II Chronicles 36

Review…

- **II Chronicles 35 – Purifying The Land…**
  - Having discovered the Law of the Lord – and been told of the impending judgment on Judah…
    - Josiah began a vigorous campaign of reforms to purge idolatry from the Land…
    - He removed all the pagan altars in the Temple / Jerusalem / Judah / even Samaria!
    - And once he had purified the Land – he held a great Passover celebration!
  - There was no King like Josiah…
    - He turned to the Lord with all his heart / soul / and might - **Deuteronomy 6:5**
    - Nevertheless - God did not turn his wrath away from Judah…
    - Pharaoh Necho made war with Nabopolassar (*the father of Nebuchadnezzar*)…
    - Necho took the Via Maris (*way of the Sea*) into Assyria - but was stopped by King Josiah…
    - Josiah went to war with Necho - he disguised himself in the battle at Megiddo (*Armageddon*)…
    - And was hit by archers - taken back to Jerusalem where he died!

The Final Kings of Judah… (*5 things*)

- **1st – Jehoahaz (*Yahweh has taken*) – 2nd son of Josiah became the 17th King of Judah… vs. 1-4**
  - He was 23 years old when he became King - but only reigned for 3 months…
  - He did evil in sight of the Lord – for 3 months - so God had Pharaoh Necho remove him…
  - It is speculated Jehoahaz may have gone to war with Necho in revenge for his father…
  - He was not the first-born son – but apparently he was the one to step up after his father's death…
  - But he was taken as a prisoner to Egypt - and ended up dying there!
- **2nd - Jehoiakim (*Yahweh raises up*) – 1st son of Josiah was the 18th King of Judah … vs. 5-8**
  - 1st – He was 25 years old when he became King - and reigned for 11 years… vs. 5-7
    - His real name was Eliakim (*God raises up*) - but Necho changed it to Jehoiakim…
      - In the first year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar - Egypt was conquered by Babylon…
      - He broke the strength of the Pharaoh – and they never again rose to a world power!
      - Judah had at that time been under Pharaoh Necho for 4 years - **Jeremiah 25:1**
      - So when Nebuchadnezzar took Egypt – he also took Judah as a spoil!
    - This was the first of three times Nebuchadnezzar conquered Jerusalem…
      - He took all of the gold in articles in the Temple off to Babylon…
      - The same gold cups and plates what would later be used by Belshazzar – **Daniel 5:2**
      - It is also when the brightest and best of Judah were taken captive…
      - Included in the captives was a young man named Daniel – **Daniel 1:2**

- I am sure at that point Daniel did not understand what God was doing…
- But God would raise Daniel up to become 2nd only the King of Babylon!
- Too often we focus on the negative - and as a result miss what God is doing...
- Anytime we get our eyes off Jesus and onto our circumstances we are in trouble...
- If we focus what is happening around us - we are bound to be overwhelmed!
- It is when we keep our eyes on Jesus that we see what God is doing in spite of our troubles!
- **II Corinthians 4:18** – "We do not look at the troubles we can see right now; rather, we look forward to what we have not yet seen [*Jesus*]. For the troubles we see will soon be over, but the joys to come will last forever."

o 2nd - After 3 years under Babylonian rule – Jehoiakim rebelled (*his 7th year*) – **II Kings 24:2-4**

▪ Nebuchadnezzar sent troops to put down the rebellion…

- Not that God had given up on Judah – he sent Jeremiah the prophet to warn them!
- **Jeremiah 26:2** – "Speak to all the cities of Judah… Perhaps everyone will listen and turn from his evil way, I may relent concerning the calamity I purpose to bring on them..."
- Yet rather than repent – the people instead wanted to silence Jeremiah!
- **Jeremiah 26:8** – "When Jeremiah had made an end of speaking all that the LORD had commanded *him* to speak… all the people seized him, saying, 'You will surely die!'"
- The people showed they had the same heart as Manasseh – rebellion against the Lord…
- Therefore the Lord brought Babylon to destroy the Kingdom of Judah!
- God uses trials in life to turn up the 'heat' – let us see what we are made of...
- God already knows - but He wants us to see what is in our hearts...
- Will we hold onto our sin – or will we be humbled / repent and turn to Jesus!

▪ The question is why Jehoiakim thought he could get away with rebelling against Babylon!

- There were many 'prophets' saying God would give Judah victory over Nebuchadnezzar…
  - But Jeremiah the true prophet warned the people – God was with Babylon!
  - **Jeremiah 27:9** – "Do not listen to your prophets, your diviners, your dreamers, your soothsayers, or your sorcerers, who speak to you, saying, "You shall not serve the king of Babylon. For they prophesy a lie to you…"
- We need to be careful in life who we listen to – whose advice we choose to follow…
  - It is easy to want to listen to people who tell us what we want to hear...
  - We want to hear God wants us to be healthy and wealthy – that life will be easy…
  - We want to hear that we are not at fault – it is the other person who is wrong!
  - But what we need is someone who will tell us the truth – point us to Jesus!
  - When we see someone whose life is 'out of control' - running from their consequences...
  - It is our opportunity to come along side and help that person...
  - Caring for someone does not mean you let them go on in their sin...
  - Sin destroys lives – how loving is it to let someone destroy themselves...
  - A true friend is one loves you enough to tell you when you are wrong!
  - **Proverbs 27:6** – "Faithful are the wounds of a friend..."

o 3rd – The curse of Jehoiakim… vs. 8

▪ The rest of the acts of Jehoiakim are written in the book of the Kings of Judah and Israel…

- But not much is said about him there – because he did not do much worth recording…
- In fact he was such an evil King – the Lord ended up cursing his lineage!

- **Jeremiah 22:30** – "For none of his descendants shall prosper, Sitting on the throne of David, and ruling anymore in Judah."

▪ This turns out to be a real dilemma…

- God promised that a son of David would always sit on the throne of Israel – **II Samuel 7:16**
- But because of Jehoiakim – the line was cursed so no King would sit on the throne…
- It might seem that God broke His Word – unable to fulfill His promise to David!
- But God did put a King on the throne of David forever – Jesus Christ…

▪ How God did that in light of the curse of Jehoiakim is amazing!

- We are given two genealogies in the New Testament…
- **Matthew 1:1-17** - follows the genealogy of Joseph - the adopted father of Jesus...
- **Luke 3:23-38** - follows the genealogy of Mary - the true mother of Jesus...
- If Jesus had been the legitimate son of Joseph He could not have been king...
- Because of the curse God put on the line of Kings from David - no more kings in Judah!

▪ But as the adopted son of Joseph Jesus inherited the rights of the Royal lineage...

- And as the son of Mary He was in the direct lineage of David (*through Nathan*)
- Yet He avoided the 'blood curse' placed on the kingly line!
- Funny how God seems to always see a way even when we cannot…
- Perhaps you are in an 'impossible' situation today - you see no way out...
- Know that we serve the God of the impossible – only believe!

- **3RD – JEHOIACHIN (*YAHWEH ESTABLISHES*) – SON OF JEHOIAKIM WAS THE 19TH KING OF JUDAH … VS. 9-10**
  - 1st – Jehoiachin was 18 - **II Kings 24:8** - when he became King - he ruled for 3 months / 10 days…

    ▪ It would seem the rebellion of Jehoiakim against Nebuchadnezzar lasted about 4 years…

    - When Jerusalem finally fell (*11th year of his reign*) Jehoiakim was killed – **Jeremiah 36:30**
    - Jehoiachin likely ruled in name only for a few months until he was taken captive!

    ▪ In that short time – he did evil in the sight of the Lord…

    - According to verse 9 – he had been ruling along side his father since he was 8…
    - And from that very young age he has been complicit in all the evil his father did!
    - I have been around little kids who know how to swear – tell dirty jokes…
    - And you are left to wonder how can someone so young - be so corrupt…
    - But perhaps the scarier question is – what will they be like when they grow up!
    - You wonder where their parents are – only to realize they are imitating their parents!
    - Kids like sponges – they soak up every word we say…
    - Our kids hear us talking / see what we do – and the whole time they are learning...
    - We can choose to show them the ways of the world - or give them a Godly example!
  - 2nd – The second fall of Jerusalem…

    ▪ Nebuchadnezzar came to besiege and conquer Jerusalem the 2nd time…

    - Jehoiachin came out to surrender to him – Nebuchadnezzar took him captive to Babylon…
    - Then he took thousands of captives – the best of those who were left in Jerusalem…
    - Included in the captive was the prophet Ezekiel – **Ezekiel 1:1**
    - Only the very poorest of the people of Judah were left in the Land!

    ▪ The prophet Jeremiah wrote to these captives – **Jeremiah 29**

- He told them to settle down in Babylon – buy houses / plant crops / get married…
- **Jeremiah 29:10** – "For thus says the LORD: After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place."
- God would leave them captives for 70 years – then come to bring them home…
- 70 years because the people had no given the land its Sabbath rests for 490 years!
- **Jeremiah 29:11** – "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope…"
- Because of sin we have been separated from God - left in a foreign land…
- And we are waiting for the day when the Lord will take us home to be with Him…
- But we may have to wait for a while - some of us may have to wait a lifetime (*70 years*)…
- And while we are waiting we need to be practical - buy houses / plant / marry…
- But we must never forget the plan God has for us - a future and a hope!

▪ When time came for the Jews to return after 70 years - only 42 thousand went - **Ezra 1:64**…

- The majority of the Jews stayed in exile - because they it had become comfortable!
- While we are still here waiting to go home - it is easy for us to get comfortable...
- It is important we take the time to strengthen our relationship with God...
- Spending time with Jesus through His Word - and through prayer...
- Preparing ourselves for the day when we will get to go HOME - **Hebrews 11:16**

- **4TH – ZEDEKIAH (*YAHWEH IS RIGHTEOUS*) – SON OF JOSIAH THE 20TH / LAST KING OF JUDAH … VS. 11-21**
  - 1st – Nebuchadnezzar made Mattaniah (*gift of Jehovah*) king of Judah… vs. 11-12
    - He was 12 years old when he became King – and reigned for 11 years…
      - As a show of power - Nebuchadnezzar changed his name to Zedekiah…
      - He was the youngest son of Josiah to reign / brother of Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim…
      - He did evil in the sight of the Lord – just as bad as his brothers - but for a different reason!
    - Zedekiah did not openly rebel against God - but he did not obey God - **Jeremiah 37:1-2**
      - It does not take a direct rejection of the Word of God to be a rebel….
      - All it takes is NOT DOING what God commands - this is also sinning against the Lord
      - **James 1:22-25** – "For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who sees his face in a mirror… goes away, and immediately forgets what he saw."
      - Many who attend Bible studies – agree with everything that is said...
      - Then go home and inexplicably forget everything they just heard!
      - The Bible is not a textbook you must learn - it is an instruction manual to follow...
      - You can know all words - but if it does not change your actions - it means nothing!
  - 2nd – The third siege of Jerusalem… vs. 13
    - In the 9th year of the reign of Zedekiah - he rebelled against Babylon …
    - He took an oath to be loyal to the King of Babylon…
    - But he broke it thinking he could find help by sending ambassadors to Egypt…
    - As a result of him breaking his oath – God sent him into exile – **Ezekiel 17:13-20**
    - People tend to break their word – they take their promises lightly…
    - But God does not treat our words lightly - He expects us to fulfill our promises...

- If we do not follow through with our promise - it is sin - **Deuteronomy 23:21**
- So if we are not sure if we can keep our promise - better to say nothing at all!
- **Ecclesiastes 5:5** - "Better to say nothing than to promise something you do not follow through on."

- 3rd – In response Nebuchadnezzar came with his whole army and besieged Jerusalem… vs. 14-17
  - On the 10th day / 10th month (*January 30, 588 B.C.)* the city was surrounded – **II Kings 25:1**
    - The very day Ezekiel was told by the Lord the city would fall - **Ezekiel 24:1-2**
    - Jeremiah was given the same message - Jerusalem was doomed - **Jeremiah 34:1**
    - The judgment of God should not have come as a surprise – He gave plenty of warning…
    - Right up to the end – the prophets of God stood up to warn the people…
    - Yet to the very end – the people were stubborn – and hard hearted!
    - **Isaiah 65:2** – "I have stretched out My hands all day long to a rebellious people…"
  - People never learn – they do not want to see the judgment that is coming…
    - They ignore the Bible / they ignore the warnings as foolish religion…
    - People today just go about their daily lives – oblivious to what is coming...
    - They assume they have all the time in the world - tomorrow will be just like today...
    - They do realize that Jesus is coming soon – the Tribulation is right around the corner...
    - God has been patient desiring that people come to Jesus – saved – **II Peter 3:9**
    - But there will come a day – when people least expect it – when judgment will come!
    - **II Peter 3:10** – "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night…"
- 4th – The siege lasted 2 ½ years - until the 11 year of the reign of Zedekiah… vs. 18-21
  - When the city fell - Zedekiah fled towards Jericho (*perhaps through Zedekiah's cave*)…
    - Nebuchadnezzar caught up with him - killed his sons in front of him - then took his eyes!
    - Zedekiah was then bound and taken as a captive to Babylon - and died there!
    - As part of the destruction that followed - on the 9th of Av – the temple was burnt down…
    - The Nation of Israel had put their trust in a building - thought it kept them safe!
  - But the Temple was just sticks and stone – it had not power to save them!
    - People tend to trust in all the wrong things in life - religion / money…
    - But religion cannot help us in the end - the church is just sticks and bricks…
    - And money disappears just as quickly as it comes - **Haggai 1:6**
    - We put our faith in all the wrong things - then wonder why our life is devastated!
    - Our problem is never a lack of faith – it was where our faith is placed…
    - We all have faith – lots of it – our problem is we do not always put our faith in Jesus…
    - And our faith is only going to be as effective as the person we have faith in!
  - Leaving no way to offer sacrifices - no way to forgive sins…
    - There was no more temple / no more tools / no more High Priest…
    - God allowed the old system to be broken - because He was getting ready for a New one!
    - **Hebrews 10:1, 12** - "The sacrifices under the old system were repeated again and again, year after year, but they were never able to provide perfect cleansing for those who came to worship… But our High Priest offered himself to God as one sacrifice for sins, good for all time."
    - Jesus came to restore us to God – He died in our place to pay for our sin…
    - He did it once and for all – not just covering one sin- but taking away all sin!

- He then gave us a new heart – so we no longer want to continue in sin!

- **5TH – RETURNING TO THE LAND … VS. 22-23**
  - 1st - In the first year of King Cyrus king of Persia (*70 years later*)…
    - When King Cyrus of the Medo-Persians conquered Babylon – killed Belshazzar – **Daniel 5:30**…
    - They took the city without a fight - by redirecting the river flowing into the city...
    - It took 3 days for many of those who lived in the city to learn it had fallen!
    - Then Daniel – now an old man - walked up and showed Cyrus this Bible verse...
    - **Isaiah 45:1 –** "This is what the LORD says to Cyrus, his anointed one… Their fortress gates will be opened, never again to shut against him."
    - The Prophet Isaiah wrote this some 150 years before Cyrus was ever born!
  - 2nd - When Daniel read this - Cyrus gave the command to rebuild the Temple - **Ezra 1:2-4**...
    - About 50,000 Jews came back to the Land under the command...
    - 80 years later Ezra took a smaller group – to work on finishing the Temple
    - 13 year after the return of Ezra from exile - 93 years after the command of Cyrus...
    - Nehemiah (*cup bearer*) heard about the troubles they were have in Jerusalem...
    - The city had no wall - not protection from bandits and marauders...
    - He asked the Persian King Artaxerxes (*step son of Esther*) if he could go back...
    - March 14, 445 B.C. - he was given the command to rebuild Jerusalem's walls!
    - Starting the 490 year clock of **Daniel 9:24-27** – that prophesied the day Jesus would come!
  - 3rd - All that to say – God is not done with his people Israel!
    - God promised to the nation of Israel would always be His people…
    - **Jeremiah 31:36** - "I am as likely to reject my people Israel as I am to do away with the laws of nature!"
    - As long as the sun rises – waves crash on the seashore – Israel is God's nation!
    - Even thought they were hard – they did not want to receive Jesus – God was not done…
    - Since God cannot break His Word – forsake Israel – that means God also cannot reject us…
    - That should bring great comfort to our hearts – it means no matter how bad we get…
    - Like the parable of the 'Lost sheep' – **Matthew 18:12** – God never gives up on us…
    - Like sheep we can be really dumb – we follow the crowd away from our shepherd…
    - But Jesus is never ever farther away than turning around (*repentance*)…

- He is always right there looking for us when we wander – seeking His lost lamb!