

# LESSON 7

## ELIJAH CONFRONTS AHAB'S WICKEDNESS

### BEFORE YOU TEACH

#### Land Ownership

Land was considered a God-given inheritance that was given to each of the Israelite tribes. As such, it could only be sold temporarily and had to be returned to or redeemed by its original owner by the year of Jubilee.

These ordinances were clearly delineated in various passages of the Old Testament (cf. Lev 25:13-17, 23-28; Num 36:7, 9), and even rulers had to obey the laws of land ownership (Ezek 46:16-18).

Based on these laws, King Ahab had no right to take possession of Naboth's land, since it also belonged to his relatives and descendants.

#### King Ahab

Unlike great kings who led armies, headed reforms, promoted trade, and strengthened their nations, Ahab was indulgent, selfish, greedy, and more concerned with his own interests, such as taking possession of his neighbor's garden.

Also, unlike respectable husbands who set good examples for their families and led them on a godly path, Ahab easily gave in to Jezebel's wicked schemes.

When Elijah confronted Ahab, he held the king accountable for listening to his wife's evil counsel and participating in her wickedness, in the same way God held Adam accountable for letting Eve talk him into eating the fruit from the forbidden tree (Gen 3:17).

All the evil that Ahab had done incurred God's great wrath and brought harsh judgment on him and his family. When Ahab realized the severity of God's judgment, he sought mercy by humbling himself and repenting through fasting, wearing sackcloth, and mourning.

The Bible teaches us that God lifts up those who humble themselves before Him (Jas 4:10). In the same way, God showed mercy to Ahab because he humbled himself (1 Kgs 21:28-29).

Later, everything came to pass according to God's just prophecy against Ahab's household (2 Kgs 9:6-37).

#### Jezebel

Jezebel was a powerful queen who drove her husband to great wickedness and turned the nation to idolatry. Her influence was so strong that she could write up schemes in the king's name and use his seal without any interference.

Among her many wicked acts, she schemed to get Naboth's garden for her husband. She instructed the elders and nobles to hold a fast and to set up false witnesses who would accuse Naboth of cursing God and the king. Her scheme resulted in Naboth's death by stoning.

Jezebel's despicable actions incurred the great wrath of God, who delivered a prophecy through Elijah about how she would be punishable by death.

### BIBLE TEXT

1 Kings 21

### BIBLE TRUTH

God is merciful to the humble and just toward the wicked.

### LESSON OBJECTIVES

To learn that God rewards or punishes us according to our hearts and actions.

### MEMORY VERSE

"The Lord lifts up the humble; He casts the wicked down to the ground."

(Psalm 147:6)

### PRAYER

In the name of the Lord Jesus, we pray. Thank You, Lord, for this week's blessings, for showing us mercy, and for helping us to obey You. We know that You act justly, love mercy, and reward those who are humble. We pray that You teach us how to be humble every day and how not to give into our pride, greediness, or selfishness. Hallelujah! Amen.

## UNDERSTANDING YOUR STUDENTS

The media and modern society play a key role in shaping the students' perceptions about pride and humility. Music, television, movies, and magazines encourage youths to flaunt their skills and to highlight their achievements.

Pride is often mistaken for self-confidence and self-esteem. Humility is either viewed as a sign of weakness, or corrupted by a mask of false modesty. Pride can often lead to a sense of entitlement, greed, and apathy towards other people's needs.

As in the case of Ahab, your students may only think of humility as a last resort instead of a conscious, daily choice.

Micah 6:8 instructs us to act "justly, to love mercy, and

to walk humbly with your God." Help students understand that true humility is not shown by giving lip service to God when they are praised for a job well done. We need to believe wholeheartedly that apart from God, we cannot have anything of value and cannot achieve lasting and satisfying success.

True humility means being content with the blessings we have received, and having the willingness to give up a benefit or reward out of consideration for our neighbors. Humility helps us win favor with God and brings our prayers to His ears.

### VOCABULARY

**forbid:** to not allow; to ban or make impossible

**inheritance:** something valuable that is passed on from parents to children, such as money, land, jewelry, etc.

**proclaim:** to announce or declare

**prominent:** outstanding or important

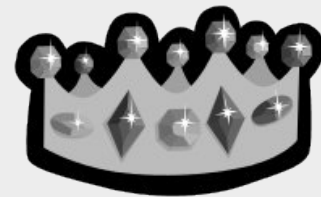
**scoundrel:** an evil or wicked person; someone who deliberately acts wickedly

### TEACHING IDEAS

#### Preparation

- Crown
- Cane or staff

1. Find or make a crown using colorful construction paper (refer to sample). Label the front "King Ahab" and label the back "Queen Jezebel."



2. Label the staff or cane "Elijah" (refer to sample).



## BIBLE STORY

### Ahab Wants Naboth's Vineyard

A man named Naboth lived in Jezreel. He owned a vineyard that was close to King Ahab's palace. At that time, King Ahab ruled over the land of Samaria.

[Wear the crown with the side labeled "King Ahab" in the front.]

One day, Ahab had a talk with his neighbor Naboth. He said, "Let me have your vineyard. It is close to my palace and it would make a great vegetable garden. I can give you a better vineyard or I can buy the vineyard from you." [Take off the crown.]

This might have sounded like a good idea, but Naboth was horrified. He replied, "The Lord forbid that I should give you the inheritance of my fathers!"

An inheritance is something important and valuable that parents pass on to their children. It can be money, land, jewelry, or anything else that is valuable. Naboth's vineyard was given to him by his parents, and one day he would give it to his children. If Naboth sold the land to King Ahab, his children might not have an inheritance.

[Wear the crown with the side labeled "King Ahab" in the front.]

Can you imagine how Ahab must have felt when Naboth wouldn't sell him the vineyard? He was sad.

Raise your hand if you have ever wanted something really badly but somebody didn't want to give it to you. Maybe it was a toy at the store or the last piece of cake, but it was something that you thought would make you happy if you could just have it. You may have felt angry, disappointed, or even sad like Ahab.

In fact, Ahab was so sad that he sulked in bed all day and wouldn't eat.

### Jezebel's Evil Plan

[Turn the crown so that the side labeled "Queen Jezebel" faces the front.]

His wife Jezebel saw him and asked, "Why are you so sad? Why won't you eat?" Ahab told her that Naboth wouldn't sell his vineyard. Jezebel was surprised that he would be upset about this when he was the king over all the land.

She said, "You are the king over Israel! Get up and eat! Cheer up. I'll get you the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite."

It didn't matter to Jezebel that the vineyard belonged to Naboth and that he didn't want to sell it or give it up. She only cared about getting what she wanted no matter who it would hurt.

Jezebel wrote letters in Ahab's name, placed his seal on them, and sent them to the elders and nobles who lived in Naboth's city. The king's seal showed the king's authority. By sealing the letters with Ahab's seal, Jezebel showed that the king agreed with what she had written.

In her letters, Jezebel wrote: "Proclaim a day of fasting

and seat Naboth in a prominent place among the people. But seat two scoundrels in front of him and have them testify that he has cursed both God and the king. Then take him out and stone him to death."

She wanted two evil men to accuse innocent Naboth of speaking out against God and the king. Jezebel knew that people who cursed God were punished by being stoned.

### Naboth's Stoning

The letters were written in the king's name and sealed with his ring, so the elders in Naboth's city obeyed the instructions. They proclaimed a fast and seated Naboth in a prominent place among the people.

Then two scoundrels came and sat in front of him. They lied and told the people, "Naboth has cursed both God and the king." The people took him outside the city and stoned him to death. Then they sent a message to Jezebel: "Naboth has been stoned and is dead."

When Jezebel heard that Naboth had been stoned to death, she said to Ahab, "Get up and go to Naboth's vineyard, which he didn't want to sell to you before. Make the vineyard yours, because he is dead." Ahab listened to his wife and went down to claim Naboth's vineyard.

[Turn the crown so the side labeled "King Ahab" faces the front.]

It looked like Jezebel got away with killing poor Naboth so that Ahab could take his vineyard.

### Elijah Confronts Ahab

Then, the word of the Lord came to Elijah: "Go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, who lives in Samaria. He is now in Naboth's vineyard, where he has gone to make it his. Say to him, 'This is what the Lord says: Have you not murdered a man and taken his property?' Then say to him, 'This is what the Lord says: In the place where dogs licked up Naboth's blood, dogs will lick up your blood—yes, yours!'"

Elijah obeyed God and went to find Ahab. When Ahab saw him, he asked Elijah, "Have you found me, my enemy?"

[Take off the crown and pick up the cane labeled "Elijah."]

"I have found you," Elijah answered, "because you have sold yourself to do evil in the eyes of the Lord. The Lord has said, 'I am going to bring disaster on you. I will destroy your descendants, including every male in your family, whether they are slave or free. I will make your house like that of Jeroboam son of Nebat and that of Baasha son of Ahijah, because you have made me angry and have caused Israel to sin. Dogs will devour Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel. Dogs will eat those belonging to Ahab who die in the city, and the birds of the air will feed on those who die in the field.'"

God was extremely angry with Ahab. There was never a man like Ahab, who sold himself to do evil in the eyes of the Lord because he listened to his wicked wife Jezebel. Not only did Ahab allow Naboth to be falsely accused and stoned to death so he could steal the vineyard, but he also set a bad example for the people by worshipping idols.

Because of his sins, Ahab received the same prophecy as Jeroboam and Baasha, two rulers whose families were doomed for destruction (1 Kgs 14:7-11; 16:1-13).

From looking at God's response to Ahab and Jezebel's wickedness, we can learn that when someone does evil without repenting, everyone is hurt. The punishment comes to them, their parents, their siblings, and their children.

We need to be obedient children of God and avoid doing evil. And, like Elijah, we should also warn those who do evil to repent.

### Ahab's Humble Response

Can anybody guess what Ahab did when he heard Elijah's prophecy? Was he proud, not caring what God had to say, or was he humble, looking for God's mercy?

When Ahab heard about God's punishment, he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth, and fasted. He lay in sackcloth and went around humbly. What a great change!

Fasting showed that he was humbling himself before God. Tearing his clothing and wearing sackcloth showed how sad he was for what had happened.

Ahab didn't try to defend or argue about what he had done, even though he was the king. He knew that God was the Almighty, and that his life and the life of his descendants were in God's hands.

Psalm 147:6 teaches us that "the Lord lifts up the humble; He casts the wicked down to the ground." When God saw Ahab's repentance, He spoke to Elijah, "Have you noticed how Ahab has humbled himself before Me? Because he has humbled himself, I will not bring this disaster in his day, but I will bring it on his house in the days of his son."

God showed His justice by judging the evil done by Ahab and Jezebel. He also showed His mercy by putting off the punishment in Ahab's case.

### A Humble Heart

Sometimes, when we have received many blessings from God, we may become proud like Ahab and Jezebel. Their pride made them greedy and mean towards their neighbors. We may feel like we deserve certain things, and be willing to do anything to get them.

In these situations, we should remember Ahab's story and understand that God shows mercy to the humble but punishes the proud. We should not repent only when we are going to be punished. Instead, we should live in a way that is pleasing to God, serving others with humility and love.

## CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

1. **Where was Naboth's vineyard?** Close to King Ahab's palace.
2. **Why did Ahab want Naboth's vineyard?** To make it into a vegetable garden near his palace.
3. **What was Ahab willing to give Naboth in exchange for his vineyard?** Money or a better vineyard.
4. **Why didn't Naboth want to sell or exchange his vineyard?** Because it was an inheritance from his ancestors.
5. **What did Jezebel do to get Naboth's vineyard?** She wrote letters in Ahab's name, sealed them with his seal, and sent them to the elders in Naboth's city.
6. **What happened to Naboth after the elders received Jezebel's letter?** A fast was proclaimed, he was seated in a prominent place, two scoundrels accused him of cursing God and the king, and he was stoned to death.
7. **What did Jezebel do when she heard that Naboth was dead?** She told Ahab to go and claim Naboth's vineyard.
8. **God told Elijah about Ahab's punishment. What was the punishment?** His household would be destroyed, he and his wife would be killed, and their blood would be licked by dogs.
9. **How did Ahab react when Elijah told him of God's punishment?** He tore his clothing, fasted, wore sackcloth, and went around humbly.
10. **What was God's response to Ahab's humility?** He said the punishment would not come in Ahab's time, but in his son's time.

## MEMORY VERSE PRACTICE

Please reinforce the memory verse every week.  
You can practice the memory verse with your students anytime during class.

**"The Lord lifts up the humble; He casts the wicked down to the ground." (Psalm 147:6)**

## SPIRITUAL TEACHING & LIFE APPLICATION

*"The Lord lifts up the humble; He casts the wicked down to the ground." (Ps 147:6)*

Today, we learned that God was furious with Ahab because he had done evil. However, God later had mercy on him after he humbled himself. From this, we can see that God very much delights in people who are humble. But what exactly does it mean to be humble? Let's see what the Bible says.

1. *"If my people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin." (2 Chr 7:14)*

Our God is merciful and forgiving. But, for Him to forgive our wrongdoings, it always requires us to first humble ourselves, pray to seek His face, and turn from our wicked ways. By humbling ourselves, we show God that we recognize that we did something wrong and that He has the power to forgive us. We pray to Him on our knees, in a lowly position, to humble ourselves. Then, we turn away from our old wicked ways. This is again to humble ourselves by honoring God's ways, which we failed to follow, and acknowledging that they are better than our own ways. If we are able to put away our own pride, God will surely accept our repentance and forgive our sins, just as He forgave King Ahab when he humbled himself before the Lord.

2. *"God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble." (Jas 4:6)*  
*"Everyone proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord; though they join forces, none will go unpunished." (Prov 16:5)*

God strongly dislikes people who are arrogant because they esteem themselves so highly that they often disregard God. The Bible tells us that the proud will not go unpunished. In contrast, God gives grace to and blesses the humble. Those are the people who give glory and honor to God instead of themselves.

3. *"Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others." (Phil 2:3-4)*

Apart from humbling ourselves before the Lord, we also need to be humble towards people around us. A humble heart is not self-seeking; therefore, for us to humble ourselves, we must look out for the interests of others. We have to esteem others with love. That way, we are giving glory to our heavenly Father and He will, as promised, shower us with grace because of our humble hearts.

In Ahab's story, we learned that God is merciful to the humble and just toward the wicked. In the next two stories, think about how Fiona and Jeffrey can put this lesson into practice.

### **Choosing a Toy or a Humble Heart**

Mom and Dad took Fiona and Ricky to the store. They told them that they could use their allowance to buy anything they'd like. Because Fiona was older, they handed her an allowance of \$15. Ricky was younger, so they gave him an allowance of \$5. Fiona put her money in her jacket pocket. Ricky followed her example and put away his money in his own jacket, too. Dad and Mom told them to be careful with their money and not to take it out before they were ready to check out. Fiona got permission from her parents to take Ricky to browse the toy section while they bought groceries. The kids were so excited to see so many toys, they ran up and down the three aisles staring at everything and trying them out.

Ricky was very hot from all the running, so he took off his jacket and left it on the floor while he played with some robots. Fiona chose her toy and saw that Ricky was still not ready. She noticed his jacket on the floor and picked it up. While she waited for Ricky, Fiona pulled out the money from her pocket and realized that she needed \$3 more to buy her toy.

She was starting to feel disappointed when she spotted a \$5 bill on the floor. She picked it up excitedly, and looked around to see if anyone had dropped it. Fiona didn't see any other adults close by, so she put all the money back into her pocket just as Ricky came over with the toy he had chosen. Together, they went to find their parents.

At the cash register, Ricky reached into his pocket but couldn't find his \$5. Fiona realized that the \$5 she had found probably fell out of Ricky's jacket when she picked it up from the floor. If she told her parents she had it, she could get into trouble for keeping it. If she returned it to Ricky, she wouldn't have enough money to buy her toy, and it would be at least another month before she could come back to the store.

If anybody asked, she could pretend that Ricky had lost his money somewhere. After all, he did leave his jacket on the floor and hadn't been careful with his money, so maybe he didn't deserve a toy. Nobody would have to know.

### What should Fiona do?

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#### *Suggested Answer:*

Fiona should not be greedy and selfish. Instead, she should be honest and humble. She should think of her brother Ricky who would get in trouble for losing his money, instead of her own desire to buy her toy at his expense. Even though nobody else knew that she had found the money Ricky had lost, God knew.

James 4:17 teaches us that "to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin." If Fiona doesn't speak up, and even if she doesn't lie, God will still see the evil intention in her heart (in the same way He knew the evil that Ahab and Jezebel had committed). If she does what is right, God will remember her good deeds and consider her needs.

### **Pride and Laziness**

Dad and Mom told Jimmy and Jeffrey to clean their room and do their chores. If they finished everything by the time Dad and Mom came back from visiting Grandpa, they would get a special treat.

After Dad and Mom left, Jimmy started cleaning the room they shared. Jeffrey was feeling a little lazy so he told his older brother that he wasn't feeling very well. He said he was going downstairs to the living room to rest on the couch. While Jimmy put away their clothing, books, and toys, Jeffrey was busy playing video games on the computer in the living room. Jimmy organized their things and swept the floor.

Everything looked sparkling clean. When Jimmy finished cleaning the room by himself, he headed downstairs. When Jeffrey heard his brother's footsteps on the stairs, he quickly turned off the monitor and pretended to be sleeping on the couch. Jimmy saw his little brother sleeping and thought, "Jeffrey must be really sick. I don't want to wake him up. I still have some time, so I can help him do his chore of wiping the dining table and kitchen counters." Jeffrey took a nap while Jimmy kept cleaning.

Dad and Mom came home. Jeffrey woke up when he heard the front door open and got up quickly. Jimmy had finished Jeffrey's chore and was playing in the backyard, so he didn't hear his parents come in. Dad went upstairs to get a jacket. Mom went into the kitchen and said, "Jeffrey, you did a great job wiping the table and the counters. I'm so proud of you!" Dad came into the kitchen beaming and gave Jeffrey a pat on the back. He said, "I passed by their room when I went to get my jacket, and they did a good job cleaning their room, too."

"Where's Jimmy?" Mom asked.  
 "He's been playing in the backyard for a while," Jeffrey replied.  
 "Does that mean you cleaned everything by yourself?" Dad asked.  
 "Then you deserve the bigger treat!" Mom said happily.

Dad and Mom didn't know that Jimmy had done all the chores. Jimmy wasn't even in the room, so he wouldn't know that their parents thought that Jeffrey had done everything. They looked so proud of what they thought he had done, Jeffrey wasn't sure of what to say. At that moment, Jimmy came in from the backyard and smiled at his parents and brother.

### What should Jeffrey do?

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#### *Suggested Answer:*

Jeffrey should tell the truth, instead of taking credit for what his brother Jimmy had done all by himself. Jimmy had been so kind; he had even done Jeffrey's chores without complaining. The person who really deserved the praise and the bigger treat was Jimmy. Jeffrey should keep a humble heart and not take advantage of his brother and his parents. After all, "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble" (Jas 4:6).

## ACTIVITIES

### 1

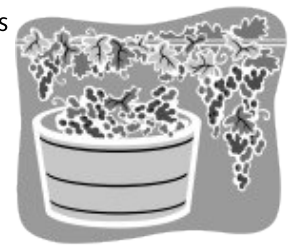
#### Naboth's Vineyard Mosaic

##### Materials

- Purple, brown, and white construction paper (1 sheet of each per student)
- Fresh green leaves
- Scissors
- Glue

##### Instructions

1. If there is a nearby tree that is accessible to the students, ask them to pick three or four leaves each from it. Otherwise, distribute three or four leaves (collected beforehand) to each student.
2. Distribute one piece each of white, brown, and purple construction paper to each student. The white construction paper will be the background. The brown construction paper will be the vine branches. The purple construction paper will be the grapes.
3. First, have the students tear the brown construction paper into squares of approximately 1 inch. Then, have them glue the brown squares on the white construction paper, in the shape of a vine branch of their own design.
4. Next, ask students to cut or tear the purple construction paper lengthwise into thin strips (as wide as their index fingers). Have them roll the strip somewhat loosely into a cylindrical shape. Then glue the end of the strip to the rolled part of the strip so it retains its round shape. Then, the students can finish rolling and gluing all of the remaining strips. The rolled strips are then laid flat on the white construction paper (in a design of the student's choice), and glued in place.
5. Finally, students glue the green leaves on the white construction paper.



## 2

**"Elijah Confronts Ahab's Wickedness" Scavenger Hunt****Materials**

- List of scavenger hunt items (1 per group)
- Digital camera (1 per group of 4)

**Preparation**

1. Use the sample list below or design your own scavenger list.

**Sample Scavenger Hunt List**

- Crown
- writing a letter
- vineyard or garden
- dog
- sackcloth
- seating in a prominent place
- grapes
- staff or cane
- stones
- two scoundrels
- fasting
- king's seal
- palace
- idols

2. Ask the students to bring their own cameras from home or borrow cameras beforehand.

**Instructions**

1. Divide the class into groups of 4.
2. Ask each team to select a team leader.
3. Distribute a scavenger hunt list and camera to each team leader.
4. Students have twenty minutes to find, make, or act out the items on the list, and take a picture of the group with each item. [Encourage students to be creative.]
5. When a group has found and photographed all the items on their list, they must return to the classroom and show the teacher. The group that finds, makes, or acts out the greatest number of items and completes the scavenger hunt in the shortest amount of time is the winner.

**HOMEWORK ANSWER KEY**

1. Jezebel
2. Jezebel
3. Ahab
4. Jezebel
5. Ahab
6. Ahab
7. Jezebel
8. Ahab
9. Jezebel
10. Ahab and/or Jezebel
11. "The Lord **lifts** up the **humble**; He **casts** the **wicked** down to the **ground**." Psalm 147:6



E1 Year 2 Book 2 Lesson 7—Elijah Confronts Ahab's Wickedness

# Homework Assignment

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Parent signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Bible Truth:** God is merciful to the humble and just toward the wicked.

**Lesson Objective:** To learn that God rewards or punishes us according to our hearts and actions.

**Bible Reading:** Please put a check mark in the space when you complete the reading each day.

**Prayer:** Please put a check mark in the space provided on the days you prayed to God.

	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Bible Reading							
Prayer							

## Memory Verse

Please write down this week's memory verse.

(Psalm 147:6)

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## What I Learned from the Bible This Week

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

# Homework Assignment

*Understanding What You Have Learned*

## Who Said It? Who Did It?

Draw a line to match the quote or action to the correct figure.



**King Ahab**



**Queen Jezebel**

1. "I'll get you the vineyard."
2. Wrote letters to the elders.
3. Tore clothing and fasted.
4. "Get up and eat. Cheer up!"
5. "I can give you a better vineyard."
6. Sold to do evil before the Lord.
7. Used the king's seal.
8. Called Elijah an enemy.
9. Ordered Naboth to be stoned.
10. Worshipped idols.

## Vineyard Search

Find the missing words in the vineyard and complete the memory verse.

"The Lord \_\_\_\_\_ up the \_\_\_\_\_;

He \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_ down to the \_\_\_\_\_."

\_\_\_\_\_ 147:6

