

Forty-fifth Street Baptist Church Life-Groups



Chapter 17: We have been following The Story—the seamless love story of God. We are learning the Bible together and seeing how it applies to our everyday lives. In The Story we come to Chapter 17 or *2 Kings 21*. God made promises to Abraham and Moses that he would show his love to all people and call them back to himself. To David, God promised to bring the Messiah. Even though God's people fail to obey, and the kingdom split into two smaller, weaker nations, God will fulfill his unconditional promises. The northern kingdom, Israel, went into exile to Assyria in 722 B.C. What happened to the southern kingdom of Judah? Turn to *2 Kings 21:1*.

- I. Judah has both good and bad kings.
- A. Manasseh did more evil in the eyes of God than any other king. Read *2 Chronicles 36:15-16* for summary of this era.
 - B. Of the last six kings in Judah, only Josiah, who began his reign as an eight year old, was good.
 - C. God cannot continue to bless Judah because it would send a confusing message to Judah and to the surrounding nations.
 - D. God warns Judah of exile, yet through Ezekiel the prophet, God promises fulfill his purpose that all nations will know God. *Ezekiel 36:23*

The express purpose of God in his relationship with Israel is always to demonstrate that he is the one true God who wants people to come back into relationship with him.

- II. God raises up the Babylonians to judge the southern kingdom—sinful Judah.
- A. The Babylonians conquered the Assyrians and destroyed Jerusalem and Judah in 586 B.C. taking prisoners into exile.
 - B. The fall of the northern kingdom and southern kingdom are hard stories but they teach us valuable lessons of faith.
 - C. In the midst of judgment God always offers a promise of hope.
- III. God calls Jeremiah to be the “weeping prophet” over Judah and its fall.
- A. God calls Jeremiah while Jeremiah is still in the womb! *Jeremiah 1:4-5*

Application: Paul writes in *Ephesians 2:10* that God calls us, too. We all have a role to play in God's unfolding upper story of love and salvation.

- B. Jeremiah made excuses to God that he was not qualified (*Jeremiah 1:9-10*) But God promises to help Jeremiah speak and God will be with Jeremiah.

Application: God gives us his Holy Spirit to help us fulfill our role. Jesus promised to be “with us” to the end of the age. *Matthew 29:18-20*

- C. Jeremiah's task to call people back, but he will fail, both weeping over Judah's destruction and offering hope for the future.
 - 1. Jeremiah's “weeping” is recorded in the Book of Lamentations.
 - 2. Jeremiah's hope is written in *Lamentations 3:21-23*

Application: Jeremiah moments come to all of us. For Bob Buford, a believer, it came at the mid-point of his life. He was consulted to view his life as a box and he could only have one of two things in it: money or Jesus. Bob chose Jesus and became a trusted consulted to many Christian leaders and pastors. Bob Buford helped Randy Frazee in his decision to leave Chicago and move to the church in San Antonio.

Will you accept God's call upon your life?