

I & II Kings



Lesson 9 – 2 Kings 17:1–41

Israel Falls

Sometimes humankind exhausts the patience of God. At times, He looks upon His creation and says, “Enough is enough.” The great flood marks such a time. In Genesis 6, we read, “The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him to His heart” (Genesis 6:5–7).

Had the nation of Israel reached an identical tipping point? Because the behavior of kings such as Ahab, Ahaziah, Jehoram, and others who merited the description “he did what was evil in the sight of the Lord,” God had reached His limit. In His mercy, God sent prophets to call His people to repentance. 1 and 2 Kings introduces us to two such prophets, Elijah and Elisha. Their ministries show that while God’s people sought to compromise with idols, He faithfully worked to restore His people.

If we are to understand God as the ultimate promise keeper, we must realize that God works according to His Word. If God details the curses that result from abandoning Him (see Deuteronomy 28:15–68), He must deliver the discipline promised.

Hoshea, Israel’s Final King

Read 2 Kings 17:1–6. The sad litany of godless Israelite kings terminates at Hoshea. Historical records tell us that Hoshea killed his predecessor in 732 BC. In doing so, he became the seventh Israelite king to come to power in such a manner. In all, nine different dynasties ruled over Israel in the nearly two hundred years of her existence. This was the kingdom brought into existence when Jeroboam revolted against Solomon’s son Rehoboam, the kingdom built upon a superficial religion of “two calves of gold” (1 Kings 12:28) placed in Bethel and Dan and upon religious tolerance. Before long, religious tolerance spawned evil kings whose indifference to God dwarfed that of Jeroboam. In reality, it is a natural progression. When a nation kicks God out, it invites Satan in, as religion becomes a hedonistic smorgasbord. In Israel, Asherah poles and graven images became the polluted substitutes for God’s temple.

94. Read Deuteronomy 4:5–8. What purpose is served when humankind keeps God’s “statutes and rules” in response to His grace?
95. King Hoshea ruled a vassal state subject to the rule of Assyria. What action did Hoshea take that led to the exile of Israel (2 Kings 17:4–5)?

The Assyrian king carried the people of Israel into exile (v. 6). We might conclude that Shalmaneser would keep God's people together in one geographic location. Such is not the case. Shalmaneser scattered the Israelites throughout his kingdom, and they were never to return. Because he did so, we know the Northern Kingdom as "the lost tribes of Israel" today.

God States His Case against Israel

Read 2 Kings 17:7–23. With detail reminiscent of a prosecuting attorney, the charges against Israel appear before us.

96. Match the verses on the left with the Lord's accusations on the right.

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| A. (v. 8) _____ | 1. Stubborn |
| B. (v. 9) _____ | 2. Burned children to death |
| C. (v. 10) _____ | 3. Offerings at high places |
| D. (v. 11) _____ | 4. Built high places |
| E. (v. 12) _____ | 5. Despised God's statutes |
| F. (v. 14) _____ | 6. Served idols |
| G. (v. 15) _____ | 7. Metal calves |
| H. (v. 16) _____ | 8. Followed other nations |
| I. (v. 17) _____ | 9. Pillars and Asherim |

97. Read Exodus 20:4, and then prove the validity of this statement: Israel's sin is first and foremost a First Commandment issue.
98. While the Israelites followed the false gods of the nations surrounding them, God did not remain idle. By what means did God repeatedly attempt to draw His wayward people unto Himself (2 Kings 17:13)?
99. Describe what was going on, religiously speaking, in the Southern Kingdom of Judah while the Northern Kingdom rebelled against God (vv. 13 and 19).

Samaria Resettled

Read 2 Kings 17:24–41. Shalmaneser did not leave the region of Samaria unpopulated; he imported captives from Babylon, Cuthah, Avva, Hamath, and Sepharvaim (v. 24). The names Succoth-benoth, Nergal, Ashima, Nibhaz, Adrammelech, and Anammelech represent the gods of the nations Shalmaneser placed in Samaria (vv. 30–31).

100. According to verses 32 and 33, how would you describe the religious practices of the people who by Jesus' day went by the name of Samaritans?

God's Word for Today

Earlier in this lesson, we read Deuteronomy 4:5–8, which we might easily call “the Old Testament Great Commission.” Now read Matthew 22:37–39 and 28:19–20, a text we call the “New Testament Great Commission.”

101. How is sharing the Gospel an important part of loving our neighbors as ourselves?

In Closing

- † Collect as much information as you can on King Hezekiah by consulting a Bible dictionary or other reliable source.
- † Compile a list of prophets God used to return Judah to Himself.
- † Read **2 Kings 18:1–21:26** to prepare for the next session.