

Lessons From Characters In Old Testament

Hezekiah

Lesson 45

INTRO:

- A. Some events to consider in the divided kingdom:
1. In Judah, Jotham , the son of Uzziah, continues to reign.
 2. In Israel is the beginning of her judgment/captivity. (1 Chronicles 5:25-26)
 3. Before the end of Jotham's reign in Judah, Pekah king of Israel and Rezin king of Damascus began to afflict Judah. (2 Kings 15:37)
 - a. That is all the information given at this point as more will be given a little later.
 4. When Jotham died he was buried in the City of David and was succeeded by his son Ahaz who reigned for 16 years. (2 Kings 16:1-20; 2 Chron. 28:1-27; Isaiah 7)
 5. Without question, Ahaz was the most wicked king Judah ever had. (2 Kings 16:2-4; 2 Chron. 28:1-4)
 - a. In fact, he did things that not even Ahab of Israel had done.
 - b. He worshiped Baal and offered his children as sacrifices to the false gods.
 - 1) This is the first time in which this type of worship by any king of Israel or Judah is even mentioned.
 - 2) It is also the first mention of the valley of the son of Hinnom as the place where this worship was conducted.
 6. There was war between Ahaz of Judah, Pekah of Israel, and Rezin of Syria (2 Kings 16:5-6; 2 Chron. 28:5-15; Isa. 7:1-17)
 - a. We have already seem in 2 Kings 15:37 that war had begun between Rezin king of Syria and Pekah king of Israel on the one hand and those of Jotham of Judah.
 - 1) This war continued with Ahaz the son of Jotham.
 - b. An alliance was made between Rezin and Pekah apparently to protect themselves against the powerful Assyrians.
 - c. A likely reason for their conflict with Ahaz was because he would not agree to join them, although the Scriptures do not give us those details.
 - d. It actually seems that Rezin and Pekah intended to kill Ahaz and put a man on the throne in Judah who would join with them (Isaiah 7:6).
 - e. When Ahaz learned of Rezin and Pekah joining together, he was very frightened and worried.
 - f. Isaiah asked Ahaz to meet him outside of Jerusalem.
 - 1) There the prophet told Ahaz: (Isaiah 7:4)
 - 2) Isaiah further tells Ahaz that those kings and their kingdoms were going to soon fall and that he needed to rely upon God for deliverance. (Isa. 7:9b).
 - g. Ahaz would not listen to Isaiah and would not put his trust in the Lord.
 - h. Soon Rezin and Pekah attacked and much damage was done in Judah.
 - 1) Rezin defeated Ahaz and carried a great number of captives to Damascus.
 - 2) Pekah also was victorious.
 - a) He slew 120,000 valiant men in one day and took 200,000 captive to Samaria.

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- i. They were able to defeat Ahaz. (2 Chron. 28:5)
- j. A prophet named Oded met the army of Pekah with their captives and said, (vs. 9-11)
- k. Some of the leaders in Ephraim stood against those who were coming back from the war.
 - 1) They said, (v. 13)
 - 2) The soldiers left the captives before the leaders and all the assembly.
 - 3) The leaders of Ephraim took food and clothing from the spoils and fed and clothed the captives.
 - 4) They found donkeys for the weak to ride and took them back to the city of Jericho and returned them to their brethren in Judah.
- 7. As Pekah continues to reign in Israel, the Edomites and Philistines invade Judah and carried away captives (2 Chron. 28:17-19).
 - a. Obviously, Judah was suffering enormous setbacks.
 - b. It should also be obvious this was because of the sins of Judah and of Ahaz (2 Chron. 28:19).
 - c. Ahaz asks help from Tiglath-Pileser of Assyria (2 Kings 16:7-10; 2 Chron. 28:16, 20-21).
 - 1) Ahaz had refused to seek help from the Lord.
 - 2) He sent messengers to Tiglath-pileser saying, (2 Kings 16:7)
 - d. Ahaz took gold and silver from the temple and palace and sent it as a gift to the Assyrian king.
- 8. Ahaz continues in his wickedness (2 Kings 16:10-18; 2 Chron. 28:22-25).
 - a. Ahaz was so pleased that Tiglath-pileser had made his attacks, he went to Damascus to meet him.
 - b. While Ahaz was in Damascus, he offered sacrifices to the gods of the Syrians. He said, (2 Chron. 28:23)
 - 1) However, *“But they were the ruin of him and of all Israel.”* (ibid)
 - c. Ahaz liked the altar to the false god so much he sent a *“design”/pattern* of it to Urijah the priest in Jerusalem.
 - 1) Urijah had a replica of it made and ready for Ahaz when he returned.
 - 2) Ahaz had the brazen altar of the Lord moved from in front of the temple to the north side.
 - 3) Ahaz then told Urijah to offer the various sacrifices on the new altar, but to save the old altar of the Lord for him to inquire of God by.
 - 4) He then proceeded to offer sacrifices to the gods of Damascus.
 - d. Ahaz continued to set aside the worship of the Lord.
 - 1) He dismantled the brazen lavers and took the bronze sea off the bronze oxen upon which it sat.
 - 2) He finally shut the doors of the house of the Lord.
- 9. In the twelfth year of Ahaz’s reign he died (2 Kings 16:19-20; 2 Chron. 28:26-27):
 - a. About three years into the reign of Hoshea king of Israel, Ahaz died and was buried in Jerusalem but not in the sepulchers of the kings.

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- I. **Hezekiah Was 25 Years Old and Reigned 29 Years In Judah:** (2 Kings 18:1-20:21; 2 Chron. 28:27-32:33; Isaiah 36-39):
- A. We see the character of Hezekiah in 2 Kings 18:3-7 and 2 Chron. 29:2.
1. Hezekiah was the best king Judah had since the days of David.
 - a. He removed the high places, destroyed the sacred stones, and cut down the Asherah poles.
 - b. He also broke in pieces the brazen serpent which Moses had made many years earlier in the wilderness (Num. 21:4-9), because the people had been burning incense to it.
 - 1) He called it Nehushtan which means "a thing of brass," to emphasize it was no god.
- B. Hezekiah trusted in the Lord and served Him like no king before or after.
1. He kept the commandments the Lord had given Moses so that the Lord was with him and was successful in all he did.
- C. He cleansed the Temple (2 Chron. 29:3-19):
1. Let us remember Ahaz had completely abandoned the temple.
 2. In the very first month of the very first year of his reign, Hezekiah opened the doors of the temple and repaired them.
 3. He assembled the priests and Levites and said, (2 Chron. 29:5-11)
 - a. Let us pay particular notice that Hezekiah has gotten the point that the prophets have been making!
 - b. Hezekiah is saying, 'We are wicked - so we are being punished. Our only hope is to turn back to God'.
 - c. The covenant had not been renewed since the days of Jehoiada when the child Joash was made king (2 Kings 11:17-20; 2 Chron. 23:16-21).
 4. The Levites got busy and started purifying the temple.
 - a. The priests went into the temple and brought the unclean things out into the courtyard.
 - b. The Levites took them from there and dumped them into the Kidron Valley.
 - c. It took them sixteen days to complete the work.
 - d. Then they went to Hezekiah and reported: (2 Chron. 29:18-19)
- D. The Temple Re-Dedicated (2 Chron. 29:20-36):
1. The very next morning after the purifying work was finished, King Hezekiah gathered the leaders of the city together and sacrifices were offered, and ceremonies were held which set the temple worship back in operation.
 2. Then the assembly brought sacrifices. So the service of the temple was restored.
 3. Hezekiah and the people rejoiced at how God had blessed their work because it was done so quickly.
- E. Hezekiah Prepares a Passover Feast To Which He Invites both Israel and Judah (2 Chronicles 30: 1-12)

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1. The Passover Feast was to be celebrated in the first month of each year, but there were not enough priests consecrated, neither had the people been assembled.
 2. They were in the process of cleansing the temple in the first month.
 3. Therefore Hezekiah and his leaders decided to celebrate the feast in the second month, which was exactly how the law specified it was to be done if someone were unable to partake of it in the first month (see Num. 9:10-11).
 4. They also sent invitations throughout all Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, inviting all Israel to share in the Passover.
 5. The Passover had not been observed for a long time. The letter said: (2 Chron. 30:6-9)
 6. Messengers went through Ephraim and Manasseh, even to Zebulun, but the people laughed and mocked them.
 - a. There were some, however, from Asher, Manasseh, and Zebulun who humbled themselves and went to Jerusalem.
 - b. Also the hand of God was on Judah to act with one heart to do the commandment of the king and of the leaders, following the word of the Lord.
- F. The Keeping of the Passover. (2 Chronicles 30:13-27)
1. Hezekiah himself provided a thousand bulls and seven thousand sheep and goats.
 2. The entire assembly rejoiced, both those from Judah and those from Israel, for there had been nothing like this since the days of Solomon.
- G. The Assembly Destroys The Idols of the Land. (2 Kings 18:4; 2 Chronicles 31:1)
- H. Hezekiah Engages In Additional Reforms. (2 Chron. 31:2-21):
1. Matters concerning the temple service, the priest's responsibilities, and the offerings.
 2. After getting the temple consecrated, Hezekiah set the priests in their divisions and assigned their duties and contributed from his own possessions to get the regular sacrifices started.
 3. The people contributed generously of the firstfruits of their crops and a tithe of all they possessed.
 - a. In fact, they gave so much they piled it in heaps.
 4. Hezekiah gave orders for store rooms at the temple be prepared for the surplus, and the priests and Levites carefully stored the gifts while the people continued to give liberally.
 5. Hezekiah's zeal inspired the people to serve God faithfully for a while, even though they had not been serving God for many years - even with good kings on the throne (such as in the days of Jotham).
- II. **Samaria (capital of Israel) Fell In The 6th Year Of Hezekiah** (2 Kings 17:3-6; 18:10).
- A. Hoshea, king of Israel, became a servant to Shalmaneser V and paid tribute to him.
- [Historical Note:** In Assyria, Tiglath-pileser III died in the year 727 B.C., and was succeeded by his son Shalmaneser V.]

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- B. When Hoshea stopped paying tribute to Shalmaneser, the Assyrian king came down and put him in prison (17:4).
- C. It was in Hoshea's seventh year that Shalmaneser invaded the land and captured the city of Samaria.
- D. The city held out for three long years before collapsing. Thus all Israel was in ashes.
- E. This was 721 years before Christ was born.
- F. Shalmaneser died before completely taking Samaria.
- G. A man named Sargon II came to the throne (Isa. 20:1).
- H. Samaria is now a part of the Assyrian Empire (2 Kings 17:6, 24-41):
- I. The king of Assyria removed the people of Israel to Assyria and settled them in Halah, in Gozan on the Habor River, and in the towns of the Medes.
[NOTE: It was Tiglath-pileser who started the practice of mass exiling of people from conquered places. When conquered people are removed far from their homeland and scattered in foreign cities, it breaks down their sense of national resistance. Thus Assyria could constantly move on to new territories to conquer without having to worry about lands already conquered.]
- J. The Assyrian king also brought in captives from other places and settled them in the towns of Samaria to replace the Israelites.
 - 1. At first these people made no effort to worship God, so He sent lions among them and killed some of the people.
 - 2. These people intermarried with the very poor Israelites left in the land and became the hated mixed race known as Samaritans in Jesus' day.

III. In 2 Kings 17:7-18 We Are Given The Reason for Israel's Fall.

- A. God's word has come true. The kingdom of Israel is fallen, never to be rebuilt.
- B. Her people are scattered to the four winds of the empire.
- C. God waited until His people had turned their backs entirely upon Him.
- D. Then, judgment was unavoidable - just as the prophets had warned.
- E. It's in these verses we see the summary of why the kingdom of Israel fell:
 - 1. Israel fell because they worshiped other gods and followed the ways of the nations whom the Lord drove out before them.
 - 2. They followed the evil ways introduced by their own kings.
 - 3. They worshiped sacred stones, Asherah poles, the golden calves, and idols of every sort.
 - 4. They steadfastly ignored and rejected every prophet the Lord sent them to warn them of judgment that was coming.
 - 5. They rejected God's commands and the covenant He made with their fathers.
 - 6. The Lord placed special blame upon Jeroboam the son of Nebat, the very first king of Israel.
 - a. He led Israel astray because he was the one who introduced the golden calves and started them down the path of idolatry.
 - 7. Therefore, the Lord God was angry with Israel and removed them from His presence.

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8. Only Judah is left, and even Judah has not kept the commandments of the Lord as they should.
- F. **THE END OF THE DIVIDED KINGDOM!**

LESSON 45 (continues)

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2 Kings 18:1-20;21; 2 Chronicles 28:27-32:33

Isaiah 36-39