

## 2 Kings 1-17

### The Exile of Israel

#### Introduction:

The book of 2 Kings is of course a continuation from the book of 1 Kings, which is itself really a continuation of the books 1 & 2 Samuel. Interestingly, these four books were originally one book, called the book of Kingdoms. In the Septuagint, which is the earliest Greek translation of the Old Testament, 1 & 2 Samuel and the 1 & 2 Kings are counted as one book, the “Book of Kingdoms.” We, today, as the Elders have already taught earlier, classify these books as the “Historical books.”

As we journeyed through the book of 1 Kings, we saw Solomon reign and the building of the Temple, showcasing God’s goodness and love for His people shining forth, even thru the midst of His punishment as a result of David’s sin. What follows from Solomon is a series of good kings and wicked kings, either bringing God’s blessing or bringing God’s judgement. 1 Kings culminates with a Godly King in Judah, Jehoshaphat, though a King that failed to call the nation to full faith in God, and a wicked king in Israel, Ahaziah, son of Ahab and Jezebel. This, of course, is where our story will pick up.

#### Author and Timeframe:

As Pastor Greg mentioned, the author of 1 & 2 Kings is not known or stated and while some speculate that possibly the prophet Jeremiah authored the work, it’s best for us to not assume more than the text gives us, so we will stick with unknown. As we mentioned earlier, 1 & 2 Kings were originally one work; according to the Reformation Study Bible, the books were split during the reign King Azariah which would place it somewhere between 767 – 739 B.C. 2 Kings, like 1 Kings and you could also throw Joshua – 2 Samuel in here as well, build on theological ideas expressed in Deuteronomy. Moses, shortly before his death, speaking to Israel warned:

***“See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, and death and calamity; in that I am commanding you today to love Yahweh your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, that you may live and multiply, and that Yahweh your God may bless you in the land where you are entering to possess it. But if your heart turns away and you will not listen, but are drawn away and worship other gods and serve them, I declare to you today that you shall surely perish. You will not prolong your days in the land where you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess it. I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your seed, by loving Yahweh your God, by listening to His voice, and by holding fast to Him; for this is your life and the length of your days, that you may live in the land which Yahweh swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.” (Deut 30:15-20)***

Here as we make our way through Kings, we see the entirety of the books play out really, within this warning from Moses. Thus is the story of Israel during the time of the Kings, the faithful that bring prosperity and blessing and the faithless that bring judgement.

## **Purpose and Theological Theme:**

Building off of 1 Kings, the purpose or heart of the books is a history of the monarchy of Israel and Judah, and just as Pastor Gregg mentioned before they additionally demonstrate that God is the true King over all things. Worth mentioning here also, the Reformation Study Bible points out, *“As the book of Kings chart the deteriorating devotion of Israel’s kings, the problem is not so much a wholesale abandonment of Yahweh for other gods but combining the worship of Yahweh with the worship of other deities in unauthorized worship sites.”* We will see that today. The books will conclude with Israel’s ultimate failure to walk in covenant faithfulness with God, resulting in exile from the promised land.

Additionally, in 2 Kings maybe as much as any book in the Old Testament we see pictures and foreshadowing of Christ. Both in the lives and ministries of Elijah and Elisha but also God’s grace, patience and mercy towards the righteous and even the unrighteous.

## **Outline**

Now moving away from the books as a whole and focusing specifically on our text today, 2 Kings 1-17, I will outline it as such:

- I. Elijah’s Departure (2 Kings 1-2:12)***
- II. The Ministry and Miracles of Elisha (2 Kings 2:13-8)***
- III. The Reign of Jehu (2 Kings 9-10)***
- IV. Quickening Decline of Israel (2 Kings 11-15)***
- V. The Exile (2 Kings 16-17)***

## **Elijah’s Departure – His Final Days (2 Kings 1)**

2 Kings picks up from where 1 Kings ends, Jehoshaphat reigning in Judah and Ahaziah ruling in Israel, but the narrative actually continues from further back. According to Thomas Schriener, He says, *“it seems fitting to consider 1 Kings 17-2 Kings 12 as a single section.”*<sup>20</sup> While our text this morning will highlight the rise and fall of various Kings in Israel, it is layered with another story, a greater story over the top, that God is over all things. Here also, in the lives and ministries of Elijah and Elisha we see yet another theme being displayed, that God is greater than all other Gods. If we can use this lens, it makes the lives and miracles of Elijah and Elisha make sense. This theme is made apparent from the opening few verses of our text,

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<sup>20</sup> Schriener, *The King in His Beauty*. Pg. 178

***Now Moab revolted against Israel after the death of Ahab. And Ahaziah fell through the lattice in his upper chamber, which was in Samaria, and became ill. So he sent messengers and said to them, "Go, inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron, whether I will live from this sickness." But the angel of Yahweh said to Elijah the Tishbite, "Arise, go up to meet the messengers of the king of Samaria and say to them, 'Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are going to inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron?'" 2 Kings 1:1-3***

Ahaziah, the wicked King of Israel, son of the Wicked King Ahab, follows in his father's footsteps, rejecting Yahweh and seeking after false gods, Baal-Zebub, the God of Ekron. Notice here that God does not make a statement about there being no God in Israel, but rather a question; "Is it because there is no God in Israel..." Well in short order, through the prophet Elijah, they will know that in fact there is a God in Israel, a God greater than all false gods.

This answer plays out in the verses that follow, verses 4-15 where Ahaziah sends three groups of fifty soldiers plus commanders to bring Elijah back to the King. The first two groups of fifty plus one find Elijah and order him to come back and Elijah calls down fire from Heaven that consumes them. The third group of fifty plus one, learning it seems, from the errors of the first two groups, approaches Elijah differently. They come and bow before him and plead for their lives. The Angel of Yahweh then instructs Elijah to go with the men back to the King.

As we will see as we look at the various miracles of Elijah and Elisha, it is difficult at times to know why God chose to move through them in the manner He did, but what's important to remember is what these men were establishing, that there is a God in Israel and He is greater than all false gods. These soldiers worked for a Baal worshipping king and came to Elijah, seeking to impose themselves over him, a man of the true God. So long as the men tried this tactic, they were consumed by the Lord. The third group bows and acknowledges Elijah and thereby God, which spared their lives.

### Christ Connection

*Interestingly, this seemingly bizarre miracle from Elijah does have a Christ connection. In **Luke 9:51-55**, we read of Jesus going to Samaria and not being received by the people there. In response to this perceived insult, James and John ask Jesus if they should call down fire, judging that these people deserved the same punishment as the troops sent to Elijah.*

Elijah then arrives to King Ahaziah, obedient to perform his final prophetic work and informs the King in verse 16, ***"Thus says Yahweh, 'Because you have sent messengers to inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron...therefore you shall not come down from the bed where you have gone up, but shall surely die.'"***

### Elijah's Departure – Chariots of Fire (2 Kings 2)

As amazing and powerful as Elijah's miracles were, what comes next in **2 Kings 2** is still more amazing. Now, Chapter 2 can be viewed as a transitional chapter of sorts as it closes the life and

ministry of Elijah and begins the ministry of Elisha. This passage portrays Elijah as a second Moses, parting the waters of the Jordan River in **2 Kings 2:8** and really conferring the mission that God called him to, on to his successor, his Joshua, Elisha **2 Kings 2:13-14**.

As Elijah is preparing to depart this realm for heaven, he grants Elisha one request. Elisha's response in **2 Kings 2:9** refers back to Deuteronomic Inheritance laws of the first-born son in **Deuteronomy 21:17**, Elisha asking that he receive a double portion of Elijah's spirit. God grants this request and as Elijah, for only the second time in human history, is received up to heaven without tasting death **2 King 2:11**, the prophetic ministry passes on to Elisha.

As a sign of confirmation, that in fact the same Spirit and power that was on Elijah has passed to Elisha, Elisha performs miracles in the same manner which Elijah did.

*And he took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him and struck the waters and said, "Where is Yahweh, the God of Elijah?" Indeed, he himself also struck the waters, and they were divided here and there! And Elisha crossed over. Then the sons of the prophets who were at Jericho opposite him saw him and said, "The spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha." And they came to meet him and bowed themselves to the ground before him. 2 Kings 2:14-15*

With Elijah now gone, Elisha sets about to continue the work, proving that there is a God in Israel and He is greater than all others gods.

## The Ministry and Miracles of Elisha

Chapters 2-8 contain various stories dealing with the prophet Elisha interwoven with Jehoram, King of Israel. Again, while this is the book of 2 Kings, in these earlier chapters, the kings take really a back seat to the prophetic ministry, establishing again, that there is a God in Israel, and that God is greater.

### Miracles of Elisha<sup>21</sup>

Heals the bitter waters of Jericho	2 Kings 2:1-18
Judges the mocking boys	2 Kings 2:23-25
Prophecies against Moab and water filled trenches	2 Kings 3:1-27
Poor woman and the olive oil jars	2 Kings 4:1-7
The Shunamite woman	2 Kings 4:8-37
Famine at Gilgal and the poisonous stew	2 kings 4:38-44
Healing of Naaman	2 Kings 5:1-27
The axehead floats	2 Kings 2 Kings 6:1-7

<sup>21</sup> Arnold and Beyer, *Encountering the Old Testament*.

Plaguing the Syrian Army	2 Kings 6:8-23
Delivering the nation from famine	2 Kings 6:24 – 7:20
Preserving the Shunamite woman's family	2 Kings 8:1-6
Postmortem miracle	2 Kings 13:20-21

As Elisha assumes the prophetic mantle, Jehoram is King in Israel and Jehoshaphat is King in Judah; **Now Jehoram the son of Ahab became king over Israel at Samaria in the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and reigned twelve years, 2 Kings 3:1.** Jehoram was an evil King and as we go through our section today, we will see that there is really no king in Israel that is praised entirely by God, all are either neglectful at best or considered evil outright. Speaking of Jehoram:

***And he did what was evil in the sight of Yahweh, though not like his father and his mother; and he took away the sacred pillar of Baal which his father had made. Nevertheless, he clung to the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which he made Israel sin; he did not turn away from them. 2 Kings 3:2-3***

I will just highlight here this phrase “the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat” because it is repeated frequently in our text. Jeroboam was the first King of Israel after the splintering of United Israel. Rehoboam became King in Judah and Jeroboam in Israel. **1 Kings 12:32** tells us of the sins of Jeroboam that all the subsequent Kings in Israel clung to:

***And Jeroboam appointed a feast on the fifteenth day of the eighth month like the feast that was in Judah, and he offered sacrifices on the altar. So he did in Bethel, sacrificing to the calves that he made. And he placed in Bethel the priests of the high places that he had made.***

A new sacrificial alter, feasts, Idols and priests. None of which are prescribed by God and are made to false idols, and this becomes the characteristic sin that will eventually lead the people of Israel into exile.

The author focuses little on the actual kings in these first eight chapters and instead places the focus on Elisha because the point the author wants to get across is not so much the specific events in the lives and reigns of certain kings so much, but rather an explanation for the destruction of both kingdoms. “The greatest single cause for the failure of Israel was the policies of the kings and their lack of obedience to the prophetic word.”<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Arnold and Beyer.

## Moab Rebels but God Delivers (2 Kings 3)

Mesha king of Moab, revolts against Israel after the death of Ahab, drawing the ire of Jehoram who gathers all Israel, including the help of Jehoshaphat, King of Judah and sets off to war. Jehoram, like his father Ahaziah, chooses not to inquire of God through His prophet and instead goes off on his own, getting his army lost in the wilderness of Edom with no water for the army or the cattle and disaster seemingly imminent, **2 Kings 3:9-10**.

Jehoshaphat, the Godly, though flawed King of Judah, steps in, speaking words of wisdom to Jehoram:

***“Is there not a prophet of Yahweh here, that we may inquire of Yahweh by him?” And one of the king of Israel’s servants answered and said, “Elisha the son of Shaphat is here, who used to pour water on the hands of Elijah.” And Jehoshaphat said, “The word of Yahweh is with him.” So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat and the king of Edom went down to him. 2 Kings 3:11-12***

In response to this request and because of Elisha’s respect for Jehoshaphat, not Jehoram, Elisha prophesies that God will deliver them from Moab. **2 Kings 3:16-18**:

***“Thus says Yahweh, ‘Make this valley full of trenches.’ For thus says Yahweh, ‘You shall not see wind nor shall you see rain; yet that valley shall be filled with water, so that you shall drink, both you and your livestock and your cattle. And this is but a light thing in the sight of Yahweh; He will also give the Moabites into your hand.***

Among the many things we can learn here, two that stand out; first one of our main themes of this book. Though the kings are present we see the greater theme that God is over all things, but here also with this miracle performed by Elisha and the defeat of Moab we see that salvation will come by God’s grace to those who don’t deserve it, like Jehoram.

Tony Merida says, “The main question asked and answered in our text again is, ‘is there a God in Israel,’”<sup>23</sup> and with each successive miracle performed by Elisha the answer is a resounding yes!

## Elisha’s Ministry of Mercy (2 Kings 4)

As we turn to Chapter 4, we leave the Kings behind and focus solely on Elisha and a series of miracles that he performs. First, we see him approached by a widow, who after her husband has died, is unable to pay the families creditors, who then threaten to enslave her two sons as payment. Elisha has mercy on the woman, telling her go and collect as many jars as she can. Once she has the jars, take her only jar of olive oil, and fill the jars she collected. From the single jar of oil, she was able to fill all of the borrowed jars, which was enough for her to sell and pay off her debts and enough for her and her sons to live on.

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<sup>23</sup> Merida, *Exalting Jesus in 1 & 2 Kings*.

## Christ Connection

*Here we see a forerunner to miracles that Christ would perform. While God would work through the words of Elisha to fill jars for a widow, Christ, by His own power would multiply twelve loaves of bread and a few fish into enough to feed around 15,000 people with plenty left over. What it also shows us with Elisha as a type of Christ, is our ultimate savior stands ready to extend grace and help to those in times of need.*

The scene then shifts to Elisha traveling to Shunem, where a wealthy woman lived. This wealthy woman and her husband, understood who Elisha was and were honored by his presence:

***And she said to her husband, "Behold now, I know that this is a holy man of God passing by us continually. Please, let us make a little walled upper chamber and let us set a bed for him there, and a table and a chair and a lampstand; and it will be, when he comes to us, that he can turn in there." 2 Kings 4:9-10***

This kindness extended towards God's prophet proved to be a blessing to this couple as well. The women's barrenness is made known to Elisha who was looking to reward her kindness, **2 Kings 4:13**. So Elisha calls the women and prophecies that within the year she would have a child. As nothing is too difficult for God, the woman bears a child.

Some years pass without mention and the story picks up after the child is grown, **2 Kings 4:18**. The child then suffers some malady or injury and dies as a result. The wealthy woman, knows what to do and heads for the man of God. Upon arriving at Mt. Carmel and explaining the situation to Elisha, he determines to raise her son back to life. He first tries sending his staff along to be laid on the young man, which doesn't work, **2 Kings 4:29-31**. Elisha then heads to the woman's home himself and through what seems like a bizarre act restores life to the young man:

***So he entered and shut the door behind them both and prayed to Yahweh. And he went up and lay on the child and put his mouth on his mouth and his eyes on his eyes and his hands on his hands, and he stretched himself on him; and the flesh of the child became warm. Then he returned and walked in the house once back and forth, and went up and stretched himself on him; and the boy sneezed seven times and the boy opened his eyes. 2 Kings 4:33-35***

## Christ Connection

*Here again, we see lesser forms of what Christ would do in His earthly ministry, raising the dead. Elisha, it says in 2 Kings 4:28 didn't know why the woman was distressed. Christ is omniscient and knew the thoughts of those He dealt with, **Matt 9:4; Luke 11:17** etc. Also, we see that Elisha failed to raise the boy the first time and only after he prayed and performed the seemingly bizarre ritual, was the boy raised. Jesus on the other hand, raised Lazarus from the dead with a word, **John 11:43**.*

Another point we shouldn't miss here is that God stands ready to help. **2 Kings 4:22-25**, when the women determines to meet Elisha at Mt. Carmel, her husband questions her, asking why she would go when it's not a holy day. Her response speaks volumes; she simply responds all is well, and sets off. It should be comforting to us today that we belong to a God who always stands ready to help. **Psalm 121:4-5, He who keeps you will not slumber. Behold, He who keeps Israel Will not slumber and will not sleep.**

Chapter four ends with two additional miracles performed by Elisha. He cleanses a potentially sickening or poisonous pot of stew and then feeds a hundred men with only 20 loaves of bread with enough to have some left over. Miracles similar in fashion to what we have already discussed, and we are left with a great reminder. Elisha was great and did great things, but one greater has come, Christ the Messiah, who not only raises dead bodies but raises dead souls to new life and secures eternity for those who place their faith in Him.

### Naaman's Conversion (2 Kings 5)

Chapter 5 reintroduces us to kings but this time it's not Israel or Judah's kings but instead it's the king of Aram (Syria) and more specifically the king's army commander, Naaman. A mighty man, a foreigner, and a leper whose faith in the God of the Israelites far exceeds that even of the King of Israel. In the story of Naaman we see one of the most thorough conversion stories in the entire Bible.

***Now Naaman, commander of the army of the king of Aram, was a great man with his master, and highly respected, because by him Yahweh had given salvation to Aram. The man was also a mighty man of valor, but he was a leper.***  
**2 Kings 5:1**

Through a previous victory which the writer of 2 Kings attributes to God, Naaman had a young captured Israeli girl who served Naaman's wife. Through an act of Godly kindness, this young girl, though a slave of a foreigner, tells Naaman's wife that if he only could get to the prophet in Israel, he would be healed of his leprosy, **2 Kings 5:3**.

Well, Naaman, a man obviously prepped for faith, requests leave from the King to go meet this prophet and in response, the King of Aram sends Naaman with a very generous gift for the King of Israel, Jehoram. Jehoram, continuing to prove his unbelief in the God of Israel and not recognizing God's prophet Elisha, tears his cloths in anguish as he suspects the King of Aram wants Jehoram to cure his commander of leprosy.

Elisha finds out and requests that the Kings send Naaman to him:

***Now it happened when Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes, that he sent word to the king, saying, "Why have you torn your clothes? Now let him come to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel."*** **2 kings 5:8**

Naaman makes the trip and arrives at the door of Elisha's house. Rather than going to meet Naaman, Elisha instructs his messenger to inform Naaman to wash seven times in the Jordan and he will be restored. Naaman is enraged by this, seeing it as a slight not having Elisha himself

come speak to him, which may have been what Elisha was intending. Dale Ralph Davis notes on this exchange saying; “Elisha treated this man like any other leper who needed to be healed, and Naaman didn’t like it.” Building of this theme, Tony Merida draws a gospel connection saying, “The gospel must first humble us before it heals us. Everything about the gospel humbles us.”<sup>24</sup>

Well, Naaman was certainly humbled and after his anger subsides and he receives council from his servants, and he goes and washes seven times in the Jordan and is cleansed:

***Then his servants approached and spoke to him and said, “My father, had the prophet spoken with you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much more then, when he says to you, ‘Wash, and be clean’?” So he went down and dipped himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the word of the man of God; and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a young boy and he was clean. 2 Kings 5:13-14***

In response to this cleansing, Naaman returns to Elisha with a great pronouncement of faith, saying **“there is no God in all the earth but in Israel.” 2 Kings 5:15.** The chapter concludes with Naaman trying to bless Elisha with a lavish gift in response to the blessing he received and Elisha refuses and send the man on his way. However, in a shameful turn of events, further highlighting the decline of faith in Israel, Elisha’s servant, Gehazi, sets off to catch Naaman, devising a story and lying in order to acquire a reward for himself. To compound the sin, Gehazi returns and lies to Elisha about his illicit gain. Elisha, not being fooled, curses Gehazi with the leprosy God had just removed from Naaman.

### Christ Connection

*Elisha heals Naaman the leper and we are reminded of Christ’s greater healing in Luke 17:11-19, where Jesus heals the ten lepers.*

Allowing Elisha to point us to Christ, we can see that God’s saving grace is not reserved for the high and mighty alone like Naaman, but it’s for all, even the lowly and desperate, like the ten lepers. God’s saving grace isn’t for Abraham’s seed alone, but for all tribes, tongues and nations and more importantly, it’s free. Tony Merida notes, “God’s grace was coming free of charge to Naaman, yet Gehazi tried to put a price on salvation.”<sup>25</sup> Dale Ralph Davis states, “Gehazi’s greed implied that Yahweh was a ‘taker’ like all the other deities that littered the near east...”<sup>26</sup>

### Eye’s to See the Might of the Lord (2 Kings 6)

Chapter 6 opens with a short and almost out of place story. After a work, log chopping accident, an axehead falls into the water and Elisha after finding out, throws a stick in the river and causes the axehead to float. Another seemingly bizarre story but highlights for us a great truth. God is not just concerned with defeating Moabite armies and consuming false idols. God cares about

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<sup>24</sup> Merida.

<sup>25</sup> Merida.

<sup>26</sup> Davis, *2 Kings*.

your work tools. There is a God in Israel, a God big enough to take care of the big problems and attentive enough to care for the mundane issues of life as well.

The scene then shifts to an ongoing feud between Israel and Aram. The King of Aram after being angered and frustrated that his plans were repeatedly thwarted, believes he has traitors in his midst:

***Then the heart of the king of Aram was enraged over this thing; and he called his servants and said to them, "Will you not tell me which of us is for the king of Israel?" And one of his servants said, "No, my lord, O king; but Elisha, the prophet who is in Israel, tells the king of Israel the words that you speak in your bedroom." 2 Kings 6:11-12***

After being told that it wasn't a traitor, but rather the man of God who knows the King's plans that has been causing his trouble, the King of Aram determines to send men and seize Elisha, **2 Kings 13-14**.

Well, the troops come and surround the city where Elisha is staying and his servant, in a panic tells Elisha, saying ***"Alas, my master! What shall we do!" 2 Kings 6:15***. Elisha responds calmly; ***"Don't be afraid, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them." 2 Kings 6:16*** Elisha then prays to have the servants' eyes opened and he sees the angelic forces filling the mountains, proving yet again that God is greater. Then in a stunning turn of events rather than defeating the Aramean army, Elisha prays that God would blind them, he leads them to Samaria and rather than having them killed, he feeds them and send them on their way, **2 Kings 6:18-23**.

This should have garnered appreciation from Aram but instead, the King besieged Samaria, bringing great famine and devastation on the city. Famine so extreme that women resorted to eating their own children, **2 Kings 6:28-29**. Jehoram, still King in Israel and still evil, rather than turning to God for deliverance from this, decides it's Elisha's fault and determines to have him killed; ***Then he said, "May God do so to me and more also, if the head of Elisha the son of Shaphat remains on him today." 2 Kings 6:31***

### The Siege Lifted (2 Kings 7)

Well, Elisha is not killed and rather than proclaiming judgement on these wicked men, he proclaims mercy, ***Then Elisha said, "Listen to the word of Yahweh; thus says Yahweh, 'About this time tomorrow a seah of fine flour will be sold for a shekel, and two seahs of barley for a shekel, in the gate of Samaria.'" 2 Kings 7:1***

This prophecy is not only incredible considering the dire state the city was in, but God uses incredible means to bring it to fruition. Four lepers at the city gate decide their lives are almost over, so they devise a plan:

***"Why do we sit here until we die? If we say, 'We will enter the city,' then the famine is in the city and we will die there; and if we sit here, we die also. So now come, and let us go over to the camp of the Arameans. If they spare us, we will live; and if they put us to death, we will die." 2 Kings 7:3-4***

The lepers head for the Aramean camp and find it deserted. They certainly don't know why but the author informs us that this was God's doing:

***Now the Lord had caused the camp of the Arameans to hear a sound of chariots and a sound of horses, even the sound of a great military force, so that they said to one another, "Behold, the king of Israel has hired against us the kings of the Hittites and the kings of the Egyptians, to come upon us." <sup>7</sup> Therefore they arose and fled in the twilight, and forsook their tents and their horses and their donkeys, even the camp just as it was, and fled for their life. 2 Kings 7:6-7***

After plundering the Aramean camp such a large amount of spoils are brought back that they prove the prophecy of Elisha true. By the end of the next day, a seah of fine flour was sold for a shekel and two seahs of barley for a shekel. An incredible and unlikely story proving yet again that God is greater and God Himself delivers His people.

### Fulfilling Elijah's Prophecies (2 Kings 8)

As we come to chapter 8, we are coming to the end of the ministry of Elisha as well as the further shifting of Kings as Israel and Judah spiral down in apostasy. Here also, we see the further fulfilment of prophecy God made to Elijah:

***And Yahweh said to him, "Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus, and you will arrive and anoint Hazael king over Aram; and Jehu the son of Nimshi you shall anoint king over Israel; and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah you shall anoint as prophet in your place. 1 Kings 19:15-16***

While Elijah didn't accomplish these prophetic acts, Elisha his successor does. Through tears, Elisha prophecies concerning Hazael:

***...and the man of God wept. Then Hazael said, "Why does my lord weep?" Then he said, "Because I know the evil that you will do to the sons of Israel: their fortifications you will set on fire, and their young men you will kill with the sword, and their infants you will dash in pieces, and their pregnant women you will rip up." Then Hazael said, "But what is your servant, who is but a dog, that he should do this great thing?" And Elisha answered, "Yahweh has shown me that you will be king over Aram." 2 Kings 8:11-13***

True to God's word, Hazael murders Ben-hadad II, King of Aram and assumes the throne. Then after a rather long absence, we return to looking at the Kings of Israel and Judah. For the first time, we see a change in leadership in Judah. Jehoram, takes the throne from his father Jehoshaphat in Judah, but unlike his father, he is an evil man: ***And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, just as the house of Ahab had done, for the daughter of Ahab became his wife; and he did what was evil in the sight of Yahweh. 2 Kings 8:18***

And through this crowning of a wicked King in Judah, as bad as that is, it allows us to see a beautiful picture of our God. The very next verse, ***2 Kings 8:19, However, Yahweh was not***

***willing to make Judah a ruin, for the sake of David His servant, since He had promised him to give a lamp to him through his sons always.***

We serve a promise keeping, covenant keeping God. We can trust that His word is true because He is the one who upholds it and brings it to pass. We don't have to be confident in ourselves, and how could we be, but we can trust in our God who is the same yesterday, today and forever.

The only accomplishment of note from the reign of Jehoram is actually not an accomplishment at all. Edom and Libnah revolted against Jehoram's rule and Jehoram was unable to quell the revolt, losing control of both cities.

After a rather short reign by Judah's standard, only eight year, Ahaziah assumes the throne in Judah and like Jehoram, he was an evil man. Walking in the ways of Ahab, **2 Kings 8:27**. Ahaziah joined forces with Joram, King in Israel to make war against Hazael, King of Aram. During the battle Joram suffers an injury at the hand of the Arameans and departs the battle for Jezreel. Setting up the final fulfilment of God's prophecy through Elijah in **1 Kings 19**.

## **The Reign of Jehu (2 Kings 9-10)**

Chapter 9-10 changes focus from the ministry of Elisha and focuses on Jehu as God's instrument of judgement. In fulfilment of God's Word to Elijah, Jehu will be anointed as King of Israel, though not actually by Elisha, but rather an unnamed "son of the prophets." This probably means more like a student of Elisha rather than an actual son of a different prophet. At Elisha's instruction the student goes and anoints Jehu at Ramoth-Gilead:

***"Thus says Yahweh, the God of Israel, 'I have anointed you king over the people of Yahweh, even over Israel. And you shall strike the house of Ahab your master, that I may avenge the blood of My slaves the prophets, and the blood of all the slaves of Yahweh, at the hand of Jezebel. For the whole house of Ahab shall perish, and I will cut off from Ahab every male person both bond and free in Israel. And I will make the house of Ahab like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah. And the dogs shall eat Jezebel in the property of Jezreel, and none shall bury her.'" 2 Kings 9:6-10***

After the anointing, Jehu's men rush to declare him King, **2 Kings 9:13** and Jehu wastes no time setting about to accomplish the mission to which God had called him.

Jehu rides towards Jezreel where King Joram and king Ahaziah are. Before he can even reach the city, the two Kings ride out to meet Jehu and providentially wind-up meeting on the land that belonged to Naboth. Who we remember from **1 Kings 21** as a righteous man, who had his land stolen and was killed by Ahab and Jezebel. Jehu, certainly a man of action, wastes no time in small talk with the Kings, makes his intentions known from the first question: **Now it happened that when Joram saw Jehu, he said, "Is it peace, Jehu?" And he answered, "What peace, so long as the harlotries of your mother Jezebel and her sorceries are so many?" 2 Kings 9:22**

Joram attempts to flee and is killed by Jehu and his body thrown on Naboth's land according to God's Words:

***Then Jehu said to Bidkar his officer, "Lift him up and cast him into the property of the field of Naboth the Jezreelite, for I remember when you and I were riding together after Ahab his father, that Yahweh lifted up this oracle against him: 'Surely I have seen yesterday the blood of Naboth and the blood of his sons,' says Yahweh, 'and I will repay you in this property,' says Yahweh. So now, lift him up and cast him into the property, according to the word of Yahweh." 2 Kings 9:25-26***

Not only do we get to see God's judgement poured out on the wicked, but we see another, merciful side of God. We see that the Lord remembers His people, even if the world doesn't know you, you're a nobody in the world's eyes, like Naboth, the Lord knows His children and you are precious to him.

Well, Jehu was not finished with the judgement and so he Jehu goes after and kills the Ahaziah King of Judah as well. Now, why Jehu killed Ahaziah is a bit trickery since Ahaziah was not of the house of Ahab. It could have been simply that Jehu viewed him as a threat, or because he had married a daughter of Ahab, joining himself through marriage to that wicked family.

Once the kings are dealt with, Jehu sets his course for the temptress herself, Jezebel. Jehu arrives in Jezreel and heads straight for her home. She hears of this and prepares. She dresses herself up and yet when Jehu arrives, rather than repent for her sins or plead for mercy, she mocks him: ***Then Jehu came to Jezreel, and Jezebel heard of it and she painted her eyes and adorned her head and looked out the window. As Jehu entered the gate, she said, "Is it peace, Zimri, your master's killer?" 2 Kings 9:30-31***

Zimri, if we remember from 1 Kings 16 conspired against King Elah, murdered him and ruled Israel for seven days. Jezebel was claiming Jehu was just like Zimri. Of course this is untrue, Zimri was an evil man serving his own desires and Jehu was a zealous man serving God's desire. Well, as would be expected, this doesn't go well for Jezebel. She is thrown from her window and dies hitting the ground. Her body is then trampled and eaten by dogs, yet again, fulfilling God's words:

***This is the word of Yahweh, which He spoke by His servant Elijah the Tishbite, saying, 'In the property of Jezreel the dogs shall eat the flesh of Jezebel; and the corpse of Jezebel will be as dung on the face of the field in the property of Jezreel, so they cannot say, "This is Jezebel."'" 2 Kings 9:36-37***

As with Jezebel, so it is with the wicked. Even when confronted with their sins, even in God's patience and granted mercy, they refuse to acknowledge or repent. God is longsuffering, wishing that none would perish, but the wicked refuse His kindness and so, reap His wrath.

### **Jehu's zeal goes awry (2 Kings 10)**

Jehu was not finished with the purging and as we come to chapter 10, we see seventy sons of Ahab put to death by Jehu's command in Samaria. Here in this act we see the zeal for God, the good in Jehu but also the flaws beginning to manifest: ***Now it happened in the morning that he***

***went out and stood and said to all the people, “You are righteous; behold, I conspired against my master and killed him, but who struck down all these? 2 Kings 10:9***

Destroying Ahab’s household was commanded by God, lying to his people was not. However, Jehu’s sins would only get worse from here. As he heads off toward Samaria, he encounters relatives of Ahaziah, who were traveling for a family visit of sorts and Jehu has them captured and killed. Forty-two people in all. This grievous act was a clear departure from God’s command, and these were family of Ahaziah, of the line of David. Jehu was never instructed to destroy David’s house. Tony Merida writes, “He was a man with obvious zeal for the Lord, but that zeal seems often to be for himself and not for the glory of God.”<sup>27</sup>

Jehu continues his purge, this time focusing on the worshippers of Baal, which is good:

***Then Jehu gathered all the people and said to them, “Ahab served Baal a little; Jehu will serve him much. So now, summon to me all the prophets of Baal, all his slaves and all his priests; let no one be missing, for I have a great sacrifice for Baal; whoever is missing shall not live.” But Jehu did it in cunning, so that he might cause the slaves of Baal to perish. 2 Kings 10:18-19***

Once the Baal worshippers show up, Jehu has his men put everyone of them to death. He then orders that the pillars of Baal be taken and burned, and turned the house of Baal into a latrine, **2 Kings 10:27**. Yet, in the very next verses, we see that this was not entirely a move of faith in God: ***Thus Jehu destroyed Baal out of Israel. However, as for the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which he made Israel sin, from these Jehu did not depart, even the golden calves that were at Bethel and that were at Dan. 2 Kings 10:28-29***

This man who had set about to destroy all the Baal worship and Baal worshippers was himself a worshipper of false idols, following in the footsteps of Jeroboam Son of Nebat just like all the rest of the wicked Kings of Israel. This failure by Jehu, really begins to set in motion the total destruction and exile of Israel. Hazael, the newly appointed King of Aram, whom Elisha had wept over as he prophesied about his kingship, begins to advance on Israel, cutting off portions of their land, proving Elisha’s fears right.

## **Quickening Decline of Israel (2 Kings 11-15)**

After the death of Jehu, Jehoahaz becomes king in Israel and from here, the author begins to move pretty quickly through the events and Kings in both Israel and Judah, highlighting the quickening decline of both nations. 2 Kings 1 through Jehu’s death in chapter 10, we covered roughly 40 years. Over that time, we had three kings in Israel and four Kings in Judah.

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<sup>27</sup> Merida, *Exalting Jesus in 1 & 2 Kings*.

The next five chapters will cover approximately 92 years of history and 13 Kings, five in Judah plus a queen if we count Athaliah who ruled after Ahaziah and eight in Israel. So, we won't belabor that which the author of the book doesn't. Instead, we will look briefly at each king and their accomplishments or lack thereof in some cases. The chart below will give a breakdown of each king, their reign, their disposition before God and the prophet that served Israel during that time.

United Kingdom									
Years (BC)	King	Start / End	Disposition	Prophet	Scripture				
1050 - 1010	Saul		Good / Evil	Samuel	1 Sa 8-31 1 Ch 9-10				
1010 - 970	David (Captain)		Good / Good	Samuel	1 Sa 16-31 2 Sa 1-24 1 Ki 1-2 1 Ch 11-29				
				Nathan					
970 - 930	Solomon (Son)		Good / Evil	Nathan	1 Ki 1-11 2 Ch 1-9				

  

Divided Kingdom											
Judah					Israel						
Years	King	Start / End	Disposition	Prophet	Scripture	Years	King	Start / End	Disposition	Prophet	Scripture
931 - 913	Rehoboam (Son)		Evil / Evil	Shemaiah	1 Ki 12, 14 2 Ch 10-12	931 - 910	Jeroboam I (servant)		Evil / Evil	Ahijah	1 Ki 12-14 2 Ch 10
913 - 911	Abijah (Son)		Evil / Evil		1 Ki 15 2 Ch 13	910 - 909	Nadab (son)		Evil / Evil		
911 - 870	Asa (Son)		Good/Good	Hanani	1 Ki 15 2 Ch 14-16	909 - 886	Baasha		Evil / Evil	Jehu	1 Ki 16
						886 - 885	Elah (Son)		Evil / Evil		1 Ki 16
						885	Zimri (captain)		Evil / Evil	Micaiah	1 Ki 16
						885 - 874	Omri (Captain)		Evil / Evil	Elijah	1 Ki 17-19 1 Ki 21 2 Ki 1-2
870 - 848	Jehoshaphat (Son)		Good/Good		1 Ki 22 2 Ch 17-20	874 - 853	Ahab (Son)		Evil / Evil		1 Ki 22 2 Ki 1
848 - 841	Jehoram (Son)		Evil / Evil	Obadiah(?)	2 Ki 8 2 Ch 21	853 - 852	Ahaziah (Son)		Evil / Evil		1 Ki 22 2 Ki 1
841	Ahaziah (Son)		Evil / Evil		2 Ki 8-9 2 Ch 22	852 - 841	Joram (Son of Ahab)		Evil / Evil	Elisha	1 Ki 19 2 Ki 2-9 2 Ki 13
841 - 835	Athaliah (mother)		Evil / Evil		2 Ki 11 2 Ch 22-23	841 - 814	Jehu (Captain)		Good / Evil		2 Ki 9-10
835 - 796	Joash (son of Ahaziah)		Good / Evil	Joel	2 Ki 11-12 2 Ch 23-24	814 - 798	Jehoahaz (Son)		Evil / Evil		2 Ki 13
796 - 767	Amaziah (son)		Good / Evil		2 Ki 14 2 Ch 25	798 - 782	Jehoash (Son)		Evil / Evil		2 Ki 13-14
767 - 740	Uzziah aka Azariah (Son)		Good/Evil	Isaiah Micah	2 Ki 15 2 Ch 26	782 - 753	Jeroboam II (Son)		Evil / Evil	Amos Hosea Jonah (2 Kings 14:25; Jonah 1:1)	2 Ki 14
						753 - 752	Zechariah (Son)		Evil / Evil		2 Ki 15
						752	Shallum		Evil / Evil		2 Ki 15
						752 - 742	Menahem		Evil / Evil		2 Ki 15
748 - 732	Jotham (Son)		Good/Good		2 Ki 15 2 Ch 27	742 - 740	Pekahiah (Son)		Evil / Evil		2 Ki 15
732 - 716	Ahaz (Son)		Evil / Evil		2 Ki 16 2 Ch 28 Is 7	742 - 740 (rival) 733 - 722 (sole)	Pekah (Captain)		Evil / Evil		2 Ki 15
716 - 687	Hezekiah (Son)		Good/Good		2 Ki 18-20 2 Ch 29-32 Is 36-39	732 - 722	Hoshea		Evil / Evil		2 Ki 17
Israel into Assyrian captivity - 722 BC											
687 - 642	Manasseh (Son)		Evil / Good		2 Ki 21 2 Ch 33						Nahum
642 - 640	Amon (Son)		Evil / Evil		2 Ki 21 2 Ch 33						
640 - 608	Josiah (Son)		Good/Good		2 Ki 22-23 2 Ch 34-35						
608	Jehoahaz (Son)		Evil / Evil		2 Ki 23 2 Ch 36						
608 - 597	Jehoiakim (Son of Josiah)		Evil / Evil	Habakkuk Zephaniah Jeremiah Ezekiel (Lamentations)	2 Ki 23-24 2 Ch 36						Daniel
597	Jehoiachin (Son)		Evil / Evil		2 Ki 24-25 2 Ch 36						
597 - 586	Zedekiah (Son of Josiah)		Evil / Evil		2 Ki 24-25 2 Ch 36						
Judah into Babylonian captivity - 586 BC											
586-450				Jeremiah Haggai Zechariah Malachi							

## Assorted Kings in Judah (2 King 11-15)

**Athaliah (Usurper)**- The mother of Ahaziah, daughter of Ahab and Jezebel. **Now Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son had died. So she rose and caused all the royal seed to perish. 2 Kings 11:1.** She was dedicated to seeing the worship of Baal officially sanctioned in Judah<sup>28</sup>

**Jehoash (Joash)**- The son of Ahaziah of the line of David, protected by Jehosheba the sister of King Ahaziah and Jehoiada the priests from Athaliah deadly usurpation. His Reign began at age seven and positively, he instituted restoration of the temple, which had been neglected for some years. Negatively, rather than trusting in God to protect the nation against Hazael, King of Aram, Joash empties the temple treasuries to bribe Hazael for peace. **And Jehoash king of Judah took all the holy things that Jehoshaphat and Jehoram and Ahaziah, his fathers, kings of Judah, had set apart as holy, and his own holy things and all the gold that was found among the treasuries of the house of Yahweh and of the king's house, and sent them to Hazael king of Aram. Then he went away from Jerusalem. 2 Kings 12:18**

**Amaziah**- The son of Joash assumed the throne after his father's death at the hands of conspirators. **And he did what was right in the sight of Yahweh, yet not like David his father; he did according to all that Joash his father had done. Only the high places were not taken away; the people still sacrificed and burned incense on the high places. 2 Kings 14:3-4** Positively, he attacked and defeated the Edomites, though he didn't regain control over Edom, the ESV Study Bible notes this victory had implications for Judah's ability to trade. Negatively, he attacked Israel and suffered defeat, ultimately getting himself captured by Jehoash, King of Israel and died at the hands of conspirators.

**Azariah (Uzziah)**- The son of Amaziah, served 52 years as King of Judah and was a good king for most of his reign, **and he did what was right in the sight of Yahweh, according to all that his father Amaziah had done. Only the high places were not taken away; the people still sacrificed and burned incense on the high places. 2 Kings 15:3-4** However, he did win many battles and brought great peace and prosperity in his time. **And God helped him against the Philistines, and against the Arabians who lived in Gur-baal, and the Meunites. The Ammonites also gave tribute to Uzziah, and his fame extended to the border of Egypt, for he became very strong. 2 Chron 26:7-8** Highlighting again that there is a God in Israel and when His people trusted in Him, they prospered. Sadly, as is common, his fame spread and his pride grew to his own destruction, **2 Chron 26:7. Then Yahweh smote the king, so that he was a leper to the day of his death. 2 Kings 15:5**

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<sup>28</sup> MacArthur, *The MacArthur Bible Commentary*.

**Jotham**- The son of Azariah/Uzziah was a good king, yet like his father, he didn't remove the high places. **And he did what was right in the sight of Yahweh; he did according to all that his father Uzziah had done. Only the high places were not taken away; the people still sacrificed and burned incense on the high places. He built the upper gate of the house of Yahweh. 2 Kings 15:34-35** During his reign, Aram and Israel sought Judah's aid in battle against Assyria, "this is the Syro-Ephraimite war that features so prominently in Isaiah 7-9."<sup>29</sup>

### Assorted Kings in Israel (2 Kings 11-15)

**Jehoahaz**- The first of four sons of Jehu to reign as God promised Jehu in **2 Kings 10:30**, but he was not a good king. **And he did what was evil in the sight of Yahweh and followed the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, with which he made Israel sin; he did not depart from them. 2 Kings 13:2.** Jehoahaz's wickedness brought judgment on the people but in the life of Jehoahaz we also see God's great mercy. **So the anger of Yahweh burned against Israel, and He gave them continually into the hand of Hazael king of Aram, and into the hand of Ben-hadad the son of Hazael. Then Jehoahaz entreated the face of Yahweh, and Yahweh listened to him; for He saw the oppression of Israel, how the king of Aram oppressed them. And Yahweh gave Israel a savior, so that they came out from under the hand of the Arameans; and the sons of Israel lived in their tents as formerly. 2 Kings 13:3-5** We said from the start that 2 Kings highlights wonderfully the judgement and the mercy of God and Jehoahaz's life and reign is a perfect showcase. He shows us that these kings in Israel and Judah knew that there was a God in Israel, yet they chose to not walk in His ways. Paul of course teaches us this truth in Romans 1:18, they suppress the truth in unrighteousness bringing on themselves the wrath of God. Also, we see that great promise declared by God in **2 Chron 7:14** displayed as well, **and My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their evil ways, then I will listen from heaven, I will forgive their sin, and I will heal their land.** God always upholds His promises, we however are not always so faithful to uphold ours.

**Jehoash**- The son of Jehoahaz, second in the line of Jehu was also an evil king. **And he did what was evil in the sight of Yahweh; he did not depart from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, with which he made Israel sin, but he walked in them. 2 Kings 13:11.** His story is interrupted by the reappearance of Elisha, who is now near death, yet he has one more prophecy to give. Jehoash comes to Elisha and says that God will bring about victory over Aram but not complete victory, ultimately because of Jehoash's lack of faith. Elisha dies and is buried and we hear of one last miracle performed through Elisha rather than by him. A man who is killed gets thrown in Elisha's grave and upon touching Elisha's bones, the man is made alive again. Then, just as prophesied, **Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz took again from the hand of Ben-hadad the son of Hazael the cities which he had taken in war from the hand of Jehoahaz his father. Three times Joash struck him and recovered the cities of Israel. 2 Kings 13:25**

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<sup>29</sup> Merida, *Exalting Jesus in 1 & 2 Kings*.

**Jeroboam II-** The third son of the line of Jehu was an evil king just as the other sons, **And he did what was evil in the sight of Yahweh; he did not depart from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which he made Israel sin. 2 Kings 14:24** Though evil, God still chose to bring military success during his time, **He restored the border of Israel from Lebo-hamath as far as the Sea of the Arabah, according to the word of Yahweh, the God of Israel, which He spoke through His servant Jonah the son of Amittai, the prophet, who was of Gath-hepher. 2 Kings 14:25** God does this because of His faithfulness to Israel, not Israel's faithfulness to Him, **2 Kings 14:27**

**Zechariah-** The fourth and final son to reign from the line of Jehu as God had promised. He was an evil king, following in his fathers footsteps, **2 Kings 15:9.**

**Shallum-** The son of Jabesh, after killing Zechariah assumes the throne. He ruled for one month.

**Menahem-** The son of Gadi. After killing Shallum assumes the throne. He was an evil king in that he followed the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, just as all the previous kings of Israel, **2 Kings 15:18.** Also, like previous kings, rather than trusting in the protection given by God, he turned to payoffs given to the King of Assyria as a means for safety in the land.

**Pekahiah-** The son of Menahem, like his father, did what was evil and followed in the ways of Jeroboam son of Nebat, **2 Kings 15:24.**

**Pekah-** The son of Remaliah, after killing Pekahiah assumed the throne and reigned 20 years. He did what was evil in the Lord's sight, following in the ways of Jeroboam son of Nebat. During his reign he suffered major defeat and set in motion the exile of Israel into the hands of Assyria, **In the days of Pekah king of Israel, Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria came and took Ijon and Abel-beth-maacah and Janoah and Kedesh and Hazor and Gilead and Galilee, all the land of Naphtali; and he took them away into exile to Assyria. 2 Kings 15:29**

### **The Exile (2 Kings 16-17)**

As we arrive at chapter 16 we see Ahaz ruling in Judah and Pekah still King over Israel. Ahaz, like Pekah was an evil king, walking in the ways of the Kings of Israel, **2 Kings 16:3.** Pekah joins forces with Rezin king of Aram to war against Ahaz in Jerusalem. After failing to take the city, Ahaz pledges his servitude to Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria in hopes of being rescued from the assault, even paying him with the temple treasure. **So Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria, saying, "I am your servant and your son; come up and save me from the hand of the king of Aram and from the hand of the king of Israel, who are rising up against me."** Ahaz also took the silver and gold that was found in the house of Yahweh and in the treasuries of the king's house, and sent a gift to the king of Assyria. **2 Kings 16:7-9.**

At this point in the decline of Israel we have both Israel and Judah, forsaking God and instead pledging their allegiance to foreign kings, kings who at various times have assaulted both nations, rather than pledging allegiance to the God who had delivered them time and time again. Ahaz further distances Judah from God's blessing by desecrating the temple. He has a replica of the alter of the Arameans, an alter to the God Hadad, brought to the temple of the Lord to replace the bronze alter. The ESV Study Bible states, *"In doing these things, Ahaz desecrates the furnishing of the temple of the Lord. Obedience to the Lord is gone, the Lord's blessing and protection are gone, and now the beauty of the Lord's temple is gradually removed.*

After defeating the Arameans in Damascus, we find that Ahaz has died, replaced by Hezekiah as King of Judah. Rezin king of Aram has died as has Tiglath-Pileser, being replaced by Shalmanesser as king of Assyria and Pekah king of Israel has died and was replaced by Hoshea. Even with a whole new ruling class throughout the warring nations, the wheels of God's punishment are still in motion and Shalmanesser turns his attention to Israel. In a sad twist of irony, Hoshea, who's name means salvation turns to Shalmanesser for this salvation, paying him tribute, rather than turning to God who alone could provide the only true salvation.

This of course doesn't end well for Hoshea or Israel as Shalmanesser determines that Hoshea was acting treacherously,

**But the king of Assyria found conspiracy in Hoshea, who had sent messengers to So king of Egypt and had offered no tribute to the king of Assyria, as he had done year by year; therefore the king of Assyria shut him up and bound him in prison. Then the king of Assyria went up against the whole land and he went up to Samaria and besieged it three years. 2 Kings 17:4-5**

We then read the heartbreaking culmination of 200 years of evil and faithlessness on the part of the people of Israel, **In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria captured Samaria and took Israel away into exile to Assyria, and settled them in Halah and Habor, on the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes. 2 Kings 17:6.**

## **Conclusion**

We aren't left to wonder why Israel is exiled into the hands of a foreign nation, the author details for us exactly what lead to this tragic defeat and displacement of God's people from the promised land.

**Now *this* happened because the sons of Israel had sinned against Yahweh their God—who had brought them up from the land of Egypt from under the hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt—and they had feared other gods and walked in the statutes of the nations whom Yahweh had dispossessed from before the sons of Israel, and *in the statutes* of the kings of Israel which they had made. And the sons of Israel did things secretly which were not right against Yahweh their God. Moreover, they built for themselves high places in all their cities, from watchtower to fortified city. And they set for themselves *sacred* pillars**

**and Asherim on every high hill and under every green tree, and there they burned incense on all the high places as the nations *did* which Yahweh had taken away into exile before them; and they did evil things provoking Yahweh to anger. And they served idols, concerning which Yahweh had said to them, “You shall not do this thing.” Yet Yahweh warned Israel and Judah by the hand of all His prophets *and* every seer, saying, “Turn from your evil ways and keep My commandments, My statutes according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by the hand of My slaves the prophets.” However, they did not listen, but stiffened their neck like their fathers, who did not believe in Yahweh their God. They also rejected His statutes and His covenant which He cut with their fathers and His warnings with which He warned them. And they followed vanity and became vain, and *went* after the nations which surrounded them, concerning which Yahweh had commanded them not to do like them. And they forsook all the commandments of Yahweh their God and made for themselves molten images, *even* two calves, and made an Asherah and worshiped all the host of heaven and served Baal. Then they made their sons and their daughters pass through the fire, and practiced divination and omens, and sold themselves to do what is evil in the sight of Yahweh, provoking Him to anger.**

God was patient with Israel, sending prophet after prophet, warning after warning. Bringing punishment for their evil deeds and bringing relief and blessing when they turned back to Him. Yet, even still, the faith of King David that unified the nation and the wisdom of Solomon that brought unparalleled peace and prosperity was not found in the kings that followed because they chose to not to place their faith in the God of David and Solomon.

So, as the chapter closes, we are left to wonder what will happen with the lone remaining tribe of Judah. Will they learn from the defeat and exile of Israel, or will they continue in their hardheartedness and bring destruction on themselves?

## Israel's Exile to Assyria

