



# Seeking the Lost

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# Syrian Shepherd & His Sheep



# Scripture Reading: Luke 15:3-7

## 2 KINGS 16:11

...to attack Hoshai, who had paid him tribute. But the king of Assyria discovered that Hoshai was a traitor, for he had sent envoys to tell the king of Assyria that he had done year by year. Therefore Shalmaneser seized him and put him in prison. The king of Assyria invaded the entire land, marched against Samaria and laid siege to it for three years. In the ninth year of Hoshai, the king of Assyria captured Samaria and deported the Israelites to Assyria. He settled them in Halah, Golan on the Habor River and in the towns of the Medes.

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## Israel Enticed Because of Sin

All this took place because the Israelites had sinned against the Lord their God, who had brought them up out of Egypt. They worshipped other gods and followed the practices of the nations of Egypt. The Lord had driven out before them, as well as the practices which the kings of Israel had introduced. The Israelites secretly did things against the Lord their God that were not right. From watchtower to fortified city they built themselves high places in all their towns. They set up sacred stones and Asherah poles on every high hill and under every spreading tree. In every high place they burned incense, and on the nations whom the Lord had driven out before them had done. They did wicked things that provoked the Lord to anger. They worshipped idols, though the Lord had said, "You shall not do this."

The Lord warned Israel and Judah. "The Lord warned Israel and seers. Turn through all your evil ways. Observe my commands and decrees, in accordance with the entire Law that I delivered to you through my servants the prophets. But they would not listen and were as stiff-necked as their fathers, who did not trust in their fathers and did not keep my commands. Therefore the Lord brought judgment on them and they became worthless."

## Hoshea Last King of Israel

In the twelfth year of Ahaz king of Judah, Hoshea son of Elah became king of Israel in Samaria, and he reigned nine years. He did evil in the eyes of the Lord, but not like the kings of Israel who preceded him.

17 Or and word omitted. 18 Or to Sam, in the, so in possibly an abbreviation for Oshai.

113 Traditionally great altars; here possibly an abbreviation for Oshai.

118 Or the day of his feast (see Septuagint). 119 Exodus 20:4, 5.

## 2 KINGS 17:41

Then the king of Assyria gave this order: "Have one of the priests you took captive from Samaria go back to live there and teach the people what the god of the land requires." So one of the priests who had been exiled from Samaria came to live in Bethel and taught them how to worship the Lord.

Nevertheless, each national group made its own gods in the several towns where they settled, and set them up in the shrines the people of Samaria had made at the high places. The men from Babylon made Succoth Benoth, the men from Cush made Nergal, and the men from Hamath made Ashima. The Sepharvites burned their children in the fire as rites to Adrammelech and Anammelech, the gods of Samaria. They also appointed all sorts of priests in the shrines to officiate for them as priests in the name of the Lord, but they also served their own gods in accordance with the customs of the nations from which they had been brought.

To this day they neither worship the Lord nor adhere to the decrees and commands of the laws and statutes of Jacob, whom he saved the descendants of Israel. When the king named Israel, who had not worshiped any other gods or bowed down to them, serve them or sacrifice to them, but the Lord, who brought you up out of Egypt with mighty power and outstretched arm, is the one you must worship. To him you shall bow and to him offer sacrifices. You must always be careful to keep the decrees and ordinances, the laws and commands that I have written for you. Do not worship other gods. Do not forget the covenant I have made with you, and do not worship other gods. For if you worship the Lord your God, it is the Lord who will deliver you from the hand of all your enemies. They would not listen, however, but persisted in their former practices. Even while these people were worshipping the Lord, they were serving their idols. To this day their children and grandchildren continue to do as their fathers did.

## Samarites Rejected

The king of Assyria brought people from Babylon, Cush, Ava, Hamath and Sepharvaim and settled them in the towns of Samaria to replace the Israelites. When they first lived there, they did not worship the Lord, so he sent lions to kill them and they killed some of the men and women. It was reported to the king of Assyria that the people who he had sent to Samaria did not worship the Lord, so he sent lions among them to kill them. He had sent lions among them to kill them, but they did not know what he requires.

120 Or they made their sons and daughters pass through the fire.

<sup>3</sup> So He spoke this parable to them, saying:  
<sup>4</sup> “What man of you, having a hundred sheep,  
if he loses one of them, does not leave the  
ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after  
the one which is lost until he finds it? <sup>5</sup> And  
when he has found *it*, he lays *it* on his  
shoulders, rejoicing. <sup>6</sup> And when he comes  
home, he calls together *his* friends and  
neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me,  
for I have found my sheep which was lost!’

<sup>7</sup> I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.

