

A WALK THROUGH THE OLD TESTAMENT
TIME FRAME #6– THE DIVIDED KINGDOM TO THE DEFEAT OF ISRAEL
READING NOTES
931 BC - 722 BC
SELECTED CHAPTERS IN 1 KINGS AND 2 KINGS

SUMMARY

In judgement for Solomon’s idolatry and drift from God the LORD rips most of the nation of Israel from his family. He uses the prideful foolishness of Solomon’s son Rehoboam to fulfill this. Thus begins the era of the ‘Divided Kingdom’, Israel to the north and Judah to the south.

While Judah has a mixture of godly and idolatrous kings Israel has only idolatrous ones, leading the country further and further from God. However, there is always a remnant of faithful followers of God, often led by the LORD’s prophets.

In the end, Israel is judged by God through the Assyrians and deported out of the Land, never to return. The mixed population brought into the Land become the Samaritans of Jesus’ time. The nation of Judah will remain for another 180 years.

MAJOR EVENTS

EVENT # 54	SCRIPTURE
ISRAEL DIVIDES INTO TWO NATIONS	1 KINGS 12
NOTES	
<p>1. In his later years, Solomon had become abusive to his people. In his determination to acquire wealth, power and prestige he had taxed the people heavily and forced thousands into forced labor to build his cities. As his son Rehoboam comes to power the people want to know how he is going to exercise his power over them. 1 Kings 12:1-5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shechem was a place where the people of Israel had recommitted themselves to the Covenant in Joshua 24. It was a proper place to recognize Jeroboam as their new king. • Hearing Solomon is dead, Jeroboam returns from his exile in Egypt. (1 Kings 11:26-40) He joins the men from Israel at Shechem. • They demand that in exchange for their allegiance to him as king Rehoboam agree to lighten both the tax burden and the forced labor requirements. (vs.4) • Rehoboam indicates his willingness to consider this request by asking for the three days to give their demand consideration. (vs.5) <p>NOTE: <i>There has always been a division between the tribe of Judah and the other Tribes. Since the tribe of Benjamin usually allied itself with Judah, this left 10 tribes in this natural northern alliance. An earlier evidence of this division had been when David first rose to power after Saul’s death. The tribe of Judah followed David while the other tribes followed Ish-Bosheth, son of Saul. Judah was the largest, most populated and wealthiest tribe. It included the city of Jerusalem. This natural division is about to bring about the official division of Israel into two separate kingdoms.</i></p> <p>2. Rehoboam sought the counsel of two groups of advisors. 12:6-11</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The first were the older, experienced advisors of his father. They recognize that this was a time for humility and graciousness. If Rehoboam agreed to their demand, the people are going to give him their support for the duration of his rule. Rehoboam rejects this counsel. The most 	

likely reason is his pride and desire to prove himself and to establish his authority. These are common mistakes made by younger men. **(6-8a)**

- Rehoboam then turns to his friends he had grown up with. These would have been from noble families, detached from the world of the common people. Their prideful arrogance matches that of Rehoboam as they advise him to establish his authority. Rather than lighten the burden, he should make it even more abusive. **(vs.8b-11)**
 - “my little finger is thicker than my father’s thighs” – I am twice the man my father was
 - “add to your yoke” – I will treat you like my slaves
 - “with scorpions” – probably a severe form of scourging
3. Rehoboam takes the words of his younger friends to the people. However, the Bible makes clear that while Rehoboam is following his own natural tendencies, it is God who is using him to fulfill His prophetic words to Solomon **(11:9-13)** and to Jeroboam **(11:29-39)**. **12:15**
4. The people of the 10 Northern Tribes reject Rehoboam’s claim to being their king and establish a new kingdom that will be called ‘Israel’ for the rest of the books of 1 and 2 Kings. They quickly make Jeroboam their king. Rehoboam’s first reaction is to gather Judah’s fighting men and to restore the kingdom by force. However, God sends a prophet to tell them this is His will, and to stand down from attacking their brethren to the north. **12:16-24**
5. Jeroboam recognized the problem the Jewish religion would create for him. The only place the people of this new Israel could worship was at the Temple in Jerusalem. His fear is that in time this would rekindle the people’s desire to reunite with Judah. His solution is to create a new religion, probably loosely based on the Law, but also incorporating pagan elements as well. **12:25-33**
- He takes a page from Scripture, and creates two calves of gold. He declares that these are the gods who delivered Israel from Egypt. **(vs.28)**
 - He places one calf in the northern part of Israel and the other near his southern border. He also created additional ‘high places’ where people could sacrifice. **(vs.29)**
 - Instead of appointing Levites to serve as priests he creates a new cast of priests from the 10 tribes. Perhaps the Levites refused to go along with Jeroboam or perhaps he feared what they might do to thwart this attempt to create this new national religion. **(vs.31)**
 - Finally, he creates a new festival that will take the place of those described in the Law. **(vs.32-33)**
- NOTE:** *In 1 Kings 11 God had told Jeroboam that He would bless and establish his rule if Jeroboam followed Him as David had **(11:37-38)**. It is clear Jeroboam does not trust God. His decision to create this combination of Scriptural and Pagan worship will result in God judging his family and in time, bringing judgment on the nation. Israel will fall deeper and deeper into idolatry as the generations pass.*

PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS:

EVENT #55	SCRIPTURE
THE KINGS FROM REHOBOAM TO AHAB	1 KINGS 14-16
NOTES	
<p>1. As we study the histories of Israel and Judah there are some key themes to note.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be 19 kings of Israel. Every one of them will be evil idolaters. Not one will lead the people in a spiritual revival, but instead will become worse each generation. • There will be 20 kings of Judah. Four of these kings will be godly men who lead Judah to spiritual renewal. Four other kings will have a mixed record in regard to following God. The other 12 kings will engage in various types of idolatry. • There is constant war between Israel and Judah, with brief times of uneasy truce. • Most of the prophets in the Bible serve in Israel. Their words of warning go unheeded. God's consistent call out to His wayward people reveals His love and desire for them. <p>NOTE: <i>With these notes is a chart showing the kings and prophets of Israel and Judah.</i></p> <p>2. Jeroboam rules for 22 years. His decision to lead the nation of Israel into idolatry instead of following in the steps of David is confronted by God, Who declares that judgement will fall on his family as well as on the nation. 14:1-19</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The illness of his son leads Jeroboam to reach out to God through the prophet, Ahijah, who had told him of his coming rise to power back in 1 Kings 11. His attempt to fool the now old man is rather humorous. God tells his prophet who is coming and what to say. (vs.1-16) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ God reminds Jeroboam that He had promised to bless him if he followed the Lord as David had done. (vs. 7-8a) ○ Because of his idolatry, God was going to wipe out Jeroboam's family. The only descendent who will die a natural death and not be slain is the child who is currently ill. God will mercifully take his life. (vs.8b-14) ○ God will also judge Israel, bringing in an adversary who will defeat them and deport them from the land, scattering them across the world. (vs.15-16) • As Jeroboam's wife steps onto the threshold of her house, her child dies. With this, she and her husband know the rest of the prophesy will come true as well. (vs.17-18) • Jeroboam then dies, having ruled for 22 years. (vs.19-20) <p>3. Rehoboam also leads the nation of Judah into both political and religious decline. His borders are not secure and he leads the people into unprecedented idolatry. 14:21-31</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The people incorporate many of the elements of the pagan religions, including male prostitutes. The use of sexual acts at the places of worship were intended to cause the gods to bless the land with fertility. This is the first mention of homosexuality being practiced by the Jews. (vs.21-24) • The king of Egypt takes advantage of the situation to plunder the treasury of Rehoboam, taking away the treasures Solomon had accumulated. The precious gold shields Solomon had made for the palace guard are replaced with ones made of bronze. (vs.25-28) • The summary of Rehoboam's life and his death are recorded in verses 29-31. <p>4. Rehoboam is succeeded by his son Abijam. 15:1-8</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He practiced the same wickedness as his father. (vs.3) • To fulfill His word to David, God allows Abijam to have a son who will reign after him, preserving the Davidic line of kings. (vs.4-5) • There was constant war between Abijam and Jeroboam. (vs.6) • After just three years on the throne, Abijam dies (vs.2,8) 	

5. Asa, the first king to bring spiritual renewal to Judah comes to the throne. **15:9-24**
 - It would be interesting to know where Asa received his spiritual life from. It was not his father or mother! Asa had the same heart for God as David, and he personally lived a life that pleased God (**vs.11**)
 - He removed the male prostitutes and idols associated with the idolatry of his father. (**vs.12**)
 - The queen mother was a position of influence as an advisor to her son. Asa removes his mother from this official role because of her idolatry. (**vs.13**)
 - He brought the Temple vessels back to the Temple.
 - He was at war with Israel. When faced with a life threatening blockade, he pays for the help of the king of Syria. His attacks on Israel forced Baasha to move away from his border with Judah.
 - He dies after 41 years of rule, having followed God faithfully through to the end of his life. (**vs.9, 23-24**)

6. Nadab, Jeroboam's son ruled for two years over Israel before being assassinated by Baasha. Baasha then kills off every member of Jeroboam's family, fulfilling the prophecy of Ahijah. **15:25-32**

7. Baasha ascends the throne of Israel and rules for 24 years. Though he brought God's judgement on Jeroboam's house, he is just as evil, continuing the pagan practices. As a result, God announces judgement on the house of Baasha that will mirror that on the house of Jeroboam. **1 Kings 16:1-7**

8. Elah became the next king of Israel and is assassinated two years into his reign by Zimri. After taking power, Zimri kills everyone in Baasha's family. His power is short lived, as the army of Israel proclaim their commander, Omri king. As they march on him, Zimri takes his own life by burning down the palace while in it. His rule was just 7 days. **16:8-14**

9. Omri needs to quell a threat from Tibni, but rules for 12 years. He fortifies Israel and builds the city of Samaria, which becomes the capital city of Israel. His life is more sinful than any ruler before him. **16:21-28**

10. Ahab then takes over the throne from his father Omri. **16:29-34**
 - He continues the spiritual decline by being worse than his father (**vs.30**)
 - He marries a pagan princess, Jezebel. She will bring the nation to even deeper paganism, removing the blended worship of those before her and introducing the worship of Baal.
 - They build a temple dedicated to Baal. It is possible that the reference to his sons dying in **verse 34** refers to them being offered as sacrifices to Baal by Ahab.
 - Ahab will rule for 22 years. For many of those he will come into conflict with Elijah the prophet.

PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS:

EVENT # 56	SCRIPTURE
THE MINISTRY OF ELIJAH	1 KINGS 17-19; 2
NOTES	
<p>1. Elijah stands out as one of the most powerful men of the Old Testament. The idolatry and apostasy of Israel hit its high point during the reign of Ahab and his wife Jezebel. Many of the prophets of Jehovah had been hunted down and killed. Baal was the official god of Israel and Jezebel personally supported hundreds of his prophets and priests. Against this backdrop God sends one man – Elijah – to confront and defeat this array of pagans. 1 Kings 17:1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Next to nothing is known about Elijah’s background. Even the location of his birth home, Tishbe, is uncertain. • His appearance, like that of John the Baptist, is sudden and unexpected. In the midst of the domination of Jezebel and Baal worship, he suddenly appears to announce a three year drought. Yahweh is about to demonstrate His power and glory. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ He declares that the LORD – Yahweh – is the true God of Israel ○ The LORD truly lives, unlike the cold statues of Baal ○ Elijah stands before this all powerful and living God. His confidence comes from knowing the LORD is with him. ○ This three year drought will begin by his word, and will not end until Elijah again speaks. ○ Baal was the god of fertility, who controlled the much needed rain. This drought would prove his impotence to provide it. <p>2. As the drought begins, God provides water and food for Elijah at a brook called Cherith. 17:2-7</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This brook is located east of the Jordan in a dry, inhospitable area. This provides some degree of safety for Elijah, for it is outside of Ahab’s reach. • The provision of God resembles His care for Israel during the Exodus, as He brings bread and meat to Elijah. <p>3. When Cherith dries up, God sends Elijah out of Israel to Sidon, located in Phoenicia, the home of Jezebel! This is the very heart of Baal worship and was ruled by Jezebel’s father. God will show that even here, He will protect and provide for His prophet. 17:8-16</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God tells Elijah that He will use a widow to provide for him. (vs.9) • Elijah’s request that the widow use her last bit of flour to make him some bread would go against every maternal instinct in her. With the request comes a promise of long term provision. (vs.10-14) • In an act of either faith or compassion, the widow does as Elijah asks. For a number of days, Elijah, the widow and her son have bread to eat. This provision would have continued after Elijah left, right up to the day the drought ends, as God had promised. (vs.15-16) <p>4. In another display of power, God raises the widow’s son from the dead. This again showed that Baal was powerless, even in his ‘own country’, while God is all powerful and sovereign, even where He is unknown and not worshipped. 17:17-24</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The widow’s deep grief over the death of her son is evident in her words to Elijah. Had he come to preserve their lives through the provision of God only to take her son? She would rather have died together from the famine than to go through her life being preserved only to lose her son. (vs.17-18) • Elijah carries the boy’s body to the chamber where he has been sleeping. He does not ‘heal’ the boy, but goes to heart filled prayer for God to raise him back to life. We see passion and compassion in his prayer. God answers by giving life back to the boy. (vs.19-22) • Elijah gives the widow back her son. Her response is to declare faith in both Elijah and the God he serves. (vs.23-24) 	

5. For three years Elijah has lived a secluded life. Now God send him to not only end the drought, but to confront King Ahab and the people of Israel with the fact He is the one true God. **1 Kings 18:1-19**
- Ahab sends his servant Obadiah to search for patches of grass in an effort to save some of the royal animals. This shows the severity of the drought. Obadiah is a godly man who has saved the lives of 100 prophets of God. The fact he had done so using the food from the palace of Ahab and Jezebel is ironic. **(vs.1-6)**
 - Elijah meets Obadiah and instructs him to tell Ahab he is back. Obadiah's response has some humor to it. He is convinced Elijah will simply disappear and he will be put to death by Ahab. With the assurance that Elijah is not going anywhere, Obadiah goes to tell Ahab. **(vs.7-16)**
 - Ahab accuses Elijah of being the cause of the drought and causing trouble for Israel. Elijah responds that the drought is the result of his family abandoning following God. Elijah then tells Ahab to gather the people of Israel together, along with the 950 prophets of Baal and Asherah being housed by Jezebel. **(vs.17-19)**
6. Everyone gathers at Mount Carmel, located in the northwest part of Israel. What follows is a dramatic showdown between Yahweh and Baal to show which is the greater god. By sunset, Yahweh will have shown Himself all powerful, the prophets of Baal will be dead and the drought will have ended. **18:20-46**
- Elijah challenges the people of Israel to stop thinking they can mix the worship of Yahweh and Baal. It is time for them to choose one or the other. It is a good reminder that God is holy, and will not allow us to worship as we want, but to worship as He has revealed and instructed. The people listen but refuse to respond. **(vs.20-21)**
 - Next Elijah sets up the showdown. As he does so, he gives the prophets of Baal every advantage. They can go first, choose the best bull and have all 450 prophets participate. Elijah will face them alone. Then they both will prepare their bull for sacrifice, but not light a fire. The god who ignites the offering being given to them will be proven as the true God. **(vs.22-24)**
 - "I, even I only, am left a prophet of the LORD" – Elijah knows there are other prophets of the LORD still alive. However, they are in hiding. He alone is out in public and facing down these 450 prophets of Baal.
 - The prophets of Baal go first. They prepare the sacrifice and spend all day beseeching Baal to answer with fire. The longer the day goes, the more frantic they become, cutting themselves as a way of getting Baal to respond. As the time for the evening sacrifice approaches, there had been no answer. **(vs.25-29)**
 - This scene shows the clear difference between the religion surrounding Baal and God. Baal demanded that his people offer sacrifices to appease him and move him to action. This included offering children as burnt offerings. Yahweh revealed Himself as the God Who reached out to His people, Who Himself made promises and sacrifices in order to make a way for His people to know Him. The invitation is to respond, for He had done everything needed for the relationship. That will include offering His own son as The Sacrifice for sin.
 - Then Elijah takes his turn. He wants to make sure there is no doubt this will be Yahweh Who answers and causes the fire to come, so he has his sacrifice drenched in water. In contrast to the prophets of Baal, his prayer is very simple and appeals to God manifesting Himself to His people. God answers by igniting the sacrifice. **(vs.30-38)**
 - It is important to note that Elijah builds his altar using 12 stones from an old altar that had been used to worship God in the past. This was in line with God's instructions in the Law regarding how altars were to be built. While the Bible generally is opposed to these high places that were used to offer sacrifices, in this case God uses it to demonstrate His power over Baal. God Himself will destroy the altar after it has served this one specific purpose. **(vs. 38)**
 - The people respond with fear and worship. Elijah now takes the next step in wiping out Baal worship by telling the people to gather his 450 prophets and killing them. **(vs.39-40)**

- Then God ends the drought. Note that He uses Elijah's prayers as He does so. Elijah supernaturally runs to the capital city of Jezreel expecting this spiritual revival to continue. **(vs.41-46)**
7. Elijah undoubtedly thought he was about to lead a revival in Israel. However, those dreams are soon shattered by the determination of Jezebel to kill him. **19:1-3**
 8. Her reputation and power are such that Elijah has no doubts about her ability to make good on her threat. He flees for his life, and as he enters the Judean wilderness he has an emotional and spiritual crash. Death looks like the best option to him. As we read about this spiritual crisis and how God restores Elijah, there are several key principles we can apply to our lives when life becomes hard and discouragement rises within us. **19:4-21**
 - The first thing God does is to start to refresh Elijah physically. Undoubtedly the past 48 hours have left him exhausted. He gets some sleep and food. Then Elijah travels to Mt. Sinai (also known as Mt. Horeb). The touch is very interesting, for the angel could have just spoken to him. Physical touch can be an essential part of encouraging people. **(vs.4-8)**
 - Then God begins to deal with Elijah's emotional and spiritual burnout. The key is to gain clear perspective on things. This will include having a future to look forward to. **(vs.9-18)**
 - God uses a question to draw out Elijah's deep emotions. Elijah's words form a lament, something often seen in the Psalms. **(vs.9-10)**
 - Then God calms Elijah by speaking to him in a low whisper. This quiets the moment. Then he asks His question again. The answer is the same, but it appears the emotion is decreasing. Elijah is clearing his heart so he can see more clearly. **(vs.11-14)**
 - Then God gives Elijah a new assignment. His season of confronting Ahab and the people of Israel are over. His role is to now anoint the next generation of civil and religious leaders. **(vs.15-17)**
 - Finally, God adjusts Elijah's sense of being alone by assuring him there are others who are remaining faithful to Him. **Vs.18)**
 - Elijah then finds Elisha and marks him as the next prophet of Israel. This is done by giving him his cloak on him. A prophet's cloak was unique and marked the man as a prophet. Elisha knows exactly what Elijah is doing. There will be a brief time of mentoring before Elisha starts his ministry. **(vs.19-21)**
 9. Elijah is taken to heaven/ leaving Elisha to carry on the ministry of prophet. **2 Kings 2**
 - The three cities that Elijah stops at, Gilgal, Bethel and Jericho were known as cities where groups of God's prophets lived. It is possible that Elijah is recognized as the leader/teacher in these locations. At each stop he encourages Elisha to stay. Each time, Elisha refuses, and continues with him. At each stop Elisha is told by the prophets there that God is about to take Elijah. **(vs.1-5)**
 - As they arrive at the Jordan, Elijah parts the waters and they cross. When asked what he wants Elijah to give him, Elisha asks for double the spirit of Elijah. This will be answered as Elisha performs twice as many miracles as Elijah.
 - Elijah becomes the second man in the Bible to go to heaven without first going through physical death. The first was Enoch in **Genesis 5:21-24**.
 - As Elisha leaves, he parts the waters of the Jordan just as Elijah had done. This indicates he does indeed have the spirit of Elijah.
 10. Elisha's role of Prophet is confirmed by God in **2 Kings 2:15-25**.

PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS:

EVENT # 57	SCRIPTURE
THE MINISTRY OF ELISHA	2 KINGS 3-7; 13:14-25
NOTES	
<p>1. Elisha is involved in a war between Israel Judah and Edom on one side and Moab on the other.</p> <p>2 Kings 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jehoram, Ahab’s son assumes the throne. He does not continue the worship of Baal like his father, but still practiced the worship of the calves put up by Jeroboam. (vs.1-3) • Moab had been a vassal state of Israel, giving tribute in exchange for peace and some degree of self-rule. The king sees Ahab’s death as an opportunity to rebel. In response, Jehoram asks Judah to help him. Jehoshaphat agrees. They decide to attack Moab from the south through Edom. They can do this because Edom is another vassal state. Their king joins forces with Israel and Judah. However, they become lost in the wilderness, and are threatened with death from the lack of water. (vs.4-9) • Jehoshaphat is a godly king. Faced with this situation he asks if there isn’t a prophet of God they can consult. Someone mentions Elisha, whose reputation is known in Judah. (vs.10-12) • As the three kings go to him, Elisha agrees to help because of the presence of Jehoshaphat. Elisha asks for a musician. As this man plays, God’s hand comes on Elisha and he predicts that God will miraculously provide water and then victory over Moab. (vs.13-19) • The next morning the dry stream beds are filled with water. As the Moabites look at the water, the reddish rock of Edom makes it appear to be red like blood. They assume this is blood, and believe the three armies have attacked each other. They move into the camp unprepared to meet the soldiers who are alive and well, and Moab is routed. (vs.21-27) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ As the king of Moab faces certain defeat and death, he sacrifices his own son on the wall of a city. The great wrath against Israel did not come from a god, but from the remaining men of Moab. They are able to attack with such ferociousness that Israel removes her army from the field. (vs.27) <p>2. Elisha meets the need of a widow of one of the sons of the prophets through the miraculous provision of cooking oil. 2 Kings 4:1-7</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The woman faces the loss of her two children. The family has debts, and the creditor intends to sell the children into slavery to meet that debt. Elisha instructs her to borrow as many containers as she can. Using her one pot of oil, she is able to fill every vessel she had borrowed. She then sold the oil to pay off her debt. <p>3. Elisha then stayed with a woman in the town of Shunem. Recognizing his position as prophet, she has her husband build a room on the roof of their house for Elisha to stay in. Grateful for the quiet place to rest, Elisha asks if he can speak a word to an official on her behalf. She says no, she has her wealthy family to care for her. Undeterred, Elisha discovers she and her older husband have no children. Elisha promises that in one year, she will be holding a baby. Her disbelief does not stop God from answering and she conceives a child. 4:8-17</p> <p>4. Later, her son is struck with a brain aneurism and dies. The mother puts his body in Elisha’s room and goes to find him. When Elisha offers her his staff and tells her to use it to raise up her son she refuses, for she wants Elisha himself to come. Arriving at her home, he does raise him up from the dead. 4:18-37.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The woman tells Elisha’s servant Gehazi all is well because she wants to meet Elisha personally, and is afraid he will try to speak on her behalf if she is honest. (vs.25-26) • Coming into Elisha’s presence she falls at his feet. Elisha says that God has not revealed what her situation is, so he gives her permission to speak. She does, saying losing this child in death was worse than not having a child at all. (vs.27-28) 	

- When Gehazi arrives and places Elisha's staff over the boy nothing happens. Elisha prays to the LORD and lays over the boy. Slowly, the cold body of the dead child warms as life once again flows through him. **(vs.31-37)**
5. Elisha purifies the poisoned stew of a group of prophets. The stew had been accidentally poisoned by one of the prophets putting a poisonous vine into the pot. Elisha put flour into the pot and miraculously the stew is purified and fit to be eaten. Note that it is God, not the flour that purifies the stew. **4:38-44**
 6. Elisha is approached by a Syrian general named Naaman, who has been struck by leprosy. As Elisha heals him, two key things are seen. One, God is the God of all peoples, including those who do not choose to worship Him. Second, a key responsibility of God's people is to represent Him to the non-believer. When God manifests Himself, faith is often the result. **5:1-19**
 - Naaman is a commanding general of the Syrian army, a very powerful man. However he develops leprosy, a disease that threatens to make him an outcast.
 - On a raid into Israel he had captured a young Jewish girl and brought her home to be a servant to his wife. She tells her mistress that there was a prophet in Israel who could heal her husband. **(vs.1-3)**
 - Naaman secures permission from the Syrian king to go to Israel to see this prophet. He sends a letter with Naaman explaining he comes in peace, and that he came to be healed of leprosy. Naaman takes silver, gold and clothing as payment for the needed miracle and goes to Israel. This payment would have been expected by any pagan prophet for 'services rendered'. **(vs.4-5)**
 - The response of the king of Israel is humorous. He knows he cannot heal this powerful man and suspects this is a plan to attack Israel. When this impossible request cannot be met the Syrians will use it as an excuse to go to war with him. Elisha hears about Naaman and his request and send a message to have Naaman come to him. **(vs.6-8)**
 - Apparently it never occurred to the king to seek Elisha's help.
 - Elisha's motivation for helping Naaman is, "that he may know there is a prophet in Israel". He wants Naaman to know the God of Israel is the one true God.
 - Naaman stood at Elisha's door, expecting to speak to him directly. He expected Elisha to then use some extravagant expression of prayer to heal him. Instead, Elisha sends a messenger and tells Naaman to dip himself in the Jordan River seven times and he will be healed. Naaman's response to this is anger, and he storms away. It is only the words of his servants that calms him and convinces him to do as he was told. The result is his healing. **(vs.9-14)**
 - All of Elisha's actions were designed to force Naaman to show humility. He as not being helped because of his position or wealth, but because of the mercy of God.
 - Naaman's response is faith in Yahweh, the God of Israel. This spiritual 'cleansing' is of far greater worth than his physical cleaning! **(vs.15-19)**
 - He declares that there is no other God but Yahweh. This is far more than saying He is the greatest of the gods! He is the only God.
 - He wants to take soil from Israel to make an altar in Syria to worship God.
 - He asks that God pardon him for the times he would have to accompany his king in worshipping Rimmon, the main god of Syria.
 - Elisha refuses to take Naaman's gifts. As he says 'go in peace', he is saying that God will pardon Naaman for the times he has to join his king in worshipping Rimmon.
 7. Elisha joins a group of the prophets he led in building a new home at the Jordan. One of them had borrowed an ax head to cut down trees. It flew off the handle and into the water. Being borrowed, and apparently he doesn't have the funds to replace it. Elisha causes it to float so it could be recovered. **6:1-7**

8. There were frequent skirmishes and full battles between Israel and Syria. **2 Kings 6:8-23** describe one such time.
- God gave Elisha insight as to where the Syrian army was waiting to ambush the army of Israel. This enabled Israel to avoid the Syrians. **(vs.8-10)**
 - The king of Syria is sure there is a traitor in his court passing information to Israel. He is assured this is not true, but that Elisha has the ability to know all the king is saying. Being told Elisha is in the city of Dothan, he sends an army to capture him. **(vs.11-14)**
 - As the army surrounds Dothan, God encircles Elisha with an angelic force. Note it takes faith to see them! After God strike the Syrians with blindness, Elisha leads them right into Samaria, where they are captured by the army of Israel. **(vs.15-20)**
 - The king sees this enemy force and asks Elisha if they should be killed. Elisha instructs the king to show mercy, and after feeding them to send them home. This displays God's mercy. **(vs.21-23)**
9. The earlier skirmishes between Syria and Israel escalates into a full invasion by Syria. Laying siege to Samaria, Syria slowly starves the people of Israel. Just when things are at their lowest, God miraculously delivers Israel by causing the Syrian army to flee the field. **6:24-7:20**
- The famine in the city was so great that people resorted to eating their children. Blaming Elisha for this situation, the king declares Elisha will die. Apparently the king believes that if Elisha is killed, the siege will be lifted. **(vs.24-33)**
 - Elisha declares that by the next day not only will there be food, but there will be so much of it that its value will be below normal. The captain of the king's guard shows dismissive unbelief. Elisha predicts he will see this happen, but will not eat any of it. **(7:1-2)**
 - The lepers in **7:3-10** are very unlikely messengers to be used by God! They are outside the city because they are considered unclean and a danger to others. They decide to take their chances with the Syrians, since they are going to die anyway. As they enter the Syrian camp it is deserted with all of their equipment and food left behind. God had made the Syrians hear the sounds of a great army and they had fled, fearing Israel had made a pact with Egypt and others to come deliver them.
 - The lepers start to eat and carry away plunder when they have a moment of compassion for the people in the city. They determine to go to the city gates to tell them the good news. Note that this is a great example for us with the Gospel – we are not to keep the good news of Jesus Christ to ourselves!
 - The initial reaction of the king is suspicion, fearing this is a trap. His servants suggest a small band go see if what the lepers said was true. When it is determined the Syrians have left leaving all their supplies behind the people in Samaria go plunder the camp. **(vs.11-20)**
 - The captain of the king's guard is sent to oversee the people going in and out of the main gate. The crush of people run him over and trample him to death, fulfilling the words of Elisha. **(vs.17-20)**
10. As Elisha nears death, Joash, king of Israel goes to see him. He knows God has preserved Israel in large measure because of Elisha. He now fears that protection will end with Elisha's death. Elisha gives him assurance that God will continue to protect Israel. Upon his death, Elisha still has one more miracle to perform. When another man is buried on top of his bones, the man comes back to life. **13:14-21**

PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS:

EVENT #58	SCRIPTURE
THE FALL OF ISRAEL	2 KINGS 17

NOTES

1. The last king of Israel is Hoshea. The Assyrians invade Israel and make them a vassal state. After a number of years go by Hoshea uses what should have been given to Assyria as tribute and uses it to try to secure the help of Egypt. As a result, Hoshea is imprisoned and the Assyrians conquer the entire nation of Israel. Their custom was to deport the native population and scatter them among other conquered people. Then the land was repopulated by other peoples. This prevented organized rebellion. **2 Kings 17:1-6**

2. The writer of 2 Kings then gives a detailed explanation for this judgement from God. **17:7-23**
 - The rebellion and idolatry of the people of Israel had started early, first in secret then openly. **(vs.7-12)**
 - God had graciously warned both Israel and Judah through the prophets, but the people had refused to listen. **(vs.13-14)**
 - Over time, the sins of the people grew worse and worse. It culminated in human sacrifice. At this, God's judgement against Israel came and they were removed from the land. **(vs.15-18)**
 - Judah also had been involved in idolatry. The deportation of Israel should have served as a warning, but they continue to cycle towards God's judgement. The 10 tribes of Israel are known as "The Lost Tribes of Israel" because they never return to the land. **(vs.19-23)**

3. **17:24-41** describes how the land of Israel was resettled. In the end, the people are taught how to worship God as well as their own gods, of which there are many! **Verse 41** summarizes this process.

NOTE: *This group of people become the Samaritans of Jesus' time.*

PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS: