

## **Dr. John Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 15.3, 1 Kings 19-20, Part 3 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 15.3, 1 Kings 19-20, Part 3, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL**

**Dr. Oswalt's lecture focuses on 1 Kings 19-20, exploring the question of Yahweh's true nature and power.** The narrative examines Ahab's encounters with the Arameans and how these events reveal God's character. **The lecture emphasizes that Yahweh is not limited, but is instead the God of the universe.** It also highlights Ahab's flawed understanding of God's grace, illustrated by his decision to spare Ben-Hadad. **Ultimately, the lecture uses Ahab's story as a cautionary tale, urging listeners to recognize Yahweh's sovereignty and seek His will.** The speaker urges the audience to decide if they are using God or recognizing his true nature as the "I am."

**2. 14 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of  
Dr. Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 15.3 – 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  
on 15\_3.mp3**

### 3. Briefing Document: Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 15.3, 1 Kings 19-20, Part 3

#### Briefing Document: 1 Kings 19-20, Part 3 (Dr. John Oswalt)

**Source:** Excerpts from "Oswalt\_Kings\_EN\_Session15\_3.pdf" by Dr. John Oswalt

**Date:** Extracted from the document title, the original recording appears to have been made in 2024. The lecture makes a direct mention of January of 2021 as the date of a political event.

#### Main Themes:

- **The Identity of Yahweh:** The core theme revolves around the question of who Yahweh truly is – not just for the Israelites of Ahab's time, but for individuals today. The Arameans' limited understanding of Yahweh as merely a "God of the hills" is contrasted with his true nature as the God of the universe.
- **God's Grace and Israel's Unfaithfulness:** God repeatedly delivers Ahab and Israel despite their shortcomings, demonstrating divine grace. However, Ahab's actions (sparing Ben-Hadad) reveal a lack of true understanding and obedience to God's will.
- **The Danger of Taking God's Gifts for Granted:** Oswalt warns against treating Yahweh as a "rabbit's foot" or taking his blessings for granted. He emphasizes the importance of seeking God's will and recognizing our dependence on Him.
- **Culture and Morality:** Oswalt draws a parallel between the decline in societal morality and a diminishing attachment to faith in God. He suggests that a culture raised on biblical principles of accountability to God is crucial for maintaining lawfulness and ethical behavior.

#### Key Ideas and Facts:

- **Aramean Misconception:** The Arameans believed Yahweh was limited to the mountainous regions of Samaria, leading them to strategize a battle in the plains of Aphek.
- **Quote:** "The Aramean advisors said, well, you know why we lost that battle? It's because we were fighting up there in the hills of Samaria, up there in that mountainous region, and Yahweh obviously is a God of the hills. So next time, let's fight in the plains, and Yahweh won't have power there."

- **God's Motivation:** God delivered the Aramean army into Ahab's hands so that the Arameans would "know that I am Yahweh." This underscores God's desire to reveal his true identity and power.
- Quote: "This is what Yahweh says because the Arameans think Yahweh is a God of the hills and not a God of the valleys. I will deliver this vast army into your hands. You will know that I am Yahweh."
- **Ahab's Merciful Reputation:** Ironically, the Aramean officials believed that the "kings of the house of Israel...are merciful."
- Quote: "His officials said to him, look, we have heard that the kings of the house of Israel do have said NIV says are merciful."
- **Ahab's Disobedience:** Ahab's decision to make a covenant with Ben-Hadad, a man God had determined should die, led to a prophetic judgment against him.
- Quote: "You have set free a man I had determined should die. Therefore, it's your life for his life, your people for his people."
- **Ahab's Underlying Issue:** Ahab "has not learned that Yahweh is God. He has not learned that Yahweh owns the universe. He has not learned that we are instruments in his hands."
- **The prophet's demonstration:** A prophet instructed someone to strike him, and when another refused, the prophet informed him that because he disobeyed the Lord, a lion would attack him. Another man struck and wounded the prophet. The prophet then disguised himself to meet the king and relate a parable to him that echoed his own disobedience in letting Ben-Hadad live.
- **Decline in lawfulness:** The lecturer compares the state of the kingdom of Israel to the United States in 2021, noting the moral underpinnings of a society erode as faith erodes, causing the society to be less law-abiding.
- Quote: "They are so law-abiding...Why? Because of this culture, this culture has been raised in this book. This culture has been raised on the idea that there is a God who has an intention for human life. And whether anybody's watching us. Whether there are any policemen around, we're responsible to God for our behavior."

### **Quotes Highlighting Key Themes:**

- "It's the unending question: who is Yahweh? Who is Yahweh in your life? Who's Yahweh in my life? Is he the I am? Is he the source of all we are and do and think? Or is he a rabbit's foot, a good luck charm, somebody to keep in the drawer for emergencies? Who is Yahweh?"
- "Everything ranged against you is simply unconquerable, except for one thing. Yahweh is with you. Is he? Have you, in fact, cast yourself upon him? Have you, in fact, found in him the grace and the strength of Christ?"
- "The momentum is running out unless we recover our attachment to that great flywheel, which is God; the wheel is going to run down."
- "He has simply taken God's gifts for granted and used them as though they were his own. God have mercy upon us. Help us not to fall into those pits. Help us to know that God is God."

### **Implications:**

- The passage from 1 Kings and Oswalt's lecture challenge individuals to examine their understanding of God and their relationship with Him. It emphasizes the importance of obedience, humility, and recognizing God's sovereignty in all aspects of life. Furthermore, it warns against complacency and taking God's blessings for granted, both on a personal and societal level.

## 4. Study Guide: Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 15.3, 1 Kings 19-20, Part 3

### Understanding Kings: Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility

#### Quiz: 1 Kings 19-20

Answer each question in 2-3 sentences, drawing from the provided text.

1. According to the Aramean advisors, what was the perceived limitation of Yahweh's power, and how did they propose to exploit it?
2. What reason does the "man of God" give Ahab for Yahweh delivering the Aramean army into his hands?
3. Despite the overwhelming odds, what is the key factor, according to the speaker, that gives the Israelites a chance at victory against the Arameans?
4. What observation about the kings of Israel did Ben-Hadad's officials make, and what word is used to describe the king's behavior?
5. What comment did the young Russian man make to the speaker about Americans, and what did the speaker suggest is the foundation of that quality?
6. According to the speaker, who truly won the battles against the Arameans, and what choice did that victor have regarding Ben-Hadad?
7. Describe the unusual request the prophet made of another man, and what the consequence was for refusing to comply.
8. How did the prophet disguise himself when he approached Ahab after the battle?
9. Summarize the story the prophet told Ahab and what Ahab said in response.
10. What judgement did God pronounce on Ahab through the prophet and how did Ahab respond to this judgement?

#### Quiz Answer Key

1. The Aramean advisors believed Yahweh was a "God of the hills" and therefore proposed fighting in the plains where they thought He would have no power. They sought to exploit this perceived limitation to gain an advantage in battle.

2. The "man of God" tells Ahab that Yahweh will deliver the Aramean army into his hands because the Arameans think Yahweh is only a God of the hills and not of the valleys. This deliverance is meant to demonstrate that Yahweh is, in fact, God.
3. Despite being significantly outnumbered, the key factor for the Israelites' potential victory is Yahweh's presence and support. The speaker implies that if they have truly trusted in Him, His power can overcome any obstacle.
4. Ben-Hadad's officials observed that the kings of Israel are merciful, and the word "gracious" is used to describe the king's behavior. They hoped this perceived kindness might lead to leniency toward Ben-Hadad.
5. The young Russian man observed that Americans are very law-abiding. The speaker suggests that this quality stems from a culture raised on the belief in a God with an intention for human life and the awareness of being responsible to God for their behavior.
6. The speaker emphasizes that Yahweh truly won the battles. Consequently, Yahweh had the power to choose whether or not to be gracious to Ben-Hadad, underscoring the theme of divine sovereignty.
7. The prophet asked a man to strike him with a weapon. When the man refused, the prophet declared that a lion would kill him for disobeying the Lord.
8. The prophet disguised himself by pulling his headband down over his eyes, effectively wearing a mask to conceal his identity from Ahab.
9. The prophet told Ahab a story about being entrusted with a valuable prisoner who escaped because he was not focused on the task. Ahab responds saying "You brought this on yourself".
10. God, through the prophet, pronounces that Ahab's life will be exchanged for Ben-Hadad's, and his people for Ben-Hadad's people. Ahab responds to this judgement sullenly and angrily.

## Essay Questions

1. Explore the significance of the question, "Who is Yahweh?" as it permeates the events in 1 Kings 19-20. How does the narrative challenge or reinforce different perspectives on Yahweh's nature and power?
2. Analyze Ahab's character in 1 Kings 19-20. Is he a pawn of divine will, a calculating political leader, or a combination of both? How does his behavior demonstrate his understanding (or lack thereof) of Yahweh's sovereignty?
3. Discuss the theme of divine grace in 1 Kings 19-20. How is God's grace extended, and to whom? What are the implications of accepting or rejecting this grace, as illustrated by the actions of Ahab and Ben-Hadad?
4. Examine the role of prophets in 1 Kings 19-20. How do they serve as intermediaries between God and humanity, and what are the consequences of heeding or ignoring their messages?
5. How does the narrative in 1 Kings 19-20 illustrate the interplay between human responsibility and divine sovereignty? How does the story suggest that these two concepts work together, and what implications does this have for understanding the nature of faith and obedience?

## Glossary of Key Terms

- **Yahweh:** The personal name of God in the Hebrew Bible.
- **Ahab:** King of Israel, known for his wickedness and idolatry.
- **Ben-Hadad:** King of Aram (Syria), a frequent adversary of Israel.
- **Elijah:** A prophet of God who challenges Ahab and advocates for the worship of Yahweh.
- **Aphek:** A location east of the Sea of Galilee where a battle took place between Israel and Aram.
- **Samaria:** The capital city of the northern kingdom of Israel.
- **Mount Carmel:** Site of the contest between Elijah and the prophets of Baal, demonstrating Yahweh's power.
- **Covenant:** A formal agreement or treaty, often between God and humanity.
- **Divine Sovereignty:** The concept that God has supreme authority and control over all things.
- **Human Responsibility:** The idea that humans are accountable for their actions and choices.
- **Gracious:** Showing kindness, compassion, and generosity.
- **Arameans:** People from Aram, also known as Syrians, who were often in conflict with Israel.



## 5. FAQs on Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 15.3, 1 Kings 19-20, Part 3, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

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

### FAQ on 1 Kings 19-20

- **What is the central question or issue being explored in 1 Kings 19-20?**
- The central question is "Who is Yahweh?" This question is posed through Ahab's interactions with the Arameans and Ben-Hadad. It asks whether Yahweh is truly understood as the God of the universe and the source of all things, or merely treated as a lucky charm to be used in times of need. This question is not just for Ahab and Israel, but for all people.
- **How does God demonstrate his power and grace in these chapters?**
- God demonstrates his power by delivering the Israelites from the Arameans, despite the Aramean's strategic advantages (choosing the plains to fight in and reorganizing their army). The Arameans believed Yahweh was only a "God of the hills," but God shows his power extends everywhere. God demonstrates grace by offering these victories to Ahab and Israel. This happens despite their wavering faith and understanding of Him.
- **What is significant about the Arameans' belief that Yahweh is only a "God of the hills"?**
- The Arameans' limited view of Yahweh reveals a fundamental misunderstanding of His nature. They reduce Him to a territorial deity with limited power. This contrasts with the biblical understanding of Yahweh as the sovereign God of all creation, whose power and authority are universal. This limited view is what God sought to disprove with the second victory.

- **How does Ahab's behavior after the victories reflect his understanding (or lack thereof) of Yahweh?**
- Ahab's behavior highlights his lack of true understanding of Yahweh. Despite witnessing God's power and grace, Ahab acts independently. He makes a covenant with Ben-Hadad and spares his life, acting graciously when God intended something different. This suggests Ahab views the victories as his own achievement, rather than a demonstration of God's will. He does not seek God's guidance or acknowledge His sovereignty.
- **What is the meaning behind the prophet's disguised message to Ahab?**
- The disguised prophet's story serves as a condemnation of Ahab's decision to let Ben-Hadad live. The story parallels Ahab's situation: he was entrusted with a valuable prisoner (Ben-Hadad), but through negligence and misplaced mercy, allowed him to escape. The message is that Ahab's life will be forfeited for Ben-Hadad's. He was meant to show that Ahab did not protect the victory God gave him.
- **What does Ahab's reaction to the prophet's message reveal about his character?**
- Ahab's sullen and angry reaction demonstrates his continued resistance to truly acknowledging Yahweh's authority. Rather than repenting or recognizing his error, he becomes resentful and questions God's judgment. This suggests a deep-seated pride and a refusal to submit to God's will, despite his awareness of God's power.
- **What is the significance of Ahab's decision to show mercy to Ben-Hadad?**
- Ahab's mercy towards Ben-Hadad is not inherently wrong. However, in this context, it represents a defiance of God's intention and a prioritization of Ahab's own political interests over God's will. Ahab treats it as if it were his victory, not as if it were a chance to honor God. It ultimately leads to his own downfall, as Ben-Hadad remains a threat. It underscores the importance of aligning one's actions with God's purposes.

- **What lessons can be learned from the story of Ahab and Ben-Hadad in 1 Kings 19-20?**
- Several important lessons emerge:
- The importance of truly knowing and understanding who Yahweh is, not reducing Him to a limited or convenient deity.
- The need to acknowledge God's sovereignty and seek His will in all decisions, rather than acting independently or for personal gain.
- The dangers of taking God's gifts for granted and using them without recognizing His ultimate authority.
- The need to remain attached to our spiritual faith as a source of wisdom and guidance.