

Dr. John Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 25.2, 2 Kings 15-16, Part 2 Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 25.2, 2 Kings 15-16, Part 2, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Oswalt's lecture analyzes the reigns of Jotham and his contemporaries in 2 Kings 15-16, emphasizing Jotham's relative righteousness. However, Oswalt cautions against using flawed human examples instead of God's standard. He uses the analogy of building a bookshelf to illustrate how small deviations can compound over time. The lecture explores why God allows suffering, even for the righteous, suggesting it can be a test of faith or a consequence of incomplete obedience. Finally, Oswalt highlights the instability of the Northern Kingdom as a cautionary tale against divided devotion and reliance on earthly powers, and implores listeners to place their trust in God.

**2. 17 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of
Dr. Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 25.2 – Double click icon to
play in Windows media player or go to the
Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link
there (Old Testament → Historical Books → Kings).**



**Oswalt_Kings_Sessi
on25_2.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 25.2, 2 Kings 15-16, Part 2

Briefing Document: 2 Kings 15-16, Part 2 - Analysis of Jotham and the Instability of the Kingdoms

Source: Excerpts from "Oswalt_Kings_EN_Session25_2.pdf" by Dr. John Oswalt and Ted Hildebrandt

Main Themes:

- **The Danger of Relative Standards of Righteousness:** Jotham's reign is characterized as "doing what was right, but according to what standard? His father" (referring to Uzziah). This highlights the danger of comparing oneself to others, even seemingly righteous figures, rather than to an absolute standard (Jesus).
- **The Question of God's Justice in a Fallen World:** The text grapples with the problem of why bad things happen to good people, using Jotham's reign as an example. While Jotham is described as a good king, he still faces threats and instability.
- **The Instability of the Northern Kingdom as a Cautionary Tale:** The tumultuous situation in the Northern Kingdom during Jotham's and Uzziah's reigns serves as a warning against placing security in earthly powers or divided allegiance to God.

Key Ideas and Facts:

- **Jotham's Reign:** Jotham's reign is marked by doing what was right in the eyes of the Lord, following the example of his predecessor, Uzziah. The text points out that the only significant achievement mentioned is that "He rebuilt the upper gate of the temple of the Lord."
- **External Threats:** "In those days, the Lord began to send Rezin, king of Aram and Pekah son of Remaliah against Judah." This signals the growing pressure from neighboring kingdoms (Syria and Israel) who sought to force Judah into a coalition against Assyria. Ahaz, who is ruling with Jotham, was a supporter of Assyria.
- **The "Problem of Evil":** The lecture explores the age-old question of why a good God allows suffering. Several possible explanations are offered including:
- Incomplete obedience.

- Opportunity for growth and testing.
- A reminder of the importance of dependence on God.
- The preservation of free will and the genuine choice to obey God regardless of outcomes.
- The ultimate acceptance that some things are beyond human understanding, echoing the Book of Job: "I cannot explain what God is doing...But I'm going to trust him anyway."
- **Lessons from the Northern Kingdom:** The instability in the Northern Kingdom offers warnings:
 - Do not place security in earthly kings or earthly security.
 - Partial commitment to God leads to instability and reliance on flawed humanity. "If you put one foot on the boat and one foot on the dock, you're going to get wet, you've got to have both feet on the dock or both feet on the boat."
 - A "divided heart" is ineffective in seeking God's protection and guidance. "We're seeing a kingdom which has worshipped God partially...And the result is, you're depending on humanity and if you're depending on humanity, you're depending on sand."

Quotes:

- "He did what was right, but according to what standard? His father."
- "Do not measure yourself by Oswalt. Do not measure yourself by your pastor. Do not measure yourself by grandma. Measure yourself by Jesus."
- "In those days, the Lord began to send Rezin, king of Aram and Pekah son of Remaliah against Judah."
- "I cannot explain what God is doing...But I'm going to trust him anyway because that's the best option by a long shot."
- "If you put one foot on the boat and one foot on the dock, you're going to get wet, you've got to have both feet on the dock or both feet on the boat."
- "We're seeing a kingdom which has worshipped God partially...And the result is, you're depending on humanity and if you're depending on humanity, you're depending on sand."

Implications:

The lecture emphasizes the importance of aligning oneself with God's absolute standard, even in the face of adversity. It cautions against complacency, partial obedience, and reliance on worldly security. Ultimately, it calls for unwavering faith and trust in God's sovereignty, even when His actions are incomprehensible. The instability in the Northern Kingdom serves as a stark reminder of the consequences of divided loyalties and misplaced trust.

4. Study Guide: Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 25.2, 2 Kings 15-16, Part 2

Study Guide: 2 Kings 15-16 (Part 2)

Quiz (Short Answer)

1. What is the danger Oswalt illustrates with the bookshelf analogy in relation to Jotham's reign?
2. What specific action by Jotham is highlighted in the text, and why is its mention potentially significant?
3. What external threat began to materialize during Jotham's reign, and who were the key players involved?
4. According to the text, why did Pekah and Rezin want to invade Judah?
5. What is a "theodicy," and how does the text explain the role of the Book of Job in the context of a theodicy?
6. The text gives several explanations for why God allows bad things to happen to good people. Name two of them.
7. What does the text suggest we should *not* place our security in?
8. What does the example of the Northern Kingdom teach us about serving God?
9. How does the text illustrate the danger of a divided heart with the example of a boat and a dock?
10. According to the text, how did Ahaz respond to the threat from the North?

Quiz Answer Key

1. The bookshelf analogy demonstrates the danger of using a flawed standard for measurement, leading to cumulative error. Jotham measured his actions by those of his father rather than by God's standard.
2. Jotham rebuilt the upper gate of the temple. Its mention is significant because it's the one thing that was mentioned despite his 20-year reign, suggesting a partial or incomplete reform.
3. The Assyrian pressure building and Pekah (Israel) and Rezin (Syria) form a coalition against Judah.

4. Pekah and Rezin wanted to invade Judah to remove Ahaz from the throne and install their own puppet ruler, forcing Judah into their anti-Assyrian coalition.
5. A theodicy is a justification of God. The Book of Job, although often called a theodicy, does not provide a justification for God's actions, but rather brings us to a place of trusting God despite our inability to understand His ways.
6. God may allow bad things to happen to good people to test their faith, or because sometimes God does not intervene in the world.
7. The text suggests we should not place our security in earthly kings, presidents, or any earthly security.
8. The Northern Kingdom teaches us that partial obedience or serving God with a divided heart (while also worshipping idols) will ultimately lead to instability and failure.
9. The boat and dock example illustrates that trying to serve God and the world simultaneously results in getting "wet," meaning a compromised and ineffective faith.
10. Ahaz was an Assyrian supporter and did not want to join the coalition against Assyria.

Essay Questions

1. Discuss the concept of "measuring yourself by Jesus" as presented in the text. What does this mean in practical terms, and why is it important?
2. Explore the reasons given in the text for why God might allow bad things to happen to good people. Which of these reasons do you find most compelling, and why?
3. Analyze the significance of Jotham's rebuilding of the upper gate of the temple. What might this action symbolize, and how does it relate to the broader themes of the text?
4. Compare and contrast the situations of the Northern and Southern Kingdoms as described in the text. What lessons can be learned from their respective fates?
5. Reflect on the role of trust in God, especially in the face of suffering and unanswered questions. How does the text's interpretation of the Book of Job inform your understanding of faith?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Aram:** An ancient region corresponding roughly to modern-day Syria.
- **Assyria:** A major ancient Mesopotamian kingdom and empire.
- **Coalition:** An alliance for combined action.
- **Idols:** Images or objects worshiped as gods.
- **Judah:** The Southern Kingdom of Israel.
- **Northern Kingdom (Israel):** The kingdom formed by the ten northern tribes of Israel after the split following Solomon's reign.
- **Pekah:** King of Israel (the Northern Kingdom) during the reign of Jotham.
- **Rezin:** King of Aram (Syria) during the reign of Jotham.
- **Theodicy:** An attempt to justify God's actions in the face of suffering and evil in the world.
- **Uzziah:** King of Judah before Jotham.

5. FAQs on Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 25.2, 2 Kings 15-16, Part 2, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

FAQ

- **Why is it dangerous to measure ourselves by imperfect standards, as seen with the kings of Judah?**
- Measuring ourselves by imperfect standards like family members, leaders, or even past versions of ourselves can lead to a gradual deviation from the true standard. As the example of the bookshelf illustrates, small errors compound over time. We should instead measure ourselves against the unfailing gold standard of Jesus Christ.
- **What is the significance of Jotham rebuilding the upper gate of the temple?**
- The text doesn't explicitly state the significance, but it's mentioned as the one concrete act recorded during his 20-year reign. It may highlight Jotham's commitment to the temple but could also underscore that despite outward acts of service, true righteousness involves unwavering adherence to God's standard, not just maintaining religious structures.
- **Why did God allow negative events to happen to a "good" king like Jotham?**
- The text explores several possible reasons: incomplete obedience, the nature of the world where "rain falls on the just and the unjust," God testing faith, a lack of seeking deliverance from God, and the need to trust God even when His actions are inexplicable. Ultimately, it points to the Job-like answer: we may not always understand God's reasons, but we must trust Him anyway. If God always intervened, it would nullify the choice to obey God regardless of circumstances.
- **What is the "Job answer" and how does it relate to trusting God?**
- The "Job answer" acknowledges that we cannot fully comprehend God's actions or justify why He intervenes in some situations and not others. It leads to a place of trusting God even when we don't understand His ways. It rejects the idea that we could run the world better than God and instead affirms faith in His goodness and salvific purposes.

- **What does the alliance between Pekah and Rezin against Judah reveal about the political landscape at the time?**
- The alliance reveals the growing threat from Assyria and the attempts by Pekah and Rezin to form a coalition to resist Assyrian dominance. Their attempt to force Judah into this coalition and replace Ahaz (who they perceive as pro-Assyrian) highlights the instability and power struggles in the region.
- **What lessons can we learn from the instability of the Northern Kingdom during the reigns of Uzziah and Jotham?**
- We should not place our security in earthly leaders, possessions, or systems. Furthermore, a divided heart or partial devotion to God (like the Northern Kingdom's continued idol worship) leads to instability and ultimately to reliance on unreliable human strength. We must commit to following God fully and without reservation.
- **How does the analogy of putting one foot on a boat and one foot on the dock relate to the Northern Kingdom?**
- The analogy illustrates the danger of divided loyalties. The Northern Kingdom tried to worship God while simultaneously clinging to idols and other forms of earthly security. This divided devotion, like straddling a boat and a dock, inevitably leads to failure and disaster. One must fully commit to God.
- **What does it mean to depend on humanity, and why is it likened to depending on sand?**
- Depending on humanity means placing our trust and security in earthly systems, leaders, or our own abilities rather than in God. This is likened to depending on sand because human efforts and earthly structures are inherently unstable and unreliable, prone to collapse under pressure or change. Only God provides a firm and lasting foundation for our lives.