

General Church Education



Elijah's Ascension

2 Kings 2:1-25

Lesson 16

Jacob's Ladder Religion Lessons

Level 6: The Lord Is Our Prophet

For ages 11-12 years

Elijah's Ascension

2 Kings 2:1-25

Teacher Background

Towards the end of Elijah's life the Lord told him to travel through Israel to the Jordan River. Elisha followed him as he went. The sons of the prophets, a prophetic guild, asked if Elisha if he knew his master was dying. Elisha told them to keep silent. When they reached the Jordan River, Elijah struck the river with his mantle, parting the water. He and Elisha crossed the river on dry ground. Elisha asked for a double portion of Elijah's spirit, and then as Elijah was taken up into heaven in whirlwind his mantle fell to the ground. Elisha picked it up and used it to part the river again. The sons of the prophets went to look for Elijah's body but did not find it. As with Elijah, the Lord gave Elisha great power to do miracles.

Elijah mentored numerous prophets. However, the Lord chose Elisha to follow him. The first time Elijah nominated him to become his successor, Elijah put the mantle around Elisha's shoulders. By picking up the mantle which fell from Elijah, Elisha showed his willingness to do as the Lord asked him despite the dangers and challenges involved in doing so. Being asked to a job is different from choosing to do something oneself!

Focus Points

- Elisha was devoted to Elijah and followed him throughout Israel.
- Elijah ascended to heaven in whirlwind in a chariot of fire.
- Elisha picked up Elijah's mantle and was granted power to serve the Lord by performing miracles.

Readings from the Writings

“‘The dividing of the waters of Jordan by Elijah's mantle,’ first by Elijah and afterwards by Elisha, signified the power of Divine truth in ultimates; ‘the waters of Jordan’ signifying the first truths through which there is introduction into the church, and these first truths are such as are in the ultimates of the Word. From this, too, it can be seen that ‘a mantle’ and ‘a robe’ signify Divine truth in general.” *Apocalypse Explained* 395.4

“Elisha tore his own clothes apart at that time to express mourning the loss of the Word, that is, of Divine Truth; for ‘Elijah’ represents the Lord as regards the Word, that is, Divine Truth. When the tunic fell from Elijah and was picked up by Elisha, the continuation of Elijah's representation by Elisha was represented, ‘the tunic’ meaning Divine Truth.” *Arcana Coelestia* 4763.7

Teacher Activity Overview

The lesson offers the following activity choices:

Recitation

Learn the recitation by heart.

“Then [Elisha] took the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and struck the water, and said, ‘Where is the Lord God of Elijah?’ And when he also had struck the water, it was divided this way and that; and Elisha crossed over.” (2 Kings 2:14)

Projects and Activities (for answers, see back of lesson)

Write the Verse

Read a series of questions. Write the number of the verse in 2 Kings 2 that gives the correct answer to the question. The questions are not in the order of the verses in the chapter.

Stories About Elijah

Elijah was one of the Lord's most powerful and important prophets. Using a chart listing story titles and references in the Word, write the miracle or miracles that Elijah did in each incident.

Additional Project and Activity Choices for Parents and Teachers

Elijah's Ascension Mobile

Cut out and assemble a mobile that shows Elijah being taken to heaven in a whirlwind in a chariot of fire. Available at: <https://newchurchvineyard.org/file/project-elijahs-ascension-mobile-2-kings-2.pdf>

Making Fun of Other People

Immediately after Elisha became the Lord's prophet some boys teased him and were mauled by bears. Consider ways in which you may hurt others—even in fun. What might you do to make things better? Available at: <https://newchurchvineyard.org/file/activity-making-fun-of-other-people-2-kings-2.pdf>

A Chart of the Kings of Israel and Judah

As you learn about the kings of Israel and Judah, complete a chart. As you fill in the spaces, think about whether the king is good or evil. Available at: <https://newchurchvineyard.org/file/activity-a-chart-of-the-kings-of-israel-and-judah-1-kings-2-kings.pdf>

Elijah's Ascension

2 Kings 2:1-25

Vocabulary

pleaded—begged

barren—ground in which nothing can grow

enlighten—bring knowledge and understanding about a subject

Elisha's Devotion

Near the end of his life, the Lord told Elijah to leave Gilgal and travel to Bethel, then to Jericho, and finally to the Jordan River. Each time he was about to leave for a new place, Elijah told Elisha to remain behind. Elisha refused to do this and showed his devotion to Elijah by traveling with him instead. He knew that he would soon take on Elijah's role because the Lord had told Elijah to anoint him as the prophet who would take his place.

“And Elisha, the son of Shaphat of Abel Mehola you shall anoint as prophet in your place.” (1 Kings 19:16)

Shortly after this, Elijah found Elisha and threw his mantle over him, demonstrating that Elijah was passing the role of prophet to Elisha. After this, Elisha always followed Elijah.

Everywhere Elijah went prophets came out to meet him. Elijah's courage and ability were known throughout the land. Each group asked Elisha if he knew that Elijah was about to die. He replied that he knew, but that they were to “keep silent”. As they moved from place to place, Elisha followed and looked out for Elijah.

“Sons of Prophets”

The prophets who came out to meet Elijah were called the “sons of prophets”. This meant they belonged to a guild of prophets and studied under other experienced prophets. Schools in Gilgal, Bethel and Jericho trained young men to bring the Lord's Word to the people. The prophets who spoke to Elisha referred to Elijah as his “master”. This leads us to believe that Elijah mentored Elisha and other prophets.

Elisha's Request

When Elijah and Elisha came to the Jordan River Elijah took off his mantle and rolled it up like a rod. It was probably a large sheepskin, which was the sign of a prophet. Then Elijah struck the water, causing it to part, so he and Elisha could cross the river. Moses performed a similar miracle when the children of Israel crossed the Red Sea, as did Joshua when the children of Israel crossed the Jordan into the Promised Land. Later in this story, Elisha did the same miracle with Elijah's mantle.

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When they had crossed to the other side of the Jordan, Elijah asked Elisha how he could help him before he, Elijah, died. Elisha asked for “a double portion” of Elijah’s spirit—the ability to perform miracles and prophesy according to the Lord’s Word. Elijah did not immediately tell Elisha that his request would be fulfilled. First there was to be a sign. If Elisha could see Elijah taken up to heaven, then he was worthy of becoming a great prophet.

Elijah Ascends to Heaven

While Elijah and Elisha continued their conversation, suddenly, Elijah was taken up by a golden chariot and horses of fire and was carried up by a whirlwind into heaven. Elisha saw it and called out,

“My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and its horsemen!” (2 Kings 2:12)

Elisha knew that he was chosen to take on Elijah’s responsibilities, and he also knew that the Lord would be with him. He could not have seen such a sight if the Lord had not opened his spiritual eyes and allowed him to see into the other world.

Elisha Takes up Elijah’s Mantle

Immediately after witnessing Elijah being carried into heaven, Elisha tore his own clothes into two pieces, demonstrating his grief. The Heavenly Doctrine tells us it also was a sign of sadness that the Lord’s Word was being lost to the people. Elisha tore his own clothes apart to

express mourning the loss of the Word, that is, of Divine Truth; for “Elijah” represents the Lord as regards the Word, that is, Divine Truth (*Arcana Coelestia* 4763.7).

After this, Elisha picked up Elijah’s mantle. This powerful image shows Elisha willingly taking on the challenging and even dangerous work of being the Lord’s prophet. Then he used the mantle to repeat Elijah’s miracle of parting the river Jordan. As he did so, he called out to the Lord, as if asking Him for the power that was Elijah’s. The Writings tell us that a “mantle” stands for Divine truth. This is why Elijah first threw his mantle over Elisha, and then at his death let the mantle pass to Elisha. This showed the representation and the transfer of the power of the Word from Elijah to Elisha.



Elijah Is Carried up to Heaven in a Chariot of Fire

The Prophets Search for Elijah's Body

After crossing the Jordan, prophets from Jericho met Elisha. They saw him parting the waters and knew he was to be honored like Elijah. They offered to send fifty men to look for Elijah's body. At first Elisha did not send them, but when they pleaded, he finally told them to go.

The men returned three days later. They had not found Elijah's body. Elisha was not surprised. He had seen Elijah taken up to heaven. The disappearance of his body was part of the miracle the Lord had done. He said, "Didn't I tell you not to go?"

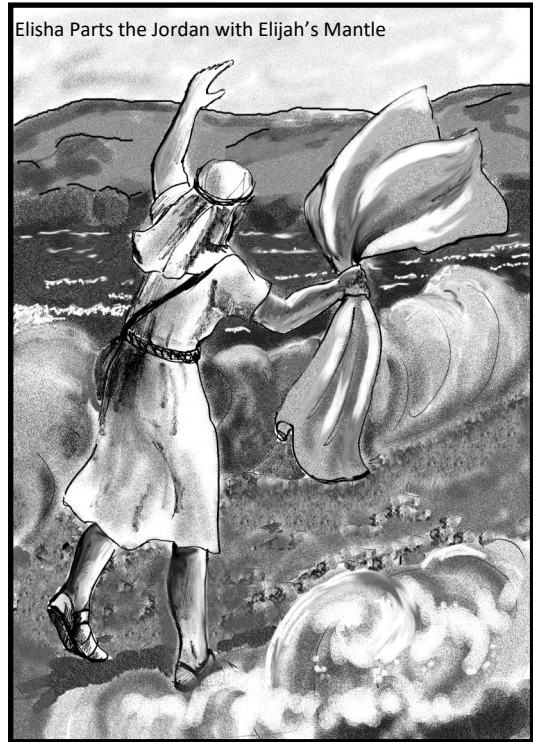
Elisha Performs Miracles

After this, the men of Jericho told Elisha that the water in that area was bad and that nothing would grow. Elisha asked for some salt in a new bowl. Then he put the salt into the water at its source, causing the water to become drinkable and good for the soil. The Word says that the waters are still good! As Elisha came from Jericho to Bethel, some boys made fun of him, calling him "bald-head". So he cursed them. Suddenly, two she-bears appeared and mauled the boys. In those days it was an insult to call someone a "bald-head". Spiritually, it was like saying the Word has no meaning. Remember, as a prophet, Elisha represented the Word. Since it is wrong to make fun of the Word, the Lord permitted this serious punishment.

Protecting the Word

Protecting Elisha represents protecting the truth of Lord's Word. This was one of the most important roles of a prophet. It is one of the most important things we can do too. Although physical copies of the Word are not holy, the truths in the words hold are holy. That is why we protect copies of the Word and put them in a special place. The Word is usually put on an altar with candles around it when we worship. The candles stand for the special truths that enlighten us and so we can follow the Lord. Although we use copies of the Word for studying, we do not treat them like other textbooks.

While it is important to treat the book well, it is even more important to protect the truths it contains. The Lord wants us to learn those truths and use them for good purposes. The words in each story are important—both the actual words and their inner meanings. When we hear people making fun of the Word, we should ask them to stop, and if they do not stop, we should leave. If it is appropriate, we should tell someone what is happening. At times in our lives we will hear people using the truths of the Word for the wrong reasons, maybe to make a point so they can do something they want or to make them look smart. This behavior harms the purpose of the Word which is to help us live happy, good and useful lives.



Activity Overview

Recitation

Learn the recitation by heart.

“Then [Elisha] took the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and struck the water, and said, ‘Where is the Lord God of Elijah?’ And when he also had struck the water, it was divided this way and that; and Elisha crossed over.” (2 Kings 2:14)

Projects and Activities (for answers, see back of lesson)

Choose one or two.

Write the Verse

Read a series of questions. Write the number of the verse in 2 Kings 2 that gives the correct answer to the question. The questions are not in the order of the verses in the chapter.

Stories About Elijah, a Review

Elijah was one of the Lord's most powerful and important prophets. Using a chart listing story titles and references in the Word, write the miracle or miracles that Elijah did in each incident.

Write the Verse

2 Kings 2:1-25

Read a series of questions. Write the number of the verse in 2 Kings 2 that gives the correct answer to the question. The questions are not in the order of the verses in the chapter.

1. How was Elijah taken up into heaven?
2. From what town did Elijah and Elisha leave when the Lord was about to take Elijah up into heaven?
3. How many children who cursed Elisha were torn by two she-bears?
4. When Elijah told Elisha that the Lord was sending him from Gilgal to Bethel, did Elisha go with Elijah?
5. How did Elisha heal the waters in the spring?
6. What fell from Elijah that Elisha put on?
7. Who came out to meet Elisha at Jericho?
8. What did Elisha cry when he saw Elijah being carried up into the heavens?
9. With what words did the children mock Elisha?
10. Did the fifty strong men find the body of Elijah?
11. What events were miraculous in this story?

Stories About Elijah, a Review

1 Kings 17– 2 Kings 8

The books of Kings tell numerous stories about Elijah—one of the Lord's most powerful and important prophets. In many of these stories the Lord performed miracles through and for Elijah. Using the story titles and the references provided, write the miracle or miracles that were done in that story. *Hint: 3 stories have 2 miracles and 2 stories have no miracles.*

Story	Miracle(s)	Chapter
1. Elijah predicts a drought		1 Kings 17:1
2. Elijah in the wilderness		1 Kings 17:2-7
3. Elijah and the widow		1 Kings 17:10-17
4. Elijah meets Ahab		1 Kings 18:15-19
5. Contest at Mt. Carmel		1 Kings 18:20-40
6. Elijah flees Jezebel and goes to Beer Sheba		1 Kings 19:7-10
7. Elijah goes to Mt. Horeb/Sinai		1 Kings 19:7-10
8. Elijah condemns Ahab and his family		1 Kings 21:17-29
9. Elijah and the captains of fifty		2 Kings 1:7-16
10. Elijah ascends to heaven		2 Kings 2:8-14

Which miracle do you think is the most amazing? Give your reasons for this choice. What kind of power does this miracle demonstrate?

Answers

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Write the Verse

1. 11, 2. 4, 3. 24, 4. 2, 5. 21, 6. 13, 7. 15, 8. 12, 9. 23, 10. 17, 11. 8, 11, 14.

Stories about Elijah, a Review

1. T Lord stopped rain and dew. 2. Elijah was fed by ravens. 3. The widow's oil and flour did not cease. 4. No miracle. 5. Fire consumed the sacrifice and the water. 6. Elijah was fed by an angel. 7. Elijah spoke to the Lord. 8. No miracle. 9. The Lord sent fire from heaven. 10. River parted; Elijah taken to heaven in a whirlwind.