

General Church Education



Family Lesson: I Kings 17 – 18
Elijah and Ahab

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Family Lesson 10 - C

Elijah and Ahab
I Kings 17-18

Family Talk:
ELIJAH AND AHAB

Rev. Alfred Acton

The story of these two chapters begins with the saying that there will be no rain or dew for years, and it comes to an end at last with an abundance of rain. So many things happen, so many interesting things, between that beginning and end that it is hard to remember them all. And what we find in these happenings is a picture of goodness and a picture of evil. We see what is right and good clearly illustrated, and we see what is wrong also shown. Then there is the choosing between them, leading at last to the return of the rain.

As you know, the evil in the story is in Ahab, the worst king the children of Israel ever had. Stirred by his evil wife Jezebel, Ahab was such a bad influence that Elijah was sent to say that no more rain would fall from heaven.

And where is the goodness in the story? First we see it in the almost unbelievable kindness of a widow woman. One could hardly imagine a greater degree of kindness when Elijah tested her. First Elijah asked if she would give him a drink of water. There she was in a land where water was precious; she felt she and her son could not live much longer, and yet she was willing to think of the need of someone else who was thirsty. As she went to get the water, he tested her further by asking her to bring some food. But then he assured her that from then on, her kindness would have a source that would never fail.

The real good, the real giver, is the Lord. The wicked King Ahab could do nothing for this woman and her people; the false god Baal could do nothing to bring the rain; but the Lord could. For He is the source of life itself, which Elijah showed in giving life back to the son who had died.

And at last the time came for people to decide between the goodness of the Lord and the worship of Baal. At that time of decision, the number of Baal's prophets was in the hundreds. They were trying to persuade the people to follow Ahab and Jezebel in the foolish worship of their god. And how many prophets of the Lord were there at the time of decision? Only one – Elijah. But that one prophet of the Lord made the powerful call to the people to come to the mountain and decide. On a mountain that looks down upon the great sea he put the question to them: **“How long will you falter between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him”** (I Kings 18:21).

And what did the people answer? Not a single word. They couldn't make up their minds. Sometimes they believed in the Lord, and sometimes they were fooled by the prophets of Baal. Sometimes we are like them, since at times it is very clear to us what really matters in life. But at other times we do things and say things and think things which are foolish. Yes, foolish. These people needed to see how foolish and silly were the prophets of Baal. Those prophets were given all the time they wanted to call on Baal to bring fire from heaven. They could shout and shout for hours and finally carry on in a ridiculous way. And when Elijah had shown their foolishness and lack of power, he gently called the people and said, "Come near to me."

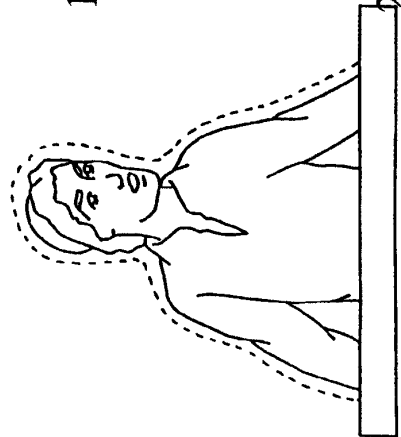
Elijah did not scream or jump on the altar. He said, "Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that the people may know that You are the Lord God, and that You have turned their hearts back to You again" (I Kings 18:37).

Then the fire from heaven came and showed the truth in such a powerful way. The people fell on their faces and said, "The Lord, He is God! The Lord, He is God!" (I Kings 18:39).

While no rain had fallen when they turned to Baal and followed after Ahab, the turning to the Lord brought new hope. Elijah went up to the top of that same mountain and first saw a small cloud like a man's hand. Then came the abundance of rain.

*Elijah and Ahab,
I Kings 17-18*
LEVEL 1 – ELIJAH

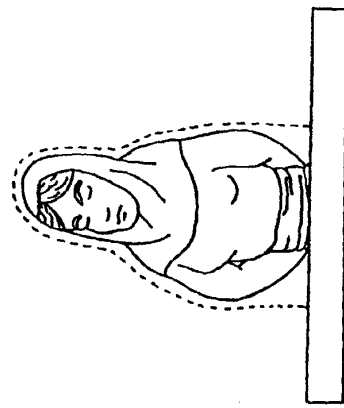
ELIJAH

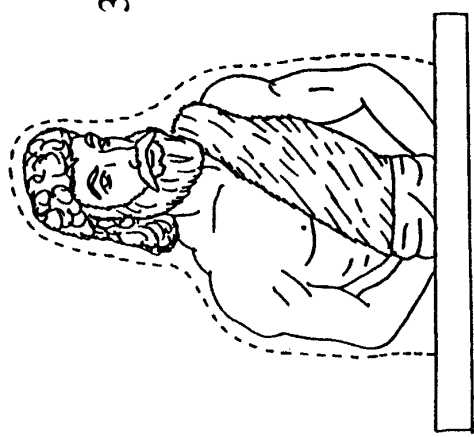
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1. Retell the stories of the 3 scenes of chapter 17:1-24.

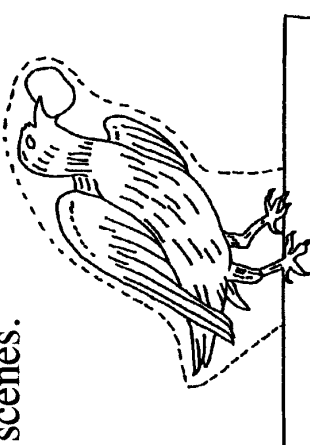
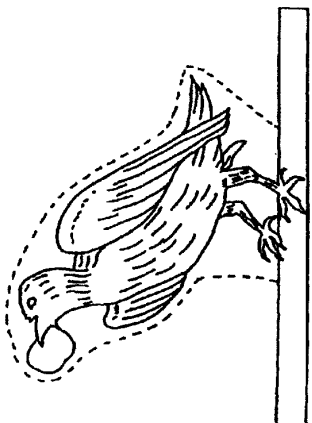
Scene 1 - The ravens feed Elijah.

Scene 2 - The oil and flour never run out for the widow and Elijah.

Scene 3 - Elijah revives the widow's son.
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2. Now set up a puppet stage.
(A card table with a blanket over it could be used.)
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3. Using these finger puppets the children can act out the 3 scenes.



***Elijah and Ahab,
I Kings 17-18***

LEVEL 2 – ELIJAH FED BY RAVENS: POM-POM BIRDS

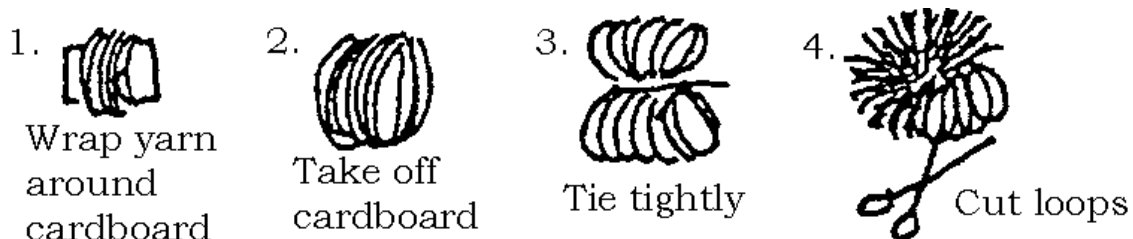
Materials Needed

Needle and thread (preferably black)
Black yarn
2 cardboard squares: 2" x 2" and 1 1/4" x 1 1/4"
Scissors and glue
Black and blue felt
Black feathers
Crayons

Project

To make pom-poms:

Wrap yarn around the bigger square over and over, about 150 times. Remove from cardboard and tie around the middle with yarn as tightly as possible. Cut loops and trim. Repeat with the small square, only wrap the yarn about 100 times.



To make ravens:

With a threaded needle, sew through the centers of a large and small pom-pom and tie knots. Cut a beak of black felt and eyes of blue and glue on. Dip feather tips in glue and poke them into the large pom-pom for wings. Let dry. You can make just one raven or as many as you would like.



Color the picture of Elijah on the following page, cut him out, and act out the story of Elijah being fed by the ravens.



Elijah and Ahab

I Kings 17-18

LEVEL 3 – PEOPLE AND PLACES IN THE HOLY LAND

Materials Needed

Pencil or pen

Crayons or markers

The Word or a Bible

ELIJAH AND AHAB

AHAB was the king of Israel (874-853 B.C.). He made an alliance with Sidonia (Phoenicia). Color it on your map. He married

JEZEBEL was the daughter of the king of Tyre and Sidon. Circle these cities. Jezebel worshiped Baal, and persuaded Ahab to do the same. Ahab would have kept the worship of Jehovah in addition to Baal worship, but Jezebel had Jehovah's altars torn down and ordered all his prophets killed.

OBADIAH was the head servant of Ahab's household. He worshiped Jehovah and hid some prophets in caves so Jezebel wouldn't kill them. How many men did he save in this way (*I Kings 18:13*)?

ELIJAH was Jehovah's prophet. He came from where (*I Kings 17:1*)?



Put a star by it on the map. Elijah prophesied there would be no rain or dew for several years because the country was worshiping Baal. Then Ahab was very angry with Elijah. So Elijah escaped to the brook Cherith. Color it blue on your map.

RAVENS brought Elijah food twice a day, and he drank from the brook. When the brook dried up, the Lord told Elijah to go to Zarephath in Sidonia. Underline it on the map. Elijah stayed with a widow.



THE WIDOW was poor and had one child. Elijah performed two miracles for her.

He made her _____ (I *Kings* 17:16),
and he brought back her _____ (I *Kings* 17:22).
The drought got so bad that King Ahab personally went out with Obadiah to look for _____ (I *Kings* 18:5), and the mules and horses. The Lord told Elijah to go see Ahab. Elijah proposed a contest to see who was the true God. He challenged . . .

THE PROPHETS OF BAAL to make a sacrifice.

How many prophets of Baal were there (I *Kings* 18:22)?
Elijah's altar was made of how many stones (I *Kings* 18:31)?
How many times did he pour water on his altar (I *Kings* 18:34)?
What happened in the Kishon valley (I *Kings* 18:40)?

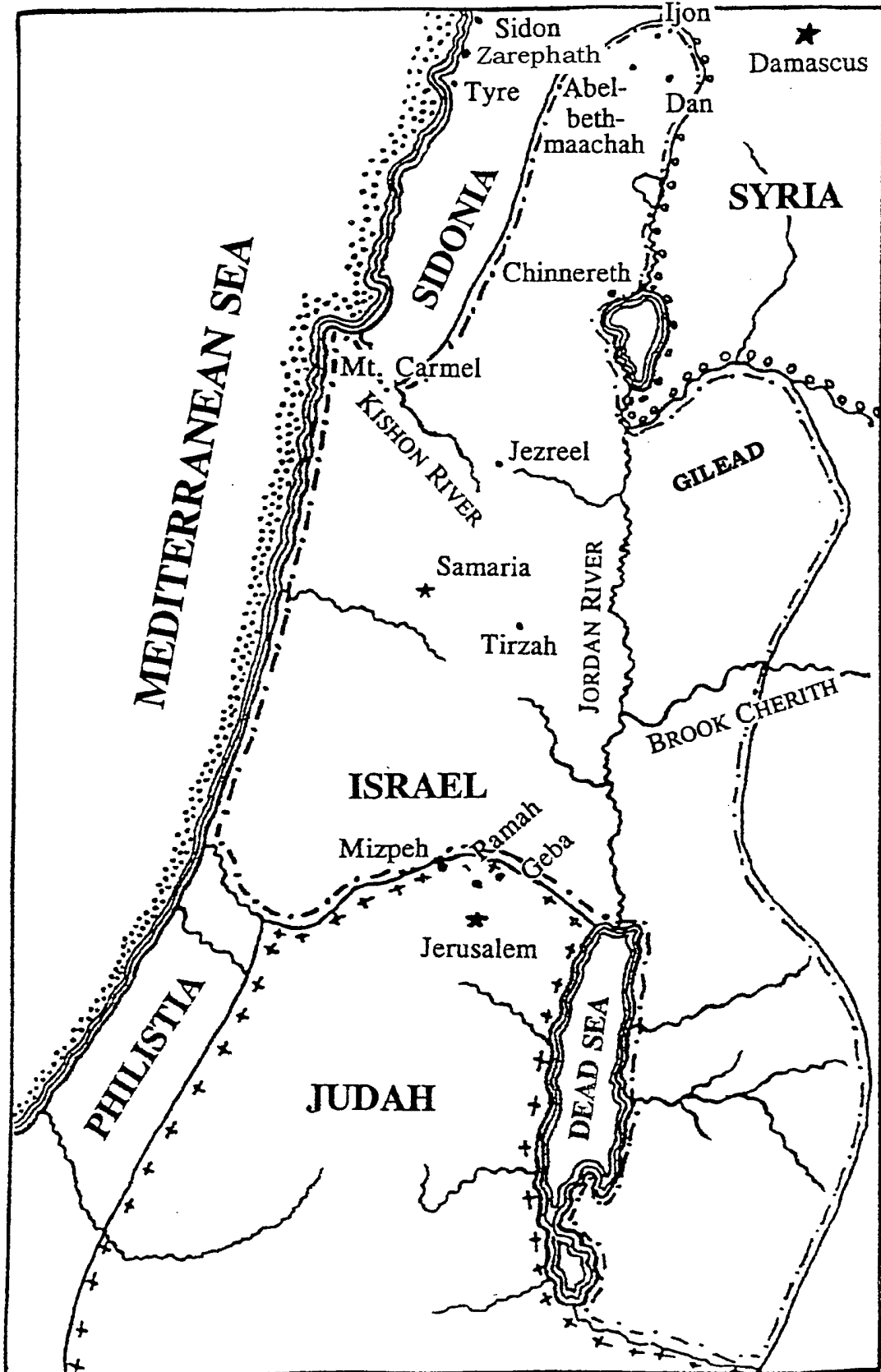
Color the Kishon River purple.

Where did Elijah go to look for rain clouds (I *Kings* 18:42)?

Color it green on the map.

“Now it happened in the meantime that the sky became black with clouds and wind, and there was a heavy rain.”

The Holy Land



Elijah and Ahab ***I Kings 17-18***

LEVEL 4 – THE HOLY LAND DURING THE TIME OF ELIJAH

For this lesson you have a choice of activities:

Activity 1



Materials Needed

Map of Holy Land (included with this lesson)

Tracing paper, pencil

- Using the tracing paper, make a map of this story by following the steps below.
 - Be sure to label all the places you put on your map.
1. Trace the **coastline of the land of Canaan** in blue. Also trace the **Jordan River**, the **Dead Sea**, and the **Sea of Galilee** in blue.
 2. After Solomon’s reign the kingdom split. The northern tribes rebelled against Solomon’s descendants and formed their own country—**Israel**. Unfortunately, they also split from worshiping the Lord. The southern tribes—Judah, Simeon and Benjamin—followed Solomon’s son Rehoboam, and continued to follow the Lord. They became known as **Judah**. Trace a line between **Judah** and **Israel** and label the two kingdoms.
 3. In the north, Ahab was king. He married Jezebel, who was the daughter of the king of Sidonia (Phoenicia), the kingdom north of Israel. Find and mark **Sidonia** on your map. Jezebel worshiped Baal and forced this idol worship on the people of Israel. Cut out the picture of Baal and paste it on the northern kingdom.
 4. Cut out the picture of the Ten Commandments and paste it on the southern kingdom.
 5. Because Ahab and Jezebel were leading the people into the terrible sin of idolatry, the Lord raised up a prophet to try to bring them back to true worship. Elijah came from **Gilead**. Trace it on your map.
 6. The Lord, through Elijah, told Ahab there would be no rain while Ahab worshiped Baal. Then Elijah was told to go to the brook Cherith where the Lord would sustain him. Find **Cherith** and trace it on your map.



7. When the brook dried up in the drought, the Lord sent Elijah to the town of Zarephath to live with a widow and her son. **Zarephath** was in Sidonia. Find and trace it.
8. Re-read I *Kings* 17 about the two miracles Elijah performed for the widow.
9. One day Elijah met the head servant of Ahab, named Obadiah. Obadiah was faithful to the Lord. He had saved 100 men who preached the worship of the Lord when Jezebel was killing people for doing so. Yet Obadiah was afraid to tell Ahab he had seen Elijah.
 
10. Find and mark **Mt. Carmel** on your map. This is where Elijah
 
 and Ahab met to test Baal. 450 believers in Baal tried to get him to burn a sacrifice. Only Elijah spoke for the Lord. He drenched the Lord's altar with water three times, yet the Lord could still send fire that burned not only the sacrifice, but the wood and stones, and even the dust and water.
11. Once it had been proven again that the Lord is God, Elijah chased the prophets of false Baal and killed them at the brook **Kishon**. Find and trace it on your map.
12. Now trace Elijah's journeys on your map. Use a different color pen and draw a dotted line from Cherith to Zarephath to Mt. Carmel to Kishon.
13. Print a title on your map: ELIJAH'S JOURNEYS
14. EXTRA: If you like to draw, draw a small picture at each of the places on your map to show what happened there.

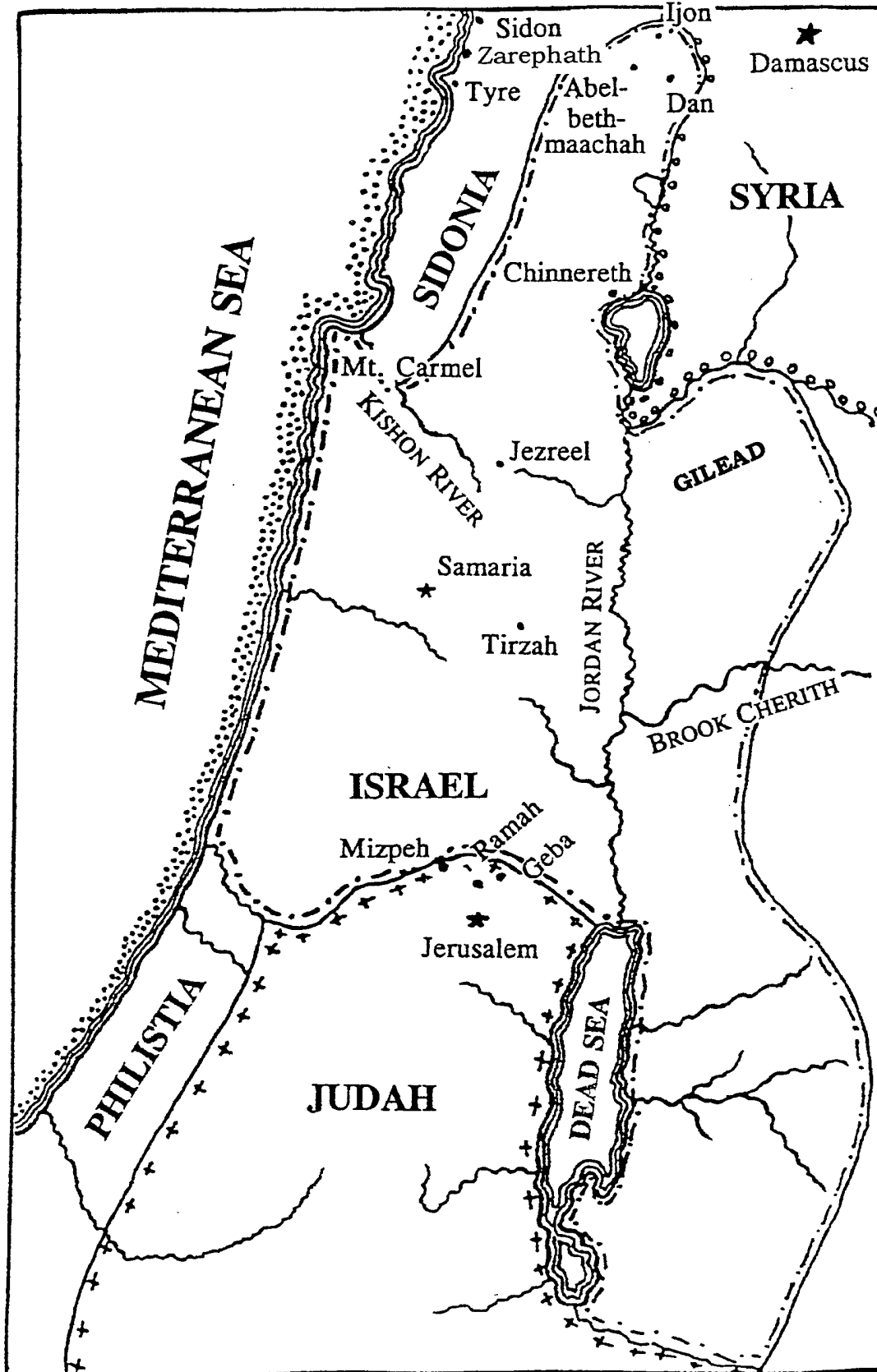
After the Lord was worshiped again in Israel, the drought was over.

Activity 2

If you enjoy art work:

- Choose one part of the story of Elijah and Ahab to illustrate with a detailed drawing or painting.
- OR make a large collage drawing or painting showing all the different events in the story of Elijah and Ahab.

The Holy Land



Elijah and Ahab
I Kings 17 & 18
LEVEL 5 – UPS AND DOWNS

“And Elijah came to all the people and said, ‘How long will you falter between two opinions’ If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him.’”



From this very full story about Elijah and Ahab we want to pick just one concept to focus on in this lesson. We find it in I Kings 18:21: “How long will you falter between two opinions?”

The *New English Bible* translation is “How long are you going to waver between two opinions?” The *Jerusalem Bible* translates it, “How long do you mean to hobble first on one leg then on the other?”

The word that has been translated “falter” or “halt” or “waver” is the same word that is translated “to leap” a few verses later. Speaking about the prophets of Baal, it says:

“And they leaped about the altar which they had made.” (I Kings 18:26)

Application

One idea we might have, therefore, about this verse is that rather than merely sit on the fence, people tend to jump first to one side of the fence then to the other. This seems to reflect the saying of Elijah about faltering between two opinions.

We go through our ups and downs emotionally, and we often also go through ups and downs in how clearly we see the values of life.

1. First read the following number from *Heaven and Hell* , and then answer the question:

“I have been taught from heaven why there are such changes of state there. The angels said that there are many reasons: first, the delight of life and of heaven, which they have from love and wisdom from the Lord, would gradually lose its value if they were in it continually, as happens with those that are in allurements and pleasures without variety. A second reason is that angels, as well as men, have what is their own (proprium), which is loving self; and all that there are in heaven are withheld from what is their own, and so far as they are withheld from it by the Lord are in love and wisdom; but so far as they are not withheld they are in the love of self; and because every one loves what is his own and is drawn by it they have changes of state or successive alternations. A third reason is that they are in this way perfected, for they thus become accustomed to being held in love to the Lord and withheld from love of self; also that by alternations between delight and lack of delight the perception and sense of good becomes more exquisite. The angels added that their changes of state are not caused by the Lord, since the Lord as a sun is unceasingly flowing in with heat and light, that is, with love and wisdom; but the cause is in themselves, in that they love what is their own, and this continually leads them away. This was illustrated by comparison with the sun of the world, that the cause of the changes of state of heat and cold and of light and shade, year by year and day by day, is not in that sun, since it stands unchanged, but the cause is in the earth.”
(Heaven and Hell 158)

Do you agree that people “falter” between two opinions? Would it be true of angels? Do they also have “ups” and “downs”? Write a brief answer below.

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- 2. But as interesting and useful as this description is of a state in heaven, we are not there. We can only hope for heaven in the future. Our main purpose in this lesson is to consider “ups” and “downs” as they apply to us. Are we not sometimes on the one side of the fence and sometimes on the other? Write a short explanation of ways in which we might do this.

- 3. To help focus on this point read the passage from the *Arcana Coelestia* 2363 below. Then fill in the chart.

“In order to obtain a clear idea of the nature of this life of the love of self and of the world (or what is the same, of a life of pride, avarice, envy, hatred, revenge, lack of mercy, adultery), let any person of talent make for himself an impersonation of some one of these evils; or if he can, let him paint it before his eyes in accordance with the ideas he is able to conceive of it from experience, knowledge, and reason; and he will then see, in proportion to the energy of his description or picture, how horrible these evils are, and that they are diabolical forms in which there is nothing human. Forms such as these do all those become after death who perceive the delight of their life in such evils, and the greater is their delight in them, the more horrible are their own forms.

On the other hand, let the same person delineate for himself an impersonation of love and charity, or let him express it before his eyes under some form; and then in proportion to his power of description or portrayal he will see that the form is angelic, full of bliss and beauty, and pervaded within with what is heavenly and Divine.”

In the chart below make a list of the negative things described (add a few if you can think of them). Then make a list of several positive things. Having done this, put a check mark next to some on each side which you can honestly relate to.

"HOW LONG WILL YOU FALTER BETWEEN TWO OPINIONS?"	
NEGATIVE	POSITIVE

4. EXTRA: Draw a picture to illustrate some negative part of human experience, such as hatred or revenge, and contrast this with a picture illustrating something positive like love.

If you don't like to draw, you can at least imagine what your own face looks like when you are feeling the negative side of the fence. You can also picture yourself with the positive feelings of kindness, consideration, and love.