

Note

2 Kings – Part 1 of 1

| Era | Characters | Chapters |
|--|--|---|
| In the beginning | God created the world. | Genesis 1 |
| Before 4000 BC | Adam & Eve | Gen 1~5 |
| Before 3000 BC | Cain Abel Seth | Gen 4~5 |
| Before 2500 BC | Noah | Gen 5~10 |
| About 2000 BC Era of Patriarchs | Abraham Isaac & Ishmael Jacob & Esau Joseph | Gen 11~50 |
| About 1500 BC~ 1000 BC Era of prophets | Moses Aaron Joshua | Exo Lev Num Deu |
| | Joshua | Joshua |
| | Judges(Othniel Ehud Shamgar Deborah Gideon Tola Jair Jephthah Ibzan Elon Abdon Samson) Abimelech | Judges |
| | Ruth Boaz Naomi | Ruth |
| | Eli Samuel Saul David | 1st Samuel |
| About 1000 BC ~ 500 BC Era of princes | Saul Jonathan David Absalom Solomon | 1st Samuel 2nd Samuel |
| | Solomon Jeroboam Rehoboam Ahab Elijah Elisha Jehu | 1 kings |
| | Ahab Hezekiah Manasseh Josiah Elisha Jehu Elijah | 2 kings 🔗 |

Summary

2 Kings - Part 1 of 13

The book of 2 Kings describes the decline and captivity of both the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah.

Both kingdoms degenerate into idolatry. The seven miracles of Prophet Elisha showed God's mercy and grace. Despite repeated warnings from God's prophets to turn away from their wicked ways, the people continued to sin.

The worst king of Judah, King Manasseh led his people so deep into sin that it became the last straw for God to destroy Judah. God raised up two enemy nations-Assyria and Babylon to bring judgment upon Israel and Judah respectively; with Judah going into exile 140 years after Israel. The lack of faithfulness of many of the 40 kings led to the downfall of Israel and Judah. God's forgiveness and grace to King Manasseh depicts genuine repentance unlocks God's mercy.

In keeping the royal line of King David intact with the promised Messiah, Jesus Christ coming from this genealogy, God showed His faithfulness.

Transcript

2 Kings – Part 1 of 1

We come now to the study of the book of Second Kings.

As I said last week, First Kings and Second Kings were actually one book. But for the sake of length, it was divided up into two books. After listening to First Kings and Second Kings, you will get pretty much bewildered. About 40 kings are named. Their names are often so similar, and there's a northern kingdom and there's a southern kingdom. When we read all this, what do we get out of this? At the end of this book, I hope you will say, wow, this is a beautiful book.

Kings were very important in those days because kings were absolute monarchs. They made the law; they could change things. They didn't worry about the law, they were the law. So a leader is so important. A good father-blessed family. Bad father-struggling family. Good pastor-strong church. Bad pastor-struggling church. Same with companies. So leadership is critical but kings were really the absolute leader. What was God's criterion for the king? How did God judge the king? Is it talent? Is it ability to conquer more land? Is it his morals, his behaviour, those are not important to God. What was primary to God if you watch how God assesses each king-he has one basic criteria-that they worship, trust, Jehovah God alone.

For many of them in Israel, they worshipped Jehovah God, and three times a year they went to the temple, joined in all the festivals, worshiping God. Then the rest of the time they had little gods-god of the hill, god of the grove, god of a high place. There were basically shrines everywhere and it was part of the religious scene of that part of the world. Idol shrines put on this hill, put on that tree, put on top of a pillar. God just wanted the king to say, we trust ONE GOD to provide all our needs. The average Israelite said, Yeah, God is the big God, but then we need our rain god, our fertility god, our health god. It's very much like Christians today. Many Christians will say, we worship God, of course we trust God. I mean, how else can I have

eternal life. For eternal life we trust God. For happiness, maybe we trust something else. For security, maybe my degree, my job, and for health, maybe my understanding of health food, my pills, my supplements. We have little gods that take care of the other things of life but eternal life is still from God. What God wants us to know is this one God takes care of everything. He is our all in all, so that was what God was looking for in his kings. Do they trust in Him alone, and remove all the other idols from the land? Like us, do we remove the other idols. Our idols can come in many shapes and sizes . That basically is how he judged the kings, and how he judges us today.

The northern kingdom and the southern kingdom- let's just look at it since there's so much talk about the north and the south. Northern kingdom obviously was bigger, 10 tribes, southern kingdom with two tribes. Northern kingdom was richer too because the soil there was more fertile. Also the trade routes between the continents went through northern Israel, not the southern kingdom. The southern kingdom soil was not good and there were no trade routes, more dry soil, dry land. The northern kingdom spun very quickly into idolatry. They didn't have a temple because Jeroboam had built two golden calves, one in the south part of the northern kingdom, Bethel and another golden calf he put in the north part, Dan so that the Israelites didn't need to go to the southern kingdom for the temple. He was giving them an alternative religion.

The golden calves were the first sin that Israel committed after Sinai. Aaron made the golden calf and Moses was so angry he threw the tables of the law on the ground. This golden calf is not Aaron's invention actually, it is a very common god, an Egyptian god. Many people have a god of a bull. A bull is always a picture of strength and virility. It produces baby cows. The bull is always a sign of prosperity and the bull god was very much a fertility god and linked up to all the other fertility gods of that part of the world. That's why they have temple prostitution. They believe that if male Sodomite prostitutes have relations with another male in the temple that will stimulate the gods, the gods of the rain, gods of the wind to get into action, and then there will be more rain and the more fertile the land will be-that's how horrible that religion was. The cow god was really a symbol of fertility. Today we have the prosperity gospel, a new version of it. It just doesn't come in a cow shape.

The southern kingdom didn't spin so fast into this type of worship because there was a temple there and they took a longer time to reach the same level of idolatry as the north. The northern kingdom was more violent than the south. In the northern kingdom there was no kingly line, no promised line, so the kings grabbed power. Whoever could kill the prevailing king became the next king so there's a lot of assassination coup d'état, very violent. Southern kingdom-there was the line of David, one after another, so there was no palace killing and coup d'état, much less. There's a difference between the north and the south. The north spun down into a road of no return much faster than the south.

There are so many kings but let's just remember two names. The number one wicked king of the north, Ahab and his wife, Jezebel. The number one wicked king of the south, Manasseh. Let's look at who are the stars in this Book of Kings. You would think the stars would be some kings but, no. The two stars in each book were not kings, they were prophets. Elijah, in First Kings; Elisha, in Second Kings. Elijah, as we have seen in First Kings was raised up by God to confront Ahab. Ahab was such a wicked king. He promoted Baal worship. Elijah was called by God to confront him. Went before Ahab and confronted him. He said, Call up your prophets of Baal. And he told the children of Israel, You decide, who is the real God? Don't have two opinions-Jehovah or Baal-you decide today. And so, he called the bluff of the prophets of Baal. He challenged 450 prophets to send fire down on the altar. Baal couldn't answer because Baal is not the real God, he's an idol. That was the job of Elijah. If you look at the New Testament, he's mentioned again as a type of John the Baptist, in Matthew 11:14 and Mark 9:11-13. John the Baptist was also called by God to confront the Pharisees, the fake religion of the time of Jesus. He called them hypocrites. That was a strong guy. He was a wild man-John the Baptist, so was Elijah.

When you see the prophets in the Old Testament, in the Book of Kings, who were these prophets, what was their job? Today we have this word prophets - very popular nowadays in Christianity - oh, my church has a prophet, he can really tell you your future. He said he had a dream last night and he saw this golden tree and the tree of fruits, and you know what it is? One day you will be a preacher who will have a lot of fruit in your life.

I have people telling me this kind of stuff. The "prophets" today are foretellers, foretelling what the world likes to hear, called fortune telling. They tell you your future. That's really not the prophets of the Old Testament.

Elijah, Elisha and later we're going to look at the prophetic books with 17 prophets there - where were they doing their job at this time, the time of the kings, This era we are studying though we see the book very separated from the Book of Kings, prophetic books, Those prophets live at the same time as during this time in Kings, and what was their job? Telling the future? Very little of it. Most of their job was warning the king. Not of the future, but of the present. How dare you do this? What are you doing? Do you know God is angry with you? Prophets are used by God to warn. Not fortune telling. Forth telling is the guts to tell forth the truth, which most people don't. How dare you tell the king what's wrong. Are you crazy? That was the job of Elijah and that was First Kings. Second Kings begins with Elisha and there is more on him than any other king. And Elisha was more like a type of Christ. Seven miracles attributed to him. John the Baptist-no miracles. Christ, miracles, so Elisha is more type of Christ. Elisha even raised the dead.

We see two people prominently featured in the life of the kings are prophets. Interestingly enough, you don't see many priests or Levites in this entire book. Actually, God had raised up a whole tribe of Levites, and priests to be the guide for Israel, to be the ones that tell them when they go off the track. But they were too close to the kings, too close to the establishment to be able to stand apart and warn. Simply put, their credibility, their status, in fact their money came from the establishment, and it's very difficult to speak against the establishment when you are part of the establishment. So, God has to raise up people outside the system to come and warn these kings while the priests were silent, the Levites were silent. You don't hear a squeak from them in these books. It's very much like today, they're kind of what we call full time career clergy who do all the nice things, say the nice things not to offend anybody, because it might affect their income, their livelihood. It's the same thing, once in a while God will raise up somebody from outside the system to come and shake up the system, to 'forth tell' (warning) what God wants people to do.

Many prophets were raised up to speak and warn the kings, but the era is the same era. They were used to warn. As the kingdom spun downwards, the northern kingdom much earlier in 721 BC, they had reached the stage of no return because there was this wicked king, Ahab. So, the Assyrians came in, besieged the capital of northern kingdom, Samaria and then brought them into Assyrian captivity. What happened to these 10 tribes that were taken out by Assyria (not Syria, Assyria - a different country). Assyria is part of the land that we call Mesopotamia, originally the land between the two rivers of Tigris and Euphrates, the land where Abraham originally came from. Abraham came from Ur, and now the Assyrians took these people and brought them back to Assyria. One big circle from Abraham. What happened to these 10 tribes? They are the Lost Tribes of Israel. Where did they go to? The Assyrian style of captivity was like that- when they went and conquered a city, they made sure the city would never rebel. So what do they do? They take the smart people, the leaders, the skilled people, the craftsmen and they take them out and leave the bottom of the barrel who won't give them any trouble - the barely surviving poor. The good ones are taken out. And then the Assyrians would then scatter them within the kingdom, a few here, a few there. And so, these 10 tribes were scattered all over the Assyrian kingdom. And because they were so small they lost their identity over time, they lost their language, they lost their religion, they lost their culture. They soon became immersed and assimilated into the Assyrian culture and nobody knows where they are today. They are called the lost tribes.

Then the Assyrians would send in their own people into the land they just conquered. In this case, it's the Assyrians into Samaria and these Assyrians who went to Samaria will then repopulate that place called the conquered place. But Assyrians were always superstitious and afraid. They still had this idea of local gods, for them a god will be the god of the region. And so, when Assyrians went into Samaria, they learned a lot about the beliefs of the Israelites. So, today, there are Samaritans still in Israel, not many, who are actually Assyrians transplanted into Samaria and believing the Torah. They believe very much what the Israelites of the past believed except they remember the Samaritan lady when she met Jesus who said, You say worship is in Jerusalem. We say it is here, right in their own place. That's the only difference, the Samaritans and the Israelite religion is the same. But one went to Jerusalem to worship and one say we worship in Samaria. Basically they took the religion of the northern kingdom.

That's what happened to the 10 tribes which disappeared and a new tribe came in. When Jesus was around you remember the story, the Samaritan, that is this group of people. The southern kingdom took longer to go, to reach the level of no return when God allowed enemies to come in. And, finally the Babylonians came in, and besieged Jerusalem, conquered Jerusalem, and then the southern tribe was taken out into exile 140 years after the northern tribes. They went in the same direction. They were just slower going down to the level, to the stage of no return.

The Babylonians, when they conquered, had a different style from the Assyrians. They conquered the Israelites or the Jews in the southern kingdom from Judah and they took the best and the brightest again. They left the junk behind; they took the brightest, and they brought them to Babylon, but they left them as one community. They preserved the language, they preserved their religion, they preserved their culture, and after 70 years, the Jews went back so that is now the Jews of the day. They are from the southern kingdom. The northern kingdom disappeared - the Lost Tribes of Israel.

That is the end as it were of this long line of Kings. We read of them slowly spinning down, spinning down, until they became so horrible and God says, Just let them go. I brought them in to clear the evil religion of this land, the evil practices of this land to clean evil out, now they are as evil as the ones I asked them to clean, so I might as well get rid of them. So, they were brought up into captivity. The story ends like that. Sounds pretty sad. The siege was so terrible. I don't want to describe it because later we're going to start the book of Lamentations, and in the book of lamentations you see the horror of the siege that had been predicted. God had warned them if you continue this way, this is what will happen, you will cook your children to eat, and all the horrible things happened in the siege.

But I want to end with a little understanding of the character in the goodness of God. He's good in judgment. Yes, but you know, that sometimes makes us a little sad. I want to show you the story of the worst king of the southern

kingdom, Manasseh. Manasseh, was so evil that God said because of this man, the Babylonians will come and take you to exile. Let me read how evil Manasseh was.

Second Kings Chapter 21 describes how evil this man was. Second Kings chapter 21, reading from verse 2- 'And he (that's Manasseh) did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, after the abominations of the heathen, whom the Lord cast out before the children of Israel. For he built up again the high places which Hezekiah, his father had destroyed, and he reared up altars for Baal, and made a grove, as did Ahab king of Israel, and worshipped all the host of heaven, all the stars, moon and sun and served them. And he built altars in the house of the Lord, of which the Lord said, In Jerusalem will I put my name And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the Lord. And he made his son pass through the fire, and observed times, and used enchantments and dealt with familiar spirits and wizards: he wrought much wickedness in the sight of the Lord, to provoke him to anger. He put an image in the temple of God. And he was taken into captivity.

You can't imagine a more wicked king than this, literally rebelling in the face of God. Second Chronicles Chapter 33:11-13, wherefore the Lord brought upon them the captains of the host of the king of Assyria, which took Manasseh, among the thorns and bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon. And when he was in affliction, he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, and prayed unto him, and he was intreated of him, and heard his supplication and brought him again to Jerusalem into His kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the Lord, He was God.

What kind of God do we have? What did we learned of God in this book? This man rebelled against God, did everything he should not have done, led the whole nation into captivity, and then what did he do when he was in captivity-he humbled himself. He prayed and said God forgive me, I'm sorry God, and God took him right back. Brought him back to his kingdom. Can you believe this? Can I forgive someone who is against me year after year, and then one day comes and says, Pastor, I'm sorry. This book is so

awful, king after king rebelling....but you know, you come to the last chapter of this book -Can I encourage you now to turn to Second Kings 25, the last chapter, and the last four verses.

Second Kings 25 verse 27 And it came to pass in the seven and thirtieth year of the captivity of Jehoiachin, king of Judah in the 12th month, on the seven and twentieth day of the month, that Evilmerodach king of Babylon in the year that he began to reign did lift up the head of Jehoiachin king of Judah out of prison. And he spake kindly to him, and set his throne above the throne of the kings that were with him in Babylon; and changed his prison garments; and he did eat bread continually before him all the days of his life. And his allowance was a continual allowance given him of the king, a daily rate for every day, all the days of his life.

And this is the end of Second Kings -what an ending. The king after king did horrible things, brought the name of God to shame, and the last part of this horrible, depressing bewildering book comes this little passage. This king is in captivity and one day the new king comes up and says to him, come out of the prison, change your clothes, eat with me every day you will be above all the other kings here. See the faithfulness of God. He had said to David, your throne would be established forever. You look at the kings all wiped off the kingly throne. All those kings and other kingdoms, we have no idea who their descendants are. But the kingly line of Judah, David's royal line is preserved. And 500 years after this, Joseph and Mary from the same line produce our King Jesus.

What do you see about God in this book?

-I see a merciful God-amazing. You know people can do horrible things to Him and at the end on their deathbed say, Lord forgive me, and God saves. I cannot believe it, but my own life was like that. For years I rejected God and mocked God and then one day on my hospital bed I asked God for forgiveness.

-Standard of God is very simple- It's not about your brains, its not about your talents, It's about your heart. You believe one God, the all-sufficient God, takes care of all your needs for eternity and now-your emotional

needs, your health needs, your every need, your family need. You don't need all the little gods of life. One God. That's what God measures. When we stand before God, the last shall be first, you'll be surprised. The simple person who never in our mind did anything great for God will be right in the front, because that's how God measures. God remembers sin- Jeroboam led people astray and the sin of Jeroboam was mentioned over and over again.

What do we learn about men?

-The longer men serve an institution, it doesn't get better it gets worse-companies run down, kingdoms run down, everything runs down. It doesn't get better. You thought the kings will get better and better but it's the opposite. Devolution not evolution. You leave men alone long enough, they rundown.

-Another lesson-good kings don't produce good sons.

Solomon, a wise man produced a fool, Hezekiah produced Manasseh. Grace doesn't run in human blood. Grace is from God. So, I hope this has helped you understand most of all, what a wonderful God we serve. What a merciful amazing God. What a faithful God. And I hope today you see the Book of Kings is not bewildering but a beautiful chapter in a beautiful book. God bless you!