

**Lesson Overview****Week of March 21****1 Life Need:**

1 Discuss why the repentant need God's peace.

2 Bible Learning:

2 Learn how Josiah's repentance upon hearing the Word led to God's peace.

Suggested Material

■ *Adult Teacher's Resource Kit:* Poster and reproducible sheet—God's Faithful Prophets

3 Bible Application:

3 Identify how our repentance leads to God's peace.

Suggested Material

■ *Adult Teacher's Resource Kit:* Poster and Reproducible Sheet—Choose Your Path

4 Life Response:

4 Seek God's peace through repentance.

Church/Home Theme:
Revive Us Again,
O Lord!

Lesson Focus:
The Lord brings
His peace to the
repentant.

Lesson Scripture:
2 Kings 22:14-20

Huldah: Prophet of Wisdom

Conviction—King Josiah reigned during a critical time in Judah's history. The young king led the people into a season of spiritual revival and repentance. This resulted in great peace during his administration.

When the young king gave an order for the temple to be opened up and cleaned out, the priest Hilkiah found the Book of the Law. The priest read it to the king, and God's message greatly disturbed the king. The people had turned their backs on God's instructions and replaced worshiping the true and living God with the worship of idols. This combination of wrongdoing guaranteed the outpouring of God's wrath.

Change—Josiah's immediate response to God's message was to seek out understanding from God's messenger. The priest took the scrolls to the female prophet Huldah. Both Jeremiah and Zephaniah spoke God's proclamations around this time. However, for some reason, the priest asked Huldah to reveal the heart and mind of God. After hearing the words of the Book of the Law, she confirmed the fears of King Josiah. Sadly, God's chosen people deserved judgment, and it would surely come because they walked contrary to the ways of the Lord.

Second Chances—Huldah, however, also had good news. Because of Josiah's humble heart, he would not see the coming punishment of Judah. He died in peace without ever suffering the calamity God eventually brought upon the nation.

King Josiah is an excellent example of what happens when a person decides to go God's way instead of continuing on a path of ungodly destruction. Biblical repentance is recognizing one's behavior is an offense to God and wanting to do something about it.

A person who refuses to repent, no matter how calm and trouble-free they seem on the outside, is in deep inner turmoil. The Holy Spirit calls the prodigals back to the One who created them to fulfill God's specific purpose for their lives. Sincere repentance brings a relationship with God and His cleansing from sin.

As Your Students Arrive

Before class time, write on a poster or whiteboard this question: "What is something you do each week, or even every day, to experience peace in your life?" Students may talk about a time of quiet they have in the morning before everyone else is up as they read their Bible, or a time at night after their children are in bed. Maybe they consciously turn off the TV and their phones for an hour each day and listen to the quiet, or they go

outdoors frequently to be alone and experience peace. This week's lesson provides us with an opportunity to reflect on God's spiritual peace, a peace that comes after we confess and repent of something we have done.

Link to Last Week: Some of your students may want to share how they refocused their agenda this last week so it reflected a closer walk with the Lord.

1 Life Need

Discuss why the repentant need God's peace.

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Huldah: Prophet of Wisdom

Lenny's story starts out the same as many others' stories. After suffering painful injuries from a car accident, he was prescribed oxycodone. Getting hooked on that pain killer, he later began buying illegal opioids to satiate his addiction. It wasn't long after that when he started using heroin. "The thing that was most absent from my life was peace," Lenny explains. He was in and out of rehabilitation centers. It was not until he firmly decided to do whatever it took to break the addiction that the therapy finally helped.

Della's story is that she didn't recognize how arrogantly she judged other people. "I was never introspective enough to see my own faults, but I could all too quickly jump in to tell other people how to fix theirs," she explains. And a deep-seated peace always alluded her because of it. Only when she learned to really listen to another person's point of view did she find she could truly encourage people—and allow others to encourage her as well.

Hunter's story is that he felt outraged over the smallest of disagreements or perceived insults. To say that he had an anger management problem would be an understatement. He didn't simply read Sun Tzu's *The Art of War*; he studied it. "I dove into the book thinking it would help me come up with ways to pay back those people whom I thought had wronged me," he explains. But when he recognized he was emotionally injuring some of the people he loved the most, he resolved to turn his life around. Accepting Christ and then praying for help, he still gets angry sometimes; but he quickly settles back into the newfound peace he has in his soul.

1. What does it mean to repent when we sin?
2. Is it possible to experience God's peace without repentance. If not why?
3. Are you experiencing God's peace in your life? If not, why?

LESSON FOCUS: The Lord brings His peace to the repentant.

Read the anecdote in *Comprehensive Bible Study*, then form small groups for discussion and respond to **Questions 1, 2, and 3.**

For Question 1, your students are to consider what it means to repent when they sin. Discuss the need to confess to God what they have done wrong, seek God's forgiveness, and turn from that sin.

In their answers to Question 2, direct your students to reflect on the fact that sin separates us from God, and therefore we can't experience God's peace without confessing our sins. Once we confess our sins and receive God's forgiveness, then His peace fills our hearts.

For Question 3, lead your students to acknowledge whether or not they are experiencing God's peace in their lives. Encourage them to examine their hearts to see if there is any sin that is keeping them from experiencing God's peace.

God desires to give us His peace, but we need to turn away from sin in order to experience it.

2 Bible Learning

Learn how Josiah's repentance upon hearing the Word led to God's peace.



On the handout sheet, read paragraph four, and on the poster, note the photo of the gates that formerly led into Herod's temple in Jerusalem, known as the Huldah Gates.

JOSIAH INQUIRES OF THE LORD

Read 2 Kings 22:14 with your class and discuss these key points:

- The long-forgotten "Book of the Law" (2 Kings 22:8) had been found in the temple. Its words highlighted the idolatry and wickedness that characterized the nation of Judah.
- King Josiah then sent the high priest and the court officials to speak to Huldah—who was God's

BIBLE EXTRA

Two Bad Kings

During the reigns of the two kings of Judah prior to Josiah, the Israelites disobeyed the Law. Although King Manasseh repented later in life, he led Judah into such idolatry and accompanying wickedness that it rivaled the Canaanites whom the Lord had previously destroyed (2 Chron. 33:9). Amon the son of Manasseh reigned for two short years before the people killed him and put an end to his evil reign (2 Kings 21:19-24).

Amon's son, Josiah, became king at the age of eight. Contrary to those before him, "He did what was right in the eyes of the LORD and followed completely the ways of his father David, not turning aside to the right or to the left (2 Kings 22:2). In the eighteenth year of his reign, he initiated repairs to the temple and asked the high priest Hilkiah for an accounting of the money in the temple treasury that was available for the task (22:3-4).

This led to Hilkiah's discovery of "the Book of the Law" (22:8), which many believe refers to the entire Pentateuch, the first five books of the Old Testament. When Moses finished writing the Book of Deuteronomy, he commanded that Israel keep the Law beside the ark of the covenant (Deut. 31:24-26). It's doubtful the high priest brought the original manuscript to the king; it was more likely a copy of the Law.

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Josiah Inquires of the Lord

2 Kings 22:14, KJV

14 So Hilkiah the priest, and Ahikam, and Achbor, and Shaphan, and Asahiah, went unto Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tikvah, the son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe; (now she dwelt in Jerusalem in the college;) and they communed with her.

2 Kings 22:14, NIV

¹⁴Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam, Akbor, Shaphan and Asaiah went to speak to the prophet Huldah, who was the wife of Shallum son of Tikvah, the son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe. She lived in Jerusalem, in the New Quarter.

The lone biblical story of the prophet Huldah began with the high priest's discovery of the "Book of the Law" in the temple (2 Kings 22:8). The long-abandoned Word of God symbolized the idolatry and wickedness that characterized the people of Judah at the time Josiah became king. Josiah, however, was much different than the two kings who reigned before him, who ignored the Lord's commands.

Upon hearing the words of the Law, King Josiah "tore his robes" in humble recognition of his and the nation's disobedience as well as in response to the severity of the "Lord's anger" because of their sins. Sensing an urgent need to hear from the Lord, he sent servants to inquire of Him (vss. 8-13).

Hilkiah the high priest along with other royal officials went to Huldah, who lived in "Jerusalem, the New Quarter." The text describes her as the "wife of Shallum . . . keeper of the wardrobe" (vs. 14). The choice of Huldah was not random; Josiah directed the delegation to her (2 Chron. 34:22), perhaps because she resided in Jerusalem where they could quickly find her and bring back a message from the Lord.

Huldah's response to Josiah tells us the king wanted to know if he or the people of Judah could do anything to avert the Lord's judgment. Did Jerusalem have time to repent and avert the disaster spelled out for them in the Law? Had they passed the point of no return?

The choice of Huldah turned out to be a wise choice. As



Further commentary on this Scripture passage can be found on pp. 724-725 in *The Wiersbe Bible Commentary: OLD Testament*.

prophet—to find out what God’s message for the country was.

SUGGESTED ANSWER TO QUESTION 4

The discovery of the “Book of the Law” in the temple led Josiah to seek further counsel from the Lord (2 Kings 22:13). When the king heard the words of the Law for the first time, he tore his royal robe, recognizing his sins as well as those of the people. As he heard the warnings of disaster

for their wickedness, he not only repented but recognized the need for a fresh word from the Lord regarding the future of the nation.

HULDAH PROPHESES THE FATE OF JUDAH

Read 2 Kings 22:15-17 and note these key points:

- Huldah told the high priest and the king’s advisers that God was going to bring His wrath against Judah because of their disobedience to Him.
- The people were worshiping other gods and their idols, so the Lord’s unquenchable anger was burning against the country.

SUGGESTED ANSWER TO QUESTION 5

The prophet Huldah began her response to the king claiming to speak in the name of “the LORD, the God of Israel.” She did not claim the message as coming from herself, but she spoke with authority on behalf of God. Josiah desired to hear a message from the Lord and that is what he heard.

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we will see, she was ready with an answer, one that would later prove 100 percent correct.

4. *What prompted King Josiah to seek counsel from the Lord?*

Huldah Prophecies the Fate of Judah

2 Kings 22:15-17, KJV

15 And she said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Tell the man that sent you to me,

16 Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, even all the words of the book which the king of Judah hath read:

17 Because they have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands; therefore my wrath shall be kindled against this place, and shall not be quenched.

2 Kings 22:15-17, NIV

¹⁵She said to them, “This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: Tell the man who sent you to me, ¹⁶“This is what the LORD says: I am going to bring disaster on this place and its people, according to everything written in the book the king of Judah has read. ¹⁷

Because they have forsaken me and burned incense to other gods and aroused my anger by all the idols their hands have made, my anger will burn against this place and will not be quenched.”

The prophet Huldah responded to the king’s inquiry with an authoritative message from the Lord. It might seem disrespectful for her to refer to the king as “the man who sent you to me” (vs. 15), but not when we consider that this message came from God, not from her.

Huldah confirmed Josiah’s worse fears; God would “bring disaster” on Jerusalem and the “people” (vs. 16). The king likely hoped it was not too late to avert the Lord’s wrath, but such was not the case. The dire warnings contained in the Law would prove to be true for the people of Judah.

The idolatry of King Manasseh, Josiah’s grandfather, was so great that he built altars to foreign gods in the courts of the temple, placed the image of an idol inside the temple

BIBLE EXTRA

Moses’ List of Consequences

In Deuteronomy 28, Moses lists the blessings of obedience to the Lord as well as the dire consequences of disobeying Him. Since Josiah most likely heard these words as Shaphan read the Law to him, it explains his urgent inquiry of the Lord after hearing the words of Moses.

The results of turning away from God included pestilence, wasting disease, drought, enemy invasions, and captivity for both the people and their king. It’s no wonder Josiah tore his robe and humbly repented at hearing the graphic descriptions of the wrath that would come upon the people as a result of their sins.

BIBLE EXTRA

Why Huldah?

Why did King Josiah inquire of the prophet Huldah when prophets such as Jeremiah and Zephaniah also prophesied during his reign (Jer. 1:3; Zeph. 1:1)? Several factors may have caused the king to choose her.

First, the urgency of the matter may have led the king to select a prophet who lived nearby. The mention of Huldah's residence implies they inquired of her because she lived close by in Jerusalem. Jeremiah may have been at home in Anathoth; though close, it would have required more time to travel back and forth with the answer.

Second, some commentators believe the younger Zephaniah either had not yet begun his ministry or perhaps was not well-known at the time.

Third, the king most likely knew about Huldah since her husband managed the royal wardrobe (22:14). Although Scripture nowhere else mentions Huldah's role as a prophet apart from this story, Josiah may have had confidence in her because of his connection with her husband.

BIBLE EXTRA

The Lord's Promise to King Josiah

Although Josiah died before God poured out His wrath upon Jerusalem and the people of Judah, the king did not die in peace. Josiah died in battle with Neco, king of the Egyptians. Egyptian archers severely wounded him during the fight, which led to his death (2 Chron. 35:20-25).

The substance of the Lord's promise to him, however, stated he would not see the disaster He would bring upon Jerusalem. Josiah's death occurred many years before Nebuchadnezzar's first invasion of the land.

Some maintain that Josiah should not have interfered with the Egyptian army since they were on their way to attack Babylon, not Judah. Neco sent messengers to the king explaining that he did not intend to attack Judah (2 Chron. 35:21). Was the Lord speaking through the Egyptian king telling Josiah to stay away? Some commentators believe Josiah disobeyed God by going out to fight the Egyptians.

SUGGESTED ANSWER TO QUESTION 6

After hearing the words of the Law, Josiah feared that God's wrath against Jerusalem would be great because of the disobedience of the people (2 Kings 22:13). Huldah confirmed that the Lord's anger would indeed result in judgment upon Judah. God had seen the idolatry and wickedness of the people, and as a result, they would experience the full fury of His wrath.

SUGGESTED ANSWER TO QUESTION 7

Huldah offered no remedy for the dire situation of the people; they could not avert God's judgment. They had reached the point of no return

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itself, and sacrificed some of his sons to a pagan deity (2 Chron. 33:4-7). Although he repented at a later time in his reign of 55 years, the damage of his wickedness remained.

Second Chronicles 33:9 records this about Manasseh's influence on the people: "But Manasseh led Judah and the people of Jerusalem astray, so that they did more evil than the nations the Lord had destroyed before the Israelites." This was the evil that Huldah referenced in her response to Josiah (vs. 17).

Judah had reached the point of no return; God's fury against His people would "not be quenched" (vs. 17). Huldah's prophecy of judgment came to pass decades later as Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem, as well as the temple, and took the people captive (2 Kings 25:1-21). This did not mean, however, the Lord would not respond favorably to those who repented, such as King Josiah.

5. *In whose name did the prophet Huldah respond to King Josiah?*

6. *How did Huldah confirm the fears of Josiah?*

7. *Was there anything Judah could do to avert God's judgment?*

Huldah Prophesies the Fate of King Josiah

2 Kings 22:18-20, KJV

18 But to the king of Judah which sent you to enquire of the LORD, thus shall ye say to him, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, As touching the words which thou hast heard;

19 Because thine heart was tender, and thou hast humbled thyself before the LORD, when thou heardest what I spake against this

2 Kings 22:18-20, NIV

18 "Tell the king of Judah, who sent you to inquire of the LORD, 'This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says concerning the words you heard: 19 Because your heart was responsive and you humbled yourself before the Lord when you heard what I have spoken against this place and

in respect to the consequences for their sins. God would respond as He said He would in the Law which King Josiah heard.

HULDAH PROPHESES THE FATE OF KING JOSIAH

Read 2 Kings 22:18-20; discuss these key points:

- Huldah said that King Josiah had already humbled himself before the Lord because of the people's sins, tearing his robes and weeping.
- Because of the king's repentant heart, the Lord had heard his prayer and would not bring His wrath against the nation at this time.
- Josiah would die in peace and not see God's judgment against His sinful people.

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KJV
place, and against the inhabitants thereof, that they should become a desolation and a curse, and hast rent thy clothes, and wept before me; I also have heard thee, saith the LORD.

20 Behold therefore, I will gather thee unto thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered into thy grave in peace; and thine eyes shall not see all the evil which I will bring upon this place. And they brought the king word again.

NIV
its people—that they would become a curse and be laid waste—and because you tore your robes and wept in my presence, I also have heard you, declares the LORD. ²⁰Therefore I will gather you to your ancestors, and you will be buried in peace. Your eyes will not see all the disaster I am going to bring on this place.”

So they took her answer back to the king.

Because the consequences of disobedience listed in the Law included captivity for the king as well as for the people (Deut. 28:36), Josiah understandably wondered about his fate as well. Huldah responded to his personal concern next, this time addressing him in a more favorable way as “the king of Judah” (vs. 18).

The Lord had seen Josiah's humble response to His word; He noticed his tears of repentance as he tore his robe. Through Huldah God assured Josiah that He heard his plea (vs. 19). Based on the Lord's response to the prayer of the king, we can assume he cried out in humble repentance over his sins, as well as those of the people.

As a result of his humble response to God's Word, the king would not see the disaster that would later come upon Jerusalem (vs. 20). The certainty of future judgment would not keep the Lord from responding favorably to those who turned away from idols and sought forgiveness from Him.

Just as Huldah prophesied, God's judgment of Jerusalem and Judah came after the death of Josiah. Although he later died in battle (2 Kings 23:28-30), he did not see the Lord's wrath fall upon the people.

8. What did the Lord cite as evidence of Josiah's humble response to hearing the Law?

9. How did the Lord reward the king for his repentance?

SUGGESTED ANSWER TO QUESTION 8

The Lord saw Josiah's humble response to the Law and its warning of disaster as a consequence of disobedience. The king tore his royal robes and wept in His presence, indicating repentance concerning the sins listed in the Law. Scripture did not record his prayer at the time, but the text tells us the Lord “heard” him and responded favorably to his humility.

SUGGESTED ANSWER TO QUESTION 9

Because of King Josiah's repentance, the Lord would spare him from seeing the disaster He would later bring upon Jerusalem. The king would not experience the bondage to Nebuchadnezzar and resulting captivity. He would die long before that time. Repentance was Josiah's automatic response upon hearing God's Word.

BIBLE EXTRA

Spurgeon on Josiah and the Law

A quote from Charles Spurgeon on Josiah's humble response to the Law: “Have you ever noticed the difference between being humble and being humbled? Many persons are humbled who are not humble at all . . . It is a voluntary humiliation of soul which is inculcated by the example of Josiah, and may the Spirit of God make us willing in the day of His power, that we may willingly humble ourselves before God.”

WINDOW ON THE WORD

Seeking Peace

Jesus offers us peace because He is the “Prince of Peace” (Isa. 9:6). Although His peace is free because of His death and resurrection, He does require humility and confession of sin on our part. Many Scriptures on God's peace emphasize our need to respond to God's gift of salvation and peace through repentance. For example, Hebrews 12:14 says, “Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord.” First Peter 3:11 reminds us that we “must turn from evil and do good [and] seek peace and pursue it.”

3 Bible Application

Identify how our repentance leads to God's peace.

This lesson step directs your students to think about what positive things happen when we humble ourselves before God and admit our sins. Copy the page and give instructions to each of the groups. Make copies of the handout from the Resource Kit to give to the group using it.



Handout:

'Choose Your Path'

Read the handout together and discuss the differences and challenges of choosing the path to peace versus the path to anxiety.

GROUP ACTIVITIES

Discussion Group

Read "No Repentance, No Peace" from the student book and respond to **Questions 10, 11, and 12**. It is difficult to acknowledge our sins because we don't like to think of ourselves as sinners, and we also don't like to face the consequences of what we have done wrong. What we don't confess to God or others eats away at our souls like a cancer. We need the healing and cleansing that only confession can bring.

Changed Heart

Read Psalm 51:3-12 and Luke 19:8-10. After reading the passages, answer the following questions:

What did both David and Zacchaeus acknowledge before God?

What did God do in response to their acknowledgement of sin?

David and Zacchaeus knew that only God could change their hearts and give them peace and joy. They repented, and God responded. He gave them peace and joy through salvation in Him.

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No Repentance, No Peace

Pride keeps Marisa from doing what she needs to do. Her life is spiraling downward because of her refusal to admit that she can't control her anger. Whenever any little thing goes wrong, even a simple thing as not being able to put on her eyelashes correctly, Marisa yells at the closest person to her. She never acknowledges that her words are hurting people, especially those close to her. Marisa's self-centeredness keeps her from being sensitive to others' feelings.

Unconfessed sin keeps Marisa from experiencing peace within her heart. Her unorganized life, including her messy bedroom, are the result of her lack of peace, yet she can't see it. Marisa continues to try in her own strength to better her life through exercise, reading self-help books and watching YouTube videos on improving yourself. She experiences small successes by her standard, but never the major progress that can be possible if she humbles herself before God.

Sadly, Marisa grew up in a Christian home and knows what it means to repent. She can't see beyond herself to acknowledge that she has sinned against God and others with her uncontrollable anger. Yes, Marisa often goes to her room and it will flash briefly through her mind what she had said to someone. But her thoughts always go back to what the other person did or said, and not what she does wrong. She is miserable, but pride keeps her from talking to a counselor or even her parents who can guide her back to God.

While no repentance brings no peace, the opposite is also true: know repentance and you can know peace.

10. List at least three things that keep us from repenting after we have sinned against God or others.

11. Why is it important to acknowledge to God and others what you have done wrong against them?

12. What does God promise will happen to us if we confess our sins to him and turn away from them (1 John 1:9)?

4 Life Response

Seek God's peace through repentance.

Our lesson today teaches us God's peace results from a repentant heart. Often, we look to receive God's peace from good works, studying God's Word, prayer, sacrificial giving, etc. A humble heart leads to God's peace, not our works.

Ask your class to read "Keep Silent or Speak?" in the student book and encourage them to reflect on David's confession and if in their own lives they have felt the difference between keeping silent and confessing their sins to God. Ask them to pray that

the Holy Spirit will show them any sins that need confessing before Him, and maybe other people if their sins affect them as well. Encourage your students to seek God's peace throughout the next week by continually examining their hearts for unconfessed sin that may hinder experiencing His peace.

Close your class by asking one or more of your students to pray, thanking God that He gives us peace when we are repentant.

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Keep Silent or Speak?

David understood the peace that comes from confessing our sins versus keeping them inside us, and he wrote about it in Psalm 32: "... I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the LORD.' And you forgave the guilt of my sin" (vs. 5).

► *Are you keeping silent about the sins you've committed and need to speak out? Confess them silently now before God, or confess them to another person in class if you feel so led, or plan this week to talk with someone who has been hurt by your sin.*

KEY VERSE

Because thine heart was tender, and thou hast humbled thyself before the LORD, when thou heardest what I spake against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, that they should become a desolation and a curse, and hast rent thy clothes, and wept before me; I also have heard thee, saith the LORD. —2 Kings 22:19, KJV

"Because your heart was responsive and you humbled yourself before the LORD when you heard what I have spoken against this place and its people—that they would become a curse and be laid waste—and because you tore your robes and wept in my presence, I also have heard you, declares the LORD." —2 Kings 22:19, NIV

DAILY BIBLE READINGS FOR NEXT WEEK'S LESSON

Week of March 22 through March 28

(See *The Quiet Hour* and *Cross* devotionals on these passages.)

Mon. Mark 9:2-8—Elijah with Moses and Jesus.

Tues. Mark 9:9-13—John the Baptist, the New Elijah.

Wed. 1 Kings 18:1-4—Elijah Sent to King Ahab.

Thurs. 1 Kings 18:20-26, 30-33, 36-39—Elijah Challenges the Baal Prophets.

Fri. 1 Kings 19:1-8—Elijah in the Wilderness with God.

Sat. 1 Kings 19:9b-15—God Commissions Elijah for a New Work.

Sun. 1 Kings 18:5-18—King Ahab Meets the Prophet Elijah.



As the class members are leaving, hand out copies of this week's *Power for Living*. Take or mail copies of *Lesson Leaflet* to those who couldn't be with you today, or send them to those you would like to join your class.

Before Teaching Next Week's Lesson

Before next week, read 1 Kings 18:5-18. Ask your students to think about what this statement means: "Obedience requires courage."