

Elijah Confronts Ahab

Level C | Lesson 6 | Teacher Overview

Key Message: We can turn to the Lord no matter what we have done.

Text: I Kings 21:1-20, 29

Activity Options (choose 2 or 3)

1. Talk About It
2. Explore: Handling Our “Wants”
3. Look Closer: Elijah’s Journeys
4. Meditate and Activate



I Kings 21:20

Then Ahab said to Elijah, “Have you found me, O my enemy?” And he answered, “I have found you, because you have sold yourself to do evil in the sight of the Lord....”

Talk About It

I Kings 21:1-20,29: Naboth's Vineyard

1. What did King Ahab want to take from Naboth? (He wanted to take his vineyard. Naboth had inherited his vineyard from his ancestors. By law he could not sell it. It was his inheritance. Ahab was really asking for more than a piece of land—he was asking for Naboth's birthright.)
2. What was Ahab's response when Naboth refused to give it to him? (He went to bed and wouldn't talk to anyone.)
3. Who stirred Ahab up so that he could not let go of his anger? (His wife Jezebel stirred him up.) How might a good person have responded to Ahab's tantrum?
4. Which of the Ten Commandments did Jezebel break so that Ahab could have what he wanted? (covet, false witness (lies), murder, steal)
5. Later on Elijah came to talk to Ahab about what had happened. What did he tell Ahab? (Elijah told him that Ahab and Jezebel would die, and that the throne of Israel, which would normally have been inherited by Ahab's descendants, would be taken away from his family.)
6. How did hearing that news change Ahab's behavior? (He tore his clothes, dressed in sackcloth and would not eat anything. This is what people did when they were mourning because somebody had died.)
7. How did Ahab's remorse change Elijah's prophecy? (Elijah modified the prophecy so that his son would inherit the throne, and after that the throne would be taken from his family.)
8. The Lord invites us to turn to Him when we have done something wrong. He continues to love us no matter how bad things seem. What actions can someone take to return to the Lord? (We can acknowledge what happened, apologize to others, pray, read the Word, attend church, etc.)

Explore: Handling Our “Wants”

I Kings 21:1-20,29: Naboth’s Vineyard



The things which enter into a person’s thought, and not through the thought into the will [what we deeply love], do not defile him. But the things which enter through the thought into the will defile him because they become his, for the will is the person himself (Arcana Coelestia 8910).

Take a look at how the influence of good and evil spirits with us plays out in life situations. Compare the kinds of thoughts that come from evil spirits with the kinds that come from good spirits. Follow up with a role play activity.

Supplies Needed for Each Student

- copy of “Handling our ‘Wants’” page with chart *or* board with chart information written up to share (see attached sheet)
- space for role play activity

Warm up

Have you ever considered where your thoughts come from? Why do people have good thoughts? Why do people experience selfish thoughts? This activity explores where our thoughts come from, and how our free response to our thoughts paves our path to heaven or hell.

Every person experiences good healthy thoughts and selfish thoughts. Thoughts come into our minds from spirits who are with us. Each person has two good and two evil spirits with them all the time. They are our associate spirits. The good spirits introduce good thoughts into our minds, and the evil spirits introduce selfish thoughts into our minds. We are not responsible for these thoughts flowing through our minds. But when an idea grabs our attention and we make a habit of returning to the same thought again and again and then look for a chance to act on it, that thought becomes part of our own life. Our spiritual freedom rests on our ability to choose between good and evil at every moment.

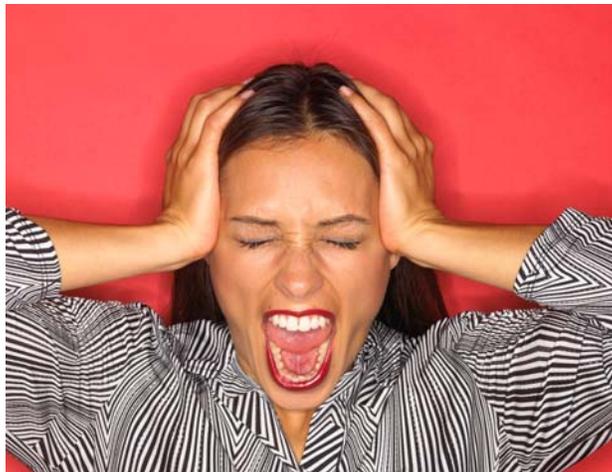
Let’s look at some of the ways good and evil spirits may lead our thoughts. Imagine that you are in Ahab’s shoes. There is something you badly want, but it is not yours to have. Compare the kinds of thoughts that flow in from good and evil spirits in the table.

Page 2 - Handling Our “Wants”

Role Play: Where Will It Lead?

Now we will take a look at how the influence of good and evil spirits with us may play out in life situations by doing a role playing activity.

Choose a scenario to act out with a partner in front of the group. Actors may decide whether to portray a person whose actions demonstrate a choice towards heaven or hell. Observing group members may replace an actor at any time during the scenario by entering the staging area, saying “freeze” and tapping the actor they wish to replace on the shoulder. The newcomer will then assume the pose and role of the actor. The first actor withdraws and sits down with the group. The scenario continues with the new player. Actor replacement may happen repeatedly at any time throughout the activity. If you wish to discuss scenarios, set a time limit. When the timer goes off, stop and discuss.



Handling Our “Wants”

I Kings 21:1-20, 29

Thoughts from evil spirits inspire you to	Thoughts from good spirits inspire you to
be angry	be happy for others
be sad	realize that <i>others</i> have wants/needs
be resentful	be thankful for what you <i>do</i> have
be jealous	trust that the Lord gives you what you need
blame (others, the Lord or “fate”)	be thankful for what you do have
These thoughts may make you want to	These thoughts may make you want to
steal (take by force or sneakiness)	look for other ways to get what you want (ways that are right)
murder	“let go” of what you wanted (decide that you <i>don’t</i> want/need)
lie	“wait on the Lord”—be patient

Scenarios for Role Playing

1. A valuable object is missing. Two people are talking about it.
2. Someone sees a person collapse on a busy city street.
3. Someone’s valuable (wallet, calculator, iPod, *etc.*) has gone missing and they are telling someone else about it.
4. A tall person is sitting in front of a short person, blocking the shorter person’s view.
5. Two people meet as they step out of their vehicles after a car accident.
6. A person is talking to a friend after hearing gossip being passed on about him or herself.
7. Someone finds out that a friend is abusing alcohol or drugs and decides to confront him or her.
8. Friends have tickets for a show. Just before they are due to leave, one feels sick and wants to stay home.
9. Someone feels desperate and decides to run away. A stranger meets him or her at a bus stop.
10. Two people are admiring a beautiful object.

Look Closer: Elijah's Journeys

I Kings 21:1-20,29: Naboth's Vineyard

Supplies Needed for Each Student

- copy of Elijah's Journeys map page (see attached)
- copy of Elijah's Journeys text page (see attached)
- colored pencils
- black pen



Introduction

The mountains, rivers, cities and plains in the Land of Canaan, where the stories in the Word take place, provide a context for the drama in each story. If we look closely at these details, we can see that this context is not only a description of a place, but a description of a state of mind. Let's look at a couple of examples. Elijah challenges the prophets of Baal to enter into a contest to determine whose god is the true God. The contest takes place up on a mountain—Mount Carmel. We sometimes talk about “raising our thoughts” on an issue, or seeking the “moral high ground.” We may remember that the Ten Commandments were given to Moses on Mount Sinai. When someone goes up a mountain in the Word, it pictures something we think or love being raised up towards heaven to the Lord.

Water and lack of water or drought also play a role in this story. Ahab's turning away from the Lord and worshipping idols leads to a three and a half year drought. The drought ends when Elijah overcomes the prophets of Baal. We talk about experiencing a “dry spell” in our spiritual lives, or “being flooded with ideas.” We also use water to clean ourselves. Water pictures truth or true ideas. When Ahab adopts false ideas, he lacks truth in his life, just as he lacks the rain. Once the true ideas reign in the land again, rain pours down from heaven.

The map work that is included in today's lesson is designed to help students become familiar with features of the land of Canaan that provide a backdrop for the stories about Elijah. It is hoped that as the students enter adulthood they will learn more about how the geographic details of the land of Canaan feature in their spiritual lives. More information on this topic is available for teachers at http://www.swedenborgstudy.com/books/W.L.Worcester_Language-Parable.

Activity

Students may work independently or in groups to locate the important places in Elijah's story. Use the answer key that is provided to help students as needed.

The names of some cities are followed by a question mark. Scholars are not certain of the exact location of these historical cities.

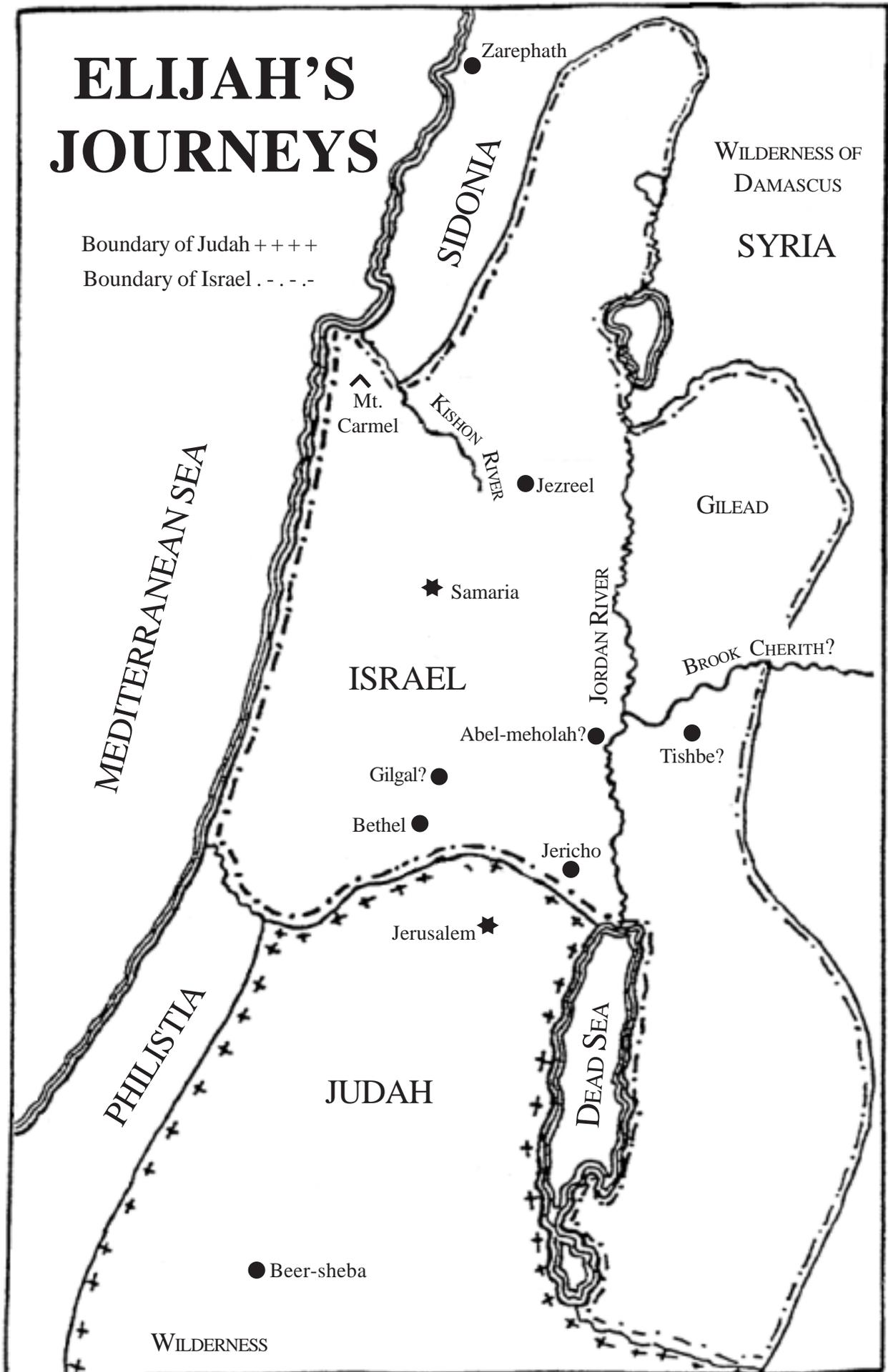
Elijah's Journeys

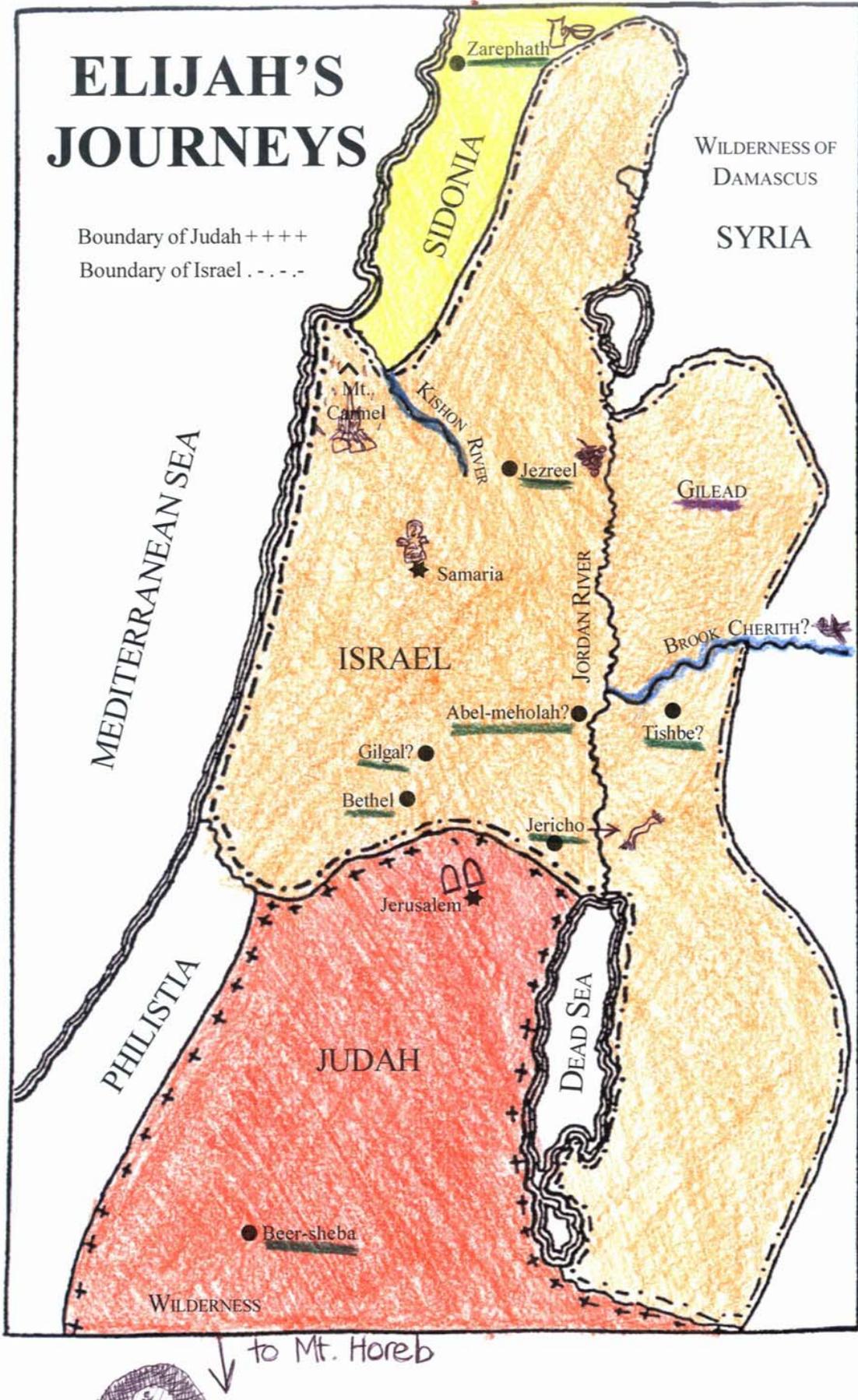
1. The traditional land of the Children of Israel was divided into two during Elijah's life. The lower part of the land was called Judah and its capital was Jerusalem. The upper part continued to be called Israel and its capital was Samaria. *Shade Judah in lightly with a red pencil. Shade Israel in lightly with an orange pencil.*
2. Judah and Israel each had its own king. In Judah, the king and the people continued to follow the Lord. *With your pen, draw a small outline of the Ten Commandments tables of stone near Jerusalem.*
3. In Israel, Ahab was the king. Against the laws of the Lord, he married Jezebel who was not of the Children of Israel but who was the daughter of the king of Sidonia. *Shade Sidonia in with yellow.*
4. Ahab and Jezebel and most of the people worshiped the false god, Baal, turning away from the Lord. Ahab even built a temple for Baal in Samaria and made a wooden image. *Draw a small image of Baal near Samaria with your pen.*
5. The Lord called Elijah to be His prophet. Elijah was from the town of Tishbe in the Gilead area of Israel. Elijah prophesied to Ahab that there would be a terrible drought in the land, with no rain for years. *Underline Tishbe with green, and underline Gilead with purple.*
6. The Lord then told Elijah to go and hide near the brook Cherith which flowed into the Jordan River. There ravens brought food to him, and he drank water from the brook. *Color the brook Cherith blue and draw a small picture of a raven near it with your pen.*
7. After a time, the brook dried up because there had been no rain. The Lord told Elijah to journey to the city of Zarephath, which was in Sidonia. There he stayed with a widow and her son. The widow fed him from her small store of oil and flour, which miraculously did not run out. Later, Elijah revived the widow's son after he became very ill and stopped breathing. *Underline Zarephath with green and with your pen draw a small picture of a jar and a bowl beside it to remind you of the oil and flour.*
8. After some time, the Lord told Elijah to go see Ahab. Elijah challenged Ahab to put the prophets of Baal to a test. The Children of Israel gathered on Mount Carmel to watch as the prophets of Baal tried to call down fire onto an altar of Baal. Nothing happened. Then Elijah built an altar to the Lord and called on Him. Fire came down from heaven and consumed the altar. *With your pen draw a small picture of an altar with fire coming down onto it near Mt. Carmel.*
9. After this contest, Elijah had the prophets of Baal taken down to the Kishon River where they were executed. *Color the Kishon River blue.*

10. Elijah and his servant went back up on Mt. Carmel to look for rain. After looking seven times, the servant saw a small rain cloud coming from over the sea. As the rain was coming, Elijah and Ahab both journeyed to the city of Jezreel where Ahab had a palace. *Underline Jezreel with green.*
11. When Jezebel heard that the prophets of Baal had been executed, she was very angry and sent word to Elijah threatening to do the same to him. Elijah fled down to Beersheba which was in Judah. *Underline Beersheba with green.*
12. Leaving his servant in Beersheba, Elijah fled further south into the wilderness. There, while he lay under a thorn tree in despair, he was given food and water by an angel. This food gave him the strength to journey even further south for forty days and nights down to Mt. Horeb. There he hid in a cave and eventually heard the Lord telling him to return to Israel. *Mt. Horeb is on the Sinai peninsula which is not visible on your map. With your pen draw an arrow pointing down off the page and write "to Mt. Horeb" beside it. Draw a small picture of a cave beside the arrow.*
13. As the Lord told him, Elijah went next to the wilderness of Damascus where he anointed a new king of Syria. *Underline the wilderness of Damascus with purple.*
14. Elijah then traveled to Abel-Meholah where according to the Lord's instructions, he chose Elisha to become the next prophet after himself. Elijah threw his mantle over Elisha while he was plowing as a sign of this selection. *Underline the possible location of Abel-Meholah in green.*
15. Ahab decided that he wanted a certain vineyard that was near his palace in Jezreel. Naboth, who owned the vineyard, refused to sell it. Jezebel arranged to have Naboth killed, and Ahab went to take possession of the land. The Lord told Elijah to confront Ahab, and Ahab repented and humbled himself. *Draw a cluster of grapes beside the city of Jezreel.*
16. Some years later, after Ahab had been killed in a war against Syria, the time came for Elijah to be taken to heaven. Elijah and Elisha traveled together from Gilgal to Bethel and then on to Jericho. At each step of the journey, Elijah tried to get Elisha to remain behind, but Elisha would not leave his master. *Underline Gilgal, Bethel and Jericho with green.*
17. Then from Jericho, they crossed the Jordan river into the region of Gilead. After crossing the Jordan, Elijah was taken to heaven and Elisha took up the prophet's mantle. *With your pen, draw an arrow from Jericho across the Jordan. Then draw a small mantle at the end of the arrow to remind you of its passing from Elijah to Elisha.*

ELIJAH'S JOURNEYS

Boundary of Judah + + + +
Boundary of Israel -





Meditate & Activate

Thinking or meditating about a passage from God's Word and finding opportunities to put it into action can be a powerful experience. Keep this card intact or cut out the illustrated quotation to use as a bookmark or put up somewhere in your home.

Meditate: We cannot make ourselves love doing the Lord's will. But if we consistently choose to turn away from things that are against His law, the Lord will bring us increasing joy in following His path.

Activate: Today, notice an idea or desire flowing into your mind which is "ungodly"—that is, against God's will. It might be a feeling of anger, a thought about cheating, or a sense of envy. Consciously choose not to act on this desire or idea; send it away by saying "no" to it in your mind.



Blessed is the man who walks not
in the counsel of the ungodly...
But his delight is in the
law of the Lord....

Psalms 1:1-2

To make a stronger bookmark, print this page on heavy paper or cardstock, cut in half and give half to each student.

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