

“When Disobedience Eats Us Up”

2 Kings 17:24-41

5/18/10

Introduction: When we see a caterpillar on a leaf, it appears it may be doing nothing. But, when given some time, we will eventually see a change. Slowly but surely, parts of leaves starts to disappear. The insect is eating the leaf up. This can be true in our spiritual life. If we keep disobeying God, we can expect to be eaten up by our own sins. It may not be physical as in the case of the leaf, but we can find our testimony, our fellowship with other Christians, our blessings, etc. disappearing (**Acts 12:21-23**). In our lesson tonight, we will see how disobedience literally eats up a group of people. As we look at this story tonight, each of us need to examine our lives to see if we are disobedient to the Lord.

Verses 24-28

The Castigation

Here we observe the punishment (castigation) experienced by the people dwelling in Samaria. After reading verse 24, we understand the history of Samaria. After the conquest by the Assyrians, certain regions of the former northern kingdom of Israel became a part of the Assyrians. This was known as Samaria. Why did God’s people experience **captivity** at the hands of the Assyrians? God allowed them to be carried away from their land because of disobedience (**Deuteronomy 4:23-27**). Our God is love, compassionate, and patient with all, But He is also holy and just. Therefore, He cannot overlook sin. Consequently, He punishes those He loves (**Hebrews 12:6**). The text tells us the **spiritual** sickness of these people. Verse 25 says they “feared not the Lord”. As a result, God reprimands or castigates them by sending lions to eat them up! Lions were used occasionally as instruments of punishment by God (**1 Kings 20:36**). These people realized the lions were a punishment from the God of Israel. They approached the king of Assyria and asked him to teach them the manner of the God of the land. In response, the king orders an Israelite priest to come back to Samaria to **teach** the commandments of God. The priest came and dwelt among these sinful people and taught them how they should fear the Lord. However, we cannot be only hearers, but doers of God’s Word. In addition, these verses convey the supremacy of God as the creator. As the lions submit to the commands of an omnipotent God, so does the entire creation. If we have been **redeemed** by the precious blood of Jesus Christ, we have no excuse not to be obedient to Him (**1 Peter 1:18-19**).

Verses 29-34

The Deviation

Even though the people were **taught** God's ways, they continued to deviate from His commands by making "gods of their own" and by appointing non-Levitical priests ("lowest of them priests"). They knew the right way, but they continued with their old **practices**. In addition, they placed the true and living God alongside other gods (**Matthew 6:24**). Are we continuing in our old ways? The Bible says that we are "new creatures: old things have passed away" (**2 Corinthians 5:17**). We should walk in the newness of Christ. As children of God, we should not be **influenced** by the world, but become influential in the world. Like the Samaritans, we may not have wood or stone idols in our homes. However, if we cherish ourselves, our family, friends, our jobs, or our possessions more than God, then we have idols in our **hearts** (**Proverbs 23:7**). The focus of our lives should be on things above and He will give us the things we desire if it's in His Will (**Colossians 3:2**) (**Psalms 37:4**) (**Matthew 6:33**). What is pulling us from the Lord? Have we identified the problem or the person? Have we asked the person we see in the mirror every morning?

Verses 35-41

The Expectation

We see God's expectation of the people. What does He expect? The answer is found in verses 36-37. He wants them to "fear", "worship", "do sacrifice", and "observe". In other words, **reverence** the Lord, worship Him and bring our sacrifices to Him (**James 1:22**). Remember obedience brings opportunity and disobedience brings **discipline**. We need to understand that if we do as the Word says, we are helping our future generations ("their children's children"). We are told the people continued in their "former" ways (of worshipping God and god). Unlike a buffet, we cannot pick and choose to do what God asks of us, we are expected to do all that He says. Remember **partial** obedience is equal to complete disobedience. We were created for good works (**Ephesians 2:10**) (**James 4:17**). Just as these people were instructed to worship and serve nothing or no one except God, He holds us to the same standards. Will we continue to let our disobedience eat us up or will we allow the Holy Spirit to **lead** us up the road of righteousness?