

I. 2 Kings

- a. Purpose: We will look at the purpose, structure and a closer look at the book of **2 Kings** so we would be more familiar with this part of the Bible and yearn to study it for ourselves.
- b. Note: We have already gone over the authorship of **2 Kings** when we went over 1 Kings. Remember that originally **1 and 2 Kings** were supposed to be one book. As Dale Ralph Davis stated it: “Originally our **1 and 2 Kings** were simply the single book of Kings. However, Greek translations of the Old Testament (after ca. 200 BC) divided the book into two segments, probably because of its length. This division then appeared in printed editions of the Hebrew text (1500s) and continues in, among others, our English Bible tradition.”¹
- c. Purpose
 - i. Again According to Keith Essex the purpose of **1 and 2 Kings** is the following: “The human monarchy, including the Davidic house, failed to follow Yahweh with the result that Israel and Judah were taken from the Land in fulfillment of the prophetic Word.”²
 - ii. According to Richard Mayhue: **2 Kings** is about “God's Judgment on Israel and Judah for disobedience”³
 - iii. According to Dale Ralph Davis: **2 Kings** begins “with an interlude of grace under the ministry of Elisha, through whom Yahweh displays the power he would lavish on Israel (**2 Kings 1-8**); with grace despised, however the process of judgement presses on until Yahweh consigns his people to the tender mercies of the Assyrians and Babylonians (**2 Kings 9-25**)”⁴
 - iv. In my own words: **2 Kings** shows the sinfulness of the kings and kingdoms of Judah and Israel and God’s righteous judgment upon both kingdom through the means of exiling them.
- d. Structure
 - i. There are different ways people have outlined the book.
 - ii. The most easiest to remember is probably a modification from Richard Mayhue’s outline⁵
 1. Marching towards Israel’s Falls (**2 Kings 1-17**)
 - a. Elijah's final ministry (**2 Kings 1-2:11**)
 - b. Elisha's ministry (**2 Kings 2:12-9:10**)
 - c. From Jehu to the fall of Israel (**2 Kings 9:11-17**)
 2. Marching towards Judah Falls (**2 Kings 18-25**)
 - a. Reign of Hezekiah and two evil kings (**2 Kings 18-21**)
 - b. Reign of Josiah and four evil kings (**2 Kings 22-24:16**)
 - c. Fall of Judah in 586 B.C. (**2 Kings 24:17-25**)

¹ Dale Ralph Davis, *2 Kings* (Ross-shire, Great Britain: Christian Focus Publications), 11.

² Keith Essex, *OLD TESTAMENT STUDIES I Syllabus* (Sun Valley, California: Self-Published Thesis for The Master’s Seminary), 37.

³ Richard Mayhue, *Ordination Practicum Syllabus* (Sun Valley, California: Self-Published for The Master’s Seminary), 64.

⁴ Dale Ralph Davis, *2 Kings* (Ross-shire, Great Britain: Christian Focus Publications), 11.

⁵ Richard Mayhue, *Ordination Practicum Syllabus* (Sun Valley, California: Self-Published for The Master’s Seminary), 64.

- e. Key chapters in **2 Kings**⁶
- i. **2** Elijah taken to heaven
 - ii. **4** Elisha's miracle for the widow - oil
 - iii. **5** Naaman healed and Gehazi's greed
 - iv. **6** Elisha thwarts Syria ...
 - v. **17** Israel's fall/Assyrian Captivity 722 B.C.
 - vi. **18** Sennacherib invades Judah
 - vii. **22-23** Josiah as King over Judah, he brings revival, reform and renewal
 - viii. **24-25** The fall of Judah to Babylon 586 B.C.
- f. Key characters in **2 Kings**⁷
- i. Josiah: 16th King of Judah; king at 8 years old; returned to obeying the, law
 - ii. Elisha: Successor to Elijah; heals and floats an axe head/miracle worker
 - iii. Naaman: Captain of enemy army; great warrior; a leper who was healed by bathing in the Jordan River seven times at Elisha's instructions
- g. Closer look at **2 Kings**
- i. Elijah's and Elisha's ministry in **2 Kings 1-9:10** are contrasted with the rest of the book's narrative of fallen kings. In a book where there is a lot of sin and disappointments the account of the prophets reminds us that God is working even though He might not be working according to what we expect.
 - ii. What's going with the killing of the "lads" in **2 Kings 2:23-25**?
 1. There is a lot more going on than we can cover for our hour.
 2. Are these young children? No.
 - a. The word "young lads" in **verse 23** in the Hebrew is from the root word נָעַר ("naar"). The word נָעַר ("naar") does not refer to children as it is unmarried male not yet a head of a household.
 - i. In **Genesis 37:2** Joseph is described as נָעַר ("naar") even though he is 17 years old.
 - ii. In **1 Kings 3:7** Solomon described himself before God as נָעַר ("naar") even though he is old enough to be an adult king.
 - b. The word "lads" in **verse 24** in the Hebrew is from the root word יָלֵד ("yeled"). The word יָלֵד ("yeled") does not necessarily refer to children. **1 Kings 12:8-10** shows it can refer to young adult males such as king Rehoboam's peers who advised him as king.
 3. Why were they punished with the bears? They were mocking God's prophet Elisha
 - a. Note in **verse 24** the narrator record these men mocking Elisha as "baldhead" being mentioned twice for emphasis.

⁶ Richard Mayhue, *Ordination Practicum Syllabus* (Sun Valley, California: Self-Published for The Master's Seminary), 64.

⁷ Taken word for word from Richard Mayhue, *Ordination Practicum Syllabus* (Sun Valley, California: Self-Published for The Master's Seminary), 64.

- b. This is in contrast to Elijah who in **2 Kings 1:8** is described as a hairy man.
 - c. We already have seen in **2 Kings 1-14** that Elisha would have double the portion of Elijah yet these men mocked him and God.
 - d. Don't forget earlier in **2 Kings 1** we also see the punishment of going against God's prophet with the instances of three group of 50 soldiers sent to get Elijah.
 - e. Thus we see here mocking God and mocking God's prophet is a serious offense.
- iii. Israel entering into Exile is described in **2 Kings 17**
 - 1. **2 Kings 17:1-6** summarizes the Assyrian's attack on Israel during the reign of Hoshea the son of Elah which brought about the subsequent exile.
 - 2. **2 Kings 17:7-23** informs us the reason God brought about the exile is because of Israel's stubborn sin of not repenting from their idolatry.
 - 3. **2 Kings 17:24-41** further described to us what happen to the land of Israel under Assyrian control: Strangers are brought into the land.
- iv. Judah entering into Exile is described in **2 Kings 24-25**
 - 1. **2 Kings 24** mentioned some of the last few kings of Judah and also the Babylonian military conquest, deportation and destruction of Jerusalem.
- h. Place of this book in the Canon
 - i. Without **2 Kings** the rest of the Old Testament would not make sense: The exile has taken place of both Israel and Judah.
 - ii. In some sense **2 Kings** can be seen as a book of "Judges" in which heinous sins and idolatry swept God's people and God punished the two kingdoms' sin with invading nations and empire.
 - iii. Also while **2 Kings** does not fully answer it, we are left in the end wondering about God's faithfulness with the Davidic Covenant with the coming Messiah: Will God bring about a Son of David who will crush Satan and save His people and Gentiles from their sins? It leaves us in suspense but later the prophetic books in the Bible will give us an answer!
 - iv. One thing is clear from **2 Kings**: None of the kings of Judah and Israel were perfect nor successful in getting rid of sins in the land, and thus none of them are the Messiah. This leaves us hungering for the Messiah!
 - v. Yet at the same time in **2 Kings 5** with the account of Namaan we see a glimpse of hope also that Israel can bless the Gentiles, reminding us of the Abrahamic Covenant in **Genesis 12** that there through Abraham there will be a Seed who will bless the nations!