



Shepherd's Path

A Shepherd's Personal Devotions

Discovery Digs Series, Lesson 14

Lesson Title: Israel Gets Captured and Destroyed

Take Home Point: Watch out for what you choose to imitate.

Warm-Up:

A friend of mine who is a missionary to India told this story. He was talking with a Brahmin priest who said, "I don't think there is any difference between what I believe about my monkey god and what you believe about your God. I believe my god made the world, he hears me when I pray, he accepts my sacrifices, he is with me. Why should I reject the monkey god of my ancestors to believe in yours? My missionary friend replied, "Since you believe our gods are the same, do something with me. I will pray a sentence to my God, then you repeat exactly the same to yours." The Brahmin agreed. "Oh, God," my friend began, "I thank you for the wonderful world you made." The Brahmin repeated these words to his god. My friend continued, "I thank you for hearing my prayers." Again the Brahmin repeated exactly. Then my friend said, "I thank you for creating me in your image." The Brahmin stopped, for it could not be true for him.

Read: 2 Kings 17:7-23; 1 Corinthians 11:1

Observation (What happened?):

List the different sins Israel committed against the Lord in today's reading.

List the different ways God responded to Israel's rebellion and rejection.

Interpretation (What does it mean?):

Why did Israel turn away from God who rescued them and brought them to the Promised Land?

How does this account still demonstrate God's mercy to his people?

Insight:

It's sad to read how Israel slipped so completely into sin, isn't it? I doubt they started out with the idea that they would turn away from God, but that happened anyway. Just a simple statue, then another, then watching idol worship, then becoming part of the worship, then turning away from God with a hardened heart. Just like Israel, as we sin we gradually develop a hardness of heart. We may fool ourselves into thinking everything is as it was in our relationship to God, but the effect is relentless and sure. It is the original "slippery slope", and only God reaching out can keep us from sliding all the way to hell. Israel chose to leave God behind, one decision after another. Still today, many people refuse God's lifelong presence and strength because of sin's enticement. In Romans 7:18, Paul is ruthlessly honest about this in his own life: *"Although I have the desire to what is right, I don't do it."* Thankfully, he also supplies God's answer in 7:25: *"I thank God that our Lord Jesus Christ rescues me!"*

Application (What does it mean to me?):

Where in your life are you risking your relationship to God because of sin? What are you going to do about it?

Pray for the children in your small group to be alert to and resist the persistence of temptation.

Lesson 14