



SMALL GROUP STUDY

Tale of Two Kingdoms

The book of 2 Kings tells the story of two kingdoms. It was an unusual time with both ungodly and godly leaders. It tells a tale of sinful kings who lead the nation farther and farther from God. It also tells a tale of God's special prophets who lead the people back to God. We see that both the Northern and the Southern kingdoms are on a collision course with captivity. They are on parallel tracks of degeneration, regeneration, unrighteousness and righteousness. Through it all we see the overwhelming character of God as a pursuing and patient God who reaches out to the people before He judges them.

The Struggling Kingdoms (2 Kings 1-17)

Second Kings begins with the end of the prophet Elijah's ministry. Miraculously he does not die but is taken up into heaven by a whirlwind. His successor is Elisha who requests a double portion of Elijah's spirit and ends up doing twice as many miracles. Many kings come and go in both the North and the South with much warfare and intrigue.

Discussion Questions:

- a. What was Elijah doing when the whirlwind took him up into heaven?
- b. Elijah appears in the New Testament in both Matthew and Mark. What are the circumstances of his appearing and who appears with him?
- c. What miracle did Elisha do for the Shunammite woman?
- d. Who is Naaman and what miracle did Elisha do for him? How did Elisha not meet Naaman's expectations?
- e. Examine your heart: Have you had an experience where God did not meet your expectations? How did God bless or teach you despite your unmet expectations?
- f. Through which king was Baal worship introduced into the southern kingdom?
- g. How did Satan try to eliminate David's royal line and thus the coming of the Messiah?

The Surviving Kingdom (2 Kings 18-25)

A repeated theme throughout the scriptures is: God is a pursuing God. He loves to give people many chances. We see this character of God throughout the 2 Kings. Hezekiah is now king of Judah and he does what is right in the sight of the Lord. He removes the high places, breaks the sacred pillars, cuts down the wooden image and breaks in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made. In the North Jeroboam is King and he drives Israel from following the Lord and he leads them into great sin.

Discussion Questions:

- a. Why did Hezekiah break apart the bronze serpent that Moses had made?
- b. Why did God extend Hezekiah's life? How many years was his life extended? Who was the prophet that gave Hezekiah this message from God?
- c. What request have you made of God that He has answered for you?
- d. What made the difference in each of these kingdoms (North and South)?
- e. Examine your heart: Who is your king? Is your heart divided, or are there any high places in your life that God would have you tear down?