

THE ONE YEAR BIBLE Reading for June 29:

2 Kings 15:1-16:20:

We read of the good Judean king Azariah in 15:1-7 before turning to the last days of the northern kingdom of Israel in 15:8-31 (the reigns of Zechariah, Shallum, Menahem, and Pekahiah). There would be only two more kings in Israel who will appear in chapter 17. The short and bloody reigns in Israel demonstrate “the wheels are coming off the cart” known as Israel. Too long have they ignored and rebelled against the LORD. His hand of judgment is ready to come upon them in a strong way!

In chapter 16 Ahaz, a very wicked king, comes to the throne of Judah. He officially returns Judah to idolatry, even going so far as sacrificing his own son. When Syria and Israel came to Ahaz to get him in a coalition to stand against the ever-growing world power, Assyria, Ahaz refuses and so the Syrian-Israelite coalition besieged Jerusalem. In response, Ahaz refuses to listen to the prophet Isaiah (see Isaiah 7-12) and instead turns to Assyria for help. In exchange for Judah becoming a servant to him (a vassal), the Assyrian king, Tiglath-pileser, delivered Judah. When King Ahaz went to the capital of Syria to meet with Tiglath-pileser (who now controlled Syria), he was so impressed with an altar he had there, Ahaz had a replica built in Jerusalem. Additionally, Ahaz desecrated the temple of the LORD. It is hard to imagine how Ahaz could have done any more damage than he did during his reign. It is also no surprise that Isaiah spoke to Judah during this time about the importance of turning to the LORD for help rather than trusting in men. The same message Isaiah delivered to Judah during this time is the same message we should take away from this Old Testament reading. When we trust in self, others, and/or our own plans and ways, we inevitably fall into grave sin. So, make the LORD the one in whom you trust! Listen unto Him!

Acts 19:13-41:

As Paul continued to minister in Ephesus some itinerant Jewish exorcists tried to replicate in the name of Jesus exorcisms as Paul had done and found out, while paying a great price, they could not (13-16). This failure fueled people’s understanding that what Paul was saying is true. As a result many believed and left behind their occult practices, and the word of the Lord continued to increase and prevail mightily (17-20).

In 21-41 we read that Paul’s ministry in Ephesus during those two years was not all easy. He ended up facing an angry mob who was upset that the spread of the gospel was cutting into the profits of idol makers (especially one Demetrius). It was this uproar which eventually led to Paul leaving Ephesus.

In today’s reading we are reminded that gospel work is not always received with open arms. Sometimes people get upset with us, make charges against us, and maybe even persecute us. Pray that the Lord would give you the courage to face whatever you need to for the sake of the gospel.

Psalms 147:1-20:

This second of the five concluding Hallel psalms provides for us a good model of what worship is. The psalmist praises God for His redemption, His providence, and His Word. As you read this psalm, allow it to move you to worship the Lord for these works and these great gifts from the LORD in your life. Also, notice in verses 15-20 just how closely the Word of God is connected to who He is and His acts. This is one indication that we cannot separate the Word of the Lord from the Lord of the Word! If you don't treasure His Word you will not treasure Him truly!

Proverbs 18:4-5:

The words of the wise are profound. Justice is not to be denied. So, pursue wisdom and pursue justice in all you do.