The Story 16: "The Beginning of the End" November 8. 2026

2Kings 17

Big Idea: Our unfaithfulness has consequences, but God's faithfulness never fails.

The Story

Welcome to "The Story: Advent." We've been working our way through a book called "The Story." It's a chronological presentation of the Bible that helps us understand how all these different people and events fit together into one incredible story. We've already worked our way through the first fourteen chapters. Here's chapter 15…

A Sad Conclusion

Chapter 16 brings us to one of the saddest periods in the entire Old Testament. After centuries of God's blessings and protection, the Northern Kingdom of Israel is about to disappear, and it didn't have to happen.

The Kings

To understand what's happening, let's put things into historical perspective. Following Solomon's death around 930 BC, Israel divided into two kingdoms. The Northern Kingdom and the Southern Kingdom, called Judah.
Over the next several centuries, both kingdoms experienced a succession of kings. The Northern Kingdom had nineteen kings, while Judah had twenty. That's approximately forty rulers between the two kingdoms. Every king of the Northern Kingdom is evaluated negatively in Scripture. Not one of them led the nation into lasting faithfulness to God.

Israel Will Fall – 2Kings 17

By the time we reach 2Kings 17, the Northern Kingdom is nearing the end of its existence. The year is approximately 722 BC, more than two hundred years after the kingdom divided. The last king of Israel is a man named *"Hoshea."* The Assyrians Invaded and occupied Israel. After approximately three years, the city fell.

Judah Will Stand — 2Kings 18–19

The Southern Kingdom of Judah was considerably smaller than Israel. If the mighty Assyrian Empire could destroy Israel, what chance did Judah have? But here's where the story takes an interesting turn. Judah's king (Hezekiah) couldn't solve the problem. He couldn't defeat the Assyrians. So he took the problem to God. He admitted the reality of Assyria's power and he asked God to deliver Judah, and that's exactly what God did.

Following Hezekiah was another evil king for Judah who led the people back into idolatry. In 586 BC, Jerusalem would fall to the Babylonians. The city would be devastated.

Upper Story Moves On

While the Lower Story appears to be falling apart, God's Upper Story is moving forward. God's promise to restore Israel during the darkest hour of her existence would be fulfilled at Advent. Christmas isn't simply the celebration of a baby being born in Bethlehem. It's the celebration of God's faithfulness to a promise made centuries earlier.

Family Night – Read 2Kings 17:1-20

- **Elementary School –** Ask, "Was Hoshea a good, godly king? Why did God's people get captured by Assyria (v.7)? Why should we obey God? How did God feel about the peoples' idolatry (v.18)?"
- **Middle/ High School –** Ask, "Why is it difficult to obey God? What does it mean to keep God first in our life? What lesson can we learn from God's dealings with Israel? Why do we often forget what God has done for us?"

Prayer: "Father, we want to be faithful to You because You are faithful to us. Amen."

Velocity (Middle and High School Students)
Velocity: This Wednesday, November 11 at 6:30.
Gravity: Gravity today in both services.

Today's Songs
How Good It Is ……..Phil Wickham
What a Beautiful Name…….Hillsong
Praise……..Elevation

Family Gift Giving
If you know of a family that needs help this Christmas, let a staff member know and we will give the church an opportunity to fulfill their wish list.

Poinsettia Sale
You can purchase a poinsettia for $20 in memory or honor of a loved one. We will display them on stage during the holidays and you can take yours home on Christmas Eve. Please pay when you order.

Impact Prayer Cards
Choose one person or organization, write their name on a prayer card, and commit to praying for them intentionally, trusting God to make an impact through your prayers.

Pie Drive for the Homeless. Pies due November 22.