

Come Follow Me
Elo Viz Production
Week 29
2 Kings 17-25

We learn that these were dark times in Judah's history, there were mostly wicked Kings that ruled over the 2 tribes that lived in the South. Wickedness had already consumed the Northern Kingdom for some time. And by this time The Assyrian empire took over and scattered the ten tribes of Israel. But the southern Kingdom of Judah was still intact. Two righteous Kings seemed to keep it held together.

Hezekiah was one of those Kings, he trusted the Lord and the Lord was with him. He prospered everywhere he went. He rebelled against the wicked king of Assyria and would not serve him. But most importantly The Lord heard Hezekiah's prayers. Through the prophet Isaiah, the Lord had a message for the King of Assyria. He told him that he was despised, and that he had done wickly in the sight of the Lord. That his plan of attack is not going to work this time. He went on to say, I know your comings and goings and evil work, because of your rage against me, I will stop you. I will turn you back the way you came. The house of Judah will be protected and prosper." The Lord will protect the city and save it for greater purposes. The Assyrians came despite these warnings. During the invasion of Judah the Lord sent an angel to help. While Hezekiah and his people were asleep, the angel came and smote thousands of the Assyrian men. When Hezekiah and his people awoke, they discovered that the Assyrians were all dead.

This story teaches us a great principle that all things are in the Lord's Hands. Hezekiah did not know how the Lord was going to help him, only that the Lord would keep his promise. God is so good and aware of all of us and our needs. There are things the Lord knows, and can do that we can't comprehend. That is where trust, and faith come in. Hezekiah and his people showed great trust and faith in the Lord. The Lord will always find a way to fulfill his plan and his promises. Perhaps if we ponder, We might see time in our lives we're the Lord was there to protect us and bless us, and we didn't even recognize it at the time.

Later, after another period of apostasy, Josiah began to reign. Josaih was truly an amazing king and he trusted in the Lord. He felt inspired to have the temple restored. During the restoration of the temple the book of law was recovered and then read to him. When he heard the words in the book he was overcome and wept before the Lord because of the sins of their fathers. He was so upset that his people had not kept the commandments that he rent his clothes. He then cleaned up the city from any idols and abominations of any kind. He read the book of God's law to all the people and they made a covenant to obey the Lord's commandments with all of their heart and soul.

Josiah brought back religious life to many. He helped his people recommit themselves to the Lord, and to the commandments and covenants written in this book.

When Josiah heard the words from the book of the law, he responded in faith.

Spencer W. Kimball Said, "I feel strongly that we must all return to the scriptures just as King Josiah did and let them work mightily within us, inspiring us to an unwavering determination to serve the Lord. Where much is given, Much is required. Access to the commandments and the gospel of Jesus Christ comes with responsibility. Study the scriptures. Let them govern our lives and the lives of our children."

During King Josiah's reign we learn that the scriptures can turn our hearts to the Lord. Even if we don't fully understand everything in them we will still be blessed by the power of the scriptures and by the word of God.

Sometimes I personally get overwhelmed by too much information. I sometimes don't understand the timelines, or how the story being shared in the scriptures can help me in my life. I don't retain all the information that I feel I need to. Or I like something and get overwhelmed by wanting to save it all for later. I have discovered a few things that have helped me with this.

While studying I have stopped saying, "oh that's good, I need to remember that for later." When this thought comes I have learned to respond by telling myself "No. Remember it now. Be inspired now. Learn it and apply it now. I will also say, "wow, I am really inspired by that. I enjoy what I am feeling and I can become better right now."

The second thing I do to avoid getting frustrated and overwhelmed is to focus on what stands out to me most. What is the principal and gospel truth being taught here? What is most important for me and what can I Focus on and apply to my life? And when I find it, and feel peace, I focus on that. Doing these things have really helped me grow spiritually and has helped me become better at serving the people around me.

With my kids I've stopped saying to myself, "I'll teach them later", we'll study together later and then I'll teach them. That has not been working. Life is too busy. Procrastinating these important things is not reliable and rarely happens if i push them off. Instead, I started teaching them at the park and in the car. During dinner or while doing chores. While we're grocery shopping or when we have a minute to visit.

I have discovered that teaching them while life happens is better than waiting for life to stop happening to teach them.

I am learning that waiting for “later” to act on our inspiration and promptings is a trick and a lie of the adversary. Whatever he can do to distract us into putting it off, he will try to do. We can beat him at his own game. With the power of the Lord, we are stronger than him and his influence.

I have learned that we are stronger than we think you are. There is great power when we act on our promptings when they come and do not doubt yourself.

The scriptures are a blessing in our lives and teach us how to follow Jesus Christ.

We are all just like the people in Israel and Judah, we all make good choices and we all make bad choices. However, when we repent and discover what is needed in your life, [for example Josiah finding the scriptures] We too can be inspired to make necessary changes in our lives, do good and inspire others to do good, and turn to the Scriptures and trust in the Lord.

If you recall from our studies of Moses, before the ten tribes of Israel were scattered, Moses gathered them at the base of Mt Sinai and the Lord declared, “ Ye shall be unto me a mighty people, IF ye obey my voice and keep my covenants” He promised them that they would flourish and prosper. Not because they were numerous and strong, but because God's power would make them mighty.

The story of the children of Israel is a rollercoaster of righteousness to sin and reject their covenants. When they hit the button and turned away from Lord, this left them unprotected from their enemies and they were eventually scattered from their homeland and became the lost 10 tribes of Israel.

The scattering of Israel is only half of the story. The Lord doesn't forget His people, even when they have forsaken him. The other part of the story is that one day the Lord will gather them and “will say to all Israel, come home.”

That day is today! Our day. President Nelson has called the gathering the most important thing taking place on the earth today. He says that “Every one of our heavenly fathers children on both sides of the veil, deserves to hear the message of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ.” We get to be a part of it!

How can we do this and, what exactly does it mean to gather Israel?

President Nelson teaches us that, “Anytime you do anything that helps anyone on either side of the veil take a step towards making covenants with God and towards receiving their essential baptismal and temple ordinances, you are helping to gather Israel. As a covenant keeper, you are part of the house of Israel. You have been gathered and now get to be the gatherer. The story is building to its climax and you are a key player. Now is the time when Jesus will say to all Israel come home.”

Our message to all is simple. Come home to Jesus Christ, and he will bring you home to God, your Father.

In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.