

Josiah: 31 Years of Grace
2 Kings 22:1–2

April 24, 2005

SERMON NOTES

A. The Scene in the Land of Promise

1. 1 Kings 1–11; 1 Chronicles 29 to 2 Chronicles 9 – the days of King Solomon
2. 1 Kings 11–12; 2 Chronicles 10–11 – the kingdom split
3. 1 Kings 12 to 2 Kings 25; 2 Chronicles 11–36 – History of the divided kingdom until the captivities and exile
 - a. the Northern Kingdom (“Ephraim”, “Samaria” or “Israel”)
 - b. the Southern Kingdom (“Judah”)

B. The Coming, Inevitable Judgement

1. the reason for judgement
 - a. 1 Kings 22 (as verse 17)
 - b. Isaiah 1:4, 10–11
 - c. 2 Chronicles 36:15–16

d. Nehemiah 9:23–30

2. the declarations of judgement

- a. Isaiah 3:8–9
- b. Micah 3:9–12
- c. 2 Kings 21:10–15, to Manasseh

C. The Time of Opportunity for Judah

1. Psalm 103:8; God’s mercy ... He gives 31 years of Grace
2. Why Josiah had this privilege (a time of grace, deferred judgement)
 - a. 2 Chronicles 34:3a ... because ...
 - b. 2 Chronicles 34:3b ... because ...
 - c. Jeremiah 1:2
 - d. 2 Chronicles 34:6ff
3. How God rewarded that privilege (the way Josiah used the time)
 - a. 2 Kings 22:8 – Hilkiah found ...
 - b. 2 Kings 22:20 – Josiah would not ...
 - c. 2 Chronicles 35:18 – Josiah celebrated ...

A. The Scene in the Land of Promise

1. as you read through the books of first and second Kings in the Bible, which tell of the history of Israel from King Solomon on
 - a. the same is to be found in first and second Chronicles
 - b. you read the sad story of deteriorating spiritual condition of God’s people as exemplified in their rulers
2. a worsening situation starting with its most renowned king, king Solomon
 - a. a king who started so well
 - b. seeking from God — neither wealth or power — but wisdom, wisdom so that he could judge God’s people
 - c. receiving that wisdom from God, as well as wealth and power and fame
 - d. given the privilege of building the temple, a house in Jerusalem upon which God Himself would place His own Name
 - e. but, as his prestige increased,
 - (A) he took many wives
 - (B) as was the way with the rulers of that day and that region,
 - (C) these turned his heart further and further from God
 - (D) so that he raised up high places and groves where all of the false gods, the abominations of the nations round about were worshipped
 - f. I like to think that in his old age, King Solomon
 - (A) in writing the book of Ecclesiastes
 - (B) had come to recognize his own folly
 - (C) and urged those who followed to learn from it
 - g. but, the damage was done
 - (A) for God’s judgment came: after Solomon, the greater part of the kingdom would be taken away
 - (B) but, for the sake of God’s promises to David,
 - (C) one small part, the Southern Kingdom, would remain with the descendants of Solomon
 - h. and after Solomon’s death this came to pass

- (A) Jereboam, the son of Nebat, led the Northern Kingdom in rebellion against Solomon's son, Rehoboam
 - (B) to prevent the people of his new kingdom from going to Jerusalem for the feasts, he set up golden calves at each end of his kingdom: one at Bethel, one at Dan, and had the people resort thither to worship annually
 - (C) this idolatry, this was the sin of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that caused Israel to sin: of which we read over and over in these pages of first and second Kings
3. the history of the Northern Kingdom is one of unmitigated spiritual darkening
- a. despite the ministry of such great prophets as Elijah, Elisha, Michaiah, Hosea and Amos
 - b. the people in this kingdom sat in darkness
 - c. as one evil king followed another
 - d. each, if possible, worse than the last: Omri, Ahab, Joram, Jehu, Jeroboam II, and so on to Pekah, son of Remaliah
 - e. each causing the people of Israel to sin in false idolatry
 - f. so that in two short centuries, that is about 7½ centuries before Christ, the rulers and people of this kingdom were sent by God into captivity under the Assyrians
4. in the Southern Kingdom, or Judah
- a. we find in its history a few bright spots
 - (A) names such as Asa, Jehoshaphat, and Joash
 - (B) when the King and people turned to God in a time of national reformation
 - (C) but even in these we find there was continuing worship of the gods of the surrounding nations
 - b. but there were many evil kings as well: Ahaz & Manasseh to name a couple, who proliferated idolatry throughout the land and were just as evil as their cousins to the north
5. so, at the end of the reign of Manasseh, Josiah's grandfather,
- a. we find on every hill, a pagan alter ...
 - b. in every woods, a grove to the goddess Astoreth
 - c. in every corner of Jerusalem, an altar to a false god

- d. in the courts of the temple, where God had put His name, sacrifices being made to the sun, the moon, the planets
- e. in the very temple itself, an wooden idol had been set up

B. The coming, inevitable judgement

1. the reason

- a. I think the reason is clear from what we have just described
- b. but our Scripture reading today, 1 Kings 22, tells us more
 - (A) the Word of God had been forgotten
 - (B) in fact, it had been lost — lost in the temple itself
 - (C) the words of the Lord God who had delivered Israel out of the land of Egypt and into the land of Canaan, the words by which He said that they were to live in that land ... lost in the rubble that had accumulated over the past centuries in the neglected house of God
 - (D) in fact, it seems that the only use that had been made of the house of God for some time was to go in, to rob its treasuries and strip its ornamentation of anything of value in order to pay off some marauding nation so that they would not attack Judah
 - (E) in fact, we discover in Nehemiah 8: 17 that the feast of tabernacles, which was meant to be a great time of rejoicing at the final harvest and a reminder of their being brought through the wilderness to Canaan, had not been celebrated from the days of Joshua
 - (F) and so we read that judgement of God as found in 1 Kings 22, as told by Huldah the prophetess, verse 17a (NKJV): *“Because they have forsaken Me and burned incense to other gods, that they might provoke Me to anger with all the works of their hands...”*
- c. or listen to these words of Isaiah, describing Judah
 - (A) Isaiah 1: 4 (NAS): *Alas, sinful nation, People weighed down with iniquity, Offspring of evildoers, Sons who act corruptly! They have abandoned the Lord, They have despised the Holy One of Israel, They have turned away from Him.*
 - (B) Isaiah 1: 10–11 (NAS): *Hear the word of the Lord, You rulers of Sodom; Give ear to the instruction of our God, You people of Gomorrah. “What are your multiplied sacrifices to Me?” says the Lord, “I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams, And the fat of fed cattle. And I take no pleasure in the blood of bulls, lambs, or goats.”* — hear how God addresses Judah; He calls them Sodom

and Gomorrah, cities destroyed a millennium before for their wickedness and sin

- (C) and Isaiah, if we are to believe the traditions, was slain by Manasseh, the grand-father of Josiah
- d. or consider these words by the chronicler as he records the fall of Jerusalem in 2 Chronicles 36: 15–16 (NAS): *And the Lord, the God of their fathers, sent word to them again and again by His messengers, because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place; but they continually mocked the messengers of God, despised His words and scoffed at His prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against His people, until there was no remedy.*
 - e. and, some 100 years later, Ezra after the return from exile, spoke these words in confession of the sins of Judah and of their fathers « -- read Nehemiah 9: 23–30a »
 - f. so judgement was to fall upon the Southern Kingdom, Judah, just 125 years or so after it did upon the Northern
 - g. not through Assyria, this time, but Assyria's successor, the Chaldeans — the Babylonian empire
2. the declarations of God's coming judgement are many
- a. there are, for example, many vivid descriptions of what God is going to bring upon Judah and Jerusalem in the pages of the book of Isaiah, but just these 2 verses: 3: 8–9 (NAS): *For Jerusalem has stumbled, and Judah has fallen, Because their speech and their actions are against the Lord, To rebel against His glorious presence. The expression of their faces bears witness against them. And they display their sin like Sodom; They do not even conceal it. Woe to them! For they have brought evil on themselves.*
 - b. or, these words from Micah 3: 9–12 (NAS): *Now hear this, heads of the house of Jacob And rulers of the house of Israel, Who abhor justice And twist everything that is straight, Who build Zion with bloodshed And Jerusalem with violent injustice. Her leaders pronounce judgment for a bribe, Her priests instruct for a price, And her prophets divine for money. Yet they lean on the Lord saying, "Is not the Lord in our midst? Calamity will not come upon us." Therefore, on account of you, Zion will be plowed as a field, Jerusalem will become a heap of ruins, And the mountain of the temple will become high places of a forest.*
 - c. now both of those were spoken before Manasseh came to the throne, but these were to Manasseh himself in « 2 Kings 21: 10–15 – Read this »

3. But, as we read in the Psalms (103:8, NAS) [The Lord is compassionate and gracious, Slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness.](#) — and he granted in the reign of Josiah 31 years of grace

C. The time of opportunity for Judah

1. why Josiah had the privilege of living in these 31 years

a. 2 Chronicles 34:3a (NAS): [For in the eighth year of his reign while he was still a youth, he began to seek the God of his father David; ...](#)

(A) at the tender age of 15 or 16, Josiah made a decision

(1) a decision for God and against sin

(2) that he would seek God — not the gods of the nations; not just God as an idea, a concept

(3) but the real, true, genuine God who had chosen his ancestor David some 3 centuries before

(4) the God with whom one can have an ongoing relationship based on God's mercy, through faith

(B) this decision, which he sustained throughout his life, meant that Josiah could be described as one who did ["right in the sight of the Lord, and walked in the ways of his father David; he did not turn aside to the right hand or to the left"](#) (verse 2)

(C) this is the decision that I would crave for every young boy and girl; that they accept the Lord Jesus Christ as their own personal Saviour, that by the grace of God they may walk in His ways every day

b. That verse goes on to say, ["and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of the high places, the Asherim, the carved images, and the molten images."](#) (2 Chronicles 34:3b NAS) and goes on to give more detail

(A) so now, at 19 or 20, Josiah takes his faith, and applies it to the world in which he lives: to correct the wrong that is so very evident as he looks around

(B) you are the leader of this people, Josiah, lead them back to God, your God, the true God ... arraign yourself against these false gods that are no gods

(C) O that the people of God, the people of this church, might make that same decision, to stand against all the power and prestige of those who deny the gospel, who set themselves against Jesus Christ, that they may bear witness to the truth of His salvation

c. We are also told in the thirteenth year of King Josiah that the prophet Jeremiah began to preach (Jeremiah 1:2); so God, seeing the resolve and actions of Josiah, sent one to stand with him and help

him in his reign over Judah

- d. Then in 2 Chronicles 34:6 (NAS): [And in the cities of Manasseh, Ephraim, Simeon, even as far as Naphtali, in their surrounding ruins,](#)
 - (A) Josiah's vision went beyond his own front door
 - (B) he went into the lands which had been the Northern Kingdom and he cleansed that as well; taking away the altars to false God including that made by Jeroboam
- e. and, in the eighteenth year of his reign, when he was 25 or 26, he began to cleanse the temple

2. how God rewarded that privilege

- a. well, you know the some of the rewards
 - (A) the word of God was uncovered, was made known to him, and he understood and wept — having set out to seek the Lord, having taken action to serve the Lord, he is given the word of the Lord so that he can now serve him with knowledge and aright
 - (B) next, though God was surely and certainly going to punish Judah and send them into captivity, this was not something that Josiah himself would have to face because he had shown his contrition to God
- b. one further reward: Josiah had the privilege of being at the greatest Passover for over 300 years: [And there had not been celebrated a Passover like it in Israel since the days of Samuel the prophet; nor had any of the kings of Israel celebrated such a Passover as Josiah did with the priests, the Levites, all Judah and Israel who were present, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.](#) (2 Chronicles 35:18 NAS) ... even some from what had been the Northern Kingdom were present; because Josiah's vision went beyond home

D. Conclusion

- 1. now as you heard, and followed along in your own Bibles, those various passages about the sins of Judah and Jerusalem, didn't they sound just a bit familiar?
 - a. living in a society that has been peculiarly blessed by God
 - (A) having God's word in our own language – it is now approaching 500 years since Tyndale translated it
 - (B) having great men of God teaching and preaching the truth: Wycliffe, Knox, Baxter, Wesley,

Boothe, Moody, Spurgeon, Billy Sunday, Billy Graham

- b. including in the motto of our country a reference to Psalm 72:8 "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea"
 - c. or, for the U.S., "one nation under God"
 - d. but now, God's word has been denied, first in universities, then in seminaries, in the public education, and finally in the pulpit, so that it lies in dust under the rubble that now clutters many of what were once the house of God
 - e. on a national basis, Canada's motto has been discarded; U.S. is now, in effect, "one nation under secularism"—{2}.
 - f. just about every week we receive a mailing from Focus on the Family, Campaign Life Coalition, or a similar group, alerting us to pending anti-Judaeo--Christian legislation
 - g. and from the Word of God we read "But evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived." (2 Timothy 3:13 NAS) and, as we have been reminded in our evening Bible Study from 2 Peter, judgement is most certainly coming and don't be fooled into thinking that God has forgotten!
2. But, praise God, He is gracious, He is merciful
- a. and He has given us this time, these days of grace
 - b. we don't know how long; maybe 31 years, maybe less, maybe more ... but still time for the gospel to sound forth
 - c. God has given us some godly men and women in public office, some in leadership, some in business, some in the educational system, some in pulpits
 - d. and here in this church, in these days of grace, we still have the opportunity to unite in the proclamation of this same gospel of grace to our own world
 - e. this is that gospel of which we have sung in hymns this morning and will sing again in our closing hymn, "Grace Greater than our Sin" (Praise! 297)

1. © 2005 by Garth Hutchinson, Faith Fellowship Baptist Church of Aurora (Ontario): may be distributed or quoted freely, only let this be done to the glory “of the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13).

Various English versions of the Holy Bible are used in this sermon. Some (for example, the AV, ASV, and NAS) seek to be strictly translations, while others (and especially PHIL) contain paraphrasing which involves a certain amount of subjective interpretation. Nevertheless, there is little material difference in meaning among these. Some prove slightly clearer on some verses than others. Looking at more than one version sometimes sheds additional light on any particular verse. Explanatory additions to the Bible text are shown in [square brackets]. The versions are identified as:

ASV	American Standard Version of 1901
AV	Authorized (King James) Version
NAS	New American Standard version © 1975 The Lockman Foundation
NIV	New International Version © 1984 by the International Bible Society
NKJV	New King James Version © 1979 Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers
PHIL	New Testament Translation © 1972 by J. B. Phillips
RSV	Revised Standard Version © 1946, 1952 by the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. A.
WEY	The New Testament in Modern Speech © 1902, 1912 R. F. Weymouth

Further sermons and illustrations may be found at the web-site, www.holwick.com. Materials in this sermon from Rev. David Holwick's database are identified by "Kerux" followed by a sermon or illustration number.

2. Susan Jacoby, "Freethinkers: A History of American Secularism" – Kerux illustrations 26526 but also see Charles Colson's BreakPoint Commentary, Kerux illustration #26525