

Incrementalism

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Open your Bible to Second Kings chapter 17. 2 Kings chapter 17. We're going to read the first of six verses, but we're actually going to be using the entire chapter. Let me just go ahead and say I'm actually supposed to be preaching today on the second part of reasons why we are different. And I will just come back with that message next Sunday and finish that message. But I was reading and studying this week and this popped out and I thought in light of the circumstances and the election that's going on and possibly whatever is going to be happening this would be a good time to bring this truth to light. So let's look in second Kings chapter 17 notice verse one.

In the 12th year of Ahaz, king of Judah began Hosia the son of Eli to reign in Samaria over Israel nine years. And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, but not as the kings of Israel that were before him. Against him came up Shalmaneser, king of Assyria. And Hosia became his servant and gave him presence. And the king of Assyria found conspiracy in Hosia. For he had sent messengers to Sargon, king of Egypt, and brought no present to the king of Assyria, as he had done year by year. Therefore the king of Assyria shut him up and bound him in prison.

Then the king of Assyria came up throughout all the land and went up to Samaria and besieged it three years. In the ninth year of Hosia, the king of Assyria took Samaria and carried Israel away into Assyria and placed them in Halah and Habor in the river of Goan of the river of Goan and in the cities of the Mes.

Now the title of the message today is incrementalism, invasion and replacement. I am sure that everyone understands these three terms or at least they certainly should understand these terms. Incrementalism is simply doing something slowly, piece by piece, little by little, until a goal is accomplished. There are many things that are can only be done by increments. Building a house is only done by increments. You must first lay the foundation and then once you get all the plumbing done, you stud up the walls and once that's done, you can put on the roof and just increments, little by little.

Moreover, any large task is done by increments. You have to start somewhere and little by little you accomplish that task. When you stop and think about education, education is accomplished by incrementalism. I mean we begin teaching our children of phonics and or at the very minimum site reading and then arithmetic. We do not begin teaching them physics and calculus. We lay the foundation and slowly but surely we build and upon that foundation I want you to stop and think about the fact that God created the universe incrementally. He did it one day at a time until he accomplished it in six days.

The Bible says in Exodus chapter 20 and verse 11, for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth and the sea and all that in them is and rested on the seventh day. Wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it. So it is true according to Psalm 33:es 8 and 9 that God simply spoke the world into existence because the Bible says there let all the earth fear the Lord. Let all the inhabitants stand in awe of him. Listen now for he spake and it was done. He commanded and it stood fast.

And so the answer to your question would be this. Yes, God could have spoken it into existence in an instant of time, but he didn't. So he took six days. He built this universe incrementally based upon his own wisdom, his own counsel, and he determined that which was going to bring him the most honor and the most glory.

The Bible tells us in Colossians 1 and verse 16, for by him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created by him and for him. And so when you get to Revelation 4 and verse 11, thou worthy, oh Lord, to receive glory and honor and power, for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

So God then created this earth in six days. Stop and think about this as well. God's providence is incremental. God does not dump everything upon us at one time. In fact, we are taught to pray for our daily bread, not our annual bread. And also, he gives us seasons in which we gather fruits and our vegetables.

In fact, the Bible says in Acts 14 and verse 17, "Nevertheless, he left not himself without witness in that he did good. and gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons filling our hearts with gladness and with food. So notice if you would everything is basically done by increments.

And here's another one. Have you ever considered the fact that everything that you know about the Bible, everything you know about God was given to you incrementally? I mean when God saved you, you did not become an instant theologian. You could not discuss theology. You may have known two great truths. Number one, that you were a sinner. And number two, that Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior.

You knew that for sure, but you could not discuss the rest of theology because you did not know that. How did you get to the place where you are now with your knowledge? And the answer is incremental.

In fact, Isaiah 28:es 9 and 10, I want you to listen to this. Isaiah 28:9 and 10. Whom shall he teach knowledge? And whom shall he make to understand doctrine? Them that are weaned from the milk and drawn from the breast? Now listen to this. For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little and there a little.

So God taught us by increments. So we understand what we understand today simply because of incrementalism. Do you realize then that our lives and everything in them and everything about them involves increments? I'm 80 years old. I was not born 80 years old. It took me 70 nine long years to reach 80. So the point being that is an increment and we tend to forget often times about the weight that we gain. You have to understand you don't go to bed slender and wake up the next morning 40 lbs overweight. You put that 40 pounds on incrementally.

And the way you can only take it off is incrementally. And I suppose that you've noticed it's a lot easier to put on than it is to take off. And when you start taking it off, it comes off very, very slowly. And those increments seem to be just not even noticeable for the longest period of time.

Now, I'm pointing all this out for a specific reason because we are going to grasp, I hope, a vast spiritual truth that we need to understand. in our lives. So let me put it to you like this. As Christians, we do not fall into deep sin suddenly and instantly. It is done by increments, little by little. We do not go to sleep one night and wake up the next morning with a seared conscience. No. If our conscience becomes seared, It's because we've listened to untruth.

We've listened to lies and we've spent time around people that we should not have spent time around. Now, the Bible tells you in 1 Timothy 4, beginning there with verse one, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly that in latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrine of devils, speaking lies and hypocrisy, having their conscience seared with a hot iron.

Now, there's another verse that is going to fit in what I'm going to be telling you, and that's 1 Corinthians chapter 15 and verse 33. Because usually if we're listening to lies or we're listening to untruth, we're around people who speak untruths and believe lies. So, 1 Corinthians chapter 15 and verse 33 says, "Be not deceived. Evil communications corrupt good manners. Evil communications corrupt good manners. Now the Greek word for communications is the word *homalia* and it refers to companionship, communion and fellowship. So it would be what you and I would call just hanging around together or hanging out together.

So I want you to turn in your Bible holding second Kings 17. We're going to be going over most of this chapter, but I want you to look in Psalm 1 at verse one because here is an excellent truth concerning incrementalism. I want you to look at it. Psalm 1 verse one. God says, "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel or the advice of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

Now, believe it or not, God is giving us some incrementalism in this verse. So, he tells you what the blessed man does not do. The blessed man does not walk in the advice or the counsel of the ungodly. Well, what happens then if a man does begin to listen to, heed, obey, and walk in the advice of the ungodly. Well, the next step according to verse one, he stands in the way of sinners. That is, he associates with them. If you're going to listen to their advice, you're going to be associating with them.

Well, if you listen to their advice and you associate with them, what are you going to be doing next? Well, he says in verse one, "Nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful." That's agreement. You end up agreeing with them. So, what began with the advice began next with association and ended up with agreement.

So the truth of the matter is just a little bit of listening and hearing of the ungodly leads to association with them and then that ultimately leads to agreement with them. So let me just kind of explain this again because I'm going to be showing you this in second Kings 17.

Christian men and women do not wake up one morning and say to themselves, "Hey, I think I'm going to go commit adultery today." Doesn't work like that. Not at all. If it is done today, it began a long time back with ungodly and unlawful thoughts and entertaining those thoughts in your mind. Once you had those thoughts in your mind, Once you thought about this subject, the next thing you have to do is justify those thoughts or justify that action in your mind. And so here's how you justify. You justify it with unbiblical, ungodly thinking. Well, my husband doesn't love me or my wife doesn't love me or they don't understand me or I'm not getting the attention I deserve or I think my spouse has stepped out on me so I'm going to get even.

Now you see it doesn't happen just at one time. So you begin to have unlawful and ungodly thoughts. Then you begin to justify those thoughts and your planning and then the next thing you go you pick out someone. You begin to flirt with them. You give them suggestive statements and ideas and the next thing you know you end up agreeing to meet. So all I'm trying to point is out is everything is done incrementally.

Now here's one more illustration. I've preached now for nearly 60 years. I have seen an awful lot of professing Christians leave the church and leave the Fellowship of the Saints. And a lot of these men and women would once they made their profession of faith would be on the front row full of them and vigor wanting everything that they could get, listening They wanted teaching. They wanted preaching. They wanted this. They wanted that.

They wanted books recommended to them. I mean, just it was gung-ho. But the next thing you know, they get upset with the preacher or they get upset about a sermon or they get upset with someone in the church or they get upset about the truth that they don't understand and don't like. And so now instead of sitting on the front row, they move somewhere to the middle of the church where they're a little more obscure and then after a while they're on the back row and then they start missing prayer meeting then they miss Sunday night and the only service they come to is Sunday morning and guess what after a while they're not even there on Sunday morning and they never come back how do they leave incrementally.

So here's the point I'm trying to make sin is always accomplished incrementally and it always leads to judgment. Here is the point of second Kings 17. It is not just individuals who sin incrementally. Families may sin incrementally. Churches may sin incrementally. And nations may sin incrementally.

So what we have in 2 Kings chapter 17 is what you and I are actually seeing today. Okay, hang on. Israel in second in 2 Kings 17 has slowly but surely left the commandments of God. They've left the worship of God. Hosia at the time was the king in Israel. Now remember if you would please Samaria is the capital of the northern kingdom just like Jerusalem was the capital of the southern kingdom. So you actually have two kingdoms. And so here is the king of the northern kingdom. He is a servant to chanzer the Assyrian king.

And of course after three years Israel Samaria is captured. So I want you to look if you would at verses four and five and six. This just sets the stage here. And the king of Assyria found conspiracy in Hosia. For he had sent messengers to so king of Egypt and brought no present or tribute to the king of Assyria as he had done year by year. Therefore the king of Assyria shut him up and bound him up in prison. Then the king of Assyria came up throughout all the land and went up in to Samaria and besieged it three years.

In the ninth year, Hosia, the king of Assyria, took Samaria and carried Israel away into Assyria and placed them in Halah or Habor and by the river of the Goan or by the river of Goan and in the cities of the Mes. Now, I want you to note if you would, Israel has sinned and God has sent the Assyrians to invade them. And of course, they're about to be replaced as well.

Now, I've told you this before, but since it's in this chapter and it's in the context, I'm going to point it out again. I want you to see the real reason why Israel went into captivity. Now, I know there are other reasons given in the scripture, but this main reason here summarizes all of the others as well.

So, I want you to look in 2 Kings 17, beginning there in verse 7. Now, we already know that Hosshi has been captured, imprisoned. We also know that Samaria has been conquered. So look in verse 7. For so it was that the children of Israel had sinned against the Lord their God, which had brought them up out of the land of Egypt, from under the hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, had feared other gods.

Now, stop right there just for a moment. So we know they've gone into idolatry. We know they have feared other gods. What most people do not understand is the very basis of idolatry because we think of idolatry bowing down to an idol. No. In fact, Colossians 3:5 tells us that covetousness is idolatry. But there's more to idolatry than just simply bowing down before an idol.

Now, the Bible says in verse 7, they feared other gods. How did they fear other gods? Look in verse eight. And walked in the statutes, that's the laws, of the heathen, whom the Lord cast out from before the children of Israel and of the kings of Israel, which they had made. There were no godly kings in Israel. So now what they're doing is obeying the laws of the heathen, man-made laws, and man-made laws of the kings of Israel, and refusing and rejecting God's law. and rebelling against him.

Now, it's interesting that God is equating idolatry with walking in the statutes or the laws of the ungodly. Now, the same sin in 1st Samuel chapter 8 is known as trading God for a man. That's where they demanded a king, a human king when God was their king. That's when God told Samuel, "Fear not. They've not rejected thee, but they've rejected me that I should not reign over them." So actually, when we reject God's law, when we reject God's word, it is rejection of God as king, as sovereign. And what we're doing then is establishing and replacing man as king and sovereign instead of God.

Now, I want you to remember Isaiah 33:22. Isaiah 33:22. The scripture says this, "For the Lord is our judge. The Lord is our lawgiver. The Lord is our king. He will save us." So what is God? God is king.

He is judge. And he is lawgiver. He's the only one with authority and power to give law. Now men are not to make law, quote unquote, so to speak. What men are to do are to implement God's law because God's already made the law. Therefore, you read in the New Testament in the book of James chapter 4 and verse 12, for there is one lawgiver who is able to save and to destroy. Only one lawgiver. And so, that happens to be God.

Now, There would be nothing wrong with obeying man's law as long as man's law is in agreement with and in conformity to God's law. But when man's law contradicts God's law according to Acts 5 and verse 29, then Peter and the rest of the apostles said to their rulers, "We ought to obey God rather than man. And so God is supreme and God is sovereign and God is to be obeyed more than man.

Now I want you to hold second Kings. And I want you to turn in your Bible to the little book of Micah, the little book of Micah. And it is right after Jonah and right before Naam. And I want you to look in Micah chapter 6 because God is going to show us a curse, but he's also going to show us the reason for the curse. And I want you to think about this in our land today.

So look in Micah chapter 6 and let's begin reading there with verse 14. We could have started earlier, but notice verse 14. God says, "Thou shalt eat, but not be satisfied, and thy casting down shall be in the midst of thee, and thou shalt take hold but shalt not deliver. And that which thou deliverest will I give up to the sword. Why? Look at this. Thou shalt sow, but thou shalt not reap.

Thou shalt tread the olives, but thou shalt not anoint thee with oil. And sweet wine, but thou shalt not drink wine. Why? For the statutes, that is the laws of Omry are kept, and all the works of the house of Ahab, and you walk in their counselss. and I will that I should make thee a

desolation and the inhabitants thereof a hissing. Therefore, you shall bear the reproach of my people.

Now, he said, here's why I'm cursing you. Because you are walking in the statutes of Omry and all the works of the house of Ahab, and you walk in their counselss. Now, I don't know if you know who Omry was, but he was the father of Ahab. And so, Ahab then continued the statutes or the laws of Omry. And God says, "I'm putting you under a curse. Everything is falling apart. because you've rejected me as king.

You rejected me as judge. You rejected me as lawgiver. And you've turned to man. And so therefore, you are cursed with a curse." So refusing and rebelling against God's lawful authority and submitting to man's usurped authority is treasonous in the sight of God.

Stop and think about 1st Samuel chapter 8 again. God said, "They've not rejected thee, Samuel, but they've rejected me that I should not be king over them." So, it is treason in the sight of God because God is to be obeyed at all cost because he is the king. He is the judge and he is the lawgiver.

So, let me ask you a question. I already know the answer, but I'm going to ask it anyway. Now, what if someone came in this room, maybe the president, maybe the judge, maybe a cop came in this room and says, "Right now, I demand that each one of you reject Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior." Would you do that? Well, I know the answer. No, you wouldn't do that. What if someone came in with a pistol, pointed at you, and said, "Right now, you reject Jesus Christ or you're going to die." Well, there might be a few that would come in, but most would not.

Not if they really and truly knew the Lord Jesus Christ. So, what I'm trying to tell you is this, and I'm going to show it to you. The professing Christians who would not denounce Jesus Christ or deny him or his word or his truth would not do it by request and would not do it by coercion, but they would do it by incrementalism because they would not realize what was happening until it was too late.

Now, I want you to watch this. We go back to 2 Kings chapter 17. Watch carefully. Let's read verse 8 and then verse 9. And they walked in the statutes of the heathen whom the Lord cast out from before the children of Israel and the kings of Israel which they had made. And the children of Israel did secretly those things that were not right against the Lord their God. And they built them high places. in all their cities from the tower of the watchman to the fenced city.

Now it's important to understand that this rebellion and this idolatry began secretly. That is where all sin begins secretly. The word secretly is the Hebrew word katha and it means to do something covertly or to do something secretly. That is why on the farm when we were children and we wanted to do something bad, maybe smoke a cigarette or something, we would go out behind the barn. Why would you go behind the barn? Because nobody could see you secret. You know, the Bible talks about people doing things at night.

You know why? Because of darkness. Folks cannot see you. And so when the Bible is talking about doing these things secretly, the Bible is referring to that which is done in the mind where no one can see what you are thinking. No one is knowing your thoughts except you and of course God. Now, you don't have to look there. I'll quote it for you.

But in the book of Ezekiel chapter 8 and verse 12, if you want to turn there, look at Ezekiel 8 and verse 12 and look what God shows Ezekiel about the ancients of Israel. And Ezekiel 8 Verse 12. Then said he unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen what the ancients of Israel do in the dark?

Every man in the chambers of his imagery, for they say, "The Lord seeth not, and the Lord has forsaken the earth." So doing it in the dark means the chambers of the imagery. He's talking about the idolatry of all of these ancients that began in their mind.

So here's what is happening in 2 Kings chapter 17. All of this idolatry and all of this rebellion was in the minds and the hearts of the Israelites when it could not be contained any longer in the mind. Then they began to do their heathenistic worship out in the forest. under the trees, in the mountains, and as God says, under every green tree. They did them over and over and over.

Now, I want you to watch this. He said in verse 9, "And the children of Israel did secretly those things that were not right against the Lord their God, and they built them high places in all their cities." I'm going to come back to that. From the tower of the watchman to the fence city.

Now, this is a proverbial expression which just simply refers to the abundance of altars and high places. I'm going to give you three quotes. The first one is from the Puritan John Trap. He said, "From one corner of the country to another, a proverbial form of speech." Then Matthew Pooh in all parts and places both in cities and in the country, yay, in the most uninhabited and neglected parts where few or none dwell beside the watchmen who are left there in towers to preserve the cattle and fruits of the earth or to give notice of the approach of enemies. Then one more Colin Dich in all their cities from the tower of the watchman to the fortified city he said the Hebrew word for tower mdall is a tower built for the protection of the flocks in the steeps that is in the mountains and is mentioned here as the smallest and most solitary place of human abode in antithesis to the large and fortified cities. And in other words, what we are being told is they had these altars everywhere originally in the country but then it got into the cities as well.

So look in verses 10 and 11. And they set them up images and groves in every high hill and under every green tree. There it is. And there they burn incense in all the high places, as did the heathen, whom the Lord carried away before them, and they wrought wicked things to provoke the Lord to anger.

Now, if you'll go back to verse 10, they did this. Look at it. And they set them up images and groves in every high hill and under every green tree. Now, the word image just refers to as statutes. In other words, statues, they had made statues which God had forbidden. They had made idols.

But now he talks about groves. Now notice the groves is not a grove like you and I think about. We think about someone like one of my friends who owns a huge peon grove or we talk about a grove of oak trees or a grove of hickory trees. No.

Every time you see the word grove in the Old Testament, with the exception, and I forget the chapter in the book of Genesis, where Abraham planted a grove of trees, that refers to a grove of trees. But the grove the rest of the time refers to a false idol. In fact, the Hebrew word is a Shira, which was the false goddess Aarte. who was the consort of Baal who was a Canaanite goddess. Now she may have been carved from a tree. it was an image but it is not a grove of trees. It is just simply this Canaanite goddess and she was an idol.

So if you look back at verse 11 and there they burnt incense and to all the high places as did the heathen whom the Lord carried away before them and wrought wicked things to provoke the Lord to anger. Here it is. For they served idols. That goes back to the grove. That goes back to the image. For they served idols where the Lord had said unto them, you shall not do this thing.

Now, here's the interesting thing. These people had to rejected God. rejected his law, rejected his covenant, rejected him, and yet in his grace, in his mercy, in his compassion, he warned them and pleaded with them.

So look, if you would in verses 13 and 14, yet the Lord testified against Israel and against Judah, by all the prophets, and by all the seers, saying, "Turn you everyone from your evil ways, and keep my commandments and my statutes, according to all the law, which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants of prophets, notwithstanding, they would not hear, but hardened their necks like to the neck of their fathers that did not believe in the Lord their God. So God sent to them his prophets, and beseeching them and commanded them to turn from their wicked ways. And yet they would not. They would not even listen.

Now, what I want you to see next is the secret sin that became open in the sense that they were worshiping under trees and on mountains and mounds has now led to the point where they completely and totally repudiate God and his covenant in his word. So if you'll look in your Bibles there to verses 15-17, look how total they were in their rejection of God. And they rejected his statutes and his covenants that he had made with their fathers, and his testimonies, which he testified against them. And they followed vanity, that is idolatry, and they became vain, that is idolatrous, and went after the heathen that were round about them concerning whom the Lord had charged them that they should not do like them. And they left all the commandments of the Lord their God, and made them molten images, even two calves, and made a grove and worship all the host of heaven and serve Baal. Here it is. And they caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire and use divinations and enchantments and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the Lord to provoke him to anger.

I want you to notice the fact that the Bible says they sold themselves. You remember the Bible tells us that Ahab sold himself. Anytime we sin, we are selling ourselves. into slavery. We're selling ourselves into bondage. We're selling ourselves to judgment and destruction.

Now, here's the final insult. You remember God had his house in Jerusalem that was built by Solomon. Well, what these people have done is they not only got tired of worshiping their idols on the mountains on the mounds and under a marine tree. So they built houses for them which means then that they totally rejected and repudiated the house of God. So if you look to verse 29 of 2 Kings 17, how be it every nation made gods of their own and put them in the houses of the high places which the Samaritans had made every nation in their cities wherein they dwelt.

Now skip down to verse 32. So they feared the Lord and made unto themselves of the lowest of them priests of the high places which sacrificed for them in the houses of the high places.

Now the word houses is the word bayeth in the Hebrew which means a house, a dwelling place or habitation. So now they have totally rejected the house of God that is in Jerusalem and they made all these different houses for their false gods. Previously they had just worshiped under every green tree and on the mountains but now they have their houses for their idols and they completely and totally rejected God.

Now here's the sad thing. Judah, the southern kingdom had stayed true for a while, but they finally capitulated and compromised and went with the heathen. So if you look in 2 Kings 17, beginning there with verse 19, 2 Kings 17:E 19, look at this. Also Judah kept not the commandments of the Lord their God, but walked in the statutes of the laws of Israel, which they

made. And the Lord rejected all the seed of Israel and afflicted them and delivered them into the hand of the spoilers until he had cast them out of his sight.

So here's something we need to understand. We need to understand that civil unrest, invasion, confusion, and chaos in a nation is the judgment of God for rejecting his statutes, his rule, and his worship. Israel and later Judah were both invaded and replaced. Let me show you.

Look in your Bibles to verse oh, let's read verse 22. Let's start there. For the children of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam, which he did, they departed not from them until the Lord, notice now, until the Lord removed Israel out of his sight. And he had said by all of his servants of prophets. So was Israel carried away out of their own land to Assyria unto this day. Hang on. And the king of Assyria brought men from Babylon and from Kata and from Ava and from Hmath and from Sepharv and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel.

And they possess Samaria, that is the heathen. and dwelt in the cities thereof. So, let me make this statement. Nations that have been invaded, overwhelmed, captured, removed, and replaced are clear evidences of God's judgment. So, it's important for you and I to note that the Assyrian king took the Samaritans, he took the Israelites out of the northern kingdom, especially around Samaria since it was the capital, and put them over in Assyria in different areas. He then took heathen from different parts of the country, Babylon, Ava, Hamoth, brought them over and put them into Samaria.

Now, why in the world would he do that? Why would he import foreigners? And why would he not just leave the Samaritans where they were? Well, the answer is very simple because he was a tyrant because he did not want any uprisings. He did not want any rebellions. So what he did, he took the Israelites out, placed them in foreign lands, different places, divided them, and brought all these different heathen and put them in the same country.

So think about this if you would. There could not be any collaboration. There could not be any identification. There could not be any collusion between all these people probably some of them could not even speak the same language. And so when you have different religions, you have different cultures, you have different habits, good gracious, how could there be any uprising against a king because you can't get together on anything?

When you read this chapter, and I encourage you to read it tonight, you'll find they worship so many different gods. They worship Teimosh. They worship Baal. They worship Tartac. They worship all of these gods. How in the world are you going to get people together when they cannot agree on religion? They cannot agree on culture.

They cannot agree on habits. They cannot agree on anything. And so the king then knew exactly what he was doing. Now the few Samaritans that were left in the land intermarried. They intermarried with the heathen. Now Judah, remember for a while did not capitulate, did not compromise. Eventually Judah did.

But this is why when you read in the New Testament, the Judahites referred to the Samaritans as dogs because they intermarried with the heathen. And you remember there in John chapter 4 when our Lord went to Samaria and the woman came there with to the well and our Lord asked her for a drink of water. She said, "Whoa, wait, stop. How is it that thou being a Judeian speaketh unto me a woman which of Samaria?" Because the Judeans wouldn't even speak to the Samaritans because they counted them as dogs.

So, here's what God has done. God took these people who wanted to worship foreign idols And he put them in a foreign land where they could get their belly full of foreign idols. Other words, this is perfect justice. This is the Lex Talionis where God makes the punishment fit the crime. He put them in those foreign countries. Now, they're going to find out the futility and the impotence of serving those gods.

Now, I want you to turn in your Bibles if you would please to Deuteronomy 28. I want you to hold 2 Kings. We're coming right back there. But let me show you this. Look in Deuteronomy chapter 28. And let's begin reading there verse 45. See, God said this specifically.

This is part of the curses for disobedience. He says, "Moreover, all these curses shall come upon thee, and shall pursue thee and overtake thee till thou be destroyed, because thou hearkenest not unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to keep his commandments, and his statutes, which he commanded thee. And they shall be upon thee for a sign, and for a wonder, and upon thy seed forever. Watch this. Because thou servest not the Lord thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things, therefore thou shalt serve thine enemies, which the Lord shall send against thee in hunger. and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in one of all things. And he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until he have destroyed thee. The Lord shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flyth, a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand, a nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor shall favor to the young.

He shall eat the fruit of thy cattle, and the fruit of thy land, and until thou be destroyed. which also shall not leave thee either corn, wine, or oil, or the increase of thy kind, or flocks of thy sheep, until he destroyed thee. And he shall besiege thee in all thy gates, until the high and fits walls come down, wherein thou trustest throughout all the land. He shall besiege thee in all thy gates, throughout all the land which the Lord thy God has given thee. In other words, God said, I'm going to teach you the difference between my service and the service of these idols.

Now, I want to show it to you again. So, if you'll look in 2 Kings chapter 18, 2 Kings chapter 18, look at verses 11 and 12. Here it is again. 2 Kings 18 11. And the king of Assyria did carry away Israel unto Assyria, and put them in Hala and Habor by the river Goan, and in the cities of the Mes, because They obeyed not the voice of the Lord their God, but transgressed his covenant, and all that Moses, a servant of the Lord, commanded, and would not hear them or do them. So, they would not obey, and they would not listen.

Now, skip down to verses 33 and 34. Same chapter, 2 Kings 18, verse 33. Look at what he said. Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered at all his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria? Now watch. Where are the gods of Hammoth and of Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepham, Hea, and Iva?

Have they delivered Samaria out of my hand? Who are they among all the gods of the countries that have delivered their country out of mine hand that the Lord should deliver Jerusalem out of my hand?

Notice if you would, he's talking about all of these foreign gods that were in Samaria. Yes. God sent them into captivity because of those foreign gods. Foreign gods cannot save. They cannot deliver. All of the time, all of the expense, and all of the self-gratification that they had with all these heathenistic gods only merited and brought forth judgment.

Now, I want you to think I only have one application today and it's going to take me a few minutes to make it. Have you been thinking about what is going on in America? And have you been thinking incrementally? Where we are today in America did not start yesterday. It started a multitude of years back incrementally we have left our status as a Christian nation.

Now when you talk about a Christian nation that does not mean that everyone in the nation is a Christian but a Christian nation is a nation that has God for their God. and his law for their laws. And originally that is exactly the way this country was set up. I can give you charter after charter where you could not even hold a public office unless you confessed that Jesus Christ was Lord and King and you believed in both the inspiration of the Old and the New Testaments. That was in every colony. Look at all the original charters.

So the point I'm trying to make is this. We have left all of our Christian principles incrementally. You remember we kicked prayer and Bible reading out of the governmental schools years back. You remember that? I saw a picture. It was not a cartoon, but it was a picture of some people and they were hollering and crying and screaming. about the school shootings and the kids that were killed and they were saying why did God allow this in our schools and someone had written under that you kicked God out he's not there well I understand you know God is omnipresent but that's the principle they kicked him out yes but not only that we've allowed moolok worship in the sacrifice of our children in abortion and also in government indoctrination. You remember when they worshiped Moolok, some of those kids were actually sacrificed. They were burned to death for Moolok.

Others were just passed over the fire and purification and dedicated to the worship and service of Moolok. And unhappily, many of our governmental and public educational students are nothing more than good little status. They know nothing of the Lord God because You can't have the Bible. You can't have prayer. You cannot have the ten commandments in a government educational unit.

So not only that, think about this. We have allowed drag queens and sodomites and transvestites and other ites as well to not only express themselves but to seduce our children.

We've allowed the social gospel to take over and gain foothold in our churches to the exclusion of the true gospel of the grace of God in Jesus Christ. We've turned our churches into social clubs and entertainment centers. I've had people tell me, "I go to such and such church because I have a good time." Really, you don't go to church to have a good time. You go to church to worship God. I've had people tell me, "I go to the such and such church. It makes me feel good." You don't go to church to feel good. You go to church to worship God.

We've turned them into entertainment centers. We've also allowed sports, hunting, fishing, and other hobbies and habits, whatever, to take precedent over the worship of God.

Alice and I, just about every Sunday, especially during the summer, we pass people in boats or towing boats on the way to the river, on the way to the ocean. You know, it's hunting season. I'm sure folks are out hunting.

Today I saw something a while back I got really tickled about this one husband told his wife he said it's a beautiful morning. He said I'm going to get up and go hunting. She said but today is Sunday. We need to go to church. He said no I'm going hunting today. So he got up and got dressed and left. And an hour or so later he was back.

And she said well what brought you back? He said, "The Lord convicted me and I came back. I'm going to church." She said, "Well, how did he convict you?" And he held his phone up and showed her a picture. There's a huge black bear sitting in his stand. He said, "I got the message. I'm coming back to go to church." Well, but you know, that's we let anything take precedent over the worship of God. Well, I had company.

You know, stop and think about this. My company can come to church with me. I've often thought I would never do it, but I've often thought about it just not showing up one Sunday when everybody calls to check on me and say, "Well, I just didn't feel like going today." Well, you know, that's what I hear all the time. Well, I just didn't feel like go. Well, what you understand?

Well, we've allowed, think about this one. We have allowed foreign temples, mosques, and other buildings to be built. in abundance in this nation to the exclusion of Christianity. In fact, our own government has built some of these mosques and some of these temples in other countries for the pagans. I know that for a fact and I would really suspect I do not have the evidence that they have actually built some of those in this country as well. When you pass some of these temples. You should see the one near Atlanta. You should see the one an hour up the road from us.

When you see some of these huge mosques in Michigan and around, you have to wonder where in the world did they get the funds to build such a magnificent structure. These things are not easily built the way they are built. And just think about they're now on every corner. are almost like the churches are.

Our government, think about this. At first, secretly and then openly allowed us to be invaded by communist, Marxist, terrorist, criminals, and sociopaths. We have been deliberately and premeditatedly invaded. There's just no two ways about it.

We've also allowed our government to steal our silver and our gold and give us nothing but this funny money, this fiat paper money which is absolutely worthless. Everybody keeps talking about inflation. Inflation is not our problem. Inflation is the symptom. Higher prices is a symptom. Inflation is caused by the continual printing of money and therefore our paper money continues to go down in value, it is worthless and therefore takes more and more to purchase what we used to purchase. It's just that simple. But yet, we've allowed all of that contrary to the Bible and even the Constitution demanding silver and gold as our standard for money.

Stop and think about the people, some of our Christian folks who've already fled this country. Expatriated got out because they think some other countries are going to be safer than this country. And think about also all these foreigners that are coming in and a lot of our people are marrying them. And now what you're going to have is divided households, divided loyalties, divided religions where you're not even going to have Americans anymore.

Let me give you a quote. You may have heard this. This is from President Theodore Roosevelt. Teddy Roosevelt. May not agree with everything in this quote, but at least he's hitting the nail on the head.

Here's the quote. He said, "In the first place, we should insist that if the immigrant who comes here in good faith becomes an American and assimilates himself to us, he shall be treated on an exact equality with anyone else. For it is an outrage to discriminate against any such man because of creed, birthplace, or origin. But this is predicated upon the persons becoming in every facet an American and nothing but an American. There can be no divided allegiance here. Any

man who says he is an American, but something else also isn't an American at all. We have room but for one flag, the American flag.

We have room but for one language here, and that is the English language. And we have room for but one soul loyalty, and that is loyalty to the American people. Where is Teddy Roosevelt today?

So, here's what I'm trying to show you. Incrementally, we're being destroyed. Incrementally, we're destroying ourselves. Incrementally, we're being judged. And unless there is repentance, all I can say is you better buckle up because it's going to get a whole lot worse than it is.

God is immutable. We understand that God is unchangeable, but also his judgments are unchangeable. And the reason that he judged people hundreds and thousands of years ago is the same reason he judges people today. The reason he judged Israel as a nation is the same reason he will judge America as a nation.

Our only hope is in repentance and restoration. Unless we turn back to God in humility, in faith, and in repentance, there is no hope. Our hope is not in politics. Our hope is not in man. Our hope is not even in our constitution. Our hope is in God alone. If God does not turn our hearts and turn our minds, we'll never be turned.

It's just that simple. Now, one other thought I want you to think about this. We sin by increments. I've pointed that out. We may also be restored by increments. What do I mean by that? Well, here's what I mean.

There's not one in this room and no one listening to me who can go to Washington DC and drain the swamp. We're not going to have a revival top down. I cannot control Washington DC. I cannot control Atlanta, Georgia. But by the grace of God, there's one person I can control and that's myself. And I have to start with myself making sure that I am right with God and my repentance is real and genuine.

And once my heart is right with God, I can work on my family. Once my family gets right with God, I can work on my church. Once my church gets right with God, I can work on my community. Once my community gets right with God, I can work on my city or my county. You see what I'm saying? It's going to be from the bottom up incrementally. It's not going to be from the top down.

Now, here's the question. You say, "But There's not enough time. Oh, hang on. Proverbs chapter 16:7. When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him. If we just started pleasing God and obeying him, we would have extra opportunity, extra time because he's quite capable of making our enemies to be at peace with us. to leave us alone so that we could accomplish that which he's ordained.

Incrementalism. Just like we sin incrementally, just like we've been invaded incrementally, just like we've been replaced incrementally, we can repent and seek restoration incrementally. Because when a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemy to be at peace with him.

The road back to God will be by increments unless God just in his mercy does something suddenly the way he did in the Old Testament under the revival of Hezekiah. Incrementalism, invasion, and replacement.

Let's seek the Lord and ask him to turn our hearts.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we ask you for your grace. We ask you for your mercy. We pray Lord that you would indeed show us the importance of this message. And Lord, what is happening in our country? And Lord, whether it's chaos, confusion, civil war, I don't know what's coming. But Lord, help us to know that you are the answer and obedience. to thee is part of that answer. Help us Lord to honor thee and glorify thee.

In the name of Jesus Christ we ask and pray. Amen.