

ISRAEL CARRIED INTO CAPTIVITY

BIBLE TEXT : II Kings 17:1-41.

LESSON 332 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Therefore was the wrath of the LORD kindled against his people, insomuch that he abhorred his own inheritance. And he gave them into the hand of the heathen; and they that hated them ruled over them" (Psalm 106:40,41).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

2 Kings 17:1-41

¹ In the twelfth year of Ahaz king of Judah began Hoshea the son of Elah to reign in Samaria over Israel nine years.

² And he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD, but not as the kings of Israel that were before him.

³ Against him came up Shalmaneser king of Assyria; and Hoshea became his servant, and gave him presents.

⁴ And the king of Assyria found conspiracy in Hoshea: for he had sent messengers to So king of Egypt, and brought no present to the king of Assyria, as *he had done* year by year: therefore the king of Assyria shut him up, and bound him in prison.

⁵ Then the king of Assyria came up throughout all the land, and went up to Samaria, and besieged it three years.

⁶ In the ninth year of Hoshea the king of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away into Assyria, and placed them in Halah and in Habor *by* the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes.

⁷ For *so* it was, that the children of Israel had sinned against the LORD their God, which had brought them up out of the land of Egypt, from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and had feared other gods,
⁸ And walked in the statutes of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out from before the children of Israel, and of the kings of Israel, which they had made.

⁹ And the children of Israel did secretly *those* things that *were* not right against the LORD their God, and they built them high places in all their cities, from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city.

¹⁰ And they set them up images and groves in every high hill, and under every green tree:

BIBLE REFERENCES:

I Sin in Israel

1. Hoshea was an evil king, and he reigned over Israel nine years, II Kings 17:1, 2.
2. Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, came up against Hoshea, and Hoshea became his servant, II Kings 17:3.
3. Hoshea was shut up in prison because of conspiracy against Shalmaneser, II Kings 17:4.
4. Israel was besieged and all the people taken captive by the Assyrians, II Kings 17:5, 6.

II Judgement of God

1. Israel had forsaken the worship of God and become idol worshippers, II Kings 17:7-12.
2. God sent His prophets and seers to Israel to plead with them and warn them against their idolatry, II Kings 17:13-17;

Jeremiah 7:25

²⁵ **Since the day that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt unto this day I have even sent unto you all my servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending them:**

Jeremiah 25:4

⁴ **And the LORD hath sent unto you all his servants the prophets, rising early and sending them; but ye have not hearkened, nor inclined your ear to hear.**

Jeremiah 11:7

⁷ **For I earnestly protested unto your fathers in the day that I brought them up out of the land of Egypt, even unto this day, rising early and protesting, saying, Obey my voice.**

3. God rejected the ten tribes of Israel, and afflicted them, and delivered them into the hands of the spoilers, until he had cast them out of His sight, II Kings 17:18-24.
4. God sent lions into the land to slay many of the people that they might learn to fear the Lord, II Kings 17:25-28.
5. The inhabitants of the land had a fear of the Lord, yet they served their own gods and idols, II Kings 17:29-41.

NOTES:

Wrath Against Israel

Hoshea, king of Israel, reigned nine years and his reign was evil. Such was the testimony Hoshea left of his rule. He was the last king of Israel, and during his reign, Israel as a nation and as a government was destroyed by the Assyrians. Sin had run its course in the history of the ten tribes of Israel, and the terrible seed that had been sown through the years had been brought to the time of reaping. (**James 1:15** ¹⁵ **Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.**) God had tolerated the rebellion and the idolatrous, licentious heathen worship of Israel long enough. They had for some two hundred years, since the division of Israel and Judah, determinedly gone their own way, led by ungodly kings who followed their own evil desires and ambitions. But the judgement of God was near at hand.

Hoshea staved off the inevitable, temporarily, by becoming Shalmaneser's servant. It was not long, however, before Shalmaneser, the Assyrian king, learned that Hoshea was conspiring against him; so Hoshea was shut up in prison, and Samaria was

¹¹ And there they burnt incense in all the high places, as *did* the heathen whom the LORD carried away before them; and wrought wicked things to provoke the LORD to anger:

¹² For they served idols, whereof the LORD had said unto them, Ye shall not do this thing.

¹³ Yet the LORD testified against Israel, and against Judah, by all the prophets, *and by* all the seers, saying, Turn ye 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.

¹⁴ Notwithstanding they would not hear, but hardened their necks, like to the neck of their fathers, that did not believe in the LORD their God.

¹⁵ And they rejected his statutes, and his covenant that he made with their fathers, and his testimonies which he testified against them; and they followed vanity, and became vain, and went after the heathen that *were* round about them, *concerning* whom the LORD had charged them, that they should not do like them.

¹⁶ And they left all the commandments of the LORD their God, and made them molten images, *even* two calves, and made a grove, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served Baal.

¹⁷ And they caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire, and used divination and enchantments, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger.

¹⁸ Therefore the LORD was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of his sight: there was none left but the tribe of Judah only.

¹⁹ Also Judah kept not the commandments of the LORD their God, but walked in the statutes of Israel which they made.

²⁰ And the LORD rejected all the seed of Israel, and afflicted them, and delivered them into the hand of spoilers, until he had cast them out of his sight.

²¹ For he rent Israel from the house

besieged. There was no return from the captivity of Israel under the cruel administrations of the Assyrians. God's tolerance of the sin in Israel was at an end, and the Assyrian was the instrument God used to make His wrath felt.

Isaiah's prophecies bring out this startling truth: that God used heathen nations to punish and chastise the Israelites. It is written: "O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation. I will send him against an hypocritical nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets" (Isaiah 10:5, 6). That was exactly what happened on several occasions to both Israel and Judah. They were trodden down like the mire in the streets; and whereas they might have, by the grace of God, gloriously beaten back the Assyrians, they went down to defeat and disaster instead.

From the time of Moses they had the solemn warning that God's curse would be upon them if they turned from the true worship of God to serve idols. That warning was: "The LORD shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand; a nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor shew favour to the young" (Deuteronomy 28:49,50).

It might be said that the Assyrians were typical of Satan. The Assyrians were known in ancient history as a most cruel and heartless people. This, of course, is typical of Satan, the archenemy of all mankind. Satan will, at any time that God in His infinite wisdom permits, attack the people of God with cruel persecution. Job's case was a notable example of such an attack by Satan. God also permits Satan to bring about some evil as a righteous judgement for sin. Such was the case with Israel. It was in the Assyrians' hearts to destroy the nation of Israel, and God permitted them to do it because of Israel's long rebellion and defiance of Him. The powers that be are ordained of God. **(Romans 13:1-6 ¹ Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. ² Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. ³ For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: ⁴ For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. ⁵ Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. ⁶ For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing.)** The Lord has said in His Word: "Behold, I have created the smith that bloweth the coals in the fire, and that bringeth forth an instrument for his work; and I have created the waster to destroy" (Isaiah 54:16). This verse of Scripture no doubt includes within its meaning the fact that Satan, the greatest destroyer and waster of all beings, is subjected to whatever restraint God sees fit to impose upon him. Likewise God is able to use the perverted and evil schemes of Satan to carry out His own plans and judgements, such as permitting the Assyrians to conquer Israel.

Even at the hour of imminent judgement God would have spared Israel from the horrors of the Assyrian invasion and consequent captivity if they had repented of their sins and sought the face of God for mercy. They did not, even though the Lord sent His prophets to warn them. "Yet the LORD testified against

of David; and they made Jeroboam the son of Nebat king: and Jeroboam drave Israel from following the LORD, and made them sin a great sin.

²² For the children of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam which he did; they departed not from them;

²³ Until the LORD removed Israel out of his sight, as he had said by all his servants the prophets. So was Israel carried away out of their own land to Assyria unto this day.

²⁴ And the king of Assyria brought *men* from Babylon, and from Cuthah, and from Ava, and from Hamath, and from Sepharvaim, and placed *them* in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel: and they possessed Samaria, and dwelt in the cities thereof.

²⁵ And *so* it was at the beginning of their dwelling there, *that* they feared not the LORD: therefore the LORD sent lions among them, which slew *some* of them.

²⁶ Wherefore they spake to the king of Assyria, saying, The nations which thou hast removed, and placed in the cities of Samaria, know not the manner of the God of the land: therefore he hath sent lions among them, and, behold, they slay them, because they know not the manner of the God of the land.

²⁷ Then the king of Assyria commanded, saying, Carry thither one of the priests whom ye brought from thence; and let them go and dwell there, and let him teach them the manner of the God of the land.

²⁸ Then one of the priests whom they had carried away from Samaria came and dwelt in Bethel, and taught them how they should fear the LORD.

²⁹ Howbeit every nation made gods of their own, and put *them* in the houses of the high places which the Samaritans had made, every nation in their cities wherein they dwelt.

³⁰ And the men of Babylon made Succothbenoth, and the men of Cuth made Nergal, and the men of Hamath made Ashima,

³¹ And the Avites made Nibhaz and Tartak, and the Sepharvites burnt their children in fire to Adrammelech

Israel, and against Judah, by all the prophets, and by all the seers, saying, Turn ye 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." God's warnings were unheeded, and judgement fell. "Therefore the LORD was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of his sight: there was none left but the tribe of Judah only" (II Kings 17:13,18).

Secret Sin

Much of the reason for God's anger against Israel is revealed in the text: "The children of Israel did secretly those things that were not right against the LORD their God, and they built them high places in all their cities, from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city." Surely Israel's conception of the omnipresence of their God was dulled by their sins. God's eye sees all the doings of men, and He knows what is in the hearts of men. Sin cannot be hidden from God; and if it be done in secret, God knows of it as if it were done openly. The Psalmist said: "If we have forgotten the name of our God, or stretched out our hands to a strange god; shall not God search this out? for he knoweth the secrets of the heart" (Psalm 44:20, 21). Jesus told the people of Israel: "There is nothing hid, which shall not be manifested; neither was any thing kept secret, but that it should come abroad" (Mark 4:22).

The world loves darkness, and Jesus said of the world: "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (John 3:19). Men think that because their sins are hidden from their fellow men, they are perhaps, in the same manner, hidden from God.

If the judgement of Israel seems severe, let it be remembered that Israel with Judah had been blessed above all other peoples of the world, in that they were chosen by God to be His own peculiar people. They were illuminated by divine Truth, they knew the worship of the true and living God, and they were destined by the providence of God to be blessed above all others, that they might in turn be a blessing. They forsook all that was right, good, and decent, and sought the evil and wickedness of the customs of the heathen nations around them.

Their great wickedness was that having once known God, the source of all life and righteousness, they turned away from Him. The words of Peter accurately describe the attitude of the ten tribes of Israel upon whom the wrath of God fell: "For if after they have escaped the pollution of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire" (II Peter 2:20-22).

Let us who know the truth of God follow the words of John the beloved: "Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward" (II John 8).

QUESTIONS

1. Who was the last king of Israel?
2. Why did the Assyrians attack Israel?
3. Why did not God fight for Israel as He had in the past?
4. Why was God angry with Israel?
5. What was the rod of God's anger?
6. Who is the great destroyer?

and Anammelech, the gods of Sepharvaim.

³² So they feared the LORD, and made unto themselves of the lowest of them priests of the high places, which sacrificed for them in the houses of the high places.

³³ They feared the LORD, and served their own gods, after the manner of the nations whom they carried away from thence.

³⁴ Unto this day they do after the former manners: they fear not the LORD, neither do they after their statutes, or after their ordinances, or after the law and commandment which the LORD commanded the children of Jacob, whom he named Israel;

³⁵ With whom the LORD had made a covenant, and charged them, saying, Ye shall not fear other gods, nor bow yourselves to them, nor serve them, nor sacrifice to them:

³⁶ But the LORD, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt with great power and a stretched out arm, him shall ye fear, and him shall ye worship, and to him shall ye do sacrifice.

³⁷ And the statutes, and the ordinances, and the law, and the commandment, which he wrote for you, ye shall observe to do for evermore; and ye shall not fear other gods.

³⁸ And the covenant that I have made with you ye shall not forget; neither shall ye fear other gods.

³⁹ But the LORD your God ye shall fear; and he shall deliver you out of the hand of all your enemies.

⁴⁰ Howbeit they did not hearken, but they did after their former manner.

⁴¹ So these nations feared the LORD, and served their graven images, both their children, and their children's children: as did their fathers, so do they unto this day.

7. Does God put any restraint upon Satan?

8. Can sin be hidden from God?

9. What is secret sin?