

*God Searches for a
Heart Fully His
Leader Guide
(NASB and ESV)*

KINGS & PROPHETS SERIES
Course 2
(1 Kings 15 – 2 Kings 2; 2 Chronicles 14–21)

God Searches for a Heart Fully His Leader Guide (NASB and ESV)

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USING LEADER GUIDES

Leader Guides are intended for you, the leader, to guide your Precept Upon Precept® and In & Out® discussions. They are designed to help you reason through the content of the lessons and to ensure you have understood what your group should have learned from their study. The guides offer effective plans for leading discussions.

The Holy Spirit is your guide as you prepare. He is the one who knows what your group needs to apply to their lives. Pray for them as they study and for yourself as you prepare to lead the discussion.

These guides can be used for either the NASB or the ESV edition of the courses. ESV words follow the NASB after a slash / or are set off with parentheses.

Leader Guides include the following:

- Lesson emphasis
- A logical order for the discussion
- Discussion questions
- Suggested visual aid(s)

Practical tips for using the Leader Guide:

- **Don't simply "do" the lesson.**
Stay with the lesson until you have a good understanding of it. This will give you a better grasp of how the Leader Guide takes you through the lesson.
- **You don't have to ask every question in the guide.**
Often one question will be covered while discussing another question so there is no reason to ask it. Your goal is not to ask every question, but to ask enough questions to make sure your group understood the lesson and to help them apply the truths to their lives.

Using the Leader Guide with In & Out


When your entire group uses In & Out

Compare an In & Out lesson with the Leader Guide. Use what relates to the In & Out lesson as a guide for the discussion. Don't teach what's not in In & Out lessons. Remember your goal in the discussion is for your group to discuss what they've learned, not for you to lecture on what you learned.

For groups studying both Precept Upon Precept and In & Out

Use the Leader Guides as designed for PUP, knowing that the In & Out assignments will be covered in the discussion. Make a note in the Leader Guide of what is not in the In & Out.

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GOD SEARCHES FOR A HEART FULLY HIS
LEADER GUIDE
Lesson 1

Lesson focus

- 1 Kings 15:1-24
- 2 Chronicles 14–16
- Asa, king of Judah

NOTE: It is difficult to determine an exact chronology and dating of the reigns of kings and their ages, and of events in Old Testament historical books. The authors had information not available to us today. Various schemes have sought to reconcile years and age, such as different calendars and co-regencies, but there are difficulties with all solutions. Don't get sidetracked trying to reconcile years and ages, as there are entire books written on this subject. There are no contradictions or errors in Scripture. Our focus should be on the lessons we learn for our lives from the lives of these characters.

To begin this discussion, tell your group to get out their charts “The Kings of Israel and Judah” and to look at the chart “Israel’s Division and Captivity” as visual aids for this discussion.

Ask what they learned about the kings in this lesson.

SAUL

1 Samuel 13:14 and 16:1-13

Saul was the first king of Israel.

God rejected him from being king because of Saul’s continuous disobedience.

DAVID

1 Samuel 13:14; 16:1-13; Acts 13:22

David was the second king and a stark contrast to Saul.

He was a man after God’s own heart; he did God’s will.

From the time that Samuel anointed David as king the Spirit of the Lord came mightily on him and remained. David served God’s purposes, not his own.

1 Kings 9:1-5; 11:2-4, 9; 14:7-8

David had a heart and walk of integrity and uprightness, obeying the Lord’s commands. His heart was wholly devoted to the Lord as he followed God with all his heart.

Therefore, the Lord made a promise to David to establish his throne over Israel forever. He would not remove him as He had Saul. David was given the everlasting dynasty over Israel. His descendants were to rule that kingdom forever.

Ask about the basic statements concerning David and his heart in 1 Kings 15:3-5.

David's heart was wholly devoted (ESV—wholly true) to the Lord his God. He did what was right, although he was not perfect and sinned with Bathsheba and concerning her husband Uriah. But his way of life was to do God's will.

Therefore, David was the standard for all of the kings after him. Relate this to the repeated references to David's example—his heart.

SOLOMON

1 Kings 9:1-5; 11:2-4, 9

Solomon, David's son was the last king of the united kingdom. He began his reign well, building the temple and obeying the Lord.

God made the promise to Solomon that if he obeyed as his father David had, then He would establish his throne over Israel forever. But when Solomon was old, his wives turned his heart away from the Lord to worship false gods.

Because of his heart turning away from the Lord, God took away from him during his son's reign ten tribes of Israel, leaving only Judah and Benjamin. And He left those two for David's sake, because of His promise to David, 1 Kings 11:36; 12:21.

THE KINGDOM DIVIDED

Ask what your group learned from the information in this lesson about the kings at the time the kingdom divided in 931 BC.

Jeroboam, Israel

1 Kings 11:26–12:33; 14:7-8

The Lord gave Jeroboam the ten northern tribes as the kingdom of Israel. He didn't follow the Lord as David had; he even set up two golden calves (one in Dan and one in Bethel) as idols for the Northern Kingdom to worship. He set up a religious system so that the people of his Northern Kingdom would not go to Jerusalem, part of the Southern Kingdom, to worship the Lord at His temple.

Tell your group to look at the map as they discuss this.

Jeroboam then became an example also—one who led the people and kings of Israel to sin.

Rehoboam, Judah

Solomon's son was the first king of Judah and did not follow his grandfather David's example. During his reign, there was war with Jeroboam and Israel.

1 KINGS 15

Verses 1-8

Ask what your group learned about Solomon's grandson, Abijam(h), from this text.

In Jeroboam's 18th year of his 22-year reign, Rehoboam's son Abijam(h) became king of Judah and only reigned 3 years.

He was not like David, but sinful like his father. He also had war with Jeroboam.

Verses 9-15

Who was the next king of Judah?

ASA

Ask what your group learned about him.

Asa became king of Judah in Jeroboam's 20th year as the king of Israel. He reigned 41 years over the Southern Kingdom.

Asa was Abijam(h)'s son, Rehoboam's grandson, Solomon's great-grandson and David's great-great-grandson. God was keeping his promise to David to have an heir on the throne.

Asa did what was right like David had done; his heart was wholly devoted / true to the Lord all his days.

2 CHRONICLES 14

How does this chapter fit into the chronology of 1 Kings 15:9-11?

The land was undisturbed for ten years, meaning no war. The previous two kings of Judah had been at war with Jeroboam in Israel.

Asa removed idols and high places, sacred pillars, and Asherim and commanded the people of his kingdom to seek the Lord and keep His commands.

Since the Lord had given rest at that time and there were no wars, he built fortified cities in his kingdom. He had an army of 580,000.

The Lord prospered Judah under Asa's rule.

Verses 9-15

Ask what your group learned about God and about Asa's relationship with Him.

An army of a million from Ethiopia went to Mareshah to war with Asa.

Asa called on the Lord because he knew—

There is no one else but God to help.

The Ethiopians were powerful, and Judah had no strength.

He requested help from the Lord based on trust and God's name.

Man cannot prevail against God.

Give time for them to discuss where they go for help when enemies come against them.

What did God do?

He struck the Ethiopians so that Asa and Judah shattered them and took much spoil from the battle.

The events of this chapter take place before 1 Kings 15:12.

So 1 Kings 15:9-11 are the only comparable verses for this time period of Asa's life.

Ask what they noted as the theme of this chapter on their At a Glance chart.

Asa, good king, sought God

2 CHRONICLES 15

What is the theme of this chapter?

Asa and Judah, covenant to seek the Lord God

Verses 1-7

How do the events of these verses relate to 1 Kings 15:12-15?

1 Kings 15:12-15 tell of Asa removing idolatry, even Maacah, from the land and restoring the temple. 2 Chronicles 15 gives more detail of these things.

*NOTE: 1 Kings 15:2 says Maacah the daughter of Abishalom was Abijam's mother. 1 Kings 15:10 says she's Asa's mother. The word translated "mother" can be "mother; grandmother; stepmother."*¹ *It is "a feminine noun meaning mother, a woman with children."*² *So this would probably be Asa's grandmother.*

¹W. E. Vine, Merrill F. Unger and William White, *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (Nashville: T. Nelson, 1996). 1:153.

²Warren Baker, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2003, c2002). 66.

The Spirit of the Lord sent a message from the Lord to Asa through a prophet named Azariah. The message contained conditional promises like what the Lord had said to Solomon and Jeroboam.

Verses 3-6 talk of a time of distress for Judah. This is most likely referring to the time of war during Rehoboam's and Abijam's reigns, the nations in verse 6 being Judah and Israel.

NOTE: Some commentators think that the period of war was during the judges' time in Israel.

There was also a call to Asa in the prophecy—be strong, don't lose courage, for there is reward for your work. Ask your group if they think that this exhortation might also apply to them.

Verses 8-19

Ask about Asa's response to the prophecy. What did he do?

Asa had grown up watching his grandfather and father rule Judah as men who didn't follow the Lord and also watching Judah at war with Israel.

So Asa took courage from the prophecy and worked to cleanse the land.

After cleansing the land there was a great celebration, and the people entered a covenant to seek the Lord with all their hearts. They were so serious about this restoration and relationship to the Lord that they made an oath to kill anyone who didn't seek the Lord.

Because of their hearts, earnestly seeking the Lord, He gave Judah rest on every side—no enemies coming against them, no war.

The rest given to his rule by the Lord must have been a wonderful reward for Asa and all the people of Judah. They had courage and reaped the reward for their work.

Relate the time of verses 16-18 to 1 Kings 15:13-15.

2 CHRONICLES 16

Ask what your group put on their At a Glance chart as the theme of this chapter.

Asa acted foolishly regarding the King of Aram

Ask your group about the events of this chapter, and relate to 1 Kings 15:16-24.

Baasha, king of Israel, went against Judah and fortified Ramah.

NOTE: Commentators say that a scribal error occurs here in the numbers. The numbers could be 15 and 16 or 25 and 26 instead of 35 and 36.

Asa turned to the king of Aram for help instead of the Lord as he'd done when the Ethiopians came against him years before.

Ben-hadad then turned against Baasha and conquered some of Israel's land, cities.

Asa had the people of Judah to take the stones and timber from the fortifications of Ramah and use them to build Geba and Mizpah.

When Asa was confronted by the prophet Hanani about his wrongdoing, he continued in it instead of turning to the Lord. Even when he was diseased in his feet, he relied on physicians instead of the Lord. Evidently he died of that disease after two years.

THE HEART

To end your discussion, ask how 2 Chronicles 16:9 might relate to your group, now that they've studied it in context. Encourage them also to discuss the references of Day Five about the heart.

Genesis 6 and Matthew 12 and 15

All men begin with evil hearts, and it grieves God.
The heart produces evil thoughts and actions.

Deuteronomy 10 and 30

He called men, in His commands to Israel, to love Him with all their hearts.
They need to circumcise, cut away the old, their hearts from the evil to one of love.

He calls men to return to Him with a whole heart, and He is the one who will circumcise the heart.

Mark 12

Loving God with the whole heart, a circumcised heart, fulfills God's law.

Proverbs 4 and 1 Chronicles 28:9

A person needs to pay attention to what his heart is like—evil or circumcised to love God. People should evaluate their hearts because God knows what is in each one. A heart seeking Him results in knowing Him and life, but a heart that forsakes Him is forsaken by Him forever.

2 Chronicles 16:9

God strongly supports the one whose heart is wholly His (ESV—blameless toward him).

You might ask if they are sure about the condition of their hearts. There might be some who are confronted by the fact that their hearts have not yet been circumcised, and the Lord is calling them to Himself using His Word in this study.

**GOD SEARCHES FOR A HEART FULLY HIS
LEADER GUIDE
Lesson 2**

Lesson focus

- 1 Kings 15–18
- Elijah

REVIEW

Begin with a review from the first lesson. As a visual aid for this discussion, tell your group to look at “The Kings of Israel and Judah” chart. Let them briefly discuss the kings. But ask specifically about Asa.

Saul rebelled.

David had a heart wholly God’s.

Solomon loved the Lord, but turned to other gods.

The kingdom divided.

Jeroboam, northern kingdom

He established idolatry in the north.

Rehoboam, southern kingdom

Abijam or Abijah

Asa was Abijam’s son, David’s great-great-grandson.

He was a king of Judah who had a heart devoted / true to the Lord.

1 KINGS 15:23-34

Ask your group what they noted on their At a Glance charts as the theme of this chapter.

Abijam and Asa kings of Judah; Nadab and Baasha kings of Israel

What are the sequence of events and the main characters in these verses?

Tell your group to look at their map as a visual aid.

Nadab, Jeroboam’s son was king of Israel for two years. He continued the idolatry begun in Israel by his father.

Baasha’s reign began with conspiracy and the assassination of Nadab in Asa’s 3rd year as king of Judah. Baasha, another evil king, reigned over Israel from Tirzah for 24 years. He was of Issachar’s tribe; Jeroboam and Nadab were of Ephraim.

How do verses 29-30 relate to the prophecy in 1 Kings 14:4-11?

When King Jeroboam's son was sick, he sent his wife to the prophet of the Lord, Ahijah, at Shiloh. She was given a message of judgment from God.

Because of Jeroboam's sin of introducing idol worship into his kingdom, all of his descendants would be cut off, killed. He would have none left. His sin affected his whole family.

Baasha was the one who carried out that judgment, and it happened shortly after he became king of Israel in Asa's 3rd year as king of Judah.

These events took place before many of the events studied in the last lesson about Asa.

1 KINGS 16

What is the theme of this chapter?

Kings of Israel—Baasha, Elah, Zimri, Omri and Ahab

Verses 1-7

Who are these verses about?

Baasha

As the Lord had sent the prophet Ahijah to confront Jeroboam of his sin and tell of his coming judgment, so He sent Jehu the prophet to Baasha.

Compare the prophecies given by Ahijah to Jeroboam and Jehu to Baasha.

They're almost the same words. Baasha's house, descendants, would be like those of Jeroboam. And Baasha knew what that meant as he was the one who wiped out Jeroboam's house.

Verse 7 adds that one of Baasha's sins he was being judged for was striking / destroying Jeroboam's house. Although God is sovereign and in total control, man is still individually responsible for his sins.

Verses 8-20

Who and what are these verses about?

Elah and Zimri

Baasha's son Elah became king of Israel in Asa's 26th year. He reigned in Tirzah for only two years.

Zimri, the commander of half of Elah's chariots, conspired against King Elah and assassinated him in Asa's 27th year. That was to fulfill Jehu's prophecy and God's judgment against Baasha and Elah for their sins.

Zimri only reigned as king of Israel for seven days at Tirzah.

There was a conspiracy against him led by Omri, the army commander. Instead of being assassinated by Omri, Zimri committed suicide when Omri and the people began a siege against Tirzah.

Again it was said that Zimri's death was for his sins and for making Israel sin. God is severe in judging those who lead His people into sin.

Verses 21-28

Ask about the division in the kingdom of Israel at that time, and who eventually became the next king.

Omri

Some of the people followed Omri, but some of them wanted Tibni as king. Eventually the people following Omri prevailed, and he became king in Asa's 31st year as king of Judah. Either Tibni died and that left his followers without a champion, or he was killed by some of those following Omri.

Omri reigned 12 years as king of Israel, six of the twelve in Tirzah where the previous kings had ruled. But he is the one who bought and built Samaria where he evidently ruled for the last six years of his reign.

He was evil as the previous kings of Israel had been and followed the sins of Jeroboam, the two calves at Dan and Bethel—leading his people in idolatry.

Verses 29-33

Ask what your group learned about the next king of Israel from these verses.

Ahab was Omri's son and more evil than all the kings who were before him.

Not only did he follow Jeroboam's sins, but also introduced Baal worship to Israel through his wife Jezebel, a Sidonian.

So at that time in God's holy land there were not only two golden calves built by a king, whom the Lord gave opportunity to lead His people into righteousness, but also an altar and house for Baal and the Asherah in Samaria built by another king.

You might relate this to what your group discussed in the last lesson about the wickedness of men's hearts in turning from the Lord.

Verse 34

Ask how this verse relates to the rest of the lesson. What main point does it have in it?

Another prophecy fulfilled, a prophecy of judgment.
Compare this with Joshua 6:26.

The main point is that what the Lord says, He fulfills. He means what He says and does what He says He'll do.

Give your group time to discuss how this relates to them.

1 KINGS 17

Ask your group what they noted as the theme of this chapter on their At a Glance chart.

Elijah—no rain, raised dead child

Verse 1

How does this chapter begin?

Elijah, a prophet from Gilead, told Ahab that there would be no rain for these years, except by his word.

How do the cross-references relate to this?

Deuteronomy 11:13-17; 28:15, 23-24; Leviticus 26:18-19

God had said in His law if His people
-didn't obey Him
-became deceived in heart
-turned away from Him
-serve and worship other gods
then He would
withhold the rain

James 5:17-18

Elijah was an ordinary man—he just knew and believed God's Word.
He knew the consequences of Ahab's and the people's sins.

And he was a man of prayer; he asked the Lord to withhold the rain because he knew God's Word.

Verses 2-7

What happened in these verses?

Elijah obeyed the Word of the Lord.
After giving the Word to Ahab, he needed to hide.

Tell your group to look at the map “Elijah’s Ministry” from the Appendix.

Verses 8-16

Ask what your group learned about Elijah and about the Lord.

Elijah obeyed the Word of the Lord.

There was no water in the brook, no flour (from grain), and no oil (from olives) because of the lack of rain. This must have been during the last year or few months of the three and a half years of no rain.

Again Elijah spoke God’s Word, and there was flour and oil for the widow and her son.

Verses 17-24

How does this chapter end?

God provided the ravens to feed Elijah.
Then He commanded the widow to provide for him.
He kept her flour and oil from depletion.

He answered Elijah’s prayers, not only to withhold the rain for three and a half years, but to give life to the widow’s dead son.

Ask about verse 24—if your group knows that the Word of God is truth.
Give time for them to discuss any relevant application.

1 KINGS 18

What is the theme of this chapter?

Elijah and Ahab, Baal’s prophets, rain

Verses 1-16

What happened in these verses?

The Lord told Elijah to go to Ahab, and there would be rain. The three and a half years were ended. These verses tell of the severity of the famine caused by drought.

Ahab had been looking all over for Elijah, but the Lord had hidden him where he couldn’t be found by the king. There was protection as he obeyed the Word of God.

Verses 17-40

Ask your group what they learned from these verses and the cross-references.

Elijah and Baal’s 450 prophets met on Mount Carmel to show whether the people should worship Baal or the Lord. This one who answered by fire is God.

Baal's prophets cried to him from morning to evening, but nothing happened.

Elijah dug a trench around his altar and put water in it. But when he called to the Lord, God's fire consumed even the water.

His desire was for the people to turn their hearts back to God.
The result was that they saw who is God.

Deuteronomy 11:13-15 and 1 Kings 8:35-36

Elijah knew from the Law that obedience was the condition for the rain to return. Solomon's prayer asked the Lord to forgive and send rain if the people turned from their sin and prayed to Him.

James 5:17-18 and Hebrews 11:1-6

Elijah was a regular man who had faith in what His God said.

Give time for your group to discuss what their prayer requests are based on. How well do they know God's words?

There was a question in the lesson which asked if your group thought Elijah acted presumptuously. Ask how they would answer that question.

According to verse 36, as with the rest of what chapters 17 and 18 say about him, Elijah did everything because God told him to. He was a man of faith.

Verses 41-46

How does this chapter end?

Elijah told Ahab that the rain was about to come. Just as he had acted in faith when he told Ahab that there would be no rain for these years, Elijah believed God to send the rain when those years were up.

He kept watching the sea, as that was where the rain would come from—he knew that it was coming.

To end your discussion, ask what your group learned about the Lord and from Elijah's example.

The prophets Ahijah, Jehu, and Elijah spoke for God because they believed what He said. They spoke in faith. God speaks to His people; He spoke to us in His Word.

People today should live in faith, believing all that God's Word says.
But they should also be speaking His Word so that it calls others to repentance.

**GOD SEARCHES FOR A HEART FULLY HIS
LEADER GUIDE
Lesson 3**

Lesson focus

- 1 Kings 19–21
- Elijah and Ahab

REVIEW

Ask your group to briefly share what they remember from the last lesson about Elijah and Ahab.

Ahab was the worst of all the kings of Israel as he introduced Baal worship to his people. His wife Jezebel was so wicked that she had killed the Lord's prophets. They were a very anti-God couple, and they were ruling those who were supposed to be God's people.

The Lord spoke to Ahab through his obedient prophet Elijah, withholding the rain because of sin and then bringing it again.

Elijah had killed the 450 prophets of Baal who had eaten at Jezebel's table.

But had the people of Israel truly repented and turned to the Lord with all their hearts?

1 KINGS 19

Tell your group to look at their At a Glance charts. What did they put as the theme of this chapter?

Elijah fled to Mount Horeb; God spoke to him; anointed Elisha

As a visual aid, use the map of "Elijah's Ministry."

Verses 1-8

What happened after the events on Mount Carmel?

Jezebel threatened Elijah's life when she heard he had killed her prophets.

When Elijah got her message, he was afraid and ran for his life to Beersheba where he hid in the wilderness alone and told God he wanted to die.

The Lord provided rest and food for him there, and in strength from that food he ran to Horeb, God's holy mountain.

Give time for your group to discuss any relevant application.

Why did God send Elijah to Horeb? What's the significance of that mountain? Discuss cross-references. Tell your group to look at the map in the lesson.

Exodus 3:1-6; 19:1-6; 33:18-23 and Deuteronomy 4:10-15

The first time it's mentioned, God told Moses that he was standing on holy ground before the burning bush.

It's Mount Sinai where the Lord Himself spoke to His people the Ten Commandments. He also spoke to Moses and let him see part of Him.

It was the place where the Lord spoke, where He met with those who spoke for Him. It was the place to meet with Him.

Verses 9-14

What did the Lord ask Elijah?

When the Lord twice asked Elijah what he was doing there, he answered the same both times. His focus began on himself and his troubles.

How did the Lord speak to him to change his focus? Ask about the significance of verses 11-12.

God was not in the great wind, nor the earthquake, nor the fire.
The Lord was in the gentle blowing (ESV—low whisper).

Elijah had seen and participated in the miraculous and the magnificent. He had told the king that it wouldn't rain for three years, and it hadn't. He had been mightily used of the Lord. Then he had become fearful when his life was threatened. Then he ran away, becoming exhausted and self-focused in the process.

God brought him to the holy place where he could see that God is not always in the most magnificent, but can also be in the gentle blowing / low whisper.

Encourage your group to seek the Lord in the quiet of His Word when they become fearful, exhausted, confused, etc.

Verses 15-21

Where did the Lord send Elijah next?

The Lord told Elijah what to do, and he was obedient. But also the Lord gave him some help in Elisha and showed him that he was not the only one left who served the Lord.

Go to the wilderness of Damascus and anoint

-Hazeal king over Aram / Syria

-Jehu king over Israel

-Elisha as prophet in your place

All three of them would do as Elijah had done, destroy Baal worshipers.

And the Lord would leave in Israel 7,000 who didn't worship Baal.

It seems that in all of those words and instructions, the Lord encouraged Elijah in his fear and loneliness.

Ask about Elisha specifically.

When Elijah threw his mantle / cloak on Elisha, Elisha knew what it meant. He knew that he was to follow Elijah. After sacrificing all that he was plowing with, he followed and ministered to Elijah.

1 KINGS 20

What is the theme of this chapter?

Aram / Syria against Ahab; prophets to Ahab

Tell your group to look at the chart “The Kings of Israel and Judah” as a visual aid.

Verses 1-12

Who are these verses about?

King Ben-hadad of Aram / Syria and 32 other kings besieged (ESV—closed in) Samaria.

Ben-hadad made demands on Ahab which he was willing to give; his silver and gold and his most beautiful (ESV—best) wives and children. But when he also demanded whatever he wanted from Ahab's and his servants' houses, then Ahab went to the elders of Israel for counsel. They told him to refuse Ben-hadad's demands.

Verses 13-22

What happened?

The Lord told Ahab through a prophet that He would deliver Israel from the great multitude so Ahab would know God is the Lord. God in His mercy and grace delivered Ahab even though he deserved defeat and death.

Ahab questioned the prophet for details, and he did what the Lord had said.

Some might think that the prophet was Elijah, but the text doesn't say who he was.

In this first battle, some Arameans / Syrians were killed, and some fled from the men of Israel.

Then the prophet told Ahab that Ben-hadad, who escaped the first battle, would come against him again at the turn of the year (ESV—the spring). Therefore, Ahab was to strengthen his army and make preparations for that battle ahead of time.

Verse 23-25

Who are these verses about?

Ben-hadad was getting advice from his servants:

-fight Israel on the plains because Israel's gods are of the mountains, the supposed reason they won the first battle

-remove the 32 kings fighting with them and put Aramean / Syrian captains in their places for better military control

-replace the lost part of the army

Verses 26-30

How do these verses relate to verse 22?

What the prophet told Ahab in verse 22 was fulfilled.

At the turn of the year (ESV—In the spring) Ben-hadad's army went to Aphek to fight Israel.

The comparison in size of the armies of Israel and Aram are given in verse 27.

A man of God spoke to Ahab; because of what the Arameans / Syrians said about God, He'd give them into Ahab's hand.

The God of the mountains and the valleys would give the great multitude into Ahab's hands—again. And again the stated reason was that he would know God is the Lord. God's longsuffering is incomprehensible.

It's not clear from the text if the man of God is the same as the previous prophet, and it doesn't say that he was Elijah.

Israel defeated Aram / Syria with the city walls of Aphek falling on 27,000 men who had fled the battlefield. The Lord did as He said, both times.

Verses 31-34

Who and what are these verses about?

The Arameans / Syrians heard that the kings of Israel were merciful, so they asked for it.

Ahab made a covenant with Ben-hadad after the battle was over, which he should not have done.

Aram / Syria was Israel's enemy and God had delivered Ahab twice from Ben-hadad.

Verses 35-43

How does this chapter end?

There are two illustrations given in these verses as the Lord sent a message to Ahab through the prophets.

One man refused to do as the Lord said and strike the prophet, so he was killed.

Another did as the prophet asked and struck him. So the prophet took the message to Ahab as Nathan had taken a message of conviction to David after sinning with Bathsheba and against her husband in 2 Samuel 12.

Ahab heard that his life would be given in exchange for Ben-hadad's because he should have killed the king of Aram / Syria.

Rather than repenting as David had, Ahab's reaction was to sulk as he returned to Samaria.

1 KINGS 21

What is the theme of this chapter?

Jezebel killed Naboth for his vineyard

Verses 1-4

How does this chapter begin? Discuss cross-references.

A man named Naboth had a vineyard in Jezreel close to Ahab's palace in Samaria. Ahab wanted the vineyard, but Naboth reminded him that the Lord forbid giving an inheritance away.

Leviticus and Numbers

Because each tribe and family was given specific inheritance in the land, that inheritance was not to be sold or given to someone of a different tribe. Only a near kinsman, relative, could buy the land from its owner.

Ezekiel 46

Even a prince was governed by the Law in this area; he was not to take someone's inheritance.

Compare Ahab's reaction to that after hearing the last prophecy of chapter 20.

Sullen and vexed must have been a common reaction of his as Jezebel is the one who took action. Verse 25 gives a clue to their relationship also. It seems that she was the one who initiated a lot, if not most, of the evil they did.

Verses 5-16

Who are these verses about?

Jezebel took over when her husband wanted the vineyard Naboth wouldn't sell to Ahab.

She used a fast to get her own way, for contention and strife as Isaiah 58:4 says. In contrast, a fast was to call God's people to humble themselves so that there might be results as verses 6 and 7 state.

She incited a whole city against an innocent man so that they stoned him—an evil woman with power is a fearful thing.

Verses 17-29

Ask about the confrontation Elijah had with Ahab.

Elijah told Ahab that he would die in the same place where Naboth did.

Remind your group that Ahab had already heard he was to die because of letting Ben-hadad live. The prophecy also included the end of his descendants like Jeroboam's and Baasha's dynasties.

Jezebel's end was told to Ahab—she would be eaten by dogs in Jezreel.

Ahab's response was different this time, he humbled himself.

But the Lord did not change what he had told Ahab, only that it wouldn't happen in his life.

You can end your discussion by asking your group if there are any specific lessons for life they learned from studying Elijah, Ahab, or Jezebel in this lesson.

**GOD SEARCHES FOR A HEART FULLY HIS
LEADER GUIDE
Lesson 4**

Lesson focus

- 1 Kings 22
- 2 Chronicles 17–19
- Jehoshaphat and Ahab

REVIEW

To begin this discussion, tell your group to look at “The Kings of Israel and Judah” chart and “The Historical Chart of the Kings and Prophets of Israel and Judah.” Ask about the previous kings studied in this course and what each one’s heart was like. To whom were these kings compared?

The good kings of Judah were compared to David, their forefather.
He was the one who first had a heart completely devoted / true to the Lord.

Rehoboam and Abijam were evil kings.

Asa had a heart toward God.

The evil kings of Israel were compared to Jeroboam, as he was the first one to introduce idolatry to the whole northern kingdom.

There were six evil kings (including Jeroboam) of Israel who preceded Ahab.

Ahab was the most evil as he added Baal worship to the other idols in Israel.

You might ask what your group remembers about the prophets sent to the kings.

God warned His people; He called them to return to Him.

He sent three prophets specifically to tell kings of Israel that their whole family line would be destroyed because they had led His people into sin.

Ahijah to Jeroboam

Jehu son of Hanani to Baasha

Elijah to Ahab

The Lord kept His Word; Baasha destroyed Jeroboam’s house, and Zimri destroyed Baasha’s house.

2 CHRONICLES 17

Ask what your group put on their At a Glance chart as the theme of this chapter.
Tell your group to continue to use the other two charts as visual aids for this whole discussion.

The Lord made Jehoshaphat great

Ask what this chapter is about.

God established the kingdom in Jehoshaphat's control because he followed David's example; he sought the Lord. Verse 6 says he took great pride (ESV—was courageous) in the LORD's ways. Encourage your students to desire the same for their own hearts.

In Jehoshaphat's 3rd year as king he sent officials, Levites, and priests, to teach the Law to his people in the cities of Judah. He sought the Lord, did what was right, and the Lord honored him.

Asa had taken some land in Ephraim, and Jehoshaphat fortified those cities as he did the cities of Judah. He also built storage cities in Judah.

His large quantity of supplies came from the Lord as He made Jehoshaphat greater and greater. His army consisted of 1,160,000 valiant warriors. Even the kingdoms around Judah feared to war with Jehoshaphat. The Philistines and Arabians brought gifts and tribute, as did all of Judah, to him.

2 CHRONICLES 18 AND 1 KINGS 22:1-40

Ask your group what they noted as the theme for these chapters on their At a Glance charts.

2 Chronicles 18	Jehoshaphat allied with Ahab
1 Kings 22	Ahab and Jehoshaphat; Ahab died in battle

Ask what they learned from their study. As a visual help for this part of your discussion, you might direct attention to the map.

Some years after the marriage alliance was made, Jehoshaphat went to visit Ahab at Samaria. Ramoth-gilead was part of the land given to Israel by God, but Israel had lost it to Aram / Syria at some point.

What was the last connection between Israel and Aram / Syria?

Ahab had let Ben-hadad live and even made a covenant with him in 1 Kings 20. That covenant gave Ahab control of Ramoth-gilead. Evidently, the king of Aram / Syria had not followed through on this. The covenant between the two kings was broken.

Compare Jehoshaphat, Ahab, and Micaiah.

Jehoshaphat responded to Ahab's plea for help like he would to a brother, at least a kinsman. But he did ask that they first inquire of the Lord. He recognized that none of Ahab's 400 prophets spoke for the Lord.

Even though the prophets of Baal had been killed by Elijah, there were still false prophets in Israel. This also says something about Ahab's heart toward the Lord—his humbling before Him in 1 Kings 21 was perhaps temporary.

When Micaiah first responded positively, both kings knew that he spoke in vain. Micaiah knew the Lord's message and spoke it.

NOTE: Here is another place where your group might get into some speculation. It's best to let the context interpret instead of imposing feelings or motives on the text. Also, the statements about the deceiving spirit sent by the Lord are best left without speculation. Just deal with the facts as stated remembering that God is sovereign over all.

Micaiah foretold Ahab's death in the battle, but the Lord did not tell either of the kings not to go to battle.

Ahab evidently believed that he could disguise himself to change the outcome of the prophecy regarding his death in that battle. Ben-hadad told his men to only fight against Ahab, maybe for breaking the covenant with him. Even when they could not tell who Ahab was in that battle, a random arrow struck him.

Both prophecies about Ahab's death were fulfilled that day.

Micaiah had said he would die in that battle.

Elijah had said that the dogs would lick his blood where Naboth had been murdered, 1 Kings 21:19.

Jehoshaphat called on the Lord for protection from the consequences of a foolish alliance.

God is sovereign and means what He says.

Give your group time to discuss any application.

2 CHRONICLES 19

What is the theme of this chapter?

Jehoshaphat appointed judges

What is this chapter about?

Jehu, the same prophet who confronted Baasha king of Israel in 1 Kings 16:1-4, told Jehoshaphat that he shouldn't help the wicked or love those who hate the Lord and bring wrath on himself.

But Jehoshaphat was not all bad; he'd just made an unwise alliance. His heart was set to seek the Lord; even when with Ahab, he'd wanted to inquire of God.

He went out among his people and appointed judges.

His words to them showed that he'd learned about using one's own judgment instead of wholly relying on God's.

He'd already sent the Word to his people, then he sent just people to lead them in their cities.

Relate the end of verse 11 with the last statement of 18:31.

He knew the Lord was with the upright—even when they made mistakes.

Ask your group if this principle applies to any of them.

1 KINGS 22:41-53

How does 1 Kings end?

This is a summary of Jehoshaphat's reign.

Jehoshaphat became king of Judah in Ahab's 4th year as king of Israel.
He reigned 25 years doing right, following the Lord like his father Asa had.

Jehoshaphat made peace with the king of Israel, Ahab.
2 Chronicles 18:1 says that he allied himself by marriage with Ahab.

When Ahaziah, Ahab's son the king of Israel, asked Jehoshaphat to let his servants go with Jehoshaphat's servants in the ships to get gold from Ophir, Jehoshaphat was not willing.

If you have time, end the discussion by asking your group what lessons for life they learned from this lesson.

**GOD SEARCHES FOR A HEART FULLY HIS
LEADER GUIDE
Lesson 5**

Lesson focus

- 2 Kings 1–2
- 2 Chronicles 20
- Jehoshaphat and Elijah, a heart fully devoted / true to God

REVIEW

To begin this discussion, ask what lessons for life your group has learned in these five weeks. Or you can ask about the main kings of Judah and Israel and how they had a heart toward God or not.

Tell them to look at “The Kings of Israel and Judah” chart and “The Historical Chart of the Kings and Prophets of Israel and Judah.”

The good kings of Judah were compared to David, their forefather.
He was the one who first had a heart completely devoted / true to the Lord.

Rehoboam and Abijam were evil kings.
Asa and Jehoshaphat had hearts toward God.

The evil kings of Israel were compared to Jeroboam, as he was the first one to introduce idolatry to the whole northern kingdom.

There were six evil kings (including Jeroboam) of Israel who preceded Ahab.
Ahab was the most evil as he added Baal worship to the other idols in Israel.

You might ask what your group remembers about the prophets sent to the kings.

God warned His people; He called them to return to Him.

Ahijah to Jeroboam
Jehu to Baasha
Elijah and Micaiah to Ahab

2 CHRONICLES 20

Ask what your group noted on their At a Glance chart as the theme of this chapter.

Jehoshaphat and Judah sought the Lord; the battle is the Lord’s

Tell your group to look at the map as a visual aid.

Verses 1-4

What did Jehoshaphat and Judah face?

Moab and Ammon, central and northern Jordan, went to Engedi for war against Judah.

Jehoshaphat was afraid, but turned his attention (ESV—set his face) to seek the Lord.

Jehoshaphat also gathered all who were in the situation with him to fast and seek help from the Lord. He had been the example to them of seeking the Lord and is now an example for all who read this chapter in the Bible.

Verses 5-12

What did he base his prayer request on?

He went to the temple, and prayed according to what he knew from God's Word.
He prayed specifically and relative to his situation.
He began with praise, acknowledging who God is specific to his request.

God is the ruler over all nations—even over Moab and Ammon.
He is power and might—Moab and Ammon couldn't stand against Him.

He gave the land to His people—Judah.
He put His name there—in the temple at Jerusalem.

Jehoshaphat knew that God would answer because they were doing what was right according to His law and commandments.

He reminded the Lord that He had left Moab and Ammon and Mount Seir (Edom, Esau's descendants' land in the southern part of modern Jordan). He called on the Lord his God to judge those nations in that battle.

He knew that he was powerless to go against his enemy.

So they watched and waited on the Lord to see what He would do.

Verses 13-17

What happened in these verses?

The Spirit of the Lord spoke through one of the Levites, Jahaziel.
He's listed on the chart as a prophet to Judah.
God told them not to fear because the battle was His.

The people of Judah were to go down against the multitude and station themselves so they could watch what He would do.

They had to face their enemies in faith that the Lord would do what He'd said.

Verses 18-19

What happened after the Lord spoke to Judah and Jehoshaphat?

They worshiped and praised Him.

This was before any action had been taken except seeking the Lord in fasting and prayer and Him answering.

Verses 20-23

When was this, and what did the people of Judah do?

It was the next day, the day when they were to move toward the enemy.

They obeyed what the Lord had told them to do.

You might ask specifically what Jehoshaphat told the men of Judah to do in verse 20 and how that relates to a believer's life now.

1. Put your trust (ESV—believe) in the LORD your God, and you'll be established.
2. Put your trust / believe in His prophets, His Word, and succeed.

Jehoshaphat's life demonstrated those two points.

What did Judah do?

They praised and thanked the Lord for His everlasting lovingkindness / steadfast love. When they began singing and praising, then the Lord acted.

He struck down His people's enemies.

First Ammon and Moab destroyed those from Mount Seir.

Compare with 1 Kings 22:47—they had no king.

Then they destroyed each other.

Verses 24-30

What were the results of Jehoshaphat's and Judah's seeking the Lord and being obedient to what He said? Can the same be true in a believer's life today?

Spoil from the battle

Blessing the Lord

Joy

Praise

The dread of the Lord (ESV—fear of God) on all their enemies

Peace

Rest on all sides

Verses 31-37

Ask what your group learned about Jehoshaphat here, and compare with 1 Kings 22:48-49.

There was another attempted partnership by Jehoshaphat with the king of Israel. The Lord sent a prophet named Eliezer to tell Jehoshaphat He would destroy the ships they were building.

Then evidently when ships were rebuilt or there were plans for other ships, Jehoshaphat was not willing to associate with Ahaziah. He learned his lesson, again.

Jehoshaphat was a man who had a heart for God. He wasn't perfect; he made some wrong choices. But he consistently sought the Lord.

Give your group time to discuss any application they learned from studying Jehoshaphat.

2 KINGS 1

What is the theme of this chapter?

King of Israel Ahaziah and Elijah the prophet

Ask your group about the setting of this chapter and how it relates to Jehoshaphat's time. Also, ask what they learned about Ahaziah and Elijah from this chapter.

Ahaziah, Ahab's son, ruled Israel when Jehoshaphat was over Judah. But Ahaziah only reigned for two years.

He sought answers from Baal-zebub instead of the Lord. The Lord sent Elijah to ask the king if there was no God in Israel.

Give your group time to discuss where they go for answers.

Elijah told the king he would die. The messengers the king sent came back with the same reply because they'd heard from Elijah also.

Ahaziah sent two more captains to Elijah asking that he come back to him. God sent fire to consume both the captains and the fifty men with each of them.

The third captain was sent to beg for life, and then Elijah went to Ahaziah and repeated his same message.

Ahaziah had no son when he died, so his brother, another of Ahab's and Jezebel's sons, became king of Israel. His name was the same as Jehoshaphat's son, Jehoram. So there were two Jehorams, one ruling Judah and one ruling Israel at the same time.

NOTE: They were united by the marriage alliance. Jehoram of Judah was married to Athalia, Ahab's daughter and Jehoram of Israel's sister.

2 KINGS 2

What is the theme of this chapter?

Elijah was taken up; Elisha

Tell them to look at the map “Elijah’s Ministry” from the lesson as a visual aid for this part of your discussion.

Ask what they learned from their study of this chapter.

Elisha, 1 Kings 19:16-21, went with Elijah from Gilgal to Bethel and then to Jericho and finally to the Jordan River.

They and all sons of the prophets knew the Lord would take Elijah that day; therefore, Elisha didn’t leave him.

Elisha knew that he was to be the prophet to take Elijah’s place.

He had followed and ministered to Elijah for several years, and knew what it took to fulfill that ministry.

Therefore, he asked for a double portion of Elijah’s spirit so that he could fulfill the ministry God called him to.

He was a man just like Elijah.

James 5:17

Elijah was a man with a nature like ours—the Spirit of the Lord is needed to accomplish any ministry from Him.

Elijah’s and Elisha’s ministries were speaking God’s Word to the kings of Israel. They were men of prayer; they did miracles.

What happened to Elijah that day? What happened to Elisha?

Elijah didn’t die, God took him to heaven by a whirlwind.

Elisha saw it and therefore received the double portion of his spirit.

When the prophets saw Elisha use Elijah’s mantle / cloak to cross the Jordan like Elijah had done, they recognized that Elijah’s spirit rested on Elisha.

He purified waters according to the Word of the Lord.
He cursed mocking lads in the name of the Lord.

He returned to Samaria—to be the prophet in Elijah’s place.

What else does the Bible say about Elijah—the man who didn't die?

Malachi 4:5-6

The Lord will send Elijah again before the day of the Lord.
He'll restore hearts in Israel at that time.

The result of his ministry the first time was to have been hearts turned toward the Lord, but most in Israel didn't heed his words.

Matthew 16:28-17:13

When Jesus was on the Mount of Transfiguration, Elijah was one who appeared with Him. Maybe Moses represented the Law, and Elijah represented the Prophets.

The Law and the Prophets, the Old Testament, were God's Word for His people at that time. But God said to listen to His Son Jesus. The New Testament is about Him.

Jesus said that Elijah is coming and will restore all things.
Elijah must come before Jesus returns, before the day of the Lord.

If Israel as a whole during John the Baptist's time had repented and believed what he said, he would have been the fulfillment of Malachi. But they didn't listen to John the Baptist preparing the Lord's way.

They put the Lord to death because they didn't believe Him either.

So there is a time in the future when Elijah will come to restore the hearts in Israel before the day of the Lord and the second coming of Jesus.

You might end your discussion by asking your group if they have really listened to the message from the Word of God as they studied this course. Has it changed their lives? Has it built their faith? Has it encouraged or corrected them?