

# Bible Stories

## ISRAEL

2<sup>nd</sup> Kings 17:22-23

February 25, 2023

The stories presented in the next 3 sermons are an overlapping history. They tell the story of the gradual decay of both nations until they experienced the full consequences of their rebellion against God. First up ---- **ISRAEL**.

Israel had 20 kings. 19 of them were unfaithful. Only 1, Jehu, was marginally faithful.

**Our story begins during the reign of the 10<sup>th</sup> king of Israel, Joram, a son of Ahab. He became king, after his brother, Ahaziah died.**

One of the instructions God had given to Elijah was to anoint Jehu, son of Nimshi, as king over Israel. For some reason he did not accomplish that task and it fell to Elisha to complete. Elisha instructed one of the Sons of the Prophets to go to Ramoth-gilead and anoint Jehu, then – **“Open the door and run away!”**

Upon completion of his task, the man did just that.

**Jehu** – Reigned 28 years (841-814 BC) = **RIGHT and EVIL**.

Part of the mandate given to Jehu was to completely destroy the house of Ahab. This was to fulfill the prophecy Elijah had spoken to Ahab in **1 Kings 21:20-29 (also see 1 Kings 16:29-33)**.

- Jehu killed king Joram in Israel with a bow and arrow.
- Then he went to Judah and killed king Jehoahaz (also called Ahaziah – Ahab’s grandson).
- Then he went to Jezreel to kill Jezebel.
- Then he killed the remaining 70 sons of Ahab – no one survived.

After all of that he destroyed Baal worship in Israel - **2 Kings 10:18-28**:

- The priests of Baal were killed.
- The sacred stone of Baal was burned and destroyed.
- The temple of Baal was torn down and used as a communal toilet.

**2 Kings 10:31 - ....** Yet Jehu was not careful to keep the law of the LORD, the God of Israel, with all his heart. He did not turn away from the sins of Jeroboam, which he had caused Israel to commit.

Jehu died and his son, Jehoahaz, became king.

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**Jehoahaz** – Reigned 17 years (814-798 BC) = **EVIL**. **He did not depart from all the sins of Jeroboam I.**

Jehoahaz died and his son, Jehoash (Joash), became king.

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**Jehoash** – Reigned 16 years (798-782 BC) = **EVIL**. **He did not depart from all the sins of Jeroboam I.**

Jehoash (**Israel**) and Amaziah (**Judah**) went to war. Judah lost. Jehoash captured Amaziah and broke down the wall of Jerusalem from the Gate of Ephraim to the Corner Gate (400 cubits = 600-733 feet). He took hostages as well as all the gold and silver from the Temple and from the king’s treasury back to Samaria.

Jehoash died and his son, Jeroboam II, became king

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**Jeroboam II** – Reigned 41 years (793-753 BC) = **EVIL**. **He did not depart from all the sins of Jeroboam I.**

Jeroboam II died and his son, Zechariah, became king.

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**Zechariah** – Reigned 6 months (753-752 BC) = **EVIL**. **He did not depart from all the sins of Jeroboam I.**

Shallum killed him.

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**Shallum** – Reigned 1 month (752 BC) = **EVIL**.

Menahem killed him.

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**Menahem** – Reigned 10 years (752-742) = **EVIL**. **He did not depart from all the sins of Jeroboam I.**

- **2 Kings 15:19-20** - Then Pul (**Tiglath-Pileser III**) king of Assyria invaded the land, and Menahem gave him a thousand talents of silver to gain his support and strengthen his own hold on the kingdom. Menahem exacted this money from Israel. Every wealthy man had to contribute fifty shekels of silver to be given to the king of Assyria. So, the king of Assyria withdrew and stayed in the land no longer.

Menahem died and his son, Pekahiah, became king.

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**Pekahiah** – Reigned 2 years (742-740 BC) = **EVIL**. **He did not depart from all the sins of Jeroboam I.**

Pekah killed him.

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**Pekah** – Reigned 20 years (752-732 BC) = **EVIL**. **He did not depart from all the sins of Jeroboam I.**

Pekah counted his time on the throne as beginning in 752 BC. 2 theories for this have been presented:

- He may have been related to Jehu or Shallum, therefore ignoring the 2 previous rulers.
- He may have ruled over an insignificant part of the country and did not recognize Menahem and Pekahiah as legitimate rulers.

Whatever the truth, one thing is certain, he only enjoyed a solo reign of 8 years.

He discontinued the pro-Assyrian policy of his predecessors and made an alliance with Rezin II of Damascus. Then he, together with Rezin II, made war against Judah to force participation in his anti-Assyrian revolt. Judah asked for assistance from Tiglath-Pileser III and received it.

Assyria came to occupy the greater part of **Galilee** and **Gilead** (in Israel) and deported its inhabitants to the eastern part of the Assyrian empire. Then they turned on Syria and conquered Damascus and captured Rezin II.

Hoshea, son of Elah, led a conspiracy against Pekah and killed him.

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**Hoshea** – Reigned 9 years (732-722 BC) = **EVIL** – **But not as the kings of Israel before him.**

- **2 Kings 17:3-24** - Shalmaneser the king of Assyria came up against him, and Hoshea became his vassal and paid tribute to him. But the king of Assyria found treachery in Hoshea, for he had sent messengers to So, king of Egypt, and he did not offer tribute to the king of Assyria as he had year after year; so the king of Assyria arrested him, and confined him in a house of imprisonment. The king of Assyria went up in all the land, then he went up to Samaria and besieged it for three years. In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria captured Samaria and deported Israel to Assyria. He placed them in Halah, in Habor, in the river regions of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes. Now this happened because the Israelites had sinned against Yahweh their God when he brought them up from the land of Egypt from under the hand of Pharaoh the king of Egypt and they feared other gods. They walked in the statutes of the nations whom Yahweh had driven out from before the Israelites, which the kings of Israel had introduced. The Israelites secretly did things that were not right against Yahweh their God; they built high places for themselves in all their towns, from the watchtower up to the fortified city. They set up for themselves stone pillars and poles of Asherah worship on every high hill and under every green tree. They burned incense there on all the high places, like the nations which Yahweh deported before them, and they did evil things to provoke Yahweh. They served idols of which Yahweh had said to them, "You shall not do this thing!" Yahweh warned Israel and Judah by the hand of his every prophet, with every seer saying, "Turn from all of your evil ways, and keep my commandments and my ordinances, according to all the law which I commanded your ancestors, which I sent to you by the hand of my servants the prophets." But they did not listen and they stiffened their necks, like the necks of their ancestors who did not believe in Yahweh their God. They rejected his statutes, his covenant which he made with their ancestors, and his warnings which he gave to them; and they went after the idols, became vain, and went after all the nations which were all around them, which Yahweh had commanded them not to do as they did. They abandoned all the commands of Yahweh their God and made for themselves two molten calf-shaped idols; they made a pole of Asherah worship and bowed down to the army of the heavens and served Baal. They made their sons and their daughters pass through the fire, they practiced divination and read omens, and they sold themselves to do evil in the eyes of Yahweh to provoke him. So Yahweh was very angry with Israel and he removed them from his presence; none remained except the tribe of Judah alone. Even Judah did not keep the commands of Yahweh their God, and they walked in the customs of Israel which they introduced, so Yahweh rejected all the offspring of Israel and punished them, and he gave them into the hand of the plunderers until he banished them from his presence. For he had torn Israel from the house of David, and they made Jeroboam the son of Nebat king, but Jeroboam detached Israel from following Yahweh, and he made them sin a great sin. The Israelites walked in all the sins of Jeroboam that he committed, and they did not depart from it, until Yahweh removed Israel from his presence as he had foretold by the hand of all his servants, the prophets. And so he deported Israel from upon his land to Assyria until this day. The king of Assyria brought from Babylonia, from Cush, from Arva, from Hamath, and Sepharvaim, and he settled them in the cities of Samaria in place of the Israelites, so they took possession of Samaria and lived in her cities.

The Nation of Israel was no more.

## What do we do with this story?

It took Israel just 245 years, 7 months and 7 days to destroy itself. Yahweh sent them Elijah, Elisha, Amos and Hosea, as well as numerous unnamed prophets, in an attempt to get the people to return Him. But they wouldn't listen. They were intent to go their own way - Do their own thing - Be free to do as they pleased.

Do you think this brought joy to the heart of God? Of course not. He desperately loved them and wanted to protect them. Clear back before they even entered Canaan, Yahweh spelled out for them what fidelity to Him looked like AND what infidelity to Him looked like and the consequences of both and then He said this:

- **Deuteronomy 30:19-20** - I invoke as a witness against you today the heaven and the earth: life and death I have set before you, blessing and curse. So **choose life**, so that you may live, you and your offspring, by loving Yahweh your God by **listening to his voice and by clinging to him, for he is your life** and the length of your days in order for you to live on the land that Yahweh swore to your ancestors, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give to them."

Israel **CHOSE** destruction and Yahweh – despite His best efforts – gave them what they said they wanted..... freedom FROM Him.

God loves You..... So much so that He has given you the power of choice. The choice:

- To love Him, which includes faithfulness and obedience = freedom IN Him
- Not to love Him, with includes faithlessness and disobedience = freedom FROM Him.

Both choices come with consequences – which have been spelled out clearly in scripture.

Choose wisely.....