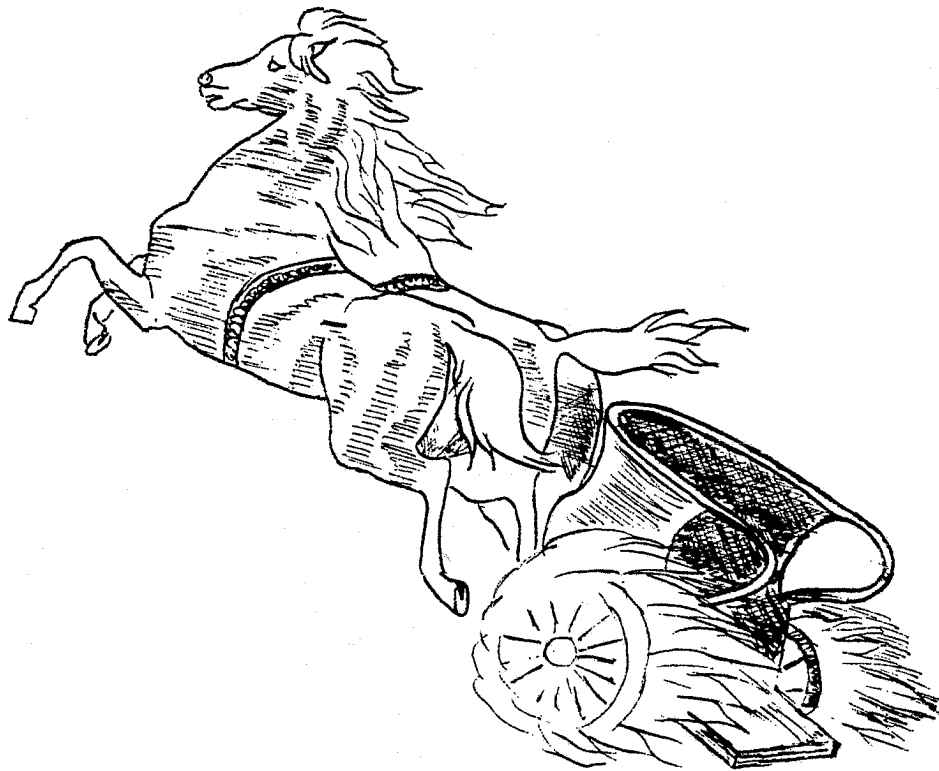


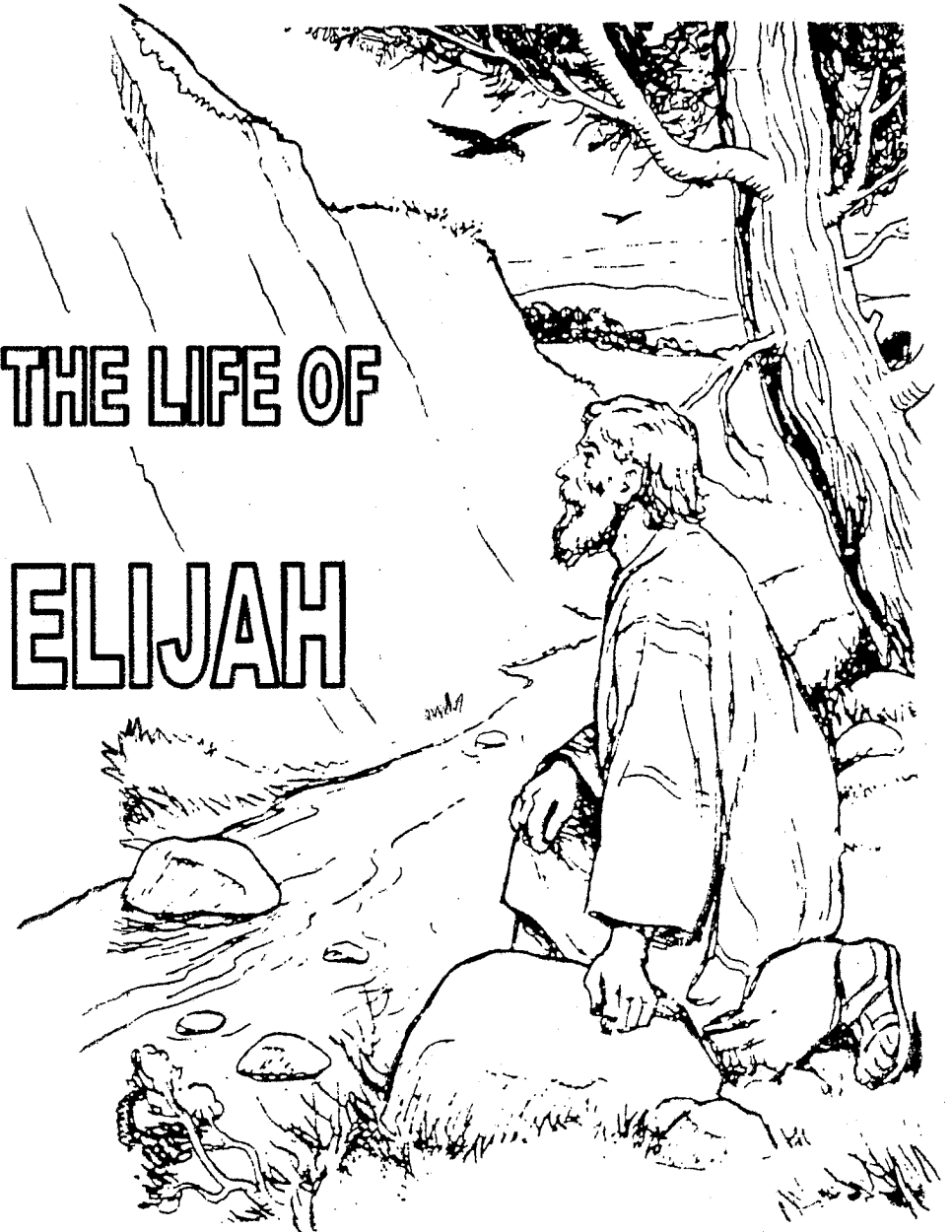
they crossed over on dry ground. Elijah asked Elisha what he could do to help him and Elisha asked for a double amount of spirit to be on him so that he, Elisha, could serve God. As they walked and talked together a splendid fiery chariot pulled by flaming horses flashed between them and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind. Elisha picked up his friend's fallen cloak and wore it instead of his own. When he came to cross back over the river Jordan he hit the water with the cloak just as Elijah had done. The waters parted and Elisha walked across to continue with God's work.



BIBLE HEROES : 13

THE LIFE OF

ELIJAH



THE LIFE OF ELIJAH

After the death of King Jeroboam came many bad kings. During the reign of King Ahab it seemed as though there was no one who trusted God. That is how a man called Elijah felt and in fact he told people that he was the only prophet of the Lord. Later God told him that there were 7,000 people in Israel who had not bowed down to the idol Baal. He strode over the hills dressed in rough skins thinking of the wickedness of the king and his wife Queen Jezebel. He walked all the way to the palace and said that because they forced the people to worship Baal there would not be a drop of rain again till God said so. This made Ahab and Jezebel so cross they decided to kill Elijah. Elijah went into hiding near the River Jordan where there was a brook called Cherith and there every morning and evening God sent ravens who flew into the valley carrying bread and meat in their beaks. This was God's miracle because normally ravens that found bread or meat would eat it and never give it to anyone else. After a while the brook dried up completely.

God told Elijah to go to the coast. It was a long, hard, thirsty journey of nearly 70 miles; a long way to walk. He came to a small village and a poor woman came along gathering sticks. Elijah asked for a drink of water and a piece of bread. The woman was so poor that all she had was a handful of flour in the bottom of her barrel and a little oil. She would then starve and so would her young son. However, Elijah told her to make him a small scone first and then her flour and oil would not be used up until God sent rain onto the earth. This happened as he told her. Elijah stayed at the woman's house for many months and they lived on the flour and oil.

Three years later God told Elijah it would rain. He challenged the priests of Baal to a test to show which was the true God. Each would ask their God to light up a fire and burn up a sacrifice they had placed upon their altar. Baal's priests prayed all day but nothing happened. Elijah laughed and said Baal must be sleeping. Then it was his turn to call on God. He even poured water on the altar first to make it more

difficult but immediately there was a great blaze and the sacrifice went up in a mass of flames and even the water, stones and dust were burnt up. The people then turned to Elijah's God.

The sky was still blue but Elijah went to Mount Carmel and prayed. He sent his servant to look. First there wasn't a cloud, The servant had to look seven times and on the seventh there was a cloud no bigger than his fist blowing from the sea. Warning was sent to King Ahab to drive home before he got soaked. It grew very dark and started to rain so the king jumped into his chariot and rode quickly. However, God gave Elijah such strength that he ran down the mountain and through the pouring rain faster than the racing chariot.

Although Elijah had shown who the true God was he still had to flee for his life because wicked Queen Jezebel was out to kill him. Forty days later Elijah was sheltering in a cave. He felt all alone. God sent a mighty wind that seemed to blow the mountain apart. Elijah didn't see God in the wind or storm. Then came an earthquake, flames and heat but he didn't see God there. Then God spoke to him in the quietness and told him that he was going to have a friend called Elisha.

Elisha was ploughing in the fields. Elijah tossed his cloak onto the shoulders of his new friend. Elisha went to say goodbye to his family and friends for he knew he was to help Elijah tell the people about God. With Elisha to help him, Elijah spoke boldly against the king's wickedness. One time King Ahab wanted a vineyard near his palace so that he could turn it into a garden. The vineyard belonged to Naboth who wouldn't sell it because it had belonged to his family for many years and was part of his inheritance. The wicked queen arranged to have him killed so that the king could take over the vineyard. Elijah told the king that God knew all that had happened and would punish them for what they had done.

At last the time came when Elijah was to be taken away. Elijah and Elisha travelled together. When they came to the river Jordan Elijah wrapped his cloak together and hit the water. The waters parted and