



The Bible Challenge

A daily guide to reading the Bible in a year

1 & 2 Kings

2 Kings 10 - 25

And I will take you, and you shall reign over all that your soul desires, and you shall be king over Israel. And if you will listen to all that I command you, and will walk in my ways, and do what is right in my eyes by keeping my statutes and my commandments, as David my servant did, I will be with you and will build you a sure house, as I built for David, and I will give Israel to you.

--1 Kings 11:37-38

The Big Picture of 1 & 2 Kings

The Book of Kings reached its final form sometime after the exile into Babylon. The Israelite in bondage under the Babylonians would certainly struggle over their suffering outside of the land, even puzzling over the "why?" questions. Why did God allow Israel to fall to their enemies? Where is YHWH? Why is the temple destroyed?

Structure of 1 & 2 Kings

A United Kingdom: Solomon	1 Kings 1 - 11
A Divided Kingdom	1 Kings 12 - 2 Kings 9
The Fall of the Northern Kingdom: Israel	2 Kings 10 - 17
The Fall of the Southern Kingdom: Judea	2 Kings 18 - 25

1 & 2 Kings serves to explain how a united Israel under King David and Solomon could become internally divided by her own people and utterly decimated by her external foes. As YHWH had warned through Moses and the prophets, his blessing was contingent on covenant faithfulness on the part of the King and people of Israel. The glories and the failures of Israel's kings point to the need for the King of Kings, Jesus.

The Fall of Israel and Judah (2 Kings 10-25)

The LORD had promised the kings of the northern kingdom, Israel that they would be blessed and established. (see 1 Kings 11:37-38) Yet, beginning with their first king Jeroboam, they gave their worship to idolatry failed to follow the command of the LORD. Twenty out of twenty kings "did evil in the sight of the Lord"--the worst being Ahab (1 Ki. 16:33)

In the Southern Kingdom, there were similar failings in the monarchy, the worst being Manasseh (2 Ki. 21:9). However, the southern Kingdom, did have eight out of the twenty kings who sought to bring reform and renewal to Judah--such as Josiah. (1 Ki. 13:2)



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The Fall of Israel and Samaria (2 Kings 9-17)

The height of the corruption of the Northern Kingdom was Ahab with his worship of Baal and human child sacrifice. The sins of Ahab and his children would lead to judgment.

The Purge of Israel (9-10)

The Lord revealed to Elijah that Jehu would be King over Israel and become the instrument of judgment on the entire house of Ahab and the followers of Baal in Israel. (see 1 Kings 15-18) This was a tremendous purge of the evil and corruption of Israel. What would be begun by the King of Syria, Hazael, would be finished by the swords of King Jehu and the prophet Elisha.

Beginning with reigning kings of Israel and Judea, Joram and Ahaziah (Joram was a son of Ahab, Ahaziah a son-in-law), Jehu assassinated them. (9:14-29) He captured and executed Jezebel, Ahab's corrupt wife. (2 Ki. 9:30-37) He slaughtered Ahab's descendants. (2 Ki. 10)

So Jehu struck down all who remained of the house of Ahab in Jezreel, all his great men and his close friends and his priests, until he left him none remaining....And when he came to Samaria, he struck down all who remained to Ahab in Samaria, till he had wiped them out, according to the word of the LORD that he spoke to Elijah.-- 2 Kings 10:11, 17

The final judgment of Jehu on Ahab's regime was the purge of all of the Baal worshipers. Using trickery by calling a solemn assembly to make a "great sacrifice", Jehu coaxed all of the worshipers of Baal into the "House of Baal"--only they were the great sacrifice! (2 Ki. 18-27) All of them were put to the sword. The House of Baal was burned and demolished to the ground. "Thus, Jehu wiped out Baal from Israel." (2 Ki. 10:28)

Because of the thoroughness of Jehu in fulfilling the word of the LORD with regard to Ahab and Baal worship, YHWH promised that an heir of Jehu would remain on the throne for four generations. However, in spite of Jehu's faithfulness in purging Israel of Baal worship, he didn't remove all of the idolatry from Israel. (2 Ki. 10:31)

And the one who escapes from the sword of Hazael shall Jehu put to death, and the one who escapes from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha put to death. Yet I will leave seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him.

1 Kings 19:17-18

But Jehu was not careful to walk in the law of the LORD, the God of Israel, with all his heart. He did not turn from the sins of Jeroboam, which he made Israel to sin. In those days the LORD began to cut off parts of Israel. Hazael defeated them throughout the territory of Israel... --2 Kings 10:31-32



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David's Line is Preserved in Judea (11:1-15:7)

With the assassination of King Ahaziah by the arrow of Jehu, succession to the throne of Judea was left an open question. Ahaziah's mother, Athaliah purposed out of spite to destroy the House of David as the House of Ahab had been destroyed. (11:1-3). Only one son of David's line was protected from her wrath, Joash the son of Ahaziah.

Under Joash (Jehoash) and the high priest Jehoiada, the southern Kingdom destroys the altars of Baal in Jerusalem and began a restoration project on the temple. The priests faltered in their repairs and Jehoash took over supervision of the project himself. Unfortunately, the troubles of Israel with their enemies came to the gate of Jerusalem. Jehoash used much of the resources of the Temple to "buy off" Hazael, the King of Syria from bringing war to Judea.

His son, Amaziah, continued on the trajectory of his father generally walking in the way of the LORD. However, the reformed projects always seemed to falter in Judea:

But the high places were not removed; the people still sacrificed and made offerings on the high places. --14:4 (cf. 15:4)

The faltering in reforms would be the seeds which would bear fruit in the downfall of Judea. The kingdom is greatly weakened by the idolatry and the division of the tribes. Israel and Judea even have yet another civil war. (14:8-14)

Israel Falls to Sin and Exile (15:8- 17:41)

The kings of Israel consistently did evil in the sight of the LORD. Chapters 15 serves as a summary of the remaining kings of both Israel and Judea. Exile was coming 2 Kings 15:29:

In the days of Pekah king of Israel, Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria came and captured Ijon, Abel-beth-maacah, Janoah, Kedesh, Hazor, Gilead, and Galilee, all the land of Naphtali, and he carried the people captive to Assyria.



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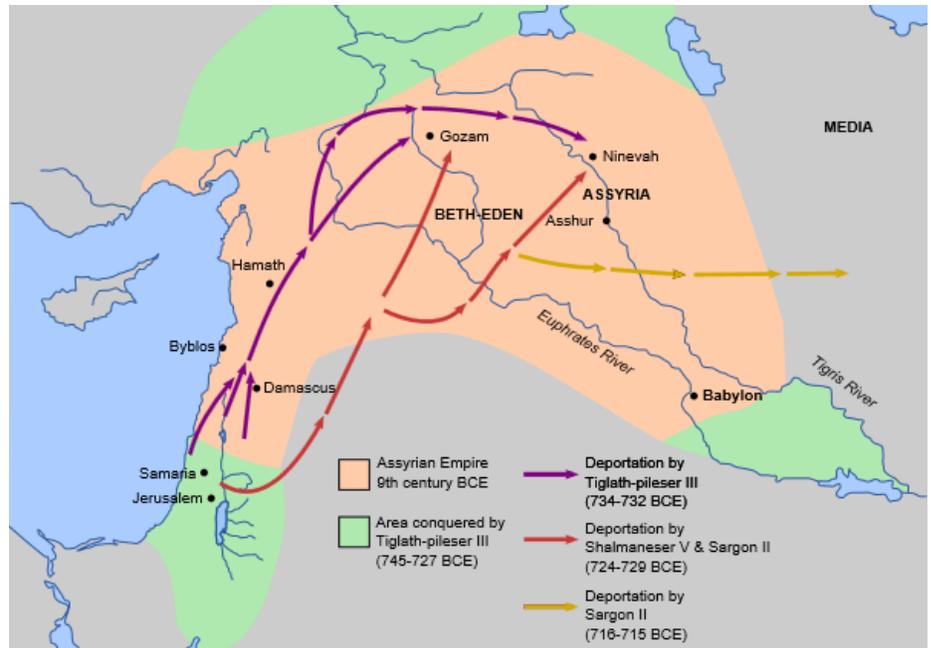
The Exile of Israel and Judah

The corruption of Israel and Judah led to YHWH ultimately withdrawing his protection from Israel in 722 BC and Judea in 586 BC.

The reign of Ahaz over Judah was abominable. His corruption included the giving of the holy things from the treasury of the House of the Lord to the Assyrians and the building of a replica altar of the Assyrian god in the Temple of Jerusalem.

During the reign Hoshea, King of Israel, the king of Assyria invaded Israel and laid siege to Samaria. (2 Kings 17) 2 Kings 17:7-23 explains why Israel was punished so severely by exile.

*In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria captured Samaria, and he carried the Israelites away to Assyria.... And this occurred because the people of Israel had sinned against the LORD their God, who had brought them up out of the land of Egypt from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and had feared other gods and walked in the customs of the nations whom the LORD drove out before the people of Israel, and in the customs that the kings of Israel had practiced.
--2 Kings 17:6-8*



Deportation of Jews by Assyrians³¹

³¹http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Deportation_of_Jews_by_Assyrians.svg



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Judea's Exile is Delayed

Because of the repentance and restoration efforts of the Southern Kings like Hezekiah and Josiah (2 Ki. 18-23), the patience and mercy of the LORD held longer. Hezekiah's repentance and prayers delayed the Assyrian invasion of Jerusalem.

Hezekiah's son Manaasseh's rebellion proved to be the last straw for Judea. (2 Ki. 21) Because of his sins, YHWH promised to wipe Jerusalem clean like a dish. (21:13)

Josiah instituted a tremendous reform effort (22-23) as was prophesied by the prophet Elijah. He even did destroy the high places where prior reform efforts had faltered!

However, the reign of Josiah's sons proved to be a return to rebellion and evil. Because of the LORD's wrath against Judea (2 Ki. 24:20), Jerusalem would fall to King Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian empire in 587 BC. (2 Kings 25)

Many of the people of Israel and Judea were forcibly deported and enslaved by the invading armies of Assyria and Babylon. Moses had warned the people of Israel of the threat of exile. Now it was upon them.

"The LORD will bring you and your king whom you set over you to a nation that neither you nor your fathers have known. And there you shall serve other gods of wood and stone. And you shall become a horror, a proverb, and a byword among all the peoples where the LORD will lead you away.

Deuteronomy 28:36-37