

**Commentary on Second Kings chapter 3, by Chuck Smith 10.26.22**

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**October memory verse Matthew 1:21**

And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins."

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**Includes John MacArthur :: Bible Introductions - 2 Kings**

Now Jehoram the son of Ahab began to reign over Israel in Samaria in the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, and he reigned for twelve years ([2Ki 3:1](#)).

So Jehoram, the other son of Ahab, began now to reign while Jehoshaphat was still king of Judah; he reigned for twelve years.

And he wrought evil in the sight of the LORD; but not as bad as his father: for he did remove the Baal image of Baal that his father had made. Nevertheless he continued in the ways of the first king of Israel, Jeroboam, and he made Israel to sin ([2Ki 3:2-3](#)).

Now this time Moab, the area across Jordan River, the area that is now Jordan, rebelled against Israel. They have been tributaries, and Moab had to pay a hundred thousand sheep and a hundred thousand goats a year as tribute. They have been conquered, and so this was the tribute that was laid upon them. A hundred thousand sheep, hundred thousand goats with the full wool were to be turned over to the king of Israel every year. And the king of Moab rebelled against this, so Jehoram drafted all of the men of Israel and he sent to Jehoshaphat the king of Judah asking him to go up against Moab with him in battle. And so he said, "Of course, I'm as you are. You know, my men with your men." And so they said, "Which way shall they go?" And they said, "Let's go down through Edom." So they were going to go south and attack them at the flank from the southern flank. The king of Edom joined with them.

And so they made this journey. It would be south of the Dead Sea to Edom, and then coming north on the other side of the Jordan River to attack Moab. And they came to a barren area.

No water for them, and for the cattle that followed them. And the king of Israel said, Alas! the LORD has called these three kings together, to deliver them into the hand of Moab! But Jehoshaphat said, Isn't there a prophet around here, that we might inquire of the LORD by him? And one of the king's servants answered and said, There is Elisha the son of Shaphat, which actually ministered unto Elijah. And Jehoshaphat said, The word of the LORD is with him. So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat and the king of

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Edom went down to him. And Elisha said to the king of Israel, What have I to do with thee? Why don't you go to the prophets of your father, and the prophets of your mother? ([2Ki 3:9-13](#))

Elisha really had no use for the king of Israel because of the idolatry that was in the land.

And he said, Nay: the LORD hath called these three kings together, to deliver them into the hand of Moab. Elisha said, As the LORD of hosts lives, if it weren't that I respected Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, I would not even pay any attention to you. I wouldn't even look at you. But bring me now a minstrel. And it came to pass, when the minstrel played, that the hand of the LORD came upon him. And he said, Thus saith the LORD, Make a valley full of trenches. For you will not see the wind, neither will you see the rain; yet the valley will be filled with water, that ye may drink, both ye, and your cattle, and your beasts. And this is but a light thing in the sight of the LORD: he will deliver the Moabites into your hand. And ye shall smite every fenced city, every choice city, and shall fell every good tree, and stop all the wells of water, and mar every good piece of land with stones. And so it came to pass in the morning, when the meat offering was offered, that, behold, there came water by the way of Edom, and the country was filled with water ([2Ki 3:13-20](#)).

Now this does happen down there in that great rift by the Dead Sea. It can be a hot sunny day, and suddenly you get torrents of water flowing down through the canyon from the rain that... It's like out here in the desert when it rains in the mountains. You can be going through the desert, and it can be having a cloudburst up in the mountains, and these gullies just become filled with water. Though it may not even be raining where you are, the gullies become just torrents, rivers. And so this did happen there. They didn't see the rain; they didn't hear the winds. And yet, the valley was full of water that came from Edom.

And now when the Moabites heard that the kings were coming to fight against them, they gathered all that were able to put on armor, and they stood at the border. And they rose up early in the morning, and they saw this valley full of water but in the early morning sun reflecting off of it, it looked like blood ([2Ki 3:21-22](#)):

The early morning sun rising was a reddish, you know, the reddish tint that is, and as it was reflecting on the water, they said, "Oh, they must have all taken the sword against each other and they've been fighting with each other. Let's go in and just mop them up." And so, they came rushing in, in a mop-up operation, and of course, all of the fellows were just waiting for them. And so the Moabites were defeated, and they went forth and destroyed the cities.

## John MacArthur :: Bible Introductions - 2 Kings

### Title

First and Second Kings were originally one book, called in the Hebrew text, “Kings,” from the first word in [1:1](#). The Greek translation of the OT, the Septuagint (LXX)<sup>1</sup>, divided the book in two, and this was followed by the Latin Vulgate (Vg.) version and English translations. The division was for the convenience of copying this lengthy book on scrolls and codexes and was not based on features of content. Modern Hebrew Bibles title the books “Kings A” and “Kings B.” The LXX and Vg. connected Kings with the books of Samuel, so that the titles in the LXX are “The Third and Fourth Books of Kingdoms” and in the Vg. “Third and Fourth Kings.” The books of 1 and 2 Samuel and 1 and 2 Kings combined are a chronicle of the entire history of Judah’s and Israel’s kingship from Saul to Zedekiah. First and Second Chronicles provides only the history of Judah’s monarchy.

### Author and Date

Jewish tradition proposed that Jeremiah wrote Kings, though this is unlikely because the final event recorded in the book (see [2 Kin. 25:27–30](#)) occurred in Babylon in 561 B.C. Jeremiah never went to Babylon, but to Egypt ([Jer. 43:1–7](#)), and would have been at least 86 years old by 561 B.C. Actually, the identity of the unnamed author remains unknown. Since the ministry of prophets is emphasized in Kings, it seems that the author was most likely an unnamed prophet of the Lord who lived in exile with Israel in Babylon.

Kings was written between 561–538 B.C. Since the last narrated event ([2 Kin. 25:27–30](#)) sets the earliest possible date of completion and because there is no record of the end of the Babylonian captivity in Kings, the release from exile (538 B.C.) identifies the latest possible writing date. This date is sometimes challenged on the basis of “to this day” statements in [1 Kin. 8:8](#); [9:13](#), [20](#), [21](#); [10:12](#); [12:19](#); [2 Kin. 2:22](#); [8:22](#); [10:27](#); [14:7](#); [16:6](#); [17:23](#), [34](#), [41](#); [21:15](#). However, it is best to understand these statements as those of the sources used by the author, rather than statements of the author himself. It is clear that the author used a variety of sources in compiling this book, including “the book of the acts of Solomon” ([1 Kin. 11:41](#)), “the chronicles of the kings of Israel” ([1 Kin. 14:19](#); [15:31](#); [16:5](#), [14](#), [20](#), [27](#); [22:39](#); [2 Kin. 1:18](#); [10:34](#); [13:8](#), [12](#); [14:15](#), [28](#); [15:11](#), [15](#), [21](#), [26](#), [31](#)), and “the chronicles of the kings of Judah” ([1 Kin. 14:29](#); [15:7](#), [23](#); [22:45](#); [2 Kin. 8:23](#); [12:19](#); [14:18](#); [15:6](#), [36](#); [16:19](#); [20:20](#); [21:17](#), [25](#); [23:28](#); [24:5](#)). Further, [Is. 36:1–39:8](#) provided information used in [2 Kin. 18:9–20:19](#), and [Jer. 52:31–34](#) seems to be the source for [2 Kin. 25:27–29](#). This explanation posits a single inspired author, living in Babylon during the Exile, using these pre-Exilic source materials at his disposal.

## Background and Setting

A distinction must be made between the setting of the books' sources and that of the books' author. The source material was written by participants in and eyewitnesses of the events. It was reliable information, which was historically accurate concerning the sons of Israel, from the death of David and the accession of Solomon (971 B.C.) to the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem by the Babylonians (586 B.C.). Thus, Kings traces the histories of two sets of kings and two nations of disobedient people, Israel and Judah, both of whom were growing indifferent to God's law and His prophets and were headed for captivity.

The book of Kings is not only accurate history, but interpreted history. The author, an exile in Babylon, wished to communicate the lessons of Israel's history to the exiles. Specifically, he taught the exilic community why the Lord's judgment of exile had come. The writer established early in his narrative that the Lord required obedience by the kings to the Mosaic law, if their kingdom was to receive His blessing; disobedience would bring exile ([1 Kin. 9:3–9](#)). The sad reality that history revealed was that all the kings of Israel and the majority of the kings of Judah "did evil in the sight of the LORD." These evil kings were apostates, who led their people to sin by not confronting idolatry, but sanctioning it. Because of the kings' failure, the Lord sent His prophets to confront both the monarchs and the people with their sin and their need to return to Him. Because the message of the prophets was rejected, the prophets foretold that the nation(s) would be carried into exile ([2 Kin. 17:13–23](#); [21:10–15](#)). Like every prophecy uttered by the prophets in Kings, this word from the Lord came to pass ([2 Kin. 17:5, 6](#); [25:1–11](#)). Therefore, Kings interpreted the people's experience of exile and helped them to see why they had suffered God's punishment for idolatry. It also explained that just as God had shown mercy to Ahab ([1 Kin. 22:27–29](#)) and Jehoiachin ([2 Kin. 25:27–30](#)), so He was willing to show them mercy.

The predominant geographical setting of Kings is the whole Land of Israel, from Dan to Beersheba ([1 Kin. 4:25](#)), including Transjordan. Four invading nations played a dominant role in the affairs of Israel and Judah from 971 to 561 B.C. In the tenth century B.C., Egypt impacted Israel's history during the reigns of Solomon and Rehoboam ([1 Kin. 3:1](#); [1:14–22](#), [40](#); [12:2](#); [14:25–27](#)). Syria (Aram) posed a great threat to Israel's security during the ninth century B.C., ca. 890–800 B.C. ([1 Kin. 15:9–22](#); [20:1–34](#); [22:1–4](#), [29–40](#); [2 Kin. 6:8–7:20](#); [8:7–15](#); [10:32, 33](#); [12:17–18](#); [13:22–25](#)). The years from ca. 800–750 B.C. were a half-century of peace and prosperity for Israel and Judah, because Assyria neutralized Syria and did not threaten to the south. This changed during the kingship of Tiglath-Pileser III ([2 Kin. 15:19, 20, 29](#)). From the mid-eighth century to the late seventh century B.C., Assyria terrorized Palestine, finally conquering and destroying Israel (the northern kingdom) in 722 B.C. ([2 Kin. 17:4–6](#)) and besieging Jerusalem in 701 B.C. ([2 Kin. 18:17–19:37](#)). From 612 to 539 B.C., Babylon was the dominant power in the ancient world. Babylon invaded Judah (the southern kingdom) 3 times, with the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple occurring in 586 B.C. during that third assault ([2 Kin. 24:1–25:21](#)).

## **Historical and Theological Themes**

Kings concentrates, then, on the history of the sons of Israel from 971 to 561 B.C. [First Kings 1:1–11:43](#) deals with Solomon’s accession and reign (971–931 B.C.). The two divided kingdoms of Israel and Judah (931–722 B.C.) are covered in [1 Kin. 12:1](#); [2 Kin. 17:41](#). The author arranged the material in a distinctive way in that the narration follows the kings in both the N and the S. For each reign described, there is the following literary framework. Every king is introduced with: 1) his name and relation to his predecessor; 2) his date of accession in relationship to the year of the contemporary ruler in the other kingdom; 3) his age on coming to the throne (for kings of Judah only); 4) his length of reign; 5) his place of reign; 6) his mother’s name (for Judah only); and 7) spiritual appraisal of his reign. This introduction is followed by a narration of the events that occurred during the reign of each king. The details of this narration vary widely. Each reign is concluded with: 1) a citation of sources; 2) additional historical notes; 3) notice of death; 4) notice of burial; 5) the name of the successor; and 6) in a few instances, an added postscript (i.e., [1 Kin. 15:32](#); [2 Kin. 10:36](#)). [Second Kings 18:1–25:21](#) deals with the time when Judah survived alone (722–586 B.C.). Two concluding paragraphs speak of events after the Babylonian exile ([2 Kin. 25:22–26, 27–30](#)).

Three theological themes are stressed in Kings. First, the Lord judged Israel and Judah because of their disobedience to His law ([2 Kin 17:7–23](#)). This unfaithfulness on the part of the people was furthered by the apostasy of the evil kings who led them into idolatry ([2 Kin. 17:21, 22; 21:11](#)), so the Lord exercised His righteous wrath against His rebellious people. Second, the word of the true prophets came to pass ([1 Kin. 13:2, 3; 22:15–28; 2 Kin. 23:16; 24:2](#)). This confirmed that the Lord did keep His Word, even His warnings of judgment. Third, the Lord remembered His promise to David ([1 Kin. 11:12–13, 34–36; 15:4; 2 Kin. 8:19](#)). Even though the kings of the Davidic line proved themselves to be disobedient to the Lord, He did not bring David’s family to an end as He did the families of Jeroboam I, Omri, and Jehu in Israel. Even as the book closes, the line of David still exists ([2 Kin. 25:27–30](#)), so there is hope for the coming “seed” of David (see [2 Sam. 7:12–16](#)). The Lord is thus seen as faithful, and His Word is trustworthy.

## **Our Hope from Kings**

In fact, none of the historical kings in the house of David met the condition of complete obedience that was to be the sign of the Promised One. According to Kings, the fulfillment of the Abrahamic and Davidic Covenants did not take place in Israel’s past, thus laying the foundation for the latter prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Twelve) who would point Israel to a future hope under Messiah when the Covenants would be fulfilled (see [Is. 9:6, 7](#)).