

2 Chronicles 34 - Josiah's Good Reign in Judah; Revival; Restoration of True Worship

IV. Judah's Kings (2 Chr 10:1—36:23)

(2) Reform and apostasy in Judah (2 Chr 12:1—36:14)

(P) Josiah's reign (34:1—35:27)

(a) Religious reforms (34:1-7)

(b) Temple renovation (34:8-13)

(c) The discovery of the Law and its resulting impact (34:14-33)

2 Chronicles 34

(P) Josiah's reign (34:1—35:27) (Cf. 2 Chr 34-35; Cf. 2 Kings 22:1—23:30)

(a) Religious reforms (34:1-7) (Cf. 2 Chr 34; Cf. 2 Kings 22:3—23:27)

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- Josiah, son of Amon, who was only 8 years old when his father died, and he ruled over Judah for 31 years (640-609 BC)

2 He did what was right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the ways of his father David and **did not turn aside to the right or the left.**

2 He did right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the ways of his father David and did not turn aside to the right or to the left.

2 He practiced what the LORD considered to be right, following the example of his ancestor David, turning neither to the right nor to the left.

2 And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the ways of David his father, and declined neither to the right hand, nor to the left.

- Much like his great-grandfather Hezekiah, Josiah loved the Lord and began to demonstrate this actively by the time he was 16 years old. He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord.

— The godly in Judah may have regarded Josiah as the most likely candidate to fulfill the promises that God had given David about a coming ideal ruler

- "...did not turn aside to the right or the left" - several kings are said to have "walked in the ways of David" but only Josiah "did not turn aside to the right or the left"

3 For in the eighth year of his reign while he was still a youth, he began to seek the God of his father David; and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of the high places, the Asherim, the carved images, and the cast metal images.

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3 In the eighth year of his reign, while he was still young, he began to seek the God of his ancestor David. In the twelfth year of his reign, he began to remove the high places, Asherim, carved images, and cast images from Judah and Jerusalem.

3 For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was yet young, he began to seek after the God of David his father: and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem from the high places, and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images.

- In his 8th year as king (age 16), he began to seek the Lord

- In his 12th year as king (age 20) he initiated a campaign to rid the land of all vestiges of Canaanite religion

— Apparently Manasseh's later purge (33:15) related only to the idols and pagan altars in the temple, not to those throughout the land

4 They tore down the altars of the Baals in his presence, and he chopped down the incense altars that were high above them; also he broke in pieces the Asherim, the carved images, and the cast metal images, and ground *them* to powder, and scattered *it* on the graves of those who had sacrificed to them.

4 They tore down the altars of the Baals in his presence, and the incense altars that were high above them he chopped down; also the Asherim, the carved images and the molten images he broke in pieces and ground to powder and scattered *it* on the graves of those who had sacrificed to them.

4 They tore down the altars of Baals in his presence. He chopped down the incense altars that stood high above them. He broke into pieces the Asherim, the carved images, and the cast images, ground them to dust, and scattered the residue on the graves of those who had sacrificed to them.

4 And they brake down the altars of Baalim in his presence; and the images, that were on high above them, he cut down; and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images, he brake in pieces, and made dust of them, and strowed it upon the graves of them that had sacrificed unto them.

- Josiah went so far as to scatter the smashed idols and other paraphernalia over the graves of their worshipers and to burn the bones of the pagan priests on their very altars (v5)

5 Then he burned the bones of the priests on their altars and purged Judah and Jerusalem.

5 Then he burned the bones of the priests on their altars and purged Judah and Jerusalem.

5 He burned the bones of the priests on their altars, thus purging Judah and Jerusalem.

5 And he burnt the bones of the priests upon their altars, and cleansed Judah and Jerusalem.

6 In the cities of Manasseh, Ephraim, Simeon, and as far as Naphtali, in their surrounding spaces,

6 In the cities of Manasseh, Ephraim, Simeon, even as far as Naphtali, in their surrounding ruins,

6 In the cities of Manasseh, Ephraim, Simeon, and as far as Naphtali and their surrounding ruins,

6 And so did he in the cities of Manasseh, and Ephraim, and Simeon, even unto Naphtali, with their mattocks round about.

- This purge was not limited to Judah; in Israel, all the way up to Naphtali in the north, the work of ridding the land of idolatry went on

7 he also tore down the altars and crushed the Asherim and the carved images into powder, and chopped down all the incense altars throughout the land of Israel. Then he returned to Jerusalem.

7 he also tore down the altars and beat the Asherim and the carved images into powder, and chopped down all the incense altars throughout the land of Israel. Then he returned to Jerusalem.

7 he also tore down altars, destroyed the Asherim and the carved images, grinding them into dust, and chopped down all the incense altars throughout the land of Israel. Then he went back to Jerusalem.

7 And when he had broken down the altars and the groves, and had beaten the graven images into powder, and cut down all the idols throughout all the land of Israel, he returned

to Jerusalem.

Josiah's Restoration Work (Cf. 2 Kings 22:3-7)

8 Now in the eighteenth year of his reign, when he had purged the land and the house, he sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, Maaseiah an official of the city, and Joah the son of Joahaz the secretary, to repair the house of the LORD his God.

8 Now in the eighteenth year of his reign, when he had purged the land and the house, he sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, and Maaseiah an official of the city, and Joah the son of Joahaz the recorder, to repair the house of the LORD his God.

8 In the eighteenth year of his reign, after he had purged the land and the Temple, he sent Azaliah's son Shaphan, Maaseiah, mayor of Jerusalem, and Joahaz's son Joah, the recorder, to repair the Temple of the LORD his God.

8 Now in the eighteenth year of his reign, when he had purged the land, and the house, he sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, and Maaseiah the governor of the city, and Joah the son of Joahaz the recorder, to repair the house of the LORD his God.

- When Josiah was 26 years old, he began the repair of the temple. It had fallen into disrepair under the reign of Manasseh, his grandfather, and Amon, his father.

9 They came to Hilkiyah the high priest and gave him the money that was brought into the house of God, which the Levites, the doorkeepers, had collected from Manasseh and Ephraim, and from all the remnant of Israel, from all Judah and Benjamin and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

9 They came to Hilkiyah the high priest and delivered the money that was brought into the house of God, which the Levites, the doorkeepers, had collected from Manasseh and Ephraim, and from all the remnant of Israel, and from all Judah and Benjamin and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

9 They approached Hilkiyah the high priest and delivered to him the money that had been brought into God's Temple that the descendants of Levi and gatekeepers had collected from Manasseh, Ephraim, the surviving Israelis, Judah, Benjamin, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

9 And when they came to Hilkiyah the high priest, they delivered the money that was brought into the house of God, which the Levites that kept the doors had gathered of the hand of Manasseh and Ephraim, and of all the remnant of Israel, and of all Judah and Benjamin; and they returned to Jerusalem.

- These tribes (which some call "lost tribes") certainly were not lost in this day, as they were sending in money for the repair of the temple

10 Then they handed it over to the workmen who had the oversight of the house of the LORD, and the workmen who were working in the house of the LORD used it to restore and repair the house.

10 Then they gave *it* into the hands of the workmen who had the oversight of the house of the LORD, and the workmen who were working in the house of the LORD used it to restore and repair the house.

10 They paid it to the workmen who supervised the LORD's Temple, and the workmen who were employed in the LORD's Temple to supervise restoration and repair of the Temple.

10 And they put it 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 amend the house:

11 They in turn gave *it* to the carpenters and the builders to buy quarried stone and timber for couplings, and to make beams for the houses which the kings of Judah had let go to ruin.

11 They in turn gave *it* to the carpenters and to the builders to buy quarried stone and timber for couplings and to make beams for the houses which the kings of Judah had let go to ruin.

11 They, in turn, paid the carpenters and builders to purchase quarried stone and timber for binders and beams for the buildings that previous kings of Judah had let deteriorate.

11 Even to the artificers and builders gave they it, to buy hewn stone, and timber for couplings, and to floor the houses which the kings of Judah had destroyed.

12 The men did the work faithfully with foremen over them to supervise: Jahath and Obadiah, the Levites of the sons of Merari, Zechariah and Meshullam of the sons of the Kohathites, and the Levites, all who were skillful with musical instruments.

12 The men did the work faithfully with foremen over them to supervise: Jahath and Obadiah, the Levites of the sons of Merari, Zechariah and Meshullam of the sons of the Kohathites, and the Levites, all who were skillful with musical instruments.

12 The workmen did their duties faithfully with these foremen supervising them: Jahath and Obadiah, descendants of Levi who were Merari's sons, Zechariah and Meshullam, descendants of Kohath, and various descendants of Levi, who were skilled musicians.

12 And the men did the work faithfully: and the overseers of them were Jahath and Obadiah, the Levites, of the sons of Merari; and Zechariah and Meshullam, of the sons of the Kohathites, to set it forward; and other of the Levites, all that could skill of instruments of musick.

13 *They were* also in charge of the burden bearers, and supervised all the workmen from job to job; and some of the Levites *were* scribes, and officials, and gatekeepers.

13 *They were* also over the burden bearers, and supervised all the workmen from job to job; and *some* of the Levites *were* scribes and officials and gatekeepers.

13 These men also supervised the heavy lift workers and supervised all the workmen from job to job, while some of the descendants of Levi served as scribes, officials, and gatekeepers.

13 Also they were over the bearers of burdens, and were overseers of all that wrought the work in any manner of service: and of the Levites there were scribes, and officers, and porters.

The Book of the Law is Discovered (Cf. 2 Kings 22:8-13)

14 When they were bringing out the money which had been brought into the house of the LORD, Hilkiah the priest found the Book of the Law of the LORD *given* by Moses.

14 When they were bringing out the money which had been brought into the house of the LORD, Hilkiah the priest found the book of the law of the LORD *given* by Moses.

14 While they were bringing out the money that had come in as gifts to the LORD's Temple, Hilkiah the priest discovered the Book of the Law of the LORD that had been handed down by Moses.

14 And when they brought out the money that was brought into the house of the LORD, Hilkiah the priest found a book of the law of the LORD given by Moses.

15 Hilkiah responded and said to Shaphan the scribe, "I have found the Book of the Law in the house of the LORD." And Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan.

15 Hilkiah responded and said to Shaphan the scribe, "I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD." And Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan.

15 Hilkiah reported his finding to Shaphan the scribe, telling him, "I found the Book of the Law in the LORD's Temple. Then he gave the book to Shaphan.

15 And Hilkiah answered and said to Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD. And Hilkiah delivered the book to Shaphan.

16 Then Shaphan brought the book to the king and reported further word to the king, saying, "Everything that was entrusted to your servants, they are doing.

16 Then Shaphan brought the book to the king and reported further word to the king, saying, "Everything that was entrusted to your servants they are doing.

16 Shaphan took the book to the king and gave an additional report to the king, telling him "Everything that you've entrusted to your servants is being carried out.

16 And Shaphan carried the book to the king, and brought the king word back again, saying, All that was committed to thy servants, they do it.

17 They have also emptied out the money which was found in the house of the LORD, and have handed it over to the supervisors and the workmen."

17 They have also emptied out the money which was found in the house of the LORD, and have delivered it into the hands of the supervisors and the workmen."

17 They've removed the money that was found in the LORD's Temple and have passed it on to the supervisors and the workmen."

17 And they have gathered together the money that was found in the house of the LORD, and have delivered it into the hand of the overseers, and to the hand of the workmen.

18 Moreover, Shaphan the scribe informed the king, saying, "Hilkiah the priest gave me a book." And Shaphan read from it in the presence of the king.

18 Moreover, Shaphan the scribe told the king saying, "Hilkiah the priest gave me a book." And Shaphan read from it in the presence of the king.

18 Shaphan the scribe also informed the king, "Hilkiah the priest gave me a book." Shaphan read from its contents to the king.

18 Then Shaphan the scribe told the king, saying, Hilkiah the priest hath given me a book. And Shaphan read it before the king.

19 When the king heard the words of the Law, he tore his clothes.

19 When the king heard the words of the law, he tore his clothes.

19 As soon as he heard what the Law said, he tore his clothes.

19 And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the law, that he rent his clothes.

- Realizing the significance of the message, the king tore his robes (as an expression of grief)

20 Then the king commanded Hilkiah, Ahikam the son of Shaphan, Abdon the son of Micah, Shaphan the scribe, and Asaiah the king's servant, saying,

20 Then the king commanded Hilkiah, Ahikam the son of Shaphan, Abdon the son of Micah, Shaphan the scribe, and Asaiah the king's servant, saying,

20 He issued these orders to Hilkiah, Shaphan's son Ahikam, Micah's son Abdon, Shaphan the scribe, and the king's personal assistant Asaiah:

20 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,

- A return to the Word of God brings revival. Nothing else will bring revival. What is wrong in our day? Why don't we see revival? The reason is simple. The church has neglected the Word of God.

21 "Go, inquire of the LORD for me and for those who are left in Israel and Judah, concerning the words of the book which has been found; for the wrath of the LORD which has poured out on us is great, because our fathers have not kept the word of the LORD, to act in accordance with everything that is written in this book."

21 "Go, inquire of the LORD for me and for those who are left in Israel and in Judah, concerning the words of the book which has been found; for great is the wrath of the LORD which is poured out on us because our fathers have not observed the word of the LORD, to do according to all that is written in this book."

21 "Go ask the LORD for me and for those who survive in Israel and in Judah about the words that we've read in this book that we found, because the wrath of the LORD that we deserve to have poured out on us is very great, since our ancestors haven't obeyed the command from the LORD that required us to do everything that is written in this book."

21 Go, enquire of the LORD for me, and 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 the LORD that is poured out upon us, because our fathers have not kept the word of the LORD, to do after all that is written in this book.

- He issued a command to Hilkiah and the others that the entire text be studied and that the mind of the Lord in relation to it be ascertained

— He was concerned that his ancestors had incurred God's anger by not obeying God's Word

It may be hard for us to understand how the people could have lost the Law of Moses and how they could have forgotten it in just two generations. However, written copies were scarce at that time. Moreover, parents and the Levites conducted most instruction orally (17:9). Only one generation separated the people from ignorance of God's will (Cf. Deut 6:6-7; 17:18). This has been true throughout history.

Hilkiah Consults with Huldah the Prophetess (Cf. 2 Kings 22:14-20)

22 So Hilkiah and *those* whom the king had told went to **Huldah the prophetess**, the wife of Shallum the son of Tokhath, the son of Hasrah, the keeper of the wardrobe (she lived in Jerusalem in the Second Quarter); and they spoke to her regarding this.

22 So Hilkiah and *those* whom the king had told went to Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tokhath, the son of Hasrah, the keeper of the wardrobe (now she lived in Jerusalem in the Second Quarter); and they spoke to her regarding this.

22 So Hilkiah and the others who had received orders from the king went to visit Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Tokhath's son Shallum, grandson of Hasrah. She was the king's wardrobe supervisor, and she lived in Jerusalem's Second Quarter. They asked her about what had happened.

22 And Hilkiah, and they that the king had appointed, went to Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tikvath, the son of Hasrah, keeper of the wardrobe; (now she dwelt in Jerusalem in the college:) and they spake to her to that effect.

- "...Huldah the prophetess" - one of four female prophets in the OT (Miriam, Ex 15:20; Deborah, Judges 4:4; Noadiah, Neh 6:14)

23 Then she said to them, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel says: 'Tell the man who sent you to Me,

23 She said to them, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'Tell the man who sent you to Me,

23 In response, she replied:

"This is what the LORD God of Israel says: 'Tell the man who sent you to me,

23 And she answered them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Tell ye the man that sent you to me,

24 this is what the LORD says: "Behold, I am bringing evil on this place and on its inhabitants, all the curses written in the book which they have read in the presence of the king of Judah.

24 thus says the LORD, "Behold, I am bringing evil on this place and on its inhabitants, *even* all the curses written in the book which they have read in the presence of the king of Judah.

24 "This is what the LORD says: 'Pay attention! I'm bringing evil to visit this place and its inhabitants—every single curse written in the book that they've been reading to the King of Judah.

24 Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, even all the curses that are written in the book which they have read before the king of Judah:

- She related to them that God was going to bring His judgment on the land—all according to the curses written in the newly found scroll (Cf. Deut 28:15-68; Lev 26:14-39)

25 Since they have abandoned Me and have burned incense to other gods, so that they may provoke Me to anger with all the works of their hands, My wrath will be poured out on this place and it will not be quenched."

25 Because they have forsaken Me and have burned incense to other gods, that they might provoke Me to anger with all the works of their hands; therefore My wrath will be poured out on this place and it shall not be quenched.”

25 Because they abandoned me and have burned incense to other gods, provoking me to become angry at everything they’re doing,⁸ therefore my wrath is about to be poured out on this place, and it won’t be quenched.’”

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

26 But to the king of Judah who sent you to inquire of the LORD, this is what you shall say to him: ‘This is what the LORD, the God of Israel says: *In regard to* the words which you have heard,

26 But to the king of Judah who sent you to inquire of the LORD, thus you will say to him, ‘Thus says the LORD God of Israel *regarding* the words which you have heard,

26 “Now tell the king of Judah who sent you to ask the LORD about this: ‘This is what the LORD God of Israel says about what you’ve heard:

26 And as for the king of Judah, who sent you to enquire of the LORD, so shall ye say unto him, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel concerning the words which thou hast heard;

27 “Because your heart was tender and you humbled yourself before God when you heard His words against this place and its inhabitants, and *because* you humbled yourself before Me, tore your clothes, and wept before Me, I have indeed heard you,” declares the LORD.

27 Because your heart was tender and you humbled yourself before God when you heard His words against this place and against its inhabitants, and *because* you humbled yourself before Me, tore your clothes and wept before Me, I truly have heard you,” declares the LORD.

27 “Because your heart was sensitive, and you humbled yourself before God when you heard what he had to say about this place and its inhabitants—indeed, because you humbled yourself before me, tore your clothes, and cried out to me, I have heard you,” declares the LORD.

27 Because thine heart was tender, and thou didst humble thyself before God, when thou heardest his words against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, and humbledst thyself before me, and didst rend thy clothes, and weep before me; I have even heard thee also, saith the LORD.

- In spite of Judah's coming captivity, Josiah would experience mercy because of his tender heart toward God and his humility

28 "Behold, I will gather you to your fathers, and you will be gathered to your grave in peace, so your eyes will not see all the evil which I am bringing on this place and its inhabitants."" And they brought back word to the king.

28 Behold, I will gather you to your fathers and you shall be gathered to your grave in peace, so your eyes will not see all the evil which I will bring on this place and on its inhabitants."" And they brought back word to the king.

28 "Look! I'm going to take you to your ancestors, and you will be buried in your grave in peace so that you won't have to see all the evil that I'm going to bring to this place and to its inhabitants.""

So they all brought back this message to the king.

28 Behold, I will gather thee to thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered to thy grave in peace, neither shall thine eyes see all the evil that I will bring upon this place, and upon the inhabitants of the same. So they brought the king word again.

- Josiah would die before Judah went into captivity

The Covenant is Renewed (Cf. 2 Kings 23:1-3)

29 Then the king sent *word* and gathered all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem.

29 Then the king sent and gathered all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem.

29 The king sent word to gather all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem.

29 Then the king sent and gathered together all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem.

- Though the wrath of God was sure because of the nation's apostasy and idolatry, Josiah himself would be spared because of his wholehearted devotion to the Lord. The impending doom would be postponed until after Josiah's death.

— The announcement of coming judgment led the king and the nation to commit anew to follow God's Word

30 The king went up to the house of the LORD with all the men of Judah, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the priests, the Levites, and all the people, from the greatest to the least; and he read in their presence all the words of the Book of the Covenant which was found in the house of the LORD.

30 The king went up to the house of the LORD and all the men of Judah, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the priests, the Levites and all the people, from the greatest to the least; and he read in their hearing all the words of the book of the covenant which was found in the house of the LORD.

30 Then the king went up to the LORD's Temple, accompanied by the men of Judah, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the priests and descendants of Levi, and everyone else from the most important to the least important, and he read out loud all the words of the book of the covenant that had been found in the LORD's Temple.

30 And the king went up into the house of the LORD, 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 the words of the book of the covenant that was found in the house of the LORD.

31 Then the king stood in his place and made a covenant before the LORD to walk after the LORD, and to keep His commandments, His testimonies, and His statutes with all his heart and with all his soul, to perform the words of **the covenant that are written in this book.**

31 Then 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 his heart and with all his soul, to perform the words of the covenant written in this book.

31 While standing in his appointed place, the king made a public covenant with the LORD to follow the LORD, to keep his commandments, his testimonies, and his statutes, and to do so with all of his heart and soul, and to carry out what was written in the covenant contained in the book.

31 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 his heart, and with all his soul, to perform the words of the covenant which are written in this book.

- "...the covenant that are written in this book" - this may be the section known by that phrase in Ex 20:1—23:33, or it may be all of Deuteronomy

32 Furthermore, he made all who were present in Jerusalem and Benjamin stand *with him*. So the inhabitants of Jerusalem acted in accordance with the covenant of God, the God of their fathers.

32 Moreover, he made all who were present in Jerusalem and Benjamin to stand *with him*. So the inhabitants of Jerusalem did according to the covenant of God, the God of their fathers.

32 He also made everyone who was present in Jerusalem and Benjamin to stand in agreement with him. As a result, the inhabitants of Jerusalem reconfirmed the covenant of God, the God of their ancestors.

32 And he caused all that were present in Jerusalem and Benjamin to stand to it. And the inhabitants of Jerusalem did according to the covenant of God, the God of their fathers.

33 Josiah removed all the abominations from all the lands belonging to the sons of Israel, and made all who were present in Israel serve the LORD their God. Throughout his lifetime they did not turn from following the LORD God of their fathers.

33 Josiah removed all the abominations from all the lands belonging to the sons of Israel, and made all who were present in Israel to serve the LORD their God. Throughout his

lifetime they did not turn from following the LORD God of their fathers.

33 Josiah also removed all the detestable things from the territories that belonged to the people of Israel, and made everyone who lived in Israel to serve the LORD their God. For the rest of his life, they didn't abandon their quest to follow the LORD God of their ancestors.

33 And Josiah took away all the abominations out of all the countries that pertained to the children of Israel, and made all that were present in Israel to serve, even to serve the LORD their God. And all his days they departed not from following the LORD, the God of their fathers.