

# Week Twenty-Five

Days 169–175



**Divided Kingdom** Narrative: 1 Kings 22; 2 Kings 1–7 | Supplemental: 2 Chronicles 23–28; Song of Solomon 8; Hosea 1–7; Psalms 69–70, 72, 101, 103, 127

## KNOWING AND SERVING GOD IS PARAMOUNT



The prophets Elijah and Elisha crossing the Jordan River

This week's readings may help us to better understand the complexity of the history and the historical figures that play a role in God's plans for the world through his covenant with the Jews. We meet new kings, prophets, advisors, foreigners, and common people. Our task is to see how God is present in the lives of these figures and in their stories as a whole.

- At the end of 1 Kings and the beginning of 2 Kings, evil Ahab's successor, Ahaziah, turns to Baal-zebul, the god of Ekron, to know the future. As a result, Elijah tells him he will die in his unfaithfulness.
- In 2 Kings 2, the prophetic work of Elijah transitions to Elisha. In the Bible, the eldest son inherits a double share of the father's property. Here, Elisha asks for a double portion of Elijah's spirit. So Elisha regards himself as the "son" of Elijah and asks for his inheritance.
- Apart from palace intrigues and wars between the kingdoms of Judah and Israel that flared up during the several hundred years of a divided kingdom, the two sides sometimes cooperated.
- In 2 Kings 3, an alliance is formed between Jehoram (king of Israel) Jehoshaphat (king of Judah), and an unnamed king of Edom to go to war against Moab.
- Kings sometimes begin their times as rulers well but then decide to turn from God. This is the case with King Joash in 2 Chronicles 24.
- The prophet Hosea's life is challenging to read about, but it contains important parallels with the other readings of the week.
- Hosea is called to witness to the Lord in his words and actions. The Lord tells him to marry a prostitute, Gomer, knowing she will be unfaithful. Hosea is called to be like the Lord because Gomer will be like the people of Israel—unfaithful.
- "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge" (Hosea 4:6). Nevertheless, they have all the information they need in the Torah, including the Ten Commandments. They lack a personal desire to know and serve God.

