

12 - 2 Kings

1:1 - 25:30

Key Verse:

INTRODUCTION TO 2 KINGS

2 Kings continues the history of the period of the monarchy. In chapter 2, Elijah is taken up to heaven in a chariot of fire and his mantle falls on Elisha. Elisha was a man of both spiritual and political influence in Israel. His ministry is described in chapter 8. In chapters 9 and 10, Jehu purges Baal worship from Israel in a bloodbath. But this did not cure the deep-rooted idolatry planted in Israel by Jeroboam, the king who made Israel to sin. The history of Northern Israel became progressively more violent, and idolatry persisted, until, in 722 BC, the Assyrians conquered Samaria. Following their regular colonial policy, they removed the Israelites from their land and brought in many people from other Assyrian colonies. The Israelites were scattered throughout the Assyrian Empire, and Northern Israel came to an end.

The lamp of David continued to burn in Judah, and David's descendants sat on the throne in Jerusalem until the Babylonian conquest in 586 BC. The book of Kings and the period of the monarchy ends with the fall of Jerusalem and the exile to Babylon. After 70 years, the Babylonians were themselves conquered by the Persians, and the Jews were allowed to return and rebuild Jerusalem, but that's another story. We can see here God's faithfulness in spite of man's unfaithfulness.

IS THERE NO GOD IN ISRAEL?

2 Kings 1:1-18

Key Verse 1:3b

1. "Go and consult Baal-Zebub" (1-8)

Ahaziah, king of Israel, had been injured in a fall. He was in pain, but he did not turn to God; he sent messengers to consult Baal. God sent Elijah to intercept the messengers and send them back to the king with a rebuke and bad news. Elijah obeyed. The king did not repent, but sent soldiers to arrest Elijah. Those who become proud and seek solutions from people or things are fools; those who refuse to repent will die.

2. There is a God in Israel! (9-18)

Fire fell from heaven and consumed the soldiers sent by the king to arrest Elijah. This happened twice. The king had no fear of God and no respect for the lives of his men. The captain of the third detachment begged Elijah to respect his life and the lives of his men. Elijah obeyed God and went with him to the king to tell him that he would die because he had despised the God of Israel. The king died.

Prayer: Lord, give me courage to speak your word. Help the people of our land to fear God and repent.

One Word: Is there no God in America?

ELISHA'S SPIRITUAL AMBITION

2 Kings 2:1-25

Key Verse: 2:9b

1. The chariot of fire (1-12)

Elisha knew that Elijah would be taken up to heaven soon, so he stayed close to his spiritual father and shepherd. Finally, Elijah asked him what he wanted. He asked for a double portion of Elijah's spirit. Elijah promised him that his hard request would be granted if he witnessed Elijah's departure. Then, as they walked along together, a chariot of fire swept down and took Elijah to heaven. Elisha was persistent, so he got God's blessing.

2. Elisha's ministry established (13-25)

God established Elisha as a spiritual leader. Elisha parted the waters of the Jordan as Elijah had done. He showed respect for Elijah, not by searching for him, but by carrying on his ministry. He healed the waters of a well and made the land productive. The jeering youths showed disrespect for God's servant and for God. Elisha restored spiritual order. God can't work in an atmosphere of disrespect.

Prayer: Lord, raise up spiritual leaders who can bring healing, spiritual order and your blessing to our land.

One Word: A double portion of Elijah's spirit

ELISHA TEACHES KINGS TO RELY ON GOD

2 Kings 3:1-27

Key Verse: 3:18

1. Moab revolts against Israel (1-9)

When Ahab king of Israel died, Moab revolted against Israel. Ahab's son Joram asked Jehoshaphat king of Judah (his father-in-law) to help him put down the revolt; so the kings of Israel, Judah and Edom formed a three-way alliance and went to attack Moab. They took a circuitous route through the desert and ran out of water.

2. Is there no prophet of the Lord here? (10-27)

In hard times, the one king who believed in the Lord God knew what to do. Jehoshaphat sought out a prophet of the Lord. For the sake of Jehoshaphat, Elisha prayed for them about their water problem. God heard Elisha's prayer and gave them water in the desert. He also promised them victory over the Moabites. The Moabites saw the sun reflected in the water and thought it was blood. The Moabites thought that their attackers had slaughtered each other, so they came to get the plunder and were surprised!

Prayer: Lord, teach me to seek your help and trust you in every time of crisis.

One Word: The Lord answers his servant

DON'T ASK FOR JUST A FEW!

2 Kings 4:1-7

Key Verse: 4:3b

1. What do you have in your house? (1,2)

Elisha not only counselled kings, he also shepherded the poor widow of a prophet. Her husband had left her with a debt. Her creditor harassed her by threatening to make her two boys slaves if she didn't pay off the debt. So Elisha asked her, "What do you have in your house?" Her total resources consisted of a little oil in a jar. God starts with what we have.

2. Don't ask for just a few (3-7)

Elisha told her to borrow empty jars--as many as she could--from her neighbors. The number she borrowed was the measure of her faith. Then he told her to go in her house, shut the door, and fill the jars with oil from her one small jar. When she began to fill the jars with oil, God worked a miracle and there was enough oil to fill as many jars as she had prepared. She sold the oil and paid off her debts. God's power and blessing was only limited by her faith and obedience.

Prayer: Lord, give me faith to ask great things of you. Make America a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

One Word: Don't ask for just a few

GOD BLESSES A GENTILE WOMAN

2 Kings 4:8-37

Key Verse: 4:9,10

1. A small room for God's servant (8-17)

Most people didn't think about Elisha's personal needs, but a certain well-to-do woman of Shunem did. She invited him to dinner. When she recognized him as God's servant, she prepared a small room on her roof for him to use whenever he was in town. To welcome a man because he is God's servant is to welcome God. The woman did not expect a reward, but Elisha prayed and God blessed her childless home with a son.

2. Did I ask for a son? (18-37)

The boy grew up and was the joy of his parents. Then one day he followed his father to the field, suffered a heat stroke, and died. His mother went with haste to Elisha. She went with resurrection faith. She wouldn't leave without Elisha, so he followed her home. After his servant failed to help the boy, Elisha struggled before God in prayer, and the Creator God restored the boy to life.

Prayer: Lord, teach me to welcome your servants and bear your costly blessings with joy and faith.

One Word: A room for God's servant

ELISHA FEEDS GOD'S FLOCK

2 Kings 4:38-44

Key Verse: 4:43b

1. Death in the pot (38-41)

There was a severe famine in Gilgal. Elisha was having a staff meeting there with about a hundred young intern prophets. They had a food problem. They collected some wild roots and herbs and made a stew. One man unknowingly put some poisonous gourds in the stew. When they tasted it they immediately knew. They were so hungry, but they could only smell the delicious stew! God's servant Elisha purified it with some flour--representing his dependence on God--and it became eatable and nourishing.

2. Give it to the people to eat (42-44)

A man came with 20 loaves of bread, baked from his first ripe grain. It was a gift for Elisha's personal use. Elisha instructed his servant to give the bread to the intern prophets. By human calculations, it was not enough for a hundred hungry men. But God was pleased with Elisha's shepherd heart and his faith, and the bread became more than enough to feed everyone.

Prayer: Lord, help me to feed your flock with a shepherd heart and to repent daily of my selfishness.

One Word: Give it to the people to eat

NAAMAN'S OBEDIENCE

2 Kings 5:1-14

Key Verse: 5:14

1. A little girl's faith (1-3)

Naaman was the great commander of the Syrian army, but he had a disease which made him more despised than a beggar. His wealth and fame could not help him. He was destined to die a painful and wretched death. A little servant girl, a captive and a slave, believed in the God of Israel. She had a shepherd heart for her master and told him about God's power and God's servant.

2. Naaman's faith and obedience (4-14)

Naaman was a proud man. He went to Elisha with a letter from his king. He was angry when Elisha didn't even come out and greet him. When Elisha instructed him to go and bathe 7 times in the Jordan River, he was furious. He didn't like to be told that he was dirty; he didn't like the Jordan River; he didn't like Elisha's attitude. But when he humbled himself and obeyed, he was healed. God cleanses sinners who come to him in his way. He blesses obedient faith.

Prayer: Lord, help me to overcome my pride and my own ideas and receive your training and your grace.

One Word: Do it God's way

A GRATEFUL SOLDIER AND A GREEDY SERVANT

2 Kings 5:15-27

Key Verse: 5:15

1. Go in peace (15-19a)

Naaman knew God's grace. He went back and thanked God's servant. He offered Elisha a gift which Elisha firmly refused. Naaman recognized the God of Israel as the true God, and he made a decision to worship only God. He took some dirt from Israel back to Syria as a reminder. He apologized for having to accompany his king into the house of an idol. Elisha sought no material gain; he was satisfied to see Naaman's desire to worship God, and he sent him home with a blessing.

2. Greed brings disaster (19b-27)

Gehazi saw the rich gifts which Elisha had refused. He decided that the opportunity was too good to miss, so he ran after Naaman and asked him for a talent of silver and two sets of

clothing. He tried to conceal what he had gotten, but God cannot be deceived. His greed cost him his job, his health and his life.

Prayer: Lord, help me to worship you with gratitude and to serve you with pure motives; help me never to seek personal benefit from your grace.

One Word: Don't be greedy; be thankful

BUILDING A NEW CENTER

2 Kings 6:1-7

Key Verse: 6:1,2

1. Let's build a bigger meeting place (1-4)

Elisha was a disciple-maker. A company of young prophets studied with him, and their number was increasing. Their meeting place was small, so the young prophets decided to build a bigger place to live and study. Elisha gave them permission and went with them to the Jordan River to cut logs. Elisha must have been very happy about their sense of responsibility.

2. The axhead floats (5-7)

While they were cutting trees, an accident happened. The iron axhead that one man was using flew off and fell in the river and sank. The man was distressed because he had borrowed the ax. Elisha was pleased with the man's sense of responsibility. No problem was too small for him. He solved the problem with the power God had given him.

One Word: Lord, help us to make a good environment for young disciples to study your word and grow. Give us each a sense of responsibility.

One Word: Let's build a bigger place

THOSE WHO ARE WITH US ARE MORE...

2 Kings 6:8-23

Key Verse: 6:16

1. Elisha joins in the war (8-17)

Aram was at war with Israel. Elisha used his prophetic insight to keep the king of Israel informed about the whereabouts and activities of the army of Aram. The king of Aram was enraged. He thought there was a leak, and he accused his officers. When he found out that the informant was Elisha, he sent an army to capture him. Elisha's servant was terrified, so Elisha prayed and God opened his eyes to see the army of the Lord standing ready to defend them (16).

2. The Aramean raiding bands stop (18-23)

Elisha prayed again, and the soldiers who had come to capture him became blind. He told them that they were in the wrong city, then proceeded to lead them to Samaria--the capital of Israel. They recovered their sight to discover that they had been captured. The king of Israel followed Elisha's advice, had a banquet for them and sent them home. The raids stopped.

Prayer: Lord, open my eyes to see that those who are with us are more, because you are with us.

One Word: Open your eyes

GOOD NEWS SHOULD BE SHARED

2 Kings 6:24-7:20

Key Verse: 7:9

1. The siege of Samaria (6:24-7:2)

When Ben-Hadad lay siege to Samaria, the suffering was indescribable. The people were starving and the ugliness of those who suffer without God appeared. King Joram blamed Elisha for the famine and sent soldiers to murder him. Elisha told him that the siege would be lifted, and the famine ended the next day.

2. This is the day of good news (3-20)

It seemed impossible that the siege would end, but God caused the Arameans to hear the sound of a great army; they abandoned everything and fled. The abandoned camp was discovered by 4 lepers who were dying of starvation. They had decided to go to the camp of the Arameans and surrender. When they saw the abandoned camp they ate and drank and began to carry off the plunder--then they were conscience stricken; they went back to Samaria to share the good news. We are duty-bound to share the good news of the gospel with a dying world.

Prayer: Lord, help me to share the good news with starving sinners.

One Word: Share the good news

A SHEPHERD OF THE NATIONS

2 Kings 8:1-29

Key Verse: 8:11

1. An obedient woman (1-6)

Elisha was a shepherd. He cared for the people of his time, both great and small. When he advised the Shunammite woman whose son he had healed to leave Israel for 7 years because of the famine, she obeyed. Now she returned. Elisha's servant was talking to the king; he identified the woman, and her property was restored. God's work in her life planted faith in the king.

2. A Gentile king (7-15)

Ben-Hadad king of Aram was sick. He was an enemy king, but he, too, was Elisha's sheep. When Hazael, his second-in-command, went to meet Elisha, Elisha wept. He knew that Hazael would murder Ben-Hadad and become a cruel and merciless foe of Israel.

3. Meanwhile, in Judah...(16-29)

Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat married Ahab's daughter Athaliah, a Baal worshiper. Their son Ahaziah came to the throne of David. There was no shepherd in Judah.

Prayer: Lord, raise up men of God who care about the people of our times.

One Word: A shepherd who wept

A COUP WHOSE TIME HAD COME

2 Kings 9:1-37

Key Verse: 9:22b

1. Go, anoint Jehu king of Israel (1-13)

Elisha sent a young prophet to anoint a general named Jehu king of Israel, and to instruct him to destroy the house of Ahab. When the prophet did as he was told, the army rallied behind Jehu and proclaimed him king.

2. How can there be peace? (14-37)

Jezebel was the most corrupt woman ever to occupy the throne of Israel. She controlled her weak husband Ahab and tried to turn Israel away from the Lord to worship Baal. She had tried to kill Elijah and had failed. Ahab had been killed in battle and their son Joram was king. God sent Jehu as his instrument of judgment. Jehu drove his chariot to Jezreel like a madman. He not only killed Jezebel, but he also killed her son, Joram and Ahaziah, Joram's cousin who was king of Judah. He purged Baal worship from Israel.

Prayer: Lord, surely your hand of judgment will fall on a land that is full of idolatry and witchcraft. Give us a spirit of repentance and turn our hearts to you.

One Word: God's judgement is sure

JEHU'S PURGE

2 Kings 10:1-36

Key Verse: 10:10

1. Ahab's family killed (1-17)

Jehu's purge had just begun. Because of Ahab and Jezebel, Baal worship had become the official religion in Israel. Jehu was a cruel and ambitious man, but God used him as an instrument to purge Baal worship from the land. After killing Ahab's son Joram, he challenged the leading men of Israel to either support him or choose another of Ahab's sons to be king. They were afraid to oppose him, so they murdered Ahab's remaining seventy sons. Jehu fulfilled the Lord's prophecy to Elijah (1Ki 21:21) and killed all who were left in Ahab's family.

2. Servants of Baal killed (18-36)

Jehu deceived the leading Baal worshipers and killed them all. God was pleased (30), but he could not bless Jehu because Jehu continued the state religion which Jeroboam had invented, and did not worship the Lord in the Lord's way.

Prayer: Lord, purge all the idols from my heart and help me to serve you in your way, with my whole heart.

One Word: God hates idolatry

THE LAMP OF DAVID FLICKERS

2 Kings 11:1-21

Key Verse: 11:2

1. A wicked woman, Athaliah (1)

Athaliah was the daughter of Jezebel and Ahab. She had married Jehoram, and he became king of Judah. After his death, her son Ahaziah became king. Ahaziah was caught in Jehu's purge and killed, so the queen mother, an ardent Baal worshiper, acted quickly to destroy the whole royal family and become queen. It looked as though the throne would be snatched from David's family.

2. A faithful woman, Jehosheba (2-21)

Jhosheba was the sister of King Ahaziah. She was married to Jehoiada the priest. She acted more quickly than the evil queen. She hid her nephew, little prince Joash, in the temple for 6 years, until her husband, Jehoiada, could muster the support of the Levites and the men of Judah

to oust Athaliah. This godly couple saved a baby and saved a nation. The lamp of David flickered, but it did not go out.

Prayer: Lord, raise up faithful men and women who can risk their lives to oppose the godless culture in which we live.

One Word: A faithful and courageous woman

ONE MAN'S GOOD INFLUENCE

2 Kings 12:1-21

Key Verse: 12:2

1. Jehoiada's good influence (1-8)

Jehoiada was the high priest. He and his wife rescued Joash, raised him and established him as king. As long as Jehoiada lived, Joash listened to him and did what was right in the eyes of the Lord. Jehoiada sought nothing for himself; he encouraged Joash to repair the temple of the Lord and restore the worship of God.

2. Honest workmen (9-21)

When the priests collected money but did not use it to repair the temple, Joash and Jehoiada decided to collect the offering in a box and give the money directly to the workmen who were repairing the temple. They did this. The workmen acted with scrupulous honesty, and the temple was repaired according to its original design. However, Joash did not remove the high places. After Jehoiada died, Joash compromised to appease the Syrian king Hazael (2Ch 24).

Prayer: Lord, raise up a few faithful men who will not compromise with secular humanism, men who can be a good influence.

One Word: Be a person of good influence

JEHOAHAZ SEEKS GOD'S FAVOR

2 Kings 13:1-25

Key Verse: 13:4

1. The Lord listened to Jehoahaz (1-9)

The kings of Israel continued the idol worship begun by Jeroboam I. Jehoahaz was no exception. God punished Israel by keeping her under the power of Hazael king of Aram. Then, Jehoahaz sought the Lord's favor. The Lord listens to those who call on him for help, so he gave the land temporary relief. But they did not stop sinning.

2. Jehoash and Elisha (10-25)

Jehoash, son of Jehoahaz, continued the idolatry of Jeroboam I. He also waged war against Judah (12). However, he recognized Elisha as a man of God, so when the prophet was dying, he visited him and wept. Elisha gave him an opportunity to claim God's grace and completely defeat Aram. But his half-hearted, compromising spirit made him miss the chance. When Elisha died, Israel lost her real shepherd. Even the bones of Elisha had resurrecting power. His dead bones had more life-giving power than the corrupt kings.

Prayer: Lord, give me faith to call on you and courage to claim your victory.

One Word: Seek God's favor and his victory

GOD'S MERCY; MAN'S COMPROMISE

2 Kings 14:1-29

Key Verse: 14:26,27

1. A king who became proud (1-22)

Amaziah king of Judah tried to follow in David's footsteps. He obeyed God's law and administered justice. He fought a large army of Edomites and defeated them. But he did not destroy the high places--the places where the Canaanites had worshipped. People used them because it was more convenient than going all the way to Jerusalem to worship. But God hates compromise. Compromise for the sake of convenience weakens faith. After defeating Edom, Amaziah became proud. He provoked a war with Israel and was defeated and shamed. Pride turns men from God and invites disaster.

2. God uses an ungodly man (23-29)

Jeroboam II reigned 41 years in Israel. He was used by God to rescue the Israelites from harassing enemies (27). But he did not solve the real problem -- he did not remove the idols at Dan and Bethel. In spite of his great achievements, he sealed Israel's doom, for he did not turn to God.

Prayer: Lord, help your people who call on your name not to compromise with idolatry.

One Word: Don't compromise with idols

REBELLION AND BLOODSHED IN ISRAEL

2 Kings 15:1-38

Key Verse: 15:3

1. 2 kings of Judah (1-7; 32-38)

Uzziah (Azariah) and his son Jotham tried to honor God, so God blessed Judah during their long reigns. They were successful administrators and they tried to do right in the eyes of the Lord; but they did not remove the high places--the remnants of Canaanite idolatry. Uzziah became presumptuous in his old age, and God punished him (2Ch 26:16).

2. The violent history of Israel (8-31)

While Judah was enjoying comparative peace and prosperity under King Uzziah, Israel was disintegrating in revolution. One corrupt king followed another in rapid succession. Almost all--Zechariah, Shallum, Pekahiah, and Pekah--met violent deaths at the hands of assassins. Menahem was a man of violence. They all "did evil in the sight of the Lord." The Lord's hand of judgment was beginning to fall; the Assyrians had begun their conquest of Israel.

Prayer: Lord, raise up men who will see our nation's problems as spiritual problems, and lead our people to repentance.

One Word: Do right in the eyes of the Lord

AHAZ, A WICKED KING OF JUDAH

2 Kings 16:1-20

Key Verse: 16:2

1. Ahaz's great fear (1-4)

Ahaz had a godly father; his son was one of the best kings to rule in Judah. But Ahaz was full of fear, so he practiced many religions. Perhaps he thought that many gods could help him better than one. He did not know that by depending on many gods, he was rejecting the help of the one God who could really help him.

2. The threat from Israel and Aram (5-20)

When Rezin king of Aram made an alliance with Pekah king of Israel and they marched on Jerusalem, Ahaz trembled in fear like leaves in the trees (Isa 7). None of his false religions gave him strength and courage. Ahaz decided to trust Assyria instead of trusting God. He gave the gold and silver of the temple to the king of Assyria as a bribe. Then, he copied an altar of the defeated Syrians and worshiped there. How could he be so foolish as to think that conquest-hungry Assyria would be a benevolent ally? Fear makes men fools.

Prayer: Lord, keep fear out of my heart and help me to trust you wholly. Protect my heart from the temptation to compromise.

One Word: Don't fear men; trust God

THE FALL OF SAMARIA

2 Kings 17:1-41

Key Verse: 17:7,15b

1. Hoshea's fatal mistake (1-23)

The kings of Israel, from the first to the last, worshiped the idols Jeroboam had built. They trusted their clever politics and trusted other nations rather than God. Hoshea was not only evil; he was also foolish. He made an alliance with a broken reed, Egypt, and stopped paying tribute to Assyria. The king of Assyria invaded the land, crushed Samaria and scattered the people throughout his empire. He had Hoshea put in prison. This was God's promised judgment on Israel. They turned from God and worshiped idols. They imitated the nations around them and did not repent. They followed worthless things and became worthless. God removed them from his Presence.

2. The folly of compromise (24-41)

The Assyrian king resettled Samaria with people from all over his empire. He allowed freedom of religion, so Samaria became a hodgepodge of religions. This violated God's law and made restoration impossible.

Prayer: Lord, help me to follow your way and be a useful person, not a worthless one.

One Word: God doesn't compromise

HEZEKIAH TRUSTED IN THE LORD

2 Kings 18:1-37

Key Verses: 18:5,6

1. Just like his father David (1-12)

Hezekiah trusted God and followed his word. Even the "good" kings of Judah had not removed the high places--the places where the corrupt Canaanite religion had been practiced. Hezekiah, however, did not compromise with idolatry. He even destroyed the bronze snake Moses had made because the people were using it as an idol. He trusted and obeyed God, and God blessed him and made him successful in everything he did.

2. A time of testing (13-37)

In Hezekiah's 14th year the Assyrians who had destroyed Samaria invaded Judah. Hezekiah did everything humanly possible to save his people. He even stripped the temple of its gold and paid tribute. But the Assyrians laid siege to Jerusalem and planted distrust and fear in the hearts of the

people. Their field commander sounds like Satan who tempts men to follow an easy way, a way that leads to destruction (31).

Prayer: Lord, help me to trust and obey you in good times and bad.

One Word: Trust wholly in the Lord

HEZEKIAH'S PRAYER

2 Kings 19:1-19

Key Verse: 19:14,19

1. Pray for the remnant (1-13)

A large Assyrian army lay siege to Jerusalem. Hezekiah and his people listened to the Assyrian field commander tell them that it was useless to depend on God to save them. They should surrender. Hezekiah had reached his human limits; he fasted and prayed and sent word to God's servant Isaiah, asking him to pray for the remnant of survivors. Isaiah told him that God would deal with Sennacherib. Then, the Assyrian king received a report of an attack on another front. He had to go home. He sent Hezekiah a threatening letter demanding immediate surrender.

2. Hezekiah prays (14-19)

Hezekiah read the letter; then he repented, went to the temple, spread the letter before the Lord and prayed. He asked God to deliver Jerusalem and show this blasphemer and the world that God alone is God. Hezekiah knew that God is God of the whole earth. He had world mission vision.

Prayer: Lord, teach me to come to you in prayer and spread before you my insoluble problems and the burdens of my heart.

One Word: Take it to God in prayer

SENNACHERIB'S DEFEAT

2 Kings 19:20-37

Key Verses: 19:30,31

1. For the sake of David (20-34)

God heard Hezekiah's prayer; he spoke through his servant Isaiah; Sennacherib would be defeated. He had blasphemed and insulted the living God. Now, God would put a hook in his nose and a bit in his mouth and lead him as a slave, back by the way he came. God would spare a remnant of Judah and enable them to take root and grow and become fruitful. God would do this for the sake of David, for God remembers his promises.

2. The angel of death (35-37)

That night, God sent an angel of death to visit the Assyrian camp. 185,000 men died of a mysterious plague. The powerful arm of Assyria was broken. They withdrew to Nineveh, and shortly afterward, Sennacherib was assassinated while worshiping in the temple of his god.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for answered prayer and remembered promises. Thank you for turning defeat into great victory when we pray.

One Word: God keeps his promises

HEZEKIAH'S ILLNESS

2 Kings 20:1-21

Key Verse: 20:5

1. God sees Hezekiah's tears (1-11)

Hezekiah was very sick. When he received a message from Isaiah that he would die, he could not accept it. He turned his face to the wall and wept, and he prayed. For the sake of David and because Hezekiah prayed, God gave him 15 more years of life. As a sign, he made the setting sun reverse its course. Only the Creator of the heavens and the earth could do this; and only the Author of life can prolong a man's life.

2. Envoys from Babylon (12-21)

It might have been better if Hezekiah's life had not been prolonged. He did a foolish thing. In his pride, he showed his treasures and his military strength to some envoys from Babylon who had come to visit him while he was ill. When Isaiah rebuked him and told him that his descendants would go into captivity to Babylon, he didn't care--as long as he did not suffer personally.

Prayer: Lord, take me to heaven when I finish the work you put me here to do.

One Word: Don't lose your sense of history

TWO WICKED KINGS

2 Kings 21:1-26

Key Verse: 21:8

1. Manasseh's idolatry (1-10)

Manasseh was as evil as his father had been good. He propelled Judah down the road that leads to destruction. He revived the immoral Canaanite religions and delved in the occult. He even

sacrificed his own son in the fire. He did these things because of fear and pride--fear fed by superstition and pride fed by a stubborn refusal to repent before God. He defied God's word by ignoring God's promises. God had promised that if his people obeyed his word, they would not have to wander from the land God gave Abraham. But Manasseh put an idol in the temple of the Lord. He shed much innocent blood. He invited disaster. God said that he would wipe out Jerusalem as one wipes a dish and turns it upside down.

2. Amon walked in the ways of his father (11-26)

Amon continued the evil practices of his father until he was assassinated by his officials. The people, however, punished the assassins and made Amon's son king in his father's place. The people had a sense of history.

Prayer: Lord, keep me from the sick practices of the world; give me a humble, repentant heart.

One Word: Worship God and be blessed

JOSIAH'S REFORM

2 Kings 22:1-20

Key Verse: 22:8

1. Temple repair begins (1-7)

Josiah was only 8 years old when he became king. His mother Jedidah must have been a woman of prayer and faith, for Josiah sought the Lord from an early age. He tried to walk in the ways of David. When he saw the temple in a state of disrepair, he ordered it repaired.

2. The Book is found (8-20)

When the Bible is lost or is kept from the people, they sink into illiteracy, superstition and idolatry. When the temple was repaired, Hilkiah the high priest found the Bible. It was read to the king, and when he heard it, he tore his robes and repented. He realized how far the people had departed from the law of God. He needed a Bible teacher, so he inquired of Huldah the prophetess. She told him of the Lord's anger and of his impending judgment. She also told him that the Lord hears the prayers of repentant sinners.

Prayer: Lord, give me a humble and repentant heart and help me to live according to your word.

One Word: Read the Bible, repent and live

IDOL-SMASHING FAITH

2 Kings 23:1-20

Key Verse: 23:3

1. Obeying God's word (1-14)

King Josiah made a decision to follow the Lord and obey his commands. He read the Bible to the people and they renewed their covenant with God. Then he began the most thorough-going purge of idolatry that had ever occurred in Judah. The king personally supervised the smashing of the idols of the Canaanites. We can see how decadent the Canaanite religion was, and how deeply it had become entrenched in Judah.

2. A prophecy fulfilled (15-20)

Josiah then went up to what had been Northern Israel. Jeroboam I was the king who caused Israel to sin. In order to keep the people of Northern Israel from going to Jerusalem to worship, he had built an altar in Bethel and one in Dan. This blatant idolatry led to God's judgment on Israel. Josiah destroyed Jeroboam's altar in Bethel. A man of God had prophesied this: that Josiah, a descendant of David, would defile this pagan altar (1Ki 13:2).

Prayer: Lord, help me to live by your word and remember your grace even in the worst of times.

One Word: Study the Bible and smash idols

WITH ALL HIS HEART AND SOUL

2 Kings 23:21-30

Key Verse: 23:25

1. Celebrate the Passover (21-23)

Josiah returned to Jerusalem from his idol-smashing crusade and ordered the people to celebrate the Passover. He did this in order to obey the written word of God. It was the most joyful and lavish celebration of all Israel's history. Josiah remembered God's grace of deliverance, and he wanted his people to remember and restore their broken relationship with God.

2. More reforms (24-25)

Josiah continued his purge of idolatry, seeking with all his heart to follow the word of God, the Book which Hilkiah had discovered in the temple. He tried with all his heart and strength to obey God's word.

3. Nevertheless... (26-30)

But it was too late. Idolatry and immorality had corroded the moral fiber of the nation, and God's decision was firm. Only a remnant would be spared. Josiah was mercifully killed in battle (22:20; 23:29).

Prayer: Lord, have mercy on our land. Raise up men like Josiah in this land.

One Word: One faithful man

BECAUSE OF THE SINS OF MANASSEH

2 Kings 23:31-24:17

Key Verse: 24:3

1. Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim (23:31-24:7)

Josiah was killed in battle by Pharaoh Neco. He was spared the agony of seeing his country destroyed. One son was taken in chains to Egypt; Neco put Jehoiakim, another son of Josiah, on the throne. But Egypt was a broken reed; Babylon was the rising power. Jehoiakim depended on Egypt, rebelling against Babylon. He invited the Babylonian siege. God who controls history was punishing Judah for the sins of Manasseh. God especially hated his sin of shedding innocent blood in Jerusalem. God had made a decision to remove Judah and reject Jerusalem. It was a painful decision.

2. The Babylonian captivity (24:8-17)

When the Babylonians besieged Jerusalem, Jehoiachin surrendered. He and the most able people--artisans, officers, nobles--were taken into exile (Da 1:1-2). The Babylonian captivity lasted for 70 years.

Prayer: Lord, surely you hate the sins that devastate our country. Help me to repent daily and depend on you, not on people.

One Word: God punishes sin

THE FALL OF JERUSALEM

2 Kings 24:18-25:30

Key Verse: 24:20

1. The 2nd siege of Jerusalem (24:18-25:26)

Zedekiah son of Josiah was appointed king. He was the full brother of Jehoahaz who had died in Egypt. But he foolishly rebelled against Babylon, and Babylon again laid siege to Jerusalem. This siege lasted two years, until the people could not endure any more. When the wall was broken, the king and his army sneaked out of a gate and fled. The king was captured, blinded and brought in chains to Babylon. Every person of ability and every object of value was taken to Babylon. The temple was burned and the walls were broken down. A new governor was

appointed by the Babylonians, but he was assassinated, and all the leaders fled to Egypt. It is tragic when God removes his hand of protection from a people.

2. The humiliation of King Jehoiachin (25:27-30)

A new king arose in Babylon. After 37 years of prison life, Jehoiachin was released. He became a royal beggar. So ended the human glory of David's descendants.

Prayer: Lord, give us a spirit of sincere repentance so that our land might not perish from the earth.

One Word: Trust God, not men or missiles