

SEVEN ARROWS



What does this passage say?



What did this passage mean to its original audience?



What does this passage tell us about God?



What does this passage tell us about man?



What does this passage demand of me?



How does this passage change the way I relate to people?



What does this passage prompt me to pray to God?

2 KINGS 17:6-23



The last half of 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles records the fall of Israel and Judah. God has reached His limit, and the time of judgment came. God used Assyria, one of Israel's enemies, to capture Samaria, which was the capital of the northern kingdom. Many Israelites died in the fighting, and others were exiled to live outside of the promised land in pagan nations. It was a terrible fate for God's people. Had they upheld their covenant commitment and been faithful to God, they could have lived in peace and experienced God's goodness in the promised land. But like Adam in the garden, they were expelled from the land to live as exiles. God made it clear why He acted in this way-the people had continually rebelled and worshiped other gods. They failed to reflect God's image, choosing instead to fill the earth with sin and brokenness. God had to act. The people mocked His name with their actions, and the exile was further proof that God would not overlook ongoing, unrepentant rebellion.

2 KINGS 22:8-20



The northern kingdom of Israel experienced judgment before the southern tribes. However, this does not imply that Judah was somehow less sinful. In fact, their situation was so bad that 2 Kings reveals that the people didn't even know where a copy of God's law was. Hilkiyah, a priest in the temple, found the book of the law and gave it to the king. The priest read God's Word and the people were confronted with their sinfulness. The law of God served as a mirror, revealing the impoverished state of the nation. The people wept over their sin. How could this happen? How could the people of God lose God's Word? The same way we do today—they were so intent on building their lives and pursuing their false gods that they forgot about God and His Word.

2 KINGS 23















Though the nation was unraveling and on the brink of destruction, we see glimmers of hope in kings like Josiah. After hearing God's law, Josiah led a number of reforms designed to restore the proper worship of God. He reminded the people of their covenant with God, reinstated the Passover celebration, and restored the temple to its proper function. He also destroyed the sites where Israel was prone to worship false gods. Josiah's actions were critical -if people did not repent and return to God, they would face exile as well. Christians today face a similar challenge. In a world marked by sin, we're called to walk faithfully with God and call others to obedience. Such faithfulness is vital for us to fulfill our God-given mission as image-bearers. Like Josiah, this type of faithfulness will require courage and conviction.

2 KINGS 24:10-17



In spite of temporary reforms, the handwriting was on the wall. Israel fell to the Assyrians in 722 BC, and in 586 BC, the Babylonians defeated Judah as well. The exile should come as no surprise now that we've traced God's story through the Old Testament. He gave them warning after warning, yet the people consistently spurned His wisdom, instead pursuing their own ways. Notice that in both cases God used foreign nations to execute judgment on His people. Though the Assyrians and Babylonians did not worship the one true God, they still served God's purposes. He used those nations to crush His people, and this proves God is sovereign and in control of everything. He can use anyone or anything to accomplish His plan. Once again, God's people were in shambles. Would He leave them to die in exile, or would He continue to enact His plan to save them once and for all?

JOHN 2:13-25



Little changed by the time Jesus began His ministry. The temple, designed to be the dwelling place of God with His people and the site of worship, had become a marketplace. People still came to offer sacrifices, but they did this out of religious obligation rather than humble worship. The exchange of animals for sacrifice had become a money-making scheme for the religious leaders of the day. Jesus performed an exile of His own, driving the leaders out of the temple. He was appalled at the state of worship among the people of His day. They had no idea that, in the person of Jesus Christ, God literally dwelled among His people. Later, Jesus warned the leaders that they could destroy the temple of His body on the cross, but He would rise again after three days. From that point on, proper worship would no longer require a temple, but would instead depend on faith in Jesus and His sacrificial work.