

Elijah & Elisha

2 Kings 2-5

Some of the best lessons that we learn and cherish are those that we learned from our parents and grandparents. Those who had gone ahead of us have handed down all their adventures and experiences. They shared these items with us sometimes in the form of stories and other times in the form of lessons. As we grow we prepare to share these lessons with the generations that will follow us.

The Lord used this type of passing on information for thousands of years. He also guided younger prophets, pastors, by having them train with older more experienced prophets. Today's story tells us how God passed the leadership of His prophet Elijah on to Elisha.



Prayer

Dear Lord God,

Please be with us and bless us with the same spirit that You gave to Your servants Elijah and Elisha. Fill each of us with love and selfless devotion to You. Guide us as we study and put Your truths into practice. We ask these things in the Name of our Savior Jesus. Amen.

Elijah & His Service to the Lord – Preparing Elisha - 2 Kings 2-5

Elijah had been called by the Lord to minister to the people of Israel. As you have learned in other lessons, the people of Israel were not God-fearing. Their leaders had introduced the worship of false gods including the worship of Baal. The work of the Lord among the people of Israel was thankless. Elijah was consistently dealing with the problems not only of idol worship but famine, the wrath of the king and queen – Ahab and Jezebel, and the constant invasion of foreign armies.

Through it all Elijah kept focused on the Lord and received the blessings of being fed and protected. Though the desire to worship Baal and other man made objects was very strong, Elijah continued to proclaim the true Lord to the people of Israel. He challenged the prophets and followers of Baal at Mount Carmel. The Lord provided not only the fire but

proof that there is but one true God, the God that Elijah was proclaiming. Still shortly after Mount Carmel Elijah had to run for his life from the wicked Queen Jezebel. The Lord then strengthened His prophet, and Elijah returned to Israel and continued preaching the Word of the Lord.

Elijah grows old. His task in Israel had not been an easy one and the time had come to pass his duties on to Elisha. Elisha had been called earlier by the Lord (2 Kings 19:15-21) to serve under Elijah. It was evident to all that with Elijah's growing older there was to be a new prophet of the Lord in Israel. The time was at hand for Elijah to go to heaven.

Elijah informed Elisha that he was going to Bethel to conduct some business. Elisha, strengthened by the Lord, insisted on going along and made a beautiful statement to his teacher " ...As the LORD lives, and as your soul



lives, I will not leave you!"

Elijah and Elisha made the trip to Bethel together. Near Bethel some prophets who were in training joined them. The impression is given that these students of the word were aware that Elijah's time here on earth was quickly coming to an end. Again, Elijah offered for Elisha to stay while he would go on to the east of the Jordan River. Elisha refused. The two men are watched from a distance by the prophets in training as this teacher and student traveled east toward the Jordan River.

When the two prophets came to the Jordan River Elijah used his cloak and struck the water. The water divided and the two prophets traveled across the Jordan on dry land. We can see the love these two men had for the Lord by the fact that they understood that it was God alone who parted the waters and provided a way for them to cross the river.

Once across the river, Elijah encouraged Elisha to request a blessing from him before the Lord would take Elijah away. Elisha the student asked for a "double portion" of Elijah's spirit. Elijah knew that this was a tough item to grant but gave his student a sign. If Elisha saw Elijah go up into heaven Elisha would know that the Lord had granted the request.

The two continued on walking and talking. Suddenly a chariot of fire separated them. Elisha saw Elijah being taken up into heaven on a whirlwind. What a great blessing! Elijah was taken by the Lord into heaven and since Elisha saw it happen it meant the Lord would grant his request for a double portion of Elijah's spirit.

Elijah's cloak was left behind. Elisha picked it up and headed back toward the Jordan River. At the river he used the cloak as Elijah had and the river was divided. The prophets who had been watching from afar understood that the Lord had passed onto Elisha the task of being a prophet to the people of Israel.

As with Elijah, the task of being prophet of the one true God to Israel was not an easy one. Immediately Elisha was tested and strengthened by the Lord. Some disrespectful children from Bethel mocked and made fun of Elisha and the true Lord. Elisha cursed them and two bears came out of the woods and mauled the forty-two children.

The king of Israel was Jehoram, the son of Ahab. Though Jehoram did not promote the worship of Baal he did continue to do evil in the sight of the Lord. At the same time the people of the country of Moab to the south rose up against Judah and Israel. The two countries joined forces against the Moabites. The king of Judah requested that the kings meet with the prophet of the Lord to know the Lord's will. Elisha, with direction from the Lord, helped the kings defeat the Moabites. It was again clear that the Lord had given His people the victory. Still the king of Israel returned to his country and continued in his sinful ways.

Love is the powerful tool of the Lord. This love was demonstrated by Elisha's dealings with the Shunammite woman. Elisha traveled a lot through Israel and Judah. Along the way he came into contact with a man and woman. The woman was moved by her love for the Lord to convince her husband to provide a place for Elisha. When Elisha traveled through their area he would rest at their house. In return for this wonderful offering Elisha requested of the Lord that the couple be blessed with a child. The request was granted. The child was born and the man and woman were very happy.

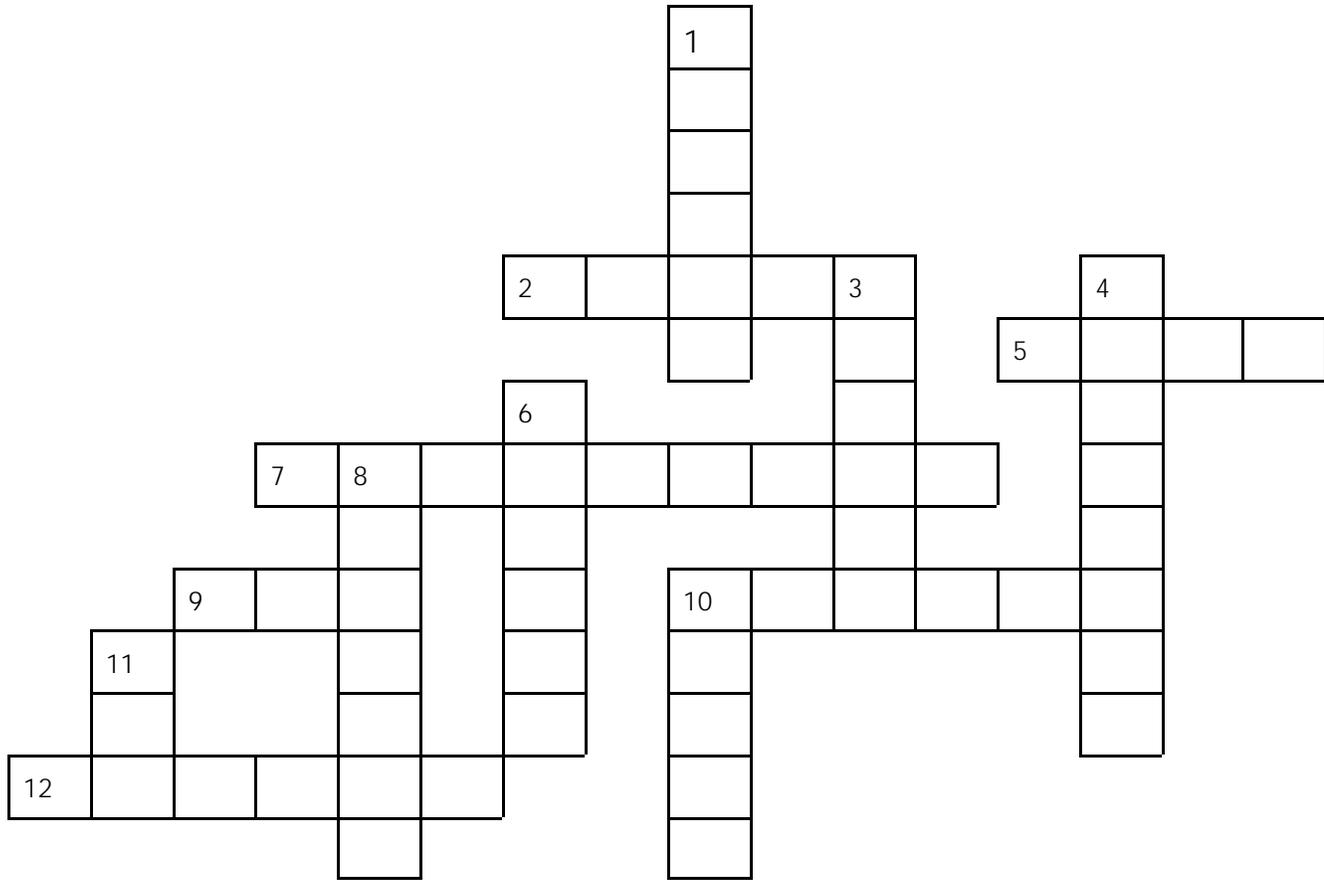
After a period of time the child became sick and died. This was a very sad time in the lives of this family. The Shunammite woman immediately went to Elisha. Elisha returned to the family home and called upon the Lord to bring the child back to the life. The Lord heard the prayer of Elisha and the child was returned to his family.

Outer Aim - Elijah was taken bodily into heaven and Elisha served in his place.

What God's Word Tells Us - Discuss the following.

1. God was with Elijah and Elisha. He never left them. He protected them when they were in trouble. Give examples of how God was with Elijah and Elisha.
2. Like Elijah and Elisha, God is with us today. How do you know God is with you everyday? Give examples.
3. Elijah and Elisha were dedicated in their work for the Lord. Many times difficult things happened to Elijah and Elisha, but the Lord helped them triumph. How can you show that you are dedicated to the Lord? How can you show that you are dedicated to the Lord when you grow up? How can you show you are dedicated to the Lord with a job?
4. The Lord blessed the woman who cared for Elisha. Why did the woman help Elisha? Did she expect something from Elisha in return? How do we show our love for the Lord when we help others? Give examples.
5. Some of the best lessons that we can learn in this life have been passed down to us from those who have gone ahead of us. Just as Elijah had strengthened Elisha to be a true prophet of the Lord, so have our parents and grandparents given us important lessons to grow on. The most important of those lessons both to Elisha and to us is to remain faithful to the Lord. If we do, the Lord will bless our families and our work here on earth.
6. Each of us has the power of God's Word. We study it as families and students in school. Learning to appreciate, believe, and trust in this word of God is the strongest and most important lesson that we can live by and pass on to those who look to us for guidance and direction in the future. Continue to study the Bible and marvel at the wonderful work that the Lord has done and is doing for each of us. Pass it on!

What the Story Tells Us - Complete the CROSSWORD PUZZLE. The answers can be found in 2 Kings using the chapter and verse given.



Across

- 2. What killed the youth (2:24)
- 5. What Elisha put into the bad water (2:20)
- 7. How Elijah went to heaven (2:11)
- 9. What gift the Lord gave to the woman (4:17)
- 10. What was in the country of Gilgal (4:38)
- 12. What the two boys would become (4:1)

Down

- 1. Which river Elijah and Elisha crossed (2:7)
- 3. Where a woman lived that made Elisha a room (4:8)
- 4. What the youth called Elisha (2:23)
- 6. What Elisha did to ask how to help the boy (4:33)
- 8. How many men ate from the 20 loaves of bread and grain (4:43)
- 10. How many prophets were on the other side of the Jordan River (2:7)
- 11. What the containers were filled with (4:4)

WORDS

- baldhead
- bears
- famine
- fifty
- hundred
- Jordan
- oil
- prayed
- salt
- Shunem
- slaves
- son
- whirlwind

Inner Aim - The same Lord who worked so powerfully through Elijah and Elisha has also promised to be with us today.

Passages

Hebrews 13:8 - Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Matthew 18:20 - "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them."

Malachi 3:6 - For I am the LORD, I do not change.

Romans 8:31- What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?

Hymn

 - TLH #434 v. 1-4

O God of Jacob, by whose hand
Thy people still are fed;
Who thro' this weary pilgrimage
Hast all our fathers led,

Our vows, our prayers, we now present
Before Thy throne of grace;
God of our fathers, be the God
Of their succeeding race.

Thro' each perplexing path of life
Our wand'ring footsteps guide;
Give us each day our daily bread
And raiment fit provide.

Oh, spread Thy covering wings around
Till all our wanderings cease
And at our Father's loved abode
Our souls arrive in peace.

Prayer

Dear Lord Jesus,

At times I can be frightened about the road that lies ahead. Help me remember that You will be with me wherever I go, just as You were with Elijah and Elisha. I know I will change throughout my life, but I am glad You will remain the same. In Your name I pray. Amen.