

I & II Kings



Lesson 10 – 2 Kings 18:1–21:26

God Rejects Judah

Before turning to the events in the Southern Kingdom, a reexamination of the Israelite deportation may prove helpful. The author of the books of Kings almost matter-of-factly mentions the deportation: “and he [the king of Assyria] carried the Israelites away to Assyria and placed them in Halah, and on the Habor, the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes” (2 Kings 17:6). This is not an afternoon stroll. In some instances, the journey carried the exiles three, four, and perhaps even five hundred miles from home. A journey of ten hours by car today took the Israelites weeks on foot.

The Assyrians took the deportation of conquered nations to new heights of physical pain. Ancient Assyrian reliefs depict captives tied together, one after another, with ropes between them fastened together with fishhooks. These fishhooks were attached to a captive’s nose or lower lip, thus inhibiting escape. The prophet Amos foretells such brutality when he writes, “The Lord GOD has sworn by His holiness that, behold, the days are coming upon you, when they [the Assyrians] shall take you away with hooks, even the last of you with fishhooks” (Amos 4:2).

With the brutal deportation of the Northern Kingdom, God mercifully warned the Southern Kingdom of her need for repentance and a return to His loving arms. Not wanting anyone to suffer the horrible loss of his soul to false gods and idols, God allowed the deportation of Israel. The question is, will Judah heed God’s intended warning?

Hezekiah, a King Who Did What Was Right

Read 2 Kings 18:1–12. Our author takes a few verses to go back in time. Approximately four years before the deportation of Israel (see 2 Kings 18:9–12), Hezekiah succeeded his father to the throne of Judah. Hezekiah’s father was Ahaz, who “did not do what was right in the eyes of the LORD his God, as his father David had done” (2 Kings 16:2). Hezekiah did not follow his father’s example. We may find an answer to why Hezekiah plotted a different course than the one laid out by his father by reviewing verse 2 of our text.

102. Some scholars believe the first person mentioned in verse 2 had a profound influence on Hezekiah. Identify this person and her relationship to him.

103. Read Proverbs 22:6 and apply it to what you learned in the previous question. How important do you feel the relationship is between parent and child as far as rearing a God-fearing child is concerned? Share your answer.

Assyria Invades Judah

Read 2 Kings 18:13–37. Ten years after Assyria deported Israel, her armies invaded Judah. Fortified cities fell to King Sennacherib, including Lachish, located twenty miles southwest of Jerusalem (v. 14). To appease Sennacherib, Hezekiah stripped gold from the temple and sent it to Sennacherib at Lachish. Not impressed, Sennacherib sent an army to besiege Jerusalem (v. 17).

104. What words in our text show Assyria's utter disdain for the Lord God?
105. Read Psalm 50:15 and relate God's desire when we are facing overwhelming situations.
106. How did Hezekiah's envoys react when they heard the blasphemous words spoken by Sennacherib's Rabshakeh, or field commander?

Isaiah Offers God's Reassurance

Read 2 Kings 19:1–37. Torn clothing and dressing in sackcloth symbolize repentance. The Assyrian invasion turned Judah's heart back to God, as noted by Hezekiah's declaration (vv. 3–4).

107. Isaiah, another of the Lord's great prophets, brought God's response to Judah's repentance. What was God's response (vv. 5–7)?
108. In what manner did God deal with the Assyrian army surrounding Jerusalem and her self-righteous king (vv. 35–37)?

Hezekiah's Last Years

Read 2 Kings 20:1–20. Hezekiah's deathbed prayer (v. 3) reminds us of the thief crucified with Jesus who uttered, "Jesus, remember me when You come into Your kingdom" (Luke 23:42). Hezekiah's prayer is not self-seeking, but promise-clinging (Deuteronomy 5:33).

109. How might we say that we see in God's answer (2Kings 20:5–6) His merciful willingness to hear the prayers of His people?

The Lord answered Hezekiah's request for a sign that the Lord would heal him (vv. 8–11). Our prayers matter to God as well.

Some 115 years before Babylon overran Judah, its envoys arrived to begin diplomatic contact. Pridefully, Hezekiah showed these envoys everything stored to resist any siege (v. 13). To his chagrin, Isaiah reminded Hezekiah of the foolishness in taking pride in ourselves for the stores God has provided (vv. 16–18).

Manasseh and Amon Reign

Read 2 Kings 21:1–26. Manasseh was only twelve when he began to rule in place of his father Hezekiah (v. 1). His son condoned every abominable religious practice condemned by Hezekiah. Amon, Manasseh's son, followed in his father's footsteps. Of Amon, our author writes, "He abandoned the LORD, the God of his fathers, and did not walk in the way of the LORD" (v. 22). What a horrible epitaph.

110. During the reign of Manasseh, the Lord determined to do away with Judah. Make a list of seven things that Manasseh did to cause God to reject Judah.

God's Word for Today

In Hezekiah, we see the second to last God-pleasing king in Judah. His great-grandson Josiah was the last. Soon, Judah will suffer a fate similar to that of Israel.

111. Read Isaiah 38:17. Here Isaiah puts before us a writing of King Hezekiah written after God had healed him and granted him fifteen more years of life. Now read Titus 2:13–14 and explain the commonality of Hezekiah's life and yours.

In Closing

- † Examine some of the religious reforms instituted by King Josiah.
- † Study the lineage of Jesus Christ found in Matthew 1:1–17. Note the names of Judah's kings, some faithful, some not. Discuss the faithfulness of God despite the strengths and weaknesses of Judah's kings.
- † Read **2 Kings 22:1–25:30** to prepare for the next session.