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THE 66-BOOK 8-WEEK GROUP BIBLE STUDY SERIES • BOOK 12 OF 66

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2 KINGS

An 8-Week Group Bible Study

By Greg and Kayla Gibson

THE COMPLETE STUDY • WEEKS 1–8 • 2 KINGS 1:1–25:30
GENERAL / MIXED GROUP EDITION

2 Kings: An 8-Week Bible Study

An 8-Week Bible Study • ESV® • 8 Sessions of 75–90 Minutes

LEADER GUIDE EDITION

Complete Participant Text + Interleaved Pacing, Hebrew Word Studies, Facilitation Probes & Pitfalls

2 Kings: An 8-Week Bible Study

Leader Guide Edition • General / Mixed Group Track

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WEEK 1 OF 8

Week 1: From Elijah to Elisha — 2 Kings 1:1–3:27

Scripture Scope: 2 Kings 1:1–3:27 (ESV) • Session Length: 75–90 Minutes

- **The title:** In the Hebrew Bible, 1 and 2 Kings were one book. 2 Kings picks up exactly where 1 Kings ends, with Ahab's son Ahaziah on the throne of Israel.
- **The setting:** About 290 years, from Ahaziah of Israel (about 850 BC) to the fall of Jerusalem (586 BC), with a closing note about 561 BC, when King Jehoiachin is released from prison in Babylon.
- **The main characters:** Elijah, Elisha, the Shunammite woman, Naaman, Jehu, Jezebel, Athaliah, Jehoiada, Joash, Hezekiah, Isaiah, Manasseh, Josiah, Huldah, Zedekiah, and Jehoiachin.
- **Its place in the Bible:** Kings explains to God's people in exile why Israel (722 BC) and Judah (586 BC) fell: they rejected the LORD and his prophets (17:7–23). It also keeps hope alive through the LORD's promise to David (8:19; 25:27–30). In the Hebrew Bible it belongs to the Former Prophets (Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings).
- **The structure (three parts):**
  - Elisha's ministry (chapters 1–8).
  - Jehu's revolt and the kings of Israel to the fall of Samaria (chapters 9–17).
  - Judah alone, from Hezekiah to the exile (chapters 18–25).
- **Why it matters:** The LORD patiently warns his people through his prophets, shows mercy again and again, and keeps a lamp burning for David, yet his word of judgment comes true when Israel and Judah refuse to turn. Exile is not the end: the book closes with David's heir alive at the king's table, pointing to Jesus, the Son of David.

How This 8-Week Study Works

Designed for weekly small groups, mini-churches, and community gatherings (75–90 minutes per session) rather than daily homework checklists, each week of 2 Kings invites you to walk through the story of the prophets and kings together through six repeatable sections:

- **Section X.1 — Opening:** Sets the scene, the Week at a Glance, Head, Heart, and Hands objectives, the Opening Frame, and the Opening Entry Question.
- **Section X.2 — Historical & Literary Context:** Places the week's chapters inside the structure of 2 Kings and the ancient Near Eastern world.
- **Section X.3 — Movement 1:** The week's first guided passage: Guided Scripture Reading, Anchor Verses, Teaching Narrative, and Group Discussion Questions.
- **Section X.4 — Movement 2:** The week's second guided passage, following the same flow.
- **Section X.5 — Canonical Horizon:** Traces how the passage echoes across Scripture and finds its fulfillment in Jesus Christ.
- **Section X.6 — Application, Looking Ahead, and Closing Prayer:** Moves the week's study into everyday life, previews next week, and closes in prayer.

Key anchor verses are printed in each section for quick reference. Longer focal passages are read aloud together from the ESV. 2 Kings includes war, sieges, assassinations, and violent judgments. The study retells

those scenes briefly in its own words rather than printing or reading them in full, so the group can understand what happened without dwelling on graphic detail.

Choosing a Bible Translation: Top 5 Translations Compared

Every English Bible translation falls along a spectrum between two primary approaches: word-for-word translation (formal equivalence, which prioritizes literal accuracy to the original phrasing and sentence structure) and thought-for-thought translation (dynamic equivalence, which prioritizes immediate modern readability by translating idioms and ideas into natural contemporary expressions). Here is how five widely used English translations compare:

- **ESV (English Standard Version) — Word-for-Word**
  - Pros: Follows the wording and sentence structure of the original Hebrew and Greek closely while using modern English; well suited to close study.
  - Cons: Because it tracks the original sentence structure, some phrasing can feel more formal than everyday speech.
- **NIV (New International Version) — Balanced (Between Word-for-Word and Thought-for-Thought)**
  - Pros: Widely read; balances accuracy to the original languages with natural, everyday readability.
  - Cons: Because some idioms are rendered as modern expressions, a few literal wordplays or technical terms can be less visible.
- **NLT (New Living Translation) — Thought-for-Thought**
  - Pros: Warm and conversational; reads smoothly aloud and helps readers follow the big picture of long passages.
  - Cons: Because it prioritizes meaning over literal phrasing, it can be harder to use for close word study.
- **CSB (Christian Standard Bible) — Optimal Equivalence (Balanced)**
  - Pros: Stays close to the original words where possible while smoothing awkward phrasing into natural modern English.
  - Cons: Because it is a newer translation, some well-known verses may sound different from the wording many readers remember.
- **KJV / NKJV (King James Version & New King James Version) — Traditional Word-for-Word**
  - Pros: Historic cadence that shaped English literature and church history; the NKJV updates archaic pronouns ("thee/thou") while keeping the classic rhythm.
  - Cons: Often reads like older English poetry, with complex sentences and archaic or formal vocabulary that can be harder for modern readers to follow.

This study quotes the ESV.

Greg & Kayla's Recommended Study Bibles

Having a trusted study Bible on hand is one of the best ways to go deeper as you read through 2 Kings:

- **Greg's Favorite Study Bible:** The MacArthur Study Bible (ESV), which contains extensive explanatory notes beneath almost every verse, ideal for detailed study.
- **Kayla's Favorite Study Bible:** The ESV Study Bible, containing over 20,000 study notes, articles, and explanations.

The 8-Week 2 Kings Study at a Glance

Week	Title & Passage	Movement 1 / Movement 2	Canonical Horizon
1	**From Elijah to Elisha** (1:1–3:27)	Elijah's Last Word and His Departure (1:1–2:18) / Elisha's First Signs and the Moabite War (2:19–3:27)	The Spirit poured out and the prophet greater than Elijah
2	**Mercy for the Least Expected** (4:1–5:27)	Elisha's Works of Mercy (4:1–44) / Naaman Healed and Gehazi's Greed (5:1–27)	Jesus cleanses lepers and welcomes outsiders
3	**Chariots of Fire and a City Under Siege** (6:1–8:29)	Horses and Chariots of Fire (6:1–23) / Famine, Siege, and the Word Fulfilled (6:24–8:29)	The unseen armies of God and the good news that must be shared
4	**Jehu's Sword and Joash's Crown** (9:1–11:21)	Jehu's Revolt (9:1–10:36) / Athaliah and the Hidden King (11:1–21)	The hidden King preserved and the true Son of David crowned
5	**Repair, Decline, and Undeserved Mercy** (12:1–14:29)	Joash's Repairs and Elisha's Death (12:1–13:25) / Amaziah, Jeroboam II, and the LORD's Compassion (14:1–29)	Grace to the undeserving
6	**The Fall of Samaria** (15:1–17:41)	Kings in Quick Succession (15:1–16:20) / Why Israel Fell (17:1–41)	The Good Shepherd who gathers scattered Israel
7	**Trust Under Siege** (18:1–21:26)	Hezekiah, Sennacherib, and the LORD's Deliverance (18:1–19:37) / Hezekiah's Illness and Manasseh's Evil (20:1–21:26)	The King who trusts the Father and the God who alone saves
8	**The Book Found and the City Lost** (22:1–25:30)	Josiah's Reform (22:1–23:30) / The Fall of Jerusalem (23:31–25:30)	The Word that exposes and restores, and the Son of David lifted from exile

How to Use This Leader Guide Edition

This **Leader Guide Edition** is built on a synchronized two-edition architecture so you never have to juggle two separate books during your small group or mini-church gathering:

1. 100% Word-for-Word Participant Text Included: Every section, Scripture reading prompt, verbatim ESV anchor verse callout, teaching narrative, table, and discussion or reflection prompt appears here **word-for-word identical** to what your group members see in their Participant Study Edition. Section numbers and question labels match exactly, so leaders and participants can stay on the same page.

2. Interleaved `[LEADER GUIDE OVERLAY]` Blocks: Immediately following each section, you will find a dedicated leader block containing:

- **Pacing & Time Targets** calibrated for a 75–90 minute session. Pacing targets appear in every Leader section header. 2 Kings weeks cover about 70–120 verses, so if time runs short, shorten the Teaching Narratives and the retellings rather than the discussion. Regnal summaries (chapters 13–17) can be summarized quickly.
- **Hebrew Word Study & Ancient Near Eastern Research Quick-References** so you can explain terms naturally without lecturing, when they add something useful.
- **Question-by-Question Facilitation Probes** listed in question order, designed to move conversation past polite answers into honest reflection.

- **Pitfalls to Steer Around** so you can gently redirect common rabbit trails back to the biblical text.
- **Additional Research Notes** appear when they add something useful.

3. Leader Flags: Numbered in reading order, they mark passages that need pastoral care or tend to raise hard questions, with guidance on handling them. 2 Kings includes fire from heaven, a child's death, famine and siege, assassinations, Jehu's purge, the murder of a royal family, child sacrifice, deportation, and the fall of Jerusalem. The flags give a consistent approach: retell the scene briefly in your own words, never read graphic verses aloud, do not present violent acts as models for today, and make room for members who carry their own wounds, including grief, trauma, or the experience of being a refugee.

4. Reading aloud: Assign readers ahead of time for the Guided Scripture Reading. Printed anchor verses are for quick reference; read the longer focal passages from an open ESV. Passages marked "in brief" are retold by the leader rather than read.

5. Facilitating well: Ask the printed question, wait, and let silence work. Use the probes to deepen, not to lecture. Aim for every voice to be heard at least once each session.

Week 1 Session Pacing at a Glance (75–90 Minutes)

Section	Focus	Time Target
Section 1.1	Opening: From Elijah to Elisha (2 Kings 1:1–3:27) (1.1 Q1)	**10 mins**
Section 1.2	Historical & Literary Context: Prophets and Kings (1.2 Q1–Q3)	**12 mins**
Section 1.3	Movement 1: Elijah's Last Word and His Departure (2 Kings 1:1–2:18) (1.3 Q1–Q5)	**22 mins**
Section 1.4	Movement 2: Elisha's First Signs and the Moabite War (2 Kings 2:19–3:27) (1.4 Q1–Q5)	**20 mins**
Section 1.5	Canonical Horizon: The Spirit Poured Out and the Prophet Greater Than Elijah (1.5 Q1–Q3)	**12 mins**
Section 1.6	Application, Looking Ahead, and Closing Prayer (1.6 Q1–Q3)	**9 mins**
Total	**Full Week 1 Group Session**	**75–90 mins**

Scripture Scope: 2 Kings 1:1–3:27 • **Focal Group Readings:** 2 Kings 1:1–4; 1:13–17; 2:1–15; 2:19–22; 3:9–20 (ESV) • **Session Pacing:** 75–90 Minutes

Section 1.1

Opening: From Elijah to Elisha (2 Kings 1:1–3:27)

Passage **2 Kings 1:1–3:27**

Opening

Ahab is dead, and his son Ahaziah falls through a window and lies injured. Instead of turning to the LORD, he sends messengers to ask a Philistine god whether he will recover. Elijah meets them with a piercing question: is there no God in Israel? Then Elijah's work on earth comes to an end.

He walks one last journey with his faithful successor Elisha, parts the Jordan with his cloak, and is taken up by a whirlwind into heaven. Elisha picks up the fallen cloak, strikes the water, and asks, "Where is the LORD, the God

of Elijah?" The waters part. The LORD's work goes on.

Week 1 At a Glance

Scripture Scope	2 Kings 1:1–3:27 (Ahaziah's appeal to Baal-zebub, Elijah's last word, Elijah taken up, Elisha's first signs, and the war against Moab)
Focal Passages	2 Kings 1:1–4; 1:13–17; 2:1–15; 2:19–22; 3:9–20
Literary & Structural Anchor	The question "Is there no God in Israel?" (1:3, 6, 16) frames the whole book. Parting the Jordan recalls the Red Sea and Joshua's crossing, and Elisha follows Elijah as Joshua followed Moses. Elijah's cloak passes to Elisha (2:13), the same cloak first thrown on him at his call (1 Kings 19:19). The double portion is the firstborn's share (Deuteronomy 21:17). The prophet, not the army, is Israel's real defense (2:12; 13:14).
Big Idea	The LORD alone gives life and speaks through his prophets, and his work continues when one servant passes the cloak to the next.

Week 1 Learning Objectives (Head, Heart, Hands)

HEAD	**Know the Story:** Understand Elijah's last confrontation, his departure, Elisha's succession, and Elisha's first signs.
HEART	**Seek the Living God:** Turn to the LORD, not to substitutes, and trust that his work continues beyond any one servant.
HANDS	**Seek and Carry On:** Take one concrete step to seek the LORD first in a need, or to carry forward the faith you received from others.

Opening Frame: Is There No God in Israel?

1 Kings ended with Ahab dead, just as the LORD's word had said, and his son Ahaziah on Israel's throne, serving Baal as his father had (1 Kings 22:37–38, 51–53). 2 Kings picks up with that same Ahaziah and that same prophet, Elijah. When the injured king sends messengers to a foreign god for answers, Elijah meets them with a piercing question. Then Elijah's long ministry comes to an end. He walks one last journey with his faithful successor Elisha, is taken up by a whirlwind into heaven, and leaves his cloak behind. Elisha picks it up, strikes the Jordan, and the LORD's work goes on through a new servant. The question for this week: when life is on the line, whom will we seek, and what will we carry forward? Before we read together, take a moment to share with the group:

Opening Entry Question (Icebreaker)

1.1 Q1 (Opening Entry Question): Think of a mentor, parent, or teacher whose influence on you continued after they were gone. What did they pass on to you?

◆ LEADER GUIDE OVERLAY — SECTION 1.1 · SECTION PACING TARGET: 10 MINUTES

- **Pacing & Time Target:** 10 minutes. Opening and At a Glance, 3 minutes; Head, Heart, Hands, 2 minutes; Opening Frame, 2 minutes; Opening Entry Question, 3 minutes.
- **Facilitation Cues & Follow-Up Probes:**
  - Welcome the group to 2 Kings and point to the front matter. Mention that this week includes a few hard scenes, retold briefly. The icebreaker may touch grief; let people share as much or as little as they want.
  - Follow-up probe for **1.1 Q1**: Who comes to mind? What did they pass on? How are you carrying it forward?
- **Pitfalls to Steer Around:** Do not press anyone who has recently lost a parent or mentor to share.
- **Additional Research Notes:** Kings was written for exiles to explain why Israel and Judah fell (17:7–23) and to keep hope alive through the promise to David (8:19; 25:27–30). Its main themes are the prophetic word fulfilled, the LORD's patience and warnings, the lamp for David, true and false worship, and reform and its limits.
- **Hebrew Word Study:** Darash (דָּרַשׁ), "inquire," in 1:2, 3, 6, 16 and 3:11. It means to seek guidance from a god. In this opening it frames the week: Ahaziah inquires of Baal, Jehoshaphat inquires of the LORD, and the question is whom we seek.

Section 1.2

Historical & Literary Context: Prophets and Kings (2 Kings 1:1–3:27)

Passage 2 Kings 1:1–3:27

Entering the World of Elijah's Final Days

1. Historical Background

Ahaziah, Ahab's son, reigns briefly in Israel and is followed by his brother Jehoram (also called Joram). Jehoshaphat still reigns in Judah. Moab, ruled by King Mesha, rebels against Israel after Ahab's death.

2. Cultural Setting

Baal-zebub ("lord of the fly") was probably a mocking twist on Baal-zebul ("Baal the prince"), the god of the Philistine city of Ekron, consulted for healing. The "sons of the prophets" were communities of prophets gathered around a leader. A prophet's cloak symbolized his office and authority.

3. Literary Structure of 2 Kings 1:1–3:27

- **Ahaziah seeks Baal-zebub** (1:1–4)
- **Fire and mercy** (1:5–16)
- **Ahaziah dies** (1:17–18)
- **The last journey** (2:1–8)
- **A double portion** (2:9–10)
- **The whirlwind** (2:11–12)
- **The cloak and the Jordan** (2:13–18)
- **Water healed** (2:19–22)
- **The young men at Bethel** (2:23–25)
- **War against Moab** (3:1–12)
- **Water in the valley** (3:13–20)
- **Victory and a terrible end** (3:21–27)

4. Key Themes

Whom will we seek? The LORD backs his messenger; succession and continuity; the word that brings life and judgment.

5. Theological Considerations

The LORD, not Baal, holds life and death, water and victory. His power rests on his prophets by his Spirit, not by their own strength.

6. Relevant Scholarly Insights

The Moabite Stone, found in 1868, records Mesha's revolt against Israel and credits his god Chemosh, confirming the setting of chapter 3.

Group Discussion Questions (Section 1.2)

1.2 Q1: Ahaziah was the son of Ahab and Jezebel. Why do you think he turned so quickly to a foreign god when he was hurt?

1.2 Q2: The question "Is there no God in Israel?" comes three times in chapter 1. What would that question sound like if it were asked of us today?

1.2 Q3: Elisha's succession recalls Joshua following Moses. Why do you think the LORD provides for the passing on of leadership among his people?

◆ LEADER GUIDE OVERLAY — SECTION 1.2 · SECTION PACING TARGET: 12 MINUTES

- **Pacing & Time Target:** 12 minutes. Context summary, 5 minutes; discussion, 7 minutes (about 2 minutes per question).
- **Facilitation Cues & Follow-Up Probes:**
  - Describe the settings in words: Ekron is a Philistine city to the southwest; Elijah and Elisha travel from Gilgal to Bethel to Jericho and on to the Jordan River; Moab lies east of the Dead Sea.
  - Follow-up probe for **1.2 Q1**: What had he seen in his parents' home? Where did he send? What does that reveal about his trust?
  - Follow-up probe for **1.2 Q2**: Where do people turn for answers today? What does that say about their view of God? Where do you turn first?
  - Follow-up probe for **1.2 Q3**: Who followed Moses? Who follows Elijah? Who is following you in faith?
- **Pitfalls to Steer Around:** Keep the context brief; let the story itself carry the session.
- **Additional Research Notes:** 1 Kings 22:51–53 introduced Ahaziah as walking in the ways of his father and mother. The parting of the Jordan echoes Exodus 14:21–22 and Joshua 3:14–17; Deuteronomy 34:9 describes Joshua filled with the spirit of wisdom after Moses.
- **Ancient Near Eastern Research Notes:** Ancient Near Eastern people often consulted the gods of other cities for healing, especially famous shrines. Prophetic guilds, called "sons of the prophets," gathered around a leading prophet for training and support.
- **Hebrew Word Study:** 'Ish ha'elohim (אִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים), "man of God," in 1:9–13. The captains use the title with contempt, and the fire proves it true. In this context section it shows that the LORD backs his messenger.

Section 1.3

Movement 1: Elijah's Last Word and His Departure (2 Kings 1:1–2:18)

Passage **2 Kings 1:1–2:18**

Guided Scripture Reading

Read aloud in this order, with brief connecting summaries between readings:

- **Reader 1: 2 Kings 1:1–4** (focal passage) — Ahaziah, injured, sends to Baal-zebub, and the angel of the LORD sends Elijah to meet his messengers.
- **Leader summary of 2 Kings 1:5–12** — The king sent a captain with fifty soldiers to seize Elijah, and fire came down from heaven and consumed them. A second captain and his fifty met the same end.
- **Reader 2: 2 Kings 1:13–17** (focal passage) — The third captain pleads humbly for his life; Elijah goes with him, gives the king the LORD's word, and Ahaziah dies.
- **Reader 3: 2 Kings 1:18–2:15** (focal passage) — Elijah's last journey, the double portion, the whirlwind, and Elisha parting the Jordan with Elijah's cloak.
- **Leader summary of 2 Kings 2:16–18** — The prophets at Jericho insisted on sending fifty men to search for Elijah, and after three days they found nothing.

Anchor Verses (ESV)

> **2 Kings 1:3:** But the angel of the LORD said to Elijah the Tishbite, "Arise, go up to meet the messengers of the king of Samaria, and say to them, 'Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are going to inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron?'"
>
> **2 Kings 2:9:** When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, "Ask what I shall do for you, before I am taken from you." And Elisha said, "Please let there be a double portion of your spirit on me."
>
> **2 Kings 2:11:** And as they still went on and talked, behold, chariots of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them. And Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.
>
> **2 Kings 2:12:** And Elisha saw it and he cried, "My father, my father! The chariots of Israel and its horsemen!" And he saw him no more. Then he took hold of his own clothes and tore them in two pieces.
>
> **2 Kings 2:14:** Then he took the cloak of Elijah that had fallen from him and struck the water, saying, "Where is the LORD, the God of Elijah?" And when he had struck the water, the water was parted to the one side and to the other, and Elisha went over.
>
> **2 Kings 2:15:** Now when the sons of the prophets who were at Jericho saw him opposite them, they said, "The spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha." And they came to meet him and bowed to the ground before him.

Teaching Narrative: The Word, the Whirlwind, and the Cloak

1. Is There No God in Israel? (2 Kings 1:1–4)

The king of Israel seeks a Philistine god for healing. Elijah's question exposes his unbelief.

2. Fire and Mercy (2 Kings 1:5–16)

Two captains come with contempt and are consumed; the third comes humbly and is spared.

3. According to the Word (2 Kings 1:17–18)

Ahaziah dies as the LORD said.

4. I Will Not Leave You (2 Kings 2:1–8)

At each stop Elijah tells Elisha to stay behind, and three times Elisha refuses. Elijah parts the Jordan with his cloak.

5. A Double Portion (2 Kings 2:9–10)

Elisha asks to be Elijah's true heir, the firstborn of his ministry.

6. My Father, My Father! (2 Kings 2:11–12)

Chariots and horses of fire separate them, and Elijah goes up by a whirlwind. Elisha grieves.

7. Where Is the LORD? (2 Kings 2:13–18)

Elisha takes up the cloak, strikes the water, and the LORD answers. The prophets recognize that Elijah's spirit rests on Elisha.

Group Discussion Questions (Section 1.3)

1.3 Q1: The angel of the LORD sent Elijah to ask, "Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are going to inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron?" (1:3). What substitutes for God do people turn to in a crisis?

1.3 Q2: The first two captains came with orders; the third came pleading for his life (1:13–14). What made the difference between them?

1.3 Q3: Three times Elijah told Elisha to stay behind, and three times Elisha refused to leave him (2:2, 4, 6). What does Elisha's persistence teach about faithfulness?

1.3 Q4: Elisha asked, "Please let there be a double portion of your spirit on me" (2:9). Why do you think he asked for this instead of anything else?

1.3 Q5: After Elijah was gone, Elisha struck the water and asked, "Where is the LORD, the God of Elijah?" (2:14). What does this moment teach about continuing in faith after a leader is gone?

◆ LEADER GUIDE OVERLAY — SECTION 1.3 · SECTION PACING TARGET: 22 MINUTES

- **Pacing & Time Target:** 22 minutes. Guided Scripture Reading with brief retellings, 7 minutes; Anchor Verses and Teaching Narrative, 4 minutes; discussion, 11 minutes (about 2 minutes per question).

- **Facilitation Cues & Follow-Up Probes:**
  - Have readers take 1:1–4, 1:13–17, and 1:18–2:15. Retell 1:5–12 and 2:16–18 yourself, using the wording above.
  - Follow-up probe for **1.3 Q1**: Where did Ahaziah send? What did that say about Israel's God? What do we reach for first when life falls apart?
  - Follow-up probe for **1.3 Q2**: How did the first two speak? How did the third? What does humility before God look like?
  - Follow-up probe for **1.3 Q3**: What did Elijah say? What did Elisha answer? Where is God calling you to stay faithful?
  - Follow-up probe for **1.3 Q4**: What could he have asked for? What did the double portion mean? What would you ask God for?
  - Follow-up probe for **1.3 Q5**: What did Elisha have in his hands? What did he ask? How do we keep going when a spiritual leader is gone?
- **LEADER FLAG 1: Fire on the captains (1:9–14)**
  - Paraphrase. Note that the third captain's humility is spared, and that Jesus refused this pattern when his disciples wanted to call down fire (Luke 9:54–56).
- **LEADER FLAG 2: Loss and transition (2:1–14)**
  - Elisha's grief may touch members who have lost a mentor or parent. Allow space for grief, and for the comfort that the LORD's work continues.
- **Pitfalls to Steer Around:** Do not treat the double portion as a request for twice the fame or power. Do not make doctrinal claims beyond the text about Elijah not dying; simply note that he was taken up.
- **Additional Research Notes:** Enoch was also taken by God (Genesis 5:24). Malachi 4:5–6 promised that Elijah would come again, a promise Jesus applied to John the Baptist (Matthew 17:10–13). "The chariots of Israel and its horsemen" (2:12) is spoken again over Elisha at his death (13:14).
- **Ancient Near Eastern Research Notes:** A prophet's cloak symbolized his office and authority. The double portion was the firstborn son's inheritance under Israel's law (Deuteronomy 21:17).
- **Hebrew Word Study:**
  - Pi shenayim (פִּי־שְׁנַיִם), "double portion," literally "a mouth of two," in 2:9. It is the firstborn's share. In this movement it shows that Elisha asks to carry on Elijah's work as his heir, not for twice the fame.
  - Ruach (רוּחַ), "spirit," in 2:9, 15, 16. The spirit of Elijah is the LORD's Spirit empowering him. In this movement it shows that the prophet's power is not his own.
  - Se'arah (סְעָרָה), "whirlwind," in 2:1 and 11. The LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind (Job 38:1). In this movement it shows Elijah's departure as a display of God's presence.
  - 'Addereth (אַדֶּרֶת), "cloak," in 2:8 and 13–14. It is the same garment thrown on Elisha in 1 Kings 19:19. In this movement it shows that the office continues though the man is gone.

Section 1.4

Movement 2: Elisha's First Signs and the Moabite War (2 Kings 2:19–3:27)

Passage 2 Kings 2:19–3:27

Guided Scripture Reading

Read aloud in this order, with brief connecting summaries between readings:

- **Reader 1: 2 Kings 2:19–22** (focal passage) — Elisha throws salt into Jericho's spring, and the LORD heals the water.

- **Leader summary of 2 Kings 2:23–25** — As Elisha went up to Bethel, a crowd of young men came out and jeered at him. He cursed them in the name of the LORD, and two bears came out of the woods and mauled many of them.
- **Leader summary of 2 Kings 3:1–8** — Jehoram became king of Israel. When Mesha king of Moab rebelled, Jehoram joined with Jehoshaphat of Judah and the king of Edom to march against him, taking a long route through the wilderness.
- **Reader 2: 2 Kings 3:9–20** (focal passage) — The armies run out of water; Jehoshaphat asks for a prophet of the LORD, and Elisha promises that the dry streambed will fill with water, and it does.
- **Leader summary of 2 Kings 3:21–27** — Moab attacked and was routed, and Israel overran the land. In desperation, Mesha offered his eldest son as a sacrifice on the city wall. Great wrath came against Israel, and they withdrew to their own land.

Anchor Verses (ESV)

> **2 Kings 2:21:** Then he went to the spring of water and threw salt in it and said, "Thus says the LORD, I have healed this water; from now on neither death nor miscarriage shall come from it."
>
> **2 Kings 3:17:** For thus says the LORD, 'You shall not see wind or rain, but that streambed shall be filled with water, so that you shall drink, you, your livestock, and your animals.'

Teaching Narrative: The Spirit at Work and a War in Moab

1. Life for a City (2 Kings 2:19–22)

Jericho, once under a curse (Joshua 6:26), receives healed water by the LORD's word.

2. Contempt for the LORD's Word (2 Kings 2:23–25)

Young men jeer at the LORD's prophet, and judgment follows.

3. An Alliance in Trouble (2 Kings 3:1–12)

Three kings march into the wilderness and run out of water; Jehoshaphat insists on inquiring of the LORD.

4. Water Without Wind or Rain (2 Kings 3:13–20)

For Jehoshaphat's sake, Elisha announces that the LORD will fill the dry streambed, and it happens at the hour of the morning offering.

5. Victory and a Terrible End (2 Kings 3:21–27)

Moab is routed, but Mesha's desperate act ends the campaign.

Group Discussion Questions (Section 1.4)

> **1.4 Q1:** Elisha said, "Thus says the LORD, I have healed this water" (2:21). Why is it important that the healing came from the LORD's word and not from the salt?

1.4 Q2: Elisha's first two signs brought life to a city and judgment on those who mocked the LORD's prophet. What does this teach about how seriously God takes his word?

1.4 Q3: When the armies ran out of water, Jehoshaphat asked, "Is there no prophet of the LORD here, through whom we may inquire of the LORD?" (3:11). Why do people often seek God only after they are in trouble?

1.4 Q4: The LORD promised, "You shall not see wind or rain, but that streambed shall be filled with water" (3:17). How does God sometimes provide in ways we would never expect?

1.4 Q5: Elisha helped the kings only for Jehoshaphat's sake (3:14). What does this say about the influence of one faithful person among others?

◆ LEADER GUIDE OVERLAY — SECTION 1.4 · SECTION PACING TARGET: 20 MINUTES

- **Pacing & Time Target:** 20 minutes. Guided Scripture Reading with brief retellings, 6 minutes; Anchor Verses and Teaching Narrative, 4 minutes; discussion, 10 minutes (about 2 minutes per question).
- **Facilitation Cues & Follow-Up Probes:**
  - Have readers take 2:19–22 and 3:9–20. Retell 2:23–25, 3:1–8, and 3:21–27 yourself, using the wording above.
  - Follow-up probe for **1.4 Q1**: What did Elisha throw? What did he say? Where does real power come from?
  - Follow-up probe for **1.4 Q2**: What did the signs show? Who received each? How do we treat God's word today?
  - Follow-up probe for **1.4 Q3**: When did they ask? Who asked? How can we seek God before the crisis?
  - Follow-up probe for **1.4 Q4**: What did they expect? What did God do? Where has God surprised you?
  - Follow-up probe for **1.4 Q5**: Who was the faithful king? What did his presence change? Where might your faithfulness bless others?
- **LEADER FLAG 3: The bears (2:23–25)**
  - Paraphrase only. Explain that the mockers were likely young men, not small children, and that the scene shows contempt for the LORD's word and his prophet. Avoid using it to frighten children, and avoid both trivializing and sensationalizing it.

- **LEADER FLAG 4: Mesha's son (3:27)**
  - State briefly without detail. Some may find child sacrifice deeply distressing; emphasize that Scripture condemns it (Deuteronomy 12:31). The meaning of the "wrath" against Israel is debated; present the uncertainty rather than speculate.
- **Pitfalls to Steer Around:** Do not read 2:23–24 or 3:27 aloud. Do not present Elisha's curse as a model for responding to insults today.
- **Additional Research Notes:** Jericho had been under Joshua's curse (Joshua 6:26), fulfilled in 1 Kings 16:34; now the LORD heals its water. The ESV's "small boys" (2:23) translates words that can describe young men. The water came "about the time of offering the sacrifice" (3:20), tying the LORD's provision to the morning worship.
- **Ancient Near Eastern Research Notes:** The Moabite Stone records Mesha's revolt and credits his god Chemosh. Some ancient Near Eastern kings offered children to their gods in desperate sieges; Israel's law condemned it. Sudden water in dry streambeds from distant rains was known, but here it comes at the time the LORD's word announced.
- **Hebrew Word Study:** Darash (דָּרַשׁ), "inquire," in 3:11. In this movement it shows Jehoshaphat doing what Ahaziah refused to do in chapter 1: seeking the LORD's word through his prophet.

Section 1.5

Canonical Horizon: The Spirit Poured Out and the Prophet Greater Than Elijah

Passage 2 Kings 2:9

Tracing the Thread Across Scripture

Elijah's departure and the passing of his spirit to Elisha point forward to Jesus, who ascended to the Father and poured out his Spirit on his people, and who came not to call down fire but to save. Turn to each passage as the connections are traced.

1. Not Fire, but Salvation (Luke 9:54–56)

When James and John wanted to call down fire like Elijah, Jesus rebuked them; he came to save.

2. Ascension and the Spirit (Acts 1:8–11; 2:1–4, 33)

As Elijah ascended and Elisha received his spirit, Jesus ascended and poured out the Holy Spirit on his followers, who carry on his work.

3. Heirs with Christ (Romans 8:17)

Elisha asked for the firstborn's share; believers are heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ.

4. In Elijah's Spirit and Power (Luke 1:17)

John the Baptist came in the spirit and power of Elijah to prepare the way for Jesus, whose ministry of healing and life far exceeded Elisha's.

Anchor Verse (ESV)

> **2 Kings 2:9:** When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, “Ask what I shall do for you, before I am taken from you.” And Elisha said, “Please let there be a double portion of your spirit on me.”

Group Discussion Questions (Section 1.5)

1.5 Q1: Jesus refused to call down fire on a village that rejected him (Luke 9:54–56). What does this show about how Jesus fulfills and goes beyond Elijah's ministry?

1.5 Q2: Jesus told his followers, "you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you" (Acts 1:8). How is Elisha receiving Elijah's spirit a picture of what Jesus gives his church?

1.5 Q3: Paul says believers are "heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ" (Romans 8:17). What does it mean for you to be an heir with Christ?

◆ LEADER GUIDE OVERLAY — SECTION 1.5 · SECTION PACING TARGET: 12 MINUTES

- **Pacing & Time Target:** 12 minutes. Teaching connections, 6 minutes; discussion, 6 minutes (about 2 minutes per question).
- **Facilitation Cues & Follow-Up Probes:**
  - Assign participants to look up Luke 9:51–56, Acts 1:8–11, Acts 2:1–4, and Romans 8:14–17 ahead of time.
  - Follow-up probe for **1.5 Q1**: What did the disciples want? What did Jesus do? How should we respond to those who reject us?
  - Follow-up probe for **1.5 Q2**: Who ascended? Who received the Spirit? How does the Spirit empower you?
  - Follow-up probe for **1.5 Q3**: What does an heir receive? What do we inherit with Christ? How does that change how you live?
- **Pitfalls to Steer Around:** Do not suggest that believers should seek a "double portion" of spiritual power for themselves; the focus is on Christ's gift of the Spirit to his whole church.
- **Additional Research Notes:** Luke's account of the ascension (Acts 1:9–11) and Pentecost (Acts 2:33) echoes Elijah's ascension and the passing of his spirit. Luke 4:25–27 shows Jesus pointing to Elijah and Elisha to show God's grace to outsiders, which leads into Week 2.

Personal & Group Application (Head, Heart, Hands)

HEAD	When Ahaziah sought a foreign god, the LORD confronted him through Elijah; then Elijah was taken up, and his spirit rested on Elisha, whose first signs showed the LORD's word bringing life and judgment.
HEART	There is a God in Israel. Jesus ascended and poured out his Spirit, and we are heirs with him.
HANDS	Faith seeks the LORD first, stays faithful in transitions, and carries forward what it has received.

Section 1.6

Application, Looking Ahead, and Closing Prayer

Application

Take a few minutes to move this week's study into everyday life. Discuss these three questions together and write down what you want to remember:

1.6 Q1: In what current need are you tempted to seek help everywhere except from the LORD?

1.6 Q2: What faith or example have you received from someone else that you need to carry forward?

1.6 Q3: Who is following your example in faith, and how can you invest in them this week?

Looking Ahead to Next Week

Recap: In Week 1, Elijah confronted a king who sought a foreign god, was taken up by a whirlwind, and passed his cloak to Elisha.

Transition: Elisha's ministry now begins in earnest, and much of it is mercy to people no one expected.

Week 2 Overview — Mercy for the Least Expected (2 Kings 4:1–5:27): Movement 1, Elisha's Works of Mercy (4:1–44), covers a widow's oil, a Shunammite woman's son, and food for the hungry. Movement 2, Naaman Healed and Gehazi's Greed (5:1–27), covers a foreign commander healed in the Jordan and a servant's greed exposed. The Canonical Horizon traces how Jesus cleanses lepers and welcomes outsiders.

Focal Readings to Preview

- 2 Kings 4:1–17
- 2 Kings 4:32–44
- 2 Kings 5:1–19

My One Concrete Step for the Week Ahead

Write down or name aloud the specific rhythm, boundary, or conversation you want to practice before next week's gathering:

Closing Prayer

Close your time together by inviting each person to share a one-sentence takeaway or prayer request, then pray together along these lines:

> **Closing Group Prayer**
>
> Living God, you alone hold life and death in your hands, and there is no one like you. Forgive us for the times we seek help everywhere but from you. Thank you for the parents, mentors, and teachers who walked with us and passed their faith on to us. Comfort any here who are grieving a mentor, a parent, or a friend who has gone before them. Thank you for Jesus, who ascended to your right hand and poured out your Spirit on his people. Give us faithfulness to pick up the work you have entrusted to us and to carry it forward. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

◆ LEADER GUIDE OVERLAY — SECTION 1.6 · SECTION PACING TARGET: 9 MINUTES

- **Pacing & Time Target:** 9 minutes. Application and questions, 5 minutes; Looking Ahead and Focal Readings, 2 minutes; Concrete Step and Closing Prayer, 2 minutes.
- **Facilitation Cues & Follow-Up Probes:**
  - Use silent reflection for 1.6 Q1. Mention that Week 2 includes the death of a child, who is restored to life; parents who have lost children may want to know ahead of time.
  - Follow-up probe for **1.6 Q1**: What is the need? Where have you looked? What would seeking the LORD first look like?
  - Follow-up probe for **1.6 Q2**: Who gave it to you? What was it? How will you carry it on?
  - Follow-up probe for **1.6 Q3**: Who comes to mind? What do they need? What will you do?
- **Pitfalls to Steer Around:** Do not turn 1.6 Q3 into pressure to become a formal mentor; small steps of encouragement count.
- **Additional Research Notes:** In Week 2, Naaman confesses, "there is no God in all the earth but in Israel" (5:15), answering the question of chapter 1 from the lips of a foreign commander.