

Devotional from Pastor Ho
November 5, 2020

2 Kings 17:41, *“So these nations feared the LORD and also served their carved images. Their children did likewise, and their children's children—as their fathers did, so they do to this day.”*

This is the last verse of 2 Kings 17, the chapter which marks the end of the northern kingdom of Israel as a nation. Although 1-2 Kings trace the histories of both Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah, they as a whole give more airtime to Israel's kings. Only after the collapse of the northern kingdom is the spotlight shifted to Judah (the reverse is true of 1-2 Chronicles).

The account of the collapse of Israel in chapter 17 provides us deep spiritual insights. On the surface, the cause of the collapse seems to be political, but deep down, the Scripture tells us it is theological. The political reason is recounted briefly (17:3-6). It is because King Hoshea of Israel was a vassal who paid tribute to King Shalmaneser of Assyria. Yet Hoshea not only stopped offering tribute to Shalmaneser, he also sent messengers to seek better terms of protection from the King So of Egypt. Politically, this is treason that warranted destruction.

The theological reason, however, is recounted lengthily (17:7-41), and quite intriguingly, it is very much akin to the political reason. On the one hand, the people of Israel were the covenant people of God, who owed their allegiance to God, who made a covenant with them on Sinai and led them into the Promised Land. On the other hand, they “feared other gods” and “did secretly against the Lord their God things that were not right” (17:7, 9), as if they could keep their secret from God. In the end, instead of being set apart as God's people, they were not any different from the nations around them. “Therefore the Lord was very angry with Israel and removed them out of his sight” (17:18).

Just as the last three words (“to this day”) of the passage above indicate, the people of God today are as much prone to “walk in the customs of the nations” (17:8) among whom we live and become like them: “feared the Lord and also served their carved images.” The Lord has warned us, “You cannot serve God and money” (Matt 6:24), with money representing a host of idols.

Prayer: Lord, we are your people and you are our God. Help us to serve you and you only, for we have no good apart from you. Amen.

何牧師的靈修

2020年11月5日

列王紀下 17 篇 41 節：“如此這些民又懼怕耶和華，又事奉他們的偶像。他們子子孫孫也都照樣行，效法他們的祖宗，直到今日。”

這是列王紀下 17 章的最後一節，這一章標誌著北國以色列作為一個國家的終結。儘管列王紀上和列王紀下追蹤了以色列和南國猶大的歷史，但它們整體上用比較多篇幅在以色列的諸王身上。北國崩潰後，才把焦點轉移到猶大（歷代誌上和下正好是相反的）。

第十七章對以色列崩潰的描述為我們提供了深刻的屬靈見解。從表面上來看，崩潰的原因似乎是政治上的，但深層來看，聖經告訴我們這是神學上的。政治的原因簡短的帶過去 (17:3-6)。是因為以色列的何細亞王本來服事和給亞述的撒縵王進貢。但何細亞不僅停止了向撒縵進貢，還派遣差使者去見埃及王梭，尋求更好的保護條款。從政治上講，這是應當被毀滅的叛國罪。

然而，神學的原因用了大篇幅來敘述 (17:7-41)，並且非常有趣的是，它與政治原因非常相似。一方面，以色列子民是神的聖約子民，他們本該效忠於神。神在西乃與他們立約，也帶領他們進入應許之地。另一方面，他們“去敬畏別神”，“暗中行不正的事，違背耶和華——他們的神” (17:7,9)，好像他們可以對神保密。最後，他們沒有被分別出來作為神的子民，反而與周圍的國家沒有什麼不同。“所以耶和華向以色列人大大發怒，從自己面前趕出他們” (17:18)。

正如上面這段經文的最後四個詞（“直到今日”）所表明的，今日的神的子民也同樣很容易地“隨從外邦人的風俗” (17:8)，就是我們在他們當中生活的人們，並變得像他們：“懼怕耶和華，又事奉他們的偶像。”主警告了我們，“你們不能又事奉神，又事奉瑪門[財利]” (馬太福音 6:24)，而瑪門[財利] 就代表許許多多的偶像。

禱告：主啊，我們是你的子民，你是我們的神。幫助我們單單服事你，因我們的好處不在你以外。阿們。

何牧师的灵修

2020年11月5日

列王纪下 17 篇 41 节：“如此这些民又惧怕耶和华，又事奉他们的偶像。他们子子孙孙也都照样行，效法他们的祖宗，直到今日。”

这是列王纪下 17 章的最后一节，这一章标志着北国以色列作为一个国家的终结。尽管列王纪上和列王纪下追踪了以色列和南国犹大的历史，但它们整体上用比较多篇幅在以色列的诸王身上。北国崩溃后，才把焦点转移到犹大（历代志上和下正好是相反的）。

第十七章对以色列崩溃的描述为我们提供了深刻的属灵见解。从表面上来看，崩溃的原因似乎是政治上的，但深层来看，圣经告诉我们这是神学上的。政治的原因简短的带过去 (17:3-6)。是因为以色列的何细亚王本来服事和给亚述的撒缦王进贡。但何细亚不仅停止了向撒缦进贡，还派遣差使者去见埃及王梭，寻求更好的保护条款。从政治上讲，这是应当被毁灭的叛国罪。

然而，神学的原因用了大篇幅来叙述 (17:7-41)，并且非常有趣的是，它与政治原因非常相似。一方面，以色列子民是神的圣约子民，他们本该效忠于神。神在西乃与他们立约，也带领他们进入应许之地。另一方面，他们“去敬畏别神”，“暗中行不正的事，违背耶和华——他们的神” (17:7,9)，好像他们可以对神保密。最后，他们没有被分别出来作为神的子民，反而与周围的国家没有什么不同。“所以耶和华向以色列人大大发怒，从自己面前赶出他们” (17:18)。

正如上面这段经文的最后四个词（“直到今日”）所表明的，今日的神的子民也同样很容易地“随从外邦人的风俗” (17:8)，就是我们在他们当中生活的人们，并变得像他们：“惧怕耶和华，又事奉他们的偶像。”主警告了我们，“你们不能又事奉神，又事奉玛门[财利]” (马太福音 6:24)，而玛门[财利]就代表许许多多的偶像。

祷告：主啊，我们是你的子民，你是我们的神。帮助我们单单服事你，因我们的好处不在你以外。阿们。