

*Today:*  
**October 26, 2014**

**Scripture Focus:** 1 Kings 11-12, 14, 16:29 —19; 2 Kings 1-6, 16-20

In the ninth year of Hoshea's reign the king of Assyria captured Samaria and took the people into exile in Assyria. He relocated them in Halah, in Gozan along the Habor River, and in the towns of the Medes.

The exile came about because of sin: The children of Israel sinned against God, their God, who had delivered them from Egypt and the brutal oppression of Pharaoh king of Egypt. They took up with other gods, fell in with the ways of life of the pagan nations God had chased off, and went along with whatever their kings did. They did all kinds of things on the sly, things offensive to their God, then openly and shamelessly built local sex-and-religion shrines at every available site. They set up their sex-and-religion symbols at practically every crossroads. Everywhere you looked there was smoke from their pagan offerings to the deities—the identical offerings that had gotten the pagan nations off into exile. They had accumulated a long list of evil actions and God was fed up, fed up with their persistent worship of gods carved out of deadwood or shaped out of clay, even though God had plainly said, "Don't do this—ever!"

God had taken a stand against Israel and Judah, speaking clearly through countless holy prophets and seers time and time again, "Turn away from your evil way of life. Do what I tell you and have been telling you in The Revelation I gave your ancestors and of which I've kept reminding you ever since through my servants the prophets."

But they wouldn't listen. If anything, they were even more bullheaded than their stubborn ancestors, if that's possible. They were contemptuous of his instructions, the solemn and holy covenant he had made with their ancestors, and of his repeated reminders and warnings. They lived a "nothing" life and became "nothings"—just like the pagan peoples all around them. They were well-warned: God said, "Don't!" but they did it anyway.

*(2 Kings 17:6-15, Message)*

**Notes from Worship:**

How did God catch your attention? To what is God calling you this week?

**Questions for Discussion:**

- What are the sins that hold you back from fully embracing relationship with God?
- Have you ever experienced a time of exile in your life? When? What was it like?
- Even in difficult times, how can we live lives of justice, mercy, and humility?

***This Week:***  
**October 27 – November 1**

**Scripture Readings:**

<b>Monday</b> 10/27	<b>Tuesday</b> 10/28	<b>Wednesday</b> 10/29	<b>Thursday</b> 10/30	<b>Friday</b> 10/31	<b>Saturday</b> 11/1
Numbers 6-9	Numbers 10-13; Psalm 90	Numbers 14-16; Psalm 95	Numbers 17-20	Numbers 21-24	Numbers 25-28

**Questions for Reflection:**

These questions are meant to help get you thinking about the readings for each day. Feel free to also use this space to jot down other questions and insights gleaned from your reading.

**Monday**

God leads the people on their journey through the wilderness (Numbers 9:15-23). What are ways you recognize God's guidance today?

**Tuesday**

What do you make of God's anger described in these chapters?

**Wednesday**

Why does Moses intercede for the rebellious Israelite people (Numbers 14, 15)?

**Thursday**

How do the people learn to trust God in these chapters (especially Numbers 20)?

**Friday**

How quickly do you think the people looked at the bronze serpent when they were bitten by a poisonous snake (Numbers 21)?

**Saturday**

What do you think of the way that Joshua is commissioned (Numbers 27)?

**Taking Scripture to Heart:**

In this year, we will spend 6 weeks or more as a congregation on selected passages that we will take to heart. We will have monthly times in worship for reviewing and reciting these passages together. Our first memory text is ***Deuteronomy 26:5-10a***, the "Covenant Recital".

***Next Sunday: November 2***

**Theme:** All Saints Day (*not a Heilsgeschichte Sunday*)

**Scripture Focus:** Micah 3:5-12; Matt. 23:1-12; 1 Thess. 2:9-13