

Lesson 20 - 2 Kings 17:1-20:21**Introduction**

In chapter 17 we encounter the last king of Israel, Hosheah, and the invasion by Assyria which overthrows the northern kingdom. Israel is exiled and the land resettled.

In chapters 18-20, the record of Hezekiah's reign in Judah casts him as a second David, and for his faithfulness the Lord gives him great success. The most notable event of these years is the Assyrian invasion in 701 BC, when the conquerors of the northern kingdom threaten to eliminate Judah and deport the remnant of God's people. Hezekiah's faith never wavers as he responds to the Assyrian king's blasphemous challenge. The Lord's great deliverance of Judah is not the last word, for the prophet Isaiah declares that after Hezekiah's death Babylon will exile the nation.¹

Study Notes

1. In general, why are people stubborn and unwilling to obey the Lord?
2. What are the consequences of Israel's and Judah's disobedience?
3. In 2 Kings 17:7-23 we find a relatively rare and extended break in the narrative as the author pauses to interpret the exile of the northern kingdom that has just been described in 17:1-6. What was the fundamental reason for the exile, according to this passage?
4. What is the spiritual result of the Assyrian resettlement of Samaria as it is described in 17:24-41? Consider verses 29-33 especially.
5. Why is Hezekiah called the greatest of the kings of Judah who came before or after him (Kings 18:5)?
6. In what specific ways in 2 Kings 18:1-6 do you see Hezekiah surpassing all the other kings of Judah?
7. According to 2 Kings 19:1-8, how is God involved in the contest between Assyria and Judah? What attitude toward the God of Israel has been reflected in the words of Rabshakeh?

¹ ZSB Text Notes

8. When Hezekiah receives the threat from the king of Assyria, he goes to the temple to pray for deliverance (19:14-19). On what theological grounds does Hezekiah make his appeal to the Lord?
9. What specific facts, past, present and future, — does God want Hezekiah to understand?

Biblical Prophets Who Ministered During the Time of 1 and 2 Kings

Several prophets whose books we read in the Old Testament were active in ministry in Israel and Judah during the years describe in 1 and 2 Kings. (Two of them—Isaiah and Jonah—are mentioned in the text of 2 Kings).

Here are the approximate time periods for the work of these prophets:

- *Jonah, Amos, and Hosea* were active in Israel during the reign of Jeroboam II, with *Hosea's* ministry likely extending through the short reigns of several of the final kings of Israel.
- *Isaiah and Micah* were active in Judah during the reigns of Azzariah (Uzziah), Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah.
- *Nahum* was active in Judah in the reigns of Manasseh, Amon, and Josiah. *Zephaniah* and *Habakkuk* also worked during the reign of Josiah.
- *Jeremiah* began his ministry in Judah during Josiah's reign, and his work continued through all the final four kings of Judah.
- *Daniel* and *Ezekiel* were among the earliest groups of captives taken to Babylon in the years just before Judah's fall. Their ministry service was in Babylon.

10. In 20:1-11, Hezekiah is told by Isaiah that he will die, but the king cries out to the Lord and sees 15 years added to his life. Are there any indications in this passage that, despite his miraculous healing, Hezekiah's attitude is not fully pleasing to the Lord?
11. Why do you think Hezekiah responds the way he does when Isaiah prophesies that Babylon will take away everything from his house (2 Kings 20:19)?

Personal Perspective

- What does this section say about the character of God and his relationship to his people?
- Considering all we covered in this lesson, what are some personal take-aways? What lessons can we learn from someone like Hezekiah?