



2 Chronicles 34-35

Tape #7143
II Chronicles 34-35
By Chuck Smith

Let's turn now to II Chronicles, chapter thirty-four. We closed the thirty third chapter of Chronicles, with the short reign of Amon, or Amon. "He was twenty two years old when he began to reign. He reigned only for two years. He did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, as did Manasseh, his father. For Amon sacrificed unto all the carved images which Manasseh his father had made, he served them; He did not humble himself before the Lord, and he trespassed more and more." Thus he was assassinated after reigning only two years, and thus his little boy, he was twenty four years old when he was assassinated, thus his little boy...

Josiah was only eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem for thirty one years (34:1).

Not a long time when you consider he was only eight years old when he began his reign. It means that he died at the age of thirty nine. However, in contrast to his father and grandfather...

Josiah did that which was right in the sight of Yahweh, and walked in the ways of David his father, and declined neither to the right hand, nor to the left (34:2).

He was a good king, like Hezekiah, his great grandfather, he walked with the Lord, and instituted spiritual reforms in Judah. However, tragic to say, in spite of the fact that Josiah was one of the best kings of Judah, because of the actions of his father, his grandfather Manasseh, and the long period of history in which Manasseh reigned, and led the people in all of the abominable idolatries, under the reign of Manasseh, the die was really cast. So that God, to be just, had to judge Judah. They had gone beyond the point of return. Though Josiah was a good king, all he did by his good reign, was forestall the judgement of God that is impending and imminent.

Again, as we look at the history of the nation of Judah, we realize that we are coming into this period of time in which Jeremiah was called to be a prophet. Jeremiah began his ministry as a prophet, during the reign of Josiah. Jeremiah continued to prophecy through the decline, and the death of the nation of Judah. He had the rather difficult task of being the prophet, to oversee, and to observe the death of the nation. To watch it plunge at the death of Josiah, right on down to the bottom, and out. No matter what he said, the judgement was determined. The people were determined to go on in their abdurant way, in opposition to God.

I must confess to you my great concerns for our nation today. My great concern for the direction that our nation has gone. For the abominations of our nation. For even as Judah served Baal, Ashtoreth, Molech, Mammon, and these other gods of the heathen, so our nation has turned to serving these gods, though we do not call them by that name. The worship of Molech, was the worship of pleasure. We see the pleasure mania that has gripped our country. The worship of Ashtoreth, was the worship of the sex goddess, that liberated sex. We see the liberated attitude towards sex today. The worship of the Ashorem, was the worship of pornography, and we see that today. The worship of Molech, also involved the sacrifice of children, and we see that today. Twenty million children aborted, since the law went into effect. So, we are following the pattern of Judah.

We've had a president, who I feel has sort of stemmed the tide, in a way, from that liberalism that has been taking our country down the path to destruction. A president who has endeavored to change the complexion of the Supreme Court, by bringing in more conservative justices to the Supreme Court. That liberal Supreme Court that was appointed under the previous reigns of the presidents, who enacted all of these liberalizing laws, or really interpreted the laws to such a liberal extent that um, the laws that were there became meaningless, through the interpretations.

The laws by which our nation was plunged into this morass that we see it today. We have a drug problem that won't quit. We have AIDS epidemics that won't quit. We have the free sex movement, homosexuality, lesbianism, and all, that won't quit. It is for these things that God brought judgement upon

nations of history. Looking back in history, nations cannot give themselves over to these things and continue to exist! God is a righteous God, and He cannot tolerate these things continuing.

I must confess my great concern for our upcoming presidential election. It deeply disturbs me that both the apparent front runners, have certain ties that disturb me deeply. The fact that Dukakis, is a vowed card carrying member of the ACLU, causes me great concern. But the fact that Bush is a member of the Trilateralist Committee, also concerns me deeply. I am fearful that no matter how the election goes we are at the state where Judah was, at the death of Josiah, the good king, who at least brought a surface reform.

Now as we will observe, the reform under Josiah was not a deep, total reform. But it was a surface reform, but it was enough to forestall the judgement of God. I really fear for what is gonna happen at the change of the administration of this nation, no matter who is elected. My only hope is in the promise of the coming again of Jesus Christ. As Jesus said to John, at the closing of the book of Revelation, "Behold, I come quickly", and John responded, "Even so come quickly Lord Jesus". Such is my prayer, day after day, as I see the things developing. "Oh Lord Jesus, come quickly!"

I take comfort also in the fact, that before God brought His judgement upon Sodom and Gomorrah, He delivered the righteous man Lot, out of that den of iniquity. It is my hope, that before God brings judgement upon this land, He will deliver His body, His church, out of the land. So I, with Paul, look for the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, and the blessed hope of His appearing. But I am concerned. As we now come into the final stages of the history of the nation of Judah, we see this final plunge. There was this time of the forestalling of this judgement, because of the righteousness of Josiah. He was a king who did that which was right, even after modeling after David, he did not turn to the right hand or to the left.

For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was yet young, [He was just sixteen years old.] he began to seek after the God of David his father: and in the twelfth year of his reign [That is when he was twenty four years old, or rather, beg your pardon. Twelve and eight, yeah twenty-four. No! Twenty years old. What's the matter with me? Come to it! When he was twenty years old,] he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem [It was when he was twenty four, that he had the big Passover. "He began to purge Judah and Jerusalem",] from the high places, [From these sex goddesses, or the pornography that was there, began to clean up the pornography.] the carved images, pornographic [molded images] molten images. And they broke down the altars of the Baalim; [Which would be the Baal's, the Baal's, the plural of Baal. The lords or the gods of the pagans, which really was the deifying of man's intellect.] and the images that were high above them, he cut down; and the Ashorem [again] and the carved images, and the molten images, he broke in pieces, [Now his grandfather Manasseh, you remember at the end of his reign, horrible reign, and yet God forgave him. You remember that lesson last week. Though he did all of these evil, horrible things, when he was carried away as a captive to Babylon, he called upon the Lord, and the Lord heard his prayer, and the Lord restored to him the kingdom. God forgave him, and restored the kingdom to him. After that he began to serve the Lord. But he didn't get rid of all of the idols. The pornography, and all of these pagan idols were still there. So that, his son Amon, was corrupted by these things, but passed quickly from the scene. Now, Josiah, his grandson becomes the king. Twelve years after becoming king, he goes through the land and he gets rid of all of this pornography that is there. All of these pagan idols that are there.] broke them in pieces, made dust out of them, [ground them] and he strewed the dust of them upon the graves of those that sacrificed to them (34:3-4).

So, upon the graves of the pagan priests, they scattered the dust of these idols, that had once been used in worship. They of course burned them, and then just took the ashes, and ground it into powder.

And he burnt the bones of the priests upon the pagan altars, [They interred the skeletons of the pagan priests, burned their bones upon the pagan altars.] and then he cleansed Judah and Jerusalem. And he did this also in the cities of the north [Now the northern empire of Israel had already fallen to Assyria, but with the strength of Judah, they began actually to sort of encompass those who remained, who were righteous and still sought the Lord. So he extended this cleansing on up into Israel, the cities of,] Manasseh, and Ephraim, and Simeon, even up to Naphtali, [Which is up to the area of the Galilee.] and the surrounding communities. And when he had broken down the altars and the Ashorem [The pornographic goddesses.] he had beaten the

graven images into powder, he cut down all the idols throughout all the land of Israel, he returned to Jerusalem (34:5-7).

So there was a purging, there was a cleansing under Josiah.

Now in the eighteenth year of his reign, [Twenty-six years old.] when he had purged the land, and the house, he sent Shaphan who was the son of Azaliah, and Maaseiah the governor of the city, and Joah the son of Joahaz the recorder, to repair the house of Yahweh his God (34:8).

Again, under Manasseh, you remember that the temple was profaned in Jerusalem. If you'll remember, Manasseh took the ark of the covenant out of the Holy of Holies, or it was taken out of the Holy of Holies by the priest when they saw how that Manasseh was just desecrating the temple. He had built pagan altars within the temple. He had set the signs of the zodiac in the inner and outer court of the temple. So he set up an idol right in the Holy of Holies, which of course, is a foreshadowing of the future, when the temple will be rebuilt in Jerusalem, and the Antichrist will come to Jerusalem, and stand in the Holy of Holies. He'll set an image of himself within the Holy of Holies, and demand that the whole world worship this image. Manasseh thus profaned the Holy of Holies.

So the ark of the covenant was removed from it. Probably by the priests, and hidden with you know, the anticipation of it being profaned by the king, the priests probably took it out and hid it. But the temple had been really brought into disrepair, and disuse, as the result of Manasseh. But now in the eighteenth year of the reign of Josiah, he then ordered the house of the Lord repaired.

So he came to Hilkiah the high priest, and they gave to him the money that was brought into the house of God, which the Levites that [were the porters] kept the doors they gathered of the hand of the people of Manasseh and Ephraim, the remnant of Israel, from Judah and Benjamin; and they returned to Jerusalem (34:9).

So this was sort of a thing, every once in awhile whenever the temple would need rebuilding, they'd go out, the priests would go out and collect money from the people throughout the land.

So they put the money in the hand of the workmen that had the oversight of the house of the Lord, and they gave it to the workmen that wrought in the house of the Lord, to repair and to mend the house: They gave it to those artisans, the builders, to buy the hewn stone, the timbers for the couplings, and the floor of the house which the kings of Judah had destroyed. And the men did the work faithfully: and the overseers of them were Jahath and Obadiah, the Levites, the sons of Merari; and Zechariah and Meshullam, of the sons of the Kohathites, to set the work forward; and the other of the Levites, that were skillful in instruments of music. And there were also those who were over the bearers of burdens, [The common laborers.] there were the overseers for all of those that wrought in all types of the work in rebuilding the temple: and of the Levites there were the scribes, the officers, and the porters. And they brought out the money that was brought into the house of the Lord, Hilkiah the priest [When he was cleaning up the whole thing, the debris, and the mess, he] found a book of the law of the Lord given by Moses (34:10-14).

The discovery again of the, of the torah.

And so Hilkiah answered and said to Shaphan the scribe, I have found the torah in the house of the Lord. And Hilkiah delivered the book to Shaphan. And Shaphan carried the book to the king, and brought the king word back again, saying, All that was committed to thy servants, they did it. And they have gathered together the money that was found in the house of the Lord, and they have delivered it into the hand of the overseers, and to the hand of the workmen. And then Shaphan the scribe told the king, saying, Hilkiah the priest has given me a book. And Shaphan read it before the king (34:15-18).

So when, with all of this repair, the cleansing of the temple, the cleaning out of the debris, the torah is discovered. The law of Moses brought to the king, and now read to the king by Shaphan the scribe.

And it came to pass, when Josiah the king, had heard the words of the law, that he tore his clothes. And the king commanded Hilkiah, and Ahikam the son of Shaphan, and Abdon the son of Micah, and Shaphan the scribe, and Asaiah a servant of the king's, saying, Go, and inquire of Yahweh for me, for them that are left in Israel and in Judah, concerning the words of the book that is found: for great is the wrath of Yahweh that is poured out upon us, because our fathers have not kept the word of Yahweh, to do after all that is written in this book (34:19-21).

Hearing the law of the Lord. Hearing the curses that God pronounced upon the nation, if they would forsake His law. If they would turn and worship the other gods, God declared the judgements and the curses that would come upon them. When Josiah heard this read, he realized, "Hey we are ripe for judgement. I mean we have done those things that God pronounced the curse upon us, if we would do them. Our fathers were guilty of doing these very things, and thus, the judgement of God is hanging over our heads".

So Hilkiah, and they that the king had appointed, went to Huldah the prophetess, [An interesting thing here.] she was the wife of Shallum the son of Tikvath, the son of Hasrah, the keeper of the wardrobe; (now she dwelt in Jerusalem in the college:) [That is the school of the prophets.] and they spoke to her to that effect. [In other words, they said, "The king wants to enquire of the Lord as to what's gonna happen to us, because we are guilty. Our fathers have done those things that God warned about in the law".] And so she answered them, Thus saith Yahweh the God of Israel, Tell the man that sent you to me, Thus saith Yahweh, Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, and all of the curses that are written in the book which they have read before the king of Judah (34:22-24):

Of course, go back into Deuteronomy, and you read the curses that God pronounced, that would come upon the people. They would be driven from the land, they'd be dispersed throughout the world, and uh, all of these curses God said He was gonna bring upon them, those things that were written in the law.

Because they have forsaken me, they've burned incense to other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all of the works of their hands; therefore my wrath shall be poured out upon this place, and shall not be quenched (34:25).

God pronounces the pending judgement that is hanging over the nation.

And as for the king of Judah, who sent you to inquire of Yahweh, so shall you say unto him, Thus saith Yahweh God of Israel concerning the words which you have hears; Because your heart was tender, and you humbled yourself before God, when you heard his words against this place, and against the inhabitants of it, and you humbled yourself before me, and did tear your clothes, and weep before me; I have even heard you also, saith Yahweh. Behold, I will gather thee to thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered to thy grave in peace, neither shall your eyes see all of the evil that I'll bring upon this place, and upon the inhabitants of the same. So they brought the king the word again (34:26-28).

So Huldah the prophetess, affirmed that, "Yes, judgement is coming, the curses that God declared in the law are going to fall upon Judah, because of the iniquity of their fathers". However, the judgement of God is forestalled because of the tenderness of the heart of king Josiah, towards the Lord. How that when he heard these things, he tore his clothes, and he began to weep before God, for the sins of the people and of the nation. He humbled himself before God, and thus God said, "It'll not come in your lifetime. You'll go to the grave in peace. It won't happen during your lifetime, but this judgement is definitely on the way".

So the king sent and gathered together all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem. And the king went up into the house of Yahweh, and all the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the priests, and the Levites, and all the people, great and small: and he read in their ears all of the words of the book of the covenant that was found in the house of the Lord. And the king stood in his place, and made a covenant before the Lord, to walk after the Lord, and to keep his commandments, and his testimonies, and his statutes, with all of his heart, [Now they're standing in that place of promise, before the people, in the temple, as they read to them the law of the Lord, the king publicly made a confession, and made a commitment unto the Lord. A commitment to keep the Lord's commandments, the testimonies, the statutes, with all of his heart, and with all of his soul.] to perform the words of the covenant which are written in the book (34:29-31).

So he's gonna go for it. A total commitment unto the Lord. "With all my heart, with all my soul, I'm gonna serve the Lord." Tremendous commitment on the part of king Josiah!

And he cause all that were present in Jerusalem and Benjamin to stand to it. [To affirm it.] And the inhabitants of Jerusalem did according to the covenant of God, the God of their fathers. And Josiah took away all the abominations out of the countries that pertained to the children of Israel, and made all that were present in Israel to serve, even to serve [Jehovah or,] Yahweh their God. And all the days they departed not from following Yahweh the God of their fathers (34:32-33).

Now, the temple was reopened. They began to worship at the temple again. The king had made a

commitment. The king's commitment was complete, with all of his heart, with all of his soul. They more or less, made it a law that all the people were gonna have to serve the Lord. So the people were doing it because it was required of them. But with the people it wasn't a whole hearted commitment. Because, the king was doing it, it became the popular thing. Go along with the crowd. You know, just follow along with what's happening. There are always those that will follow the movement. You know whichever way the breeze is blowing, they're like a feather, they'll drift with it. They have no inertia on their own, no you know, they just, they just flow with the movement of the day, with whatever is vogue, or popular. So with the king serving God, it became the popular thing. So everybody starts going to the temple again.

This is when Jeremiah began his ministry. One of the first commissions that Jeremiah received from the Lord. Of course, if you'll, if you would, if you would, want to really gain something this week, along with the further reading here in Chronicles, if you would read the book of Jeremiah this week, you'll put it in it's historic context. I mean the book of Jeremiah will just come alive to you like, like you've never realized before. Because you'll have it now, in the historic context. You'll think of Josiah, the renewing of the temple, the renewing of the temple worship and all. In chapter seven of the book of Jeremiah, "The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, Stand in the gate of the Lord's house and proclaim there this word, and say, Hear the word of Yahweh all ye of Judah that enter into these gates to worship Yahweh, Thus saith Yahweh of hosts, the God of Israel, Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place. But trust not in lying words saying, The temple of Yahweh, the temple of Yahweh are these".

Now, with the rebuilt temple, there were those people that were trusting in just the fact, "We have the temple again". They were trusting in that to be their deliverance. They were saying, "Because the temple is rebuilt, and we're worshipping again, we don't have any more problems. We don't have to worry about judgement". But the Lord sent Jeremiah to stand at the gates, as the people were coming in to worship under this false sense of security, and he said, "Trust not in the lying vanities, saying, The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are these. Because that's not what's gonna save you. What's gonna save you is your own personal commitment unto the Lord".

People need to realize that. The church isn't gonna save you. Attendance in church is not gonna save you. Religious rites can never save you. Yet there are so many people trusting in those kinds of lying vanities. "Well, I attend church regularly. I take communion. I observe the sacraments. The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord!" But Jeremiah is saying, "Don't trust in that! You've got to make your own personal commitment unto the Lord". Studying the word of God, attendance at Calvary Chapel will never save you! I don't want you to rest under any kind of false security! Just because we are an evangelical church, and just because we're seeking to serve the Lord, purity and in righteousness, and in holiness. The attendance here will not save you. Don't trust in a lying vanity saying, "I go to Calvary Chapel, I go to Calvary Chapel", that's not gonna do anything for you! You stand before the Lord, you can't say, "Well I went to Calvary Chapel". It's not gonna count for anything! It's your own personal commitment to Jesus Christ which is necessary. Anything less is a lying vanity, and don't trust in it. I think it's so tragic today that so many people are trusting in their church relationships, or affiliations to save them.

Jeremiah I'm sure was sort of a thorn in a lot of the sides, of a lot of the people. In fact we know he was. As we read the prophecy of Jeremiah, we see the people's reaction to him, as they're going into the temple, you know, just thinking, "Well look, you know I've got my Sunday best on", or sabbath best on in those days! Ha, ha! But uh, "I'm going in to worship the Lord", you know and just all of this pomp and circumstance. Here's this prophet standing there, "Don't trust in the lying vanity! Your attendance here isn't gonna save you!" You've got to make your own personal commitment unto the Lord.

So if you'll read Jeremiah, you'll get it in the context of the historic, it's, it's a spiritual outward reform. Surface reform. The king has made the commitment but with the people, so many of them, it isn't a true commitment, it's just going along with the popular trend of things. "The king is serving the Lord, so we go to church and we clean up our act, and we change a bit here", but it wasn't something that was happening in their hearts. Manifested by the fact that as soon as Josiah died, the people reverted back to the old ways, and they began a plunge almost straight down, after the death of Josiah. Indicating, that all they had was a surface reform. Something that didn't get down into the very vitals of their being.

You'll hear it over and over, as Jeremiah is lamenting these things. Jeremiah is dealing with these issues, of surface kind of commitment, and the necessity for the deep heart commitment to God.

But for Josiah the king, we've got to give him good points. He made those that were in Israel to serve, but that's the problem, you can't make men serve the Lord. We have the issue of public prayer in schools, it doesn't, I think that, that is not to me, an issue that I would want to push. Except that it is something perhaps, symbolic. But I don't think that you can rule or legislate righteousness. I think that a prayer to the, "Great force of the universe", or whatever you know, a universalist type prayer would be meaningless in school. It would almost be blasphemous in a way. Our only approach to the Father, is through Jesus Christ, and unless you can pray in school in the name of Jesus Christ, you might as well pray to a brick. Ha, ha! So, that to me is not a big issue. It's not one of those things that I'm ready to crusade for, public prayer in school. I think that if you had a teacher who was an atheist or something, and leading the children in some little printed prayer, it would be blasphemy.

You cannot legislate spirituality. You cannot legislate righteousness. That was the mistake of Josiah. He ordered that all the people serve the Lord. Well they did, in obedience to the order, but not from their hearts. The only service that God counts, is that service that comes from your heart. Not that which comes from duty, or a sense of duty, or not that which comes from the sense of obligation. But only that which arises from your heart, from really the love that you have for Him, is the only real true motivation that God accepts. That which I do for Him motivated by my love for Him, God enjoys. That which I do for Him, because I think, "Oh well I'm the pastor, I've got to". Yuck! you know. No rewards for that. God doesn't appreciate that, and God doesn't appreciate the service that comes from a, from a heart that is resentful. "You know if I don't get it done, they're gonna be bugging me again. I hate to be bugged you know. I guess I have to do it. No, no!"! No value. Only that which stems from my love for the Lord. As Paul said, "The love of Christ constrains me". That's the kind of service God accepts, and God blesses.

So Josiah served the Lord with his heart. Good king. He made that commitment, "I'm gonna obey God with all my heart, and with all my soul. I'm gonna commit myself to serving the Lord". God accepted it, and God blessed him. Then he said, "All of you gotta do it too". He was the king, so they started doing it, but not with the same heart. Theirs was only surface. That's why Jeremiah was rebuking them while they were even going into the temple to worship God, because they were trusting in the wrong thing. They were trusting in the ritual of worship, and not in the Lord, Himself. So make sure that you can discern in your mind the difference between the ritual, and the Lord Himself. The ritual of worship, and the Lord Himself.

Chapter 35

So in chapter thirty five...

Josiah kept a Passover unto Yahweh in Jerusalem: and they killed the Passover on the fourteenth day of the first month (35:1).

Even as Hezekiah when he initiated the reforms, began again the Passover. Only they did it in the second month, because they weren't prepared to do it in the first month. So now Josiah. It would seem that the whole spiritual reformation of the temple and all, began about six months earlier. So that, he was ready by the time the first of the year rolled around, they were ready to observe the Passover. So the fourteenth day of the first month.

And he set the priests in their charges, [Or in their uh, places of duty.] and he encouraged them in the service of the house of the Lord, And he said to the Levites that taught all of Israel, which were holy unto the Lord, Put the holy ark in the house which Solomon the son of David the king of Israel did build; it shall not be a burden upon your shoulders: serve now the Lord your God, and his people Israel (35:2-3),

So he ordered that the ark of the covenant be brought back again, and placed in the Holy of Holies. You know, "It's not something that you're to carry around any more on your shoulders. Solomon made the place for the rest, for the ark of the covenant. Bring it back". It had been, of course, taken out at the time of Manasseh, in his profaning of the temple. So now, the returning, and the ordering of the priests to return the ark of the covenant back to its place.

And prepare yourselves by the houses of your fathers, after your various courses in which you are to

minister, according to the writing of David the king of Israel, according to the writing of Solomon his son (35:4).

So each of the houses of the, or the families of the tribe of Levites, each family had a certain duty within the temple. David appointed the families, which families would fulfill which duties within the temple. So return again to these duties, as David and Solomon had required.

Stand in the holy place according to the divisions of the families of the fathers of your brethren and the people, and after the division of the families of the Levites. And so kill the Passover, and sanctify yourselves, and prepare your brethren, that they may do according to the word of the Lord by the hand of Moses (35:5-6).

So, "Let's begin again this great feast to celebrate really, God's deliverance of our people out of Egypt, and God's keeping His promise and bringing us to this land. The birth of our nation".

So Josiah gave to the people, of the flock, lambs and goats, all for the Passover offerings, for all that were present, to the number of thirty thousand, [So the king himself, personally gave thirty thousand lambs and goats, to be offered in sacrifice at this Passover. Now, you remember that they would take really just the fat of the lambs and the goats, and they would burn it on the altar before the Lord. Then they would roast the meat, and they would have, it was a time of feast. They called it the feast of the Passover, and it was indeed a true feast. Everybody would feast for seven days, on the meat that was roasted. Then part of the meat they boiled. But it was all to be partaken in their worship of God. The idea is that, "We are offering this unto the Lord, the sacrifice. The fat of it rises unto God, as a sweet savor. Then we sit down, having been offered to God, He partakes of it, and we partake of it, and thus we become one with our Maker". As they sit and they eat, it was an act of worship. The eating itself signified their communion, and becoming one with their God. So the king gave thirty thousand out of his flock of lambs and goats. Plus,] three thousand bullocks: and these were from the king's substance. The princes also gave willingly to the people, and to the priests, and to the Levites: [Now it doesn't tell us how many that the princes gave.] Hilkiyah and Zechariah and Jehiel, the rulers of the house of God, gave unto the priests for the Passover offerings [These came now from the priests.] two thousand six hundred small cattle, and three hundred oxen (35:7-8).

That was the contribution of the high priest and of the rulers of the priesthood.

Conaniah also, and Shemaiah and Nethaneel, his brethren, and [These other fellows, and why bother with them? Ha, ha!] they gave five thousand small cattle, and five hundred oxen. So the service was prepared, and the priests stood in their place, and the Levites in their courses, according to the king's commandment. And they killed the Passover, and the priests sprinkled the blood from their hands, and the Levites [butchered them, or] flayed them. And they removed the burnt offerings, that they might give according to the divisions of the families of the people, to offer unto Yahweh, as it is written in the book of Moses. And so they did with the oxen (35:9-12).

So, they took all of these animals, sacrificed them, cut and barbecued part of the meat, and uh, verse thirteen...

They roasted the Passover with fire according to the ordinance: but the other holy offerings they boiled in the pots, and in the caldrons, and in the pans, and they divided them all up among the people (35:13).

For seven days the feast of the Passover. The provisions provided by the king, by the princes, as the people gathered from all over to worship the Lord here at the feast of the Passover.

And afterward they made ready for themselves, and for the priests: because the priests the sons of Aaron were busied in the burnt offerings and the fat until [the evening] the night; and therefore the Levites prepared for themselves, and for the priests the sons of Aaron (35:14).

So they gave to the people, and then they hurried to prepare for the other priests.

And the singers the sons of Asaph were in their place, according to the commandment of David, Asaph, and Heman, and Jeduthun the king's seer; and the porters waited at every gate; that they might not depart from their service; for their brethren the Levites prepared for them (35:15).

So the Levites were serving. Serving the people, and then after serving the people, serving themselves, serving the porters that were at the gate.

So all of the service of the Lord was prepared the same day, to keep the Passover, and to offer the burnt

offerings upon the altar of the Lord, according to the commandment of king Josiah (35:16).

All done, according to the commandment. Again, the people were doing it, but not with a whole heart. Many of them, it was just, you know, it was just the thing to do, but it wasn't really from their hearts.

So the children of Israel that were present kept the Passover at that time, the feast of unleavened bread for seven days. And there wasn't any Passover like this one that had been kept in Israel from the days of Samuel the prophet; [I mean even during the great glory days of David, and Solomon, they had never had a Passover that would equal this one, as far as the numbers of the animals and all, that were sacrificed.] and neither did all of the kings of Israel keep such a Passover as Josiah did, [The judges did not, neither did the kings of Israel.] and the priests, and the Levites, and all of Judah and Israel that were present, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Now in the eighteenth year of the reign of Josiah this Passover was kept (35:17-19).

So he's still just a young man, twenty-six years old. But he's taking the country in the right direction. He's bringing them back into the consciousness of their relationship with God. That God rules over the people. And he's bringing them into that important consciousness. However, verse twenty...

After all of this, [Some thirteen years later. After,] when Josiah had prepared the temple, Necho the king of Egypt came up to fight against Charchemish by Euphrates: and Josiah went out against him (35:20).

Now the Babylonians had been fighting with the Assyrians. It had been an on-going war between these two nations, and the Babylonians were now beginning to gain the ascendancy over the Assyrians. The Assyrians had lost their capital of Nineveh, and Charchemish, was even taken by Babylon. Necho was taking his troops up to Charchemish in order to retake it, which he did. He retook Charchemish from the Babylonians. However, a couple of years later, Nebuchadnezzar came with the Babylonian army, and the great battle of Charchemish, when the back of Egypt was broken, Charchemish was retaken by Nebuchadnezzar. Egypt was defeated, which ushered in the world dominance of the nation of Babylon. So this is that period of history that we're looking at right now. Necho feels called of God to go up and to aid the Assyrians against Babylon.

Now for some reason Josiah decides to oppose Pharaohnechoh. It is possible that Pharaohnechoh marched his troops along the Viamaris. From Egypt. When you come along the Viamaris, when you get just south of mount Carmel, the geography is such that mount Carmel comes right down to the coast. Right down to the Mediterranean. It just slopes right on down into the Mediterranean, so that it was difficult to stay along the coast. About seven miles south there, Viamaris turned inland, and it went through a pass over into the valley of Megiddo. Just about a mile west from this pass, is the city of Megiddo, that was built to protect this passage of the Viamaris, through these hills. They don't then continue along the coast, they go inland at this place, up past the sea of Galilee, on over through the area of the Yarmoch river, and then on east from there, to Babylon, and to the old Assyrian empires. They were the great trade routes of the ancient world.

It is possible that he went up to meet them in Megiddo, knowing that they would have to pass that way, and this is a narrow passage that comes through, and a great place to ambush any army that's trying to come along. However it is more likely that instead of meeting, rather than letting them come all the way along the Viamaris, along the coast, that the Egyptians probably came by ship to the ancient port city of Acco, where the troops then assembled and began their march through the valley of Megiddo, to come to the Viamaris, and continue then northward, and eastward, towards Charchemish.

Josiah decided to get involved in this stopping of Egypt. So, "Josiah", it says, "went out against him".

But Necho [Pharaohnechoh] sent ambassadors to him, that said, What have I to do with you, thou king of Judah? I am not coming against you this day, but against the house wherewith I have war: ["My grievance isn't with you, it's with Babylon."] for God commanded me to make haste: ["So don't stand in my way. Don't slow me down. I'm under the commands of God!"] forbear from meddling with God, who is with me, that he destroy you not (35:21).

It is quite possible that Josiah felt, "What does he know about God? What does he know about the word of God, or the will of God. He is a pagan Egyptian king". Thus Josiah persisted upon getting involved in this battle. Again, we don't know because the bible doesn't tell us, what the motivations of Josiah were. Why does he want to meddle? It isn't an attack against Judah, actually it's an attack against Babylon, which

ultimately destroyed Judah! Why he would want to get involved, is something that we can only speculate. But even after this warning from Pharaohnechoh. This warning to, "Stay out of this. This isn't between you and me. Stay out of it, why, God has sent me on this mission. God has told me to hurry on this mission! So don't stand in my way. For you shouldn't meddle with God, or He will destroy you".

So here is this king of Egypt, warning this righteous king, Josiah, against meddling with God, and with the plan of God, and with the purpose of God. Josiah had been a faithful servant of God, and an instrument that God used for the salvation of the nation, for thirty-one years. It is possible that he thought at this point, he could do no wrong. It could be that he was incensed and insulted that a pagan king would try to instruct him about God, and the things of God.

There is a danger, an inherent danger of being an instrument that God has used for His purposes. That danger is getting an exalted opinion of yourself. Beginning to think that, "I am really somebody. God chose me for this great work", and, "God can't do it without me. I am necessary for the work of God. If I am not in this place, God's work will go down the tubes". If the work has been built upon the personality of any man, it ought to go down the tubes! The sooner the better! But we begin to get inflated opinions of ourselves because God has used us.

People often aid and abet that inflated ego, as they come up and tell you how blessed you are, you, you know, what a blessing you are to them, and how wonderful you are, and these things. And it can destroy the servants of God. Paul said, "Don't let a man think more highly of himself than he ought". There is a danger in that. Then Paul asked, "What do you have, but what you receive? And if you received it of the Lord, then why do you boast as though you didn't receive it from the Lord, but it's something in you?". It is true that God does gift men, and God uses then these gifted men. But, the gifts came from God, and you need to constantly recognize that. "God has used me as an instrument, because God has given me certain gifts, but it was God that gave me the gifts, and I can't boast in myself, or what I am, or what I have done, or the ability to teach or anything else. It's a gift of God!" And it needs to be recognized as such, always recognized as such!

So that the instrument is not exalted or lifted up, because the moment the instrument begins to be lifted up, and begins to think, "Well, God really needs me. God's work requires that I be here, and if I weren't here, you know the whole thing could cave", and all this. Oh what a lie and deception. Josiah, having been used of God for such a period of time, probably felt that, "I can do what I please now. My life is anointed".

So he did not listen to the warning of Pharaohnechoh. In spite of the warning, he meddled with the plan of God. He tried to hinder the plan of God. Pharaohnechoh said, "God told me to make haste". He tried to stand in the way, and slow him down, and he tried to stand in the way of the work that God was seeking to do. Oh God help that man, who stands in the way of the work, that God is seeking to do! So he went out. Verse twenty two...

Nevertheless Josiah would not turn his face from the battle, [From Necho] but he disguised himself, that he might fight with him, he harkened not unto the words of Necho that had come from the mouth of God, and he came to fight in the valley of Megiddo (35:22).

So not hearkening to the warnings, the word that came from God, he's gonna go out there, and he's gonna stand, or seek to stand, in the path of God.

And so the archers shot at king Josiah; and the king said to his servants, Get me out of here; for I am gravely wounded (35:23).

The course of history is changed, by the hardheadedness of this king. It is interesting, once he gets involved, the moment trouble comes, he says, "Get me out of here". But he wouldn't listen beforehand. It's not until he's been shot, it's not until he's been gravely wounded, that he is willing then, to listen to what God says. Oh God help us that God doesn't have to hurt us, or wound us, in order to get us to listen.

I think of Jacob. Headstrong guy. God had to finally cripple Jacob to get him to listen. Jacob had all kinds of problems. But Jacob was so self-resourceful, and reliant. I mean this guy was clever! He could get the best of any deal. He learned to rest upon his own resources, taking the blessing of his brothers by his clever maneuvering. Taking from his uncle Laban, the greater portion of the stronger cattle and herd, his two daughters, their servants. Though Laban tried to outwit him, and changed his wages ten times, Jacob came

out on top every time. He was that kind of resourceful guy. But now he's facing some real problems. He's just left his uncle Laban, who has put a mark on the ground, and said, "Don't you come over this mark, or you've had it man! There's no place to return back here!". And, Laban takes off with his men, and his tents. Then, word comes to him, "Your brother Esau is coming to meet you, he's got two hundred armed men with him". Quite a welcoming party. "Welcome home!" But Jacob realized that, it's not the kind of a welcome that he wanted. The last time he saw his brother, he said, "I'm gonna kill you. As soon as dad dies man, you're dead. I'm gonna kill you".

Now, here comes his brother with two hundred men. But, oh clever resourceful Jacob! He sets his servants in groups. He says, "Here you take two hundred sheep, and you go out in front, and when you meet Esau with the men, and they say, 'Who are you, and who are these sheep?', these are a present for Esau, from his brother Jacob". He sent all these guys out in front with these cattle, and camels, and everything else, and all presents from Esau, from his servant Jacob. You know, to appease him. Then he divided the family into two companies. In case they attacked one, the others can flee. I mean got the whole thing all worked out, you know. "If we can't appease him with all the gifts, then you know we'll, one will hold a, one will have a holding action, while the others escape". Still scheming, conniving. So he sets his family down, and says, "Okay, you guys sleep here".

Now he goes across this little Jabock and he prays. He says, "Now Lord, you're the one that told me to come back home, and you'd do me good. Now I'm not worthy of the least of your mercies that you have shown unto me. When I crossed this little Jabock, running from my brother, all I had was my cane. Now look! Man I've got so many, I had to divide into two companies! But Lord, I'm worried about this guy Esau".

There came the angel of the Lord, and wrestled with Jacob all night. Now here he is a ninety six year old, tougher than nails. What you don't need when facing a crisis is to be up all night, and especially to be wrestling. Takes a lot of energy! As the morning began to break, and Jacob still wouldn't give up, still wouldn't surrender, the angel of the Lord touched his hip and threw it out of joint. Shriveled up the muscle. Pulled the whole thing out. Crippled him!

When Jacob saw that he was crippled and could not run, he then began to cry, and he said, "Oh Lord, I won't let you go until you bless me!". He said, "What is your name?" "Yakov." The name means heel catcher. One who overtakes a person by tripping him. The heel catcher. He said, "Your name will no longer be heel catcher, Yakov. But your name will be Israel", a man of God. Or, a man governed by God. That was the blessing that God gave to him. The change of nature. No longer the clever, conniving schemer. But now a man governed by God.

Oh how important that our lives be governed by God! Josiah would not listen. He insisted on getting involved. It was not until he was wounded that he was willing to surrender. It was not until Jacob was wounded, that he was willing to surrender. He, he was still doing his best, conniving, scheming, until God finally had to cripple him, in order to bring him to the place of submission. But I would suggest that, that's not good! It's better that we submit unto God, before we are crippled. That we be more obedient, and yielded unto the things of God, so that God doesn't have to cripple us, in order to get us in alignment with what He wants.

Here is Josiah, sorely wounded, he says, "Get me out here!". Well, God was saying, "Stay out of there!", to begin with! But he pushed on headstrong until he was wounded. Just like so many people I know today. God says, "Stay out of there. You have no business being there". And they go anyhow. And God has to let them suffer then, the consequences of getting involved in things where you have no business being.

My son confessed to me the other night something I had not known. Probably good that I didn't. When he was in a period of life when he was running from God, a friend of his was involved in a pool shooting contest at a bar, and had encouraged Jeff to come down and join the contest, and was there in the bar with his friend shooting pool. He had been eliminated, but his friend was going on in the contest, a good pool player. Three seedy characters came into the bar, began to push their way around and cause trouble, and so the patrons in the bar beat up on these three guys, who were ejected from the bar. But they came back in about an hour with guns, and began to shoot the place up. My son was there. He said, "By the time the third

shot was fired, he was halfway down the block”. Said he never moved so fast in all of his life! He said, “Oh God! I don’t want to die in a bar!”

A lot of times when we insist on being where God says we shouldn’t be, we can find ourselves in deep water. Josiah was where he shouldn’t be. He found himself in deep water. He wasn’t willing to listen, until God had to actually, let him be injured, gravely injured. Then he orders the chariots here, “Get me out of here! I’ve been wounded”.

And his servants therefore took him out of that chariot, and put him in the second chariot [The one that was built for speed.] and they brought him to Jerusalem, and he died, [The indication is, according to history in the text, is that he died, from some of the other prophets, he died on the way to Jerusalem.] and he was buried in one of the sepulchres of his fathers. And all of Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah (35:24).

He had been a good king, he had been a good leader. He had brought the nation back to God, back to strength.

And Jeremiah [The prophet of God.] lamented for Josiah: and all of the singing men and singing women spake of Josiah in their lamentations to this day they made an ordinance in Israel: and, behold, they are written in the lamentations (35:25).

Now that is not of course the lamentation of Jeremiah, because that lamentation was against Jerusalem. It was lamenting over Jerusalem, because of the destruction by the Babylonians. Jeremiah sat there in the Grotto, across from the Herod’s gate, looking at the devastated city. Looking at the temple that had been destroyed. He sat there weeping, and lamenting over Jerusalem. “It didn’t have to be! It didn’t have to be in such a mess. It didn’t have to be destroyed. But the people would not listen or hearken to God, and they brought the judgement of God upon themselves!”. Jeremiah’s lamentation. But here was the separate lamentations. These are for Josiah.

Now the rest of the acts of Josiah, his goodness, according to that which was written in the law of the Lord, And his deeds, both the first and the last, behold, they are written in the book of the kings of Israel and of Judah (35:26-27).

II Kings, chapter twenty two. In that area, you’ll find also the story of Josiah. We’ll also come to him, when we come to Jeremiah, we will get into the man Josiah again.

A lot for us to learn! Important lessons to take to heart. God help us to do it. God help us to learn the lesson of listening to the Lord. Not to think of ourselves ever, as above the law of God. Because we’ve been used of God or whatever, not to think that we’re exempt from the law of God. Not to go where God has not called, and especially, not to go where God says we shouldn’t be! Help us to learn O Lord, to serve you with all of our heart, and with all of our soul. Not just because it’s the popular thing to do, or it’s you know, everybody’s going, “I like to be with the crowd”. But, we serve the Lord with all of our hearts, and that we serve Him out of a heart of love. Not from constraint, not from pressure, but the love of Christ constraining me, pushing me.