

WEEK 30 | SUNDAY, JULY 26, 2026

God's People Turn Away, and God Still Calls Them Back

Primary Scripture: 2 Kings 17:7 to 15, Kings Overview

Supporting Scripture: 1 Kings 12 | Lamentations 3:22 to 23 | 2 Samuel 7:12 to 16

Memory Verse, Lamentations 3:22 to 23: The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases, his mercies never come to an end, they are new every morning.

BIBLE TIMELINE PLACEMENT

After Solomon's reign ends, the united kingdom splits into two. This week is a wide angle overview covering roughly two centuries of history across both the northern kingdom, Israel, and the southern kingdom, Judah, before we slow back down next week to focus closely on one of God's prophets, Elijah.

2 CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

After Solomon dies, his kingdom splits into two, Israel in the north with ten tribes, and Judah in the south with two tribes still loyal to David's family line. The first northern king, Jeroboam, worried his people would return their hearts to Jerusalem, so he set up golden calves in two northern cities and told the people to worship there instead. This choice is remembered as the sin of Jeroboam, and the Bible says every single king of the northern kingdom continued in it. Judah, in the south, had a mixed record, some kings who honored God and tore down idols, and others who led the people right back into worshipping them. Over roughly two centuries, God kept sending prophets like Elijah and Elisha to call the people back, but the overall pattern kept worsening. Eventually Israel fell to the Assyrian Empire, and later Judah fell to Babylon. This week is a wide angle view covering a large stretch of time and many different kings, not one single story, so it helps set the stage before we slow down next week and look closely at one of God's prophets.

3 WHAT HAPPENS IN THIS PASSAGE

After Solomon's death, the united kingdom splits into two nations, Israel in the north and Judah in the south. This division follows directly from Solomon's own unfaithfulness late in his life, and it never gets undone.

Across the next two centuries, a repeating pattern unfolds. God's people turn to worship false gods, forgetting the LORD who rescued them from Egypt and gave them the land. God sends prophets, real messengers with real warnings, calling the people to turn back before it is too late.

Sometimes a king listens and leads reform, tearing down idols and turning the nation back toward God for a season. But the pattern always resumes. Generation after generation, the warnings go unheeded more often than they are received.

Eventually the consequences God warned about arrive. The northern kingdom, Israel, is conquered and its people are carried away by the Assyrian Empire. Later, the southern kingdom, Judah, is conquered and carried into exile by Babylon. Yet even here, God does not abandon His promises. He preserves a remnant, and He preserves the line of David, because that line is where His greatest promise, a coming

Savior, will one day be fulfilled.

4 KEY THEOLOGICAL TRUTHS

1. What This Reveals About God (Lamentations 3:22 to 23)

Even when His people are unfaithful again and again, God's mercy never runs dry. He keeps sending warnings, keeps offering the chance to return, and His faithfulness to His promises never depends on human faithfulness.

2. What This Reveals About People (2 Kings 17:13 to 15)

People have a real tendency to drift toward what feels familiar or comfortable rather than staying faithful to God, even after seeing God's goodness firsthand. Warnings are not always welcomed, even when they come from God Himself.

3. How This Points to Jesus (2 Samuel 7:12 to 16)

Despite centuries of failure from Israel's kings, God preserved the line of David through every collapse, every exile, every dark chapter, because that promise would one day be fulfilled perfectly in Jesus, the King who never turns away and never fails His people.

5 GOSPEL CONNECTION

This whole stretch of history, spanning kings and kingdoms and centuries, tells one long story of people who could not stay faithful, no matter how many chances they were given. It would be easy to read this and lose hope. But threaded through every single page of failure is a promise that never breaks, God's commitment to send a King from David's line who will not fail the way every other king failed. That King is Jesus, the one who never turns away from God, and who never stops calling His people home, even when they have wandered as far as Israel and Judah ever did.

Simple Gospel Sentence: Every king in this story eventually turned away from God except One, Jesus, the King who never fails and who died to bring wandering people home.

6 QUESTIONS CHILDREN WILL ASK

Why did the kingdom split into two?

After Solomon's death, his son Rehoboam treated the people harshly, and ten of the twelve tribes rebelled and formed their own kingdom in the north, called Israel, while two tribes stayed loyal to David's family in the south, called Judah.

Did every single king turn away from God?

Every king of the northern kingdom did. In the southern kingdom, Judah, there was a mix, some kings honored God and led reform, while others led the people further into false worship.

What happened to the people when their kingdoms fell?

Many people from Israel were carried away by the Assyrian Empire, and later many people from Judah were carried away by Babylon, forced to leave their homeland as a consequence of generations of turning away from God.

If God knew this would happen, why did He let it happen?

God gave people real choices and sent real warnings through the prophets again and again. He did not force anyone to obey Him, but He also never stopped offering a way back.

Did God give up on His people after all of this?

No. God preserved a remnant of His people and preserved the family line of David, keeping His promise alive until it was fulfilled perfectly in Jesus.

7 TEACHER SUMMARY

Big Idea	God's people repeatedly turned away from Him, but God's mercy and His promises never failed, leading all the way to Jesus.
What God Did	Sent prophet after prophet across centuries to call His people back, and preserved His promise to David's family even through national collapse and exile.
How It Points to Jesus	Every human king in this story eventually failed God's people in some way, but Jesus, the promised King from David's line, never fails and never turns away.
Error to Avoid	Do not rush past this as just a sad history lesson, or reduce it to a simple moral, obey and be blessed, disobey and be punished. The center of this lesson is God's relentless mercy, not merely human failure or divine punishment.
Hope to Emphasize	No matter how far someone wanders, God's mercy is new every morning, and He is always ready to welcome people back.