

Notes



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Meeting With God Bible Reading Notes

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Week 21: Kings & Chronicles 2 (A historical study)

As the decades pass, Israel and Judah drift further from true worship and kingship. Israel is less stable than Judah, who still has the same dynasty on the throne throughout. The catalogues of the kings show that they are all mediocre, bad... or worse. But God continues to send his prophets to warn the people. In the next two studies, we begin by following the fortunes of one of these men - Elisha.

Day 1. Elisha's double portion

2 Kings 1 - 2

1. Contrast the actions of Ahaziah and Elijah as they near their deaths. What's the difference between them?

Note: 2:9 The eldest son inherited twice that of other sons. Elisha is asking that he may be Elijah's heir; not that he may be twice as powerful.

2. Elisha's miracles are also parables. Try to work out the spiritual truth involved in chapter 2 verses 19-21. What specific lesson do you learn from this?

Faith meant that Elisha believed God whatever the odds might be. Pray God will strengthen your faith through life's tests.

Day 2. Elisha gives hope

2 Kings 5:1-27

1. Naaman's knowledge of God is slight but sincere. What does he learn through his meeting with Elisha?

Notice that God's blessing is not confined to the Jew in Old Testament times.

2. Summarize how the servants help Naaman overcome his anger. What can you learn from this about dealing with your own anger or that of others?
3. Notice how the faith of the young captured Jewish girl is demonstrated. How can you copy her example as you seek to share your faith with others?

Ask God to help you to be conscious of the needs and opportunities around you as you seek to witness for Jesus and seek to be ready to do His will. Meditate on Hebrews 12:1-3 and fix your eyes and will on Christ.

Day 3. The Northern Kingdom collapses

2 Kings 9 and 10:28-35

The last of Elijah's charges to Elisha is to anoint Jehu as king (1 Kings 19:16). A new but short-lived dynasty begins.

1. Note down the ways in which God used Jehu as a scourge against the evil in Israel.
2. In what ways did Jehu fail God? God demands whole-hearted allegiance. Do you ever go only halfway when working for God?

God began reducing Israel's territory even in Jehu's time. Eighty years and several bad kings later, the reduction becomes complete. Hoshea is the final king, reigning as a vassal of the Assyrians.

Sin undermined and weakened the kingdom until it collapsed. Our lives are likewise hindered by wilful rebellion. Ask God to point out problem areas in your life and deal with them in his time.

Next time you are browsing Amazon or in a bookshop why not obtain 'Holiness' by Bishop J. C. Ryle or 'Holiness' by John White.

Day 4. Hezekiah's reforms

2 Chronicles 32

The Southern Kingdom, Judah, was to continue for over a century longer. During that time some of the kings were quite good! One of these was Hezekiah. Chapters 29 – 31 reveal his efforts in purifying the Temple, and reinstating the Passover feast, and developing the Temple worship. Yet “after all that Hezekiah had so faithfully done” (32:1) he faces a great test from the rising Kingdom of Assyria.

1. From this chapter try to work out what Hezekiah's priorities were during his reign.
2. Hezekiah's life was godly though imperfect. Note down the things he did that pleased God.
3. How does Hezekiah's response to the Assyrian threat give an insight into how you should respond when difficulties arise in your life?

Sometimes it is harder to be fruitful when things are going well, and it is easy to pray in a crisis. Pray for consistency and ask God to show you when you become self-centred.

Day 5. Judah's final years

2 Chronicles 33:21 – 34:33

1. From God's words (34:23-28), what can be deduced about God's attitude to those who repent and humble themselves before God? What are the consequences of sin?
2. What effect did finding the book of the law have on Josiah and the nation?

God of course hates sin and seeks to eradicate it from our lives. Pray that God will give you the willingness to surrender to his rule areas of your life which at present are not glorifying to him. This is so that you may grow more into the likeness of his Son (Romans 8:29).

Weekend

Read Deuteronomy 28, which sets out the blessings and curses of the covenant on the threshold of the Promised Land. Look over your notes of the past two weeks. From the record of blessings and judgments in Kings and Chronicles, trace the ways God was always faithful to the covenant, despite the Israelites' increasing departure from it.