**Survey Old Testament**

**2 Kings 11–16**

Thirteen different kings are mentioned in these chapters, five from Judah and eight from Israel. It is not necessary to examine the life of each king separately, so we will focus our attention on five kings in particular and seek to learn lessons from their lives.

**Joash, the Boy King of Judah (11–12)**

1. Protected (2 Kings 11:1–3).When the Queen Mother Athaliah saw that her son Ahaziah was dead, she determined to wipe out the entire royal family lest any rival steal the throne from her. In the providence of God, one little boy was rescued and protected for seven years, and thus God fulfilled His promise to keep David’s seed on the throne of Judah.
2. Proclaimed king (2 Kings 11:4-21). Jehoiada had the entire program arranged without the Queen Mother’s knowledge of the plot. He had the Levites and the guards in their places before evil Athaliah could act, and when she did appear, it meant her death. But it was more than a change in government; it was also a religious revival. Youthful Joash was given the Law (v. 12, and see Deut. 17:18), and the king vowed to serve the Lord and the people. Once his throne was secured, the king permitted Jehoiada to “clean house” and remove the Baal worshipers and their idols.
3. Blessed by God (2 Kings 12:1–16). The high priest Jehoiada was the young king’s spiritual guide, and at the beginning of his reign, Joash was willing to follow. Baal-worshiping Athaliah had allowed the house of the Lord to fall into disrepair, so Jehoiada and the king went to work to repair it and restore its use. The people responded generously so that soon there was enough money to complete the work. So honest and faithful were the workers that no special accounting was even made as the funds were spent.
4. Ruined by sin (2 Kings 12:17–21).  Second Chronicles 24:15–27 informs us that when godly Jehoiada died (at the age of 130), the king began to backslide and actually went into idolatry. God sent prophets to warn the king, but he would not listen. One of these prophets was Zechariah, the son of the high priest Jehoiada. Instead of listening to him, Joash commanded him to be stoned in the temple court. Jesus referred to this murder in Matt. 23:34–35. Being spiritually backslidden, Joash was unable to cope with the Syrian invasion, so he tried to bribe Hazael by giving him the wealth of God’s house. Joash himself was murdered by some of his own servants as they sought to avenge the deaths of Jehoiada’s innocent sons.

**2 Kings 13–16 Jehoash King of Israel. Lost Opportunity**

1. In the first nine verses, we read of Jehoahaz, Jehoash’s father. Do not confuse this Jehoash (or Joash) with the young king of Judah in chapters 11–12. This Jehoash was king of Israel and did what was evil in God’s sight. We will see in 14:8–14 that this king defeated the king of Judah, Amaziah. During his reign, Jehoash came into contact with the prophet Elisha just before the man of God died. Elisha gave him an opportunity to defeat Syria once and for all, but he failed to use his opportunity. Verse 25 tells us that he won only three times. The unusual miracle of vv. 20–21 suggests the powerful influence a godly man can have even after his death.

**Amaziah King of Judah Defeated by Pride (14)**

1. This king got off to a good start by obeying the Lord and avenging the murder of his father Joash (v. 5). Note his strict obedience to Deut. 24:16 in v. 6. God gave him great victories in Edom, but 2 Chron. 25:14–16 tells us that he brought back with him the heathen gods of Edom and worshiped these gods of the defeated enemy. This combination of idolatry and pride led him to “meddle” with Jehoash, the king of Israel (see 13:10–13), and challenge him to a war (v. 8). The result? “Pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall” (Prov. 16:18). Judah was soundly defeated by Israel; Jerusalem was partly destroyed, and the Lord’s treasury emptied. Had Amaziah remained in his own land and given God the glory for his victories, he would not have become captive to Israel. We are told that he was slain in a conspiracy (2 Chron. 25:25–28).

**Uzziah—Judah’s Great King (15)**

1. Uzziah means “strength of the Lord”; his other name, Azariah, means “helped of Jehovah.” He was elevated to the throne at the age of sixteen, and under his sound leadership the nation took on new life and prosperity. His spiritual guide was Zechariah (2 Chron. 26:5); this is not the prophet who ministered to Joash (2 Chron. 24:17–22). God gave Uzziah great victories over the Philistines and the Arabian nations. He led the nation in great building programs, particularly in the area of the water supply. His military establishment was remarkable; he used the latest machinery for waging war. The prophet Isaiah received his call to service in the year that King Uzziah died; Isa. 6.
2. Pride brought about his ruin (2 Chron. 26:16): he went into the temple to burn incense, and the Lord smote him with leprosy. His son Jotham reigned with him for several years until Uzziah died. His death brought great mourning to Judah. He had ruled for fifty-two years and the nation enjoyed its greatest safety and prosperity since Solomon.

**Ahaz King of Judah The Cost of Compromise (16) (2 Chron. 28)**

1. So evil was this king of Judah that he even sacrificed his son to the god Moloch. He reigned for only sixteen years. One of his achievements was dedicating the Valley of the Son of Hinnom to Baal. Later, King Josiah desecrated that valley and made it a garbage dump. God punished Ahaz by bringing the Syrians against him, and, like some of his predecessors, Ahaz robbed the Lord’s house to bribe the Assyrians to fight for him.
2. His friendship with the Assyrian king led to more trouble. Ahaz saw a heathen altar at Damascus and tried to duplicate it in Jerusalem. In fact, his new altar replaced the God-ordained altar in the temple. How easy it is to imitate the world. Second Chronicles 28:20–27 tells us that this friendship with Assyria led Ahaz into idolatry, and that the king of Assyria took the money but in the end failed to help Judah at all. At his death, his son Hezekiah took the throne, a godly man who sought the blessing of the Lord. Ahaz had tried to compromise and to “buy his way” to victory, but it only led to shame and defeat.

**2 Kings 17:1–41 The Fall of the Northern Kingdom Israel**

1. This long chapter is the record of Israel’s last king and how he led the Northern Kingdom into captivity. Assyria captured Samaria (capital of the Northern Kingdom) in 722 B.C., after subduing the nation. What could have been a great victory to the glory of God turned out to be a defeat that brought the worship of the true God to a new low.
2. History is never merely a series of accidental events, for behind every nation is the plan and purpose of God. In these verses, the Holy Spirit explains to us why Samaria fell. God had redeemed them from Egyptian slavery and had purchased them to be His own people. The annual Passover feast was a reminder to them of God’s grace. Yet they forgot all that God had done for them. God had warned them not to mingle with the heathen nations in Canaan (Deut. 7), yet Israel secretly disobeyed. What begins as secret sin ultimately becomes open sin, and the nation deliberately provoked God.
3. The Lord sent godly prophets to warn them and plead with them, but the people only stiffened their necks in stubborn rebellion (Acts 7:51). They rejected the Law, which was written by the Lord and given to them for their blessing. Verse 15 is terrifying: “They followed vanity (empty idols), and became vain.” They became slaves of sin. The OT lists twenty kings for the nation of Israel, all of them wicked. It took about 250 years for the kingdom of Israel to fall into ruin. They heard preachers like Elijah, Elisha, Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah, yet refused to bow the knee to the Lord.
4. After deporting the best of the people, the king of Assyria imported citizens from other nations under his rule, thereby preventing Israel from organizing and rebelling. These verses describe the origin of “the Samaritans,” the mixed people we read about in John 4 and Acts 8.

**2 Kings 18:1–20:21 The Reign of Hezekiah**

1. We enter now into the study of one of the most exciting periods in Judah’s history, the reign of godly King Hezekiah. Samaria (Israel) had fallen to Assyria, and now the enemy was attacking Judah. Actually, the events in these chapters are not recorded in their exact order, for Hezekiah’s sickness occurred during the siege (see 20:6), and the visit from the Babylonian leaders followed his recovery. We will note three enemies that Hezekiah had to face and how he dealt with them.
2. Hezekiah’s **reformation** (2 Kings 18:1–8; 2 Chron. 29–32). This godly king immediately set out to rid the land of idolatry and sin. He reopened and repaired the temple, and reestablished the services. He was especially interested in the singers and the sacrifices. He also called the whole nation (Israel included) to a great Passover feast. It was a time of revival, but, unfortunately, it did not get into the hearts of the people. The changes were only on the surface. However, Hezekiah proved that he did love the Lord, and God blessed him for his service.
3. **Rebellion** (2 Kings 18:9–37). For years, the nation had been under tribute to Assyria, but Hezekiah rebelled and refused to pay tribute. This brought the Assyrian army to Jerusalem, but instead of turning to God, Hezekiah feared the enemy and gave in (vv. 13–16), even to the point of robbing the temple to pay Assyria. The king of Assyria took the money and then turned around and invaded Judah anyway.
4. Request for the Lord’s Help (2 Kings 19:1–19). Unable to save himself, the king went to the temple to pray. Verse 2 is the first mention of the Prophet Isaiah in the Bible. The prophet sent the king an answer of peace: God would deliver Judah and defeat Assyria. Difficulties with other nations forced Assyria to pull back their forces, but 2 Kings 19:9 (NLT): Sennacherib sent an arrogant letter to Hezekiah to frighten him into surrendering. The king took the letter to the temple and “spread it before the Lord.”
5. Reward (2 Kings 19:20–37). What a wonderful combination—the Word of God and prayer. Hezekiah prayed and God sent the answer through Isaiah—He would judge Assyria and treat them as they had treated the nations. God gave Hezekiah the promise that after two years Judah would have harvests again (v. 29). (The Assyrians had devastated the land.) Note that God answered prayer for David’s sake and not because Judah or the king deserved such mercy (v. 34). God killed 185,000 soldiers in one night, and later Sennacherib’s own sons assassinated him.
6. **Death** (2 Kings 20:1–11) Death is called “the last enemy” (1 Cor. 15:26). It must have been trying to the king to be very ill while Assyria was threatening to invade. Certainly the king’s psalm of praise in Isa. 38:9–20 indicates that he was fearful of death and wanted to stay alive to finish his work. At any rate, he prayed to be spared, and God answered his prayer. God gave the king fifteen additional years. He strengthened the king’s faith even more by causing the shadow to go back on the sundial ten degrees. (This sundial was perhaps a stone stairway with steps to mark out the hours. The king could see it from his palace window.)
7. Bible students have debated for years whether Hezekiah should have prayed for healing and whether his recovery was God’s perfect will or His permissive will. Sometimes God does answer prayer when the answer is not the best thing for us (see Ps. 106:15). Those who feel Hezekiah was wrong, point out that the king’s final fifteen years involved his sinful alliance with the Babylonians (20:12–21) and also the birth of Manasseh, who turned out to be Judah’s most wicked king (chap. 21). Had Hezekiah died, Judah would have been spared the Babylonian compromise and the evil reign of Manasseh. However, Manasseh did repent and serve the Lord (2 Chron. 33:11–19). Had Hezekiah died, there would have been no Josiah.
8. The Babylonian Visitors (20:12–21) What Assyria could not accomplish by force, Babylon accomplished by guile. Satan is either a lion or a serpent. Hezekiah’s pride after the healing and the deliverance of Jerusalem got him into a wicked alliance with Babylon. For the king to let the enemy see his wealth and his weapons was certainly a foolish move, and the nation ultimately suffered for it. The same prophet who brought him the joyful message of healing now had to convey a sad message of judgment: the treasures would go to Babylon, and so would his sons. But in spite of his mistakes and sins, Hezekiah has gone down in Jewish history as a great king. He was a man of prayer who knew how to “spread it out before the Lord.”

**2 Kings 21–23 Manasseh and Josiah**

1. Five kings are mentioned in these chapters, but we will concern ourselves primarily with two: Manasseh and Josiah. The interesting thing about Josiah and Manasseh is that their spiritual lives were exactly opposite each other. Manasseh began his reign in sin but ended it in humble repentance, while Josiah sought the Lord early in his life but ended his reign (and his life) in disobedience.
2. Manasseh’s Reign (21). Manasseh was a wicked man, worse than any before him or after him. No sooner was Hezekiah off the scene than Manasseh’s true character was revealed. He built up what Hezekiah had torn down, and tore down what Hezekiah had built up.
3. Here we must read 2 Chron. 33:11–20 for the full story. God sent his prophets to warn the king, but the king would not listen. God announced to the nation that judgment and captivity were coming. Judah had witnessed God’s judgment on Samaria, but that had not brought the people to repentance. The Assyrian captains took Manasseh to Babylon where he was put into prison. “When he was in affliction he besought the Lord.” God in His grace forgave the evil king and permitted him to return to his throne.
4. He fortified Jerusalem against the enemy; he removed the idols and the strange altars; and he sought to lead the nation back to the Lord. Of course, it was impossible to undo all the damage he had done. Sad to say, God gave Manasseh the longest reign of any Hebrew king, yet he accomplished almost nothing. In fact, even his repentance did not stay God’s hand of judgment; it was Manasseh’s sins that moved God to send the nation into captivity (23:26–27).
5. Josiah’s Reign (22–23) The assassination of Amon brought Josiah to the throne at the young age of eight years. In the eighth year of his reign, when he was sixteen, Josiah began to seek the Lord. No doubt Hilkiah the high priest taught the lad the Word of God.
6. Josiah’s ultimate goal was to restore the temple and bring the nation back to the worship of the Lord, but he knew that he would have to destroy the old sins before he could establish new obedience. While repairing the temple, the high priest discovered a copy of the Law of Moses. When he heard the Law read, Josiah immediately knew that Judah was in great danger, and he sent to inquire of the Lord what to do. Huldah the prophetess, gave the anxious king God’s message: (1) Judah and Jerusalem would be judged for their sins, but (2) King Josiah would not see these judgments because he had humbled himself before the Lord. Josiah immediately shared the Word of God with all the elders of the land, and he led the way in a great service of dedication, reaffirming the Covenant of God. During Josiah’s day, there was peace and blessing; but God did not withdraw His original promise of judgment because of the sins of Manasseh (23:26–27). Josiah’s godly life and ministry had stayed the hand of judgment a few more years, but captivity was coming and nothing could prevent it.
7. Pharaoh made it clear that he was not against Judah, but only moving on his way to attack Assyria. Josiah did not seek the mind of the Lord; in fact, it appears that he deliberately disobeyed God’s will; see 2 Chron. 35:22.

**2 Kings 24:1–25:30 Judah Fall to Babylon.**

1. The hour of judgment finally arrives, and God keeps His Word by bringing terrible wrath upon His people in the kingdom of Judah. God had given them a throne, a temple, a city, and a land, and upon each of these He poured out His anger. **(1) The King Was Dethroned** (24:1–12, 17–20) **(2) The People Were Deported** (24:13–16) **(3)** The Temple Was Disgraced (25:13–17) **(4)** The Land Was Left Desolate (25:18–30) “Be sure your sins will find you out.”