



# 2 KINGS

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## Welcome to the book of 2 Kings!

To begin your study of 2 Kings, meditate upon the contents of the book reflected in the overview chart below. What are the two major movements of this book? Who were the primary prophets of 1-17? What was the surviving kingdom? Of what tribes did it consist? As you read 18-25, evaluate the kings and the reforms they implemented or the rebellion they fostered. A key verse is 17:7. How does this verse reflect the theme words we have chosen for 2 Kings? The results of monarchy is really quite dismal for Israel.

<b>2 KINGS</b>	<b>Exile/Scatter</b>
<b>DIVIDED KINGDOM</b> 16:2-4	<b>SURVIVING KINGDOM</b> 18:3-6
prophets...1:3; 2:9 kings...17:7,8	reform...22:10-13 rebellion...23:32,37; 24:9,19
1-17	18-25

*"Now this came about because the sons of Israel had sinned." 17:7*

Also note the passages listed within the overview chart above. Take this opportunity to refer to and note each one, relating the section titles to the appropriate passage. What have you learned about 2 Kings thus far?

1 Samuel begins with the call of Samuel in a time where visions from the Lord were rare. 2 Samuel opens with David's success that led to a self-confidence that resulted in the shame of adultery and murder. 1 Kings gives the account of Solomon's divided interests and closes with a split into a divided kingdom. 2 Kings reviews the fortunes of the divided kingdom through both men of God and men of flesh. It ends with the complete collapse of the Kingdom and scattering of the people of God.

*Open your heart as you read!*

What do the messages and works of the prophets tell you about your own spiritual condition - as well as that of the people of Israel? How do the actions and reactions of the Kings give you specific instruction on your own response to God's Word? Reform contributes to our spiritual survival. Rebellion contributes to our spiritual captivity!

## **BACKGROUND**

In the midst of the Civil War in the United States, our President, Abraham Lincoln, gave his famous "House Divided" speech in which he quoted from Matthew 12:25 where the Lord Jesus is speaking to the Pharisees when He states the fact that "any kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and any city or house divided against itself shall not stand". The kingdom divided against itself in 1 Kings becomes the kingdom dissolved in 2 Kings. This book outlines the depressing history of two nations (Israel and Judah) on a collision course with captivity. The author of this book first traces the history of Israel forward to its captivity at the hands of the Assyrians (chapters 1-17), then retraces the history of Judah forward to its captivity at the hands of the Babylonians (chapters 18-25).

The period of time covered in this book is approximately 300 years. What were the empires like which conquered the Northern and later Southern Kingdoms? The Assyrians were powerful and cruel warriors. Their practices were horrible. They skinned men alive, cut out their tongues, gouged out their eyes, dismembered their bodies, and often made mounds of the skulls of men to instill fear! Assyria was a world empire for 300 years. The capital of this empire was Nineveh to which Jonah was sent by God to preach a message of judgment. About 136 years after the Northern Kingdom had been taken into captivity by Assyria, the Southern Kingdom was captured by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. The king of Babylon destroyed Jerusalem, burned the temple, confiscated most of its treasures and led the princes of Judah away into captivity. While Nebuchadnezzar would not tolerate any disloyalty to him as ruler, there is evidence that he and his empire were not as brutal as the Assyrians.

The exiles of Judah may be described as being under liberal interment rather than in a concentration camp. Some captives were given special privileges such as owning their own homes and land, and even accumulated great wealth for themselves (Jeremiah 29:4-7). According to the historian, Josephus, when the exiles were given permission by Cyrus to return home, most refused because they were not able to part with their possessions (Jos. Antiq. XI 1.3). They had come under the influence of affluence and had replaced one form of captivity for another.

## **WHY STUDY 2 KINGS?**

This book shows us how quickly a great nation (or church) can become divided and ultimately fail through the sin of its leaders and people. "Let him who thinks he stands keep watch or he may fall." (1 Corinthians 10:12)



# 2 Kings Chapter Chart

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## Ahaziah of Israel

## Read Chapters 1-2

Chapter	Title	Key Verse
1		
2		

### KEY QUESTIONS:

1. What was Ahaziah's sin?
2. Why did Elijah answer with the statement, "If I am a man of God..."?
3. Why was fire the chosen way to display God's power in this instance?
4. What was the necessity of the challenge in 2:10?
5. What do we learn about Elijah? About Elisha (his character)?

### What about today?

The closing words of this chapter reveal the stubbornness of the people's heart as these young men fail to submit to God's authority through Elisha. Ahaziah's sin was consultation of other gods before Yahweh (the Lord). The result would be a nation of young men who would revile authority.

What patterns are you setting in life? Do you consult the God of heaven or the wisdom of men when you approach life's circumstances? Note James 3:13-18 for a comparison of these two kinds of wisdom!

# Jehoram of Israel

# Read Chapters 3-5

Chapter	Title	Key Verse
3		
4		
5		

### KEY QUESTIONS:

1. Notice in 3:1-3 the character of Jehoram's reign. What does Elijah's statement in 3:14 reveal?
2. What is the cause of the "great wrath" in 3:27?
3. How is the situation and faith of the widow symbolic of the nature of 2 Kings?
4. How does the outcome of the Shunnamite woman's son's life reveal something about Israel and Judah?
5. What was the lesson God is trying to teach through the example of Naaman?
6. Through the dishonesty of Gehazi?

### What about today?

"The goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart, a clear conscience and sincere faith." (1 Timothy 1:5). How does your commitment to God compare to this verse, as well as the examples of Naaman and Gehazi?

# Jehoram's Reign

# Read Chapters 6-8

Chapter	Title	Key Verse
6		
7		
8		

### KEY QUESTIONS:

1. What was the significance of the episode with the floating ax head in context with the account about Assyria?
2. Notice the contrasted faith of Elisha and his servant. How does God display His power to the Assyrians (Arameans)? To the king of Israel?
3. Why was the death of the royal officer necessary?
4. Notice the fulfilled prophecy about Hazael in 10:32, 13:3-7, 22. What is Elisha saying to Hazael in 8:10, 11?

### What about today?

Man looks on the outward appearance, but God views the heart. In 8:11, Elisha cut right through Hazael's motives. Our God knows our heart. It is of no profit to try to lie to God. Our motives are transparent before Him! If our motives are not apparent now, they will be completely revealed in the future (Romans 2:16)! Why try to hide?!

# Kings of Judah and Israel

# Read Chapters 8-13

Chapter	Title	Key Verse
8		
9		
10		
11		
12		
13		

### KEY QUESTIONS:

1. Why was the Lord's wrath withheld from Judah (8:19)?
2. Answer these questions about each king's reign: What was the character of each king's reign? What were the signs that occurred in each reign proclaiming the Word of the Lord?

### What about today?

Notice the revival in 11:17-20 and the return to bondage in 12:2-3. We cannot allow the high places to remain. Have you torn down your altars and destroyed them beyond rebuilding? What are the remaining high places in your life? Note James 4:4-10 in this regard.

# Kings of Judah and Israel

# Read Chapters 14-17

Chapter	Title	Key Verse
14		
15		
16		
17		

### KEY QUESTIONS:

1. Again answer these questions about each of the king's reigns:  
What was the character of each reign?
2. What were the signs that occurred in each reign proclaiming the Word of God?

### What about today?

Reread 17:7-23, recounting and listing Israel's specific sins. How are these characteristics somewhat true of "religion" in American today? What can you change in your life relative to the lessons of these chapters? Note I Timothy 5:24, 25 concerning "religion."



# Hezekiah and Manasseh

# Read Chapters 18-21

Chapter	Title	Key Verse
18		
19		
20		
21		

### **KEY QUESTIONS:**

1. Over whom did these two kings reign?
2. Where was Israel and her kings spiritually at this time?
3. How did Hezekiah's reign contrast and/or parallel that of the kings we have already read about?
4. Which of the major prophets is introduced here?
5. Notice the restatement of Israel's fall in 18:9-12. What was the failure of Hezekiah's reign?
6. Contrast the reign of Manasseh with that of Hezekiah. Notice the inconsistency of the quality of commitment and lifestyle that characterizes this whole period of Israel's history.

### ***What about today?***

Through the defeat of Sennacherib we once again see God's power manifested to a disobedient and unreliable people. Thank God for His miraculous grace that continues to be sufficient - despite the deficiencies of His people!

# Jehoram's Reign

# Read Chapters 21-23

<b>Chapter</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Key Verse</b>
21		
22		
23		

### **KEY QUESTIONS:**

1. Again answer the question, "What was the character of each reign?"
2. "What were the signs that occurred in each reign proclaiming the Word of the Lord?"

### **What about today?**

Notice the ending note of the book. How does this captivity differ from that of Israel to Assyria? Review all the reigns of the kings.



# ELIJAH HAS COME

The Jews were very aware that the Messiah was due to arrive. In fact, there were over a dozen people claiming to be the Messiah at the time Jesus appeared in Jerusalem! When Jesus was questioned He was often asked if He or John the Baptist were Elijah or the Prophet or the Messiah.

Elijah and Elisha had specific roles to fulfill among the Kings of Israel who ruled during the years of their lives and public ministries. But even more stunning is the way Elijah and Elisha gave a clear picture of what kinds of things would surround the Messiah! He would do things that had never been heard of or seen since the foundation of the world.

As Jesus performed miracles and even raised the dead, the Jews should have had no doubt who was before them. The miracles of Elijah and Elisha are personal and shocking, and they will only be eclipsed when Jesus shows up on the world stage hundreds of years later.

Make a list of the miracles of these two prophets, paging through your studied chapters of 1 & 2 Kings. Do you see any similarities to the miracles that Jesus performed?

1 & 2 Kings Miracles	Purpose of the Miracle?	Similar Jesus Miracle

*Why do you think the Jews in Jesus day missed the significance of Jesus' miracles?*

*How can people in our world be guilty of the same error?*