

## 2 Kings 17-18

Good morning and thank you for joining us. Would you please turn in your bibles to 2 Kings chapter 17?

Over the last 8 days, the images and horrors of war in Israel have been seared into our minds. October 6th will now always be a part of Israel's bloody history.

Just as we're watching history unfold in real time in, in Chapter 17 this morning we're studying a critical time in Israel's history, as it records the fall of Israel, and her capital city, Samaria at the hands of Assyria.

The capital of Assyria was Nineveh, and if you want some details on Nineveh, read the book of Jonah and Nahum.

History tells us that the Assyrian army practiced the utmost cruelty. They skinned their prisoners alive, or cut off limbs, or pulled out their tongues, and made mounds of human skulls, all to inspire terror and limit resistance.

But we're about to see that the fall of Israel was not the result of Assyrian might, or Israel's military weakness. An uncomfortable truth is given to us in **Isaiah 10:5 Woe to Assyria, the rod of My anger**  
**And the staff in whose hand is My indignation.** The Assyrians were God's tool of judgment.

We're gonna study both chapters 17-18, and the title of this mornings message is FACING FEAR

Let's pray

So we're picking up the scene as we move away from the kings in the southern kingdom of Judah to the events that take place in the northern kingdom of Israel.

1-3

1 In the twelfth year of Ahaz king of Judah, Hoshea the son of Elah became king of Israel in Samaria, and he reigned nine years. 2 And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, but not as the kings of Israel who were before him. 3 Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up against him; and Hoshea became his vassal, and paid him tribute money. Just like the king before him, Hoshea becomes a vassal, or servant of the king of Assyria. If he paid his money and did as the king of Assyria pleased, he would be allowed to continue on the throne of Israel.

4 And the king of Assyria uncovered a conspiracy by Hoshea; for he (Hoshea) had sent messengers to So, king of Egypt, and brought no tribute 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. What do you think happens when a king is imprisoned? Their kingdom is conquered.

5 Now the king of Assyria went throughout all the land, and went up to Samaria and besieged it for three years. 6 In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria took Samaria and carried Israel away to Assyria, and placed them in Halah and by the Habor, the River of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes. The year is 722 BC and The Assyrians have now conquered Israel and scattered almost all her citizens.

Now we're going to read verses 7-23 which explains why God allowed Israel to go into this Aysrrian captivity.

### SHOW PIC

1. They feared other gods (v. 7; cf. Exod. 20:3; Judg. 6:10).
2. They adopted Canaanite customs (v. 8; cf. Lev. 18:3; Deut. 18:9).
3. They adopted customs condemned by the Mosaic Law (v. 8; cf. 16:3; 17:19).
4. They practiced secret sins (v. 9).
5. They built pagan high places (v. 9; cf. Deut. 12:2-7, 13-14).
6. They made many sacred pillars and Asherim (v. 10; cf. Exod. 34:12- 14).
7. They burned incense to other gods (v. 11).
8. They did evil things that provoked Yahweh (v. 11).
9. They served idols (v. 12; cf. Exod. 20:4).
10. They refused to heed God's warnings (vv. 13-14).
11. They became obstinate (v. 14; cf. Exod. 32:9; 33:3).
12. They rejected God's statutes (v. 15).
13. They rejected God's covenant (v. 15; cf. Exod. 24:6-8; Deut. 29:25).
14. They pursued vanity (v. 15; cf. Deut. 32:21).
15. They became vain (v. 15).
16. They followed foreign nations (v. 15; cf. Deut. 12:30-31).
17. They forsook Yahweh's commandments (v. 16).
18. They made molten calves (v. 16; cf. Exod. 20:4).
19. They made an Asherah (v. 16; cf. Exod. 20:4).
20. They worshipped the stars (v. 16; cf. Deut. 4:15, 19; Amos 5:26).
21. They served Baal (v. 16).

22. They practiced child sacrifice (v. 17; cf. Lev. 18:21; Deut. 12:31).

23. They practiced witchcraft (v. 17; cf. Lev. 19:26; Deut. 18:10-12).

24. They sold themselves to do evil (v. 17; cf. 21:20).

7 For so it was that the children of Israel had sinned against the LORD their God, who had brought them up out of the land of Egypt, from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and they had feared other gods, 8 and had 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, which they had made. 9 Also the children of Israel secretly did against the LORD their God things that were not right, and they built for themselves high places in all their cities, from watchtower to fortified city. 10 They set up for themselves sacred pillars and wooden images<sup>[fn]</sup> on every high hill and under every green tree. 11 There they burned incense on all the high places, like the nations whom the LORD had carried away before them; and they did wicked things to provoke the LORD to anger, 12 for they served idols, of which the LORD had said to them, "You shall not do this thing."

13 Yet the LORD testified against Israel and against Judah, by all of His prophets, every seer, saying, "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." " God sent prophets to warn them.

14 Nevertheless they would not hear, but stiffened their necks, like the necks of their fathers, who did not believe in the LORD their God.

15 And they rejected His statutes and His covenant that He had made with their fathers, and His testimonies which He had testified against them; they followed idols, became idolaters, and went after the nations who were all around them, concerning whom the LORD had charged them that they should not do like them. 16 So they left all the commandments of the LORD their God, made for themselves a molded image and two calves, made a wooden image and worshiped all the host of heaven, and served Baal.

17 And they caused their sons and daughters to pass through the fire, practiced witchcraft and soothsaying, 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 from His sight; there was none left but the tribe of Judah alone.

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

Because of Judah's 8 good kings God still saw hope in Judah, and gave her another 120 years to repent.

20 And the LORD rejected all the descendants of Israel, afflicted them, and delivered them into the hand of plunderers, until He had cast them from His sight. 21 For He tore Israel from the house of David, and they made Jeroboam the son of Nebat king. Then Jeroboam drove Israel from following the LORD, and made them commit a great sin. 22 For the children of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam which he did; they did not depart from them, 23 until the LORD removed Israel out of His sight, as He had said by all His servants the prophets. So Israel was carried away from

their own land to Assyria, as it is to this day. Because of Israel's persistent sin Samaria fell, and the northern 10 tribes were scattered among the neighboring nations. God was faithful to warn them – over and over they stubbornly rejected the prophets.

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24 Then the king of Assyria brought people from Babylon, Cuthah, Ava, Hamath, and from Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel; and they took possession of Samaria and dwelt in its cities. While the Assyrians were deporting Hebrews from Israel they were importing people from other lands into the area. And these Gentile immigrants will intermarry with the Hebrews left behind.

25 And it was so, at the beginning of their dwelling there, that they did not fear the LORD; therefore the LORD sent lions among them, which killed some of them. As the people left the land and new inhabitants came into Israel, they refused to worship God so lions were used by God as another tool of judgment.

And this gets the attention of the Assyrians!

26-33

26 So they spoke to the king of Assyria, saying, "The nations whom you have removed and placed in the cities of Samaria do not know the rituals of the God of the land; therefore He has sent lions among them, and indeed, they are killing them because they do not know the rituals of the God of the land."

27 Then the king of Assyria commanded, saying, "Send there one of the priests whom you brought from there; let him go and dwell there, and let him teach them the rituals 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. Sounds good right?

29 However every nation continued to make gods of its own, and put them in the shrines on the high places which the Samaritans had made, every nation in the cities where they dwelt.

30 The men of Babylon made Succoth Benoth, the men of Cuth made Nergal, the men of Hamath made Ashima, 31 and the Avites made Nibhaz and Tartak; and the Sepharvites burned their children in fire to Adrammelech and Anammelech, the gods of Sepharvaim.

32 So they feared the LORD, and from every class they appointed for themselves priests of the high places, who sacrificed for them in the shrines of the high places. 33 They feared the LORD, yet served their own gods—according to the rituals of the nations from among whom they were carried

away.

The Samaritans learned about the true God, but they failed to embrace Him as the only God.

34-41

34 To this day they continue practicing the former rituals; they do not fear the LORD, nor do they follow their statutes or their ordinances, or the law and commandment which the LORD had commanded the children of Jacob, whom He named Israel, 35

with whom the LORD had made a covenant and charged them, saying: “You shall not fear other gods, nor bow down to them nor serve them nor sacrifice to them; 36 but the LORD, who brought you up from the land of Egypt with great power and an

outstretched arm, Him you shall fear, Him you shall worship, and to Him you shall offer sacrifice. 37 And the statutes, the ordinances, the law, and the commandment which He wrote for

you, you shall observe. 38 And the LORD said to the king of Assyria: “The king of Assyria shall say: ‘I have carried away the king and the nobles of the land, and have brought them to Assyria, and there they are. I have carried away the king and the nobles of the land, and have brought them to Assyria, and there they are.’”

you, you shall be careful to observe forever; you shall not fear other gods. 38 And the covenant that I have made with you, you shall not forget, nor shall you fear other gods. 39 But the LORD your God you shall fear; and He will deliver you from the hand of all your enemies.”

40 However they did not obey, but they followed their former rituals. 41 So these nations feared the LORD, yet served their carved images; also their children and their children’s children have continued doing as their fathers did, even to this day. These people who settled this northern kingdom came to be known as the Samaritans. Unlike the northern kingdom, Israel, who was scattered among the nations - the southern kingdom of Judah is eventually judged and taken to Babylon as exiles. Eventually, Judah is allowed to return and Nehemiah rebuilds Jerusalem, but guess who tries to stop them? These same folks... the Samaritans.

The Samaritans were a mixed race – part Hebrew, part Gentile. They were a people who worshiped Jehovah in name – but who never fully embraced the Law of Moses. And as a result, they became the hated enemies of the Jews.

This is why Jesus talked about the “Good Samaritan” – here’s a man who was hated by the Jews, but was more righteous because of his love and compassion.

When you read the New Testament the Samaritans play a pivotal role in the life of Jesus. Our Lord showed mercy on a Samaritan village. Jesus blessed a Samaritan woman with the gift of living



water – soul-satisfying water. Now you know where the Samaritans came from.

## Chapter 18

So as chapter 18 begins the northern kingdom is conquered, the Assyrians now have their eyes set on the southern kingdom of Judah.

1-4

1 Now it came to pass in the third year of Hoshea the son of Elah, king of Israel, that Hezekiah the son of Ahaz, king of Judah, began to reign. 2 He was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Abi<sup>[fn]</sup> the daughter of Zechariah. 3 And he did what was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father David had done. 4 He removed the high places and broke the sacred pillars, cut down the wooden image<sup>[fn]</sup> and broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made; for until those days the children of Israel burned incense to it, and called it Nehushtan.<sup>[fn]</sup> Hezekiah did what his predecessors lacked the courage to do. He went throughout Judah and removed the altars of convenience – the high places. He insisted that God be worshiped as God desired to be worshiped – in the Temple.

The word “Nehustan” means “a thing of bronze”. Amazingly, the Hebrews made an idol out of an instrument of God's grace.

In numbers 21, when Israel rebelled against God in the wilderness, God sent serpents into the camp. Then God had Moses make a bronze serpent as a means of healing. **Numbers**

21:9 So Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived.

See it was all a picture-The serpent was a symbol of sin. So the bronze serpent was a symbol of sin's judgment and God's atonement.

That's how Jesus described it in [John 3:14](#), And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up,

Jesus said the bronze serpent spoke figuratively of His crucifixion. On the cross sin was judged - its penalty paid - salvation was won.

But here in chapter 18 we read the people of Judah replaced God Himself with a symbol of God. They turned the bronze serpent into an idol. This is why God renamed it, "Nehustan" – "a bronze thing." It had no power of its own. It was "just a thing".

Have you ever noticed that when people lose the personal awareness of God's presence, they substitute a reminder of what they once had? They get attached to a relic - or become preoccupied with some ritual or observance. They try to fill the void in their life with resemblance, rather than substance. But the things of God are a sorry substitute for God Himself. They're always a "Nehushtan" – just a thing!

The way back to God is a simpler route, but probably harder...  
confession and true repentance. Admit your sin, and trust in  
Jesus

King of Judah Hezekiah gets rid of these relics...

5 He trusted in the LORD God of Israel, so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor who were before him. 6 For he held fast to the LORD; he did not depart from following Him, but kept His commandments, which the LORD had commanded Moses. 2 Chronicles tells us of Hezekiah's additional reforms... he cleansed and reopened the Temple after Ahaz had closed it down. Hezekiah purified the priests, and reinstated the Passover.

7-13

7 The LORD was with him; he prospered wherever he went. And he rebelled against the king of Assyria and did not serve him. 8 He subdued the Philistines, as far as Gaza and its territory, from watchtower to fortified city.

9 Now it came to pass in the fourth year of King Hezekiah, which was the seventh year of Hoshea the son of Elah, king of Israel, that Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up against Samaria and besieged it.

10 And at the end of three years they took it. In the sixth year of Hezekiah, that is, the ninth year of Hoshea king of Israel, Samaria was taken. 11 Then the king of Assyria carried Israel away captive to Assyria, and put them in Halah and by the Habor, the River of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes, 12 because they did not obey the voice of the LORD their God, but transgressed

His covenant and all that Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded; and they would neither hear nor do them.

13 And in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and took them. Assyria is on the move southward and conquers the northern suburbs of Jerusalem - Judah's first line of defense. Assyria breezes through these barricades and camps outside the city's walls. This is utterly horrifying.

And fear has a way of crippling our decision making...

14 Then Hezekiah king of Judah sent to the king of Assyria at Lachish, saying, "I have done wrong; turn away from me; whatever you impose on me I will pay." And the king of Assyria assessed Hezekiah king of Judah three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold. Hezekiah panicked. He was a good king, but not a perfect king... Imagine-one day he looks out his window and sees hordes of ferocious warriors just outside the wall – imagine the fear coursing through his veins! His courage disappears and he caves in and tries to pay off the Assyrians.

A talent was a measurement of about 100 pounds. The king of Assyrian is demanding 30,000 pounds of silver and 3000 pounds of gold

15-16

15 So Hezekiah gave him all the silver that was found in the house of the LORD and in the treasuries of the king's house. 16 At that time Hezekiah stripped the gold from the doors of the temple of the LORD, and from the pillars which Hezekiah king of

Judah had overlaid, and gave it to the king of Assyria. This was the strategy the kings of Israel had adopted. They tried to buy off the Assyrians, but they kept coming back for more until they finally took it all.

And I hope you understand this is how Satan works... Don't think, "If I give into temptation a little - try it one time - then it'll go away. It never works that way. Satan isn't satisfied with stealing a little of your virtue - or putting a dent in your integrity. He wants to destroy you.

This was also the case with Sennacherib, king of Assyria

17 Then the king of Assyria sent the Tartan,[fn] the Rabsaris,[fn] and the Rabshakeh[fn] from Lachish, with a great army against Jerusalem, to King Hezekiah. And they went up and came to Jerusalem. When they had come up, they went and stood by the aqueduct from the upper pool, which was on the highway to the Fuller's Field. Lachish was the Assyrian command post southwest of Jerusalem – which indicates they had the city surrounded. From Lachish Sennacherib sends three officials to Hezekiah. "Tartan" was the chairman of the joint-chiefs-of-staff - the military leader. "Rabsaris" was the chief eunuch – probably the White House chief-of-staff. "Rabshakeh" was the chief cupbearer. The position Nehemiah will occupy.

This is all an attempt to play into a people's fears, and intimidate. Cities often surrendered without a fight.

18-21

18 And when they had called to the king, Eliakim the son of Hilkiyah, who was over the household, Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph, the recorder, came out to them. 19 Then the Rabshakeh said to them, “Say now to Hezekiah, ‘Thus says the great king, the king of Assyria: “What confidence is this in which you trust? 20 You speak of having plans and power for war; but they are mere words. And in whom do you trust, that you rebel against me? 21 Now look! You are trusting in the staff of this broken reed, Egypt, on which if a man leans, it will go into his hand and pierce it. So is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all who trust in him. Surely, Hezekiah isn’t depending on a flimsy Pharaoh to come to his aide?”’

22-25

22 But if you say to me, ‘We trust in the LORD our God,’ is it not He whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah has taken away, and said to Judah and Jerusalem, ‘You shall worship before this altar in Jerusalem?’”’ 23 Now therefore, I urge you, give a pledge to my master the king of Assyria, and I will give you two thousand horses—if you are able on your part to put riders on them! 24 How then will you repel one captain of the least of my master’s servants, and put your trust in Egypt for chariots and horsemen? 25 Have I now come up without the LORD against this place to destroy it? The LORD said to me, ‘Go up against this land, and destroy it.’” Assyria is claiming to be God’s tool of judgment.

26 Then Eliakim the son of Hilkiyah, Shebna, and Joah said to the Rabshakeh, “Please speak to your servants in Aramaic, for we understand it; and do not speak to us in Hebrew<sup>[fn]</sup> in the hearing of the people who are on the wall.”The Hebrews were bilingual

and could speak the Assyrian language. They wanted private negotiations so their troops wouldn't hear the propaganda.

27 But the Rabshakeh said to them, "Has my master sent me to your master and to you to speak these words, and not to the men who sit on the wall, who will eat and drink their own waste with you?" He wanted to intimidate the rank-in-file. Perhaps they would turn on their own leaders and force their surrender. This was equivalent to the modern tactic of dropping leaflets from an airplane over the camp of your enemy - written in the enemy's language - encouraging them to rebel against their own officers and surrender. Why be slaughtered?

28-32

28 Then the Rabshakeh stood and called out with a loud voice in Hebrew, and spoke, saying, "Hear the word of the great king, the king of Assyria! 29 Thus says the king: 'Do not let Hezekiah deceive you, for he shall not be able to deliver you from his hand; 30 nor let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD, saying, "The LORD will surely deliver us; this city shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria."' 31 Do not listen to Hezekiah; for thus says the king of Assyria: 'Make peace with me by a present and come out to me; and every one of you eat from his own vine and every one from his own fig tree, and every one of you drink the waters of his own cistern; 32 until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of grain and new wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of olive groves and honey, that you may live and not die. But do not listen to Hezekiah, lest he persuade you, saying, "The LORD will deliver us.'" Here's a promise right out of The Satanic book of Lies. He tells them the enemy's plans are better than God's plans.

33-35

33 Has any of the gods of the nations at all delivered its land from the hand of the king of Assyria? 34 Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim and Hena and Ivah? Indeed, have they delivered Samaria from my hand? 35 Who among all the gods of the lands have delivered their countries from my hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem from my hand?’ ”When Assyria went to battle they believed it was the gods of Assyria against the gods of their foes. And here the Assyrian messengers list all the gods that have fallen before them. They tell the Hebrews- hey what makes you think God will be any different.

36 But the people held their peace and answered him not a word; for the king’s commandment was, “Do not answer him.” 37 Then Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, who was over the household, Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph, the recorder, came to Hezekiah with their clothes torn, and told him the words of the Rabshakeh. You can imagine the overwhelming sense of hopelessness and fear as the nation is surrounded, and certain death is casting its long shadow. So what happens next? Read ahead!!!

We live in some fearful times don’t we?

1 John 4:18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.

Perfect love casts out fear.



Regardless of what the doctors may say, no matter what the news might declare, nor what our government does or who wins the election—when you are sure of God’s love for you, you don’t have fear.

The answer to anxiety and fear is not to face your fears or to figure out your phobias.

The answer to fear is to become saturated in God’s love because His perfect love casts out fear. Grumpiness and cynicism, doubt and despair wash over me whenever I take my mind off God’s perfect love—so undeniably demonstrated at Calvary. **Romans 5:8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.**