



Overview for 2 Kings

Purpose: To give the history of the kings from Ahaziah (Northern Kingdom) and Jehoram (Southern Kingdom) until each kingdom fell and was brought into captivity. The book also demonstrates God's pursuit of His people through the message of His prophets.

Author: Tradition says that Jeremiah wrote the Book of Kings, perhaps with the help of other prophets. Some scholars suggest that Ezra and the priests compiled the information included in the book.

Date Written: Internal evidence indicates that at least the final chapters were written sometime after 561 B.C. and before 536 B.C.

Setting: The Book of 2 Kings begins approximately eighty years after the Kingdom was divided. It covers the final 130-year period before the fall of the Northern Kingdom of Israel to Assyria in 722 B.C., and then another 136 years until the fall of the Southern Kingdom of Judah to the Babylonians in 586 B.C.

Key People: Elijah, Elisha, and kings of Judah and Israel.

Summary: The Books of 1 and 2 Kings were originally one book. The first time the book was known to have been separated into two was in the Septuagint, which was the earliest translation into Greek of the Old Testament. The first time a division is found in the Hebrew Bible is in the Rabbinic Bible of 1517. The time frame of both the books together is about 450 years.

The Book of 2 Kings relates how Israel and Judah were led into captivity. During this sinful time of Israel's history, God raised up prophets to proclaim

His message and be His spokesmen. Elijah was one of the first prophets mentioned in this book, and he trained Elisha to be his successor. Chapter 2 records Elijah's final meeting with Elisha. Following this, Elisha's ministry lasted fifty years. He had a great deal of influence upon the kings of his day, and although he did not approve of what they did, he was continually sent by God to their rescue.

Judah survived for more than a century after the fall of the Northern Kingdom, but paid tribute to Assyria during most of that time. There were only two good kings in Judah's final years: Hezekiah and Josiah. Without question, Josiah was the finest of Judah's kings and he instituted thorough religious reform (2 Kings 23:25 and 2 Chronicles 34-35). During his reform and repairing of the Temple, a book of the law was found which inspired a revival in Judah.

At the end of Josiah's reign, the Assyrian capital, Nineveh, fell to Babylonia in 612 B.C. Egypt then went north to aid what was left of Assyria. King Josiah of Judah resisted their march through Israelite territory and was killed at the Battle of Megiddo (2 Kings 23:29).

Judah became sandwiched between two super powers, Egypt and Babylonia. The Jewish people began to rely on both nations, and seldom sought the Lord for guidance. Finally, Nebuchadnezzar invaded Judah in 605 B.C. After Judah made several attempts for independence, Babylon decided to completely destroy it. The important leaders were killed, and the rest of the people were exiled, except for the very poor who were left to tend the crops. The Temple was burned, and all its furnishings taken away to Babylon (2 Kings 24 and 25).

Timeline

See “The Divided Kingdom” four-page timeline included in this unit.

Outline

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A complete amplified outline of this book is available on our website at www.apostolicfaith.org.*

- I. The reigns of the kings of Israel and Judah (1:1 — 17:41)
 - A. Ahaziah of Israel (1:1 — 2:25)
 - B. Jehoram of Israel (3:1 — 8:15)
 - C. Jehoram of Judah (8:16-24)
 - D. Ahaziah of Judah (8:25-29)
 - E. Jehu of Israel (9:1 — 10:36)
 - F. Athaliah of Judah (11:1-20)
 - G. Jehoash of Judah (11:21 — 12:21)
 - H. Jehoahaz of Israel (13:1-9)
 - I. Jehoash of Israel (13:10-25)
 - J. Amaziah of Judah (14:1-22)
 - K. Jeroboam II of Israel (14:23-29)
 - L. Uzziah of Judah (15:1-7)
 - M. Zechariah of Israel (15:8-12)
 - N. Shallum of Israel (15:13-16)
 - O. Menahem of Israel (15:17-22)
 - P. Pekahiah of Israel (15:23-26)
 - Q. Pekah of Israel (15:27-31)
 - R. Jotham of Judah (15:32-38)
 - S. Ahaz of Judah (16:1-20)
 - T. Hoshea of Israel (17:1-41)
- II. The reigns of the kings of Judah (18:1 — 25:30)
 - A. Hezekiah (18:1 — 20:21)
 - B. Manasseh (21:1-18)
 - C. Amon (21:19-26)
 - D. Josiah (22:1 — 23:30)
 - E. Jehoahaz (23:31-35)
 - F. Jehoiakim (23:36 — 24:7)
 - G. Jehoiachin (24:8-16)
 - H. Zedekiah (24:17 — 25:30)