



Wednesday Bible Education
Biblical Theology
Lesson 13: 2 Kings

REVIEW

Questions from last week's lesson:

1. What is in the book of 1 Kings?
2. How does 1 Kings help us today?

Answers:

1. 1 Kings records the death of David and Solomon's reign. The book recounts the building of the temple and the divided kingdom after Solomon's death. The book also tells of the prophetic ministry of Elijah and has the famous contest with the prophets of Baal.

Book Summary: 1 Kings shows that the curse of sin is death and all who have sinned will die, so the only hope is in God who raises the dead.

2. Understanding 1 Kings helps us consider how we respond to God's word. Are we like the kings and people who refuse the word given to us? Are we like Israel and Judah, who wanted to live like the nations of the world rather than as the people of God?

Understanding 1 Kings helps us understand the larger purposes of God, which he will fulfill. God doesn't exist and work to fulfill our hopes and dreams of our best life now, nor to bail us out of trouble and make America great.

Understanding 1 Kings helps us get past the idea that human government can or will save us. Human government is necessary and ordained by God. It brings certain benefits. However, human governments are fundamentally flawed because of the fallenness of the humans in them. Our hope is in the coming of the wise and righteous King Jesus.

INTRODUCTION

What is in the book of 2 Kings? 2 Kings has many well known events, such as Elijah being carried to heaven in a chariot of fire and Elisha getting a double portion of Elijah's spirit. It also has extraordinary events like the children making fun of Elisha's bald head and two bears killing 42 children. 1 Kings tells of the raising of the

Shunammite's son to life and the healing of Naaman the leper.

1 Kings records the ends of both the northern and southern kingdoms. Samaria fell to the Assyrians and the northern kingdom of Israel was carried away. Judah experiences a brief revival, Josiah finds the book of the law, but Jerusalem falls to the Babylonians and Judah is exiled to Babylon

Summary Statement: 2 Kings concludes the story of the death of the divided kingdoms of Israel and Judah, demonstrating the judgment of sin and the hopelessness of kings, priests, prophets, wisdom, law, and the temple to save them from death. The only hope is in God who raises the dead.

This lesson covers the book of 2 Kings. We will look at the structure and content of the book, along with major themes and practical applications to modern readers. We will consider what 2 Kings reveals about Christ and his kingdom as it fits into the Bible's main story.

OBSERVATION

2 Kings is the seventh book of history and continues from 1 Kings. The book is mostly historical narrative and alternates between the kings of Israel and Judah. The book covers nearly 300 years of time and 29 kings combined between the two kingdoms.

2 Kings chronicles the divided kingdoms to their ends. The northern kingdom is covered from the reign of Ahaziah (853-852 BC) to the reign of Hoshea (732-723 BC), which is about 129 years. The northern kingdom is carried away by the Assyrians in 722 BC. The southern kingdom is covered from the reign of Jehoshaphat (853-848 BC) to the reign of Zedekiah (597-586 BC), which is about 267 years. The kingdom of Judah is carried away into captivity after Jerusalem is destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 BC.

2 Kings also mentions many prophets, such as Elijah (1-2), sons of prophets (2, 4), Elisha (2-9, 13), false prophets (3), a young prophet (9), Jonah (14), Isaiah (18-20), and Huldah who was a prophetess (22). Israel and Judah both continue to reject God's word that is sent to them and, despite small revivals, go into exile out of the land of promise.

By the end of 2 Kings, the curses for breaking the covenant have come upon them. They have lost the land promised to Abraham, the kingdom promised to David, the temple promised to Solomon, and the residue of Judah have fled to Egypt in a dramatic reversal of the exodus (25:25-26). The book ends on an odd note with Jehoiachin being released from prison and elevated in the house of Evilmerodach, the king of Babylon.

A brief outline of 2 Kings:

1. Chapters 1-10 The ministry of Elisha

2. Chapters 11-17 Kings of Israel and Judah until Israel's exile

3. Chapters 18-25 Kings of Judah until Judah's exile

INTERPRETATION

2 Kings makes clear that judgment came on Israel and Judah because of their sins. Statements are made against Israel (17:7-23) and Judah (23:26-27). 2 Kings reveals God's wrath against sin (13:3; 17:11, 17; 21:6, 15; 22:13, 17; 23:19, 26; 24:20).

2 Kings also reveals God's patience and mercy. He gave the prophecy of Josiah (1 Kings 13:2) that would not be fulfilled until 360 years later (23:16). God had promised Solomon of the judgment that would come if he or Israel turned from him (1 Kings 9:6-7). Solomon did turn to idols and provoked the Lord, but the temple remained (1 Kings 11:9). Shishak of Egypt carried off pieces of the temple, but it still remained (1 Kings 14:25-28). The temple was neglected and plundered. The Altar was replaced and still it remained (16:10-18). God gave Judah eight good kings after Solomon, including Hezekiah and Josiah, but eventually the temple would be destroyed (25). Furthermore, God gave many victories to Israel, despite their rebellion (13:4, 23).

God's sovereignty is depicted variously throughout the book. It is particularly revealed through the sending of his prophets.

2 Kings does contribute to the expectation of the Messiah and his kingdom. Throughout the book, the Davidic ideal is the standard for kings (14:3; 16:2; 18:3; 22:2), pointing to that ideal King to come. God's promise to David is writ large throughout the book (8:19; 17:21; 19:34; 20:5; 21:7). Through all the destruction that comes to Israel and Judah, the house of David is not destroyed as curiously demonstrated at the end of the book with the reference to the elevation of Jehoiachin (25:27-30). The book ends pointing to the hope of future fulfillment of kingdom promises by leaving us with a Joseph like picture in Egypt.

APPLICATION

How does 2 Kings help us as modern readers? Understanding 2 Kings helps us see clearly that God punishes sin. He is longsuffering to be sure, but he will not leave sin unpunished. It helps lead us to repentance of our own sins, where we have refused God's word or gone after idols in our own hearts.

Understanding 2 Kings helps us see that God is over all, in control of all, and works all according to his own plan. This gives us great assurance that God has kept and will keep his promises. His promises are sure because he governs all events to bring about his own purposes.

Understanding 2 Kings gives us a picture of those who lived by faith in difficult and trying circumstances. We see the faith of Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Hezekiah, Josiah, etc. living during times of decline and deterioration. As they looked around them, circumstances did not seem to be moving toward the hoped for fulfillment of God's promises. We can certainly relate when we see such times of rebellion and hardening against God.

Understanding 2 Kings teaches us the only true hope. The best Israel could manage was not enough. They need the greater David, greater Solomon, greater temple, greater prophet, and greater priest, which is Jesus Christ.

CONCLUSION

2 Kings clearly shows how and why Israel and Judah went into exile. David, Solomon, nor any other kings could keep God's covenant and bring in the kingdom of blessing promised to Abraham and David. The kingdom divided and both came to the same ends despite God's word being repeatedly sent to them. The book points Israel and Judah to look for the coming King and his kingdom rather than reforms.

ABOUT THIS STUDY

This series is a study in biblical theology going book by book through the entire Bible. Each lesson typically covers one book of the Bible, though occasionally covers more than one book when the books are short. This PDF is provided for personal study, small group study, or use in a church class. Unless otherwise noted, all lessons have been prepared by Jeff Short, the pastor of Harmony Baptist Church.

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