

Notes & Outlines

**1 & 2
KINGS**

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1 & 2 KINGS

The second in the series of three double books. Originally one book, they were divided by the Septuagint translators.

WRITER:

Although the writer is unknown, it was written while the first temple was still standing (1 Kings 8:8). Jeremiah is the traditional writer. Modern scholarship assigns the authorship to “the prophets.”

THEME:

Standard of the kingdom: “as David his father” (repeated 9 times in 1 Kings). It was a human standard, but man failed to attain even to it.

KEY VERSES:

2 Kings 17:22, 23 and 25:21

FEATURES:

1. Practically all the rulers were evil.
2. God’s patience in dealing with them.
3. Names of the mothers are given of both good and bad kings.
4. God’s grace in sending revival when the king, with the people, turned to Him.
5. Prominence of the prophet and insignificance of the priest.
6. God’s long delay before the captivity of both Israel and Judah.
7. Man’s total inability to rule for God.
8. Wicked kings who had godly sons, also good kings who had wicked sons.

KINGDOM:

First Kings records the *division* of the kingdom; Second Kings records the *collapse* of the kingdom. Considered

together, they open with King David and close with the king of Babylon. They are the book of man's rule of God's kingdom. The throne on earth must be in tune with the throne in heaven if blessings come and benefits accrue to the people. Yet man's plan cannot overthrow God's purposes.

PURPOSE:

It is a continuation of the narrative begun in 1 & 2 Samuel. Actually, 1 & 2 Samuel with 1 & 2 Kings can be viewed as one book. In these four books the history of the nation is traced from the time of its greatest extent, influence, and prosperity under David and Solomon to the division and finally the captivity and exile of both kingdoms.

The moral teaching is to show man his inability to rule himself and the world. In these four historical books we have the rise and fall of the kingdom of Israel.

OUTLINE:

- I. Death of David**, 1 Kings 1, 2
- II. Glory of SOLOMON'S reign**, 1 Kings 3 — 11
 - A. Solomon's prayer for wisdom, Chapters 3, 4
 - B. Building of temple, Chapters 5 — 8
 - C. Fame of Solomon, Chapters 9, 10
 - D. Shame and death of Solomon, Chapter 11
- III. DIVISION of the kingdom**, 1 Kings 12 — 2 Kings 16
(See table on next page)
- IV. CAPTIVITY of ISRAEL by Assyria**, 2 Kings 17
- V. DECLINE and CAPTIVITY of JUDAH by Babylon**, 2 Kings 18 — 25

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF THE KINGS OF THE DIVIDED KINGDOM

JUDAH				ISRAEL			
King	Reign	Character	Prophet	King	Reign	Character	Prophet
1. Rehoboam	931-913 BC	(17 yrs.) Bad	Shematah	1. Jeroboam I	931-910 BC	(22 yrs.) Bad	Ahijah
2. Abijam	913-911	(3 yrs.) Bad		2. Nadab	910-909	(2 yrs.) Bad	
3. Asa	911-870	(41 yrs.) Good		3. Baasha	909-886	(24 yrs.) Bad	
				4. Elah	886-885	(2 yrs.) Bad	
				5. Zimri	885	(7 days) Bad	
4. Jehoshaphat	870-848*	(25 yrs.) Good		6. Omri	885-874	(12 yrs.) Bad	{ Elijah Micaiah
5. Jehoram	848-841*	(8 yrs.) Bad		7. Ahab	874-853	(22 yrs.) Bad	
6. Ahaziah	841	(1 yr.) Bad	Obadiah	8. Ahaziah	853-852	(2 yrs.) Bad	
7. Athaliah	841-835	(6 yrs.) Bad		9. Joram	852-841	(12 yrs.) Bad	Elisha
8. Joash	835-796	(40 yrs.) Good	Joel	10. Jehu	841-814	(28 yrs.) Bad	
9. Amaziah	796-767	(29 yrs.) Good		11. Jehoahaz	814-798	(17 yrs.) Bad	{ Jonah Amos
10. Azariah (or Uzziah)	767-740*	(52 yrs.) Good	Isaiah	12. Jehoash	798-782*	(16 yrs.) Bad	
				13. Jeroboam II	782-753*	(41 yrs.) Bad	Hosea
				14. Zechariah	753-752	(6 mo.) Bad	
				15. Shallum	752	(1 mo.) Bad	
				16. Menahem	752-742*	(10 yrs.) Bad	
				17. Pekahiah	742-740	(2 yrs.) Bad	
				18. Pekah	740-732*	(20 yrs.) Bad	
11. Jotham	740-732*	(16 yrs.) Good	Micah	19. Hoshea	732-722	(9 yrs.) Bad	
12. Ahaz	732-716*	(16 yrs.) Bad		<i>(Capture of Samaria and captivity of Israel)</i>			
13. Hezekiah	716-687*	(29 yrs.) Good					
14. Manasseh	687-642*	(55 yrs.) Bad					
15. Amon	642-640	(2 yrs.) Bad	{ Nahum Habakkuk Zephaniah Jeremiah				
16. Josiah	640-608	(31 yrs.) Good					
17. Jehoahaz	608	(3 mo.) Bad					
18. Jehoiakim	608-597	(11 yrs.) Bad					
19. Jehoiachin	597	(3 mo.) Bad					
20. Zedekiah	597-586	(11 yrs.) Bad					

*Co-regency

(Destruction of Jerusalem and captivity of Judah)

*Co-regency

1 KINGS

COMMENT:

First Kings opens with the death of David and closes with the death of Jehoshaphat.

The death of David, the reign of Solomon, and the division of the kingdom are the dominant features of 1 Kings.

The evil reign of Ahab and Jezebel and the spectacular ministry of Elijah the prophet are the fitting climax to this first book of Kings.

I. **Death of David**, Chapters 1, 2

Chapter 1 — David becomes senile. Adonijah, a son of David, takes advantage of his father's condition and makes a bid for the throne. David anoints Solomon under pressure from Nathan and Bathsheba.

Evidently Absalom was the choice of David as his successor. After Absalom's death and as David approached old age, he lost interest in choosing his successor. This led to confusion and the abortive attempt of Adonijah.

Chapter 2 — David charges Solomon. David's charge to Solomon (vs. 2, 3) reveals his attitude toward Solomon. Charging him to show himself a man reveals that David had little confidence in a successor who had been reared in the palace among women. David knew the tough discipline of the caves and rugged outdoor life. Solomon has a taste for comforts, luxury, and ease. David's charge reveals something of his own character.

David's legacy to Solomon is sometimes ignored.

(1) He transferred the leadership of the nation from the house of Saul and the tribe of Benjamin to Judah and established the royal house of David.

(2) He established Jerusalem as the Holy City and as the religious center and national capital for all Jews.

(3) He stamped out idolatry, practically speaking, and made the worship of Jehovah universal in the land.

(4) He made conquests of many nations who paid tribute to Israel and its king. He extended the borders of the country to Egypt on the south and to the Euphrates River in the north and east, including far more territory than at any other time in the nation's history.

(5) Although an oriental monarch with a sizable harem, David's foreign marriages were largely political and relatively free from religious and moral corruption.

(6) David was a poet and musician who endeared himself to the people as the "sweet psalmist of Israel."

(7) David planned the Temple, which was to exalt the religious life of the nation and the worship of Jehovah, although he was not permitted to build the Lord's house.

(8) Although there was still rivalry of a sort between the ten tribes of the north and Judah (and had been ever since the death of Saul and his son), even so, David had no serious difficulty in uniting all the tribes under his rule and about the national capital at Jerusalem.

(9) At the time of David's death, the nation was second to none in power and military prowess, and the people had a large measure of peace and freedom, as every man "sat under his own vine and fig tree."

David's death injects a sad note into the record.

Adonijah's treachery is revealed in his request to Bathsheba. Adonijah is slain, Abiathar removed from the priesthood, and Joab flees but is captured and slain.

Solomon made Benaiah captain and Zadok priest.

Shimei, of the house of Saul, who cursed David, is executed.

II. Glory of SOLOMON'S REIGN, Chapters 3 — 11

A. Solomon's prayer for wisdom, Chapters 3, 4

Chapter 3 — Solomon was married to the daughter of

Pharaoh, but at this time he loved the Lord (v. 3). The spirit of compromise is evident in this marriage as well as his failure to remove idolatry from the land.

Solomon prayed for wisdom. Evidently he was praying for political wisdom and not spiritual discernment.

That God granted his request is manifested in the method he used in determining which of the two harlots was the real mother of the child.

Chapter 4 — Peace and prosperity became a reality (vs. 20, 25, 26). Solomon was a prince of peace, while David was a man of war. Solomon became famous because of his wisdom. Note the areas in which he was a specialist (see vs. 32-34).

B. Building of Temple, Chapters 5 — 8

Chapter 5 — Solomon engages Hiram, King of Tyre, to build the Temple. His workers were the greatest builders of that day. The building required 30,000 Israelites, 150,000 Canaanites, 550 overseers, and 3500 subordinates.

Chapter 6 — Solomon begins to build the Temple. It was patterned after the wilderness Tabernacle but was about twice as large. It was more ornate, elaborate, and costly. The simplicity of the Tabernacle was lost, and there seemed to be definite spiritual deterioration. There are several indications of this. For instance, the Tabernacle depended solely upon the light of the lampstand in the Holy Place, but in the Temple there were narrow windows. Natural light is substituted for the light which speaks of Christ. Also, the measurements of the cherubim over the mercy seat are given while there was no measurement of the cherubim in the Tabernacle because it speaks of the deity of Christ which cannot be measured.

The striking feature of the construction of the Temple is stated in verse 7. It took 7 years to build the Temple (v. 38).

Many other buildings surrounded the Temple proper.

The estimated cost of the Temple is \$2,450,000,000 to \$4,900,000,000.

Chapter 7 — Solomon builds other structures:

His own palace — 13 years in building (v. 1),

House of the forest of Lebanon (v. 2),

Palace for the daughter of Pharaoh (v. 8),

Pillars for the porch of the Temple (v. 21),

Molten sea for the Temple (v. 23),

Ten lavers of brass (v. 38),

Articles of furniture for the Temple (vs. 48, 49).

Chapter 8 — The glory of the Lord fills the Temple after the ark is brought from the Tabernacle and installed inside the Holy of Holies (vs. 10, 11).

Solomon dedicates the Temple, giving the proper credit to David (vs. 17-20). See 1 Chronicles 22 for the account of David's gathering all the materials for the Temple. It is properly David's temple. The only temple Solomon had was on the side of his head.

Solomon's prayer of dedication reveals that he had no primitive view of God (v. 27). It is a pagan notion that God dwells in a house.

The Temple becomes the center of worship. The world was to come to the Temple to worship. Israel in captivity was to turn toward the Temple to pray.

The large number of animals sacrificed (v. 63) poses no problem when it is considered that many temporary altars were erected for this occasion (v. 64).

C. Fame of Solomon, Chapters 9, 10

Chapter 9 — God appears to Solomon the second time (v. 2) and encourages his heart. God sets up David, a very human standard, by which to measure the kings that followed him (v. 4).

The fame of Solomon spreads throughout the world. Hiram was not happy with the payment for material that Solomon made to him (v. 12).

Chapter 10 — The visit of the queen of Sheba reveals that Solomon had succeeded in witnessing for God to the world of that day (see also v. 24). Solomon's fame had spread, and obviously multitudes were coming to Jerusalem to worship the living and true God (v. 1). In the present dispensation, the church is to go to the world, but the commission to go into all the world was not given to Israel. As Israel was true to God, she was a witness to the world, and the world came to Jerusalem to worship.

“And his ascent” (v. 5) should be translated “burnt offering.” This is the offering that speaks more fully of Christ and His substitutionary death than all others. The queen of Sheba and the world came to know about Christ through the burnt offering — “without shedding of blood is no remission of sins.” The testimony of the queen of Sheba reveals that she had come to know the living and true God (vs. 7-9).

This is one isolated experience out of many which could have been recorded. (The Book of Acts records only certain conversions such as that of the Ethiopian eunuch.) This chapter reveals that for a time Israel succeeded in witnessing to the world.

The wealth of Solomon is given in verses 14-21. The luxury of his kingdom is revealed in verse 22. All these are luxury items:

Apes for entertainment,
Peacocks for beauty,
Gold, silver, and ivory for magnificent decorations.

There is a frivolous and tragic note here which is symptomatic. He is called to give a witness to the world, and he spends his energy and time with apes and peacocks to satisfy a whim.

D. Shame and death of Solomon, Chapter 11

Solomon is the most colossal failure on the pages of

Scripture. “For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required.” He had the greatest opportunity of any man who ever lived. He began by failing to remove false religion (1 Kings 3:3). What was at first a spot is now the plague of leprosy. He has a harem of 1000 wives (vs. 1-3). David also had a harem, but his was largely political while Solomon’s is licentious.

The Lord was angry with Solomon (v. 9). The kingdom is to be divided as a judgment from God, yet it would not happen in Solomon’s day — for David’s sake (vs. 12, 13).

Jeroboam is promoted by Solomon but plots to lead the 10 northern tribes in revolt according to the word of Ahijah the prophet (vs. 29-31). When Solomon discovers this, he attempts to slay Jeroboam who flees to Egypt until the death of Solomon.

The death of Solomon concludes the chapter. He reigned 40 years.

III. DIVISION of the kingdom, 1 Kings 12 — 2 Kings 16

1 Kings

Chapter 12 — Rehoboam, son of Solomon, succeeds to the throne. Jeroboam returns from Egypt and leads 10 tribes in demanding a reduction in taxes. Rehoboam, under the influence of the young men of his kingdom, having rejected the counsel of the old men who were Solomon’s advisors, turns down the request of the 10 northern tribes. Instead of reducing taxes, he threatens to raise them (vs. 10, 11). Therefore, Jeroboam leads the 10 tribes in revolt. First Kings was written during the time of the division of the kingdom (v. 19).

Jeroboam divides the nation religiously as well as politically by setting up a golden calf in Bethel and one in the tribe of Dan. The northern tribes go into idolatry (vs. 28-30).

Chapter 13 — God grants Jeroboam another chance by sending a prophet to him with a warning and a sign.

Jeroboam seems to repent at the time but finally plunges into total apostasy.

Chapter 14 — Ahijah the prophet pronounces judgment on Jeroboam and measures him according to David (v. 8).

Rehoboam king of Judah led the people into idolatry and sin. There was an abnormal increase of homosexuality (v. 24).

Shishak king of Egypt came against Jerusalem and captured it. He took as booty the gold shields that Solomon had on display. Rehoboam substitutes shields of brass. There was deterioration in the kingdom now as well as division.

Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, dies.

This chapter, which describes the reigns of Jeroboam and Rehoboam, sets the pace for the sordid record of the kings of the divided kingdom. There was not one good king in the northern kingdom of Israel. There were 19 of them, and all were bad. In the southern kingdom there were 20 kings — 12 of them were bad. Only 8 of them could be labeled good kings. Out of the 8, only 5 were outstanding. (See chronological table of the kings of the divided kingdom.)

Chapter 15 — Abijam, son of Rehoboam, succeeded his father on the throne of Judah. He was as wicked as his father (v. 3). David continues as the standard of excellence for the kings of both Israel and Judah (v. 5). (Jeroboam became the standard of evil for the kings of the northern kingdom.) The one black mark against David is recorded, not covered. Abijam did nothing worthy of mention, either good or bad; his death is recorded here.

Asa succeeded Abijam in the southern kingdom of Judah. Asa compares to David (v. 11). He led in the first revival of the nation. First Kings gives only half a chapter to his reign, but 2 Chronicles gives three chapters (chapters 14, 15, 16). We will explore his reign when we come to the Book of Chronicles.

Asa did have to bribe Ben-hadad, king of Syria, and he warred with Israel continually. Jehoshaphat succeeded Asa as

king of Judah.

Nadab, son of Jeroboam, succeeded him as king of Israel. He was evil (v. 26).

Baasha led a conspiracy against him, slew him, and reigned in his stead (vs. 27, 28). Baasha continued war against Asa (v. 32).

Chapter 16 — Baasha's evil reign lasted for 24 years. Elah his son succeeded him but reigned only 2 years. Zimri, a captain, slew Elah while he was drunk.

Zimri destroyed every male member of the house of Baasha. He reigned only 7 days, for Omri, captain of the host of Israel, besieged Tirzah and captured it. Zimri committed suicide by burning down the house in which he was.

The northern kingdom was divided between Omri and Tibni for 4 years. Tibni died and Omri reigned alone for 8 years. Omri built Samaria and made it the capital of the northern kingdom. He plunged Israel into the depths of evil (v. 25). His pattern was Jeroboam (v. 26).

Ahab, son of Omri, succeeded him (v. 28). He was worse than his father; he was the worst king of all (v. 30). He compounded evil by marrying Jezebel, the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Zidonians and high priest of Baal. What evil designs Ahab did not think of, Jezebel did.

Chapter 17 — Elijah the prophet is introduced by his walking into the court of Ahab and Jezebel and making a very brave announcement — no rain for 3 years but according to the word of Elijah. Then he departs in just such a dramatic fashion.

He retires to the brook Cherith where he is fed by ravens and drinks of the brook until it dries up. He learned that his life was no more than a dried up brook. He could truly sing, "Make me a channel of blessing today."

He was sent by the Lord to the widow of Zarephath. For many days Elijah looked down into an empty flour barrel and sang the doxology. He learned that his life was no more than an empty flour barrel.

When the widow's son died, he learned that this life was no more than a dead body. He also learned that life comes from contact.

Chapter 18 — This is one of the most spectacular chapters of Scripture. The meeting between Elijah and Ahab is again dramatic. Note the 3 times it is announced, “Behold, Elijah is here” (vs. 8, 11, 14).

The contest is sensational as Elijah challenges the prophets of Baal (vs. 21-24). It is Elijah versus 450 prophets of Baal. John Knox was right — “One with God is a majority.” The prophets of Baal use every kind of incantation to bring fire down upon the offering in the name of Baal. Elijah looks on with a bored and skeptical eye. He uses the rapier of irony and sarcasm. They yell louder and become more frantic but to no avail. Elijah, after the prophets of Baal retire in defeat, repairs the altar of 12 stones, showing that the nation Israel is one. He then arranges the wood and the sacrifice. When barrel after barrel of water is brought up from the blue Mediterranean to Mount Carmel and poured on the altar, Elijah utters one of the great prayers of Scripture, brief but effective (vs. 36, 37).

After slaying the prophets of Baal, he announces the approach of a rainstorm from out over the Mediterranean Sea.

Chapter 19 — Ahab reports to Jezebel that Elijah had slain all her prophets of Baal. She vows to kill Elijah. “And when he saw that” (v. 3) reveals for the first time that Elijah is a man of like passions as we are. He got his eyes off the Lord and ran from the woman. He beat a cowardly retreat to Beersheba, where he left his servant, and continued on into the wilderness to crawl under a juniper tree where he requested that he might die.

Evidently Elijah was suffering from nervous exhaustion. He was physically and mentally depleted. God gave him nourishing food and plenty of sleep. He informed Elijah that

“the journey is too great for thee” (v. 7).

Then the Lord rebuked him and treated him to a spectacular display:

- (1) strong wind — but God was not in the wind;
- (2) earthquake — but God was not in the earthquake;
- (3) fire — but God was not in the fire.

Elijah loved all of this. Then came the still small voice. This is contrary to Elijah, but God was in the still small voice.

Elijah returns to the scene of action and danger. On the way, he calls Elisha.

Chapter 20 — God grants to Ahab another opportunity of turning to Him. A prophet of God promises victory to Ahab over the Syrians. God grants the victory which seemed impossible.

Again the prophet warns Ahab that the king of Syria will return, but God will give him another victory. God granted this victory also, but Ahab failed to obey God by sparing Ben-hadad. Judgment of God is pronounced upon Ahab (v. 42).

Chapter 21 — Ahab attempts to buy the vineyard of Naboth, but Naboth refuses to sell. Ahab returns to his palace like a spoiled child. Jezebel promises to get the vineyard. She has Naboth slain through a dastardly plot. Ahab is overjoyed and goes to claim the vineyard. God sends Elijah to meet Ahab and pronounce judgment upon him (v. 19). Just as Naboth died, Ahab will die, and the dogs will lick his blood in the same place.

Be not deceived, God is not mocked, for whatever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. (Galatians 6:7)

This is another instance of the operation of this immutable law of God. Also, judgment is pronounced upon the line of Ahab (v. 22) and upon Jezebel (v. 23). Ahab repents in a measure, and God delays judgment but does not revoke the sentence upon Ahab and Jezebel.

Chapter 22 — It is strange that Jehoshaphat would become an ally of Ahab, but his son married a daughter of Ahab and Jezebel (2 Kings 8:16-18). Before making war against Syria, Jehoshaphat, who had real spiritual discernment, asked that a prophet of God be called (vs. 5, 7). Micaiah, a prophet of God, is called (vs. 8, 9). He is one of the unsung great men of God. The prophets of Baal had already told Ahab what he wanted to hear. Micaiah at first resorted to sarcasm and comedy (v. 15). Note the reaction of Ahab (v. 16).

Then Micaiah gave a ridiculous parable. Imagine God asking any creature for advice (vs. 20-23). This was a subtle way of calling the false prophets of Baal liars. Note the reaction of Ahab to Micaiah's prophecy (v. 18). Ahab orders him kept in prison until he returns from battle. Micaiah had one parting shot (v. 28). Ahab will not return alive.

Ahab uses a clever and crooked device to escape from being killed in battle. He wore the uniform of a common soldier, while Jehoshaphat was the only one dressed as a king. Ahab did not escape. Note the irony of it all:

And a certain man drew a bow at a venture, and smote the king of Israel between the joints of his armor. Wherefore, he said unto the driver of his chariot, Turn thine hand, and carry me out of the host; for I am wounded. (v. 34)

Note how literally the prophecy of Elijah was fulfilled (vs. 37, 38).

Ahaziah, his son, succeeded him.

Jehoshaphat returned home a sadder but wiser man. He refused to make a further alliance with Ahaziah (v. 49).

First Kings closes with the 2-year reign of Ahaziah who walked in the steps of his father, Ahab.

2 KINGS

COMMENT:

The second book of Kings continues the record begun in the first book of Kings. In fact, there does not seem to be a proper division between the two books. Ahaziah's reign in Israel is begun in 1 Kings and concluded in 2 Kings.

The king and the prophet take the place of the priest as God's instruments of communication.

Chapter 1 — Ahaziah king of Israel, son of Ahab and Jezebel, fell down through a lattice and was seriously injured. Greatly influenced by his mother Jezebel, he sends messengers to Ekron to inquire of Baal if he would be healed.

Elijah, in his last public act as prophet, is sent by the Lord to meet the messengers with a stern rebuke, "Is it because there is not a God in Israel that thou sendest to inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron?" Then Elijah pronounces the death sentence upon Ahaziah.

Elijah brings down fire from heaven to destroy the two detachments of 50 sent by the king to get him. Then Elijah goes with the 3rd detachment and personally delivers the death message to Ahaziah — which was fulfilled.

Chapter 2 — This chapter records the translation of Elijah. He goes from Gilgal to Bethel to Jericho to the Jordan river, accompanied by Elisha. Elijah promises Elisha a double portion of his spirit if he witnesses his departure. Elijah strikes the waters of Jordan with his mantle, and they two go over. Elijah departs from him in a chariot of fire (v. 11), and Elisha witnesses it (v. 12). Elisha returns over Jordan by using Elijah's mantle to smite the waters.

Elisha makes the bitter waters sweet at Jericho.

On his return to Bethel he is met by a crowd of roughnecks and hoodlums who ridicule him. This incident has been derided by the critic who seems to be totally unaware of the facts.

And he went up from thence unto Bethel; and as he was going up by the way, there came forth little children out of the city, and mocked him, and said unto him, Go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head. (2 Kings 2:23 KJV)

“Little children” is *nahar* or *naar* in Hebrew. It was used of Isaac when he was 28, of Joseph when he was 39 and of Rehoboam when he was 40. It also was used for the sons of Jesse (1 Samuel 16:11) and of the Hebrew children (Daniel 1:4, 17) who were at least 17 at the time of captivity, and also for the Sodomites who attacked the home of Lot. These “little children” were not from a nursery school. Elisha did not bring out the bears — God was responsible. God still judges sin and blasphemy.

They were ridiculing Elisha and scoffing at the translation of Elijah. Their irreverence was blasphemy, as it attacked one of the great doctrines of Scripture:

Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation. (2 Peter 3:3, 4)

See also 2 Timothy 3:1-9 and Jude 7-15. The one obvious fact from this episode is that Elisha was bald.

Chapter 3 — King Ahaziah, son of Ahab, had no son as his successor so that his brother Jehoram (Joram) reigns after him.

Moab rebels against Israel. Jehoshaphat joins forces with Jehoram to go against Moab. Jehoshaphat again calls for a prophet of Jehovah. Elisha refuses at first, but responds because of the presence of Jehoshaphat (v. 14). Elisha announces that God would give them both water, which they sorely needed, and victory over Moab, which was granted.

Chapter 4 — This chapter contains 5 miracles performed by Elisha. While there is a similarity between the miracles of Elisha and Elijah, the miracles performed by Elisha were more extensive and greater to a degree.

(1) A widow of one of the prophets is in dire circumstances — her two sons are about to be sold into slavery. Elisha multiplies the pot of oil.

(2) A “great woman” of Shunem entertains Elisha (v. 10). Elisha promises she would have a son.

(3) When the son was grown to manhood, he died, and Elisha restores him to life (using the same method as Elijah had).

(4) Sons of the prophets are eating a soup in which there was poison, and Elisha makes it harmless.

(5) Elisha feeds 100 men with food for one man.

Chapter 5 — Naaman, captain of the army of Syria and a great man but a leper, comes to Elisha for healing at the suggestion of his wife’s maid (a Hebrew girl taken captive). Elisha refuses to see him but sends a messenger to tell him to go wash in the Jordan 7 times (v. 10). Naaman, because of pride, refuses to go at first (vs. 11, 12). He is persuaded to swallow his pride and obey the prophet. He is healed.

Gehazi, servant of Elisha, extracts a reward from Naaman without Elisha’s permission. Elisha pronounces judgment upon him, and he becomes a leper.

Chapter 6 — The miracle of the floating axe head reveals the character of the prophet Elisha. Elisha is the popular professor of the school of the prophets. They need larger quarters (vs. 1, 2), and Elisha goes with them to cut down timber in the Jordan valley where the accident occurs. The borrowed axe head slips off and falls into the river (vs. 4, 5). Some consider the young student careless and feel that he should not have borrowed the axe. Both charges seem unjustified, for Elisha did not rebuke him. The miracle of making

an axe head float may seem “much ado about nothing” since it is not spectacular like bringing fire down from heaven. Here we see the contrast between Elijah and Elisha. Elijah would not have done it this way or bothered with it at all. I think he would have said, “Son, forget it.” But not Elisha. Like our Lord, he is interested in the individual and his little problems. There is a great spiritual lesson here. Man is lost and the dark waters of defeat and death have passed over him. Only when the stick, representing the cross, is placed in the waters of death can man be recovered (saved) and restored to his God-given purpose and pursuit in time and eternity (vs. 5-7).

Elisha warns the king of Israel concerning the plot of Ben-hadad and thereby saves his life, not once but many times. Ben-hadad attempts to capture Elisha by sending a great host to Dothan where the prophet is staying. The servant of Elisha thinks this will be their finish, but Elisha prays that the Lord would open his servant’s eyes. God does “and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha” (v. 17). Elisha leads the blinded Syrians to Samaria as captives.

Ben-hadad lays siege to Samaria, and the inhabitants of the city are starving. The king of Samaria blames the prophet and tries to destroy him.

Chapter 7 — Elisha promises an abundance for the very next day. Four leprous men outside the city enter the camp of the Syrian army in desperation and find it deserted. During the night the Lord had caused the superstitious Syrians to hear a great noise which they interpreted as the great host of a hired army coming to attack them. They fled in panic, leaving all their supplies behind. The lepers report to the starving populace of Samaria that there is an abundance of food in the deserted camp.

Chapter 8 — Elisha predicts a famine of seven years and urges the Shunammite mother to leave the area. She returns at

the end of the drought and appeals to the king to restore her land. After learning who she is, he does so.

Elisha goes to Damascus, predicts the death of sick Ben-hadad and the ascension of Hazael (who will in turn destroy Israel) to the throne. Hazael pleads innocent of all such plans but carries them out.

Jehoram, son of Jehoshaphat, begins to reign with his father. He walks in the ways of the kings of Israel, for he had married the daughter of Ahab. Edom revolts against him, also Libnah. Jehoram dies after an 8-year reign. He is succeeded by Ahaziah his son, who joins with Joram, king of Israel, against Hazael of Syria in war. Joram is wounded.

Chapter 9 — Elisha sends one of the sons of the prophets to Jehu in Ramoth-gilead to anoint him as king of Israel and to pronounce judgment on the house of Ahab. Jehu is proclaimed king by the army. He slays Joram king of Israel, Ahaziah king of Judah, and Jezebel. Jezebel attempts to win Jehu over by her appeal as a woman (v. 30), but she is too old (v. 33). The prophecy of Elijah is literally fulfilled (vs. 36, 37). It is the frightful finish of a frightful woman.

Chapter 10 — The house of Ahab is exterminated by the slaying of his 70 sons. Jehu slays what remained. Jehu also kills the brethren of Ahaziah king of Judah.

Jehu pretends to turn to Baal worship in order to gather together Baal's followers. When they come together, Jehu has all of them slain (v. 25). Jehu destroys Baal worship from Israel (vs. 27, 28), but he does not return to the worship of Jehovah. He merely comes back to the low level of calf worship which had been established by Jeroboam (v. 29). However, God does recognize and reward him (v. 30).

Israel begins to decline as a great kingdom (v. 32).

Jehu dies and his son Jehoahaz succeeds to the throne (vs. 34, 35).

Chapter 11 — When Athaliah sees that her son Ahaziah

was slain by Jehu, this bloody daughter of Jezebel tries to destroy all the line of David. She destroys all the princes of the royal line except Joash who was hidden by a sister of Ahaziah.

When Joash is seven, he is revealed to the rulers of the kingdom who in turn plot the overthrow of bloody Athaliah. She is slain and Joash (Jehoash) becomes king at seven years of age (v. 21).

Jehoiada, the priest, leads in a movement to return to the worship of Jehovah (v. 17). The Baal worship which had invaded Judah is exterminated (v. 18).

Chapter 12 — Jehoash reigns 40 years, and he does that which is right in the eyes of the Lord (v. 2). The corruption of the priesthood is corrected and the Temple repaired.

The Syrians take Gath, and Jehoash has to pay a ransom to Hazael king of Syria to save Jerusalem. Jehoash is slain by a conspiracy of his servants. Amaziah his son succeeds him.

Chapter 13 — Jehoahaz, son of Jehu, reigns over Israel for 17 years, and he follows in the sinful steps of Jeroboam.

In desperation he turns to the Lord when oppressed by the king of Syria. The Lord delivers them, but they return to the sins of Jeroboam. Jehoahaz dies a natural death.

Joash (Jehoash) son of Jehoahaz succeeds his father to the throne. Nothing of consequence is done in his reign except he renews the war against Judah during the reign of Amaziah.

Elisha becomes sick with a fatal illness. He is visited by King Jehoahaz of Israel, to whom the prophet promises victory over the Syrians. Elisha dies. The Syrians oppress Israel, but God is gracious (v. 23).

Chapter 14 — Amaziah son of Joash succeeds to the throne of Judah and he, too, does that which is right in the sight of the Lord — but does not quite measure up to David's standard (v. 3). He is defeated by Jehoash, king of Israel, who takes Jerusalem, breaks through the wall for 400 cubits and

removes all the gold and silver that remain in the house of the Lord. Amaziah is slain in a conspiracy at Lachish.

Azariah (Uzziah), son of Amaziah, succeeds to the throne. Jeroboam II, king of Israel, reigns 41 years and does evil according to the sins of Jeroboam I. He restores the border of Israel according to Jonah, son of Amittai, the prophet. This is the historical reference to Jonah and confirms the fact that Jonah was a real person and a prophet in Israel (v. 25). Jeroboam II dies a natural death, and his son Zechariah succeeds him.

Chapter 15 — Uzziah king of Judah is a good king, but because he intrudes into the priest's function, he is smitten with leprosy (2 Chronicles 26:15-21). Jotham his son succeeds him (see Isaiah 1:1).

Zechariah, last of the line of Jehu, is slain by Shallum after he had reigned only 6 months. Shallum reigns only 1 month. Menahem overthrows and slays Shallum. Then he reigns 10 years and does evil as had Jeroboam.

At this time, Pul, king of Assyria, comes against Israel, and Menahem pays 1,000 talents of silver to preserve his kingdom. At his death, Pekahiah his son succeeds to the throne but reigns only 2 years, when Pekah, his captain, conspires and slays him.

During the reign of Pekah, Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria, comes against Israel and takes captive the tribe of Naphtali. Pekah is slain by Hoshea. Jotham reigns in Judah and is recognized as a good king.

Chapter 16 — Ahaz, son of Jotham, succeeds him to the throne. He is a wicked king who walks in the evil ways of the kings of Israel (vs. 2, 3).

Rezin, king of Syria, and Pekah, king of Israel, invade Judah but cannot take Jerusalem (see Isaiah 7—10). Ahaz appeals to Assyria for help, and the Assyrians take Damascus.

The term "Jews" is used for the first time in the Bible (v. 6).

IV. CAPTIVITY of ISRAEL by Assyria, Chapter 17

Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, captures the northern kingdom and exacts tribute from them. When he discovers that King Hoshea had formed a conspiracy against him, he besieges Samaria and, after 3 years, takes the northern tribes into captivity.

These are the reasons God permitted Israel to go into captivity:

- (1) Disobeyed God (v. 13)

Yet the LORD testified against Israel, and against Judah, by all the prophets, and by all the seers, saying, Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments and my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets.

- (2) Doubted God (v. 14, see also 2 Chronicles 36:15, 16)

Notwithstanding, they would not hear, but hardened their necks, like the neck of their fathers, who did not believe in the LORD their God.

- (3) Defied God (v. 15) in that they refused to observe the sabbatic year for 490 years

To fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths; for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfill threescore and ten years. (2 Chronicles 36:21)

The story of this nation is the story of every individual (Romans 1:5; 16:20, 26; Acts 7:51; Hebrews 12:16).

Assyria brings in foreigners to colonize the land — first mention of Samaritans (v. 29).

V. DECLINE and CAPTIVITY of JUDAH by Babylon, Chapters 18 — 25

Chapter 18 — Hezekiah, son of Ahaz, succeeds him to the

throne and is an exceptionally good king (v. 3). There is a revival during his reign (vs. 4, 5).

Hezekiah is able to overcome the Philistines, but Sennacherib, king of Assyria, invades Judah and threatens Jerusalem. Rab-shakeh, captain of Assyria, insults Hezekiah and attempts to frighten him.

Chapter 19 — He is successful in this, for Hezekiah puts on sackcloth and goes to the house of God to pray. In the meantime, he sends a messenger to Isaiah. Isaiah returns a message of encouragement (vs. 6, 7). Rab-shakeh becomes bold and challenges the God of Israel by sending an insulting letter to Hezekiah. Hezekiah goes into the house of the Lord and spreads the letter before God. God answers through Isaiah that He will turn the hosts of Assyria back (vs. 28, 32-34). God destroys 185,000 of the Assyrian army, and Sennacherib returns home where he is slain.

Chapter 20 — Hezekiah takes sick and his time is come to die (v. 1). He prays for a recovery, and God hears his prayer. This is a time when a man should have died at the appointed time. After his recovery, he commits 3 foolish acts:

- (1) He permits the ambassadors from Babylon to see his treasures (vs. 12-19).
- (2) He fathers Manasseh, the worst king of all (21:2, 9, 16, 17).
- (3) Hezekiah's heart becomes full of pride (2 Chronicles 32:25).

That this is an important section is evident from its being recorded 3 times in the Word of God (in 2 Chronicles and Isaiah).

Chapter 21 — Manasseh, son of Hezekiah, is the most wicked king of all, even surpassing Ahab and Jezebel. (Since Manasseh was 12 years old when he began to reign and Hezekiah reigned 14 years after his illness, Manasseh was

born after the recovery of Hezekiah.) Amon succeeds Manasseh and is evil as was his father (v. 20). His servants conspire against him and slay him in his own house. Josiah his son succeeds him.

Chapters 22, 23 — Josiah begins to reign when he is 8 years old, and he reigns 31 years (22:1). He is one of the best who reigned after Solomon (22:2). A great and needed revival comes to the nation. Hilkiah, the high priest, is his counselor, assistant, and adviser. The steps of revival are given:

- (1) Temple repaired (22:3-6);
- (2) Return to the Word of God (22:8-10);
- (3) Convicted of sin (22:11-13);
- (4) Put away idolatry (23:4);
- (5) Put away immorality (23:7);
- (6) Reinstated the Passover (23:21-23 and 2 Chronicles 35:18);
- (7) Further reformation (23:8-20).

Josiah is slain by Pharaoh-neco, king of Egypt. Josiah's son Jehoahaz reigns 3 months, then the king of Egypt makes Eliakim king, another son of Josiah, and changes his name to Jehoiakim. Jehoiakim does that which is evil (v. 37).

Chapter 24 — Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, comes against Jehoiakim, and Judah is destroyed (v. 2). This is God's judgment upon the nation because of the sins of Manasseh (vs. 3, 4).

After the death of Jehoiakim, who reigns 11 years, his son Jehoiachin comes to the throne for 3 months. He is an evil ruler (v. 9). The king of Babylon captures him, sacks Jerusalem and takes captive all the leaders of Jerusalem — among whom is Daniel and the 3 Hebrew children (vs. 14, 15). Nebuchadnezzar also takes Jehoiachin into Babylonian captivity and makes his uncle, Mattaniah, king over Judah and changes his name to Zedekiah. Zedekiah is also an evil

king, and he rebels against Nebuchadnezzar (vs. 19, 20).

Chapter 25 — Nebuchadnezzar comes up against Jerusalem, destroys it, and deports the people into captivity. The eyes of Zedekiah are put out after he witnesses the slaying of his own sons (v. 7). Nebuchadnezzar burns the Temple (v. 9) and transports all things of value to Babylon, including the vessels of the Temple. Jerusalem is totally destroyed.

Gedaliah is made governor and becomes the abject subject of King Nebuchadnezzar (v. 24). Before long he is murdered, and the people who remain flee to Egypt.

Jehoiachin is released from prison in Babylon and given a place of prominence there.

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