

# The Key to Loving One's Country Is to Return the Hearts to Yahweh God

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I will first try to identify the reasons for the fall of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, and then come up with my answer on how to love one's country. Around 920 B.C., Israel split into two kingdoms. The ten northern tribes were called the kingdom of Israel, and the two southern tribes were called the kingdom of Judah. Two hundred years later, in 720 B.C., the northern kingdom of Israel was destroyed by Assyria, and another 134 years later, in 586 B.C., the southern kingdom of Judah was destroyed by the Babylon.

We know from the Bible that the northern kingdom of Israel had different families reigning during its 200-year history, while the southern kingdom of Judah had basically descendants of the house of David reigning for 334 years after the split; both Israel and Judah claimed to be a nation that worshiped Yahweh God, and the kings of each dynasty in them were working hard to rule the nation, but why did these two nations perish?

Usually, people analyze and find the causes from political, economic, social, military, diplomatic, and cultural aspects with the purpose to discover some social cyclical laws. Although such analysis makes sense, these reasons are only superficial ones, because after analyzing these aspects, one can only come up with a generalized social cycle theory. And no one can explain what this social cycle law exactly is and how to jump out of this cycle according to this social cyclical law. Thus various ideologies and isms keep arising, which, although initially brightening people's eyes, eventually lose their effectiveness and glamour, including the Western democracy.

For the destruction of these two kingdoms, the Bible does not look to these aspects above for the ultimate cause; rather, the phenomena in these areas are the result of the ultimate cause. Rather, the ultimate cause that the Bible repeatedly emphasizes is the departure of hearts from the LORD. The following is a selection of Bible verses for the reader to read.

2 Kings 17 tells the story of the northern kingdom of Israel, which had just been destroyed, and the southern kingdom of Judah, which was in the midst of a storm. Verses 7-20 read like this (this article uses the ESV version).

7 And this occurred because the people of Israel had sinned against the Lord their God, who had brought them up out of the land of Egypt from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and had feared other gods

8 and walked in the customs of the nations whom the Lord drove out before the people of Israel, and in the customs that the kings of Israel had practiced.

9 And the people of Israel did secretly against the Lord their God things that were not right. They built for themselves high places in all their towns, from watchtower to fortified city.

10 They set up for themselves pillars and Asherim on every high hill and under every green tree,

11 and there they made offerings on all the high places, as the nations did whom the Lord carried away before them. And they did wicked things, provoking the Lord to anger,

12 and they served idols, of which the Lord had said to them, “You shall not do this.”

13 Yet the Lord warned Israel and Judah by every prophet and every seer, saying, “Turn from your evil ways and keep my commandments and my statutes, in accordance with all the Law that I commanded your fathers, and that I sent to you by my servants the prophets.”

14 But they would not listen, but were stubborn, as their fathers had been, who did not believe in the Lord their God.

15 They despised his statutes and his covenant that he made with their fathers and the warnings that he gave them. They went after false idols and became false, and they followed the nations that were around them, concerning whom the Lord had commanded them that they should not do like them.

16 And they abandoned all the commandments of the Lord their God, and made for themselves metal images of two calves; and they made an Asherah and worshiped all the host of heaven and served Baal.

17 And they burned their sons and their daughters as offerings[a] and used divination and omens and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the Lord, provoking him to anger.

18 Therefore the Lord was very angry with Israel and removed them out of his sight. None was left but the tribe of Judah only.

19 Judah also did not keep the commandments of the Lord their God, but walked in the customs that Israel had introduced.

20 And the Lord rejected all the descendants of Israel and afflicted them and gave them into the hand of plunderers, until he had cast them out of his sight.

### **In a nutshell: the heart is sick of the LORD.**

The Bible is written for us to read by our heavenly Father, and many times it does not directly answer all the questions we may have, so many readers may question if this is actually the ultimate reason. It is understandable to have such a question, but if we read the Bible carefully, we will find that the Bible has the answer written out in many scattered corners. The author of this article tries to quote one of these Bible verses to explain why this is actually the ultimate reason.

The book of Isaiah in the Old Testament of the Bible was written sometime during the period of about 740-701 B.C. Isaiah, the messenger of the LORD, lived in Jerusalem and experienced the fall of the northern kingdom and the decline of the southern kingdom, so he knew best what the consequences of this ultimate cause would be.

Isaiah 1:15-23 reads as follows.

15 When you spread out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not listen; your hands are full of blood.

16 Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes; cease to do evil,

17 learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause.

18 “Come now, let us reason[c] together, says the Lord: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool.

19 If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land;

20 but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be eaten by the sword;

for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”

21 How the faithful city has become a whore, she who was full of justice! Righteousness lodged in her, but now murderers.

22 Your silver has become dross, your best wine mixed with water.

23 Your princes are rebels and companions of thieves. Everyone loves a bribe and runs after gifts. They do not bring justice to the fatherless, and the widow's cause does not come to them.

The core meaning of verses 15-20 is that if one turns away from the LORD in his heart, then outward piety does not mean much to the LORD. And verses 21-23 are the most interesting, because here it tells what mental and social phenomena arise after loathing and turning away from Yahweh.

**If we repeat them in modern language, the three verses 21-23 are: infidelity and dishonesty, the prevalence of debauchery, the prevalence of murder, no punishment for murderers, the devaluation of the currency, producing fraudulent food, the rebelliousness of leaders toward their superiors, the collusion between officials and criminals, the corruption of officials, the exploitation and oppression of the disadvantaged, and the lack of recourse for grievances.**

These phenomena do not seem to be unfamiliar. If such mentality and phenomena are prevalent in a society, they are bound to appear in a country's political, economic, social, military, diplomatic, and cultural aspects and negatively affect them, then weakness is inevitable, and in the long run, destruction will follow.

All nations are from the Lord, and are the beloved people of the heavenly Father (although these people may deny it), and Israel is but an example chosen by God for all nations, whether it is a good or bad example, from which we can know what kind of God the Lord God is.

Although there are pros and cons to various ideologies and isms, and some of them are better than others, no matter what the ideology or ism, if the hearts of the people turn away from Yahweh, no matter how diligent the governors are, it is impossible to avoid the decline. Europe and America now show this tendency.

Therefore, I believe that patriotism that only chants slogans is opportunistic and empty, patriotism without insight is blind and even harmful, and patriotism that is committed to reform and improve rules or institutions is necessary and beneficial, but **the core of true patriotism is to return hearts to Jehovah God, and failure to grasp this core will lead to the consequences of treating the surface but not the root.**