

Lesson 11 – 2 Kings 17

Text: 2 Kings 17

Main Characters: God, Hoshea, Shalmaneser, Sargon II

Key Passages:

- 2 Kings 17:7 – Israel was punished for one reason only: their sin.
- 2 Kings 17:18 – The Lord removed Israel from his sight, leaving Judah alone.

Main Storyline:

Hoshea became king of Israel after he conspired against and killed the previous king, Pekah. Just as every other king of Israel, Hoshea was evil, though the Bible notes that he was not as wicked as the kings that had come before him. Shalmaneser, the king of Assyria, attacked Israel and forced Hoshea to become his vassal, or servant, and to pay Assyria tribute money.

At some point, Hoshea decided to rebel against Assyria, believing that an alliance with Egypt would assist them in escaping from Assyria's control (Assyria and Egypt were enemies). When Hoshea stopped sending the tribute to Assyria, the king of Assyria realized what Hoshea had been doing and threw him in prison. Shalmaneser and his successor, Sargon II (Isaiah 20:1), began to attack Israel and besieged the city of Samaria for 3 years before it finally collapsed.

Nine years after Hoshea had become king, the Assyrian empire destroyed the nation of Israel. After the nation had been subdued, the king of Assyria removed most of the people from Israel and scattered them throughout the Assyrian empire. The king also took some of the captives from other areas places that the Assyrians had conquered and settled them in the land of Israel. This strategy prevented the conquered peoples from developing a national resistance, as they had been broken away from the rest of their nations; it was very effective.

When the foreigners first began living in Israel, they did not fear or worship the Lord; rather, they served their own false gods and idols. In response, God sent lions to kill some of the idolatrous foreigners living in Israel. When the king of Assyria found out what was happening, he sent one of the priests of Israel to return to his land and to teach the people the rituals of God. While the foreigners learned how to worship the Lord (and did serve Him), they continued to worship their own gods as well. These foreigners intermarried with the very poor Israelites left in the land and became known as the "Samaritans" that were seen in the time of Jesus.

As God had promised, the nation of Israel had been completely destroyed, never to be rebuilt. God had taken care of His people by taking them out of Egypt and constantly caring for and providing for them, yet Israel continued to rebel against Him. God had warned His people repeatedly regarding the judgment that would come if they refused to change. When the people turned their backs on God completely, God, through many prophets, promised that judgment was inevitable. The Assyrian empire had completely destroyed the nation of Israel: the land was taken and the people were scattered.

God destroyed Israel because of their constant sin, especially their idolatry. God had sent numerous prophets to Israel to try to help them to see that they needed to change, yet the people refused to listen to their warnings. Instead, the people stiffened their necks and hardened their hearts, becoming even more entrenched in their idolatrous worship. In the end, God became angry at Israel's betrayal, and He removed Israel completely from his sight, leaving Judah alone in the land.

Lessons/Applications:

- 1.) Though God has great patience, eventually we must repent, or, inevitably, we will be punished.
- 2.) God demands and deserves all of our worship; we cannot serve any other gods but Him alone.