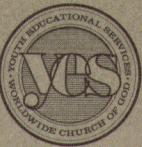


YOUTH BIBLE LESSONS



LEVEL 6



LESSON 7



Elijah—A Man of Miracles

ELIJAH—A MAN OF MIRACLES

Has a miracle ever occurred in your life or in the life of someone you have known? Perhaps you know of a person who was healed by God of a terrible sickness or disease. Or maybe you know of someone who was saved from certain death by a miracle from God!

As we have learned in previous lessons, the Bible is filled with many dramatic and outstanding miracles. You may recall some of these miracles, such as the ten plagues on Egypt, the parting of the Red Sea, and God's deliverance of the nation of Judah from the Ethiopian army of one million men. On a number of occasions, the dead were even raised to life!

In this lesson we will learn about a faithful servant of God named Elijah, a man whom God used in dealing with the idolatrous nation of Israel. God performed many miracles through Elijah to show the king and the nation who is the true God, the God they should have been worshipping.

ABOUT OUR COVER . . .

Mt. Carmel in Israel, where God demonstrated His power to the people of Israel by sending fire from heaven to consume Elijah's sacrifice.

YES Photo

ISRAEL'S IDOLATRY

In the last lesson, we learned how the people of Israel were led astray from the true God. They followed the example of their leaders and began to worship false gods. As the years passed, they became more and more involved in idolatry.

You may remember how Jeroboam obtained the kingdom of Israel from Rehoboam and deliberately led the people of Israel into idolatry. Review the last lesson and briefly list several ways Jeroboam led the people of Israel away from the true God.

Baasha, Zimri and Omri each reigned as kings over Israel after the death of Jeroboam. All were idolatrous and wicked.

When Omri died, his son Ahab became the next ruler of Israel. He went further into idolatry than all the kings of Israel before him. "And _____ made a _____; and _____ did more to _____ the Lord _____ of _____ to _____ than all the _____ of _____ that were _____ him" (I Kings 16:33).

JEZEBEL'S EVIL INFLUENCE

Ahab chose as his wife a woman named Jezebel. She came from Zidon (also known as Sidon), a country to the north of Israel.

Jezebel was a cruel, scheming Canaanite woman who detested God and wanted to plunge the nation of Israel further into idolatry. She influenced Ahab to build a temple and a great altar for the false god Baal, whom she worshipped. The people of Israel blindly followed their leaders and began to worship Baal also.

Have you ever noticed that people tend to follow their political, social and religious leaders? People often accept the *opinions* of certain entertainers, governors and presidents as being the truth, without really checking to be sure.

You may wish to ask your parents to help you list famous people whose opinions and styles have influenced others. If you do not already know, ask them how the style of long hair for men became popular in the United States and Great Britain in the early 1960s. (Be sure to read I Corinthians 11:14 to find out what God thinks about long hair on a man.)

Adolph Hitler is an example of a national leader who profoundly influenced an entire nation. Under his leadership, many innocent people were put to death in the 1940s during World War II.

In some cases, leaders have also influenced people to perform good

deeds. When leaders obey God, their followers are more likely to obey Him also.

But Ahab and Jezebel were wicked and evil in God's sight. Jezebel's hatred for those who followed God was so intense that she sent soldiers to kill those who were known to be true prophets of God. Ahab did not object to this wholesale murder.

GOD SENDS ELIJAH TO PROCLAIM A DROUGHT

Because of the great wickedness and evil taking place, God decided to intervene and punish the idolatrous nation for its own good. He chose a man named Elijah to show King Ahab and the people of Israel who is the true God—to restore the worship of the true God and obedience to His commandments.

Elijah was one of the few who had remained faithful to God and refused to follow in the idolatrous ways of the Israelites. God told him to leave his home in Gilead and deliver an important message to the king. Elijah obeyed and some time later arrived in the capital city of Samaria.

Upon entering the palace, Elijah said to the king, "I stand before the *true God* of Israel. As surely as He lives, there will be no more rain in the land until I return to announce otherwise."

Elijah then turned and left the palace. Ahab, who probably did not believe the prophet, made no attempt to stop him.

The first few weeks of dry weather were not all that unusual—after all, rain

may not fall for many weeks at a time. But as the months passed, Ahab began thinking more and more about what Elijah had said.

Four months passed, then five, six and seven months. Still no rain—even during the season when rain was supposed to fall! Eventually Ahab realized that Elijah had spoken the truth! He began an intensive search for the prophet, but Elijah was nowhere to be found!

GOD MIRACULOUSLY FEEDS ELIJAH

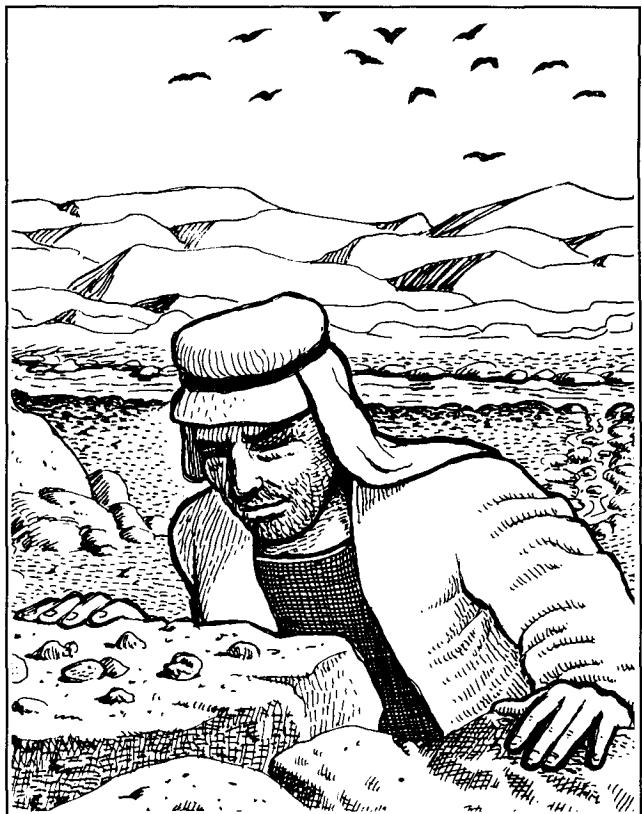
After Elijah had announced the coming drought to Ahab, God said to him, "Get thee _____, and turn thee _____, and _____ thyself by the brook _____, that is before _____. And it shall be, that thou shalt _____ of the brook; and I have _____ the _____ to _____ thee there" (I Kings 17:3-4).

Elijah obeyed God and had immediately left for safety.

At the Brook Cherith, which flowed into the Jordan River, Elijah found a suitable place to sleep, perhaps in a cave near the brook. He drank the water from the brook. Twice each day a flock of ravens, sent by God, delivered his meat and bread. Although Elijah did not know exactly where the meat and bread came from, he knew God sent it, and he was very thankful.

God sustained Elijah's life in this miraculous way every morning and evening during the time he was at the brook.

The Bible does not mention what



A flock of ravens delivered food to Elijah twice each day at the Brook Cherith.

Elijah did during the passing months he spent at the brook. Apparently he was alone, and was never seen by Ahab's servants.

Because there had been no rain in months, the brook eventually dried up. God, who faithfully fed Elijah twice each day, could have also given him water in a miraculous way. But He chose not to do so.

Instead, God told Elijah to leave the brook and go to the town of Zarephath. Located in Zidon, Zarephath was about a hundred miles north of Samaria on the eastern edge of the Mediterranean Sea. There Elijah would find a certain widow who would supply him with food and lodging.

A CONTINUOUS SUPPLY OF FOOD

As Elijah approached the gates of the city, he saw a woman gathering sticks. She was the widow God had described to him.

Elijah walked toward the widow and said, "Please bring me a cup of water to drink."

The widow turned to fulfill Elijah's request. As she was leaving, Elijah spoke to her again. "Please bring me a small piece of bread also," he said.

Somehow the widow knew Elijah was a servant of God. She said to him, "As the Eternal your God lives, I don't even have a loaf of bread. I have only a handful of meal in a barrel and a little oil in a jar."

The widow then added sadly, "I am gathering a few sticks with which to build a fire. I plan to bake the oil and meal into a bit of bread. My son and I will eat it and then," she continued weakly, "we will die" (I Kings 17:12).

Elijah, in a positive tone answered her, "Don't be afraid. Go and do as you have said. But make me a small cake of bread first. Bring it to me and afterwards, make some for yourself and your son."

Elijah then assured her, "For thus saith the Lord God of Israel, The _____ of _____ shall not _____, neither shall the curse of _____, until the day that the Lord _____ upon the earth" (I Kings 17:14).

What a wonderful and unusual

miracle God was to perform! God planned to feed Elijah and save a woman and her young son from starvation.

Imagine having a container of flour that you couldn't use up. Each time you took out a cupful, flour still remained. No matter how much flour you used, there was always more!

Trusting God to keep His promise, the woman went to prepare the meal. She baked Elijah's meal first, then her own and her son's. Later, when she returned to prepare another meal, she discovered that there was plenty of flour and oil.

From that day until the drought ended, she never had to worry about food. She fed Elijah, her son and herself for many days (I Kings 17:15).



Because the widow helped Elijah, God blessed her with enough food to last throughout the drought.

THE DEAD RAISED TO LIFE

Elijah lived with the widow and her son for many months. He slept in an upstairs room in her house.

One day the widow's young son became ill. As the days passed, his illness grew increasingly worse. "His _____ was so _____

[serious], that there was no _____ left in _____" (I Kings 17:17).

The widow pitifully embraced the limp and lifeless body of her son. She somehow felt that Elijah had something to do with her son's death.

"What have I to do with you?" she asked. "Have you come here to remind me of my past sins, and to bring about the death of my son?"

The widow's words were very harsh and unkind. She apparently forgot about the miracle God had been performing since Elijah had come to her home.

But Elijah reacted in a gentle manner. "Give the boy to me," he said.

The prophet took the limp body from his mother's arms. He walked up the stairway to his upstairs room, where he had lived since coming to Zarephath. There he laid the boy on his bed.

Elijah then stretched out his own body over the boy's lifeless form. "In your mercy," he earnestly prayed to God, "please bring this child back to life" (I Kings 17:21).

Elijah may not have understood why the child died, but he had faith that God would answer his prayer.

God did hear and answer Elijah's earnest prayer. The boy's heart began to beat; his cold body warmed. After a moment the boy began to breathe and move.

Elijah rose, picked up the living child and carried him downstairs. "See!" he said to the child's mother, "Your son lives!"

The mother eagerly received her young son. With tears of joy she apologized to Elijah for her unkind words.

"I now know," she told the prophet, "that you are a man of God and that the words you speak are words of truth!" (I Kings 17:24.)

DROUGHT SOON TO END

Many days and weeks passed and Elijah continued hiding in Zarephath with the widow and her son.

Finally, God told Elijah that the drought would soon come to an end. By this time the entire land yearned for water.

According to James 5:17, how long did the drought last? _____

All over the land of Israel plants, trees and even animals died from the lack of water.

In a severe drought, water is so scarce it is rationed. To ration something means to divide it carefully so that it will last as long as possible. Usually no water for washing or bathing is allowed. People receive only a very small amount for drinking—just enough to keep their bodies alive.

ELIJAH REVEALS HIMSELF TO AHAB

After three and one-half years of drought, God told Elijah to return to Israel and see Ahab. "Go show yourself to the king," God said. "Tell him I will send rain and end the drought."

While Elijah traveled southward toward Samaria, Ahab and his chief servant, Obadiah, searched the countryside. They were looking for grass to feed the king's starving horses and mules. Ahab headed a group which searched in one area and Obadiah headed another group which searched in a different area.

As Elijah neared the capital city, he met Obadiah. Although Obadiah was Ahab's chief steward, he greatly feared God. In fact, Obadiah had risked his own life to save the lives of a hundred of God's prophets when Jezebel first began her campaign to kill all of God's prophets. Obadiah secretly hid them in caves in nearby mountains and gave them food and water to live on (I Kings 18:3-4).

When Obadiah saw Elijah, he bowed before him. "Is it really you, Elijah?" he asked in astonishment. "We have searched everywhere for you."

Read I Kings 18:8 for Elijah's reply. "And he answered him, _____: _____, tell thy lord [Ahab], Behold, _____."

"I can't do that," Obadiah fearfully replied. "By the time I tell Ahab you are here, you might be gone. God may carry you away secretly again to protect you. If I say you are here and Ahab finds

you aren't, he will have me killed."

"Ahab has searched all over for you," continued Obadiah. "He asked the kings of the surrounding nations to help him look for you. When the rulers said they could not find you, Ahab had them swear they were telling the truth."

Elijah calmed Obadiah's fears by saying, "As the Eternal of hosts lives, before whom I stand, I will show myself to Ahab today."

Elijah referred to God as the Eternal of hosts to remind Obadiah that God would protect them.

Obadiah now felt more confident, and went to tell Ahab the news. "I have found Elijah, the prophet!" he announced to the startled king.

Excitedly, Ahab went to meet Elijah. "Well," he growled at the prophet, "we meet again at last! Are you the one who troubles Israel?"

"I have not troubled Israel. *You* and your father's house are the ones who have troubled Israel," Elijah boldly retorted. "You have turned from God and have followed Baal!"

Clearly Elijah did not fear Ahab. Elijah's boldness intrigued the king. Because he felt Elijah was the key to desperately needed rain, Ahab did not order his men to execute him. Instead, he listened as Elijah continued to speak.

"Send word to all the people of Israel to gather at Mount Carmel," Elijah said. "Then, assemble the 450 prophets of Baal and 400 of Jezebel's special prophets that eat at her table."

Hoping this might mean the end of

the drought, Ahab agreed to Elijah's unusual request.

ELIJAH CONFRONTS THE PROPHETS OF BAAL

When all the people assembled a few days later, Elijah arrived. It was early morning. Ahab arrived along with 450 prophets of Baal. But Jezebel and her 400 special prophets did not attend.

From a high peak Elijah's voice boomed out to the crowd below. "How long halt ye between _____? if the _____ be _____, _____ him: but if _____, then _____" (I Kings 18:21).

The people silently listened to what Elijah had to say. He then proposed a

contest which would show who is the true God.

"Let the 450 prophets prepare a sacrifice to Baal," Elijah said. "I alone will prepare a sacrifice to God. Let no one put fire under the sacrifices. Let the 450 prophets call out to Baal and I will pray to God." Elijah paused for emphasis, then finished by saying, "Let the God who answers by fire be the true God."

The crowd responded to the sincerity and simplicity of Elijah's proposal by shouting "Agreed!" in chorus.

Elijah told the false prophets to choose a bullock for sacrifice. "You may have the first opportunity to prove to the people whether Baal is the true God," he said.

The prophets of Baal prepared their



The prophets of Baal danced and sang wildly for hours, hoping their god would answer with fire.

sacrifice. The animal was slaughtered and cut up before the onlookers, and placed on a hastily constructed altar.

Finally, the sacrifice was ready. The prophets danced around the altar, singing and yelling to Baal. All morning long they called Baal to answer with fire. They continued to leap and dance about the altar.

For hours, Elijah sat close by, watching the commotion. At noon he started mocking the dancing prophets. "If you yell a little louder maybe he will hear you," Elijah shouted.

"Maybe Baal is in conference. Or perhaps he has taken a short vacation. Maybe he is asleep. Yell louder and he might wake up!" Elijah's tone insulted the pagans.

The prophets responded to Elijah's taunts. They cried even louder, "O Baal, hear us!"

What did they do next? Write out I Kings 18:28 on the following lines.

These foolish activities continued until mid-afternoon. Still Baal did not answer.

GOD'S FIERY ANSWER

Ignoring the false prophets, Elijah calmly rose and motioned for the people to come closer. Years earlier on Mount Carmel, the people of Israel had sacrificed to the true God. But after many years of neglect, the altar they had used was almost completely broken down.

The people watched as Elijah took twelve stones and repaired the ancient altar. Each stone represented one of the twelve tribes of Israel. Elijah then dug a deep trench completely around the altar. He laid wood under the altar. Next he prepared the sacrifice and placed it on the altar. As the people watched, Elijah had four barrels of water poured on the sacrifice and the wood.

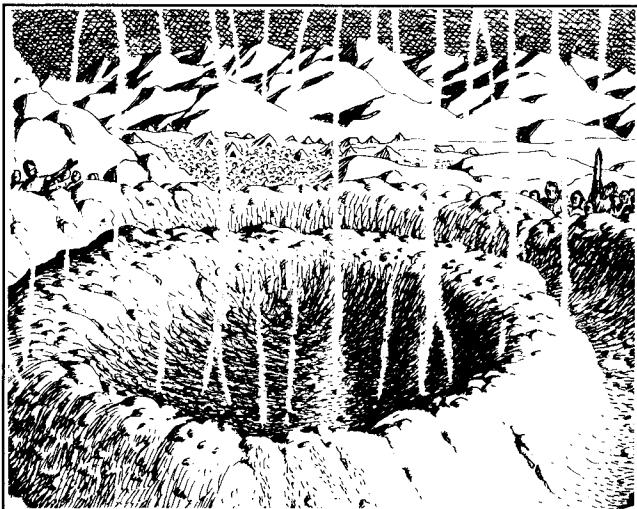
Since water was so scarce, some people probably thought this was a terrible waste. The water ran around the altar and filled up the trench, completely soaking the sacrifice and the wood. Before Elijah stopped, however, he had four more barrels poured over the sacrifice. And then another four!

Elijah then stepped back and prayed. He did not dance, scream or cut himself. His prayer was short, but very earnest.

Copy Elijah's short prayer, found in I Kings 18:36-37, on the following lines.

As soon as Elijah concluded his prayer, God answered. A fireball appeared high over Mount Carmel. Suddenly the fire fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice. The fire also consumed the wood and the stones of the altar and even the dust underneath it. The water in the trench was instantly dried up.

After the smoke cleared, the people saw a black crater where the altar once rested.



A fireball from God totally consumed Elijah's sacrifice, leaving only a blackened crater.

THE ETERNAL IS GOD!

In the minds of the people, there was no question about who had won the contest. They fell on their faces and cried out. "The Eternal, He is God! The Eternal, He is God!" they cried.

The people now understood that the prophets of Baal had been largely responsible for leading them into idolatry.

In Deuteronomy 13:1-4 God had told the Israelites not to follow those who would teach them to worship false gods. Read these verses and summarize them on the following lines. _____

The lesson for us today is that we should follow leaders who serve the true God and who have been placed in positions of authority by Him.

Now that the false prophets were exposed, Elijah commanded that they be

seized. "Don't let any of them escape," he ordered the people.

Elijah was following God's instructions, found in Deuteronomy 13:5, which commanded the people of Israel to kill false prophets who attempted to lead them into idolatry. Write out this verse on the following lines. _____

The people obeyed and dragged all 450 false prophets down the mountain and killed them near the Brook Kishon.

AN ABUNDANCE OF RAIN

Elijah then turned his attention to Ahab. Although Ahab was a wicked ruler, God did not give Elijah the authority to harm him. God would deal with the king later in another way.

"It's time to get up and get away from here," Elijah said to Ahab. "Eat and drink. A great amount of rain will soon come!"

Ahab, sobered by what he had just witnessed, obeyed. While he ate and drank, Elijah went up to the top of Mount Carmel and prayed for rain.

Bowed low, with his face between his knees, Elijah prayed fervently. He then sent his servant to look toward the sea and to report back if there were any signs of cloudiness in the sky. The servant returned a little while later and said, "There is nothing!"

The news didn't discourage Elijah, who continued to pray. Seven times

more he sent the servant. Each time, but the last, Elijah received the same news. No rain!

But the last time the servant said, "I see a little cloud forming out over the sea. It has the shape of a man's hand."

"That's it!" Elijah thought. The cloud was what he had expected. "Go to Ahab quickly," he told the servant, "and tell him that the rain will fall very soon. Tell him that it would be wise to leave the area immediately so that his chariot will not get bogged down in the mud the downpour will create."

The small cloud rapidly grew larger and darker. Soon heavy rain clouds roared and thundered.

Ahab realized that rain would soon be

falling. Following Elijah's advice, he swiftly got into his chariot, and started out across the plains toward the town of Jezreel, about twenty miles distant.

Elijah also headed toward the town of Jezreel, but by foot. With help from God in the form of additional strength and speed, Elijah outran Ahab's chariot all the way to Jezreel, arriving there first!

Imagine a man outrunning a horse-drawn chariot for twenty miles! This was another of the many fantastic miracles God performed during Elijah's lifetime!

In the next lesson, we will learn more about what happened to the the nations of Israel and Judah, and about many miracles God performed through His servants the prophets.

WHO'S WHO AND WHAT'S WHAT (Match the following)

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Cherith | A. Ahab's father |
| 2. Zidon | B. Brook where Elijah stayed |
| 3. Obadiah | C. Jezebel's homeland |
| 4. Man's hand | D. Ahab's chief servant |
| 5. Zarephath | E. Cloud shape |
| 6. Ravens | F. Hidden from Jezebel |
| 7. 100 prophets | G. Widow's city |
| 8. Who troubled Israel | H. Servant saw a cloud |
| 9. 12 stones | I. Miraculous food |
| 10. Omri | J. Tribes of Israel |
| 11. Deuteronomy 13:5 | K. False prophets |
| 12. Seventh trip | L. Israel's kings |



Elijah's servant watched intently from the top of Mt. Carmel for any sign of rain.

EDITOR IN CHIEF: Herbert W. Armstrong

Produced in cooperation with Imperial Schools.

© 1983 Worldwide Church of God for the entire
contents of this publication.

BIBLE MEMORY I Kings 17:14
I Kings 18:21
James 5:17
Deuteronomy 13:1-4

SCRAMBLED ASSIGNMENT

Unscramble each of the following words in the sentence below to reveal
a written assignment.

V A E H O U Y V E E R A D H A R L M A I E C

R C O C U N I U Y R O F E L I R O W N K O N

F O M E E N O O S H W O S A H F I O S

?

T R E W I A E F W G A A R P A S H P R U T B A O

R Y U O E P R X C N E I E E N O A P R T E A A S

E S T H E F O R E P P A