

St. Nicholas Orthodox Church - Monongahela, Pa.
Bible Study – Old Testament Heroes of Faith
Session 5 – Holy Prophet Elias

O Master who loves mankind, illuminate our hearts with the pure light of Your divine knowledge and open the eyes of our mind to understand the teachings of Your Gospel. Instill in us also the fear of Your blessed commandments, that we may overcome all carnal desires, entering upon a spiritual life and understanding and doing all things to please You. For You are the enlightenment of our souls and bodies, O Christ God, and to You we give glory, together with Your eternal Father and You all-holy, gracious, and life-giving Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.

I. INTRODUCTION

A succession of seven wicked kings had reigned over Israel: among them Ahab and his notoriously wicked wife Jezebel. God sends Elias (*Hebrew version of his name is Elijah*) to bring the people back to worship and belief in the one, true God.

1. The prophets are men (and women) who both “foretell” and “tell for”. Explain

Read 3 Kingdoms 16:37-41 (p. 411)

Worship of the true God had all but ceased; Baal worship had become the national religion. Only 7000 Israelites remained true in heart to the Lord, and these were fearful and hid their belief in the true God. A flood of idolatry, superstition and evil had overwhelmed the nation; never had God’s favored nation sunk so low spiritually and morally.

II. THE DROUGHT AND THE WIDOW OF ZAREPHATH (3 Kingdoms 17)

Read 3 Kingdoms chapter 17

1. Why is there a drought?
2. How does Elias’ experience at the Brook Cherith illustrate the promise of our Lord from Matthew 6:31-33 (p. 1279)
3. What does Elias ask of the widow and how does she respond?
4. If you were the widow how might you have responded to Elias’ request in v. 10 & 11?

5. How does Elias' experience with this widow illustrate the promise of Jesus in Luke 6:38 (p. 1376)

If you give what you do not need, it isn't giving.
(Mother Theresa)

6. How does God use this widow in His work? What does this teach us?
7. Why does the widow think her son died? See also John 9:1-2 (p. 1442)
8. Does God punish people when they sin? Why do bad things happen to good people?

III. PROPHETS OF BAAL ON MT. CARMEL (3 Kingdoms 18)

After three and a half years of drought, God told Elias to return to King Ahab. The king had already gone in search of water for the nation. Elias met Obadiah who was also in search of water by the king's command. Elias sent Obadiah to fetch the king while he began preaching to the people. Elias issues a challenge to the King Ahab

Read 3 Kingdoms 18:17-26 (p. 413) and then **18:36-40**

9. Why are the people silent when Elias challenges them in 18:21?
10. There are more prophets of Baal than of the one, true God. What does this teach us?
11. When the people shouted "*Truly, the Lord is God; He is God*" they were: a. scared to death
b. convinced c. humbled d. converted
12. During the Divine Liturgy, the sacrifice is laid on the altar and like Elias the priest prays. What/ who falls from heaven? When?

For reflection: I wish God would bring to my life: a. a little lightning b. His power c. an answer to prayer d. conviction e. proof of His existence f. His presence

The place I'd begin to cast out the "Baals" of my life is: a. my bedroom b. my kitchen c. my workplace d. my school e. my mind f. my friendships g. my rest and relaxation time

IV. THE SOUND OF A GENTLE BREEZE (3 Kingdoms 19)

King Ahab returned home to his wife and told Jezebel all that Elias had done and how he killed all the prophets of the false god Baal. She was furious.....

Read 3 Kingdoms 19:1-9 (p. 415)

13. What emotions is Elias experiencing in 19:1-5?

14. How does this experience of Elias illustrate the promises of Jesus in John 6:35 (p. 1435) and John 6:47-51 (p. 1436)

15. What is significant about where Elias flees? v. 8 (see Exodus 3:1)

16. How is Elias' encounter different from that of Moses?

17. What other time did God reveal Himself in the wind?

18. What might be the message for all of us from their experiences?

For reflection: Have I ever felt like Elias "at the end of my rope"? Does God seem to care at all in my struggle? How can He help me? What tempts me to "give up" on serving God?

IV. ELISHA TAKES UP THE WORK (4 Kingdoms)

Read 3 Kingdoms 19:19-21

19. What might be the reason Elisha got rid of all his farm equipment?

Read 4 Kingdoms 2:1-14 (p. 423)

20. In v. 8 and v. 13...why not use a boat? To what authority does this tie Elias and Elisha?
See Exodus 14:21 (p. 83) and Joshua 3:7, 13 (p. 259)

21. What happened to Elias? How is the death of a Christian like or unlike this?

Concluding hymn, Kondak, Tone 2:

*O Prophet, who foresaw the mighty deeds of our God,
O great Elias, who through your prayers stopped rain,
intercede for us with the only One who loves mankind.*