and a proponent of Baal worship. Ahab, Omri's son, succeeds him and is described as doing more evil in the sight of the Lord than any of those before him. Ahab was a man known for his weakness and godlessness. He allowed Jezebel to control the religious worship in the northern kingdom. He set up and worship the Asherah pole which was a sacred tree or pole used to honor the Canaanite goddess Asherah.

Lastly, verse 34 concludes the chapter with the story of Hiel, the Beth elite, rebuilding Jericho, which is said to have been done at the cost of his firstborn son, Abiram and his youngest sons, Segub, fulfilling a curse pronounced by Joshua.

Lesson aim and summary written by Brenda F. Moore

Lesson V

Date: May 4, 2025

Lesson Scriptures: 1 Kings 17:1-7

Elijah and the Great Draught

Lesson Aim: To teach the student that there is but one true and living God. And, He is The Lord God, Creator of the Heavens and the Earth.

Open It

1. How do you respond to God's guidance in your life?

Explore It

1. Who was Elijah, and what did he declare to Ahab?

2. Where did the Lord instruct Elijah to go after his declaration to Ahab?

3. How did Elijah's obedience to God's instructions demonstrate his faith?

4. How was Elijah provided for at the Kerith Ravine?

Cultural Concept:

Nature as a Tool of Judgment: The drought declared by Elijah was not just a natural disaster but a divine judgment against the idolatry and wickedness of Israel. This concept reflects the cultural understanding that natural events, such as droughts and famines, were often seen as expressions of God's favor or displeasure, reinforcing the connection between the people's behavior and their relationship with God.

Divine Provision: The story of Elijah being fed by ravens and drinking from the brook highlights the belief in God's provision for His faithful servants. In a culture where survival often depended on natural resources and agriculture, this miraculous provision underscored the idea that God could sustain His people even in times of scarcity and crisis.

Summary: Elijah was the first in a long line of important prophets that God sent to Israel and Judah. Israel, the northern kingdom, had no faithful kings throughout its history. Elijah had been and was being prepared by the Lord to demonstrate to all Israel that Yahweh, not Baal, is still the One and Only True God. Even the name Elijah conveys this fact because his name means “Yahweh is my God”.

This was a crucial time in the history of Judah and Israel, so God sent the Prophet Elijah as a dominant spiritual force during these dark days of King Ahab's apostasy. Ahab's government officials supported the worship of Baal and other gods, and it looked as if the worship of the one true God might be completely eliminated in the northern kingdom.

Observe, “the land was swarmed with priest of Baal and of the other groves; people were proud of court favors, glorying in their sudden rise to power; insolent, greedy, licentious, and debased. The fires of persecution were lit and had begun to burn with fury” (Meyer). Each king was more wicked than the former and was actually leading the people into worshipping pagan gods.

There were no king or priest to bring God's word to the people, so God called prophets to try to rescue His people from their spiritual and moral decline. Those who worshiped Baal believed that he was the god who brought rain and bountiful harvest. So, when Elijah walked into the presence of this Baal-worshipping service and told king Ahab that there would be no rain for the next several years, Ahab was shocked! Elijah bravely confronted the man who led God's people into evil, and he told of a power far greater than that of any pagan gods, Elijah claimed that the Lord is the God of Israel! And, that He is alive! He could confidently claim there would be no dew or rain because God had promised to withhold these from the land, proving that He/the True God, controls the weather, not Baal. This was a remarkable demonstration of God's power and superiority showing us that our God does not only respond with words, but action! We serve a living God!!! Amen somebody!

Lesson aim and summary written by Glendoria P. Boyd

Lesson VI

Date: May 11, 2025

Lesson Scriptures: 1 Kings 17:8-16

The Widow for Elijah

Lesson Aim: To teach the student that obedience is a faith activator. Your obedience to God activates your faith in God. (So, without faith it is impossible to please God; Heb. 11:6).

Open It

1. How can you practice generosity even when you feel you have little to give?
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Explore It

1. Where did the Lord instruct Elijah to go after the brook dried up?

2. Who did Elijah meet at the gate of Zarephath, and what was she doing?

3. What was the widow's response to Elijah's request for bread?

4. What promise did Elijah give the widow if she made him a small loaf of bread first?

Cultural Concept:

Hospitality and Provision: In ancient Near Eastern culture, hospitality was a highly valued virtue. The widow of Zarephath's willingness to share her last meal with Elijah, despite her dire circumstances, reflects this cultural emphasis on caring for strangers and guests. This act of hospitality, even in the face of scarcity, underscores the importance of generosity and trust in divine provision. The story also highlights the belief that God rewards those who show kindness and faith, as seen in the miraculous replenishment of the widow's flour and oil.

Summary: In this section of scripture, we see God calling Elijah to go to Zarephath, which belongs to the Sidon. God led Elijah from a dry brook where he was being fed by ravens (unclean birds) to a Gentile city. This again was an unusual and challenging move for Elijah to make. God kept transplanting Elijah from home to Jezreel, Cherith, and Zarephath. This transplanting was done to make Elijah stronger and stronger. There's a message for us right here: Our difficulties do not come to weaken us but only strengthen us in the image of God.

We must remember that this was also the region which the wicked Jezebel was from. Elijah was visiting enemy territory and showing the power of God in an area where Baal was worshiped. Obediently Elijah made his way to Zarephath. Indeed, a widow was there gathering sticks, which shows us that this was a poor woman. Regardless of what Elijah may have thought, God led him to a poor Gentile widow who did not even have firewood because she was picking up scraps. This tells us that the woman had to have been extremely poor. Yet, God had commanded her to feed His prophet. This shows us how God's unseen hand often works.

This widow went out that morning to gather sticks, to feed herself and her son one last meal to prepare to die. She had no idea what was planned for her, certainly not sustaining a man of God. Yet, the Lord who never lies, spoke a solemn truth when He said "I have commanded a widow there". God had so operated upon her mind that He had already prepared her to obey. God was again using an unusual source to feed His prophet. God used a poor widow Gentile woman who had nothing herself but, perhaps, a belief in God, to show His unending power to sustain and provide.

In a nation that was required by law to care for its prophets, it's ironic that God turned to a raven (unclean bird) and a widow (a foreigner from Jezebel's home territory) to care for His prophet. God has help where we least expect it. We don't receive it because we are too proud. But God provides for us in ways that go beyond our narrow definitions and/or expectations. No matter how bitter our trials or how seemingly hopeless our situations are, we should look for God's caring touch because a simple act of faith will produce a miracle.

Faith is the step between promise and assurance. Amen!!!

Lesson aim and summary written by Glendoria P. Boyd

Lesson VII

Date: May 18, 2025

Lesson Scriptures: 1 Kings 17:17-24

Life for a Dead Boy

Lesson Aim: To teach the student that we must exercise our faith in God. We must believe that God can do all that we can ask or think according to His Word.

Open It

1. How do you respond to crises or unexpected challenges in your life?

Explore It

1. What happened to the widow's son after some time?

2. What did Elijah do with the widow's son after he died?

3. What was the result of Elijah's prayer?

4. How did the widow respond after her son was revived?

Word Study:

Belief in Divine Retribution: The widow's reaction to her son's death reflects a common cultural belief in divine retribution, where personal misfortune was often seen as a punishment for sin. She questioned Elijah, wondering if his presence had brought her sin to God's attention, resulting in her son's death. This concept highlights the ancient understanding of a direct connection between one's actions and divine consequences.

Summary: In these verses, we see once again that tragedy has fallen upon this poor widow. Her young son fell ill and finally stopped breathing. Let's not forget the happy days in the widow's home when all her provision were met. Their needs were supplied by a continuous miracle from God. Yet those happy days were covered by a dark shadow, the sickness and death of the widow's son. The death of the son was a double blow to the widow. Because, not only did she suffer as any mother who loses a child, but she suffered as one who lost her only hope for the future. This widow, as any of us, had the expectation that her son would grow up and provide for her in her old age. Now that expectation was gone.

Naturally, she questioned the man of God. This woman suffered from a guilty conscious and immediately concluded that God was punishing her for her sin by killing her son. Although, we are not told what the woman's sin was, this is a common reaction among many of us who do not know God's ways well enough when personal tragedy enters their lives (See John 9:2-3).

Even when God has done a miracle in our lives, our troubles may not be over. The famine was a terrible experience, but the worst was yet to come. God's provision is never given in order for us to rest. We are to depend on Him as each new trial faces us. Amen, somebody!!!

Elijah's prayer simply expressed his compassion for the woman who, in addition to the trials of the famine, now also had to bear this added tragedy. Because Elijah was not only implicit, but adamant and persistent in his prayer, God relieved the widow of this added burden. Often in cases of miraculous restorations and healing, God's servant places his hands on the afflicted one to indicate that the power of God flows through him to the needy person. Elijah, out of heartfelt compassion placed his whole body on the boy three times, praying that God would restore the boy's life.

Persistent in prayer is a fundamental requisite for obtaining one's petition. God miraculously restored the boy's life. This was not done because of Elijah's prayer, but because of Elijah's faith that God answered his prayer. This miracle proved to the woman that Elijah was indeed a man of God and that the Word of the Lord was indeed the truth.

This is the first example in the Bible of revival from death.

Point to remember: Our God is a living God. Our God has all power. Our obedience activates our faith and our faith is essential to pleasing God. When we respond to God with obedience and faith, God hears and answers our prayers. Amen, Somebody!!!

Lesson aim and summary written by Glendoria P. Boyd

Lesson VIII

Date: May 25, 2025

Lesson Scriptures: 1 Kings 18:1-16

The Showdown at Mt. Carmel

Lesson Aim: Students will understand the importance of faithfulness, courage, and divine providence in the context of Elijah's and Obadiah's actions.

Open It

1. How can you find the courage to confront difficult situations or people in your life?
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Explore It

1. What did the Lord instruct Elijah to do in the third year of the drought?

2. What did Obadiah do to protect the prophets of the Lord?

3. What task did Ahab give to Obadiah during the drought?

4. How did Obadiah react when he met Elijah?

Cultural Concept:

Hospitality and Respect: Obadiah's reaction to meeting Elijah, bowing down to the ground, reflects the cultural norms of hospitality and respect for religious figures. In ancient Near Eastern culture, showing deference to prophets and other religious leaders was a common practice, demonstrating reverence for their connection to the divine.

Survival During Drought: The severe drought described in the passage underscores the dependence of ancient societies on natural resources for survival. Ahab's search for grass to keep the horses and mules alive illustrates the desperate measures taken to preserve livestock and sustain life during times of environmental crisis. This cultural concept emphasizes the vulnerability of agrarian societies to natural disasters and the lengths they would go to mitigate their impact.

Summary: This chapter takes place during the reign of King Ahab in Israel. The nation is suffering from a severe drought, which Elijah had previously predicted as a judgment from God due to the people's idolatry. The passage begins with God instructing Elijah to present himself to King Ahab, as God intends to send rain upon the land. Elijah sets off to meet Ahab, and the famine in Samaria is severe. Obadiah, a devout follower of the Lord who serves as the manager of Ahab's palace, despite serving under the evil king, remains faithful to God. During Queen Jezebel's purge of the Lord's prophets, Obadiah had hidden 100 prophets in two caves, providing them with food and water. Ahab instructs Obadiah to search the land for springs and valleys where grass might still grow, in hopes of finding enough food to keep the king's horses and mules alive. They decide to split up, with Ahab going in one direction and Obadiah in another. As Obadiah is searching, he encounters Elijah. Recognizing him, Obadiah bows down and asks if it is indeed Elijah, calling him "my lord." Obadiah expresses fear about delivering Elijah's message to Ahab. He worries that if he reports Elijah's presence and Elijah is taken away by the Spirit of the Lord, Ahab will kill him. Despite Obadiah's faithful service to the Lord, he fears the repercussions of Ahab's anger. Elijah reassures Obadiah that he will indeed present himself to Ahab that very day. Elijah swears by the Lord Almighty that he will show himself to Ahab. Encouraged by Elijah's promise, Obadiah goes to inform Ahab of Elijah's presence. Ahab sets out to meet Elijah, leading to the next part of the story where Elijah confronts the prophets of Baal.

Obadiah's faithfulness in protecting the prophets despite the danger and Elijah's courage to confront Ahab both exemplify his commitment to God's will. God's instruction to Elijah and the eventual promise of rain demonstrates God's control over natural events and His provision for His people. The narrative sets the stage for the confrontation between Elijah (representing faithfulness to God) and the prophets of Baal (representing idolatry and rebellion against God). This conflict underscores the theme of spiritual warfare and the need for steadfast faith. These verses set the stage for the dramatic showdown on Mount Carmel, where God's power is vividly demonstrated through Elijah's challenge to the prophets of Baal. The story serves as a reminder of the importance of remaining faithful to God, even in challenging circumstances.

The story of Elijah and Obadiah during a time of severe drought serves as a powerful reminder for Christians today of the importance of faithfulness, courage, and reliance on divine providence. Just as Elijah remained steadfast in his mission and Obadiah courageously protected the prophets, Christians are called to uphold their faith and stand for what is right, even in challenging and hostile environments. This passage underscores that God's guidance and provision are ever-present, encouraging believers to trust in His plans and act with integrity and conviction. In contemporary times, this narrative inspires Christians to remain committed to their principles, advocate for justice, and rely on God's unwavering support in the face of adversity.

Lesson aim and summary written by Victor Kirkpatrick

Lesson IX

Date: June 1, 2025

Lesson Scriptures: 1 Kings 18:17-24

The Purpose of the Showdown

Lesson Aim: The student will understand the importance of choosing to serve the one true God, the significance of standing firm in faith, and the consequences of wavering between conflicting beliefs.

Open It

1. How can you stand firm in your faith and beliefs when faced with opposition or criticism?

Explore It

1. What did Ahab call Elijah when he saw him?

2. What challenge did Elijah propose to Ahab?

3. How did Ahab respond to Elijah's challenge?

4. What question did Elijah ask the people of Israel on Mount Carmel?

Cultural Concept:

Religious Syncretism and Idolatry: The passage highlights the issue of religious syncretism, where the Israelites were wavering between worshiping the Lord and following Baal. This reflects the cultural challenge of maintaining exclusive devotion to Yahweh amidst the influence of surrounding Canaanite religions and their deities. The confrontation on Mount Carmel was a decisive moment to address this syncretism and reaffirm the worship of the true God.

Summary: When Ahab sees Elijah, he accuses him of being a troublemaker in Israel. Elijah responds by stating that it is Ahab and his family who are causing trouble by abandoning the Lord's commandments and following Baal. Elijah challenges Ahab to gather all the people of Israel, along with the 450 prophets of Baal and the 400 prophets of Asherah, who are supported by Queen Jezebel, to Mount Carmel. Ahab agrees and sends out a message to all the people of Israel to gather at Mount Carmel. When the people have assembled, Elijah addresses them, asking how long they will waver between two opinions. He challenges them to decide whether the Lord is God or if Baal is God. Seeing that the people are silent, Elijah states that he is the only prophet of the Lord left, while Baal has 450 prophets. Elijah proposes a contest to determine the true God. He asks for two bulls: one for himself and one for the prophets of Baal. They will each prepare an altar and place their bull on it without setting fire to it. The prophets of Baal will call on their god, and Elijah will call on the Lord. The god who answers by setting the altar on fire will be the true God. The people agree to this plan.

Elijah's actions illustrate a pivotal moment where he challenges the Israelites to reaffirm their faith in the Lord and reject idolatry. This passage underscores the importance of recognizing and worshipping the one true God, rather than being swayed by false idols or societal pressures. Elijah's boldness in confronting Ahab and the false prophets demonstrates the necessity of standing firm in one's faith, even in the face of overwhelming opposition. This story serves as a powerful reminder for Christians to remain steadfast in their commitment to God, to seek His truth, and to boldly proclaim their faith. It highlights the importance of choosing whom to serve and the consequences of wavering between conflicting beliefs.

In the same way Elijah challenged the Israelites to choose the Lord over Baal, modern Christians are called to prioritize their faith in God over worldly choices, be it political affiliations or societal pressures, reaffirming their commitment to divine principles.

Lesson aim and summary written by Victor Kirkpatrick

Lesson X

Date: June 8, 2025

Lesson Scriptures: 1 Kings 18:25-30

The Revival on Top of Mt. Carmel Part 1

Lesson Aim: Students will analyze the confrontation between Elijah and the prophets of Baal in 1 Kings 18:17-24, understanding the importance of choosing the one true God over false idols.

Open It

1. How do you maintain persistence in your faith, especially when you don't see immediate results?
-

Explore It

1. What did Elijah instruct the prophets of Baal to do first?
-

2. How did the prophets of Baal try to get a response from their god?
-

3. What was Elijah's reaction to the prophets of Baal's efforts at noon?
-

4. What did Elijah do after the prophets of Baal failed to get a response?
-

Cultural Concept:

Baal Worship

Baal was a major deity in Canaanite religion, often associated with fertility, rain, and storms. The prophets of Baal performed rituals, including loud prayers, dancing, and self-mutilation, to invoke their god's power. These practices reflect the intense devotion and desperation of Baal's followers to elicit a response from their deity.

Summary: Elijah confronts King Ahab, who accuses him of causing trouble in Israel. Elijah boldly points out that it is Ahab and his family who have brought trouble by abandoning the Lord's commands and worshipping Baal. Ahab calls Elijah the “troubler of Israel.” Elijah counters by clarifying that the true cause of Israel's troubles is Ahab’s abandonment of the Lord's commandments and his following of Baal. Elijah challenges Ahab to gather all Israel, along with the prophets of Baal and Asherah, at Mount Carmel. This sets the stage for a public confrontation between Elijah and the false prophets, aiming to demonstrate the power of the true God. Elijah addresses the assembled people of Israel, urging them to stop wavering between two opinions and to decide whether the Lord is God or if Baal is God. Seeing the people's hesitation, Elijah underscores that he is the only remaining prophet of the Lord, while Baal has 450 prophets. Elijah proposes a contest to reveal the true God. Each side will prepare a bull on an altar without setting fire to it. The prophets of Baal will call on their god, and Elijah will call on the Lord. The god who answers by setting the altar on fire will be acknowledged as the true God. The people agree to this challenge.

Consider the modern issue of prosperity theology, which teaches that financial blessing and physical well-being are always the will of God for Christians. Many Christian leaders confront this doctrine by emphasizing biblical teachings on suffering, contentment, and the true nature of God's blessings. They draw parallels to passages like 1 Timothy 6:10, which warns against the love of money, and James 1:2-4, which speaks to the value of trials in producing perseverance and maturity. In both cases, the key response involves a return to biblical truth, a call for discernment, and a bold stand against teachings that distort the gospel. This reflects the spirit of Elijah’s challenge to the prophets of Baal and the people of Israel.

Lesson aim and summary written by Victor Kirkpatrick

Lesson XI

Date: June 15, 2025

Lesson Scriptures: 1 Kings 18:31-40

The Revival on Top of Mt. Carmel Part 2

Lesson Aim: Students will gain insights into the importance of faith, obedience, and the rejection of false beliefs in their own spiritual lives

Open It

1. In what ways can you renew your commitment to God, similar to how Elijah rebuilt the altar with twelve stones representing the tribes of Israel?
-

Explore It

1. How many stones did Elijah use to build the altar, and what did they represent?
-

2. What did Elijah do after building the altar with the stones?
-

3. What happened after Elijah prayed to God?
-

Cultural Context:

Water as a Symbol of Purity and Sacrifice

Elijah's command to pour water on the altar and the sacrifice (verses 33-35) is culturally significant. Water was a precious resource, especially during a drought, and using it in this manner emphasized the sincerity and seriousness of the sacrifice. It also demonstrated Elijah's faith in God's power to overcome natural elements, as the water-soaked altar would make it even more miraculous when God sent fire to consume the offering.

Summary: These verses describe the climax of the confrontation between Elijah and the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel. Elijah's goal is to demonstrate the power of the Lord and expose the impotence of the false god Baal. Elijah takes twelve stones, representing the twelve tribes of Israel, and uses them to rebuild the altar of the Lord, which had been torn down. This act symbolizes the restoration of true worship and the unity of God's people. Elijah prepares the altar by arranging the wood, cutting the bull into pieces, and placing it on the wood. He then instructs the people to fill four large jars with water and pour it over the offering and the wood. This is repeated three times until the water runs down around the altar and fills the trench, he dug around it. This dramatic act emphasizes the impossibility of lighting the fire by natural means and sets the stage for a miraculous demonstration of God's power. At the time of the evening sacrifice, Elijah prays to the Lord, addressing Him as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel. He asks God to let it be known that He is the true God in Israel, that Elijah is His servant, and that everything Elijah has done is at God's command. Elijah prays for God to answer him so that the people may know that the Lord is God and that He is turning their hearts back to Him. The Lord responds to Elijah's prayer by sending fire from heaven, which consumes the burnt offering, the wood, the stones, the soil, and even the water in the trench. This miraculous event demonstrates God's power and confirms His supremacy over Baal. When the people see the fire of the Lord, they fall prostrate and declare, "The Lord, he is God! The Lord, he is God!" This confession shows their recognition of the true God and their repentance from following false gods. Elijah orders the people to seize the prophets of Baal. They are taken to the Kishon Valley and put to death, thus eliminating the influence of false prophets and their teachings in Israel.

1 Kings 18:31-40 can be seen as a powerful allegory for modern Christianity's struggle against false religions and doctrines. Here are some key points of comparison:

1. Restoration of True Worship: Just as Elijah rebuilt the altar and restored true worship, Christians today are called to restore and maintain the purity of their faith. This involves returning to the foundational truths of Scripture and rejecting practices or beliefs that compromise the gospel.
2. Faith and Obedience: Elijah's actions and prayer were rooted in his unwavering faith in God and obedience to His commands. Similarly, Christians are encouraged to rely on God's power and remain obedient to His word, even when facing opposition or seemingly insurmountable challenges.
3. Discernment of True and False Teachings: The miraculous demonstration of God's power through fire from heaven clearly distinguished the true God from the false god Baal. In contemporary Christianity, believers are called to discern between true and false teachings, using the Bible as their ultimate standard of truth.
4. Rejection of False Prophets: Elijah's command to seize and eliminate the prophets of Baal represents the necessity of rejecting and removing false teachers and doctrines from the Christian community. This is echoed in New Testament warnings against false prophets and teachers who lead believers astray (e.g., Matthew 7:15, 2 Peter 2:1).
5. Public Confession and Repentance: The people's declaration of "The Lord, he is God!" signifies their public confession and repentance. Modern Christians are likewise called to publicly affirm their faith in God and repent from any false beliefs or practices. In today's world, Christians face numerous challenges from secular ideologies, false religions, and distorted doctrines that seek to undermine biblical truth. The story of Elijah on Mount Carmel serves as a timeless reminder of the importance of steadfast faith, clear discernment, and courageous action in defending the true gospel. It encourages believers to be vigilant in their faith, to actively seek God's guidance, and to stand firm against any teachings that deviate from the core message of Christianity.

Lesson aim and summary written by Victor Kirkpatrick

Lesson XII

Date: June 22, 2025

Lesson Scriptures: 1 Kings 18:41-46

The Power of the Living God

Lesson Aim: This week the student will learn about the marvelous workings of the True and Living God.

Open It

1. How can you demonstrate perseverance in prayer, similar to Elijah's persistence in praying for rain?
-

Explore It

1. Where did Elijah go after speaking to Ahab, and what did he do there?

2. How many times did Elijah tell his servant to look toward the sea?

3. What did the servant see on the seventh time he looked toward the sea?

4. What happened after the servant saw the cloud and Elijah gave the instructions to Ahab?

Physical Posture in Prayer

Elijah's posture during prayer—bending down to the ground with his face between his knees (verse 42)—reflects the intensity and humility of his supplication. In ancient Near Eastern cultures, physical posture in prayer often conveyed the seriousness and earnestness of the petition. This posture demonstrated Elijah's deep dependence on God and his fervent desire for God's intervention.

Summary: This week's lesson focuses on the marvelous working of the LORD through the prophet Elijah. In verse 41, "And Elijah said to Ahab, "Go, eat and drink, for there is the sound of a heavy rain." Recall that the LORD sent word to King Ahab by the lips of the prophet Elijah that there will be no more rain in the land for the next few years. This was a result of the idolatrous worship of Baal and of the Asherah pole and his marriage to Jezebel daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians (1 Kings 16:30-33). In this section of scriptures, all of the prophets of Baal were slaughtered by the people of the Most High God. The wicked king Ahab was given instructions from Elijah to eat, drink, and to anticipate heavy rain in the land. In the opening verse of this chapter, we read that all the people in the land did not experience any rain. Elijah climbed to the top of Mount Carmel, and bent down to the ground and prayed to the LORD. After he prayed, Elijah instructed his servant to go and look towards the sea and report back to him. This transaction occurred seven times. On the seventh time, the servant reported, "And it came to pass at the seventh time, that he said, Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand. And he said, "Go up, say unto Ahab, Prepare *thy chariot*, and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not." The LORD made good on his word, and the land experienced a great rain. This chapter ends with the writer writing in verse 46, "And the hand of the LORD was on Elijah; and he girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel." It is by the hand of the Almighty God that we experience his marvelous workings.

This portion of scripture teaches at least three biblical principles. The first biblical principle presented in this lesson is that God's word is trustworthy. The second biblical principle is that the All-Powerful God will judge sin. The third biblical principle is that the LORD's great workings are unmatched.

Lesson aim and summary written by Joseph Ellzey Jr., PhD

Lesson XIII

Date: June 29, 2025

Lesson Scriptures: 1 Kings 19:1-8

Elijah Threaten by Jezebel

Lesson Aim: This week the student will learn that the learn will fight out battles.

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Open It

1. How do you handle fear and anxiety when faced with threats or overwhelming situations?

Explore It

1. What did Jezebel threaten to do to Elijah after hearing about the prophets of Baal?

2. How did Elijah react to Jezebel's threat?

3. What did the angel of the Lord say to Elijah the second time?

4. How long did Elijah travel after being strengthened by the food provided by the angel?

Cultural Concept:

Fear of Retribution

In ancient Near Eastern cultures, rulers like Jezebel wielded significant power and could swiftly punish those who opposed them. When Jezebel threatened Elijah's life (verse 2), it reflected the real and immediate danger prophets faced when challenging royal authority. Elijah's fear and subsequent flight (verse 3) highlight the precarious position of prophets who spoke against powerful leaders.

Summary: At the beginning of chapter 19, the student discovered that Jezebel had vowed to kill the prophet, Elijah. The writer writes in verse 2, “Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let the gods do *to me*, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time.” This threat caused the prophet to run away in fear of his life. He ended up in Beersheba, which belonged to Judah, but left his servant there. From there, he went on a day’s journey into the wilderness and sat down under a juniper tree. The prophet made a request to the LORD that he might die because he was overwhelmed with the persecution that awaited him by the hands of Jezebel. At this point, there is a shift in the text. The writer writes in verse 5, “And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise *and* eat.” Elijah was awakened by an angel as he slept under the Juniper tree. He was instructed to arise and eat. There was bread baked over some hot coals, and a jar of water. The prophet ate, drank, and laid down again. The writer writes in verse 7, “And the angel of the LORD came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise *and* eat; because the journey *is* too great for thee.” Elijah was strengthened by the touch of the angel of the LORD and arose and ate and drank again. He was instructed by the angel of the LORD to eat and drink because the journey was too much for him to handle with his own might and strength. Elijah was obedient to the angel of the LORD by travelling forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God. There he went into a cave and spent the night.

This portion of scripture teaches at least three biblical principles. The first biblical principle presented in this lesson is that God is our refuge in the time of trouble. The second biblical principle is that the LORD will never leave us nor forsake us. The third biblical principle is that it is not by might, nor by power, but the LORD’s spirit that gives us the power to overcome any difficult situation.

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Cover Graphic Design: Dale Allen, D.Min

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