CHAPTER 17
The Kingdoms' Fall
2 KINGS 21-25, 11 CHRON 33,36

THE STORY

Recently in The Story:
- God had made covenants with the Israelites...
  These covenants essentially declared that God honors those who are faithful to Him, but removes His blessings from the unfaithful.

Throughout The Story the Israelites had repeatedly fallen into sin.
Because of His great love, God sent numerous messengers to warn the Israelites: Elijah, Elisha, Hosea, Amos, and Isaiah.
God ultimately brought judgment upon the northern kingdom of Israel at the hands of the Assyrian empire.
The southern kingdom of Judah barely escaped the same fate, but they still failed to honor God faithfully.

Judah’s King Manasseh:
- The most evil king in Judah’s history.
- 2 Chron. 33, “He did evil in the eyes of the Lord”.
- Reinstituted idol worship & built alters to pagan gods.
- Publicly worshipped false gods & encouraged the people to do the same.
- Sought counsel from sorcerers & mediums.
- Threw one of his own sons into the fire as a sacrifice to a pagan god.

2 Chronicles 33:10-11- “the Lord brought against them (Judah) the army commanders of the king of Assyria, who took Manasseh prisoner, put a hook in his nose, bound him with bronze shackles, and took him to Babylon.”

THE STORY

God’s holiness can only tolerate open rebellion and sin for so long. It’s a dangerous thing to test the patience of our holy God.
Many people must experience the despair of the full consequences of their sin before they realize the error of their ways.

There’s a positive lesson to be learned from Manasseh’s life as well:
2 Chronicles 33:12-13
12 In his distress he sought the favor of the Lord his God and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers. 13 And when he prayed to him, the Lord was moved by his entreaty and listened to his plea; so he brought him back to Jerusalem and to his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the Lord is God.

* Manasseh would spend the remainder of his life working to undo the idolatry he had brought into Judah.
There's a positive lesson to be learned from Manasseh’s life as well:
- God is holy, but He is also God of grace and love.
2 Peter 3:9
The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.
God’s greatest desire is for reconciliation and relationships with His creation.
Even when God does act in judgment, He is still quick to forgive when we turn to Him in repentance.
Manasseh’s story is proof that no one is beyond the unfathomable love of our great God.

Our sins have lasting consequences.
Not only does sin damage our relationship with God, but it’s messy and often spills over onto others.
The consequences of our sin often remain in the form of damaged relationships, broken trust, tarnished reputations, legacies of sin and rebellion within our families, etc.

THE STORY

Judah’s King Amon:
- Manasseh’s son.
- Did not follow the repentant ways of his father, but his earlier evil ways.
2 Kings 21:20-21, “He did evil in the eyes of the Lord, as his father Manasseh had done. He walked in all the ways of his father; he worshiped the idols his father had worshiped, and bowed down to them.”
Things got so bad under Amon’s leadership; he was assassinated just two years into his rule.
One generation’s sin has spilled over into the next.

Our choice, whether we’ll honor God and follow Him faithfully in all areas of our lives, has implications beyond just us. The next generation is watching!
Proverbs 22:6
Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.
This training happens through the words we speak, our actions, and what our kids observe in our lives.

THE STORY

Judah’s King Josiah:
- Amon’s son & Manasseh’s grandson.
- 2 Chronicles 34:1, Josiah “did what was right in the eyes of the Lord.”
- Removed the remnants of idolatry from his grandfather’s reign.
- Found the Book of the Law (Scriptures) that had been lost for 55 years.
- Publically read God’s covenants to the people of Judah.

Prior to Josiah, God’s people had no Scriptures to guide them for 55 years! No wonder they got into so much trouble!
Psalm 119:105, “Your word is a lamp to my feet and light for my path.”
God’s word is like the roadmap, or GPS system, that guides us safely through life.
2 Chronicles 34:33, “As long as he (Josiah) lived, they did not fail to follow the Lord, the God of their fathers.”
The Ungodly Leadership of Judah’s Final Kings:
2 Chronicles 36 reports:
Verse 5: “Jehoiakim was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem eleven years. He did evil in the eyes of the Lord his God.”
Verse 9: “Jehoiachin was eighteen when he became king. He reigned in Jerusalem three months and ten days. He did evil in the eyes of the Lord.”
Verses 11-12: “Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king. He reigned in Jerusalem eleven years. He did evil in the eyes of the Lord his God.”

God’s patience would finally run out with Judah.
2 Chronicles 36:15-20
15 The LORD, the God of their fathers, sent word to them through his messengers again and again, because he had pity on his people and on his dwelling place. 16 But they mocked God’s messengers, despised his words and scoffed at his prophets until the wrath of the Lord was aroused against his people and there was no remedy. 17 He brought up against them the king of the Babylonians, who killed their young men with the sword in the sanctuary, and spared neither young man nor young woman, old man or aged. God handed all of them over to Nebuchadnezzar. 18 He carried to Babylon all the articles from the temple of God, both large and small, and the treasures of the house of God and the treasures of the king and his officials. 19 They set fire to God’s temple and broke down the wall of Jerusalem; they burned all the palaces and destroyed everything of value there. 20 He carried into exile to Babylon the remnant, who escaped from the sword, and they became servants to him and his sons until the kingdom of Persia came to power.

God’s plans for Judah weren’t finished yet!
Jeremiah 29:10-14
10 This is what the LORD says: “When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my gracious promise to bring you back to this place. 11 For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. 12 Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. 13 You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. 14 I will be found by you,” declares the LORD, “and will bring you back from captivity. I will gather you from all the nations and places where I have banished you,” declares the LORD, “and will bring you back to the place from which I carried you into exile.”

Ezekiel 36:24-28
24 "For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land. 25 I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. 26 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. 28 You will live in the land I gave your forefathers; you will be my people, and I will be your God.

Do you long to hear God’s loving invitation to come home?
- We’re all exiles and we all long to connect with our Creator.
- The Good News: God is eager to forgive and restore us too, if we’ll just turn to Him.

THE STORY