

**JUNE 29**

**2 Kings 15-16**

2 Kings 15

Vs. 1-7 Azariah is also King Uzziah, well known in Isaiah 6. Notice that he reigned 52 years. You can imagine the sadness of the event when this king died. It's interesting here that it mentions that God made him a leper, but never says why. We'll get to that in 2 Chronicles 26, but Uzziah was another godly king who was great in his youth; however, later in life, when he became (fill in the blank), he fell.

V. 3 Notice that his devotion to the Lord was measured in comparison to his father, not in comparison to David. Only three kings were devoted to the Lord at David's level. Jehoshaphat was one of them and we'll meet the second today.

V. 5 Most of these kings allowed their sons to reign with them, co-regents, until their deaths. Azariah (Uzziah) was forced to let Jotham reign with him, since Uzziah was no longer allowed to live in the palace because of his leprosy.

Vs. 8-12 This fulfills the promise to Jehu. Zechariah was the fourth generation, but only reigned six months.

Vs. 13-15 Believe it or not, Shallum wasn't the shortest reigning king. Zimri was king for seven days, in 1 Kings 16.

Vs. 14-22 Menahem murdered the other murderer to become king. In v. 16 Menahem began his reign by sending a very clear message to all of Israel. Imagine having this guy as your king for ten years. In addition, Menahem was very much into taxation. His name should have been "Mayhem."

Vs. 23-26 It's interesting that there was so much killing and so many bloody takeovers in the northern kingdom. We go from Pekahiah to Pekah.

Vs. 27-28 Notice that we are still rolling though lots of years. God's patience is pretty amazing.

Vs. 29-31 Pekah lost most of Israel to Assyria, and that was probably the reason Hoshea wanted to remove him and prove he could do a better job as king. "Here, let me try!"

Vs. 32-38 We have very little information about Jotham. He was a godly king, measured against his father. All of 2 Chronicles 27 is devoted to him, but the chapter is only nine verses long.

The king of Syria and Israel fought with Jotham to persuade him to fight with them against Assyria. But God protected Jotham because he ordered his way before the Lord. He must have been a good guy.

Another interesting thing in this chapter of musical kings is the name of Tiglath-pileser (Tiggy) of Assyria. Assyria would be the country that would take the northern kingdom into exile. They were a brutal, fear-inspiring people. They often led people into captivity by marching them along with a hook through the muscle of the captive's chest or some other body part, attached by rope to a wagon or a horse. You wouldn't want to fall. Assyria was poised to become the first world empire, but in the middle of their conquests, they lost 185,000 men in a single night. That weakened them enough to eventually tip the scales to the side of Babylon.

2 Kings 16

The importance of this story is that it is Ahaz, an evil king of Judah, who gets the ball rolling against Israel. These were a very destructive 16 years for both kingdoms. In Jerusalem, Ahaz modified the worship in the temple to be more reflective of Assyria. Verse 18 gives the idea that the modifications were actually seen by Tiggy when he visited Jerusalem.

Vs. 1-4 It is hard to imagine that two good kings could be followed by a king like this. It is also hard to imagine that God allowed him to reign for sixteen years. He sacrificed his son, but so did Solomon. Still, Solomon, in some funny way, was partly devoted to the Lord. Ahaz was not devoted to the Lord. Although he kept the "culture" of Yahweh worship, he introduced other worship into the veins of the nation.

Vs. 5-9 While Jotham was protected from Syria and Israel, because he lived his life before the Lord, Ahaz had a better idea. He courted the Assyrians. This "courting" will be described later in Jeremiah and Ezekiel. God didn't approve.

Vs. 10-19 Apparently Ahaz didn't abandon the worship of Yahweh, but he did copy the altar in Damascus. There was a thought back then that if an army won, their God was bigger. Ahaz became a puppet of Assyria culling their favor and aping their worship. He did anything he could to show he belonged to them.

V. 17 I think this describes how poor he had become by paying off Assyria. The stands and the oxen were made of bronze and he probably needed it. He replaced the bronze with stone.

V. 20 Hezekiah would be a welcome change for Judah and, thankfully, nothing like his father. He was one of the great kings of Judah and compared to David.

As disciples witnessing all of this lostness, we need to trust the Lord so that regardless of our situation or circumstances, we honor Him. As The Psalms are saying, God helps those who cry out to Him and seek His help. There is a lot of help to be sought and lots of help to be found in our world, but it doesn't always lead us in the right direction. Paul said in Romans 5:3-5, *we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance,<sup>4</sup> and endurance produces character, and character produces hope,<sup>5</sup> and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.* As we've seen with David, he became overwhelmed with the steadfast love of the Lord by seeking God while enduring his trials. He was not only helped, but he also fell incurably in love with the Lord and knew he could trust Him in everything. There is a price to seeking God's help, but there is also an incredible reward. Who would want it any other way?

### **Acts 19:13-41**

Vs. 13-20 These two events are a part of the atmosphere of wonder that God had created in Ephesus to get the church there up and running.

It is interesting that the demon said he knew Jesus. He'd only heard about Paul, but he knew Jesus.

Notice that the people burned their books of their own accord. There were no Baptists back then. This was done by the newly saved. Verse 19 is sort of tipping us off to what is about to happen. The word for the money is unknown, so it is hard to say what the actual value was, but it looks like it topped \$50,000.

V. 17 It is interesting that this story became known to all and led to the next event.

Vs. 21-22 seem to have the first part of 1 Corinthians 16 in view. Paul was ready to leave Ephesus to go to Corinth and pick up the contribution for the believers in Jerusalem. Unknown to him, God was ready for him to leave also.

Vs. 23-34 Here we meet Demetrius, a silversmith, who led this riot of other makers of statues and other craftsmen. Later there will be another of these guys, Alexander the coppersmith, in 2 Timothy 4, who will be responsible for Paul's final arrest and imprisonment. Paul tells Timothy to beware of him because of his violence toward Christianity.

The real issue here was their idol-making business. There were other cities that worshipped Artemis, so her worship was safe. The temple of Artemis in Ephesus was one of the seven

wonders of the world. If the city had become believing and idols were rejected, they would lose a ton of money.

Apparently this was a loud, hysterical assembly, but no one was hurt. In v. 34 the Jew, Alexander, tried to calm the crowd, but Jews were also against idols. The people went nuts.

As disciples, there is some wisdom in staying out of harm's way. Not because we're afraid or embarrassed, but because our focus is on the harvest, not the barking dog. When Jesus says not to throw what is holy to the dogs or throw pearls before swine, it has nothing to do with fear, but rather not wasting our time on the hard of heart.

V. 34 Can you imagine people in a stadium yelling this for two hours? I'll bet the neighbors were mad. They probably called the cops.

Vs. 35-41 This guy was like the mayor of the city, not just a clerk. Notice that Luke is showing here that Christianity was being pronounced "not guilty" again. This would have gone into the official records of Ephesus.

Knowing that we are put here as disciples to abide in our Lord in the harvest, following His lead, we need to remember that there are no random events. This was not a random event. God is working, and our job at times is to be observant and see what the Lord is doing. Even in a chaotic situation like this, God was working a purpose for His harvest. Imagine all of the conversations that must have taken place in Ephesus the next morning.

### **Psalm 147**

If I had to choose a verse from this psalm that speaks to me, it would be v. 11. Which verses stand out to you?

Vs. 1-6 In praising God, the writer is focused on how God cares for the outcasts and brokenhearted. Verse 4 sounds like Jesus saying, *even the hairs of your head are all numbered*. I find it encouraging to remember this.

Notice too, the emphasis on building up Jerusalem. This would either be David establishing the city, or it could be written after the exile, after Nehemiah rebuilt the city. I would vote for David.

Vs. 7-11 Notice the pattern in this section. The first verse says to praise the Lord, and the rest of the verses tell why He should be praised. Make a list. This is true of vs. 1-6 also.

With God's great creative power, our true hope should be in Him. We are saved by Him being our heart's desire.

Vs. 12-20 God is to be praised because true peace and prosperity come from Him. Not only does He bring the blessing of children, but He brings the blessing of nature. All of this, for Israel, was because of God's promise to Abraham, as seen in making a nation out of Jacob and giving Israel His Word.

### **Proverbs 18:4-5**

Amen.