

**Lesson 23 - 2 Kings 23:31-25:30****Introduction**

In this our final study we experience the last days of Judah. “The historian concludes his history with abbreviated summaries of the last four kings . . . as leading on to the fall of Jerusalem and the exile.”<sup>1</sup> In experiencing Judah’s pain we get a glimpse into the full plan of God in ultimately redeeming his people.

**Study Questions**

1. From the evidence you see in chapters 23-24, what does God want his people to remember about each of these rulers?
  - a. Jehoahaz (23:31-35)
  - b. Jehoiakim (23:36-24:7)
  - c. Jehoiachin (24:8-17)
  - d. Zedekiah (24:18-20)
2. Summarize the particular military and political developments involved in the final fall of Judah, as you see them playing out in the final few chapters of 2 Kings.
3. Look at the summary statements about Judah given in 24:3-4 and 24:20. Why do you think these are so much briefer than the similar statements given in 2 Kings 17 about Israel’s final fall, about 140 years earlier?
4. Look back at Solomon’s temple dedication prayer in 1 Kings 8:33-52 and notice the various calamities that Solomon mentions as future possibilities. We have seen most of these hardships become realities throughout the the rest of 1 and 2 Kings. How well did Israel and Judah’s kings and people respond in the way Solomon envisioned?
5. Second Kings 25:1-7 recounts Babylon’s final siege of Jerusalem resulting ultimately in the slaughtering of Zedekiah’s children before he is blinded and deported to Babylon. Later, in 25:8-17, Jerusalem is destroyed, having all its important buildings broken down. In addition

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<sup>1</sup> Donald Wiseman, Tyndale OT Commentary pg. 325

the temple is razed and artifacts taken. Exile comes in verse 21. What emotions does the narrative recounted in this section prompt in you as you read it? How would you have felt if you had lived through this horrific time?

6. Review carefully the closing words in 25:27-30. What hope does it give the reader? What is the significance of the book's ending in this way?
7. What would you select as the key verse or passage in 2 Kings 18-25 — the one that best captures or reflects the dynamics of what these chapters are about?
8. What has been the strongest example to you throughout the book of 2 Kings of someone doing what was right in the eyes of the Lord? What has been the strongest example of someone doing what was wrong in his eyes?

*Thus the final curtain falls on the drama of the divided monarchy. What has been a note of dark despair is illuminated by the light of God's gracious concern for his own. Although God's people had been judged as they must, yet God would be with them even in the midst of their sentence. Jehoaichin's release and renewed enjoyment of life thus stands as a harbinger of the further release and return of all the nation, in accordance with God's promises (see Jeremiah 31:8; Lamentations 5:21). The spiritually minded believers perhaps would see in this incident an assurance of God's greater redemption from bondage of those who look forward to him who gives release and eternal refreshment to all who love his appearing."*<sup>2</sup>

### **Personal Reflection**

- What are a couple of lessons you have learned during our study of Kings?
- How might the principles learned in this historical narrative be applied to your life?
- In the end, this has been a study of our great God and his plan for his people. What have we learned about the character of God? How does this impact your understanding of who he is?

*The book of Kings leaves Israel east of Eden, awaiting a return that is not yet come. And so it leaves us, a divided Christendom exiled in modern secularism, enduring the times of the Gentiles. It leaves us in exile, but it does not leave us without hope of return."*<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Expositors Bible Commentary pg. 300

<sup>3</sup> Life Change 1 and 2 Kings pg 86 (Peter Leithart)