

## Power Struggles

The Kingdom of Israel has fallen. It is fractured, disjointed, and broken. In this week's reading, we see a people that has forgotten their God and walked away. We see kings quickly rise and fall from power. It is in the midst of this "wild west" chaos that we see the difference between the power of man and the power of God. Throughout the story, there are grand moments when God reveals Himself in spectacular ways to show that He is mightier than all others.

As we read, we will see the throne of Israel and the throne of Judah pass very quickly and brutally from person to person. Kings will climb to power and wipe out the entire house of their predecessors. This shows the intense brutality evil men are willing to commit in order to gain and maintain power in their own strength. However, we also see these same kings lose power just as quickly and brutally as they gained it. This sad and disturbing pattern gives us another glimpse into the depravity of man and the utter chaos we are prone to when living apart from God.

Throughout all the turmoil, we see a stark difference in a few men. As the kingdom of Israel passes from hand to hand, the Kingdom of Judah remains fairly consistent under the reign of Asa and Jehoshaphat. We see a drastic difference in the way Asa and Jehoshaphat come to power and in the way in which they lead. Instead of making war against their predecessors when they came to power, they made war against false idols. As they led, they sought the Lord and "did right in the eyes of the Lord." (1 Kings 15:11; 1 Kings 22:43; 2 Chronicles 14:2)

They loved the Lord and worked to bring justice and peace to the kingdom.

These two kings did not have perfect reigns. They still had struggles and enemies like all other kings; however, the way they reacted in these situations was remarkable. In the face of certain defeat, these men of God prayed for deliverance and saw the Lord move and defeat their enemies before their very eyes. Jehoshaphat even went as far as to send worshipers out in front of an army, and their praise implores the Lord to move and the enemies defeat themselves. The Lord uses Asa and Jehoshaphat to show that He is greater than any enemy, kingdom, or power.

This week's readings also show us God's work through two well-known prophets, Elijah and Elisha. God uses these two men to reveal His will and draw His people back to Himself. These men bravely speak truth to kings in ways that often endanger their lives. They also wage war against false idols, and through their work, the Lord reveals himself in powerful, miraculous ways.

These stories reveal the best and worst of man. We see what men are capable of and the ways we often stray in search of power and in the service of false Gods. We also see how the Lord uses normal, everyday people to do miraculous things. May this be both a warning and encouragement to us to walk with the Lord, seek His will, and boldly do the work He has set out for us.

~ Jamison Elder

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### **June 10th Readings**

1 KINGS 15:16-22  
2 CHRONICLES 16:1-10  
1 KINGS 16:1-34  
1 KINGS 15:23-24  
2 CHRONICLES 16:11-17:19  
1 KINGS 17:1-7

### **June 11th Readings**

1 KINGS 17:8-20:22

**June 12th Readings**

1 KINGS 20:23-22:9  
2 CHRONICLES 18:1-8

**June 13th Readings**

1 KINGS 22:10-28  
2 CHRONICLES 18:9-27  
1 KINGS 22:29-35  
2 CHRONICLES 18:28-34  
1 KINGS 22:36-40  
1 KINGS 22:51-53  
2 CHRONICLES 19:1-20:30

**June 14th Readings**

2 KINGS 1:1-18  
2 KINGS 3:1-27  
1 KINGS 22:41-49  
2 CHRONICLES 20:31-37  
1 KINGS 22:50  
2 CHRONICLES 21:1-4  
2 KINGS 8:16-22  
2 CHRONICLES 21:5-7

**June 15th Readings**

2 KINGS 2:1-25  
2 KINGS 4:1-44

**June 16th Readings**

2 KINGS 5:1-8:15