

1&2 KINGS

PART TWO

Learning from Leaders

Lessons from Kings, Queens, and Prophets



A Devotional Bible Study
by Sue LeBoutillier

❧ 1&2 Kings — Part Two ❧

Greetings Friend, and welcome to somewhat of a unique Bible study! What I mean is, it's a unique woman that thinks, 'Hey, I'd really like to find a Bible study on the disobedience and decline of Israel!' I mean, when was the last time a friend invited you to really dig into the Word to get to know *Zimri, Omri, Ahab and Ahaziah*?

When we think of *Bible study* we usually think of something that will inspire us, something encouraging, some nuggets to help us know God better. Well, it might be a surprising truth that we WILL know God better through this study. Yes, we will cover about 400 years worth of Israel's history and read the biographies of 38 of their 41 kings, plus a queen, and several prophets. But, along the way, we'll also add to our understanding of God's character. We will find that God does nothing without revealing it to His prophets. We'll find that God is extremely longsuffering. We will find that God disciplines His children, but He does so with an eye on future relationship — not with a sweep of His arm to obliterate!

In the same way that 1&2 Samuel is really one continuous book, 1&2 Kings is also one lengthy narrative. We've already studied the first eleven chapters of 1&2 Kings in Part One, which was titled ***Solomon and the House of the Lord***. Solomon was an incredibly important figure and deserved an entire study session. Some of the kings in this study were also very important, interesting, or notorious, but we're going to group them together into one Bible study, and race through the remaining 36 chapters of 1&2 Kings in nine weeks!

Is there a theme that can be pulled from those 36 chapters? Unfortunately yes. It would be the repetition of the phrase "***...and Israel did what was evil in the sight of the Lord.***"

May the Lord richly bless you as you study His Word!

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How to use this Bible Study

1&2 Kings, Part Two is a women's Bible study which has been divided into nine weekly lessons. If you do each lesson, you will have read and contemplated each chapter from **1 Kings 11** through **2 Kings 35**.

Whether you are meeting with a friend, a small group, or doing this study on your own, the following would be an ideal path:

#1 Your first step will be to watch/listen to **Week One — Introduction**, either independently or with your group.

#2 Begin **Week Two in your Study Guide**

- ◆ Read the assigned Scriptures and answer the questions for each day. This Study Guide is intended to be completed independently **before** you watch or listen to the teaching associated with each week's lesson. (Also note the *Questions for Thought and Discussion at the end of each lesson* — you won't want to miss them).
- ◆ Then watch/listen to that week's teaching using the links below. You can do this privately or with your group.
- ◆ Then discuss the week's lesson in your group and pray together about applying the passages to your lives.
- ◆ Repeat this process as you do all the weeks in your Study Guide.

One last reminder — be sure to approach each of the above steps with prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to give you understanding and speak to your heart.

To watch the video teachings for this Bible Study go to:

ccontario.com/womens-studies

or

[YouTube.com/calvarychapelontario](https://www.youtube.com/calvarychapelontario)

The best translation of the Bible to use is the one you understand best, and using more than one translation can be a useful aid in your study! This study guide was created using the ESV (English Standard Version).

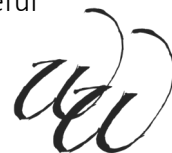


Chart of the Kings of Judah

	Name of King	Length of Reign	Good or bad
1	Rehoboam	17 years	B
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			
14			
15			
16			
17			
18			
19			

Chart of the Kings of Israel

	Name of King	Length of Reign	Good or bad
1	Jeroboam I	22 years	B
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			
14			
15			
16			
17			
18			
19			

Week One — Introduction

Use this page to accompany the Week One teaching video.
(www.ccontario.com/wow-1-2kings-part2)

If you're studying in a group, the questions on page 9 may provide some good discussion starters following the video.

The history of the kings of Israel really begins in the Old Testament books of **1&2 Samuel**.

- ◆ **1 Samuel** tells of Israel's first king: _____
- ◆ **2 Samuel** tells of Israel's famous king: _____
- ◆ **1 Kings 1-11** tells of David's son, king: _____
- ◆ The rest of **1&2 Kings** tells us of the history of the remaining _____ kings of Israel and Judah.
- ◆ Solomon's servant _____ became king over the northern ten tribes.
- ◆ Solomon's son _____ became king over the tribe of _____, for the sake of _____.

To his son [Rehoboam] I will give one tribe, that David my servant may always have a lamp before me in Jerusalem, the city where I have chosen to put my name. But I will take you [Jeroboam], and you shall reign over all that your soul desires, and you shall be king over Israel. If you will listen to all that I command you, and walk in my ways, and do what is right in my eyes... as David my servant did, I will be with you and will build you a sure house, as I built for David, and I will give Israel to you. (1 Kings 11:36-38)

Questions for Thought & Discussion

1. Read **1 Kings 11:4-6**. Solomon is widely known for his wisdom, but his actions in these verses did *not* seem very wise. Discuss the difference between understanding the things of God and actually loving and obeying God. How can this impact our lives?
2. Rehoboam showed *some* wisdom in at least seeking the counsel of others, but we're disappointed that he followed the flawed advice of the younger men. Discuss why their youthful advice may have appealed to Rehoboam. Why might faulty advice appeal to us and lead us in a wrong path? How can we guard against that?
3. We don't usually disobey God just for fun. There is often an underlying motivator like fear. What types of fears do you think may have motivated Jeroboam to make priests out of non-Levites and draw the people to worship away from Jerusalem? In what ways can fear tempt you to disobey God?
4. The narrative of the older and younger prophet is complicated. At the end of the day, the younger prophet allowed the older prophet's influence to trump the *word of the Lord* that he already knew. Discuss situations where we may have to guard our hearts against *new revelations* that may challenge our deeply-held beliefs or understanding of loving and serving God.

*God remains faithful in all His promises,
despite the unfaithfulness of His people.*

Week Two — 1 Kings Chapters 14-16

This Bible study has begun with division. Division is the opposite of multiplication. Sometimes one thing can multiply to become two things in a positive way — like cellular growth. But, in the case of the nation of Israel, due to the choices of their leaders, one thing was divided into two halves and suffered all of the consequences of that division.

Who was to blame for this unhealthy division? Did the fault lie with Rehoboam? His father, Solomon? Did it go back to David? Or did it go all the way back to Adam? Could the downward spiral that we read about in 1&2 Kings be attributed to plain ole human sinful nature?

In **1 Samuel 8:20**, Israel desperately wanted a king to rule over them so they could be like all the nations around them. They had rejected God as their king (**1 Samuel 8:7**). Samuel had warned them that it would not go well (**1 Samuel 8:10-18**) and now we'll find out just how badly it actually went.

And yet, God's work is neither absent nor concealed. We'll discover that most of the kings had no heart for obeying God. A very few did have a heart for God, but struggled to live out their faith in a way that led the nation in a positive direction.

We have so much to learn, so much to process, and you've probably already figured out, there will be so much to apply to our own lives and our own walk of faith.

Here are a few practical points as you work through this study:

- ◆ We will be completing the charts on p.4-5 (mostly because I love charts), with the names of the kings of Judah and Israel as we read about them in our text.
- ◆ We'll discover that some of the names of the kings have variations in their spelling and even alternate names (for example, Uzziah and Azariah are the same king).
- ◆ There will be some days with quite a bit of text to read (or listen to) and fewer questions. It's just the way this study will go. Don't give up with the lengthy passages and don't feel that you need to get them read all at once. Slow and steady wins the race.

Day 1:

📖 READ 1 Kings 14:21-31—15:1-11 — Three Kings of Judah

Judah's King #1, Rehoboam (14:21-31). Verse 21 seems like a very odd place to begin our reading, but we did a fairly sturdy job in the introduction of explaining the split of the kingdom — with Jeroboam reigning over the northern tribes and Rehoboam over the southern.

- From **v.23-24**, bullet point some of the things that Judah participated in that were considered evil in the sight of the Lord.

- From **v.25-26**, list what Jerusalem lost to the Egyptians.

Judah's King #2, Abijam (15:1-8).

- List Abijam under the kings of Judah, along with your assessment of his letter grade “G” for good, or “B” for bad.

This is a fascinating paragraph. We learn very little about Abijam and half of the text seems to comment on David.

- For whose sake did God allow Abijam to ascend to the throne through the family line? (**v.4**)
- If you had never read any other text about David, what would your perspective be from **v.5**?

Judah's King #3, Asa (15:9-11).

- List Asa under the kings of Judah, along with your assessment (from these few verses) of his letter grade: *G* or *B*.

Day 2:

🌀 READ 1 Kings 15:12-14 — Asa's life — A Great Start

We'll spend two of our study days this week investigating the reign of Asa. I honestly think we'll find parts of his life *very* relatable.

- From **v.12-14**, what is your impression of Asa?

We'll pick up the text in 1 Kings tomorrow, but there is so much more to discover about Asa if we flip over to 2 Chronicles. (I promise I won't do this to you through the entire study, but occasionally we'll simply *have* to turn to Chronicles for a more robust perspective.)

🌀 READ 2 Chronicles 14 & 15 — (It's only a total of 34 verses)

Rest and Peace (2 Chronicles 14:1-8). Note how many times you read the words: *rest* and *peace* in those eight verses: _____

- Beside all the reforms that Asa instituted (by ridding the land of foreign altars), **v.4** says he also issued a command to his people. What was it?
- And because the Lord honored him by providing peace, what were the people of Judah able to do during this period (**v.7-8**)?
- What conclusions might you draw from these verses?

Peace Challenged (2 Chronicles 14:9-15). Even though Asa had been afforded a season of peace to build an army, this horde from Ethiopia was at least twice as large as his own troops!

- From **v.11**, note Asa's immediate response to the challenging situation he was facing.

- From **v.12-13**, note God's answer to Asa's prayer.

Beware of Victory (2 Chronicles 15:1-7). One of the most vulnerable times in any of our lives can come on the heels of God helping us achieve some level of victory. We can mistakenly think that we're pretty good at overcoming our enemies or resisting our temptations. Or, we can forget about our dependence on the Lord altogether. That was exactly the time in Asa's life when God sent a prophet with a message, so he wouldn't forget.

- Summarize the prophet's message in **v.2-7**.

A prophet was a heavenly ambassador, who called God's people back to their covenant relationship with the Great King.¹

- What do you find to be the most compelling phrase from the prophet Azariah for your own personal life?

A Proper Response (2 Chronicles 15:8-19).

Asa responded very positively to the prophet's message. I would give him an A+!

- List some of the important actions from **v.8-18** that Asa initiated in response to the message.

*"But you, take courage! Do not let your hands be weak, for your work shall be rewarded."
2 Chronicles 15:7*

Note the lengthy period of peace showered upon Judah (**v.19**) — 35 years! We'll find out what happened in year 36 tomorrow!

Day 3:

☞ READ 1 Kings 15:16-24 — Asa's Life (Part Two)

The narrative in 1 Kings had omitted all of what we just studied about Asa's early life and had quickly launched into recording the conflict between Asa and Baasha, the king over the northern tribes which were referred to as *Israel* at this point.

Unfortunately, we haven't even been introduced to Baasha yet, but tomorrow's text will take care of that as we learn about the next six kings of Israel. For our purposes today, however, this really could have been *any* adversary, the point of the text is how Asa handled the confrontation.

- Compare **v.16-17** of this chapter with **2 Chronicles 14:9-10**. How were these two situations in Asa's life similar?

- Compare **v.18-19** of this chapter with **2 Chronicles 14:11**. In what ways were Asa's responses different?

Asa's response to Baasha doesn't really sound all that terrible here in 1 Kings — I mean, it sounds like Asa basically withdrew some funds, worked some diplomacy, and the conflict was resolved.

Well, let's go back to our more detailed account in 2 Chronicles...

🌀 READ 2 Chronicles 16 — The Rest of the Story

- From **2 Chronicles 16:7** what important insights do we gain from Hanani, the seer, about Asa’s motivation to work with the king of Syria?

In **v.7-8**, underline the words *rely* and *relied* (3x).

- How does the repetition of those words hit home in your own life of faith? What are some of the things that *you* rely on that seem like a sure way to dissolve a problem?

Write out **2 Chronicles 16:9** here in your Study Guide:

- From **v.10**, what was Asa’s response to the prophetic message this time?

The end of Asa’s life paints a very sad picture. As the years went by, we saw him go from someone with a very sturdy reliance on God, to a prideful man who wouldn’t even consult the Lord about his own health matters. Very sad indeed!

Day 4:

After spending a very large amount of time studying the life of Asa, we'll finish this week's study fairly rapidly.

You'll find, throughout 1&2 Kings, that the narrative will ping-pong from Judah to Israel and back again. It won't always be in chronological order, the volume of information on each king will vary greatly, and some of the material might skew to the violent or depressing side. But we have to remember, this entire study leads us to the exile of God's people for their discipline! God doesn't give up on them. He will bring them back to this land and they will be cured of their spiritual adultery through His chastisement.

🔗 READ 1 Kings 15:25-33 — Three Kings of Israel

Israel's King #2, Nadab (15:25-26). We read a very short account of his reign.

- List Nadab under the kings of Israel, along with your assessment of his letter grade.

Israel's King #3, Baasha (15:27-16:7). Finally we're introduced to the king who tempted Asa to rely on his own resources rather than on God's strength.

- List Baasha under the kings of Israel, along with your assessment of his letter grade.
- According to **v.27-28**, how did Baasha rise to the throne?

Israel's King #4, Elah (16:8-14). Here is another example where the narrative tells us more about the next king than it tells of Elah.

- List Elah under the kings of Israel, along with your assessment of his letter grade.
- How did it come about that he was no longer king? (**v.10**)

Day 5:

☞ READ 1 Kings 16:15-34 — Three More Kings of Israel

Israel's King #5, Zimri (16:15-20). Most of what we learned about Zimri was in yesterday's passage where we found that he killed all of Baasha's family to ensure his uncontested reign on the throne.

- List Zimri under the kings of Israel, along with your assessment of his letter grade.
- In what way might Israel's actions in **v.16** and Zimri's death be considered poetic justice?

Israel's King #6, Omri (16:21-28). Omri was the second in a line of mere military commanders turned king.

- List Omri under the kings of Israel, along with your assessment of his letter grade.

In **v.26**, we read a sentence that should sound familiar to us by now:

"He walked in all the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and in the sins that he made Israel to sin, provoking the LORD, the God of Israel to anger by their idols."

Jeroboam established a standard of evil to which ALL subsequent kings of Israel aspired. (Spoiler Alert — you'll find the entire right hand column for the kings of Israel will contain a "Bad" grade).

Israel's King #7, Ahab (16:29-31). We'll study Ahab next week, but he's introduced here in connection with his father.

- List Ahab under the kings of Israel, along with your assessment of his letter grade.
- Name the new location from which Omri and Ahab and future kings of Israel reigned (**v.24, 29**).
- Name Ahab's wife (**v.31**) who will further encourage the degradation of Israel.

Questions for Thought & Discussion

1. Take a moment to contemplate how much had changed for the people living around Jerusalem in just one generation. Discuss how little time it actually takes to lose hard-fought spiritual gains.
2. No one's life is completely free of trouble. Even though Asa was *doing everything right* and *honoring God*, trouble came his way in the form of Zerah the Ethiopian. Discuss the wisdom and the effectiveness of Asa's prayer in **2 Chronicles 14:11**.
3. What spiritual applications do you find in Asa's prayer that can be applied to your life?
4. Both **1 Kings** and **2 Chronicles** informed us that Asa chose obedience to God over family loyalty when he deposed his own mother. What might be a modern-day application of this type of choice in our lives?
5. What are some practical strategies that would help us hold strong in our faith and our trust in God throughout our entire lifetime?

*The Lord is with you while you are with him.
If you seek him, he will be found by you...*

2 Chronicles 15:2

Week Three — 1 Kings 17-19

We won't log any new kings this week in our charts because these three chapters all took place during the reign of Ahab, whom you've already logged. But the narrative does begin by introducing a new character without really introducing him — Elijah the Tishbite!

In a pattern similar to our study of Judges, the compiler of this book alternates between the degradation of the nation as a whole to examples of the simple but powerful faith of the few. Elijah was one of the few. Although he isn't formally introduced as a prophet of God, by the second verse, we begin to suspect as much.

Day 1:

READ 1 Kings 17:1-24 — A Life of Powerful Faith

God had told Israel that he would *shut up the heavens* (**Deuteronomy 11:16-17**) if they chose to turn from Him and serve other gods. That's exactly what was happening here in the days of Ahab and Elijah.

There are three miraculous events given in these verses that remind us that God is able to care for those who remain faithful to Him. For simplicity, I've listed sets of verses and a heading for each so that you can note the important-to-you elements.

V. 2-7 The Miracle at the Brook Cherith

V.8-16 The Miracle of the Flour and Oil

V.17-24 The Miracle of the Son Raised to Life

Now I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the LORD in your mouth is truth. 1 Kings 17:24

Day 2:

Chapter 17 had opened with Elijah — whose name means ‘My God is Yahweh’ — telling King Ahab, “**there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word.**” He boldly declared that he was the representative of the Lord in matters of precipitation.

We were also previously told that Ahab had built a *house for Baal, erected an altar for Baal*, and that he *served Baal and worshiped Baal* (1 Kings 16:31-32). The spiritual adultery of the king really disappoints us, because these were God’s people and they deserve to be led by someone who worshiped God alone.

Since the setting of these chapters is a drought, we have something more to consider that makes this story fascinating. Ancient texts describe Ahab’s god — **Baal** — as ‘*the great storm god,*’ the ‘*rider on the clouds,*’ in other words, the god responsible for sending rain!² The problem was, he wasn’t sending any rain!

Now, after a long season of obscurity, God sent Elijah to tell Ahab that HE would send rain. Let’s read how it unfolded...

READ 1 Kings 18:1-16 — The Men God Used

- What new man of faith is introduced in v.3?

Are you surprised to find him *working for Ahab*?

- What special task had he covertly undertaken? (v.4)


Ahab and Obadiah decided to split up to search for some patch of grass that might be left undiscovered. But it wasn’t the people Ahab was concerned about — it was the animals — he didn’t want to lose his animals to the drought and was hoping to find food for them!

God often seems to use the absurd for His own purposes. It was because of this mission that Obadiah’s and Elijah’s paths crossed.

We realize two things fairly quickly: 1) Ahab had wanted to get his hands on Elijah for some time; 2) Elijah had a reputation of being a bit slippery to pin down.

- What was Obadiah's fear in telling Ahab that he knew where Elijah could be found?

- How did Elijah calm that fear?

 **READ 1 Kings 18:17-29 — Battle of the Gods**

- What was the unexpected request that Elijah made to Ahab (v.19, 23)?

*"How long will you go limping between two different opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him."
1 Kings 18:21*

- Describe how the prophets of Baal tried to entice their god to send fire on their offering (v.26,28).

...but there was no voice. No one answered; no one paid attention.

Day 3:

Elijah was completely outnumbered on Mount Carmel. There were 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of Asherah, plus a number of Israelites that presumably followed Ahab's spiritual leadership. When Elijah said he was *the only one left* (18:22), he was not only stating how it *seemed*, but also giving an accurate account of the moment.

Nonetheless, Elijah wasn't deterred. He demonstrated a holy courage throughout the entire sacrifice stand-off.

🔗 READ 1 Kings 18:30-39 — Elijah's Boldness

- From v.31, in the building of his altar, what did Elijah symbolically use to remind the people of their covenant background?

- What instructions did Elijah give that both made the people active participants, and would have made the burning process even more miraculous?

The most important part of this confrontation wasn't found in Elijah's chiding of the prophets of Baal, or in the abundance of water poured over the altar. The critical part was his prayer of faith.

- Note the important elements of Elijah's prayer in v.36-37.

- What was the response of the people who had gathered (v.39)?

We might think that a demonstration of God's power is relegated to the prophets of old. Yet, Jesus told his disciples, "***...you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you...***" (Acts 1:8).

The Apostle Paul also prayed for the church, "***...to be strengthened with power through his Spirit...***" reminding them that God is "***able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us.***" (Ephesians 3:16-20)

- ◆ Is there an element of God's *power* that you are in need of?
- ◆ Have you lost sight of God's desire to work abundantly in your life?
- ◆ Do you need a fresh work of the Spirit today in order to have the boldness, faith, and perseverance in prayer that we witnessed with Elijah?

Don't be shy with God, take these matters to Him in prayer!

"...let it be known this day that you are God in Israel, and that I am your servant, and that I have done all these things at your word." 1 Kings 18:36

📖 READ 1 Kings 18:40-46 — The Real Storm God

The people were now so convinced that Yahweh was indeed their God that it wasn't difficult for them to spring into action and seize the prophets of the imposter god.

We're not specifically told where Ahab had been during this time, but now Elijah told him to ***go up*** because the rain was coming. This was important because Elijah had told him back in Chapter 17 that there would be no *dew or rain, except at his word*.

- What do you think Elijah was doing in **v.42** at the top of Mount Carmel?

- Note the final miraculous event in this story from **v.46**.

Day 4:

After such a dramatic demonstration of God's power that king Ahab himself witnessed, it would be natural to hope that the cultural and political climate in Israel would return to the Lord. Hadn't Elijah been confident of that very thing when he said that God had *turned their hearts back* (18:37)? Things should be looking up for sure!

But, in the opening of this chapter we realize that not *everyone's heart* had turned to the Lord. Someone with influence was very angry about what had transpired and her solo voice had a great impact on Elijah's perspective of success and on his emotions.

🔗 READ 1 Kings 19:1-7 — From Courage to Depression

- According to v.2, what was Jezebel's threat?

- According to v.3, what was Elijah's response?

These verses can really benefit us if we read them as a case study of our fragile human emotions. We have all experienced courage, zeal, even boldness at times. But it doesn't take much for us to turn completely toward fear, fatigue, and a sense of failure.

- Give your summary of Elijah's emotional state while *under the broom tree* (v.4-5).

- In what way did God minister to him while *under the broom tree*?

Women can be very strong...until we're not. We've all probably experienced some level of despair leading to depression. But one of the most helpful strategies is also the most practical — food and rest! That was the first therapeutic that God ministered to Elijah — food and rest!

Have you noticed this with family or friends? There can be a huge difference in talking through big problems or heartaches after sleep and with proper nourishment. But God didn't stop there.

Ultimately, (in tomorrow's text) God reminded Elijah of his purpose. In the meantime He lavished upon him kindness, comfort, and rest.

📖 READ 1 Kings 19:8-21 — The Still, Small Voice of the Lord

Mount Horeb is also known as Mount Sinai, which should also remind us of Moses' intimate moments with the Lord.

- From **v.9**, what question did God ask Elijah from the cave?
- Write at least three words that characterize Elijah's response to God (i.e., *forlorn*).
- In **v.11-12**, God made his presence known through four different elements. List them:

After God demonstrated His attention toward Elijah on the mountain, He repeated the same question (**v.9 & 13** are identical).

- ◆ What do you think of Elijah's response in **v.14**?
- ◆ Did you expect him to be instantly changed, having seen and heard the presence of God in those manifestations?
- ◆ Has it been your experience that people who become emotionally fragile recover quickly?

We'll find another remedy in tomorrow's text.

Day 5:

📖 READ 1 Kings 19:9-21 — A God-given Purpose

God wasn't disappointed at all that Elijah's response hadn't changed. Throughout this story, we see aspects of God's character that we sometimes lose grip of — His longsuffering, kindness, persistence.

In our lives, God is always gently reminding us that He has a purpose for our life, and that He has assigned good works which He planned long ago (**Ephesians 2:10**). Sometimes the best thing for a depressed person to do is simply do the next thing assigned to them!

- What three practical tasks did God tell Elijah to tend to on his way back (**v.15-16**)?

- What truth did God reveal in **v.18**, that was a direct, but gentle correction of Elijah's previous assessment of God's resources?

Failure is a paralyzing emotion. We're all very poor judges of our own successes or failures. Somehow Elijah believed he had failed and put the weight of the world on his shoulders, believing himself to be the single remedy for the spiritual health of Israel. God reminded him that it wasn't all about him!

- ◆ Do you absorb unrealistic responsibility for the spiritual lives of those around you?
- ◆ Does God need to gently remind you that it's not all about you?
- ◆ If so, take some time today to talk these things over with God and allow Him to show you a better perspective.

We close this week's study with the introduction of Elisha. He won't be mentioned again until 2 Kings, but it's important to note that his calling was a gift to Elijah, and Elijah was also a gift to Elisha.

Questions for Thought & Discussion

1. Elijah had a message from God, but was immediately sent away from the crowds to an isolated brook, to a widow and her son — for several years. Discuss the importance of faithfulness in our lives when God doesn't seem to be giving us an immediate outlet for what we believe our ministry to be.
2. It's almost a universal human experience to assume God's judgment when tragedy strikes. That's what the widow believed in **1 Kings 17:18**. How might Elijah's actions inspire us when those around us have these types of emotions?
3. Jezebel's threat seemed to be the single cause of Elijah's emotional spiral. Since he believed himself to be the *only one left*, he had become isolated, even though Obadiah seemed to be available. How can a Christian take better advantage of others in the Body of Christ when their emotions are fragile?
4. In what ways has the account of Elijah's emotional collapse helped you to minister to someone who is struggling? In what ways has it helped you understand your own struggles?
5. God gave Elijah a purpose to help him get back on track. Share what God has spoken to you as your purpose — simple, practical, spiritual, etc.

Week Four — 1 Kings Chapters 20-22

Now, for this week, we focus on Ahab, King of Israel. If our last study could be labeled *the stable person who lapsed into despair* — this week's case study would be *the unstable person without maturity*.

The Apostle Paul encourages Christians to grow into maturity, which leads to stability, “...*that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.*” (Ephesians 4:14)

In these chapters, God repeatedly sent His prophets (several of them) to declare the *word of the Lord* to Ahab. One would have hoped to see a growth of personal stability and maturity in the ways of the Lord. You can decide if you see that happen with Ahab or not.

God's clear message was that He is jealous for His people, He is active in the affairs of His people, and Ahab wasn't in control as much as he thought he was!

Day 1:

✞ READ 1 Kings 20:1-25 — The King, the Prophets, and Victory

Our approach will be more inductive today. You'll find a series of verses followed by a topic phrase. You can simply note anything in that text that you find compelling and we'll wrap it up at the end with thoughts about the *unstable person*.

V.1-6 A Challenge from Ben-hadad

V.7-12 A Response from the Elders

V.13–15 The Prophet’s First Message

“...and you shall know that I am the LORD.”
1 Kings 20:13,28

V.16–21 The Attack

V.22–25 The Prophet’s Second Message

If you knew nothing of Ahab, a quick read of these verses might cause you to give him a “G” rating on the chart of kings — God spoke to him, he listened, and God seemed to favor him with victory. But there were notable signs of instability from the beginning.

- What do you find troubling about Ahab’s attitude toward the King of Syria in v.4?
- According to v.13, what reason did God give Ahab for the victory that He was about to bring?

Unstable people are lazy in both perceiving enemies and fighting enemies. Ultimately, they would rather *join them* than *fight them*.

Day 2:

Fast forward to spring and another battle with Ben-hadad. After the previous battle, his servants had reasoned that Israel's God was a *god of the hills, but not a god of the plains* — if they would merely move the battle to the plains, victory would be sure.

✞ READ 1 Kings 20:26-34 — The Second Battle

- In **v.26-27**, how was Israel's army described compared to Syria?
- A prophet came and told Ahab exactly why God intended to give Israel victory in this battle. From **v.28**, what was the reason?
- In **v.29-30**, the mention of *seven days* and a *wall that fell* might remind the reader of what other victory in the history of Israel (in which God intended people to know that HE was God)?

As you read **v.30–34** you might have thought, '*That's so nice! They settled their differences, decided to restore the borders, and opened up trade again! Look how agreeable they are!*'

Calling each other *brother* and making a covenant might appeal to a modern reader, but remember, we're talking about God's people, God's land, God's enemies, and God's victory. Ahab had no right to release God's enemy, much less make a covenant with him, and he's about to be told as much by another prophet.

Unstable people are most concerned with self-opportunity.
Their sense of discernment often goes to sleep when
presented with a chance to advance themselves
either financially or in popularity.

📖 READ 1 Kings 20:35-43 — A Dramatized Message

Yet another prophet enters the scene, which proves that there *were* other men of God willing to face Ahab — Elijah was not the only one.

In order to prepare for his dramatization, the prophet required someone to physically injure him. The first man he asked was unwilling to participate and was himself cursed. This is difficult for us to understand, but we have to resist the temptation to get high-centered on things that don't sit right. Many situations related to God's prophets tend to get complicated!

The prophet's script is reminiscent of Nathan's message to King David in **2 Samuel 12:7** when he presented a heart-wrenching story of a man who had done a great injustice to another man. He had ended by telling David, "*You are the man!*"

- In what ways is this confrontation similar?

- From **v.42**, what was God's ultimate verdict for Ahab?

- From **v.43**, what was Ahab's mood when he got home?

Unstable people have unstable emotions.
They have difficulty admitting fault and they are
given to pouting when things don't go their way.

Day 3:

🔗 READ 1 Kings 21:1-16 — Conspiring Over a Vineyard

We already know that Ahab didn't care about God's instructions. God told Israel multiple times through Moses that they were NOT to make alliances with the inhabitants of Canaan — neither politically, nor by marriage. Ahab had ignored God's command and done both.

Enter an unsuspecting Israelite who still cared about the proper distribution and retention of the land. He happened to own a vineyard upon which Ahab had set his sights.

- From **v.3**, and again in **v.4**, what four words did Naboth use twice in his conversation with Ahab to describe his land?
- What was Ahab's emotional response to Naboth's rejection of the sale of his vineyard?
- From **v.7**, how did Jezebel spring into action to relieve her poor husband's suffering?
- List some of the points of action on Jezebel's part from **v.8-16**:

Unstable people get fixated on their desires.
Their judgment becomes clouded and they will tend
to stop at nothing to see their plan move forward.

📖 READ 1 Kings 21:17-29 — Condemnation Over a Vineyard

Elijah was now back on the scene. Ahab had recently added murder and theft to his list of sins and God sent Elijah to be a prophetic voice of judgment.

- From **v.19-24**, list a few of the details of Ahab's judgment.

- What other people group was Ahab compared with in **v.26**, and why is that significant?

- Here comes the big surprise. We were just told that Ahab was the worst king ever, and now from **v.27**, how did Ahab respond to God's judgment?

And for an even bigger surprise, **v.29** seems to confirm his sincerity. The Lord told Elijah that Ahab had ***humbled himself*** and that God would postpone the greater portion of disaster!

*For the Lord your
God is a
merciful God.
Deuteronomy 4:12*

This situation highlights God's mercy to the extreme. How would you have felt if you were in Elijah's sandals? (It's also a bit reminiscent of Jonah at Nineveh)! But it's good for us to see God's mercy extended to the vilest, to pause and consider that, and to be reminded of the completely transcendent character of God.

Unstable people can feel remorse and even genuine repentance. But it's only mature people who will continue to walk out that repentance.

Day 4: _____

🔗 READ 1 Kings 22:1-28 — To Battle, or Not to Battle

- Syria and Israel were at war for three years (v.1). How might that have been avoided if Ahab had dealt differently with Ben-hadad the first time?

Without any real introduction, we're suddenly reading about a new king in Judah, (we'll log his information at v.41). What is astonishing at this point is that both of the kings of Israel and Judah are working together to defeat a common foe!

Just one generation back, Baasha was fighting against Judah and Asa was writing checks to Ben-hadad to fight Baasha. Now we read about the two kings working together to defeat Syria.

Perhaps Ahab's repentance over the evil against Naboth had really taken hold — at least for awhile. But one big difference eventually came to the surface and that is the theme of v.5-9.

- From v.5, what did Jehoshaphat want to do before he made a commitment to go into battle?

Ahab suspiciously had 400 prophets at his disposal. Review **1 Kings 18:19**. We know that the prophets of Baal had been killed on Mount Carmel; but it's interesting that nothing was ever said about the 400 prophets of Asherah. Now Ahab has 400 prophets! Coincidence?

- What was their unified advice (v.6-12)?

A messenger sought out the prophet Micaiah and prompted him with the politically correct prophecy. Micaiah sarcastically obliged with the desired word, but Ahab knew he was being patronized.

- List some of the elements of the *real* prophecy from **v.17-23**.

- From **v.26-27**, how was Micaiah treated for speaking his *real* prophecy?

🌀 READ 1 Kings 22:29-36 — The Outcome of the Battle

- Why do you think it was that Ahab wanted to dress in disguise while Jehoshaphat went to battle looking like a king?

- Explain how God's plan of judgment prevailed regardless of how the men were dressed.

Day 5:

📖 READ 1 Kings 22:37-53 — Ahab's Reign Ended

The end of Ahab's life turned out exactly as had been prophesied. His chariot, his remains, and his blood were all subject to the will of the dogs '*according to the word of the Lord*' that we read about in **1 Kings 21:17-19**.

Judah's King #4, Jehoshaphat (v.41)— Finally we get to record the next king of Judah. Even though we've learned quite a bit about him and his character, this is the formal introduction.

- List Jehoshaphat under the kings of Judah, along with your assessment of his letter grade.

List some of the positive and negative things that Jehoshaphat did while he was king of Judah, according to **v.43-50**.

Positive Actions

Negative Actions

Israel's King #8, Ahaziah (v.51)— Now, we get to record the next king of Israel, Ahab's son Ahaziah, who carried forward the family custom of evil and idolatry.

- List Ahaziah under the kings of Israel, along with your assessment of his letter grade.

Unstable people often believe they are in complete control of situations, and if they plan and/or scheme carefully they can control others around them.

Questions for Thought & Discussion

1. There was a statement that characterized an *unstable person* at the end of each lesson this week. Both Ahab and Jezebel were considered *unstable*. Discuss how they each contributed to the other's *instability*.
2. Perhaps you have had people close to you that displayed a strong pattern of disobedience and/or manipulative emotions and maybe they have impacted you negatively with or without your awareness. Share one biblical passage or concept that gives a warning about the negative influences of other people.
3. Ahab seemed quite lazy to put up any further resistance to his enemy, Ben-hadad. Instead of putting up a fight against God's enemy, he made a covenant with him (**20:34**). In the same way, we might be unwilling to resist temptation or evil — it may seem too daunting. In what way can this narrative be a warning for what's going on in our own lives?
4. Read **James 1:5-8**. What is one cause for instability? What are some remedies?
5. Read **1 Kings 21:5-7** again. We're disgusted at Jezebel's actions, but yet they may be more familiar than we want to admit. In what ways might a wife or a mother respond similarly to her, and how should we guard against this type of response?

Week Five — 2 Kings Chapters 1-5

The Book of **2 Kings** contains 25 chapters. By the end of the book, both the northern tribes (Israel) and the southern tribes (Judah) will have been conquered and God's people carried into captivity away from the land of promise.

It won't be easy reading because the trajectory is steadily downward as the leaders point God's people into spiritual adultery and a disregard for God's covenant promises. Even so, we'll realize that...

- ◆ God still loves His people dearly and hasn't given up on them.
- ◆ God's presence and power are alive and active through His prophets and even select ordinary people.
- ◆ God's Unfolding Plan of Redemption is still moving forward until His True King will burst onto the scene of human reality.

Prepare yourself for a very fast pace because, for the next several weeks, we'll cover one chapter every day. The next ten chapters will contain multiple brief stories, (the majority of which highlight Elisha), meant to drive home the point that people's thoughts and actions — whether kings or ordinary folk — do not escape the attention of God.

Day 1: -----

Today's passage might be described as *making a short story long*. The point, accentuated by repetitive phrases, is simple — nothing is hidden from the Lord. God sees what's really going on!

🔗 READ 2 Kings 1 — Judgment on Ahaziah

In the opening scene we realize Ahaziah has had an accident and is worried if he will recover. We can't help but wonder if this is an intentional parallel to Israel's spiritual condition, having infirmed themselves with their spiritual adultery and now wondering if their vitality has been lost permanently.

- From **v.2**, to whom did Ahaziah send his messengers to gain insights and why is that so shocking?

This inquiry didn't escape God's notice and He pre-emptively alerted Elijah to what was coming his way.

- What was God's message to Elijah, which he relayed to the king's messengers in **v.3-4** (which was repeated twice more in **v.6, 16**)?

It's not easy for us to understand why the king would make a military demand for Elijah to come to him when the initial message was so unfavorable — but that's exactly what Ahaziah did! He sent fifty men to bring back one man!

- Describe the confrontation between the military group and Elijah in **v.10** and again in **v.12**.

As we've pointed out before, God's work through His prophets isn't always easy for a modern reader to understand. But we do get a little insight from the commander of the third group in **v.13-15**.

- How was his request and his respect for Elijah different than the first two groups and how did that change the outcome?

We wonder if this introductory scene is meant to prepare us that God has seen the spiritual disease that has completely infiltrated His people. He has declared His judgment through His prophets (three times) and the outcome is decided — it's only a matter of time.

Day 2:

✞ READ 2 Kings 2 — Elijah Taken up to Heaven

Elijah had been the *voice of the Lord* in previous chapters and now the prophetic mantle passed to Elisha. He would now become the prominent prophetic figure through Chapter Ten.

Both Elijah and Elisha seemed to know that it was time for Elijah's departure. As they traveled through Gilgal, Bethel, and Jericho (all communities with a school of prophets) everyone they encountered seemed to realize the same thing.

- According to **v.8**, how were Elijah and Elisha able to cross the Jordan?
- What did Elisha ask as his inheritance from Elijah (**v.9**)?
- What miracle did Elisha display in **v.14** (while the sons of the prophets were watching) that seemed to prove he was indeed going to carry forward Elijah's ministry?

Still, they weren't completely convinced. The group of prophets was so accustomed to Elijah disappearing off into another location that they wanted to spend some time hunting to see if he might yet be located. Elisha had personally witnessed Elijah's departure, but he finally just let them do what they wanted to do!

Two questions for fun:

- What other men in the Old Testament were *caught up* without actually facing death?

- What other men in the Old Testament were enabled by God to cross a body of water in a miraculous way like this?

After their search turned up empty, the prophets returned to Jericho, presumably satisfied that Elijah had indeed been taken up to heaven and not just deposited upon some mountain.

In order for Elisha to be received as God's spokesperson he would be expected to demonstrate both God's blessing and curse as revealed by God in **Deuteronomy 11:26-28**. He had already demonstrated the supernatural by parting the Jordan River and the chapter ends with an example of both blessing and curse.

- From **v.19-22**, everything was great at Jericho, except what?
- In what way did Elisha intervene with blessing?
- From **v.23-24**, everyone seemed to respect Elisha's ministry, except who?
- In what way did Elisha intervene with a curse?

Though this judgment may at first seem harsh, the group must have included over 50 boys old enough to be out running in a pack, which constituted something of a physical threat to Elisha. The authors of Kings regularly show that contempt toward divinely called prophets is disastrous for God's people. ³

Day 3:

🔗 READ 2 Kings 3 — Elisha and the Battle Against Moab

Elisha, as the new prophet of the Lord, had now made the entire circuit back to Mount Carmel and then to Samaria where he became available to the next king of Israel, something like when Elijah had been involved with the last king of Israel.

Israel's King #9, Jehoram II (v.1-3). This was Ahaziah's brother, since the text tells us he was the son of Ahab.

- ☐ List Jehoram II under the kings of Israel, along with your assessment of his letter grade.

We learn that the king of Moab had long sent tribute to Israel, but once Ahab died, he grew tired of it and simply quit. Now Jehoram wanted to fight with Moab over those lost revenues which set up a situation very similar to his dad's fight against Syria in **1 Kings 22:3-4**.

Instead of *Ahab* and *Jehoshaphat* and *Elijah* against *Syria*, this time it became *Jehoram* and *Jehoshaphat* and *Elisha* against *Moab*. It was another opportunity for Elisha to step in as the prophetic voice.

- Note Jehoshaphat's reply in **v.7** (which was identical to the last battle).

Israel, Judah, and Edom all marched together and when the going got rough, it was Jehoram who rather comically decided this was God's plan all along, that the three kings should be captured and destroyed.

Isn't that the way some Christians think today? If a situation becomes difficult or threatening, it must be a sign that God is punishing them, or worse, has brought them to this place to destroy them!

- Jehoshaphat had a more level head in the situation. From **v.11**, what was his advice?

- Elisha made it clear that he really wanted nothing to do with Jehoram, but he was still persuaded to seek the Lord on behalf of these kings for whose sake?

This is really the first foretelling prophecy that Elisha spoke and it was important from the standpoint of validating his place as a prophet. Read **Deuteronomy 18:20-22**. This is a negative version of testing a prophet, but basically Moses was explaining that a prophet could be judged by whether their predictions of the future came true or not.

- What part of Elisha's prophecy in **v.17-19** would be granted through God's miraculous intervention?

- What part of Elisha's prophecy would be fulfilled by the kings simply obeying what God told them to do?

As we compare God's message (related to the battle in this text) to our own lives, there are some similarities. In our lives, sometimes God performs the supernatural (physical or relational healing) and sometimes God instructs us to simply put our head down and move forward in what He has given us to do.

- How has this been true in your life? What instructions has God given you that require you to just keep moving forward?

Day 4:

We turn a corner now from God's military intervention to His intervention in the lives of ordinary people. The people that Elisha helped in these chapters covered the spectrum from *men* to *women*, *poor* to *rich*, *Hebrew* to *foreigner*. The clear message is that God — and his ministers — take an active interest in the lives of *all* people who seek Him and put their faith in Him — *even* during national decline.

🌀 READ 2 Kings 4:1-7 — Elisha and the Widow's Oil

Elisha's first intervention was on behalf of a poor widow with children on the verge of being sold into slavery because of her debts.

- What was God's intervention worked through Elisha?

🌀 READ 2 Kings 4:8-37 — Elisha and the Shunammite Woman

The next intervention was on behalf of a wealthy couple. Unlike the former situation, this couple had plenty of wealth but no children.

- How did the wealthy couple make use of their resources for the work of the Lord?

Elisha was so grateful for his accommodations that he wanted to reciprocate with some assistance — perhaps a good word to the king or the commander — but the couple said they had all they needed.

- What was the need in their lives that Gehazi noticed (v.14)?

Through God's miraculous intervention, the woman bore a son, who grew up but later died. The woman knew that her only hope would be found in the Lord through the prophet Elisha, so she traveled with haste to see him.

V.27 reminds us that prophets are used by God to represent Him, but they are not gods and they are not omniscient. Elisha himself said that *the Lord had hidden the matter from him* so he began to ask the woman about her turmoil.

- What were the woman's words to him in v.28?

Again we get a glimpse into human nature. We hate disappointment! Sometimes we would rather forego joy than risk despair. Sometimes we take out our frustrations on people around us. Elisha moved forward with a spirit of grace toward the woman, realizing that her emotions were in charge in this moment.

- Note Elisha's actions and the result from v.33-37.

Clearly, raising her dead son to life was the best thing that ever happened to this woman, but the miracle also clinched Elisha's reputation as a *true* prophet of the Lord.

READ 2 Kings 4:38-44 — Elisha and the Deadly Stew

Here was another intervention on behalf of people in ordinary circumstances. During a famine it would have been common to gather more obscure ingredients to consume in cooking.

- What problem developed and how did Elisha intervene?

Day 5:

📖 READ 2 Kings 5:1-14 — Elisha and Naaman

Here is our final example this week of how God used Elisha to intervene in people's lives. This time it was to benefit a foreigner.

- What was Naaman's position in life and who did he work for?

The term *leper* was used broadly in those days. Naaman probably had a skin disease that would have made him ceremonially unclean, but not necessarily an outcast from society.

- From **v.2**, who was it that suggested Naaman go to Elisha?
- Naaman's boss sent him instead to the King of Israel along with a bounty of gifts. How did the king respond to Naaman's request?

It's a good thing Elisha heard about the incident. He invited Naaman to come see him — but then arranged it so that Naaman didn't really see him but was merely told by a messenger what to do.

- Why do you think this bothered Naaman so much?
- Even so, what was the outcome when Naaman humbled himself and followed Elisha's instructions (**v.14**)?

📖 READ 2 Kings 5:15-27 — Elisha and Gehazi

- What application or moral would you draw from the incident with Gehazi?

Questions for Thought & Discussion

1. When Ahaziah sent military troops to demand that Elijah return to him, it must have been quite intimidating to Elijah, yet he didn't move until the Lord said so. What are some vulnerable areas of your life that can cause you to be easily intimidated?
2. The story of the Shunammite woman in **2 Kings 4** demonstrates yet another episode of God's grace toward childless women. As a group, try to name several other women from the Scriptures for whom God intervened with a child.
3. Since we're attempting to learn lessons from prophets (as well as kings), what would you say are characteristics of both Elijah and Elisha that have contributed to their deep faith in God? How might you want to imitate their faith?
4. From Chapter Five, how would you describe Naaman's root problem (other than his leprosy)? What would you say was Gehazi's root problem?
5. What tendencies do you see in your own life that reflect either of those men's character flaws? If God has already brought some level of victory, share your experiences with your group.

Week Six — 2 Kings Chapters 6-10

This week's chapters almost bring a conclusion to the incredible ministry of Elisha. What great faith he had! What great insights the Lord gave him!

Since it's not yet quite God's time to bring judgment on Israel, His miraculous help and favor will still be evident in these chapters, through both Elisha and other unsuspecting characters. So, on we go with a few more kings, a few more battles, and a few more episodes that demonstrate God's faithfulness — even when His people are not faithful.

Day 1:

🔗 READ 2 Kings 6:1-7 — Elisha and the Recovered Axe Head

If we were given the chance to make our own chapter divisions, we may have included these verses with the previous chapter where Elisha was used by God to show compassion and intervention in the ordinary course of people's lives. That's the main point of this story — a man was spared from great peril as Elisha helped to miraculously cause his iron tool to float and become recovered.

🔗 READ 2 Kings 6:8-23 — Elisha Brings the Syrians to King of Israel

Here we have an account with no time stamp. In fact, none of the kings are even named — only Elisha's name is used.

- From **v.8-11** what military problem troubled the king of Syria?

Naturally, the king of Syria wanted to lay hands on this man who was a menace to him.

- From **v.14** describe the type of group that was sent to find Elisha.

This would have been a frightening sight for anyone, but Elisha's faith allowed him to see what others could not. Then, through his prayers, others were allowed to see what would build their faith.

- Describe Elisha's three prayers in **v.17, 18, 20** and consider how his requests (and God's response) were related to each other.

Elisha, rather comically, led the military to the doorstep of the king of Israel in Samaria. Then he ordered the king to treat them to a great feast rather than strike them down.

- From **v.23**, what was the outcome of this diplomacy?

READ 2 Kings 6:24-33 — Siege of Samaria

Nothing lasts forever — even good diplomacy. Eventually Ben-hadad went up and besieged Samaria.

- From **v.25-29**, note some of the shocking and tragic effects of this military siege.

- From **v.31**, who did the king of Israel blame for these tragedies?

Once again we note a response that is more common than it should be. Even today people blame God (and/or His people) for the trouble they are facing, while at the same time refusing to actually trust in God and give Him a chance to relieve their suffering.

*Answer me when I call, O God of my righteousness!
You have given me relief when I was in distress.*

Psalm 4:1

Day 2:

The people living in Samaria were suffering under the poor leadership of their king. But God was about to do something miraculous that could only be accomplished by Him! God has a knack for telling His prophets when He's about to do something and that's where this chapter begins.

🔗 READ 2 Kings 7 — God's Compassion on the Poor

- There were two main elements of Elisha's prophecy that he told the king's messenger. List the main points from...

v.1

v.2

It's interesting that lepers, being counted among the poorest of the poor were the first to see and understand God's miracle.

- What had happened to the vast Syrian army and why (v.6-7)?

Once it was investigated and confirmed that the Syrian army had fled — and once the remaining people in the city heard that food and plunder was to be had just outside their city gates — you can imagine the stampede that ensued.

- From v.16-17, explain how both of Elisha's prophecies above came true.

Day 3:

☞ READ 2 Kings 8:1-6 — The Shunammite's Land Restored

You might remember the situation with the Shunammite and the son who was restored to life (**2 Kings 4**). It's likely that since the husband was old in that chapter, he was likely departed from the scene in this chapter, and the woman is in charge of her household. We learn that Elisha had warned her of the famine to come, encouraging her to sojourn where she could find food. Now it was time to return and claim her property.

"At the end of the seven years" (**v.3**) may have referred to the sabbatical restoration of property according to **Deuteronomy 15:1**.

- Describe how God arranged a divine appointment just to bless this woman.

☞ READ 2 Kings 8:7-15 — Hazael Murdered Ben-hadad

Isn't it interesting that several kings, who had no real interest in trusting God, turned to a prophet to find out whether or not they would recover from an illness?

- What did Elisha tell Ben-hadad's servant, Hazael, regarding his recovery and his future? (**v.10**)

- What was Elisha's further prophecy of Hazael's future (**v.12**)?

- How did that partially prove true in **v.15**?

When evil is passed down from one leader to another, people tend to despair. With Hazael now in charge of Israel, the line of wicked Omri has endured since **1 Kings 16**. We thought there would be some reprieve by now since Elijah had prophesied the destruction of Ahab's line back in **1 Kings 21:21-24**.

We're also confused because we remember that God told Elijah to anoint both Hazael and Jehu in **1 Kings 19:15-18**. Did he forget? Was that a mistake? Was it unfinished business handed down to Elisha? We have a few puzzle pieces to work on yet.

Yet the Lord was not willing to destroy Judah, for the sake of David his servant, since he promised to give a lamp to him and to his sons forever. 2 Kings 8:18

Judah's King #5, Jehoram I (v.16). Keeping the Jehorams straight can get complicated, since there was one in Judah and one in Israel. Add the further complication that both of their names are sometimes shortened to Joram and we find that we really need our chart.

- List Jehoram I under the kings of Judah, along with your assessment of his letter grade.
- Who had been his wife (**v.18**)?

Judah's King #6, Ahaziah I (v.25).

- List Ahaziah I under the kings of Judah, along with your assessment of his letter grade.
- Who was his mother, what was her lineage (**v.26**), and how do you think that affected Ahaziah's short reign?

And off went the northern and southern tribes to make war against Hazael, king of Syria — the same Hazael that Elisha had prophesied would do such a great evil to God's people (**2 Kings 8:12**).

- Note the location where Joram went to recover from a wound and where Ahaziah went to visit him (**v.29-30**).

Day 4:

☞ READ 2 Kings 9:1-13 — Jehu, Anointed King of Israel

It's interesting to note that all the important players are centralized in Jezreel at this moment: Joram, King of Israel; Ahaziah, King of Judah; and of course, Jezebel, King Ahab's wife.

- Elisha sent a prophet to anoint what person as king over Israel?

Note: this action broke the chain of Israel's king from Omri and Ahab.

- What further instructions did the prophet give to Jehu and why were they given (v.7-10)?
- How did the men respond to the news that Jehu had been anointed king (once Jehu finally told them)?

☞ READ 2 Kings 9:14-29 — Jehu Obeyed the Word of the Lord

The watchman in Jezreel saw Jehu approach, so naturally a man was dispatched (twice) to find out if the approaching visit could be considered peaceful or not.

- When Joram and Ahaziah finally rode out to meet Jehu, at what property did they *just happen* to meet up with him (v.21)?
- How would you describe Jehu's attitude based on his bold statement in v.22?

- Who received the first deadly battle wound according to **v.24**?
- From **v.25-26**, how did this field serve as a location of justice?
- Who received the second deadly battle wound (**v.27**)?

📖 READ 2 Kings 9:30-37 — Jezebel’s End

As a finale to this incursion in Jezreel, Jehu encountered Jezebel!

- Jezebel called to Jehu out the window, *“Is it peace, you Zimri, murderer of your master?”* Read **1 Kings 16:9** and write one sentence as to why she made that reference.
- Who technically killed Jezebel (**v.33**)?
- How did Jezebel’s death fulfill what had been prophesied in both **1 Kings 21:23** and **2 Kings 9:8-9**?

These accounts are not easy to read. We don’t study them for fun, we study the Bible to learn about God. One thing we learn here is that God does what He says He will do. There might be a lengthy pause between God’s promise and His action, but we can be sure that God always does things in His time and His way.

Day 5:

There was a repetitive theme as Jehu approached Jezreel and also as he approached Jezebel. Everyone seemed to ask him about *peace!* Naturally, a reader might be quite disappointed in what actually happened, because it didn't seem peaceful at all.

One thing that Jehu instinctively knew was that there could be no peace between people without peace with God — and peace with God required that His people walk in right relationship to Him and honor Him as God and hold to their covenant relationship.

In Chapter Ten, we will read about more destruction before we read about more peace. And, just to be clear, Jehu didn't do everything perfectly either, but he *was* zealous for God's honor within the community of God's people!

🔗 READ 2 Kings 10:1-17 — Jehu Slaughtered Ahab's Descendants

Jehu sent letters to the leaders in Samaria, basically telling them to set someone on the throne in place of Joram.

- According to **v.4-5**, what did they want to do instead, and why?

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Jehu called their bluff and set the conditions for which they would have to submit to *him* as their king.

In **v.15-17**, the writer introduced us to a new character, **Jehonadab the Rechabite**, who rode along with Jehu for the final destruction of the descendants of Ahab. The affect of these events was not a one-size-fits-all. Jehu's zeal did not cause him to follow the Lord fully. Jehonadab, on the other hand, established a community that *did* follow the Lord fully.

You can read more about the descendants of Jehonadab in **Jeremiah 35**, and see how God honored his devotion.

📖 READ 2 Kings 10:18-36 — Jehu Destroyed Baal Worship

Because Ahaziah (king of Judah) was also descended from the wicked house of Omri and Ahab, Jehu destroyed all of his relatives as well. Now, he continued his purge of the evils in the nation.

- Describe the ruse that Jehu crafted in **v.18-19** in order to destroy Baal worship.

- Why do you think the people so easily believed him?

Well, his strategy worked. The sacrifices were made, the guards put the worshipers to the sword, the pillar in honor of Baal was burned and the whole place was turned into a latrine, which was a shocking but yet satisfying twist.

Israel's King #10, Jehu. The syntax for the reign of Jehu at the end of Chapter 10 is a little different than for the other kings, but it's all there.

- ☐ List Jehu under the kings of Judah, along with your assessment of his letter grade.

We read that Jehu still walked in the ways of Jeroboam — specifically as it related to the golden calves in Bethel and Dan. But, the Lord did have a commendation for him.

- According to **v.30**, how was he to be rewarded for what he *did* accomplish that was *right in the eyes of the Lord*.

Questions for Thought & Discussion

- In Chapter 6 we see that Elisha warned the king of Israel more than a few times of the danger and even location of the Syrian army. And yet, the king of Israel hadn't exactly been deserving. Does God do that? Have you experienced God's hand of protection when you weren't exactly following after Him.
- Elisha was a man of great spiritual perception. When others would succumb to fear, he was able to *see* what God was doing. This was *literally* the case in Chapter 6 when he saw a mountain full of horses and chariots of fire. How does that story inspire you to become more aware of God's work in our lives?
- Even when God *is* working we may face difficulties. The siege on Samaria was a severe trial; some of the women fell into desperation (6:28-29), the king blamed Elisha (6:31), but God's stopwatch was ticking the whole time. How can we prepare ourselves in good times to hold onto faith and knowledge that God is at work?
- How does God's intervention in these chapters give you hope of His awareness of the challenges and evils of our own day? How do these chapters help you be patient for God's timing?
- In **2 Kings 10:23** Jehu said, "*Search, and see that there is no servant of the LORD here among you, but only the worshipers of Baal.*" How does that speak to the importance of reputation?

Week Seven — 2 Kings Chapters 11-17

We're going to cover a lot of territory this week. Elisha will pass from this earth and Israel will cease to be a self-governing nation; they will finally be taken captive to Assyria and the northern territory will become resettled.

I'll admit, it will take a little tenacity on your part to make your way through these chapters, but don't lose heart — if you persevere through this text we'll have the delight of studying Hezekiah and Josiah — they are both worth sticking around for.

Day 1:

We were most recently studying Israel, but now our focus goes back to Judah.

🌀 READ 2 Kings 11:1-3 — The Wicked Reign of Athaliah

Some charts of the kings actually show Athaliah as reigning two years as Queen of Judah, or Regent over Judah. We won't be including her on our chart.

- What was the child's name who was hidden from Athaliah?

🌀 READ 2 Kings 11:4-20 — Only Joash was Spared

The priest Jehoiada surfaced in **v.4** without introduction, but you'll quickly realize he was an extremely influential player during the years of Joash's reign.

- From **v.4-12**, describe what Jehoiada organized.

- From **v.13-14**, describe Athaliah's response and the action that Jehoiada took against her.

- From **v.17-20**, describe the people's response to Jehoiada's covenant and to Joash being crowned king.

READ 2 Kings 12 — The Reign of Jehoash

Judah's King #7, Jehoash. Jehoash was also called Joash. You'll find a repetitive pattern that the 'eh' was often either included or excluded, thus giving two different spellings.

- List Jehoash under the kings of Judah, along with your assessment of his letter grade.
- What was the main reason given for the good parts of Jehoash's reign (**v.2**)?

The administration of *church projects* was just as challenging then as it is now. The people were generous, the leaders had good ideas and good intentions, but *someone* needed to watch over the details. Once this was figured out, many of the repairs finally took place and it seemed to be a prosperous time in Jerusalem.

But peace and prosperity doesn't last forever.

- What king eventually threatened Jerusalem (**v.17**)?
- How did Jehoash decide to handle this threat (**v.18**)?
- What do you think of his solution? Wise or foolish?

Day 2:

🔗 READ 2 Kings 13:1-13 — Two More Kings in Israel

Now we're back to the history of Israel to look at the next two kings.

Israel's King #11, Jehoahaz.

- ☐ List Jehoahaz under the kings of Israel, along with your assessment of his letter grade.

Even though Jehoahaz led Israel deeper into idolatry and the Lord brought even more significant discipline on the nation through their enemy, Syria — still, God never stopped listening for signs of repentance and humility.

- From **v.4**, what action did Jehoahaz take that temporarily turned the nation around?

This cycle of disobedience followed by repentance leading to God's rescue is reminiscent of the days of the judges. In that time God would raise up someone to save them from their oppressors as well.

This action on God's part highlights His mercy and faithfulness.

- Read **1 Kings 8:33-34** (which was spoken by Solomon at the dedication of the temple) and explain how this is a fulfillment of Solomon's request.
- What application can we make from this today?

Israel's King #12, Jehoash. Little is written about Jehoash (Joash) except his connection with Elisha.

- ❑ List **Jehoash** under the kings of Israel, along with your assessment of his letter grade.

📖 READ 2 Kings 13:14-25 — The Death of Elisha

Based on what was written about Jehoash — that he had done evil in the eyes of the Lord, and that he did not depart from the ways of Jeroboam — do you find it surprising to read that he went to visit Elisha when he was sick? We might find it additionally surprising that Elisha spent time passing on positive prophecy to him.

- What did Elisha prophesy through the incident with the arrows?

- What dramatization foretold the limited victory over Syria?

- What miraculous event was attributed to Elisha, even after he had died?

Day 3:

Today's reading may be the most challenging of this entire Bible Study. There is only a small amount of personal application alongside a large dose of history and logging the various new kings after they killed the old kings. But take heart...you *will* get through this and there are so many profitable things yet to come!

🔗 READ 2 Kings 14 — Amaziah & Jeroboam II

Judah's King #8, Amaziah.

- List Amaziah under the kings of Judah, along with your assessment of his letter grade.

One of the first things we learn is that Amaziah took revenge on those who killed his dad (2 Kings 12:20-21). But to his credit, he only put to death the murderers.

- According to v.6, what limit did he put on his revenge that seems wise to us.

- According to v.8, what provocation did he initiate that seems foolish to us.

Israel's King #13, Jeroboam II —

- List Jeroboam II under the kings of Israel, along with your assessment of his letter grade.

Therefore I will make Samaria a heap in the open country, a place for planting vineyards, and I will pour down her stones into the valley and uncover her foundations.

Micah 1:6

 **READ 2 Kings 15 — More Kings and the First Wave of Exile**

Judah's King #9, Azariah. The same king is listed by the name of **Uzziah** in **2 Chronicles** — perhaps as a way of eliminating confusion with the chief priest by the same name.

- List Azariah under the kings of Judah, along with your assessment of his letter grade.

Israel's King #14, Zechariah. Note in **v.12** we're reminded that this king fulfilled the promise made to Jehu that his sons would sit on the throne of Israel to the fourth generation.

- List Zechariah under the kings of Israel, along with your assessment of his letter grade.

Israel's King #15, Shallum. Note how the names of the kings are beginning to change starting right here.

- List Shallum under the kings of Israel, along with your assessment of his letter grade.

Israel's King #16, Menahem. The king who gave away wealth to other countries in order to hold onto his power.

- List Menahem under the kings of Israel, along with your assessment of his letter grade.

Israel's King #17, Pekahiah.

- List Pekahiah under the kings of Israel, along with your assessment of his letter grade.

Israel's King #18, Pekah.

- List Pekah under the kings of Israel, along with your assessment of his letter grade.

V.29 is an important timestamp! This is the first phase of exile. Write the last seven words of the verse here:

Judah's King #10, Jotham.

- List Jotham under the kings of Judah, along with your assessment of his letter grade.

Day 4: _____

🔗 READ 2 Kings 16 — Ahaz and Extreme Idolatry

Judah's King #11, Ahaz.

- ☐ List Ahaz under the kings of Judah, along with your assessment of his letter grade.
- What was one of the evil things that Ahaz did according to **v.3**?

It's almost unbelievable to read that Ahaz was chumming up to the king of Assyria (**v.7**) to ask for assistance in his skirmishes with both Syria and Israel.

- According to **v.8**, what resources did Ahaz offer to the king of Assyria in exchange for his help?

Ahaz became infatuated with a pagan altar that he saw in Damascus. The text doesn't tell us what deity the altar honored, nor why it was so alluring to Ahaz. But he decided he had to have one just like it!

- Who did he ask to build a replica of this altar in Jerusalem and why is that shocking?
- What did he instruct to have done with the original *bronze altar* that was part of Solomon's Temple (**v.14**), and what was to be its use going forward (**v.15**)?

We usually think of the treasure in Jerusalem being carried off by the conquering nations. We think of the altars being torn down by pagan kings. This is a very sobering text that shows the depravity of the leaders in Jerusalem as they gave away the wealth and destroyed their nation's spiritual life.

Day 5:

🔗 READ 2 Kings 17:1-6 — The Fall of Israel

Israel's King #19, Hoshea. Hoshea initially became a vassal of Assyria and paid him tribute. But he must have thought better of it and tried to get some help from Egypt. THAT didn't sit well with Shalmaneser, who imprisoned Hoshea and besieged Samaria.

- ☐ List Hoshea under the kings of Israel, along with your assessment of his letter grade.

V.6 is another important timestamp in this book. It signals the end of the end for the northern tribes. What was begun in **2 Kings 15:29** is now entering completion.

🔗 READ 2 Kings 17:7-41 — The Reason for the Fall of Israel

- Make a list of all of the reasons that you can find for the exile of Israel according to **v.7-12** and **v.15-17**.

- How had God given warnings to Israel, according to **v.13**?

Lest we think the northern tribes were idolatrous and Judah was faithful, **v.19** reminds us that *Judah also did not keep the commandments of the Lord their God*. Yet, it had always been the first king of Israel, Jeroboam, who had set the course for unfaithfulness.

- According to **v.24**, who was brought in to settle the Land of Promise in place of the Israelites?
- What peril did the Lord send upon those who resettled the land (**v.25**)?
- What was the king's solution to this peril (**v.27-28**)?
- What do you find ironic about that solution?
- According to **v.29-33, 41**, what ended up being the spiritual solution for the people who re-settled the land?

Questions for Thought & Discussion

1. We all know that people closest to us have a great influence on our lives. Discuss the sacrifice necessary on Jehosheba's part to provide that influence. How does that inspire you?
2. How do you think the *chest with a hole in the lid* (placed in the house of the Lord for offerings), compares to current methods of collecting offerings today?
3. God's instruction that Israel completely destroy the Canaanite nations doesn't always sit well with people. Read **2 Kings 16:3**. How does this one verse present a defense to that instruction?
4. You listed many reasons found in Chapter 17 that contributed to the downfall and exile of Israel. Are there any lessons to be considered from that passage for God's people today?
5. Much of Israel's disobedience was due to *idolatry*. Read the following New Testament passages and discuss any instructions you find regarding *idolatry* for Christians. **1 Corinthians 10:1-14, Colossians 3:5-6, 1 John 5:21**

Week Eight — 2 Kings Chapters 18-21

The final two weeks in this Bible study will be all about Judah since Israel has already been taken away into exile. Judah would have almost 150 years yet until their time would come.

It always makes for a fascinating story when a son becomes the exact opposite of his father. In these chapters we go from Ahaz, a man infatuated with the pagan altars of Damascus — to Hezekiah, a man who was credited with a heart like David — to Manasseh, a man who returned to more evil than anyone before him. I suppose one observation is that each person makes his/her own choices in life. Being raised in the midst of evil doesn't necessarily mean one must follow that course. And Hezekiah did NOT!

Day 1:

📖 READ 2 Kings 18:1-12 — Finally, a Good King in Judah

Judah's King #12, Hezekiah.

- List Hezekiah under the kings of Judah, along with your assessment of his letter grade.

Hezekiah had become king just a few years before Samaria was besieged and ultimately captured. Certainly he had to be aware of the trouble happening to his northern neighbors...

- Yet, **v.4** tells us he busied himself by doing what?

- What were the characteristics of Hezekiah, according to **v.5-6**?

Write out the first sentence of **v.7** that tells us of God's regard for his obedience:

- Contrast the characteristics of Hezekiah that you wrote previously with the reasons given for the exile of Israel in **v.12**.

📖 READ 2 Kings 18:13-18 — Sennacherib Came Against Judah

Hezekiah was about halfway through his reign in this passage.

- From **v.14**, what did the king of Assyria want to begin to require from Judah as tribute?

- Where did Hezekiah find all of the resources to keep the king of Assyria happy (**v.15-16**)?

But, of course, bargaining with bullies never lasts very long and soon three of Assyria's main officials arrived at Jerusalem and were met by three of Hezekiah's main officials — Eliakim, Shebna and Joah.

*Hezekiah did what was right in the eyes of the LORD,
according to all that David his father had done.*

2 Kings 18:3

Day 2:

✞ READ 2 Kings 18:19-36 — The Voice of the Enemy

The whole focus of this confrontation lies in the word *trust*. When you listed Hezekiah's characteristics yesterday, you couldn't avoid **v.5** *He trusted in the Lord, the God of Israel*. Now the enemy that was facing him was questioning that very trust.

- In your Bible underline the words *trust* or *trusting* (5x) in **v.19-22**.

Assyria's officials misunderstood or misrepresented two things:

- 1) They assumed that Hezekiah had been reaching out to Egypt for help against Assyria — so they claimed Egypt was a *false hope*.
- 2) They wrongly assumed it had been Hezekiah's idea to centralize worship in Jerusalem and that his destruction of the high places displeased the God of Israel and He would also be a *false hope*.

The obvious point they were advancing was, "*all the things you've trusted in will fail.*"

This scenario is something we should think through. The voice of the enemy here sounds a lot like the voice of our *enemy* — Satan himself.

- ◆ He sends people to question our faith — "*On what do you rest your trust?*"
- ◆ He misrepresents our situation (or our actions) and accuses us of really messing things up.
- ◆ And, often when we tell him to simmer down and not be such a loud voice in our head (like Eliakim told the Assyrian officials not to speak in the common language), he increases the volume and continues with the threats.

Can you relate to a battle like this? It usually doesn't end there — there is often a promise of an easier life through compromise.

- What types of things did the Assyrian officials suggest would be waiting for those who '*came over to their side*' in **v.31-32**?

- In what ways has the suggestion been made to you that life would be easier or more enjoyable if you surrendered your trust in the Lord and simply followed the alternatives presented to you?

The case had been made by the enemy that no other gods had been successful for protection against Assyria in the past — Jerusalem would be no different in the present!

- It would have been tempting for the Jewish officials to engage in the conversation, to argue back, but what command had been given by Hezekiah that prevented that?

READ 2 Kings 19:1-7 — Seeking God’s Help

When Hezekiah heard the threat, he did three positive things:

V.1 He went into the _____

V.2 He sent for _____

V.4 He requested that Isaiah _____

When we’re in trouble, those three elements would also serve us well — connecting with the Body of Christ, seeking companionship from those who love the Lord, asking them to join us in prayer.

- Isaiah had already heard from the Lord and gave the servants what message of encouragement (v.6)?

Day 3:

🔗 READ 2 Kings 19:8-20 — Praying to God for Help

Isaiah didn't make it clear exactly *when* Sennacherib would hear the rumor that would cause him to turn from Jerusalem.

- What information was given in **v.9** that *might have turned out to be* the promised rumor?

Despite this information, Sennacherib still taunted Hezekiah about his foolish trust in his God. The threat still existed and this time Hezekiah went to the Lord himself.

*Do not let your God
in whom you trust
deceive you...
2 Kings 19:10*

Write the final portion of **v.14** here:

- What elements of Hezekiah's prayer in **v.15-19** do you find most useful for your own prayer life?

🔗 READ 2 Kings 19:21-37 — Isaiah's Prophecy of God's Favor

It's interesting that Elijah and Elisha's prophetic words were neither long nor poetic. But now the prophecy from Isaiah reads much the same as the book of Isaiah! (Which isn't surprising, right?)

God's response, via Isaiah, is neatly packaged into three parts:

Part One — Regarding the pride and arrogance of Assyria

V.22-23 Who was Assyria accused of mocking and in what way?

V.23-24 In what ways had Assyria taken credit for all her exploits?

V.25-26 How did God set the record straight that **He** was the one behind all of her success?

V.27-28 Who would have the last word, and how?

Part Two — Regarding the way in which Judah would survive

V.29-31 How would the people of Judah have food?

Part Three — Regarding the exit of Sennacherib

V.32-34 How would the king of Assyria depart from Jerusalem?

Finally, the chapter ends by reminding us of God's covenant with His servant David.

- How did God win the final victory over Assyria (**v.35**)?

Day 4:

🔗 READ 2 Kings 20:1-11 — Hezekiah's Illness and Recovery

There is a timestamp here that's not super easy to find, but worth looking for. This chapter is actually a *flashback* to right around the same time that Sennacherib came to trouble Jerusalem. We can figure this out from three sources:

- ◆ 2 Kings 18:2 told us that Hezekiah reigned for 29 years.
- ◆ 2 Kings 20:6 told us that God added **fifteen** years to his life *after* his illness (which was **fourteen** years into his reign).
- ◆ 2 Kings 18:13 told us that Sennacherib came up against the cities of Judah in the **fourteenth** year of King Hezekiah.

So, with all of that information, we realize that this illness must have happened right around the time when Assyria first began to trouble the cities of Israel, but had not yet gotten to Jerusalem.

Now, let's look at the particular incident:

- What did Isaiah initially prophesy about Hezekiah's illness (v.1)?

- What was the basic gist of Hezekiah's prayer in v.3?

It was true. Hezekiah had done more profit for the spiritual life of Judah than any king since David.

This might be a good place for some *extra-credit* reading. **2 Chronicles** gives us a detailed account of all that Hezekiah did. If you have time for additional reading, here is a guide for the passages that give a good picture of what he accomplished:

READ **2 Chronicles 29:3-11, 16-19** (The cleansing of the Temple)

READ **2 Chronicles 29:30-36** (The restoration of Temple worship)

READ **2 Chronicles 30** (The reintroduction of Passover celebration)

READ **2 Chronicles 31** (The organization of the priests)

Back to our current text...

- Describe the generous nature of God that we read about in **v.5-6**:

- What was the physical remedy that the Lord had used for the miraculous healing (**v.7**)?

- What was the miraculous event that Hezekiah asked for as a sign that God's word would happen (**v.8-11**)?

📖 READ 2 Kings 20:12-21 — Hezekiah and Babylon

We haven't even heard of Babylon yet in the Bible, (except that some Babylonians were recently resettled into the lands of the northern tribes after the Israelites were taken to Assyria). Babylon was *not* a threat at the moment, and yet there was a foreshadowing of challenges to come.

- According to **v.13**, how did Hezekiah treat the envoys from Babylon and what did he show them?

- Isaiah prophesied that Babylon would be involved in the future of Judah in what ways (**v.17-18**)?

Day 5:

🔗 READ 2 Kings 21:1-26 — Manasseh and Amon

Judah's King #13, Manasseh.

- List Manasseh under the kings of Judah, along with your assessment of his letter grade.

Manasseh's reign was the longest of any king in Judah and also the most treacherous. What a sad commentary that the best king gave rise to the worst king.

- List a few of the evil things that Manasseh did from **v.3-9**:

- Because of the evil turn that Judah took, what did God declare He would do in **v.12-15**?

- Read **2 Chronicles 33:10-20**. What surprise do you find about the final years of Manasseh's life?

Judah's King #14, Amon.

- List Amon under the kings of Judah, along with your assessment of his letter grade.

From **v.24**, who did the people make king in place of Amon?

This is a surprising temporary reversal of God's previous message regarding the destruction of Judah. Stay tuned for our study on King Josiah, which will be thrilling, but will also produce a sad ending.

Questions for Thought & Discussion


1. Read **2 Kings 18:5** where you find one characteristic of Hezekiah that set him apart from all the other kings. Read **Proverbs 3:5-6**. Discuss why this one characteristic is critical in our lives as well.
2. Trust is often tested by temptation. In **2 Kings 18:30**, the voice of the Rabshakeh parallels the voice of Satan, who deceives and attacks our faith — often by fear. Share any helpful tools you've discovered to maintain your trust in the Lord when tempted to trust in yourself or some other system.
3. Share any aspects of Hezekiah's prayer in **2 Kings 19:14-19** that are applicable to your life today and why.
4. What do you find fundamentally wrong with Hezekiah saying to Isaiah, "*The word of the Lord that you have spoken is good,*" for he thought, "*Why not, if there will be peace and security in my days?*" Has short-sighted thinking ever gotten you into trouble? How?
5. From the narrative in **2 Kings 18-20**, what aspects of Hezekiah's life do you find the most admirable? The most applicable? The most cautionary?

Week Nine — 2 Kings Chapters 22-25

The story of Josiah is one of the most encouraging narratives in the Book of Kings. To witness a young man turn to the Lord, cleanse impurity from the community, and provide his nation with one final opportunity for covenant living, is simply the best.

You may already know that this renewal didn't last long, but the point is that it happened! And that means it could happen again! Let's soak up every aspect of the process and see what sticks in our own lives!

Day 1:

 **READ 2 Kings 22:1-13 — Josiah's Heart for God**

Judah's King #15, Josiah. He was crowned by the people of the land.

- List Josiah under the kings of Judah, along with your assessment of his letter grade.


By the time the king was a young adult, he had sent instructions for an accounting of the available funds in the House of the Lord, followed by an approval for the necessary repairs to be made.

Yes, this is still the same House of the Lord that Solomon built in the opening chapters of the Book of Kings. Over all these years, it had been altered and repaired, stripped of precious metals and rebuilt, neglected and then restored. But this particular remodel produced an interesting discovery.


- What did Hilkiah, the high priest, find during the renovation (v.8)?
- What was King Josiah's response to this find?

In the eighth year of Josiah's reign, while he was yet a boy, he began to seek the God of David his father.

2 Chronicles 34:3

 READ 2 Kings 22:14-20 — Discovering the Word of the Lord

- What surprising person did the priest and the officers turn to for more information about the book of the law (v.14)?
- Give a summary of the word of the Lord that she spoke against Judah in v.15-17.
- Give a summary of the word of the Lord that she spoke on behalf of Josiah in v.18-20.
- What type of encouragement does that give you for repentance and a humble heart in your own life?

 READ 2 Kings 23:21-27 — Celebrating the Passover

In the second half of this chapter we learn about the Passover being observed in a way that it hadn't since the days of the judges. Other kings had intermittently observed the Passover (most notably his grandfather, Hezekiah), but Josiah's celebration and commitment to involve the people outstripped all of them including David himself.

- What was the one final example of Josiah's reforms given in v.24?

We can't be sure why the writer listed these here, but one reason might be that mediums and necromancers had not been introduced into the life of Judah until recently. It was Josiah's father, Manasseh who welcomed them, going completely against the *words of the law that were written in the book that Hilkiah found* (Leviticus 19:31, 20:6, 20:27).

Write the description of Josiah found in v.25:

- List a few ways in which Josiah's life up to this point inspires you:

Day 3:

🌀 READ 2 Kings 23:28-30 — Josiah's Death

In our study of Kings, the final days of Josiah's life are listed rather briefly and matter-of-factly. But there is quite a bit more to the story, so this is one of those rare times when we'll pick up the narrative from **2 Chronicles**.

🌀 READ 2 Chronicles 35:20-27 — Josiah's Sad End

We learn that Neco, King of Egypt, was fighting a battle that had nothing whatsoever to do with Judah or Josiah. For whatever reason, Josiah *went out to meet him*, (meaning he went *out ready for battle*).


- What gracious offer of diplomacy did Neco send to Josiah in **v.21**?

We can't imagine why Josiah didn't listen to this warning — especially since Neco purported to be on a mission from God, *and* the writer corroborated that in **v.22** by telling us that Josiah ***did not listen to the words of Neco from the mouth of God.***

- Josiah seemed completely fixated on fighting with Neco, to the point that he even did what in **v.22**?

Josiah was shot, he was brought to Jerusalem, and he died. It seems like such a dreadful waste of a good king. But, we've often learned through our studies of Samuel and Kings that none of the kings are all bad or all good. Even the ones with a heart after God can surprise us when their human nature rises up. In this case, perhaps Josiah gave way to an unhealthy ambition to achieve something militarily since his only successes had seemed to be in the area of spiritual renewal.

Josiah was well loved; Jeremiah and many others wrote laments about him to be learned and sung by Israel.

 **READ 2 Kings 23:31-37 — Jehoahaz & Jehoiakim**

Judah's King #16, Jehoahaz. Josiah's son was made king by the people of Judah.

- List Jehoahaz under the kings of Judah, along with your assessment of his letter grade.
- In what ways did Pharaoh Neco flex his control during Jehoahaz's brief reign?

Judah's King #17, Jehoiakim. Jehoahaz's brother was made king by Pharaoh Neco. Perhaps Jehoiakim seemed more disposed to collecting and delivering the tribute required by Neco.

- List Jehoiakim under the kings of Judah, along with your assessment of his letter grade.

 **READ 2 Kings 24:1-9 — Introduction of Nebuchadnezzar**

Not only was Egypt wanting tribute from Jehoiakim and from Judah, but now Nebuchadnezzar also wanted Judah to serve him.

- And as if that weren't enough, what other countries and/or territories came against Judah according to **v.2?**

Judah's King #18, Jehoiachin. It's interesting that his mother's name was **Nehushta**. **2 Kings 18** told us that Hezekiah had broken in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made because the people began to worship it. The idol had been called **Nehushtan**. Sounds fairly similar doesn't it?

- List Jehoiachin under the kings of Judah, along with your assessment of his letter grade.

Day 4:

🔗 READ 2 Kings 24:10-20 — Jerusalem Captured

- How did Jehoiachin respond to the siege of Nebuchadnezzar (v.11)?
- Describe the things that were taken from Jerusalem (v.13).
- Describe the people that were taken (v.14-17).
- Who was able to stay in the land (v.14)?

Two very recognizable Bible figures were taken into captivity in Babylon at this same time.

- ◆ Read **Daniel 1:1-2**
- ◆ Read **Ezekiel 1:1-3**

Judah's King #19, Zedekiah. His given name was Mattaniah and he was the third son of Josiah.

- ☐ List Zedekiah under the kings of Judah, along with your assessment of his letter grade.

"Surely this came upon Judah at the command of the Lord, to remove them out of his sight, for the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he had done." 2 Kings 24:3

Day 5:

🔗 READ 2 Kings 25:1-21 — The Captivity of Judah

Much of 1&2 Kings has been difficult reading, but this final chapter in particular is very sobering. We can feel the distress of the common people within the walls of Jerusalem during the siege without any food. We're a bit frustrated with the men of war escaping by night — maybe they had a plan — but it seemed cowardly. Finally, we wish the writer didn't have to tell us about the last thing that Zedekiah saw with his eyes.

- List some of the actions of the Babylonians in **v.9-17** that is very difficult for us to read (especially having studied 1&2 Kings, Part One — Solomon and the House of the Lord).

READ 2 Kings 25:22-30 — Instructions in Exile

Now that only the poorest of the Jews were left behind, and the city was basically leveled, Nebuchadnezzar appointed one of their own to be his governor over Judah.

- Who was this man (v.22)?
- From which town north of Jerusalem did he serve (v.23)?
- What was his primary message to those left in Judah (v.24)?

One can imagine how that wasn't a super popular message.

- Why do you think that might have rubbed people the wrong way?

But faithfulness, wherever they landed, was actually what was on God's heart. Read **Jeremiah 29:1-14** to get an idea of God's message to those who had been taken into Babylon.

- What are the similarities between Gedaliah's message to the remnant and Jeremiah's message to the exiles?

There is no satisfactory ending to the Books of 1&2 Kings. The only satisfaction is found in the above prophecy by Jeremiah that reveals that God had a timestamp set for their captivity.

The good news for Women of the Word is that we've reached the bottom and from here on, the books that we study will have a tone of hope and restoration.

Until our next study — be blessed and trust in the Lord!

Sue

Questions for Thought & Discussion

1. Both Hezekiah and Josiah grew up in homes that had embraced idolatry, yet they made different choices in their own lives. How does this encourage you if you grew up in a home that tolerated or even promoted ungodliness?
2. Concerning Huldah, the prophetess — in what ways does her boldness inspire you? In what ways does her message teach you something about the character of God?
3. Like a small handful of other *good kings*, Josiah immediately set about the task of *temple reforms*. When we hear *reform* we often think of other people who *really need reforming*. Read **1 Corinthians 6:19**. In what area of *your temple* are reforms needed?
4. Discuss how the Lord's message to the exiles in **Jeremiah 29** is good advice for anyone finding themselves in a place they never wanted to be in life.
5. Discuss how the familiar verse **Jeremiah 29:11** makes so much more sense in the context of the ending chapters of 2 Kings. How does it still make sense in your life?

*"The Lord lives, and blessed be my rock,
and exalted be my God, the rock of my salvation!"*

1 Samuel 22:47

REFERENCES

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Women of the Word Bible Studies

The following WOW Bible Studies written by Sue LeBoutillier are available through the **Calvary Chapel Ontario bookstore**, and through our online store at www.ccontario.com.

Old Testament:

- **Genesis** — Divine Design, From Eden to Egypt
- **Exodus** — Divine Deliverance, From Egypt to Sinai
- **Numbers** — The Wilderness Way, From Sinai to the Jordan
- **Joshua** — The Path of Promise, From the Jordan into Canaan
- **Judges** — A Time of Turning
- **Ruth** — Walking with My Redeemer
- **1 Samuel** — The Coming King
- **2 Samuel** — The Reigning King
- **1&2 Kings (Part One)** — Solomon and the House of the Lord
- **1&2 Kings (Part Two)** — Learning from Leaders
- **Jonah** — The Call of Compassion
- **Esther** — When God Works in the Shadows

New Testament:

- **The Way of Jesus** — The Sermon on the Mount from Matthew
- **Simply Jesus** — The “I AMs” of Christ in the Gospel of John
- **Acts** — Walking in the Spirit, The First Days of the Last Days
- **Galatians** — Finding Grace in a Demanding World
- **Ephesians** — Finding Purpose in a Confused World
- **Philippians** — Finding Joy in a Disjointed World
- **Colossians** — Finding Stability in a Changing World
- **Titus** — While We Wait
- **James** — Real Faith for Daily Life
- **1&2 Peter** — Hope, Holiness and Humility in a Hostile World
- **1,2,3 John** — Light, Love and Logic, Lessons from the Apostle John

