

# 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings: We are not Obeyers

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We are now at exit 12 on Route 66, traveling into 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings. We are going to list the twenty-eight kings mentioned in 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings, if they were a bad king or a good king, and what was notable about each of them.

## The Kings of Israel

1. *King Ahaziah* - He was a bad king who reigned for two years. When he was sick, he consulted Baal, a false god, to see whether he was going to recover or not.
2. *King Jehoram* - He was a bad king. He reigned for eleven years. The Bible says he did what was evil in the sight of the Lord.
3. *King Jehu* - This king did a lot of good stuff, but he was a bad king because he did not follow the Law of God. But he did some good things; he brought judgment to the house of Ahab and judgment to the house of Jezebel. He brought judgment to the prophets and temples of Baal. God promised that four sons would sit on the throne after him, but he didn't follow the Law.
4. *King Jehoahaz* - He was a bad king who reigned for seventeen years. He did evil in the sight of the Lord and actually provoked the Lord's anger. So the Lord set up Hazael, a really bad ruler, over Syria. At the end of his days, this king actually sought the Lord, so God sent a savior and

rescued Israel. But then at the end of his life, the king continued to do what was evil in the sight of the Lord. He continued in his sins.

5. *King Jehoash* - He is a bad king who reigned for sixteen years. He defeated Amaziah in battle, broke down the walls of Jerusalem, and took items from the temple in Jerusalem to Samaria.
6. *King Jeroboam II* - He was a bad king who reigned for forty-one years. He did evil in the sight of the Lord, yet the Lord saved Israel through the prophet, Jonah. He also restored Damascus, yet he still did evil in the sight of the Lord.
7. *King Zachariah* - He was a bad king and was killed in a conspiracy. He did what was evil in the sight of the Lord. He was the fourth son after Jehu to reign, so God fulfilled his promise even to that evil king.
8. *King Shallum* - He was a bad king who killed Zechariah. He reigned for one whole month as king.
9. *King Menahem* – He was a bad king who reigned for ten years. He was a horrible king. He would rip open the wombs of pregnant women. He actually paid off King Pul, king of Assyria, not to invade Israel. He taxed the people to pay this off. One of the things you see in 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings is that the kings constantly make allies with foreign nations and foreign kings. Instead of relying on God, they rely on the powers around them. This actually gets them in trouble, as we will see at the end of the book.
10. *King Pekhiah* - He was a bad king who ruled for two years. He was killed by Pekah.
11. *King Pekah* – He was a bad king who reigned for twenty years. He was also killed in a conspiracy. There were a lot of kings killing kings to take over as king.
12. *King Hoshea* - He was a bad king who reigned for nine years. He stopped paying Assyria, so Assyria invaded, which actually led to the capture of the Israelites.

## The Kings of Judah

1. *King Jehoram* - He is a bad king who reigned eight years. He put away Baal, like his father, which was good. However, the Bible says he clung to the sins of Jeroboam.
2. *King Ahaziah* - He was also a bad king who reigned for one year. He was evil like Ahaz.
3. *Queen Athaliah* - She was bad. She killed nearly the entire royal family in order to be queen and ruled for six years.
4. *King Joash* – Finally, he was a good king! He started ruling when he was just seven years old, and he did good for forty years. The people made a covenant together with God and they destroyed the temples of Baal. He did many good things, and although the high places were not all removed, he started to rebuild the Temple. He also visited Elisha on his death bed. He did a lot of good and God used him to destroy Assyria.
5. *King Amaziah* - He was a good king who reigned for twenty-nine years. He did right, yet he left the high places and the people still worshipped up there. But he won battles and did what was good in the sight of the Lord.
6. *King Azariah* - He was a good king who reigned for fifty-two years. He didn't remove the high places, though. He actually became a leper and he had to be in a new house, but he was considered a good king in the eyes of the Lord.
7. *King Jotham* – He was a good king who ruled for seventeen years, also did not remove the high places, but he did rebuild the gate in Jerusalem.
8. *King Ahaz* - He was a bad king who reigned for sixteen years. He walked in the ways of Israel, who were in rebellion against God. He burned his sons on an altar as a sacrifice to the pagan God. He built altars to himself. He was a horrible, wicked king.

9. *King Hezekiah* - He was a great king who reigned for twenty-nine years. He removed the high places, becoming the king who finally destroyed all the pagan altars. The Lord prospered him. He rebelled against Assyria. The Lord killed 180 of the Assyrians by an angel in His stead. When he was about to die, God gave him fifteen extra years. He was tight with the prophet Isaiah, who would tell him God is on your side, keep going. However, he did show Babylon the treasures of the Temple, which Isaiah said wasn't a good idea because one day those treasures are going to be carried off by Babylon. He really was a good king.
10. *King Manasseh* - He was a terrible king who reigned fifty-five years. He rebuilt all the high places that Hezekiah tore down. So by worshipping pagan gods, he caused Israel to become more evil than the nations they drove out.
11. *King Amon* - He was a bad king who reigned for two years and did evil in the sight of the Lord.
12. *King Josiah* - He was a good king who ruled thirty-one years. He made repairs to the Temple. Shaphan found the Law and read it to the king. He made covenants, and they kept the Passover for the first time since the days of the Judges. He was a really good king.
13. *King Jehoahaz* - He was a bad king who reigned for three months. He paid money to Pharaoh and got in trouble with Babylon. He started the whole 'we are about to be taken captive' thing.
14. *King Jehoiakim* - He was a bad king who reigned for eleven years. He became Nebuchadnezzar's servant, and then rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar. God sent an army to destroy Judah for the sins of Manasseh.
15. *King Jehoiachin* - He was a bad king who reigned for three months. He was the king that got besieged by Babylon and did evil in the sight of the Lord. He was taken prisoner.
16. *King Zedekiah* - He was a bad king who reigned eleven years. This was the king that caused God to cast the kings out of His presences and cast His people out of His presence. They are now in exile.

## **Perfection Ruined by Disobedience**

Out of twenty-eight, there were about five good kings. When you read 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings, you read a lot of 'this king did this, this king did that.' One of the things I wanted to show in this list was the reoccurring theme of bad kings. There was constant rebellion going on in Israel. I want to take you back, just for a moment, to where we are in Route 66. If you remember, there was a creation moment from God; God created the world, created us perfect, and then something happened. We rebelled. We sinned. We fell. But then, God started a covenant with a guy named Abraham. He called one man and made a nation from him, rescued him from Egypt, gave him the Law, gave him His relationship, gave him His presence, and then brings Israel into their own land. God gave them a Temple, prophets, and priests. Everything is going well. Israel should be doing amazing at this point, but what happens? We find a twist to the plot line in 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings. Israel is now going into exile. They went in and drove out the nations, and now the nations are coming in and driving them out. They are now in chains, walking behind Assyria and Babylon into captivity. The obvious questions are, "What in the world happened? What is going on?" God brought this nation into their land and now they are being taken away to Babylon and to Assyria.

Here is one of the big ideas I want you to see. I think both Eden and Canaan show us that we, as people, are not obeyers, if I can coin that word. That is the big idea; we are not obeyers. Adam and Eve in a perfect garden, in a perfect place, in a perfect situation, didn't obey; they disobeyed. Israel in Canaan, with priests, temples, prophets, the Law, and God's presence in their own land, in a perfect surrounding, disobeyed rather than obeyed. The big picture is that we are not obeyers as people. We don't need a better plan. What we need is a Savior to come and save us from our disobedience, and can live the obedient life that we cannot live for ourselves.

## Purpose of 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings

In 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings, we first see Elijah to Elisha in chapters 1-8. Then, chapters 8-17 is the fall of Israel, and chapters 18-25 is the fall of Judah. The reason I think 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings was written is to answer two questions:

- 1. Has God failed Israel?**
- 2. Is there any hope?**

Has God failed Israel? Is He not big enough to keep them? The God who rescued them, can He not sustain them? Can He not keep them from the Assyrians? Can He not keep them from the Babylonians? Can God not rescue and keep His people? 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings is written during Israel's exile, and they are all asking the question, "Has God failed us? We are in bondage. Where is God? Has God failed us?" The book overwhelmingly says, no, God has not failed Israel. Israel has failed God.

So, is there any hope? Is there any hope for us in exile as Israelites? 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings chapter 17 gives an idea of kind of the summary of what is going on here. Our Scripture is verses 6-18.

## Scripture

***"In the ninth year of Hoshea the king of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away into Assyria, and placed them in Halah and in Habor by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes. For so it was, that the children of Israel had sinned against the Lord their God, which had brought them up out of the land of Egypt, from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and had feared other gods, And walked in the statutes of the heathen, whom the Lord cast out from before the children of Israel, and of the kings of Israel, which they had made. And the children of Israel did secretly those things that were not right against the Lord their God, and they built them high places in all their cities, from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city. And they set them up images and groves in every high hill, and under every green tree: And there they burnt incense in all the high places, as did the***

***heathen whom the Lord carried away before them; and wrought wicked things to provoke the Lord to answer: For they served idols, whereof the Lord had said unto them, Ye shall not do this thing. Yet the Lord testified against Israel, and against Judah, by all the prophets, and by all the seers, saying, Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments and my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets. Notwithstanding they would not hear, but hardened their necks, like to the neck of their fathers, that did not believe in the Lord their God. And they rejected his statutes, and his covenant that he made with their fathers, and his testimonies which he testified against them; and they followed vanity, and became vain, and went after the heathen that were round about them, concerning whom the Lord had charged them, that they should not do like them. And they left all the commandments of the Lord their God, and made them molten images, even two calves, and made a grove, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served Baal. And they caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire, and used divination and enchantments, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke him to anger. Therefore the Lord was very angry with Israel, and removed them from out of His sight: there was none was left but the tribe of Judah only."***

## **You have Failed God**

So the obvious question for Israel is why are we here? Why are we in exile? Where is God? Some of you may have that same question; where is God? I get this question from students all the time, when they graduate youth group and go off to college. They call me and say, "I've got a really difficult question; how do we explain God is good in the midst of all this evil and this horrible world? How do we explain there is a good God, but there are children's hospitals? How do those two things go together? Is God really good? Has God failed us? What is going on, on the planet?"

This was the thought of the Israelites. We are in exile. We're getting punished here. Is God really good? Is he really faithful to us? Where is God in all of this? Has God failed us? 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings is written to tell Israel that God has not failed them; they have failed God. According to chapter 17, their sin is why they are here in exile. Verse 6 tells us that in the ninth year, they are carried away to Assyria. What in the world is going on? Why are they in Assyria? The next verse answers it. Verse 7 says "And this occurred because the people of Israel had sinned against the Lord their God." They are in Babylon because they sinned against God, and not just Israel, but Judah as well. In chapter 24:2, the Bible says the Lord, "...sent them against Judah to destroy it according to the Word of the Lord that he spoke by his servant and prophets."

## **Sin Provokes Judgment**

Why are they in captivity? Why are they in Assyria and Babylon? Because of their sin, and not only that, God is the one who sent the Assyrians. They are the axe and the rod of His judgment. God sent Nebuchadnezzar, He sent the Babylonians, as judgment on their sins. So this was not only because of their sin, it was God's direct doing for their sins. This tells us that sin provokes God's judgment, God's wrath. One of the big ideas is that God is not as tolerant as we think He is. We have this view of God's tolerance. He puts up with everything. He is okay with everything. 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings says absolutely not! God is not tolerant toward sin; He judges sin. The people are getting judgment for their sins.

## **Points of Chapter 17**

So let's walk back through that 17th chapter of 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings. I want to give you a couple bullet points:

- **Their exile was a result of their sin.**

It was their sin that put them there. They had no one else to blame but God. The reason we find the world in the state it is today is our own fault.



We rebelled against Him in the garden and we rebelled against Him in Canaan. We always rebel against Him, so the world is under the curse of sin. We are in a fallen world. When we see bad things, we need to point to ourselves, because we are the ones who broke the great world that God had created.

- **They thought their sins were secret.**

In the text, it says they were doing secret sins. I think that was kind of funny, that they were doing secret sins against God. How many of you like to play hide and seek? I love playing hide and seek. I have a five, three, and a one year old. When my middle son was a little bit younger, his idea of playing hide and seek was going to the middle of the floor and hiding his head. To him, that was hiding. No one could see him, he was in secret, and my oldest son and I would laugh. He thought he was hiding, but we could see him.

This is what was going on with the people of Israel. They are sinning in secret as if God doesn't know they are going and making a sacrifice to Baal. They thought as long as they were not by the Temple, everything was okay. The people thought their sin was hidden from God, and you know, the same is true with us, isn't it? We often think our sins are hidden from God, that God doesn't see them. As long as we don't get caught, everything is okay. God sees everything. Trying to hide your sin is like my son in the middle of the living room trying to hide from me, covering his eyes. God can see everything.

He sees all of our sins and He saw Israel's sins. In truth, they ignored God's warning because of unbelief. It said they actually didn't believe in God at this point. They didn't believe in the Lord and their disobedience was because of unbelief. Did you know your sin is often because of unbelief? You see, when you are in a lifestyle of sin and you know the Lord has spoken to that sin, what you are saying is I don't really believe that God has said that. I don't believe that verse is for me. It is for somebody else, because I am an exception. I am different. I can do whatever I want. Our sin is often because of unbelief.

- **They went after that which was false and they became false.**

That is so true for us as well. The things that you run to that are false will cause you to become false just like them. The idols you run to will become the things that cause you to turn into destruction. When you chase after money above all as a god, you become greedy. When you chase after sex as a god, you become perverse. When you chase after self, you become self-absorbent and prideful. The idols you chase are ultimately the sins that you become.

- **God cast them out of His presence.**

How sad! God sent Israel to drive out the nations to be His people, and now God is sending the nations to drive out His people because of their disobedience and because of their sin.

## **The Deuteronomic Covenant**

So why is this happening? Why are they receiving a curse? Why they are in exile is the question in everybody's mind. I want to remind you of what is called the Deuteronomic Covenant. I want you to remember that. In Deuteronomy, there is a covenant that God made with His people. The Deuteronomic Covenant is, 'If you obey, you will be blessed. If you disobey you will be cursed.' The problem is that God's people always disobeyed. Here in 2nd Kings, we see them getting what they truly deserve. They deserve cursing because of their disobedience. The people have failed the covenant, so they get God's judgment. This is the point where they should be flourishing, but instead they are in famine because they won't obey.

Do you know what we need to see in their judgment? We need to see our judgment as well. In Romans chapter 3, Paul says the whole world is accountable, because no one can be justified through works of the Law. Why does he say that? He is actually using Israel as an illustration. He is saying look, if you look at Israel; they were a case study in point. If anyone could obey God and get the blessings of the Deuteronomic Covenant, it is

Israel. They've got every opportunity: temple, priests, prophets, place, and presence. They have everything, yet they couldn't obey. So he says because of that, the whole world is condemned because if they couldn't do it, there is no way anyone else in the world that can do it.

## **Disobedient by Nature**

So in 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings, Israel is kind of a case study of how Israel should be obeying, yet they are not. They are disobeying, so as we see their disobedience, we need to remember our own disobedience. We are the same way. How many of us, in our own mind, can just admit that yes, that's me? I know what I should do, but I always do what I shouldn't do. I always find this rebellion in my heart. No matter how much we want to please God, we are not by nature obeyers.

My wife had recently had a birthday and our eldest son came in first thing in the morning and said, "Mommy, for your birthday, I'm going to give you hugs and kisses and I'm going to obey you all day long. Whatever you say, I'm going to obey you." That lasted until about 8:30 in the morning. From 8:30 until bedtime, it was just disobedience after disobedience. He really wanted to obey his mom for her birthday, but he just couldn't, because by his nature he is not an obeyer. He is a disobeyer.

You, no matter how bad you want to obey God, by your nature are not an obeyer. You are a disobeyer. That is what we see in Israel. By nature, they are disobeyers. In Eden, we see that we are disobeyers. In Canaan, we see we are disobeyers. Our disobedience deserves judgment and God's wrath. He gave them judgment and He will give us judgment as well, forever cast in His presence in a place called Hell.

## **There is Hope**

Israel is in exile because of their rebellion, their own sin, against God. This brings us to the question, "Is there any hope?" If we are in exile because of our sin, is there any hope? What can we do? I think 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings gives us glimmers of hope.

## **1. God is in Control**

The first glimmer of hope is that God is in control. Now at first this doesn't seem like hope, but I think it is hope. In 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings, God tells the Israelites, you are in exile, because I sent you in exile. You are not here because the kings of Assyria were stronger or the kings of Babylon were stronger. I actually used the kings of Babylon and the kings of Assyria to come and attack you. They were My rod and My axe. I am the one who sent them to defeat you.

The obvious question is, are the gods of Assyria bigger than our God? God says oh no, I am over all of them. I am sovereign, I am in control, and I am the One who sent you here. You might be asking; how is it hope to know that God is the One who sent them into judgment? It is hope because the God who is big enough and strong enough to send them into judgment is the God who is big enough and strong enough to rescue them from judgment and from exile. If they were going to be rescued, they were going to have to turn and trust in God and in God alone. There is hope, but the hope has to be that they return to God through repentance and faith.

## **2. Elisha**

The second glimmer of hope is a miracle worker named Elisha, right in the middle of the book. 1<sup>st</sup> Kings and 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings is really one book, and it starts with Temple being built and ends with the Temple being burnt. Right in the middle you have Elisha who is working miracles; raising people from the dead, causing the lame to be healed, feeding people by multiplying food, Gentiles are being helped by him. When you read those chapters, it points to Jesus the whole way through, because you can remember when Jesus did the same things!

I think we see Elisha pointing to, or is almost a foreshadow of another miracle worker who is to come. Elisha is given the title, 'The Man of God,' but I think he is ultimately pointing to the man who is God, Jesus Christ. Just as Elisha comes after Elijah, Jesus comes after John the Baptist, who was came in the spirit of Elijah.

What is amazing is that in Luke chapter 4, Jesus tells everyone that He is the Spiritual Messiah. They say, "Is this not Joseph's son?" So he points them to Elisha and says yes, just like Elisha's day; there are many here who rebel, there are many lepers, but Elisha only healed one, Naaman, a Gentile, a pagan, from Assyria. They got mad, and they threw stones; they tried to kill Jesus! What is Jesus saying? Elisha in his day was amidst a perverse and wicked generation, but he was doing the works of the Lord and the Gentiles were being blessed by him. Here is Jesus, standing in the midst of a wicked and perverse Israel, but He is doing miracles. And even though Israel would eventually kill Him, in His death and resurrection He brings both Jews and Gentiles to be alive again into the presence of God. I think Elisha is pointing to the great miracle worker Jesus, who is God. He is going to bring blessings and even in His death, He is going to bring blessings to all peoples on the earth.

### **3. The Forever King**

The last glimmer of hope in this is there is a king released from prison. The last thing we read is that there is a king being released under Babylonian rule. He is released from prison and set as a high king. He is treated good and favorable among the kings of Babylon. Thus, the question is why in the world is this going on? Here is Israel in captivity, yet their king is being esteemed. I think God is giving them a little glimmer of hope. I think He is using this to remind them of the covenant He made with David. There is going to be a forever King. Even though it looked like all the kings were stamped out, they are not. The king line will still go forth and there is still coming a forever King who is going to rule over them. We see that even though there is sin and judgment, there are also glimmers of hope in 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings.

### **Jesus Fulfills the Deuteronomic Covenant for Us**

I want to end with this amazing picture of the gospel when it comes to the Deuteronomic Covenant. Jesus fulfilled the Deuteronomic Covenant for us. I want you to see how we cannot fulfill it because of 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings, and how Jesus must fulfill it because of what He did for the gospel. Remember, in the Deuteronomic Covenant, to get blessings you have to obey. If you

don't obey, you get curses. In 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings, we see the people who should be able to obey, they are in Canaan and have everything at their disposal; they should be obedient and receive blessings, yet they do not. They disobey and receive curses. So there is absolutely no hope for you and me. If you can't do it in Canaan and you can't do it in Eden, you are surely not going to do it today in our culture. You are going to be a disobeyer. It is what we do by nature.

We learned in Samuel that we need a king to rule over us. We learned in the Kings that we need to be good people under the king, and we are not. We are not obeyers. We don't obey good leadership; we disobey and rebel. Ultimately, we need not only a good King to rule over us, but we need someone to come and live a good life under that King for us because we are hopeless! We can't live a good life. It was shown in Eden, now it is shown in Canaan. We cannot do it! We don't obey and get blessings; we disobey and get curses.

So what is the gospel? Israel can't obey; they disobey, so Jesus became Israel! Jesus, circumcised on the eighth day, took the whole Law upon His shoulders, and fulfilled it completely. He is the only Israelite who actually obeyed God and received a blessing. He is the only human on the planet that fulfilled the covenant and gets a blessing from God! Jesus is the only one, just Him. This is the gospel; when we believe in Him, we get His blessing! He gives us His perfect life as a free gift to us, so that those of us who have always been disobeyers are all of a sudden obeyers. That is our nature. That is our identity. Who we are now in Christ is this statement; we are obeyers! We've always obeyed. We have never disobeyed. We have never done one thing wrong in the eyes of the Lord. Why? Not because of our life, not because of our record, but because Jesus became one of us to live the life we couldn't.

You see, God has not relaxed the Deuteronomic Covenant in any way. He has not relaxed His law in any way. Sometimes we think we are under grace, and God has kind of let us off the hook. No, He doesn't. The Law still says you must be perfect. But grace is that Jesus lived that perfect life for you. Here is the cool thing about the gospel. He takes your curse that

you have earned and gives you His blessing that He has earned, so that now, before your Heavenly Father, you are an obeyer.

So in Eden, we can't. In Canaan, we can't. In your life, you can't; so stop trying and trust in the One who did! His name is Jesus Christ. He fully obeyed, and by faith, you get His obedience in your account. So now, even though by your very nature, you are a disobeyer; in Christ, you have always obeyed and what is said about you is that you are an obeyer.

What does that mean for you? It means you walk out that door and obey, because that is who you are. That is who Christ has made you to be. Your identity in Christ now, because of what He has done for you in the gospel, is that you are an obeyer, therefore go and live for His honor and His glory.