

**Sermon Series:** The Big Picture

**Sermon title:** Exile

**Scripture reading:**

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S.C. Brown, Pastor

**Introduction:** Have you ever been homesick? I am sure most of us have known the feeling sometime in our life. You want to be home where things are familiar. Where people understand you. Where there is a sense of safety and belonging. As Dorothy said in the Wizard of Oz, *"There's no place like home."*

Well, most of us know that feeling but if I am guessing there aren't many of us who know what it's like to be *barred* from our home, to be kicked out of our home or to be run out of our home; to be **EXILED**.

That's a different feeling all together. Gone against your will. Desiring to go back but can't. Maybe some of you here today have been exiled from your home and family because of your faith in Jesus.

In our walk through the major themes of the Bible where we are trying to see the Big Picture, we come

today to the period of Biblical history known as the Exile.

**Exile: What is it?:** *a prolonged living away from one's country, usually not by choice.*

You might be familiar with it because it is common in news stories.

For example, just last week the exiled Prime Minister of Thailand, Thaksin Shinawatra was in Hong Kong for his daughter's wedding and the Thai government asked HK to extradite him. Edward Snowden is in Exile in Russia and can't go to the USA. **Exile is being kicked out for something you've done.**

Well, as we will see today, the Israelites are kicked out of the Promised Land for something they've done. Of course, being exiled isn't a new concept. We've seen in Genesis that Adam and Eve were exiled from the Garden of Eden for refusing to listen to God and live under his rule. Their son Cain was exiled from the LORD and from the ground. Moses fled Egypt after he killed a man and was in exile in Midian. But this exile of the Israelites is different. It's the whole nations being banished from the land.

**Exile: When did it happen?**

To answer the question of when did it happen, we need to back up a little bit. Last week we talked about this period of history called Kingship.

The first king of Israel was Saul and he didn't follow the LORD.

David was a good king who "inquired of the LORD" and followed the LORD with all of his heart. Though he wasn't perfect, his life points us toward the kind of king we need.

David's son Solomon started out well but eventually was led astray into idolatry through his love of women. Due to Solomon's sin, the kingdom was divided during the reign of his son, Rehoboam.

One part of the kingdom was the Northern Kingdom, consisting of 10 tribes ruled first by an evil man named Jeroboam and the Southern Kingdom, consisting of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin ruled by David's heirs.

Eventually, because of their refusal to live under God's rule, both kingdoms were exiled.

- The Northern Kingdom (10 tribes), whose capital city was Samaria, was exiled to Assyria in 722 BC.

- The Southern Kingdom (2 tribes), whose capital was Jerusalem was exiled to Babylon in 586 BC.

### **Exile: What caused it?**

Let's turn to our text in **2 Kings chapter 17**.

### **[Read 17:1-6]**

Here we have some of the details of *how* the North was exiled to Assyria. Assyria was the great power to their north and Hoshea did what many kings would have done. He tried to use a strategy called, 'the enemy of my enemy is my friend', by making an alliance with Egypt. Didn't work. What should he have done? Where should he have turned?

He should have done what Hezekiah, the King of the South does when Assyria threatens to take Jerusalem. That's in the next **2 chapters, 18 and 19**. And it is worth reading.

Hezekiah turns to the King of the universe, the LORD his God to help. In these chapters we have the Assyrian king and generals making all kinds of boast about how they've defeated everyone. What they're saying is, "It's pointless. Just surrender."

Through the prophet Isaiah, God reassures Hezekiah.

### **[Read 19:32-36]**

So, the king in the North, Hoshea, should have done what the king in the south, King Hezekiah did. He should have turned to the LORD, but he didn't. Let's look back at our main passage in chapter 17 and we will see why.

## [Read 17:7-12]

### I. THE LAW OF GOD FORGOTTEN.

What we see clearly in these verses is what caused them to be exiled; what they did for God to banish them from the land he had prepared for them.

1. **They were ungrateful to God.** (verse 7) *“Who had brought them up out of the land of Egypt.”*
2. **They gradually became like the culture around them.** (verse 8) *“walked in the customs of the nations and their wicked kings.”*
3. **They turned to idol worship.** (verse 9-12) *“on every high hill and under every green tree.”* Now just in case you’re tempted to think that Baal and Ashteroth worship wasn’t too bad, you should know that I can’t even explain in public what their practices were. It would suffice to say that it was sexually immoral partying out in the open.

Also in verses 14 through 17 we see how wicked they had become.

## [Read 2 Kings 17:14-17]

**Jeremiah 32** describes how both Israel and Judah eventually went down this same path of idolatry.

## [Read Jeremiah 32:30-35]

*“They turned to me their back and not their face.”*

4. **They forgot God's word.** (verse 12) "which the LORD had said to them, *"You shall not do this."* God had already warned them in the Law, in **Deuteronomy 28**, that if they didn't obey him that they would be *"plucked off the land"* and that God would *"scatter them among the peoples"*.

This is the root of all of their problems. They were told time and time things like, *"these words of mine shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise. Bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates"*. **Deuteronomy 6**

The Law of God had been totally forgotten.

## **II. THE PROPHETS OF GOD IGNORED.**

### **[Read 2 Kings 17:13-14]**

Oh, how gracious is the LORD. The prophets were servants of God who were sent to remind the people of the covenant. They are covenant reinforcers, not predictors of the future. When a prophet shows up, it's a gracious warning light going off. Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Jeremiah and many others like the 12 minor prophets. The reason we see so many prophets during this time period is because they were so off track!

God was screaming at them and trying to get their attention. *"You're out of bounds. You're forgetting the covenant. You're forgetting me and my word. You're not living under my rule. You're turning to idols. God is not going to tolerate this."*

The road Idolatry begins at a place called 'forgetting God's word'. The next stop is called 'ignoring God's prophets' and the road leads to place called **exile**.

### **III. PENALTY APPLIED**

God is holy. God is just. What he says he will do, he does. Look at our text in **2 Kings 17**.

**[Read 17:18-20]** God removed them from the land. The Northern kingdom would never be the same. The Assyrians resettled it with foreigners. These people mixed with some of the Jews who came back after the fall of Assyria and were known as the Samaritans. Judah, by God grace would return 70 years after they went into Exile. More about that next week.

**You may wonder what all of this has to do with your life!**

**Point number 1 is that they forgot God's word.**

Are you currently marinating in God's word?

Are you aware of how crucial it is?

Would your Bible be found in a dusty old closet like it was in king Josiah's day?

**Point number 2 is that they ignored God's warnings through the prophets.**

Has God sent you warnings through one of his servants that you are ignoring?

Someone spoken truth into your life and you're not listening?

Who is speaking truth into your life?

**We are all a lot like the children of Israel.**

Are you aware of how easily you can drift into idolatry?

Are you aware of your own propensity to wander?

As we have seen in scripture so far, we are all sinners.

We all want to do that which is right in our own eyes.

We all committed evil as we have turned our back toward God and not our face.

And God promises serious consequences if we don't turn our face toward God.

#### **IV. PERMANENT EXILE COMING.**

For those who continue on a path of self rule, which is idolatry, there is a permanent exile coming. An eternal separation, an eternal banishment away from the LORD's presence. It's a place that the Bible calls the the lake of fire.

**[Read Matthew 13:47-50]**



No one wants to go there. Though sadly, the Bible says that many will choose the lake of fire over Christ. Well, is there any way to escape exile? Is there any way to dwell with God in his place forever? Is there any hope for idolaters like you and me?

## **V. PARDON THROUGH CHRIST**

In a very real way, we can say that Christ was exiled for us so that we don't have to be exiled from God forever. What does that mean?

I could say it like this:

All of the sin that I have done...that causes me to be separated from God (*ie...exiled from his presence*) was placed on Christ instead...providing access into God's presence for me.

Or let me say it another way:

My filth, rebellion and idolatry caused me to be *exiled* from God. God said, "He cannot stand in my holy presence as a sinner." But Christ said, "I will take the filth onto myself and wash you clean so the you can dwell in God's presence. I will be exiled outside of Jerusalem and there I will die on a cross.

I will be exiled from the Father for a time so that you don't have to be exiled forever....if you will turn your face toward me and not your back.

**Which will you choose today?**

If you don't know Jesus Christ, today is the day to turn your face toward him and receive eternal life.

If you ARE a believer in Christ, the call for us is to *"conduct ourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, knowing that we were ransomed from the futile ways...with the precious blood of Christ."*

1 Peter 1:17

And *"As sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh which wage war against our soul."*

1 Peter 2:11

*"For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come."*

Hebrews 13:14