

**BOOK OF SECOND KINGS**

1. Kings were important because they were absolute monarchs. They were the law. A good father blesses his family and a bad leader means bad outcome. It is the same for company leaders and kings who are absolute leaders.
2. How did God judge the king?
  - a) It was not by his moral behaviour or how much land he conquered.
  - b) It was only by one basic criterion, which was that he worshipped and trusted Jehovah alone!
3. During the Age of Kings in Israel, all the people would go three times a year to the temple in Jerusalem to worship God; but for the rest of the time, they would worship their own idols in high places everywhere.
  - a) There were “gods ”of rain god, fertility god, etc.
  - b) Christians are alike, we trust God for our eternal life but we trust other things for happiness, security and health, etc. We look to security in our wealth, and look to healthy food to sustain our health; but God wants us to trust Him in everything.
  - c) That was all that God looked for in a king. He wanted the kings to remove all the high places in Israel. Similarly, Christians need to remove all the idols in our heart.
4. What do we know about the Northern Kingdom?
  - a) It was much bigger than the Southern Kingdom with 10 tribes instead of just 2 in the Southern Kingdom.
  - b) It had more fertile land and more trade routes with the rest of the world, compared to the Southern Kingdom.
  - c) However, it spun quickly into idolatry because of the 2 golden calves that King Jeroboam built (1 Kings 12:25-33). These golden calves were similar to those built by some at Mount Sinai. It was an Egyptian concept of the fertility and prosperity god. The Prosperity gospel today is no different from this kind of idol worship.
  - d) The most wicked king in this kingdom was King Ahab and his wife Jezebel.
5. What do we know about the Southern Kingdom?
  - a) It had a temple in Jerusalem. So it took the people much longer to spiral downwards spiritually to reach the same level of idolatry as the Northern Kingdom.
  - b) It had less violence than the Northern Kingdom which had many palace upheaval and the dynasties kept changing as kings killed each other to snatch the thrones. In the Southern Kingdom the succession was through the lineage of King David, so there were less killings.
  - c) The most wicked king in this kingdom was King Manasseh.
6. There were 2 stars in the book of Kings who were not kings but prophets (Elijah and Elisha).
7. In the book of 1 Kings, we see Elijah as the prominent star:

- a) Elijah was raised by God to confront wicked King Ahab who promoted the worship of Baal.
  - b) There was a battle between Elijah and the 450 prophets of Baal who forced the Israelites to make a decision whom they would follow, God or Baal. Elijah won against these prophets of Baal by successfully calling fire from heaven.(1 Kings 18:20-40).
  - c) The New Testament mentioned John the Baptist as a type of Elijah (Matthew 11:14 and Mark 9:11-13). John the Baptist was called to confront the Pharisees, which is similar to Elijah who confronted the prophets of Baal.
8. Many Christians today claim that their churches have prophets who are foretelling the future.
- a) But we should note that both Elijah and Elisha as well as all the 17 prophets (during the Age of Kings) did not do much foretelling of the future. Some of the prophets who lived during the Age of Kings were Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Daniel, Isaiah, etc.
  - b) The Old Testament prophets' key job was to warn the kings of the present happenings and their sins as well as the impending judgements and not so much to tell the future. They were doing forth-telling (speaking out boldly to warn) more than fore-telling.
  - c) Forth-telling requires guts. These prophets must have the courage to tell kings of their sins and their impending death punishment if they were to reject the messages from God. We see in the New Testament that John the Baptist was beheaded for calling out the sins of the king too.
9. In the book of 2 Kings, the star was Elisha:
- a) This book was more about Elisha than about any king.
  - b) Elisha is a type of Christ. He did 14 miracles unlike John the Baptist who did no miracle. Elisha even raised the dead.
10. There is not much mention of the Levite tribe.
- a) Levites were supposed to be the spiritual leaders to guide the Israelis and kings but they were too close to the kings to dare to warn the kings because they were dependent on the kings for their living.
  - b) Therefore God intentionally raised the prophets outside of the system of priests (Levite tribe) to warn the kings.
  - c) It is sad that today, like the Levites of the Age of Kings, the full-time clergy do not dare to say anything about the church because they are dependent on the church for a living.
11. In 722 BC, the Northern Kingdom of Israel reached a stage of no return (due to wicked King Ahab).
- a) They were captured by the Assyrians who lived in the Mesopotamia area (where Abraham came from). The 10 tribes of the Northern Kingdom were taken away and are now considered as the lost tribes of Israel.
  - b) The Assyrians took away the smart ones in each of the cities that were captured in the Northern Kingdom and scattered these 10 tribes and assimilated them into the Assyrian population.

- c) The Assyrians then sent their own people into the Northern kingdom, including Samaria (the capital of the Northern Kingdom). Hence these immigrants learned the Jewish culture and religion and believed in the Torah but they were never accepted by the Jews.
  - d) Like the Samaritan woman who spoke to Jesus in John 4:7-42, these Samaritans worshipped in high places and not in Jerusalem.
12. The Southern Kingdom was captured by Babylon about 140 years later in 586 BC.
- a) The Babylonian style of treating captives differed from the Assyrians. The Babylonians took the best and brightest Israelites and preserved them as one group in Babylon and let them keep their religion, culture and language, etc.
  - b) Then, 70 years later, these captives were allowed to return from exile to Jerusalem when the Medes/Persians subsequently conquered Babylon.
  - c) So, today, the nation of Israel is made up of people from the Southern Kingdom (Judah) and hence they are Jews (who are from the tribe of Judah).
13. God originally brought the Israelites out of Egypt into the Promised Land to rid the land of evil and idol worship.
- a) BUT, now both the Northern and Southern Kingdoms became just as evil and so God had to scatter them again and throw them out of the Promised Land into captivity.
  - b) The book of Lamentations tells of the horror of the siege of Jerusalem and how the inhabitants of Jerusalem resorted to eating their own children to survive the siege by the Babylonians.

#### What do you of the Character of God from this Book of 2 Kings?

1. In 2 Kings Chapter 21, King Manasseh was so evil in the Southern Kingdom (Judah) that God had to send the Babylonian army to punish Judah.
  - a) This king rebuilt all the high places which his godly father, King Hezekiah, tore down. He offered his own son as a burnt offering and practiced witchcraft and many other sins. He even set up a graven image in the temple in Jerusalem itself.
  - b) King Manasseh was taken into captivity by the Assyrians but he implored the Lord and humbled himself to God (2 Chronicles 33:10-17), so God heard him and returned him to Jerusalem so that he could know who God was.
  - c) We can see that God is very forgiving and merciful as long as we repent.
2. In 2 Kings 25:27-30, which are the last 4 verses of the book of 2 Kings, the Babylonian King released Judah's King Jehoiachin, treated him kindly and let him eat with the king every day. What an ending! This showed the faithfulness of our God in preserving the throne of David. The descendants of Jehoiachin could be traced to Joseph and Mary, who were Jesus' "parents".
3. The standard of God is simple. It is about our hearts, he wants us to have faith in Him in everything, as our all sufficient God. In Matthew 20:16, it says the last shall be the first, so it is not about your social status but about your faith in Him.
4. The sin of King Jeroboam (the first king of the Northern Kingdom) in introducing idol worship to Israel was mentioned over and over again in this book. God will remember

all the church leaders who bring in pagan practices into their churches and mislead their followers.

What do we learn about men in this Book of 2 Kings?

1. The longer that men are in an institution, the worst the institution becomes. For example, kingdoms fall, companies fail, etc. The lesson is that if you leave men alone long enough, corruption and immorality will eventually cause the downward spiral.
2. Good kings do not necessarily produce good sons. For example, King Solomon produced King Rehoboam, and King Hezekiah produced King Manasseh. Grace does not run in the human line. Grace comes only from God.

So, see the wonderful God in this book of 2 Kings.