

## Story Of The Bible Week 9: Civil War and the Exile

### Questions for last week and this week:

1. Has looking at the Bible as a narrative, in its own context, helped you understand the Bible better? What parts of the Bible, if any, that we haven't covered yet are made clearer to you understanding the origin story?
2. Israel let a dispute over money and labor cause them to leave faith in Yahweh, are there worldly items or potential world events that you think could cause you to turn away from the faith?
3. Judah was exiled because of their sin which grew larger and larger over time until they too turned away from Yahweh like the Northern Kingdom? What can we do as Jesus followers to keep us from doing the same?
4. Yahweh gave Ahab what he wanted a bunch of prophets who only prophesied what he wanted to hear. What can we do to make sure we aren't listening to the voice of man but the voice of the Holy Spirit?
5. Many of the false prophets genuinely believed they were speaking for Yahweh (1 Kings 22:24). How can we make sure when we believe the Holy Spirit is talking it is really Him and not another voice?

### Recap:

God's name is Yahweh which means HE IS.

Yahweh creates everything.

Yahweh creates an earthly family and a heavenly family.

A member from the heavenly family led the earthly family to rebel.

Members of both families continue to rebel.

Yahweh's earthly build a tower to "make a name for themselves," which is essentially them saying "we don't want to serve you anymore, we want to exalt ourselves."

Yahweh gives the people what they ask for as an inheritance, life without Him.

Yahweh makes a nation for Himself from a man named Abraham, whose offspring become know as the Israelites.

After many years the Israelites entire into their own land and ask for a King.

Their first King was bad.

Their second King, named David, wasn't perfect but was a man after Yahweh's heart.

David's son Solomon becomes King after David dies.

King Solomon built a house for the Lord also known as The Temple.

### **The Life of Solomon**

Solomon (name meaning 'peace') is a King who started off well. He build the temple. He thought was not perfect:

1 Kings 3:3 (LEB)

3 Solomon loved Yahweh, by walking in the statutes of David his father; only he was sacrificing and offering incense on the high places.

While Solomon loved Yahweh, he did not put an end to pagan worship that was taking place. This would be his undoing:

1 Kings 11:1–8 (LEB)

1 King Solomon loved many foreign women: the daughter of Pharaoh, Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, Hittite; 2 from the nations which Yahweh had said to the Israelites, "You shall not marry them, and they shall not marry Jehoshaphat you. They will certainly turn your heart after their gods." But Solomon clung to them to love. 3 He had seven hundred princesses and three hundred concubines, and his wives turned his heart. 4 It happened at the time of Solomon's old age that his wives guided his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully with Yahweh his God as the heart of David his father had been. 5 Solomon went after Ashtoreth the god of the Sidonians and after Milcom the abhorrence of the Ammonites. 6 So Solomon did evil in the eyes of Yahweh and did not fully follow after Yahweh as David his father. 7 At that time, Solomon built a high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, on the mountain which faces Jerusalem and for Molech, the abomination of the Ammonites. 8 Thus he did for all of his foreign wives, offering incense and sacrificing to their gods.

Solomon didn't end well. He allowed his wives, which Israel was warned about (Exodus 34:16), to sway His heart. Paul will pick up on this idea when he speak about being unequally yoked—a believer marrying an unbeliever. More often than not a non-believer will pull the believer into their world and cause them to make compromises.

Because of Solomon's compromises the Lord prophesies to Solomon that the kingdom will be torn from the hands of his son.

It seems like Solomon may have gotten his act together in the end. Solomon would go on to write the book of Ecclesiastes, where he goes through how he has experienced everything life has to offer yet all of it, in the end, in "vanity," worthless, and futile. Ecclesiastes is a rather grim book for most of it until you get to the end:

Ecclesiastes 12:13–14 (ESV)

13 The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. 14 For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil.

What Solomon wants us to know is in the end, Fear God and keep his commands. Solomon appears to come to the realization that he had gone astray and urges his readers not to do the same.

### **Civil War**

After Solomon dies, Israel was coming to make Rehoboam (which means 'he enlarges the people'), Solomon's son, King of Israel. Israel asks Rehoboam to "lighten the load" as it were. Essentially take less taxes and demand less work. Rehoboam tells them to give him three days to make his decision, which he uses to consult those who counseled his father, Solomon. They tell him it would be a good idea to be a servant of the people, that way they would be loyal to him. However, Rehoboam decides not to listen to those who knew his father and his wisdom. Instead he listen to a new group of advisers and tells the people not only will he not lighten the burden but he will add to it.

The people are outraged and the tribes, except Judah and Benjamin, do not recognize Rehoboam as king. Judah and Benjamin are what would be know as the "Southern Kingdom" also known as "Judah." Because of this a man named Jeroboam (name meaning 'to oppose the people'), who was a servant of Solomon, gathers the remaining northern tribes and establishes the "Northern Kingdom" which retains the name "Israel." (When you're reading your Bible after 1 Kings and you see Israel it's always the northern 10 tribes and Judah is always the tribes of Judah and Benjamin.) The ten northern tribes and the two southern tribes will never be united as a single nation.

In his new kingdom Jeroboam spots a problem. The Temple is in the Southern Kingdom and law requires that all Israel go to the Temple several times a year to worship Yahweh. He fears that as they go back to Jerusalem they will turn back to Rehoboam as king. Rather than let that happen Jeroboam makes two golden calves and sets them up in the far north, Dan, and in the south, Bethel. He tell's Israel that these are the their gods and they will come and worship there.

**The Northern Kingdom's Exile.**

<b>Civil War and Exile - Southern Kingdom Prophets</b>			
<b>950 BC</b> Civil War 1 Kings 12	<b>742-701 BC</b> Isaiah 2 Kings 19-20/Isaiah	<b>735-700 BC</b> Micah Book of Micah	
<b>635 BC</b> Zephaniah Book of Zephaniah	<b>650-612 BC</b> Nahum Book of Nahum	<b>627-588 BC</b> Jeremiah 2 Kings 14/Jonah	
<b>612-589 BC</b> Habakkuk Book of Habbakuk	<b>605 BC</b> 1st Exiles to Babylon	<b>597 BC</b> 2nd Exiles to Babylon	<b>587 BC</b> Temple Destroyed

At the beginning of this journey we talked about Babel. Genesis 11 and Deuteronomy 32 give us a picture that the nations rejected Yahweh, so He gave them what they wanted. He let them leave Him. Jesus would one day tell a parable. The parable of the Prodigal Son. Jesus explains that one day a son went to his father and asked for his inheritance (the same language is used in Deuteronomy 32). The father, almost certainly heartbroken gives the son the inheritance he asks for. The son goes off and lives his own way, doing what he wants to do, the way he wants to do it. In the parable the Father is Yahweh. He lets His creation make their own choices, unfortunately that means that most will not choose Him, they will choose like the prodigal son did, to take their inheritance and leave.

This is precisely what happened in Northern Israel. From the day that they split with Judah they had 19 kings and not a single one served Yahweh. We see a summary of the sin of the Northern Kingdom in 2 Kings 17.

2 Kings 17:6-12 (LEB)

6 In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria captured Samaria and deported Israel to Assyria. He placed them in Halah, in Habor, in the river regions of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes. 7 Now this happened because the Israelites had sinned against Yahweh their God when he brought them up from the land of Egypt from under the hand of Pharaoh the king of Egypt and they feared other gods. 8 They walked in the statutes of the nations whom Yahweh had driven out from before the Israelites, which the kings of Israel had introduced. 9 The Israelites secretly did things that were not right against Yahweh their God; they built high places for themselves in all their towns, from the watchtower up to the fortified city. 10 They set up for themselves stone pillars and poles of Asherah worship on every high hill and under every green tree. 11 They burned incense there on all the high

places, like the nations which Yahweh deported before them, and they did evil things to provoke Yahweh. 12 They served idols of which Yahweh had said to them, “You shall not do this thing!”

2 Kings 17:15–17 (LEB)

15 They rejected his statutes, his covenant which he made with their ancestors, and his warnings which he gave to them; and they went after the idols, became vain, and went after all the nations which were all around them, which Yahweh had commanded them not to do as they did. 16 They abandoned all the commands of Yahweh their God and made for themselves two molten calf-shaped idols; they made a pole of Asherah worship and bowed down to the army of the heavens and served Baal. 17 They made their sons and their daughters pass through the fire, they practiced divination and read omens, and they sold themselves to do evil in the eyes of Yahweh to provoke him.

Even in their sin Yahweh still wanted His people to repent. He raised up prophets to go to the people and warn them:

2 Kings 17:13–14 (LEB)

13 Yahweh warned Israel and Judah by the hand of his every prophet, with every seer saying, “Turn from all of your evil ways, and keep my commandments and my ordinances, according to all the law which I commanded your ancestors, which I sent to you by the hand of my servants the ` prophets.”

14 But they did not listen and they stiffened their necks, like the necks of their ancestors who did not believe in Yahweh their God.

Yahweh sent prophet after prophet to Israel to change their hearts that they might come back to Him. The prophets that we know the names of in chronological order (there are other prophets that we aren't given the names of) are: Elijah (1 Kings 12-2 Kings 2), Micaiah (1 Kings 22), Elisha (2 Kings 2-13), Joel (the dating of the life of Joel is not entirely known and is contested), Jonah, Amos, Hosea, and finally Isaiah. Each time the prophets message from Yahweh was rejected. As a result Yahweh used the Assyrian Empire to judge Israel as He had warned (Exodus 20:4-6, Deuteronomy 31). The Assyrians fought against Israel, conquered them, and spread them across the empire.

### **The Southern Kingdom's Exile.**

## Civil War and Exile - Southern Kingdom Prophets

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Judah took a different path, some of the kings were wicked but many of them served Yahweh, tore down the idols, and removed wickedness from the land. However, it didn't last forever. Several decades after Israel had been exiled, Judah found themselves in the same place, they had abandoned Yahweh, were sacrificing their children to foreign gods, and their sin caused Yahweh to exile them from their land.

Much like Israel Judah was sent many prophets urging them to repent. In order they are: Isaiah, Micah, Zephaniah, Nahum, Jeremiah, and Habakkuk. Judah held on to the faith a lot longer, but over time they gave into their own desires.

### The Prophets

The later half of our Bibles have books that are named after the prophets. Prophets were representatives for Yahweh, who went to the people to call them to repent of their ways. They would often remind Israel of who Yahweh was, and what He had done for them, urging them to remember how good He was and the covenant their ancestors had made with Him; that they were Yahweh's chosen people.

This came in the form of announcing judgment on the nation and the surrounding nations. These judgments were a way for people to realize who was on the throne, who really controlled history and all things. The prophets would at times perform miracles with the power given to them by Yahweh. They would also sometimes perform prophetic acts, such as Ezekiel shaving his head, burning 1/3 of his beard, cutting up 1/3 with a sword, and thrown 1/3 in the wind showing how the destruction of Jerusalem would take place.

At the time only a few would repent and return to Yahweh, but as time went on and the children of Israel were exiled they looked back at the prophecies and teaching of the prophets and realized they accurately prophesied and spoke for Yahweh. This caused Judah to largely return to Yahweh while in exile.

### **Yahweh will give us what we ask for.**

In 1 Kings 22 we have a very intriguing account of the prophet Micaiah (whose name means ‘who is like Yahweh?’). The wicked King of Israel, Ahab (meaning ‘father’s brother’) is fighting against Syria and calls to the righteous King of Judah, Jehoshaphat (meaning ‘Yahweh is judge’) for help. Jehoshaphat “comes down\*” (verse 2) to Ahab and asks if Ahab has consulted Yahweh (verse 5). So...

1 Kings 22:6–9

6 Then the king of Israel assembled the prophets, about four hundred men, and he said to them, “Shall I go against Ramoth-Gilead for the battle, or should I refrain?” Then they said, “Go up, for the Lord will give it into the hand of the king.” 7 So Jehoshaphat said, “Is there no prophet of Yahweh here that we might still inquire from him?” 8 Then the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, “There is still one man to inquire of Yahweh through him, but I despise him, for he never prophesies anything good concerning me, but only bad: Micaiah the son of Imlah.” Then Jehoshaphat said, “The king should not say so.” 9 The king of Israel summoned a certain court official, and he said, “Quickly fetch Micaiah son of Imlah.”

Jehoshaphat was obviously not convinced by the other prophets. When Micaiah comes, after being threatened by the messenger who came to get him, mocks the prophets and the king by saying what they say:

1 Kings 22:13–15 (ESV)

13 And the messenger who went to summon Micaiah said to him, “Behold, the words of the prophets with one accord are favorable to the king. Let your word be like the word of one of them, and speak favorably.” 14 But Micaiah said, “As the Lord lives, what the Lord says to me, that I will speak.” 15 And when he had come to the king, the king said to him, “Micaiah, shall we go to Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall we refrain?” And he answered him, “Go up and triumph; the Lord will give it into the hand of the king.”

Micaiah may have said it with some sarcasm in his voice because the king says to him, “How many times shall I make you swear that you speak to me nothing but the truth in the name of the LORD?” To which Micaiah tells the kings that Ahab will die if he goes into battle. Ahab tells Jehoshaphat “Did I not tell you that he would not prophesy good concerning me, but evil?” After this statement Micaiah gives us our best glimpse into how the inter-workings of heaven work.

As we have discussed before Yahweh has a heavenly family, the Bible also describes them as a “council of the holy ones (Psalm 89) and divine council (Psalm 82).” Yahweh DOES NOT NEED a council, that’s not the point, rather He WANTS relationship with His family.

Micaiah actually sees the “council” meeting to discuss the judgement on Israel.

1 Kings 22:19–23 (LEB)

19 And he said, “Therefore, hear the word of Yahweh. I saw Yahweh sitting on his throne with all the hosts of heaven standing beside him from his right hand and from his left hand. 20 And Yahweh said, ‘Who will entice Ahab so that he will go up and fall at Ramoth-Gilead?’ Then this one was saying one thing and the other one was saying another. 21 Then a spirit came out and stood before Yahweh and said, ‘I will entice him,’ and Yahweh said to him, ‘How?’ 22 He said, ‘I will go out and I will be a false spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.’ And he said, ‘You shall entice and succeed, go out and do so.’ 23 So then, see that Yahweh has placed a false spirit in the mouth of all of these your prophets, and Yahweh has spoken disaster concerning you.”

Here Yahweh is sitting on his throne, and He asks a question. Essentially He says, “It’s time for Ahab’s judgement, any one have any ideas?” Again, not because He isn’t smart enough or doesn’t have any ideas Himself, but because He wants participation from His creation. So some of the heavenly host come up with ideas until finally one of them says, “I will entice Ahab by giving him exactly what he wants, prophets who lie to him.” Yahweh tells the spirit, “Good job, make it so.” And that’s what we see happen, 400 prophets come and falsely prophesy to the kings of Israel and Judah.

There are naturally questions that come from this passage. How can the Lord allow a spirit to cause prophets to lie? Does He make people lie? What does this mean for free will? This question often comes up with Pharaoh. When Moses comes to Pharaoh to let Yahweh’s people go, Pharaoh “hardens his own heart.” Following this Yahweh “strengthen’s Pharaoh’s heart” before Yahweh Himself “hardens Pharaoh’s hearth.” So does that mean we don’t have free will? No, it means Yahweh will give us what we ask for.

Ahab didn’t want any prophets who tell him that he would fail if he went to battle. When Jehoshaphat asked if there was another Ahab groaned as if he already knew Micaiah would tell him the truth of what Yahweh said. Ahab didn’t actually care what Yahweh said, he wasted Jehoshaphat to go to war with him. Ultimately Ahab didn’t listen to Micaiah but went into battle and died just like Micaiah had prophesied. There comes a point where the Lord will give us what we want and let us face the judgment of our actions.

In 2020 thousands of “prophets” claimed a certain presidential candidate would win, when he didn’t win they claimed it was stolen and the courts would take care of it. Why did these people prophesy this thing? Because they wanted it more than anything, they held this individual in so high regard that it was idolatry itself. Churches held prayer meetings for this individual where the place was packed wall-to-wall. Why wasn’t this attendance high when prayer meetings were held for repentance? Why wasn’t attendance this high during prayer meeting with a focus on sitting in His

Presence? Instead across the country these prophets called for prayer meetings for a presidential campaign and attendance was through the roof.

I believe the same thing happen. God let these people prophesy to the mass of people listening to them false information because in the end that's what they wanted. They didn't want to listen for His voice, they wanted to listen for the voice that agreed with them. There were, of course, followers of Jesus who said, "Hey, I think we are getting a little radical." These people were mostly met with anger and criticism. Just like Micaiah.

This serves are a warning to us. If all we want is to hear what we want to here, to do what we want to do, even in the "name" of Christianity. Well, he will let us do it. But His hope is that we will change our ways and come to Him. We have this warning so that we don't have to hit rock bottom before we come back to Him.

The prodigal son was given his inheritance and left to live however he wanted but it wasn't until living his own way caused him to hit rock bottom, he was poorer than poor, the food he was feeding to pigs was better worth more than anything he had. Upon hitting rock bottom the son decided he would go home and ask his father if he could be a slave in his house. As the father saw his son coming over the horizon the father ran to the son and re-adopted the son as his own. This is the heart of Yahweh, the heart of Jesus, toward us. He will let us go our own way, but he so desires for us to run into His arms and receive our place at His side, engaging with Him as we do life with Him, just as we saw the heavenly host.

(\*The writers use of 'come down' is pejorative; he uses this language to describe Ahab and Israel's righteousness. Even though Judah is south of Israel, the King of Judah "comes down" to Israel. See also 2 Kings 2:23-25 where the "small boys" tell Elijah to "go up" at Bethel. Bethel was a cult center for worship in Israel. They are trying to get Elisha to come up and worship their gods, as a judgement Elisha curses them and two bears come out of the woods and kill them. Earlier in the same chapter Elijah and Elisha "come down" to Bethel which was geographically is 'up' from where they were (Gilgal).)

Not abandoned.

Although Yahweh had cast Judah out of the land there were still many who were faithful to Him. Some of the more famous names like Daniel, Ezekiel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Although Judah had been exiled He was still with those who loved Him. Through those who loved Him he continued to call to His people, urging them to repent.

**Judah Exiled in Babylon**

**605 BC**  
1st Exiles  
to Babylon

**605-520 BC**  
Daniel  
Book of Daniel

**597 BC**  
2nd Exiles  
to Babylon

**593-568 BC**  
Ezekiel  
Book of Zephaniah

**587 BC**  
Temple  
Destroyed

**586 BC**  
Obadiah  
Book of Obadiah

**586 BC**  
3rd Exiles  
to Babylon

**539 BC**  
Babylon Falls  
To Persia

**537 BC**  
1st Group  
Returns from Exile

**Judah Returns to the Land**

**536 BC**  
Building 2nd  
Temple Begins

**520 BC**  
Haggai  
Book of Haggai

**520 BC**  
Zechariah  
Book of Zechariah

**516 BC**  
2nd Temple  
Finished

**479-474 BC**  
Events of  
Esther

**458-432 BC**  
Ezra  
Book of Ezra

**445-432 BC**  
Nehemiah  
Book of Nehemiah

**430 BC\***  
Malachi  
Book of Malachi

**331 BC**  
Greeks Defeat  
Persian Empire