

Sermon, April 3, 2011
“Drifting Away”, 2 Kings 17:32-41
Pastor Thomas P. Bellhy

Review of the Books of History so far:

Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther

Joshua	entering, battling for, and taking possession of the “Promised Land” can only be done through the LORD your King.
Judges	The message of Judges...know your King.
Ruth	Knowing your King leads you to redemption
1 Samuel	Worldly kings have unrepentant hearts which lead to evil
2 Samuel	The true king is one after God’s own heart who loves and is obedient to the Father and teaches the people repentance.
1 Kings	The presence of God in His Temple and the presence of kings in their palaces

Overview of 2 Kings:

- Takes place at some point in time during the Book of Judges, probably around 850 to 560 BC
- Author unknown, perhaps Jeremiah.
- 1 & 2 Kings originally written as one book covering 950-560 BC.
- The 7th book of history, 12th book of the Bible.
- **Outline of 2 Kings:**
 - 1-2 Death of Ahaziah (Israel) and Ascension of Elijah
 - 2-8 The ministry of Elisha
 - 9-16 The late divided kingdom
 - 17 Israel (northern kingdom) falls to Assyria (722 BC); Resettlement by Assyrian deportees
 - 18-24 Judah (southern kingdom) alone, Hezekiah through Zedekiah
 - 25 Judah falls to Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar, Jerusalem destroyed (586 BC), Jehoiachin king of Judah released from Babylonian prison (560 BC)

Major Themes of 2 Kings:

- The ministry of the prophet Elijah passes on to Elisha, a foreshadow of John the Baptist and Christ
- David’s life and reign is used as the standard throughout 1 & 2 Kings.
- The Mosaic Covenant¹. The history of Israel’s kings are presented from a covenantal, rather than from a social, political or economic viewpoint. Assessments of the various kings are based upon their degree of obedience to the Mosaic covenant (Dt. 17:14-20). A major premise of the book is that obedience brings blessings, while disobedience results in judgment.
- The final downward spiral of the kings and the people remind us of the book of Judges where the same degradation occurred. In Judges the people “did what was right in their own eyes.” In Kings the kings do the same and Israel and Judah finally fall in 722 and 586 BC.
- The one true place of worship (Dt 12:1-14) was destroyed in 586 BC.

While there are many lessons in 2 Kings, the finality of 2 Kings is the destruction of Israel (Ch. 17) and Judah (Ch. 25) as the people turned from the presence of God and surrounded themselves with other gods and idols.

The Northern Kingdom did what was “right in their own eyes”...

- After the death of Solomon the two kingdoms split and the northern king Jeroboam designated his own place of worship (1 Kings 12:26-29) in Bethel and Dan (930 BC), thus turning his back on the place of worship designated by the LORD in Jerusalem
- For the next 200+ years Israel (the northern kingdom) is ruled by king after king who “did evil in the sight of the LORD” by turning away from the precepts of God and turning to their own man made idols and gods.
- Their Godly ideas were supplanted by attractive worldly thoughts which eventually led to their ruin.

¹ “NIV Archeological Study Bible”, Zondervan, p.480.

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This long line of evil kings ended when the Assyrian king Shalmaneser conquered the northern kingdom of Israel in 722BC (120 years later the southern kingdom would suffer the same fate at the hands of king Nebuchadnezzar).

- Israel is carried into captivity to Assyria and the northern Samaritan region is resettled by Assyrians who were then taught to worship God, but to no avail.
- **2 Kings 17:32-41**
³² *They also worshiped the LORD and appointed from among themselves all sorts of people as priests of the high places, who sacrificed for them in the shrines of the high places.* ³³ *So they worshiped the LORD but also served their own gods, after the manner of the nations from among whom they had been carried away.*
- The promised land of heaven is the kingdom of God. In this kingdom, God is King. You and I do not dictate how we are to worship, praise, pray to, covenant and commune with God in everlasting relationship... God does.

1 & 2 Kings demonstrates the lesson of self imposed exile when you try to serve two masters, God AND the world.

- Jesus warned of the consequences of less than total devotion to God
- **Matthew 6:24** ²⁴ *"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.*

Our God is full of everlasting love and hope, He can be trusted in all things to do what is good for you if you will only learn the lesson of Kings and turn to Him, the only King.

- You do not want to be in a position to despise God.
- The prophet Jeremiah wrote the following in his letter to the Babylonian exiles after the fall of Jerusalem...
- **Jeremiah 29:11-14** ¹¹ *'For I know the plans that I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope.* ¹² *'Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you.* ¹³ *'You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart.* ¹⁴ *'I will be found by you,' declares the LORD, 'and I will restore your fortunes and will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you,' declares the LORD, 'and I will bring you back to the place from where I sent you into exile.'*
- God is saying..."It was not I that deserted you, but you deserted Me! Turn back, repent, change your ways, turn from worldly desires and set your heart to desire Me. Trust Me to give you a future and a hope!"