



OT overview 8

Elijah – God exposes the sin of Israel – Leader’s version

For an hour study, just do the starred * questions

Check in – ask everyone, including leaders, how they are and how they're feeling about studying the Bible today.

1. What was the covenant God made with the people of Israel? (see Genesis 12 v 2-3)

God promised the people that He would give them land and descendants and bless them.

*2. **SHOUT-OUT** Although David had sinned personally, he had led the nation of Israel well. Look up the following passages to see what later kings were like and what they led the people to do.

(David's son Solomon was the last king of the united Israel. After Solomon died, the kingdom split into Israel (North) and Judah (South). For the purposes of this exercise, this is not terribly relevant).

Solomon	1 Kings 3 v 3	<i>Loved God, but used 'high places' (pagan worship sites). He didn't obey the laws of where to worship God (the tabernacle, later the Temple).</i>
Solomon	1 Kings 11 v 1-4	<i>Promiscuous! Multiple wives, intermarrying with the surrounding nations. God had specifically said not to do this (Deut 7 v 3-4). Solomon's foreign wives led him away from God.</i>
Jereboam	1 Kings 12 v 28	<i>Told the people to worship calf idols.</i>
Reheboam	1 Kings 14 v 23	<i>Followed the Canaanite religion.</i>
Asa	1 Kings 15 v 11	<i>Did what was right in the eyes of the Lord</i>
Baasha / Elah	1 Kings 16 v 13	<i>Their sin and idols provoked God to anger and they led the people into sin too.</i>

*3. What was the general nature of these kings and how do you think this affected the people of Israel?

They were generally bad, and didn't love or follow God. There was a moral decline of the nation as a result of the poor morality of the leaders.

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Although the nation of Israel was falling away from love of God, individuals would have been faithful to Him. Spend some time discussing issues you face as you live in the Christian minority on the wing.

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In Elijah's time the king was responsible for leading the people in obedience to God. Who do you think is responsible for this now?

We are! Every Christian has the responsibility to be a witness to others of what it means to live a life of obedience to God. It's not just up to church leaders!

Help the group think about what this means for each of them – what message are they giving to others on the wing, family who visit etc? Are they living as a Christian or are they leading a double life?

*4. **SHOUT-OUT** Read 1 Kings 16 v 30-33. Who was king and what did he do that was so bad?

Ahab 'who did more evil in the eyes of the Lord than any of those before him'. He:

- *committed the sins of Jeroboam, (1 Kings 14 v 9; followed, and led the people to follow, other gods)*
- *married Jezebel, a foreign princess (Deut 7 v 3-4)*
- *served and worshipped Baal (the local Canaanite god of fertility and lord of the rain clouds – explain this, as it's important later)*
- *built an Asherah pole (image of Asherah, the wife of Baal)*
- *thus making God more angry than all the previous kings had*

*5. **STICKERS** How do you think the nation of Israel deserved to be treated by God in view of their behaviour?

Let the group discuss the various answers on their stickers, and help them to see that the nation of Israel deserved God's anger and punishment for this.

*6. Read 1 Kings 17 v 1. What does God send Elijah to tell Ahab? Can you work out why?

1. God lives, 2. Elijah serves him, 3. There would be no rain or dew for the next few years, except at Elijah's word (i.e. at God's command to Elijah).

This was not a random curse – Baal was the local god of fertility and rain clouds and God was going to show that He is more powerful than Baal by taking away that which the people believed Baal provided.

7. Read 1 Kings 17 v 2-6. God told Elijah to go and hide. Why do you think He did this and how did God provide for Elijah?

There was no active voice of God in Israel once Elijah was hidden in the ravine (outside of Israel). The people were left to suffer God's punishment of drought. God provided for Elijah however, despite the drought. This miracle 1. showed that God was with Elijah, and 2. taught Elijah to depend fully on God.

(NB. There were other prophets, 1 Kings 18 v 4, but Elijah didn't know about them, so presumably God wasn't speaking to the king through them at the time).

8. Read 1 Kings 17 v 7-16. How did God provide for Elijah when the brook dried up and who else did He provide for?

A miracle of provision of flour and oil, to feed Elijah, the woman and her family. Significantly, the woman was not Jewish; Zarephath was outside of Israel.

9. Read 1 Kings 17 v 17-24. What miracle happens and what does this teach the woman?

God brings the woman's son back to life. Because of this, she is convinced that Elijah is a man of God and speaks the truth from God.

10. We don't very often see miracles in the 21st century (or maybe we just don't recognise them...). The Bible tells us they are real. Read John 20 v 30-31. Is it necessary to see a miracle in order to believe? What do you make of the miracles in 1 Kings and what do they tell us about God?

Jesus' miracles are recorded in the Bible that we may believe without seeing.

Focus on what miracles tell us about God – that He exists, what He has power to do / authority over etc. People often say they would believe if they could see a miracle for themselves. But there are many people in the Bible who see a miracle and DON'T believe e.g. the Pharisees and Teachers of the Law who saw what Jesus was doing, but didn't understand it – we are given the Bible records of miracles so that we can believe on the evidence it gives us.

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Are you waiting for God to do something miraculous before you will believe He's there or before you will trust Him? What miracle has He already performed that He's asking you to trust?

The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ! God has given us all the evidence we need that He is real, by coming to earth as a human.

'Jesus cried out, "When a man believes in me, he does not believe in me only, but in the one who sent me. When he looks at me, he sees the one who sent me.'" John 12 v 44-45.

*11. Read 1 Kings 18 v 20-21. What has happened to the faith of the people of Israel? In what ways is the society you live in similar?

There were two opinions amongst the people – that God is God or Baal was god. Only Elijah defended God. Help the group think about their society, and what people put their trust in instead of God – e.g. money, other people, relationships, careers, football teams etc.

Questions 12-14 are **SELF-DIRECTED QUESTIONS**. Let the group work in pairs.

Read 1 Kings 18 v 22-24 to the group first.

*12. **SDL** Read 1 Kings 18 v 25-29. Why do you think Elijah asks the prophets of Baal to do this and what does it show?

There's going to be a show-down – only the true God can send fire. The prophets of Baal go first 'but there was no response, no-one answered...' (18 v 29).

*13. **SDL** Read 1 Kings 18 v 30-39. How is the sacrifice to God different, and what happens? How do the people respond to what they see?

The sacrifice to God is soaked with water, but it is this sacrifice which is lit with fire from heaven. The people recognise from this that 'The Lord is God!'. Only the real God could light the fire, and not only light it, but do it when the wood was soaking wet.

Baal was the god of rain clouds and there was a drought – Baal hadn't fixed the drought, and if he was real, this would be the time to show it...

*14. **SDL** Why did God do this? (See 1 Kings 18 v 37).

So the people would know that God is God and come back to Him.

*15. The people deserved to be rejected by God because of their sin, but God called them back to Him. How is God calling sinners to come back to Him today?

Through Jesus. Use this as an opportunity to share the gospel and explain that God has offered us a way to be reconciled to Him – by trusting in Jesus' death in the place of repentant sinners and His resurrection.

16. Through Elijah, God won a decisive victory over the false god, Baal. In what way does Elijah foreshadow Jesus?

On the cross, Jesus won a decisive victory over the powers of sin and death.

17. Why do you think God goes to so much trouble to bring rebels back into relationship with Him?

Because He loves us so much! Jesus' death in our place shows us just how much God loves us, and what

lengths God went to, to save us.

TIME-LINE: if you are making a time-line, do the next part of it now – ask the group to add what they have learnt today in the appropriate place. See the time-line on the TFC website for guidance of dates.

Check out – ask everyone, including leaders, how they found the study and if they are safe to go back to the cell.



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