

BIG WORD: 2 Kings

INTRODUCTION

Just like 1st and 2nd Samuel, 1st and 2nd Kings were originally one book. The four actually go together with Kings being a continuation of Samuel. The Septuagint (early Greek translations of the Old Testament) divided them into separate books not because of content (as evidenced by the abrupt endings of each), but simply for convenience. Smaller books meant lighter, more manageable scrolls. The stories all thread together, but the book and chapter breaks make for more bite-size studies.

Author: Unknown, though many believe it to be Jeremiah

Date: The events detailed within 2 Kings cover a span of over 300 years. The kingdom divided in 930 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar conquered Judah around 586 B.C. The books were written circa 550 B.C.

Characters: Several characters fill the pages of Kings. The book offers the historical account of 28 different monarchies and 17 different prophets. As we watch these kings (and one queen) lead the Divided Kingdom to ruin, we also meet various leaders of neighboring nations – Babylon, Assyria and Moab.

The characters of which to take special note include:

- Elisha (prophet)
- Hezekiah (king of Judah)
- Josiah (king of Judah)
- Isaiah, Micah, Jeremiah and Hosea (all prophets)

Key Events:

- Elijah ascends without death
- Assyria conquers the Northern Kingdom (Israel) circa 722 B.C.
- Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon conquers the Southern Kingdom (Judah) circa 586 B.C.

Themes: Several themes can be found in these books, but two stand out more than the others.

1. God is the only King that matters; His kingdom, the only one that stands.
2. Strong leaders who pursue God can turn any idolatrous tide in remarkable time.