

WHY GOD ALLOWED ASSYRIA TO CAPTURE ISRAEL

2 Kings 17:7-18

INTRODUCTION:

- A. After Rehoboam became king and followed the poor advice of his peers, the nation of God's people was split into the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah.
- B. The Northern Kingdom of Israel was captured by Assyria in 722 B.C. and never returned as a nation.
- C. The Southern kingdom of Judah lasted until 586 B.C. when they were captured by the Babylonians.
- D. Why did this happen to the nation of Israel?
- E. Let's study some reasons why God allowed this to happen:

I. THEY SINNED DESPITE GOD'S BLESSINGS, verse 7.

- A. How had God blessed them?
- B. How often do WE take God's blessings for granted, and continue through life, simply living for ourselves?

II. THEY BECAME LIKE THE NATIONS AROUND THEM, verse 8.

- A. They *walked in the statutes of the nations* whom the LORD had cast out from before the children of Israel, and of the kings of Israel," Verse 8.
- B. Look at what they did: (Verses 9-12)
 - 1. High places (**v.9**): a term often used to describe a place of idolatrous worship, (Cf. 2 Kings 11:7).
 - 2. From the tower of the watchmen to the fortified city (**v.9**): from desolate places to the populated cities.
 - 3. They set up for themselves sacred pillars and wooden images on every high hill and under every green tree (**v.10**): places of idol worship in every available location.
 - 4. There they burned incense on all the high places, like the nations whom the LORD had carried away before them; (**v.11**): burning incense was a part of worship to God in the OT, and was performed in worship of idols.
 - 5. For they served idols, (**v.12**): consider the word served -- when you serve another, you are submitting to that one and doing their will instead of your own. Israel was doing that instead of conforming to the will of God.
- C. Paul quoted *Isaiah 52:11-12* in the NT: Therefore "Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you."
2 Corinthians 6:17.
- D. There is a real danger for Christians today. We must make sure that we do not conform to the world around us, **Romans 12:2.**

III. THEY SECRETLY DID (SINNED) AGAINST GOD, verses 9-12.

- A. *Secretly*: they committed sins that they tried to hide from God.
- B. What did they do? They built high places, set up images, burned incense, served idols.
- C. Does that mean God did not know what they were doing? Was it really hidden from His sight? Of course not!
- D. Can we do ANYTHING secretly against God?
 - 1. The eyes of the LORD are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good.
Proverbs 15:3
 - 2. Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence?
Psalms 139:7-12.
- E. Song: "There's an All-seeing Eye Watching You." (Church building in Montgomery).

IV. THEY WOULD NOT LISTEN TO GOD, verses 13-16.

- A. They were warned by God, v.13.
 - 1. God was trying to get them to come back to Him and His commandments.
 - 2. He had sent prophets to tell them of His law and commandments.
 - 3. His warning: "Turn from your evil ways, and keep My commandments and My statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by My servants the prophets."
- B. They would not listen.
 - 1. Nevertheless they would not hear, *but stiffened their necks* (v.14): Stubborn, unyielding, arrogant, and proud. The phrase "a stiff-necked people" is a figure of speech for rebellion and disobedience taken from stubborn domestic animals, such as oxen that turn their shoulders away from the yoke and refuse to follow directions. Israel was stiffnecked in refusing to obey the Word of God and in following after idolatry and immorality <Deuteronomy 31:27; Neh. 9:16-17,29; Jer. 17:23>. (from Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary).
 - 2. They rejected His statutes and His covenant (v.15).
- C. THE RESULT OF NOT LISTENING TO GOD: "So they left all the commandments of the LORD their God." **v.16.**
- D. Do WE listen to God as He speaks to us through His word?

V. THEY SACRIFICED THEIR CHILDREN, v.17.

- A. Did they LITERALLY sacrifice their children?
 - 1. Some have tried to say that merely had a ceremony where they caused their children to walk between two fires.
 - 2. However, there is no basis for that understanding, for we know other nations had sacrificed their children, and King Ahaz is accused of doing the abominable thing they had done, **2 Kings 16:3.**

3. “And they burned their sons and their daughters as offerings and used divination and omens and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, provoking him to anger.” **2 Kings 17:17 (ESV)**
- B. Would we ever sacrifice OUR children?
 1. We can sacrifice them to the world by failing to monitor what they see, read and hear.
 2. We can sacrifice them to the world by refusing to teach them God’s way.
 3. We can sacrifice them by spending too much time making money and not enough time with them.
- C. We would never LITERALLY sacrifice our children, but we do sacrifice them - time, interest, attention, failing to teach them, etc.

CONCLUSION: THEY WERE PUNISHED BY GOD, v.18, 22,23.

- A. “Therefore the LORD was very angry with Israel, and *removed them from His sight*; there was none left but the tribe of Judah alone.” Verse 18.
- B. They were carried into Assyrian captivity, never to return as a nation.
- C. What will be OUR punishment for similar sins?

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