

UNIT 1

GRADE 10

LESSON 2

Aim & Objectives:

To discuss, compare, and integrate science and faith within our changing society.

Rebuilding the World

Theme:
Science and Faith

Teacher's Preparation:

Enter into the lesson with the motive of teaching that science and faith can coexist.

Meditate on **how** God uses Elijah and, through him, God uses the environment to display His Glory.

Reflect on other instances when "miracles" happen in the Bible (Joshua 10, 1 Kings 17 and Exodus 15.)

Be prepared to address how God affects students' lives and how faith allows them to be used as vessels

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1 King 18:16-40 (NRSV)

¹⁶ So Obadiah went to meet Ahab and told him, and Ahab went to meet Elijah. ¹⁷ When he saw Elijah, he said to him, "Is that you, you troubler of Israel?"

¹⁸ "I have not made trouble for Israel," Elijah replied. "But you and your father's family have. You have abandoned the LORD's commands and have followed the Baals. ¹⁹ Now summon the people from all over Israel to meet me on Mount Carmel. And bring the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and the four hundred prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel's table."

²⁰ So Ahab sent word throughout all Israel and assembled the prophets on Mount Carmel. ²¹ Elijah went before the people and said, "How long will you waver between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him." But the people said nothing.

²² Then Elijah said to them, "I am the only one of the LORD's prophets left, but Baal has four hundred and fifty prophets. ²³ Get two bulls for us. Let Baal's prophets choose one for themselves, and let them cut it into pieces and put it on the wood but not set fire to it. I will prepare the other bull and put it on the wood but not set fire to it. ²⁴ Then you call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of the LORD. The god who answers by fire—he is God."

Then all the people said, "What you say is good."

²⁵ Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, "Choose one of the bulls and prepare it first, since there are so many of you. Call on the name of your god, but do not light the fire." ²⁶ So they took the bull given them and prepared it.

Then they called on the name of Baal from morning till noon. "Baal, answer us!" they shouted. But there was no response; no one answered. And they danced around the altar they had made.

²⁷ At noon Elijah began to taunt them. "Shout louder!" he said. "Surely he is a god! Perhaps he is deep in thought, or busy, or traveling. Maybe he is sleeping and must be awakened." ²⁸ So



they shouted louder and slashed themselves with swords and spears, as was their custom, until their blood flowed. ²⁹ Midday passed, and they continued their frantic prophesying until the time for the evening sacrifice. But there was no response, no one answered, no one paid attention.

³⁰ Then Elijah said to all the people, "Come here to me." They came to him, and he repaired the altar of the LORD, which had been torn down. ³¹ Elijah took twelve stones, one for each of the tribes descended from Jacob, to whom the word of the LORD had come, saying, "Your name shall be Israel." ³² With the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD, and he dug a trench around it large enough to hold two seahs^[a] of seed. ³³ He arranged the wood, cut the bull into pieces and laid it on the wood. Then he said to them, "Fill four large jars with water and pour it on the offering and on the wood."

³⁴ "Do it again," he said, and they did it again.

"Do it a third time," he ordered, and they did it the third time. ³⁵ The water ran down around the altar and even filled the trench.

³⁶ At the time of sacrifice, the prophet Elijah stepped forward and prayed: "LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant and have done all these things at your command. ³⁷ Answer me, LORD, answer me, so these people will know that you, LORD, are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again."

³⁸ Then the fire of the LORD fell and burned up the sacrifice, the wood, the stones and the soil, and also licked up the water in the trench.

³⁹ When all the people saw this, they fell prostrate and cried, "The LORD—he is God! The LORD—he is God!"

⁴⁰ Then Elijah commanded them, "Seize the prophets of Baal. Don't let anyone get away!" They seized them, and Elijah had them brought down to the Kishon Valley and slaughtered there.

Student's Introduction to the Lesson:

The construction of a passenger airplane requires intricate measurements and precise calculations to allow every gear and every piston to function, but what happens if a technological mishap occurs? The probability of an airplane crash at any given moment is 1 in 1,200,000.

On January 15, 2009, a US Airways Airbus A320 twin-engine jetliner, a passenger airplane, malfunctioned, spiraling the frantic 150 passengers and five crewmembers towards the Hudson River by New York City. With passengers watching their own descent toward an untimely death, all of them buckled down and listened to the commands of the crewmembers to duck and take cover.



All hope was lost and all that was left were scared passengers who relied on the only option they had at that moment to cope with their dire situation- **prayer**. The passengers continued praying as they heard a countdown to their potential untimely death. As their prayers rose, nothing short of a miracle presented itself- as the pilot, Chesley B. "Sully" Sullenberger, steered the skidding plane

across the river and landed it safely upon the river waters. The local ferries around the plane saved all the passengers and crewmembers with no casualties. Local newspapers reported this incident as an incredible feat, something beyond human comprehension, in short- a miracle¹. God used Sullenberger as a vessel for His glory. It's times like these where we see an application of both science and faith in action- where science, something we put our faith in, fails, but prayer, an application of our faith, establishes hope and displays the sovereignty of God. How else can we see faith and science interact and allow us to see the true beauty of God's creation?

Bible Exposition:

Introduction

The story of the Hudson River airplane crash is an example of how God uses people for His work even when all hope seems lost. We also see how God's sovereignty presents itself in the people He uses within the Bible. Elijah, a man from Tishbe, was one of many people God used to carry out His mission.

Elijah the Tishbite

Elijah the Tishbite was from Tishbe in Gilead. He was a "man of God and the word of the Lord from his mouth was the truth" (1 Kings 17:24). He was a prophet characterized by his faith in the Lord no matter the circumstance and he always remained obedient to the Lord. Elijah was bold enough to proclaim to King Ahab the grievances the king had committed against God and, by the Lord's command, placed a drought over the lands.



Knowing well that the drought would affect him, Elijah still continued on with the plan having full trust and faith in God. From there he obeyed the Lord's command to go to the Kerith Ravine, where God provided him water from the brook and meat and bread were fed to him by ravens. Even after the brook dried up, Elijah didn't waver in his faith and listened to God's command to go to a widow at Zarephath, where he was fed and taken care of by way of God's provisions to the widow. Though there was a shortage of flour and oil, the widow never ran dry of them because the Lord provided a constant supply. Elijah also raised the widow's boy from the dead through steadfast pleading and prayer to God- a scientific anomaly that can only be explained by the presence of God in Elijah's life. All these events led up to Elijah's return to confront King Ahab before all the people of the land.

Baal and Asherah

Ahab, son of Omri, was the king of Israel and reigned in Samaria over Israel. He did "more evil in the eyes of the Lord than any of those before him." He married Jezebel, daughter of Ethbaal (king of the Sidonians), and served Baal and worshipped him by setting up altars for Baal and poles for Asherah in Samaria. After the Lord used Elijah to place a drought upon the lands, Elijah fled and King

Ahab and Queen Jezebel went throughout the lands searching for him. Queen Jezebel went throughout the lands to kill the Lord's prophets and believers of the one true God. As a result, people were terrified of Jezebel and **were afraid to speak** for they feared for their lives.

The Showdown on Mount Carmel

When Elijah appeared to King Ahab through the guidance of Obadiah, Elijah requested King Ahab to summon all the peoples of Israel to meet Elijah on top of Mount Carmel. Along with the people, Elijah persuaded King Ahab to bring the 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of Asherah who ate at Jezebel's table. On Mount Carmel, Elijah declared to the people that there couldn't be two gods among the people; that they must choose either the Lord as God, or Baal as God. Elijah, knowing that he was only one prophet of the Lord versus the 850 prophets of Baal and Asherah, prepared a challenge for Baal's prophets- that whichever god answered by setting fire to the offering placed on the altar would be deemed the true God.

Faith Beyond Reason

Elijah allowed the prophets of Baal and Asherah to make their altar first. They cut up pieces of wood and placed a bull as an offering to Baal and proclaimed praises, slashed themselves to allow their blood offering to flow, and pled to Baal from morning to evening for fire. In all that the prophets of Baal and Asherah did, no one answered and no one paid attention. Elijah had so much faith in God that he knew that the 850 prophets calling out for fire from Baal was an exercise in futility.



Elijah then told the people to approach him and observe what the Lord was to provide for them on that day. Elijah didn't summon an instant miracle but instead repaired the altar of God that had been thrown down by setting up twelve stones, representing the twelve tribes of Israel, to serve as this altar. He then arranged the wood for the altar, laid the bull on the wood, built a trench around the altar and then asked the people to pour four large jars of water three times over the altar (which was enough to fill up the trench). Then Elijah prayed to God and a great fire burned the offering and even

licked up the water in the trench. At this magnificent sight, the people fell prostrate and proclaimed that the Lord is God.

Elijah didn't rely on his words. He didn't put the altar in a specific way for there to be a fire- he asked the people to do it themselves. He even requested that water be poured over all the items of the altar, so much so that the trench was full of water. In science, we know that wet items cannot burn because of decreased flammability. All these steps were taken to demonstrate the sovereignty of God- how He is the controller of the physical world. All the glory was given to the Lord and none was taken by Elijah. The people turned to God by witnessing the whole incident and participating in the event without Elijah's persuasion.

Rebuilding the Modern World

Today we live in a world where technology runs our lives. Even aspects of our worship today become hindered when technology fails us in mid-worship, yet the worship still remains beautiful because God is a constant presence in our life far above technological advances or failures.

Scientific discoveries in various fields have benefited the human race immeasurably, allowing us to go far beyond our beginnings. For example, advancements in the field of medicine have allowed us to investigate ways of prolonging our lifespan and eradicating illness. As a result, there has been a significant increase in average life spans over the last five decades. Technological progress has helped people lead more productive lives.

However, like Baal and Asherah of Elijah's time, science and modern technology are becoming what people think can save them and replace the need for God. When Hurricane Katrina, Hurricane Sandy, and Typhoon Haiyan struck, many

Group Discussion:

Describe and try to arrive at definitions for science and faith.

Discuss how science and faith can work together in the following case studies.

Case Study 1:

A child is shaking in bed with what appears to be a fever. Various visitors have advised the parents to bring the child to a doctor to have him treated it but the parents insist that their faith in God will heal the child and refuse medical intervention. Instead, they plan to hold a prayer session in their home, inviting various religious Christian authorities to attend by citing James 5:14-15 as proof of their faith. What is the appropriate course of action? How can faith be misinterpreted or misused? Is there a place where faith ends and science begins?

Case Study 2:

A little boy is afraid to sleep alone in the dark. His mother advises him to pray to Jesus to not be afraid of the dark. He prays but is still afraid of the dark. His older sister, seeing this, gets him a night light that gives off a soft blue glow. He is now able to go to sleep without being afraid. Who won – faith or science? Was this a competition in the first place? What would have been the appropriate use of faith/science in this case?

Values For Life

God uses people to accomplish difficult tasks to train and mold people into instigators of faith for His Purpose. Though we may not have the foresight to know what we will be doing in the years to come, God leads and unveils His mission through our experiences. As God used Elijah for His Glory, He also uses us for seemingly impossible tasks to accomplish a greater mission. Many modernized nations are now slowly inching toward policies that are designed to deliberately exclude any influence from any religion, including teachings of the Christian faith. While this may be disheartening, we should simply see it as a challenge to explore and profess our faith even more than we do today. We should identify and distinguish the limitations of science and the infinite power of faith in God, as seen with Elijah and his burnt offering to God. Elijah used science to further convey God's glory by showing how that while there may be limitations established by scientific laws, there are no boundaries to what God can do.

Life Response

God used Elijah not only to defeat Baal, but also to turn His people back to Him. He used Elijah and Baal as a means to show the people the error of their ways and gave them the opportunity to return to Him. God uses the difficult situations of our lives to reveal His purpose. Elijah's story shows how God can take control of the seemingly uncontrollable and use it for His purpose. All the miracles of our lives can attest to how faith can prevail when science fails.

**Memory Verse:**

“Answer me, O Lord, answer me, so these people will know that you, O Lord, are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again.”
1 Kings 18: 37

Closing Prayer

Lord, forgive us for putting our blind faith solely in science when it should've always been in You. My might and intellect are nothing compared to Your greatness. Thank you for showing your grace and love for us even though we are unworthy of them.

Sources:

<http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB123205240502786899>

Freebibleimages.com

Lesson Review:**Multiple Choice:**

- How were the Israelites exposed to Baal and Asherah in this lesson?
 - When Ahab married Jezebel, he chose to follow her gods and made all Israelites do the same.
 - The Israelites were angry that they were in exile, so they turned away from the Lord.
 - Elijah led the Israelites to Baal.
 - The Israelites always worshiped Baal and Asherah.
- How many times does Elijah ask for the water to be poured over the stone altar?
 - 1
 - 2
 - 3
 - 4
- How many prophets of Baal and Asherah were present?
 - 250
 - 450
 - 400
 - 850
- How did the Israelites respond to Elijah's offering being burned by the Lord?
 - They fled from Elijah's sight out of fear.
 - They ignored the sight and continued worshipping Baal and Asherah.
 - They turned from their wicked ways, fell prostrate before the Lord and declared Him as God.
 - They chased Elijah out of the city.

Short Questions:

- How did Elijah proceed in showing God's glory to the people?
- How did Baal and Baal's prophets fail to show that they were the victors?
- How did God prove, through Elijah, that He was restoring the people back to Him?

Essay Question:

500 Words

What role did Elijah carry out in the Lord's mission in bringing the people back to Him? Be sure to include the following:

- Introduction
- Describe who Elijah was.
- Elijah's encounter with King Ahab and how he stood up for his faith
- Elijah vs. Baal and Asherah at Mount Carmel
- Describe how we can keep our faith in the midst of scientific advancement
- Conclusion