

The Prophet Elijah: From Wicked King Ahab to the Whirlwind

by Joelee Chamberlain

Remember when we talked about the kings of Israel and Judah? You remember how there came to be two kingdoms of Jews, don't you? How the very wise son of good King David, Solomon, had become king and then very foolishly Solomon started building altars to false gods for his many wives and had sort of forgotten the only real God? And that was when the Lord God told Solomon that most of Solomon's kingdom would be taken away from Solomon's son because of this wickedness of Solomon. So after Solomon died, the kingdom was divided into two parts, wasn't it? One part stayed with David's descendants and was called the kingdom of Judah, and the other part was called the kingdom of Israel.

And then do you remember that I told you that the kingdom of Israel didn't have even one good king; they were all very wicked? And the very worst king of Israel was named Ahab. But at the same time there was a good prophet of the Lord named Elijah. But there hadn't been then to tell you the stories about them then, had there? But I'd said I'd tell them to you later. So why don't I tell them to you now? Would you like that?

All right! Let's see now. How do you think wicked Ahab got to be king of Israel in the first place? Why, it was because his father had been king of Israel. But how do you think Ahab's father had become king of Israel? Why, Ahab's father had actually killed the man who was king of Israel and made himself king! What do you think of that?!

Anyway, when Ahab's father died, then Ahab became king of the 10 tribes that made up the kingdom of Israel. Like the other kings of Israel, Ahab worshipped the golden calves that Jeroboam, the first king of Israel, had made. (You remember when I told you that story, don't you?) And then one of the bad things that Ahab did was to marry a very wicked woman named Jezebel. Jezebel worshipped a false god which was called Baal, and when Jezebel became queen, she brought her idols with her. Ahab made an altar for Baal, and they had lots of priests for Jezebel's idol, and the people of Israel began worshipping Baal and doing even more wicked things. And Jezebel tried to kill all of the priests and prophets of the Lord, of the real God. She was a very wicked woman, wasn't she!

Now, of course, the Lord God didn't like this at all. So the Lord sent a very great prophet to Ahab. This prophet's name was Elijah. Elijah said to Ahab, "The Lord says that there won't be any rain until I say so." Now, what would happen if there were no rain? That's right; the food couldn't grow, could it? And if food couldn't grow, then people would get hungry. And this was to show Ahab (and the people) that only the Lord God could make it rain, and that Ahab and the people should stop worshipping idols (which couldn't help them!) and worship only the Lord, the one real God.

After Elijah told Ahab that there would be no rain until he said for it to rain, then the Lord said to Elijah, "Now you go hide by a brook that I'll tell you about. You will have water to drink from the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to bring you food there." Now why would the Lord tell Elijah to hide? Well, the Bible doesn't say why, but I think it might have been because Ahab was mad at

Elijah now and might try to kill him or at least be very mean to Elijah to try to make him say it would rain. But, again, the Bible doesn't really tell us why God said this. But anyway, Elijah did what the Lord said, and Elijah ran away to this brook. (A brook is a very little river.) And every morning and every evening ravens, big black birds, would bring him bread and meat to eat, and Elijah could drink water from the brook whenever he was thirsty. Now wasn't God kind to Elijah to feed him this way? But just imagine that! Here Elijah was living by this little brook, and every morning and every evening these big black birds, these ravens, would come flying in with food for Elijah in their beaks! Why, even the birds obey God!!

After a while, though, the brook dried up and had no water in it. Now, why would the brook dry up? Of course! It dried up because Elijah had said there wouldn't be any rain! The kingdom of Israel was being punished for worshipping idols, wasn't it? And they were going to learn that only God was God, and that only God could give them rain and food. Anyway, the brook dried up. And then the Lord said to Elijah, "Get up. Go to a town I'll tell you about, and I have commanded a widow woman there to feed you." (A widow is a woman whose husband has died.)

So Elijah got up and went to the town that God told him about. As Elijah was coming up to the gate of the town, he saw a widow woman out gathering some sticks. Elijah called to her and said, "Please bring me a little water to drink."

The widow started to go get the water for Elijah, when he called to her again and said, "And please bring me a little bit of bread to eat, too."

The widow said to Elijah, "I don't have any bread. All I have is a little bit of flour in a jar and a little bit of oil in a bottle. And, look, I'm gathering a few sticks now so that I can use that flour and oil to make some food for me and my little son. We'll eat that and then we'll have no more food and will die."

(Remember, it wasn't raining, so no food was growing, so there wasn't any more flour or oil for the widow to buy to cook with.)

But Elijah said to the widow, "Don't be afraid. Go ahead and do what you were saying, but first make me a little cake (like a biscuit or pancake) and bring it to me. Then make some for yourself and your son."

Elijah said to her, "The Lord God of Israel says that the jar of flour and the bottle of oil will always have flour and oil in them until the Lord has it rain again."

Well, the widow went and did what Elijah had told her. First she made some food for Elijah and then some for herself and her son. And then Elijah stayed there with them, and they were all able to eat food for a long time. There was always flour in the jar and oil in the bottle, just as God had promised. That was a miracle, wasn't it? Of course, God always keeps His promises.

Well, after Elijah had lived there a while, the widow's son got very sick, and he died.

The woman went to Elijah and said, "What do I have to do with you, you man of God? Have you come to me to remember my sins and to kill my son?"

Elijah said to her, "Give me your son." The woman was holding her son, and Elijah took him from her. Elijah took the boy up to the room where he stayed, and he put the boy on his own bed. And Elijah cried out to the Lord.

Then Elijah stretched himself out onto the child 3 times and cried again to the Lord, "Please, O Lord my God, please let this child be alive again."

The Lord listened to Elijah, and the little boy became alive again! So Elijah took the child down and gave him to his mother, and Elijah said, "See, your son is alive." That was another miracle, wasn't it?!

The woman said to Elijah, "Now I know that you are really a man of God and that what you say that the Lord says, is true."

Well, do you remember that Elijah had said it wouldn't rain until he said it would? Of course, Elijah himself couldn't make the rain come, but he was a prophet of God, and the Lord would tell him when the rain would come. And it had been 3½ years now that there hadn't been any rain! Just imagine! The people were running out of food for themselves and for their animals. There was a famine. A famine is when there isn't food. But finally one day the Lord spoke to Elijah.

The Lord said, "Go and let Ahab see you, and I will send rain on the earth."

So Elijah went down to where Ahab lived.

Now, Ahab had horses and mules, and the man who was in charge of these animals was named Obadiah. Obadiah worshipped the Lord. But do you remember that I told you that Ahab's wife, Jezebel worshipped Baal and tried to kill God's prophets? Well, when Jezebel was trying to find these men of God and kill them, Obadiah had hidden 100 of these men of God in caves and had secretly been bringing them food and water! Of course, Ahab and Jezebel didn't know about that! Well, now Ahab called Obadiah to him.

Ahab said to Obadiah, "Let's try to find grass for the horses and mules so that they don't die. You go one way, and I'll go another way, and we'll look all over the land for brooks and water. Maybe we can find some grass for them." So that's what they did.

As Obadiah was going along trying to find grass for the horses and mules, who should he meet but Elijah! Obadiah recognized Elijah, and Obadiah fell on his face before Elijah and said, "Are you really Elijah?!"

Elijah said, "Yes, I am. Now you go tell your master (Ahab) that Elijah is here."

Obadiah said, "Do you want Ahab to kill me?! Ahab has been looking all over, in all of the countries, trying to find you! Wherever he sent trying to find you, they would say that you weren't there. He even made them swear that you weren't there. And now you tell me to go tell my master Ahab that you, Elijah, are here! Why, as soon as I leave you, the Spirit of the Lord will carry you someplace that I won't know of, and so when I've told Ahab and he comes and can't find you, he'll kill me."

Obadiah said to Elijah, "Look, I've worshipped the Lord ever since I was young. Don't you know that when Jezebel was killing the prophets of the Lord that I hid 100 of them in caves and fed them food and water? And now you're saying to me, 'Go tell your master that Elijah is here.' Ahab will kill me!"

But Elijah said to Obadiah, "I swear by the Lord that I will really let Ahab see me today."

So Obadiah went and met Ahab and told him what Elijah had said. And Ahab went to meet Elijah.

When Ahab saw Elijah, Ahab said to him, "Are you the one that is bringing trouble to Israel?"

Elijah said to Ahab, "I haven't brought trouble to Israel. You and your family have, because you have left the commandments of the Lord and are worshipping Baal instead."

Then Elijah said to Ahab, "You send and gather together 450 of the prophets of Baal and 400 other false prophets. Jezebel feeds them. And then you meet me with them at Mount Carmel.

So Ahab did. He gathered all of those false prophets, and he also sent for the people of his kingdom of Israel, and they met Elijah at Mount Carmel. Mount Carmel is a hill in the land of Israel and is right on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. And the people all came to Elijah there.

Elijah said to the people, "How long are you going to not make up your minds? If the Lord be God, follow Him. But if Baal be God, then follow him." And the people didn't say a word about that!!

Then Elijah said to all of the people, "Look, I'm a prophet of the Lord, and I'm here all by myself. But there are 450 of Baal's prophets here."

Then Elijah said, "Bring two young bulls here. Let Baal's prophets have the first choice of them. Have them cut it up to be sacrificed and put the wood on to burn it with. But they are not to light a fire in the wood. I'll do the same with the other young bull. I'll cut it up all ready to be sacrificed and put wood under it, but I won't put fire in the wood either."

Elijah said to the people, "After we are all ready, you call on the name of your gods, and I'll call on the name of the Lord. Then the one that answers our call by sending fire to burn the wood, that will be the real God."

The people all said, "That's a good idea."

So that's what they did. Elijah let the false prophets of Baal have the first turn. The prophets of Baal made an altar and got everything all ready with the meat and the wood, but they didn't light a fire. Then they started calling on the name of Baal. They started in the morning and called out to Baal, "O Baal, hear us!" They wanted Baal to listen to what they were asking of him and for him to answer them by sending down fire.

For several hours they did this, calling out to Baal, until noon! But, of course, there was no answer! Then they started jumping up and down by their altar! But still there was no answer or fire from Baal! Now, why wasn't Baal answering his prophets or why wasn't Baal sending fire down to burn the sacrifice? That's right! Because Baal wasn't really a god, was he? Only the Lord is really God!

After it was past noon, Elijah began making fun of them. Elijah said, "Cry out louder! Why, you say he is a god. Maybe he's talking to someone! Or maybe he's on a journey! Or maybe he's sleeping, and you have to wake him up!"

So the prophets of Baal began shouting louder, "O Baal, hear us!!" They even began cutting themselves with knives, thinking this might get Baal's attention, and they were bleeding all over! They kept calling on Baal until it was the middle of the afternoon. They'd been calling on Baal for about 6 hours -- and yet, of course, Baal didn't answer them or send fire for them! Of course, Baal was only an idol, not the real God!

Finally Elijah said to all of the people, "All right, come near to me." It was his turn now.

And all of the people went up near to Elijah.

Then Elijah began fixing an altar to the Lord that was there and had been broken down. Elijah took 12 stones, one for each of the 12 sons of Jacob (the 12 tribes of Israel, right?), and with these 12 stones Elijah built up the altar to the Lord. Then Elijah dug a trench around the altar. Now why do you think he dug a trench around the altar?! I'll tell you in just a minute!

Then Elijah put the wood on the altar, and then he cut the young bull up and put the pieces on the wood. Then Elijah said, "Fill up 4 barrels with water, and pour the water on the meat for the sacrifice and over the wood." So they poured 4 barrels of water over the meat and wood.

Then Elijah said, "Do it again." So they poured 4 more barrels of water over the meat and wood.

Then Elijah said again, "Do it the third time." So again they poured 4 barrels of water all over the meat and the wood. That was 3 times that 4 barrels of water had been poured all over that meat and wood. 12 barrels of water! The meat was all wet! The wood was all wet! There was so much water that the water poured off of the altar and filled up the trench that Elijah had dug around the altar!

Now you see why Elijah had dug the trench, don't you?!

Then Elijah, who was a prophet of the Lord, went up to the altar. And Elijah began to talk to God, and Elijah said, "Oh Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel (that's Jacob, isn't it?), please let everyone know today that You are the God of Israel and that I am Your servant and that I have done all of this because You told me to."

Elijah kept talking to the Lord and said, "Please hear me, O Lord, so that these people will know that You are the Lord God and You are turning their hearts back to You."

Elijah only called on the Lord for just a little minute, but then what do you think happened? Do you think the Lord would hear him? Why, suddenly the Lord God sent fire down from heaven, and the fire burned up the meat for the sacrifice, and the fire burned up the wood, and the fire burned up the stones that made up the altar, and the fire burned up the water that was in the trench, and the fire even burned up some of the dirt!!!!

When all of the people saw this, they fell on their faces, and they said, "The Lord, He is God!! The Lord, He is God!!"

Then Elijah said to the people, "Take those prophets of Baal. Don't let even one of them escape." And the people grabbed the hundreds of false prophets of the false god Baal, and Elijah had them take them down to the brook, and kill them there.

Then Elijah said to King Ahab, "Get up and eat and drink something, because there's going to be a lot of rain."

So Ahab ate and drank. But Elijah went up to the top of Mount Carmel. He threw himself down on the ground, and he put his face between his knees. And Elijah said to his servant, "Go up and look out toward the sea." (Remember, I told you that Mount Carmel was right next to the Mediterranean Sea.)

So Elijah's servant went and looked out toward the sea. He said, "There is nothing." Then Elijah said to his servant, "Go look seven times." So the servant did.

Then when the servant looked at the sea the seventh time, he said to Elijah, "Look, there is a little cloud coming up out of the sea. It looks like a man's hand."

Then Elijah said, "Go to Ahab and tell him, 'Get your chariot ready and leave here, so that the rain doesn't stop you!'"

And the sky started getting black with rain clouds, and there was lots of wind, and then there was lots and lots of rain. And Ahab was riding in his chariot heading back to his home. And what do you think Elijah was doing? Why, the Lord made it so that Elijah could just run along right in front of Ahab's chariot all the way to the city gates!!

Well, King Ahab got home, and he told his wife Jezebel everything that Elijah had done, and he told her how Elijah had killed all of the prophets of Baal with the sword. Now, what do you think Jezebel thought of that? Do you think she became sorry for having worshipped Baal? No!!! Jezebel was very upset!! And she sent a messenger to Elijah. The messenger said, "Jezebel says she's going to kill you by tomorrow just like you killed her prophets!"

When Elijah heard that, he got up and ran away from the kingdom of Israel to save his life. And Elijah kept going until he was well into the desert, and then he sat down under a tree. He was very sad and tired. Elijah prayed to God, "O, Lord, I've had enough. Please let me die." Then Elijah lay down and went to sleep under the tree.

Now, do you think that the Lord God had forgotten Elijah? No, of course not! And while Elijah was sleeping, an angel came to him and touched him and woke him up. The angel said, "Get up and eat." Elijah looked around, and he saw a cake of bread cooking on some hot coals and there was a jug of water there, too. So Elijah got up and ate and drank, and then he lay down again. The angel of the Lord came again to him and did the same thing. The angel said to Elijah, "Get up and eat and drink, because you have a long journey ahead of you."

So Elijah got up and ate and drank again, and then he went on his journey. He didn't have anymore food or water for a long time, but the food and water that the Lord had given him was enough. Then Elijah came to a mountain, and there was a cave there, and Elijah went into the cave and stayed there. And then the Lord said to Elijah, "What are you doing here?"

Elijah said to the Lord, "I have been very zealous for You, Lord. But the children of the kingdom of Israel have left You. They've thrown down your altars and killed your prophets, and I'm the only one left, and now they're trying to find me and kill me, too."

The Lord said, "Go stand outside of the cave." Then The Lord sent a strong wind that broke rocks, it was so strong. And the Lord send an earthquake. And the Lord sent a fire. But the Lord wasn't in the wind nor the earthquake nor the fire. Then there came a little quiet voice. And Elijah knew that was the Lord speaking. Elijah wrapped his shawl around his face and went to the door of the cave and stood there. And the voice of the Lord said to Elijah again, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

And again Elijah told the Lord about how Israel had stopped worshipping the Lord and had killed the prophets of the Lord. And Elijah said, "And I'm the only one left, and they're trying to find me and kill me."

Then the Lord said to Elijah, "Go back to Israel. You're going to have a man named Jehu anointed to be king over Israel (instead of Ahab or Ahab's son). And you're going to anoint a man named Elisha to be prophet instead of you."

And the Lord said to Elijah, "You aren't the only one. There are still 7,000 people in Israel who haven't worshipped Baal."

So Elijah left the cave and the desert and started back toward the land of Israel. Elijah found the man named Elisha. Those names sound a lot alike, don't they?! Elijah and Elisha! I'll try to say them carefully so that you can hear the difference! Anyway, Elisha then went with Elijah and helped him.

And now I'll tell you another true story about the prophet Elijah and King Ahab. Would you like that? All right.

Well, Ahab had a palace, and right near to the palace was a vineyard, a place where a lot of grape vines were growing. This vineyard belonged to a man name Naboth. Now, Ahab wanted to have Naboth's vineyard to make a vegetable garden, so Ahab went to Naboth and said, "Your vineyard is right near my house. Let me have your vineyard to make a vegetable garden, and I'll give you a better vineyard, or, if you prefer, I'll give you money for it."

But Naboth didn't want to give up his vineyard. This vineyard had belonged to his father and grandfather and great-grandfather, and Naboth wanted to keep it.

Well, this made Ahab unhappy. So Ahab went home, and he went to bed and wouldn't eat!!! Imagine, a grown man acting like that! Well, Ahab's wife, Jezebel, came to him and said, "Why are you so unhappy that you won't even eat?"

Ahab said, "I spoke to Naboth and offered him money or another vineyard for his vineyard, but he said he wouldn't let me have it."

Jezebel said to Ahab, "Aren't you the king?! Get up and eat and be happy. I'll get Naboth's vineyard for you!"

And do you know what Jezebel did?! Well, I'll tell you! Jezebel had Naboth arrested, and Jezebel had two bad men tell lies about Naboth. Right in front of the people these two bad men lied and said that Naboth had said bad things about the Lord and about King Ahab. That was all a lie, wasn't it? And then do you know what happened? The people took Naboth and his sons out and killed them!! And that is what Jezebel wanted to happen! And Naboth's blood was on the ground there, and the dogs came along and licked at it.

Then they told Jezebel, "Naboth is dead now."

So Jezebel went to her husband King Ahab and said, "Get up. Go take Naboth's vineyard that he wouldn't sell to you, because Naboth is dead now."

So Ahab got up and went down to Naboth's vineyard to take it for himself. And what do you think the Lord thought of all that?! Well, I'll tell you! The Lord spoke to the prophet Elijah. The Lord said, "Go meet King Ahab. He's gone to Naboth's vineyard to take it for himself. You go tell him what I'm going to tell you."

So Elijah went to Ahab. And Ahab said to Elijah, "Have you come to me, my enemy?" (Ahab knew that Elijah didn't like what Ahab did, so he called Elijah his enemy.)

Elijah said, "Yes, I've come to you, because you have done evil things before the Lord. The Lord says that at the very place that Naboth's blood was spilled when he was killed, your blood will be, and the dogs will lick your blood, too. And the Lord says that He will bring evil onto you and your family. And Jezebel will be killed right by the wall of this city."

Well!! What do you think of that!?! Now, the Bible says that there was no one as wicked as Ahab, and that his wife Jezebel encouraged him to be wicked. But what do you think Ahab did when he heard those words from Elijah? Why, Ahab actually did something very wise. It is the only good thing that the Bible says about Ahab. You see, when Ahab heard what Elijah said, Ahab tore his own clothes, put on old clothes, stopped eating, and made himself very humble before the Lord. All of those things he did were a sign that he was sorry for being so very wicked. So the Lord said to Elijah, "Since Ahab has humbled himself before me, I'm not going to have this evil happen to Ahab's family while he is alive. That won't happen until after he's dead and his son is king."

Now, for a long time there had been fighting between Israel and another country named Syria. This is not the Assyria that will much later take the kingdom of Israel away as captives. Syria and Assyria are two different countries. Syria is a country right next to Israel, and Syria had captured and kept some of the cities that had belonged to Israel. One of those cities was named Ramoth-gilead. Well, Ahab decided to try to get Ramoth-gilead back from the Syrians.

Now, the king of Judah had come down to visit Ahab. The name of this king of Judah was Jehoshaphat. Isn't that a strange sounding name to us?! Je-hosh-a-phat! Now, Jehoshaphat the king of Judah was quite a good king, and he worshipped the Lord. He got rid of a lot of wicked things in his kingdom of Judah. But Jehoshaphat was very friendly with wicked King Ahab of Israel. In fact, Jehoshaphat's son married a very wicked daughter of king Ahab!

Well, remember, King Ahab of Israel wanted to get Ramoth-gilead back from the Syrians. So he said to King Jehoshaphat of Judah, "Will you help me fight at Ramoth-gilead?"

King Jehoshaphat of Judah said, "I am as you are. We will go with you to war." Jehoshaphat meant that both he and Ahab were Jews, so he would help Ahab. And, yes, they were both Jews. But Jehoshaphat shouldn't have been so friendly with a Jew who worshipped idols, should he?

Then Jehoshaphat said to Ahab, "But first ask what the Lord has to say about this."

So Ahab had 400 prophets come together, and he asked them, "Shall we go fight at Ramoth-gilead or not?"

But these were not prophets of the Lord God. These were false prophets of idols. And they all said, "Oh, yes, go, for the Lord will let you win."

But Jehoshaphat knew these were prophets of false gods, so he said, "Aren't there any prophets of the Lord that we could ask?"

Ahab said, "Yes, but he never says anything good for me."

But Jehoshaphat wanted to know what the Lord said, so Ahab sent for the prophet of the Lord God. This prophet's name was Micaiah (Mi-ca-yah). When Micaiah got there, the false prophets were all telling Ahab how much he was going to beat the Syrians in the battle. At first Micaiah said, "Yes, go on up to Ramoth-gilead and win there." But Ahab knew Micaiah wasn't really telling him what the Lord had said. So Ahab said, "How many times do I have to tell you only to tell me what is true in the name of the Lord?"

So Micaiah told Ahab the truth. Micaiah said, "The Lord wants you to go to Ramoth-gilead, but you will not win. You will fall there, so all of your prophets having been lying to you." You see, Ahab had been so wicked, that now the Lord was going to have him die.

Ahab didn't like what Micaiah told him, and Ahab wanted to believe his false prophets. So Ahab and Jehoshaphat went ahead and got ready to go fight with Syria at Ramoth-gilead. Jehoshaphat wore his kingly robes, but Ahab disguised himself as just a regular soldier. And off they went to battle.

Well, the king of Syria had said to his generals, "Just fight against the king of Israel."

So when the generals saw Jehoshaphat in his kingly robes, they thought, "This must be the king of Israel!" And they started to go fight against him. But Jehoshaphat shouted out, and they realized that he wasn't the king of Israel, so they left him alone.

But how was Ahab going to be killed in this battle if he didn't look like a king? Well, some Syrian soldier who had a bow and arrow, just shot an arrow without really aiming at anything, and guess what? Why, Ahab's armor had a little gap in it where two pieces of the armor met, and the arrow went right into that little gap! Yes, the arrow went in through that gap and wounded Ahab very badly. But Ahab was brave, and he stayed there in his chariot all during the day while the fighting was going on. His blood kept running out of his wound down into his chariot. Then just about the time the sun was going down, Ahab died. And Ahab's army heard that Ahab was dead, and the soldiers said, "Oh, let's all go back to our own cities!" So they did. They all ran away. But Jehoshaphat wasn't killed, and he went back to his kingdom of Judah.

Well, Ahab was dead now. And they brought Ahab's body back to his city, and they buried him there. But do you remember the prophecy that Elijah had made about Ahab when Naboth had been killed? What was that prophecy? Yes, that Ahab's blood would be at the very place that Naboth's blood had been. But Ahab had died way far away from his home, so how was that going to happen? Well, I'll tell you how. Remember that I said that Ahab bled after he was wounded by the arrow and that his blood all ran down into his chariot? Well, after they brought dead Ahab home, they wanted to clean the chariot. So they took his chariot over to the pool right by where Naboth had been killed, and they washed Ahab's chariot and his armor there to get the blood off of them, and the blood ran out of the

chariot onto the ground and was there in the same place that Naboth's blood had been. And the dogs came along and licked at it, just as they had when Naboth had died. So God's prophecy came true, didn't it? But, of course, anything that God says is going to happen, always will happen, won't it?!

So Ahab was dead. But what about the rest of the prophecies about his family? Remember that Elijah had said that evil would come on Ahab's family and that Jezebel would die right by the walls of the city? Do you think that would happen, too? Of course it would, since God said it would! Would you like for me to tell you how it happened? All right.

Now, remember how earlier I told you that the Lord had told Elijah that he was to anoint Elisha to be prophet instead of himself and also that a man named Jehu would be anointed to be king over Israel? Well, about 20 years after Ahab died, and also after Elijah went to heaven, Elisha sent a young prophet of the Lord to a house where Jehu, a man of the kingdom of Israel, was. And the prophet anointed Jehu and said, "The Lord anoints you as king over Israel."

Then the prophet said, "You are to kill Ahab's family. You are to do that because his wife Jezebel killed so many of my prophets." Then the prophet opened the door and ran away. This is what Elisha had told him to do.

At first Jehu thought that his friends were playing a joke on him, but then he finally realized that the man had been a prophet of the Lord. And Jehu's friends blew a trumpet and shouted, "Jehu is king."

Then Jehu said, "If this is what you want, don't let anyone get out of the city to go tell about this." Then Jehu got into his chariot and headed out for the city where Ahab's son (who was now king of Israel) and Jezebel were. Now, there was a watchman standing in the tower of the city, and he saw all of these people coming toward the city. They told the king of Israel about it, and two times the king had someone go out to check to see what was going on. But each time, the man going to ask, just rode along with Jehu instead of going back to the king. Finally the watchman said, "It looks like the way that Jehu drives, because he's driving furiously."

Then the king of Israel said, "Get my chariot ready." So they did, and the king went out to meet Jehu. The king met Jehu right where Naboth's vineyard used to be.

The king said to Jehu, "Is it peace, Jehu?"

Jehu said, "How can there be any peace as long as your mother Jezebel is doing so many wicked things?!"

Then the king tried to turn his horses around and run away, but Jehu took his bow and shot as hard as he could, and the arrow killed Ahab's son, the king of Israel. And they threw the body of the king onto the ground where Naboth had been killed.

Well, Jezebel was back in the city, and she heard what was going on. She put on her makeup and fixed her hair and looked out of the window. As Jehu in his chariot was riding into the gate, she

called out to Jehu, "You murdered your master!"

Jehu looked up and shouted, "Who is on my side?!" And some servants looked out the window at him. Jehu said, "Throw her down!" And they threw wicked Jezebel out of the window, and she died. Then after a while the leaders of the cities of Israel realized that Jehu was going to be king of Israel, and many sons and grandsons of wicked King Ahab were killed. So God's prophecy about Ahab's family was fulfilled. God's prophecies are always fulfilled, aren't they?

But what about the great prophet Elijah? We haven't talked about him for a while have we? This that I just told you about Jehu all happened after Elijah went to heaven. But now let me tell you what happened to Elijah, how he actually went to heaven. It was very unusual! In fact, what finally happened to Elijah only happened to one other man that we know of.

Remember that I told you that the Lord had told Elijah that he was not only going to have a man named Jehu to be anointed as king over Israel, but Elijah was himself to anoint a man named Elisha to be prophet instead of himself. Well, as I said, Elijah had anointed Elisha to be a prophet, and Elisha had been with Elijah after that and had helped Elijah. Well, one day after Elijah had been a prophet of the Lord for about 25 years, Elijah and Elisha were walking along, and Elijah said to Elisha, "Please wait here. The Lord wants me to go further on to a certain city."

Elisha said, "I won't leave you."

As they were walking toward that city, some prophets came out and said to Elisha, "Do you know that today the Lord will take your master Elijah away from you?"

Elisha said, "Yes, I know. Be quiet."

Then Elijah said to Elisha, "Please wait here, for the Lord has sent me to another city."

But Elisha said, "No, I won't leave you."

As they came to this second city, some other prophets came out and said to Elisha, "Do you know that today the Lord will take your master away from you?"

Elisha said to the prophets, "Yes, I know. Be quiet."

Then Elijah said to Elisha, "Please wait here, for the Lord has sent me to the Jordan River."

Elisha said to Elijah, "No, I won't leave you."

So they walked on together. And 50 prophets of the Lord went along and stood a little ways away from them as Elijah and Elisha were both standing by the Jordan River.

Now Elijah had a mantle. This was sort of a cloak that he could wrap around himself to keep

warm. Well, Elijah took his mantle, and he rolled it up, and he hit the Jordan River with it. And what do you think happened then? Why, the water of the river just opened up, and Elijah and Elisha walked across the river on dry ground!

After they had walked across the river, Elijah said to Elisha, "Ask what you'd like for me to do for you before I am taken away from you."

Elisha said, "Please, let me have a double share of your spirit." (I'm not exactly sure what this means, but it might mean Elisha wanted the Lord to be with him very much and let him do even more things than Elijah had done by the power of the Lord. But I'm not really sure of what it means, since the Bible doesn't say.)

Anyway, Elijah said, "You've asked for something very difficult. However, if you see me when I am being taken away from you, then you will have it. But if you do not see me being taken away from you, you won't have it."

Are you wondering what Elijah and the prophets had meant when they'd said that Elijah was going to be taken away from Elisha? Well, now you'll find out!

Elijah and Elisha were going on and talking, when suddenly...a chariot of fire and horses of fire came between them! And Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind!!! He didn't die; the Lord just took him up to heaven! And Elisha saw his master Elijah going up to heaven in the whirlwind, and Elisha cried out, "My father, my father! The chariots of Israel and the horsemen of them!"

And Elisha didn't see Elijah anymore!! And Elisha took hold of his clothes and tore them into two pieces (that was a sign of mourning, of being unhappy). Then Elisha picked up Elijah's mantle which had dropped from Elijah. And Elisha walked back and stood by the edge of the Jordan River. The Jordan was flowing along again now, just as it always did. But Elisha took Elijah's mantle, and he hit the water with it (just as Elijah had done earlier), and he called on the Lord. And the water opened up and made a path for Elisha, and Elisha walked across the river on the dry ground.

Now, remember the 50 prophets who had stood watching Elijah and Elisha? Well, they saw Elisha make the river open up and saw him walk across, and they all realized that the Lord had made Elisha to be a great prophet now instead of Elijah.

And that is the end of the stories about the good prophet of the Lord, Elijah and about wicked King Ahab of Israel. We find all of these stories about Elijah and wicked Ahab in the book of I Kings in the Bible. In fact, the book of I Kings ends by telling about when Ahab dies. The book of II Kings then starts out by telling when Elijah is taken up to heaven.

The next time we get together, I'll tell you some really exciting stories from the book of II Kings about Elisha after Elijah was taken up to heaven. Elisha became a very great prophet and did many miracles.

But what can we learn from these true stories about Elijah and Ahab? I think the biggest thing to learn is that we should only worship the Lord, the only real God. And where can we learn about the Lord God? In the Bible, of course! And what is the most important thing in the Bible for us to remember? Yes, it's about the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Who came to earth to save us from our sins. We all sin, don't we? And we all deserve to be punished for our sins. What would that punishment be? Yes, it would be that we couldn't go to heaven and be with God when we die, wouldn't it? But when Jesus died on the cross, He died to take the punishment for our sins, didn't He? Of course, Jesus didn't stay dead, did He?! After 3 days He rose from the dead, and He's still alive in heaven, isn't He? And all we have to do is to believe this and to trust Jesus to take our punishment. And then someday we will be with Jesus forever!