

BEING IN THE RIGHT PLACE AT THE RIGHT TIME

2 Kings 17:24-28

Then the king of Assyria brought people from Babylon, Cuthah [cu-thah], Ava [av-va], Hamath, and from Sepharvaim [se-far-va-yim], and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel; and they took possession of Samaria and dwelt in its cities. And it was so, at the beginning of their dwelling there, that they did not fear the Lord; therefore the Lord sent lions among them, which killed some of them. So they spoke to the king of Assyria, saying, "The nations whom you have removed and placed in the cities of Samaria do not know the rituals of the God of the land; therefore He has sent lions among them, and indeed, they are killing them because they do not know the rituals of the God of the land." Then the king of Assyria commanded, saying, "Send there one of the priests whom you brought from there; let him go and dwell there, and let him teach them the rituals of the God of the land." Then one of the priests whom they had carried away from Samaria came and dwelt in Bethel, and taught them how they should fear the Lord.

This bit of Scripture is right after the Assyrians had taken Israel captive, meaning they took them from their homes and their homeland and took them as slaves into Assyria. Chapter 17 breaks down the reasons why God basically gave up on Israel. Judah would later be taken into captivity, into Babylon, but their time hadn't come up yet. They would still have two more God-fearing kings to reign: Hezekiah and Josiah. There were twelve reasons God was "very angry with Israel and removed them from His sight." (17:18)

1. they had sinned against the Lord their God
2. they feared other gods
3. they walked in the statutes of other nations
4. they secretly did against the Lord their God, things that weren't right
5. they built high places and sacred pillars and wooden images
6. they burned incense on all the high places
7. they served idols
8. they rejected God's statutes and His covenant
9. they made a molded image, two calves, and a wooden image (worshipping all the host of heaven and Baal)
10. they caused their children to pass through the fire
11. they practiced witchcraft and soothsaying
12. they sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the Lord

Suffice it to say that the Israelites rejected God as being, their God, they rejected His ways and purpose for their lives and chose to serve other gods. Yet there is but one True God, the creator of the heavens and the earth. The God who made the heavens and the earth

also made man in His own image and breathed the breath of life into his lungs. The God to whom it is said that "The earth is the Lord's, and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell therein." (Psalm 24:1). What we will see in the passage of Scripture for today, and in the surrounding text, that God has made it abundantly clear that He alone is to be honored and worshipped as God and that He has laid out before us in His Word, from the beginning in Genesis to the ending in the book of Revelation that He alone is God, He has the perfect plan of salvation for His people, and that there is only two choices that we can make as far as our eternal destiny is concerned, to follow God, that is the one True God and to live in His ways, and His plan, and His purpose or to reject God by going any other way. And then, in trusting in God, we will always be in the right place and in the right time for His perfect plan for our lives, from beginning to end. **Proverbs 3:5-6** says, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths." What a great promise from God. Knowing that we can always be in the right place at the right time. Sound impossible? Just as Jesus said about a rich man making it to heaven, "'With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.'" With God, all things are possible.

In human terms that the Apostle Paul used in speaking to the Romans, so that they could understand, he said, "Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?" (**Romans 6:16**) Slaves of sin or slaves of righteousness. Serve God or serve the devil. Heaven or hell. We are either a child of God or a child of the devil. We are either saved or not saved. God had a perfect plan of salvation for us before we were even born, before He even laid the foundations of the earth and the sun and moon and stars. He is God Almighty, the great creator of all things. His Word is true, His Ways are perfect, and His Way of salvation is by His Righteousness alone through His Son Jesus, the Christ. In **Galatians 4:4-7** the Apostle Paul wrote, "But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!" Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ." Once again, in God's perfect time He sent His Son Jesus to come to earth, to do what He had to do. It was the perfect time for Jesus to be born in Bethlehem due to the census, It was God's perfect time for Joseph and Mary to take Jesus to Egypt to escape the edict of King Herod to kill all boys 2 years old and under. It was God's perfect time for them to settle in Nazareth after the death of King Herod. And so on and so on. Do you know that the Old Testament, that is, all of the Scripture (which is the Word of God) that was written before Jesus was born,

was written over a 1,000 year period and contains several hundred references to the coming Messiah, meaning "the anointed one" which in Greek translates to Christ. Jesus the Christ, the Messiah, the Anointed One, the **One** Who would be our righteousness, by **His righteousness**. He was born of the virgin Mary through the Holy Spirit, lived a sinless life, gave Himself to be the sacrifice for our sins, taking our sins upon Himself by dying on a cross and then raising from the dead on the third day, conquering death so that we too could overcome death and have eternal life in Christ, to all who will put their faith in Him.

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." (**John 3:16-17**)

So how does all of what I just said have to do with our passage of Scripture today? Let's take a look at what was going on in this story and in how the Israelites rejected God, God's perfect plan for their lives, and ultimately His plan of salvation. The Israelites were taken captive by the Assyrians for looking to all of the other false gods for their well-being and safety. They were serving all of the other gods of the surrounding nations and had rejected God even though God had in times past led the Israelites out of captivity from the Egyptians by great signs and wonders, led them through the wilderness for 40 years (40 years because of their rebellion and sin against God) and then established them as a great nation which peaked in the reigns of King David and his son King Solomon.

Now after Israel was led away captive to Assyria, the king of Assyria replaced the void of people in Samaria, which was like the capital of Israel, with people from Babylon and other cities. Isn't it interesting that the Assyrians recognized that there was a problem when lions started attacking and killing people in Samaria and that they attributed it with not having the favor or presence of the Israelite God. So the king of Assyria sent an Israelite priest to teach the new people of Samaria the "fear of the Lord." Yet in verse 33 it says, "They feared the Lord, yet served their own gods—according to the rituals of the nations from among whom they were carried away." The people of Samaria tried just what the Israelites had been doing. It was like they were trying to please all of the "gods" by serving them all. If they go through all the rituals, the sacrifices, following all the laws, then surely somehow, some way they would please the gods, and somehow, some way might even go to the pleasant place in the afterlife.

Yet, God said in **Isaiah 46:9-10**, "Remember the former things of old, for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times

things that are not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure,'"

So now, what does all of this have to do with where we are now, in this time and place, to where as the Apostle Paul wrote, "as many as call on the name of the Lord shall be saved?" (**Romans 10:13**) What does this have to do with **Romans 10:9-10** that says, "that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." It is true. Our faith is what saves us and nothing else. "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast." (**Ephesians 2:8-9**) Yet the next verse says this, "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." Paul also said that in believing on Jesus as our Savior, "do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." (**1 Corinthian 6:19-20**) Paul in **Romans 6:10-11** says, "For the death that He [Jesus] died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord." Jesus Himself said something similar, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who **does the will of My Father in heaven**. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'"

When we believe on Jesus as dying on a cross for our sins, that He raised from the dead on the third day, we become as Paul said a new creation, or as Jesus said, "born again". We then receive the Spirit of Christ, the Holy Spirit, that is "placed in us as a deposit guaranteeing what is to come." (**2 Corinthians 1:22**) His Spirit then "bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God" (**Romans 8:16**), and "as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God." (**Romans 8:14**) They that do the will of God, they that are led by the Spirit of God, those are the true children of God. And our salvation is in Jesus alone! "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." Jesus said, "**I** am the Way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."

We don't have to "hedge our bets" by fearing all the other gods, for they aren't even really gods, for there is but one God. There is but one way of salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord. And there is but

one way to live our lives after we have believed on Jesus and that is in the Spirit of Christ. No other form of "religion" has Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the Living God! Islam may have the Torah and Jesus in their book but it doesn't lead anyone to salvation. It leads one to be just as lost as the Israelites. It is the same as with the Pharisees of Jesus' time who rejected Jesus as the Messiah, and chose to follow the law that leads to death. All other forms of religion that teach one to be a good person, to reap karma, to have hope that one day you will be enlightened all leads to that same place. Hell! Harsh, I know, but God has made it abundantly clear that we have but one choice of salvation and in the true blessings of God. Jesus! "He who has the Son [that's Jesus] has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life." (**1 John 5:12**) Listen to this and take heed, be warned-"Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who **practice such things** will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." (**Galatians 5:19-25**)

The Jews and all the other nations around them failed to look to God alone for their protection, welfare, and salvation. Jesus is of God. God is made up of three persons in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, and these three are One. (**1 John 5:7**) God's perfect plan of salvation for us is in Jesus the Christ! Now, we continue "looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God," and continue to take everything to God in prayer, and spend time in His Holy Word, **then** we can be assured that we will always be in the right place at the right time. Thank You Jesus. Jesus got us this far, and He'll get us to where we are going, a place in His eternal kingdom where we will be joint heirs with Jesus, where we will reign with Him, "And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful." There's only one way to get there, Jesus! We will overcome! "You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world." Amen.