

YOUTH



LEVEL 7

BIBLE

LESSONS



LESSON 3



The Kings of Israel

THE KINGS OF ISRAEL

Have you ever found yourself doing wrong things when you really did not plan to? This happened to King David sometimes, too.

David was a man after God's own heart. But that does not mean he was perfect. It means he sincerely wanted to do what was right in God's sight. Sometimes he failed, though. Remember, from the last lesson, David's attempt to cover up his sin of adultery with Bathsheba?

When you disobey your parents, they correct you. They do it for your own good because they love you. In the same way, God had to punish David and Bathsheba for their sins.

Do you remember what happened to David and Bathsheba because of their sin of adultery and his murder of Uriah, Bathsheba's husband? This is where our lesson begins. We will continue the story of David and the kings who followed him.

If you have your Bible and a pen or pencil in front of you, you are ready to continue.

DAVID'S LATTER REIGN

Although David repented — asked for and received God's forgiveness of his sins of murder and adultery — he still had to pay a penalty for his sins. God punished him in several ways. First God caused the baby born of Bathsheba to die. The story is found in II Samuel 12.

King David was heartbroken when the prophet Nathan told him God was going to take the life of his son. For seven days he fasted and fervently prayed to God, hoping God would change His mind and spare the life of the son he loved so much. But the boy died as Nathan had said.

Read II Samuel 12:14. Then, in your own words, state why God punished David so severely.

Nathan said God would punish David in other ways too (read verses 10-11). Later in David's reign over Israel, God allowed his son, Absalom, to lead a rebellion against his father. Absalom even took over the throne and forced David to flee for his life! By this act of rebellion, Absalom was breaking the Fifth Commandment — he was dishonoring his father.

Absalom gathered an army to fight against David. But God was with David, and Absalom's men were defeated. Now it was his turn to flee.

Absalom raced away on his mule through the woods. As he rode under a giant oak, his head and hair caught in the limbs. He hung helpless in midair, unable to get down. Joab, David's general, disobeyed David's orders and killed Absalom. Even though Absalom was trying to kill his father, David had given strict orders to spare his son's life.

When David found out, he mourned deeply for his dead son. He still loved Absalom, even after all that had happened. This was one of the traits of God's character that David had and which your parents are also developing. You may do things that hurt you as well as your parents. They will correct you for disobeying them, but they are willing to forgive

and let you try again. That is what the love of God is like—outgoing concern for the welfare of others.

David had still another valuable lesson to learn. Remember David's trust in God when confronting Goliath as a youth? Yet when David was older, he had to be forcefully reminded that God was his protector and deliverer, because he began to think about how mighty *he* was, and about the many men he had under him. He ordered his officers to count all the warriors in Israel. He wanted to see how strong his army was.

God was displeased with David's order. David had forgotten that it was God who destroyed his enemies — not the strength of his soldiers. To win all his battles, David needed only God. In the same way, the Church of God today can be confident in His tremendous power. We are a small church, but we have the strength of God to guide, protect and deliver us from all enemies and trials.

Why do you think countries today have armies and navies? Answer: Because that is



David was deeply repentant when his sins were revealed to him.

where they place their trust — in their armies and navies. But if they would trust and obey God, He would fight for them!

David had to be corrected for his sin. He was allowed to choose one of three punishments. Read II Samuel 24 and list the three choices David was given. 1. _____;
2. _____;
3. _____. What did David choose? _____

Why this choice? _____

David and the nation of Israel had to learn to put their trust in God. David made the right choice.

Look at David's attitude when he saw the angel of God killing the people. "And David spoke unto the Lord when he saw the angel that smote the people, and said, Lo, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly: but these sheep, what have they done? let thine hand, I pray thee, be against me, and against my father's house" (II Sam. 24:17).

David was willing to take the responsibility for his sin. He wanted to give his own life so others would not die. If your brother or sister were being punished for something you did, would you speak up? It is difficult, but you should not let others suffer for your mistakes and sins.

Because of David's prayer, God did stop the angel from killing the people under his rule. David saw the angel over a threshingfloor, a spot where grain was sorted out. He went to this place and bought it from its owner. He built an altar and offered a sacrifice to God. This same location in Jerusalem is where the Temple of God was later built.

David wanted so much to build a temple to God, but God would not allow it. "Thou shalt not build an house for my name, because thou hast been a _____ of _____, and hast shed _____" (I Chron. 28:3). God loved David very much, but he didn't want war to be associated with His Temple. The

fruits of God's Spirit do not include fighting and killing. List the fruits of God's Spirit as given in Galatians 5:22-23.

God wanted peace, prosperity and happiness during the time His Temple was built. These are results of God's way of life. David knew he could not build the Temple, so he stored up the materials for Solomon, his son, who would build it. That was as much as he could do to prepare for the Temple.

Do You Remember?

Which commandment or commandments did Absalom break when he took his father's throne? _____

What was David's mistake in numbering the warriors in Israel? _____

What building was to be built on the spot where the angel stopped killing the Israelites? _____

Why was David not allowed to build the Temple? _____

A WISE KING

What would you ask for if God said you could have one wish? Anything you wanted could be yours. List the one wish. _____

What did you ask for? Toys, money, power? This may seem like a make-believe situation, but this actually happened to Solomon, King David's son.

Solomon was just a young man when his father died, leaving him king over all Israel. But Solomon recognized the awesome responsibility that went with this job. One night God appeared to Solomon in a dream and told him he could have anything he asked for. What was Solomon's reply? Read the story in I Kings 3, then fill in the missing words from verse 9: "Give therefore thy servant an _____ to _____ thy people."

This pleased God. Notice what God said in verses 11-12: "And God said unto him, because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself _____ ;



Jerusalem prospered during King Solomon's rule.

neither hast asked _____ for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine _____; but hast asked for thyself _____ to discern judgment; behold I have done according to thy words.”

Notice that Solomon did not make a selfish request. Because Solomon’s attitude was right, God blessed him fantastically. He not only made Solomon the wisest man on earth, but also the richest. He also gave Solomon peace during his 40-year reign, and promised him long life. But what did Solomon have to do for a long life? (I Kings 3:14.) _____

Solomon’s request is a good example for us. He was not selfish. He wanted to be able to judge fairly so that everyone would be happy. When you pray to God, follow Solomon’s example. Ask for wisdom and for things that will help other people. Your life will be much happier if you learn to think of others instead of just yourself! And God will take care of you.

Solomon’s fame spread throughout the surrounding nations. He had many building projects in Israel that made it the most beautiful country of its time. And of all the buildings in Israel, the finest was the Temple of God in Jerusalem.

God was pleased with Solomon and renewed the promise He had given to David (I Kings 9:5). God promised Solomon that He would establish his throne forever, and there would always be someone on the throne of Israel. That throne is still established today. The Queen of England is a direct descendant of David. For more on this, have your parents help you find this part in Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong’s *The United States and British Commonwealth in Prophecy*.

But Solomon did not stay close to God all his life. He had 700 wives and 300 concubines, many of whom were not of the same race or religion. These women began to turn Solomon toward their gods. To please his wives, he built altars to their gods. Solomon knew better than

to do this, but he chose to please his wives more than the true God.

There will be many times in your life when friends will want you to do things that you know are not right. It is up to you to say no. You are being taught what is right and wrong by your parents, God’s Church and, of course, God’s Word, the Bible. God wants you to choose the right ways throughout your life. Of course, you will make mistakes. But as you learn what is right and practice doing the right things, you will be building what is known as righteous character.

So Solomon blew it. He knew better.

Because of Solomon’s sins God took most of the kingdom away from his son, Rehoboam. It was only because of David’s overall righteousness that God did not take all the kingdom away from Solomon.

Do You Remember?

The Temple was built in what city? _____
By whom was it built? _____ Why was David not allowed to build the Temple? _____

What did Solomon ask God for? _____
What queen, now living, is a descendant of David and Solomon? _____

What was Solomon’s downfall? _____

What did God promise He would do because of Solomon’s sin? _____

THE KINGDOM IS DIVIDED

God used Rehoboam’s lack of wisdom to fulfill the punishment He had promised his father. Solomon was now dead. The people asked the new king for relief from the heavy taxes they had been paying.

Rehoboam first counseled with the old men who had been with Solomon. They said that if he reduced the taxes the people would follow him. Rehoboam then went to his peers —

young men his own age — for advice. They told him that he was king and had to be tough on the people — that the taxes should be increased.

To whose counsel would you listen? Do you listen to the counsel of your parents and other adults? Or do you listen to the counsel of your friends? We have all been faced with this situation many times: Your friends urge you to do something that you know your parents would disapprove of. What do you do?

Your parents know what is best for you. You must learn to follow sound advice. Rehoboam did not. He listened to the advice of his friends. Read what Rehoboam said in I Kings 12:14 and supply the missing words: “My father also chastised you with _____, but I will chastise you with _____.” The “scorpions” mentioned here are whips with pieces of metal and glass in them. They hurt much more than normal whips. Rehoboam was trying to show the people he was going to be tough.

The people revolted against Rehoboam’s rule because of this. Ten of the 12 tribes chose to be ruled by a man named Jeroboam. Only Judah and Benjamin, and some of Levi, remained under Rehoboam.

Now, instead of one nation, there was the kingdom of Israel (composed of the northern 10 tribes) and the kingdom of Judah (in the south, including the city of Jerusalem). The two kingdoms were not united again. Both nations forgot God for most of their history. They no longer had the peace and riches they had before. Only occasionally did a king rule who trusted God. During such a rule, God blessed them.

Now, we will learn about other kings who ruled the kingdom of Israel. But first, let us review what we have learned.

Do You Remember?

What mistake did Rehoboam make? _____

And what did his mistake cost him? _____

After the people’s revolt, Rehoboam was king

of the kingdom of _____,
while Jeroboam became king over the kingdom
of _____.

JEROBOAM TURNS TO IDOLATRY

God promised to give Jeroboam the 10 tribes of Israel. But Jeroboam didn’t believe God. He was afraid Israel would sooner or later want to reunite with Rehoboam.

Jeroboam knew that all the people went to Jerusalem to worship at the time of God’s feasts. And Jerusalem was headquarters for Rehoboam’s kingdom. Jeroboam thought that Rehoboam would sway the people to reunite with him.

So Jeroboam decided to take matters into his own hands. He set up idols in two cities of his own kingdom. One was in Dan, to the north, and the other was in Bethel, to the south. Then Jeroboam made his own festivals. He ordained feasts at times of his own choosing and told Israel to worship the idols he had set up. He did not use the Levites as God had ordained, but picked out his own priests.

All these things displeased God greatly. God’s commandments stated specifically that they were not to have any other gods or worship idols. And God, through His ministers, is the only One who can set aside times and locations of Holy Days and festivals for His people to keep!

Because Jeroboam caused Israel to sin, God said He would take the kingdom from him and cut off all heirs to the throne. Within two years after Jeroboam’s son took the throne, God fulfilled this prophecy. All the male children from Jeroboam were killed.

Do You Remember?

The kingdom of Israel under Jeroboam was _____ (north, south) of the kingdom of Judah. List two of God’s Ten Commandments Jeroboam caused Israel to break. _____

List the seven festivals God originally gave to Israel (Leviticus 23)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____

AHAB AND JEZEBEL

The people of the northern kingdom of Israel forgot God and followed after the false god Baal. Several kings came and went, each more wicked than the one before. When Omri became king of Israel, he did more evil than any king before him. But his son, Ahab, was worse!

When Ahab became king, he married Jezebel, the daughter of the king of the Zidonians. Together, they caused Israel to sin even more. Jezebel went so far as to kill all the prophets of God that she could find. Then she chose her own priests and prophets to serve Baal. God saw this idolatry and sent His prophet Elijah to Ahab with a message.

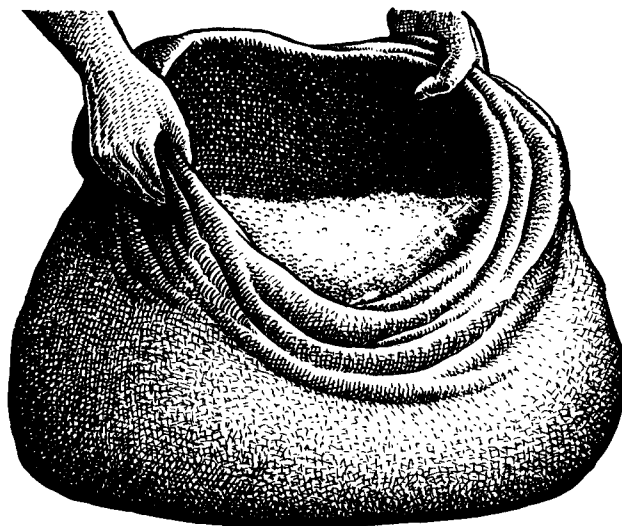
“There shall be no rain or dew on the earth until I say so!” declared Elijah. And from that moment, there was no rain! Wells began to dry up. Without water the crops failed. Soon there was very little food to eat. Israel was feeling God’s punishment.

Elijah had to trust God for his food. Not knowing what was ahead for him, Elijah was sent to stay with a certain widow and her son. When he arrived he found that the woman was building a fire to cook her last remaining food for herself and her son. They were preparing to die.

“Fix me a meal first,” Elijah told her. “God will make your nearly empty sack of flour and small jar of oil last till the famine is over!”

Would you give your last meal away if you were asked to do as this woman was? Would you trust God if you had only enough flour for a couple of loaves of bread?

This woman trusted in God and did as Elijah asked. And God caused the oil and flour to last



God caused the scarce supply of food the widow shared with Elijah to last until the famine ended.

till the end of the drought! It would have been easy for her to say, “This is my last meal; I’m certainly not going to give it away.” Because of her unselfishness and obedience, she had plenty to eat throughout the famine and both she and her son lived.

Three years passed. But finally Elijah returned to Ahab to say that the drought was over. God was going to send rain. But first, God wanted Ahab to *know* that He was the *true* God.

THE ETERNAL VS BAAL

God had Elijah send word to Ahab. “Gather all the people of Israel together at Mount Carmel. And bring the 450 prophets of Baal and the 400 prophets of the grove!”

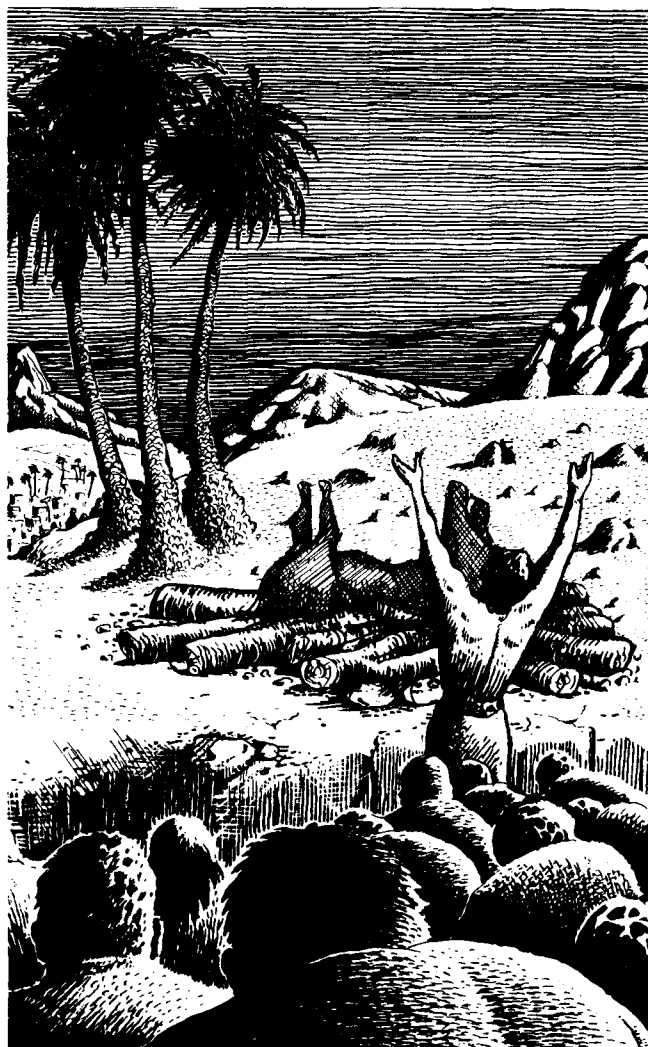
The appointed time came. Both the prophet of God and the prophets of Baal stood in the sight of all Israel. The people waited in great anticipation. Suddenly, the crowd parted. Elijah stepped forward and issued a challenge to Ahab and all the people: “If the Lord be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him.”

Then Elijah had the people bring two bullocks to offer for a sacrifice. One he gave to the prophets of Baal, and the other he kept to offer to the true God.

The rules were simple. Each side was to prepare an altar and the animal sacrifice, but they were not allowed to set fire to it. The god who answered by fire to consume the sacrifice would be known by all to be the true God.

The prophets of Baal began to cry out to their false, pagan god. From early morning till evening they yelled and leaped around the altar, but there was no answer. "Maybe he is asleep," Elijah said, making fun of them. They began to cut themselves in attempts to get their god's attention. But all their efforts were in vain.

It was now the time of the evening sacrifice. Elijah walked past the exhausted prophets of



The prophets of Baal received no response to their day-long prayers to their false, pagan god.

Baal and began to prepare his sacrifice to God. He rebuilt the altar that had been torn down. He carefully placed the 12 stones, one for each tribe of Israel. Then he put the pieces of the animal on the wood which was laid on the altar.

The people were puzzled when he dug a trench around the altar. This wasn't part of a normal sacrifice! Then, to show there was no trickery involved, he had the people pour four barrels of water over the animal and the wood. This he repeated three more times. The whole altar and sacrifice were soaked! Even the trench was full of water!

"This will never burn," said the people. They obviously had forgotten the power of God!

It had taken the prophets of Baal all day to accomplish nothing. That is because their god was no god at all. Elijah now prayed one short prayer to God. Read in I Kings 18:38 how God heard and answered. "Then the _____ of the Lord _____, and _____ the burnt _____, and the _____, and the _____, and the _____, and licked up the _____ that was in the _____."

What an awesome display of power! There was no doubt that this was the true God who answered Elijah's brief prayer. Elijah killed the prophets of Baal — those false prophets who wanted the people to follow false gods. And as God had promised, it soon began to rain in Israel.

You would think that all this strong witness would have moved Ahab and Jezebel to serve God. It didn't. Instead, Jezebel sent people to kill Elijah so that he had to flee for his life. Finally Elijah became tired of running and hiding. He felt all alone. He was now ready to give up.

Have you ever felt all alone? Have you felt like quitting at one time or another? That is not God's way. When you are given a job to do, work hard to finish it. Don't be discouraged. Never give up! Remember, you are learning valuable lessons in the process.

God came to Elijah and encouraged him. He fed Elijah and told him that there were still 7,000 in Israel who had not worshiped Baal.

Do You Remember?

Who was the prophet God sent to Ahab? ____
The name of Ahab's wife was ____
The pagan god Israel served was called ____
It didn't rain in Israel for how many years? ____
At what mountain did Elijah challenge the prophets of Baal? ____
How did Elijah show that the fire was not a trick? ____

What happened to the prophets of Baal? ____

What miracle did God perform for the widow that Elijah stayed with during the famine? ____

Ahab still refused to follow God. Next to his house in Jezreel was a vineyard. Ahab wanted this vineyard for an herb garden, since it was next to the palace. But Naboth, the owner, would not sell it, because it was part of his inheritance.

There are times when you may want something that someone else has. Do you try to figure out a way to take what you want from the other person? Taking, or getting, is not God's way. God does not bless people who covet others' things and lie or steal to get them. God blesses those who work hard and do what He says is right. If you obey God, He will see that you always have all that you need. But Ahab had not yet learned this lesson.

Ahab began to feel sorry for himself because he couldn't have what he wanted. When Jezebel heard of this, she devised a plan to get the vineyard. She ordered men to lie and give an evil report against Naboth. The people believed these lies and stoned Naboth to death.

"The vineyard is yours," Jezebel told Ahab smugly. She told Ahab how her plan had



Jezebel's wickedness resulted in a violent death!

worked. Ahab should have corrected his wife for the evil deed she had done. He did not. Instead, he was happy and went to take the vineyard for himself.

No one else knew that Naboth was innocent. But God knew. And He didn't like what Ahab and Jezebel had done.

Ahab knew there was trouble when he saw Elijah coming. He knew he was about to hear a message from God. Read the conversation between Ahab and Elijah in I Kings 21:20-24. Ahab was frightened by what he heard. All his children would be killed. His wife, Jezebel, would be eaten by dogs at the Gate of Jezreel.

Ahab humbled himself upon hearing this. Even though he had sinned so greatly, God had compassion on him and said He would not fulfill the prophecy while Ahab lived. Read II Kings 9:30-37 and see how this prophecy was fulfilled. Soon Ahab went to battle against Syria and was killed. His son Ahaziah ruled in his place.

A LESSON IN RESPECT

King Ahaziah became ill shortly after he began to reign. He began to wonder whether he would get well or die from this illness. So he decided to ask a prophet for the answer. Instead of sending for a prophet of God, he sent messengers to inquire of Baalzebub, the god of Ekron, to see if he would get better. The reason the king sent to inquire of a false god was that his prophets would tell him what he wanted to hear.

God told Elijah what Ahaziah had done. Elijah went to meet the messengers. Notice Elijah's words in II Kings 1:3: "Is it not because there is not a _____ in _____, that you inquire of _____, the god of Ekron?" Elijah then told the messengers to return and tell the king he would die of the sickness.

Ahaziah didn't like the answer Elijah had given. He ordered one of his captains of 50 to bring Elijah to him. The captain went and ordered the man of God to come down. The captain did not show the proper respect due a prophet of God. Notice what happened in II Kings 1:10: "And Elijah answered and said to the captain of fifty, If I be a _____ of _____, then let _____ come down from _____, and _____ thee and thy fifty."

And fire came down from heaven and consumed him and his 50. So, the king sent another captain of 50. He and his men also commanded Elijah to come down, and the same thing happened to them. Elijah took his orders from God and not from the king.

Again the king sent a captain and his 50

men. But this third captain came with a different attitude. Notice the respect that this captain showed Elijah. "And the third captain of fifty went up, and came and fell on his knees before Elijah, and besought him, and said unto him, O man of God, I pray thee, let my life and the life of these fifty thy servants, be precious in thy sight" (II Kings 1:13)

This captain acknowledged the fact that Elijah was a man of God. He didn't try to give Elijah orders but showed the proper respect to a prophet of God. For this, God sent Elijah with this captain and their lives were spared.

Elijah delivered his message personally to the king. Soon after, the king died of the sickness.

Do You Remember?

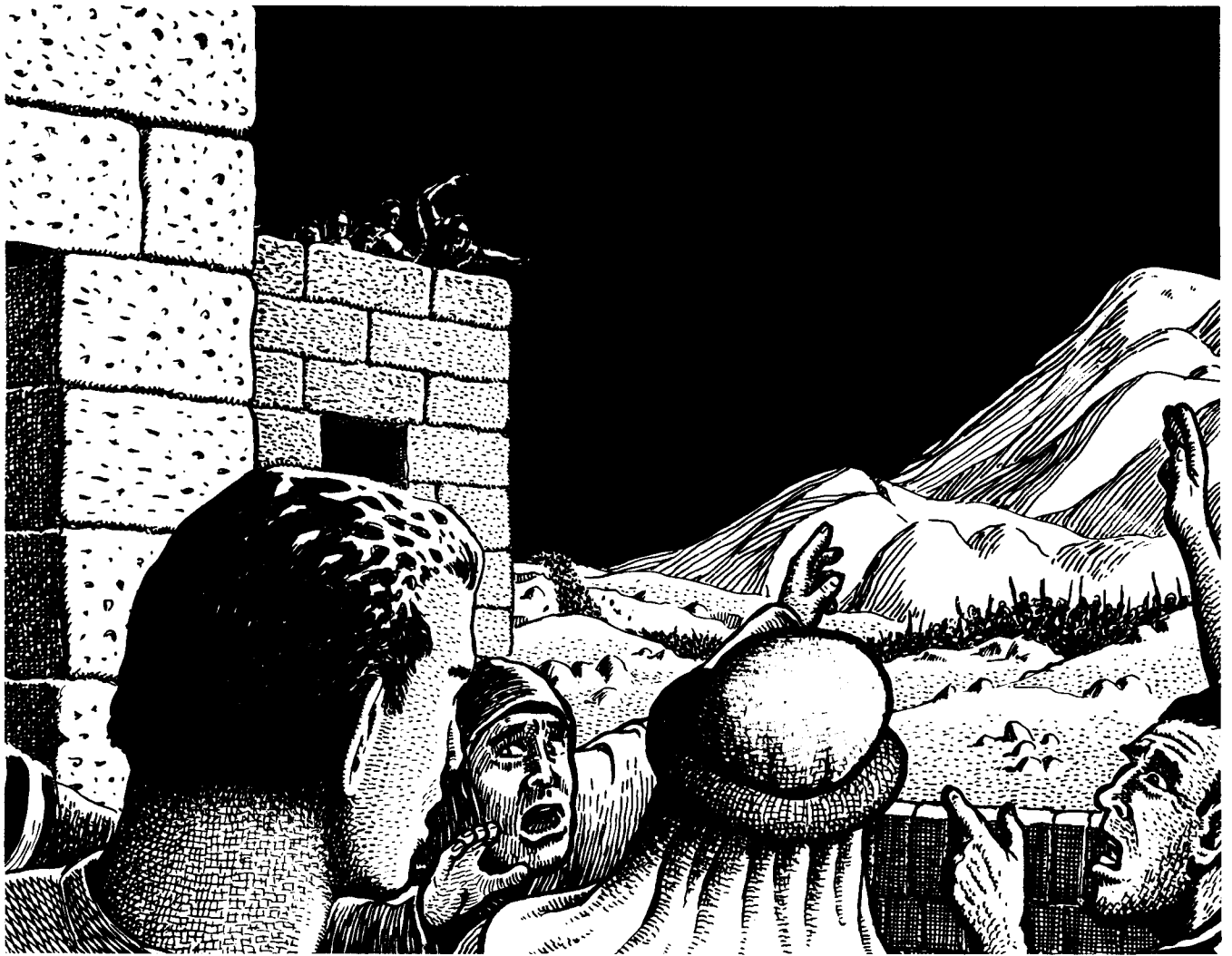
Ahab could not buy Naboth's _____, so Jezebel had evil men lie so that Naboth would be _____ to death. What was God's promised punishment upon Jezebel for her deceit? _____

What lesson can we learn from the third captain of 50 who was not consumed by fire? _____

ISRAEL TAKEN CAPTIVE

The kingdom of Israel would not obey the prophets God had sent to them. They continued in their idolatry. They had been warned and now God was going to act. As you learned when you studied the period of the judges, God used other nations to punish Israel. This time God used the Assyrians.

The Assyrians were north of Israel. Israel had been paying taxes to Sennacherib, king of Assyria. Much of Israel had already been conquered and the kingdom was weak. Hoshea was the name of the King of Israel at this time. Instead of seeking help from God, he chose to ask Egypt for help.



God allowed the Israelites to be taken captive as punishment for disobeying Him.

The Assyrians attacked Israel and destroyed their cities. Notice what the Assyrians did to make sure they would have no more trouble from the Israelites. Complete the quote from II Kings 17:23: "So was Israel _____ out of their _____ land."

The kingdom of Israel was carried away captive. They lost their identity, their language and their culture. They became known as the "lost tribes of the house of Israel." The people in the modern nation called Israel today are *not* these Israelites. Your parents can explain where these 10 tribes are today since this subject is discussed in Mr. Armstrong's book, *The United States and Britain in Prophecy*.

We have only briefly covered some of the events that happened within the kingdom of Israel. In the next lesson, we will return to the kingdom of Judah in the south. We will also show who the people that live in the modern nation of Israel are.

Do you remember that God had promised David that there would always be one of his descendants to sit on his throne? Because of Solomon's sin the kingdom had been divided when his son Rehoboam decided to tax the people harshly, but God allowed Rehoboam to continue to rule over Judah. Next month you will learn that Judah did not follow God much better than Israel, and suffered much the same fate.

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BIBLE MEMORY:

The books of the Old Testament

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|-------------|---------------|-----------------|--------------|-----------|
| Genesis | I Samuel | Esther | Lamentations | Micah |
| Exodus | II Samuel | Job | Ezekiel | Nahum |
| Leviticus | I Kings | Psalms | Daniel | Habakkuk |
| Numbers | II Kings | Proverbs | Hosea | Zephaniah |
| Deuteronomy | I Chronicles | Ecclesiastes | Joel | Haggai |
| Joshua | II Chronicles | Song of Solomon | Amos | Zechariah |
| Judges | Ezra | Isaiah | Obadiah | Malachi |
| Ruth | Nehemiah | Jeremiah | Jonah | |

WORD SEARCH

IMPORTANT PEOPLE MENTIONED IN THIS LESSON

The words listed below can be found in the puzzle reading forward, up, down or diagonally. How many can you find?



Absalom
Ahab
Ahaziah
David
Elijah
Israel
Jeroboam
Jezebel
Joab
Judah
Naboth
Omri
Rehoboam
Solomon