

ELIJAH (3)**1 Kings 19; 21; Romans 11:1-6**

Memory Verse: *Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God (Psalm 42:5 ESV).*

Background Helps:

Elijah's fear and deep discouragement in 1 Kings 19 certainly underscore the comment made about him in James 5:17 that "Elijah was a man with a nature like ours." The prophet of the LORD, who boldly defeated the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel, now runs for his life and wants to die! Notice how graciously the LORD treats his discouraged prophet throughout this chapter. And although, at this point, the LORD provides a prophet to succeed Elijah, namely Elisha (19:16, 19-21), God continues to use Elijah in the chapters that follow.

In your preparation this week, be sure to read the relevant pages in *Faith in the Face of Apostasy* (51-73).¹ Notice especially the interesting parallels Dillard draws between Moses and Elijah and how he relates these two prophets to the Lord Jesus, with whom they appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration (pp. 54-55).

Lesson Helps:

1 Kings 19 and 21 are so diverse in their content you would probably be well advised to choose one of them as the basis for your lesson this week.

1 Kings 21, with its portrayal of the pouting King Ahab (see 1 Kings 20:43 and 21:4-5), would make a great lesson for kids! A possible lesson aim: My students will learn about King Ahab coveting the vineyard of Naboth in 1 Kings 21, so that they will repent of covetousness in their own lives.

Hook: Make up a story about a child who doesn't get toy he wants for Christmas, a toy one of his/her friends has, and pouts and sulks about it. (Or use a similar story.)

Book: Tell the story of Naboth's vineyard in 1 Kings 19. Show how Ahab's frustrated greed (or covetousness) led to pouting, his pouting led to killing (with his wife Jezebel's help), his killing led to stealing, and all this sinning led to God's judgment (vv. 1-24). Teach your students the tenth commandment—"You shall not covet" (Ex. 20:17)—and the virtue of contentment (Heb. 13:5).

Look: How might your students be discontent with their own possessions and covet the possessions of others?

¹ Raymond B. Dillard, *Faith in the Face of Apostasy* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing Company, 1999), 51-73.

Took: Close your lesson with the good news of God's mercy in 1 Kings 21:27-29. God was willing to show mercy even to King Ahab when he humbled himself before God. Encourage your students to humbly repent of their covetousness and to seek God's merciful forgiveness and his help to be content with what they have.


Youth and adult classes can follow this same lesson plan, at an adult level, of course. And in classes with married couples, don't fail to point out how Jezebel incited her husband to all this evil. Urge husbands and wives, conversely, to encourage each other to follow the LORD and do what is right in his sight.

An alternative lesson plan for youth and adult classes would be based on 1 Kings 19. A possible aim: My students will learn about the LORD's encouragement of his discouraged prophet, Elijah, in 1 Kings 19, so that they will receive God's encouragement in the midst of their own discouragement. Here are a few suggestions:

- Find all the evidences of Elijah's discouragement in 1 Kings 19:1-5, 10, 14. Why do think he was so discouraged? Have you ever experienced such fear and deep discouragement?
- Find all the ways by which the LORD encouraged Elijah in I Kings 19:5-9, 11-13, 15-21. Notice how Paul uses verse 18 as an encouragement in Romans 11:1-6. How has God encouraged you in your times of fear and deep discouragement?
- Spend some time going over the memory verse in Psalm 42:5. Notice how the psalmist talks to himself: he challenges himself with a question ("Why . . . etc."), gives himself a command ("hope in God"), and encourages himself with a reason for hope ("for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God"). Encourage your students in their times of fear and deep discouragement to use this verse and follow this plan. The psalmist himself uses this same verse again in Psalm 42:11 and 43:5. Apply the remedy as often as necessary!

Remember to consult the questions in the reading schedule and in *Faith in the Face of Apostasy* for possible use in class. Also, in adult classes, if you focus on either 1 Kings 19 or 21, feel free to make *passing* reference to the other chapter, to keep the overall story line of Elijah moving forward.

Home Assignment:

 Read 2 Chronicles 21:1-6, 11-20; 1 Kings 22:51-53; 2 Kings 1:2-18.

 Memorize Deuteronomy 4:24 ESV.