

# Dr. John Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 15.2, 1 Kings 19-20, Part 2 Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

## 1. Abstract of Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 15.2, 1 Kings 19-20, Part 2, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Oswalt's lecture focuses on 1 Kings 20, exploring God's unexpected deliverance of King Ahab from the Syrian army. Despite Ahab's past evil deeds and failure to seek God's guidance, God grants him victory to demonstrate His power and grace. **Oswalt highlights God's tendency to use the weak and unexpected to accomplish His purposes.** This victory, however, doesn't lead Ahab to repentance or gratitude, which underscores a critical theme of the lecture. **The lecture emphasizes that God's grace is undeserved and should elicit gratitude and recognition of His sovereignty.** The prophet warns Ahab that this victory is not the end, but a prelude to future conflict.

**2. 13 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 15.2 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament → Historical Books → Kings).**



**Oswalt\_Kings\_Sessi  
on15\_2.mp3**

### 3. Briefing Document: Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 15.2, 1 Kings 19-20, Part 2

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the main themes and important ideas from the provided excerpt of Dr. John Oswalt's lecture on 1 Kings 19-20, specifically focusing on chapter 20, part 2:

#### **Briefing Document: Oswalt on 1 Kings 20**

**Main Theme:** God's undeserved grace and the opportunity for Ahab (and us) to recognize Yahweh. The lecture explores the unexpected deliverance of Ahab from the Syrians despite Ahab's wickedness, and the missed opportunity for Ahab to acknowledge God's power and grace.

#### **Key Ideas and Facts:**

1. **The Unexpected Deliverance:** The central paradox is that God delivers Ahab, a king described as doing "more evil than any king before him," from the Syrians (Aram). This occurs on two separate occasions in chapter 20. Oswalt emphasizes the unexpected nature of this: "And yet in this chapter, we see God on two different occasions, completely, undeservedly, unexpectedly delivering Ahab from his enemies in Syria."
2. **Syria/Aram's Geopolitical Importance:** The lecture explains the strategic importance of the region controlled by Israel and Syria (Aram). Syria sought control of Israel because of the major highways running through the territory, controlling trade routes between the Euphrates and Egypt and between the Gulf of Aqaba and Damascus. "Syria was, in many ways, the natural enemy of Israel because the great highway ran from the Euphrates River through Damascus, down along the northern edge of the Sea of Galilee, down to Megiddo, and down to Egypt. So if Syria could control Israel, they would have a big chunk of the international highway in their control."
3. **Ahab's Initial Submission and Lack of Reliance on God:** Faced with Syrian demands for his possessions, Ahab initially submits without seeking God's guidance. Oswalt stresses the importance of seeking God first in times of crisis: "Now, we notice the thing that Ahab does not do. He does not go to God. He does not ask God for protection. He does not ask God what he should do. He simply bows down to the superior force that is in front of him." He further elaborates on the importance of asking God first in times of crisis before taking action.

4. **The Prophet's Intervention and God's Motivation:** A prophet (possibly not Elijah) intervenes, promising Ahab victory, not because Ahab deserves it, but so that Ahab will know that Yahweh is God. "A prophet came to Ahab, king of Israel, and announced, this is what Yahweh says. Do you see this vast army? I will give it to your hand today... Then you will know that I am Yahweh." This emphasizes God's desire for recognition and acknowledgment. Oswalt connects this to God's grace: "How many times has he done good and gracious things in our lives that we weren't even aware of? Why is he doing this?... Then you will know that I am Yahweh... maybe even stronger evidence...is his grace toward us, undeserved, gladly given."
5. **God's Use of the Weak and Unexpected:** God instructs Ahab to use the junior officers ("lieutenants") in the attack, highlighting God's typical pattern of using the weak and unexpected to demonstrate His power. "Let the young guys do it. Let the lieutenants do it...When we are largely militarily helpless, no, that is so like God. As Paul says to us, the weakness of God is stronger than the strength of men." Oswalt provides biblical examples of God using unexpected choices to demonstrate his power like choosing second born sons, or the herald of Jesus being born to an old woman. He connects this to Jesus choosing fishermen and tax collectors as disciples.
6. **Ahab's Unresponsiveness:** Despite the miraculous victory, Ahab fails to acknowledge or thank God. "So, what was Ahab's response? Zero. Did he fall on his knees and repent of his idolatry? No. Did he utter one word of thanks to Yahweh for this great victory? No." This serves as a cautionary tale against taking credit for God's work, paralleled with Moses' actions in Numbers 20.
7. **The Continuing Threat:** The prophet warns Ahab that the victory is not the end, and the Syrians will attack again in the spring. "The prophet says verse 22, again, the prophet came to the king of Israel and said, strengthen your position, see what must be done because next spring, the king of Aram will attack you again." This suggests that the opportunity for Ahab to learn from the experience remains open, but also underscores the constant nature of spiritual battles.

## 4. Study Guide: Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 15.2, 1 Kings 19-20, Part 2

### A Study Guide to 1 Kings 19-20 (Part 2)

#### Key Concepts and Themes

- **Undeserved Grace:** God's repeated deliverance of Ahab, despite Ahab's wickedness, highlights the concept of undeserved grace.
- **Ahab's Impenitence:** Despite witnessing God's power and grace, Ahab fails to acknowledge God or repent.
- **God's Sovereignty:** God demonstrates His power by using the weak and unexpected to achieve His purposes.
- **The Purpose of Miracles:** God's interventions are intended to reveal His identity and draw people to Him.
- **Strategic Importance of Israel:** The geographical location of Israel and its control of key trade routes made it a constant target.
- **Ahab's Poor Leadership:** Ahab's reliance on worldly solutions rather than seeking God's guidance reveals a lack of spiritual leadership.
- **The Role of Prophets:** The prophet's interventions serve as reminders of God's presence and guidance in the affairs of Israel.

#### Quiz (Short Answer)

1. Why was Syria (Aram) a natural enemy of Israel, geographically speaking?
2. What was Ahab's initial response to Ben-Hadad's demands, and why did he respond in this way?
3. Why does Oswalt find it so important to ask for God's plan in a moment of crisis?
4. What is the prophet's message to Ahab in 1 Kings 20:13, and what is significant about it?
5. Why does God choose the "young officers" to lead the attack against the Arameans?
6. What unusual circumstance surrounded the birth of the first three "mothers of Israel," and how does this relate to God's character?

7. What is Ahab's response to the miraculous victory God gives him over the Arameans?
8. According to Oswalt, why did God chose Jacob over Esau, even though Esau was the first born son?
9. What warning does the prophet give Ahab in 1 Kings 20:22?
10. How does this reading reinforce the lesson that the weakness of God is stronger than the strength of men?

### **Quiz Answer Key**

1. Syria controlled the major highways running through Israel. It coveted Israel's territory to control a larger portion of those trade routes.
2. Ahab initially agrees to Ben-Hadad's demands, likely because Israel was weakened by three years of famine and he lacked the military strength to resist.
3. The first thing we should do in a crisis is ask God what he wants us to do. Seeking God's will before acting acknowledges His sovereignty and invites His guidance and blessing.
4. The prophet says that God will deliver the vast Aramean army into Ahab's hands, so that Ahab may know that He is Yahweh. This is significant because it is an undeserved act of grace intended to reveal God's power and identity.
5. God uses the weak and unexpected to demonstrate His power and that the victory is from Him, not from human strength or strategy.
6. They were all childless at first. This emphasizes that God is the source of life and that His intervention is necessary for the fulfillment of His promises.
7. Ahab does not acknowledge God or express any gratitude for the victory. He takes credit for the victory, demonstrating his continued impenitence.
8. God chose Jacob because Jacob was the second born son, and therefore one that the world saw as essentially useless. God is the only one that can see past this "uselessness," thus reinforcing His nature.
9. The prophet warns Ahab to strengthen his position and prepare, because the king of Aram will attack again in the spring.

10. God consistently uses the weak, the unlikely, and the unexpected to accomplish His purposes. God is the only one who can see the potential in people that the world has deemed useless.

## **Essay Questions**

1. Discuss the significance of God's undeserved grace towards Ahab in 1 Kings 20. What does this reveal about God's character and purposes?
2. Analyze Ahab's leadership in 1 Kings 20. How does his response to crises reveal his spiritual state, and what lessons can be drawn from his example?
3. Explore the theme of God's sovereignty in 1 Kings 20. How does God use unexpected means and individuals to accomplish His will, and what does this teach us about His power and control?
4. Examine the role of the prophet in 1 Kings 20. How does the prophet serve as a messenger of God, and what is the significance of his interventions in the affairs of Israel?
5. How does the account of Ahab's victory over the Arameans relate to the broader narrative of the Old Testament and to the Christian Gospel?

## Glossary of Key Terms

- **Ahab:** King of Israel, known for his wickedness and idolatry, particularly his worship of Baal.
- **Jezebel:** Ahab's wife, a Phoenician princess who promoted the worship of Baal in Israel.
- **Ben-Hadad:** King of Aram (Syria), who repeatedly attacks Israel.
- **Aram (Syria):** An ancient kingdom located northeast of Israel, a frequent adversary due to its strategic location and control of trade routes.
- **Prophet:** A messenger of God, who speaks on His behalf and often challenges the actions of kings and the people.
- **Grace:** Undeserved favor or love from God.
- **Sovereignty:** God's ultimate authority and control over all things.
- **Idolatry:** The worship of false gods or idols.
- **Transjordanian plateau:** The territory east of the Jordan River.
- **Yahweh:** The personal name of God in the Hebrew Bible, often translated as "Lord."

## **5. FAQs on Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 15.2, 1 Kings 19-20, Part 2, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)**

Here is an 8-question FAQ based on the provided source:

### **FAQ on 1 Kings 20 and God's Unexpected Deliverance of Ahab**

#### **1. Why is the account in 1 Kings 20 considered unexpected, given the previous judgments against Ahab?**

The account is unexpected because Ahab had been heavily condemned for his evil deeds and idolatry. God had already pronounced judgment on him and his wife Jezebel. Despite this, God delivers Ahab from the Syrian army not once, but twice, which seems completely undeserved based on Ahab's character and actions.

#### **2. What was the strategic importance of Syria (Aram) to Israel, and why were they in conflict?**

Syria (Aram) was a natural enemy of Israel because it controlled vital sections of the international highways that ran through the region, connecting the Euphrates River to Egypt and the Gulf of Aqaba to Damascus. Control over Israel would give Syria significant economic and military power. Additionally, Syria sought to control the Transjordanian plateau, territory claimed by some Israelite tribes.

#### **3. How does Ahab initially respond to the Syrian king Ben-Hadad's demands, and what does this reveal about Ahab's character and leadership?**

Ahab initially submits to Ben-Hadad's demands, offering his silver, gold, wives, and children without resistance. This reveals Ahab's weakness and lack of faith in God. He prioritizes self-preservation over seeking divine guidance or protection. He does not even think to ask God for help in the crisis.

#### **4. How does God intervene in the conflict between Ahab and Ben-Hadad, and what is God's stated purpose for this intervention?**

God sends a prophet to Ahab with a promise of victory over the Syrian army, despite Ahab's unworthiness. God's stated purpose for this intervention is so that Ahab (and Israel) will know that He is Yahweh. God is using this undeserved deliverance as an opportunity for Ahab to recognize and acknowledge God's power and grace.



**5. What is significant about God choosing "young guys" or "lieutenants" to lead the Israelite army in the battle against the Syrians?**

God's choice of junior officers to lead the battle highlights His tendency to use the weak and unexpected to demonstrate His power. It emphasizes that the victory comes from God, not from human strength or ability. This reflects a pattern seen throughout the Old Testament and in the selection of Jesus' disciples: God often chooses the unlikely to accomplish His purposes.

**6. What is Ahab's response after God delivers him from the Syrian army, and what does this indicate about his understanding of God's grace?**

Ahab shows no gratitude or acknowledgement of God's role in the victory. He doesn't repent from his idolatry or thank Yahweh. This demonstrates his failure to understand or appreciate God's grace. It suggests he attributes the victory to his own decisions or the actions of his officers, rather than recognizing it as an act of divine intervention.

**7. What warning does the prophet give Ahab after the victory, and what does this imply about the nature of spiritual battles?**

The prophet warns Ahab that the Syrian king will attack again in the spring, urging him to strengthen his position. This implies that spiritual battles are ongoing and that one victory does not guarantee lasting peace. It emphasizes the need for constant vigilance and preparation.

**8. According to the source, what broader theological point does this story illustrate about God's character and actions?**

The story illustrates God's grace and His tendency to use the weak, the unexpected, and the undeserving to demonstrate His power and glory. It reinforces the idea that God chooses the "offscourings of the earth" and gives unearned favor so that people will know that He is the Lord. It also highlights the contrast between human actions and God's unmerited grace.