

July 11-17, 2022

2 Kings 17–25

“HE TRUSTED IN THE LORD GOD OF ISRAEL”

Summary: *2 Kings 17. Hoshea reigns in Israel and is subject to the Assyrians—The Israelites forsake the Lord, worship idols, serve Baal, and reject all that the Lord has given them—The ten tribes are carried away captive by the kings of Assyria—The land of Israel (Samaria) is repopulated by other people—Many forms of false worship are found among the Samaritans.*

2 Kings 18. Hezekiah reigns in righteousness in Judah—He destroys idolatry and breaks the brazen serpent made by Moses because the children of Israel burn incense to it—Sennacherib, king of Assyria, invades Judah—In a blasphemous speech, Rabshakeh asks Jerusalem to surrender to the Assyrians.

2 Kings 19. Hezekiah seeks counsel from Isaiah to save Jerusalem—Isaiah prophesies the defeat of the Assyrians and the death of Sennacherib—Hezekiah prays for deliverance—Sennacherib sends a blasphemous letter—Isaiah prophesies that the Assyrians will be destroyed and that a remnant of Judah will flourish—An angel slays 185,000 Assyrians—Sennacherib is slain by his sons.

2 Kings 20. Hezekiah is told he will die and pleads with the Lord; his life is lengthened fifteen years—The shadow goes back ten degrees on the sundial of Abaz—Isaiah prophesies the Babylonian captivity of Judah.

2 Kings 21. Manasseh turns Judah to idolatry, even sacrificing a son to a heathen god—Prophets foretell the destruction of Judah and Jerusalem—Wickedness continues under Amon.

2 Kings 22. Josiah reigns in righteousness in Judah—Hilkiah repairs the temple and finds the book of the law—Josiah sorrows because of the wickedness of his fathers—Huldah prophesies wrath upon the people but blessings upon Josiah.

2 Kings 23. Josiah reads the book of the covenant to the people—They covenant to keep the commandments—Josiah overturns the worship of false gods, removes the sodomites, and puts down idolatry—Idolatrous priests are slain—Judah holds a solemn Passover—Egypt subjects the land of Judah.

2 Kings 24. Jerusalem is besieged and taken by Nebuchadnezzar—Many of the people of Judah are carried captive into Babylon—Zedekiah becomes king in Jerusalem—He rebels against Babylon.

2 Kings 25. Nebuchadnezzar again besieges Jerusalem—Zedekiah is captured, Jerusalem and the temple are destroyed, and most of the people of Judah are carried into Babylon—Gedaliah, left to govern the remnant, is slain—The remnant flee to Egypt—Jeioiachin is shown favor in Babylon.

Supplemental Jewish and Holy Land Insights

It is worth noting that the scribe of the book of Kings concludes the account of

What precipitated the scattering of the Kingdom of Israel?

Israel's history with a warning, using the fall of Samaria as God's judgement against the people's sins: "For so it was, that the children of Israel had sinned against the LORD their God, which had brought them up out of the land of Egypt,

from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and had feared other gods, And walked in the statutes of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out from before the children of Israel, and of the kings of Israel, which they had made. And the children of Israel did secretly those things that were not right against the LORD their God, and they built them high places in all their cities, from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city. And they set them up images and groves in every high hill, and under every green tree: And there they burnt incense in all the high places, as did the heathen whom the LORD carried away before them; and wrought wicked things to provoke the LORD to anger: For they served idols, whereof the LORD had said unto them, Ye shall not do this thing. **(2 Kings 17:7-12).**

What was a reason the Kingdom of Judah was somewhat spared?

There is a value in keeping statutes of the Lord, even when the devotions and meanings were missing. "Therefore, the Lord was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of his sight: there was none left but the tribe of Judah only. Also, Judah kept not the commandments of the Lord their God, but walked in the statutes of Israel which they made." **(2 Kings 17: 18-19)**

How does the review of Hezekiah bring us closer to the lord?

Hezekiah is highly favored among the Jews. Several scriptures are attributed to his inspiration. Certain aspects of his life are powerful metaphors of the Savior. One is bringing "Living Water" to Jerusalem; another is bringing the people to the Lord and returning them to the temple by unfolding the scriptures to them. "Hezekiah was king of Judah for 29 years in the late eighth or early seventh century B.C.E. Hezekiah is remembered as a great king by Jews, both for his religious virtue and his political and

military skill. In the Books of Kings and Chronicles, Hezekiah is depicted as a king who purified the religion of the people of Judah by eliminating idolatry, and who tried to return to the glorious days of David and Solomon. Through his piety, Hezekiah was responsible for a national awakening in Judah."

"In the *Aggadah* (legends, parables, or anecdotes illustrating *Talmudic Law*), Hezekiah is idealized as a completely righteous man, devoted to the study of *Torah* and to "strengthening the bonds between Israel and its Father in Heaven." The *Talmud* states that in his time there was not a child in the whole of the land who was not expert in the complicated laws of ritual purity, so great was the knowledge of the *Torah*." "Hezekiah was the father-in-law of the prophet Isaiah." "King Hezekiah and his colleagues committed the Book of Isaiah to writing; and Ezekiel and the Twelve Prophets were committed to writing by the Great Assembly, an institution that existed sometime after Ezra." There is a Jewish tradition that Hezekiah may have written "The Song of Songs" that is read on the Sabbath of *Passover*. The Book is a song of love which the rabbis interpreted as being a poetic expression of the love between God and Israel. Even though it is thought that King Solomon had composed this Book in his youth. As stated, another tradition attributes its writing to King Hezekiah. "Another tradition has it that King Hezekiah committed Ecclesiastes to writing. This Scroll is read during *Sukkot*." **(Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)**

How did Hezekiah bring "Living Water" into Jerusalem?

Hezekiah reinforced the walls of Jerusalem and repaired the temple. Remembering David's time and the vulnerability of the city through its water source (a short tunnel leading into the city from a spring outside the walls), Hezekiah built a longer water tunnel capable of

supplying the city in times of emergency. He covered the Gihon spring outside the walls sending the water to the pool of Siloam, the name meaning “sent” (*Shiloah* in Hebrew). “*Siloam* is a pool of water and an artificially constructed tunnel leading to it, which constituted the main water source for the city of Jerusalem during biblical times. Located in the Kidron Valley to the south and east of the present-day Old City of Jerusalem, the Siloam Pool (*Shiloah* in Hebrew) was fed by the waters of the Gihon, a natural spring source situated deep within the valley. Because the spring lay outside the city walls, attempts were made as early as the days of King David to construct canals or channels which would bring the water into the city and sustain the inhabitants even in the time of siege. At the end of the eighth century, King Hezekiah sponsored the most successful of these undertakings—he construction of a 1,756 foot tunnel which connected the Gihon with the Siloam Pool which was then located within the extended walls of the city. The construction of this tunnel was a remarkable engineering feat. It was dug in hard rock by two groups of diggers who began working at the same time from opposite ends. After several twists and turns, the two groups eventually met, and left an inscription at their meeting place commemorating their joy at their achievement. The inscription was removed from the tunnel at the end of last century and today can be seen in the museum of Istanbul.” ([Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.](#))

What is so symbolic of “Living Waters?”

The significance of this water is that it emanates from springs. Spring water is “*kosher*.” It is used for ritual purposes such as temple washings, immersions and other ceremonies. Immersions in Judaism require “Living Water,” that is, water from a spring, from bedrock, “The

Rock of Salvation.” That water must flow naturally, and the immersion font (*mikveh*) is best suited below ground level. Incidentally, in present Judaism, there is no immersion for “forgiveness of sins.” A review of Jewish immersion practices can be seen as an echo of the restored ordinance of “Baptism for the remission of sins.” “A mikveh must not be filled with water that has been drawn (i.e., has been in a vessel or a receptacle), but with water from a naturally flowing source; spring water or rainwater are the ideal sources, but melted snow and ice are also permitted. The water must be able to flow into the mikveh freely and unimpeded (any blockage renders the water “drawn water”) and must reach the mikveh in vessels that are not susceptible to ritual uncleanness. The minimum size of the mikveh is of a vessel which has a volume of “40 *seah*,” variously estimated at between 250 and 1,000 liters (quarts). The mikveh must be watertight and must be constructed of natural materials on the spot, for otherwise it is deemed itself to be a “vessel” and renders the water in it “drawn water.” ([Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.](#))

Where can I connect “purification” or “forgiveness of sin” to water?

The unusual ritual sacrifice of the completely red calf has symbolism and lessons of repentance. “...from the Siloam pool...water was taken for the Red Heifer ceremony in Temple times.” ([Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.](#)) As stated in ([Numbers 19:1-9](#)), the red heifer ritual was for forgiveness of sins. Jews have a tradition that this red calf offering had to be high on the Mount of Olives, above the temple itself and opposite the Gate Beautiful. Those who have had the experience of sitting on the upper part of the Mount of Olives opposite of the present day Gate Beautiful can attest to the spirit of Gethsemane (well away from the traditional Church of Gethsemane on the lower part of the mount). Water and sins do have a

connection and a place in Jewish traditions: “On the afternoon of the first day (of Rosh Hashana), it is customary to walk to the nearest body of running water and there symbolically “cast” one’s sins into the water. The ceremony may be based on a verse in the biblical book of Micah: “And Thou (referring to God) shall cast all their sins into the depths of the seas” (**Micah 7:19**). This practice, to which there is no reference in the Talmud, is generally called *Tashlikh*, probably after the Hebrew word meaning “cast” (*va-tashlikh*) in the verse from Micah.” (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**)

What caused a brief period of repentance in Josiah’s time?

During the renovation of the temple, the book of Deuteronomy, a distinctive part of the Torah was discovered in one of the storage chambers. “Moreover, the workers with familiar spirits, and the wizards, and the images, and the idols, and all the abominations that were spied in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, did Josiah put away, that he might perform the words of the law which were written in the book that Hilkiah the priest found in the house of the Lord. And like unto him was there no king before him, that turned to the Lord with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; neither after him arose there any like him. (**2 Kings 23: 24-25**) “The biblical Books had previously been destroyed by Amon so that the find caused a sensation. When the Book was read to Josiah he was deeply shocked by its prophecies of doom. He immediately sent a delegation to the prophetess Hulda to ask her advice. The answer was forthright and not reassuring—Jerusalem and the Temple were doomed, but Josiah himself would not live to see their

destruction. Josiah led the people to the Temple in repentance.” (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**)

Where is my haven for purity and the presence of the Lord?

There are presently 265 temples designated, under construction, being remodeling or completed in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Before the Jerusalem temple was built, the entire encampment of Israel was a “city temple.” Apparently, it will be that way again when the Lord returns to Jerusalem. “In Pre-Temple times, in the desert, the whole encampment was considered to be in a state of sanctity, and hence anyone who was *tameh* (unclean) was forced to go outside the marked boundaries and was forbidden to return until he had completed the purification ritual. With the destruction of the Temple, such sanctions ceased to apply. Nevertheless, the maintenance of ritual impurity has remained an essential aspect of Jewish life. Thus, because all Jews are now assumed to be ritually impure, they are even today forbidden to enter the Temple area in Jerusalem.”

(**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**) More and more temples are being built as places of refuge, where the Holiness of the Lord dwells. References to “cities of refuge” are indications of temple cities, among them, Jerusalem, (**Doctrine and Covenants 124:36**) and Independence, Missouri. “Joseph Smith presided over the dedication of the Independence Temple site on August 3, 1831 and laid the northeast and southeast cornerstones (or corner markers). Joseph Smith revealed his plan for the City of Zion in June 1833, which featured a complex of 24 temples in the center of a city with wide streets crossing at right angles.” (<https://churchofjesuschristtemples.org/independence-temple>)