
Day 179 - June 28

The Divided Kingdom (930-725 BCE)

Early Beginnings of Captivity

War between Syria, Israel and Judah

Readings: 2 Kings 15:29-31, 36-38; 16:1-4; 17:1-2; 1 Chronicles 5:23-26; 2 Chronicles 27:7-9; 28:1-4

Reflections:

- These collections of historical accounts again show that Israel is living far from God, both in northern Israel and southern Judah. The first captives are taken and the political leadership is in turmoil with yet another assassination. The spiritual condition remains terrible and the comment about Ahaz illustrates it perfectly: “Unlike David his father, he did not do what was right in the eyes of the Lord. He walked in the ways of the kings of Israel and also made cast idols for worshipping the Baals. He burned sacrifices in the Valley of Ben Hinnom and sacrificed his sons in the fire, following the detestable ways of the nations the Lord had driven out before the Israelites. He offered sacrifices and burned incense at the high places, on the hilltops and under every spreading vine.” Complete rejection of God and complete abusive, destructive religion, even to the point of child sacrifice! This should shock the reader.
- It is interesting how clearly in this passage David as one king with a humble heart is contrasted with all the other kings. Again this is the story of what doesn't work. Even with David, he was a long ways away from being a perfect leader. Scripture is driving the point home that human leadership in and of itself will not effect positive change for the human heart. Why? Because all of the hearts of the human leaders we may follow are just as messed up as our hearts, if not more messed up because of the corruption of power.
- As the captivity begins we can see that these are the early signs to the nation that the prophecies are going to come true. What is fascinating is that even the combination of warnings and early signs of those predictions coming true are not enough to give the nation and its leaders pause to reconsider their rebellion against God. It is like someone who overeats to the point of destroying their lives. They go to see the doctor and the doctor says they are going to have a heart attack if they don't do something about their health. They have a minor heart attack and instead

of it serving as a wake up call, the person keeps the exact pattern of life and refuses to change their ways. You can see it coming. This person is going to die of a heart attack. Well, with this part of the story we can see what is going to happen. This nation is going into captivity. God's judgment is only going to escalate.