



2 KINGS

JUNE 2019

Read on your own or with others,
which ever you prefer.

This leaflet is just a brief overview of the 'big picture' of this book. If you have been reading the Bible for some time you will be aware there is much more to them than you'll find here.

If you are new to reading the Bible don't worry too much if there are details you do not quite get at the moment - focus on the 'big picture'.

2 KINGS – INTRODUCTION

The books of 1 Kings and 2 Kings give us the history of the Kings of Israel and Judah from Solomon to the fall of Jerusalem at the hands of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. Yet, these books are not merely history. They also point us towards Jesus who is the ultimate and perfect King.

At the beginning of 2 Kings, Jehoshaphat is king in Judah and Ahaziah, son of Ahab, is king in Israel. Elijah, the great prophet of God, is nearing the end of his ministry with Elisha set to replace him.

OUTLINE

A NEW PROPHET IN TOWN: 2 KINGS 1-8

Elijah was a prophet God used in a mighty way. He challenged the establishment and the rampant idolatry in the northern kingdom of Israel. His loss would surely be felt by the nation and cause it to slide even further away from God?

Yet, God had plans. In Elisha we find a prophet who, if anything, had a greater ministry than Elijah. He received a double portion of the Spirit (2:9-10), brought life to a barren place (2:19-22) and was vindicated by God as his servant (2:23-25).

His ministry reached beyond the borders of Israel. The account of the healing of Naaman is a wonderful reminder of God's plan to bring people from every tribe, tongue and nation to know him.

We can see in Elijah and Elisha a picture of John the Baptist and Jesus. Jesus called John the 'Elijah who was to come' (Matthew 11:14) and Jesus was the one greater than John who would bring life into a dying world.

A WICKED FAMILY REMOVED: 2 KINGS 9-10

In 1 Kings 21:17-24 God makes a chilling promise to Ahab to wipe out his family for all the evil that they have done and caused Israel to do. In chapters 9 and 10 of 2 Kings we see God making good on this promise.

Elisha to bring a message from God to Jehu and, on God's instructions, anoints him as the next king of Israel. Jehu was God's instrument to bring God's justice against Ahab's family. However, we find out that he too was a failed, flawed and fallen king who continued to cause Israel to turn away from God (10:28-29).

GOING IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS: 2 KINGS 11–23:30

Despite God sending and using Elijah and Elisha the northern kingdom of Israel continued to decline and move away from God. As a nation they did not live in obedience to God. God is clear in Deuteronomy 28 where this disobedience would lead. In 2 Kings 17 God hands the nation of Israel over to the Assyrian invaders.

Although the southern kingdom of Judah has its fair share of ungodly kings, these chapters speak of some notable exceptions. Under Joash, Hezekiah and Josiah Judah experienced revival and reformation in their walk before God.

The eras of these three kings stand as beacons in the book of 2 Kings pointing towards what life could be. However, on their deaths, or for Joash on the death of his uncle Jehoiada the priest, things quickly returned to the status quo of a people in rebellion to God.

As much as these three kings achieved they could not change the heart and the direction of the nation for good. For that another king must come who would bring in a covenant that would change people from the inside out (Jeremiah 31:33-34).

THE HAMMER FALLS: 2 KINGS 23:31–25:30

Judah eventually feels the force of God's judgement for their disobedience. Nebuchadnezzar marches his armies up to Jerusalem. They siege the city and capture it, destroying the temple, the visible symbol of God's presence with his people.

But has God given up? The book ends with the account of Jehoiachin, King of Judah, now captive in Babylon. He is not humiliated, but lifted up and honoured. God is preserving the line of David, and from this line will come Jesus, the king of kings who will establish the kingdom of God across the world and into eternity.

ASKING THE QUESTIONS THE BIBLE WANTS YOU TO ASK

What does this book teach you about Jesus? (Luke 24:45-47)

What does this book teach you about yourself? (James 1:23 & 2 Tim 3:16-17)

How were you encouraged? (2 Tim 3:16-17)

How were you corrected? (Romans 15:4)

What difference do the truths of this book make in your life (Matthew 7:24-27)