

EXILE

Part 3 of The Savior King. 2 Kings 21:1-16.

Peter Foxwell. The Cornerstone Church. September 27, 2026.

Dismiss the Middle School

STUDY GUIDE

As you came in this morning, you should have received a bulletin. Inside, you'll find a simple study guide you can use in a few different ways: to follow along with today's teaching, to reflect on during your personal devotions this week, or to spark conversation in your small group.

More resources are available online. [The link is in your study guide.](#)

Let's get started on today's teaching ...

INTRODUCTION

What would happen if we stepped back from the Bible for a moment and looked at its whole story from 30,000 feet?

I remember having an experience like that during graduate school. I read a book on biblical theology, which was a brand-new concept to me. The book was so good that I kept reading through the Christmas break.

I learned that the Bible is NOT a collection of disconnected stories, moral lessons, and inspiring verses. It is one grand story—God’s story—revealing his character and his plan of salvation through his Son, Jesus Christ.

That changes the way you read your Bible, doesn’t it?

Today, I want to invite you to do some biblical theology with me, a 30,000-foot view of one theme through the unfolding storyline of the Bible.

We’ll study a concept called the Exile. Now, the Exile may sound like a history lesson at first. You may think, “What does the fall of Jerusalem and the captivity in Babylon have to do with my life today?”

But the Exile is actually the backdrop to the Incarnation of God in Jesus Christ. The Exile helps us understand why Jesus spoke of gathering, restoring, forgiving, and bringing people back to God. And it points us forward to the day when God will make His dwelling with His people forever.

Before we can understand the Exile, we need to understand the background.

THE BACKGROUND TO 2 KINGS 21

Israel was not just another nation on a map. God called and formed Israel. It was a covenant relationship.

Think of a covenant as a solemn, binding relationship established by God. God pledged Himself to Israel in grace, and He called Israel to belong to Him alone. They were to worship Him, obey Him, and live as His holy people among the nations.

And God attached blessings to that covenant. If Israel walked with Him, they would enjoy his protection, provision, peace in the land, fruitful harvests, and safety from their enemies. The Promised Land was a gift from God—a picture of living under His blessing and in His presence.

But God also gave clear warnings. If Israel turned from God to idols, injustice, and immorality, God would discipline them. Their enemies would invade. Their land would be devastated. And ultimately, they would be removed from the land and scattered among the nations.

And the tragedy is that Israel was given every reason to love and obey God, yet again and again, they turned away.

And that brings us to the kings of Israel:

THE KINGS OF ISRAEL

King Solomon died in 931 BC, and his son Rehoboam took the throne. He messed up big time, and the Kingdom of Israel divided into two rival kingdoms, Israel in the north and Judah in the south.

A series of kings governed Judah for the next 200 years; some were faithful to God and led with wisdom, but most were godless and led the people into idolatry, injustice, and immorality.

For example, King Ahaz (2 Kings 18-20) shut down the Temple and its services. He built pagan altars at every corner of the city and set up idols and their altars in the Temple courtyards.

When Ahaz died in 715 BC, his son Hezekiah took the throne. He was faithful to God even when the Assyrians invaded Judah. He reopened and purified the temple and removed the pagan shrines. He wasn't perfect, but he was headed in the right direction.

Then he died, and his son Manasseh became king, and he reversed everything good Hezekiah had done. He was possibly the worst, most godless ruler of all.

And that brings us to 2 Kings 21.

2 Kings 21:1-16 (CSB)

Manasseh was twelve years old when he became king, and he reigned fifty-five years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Hephzibah. 2 **He did what was evil in the LORD's sight**, imitating the detestable practices of the nations that the LORD had dispossessed before the Israelites. 3 He rebuilt the high places that his father Hezekiah had destroyed and reestablished the altars for Baal. He made an Asherah, as King Ahab of Israel had done; he also bowed in worship to all the stars in the sky and served them. 4 He built altars in the LORD's temple, where the LORD had said, "Jerusalem is where I will put my name." 5 He built altars to all the stars in the sky in both courtyards of the LORD's temple. 6 He sacrificed his son in the fire, practiced witchcraft and divination, and consulted mediums and spiritists. He did a huge amount of evil in the LORD's sight, angering him.

7 Manasseh set up the carved image of Asherah, which he made, in the temple that the LORD had spoken about to David and his son Solomon: "I will establish my name forever in this temple and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel. 8 I will never again cause the feet of the Israelites to wander from the land I gave to their ancestors if only they will be careful to do all I have commanded them — the whole law that my servant Moses commanded them." 9 But they did not listen; Manasseh caused them to stray so that they did worse evil than the nations the LORD had destroyed before the Israelites.

10 The LORD said through his servants the prophets, 11 "Since King Manasseh of Judah has committed all these detestable acts — worse evil than the Amorites who preceded him had done — and by means of his idols has also caused Judah to sin, 12 this is what the LORD God of Israel says: 'I am about to bring such a disaster on Jerusalem and Judah that everyone who hears about it will shudder. 13 I will stretch over Jerusalem the measuring line used on Samaria and the mason's level used on the house of Ahab, and I will wipe Jerusalem clean as one wipes a bowl — wiping it and turning it upside down. 14 I will abandon the remnant of my inheritance and hand them over to their enemies. They will become plunder and spoil to all their enemies, 15 because they have done what is evil in my sight and have angered me from the day their ancestors came out of Egypt until today.' "

16 Manasseh also shed so much innocent blood that he filled Jerusalem with it from one end to another. This was in addition to his sin that he caused Judah to commit, so that they did what was evil in the LORD's sight.

THE EXILE

Manasseh's godless reign provoked the Lord into action.

- Because the king committed detestable acts, Jerusalem would be destroyed.
- Because the nation abandoned the Lord, he abandoned them.
- Because they gave themselves to idols, God gave them to their enemies.

They did what was evil in God's sight.

When God made his covenant with Israel after the Exodus, he warned them that he would send them out of the Promised Land if they were unfaithful (Leviticus 26, Deuteronomy 28-30). So, in 586 BC, the Lord sent Judah into exile in Babylon.

The Exile wasn't an idle threat; God carried it out. It happened.

2 Kings 25:8-12 (CSB) On the seventh day of the fifth month — which was the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon — Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guards, a servant of the king of Babylon, entered Jerusalem. 9 He burned the LORD's temple, the king's palace, and all the houses of Jerusalem; he burned down all the great houses. 10 The whole Chaldean army with the captain of the guards tore down the walls surrounding Jerusalem. 11 Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guards, deported the rest of the people who remained in the city, the deserters who had defected to the king of Babylon, and the rest of the population. 12 But the captain of the guards left some of the poorest of the land to be vinedressers and farmers.

THE EXILE, JESUS, AND THE NEW LAND

THE EXILE AND HOPE

Judah went into exile for seventy years. Then, around 60-70,000 Jews returned to the Land, and rebuilt the Temple and the walls of Jerusalem. Sadly, the majority of the Jews remained in prosperous Babylon.

Judah was a shadow of its former glory. But there was some hope ...

The Lord spoke through his prophets to the exiles about a time when he would restore the covenant blessings. He promised:

- Return from exile - dry bones living (Ezekiel 37).
- New Exodus (Isaiah 40, 43, 52).
- New Covenant (Jeremiah 33).
- New heart and his indwelling Spirit (Ezekiel 36).
- New King David - a good shepherd to faithfully lead his people back to God (Jeremiah 23; Ezekiel 34, 37).
- His Presence would dwell with his people (Ezekiel 37, 43).
- Salvation for the nations would come from Judah (Isaiah 49, 56).

Most of these promises were not fulfilled when the exiles returned.

God never fails; he keeps every promise. But when? **Fast forward to 30 AD.** The people were under Roman rule, and still waiting for God's presence to return. They longed for the King David shepherd.

JESUS

Jesus fulfilled God's promises to the exiles. He preached about and demonstrated the Kingdom of God. John the Baptist proclaimed: ***“Prepare the way for the Lord”*** (Isaiah 40; Matthew 3:1-3) (another message of hope to the exiles). Those with open minds and hearts clearly saw Jesus as God returning to his people.

- Jesus is the promised Son of Man who rules the universe forever (Daniel 7; Mark 14), and the Messiah (John 4:25-26), the good shepherd (John 10), King David's successor (Luke 1).
- More than that, he is the Temple (John 1:14; 2:19-22) — the place where God manifests his presence and cleanses the nation from its sins.

Jesus re-lived Israel's story with one major difference: He was obedient and faithful to the Lord.

- Jesus went to Egypt, then returned to the Land. He was faithful in the desert and overcame Satan's temptations. He fulfilled God's plan for Israel as a light to the nations.
- During his final Passover meal, Jesus identified himself as the mediator of the promised New Covenant (Luke 22:20).
- The cross became the mercy seat where the atoning blood was sprinkled, replacing the ark of the covenant in the Temple.
- Jesus offered the indwelling Spirit, living water, new life, forgiven sins, and restoration to God and his covenant blessings.

BUT ... still the Bible calls us *exiles* (1 Peter 1:1). There must be still more to come to end the long exile.

THE END OF EXILE IN THE NEW PROMISED LAND

When will the Exile finally end? When heaven comes to earth. When we enter into our promised inheritance in the new creation, God's new promised land.

We first read about it in Isaiah, who wrote to encourage the exiles:

Isaiah 65:16-19 (CSB) For the former troubles will be forgotten and hidden from my sight. 17 "For I will create new heavens and a new earth; the past events will not be remembered or come to mind. 18 Then be glad and rejoice forever in what I am creating; for I will create Jerusalem to be a joy and its people to be a delight. 19 I will rejoice in Jerusalem and be glad in my people. The sound of weeping and crying will no longer be heard in her.

Then, Revelation 21-22 give us a foretaste of what is coming when Christ returns:

Revelation 21:2-5 (CSB) I also saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared like a bride adorned for her husband. 3 Then I heard a loud voice from the throne: Look, God's dwelling is with humanity, and he will live with them. They will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them and will be their God. 4 He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; grief, crying, and pain will be no more, because the previous things have passed away. 5 Then the one seated on the throne said, "Look, I am making everything new."

That's when God's promises reach their maximum fulfillment. It will be the end of exile, the greatest, most glorious day ever.

EYES FIXED ON THE END OF EXILE

We can apply the lessons of the Exile and its aftermath in several ways:

1. **Gratitude:** Thank God that we're already part of **the new creation in Christ**, just waiting for our new bodies and the new Land to be revealed.

2 Corinthians 5:17 (CSB) Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, and see, the new has come!

2. **Holiness:** Strive, with the Holy Spirit's help, to live a **new-creation lifestyle**.

*Ephesians 4:22-24 (CSB) ... (you were taught) to take off your former way of life, the old self that is corrupted by deceitful desires, 23 to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, 24 and to **put on the new self, the one created** according to God's likeness in righteousness and purity of the truth.*

3. **Detachment:** Hold on to this world lightly, since **our home** is the eternal Promised Land.

Philippians 3:20-21 (CSB) Our citizenship is in heaven, and we eagerly wait for a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ. 21 He will transform the body of our humble condition into the likeness of his glorious body, by the power that enables him to subject everything to himself.

4. **Attitude:** Cultivate a positive, optimistic, hopeful **attitude** since the best is yet to come. Jesus will return in glory, and we will be with him forever.

Matthew 24:30-31 (CSB) Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the peoples of the earth will mourn; and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. 31 He will send out his angels with a loud trumpet, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.

SMALL GROUP GUIDE

Use any or all of the following questions to guide your group's conversation about Sunday's sermon.

Observation

As you look at 2 Kings 21:1–9, what specific actions and patterns describe Manasseh's leadership and its effect on Judah?

In verses 10–16, what reasons does God give for the coming disaster on Jerusalem and Judah? Which words or images stand out to you?

Are there any signs of hope in 2 Kings 21:1-16?

Interpretation

What does 2 Kings 21 reveal about the seriousness of sin and God's patience (think how long it was between the Exodus and the Exile - 600 years of mostly idolatry)?

Jesus is presented as the one who faithfully relives Israel's story. How does that framework change the way you understand Jesus' life and mission?

The sermon says Christians are already part of God's new creation in Christ, while still waiting for its complete fulfillment. What should we expect as we live in that "already, but not yet" reality?

Application

What are the signs that we are still in exile, that the fullness of God's promises is yet to come? How can faithful Christians respond during this time of waiting?

Review Peter's application section: Eyes on the End of Exile. Which of the four applications seemed most relevant for your life? How would you integrate that application into your lifestyle?

We've been exploring the biblical history of Israel and how it all culminates in Jesus Christ, and today we come to King Manasseh and the event called the Exile - one of the most devastating episodes in world history.

To get the most from today's study, we need to take a moment to learn the background. Then we'll understand what is called Exile theology; more than that, we'll know God better, appreciate Jesus more, and understand why life today is so challenging.