

Lesson 3
(2 Kings 15:8-38)

ACCELERATING TO ANNIHILATION

ZECHARIAH, SHALLUM, MENAHEM, PEKAHIAH, AND PEKAH, KINGS OF ISRAEL (2 KINGS 15:8-31)

23. This part of 2 Kings is dull (due to its repetitiveness) and confusing (because of the rapid succession of kings and the seemingly never-ending conspiracies and assassinations it narrates). However, a careful reading of these verses reveals several recurring themes that illustrate the spiritual condition of the northern kingdom as it accelerates toward total destruction. What recurring themes can you identify in this text?
24. The kingdom of Assyria had been emerging as a regional superpower in the Near East during the time of Jeroboam II and Uzziah. How later kings attempted to deal with the Assyrian threat is of central importance to our study of 2 Kings and will be discussed in detail in the next several lessons. Read Nahum 3:1-3. What did this prophet say about the Assyrians and their methods? What did the ascendancy of Assyria portend for the kingdoms of Israel and Judah?
25. What did Menahem do to the pregnant women of Tiphshah? Now read 2 Kings 8:12 and Amos 1:13. What was Israel under Menahem starting to do? What had God originally intended Israel to do?
26. What did Israel lose during the reign of Pekah? According to 1 Chronicles 5:25-26, why did this loss occur? What does this loss foreshadow for the northern kingdom?

JOTHAM, KING OF JUDAH (2 KINGS 15:32-38)

27. Jotham gets only a handful of verses in 2 Kings. Many commentaries and Bible studies on 2 Kings have little to say about him. Why do you suppose this is? What do you think God might be teaching us by this?
28. Verse 34 says that Jotham “did what was right in the eyes of the LORD.” According to verse 35 however, “...the high places...were not removed.” If Jotham failed to do something commanded by God, why does the writer of 2 Kings consider him to be a good king?
29. Although Jotham was a good king and continued his father Uzziah’s work of strengthening the military, political, and economic stability of Judah, social corruption and spiritual wickedness were common among the leaders, priests, and even many of the ordinary people. The prophet Micah began his long ministry at this time and commented on the spiritual condition of Judah. Read Micah 2:1-2 and 3:9-11. What sort of sins were the people guilty of?

WHERE IS JESUS?

30. Menahem means “comforter” in Hebrew.
- a. What did Menahem do to bring comfort to the Assyrian king Pul (better known as Tiglath-Pileser)?

 - b. How did this act of appeasement bring false comfort to Israel?

- c. Now consider the following familiar narratives from the New Testament:
- i. The Parable of the Rich Fool (Luke 12:16-21). What comfort did the rich fool derive from his wealth? Why was this false comfort?

 - ii. The Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31). What comfort did the rich fool derive from his wealth? Why was this false comfort?

 - iii. The Temptation of Christ (Matthew 4:1-11). What comforts did Satan promise to Christ? Why were these false comforts?
31. Review your answer to question 26 above. Now read Isaiah 9:1-2 and 6-7. How did God “honor Galilee of the Gentiles” centuries after it was devastated by Tiglath-Pileser?
32. Read Micah 6:6-8. What did the religious leaders of Judah during Jotham’s reign think God required? What does God really require? Now read Mark 12:28-29. How do Micah’s words compare to those of Jesus

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