

Elijah Confronts Ahab

Level D | Lesson 6 | Teacher Overview

Key Message: We can turn to the Lord no matter what we have done.

Text: I Kings 21:1-20, 29

Activity Options (choose 2 or 3)

1. Talk About It
2. Explore: The Ten Commandments
3. Look Closer: Elijah's Journeys
4. Meditate and Activate



I Kings 21:20

Then Ahab said to Elijah, “Have you found me, O my enemy?” And he answered, “I have found you, because you have sold yourself to do evil in the sight of the Lord....”

Talk About It

I Kings 21:1-20,29: Naboth's Vineyard

1. Why was Ahab's longing for Naboth's vineyard so bad? (Naboth had inherited it from his ancestors. By law he could not sell it. Ahab was really asking for more than a piece of land—he was asking for Naboth's birthright.)
2. Was Ahab's response to Naboth's refusal justified?
3. Who or what fueled Ahab's anger? (His wife Jezebel.) What fuels our own angry responses? (Thoughts flowing in from evil spirits with us fuel our anger.)
4. Which of the Ten Commandments did Jezebel break so that Ahab could have what he wanted? (covet, false witness (lies), murder, steal)
5. Did Ahab regret Jezebel's actions? Compare this to the way you might behave if you felt justifiably angry about something. What goads you on?
6. Later on Elijah came to talk to Ahab about what had happened. What did he prophesy? (He prophesied that Ahab and Jezebel would die, and that the throne of Israel, would be taken away from his family.)
7. Did hearing that news change Ahab's behavior? What might change your behavior in a situation like this?
8. How did Ahab's apology change Elijah's prophecy? (Ahab's son would inherit the throne, and after that the throne would be taken from his family.)
9. Even though Ahab had broken the Commandments, the Lord saw his remorse, and He changed the punishment. Is it ever too late to feel sorry for what we have done? Can we be saved if we only feel sorry *after* we die?
10. The Lord invites us to turn to Him when we have done something wrong. He continues to love us—even when we do something wrong. Does the Lord ever stop loving us? Are there any things we might do that would prevent the Lord from loving us?

Explore: The Ten Commandments

I Kings 21:1-20,29: Naboth's Vineyard

So Ahab spoke to Naboth, saying, "Give me your vineyard, that I may have it for a vegetable garden, because it is near, next to my house...."



Take an in-depth look at the Ten Commandments. Compare the role they played in Ahab and Jezebel's lives with the role that they play in your own life. Choose one Commandment to meditate on this week.

Supplies Needed for Each Student

- copy of the Ten Commandments to sequence (see attached sheet)
- copy of the table relating the Ten Commandments to life (see attached sheet)

Teacher Preparation

- cut apart and scramble the Ten Commandments to sequence

Hint: print copies of the Ten Commandments on different colors of paper to help distinguish different "sets" of the Ten Commandments.

Warm up

Ahab's covetous request starts a series of events that ends with false accusations, lies and murder. Which of the Ten Commandments did Ahab and Jezebel violate? (Brainstorm with the group.)

Sequence the Ten Commandments

Hand out the cut-apart and scrambled sets of the Ten Commandments. Ask the students to sequence them in the order they are given in Exodus 20. (You may choose to do this as individuals or as a group. If students need a lot of help, have them use Exodus 20 as a guide.)

Page 2 - The Ten Commandments

Explore the Ten Commandments

The Ten Commandments are Divine laws outlining rules for life in this world, and life in heaven. They hold in them the promise that if we do them, “[our] days may be long upon the land which the Lord [our] God is giving [us].” The land that the Lord promises to give us when we follow them is heaven—our spiritual Canaan.

Choose and Discuss

Choose three or four Commandments from the table that explains them. Read one commandment (including the explanations) with the group and then use the following questions to start a discussion about each one:

1. How did this Commandment play a role in Ahab and Jezebel’s life?
2. Give an example of how this Commandment has played a role in your life.
3. What suggestions might you have for a friend who is struggling to keep this Commandment?
4. The Lord says that if we keep His Commandments, we are building a life in heaven. This seems far away. Is it? How might keeping this Commandment help you experience heaven right now?

Wrap-Up

The Psalmist says, “Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly. . . but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night.” Choose one of the Commandments to meditate on in your life this week.

The Ten Commandments

Commandment	Identifying this Commandment in my life	What steps can I take to follow the Commandment better?
I am the Lord your God. You shall have no other gods before Me.	Everything we love and spend time doing has power in our life. It is like a God which we serve for the moment. Worship is of life—and life is how we spend our time.	Notice what you think about. Is there a person, substance, or activity that controls you—that you can't stop thinking about. Identify it, name it and change habits leading away from God.
You shall not take the name of the Lord in vain.	To call upon the name of God is to pray that God's qualities—love, compassion, forgiveness, wisdom, understanding—may come into us. To take them in vain is not to make use of them.	Think about a time when you did not make use of God's qualities. Pray for qualities that are lacking. Think about how you might replay a situation to better use God's qualities in your life.
Remember the Sabbath day.	Sabbath is a day of rest—or a restful state of mind. We can let go of our own concerns, recognizing the Lord in our life.	Read the Word—reconnect with the Lord. Keep your own thoughts quiet and listen to what the Lord says.
Honor your father and your mother.	Honoring our parents means respecting and valuing their fine qualities. In adult life it means loving and honoring the Lord (heavenly Father) and the church (the community of people following the Lord).	Conduct yourself in ways that honor your parents and spiritual advisors. Express your appreciation. Count your blessings.
You shall not murder.	Do not take earthly or spiritual life from another person, either in thought or action.	Speak only kind, true and useful words. Say nothing unkind or critical. Give life to others.
You shall not commit adultery.	Honor marriage with your words and actions. Keep in mind that friends of the opposite sex may eventually be someone else's married partner.	Catch yourself "in the act" of thinking impure thoughts and stop them. Do not repeat jokes dishonoring marriage.
You shall not steal.	Do not take what is not yours—objects, credit for work that is not yours, etc. Acknowledge that only the Lord gives life.	Recognize that all gifts come from the Lord. Give Him credit for your talents, thoughts, feelings and deeds.
You shall not bear false witness.	Tell the truth. Be honest, open and kind in dealing with others. Be true to your word, honor commitments, keep promises.	Watch out for misinterpreting the motives of others and attaching false meaning to what they do. Watch for the false witness of guilt that makes us feel that we cannot turn our lives to the Lord.
You shall not covet your neighbor's house.	Coveting possessions means being unable to let go of wanting something until we have it. Letting go of covetous desires opens our hearts to the treasures of heaven.	All material things belong to the Lord. Get rid of possessions you don't need. Look at motives. Ask yourself if you are doing something just to gain worldly wealth.
You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's.	Do not selfishly dominate the feelings, thoughts or actions of others.	Give up the feeling of having to be "right"—acknowledge that you do not always have the answers. Ask yourself if you are doing something just to gain a good reputation.

I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God is giving you.

You shall not murder.

You shall not commit adultery.

You shall not steal.

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

You shall not covet your neighbor's house.

You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's.

Look Closer: Elijah's Journeys

I Kings 21:1-20,29: Naboth's Vineyard

Supplies Needed for Each Student:

- copy of Elijah's Journeys map page (see attached)
- copy of Elijah's Journeys text page (see attached)
- colored pencils
- black pen



Introduction

The mountains, rivers, cities and plains in the Land of Canaan, where the stories in the Word take place, provide a context for the drama in each story. If we look closely at these details, we can see that this context is not only a description of a place, but a description of a state of mind. Let's look at a couple of examples. Elijah invites the prophets of Baal to enter into a contest to determine whose god is the true God. The contest takes place up on a mountain—Mount Carmel. We sometimes talk about “raising our thoughts” on an issue, or seeking the “moral high ground.” We may remember that the Ten Commandments were given to Moses on Mount Sinai. When someone goes up a mountain in the Word, it pictures something we think or love being raised up towards heaven to the Lord.

Water and lack of water or drought also play a role in this story. Ahab's turning away from the Lord and worshiping idols leads to a three and a half year drought. The drought ends when Elijah overcomes the prophets of Baal. We talk about experiencing a “dry spell” in our spiritual lives, or “being flooded with ideas.” We also use water to clean ourselves. Water pictures truth or true ideas. When Ahab adopts false ideas, he lacks truth in his life, just as he lacks the rain. Once the true ideas reign in the land again, rain pours down from heaven.

The map work that is included in today's lesson is designed to help students become familiar with features of the land of Canaan that provide a backdrop for the stories about Elijah. It is hoped that as the students enter adulthood they will learn more about how the geographic details of the land of Canaan feature in their spiritual lives. More information on this topic is available for teachers at http://www.swedenborgstudy.com/books/W.L.Worcester_Language-Parable.

Activity

Have students work independently or in groups to locate the important places in Elijah's story. Use the answer key that is provided to help students as needed.

The names of some cities are followed by a question mark. Scholars are not certain of the exact location of these historical cites.

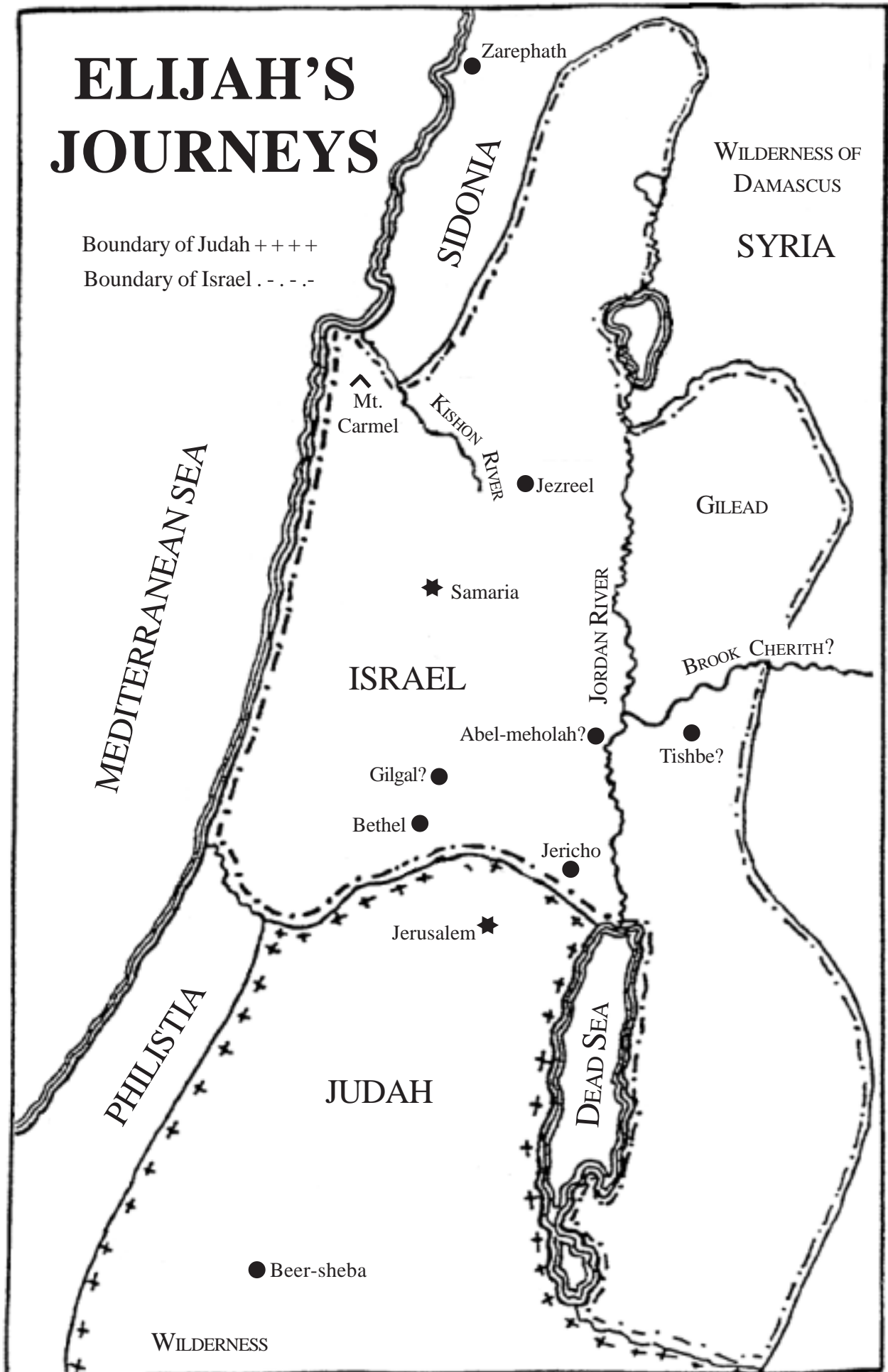
Elijah's Journeys

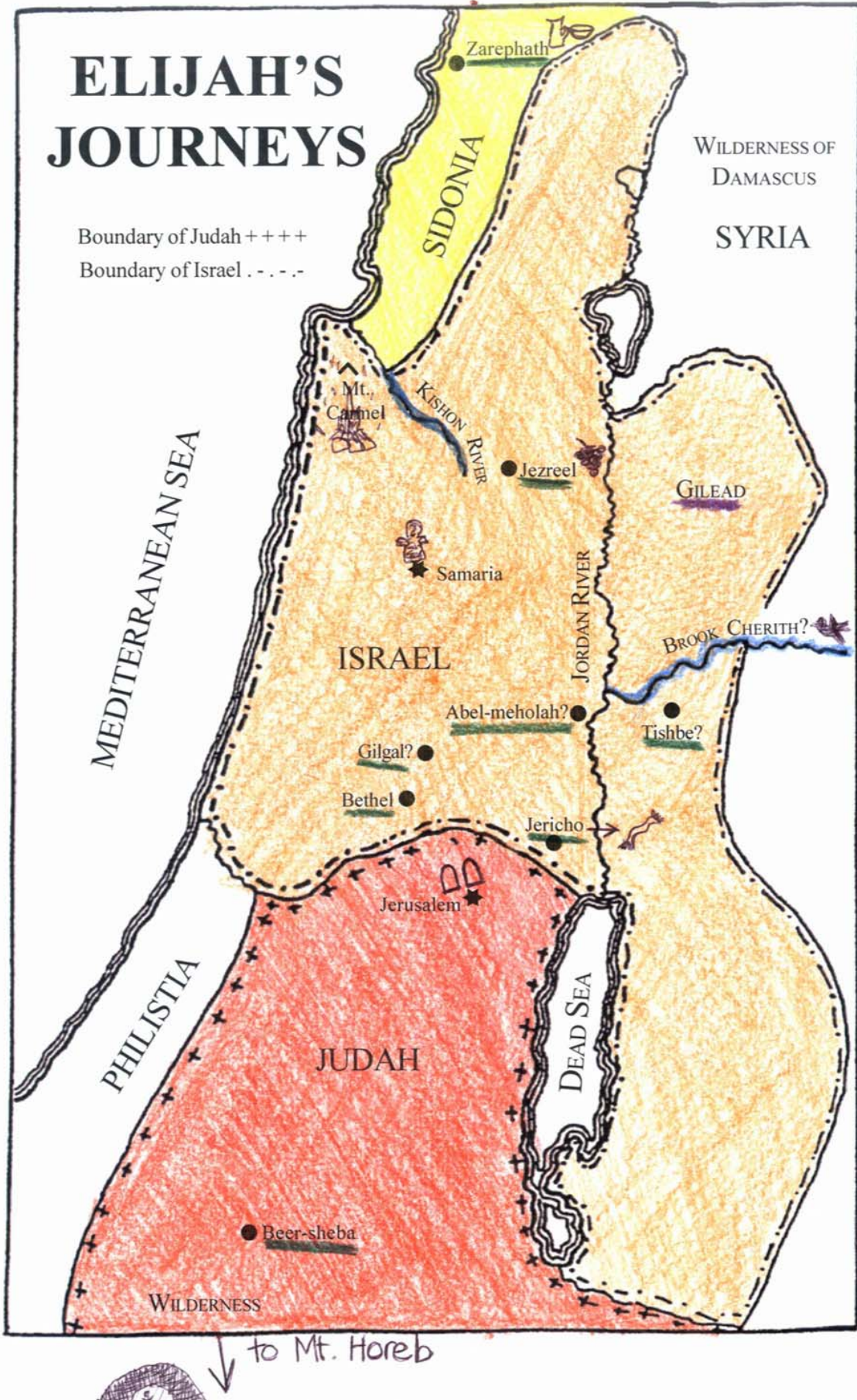
1. The traditional land of the Children of Israel was divided into two during Elijah's life. The lower part of the land was called Judah and its capital was Jerusalem. The upper part continued to be called Israel and its capital was Samaria. *Shade Judah in lightly with a red pencil. Shade Israel in lightly with an orange pencil.*
2. Judah and Israel each had its own king. In Judah, the king and the people continued to follow the Lord. *With your pen, draw a small outline of the Ten Commandments tables of stone near Jerusalem.*
3. In Israel, Ahab was the king. Against the laws of the Lord, he married Jezebel who was not of the Children of Israel but who was the daughter of the king of Sidonia. *Shade Sidonia in with yellow.*
4. Ahab and Jezebel and most of the people worshiped the false god, Baal, turning away from the Lord. Ahab even built a temple for Baal in Samaria and made a wooden image. *Draw a small image of Baal near Samaria with your pen.*
5. The Lord called Elijah to be His prophet. Elijah was from the town of Tishbe in the Gilead area of Israel. Elijah prophesied to Ahab that there would be a terrible drought in the land, with no rain for years. *Underline Tishbe with green, and underline Gilead with purple.*
6. The Lord then told Elijah to go and hide near the brook Cherith which flowed into the Jordan River. There ravens brought food to him, and he drank water from the brook. *Color the brook Cherith blue and draw a small picture of a raven near it with your pen.*
7. After a time, the brook dried up because there had been no rain. The Lord told Elijah to journey to the city of Zarephath, which was in Sidonia. There he stayed with a widow and her son. The widow fed him from her small store of oil and flour, which miraculously did not run out. Later, Elijah revived the widow's son after he became very ill and stopped breathing. *Underline Zarephath with green and with your pen draw a small picture of a jar and a bowl beside it to remind you of the oil and flour.*
8. After some time, the Lord told Elijah to go see Ahab. Elijah challenged Ahab to put the prophets of Baal to a test. The Children of Israel gathered on Mount Carmel to watch as the prophets of Baal tried to call down fire onto an altar of Baal. Nothing happened. Then Elijah built an altar to the Lord and called on Him. Fire came down from heaven and consumed the altar. *With your pen draw a small picture of an altar with fire coming down onto it near Mt. Carmel.*
9. After this contest, Elijah had the prophets of Baal taken down to the Kishon River where they were executed. *Color the Kishon River blue.*

10. Elijah and his servant went back up on Mt. Carmel to look for rain. After looking seven times, the servant saw a small rain cloud coming from over the sea. As the rain was coming, Elijah and Ahab both journeyed to the city of Jezreel where Ahab had a palace. *Underline Jezreel with green.*
11. When Jezebel heard that the prophets of Baal had been executed, she was very angry and sent word to Elijah threatening to do the same to him. Elijah fled down to Beersheba which was in Judah. *Underline Beersheba with green.*
12. Leaving his servant in Beersheba, Elijah fled further south into the wilderness. There, while he lay under a thorn tree in despair, he was given food and water by an angel. This food gave him the strength to journey even further south for forty days and nights down to Mt. Horeb. There he hid in a cave and eventually heard the Lord telling him to return to Israel. *Mt. Horeb is on the Sinai peninsula which is not visible on your map. With your pen draw an arrow pointing down off the page and write "to Mt. Horeb" beside it. Draw a small picture of a cave beside the arrow.*
13. As the Lord told him, Elijah went next to the wilderness of Damascus where he anointed a new king of Syria. *Underline the wilderness of Damascus with purple.*
14. Elijah then traveled to Abel-Meholah where according to the Lord's instructions, he chose Elisha to become the next prophet after himself. Elijah threw his mantle over Elisha while he was plowing as a sign of this selection. *Underline the possible location of Abel-Meholah in green.*
15. Ahab decided that he wanted a certain vineyard that was near his palace in Jezreel. Naboth, who owned the vineyard, refused to sell it. Jezebel arranged to have Naboth killed, and Ahab went to take possession of the land. The Lord told Elijah to confront Ahab, and Ahab repented and humbled himself. *Draw a cluster of grapes beside the city of Jezreel.*
16. Some years later, after Ahab had been killed in a war against Syria, the time came for Elijah to be taken to heaven. Elijah and Elisha traveled together from Gilgal to Bethel and then on to Jericho. At each step of the journey, Elijah tried to get Elisha to remain behind, but Elisha would not leave his master. *Underline Gilgal, Bethel and Jericho with green.*
17. Then from Jericho, they crossed the Jordan river into the region of Gilead. After crossing the Jordan, Elijah was taken to heaven and Elisha took up the prophet's mantle. *With your pen, draw an arrow from Jericho across the Jordan. Then draw a small mantle at the end of the arrow to remind you of its passing from Elijah to Elisha.*

ELIJAH'S JOURNEYS

Boundary of Judah ++++
Boundary of Israel -





Meditate & Activate

Thinking or meditating about a passage from God's Word and finding opportunities to put it into action can be a powerful experience. Keep this card intact or cut out the illustrated quotation to use as a bookmark or put up somewhere in your home.

Meditate: We cannot make ourselves love doing the Lord's will. But if we consistently choose to turn away from things that are against His law, the Lord will bring us increasing joy in following His path.

Activate: Today, notice an idea or desire flowing into your mind which is "ungodly"—that is, against God's will. It might be a feeling of anger, a thought about cheating, or a sense of envy. Consciously choose not to act on this desire or idea; send it away by saying "no" to it in your mind.



Blessed is the man who walks not
in the counsel of the ungodly...
But his delight is in the
law of the Lord....

Psalms 1:1-2

To make a stronger bookmark, print this page on heavy paper or cardstock, cut in half and give half to each student.

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