Unit 13 | Session 4

THE REIGN OF AHAB

1 Kings 20–22; 2 Kings 1



King Ahab was at war with King Ben-hadad of Aram, a nation to the northeast of Israel. A prophet of the Lord came to Ahab and said, "This is what the Lord says, 'Do you see Ben-hadad's huge army? Watch this: I am handing it over to you today so that you may know I am the Lord.'" Ahab led the men to battle. Israel won, but Ben-hadad escaped.

Ben-hadad's servants told him that Israel had only won because they had fought in the hills. They believed that if they went to war with Israel in the plains, that they would be able to defeat them. The prophet of God came to Ahab again and said, "Because the Arameans have said that the Lord can't win unless the battle is in the mountains, I will hand their huge army over to you. You will win, and you will know that I am the Lord." The Israelites camped in front of them like two little flocks of goats, while the Arameans filled the landscape. Israel won the battle, and they captured Ben-hadad.

Ben-hadad offered to make a deal in exchange for his life. Ahab knew he was supposed to defeat the Arameans, but he disobeyed. He agreed to receive the land the Arameans took from Israel in exchange for Ben-hadad's release.

Sometime later, Ahab decided he wanted a vineyard that belonged to a man named Naboth. Naboth refused to sell this land, and Ahab was mad, because he was greedy and wanted that land. Ahab's wife, Jezebel, said to him, "Now, exercise your royal power over Israel. For I will give you the vineyard of Naboth." Then Jezebel hired men to lie about Naboth. They said that Naboth had cursed God and the king, a crime punishable by death. Naboth was killed, and Ahab took his vineyard.

A few years later, Ahab wanted to go to war against the Arameans again because they still had some of Israel's land. He asked his false prophets, and they all agreed it was a good idea. But the prophet of the true God, Micaiah, told Ahab the truth. Going to war against Aram would fail, and the king would die. Micaiah said, "I saw all of Israel alone scattered on the hills like sheep without a shepherd. And the Lord said, 'They have no one to lead them.'" King Ahab was stubborn and decided to go to war anyway. He was struck by an arrow during the battle, and he died, just as the prophet of the Lord said.

Christ Connection: Ahab was a disobedient, greedy, and stubborn king who refused to lead Israel in the ways of the Lord. Jesus, the Good Shepherd, always obeyed God and laid down His life for us. Anyone who follows Him will dwell with God forever.

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1 TELL THE BIBLE STORY

The Bible tells us what is true about God and about ourselves. All of the stories in the Bible fit together to tell us the big story of how God rescues sinners through His Son, Jesus.

Today, we are going to hear about the reign of King Ahab. Through our Bible story, we will learn that **AHAB WAS AN EVIL KING, AND GOD BROUGHT JUDGMENT ON HIM**. Whether this is your first time or your tenth time hearing this story, there is always something new to learn in God's Word.

Read from 1 Kings 20–22; 2 Kings 1.

- **What does this story teach us about God?**

  Ahab was a wicked king who led Israel away from God. The prophet Micaiah said Ahab would die in battle. During the battle, Ahab was struck by an arrow and died. **God will not allow evil to continue forever. He will always punish evil. AHAB WAS AN EVIL KING, AND GOD BROUGHT JUDGMENT ON HIM.**

- **Why do you think the prophet Micaiah said Israel was like sheep without a shepherd?**

  The people of Israel were left to wander without a good king to lead them to follow God. King Ahab wasn't a good king who led the people to follow God and obey Him. But Jesus is the perfect King. Jesus, the Good Shepherd, always obeyed God and laid down His life for us. Anyone who follows Him will dwell with God forever.

GOSPEL DISCUSSION

Like Ahab, we are all sinners and deserve punishment for our sin. But out of God's love for us, He sent Jesus to rescue us. Jesus willingly laid down His life and took the punishment we deserve for our sin. We won't face God's judgment for sin when we trust in Jesus.

3

PRAY

Thank You, Lord, for sending Jesus to be the perfect sacrifice for our sins. Thank You that through Him we can be saved and forgiven. In Jesus' name, amen.

Have the Students follow along on their guides and then answer the questions afterward in their guides individually.

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THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

Have the Students follow along on their guides and then answer the questions together as a group.

1 THINK ABOUT THE STORY

- **Why is death a consequence for sin, even though we were not the ones who sinned in the first place?**
- **Why did Jesus take the punishment we deserve for our sin?**

2 GROUP DISCUSSION

Distribute Bibles. Guide preteens to open their Bibles to 1 Kings 22. Choose a volunteer to read aloud 1 Kings 22:17. Remind preteens that the prophet Micaiah said that Israel had no one to lead them. Ahab, and all of Israel's kings, were evil and did not truly care about the people. They didn't seek to lead the people to what is best: following and worshiping God. When Jesus came to earth, He had compassion on people and said they were also like sheep without a shepherd (Matthew 9:36). Jesus came to seek out sinners and show them that He is the Good Shepherd who had come to lay down His life to save them from sin.

Then lead the group to discuss the following questions.

1. **How can a loving God bring judgment on people?**
   Tell kids that God is holy and hates sin because sin goes against all that God is and loves. Sin dishonors God, hurts us, and hurts others. He will not let sin go unpunished. For those who trust Jesus as their Savior, Jesus paid the price for their sin. But those who do not trust Jesus as Savior will be punished for their sins. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Hebrews 9:27-28.)

2. **Why should we take God's Word seriously?**
   Remind kids that God always keeps His Word. He kept His Word to bring judgment on Ahab's sin. Because of this truth, it is important to listen to what He has said. Today, God speaks to us through His Word, the Bible. God's words in the Bible are always for our good and lead us to become more like Jesus. The Bible reminds us that God has made the way to save us from sin through His Son, Jesus.
   (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Isa. 46:9-10.)

3. **How is Jesus the perfect King?**
   Tell kids that Jesus is the King who always obeyed God and who sought the good of others. Jesus never did anything out of selfishness or greed, like Ahab. He is the perfect King who rules with justice, righteousness, and peace. Jesus is the only King who saves those who trust in Him from the punishment their sin deserves. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Isa. 9:6-7.)

BIG PICTURE QUESTION

How many gods are there?

There is one true God who alone deserves worship.

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THE MISSION OF THE GOSPEL

1 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY

Instruct kids to open their Bibles to 1 Kings 8:60. Lead them in reading the key passage aloud together. Distribute a piece of cardstock and a pen or marker to each kid. Direct kids to fold their cardstock into a fan. Write the reference and three or four words of the key passage on each fold of the fan. Share how kids can close their fans to practice saying the key passage from memory. Or if they need help remembering the key passage, kids can open their fans to see the words.

2 PRAY

Invite volunteers to share prayer requests. Then pray, thanking God for how He is in control and provided Jesus to rescue us from judgment.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

BOOKS OF THE BIBLE TOSS

Direct kids to form a circle. Give one kid a ball and challenge her to say the first book of the Bible. Then direct her to toss the ball to the kid on her right who will say the next book of the Bible. Lead kids to keep tossing the ball and saying the books of the Bible in order. If a kid does not know the book that comes next, offer hints. Or consider hanging up the Books of the Bible Poster for kids to refer to. Continue until kids have said all the books of the Bible. For an added challenge, encourage kids to say the books as quickly as possible to see how fast the group can get through all the Bible books.

In our story, we saw how God sent prophets to speak His words and warn Ahab. Today, God speaks to us through His written Word, the Bible. When we read our Bibles, we learn about God and His plan to save people from sin. Reading the Bible helps us follow His commands through faith in Jesus. Those who trust in Jesus will be saved from judgment and will have eternal life.

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