



S2.Lesson 23: Jesus & The Old Testament – Going Up!

Middle School Lesson Plans

Supplies Needed: Journals; Handout; tv or laptop to show movie clip (movie clip link is available at rfour.org/curriculum.html); a pad of sticky post-it notes; 1 writing utensil per student

OPENING PRAYER

TELL

- During this 3 week session, we are looking at things Jesus did during his life and ministry and comparing it to similar things that happened in the Old Testament.
- We're doing this session for a number of reasons – the main reason is to point out that what Jesus did, though impressive, was not new or unique to the Israelites understandings of how God can work through us, humans. Also, if these things happened *before* Jesus, then that means these things can happen *after* Jesus as well.
- Two classes ago, in our Old Testament story, we talked about how Elijah raised a young boy from the dead. In the last class, we talked about how Elisha, Elijah's student and successor, helped a woman have an abundance of oil.
- This week, we're going to read a story that has both Elijah AND Elisha in it. And the Jesus story has Jesus leaving. But before we read the stories, let's watch a movie clip from the movie, "Up."
- In the clip, two men from a retirement/nursing home are coming to pick the old man up from his home, which is slated to be demolished. But the old man has some other ideas. Let's see what happens.

WATCH "UP" Movie Clip

ASK

- So instead of going to the nursing home, what did the old man do? (he used millions of balloons to move his house)
- What was the response of the people on the ground? (amazement; dumbstruck)
- Did the old man say anything to the people once he was in the air? ("so long boys! I'll send you a postcard from Paradise Falls" and then later makes a dismissive "bleh" sound towards the town he's leaving behind)
- At the end of the clip, what does the old man realize? (That he's not alone...He has a stowaway!)

TELL

- Now that our minds are thinking about going up, let's read the two scripture passages for today.
- For the first passage, let's say Eli-JAY and Eli-S instead of their real names so that we can distinguish the difference between them.

READ

2 kings 2:1-15: the chariot of fire

1 Now when the Lord was about to take Elijah up to heaven by a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal. 2 Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here; for the Lord has sent me as far as Bethel." But Elisha said, "As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So they went down to Bethel. 4 Then Elijah said to him, "Elisha, stay here; for the Lord has sent me to Jericho." But Elisha said, "As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So they came to Jericho. 6 Then Elijah said to him, "Stay here; for the Lord has sent me to the Jordan." But he said, "As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So the two of them went on 7 and they stood by the Jordan River. 8 Then Elijah took his mantle and rolled it up, and struck the water; the water was parted to the one side and to the other, until the two of them crossed on dry ground. 9 When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, "Tell me what I may do for you, before I am taken from you." Elisha said, "Please let me inherit a double share of your spirit." 10 Elijah responded, "You have asked a hard thing; yet, if you see me as I am being taken from you, it will be granted to you; if not, it will not." 11 As they continued walking and talking, a chariot of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them, and Elijah ascended in a whirlwind into heaven. 12 Elisha kept watching and crying out, "Father, father! The chariots of Israel and its horsemen!" But when he could no longer see Elijah, he grasped his own clothes and tore them in two pieces. 13 He picked up the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and went back and stood on the bank of the Jordan. 14 He took the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and struck the water, saying, "Where is the Lord, the God of Elijah?" When he had struck the water, the water was parted to the one side and to the other, and Elisha went over.

READ Acts 1

6 So when the disciples had come together, they asked (the resurrected) Jesus, "Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?" 7 He replied, "It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." 9 When Jesus had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. 10 After he was going and they were still gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. 11 They said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."

ASK about the Elijah story

- Did you count how many times Elijah tried to get Elisha to go away? (three)
- Elisha says in response, "As the Lord lives, and you yourself live, I will not leave you." Why do you think he's not going to leave Elijah? (cuz he loves him; cuz they're best buddies; cuz he's loyal).
- What does Elisha want from Elijah? (a double share of his spirit)
- What do you think about Elijah not dying, but being taken away?
- What does Elijah leave behind? (a mantle)
- Do you know what a "mantle is?" (it's like a cloak, wraps around the shoulders)
- If you saw your best friend be taken away, and they left one thing, would you pick it up and keep it too?
- What does Elisha then do with the mantle? (he strikes the river, it parts, and he crosses)

ASK about the Jesus story

- In verse 8, what does Jesus tell the disciples they will receive? (power from the Holy Spirit)
- What takes Jesus away? (a cloud)
- At the start of verse 10, what are the disciples looking at? (nothing. Jesus is gone).
- Does this remind you at all of how the people in the movie were?
- For "extra credit," do you know what happens in the next story, in chapter 2 of Acts? (Pentecost)
- So what similarities do you see between these two stories (and the movie, if you want to include that)?

TELL

- To review and add to your observations:
 - Someone goes up.
 - Both Jesus and Elijah do not die (though Jesus has already died once)
 - Both Jesus and Elijah tell of or leave something behind – something that gives power of the spirit to the people who are left behind – Elisha and the disciples receive the Holy Spirit that gives them ability to do things.
- In all three stories (movie included), even after lift-off, life continues – though some things are ending, other people are then prepared and ready to go (with a little stretch of the imagination, this can include the kid from the movie).

EXPLAIN Part 1 of STICKY WALL Activity

- First, everyone gets a sticky note.
- Write your name on the sticky note.
- Now, using ONLY yourself – this means no one else can help you, you cannot use furniture, you cannot use tools, etc – using only yourself, place that sticky note that you've just received as high up on this wall as you possible can...

DO Part 1 of Sticky Wall

EXPLAIN Part 2 of STICKY WALL Activity

- Ok, now that you've done that, let's get into two groups (if the class has 6 or less students, keep them all in one group) and give your group a name.
- I'm now giving each group one sticky note.
- Write your group's name on it.
- Now, as groups, using only yourselves – this still means no tools or furniture – get your sticky note as high up on this wall as possible.

DO Part 2 of Sticky Wall

ASK

- So what sticky note made it higher, the one where you were by yourself, or the one where you helped each other?

TELL

- In the science world, there's a phrase that gets used from time to time about standing on the shoulders of giants. Isaac Newton once wrote *"If I have seen a little further it is by standing on the shoulders of Giants."*
- What this phrase means is that the work that was done before (that would be the shoulders of the giants) can be stood upon, allowing the current person to see even further than the giant.
- So, in the Old Testament stories in this session, we've seen people doing what Jesus did later on.
- We also, though, saw Jesus doing it better than Elijah and Elisha. Jesus struggled less and did the things better, with more grace.
- If we use the phrase that Isaac Newton used, we could say that this is because Jesus was standing on the shoulders of giants.
- Now, listen to what Jesus tells his disciples in the Gospel of John 14:12:
- *"12 Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father."*
- If we look at the six stories from this session and then look at what Jesus is saying, there is inferred progression.
 - The prophets do cool things through God.
 - Jesus does the same things, only better.
 - Jesus then says that his disciples will do even greater works than what he did.
- But in order to do greater works than Jesus did, we first have to learn what Jesus knew. That's why Jesus says follow me. And when we truly do, then we will be standing on the shoulders of giants!
- This is the good news for today.

CLOSING PRAYER