

# The Book of 2 Kings



## Part 1 5 Studies in 2 Kings

## Introduction

The two books, 1 & 2 Kings, in the Hebrew Old Testament were one book. It was divided by the Septuagint (Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible) translators. They summarized these books as follows: I The Reign of Solomon; II Division of the Kingdom, and Parallel History of the Two Kingdoms; III Subsequent History of Judah to the Captivity.

1 Kings opens with the Hebrew nation in its glory. 2 Kings closes with the nation in ruin. Together they cover a period of about 400 years, from 1000-600 BC.

## Author

The author is not known. A Jewish tradition says it was Jeremiah. Whoever the author is, he makes frequent reference to state annals and other historical records existent in his day, such as: “The book of the acts of Solomon”; “The book of chronicles of the Kings of Judah”; and “The book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel” (1 Kings 11:41; 14:19, 29; 15:7, 23, 31; 16:5, 14, 27 etc.).

## Brief Outline of 1 & 2 Kings

- |   |                              |
|---|------------------------------|
| 1. The last days of David and Solomon’s Accession     | 1 Kings 1:1 – 1 Kings 2:46   |
| 2. The reign of Solomon                               | 1 Kings 3:1 – 1 Kings 11:43  |
| 3. History of the Divided Kingdom                     | 1 Kings 12:1 – 2 Kings 10:36 |
| 4. History of Judah & Israel to fall of North Kingdom | 2 Kings 11:1 – 2 Kings 17:41 |
| 5. History of Judah to the fall of Jerusalem          | 2 Kings 18:1 – 2 Kings 25:30 |

## Alternative Outline of 1 & 2 Kings

- |                     |                       |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. The Golden Age   | 1 Kings 1-11          |
| 2. The Torn Kingdom | 1 Kings 12-2 Kings 17 |
| 3. The Last Days    | 2 Kings 18-25         |

## Please Note the following:

1. It is not necessary to look up all the Bible cross references listed in a particular question; your Growth Group Leader will summarize these Bible cross references for you.
2. Just a reminder that sometimes in our Growth Groups, people feel comfortable sharing very personal and sensitive things about their lives. This information **MUST BE CONFIDENTIAL and NEVER LEAVE THE GROUP.**

## Study 1 – The Character of the One True God

2 Kings 1:1-18

*(Sermon on 30-July-2023)*

### Before we begin: Summarize 1 Kings

*1 Kings is a book in the Old Testament of the Bible that primarily focuses on the reigns of two significant kings of Israel, **Solomon and his father, David**. The book starts with the death of David and Solomon's ascension to the throne. Under Solomon's rule, Israel experiences a time of great prosperity and wisdom. Solomon builds the magnificent Temple in Jerusalem, solidifying the center of worship for the nation.*

*However, as Solomon ages, he makes unwise decisions and allows foreign influence, which leads to the downfall of his kingdom. After Solomon's death, his son **Rehoboam** takes over, but his heavy-handed policies cause a division within the kingdom. The northern ten tribes break away, forming the Kingdom of Israel, while the remaining tribes establish the Kingdom of Judah in the south.*

*The Northern Kingdom [10 tribes] gets off to a terrible start with King **Jeroboam** starting false religion.*

*Throughout 1 Kings, various kings of both kingdoms are mentioned, each with their unique strengths and weaknesses. The book also introduces the **prophet Elijah**, who confronts and challenges the wickedness and idolatry/worship of false gods of **King Ahab and Queen Jezebel**.*

*The narrative in 1 Kings highlights: the blessings of obedience and consequences of disobedience to God's commandments; the importance of remaining faithful to the covenant, and the role of prophets in guiding the people back to righteousness. It ultimately serves as a historical account of Israel's monarchy, illustrating the impact of leadership and faithfulness on the nation's destiny.*

### Before we begin, from 1 Kings, remind yourself who King Ahab and Jezebel are. Make some notes.

*King Ahab and Jezebel are significant figures in the found in 1 Kings, particularly in chapters 16 to 22. Ahab was the seventh king of Israel and ruled from approximately 869 to 850 BCE. Jezebel was his wife, and she came from the Sidonian city-state of Tyre, a region known for its worship of the pagan god Baal. Ahab, greatly influenced by his wife, Jezebel, is portrayed as one of the most wicked kings of Israel. He allowed the worship of foreign gods, particularly Baal, to*

*spread throughout the kingdom. Ahab's reign is marked by idolatry and moral decline, leading the nation away from the worship of Yahweh, the God of Israel.*

*Jezebel played a prominent role in promoting the worship of Baal and other pagan deities. She used her position and influence to suppress the worship of Yahweh, leading many Israelites astray. She is infamous for her ruthless actions, including orchestrating the murder of Naboth to seize his vineyard for Ahab.*

*The prophet Elijah appears in 1 Kings as a significant figure during the reign of Ahab and Jezebel. He confronts them and challenges the prophets of Baal to a dramatic showdown on Mount Carmel, where Yahweh's power is demonstrated through fire from heaven. Elijah's ministry seeks to call the people back to the true worship of God and denounce the evil practices introduced by Ahab and Jezebel. The story of Ahab and Jezebel in 1 Kings serves as a severe warning about the consequences of turning away from God and following the ways of idolatry and immorality. Their actions ultimately lead to the downfall of the northern kingdom of Israel.*

*We pick up the story in 2 Kings where Ahab is dead and his son, Ahaziah takes the throne...*

### **Read 2 Kings 1:1-2**

1. Locate the Kings mentioned in appendix 1. Who is Ahaziah related to and why is that significant?

**See red circles**

**See 2 Kings 1:51-53:** *Ahaziah son of Ahab became king of Israel in Samaria in the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and he reigned over Israel two years. He did evil in the eyes of the LORD, because he followed the ways of his father and mother and of Jeroboam son of Nebat, who caused Israel to sin. He served and worshiped Baal and aroused the anger of the LORD, the God of Israel, just as his father had done.*

*He was the son of Ahab and followed his father and mother's ways (Ahab and Jezebel) and Jeroboam's ways*

2. Locate the places mentioned in the map on appendix 2. What's the distance from Samaria to Ekron?

**See red underline**

The distance from Samaria to Ekron is 45 miles or 72km

3. **Ponder:** Why would Ahaziah consult Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron? Why send his messengers such a distance?

*Ahaziah has had a serious accident, falling through the lattice of his upper-room and wants to know, from deity, if he will recover from this fall!*

*Remember, Ahaziah came under the influence of his father, Ahab, and his mother Jezebel, who grew up following the Philistine gods.*

*Instead of seeking guidance or help from the God of Israel, Ahaziah sought advice from foreign gods. He sent messengers to Ekron, a city in Philistia, to inquire of Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron, whether he would recover from his injuries. By doing so, Ahaziah showed his allegiance to pagan gods, following in the footsteps of his wicked parents, Ahab and Jezebel.*

*One suggestion for sending the messengers such a distance was that Ahaziah didn't want the people to know how serious his condition was?*

*Sending messengers to Ekron to seek guidance from a pagan deity was a direct violation of God's commandments, which strictly forbade the worship of other gods. This act of idolatry and the refusal to turn to the one true God led to severe consequences for Ahaziah...*

### **Read 2 Kings 1:3-4**

4. What is the prophet Elijah's message and what is the reason for delivering such a message?

*Elijah's message is: "You will not leave the bed you are lying on. You will certainly die!" and the reason is: "Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are going off to consult [a false god] Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron" (repeated in v3, 6, 16). Basically, Elijah is saying 'why go and consult a false god (like Baal-Zebub) when you can consult the One True Living God in Israel already!'*

### **Read 2 Kings 1:5-8**

5. What brings the messengers back to the King so soon?

*The messengers met a man who gave them a message for the King; the message was: "Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are sending messengers to consult Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore, you will not leave the bed you are lying on. You will certainly die!"*

6. How do they describe the "man" they met? Does this description sound familiar? (cf. Matthew 3:4; Mark 1:6)

*They described the “man” as having a garment of hair and a leather belt around his waist.*

*King Ahaziah knows exactly who the “man” is! Elijah the Tishbite!*

*The description is similar to the way John the Baptist is described in the New Testament. John is described as having “the spirit of Elijah” (Luke 1:17).*

*Matthew 3:4 – John’s clothes were made of camel’s hair, and he had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey.*

*Mark 1:6 - John wore clothing made of camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey.*

## **Read 2 Kings 1:9-12**

7. What happens to the two groups of “a captain and fifty men” who go to Elijah? Why?

*Elijah calls down fire from Heaven and consumed the captain and his fifty men!*

8. **Ponder:** Is this a bit harsh?

*At first glance, this incident may seem harsh or severe, but it is important to understand the context and significance of this event within the biblical narrative.*

*Elijah was a prophet of God, and he acted under the authority and direction of Yahweh. The judgment that came upon the captains and their men was not arbitrary but rather a divine response to their rebellion against God and His chosen messenger.*

*The fire from heaven was a visible manifestation of God's power and authority, affirming Elijah's role as a prophet and demonstrating the consequences of opposing God's will. In the biblical context, divine judgments like this were not uncommon, especially in the Old Testament, where God was establishing His authority and guiding the Israelites.*

*Also, the incident served as a warning [and a reminder of Mount Carmel fire – 1 Kings 18] to King Ahaziah and the people of Israel about the consequences of turning away from the one true God and seeking help from false gods. It was a reminder that **God alone is sovereign and deserving of their worship and obedience.***

*While this event may appear severe, it is essential to view it within the broader theological framework of the Bible, where God's judgments are ultimately rooted in justice, holiness, and His desire to lead people back to righteousness.*



*We also need to look at intent. Why did Ahaziah send the captains and men? To inquire of Elijah or to get rid of him?*

### **Read 2 Kings 1:13-15**

9. How is the third captain's approach to Elijah different from the other two captains?

*Unlike the first two captains who displayed arrogance and disrespect towards the prophet Elijah, the third captain approached the situation with humility and reverence. He fell on his knees before the prophet. This act of kneeling showed submission and acknowledgment of Elijah's authority as a prophet of God.*

*The third captain made a respectful plea saying to Elijah "O man of God, please let my life, and the life of these fifty servants of yours, be precious in your sight." The third captain recognized the power and authority of Elijah and sought his mercy, acknowledging that their lives were in Elijah's hands.*

*The third captain's respectful demeanor allowed him and his men to be spared from the same fate that befell the previous groups. This event serves as a lesson on the significance of humility and obedience when encountering God's chosen messengers and the consequences of opposing His will.*

***Surely Ahaziah and Israel are meant to respond to God's anger in the same way as this third captain?***

### **Read 2 Kings 1:16-18**

10. What message did Elijah deliver to the King and what was the result?

*Elijah told the King, he would not recover from the fall, but would certainly die. And Ahaziah did die!*

11. **Ponder:** Why did Ahaziah have to die? What was he guilty of?

*Ahaziah, the king of Israel, had to die because of his guilt in seeking guidance from a foreign god and disregarding the God of Israel. Instead of seeking counsel or help from Yahweh, the God of Israel, Ahaziah sends messengers to inquire of Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron, as to whether he would recover from his injuries.*

*By seeking guidance from a pagan deity, Ahaziah committed an act of idolatry and showed disrespect to the one true God. In the Bible, **seeking counsel from foreign gods was strictly forbidden, as it violated the commandment to have no other gods before Yahweh.***

*Ahaziah's death was a divine judgment for his unfaithfulness and refusal to seek the God of Israel for guidance and healing.*

12. Who succeeded Ahaziah? Why? (cf. 2 Kings 3:1; 8:16). Locate him in appendix 1.

*Joram (aka Jehoram) succeeded Ahaziah.*

*2 Kings 3:1 and 2 Kings 8:16 – both state that Joram/Jehoram was the son of Ahab. Joram succeeded Ahaziah because he had no son (2 Kings 1:17).*

13. Who is King of Judah at the time?

*Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat was the King of Judah at the time.*

14. Why do you think the writer doesn't mention any other details of Ahaziah's reign in verse 18?

*The focus of the writer is the importance of obeying and worshipping the one true God; everything else Ahaziah did is unimportant in comparison to the importance of the true worship and allegiance of Yahweh. **Ahaziah is not the focus of the story; God is! That's the whole point. God must be our focus!***

15. How many times is the phrase "man of God" used in this chapter? What does it mean?

*Five times!*

*The phrase "**man of God**" is a title or designation given to prophets or individuals who hold a special position as **servants of God**. In the context of 2 Kings 1, Elijah is referred to as the "man of God." **Elijah was one of the most prominent and respected prophets in the Bible**, known for his courageous stand for God and his powerful demonstrations of God's authority.*

*Calling someone a "man of God" acknowledges their spiritual authority and connection with the divine. It emphasizes their role as messengers of God and representatives of His will on Earth. Elijah's designation as the "man of God" in these verses highlights his position as a prophet chosen by God to deliver His messages and carry out His plans.*

### **Read Acts 17:22-31**

16. What does the Apostle Paul discover in amongst all the "objects of worship" in Athens?



*As Paul walked around Athens, he found an altar with the inscription: "to **an unknown god**"*

*Paul explains that this unknown God is the God of whom he speaks, who is not confined to temples made by human hands, but in fact the God who made the world and everything in it!*

17. How does Acts 17:22-31 relate to 2 Kings 1:1-18?

*In Acts 17, Paul addresses the Athenians' polytheistic beliefs, teaching them about the one true God. Similarly, in 2 Kings 1, the encounter with Elijah deals with King Ahaziah's act of seeking guidance from a pagan god, Baal-Zebub. Both passages highlight the importance of acknowledging and worshiping the true God, rejecting false gods and idols.*

*In 2 Kings 1, Elijah exercises **God's authority**, calling down fire from heaven as a sign of divine judgment. In Acts 17, Paul speaks about **God's authority** as the Creator and Sustainer of all things. Both passages emphasize the sovereignty and power of God over creation and human affairs.*

*In Acts 17, Paul urges the Athenians to **repent** from their ignorance and turn to the living God. In 2 Kings 1, Elijah's message serves as a warning for King Ahaziah to repent and seek God's guidance instead of turning to idols. Both passages emphasize the importance of repentance and turning away from false beliefs and practices.*

What's the **BIG IDEA** of 2 Kings 1:1-18?

*The significance of acknowledging and obeying the one true God while refraining from turning to false gods and idols.*



If the Old Testament points to Jesus and **Scripture is all about Him** (Luke 24:27), in what ways **2 Kings 1:1-18** point to Jesus?

- a. *Both Elijah and Jesus preach the importance of repentance and turning back to God.*
- b. *Elijah acts as a mediator between God and the people; he delivers God's messages and judgments to the kings of the nation. Jesus is the ultimate mediator between God and humanity.*
- c. *The passage showcases God's power and authority as demonstrated through Elijah's calling down fire from heaven. Jesus, as the Son of God, also displays*

*God's authority through His miracles, teachings, and his ultimate victory over sin and death through His resurrection.*

How does this passage **apply to your life?**

- a. Avoid **idolatry**. Confess anything/anybody that we worship ahead of God. **God requires exclusive loyalty!***
- b. **Heed the roadblocks** against our sin that God sends our way!*
- c. **Obey God's commands** or suffer the consequences of disobedience.*
- d. **Submit to God's authority and sovereignty.***
- e. Be **quick and regular in repenting** of any sin in our lives.*
- f. Be **ambassadors** of Jesus, just as Elijah was an ambassador. Elijah's message was meant to draw people away from sin and back to God. We too should share the Good News of Jesus that leads others to salvation.*

**Share the verse** that had a special meaning to you in this study?

**V3** *But the angel of the LORD said to Elijah the Tishbite, "Go up and meet the messengers of the king of Samaria and ask them, 'Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are going off to consult Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron?'"*

**Finish in prayer:** Ask God to forgive us the idolatry in our lives – anything that we have placed ahead of Him. Ask God to help us recognize the false “gods” and distractions that hinder our relationship with Him.

## Study 2 – Passing the Mantle

2 Kings 2:1-25

*(Sermon on 6-August-2023)*

**Before we begin:** What is a “*mantle*”

*A mantle is literally a cloak or robe worn as an outer garment, especially in ancient and medieval times. The word mantle became figuratively to be used to represent responsibility, duty or authority that is passed on or bestowed upon someone, often in the context of leadership succession!*

### Read 2 Kings 2:1-3

1. Locate **Gilgal, Bethel, Jericho** and **River Jordan** in appendix 2.

*See blue lines and blue arrow!*

2. What is about to happen to Elijah according to verse 1?

*Elijah was about to be taken up to Heaven in a whirlwind.*

3. What do you think Elijah is doing with Elisha in verse 2? What is Elisha’s response?

*Elijah seems to be testing the devotion of Elisha by telling him to stay whilst Elijah himself goes to Bethel. As it was known that Elijah would soon depart to heaven in an unusual way, Elisha wanted to stay as close as possible to his mentor.*

*Elisha would not leave his mentor until God took Elijah away in the dramatic way promised.*

4. Who else knows what is going to happen to Elijah in verse 3? How would they know?

*The company of prophets at Bethel know that the Lord is going to Elijah. They know, either through Elijah informing them or God informing them.*

### Read 2 Kings 2:4-10

5. What do you think Elijah is doing with Elisha in verse 4? What is Elisha’s response?

*Elijah is again testing the devotion of Elisha by telling him to stay whilst Elijah himself goes to Jericho. Elisha would not leave his mentor until God took Elijah away in the dramatic way promised.*

6. Who else knows what is going to happen to Elijah in verse 5? How would they know?

*The company of prophets at Jericho know that the Lord is going to Elijah. They know, either through Elijah informing them or God informing them.*

7. What do you think Elijah is doing with Elisha in verse 6? What is Elisha's response?

*Elijah is again testing the devotion of Elisha by telling him to stay whilst Elijah himself goes to the Jordan. Elisha would not leave his mentor until God took Elijah away in the dramatic way promised.*

8. What miracle occurred in verse 8? What event are you reminded of? (cf. Exodus 14:21; Joshua 3:13ff)

*Elijah took his cloak, rolled it up and struck the water with it. The water divided to the right and to the left, and the two of them crossed over on dry ground.*

*It's a reminder of Moses (with God's help) parting the Red Sea, so that the Israelites could escape the pursuing Pharaoh and his soldiers (Exodus 14:21ff)*

*It's a reminder of the time of Joshua when the River Jordan was parted as soon as the priest stepped foot in the water! (Joshua 3:13ff)*

9. When Elijah asked Elisha what he could do for him before he was taken, what did Elisha ask for? Why is that significant? (cf. Deuteronomy 21:17). What can we learn from Elisha's request?

*Elisha asked Elijah if he could inherit a double portion of Elijah's spirit.*

*In biblical times, when a father passed away, his inheritance was typically divided among his sons. The firstborn son usually received a double portion of the inheritance compared to the other sons (Deuteronomy 21:17). It seems Elisha saw Elijah as a father figure (see v12!)*

*Elisha's request for a double portion of Elijah's spirit can be understood in this context. By asking for a double portion, Elisha was essentially requesting to be recognized as Elijah's spiritual heir and successor. He wanted to carry on Elijah's prophetic ministry with even greater power and authority.*

*It's also commendable that Elisha asked for a spiritual inheritance not a worldly material inheritance!*

10. What does Elijah's response in verse 10 mean?

*Elijah's response to Elisha's request indicates that obtaining a double portion of his spirit would not be an easy task. He tells Elisha that if he sees Elijah being taken away, his request will be granted. This implies that Elisha would need to be a faithful and devoted disciple until the very end, witnessing Elijah's departure and continuing to walk in the same spiritual path.*

### **Read 2 Kings 2:11-13**

11. What happened to Elijah. What symbolism is involved?

*As they were walking along and talking. Suddenly a chariot and horses of fire came between them and Elijah went up in a whirlwind to heaven. These chariots and horsemen symbolized strong protection as well as the supernatural and heavenly forces of God's spiritual presence which were the true safety of Israel and also symbolize the protection that Elijah had during his prophetic ministry.*

12. How did Elisha react? Why?

*When Elisha saw this, he cried out "My Father! My Father!". Elisha acknowledges Elijah as his spiritual mentor and father figure in the prophetic lineage. In ancient Hebrew culture, the relationship between a teacher or mentor and a disciple was often described as a father-son relationship. Elisha also tore his clothes as a sign of grief in losing his mentor and perhaps he felt the weight of his sin and worthiness in taking on this role (somewhat like Isaiah in Isaiah 6).*

13. What fulfillment takes place in verse 12? (cf. 2 Kings 2:10)

*Elisha did witness Elijah being taken as Elijah told him in 2 Kings 2:10.*

14. What "happened" to Elisha in verse 13?

*Elisha picked up Elijah's cloak (aka mantle) – this symbolized the "mantle" being passed from Elijah to Elisha!*

### **Read 2 Kings 2:14-18**

15. What miracle happened in verse 14? What does that prove?

*Elisha asked in v14: "Where now, is the Lord?" and he struck the water with Elijah's cloak and the water divided in two and he crossed over the River Jordan. This proved that Elisha immediately had the same power in ministry that Elijah had.*

16. What do the prophets of Jericho confirm and what do they want to do?

*The prophets of Jericho confirm that the spirit of Elijah is indeed upon Elisha. They want to go and search for Elijah; in case the Spirit of the Lord has picked him up and set him down on some valley or mountain.*

17. How did the search go? What does this prove about Elisha? What lesson is there in this for the prophets of Jericho?

*The search was futile, which is what Elisha had told them before they went. The search proved Elisha a) saw Elijah go to Heaven; b) Elisha knows what he is doing. The prophets of Jericho must now submit to Elisha's authority as they did to Elijah.*

### **Read 2 Kings 2:19-22**

18. What problem is there in the city of Jericho? For background on Jericho's problem, see Joshua 6:26 and 1 Kings 16:34.

*The problem in Jericho is that the city's water supply is causing harm and unproductivity. The water is described as "bad" or "unwholesome," and it is causing the land to be unfruitful, resulting in a lack of vegetation and affecting the livelihood of the inhabitants.*

*Back in Joshua 6:26 – Joshua had imposed an oath which cursed any attempt to rebuild the city of Jericho. Any man who attempts to rebuild the city, it will cost him his firstborn son to lay the foundations and cost him his youngest son to build the gates.*

*Then in 1 Kings 16:34, in Ahab's time, a man named Hiel of Bethel did try to rebuild Jericho and as Joshua's curse predicted, it cost Hiel his firstborn and youngest son, in the rebuild.*

*Now in Elisha's time, the city's water supply is harmful!*

19. How does Elisha fix the problem?



*He threw salt into the spring and called upon the Lord saying “This is what the Lord says: ‘I have healed this water. Never again will it cause death or make the land unproductive.’”*

20. What does the use of “salt” symbolize? (cf. Exodus 15:23-25) **Ponder:** Does it suggest God’s desire for people?

*In ancient times, salt was sometimes associated with purification and healing properties.*

*In Exodus 15:23-25 there is a similar story: The Israelites came across water in a place called Mara (which means bitter) and the water was bitter. Moses threw a piece of wood into the water and the water became fit to drink.*

*God’s desire is for not just the water to be pure but for his people to be spiritually pure and healed!*

### **Read 2 Kings 2:23-25**

21. This is a bizarre story! What justification, if any, is there for the boys being mauled by two bears? (cf. Leviticus 26:21-22)
- a. We have to understand the cultural context. In ancient times, prophets were regarded as authoritative figures who represent God. The use of “boys” is misleading as the Hebrew word can mean young men or youths rather than young children.*
  - b. These youths showed disrespect towards a prophet. They insulted him by calling him “Baldy” and telling him to “get out of here” which might be a reference to go the same way as Elijah; but likely means “keep on going – right out of town Baldy”. And it was a deliberate act, the youths came out of the town to abuse Elisha; he didn’t walk past them!*
  - c. Bethel is the centre of Jeroboam’s bull worship (1 Kings 12:25-33) which started all the false worship problems in Israel, in the first place. And Bethel has been like this for the past 80 or so years!*
  - d. The Lord answered Elisha’s call to bring down a curse; so, the Lord must have thought their offence was severe affront on His prophet and on the Lord Himself.*
  - e. It’s also a demonstration that even though the great prophet Elijah has gone; God is with his successor, Elisha, in equally a most powerful way!*

*It's also worth considering what Leviticus 26:21-22 says:*

<sup>21</sup> *"If you remain hostile toward me and refuse to listen to me, I will multiply your afflictions seven times over, as your sins deserve. <sup>22</sup> I will send wild animals against you, and they will rob you of your children, destroy your cattle and make you so few in number that your roads will be deserted.*

22. **Ponder:** How would this chapter alleviate any anxiety that genuine believers had over the departure of Elijah?

*Genuine believers will see that the spirit of Elijah continues with Elisha, who has been given the mantle. They have also seen God's demonstration of his power and that God's power is also with Elisha.*

23. **Ponder:** In what ways might you be tempted to look to a particular religious leader and their gifts rather than to the living God and His power?

- a. We might follow a leader's "charismatic" personality and captivating speaking ability – rather than focus on the source of their gifts which is ultimately God.*
- b. We might believe everything they say – rather than checking it comes from God's Word.*
- c. We might hero worship and imitate them rather than imitating Christ.*

24. **Read Revelation 2:4-5.** How does this passage relate to 2 Kings 2:1-25?

*In Revelation 2:4-5, Jesus speaks to the Church in Ephesus and describes them as "forsaking the love you had first" – i.e., forsaking their love for God.*

*Jesus warns the church in Ephesus to repent – otherwise, He will come and remove their lampstand!*

*The "lampstand" is a symbolic representation of the church's witness and spiritual vitality. It signifies the church's role as a light-bearer in the world, reflecting God's truth and love to others. By warning them that He will remove their lampstand, Jesus is indicating that their continued existence and effectiveness as a church are contingent upon their repentance and restoration of their initial love and devotion to Him.*

*This is precisely where Israel is at in Elijah/Elisha's time and in fact, throughout most of the period of the Kings of Israel! They haven't repented, and they will have their lampstand removed!*

*It's a stark warning for our nation of Australia, which was built on Christian values and principles; but in these days, God is being forsaken by many! What will happen to our lampstand?*

25. **Read 2 Timothy 2:1-2.** How does this passage relate to 2 Kings 2:1-25?

*The Apostle Paul appeals to his "son" Timothy – to pass on the Gospel message of Jesus to trustworthy people who will also teach others.*

*Elijah was Elisha's mentor and passed the mantle on to him.*

*Paul was Timothy's mentor and passed the mantle on to him AND also encouraged Timothy to pass the mantle (baton) on to others.*

What's the **BIG IDEA** of 2 Kings 2:1-25

**Passing on the mantle OR**

**The culmination of Elijah's ministry and his reward for being faithful**



If the Old Testament points to Jesus and **Scripture is all about Him** (Luke 24:27), in what ways **2 Kings 2:1-25** point to Jesus?

- a. *The passing of Elijah's mantle to Elisha can be seen as a symbol of the transfer of prophetic authority and the continuation of God's work through His chosen servants. In the New Testament, Jesus' ministry can be seen as the fulfillment and ultimate continuation of God's redemptive plan for humanity.*
- b. *Elijah's departure to Heaven in a whirlwind foreshadows Jesus' ascension.*
- c. *The miracles of Elijah and Elisha foreshadow Jesus' miracles and demonstrate God's divine power.*

How does this passage **apply to your life**?

- a. *The importance of seeking a mentor for our Christian walk*
- b. *The importance of us mentoring/discipling others in their Christian walk*
- c. *The importance of passing on the mantle/baton to the next generation*
- d. *The events/miracles of this chapter show God's sovereignty and power of all things*
- e. *God has a plan for each of us. He had a plan for Elijah and Elisha; and He has a plan for you and me!*
- f. *God has the power to heal/restore (e.g., Jericho's water) and the power to curse/punish rebellion (the bears incident)*

*g. The importance of respect for God's representatives and not underestimating the gravity of disrespect towards those who serve the Lord.*

**Share the verse** that had a special meaning to you in this study?

*2 Kings 2:13 - Elisha then picked up Elijah's cloak that had fallen from him and went back and stood on the bank of the Jordan.*

*2 Timothy 2:2 - And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.*

**Finish in prayer:** Ask God to fill us with His Holy Spirit. Confess any pride and arrogance which might hinder us from following God's will. Thank God for His miraculous healing and restoration. Ask God to help us show respect and honour to His messengers and representatives.

## Study 3 – We Three Kings

2 Kings 3:1-27

*(Sermon on 13-August-2023)*

### Read 2 Kings 3:1-3

1. Locate the kings: **Joram (aka Jehoram)** and **Jehoshaphat** in appendix 1

*See red circles in appendix 1*

2. What summary is given of Joram's (aka Jehoram) behaviour? To whom is Joram's sinful behaviour compared to?

*Joram is Ahab's son; he reigned in Samaria in Israel (Northern Kingdom) at the same time that Jehoshaphat was King of Judah; he reigned 12 years.*

*V2 -He did evil in the eyes of the Lord, but not as his father (Ahab) and mother (Jezebel) had done. He got rid of the sacred stone of Baal that his father had made.*

*V3 - Nevertheless he clung to the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat, which he had caused Israel to commit; he did not turn away from them.*

3. Where did this regime of sin originate from? (cf. 1 Kings 12:25-32)

*Joram's sin originated from the regimes of sin introduced by the first king of the Northern Kingdom, Jeroboam; who made two golden calves to worship; one at Bethel and one at Dan. See map in appendix 2. This was a "well-meaning" act by Jeroboam, so that the people of the Northern Kingdom had no reason to travel to Jerusalem (in Southern Kingdom) to worship at the Temple. But what this act did was to introduce the regime of false worship, which became a slippery slope to worship Baal etc.*

### Read 2 Kings 3:4-11

4. What deal had the King of Moab previously had which he reneged on once King Ahab died?

*Mesha, King of Moab, had to pay a tribute/tax (to remain independent of Israel) of 100, 000 lambs and the wool of 100, 000 rams.*

5. How does King Joram react to this? Whose help does he seek?

*Joram mobilized all of Israel in war against the Moabites (v6).*

*Joram also asked King of Judah, Jehoshaphat to go with him to fight against Moab (v7) and Jehoshaphat agreed. Nothing like a common enemy!*

*It seems the King of Edom also joined them (v9)*

6. Locate the places mentioned in this chapter on the map in appendix 2.

*See red circles on the map in appendix 2.*

7. What route do they take and what problem to the three kings encounter?

*They took the route through the Desert of Edom*

*After a seven-day march, there was no more water for themselves or their animals.*

8. How does the King of Israel (Joram) react to this calamity in verse 10?

*He exclaimed: "Has the Lord called us three kings together only to deliver us into the hands of Moab?" We are always quick to blame God for our bad decisions!*

9. In contrast to the King of Israel (Joram), how does the King of Judah (Jehoshaphat) react to the calamity in verse 11?

*In contrast, Jehoshaphat inquires whether there is a prophet through whom they might inquire of the Lord? What a novel idea, asking the Lord's help!*

10. What does it mean that Elisha **"used to pour water on the hands of Elijah"**? (cf. 1 Kings 19:6)

*Jehoshaphat is reminiscing about the time when Elisha served as a disciple and assistant to the prophet Elijah. The act of pouring water on Elijah's hands likely refers to a symbolic or ceremonial action, possibly related to serving or assisting someone of higher status. It's a metaphorical expression used to emphasize Elisha's close relationship with Elijah and his role as a devoted follower and assistant and servant.*

### **Read 2 Kings 3:12-20**

11. How does Elisha initially react to the three Kings request for help? What sways Elisha to help. What does that say about Jehoshaphat?

*Elisha initially reacts (v13) by asking "why involve me? Go to the prophets of your father (Ahab) and the prophets of your mother (Jezebel)". In other words, go and consult your false prophets!*

*Elisha is swayed to help because (v14) of the respect he has for the King of Jehoshaphat. This suggests that Jehoshaphat was a good and godly King (as per chart in appendix 1).*

12. What's significant in the use of a harpist in verse 15



*The request for a musician to play a musical instrument, such as a harp, was a common practice in the ancient world. Music was believed to have a soothing and inspiring effect on the mind and spirit, and it could create an atmosphere conducive to receiving divine inspiration.*

*The music likely helped Elisha focus his thoughts and open himself to receiving the message from God.*

13. What prophecy does Elisha give in verses 16 to 19?

*The valley will be filled with pools of water (v16) even though there will be no wind or rain; and there will be enough for them and the animals to drink (v17).*

*It maybe they had to dig ditches (KJV – v16) for the water to be captured in pools.*

*Note: filling the ground with pools of water was a simple matter for God; and He wanted to give them more than that; so, He promised victory over the Moabites!*

*God will also deliver Moab into their hands (v18)*

*They will also overthrow every fortified city and major town; cut down every good tree; stop springs and ruin every good field with stones (v19)*

14. What was the outcome the next morning, in verse 20?

*The next morning, at the time for offering sacrifice – water was flowing from the direction of Edom and the land was filled with water; just as the Lord had promised!*

### **Read 2 Kings 3:21-27**

15. What double fulfilment did the waters promised by God achieve both positively for the three kings and negatively for the Moabites?

*For the three kings (positively): the waters provided the three kings with enough water to drink and they were ready to face the Moabites (who were tricked into thinking the water was full of blood – see below). Thus, the armies of the three kings were able to defeat the Moabites and destroy the cities and towns as God had promised.*

*For the Moabites (negatively): the sun shining on the pools of water made the water look red, like blood; and they thought the three kings had fought and slaughtered each other; so, they went to plunder the armies of the three kings.*

16. **Ponder:** You might be feeling upset with God for allowing this idolatrous rascal Joram to enjoy the benefits of victory. Why is Joram afforded such grace? For the answer, see v14? Whose ancestor is Jehoshaphat? Whose ancestor allows us to receive similar victorious benefits?

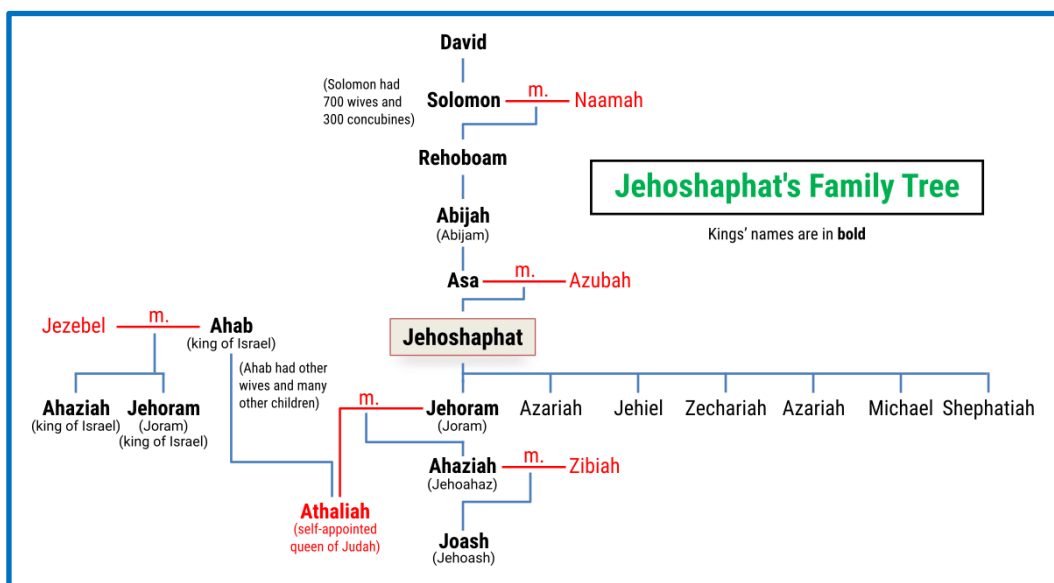
## Jehoshaphat is King David's ancestor

*God had promised to keep David's lamp lit*

*See 1 Kings 15:4 - Nevertheless, for David's sake the LORD his God gave him a lamp in Jerusalem by raising up a son to succeed him and by making Jerusalem strong.*

*See 2 Kings 8:19 - Nevertheless, for the sake of his servant David, the LORD was not willing to destroy Judah. He had promised to maintain a lamp for David and his descendants forever.*

*Jesus, David's ancestor gives us victorious benefits – by showing us grace – and giving us an escape from our sin – with forgiveness; and giving us an escape from death – with eternal life!*



17. What bizarre thing does the King of Moab do in verses 26-27? Why?  
*He first tried to break through against the King of Edom with 700 swordsmen and when that fails, he took his firstborn son, who was to succeed him as king and offered him as a sacrifice on the city wall.*

## Why?

*The king of Moab's decision to sacrifice his firstborn son was likely an act of desperation and a last-resort attempt to invoke divine favor or intervention on behalf of his nation during the intense battle against the allied armies. It's*

important to note that the Bible does not explicitly state the exact reasons behind this action, but historical and cultural context can provide some insight.

In some ancient cultures, including those in the region where Moab was located, human sacrifice was practiced as a way to appease deities or seek their favor in times of crisis or war. The sacrifice of a royal heir, such as the king's firstborn son, **might have been seen as a powerful and significant offering to demonstrate the king's devotion and commitment to the gods.**

In desperation, the king of Moab might have believed that offering his own son as a sacrifice **could somehow turn the tide of the battle and save his people from defeat.**

Sacrificing the firstborn son, who was supposed to be the heir to the throne, **could have been viewed as a drastic act of surrender and submission to a higher power.** It might have been seen as an attempt to make a significant personal sacrifice in exchange for divine intervention.

The act of sacrificing the king's own son **could also have been intended to shock and demoralize the opposing forces, leading them to question their own resolve and the righteousness of their cause.**

The radical determination of the king of Moab convinced the kings of Israel, Judah, and Edom that they could not completely defeat Moab. They left content with their near-complete victory.

*“Sickened by the maddened spectacle of senseless human sacrifice, the allies lifted the siege and returned to their homes.” (Patterson and Austel)*

*Alternative view: after seeing such a great and terrible display of human sacrifice, this most likely galvanized the Moabites into fighting even harder against Israel, causing Israel to withdraw. After seeing the king's son killed, they fought even more fiercely against Israel.*

18. What lesson are Israel meant to learn from the pagan worship of v27? (cf. Deuteronomy 4:7)

*Unlike the Moabites; Israel does have a God who is so near to them at all times and they can pray to Him; and He does listen; and He does answer!*

*The message to Israel is: “Israel, do you see where pagans go in their desperation? Do you realize, Israel, the treasure you have in YHWH, the one true God, who lives*

*and hears and speaks and delivers without bribery? Israel, you never need to resort to what the King of Moab is doing!"*

19. **Read Psalm 1.** How does this passage relate to 2 Kings 3:1-27?

*Psalm 1 emphasizes **the importance of making righteous choices and finding delight in God's law**. This can be seen in contrast to **the desperate and misguided choices of the Moabite king in 2 Kings 3:1-27**, who resorts to human sacrifice in his desperation.*

*The Moabite king's action in 2 Kings 3:1-27 has dire consequences, whereas Psalm 1 speaks of blessings and prosperity for those who follow the ways of righteousness. This contrast **highlights the outcomes of different choices and actions**.*

*Psalm 1 underscores the idea of relying on God's wisdom and teachings, while the events of 2 Kings 3 can be seen as a cautionary tale against relying on desperate and questionable measures instead of trusting in God's providence.*

20. **Read Matthew 6:25-34.** How does this passage relate to 2 Kings 3:1-27?

*Jehoshaphat (instead of worrying about the lack of water) trusted in God's provision and suggested seeking the word from the prophet! In contrast Joram blamed God for the calamity; and the King of Moab resorted to a desperate sacrifice to his false god!*

21. **Read Matthew 7:7-12.** How does this passage relate to 2 Kings 3:1-27?

*In Matthew 7:7-12, Jesus encourages his followers to ask, seek, and knock in prayer. This aligns with the theme of **seeking divine guidance** that is present in the story of 2 Kings 3, where Elisha is consulted for guidance in a time of conflict.*

*In Matthew 7, Jesus teaches that **God responds to sincere and earnest requests**. This can be contrasted with the Moabite king's desperate and misguided act of sacrificing his son in 2 Kings 3, which did not lead to a favorable outcome.*

*The "Golden Rule" in Matthew 7:12 (treating others as you would like to be treated) underscores the importance of ethical behavior and kindness. We could perhaps **reflect on the choices made by the various parties involved and their treatment of one another during the conflict**.*

*In Matthew 7, Jesus encourages his followers **to have faith in God's response to their prayers**. The events of 2 Kings 3 can be examined in terms of the trust and faith demonstrated by the different parties involved.*

What's the **BIG IDEA** of **2 Kings 3:1-27**

***Our hope is in nothing else but the one true God and His Word!***



If the Old Testament points to Jesus and **Scripture is all about Him** (Luke 24:27), in what ways **2 Kings 3:1-27** point to Jesus?

- a. *Joram is granted grace – which by definition is undeserved. We too are granted the grace of our Lord Jesus!*
- b. *Jehoshaphat consulted the man of God, Elisha, because Elisha had God's Word. We have God's Word – Jesus – the Word made flesh!*
- c. *Jehoshaphat is a descendant of King David – which points to a greater descendant of David; our Lord Jesus.*
- d. *The King of Edom trusting in the sacrifice of the blood his firstborn son. We only need to trust in the blood of God's only son!*
- e. *The pools of water that God provided to save the 3 Kings and their soldiers from dying of thirst remind us of the living water that Jesus gives us!*

How does this passage **apply to your life?**

- a. *Being like Joram and saying "we're not as bad as we could be" is still not good enough! Anything less than 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> commandment worship just won't cut it!*
- b. *Don't rush in to something without praying, without consulting God and His Word.*
- c. *Sometimes we blame God (like Joram) when we make wrong choices and are surprised, they don't work out!*
- d. *Be careful that we're not like Joram, only interested in God to escape trouble but not interested in God when it comes to follow His ways!*
- e. *Be careful we don't quote the sovereignty of God just to excuse or accuse but never quote His sovereignty in worship and adoration!*
- f. *Where do we turn to in times of crisis? To God and His Holy Word! Ask, seek and knock!*
- g. *Is God our first port of call or our last resort?*
- h. *God typically doesn't just address the immediate dilemma but does more than we ask (John 1:16 – grace upon grace and Ephesians 3:20 – He can do immeasurably more than we ask or imagine...)*

- i. The soldiers had to dig ditches for the water to pool. God requires us to do or provide what we can (like the loaves and fish) but He does the rest!*
- j. Don't complain too much about how unfair it is that the wicked Joram received grace. We only receive any grace because one of David's descendants, Jesus, stands in front of us and God sees us as not guilty of our sins*
- k. Do we realize the treasure we have in YHWH, the one true God, who lives and hears and speaks and delivers without bribery? We never need to resort to what the King of Moab is doing and turn elsewhere for help!"*
- l. Are we trusting only in the blood of Jesus?*

**Share the verse** that had a special meaning to you in this study?

2 Kings 3:18 - This is an **easy thing** in the eyes of the LORD; he will also deliver Moab into your hands.

**Finish in prayer:** Confess sometimes we rely on our own strategies rather than seeking God's direction and help. Pray for faith that persists in asking, seeking and knocking, confident that God is always good and loving. Give thanks to God for the victories in our lives.



## Study 4 – Triumphant Over Debt and Death

2 Kings 4:1-37

*(Sermon on 20-August-2023)*

### Read 2 Kings 4:1-7

1. What double desperation is the widow in? What are we told about her husband? Why are we told that?

*The woman had lost her husband who had died and she was on the brink of bankruptcy and her creditor was about to take her sons.*

*We are told her husband revered the Lord. We are told that because her husband was swimming against the tide of the false religion of the day, and surely that counts for something; surely God will help. This is what she implied.*

2. What were the cultural and social implications of being a widow in that time?

*As a widow she has lost the protection of her husband and is financially dependent on the support of her family. Her sons are her source of income; and now they are being taken too. And the sons would remain slaves until the next Jubilee Year (50<sup>th</sup> year)*

3. When Elisha offers to help, what does the widow say?

*She explains that she only has a small jar of olive oil.*

4. What is required of the widow in the miracle that takes place?

*She is told “don’t ask for just a few” – she is to have great expectations.*

*The widow supplies what she has – just like Jesus’ miracle in feeding the 5000 – the 5 loaves and 2 fish are supplied and Jesus does the miracle.*

*The widow must collect empty jars; as many as she can. As long as they are jars, the miracle continues. This required faith on the part of the woman; and she might face awkward question but she was to do as Elisha said.*

5. Why the secrecy, “behind closed doors”? (See also v33; cf. Matthew 6:1-6)

*Sometimes God’s staggering goodness is to be kept to oneself and not made public as it can become an occasion of pride. God is to get the glory and our ego does not have to be stroked. The Sermon on the Mount says “don’t let your left hand know what your right hand is doing” and “when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father...”*

6. The miracle of provision continued as long as there were available jars. What does this teach us about God's abundance and the role of our faith in receiving blessings?

*Her faith and the accumulation of empty jars determines the result.*

*God pulls people into His process and allows them to take part in His miracle by requiring faith and obedience.*

7. In what way must we mimic Elisha's actions here?

*Elisha showed the widow compassion and empathy. He was willing to listen to the widow's plight and respond with compassion. We can strive to be empathetic and compassionate to those in need around us.*

*Also, Elisha, involves the widow in helping herself. He does not do everything for her.*

8. What three commands does Elisha (aka the man of God) give the widow in verse 7?

*Elisha gives the woman 3 commands: sell, pay and live.*

9. From verse 7, how much did God supply? (cf. John 10:10; Ephesians 3:20-21)  
*God supplied enough to pay off her debts and enough for the widow and sons to live off.*

*John 10:10 – I have come that they may **have life, and have it to the full.***

*Ephesians 3:20-21 - Now to him who is **able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine**, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.*

10. **Ponder:** Why does God put this story of this widow in His Word?

*This shows that the needs of desperate people matter to Him. Our problems, needs, circumstances matter to him. The needs of this poor widow matter just as much as the kings of Israel. God cares about the details of our lives!*

11. **Ponder:** What miracle of Elijah's is similar to this one in 2 Kings 4:1-7? (cf. 1 Kings 17:8-16). What are the similarities?

*Both stories have: a widow in dire need; a prophet who intervenes; the widow is required to do something when instructed by the prophet; God miraculously multiplies a meagre amount into plenty; requires faith and obedience; a*

*demonstration of God's power; and are powerful testimonies to God's faithfulness and provision.*

12. **Ponder:** What miracle of Jesus is similar to this one in 2 Kings 4:1-7? (cf. Matthew 14:13-21, Mark 6:30-44, Luke 9:10-17, and John 6:1-15). What are the similarities?

*The feeding of the 5,000.*

*The miracles are similar in that: there is a multiplication of a meagre amount into plenty; miraculous provision from God; faith and obedience are required; compassion for those in need; a demonstration of God's power; and scarcity is turned into abundance (there is some leftover).*

### **Read 2 Kings 4:8-17**

13. Locate Shunem on the map in appendix 2.

*See green line.*

14. What kindness is Elisha shown in Shunem? By whom? (cf. Matthew 10:41 and Romans 12:13)

*A well to do woman shows kindness to Elisha by giving him a meal and offering him a room to stay in whenever he comes to Shunem.*

*Matthew 10:41 – Whoever welcomes a prophet as a prophet will receive a prophet's reward...*

*Romans 12:13 - Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.*

15. In wanting to show thanks to the Shunammite, what does Elisha discover?

*He discovers she has no son and her husband is old.*

16. What promise does Elisha make in v16?

*About this time next year, she will hold a son in her arms.*

17. How does the woman react to this promise?

*She asks Elisha not to mislead her!*

18. Is the promise fulfilled?

*Yes, the woman became pregnant and the following year have birth to a son, just as Elisha had said.*

### **Read 2 Kings 4:18-37**

19. What happens to the boy when he grows up?

*When he grew up, he became unwell and cried out to his father that his head hurt (v19). The boy was brought to his mum, but he died and they laid him on the man of God's (Elisha) bed.*

20. What does the woman plan to do in verse 22? Why?

*She wants to go to the man of God (Elisha). She had faith that the man of God (Elisha) could help – even by raising her son from the dead! She goes to God (through God's representative) in her time of need.*

21. What objection does her husband raise in verse 23? Why? (cf. Leviticus 23:3; Numbers 28:11 and Amos 8:5)

*The husband objects that it is not a New Moon or a Sabbath.*

*Leviticus 23:3 – The Sabbath was the day for the Lord – the objection is the widow is going to the man of God and it is not the Sabbath*

*Numbers 28:11 – At the beginning of a new month (new moon) offerings were made.*

*Amos 8:5 – In Amos' time still, the New Moon and Sabbath were kept.*

*What these verses plus the husband's objection tell us is that faithful people were accustomed to meeting at the Prophet's house for worship. Especially in the time of Elijah and Elisha so that they could nurture a believing remnant in a nation that was predominately worshipping the false god, Baal.*

*It's like the husband is saying "why are you going to church; it's not Sunday?"*

22. How does Elisha react to the news from the woman?

*Elisha tells his servant, Gehazi, to go and lay his staff on the boy's face*

23. What faith does the woman show?

*She will not leave Elisha's side. Her faith is in him alone (as the man of God) to help.*

24. Why can't Elisha's servant, Gehazi heal the boy?

*It's likely the healing didn't happen because the woman connected the healing to the presence of Elisha rather than to him telling his servant to go. If the woman had been game enough to leave Elisha and go back with the servant, it's likely the miracle would have happened. She needed to trust God's Word through Elisha – rather than trusting in Elisha alone.*

*It seems that Elisha's staff is not enough – the prayers and presence of Elisha is required.*

25. How did Elisha heal the boy? (cf. Acts 20:10)

*He prayed (v33).*

*Then he lay on the boy – mouth to mouth – eyes to eyes – hands to hands (strange CPR!) The boy grew warm. Then he repeated this and the boy sneezed 7 times and opened his eyes!*

*The Apostle Paul did a similar thing to Eutychus when he fell out of a third story window! (Acts 20:10)*

26. How did the woman react to the news? (cf. Hebrews 11:35)

*She fell at Elisha's feet and bowed to the ground. Then she took her son and went out.*

*Hebrews 11:35 – says it is by their faith – women in the Bible received back their dead, raised to life again!*

27. **Ponder:** What miracle of Elijah's is similar to this one in 2 Kings 4:8-37? (cf. 1 Kings 17:17-24). What are the similarities?

*The two miracles are similar in that: there is a death of a child; a prophet intervenes; mothers who in desperate need; there is physical contact and prayer for the dead children; God's intervention; a miraculous restoration; and a demonstration of God's amazing power.*

28. **Ponder:** What miracle of Jesus is similar to this one in 2 Kings 4:8-37? (cf. Matthew 9:18-26, Mark 5:22-43, Luke 8:41-56). What are the similarities?

*The raising of the synagogue leader, Jairus', daughter!*

*In both miracles: a child is raised to life; the parents are in desperate need; God (through Elisha and Jesus) intervenes; involves praying/speaking of God's Word; the miracles are witnessed; both parents show faith; and grief turns to joy!*

29. **Read 1 Corinthians 15:55-57.** How does this passage relate to 2 Kings 4:1-37?

*In 2 Kings 4 – death does not get victory; God intervenes and allows the widow’s son to be raised to life. Because of Jesus, death does not have the victory. Jesus has conquered our death; we too will be raised from the dead, because of Jesus’ resurrection.*

**See also Luke 7:11-17 – the widow of Nain**

What’s the **BIG IDEA** of 2 Kings 4:1-37

***God has power over debt and death [all things]***



If the Old Testament points to Jesus and **Scripture is all about Him** (Luke 24:27), in what ways **2 Kings 4:1-37** point to Jesus?

- a. *The miracle of the oil – reminds us of Jesus’ miracle in feeding 4000 and 5000.*
- b. *The miracle of raising the woman’s son – reminds us of the miracles of raising Jairus’ daughter, the widow of Nain’s son and Lazarus*
- c. *The miracle of raising the woman’s son – reminds us of Jesus’ resurrection*
- d. *The compassion Elisha shows – reminds of Jesus’ compassion*
- e. *Elisha, as a man of God, is a “type of Christ”*

How does this passage **apply to your life**?

- a. *Like the widow in debt, we must be persistent in prayer and seek God’s help.*
- b. *Like the widow in debt, we must have faith and obedience.*
- c. *Like the widow in debt and Elisha, we must trust in God’s provision.*
- d. *Like Elisha, we must show compassion and empathy.*
- e. *God often gives us immeasurably more than we ask for.*
- f. *God cares about the details of our lives.*
- g. *We must go to God even when God’s goodness seems to have turned bad.*
- h. *Like the Shunammite woman, we must show generosity and kindness*
- i. *Trust in God and His Word, not the messenger!*



- j. Like Elisha, we must be faithful in prayer and intercession for others*
- k. God's timing is perfect in all things*
- l. Because of Jesus, we do not have to be concerned about death. Jesus is victorious over death and because of Him, we have that same victory!*
- m. Not even death can separate us from the love of God!*

**Share the verse** that had a special meaning to you in this study?

*<sup>36</sup> Elisha summoned Gehazi and said, "Call the Shunammite." And he did. When she came, he said, "Take your son."*

**Finish in prayer:** Thank God that He is our ever-present help in times of need. Thank God for His unwavering love and compassion for His people. Ask God to strengthen our faith so that we may believe in His power even over death, through Jesus' resurrection.

## Study 5 – Triumphant Over Danger and Deficiency

2 Kings 4:38-44

*(Sermon on 27-August-2023)*

### Read 2 Kings 4:38-41

1. Locate **Gilgal** on the map in appendix 2.

**Blue line – south-east of Jericho**

2. What's the problem in the region of Gilgal?

*There was a famine in that region.*

*The famine most likely evidence of God's judgment on Israel (Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28).*

*So, Elisha told his servant to cook some stew for the company of prophets.*

3. What are gourds in v39?

*Gourd is occasionally used to describe crop plants in the family Cucurbitaceae, like pumpkins, cucumbers, squash, luffa, and melons.*

*In Hebrew, the word means: "wild cucumber".*

*One commentator suggests the gourd can act as a strong laxative and a large quantity could be fatal!*

4. What's wrong with the stew and why would it be important not to waste the stew?

*When the prophets ate the stew, it tasted terrible and they cried out "there's death in the pot". It was inedible.*

*It's important not to waste the stew because there is a famine in the region, and ingredients of any kind were scarce and they could not afford to be wasting food.*

5. What does Elisha propose to fix the stew?

*He proposed putting flour in the stew to fix it.*

6. Ponder: What spiritual lesson is there in the statement "**And there was nothing harmful in the pot**" in verse 41?

*a. It is always helpful to have a "physical" sign accompany a miracle. Like Moses putting a stick in the water to get rid of the bitterness (Exodus 15:25) and like Elisha putting salt in the bad water supply in Jericho (2 Kings 2:21).*

- b. The gourds added to the stew were harmful and tainted the whole pot. Similarly, we should strive to keep our thoughts, intentions and actions pure to avoid negative consequences.*
- c. The flour added to the stew – shows God’s desire for us to be cleansed and pure.*

7. Share a time when your intentions were good and yet it turned out badly. How did God intervene in that situation?

*At Friday Jaffa a few years ago, we decided to place little coloured stones with small messages on, in Canton Beach Sensory Park. The idea was that children playing in the park, would pick up the coloured stones and read a message inviting them to come to Jaffa. The theme for the night was “share the love”.*

*The next day, our website received an abusive message from a lady who accused us of polluting the lake and that all our stones with the laminated messages were in the waterways.*

*A few of us in the Jaffa team were horrified that our good intentions and be perceived so negatively.*

*The lady even reported us to “Dob in a Dumper” and I received a phone call from the government authorities!*

*Praise God, the fellow I spoke to was very understanding and saw the good intentions and perceived the lady to be a wowser!*

*However, it was a distressing time for some of our Jaffa team.*

8. **Ponder:** Why is it helpful to have a visible sign accompany the miracle? (cf. Mark 7:31-37)

*a) It shows something significant is going on; b) it is an aid to our memory of the incident later.*

9. **Ponder:** We might think that we are way more sophisticated than in Elisha’s day, but Jesus has left us signs too, what are they? (cf. Matthew 28:19 and Luke 22:19-20)

*a. The water of baptism*

*b. The bread symbolizing Jesus’ body broken and the wine symbolizing Jesus’ blood poured out for us!*

10. **Read Isaiah 11:6-9.** How does this passage relate to 2 Kings 4:38-41?

*Both passages contain imagery of **transformation**; in Isaiah, the animals which are normally predators coexist with prey peacefully; and harm/danger is removed. Similarly, harm/danger is removed from the stew.*

*Both passages show **restoration** – animal kingdom is restored to a state of peace – and the stew is restored to being edible.*

*Both passages show **God's intervention and provision**.*

**11. Read Isaiah 65:17-25.** How does this passage relate to 2 Kings 4:38-41?

*Both passages convey **a promise of renewal and transformation**. Isaiah speaks of a new heaven and a new earth where sorrow and crying will be no more. In 2 Kings, Elisha's intervention transforms the poisonous stew into something safe to eat.*

*Both passages touch on the **restoration of creation**. Isaiah envisions a world where even the animal kingdom coexists harmoniously, mirroring the transformation of the stew in 2 Kings.*

*In both passages, there is a sense of **divine intervention**. Isaiah's prophecy speaks of God's creative power in bringing about a new reality. In 2 Kings, Elisha's intervention demonstrates God's providential care and the ability to rectify harmful situations.*

**12. Read Matthew 15:32-39 and Mark 8:1-10.** How do these passages relate to 2 Kings 4:38-41?

*In the Old Testament/New Testament (NT) passages there is **a need for food**. In 2 Kings there is a famine and in the NT passages there is a large crowd (4000) with nothing to eat.*

*In both instances, there is a **miraculous divine intervention**, where **a shortage is turned into abundance**.*

*In both instances, Elisha and Jesus show **compassion and care**.*

**Read 2 Kings 4:42-44**

**13.** Locate **Baal Shalishah** on the map in appendix 2.

**Green line, just below Samaria.**

**14.** What does the man from Baal Shalishah bring to Elisha? Why?

*He brings twenty barley loaves baked from the first ripe grain, along with some heads of new grain. Why? To feed the people. Remember it is a famine*

15. What's significant about the barley bread being baked from the first ripe grain? (cf. Exodus 23:19; Leviticus 23:20 and Numbers 18:12-13 and Deuteronomy 18:4-5)

**Exodus 23:19** – *“Bring the best of the **firstfruits** of your soil to the house of the LORD your God.*

**Leviticus 23:20** – *The priest is to wave the two lambs before the LORD as a wave offering, together with the bread of the **firstfruits**. They are a sacred offering to the LORD for the priest.*

**Numbers 18:12-13** – <sup>12</sup> *“I give you all the finest olive oil and all the finest new wine and grain they give the LORD as the **firstfruits** of their harvest. <sup>13</sup> All the land's **firstfruits** that they bring to the LORD will be yours. Everyone in your household who is ceremonially clean may eat it.*

**Deuteronomy 18:4-5** - **4** *You are to give them the **firstfruits** of your grain, new wine and olive oil, and the first wool from the shearing of your sheep, for the Lord your God has chosen them and their descendants out of all your tribes to stand and minister in the Lord's name always.*

*These passages all speak of giving God and His appointed servants the firstfruits of the harvest. The last two references specify the firstfruits should go to the priests, but the man brings them to Elisha. This is because the priesthood was corrupt, as they had allowed Baal worship. So, the man brought them to Elisha as the one true representative of God in the land!*

16. How does Elisha's servant's initial doubt about the sufficiency of the twenty barley loaves reflect a common human response when facing challenging situations?

*The servant's reaction is understandable. In human terms, there is not enough food to feed 100 men! But we limit God and His provision?*

17. How is the miracle achieved this time (no visible sign like salt or flour or stretching oneself on top of a corpse) in verses 42b and 43b?

*The miracle is achieved by “speaking”. At Creation, God just spoke. In this miracle and some of the miracles of Jesus, often words are used as a matter of “Re-creation”.*

*V42b = “Give it to the people to eat” Elisha said.*

*V43b = “They will eat and have some left over”*

18. How do we know the miracle would happen? (v43b)

*Because the Lord said "They will eat and have some left over!". See also v44!*

19. What's significant in there being leftovers?

*God is able to do immeasurably more than we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us (Ephesians 3:20)*

20. **Read Deuteronomy 8:2-3.** How does this passage relate to 2 Kings 4:42-44?

*Deuteronomy 8:2-3 reminds the Israelites that God provided them daily manna (bread) in the wilderness. This was to teach them that 'man does not live by bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God' – and it was the 'word of God' that said the loaves would be sufficient for the 100 men in 2 Kings 4:42-44. God provides what we "need", not necessarily what we "want".*

21. **Read John 6:1-15.** How does this passage relate to 2 Kings 4:42-44?

*In both passages:*

- *There is a shortage of food – but in Jesus' case a greater shortage as there is a larger crowd to feed!*
- *There are some loaves available but not enough – in 2 Kings there are 20 loaves and in Jesus' case there are 5 loaves and 2 fish which a boy has with him!*
- *There is a miraculous provision of food – in Jesus' case a greater provision because there is a larger crowd to feed.*
- *There are leftovers – in Jesus' case 12 baskets*
- *There is a test of faith in both stories. Elisha's servant's doubt and faith are tested and Philip's doubt and faith are tested.*

22. **Read John 6:35-40.** How does this passage relate to 2 Kings 4:42-44?

*Both passages involve the concept of bread as sustenance. In 2 Kings the story is purely physical sustenance; but Jesus goes further than physical sustenance; He says that He is the "bread of life" that provides spiritual eternal sustenance leading to eternal life in Heaven, for all who trust in Him; they will never be spiritually hungry or thirsty!*

*Both passages speak of God's provision.*

*Both passages require the people involved to have faith in God without limiting Him! Nothing is impossible for Him! God is in the miracle business!*



## What's the **BIG IDEA** of 2 Kings 4:38-44

### God's Provision over Danger and Deficiency



If the Old Testament points to Jesus and **Scripture is all about Him** (Luke 24:27), in what ways **2 Kings 4:38-44** point to Jesus?

- a. The flour removed harm from the stew. Jesus' death and resurrection remove the harm of sin and death.
- b. The miracles of Elisha are a foreshadowing (in a lesser degree) of the miracles of Jesus!
- c. Jesus is the bread of life – leading to eternal life!

How does this passage **apply to your life**?

- a. *God cares about the details – even a ruined stew in a famine. Notice the “daily bread” is the first petition in the Lord’s Prayer. Jesus understands our needs!*
- b. *Outward symbols often accompany spiritual meanings. We have “water” for baptism and “bread and wine” for the Lord’s Supper. God gives us pegs on which to hang the memory of his works!*
- c. *God does not allow our efforts to derail His kingdom work.*
- d. *How do we get rid of the poison in the world?*

“There is death in the pot; how is the Church to meet it? I believe it is to imitate Elisha. We need not attempt to get the wild gourds out of the pot; they are cut too small, and are too cunningly mixed up; they have entered too closely into the whole mass of teaching to be removed. Who shall extract the leaven from the leavened loaf? What then? We must look to God for help, and use the means indicated here. ‘Bring me.’ Good wholesome food was cast into the poisonous stuff, and by God’s gracious working it killed the poison; and the Church must cast the blessed gospel of the grace of God into the poisoned pottage, and false doctrine will not be able to destroy men’s souls as it now does.” (Spurgeon)

- e. *Jesus removes the danger of sin and death*
- f. *Sometimes we can limit God and limit His provision!*
- g. *Just like in Israel, our nation has a remnant of faithful believers. It’s often refreshing when we find a fellow Christian in an unlikely place.*
- h. *Whatever God promises will be so. We can stand beside the manna-seeking Israelites and say “I will eat today, if I eat, because God has decided that I will have enough’. God provides what we “need”, not necessarily what we “want”.*
- i. *Jesus is the bread of life – giving eternal life to all who trust in Him.*

*j. Jesus is not stymied or frustrated by our own deficiencies or those deficiencies we bring to Him. Our deficiency is no crisis for Jesus. He is a more than adequate Saviour.*

**Share the verse** that had a special meaning to you in this study?

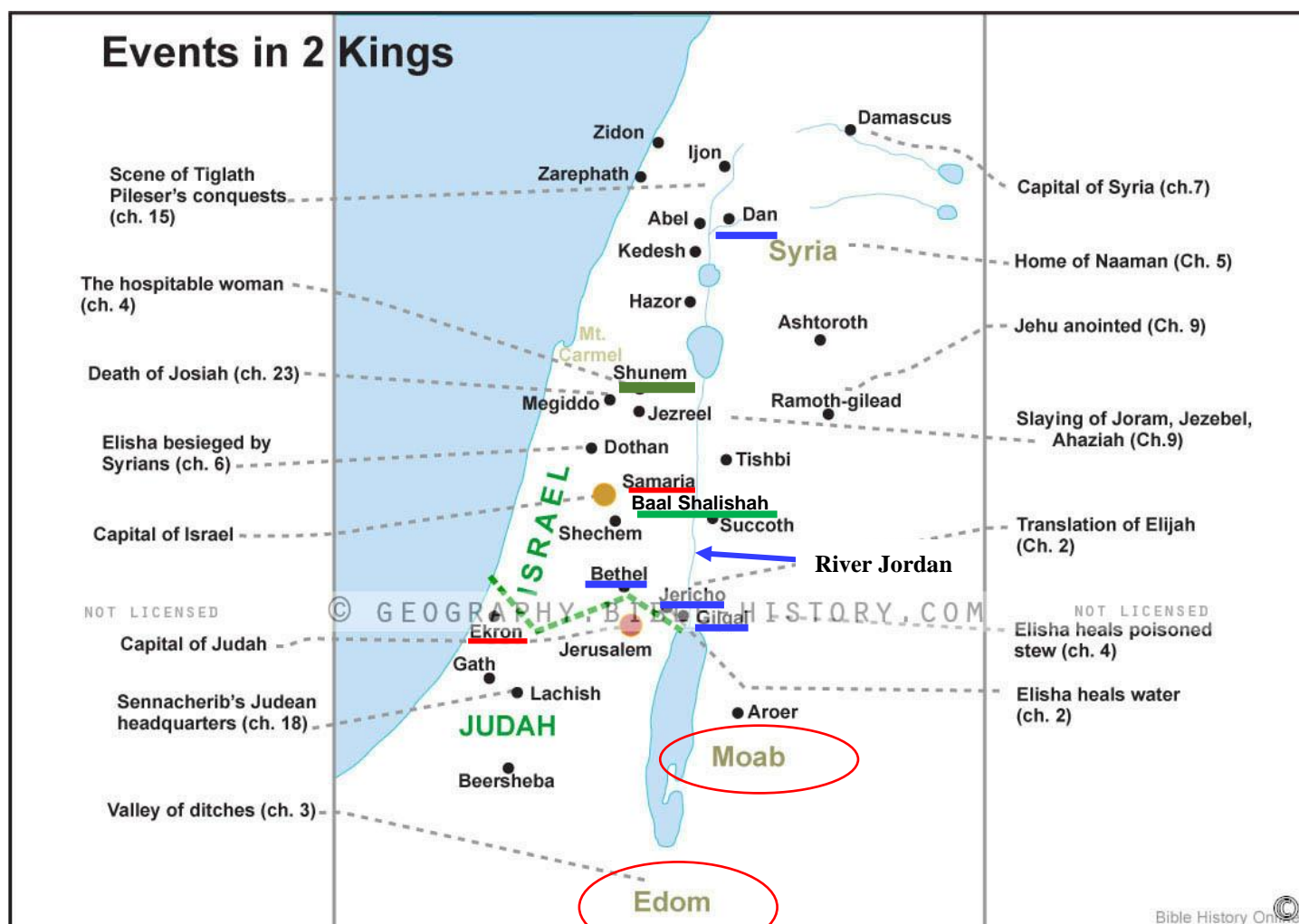
*John 6:35 - Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."*

**Finish in prayer:** Thank God for His power over danger and deficiency. Thank God that He can turn the little we have into more than enough. Ask God to strengthen our faith so that we are not discouraged by life situations but that we rely on His divine provision.

## Appendix 1 – The Kings of Judah and Israel

Kings of Judah and Israel											
Saul		1050-1010 BC		David		1010-970		Solomon		970-930	
Judah (and Benjamin)					Israel (Ten Northern Tribes)						
King	Reign		Character	Prophets	King	Reign		Character	Prophets		
1. Rehoboam	931-913	17 years	Bad	Shemaiah	1. Jeroboam I	931-910	22 years	Bad	Ahijah		
2. Abijah	913-911	3 years	Bad		2. Nadab	910-909	2 years	Bad			
3. Asa	911-870	41 years	Good		3. Baasha	909-886	24 years	Bad			
					4. Elah	886-885	2 years	Bad			
					5. Zimri	885	7 days	Bad			
Jehoshaphat	870-848*	25 years	Good		6. Omri	885-874*	12 years	Bad	Elijah Micaiah		
5. Jehoram	848-841*	8 years	Bad		7. Ahab	874-853	22 years	Bad			
6. Ahaziah	841	1 years	Bad		8. Ahaziah	853-852	2 years	Bad			
7. Athaliah	841-835	6 years	Bad		9. Joram	852-841	12 years	Bad	Elisha		
8. Joash	835-796	40 years	Good	Joel	10. Jehu	841-814	28 years	Bad			
9. Amaziah	796-767	29 years	Good		11. Jehoahaz	814-798	17 years	Bad	Jonah Amos Hosea		
10. Uzziah (Azariah)	767-740*	52 years	Good		12. Jehoash	798-782	16 years	Bad			
11. Jotham	740-732*	16 years	Good	Isaiah Micah	13. Jeroboam II	782-753*	41 years	Bad			
12. Ahaz	732-716	16 years	Bad		14. Zechariah	753-752	6 mo	Bad			
13. Hezekiah	716-687	29 years	Good		15. Shallum	752	1 mo	Bad			
14. Manasseh	687-642*	55 years	Bad-repent		16. Menahem	752-742	10 years	Bad			
15. Amon	642-640	2 years	Bad	Nahum Habakkuk Zephaniah	17. Pekahiah	742-740	2 years	Bad			
16. Josiah	640-608	31 years	Good		18. Pekah	740-732*	20 years	Bad			
17. Jehoahaz	608	3 mo	Bad		19. Hoshea	732-712	9 years	Bad			
18. Jehoiakim	608-597	11 years	Bad	Daniel	722 BC Fall of Isreal / Assyrian Captivity						
19. Jehoiachin	597	3 mos	Bad	Ezekiel							
20. Zedekiah	597-586	11 years	Bad	Jeremiah							
Destruction of Jerusalem, 9th Av, 586 BC, Babylonian Captivity											

## Appendix 2 – Events and Places in 2 Kings



**Studies prepared by Paul O'Rourke**  
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**Resources:**

The MacArthur Study Bible

New Bible Commentary (Carson, France, Moyter & Wenham)

1 and 2 Kings (Donald J. Wiseman – Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries)

2 Kings – The Power and the Fury (Dale Ralph Davis)

2 Kings and 2 Chronicles – The Wiersbe Series (David C. Cook)

Halley's Bible Handbook – New Revised Edition (Henry H. Halley)

**Notes/Prayer Points**