

“The End of Israel”
2 Kings 17
(Preached at Trinity, August 14, 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. We've reached the tragic end of a holy nation. The title of this sermon is a bit inflammatory, for we know that this did not mark the end of the people of God. That is the good news that overshadows this chapter. But it does mark the end of the Northern Kingdom. God's covenant promises are unilateral and unconditional. At the same time, there were temporal judgments threatened against covenant unfaithfulness. The words "if you obey" always stood as a both promise and warning.
Exodus 19:5-6 NAU - "Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; ⁶ and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel."
2. This chapter describes the final destruction of Israel, the causes of it and justification of God's righteous judgment. It also describes the pagan nations with their pagan religion who would settle in the land of promise.
2 Kings 17:15 NAU - "They (Israel) rejected His statutes and His covenant which He made with their fathers and His warnings with which He warned them. And they followed vanity and became vain, and *went* after the nations which surrounded them, concerning which the LORD had commanded them not to do like them."
2 Kings 17:20 NAU - "The LORD rejected all the descendants of Israel and afflicted them and gave them into the hand of plunderers, until He had cast them out of His sight."
3. In the midst of the destruction of Israel we find the surety of God's covenant.
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."
4. God maintained a remnant.
 - A. Make no mistake, Judah was also unfaithful.
2 Kings 17:19 NAU - "Also Judah did not keep the commandments of the LORD their God, but walked in the customs which Israel had introduced."
 - B. If Judah was also unfaithful why did God not also destroy them?
We need to understand the answer to this question. It was because of God's sovereign grace and because God did not forget His covenant.
Exodus. 2:24 NAU - "God remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."
Psalms 105:6-9 NAU - "O seed of Abraham, His servant, O sons of Jacob, His chosen ones! ⁷ He is the LORD our God; His judgments are in all the earth. ⁸ He has remembered His covenant forever, The word which He commanded to a thousand generations, ⁹ *The covenant* which He made with Abraham, And His oath to Isaac."

5. From **Chapter 18** to the end of **2 Kings** the author describes the covenant unfaithfulness of Judah that resulted in God's judgment and the destruction of Jerusalem and captivity by the Babylonians. But while Israel was forever destroyed, God maintained the remnant of Judah. Why? Because, God remembers His covenant.
6. There is a beautiful illustration of this in the Old Testament
- A. Hosea married a wife of harlotry. She gave birth to children and they were given particular names. Through the birth of Hosea's children God foretells the ruin of Israel.
 - B. The firstborn was named Jezreel which means "The seed of God." More specifically it refers to the scattering of seed. Israel would be scattered by God among the Gentile nations as a punishment for their sins.
 - C. The second born was a daughter whose name was called, Loruhamah which means "not beloved" or "no mercy," Israel had forsaken God's mercies. Because of Israel's sin they had forfeited God's mercies. God would no longer show them mercy.
 - D. The third child was another son. His name was to be Loammi which means, "not my people." Israel would be utterly scattered and forsaken.
 - E. Israel was abandoned by God because He was abandoned by them. God abandoned Israel but He didn't abandon them absolutely. They were abandoned but this doesn't mean that He forgot His covenant promises. He would preserve a remnant.
Isaiah 10:22 NAU - "For though your people, O Israel, may be like the sand of the sea, *Only* a remnant within them will return"
7. Before we leave this account of the destruction of Israel and move on to the end of 2nd Kings we need to be reminded of the precious truths once again. They will serve as a continued source of encouragement and hope.
- I. God's people have always been a minority – a holy remnant
"a small remaining part, a fragment"
- A. Do you get frustrated in this world of corruption? Does it seem like there are so few who follow Christ in holiness? Christians have often become distressed by this condition.
There are few in any given age who believe and serve God.
 1. Jesus taught this
Matthew 7:13-14 NAU - "Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. ¹⁴ "For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it."
 2. By the time of the flood the number of the righteous was reduced to a tiny remnant – eight souls, Noah and his family.
Genesis 6:5-8 NAU - "Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. ⁶ The LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. ⁷ The LORD said, "I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky; for I am sorry that I have made them." ⁸ But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD."

- a. Only 8 were saved from the flood
 - b. This is in spite of the righteous preaching of Noah that continued for 120 years.
2 Peter 2:5 NAU - "and did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly;"
- B. The smallness of the remnant would continue to be demonstrated
- 1. Of the multitude that was delivered from Egypt only a small remnant entered into Canaan
 - 2. God sent Elijah to the nation of Israel. They witnessed many miracles.
 - a. They saw God's victory over the prophets of Baal
 - b. Elijah prayed and rain came ending a three-year drought.
 - c. In spite of this the nation remained unrepentant – Jezebel sent to have Elijah arrested. Jezebel said to Elijah:
1 Kings 19:2 NAU - "Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, "So may the gods do to me and even more, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time."
 - d. Elijah falls beneath a juniper tree discouraged before God requesting that he might die. He cries out:
1 Kings 19:4 NAU - "O LORD, take my life, for I am not better than my fathers."
1 Kings 19:10 NAU - "I have been very zealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the sons of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars and killed Your prophets with the sword. And I alone am left; and they seek my life, to take it away."
 - e. God answers Elijah with the truth that seems to have been consistent throughout the ages
1 Kings 19:18 NAU - "Yet I will leave 7,000 in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal and every mouth that has not kissed him."
 - 3. Now we read the entire nation of Israel has been cast away, except for a remnant. **2 Kings 17:18** - "none was left except the tribe of Judah."
- C. History is covered with the blood of martyrs who were a remnant in a mass of men who hate God – often religious men.
- 1. The same holds true today.
There are still many religious men.
 - a. Remember, Cain was a religious man – He brought an offering to God.
 - b. The Israelites in the wilderness were religious – they even fashioned a golden calf.
 - c. The Israelites of Elijah's day were religious. They faithfully worshipped Baal. And then they made their bold profession of allegiance towards God.

d. Those remaining in Samaria were religious, but they also served other gods.

2 Kings 17:41 NAU - "So while these nations feared the LORD, they also served their idols; their children likewise and their grandchildren, as their fathers did, so they do to this day."

2. There are few today who truly love and serve Christ. There are few who have not bowed the knee to the gods of this age. There are few whose lives are consistent with their profession.

II. God will always have a holy remnant. He remembers covenant. The Jezebel's of the earth cannot stop it.

A. God maintains a remnant of holy people.

1. Lot was one righteous man in a city of evil.

2 Peter 2:7-9 NAU - "He rescued righteous Lot, oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men ⁸ (for by what he saw and heard *that* righteous man, while living among them, felt *his* righteous soul tormented day after day by *their* lawless deeds), ⁹ *then* the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment,"

God said He would have spared Sodom if there would have been ten righteous men.

2. Joseph was sold by his brothers and taken into Egypt. One righteous man in a pagan land. He continued walking with God refusing to compromise his righteousness. When tempted by Potiphar's wicked wife Joseph cried out:

Genesis 39:9 NAU - "How then could I do this great evil and sin against God?"

3. Moses chose faithfulness to God rather than enjoy all the riches of Egypt.

4. During the captivity period young men like Daniel and Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to compromise their integrity to the prevailing wickedness around them.

5. God has always had a faithful remnant. This is Paul point in **Romans 9** as he quotes from Isaiah.

Romans 9:27 NAU- "And Isaiah cries out concerning Israel, "Though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, it is the remnant that will be saved;"

B. This has always been the consistent condition upon this earth.

1. Christians sometimes cry out today as if the present situation of wickedness is some unusual situation.

2. The wicked have always outnumbered the righteous. The righteous have always been few in number, standing firm upon the promises of God seeking to glorify Him upon the earth.

- III. As Christians we are a part of God's holy remnant
- A. Israel has not ended.
1. Israel represented God's covenant promise. They were God's covenant people. God destroyed them but maintained a small remnant.
 2. The church is the continuation of God's covenant promise. Those in Christ Jesus are God's remnant – God's covenant people.
- B. God has maintained His holy people.
1. Israel represented those people in the Old Covenant
Exodus. 19:5-6 NAU - "Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; ⁶ and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel."
 2. The church is God's holy people in the New Covenant.
1 Peter 2:9-10 NAU - "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for *God's* own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; ¹⁰ for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy."
 3. As God's holy people we are called upon to be holy, set apart
2 Corinthians 6:15-18 NAU - "Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? ¹⁶ Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "I will dwell in them and walk among them; And I will be their God, and they shall be My people. ¹⁷ "Therefore, come out from their midst and be separate," says the Lord. "And do not touch what is unclean; And I will welcome you. ¹⁸ "And I will be a father to you, And you shall be sons and daughters to Me," Says the Lord Almighty."

Conclusion:

1. God's Covenant promises are a great source of encouragement for us. God continues to maintain His remnant. When things look bad, when it seems that no one is following Christ remember God has His faithful remnant serving Him. Are you one of them?
2. Remember, the church is a remnant upon the earth and it marches forth with great power. The gates of hell will not prevail against it.
3. We may be hated and despised, but we will not be stopped. We will not be destroyed. God will not lose a single one of His holy people.