



2 Kings

Summary

2 Kings is a continuation of 1 Kings. 2 Kings documents the dividing of the kingdom, the destruction of Israel, and the captivity of Judah, leaving only a remnant of David's kingdom as had been prophesied. 2 Kings begins with Elijah telling Ahaziah, king of Israel, that he will die for worshipping Baal instead of Yahweh. Elijah's ministry ends as Elisha asks for a double portion of Elijah's spirit, and a chariot of fire appears to take Elijah to heaven.

In the next section of 2 Kings, Judah and Israel are at war against Moab and are without water. God tells Elisha that He will fill the valley with water without sending rain and that they will prevail over Moab in battle. During his ministry, Elisha parted the waters of the Jordan River, purified the bad water of Jericho, and saved the lives of a widow and her sons by providing a jar of oil that never ran out. He also raised a young boy from the dead, purified poisoned food during a famine, cured an army commander of leprosy, and made an iron ax head float. On one occasion, Elisha feeds a crowd of over 100 people with just 20 loaves of bread. This story, as well as others, foreshadows similar miracles done by Jesus in the New Testament. In one miraculous event, God blinds the entire Syrian army so that Elisha can escape captivity.

The remaining chapters of 2 Kings focus on the acts of the kings in the northern and southern kingdoms. One of the most notable kings was Jehoshaphat, king of the southern kingdom of Judah. God tells Jehoshaphat to destroy the house of Ahab, king of Israel, and he does so, fulfilling the prediction. The next section focuses on the fact that most of the kings did evil and how their behavior, and the behavior of the people, would lead to the destruction that follows.

In 732 B.C., Hoshea became the last king of Israel. In the ninth year of his reign, Assyria conquered Samaria. The people of Israel were then deported to Assyria and ultimately scattered to other lands. Israel no longer existed as a nation, which was a fulfillment of God's promise to Solomon. He warned Solomon that if the people worshipped other gods and did not obey His laws, He would cut them off and reject them. Meanwhile, Hezekiah became

king of the southern kingdom. In the eyes of the Lord, he was the godliest of all the kings of Judah. He kept God's commands, and the people worshipped Yahweh. This prolonged the eventual fall of the southern kingdom. The fall almost came when King Sennacherib of Assyria set siege to Jerusalem; but through the advice of the prophet Hezekiah, he was led to prayer, and Jerusalem was delivered. Later, envoys visited Hezekiah from Babylon, and he showed them all the temple treasures. Isaiah tells Hezekiah that because of his actions, someday the treasures would be carried off to Babylon.

When Hezekiah died, Manasseh became king. He was the evilest king in the eyes of the Lord. He rebuilt all the temples to Baal, he sacrificed his own son in the fire to Moloch, and he led the people to worship foreign gods. Because of Manasseh, God promised disaster on Jerusalem and Judah. God would forsake the remnant of his inheritance and allow the land to be plundered by enemies. Josiah became king after Manasseh's son, and he was a godly king who feared the Lord. When repairing the temple, he found the Book of the Law and read it aloud to his people. Josiah pledged himself and his kingdom to God, destroyed all the places of worship to other gods, and reinstated the celebration of the Passover. While God was pleased with Josiah, He still promised to punish the people for the sins of Manasseh. Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, invaded the land, and Jehoiakim became the leader of Judah. When he rebelled, Nebuchadnezzar came back twice to lay siege to Jerusalem. The first time, Jehoiakim was king, and he was taken to Babylon as a prisoner. The temple treasures were looted and the treasures were taken to Babylon, just as Isaiah had prophesied.

The second time Nebuchadnezzar returned, the youngest and brightest of the people of Judah were taken into exile in Babylon. Most of the remaining people were killed, and only a small remnant of poor farmers were left to work in the vineyards. The Babylonians set fire to the temple, the Royal Palace, and most of Jerusalem. 2 Kings ended with the people of Judah rebelling; but in fear of the Babylonians, all the remaining Israelites fled to Egypt. Hundreds of years after coming out of Egypt, God's chosen people no longer occupied the Promised Land, and they dispersed among the nations. Although God had fulfilled His promise to punish Israel for their sins, He also kept His promise to keep a remnant of the house of David alive. He did this so that He could fulfill His promise of providing a Messiah (Jesus Christ) from the house and lineage of David.

Author

In the original Hebrew texts, 1 & 2 Samuel and 1 & 2 Kings were all one book, simply titled Kings. They were separated into four books, because of their length. No one knows for certain who wrote 1 & 2 Kings. Jewish tradition credits Jeremiah, but few scholars accept this as likely. Whoever the author was, it is clear that he was familiar with the book of Deuteronomy, as were many of Israel's prophets.

Date

Most scholars believe 1 & 2 Kings was written around 550 B.C., and cover a period of 130 years. The timeframe was likely from David's death, around 970 B.C. to the reign of Ahaziah in 840 B.C.

Primary Characters

Elijah (2 Kings 1-2)

Elisha (2 Kings 2-13)

Jehu (2 Kings 9-10)

Ahaz (2 Kings 16-17)

Sennacherib (2 Kings 18-19)

Hezekiah (2 Kings 18-20)

Isaiah (2 Kings 19-20)

Manasseh (2 Kings 21)

Josiah (2 Kings 22-23)

Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings 24-25)

Jehoiachin (2 Kings 24-25)

Historical Moments

Elijah Taken Alive Up to Heaven in a Fiery Chariot (2 Kings 2)

Assyria Captures Samaria and the People of Israel Deported and Dispersed (2 Kings 17)

Manasseh, the Most Evil King, Becomes King of Judah (2 Kings 21)

Josiah, the Godliest King, Becomes King of Judah (2 Kings 22-23)

Nebuchadnezzar Lays Siege to Jerusalem and Temple Treasures Are Taken to Babylon (2 Kings 24)

Nebuchadnezzar Returns and Jerusalem and the People Are Destroyed (2 Kings 25)

Major Theological Themes

God Is Just - The Lord will judge His people when they disobey and turn their backs on Him. Because of His righteousness, there must be a payment for sin.

Prophecy Is True - The words of God's prophets are true, and they always come to pass. Although not all of the prophecy given by the Old Testament prophets are foretelling, many of them are. When prophets say that something will come to pass in the future, it does.

The Lord Is Faithful - God remembered His promise to David. Even though the kings and people of Judah and Israel disobeyed, the Lord did not allow David's kingdom to end.

God Deserves Our Trust - Elisha had an invisible army of angels protecting him. Just like him, we must also trust in God for His provision and protection in every trial that we face.

Lessons Learned from 2 Kings

God Hates Sin - The people in 2 Kings continuously sinned against the Lord through idolatry and disobedience. God makes it clear that He will not allow this to continue. Through the prophets, He warned that there would be punishment for the sins against Him. These consequences came in full force. Although we must always remember that God is loving, we must never forget that God expects us to live our lives in a godly manner.

God Keeps His Promises - In the book of 2 Kings, there are both promises of judgment and promises of protection. All of God's promises will be fulfilled. An example of this can be seen through the remnant that was preserved in Babylon. God also promised that the Messiah would come and save the people, which was fulfilled by Jesus Christ. Because of this, we can now have an uninhibited relationship with God despite our sinful nature.