



ELIJAH

Study Guide

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Elijah: One Person Can Make a Difference

Welcome to the AS IT WAS Bible Series. This guide will provide a method for viewing the DVD episode with a small study group. To get the most out of the Elijah episode, it is best if you can devote two full group sessions to viewing and discussing the story. In between the group sessions, there are six daily lessons for home study that will allow you to thoroughly review the actual scripture passages that are mentioned throughout the episode. We recommend following three steps to get the most from the AS IT WAS series as a Bible Study Tool:

1) VIEW → 2) STUDY → 3) VIEW AGAIN

If you only have a limited time, you can view the DVD, choose a few questions to discuss together and then use the personal study guides to review the scripture later as time permits.

The Elijah episode recounts the story of the prophet Elijah, which is found in 1 Kings 16:29 – 2 Kings 2. Please review the background information below before starting the DVD.

✧ **BACKGROUND:** Elijah appears on the scene in Israel following the division of the kingdom and when things are out of control in Israel. King Ahab and his wife, Jezebel, are leading Israel, the Northern Kingdom, further away from God to the idols of the Baal and Asherah gods. The wickedness of Israel breaks God's heart and Elijah the Prophet is sent to Ahab to deliver some powerful messages from the Lord.

🕒 Watch the Elijah DVD

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In every AS IT WAS episode, there are characters that are biblical (i.e. they appear in the actual biblical account) and there are characters that are ‘extra-biblical’ (i.e. they do not appear in the biblical account, but there is reasonable evidence that they existed). In the episode of Elijah, we heard from six characters. Four of these characters are biblical and two are extra-biblical.

ICON KEY

 Discussion

 Note Section

 Background

 Scripture Reading

 Briefly Skim 1 Kings, 17-22 and circle whether the characters below are biblical or extra-biblical

Ahab, King of Israel:	Biblical	Extra-Biblical
Bilam, Servant Boy	Biblical	Extra-Biblical
Jehoshaphat, King of Judah	Biblical	Extra-Biblical
Jezebel, Wife of Ahab	Biblical	Extra-Biblical
Antar, Widow	Biblical	Extra-Biblical
Eshmer, Baal Priest	Biblical	Extra-Biblical

Using Discussion Questions

The next few pages contain several different questions based upon the characters and events depicted in the AS IT WAS DVD episode. Depending on the amount of time your group has available for discussion, you may want to review the questions first and then select a few that you would like to discuss as a group. Each question should take 5-10 minutes to discuss.

 The story of Elijah is included in the “Faith and Failure” collection. Why do you think that is? Where did Elijah demonstrate great faith and how did he fail?

 Jezebel is a very ‘colorful’ character in the AS IT WAS episode. How would you describe Jezebel’s character traits?

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👉 How would you describe the relationship between Ahab and Jezebel? What was the effect of their relationship on Ahab's reign?

👉 Do you know anyone named Jezebel? Why is that? Our names are often associated with what we are and what we do. How do you wish your name to be remembered?

👉 Why do you think the Lord pronounced such a harsh sentence on Ahab and Jezebel?

👉 When Elijah made his prophecy about the drought to Ahab and Jezebel, they did not take him seriously. What do you think it was about his manner that allowed them to dismiss him so easily?

👉 Can you imagine being Bilam and actually seeing the raven's feeding Elijah? Would it make a big difference to your faith if you actually saw a miracle? Why or why not?

👉 The widow Antar called Elijah 'mesmerizing'. What other characteristics did Elijah have? How did they help or hurt him in his mission?

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✎ The Baal prophet was puzzled by the showdown at Mount Carmel, but Ahab tells us that Jehoshaphat was ecstatic when Elijah performed the miracle. Why do you think that was his response?

✎ After seeing Elijah's miracle and experiencing the rain foretold by Elijah, Ahab went back to Jezebel and continued to allow her to call the shots. Why do you think the experience on Mount Carmel had no effect on him?

✎ God came to Elijah in the wind, in an earthquake and in fire. But only when it was in the 'gentle whisper' did Elijah hear Him. How do you experience the voice of God?

✎ Why do you think Naboth did not want to make a deal for his vineyard with his king?

✎ One man, Elijah, took a stand and made a difference. Who do you know today who has taken a courageous stand like that?

✎ Which character did you most identify with in the story? Why?

Going Deeper: Personal Study Lessons

✧ Elijah; Prophet to the Northern Kingdom

In this section, there are six daily lessons for your personal study time in order to dig deeper into the scripture story of Elijah once you have viewed the AS IT WAS episode on DVD. You will need your Bible and about 30 minutes a day to complete each lesson.

In each section you will be given some background information, specific scripture readings and a few questions to answer. The icons above will help guide you in your study efforts.

The AS IT WAS series utilizes the New International Version for all scripture quotations, but you can use whatever version best suits you.

ICON KEY

 Discussion

 Note Section

 Background

 Scripture Reading

DAY ONE

 READ 1 Kings 16:21 – 1 Kings 16:34

✧ BACKGROUND: Ahab's father was King Omri and his reign started a new dynasty. The house of Omri (881-841 B.C.) was noted for its evil ways and it was Omri who prepared the way for Israel's sudden and rapid descent into idolatry.

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 What does scripture tell us about Omri's Character? Do you think that may have affected Ahab?

 In what ways do we worship idols today?

✧ Baal is the best known of the Canaanite gods. In the pagan family of gods, El was the father and Asherah was the mother. Baal (meaning master) was one of their seventy offspring, the fertility god responsible for germinating crops, increasing flocks and adding children to the community. Baal worship included religious prostitution, both male and female.

 Why was serving Baal so evil?

 Was Ahab's marriage to Jezebel considered evil? Why?

DAY TWO

 READ 1 Kings 17, 1-6

✧ BACKGROUND: This was a time of widespread corruption in Israel's history, but it was also marked by the emergence of many great prophets equipped with extraordinary powers. One of the distinguishing features of this particular period of Israel's history was the unique and extraordinary miracles that were displayed.

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 How did God provide relief for Elijah in the midst of the resulting famine?

 Why did Elijah flee from Jezebel? How was this behavior demonstrating a lack of faith in the Lord?

 What lessons do you think Elijah learned in the quiet of the desert hidden away from Jezebel and her agents?

 Has God ever provided a way for you to 'bear it' in the midst of trouble? What did you learn from that experience?

DAY THREE

 **READ** 1 Kings 17, 7-24

 Why do you think the widow made bread for Elijah, a stranger, in the midst of the drought?

 Have you ever been asked to do something for God that didn't make sense to most people?

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 Why do you think God sent Elijah to a Gentile woman?

DAY FOUR

 READ 1 Kings 18

✦ **BACKGROUND:** Obadiah was Ahab's chief steward and a loyal worshipper of the Lord. During the famine, he risked both his position and his life to hide one hundred prophets in two caves and to feed them.

 Why did God ordain the meeting between Elijah and Obadiah? What encouragement do you think Elijah received from Obadiah?

 How do you think Elijah felt when he saw 450 prophets lined up against him? Do you ever feel outnumbered when you take a stand for God?

 Review Elijah's prayer in verses 36-37. What do you learn from this prayer?

DAY FIVE

 READ 1 Kings 19

 Why did Elijah forget God's provision and previous answers to prayer and 'run for his life' from Queen Jezebel?

 How did the Lord respond to his discouragement and fear?

 Have you ever been overcome with weariness in your spiritual walk? What promises does the Lord make to us about our weariness?

DAY SIX

 READ 1 Kings 21-22, 2 Kings 1-2

☆ Jezebel was the daughter of the heathen Sidonite King Ethbaal. Ethbaal murdered the previous king, Pheles, who may have been his brother, then usurped his throne and reigned for thirty-two years.

 Do you think Jezebel's upbringing may have been the cause of her evil ways?

 Why do you think Ahab was held accountable for the death of Naboth even though it was at Jezebel's commands that he died?

 Do you think Ahab might have yielded to better influences if he did not have Jezebel as his wife? Why or why not?

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 Was Elijah's prophecy about Ahab and Jezebel fulfilled? Do you think the sentence passed by the Lord was justified?

 After his disappearance in the Old Testament, Elijah reappears in the New Testament. Where does he reappear?

ICON KEY Discussion Note Section Background Scripture Reading

Sharing the Learning: Group Review

✧ Elijah; Prophet to the Northern Kingdom

In this section, we review what we learned as we studied the scripture during the daily lessons and we watch the Elijah episode with new insights and understanding of Jezebel, of Ahab and especially of Elijah.

What a wonderfully human story this is even with all the supernatural miracles that adorn it. In the story of Elijah, we experience a man who was dedicated to God and who obediently followed the directions he was given. We heard about the awe inspiring miracles that God performed through him that were powerful enough to turn a pagan servant boy and a gentile widow into followers of the God of Israel. We also listened to the prideful and arrogant Jezebel as she continued to be undaunted by the mighty prophet's words and deeds. We watched as Ahab was given every opportunity to turn back to the God of Israel, only to hear him defer again and again to his wicked wife. And we experienced the tenderness of God as he appeared in a 'gentle whisper' to comfort Elijah when he was discouraged.

Let's return once more to hear about Elijah again with our additional scriptural insights and understandings.

📺 Watch the Elijah DVD

Group Discussion Questions

After viewing the DVD, Discuss the following topics with your group.

✎ What new perspectives did you have on the characters when you watched it this time? Who did you see differently and why?

✎ If you were filming the life of Elijah, is there something or someone you would have added to this film, which was not included? Why is the scene or person you selected important to you?

✎ Is there anything in Ahab's manner or in his comments that makes you think he could have been turned back to God if he were not under the influence of Jezebel?

✎ What did you learn about Elijah's character as you studied the scripture behind this story?

✎ What did you learn about God's character as you studied the scripture behind this story?

Review

The story of Elijah teaches us many things. At Horeb, God revealed His almighty power to Elijah in wind, earthquake and fire. Yet, these evidences of God's power were only the outward signs of His ways. Elijah needed to experience the living person-to-person relationship with God Himself. God revealed His person in a gentle whisper that spoke directly to Elijah's heart. God comforted and encouraged Elijah in four ways:

- 1) **Elijah was not alone.** God answered Elijah's sense of isolation by causing him to realize that he was not alone in the worship of God. There were at least seven thousand others who had not worshipped Baal (I Kings, 19:18). No matter how far the whole nation will backslide from God, He always draws to Himself a remnant through whom He will build our future.
- 2) **Good, not evil, will ultimately triumph.** God assured Elijah that He is still on the throne. The wicked will be destroyed even though they seem to flourish without hindrance. Ahab and Jezebel would receive their punishment.
- 3) **God promised Elijah companionship.** God encouraged Elijah to realize that his work in Israel was not in vain. Elijah was promised a fellow worker, Elisha, who would continue what Elijah had started after he was gone.
- 4) **God comforted Elijah by a new commission.** God called Elijah to anoint Hazael to be king of Syria and Jehu to be king of Israel.

In James 5:12, Elijah is described as "a man just like us." We, too, then can take comfort in these same promises from God. We can be encouraged in the same way. We can pray with the faith and effectiveness of Elijah.

☒ Action Item

Would you ask the Lord to lead you to begin praying about "big" issues that are on God's heart? Don't be afraid to pray with boldness like Elijah.