

## **Crosswalk Communities Discussion Guides** **(Feb 10<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup>)**

### **Icebreaker Questions (Pick at the least one question, but use as many as your group feels comfortable)**

1. The Olympics are wrapping up. What is your favorite winter Olympic sport? If you could compete in a sport, which one would you compete in?

### **Bible Study Questions**

1. If you have been reading in 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings, what have you been learning? What do you notice about God? Who do you identify with? What questions do you have?
2. This week focuses a bit on the theme of judgment. What comes to your mind when you hear that word? Does it make you uncomfortable? Why or why not?
3. 2 Kings 17:1-23
  - Do your own postmortem. In your own words, what would you identify as what led to Samaria's downfall?
  - In verse 15, it says that they followed worthless idols and they themselves became worthless. How did worshipping idols make them worthless?
4. Read 2 Chronicles 36:14-21
  - In your own words, what would you identify as what led to Jerusalem's downfall?
5. Where do you find yourself, and American Christians in these stories? Where are we following in the same footsteps as the people of Israel and Judah?
6. Read Matthew 7:21-23, 2 Corinthians 5:10,

7. Romans 11:20-21. and Revelation 3:15-16. What warnings are given here? Do you think that Christians take these warnings seriously? Why or why not? Do you take them seriously?
8. Additional discussion: In recent years, it has become common for prominent pastors to declare that various disasters are God's judgment. For example, following Hurricane Katrina, John Hagee suggested that the people of New Orleans had engaged in sin that was so offensive to God that they had been singled out for destruction. Do you agree or disagree with that? How should Christians approach the issue of judgment in the wake of disasters?

**Feb 10th**  
**Judgment Day**  
**2 Kings 17, 25**

**Intro:** the Fall of Jerusalem is the most repeated story in the Old Testament. As easy as it is to disregard it as God punishing wicked people, we need to remember that this happened to people who were in a covenant with God...Christians before Jesus. As a result, we should be listening to their story.

- I. Fall of Samaria:** Samaria was the capital of the northern kingdom of Israel. They were conquered by the empire of Assyria and the people were taken into exile. 2 Kings 17 explains why God's protection left them.
- **Failed to show the greatness of God by pursuing other gods:** Israel had been given a special mission as a kingdom of priests. By their devotion to God, they would show the world God's greatness. Yet in 17:7 we are told that they ran after other gods. In 17:17 we are told that they worshipped worthless idols and became worthless. The message to the world was that God was not worthy of their devotion. As a result, they became worthless for that mission.
  - **Cheapened their calling by imitating other nations:** God had called them his special possession. He had displaced other people groups to give them their land. They had been called to be set apart, to be a Holy people. Yet, 17:17 tells us that instead of following God, they chose to imitate the other nations. Ironically, just as the other nations were driven out of the land, they found themselves driven out also.
- II. Fall of Judah:** 2 Kings 25 tells the story of Jerusalem, the capital of Judah, being conquered by the Babylonians. The Babylonians tear down the walls, burn the temple, and take the people into exile in Babylon.
- **Followed in the same path as Israel:** Kings and Chronicles both tell the story of the people of Judah falling into the same idolatrous path as Israel. 2 Chronicles 36:14 tells of them following in the practices of the other nations and defiling the temple.
  - **Ignored God's warnings:** There was more though to the sin of Judah. They had the example of the northern kingdom. 2 Chronicles 15:15-16 tells of God sending warning after warning, only for the people to scoff and ignore them.

**III. Conclusion: God wasn't finished with them yet:** 2 Kings ends with the story of King Jehoiachin being taken from prison and being seated at the Babylonian king's table. This was a message that the lineage of David was still strong. 2 Chronicles ends with the Persian King Cyrus announcing that the temple would be rebuilt and that the people could return to the land. Even though judgment had come, God was still committed to his original rescue plan for humanity. Redemption was coming.

**Conclusion**

It is easy to consider the judgment on Samaria and Jerusalem as an Old Testament issue. Yet, is given as a warning to God's people today. We are called to display the greatness of God. Whenever we find fulfillment in money, power, or sex we diminish God's greatness. When we imitate the sinful actions of the world, we cheapen God's calling. We can easily settle into the mindset that because of the cross, we are forgiven, and our choices don't matter. Jesus called us to follow him and there are many stern warnings in the New Testament about a life of holiness. We ignore them at our own peril.