

Valley Bible Church - Bible Survey

Bible Survey Lesson 24: The Book of II Kings

OUTLINE OF II KINGS

Introduction:

I and II Kings form one narrative recounting the history of Israel's monarchy from the death of David through the destruction of both of the fragments of that nation, Israel and Judah. God destroyed both kingdoms because their kings led the people to do evil things primarily tied to the worship of idols.

II Kings begins with a continuation of the story of Elijah and the re-introduction of his follower Elisha.

I. GOD'S PROPHET ELISHA (Chapters 1- 8)

This first section continues with the Prophets Elijah and Elisha who were responsible for speaking the word of the Lord to the people of a perverse and evil nation. Elijah soon leaves the scene, but Elisha guides Israel to victories over their greatest enemies. God again and again showed his sovereignty over all nations of the earth while meeting the needs of His faithful followers and judging those who disobey.

A. Elijah's Service Ends (Chapters I - 2)

1. Ahaziah Consults with Baal-Zebub (1)

His rule in Israel was introduced in I Kings 22 when he followed the most wicked of all Israel's kings, Ahab, to the throne. Ahaziah was seriously injured in an accident in his palace and sent his messengers to consult with the Phoenician God, Baal-Zebub to find out if he would recover.

Elijah intercepted them with God's message that Ahaziah would die, not because of the accident, but because he went to the false god rather than to the Lord. And he did (vv. 15-18)

The name Baal-Zebub (lord of the flies) is a play on the original name Baal-Zebal (lord of the high heaven or princely lord) and is translated Beelzebub in the New Testament referring to Satan.

2. Elijah Chooses a Successor (2)

Elijah was traveling from town to town knowing that his life and ministry was coming to an end. Elisha attached himself to him hoping to receive a double portion of the spirit that Elijah powerfully displayed throughout his life.

What right did he have to expect anything? He based his request on the "law of the firstborn" in Deut. 22, where the firstborn son was to receive a double portion of his father's inheritance, and he considered himself Elijah's spiritual son. He swore he would never leave Elijah's side until he was so blessed.

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When Elijah's ministry came to a close God chose to take him home in a whirlwind on a "chariot of fire". Elisha's reaction, as he saw the chariot was to cry out, "My father! My father! (12) Elijah was transported into heaven alive and his cloak, the symbol of his office, fell on Elisha's shoulders, (v 13) indicating God's choice of him as Elijah's successor.

The other young prophets were not convinced that Elisha was really called by God. God confirmed his choice by: --Allowing him to cross the Jordan on dry ground as Elijah had --Empowering him to purify the corrupted water at Jericho, and --Punishing two of the mocking prophets (bears killed them)

B. Elisha Represents God(Chapters 3-8)

1. To Joram (Jehoram) (3)

While he was the king of Israel (852-841 B.C.) Mesha, king of Moab, moved his armies against him. Joram recruited Jehoshaphat, king of Judah (I Kings 22) and the king of Edom, to help put Mesha back in his place.

They had a hard time keeping him out of Israel because all the rivers and streams, natural barriers to their advance, were dried up. Since Jehoshaphat, the king on David's throne, was involved Elisha asked God to help Joram (vv. 1-15).

The Lord had them dig a series of trenches on the potential battlefield and He flooded them with water. When the Moabite armies came to the site they saw a myriad of pools of red liquid (perhaps reflection from the red hills, or red dye from the clay) and thought that the three kings of Israel, Judah, and Edom had fought amongst themselves.

Mesha attacked, expecting to find a weak and depleted army, only to be routed. He publicly offered his firstborn son to his god, Chemose, thinking he had offended him and thus been defeated. The Jewish armies, knowing God's abhorrence of human sacrifice withdrew, expecting God's wrath to fall from heaven. It didn't, but the battle was over.

On a Moabite stone found at Dhaban, Jordan in 1868 is Mesha's account of the battle. He admitted being defeated by Ahab earlier but claimed victory against Israel in this battle because they fled.

2. To His Faithful Followers (4)

a. A prophet's widow had no means to pay her many creditors and was being forced to sell her sons into slavery. Elisha multiplied her meager amount of oil to meet those and future needs (vv. 1-7).

b. When Elisha came to Jezreel he stayed with a wealthy Shunammite woman who met all his needs. God rewarded her by giving her and her husband a son in their old age, but he died. Elisha prayed and God answered by raising their son (vv. 8-37).

c. The Lord met the needs of the growing school of prophets through Elisha, purifying their poisoned water, feeding a hundred with just twenty loaves of bread, and making an ax head float when it was dropped into the Jordan River (vv. 38-44).

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3. To The Arameans (6-7)

The Arameans waged two military campaigns against Israel:

In the first raid the Lord had Elisha tell the Israelites every move the Arameans were making. Knowing this, the Aramean army surrounded Elisha's home in order to kill him. God not only protected Elisha and his servant with his own army of horses and flaming chariots but, in answer to his prayer, he blinded the whole army as well. With sight restored they went home to warn their king (vv. 8-23).

In the second, Ben-Hada and his Aramean army invaded Samaria. Their siege caused a famine that was blamed on Elisha, and the king of Israel sent out a hit man to get him. Just as the hit man arrived, Elisha prophesied that the city would be free in one day.

That night the Lord created a rumbling noise that the Arameans took for an approaching army coming to the aid of Samaria. They ran off leaving all their food and supplies behind. Word of this miracle got to the city from some lepers who had seen the deserted camp, and the following day the hit man was trampled in the stampede of the town people to get to the supplies.

4. To Jehoram and Ahaziah (8)

Meanwhile, in Judah, Jehoram came to power as co-ruler while his father, Jehoshaphat, was still king.

Unfortunately, his father married him off to Athalia, daughter of the evil Ahab and Jezebel. This resulted in exporting their evil to Judah. So, even though God allowed Jehoram's reign as heir to the Throne of David, it ultimately spelled disaster when he died and the evil Athalia usurped the throne from their son Ahaziah.

II. DECLINE OF ISRAEL (Chapters 9-17)

The second section describes the deterioration and collapse of the Northern nation of Israel due to its continued pagan practices and evil leadership. The slide into captivity is now all downhill climaxing in chapter 17, which explains why Israel cannot survive. By disregarding the covenant as explained by Joshua in Deut. 30: 19, "This day I call heaven and earth as witness against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life. " Israel chooses death!

A. Political Purging Doesn't Save Israel (Chapters 9-14)

1. Jehu's Purge of Ahab (9)

Jehu was the commander of the army of Israel under King Joram. He faithfully defeated Joram's arch-enemies, the Arameans, but God had a special plan for him. Elisha instructed a prophet to anoint Jehu king, the only God anointed king in Israel.

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The Lord then commanded Jehu to avenge the blood of His prophets shed by Ahab and Jezebel (vv. 1-13). Jehu pushed his chariot to Jezreel and found kings Joram and Ahaziah meeting in the field once belonging to Naboth. He killed Joram, making sure his body landed on Naboth's land to fulfill Ahab's judgment (I Kings 21 and 29).

Jezebel, never knowing when to quit, mocked Jehu but he had the palace guard toss her out of her window where she splattered on the ground, was trampled by horses and eaten by dogs, as predicted, in Naboth's field (I Kings 21).

2. Jehu's Bloody Coup (10)

To follow through with his instructions, Jehu threatened the city officials in Samaria, and they appeased him by decapitating Ahab's seventy sons. He also killed all other relatives and associates he could find. This was sanctioned under the Lord's directive. But, he also slaughtered forty-two relatives of King Ahaziah of Judah, so as to weaken his rival's throne. This blood bath was remembered and cursed for 100 years (Hosea 4).

Jehu continued his purge to include the worshippers of Baal and burned their temple, but didn't bother to remove the golden calves from Bethel and Dan. His bloody reign lasted from 841-814 B.C.

Jehu's troubles included making an alliance with King Shalmaneser from Assyria to protect his northern border. He is shown bowing to the Assyrian king and presenting tribute on a black stone monument now in a museum.

3. Athaliah's Coup in Judah (11)

When her son Ahaziah died, Athaliah seized the throne and killed all of the royal descendants of David. All, that is but one, Joash. He was hidden for six years in the temple, and made king after she was executed by the palace guards. Joash became king at age seven.

4. Joash's Religious Reforms (12)

His forty-year reign (835-796 BC.) was a time of a renewal of righteousness and a refurbishing of the Temple and reinstatement of Temple worship. His rule was flawed by his fear of Aramean King Hazael, which caused him to send Holy Temple Implements to them as payment of tribute. God's desire, since Egypt, was that His people stay free to worship Him. His own officials killed him.

5. Jehoahaz and Jehoash's Wicked Rule (13)

Jehoahaz followed Jehu to Israel's throne only to introduce a new form of idol worship, the Asheroth Pole. This was a representation of the Canaanite fertility goddess, bringing its vile immoral practices. God used the Arameans again to reduce Israel's army and influence.

His son, Jehoash, was king when Elisha was dying. Even on his deathbed, Elisha was a powerful instrument of God. God allowed Jehoash to defeat his enemies because of his love of Elisha and, even after death; a body was restored to life when placed among his bones in his tomb.

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6. Amaziah's Pleasing Rule(14)

Just like his father Joash, he pleased God by bringing religious reform. He executed his father's assassins and put down a rebellion by the Edomites, but His overconfidence and arrogance led to his defeat by Jehoash of Israel who crumbled the walls of Jerusalem and raided the Temple treasury. Amaziah was assassinated, like his father.

B. Political Stability Doesn't Save Israel (Chapters 14-17)

1. Jeroboam II's Successes (14)

Jeroboam II gave Israel one of its greatest periods of political stability and territorial growth. The prophet Jonah encouraged this expansion as God showed His mercy to His wayward people. By the end of his rule, however, Amos was condemning the greed and immorality of Jeroboam II as he began to be more and more like his namesake

2. Uzziah's Successes (15)

While Jeroboam II ruled Israel, he ruled Judah in an even longer and more successful reign. He was struck with leprosy for offering incense in the Temple (2 Chron. 26).

Jeroboam was followed by five kings who presided over the fast deterioration of Israel:

--Zechariah ruled for six months and was killed by . . . --Shallum ruled for one month and was assassinated by . . . --Menahem held on for ten years by paying heavy tribute to the Assyrian King Tiglath-Pileser III (Pul). --Pekahiah inherited his father's debts to Assyria until his military commander led a coup and killed him (two years) --Pekah, that commander, ruled for twenty years and refused to pay Assyria but he was deposed by . . . --Hosea, who usurped the throne with Assyrian support.

3. Jotham's Co-rule (15)

In Judah he co-ruled with his father Uzziah and was also righteous. He did, however fail to destroy the "high places" and Pekah was his greatest threat. The prophets Hosea, Isaiah and Micah ministered during his reign.

4. Ahaz's Wicked Rule (16)

Like Ahab in Israel, Ahaz in Judah was one of their most wicked kings. He introduced human sacrifice to worship and promoted the "high places" (2 Chron. 28). Against the advice of Isaiah, he asked Tiglath-Pileser for help against a threat from Assyria. He paid for the help with treasure from the Temple and palace but never received the help.

Assyria captured Damascus, besieged Samaria and forced continued tribute as Judah was a virtual vassal state of Assyria. Part of his compliance meant erecting an Assyrian altar in place of the Bronze Altar in the Temple and removing all things from the Temple that would offend the Assyrians.

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5. Hosea's Final Rule (17)

He was able to save Samaria by continuing to pay tribute to Assyria, but when he tested Shalmaneser, Tiglat-Pileser's son, by threatening to bring Egypt into the equation, he was imprisoned, Samaria besieged, eventually destroyed, and the state of Israel brought to an end.

The Assyrians moved many of the able-bodied Jews to Assyria and settled many of their people into Samaria, bringing the mix of nationalities and religions that made the Samaritans a hated race of half-breed, heretical people during New Testament times.

III. SURVIVAL OF JUDAH (Chapters 18-25)

The final section of Kings traces the survival of Judah after Israel's collapse. Hezekiah and Josiah brought reform that prolonged Judah's existence for another hundred years. Manasseh, however, brought the eventual collapse as God judged him for his terrible sins.

A. Judah's Renewal (Chapters 18-20)

1. Hezekiah Trusts The Lord (18)

He, unlike his father Ahaz, trusted the Lord and introduced many religious reforms in Judah. He re-established worship in Jerusalem, removed the "high places," and destroyed idols and other pagan symbols. He also rebelled against his oppressors Sargon and Sennacherib causing the invasion and siege of Jerusalem. This is also recorded in Isaiah 36-37.

When it looked like Hezekiah might get help from Egypt, Sennacherib surrounded the city (701 B.C.). Assyrian writings report, "He was trapped like a bird in a cage." Hezekiah paid a large tribute, but it only delayed the inevitable.

Sennacherib sent a delegation to accept surrender terms and they made fun of Hezekiah and his dependence on his God. They made dire threats in Hebrew so the Jewish population would understand.

2. The Lord Delivers Hezekiah (19)

Hezekiah received the threats from Assyria and consulted Isaiah for God's word and received a promise of deliverance. Sennacherib, worried because of troop movements from Egypt, sent a letter warning him not to use Egypt. He took the letter before the Lord, knowing only He could save them, and Isaiah announced that God would fight for them and save Jerusalem and end Sennacherib's reign.

That night an angel of the Lord slaughtered the Assyrian army, forcing Sennacherib to return to Ninivah.

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3. The Lord Heals Hezekiah (20)

Hezekiah became deathly ill, and the Lord sent Isaiah to tell him to prepare to die. He begged God for fifteen more years and God honored his request. His response is in a hymn recorded in Is. 38.

Mardoch-Baladan, a king of Babylon (721-710 BC.), sent an envoy to Hezekiah to congratulate him on his recovery. Actually he wanted to test Judah's strength and lure them into an alliance, but he proudly showed off the nation's riches which, according to Isaiah, caused those treasures to be carried away in the Babylonian Captivity.

A. Judah's Regression (Chapters 21-25)

1. Manasseh Rejects the Lord (21)

It is interesting that Hezekiah's son would undo all that he has accomplished in righteousness. During the fifty-five years of Manasseh's reign he committed every pagan atrocity and under his leadership Judah *"did more evil than the nations the Lord had destroyed before the Israelites"* (v. 19). In fact, Manasseh was blamed for the eventual fall of Jerusalem. He was the most wicked king in Judah.

He experienced a short imprisonment in Assyria (2 Chron. 33), but Assyrian records show he was their loyal subject for most of his rule.

2. The Lord Touches Josiah (22)

Manasseh's grandson Josiah was eight years old when his father died and he became king. When he was eighteen he began repairs on the temple which had decayed during the previous fifty plus years. Hilkiah, the high priest found the book of the law (probably Deuteronomy) and read it to the king. Josiah feared God's wrath and inquired of a prophetess, Huldah, about Judah's future. She predicted that Judah would be destroyed, but Josiah would not see it because he had personally repented.

3. The Lord Waited Because of Josiah (23)

Josiah renewed the covenant and celebrated Passover as it had not been celebrated since the wilderness wanderings. He removed all evidence of pagan worship, including the shrine built at Bethel by Jereboam (I Kings 13), and re-centralized the nation's worship in Jerusalem. *"Neither before nor after Josiah was there a king like him who turned to the Lord as he did"* (v. 25).

Sadly, Josiah was killed in a battle with Egyptian Pharaoh Necho when he tried to stop him from helping the Assyrians against Babylon's armies. Babylon took control of the known world from Egypt and Assyria.

The end of Judah's history reads much like the fall of Israel. King after king failed to halt the spiritual and physical spiral:

--Johoahaz, Josiah's son was deposed by Pharaoh Necho

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--Jehoiakim, another son was made Necho's puppet king and resisted the word of the Lord by burning Jeremiah's scroll that warned of Judah's coming slavery.

--Jehoiachin, Jehoiakim's son tried to rebel against Babylon and brought Neb. Back to Jerusalem where he deposed Jehoichin and stripped Jerusalem and the Temple and took the royal family and leading citizens of the city to Babylon. This was the beginning of the Babylonian Captivity.

--Zedekiah, Jehoiachin's uncle was made puppet king of Jerusalem.

4. The Destruction of Jerusalem (25)

Zedekiah led a final revolt against Babylon, against the warnings of the prophet Jeremiah and bringing a siege that led to the starvation and eventual burning of Jerusalem. The Temple was stripped of the last of its furnishings.

Zedekiah was forced to watch his sons executed and then his eyes were put out so the memory would remain, then led into captivity. When Evil-merodach became king in Babylon, he released Jehoiachin and provided a stipend for him. God still had a king in Israel and Judah could be restored if it would only repent.

Lessons:

1. Dependence on other gods, whether idols or things, brings disaster to our relationship to the True God.
2. Security is not as important as righteousness.
3. Sin and rebellion have terrible consequences.