

## 2 Kings 1

1 Moab had been subjugated by David (2 Samuel 8:2) 140 – 150 years earlier. Israel maintained that control. After the defeat of Israel and Judah by Syria, Moab saw an opportunity to be free. See 3:4 – 5.

2 Baal-Zebub means Lord of the Flies. Ekron was a Philistine city.

3 God told Elijah to intercept the messengers and tell them that Ahaziah would die.

6 The messengers did not bother to go to Ekron after meeting Elijah.

8 Prophets typically wore hairy robes, such as sheepskin with the wool still on it. Juju priests continue the tradition today. The leather belt also was unusual, since most used cotton or linen.

9 Whether Ahaziah believed killing Elijah would cure him, or Ahaziah just wanted revenge is unknown.

13 After the first two groups of 50 soldiers were toasted, the third captain approached Elijah more cautiously and respectfully.

15 God confirmed to Elijah that he would be safe with the third captain. The message to Ahaziah remained the same.

17 When Ahaziah died without an heir, his brother Joram (or Jehoram) took his place. The dates do not agree with 3:1 and 1 Kings 22:51 because Jehoshaphat co-reigned with his son for a time.

## 2 Kings 2

3 Apparently, lots of people knew that Elijah would be taken up soon.

4 Elisha was insistent about staying with Elijah.

5 Israel contained several places where the sons of the prophets gathered, which likely is how Jezebel had been able to slaughter so many.

8 A third parting of water (Red Sea, Jordan twice), but more theatrically this time.

9 Elisha was granted one wish. Moses asked to see God's glory. Solomon asked for wisdom.

10 Elijah was not told the answer, but relayed to Elisha a sign.

11 Details of this fiery chariot were not given.

12 Tearing one's clothes was a sign of mourning.

13 The signature cloak did not go with Elijah but stayed for Elisha.

14 Parting Jordan #4, probably observed by at least some of the sons of the prophets.

17 Not believing Elisha's account, the prophets wanted a search party.

19 The wells of Jericho had gone bad. They could get water from the Jordan, but such would not be possible in wartime. Further, the bad water seems to have affected the land.

22 Adding a bowl of salt may cause a precipitation to occur briefly, purifying the water, but the new water coming in behind it would quickly return the water back to brackish. So, this qualifies as an obvious miracle.

23 Elisha's mantle identified him as a prophet, so "Go up" likely referred to going up to a high place. Several stories of why he was bald have circulated. Most likely, he was just prematurely bald (he lived another 50 years, 13:14).

24 Note: a youth was anyone under 30. Elisha was not a magician. He was only relaying a curse from God.

25 The reason for this trip was not given. Carmel is where Elijah had defeated and killed the priests of Baal. Samaria was the capital.

## 2 Kings 3

3     Jehoram, son of Ahab, abolished Baal worship but kept golden-calf worship.

4     The lambs would be worth about \$3.6M today, and the fleeces about \$10M.

5     Ahab died due to a battle with Syria, which Israel lost. So, seeing weakness, Mesha saw an opportune time to throw off the yoke of Israel.

7     Moab, with Ammon, had attempted to raid Judah previously (2 Chronicles 20), although the Lord saved them by confusing them into attacking their own ally, Edom. However, Moab could try again, so, for Judah, this would be largely preventative.

8     Invading via Edom was much more difficult, but would not expose themselves to an attack from the rear by Syria, would gain the element of surprise, and would invade through the less fortified region of Moab.

9     Edom joined perhaps for revenge or for booty.

11    “Poured water on the hands” describes a personal servant.

14    Elisha agrees to prophecy for the sake of Jehoshaphat, not the others.

15    This theatric presentation illustrated that the power was God’s not Elisha’s.

17    God made it rain at a distance. The water arrived through the wadis. The ditches filled with water.

18    And, by the way, Moab will lose.

19    This punishment also causes climate change.

22    A combination of the rosy sunrise and the natural red clay of the region, the Moabites thought that history had repeated itself, so broke ranks to collect spoil.

26    Mesha tried to escape the siege of Kir Haraseth through the Edomite lines, thinking either that they would be the weakest after the previous devastation, or that Edom might let them pass.

27    In desperation, Mesha sacrificed his eldest son and successor to his god Chemosh on the city wall. The Moabite stone records Mesha’s conclusion that it worked. The Israelites and Judeans were so disgusted that they broke the siege and went home.

## 2 Kings 4

1     Leviticus 25:39 – 40 became interpreted as the right of a creditor to claim the children of a debtor who would then work until the next year of Jubilee.

2     The jar was small, an anointing flask.

3     The widow and sons followed the strange directions and obtained enough oil to sell and both pay debts and capitalize a fresh start. The oil stopped coming from the flask when they ran out of vessels into which to pour.

9     The Shunammite woman volunteered to care for the needs of Elisha and Gehazi out of the goodness of her heart.

14    Elisha wants to reward her kindness, so inquires what she needs.

16    The woman was incredulous at the promise of a son. (*cf.* Sarah, Genesis 18:12 – 13)

19    Perhaps the boy was stricken with sunstroke.

23    The woman did not break down in grief, but went to Elisha.

27    Elisha admits to being clueless in the matter.

28    The woman’s point was that this outcome was unfair.

29    Apparently, Elisha agreed with the woman. Surely, God told him how to fix the problem. So, sending Gehazi with the staff was a ruse.

35    The miraculous cure took some doing.

39 Due to the famine, the sons of the prophets gathered whatever they could find, some of which was new to them.

40 How they knew that the stew was poisonous is not given.

41 The addition of flour would only thicken it, not react with poisons. So, the detox action was miraculous.

42 Faithful people provided for the prophets. This donation of 20 loaves and a knapsack of grain was nice, but not sufficient.

43 The bread was miraculously sufficient for 100 men, much as Jesus did in Matthew 14:15 – 21, 15:32 – 38, and 16:9 – 10.

## 2 Kings 5

1 In Israel, lepers were excluded from society (Leviticus 13 – 14), but not in Syria.

2 Slaves were often captured in war and were often highly skilled.

5 Having heard from the slave girl about Elisha, Naaman sent silver (\$165,000) and gold (~\$2.5M) to the king of Israel, assuming that the king controlled Elisha.

7 The king assumes that the request is a way to start a war for refusing to help.

10 In addition to the “insult” of having to go to the prophet’s poor house, a servant is sent out to deliver a seemingly senseless cure.

13 The servants were more sensitive to the ways of legitimate prophets and less impacted by the required humility.

16 Elisha desired to distance himself from the financial gain of pagan prophets.

17 Still somewhat pagan, Naaman asked to take home to mule-loads of earth so he could continue to offer sacrifices to the one true God.

18 Naaman also knew that his official duties included pagan worship with the king of Syria, so he asked forgiveness in advance.

19 Elisha did not comment on the slightly twisted understanding, but replied in keeping with the nature of the word, forgive (to set aside or make of no consequence), rather than making an exception to a rather clear rule.

22 Gehazi succumbed to greed and lied to Naaman to get some of the tribute.

26 God apparently let Elisha know what had happened.

27 So the leprosy of Naaman was transferred to Gehazi.

## 2 Kings 6

1 The ranks of the sons of the prophets must have been growing, as they ran out of room. So they proposed to Elisha that they build a new facility near Jericho, to which Elisha consented.

5 Some translators used “borrowed,” meaning that the prophet was dismayed because he would be required to replace it. Some translate it “begged,” meaning that the prophet was dismayed at the loss to himself.

6 Some provide the non-miraculous explanation that Elisha speared the ax head through its hole and thereby raised it.

10 Elisha sent unsolicited military advice to the king of Israel to thwart the Syrian advance.

11 The king of Syria suspected a mole in his court.

14 Apparently, the king of Syria believed the report about Elisha from his servants, but did not follow through the logic and tried to capture Elisha.

17 Elisha calmed his servant by allowing him to see the army of angels God had sent for Elisha’s protection.

19 God chose to blind the invaders rather than kill them. So, Elisha deceived them into marching blindly inside the capital of Israel, apparently unarmed and surrounded by the army of Israel.

22 Elisha prevents the slaughter of the Syrian army, rather ordering that they be given a feast, then sent home.

23 This display of power was sufficient to prevent future raiding parties from Syria, although not full-scale invasions (next story).

25 The Syrian seige of Samaria led to near starvation. A shekel was approximately a day's wage for a laborer. A fourth of a kab was about a pint.

27 The king, probably Joram son of Ahab, was a worshipper of Jehovah via the golden calf, so had some notion of the power of God.

28 Cannibalism was not uncommon in sieges.

30 The king was grieving for his people already; this incident just made it worse.

31 So, he blamed Elisha.

32 God forewarned Elisha of the king's murderous intent and solicited the help of the town elders.

33 The king got tired of waiting for deliverance so was about to try anything that might work, such as a counterattack.

## 2 Kings 7

1 Although these prices were a little high, they were substantially lower than those of 6:25.

2 Whether the officer was incredulous or disrespectful is unclear. Either way, Elisha told him he would die before he could eat of the siege-busting food.

3 The lepers were not allowed in the city (even in the semi-pagan north), so they had suffered the siege outside the wall, between the armies.

4 Syrians did not exclude lepers (remember Naaman), so the chance of survival was best in the Syrian camp.

6 Sieges often were broken by allies who attacked the besiegers from the rear. The Hittites were from central Turkey.

7 The noise from God was so convincing that the Syrians left all their supplies behind and retreated to Syria.

8 The four lepers would be able to accumulate enough plunder in a short time to live comfortably for the rest of their lives.

9 Despite being treated poorly by Israel, possibly because of potential punishment for silence, the lepers decide to tell the inhabitants of the city that the Syrians had retreated.

15 Suspecting a trap, the king acted prudently and investigated before breaking the siege.

17 Of course, Elisha's predictions came true, the officer being trampled in the stampede of people to find food in the Syrian camp.

## 2 Kings 8

1 The Shunammite woman was rewarded further with advance notice of a famine. Being wealthy, she had the ability to relocate.

3 Having abandoned her land, surely other relatives had claimed it.

4 Gehazi became a leper after the healing of Naaman, so this scene must be out of historical sequence.

5 Whether Gehazi and the Shunammite woman were together by chance or design is not given.

6 Although the king did not like Elisha, the fact that Elisha had favored the Shunammite woman was enough to rule in her favor not only for restoration of the land and house, but also for the value of the portion of the crops (which would not be much in a famine) that should go to the landowner. Although a token amount, a point was made.

7 This picks up on the commission of Elijah (1 Kings 19:15 – 17) that had been delayed by the repentance of Ahab. Apparently, the movements of Elisha were politically important in more than Israel.

8 Surely Ben-Hadad had asked the same question of his own seers, but Elisha was assumed to be better at predictions.

10 By the end of the story, this apparent lie becomes truth.

13 Hazaël objected to Elisha's characterization, but such actions were common in that time.

15 So, the disease didn't kill him, yet he died. Elisha was exactly correct (8:10).

18 Although Jehoshaphat was good (Elisha said so, 3:14), his son was a pagan. This is attributed to his political-alliance wife, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, Athaliah (8:26). So, Jehoram re-introduced Baal and golden-calf worship.

19 God had stopped the dynasties of Jeroboam and Omri for similar reasons, but declined to do so in Judah because of His promise to David. Jehoram murdered all his brothers to prevent a palace coup and to consolidate the wealth of the royal family (2 Chronicles 21:2 – 4).

20 Edom had lost their king (and, apparently, all viable successors) in the fiasco in which they had teamed with Moab and Ammon in which God had confused them into attacking each other. (1 Kings 22:47, 2 Chronicles 20:1 – 30)

22 Several more wars occurred between Judah and Edom, with some control by Judah for short periods. But, Edom remained essentially independent until the Babylonian Captivity.

25 Ahaziah, son of Jehoram, grandson of Jehoshaphat, was as bad as his father, partly due to the influence of Athaliah, his mother, daughter of Jezebel.

28 Ramoth Gilead was a frequent site of battles between Syria and Israel due to its border location and fortifications.

## 2 Kings 9

2 Jehu, the commander of the army of Israel, was the son of a different Jehoshaphat, not the king of Judah. Ramoth Gilead was back in Israelite hands.

7 This anointing was commanded of Elijah (1 Kings 19:16) but was delayed by Ahab's repentance (1 Kings 21:29). The evils of Jezebel finally were to be avenged.

10 This curse was delivered by God in 1 Kings 21:20 – 26.

12 The captains made jokes about prophets, but well knew that they spoke the truth.

13 Based on the prophet's message, the officers immediately switched allegiance.

15 Jehu tells the officers to prevent anyone from informing King Joram of the anointing.

20 Usually, a messenger would be tired and travelling less quickly as the destination was neared. Messengers from the city would be fresh and chosen for speed so as to get the news a few minutes earlier. Instead, the city messengers fell in behind Jehu. Apparently, Jehu was known for his speed, so the watchmen guessed who was driving a chariot so madly.

23 Jehu's reference to Jezebel was all Joram needed to hear to know that this was not going to end well, so he fled. Ahaziah should have realized that the same fate awaited him, but took a few minutes to pick up on it.

24 The wording implies that Jehu personally shot Joram through the heart. Later, (v 27), it seems that Jehu was not alone, and other soldiers shot Ahaziah.

25 God gave specific instructions to dump Joram's body in Naboth's vineyard to complete the prediction from 1 Kings 21.

27 Oddly, Ahaziah fled away from Judah from Samaria, dying in Megiddo.

30 Jezebel had been told of the death of Joram, so she dressed up for what would surely be her death on that day.

33 The eunuchs who attended Jezebel quickly switched sides, like the captains.

36 Again, the predictions of 1 Kings 21 came to pass.

## 2 Kings 10

3 Jehu dares the elders who were rearing Ahab's other sons to support the dynasty.

5 The elders realize that the dynasty is finished, so decline.

6 Having been assured of their loyalty, Jehu asks them to collect their heads and come to him, which they did promptly.

9 Jehu assured the people that they bore no guilt in this matter. Jehu admitted his own treachery and that of the elders of the cities. But, he also cited the prediction of Elijah as the reason.

13 When the brothers of Ahaziah came to greet the sons of Ahab (apparently not knowing that Jehu had had them all killed), Jehu executes all of them, also.

15 Jehonadab was of the Kenites, of a family later honored in Jeremiah 35:6 as those who obeyed their ancestors. His witness would be valuable in gaining the trust of the people.

19 Although Jehu's intentions were commendable, his methods were suspect. He used deception to gather the prophets and worshipers of Baal so he could slaughter them.

25 Translators disagree on who did the sacrifice to Baal, Jehu or the priests of Baal.

29 Baal worship was eliminated, but, golden-calf worship continued.

30 Despite a few shortcomings, Jehu is promised a dynasty of four generations (Jehoahaz, Jehoash, Jeroboam). The great-great-grandson, Zechariah, lasted only six months.

32 But, because of these shortcomings, Israel began to shrink, losing territory to Syria, which would severely decrease royal income while greatly increasing royal expenses.

33 All the territory east of the Jordan was lost to Syria.

## 2 Kings 11

1 Athaliah was the daughter of Jezebel and Ahab. Jehu killed many of that household, as did the coalition of the Philistines and Arabs (2 Chronicles 21:17). Athaliah probably focused on nephews, cousins, and sons of concubines.

2 However, one son of Ahaziah was stolen away as an infant.

3 Technically, the throne of David had six years without an heir. Queen Athaliah reigned, who was half Israelite (not of David) and half Phoenician.

4 Jehoiada was High Priest and a righteous man. He organized a coup with the captains of the army to unseat Athaliah and proclaim seven-year-old Joash as king (his 7<sup>th</sup> year).

15 Underestimating the loyalty of the captains, Athaliah attempted to have them all arrested for treason (which is what). The High Priest prevailed and had her forcibly removed and executed at the entrance of the palace.

18 Under the direction of Jehoiada, the high priest of Baal was killed, the Baal temple in Jerusalem destroyed, and the other Baal worship places broken in pieces. Peace ensued.

## 2 Kings 12

1 Additional details may be found in 2 Chronicles 24.

2 Jehoash did well at first because the High Priest who kept him in seclusion to age seven was actually running things.

3 The high places, however, were not destroyed.

4 Jehoash ordered that money coming into the Temple (redemption money, half-shekel Temple tax, vows, freewill offering) was to be used for repairs.

7 After an unknown number of years, the money was gone but no repairs had happened.

8 So the order was rescinded and the missing money was forgotten. Embezzlement probably was not the issue, but just mismanagement since the King and the High Priest did not complain.

9 Jehoiada decided to try again using a chest into which donations were placed. An accounting system was devised. This prevented the co-mingling of income streams. So, repairs began.

15 Although the priests could not be trusted to accumulate the money without supervision, the workmen were faithful and worked without an accounting system. 2 Chronicles 24 adds that the leftover funds were used to make new utensils for the Temple because the sons of Athaliah had stolen originals. Further, after Jehoiada died, the king and the leaders reverted to idols. When the son of Jehoiada, Zechariah, rebuked them, he was killed. See Luke 11:51.

17 Gath had been taken from the Philistines by Rehoboam, Solomon's son (2 Chronicles 9:8). Syria probably got there by defeating the Northern Kingdom (2 Kings 10:33, 13:3), then traveling down the Mediterranean coast to take Gath, a fortified city (to avoid being attacked from the rear), before turning back to attack Jerusalem.

18 A siege of Jerusalem was averted with a large tribute payment. The Syrian force was not large (2 Chronicles 24:24), but the Lord worked against Judah so they lost and the king was wounded.

21 Jehoash was assassinated by his inner circle (including some of his sons) because of his failure with Syria and his assassination of Zechariah.

## 2 Kings 13

1 Probably should be 21<sup>st</sup> year of Jehoash (compare to 12:1 and 13:37).

2 Golden Calf worship continued.

4 Despite the massive problems in the north, God listened to the pleas of Jehoahaz.

6 The Asherah were back, too.

12 The next king, Joash (3<sup>rd</sup> in Jehu's line), fought with Amaziah of Judah (see 14:8 – 14) after a long alliance.

14 Joash of Israel, despite his idolatry, honored Elisha, probably because of the anointing of Jehu.

18 On his deathbed, Elisha gave Joash strange commands about a bow and some arrows. Joash failed the test and received less than he could have, but still recovered much territory from Syria (v 25).

21 Strange anecdote about resurrection by touching Elisha's bones.

## 1 Kings 14

3 Next king of Judah was Amaziah, another somewhat good king, but the high places remained.

5 Amaziah punished those who had assassinated his father, but spared their families (v 6) as the Law dictates (Deuteronomy 24:16).

9 Middle Eastern kings were fond of insulting one another with fables.

13 Jehoash, apparently, was not interested in occupying or absorbing Judah. Perhaps he did not think the people would switch allegiance. So he contented himself with destroying a portion of the wall of Jerusalem and taking all the valuables from the Temple and the palace.

19 Amaziah also was assassinated by his inner circle probably due to his poor performance. This was not a power grab as in the north, but an “orderly” succession of David’s dynasty.

22 Uzziah (also called Azariah), at 16, took over. He took the port of Elath (Ezion-Geber) from Edom to restart the maritime business. 2 Chronicles 26 adds that he prospered greatly, was victorious over the Philistines, made many infrastructure improvements, and greatly improved the army and its weapons. He tried to offer incense, but was rebuffed by the High Priest, at which time he broke out in leprosy instantaneously.

25 Jeroboam II (4<sup>th</sup> in Jehu’s line) took over in Israel and restored the borders of Israel to those established by David (and promised to Abraham). Note that Jonah lived in this period.

27 God helped Jeroboam despite his shortcomings. Hosea and Amos also lived in this period, through the fall of the Northern Kingdom.

## **2 Kings 15**

5 Although Uzziah reigned 52 years, most was as a leper, so his son, Jotham, became co-regent.

10 Jehu’s dynasty ended with Zechariah (5<sup>th</sup> in the line) who reigned six months before being assassinated.

13 Zechariah’s assassin, Shallum, lasted only one month on the throne.

17 Shallum’s assassin, Menahem, lasted ten years and was ruthless, cruel, and evil.

19 Menahem sent huge tribute money to Assyria, which held them at bay for a while.

25 Pekahiah succeeded his father, Menahem, and was just as bad. He was assassinated after two years in a military coup. Pekah came to power and lasted 20 years and was just as bad.

29 The Assyrians came back in the time of Pekah and started conquering territory and deporting the people as slaves. As the Assyrians flooded in, the Syrians and the Northern Kingdom fought against Judah (v 37) in an attempt to accumulate enough precious metals for an effective tribute payment.

30 Pekah was assassinated by Hoshea who reigned 11 years. He was the last king, the Assyrians destroying all of the Northern Kingdom.

32 2 Chronicles 27:3 adds that Jotham rebuilt the defenses of Jerusalem after the damage caused by Jehoash (2 Kings 14:13), fortified several cities, and put the Ammonites under tribute for three years. Although Jotham was faithful, the people were not.

## **2 Kings 16**

3 After three generations of reasonably good Judean kings, Ahaz reverted to idolatry, including Molech worship (Moab), passing children through the fire. Hosea, Isaiah, and Micah all were prophesying in this period.

5 Due to the expansion of Assyria and that imminent threat, long-time enemies, Israel and Syria, formed an alliance against Judah (also freeing Edom and Philistia from Judean control,

both of whom re-started their raids of Judah). Syria and Israel needed tribute money to prevent conquest by Assyria, which happened anyway.

6 Syria also captured Elath, Judea's port to the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean, diverting the trading income.

7 Ahaz defused the invasion by offering tribute to Assyria so that they would speed up their expansion and conquer Syria.

15 After visiting Damascus (now under Assyria), Ahaz had a copy of a pagan altar built and placed in the Temple along with a number of other changes to the regular rituals of the Law.

## **2 Kings 17**

3 Hoshea, last king of the Northern Kingdom, recovered from the alliance with Syria by paying tribute to Assyria.

4 Hoshea tried to form an alliance with Egypt but was found out, resulting in imprisonment. Egypt would want the alliance to shift the battle away from Egypt. The potential benefits to Israel were debatable.

6 In retaliation for stopping the payment of tribute, Assyria conquered all of Israel, ending with a three-year siege of Samaria. All the people were deported to northern Iraq, northwestern Persia, and Afghanistan. Assyria's practice was to move and mix captives to prevent future nationalism.

18 The historian summarized all the idolatry and unfaithfulness of Israel that lead to their deportation.

24 Assyria imported a mixture of conquered peoples from Iraq and northern Syria. These are the ancestors of today's Palestinians.

25 God tormented the imported peoples with lions.

26 The imported people asked the king of Assyria for priests of the land (or Northern Israel – the calf-worship cult) to teach them the ways of Jehovah.

33 Paganism continued in parallel with calf-worship.

## **2 Kings 18**

1 Hezekiah was one of the better kings of Judah. Isaiah was active throughout his reign. A parallel account may be found in 2 Chronicles 29 – 32.

4 Hezekiah even removed the high places, which previous marginally righteous kings had not done. He found it necessary to destroy the bronze serpent (Numbers 21:5 – 9) because it had become an idol.

7 Breaking with Assyria (stopping the flow of tribute money) was a big act of faith because of the power of Assyria.

13 Deportation of Israel and restarting expansion took eight years. Assyria took the fortified cities one at a time, leaving Jerusalem for last due to location.

14 Many artifacts from the Assyrian siege of Lachish have been found, as well as a huge fresco in an Assyrian palace depicting the methods used.

17 Hezekiah caved to the relentless conquest and tried tribute again, turning over all the precious metals of the Temple. Assyria besieged Jerusalem anyway. The aqueduct was built by Hezekiah's engineers to bring water inside the city.

21 The Assyrians believed that Judah had established a treaty with Egypt as had Hoshea.

22 The Assyrians repeated Hezekiah's history of suppressing idolatry in sarcasm.

26 The speech was designed to demoralize the Judean defenders, perhaps to cause surrender or assassination. So, the Judeans asked that they speak Assyrian rather than Hebrew.

28 But, the Assyrians continued to speak Hebrew to heighten the fear of the defenders.

32 The Assyrians promise temporary peace followed by orderly deportation, which was a better deal than the northern kingdom got.

36 Hezekiah had ordered that no one respond to the Assyrian needling, although the Judean officials answered symbolically (treasonously?) by their displays of grief.

## 2 Kings 19

1 Parallel in Isaiah 37. Hezekiah also displayed grief, perhaps not completely trusting God to rescue them.

2 So, the leaders of government went to Isaiah for answers.

3 The figure of speech used a woman who has been in labor so long that she no longer has the strength to deliver, endangering the lives of both.

7 Isaiah predicted that the Assyrians would retreat and the king of Assyria would be killed by his own people.

9 Egypt and Ethiopia went back and forth, conquering each other, during this period. At this time, Ethiopia was in charge. Coming to the aid of Jerusalem would be preferable to Ethiopia because (1) they could attack the Assyrian army from the rear, (2) they would not need to fight in and damage their own land, and (3) they would gain an ally who would be a future buffer state.

10 The king of Assyria was informed of the potential of an Ethiopian attack and tried to speed up the surrender of Jerusalem.

14 Perhaps unconvinced by Isaiah, Hezekiah took the Assyrian response to the Temple.

20 God did not hold Hezekiah's weak faith against him, but rather repeated His promise.

28 Like the message of Nahum, Assyria went too far. They had been set up by God for a purpose. God said He would take them down using their own inhumane methods.

29 Judah was not promised immediate restoration, but after three years, at least partially due to the time needed for refugees to return.

32 God was specific that the Assyrian siege would not happen.

35 This even also was recorded in Assyria and in Egypt.

37 The sons of Sennacharib, according to Assyrian records, thought the king had gone mad.

## 2 Kings 20

1 Parallel Isaiah 38. We must assume that Isaiah did not speak presumptuously, but that this was the correct message from God.

5 God changed His mind.

6 This piece of history is out of sequence. Hezekiah reigned 29 years (18:2), so this event was in his 14<sup>th</sup>, which was the year when the Assyrian invasion began (18:13).

7 The fig poultice may have been effective (an overlooked medicine of the day that God suggested to Isaiah) or the poultice was known to be useless and God made it happen.

8 Apparently, the cure was not instantaneous.

9 Many have suggested that Ahaz built a sundial in which the shadow of a tower moved across a flight of steps, indicating the time.

12 2 Chronicles 32:31 adds that also wanted to know about the sundial moving backwards. This may have happened after the Assyrian army was struck down, since these diplomats appear to be from an independent Babylon, which did not happen until after that event.

13 Further, Hezekiah had had time to accumulate some wealth, probably from the spoils left behind by the Assyrian army. Prior to that, Hezekiah had paid tribute several times and would have little to show.

17 Hezekiah was punished for his showmanship. Perhaps he had not given adequate credit to God for the riches he displayed.

19 Hezekiah revealed his self-centered nature.

## **2 Kings 21**

1 Manasseh was born after Hezekiah's serious illness (chapter 20).

2 Manasseh reversed Hezekiah's gains (v 2 – 9), indicating that the faith of the people had not changed much.

13 Prophets delivered the message that Judah would suffer the fate of Samaria: exile. Habakkuk predicted Babylonian victory (1:6) so may have preached in this era.

17 2 Chronicles 33:11 – 19 records Manasseh's repentance. He was captured by Assyria (Nineveh did not fall to Babylon until 612 BC. Manasseh reigned from 692 – 637 BC). In prison, he repented. God arranged his release. Manasseh refortified Jerusalem and other cities plus removed the idols. But, the people continued to sacrifice to Jehovah in the high places.

21 Manasseh's son Amon reverted to idolatrous ways.

23 After two years, Amon was assassinated (the assassins were executed). The reasons are not given. But, the dynasty of David continued in his 8-year-old son, Josiah.

## **2 Kings 22**

3 Josiah began to seek God from age 16 and began removal of idols at age 20, including in the region of the former Northern Kingdom (2 Chronicles 34:3 – 7). At age 26, he began repairs on the Temple.

7 As under Jehoash with High Priest Jehoiada (2 Kings 12), although the priests accounted for the donations, the workmen were trustworthy and were not required to give an accounting.

8 Assuming that the Law was being followed in the days of Hezekiah, the Law had been out of circulation 75 years. Perhaps this was the copy kept by the ark of the covenant (Deuteronomy 31:26)

11 Josiah apparently was unaware of the book of the Law, although other copies probably existed.

13 Josiah immediately connected the curses of Deuteronomy (and other places in the Law) to the condition of Israel in his time.

15 The prophetess Huldah delivered two messages: Israel will suffer but Josiah was promised that it would not come in his time and that he would die in peace. The latter part did not happen (23:29) because Josiah, later, did not listen (2 Chronicles 35:22).

## **2 Kings 23**

4 Josiah orchestrated a thorough cleansing of the Temple by removing and destroying all pagan artifacts. The ashes were taken to Bethel because that was the center of calf worship and other idolatries.

6 The ashes of images were spread on the graves of the “unclean” people – those who were separated from Israel, probably due to their idolatry (not on the graves of poor people as the English translation seems to imply).

7 Prostitution, male and female, was part of Asherah worship.

9 The priests of the high places, despite being dedicated to Jehovah, were not allowed back into the priestly class.

13 Some of the pagan temples destroyed under Josiah had been built by Solomon (1 Kings 11:4 – 8).

14 The point of defiling the pagan locations before their destruction was to prevent rebuilding.

15 Josiah’s appropriated authority over the previous Northern Kingdom (see v 19), so he defiled and dismantled the calf-worship temple and the other sites of idolatry. Assyria was in its last times, so that authority over the region had disappeared. Josiah even taxed them for Temple repairs (2 Chronicles 34:9). Perhaps this led to the expectation of the Samaritans that they should participate in the rebuilding of the Temple under Ezra (Ezra 4:2 – 3). Also, some Israelites had moved back into the region, perhaps becoming the ancestors of the Galileans of the New Testament.

16 1 Kings 13: A prophet told Jeroboam that one named Josiah would do these things.

22 Passover had not been celebrated even in the time of David, but not since the time of the judges. The last one mentioned in the Old Testament was in Joshua 5:10, before the battle at Jericho. See also 2 Chronicles 35:1 – 19 for more details.

25 Josiah was named by God as the king who tried the hardest to follow all the Law.

26 But, God was still intent on exiling Judah as He had exiled Northern Kingdom. Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Zephaniah prophesied in this period. Jeremiah continued much longer, beyond the destruction of Jerusalem.

29 2 Chronicles 35:22 adds that God, through Pharaoh, told Josiah not to fight the Egyptian army as it went north to aid the last of the Assyrian army that was being pursued by the Babylonian army. Historically, the Egyptians got there too late. Babylon had already defeated the last Assyrian army. Josiah’s efforts would not have changed anything.

32 Jehohaz succeeded Josiah, but was evil. As Pharaoh was returning from his attempt to aid Assyria, he arrested Jehoahaz and replaced him with another son of Josiah, Eliakim, changing his name to Jehoiakim. Pharaoh also put them under tribute.

37 Jehoiakim was no better than his brother.

## 2 Kings 24

1 See also 2 Chronicles 36:5 – 8 and Jeremiah 26:22 – 24. Babylon took over in 606 BC. Jeremiah predicted that Judah would serve them 70 years (Jeremiah 29:10), which triggered Daniel’s prayer in Daniel 9:2. Daniel’s captivity began at this point. About this time, Nebuchadnezzar’s father died and Nebuchadnezzar became emperor, so he was distracted by other affairs. Jehoiakim saw this as an opportunity to revolt. As a result of his rebellion, Jehoiakim was taken as a prisoner to Babylon along with some of the Temple articles. He must have returned later since he died at Jerusalem.

4 Jehoiakim had enriched himself by abusing his people.

7 Babylon defeated Egypt at Carchemish in the fourth year of Jehoiakim (Jeremiah 46:2) after Egypt's failed mission to support Assyria. So, Egypt never risked opposing Babylon's takeover of the regions previously subject to them.

8 Jehoiachin was king only three months when the Babylonians arrived in response to his father's rebellion. He was imprisoned in Babylon, but was released 37 years later (2 Kings 25:27).

10 This siege corresponds to 597 BC.

12 The royal family was taken captive.

13 The rest of the articles of the Temple were taken as booty, which were later used by Belshazzar (Daniel 5) and returned by Cyrus (Ezra 1:7).

14 All the wealthy people were exiled, which included Ezekiel.

18 Zedekiah was another son of Josiah.

20 Zedekiah apparently thought that he could stop sending tribute due to distance and the political climate. Both Jeremiah and Ezekiel recorded much of the history of this period.

## 2 Kings 25

3 In 588 BC, the Babylonians returned. The siege lasted 19 months (586 BC).

4 When defeat was assured due to lack of food, the king attempted to escape with the remains of the army, presumably to fight another day.

7 Punishments for rebellious vassals were brutal. Zedekiah lived out his years in Babylon.

10 Breaking down the walls made refortification difficult.

11 A third wave of exiles went to Babylon

12 But some of the poorest people were allowed to stay. Jeremiah records their history and why they decided to forsake the land and move to Egypt (Jeremiah 40 – 44).

17 Anything of value (gold, silver, bronze) was taken as booty.

21 Judean army officers who had been left behind were captured and executed.

24 Gedaliah was appointed governor (not king) of the remaining poor people. He assured them that they would be safe under Babylonian rule.

25 But, the idea of royalty was strong. So, a remnant of the royal family assassinated the governor in an attempt to re-start Judah.

26 Despite Jeremiah's warning, the remaining poor people decided that the Babylonians would come back and kill them all due to the coup, so they left for Egypt.

27 Jehoiachin was released by Nebuchadnezzar's son, who thought highly of him.

30 Therefore, this history was written after Jehoiachin's death.