

Two Year Bible Trek  
Week 53  
Week 53 – 2 Kings 1-15; 2 Chronicles 24-26

**Key Concepts:** The key concepts are that even with good leaders Judah did not abandon all of its evil practices, while even with its evil leaders Israel was not yet completely abandoned by God.

**Stories:** In 2 Kings we begin with Elijah returning to the stage, the passing of the mantle to Elisha, a war with Moab, a series of Elisha miracles, God's miraculous protection of Samaria (Israel), Elisha fomenting rebellion against several kings which leads to the rise of Jehu, the massacre of the princes of Judah, Israel and the worshippers of Baal, the rise of Athalia in Judah, her subsequent death and the coronation of the real King (Joash), attempts to repair the temple, the assassination of Joash, the death of Elisha, the rise and fall of kings good and evil and the first deportations from Israel by the Assyrians. In 2 Chronicles we watch the rise of some good kings who in the end all turn bad.

**Brief Summary:** we begin with the transfer of prophetic power from Elijah to Elisha. This power then is transferred to Elisha because of Elisha's faithfulness in never leaving Elijah's side. Elijah's exit, being taken up in a whirlwind in a fiery chariot pulled by fiery horses, makes Elijah one of only a couple of Old Testament characters who do not die but who are taken directly to heaven. This is one reason that in the time of Jesus, people wonder if John the Baptist is Elijah come back to earth. As an additional note, it is from this story that we get the term "passing the mantel" which is often used to refer to a change of leadership.

The writer of Kings then offers us a series of stories which demonstrate Elisha's God given powers. We hear of a miraculous jar of oil, the resurrection of a child, the de-poisoning of a stew, a multiplication of loaves, the healing of the leper Naaman, making an iron axe head float in water, the misdirection of an entire army, the ability to see the future and the assisting of the woman whose son he had saved. As we read these stories we might want to reflect on how many of them appear in a list of miracles performed by Jesus. There is little wonder that people understood Jesus to be a prophet considering how closely his actions mirrored those of Elijah and Elisha.

We then proceed to read about how, on God's orders, Elisha interferes in politics and foments rebellion. He assists in the turnover of leadership in Syria and in Israel. The most dramatic impact he has is in directing Jehu to leadership. Jehu wipes out not only the leadership of Israel, along with those who worship Baal including Jezebel, but the leadership of Judah as well. While this purge led to a restoration of Godly worship in Israel, this faithfulness was only short-lived.

In this section we also encounter the only "queen" who led Judah, Athalia. When her son Ahaziah the king of Judah, was killed by Jehu, she seized power and slaughtered all claimants to the throne and installed Baal worship in Judah. Fortunately one of Ahaziah's sons was hidden. When the son, Jehoash, was old enough, the religious and political leaders of Judah rallied around him and executed Athalia along with the priests of Baal. This led to a limited restoration of true worship under Jehoash, who would ultimately be assassinated for political reasons. Thus the cycle of good/bad kings and their faithfulness/unfaithfulness continues.

We conclude this section with a hint of the destruction that is about to come upon Israel at the hands of the Assyrians.

1. What do you take away from the fact that no kings ever live up to David's reputation?
2. What lessons might we draw from Elisha's participation in the politics of his day?
3. Does it surprise you that God continues to pursue Israel, even though they have ceased loving God?