

Week Twenty-Seven

Days 183–189



Divided Kingdom Narrative: 2 Kings 17 | Supplemental: Micah 5–7; Psalm 140

Exile Narrative: 2 Kings 18–23 | Supplemental: 2 Chronicles 29–34; Psalms 141, 143–145; Proverbs 7 and 8:1–21

THEY REJECTED GOD AND ARE EXILED



The Walls of Samaria Breached
by Assyrian Soldiers

Israel's sins now culminate in its destruction by the Assyrian Empire as the "Divided Kingdom" period in *The Bible in a Year* transitions to the period of "Exile." Moreover, Judah's fate will not be far off when it falls to the Babylonians. The Bible emphasizes that all the Jewish people's fate is connected directly to their rejection of God in favor of serving idols and sin. The same elements were factors in the cycle of sin and redemption throughout Judges. As always, hope in God's mercy and redemption will be present after punishment.

- 2 Kings 17 presents the fall of the northern kingdom of Israel, when the ten tribes are exiled by the Assyrians. That some Israelites remain (and others eventually return) and mix with Gentiles means that the ten tribes of the north become largely indistinguishable as a new group distinct from the two tribes of Judah. These people will become the Samaritans in the Gospels.
- Judah and Benjamin will be exiled into Babylon, but they will return and resettle the land distinct from Gentiles.
- Hezekiah's story in 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles teaches us that our history does not determine our future. Hezekiah's father was Ahaz, one of the worst kings of Judah, but Hezekiah is one of the best kings.
- While Hezekiah does not condemn Ahaz in 2 Kings or 2 Chronicles, his actions undo all his father's bad actions.
- Though he is a great king overall, Hezekiah becomes prideful in his last years.
- The books of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles contain stories of leaders and important people in the king's house. Others in those times also are called to be faithful, regardless of what the kings do.
- The prophecy of Jesus' birth in Bethlehem is found in Micah 5: "But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah ... from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel" (Micah 5:2). Micah is telling the people that they will be scattered, but from Bethlehem in Judah will come a ruler who will bring them back.

