

Lesson 20: 2 Kings 15:32 to 17:41 Judah in Trouble

In our last lesson we learned about the death of the prophet Elisha. Elisha died of his illness and was buried. Sometime later, another man was buried in Elisha's tomb, but as soon as his body touched the bones of Elisha, the man came back to life and stood up. Before he died, Elisha tried to guide King Joash of Israel to perform a ritual act that would bring the "Lord's arrow of victory" over Syria for Israel. King Joash didn't quite follow through in the manner that Elisha suggested, and the result was that Israel would only defeat Syria in battle three times, rather than indefinitely. The prideful King Amaziah of Judah decided to challenge Israel. Judah was defeated and King Joash of Israel tore down 600 feet of the wall of Jerusalem and plundered Jerusalem and then taking hostages. Chapters fourteen and fifteen cover times of tension between the kings of Israel and the kings of Judah. For a brief time, the LORD allowed Israel to reclaim some lands that had previously been lost to Aram/Syria. 2 Kings 14 covers the years from 845 BC to 770 BC. Joash of Israel reigned for 16 years and then his son Jeroboam II reigned for 41 years. 2 Kings 15 covered briefly the kings of Israel and Judah from approximately 815 BC to 735 BC. At the end of our last lesson, the Assyrians captured many territories that were part of Israel to the north, along the western seacoast, Galilee and territories along the Jordan River. The inhabitants of these areas were deported to Assyria. Israel's King Pekah, was then killed by Hoshea, son of Elah, and then succeeded him as king

1. Read 2 Kings 15:32-38 and footnotes. Share any helpful footnotes with your group.

a. Who is king of Judah at this time?

b. What do we know about this king?

c. Reflection: The high places were to be destroyed when the Chosen People conquered Canaan. High places were originally dedicated to idol worship and often included a sacred object such as a stone pillar or wooden pole in various shapes identified with the object of worship.

Why do you believe it was so difficult to destroy these places?

d. What does it say about the people's belief in the LORD if they continually return to these places?

e. Who are the enemies of Judah at this time?

2. Read 2 Kings 16:1-9 and footnotes. Share any helpful footnotes.

a. Who is king of Judah in these verses?

b. Which of this king's actions suggest that the king of Judah is not walking in the way of the LORD?

c. Who are the enemies of Judah?

d. Who does the king of Judah turn to for help against his enemies?

e. How did Judah's new ally deal with the threats against Judah? (2 Kings 16:9)

f. What status does Judah hold in the eyes of Assyria?

3. Read 2 Kings 16:10-20 and footnotes. Share any helpful footnotes.

a. Reflection: What does the desecration of the temple under Ahaz's rule symbolize?

b. Check again for footnotes on 16:15. How does King Ahaz intend to use the smaller bronze altar in the Temple?

c. Read 2 Kings 16:18 and compare translations- NABRE translation is here:

2 Kings 16:18 *In deference* to the king of Assyria he removed the sabbath canopy that had been set up in the house of the Lord and the king's outside entrance to the temple.

What does the term "in deference to the king of Assyria" mean?

4. Read the excerpt from Deuteronomy below. Which of these laws has King Ahaz broken?

Deut. 18:10-14 ¹⁰ Let there not be found among you anyone who causes their son or daughter to pass through the fire, or practices divination, or is a soothsayer, augur, or sorcerer, ¹¹ or who casts spells, consults ghosts and spirits, or seeks oracles from the dead. ¹² Anyone who does such things is an abomination to the Lord, and because of such abominations the Lord, your God, is dispossessing them before you. ¹³ You must be altogether sincere with the Lord, your God. ¹⁴ Although these nations whom you are about to dispossess listen to their soothsayers and diviners, the Lord, your God, will not permit you to do so.

5. Read 2 Kings 17:1-7 and footnotes. Share any footnotes that are helpful.

The time frame for this chapter is ~740-721 BC.

a. Who is king of Israel and king of Assyria in these verses?

b. What did the king of Israel do to anger the Assyrian king?

c. What is the status of Israel in these verses?

6. Read 2 Kings 17:8- 17 and footnotes. Share your footnotes.

a. Note the sins of Israel in the following verses

2 Kings 17:7b-8

2 Kings 17:9-11

2 Kings 17:12

2 Kings 17:13-14

2 Kings 17:16

2 Kings 17:17

7. Read 2 Kings 17:18-23 Share any footnotes.

a. How does 17:17-20 and 17:23 describe and explain God's treatment of Israel?

b. What was *Jeroboam's* role in the ultimate fate of Israel? (see 17:21-22)

8. Read 2 Kings 17:24-34 and footnotes.

a. Who was moved into Samaria/Israel after the mass deportation of the Israelites?

b. What occurrence caused the Assyrian king to *return* the priests who were earlier deported from Israel?

c. How did the new residents change their religious practices? (see 17:29-33)

9. Read 2 Kings 35-41.

a. Which of the Ten Commandments is being stressed here as essential?

b. How do these verses help to explain the hatred between Israel and Samaria in that is evident in the New Testament?