



II Kings: The God of Power

Memory Verse: II Kings 6:15-17 "When the servant of the man of God got up and went out early the next morning, an army with horses and chariots had surrounded the city. "Oh no, my lord! What shall we do?" the servant asked. ¹⁶"Don't be afraid," the prophet answered. "Those who are with us are more than those who are with them." ¹⁷ And Elisha prayed, "Open his eyes, LORD, so that he may see." Then the LORD opened the servant's eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

Background

The book of 2 Kings is the 12th book of the Bible and the 7th book of history in the Old Testament. As previously mentioned, 1 and 2 Kings were originally one book with the author unknown. The tone of the book with its many references to Israel and Judah's faithfulness or unfaithfulness to their covenant with God, suggests that the book of Kings was written by a prophet, possibly Jeremiah or a contemporary of his.

Second Kings was probably written around 586 BC after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians with the last two chapters written after Jehoiachin's release in 560 BC. The events in 2 Kings continues around 853 BC where 1 Kings left off with the divided kingdoms of Israel and Judah and follows the histories of both kingdoms. The first part of the book covers a time span of approximately 130 years with the Northern Kingdom of Israel falling to the Assyrians in 721 BC. Second Kings continues with the Southern Kingdom of Judah which lasts for another 135 years before it falls to the Babylonians, Jerusalem is destroyed, and its people are taken away as captives. Second Kings ends with a short epilogue regarding the release of Jehoiachin, the last true king of Judah.

The Short Story of 2nd Kings is that:

The divided Jewish nations of Israel and Judah are destroyed and their people taken captive due to their disobedience to God.

What's the Big Idea?

The book of Kings collectively shows the tragic history of the nation of Israel. At the beginning of 1 Kings, Israel, a united kingdom under Solomon, splits into the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah. By the end of 2 Kings, both nations are destroyed with their people scattered, enslaved, and no longer living in their Promised Land. In Kings, we see many prophets sent by God warning them of God's coming judgments in an effort to turn them from their sinful ways and turn them back to God. Elijah, Elisha, Amos, and Hosea prophesy to the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Obadiah, Joel, Isaiah, Micah, Nahum, Zephaniah, Jeremiah, and Habakkuk are sent to the Southern Kingdom of Judah. It is also in 2 Kings that we see God's mighty power at work through the raising of two people from the dead, Elijah being taken directly to heaven without dying, the waters of the Jordan River being rolled back twice, and numerous other miracles.

So What? Why is this book so important? What was God's purpose for the book?

Although Judah's destruction came later than Israel's due to this kingdom having a few righteous kings to all of Israel's bad kings, the demise of Judah did eventually come. God keeps His word and because the people of Judah and Israel turned to idolatry and wickedness, they came under God's judgment in fulfillment of the curses of the Mosaic Covenant (Deuteronomy 28). God used the world events of their day with the rise of the Assyrians and Babylonians to power to carry out His judgment. God is patient and does not want anybody to perish (2 Peter 3:9). He will give plenty of warnings and opportunities to repent and turn to Him, but He will not let perpetual sin go unpunished. God's power is evident in 2 Kings, as it is today. God keeps His word not just in fulfilling judgment, but also in providing hope. God's mighty power saved a remnant from among the people, keeping the royal line of Judah intact so that one day His people could return to their land and await the promised Messiah. Knowing that God keeps His promises, as they looked forward to Christ's first coming, we can eagerly look forward to His second coming.

**Material taken from various sources.*

Teaching Text

II Kings 2:11-14 “As they were walking along and talking together, suddenly a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared and separated the two of them, and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind. ¹² Elisha saw this and cried out, “My father! My father! The chariots and horsemen of Israel!” And Elisha saw him no more. Then he took hold of his garment and tore it in two. Elisha then picked up Elijah’s cloak that had fallen from him and went back and stood on the bank of the Jordan. ¹⁴ He took the cloak that had fallen from Elijah and struck the water with it. “Where now is the LORD, the God of Elijah?” he asked. When he struck the water, it divided to the right and to the left, and he crossed over.

Sermon-Based Discussion Questions

- What were the circumstances of the main characters in the 4 stories you heard today?
- What were the objections that these people did or could have presented?
- What would the natural (world) response be to each of these circumstances?
- How likely were these individuals to overcome their circumstances (on their own)?
- What did God do? Why? How does this sometimes work out in the rest of scripture?

Practical Application

- Of the 4 stories, which one can you relate to most? Why?
- What area of your life was/ is God speaking to? How often do you feel a prompting?
- What is God calling you to do? Write 3 goals that will help you achieve this calling.
- When told that God has a plan for your life, what objections come to your mind?
- Are your objections from your past, present or future? How can you overcome?
- What does God’s word say about your objections? How can you apply it?

Hitting the Highpoints

- II Kings 2:11 “...a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared...and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind”
- II Kings 17:6 “...the king of Assyria captured Samaria and deported the Israelites to Assyria.”
- II Kings 17:20 “...the LORD rejected... Israel; he afflicted them and gave them into the hands of plunderers...”
- II Kings 24:14 “He carried all Jerusalem into exile... Only the poorest people of the land were left.”
- II Kings 25:4 “Then the city wall was broken through, and the whole army fled at night through the gate...”
- II Kings 25:21 “...the king had them executed. So Judah went into captivity, away from her land.”

Bonus Features: Where’s Jesus

Many of the miracles of Elisha foreshadowed those of Jesus Himself. Elisha raised the Shunammite woman’s son from the dead in 2 Kings 4, healed Naaman of leprosy Chapter 5, and multiplied loaves of bread to feed a hundred people with some leftover, also in Chapter 4. One thing that could be said about Elisha is that he did as the father instructed, the very thing Jesus proclaims himself (John 6:38).

Personal Takeaways and Notes