



The book of 2 Kings

DID YOU KNOW?

1. Originally, 1 and 2 Kings were one book. 2 Kings includes the account of two great national tragedies, the fall of Israel, the northern kingdom, in 721 B.C., and the fall of Judah with the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. It also includes an account of the remarkable ministry of Elisha.
2. Baal-Zebub, god of Ekron, meant master of flies. In the Canaanite perspective, this god was able to control insect-borne diseases.
3. The “high places” were places built by other peoples who inhabited the land before the arrival of the people of Israel to worship other gods.
4. Elisha had asked for a double portion of Elijah’s spirit (2 Kings 2:9), and the Bible shows that Elisha performed twice as many miracles as Elijah. Many of these miracles, especially those in chapter 4 of the book, have many similarities to those that Jesus performed later.
5. My father, my father, the chariots and horsemen of Israel are the last words Elisha spoke to his master Elijah (2 Kings 2:12). These words probably referred to Elijah’s power, indicating that he was more valuable to the nation of Israel than to chariots and horsemen. It was a subtle compliment. Later, after Elisha’s death, King Joash spoke the same words to him (2 Kings 13:14).
6. Elisha’s long career spanned the reigns of six kings with whom he had ups and downs.
7. Unlike David who was the model of a king who walked in the way of the Lord, King Jeroboam was the prototype of evil kings in Israel. Whenever God wanted to show the degree of disobedience of the kings of Israel, he said that they followed completely the way of Jeroboam (2 Kings 3:3). Also, the kings of Judah were more inclined to serve God than those of Israel.
8. The expression “Was not my spirit with you...” used by the prophet Elisha when speaking to Gehazi in 2 Kings 5:26-27, means that God revealed his evil deeds to him even when he was not physically there.
9. Ahab cunningly arranged marriages to strengthen his alliance with Israel’s neighbors. For example, his wife Jezebel was from Phoenicia, which later became an ally of Israel. Ahab

also married his daughter to the king of Judah, a union that brought peace to the two warring neighbors (2 Kings 8:27).

10. Even though God had chosen Jehu to purify Israel, the Bible makes it clear that his violence went far beyond his intended mission (2 Kings 10:14 – 36). God himself condemns Jehu in Hosea 1:4.
11. King Joash, king of Judah, did what was right in the eyes of the Lord (2 Kings 12); while the other Joash, king of Israel, acted very wrongly in the eyes of the Lord by making the people fall into idolatry (2 Kings 13:10 – 13).
12. Queen Athaliah, mother of Ahaziah, was close to wiping out the royal lineage of David, because of the death of her son. The prophets foretold that Jesus the Messiah would come from the seed of David. Thus, the fulfillment of God's plan depended on the family's ability to hide Joash and replace him on the throne at the age of seven (2 Kings 11). The youngest kings of Judah are: Joash (7), Manasseh (12) and Azariah (16).
13. Secular historians report that Omri and Jeroboam II were the most powerful kings of Israel. Under their reign, the nation grew in power and prestige. But the book of Kings says very little about political power. It judges the kings based on spirituality, and so Omri and Jeroboam II are forgotten after only a few paragraphs (2 Kings 14:23 – 29).
14. King Ahaz figures prominently in the history of Israel and Judah (2 Kings 16:1). When Israel threatened Judah, his kingdom, he bought military help from Assyria. Assyria wiped Israel off the map and turned Judah into a mere puppet. Worse, Ahaz imitated the pagan religions of his conquered territories, even to the point of passing his son through the fire (2 Kings 16:3).
15. The death of Ahab's 70 sons and the servants of his house (2 Kings 20) was the consequence of God's judgment against Ahab and his wife Jezebel who had sentenced Naboth, an innocent man, to death by stoning (1 Kings 21).
16. Even though God added 15 years to Hezekiah's life, he did not have a happy ending for bringing God's judgment on the nation. He did not keep his promise to God by doing what was wrong in the eyes of the Lord, especially by showing his wealth and defense system to the Babylonian embassy (2 Kings 20).
17. Manasseh is described in the Bible as a godless and wicked king. He re-established the idolatrous worship that had been banished from the kingdom of Judah by imitating the abominable practices of the nations that the Lord had driven out before the Israelites. These practices included: rebuilding the high places, building altars in honor of Baal, practicing divination and occultism, and setting up people who could summon spirits and mediums (2 Kings 21: 1 – 7).

18. The uprising of Judah against the powerful Babylon was a failure (2 Kings 25:22). It ended in an eighteen-month siege and the destruction of Jerusalem. The survivors were taken into captivity, the so-called “Babylonian deportation,” a tragic episode in Jewish history. God gives the reasons for this calamity in 2 Kings 21:10 – 16.