

THE PICTURE OF GOD'S AUTHORITY

Session In A Sentence: God's miracles reveal He is the one true God.

When my kids were younger, they often wanted to eat at McDonald's® because they wanted a Happy Meal®. They enjoyed the food, but they loved the cheap toy inside even more. Now, however, my kids are older, and they never ask me to pull into McDonald's for a Happy Meal. Now they want steak! They have grown up. The Happy Meal days are gone. Some people today look at the miracles in the Bible like Happy Meals—to be cherished as children but not as adults. The skeptics believe you should grow up and see these biblical stories as fictional. But should we discard the miracle stories of Scripture?

What beliefs and doctrines are affected when a person rejects the validity of miracles in the Bible?

CHRIST CONNECTION

The miracles Elijah performed revealed that he was a prophet of the one true God and that the Lord's words were true. In a greater way, the miracles Jesus performed revealed that He is the Son of God, the true Word of God (John 20:30-31).

DAY 1

Read: 1 Kings 15:1-34

Some of the kings in 1-2 Kings had commendable traits, though none were flawless, and many were a total mess. What keeps certain portions of 1-2 Kings from being depressing is this: God was preserving a remnant so that the ultimate Son of David would come and reign forever. God was preserving “a lamp before me in Jerusalem” (1 Kings 11:36; 15:4).

The writer gave quick facts about many kings, such as: 1) the king’s identity; 2) the length of his reign; 3) his relationship to the king in Judah or Israel; 4) the identity of the king’s mother (in the case of Judah’s kings); 5) occasionally an explanation of the divine point of view; 6) a statement of death; and 7) recommendations for further study.

We meet Judah’s King Abijam in 15:1-8. He was not completely devoted to the Lord as David had –Trillia Newbell been. But his son, Asa, Judah’s next king, sought the Lord for the majority of his life (vv. 9-24). Only Hezekiah and Josiah receive higher praise than Asa. Sadly, Asa fell later in life due to unbelief (2 Chron. 16). Then we read of Israel’s King Nadab, who did evil in the sight of the Lord (1 Kings 15:25-32). He continued in the sins of his father before being killed and replaced by another bad king, Baasha (vv. 28-30).

What are some lessons to glean from the lives of the kings in 1 Kings 15?

DAY 2

Read: 1 Kings 16:1-34

This chapter highlights the exceeding sinfulness of sin. It also shows us our need for and the trustworthiness of God’s Word. We meet the prophet Jehu, who brought a word against Baasha. Baasha acted like Jeroboam, leading the people to sin against the Lord with their false worship, and consequently, he shared Jeroboam’s fate (16:2-4). Then his son, Elah, got drunk and was assassinated by Zimri, who went on to kill the rest of Baasha’s house (vv. 8-14). This fulfilled Jehu’s prophecy against Baasha (vv. 3,12). Zimri only reigned for seven days (v. 15). Omri then reigned for twelve years (v. 23). He established Samaria as the new capital city of the Northern Kingdom. It remained Israel’s capital until Assyria plundered it in 722 BC.

Finally, we meet the evil king Ahab. He reigned for twenty-two years (v. 29). He married Jezebel, a daughter of the king of the Sidonians. She was a Baal worshiper, and she had hundreds of prophets for Baal. She also killed God’s prophets (18:4,13). Following the heart of his wife, Ahab also served Baal, the first Israelite king to do so. It was into this context that God sent His prophet Elijah to proclaim the His word.

What are some of the consequences of sin, whether yours or others’, that you have experienced?

DAY 3

Read: 1 Kings 17:1-7

Evil king after evil king, and then—“Boom!”—we meet Elijah the prophet. He was a settler from the wild, forested area east of the Jordan in Gilead.

God chose this man from the middle of nowhere. Unlike the kings, we don't know who his family was, and we don't know anything about his childhood. God chose him out of obscurity in order to confront apostasy. God loves to use “nobodies” from “nowhere” places.

The chapter begins with Elijah proclaiming a message to King Ahab (17:1). Picture the awkward sight of a wild man entering the presence of the king. But because Elijah knew the living God, he was able to stand fearlessly before Ahab. Because he knew the living God, he could also trust God for his daily provision (vv. 2-7). Elijah had great faith because he

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DAY 4

Read: 1 Kings 17:8-16

In this passage, God provided for His prophet through a widow at Zarephath. She had nothing to offer but a handful of flour and a bit of oil, but God multiplied these meager supplies. Elijah promised the widow that if she would bake him a cake before feeding herself and her son that the flour jar would not be empty and the oil would not run out. She submitted to Elijah's word, and her household ate for days. This all took place according to the word of God (17:8,14,15,16).

Observe God's sovereignty and grace. God chose this widow to provide for Elijah. God told Elijah, “I have commanded a widow there to feed you” (v. 9). But we don't read that God ever spoke directly to the widow. Even though she may not have heard this news from a prophet beforehand, God proclaimed it to be so because He is the only sovereign. He works in the hearts of the mighty and in the hearts of the lowly to accomplish His purposes.

How might this passage address the times when you are anxious, afraid, or overwhelmed by the cares of this life?

Voices from the Church

“Because we know God and because we fear God, we can trust God. There is only one God, and He is our Father. He most clearly reveals Himself in His Word, so it is there that we must turn to learn more about Him and grow in fearing Him.” –Trillia Newbel

A third miracle—and a more dramatic one—took place next in 1 Kings 17. The widow's son became ill and died (v. 17), but God raised him from the dead through the ministry of Elijah. We're reminded of the reality and pain of death in this story. Stories of death are all around us. At any moment, a loved one could take his or her last breath. Like in this story, just when things seem to be working out wonderfully, death can take someone. In this case, it was a precious child.

But there is hope beyond the grave for every grieving believer: God raises the dead. God gives us a little sign of his resurrection power in this Old Testament story.

We should look forward to the resurrection when Christ comes again. Yet in the present, we should ask God to do what only He can do—raise spiritually dead people to life (Eph. 2:4-5). This young boy eventually died again. What everyone needs is to be raised up forever by the resurrection power of God through faith in His Son, Jesus.

How might this story inspire you to pray more fervently?

Join together with 2-4 people from your group, or with your family, sometime during the week to reflect on the session and to share how God is working and you are responding.

Share your thoughts and reflections on the truths from Scripture in this session:

- God provides in unusual ways (1 Kings 17:1-4).
- God provides in miraculous ways (1 Kings 17:10-16).
- God provides through His servant (1 Kings 17:17-24).

How have you responded to these truths from Scripture?

Why are miracles not only a demonstration of God's power but also of His care for His creatures, namely, His people?

How can the miracles that God performed through Elijah inform how we serve and bless those around us, both inside and outside of the church?

Missional Application

Because we have come to know Jesus as the Word of God and have been forgiven and transformed by Him, we declare God's Word to those around us with faith and boldness so that God may move others from death to life.