

**Aim:** Elisha spent his whole life working for God.

**Refer:** 2 Kings 8, 13; Great Controversy chapter 7

Johann Tetzel was appointed Commissioner of Indulgences for the church. His job was to travel around selling pardons for sins; and he was very good at his job. He sold pardons for existing sins and even pardons for the sins of the dead saying, "As soon as a coin in the coffer rings / the soul from purgatory springs." He even sold pardons for future sins. The story is told that one day a man asked if he could buy the pardon for a future sin; Tetzel agreed, money was exchanged, and the man went away with his letter of pardon. Later, he found Tetzel on a lonely stretch of road, beat and robbed him of the large sum of money he had collected. When Tetzel cried that he would burn in hell, he showed him the pardon received and so nothing further was done.

Many of Luther's congregation bought indulgences, but when they came to Luther claiming the right to forgiveness with repentance, he could not agree, saying instead that they must repent and reform their lives, or perish in their sins. Some even returned to Tetzel demanding their money back.

Luther was not the only one to recognise the falseness of the indulgence teachings, but he was one of the few to do more than just pray about it. Time after time he preached about sin and the saving grace of Jesus; he related his own experiences in searching for the peace of forgiveness. But he was determined to do more.

The church of the castle of Wittenberg had many historical objects called relics, and on special days they were displayed to the public and they claimed that anyone who viewed them was granted forgiveness of sins. The day before All Saints Day (Halloween), Luther nailed onto the door of the church a list with ninety-five arguments against the doctrine of indulgences – forgiveness of sins for money or certain actions. He invited anyone who wanted to debate his arguments to join him at the university the following day. No one dared take up the challenge, but it was the talk of the town.

Luther had been confident that the leaders of the schools and churches would support him, and they appeared to at first, but many soon changed their minds when they realised the consequences. Not only would it undermine the authority of the church but the loss of income from the sale of indulgences would be too much. And so, Luther stood alone, one man of God against nearly the whole world.

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Did you notice what the church at that time was telling people they could do to have their sins forgiven?

They could buy indulgences – in other words pay money.

They could look at certain holy objects – like a piece of clothing from the Bible times – and often they would be charged money to do this.

What does God say we need to do to have our sins forgiven?

**Read or say 1 John 1:9**

Should we purposely choose to sin, since we know that God will forgive us?

Some people in Paul's day must have thought this because Paul discusses it in Romans 6

**Read Romans 6:1-2**

As humans we make mistakes and we sin, but at the same time, the more time that we spend with Jesus, the more we become like Him. That is what Paul says in Philippians 1:6 – God will continue His work of changing us, and will finish it on the day that Jesus returns.

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*The following stories of Elisha can be told either as a PowerPoint Story or using the following Bible study.*

Do you remember the story of the Woman of Shunem?

**Read 2 Kings 8:1** – Elisha warns her to leave for 7 years because of a famine.

When she returns to Israel, she goes to the king to see about getting her land back. What happened?

**Read verse 4-5**

After hearing the story from her, the king orders that her land is given back and she is paid for the crops she missed while away.

Damascus was the Capital of Aram and King Ben-hadad was sick. When someone told him that Elisha had come to his city he sent Hazael with gifts to Elisha to ask if he would recover.

What did Elisha say **verse 10, 11**

Then Elisha went on to tell Hazael that he would do terrible things to Israel and that he would become the king of Aram. So Hazael, went back and told the king that he would recover, but then the next day, Hazael killed the king and became the new king.

Turn to **2 Kings chapter 13:1** tells us that the next king of Israel after Jehu, was his son, Jehoahaz and that he did evil in the sight of the Lord.

What happened? **Verse 3** (Hazael defeated him repeatedly.)

Verse 4 tells us that Jehoahaz finally asked God for help and after that Israel lived in peace again, but they still worshiped some idols.

Who was the next king? Read **verse 10, 11** (His son Jehoash, who also did evil)

Elisha was old and ill by this time and Jehoash visited him.

Elisha told Jehoash to get a bow and some arrows. As the king held an arrow in the bow, Elisha touched his hands and then told him to shoot out the window. Elisha said, "This is the Lords arrow, you will have victory over Aram."

Then Elisha told him to hit the other arrows on the ground. The king did this three times.

What did Elisha say? **Verse 19.**

And that is exactly what happened.

There is one last story in the Bible about Elisha and it is unusual because it happen after he died and was buried.  
(2 Kings 13:2, 21)

One day some Israelites were preparing to bury a man when they saw a band of Moabite raiders, they quickly threw the body into the tomb of Elisha and fled, but when the body touched Elisha's bones, the man came back to life and jumped up!