
Leader BIBLE STUDY

The nation of Israel experienced quite the range of leaders throughout its history. Moses led the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt. Joshua brought them into the promised land.

From there, Israel was ruled by a series of judges: Othniel, Ehud, Shamgar, Deborah, Gideon, and several others until the time of Samson. The period of the judges was not a particularly proud time in Israel's history. Without a godly king, the people continuously turned away from God and disobeyed Him. "Everyone did whatever he wanted" (Judg. 21:25).

Then came Samuel. Samuel guided God's people between the time of the judges and the time of the kings. The Israelites asked for a king, and God gave them Saul. But God took Saul's kingdom away and gave it to David. When David died, his son Solomon became king. Solomon's sin led to the nation of Israel being divided into two kingdoms. Solomon's son Rehoboam ruled over Judah in the south, and Jeroboam ruled over Israel in the north.

For several decades, Israel was led by men who did evil. Baasha became the third king of the Northern Kingdom when he murdered the second king. Baasha made God's people in Israel sin, and when he died, his son Elah became king. Elah was king for two years, but then his servant Zimri killed him. Zimri became the next king. Zimri's reign was short—just seven days. Zimri died in a fire, and Omri became Israel's next king. When Omri died, his son Ahab became king. King Ahab was more evil than any other king before him.

The evil kings of Israel did not lead God's people well. They sinned and led God's people away from Him. As you teach kids the reality of Israel's past, point out God's plan to send a perfect king for His people. Jesus came to bring salvation from sin and be the faithful, loving King Israel needed.

Younger Kids BIBLE STUDY OVERVIEW

Session Title: Israel's History of Evil Kings

Bible Passage: 1 Kings 16

Big Picture Question: What kind of king did God's people need? God's people needed a faithful king.

Key Passage: 2 Kings 17:13-14

Unit Christ Connection: The prophets called God's people to repentance as Christ calls people to repentance. Sin continued to divide and ultimately destroy the Northern Kingdom, but Christ's perfect kingdom is forever.

Small Group Opening

Welcome time

Activity page (5 minutes)

Session starter (10 minutes)

Large Group Leader

Countdown

Introduce the session (1 minute)

Timeline map (1 minute)

Big picture question (1 minute)

Sing (5 minutes)

Key passage (4 minutes)

Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

Discussion starter video (3 minutes)

The Gospel: God's Plan for Me (optional)

Prayer (5 minutes)

Small Group Leader

Key passage activity (5 minutes)

Bible story review (10 minutes)

Activity choice (10 minutes)

Journal and prayer (5 minutes)

The BIBLE STORY

Israel's History of Evil Kings

1 Kings 16

God's people, the nation of Israel, had been led by many people over the years—Moses, Joshua, and then several judges. Do you remember Deborah, Gideon, and Samson? Then came Samuel, and God's people asked for a king. Saul became king, and then David, and then Solomon.

After King Solomon died, the nation of Israel split into two kingdoms: Israel, the Northern Kingdom, and Judah, the Southern Kingdom. And a time began when the nation of Israel was ruled by kings who did not love God and did not lead God's people like they should.

Baasha (BAY uh shuh) was the third king to rule over Israel. He was an evil king. Baasha had killed Israel's second king, King Nadab (NAY dab), to take over the throne. **Baasha did evil things, and he led the people of Israel to sin. This made God angry. God sent a prophet to tell Baasha that he would not be king anymore. Baasha died, and his son Elah (EE luh) became Israel's king.**

Elah wasn't king for very long, and he wasn't a very good king. **Elah was like his father,** and he made God angry because **he worshiped idols and caused Israel to sin. After two years, Zimri (ZIM righ)—a commander in Elah's army—planned to kill Elah. And he did. Zimri killed Elah and everyone in Elah's family.**

Zimri became king, and he acted just like Elah and Baasha. He was an evil king and caused Israel to sin. **The people of Israel didn't want Zimri to be king. The people chose Omri (AHM righ), the commander of the army, to be king of Israel.** Omri took over the city Zimri was in, and **Zimri was afraid.** He knew he could not win against Omri. **Zimri was king for just seven days when he went into his house and set it on fire. The house burned down with Zimri inside, and Zimri died.**

Now Omri was king—the sixth king of Israel. While Omri was king, he bought a hill and built a city named Samaria. **Omri was like the kings before him. He worshiped idols and caused Israel to sin.** This made God angry.

Omri died, and his son Ahab (AY hab) became king of Israel.

Ahab was more evil than the kings who were before him—more evil than Omri, more evil than Zimri, more evil than Elah, and more evil than Baasha. Ahab was a very evil king! **He married Jezebel, who encouraged him to do evil things. Ahab began to serve and worship the false god Baal.** He built an altar for Baal in Samaria, and **all the things Ahab did made God very angry.**

Christ Connection: God's people asked for a king to lead them, but no king led them perfectly. Was there any king on earth who would be faithful? God would send a king from heaven—His own Son—who would lead God's people back to God. He would be the King of all kings—Jesus Christ.

Small Group OPENING

Session Title: Israel's History of Evil Kings

Bible Passage: 1 Kings 16

Big Picture Question: What kind of king did God's people need? God's people needed a faithful king.

Key Passage: 2 Kings 17:13-14

Unit Christ Connection: The prophets called God's people to repentance as Christ calls people to repentance. Sin continued to divide and ultimately destroy the Northern Kingdom, but Christ's perfect kingdom is forever.

Welcome time

- construction paper, 1 per kid
- scissors, 1 per kid

Arriving Activity: Bad king

Provide each kid with a piece of construction paper and a pair of scissors as she enters the room. Encourage them to make each piece of construction paper into a crown, and write one thing a bad king might do. Read some of their responses.

Say • We will meet several bad kings today, who were all bad for one reason. See if you can find out why.

Activity page (5 minutes)

- "Picture Touch Up" activity page, 1 per kid
- pencils or markers

Guide boys and girls to complete the activity page.

Say • In today's Bible story, we will find several Israelite kings who were missing something very important. They didn't follow and obey God.



- tape

Session starter (10 minutes)

Option 1: Which direction?

Tape three long lines several feet apart, or tape one long line in the middle of the room and use the walls on each side as the other lines. Invite the kids to stand on the middle line.

Explain that the middle line is called “middle.” The line on one side of the room is called “north.” The line on the other side of the room is called “south.” The leader should call out one of those three directions, and the kids must race to the correct line. The kids who go the wrong direction, or the last kid to the line, must sit outside the game area. Feel free to invite them back into the game at any time, or continue until only one kid is still in the game. Play as time allows.

Say • Sin divided God’s people, the Israelites, into two kingdoms, north and south. Today, we will learn about several kings in the Northern Kingdom.

Option 2: Good king, bad king

Explain that you are going to give a command. The other kids must vote on whether the command would come from a good king or bad king. The commands can be fun or serious. When the command is given, the kids who believe the command is from a good king stand and cheer. If they believe the command comes from a bad king, they should cross their arms and boo. Invite a couple of kids to explain their choice. Some kids may believe a command is good while others think it is bad. That’s OK. Here are a few command suggestions:

- No one may run and play.
- Ice cream will be free for everyone.
- The whole world will live in peace.
- No one will go to school anymore.
- All TVs and computers must be destroyed.

Say • Do you think a bad king can be good for the people he rules? No! The Israelites found that out the hard way.

Transition to large group

Large Group LEADER

Session Title: Israel's History of Evil Kings

Bible Passage: 1 Kings 16

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- room decorations of your choice

Suggested Theme Decorating Ideas: Use cloth or large sheets of green paper to make a background. In the middle of the background, drape blue cloth or paper from the top to the bottom to create a waterfall. Continue the blue cloth or paper through the middle of the stage for a river. Inflate several inflatable tubes and place them with life jackets or paddles on either side of the river. Create large rocks with gray garbage bags or large, crumpled paper bags. Place the rocks along the edges of the waterfall and river.

- countdown video

Countdown

Show the countdown video as your kids arrive, and set it to end as large group time begins.

- life jacket

Introduce the session (1 minute)

[Large group leader enters with a life jacket.]

Leader • Oh dear! Did each of you not get my text message? Am I at the wrong place? Sorry, I'm a little nervous about white water rafting. Have any of you ever been? I'm actually glad there are so many of you going. Here's the problem. I can't swim very well. That's why

it's a really good idea to have this, my life jacket. I can trust it to keep me floating. Don't worry if you don't have one today. I'm sure you will be able to get one before we actually get in the raft. I also understand that we will be learning about a nation that went on a wild ride, but it wasn't down a river.

Timeline map (1 minute)

• Timeline Map

Leader • The nation of Israel was divided as punishment for King Solomon's sin. Part of it was still called Israel, or the Northern Kingdom, and part of it was named Judah or the Southern Kingdom. Judah remained loyal to King Solomon's family. You now have God's people split between Israel and Judah. The next few weeks, we will discover what happened to Israel or the Northern Kingdom. It all starts with "Israel's History of Evil Kings."

Big picture question (1 minute)

Leader • As always, there is only one place to find the true history of the Israelites—God's Word. How many of you brought your Bible today?

Let's see if we can answer a very important question today. Our big picture question is, *What kind of king did God's people need?*

Sing (5 minutes)

• "Running" song

Leader • A person who is faithful trusts God and does what He commands. The Old Testament is full of stories where God's people chose to disobey God. Because the people didn't trust God, they turned away from Him. That led to punishment. When the people repented or turned back to God, He forgave them and blessed them again.

God always wants you and me to run toward Him, not away. That reminds me of our theme song for the next several weeks. It's called "Running."
Sing together "Running."

Key passage (4 minutes)

- Key Passage Slide or Poster
- "Keep My Commands" song

Leader • The Israelites knew what God expected and wanted them to do. He reminded them many times, but they still chose to disobey. Our new key passage shares one of the many warnings God gave His people.

Show the slide or poster of the unit's key passage, 2 Kings 17:13-14. Lead the boys and girls to read the verses together. Sing together "Keep My Commands."

Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

- "Israel's History of Evil Kings" video
- Bibles, 1 per kid
- Bible Story Picture Slide or Poster

Leader • Remember, the Israelites were now divided into two parts. One part remained Israel, also called the Northern Kingdom, while the other was named Judah or the Southern Kingdom. We are about to find out if the kings of the Northern Kingdom followed God or chose to ignore His commands.

Remember our big picture question. ***What kind of king did God's people need?***

Show the "Israel's History of Evil Kings" video, or choose to tell the Bible story in your own words using the script provided. For a shorter version of the story, read only the bold text.

Leader • It's the same story over and over again. The Northern Kingdom was led by many bad kings. Can you name some of them? (*Nadab, Baasha, Elah, Zimri, Omri, Ahab*) They were bad because they didn't follow God. Counting Jeroboam, who was the very first king of Israel after it split with Judah, they had seven straight bad kings.

This nation didn't need another king like the others; they needed a new king. ***What kind of king did God's people need? God's people needed a faithful king.*** The king was a leader for the people. They followed him. They needed a king who would be faithful to God, so they would be faithful, too.

Wait a minute! I think we found the answer to our big picture question. ***What kind of king did God's people need? God's people needed a faithful king.*** A faithful king would be someone like King David, a king who would love and obey God.

Ask the following review questions:

1. What two kingdoms were created when God divided them? (*the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah; 1 Kings 11:11-13; 12:17*)
2. Over which kingdom did the kings we studied today rule? (*Israel or Northern Kingdom*)
3. Which king was more evil than the rest? (*Ahab, 1 Kings 16:30*)
4. ***What kind of king did God's people need? God's people needed a faithful king.***
5. Whom did God send many years later as the true and faithful king of Israel? (*Jesus*)

Discussion starter video (3 minutes)

• "Unit 13 Session 1"
discussion starter
video

Leader • God's people had promised to be faithful to God many times, but they failed to keep that promise. Are you always faithful to your promises? Watch this video.

Show the "Unit 13 Session 1" video.

Leader • Should you always keep your promises? Is there a promise that you know you haven't kept? If so, you have not been faithful to that promise. The kings we looked

at today were not faithful to God. ***What kind of king did God's people need? God's people needed a faithful king.***

There would only be one truly faithful king. He is the King of all kings. Do you know who He is? He's Jesus. God would have blessed the kings of Israel if they had followed Him, but even the best king would have eventually sinned. We sin, too. That's why Jesus—who never sinned—came to pay the price for our sins, for our failure to obey God.

The Gospel: God's Plan for Me (optional)

Use Scripture and the guide provided with this session to explain to boys and girls how to become a Christian. Assign individuals to meet with kids who have more questions. If this is not possible, encourage boys and girls to ask their parents, small group leaders, and other Christian adults any questions they may have about becoming a Christian.

Prayer (5 minutes)

• Big Picture Question
Slide or Poster

Show the big picture question slide or poster.

Leader • Who remembers the answer to our big picture question? ***What kind of king did God's people need? God's people needed a faithful king.***

Repeat the big picture question, and announce that “the royal king/queen _____ [say a kid's name] may answer.” After the kid answers, repeat using another kid's name.

Before transitioning to small group, make any necessary announcements. Lead the kids in prayer. Pray that God will help us to be faithful to Him.

Dismiss to small groups

The Gospel: God's Plan for Me

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word *gospel*. Clarify that the word *gospel* means “good news.” It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.

God rules. Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.

We sinned. Tell kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)

God provided. Choose a child to read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.

Jesus gives. Share with kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:18.

We respond. Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

Offer to talk with any child who is interested in responding to Jesus.

Small Group LEADER

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Key Passage: 2 Kings 17:13-14

Unit Christ Connection: The prophets called God's people to repentance as Christ calls people to repentance. Sin continued to divide and ultimately destroy the Northern Kingdom, but Christ's perfect kingdom is forever.

Key passage activity (5 minutes)

- Bibles, 1 per kid
- Key Passage Slide or Poster
- dry erase board and markers (optional)

Make sure the key passage, 2 Kings 17:13-14, is visible for each child, either as the printed poster or written on a dry erase board. Read the verses together.

Say • What did God ask the people to do? He asked them to turn from their evil ways and keep His commands. The people had been reminded of God's commands through their families and the prophets. Still, they refused to listen. We should always listen and obey God.

Invite the kids to find the verses in their Bibles. Help if needed. Read the key passage together. Then, encourage them to close their Bibles. When you say go, see who can find the passage first. Read the verses together again as the winner leads. Repeat, only this time the kids must find the verses using only one hand. Read the key passage together, again allowing the winner to lead.

- Bibles, 1 per kid
- Small Group Visual Pack
- Big Picture Question Slide or Poster

Bible story review (10 minutes)

Encourage the kids to find 1 Kings 16 in their Bibles. Help them as needed.

Say • Is 1 Kings in the Old Testament or New Testament? (*Old Testament*) Which book does 1 Kings follow? (*2 Samuel*) First Kings is part of which division of the Bible? (*History*) First Kings tells the history of Solomon and what happened after the nation was divided into Israel and Judah.

Use the small group visual pack to show kids where today's Bible story is on the timeline. Review the Bible story provided using the bold text, or summarize the story in your own words. Once you review the first two paragraphs of the Bible story, stop and encourage the kids to say "bad, bad, bad" each time you say the word *king*.

Say • What did all these kings have in common? That's right! They were all bad. They didn't follow God at all. They were nothing like King David or King Solomon. They didn't even try to obey God.

With each bad king, the people pushed God farther and farther away. Sin separates people from God.

What kind of king did God's people need? God's people needed a faithful king. Jesus would be the only truly faithful King. He died for the sins of all the people then and now. When we repent and put our trust in Jesus, God forgives our sin.

Show the big picture question slide or poster.

Say • Can anyone answer the big picture question? ***What kind of king did God's people need? God's people needed a faithful king.***



- tape
- paper wad or beanbag

Activity choice (10 minutes)

Option 1: King-sized choice

Tape a small circle on the floor. Tape a start line several feet away. Invite the kids to line up single file behind the line. Encourage the first kid in line to toss a paper wad or

beanbag. If it lands and stays in the circle, she should share something a good king would do or say (*pray, trust God, share, love his people, and so forth*). If it lands outside the circle, she should share something a bad king would say or do (*not obey God, be mean, not care for his people, and so forth*). Provide hints if necessary.

Say • They wouldn't have been perfect, but the kings of Israel didn't even try to obey God. ***What kind of king did God's people need? God's people needed a faithful king.***

Option 2: Dry erase plates

- clear plastic plates, 1 per kid
- permanent markers
- dry erase markers
- stickers (optional)

Provide each kid with a clear plastic plate. Invite the kids to decorate the borders of the plates with permanent markers or stickers, leaving the circle open in the middle. Give each child a dry erase marker. Encourage her to draw a picture of something a good king might do. Invite writers to list characteristics of a good king and of a bad king.

Say • People depend on and follow their leaders. The leaders of Israel didn't trust and obey God. These kings followed false gods and refused to listen to God or the prophets. ***What kind of king did God's people need? God's people needed a faithful king.*** We serve a faithful King today. His name is Jesus.

Journal and prayer (5 minutes)

- journals
- Journal Page, 1 per kid (enhanced CD)
- markers or crayons
- Bible Story Coloring Page

Distribute each child's journal and the journal page provided with this session. Instruct the kids to each draw a picture of a good king and a bad king. Writers may write ways they can show that they trust and obey God.

Say • What kind of king would you be? I hope you would be a king who would seek to obey God in everything you do. That reminds me of the big picture question

Tip: Each quarter the *Younger Kids Activity Pack* includes a set of *Big Picture Cards for Families*. Don't forget to give the cards to parents today to allow families to interact with the biblical content each week.

and answer. ***What kind of king did God's people need? God's people needed a faithful king.***

Make sure each child puts this week's sheet in the journal, and then collect them. Keep the journals in the classroom so they will be available every week or as often as you wish to use them.

If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the coloring page provided with this session. Pray, thanking God for His faithful example. Pray for each child by name, asking God to help the kids learn to trust God in everything they do.

Israel, the Northern Kingdom

Key Passage: 2 Kings 17:13-14

Session 1: Israel's History of Evil Kings
1 Kings 16

Session 2: Elijah Confronted Evil Ahab
1 Kings 18

Session 3: Elijah Ran from Jezebel
1 Kings 19

Session 4: Elisha and Naaman
2 Kings 5

Session 5: The Northern Kingdom Was Destroyed
2 Kings 17:1-23



The background of the poster features a scenic view of a river with white-water rapids. Several people are seen in yellow inflatable rafts, navigating the turbulent waters. The river is bordered by lush green trees and rocky banks. The sky above is a clear, vibrant blue with a few wispy white clouds. The overall scene conveys a sense of adventure and natural beauty.

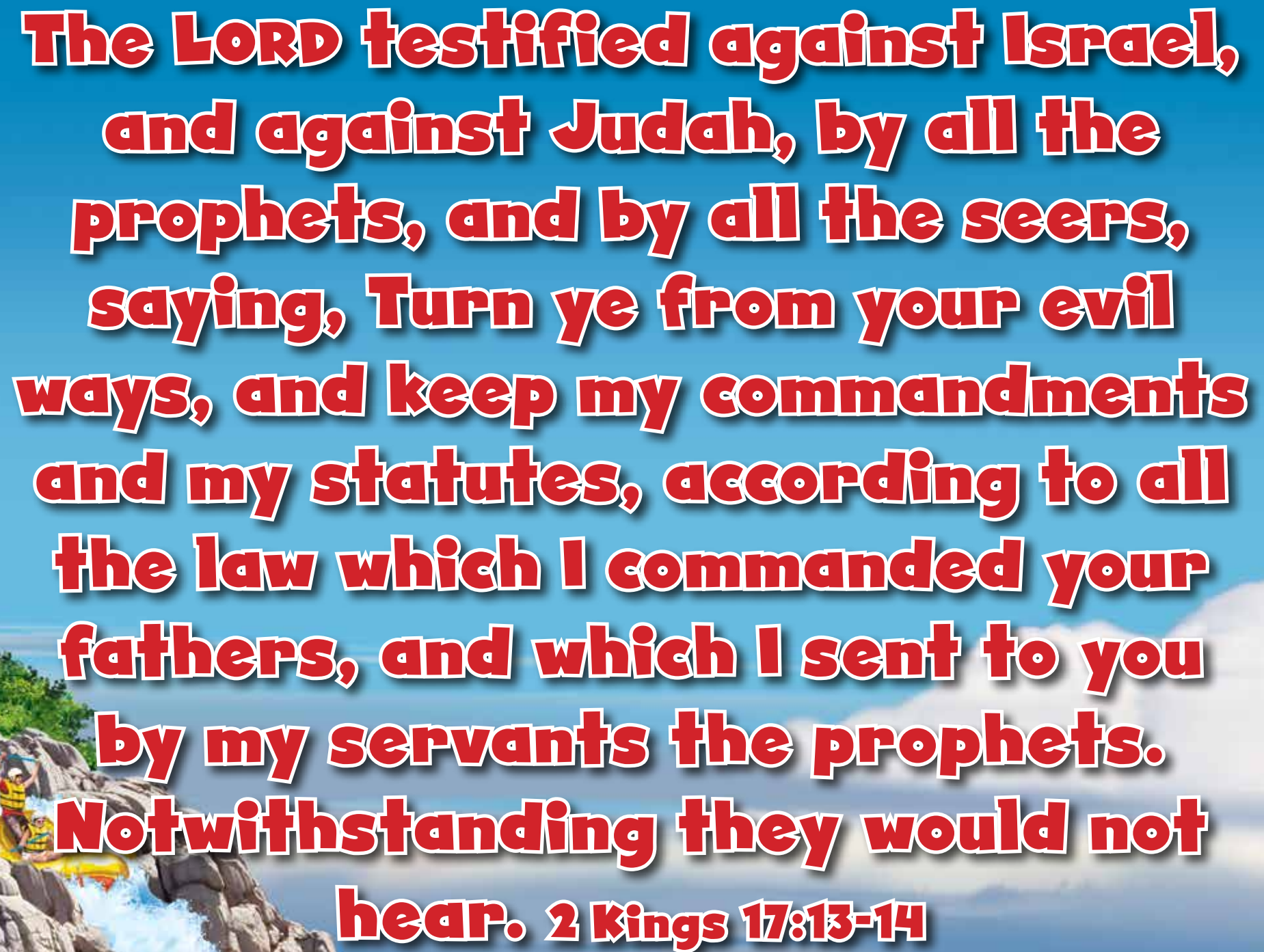
**The LORD testified against Israel
and against Judah, by all of His
prophets, every seer, saying, “Turn
from your evil ways, and keep My
commandments and My statutes,
according to all the law which I
commanded your fathers, and which
I sent to you by My servants the
prophets.” Nevertheless
they would not hear.**

2 Kings 17:13-14

The background of the poster features a vibrant scene of a river with a waterfall. Several people are seen in yellow rafts, navigating the turbulent waters. The sky is a clear blue with soft, white clouds. The overall tone is bright and adventurous.

The LORD warned Israel and Judah through all his prophets and seers: “Turn from your evil ways. Observe my commands and decrees, in accordance with the entire Law that I commanded your ancestors to obey and that I delivered to you through my servants the prophets.” But they would not listen.

2 Kings 17:13-14



**The LORD testified against Israel,
and against Judah, by all the
prophets, and by all the seers,
saying, Turn ye from your evil
ways, and keep my commandments
and my statutes, according to all
the law which I commanded your
fathers, and which I sent to you
by my servants the prophets.
Notwithstanding they would not
hear. 2 Kings 17:13-14**

The LORD warned Israel and Judah through every prophet and every seer, saying, “Turn from your evil ways and keep My commands and statutes according to all the law I commanded your ancestors and sent to you through My servants the prophets.” But they would not listen.

2 Kings 17:13-14

The LORD warned Israel and Judah by every prophet and every seer, saying, “Turn from your evil ways and keep my commandments and my statutes, in accordance with all the Law that I commanded your fathers, and that I sent to you by my servants the prophets.” But they would not listen.

2 Kings 17:13-14

What kind of king did God's people need?

God's people needed a faithful king.



Picture Touch Up

Instructions: Look at the picture on the left. Draw the missing items in the picture on the right so that the pictures are the same.







ALLERGY ALERT



Today we will be tasting/
touching/sniffing:

**Please notify the leader
if your child should not
participate.**

Instructions: Print this poster. You may laminate it and reuse it throughout the quarter. Use a dry erase marker to fill in the necessary information. Display the poster where parents and kids can see it before class.

the

GOSPEL

GOD'S PLAN FOR ME

gos-pel – *noun*. good news. the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation.



GOD RULES.

The Bible tells us God created everything, including you and me, and He is in charge of everything. *Genesis 1:1; Revelation 4:11; Colossians 1:16-17*



WE SINNED.

We all choose to disobey God. The Bible calls this sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. *Romans 3:23; 6:23*



GOD PROVIDED.

God sent Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. *John 3:16; Ephesians 2:8-9*



JESUS GIVES.

He lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! *Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 3:18; Ephesians 2:8-9*



WE RESPOND.

Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus. *John 14:6; Romans 10:9-10, 13*