**Kings of Israel II: The Divided Kingdom, Israel**

Instructor-Pat Reeder

Wednesday evenings, 7pm-9:30pm

**Course description**

This is the second of a three-part series, running from 1 Samuel through 2 Chronicles, exploring the history of the Kings of Israel.  This massive stretch of the Old Testament contains shocking family dramas, gruesome violence, court intrigue and interminable struggles for power.   Behind it all stands God’s sovereignty over Israel and the nations.  In part 2, we will examine the second “chapter” of the kingship in 1st and 2nd Kings, running from David’s death through the divided kingdom, to the exile.  Together with the (in)famous behavior of the kings, these books record what God accomplishes through the unique ministries of Elijah and Elisha.  In Bruce Waltke’s words, “The books of Kings shows beyond question that the prophetic word is mightier than the king’s sword."

**Course goals**

1. Enable students to see how major biblical doctrines play out vividly over a period of centuries.
2. Help students understand generally how to read narrative more broadly, examining the ways in literary technique is wielded to point in a theological direction.

**Course Requirements**

*Attendance* Students must attend at least 4 of 5 classes to pass. Everyone has 1 “excused absence” before receiving an incomplete. Any other absence is negotiable, to be discussed with the instructor.

*Readings, Homework* There will be weekly readings to keep in step with the material being covered each week. Questions on the readings can be found on the back of this sheet. These are strictly completion based.

**Calendar**

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| Date | Session | Readings | HW Due | Content |
| 8/14 | Week 1 | N/A |  | Introduction, Solomon |
| 8/21 | Week 2 | I Kings 1-16 | 1 | Divided Kingdom |
| 8/28 | Week 3 | I Kings 17-II Kings 2 | 2 | Omrid Dynasty, Elijah |
| 9/4 | Week 4 | II Kings 3-11 | 3 | Omrid Dynasty, Elisha |
| 9/11 | Week 5 | II Kings 12-25 | 4 | Towards Exile |

**Miscellaneous**

Students will be responsible for their own notes. We will provide notebooks and the powerpoints will be available upon request.

For each week, read the weekly selection. Reflect on and answer the questions to follow.

**Homework 1** (Due Week 2)

1. The author stops in the middle of his description of the temple to describe Solomon’s palace in I Kings 7:1-10. What is the author trying to communicate here and why?
2. In I Kings 8:27, Solomon says, “heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain You, how much less this house which I have built!” Yet, one of the main themes of the book is the wickedness of the continual worship away from the temple. If the temple can’t contain God anyway, then what’s the problem with worshipping him somewhere else?
3. The death of the prophet against Bethel in I Kings 13 is filled with irony. What is the author communicating with this peculiar story?

**Homework 2** (Due Week 3)

1. Why might Elijah be so despondent in I Kings 19:4 after so great a victory in I Kings 18?
2. Name at least two parallels between the David-Bathsheba episode (II Sam 11-12) and the Ahab-Naboth episode in I Kings 21.
3. In I Kings 22:22, God sends a spirit to lie to Ahab’s prophets. However, in Titus 1:2, we read that God “does not lie.” How would you explain this tension?

**Homework 3** (Due Week 4)

1. What do you think Elisha means when he says to Gehazi, “Is it a time to receive money and to receive clothes and olive groves and vineyards and sheep and oxen and male and female servants?” in II Kings 5:26.
2. God appointed Jehu king of Israel and even predicted it in a special appearance to Elijah. But, Jehu “was not careful to walk in the law of the Lord.” How should we reconcile this?

**Homework 4** (Due Week 5)

1. Josiah, one of the greatest kings of Judah lived only 29 years, killed in battle. Whereas his father, Manasseh, the most evil king of Judah, lived a full life of 67 years. How would you explain this?
2. What do you think the author is communicating with the final sentences of the book, II Kings 25:27ff?