

2 Kings

2 KINGS is the record of the divided Jewish kingdom. The period ended with the overthrow of Israel by Assyria in 722 BC and of Judah 136 years later, by Babylon.

Two Kingdoms Topple

Idolatry and disobedience to God’s word was consistent in the Northern kingdom (Israel), which resulted in the downfall of that kingdom in 722 BC.

The southern kingdom of Judah, which had a few better kings, was finally overthrown by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, in 586 BC. Many of the Jews were taken into captivity in Babylon.

The Prophet Elisha

After he had seen Elijah taken away (chapter 2), Elisha became the next great prophet to Israel.

He asked Elijah for “a double portion of your spirit” (verse 9), and the number and nature of the miracles Elisha performed suggest that God granted the request. Examples include: healing the waters of a spring (2 Kings 2:19–21), increasing the widow’s oil (4:1–7), bringing the Shunammite’s son back to life (4:34), and causing an axe-head to float to the water’s surface (6:1–7).

One miracle with a specially significant

spiritual lesson was the cleansing from leprosy of Naaman, the Syrian commander-in-chief (chapter 5). By humbling himself and being willing to wash in the waters of the river Jordan, Naaman prefigured the act of baptism which Jesus commanded, which can cleanse a sinner and give him or her a new life: a ‘burial’ in water followed by a ‘resurrection’ to a new way of life.

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Some interesting links with other parts of the Bible

- ◆ 2 Kings 5:1–14 – see Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16.
- ◆ 2 Kings 11:12 – see Psalm 2:6; Zechariah 14:9.
- ◆ 2 Kings 20:1 – see Isaiah 38:1, 18; Ecclesiastes 9:5.

