



# **SUNDAY SCHOOL MINISTRY**

## **Discipleship Plan**

**Year Six**  
**The Divided Kingdom**  
**(Part 3)**

Deacon Jerome Yorkshire, Sr., Sunday School Superintendent  
Deacon Eric Dolce, Director of Discipleship  
Reverend Patrick J. Walker, Senior Pastor

## The Divided Kingdom

Lesson 9: The Journey to Exile -- Apostate Kings of the North	Page 3
Lesson 10: The Journey to Exile -- Israel's Covenant God Relents from Disaster	Page 4
Lesson 11: Journey to Exile—A Broken Covenant, Guilty Verdict, and Heavy Sentence	Page 5
Lesson 12: The Journey to Exile --One Nation Taken, the Other One Left	Page 6
Lesson 13: The Journey to Exile --The Fall of Judah and the Glory of God	Page 7
Article: Consequences of Forgiven Sin by: John Piper	Page 8
Article: Waiting on the Lord by: Zach Keele	Page 9

## Lesson 9: The Journey to Exile -- Apostate Kings of the North

**Primary Verse:** "In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria captured Samaria and deported the Israelites to Assyria. He settled them in Halah, in Gozan on the Habor River and in the towns of the Medes." (2 Kings 17:6, NIV).

**Teaching Text:** 2 Kings 14-17

**Supporting Text:** 1 Kings 12-16; 2 Kings 9-13

**The Chronicles of the Kings of Israel:** Israel's story of exile is told through the history of her kings--this approach makes sense when we remember the people's religious condition was often influenced by their leader (1 Kings 12:28-30). Through this lens, reading the chronicles of Israel's kings is like watching a nation progress toward a cliff's edge. If Deuteronomy 28:58-68 is true, then Israel's wicked kings made her exile inevitable. We tend to be more familiar with the Davidic kings of the south, while the random succession of violent men in the north seems hazy. Let's begin Israel's journey to exile with a big picture view of her idolatrous northern kings:

1. Jeroboam 1 (1 Kings 12:25-14:20) - he reigned 22 years. He carved idolatry deep into the heart of the nation with the creation of his golden calves.
2. Nadab (1 Kings 15:25-32) - son of Jeroboam, reigned 2 years, killed by Baasha.
3. Baasha (1 Kings 15:33-16:7) - reigned 24 years; God vowed to utterly destroy the house of Baasha.
4. Elah (1 Kings 16:8-14) - son of Bassha, reigned 2 years, then murdered by Zimri.
5. Zimri (1 Kings 16:15-20) - reigned 7 days. He committed suicide when besieged by Omri.
6. Omri (1 Kings 16:21-28) - reigned 12 years, more evil than kings before him; established Samaria as northern capital.
7. Ahab (1 Kings 16:29-34) - son of Omri, husband of Jezebel. Ruled 22 years, topped his father in wickedness.
8. Jehu (2 Kings 9-10) - reigned 28 years. He killed Jezebel and the house of Ahab but did not turn aside from the sin of idolatry. God promised the throne to his sons to the 4th generation.
9. Jehoahaz (2 Kings 13:1-9) - son of Jehu, reigned 17 years. God saved him from Syria when he cried out to Him but even this didn't lead to his repentance.
10. Jehoash (2 Kings 13:10-25) - son of Jehoahaz, reigned 16 years.
11. Jeroboam 11 (2 Kings 14:23-29) - son of Jehoash, ruled 41 years. He restored Damascus and Hamath with the help of the Lord, and yet, he continued in the sin of his fathers.
12. Zechariah (2 Kings 15:8-12) - son of Jeroboam 11, he reigned 6 months and was killed by Shallum.
13. Shallum (2 Kings 15:13-16) - reigned for 1 month until killed by Menahem.
14. Menahem (2 Kings 15:17-22) - reigned 10 years. He paid the king of Assyria to avoid invasion.
15. Pekahiah (2 Kings 15:23-26) - son of Menahem, reigned 2 years, murdered by Pekah
16. Pekah (2 Kings 15:27-31) - reigned 20 years, killed by Hoshea. Assyrians began their invasion in his day.
17. Hoshea and the Exile (2 Kings 17:1-6) - king of Assyria captured Samaria in 9th year of Hoshea.

**Questions to Consider:** In Judges 2:18-19, God shows great mercy and rescues Israel through faithful judges. What other passages in Scripture reveal righteous leaders as God's expression of grace toward His people?

**Challenging the Class:** Read 1 Timothy 2:1-4 and commit to obey Scripture's command to pray for those within various positions of authority over your life and specifically pray that they grow to fear the Lord.

## Lesson 10: The Journey to Exile -- Israel's Covenant God Relents from Disaster

**Primary Verse:** “The Lord had seen how bitterly everyone in Israel, whether slave or free, was suffering; there was no one to help them. And since the Lord had not said he would blot out the name of Israel from under heaven, he saved them by the hand of Jeroboam son of Jehoash” (2 Kings 14:26-27, NIV).

**Teaching Text:** 2 Kings 14:23-29

**Supporting Text:** Jonah 1-4

**Two Jeroboams and One Covenant God:** Our study of Israel’s northern kings mentions two Jeroboams. In between the first (who reigned from 930-909 B.C.) and the second (who reigned from 793-753 B.C.) are nine kings representing some 120 years of idolatry. Over a century of habitual rebellion is a long time. But in truth, Israel’s defiance had been far longer. God had warned His people decades ago in Deuteronomy 28—even before they were in the Promised Land—of the penalty of exile for disobedience. After YEARS of immorality, violence, and religious syncretism (mixing the worship of God with idols), we come to the reign of Jeroboam II in 2 Kings 14:23-27 and are shocked to find a covenant God who remains patient and merciful to an obstinate people!

**The Prophet Jonah in 2 Kings?** Some may be surprised to find the prophet Jonah in 2 Kings 14:25. Pages away from the book that bears his name, Jonah is not sent to an enemy nation with a word of judgement but is sent to his own people to announce blessings. Israel was in a state of great suffering. As was the case in Exodus 3:7 and Judges 2:18, God sees the oppression of His people and is moved to recuse them. Jonah is sent to proclaim God’s help to none other than the wicked King Jeroboam II of Israel (2 Kings 25-27). In accordance with Jonah’s prophecy, Jeroboam II overcomes Israel’s enemies and extends the northern territory to what it had been in the time of Solomon (2 Kings 14:25, 28).

**God Relents from Disaster:** Reading 2 Kings 14 is a reminder of Jonah 4:2 when Jonah calls God gracious and merciful, “slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from disaster.” The description captures God’s *hesed* or steadfast love. Jonah’s phrasing is seen throughout Scripture, but first appears in Exodus 34:6 during God’s covenant renewal with Israel. The Northern Kingdom was called to belong to a patient God who relents from disaster. God’s far-reaching kindness elects to help a rebellious king and his people. In Jonah’s ministry, we can see God’s mercy extended to those who are far and near: wicked Nineveh *and* wayward Samaria. Who then is beyond His grace?

**Questions to Consider:** God’s *hesed* is ultimately demonstrated in the giving of His son; God has become *our* covenant God through the work of Christ Jesus. Does God’s patience/ mercy toward you inspire your obedient praise or an excuse for sin?

**Challenging the Class:** Read these passages referencing God’s *hesed*: Numbers 14:18; Nehemiah 9:17; Psalm 103:8; Joel 2:13; and Jonah 4:2. What do they have in common? What themes (e.g. judgement, renewal) do you find?

## Lesson 11: Journey to Exile -- A Broken Covenant, Guilty Verdict, and Heavy Sentence

**Primary Verse:** “And they burned their sons and their daughters as offerings and used divination and omens and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the Lord, provoking him to anger. Therefore the Lord was very angry with Israel and removed them out of his sight. None was left but the tribe of Judah only.” (2 Kings 17:17-18, NIV).

**Teaching Text:** 2 Kings 17:1-41

**Supporting Text:** Hosea 1-2; 4-10

**A Guilty Verdict is Rendered:** 2 Kings 17:6-23 is a sad chapter in the Bible; it reads almost like a criminal verdict. Verse 6 announces the fall of Israel like a straightforward conviction and verses 7-23 rehearse the facts of the case. In 2 Kings 17:18, the sentencing is rendered. Israel falls because of her guilt; God’s justice is served.

**God the Angry Plaintiff and Judge:** 2 Kings 17 captures the details of the nation’s crime, but to feel the burning anger of God--the plaintiff, the judge, the prosecutor, and key witness--it’s useful to read a book like Hosea. The Old Testament is filled with the passionate, indignant--yet often tender--words of God to His rebellious people. Hosea, the son of Beerai, was a prophet used by God to deliver such words. He served the northern kingdom for 28 years, from the tail end of King Jeroboam II to just before the fall of Samaria. Hosea’s writings capture the heinousness of Israel’s crime and God’s anger with vivid words. Hosea 8:4-5: “They set up kings without my consent; they choose princes without my approval. With their silver and gold, they make idols for themselves to their own destruction. Samaria, throw out your calf-idol! My anger burns against them.” Israel’s offense, God’s response, and great emotion, all conveyed in just two verses!

**Israel Breaks Covenant:** Our lesson last week spoke of God’s *hesed* (steadfast covenant love). Israel’s sin abounded, yet grace seemed to abound even more (Romans 5:20). But, we should never presume the riches of God’s kindness and patience for these are meant to lead us to repentance (Romans 2:4). The crimes ascribed to Israel testify to a brazen disregard of God’s covenant. As the people of God, the nation was to worship “no other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God” (Exodus 34:1-28). But like a woman who leaves her marriage bed to chase after lovers, the Northern Kingdom abandons covenant intimacy and obedience for idols. No wonder Gomer, Hosea’s wife--a woman who wore whoring on her face and carried adultery between her breasts--is symbolically pictured as Israel in Hosea 2:2. The northern tribe breaks covenant with her God, forfeits His covering, and is soon carried away by Assyria, never to return (2 Kings 18:12).

**Questions to Consider:** Israel sacrificed her children in fire and used divination and yet claimed to “know” the Lord (Hosea 8:2-3). In what ways can sin deceive our hearts into believing we are “close to God” when, in fact, we are far from Him?

**Challenging the Class:** What is the difference between disciplinary consequences of a believer’s sin and God’s eternal retributive justice? In what ways does Christ suffer God’s retributive justice on your behalf? Knowing this, what should be the response of God’s new covenant people?

## Lesson 12: The Journey to Exile -- One Nation Taken, the Other One Left

**Primary Verse:** “In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah's reign, Sennacherib, king of Assyria, attacked all the fortified cities of Judah and captured them” (2 Kings 18:13, NIV).

**Teaching Text:** 2 Kings 18-20

**Supporting Text:** 2 Chronicles 29-32

**One Nation Taken, the Other One Left:** Weeks ago, we studied the story of Hezekiah and Sennacherib from 2 Chronicles 29-32. Today, as we move from 2 Kings 17 to 2 Kings 18, we find the same story of Sennacherib's attack on Judah. This time, a surprising fact emerges: Sennacherib, king of Assyria, surrounded Judah just *eight years* after Samaria was taken (see 2 Kings 18:9-13). Reading the Bible within context will always give the best understanding of a passage. In this case, we learn that, within the interval of a few years, Assyria attacks *both* the north *and* southern kingdoms of Israel—one nation is taken and the other one is spared.

**Kingdom United in Fear:** Samaria was besieged in the fourth year of Hezekiah's reign; the ten tribes to the north were exiled to Assyria in his sixth year (2 Kings 18:9-10). No doubt, the incident had a great impact on Hezekiah and Judah. For one, the divided kingdom of Israel was now a southern remnant; historian's report an explosion in Judah's population caused by refugees from the north. Second, fear of Assyria, the superpower of the day, must have gripped the region. If so, imagine the anxiety when Sennacherib shows up just eight years later with these words: “Has the god of any nation ever delivered his land from the hand of the king of Assyria?... Have they rescued Samaria from my hand?” (2 Kings 18:33-34). It was true. Samaria *had* been crushed by Assyria...would the same hand destroy Judah?

**God Spares Judah:** Hezekiah meets Sennacherib's threats with humility and prayer and God hears him (2 Kings 18:14-20). Again, we see God's great compassion for His people. He had secured Israel in the time of Jeroboam II and He does the same for Judah in the days of Hezekiah. The prophet Isaiah is sent to Hezekiah with these words: “I will defend this city and save it, for my sake and for the sake of David my servant” (2 Kings 19:34). The idols of Samaria were only the work of men's hands, they could not save. For the sake of His own name, God shows the nations that “No one who hopes in *Him* will ever be put to shame” (Psalm 25:2-3). God remembers David and preserves his lamp in Jerusalem (1 Kings 11:36).

**Questions to Consider:** Hezekiah's humble prayers in 2 Kings 18 move God to save Judah. How does the pride and ill-judgement of the same person in 2 Kings 20 influence the eventual invasion and exile of Judah? What does this say about our relative weakness and desperate need for God's enabling grace and daily strength (Ephesians 3:16-17)?

**Challenging the Class:** What does 2 Kings 20:5 teach us about the importance of humble supplication, God's divine freedom, kindness, and power? What's common between 2 Kings 20:5 and passages like 1 Kings 11:25-29 and 2 Chronicles 33:10-13?

## Lesson 13: The Journey to Exile --The Fall of Judah and the Glory of God

**Primary Verse:** “Manasseh king of Judah has committed these detestable sins. He has done more evil than the Amorites who preceded him and has led Judah into sin with his idols. Therefore this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: ‘I am going to bring such disaster on Jerusalem and Judah that the ears of everyone who hears of it will tingle’” (2 Kings 21:11-12, NIV).

**Teaching Text:** 2 Kings 21-25

**Supporting Text:** 2 Chronicles 33-36; Habakkuk 1-3

**Fleeting Reforms and Fickle Repentance:** One of my children loves to make loud apologies at the threat of discipline but will quickly turn back to her disobedience as soon as mercy is shown. In many ways, my girl’s surface repentance illustrates Judah’s fickle commitment to God. Unlike the Northern Kingdom, Judah points to moments of faithful reform. However, these days of contrition were often forgotten as succeeding kings turned the nation back to sins. This is precisely the case with King Manasseh (see 2 Kings 21:3).

**Enough is Enough:** Manasseh ascends to the throne twenty-three years after the fall of Samaria. Twenty-three years, filled with God’s protection for the sake of David and Hezekiah, were enough to make Judah forget the fate of Samaria and the years were long enough to make King Manasseh bold in his idolatry and disregard of a covenant keeping God. There was no king in Judah like Manasseh in provoking the Lord to anger; “he burned his son as an offering and used fortune-telling and omens and dealt with mediums and with necromancers...Moreover, Manasseh shed very much innocent blood” (2 Kings 21:6-16). In the days of Manasseh, God determines “enough is enough.” Like a faithful parent who applies a fitting consequence to habitual disobedience, God would “stretch over Jerusalem the measuring line of Samaria, and [would] wipe Jerusalem as one wipes a dish” (2 Kings 21:13).

**God is Glorified in Judgement:** The exile pronounced in 2 Kings 21 is fulfilled in 2 Kings 25. In the interim, we find the remarkable reign of Josiah—a king who loves God “with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his might, according to all the Law of Moses” (2 Kings 23:25). Josiah did much to reform Judah and “still the Lord did not turn from the burning of his great wrath, by which his anger was kindled against Judah, because of all the provocations with which Manasseh had provoked him” (2 Kings 23:26). God had been merciful to Judah—the nation endures for nearly 140 years after the exile of Samaria; Josiah is graciously spared from captivity (2 Kings 22:18-20); and even a humbled Manasseh is helped by God (2 Chronicles 33:10-20). God is glorified in His mercy. He is also glorified in His judgement of sin. In Jerusalem’s Babylonian captivity, God enforces the terms of His covenant (Deuteronomy 28:58-68) and demonstrates His infinite power, justice, holiness and Word.

**Questions to Consider:** How can God be both merciful and just? Doesn’t His justice nullify His mercy? How can the cross of Christ help us with this answer? How does God uphold justice and yet extend mercy on the cross?

**Challenging the Class:** Read Habakkuk 1-3. The prophet, who served during the reign of Jehoiakim (2 Kings 24), was puzzled by God’s seeming indifference to the violence and strife of his day. How can God’s response to his questions assure us of His ultimate justice and lordship over the events of our day?

# Consequences of Forgiven Sin

## Article by

John Piper

Founder & Teacher, [desiringGod.org](http://desiringGod.org)

I was again overcome by the story of David's sin against Uriah (murder) and Bathsheba (adultery) and God's response in 2 Samuel 11-12. David acknowledges that the one who has done such a thing deserves to die (12:5). But in the end Nathan says, "The Lord also has taken away your sin; you shall not die" (12:13).

But though the sin is taken away and the death sentence removed, Nathan says, "Nevertheless, because by this deed you have utterly scorned the Lord, *the child that is born to you shall die*" (12:14). In spite of forgiveness some "penalty" for the sin remains. I put "penalty" in quotes because I think we must distinguish consequences of forgiven sin (v. 13) from consequences of unforgiven sin. The latter are properly called penalties. The former we should probably call "disciplinary consequences."

That is, they are related to the sin, and they reflect the displeasure of God for the sin, but their aim is not retributive justice. They are not part of condemnation. The aim of the consequences of forgiven sin is not to settle the accounts demanded by retributive justice.

That's what hell is for. There is a judgment whose purpose is to vindicate the right by paying back the wrong thus establishing equity in God's kingdom of righteousness. This is done on the cross for those who are in Christ and it is done in hell for those who are not.

But the aim of God-sent *consequences of forgiven sin* is not to settle accounts demanded by retributive justice. The aim of the God-sent consequences of forgiven sin are (1) to demonstrate the exceeding evil of sin, (2) to show that God does not take sin lightly even when he lays aside his punishment, (3) to humble and sanctify the forgiven sinner.

Thus [Hebrews 12:6](#) teaches that "the Lord disciplines him whom he *loves*, and chastises every son whom he *receives*."

This is immensely important to teach in a day when there is an imbalance of emphasis on the Father's forgiving tenderness to the exclusion of the Father's forgiving toughness. Thus many people have no categories to handle the consequences of the sins in their lives except to become less biblical and God-centered in their interpretation of life.

By the power of truth and the Spirit we must learn to revel in the grace of God, the forgiveness of sins, the hope of glory, the joy of the Lord at the very same time that we may be suffering from the consequences of *forgiven* sin. We must not equate forgiveness with absence of painful impact. David's life is a vivid illustration of this truth. May God give us the grace to learn it and live it.

Cherishing with you the tough and tender truth of God,

Pastor John

John Piper (@JohnPiper) is founder and teacher of [desiringGod.org](http://desiringGod.org) and chancellor of Bethlehem College & Seminary. For 33 years, he served as pastor of Bethlehem Baptist Church, Minneapolis, Minnesota. He is author of more than 50 books, including *Reading the Bible Supernaturally*.

# Waiting on the Lord

Zach Keele

Are you good at waiting? Is sitting in traffic or standing in line like a hammer to your thumb, making you want to scream? Historically, humans haven't been known for their ability to wait patiently, but our society treats this virtue as an infectious virus—something to be vaccinated against and eradicated.

If you have to wait three seconds for a webpage to load, do you file a complaint with your service provider? A buffering YouTube video has become an arch-villain deserving the Arkham Asylum. This problem of lack of patience, this obsession with immediacy, is not only a modern issue. It was also a struggle for those Judean exiles fresh home from Babylon.

Before the exile, one of the weeds growing in Israel's field of sins was their refusal to accept the prophets' warnings of the coming judgment. They reasoned, "Isaiah, Hosea, Amos, and Jeremiah have been preaching fire and brimstone for centuries. If it hasn't happened yet, it's never going to happen." The delay in the judgment seemed to stimulate their disbelief. After the fall of Jerusalem, however, the exiles could not so easily dismiss the preaching of the prophets. What God's Word announced hundreds of years previously had come to pass in their judgment and exile. This reality invigorated the people's trust in the words of the prophets, especially since judgment was not the only sermon they preached.

The prophets declared the certainty of desolation and exile, but they also painted with grandiose colors the coming restoration after the exile. Jeremiah said the exile would last seventy years, but then the Lord would gather his lost sheep back to the Promised Land. And what a gathering this would be! Isaiah sings that the rough places shall become a plain, the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and he will lead his people on level paths. The Lord's servant Cyrus will free the exiles and rebuild the city and house of God. Jeremiah foretold the new and everlasting covenant of forgiveness and peace. The Lord would make all of Jerusalem holy to the Lord, and it would never be uprooted or overthrown again (Jer. 31:40). Ezekiel sculpted King David as the one shepherd over God's people forever, and God's sanctuary would be in the presence of his people forevermore (Ezek. 37:24-28).

Could you imagine living in Babylon with these promises? It would be like a gift set on the mantle in July that you have to wait until Christmas to open. Children would be asking their dads, "Are we there yet?" Parents would dutifully mark off the calendar the days of those seventy years. The excited expectation would fill their dreams with images of a new and greater exodus. This hope would keep them hydrated in the dry years of exile.

And then the day came! A king named Cyrus came to power, Babylon fell, and Cyrus issued the proclamation for the Judean exiles to go home. He filled their pockets with temple treasures and gave them a permit to rebuild the temple (Ezra 1:1-4). The day of the Lord's promises had arrived.

The Judean exiles got to go home, to live in their own land again. Stone upon stone, the temple was rebuilt. The altar was consecrated. The people could again worship the Lord in his house. Swelling with joy, the people celebrated Passover. Ezra returned with treasures to beautify the temple. Nehemiah rebuilt the wall and with a priestly parade consecrated it as holy. The verse they memorized in exile proved true: "It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord."

And yet, as we read the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, something seems askew. The prophetic promises have lost all their glitter. The color of Isaiah is drawn out in shades of gray. Under Cyrus, the exiles do return, but there are no glorious manifestations of the Lord, no springs welling up in the desert. At the dedication of the temple's foundations, weeping at its smallness interrupts the joyful songs. Intermarriage with the pagan neighbors spoils the optimism of Ezra. Nehemiah's wall stands consecrated, but the people still cannot keep the Sabbath, nor can they keep their hands off of the foreign beauties.

And to top it off, this was all painfully slow. The first exiles who laid the temple foundation returned in 538 BC; the temple was finished in 516 BC; Ezra came in 458 BC, and Nehemiah in 445 BC. Nearly a hundred years were expended to accomplish what appeared momentary in the prophets. Then the ultimate fly in the ointment: there was no king! Where was the Davidic king? The exiles had the land, Jerusalem, the priesthood, and the temple, but no king. In fact, the Levitical prayer in Nehemiah 9 closes on this bitter note by saying, "We are still slaves." They were still paying taxes to Persia. What kind of fulfillment was this?

The Judeans could not deny the Lord was watching over them; after all, they were back in the land with the temple. Yet the experienced fulfillment was glaringly lacking in glory, which pointed the Judeans' faith and hope further into the future. They were back to the waiting game. In fact, Nehemiah showed himself to be a good steward in this regard. With the wall built, a new covenant made, the priesthood put in order, and the wall consecrated as holy, Nehemiah had the city of David all ready for the King to come. Nehemiah knew he was not the King, but he was preparing Jerusalem for the King. Like a teenager who has the house spick and span before his parents return, so Nehemiah had Jerusalem polished in expectation. He reminded the people that it is good to wait upon the Lord and his salvation.

Well, Nehemiah did not see the King in his day, but his faith was not in vain. Centuries later, a few days before Passover, the true King rode into Jerusalem on that donkey spoken of by Zechariah and was welcomed by the crowds: "Hosanna to the Son of David!" The King, Jesus Christ, in whom all God's promises are yes and amen came to accomplish our salvation. Therefore, being heirs to such a great salvation in Christ, we are reminded that it is good to wait upon the Lord as we look forward to our blessed hope, the resurrection of the body and life everlasting in the light of the Lamb's face.

This article originally appeared in the November/December 2013 Vol: 22 Num: 6 edition of *Modern Reformation* and is reprinted with permission. For more information about **Modern Reformation**, visit [www.modernreformation.org](http://www.modernreformation.org) or call (800) 890-7556. All rights reserved.