



## **My Drift**

**Title: Bible – The Book of 2 Kings**

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The book of 2 Kings describes the history of the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah, focusing on the spiritual successes and failures of each kingdom. The book also explains why Israel and Judah lost the Lord's protection and were conquered.

That's the big picture but since 2 King has 25 chapters, I will provide a few details.

### **2 Kings 1–13**

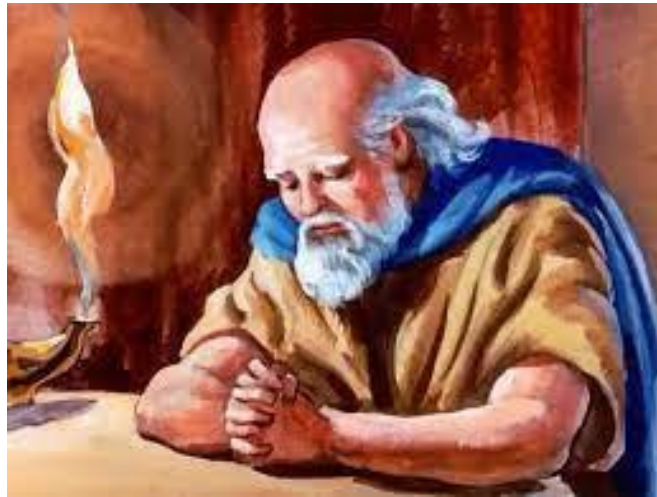
In the Northern Kingdom, Elijah is translated and taken into heaven and Elisha begins his ministry.

**What does translated mean?** Apparently, it means going to heaven without dying. According to the Bible, Enoch and Elijah are the only two people God took to heaven without them dying.



### **Who is Elisha?**

The successor to Elijah, Elisha served as a prophet and miracle worker during a tumultuous time in Israel's history. Though he performed many miracles, he remained humble and faithful to God, denying monetary gain as he served the Lord.



God wants none of His Children to die sick, much less one of His Prophets. However, Prophet Elisha, one of the most anointed among God's Prophets died sick. In His lifetime, Elisha raised the dead without speaking a word. He merely laid himself on the dead body twice and the dead rose up. Elisha also performed the miracle of the oil and heals Naaman of leprosy.

### **The miracle of the oil?**

A prophet died and left debts that his widow and two sons could not pay. The creditor decided to take the two sons as slaves in payment of the debt. When the widow begged for Elisha's help, the Lord miraculously provided them with enough oil to sell and pay off the debt. The oil containers always remained full.



### **Why did God let the prophet Elisha get sick and die?**

Even though Elisha was a man of God, he suffered but God did not forsake him. Elisha's sickness was painful, but it brought him to heaven. It was not the result of sin. It wasn't a punishment. It was simply that he lived in a fallen world and death was a part of it.

**Judah and Israel unite in a war against Moab and are victorious.**

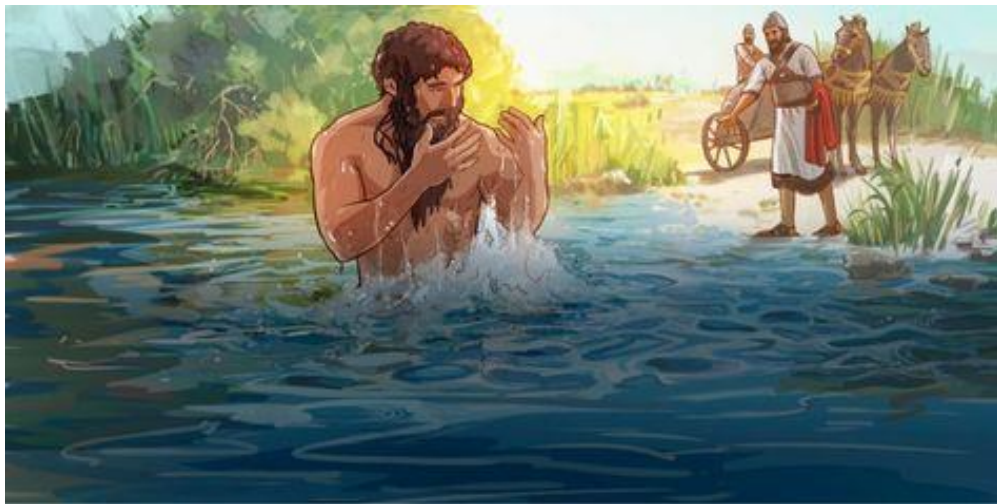
In 2 Kings 3, the kings of Israel, Judah and Edom unite to fight the Moabites. The Lord promotes the king of Judah through His prophet, Elisha, that these kings would see victory against the Moabites. The Lord sustains the armies in the desert by a supernatural provision of water to sustain the men and prove His willingness to bring victory. He also used the water to trick the Moabites into attacking. In the battle, the armies of Israel, Judah and Edom successfully destroy the Moabite army.

**The Lord heals Naaman, the captain of the Syrian army, of his leprosy. Here is the story as told in the bible 2 Kings 5:1-17:**

*Naaman was the captain of the army of the king of Aram. He was very important to his king because the LORD used him to lead Aram to victory. Naaman was a great and powerful man, but he was also sick with leprosy. The Aramean army sent many groups of soldiers to fight in Israel. One time they took a little girl from the land of Israel. This girl became a servant of Naaman's wife. She said to his wife, "I wish that my master would meet the prophet who lives in Samaria. He could heal Naaman of his leprosy." Naaman went to the king and told him what the Israelite girl said. Then the king of Aram said, "Go now, and I will send a letter to the king of Israel." So Naaman went to Israel. He took 750 pounds of silver, 6000 pieces of gold and ten changes of clothes as gifts. Naaman took the letter from the king of Aram to the king of Israel. The letter said: "Now this letter is to show that I am sending my servant Naaman to you. Cure his leprosy." When the king of Israel had read the letter, he tore his clothes to show he was sad and upset. He said, "Am I God? I don't have the power over life and death. So why did the king of Aram send a man sick with leprosy for me to heal? Think about it, and you will see that it is a trick. The king of Aram is trying to start a fight." Elisha, the man of God, heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes. So, Elisha sent this message to the king: "Why did you tear your clothes? Let Naaman come to me. Then he will know there is a prophet in Israel." So Naaman came with his horses and chariots to Elisha's house and stood outside the door. Elisha sent a messenger to Naaman who said, "Go and wash in the Jordan River seven times. Then your skin will be healed, and you will be pure and clean." Naaman became angry and left. He said, "I thought Elisha would at least come out and stand in front of me and call on the name of the LORD his God. I thought he would wave his hand over my body and heal the leprosy. Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, are better than all the water in Israel. Why can't I wash in those rivers in Damascus and become clean?" He was very angry and turned to leave. But Naaman's servants went to him and talked to him. They said, "Father, if the prophet told you to do some great thing, you would do it, isn't that right? But he*



*said, ‘Wash, and you will be pure and clean.’” So Naaman did what the man of God said. He went down and dipped himself in the Jordan River seven times, and he became pure and clean. His skin became soft like the skin of a baby. Naaman and his whole group came back to the man of God. He stood before Elisha and said, “Look, I now know there is no God in all the earth except in Israel. Now please accept a gift from me.” But Elisha said, “The LORD is the one I serve, and as surely as he lives, I will not accept any gift.” Naaman tried hard to make Elisha take the gift, but he refused. Then Naaman said, “If you will not accept this gift, at least do this for me. Let me have enough dirt from Israel to fill the baskets on two of my mules. I ask this because I will never again offer any burnt offering or sacrifice to any other gods. I will offer sacrifices only to the LORD!*



**Naaman dipped himself in the Jordan River**

**The people of Israel experience famines.**



### **The Four Lepers: Outcasts sharing good news (2 Kings 7:3-20)**

*The situation in Samaria, the capital of Israel, was bleak. The city was under siege from the invading Aramean army and 2 Kings 6:24-33 describes the situation. There was a famine and so the price of anything that could be eaten rocketed. This included extortionate prices for delicacies such as a donkey's head for 80 shekels (a live horse cost 150 shekels) and of dove's dung for 5 shekels. However, worse than that was the fact that the residents had resorted to cannibalism, illustrated by the two women who agreed to eat each other's sons but after the first son had been boiled and eaten the second mother changed her mind.*

*Samaria was simply waiting for her long, slow, and painful end to arrive. Hope had long since fled the scene.*

*Meanwhile, 2 Kings 7 begins by telling us of four lepers who were living outside the city. Lepers were outcasts. They were the dregs of society; the lowest of the low. Once diagnosed with leprosy, a person had to live outside of the main community so as not to endanger anyone else. However, the real stigma came from the fact that they were regarded as being unclean. They had to call out 'Unclean' as they moved around in order to warn of their approach. As God's people being unclean meant that a person was not acceptable to God and therefore unable to participate in any acts of worship. The rejection by society was simply a picture of the rejection by God.*

*These four lepers, then, were in a difficult situation. They were sitting at the gate of the city as that was the place where they could beg. However, due to the siege no-one was going in or out of the city and so that was a hopeless task. In discussion with each other they realized they had three options:*

- *They could wait at the gate until they died;*
- *They could re-enter the besieged city and die; or*
- *They could go over to the Arameans.*

*This third option was highly likely to result in death since the invading army were trying to kill all who lived in the city. However, there was a slim chance that the army would have mercy on them and so they decided it was worth a shot.*

*It was this decision that led to the salvation of many. As the four lepers approached the camp it appeared much quieter than they had anticipated. They encountered no hostile guard. No-one challenged them as they approached the nearest tents. There was no lookout or sentry blocking their path. They heard no voices of soldiers laughing or shouting or passing the time with each other. All they heard was the neighing of horses and the braying of donkeys, all of which had been abandoned in the camp.*

*They could not believe what was happening! They cautiously entered a tent on the edge of the camp and found some food and drink and hungrily gorged themselves on what they found. These were men who in good times had been living on the scraps from the city but during the siege would have received nothing at all. Once they had satisfied their immediate desire for something to fill their stomachs they looked around and realized that the tent contained silver, gold, and clothes. They couldn't believe their luck and so gathered up the items and ran off to hide them. Having done that, they moved to another tent and did the same thing.*

*It was at this point that the realization dawned on them that they had stumbled upon the aftermath of a miracle! God had invaded the enemy camp and scattered the army so that no man was left. He had provided the besieged and hopeless city with food, drink, and plunder.*

*God had brought salvation to the city!*

*The lepers realized that this was good news for them but also good news for the people. This was not a victory God had brought about just for four lepers. This was good news for all the people! 'We are not doing right', they said, 'This day is a day of good news...let us go and tell'.*

*And so they did! They went back to the city and shouted out the news to the gatekeepers who told the king's household. Following some careful checking as to the reliability of the testimony of the lepers the people were told 'and the people went out and plundered the camp'. Donkey head and dove dung was no longer on the menu and instead 'a measure (just over 7 liters) of fine flour was sold for a shekel and two measures of barley for a shekel'. The city was saved!*

### **The house of Ahab is destroyed.**

**In 2 Kings 9–10 we read an account of prophecy again being fulfilled. This time the prophecy was the one Elijah gave concerning Ahab and Jezebel and their descendants. These sobering chapters testify to the awful end of those who fight against God. The prophecy's fulfillment didn't seem to have the desired effect on the people, however. King Jehu, the man who fulfilled the prophecy by killing Jezebel and Ahab's posterity, also killed the priests of Baal but would not give up the idols of Jeroboam, the first king of divided Israel. So, Elijah's prophecies were fulfilled, but Israel continued in a form of idolatry although it was different than Baal worship.**

## **2 Kings 14–20**

**Many of the kings of Israel reign in wickedness.**

### **Israel's Evil Kings**

#### **♠ Jeroboam (931–910 BC)**

The northern kingdom was plagued with evil kings, beginning with Jeroboam, who intentionally caused Israel to sin by erecting golden calves in Bethel and Dan and telling the Israelites, “Here are your gods, O Israel, which brought you up from the land of Egypt!”

Here is a rundown of the reigns of the seven kings who followed him:

#### **♠ Nadab (910–909 BC)**

Jeroboam's son. He practiced all the evils his father practiced. He ruled only two years because Baasha assassinated him and became king in his place.

#### **♠ Baasha (909–886 BC)**

He immediately killed everyone in Jeroboam's house. His despicable deeds caused God to pronounce the same judgment on him, and his household suffered the same fate as Nadab's.

#### **♠ Elah (886–885 BC)**

He assassinated Baasha and ruled two years. While in a drunken stupor, Elah was assassinated by Zimri.

#### **♠ Zimri (885–885 BC)**

He ruled for one week. Hearing that Zimri had become king, the people of Israel made Omri king and attacked Zimri in Tirzah. Knowing he was defeated, Zimri committed suicide by going into the citadel of the king's house and burning it down upon himself.

#### **♠ Omri (885–874 BC)**

He proved to be eviler than all the kings before him. He ruled 12 years, died, and was buried in Samaria.

#### **♠ Ahab (874–853 BC)**

Omri's son. He followed the examples before him and became even more wicked. His idolatrous wife, Jezebel, was the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians. Her marriage to Ahab secured an alliance between Phoenicia and



Israel and brought Baal worship to Israel. The driving force behind Baal worship, Jezebel led Ahab to serve Baal and erect a temple and altar to Baal in Samaria. When condemned and convicted of his sin by God, Ahab tore his clothes, donned sackcloth, and fasted and mourned in repentance and humility. God showed grace to Ahab, promising not to bring judgment or calamity on his house but vowing to pour them out on Ahab's son's house. Ahab died fighting the Syrians, and Ahaziah reigned in his place.

#### ♠ Ahaziah (853–852 BC)

He ruled for two years. He did evil in God's sight and worshiped Baal, which angered the Almighty. Ahaziah fell through the lattice of his upper room on the second floor of his dwelling and received a life-threatening injury. Extremely afraid he would die, he sent messengers three times to seek Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron. In so doing, Ahaziah signed his own death warrant. Elijah intercepted the messengers each time. The third time the prophet informed Ahaziah personally that he would surely die. With Ahaziah's death, Elijah passed off the scene.

Ahaziah had no son to replace him on the throne, so Jehoram (852–841 BC) became king in his stead. Ten more kings ruled Israel from 841 to 722 BC—all of them evil.



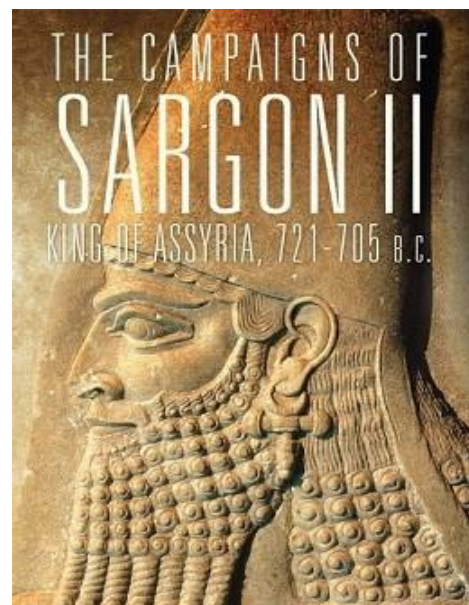


THE DIVIDED KINGDOM	
ISRAEL	JUDAH
1. Jeroboam	1. Rehoboam
2. Nadab	2. Abijam
3. Baasha	3. Asa
4. Elah	4. Jehoshaphat
5. Zimri	5. Jehoram
6. Omri	6. Ahaziah
7. Ahab	7. Athaliah (Queen)
8. Ahaziah	8. Joash
9. Jehoram	9. Amaziah
10. Jehu	10. Azariah
11. Jehoahaz	11. Jotham
12. Jehoash	12. Ahaz
13. Jeroboam 2	13. Hezekiah
14. Zechariah	14. Manasseh
15. Shallum	15. Amon
16. Menahem	16. Josiah
17. Pekiah	17. Jehoahaz
18. Pekah	18. Jehoiakim
19. Hoshea	19. Jehoiachin
	20. Zedekiah

The kings with the yellow smiley-face are considered good kings.

Well, if my arithmetic is correct, there were 31 evil kings and 8 good kings. All of the kings in Israel were evil. Why?

King Tiglath-Pileser of Assyria takes many of the Israelites captive. King Ahaz of Judah reigns in wickedness. The idolatrous ten tribes of Israel are carried into captivity by King Sargon II of Assyria. King Hezekiah reigns over Judah in righteousness, obeying the Lord and eliminating the places devoted to the worship of false gods. Because of King Hezekiah's faith and trust in God, an angel destroys the Assyrian army, fulfilling a prophecy of Isaiah.



## **2 Kings 21–25**

**In the Southern Kingdom, King Manasseh temporarily restores idol worship. Righteous King Josiah repairs the temple, and the book of the law is found. Josiah reads the book of the law to the people, eliminates the places devoted to the worship of false gods, and reinstitutes the Passover. Josiah is killed in battle. Babylon invades Judah and carries many of the people into captivity, including King Zedekiah.**



**After many years, King Jehoiachin of Judah is released from prison and is allowed to live out his final days in relative peace and comfort in Babylon.**

### **Why so many evil kings? What happened?**

**We will never know for sure.**

**The kings were evaluated by how they worshiped the Lord God. Good kings served the Lord in the temple at Jerusalem, the others did evil in His sight. Two kings set examples for the rest of the nation: David and Jeroboam. David honored God and upheld His law. Jeroboam disregarded God and His temple, and instead set up two golden calves to worship.**

**Good kings of the South followed David's example. Every king of the North followed Jeroboam's example. Most kings of the South worshiped pagan gods, too.**

**The books of Kings show us how faithful God is to His people. We see the full spectrum of God's dealings with Israel: from extreme blessing under Solomon to utter desolation and captivity. These blessings and curses were all promised**

to Israel in the Book of Deuteronomy where it says, ***“God will give Israel blessings of the land, fertility, and prosperity so long as Israel is faithful to God's teaching; disobedience will lead to curses and punishment.”***

Apparently, most of these kings didn't get the word!

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