

Elijah Goes to Heaven; Elisha Takes His Place

1 KINGS 19:16



Old Testament 7
Part 2: The Divided Kingdom

SUNDAY MORNING

Old Testament 7 [Class Attendance Sheet](#) provided in activity sheets (NOTE: The document is interactive, allowing the teacher to type in the Class, Teacher, and the children's names.)

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

1 Kings 19:16,19-21; 2 Kings 2:1-15; John 14:1-3; Revelation 21

MEMORY WORK:

YOUNGER CHILDREN: “[A]nd Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven” (2 Kings 2:11b).

OLDER CHILDREN: “Then it happened, as they continued on and talked, that suddenly a chariot of fire appeared with horses of fire, and separated the two of them; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven” (2 Kings 2:11).

SONGS AND FINGERPLAYS (SEE END OF LESSON FOR WORDS):

A [song book](#) and [audio recordings](#) of many of the curriculum songs are available on the curriculum Web site.

- [“2 Kings 2:11-12”](#)
- [“Sing a Song of Heaven”](#)
- [“Heaven is a Wonderful Place”](#)
- [“Elijah and Elisha”](#)

LESSON VISUALS AND TEACHING AIDS (NOTE ANY DISCLAIMERS):

- See [AP's Pinterest page](#) for ideas on bulletin boards, visuals, crafts, etc. [DISCLAIMER: Pins may sometimes need to be adjusted to be Scriptural.]
- [The Divided Kingdom 1](#) Bible fact cards (provided under “O.T. 7 Bible Facts”)
- “Summary of the Bible” from [“Kids Prep”](#) CD by Jeff Miller
- Pictures/drawings from any books listed under 3rd-4th Grader Pre-Class Activities/Learning Centers
- Betty Lukens' felt pieces
- Elijah A Beka Flash-a-Card Series (DISCLAIMER: use the cards, not the lesson book; skip card 4.3)
- [“Map of the Divided Kingdom”](#) (provided in activity sheets)



PERSONAL APPLICATION:

Heaven is a wonderful, special, beautiful place. Some day I want to live there with Jesus!

LESSON STARTS HERE

INTRODUCTION:

Review last week's lesson.

All the people in the Bible died except two men. One was Enoch (in the book of Genesis). He went to heaven to be with God without dying. Today we're going to learn how the great prophet Elijah went to heaven.

POINTS TO EMPHASIZE:

1. When Elijah was feeling sorry for himself and seeking refuge in a cave at Mount Horeb (Sinai), God reminded Elijah of His great power (in the storm, the fire, the earthquake, and the still, small voice). Then God told Elijah to get back to work. One of the things God told him to do was to find a man named Elisha to take his place as God's prophet (1 Kings 19:19-21). Elijah left Mount Horeb and traveled back to find Elisha.
2. Elisha left his father's farm behind to follow Elijah and learn from him. About 10 years passed. Elijah encouraged Elisha to leave him and go to different towns [Gilgal, Bethel (one of the centers of idol worship in Israel), and Jericho] while the old prophet went on with his work for God. But Elisha stubbornly refused to leave his old friend; he knew that the king of Israel (Ahaziah, son of Ahab) had tried to kill Elijah, and he wanted to stay with him. When they arrived in Bethel, a group of prophets (called "the sons of the prophets") who were living there asked Elisha if he knew that day would be Elijah's last. Elisha told them that he knew and asked them not to say anything ("**Keep silent**"—2 Kings 2:3).



NOTE: When Elisha told the sons of the prophets to "**keep silent,**" perhaps he did not want them to be upset about Elijah leaving, or he, himself, did not want to be upset about it. He was likely very close to Elijah, having served at his side for ten years. He did not want to leave Elijah's side (2 Kings 2:4,6), and called him "father" (2 Kings 2:12). He also may simply have not wanted to discuss it at that moment because of the gravity of the moment.

3. Elijah and Elisha traveled on to Jericho that day and more sons of the prophets met Elisha to tell him that his master would be taken away that day. They came to the Jordan River, and Elijah took off his cloak (mantle), rolled it up, and hit the water with it. Immediately the water of the Jordan opened up and the two prophets walked to the other side. Fifty sons of the prophets saw this happen.
4. The sons of the prophets and Elisha weren't the only ones who knew that it was time for Elijah to go be with the Lord. Elijah knew, too. When they had reached the other side of the Jordan River, Elijah asked his young friend what he could do for him before he was "taken." Elisha said that all he wanted was a "double portion" of Elijah's spirit. He wanted to be as strong in his faith and as powerful a prophet as Elijah had been for so many years. This was a "hard

thing” that Elisha asked, but Elijah told him his wish would be granted **if** he saw Elijah going up into heaven.

5. They walked on and talked. Suddenly a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared in the sky and took Elijah up into **heaven** in a whirlwind.



NOTE: The underlying Hebrew word for “**heaven**” in this story is plural—i.e., heavens. There are three heavens described in the Bible (see the article below): the atmosphere (sky—Genesis 1:20; 8:2; etc.), space (Genesis 15:5; 22:17; etc.), and the place where God and other celestial beings abide (Deuteronomy 10:14; 26:15; etc.). In this case, without further clarification as to his destination, it appears that the text is saying that Elijah was carried up into the sky (the “first heaven”), especially in light of John 3:13 (see the article referenced below) and Matthew 17:1-13, where he is depicted as being where Moses is, presumably in Hades.



RECOMMENDED READING FOR TEACHERS: See the article “**No One has Ascended to Heaven**” by Eric Lyons and “**One Second After Death**” by Dave Miller on the Apologetics Press Web site for a response to the allegation that Jesus made a mistake in making that claim and for a discussion of the three heavens of Scripture.

6. Elisha was so overwhelmed that he tore his clothes—in this case not only a sign of grief, but of absolute wonder/awe of what he had just seen. Elijah’s mantle fell to the ground as he was being taken into heaven, and Elisha picked it up. He walked back to the Jordan River, rolled up the mantle, struck the water, and walked to the other side on dry ground—just as Elijah had done. This was a sign to the **50 sons of the prophets** who were watching that Elisha was God’s choice (not just Elijah’s) to take Elijah’s place.



NOTE: See Joshua 3:1-4:24 for the other instance of the Jordan parting and the Israelites crossing on dry ground.



HISTORICAL NOTE: The phrase “**sons of prophets**” (or “schools of the prophets”) may be an indicator of the close relationships/associations these particular men had with Samuel, Elijah, and Elisha. The phrase first appears in Scripture during the time of Samuel. During the reign of King Saul, there was a great need for teachers who could (and would) encourage God’s chosen people to remember who they were and to obey Him. During that time, loosely-organized groups of prophets formed in order to be teachers of God’s Word. Some biblical commentators believe that Samuel started these groups. It is interesting that following his death, these groups are not mentioned again until the time of Elijah and Elisha, and then only in reference to the Northern Kingdom where Elijah and Elisha worked. They are not mentioned again after the death of Elisha.

7. Elijah is mentioned in other biblical passages, including Malachi 4:5-6 and Matthew 11:14 as an example of the prophet who would announce the coming of the Messiah. [John the Baptizer was that “Elijah.”] During the ministry of Jesus, Elijah (and Moses) appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration with Jesus (Matthew 17:3-4), representing the prophets who tried to teach and warn God’s people about the consequences of sin. Elijah was a powerful man of God, but he was not a perfect man. He

had his weak moments when he felt fear and uncertainty—like all of us do—but he loved God and served Him every day.

8. It is clear from this story (and by implication in Matthew 17:2-3) that Elijah will be in heaven. We sometimes sing the song “Heaven is a Wonderful Place.” Indeed, heaven **is** a wonderful place—a place where we want to go to be with God, Jesus, and people like Elijah forever and ever. God loved Elijah very much and chose this special way to take him to heaven. [It was a reward for Elijah, to be sure, but it was also a powerful sign to those watching that Elisha was to take his place. If we obey God like Elijah did, we, too, will go to heaven to be with God forever.]
9. Heaven is a happy place, a place with absolutely no sadness, no sickness, no war, no hunger, etc. In heaven we will sing and praise God all the time. Heaven is where Jesus went after His resurrection, and He has a special place prepared especially for each one of us. [Go into as much detail about heaven as you think appropriate for your class. As appropriate, talk to the children about Jesus’ Second Coming and the Judgment (meeting Jesus in the clouds, etc.).]



RECOMMENDED READING FOR TEACHERS: See the articles “[One Second After Death](#)” by Dave Miller and “[What Will Happen When Jesus Comes Again?](#)” by Kyle Butt on the Apologetics Press Web site for a discussion about how humans leave this World today.

PRE-CLASS ACTIVITIES/LEARNING CENTERS (TO BE USED AS CHILDREN ARE ARRIVING—BEFORE CLASS, AND UP TO THE FIRST FIVE MINUTES OF CLASS; OR AS HOMEWORK):

- Click here for complete [Activity Book](#) and [Answer Key](#).

Ages 2-5:

- “[Elijah in the Chariot Coloring Sheet](#)” (provided in activity sheets)
- Help children make “chariots” out of detergent scoops and milk jug lids. On each side of the scoops, help them attach milk jug lids with brads. Let them put red crinkly paper inside, along with a pipe cleaner figure of Elijah.
- “[Elijah and the Fiery Chariot Activity](#)”: Provide each child a picture of Elijah in the chariot that they can color; help them glue strips of orange and red tissue paper to the chariot to represent fire. Write the memory verse on each child’s paper. (provided in activity sheets)
- Review game: Make 8-10 “chariot” and “Elijah” cutouts. Write questions about the lesson on the chariots and corresponding answers on each “Elijah”. Attach magnets or Velcro® to the back of the “Elijah” cutouts and the front of the chariot cutouts. Ask each child (or pair of children) a review question, and help them match the correct answers to the questions. (“[Elijah and Chariot Cutouts](#)” provided in activity sheets)
- Make visuals to go with the song “2 Kings 2:11-12” and sing the song, using visuals, several times with children.

1st-2nd Graders:

- “[Elijah Goes to Heaven Word Search](#)” (provided in activity sheets)
- Play Hang Man with key words from this and previous lessons.
- Review game: Make 8-10 “chariot” and “Elijah” cutouts. Write questions about the lesson on the chariots and corresponding answers on each “Elijah”. Attach magnets or Velcro® to the back of the “Elijah” cutouts and the front of the chariot cutouts. Ask each child (or pair of

children) a review question, and help them match the correct answers to the questions. (“[Elijah and Chariot Cutouts](#)” provided in activity sheets)

- “[Elijah Goes to Heaven Fill in the Blank](#)” (provided in activity sheets)

3rd-4th Graders:

- “[Elijah Goes to Heaven Word Search](#)” (provided in activity sheets)
- Play Hang Man with key words from this and previous lessons.
- “[Elijah Goes to Heaven Fill in the Blank](#)” (provided in activity sheets)
- Have the children read the following:
 - 2 Kings 1-2; Revelation 21
 - *Elijah and the Great Prophets*, by Joy Melissa Jensen, Contemporary Bible Series, Scandinavia Publishing (DISCLAIMERS: p. 20—the text says a “great fish,” not a “whale”; p. 36—skip the phrase “like the one in his dream”; p. 49—skip the last two sentences; p. 61—change the first sentence of the second paragraph to “So a new law was written that protected the Jews.”)
 - *The Story of Elijah*, by Rhonda Colburn, Hambleton-Hill Publishing (DISCLAIMER: Skip the second paragraph on p. 12, starting with “They even...”)

SONGS:

“2 KINGS 2:11-12” ([Click to Hear](#))

Author: Unknown*

(Tune: “Are You Sleeping?”)

In a whirlwind, in a whirlwind,
Chariots of fire, chariots of fire;
Elijah going upward, Elijah going upward,
Heaven bound, heaven bound.

Elisha saw him, Elisha saw him,
Saw him go, saw him go;
Found Elijah’s mantle, found Elijah’s mantle,
Power from God, power from God.

Took the mantle, took the mantle,
Rolled it up, rolled it up;
Elisha struck the water, Elisha struck the water,
Jordan was dry, Jordan was dry.

“SING A SONG OF HEAVEN” ([Click to Hear](#))

Author: Jean Hooper (Adjustments made by Jeff Miller)

(Tune: “Jesus Loves Me”)

VERSE 1:

Heav’n is there for me, I know,
For the Bible tells me so.
Heav’n is where I want to be.
Jesus there I want to see.

CHORUS:

Yes, heaven's glory. (3X)
Jesus made for you and me.

VERSE 2:

Gates of pearl and streets of gold,
See my friends, both young and old.
Moses, Abraham, Elijah, too.
Heav'n is there for me and you.

(CHORUS)

VERSE 3:

No more sadness, no more fears;
God, Himself, will wipe our tears.
Heaven offers joy and love.
Happiness we'll find above.

(CHORUS)

VERSE 4:

We will take no bus nor train.
Ships don't go there, neither planes.
The only way that we can go,
Is through Jesus Christ I know.

(CHORUS)

“ELIJAH AND ELISHA” ([Click to Hear](#))

Author: Lora Laycook

(Tune: “Onward Christian Soldiers”)

Onward go Elisha! Marching on your way.
You must follow this man, learn to lead the way;
For God soon will take him, in a whirlwind, too.
Come, O come, Elisha, learn God's will to do.

CHORUS:

God will take Elijah, up to live above,
Come, O come Elisha, teach of God's great love.

“HEAVEN IS A WONDERFUL PLACE”

Author: O.A. Lambert

[See Internet for lyrics and tune]

*Author Unknown: Please contact us through the feedback button for this lesson if you are aware of any copyright information for this song.

*** IF YOU HAVE SUGGESTIONS PERTAINING TO THIS LESSON, PLEASE CLICK THE “SUGGESTION” BUTTON BESIDE THE BUTTON FOR THIS LESSON ON THE CURRICULUM WEB SITE.



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WEDNESDAY EVENING

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PERSONAL APPLICATION:

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INTRODUCTION:

Review [O.T. 7 Bible Fact Flash Cards](#) (provided under “O.T. 7 Bible Facts” on curriculum Web site)

POINTS TO EMPHASIZE:

1. Review Sunday’s lesson. (See [O.T. 7 Review Questions](#) for example questions.)
2. Review the miracles that Elijah performed and the highlights of his life. A “This is Your Life, Elijah” segment or holding a mock funeral, to review all the things Elijah did during his life, would be clever ways to present these highlights.

PRE-CLASS ACTIVITIES/LEARNING CENTERS (TO BE USED AS CHILDREN ARE ARRIVING—**BEFORE** CLASS, AND UP TO THE FIRST FIVE MINUTES OF CLASS; OR AS HOMEWORK):

See Sunday morning’s lesson

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