THE CHURCH IN NEW YORK CITY

**CHILDREN’S MEETING LESSON**

**LESSON #4**

**DATE:** April 19, 2020

**SUBJECT: PROPHETS AND KINGS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT: Elijah (4 of 4)—The Rapture of Elijah and the Succession of Elisha**

**SCRIPTURE:** 2 Kings 2:1-25; 1 Kings 19:19-21

**AIM:** To encourage the children to respect the servants of the Lord. When they do so, they will eventually obtain the blessing from Him.

**SUGGESTED MEMORY VERSES:** Hebrews 13:7 (Remember the ones leading you, who have spoken to you the word of God; and considering the issue of their manner of life, imitate their faith.); Hebrews 13:17 (Obey the ones leading you and submit to *them,* for they watch over your souls as those who will render an account, that they may do this with joy and not groaning; for this would be unprofitable to you.); Galatians 6:7 (Do not be deceived: God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.); 2 Timothy 3:14 (But you, continue in the things which you have learned and have been assured of, knowing from which ones you have learned them); 2 Kings 2:2m (…And Elisha said, As Jehovah lives and as your soul lives, I will not leave you…); Romans 13:1 (Let every person be subject to the authorities over him, for there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are ordained by God.); Titus 3:1 (Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready unto every good work,)

**SUGGESTED SONGS:** 3722 (Jesus, I am Listening); 9219 BSS David, Song 19 (I’d Like to Honor You); 5502 (People of the Lord); 7603 (We Love to Please); 9535 Vessels Unto Honor, Song 15 (second stanza only – When I Hear My Mother Call, I Hop, Skip, Jump to Her); 9204 *BSS David Song 4* (Honor, Honor, Honor); 2829 (Honor and Respect for Authority); 9528 *BSS Vessels Unto Honor Song #8* (There’s a Reason for the Rule); 3104 (He is the King of Kings)

**BACKGROUND: *Note to Serving Ones:*** *This Background is meant to be informative for the serving ones so that they have an understanding of the context. It is not intended to be taught to the children as part of the lesson, though for older children, serving ones may consider whether it is appropriate to mention some matters concerning what happened to Ahab to show God’s righteousness and mercy. The story for the children begins with the Content section below on Elijah and Elisha.*

We saw in prior lessons that King Ahab and his wife Jezebel were extremely evil, and caused the people of God to worship idols. God is merciful, yet He is also righteous and severe.

# Ahab Taking Naboth’s Vineyard by Force (1 Kings 21:1-29). Ahab unjustly took the vineyard of a man named Naboth. Naboth had a vineyard close to Ahab’s residence in Jezreel, alongside the palace of Ahab. Coveting this vineyard, Ahab told Naboth to give it to him that he might have it for a vegetable garden. Naboth, not afraid of the king, refused to give the inheritance of his fathers to Ahab (vv. 1-4). In verses 5 through 16 we read of Jezebel’s evil plot to get rid of Naboth through the elders and nobles and to take possession of his inheritance. Jehovah sent Elijah to condemn Ahab, saying that because of the evil he did to Naboth, in the place where the dogs licked up the blood of Naboth, the dogs would lick up Ahab’s blood also (vv. 17-19). Elijah went on to tell Ahab that all his posterity would be cut off and that the dogs and birds would eat them because Ahab had sold himself to do what was evil in the sight of Jehovah through Jezebel’s inciting (vv. 20-26). Ahab repented and humbled himself before God. Because of this, God said that He would not bring the evil upon him in his days but would bring the evil upon his house in his son’s days (vv. 27-29). Here we see that to some extent God was merciful even to such a man as Ahab.

# Ahab’s Death (1 Kings 22:1-40). Ahab died a severe death. After three years of peace between Syria and Israel, Ahab wanted to fight against the king of Syria for Ramoth-gilead. Regarding this, the king of Judah, Jehoshaphat, was in alliance with Ahab (vv. 1-4). Jehoshaphat proposed to Ahab that they ask for the word of Jehovah (v. 5). Ahab assembled about four hundred prophets and asked them if he should go against Ramoth-gilead to battle or refrain. These false prophets lied to him, saying that he should go ahead and that God would deliver the city into his hand. However, Micaiah, a real prophet of God, prophesied that all Israel would be scattered upon the mountains, like sheep that have no shepherd, and told Ahab that Jehovah had put a lying spirit into his prophets and had spoken evil concerning him. Instead of believing the real prophet, Ahab imprisoned Micaiah, the prophet who told the truth (vv. 6-28). Ahab and Jehoshaphat king of Judah went into battle. Ahab disguised himself so that others would not recognize him, but he was still defeated and killed in the battle (vv. 29-36). Ahab could hide from people, but he could not hide from God, who saw where he was and what he was doing. Nothing can be hidden from the eyes of God. Ahab was buried in Samaria. Someone washed Ahab’s blood from his chariot in the pool of Samaria, and the dogs licked his blood, according to what God had spoken (vv. 37-40a). The way God dealt with Ahab shows how righteous and how merciful He is. On the one hand, God is kind; on the other hand, He is severe. We need to fear Him and to be serious with Him. We also need to be ready to reap what we have sown.

# CONTENT: In the whole Bible, only two named persons, Enoch and Elijah, did not die but were “taken up” or raptured by God. In the past few weeks, we have been learning about the second one, the prophet Elijah. Also in today’s lesson, we will see another faithful prophet who continued the work of Elijah in speaking for God to His people, the prophet Elisha.

**Jehovah’s commission to Elijah - Finding Elisha to replace Elijah. (1 Kings 19:19-21)** On the mountain, Jehovah spoke to Elijah, commissioning him to find his successor, Elisha. Elijah left the mountain and found Elisha, who was plowing the field with twelve yokes of oxen. When Elijah put his mantle upon Elisha, he left the oxen and ran after Elijah. Elisha asked to kiss father and mother goodbye first and then then he would follow Elijah. When Elisha returned, he prepared the oxen for the people to eat. Elisha rose up and went with Elijah and ministered to him.

# The Rapture of Elijah (2 Kings 2:1-18). When Jehovah was about to take up Elijah by a whirlwind into heaven, Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal. And Elijah said to Elisha, “Stay here, for Jehovah has sent me as far as Bethel.” And Elisha said, “As Jehovah lives and as your soul lives, I will not leave you.” So they went down to Bethel. Then the sons of the prophets who were in Bethel came out to Elisha and said to him, “Do you know that Jehovah will take away your master from over your head today?” And he said, “I too know it; be silent.” And Elijah said to him, “Elisha, stay here, for Jehovah has sent me to Jericho.” And he said, “As Jehovah lives and as your soul lives, I will not leave you.” And they came to Jericho. And the sons of the prophets who were at Jericho approached Elisha and said to him, “Do you know that Jehovah will take away your master from over your head today?” And he said, “I too know it; be silent.” And Elijah said to him, “Stay here, for Jehovah has sent me to the Jordan.” And he said, “As Jehovah lives and as your soul lives, I will not leave you.” So the two of them went on. And fifty men from the sons of the prophets went and stood opposite them at a distance, while the two of them stood by the Jordan. And Elijah took his mantle and wrapped it together and struck the water; and it parted to this side and that, so that the two of them crossed over on dry ground.

And when they had crossed over, Elijah said to Elisha, **“Ask what I should do for you before I am taken from you**.**”** And Elisha said, **“Let a double portion of your spirit be upon me.”** And he said, “You have asked a hard thing. If you see me when I am taken from you, so will it be to you; but if not, it will not be so.”

And as they went on and talked, **suddenly a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared;** and they separated the two of them. **And Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.** And Elisha saw it and cried, “My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and its horsemen!” And he did not see him anymore. And he grasped his clothes and tore them in two pieces. And he picked up Elijah's mantle, which had fallen from him, and returned and stood by the bank of the Jordan. And he took Elijah's mantle, which had fallen from him, and struck the water and said, “Where is Jehovah, the God of Elijah?” And when he also struck the water, it parted to this side and that, and Elisha crossed over.

And when the sons of the prophets who were at Jericho opposite him saw him, they said, **“The spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha.”** And they came to meet him and bowed themselves to the ground before him. And they said to him, “Here with your servants are fifty strong men; let them go and seek your master, lest the Spirit of Jehovah has taken him up and cast him upon some mountain or into some valley.” And he said, “You shall not send them.” But when they urged him until he was ashamed, he said, “Send them.” So they sent fifty men, who searched for three days but did not find him. And they returned to him while he stayed at Jericho; and he said to them, “Did I not say to you, Do not go?”

**Cursing the Mocking Boys (2 Kings 2:23-25).** Elishawent up from Jericho to Bethel. And as he was going up on the way, some little boys came out from the city and mocked him and said to him, “Go up, baldhead; go up, baldhead.” And he turned around and looked at them and cursed them in the name of Jehovah. (This doesn’t mean that Elisha used a curse word. This kind of curse means that Elisha expressed a righteous anger.) Then two female bears came out of the woods and tore up forty-two children among them. And he went from there to Mount Carmel, and from there he returned to Samaria.

**Note to serving ones:** It may be wise to summarize this portion without the graphic details and simply tell the children

that there are consequences and severe punishment for our actions if we mock, bully or tease someone.

**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.*

* **It is a blessing to follow those whom God appointed over us.** Elisha determinedly and unwaveringly followed Elijah and was eventually rewarded with a double portion of Elijah’s spirit. If we follow older, trusted ones in such a way, we also will eventually receive the blessing. Even Elisha’s parents obeyed Jehovah by releasing their son from his responsibilities in the field to follow Elijah, the prophet.
* **We need to respect and honor the servants of God.** Anyone sent by God to help us is a servant of God, including parents, grandparents, teachers, leading ones, serving ones, etc. As children, we should show respect to them as they usually give us the help that we need. We should not join in with our friends if they mock older ones. There are consequences to such actions. We need to be careful in our speaking, attitude, and demeanor to older ones. We not only risk forfeiting the blessing but also must realize that the consequences to such actions may be severe.
* **Respecting God’s authority on the earth.** In order for us to live a peaceful life on the earth, God has established human government to rule over mankind, including prime ministers, kings, queens, presidents, governors, mayors, police officers, sheriffs, judges, chancellors, superintendents, principals, teachers and military forces. We need to respect the laws and mandates of our human government who represent God’s authority on the earth today.
* **We should not mock, tease, bully or make fun of others.** Some little boys mocked God’s servant Elisha by calling him “baldhead.” We should be sober and not make fun of others, especially for the way God made them. God made each person in a special way and we are all unique. When bullied, or picked on, or called “teacher’s pet” or “shorty”, it makes the person upset inside. Sometimes there are consequences for such behavior.

Adapted from the Church in New York City Children’s Meeting lessons: 4/13/80; 8/6/89; 4/28/96; 4/25/04; 5/2/10; 4/26/15