

OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY

Lesson 51

Judah's Fall – Part One (Including Zephaniah)

Do you remember where you got your Bibles? I can remember getting one from my parents after my baptism at age 12. I remember getting my first NIV New Testament in 1978 with my name engraved on the cover as a High School graduation gift from my church. I also remember the first one I bought with my own money.

As a junior in high school, I had come across a Harper Study Bible, based on the Revised Version of the Bible and found the notes amazing! I felt like it was a commentary and a Bible all rolled into one. I was at the Bailey Christian Bookstore in Lubbock, Texas, and I knew this Bible should be my new constant companion. The Bible had a magnificent brown *real* leather cover and was as gorgeous as any I had ever seen.

The problem? This Bible was slightly over 60 dollars! In 1976, that was a lot of money to a high school boy who could clear just twenty-one dollars and seventy-six cents a week when working his full allotment of after-school hours at Holiday Mart! (And that money had to cover a lot more than simply books!) The bookstore's owner, Ron Bailey, must have seen me salivating over my frequent trips to the bookstore to hold the Bible I desperately wanted. He came up to me and spoke with me about it. This kind Christian gentleman, who would grow to become one of my strong encouragers in the faith, changed his pricing on the Bible in such a way that I was able to afford it.

I bought that Bible and it became my principal Bible for study and reading. I made prolific notes in the Bible, from sermons, classes, personal devotions and study. When I went off to Nashville to college, I took the Bible with me. The Bible even got me in a spot of trouble once! I was studying the Psalms in a Hebrew class with a really tough student teacher ratio: one to one. Being the only student in a translation class is a tough situation. It means that instead of being one in say fifteen students called on to translate for a segment of a one-hour class, you are the only one! You translate for the entire hour. There is no hiding, no reading ahead in preparation for being "the next one" called, nothing! There is only the start of class where you begin translating and the end of class an hour later where you finish.

Preparation was BRUTAL! You had to be fully ready every class period. One class, we were set to cover a particularly difficult Psalm to translate and I was

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running a bit behind in my preparation. So I grabbed my trusty companion, my brown leather Harper Study Bible from Bailey Bookstore in Lubbock, Texas and looked at the Revised Standard Version's translation of a particularly troubling passage that was giving me difficulty. Shortly thereafter, I was in Professor Miller's gaze as he asked me to translate the Psalm out loud. Periodically he would stop me and challenge me on the particular verb form or reasons behind my translation choices. When I reached the passage that had caused me so much trouble in my prep, I gave the RSV translation I had memorized from my Bible! He interrupted me and asked me, "Where do you get that translation from in this passage?" I tried explaining the best I could how the passage meant what I suggested.

"Backward engineering" is an appropriate term for what I was doing! I had a translation and was trying to back into the Hebrew words as best as my mind could do, without revealing my method! Professor Miller kept pushing, showing my feeble attempts inadequate at each turn. Phrases like, "You couldn't get that translation from this word in this form" still embarrassingly echo in my head! Finally, in frustration, I said, "Well I guess I can't figure out how this translates out." He peered over his glasses with a knowing glare and said, "Would you like me to remind you on how you got to your English translation?" I nodded thinking I was finally getting out of his trap. He continued, "You used the Revised Standard Version!"

I was caught red-handed! I meekly acknowledged my short-cut as he continued, "So our next question is, How did the translators of the RSV get their translation?" I then watched as he went into the footnotes of the Hebrew Bible we used and used what are called "variant readings." These are different Hebrew choices for the text based upon different copies of the Old Testament. Sometimes different word forms, even different words, are found in different manuscripts, evolving from scribal errors over the centuries. The RSV had used a variant reading and I, in my limited prep time, had failed to pick up on it!

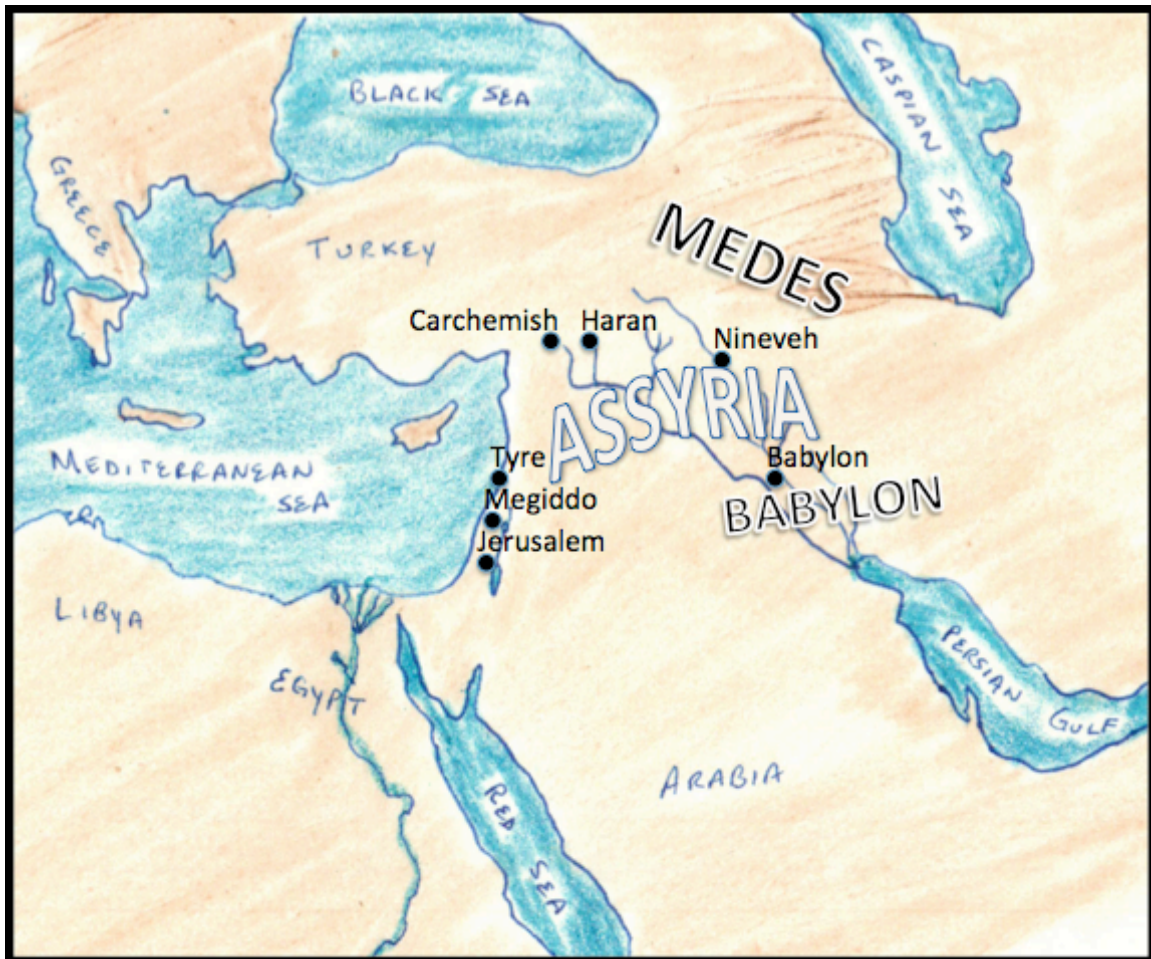
As we turn to the lessons of the fall of Judah this week, this story crops into my head for a number of reasons. The great joy of the value of getting a Bible you want and need, the joy of discovering truths in that Bible, the issues surrounding the Biblical text and efforts to restore it to an original form, and even the problems of short-cuts rather than doing things right all bear on the class material we cover today as we begin to bring to a close the kingdom of Judah.

THE FALL OF JUDAH

We can learn of Judah's fall from a number of sources. In the Bible we have information and narrative in 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles. There is also some

narrative and a great bit of insight from the prophets Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Zephaniah, Nahum, and Habakkuk. Outside of the Bible, we have good records from Assyria, Babylon, and Egypt. There is also a good bit of insight we can glean from archaeology. While long books and thorough studies are deserved in this area, we are attempting to winnow down the subject into several lessons that provide a solid core of understanding, as well as the references for further study, should one be so inclined.

This first phase of the study will focus on the narratives in Kings and Chronicles, with supplements from the other areas. Then the writings of Jeremiah and Ezekiel will each merit more in depth study and independent lessons. The below map should be helpful in identifying relevant peoples and places.



Amon

Our last study in the narrative history of Judah was on Hezekiah, the good king, and his son Manasseh, the evil king who reigned for fifty-five long years.¹ If we consider that in today's terms, we realize that fifty-five years is a long time in the history of a nation. Fifty-five years ago in America, Dwight Eisenhower was President, there were no man-made satellites in space, televisions were black and white, and Elvis Presley ruled the Top Ten with songs like, Don't Be Cruel. Now many might remember these things, but the idea of one king ruling the entire period is a bit stunning! Furthermore, think of the changes in behavior, dress, and culture/ethics. Certainly the rate of change in America is not necessarily transferable over the centuries to a similar rate of change in Judah, but we can at least understand that much time passes in the real world in fifty-five years. Manasseh's evil seriously reversed the trajectory of Judah from the days of the righteous king Hezekiah.

The world was also changing significantly during the reign of Manasseh. When Manasseh assumed the throne, the imperial power of Assyria reigned supreme. Assyria claimed Judah as a vassal state, and Judah paid Assyria's kings annual taxes as well as providing other materials and manpower when called upon. Assyria is well known through material we have today for its belief and practice of divination and magic. These practices were adopted by Manasseh and became de rigueur for Judah as well.² Judah also was quick to adopt the foreign style of clothing (Zeph. 1:8) and doubtless other cultural norms.

Assyria's century-long dominance was showing signs of fracturing. In 652BC, Babylon rose up from the East in rebellion to Assyria. While the rebellion was quashed by 648BC, it was still a smoldering ember waiting to re-flame at an opportune moment. Meanwhile to Assyria's south, Egypt continued to be a thorn that, while subdued early in the reign of Assyria's king Ashurbanipal, was consistently seeking to re-establish itself as an independent nation.

In this transitional time period, Judah saw the death of King Manasseh and the enthroning of his son Amon. Amon took the throne as a twenty-two-year-old man, and he continued in the path of his father. In religious matters, he was an idolater who "abandoned the LORD," and "did not walk in the way of the LORD" (2 Kings 21:22). The writer of Chronicles takes it a step further and emphasizes

¹ Some of that tenure was likely as a co-regent with his father Hezekiah. Manasseh's sole reign we compute as 687-642BC.

² See, 2 Kings 21:6, "And he burned his son as an offering and used fortune-telling and omens and dealt with mediums and with necromancers."

that he “incurred guilt more and more” as compared to his father (2 Chron. 33:23). After reigning just two years, his servants rose up in rebellion and assassinated Amon in a palace coup d’état.

Deceased Hebrew University professor Abraham Malamat, (whose library has been shipped to the Lanier Theological Library in Houston!) analyzed the historical underpinnings of the assassination of Amon in a 1953 article in the *Israel Exploration Journal*. Malamat makes a good case for a politically motivated assassination. Malamat cites the Arabian revolt against the Assyrians, noting it was occurring during the same time as Amon’s assassination. The uprising was fairly extensive and enveloped even the nearby area of Tyre. Malamat surmised:

It seems most likely that there was some connection between these events and the progress of matters in Judah. We may assume that the coup d’etat in Jerusalem was aimed against the pro-Assyrian policy of Amon and that the conspirators wanted to join the general uprising against Ashurbanipal [the Assyrian king].³

The uprising was not successful, however, and the “people of the land” killed the palace traitors (2 Chron. 33:25). With the rebellion quelled, Josiah, the eight-year-old son of Amon, took the throne.

Josiah

Kings and Chronicles both set out Josiah immediately in stark contrast to his father. Whereas Amon was evil, Josiah “did what was right in the eyes of the LORD and walked in all the ways of David his father, and did not turn aside to the right or to the left” (2 Kings 22:2). Josiah reigned in Judah for thirty-one years, from age eight to about thirty-nine.

When Josiah was about twenty-six, he had workers repairing and restoring the temple. In the process, the workers found something startling – a *Torah* scroll! The Torah scroll was given to Shaphan, the King’s secretary. Shaphan read the scroll and, when giving his update on progress to the king, reported the find of the scroll. Josiah had Shaphan read aloud the Torah scroll, and hearing the words for the first time, tore his clothes in a repentant gesture. Josiah ordered that inquiries be made of YHWH on his behalf and on behalf of the people, for it was obvious that,

³ Malamat, A., “The Historical Background of the Assassination of Amon, King of Judah,” *Israel Exploration Journal*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (1953), at 27.

...great is the wrath of the LORD that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not obeyed the words of this book, to do according to all that is written concerning us. (2 Kings 22:13).

Just what was the “Torah scroll” (usually translated as “Book of the Law”) that was found? It was certainly not the brown leather RSV Harper Study Bible I once bought at the Bailey Bookstore! Scholars generally identify the Book of Deuteronomy as the book discovered and read to Josiah. This opinion takes a number of shapes and forms, as scholars debate what form Deuteronomy was in when found, and how it might have later edits. Some scholars think the Book of Leviticus was found, and other scholars think the scroll was more of the Law of Moses (or Pentateuch) than simply Deuteronomy or Leviticus.⁴

Regardless of which scroll was found and read, the word of God had a profound impact on Josiah and the people. Josiah’s inquiries came back with a prophetic word from a prophetess named Huldah who proclaimed that Judah was too far gone in its covenant failures:

Because they have forsaken me and have made offerings to other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the work of their hands, therefore my wrath will be kindled against this place, and it will not be quenched (2 Kings 22:17).

For Josiah, however, she had a different message from the Lord:

But to the king of Judah, who sent you to inquire of the LORD, thus shall you say to him, Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: ‘Regarding the words that you have heard, because your heart was penitent, and you humbled yourself before the LORD...I have also heard you, declares the LORD. Therefore, behold, I will gather you to your fathers, and you shall

⁴ In 2 Kings 23:2 and 21 the *Torah* scroll is called the “Scroll of the Covenant.” This is a lead argument in favor of Deuteronomy that repeatedly speaks of itself as “the words of the covenant” (Dt. 29:1, 9, 19) tying that covenant in with blessings and curses. Furthermore, the steps taken by Josiah seem to echo those principles of Deuteronomy. From this flow a number of ideas from various scholars about the composition of Deuteronomy, whether it might have had some origination from the Northern Kingdom, whether it was written as a whole, when it was written, etc. For more on this, most commentaries on Deuteronomy quickly set out the opinions of the author/scholar as well as of others. See, e.g., Christensen, Duane, *Word Bible Commentary: Deuteronomy 1:1-21:9*, (Nelson 2001); Craigie, Peter, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, (Eerdmans 1976); Driver, S. R., *The International Critical Commentary: Deuteronomy*, (T&T Clark 1895); Nelson, Richard, *Deuteronomy*, (Westminster John Knox 2002); Von Rad, Gerhard, *Deuteronomy*, (Westminster 1966); Weinfeld, Moshe, *The Anchor Bible: Deuteronomy 1-11*, (Doubleday 1991). A very thorough analysis of the various opinions, with direct discussion on the implications for Deuteronomistic origins is found in Lowry, Rich, *The Reforming Kings: Cult and Society in First Temple Judah*, (T&T Clark 1991), at 196ff.

be gathered to your grave in peace, and your eyes shall not see all the disaster that I will bring upon this place.’ (2 Kings 22:18-20).

Josiah was not satisfied to take that prophecy and live it out. He gathered together the elders from throughout Jerusalem and Judah, the priests, the prophets, and the general public. He then had the words of the *Torah* scroll read to all, making a personal covenant and a covenant by the people to YHWH. Josiah purged the land of idols, idol priests, high places for worship, he destroyed the altar at Bethel, the places for sacrifices of children, and the interred bones of those associated with the pagan shrines. He did this throughout both Judah and Samaria. Josiah then restored the Passover and eliminated the pagan practices of mediums and necromancers.

These actions did not change the course God had for Judah, but they did reflect the heart of a godly king that God protected until his life ended. That end came rather abruptly when at about age 39, Josiah “went up to meet” Pharaoh Neco at Megiddo. Neco killed Josiah “as soon as he saw him” (2 Kings 23:29).

Before we move on from Josiah, it is noteworthy to add in a bit more detail we have from non-Biblical records and archaeological finds. They help our 21st century minds understand the context of Josiah’s life and what he accomplished. During Josiah’s life, things seemed to be moving more positively for Judah. Assyria’s dominance over the ancient near east declined considerably. Some scholars see in 2 Chronicles 34:3, an indication that Israel’s pro-Assyrian policy started shifting around 632BC. This passage specifies that in Josiah’s eighth year as king, as a sixteen-year-old boy, he was turning his back on Assyrian gods and worship and “began to seek the God of David.” Within the next four years the Chronicler explains that Josiah began his purge of the high places. By this time, 629/8BC, Assyria’s king Ashurbanipal was old and had appointed his son Sinsharishkun as acting king. Assyria’s hold over the area of Judah (the “west”) was effectively gone. Its attention and military might was being used to control matters much closer to home.⁵

By the time Ashurbanipal died in 627⁶, Assyria’s hold over Judah dissipated. For the first time in over sixty years, Judah was again a free and independent kingdom. It was in this time that Josiah purged the land of both Assyrian idols and Canaanite idols. Josiah also began to exercise greater control over the northern lands of Samaria. According to Kings and Chronicles, Josiah purged Samaria (the since

⁵ See generally the information and citations at Bright, John, *A History of Israel*, (Westminster 1981), at 317.

⁶ Some scholars date the death of Ashurbanipal to 633BC, however, most seem to date it in 627. See, generally, the information and citations at Lowry, Rich, *The Reforming Kings: Cult and Society in First Temple Judah*, (T&T Clark 1991), at 191.

dissolved “Northern Kingdom”) of its idol worship and pagan priests. 2 Chronicles 34:6 specifies that Josiah purged the northern cities of “Manasseh, Ephraim, and Simeon, and as far as Naphtali, in their ruin all around.” Archaeology has substantiated this expansion of Josiah and Judah not only into the north, but toward the west as well. In 1960, Israeli archaeologist J. Naveh discovered a letter from the time of Josiah in a dig at a fortress west of Judah in the area facing the Philistine city of Ashdod. Based on pottery and other considerations, the fortress is dated to Josiah’s reign, around 630BC.⁷



The letter is written upon a “shard” which was a broken piece of pottery recycled as a writing surface. This letter was a plea for a master to see to the return of a servant’s cloak. The letter is significant as the oldest non-biblical reference to the Sabbath.

While some scholars have attempted to tie the precise dating of Josiah’s reforms to key events in the disintegration of Assyrian control, other scholars do not agree that the dates match perfectly.⁸ It is safest to note simply that the world (life) presented Josiah with a chance to chase the fading gods of a fading superpower, or to return to the ancient God of his forefathers. Josiah chose YHWH God.

The writers of Kings and Chronicles are brief and limited in describing Josiah’s death. His meeting with Pharaoh Neco at Megiddo is not explained in much detail, beyond the Chroniclers few verses that discuss a battle between Josiah and Neco. History does help fill in some gaps that add depth to our picture. Assyria’s empire continued to crumble during Josiah’s reign, and in 612BC, the Babylonians

⁷ For the write-up of the discovery see, Naveh, J, “A Hebrew Letter from the Seventh Century B.C.”, *Israel Exploration Journal*, (1960), Vol. 10, No. 3, at 129ff. A brief introduction and solid translation can also be found at Pritchard, James B., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (Princeton 1974), 3d ed., at 568.

⁸ Compare Bright at 318-319 (tying the dates together) with Jones, G. H., *1 and 2 Kings*, (Eerdmans 1984), at 607; Williamson, H. G. M., *1 and 2 Chronicles*, (Eerdmans 1982) p. 397-398, *et al.* (rejecting the precise date correlations).

from the East and the Medes from the north crushed Assyria, destroying its capital city Nineveh. A remnant of Assyrian power escaped to the city of Haran, but they were ejected in 610 by the opposing armies. For reasons history does not tell us, Pharaoh Neco decided to march north and ally himself to the Assyrian remnant in an effort to retake Haran from the Babylonians. (Perhaps Neco wanted a diminished Assyria to serve as a buffer state between Babylon and Egypt). Neco took his large army to Carchemish on the Euphrates for the large battle.

Neco's march to Carchemish took him on the Mediterranean coastal road that turned and passed through the Carmel mountain range near Megiddo. It was there that Josiah took his army to try and stop Pharaoh Neco. Although Neco urged Josiah to let him pass unharmed (2 Chron. 35:21 ff), Josiah refused. In the ensuing battle, Josiah was shoot with an arrow and taken back to Jerusalem to die.

We might note that Neco did not fair much better in the end! The Egyptian/Assyrian coalition was not able to win at Carchemish, and the world's greatest superpower to that point, Assyria, was destroyed and began its fade into history. Neco, on the other hand, retreated back toward Egypt and started extending his hand to control Judah. Judah's independence lasted barely twenty years before succumbing to Egypt.

Before leaving Josiah, we should note the theory of some that Josiah's reforms were not simply motivated by political reasons, but were also reactions by Josiah to the prophetic voice of Zephaniah.⁹ With that in mind, we finish this lesson by considering the prophecy of Zephaniah.

Zephaniah

The first verse in Zephaniah places his prophetic ministry "in the days of Josiah."¹⁰ Zephaniah himself was the great grandson of Hezekiah, Judah's righteous king who reigned seventy-five years before Josiah took the throne as an eight-year-old. Being a descendant of the king, it is likely that Zephaniah would have had considerable social standing. His prophecies show a great deal of familiarity with the court in Jerusalem as well as the current political issues.

⁹ See, e.g., Robinson, Donald, *Josiah's Reform and the Book of the Law*, (Tyndale Press 1951).

¹⁰ While noted to be a prophet during the reign of King Josiah, it is important to note that a significant portion of Zephaniah's prophetic declarations concerned the ongoing Baal worship in the land. Since this worship was outlawed around the mid-point of Josiah's reign, scholars conclude that most, if not all of Zephaniah's prophecies were earlier than Josiah's reforms of 621BC.

Zephaniah's prophecies also show familiarity and dexterity in using and referencing prophecies of Amos and Isaiah, two active prophets during the life of his great-grandfather Hezekiah.

Zephaniah joined the chorus of other prophets who cried out about the coming judgment of God upon Judah. The "day of the LORD" was noted as coming as a day of punishment for Judah as well as other nations. The imagery denoted the horrors of what people could expect. Like other true prophets both before and after him, Zephaniah reiterated and emphasized that God would ultimately restore his people and bring rejoicing back to them.

Zephaniah confronted Judah not only with its pagan worship, but also the sins of ignoring God. He spoke to "those who have turned back from following the LORD, who do not seek the LORD or inquire of him" (Zeph. 1:6). Those turning from God were wealthy people who were "complacent" before God, thinking God was an inactive force in their lives. They said in their hearts, "the LORD will not do good, nor will he do ill" (Zeph. 1:12). To these people, the judgment of God was drawing near as a day of wrath, distress and anguish – a time of significant trouble. Ruin, devastation, and gloom were around the corner (Zeph. 1:15). For folks to be sheltered from this coming onslaught, they were admonished to "seek the Lord" and his "righteousness" as "humble" people, to "do his just commands," to "seek righteousness [and] humility" in hopes of being "hidden" on the day of God's judgment (Zeph. 2:3). Interestingly, these are the very traits that the Prophet Historian writing kings recorded as God's reasons to spare Josiah the coming judgment and misery!

Zephaniah's prophetic cries were not isolated to Judah. He also pronounced God's coming judgment upon Assyria, noting God would "make Nineveh a desolation, a dry waste like the desert" (Zeph. 2:13). As noted earlier in the lesson, this happened slightly over ten years later, with the destruction of Nineveh in 612BC.

The royally descended Zephaniah went into some detail when recounting the sins of the governmental and religious leaders. The officials he called "roaring lions," the judges "evening wolves" (Zeph. 3:3). They did not "trust in the LORD" nor "draw near to her [Judah's] God," but instead were "fickle" and "treacherous men" who "profane what is holy" and "do violence to the law" (Zeph. 3:2, 4). They were the very opposite of the consistent (non-fickle) LORD who "is righteous" and "does no injustice." God's consistency mirrored the day: "Every morning he shows forth his justice; each dawn he does not fail" (Zeph. 3:5). Not surprisingly, God was not tolerant of the arrogant, profane, unjust society and was bringing swift judgment.

While Zephaniah was clear and blunt in his foretelling of the judgment, he was equally clear that the judgment would not last forever. The judgment would be

followed by a time of restoration, when the “speech” of the people would be purified so that “all of them may call on the name of the LORD” (Zeph. 3:9). With the coming restoration, God would leave in the land a people who were “humble and lowly,” who would “seek refuge in the name of the LORD” (Zeph. 3:12). Those people who stayed in the coming kingdom would “speak no lies, nor will deceit be found in their mouths” (Zeph. 3:13). God had sworn to “save the lame and gather the outcast,” changing their shame into praise” (Zeph. 3:19).

We can safely assume that Josiah as a man of God would have listened to these prophetic words delivered into his reign. We certainly see evidence of his life aligning with the demands of the prophetic cry! We also see God’s blessings upon him as promised. Most likely we have in Josiah the same thing we have in our lives today. A message from God about how we live centered on his majesty and his will, with the assurance as we do so, his blessings will follow.

POINTS FOR HOME

1. *“I have found the Book of the Law in the house of the LORD” (2 Ki. 22:8).*

I made it over a decade with my brown leather RSV Harper Study Bible. It was my constant companion through years of Hebrew and Greek classes, through countless hours of Bible study, through my personal digestion of biblical books as I checked the Scriptures referenced and made crib notes about words, phrases, meanings, history, etc. The notes became such a part of my learning that I feared taking the Bible out lest I lose it! Yet it was my teaching Bible as well, and I took it weekly to church to teach from, just as I used it at home as a study guide. It was on a Sunday 12 years after I bought it that I lost that Bible. I still think of it today and hope that the notes are helping someone who possesses it.

Where are you in your Bible study? Do you have a good Bible? One not hidden on a shelf, in a garage, or even in the temple! Do you have one that is accessible, that you read, that you seek to understand? Make the word of God a priority in your life. Read it to yourself, and read it to others. See it transform who you are and what you do. It will change your life. It is “living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword” and able to discern “the thoughts and intentions of the heart” (Heb. 4:12).

2. *“...because your heart was penitent, and you humbled yourself before the LORD” (2 Ki. 22:19).*

King Josiah was spared because his heart was penitent and he humbled himself. A penitent heart is one that feels regret for sins. Of course to feel such regret, one must acknowledge and own up to one's sin. In this way penitence goes hand in hand with humility. These attributes are mirrored in multiple beatitudes taught by Jesus:

- Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven (Mt. 5:3).
- Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth (Mt. 5:5).
- Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God (Mt. 5:8).

Take a moment and consider this. Are you able to see yourself for the sinner you are? (Hopefully we are not beating our chests thanking God we are not like other sinners! If we are, we need to re-consider who we are in light of Jesus's parable in Luke 18:9-14!) Are you moved by your sin to regret and sorrow? If so, in humility, recognize your inadequacies, thank God for the forgiveness in Christ, and live your life in service to others, not living in arrogant self-aggrandizement, but in meek and lowly spirit, acknowledging God's healing grace.

3. *"I will cut off... [those] who do not seek the LORD"* (Zeph. 1:4, 6).

I see the world whirling by. Days clip by at an alarming rate. Blink, and a few weeks are gone. Blink again and it's a month later. There are countless ways to numb our minds, unnumbered diversions for our thoughts, and constant issues that occupy our minds. If we are not careful, we tend to business, enjoy downtime, find recreation, and in the midst of the running days, leave seeking God out of the picture.

Stop. Better yet, **STOP!** Do not let this be your lot in life. You have no rewind button; there are no do-overs. Each moment that passes is gone, each day happens one time only. Make a decision, and get into a habit, where you constantly seek the Lord. Make him your constant companion. Start your day thinking about your service to him. Thank him for the food you eat, each time you are blessed to eat it. Seek his insight when you make decisions. Spend your time in ways and activities that do not shut him out. When confronted with challenges and difficulties, seek his temperament as well as his solutions. As your day ends, in penitence and humility confess your shortcomings and seek his presence for your next awakening.

Seek the Lord! Your life will be transformed!

WANT MORE?

Email us your new year's resolutions! We will pray over them and likely adopt a few of them ourselves! Email us at wantmore@Biblical-Literacy.com.

Next week get ready as the kingdom of Judah comes to a close!