



## DISOBEDIENCE, DECLINE & DIVISION



In this chapter you will ...

- (1) See how the kingdom cannot be established by man.
- (2) Understand the punishment of the nations by a jealous God.
- (3) Recognize false worship and its wickedness.
- (4) Hear the laments of an exiled people.

### 2 Chronicles 36:17-21 - Slaves Once Again



The chosen nation of Israel, freed by God Himself from the hand of Pharaoh, brought into the land of promise, with a king after God's own heart on the throne, had now become slaves once again. Not because of the might of foreign enemies or the forgetfulness of their God, but precisely because of the love of God and His commitment to His holiness displayed in His holy people. After Solomon, the united kingdom of Israel had split. Ten tribes revolting from the Davidic kingship in the south to establish their own nation, name, and place of worship ... this was Israel. And two tribes remaining loyal to David, and Jerusalem ... this was Judah. Unfortunately neither of them remained very faithful to God. With a string of mostly wicked kings both in the north and in the south, the decline of God's people was slow but steady. Eventually both Israel and Judah were carried away from the land and into exile ... slaves again.



### Speaking Truth Into Lies

God operates in the realm of truth, because He is Truth. Even in the midst of dark days, God never leaves His people without a witness to battle the lies of unbelief. He will always call sin, sin and disobedience, disobedience, so that in exposing the darkness, light can break through. The false messengers cry "Peace, Peace" seeking comfort when rebuke and repentance is what is needed. In the big picture of the Bible, we always see God's Word (spoken and written) as the antidote to darkness and division, all the way up to the Eternal Logos (Word) - Jesus Christ's coming.

### Jesus, Leading You Out of Exile



The story of God is all about redemption and setting the captives free. From Joseph and the deliverance of his family from famine, to Moses and the deliverance of the slaves out of Egypt, up to now - an exiled people who again need deliverance. And it all points to the One to come who is the great rescuer. Mankind is held hostage to the universal infection called sin, and the flesh is handcuffed in slavery to sinful, selfish pleasures. *But God* rich in mercy sent His Son to set the captives free (Luke 4:18) leading them out of exile and into the rich promises of grace for all who believe. God is always the Deliverer-Redeemer, and in every case of exile, man is to be the Broken-Repenter. From Joseph's brothers owning their sin, to the Hebrew slaves rescued by the blood of a Passover lamb, and here heeding the words of the prophet to turn from their wickedness. *You can't save you, only God can!*

### Story-Tellers Takeaways ...

- (1) No man, not even the human king David, can establish the eternal Kingdom of God.
- (2) God is holy, calls His people to holiness, and will not leave sin unpunished.
- (3) Even religious people can be idolaters. False worship can run rampant in places of worship.
- (4) People rarely see their sin when they are in it, but lament over their disobedience when they come to ruin.

# My Notes:

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## **How to Read the Story ... the Big into the Small, and the Small into the Big ... all to Penetrate Our Hearts!**

*Feathers* - You must have an understanding of the epic narrative of God's story ... this is Biblical Theology that guides our reading of the story.

*Shaft* - You must approach each text of Scripture honestly and openly ... this is Exposition of Scripture that shapes our understanding of the story.

*Point* - You must have a soft heart to worship the author of the story ... this is Gospel Centeredness that changes life.

## For Discussion:

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- (1) Discuss how the "peace, peace" message is destructive to seeing one's own sin.
- (2) What similarities do you see between the various "exiles" we have observed in the story of God up to this point? Talk through the exiles and the roles of God and man.
- (3) Where are you in slavery? What is your role in finding that freedom? What will that look like?
- (4) How is Jesus the great deliverer? What does His work have to do with the "exodus" of slaves from "exile"?