

LORD GOD, WHO BREATHED YOUR WORD OF OLD
on those who wrote the sacred page,
the same through all the years untold –
to us, in our degenerate age,
the Spirit of your word impart
and breathe his life into our heart.

While now your holy word we read
with earnest prayer and strong desire,
O send your Spirit, in our need
our souls awaken and inspire,
our weakness help, our darkness chase,
and guide us by the light of grace!

When in the paths of sin we move
and so the living God forsake,
our conscience by your word reprove,
convince and bring the wanderers back,
deep wounded by your Spirit's sword,
and then by pardoning grace restored.

The sacred lessons of your grace,
transmitted through your word, repeat,
and train us up in all your ways
to make us, for your work, complete;
your love's redeeming plan fulfil,
perfect us in your holy will.

With your rich grace our lives renew,
that we may always ready stand
to help the souls redeemed by you,
as all their various states demand;
to teach, convince, correct, reprove,
and build them up in holiest love!

CHARLES WESLEY 1707-88
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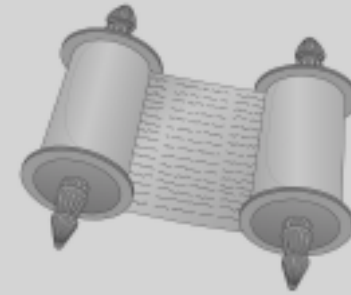


KENDAL

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ALL SCRIPTURE IS GOD-BREATHED

AN OLD TESTAMENT OVERVIEW



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1, 2 KINGS, 1, 2 CHRONICLES, AMOS, HOSEA, ISAIAH, JEREMIAH

The decline and fall of God's people

"We have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."

2 PETER 1:19-21



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1 KINGS

Chapters 12-14 • The Kingdom splits apart

The tensions between Judah and the northern tribes surface after Solomon's death. Rehoboam succeeds to the throne, but Jeroboam I leads the ten breakaway tribes setting up a new capital at Samaria and two new religious sanctuaries.

Chapters 15-22 • Kings of Israel and Judah

The historian runs the histories of Judah in the south and Israel in the north in parallel. Each of Israel's kings is assessed as bad – though some worse than others. Under King Ahab religious life in Israel reaches an all-time low, primarily through the corrupt worship brought in by his wife Jezebel of Tyre. God sends His prophet **Elijah** into this crisis: a man fearless in his confrontation of evil yet at times still vulnerable to doubt and self-pity.

2 KINGS

Chapters 1-8 • The ministry of Elijah and Elisha

Elisha dons the mantle of Elijah (literally) and continues to proclaim God's word in the north. The spoken word is confirmed by miraculous intervention, God, in His grace, including healing for the Syrian commander, Naaman.

Chapters 9-17 • Kings of Israel & Judah to Samaria's fall

After two 'bad' kings of Judah (Jehoram & Ahaziah) the focus is upon Jehu's coup in the north. Meanwhile, in the south, things sink to their darkest under Queen Athaliah of Judah. Nevertheless God graciously blesses the rule of **Joash** who, during his 40-year reign, arranges for repairs to the temple. Meanwhile Israel succumbs to Syrian domination during Jehoahaz' reign – a situation re-couped by Jehoash.

Jeroboam II reigns over Israel for 41 years. Politically he is strong. However there is corruption within Israel – extremes of wealth and poverty and the grinding down of the poor and the weak – which is exposed by Yahweh's prophets **Amos** and **Hosea**.

Azariah (Uzziah) of Judah, who reigns for 52 years, is a strong king defeating the Philistines and reducing Ammon to vassal status. However, pride is his downfall. After a series of short reigns Menahem in Israel rules for ten years but succumbs to the power of Assyria. Political intrigues – siding with Egypt against Assyria – result in the depopulation of the land and other conquered peoples being relocated to inhabit the northern region of Israel. The historian makes the reason clear (17:7-18). It is because of idolatry, disobedience to God's law and failure to heed His prophets.

Chapters 18-25 • Kings of Judah to the fall of Jerusalem

Hezekiah, one of Judah's finest kings, reigns for 29 years (in addition to co-regency). Eight years after Samaria's fall, the Assyrians turn their attention to Judah. Hezekiah consults God's prophet **Isaiah**. The crisis brings out the best in the king. God answers his prayer, Isaiah's prophecy is fulfilled and Jerusalem is saved. When Hezekiah falls ill he pleads for his life to be prolonged. Later, however, his foolishness in displaying the country's treasures to Babylon's state visitors evokes censure from Isaiah and the prediction that Judah will succumb to her power.

After the sad stories of Manasseh and Amon we meet the best of Judah's kings, **Josiah**. Hilkiah discovers the book of the law in the temple which is then read publically. This is followed by a renewal of the covenant with God, a celebration of the Passover and a purge through the land of pagan objects of worship.

Sadly, however, the nation's heart is not truly renewed by Josiah's reformation. As a consequence Egypt is allowed temporarily to dominate Judah, but she then falls under the power of Babylon.

There is a short siege of Jerusalem, when Jehoiachin is king, by Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. He removes the temple treasures and the gold plate and also takes 10,000 officers and craftsmen from the city into exile.

For eleven years Zedekiah is a puppet king. However, as a result of rebelling against Babylon, Jerusalem is overwhelmed and the Temple is destroyed. Most of Judah's remaining inhabitants are removed from the land. The predicted exile is complete.