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2 Kings 17

"Warnings from a Just and Patient God"

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The full account of the 723BC siege of the Assyrian Empire against Israel is found in [2 Kings 17](#), which resulted in the complete collapse of northern kingdom of Israel. The Assyrian Empire was vast and powerful, and in its heyday it encompassed all of what we know today as Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Cyprus, most of Turkey, and parts of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Iran. Approximately 137 years later, the southern kingdom of Judah had a similar thing happen to them when the Babylonians, who conquered the Assyrians, conquered Judah.

In this study, we'll learn more about the character of God when it comes to his just judgments, his patience in judgments, and his forewarning before judgment comes.

Historical Background

1. Hoshea would be the last king of Israel, and his reign lasted just nine years.
2. [2 Kings 17:2](#) - *"He did evil in the eyes of the Lord, but not like the kings of Israel who preceded him."*
3. Every single one of Israel's kings *"did evil in the eyes of the Lord,"* and Hoshea was no exception.
4. Before the Assyrians came and laid siege to Israel, Shalmaneser, the king of Assyria, made a deal with Hoshea: "If you play your cards right and pay me a royal fee every year, I'll let you stay on as the king in Israel."
 - a. [2 Kings 17:3](#) - *"Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up to attack Hoshea, who had been Shalmaneser's vassal and had paid him tribute."*

5. Some time later Hoshea made the decision to stop paying tribute to Shalmaneser, and he turned to the Egyptians in an attempt to form an alliance against Assyria.
6. Shalmaneser figured out what was going on and he came with after Israel with a vengeance, and when he besieged Samaria he also put Hoshea in prison.
7. When Israel was conquered, Shalmaneser deported the people to Assyria and he imported Assyrians to Israel.
8. In 1847, archaeologists discovered an ancient inscription written by the king of Assyria that dates back to the 8th century BC, which documented this event.
 - a. "At the beginning of my royal rule, ... the town of the Samaritans I besieged, conquered [for the god...] who let me achieve this my triumph... I led away as prisoners 27,290 inhabitants of it (and) equipped from among them... 50 chariots for my royal corps... The town I rebuilt better than it was before and settled therein people from countries, which I had conquered. I placed an officer of mine as governor over them and imposed upon them tribute as is customary for Assyrian citizens."¹
9. Israelites Deported
 - a. The Assyrians were a ruthless people.
 - b. They invented crucifixion.
 - c. They slaughtered people without mercy or conscience.
 - d. They raped, pillaged, and disemboweled pregnant women.
 - e. It's reasonable to think of the Assyrians as being the ISIS of that time.
 - f. When exiles were brought into Assyria, they were stripped naked and strung together with hooks in their mouths like fish on a string!
 - g. They were moved some 600 miles to the capital city of Nineveh, and the Israelites who survived the journey experienced not only humiliation but also excruciating pain.
10. Assyrians Imported
 - a. The Israelites who were allowed to remain were re-patriotized, so to speak, by the Assyrians, who intermarried with them.
 - b. The children of the mixed marriages of Assyrians and Israelites became known as Samaritans.
 - c. Over time a long-standing hostility between Jews and Samaritans developed because Samaritans were part Jewish and part Assyrians, which is why the Jews thought of them as being "half-breeds."

¹ <https://theosophical.wordpress.com/2011/08/15/biblical-archaeology-16-sargon-ii-inscriptions/>

An Amazing Thing Happened!

11. **2 Kings 17:24-28** - *“The king of Assyria brought people from Babylon, Cuthah, Avva, Hamath and Sepharvaim and settled them in the towns of Samaria to replace the Israelites. They took over Samaria and lived in its towns. When they first lived there, they did not worship the Lord; so he sent lions among them and they killed some of the people. It was reported to the king of Assyria: ‘The people you deported and resettled in the towns of Samaria do not know what the god of that country requires. He has sent lions among them, which are killing them off, because the people do not know what he requires.’ Then the king of Assyria gave this order: ‘Have one of the priests you took captive from Samaria go back to live there and teach the people what the god of the land requires.’ So one of the priests who had been exiled from Samaria came to live in Bethel and taught them how to worship the Lord.”*
12. The real priests were in Jerusalem at the Temple in the southern kingdom of Judah, so the priest that was sent and the instructions he gave weren't legitimate.
13. **2 Kings 17:32-33** - *“They worshiped the Lord, but they also appointed all sorts of their own people to officiate for them as priests in the shrines at the high places. They worshiped the Lord, but they also served their own gods in accordance with the customs of the nations from which they had been brought.”*
14. Their “worship” became a brackish mixture of the sacred and the secular, which is a major problem in many churches and denominations today.
15. Real worship comes from the overflow of the heart in a relationship with Jesus, and worship as a lifestyle, isn't just about singing in church.
 - a. Pastor Gary said he learned that he needed to lay down his pride, stop being self-conscious about himself, and just lift his voice and his hands in worship to the Lord.
 - b. **Psalms 134:2** - *“Lift up your hands in the sanctuary and praise the Lord.”*
 - c. It's unfortunate that some people become very possessive when it comes to the kind of worship they prefer (old songs, new songs, fast songs, or slow songs).
 - d. Pastor Gary said, “As long as the lyrics are right and worship is offered with a right heart, I think God loves all styles!”

How Did Israel Get In This Mess?
And
What Do We Learn About God In This Story?

16. **2 Kings 17:7-8** - *“All this took place because the Israelites had sinned against the Lord their God, who had brought them up out of Egypt from under the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt. They worshiped other gods and followed the practices of the nations the Lord had driven out before them, as well as the practices that the kings of Israel had introduced.”*
17. **2 Kings 17:18-20** - *“So the Lord was very angry with Israel and removed them from his presence. Only the tribe of Judah was left, and even Judah did not keep the commands of the Lord their God. They followed the practices Israel had introduced. Therefore the Lord rejected all the people of Israel; he afflicted them and gave them into the hands of plunderers, until he thrust them from his presence.”*
18. Israel was responsible for their troubles and God allowed these things to take place because he used the Assyrians to correct the people whom he loved.
19. The fact that the Assyrians treated the Israelites so cruelly doesn't sound like they were experiencing the love of God, but that's because our modern definition of God's love is usually absent his correction.
20. Pastor Gary said that when people restrict the definition of God's love to somehow mean, “I can do whatever I want and a loving God will support me, take care of me, accept me, and never interfere with me,” then they have created a fictional God to justify their sinful behavior.
21. The truth is that the love of God includes correction, and our sin will have consequences.

The Character Of God - He Is Just In His Judgments

22. In **2 Kings 17:14-17**, there are 14 indictments against Israel.
 - a. Wouldn't listen
 - b. Stiff-necked
 - c. Did not trust in God
 - d. Rejected God's decrees
 - e. Followed worthless gods
 - f. Imitated other nations

- g. Did what was forbidden
- h. Forsook God's commands
- i. Made idols and Asherah poles
- j. Worshipped the stars and Baal
- k. Sacrificed sons and daughters in the fire
- l. Practiced divination and sorcery
- m. Sold themselves to do evil
- n. Provoked God to anger

The Character Of God - He Is Patient In His Judgments

- 23. If someone wrongs us, we're not likely to put up with it more than a day or two, but God is patient in his judgments.
- 24. God waited patiently for 200 years while the Israelites continued to offend, wrong, and sin against him.
- 25. **Psalm 78:38** - *"Yet he was merciful; he forgave their iniquities and did not destroy them. Time after time he restrained his anger and did not stir up his full wrath."*
- 26. **Psalm 103:8** - *"The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love."*
- 27. **Isaiah 48:9** - *"For my own name's sake I delay my wrath; for the sake of my praise I hold it back from you, so as not to cut you off."*
- 28. **2 Peter 3:9b** - *"He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."*

The Character Of God - He Warns Us Before Bringing Judgment

- 29. **2 Kings 17:13** - *"The Lord warned Israel and Judah through all his prophets and seers: 'Turn from your evil ways. Observe my commands and decrees, in accordance with the entire Law that I commanded your fathers to obey and that I delivered to you through my servants the prophets.'"*
- 30. **2 Kings 17:15a** - *"They rejected his decrees and the covenant he made with their fathers and the warnings he had given them."*

31. [2 Kings 17:22-23](#) - *“The Israelites persisted in all the sins of Jeroboam and did not turn away from them until the Lord removed them from his presence, as he had warned through all his servants the prophets.”*
32. If people persist in their sin even though God has given every warning possible, there will be a time when God's patience runs out and he will judge justly, and make no mistake, there will come a day of accounting for every single person.
33. The only way we will be able to stand blameless before God will be because we have accepted Jesus Christ and his death on the cross on our behalf.
34. [John 5:24](#) - *“[Jesus said,] ‘I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.’ ”*
35. Our God is a just, patient, and forewarning God!

Discussion Questions

1. Review the introduction to the study guide with your group to provide the appropriate background.
2. Read [2 Kings 17:1-6](#) to provide the foundation for this study.
3. Share examples of times when you've found yourself in a real mess and what you learned about the character of God.
4. Read and discuss [2 Kings 17:7-8, 18-20](#).
5. When you read [2 Kings 17:14-17](#), and see all of the indictments the Lord had against Israel, how just do you think God was in his judgments?
6. What has been your experience concerning the patience of God in his judgments?
7. Read and discuss the Scriptures Pastor Gary shared concerning the patience of God. (See #25 through #28 above)
8. Read and discuss the Scriptures Pastor Gary shared concerning the forewarning of God. (See #29 through #31 above)

9. What does the truth and the promise of [John 5:24](#) mean to you?

10. Close your time in prayer as the Holy Spirit leads.

* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New International Version (NIV 1984).