

WHY ISRAEL FELL

As a nation, we Americans like happy endings. We want good to triumph, wrong to be righted, and the hero to ride off into the sunset with his beloved, there to live happily ever after. This means that we often have trouble appreciating the narrative of the decline and fall of Israel as portrayed in 1 Kings and 2 Kings. After all, this narrative opens with Israel at the height of its glory under Solomon, peaceful, prosperous, righteous, and the foremost power in its region.

From there, however, literally everything goes downhill. Solomon turns away from the Lord, the people follow him, his great kingdom is divided, Israel and Judah each continue to decline in both strength and righteousness, and ultimately, each nation is carried away captive, Israel by the Assyrians and Judah by the Babylonians. The high note at the end of 2 Kings is that one of the exiled kings of Judah is treated well by his captor. That is NOT happily ever after!

However, this downbeat narrative has a very important lesson for us. Israel and Judah weren't destroyed because they were overmatched by the military might of their neighbors. They fell because they chose to forsake the Lord. Their continued survival was up to them, and they made the wrong decision.

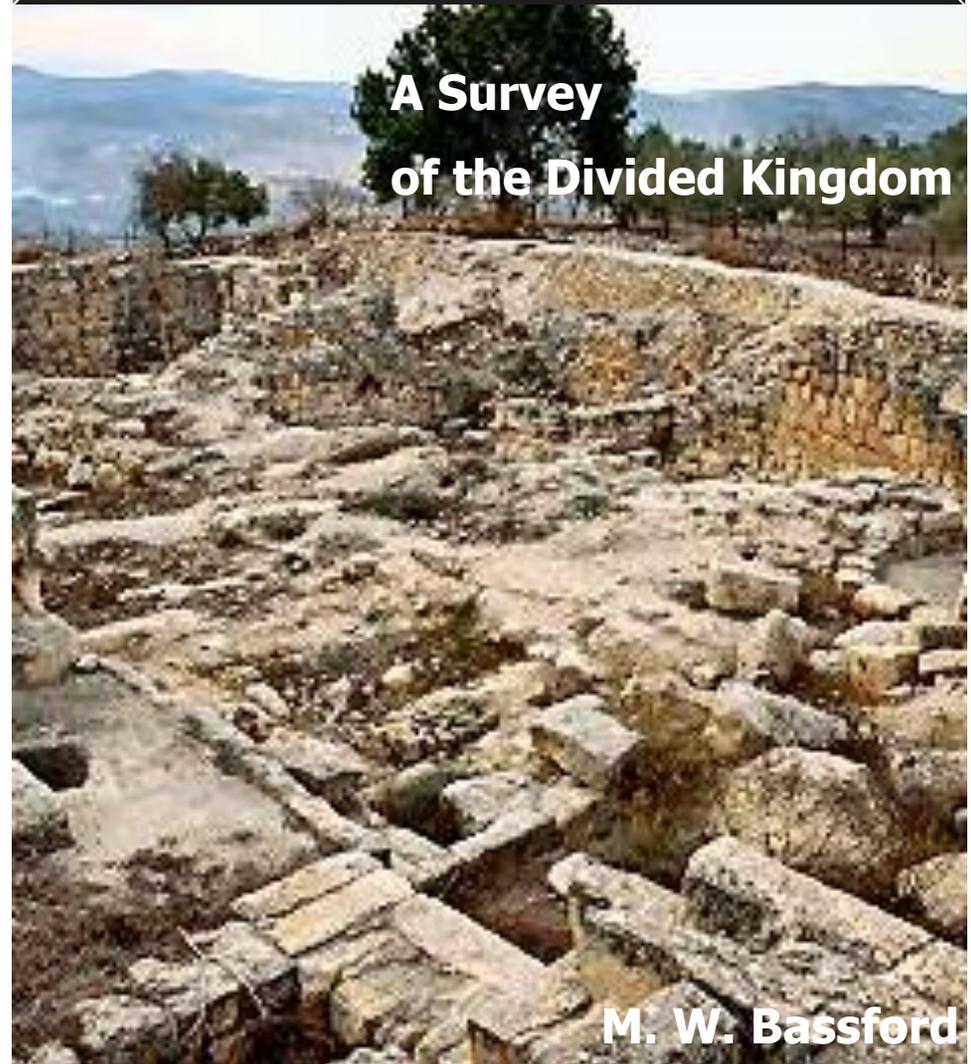
This is no less true for us today. As it was for those nations, our fate, both individually and congregationally, is in our hands. If we are righteous, God will bless us, both in this life and in the life to come. If we are not, He won't. He promises only disaster for His people when they forsake Him, and the exile of Israel shows that He means it.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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SO ISRAEL WAS EXILED

A Survey of the Divided Kingdom



M. W. Bassford