

THE SECOND BOOK OF KINGS

OT/NT: Old Testament SECTION: History (7 of 12) TRADITIONAL AUTHOR: Jeremiah

KEY PEOPLE: Elijah, Elisha, Hezekiah, Isaiah, Jehoiakim, Jehu, Jezebel, Joash, Josiah, Manasseh, Naaman, Nebuchadnezzar, Sennacherib, the Shunem Woman, Zedekiah.

SUMMARY: Canonically, the Second Book of Kings is the twelfth book of the [Holy Bible](#) (1), the twelfth book of the [Old Testament](#) (2), and the seventh of the twelve [historical books](#) (3). Its purpose was to demonstrate the value of those who obey God, and the fate of those who refuse to obey and make Him ultimate ruler.

A big part of the work's purpose is to explain why the Assyrians were able to destroy Israel and why most of the inhabitants of Judah were sent into exile in Babylon. The book hammers home this point with insistency: it's because they turned away from God, worshipping deities like [Molek](#) (4) with child sacrifice or [Asherah](#) (5) with sacred poles. Even the good guys, who start to get the right idea, often aren't perfect. Their efforts to turn things around don't last long and can't prevent destruction and exile.

In chapters 1-17, we read of the rulers of the divided kingdoms who lead them to their fate in exile. The prophet Elijah concludes his ministry and hands over the reins to Elisha. Elisha is an apprentice of sorts, and follows Elijah as he follows God's lead. Before God took the very much alive Elijah to Heaven in a horse-led chariot of fire ([2 Kings 2:11](#)), Elisha asked Elijah for a double portion of his spirit ([2 Kings 2:9](#)), and it was granted unto him.

In Elisha's ministry, he carries out twice as many miracles as Elijah, as God does His will through His prophet. We also find in these chapters many details about kings and dynasties, which ultimately [disobeys](#) (6) and ignore God's orders and provisions. Finally, during the reign of the last evil king, Hoshea, the Assyrians take the Northern Kingdom into captivity. They have neglected the warning and coming judgment announced by the prophet [Hosea](#) (7). It is fitting that the more evil of the two kingdoms (Northern) is the kingdom that goes into permanent captivity. There is no record of these 10 tribes of Israel ever returning from exile.

In chapters 18-25, it is apparent that the Southern Kingdom is not doing much better, and soon would also face God's judgment. "The Lord warned Israel and Judah through all his prophets and seers: "Turn from your evil ways. Observe my commands and decrees, in accordance with the entire Law that I commanded your ancestors to obey and that I delivered to you through my servants the prophets." But they would not listen and were as stiff-necked as their ancestors, who did not trust in the Lord their God " ([2 Kings 17:13-14](#)).

COMING UP: Next up is the First Book of Chronicles. Click [HERE](#) (8) to explore!

FOOTNOTES:

- (1) <http://www.downriverdisciples.com/the-good-news>
- (2) <http://www.downriverdisciples.com/old-testament>
- (3) <http://www.downriverdisciples.com/historical-books>
- (4) <https://www.biblegateway.com/quicksearch/?quicksearch/molek&q&s version/NIV>
- (5) <https://www.biblegateway.com/quicksearch/?quicksearch/Asherah&q&s version/NIV>
- (6) <http://www.downriverdisciples.com/disobedience>
- (7) <http://www.downriverdisciples.com/hosea>
- (8) <http://www.downriverdisciples.com/1-chronicles>

PAGE SOURCES:

- (a) Shmoop Editorial Team ([link](#))
- (b) Bible Hub ([link](#))