

2 Kings 24

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[0 : 00] Take your Bibles out, we're in 2 Kings chapter 24, 2 Kings chapter 24. The Bible tells us in the book of Hebrews, Hebrews chapter 10, Jonathan Edwards preached his famous sermon from it, that it is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of an angry God.

Jonathan Edwards read that sermon, Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God, from the text found in Hebrews chapter 10, and it is a reality in which we see that it truly is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of an angry God.

We look at that and we think, well, then that means I need to meet my Savior and I need to ensure that I have salvation correct, because surely the text is referring to the lost.

But much like when Jonathan Edwards read that sermon, we say read because while he was a fluent preacher, he ended up becoming the president of one of the greatest universities in America.

He read his sermons word by word, and history tells us that he stood with his face buried and his notes trembling, not his voice very weak, because he had been up all night just crying over the sermon, and it wasn't the most eloquent of sermons, but it had its power.

[1 : 25] But I think that he was correct in the admonition of that sermon, as the book of Hebrews tells us that the author of Hebrews was writing to the church, and the text was given to the church.

And it was speaking about the disciplinarian action of God upon his people. Our text before us is a further admonition and admission of that.

It is, if you want to see a title, Judgment Realized, found in 2 Kings chapter 24. It is what we've been moving towards ever since the division of the kingdom.

Ever since Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, ascended to the throne and the kingdom was divided. And if you want to go back even a little further, it is a time in history which we have been moving forward ever since Moses penned the very last chapters of the book of Deuteronomy.

In Deuteronomy chapter 32, I believe it is, Paul, not Paul, Moses is writing that final message. And there's a lament there in that final message in which God is declaring that his people will stray away from him.

[2 : 44] And by the way, this is the text that Hebrews, the author of Hebrews, is quoting in chapter 10, where it says in Deuteronomy, thus says the Lord, vengeance is mine.

And in context, God is speaking about vengeance upon his own people. And he declares there in the Deuteronomy text that he will bring vengeance upon them for their lack of faithfulness.

And then he will look at them and say, where are the gods, lowercase g, that you have been relying upon? Where are those that you have cried out to? But, as we will see, God says he does it to correct his people.

Because then when they are broken, he will restore them and renew them. Now, ever since Moses penned that passage, we've been moving through the biblical history, 400 years of judges, 400 plus years of kings, and now we're at that day.

The northern kingdom has fallen to the Assyrians in circa 752 BC, or 785, somewhere in there.

[4 : 06] And now we are at 605 BC. And we meet a king that is mentioned more than any other non-Jewish king in scripture.

Nebuchadnezzar. We meet him even before he's a king, even though he's referred to as king. His father, Nebo Plaza, is king the first time we mention him.

And he is the vassal prince who is reigning over and ruling over the troops. That's why he's with the troops. But he would later become king. But we meet Nebuchadnezzar.

It says in verse 1 of chapter 24, let's go back to the 23rd chapter in verse 36. Jehoiakim was 25 years old when he became king, and he reigned 11 years in Jerusalem.

Now, let's go down to verse 1 of chapter 24. In his days, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, came up, and Jehoiakim became his servant for three years. Then he turned and rebelled against him.

[5 : 11] And the Lord sent against him bands of Chaldeans, bands of Arameans, bands of Moabites, bands of Ammonites. So he sent them against Judah to destroy it, according to the word of the Lord which he had spoken through his servants to the prophets.

Surely at the command of the Lord it came upon Judah to remove them from his sight because of the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he had done, and also for the innocent blood which he shed.

For he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood, and the Lord would not forgive. Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? So Jehoiakim slept with his fathers, and Jehoiachin, his son, became king in his place.

Now, pay attention. Let me stop right here. Jehoiachin is also a man by the name of Jeconiah, who is also a man by the name of Coniah.

It is this man that you encounter in the genealogy found in the book of Matthew. You need to know that Jehoiachin and Jeconiah, the name means Yahweh will establish.

[6 : 26] Many scholars believe because it is Jeremiah that refers to him as Coniah, Coniah means Yahweh establishes. And so many people believe that Jeremiah intentionally changed his name from Yahweh will establish to Yahweh establishes.

You say, what difference does that matter? Well, the first implies that Yahweh will establish me. The second one just declares an emphatic truth that Yahweh establishes whatever he wants to establish. And that Jeremiah was declaring that he was not walking in faithfulness, that God would establish him.

But this is the man, okay? Stay with me. So Jehoiachin slept with his fathers in Jehoiachin. His son became king in his place. The king of Egypt did not come out of his land again, for the king of Babylon had taken all that belonged to the king of Egypt, from the brook of Egypt to the river Euphrates.

Jehoiachin was 18 years old when he became king, and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Nahushtah, the daughter of Elnathan of Jerusalem. He did evil in the sight of the Lord according to all that his father had done.

And at that time the servants of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, went up to Jerusalem, and the city came under siege. And Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, came to the city while his servants were besieging it.

[7 : 48] Jehoiachin, the king of Judah, went out to the king of Babylon. He and his mother, pay attention to that, and his servants and his captains and his officials. So the king of Babylon took him captive in the eighth year of his reign.

Another side note, I know I'm reading, it's a Wednesday night, it's okay, I mean Sunday night, we can do it like this. This is the first time in the history of the kings that time is dictated by the reign of a non-Jewish king.

It's the eighth year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, not the eighth year of a Jewish king's reign. So now all of a sudden we're telling time by the reigning years of Nebuchadnezzar, not the reign of a king of Judah.

He carried out from there all the treasure of the house of the Lord and the treasures of the king's house and cut in pieces all the vessels of the gold which Solomon, king of Israel, had made in the temple of the Lord, just as the Lord had said.

Then he led away into exile all Jerusalem and all the captains and all the mighty men of valor, ten thousand captains and all the craftsmen, the smiths, none remained except the poorest people of the land.

[8 : 51] So he led Jehoiachin away into the exile to Babylon and also the king's mother and the king's wives and his officials and the leading men of the land.

He led away into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon, all the men of valor, seven thousand, the craftsmen, the smiths, one thousand, all strong and fit for war. These, the king of Babylon brought into exile to Babylon.

Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, and Daniel were in that deportation, as was Ezekiel, the prophet. He was in that deportation, okay? Jeremiah, side note, was left behind.

Then the king of Babylon made his uncle Mataniah king in his place and changed his name to Zedekiah. Zedekiah was 21 years old when he became king and he reigned 11 years in Jerusalem.

And his mother's name was Hamuto, the daughter of Jeremiah, Lemna. He did evil in the sight of the Lord according to all that Jehoiakim had done. For through the anger of the Lord, this came about in Jerusalem and Judah until he cast them out from his presence.

[9 : 52] And Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon. Here we have judgment realized. I know I didn't read it without stopping. I gave you a little bit of side note there because I wanted you to understand the context.

I want you just to notice a few things that are going on. Because, by the way, the events that take place here are events that help us to interpret a lot of what's going on in the rest of Scripture. It is what is taking place here that we turn to Daniel chapter 1 and we read of Daniel and his friends and their denial and taking Nebuchadnezzar's food and then how the Lord uses them.

We read of the visions of Ezekiel when he is in captivity and how he goes back in the spirit into the land of Jerusalem and he sees what is going on there. We also understand much of what takes place in the book of Jeremiah through this.

See, this really is a pivotal point. It is the Babylonian captivity that will be referred to repeatedly through the remainder of our Scripture.

It is that that helps us to interpret not only the major prophets of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, but also our minor prophets. It is that once we get into the books of Ezra and Nehemiah and we see them coming out of the Babylonian captivity.

[11 : 06] We kind of set the stage. It is that which leads us into the intertestament times. It sets the stage for what goes on in the New Testaments. It's a very important time. It is that, by the way, which parallels what I believe to be the tribulation period in the book of Revelation.

Because what God is doing in the Babylonian captivity in 70 years is the same thing that he is doing during the tribulation period in seven years.

He is refining his people. This is not a judgment unto destruction, but it is a judgment of discipline.

Do not be mistaken. This is not the Bema seat of judgment where Christ separates the lost from the redeemed. This is the disciplinarian hand of God upon the lives of his people.

We've said it before. The nation of Israel went into captivity. One of the most polytheistic people in all of the land. They came out of the Babylonian captivity. The most monotheistic people even to this day as a nation.

[12 : 19] So what God was intending to do, he did. He was cleansing them and purging them from their worship of false gods and their multitude of gods. Go read Deuteronomy chapter 32.

It is there that he declares, I will do this and then I will say, where are your gods you have been crying out to? And he cleanses them from that dependence upon these false gods and leads them to cry out the most monotheistic.

Are they saved and redeemed coming out of it? No, but at least at that point they're prepared. How do we get to the book of Ezra? And all of a sudden we see the people broken because they realize they are sinning.

When Ezra here is leading them and teaching them the word and they realize they've taken foreign wives and Ezra's pulling out his hair. It's really good. It's really telling at the end of the book of Ezra where they look at him and put their hand on his shoulder and said, this is your responsibility.

Ezra, tell us what to do. And he opens up the word. And then we read in connection with that Nehemiah when they build the platform and the Levites are there and they're reading from the word for half a day. And then the people are going and giving the sense.

[13 : 20] That is, they're breaking out in small groups and they're discipling for the other half of the day. What prepared them for that? Babylon. They were coming out of captivity. They didn't know.

God was preparing them. So the discipline that God was intending to carry out had its benefit. But I want you to see, and I know we're pressing in on time a little bit tonight, but I want you to see a number of things as we get to it.

Number one, when we look at this judgment, realize I want you to see the weakness of man to avoid it. The weakness of man to avoid it. It tells us that during Jehoiakim's reign, it is then that Nebuchadnezzar comes for the first time from Babylon.

This is what God had told through the prophet, spoke through the prophet to Hezekiah. And Hezekiah was cleansed and he showed, he was healed and extended his life. And he showed all the envoy from Babylon everything that he had.

And God declares to the prophet that these men would come and take away everything that he has just shown them. Right? Well, the first time they come in military array, Nebuchadnezzar is not king.

[14 : 21] Rather, he's the vassal prince. His father's on the throne. He ends up reigning over Babylon, I think for like 43 to either 43 or 48 years. For a number of years there. Has a long reign. It's the most well-known leader of the Babylonian empire.

But it is he who is coming now as the leader of the military and he comes around Jerusalem for the first time. And he does it during the reign of Jehoiakim. Why? You remember Pharaoh Necho, right?

Pharaoh Necho was fighting against those forces and the Babylonians had come down. So he defeats Pharaoh Necho and then he makes his way on down and he meets Jehoiakim. And when he comes out, he makes him his vassal for three years.

He says, I'm the ruler of the land now and you'll be a vassal of mine. You'll be a vassal of ours and I'll reign over you. Well, we notice here it says, and then he turned and rebelled against him. Why?

The Babylonians were the tools and instruments of discipline that God had declared they would be. Don't ever lose this. These were the ones that God was using to discipline his people.

[15 : 19] Yet, the king here decides he wants to rebel against it. Make no mistake about it. We will either walk in obedience or we will live under discipline. We don't have the freedom to be anything else.

We will walk in obedience or we will live under discipline. They don't want that. They want to live how they want to live. So the king says, after three years, we're going to rebel against that. Something amazing happens about that three-year mark.

Because see what happens. Historically, I'll give you a little bit of background so you can see why he did that. Historically, this three-year mark, Nebuchadnezzar goes back home. He makes them their vassal state. After three years, his father dies.

He becomes the king of the land now. Now he's no longer the vassal prince. He's the actual king. That's 605 B.C. Around 605 B.C., a lot of things are happening. There's some other smaller countries that are rebelling that are under the Babylonian reign.

So Nebuchadnezzar gets kind of busy, right? So he decides, well, I'm fighting battles over here. I'm fighting battles over there. And he's got all these battles being fought. Now, make no mistake.

[16 : 23] This is still the instrument of discipline God is using upon Judah. He's just using this world force. Jehoiakim says, Nebuchadnezzar is too busy to worry about us. If you've ever looked at a map, you know that Jerusalem, the land of Judah, is the farthest most western region of the Babylonian empire.

We're way out here on the fringes. They have not yet made it to Egypt. So this is the farthest west that you can go in the empire. Babylon's way over there, right? So he won't care about us.

Surely we can escape it by just rebelling against it. Well, this is just how impossible it is for man to avoid. It is the weakness of man to avoid the discipline of God.

We don't want to live under their hand. So it says, then the Lord sent against him. Now, historically, it tells us that Nebuchadnezzar used these other smaller vassal states to do it.

But the Lord was using the heart of the king in the palm of his hand. The Lord sent against him the bands of the Chaldeans, the bands of the Arameans, the bands of the Moabites, and the bands of the Ammonites.

[17 : 33] He thought, well, while he's busy fighting, I can live however I want to. But guess what? There are other people there. Man simply cannot avoid the discipline of God. We are not strong enough.

Over and over again, we read each one of these kings, they rebel, they rebel, they rebel. Jehoiakim, or Jeconiah, or Koniah, is the one that decides, well, I'm just going to rebel against the king of Babylon. I'm not going to do that.

And guess what? He dies, right? He gets led away into captivity, and he dies. And I ask you to pay attention to something. It says that when Jeconiah, or Koniah, Jehoiakim, he is led out, he and his mother are led out.

And the reason I ask you to pay attention to that is because if you go read the passage in the book of Jeremiah, forgive me, I want to think it's like Jeremiah 26, I'm probably off there, maybe later than that.

But if you find the passage in Jeremiah, and Jeremiah is referring to all these kings in this time, and he makes this declaration about Koniah. He's referring to him as Koniah there because Yahweh establishes, not Yahweh's going to establish him.

[18 : 37] But he makes this declaration. He says that Yahweh will carry Koniah and his mother away into captivity. So guess what happens, for lack of putting it in a better way, the Lord sends someone to come get him and his mama and carries them off.

It is a very specific prophetic word. And it happens just as God declares. But in the midst of that, what's going on, much like every other prophet of that land, Jeremiah is telling the people, don't resist Babylon.

Right? Don't rebel. Jeremiah is there. He's experiencing the horrors of this. He's there every time the city is held captive. He must be the poorest of the poor of the poor because he is left there even after the third and fourth deportation of people.

Right? He's left there to the very end. He had the opportunity to go to Babylon and decided to stay back. But he's there through it all. And he is one who tells them, don't rebel. Just submit under the Babylonian reign.

Why? Because this is God's discipline. But man doesn't want to submit to discipline. Man wants to rebel against that and thinks that they can avoid it. Each time that they try to avoid it, the discipline gets more severe.

[20 : 03] The first time that Nebuchadnezzar comes, they take some articles out of the temple. By the time he comes back, they carry away the Ark of the Covenant. They carry away the table of showbread. They carry away everything.

Until the last deportation that the only thing of value that is left is the bronze. I mean, think about that. Bronze, during the days of Solomon, bronze wasn't even measured.

Because it was so invaluable. By the time he comes back the last time, the only thing he can take out of there is the bronze. He's already taken everything else.

Every time man resists the discipline of God, it gets more severe. Think about it. Isn't it amazing how consistent Scripture is?

When God calls him out of Egypt and he brings him into the wilderness and he meets them and he's leading them, every time man rebels, God sets a stricter standard.

[21 : 03] He doesn't make it easier. It starts out, they were to be a nation of priests. They rebelled. They complained. They murmured because the water, they were going to die in the wilderness. So then all of a sudden they became a nation with priests.

It's a big difference. And then they complained a little bit further. Then they become a nation with priests and a sacrificial system. And they rebelled and they complained. They get a little bit. So then they become a nation with priests and a sacrificial system. And all the sundry laws.

Every time man pushes back, God makes the standard harder. Not easier. What do we do in our churches? We want to ease the requirements instead of lifting the requirements.

But what we find is the weakness of man to avoid the discipline of God. Number two. We see the work of God to ensure it.

That is, God's hand is not shortened nor his ways limited as to how he can bring about the discipline he has ordained. He is using the Babylonian Empire, but yet we see him also using the Chaldeans, the Armeans, the Moabites, the Ammonites, all these other individuals.

[22 : 08] God will bring about his discipline he has declared. He declared it all the way back in the book of Deuteronomy. Ever since the days of Manasseh, he said it is coming a lot quicker.

He has said that it would be the Babylonians who came during the reigns of Hezekiah. All this time it has been coming. Man has been trying to avoid it. Man has been trying to avoid it. And yet God ensures that it happens.

They think they have help in the Egyptians. They form an alliance with the king of Egypt for just a short period of time. If you read it historically, you see that they do that. But then what do we read in our text?

It says the king of Egypt did not come out of his land again. The Babylonians came onto the scene in such power that Pharaoh Necho says, I'm not leaving home. Why?

Because he lost all of his land. Go back and read the book of Jeremiah. They say, well, we're going to go to Egypt for help. And Jeremiah says, don't do it. You don't need to go to Egypt. They're not going to be a help to you. Well, we're going to go to Egypt because the Babylonians are coming here.

[23 : 06] So we're going to flee. At this time, Egypt was a free state. So they said, well, we're going to go to Egypt. And Jeremiah says, don't do it. And he said, well, we're going to go. So they take Jeremiah with them. And they go. Read the account. Right. What do they do? The Babylonians come to Egypt.

And all of a sudden, Egypt falls too. You know why Egypt fell? It's because Judah went there. Right? I wonder if they had stayed home, if the Babylonians would have even went that far.

I don't know. But I do know that God can bring about the discipline. And his hand is not shortened. It is the work of God that ensures it.

This is why the author of the book of Hebrews tells us it is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of an angry God. He can bring it about. We don't like to envision.

We would love to think that this angry God is a God of the Old Testament. But, by the way, Hebrews is in the New Testament. You say, well, God's not angry.

[24 : 04] No. No. No. But he also will not be mocked. And our sins, as his people, are an offense to God.

And he will discipline. He will rebuke. He will correct. And we see it here going on before us. It is the work of God to ensure it. Which brings us to the third reality.

That is, the witness of the world to it. God had called his people to be a nation of priests unto the world. We get that all the way back in the book of Exodus.

He called them out of Egypt not just to set them free. Remember, we properly understand the salvation event when we properly understand the Exodus event. So, God called them out of Egypt not just so they would be a free people.

He called them out of Egypt to be a priest, a nation of priests to all people. They were to be a billboard to a watching world of what it looked like to live in relationship with Holy God.

[25 : 18] When God called Abram out of the land of the earth, the Chaldeans, it was one of the most generous things that God has ever done for humanity. Some say, well, God is unfair in choosing one individual.

No, the most gracious thing that God could ever do would choose an individual. Because only by choosing an individual, then did he put flesh to the reality of, this is what it looks like to live in relationship with Holy God.

If it was not for the reality that God called Abram to himself, we would not know what it looks like to be one who would be willing to live sacrificially. To walk in failure, sure. But then to offer up your own son and to know that Yahweh will provide in the mount of the Lord.

It will be provided. All of these biblical truths we know because God chose an individual. The nation of Israel was led out of Egypt to be those individuals to draw the world to himself.

He was not isolating people. He was setting them up to draw the world to himself through their testimony. In their rebellion, they were not a nation of priests.

[26 : 22] They became a nation with priests. But yet, even then, the nation was to look so different and live so different by the guardrails of the law that it would set them apart. This is why we see the promises that if they walk in obedience, the rains would not fail to fall.

Their animals would not fail to give birth. Their crops would not fail to yield. All around them would be nations that their animals would not be as productive. Their fields would not be as fruitful.

And all of a sudden, the big difference would be that must be the blessings of Yahweh upon his people. That is, God was doing a very public event in front of a watching world.

It is what we say in the New Testament, that you are a light to the world, not to be put under a bushel, but to be set up on a pedestal.

You are a city set on a hill. That's what Jesus says, right? You are the light of the world. You are the city set on a hill. You are that. You are to let your good works so shine before men that they may see them and glorify your Father.

[27 : 27] God does public works through his people for his glory. The problem. The problem is, is that they sinned publicly.

They disobeyed him. They rebelled against him. They started accepting the false gods of the nations around them. They began to walk in offensive manners to him. They didn't keep the Passover. They didn't keep the years of Jubilee.

They didn't do any of those things. They began to offer their sons and daughters to Moloch, the god of the fire up here. They began to burn their sons and daughters. They began to do all these things that were offensive.

And they were living as everybody else did. And much like us, they wanted to sin publicly but be disciplined privately. They wanted to live publicly however they wanted to live, but they would rather God deal with them in the back room that nobody saw it.

We've said it this way before. We like to sin in retail and confess in wholesale. We choose the sins we walk into, and then we say, Lord, forgive me for everything I did.

[28 : 31] But God disciplines as we rebel. And so we notice that the discipline of the people is a very noticeable thing.

It is witnessed by the world. And it is, by the way, this is what God says. God says that if you live faithfully, the world will notice. If you live unfaithfully, then you will become a laughingstock, essentially.

They'll walk by and they'll go, Look, there's the ruins of Jerusalem. There's the ruins of the temple. There's all of these things. These things are to be a testimony to the world. Why did this happen? Why are the walls in shambles?

Go read Daniel. Go read Nehemiah. Daniel and Nehemiah, both in their prayer time, what do they say? It is us, O Lord. It is our sins that led to this destruction. We have done this. Right?

The ridicule the world was heaping upon them was deserved. And we notice here, the Egyptians noticed it, the Chaldeans, the Armeans, the Moabites, the Ammonites, the Babylonians.

[29 : 29] All these people are involved and everybody in their world sees what's going on. It's not a private event. This is why.

Too often when God has to genuinely discipline his people, it becomes a public spectacle. And we shouldn't run from that. It ought to be that way.

Because too often publicly, I'm reminded of a quote that I heard Adrian Rogers say recently. I listened to his sermon.

He said, anytime a ministry leader falls or a great Christian falls and someone falls, he said, oh, we're tempted to say, look how far he fell. He said, friend, you don't know how low they were living. He said, sometimes they didn't fall very far.

They were living very low and the fall just became very public. There's a lot of truth in that, right? It's the low-lived life that falls the hardest and often, quite often, the most publicly.

[30 : 34] It is a witness to the world because God will not be mocked. We see this. But unless we despair, look at the fourth and final thing.

So you see the weakness of man to avoid it, the work of God to ensure it, the witness of the world to it. Lest we despair, look at the will of God that endures through it.

The will of God that endures through it. We've pointed it out a number of times throughout our study of Scripture together, but this Jehoiachin, or this Jehoiachin, Jeconiah, Coniah, didn't reign very long.

But it is during his reign that Jeremiah makes a prophetic word that no descendant of Jeconiah will ever sit upon the throne. We find his name recorded in the lineage of Joseph, but we know that Jesus is not the seed of a man.

He's the seed of a woman. So we've seen the faithfulness of God there. But we despair because we look at this and we think, wow, man has so failed that what God has intended will not come to pass.

[31 : 45] But yet we notice. The Assyrians, when they took over land, they did something totally different. Even during the life of Jesus, we see this. When he went through Samaria and he met the woman at the well, we notice why most Jewish individuals would avoid that region because that was impacted by the Assyrians.

What the Assyrians would do when they came in to overcome people is they would completely remove all of the people and they would re-assimilate the land with people scattered from all over their kingdom.

This is why during the time of Jesus, people wouldn't pass through the region of Samaria because those were non-Jews or sometimes half-Jews and were therefore seen as unclean. And that was a direct result of the Assyrians overtaking the northern kingdom.

And what they would do is they would remove the Jewish people and they would put them over there. And they would bring in people from all over their kingdom and put them here so the land didn't stay empty. In his grace and his mercy, it's not that way with the southern kingdom of Judah because the Babylonians did something totally different.

When the Babylonians overtook it, they would take your leading men. They would take your scholars and your leaders and your political leaders and your military leaders, your artisans, your craftsmen, and they would take them back home.

[32 : 54] And the reason they would take them back home is because when they built their cities, they wanted the most talented people around them. But it would also weaken you as a town because now, all of a sudden, you didn't have your political leaders, you didn't have your military leaders, you didn't have your blacksmiths to make your weapons, you didn't have anything there, you didn't have your craftsmen.

So they kind of tied your hands. But you remained your people. And the Babylonians were so much different than the Assyrians because when the Assyrians would move you around, they didn't put all of you, when they deported the people out of Israel, they didn't put them all in one locale.

They would put some over here, some over there, some over here. They scattered them. The Babylonians, when they took you to Babylon, they left you to gather. So you could still, you were living in Babylon, but you were living among your own people.

This is important because when King Cyrus issues a decree that anybody that wants to go back can go back, guess what? They are still living together, so they go back.

This is why Daniel is still together with his friends. This is why Nehemiah can still ask his brothers about what happened or what's going on with the walls in Jerusalem.

[34 : 09] This is why Ezra can give himself to the study of Scripture and teaching other people about Scripture because within the realm of the Babylonian Empire, those things were permissible. This is why when they went back, Jerusalem was still in shambles, sure.

But it's still Jerusalem. No other nation has moved in. Many people believe that by this time, when Jerusalem fell, the city was about 15,000 people.

Of those 15,000, 10,000 of them were deported, so 5,000 people were left behind. We'd call that a skeleton crew, but the crew's still there. Not enough to rebuild the walls, but there's a remnant there that when the decree is issued and Nehemiah gets the approval from the king that he's serving, that he can come back and there's some laborers to rebuild the walls.

Right? So notice this. God uses the tool of judgment that would correct his people, but not destroy his people. Because the purposes and plans of God remain.

He really knows what he's doing. He knows how to operate, and the will of God will endure through it.

[35 : 32] Had it not been for the nation and their tendencies and who God is using and even the way God is using, there would be no traceable lineage of the Davidic kingdom.

So that we could say that here is the Messiah from the lineage of David that sits upon the throne. There would be none of that. Had it not been for the deportation to the Babylonian Empire, there would have not been what we call the Septuagint.

The Septuagint is the Greek translation of Scripture, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, which, by the way, much of our English translations of the Old Testament is depending upon the Septuagint.

The Septuagint came into existence because so many people were raised in non-Hebrew-speaking lands. That is, they were raised speaking Greek in the Babylonian Empire that Ezra developed this school of scribes that would teach people the word.

And they had to translate Scripture, and therefore had led to our biblical translation of Scripture. Had it not been from that, there would have been no common language, even when the Roman Empire come in and the Koine Greek, that their New Testament was written in.

[36 : 35] It was the marketplace language. God preserved the nation, but he also gave it a worldwide platform. And established it because the will of God.

The failure of man did not negate the purposes and plans of God. Romans 8 tells us what? That he caused it to work together for the good. Not for all of them, because many of them died in judgment, but for those who love him and are called according to his purposes.

In the midst of all of this, we can focus all of our attention on the failure of man. But isn't it much more encouraging to notice the faithfulness of God?

God is so faithful. God is so faithful. We don't live our lives in the fear of discipline.

We live our lives in the reality that God does discipline those whom he loves. Hebrews chapter 12. Those whom he loves, he disciplines. That that discipline must be accepted and received, because we understand that we cannot avoid it at times when we fail him.

[37 : 43] But that discipline does not negate what he's doing in our lives. Rather, it prepares us to be greater and further utilized for his purposes in our life. It preserves us for usefulness.

And we accept it from the hand of a loving father. See, what we read before us is not a judgment of the lost, but a refining of his people.

And at times he does that, even in our lives. Sometimes there are things that need to be refined. There are things that need to be removed. And the greatest way he can do it is when judgment is realized.

And we are then positioned to be used by him in a greater way. And we see it in 2 Kings chapter 24. Brother Jamie, you close us in a word of prayer.

We'll be dismissed. And we'll be diminished. Thank you.

[39 : 13] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[41 : 43] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[44 : 13] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[46 : 43] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[49 : 13] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.