

## ***THE ONE YEAR BIBLE Reading for June 30:***

### *2 Kings 17:1-18:12:*

Chapter 17 tells of the fall of Samaria and the northern ten tribes of Judah. Hoshea, the last king of Israel, angered Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, by sending messengers to Egypt and by not paying tribute to Assyria which was owed as their servants (1-5). This was the near cause of the fall of Israel (6), however, the text makes it clear that the ultimate cause of the captivity was Israel's sin (7-23). The text lists some of their sins including: fearing other gods; walking in the customs (literally statutes) of other nations, building high places of sacrifice and worship, serving idols, ignoring the prophets the LORD sent to them as a way of calling them back to Him, stubbornness, unbelief, they despised the covenant of the LORD, they abandoned the commandments of the LORD, and they sacrificed their children. As a result, the LORD did with Israel what He had said He would do to this nation if they did not keep the covenant: He gave them into the hands of another nation (Deuteronomy 28:49-57). This account of the fall of Israel, along with the list of sins, is no surprise to the person who has read 1 and 2 Kings to this point. It is merely a summary. By this point, the reader agrees with the book that Israel is receiving from the LORD what is deserved. The LORD is just and right in bringing this upon them. What is more, the original readers, part of the later Babylonian captivity, would take special notice of the words in 17:19: "Judah also did not keep the commandments of the LORD their God, but walked in the customs that Israel had introduced." This prepares them for the rest of the book and for understanding why they also are in captivity.

In 17:24-41 we learn that Shalmaneser resettled the land of the northern ten tribes with peoples from other lands. This not only eventually led to intermarriage, but to syncretism. As this text makes clear, there was a wedding of the religions of these peoples with the worship of Yahweh. This, then, reverses one of the key reasons the LORD delivered Israel from Egypt and brought them to the Promised Land—that they might have rest and might worship Him fully and rightly (Deuteronomy 12). This also explains why Jews in the Judea area in the southern part of Palestine in the days of Jesus despised Samaria and Samaritans so much (those in this area). They viewed them as half-breeds and idolaters.

If we learn nothing else from 1 and 2 Kings, we should learn that the LORD does not overlook sin!

Chapter 18 brings some temporary relief to the reader who has just read of such tragic events with the northern ten tribes. In Judah (Judah and Benjamin), Hezekiah comes to the throne and the text (1-12) says he was the best king to come to the throne of all kings. He trusted in and clung to the LORD (18:5, 6).

### *Acts 20:1-38:*

At the beginning of this chapter we find Paul continuing his third missionary journey with two visits to Macedonia and one to Greece, after he left Ephesus (1-3). We learn that Paul had a number of different people with him at different times in his journey—

especially of late (20:4-5; cf. also 19:29). With Luke part of the entourage again, they came to and stayed in Troas, in what is western Turkey today, the place where Paul had received the visionary call to come to Macedonia in the first place on his second missionary journey (Acts 16:6-10). In 20:7-16 we read of Paul's last night in Troas and how he had to perform a miracle on a young man by the name of Eutychus who fell from a window while Paul was preaching. We also read of the beginning of a journey to Jerusalem to celebrate Pentecost. By this we are reminded that though Christians should not be required to keep such days (Colossians 2:16-17), those during Paul's days who desired to (especially those who were Jewish Christians), could celebrate such days.

In 20:17-38 we discover that Paul sent for the Ephesian elders to meet him in Miletus (because of Pentecost he did not want to go to Ephesus, v. 16) so he could give them some last instructions. Here are some of the rich lessons found in this passage: (1) Elders and overseers (and by implication Pastors or shepherds [notice the reference to flock in 28]) refer to the same ministry position (compare 17 with 28). (2) Paul modeled bold, courageous teaching, preaching, and gospel work (20, 26-27). (3) Faith and repentance are necessary in applying redemption (21). (4) Paul modeled how a Christian is to live—for the glory of God through testifying to the grace of God in the gospel, and this is more important than preserving our own life or safety (22-24). (5) Pastors/elders/overseers (the same office) are ultimately gifted, called, and placed in their ministry by the Holy Spirit (28). As such, the Church must strive to recognize in men what the Holy Spirit has already done. (6) Pastors/elders/overseers must give great care to their work and cherish the Church since God obtained the Church with the blood of His own, His Son, Jesus Christ (28). (7) Pastors/elders/overseers are to protect the Church from false teaching and this is best done by teaching the Word of God rightly (29-32 [cf. also Titus 1:9-10]). (8) Paul modeled how Christian leaders should not be covetous, materialistic, but instead hard-working, faithful, and should have great affection for those whom they lead (33-38).

*Psalm 148:1-14:*

The last five psalms in the entire Psalter focus primarily upon calling readers and everything to praise the LORD. That is certainly true of this psalm. Emphasis is placed upon the fact that all should praise the LORD by calling heaven to (1-6), the earth (7-12), and also His redeemed (13-14). Especially noteworthy is the verse 13 affirmation that the name or reputation (all He is) of the LORD is the only one which should be exalted in the ultimate way; His splendor is greater than all in the heaven and on earth.

*Proverbs 18:6-7:*

Here is another of the many reminders that a person must be careful in what he says.