

THE CHURCH IN NEW YORK CITY

CHILDREN'S MEETING LESSON

LESSON #1

DATE: March 29, 2020

SUBJECT: PROPHETS AND KINGS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT: Elijah (1 of 4)—A Man of God Fed By Ravens and A Widow

SCRIPTURE: 1 Kings 16:29-33; 17:1-16

AIM: To show the children that as we love the Lord and take care of His need, He will take care of all of our needs.

SUGGESTED MEMORY VERSES: Matthew 6:8b (...for your Father knows the things that you have need of before you ask Him.); Matthew 6:33 (But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.); 1 Peter 5:7 (Casting all your anxiety on Him because it matters to Him concerning you.)

SUGGESTED SONGS: 172 (Why Worry When You Can Pray?); 176 (God Uses Helpers); 4610—BSS Matthew Vol. 1 Song #19 (My Father Knows Before I Ask); 2201—BSS Matthew Vol. 2 Song #5 (Every Little Hair); 148 (My Precious Lord—I Don't Want to Grieve My Lord Anymore); 2811 (God is so Good); 1614 (COOPERATION); 4611 (My God is So Great); 4612 (My God is There, Controlling); 6732 (Trust and Obey)

CRAFT IDEA: (1) Make origami ravens bringing bread and meat (3) Use an old, clean sock and glue on googly eyes and construction paper wings for flapping.

BACKGROUND: *Note to serving ones:* This Background is included as an introduction to the Prophets and Kings series which will start with Elijah and end with Jonah. It is mainly for use as a reference to help the serving ones. However, for older children, some of the details are interesting and able to be absorbed. Please pray and consider how much detail to cover for both the Background and the Content. For younger children, we can omit some details.

Many years after the children of Israel inherited the good land, they asked for a king to reign over them, rejecting Jehovah from being their King (1 Samuel 8:7). Even though Samuel the priest warned them about what the king would be like—one who would take many things away from them and make them his slaves—the children of Israel refused to listen and insisted on having a king like the other nations. God firstly gave them Saul as a king, then David, and then David's son, Solomon. King Solomon loved the Lord very much, but when he became old, his many foreign wives turned his heart to go after other gods (1 Kings 11:1-8). God became angry at Solomon's idolatry and determined to tear the kingdom away from him (1 Kings 11:9-13). For his father David's sake, however, God did not do this in Solomon's days, but did it in the days of his son, Rehoboam. God eventually took ten tribes away from Rehoboam. Now, sadly, the kingdom was divided into two parts. The ten tribes in the north took Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, as their king. This northern kingdom was called **Israel**. Two tribes in the south, Judah and Benjamin, took the southern part of the kingdom, which was called **Judah**.

The ten tribes in the northern kingdom, Israel did not keep the first commandment of God. Do you remember what the first commandment is? (Exodus 20:3 *You shall have no other gods before Me.*) Even though God loved the people of Israel and did so many wonderful and amazing things for them, they began to worship idols. To make matters worse, Jeroboam did a very evil thing and set up two calves of gold for his people to worship (1 King 12:28-31). Because of this, the Lord caused the house of Jeroboam to be destroyed as well as the house of Jeroboam's successor, Baasha (1 Kings 13:33-34).

During this period of time when the people of Israel turned away from God and rejected Him, the Lord raised up prophets to speak for Him and warn His people. A prophet is a person who speaks for God. A prophet loves God and lives before God every day. **God speaks to him** by putting His Spirit upon him and **he speaks for God**. A prophet knows God's heart's desire and brings God's people back to God and His will. In today's lesson and the next few lessons, we will hear about Elijah, who was one of the prophets who spoke for God. After we learn about Elijah, we will learn about more prophets God sent to help and warn His people.

CONTENT: King Ahab Was More Evil Than All The Kings Before Him (1 Kings 16:30-33). During the time that Elijah lived, there was a very evil king named Ahab. Ahab did not care for God at all. He continued to walk in the sins of Jeroboam and seemed to think it did not matter. On top of all this, he married an extremely cruel and evil woman named Jezebel, a princess from an idol-worshipping people, who led God's people to worship idols. Jezebel eventually tried to murder those who were faithful to God. King Ahab himself served and worshipped a false god Baal.

He even built a place for Baal and set up an altar to worship the false god. King Ahab also caused all the children of Israel to commit the sin of idolatry. He did many, many other evil things. King Ahab was so evil that the Bible tells us that “Ahab did more to provoke Jehovah the God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel who had been before him” (1 Kings 16:33b).

Elijah the Prophet Warning Ahab (1 Kings 17:1). The Lord still loved His people even though it so grieved Him when they worshipped and served idols. So God sent Elijah the prophet to deal with Ahab. Elijah boldly told the evil Ahab, warning him, “As Jehovah the God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain during these years, except by my word.” As it turned out, and according to Jehovah’s word through His prophet Elijah, it would not rain in the land for three years and six months (James 5:17).

God Provides Elijah with Water and Food (1 Kings 17:2-7). During this long period that it did not rain, what would happen to Elijah? The Lord cared for His prophet. The Lord told Elijah to go and hide by the brook of Cherith. Elijah could drink from the brook. The Lord also commanded ravens [*large, black* birds] to feed Elijah. Ravens would bring him bread and meat in the morning and again in the evening. But after a while the brook dried up because there had been no rain in the land.

God Sending Elijah to a Widow to Feed Him (1 Kings 17: 8-16). Even though the brook was now dried up, the Lord still continued to care for His faithful prophet. Jehovah spoke to Elijah, “Rise up and go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and stay there. I have just commanded a widow there to keep you fed.” So Elijah went to Zarephath and when he came to the entrance of the city, a widow was there gathering sticks. He called to her and said, “I beg you, bring me a little water in a vessel, that I may drink.” And she went to get it. Then he called to her and said, “I beg you, bring me a piece of bread in your hand.” She answered, “As Jehovah your God lives, I have nothing baked, but only a handful of meal in a barrel and a little oil in a jar; and I am now gathering a few sticks that I may go and prepare it for me and my son, that we may eat it and die.” Elijah said to her, “Do not fear. Go, do as you have said. But make me a little cake out of it first, and bring it out to me; then make something for yourself and for your son afterward.” God had told Elijah that the barrel of meal and the jar of oil would not run out, even though the widow would keep using them! According to God’s word, the widow and Elijah and the widow’s household ate for many days.

SUGGESTED APPLICATIONS TO CHOOSE FROM: *Note to serving ones: It is not intended that we cover all the suggested applications, but based on prayer and fellowship, and the children’s response, allow the Lord to lead us regarding which applications to cover.*

- **God needed someone to speak for Him in this difficult time for His people.** Elijah was a man of God and a man of faith who loved the Lord very much. Elijah knew God’s Word, and that God’s heart was to turn his people back to Him and away from the idols. He boldly opposed the idolatry of the kingdom of Israel. He went before King Ahab to speak for God despite the danger to his life, and despite the ramifications. Elijah took care of God’s need to help and warn His people; thus God took care of Elijah’s need to protect him, give water to him and to feed him for three years and six months it did not rain.
- **The Lord continually and abundantly provides for His servants’ needs.** In Elijah’s case, God Himself firstly sent ravens to give Elijah water, bread and meat. When the brook dried up, God then used a Gentile widow in Sidon to take care of Elijah’s need for water and food. The Lord blessed the widow for taking care of Elijah. He not only provided for faithful Elijah but also for the widow and her son for many days.
- **Trust, Obey and be Willing and Generous.** Elijah trusted God because He knew God’s word and His faithfulness. The widow obeyed Elijah and in turn obeyed Jehovah. At first she did not think she would have enough for herself and her son, but she did not question him or complain. Due to her willingness and generosity, she was able to feed Elijah and her family for the pot of meal and jar of oil did not run out. Today, at this time, God still has a need. He is looking for some to be just like Elijah. May we all learn to be like Elijah, *i.e.*, to love Him and to boldly and unashamedly speak for Him. Then we will all see how much the Lord can take care of us and provide everything that we need.

Adapted from the Church in New York City Children’s meeting lesson 07/30/89; 4/14/96; 4/11/2004; 4/11/2010; 4/5/2015