

Purpose

To demonstrate the fate that awaits all who refuse to make God their true leader

Penman

Unknown — possibly Jeremiah or a group of prophets

Setting

Once united nation of Israel, now divided into two kingdoms, Israel and Judah

Key People

Elijah, Elisha, the Woman from Shunem, Naaman, Jezebel, Jehu, Joash, Hezekiah, Sennacherib, Isaiah, Manasseh, Josiah, Jehoiakim, Zedekiah, and Nebuchadnezzar

Key Places

Jericho, Gilgal, Dothan, Samaria, Damascus, Ramoth-Gilead, and Jerusalem

Special Feature

1 Kings and *2 Kings* were originally one book

Key Verses

“Again and again the Lord sent His prophets to warn the people, but they would not listen. They were as stubborn as their ancestors and refused to believe in the Lord their God.”

2 Kings 17:13, 14

An Overview (25 Chapters)

- The Divided Kingdom (*1:1-17:41*)
- The Surviving Kingdom (*18:1-25:30*)

Major Themes

- *Idolatry*: An idol is any idea, ability, possession, or person that we regard more highly than God. We condemn Israel and Judah for foolishly worshiping idols, but we also worship other gods — power, money, physical attractiveness. Those who believe in God must resist the lure of these attractive idols.
- *Human Leaders*: Although the evil kings led the people into sin (and the good kings spent most of their time undoing what was done by their predecessors), the priests, princes, heads of families, and military leaders all had to cooperate with the evil plans and practices in order for them to be carried out. We cannot discharge our responsibility to obey God by blaming our leaders. We are responsible to know God’s Word and obey it.
- *God’s Patience*: God is patient with us. He gives us many chances to hear His message, to turn from sin, and to believe Him. His patience does not mean that He is indifferent to how we live, nor does it mean we can ignore His warnings. He gave ample warning to both Israel and Judah of their coming destruction. Even God’s patience has limits.
- *Judgment*: The consequences of rejecting God’s commands and purpose for our lives are severe. He will not ignore unbelief or rebellion.