



11

God Uses Elijah

Key Theme

- God alone is to be worshipped.

Key Passages

- 1 Kings 18:20–29, 18:32–39

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Compare the actions of the priests of Baal to Elijah's actions.
- Describe how God demonstrated His power over Baal.



Lesson Overview



Come On In

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Students will place paper strips at 1 Kings 18.

Students will practice the memory verse by unscrambling the words on the activity sheet and then reciting the verse to each other or to the class.



Activity 1: God Uses Elijah Class Notes

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Students will fill out the God Uses Elijah Class Notes as you study the lesson. Pass out the class notes before you begin to teach.



Studying God's Word

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God sent the prophet Elijah to challenge wicked King Ahab and the prophets of Baal to demonstrate the power and identity of the true God. The prophets of Baal could not call down fire on their sacrifice. But Elijah's sacrifice was consumed, and the people bowed in worship to the all-mighty, one true God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel.



Activity 2: Altar Made of Stones

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Students will divide into teams and race to build an altar with stones and sticks. Then they will drench the altar with water as a reminder that the Lord is the one true God and nothing is impossible for Him.

Lesson Preparation

WHAT YOU WILL DO



COME ON IN

- Cut paper into strips for each student to mark today's study passages in 1 Kings 18.
- Print the Memory Verse Review Sheet from the Resource DVD-ROM for each student.



GOD USES ELIJAH CLASS NOTES

- Print one God Uses Elijah Class Notes from the Resource DVD-ROM for each student. Keep the answer key for your use.



STUDYING GOD'S WORD

- Study the Prepare to Share section.
- Go Before the Throne.



ALTAR MADE OF STONES

- Gather supplies listed to the right.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- Memory Verse Poster
- Paper strips
- Memory Verse Review Sheet for each student

- God Uses Elijah Class Notes for each student
- God Uses Elijah Class Notes Answer Key
- Pencils

- Student Take Home Sheets

- Each team will need 12 stones, 12 little paper cups, 4 sticks, one bucket
- Another bucket for water to pour on the "altar"
- Water
- Masking tape



Memory Verse

1 Chronicles 29:11 Yours, O Lord, is the greatness, the power and the glory, the victory and the majesty; for all that is in heaven and in earth is Yours; Yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and You are exalted as head over all.

➤ **Pace your lesson!** Use the clocks to mark the time you want to finish each section. This will help you stay on track and finish on time. You may need to shorten or drop sections as necessary.





Prepare to Share

SCRIPTURAL BACKGROUND

Prepare to teach by preparing your heart. Read the key passage listed above with this background.

Today's lesson is about another prophet of God. God used prophets throughout the Old Testament to send messages of encouragement, judgment, warning, and to perform miracles in His name to show His glory! The prophet Elijah ministered, like Jonah, to the 10 tribes of the Northern Kingdom of Israel. He had a powerful ministry in spite of the turmoil, the victories, the defeats, and the depression he often endured (1 Kings 17–19).

Through Elijah we come to know that God is a jealous God. When we hear the word jealous, we often think it refers to being envious of someone—wanting something they have for ourselves. We tend to consider jealousy a sinful reaction. So when we hear that God is jealous (Exodus 34:13–14), we wonder what it means. God cannot sin, nor does anyone physically possess anything He would want, since everything belongs to Him (Psalm 50:12). His jealousy is not the sinful jealousy we often consider. So what is it? God's jealousy is a desire for His own glory! God's jealousy is provoked when we worship anything above Him. In the Bible, His jealousy is related to idolatry (Exodus 20:4–5, 34:14; Deuteronomy 4:23–24, 5:9, 32:21; Joshua 24:19–20). As the Creator, God is the only one who rightly deserves to be worshipped. As the Creator, He is righteous in His jealousy to be exclusively worshipped, and those who bow down to other gods will surely face His wrath.

Elijah knew that there is one true God and that He alone is to be worshipped. But at that time, King Ahab and his wife Jezebel ruled over Israel in Samaria. Ahab worshipped the false god Baal, built a temple, set up an altar to Baal in the temple, and erected wooden images to worship (1 Kings 16:31–33). In fact, Ahab did more to provoke God's anger than any other king of Israel (1 Kings 16:33). And God would reveal His jealousy when Ahab promoted pagan worship. Into this idolatrous environment God sent Elijah, who stood before King Ahab and pronounced that the Lord God of Israel would stop the rain and cause a severe drought in the land (1 Kings 17:1).

God did not spare Elijah from this drought but did care for him in supernatural ways—first at the Brook Cherith where he found water to drink and food from ravens sent from God (1 Kings 17:3–4). And then God sent him to Zephath, a city on the Mediterranean Sea, to a widow who was commanded to provide for

the prophet of God (1 Kings 17:9–10). Although destitute, she was able to do so by God's miraculous mercy and grace (1 Kings 17:11–14).

God eventually sent Elijah back to challenge Ahab and the 850 false prophets who worshiped pagan gods (1 Kings 18:1, 18:18–19). Elijah persuaded King Ahab to assemble with the false prophets and all Israel at Mount Carmel for God's determined confrontation. There, he asked the Israelites, "How long will you falter between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him" (1 Kings 18:21).

Altars were built, sacrifices were prepared, but the challenge was to be the fire. Whoever would answer the plea for fire to burn the sacrifice was the true God (1 Kings 18:24). The Baal worshippers called, danced, leaped, howled, and cut themselves with knives and lances—but to no avail. The one true God would not allow them to succeed (1 Kings 18:26–29). He was restraining the demons behind the inanimate idols. The priests' efforts were futile.

Now Elijah was prepared to show the power and glory of the true Creator God. The altar was prepared, and lest anyone doubt God's authority, Elijah ordered that four pots of water be poured onto the sacrifice and over the wood. This was done three times! Even the trench around the altar was filled with water (1 Kings 18:33–35).

Elijah cried out to the Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel (Jacob). Then, the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, the wood, the stones, the dust, and the water that was in the trench. The people fell to the ground and proclaimed that the Lord, He is God (1 Kings 18:38–39).

At Elijah's command the prophets of Baal were seized and executed at the Brook Kishon (1 Kings 18:40). This fulfilled God's law that any false prophet should be killed (Deuteronomy 13:5). And as Elijah prayed to the Lord from the top of Mount Carmel, a cloud appeared and the drought ended with heavy rainfall.

In Israel, it was evident that Baal was nothing and that God was everything. God is not mocked. His truth will prevail, and the whole world will one day know that He is God, the only true God, and that salvation comes only one way—through His Son Jesus Christ, crucified on a Cross and raised again to life!

HISTORICAL/APOLOGETICS BACKGROUND

Elijah had a long ministry in both the northern and southern kingdoms. He was born in Israel and

is said to have come from Tishbe (1 Kings 17:1). As God's prophet, Elijah was called to fulfill many different roles. He delivered messages of national judgment because of idolatry and messages of judgment to individual leaders. His ministry was affirmed by the working of many miracles. These signs were a mark of the authenticity of Elijah's work on behalf of God. He stopped the rain (1 Kings 17:1), raised the dead (1 Kings 17:22), called fire from heaven (1 Kings 18:38), and performed other signs.

Elijah ministered during the early part of the divided kingdom, a time when there was rampant idolatry in Israel and Judah. As he constantly called the tribes back to worship Jehovah, he faced a religious system that was based in works and superstition rather than in truth. The demonic influence in the religious systems of the Gentile nations was obvious and was a constant cause for judgment against Israel and Judah. God used the nations surrounding the two kingdoms to bring judgment on the people.

Elijah was one of the earliest of the prophets proclaiming to the Israelites the message of repentance and reconciliation with God, but that message would be repeated by others over the next several hundred years. The Jews did not remain faithful to God as a nation, but they repeatedly involved themselves in spiritual adultery with other gods—the idolatry that is still present in all other religions today. And as we look at the world around us, and our own hearts, the words of John Calvin ring true: "From this we may gather that man's nature, so to speak, is a perpetual factory of idols" (Institutes Book I.XI.8). 1 Corinthians 10:14

warns us to "flee from idolatry." God alone is worthy of praise and deserves first place in our hearts.

God is faithful, and as He did in Elijah's time (1 Kings 19:18), He will always reserve a remnant who worship Him in truth and who declare His Word to the next generation. Remember that this is your task as you teach your students.

For more information on this topic, see the Online Resource Page.



BEFORE THE THRONE

Blessed are you, Lord! I rejoice in your power and might and recognize that you alone are worthy to be worshipped. Nothing is too difficult for you. You are great in power and mighty in deed. Help me to remember that although my desire is for an undivided heart, sometimes my heart is prone to wander. When that happens, Holy Spirit, convict me, so I confess quickly and turn back to you. As I teach this lesson, help me to point out your omnipotence. There is no one like you. Help me and my students to grow in faith until we are able to trust you to do the impossible. And Lord, for those students who don't know you, draw them to yourself. Convict them of their sins, so they long for forgiveness and a newness of life that only you can provide, through Jesus Christ.



COME ON IN

As students arrive . . .

- They will mark their Bibles at 1 Kings 18 with a strip of paper.
- They will say the memory verse after they unscramble the words on the Memory Verse Review Sheet.

This time at the beginning of class should be used to review the memory verse. We have provided an activity sheet on the Resource DVD-ROM for you to use. Students should unscramble the letters of the missing words and then recite the verse to you or another student. Each week the verse will get harder to unscramble. You may have other ideas and ways to encourage your students to memorize the verse.



After all the students arrive, pray with them before beginning the lesson.



REVIEW

Using the Lesson Theme Posters provided with each lesson, quickly review the previous lesson(s) with your students. Take 5 to 10 minutes to reinforce the important truths the students have heard so far in your class.

Ask the children questions about the previous lessons as you display the Lesson Theme Posters. Reflect briefly on the passages you read, bringing the objectives and themes back into focus. This will refresh the truths in your students' minds and maintain continuity as you teach through the lessons.



God Uses Elijah Class Notes

MATERIALS

- God Uses Elijah Class Notes
- God Uses Elijah Class Notes Answer Key
- Pencils

INSTRUCTIONS

Print the class notes for each student. Pass them out at the beginning of class. Have students fill in the blanks as you study the lesson.

We will be completing these class notes as we study the Bible passages. Try not to work ahead. You will fill in the blanks as we come to them.

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

As we complete our class notes today, we'll discover just how powerful the one true God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob really is!



Studying God's Word

READ THE WORD

► Use the History of Israel Poster included with your teacher kit to show your class where the biblical accounts you study chronologically fit into this timeline.

Refer to the Lesson Theme Posters. Today's lesson is about another prophet of God. Remember, God used prophets in the Old Testament to send His messages of encouragement and judgment to His people. The prophets of God often performed miracles in His name to show His glory! The people did not have the complete Bible in the times of the prophets. So God spoke through these special men to teach the people His truth. These prophets helped the people know and understand God. We have talked about the prophet Samuel. God used Samuel to minister to King Saul and King David after Saul. In fact, Samuel anointed both Saul and David as kings in the name of the Lord. And then we learned about Nathan. He ministered to David as a prophet of God. Last week, we read about the prophet Jonah. He tried to run from God, but in the end obeyed God and warned the people of Nineveh to repent and turn to God. *Refer to the Roles of the Prophets Poster.*

Today, we'll meet another prophet of God—Elijah! Like Jonah, he spent most of his time in the northern kingdom of Israel. This prophet, Elijah, spoke and acted for God during the reign of King Ahab. *Refer to Elijah and King Ahab on the History of Israel Poster.*

King Ahab was a wicked king. He did not worship the true God but worshipped many false gods—especially the god called Baal. King Ahab and his wife Jezebel built a temple to this god, set up an altar, and erected wooden images to worship. This false god, Baal, had 400 priests and 450 prophets who worshipped him and made sacrifices to him in the land. We know that God demands all worship and praise be given to Him alone. He was not pleased with the false gods, prophets, and worship of Baal. And so God sent Elijah to speak to the wicked King Ahab who did not love the true God.

God's message to King Ahab through Elijah came as a challenge to the priests and prophets of Baal. God was angry that the people were worshipping false gods, and He was going to glorify His name among the people. This is where we're going to begin now. Everyone was gathered at a place called Mount Carmel. Ahab (with the 450 prophets of Baal) was going up against only one prophet of the true God, Elijah.

1 Kings 18:20–25

Let's read 1 Kings 18:20–25. *Divide the passage for members of the class to read aloud.*

EXAMINE THE WORD

The people were gathered and ready to watch the challenge between the false prophets of Baal and God's prophet, Elijah. Let's look more closely at

these verses now, so we can see what the Lord wants to say to us through them today.

Observe the Text

? **Who was gathered? Where were they gathering?** *1 Kings 18:20. All the children of Israel and the prophets gathered on Mount Carmel.*

? **What was Elijah's question to the people?** *1 Kings 18:21. How long will you falter between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him. If Baal is god, follow him.*

? **Yes, Elijah wanted the people to decide between the Lord God or Baal. How did the people answer Elijah?** *1 Kings 18:21. They did not answer him.*

What did Elijah ask the people? How will you complete #1 on your class notes? *God, Baal.*

? **How many of Baal's prophets were gathered at Mount Carmel?** *1 Kings 18:22. 450.*

? **That's a lot of prophets! How was the challenge set up? Read the verses again very carefully.** *1 Kings 18:23. There would be two altars built. Then two bulls were prepared for sacrifice and placed on each of the altars. No fire would be set under either altar as was usually done.*

? **How would the people know who the true God was?** *1 Kings 18:24. The true God would be the one who sent the fire down from heaven to burn the sacrifices when the people cried for fire.*

Complete #2 on your class notes. *Fire.*

➤ After filling in each point on the class notes, have the students re-read the statement together or call on individual students to read it.

Discover the Truth

The challenge was set. The people were gathered. Two altars were prepared. One prophet of the true God against 450 prophets of Baal. Who would send fire down from heaven to burn the sacrifices prepared and placed on the altars?



READ THE WORD

Let's continue. Read 1 Kings 18:26–29. *Divide the passage for members of the class to read aloud.*

1 Kings 18:26–29

EXAMINE THE WORD

Observe the Text

? **What did the 450 prophets of Baal cry out in verse 26?** *O Baal, hear us.*

? **What did they do when they heard no voice?** *1 Kings 18:26. They leaped about the altar.*

- ? Are you picturing this? Look in 1 Kings 18:28. What did the 450 prophets of Baal do next, in verse 28? *They cried aloud, they cut themselves with knives and were bleeding.*
- ? These prophets were getting desperate! They were yelling, leaping, and even cutting themselves in the hopes that their blood would get Baal to respond. Did anything happen? Did Baal answer? *1 Kings 18:29. No. There was no voice; no one answered; no one cared.*
- ? How will you complete #3 on your class notes? *3.a) Cried out. 3.b) Leaped. 3.c) Cut. 3.d) No.*

Discover the Truth

The so-called god of Baal did not hear his 450 prophets. They were leaping, crying out, and cutting themselves so they would bleed, but there was no answer. No fire came from heaven to burn up the bull prepared on their altar. What would Elijah do?



READ THE WORD

1 Kings 18:32–39

Let's read 1 Kings 18:32–39 to see. *Divide the passage for members of the class to read aloud.*

EXAMINE THE WORD

Wow! Let's really dig into those verses by answering some questions. We want to make sure we really understand everything that God wants us to know.

Observe the Text

Elijah was preparing the altar for his sacrifice. Remember, whoever would send fire from heaven would be the true God.

- ? Elijah did something a little odd to the wood that he wanted to burn. What was it? *1 Kings 18:33. He told them to put water on the wood.*
- ? How many times did they add water to the wood and the altar? *1 Kings 18:34. Three times.*
- ? They put water on the wood and on the altar. Where else did they pour water? *1 Kings 18:35. They filled the trench with water.*
- ? Do you know what a trench is? *Allow discussion.*

A trench would be like a ditch or drain dug around the altar. They would dig that so the fire wouldn't spread. Well, Elijah was even filling that ditch with water!

So the wood was completely wet. The altar was wet. And the trench around the altar was filled with water.

? Look at #4 on your worksheet. How would you complete that? *Water, water.*

? What do we know about fire and water? Have you ever tried to start a camp fire with wet wood? *Allow discussion. If something is wet, it is harder to light on fire.*

? Right! So why did Elijah put water on his wood? *Allow answers.*

Elijah was making the wood wet so it would be more difficult to burn. He wanted to show the people that the fire from God was no accident. This was a sacrifice by fire that only the powerful one true God could burn!

? Who did Elijah call out to when it was his turn to make the sacrifice? *1 Kings 18:36. The Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel.*

? How will you complete #5 on your class notes? *Abraham.*

? Right! Elijah was calling on the one true God—the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel (Jacob). What did Elijah want the others to know? There are three things listed at the end of 1 Kings 18:36. 1) *Elijah's God is the God of Israel—the true God.* 2) *Elijah was God's servant.* 3) *Elijah did all these things at God's Word.*

Complete #6 on your class notes. *One true, servant, Word.*

? Now, someone read 1 Kings 18:38 again. What did the one true God do? *Assign someone to read it with enthusiasm. 1 Kings 18:38. He sent the fire. The fire burned up everything and licked up the water.* Complete #7 on your class notes. *Fire, water.*

? That's right! God proved Himself, didn't He? What did the people do and say after seeing the wet offering burning up with fire from heaven!? *1 Kings 18:39. They fell on their faces and said, "The Lord, He is God! The Lord, He is God!"* Complete #8 on your class notes. *Lord, God.*

Discover the Truth

The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel (also known as Jacob) had sent fire down from heaven. One prophet against 450 prophets. The true God against the false god Baal. In Israel that day, no one doubted who the real God was. They suddenly knew that Baal was nothing. He couldn't hear them. He couldn't help them. He couldn't answer their prayers. He was a false god and would never compare to the power and glory of the one true God!





Altar Made of Stones

MATERIALS

- 12 stones per team
- 12 small paper cups per team
- 4 sticks per team
- 1 empty bucket per team
- 1 bucket of water
- Masking tape

INSTRUCTIONS

This would be a great game to play outside. Otherwise, provide two buckets for the teams to build their altars in.

This game is a relay. Provide the materials listed above for each team. Teams will race to see who can build an altar first. On one end of the room make a masking tape starting line. Have the two teams line up behind the tape. Stack the supplies for each team, in front of the tape. Place the buckets on the other side of the room. Fill one bucket with water. This will be used to wet down their "altar." If you have a smaller class, have the whole class race the clock to see how fast they can prepare the altar.

Today we heard about Elijah the prophet and his challenge to Ahab, the wicked king who worshipped Baal. Elijah's challenge was to see who worshipped the true God. The test would be to see who would bring down fire from heaven for the sacrifice. The prophets of Baal tried all day to get their god to send fire. Then it was Elijah's turn. He built his altar using 12 stones. He added sticks for the fire, then added lots of water.

I've brought materials in for you to build an altar. But we're going to build it relay style. Each person can only take one thing at a time across the room (field) to prepare the

altar. You will put the stones down first. Then place the sticks on top of the stones. Place one item into the empty bucket, then come back and tag the next person on your team until your altar is built.

? What did Elijah add to his altar after the stones and the sticks? *He soaked his altar with water.*

Right. So after you build your altar, soak it by pouring 12 cups of water over it. Each person may only pour one cup at a time when it's your turn. I've supplied 12 cups for each team. Use the water from the water bucket. *Start the relay.*

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

Elijah watched all day as the false prophets cried out to Baal, leaped around, and cut themselves. Their false god never even produced a little spark! But when Elijah got his turn, he built up the altar of the Lord and poured water on it just to prove that the Lord God was the all-powerful, one true God. God's mighty display of power was instantaneous as soon as Elijah prayed. God sent fire that consumed everything, even the water. And the people bowed down and worshipped God. Their faith was restored. They realized that Baal was powerless compared to God and that the one true God was the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel.





Applying God's Word

WHAT YOU HEARD IN THE WORD

Elijah was a prophet of God. He knew that his God was the one true God. Because he trusted in God, he did not act like the prophets of Baal. First of all, there were 450 prophets of Baal compared to only one prophet of God. But that didn't stop Elijah.

The prophets of Baal cried out to Baal all day long! They danced around the altar, they prophesied until evening, they were so desperate they began to cut themselves so that they bled, hoping their god would respond. But there was no response because they cried to a false god.

Elijah, however, stayed calm. He built his altar and even poured water all over it. He prayed to the true God. He prayed only once. And God answered with fire from heaven. God's fire burnt up the sacrifice and even burned the water! The people witnessed this amazing miracle. They fell on their faces and worshipped God.

GOD'S WORD IN THE REAL WORLD

We serve a mighty and powerful God. He alone is to be worshipped. We don't have to worry about worshipping the god Baal. But we do often put things above God in our lives. We should be very careful about that. The Bible says we are to love the Lord our God with all our heart, all our soul, and all our mind. That means He should be the most important thing in our lives. It is very easy to let the world slip in and take God's glory away.

What does this mean in your life? You don't have to stop doing everything you like to do. But you do have to keep things in the proper perspective. Let me explain. If you play soccer, you can play soccer to the glory of God. Thank Him for the opportunity to do it. If you play piano, play piano to the glory of God. Thank Him for the talent He has given you. If you love to read, read to the glory of God. Be careful to choose books that He would approve of—books that honor Him and His Word. If you like to watch TV, watch TV to the glory of God. Watch shows that you know Jesus would watch with you! If you are a son or daughter, be a son or daughter to the glory of God. Thank God for your parents and obey and honor them. If you are a sister, be a sister to the glory of God. Be kind to your brothers and sisters. Don't make fun of them or tease them.

➤ Pass out the Student Take Home Sheets and remind the students to practice the memory verse this week.

God wants us to worship Him alone. He wants all of our love and praise. He deserves it! He is our Creator. He is the only one who can forgive our sins and give us eternal life. And He offers that to us through His Son Jesus Christ—the one who was crucified on a Cross and raised again to life. Everyone who believes in Him and turns from his or her sins will be forgiven and saved.



MEMORY VERSE

1 Chronicles 29:11 Yours, O Lord, is the greatness, the power and the glory, the victory and the majesty; for all that is in heaven and in earth is Yours; Yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and You are exalted as head over all.



GROUP PRAYER TIME

- Praise God because He is omnipotent.
- Thank God because no false god can compare to Him.
- Ask God to help us keep Him first before everything else in our life.