

Lesson 1 Melakhim Bet 1 and 2

Goals:

1. Students will develop skills in fluent reading of Biblical narrative.
2. Students will practice use of Te'amei Ha Mikra as punctuation markers, useful in breaking verses into smaller parts and thus assisting in comprehension.
3. Students will resume study of Eliyahu's character, and the "other-worldly" nature of the portrayals of Eliyahu in Sefer Melakhim, and appreciate their dramatic value and their contribution to the figure of Eliyahu in aggadah and folklore.
4. Students will recognize in Eliyahu a prophet who does not dialogue with people, and recognize that this behavior is not necessarily conducive to changing the behavior of the Israelites in the long term.

Lesson, Part 1:

Begin by recalling the dismissal of Eliyahu in Melakhim Alef Perek 19. Ask students what Eliyahu's greatest accomplishment was, one they remember from Melakhim Alef. Students will recall the events at Mount Carmel. Pull out the smartboard of opinions recorded in Perek 19, discussing the nature of Eliyahu's accomplishment. Students should remember that Eliyahu did not necessarily change people's behavior over the long term.

Then, ask students to read on their own Melakhim Bet Chapter 1 verse 2. (Students may ask why we're not starting with verse 1 – tell them that we will deal with verse 1 when we study chapter 3 of Melakhim Bet, which expands on that topic.)

Before they begin reading, post in a prominent location the "dividing" *taamei ha mikra*, viz., the *zakef katan* and the *etnachta*, to help students in dividing up the verse and thus make it easier to understand the verse.

In reading verse 2, remind them that Ahaziah is Ahab's son (see slide 2) and ask them what's wrong with Ahaziah's behavior. (To help them answer the question, they should remember that Ekron is a Philistine city, and its location is illustrated in slide 1.)

Students should realize the answer quickly, and the teacher should emphasize that despite the many lessons Ahab learned, and despite the events of Mount Carmel, the leadership of the kingdom of Israel is still not willing to accept God as arbiter of all events.

As a "by the way," the teacher should illustrate to students that verse 2 is divided in the slide into four parts, using the "dividing" *taamei ha mikra*, viz., the *zakef katan* and the *etnachta*. Students should remember these important tools for dividing up verses, which will be emphasized later.

Then, read to students verses 3 and 4 using slide 3. Tell students, before reading the verses, that these verses contain God's message to Ahaziah, and that they will be asked to work in "creative chavruta" for 3 or 4 minutes (not more) to come up with "the one best way" for Eliyahu to convey that message to Ahaziah. For students who have difficulty reading, note that verse 3 contains many examples of the *zakef katan*, and encourage students to divide up the verse and then translate each section.

Give a few minutes for each group to present their "one best way" and ask the other students to rate their method on two score-sheets: a) is it dramatic? b) will it produce long-term change? Some groups will spend all their time dividing and translating; others will be able to get to the questions of the "one best way."

Then, tell students that Sefer Melakhim does not present to us directly what Eliyahu did. Instead, it records the response of the unnamed "messengers" that Ahaziah sent to ask the idol in Ekron. Ask students why this might be so, students should realize that Tanakh tries to focus on how the recipients received the message, and what effect it had on them. Emphasize that in verse 5, we are now returning back to the royal palace and hearing what goes on between Ahaziah's messengers and Ahaziah (the two scenes are illustrated in slide 4, students should be able to figure out in which scene to place verse 5).

Have students act out the dialogue in verses 5-8. Again, remind them to look for the "dividing" *taamei ha mikra*. Here, we should add *munach revi'l* to the *zakef katan* and the *etnachta*, since there are many examples of it in verse 6, and it is helpful in dividing up the verse. Then ask students: How did Ahaziah accept the message? Did Eliyahu's method of giving the message get Ahaziah's attention? Did it change Ahaziah?

Ask students to break into chavrutot and read verses 9-11. Remind students to divide using the "dividing" *taamei ha mikra*: at minimum, *munach revi'l*, *zakef katan*, *etnachta*. Using the instructions in slide 5, ask them: To whom does Ahaziah direct his messengers after receiving Eliyahu's message? Students should realize based on verses 9 and 11 that Ahaziah is now corresponding directly with Eliyahu, and no longer with Baal-zevuv. Allow students to debate whether this represents long term change...the answer is not so clear.

Using slide 6, students should complete their investigation of verse 9-14. After they've answered the first questions, before they get to Eliyahu's reaction, ask students what type of emotion Eliyahu provokes. Students should realize that Eliyahu provokes fear and trembling, and this is one stage of change. Then ask students: how do they think Eliyahu will reply to the request of the 3rd captain of 50? Do they think Eliyahu emphathizes or cares about the captain and his soldiers?

Students can debate the issue, but ultimately, Eliyahu does not actually show empathy- read v. 15 with the students and they will see that God decides the issue and Eliyahu simply accepts what God instructs. Using slide 7, show students that Eliyahu reports to the people what God says. He does not pray to God on behalf of the people. Note that *נביא* is related to *להביא* - to bring the word of one to the other. Eliyahu brings the word of God to the people, but not the prayers of the people to God. Eliyahu does not dialogue with people- the captain speaks to him, but Eliyahu does not respond except to say what God tells him. This introduces the next chapter.

Lesson, Part 2:

Melakhim Bet Chapter 2 is a story students must know, because it is part of Jewish culture. It is very difficult to explain the story on any rational level, and I doubt whether this is a good opportunity to investigate notions of eternity, heaven, and paradise. Instead, the story is an

opportunity for students to develop their reading fluency, and to focus on contrasts between Eliyahu and Elisha.

I suggest assigning the students the attached worksheet on verses 1-15, with an extension activity through verse 18. The worksheet assumes that students have access either to computers on which the text of Melakhim Bet WITH TE'AMIM is available, or that they can write in their Tenakhim. Before beginning, students should go through verses 1-15 and mark off divisions based on the טעמים מפסיקים, including רביעי קטן, זקוף קטן, אתנחתא, זקוף קטן, רביעי. Some of the questions specify the number of divisions into which a specific verse should be divided, others do not, but the students will need to "punctuate" the chapter before beginning to read it through.

The questions with two stars are the higher level questions, which students will find more difficult, but which form the basis for the discussion after the worksheet. The question with three stars are extension activities.

After students have worked through the worksheet, the teacher should review the two-star questions, in a discussion format.

1. Eliyahu's death. Emphasize that Eliyahu dies like a normal person, according to the Radak, and like everyone else, only his neshama returns to God, not his body.
2. In question 3, emphasize that Elisha recognizes his limits and knows that he cannot keep Eliyahu alive once God has decided to take him.
3. In question 4, students should recognize that the cycle repeats itself two and a half times. Elisha is loyal to Eliyahu, as seen by his refusal to leave Eliyahu who is about to die, but the Bnei Nevi'im who keep asking Elisha "Did you hear...." Questions, will be separated from Eliyahu and Elisha. This separation is emphasized in question 5.
4. Ensure understanding of question 6, which is central to the story.
5. In questions 7 and 8, the elevation of Elisha from "one of Bnei Ha Neviim" to "successor of Eliyahu" is emphasized.
6. In question 9, Elisha does not seem to rejoice in his new status, but rather mourns Eliyahu. In question 10, Elisha's actions confirm his status as Eliyahu's successor.
7. In question 11, students will examine how vv. 16-18 highlight that Elisha now understands things that Bnei Ha Neviim don't, and show that Elisha has a higher status than Bnei Ha Neviim. This contrasts with the beginning of the chapter, where Bnei Ha Neviim ask Elisha "Do you know" and Elisha says "I know what you know." Elisha has now come "full circle" – he is the teacher of the Bnei Ha Nevi'im, not their equal.

Throughout the story, Elisha shows restraint but also understanding of others:

1. he cares how Eliyahu feels and won't leave him;
2. he realizes that he can't prevent Bnei Ha Neviim from searching for Eliyahu and only by letting them seek in vain will they be able to accept that Eliyahu is gone.

The students' key "take away" message in this chapter is to recognize that Elisha differs from Eliyahu: he shows empathy for others' feelings, and those "others" include both Elisha and Bnei Ha Neviim.

Test

Melakhim Alef chapter 22 and Melakhim Bet chapters 1 and 2 are very powerful dramatic narratives. Students have had the opportunity to read these, but must be given the opportunity to review and internalize these narratives. I suggest assigning a test in which students will be given "graduated" assignments, consisting of three concentric groups of verses.

Group A:

Chapter 22, verses 2-4, verses 16-18, verses 30-31

Chapter 1 verse 2, verses 5-8, verses 16-17

Chapter 2, verses 1-3, verse 8, verse 11

Group B:

Chapter 22, verses 5-7, verses 19-23, verses 32-37

Chapter 1, verses 13-14

Chapter 2, verses 4-6, verses 9-12

Some students will be responsible for reading, translating, and answering questions only on group A; others will be responsible for groups A and B and others will be responsible for all of the three chapters. This ensures support for students who have difficulty reading, while giving all students a chance to familiarize themselves with these verses.

Note that the first part of the next lesson is designed to give brighter students an independent activity so that they can work on their own while the teacher reviews with the weaker students for the test.