

Commentary on Second Kings chapters 22&23 by Chuck Smith 3.1.23

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March memory verse 1 Peter 1:25 (NKJV)

But the word of the LORD endures forever." Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you.

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Chapter 22

And Josiah was only eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned for thirty-one years in Jerusalem. And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD ([2Ki 22:1-2](#)).

Now at this point you need to read the prophecy of Jeremiah, because here is where Jeremiah began his prophecies. And Josiah was a good king as far as spiritual reforms went.

And so the temple was all of a sudden full of people again. Everybody, it was the popular vogue thing to do, to go to the temple. And so God said to Jeremiah, "Go down to the temple, the gate of the temple and as the people are passing through it in the temple, cry out, 'Trust not in lying vanities saying, The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are these. The lies, emptiness.' They're not really serving God." And of course, Jeremiah got into all kinds of trouble, because of the things God told him to tell these kings. Thrown in dungeons. Thrown in the prison. Ran into a lot of difficulty, but this is when Jeremiah began his prophecy, and now to the end of the kingdom unto the four kings. Jeremiah prophesies under Josiah here, and then unto Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim and Jehoiachin and Zedekiah, actually. But Jeremiah doesn't mention Jehoiachin because his reign was so short.

So this is the period in which Jeremiah is prophesying, and so when you read Jeremiah, you got to bring your mind back to this point in history so that you'll understand better the...you know, as you go through the Bible more and more, as you start to put it together, it helps in understanding. You'll understand Jeremiah better if you can put it with this portion of history and you'll understand this portion of history better if you'll read the commentary on it by Jeremiah. So that's where the Bible starts to come in together and the cumulative knowledge of the Bible begins to really develop. And you really begin to understand the thing a lot better as you take these pieces of the puzzle and you start fitting them together. You begin to get the whole picture. You know, as long as you're just looking at one little piece of the puzzle, you're saying, "I don't know where that goes. How does that fit? It's a weird shape and those are weird colors." And you study it and you can study for a long time and still not understand it very well.

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But when you start putting and linking the pieces together and the faces and everything begins to take shape, it's, "Oh yeah; see that, alright," you know. And it begins, but you've got to start putting up the pieces together. So when you get to Jeremiah, put it back to here or jump ahead. It won't hurt you to read Isaiah and Jeremiah this week. If you take the time that you're going to spend this week reading the daily newspaper, you can probably read both books.

Now what you're going to gain from reading the daily newspaper is deep depression and discouragement and despair as you see what a mess the world is in. But if you read Jeremiah and Isaiah, you'll get all kinds of hope. You'll see that even in the darkness God is there; God is working and God is promising a light at the end of the dark tunnel.

So Josiah began to reign. He began in reforms, the rebuilding of the temple. The temple, of course, under Manasseh they put all these altars in the courts and in the temple itself, and they tore all these things out. They started cleaning up the temple. They took the money that was brought into the temple and they used it to begin to repair the breaches that were in the house of the Lord. And as they were repairing the temple, they came across the copy of the law of the Lord. Now the law had been lost for a long time. They didn't even know the law of the Lord. And some guy came across a copy of the law of the Lord. And so the priest began to read the law of the Lord, and as they began to read, they realized, "Oh, how we have disobeyed the law of God!"

Came to pass, when the king heard the words of the book of the law, that he tore his clothes. He said, Go, inquire of the LORD for me, and for the people, for all of Judah, concerning the words of this book that you found: for great is the wrath of the LORD that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not hearkened to the words of this book, to do according unto all that which is written concerning us ([2Ki 22:11](#), [13](#)).

So they came to Huldah the prophetess who was there with the school of the prophets.

And she said unto them, Thus saith the LORD the God of Israel, Tell the man that sent you to me, Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, upon the inhabitants, even all the words of the book which the king of Judah hath read: Because they have forsaken me, and they've burned incense unto other gods, that they might provoke me to anger and all the works of their hands; therefore my wrath shall be kindled against this place, and not be quenched. But to the king of Judah which sent you to inquire of the LORD, thus shall ye say to him, Thus saith the LORD the God of Israel, As touching the words which you have heard; Because your heart was tender, and you have humbled yourself before the LORD, when you heard what I spake against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, that they should become a desolation, a curse, and you have torn your clothes, and wept before me; I also have heard thee, saith the LORD. Behold therefore, I will gather thee unto thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered into thy grave in peace; and thine eyes shall not see all the evil that I'm going to bring upon this place. And so they brought the king the word of the Lord ([2Ki 22:15-20](#)).

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So Josiah, he heard the law and he tore his clothes; he wept before God. Real repentance. "Oh God, you know, what have we done. What have our fathers done?" And so inquiring of the Lord through Huldah the prophetess, he received this message that the nation was going to fall. However, not in the time of his reign. So he ordered that the people be gathered together and that they read the law of the Lord to all of the people.

Chapter 23

And the king stood by the pillar, and he made a covenant before the LORD, to walk after the LORD, and to keep his commandments and the testimonies and the statutes with their heart and with their soul, and to perform the covenant that was written in the book. And all the people stood to the covenant ([2Ki 23:3](#)).

So the king stood there and in his heart he said, "Okay, God, I'm going to obey You. I'm going to follow You. I'm going to serve You." And made his commitment unto God. Very beautiful, beautiful scene. And the people again standing with that covenant with the king.

And so the king commanded Hilkiah the high priest, and the priests of the second order, and the keepers of the door, to bring forth out of the temple of the LORD all of the vessels that were made for Baal, and for the host of heaven: and he burned them there in the valley of Kidron in the fields, and he took the ashes on up to Bethel [and buried them there] ([2Ki 23:4](#)).

They burned... they began to tear down all of the high places, the places of worship and so forth for the pagan gods. And they came on up to Bethel and they broke down the altar that was there in the city of Bethel that Jeroboam had built to worship in the northern kingdom. And they beat down the altar and they took the graves and they took the bones out of the graves and they burned the bones which was a desecration of the altar.

Now this goes back several hundred years for when Jeroboam first became the king over the northern Israel. He built this altar in Bethel, and as he was worshipping at the altar, you remember the story of the young prophet that came out of Judah and cried against the altar? "O altar, O altar, men's bones will be burned on you." Jeroboam stretched forth his hand, he said, "Arrest that young man!" And his hand withered. Jeroboam said to him, "Pray for me that God will heal me." And the young prophet prayed for Jeroboam and his hand was healed. And you remember that he said, Jeroboam said, "Come and eat at my house and I'll give you a reward." And he said, "You know, if you gave me the whole kingdom I can't stay. For the Lord who sent me here to cry against the altar told me not to eat any bread, drink any water in this place, not even to go home by the way I came." And so he took off.

And a couple of boys were there whose dad was a prophet. They went home and said, "Dad, there was a prophet came out of Judah, young kid. Man, he cried against the king

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and the king reached out his hand and told them to arrest him and his hand withered. And he prayed, the hand was healed." Dad said, "Which way did he go?" "He went down the road that way." He said, "Get my donkey." And he saddled his donkey and took off after the young man and he caught up with him. And he was sitting there under a tree. And he said, "Who are you? Are you the young prophet?" He said, "Yes, I am." He said, "Why don't you come back to my house and eat some bread, drink water." He said, "No, the Lord who sent me told me not to drink any water in this place, any bread in this place, but get on home without even going back the same way." He said, "Well, I also am a prophet and the Lord spoke to me and said come and get you and invite you to come to my house." So the young prophet listened to the old man. Had respect for his age and so forth. He listened to him and he came back. And while he was eating bread in the old man's house, the Spirit of the Lord came on the old man and he cursed him. He said, "Because you've done this and all, you're not going to get home. You're going to die in the way."

And so as the young prophet left, a lion attacked him and killed him. And so news came back to the old prophet that the young man had been killed. And they said, "This is the word of the Lord, you know, that he wouldn't get home safely." And so he came out and the lion was standing there, had not eaten him or torn him, but just left his body there. And the donkey was just sort of roaming around that the kid was riding on. And he picked up the young prophet and brought him back and buried him. You remember the story. So here's the young prophet that cried out against the altar.

So as Josiah is up there now tearing down the altar to desecrate it, he burns. They see these graves; they take the bones out of them and burn them. It's a way of just really utter disrespect and desecration of an altar. Thus, the prophecy was fulfilled.

And then they saw another grave and they said, "What's that tombstone say?" They said, "Well, that's the young prophet who came up and cried up against the altar." He said, "Don't take his bones. Just leave his bones lie." And so it ties back into the prophecy and so forth of this young prophet, and here we come with it again. Back in First Kings, chapter thirteen, you'll find the story of that young prophet.

Moreover [verse fifteen] the altar that was at Bethel, the high place which Jeroboam the son of Nebat, he made Israel to sin, had made, that altar, the high place he broke down, he burned the high place, stamped it small to powder, burned the grove that was by it. And as Josiah turned himself, he spied the sepulchres that were there in the mount, and he sent, and he took the bones out of the sepulchres, burned them on the altar, polluted it, according to the word of the LORD which the man of God proclaimed, who had proclaimed these words ([2Ki 23:15-16](#)).

Now Josiah commanded that they keep the Passover. Of course, they had not been keeping the holy days, the feast days, and Passover was coming. And so they had this huge Passover, and in Second Chronicles we'll actually get into further details of this huge Passover feast that was instituted by Josiah. The death of Josiah is recorded for us in the beginning of verse twenty-eight, how that the king of Egypt had come up

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against the king of Assyria, and how that Josiah went up to battle and he got into the battle at Megiddo. And there he was killed at Megiddo, and he was brought in his chariot back to Jerusalem and buried.

Now Jehoahaz his son was twenty-three years old when he began to reign; he reigned for three months. And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD ([2Ki 23:31-32](#)),

And Pharaoh put him in bands and he took... he actually took him out and put tribute upon the land, and the Pharaoh then made a vassal king Jehoiakim. And Jehoiakim was just a vassal king to the Pharaoh, and he paid the Pharaoh, of course, the tribute that the Pharaoh had demanded. He was twenty-five years old. He reigned for eleven years. And during this time, Jeremiah is really crying out against the sins of the people.