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God Calls Elisha

Key Theme

- God uses people to accomplish His perfect plans.

Key Passages

- 2 Kings 2:6–14, 5:9–19

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Describe God's calling of Elisha to be His prophet.
- Explain how Elisha showed he was a prophet of God.



Lesson Overview



Come On In

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Students will place paper strips at 2 Kings 2 and 5. 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 Calls Elisha Class Notes

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Students will fill out the God Calls Elisha 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 whisked Elijah up to heaven in a fiery chariot and a whirlwind, and Elijah's mantle fell to Elisha. Right away miracles confirmed Elisha's role as a prophet of God, and the healing of Naaman's leprosy spread the fame of the Lord as far as Syria.



Activity 2: Miracles of Fire and Water

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Students will play an activity where they race to match the Bible references to the miracles of Elisha then step across "rocks" to reach the finish line.

Lesson Preparation

WHAT YOU WILL DO

WHAT YOU WILL NEED



COME ON IN

- Cut paper into strips for each student to mark today's study passages in 2 Kings 2 and 5.
- Print the Memory Verse Review Sheet from the Resource DVD-ROM for each student.

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



GOD CALLS ELISHA CLASS NOTES

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

- God Calls Elisha Class Notes for each student
- God Calls Elisha Class Notes Answer Key
- Pencils



STUDYING GOD'S WORD

- Study the Prepare to Share section.
- Go Before the Throne.
- Print one Elisha Readers Theater Script from the Resource DVD-ROM for each student.

- Student Take Home Sheets
- Elisha Readers Theater Script for each student



MIRACLES OF FIRE AND WATER

- Print one Miracles Worksheet from the Resource DVD-ROM for every 2–4 students. Keep the answer key for your use.
- Print one set of River Rocks from the Resource DVD-ROM for every 2–4 students.

- Miracles Worksheet for every 2–4 students
- Miracles Worksheet Answer Key
- River Rocks, one set for every 2–4 students



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 passages listed above with this background.

Jezebel was seeking to kill Elijah because of God's triumph over the false prophets at Mount Carmel and the subsequent execution of those false prophets (1 Kings 18:36–40). In fear, Elijah ran for his life into the wilderness. In desperation, he prayed that he might die (1 Kings 19:2–4). But in obedience, he ate the food God provided and continued his journey south for 40 days to Horeb, the mountain of God (1 Kings 19:8). In a cave on this mountain, Elijah again encountered God (1 Kings 19:9), learned that God had appointed Elisha to replace him (1 Kings 19:16), and was encouraged to know that God had spared 7,000 in Israel who were faithful to Him (1 Kings 19:18). As Elijah then returned north toward Damascus, he met Elisha plowing with oxen. Before Elisha knew what was happening, he had Elijah's mantle (an outer garment like a cloak or robe) on his own shoulders (1 Kings 19:19). Elisha would have understood that this meant that God had appointed him to be a prophet like Elijah. Elisha followed the great prophet and became his servant (1 Kings 19:21).

The transition of Elisha assuming Elijah's role occurred at the Jordan River about 20 years after Elisha had left his home. Elijah and Elisha stood by the river. Elijah rolled up his mantle, struck the water, and the river divided so they crossed on dry land (2 Kings 2:8). God would bestow to Elisha the blessing he requested through Elijah—a double portion of Elijah's spirit. Elisha witnessed Elijah's unique ascent into heaven as he was taken up in a whirlwind after a chariot of fire with horses of fire appeared (2 Kings 2:9–11). In his distress at this sight, Elisha retrieved the mantle of Elijah that had been left behind and approached the Jordan River. Elisha then struck the water with the mantle as he cried out to the God of Elijah; the river divided again, and he crossed over (2 Kings 2:12–14). The sons of the prophets acknowledged Elisha's status as a prophet of God when they declared, "The spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha" (2 Kings 2:15).

Elisha prophesied during a dark time in Israel's history, and God revealed His power, validated Elisha's position as prophet, and gave him the authority to perform many miracles in His name. The Creator God used His prophet Elisha as a means of accomplishing His perfect plans on earth.

Elisha not only ministered to Israel, but was also called upon to spread God's fame throughout the earth. We see this in the account of Naaman, commander of the army of the king of Syria, a powerful Gentile nation. The Bible tells us that Naaman served as the chief commander to Ben Haddad and had won many battles by the hand of the Lord. But Naaman was a leper (2 Kings 5:1). If not for his status as commander, his power, and his wealth, this disease would have caused him to be shunned by many.

Upon hearing through an Israelite servant girl about the prophet of God in Samaria, Naaman sought permission from his king to pursue the prophet's healing power (2 Kings 5:4–6). When Naaman approached Elisha's house, the prophet sent a messenger to tell him to wash in the Jordan River seven times to be restored. Naaman became furious at the advice, too proud to oblige these humble, uncomplicated instructions (2 Kings 5:10–12). After some persuasion from his servants to follow the simple command of the prophet, Naaman conceded. He dipped seven times in the Jordan, and his flesh was restored and made clean (2 Kings 5:14). God had healed the leprosy and had changed the heart of this foreigner to acknowledge the true God (1 Kings 5:15).

God used many people to influence Naaman and bring him to a realization of the true God who had the power to heal through such an apparently silly, simple act. God still uses imperfect people to accomplish His perfect plans. The New Testament confirms this as we read of Elijah in the book of James: "Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit" (James 5:17–18).

You can trust that in your obedience the sovereign and omnipotent one is using you (despite your failings) in the lives of people around you to proclaim His glory and to further the gospel of Jesus Christ.

HISTORICAL/APOLOGETICS BACKGROUND

The miracles of Elisha are often cited by skeptics to discredit the Bible as a source of authority. They question why God would send bears to kill a bunch of boys mocking a prophet (2 Kings 2:23–24). They don't believe that throwing a stick in the water would make an axe head float (2 Kings 6:1–7), or that a poisonous

pot of stew could be purified with a bit of flour (2 Kings 4:38–41), much less that a dead child could be raised to life by lying on top of him (2 Kings 4:8–37). But these doubters don't know and fear the Creator and Sustainer of all things—the one true God. God used His prophets and their miracles to accomplish His purposes and to glorify His name among His people.

As we look at the laws delivered to Israel by Moses, various forms of skin disease were referred to as leprosy, not just the disease we call leprosy today (Leviticus 13–14). Consequently, we don't know exactly what afflicted Naaman. We know it was clearly a skin disease classified broadly as leprosy. Naaman's leprosy appears to have been localized (2 Kings 5:11), and he had surely sought many cures in Syria. Upon his healing, Naaman knew that he had experienced a miracle at the hand of God. He was now clean.

If we are honest and look closely, we can easily connect Naaman's leprosy to the leprosy that fills the heart of every human—sin. This disease has separated us from God. We are unclean and can't stand in His presence . . . unless He washes us. Those who receive Jesus Christ, believing in the cleansing and forgiveness offered to sinners through the death of Jesus, can rejoice at the freedom Christ offers. Like Naaman,

those forgiven through Christ no longer have to worry about the disease that has tainted them since birth—but can stand before God, knowing they are clean from sin in Christ for all eternity.

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



BEFORE THE THRONE

Heavenly Father, you can use me to accomplish your plans, even though I am imperfect. Do that, Lord. Use me to affect the lives of others around me, those you have put in my sphere of influence. Help me proclaim your glory to the students in my class, to my neighbors, my family, and friends, and anyone you call me to minister to. I want you to find me faithful. Provide me with more opportunities to further the gospel of Jesus Christ. Keep me grounded in you. And prepare the hearts and minds of my students, so they are ready to receive the truth you have prepared for them this week.



COME ON IN

As students arrive . . .

- They will mark their Bibles at 2 Kings 2 and 5 with strips 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 Calls Elisha Class Notes

MATERIALS

- God Calls Elisha Class Notes for each student
- God Calls Elisha 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

After completing our class notes today, we will learn that God called Elisha to follow in Elijah's footsteps.



Studying God's 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.

► The students will read the passages together from the Elisha Readers Theater Script.

2 Kings 2:6–14

READ THE WORD

After God's amazing show of power over the prophets of Baal at Mount Carmel you might think that Elijah was home free. But no, he was on the run. The wicked King Ahab and his wife Jezebel were furious that Elijah's God had succeeded in bringing fire from heaven to the shame of the 450 prophets of Baal. Elijah was hiding out in a cave, running for his life, and getting discouraged. But God wasn't finished with him yet. And Elijah was sent on another journey—this time to find Elisha, the man who would serve as God's prophet after Elijah was gone.

Elisha was another powerful prophet of God. God arranged for him to begin his ministry at the Jordan River in a spectacular way. We're going to read about that now on our Readers Theater Script. Before we start, the Bible mentions Elijah's mantle. A mantle in this case was like a cloak or a cape—something Elijah wore, probably wrapped around him. *Pass out the Elisha Readers Theater Scripts. Assign parts. You can be the Narrator if necessary in order to keep things moving. Read Part 1 of the Readers Theater Script with the class.*

Open your Bibles to 2 Kings 2:6–14. As I ask questions, you can find the answers on your scripts or in your Bibles.

EXAMINE THE WORD

Observe the Text

Where were Elijah and Elisha headed? *2 Kings 2:6. The Jordan River.*

? Yes. And Elijah told Elisha to stay and not follow. What did Elisha say? *2 Kings 2:6. I will not leave you!*

? What did Elijah do with his rolled up mantle (or cloak)? *2 Kings 2:7–8. He struck the water with it.*

? What happened to the water? *2 Kings 2:8. It was divided and they crossed on dry ground.*

? Fill in #1 on your class notes. *Struck, divided.*

? 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. Elijah knew he was going to leave Elisha. He wanted to leave Elisha with a blessing. What did Elisha ask from Elijah? *2 Kings 2:9. A double portion of Elijah's spirit.*

? What does that mean? What was Elisha asking for? *Allow discussion.*

Elisha knew he would be taking over for Elijah. He was asking for the wisdom and power to do that well. Elisha knew he would need special power and blessings from God—the same power and blessings God had given to Elijah—in order to follow in Elijah's footsteps.

- ? So Elisha asked for the blessing. Then what did Elisha see? What suddenly appeared out of the sky? *2 Kings 2:11. A chariot of fire with horses of fire!*
- ? Incredible! Then what happened? *2 Kings 2:11. The chariot separated the two of them and Elijah went up to heaven.*
- ? What a way to end one ministry and start another! How would you answer #2 on your class notes based on 2 Kings 2:11? *Chariot, whirlwind.*
- ? What did Elisha say when he saw this amazing event? *2 Kings 2:12. My father, my father the chariot of Israel and its horsemen!*

Elisha definitely saw the chariot. And he was apparently upset. 2 Kings 2:12 says he tore his clothes when he cried out. His friend was gone. In fact, Elijah had been like a father to him.

- ? What did Elisha find after Elijah left? Something had fallen. It's in 2 Kings 2:13. *Elijah's mantle. Complete #3 on your class notes. Mantle.*
- ? Do you remember what I said the mantle was? *A cloak or a cape.*
- ? And what did Elisha do with Elijah's mantle? *2 Kings 2:14. He struck the water of the Jordan River and the water divided and Elisha crossed over.*

You can complete #4 on your class notes. *Struck, divided.*

Discover the Truth

Like I said earlier, what a way to end a ministry and begin a new one. God came and got Elijah in an amazing way—his ministry was finished. God took him away in a chariot with horses of fire! Now Elisha had Elijah's cloak—and with it he had Elijah's responsibility as God's prophet. And if Elisha doubted what God wanted him to do, he soon found out when he returned to cross the Jordan River. The water divided for Elisha the same way it had divided for Elijah. Elisha returned across the river on dry land alone. He would now serve God as prophet in place of Elijah. The cloak or mantle of the great prophet had been passed to Elisha.



READ THE WORD

God would go on to perform many great miracles through Elisha. These miracles would show the power of the true God. Remember, performing miracles in God's name was one of the roles the prophet had. *Refer to the Roles of the Prophets Poster.*

We are going to read about one particular miracle. This is a miracle that had to do with a commander in the powerful Syrian army. His name was Naaman. He had leprosy and had heard about Elisha. He knew Elisha had the power to perform miracles. So he traveled a long way to meet with the great prophet. He was hoping the prophet could cure his leprosy. We

are going to pick it up when Naaman, the great commander of a foreign army, first met with Elisha.

Let's see what Elisha told the great commander Naaman. We'll read Part 2 of our Elisha Readers Theater Scripts. *Assign and read Part 2, 2 Kings 5:9–16.*

EXAMINE THE WORD

Let's answer some questions about this miracle involving Naaman. We want to learn more about what the Lord is saying to us in this passage today.

Observe the Text

? What did Elisha tell Naaman to do? *2 Kings 5:10. Go and wash in the Jordan seven times. Complete #6 on your class notes. Seven.*

? What did Elisha say would happen if he did that? *2 Kings 5:10. His flesh would be restored. His leprosy would be gone.*

? What was Naaman's response to Elisha in 2 Kings 5:11? *He was furious.*

? What made him so angry? *Allow discussion.*

He was angry because Elisha did not do what Naaman expected him to do. The great commander did not want to be seen going to the river and washing seven times.

? What did Naaman think Elisha might do? *2 Kings 5:11. Come out and call on the Lord and wave his hand and heal the leprosy.*

? Who convinced Naaman to listen to Elisha? *2 Kings 5:13. His servants. Complete #6 on your class notes. Servants.*

? What did Naaman do? *2 Kings 5:14. He went to the Jordan River and dipped seven times.*

? And what happened to him? *His flesh was healed. It was like a little child's. He was clean. Have students fill in #7 on their class notes—Yes.*

? So, what did God show Naaman, the great commander, through this healing? What did Naaman think of God now? *2 Kings 5:15. He knew that there was no other God but the God of Israel. Complete #8 on your class notes. No other God.*

Discover the Truth

Because Naaman considered himself a great man, he was prideful at first and didn't want to go down and do a simple thing like bathe in the river. He wanted the great prophet to do something spectacular to heal him. But when he did as the prophet said, Naaman was healed. And through that healing, the name of the Lord God was glorified and proclaimed outside of Israel and into Syria. God's name and fame were spreading. God was using His prophets to confirm that He is the one true God.





Miracles of Fire and Water

MATERIALS

- Miracles Worksheets, one per team of 2–4 students
- Miracles Worksheet Answer Key for your use
- River Rocks, one set for each team
- Pencils
- Masking Tape

INSTRUCTIONS

Elijah and Elisha were mighty prophets of God. One of the roles of the prophets was to perform miracles to show the glory of God to the people. Elijah and Elisha were known for the many miracles they performed. For this activity, you will be looking up some of the miracles that Elisha or Elijah did that had to do with fire and/or water.

Game Directions: Divide the class into teams of 2–4 students. Pass out one Miracles Worksheet and one set of River Rocks to each team. Designate an area for each team’s “river”—across the room, down the hall, etc.

The object of the game is to place the rocks down and cross the river on the rocks. Teams will look up the Scriptures on the worksheet and find the rock that describes that miracle. They will write the Scripture

reference on the rock and place the rock in the “river” and continue until all their rocks have made a way for them to get across the river.

Look up the verses on the worksheet. Find the River Rock that describes the miracle. Write the Scripture verse on the rock and place the rock in the “river.”

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

The Bible records many of the miracles that the prophets did. Remember, the prophets were able to do these miracles only by God’s power. They had no power of their own. They trusted God and were faithful men of God. And God used them to accomplish His plans. These men weren’t perfect, but they were willing and obedient as God called them. Elijah and Elisha (and many others) were true prophets of God. Their words, works, and miracles declared the glory of God to the people, and many hearts were turned to the one true God because of them.



Applying God’s Word

WHAT YOU HEARD IN THE WORD

It was hard for Elisha to watch his friend—who was like a father—disappear up into the clouds in that chariot of fire in the whirlwind. He didn’t want to say good-bye. But God’s timing is always perfect, and God had ordained that time for Elisha to take up the mantle of Elijah and take on the role of the next prophet of God.

Elijah’s mantle (cloak) was passed to Elisha, and Elisha received the blessing of God’s Spirit so he could carry on.

God quickly confirmed Elisha as his prophet when Elisha, using Elijah's mantle, divided the Jordan River and walked across. We read about another miracle involving an important Syrian commander, named Naaman, who came to Elisha because he wanted Elisha to heal his leprosy. His skin disease was healed when he listened to Elisha and dipped in the Jordan River seven times. It wasn't how he expected to be healed, but when Naaman's skin became clean and new, he glorified God and proclaimed His fame in the foreign land of Syria. God was using His prophet Elisha to confirm that He is the true God. And it was clear that Elisha had authority from God to speak for Him as a mighty prophet.

GOD'S WORD IN THE REAL WORLD

Yes, God cured Naaman's leprosy. When Naaman was healed he knew it was a miracle of God. He was now clean, cured, made pure.

In much the same way, the sin in our hearts is like Naaman's leprosy. Sin fills every human heart and has separated us from God. We are unclean. Our hearts are sick because of sin. But God has sent a cure for the disease of sin. God has made a way to clean our hearts and heal us of our sin—like He did for Naaman's leprosy. God sent His Son, Jesus Christ. And everyone who accepts Jesus's message of salvation and believes in the cleansing and forgiveness He offers through His death, can rejoice that he will one day be with Christ in heaven forever. He is no longer separated from God, but made one of God's children.

Those who believe in Jesus and receive Him as the Savior will no longer need to worry about the disease of sin they were born with. They can stand before God knowing that through Christ they are clean from sin for all eternity.



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



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 speaks to us through His Word.
- Thank God for using ordinary people to give Him glory and accomplish His plans.
- Ask God to use us to spread His fame to someone new this week.