

2 Kings Lesson 17

2 Kings Chapter 17

Distributed by: KJV Bible Studies

Website: www.KjvBibleStudies.net

e-Email: mailKjvBibleStudies@gmail.com

Memory verses for this week: *Pro 19:4 Wealth maketh many friends; but the poor is separated from his neighbour.*

Introduction: In chapter 16, we studied about the reign of Ahaz and covered some of the detail relating to his reign in Chapter 7 of Isaiah. This next chapter of II Kings is a climactic one. Though the next king of Israel (Hoshea) is briefly chronicled, it was during his reign that God sent the Assyrians which carried away captive the northern kingdom. The text makes it exceedingly clear that the Assyrian captivity was because of the sin of Israel.

I. Hoshea Begins Reign in Samaria

2Ki 17:1 In the twelfth year of Ahaz king of Judah began Hoshea the son of Elah to reign in Samaria over Israel nine years.

2Ki 17:2 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, but not as the kings of Israel that were before him.

The focus of the book changes for the last time to the affairs of Israel, the northern kingdom. Its last reigning king, Hoshea, continued in the evil tradition of his predecessors. Though Hoshea was not as wicked as many before him, God's impending judgment was due and about to fall upon Israel.

2Ki 17:3 Against him came up Shalmaneser king of Assyria; and Hoshea became his servant, and gave him presents.

2Ki 17:4 And the king of Assyria found conspiracy in Hoshea: for he had sent messengers to So king of Egypt, and brought no present to the king of Assyria, as he had done year by year: therefore the king of Assyria shut him up, and bound him in prison.

As the Assyrian empire was exercising imperialistic strength across the Middle East, God allowed the Assyrians to invade Israel and to subdue them. The remainder of the chapter will make it clear that the Assyrian invasion was at God's hand. I Chronicles 5:26 speaks of Tiglathpilneser, king of Assyria, invading Israel. However, Shalmaneser likely is the son of Tiglathpilneser.

1Ch 5:26 And the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul king of Assyria, and the spirit of Tilgathpilneser king of Assyria, and he carried them away, even the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh, and brought them unto Halah, and Habor, and Hara, and to the river Gozan, unto this day.

In any event, the Assyrian king forced Israel into vassal status, requiring payment of substantial tribute taxes on a regular basis. Hoshea endeavored to make an alliance with Egypt to throw off the Assyrian yoke. Assyria evidently learned of this attempted conspiracy and they certainly became aware of the cessation of tribute monies flowing from Israel.

The Assyrians therefore returned to Israel, arrested Hoshea, and threw him in prison. The arrest may have taken place after the complete defeat of Israel as noted in the next two verses.

2Ki 17:5 Then the king of Assyria came up throughout all the land, and went up to Samaria, and besieged it three years.

2Ki 17:6 In the ninth year of Hoshea the king of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away into Assyria, and placed them in Halah and in Habor by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes.

Though the Assyrians had little trouble in overrunning Israel previously; evidently, this time, Hoshea and his forces withstood them by fortifying themselves in Samaria, their capital city. After three years of siege, the king of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away into Assyria, and placed them in Halah and in Habor by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes.

The long foretold dispersion of Israel from their land had begun. Not only were the inhabitants of the city of Samaria deported, but all of the ten tribes of the remainder of the northern kingdom were as well. As early as Leviticus 26:32-39 and Deuteronomy 28:58-67, God had long warned His people that He would eventually remove them from their land if they turned their back on Him and followed idols.

The Assyrian captivity of the northern kingdom began in about 722 B.C. The places mentioned in Assyria where Israel was placed were “Halah and in Habor by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes.” These were in the northern part of Assyria. In more modern terms, these areas would be northern Iraq and into central Iran.

II. Israel Guilty of Sin

2Ki 17:7 For so it was, that the children of Israel had sinned against the LORD their God, which had brought them up out of the land of Egypt, from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and had feared other gods,

The text makes exceedingly clear why Israel was deported from their land.

“For so it was, that the children of Israel had sinned against the LORD their God, which had brought them up out of the land of Egypt, from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and had feared other gods”.

God is longsuffering, but there is a point where judgment is going to come. He had put up with the sin of Israel for more than 250 years. Time after time He had sent prophets to warn them. He had mercifully delivered them from their enemies. He had given them provision in times of famine. Yet, Israel and its kings stubbornly rebelled against their God.

The patience and long suffering of God finally expired. He had enough. As He had foretold in the Law of Moses, He took Israel out of their land. The Assyrian captivity has never officially ended. Though Judah, the southern kingdom would go into captivity about 117 years later and return with God's blessing, the northern kingdom has never officially returned. To this day, the descendants of Jacob are called Jews after the tribe of Judah.

Though individual Israelites from the ten northern tribes surely did and have returned to their land over the centuries, they have never come back as a whole. That evidently will not happen until the Day of the Lord. (See further comments in verses 23, 34-35, and 41.)

2Ki 17:8 And walked in the statutes of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out from before the children of Israel, and of the kings of Israel, which they had made.

2Ki 17:9 And the children of Israel did secretly those things that were not right against the LORD their God, and they built them high places in all their cities, from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city.

Verse 8 further enumerates the sins of Israel. They walked in the statutes of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out from before the children of Israel, and of the kings of Israel, which they had made. Israel degenerated into the idolatrous and immoral practices of the Canaanites which had inhabited the land before them.

God had cast them out because of their sin. Now the same fate fell upon Israel. Additionally, Israel willingly followed after the sins of the kings of Israel, namely the golden calves set up at Bethel and Dan. Not only had Israel participated in the open idolatry of Jeroboam, they also secretly and privately practiced sin in their homes. This extended not only from the fortified major cities of the land but into the small towns as well. They built private high places for idolatrous practices throughout the land.

2Ki 17:10 And they set them up images and groves in every high hill, and under every green tree:

2Ki 17:11 And there they burnt incense in all the high places, as did the heathen whom the LORD carried away before them; and wrought wicked things to provoke the LORD to anger:

2Ki 17:12 For they served idols, whereof the LORD had said unto them, Ye shall not do this thing.

2Ki 17:13 Yet the LORD testified against Israel, and against Judah, by all the prophets, and by all the seers, saying, Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my

commandments and my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets.

Throughout the land of Israel, the people of Jehovah had set up pagan idols atop every high hill (which are numerous across the land) and even under every green tree. This was the practice of the heathen by nature and Israel willingly conformed themselves thereto.

Jer 3:6 The LORD said also unto me in the days of Josiah the king, Hast thou seen that which backsliding Israel hath done? she is gone up upon every high mountain and under every green tree, and there hath played the harlot.

Though the covenant-people of Jehovah, Israel had backslidden into such a degenerate state that there was little difference between them and the world about them. They as a result provoked Jehovah God to anger. Their sin is summarized as follows: "For they served idols, whereof the LORD had said unto them, Ye shall not do this thing".

Israel had blatantly ignored the first two commandments as recorded in Exodus 20:3-5.

Exo 20:3 Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

Exo 20:4 Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth:

Exo 20:5 Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me;

The mills of God's judgment grind slow, but they grind exceedingly fine. Israel, perhaps, thought that they were getting away with their sin. But God dealt against them with righteous wrath in His perfect time.

Verse 13 notes how God sent many prophets to the people. In mercy and longsuffering, God sent these various prophets to warn Israel. Though the message may have been sharp, it was gracious in that God gave Israel ample warning of their sin. God then and to this day warns His people.

"Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments and my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets".

Sadly, Israel refused to hearken.

2Ki 17:14 Notwithstanding they would not hear, but hardened their necks, like to the neck of their fathers, that did not believe in the LORD their God.

2Ki 17:15 And they rejected his statutes, and his covenant that he made with their

fathers, and his testimonies which he testified against them; and they followed vanity, and became vain, and went after the heathen that were round about them, concerning whom the LORD had charged them, that they should not do like them.

In verse 14, the bible elaborates further concerning the sin of Israel. They refused to listen to the prophets sent by God. They hardened their necks in stubbornness against the message of God and the God of the message.

They refused to trust Jehovah their God. They rejected His commandments and the covenant God had made with their forefathers. They rejected the warnings of the prophets against them and they pursued after vanity. They willingly conformed themselves to the world around them, notwithstanding the commandment of God to not be like them. Sadly, many a nominal Christian in this age is quite similar in nature to Israel then.

2Ki 17:16 And they left all the commandments of the LORD their God, and made them molten images, even two calves, and made a grove, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served Baal.

2Ki 17:17 And they caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire, and used divination and enchantments, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger.

Not only did Israel accept the abomination of Jeroboam and his golden calves, they also became involved in astrology in worshiping various heavenly bodies. On top of that, they practiced the sexual immorality of the heathen in their pagan god named Baal. If all the wickedness thus far were not enough, Israel stooped to offering their small children to the pagan atrocity called Molech.

They also dabbled in the occult to the degree that they prostituted themselves to do evil before God. Implied is that they not only sinned against God, but did so on purpose to defy and provoke the God of their fathers.

III. God Becomes Very Angry with Israel

2Ki 17:18 Therefore the LORD was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of his sight: there was none left but the tribe of Judah only.

2Ki 17:19 Also Judah kept not the commandments of the LORD their God, but walked in the statutes of Israel which they made.

If Israel was intent in provoking the God of their fathers, they succeeded. God had had enough. He threw Israel out its land leaving only the tribe of Judah. (It should be recalled that Judah also included the tribe of Benjamin.)

The sin of Judah was not initially as blatant as that of their northern brethren. Furthermore, there were times of revival in the southern kingdom. Judah as well had backslidden and little by little emulated the example of their wicked northern brethren.

2Ki 17:20 And the LORD rejected all the seed of Israel, and afflicted them, and delivered them into the hand of spoilers, until he had cast them out of his sight.
2Ki 17:21 For he rent Israel from the house of David; and they made Jeroboam the son of Nebat king: and Jeroboam drave Israel from following the LORD, and made them sin a great sin.
2Ki 17:22 For the children of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam which he did; they departed not from them;
2Ki 17:23 Until the LORD removed Israel out of his sight, as he had said by all his servants the prophets. So was Israel carried away out of their own land to Assyria unto this day.

The following four verses summarize the situation of Israel. Certainly included is the northern kingdom. And quite possibly, the coming Babylonian captivity of the southern kingdom may be in view as well.

“And the LORD rejected all the seed of Israel, and afflicted them, and delivered them into the hand of spoilers, until he had cast them out of his sight”.

The northern kingdom was deported as noted above. The southern kingdom would face the same fate approximately 117 years later. Specifically, God had rent Israel from the house of David. Jeroboam the son of Nebat became their king. Jeroboam drove Israel away from the LORD, and made them sin a great sin. Because of the sins of Solomon and Rehoboam, God allowed the nation of Israel to split. After the division, the northern kingdom willingly followed the sin of Jeroboam, who drove Israel even further away from Jehovah God.

Verse 22 records God’s climactic and decisive action against Israel. For 250 years, Israel had defied Jehovah God with the idolatry of Jeroboam. Therefore, God threw them out of the land as He had forewarned He would do. God used the Assyrians as the instrument of His chastisement. The northern kingdom was obliterated, never again to be officially restored.

Though those ten tribes have passed into oblivion, nevertheless, Revelation 7 makes clear that they still exist scattered across the world. Many of them no doubt are already in Israel in preparation for the fulfillment of Revelation 7 and 14.

Rev 14:1 And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.
Rev 14:2 And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps:
Rev 14:3 And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.
Rev 14:4 These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.

Rev 14:5 And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.

IV. Assyrians Replace Israelites with Gentiles

2Ki 17:24 And the king of Assyria brought men from Babylon, and from Cuthah, and from Ava, and from Hamath, and from Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel: and they possessed Samaria, and dwelt in the cities thereof.

2Ki 17:25 And so it was at the beginning of their dwelling there, that they feared not the LORD: therefore the LORD sent lions among them, which slew some of them.

2Ki 17:26 Wherefore they spake to the king of Assyria, saying, The nations which thou hast removed, and placed in the cities of Samaria, know not the manner of the God of the land: therefore he hath sent lions among them, and, behold, they slay them, because they know not the manner of the God of the land.

The focus of the text now shifts away from the deported ten tribes to events which continued in the land in their absence. In deporting the ten tribes of Israel, the Assyrians replaced them with gentiles from around their empire. The name Samaria is here used as another name for the northern kingdom.

Though there certainly was a city by that name, which in fact had been the capital city of the northern kingdom, Samaria also came to be a synonym of the northern kingdom. Israel no longer dwelt therein. Now it was called Samaria.

“And so it was at the beginning of their dwelling there, that they feared not the LORD: therefore the LORD sent lions among them, which slew some of them”.

These pagan gentiles transplanted in the land came with no fear of Jehovah. Though the people of the covenant had been removed, the land remained the covenant land. It still was the holy land (and still is to this day). God instilled the fear of the Lord in them by sending lions throughout the country. As will be clear in the following context, these new gentiles clearly realized the lions were a chastisement of Jehovah.

Verse 26 records how word was sent back to Assyria ascribing the plague of lions to the God of the land. Indeed it was. They then determined to appease this unknown God.

2Ki 17:27 Then the king of Assyria commanded, saying, Carry thither one of the priests whom ye brought from thence; and let them go and dwell there, and let him teach them the manner of the God of the land.

2Ki 17:28 Then one of the priests whom they had carried away from Samaria came and dwelt in Bethel, and taught them how they should fear the LORD.

A priest (apparently of the lineage of Aaron) was found in the captivity and sent back to Bethel to instruct the new inhabitants of the land in the ways of Jehovah.

2Ki 17:29 Howbeit every nation made gods of their own, and put them in the houses of

the high places which the Samaritans had made, every nation in their cities wherein they dwelt.

2Ki 17:30 And the men of Babylon made Succothbenoth, and the men of Cuth made Nergal, and the men of Hamath made Ashima,

2Ki 17:31 And the Avites made Nibhaz and Tartak, and the Sepharvites burnt their children in fire to Adrammelech and Anammelech, the gods of Sepharvaim.

The 'goyim' (the various gentile peoples imported into the land) brought their own forms of idolatry with them. Sadly, the deported Israelites had left behind numerous high places suitable for the continuation of pagan worship. The gentile transplants from Babylon made an idol to their deity Succothbenoth.

The gentiles imported from Cuth made an idol to their pagan deity, Nergal. Likewise did the men of Hamath with their idol to Ashima. Other pagan deities are noted. The Sepharvites adopted a form of the pagan abomination of Molech in offering small children.

2Ki 17:32 So they feared the LORD, and made unto themselves of the lowest of them priests of the high places, which sacrificed for them in the houses of the high places.

2Ki 17:33 They feared the LORD, and served their own gods, after the manner of the nations whom they carried away from thence.

The dismal spiritual conditions of the land are described. As had Jeroboam, the lowest scoundrels of the land were made priests of the numerous pagan high places of the land. They maintained a slight fear of Jehovah because of the fear of His chastisement upon them.

The sacred writer therefore summarizes the situation in that 33 they feared the LORD, and served their own gods, after the manner of the nations whom they carried away from thence. Though the appearance of the fear of the Lord was maintained, these pagan priests continued with their own idols. Ironically, they were not different from Israel "after the manner of the nations whom they carried away from thence."

2Ki 17:34 Unto this day they do after the former manners: they fear not the LORD, neither do they after their statutes, or after their ordinances, or after the law and commandment which the LORD commanded the children of Jacob, whom he named Israel;

2Ki 17:35 With whom the LORD had made a covenant, and charged them, saying, Ye shall not fear other gods, nor bow yourselves to them, nor serve them, nor sacrifice to them:

The they likely refers to Israel even in their captivity though some think it may refer to the colonies of transplanted gentiles in the land. If the former is the case (and the context lends itself thereto), the implication is that the ten northern tribes never repented of their sin or of their idolatry.

If that be the case, the ten northern tribes simply assimilated into the gentile

culture of the nations in which they were dispersed. They likely intermarried with gentiles to such a degree that they no longer exist as a distinct people. Notwithstanding, there was a remnant of those ten northern tribes which migrated to the south.

2Ch 30:1 And Hezekiah sent to all Israel and Judah, and wrote letters also to Ephraim and Manasseh, that they should come to the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, to keep the passover unto the LORD God of Israel.

2Ch 30:5 So they established a decree to make proclamation throughout all Israel, from Beersheba even to Dan, that they should come to keep the passover unto the LORD God of Israel at Jerusalem: for they had not done it of a long time in such sort as it was written.

2Ch 30:6 So the posts went with the letters from the king and his princes throughout all Israel and Judah, and according to the commandment of the king, saying, Ye children of Israel, turn again unto the LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, and he will return to the remnant of you, that are escaped out of the hand of the kings of Assyria.

2Ch 30:7 And be not ye like your fathers, and like your brethren, which trespassed against the LORD God of their fathers, who therefore gave them up to desolation, as ye see.

2Ch 30:8 Now be ye not stiffnecked, as your fathers were, but yield yourselves unto the LORD, and enter into his sanctuary, which he hath sanctified for ever: and serve the LORD your God, that the fierceness of his wrath may turn away from you.

2Ch 30:9 For if ye turn again unto the LORD, your brethren and your children shall find compassion before them that lead them captive, so that they shall come again into this land: for the LORD your God is gracious and merciful, and will not turn away his face from you, if ye return unto him.

2Ch 30:10 So the posts passed from city to city through the country of Ephraim and Manasseh even unto Zebulun: but they laughed them to scorn, and mocked them.

2Ch 30:11 Nevertheless divers of Asher and Manasseh and of Zebulun humbled themselves, and came to Jerusalem.

2Ch 30:25 And all the congregation of Judah, with the priests and the Levites, and all the congregation that came out of Israel, and the strangers that came out of the land of Israel, and that dwelt in Judah, rejoiced.

2Ch 30:26 So there was great joy in Jerusalem: for since the time of Solomon the son of David king of Israel there was not the like in Jerusalem.

Though the ten tribes may be officially 'lost,' the evidence of II Chronicles 30 is that a remnant of each tribe migrated back to Judah before the Assyrian captivity to worship Jehovah God. The account of II Chronicles 30 indicates that God preserved a remnant of the ten northern tribes in their meager migration to Judah.

2Ki 17:36 But the LORD, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt with great power and a stretched out arm, him shall ye fear, and him shall ye worship, and to him shall ye do sacrifice.

2Ki 17:37 And the statutes, and the ordinances, and the law, and the commandment, which he wrote for you, ye shall observe to do for evermore; and ye shall not fear

other gods.

2Ki 17:38 And the covenant that I have made with you ye shall not forget; neither shall ye fear other gods.

2Ki 17:39 But the LORD your God ye shall fear; and he shall deliver you out of the hand of all your enemies.

Further credence that the northern tribes are in view here. Summarized is the covenant which Jehovah God had made with Israel over the preceding centuries. The scripture makes clear the basis of God's dealing with Israel even in their dispersion.

2Ki 17:40 Howbeit they did not hearken, but they did after their former manner.

2Ki 17:41 So these nations feared the LORD, and served their graven images, both their children, and their children's children: as did their fathers, so do they unto this day.

The sad statement is made, "howbeit they did not hearken, but they did after their former manner". Though chastened by their God, Israel continued in their idolatry and sin in Assyria.

Thus ends one of the saddest chapters in the Bible. The pagan gentile nations transplanted in the land feared Jehovah God more than Israel, though they continued to practice their idolatry. The mention to this day may refer all the way to the time of Ezra, the presumed author of the book.

Though not mentioned in the text here, other sources indicate that a remnant of Israelites were missed in the deportation and remained in the land. These evidently intermarried with the various gentile transplants into the land. The offspring of these became the genesis of what came to be known as the Samaritans in Jesus' day. They were partly Hebrew in their lineage as well as gentile.

They formed a hybrid religion on Mount Gerizim which in some ways was similar to the Mosaic Law practiced at Jerusalem. However, it also had pagan influences from the gentile influence of this mixed race.

KJV Bible Studies are prepared and distributed free of charge. The lessons may not be sold without consent. If you have questions or wish to discuss the lessons, or possibly need help in finding Jesus Christ as your Personal Lord and Savior, contact us at the email below.

Prov 4:18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

Website: www.KjvBibleStudies.net

e-Mail: mailKjvBibleStudies@gmail.com

Practice Random Acts of Kindness. Each act spreads, and many will be blessed.