
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.

Kids WORSHIP 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.

Kids Worship

Countdown

Introduce the session (2 minutes)

Big picture question (1 minute)

Group game (10 minutes)

Timeline map (1 minute)

Key passage (5 minutes)

Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

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

Sing and offering (3–12 minutes)

Review (4 minutes)

Group demonstration (5 minutes)

Missions (6 minutes)

Announcements (2 minutes)

Prayer (2 minutes)

Additional idea

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.

Kids Worship LEADER

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.

• room decorations

Tip: Don't be overwhelmed by all of the theme decorating ideas! Choose only the ideas that work for your budget and space.

Suggested Theme Decorating Ideas: Create the interior of a river-rafting adventure company on stage. Place benches or chairs at one end of the stage to represent a waiting area. A small table littered with papers can represent the front desk. You may inflate several inner tubes and place them at the other end of the stage, along with life jackets and paddles. Hang a map of a river on the wall, along with printed pictures of river rafters to represent the company's past clients. You may place other props in various places on stage, such as small piles of water shoes, water helmets, or beach towels.

• countdown video

Countdown

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

• leader attire
• map

Introduce the session (2 minutes)

[Leader is wearing hiking or swim shorts, sandals, and a water-resistant jacket. Leader walks in carrying a map.]

Leader • *[Inspect the map.]* Now let me see. The Big Fork River runs into Rocky Bottom Creek southwest of the

Cascading Falls. To avoid the falls, we have to [*Look up and notice the kids.*] Well, hey there! Are you here for the next river tour? We have a few more spots left if you are interested!

Have you ever been rafting before? Well, this trip is going to be an exciting five-week rafting adventure that you won't believe! I've been leading groups of tourists down these rivers for years. I know these rivers like the back of my hand: Floating-Paddle River, Lost-My-Paddle River, Accidentally-Overboard River, and many, many more.

I'm River-ridin' Rick [*or Ruby for a female leader*], by the way. I'm from the woods behind Rocky Bottom Creek. My dad was a river guide, and his dad was a guide before him. Now I am a guide too! So, will you go with me? What's that? You will? Fantastic! We have just enough room. Let the adventure begin!

Big picture question (1 minute)

Leader •While we are on this rafting adventure, we will look at some of the kings of Israel. The first three kings of Israel were Saul, David, and Solomon. We will learn about the kings who ruled Israel after Solomon's death. During today's rafting excursion, we need to find the answer to a very important big picture question. Are you ready to hear it? The big picture question for the week is, ***What kind of king did God's people need?*** Can we say it together? ***What kind of king did God's people need?*** Fantastic! Before we delve into the Bible story, I think we need to go over a few things about river rafting.

Group game (10 minutes)

Cross the river

• tape

Tip: This is a fun outdoor activity! If teaching a large group, you may also choose 5 or 6 kids or adult volunteers to play this game on stage, or you may separate the kids into smaller groups.

Leader • If you aspiring rafters want to go down river with me, you need training. Let's practice crossing the river! Choose one kid to be the "river guard." Designate two sides of the river using tape. Line up the remaining kids on one side of the river, at least six feet away from the guard. The kids should ask in unison, "May we cross the river?" The guard responds with a qualifier, such as "Only if you are wearing red" or "Only if you have brown hair." Kids who meet the requirement may pass safely to the opposite wall, while kids who do not meet the requirement must try to cross to the opposite wall without being tagged by the river guard. Whoever is tagged first becomes the next river guard. You may choose to guide kids to skip, crab walk, or crawl instead of run (if playing indoors).

Leader • Great job! You know, when river rafting, it's important to follow the river guide. A really good river guide, like me, knows the river and will help you get safely to your destination. A not-so-good river guide could lead you into dangerous waters, or even onto the rocks.

The Israelites had plenty of kings, but we'll find out if the kings they had were good guides, or if they led the Israelites into danger. Hey, that sounds like our big picture question! Let's say it together: ***What kind of king did God's people need?*** We are going to learn about some of the other kings of Israel today, and you can see if these kings were the kinds of kings Israel needed.

Timeline map (1 minute)

• Timeline Map

Leader • Does anyone remember the name of the first king of Israel? That's right! King Saul. After Saul came King

David and then King Solomon, the wise king. Sadly, as he grew older, Solomon turned away from God. Because of this, God divided the kingdom of Israel. God's chosen people lived in two separate kingdoms, Israel and Judah. In today's Bible story when we talk about Israel, we are talking about the Northern Kingdom.

Key passage (5 minutes)

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

Leader • While we are on this rafting trip, we will be memorizing 2 Kings 17:13-14 together. Are you up for the challenge? You are? Fantastic! Let's read this key passage together.

Read the key passage aloud with kids three times. On the third time, ask kids to whisper as softly as they can. Lead boys and girls to sing "Keep My Commands."

Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

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

Tip: A Bible story script is provided at the beginning of every session. You may use it to guide you as you prepare to teach the Bible story in your own words. The bolded text is a shorter version of the Bible story that can be used with younger kids or as a review.

Open your Bible to 1 Kings 16. Tell the Bible story in your own words using the script provided, or watch the Bible story video "Israel's History of Evil Kings."

Leader • In this story, the Israelites had six evil kings after King Solomon. Six! Can you believe how many kings of Israel chose to disobey God? Let's see, there was Nadab and then Baasha. Baasha killed Nadab and stole the throne of Israel from him. Baasha's son Elah was very evil and worshiped idols. Zimri was one of Elah's top soldiers, but he killed Elah and stole the throne. The Israelites did not like Zimri, and they wanted Omri to be king. Zimri knew that Omri would be king instead of him, so he went inside his own house and set it on fire. When Omri became king, he was evil too. He worshiped idols, but his son Ahab was the most evil king of all.

Whew! These kings sure have some confusing names.

They don't sound anything like the names I know—Rick, Ruby, Ronald, Rhoda, Ralph, and Rhonda! Anyway, it can be challenging to remember all these kings. The most important thing to remember is that these kings disobeyed God, and King Ahab disobeyed God more than any of them. Sadly, the kings of Israel led the Israelites further and further away from God. God's people needed a good and faithful king who would help them follow God.

Hey, this sounds like the answer to our big picture question! ***What kind of king did God's people need? God's people needed a faithful king.*** Let's say it together! ***What kind of king did God's people need? God's people needed a faithful king.***

A faithful king is a king who obeys God no matter what. Instead of being faithful to God, Israel's kings continued to disobey. The Israelites needed a faithful king who would lead them to God. No human king could be perfectly faithful, so God sent His Son, Jesus, to be the faithful King of Israel. Jesus would lead the Israelites back to God.

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

Leader • I don't know about you, but sometimes I don't obey God like I should, just like the kings of Israel. Sometimes, I'd rather do things my way instead of trusting God's way. The good news is that God knew from the very beginning that we would not be able to perfectly obey Him. God sent His Son, Jesus, to live a sinless life so that He could die on the cross for our sins. When we trust in Jesus' death and resurrection to pay for our sin, we are forgiven completely and forever.

Use your Bible and the guide provided to explain how to become a Christian. Encourage kids to ask their parents

or other adults any questions they have about becoming a Christian. Anytime you share how to become a Christian in a large group environment, try to have counselors available to meet one-on-one with kids. Make sure kids know who they can talk to and when they can talk.

Sing and offering (3–12 minutes)

- “Running” song and other songs of your choice

Leader • Can you say the big picture question and answer with me? ***What kind of king did God’s people need? God’s people needed a faithful king.*** Let’s sing and praise God together because He sent Jesus to be the perfect, faithful King!

Sing together “Running.” Choose other songs as time allows. You may also collect an offering during this time.

Song suggestions:

- “Running” (unit theme song)
- “Nothing Is Impossible”
- “10,000 Reasons”
- “Amazing Grace”
- “95”

Review (4 minutes)

Invite the kids to answer the following questions:

1. Why did God divide the kingdom of Israel into two new kingdoms? (*King Solomon disobeyed Him and worshiped idols, 1 Kings 11:11-13*)
2. When God divided the kingdom of Israel into two kingdoms, what were the two kingdoms called? (*Israel and Judah, 2 Kings 17:13-14*)
3. What were the kings of Israel like? (*They were evil. They worshiped idols; 1 Kings 16:2,13,19,26,31*)

4. Name two of the six evil kings of Israel.
(*Nadab, Baasha, Elah, Zimri, Omri, Ahab;*
1 Kings 15:25-26, 16:1-34)
5. *How long did Zimri reign as king? (7 days,*
1 Kings 16:15)
6. Who was the most evil king of all? (*Ahab,*
1 Kings 16:30-33)
7. ***What kind of king did God's people need? God's people needed a faithful king.***
8. Who did God send to be the faithful king of Israel?
(*His Son, Jesus, the King of all kings*)

Group demonstration (5 minutes)

- 2 eggs in the shell,
1 hard-boiled and
1 raw
- table or other level
surface

Tip: You may cover the surface and floor with newspapers, tablecloths, or a tarp in case an egg breaks. Keep towels nearby for cleanup.

Tell kids that you have two eggs, but they are different. Spin both eggs on the table, and gently touch them with your finger while they spin. The raw egg should continue to spin, but the hard-boiled egg should stop quickly. You may let older kids spin the eggs and stop them as well. Ask kids to guess why one egg stops while the other continues to spin.

Leader • One of the eggs is hard-boiled, or fully cooked.

The other is raw and gooey inside. When I touch the raw egg's shell with my finger, the liquid inside the egg continues to move. This makes the egg keep spinning!

The kings of Israel were like this raw egg. They did not follow God's laws. They continually chose to do evil in His sight. They continued to spin out of control. As a result, the people of Israel also disobeyed God's laws. The more they went along with whatever the kings of Israel were doing, the more they sinned. The more they sinned, the further they went from God. Because they continued to sin, God's people in the Northern Kingdom were heading for trouble. [*Keep the raw egg spinning. Consider allowing the raw egg to spin off the table and*

crack onto a drop cloth.]

The Israelites needed a king like this hard-boiled egg. They needed a king who was firm in his faith—someone who loved God and obeyed His laws. Because no human king is perfect, God sent Jesus to be the perfect, faithful King.

Missions (6 minutes)

• “Connect with Love”
missions video

Leader • While these evil kings reigned, the Israelites were distant from God. They were not as close to Him. Did you know that there are people in our country and all over the world who are not close to God? We can reach out to them and tell them that Jesus is our faithful King! Let’s see how one church in Brazil is reaching out to college students who are not close to God.

Watch the missions video “Connect with Love.”

Leader • Wow! What a great video! It is very important to remember that even though sometimes as Christians we sin and feel like we are not close to God, God is always faithful. When you put your faith and trust in Jesus to save you from your sins, He is always with you. Jesus is our perfect, faithful King who will always lead us back to God.

Announcements (2 minutes)

Leader • This has been a great start to our river journey! I hope to see you back here next week. Next week, we will talk more about the most evil king in our story, King Ahab! Now sit tight, because before you leave we need to go over a few announcements.
Make any announcements from your kids’ ministry.

Prayer (2 minutes)

Leader • Thank you for joining me on this rafting adventure. Before we pray, will you say the big picture question and answer with me? Are you ready? Here goes!
What kind of king did God's people need? God's people needed a faithful king.

Close in prayer.

Dismiss

Additional idea

Play "King, King, Faithful King"

Play "King, King, Faithful King," a version of "Duck, Duck, Goose." Guide kids to sit in a circle. One kid will be *It*. She will move around the circle and tap each kid on the head, saying "King." She will then choose one kid and say "Faithful King." When the faithful king is tapped, he will chase *It* around the circle, trying to tag her. If he tags *It*, she must sit in the middle of the circle until someone else takes her place.

Leader • The Israelites did not need just any king. They needed a good and faithful king who would lead them to God. We have a faithful King to lead us to God. His name is Jesus. *What kind of king did God's people need? God's people needed a faithful king.*

Tip: If teaching a large group, you may choose to arrange kids into several smaller 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.

The background of the poster features a scenic view of a river with white-water rapids. In the lower-left corner, a group of people are seen rafting down the river in yellow inflatable rafts. The river is surrounded by lush green trees and rocky banks. The sky above is a clear, vibrant blue with a few wispy white clouds on the right side. The text is overlaid on this background, centered and written in a large, bold, red font with a white outline.

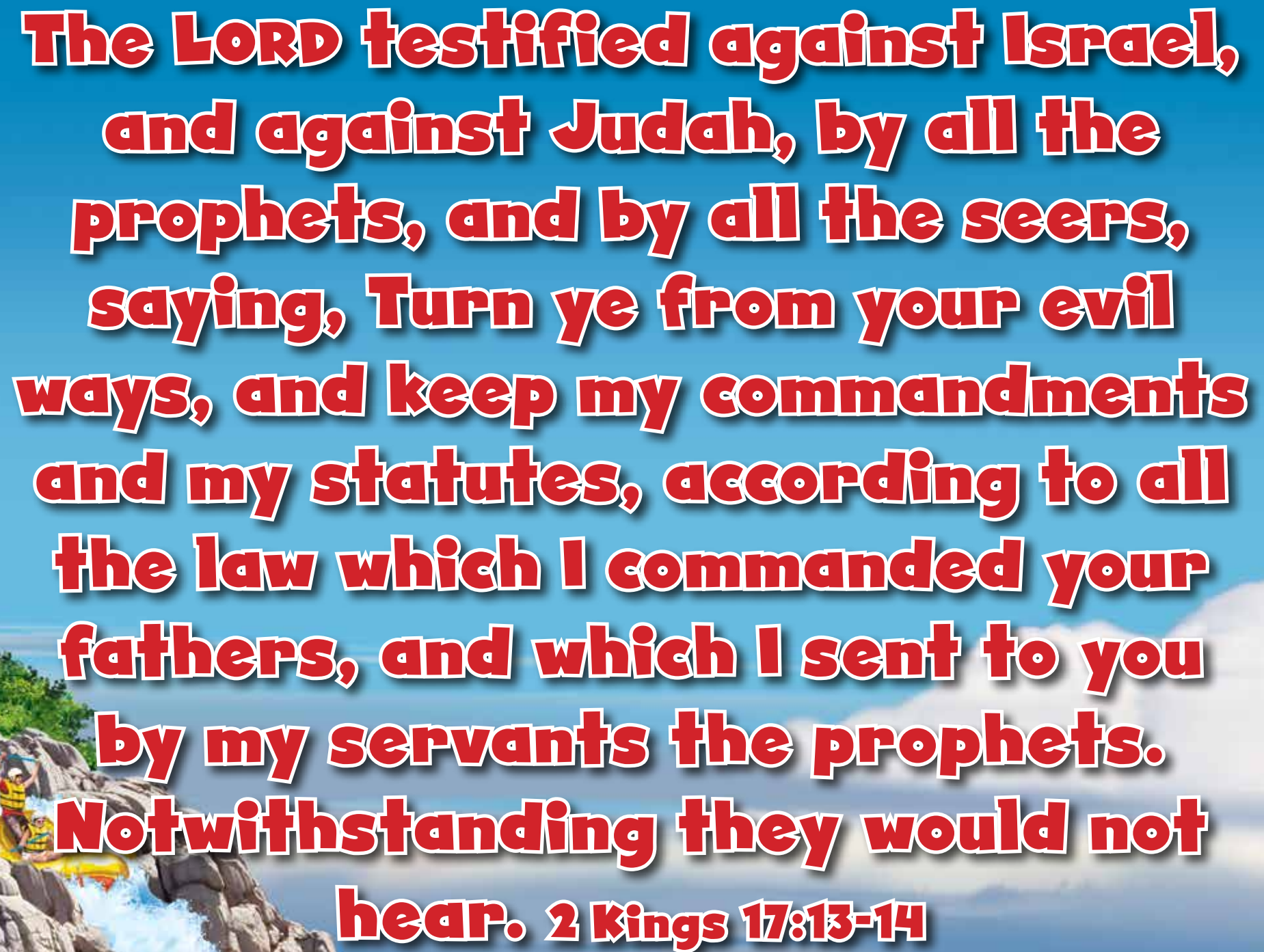
**The LORD testified against Israel
and against Judah, by all of His
prophets, every seer, saying, “Turn
from your evil ways, and keep My
commandments and My statutes,
according to all the law which I
commanded your fathers, and which
I sent to you by My servants the
prophets.” Nevertheless
they would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

2 Kings 17:13-14



The 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.



