

2 Kings

Who, When, Where

Written by Unknown.

From the death of Ahab, king of Israel, around 860BC up to the end of the divided kingdom until about half way through the 70 year Exile in Babylon, around 560BC. So this covers many of the kings of the north and south. And it includes the lifetimes of Obadiah, Joel, Isaiah, Jonah, Amos, Hosea, Micah, Jeremiah, Daniel and Ezekiel. So while all this was going on, a lot of the Old Testament books were being written. God was far from active, and what you read here wasn't all he was doing during this time period.

Most of 2 Kings is set in Israel, but it ends in the Exile, in Babylon, (modern day Iraq),

Summary

Before You Read

Calling fire from the sky, raising the dead, feeding hundreds with a few loaves of bread, making iron float, killing a gang of youths, ... Elisha did some great miracles. As you read each one, think about the miracles of Yeshua (Jesus) and compare them.

Key Verses

2 Kings 2:11

a chariot of fire and horses of fire separated them, and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.

So Elijah didn't die? It looks like he was taken up to heaven without dying. But this isn't the last we hear about Elijah. He makes another appearance with Moses, when they visit Jesus on the mountain, in the New Testament! And then, the Bible doesn't say who the two witnesses are in Revelation, but when you look at their powers it fits what Moses and Elijah did while they were on Earth. So maybe they **still** aren't finished!

2 Kings 2:23-24

As he was going up by the way, some youths came out of the city and mocked him, and said to him, "Go up, you baldy! Go up, you baldy!" He looked behind him and saw them, and cursed them in Yahweh's name. Then two female bears came out of the woods, and mauled forty - two of those youths.

Mauling by bears for calling someone "baldy". Seems a little harsh? But Yahweh answered this prayer. Especially for Christians, because we have instant and immediate access to Yahweh himself through Yeshua, it is easy to forget that Yahweh should be revered, almost to the point of fear. We need to guard our words carefully when talking about God. We need to show proper respect to those who represent him. Misusing the name of Yahweh used to be punishable by stoning. Now we see it every day on TV. But search the Bible for "fear of Yahweh"... And let us not forget who it is that we serve.

2 Kings 4:6

He said to her, "There isn't another container." Then the oil stopped flowing

What is God's limit? When he is pouring out his blessing the limitation usually seems to depend on us, not him. If she had gathered twice as many empty containers then God would have poured out twice as much oil.

2 Kings 5:2-3

The Syrians had gone out in bands, and had brought away captive out of the land of Israel a little maiden; and she waited on Naaman's wife. She said to her mistress, "I wish that my lord were with the prophet who is in Samaria! Then he would heal him of his leprosy."

So what would you do if you were a young girl, captured and dragged away to slavery in a foreign country, and you found out that your master, the top general of their army, had leprosy?

"Serves him right"?

Not this little maiden... she says, if only he would go and see Elisha he would be healed.

The story of Namaan is a powerful story of God's love for everyone and it is set in motion by a young girl who had every right to be bitter and angry, but who thought only of blessing and of bringing glory to her god.

2 Kings 5:7

When the king of Israel had read the letter, he tore his clothes, and said, "Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man sends to me to heal a man of his leprosy? But please consider and see how he seeks a quarrel against me."

What was the king's reaction? Suspicious. Assuming he was being set up so the king of Syria could start a war.

2 Kings 5:8

It was so, when Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes, that he sent to the king, saying, "Why have you torn your clothes? Let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel."

And, Elisha's reaction. Awesome, bring it on. Now we can show him the glory of Yahweh.

2 Kings 5:10-11

Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, "Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall come again to you, and you shall be clean."

11 But Naaman was angry, and went away, and said, "Behold, I thought, 'He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of Yahweh his God, and wave his hand over the place, and heal the leper.'

And, Namaan's reaction. Go and wash in a muddy river!! He's got to be kidding me. I wanted pomp and ceremony and calling down power from the sky in a big show. Funny how we put God in a box we designed ourselves isn't it.

2 Kings 5:13

His servants came near, and spoke to him, and said, "My father, if the prophet had asked you do some great thing, wouldn't you have done it? How much rather then, when he says to you, 'Wash, and be clean?'"

His servant's reaction was much more humble. Why is that?

If he had asked you to save a damsel in a castle from a dragon you would have done it. If he said, go and wash in a river you won't. Is that pride? Who gets the glory in the first one? Who gets the glory for the second one?

2 Kings 5:20

But Gehazi the servant of Elisha the man of God, said, "Behold, my master has spared this Naaman the Syrian, in not receiving at his hands that which he brought. As Yahweh lives, I will run after him, and take something from him."

And finally, Gehazi's reaction. Let's cash in on this! Yahweh gives his blessing for free. Gehazi didn't heal Namaan, Yahweh did. So many churches these days seem to have the attitude of Gehazi. They want to charge for ministry. Ministry should be free. Teaching, healing, praying, counselling, food, clothing, housing, songs, books, ... If it came from the holy spirit it was free, it should stay free. Trust God to supply your need and do his ministry for free. Gehazi got what he deserved.

2 Kings 6:16-17

He answered, "Don't be afraid; for those who are with us are more than those who are with them." Elisha prayed, and said, "Yahweh, please open his eyes, that he may see." Yahweh opened the young man's eyes; and he saw: and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire around Elisha.

Elisha's servant was worried because they had been surrounded by an army. Elisha was completely **not** worried because they had only come with a little army of men, and they didn't know that Elisha was surrounded by a huge army of angels with horses and chariots of fire.

Which are you? Elisha or his servant? Do you look at the physical or the spiritual? Regardless of which one you focus on. The truth is the same. **You** are a son of Yahweh. Elisha was just his servant. Do you really believe Yahweh does not have you covered?

2 Kings 6:19

Elisha said to them, "This is not the way, neither is this the city. Follow me, and I will bring you to the man whom you seek." He led them to Samaria.

The original Jedi mind trick...

When I read Elisha's story I feel that we, (modern Christians), so sell ourselves short on the power of God. We fight our battles in the physical, and constantly underestimate the power of God which is available to us to deal with our problems.

2 Kings 6:23

He [the king of Israel] prepared a great feast for them. When they had eaten and drunk, he sent them away, and they went to their master. So the bands of Syria stopped raiding the land of Israel.

Ah, ... remember when men had honour?

He captured them. He had their lives in his hand, but instead of taking it he released them to go back home and stop the invasion.

And they did.

2 Kings 6:28-29

She answered, "This woman said to me, 'Give your son, that we may eat him today, and we will eat my son tomorrow.' So we boiled my son, and ate him: and I said to her on the next day, 'Give your son, that we may eat him; and she has hidden her son.'"

It's hard to imagine being that hungry. In the verses before we already read that they're paying 5 days pay for pigeon poo to eat. But now they're eating their own children! And if we keep reading a little... and they blamed Elisha!

They were angry with Yahweh for letting this happen, and they blamed his servant.

2 Kings 7:9

Then they said to one another, "We aren't doing right. Today is a day of good news, and we keep silent. If we wait until the morning light, punishment will overtake us. Now therefore come, let's go and tell the king's household."

The lepers had found abundance in the abandoned camp of the Syrians. What would you do? Would you see that as Yahweh's blessing on you in compensation for being leper? Would you see it as your right to keep whatever you found? Or would you see it as an obligation to share with your suffering brothers who had expelled you from among them because of your illness?

After You Read

What verses really stood out to you?

How would you summarize this book in a sentence or two? What is it about? What is God trying to say to us?

Do you think that Yeshua performed greater miracles than Elisha?