

LESSON 64

Elijah Is Taken Up to Heaven

2 KINGS 2:1-15



BIBLE TRUTH

ELISHA TAKES ELIJAH'S PLACE AS GOD'S PROPHET TO CARRY ON THE WORK

LESSON SNAPSHOT

- 1. OPENING REVIEW** **5 MIN**
Use last week's lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.
- 2. BIBLE STORY** **10 MIN**
Read 2 Kings 2:1–15 from the Scriptures or read story 64, "Elijah Is Taken Up to Heaven," from *The Gospel Story Bible*.
- 3. OBJECT LESSON 1** **10 MIN**
Dividing the Water
SUPPLIES:
- ✓ two sixteen-pound bags of ice
 - ✓ a plastic drop cloth
 - ✓ a clean trash can
- 4. TEACHING/DISCUSSION** **10 MIN**
- 5. OBJECT LESSON 2** **10 MIN**
An Ordinary Man
SUPPLIES:
- ✓ whiteboard and dry-erase marker
- 6. SWORD BIBLE MEMORY** **5 MIN**
- 7. ACTIVITY TIME** **15 MIN**
Elijah's Last Days
SUPPLIES:
- ✓ colored pencils, crayons, and paper
- 8. CLOSING PRAYER** **5 MIN**
- 9. BONUS OBJECT LESSON** **10 MIN**
A Double Portion
SUPPLIES:
- ✓ individually wrapped chocolate candy
 - ✓ a bag of simple rocks (not decorative stones)

TOTAL 80 MIN

PREPARING TO TEACH

TEACHING POINTS

God’s announces his plan—God takes Elijah up into heaven. The “sons of the prophets” (2 Kings 2:3) are students in a kind of school where they are learning from prophets of God. It seems that God has told others who are gifted as prophets that he is about to take Elijah away. The students are excited about this and tell Elisha, but Elisha doesn’t want to talk about it.

In these verses, we see Elisha’s loyalty and love toward Elijah. Twice, Elijah tries to go on alone, but Elisha insists on going with him. It may be that Elijah is trying to spare Elisha the pain of watching his master leave. But there is a reward for Elisha’s persistence, and perhaps this reward is what Elijah had in mind all along.

God grants Elisha’s request—Elisha is faithful to Elijah. He is also passionate about the work that Elijah does as a prophet of God. So when Elijah offers to do something for him before he leaves, Elisha requests a double portion of Elijah’s spirit.

Elijah leaves the younger man’s request up to the Lord knowing that only God could grant it. But God does grant Elisha’s request, and Elijah’s cloak being left behind symbolizes that his power has been given to Elisha. Still, Elisha knows that the cloak is not magic. He knows that all power comes from God. This is why he cries out to the Lord when he strikes the water with the cloak.

God’s mission continues—God’s mission does not depend on particular individuals. It depends on the power of his Spirit working by grace through those whom he chooses. This is why we can be sure that God’s mission will never fail because it depends on God not on us. When Elijah is taken away, God continues working through Elisha as well as through others.

In the Old Testament, God’s mission was to prepare the way for Jesus. Now that Jesus has come and died for the sins of the world, God continues working today through everyone whom he has saved. But now God’s mission is to spread the good news of the gospel.

A LITTLE BIT MORE

Double portion

In Deuteronomy 21:17, a double portion of inheritance is reserved for the firstborn son. This extra measure is designed to make a statement. Elkanah gave a double portion of food to

Hannah, the mother of Samuel, because he loved her and she was barren. God promises a double portion to his people in Isaiah. To give a double portion is to bestow honor. Elisha was very bold to request a double portion of the spirit of Elijah (2 Kings 2:9). In effect he was saying that he wanted special favor from God. Elijah was not free to grant Elisha's request but spelled out the conditions for God to either meet or deny.

WHERE IS JESUS?

How does today's Bible story fit into God's greater plan of redemption?

Read Luke 9:28–31.

Elijah was taken up to heaven in a chariot on a whirlwind. That is not the last time we see him. He appears again in the New Testament with Jesus and Moses at Christ's transfiguration. One day, like Elijah, we will all be with the Lord.

THE LESSON

OPENING REVIEW 5 MIN

Use last week's lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read 2 Kings 2:1–15 from the Scriptures or read story 64, "Elijah Is Taken Up to Heaven," from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

OBJECT LESSON 1 10 MIN

Dividing the Water

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ two sixteen-pound bags of ice
- ✓ a plastic drop cloth
- ✓ a clean trash can

Place the ice in the clean trash can until you are ready to use it.

This is simply a gag, an attention-getter, to prepare for the story.

Tell the children you have read the lesson for today and that once again the waters of the Jordan River were parted by God. In fact both Elijah and Elisha parted the waters of the Jordan. Remind them of the earlier crossing of the Jordan by the army of Israel when they carried the ark before them. Also remind them of the Israelites' crossing of the Red Sea.

Tell them that you never thought you could part water and walk across because you thought it was too difficult, but now you have figured out the secret.

Explain that when you read about the crossing of the Red Sea you thought it was unique, but then when you read about the first crossing of the Jordan, you started to wonder if we could do the same. Now, having read about Elijah and Elisha, you have it figured out.

Spread out the drop cloth and explain that you are putting this down so as not to make a huge mess. Tell the class you are ready, and appear excited.

Quickly cut open a bag of ice and throw it down on the tarp (make sure that prior to class you broke up the ice into cubes by dropping it on the pavement). Do the same for the second bag.

Announce that you are going to divide the waters (ice), and then using your foot to push aside the cubes take one step at a time. Make sure you really ham it up.

Then ask the class the following questions:

- **What do you think of my dividing the waters?**
(Solicit some good answers about what was really happening.)

- **Who really parted the waters, Elijah and Elisha or God?**
(Obviously the answer is that God parted the waters.)

TEACHING/DISCUSSION **10 MIN**

Using the teaching points, teach through the lesson for today.

OBJECT LESSON 2 **10 MIN**

An Ordinary Man

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ whiteboard and dry-erase marker

Ask the class to recall some of the amazing things Elijah was used by God to do. (Have the children look in 1 Kings 17—18 and 2 Kings 1—2 to find the answers. Make a list on the board.)

Read James 5:14–18 and ask,

- **What does James say about Elijah that seems to contradict all these amazing acts?**
(James tells us that Elijah was an ordinary man like us.)
- **If Elijah was an ordinary man, how was it that he did such extraordinary things?**
(Elijah did not do them by his own power, but it was God who did these things through him.)
- **Should we expect to do the kinds of things that Elijah did?**
(We will likely not perform the miracles of Elijah, but in the book of James, God does instruct us to be like Elijah. We should expect that when we pray for the sick, they will recover. But even here in the book of James, we are told that it is the Lord who will raise them up.)

SWORD BIBLE MEMORY **5 MIN**

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

ACTIVITY TIME **15 MIN**

Elijah's Last Days

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ colored pencils, crayons, and paper

Have the children draw a picture either of the Jordan River parting or of Elijah being carried up to heaven.

CLOSING PRAYER **5 MIN**

Pick several children to pray prayers based on the day's scripture passages.

BONUS OBJECT LESSON **10 MIN**

A Double Portion

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ individually wrapped chocolate candy
- ✓ a bag of simple rocks (not decorative stones)

After telling the story, pass a rock out to each child, then ask: "Who would like a double portion?" Give a second rock to those who ask.

Second, pass out a chocolate candy to each of the children. Again ask, "Who would like a double portion?" This time your question should be met with great enthusiasm. Find out why they were so much more excited about the chocolate than the rocks.

Finally, ask them if they have considered praying for a double portion of God. In our story, Elisha asked for a double portion of Elijah's spirit (2 Kings 2:9). Elisha didn't ask for a double portion of his power but rather a double portion of his spirit. That meant that Elisha wanted a double portion of all that Elijah was—he wanted a double portion of Elijah's love for God, a double portion of his faith in God and, yes, a double portion of his gifting as God's prophet.

Jesus said that if anyone asks him for his Spirit he will give it. Read Luke 11:11–13. Tell the children that we all should ask God for a double portion of his Spirit.