

I AND II KINGS

Outlined Bible

Introduction: These two books are about all the kings of Israel and Judah except the first two. The great prophets are also introduced, some of whom are named and some of whom are not. Much of the material will be paralleled in I & II Chronicles.

Name

1. Originally these two books were counted as one.
2. Since they deal with the reigns of the kings, they are appropriately titled.

Author - Authorship is uncertain, but most scholars believe it was written by Jeremiah and one or more of his contemporaries.

Purpose

1. Both books show that the welfare of the nation ultimately depended on the people's *faithfulness* to God.
2. To show how each king responded to God, either *fulfilling* or *rejecting* God's covenant.

I. Background of the Book

A. Centuries of Israel's history are covered by I & II Kings.

1. They move from the close of David's reign (970 BC) through the golden age of Solomon, the rift between Israel and Judah (at Solomon's death ca. 930 BC) to the fall of Samaria to the Assyrians (722 BC) and the destruction of Jerusalem (587 BC).

2. The account begins with a stable, United Kingdom under a strong king.

- a. However, at Solomon's death (ca. 930 BC) the nation divide into two kingdoms.

- [1] The Northern Kingdom was known as **Israel**. Sometimes it was called by the name of its leading tribe, Ephraim.

- (a) Israel had nine dynasties and 20 kings.

- (b) Israel did not have a single righteous king.

- [2] The Southern Kingdom, known as **Judah**, had two tribes: Judah and Benjamin.

- (a) Judah had only one dynasty (David's) and 20 kings.

- (b) Eight kings of Judah were recognized for varying degrees of righteousness.

3. The account ends with total collapse and mass deportation to Babylon.

B. Major international powers at play during this historical period were Assyria, Babylon, Egypt, and Phoenicia.

C. The book can be dated with reasonable accuracy, sometime between 562 and 536 BC.

D. The Kings of Judah and Israel.

1. The books are constructed so as to allow for the telling of the stories of two nations at contemporary times.

2. The prophets are also doing their work during this period.

3. In the following lists, the kings and their dates of rule are given. Some of the dates overlap due to co-regencies. The eight good kings are indicated by having their names in all capital letters. The dates assigned are largely based on those given by E.R. Theile in his two books, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings* and *A Chronology of the Hebrew Kings*, these are close approximations and are, of course, BC.

United Kingdom

Saul 1050 -1010

David 1010 - 970

Solomon 970-

Divided Kingdom

Judah

King Dates of rule

Rehoboam 930-913

Abijam 913-910

ASA 910-869

JEHOSAPH 872-848

AT

Jehoram 853-841

Ahaziah 841

Athaliah 841-835

JOASH 835-796

AMAZIAH 796-767

AZARIAH 792-740

(UZZIAH)

JOTHAM 750-732

Ahaz 735-715

HEZEKIAH 715-686

Manasseh 697-642

Amon 642-640

JOSIAH 640-609

Jehoahaz 609

Jehoiakim 609-598

Israel

King Dates of rule

Jeroboam I 930-909

Nadab 909-908

Baasha 908-886

Elah 886-885

Zimri 885

Tibni 885-880

Omri 885-874

Ahab 874-853

Ahaziah 853-852

Jehoram 852-841

(Joram)

Jehu 841-814

Jehoahaz 814-798

Jehoash 798-782

Jeroboam II 793-753

Zechariah 753

Shallum 752

Menahem 752-742

Pekah 752-732

(Jerusalem destroyed 586) (Fall of Samaria 721) (Jehoiachin freed 562)

II. The Main Message of the Book

A. The books attempt to show that the fate of Israel depended on their observance of the Lord's covenant with them.

B. The reign of each king is assessed not according to his political or historical significance but according to his spiritual life.

III. Outline of the Book

A. The 40-year reign of King Solomon. (I Kings 1-11)

1. Solomon reigned because his authority and wisdom came from God. (1)

2. Solomon built the temple. (5-6)

3. Solomon did two things that ultimately led to the overthrow of his kingdom:

a. He made alliances with the world. (3:1-2)

b. He allowed the mixing of idolatry with the worship of God. (3:3)

4. Solomon's *heart* turned away from God. (11:1-6)

B. The first 80 years of the divided kingdoms. (I Kings 12-22)

1. After Solomon's death the nation divided.

a. Solomon's son, Rehoboam, foolishly precipitated a revolt among his subjects after he took his father's place.

b. The nation divided, Jeroboam becoming king of the Northern Kingdom, and Rehoboam becoming king of the Southern kingdom.

- [1] The northern kingdom, "Israel" had 10 tribes.
 - (a) It had about three times more land and twice as many people.
 - (b) Its capital city was Samaria.
- [2] The southern kingdom, known as "Judah" had 2 tribes: Judah and Benjamin.
 - (a) Its capital city was Jerusalem.
 - (b) It also had Solomon's Temple.
- 2. King Jeroboam led Israel in worship of golden calves. (12)
- 3. Egypt invaded and defeated King Rehoboam of Judah. (14)
- 4. God sent Elijah to show that willful sin brings dreadful results. (17-22)
- C. The remaining years of the Northern Kingdom. (II Kings 1-17)
 - 1. Elijah died and passed his mantle to Elisha. (18-25)
 - 2. Kings of Israel and Judah.
 - 3. Israel was exiled to Assyria. (17)
 - a. The Northern Kingdom simply ceased to exist as a nation.
 - b. An explanation of the origin of the Samaritans is given. (17:24-41)
- D. The remaining years of the Southern Kingdom. (II Kings 18-25)
 - 1. When Israel fell to Assyria, Judah was being ruled by good King Hezekiah.
 - a. Under him, God delivered Judah from the Assyrian invaders under Sennacherib.
 - b. Isaiah was a contemporary of Hezekiah and figured in several events of his life.
 - 2. Hezekiah was succeeded by his evil son, Manasseh, whose idolatry and wickedness seduced the entire nation.
 - 3. Manasseh was followed briefly by his son, Amon, who continued to compound evil.
 - 4. Then came Judah's last righteous king, Josiah, who led a religious revival in the land.
 - 5. However, in 606 BC, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon began to dominate Judah.
 - 6. In 597 BC the Babylonians captured Jerusalem and carried King Jehoiachin captive to Babylon,
 - a. This was when Daniel, his three friends, and many other Jews were taken to Babylon as captives.
 - b. Nebuchadnezzar left Judah under the rule of Zedekiah.
 - c. But the very next year Zedekiah's reign ended, Jerusalem was destroyed, and the Temple was ransacked and torn down.

IV. Key themes of the Book

- A. God dwells among His people. This was symbolized by His presence in the Temple.
- B. God's Word confronts our sins. (I Kings 16:30-33; 18:17-18; 19:1-2:21:20)
 - 1. Prophets of God boldly challenged both kings and common people to follow the right ways of the Lord. (I Kings 18:17-18) Their message was "Thus said the Lord."
 - 2. Forgiveness comes when there is repentance.
 - 3. Neglecting God's word leads to downfall.
 - 4. God is patient, but His patience finally wears out and His judgment is handed down.
- C. Lordship demands total loyalty. (I Kings 18:36-40; Matthew 10:32-39)
- D. Even one person can have a great influence for either evil or good.
 - 1. An example of one whose influence was bad is Jezebel
 - 2. An example of one whose influence was good is Josiah.

I & II Kings

Summarized Bible

1 KINGS

“When King David was old and well advanced in years, Adonijah put himself forward and said, ‘I will be king.’ So, he got chariots and horses ready, with fifty men to run ahead of him. (His father had never interfered with him by asking, ‘Why do you behave as you do?’) Adonijah conferred with Joab and Abiathar the priest, and they gave him their support. But Zadok the priest, Benaiah son of Jehoiada, Nathan the prophet, Shimei and Rei and David's special guard did not join Adonijah, but he did not invite Nathan the prophet or his brother Solomon.” (1 Kings 1:1, 6-10)

“Then Nathan asked Bathsheba, Solomon's mother, ‘Have you not heard that Adonijah, has become king without our lord David's knowing it?’ ... So, Bathsheba went to see the aged king and said to him, ‘My lord, you yourself swore to me: Solomon your son shall be king after me, and he will sit on my throne. But now Adonijah has become king. My lord the king, the eyes of all Israel are on you, to learn from you who will sit on the throne. Otherwise, as soon as my lord the king is laid to rest with his fathers, I and my son Solomon will be treated as criminals.’ While she was still speaking with the king, Nathan the prophet arrived and said, “Have you, my lord the king, declared that Adonijah shall be king after you, and that he will sit on your throne? But me your servant, and Zadok the priest, and Benaiah son of Jehoiada, and your servant Solomon he did not invite. Is this something my lord the king has done without letting his servants know who should sit on the throne of my lord the king after him?” (1 Kings 1:11, 15-27)

“King David said, ‘Call in Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet and Benaiah son of Jehoiada.’ When they came before the king, he said to them: ‘Take your lord's servants with you and set Solomon my son on my own mule and take him down to Gihon. There have Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him king over Israel. Blow the trumpet and shout, Long live King Solomon! Then you are to go up with him, and he is to come and sit on my throne and reign in my place. I have appointed him ruler over Israel and Judah.’ Trumpets were sounded and all the people shouted, “Long live King Solomon!” (1 Kings 1:32-35)

“As Adonijah and all the guests were finishing their feast, Joab asked, “What's the meaning of all the noise in the city?” Jonathan answered. ‘Our lord King David has made Solomon king.’ ... At this, all Adonijah's guests rose in alarm and dispersed. But Adonijah, in fear of Solomon, went and took hold of the horns of the altar. Then Solomon was told, ‘Adonijah is afraid of King Solomon and is clinging to the horns of the altar. He says, Let King Solomon swear to me today that he will not put his servant to death with the sword.’ Solomon replied, ‘If he shows himself to be a worthy man, not a hair of his head will fall to the ground; but if evil is found in him, he will die.’ Then King Solomon sent men, and they brought him down from the altar. And Adonijah came and bowed down to King Solomon, and Solomon said, “Go to your home.” (1 Kings 1:41, 49-53)

“David gave a charge to Solomon. ‘So be strong, show yourself a man, and observe what the Lord your God requires: Walk in his ways, and keep his decrees and commands, his laws and requirements, as written in the Law of Moses, so that you may prosper in all you do and wherever you go, and that the Lord may keep his promise to me: If your descendants watch how they live, and if they walk faithfully before me with all their heart and soul, you will never fail to have a man on the throne of Israel. Now you yourself know what Joab did to me — Deal with him according to your wisdom, but do not let his gray head go down to the grave in peace. But show kindness to the sons of Barzillai of Gilead and let them be among those who eat at your table. They stood by me when I fled from your brother Absalom. Remember Shimei who called down bitter curses on me. You are a man of wisdom; you will know what to do to him. Bring his gray head down to the grave in blood.’ Then David rested with his fathers and was buried in the City of David. He

had reigned forty years over Israel — seven years in Hebron and thirty-three in Jerusalem.” (1 Kings 2:2-11)

“Solomon removed Abiathar from the priesthood of the Lord, fulfilling the word the Lord had spoken at Shiloh about the house of Eli. ... The people, however, were still sacrificing at the high places, because a temple had not yet been built for the Name of the Lord. (initially)Solomon showed his love for the Lord by walking according to the statutes of his father David, except that he offered sacrifices and burned incense on the high places.” (1 Kings 2:27; 3:2-3)

“The king went to Gibeon to offer sacrifices, there the Lord appeared to Solomon during the night in a dream, and God said, ‘Ask for whatever you want me to give you.’ ... Solomon answered, ‘You have shown great kindness to your servant, my father David, because he was faithful to you and righteous and upright in heart. You have continued this great kindness to him and have given him a son to sit on his throne this very day. ... So, give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?’ The Lord was pleased so He said ‘Since you have asked for this and not for long life or wealth for yourself, nor have asked for the death of your enemies but for discernment in administering justice, I will do what you have asked. I will give you a wise and discerning heart, so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be. Moreover, I will give you what you have not asked for — both riches and honor — so that in your lifetime you will have no equal among kings. And if you walk in my ways and obey my statutes and commands as David your father did, I will give you a long life.’ Then Solomon awoke — and he realized it had been a dream.” (1 Kings 3:4, 6, 9-15)

“God gave Solomon wisdom and very great insight, and a breadth of understanding as measureless as the sand on the seashore. Solomon's wisdom was greater than the wisdom of all the men of the East, and greater than all the wisdom of Egypt. ... Men of all nations came to listen to Solomon's wisdom, sent by all the kings of the world, who had heard of his wisdom.” (1 Kings 4:29, 34)

“When Hiram king of Tyre heard that Solomon had been anointed king he sent his envoys to Solomon, because he had always been on friendly terms with David.” ... Solomon told Hiram King of Tyre ‘I intend, therefore, to build a temple for the Name of the Lord my God.’ ... When Hiram heard Solomon's message, he was greatly pleased and said, "Praise be to the Lord today, for he has given David a wise son to rule over this great nation." Hiram sent word to Solomon: “I have received the message you sent me and will do all you want in providing the cedar and pine logs. ... In this way Hiram kept Solomon supplied with all the cedar and pine logs he wanted, and Solomon gave Hiram twenty thousand cors of wheat as food for his household, in addition to twenty thousand baths of pressed olive oil. Solomon continued to do this for Hiram year after year. The Lord gave Solomon wisdom, just as he had promised him. There were peaceful relations between Hiram and Solomon, and the two of them made a treaty.” (1 Kings 5:1, 5, 7-8, 10-12)

“The word of the Lord came to Solomon: ‘As for this temple you are building, if you follow my decrees, carry out my regulations and keep all my commands and obey them, I will fulfill through you the promise I gave to David your father. And I will live among the Israelites and will not abandon my people Israel.’” (1 Kings 6:11-13)

“In the inner sanctuary he made a pair of cherubim of olive wood, each ten cubits high (a cubic = 18 inches). ... He placed the cherubim inside the innermost room of the temple, with their wings spread out. The wing

of one cherub touched one wall, while the wing of the other touched the other wall, and their wings touched each other in the middle of the room. He overlaid the cherubim with gold.” (1 Kings 6:23, 27-28)

“It took Solomon thirteen years, however, to complete the construction of his palace. He built the Palace of the Forest of Lebanon a hundred cubits long, fifty wide and thirty high, with four rows of cedar columns supporting trimmed cedar beams. It was roofed with cedar above the beams that rested on the columns — forty-five beams, fifteen to a row. Its windows were placed high in sets of three, facing each other. All the doorways had rectangular frames; they were in the front part in sets of three, facing each other.” (1 Kings 7:1-5)

Comment: Solomon built the finest of things:

- the Hall of Justice where he was to judge.
- a magnificent palace for his wife, Pharaoh's daughter
- for the Temple he
 - cast two bronze pillars, each eighteen cubits high and twelve cubits around,
 - two bronze capitals on the tops of the pillars and a network of interwoven chains,
 - the Sea of cast metal which stood on twelve bulls
 - ten movable stands of bronze each stand had side panels with lions, bulls and cherubim and many ornate things. (1 Kings 7:15-45)

“Solomon also made all the furnishings that were in the Lord's temple: the golden altar, golden table on which was the bread of the Presence; the lampstands of pure gold, the gold floral work and lamps and tongs; gold basins, wick trimmers, sprinkling bowls, dishes and censers; and the gold sockets for the doors of the innermost room, the Most Holy Place, and the main hall of the temple doors. When all the work for the temple was finished, he brought in the things his father David had dedicated — the silver and gold and the furnishings — and he placed them in the treasuries of the Lord's temple.” (1 Kings 7:48-51)

“Then King Solomon summoned into his presence at Jerusalem the elders of Israel, all the heads of the tribes and the chiefs of the Israelite families, to bring up the ark of the Lord's covenant from Zion, the City of David. When all the elders of Israel had arrived, the priests took up the ark, and brought it and the Tent of Meeting and all the sacred furnishings in it to the temple. King Solomon and the entire assembly of Israel were sacrificing so many sheep and cattle that they could not be recorded or counted. The priests then brought the ark of the Lord's covenant to its place in the inner sanctuary of the temple, the Most Holy Place, and put it beneath the wings of the cherubim. ... There was nothing in the ark except the two stone tablets that Moses had placed in it at Horeb, where the Lord made a covenant with the Israelites after they came out of Egypt. When the priests withdrew from the Holy Place, the cloud filled the temple of the Lord. The priests could not perform their service because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord filled his temple. Then Solomon said, ‘The Lord has said that he would dwell in a dark cloud; I have indeed built a magnificent temple for you, a place for you to dwell forever.’” (1 Kings 8:1, 3-6, 9-13)

Comment: Mt. Zion is one of the hills that form Jerusalem, which includes Mount Moriah (the Temple Mount), the Mount of Olives.

“Solomon stood before the altar of the Lord in front of the whole assembly of Israel, spread out his hands toward heaven and said: ‘O Lord, God of Israel, there is no God like you in heaven above or on earth below — you who keep your covenant of love with your servants who continue wholeheartedly in your way. You

have kept your promise to your servant David ... May your eyes be open to your servant's plea and to the plea of your people Israel, and may you listen to them whenever they cry out to you. For you singled them out from all the nations of the world to be your own inheritance, just as you declared through your servant Moses when you, O Sovereign Lord, brought our fathers out of Egypt.” (1 Kings 8:22-53)

“When Solomon had finished building the temple of the Lord and the royal palace, and had achieved all he had desired to do, the Lord appeared to him a second time, as he had appeared to him at Gibeon. The Lord said to him: "I have heard the prayer and plea you have made before me; I have consecrated this temple, which you have built, by putting my Name there forever. My eyes and my heart will always be there. ‘As for you, if you walk before me in integrity of heart and uprightness, as David your father did, and do all I command and observe my decrees and laws, I will establish your royal throne over Israel forever, as I promised David your father when I said, 'You shall never fail to have a man on the throne of Israel.' "But if you or your sons turn away from me and do not observe the commands and decrees, I have given you and go off to serve other gods and worship them, then I will cut off Israel from the land I have given them and will reject this temple I have consecrated for my Name. Israel will then become a byword and an object of ridicule among all peoples. And though this temple is now imposing, all who pass by will be appalled and will scoff and say, ‘Why has the Lord done such a thing to this land and to this temple?’ People will answer, ‘Because they have forsaken the Lord their God, who brought their fathers out of Egypt, and have embraced other gods, worshiping and serving them — that is why the Lord brought all this disaster on them.’” (1 Kings 9:1-9)

Comment: “Israel became a byword and an object of ridicule” in 70 AD when Rome destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple.

“King Solomon, however, loved many foreign women besides Pharaoh's daughter — Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians and Hittites. They were from nations about which the Lord had told the Israelites, ‘You must not intermarry with them, because they will surely turn your hearts after their gods.’ Nevertheless, Solomon held fast to them in love. He had seven hundred wives of royal birth and three hundred concubines, and his wives led him astray.” (1 Kings 11:1-3)

“The Lord became angry with Solomon because his heart had turned away from the Lord, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice. Although he had forbidden Solomon to follow other gods, Solomon did not keep the Lord's command. So, the Lord said to Solomon, "Since this is your attitude and you have not kept my covenant and my decrees, which I commanded you, I will most certainly tear the kingdom away from you and give it to one of your subordinates. Nevertheless, for the sake of David your father, I will not do it during your lifetime. I will tear it out of the hand of your son. Yet I will not tear the whole kingdom from him, but will give him one tribe for the sake of David my servant and for the sake of Jerusalem, which I have chosen.” (1 Kings 11:9-13)

“Then the Lord raised up against Solomon an adversary, Hadad the Edomite, and Rezon son of Eliada. ... Also, Jeroboam son of Nebat rebelled against the king. He was one of Solomon's officials. About that time Jeroboam was going out of Jerusalem, and Ahijah the prophet of Shiloh met him on the way, wearing a new cloak. The two of them were alone out in the country, and Ahijah took hold of the new cloak he was wearing and tore it into twelve pieces. Then he said to Jeroboam, "Take ten pieces for yourself, for this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: 'See, I am going to tear the kingdom out of Solomon's hand and give you ten tribes. But for the sake of my servant David and the city of Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the

tribes of Israel, he will have one tribe. I will do this because they have forsaken me and worshiped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Molech the god of the Ammonites, and have not walked in my ways, nor done what is right in my eyes, nor kept my statutes and laws as David did.” (1 Kings 11:14, 29-33)

“As for you (Jeroboam), I will take you, and you will rule over all that your heart desires; you will be king over Israel. If you do whatever I command you and walk in my ways and do what is right in my eyes by keeping my statutes and commands, as David my servant did, I will be with you. I will build you a dynasty as enduring as the one I built for David and will give Israel to you. I will humble David's descendants because of this, but not forever.’ Solomon tried to kill Jeroboam, but he fled to Egypt, to Shishak the king, and stayed there until Solomon's death. ... Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel forty years. Rehoboam his son succeeded him as king.” (1 Kings 11:37-40, 42)

“Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all the Israelites had gone there to make him king. When Jeroboam heard this, he returned from Egypt. So, they sent for Jeroboam, and he and the whole assembly of Israel went to Rehoboam and said to him: ‘Your father put a heavy yoke on us, but now lighten the harsh labor and the heavy yoke he put on us, and we will serve you.’ Rehoboam answered, ‘Go away for three days and then come back to me.’ King Rehoboam consulted the elders who had served his father Solomon during his lifetime. They replied, ‘If today you will be a servant to these people and serve them and give them a favorable answer, they will always be your servants.’ But Rehoboam rejected the advice the elders gave him but he took the advice of the young men he had grown up with. ... This turn of events was from the Lord, to fulfill the word the Lord had spoken to Jeroboam son of Nebat through Ahijah the Shilonite.” (1 Kings 12:1-8, 15)

“When all Israel saw that the king refused to listen to them, they answered the king: they went home. But as for the Israelites who were living in the towns of Judah, Rehoboam still ruled over them. ... Rehoboam he mustered a hundred and eighty thousand fighting men to make war against the house of Israel and to regain the kingdom. But this word of God came to Shemaiah the man of God: ‘Say to Rehoboam and to the whole house of Judah and Benjamin, This is what the Lord says: Do not go up to fight against your brothers, the Israelites. Go home, every one of you, for this is my doing.’ So, they obeyed the word of the Lord and went home again, as the Lord had ordered.” (1 Kings 12:16-24)

“Now Jeroboam thought to himself, ‘The kingdom will now likely revert to the house of David. If these people go up to offer sacrifices at the temple of the Lord in Jerusalem, they will again give their allegiance to their lord, Rehoboam king of Judah. They will kill me and return to King Rehoboam.’ Therefore, he made two golden calves. He said to the people, ‘It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Here are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.’ One he set up in Bethel, and the other in Dan. ... He then built shrines on high places and appointed priests from all sorts of people and offered sacrifices on the altar he had built at Bethel. Soon a man of God came from Judah to Bethel, as Jeroboam was standing by the altar to make an offering. He cried out against the altar by the word of the Lord: ‘O altar, altar! This is what the Lord says: A son named Josiah will be born to the house of David. On you he will sacrifice the priests of the high places who now make offerings here, and human bones will be burned on you. This is the sign the Lord has declared: The altar will be split apart and the ashes on it will be poured out.’ When King Jeroboam heard this, he stretched out his hand from the altar and said, ‘Seize him!’ But the hand he stretched out toward the man shriveled up, so that he could not pull it back. Also, the altar was split apart and its ashes poured out according to the sign given by the man of God by the word of the Lord. Then the king said to

the man of God, 'Intercede with the Lord your God and pray for me that my hand may be restored.' So, the man of God interceded with the Lord, and the king's hand was restored and became as it was before. The king said to the man of God, 'Come home with me and have something to eat, and I will give you a gift.' But the man of God answered the king, 'Even if you were to give me half your possessions, I would not go with you, nor would I eat bread or drink water here. For I was commanded by the word of the Lord: 'You must not eat bread or drink water or return by the way you came.' So, he took another road and did not return by the way he had come to Bethel.'" (1 Kings 12:26-13:10)

"Now there was a certain old prophet living in Bethel, whose sons came and told him all that the man of God had done there that day. They also told their father what he had said to the king. Their father asked them, 'Which way did he go?' And his sons showed him which road the man of God from Judah had taken. So, he said to his sons, 'Saddle the donkey for me.' And when they had saddled the donkey for him, he mounted it and rode after the man of God. He found him sitting under an oak tree and asked, 'Are you the man of God who came from Judah?' 'I am'," he replied. So, the prophet said to him, 'Come home with me and eat.' The man of God said, 'I cannot turn back and go with you, nor can I eat bread or drink water with you in this place. I have been told by the word of the Lord: 'You must not eat bread or drink water there or return by the way you came.' The old prophet answered, 'I too am a prophet, as you are. And an angel said to me by the word of the Lord: Bring him back with you to your house so that he may eat bread and drink water.' (But he was lying to him.) So, the man of God returned with him and ate and drank in his house.'" (1 Kings 13:11-19)

Comment: Paul's statement "But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one, we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned!" (Galatians)

"While they were sitting at the table, the word of the Lord came to the old prophet who had brought him back. He cried out to the man of God who had come from Judah, 'This is what the Lord says: You have defied the word of the Lord and have not kept the command the Lord your God gave you. You came back and ate bread and drank water in the place where he told you not to eat or drink. Therefore, your body will not be buried in the tomb of your fathers.' When the man of God had finished eating and drinking, the prophet who had brought him back saddled his donkey for him. As he went on his way, a lion met him on the road and killed him, and his body was thrown down on the road, with both the donkey and the lion standing beside it. Some people who passed by saw the body thrown down there, with the lion standing beside the body, and they went and reported it in the city where the old prophet lived. When the prophet who had brought him back from his journey heard of it, he said, 'It is the man of God who defied the word of the Lord. The Lord has given him over to the lion, which has mauled him and killed him, as the word of the Lord had warned him.' The prophet said to his sons, 'Saddle the donkey for me,' and they did so. Then he went out and found the body thrown down on the road, with the donkey and the lion standing beside it. The lion had neither eaten the body nor mauled the donkey. So, the prophet picked up the body of the man of God, laid it on the donkey, and brought it back to his own city to mourn for him and bury him. Then he laid the body in his own tomb, and they mourned over him and said, 'Oh, my brother!' (1 Kings 14:20-30)

Comment: God wants obedience.

"Even after this, Jeroboam did not change his evil (repent) ways. ... Ahijah said You have done more-evil than all who lived before you. You have made for yourself other gods, idols made of metal; you have provoked me to anger and thrust me behind your back. 'Because of this, I am going to bring disaster on the

house of Jeroboam. I will cut off from Jeroboam every last male in Israel — slave or free. I will burn up the house of Jeroboam as one burns dung, until it is all gone. Dogs will eat those belonging to Jeroboam who die in the city, and the birds of the air will feed on those who die in the country. The Lord has spoken!” (1 Kings 14:33, 15:9-11)

“Judah did evil in the eyes of the Lord. They also set up for themselves high places, sacred stones and Asherah poles on every high hill and under every spreading tree. There were even male shrine prostitutes in the land; the people engaged in all the detestable practices of the nations the Lord had driven out before the Israelites. ... Shishak king of Egypt attacked Jerusalem. He carried off the treasures of the temple of the Lord. ... Rehoboam died and was buried in the City of David.” (1 Kings 14:22-26, 31)

“Abijah became king of Judah and he reigned in Jerusalem three years. Asa became king of Judah, and he reigned in Jerusalem forty-one years. ... Asa did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, as his father David had done. He expelled the male shrine prostitutes from the land and got rid of all the idols his fathers had made. He even deposed his grandmother Maacah from her position as queen mother, because she had made a repulsive Asherah pole. Asa cut the pole down and burned it in the Kidron Valley. Although he did not remove the high places, Asa's heart was fully committed to the Lord all his life. He brought into the temple of the Lord the silver and gold and the articles that he and his father had dedicated.” (1 Kings 15:1-2, 9, 11-15)

Kings of Israel after Jeroboam till Ahab. All caused Israel to sin.

- Nadab son of Jeroboam became king. He reigned 2 years. (15:25)
- Baasha killed Nadab and became king. He killed all of Jeroboam's whole family. He reigned 24 years. (15:27)
- Elah his son succeeded him as king and reigned two years. (15:33)
- Zimri killed Elah reigned 7 days then Omri laid siege against Zimri who burned his palace and died. (16:9, 15)
- Omri built a city the city of Samaria. He reigned 12 years. (16:21)

“Ahab his son became king. He did more-evil in the eyes of the Lord than any of those before him. He not only considered it trivial to commit the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat, but he also married Jezebel daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians, and began to serve Baal and worship him and provoked the Lord, the God of Israel, to anger.” (1 Kings 16:30-31)

“Now Elijah the Tishbite said to Ahab, ‘As the Lord, the God of Israel, lives, whom I serve, there will be neither dew nor rain in the next few years except at my word.’ Then the word of the Lord came to Elijah: ‘Leave here, turn eastward and hide in the Kerith Ravine, east of the Jordan. You will drink from the brook, and I have ordered the ravens to feed you there.’ So, he did what the Lord had told him. He went to the Kerith Ravine, east of the Jordan, and stayed there. The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning and bread and meat in the evening, and he drank from the brook. Sometime later the brook dried up because there had been no rain in the land. Then the word of the Lord came to him: ‘Go at once to Zarephath of Sidon and stay there. I have commanded a widow in that place to supply you with food.’ So, he went to Zarephath. When he came to the town gate, a widow was there gathering sticks. He called to her and asked, ‘Would you bring me a little water in a jar so I may have a drink?’ As she was going to get it, he called, “And bring me, please, a piece of bread.” “As surely as the Lord your God lives,” she replied, “I don't have

any bread — only a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a jug. I am gathering a few sticks to take home and make a meal for myself and my son, that we may eat it — and die. Elijah said to her, ‘Don’t be afraid. Go home and do as you have said. But first make a small cake of bread for me from what you have and bring it to me, and then make something for yourself and your son. For this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: The jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry until the day the Lord gives rain on the land.’” (1 Kings 17:1-14)

“Sometime later the son of the woman who owned the house became ill. He grew worse and worse, and finally stopped breathing. She said to Elijah, ‘What do you have against me, man of God? Did you come to remind me of my sin and kill my son?’ ‘Give me your son,’ Elijah replied. He took him from her arms, carried him to the upper room where he was staying, and laid him on his bed. Then he cried out to the Lord, ‘O Lord my God, have you brought tragedy also upon this widow I am staying with, by causing her son to die?’ Then he stretched himself out on the boy three times and cried to the Lord, ‘O Lord my God, let this boy’s life return to him!’ The Lord heard Elijah’s cry, and the boy’s life returned to him, and he lived. Elijah picked up the child and carried him down from the room into the house. He gave him to his mother and said, ‘Look, your son is alive!’ Then the woman said to Elijah, ‘Now I know that you are a man of God and that the word of the Lord from your mouth is the truth.’” (1 Kings 17:17-24)

“The word of the Lord came to Elijah: ‘Go and present yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on the land.’ So, Elijah went to present himself to Ahab. ... When he saw Elijah, he said to him, ‘Is that you, you troubler of Israel?’ ‘I have not made trouble for Israel,’ Elijah replied. ‘But you and your father’s family have. You have abandoned the Lord’s commands and have followed the Baals. Now summon the people from all over Israel to meet me on Mount Carmel. And bring the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and the four hundred prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel’s table.’ So, Ahab sent word throughout all Israel and assembled the prophets on Mount Carmel. Elijah went before the people and said, ‘How long will you waver between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him.’” But the people said nothing.” (1 Kings 18:1-2; 17-21)

Comment: They chose by remaining silent.

“Then Elijah said to them, ‘I am the only one of the Lord’s prophets left, but Baal has four hundred and fifty prophets. Get two bulls for us. Let them choose one for themselves, and let them cut it into pieces and put it on the wood but not set fire to it. I will prepare the other bull and put it on the wood but not set fire to it. Then you call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of the Lord. The god who answers by fire — he is God.’ Then all the people said, ‘What you say is good.’” (1 Kings 18:22-24)

“So, they took the bull given them and prepared it. Then they called on the name of Baal from morning till noon. ‘O Baal, answer us!’ they shouted. But there was no response; no one answered. At noon Elijah began to taunt them. ‘Shout louder!’ he said. ‘Surely he is a god! Perhaps he is deep in thought, or busy, or traveling. Maybe he is sleeping and must be awakened.’ So, they shouted louder and slashed themselves with swords and spears, as was their custom, until their blood flowed. Midday passed, and they continued their frantic prophesying until the time for the evening sacrifice. But there was no response, no one answered, no one paid attention. Then Elijah repaired the altar of the Lord, which was in ruins. He took twelve stones, one for each of the tribes and built an altar in the name of the Lord, he dug a large trench around it, arranged the wood, cut the bull into pieces and laid it on the wood. Then he said to them, ‘Fill four large jars with water and pour it on the offering and on the wood.’” They did this for three times until

the water ran down around the altar and even filled the trench. At the time of sacrifice, the prophet Elijah stepped forward and prayed: "O Lord, God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant and have done all these things at your command. Answer me, O Lord, answer me, so these people will know that you, O Lord, are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again." Then the fire of the Lord fell and burned up the sacrifice, the wood, the stones and the soil, and also licked up the water in the trench. When all the people saw this, they fell prostrate and cried, 'The Lord-he is God! The Lord-he is God!'" (1 Kings 18:26-39)

"Then Elijah commanded them, 'Seize the prophets of Baal. Don't let anyone get away!' They seized them and slaughtered there. Then Elijah said to Ahab, 'Go, eat and drink, for there is the sound of a heavy rain.' Ahab went off to eat and drink, but Elijah climbed to the top of Carmel, bent down to the ground and put his face between his knees. 'Go and look toward the sea,' he told his servant. And he went up and looked." There is nothing there,' he said. Seven times Elijah said, 'Go back.' The seventh time the servant reported, 'A cloud as small as a man's hand is rising from the sea.' Elijah said, 'Go and tell Ahab, 'Hitch up your chariot and go down before the rain stops you.' Meanwhile, the sky grew black with clouds, the wind rose, a heavy rain came on and Ahab rode off to Jezreel. The power of the Lord came upon Elijah and, tucking his cloak into his belt, he ran ahead of Ahab all the way to Jezreel.'" (1 Kings 18:40-46)

"Ahab told Jezebel everything Elijah had done and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah to say, 'May the gods deal with me, be it ever so severely, if by this time tomorrow I do not make your life like that of one of them.' (1 Kings 19:1-2)

"Elijah was afraid and ran for his life. When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there, while he himself went a day's journey into the desert. He came to a broom tree, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. 'I have had enough, Lord,' he said. 'Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors.' Then he lay down under the tree and fell asleep. All at once an angel touched him and said, 'Get up and eat.' He looked around, and there by his head was a cake of bread baked over hot coals, and a jar of water. He ate and drank and then lay down again. The angel of the Lord came back a second time and touched him and said, 'Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you.' So, he got up and ate and drank. Strengthened by that food, he traveled forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God. There he went into a cave and spent the night." (1 Kings 19:3-9) The Lord provides.

"The word of the Lord came to him: 'What are you doing here, Elijah?' The Lord said, 'Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by.' A great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart – God was not there, then an earthquake – God was not there not in the fire. Then came a gentle whisper which When to him again, 'What are you doing here, Elijah?' He replied, 'I have been very zealous for the Lord God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, broken down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me.' The Lord said to him, 'Go back the way you came, and go to the Desert of Damascus. When you get there, anoint Hazael king over Aram. Also, anoint Jehu son of Nimshi king over Israel, and anoint Elisha son of Shaphat to succeed you as prophet. Jehu will put to death any who escape the sword of Hazael and Elisha will put to death any who escape the sword of Jehu. Yet I reserve seven thousand in Israel — all whose knees have not bowed down to Baal and all whose mouths have not kissed him.'" (1 Kings 19:10-18)

Comment: Fear and self-pity causes many problems physically and spiritually!!!

“So, Elijah went from there and found Elisha son of Shaphat. He was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen, and he himself was driving the twelfth pair. Elijah went up to him and threw his cloak around him. Elisha then left his oxen and ran after Elijah. ‘Let me kiss my father and mother good-by,’ he said, ‘and then I will come with you.’ Elisha took his yoke of oxen and slaughtered them. He burned the plowing equipment to cook the meat and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he set out to follow Elijah and became his attendant.” (1 Kings 19:19-20)

“Now Ben-Hadad king of Aram mustered his entire army. Accompanied by thirty-two kings with their horses and chariots, he went up and besieged Samaria and attacked it. He sent messengers into the city to Ahab king of Israel, saying, ‘This is what Ben-Hadad says: Your silver and gold are mine, and the best of your wives and children are mine.’ The king of Israel answered, ‘Just as you say, my lord the king. I and all I have are yours.’ The messengers came again and said, ‘This is what Ben-Hadad says: I sent to demand your silver and gold, your wives and your children. But about this time tomorrow I am going to send my officials to search your palace and the houses of your officials. They will seize everything you value and carry it away.’ Ahab replied this demand I cannot meet. Ben-Hadad said Prepare to attack.” (1 Kings 20:1-6)

“Meanwhile a prophet came to Ahab king of Israel and announced, ‘This is what the Lord says: Do you see this vast army? I will give it into your hand today, and then you will know that I am the Lord.’ ‘But who will do this?’ asked Ahab. The prophet replied, ‘This is what the Lord says: The young officers of the provincial commanders will do it.’ ‘Ahab summoned the young officers of the provincial commanders, 232 men. Then he assembled the rest of the Israelites, 7,000 in all. They set out at noon while Ben-Hadad and the 32 kings allied with ... The young officers of the provincial commanders marched out of the city with the army behind them and each one struck down his opponent. At that, the Arameans fled, with the Israelites in pursuit. But Ben-Hadad king of Aram escaped on horseback with some of his horsemen. The king of Israel advanced and overpowered the horses and chariots and inflicted heavy losses on the Arameans. ... The next spring Ben-Hadad mustered the Arameans and went up to Aphek to fight against Israel. When the Israelites were also mustered and given provisions, they marched out to meet them. The Israelites camped opposite them like two small flocks of goats, while the Arameans covered the countryside. The man of God came up and told the king of Israel, ‘This is what the Lord says: Because the Arameans think the Lord is a god of the hills and not a god of the valleys, I will deliver this vast army into your hands, and you will know that I am the Lord.’ The Israelites inflicted a hundred thousand casualties on the Aramean foot soldiers in one day. The rest of them escaped to the city of Aphek, where the wall collapsed on twenty-seven thousand of them. And Ben-Hadad fled to the city and hid in an inner room. His officials said to him, ‘Look, we have heard that the kings of the house of Israel are merciful. Let us go to the king of Israel with sackcloth around our waists and ropes around our heads. Perhaps he will spare your life.’ Wearing sackcloth around their waists and ropes around their heads, they went to the king of Israel and said, ‘Your servant Ben-Hadad says: Please let me live.’ The king answered, ‘Is he still alive? He is my brother.’ On the basis of a treaty Ahab set Ben-Hadad free and let him go.” (1 Kings 20:13-16; 19-20, 26-32)

Comment: Never make a treaty with the enemy of God nor Comprise the truth.

“One of the sons of the prophets disguised himself with his headband down over his eyes. ... As the king passed by, the prophet called out to him, ‘Your servant went into the thick of the battle, and someone came

to me with a captive and said, 'Guard this man. If he is missing, it will be your life for his life, or you must pay a talent of silver.' While your servant was busy here and there, the man disappeared.' 'That is your sentence,' the king of Israel said. 'You have pronounced it yourself.' Then the prophet quickly removed the headband from his eyes, and the king of Israel recognized him as one of the prophets. He said to the king, 'This is what the Lord says: You have set free a man I had determined should die. Therefore, it is your life for his life, your people for his people.' Sullen and angry, the king of Israel went to his palace in Samaria." (1 Kings 20:35, 39-43)

"Sometime later there was an incident involving a vineyard belonging to Naboth the Jezreelite. The vineyard was in Jezreel, close to the palace of Ahab. Ahab said to Naboth, 'Let me have your vineyard to use for a vegetable garden, since it is close to my palace. In exchange I will give you a better vineyard or, if you prefer, I will pay you whatever it is worth.' But Naboth replied, 'The Lord forbid that I should give you the inheritance of my fathers.' So, Ahab went home, sullen and angry because Naboth the Jezreelite had said, 'I will not give you the inheritance of my fathers.' He lay on his bed sulking and refused to eat. His wife Jezebel came in and asked him, 'Why are you so sullen? Why won't you eat?' He answered her, 'Because I said to Naboth the Jezreelite, Sell me your vineyard; or if you prefer, I will give you another vineyard in its place.' But he said, 'I will not give you my vineyard.' Jezebel his wife said, 'Is this how you act as king over Israel? Get up and eat! Cheer up. I'll get you the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite.'" (1 Kings 21:1-7)

"Jezebel had Naboth stone him to death. Then she said to Ahab, 'Get up and take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite that he refused to sell you. He is no longer alive, but dead.' ... When Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, he got up and went down to take possession of Naboth's vineyard. Then the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite: 'Go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, who rules in Samaria. He is now in Naboth's vineyard, where he has gone to take possession of it. Say to him, This is what the Lord says: Have you not murdered a man and seized his property? Then say to him, This is what the Lord says: In the place where dogs licked up Naboth's blood, dogs will lick up your blood — yes, yours!' You have sold yourself to do evil in the eyes of the Lord. I am going to bring disaster on you. I will consume your descendants and cut off from Ahab every last male in Israel — slave or free. I will make your house like that of Jeroboam son of Nebat and that of Baasha son of Ahijah, because you have provoked me to anger and have caused Israel to sin.' "And also concerning Jezebel the Lord says: Dogs will devour Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel.' ... Then the word of the Lord came to Elijah: 'Have you noticed how Ahab has humbled himself before me? Because he has humbled himself, I will not bring this disaster in his day, but I will bring it on his house in the days of his son.'" (1 Kings 21:8, 16-23, 29-29)

Comment: God sees and takes notice of the vilest of men who repent.

"In the third year Jehoshaphat king of Judah went down to see the king of Israel. The king of Israel had said to his officials, 'Don't you know that Ramoth Gilead belongs to us and yet we are doing nothing to retake it from the king of Aram?' So, he asked Jehoshaphat, "Will you go with me to fight against Ramoth Gilead?' Jehoshaphat replied to the king of Israel, 'I am as you are, my people as your people, my horses as your horses.' But Jehoshaphat also said to the king of Israel, 'First seek the counsel of the Lord.'" (1 Kings 22:2-5)

"The king of Israel brought together the prophets — about four hundred men — and asked them, 'Shall I go to war against Ramoth Gilead, or shall I refrain?' 'Go,' they answered, 'for the Lord will give it into the king's hand.' But Jehoshaphat asked, 'Is there not a prophet of the Lord here whom we can inquire of?' ...

Then Micaiah was summoned. They were sitting on their thrones with all the prophets prophesying before them. Now Zedekiah son of Kenaanah declared, 'This is what the Lord says: With these you will gore the Arameans until they are destroyed.' All the other prophets said 'Attack Ramoth Gilead and be victorious,' they said, 'for the Lord will give it into the king's hand.' The messenger sent to summon Micaiah said "the other prophets are predicting success for the king. Let your word agree with theirs, and speak favorably." When he arrived, the king asked him, 'Micaiah, shall we go to war against Ramoth Gilead, or shall I refrain?' 'Attack and be victorious,' he answered, 'for the Lord will give it into the king's hand.' The king said to him, 'How many times must I make you swear to tell me nothing but the truth in the name of the Lord?' Then Micaiah answered, 'I saw all Israel scattered on the hills like sheep without a shepherd, and the Lord said, These people have no master. Let each one go home in peace.' ... 'Therefore, hear the word of the Lord: I saw the Lord sitting on his throne with all the host of heaven standing around him on his right and on his left. And the Lord said, Who will entice Ahab into attacking and going to his death there? Finally, a spirit came forward, stood before the Lord and said, I will entice him. ... by being a lying spirit in the mouths of all his prophets, The Lord. Go and do it.'" (1 Kings 22:6-7; 10-16)

Comment: Seek truth - not what you desire.

"The king of Israel and Jehoshaphat king of Judah went up to Ramoth Gilead. The king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, 'I will enter the battle in disguise, but you wear your royal robes.' So, the king of Israel disguised himself and went into battle. Now the king of Aram had ordered, 'Do not fight with anyone, small or great, except the king of Israel.' When the chariot commanders saw Jehoshaphat, they thought, 'Surely this is the king of Israel.' So, they turned to attack him, but when Jehoshaphat cried out, the chariot commanders saw that he was not the king of Israel and stopped pursuing him. But someone drew his bow at random and hit the king of Israel between the sections of his armor. ... The blood from his wound ran onto the floor of the chariot, and that evening he died and was brought to Samaria, and buried. They washed the chariot at a pool in Samaria (where the prostitutes bathed), and the dogs licked up his blood, as the word of the Lord had declared. ... Ahaziah his son succeeded him as king." (1 Kings 22:29-38)

"Jehoshaphat walked in the ways of his father Asa, as he did what was right in the eyes of the Lord. ... He rid the land of the rest of the male shrine prostitutes who remained there even after the reign of his father Asa. Jehoshaphat died and Jehoram his son succeeded him. Ahaziah son of Ahab reigned over Israel two years. He did evil just as his father, Ahab, had done." (1 Kings 22:41-53)

Key Points

- Walk in God's ways, and keep his decrees and commands, his laws and requirements - seek righteousness.
- Solomon showed his love for the Lord by walking according to the statutes of his father David, except that he offered sacrifices and burned incense on the high places. Making exceptions to God's commands is not pleasing to Him.
- Leaders have a great impact on their followers, whether kings, parents, teachers or spiritual leaders.
- The prophecies all came true about those who did evil and angered the Lord.

2 KINGS

"Moab rebelled against Israel. Now Ahaziah had fallen through the lattice of his upper room in Samaria and injured himself. So, he sent messengers to consult Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron, to see if I will recover

from this injury. But the angel of the Lord said to Elijah the Tishbite, 'Go to messengers of the king of Samaria and ask them, 'Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are going off to consult Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron?' Therefore, this is what the Lord says: 'You will not leave the bed you are lying on. You will certainly die!'" Joram succeeded him as king. (2 Kings 1:1-4, 17)

Passing Elijah's Mantel to Elisha

"Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal. Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here; the Lord has sent me to Bethel and Jericho. He refused. ... Fifty men of the company of the prophets went and stood at a distance, facing the place where Elijah and Elisha had stopped at the Jordan. Elijah took his cloak, rolled it up and struck the water with it. The water divided to the right and to the left, and the two of them crossed over on dry ground. When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, 'Tell me, what can I do for you before I am taken from you?' 'Let me inherit a double portion of your spirit," Elisha replied. 'You have asked a difficult thing,' Elijah said, 'yet if you see me when I am taken from you, it will be yours — otherwise not.' 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. 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 own clothes and tore them apart." (2 Kings 2:1-2, 7-12)

"He picked up the cloak that had fallen from Elijah and went back and stood on the bank of the Jordan. Then he took the cloak that had fallen from him 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. ... Elisha went up to Bethel on to Mount Carmel and from there returned to Samaria." (2 Kings 2:13-14, 23)

"Joram son of Ahab did evil in the eyes of the Lord, but not as his father and mother had done. He got rid of the sacred stone of Baal that his father had made. Nevertheless, he clung to the sins of Jeroboam which he had caused Israel to commit; he did not turn away from them." (2 Kings 3:1-3)

"Again, the king of Moab rebelled against the king of Israel. So, King Joram set out from Samaria and mobilized all Israel. He also sent this message to Jehoshaphat king of Judah: Will you go with me to fight against Moab? 'I will go with you,' he replied. They chose to go through the Desert of Edom to attack but ran out of water.' ... 'The king of Israel, and Jehoshaphat king of Judah and the king of Edom went down to see Elisha. Elisha said, if I did not have respect for the presence of Jehoshaphat, I would not look at you or even notice you. Then he said make this valley full of ditches. ... For this is what the Lord says: You will see neither wind nor rain, yet this valley will be filled with water, and you, your cattle and your other animals will drink. This is an easy thing in the eyes of the Lord; he will also hand Moab over to you. You will overthrow every fortified city and every major town. You will cut down every good tree, stop up all the springs, and ruin every good field with stones.' The next morning, about the time for offering the sacrifice, there it was — water flowing from the direction of Edom!" (2 Kings 3:4-7, 12-20)

"Now all the Moabites had heard that the kings had come to fight against them; so, every man, young and old, who could bear arms was called up and stationed on the border. When they got up early in the morning, the sun was shining on the water. To the Moabites across the way, the water looked red — like blood. 'That's blood!' they said. 'Those kings must have fought and slaughtered each other. Now to the plunder, Moab!' But when the Moabites came to the camp of Israel, the Israelites rose up and fought them until they fled. And the Israelites invaded the land and slaughtered the Moabites. When the king of Moab saw that the

battle had gone against him offered his firstborn son as a sacrifice on the city wall. The fury against Israel was great; they withdrew and returned to their own land.” (2 Kings 3:21-26)

Comment: How often do we pray to God for guidance but fail to go to His word to find His answer?

Faith of the Shunammite Woman

“One day Elisha went to Shunem. A well-to-do woman urged him to stay for a meal. So, whenever he came by, he stopped there to eat. She said to her husband, ‘I know that this man who often comes our way is a holy man of God. Let’s make a small room on the roof and put in it a bed and a table, a chair and a lamp for him. Then he can stay there whenever he comes to us.’ One day when Elisha came, he went up to his room and lay down there. He said to his servant Gehazi, ‘Call the Shunammite.’ ‘Tell her, You have gone to all this trouble for us. Now what can be done for you? She replied, ‘I have a home among my own people.’ Elisha asked Gehazi ‘What can be done for her?’ Gehazi said, ‘Well, she has no son and her husband is old.’ The woman was called and Elisha said ‘About this time next year,’ Elisha said, “you will hold a son in your arms.’ Next year a son was born. The child grew, one day he went out to his father, who was with the reapers. ‘My head! My head!’ he said. His father told a servant, ‘Carry him to his mother.’ After the servant had lifted him up and carried him to his mother, the boy sat on her lap until noon, and then he died. She went up and laid him on the bed of the man of God, then shut the door and went out. ... She set out and came to the man of God at Mount Carmel. ... When she reached the man of God at the mountain, she took hold of his feet. Gehazi came over to push her away, but the man of God said, ‘Leave her alone! She is in bitter distress, but the Lord has hidden it from me and has not told me why.’ ‘Did I ask you for a son, my lord?’ she said. ‘Didn’t I tell you, Don’t raise my hopes?’ ... When Elisha reached the house, there was the boy lying dead on his couch. He went in, shut the door on the two of them and prayed to the Lord. ... The boy sneezed seven times and opened his eyes. Elisha said to the Shunammite woman, ‘Take your son.’ She came in, fell at his feet and bowed to the ground. Then she took her son and went out.” (2 Kings 4:8-37)

Comment: Her faith in the Lord’s power through Elisha did not waiver.

Naaman of Aram

“Now Naaman was commander of the army of the king of Aram. He was a great man in the sight of his master and highly regarded, because through him the Lord had given victory to Aram. He was a valiant soldier, but he had leprosy. Now a captive young girl from Israel, who served Naaman's wife said to her mistress, ‘If only my master would see the prophet who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy.’ Naaman went to his master and told him what the girl from Israel had said. ‘By all means, go,’ the king of Aram replied. ‘I will send a letter to the king of Israel.’ So Naaman took the letter to the king of Israel read: With this letter I am sending my servant Naaman to you so that you may cure him of his leprosy.” (2 Kings 5:1-6)

Comment: Aram was located in and near present-day Syria, the country of the Armenians.

“As soon as the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his robes and said, ‘Am I God? Can I kill and bring back to life? Why does this fellow send someone to me to be cured of his leprosy? See how he is trying to pick a quarrel with me!’ When Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his robes, he sent him this message: ‘Why have you torn your robes? Have the man come to me and he will know that there is a prophet in Israel.’ So Naaman went to Elisha's house. Elisha sent a messenger to say to him, ‘Go, wash yourself seven times in the Jordan, and your flesh will be restored and you will be cleansed.’ But

Naaman went away angry and said, 'I thought (what but does God say) that he would surely come out to me and stand and call on the name of the Lord his God, wave his hand over the spot and cure me of my leprosy. Are not Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than any of the waters of Israel? Couldn't I wash in them and be cleansed?' So, he turned and went off in a rage." (2 Kings 5:7-12)

Comment: Don't get angry when God's answer does not meet your expectations.

"Naaman's servants went to him and said, 'My father, if the prophet had told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much more, then, when he tells you, Wash and be cleansed!' So, he went down and dipped himself in the Jordan seven times, as the man of God had told him, and his flesh was restored and became clean like that of a young boy. Then Naaman and all his attendants went back to the man of God. He stood before him and said, 'Now I know that there is no God in all the world except in Israel. Please accept now a gift from your servant.' The prophet answered, 'I will not accept a thing.' And even though Naaman urged him, he refused. ... Then Naaman said 'may the Lord forgive your servant for this one thing: When my master enters the temple of Rimmon to bow down and he is leaning on my arm and I bow there also — when I bow down in the temple of Rimmon, may the Lord forgive your servant for this.' 'Go in peace,' Elisha said. (2 Kings 5:13-19)

"After Naaman had traveled some distance, Gehazi hurried after Naaman. When Naaman saw him running toward him, he got down from the chariot to meet him. "Is everything all right?" he asked. Gehazi lied by saying. 'My master sent me to say, Two young men from the company of the prophets have just come to me from the hill country of Ephraim.' Gehazi took two bags of silver and two sets of clothing and put them away in the house. When Elisha asked 'Where have you been, Gehazi?' Elisha asked. Gehazi lied again saying 'Your servant didn't go anywhere,' But Elisha said to him, 'Was not my spirit with you when the man got down from his chariot to meet you? Is this the time to accept gifts? Naaman's leprosy will cling to you and to your descendants forever.' Then Gehazi went from Elisha's presence and he was leprous, as white as snow." (2 Kings 5:20-27)

Comment: Greed results in much sorrow and is not of God.

"Now the king of Aram was at war with Israel. After conferring with his officers, he said, 'I will set up my camp in such and such a place.'" But Elisha kept the King of Israel informed their every move. The enraged king summoned his officers and demanded of them to know who among them was on the side of the king of Israel?' "None of us, my lord the king," said one of his officers, it is Elisha, the prophet, who is in Israel, tells the king of Israel the very words you speak. ... Then the king went with a strong force and surrounded the city. 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, my lord, what shall we do?' the servant asked. 'Don't be afraid,' the prophet answered. 'Those who are with us are more than those who are with them.' And Elisha prayed, 'O Lord, open his eyes so 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. As the enemy came down toward him, Elisha prayed to the Lord, 'Strike these people with blindness.' So, he struck them with blindness. Elisha told them, 'This is not the road and this is not the city. Follow me, and I will lead you to the man you are looking for.' After they entered the city of Samaria, the Lord, open the eyes of these men so they can see. The king of Israel saw them, he asked Elisha, Shall I kill them?' NO! Set food and water before them so that they may eat and drink. After they had finished eating and drinking, he sent them away,

and they returned to their master. So, the bands from Aram stopped raiding Israel's territory.” (2 Kings 6:8-23)

Comment: Overcome evil with good and pray for those who persecute you.

“Elisha went to Damascus, and Ben-Hadad king of Aram was ill. The king sent Hazael to ask Elisha will I recover from this illness? Elisha answered, ‘Go and say to him, You will certainly recover; but the Lord has revealed to me that he will in fact die.’ Then to Hazael he said ‘The Lord has shown me that you will become king of Aram.” (2 Kings 8:7-13)

Hazael - King of Aram

“Then Hazael left Elisha and returned to his master. When Ben-Hadad asked, ‘What did Elisha say to you?’ Hazael replied, ‘He told me that you would certainly recover.’ But the next day he took a thick cloth, soaked it in water and spread it over the king's face, so that he died. Then Hazael succeeded him as king.” (2 Kings 8:14-15)

“Jehoshaphat died and Jehoram reign as king of Judah, he married a daughter of Ahab. He did evil in the eyes of the Lord. Nevertheless, for the sake of his servant David, the Lord was not willing to destroy Judah. Jehoram rested with his and Ahaziah his son succeeded him as king. He reigned in Jerusalem one year. ... Ahaziah went with Joram son of Ahab to war against Hazael king of Aram. The Arameans wounded Joram so returned to Jezreel to recover.” (2 Kings 8:18-19, 28)

Jehu appointed King of Israel

“The prophet Elisha sent one of the prophets to appoint Jehu king if Israel. The prophet opened the door and run. When Jehu went out to his fellow officers, one of them asked him, ‘Is everything all right?’ Jehu said, ‘he anointed me as king over Israel.’ Jehu conspired against Joram and went down to Jezreel. ... Joram king of Israel and Ahaziah king of Judah rode out, each in his own chariot, to meet Jehu. Then Jehu drew his bow and shot Joram between the shoulders. The arrow pierced his heart and he slumped down in his chariot. Jehu said to Bidkar, his chariot officer, picked him up and throw him on the field that belonged to Naboth the Jezreelite in accordance with the word of the Lord. He also killed Ahaziah king of Judah. (2 Kings 9:1-27)

“Then Jehu went to Jezreel. When Jezebel heard about it, she painted her eyes, arranged her hair and looked out of a window. As Jehu entered the gate, she asked, ‘Have you come in peace, Zimri, you murderer of your master?’ Jeru looked up at the window and called out, ‘Who is on my side? Who?’ Two or three eunuchs looked down at him. ‘Throw her down!’ Jehu said. They threw her down, and some of her blood splattered the wall and the horses as they trampled her underfoot. Jehu went in and ate and drank. ‘Take care of that cursed woman,’ he said, ‘and bury her, for she was a king's daughter.’ But when they went out to bury her, they found nothing except her skull, her feet and her hands, just as Elijah prophesied.” (2 Kings 9:30-35)

Comment: Oh! The consciences of an evil and wicked life.

“Jehu had them killed seventy sons of the house of Ahab and all of Joram’s family, according to the word of the Lord spoken to Elijah. He then called all the prophets of Baal to assemble in the temple of Baal for a sacrifice whereupon he killed all of them and burned their temple. Yet Jehu was not careful to keep the law of the Lord, the God of Israel, with all his heart. He did not turn away from the sins of Jeroboam, which

he had caused Israel to commit. Jehu rested with his fathers and was buried in Samaria. Jehoahaz his son succeeded him.” (2 Kings 10:15, 18-31, 35)

Joash To Become King

“When Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah, king of Judah, saw that her son was dead, she proceeded to destroy the whole royal family. But Jehosheba, the sister of Ahaziah, took Joash son of Ahaziah and stole him away from among the royal princes, who were about to be murdered. She hid him with his nurse at the temple of the Lord for six years while Athaliah ruled the land.” (2 Kings 11:1-3)

“In the seventh year Jehoiada, the priest, sent for the commanders of units of a hundred, the Carites (executioners) and the guards and had them brought to him at the temple of the Lord. He made a covenant with them and put them under oath at the temple of the Lord. Jehoiada brought out the king's son and put the crown on him; he presented him with a copy of the covenant and proclaimed him king. They anointed him, and the people clapped their hands and shouted, ‘Long live the king!’ ... Jehoiada the priest ordered the commanders to bring Athaliah out between the ranks and put to the sword anyone who follows her.’ For the priest had said, ‘She must not be put to death in the temple of the Lord.’ They seized her and put to death.” (2 Kings 11:4-16)

“Then the commanders of hundreds, the Carites, the guards and all the people of the land brought the king down from the temple of the Lord and went into the palace, entering by way of the gate of the guards. The king then took his place on the royal throne, and all the people of the land rejoiced. And the city was quiet, because Athaliah had been slain with the sword at the palace. Joash did what was right in the eyes of the Lord all the years Jehoiada the priest instructed him.” (2 Kings 11:18-20; 12:1)

“Hazeal went to attack Jerusalem. But Joash king of Judah took all the sacred objects dedicated by his fathers — Jehoshaphat, Jehoram and Ahaziah, the kings of Judah — and the gifts he himself had dedicated and all the gold found in the treasuries of the temple of the Lord and of the royal palace, and he sent them to Hazeal king of Aram, who then withdrew from Jerusalem.” (2 Kings 12:17-21)

Comment: Joash did not inquire of the Lord what to do.

Kings Replacing Kings

- Joash was assassinated after a being king for forty years. Amaziah his son succeeded him as king.
- Jehoahaz son of Jehu became king of Israel. He did evil so the Lord's anger burned against Israel, and for a long time he kept them under the power of Hazeal king of Aram and Ben-Hadad his son.
- Jehoash succeeded Jehoahaz as king.
- Amaziah king of Judah did what was right in the eyes of the Lord. After the kingdom was firmly in his grasp, he executed the officials who had murdered his father the king. Yet he did not put the sons of the assassins to death, in accordance with what is written in the Book of the Law of Moses where the Lord commanded: "Fathers shall not be put to death for their children, nor children put to death for their fathers; each is to die for his own sins."
- Jehoash attacked and captured Jerusalem, broke down about six hundred feet the wall and took all the gold and silver and all the articles found in the temple of the Lord and in the treasuries of the royal palace. He also took hostages and returned to Samaria.
- Jeroboam succeeded Jehoash as king.
- Azariah succeeded Amaziah but the Lord afflicted him with leprosy
- Jotham Azariah's son governed the people during Azariah's lifetime and king afterwards.

- Zechariah became king of Israel and reigned six months before he was assassinated by Shallum.
- Shallum was king for one month before being assassinated by Menahem.
- Pul king of Assyria invaded the Israel and Menahem paid Pul ransom. So, he withdrew.
- Pekahiah, Menahem son succeeded him as king but was assassinated.
- Hoshea assassinated Pekah and succeeded him as king.
- Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria captured much of Israel and deported the people to Assyria.
- Jotham, the king of Judah, did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, just as his father Uzziah had done. Ahaz, Jotham's son, became king but he walked in the ways of the kings of Israel and even sacrificed his son in the fire.
- Rezin king of Aram and Pekah king of Israel marched up to fight against Jerusalem to besiege Ahaz, but they could not overpower him. Ahaz sent messengers to say to Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria to come up and save me out of the hand of the king of Aram and of the king of Israel, who are attacking me. The king of Assyria complied by attacking Damascus and capturing it. He deported its inhabitants to Kir and put Rezin to death. Then King Ahaz saw an altar in Damascus and sent to Uriah the priest a sketch of the altar, with detailed plans for its construction. So, Uriah the priest built an altar in accordance with all the plans that King Ahaz had sent from Damascus and finished it before King Ahaz returned. When the king came back from Damascus and saw the altar, he approached it and presented offerings on it. Later when Ahaz died Hezekiah became king.
- Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up to attack Hoshea, seized him and put him in prison, invaded the entire land, deported the Israelites to Assyria. He settled them in the towns of the Medes and brought people from Babylon, Cuthah, Avva, Hamath and Sepharvaim and settled them in the towns of Samaria to replace the Israelites. They took over Samaria and lived in its towns. (2 Kings 13: - 17:3-6)

Hezekiah, King of Judah

“Hezekiah, King of Judah, did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, just as his father David had done and the Lord was with him; he was successful in whatever he undertook. He rebelled against Sennacherib, the king of Assyria and did not serve him. So, Sennacherib attacked all the fortified cities of Judah and captured them. Hezekiah sent this message to the king of Assyria at Lachish: ‘I have done wrong. Withdraw from me, and I will pay whatever you demand of me.’ Hezekiah gave him all the silver that was found in the temple of the Lord and in the treasuries of the royal palace. At this time Hezekiah king of Judah stripped off the gold with which he had covered the doors and doorposts of the temple of the Lord, and gave it to the king of Assyria.”

“The king of Assyria sent his commanders to King Hezekiah at Jerusalem who said ‘On what are you basing this confidence of yours? ... If you say to me, "We are depending on the Lord our God" - isn't he the one whose high places and altars Hezekiah removed, saying ‘You must worship before this altar in Jerusalem?’ ... Then Eliakim, Shebna and Joah said, ‘Please speak to your servants in Aramaic, since we understand it. Don't speak to us in Hebrew in the hearing of the people on the wall.’ ... Then the commander stood and called out in Hebrew: Do not let Hezekiah deceive you. He cannot deliver you from my hand. Do not let Hezekiah persuade you to trust in the Lord when he says, The Lord will surely deliver us; this city will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria. Make peace with me and come out to me. Choose life and not death! ... The people remained silent and said nothing in reply, because the king had commanded, ‘Do not answer him.’” (2 Kings 18:17-36)

“With this Hezekiah tore his clothes and put-on sackcloth and went into the temple of the Lord. He sent for the prophet Isaiah who said "Tell your master, 'This is what the Lord says: Do not be afraid of what you have heard — those words with which the underlings of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me. ... Hezekiah received the letter from the king's messengers and read it. Then he went up to the temple of the Lord and spread it out before the Lord. And Hezekiah prayed to the Lord: 'O Lord, God of Israel, enthroned between the cherubim, you alone are God over all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth. Give ear, O Lord, and hear; open your eyes, O Lord, and see; listen to the words Sennacherib has sent to insult the living God.' ... Now, O Lord our God, deliver us from his hand, so that all kingdoms on earth may know that you alone, O Lord, are God.” (2 Kings 18:37; 19:2, 7, 14-16, 19)

“Then Isaiah sent a message to Hezekiah: 'This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: I have heard your prayer concerning Sennacherib king of Assyria ... he will not enter this city or shoot an arrow here. I will defend this city and save it, for my sake and for the sake of David my servant.' That night the angel of the Lord went out and put to death a hundred and eighty-five thousand men in the Assyrian camp. When the people got up the next morning — there were all the dead bodies! So, Sennacherib king of Assyria broke camp and withdrew. He returned to Nineveh and stayed there. One day, while Sennacherib was worshipping in the temple of his god Nisroch, his sons Adrammelech and Sharezer cut him down with the sword, and Esarhaddon his son succeeded him as king.” (2 Kings 19:20, 32-37)

“In those days Hezekiah became ill and was at the point of death. The prophet Isaiah son of Amoz went to him and said, 'This is what the Lord says: Put your house in order, because you are going to die; you will not recover.' Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to the Lord, 'Remember, O Lord, how I have walked before you faithfully and with wholehearted devotion and have done what is good in your eyes.' And Hezekiah wept bitterly. Before Isaiah had left the middle court, the word of the Lord came to him: 'Go back and tell Hezekiah, the leader of my people, This is what the Lord, the God of your father David, says: I have heard your prayer and seen your tears; I will heal you. On the third day from now you will go up to the temple of the Lord. I will add fifteen years to your life. And I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria. I will defend this city for my sake and for the sake of my servant David.’” (2 Kings 20:1-6)

“Merodach-Baladan king of Babylon sent Hezekiah letters and a gift, because he had heard of Hezekiah's illness. Hezekiah received the messengers and showed them all that was in his storehouses. Then Isaiah the prophet went to King Hezekiah and asked, 'What did those men say, and where did they come from?' Hezekiah replied, 'They came from Babylon.' The prophet asked, 'What did they see in your palace?' Hezekiah said, 'Everything.' Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, 'Hear the word of the Lord: The time will surely come when everything in your palace, and all that your fathers have stored up until this day, will be carried off to Babylon. Nothing will be left, says the Lord. And some of your descendants, your own flesh and blood, that will be born to you, will be taken away, and they will become eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.' ... Hezekiah rested with his fathers. And Manasseh his son succeeded him as king.” (2 Kings 20:12-18, 20)

“Manasseh was twelve years old when he became king. He did evil in the eyes of the Lord. He also shed much innocent blood. He died and Amon his son succeeded him. Amon was assassinated by his officials and Josiah his son king was appointed king by the people.” (2 Kings 20:21; 21:1, 3, 16-17; 19, 24)

Josiah the King who walked in the ways of David

“Josiah was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem thirty-one years. He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord and walked in all the ways of his father David, not turning aside to the right or to the left. King Josiah sent the secretary, Shaphan to Hilkiah the high priest and have him give money to the men appointed to supervise the work on the temple. Hilkiah said to Shaphan , ‘I have found the Book of the Law in the temple of the Lord.’ He gave it to Shaphan, who read it and went to the king to read from it in the presence of the king. When the king heard the words of the Book of the Law, he tore his robes and said. ‘Great is the Lord's anger that burns against us because our fathers have not obeyed the words of this book; they have not acted in accordance with all that is written there concerning us.’ ... Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam, Acbor, Shaphan and Asaiah went to speak to the prophetess Huldah. She said to them, ‘This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: I am going to bring disaster on this place and its people. Because they have forsaken me and burned incense to other gods and provoked me to anger by all the idols their hands have made, my anger will burn against this place and will not be quenched. Tell the king of Judah. ... Because your heart was responsive and you humbled yourself before the Lord and wept in my presence, I have heard you. Therefore, I will gather you to your fathers, and you will be buried in peace. Your eyes will not see all the disaster I am going to bring on this place.’” (2 Kings 22:1-20)

“Then the king went up to the temple of the Lord with the men of Judah, the people of Jerusalem, the priests and the prophets — all the people from the least to the greatest. He read in their hearing all the words of the Book of the Covenant, which had been found in the temple of the Lord. The king stood by the pillar and renewed the covenant in the presence of the Lord—to follow the Lord and keep his commands, regulations and decrees with all his heart and all his soul, thus confirming the words of the covenant written in this book. Then all the people pledged themselves to the covenant.” (2 Kings 23:1-3)

“The king gave this order to all the people: ‘Celebrate the Passover to the Lord your God, as it is written in this Book of the Covenant.’ So, the Passover was celebrated to the Lord in Jerusalem. ... Neither before nor after Josiah was there a king like him who turned to the Lord as he did — with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his strength, in accordance with all the Law of Moses.” (2 Kings 23:21,25)

Babylon Captivity Is Near

“While Josiah was king, Pharaoh Neco king of Egypt went up to the Euphrates River to help the king of Assyria. King Josiah marched out to meet him in battle, but Neco faced him and killed him at Megiddo.

Jehoahaz son of Josiah was anointed king. He only reigned three months when Pharaoh Neco put him in chains, made Eliakim king in his father place and changed his name to Jehoiakim. Then he took Jehoahaz and carried him off to Egypt, and there he died. Jehoiakim did evil in the eyes of the Lord, just as his fathers had done. During Jehoiakim's reign, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon invaded the land, and Jehoiakim became his vassal for three years. But he rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar. The Lord sent Babylonian, Aramean, Moabite and Ammonite raiders to destroy Judah. Jehoiakim died and Jehoiachin became king for three months.” (2 Kings 23:29-35; 24:1-2, 4)

“At that time the officers of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon advanced on Jerusalem and laid siege to it, and Nebuchadnezzar himself came up to the city while his officers were besieging it and took Jehoiachin prisoner. Nebuchadnezzar removed all the treasures from the temple of the Lord and from the royal palace, and took away all the gold articles that Solomon king of Israel had made for the temple of the Lord. He carried into exile all Jerusalem: all the officers and fighting men, and all the craftsmen and artisans — a

total of ten thousand. Only the poorest people of the land were left. He made Mattaniah, Jehoiachin's uncle, king in his place and changed his name to Zedekiah.” (2 Kings 24:10-14)

“Now Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon. Consequently, Nebuchadnezzar marched against Jerusalem with his whole army. He encamped outside the city and built siege works all around it. The city wall was broken through, and the whole army fled at night through the gate between the two walls near the king's garden. Zedekiah was captured and taken to Babylon where sentence was pronounced on him -they killed the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, put out his eyes, bound him with bronze shackles.” (2 Kings 25:1-2, 6-7)

“Nebuzaradan commander of the imperial guard came to Jerusalem, set fire to the temple of the Lord, the royal palace, all the houses of Jerusalem and every important building. Then whole Babylonian army broke down the walls around Jerusalem and carried into exile the people who remained in the city, along with the rest of the populace and those who had gone over to the king of Babylon.” (2 Kings 25:9-11)

Key Point from 2 Kings

- Kings, leaders with power, have great influence over their citizens; some were good but most were evil and rebellious towards God’s commands. Likewise, on the spiritual kingdom church leaders; pastors, preachers, shepherds, exercise power and authority over those they are to shepherd, some for good but not all.
- A shepherd goes on ahead of his sheep and they follow him because they know his voice. (John 10:4)
- Sins of nations or individuals do not go unpunished but they can repent and return to God.
- Under the New Covenant, each person is accountable for their own sins, not those of their parents, their children or their spiritual leaders.
- For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad. (2 Cor 5:10)