

2 Kings

*This is part of an ongoing series of short articles designed to help us understand what scripture is and what is **in** each book of scripture. Previous articles can be found at www.openarms-communityofchrist.org.*

2 Kings is the second half of a set of two books that make a specific point--the moral and religious failure of the leaders and the people eventually led to the loss of Israel's national identity and autonomy.

This portion covers about 300 years of the monarchies of both Israel and Judah, ending with the fall of both and the capture/destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. It can be a little challenging to follow, because the stories of the kingdoms alternate.

Stories to be found in this book include

- The ascension of the prophet Elijah by a whirlwind after his placing of the mantle of prophet on Elisha
- Elisha was provided for by a woman of Shunem; he prayed for the birth of her son. When the child was dying, Elisha prayed for and saved the child.
- Naaman, an enemy commander, suffered from leprosy. His Israelite slave told him about Elisha; he went to see him and was annoyed when Elisha told him to wash in the Jordan; however, he did and was healed.
- The overthrow of Ahab and Jezebel (people we first met in 1 Kings) by Jehu—who wiped out the worship of Baal but still did not turn the people back to God
- Continual changing of kings in the kingdoms—kings who continued to lead the people in evil ways
- The ascension of Josiah to the throne of Judah; he brought the people back to the worship of God, but after his death his son turned the people away again
- Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon besieged and eventually conquered Jerusalem. He took the treasures from the temple as well as all but the poorest of the people.

The book ends with a brief report of the abolition of the monarchy and the ensuing chaos. However, there is a slight note of hope, because Jehoiachin (king of Judah) was still alive and being well-treated by the king of Babylon. This means that the dynasty of King David has not been completely wiped out, despite all the past problems and wars.