

NOON BIBLE STUDY: 2 KINGS 25

2 KINGS 25:1-3 - THE FINAL SIEGE OF JERUSALEM

THE FINAL SIEGE OF JERUSALEM LASTED ABOUT 18 MONTHS. DURING THIS TIME, THE CONDITIONS IN JERUSALEM WERE VERY DIRE. REMEMBER, A SIEGE WAS A MILITARY STRATEGY WHERE THE INVADING ARMY WOULD SURROUND THE CITY WALLS AND WAIT FOR THE CITY'S INHABITANTS TO EITHER SURRENDER OR STARVE. AS A RESULT, WE LEARN VERSE 3 THAT THIS IS EXACTLY WHAT WAS HAPPENING.

2 KINGS 25:3 (NLT) - BY JULY 18 IN THE ELEVENTH YEAR OF ZEDEKIAH'S REIGN, THE FAMINE IN THE CITY HAD BECOME VERY SEVERE, AND THE LAST OF THE FOOD WAS ENTIRELY GONE.

READING THE BOOK OF JEREMIAH WILL PROVE TO BE VERY HELPFUL TO UNDERSTAND THE SPIRITUAL CLIMATE OF THIS TIME AS WELL AS MORE "INSIDER" PERSPECTIVE OF THIS TIME. JEREMIAH THE PROPHET WAS HIMSELF A WITNESS TO THIS SIEGE AND THE CONDITIONS IN JERUSALEM.

JEREMIAH WROTE A LENGTHY POEM OF LAMENT LIKELY DURING OR DESCRIBING THIS TIME. WE KNOW IT AS THE BOOK OF "LAMENTATIONS". READ THIS PORTION WHICH ILLUSTRATES WHAT THINGS WERE LIKE IN THE CITY:

LAMENTATIONS 4:4-13, 16A (NLT) - THE PARCHED TONGUES OF THEIR LITTLE ONES STICK TO THE ROOFS OF THEIR MOUTHS IN THIRST. THE CHILDREN CRY FOR BREAD, BUT NO ONE HAS ANY TO GIVE THEM. 5 THE PEOPLE WHO ONCE ATE THE RICHEST FOODS NOW BEG IN THE STREETS FOR ANYTHING THEY CAN GET. THOSE WHO ONCE WORE THE FINEST CLOTHES NOW SEARCH THE GARBAGE DUMPS FOR FOOD. 6 THE GUILT OF MY PEOPLE IS GREATER THAN THAT OF SODOM, WHERE UTTER DISASTER STRUCK IN A MOMENT AND NO HAND OFFERED HELP. 7 OUR PRINCES ONCE GLOWED WITH HEALTH-- BRIGHTER THAN SNOW, WHITER THAN MILK. THEIR FACES WERE AS RUDDY AS RUBIES, THEIR APPEARANCE LIKE FINE JEWELS. 8 BUT NOW THEIR FACES ARE BLACKER THAN SOOT. NO ONE RECOGNIZES THEM IN THE STREETS. THEIR SKIN STICKS TO THEIR BONES; IT IS AS DRY AND HARD AS WOOD. 9 THOSE KILLED BY THE SWORD ARE BETTER OFF THAN THOSE WHO DIE OF HUNGER. STARVING, THEY WASTE AWAY FOR LACK OF FOOD FROM THE FIELDS. 10 TENDERHEARTED WOMEN HAVE COOKED THEIR OWN CHILDREN. THEY HAVE EATEN THEM TO SURVIVE THE SIEGE. 11 BUT NOW THE ANGER OF THE LORD IS SATISFIED. HIS FIERCE ANGER HAS BEEN POURED OUT. HE STARTED A FIRE IN JERUSALEM THAT BURNED THE CITY TO ITS FOUNDATIONS. 12 NOT A KING IN ALL THE EARTH-- NO ONE IN ALL THE WORLD-- WOULD HAVE BELIEVED THAT AN ENEMY COULD MARCH THROUGH THE GATES OF JERUSALEM. 13 YET IT HAPPENED BECAUSE OF THE SINS OF HER PROPHETS AND THE SINS OF HER PRIESTS, WHO DEFILED THE CITY BY SHEDDING INNOCENT BLOOD...16 THE LORD HIMSELF HAS SCATTERED THEM, AND HE NO LONGER HELPS THEM.

2 KINGS 25:4-7 - THE KING FLEES, THE KING NO LONGER SEES

IN A CLASSIC COWARDLY MOVE, THE "MEN OF WAR" AND THE KING FLED THE CITY WHEN THE BABYLONIAN ARMY ENTERED THE WALLS. THEY ATTEMPTED TO FLEE TO SAFETY BUT WERE PURSUED BY THE BABYLONIANS WHO SOON CAPTURED THE KING (ZEDEKIAH). THEY THEN BROUGHT HIM TO NEBUCHADNEZZAR WHO FOUND HIM "GUILTY". THE BABYLONIANS SLAUGHTERED ZEDEKIAH'S SONS IN FRONT OF HIM AND THEN IMMEDIATELY GOUGED OUT HIS EYES, LEAVING HIS SON'S DEATH ETCHED IN HIS MEMORY AS HIS EYE'S LAST SIGHT.

2 KINGS 25:8-17 - JERUSALEM NO MORE...

APPROX ONE MONTH LATER (V. 8) A LEADING SERVANT OF NEBUCHADNEZZAR CAME TO JERUSALEM TO COMPLETE THE DESTRUCTION OF THE CITY. HE BURNED THE TEMPLE. HE BURNED THE KING'S PALACE. HE BURNED ALL OF THE HOMES OF THE CITY. HE ORDERED THE SOLDIERS TO BREAK DOWN EVERY WALL. HE BEGAN THE DEPORTATION OF EVERY REMAINING PERSON IN THE CITY.

2 KINGS 25:13-17 - THE TEMPLE DESTROYED

V. 13 - BRONZE PILLARS & SEA
 V. 14 - POTS, SHOVELS, SNUFFERS,
 SPOONS AND ALL BRONZE VESSELS
 V. 15-16 - FIREPANS, BASINS,
 STANDS FOR THE SEA

→ "BEYOND WEIGHT" - NLT: TOO
 GREAT TO BE MEASURED...



2 KINGS 25:8-17 ALMOST BRINGS YOU TO TEARS. THE NARRATOR OF THESE EVENT REPORTS WITH SPECIFIC DETAILS THAT WOULD BREAK THE HEART OF THOSE READING THIS TEXT, MINDFUL OF HIS WORDS. I TRIED TO THINK OF SOMETHING COMPARABLE TO OUR DAY THAT WOULD ONLY SLIGHTLY COMPARE. IT BROUGHT TO MIND WHEN TERRORISTS FLEW PLANES INTO THE WORLD TRADE CENTER. I REMEMBER WATCHING AS A FRESHMAN IN COLLEGE AS THE SECOND PLANE HIT THE TOWER ON LIVE TV. THE FIRST PLANE WASN'T TELEVISED AND THERE WAS STILL SOME QUESTION AS TO WHETHER OR NOT IT WAS AN ACCIDENT. BUT THE SECOND PLANE

MADE IT CLEAR IT WAS NOT. AND YOU SAT AND WATCHED IN FEAR AND SHOCK. AND THEN 56 MINUTES AFTER THE SOUTH TOWER WAS HIT, IT FELL TO THE GROUND IN 10 SECONDS.



THE TEMPLE IN JERUSALEM. THE ONE PERMANENT PLACE ON THE ENTIRE PLANET THAT YAHWEH HAD PLACED HIS NAME TO BE HONORED. BUILT BY SOLOMON, DEDICATED WITH JOY AND WONDER - THE PLACE THAT THE GLORY AND PRESENCE OF GOD FILLED AT THAT DEDICATION. THE SITE OF SO MANY GLORIOUS FEASTS AND TIMES OF WORSHIP. SO MANY HOLY MEN AND WOMEN WALKED IN IT'S COURTS. AND PIECE BY PIECE IT IS DISMANTLED AND THE REMAINING PIECES BURNED.

2 KINGS 25:18-21 - JERUSALEM'S OTHER LEADERS ARE KILLED

NEBUZARADAN ALSO FINDS LEADING OFFICIALS OF THE TEMPLE, ARMY AND ROYAL ADVISORS AND BRINGS THEM FOR JUDGMENT BEFORE NEBUCHADNEZZAR. THEY ARE KILLED. BABYLON HAS DESTROYING THE TEMPLE, THE CITY, EXECUTING THE LEADERS, AND EXILING THE PEOPLE. THEY HAVE DOMINATED, DEFEATED AND DESTROYED THE KINGDOM OF JUDAH. AND AS WE KNOW FROM 2 KINGS 24, THIS WAS ALL THE LORD'S DOING. THIS IS HEARTBREAKING.

2 KINGS 25:22-24 - ADMINISTRATION FOR THE REMAINING PEOPLE

WE READ EARLIER THAT THE ONLY REMAINING PEOPLE IN THE LAND WERE "THE POOREST OF THE LAND" LEFT INTENTIONALLY BY BABYLON TO BE "VINEDRESSERS AND PLOWMEN" (V. 12). BABYLON APPOINTS A MAN NAMED GEDALIAH. SOME OF THE MEN OF THE REGION MEET WITH GEDALIAH AND HE ASSURES THEM THAT THERE CAN AND WILL BE PEACE DURING HIS OVERSIGHT. IF THE PEOPLE OF THE LAND WILL SERVE BABYLON (AND THEIR REPRESENTATIVE GEDALIAH), THINGS WILL GO "WELL".

2 KINGS 25:25-26 - EVEN THE REMNANT DOESN'T REMAIN

SOME TIME LATER, A GROUP OF THE MEN WHO HAD PREVIOUSLY SPOKE TO GEDALIAH CAME AND ASSASSINATE HIM. THEY ALSO KILL "ALL THE JUDEANS AND BABYLONIANS WHO WERE WITH GEDALIAH AT MIZPAH (25:25B, NLT). AS A RESULT, THE FEW PEOPLE LEFT IN JUDAH LEAVE THE LAND FOR EGYPT, FEARING THE BABYLONIAN RESPONSE TO THIS EVENT.

AND WITH THAT WE COME TO THE NEAR CLOSE OF 2 KINGS. THE FORMERLY GREAT TEMPLE OF SOLOMON RANSACKED AND BURNED. THE FORMERLY MAJESTIC CITY OF DAVID, JERUSALEM DEMOLISHED. THE DESCENDANT OF DAVID, ZEDEKIAH THE KING BLINDED AND IN CHAINS. THE PEOPLE OF ABRAHAM, ONCE FREED FROM SLAVERY BY PHAROAH NOW EXILED IN BABYLON OR FLEEING IN FEAR TO EGYPT. THE PROMISED LAND LEFT DESOLATE.

THINGS DIDN'T HAVE TO TURN OUT THIS WAY. GOD CALLED ABRAHAM TO BEGIN TO RESTORE WHAT WAS LOST BY HUMANITY IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN. HE SAW IN HIM A MAN WHO WOULD LIVE BY FAITH, TEACHING HIS CHILDREN TO DO THE SAME. ABRAHAM WAS FAITHFUL AND THOUGH FLAWED, PASSED THE BLESSING OF KNOWING YAHWEH TO HIS CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN. EVEN WHEN THE NATION FORGOT ABOUT THE LORD WHILE IN EGYPT, THE LORD DID NOT FORGET ABOUT THEM, RAISING UP FOR THEM A DELIVERER IN MOSES. MOSES TOO WAS FAITHFUL TO THE LORD, SERVING HIM DESPITE THE CHALLENGES HE FACED IN HIS OWN LIFE OR THE OBSTACLES HE HAD TO OVERCOME WHEN FACING PHAROAH OR LEADING A STUBBORN AND FICKLE PEOPLE THROUGH THE DESERT. HE NEVER GAVE UP ON GOD AND PASSED THE BATON OF FAITH TO JOSHUA WHO LED A VICTORIOUS GENERATION INTO THE LAND GOD HAD PROMISED TO ABRAHAM. JOSHUA KEPT THE FAITH AS WELL - CHOOSING WITH HIS HOUSEHOLD TO SERVE THE LORD RATHER THAN THE GODS OF CANAAN. AND THE LORD KEPT HIS PROMISE...THROUGH A SEASON OF UPS AND DOWNS, GOD REMAINED FAITHFUL. HE DIDN'T REJECT HIS PEOPLE, EVEN WHEN HE REJECTED THEIR FIRST KING, SAUL AND MAINTAINED HIS LOVE AND BLESSED HIS PEOPLE BY RAISING UP DAVID TO BE THEIR SHEPHERD KING.

DAVID, LIKE ABRAHAM AND MOSES BEFORE HIM WASN'T PERFECT, BUT HE WAS FAITHFUL. AND THROUGH MANY TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS, SOME CAUSED BY HIS OWN SIN, HE NEVER TURNED FROM THE GOD OF CREATION. THIS WAS THE PROTOTYPE FOR HOW THINGS WERE SUPPOSED TO BE. STAY FAITHFUL TO THE LORD. THAT'S THE PURPOSE OF THEIR CALLING AND THEIR KINGDOM. TO BE A NATION OF PRIESTS AND A LIGHT TO THE WORLD. YET WITHIN ONE GENERATION, THAT PURPOSE SPLIT IN TWO. JUDAH WOULD STICK WITH THE LORD, AND ISRAEL WOULD TURN BACK TO IDOLS.

YET EVEN DURING THIS TIME, GOD DIDN'T GIVE UP ON HIS PEOPLE. HE RAISED UP PROPHETS, MEN OF GREAT RENOWN LIKE ELIJAH, ELISHA AND ISAIAH AND UNKNOWN AND UNNAMED HEROES WHO PROCLAIMED GOD'S HEART FOR HIS PEOPLE. JUDAH WOULD KEEP FAITH, AT TIMES. BUT ISRAEL NEVER DID. AND SO, LONG BEFORE THIS DARK CHAPTER IN JUDAH'S STORY, ISRAEL WOULD BE CUT OFF AND CARRIED AWAY BY ASSYRIA. THEY DIDN'T KEEP THE FAITH.

YOU WOULD THINK THAT JUDAH WOULD HAVE GOTTEN THE MESSAGE LOUD AND CLEAR AS THEIR BIOLOGICAL AND SPIRITUAL BROTHERS TO THE NORTH GOT DEFEATED AND DEPORTED. SURELY SOME DID - HEZEKIAH DID. JOSIAH DID. THEY KEPT FAITH, EVEN WHEN THE PRESSURE FROM THEIR FATHERS MADE IT HARD OR UNPOPULAR TO WORSHIP YAHWEH. BUT THEY DID IT. THEY KEPT THE FAITH, AND GOD KEPT HIS FAVOR ON THEM.

BUT AT LONG LAST, THE CUP OF HIS WRATH WAS FILLED. MANASSEH ADDED OVER 50 YEARS OF EVIL TO THAT CUP. JOSIAH'S SONS ADDED MORE. AND NOW IT WAS TIME FOR IT TO BE POURED OUT ON THEIR OWN HEADS. OH SURELY THE LORD IS MERCIFUL AND GRACIOUS, LONG-SUFFERING AND KIND...BUT HE DOES NOT LEAVE THE GUILTY UNPUNISHED. AND FROM THE VERY BEGINNING OF GOD SPEAKING THIS COVENANT OPPORTUNITY TO THE

NATION OF ISRAEL, THROUGH MOSES, HE LAID OUT THE CHOICES AND CONSEQUENCES, THE BLESSINGS AND CURSINGS, THE LIFE OR DEATH OF ENTERING INTO THE COVENANT WITH HIM.

AS WE CLOSE 2 KINGS WE SEE THE CHOICE THAT GOD'S PEOPLE MADE. THEY REJECTED HIS LOVE AND SAID "NO" TO HIS COVENANT. THEY MADE THE CHOICE FOR "CURSING" AND "DEATH" AND THAT IS EXACTLY WHAT THE LORD GAVE. NO MORE CHANCES, THE "LONG-SUFFERING" OF GOD HAS REACHED ITS END.

2 KINGS 25:27-30 - FAVOR ON JEHOIACHIN

IN A SURPRISE (OR IS IT REALLY A SURPRISE?) TWIST, 2 KINGS ENDS WITH A REAPPEARANCE OF JEHOIACHIN. AND SO AS READERS, WE'RE RIPPED AWAY FROM OUR MOURNING AT VERSE 26 AND BROUGHT TO A PLACE OF CURIOSITY IN VERSES 27-30. WE THINK "WAIT, WHAT'S THIS ALL ABOUT?" WHY IS JEHOIACHIN BACK IN THE STORY, AND WHY DOES IT SEEM THAT HE'S GETTING FAVORED IN BABYLON? JEHOIACHIN WAS THE 18 YEAR OLD KING WHO REIGNED FOR 3 MONTHS BEFORE SURRENDERING TO NEBUCHADNEZZAR (24:8-12).

YOU CAN JUST IMAGINE SOMEONE READING THE BIBLE FOR THE FIRST TIME, UNAWARE OF WHAT HAPPENS NEXT, OR THE NEW TESTAMENT, THINKING "I THOUGHT WE WERE DONE WITH JUDAH AND HER KINGS..." IT SHOULD INSPIRE US TO READ ON AND SEE WHY GOD RELIGHTS A FLAME OF HOPE - A SMALL, WEAK AND FLICKERING LIGHT FOR SURE - YET LIT NONETHELESS. WE DON'T KNOW WHAT WILL BECOME OF JEHOIACHIN, BUT HIS REAPPEARANCE AT LEAST CONFIRMS THAT THERE IS A DESCENDANT OF DAVID THAT STILL LIVES! AND IF THERE IS A DIM SPARK, THERE IS HOPE.

YOU SEE THE COVENANT WAS BIGGER THAN THE CURRENT GENERATION. IT WAS AN EVERLASTING COVENANT THAT SURPASSED THE FAITH OF THE ONE'S LIVING IN THAT MOMENT. IT WAS AN EVERLASTING COVENANT TO ABRAHAM, IT WAS AN EVERLASTING COVENANT TO DAVID. AND IT SUPERSEDED THEIR FOOLISH CHILDREN BECAUSE IT WAS BASED ON THE GOD WHO KNOWS HOW TO FOLLOW THROUGH NO MATTER WHAT HUMANITY TRIES TO THROW HIS WAY.

IN MANY WAYS THE STORY OF 1 & 2 KINGS IS A TIMELESS STORY ABOUT HUMANITY'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CREATOR. GOD INITIATES THE RELATIONSHIP, LONGS FOR IT TO STAY CLOSE, AND WORKS HOWEVER HE NEEDS TO - WHETHER IN BLESSING OR CURSING - TO ENSURE HIS COVENANT INVITATION IS OFFERED TO HIS PEOPLE. 1 & 2 KINGS SHOW US THE BLESSING OF FOLLOWING THE LORD'S WAYS AND THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT. 1 & 2 KINGS TEACH US ABOUT WHAT IS REALLY IMPORTANT IN LIFE - NOT RICHES OR SUCCESS, BUT RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD. 1 & 2 KINGS PUT ON DISPLAY THE CHOICES THAT EVERY GENERATION HAS, OURS ESPECIALLY, TO SERVE THE LORD OR SERVE OTHER GODS - AND THE RAMIFICATIONS OF THOSE CHOICES ON US AS INDIVIDUALS, ON OUR FAMILIES, AND ON OUR FUTURE.

AND 1 & 2 KINGS REMIND US OF THE GREAT PURSUIT OF OUR LIFE AND GOALS FOR OUR DAYS - TO BE AN INDIVIDUAL AND A COLLECTIVE GENERATION THAT WILL BE COUNTED AS A FAITHFUL GENERATION TO THIS GREAT GOD OF LOVE, MERCY, POWER AND FAITHFULNESS. TO FOLLOW IN FOOTSTEPS OF THE HEROES OF OUR STORY - DAVID, ASA, JEHOASHAPHAT, HEZEKIAH, JOSIAH, ELIJAH, ELISHA, ISAIAH AND JEREMIAH. WHILE WE MAY NOT BE CALLED TO SOME OF THE ROLES AND MOMENTS THEY WERE - IT IS OUR TIME TO BE FAITHFUL IN WHATEVER ROAD WE MAY TRAVEL. AND AS WE GO, WE CAN KNOW FOR SURE, THAT THE COVENANT-KEEPING GOD OF 1 & 2 KINGS WILL GO BEFORE US, WATCH BEHIND US AND TRAVEL WITH US EVERY STEP OF THE JOURNEY.

FOOD — CHURCH FOR JANUARY
GRUMBLING, MURMURING, PROBLEMS...