

## Will You Hear?

In second Kings Chapter 17, we find a record of the final days of the northern tribes of Israel: a time when Hoshea the son of Elah began to reign. Although Hoshea was not as bad as the kings of Israel before him, it was in his reign that Shalmaneser king of Assyria “came up throughout all the land, and went up to Samaria, and besieged it three years” (Vs. 5). The initial march of Shalmaneser against Israel was due to Hoshea’s failure to pay tribute to the Assyrian king, but to understand why Israel was taken, we will summarize the prophet’s record. The reasons given were “because the children of Israel had sinned against Jehovah their God...and had feared other gods, and walked in the statutes of the nations, whom Jehovah cast out from before the children of Israel, which they made;” (Vs. 7-8) “the children of Israel did secretly things that were not right against Jehovah their God: and they built them high places in all the cities;” (Vss. 9) “they set them up pillars and Asherim upon every high hill, and under every green tree;” (Vs. 10) “they burnt incense in all the high places, as did the nations whom Jehovah carried away before them; and they wrought wicked things to provoke Jehovah to anger;” (Vs. 11) and “they served idols, whereof Jehovah had said unto them, Ye shall not do this thing.”

Although Israel had committed these great sins against Jehovah, Jehovah sent prophets to instruct the people to “Turn ye from your evil ways...Not withstanding, they would not hear, but hardened their neck, like to the neck of their fathers, who believed not in Jehovah their God...Therefore Jehovah was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of his sight” (Vs. 13-18).

This judgment came upon Israel according to what Jehovah told Israel, even before they entered into the land, saying, “Defile not ye yourselves in any of these things: for in all these the nations are defiled which I cast out from before you; and the land is defiled: therefore I do visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land vomiteth out her inhabitants...Ye therefore shall keep my statutes and mine ordinances, and shall not do any of these abominations...that the land vomit not you out also, when ye defile it” (Leviticus 18:24-28). The destruction of Israel came about because they “would not hear, but hardened their neck” (2 Kgs. 17:14).

As you traverse the roads of life will you take to heart the words of Jehovah, saying, “If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto my name, saith Jehovah of hosts, then will I send the curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings; yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay it to heart” (Malachi 2:2). Ross Triplett, Sr.