

“The Wages of Sin”  
2 Kings 17  
(Preached at Trinity, July 31, 2022)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. **Chapter 16** is completely devoted to the most wicked king in the history of Judah. Ahaz surpassed them all, falling headlong into idolatry and completely rejecting the God of his fathers. Of course, Manasseh runs a close second in the competition for being the most evil king.
  - A. The author summarizes his reign:  
**2 Kings 16:2-4 NAU** - "he did not do what was right in the sight of the LORD his God, as his father David *had done*.<sup>3</sup> But he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, and even made his son pass through the fire, according to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD had driven out from before the sons of Israel.<sup>4</sup> He sacrificed and burned incense on the high places and on the hills and under every green tree."
  - B. And then, as quickly as he rose to the throne, it was over – dead at age 36.  
**2 Kings 16:20 NAU** - "So Ahaz slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David; and his son Hezekiah reigned in his place."
  - C. The date of importance was not his date of birth, nor his death, but what happened between those two dates. The same is also true of us. It would have been better if Ahaz had never been born.
2. We are told he was succeeded by his son, Hezekiah, who was a righteous king, not perfect, but a refreshing change from the reign of Ahaz. But the author pauses before writing about his reign.  
As we enter **Chapter 17** we are given the account of the fall of Israel and the immediate subsequent years. It is twice as long as **Chapter 16**.
  - A. The fall of Israel is recorded in single verse:  
**2 Kings 17:6 NAU** - "In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria captured Samaria and carried Israel away into exile to Assyria, and settled them in Halah and Habor, *on* the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes."
  - B. The reason for their demise is described plainly in the next verse:  
**2 Kings 17:7 NAU** - "Now *this* came about because the sons of Israel had sinned against the LORD their God, who had brought them up from the land of Egypt from under the hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and they had feared other gods"
  - C. They had abandoned their unique relationship as God's covenant people.  
**2 Kings 17:15 NAU** - "They rejected His statutes and His covenant which He made with their fathers and His warnings with which He warned them."
3. In this passage we find a paradigm of sin and judgment.  
I title this sermon, “The Wages of Sin.” We’ll set some principles regarding the nature of God’s judgment. We’ll also see that overshadowing earthly judgment is God’s rich mercy.

- I. First, we see God's judgment is promised
- A. The fall of Samaria was not without warning.
1. From the beginning God set covenant duties before Israel with the promise of blessing for covenant faithfulness and curse for the failure to obey.  
**Deuteronomy 28:15 NAU** - "But it shall come about, if you do not obey the LORD your God, to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes with which I charge you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you:"  
**Deuteronomy 28:47-50 NAU** - "Because you did not serve the LORD your God with joy and a glad heart, for the abundance of all things; <sup>48</sup> therefore you shall serve your enemies whom the LORD will send against you, in hunger, in thirst, in nakedness, and in the lack of all things; and He will put an iron yoke on your neck until He has destroyed you. <sup>49</sup> "The LORD will bring a nation against you from afar, from the end of the earth, as the eagle swoops down, a nation whose language you shall not understand, <sup>50</sup> a nation of fierce countenance who will have no respect for the old, nor show favor to the young."
  2. In addition, God sent His prophets to warn Israel and Judah.  
**Jeremiah 2:4-5 NAU** - "Hear the word of the LORD, O house of Jacob, and all the families of the house of Israel. <sup>5</sup> Thus says the LORD, "What injustice did your fathers find in Me, That they went far from Me And walked after emptiness and became empty?"  
**Jeremiah 2:7 NAU** - "I brought you into the fruitful land To eat its fruit and its good things. But you came and defiled My land, And My inheritance you made an abomination."  
**Jeremiah 2:9 NAU** - "Therefore I will yet contend with you," declares the LORD, "And with your sons' sons I will contend."  
**Micah 1:6 NAU** - "I will make Samaria a heap of ruins in the open country"
  3. God warned over and over but they would not hear.  
**2 Kings 17:13-14 NAU** - "Yet the LORD warned Israel and Judah through all His prophets *and* every seer, saying, "Turn from your evil ways and keep My commandments, My statutes according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you through My servants the prophets." <sup>14</sup> However, they did not listen, but stiffened their neck like their fathers, who did not believe in the LORD their God."
  4. It reminds us of God's words to Moses:  
**Numbers 14:11 NAU** - "How long will this people spurn Me? And how long will they not believe in Me, despite all the signs which I have performed in their midst?"
  5. God could have destroyed them years before, but He exercised patience and restraint.

- B. God continues exercise restraint today. He continues to send forth His warnings, commanding sinners to repent and turn to Christ.
1. Paul described God's wrath as being clearly revealed to all  
**Romans 1:18 NAU** - "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,"
  2. He declared that instead of repenting, sinful men are storing up more and more wrath unto the day of judgment.  
**Romans 2:5 NAU** - "But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God,"
  3. God's warnings are the demonstration of His rich mercy. He is not compelled to warn. It is foolish to refuse His mercy or to delay.  
**2 Corinthians 6:2 NAU** - "behold, now is "the acceptable time," behold, now is "the day of salvation "  
**Hebrews 3:15 NAU** - "Today if you hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts, as when they provoked Me."

## II. God's judgment is just

- A. God is infinitely holy
1. When Isaiah saw the throne of God he presumed he was about to die? Why? Because he saw the infinite holiness of God and his own uncleanness. He knew God's Word. **Exodus 33:20 NAU** - "You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live!" His words, "Woe is me for I am unclean."
  2. God's wrath is the divine attribute of His righteous anger against all that is not holy.
  3. We have to understand the infinite evil of sin and the infinite holiness of God.
- B. God has given His Law as His standard of righteousness.
1. The Law demands perfection. To transgress the Law is to make oneself guilty. It brings a person under God's just judgment.
  2. Justice demands a punishment in proportion to the crime. The greater the fault, the greater the punishment deserved.
  3. Our guilt is an infinite guilt that demands God's infinite judgment. Our punishment is just.
  4. God's destruction of Israel was just—and so it is with all humanity.  
**2 Kings 17:18 NAU** - "So the LORD was very angry with Israel and removed them from His sight; none was left except the tribe of Judah."
  5. But again, His just judgment was filtered with His great mercy. God did not destroy Israel entirely.

### III. God's judgment is delayed – an act of mercy

#### A. God demonstrated amazing patience and forbearance with Israel

1. Upon the division of Israel and Judah Jeroboam immediately led Israel into sin.

**1 Kings 12:26-28 NAU** - "Jeroboam said in his heart, "Now the kingdom will return to the house of David. <sup>27</sup> "If this people go up to offer sacrifices in the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, then the heart of this people will return to their lord, *even* to Rehoboam king of Judah; and they will kill me and return to Rehoboam king of Judah." <sup>28</sup> So the king consulted, and made two golden calves, and he said to them, "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem; behold your gods, O Israel, that brought you up from the land of Egypt." But God didn't destroy them.

2. King after king continued to lead Israel deeper into sin, and yet, God did not destroy them. He brought sickness, drought and famine, continuing affliction from their enemies, including the devastation of a long siege, all designed to bring them to repentance. None of it brought repentance.
3. God sent His prophets, but it did not bring them to repentance.

**2 Kings 17:13-14 NAU** - "Yet the LORD warned Israel and Judah through all His prophets *and* every seer, saying, "Turn from your evil ways and keep My commandments, My statutes according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you through My servants the prophets." <sup>14</sup> However, they did not listen, but stiffened their neck like their fathers, who did not believe in the LORD their God."

4. Finally, God poured out His wrath.

**2 Kings 17:18 NAU** - "So the LORD was very angry with Israel and removed them from His sight; none was left except the tribe of Judah."

- a. We need to understand, God was already angry. He had been angry, very angry with them from the beginning, but He suffered with them with patience.

- b. God's judgment was His wrath long delayed.

#### B. The wrath of God is already kindled today.

**Psalms 7:12 NAU** - "He has bent His bow and made it ready."

1. Few today realize that they are under the indignation and fury of God. They awaken each day to sunshine and the rich provisions of His bounteous grace. It is hard to imagine that there is great trouble brewing. They can't imagine they are dangling over the fires of God's Divine judgment.
2. God is longsuffering, He is patient, and He is also full of mercy in granting time, in granting a brief reprieve.
3. God's patience should not be confused with a diminishing of His wrath. Every thought, every word, every action is known of God. And all will be exposed on that great day.

**Nahum 1:3** – "The LORD *is* slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit *the wicked*"

4. Matthew Henry: "Time does not wear out the guilt of any sin."<sup>1</sup>
5. Jesus Christ will soon come in the judgment that has long been delayed and everything in this world will be purged.  
Jonathan Edwards (*Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God*)  
"It is not because God is unmindful of their wickedness, and does not resent it, that he does not let lose his hand and cut them off. God is not altogether such as one as themselves, though they imagine him to be so. The wrath of God burns against them, their damnation does not slumber; the pit is prepared, the fire is made ready, the furnace is now hot, ready to receive them, the flames do now rage and glow. The glittering sword is whet, and held over them, and the pit hath opened its mouth under them."

#### Conclusion:

1. God is longsuffering. He is merciful in granting time, in calling men to repent and turn to Him in faith. But for those who refuse Paul's statement remains a universal truth – "The wages of sin is death."
2. God's way of salvation has always been the same – faith and repentance. Notice their condemnation. They did not believe in the LORD their God.  
**2 Kings 17:14 NAU** - "However, they did not listen, but stiffened their neck like their fathers, who did not believe in the LORD their God."  
This demands a new heart that only God can give.
3. All will stand before the judgment seat of Christ when the age of mercy will come to an end. Then fallen humanity will be forever removed from the blessings of God.  
**Verse 18** sums it up well. They will be "removed from His sight."  
They will hear the terrifying words, "Depart from Me into everlasting fire."
4. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 482.