

# Open Bible Stories - The Prophets

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## Introduction

### Key Idea

The story of the prophets teaches us the need to repent of our sin to escape God's judgment and punishment.

### Core Belief Verse

*"Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, whom heaven must receive until the time for restoring all the things about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago." Acts 3:19-21*

### God's Big Story

The eternal God created all things in six days.

He made a good and perfect world.

He made humans in his image to fill the earth and rule over creation.

But humans rebelled against God and ruined God's creation.

God set to restore his world through his promise.

God made a covenant with Abraham. He promised to bless all nations through Abraham.

God kept his promises across the generations.

God provided Abraham with a promised child, Isaac.

God gave Isaac a wife and she bore twins, Jacob and Esau.

God blessed Jacob and his sons, and the blessing continued to the next generation.

God rescued Joseph, one of Jacob's sons, and used him to rescue his family.

God caused his people, the Israelites, to multiply in the land of Egypt; eventually, they became slaves.

But, God raised up a deliverer, Moses, to deliver his people from their slavery.

God sent judged the Egyptians with harsh plagues; in the final judgment, he passed over his people who covered their doorposts with the blood of a sacrificed lamb.

Then, God delivered the Israelites by bringing them out of Egypt and crossing the Red Sea on dry land.

God made a covenant with the Israelites and made them his people.  
God tested Israel in a series of wilderness wanderings and eventually brought his people into the promised land of Canaan.

God raised up deliverers to lead Israel and rescue them from their enemies.

God formed Israel into a kingdom. He made a covenant with King David and promised to send a king that would rule his people forever.

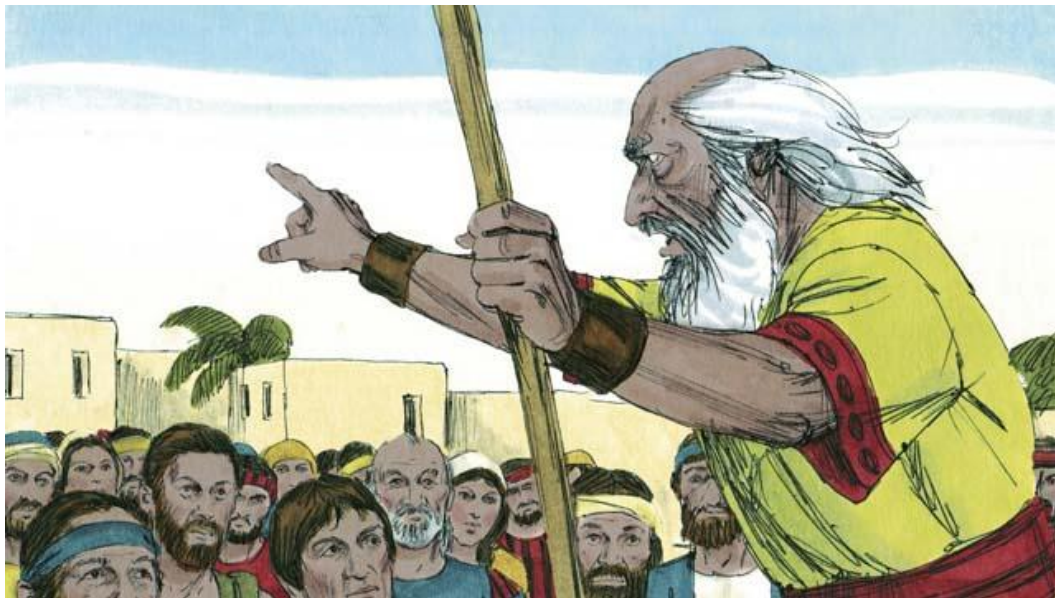
Many of Israel's kings were evil and the kingdom of Israel divided into two kingdoms.

God sent prophets to warn his people of God's judgment and call them to repent.

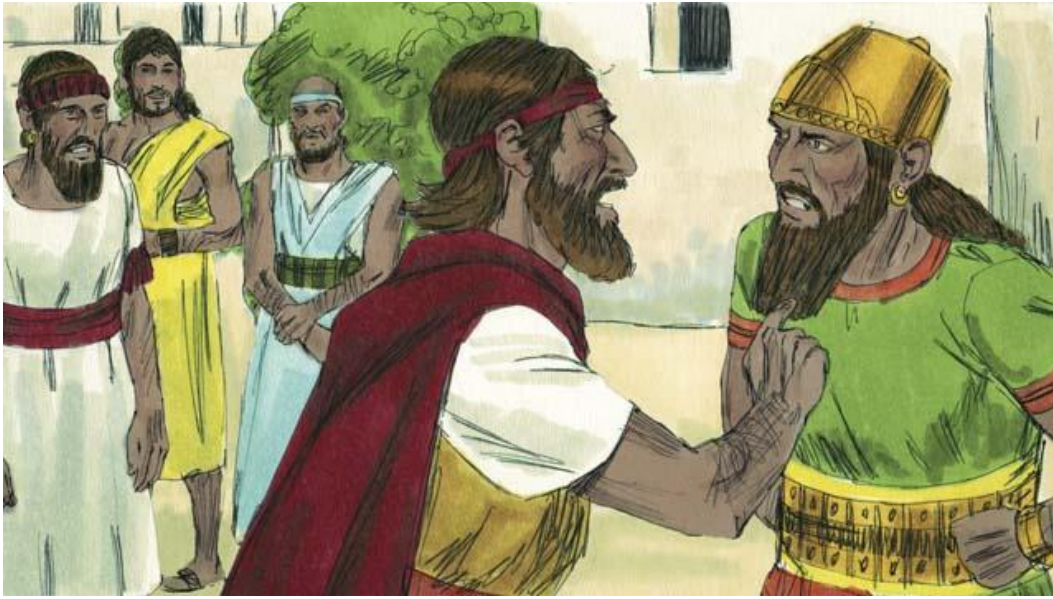
## **The Story: The Prophets**

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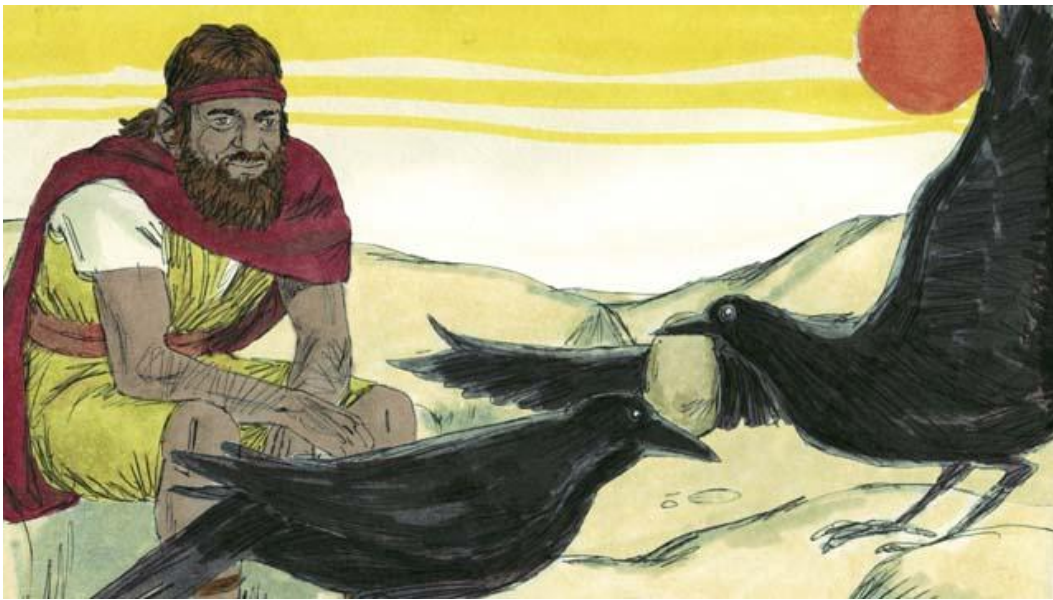
19-01



God was always sending prophets to the Israelites. The prophets heard messages from God and then told them to the people.



Elijah was a prophet when Ahab was king over the kingdom of Israel. Ahab was an evil man. He tried to make the people worship a false god named Baal. So Elijah told King Ahab that God was going to punish the people. He said to him, "There will be no rain or dew in the kingdom of Israel until I say it will rain again." This made Ahab so angry that he decided to kill Elijah.



So God told Elijah to go into the wilderness to hide from Ahab. Elijah went into the wilderness to a certain stream where God directed him. Every morning and every evening, birds would bring Elijah bread and meat. During this time, Ahab and his army looked for Elijah, but they could not find him.



Because there was no rain, after some time the stream dried up. So Elijah went to another country close by. In that country lived a poor widow and her son. They had almost run out of food because there was no harvest. But still, as the woman took care of Elijah, God provided for her and her son. Her jar of flour and her bottle of oil never became empty. They had food during the whole famine. Elijah stayed there for about three years.



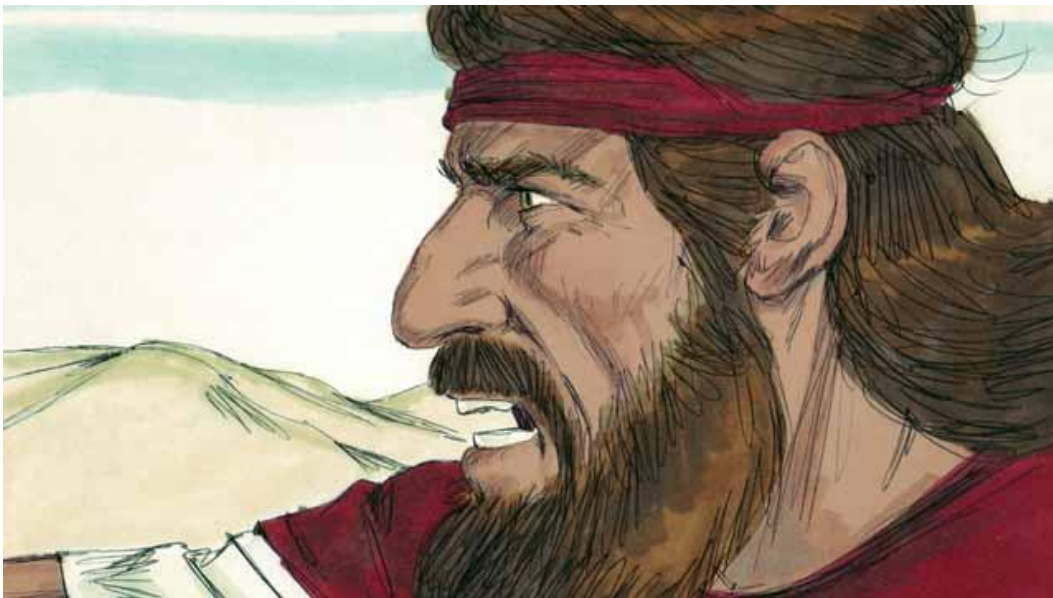
After three and a half years, God told Elijah that he would make it rain again. He told Elijah to return to the kingdom of Israel and speak with Ahab. So Elijah went to Ahab. When Ahab saw him, he said, "There you are, you troublemaker!" Elijah replied to him, "It is you who are the troublemaker! You have abandoned Yahweh. He is the true God, but you are worshiping Baal. Now you must bring all the people of the kingdom of Israel to Mount Carmel."

19-06



So all the people of Israel went to Mount Carmel. The men who said they spoke messages for Baal also came. These were Baal's prophets. There were 450 of them. Elijah said to the people, "How long will you keep changing your mind? If Yahweh is God, worship him! But if Baal is God, worship him!"

19-07



Then Elijah said to Baal's prophets, "Kill a bull, divide the meat into pieces, and put it on an altar for a sacrifice, but do not light the fire. I will do the same later, and I will put the meat on a different altar. Then if God sends fire on the altar, you will know that he is the real God." So the prophets of Baal prepared a sacrifice but did not light the fire.

19-08



Then the prophets of Baal prayed to Baal, "Hear us, Baal!" All day long they prayed and shouted and even cut themselves with knives, but Baal did not answer, and he did not send any fire.

19-09



Baal's prophets spent almost the whole day praying to Baal. They finally stopped praying. Then Elijah put the meat of another bull on an altar for God. After that, he told the people to pour 12 huge pots of water on top of the sacrifice until the meat, the wood, and even the ground around the altar were completely wet.

19-10



Then Elijah prayed, "Yahweh, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, show us today that you are the God of Israel and that I am your servant. Answer me so that these people will know that you are the true God."

19-11



Immediately, fire fell from the sky. It burned up the meat, the wood, the rocks, the soil, and even the water that was around the altar. When the people saw this, they prostrated themselves to the ground and said, "Yahweh is God! Yahweh is God!"

19-12



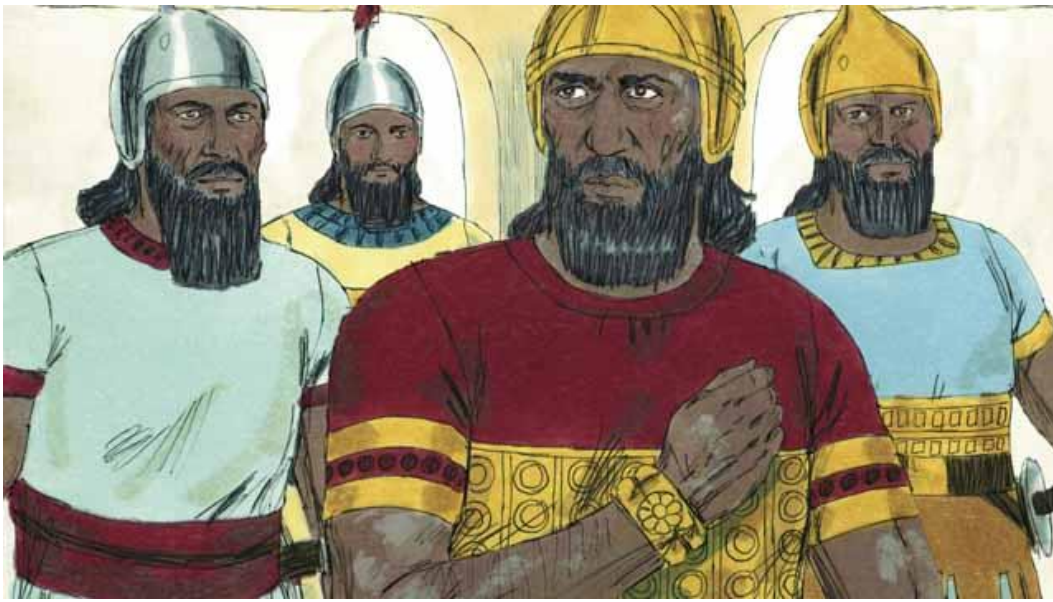
Then Elijah said, "Do not let any of the prophets of Baal escape!" So the people captured the prophets of Baal and took them away from there and killed them.

19-13



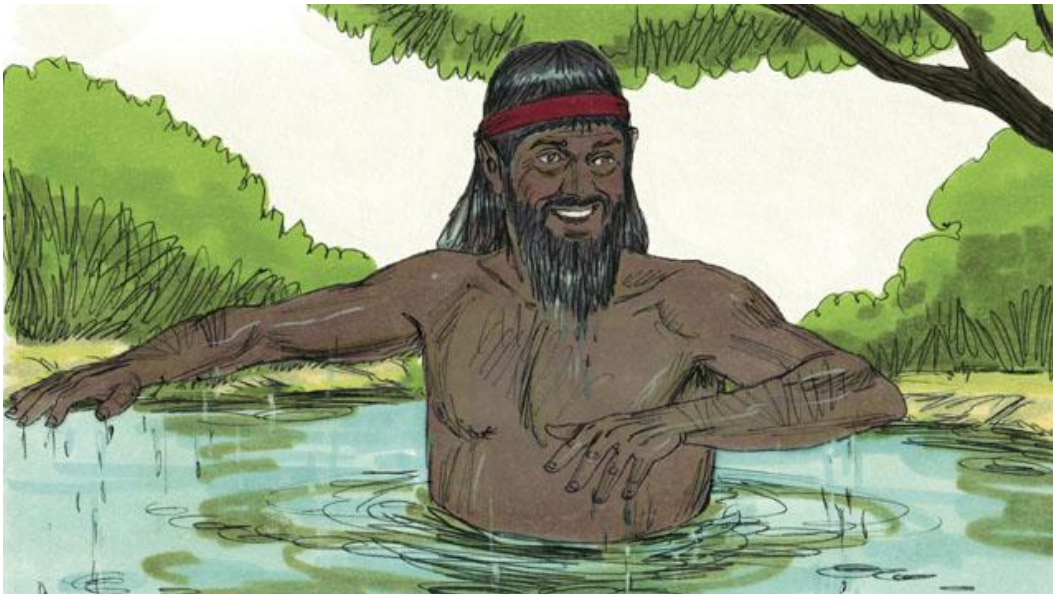
Then Elijah said to King Ahab, "Return immediately to your home, because the rain is coming." Soon the sky became black, and a heavy rain began. Yahweh was ending the drought. This also showed that he is the true God.

19-14



When Elijah finished his work, God chose a man named Elisha to be his prophet. God did many miracles through Elisha. One of the miracles happened to Naaman. He was the commander of an enemy army, but he had a bad skin disease. Naaman heard about Elisha, so he went to Elisha and asked him to heal him. Elisha told Naaman to go the Jordan River and dip himself in the water seven times.

19-15



Naaman became angry. He refused to do this because it seemed foolish. But later he changed his mind. He went to the Jordan River and dipped himself seven times into the water. When he came up from the water the last time, God healed him.

19-16



God also sent many other prophets to the people of Israel. They all told the people to stop worshipping idols. Instead, people should act justly with each other and have mercy on each other. The prophets warned the people that they must stop doing evil and obey God instead. If the people did not do this, then God would judge them as guilty, and he would punish them.

19-17



Most of the time, the people did not obey God. They often mistreated the prophets and sometimes even killed them. Once, they put the prophet Jeremiah into a dry well and left him there to die. He sank down into the mud in the bottom of the well. But then the king had mercy on him and ordered his servants to pull Jeremiah out of the well before he died.



The prophets continued to speak for God even though the people hated them. They warned people that God would destroy them if they did not repent. They also reminded people that God promised to send them the Messiah.

*A Bible story from: 1 Kings 16-18; 2 Kings 5; Jeremiah 38*

### **All of You - Enjoying Brotherly Unity**

- **Key Idea:** honoring the unity of God's people
- **Key Passage:** 1 Peter 3:8-12
- **Main Session:** OBS 19 (The Prophets)

#### **Sing a Song** (3-5 minutes)

Choose a song to sing to praise God and encourage one another.

#### **Recite the Core Belief Verse** (3-5 minutes)

The verse below summarizes the teaching of the current passage. Read the verse out loud as a community. Read it again several times as a group until the whole community can recite it from memory.

*7 Surely the Lord Yahweh will do nothing unless he reveals his plan to his servants the prophets. Amos 3:7*

OR

*21 For no prophecy was ever brought by the will of man, but men spoke from God when they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. 2 Peter 1:21*

**Read the Passage** (5 minutes)

God tells believers to love each other like brothers and sisters. In order to grow together as a united and one-minded community, read the passage below.

*8 Finally, all of you, be likeminded, compassionate, loving as brothers, tenderhearted, and humble. 9 Do not pay back evil for evil or insult for insult. On the contrary, continue to bless, because for this you were called, that you might inherit a blessing. 10 "The one who wants to love life and see good days should stop his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit. 11 Let him turn away from what is bad and do what is good. Let him seek peace and pursue it. 12 The eyes of the Lord see the righteous, and his ears hear their requests. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil." 1 Peter 3:8-12*

**Explore the Idea** (10-15 minutes)

God explains to us what it means to be a Christian community. After reading the passage above, use the following questions to help your community discuss what it means to practice Christian community in a godly way.

1. How does this passage teach Christians to relate to one another?
2. What kind of commitment does it take to enjoy this kind of Christian community?
3. What behaviors and attitudes are dangerous against the Christian community?
4. How can your community/team develop this kind of Christian community?

**Give Your Reasons** (5-10 minutes)

Reflect on the passage and discussion above. Think about what it would be like to be a part of the kind of community described in the passage. Share your thoughts with the group.

It would be a joy to be a part of this kind of community because...

**Pray to God** (5 minutes)

Pray that God would make your community like the one described in the passage above. Use the specific details of the passage to pray as a community.

## **Movement 1: Understand the Story**

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*Read each question aloud. Give the group time to answer before sharing the answer.*

### **Observation Questions**

19-01

Who was God sending to the Israelite?

God was always sending prophets to the Israelites.

What did the prophets do?

The prophets heard the messages from God and spoke them to the people.

19-02

Who was prophet during the reign of King Ahab?

Elijah was a prophet when Ahab was king over the kingdom of Israel.

What kind of king was Ahab?

Ahab was an evil man. Ahab tried to make the people worship a false god named Baal.

What did Elijah say that God was going to do to punish the people?

Elijah said that God will withhold rain and dew in the kingdom of Israel until Elijah says it will rain again.

How did Ahab respond to this message from Elijah?

Ahab was so angry about this message he tried to kill Elijah.

19-03

Where did God tell Elijah to go to hide from Ahab?

God told Elijah to go into the wilderness to hide from Ahab. God directed Elijah to a certain stream of water.

How did God provide for Elijah in the wilderness where he was hiding?

Every morning and evening, God sent birds with bread and meat for him.

How successful was Ahab in finding Elijah?

Ahab and his army looked for Elijah but they could not find him.

*19-04*

What caused the stream where Elijah was staying to dry up?

Because there was no rain, the stream dried up.

How did the widow treat Elijah?

The widow took care of Elijah even though the widow and her son had almost run out of food.

How did God provide for Elijah when he lived with the widow and her son?

God caused their flour jar and bottle of oil to never become empty.

How long did they have food?

They had food during the whole time of the famine.

How long did Elijah stay there?

Elijah stayed there for three years.

*19-05*

What did God tell Elijah after three and a half years?

God told Elijah that he would make it rain again. God told Elijah to return to the kingdom of Israel and speak with Ahab.

What did Elijah and Ahab say to each other when they met?

Ahab called Elijah a troublemaker. Elijah told Ahab that he was the troublemaker because he abandoned Yahweh.

What great evil did Elijah say that Ahab had committed?

Ahab had abandoned Yahweh, the true God, and had worshiped Baal.

What did Elijah tell Ahab to do?

Elijah told Ahab to bring all the people of Israel to Mount Carmel.

*19-06*

Who gathered at Mount Carmel?

The people of Israel, the prophets of Baal, and Elijah gathered at Mount Carmel.

How many prophets of Baal came to Mount Carmel?

There were 450 prophets of Baal at Mount Carmel.

What choice did Elijah tell the people they must make?

He told them that if Yahweh is God, they should serve him, but if Baal is God, they should serve Baal.

*19-07*

What did Elijah tell the prophets of Baal to do?

Elijah told the prophets of Baal to kill a bull, divide its meat in pieces, and put it on an altar for sacrifice without lighting a fire.

What did Elijah tell the prophets of Baal that he would do?

Elijah told the prophets of Baal that they would do the same thing later on a different altar.

How would the people know who was the real God?

The people would know the real God by which altar was lit up by fire.

*19-08*

How did the prophets of Baal try to get fire on their altar?

The prophets of Baal prayed to Baal, shouted, and cut themselves with knives.

How did Baal respond?

Baal did not answer and did not send rain.

*19-09*

How long did the prophets of Baal pray to Baal to send fire?

The prophets of Baal prayed almost the whole day and then finally stopped praying.

How did Elijah prepare the altar?

Elijah put the meat of the bull on the altar and had the people pour twelve huge pots of water on it until the meat, wood and ground around the altar were wet.

*19-10*

What did Elijah pray to Yahweh?

Yahweh prayed that God would answer his prayer and show the people that he is the true God.

*19-11*

How did God show he is the real God?

God sent fire from the sky and burned up the meat, the wood, the rocks, the dirt, and the water around the altar.

How did the people respond when they saw this demonstration of power?

They fell on the ground and said, "Yahweh is God! Yahweh is God!"

*19-12*

What happened to the prophets of Baal?

The people took them away and killed them.

*19-13*

What did Elijah tell king Ahab about the rain returning?

Elijah told Ahab to return home because the rain was coming.

What did the rain show?

The rain showed that Yahweh was ending the drought and that he is the true God.

*19-14*

Who was the prophet after Elijah?

Elisha was a prophet after Elijah.

Who was Naaman?

Naaman was a commander of an enemy army who heard about Elisha and went to him to be healed.

What did Elisha tell Naaman to do in order to heal his skin disease?

Elisha told him to dip himself seven times in the Jordan River.

*19-15*

What did Naaman do after he heard Elisha's instructions?

At first Naaman was angry and would not do it because it seemed foolish, but later he changed his mind and did it, and was completely healed.

*19-16*

What did the prophets tell the people to do?

They told them to stop worshiping idols and to show justice and mercy to others.

How did the prophets warn the people?

The prophets warned the people to stop doing evil and obey God. If they did not do this, God would punish them and judge them as guilty.

19-17

In general, how did the people treat the prophets?

The people mistreated the prophets and sometimes even killed them.

How did the people mistreat the prophet Jeremiah?

The people put Jeremiah in a dry well and left him there to die.

Did Jeremiah die in the well?

No, the king had mercy on him and had his servants pull Jeremiah out.

19-18

In general, what did the prophets do?

The prophets spoke for God, warned about God's judgment, and reminded them that God would send the promised Messiah.

Who was that person that God promised to send?

The person that God would send was the Messiah.

## **Movement 2: Theological Questions**

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### **What Does This Story Teach Us?**

1. What does the work of the prophets teach us about the character of God (what God is like)?
2. How do the messages of the prophets teach us about sin and its consequences?
3. What do the prophets teach God's people about what it means to faithfully serve God?

## **Movement 3: Live It Out**

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### **Personal Implications & Applications From The Story**

*Guide the group to discuss practical obedience from this story and name concrete next steps.*

1. What have you learned about God and his character that you have found meaningful?
2. From what sin in your life do you need to repent? Where can you see idolatry, evil, immorality, or injustice in your life?
3. How can you more faithfully follow God in your life as a Christian?

4. Think about this week. Where does "The Prophets" challenge you to obey God in a practical way?
5. How does this key idea shape one decision you need to make right now: The story of the prophets teaches us the need to repent of our sin to escape God's judgment and punishment.

## **Movement 4: Retell the Story**

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*Invite the group to retell the story several times until they can tell it clearly and faithfully.*

1. Can someone retell "The Prophets" from beginning to end in their own words?
2. Retell this story again, but focus on what God did at each key moment.
3. Retell the story in three parts: beginning, middle, and ending. What changed in each part?
4. If you were teaching this story to your family tonight, how would you tell it simply and clearly?

### **Church Ministry**

Reflect on how this story can edify and mature the Christian community. Design a way to minister this story to your church community.

**Ministry Preparation:** Take time to consider how you could minister this story to others. What setting, audience, or approach would you use? Record your ideas below.

**Ministry Implementation:** Minister this story to a group of believers as you had planned. Use the information in this study to help develop a teaching or lead a discussion. Record your ministry plan below.

**Ministry Reflection:** Think about what you learned from ministering this story to other believers. What went well? What would you do differently? Reflect on your experience below.

## **Movement 5: Share It**

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*Help each person plan how they will share this story with others before the next gathering.*

1. Who is one specific person you will share "The Prophets" with this week?
2. When and where will you share this story with them?

3. What is the one main truth from this story you want them to remember?

Report-back next meeting: Who did you share with, and what happened?

### **Mission Engagement**

Consider how you will witness this story to unbelievers. Design a way to share this story and engage them in what it teaches about Christianity and the gospel.

**Witness Preparation:** Take time to consider how you will witness this narrative to unbelievers. What context, relationship, or opportunity will you use? Record your ideas below.

**Witness Implementation:** Share this story with an unbeliever. Use the information in this study to help develop a natural conversation or teaching. Record your plan below.

**Witness Reflection:** Think about what you learned from sharing this story with unbelievers. What did they respond to? What questions did they ask? Reflect on your experience below.