

2 Kings

Original Historical Setting

Author: Unknown (Traditionally Jeremiah)

Written: Perhaps around 600 B.C.

Audience: Probably Israelites living in Babylonian exile

Occasion: Along with 1 Kings this is a selection of events from various resources to explain both the united kingdom era through Solomon and the subsequent divided monarchy.

Timeline:

850 BC – Elijah is taken into heaven

850 BC – Elisha's ministry begins

755 BC – Isaiah begins to prophesy in Judah

722 BC – Israel is defeated by the Assyrians

640 BC – Josiah's rule in Judah begins

624 BC – The Book of the Law is found in Jerusalem

586 BC – Judah is taken into captivity by Babylon

World Events that occur simultaneously

776 B.C. – First recorded Olympic Games in Greece

753 B.C. – Rome founded by Romulus

600 B.C. – First silver coins made by Lydians from Turkey

Genre/Literary style

An extremely selective historical account written in Hebrew

Features and Structure

- The author focuses the ministry of Elisha **Ch 2-8** and two sieges of Jerusalem—one by Sennacherib of Assyria **Ch 19** and the other by Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon **Ch 25**
- 2 Kings can be divided into **3 sections:**
 - Ch 1-8 Elisha's ministry**
 - Ch 9-17 Period of the Divided Monarchy**
 - Ch 18-25 Period of Judah alone**

Key text(s)

2:11 – Elijah is taken up in a whirlwind

22:8 – “I have found the Book of the Law in the house of the LORD.”

What to look for

- Notice that all eight kings of Israel in 1 Kings were evil. And the further eleven of Israel in 2 Kings were also evil.
- Judah had a total of twenty kings with twelve evil kings.
- The only eight good kings out of all 39 were from Judah and were: Asa, Jehoshaphat, Joash, Amaziah, Uzziah, Jotham, Hezekiah, and Josiah.

Interesting facts

- The 1981 Oscar-winning movie “Chariots of Fire,” about an Olympic runner named Eric Liddell who is a Christian who refuses to run on Sunday, gets its title from 2 Kings 6:17. The verse says that when the prophet Elisha's hometown was surrounded by enemy invaders, God sent His own army to protect His people. “The mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire.”
- The Lost Tribes of Israel refers to the 10 Jewish tribes, descended from 10 of Jacob's 12 sons. When the northern kingdom of Israel was destroyed by the Assyrians, the survivors of the invasion were deported to other parts of the kingdom including what is now Iraq. They eventually lost track of what tribes they belonged to.
- In 9:20, a watchman on a city wall identifies charioteer, Jehu by his driving style. In the NIV it says, “He drives like a madman.”
- In 10:15 Jehu asks a man, “Is your heart right?...If it is, give me your hand.” When the man replied his is, Jehu gives him a hand up into the chariot he is driving. Apparently this pedestrian doesn't know what the watchman knows about Jehu's driving.

Memory Verse: 2 Kings 6:16