

## 2 KINGS

### INTRODUCTION

1. AUTHOR – Unknown – See notes on 1 Kings.
2. DATE WRITTEN – Again unknown but probably compiled after the exile.
3. DATES COVERED – From the death of Ahab (850 BC) to the fall of Jerusalem & Judah's exile (580 BC).
4. NAME – Again taken from the kings as prominent figures.
5. KEY VERSES – Chapter 17:18-20, 23:26-27

### OUTLINE

2 Kings continues the story. Israel and Judah increase in wickedness and are taken into captivity.

CAPTURED NATION	KING AT TIME	CAPTURING NATION	KING	DATE
Israel	Hoshea	Assyria	Shalmaneser	722 BC.
Judah	Jehoiachin & Zedekiah	Babylon	Nebuchadnezzar	605-586 BC

1. THE INFLUENCE OF THE PROPHETS. CH 1-9
  - A. The close of Elijah's ministry. Ch1-2
  - B. The ministry of Elisha under Israel's Kings Ahaziah and Joram. Ch3-8
  - C. Kings of Judah, Jehoram and Ahaziah, and of Israel, Jehu. Ch9
2. THE DECLINE AND FALL OF ISRAEL. CH 10-17
  - A. Israel's kings – Jehu Ch10, Jehoahaz and Jehoash Ch13, Jeroboam II, Zechariah, Shallum, Menahem, Pekahiah, Pekah, and Hoshea. Ch14,15,17.
  - B. Judah's kings – Athaliah and Joash Ch11-12, Amaziah Ch14, Azariah Ch15:1-7, Jotham Ch15:32-38, and Ahaz Ch16.
  - C. Samaria falls and is resettled by pagans Ch17.
3. THE DECLINE AND FALL OF JUDAH. CH 18-25
  - A. King Hezekiah's reign is characterized by prosperity and failure. Ch18-20
  - B. Kings Manasseh and Amon. Ch21
  - C. King Josiah carried out a reformation. Ch22-23
  - D. Jerusalem fell. The stories of Kings Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah are told. Ch24
  - E. The rebellion and its defeat. King Jehoiachin is favored. Ch25

### IMPORTANCE OF 2 KINGS

1. 2 Kings continues the historical narration of the decline of Israel and Judah as the setting for the ministries of the prophets.
2. Just as God is faithful in rewarding obedience, so He is faithful in punishing disobedience. Compare the promises of punishment in Deut 28 with the events of 2 Kings.
3. God sovereignly directs His people by His prophets and punishments.
4. Israel and Judah demonstrate their unfaithfulness even after God granted their desire for a king. We are all sinners even when we get what we want.
5. God's grace is demonstrated in deeds outside His people as with the Shunammite woman, and Naaman and in His blessings when His people obeyed as under Kings Joash and Hezekiah.
6. God kept His word to David. Israel had 19 kings from 7 different families while all 20 kings of Judah were descended from David. See 2 Samuel 7.
7. I think the key phrase in the book is "the word of God" or a representation like that. It is what is kept. It is what the prophets speak and what the kings and people are held accountable to. Take note of how it dominates the activities of the book.
8. One of my favorite stories is chapter 6. Pray that God opens our eyes to see from his perspective.

## 2 KINGS

1 – This book continues the account of the life and ministry of Elijah. It shows the power of Elijah's life as he lived and spoke the Word of God. He had a message that the king would die and he did. He called down fire from heaven on the captain and his army of fifty men and they died. Notice the way this chapter sets up contrasts between what is right and what is wrong. The story centers on the illness of the king of Israel. The word of the Lord was that the illness was fatal and that he would not recover but die. The phrase that is repeated is "This is what the king says..." The answer to that lies in V16, "and said to him, 'Thus says the Lord, "Because you have sent messengers to inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron – is it because there is no God in Israel to inquire of his word?"'" Contrast what the king says with what God says.

2 – This chapter is about the passing of leadership as a prophet from Elijah to Elisha. A series of similar events seemed designed to turn Elisha away. He refused. There was the request. V9 "When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, 'Ask what I shall do for you before I am taken from you.' And Elisha said, 'Please let there be a double portion of your spirit on me.'" It appears that happened. Like Elijah, Elisha separated the waters of the Jordan, healed the polluted water and called down the curse on the boys who jeered him. Is not the point of the story to show the power of God in and on behalf of his prophet? Elisha called a curse "in the name of the Lord." *The Message* says of the "double portion," "Your life repeated in my life. I want to be a holy man just like you." May we say that to Jesus! "Lord Jesus, we want to be a man just like you, not in power of miracles so much as in relationship with God and faithfulness. Help us, we pray!"

3 – The nations of Israel and Judah joined together to fight Moab who had rebelled. They were in the desert and ran out of water. The Lord provided water. Notice again the effectiveness of the Word of God. Everything that Elisha says would happen did happen. V12 "And Jehoshaphat said, 'the word of the Lord is with him.' So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat and the king of Edom went down to him."

4 – Further stories of the miracles God did through Elisha are recounted. He multiplied oil to provide for a widow. He gave a childless couple a son then raised him back to life when he died. He healed poison food and multiplied bread for the hungry. All is V44 "according to the word of the Lord."

5 – Naaman was cured of his leprosy (skin disease). The upshot of the story is that he became a believer in the God of Israel. The end result is the testimony in V15, "Behold I know that there is no God in all the earth but in Israel." There is an intriguing interchange between Naaman and Elisha over the practice of bowing before the foreign god when he worships with his master. It seems that what looks like an unacceptable compromise is allowed by grace due to the man's situation, his master being in charge of his life, and his pagan understanding of God and his ways. Note also the servant Gehazi took reward. He did not do anything to earn it. He lied to obtain it. His timing was very poor. And Elisha's spirit is said to have gone with him and knew what he had done.

6-7 – This is the story of conflict between Israel and Aram. It demonstrates several times the supernatural abilities the prophet of God possessed. He raised an iron axe head to float on water. He knew where the enemy army was and warned the king. He overcame an entire army with supernatural ability to see for himself and to cause the enemy to not see. He seemed to be in control of a battle and famine and the ending of it. O Lord, help us to see that you are in charge of all. 6:17 "Then Elisha prayed and said, 'O Lord, please open his eyes that he may see.' So the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha." That is a valid prayer for us. We know that God surrounds his people with care. Often we do not see that care. We see only the troubles and enemies. Pray that the Lord will open our eyes that we will see the resources he has provided for us.

8 – The chapter continues the story of the kings of Israel and Judah and their wickedness, which consisted of disobedience to the word of the Lord. V27 "He also walked in the way of the house of Ahab and did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, as the house of Ahab had done, for he was son-in-law to the house of Ahab." All of these stories continue to reflect the truth and power of the word of the Lord. It shows in this chapter by the phrase, "the Lord has shown me..." Note again the faithfulness of God to his

word in V19. "Yet the Lord was not willing to destroy Judah for the sake of David his servant, since he promised to give a lamp to him and to his sons forever."

9 – The Lord carried out his word of judgment against Ahab's wife Jezebel and his son Joram. Jehu was anointed king over Israel and murdered both of them in obedience to the word of the Lord. How can anyone ever leave out the justice of God in discussions about God? These are gruesome stories but it all has to do with the justice of God. We must always remember that God judges all sin. We are only safe in the death of Jesus.

10 – Jehu continued to carry out the Lord's judgment by executing the sons of Ahab, the sons of Ahaziah and the worshipers of Baal. All of this was to fulfill the prophecy of the word of the Lord in judgment. V10 "Know then that there shall fall to the earth nothing of the word of the Lord, which the Lord spoke concerning the house of Ahab, for the Lord has done what he said by his servant Elijah." This brought reward to Jehu in that the Lord promised that his sons to the fourth generation would rule on Israel's throne. At the same time, God began to judge Israel. V32 "In those days the Lord began to cut off parts of Israel." What a line there is between zeal for the Lord and zeal for self! Jehu was zealous for the Lord and carried out all the Lord's commands to rid Israel of the house of Ahab. At some point he crossed over for himself, it seems, because the Lord, while granting him four generations of the throne of Israel, only gave him four. How careful we must be to obey all the Lord's commands!

11 – Meanwhile back in Judah, when Ahaziah died, his mother took over. She killed all the other king's sons except the youngest, who a nurse hid from her. The priest Jehoiada arranged for that youngest son to reign six years later when he was seven. V17-18 "And Jehoiada made a covenant between the Lord and the king and people that they should be the Lord's people and also between the king and the people. Then all the people of the land went to the house of Baal and tore it down; his altars and his images they broke in pieces, and they killed Mattan the priest of Baal before the altars." There is a time when our stand for God and for his righteousness will show in action and judgment. Is it that we think we no longer are the ones to carry out his judgments? It is clear that God uses nations and wars, at least partially, to fulfill his judgments.

12 – There is a clear theme in the Books of Kings that when people obey the Lord, things in life go well with them and when they do not, there is judgment and destruction. For some reason this king had two names, Jehoash and Joash. V2 "And Jehoash did what was right in the eyes of the Lord all his days, because Jehoiada the priest instructed him." We can appreciate the testimony regarding the workers in V15. "And they did not ask an accounting from the men into whose hand they delivered the money to pay out to the workmen for they dealt honestly." Then Joash died and Amaziah his son reigned. Notice how thin the thread of succession is during this time. Remember that in Judah, God promised that a son of David would always reign. That promise was held by the thread of that nurse who hid the one-year-old baby Joash so that he would reign when he was seven.

13 – This is a list and account of a further succession of kings of the Northern kingdom of Israel. It is a little confusing because a king Joash (also spelled Jehoash) is king of Israel at the same time a man of the same name is king over Judah. Elisha died. V22-23 "Now Hazael king of Syria oppressed Israel all the days of Jehoahaz. But the Lord was gracious to them and had compassion on them and he turned toward them, because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and would not destroy them nor has he cast them from his presence until now." See V5 where it says, "Therefore the Lord gave Israel a savior, so that they escaped from the hand of the Syrians..." God's grace extended to the northern kingdom even though they seemed to be wicked continuously. There is a remarkable testimony to the power of Elisha's life in that even after he died, when a dead person came in contact with his bones, the dead person became alive again V21 "and stood on his feet."

14 – This chapter tells the stories of Amaziah of Judah and of Jeroboam II of Israel. The first did right in the eyes of the Lord and the second did evil. V27 "But the Lord had not said that he would blot out the name of Israel from under heaven, he saved them by the hand of Jeroboam son of Joash."

Go TO JOEL, JONAH, AMOS, AND HOSEA for next reading.

15 – This is a very important section of Scripture and Earlier Testament history. This chapter goes through a list of kings of Israel that reigned during the reign of Azariah (Uzziah) who led Judah for 55 years. All of these were characterized, as “did evil in the sight of the Lord.” That is all that counts, what we do in God’s eyes. Their reigns were very short and several of them were assassinated by the one succeeding them. It was very dark. Assyria took over. Meanwhile, Azariah/Uzziah reigned over fifty years in Judah bringing stability and righteousness. During this time, Assyria attacked and captured Israel and carried the people to Assyria captive.

16 – In this chapter, the King of Judah saw an altar in the foreign land and ordered the priest to build him one like it. So he built one just like the one used by the pagans even though they had just been defeated in battle. 16:16 “Uriah the priest did all this as King Ahaz commanded.” He did a number of other activities “in deference to the king of Assyria.” This chapter tells the story of Ahaz, king of Judah. He was very wicked. Not only did he do things contrary to the command of the Lord, but he also tore down parts of the temple worship and replaced them with things pleasing to the king of Assyria. He did this work through the priest, Uriah, who must not have been much better. It seems that the priest was more interested in pleasing the king than God.

17 – This chapter is a one-chapter history of the entire nation of Israel. It tells what God did for them, how they rejected what he did by disobedience, and what he did to punish them. It continues to recount that Judah was not much different. Because of this Israel was carried away into captivity. And when the people who replaced them in the land did not do things God’s way, he sent lions into the land to terrify them. They tried to find out what to do about the lions but when God told them what to do even then they did not do what he said. How wicked is the heart of humans, including our own hearts! Even though they heard prophets like Elijah, Elisha, Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah they still refused to bow the knee to the Lord. V13 “Yet the Lord warned Israel and Judah by every prophet and every seer, saying, ‘Turn from your evil ways and keep my commandments and my statutes, in accordance with all the Law that I commanded your father, and that I sent to you by my servants the prophets.’ But they would not listen...” There is no cure for apostasy. All God can do is to judge and then take a “believing remnant” and start over again.

18 – Sennacherib the king of Assyria, who had just captured Samaria, approached Jerusalem, full of confidence that their fates would be the same. V19 “Thus says the great king, the king of Assyria...” Note the answer given in 19:6, “Thus says the Lord...” They sent a delegation to Isaiah the prophet. That was a good move to bring it to the Lord. Hezekiah had already been seeking the Lord and a revival had happened. That seems to have been the basis for this.

19 – V6 “Isaiah said to them, ‘Say to your master, “Thus says the Lord: Do not be afraid because of the words you have heard with which the servants of the king of Assyria have reviled me.”’” Note Hezekiah’s response to the letter of threat in V14. “Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers and read it; and Hezekiah went up to the house of the Lord and spread it before the Lord.” V19 He prayed, “So now, O Lord our God, save us, please, from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you, O Lord, are God alone.” V34 “For I will defend this city and save it, for my own sake and the sake of my servant David.”

20 – There are several things that seem unusual in this chapter. One is that it is almost a word for word repeat of a chapter in Isaiah. It does not seem to be that important. Another is that it seems strange that God healed Hezekiah. His prayer for healing seems more like whining than prayer. Why does God answer this one? It appears to be a small thing that Hezekiah showed off his possessions to the people from Babylon. Yet God picked up on that and announced that that was the nation that would invade and capture their land. It seems more likely that the invasion was already identified. Perhaps the strangest is that the conception of Manasseh, the wickedest king in Judah’s history occurs during the fifteen years extension that Hezekiah is granted in answer to his prayer. Did what appeared to be a good answer to Hezekiah’s prayer turn into something bad in the birth of this most wicked king? Lord you are above us. You are sovereign and we do not understand all or much of what you do. Help us trust what you do more than what we can figure out. The promise of healing is in V5. “And before Isaiah had gone out of the middle court, the word of the Lord came to him. Turn back, and say to Hezekiah the leader of my people. Thus says the Lord, the God of David your father. I have heard your prayer; I have seen your tears.

Behold I will heal you." Note the unusual sign that God offered. It was to reverse the movement of the sun on the steps, which would act as a sundial to measure the hours of the day. Can you imagine the sun going backward in the sky? What a great God we serve!

21 – This chapter records the wickedness of King Manasseh and his reign. He did the opposite of his father, Hezekiah and it appears that he undid all the good that Hezekiah had done. Even though he was king for 55 years, he is given very little space in the history of the nation. One thought that is repeated is that Jerusalem is the place where the Lord put his Name. That seems significant as it is listed in V4 and V7. It is also recorded that Manasseh's wickedness set the tone for the nation and that as he went in his evil, they followed in theirs. V9 "Manasseh led them astray to do more evil than the nations had done whom the Lord destroyed before the people of Israel." There is such wickedness in this chapter. It is hard to figure out though what counts. Is it that the entire nation sinned in this way? Or is it that the wickedest sinned in this way? How does God see our nation today? We know some sin in these most wicked of ways but there are also many who appear to seek the Lord. Is it a certain percentage that determines judgment or blessing? How can we tell?

22 – The king Josiah is commended as one who did what was right. Also when he was confronted with the words of the prophecy that the Lord was going to judge the nation, his heart responded in humility and brokenness, seeking the Lord. For that he was commended also. Why is it that we are so hesitant to confess our sins when God is so quick to restore us? Instead we hide or excuse or deny our sin. That led to punishment. V11 "When the king heard the words of the Book of the Law, he tore his clothes." V19-20 "Because your heart was penitent and you humbled yourself before the Lord...I will gather you to your father and you shall be gathered to your grave in peace."

23 – Josiah is commended as the best king since David. He did what he could to remove all the offending symbols of foreign gods. He "defiled" the places of the foreign gods. It was not enough to turn away the anger and judgment of the Lord against the nation. V26-27 "Still the Lord did not turn from the burning of his great wrath, by which his anger was kindled against Judah, because of all the provocations with which Manasseh had provoked him. And the Lord said, 'I will remove Judah also out of my sight, as I have removed Israel, and I will cast off this city that I have chosen, Jerusalem, and the house of which I said, My name shall be there.'" This appears to be similar to what God did to Israel except that he will also state the he will bring them back to this land. This is evidence for the doctrine of premillennialism because it shows a future for the nation of Israel through a remnant as seen in those of Judah who survive.

24 – V3-4 "Surely this came upon Judah at the command of the Lord, to remove them out of his sight, for the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he had done, and also for the innocent blood that he had shed. For he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood, and the Lord would not pardon." V20 "For because of the anger of the Lord it came to the point in Jerusalem and Judah that he cast them out from his presence." We must be willing to preach that. According to V4, there comes a point of rebellion and sin at which God is no longer willing to pardon. The judgment, righteousness and holiness of God must be preached. It is what sets the mercy and grace of God in context. If we have rebelled against God enough that he has passed that point and we have deserved his condemnation, and then he forgives us, it is only because of his mercy and grace.

25 – The rest of the punishment of the city of Jerusalem is carried out by the Babylonians. V9 "And he burned the house of the Lord and the king's house and all the houses of Jerusalem; every great house he burned down." Imagine the people watching their city, its temple and walls and all parts of it being burned. They had relied on the Lord but in a presumptive way. They thought they could live however they wanted and sin as much as they wanted, and God would still protect them. That was a false hope. The king and all officials were carried off with the people into exile. It was a complete fulfillment of the prophecy of the LORD because of their disobedience. It is interesting to note that after some time, it is the king of Judah who is released from prison and given a rank higher than any of the other kings who were taken in exile.