



## **The Fall of Israel**

### **Lesson 11 - 2 Kings 14-17**

#### **What happened before?**

The people of the Northern Kingdom had a powerful army and a great deal of confidence. Under the leadership of Jeroboam II, Israel had won many military victories. They may have felt very secure, thinking they could overcome any enemies who might attack. They were wrong—the Assyrians were coming!

God sent the prophet Jonah to Assyria, not to announce their doom, but to preach repentance. Jonah was upset when Assyria repented.

#### **BIBLE STORY:**

Things went from bad to worse for Israel. All the kings in the north were wicked men. Most of these men became king by murdering the king before them! During this time period only three kings reigned over Judah, while seven different men reigned in Israel.

There was a lot of war and violence going on at this time. Not only did Israel and Judah have enemy nations around them, they were enemies against each other. At the time when Pekah was king of Israel and Ahaz was king of Judah, the two nations were in conflict with each other.

King Pekah of Israel joined with Syria against Judah. King Ahaz of Judah was extremely wicked and was also a cowardly and faithless man. He was afraid when Israel and Syria joined together against his kingdom. God offered to help him, but he refused to trust in God! Instead Ahaz turned to the Assyrians. He hoped the Assyrians would help him save his kingdom.

Ahaz did everything he could to satisfy the Assyrian king. He stooped so low as to bring Assyrian worship to Jerusalem. He had a new altar built at Jerusalem that was like one he saw in Assyria and changed all sorts of things at the temple. He even offered one of his sons as a sacrifice to pagan gods. The Assyrians were not interested in helping Ahaz. Instead, they wanted to help themselves to whatever land they could get from Judah.

Hoshea was the last king of Israel. He contacted the king of Egypt and asked him to join with him in a fight against Assyria. When the king of Assyria, Shalmaneser, learned what Hoshea had done, he had him arrested and put in prison. Following the arrest of Hoshea, Shalmaneser went to battle against the city of Samaria. Samaria was the capital of Israel. When Samaria fell, the people of Israel were carried away into captivity and were made slaves.

Israel was taken into captivity, not because God was not strong enough to protect them against Assyria, but because they continually sinned against God. God had richly blessed them, but they still turned to other gods. They built altars and images as objects of worship. God sent His prophets to warn them

that judgment would come if they did not turn from their idolatry. Also remember that God always told the people that if they would serve only Him, He would bless them, but if they did not, He would turn away from them. (Joshua 23:16) "When you have transgressed the covenant of the LORD your God, which He commanded you, and have gone and served other gods, and bowed down to them, then the anger of the LORD will burn against you, and you shall perish quickly from the good land which He has given you."

The prophets Hosea and Amos had both prophesied the fall of Israel. In spite of all the warnings, the people would not listen to the prophets; they became hard-hearted toward God and His commandments. The people became immoral and went so far as to burn their children in the fire to their false gods; they practiced witchcraft and sorcery. All the things they did made the Lord angry. That is why the Lord removed them from their land and gave it to some other people. When the people of Israel were captured and taken away, the Northern Kingdom came to an end; only the Southern Kingdom of Judah remained.

After the Israelites were taken out of their land, the king of Assyria brought people from a foreign land into Israel to live. They were people who did not know the Lord. God sent lions among them and some of the people were killed. They asked the priests of Israel to come and teach them about the true God. They did not want any more of their people killed by the lions. The king of Assyria sent a priest. He taught them about the Lord, but the foreign people continued to worship idols. They tried to serve the Lord and worship idols at the same time. Even though they had the land that once belonged to Israel, they did not have a true heart to obey the God of Israel. They were never accepted as part of God's people. The Samaritans we read about in the New Testament came from the people who were brought into Israel at this time.

The Kingdom of Israel no longer existed. Our next lessons will be about Judah. This is the nation and the tribe through which God would bring the Messiah, the Savior of the world. As we will soon learn, things did not go well for Judah. About 120 years later, Judah was also taken captive—not by the Assyrians, but by the Babylonians. Judah spent 70 years in captivity in Babylon, then returned and rebuilt Jerusalem and the temple. God's plan to send a Savior into the world continued in spite of the disobedience of His people.