

# CONNECTING FAITH AND LIFE

FAITH FORMATION FOR CHILDREN | YOUTH | FAMILY | ADULT

## Talking with God - God's Voice through the Prophets Week 1 - Talking with God- God's Voice Through Elijah

### **KEY POINT**

God uses Elijah to heal a young boy. It is through Elijah that God is made known. God uses us, our words and our actions, to make himself known in this world.

### **KEY VERSE**

1 Kings 1:24  
Nathan said, "My lord the king, have you said, 'Adonijah shall succeed me as king, and he shall sit on my throne?'"

### **OPENING PRAYER**

Begin your time together with this, or another, prayer:

God of Elijah, you have led your people through drought and famine, even when they have turned from your ways. We are hungry for knowledge of you and thirsty for your word. Be with us as we study, and fill us with your Spirit. In your name. Amen.

### **READ**

1 Kings 17:1-16 [17-24] (Additional text: Luke 4:24-26)

### **ABOUT THE STORY**

The kingdom that had been united under King David fell apart just two generations later, after the death of David's son Solomon (1 Kings 12). From 922 BCE onward, there were two kingdoms. The southern kingdom was known as Judah and had its capital at Jerusalem. The northern kingdom was called Israel and, while it was prosperous, it also experienced a great deal of turmoil. Over the two hundred year history of the kingdom, it had 19 kings, 8 of whom were assassinated. In addition, outside influences and threats were constant presences until the Assyrians conquered the northern kingdom in 722 BCE.

A primary concern for the authors of 1 Kings is to trace the reasons for the fall of the northern kingdom. The introduction of foreign gods like Ba'al and the failure of the northern kings to properly honor the God of Israel is a recurring theme.

Chapter 17 introduces King Ahab as the ruler of the northern kingdom. Ahab has married a Phoenician princess named Jezebel. The final verses of chapter 16 describe how "Ahab did more to provoke the anger of the LORD, the God of Israel, than had all the kings of Israel who were before him" (1 Kings 16:33), which is saying something.

This is the era in which Elijah appears. Elijah is one of the greatest prophets of ancient Israel, best remembered for his opposition to the introduction of foreign gods, especially Ba'al and Astarte. Today's passage is the first we hear of Elijah's ministry. We do not get a detailed biography of Elijah, or even a call story in the tradition of other biblical prophets. The first time we meet him, he proclaims judgment on Ahab by declaring a drought. He then flees and takes refuge outside Israel. His sojourn in Zarephath is remarkable not only for the miracles that he did there, but because it is not an Israelite city. The people of Zarephath, including

the widow, are Gentiles and worship Ba'al, the very god whose worship Elijah condemns. Over the course of chapter 17, we will see that Elijah is indeed a man of God, a true prophet who shows God's concern for all people, regardless of nationality.

God provides for each of us, often in ways we do not expect. Each person in this passage finds themselves in need, either of sanctuary, food, or life. Each time, God shows up and provides.

## SHARE

- Have you ever had a windfall when you really needed it? Found a \$20 bill on the ground when you did not have enough for lunch? Received an unexpected check in the mail just as the furnace went out? Had a tow truck show up just as a tire blew out? Share your story with the group. How did your situation resolve? How did you feel when you realized your need but could not meet it? How did you feel when help arrived?
- What image does the Wadi Cherith evoke for you? What would you imagine life to be like for Elijah in such a place?
- What emotions does this section, and particularly verse 16, evoke for you? Can you imagine how this story might have implications for your own life?

## PRAY

Make binoculars with your hands. Take a moment for each person to look around and look for things God has made. Look for God's love all around you. At the end of the time, form a circle and have each person say out loud something they saw, concluding with these words: Thank you God, for all you have made. Help us share your love and goodness with others. Amen.

## BLESS

Share this verbal blessing with one another: "You have been filled with God's provisions today. Amen."

## FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION AT HOME:

- Read Mark 5:21-43 and compare Elijah's raising of the widow's son to Jesus' raising of
- Jairus' daughter. What parallels do you see? What differences? What do you think Mark wants you to know about Jesus?
- Look for a service organization in your area that focuses on the needs of people in
- vulnerable situations. Is there an opportunity for you to get involved?
- Using a newspaper or the Internet, find where the most severe droughts in the world are right now. Pray for each of these areas and the residents in your daily prayers this week.

