

Commentary on Second Kings chapter 16 by Chuck Smith 1.25.23

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January memory verse Isaiah 55:11 (NKJV)

So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.

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Now in the seventeenth year of Pekah, Remaliah or the son of Remaliah, Ahaz the son of Jotham king of Judah began to reign (2Ki 16:1).

Ahaz the son of Jotham. So you have now an Ahaz reigning. Used to have an Ahaz in the north tribes, now you have one in the southern tribes.

He was twenty years old he began to reign, he reigned for sixteen years in Jerusalem, [but he was one of the rare bad kings in Judah,] he did not walk after the LORD like David his father. But walked after the ways of the kings of Israel, in fact, he caused his own children to pass through the fire, according to the abominations of the heathen, that the LORD had cast out of the land before the children of Israel had come in. He sacrificed and burned incense in the high places, on the hills, and under every green tree. Then Rezin the king of Syria and Pekah the son of Remaliah both attacked him (2Ki 16:2-5).

And so he sent to the king of Assyria and sent him money unto Tiglathpileser and asked for his help. And Tiglathpileser came down to Syria. He took Damascus, and Ahaz, of course, sort of bought him off. And the king of Assyria began to strike against Syria and against Israel. Of course, they called off their attack then on Ahaz.

And king Ahaz commanded Urijah the priest saying, "Upon the great altar... " When he was up there in Damascus, the king of Assyria after taking Damascus, he invited him to come up and see Damascus. And when he got up there he saw an altar that attracted him. And so he drew it out, got the dimensions and then he went home and he said to the priest, "Now I want you to build an altar like this." And so they built another altar. They took away the altar out of the temple and replaced it with this altar that was fashioned like unto the pagan altar that he had seen in Damascus.

Also this great brass laver that was set upon these twelve brass oxen out in front of the temple, he took it off and set it on the ground and just sort of desecrated the temple of God and sort of fashioned it after some of the pagan temples that he had seen there in Damascus. And his death is recorded in the last couple of verses here.

Now as we get into chapter seventeen next week, we'll find the reasons why Israel fell. God lists to us the reasons why Israel went into captivity. For we come to the end of the nation Israel next week. All the reasons are listed. Their failure to follow God and worship God.

Now with knowledge comes responsibility. And the Bible says that "righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people" (Proverbs 14:34). And as we get into the reasons for the fall of Israel to their enemies, and as we sort of try to learn from history, the lessons that we are going to learn will be bitter lessons indeed as we look at the United States today and we see how godless a nation we are becoming. Now there are people who have a hard time understanding the ways of God. Habakkuk the prophet said to the Lord one day, "God, please don't show me anything else because the nation is going downhill so fast. It's so corrupt. The leaders are so corrupt and God, You're not doing anything about it." And God said to Habakkuk, "Habakkuk, I am doing something about it, but if I told you what I was doing, you wouldn't believe Me." Habakkuk said, "Well, try me, Lord." And so the Lord said, "Alright, I'm going to bring Babylon against Judah and they're going to take Judah captive." "Why, Lord would you do that?" He said, "I told you you wouldn't believe Me." But he said, "Hey, we're bad, that's true, but they're worse than we are. Why would You use a nation that is worse than we are to punish us?" And He said, "Because they don't know. They're not My people. But you are My people. And you have turned from Me. And because you have known Me, knowledge brings responsibility." And the failure to act to the knowledge is the thing that brings the judgment of God.

So that if God should use Russia as an instrument to punish the United States, we'd have the same kind of mental problems that Habakkuk had. "Lord, they're atheistic nation. Why would You use them to punish the United States?" It wouldn't be the first time in history that God used a godless nation to punish a once godly nation because the godly nation had turned from their godliness and had turned after idols and turned away from the living God. I would not be surprised to see God judge our nation. I could surely not blame God for doing it. Because of the things that are going on in our nation today. Surely we must lead the world in pornography and in so many filthy things and in godlessness. And we look at how we have sought to rule God out of our national life. And how the courts are seeking to rule God out of our national life. And we cannot and should not complain if God brings His judgment against this nation. As we read the reasons why judgment was brought against Israel, you'll see that God has every right to judge the United States. And I believe He is going to. And He's going to judge it severely. But I think the judgment is going to fall after I'm gone.

When God was ready to judge Sodom and Gomorrah, you remember what Abraham said to the Lord. "Lord, shouldn't God be fair? Would You judge the righteous with the wicked? What if there are fifty righteous there?" God said, "I will spare it for the fifty righteous." Hey, you should feel very honored tonight, because it is because of you that God is sparing the nation the judgment that is due it. And God did not bring His judgment against Sodom and Gomorrah until He had first removed that righteous man Lot. And then the judgment fell. I believe that God is going to remove His righteous church, but then judgment such as the nation deserves will surely come from God.

We'll get into this more next week as we look at the fall of Israel, the judgment of God and the reasons for that judgment.

May the Lord bless you and keep you. And may He strengthen you through this week. As you have to go out and mix in that world I pray that God will give you divine insulation by His Holy Spirit that will just sort of ward off all of the evil influences that are pointed in your direction that surround you daily when you're on the job or in your classroom or just dealing with this corrupt system. I pray that God will just help you to keep your mind and heart fixed upon Him. And that you'll look above the corruption of this world. And that you'll be strengthened as we look to Him, our only hope but Who is our strength and our defense.