# II Kings 23

## Review…

- **II Kings 22 – Godly King Josiah – the 16th King of Judah…**
  - Josiah did what was right in the sight of the Lord – in ALL the ways of his father David…
    - He became King when he was only 8 years old – and sought the Lord while he was young…
    - When Josiah was 16 he began to seek the God of his Father David…
    - When Josiah was 20 he began to purge out idolatry - **II Chronicles 34:3**
    - When Josiah was 26 – he decided to repair the Temple!
  - During the renovations of the Temple – Hilkiah found the Book of the Law…
    - It is thought Josiah read from Law of Moses in - **Deuteronomy 28-30**…
    - When Josiah heard these Words from the Book of the Law – he tore his clothes…
    - He realized that Israel had chosen the wrong path – they had chosen the curses of God!
  - Josiah sent men to inquire of the Lord – they went to Huldah the prophetess…
    - Huldah gave the answer from the Lord – there was no stopping His wrath…
    - God would bring all the curses written in the Law upon Judah…
    - Because the people continued to worship other gods – provoking the Lord to anger!
    - But although the judgment of the nation was certain – there was hope for Josiah…
    - He had humbled himself – torn his clothes at the reading of the Word…
    - So Josiah would not see the judgment – he would go to be with the Lord in peace!

## Purifying the Land… (*4 things*)

- **1st – Making a covnenant with God… vs. 1-3** Read: II Kings 23:1-3
  - 1st – Josiah called for all the leaders of Judah… vs. 1-2
    - He went up to the Temple – along with all the priests / and the prophets…
      - As well as all the people of Jerusalem – both small and great…
      - And there Josiah read to them all the 'Book of the Covenant' that had been found!
    - Josiah understood the judgment that was coming on the nation…
      - He realized that God had promised peace in his generation because he humbled himself…
      - He could have been content with that – knowing that he was safe…
      - But Josiah also wanted ALL of Judah to have that same peace with God…
      - So he made sure that EVERYONE heard the Word of the Lord!

- It is not enough to know that we are saved – we might have peace with God…
- But how about the world around us that is hurling toward judgment and destruction…
- We know LOTS of people who do not believe in Jesus – what are we doing about it!
- We are called to 'go' – into our workplace / to our families - **Romans 10:14-17**
- And tell people about Jesus – give them the Word / the message of salvation!

- 2nd – Josiah stood by a pillar in the Temple and made a covenant with the Lord… vs. 3
  - The word covenant can be a confusing Word – it simply means promise…
    - Josiah promised God that he would keep His commands / His Word…
    - He would follow God with all his heart / and all his soul…
    - And that he would do everything God commanded in His Word!
    - All the people of Judah agreed with him – but they would fail to keep their commitment…
    - Caught up in the excitement of the day - they were making an emotional promise!
  - The problem with promising to obey God - is we are not dependable…
    - I can remember being at camp when I was a kid – stirred by a spiritual high…
    - Gathered together with lots of other believers – challenged to 'promise to live for God'…
    - In that moment I was convinced I would always follow the Lord – but ultimately I failed!
    - Emotional promises to God are destined to go wrong - because they depend on us…
    - We can make our promise - be determined to do the things we know we should do…
    - Get up early and read our Bibles / invite unsaved friends to church / pray…
    - But when we start to sleep in / hang out with friends – rather than inviting them…
    - We end up condemned – because we were are not able to follow through…
    - It is not that we do not want to do the right things – we cannot do the right things!
  - Our problem is our heart – we are the problem – we are sinners!
    - **Romans 7:18** – "I know I am rotten through and through so far as my old sinful nature is concerned. No matter which way I turn, I can not make myself do right…"
    - Why do I do what I know is wrong – because I want to – no one forces me…
    - Why do I not do what I know is good and right – because I do not want to…
    - And the challenge is I cannot change my heart – how can you change what you want…
    - My problem is my heart/desires – I am the problem – I sin because I want to!
  - That is why God gave us a new promise - a New Covenant...
    - **Jeremiah 31:31** - "Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant… I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people."
    - The New Covenant is not about what we have to do - but what God does for us!
    - Only Jesus can bring lasting change - a transformed heart and new life...
    - As we look to Jesus - we new are changed from the inside out!

- **2ND – 11 REFORMS OF JOSIAH… VS. 4-24** READ: II KINGS 23:4-24
  - 1st – Josiah then began a vigorous campaign to purge idolatry from the Land… vs. 4
    - He removed all artifacts in the temple used to worship Baal / Asherah / Hosts of heaven…
    - He burned them in the Kidron valley - and spread their ashes in Bethel…
    - Bethel was the place where the Golden calf had been placed by Jeroboam…

- He defiled that place of pagan worship to discourage people from worshiping there!

- 2nd - Josiah removed the Idolatrous priests - in Hebrew 'chemarim' - scorched… vs. 5
  - The thought is offering incense to the false gods blackened their clothes…
  - These were priests who worshiped Baal / the sun / moon / and the Zodiac (*constellations*)…
  - Interesting that to this day the Jews refer to Christian ministers as 'chemarim'…
  - Because Christian priests (*Catholic / Orthodox*) wear black clothing!
- 3rd - Josiah took the Asherah pole (*wooden image*) from the Temple… vs. 6
  - Manasseh had set it up - but removed it when he repented and turned back to God…
  - But his son Amon had placed it again in the Temple after Manasseh death…
  - So Josiah burnt it / and ground the ashes into dust - so it could never stand again!
  - We often make the mistake as Christians to put down a temptation - but not remove it…
  - If we struggle with something - we cannot trust in our convictions to keep us safe…
  - We need to get it out of our lives so there is no chance it can stumble us again!
- 4th - Josiah tore down the 'booths of the perverted persons' in the Temple… vs. 7
  - Thought to be the same as 'Succoth-benoth" - the tents of Venus - **II Kings 17:30**
  - Places where prostitutes were available for hire in the worship of Asherah (*wooden image*)…
  - These had been allowed to exist in the VERY courtyard of the Temple!
- 5th - Josiah gathered all the priests from the cities of Judah… vs. 8-9
  - He defiled the high places where they had been worshiping the LORD…
    - These priests 'lost their job' - because they had disobeyed the command of God…
    - They had burned incense on the high places - rather than at the Temple of God!
  - All sacrifices had to be offered at the Temple - **Deuteronomy 12:11**...
    - The Temple was a way to associate Israel with the One True God...
    - If someone saw you burning incense at the Temple - for sure you were a Jew!
    - If people watch our life - what do our actions say about who we are...
    - Just looking at where we go - are we identified with Jesus / or with the world...
    - One reason we go to church – is to associate ourselves with Jesus...
    - As the family of God we declare to anyone who is watching - we believe in Jesus...
    - If we were not Christians - if we did not believe - we would not go to church…
    - But church also keeps us in fellowship with God - reminds us to be in God's Word!
- 6th - Josiah defiled the valley of Topheth - place of fire… vs. 10
  - The Hinnom valley - where children were offered as sacrifices to Molech…
    - The rabbis say that Topheth had its name from *toph* - a *drum*…
    - Drums were used to drown the cries of the children burning in the arms of Molech!

- Josiah defiled it by making it the public dump / 'poop pit' for the city!
  - To this day the gate from the Temple mount to the Hinnom valley is called the dung gate!
  - Jesus refers to the valley in the NT – **Matthew 10:28**
  - *Gehenna* - used 12 times in the NT– 'The Valley of Hinnom' – translated - Hell…
  - Jesus uses the Valley of Hinnom as a word picture – for hell – eternal judgment!
- 7th - Josiah removed the horses dedicated to the sun… vs. 11
  - The assumption is Kings Ahaz / Manasseh / and Amon worshiped the sun…
  - Part of their belief was that the sun was drawn in a chariot by horses across the sky…
  - Similar in belief to the Greek god Helios / or the Roman god Sol…
  - The Kings would parade through the city in horse draw chariots as part of their worship…
  - Josiah removed the horses (*maybe statues*) and burned the chariots!
- 8th - Josiah tore down altars Ahaz and Manasseh had built on the rooftops… vs. 12
  - He pulverized them and cast their dust in the Kidron valley…
  - Josiah was not just removing the obvious idolatry - he cleaned out every nook and cranny!
  - When God starts to do a work in our life - cleaning up our act…
  - Inevitably we try and hide away a few struggles - tucked away on the 'roof top'…
  - But God does not want us to be party sold out for him - He wants every nook and cranny!
- 9th - Josiah defiled the mount of corruption… vs. 13-14
  - Thought to be the central - and highest - of three peaks on the Mt. of Olives…
  - It was the place where Solomon had worshiped Ashtoreth / Chemosh / and Milcom…
  - Josiah tore out the altars - and covered them with the bones of men (*graveyard*)…
  - Because Josiah wanted to remove the old idolatry - that had been around way too long!
  - Just because we have been living with a certain sin for a long time...
  - Is no reason for us to become complacent and just accept it as a part of our lives…
  - God wants to yank out those stubborn sins - and make us a holy people!
- 10th - Then Josiah turned his attention to Samaria (*Northern Kingdom*)… 15-20
  - He tore down the altar at Bethel - the Golden calf - that Jeroboam had set up…
    - He took bones from a nearby tomb - and burned them on the altar…
    - Fulfilling the prophecy of **I Kings 13:1-6** - the destruction of the Golden calves!
    - It had taken 360 years – but King Josiah now fulfilled the prophecy!
  - Josiah then asked about one of the tombs - the grave of the man who had given the prophecy
    - God had told a young prophet to go and speak out against Jeroboam / Golden calf…

- As he was returning to Judah an old 'prophet' heard about the young man…
- He caught up with him – and invited him to come back to his house for dinner…
- The young prophet told him - God had commanded him not to stay in Israel…
- But the old man said – an angel spoke to him – and he was to come back for dinner…
- The problem was it was all a lie – the old man had not heard from God!
- So when the young prophet left to return to Judah – a lion attacked and killed him!

▪ We have to be careful when someone tells us God told them something…

- Even if they mean well – we need to make sure it is really from the Lord!
- God will never contradict His Word – **I Corinthians 14:32**…
- If 'God says something' contrary to His Word - it is not God speaking!
- We also need to be careful when we tell others – 'thus says the Lord'…
- Because people must just listen and follow the advice we give to them…
- And if it is not really from the Lord – it can have disastrous results!

○ 11th - Keeping the Passover… vs. 21-24

▪ Once Josiah had purified the Land of all idolatrous worship…

▪ Including removed all the mediums / wizards (*spiritists*) / and even the household gods…

▪ He then held a Passover celebration - such as had not been seen since the days of the Judges…

▪ Once the people had removed all the distractions - they were able to celebrate with the Lord!

▪ I often hear people complain that God is not answering their prayers…

▪ They argue they do not feel the presence of God in their lives – disconnected…

▪ The problem is not that God is not there – it is we have allowed sin to separate us from God…

▪ We must remove all the distractions – so we can celebrate / commune with our Lord!

- **3RD – THE DEATH OF JOSIAH… VS. 25-30** READ: II KINGS 23:25-30

○ 1st – There was no King like Josiah… vs. 25-28

▪ He turned to the Lord with all his heart / soul / and might - **Deuteronomy 6:5**

- There was no King like him before or afterwards who so completely followed God!
- Nevertheless - God did not turn his wrath away from Judah…
- He would remove them from his sight - because of the sins of Manasseh!

▪ Although the was repentance on the part of Judah - there was still consequence…

- Many assume they are 'ok' because God does not immediately punish them...
- They make mistake of interpreting God's 'patience' for God's 'acceptance'...
- Just because God has not judged yet – does not mean God will not judge…
- God is patient – longsuffering – giving time to repent and turn back to Him…
- God waits to punish sin only because He loves the sinner – **II Peter 3:9**
- But if we harden our hearts - choose not to repent - our sin will not remain hidden
- **Numbers 32:22** - "Be sure your sin will find you out..."

○ 2nd - The death of Josiah… vs. 29-30

- After Josiah had completed all the work of purifying the Land / Temple…
  - Pharaoh Necho made war with Nabopolassar (*the father of Nebuchadnezzar*)
  - Necho took the Via Maris (*way of the Seas*) into Assyria - but was stopped by King Josiah…
  - Judah had an alliance with Babylon – form the time of Manasseh - **II Chronicles 33:11**
  - **II Chronicles 35:20-25** – "What have I to do with you, king of Judah? *I have* not *come* against you this day, but against the house with which I have war; for God commanded me to make haste. Refrain *from meddling with* God, who *is* with me, lest He destroy you."
- Josiah did not back down - he disguised himself in the battle at Megiddo (*Armageddon*)…
  - And was hit by archers - taken back to Jerusalem where he died!
  - Do not have friendship with the world – instead be a light to the world!
  - If I stand on a chair – you can pull me off – easier than I can pull you up…
  - We must be very careful about our fellowship with the world…
  - It is far easier for them to pull us down – then to pick them up!
  - We need to be interacting with those who do not know Jesus...
  - If we are not out in the world - we cannot show the world the hope of Jesus!
  - But though we are in the world - we should not be like the world - **John 17:15**
  - We should be an example to them – let them see Jesus in us!

- **4TH – THE FINAL KINGS OF JUDAH… VS. 31-37** READ: II KINGS 23:31-37
  - 1st – Jehoahaz (*Yahweh has taken*) became the 17th King of Judah… vs. 31-34
    - He was 23 years old when he became King - but only reigned for 3 months…
    - He did evil in sight of the Lord - so God had Pharaoh Necho remove him…
    - It is speculated Jehoahaz may have gone to battle Necho in revenge for the death of his father…
    - But he was taken as a prisoner to Egypt - and ended up dying there!
  - 2nd - Jehoiakim (*Yahweh raises up*) became the 18th King of Judah… vs. 35-37
    - He was 25 years old (*eldest son of Josiah*) when he became King - and reigned for 11 years…
    - His real name was Eliakim (*God raises up*) - but Necho changed it to Jehoiakim…
    - He was forced to pay 6.5 tons of silver / and 130lbs of gold in tribute every year to Egypt…
    - He had to tax the people of Judah heavily in order to pay the tribute to Egypt!