

2 Kings 23b-25 • Chapter Study

INTRO

We'll finish 2 Kings tonight and next week move back to the NT for 1 Cor.

For those new to CCO or just joining us for the stream, we go v by v thru the Bible, book by book.

We do 2 OT books, then 1 in the NT // We've just done 1 & 2 Kings, so we shift back to the NT for 1 Cor. Since we're starting half way thru ch23, let's recap ...

After almost 60 yrs of the rankest idolatry and most abominable immorality & injustice, a good and godly king finally came to the Kingdom of Judah's throne.

His name was Josiah.

He immediately set out to remove the idols of his father & grandfather, the ultra-wicked Manasseh.

One of those reforms was to restore the temple in Jrz to the worship of God.

The work crews discovered a copy of the Law, something that had been lost for decades.

Josiah's reforms had been driven more by more by tradition than framed by God's actual Word.

Once the Scripture was read, Josiah realized Judah hadn't just **broken** God's law, they'd brutally abused it, egregiously molested it.

Fearful the curses God foretold on their rebellion, he asked the prophetess Huldah is it was too late to avoid judgement.

She said that indeed it was. BUT: Josiah's tender heart toward God and remarkable reforms had delayed judgment.

It was too late for Judah **as a kingdom**, but not too late **for individuals** IN Judah to repent and return to the Lord.

Well: Armed now with God's **specific** Word, Josiah embarked on an even more determined & far-reaching set of reforms.

Every pagan high place wasn't just torn down, it was desecrated so as to make it unusable ever after.

Every shred and trace of idolatry was removed from Jrz and the hills around it.

Not content to just erase idolatry inside Judah, we even took his reforms beyond his borders into the realm of Israel to the North.

^{23:19} Now Josiah also took away all the shrines of the high places that *were* in the cities of Samaria, which the kings of Israel had made to provoke the Lord to anger; and he did to them according to all the deeds he had done in Bethel. ²⁰ He executed all the priests of the high places who *were* there, on the altars, and burned men's bones on them; and he returned to Jerusalem.

Josiah, informed as he was by God's Word, understood the territory given by God to Israel didn't stop at Judah's northern border.

The whole split that took place between the 2 nations was wrong so he determined to extend his reforms throughout the length & breath of the territory given them by God.

Samaria was the new name of what used to be the Kingdom of Israel.

It was technically under the rule of Assyria.

But they were too preoccupied with their own problems to stop Josiah's idol-smashing campaign.

²¹ Then the king commanded all the people, saying, "Keep the Passover to the Lord your God, as *it is* written in this Book of the Covenant." ²² Such a Passover surely had never been held since the days of the judges who judged Israel, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel and the kings of Judah. ²³ But in the 18th year of King Josiah this Passover was held before the Lord in Jerusalem.

PO = Isrl's July 4th, their Indepnd Day, commemor8g Isrl's deliverance frm slavery & their unique cov w/God.

But it hadn't been celebrated in decades.

As they've now read about the Covenant, Josiah pulls out all the stops in a massive celebration of PO.

²⁴ Moreover Josiah put away those who consulted mediums and spiritists, the household gods and idols, all the abominations that were seen in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, that he might perform the words of the law which were written in the book that Hilkiyah the priest found in the house of the Lord.

Josiah's reforms weren't limited to demolishing pagan sites.

He banned seeming *little* things like, household idols, charms, astrology, fortune-telling.

All forms of the occult were ended.

²⁵ Now before him there was no king like him, who turned to the Lord with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the Law of Moses; nor after him did *any* arise like him.

Quite an epitaph = “There was no king like Josiah. Specifically ***in how he turned to God.***”

Note how this is described; He turned ***with all his heart, soul, and strength.***

Remind you of anything? Sound like another, well-known passage? The Shema.

“Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is 1. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength.”

²⁶ Nevertheless

After such an amazing epitaph, “Nevertheless”

the Lord did not turn from the fierceness of His great wrath, with which His anger was aroused against Judah, because of all the provocations with which Manasseh had provoked Him. ²⁷ And the Lord said, “I will also remove Judah from My sight, as I have removed Israel, and will cast off this city Jerusalem which I have chosen, and the house of which I said, ‘My name shall be there.’”

While Josiah ***delayed*** judgment, he couldn’t ***remove*** it.

BECAUSE: The evil installed by his grandfather Manasseh remained in the hearts of the people.

Josiah was able to effect ***outward reform***, but not instill an ***inward revival***.

We know that because as soon as he’s gone, the old abominations came right back out.

²⁸ Now the rest of the acts of Josiah, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

Now we get a little historical marker

²⁹ In his days, Pharaoh Necho king of Egypt went to the aid of the king of Assyria, to the River Euphrates; and King Josiah went against him. And *Pharaoh Necho* killed him at Megiddo when he confronted him.

The Babylonians were moving to throw off the Assyrian dominance that had kept them down for generations.

They’d already taken 2 key Assyrian cities, including the capital at Nineveh.

Egypt had just begun the 26th dynasty & was once again a rising power.

They deemed Babylon a threat, so they threw in their lot with the Assyrians hoping to crush the Babylonians before they became a thing.

Josiah knew Judah’s recently renewed independence from Assyria could only be maintained by seeing all 3 powers kept weak, so he mobilized his forces and set-up at the fortress of Megiddo.

He blocked the pass that led from the mountains around Megiddo into the Jezreel Valley.

Warned of the block, the Egyptians doubled timed their march to a smaller pass.

They were able then to ***flank*** Judah’s troops.

During the battle, Josiah was hit by a stray arrow that found & killed him and ended the battle.

But the *delay* he’d hoped for worked.

The Egyptians didn’t arrive in time and the Assyrians fell to the Babylonians who became the new power in the ME.

³⁰ Then his servants moved his body in a chariot from Megiddo, brought him to Jerusalem, and buried him in his own tomb. And the people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah, anointed him, and made him king in his father’s place.

Jehoahaz was ***not*** the heir to the throne // 3 brothers were older. But Jehoahaz was the people’s choice.

Or I should say, he was the choice of the power-brokers, the influence peddlers.

The political machinery that had by this time taken effective control of the politics of Judah.

They deemed Jehoahaz more pliable to their agenda.

His real name was ***Shallum***; Jehoahaz was his ***throne name***.

³¹ Jehoahaz was 23 years old when he became king, and he reigned 3 months in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Hamutal the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah. ³² And he did evil in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his fathers had done. ³³ Now Pharaoh Necho put him in prison at Riblah in the land of Hamath, that he might not reign in Jerusalem; and he imposed on the land a tribute of 100 talents of silver and a talent of gold.

With the Assyrians defeated & the Babylonians not yet moving S, the Egyptians took control of both Syria & Israel.

Pharaoh Necho set up a base in Syria at Riblah and ordered the new king of Judah to appear.

When he arrived, he was arrested and thrown in prison.

Later he was carted off to Egypt where he eventually died.

In his place, Necho installed his older brother ***Eliakim***; who promised to be amenable to Egyptian rule.

³⁴ Then Pharaoh Necho made Eliakim the son of Josiah king in place of his father Josiah, and changed his name to Jehoiakim. And Pharaoh took Jehoahaz and went to Egypt, and he died there. ³⁵ So Jehoiakim gave the silver and gold to Pharaoh; but he taxed the land to give money according to the command of Pharaoh; he exacted the silver and gold from the people of the land, from every one according to his assessment, to give *it* to Pharaoh Necho. ³⁶ Jehoiakim *was* 25 years old when he became king, and he reigned 11 years in Jerusalem. His mother's name *was* Zebudah the daughter of Pedaiiah of Rumah. ³⁷ And he did evil in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his fathers had done.

The prophet Jeremiah was active during this time & had a lot to say about the reign of this loser, Jehoiakim.

In Jer. 36 we're told he defiantly burned a scroll of scripture because he didn't like what it said.

Jehoiakim was such a moral and spiritual wretch, God declared none of his descendants would ever sit securely on the throne.

Ch24

¹ In his days Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up, and Jehoiakim became his vassal *for* 3 years. Then he turned and rebelled against him.

There's an important historical back-story to this.

In one of the most important battles of the ancient world, the Egyptians, allied with what was left of the Assyrians, met the Babylonians & their allies the Medes, at the ***Battle of Carchemish***.

The Egyptian-Assyrian alliance was completely shattered.

The Babylonians pursued the retreating Egyptians all the way to Egypt.

On the way back to Babylon, the young prince Nebuchadnezzar asserted his authority over Judah.

Judah's vassaldom switched from Egypt to Babylon. It was 605 BC.

All of this is well-documented in Babylonian chronicles housed in the British Museum.

Nebuchadnezzar may have planned to stay at Jerusalem longer but word reached him of his father's death so he hurried home to take the throne.

He took with him a few Jewish hostages to make sure the tribute was sent.

Daniel & his friends were among them.

After only 3 yrs, when the Egyptians managed to push back on Babylon in a minor victory, Jehoiakim thought he possessed the strength to assert independence & refused to send the tribute due Nebuchadnezzar.

² And the Lord sent against him *raiding* bands of Chaldeans, bands of Syrians, bands of Moabites, and bands of the people of Ammon; He sent them against Judah to destroy it, according to the word of the Lord which He had spoken by His servants the prophets.

Part of the genius of Nebuchadnezzar was to unite several nations under his banner.

The raiders referred to here were a multinational-force that now fought for Babylon.

³ Surely at the commandment of the Lord *this* came upon Judah, to remove *them* from His sight because of the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he had done, ⁴ and also because of the innocent blood that he had shed; for he had filled Jerusalem with innocent blood, which the Lord would not pardon.

There were many in Judah at this time who thought it good & right to resist Babylon.

Jeremiah & the other prophets made clear: No! It was time to surrender & submit to judgment.

I have to say, v4 fills me with dread.

The persistence of Judah's judgment was due to Manasseh's shedding so much innocent blood.

As king, his primary duty was to enforce God's Law.

And as we see in Gen 9, the basis of all govt is the preservation of the sanctity of life.

Manasseh didn't just ignore his primary duty as King; he trampled it with glee.

This was a crime that rose to the level of blasphemy.

If Judah's was judged for Manasseh's abominable atrocity in shedding innocent blood, what are we to make of modern nations who use the power of the State to legalize, promote, and fund abortion?

⁵ Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? ⁶ So Jehoiakim rested with his fathers. Then Jehoiachin his son reigned in his place.

While Jehoiachin technically gained the throne, he never really reigned because his subjects ignored him for the scant 3 months of his term.

Jeremiah's prophecy came true None of Jehoiaquim's descendants secured the throne. And the royal line departed from this branch of David's family altogether.

⁷ And the king of Egypt did not come out of his land anymore, for the king of Babylon had taken all that belonged to the king of Egypt from the Brook of Egypt to the River Euphrates. The Babylonians conquered all Egypt.

⁸ Jehoiachin *was* 18 years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem 3 months. His mother's name *was* Nehushta the daughter of Elnathan of Jerusalem. ⁹ And he did evil in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his father had done. ¹⁰ At that time the servants of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up against Jerusalem, and the city was besieged. ¹¹ And Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came against the city, as his servants were besieging it. ¹² Then Jehoiachin king of Judah, his mother, his servants, his princes, and his officers went out to the king of Babylon; and the king of Babylon, in the 8th year of his reign, took him prisoner. The siege was so brutal, Jehoiachin surrendered.

¹³ And he carried out from there all the treasures of the house of the Lord and the treasures of the king's house, and he cut in pieces all the articles of gold which Solomon king of Israel had made in the temple of the Lord, as the Lord had said.

While much of the decoration of the temple had been looted over the years, the main furniture & fixtures remained intact. Now it was all taken.

The one thing that may have escaped was the ark of the covenant, which 1 ancient tradition says was hidden by the prophet Jeremiah.

When God told him Jerusalem would fall, he's said to have hidden the ark to keep it from falling into enemy hands.

¹⁴ Also he carried into captivity all Jerusalem: all the captains and all the mighty men of valor, 10,000 captives, and all the craftsmen and smiths. None remained except the poorest people of the land. ¹⁵ And he carried Jehoiachin captive to Babylon. The king's mother, the king's wives, his officers, and the mighty of the land he carried into captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon. ¹⁶ All the valiant men, 7000, and craftsmen and smiths, 1000, all *who were* strong *and* fit for war, these the king of Babylon brought captive to Babylon. Like the Assyrians, the Babylonians shuffled populations between their conquered people as a way to control the lands they possessed.

The Babylonian chronicles refer to Jehoiachin as "**Yaukin**" king of the Judeans.

They **renamed people** as a way to show their **dominance** over them Think Daniel and his 3 pals. The Babylonian record lists the provisions allocated the captive king's household.

¹⁷ Then the king of Babylon made Mattaniah, *Jehoiachin's* uncle, king in his place, and changed his name to Zedekiah. ¹⁸ Zedekiah *was* 21 years old when he became king, and he reigned 11 years in Jerusalem. His mother's name *was* Hamutal the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah. ¹⁹ He also did evil in the sight of the Lord, according to all that Jehoiaquim had done. ²⁰ For because of the anger of the Lord *this* happened in Jerusalem and Judah, that He finally cast them out from His presence. Then Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon. Both Jeremiah & Chronicles tell us Zedekiah's evil lay in his refusal to listen to God's Word.

He returned Judah to the abominations Josiah had removed.

Ch25

¹ Now it came to pass in the 9th year of his reign, in the 10th month, on the 10th *day* of the month, *that* Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and all his army came against Jerusalem and encamped against it; and they built a siege wall against it all around. ² So the city was besieged until the 11th year of King Zedekiah. A 2½ year siege! // We're in a lockdown that's lasted what = 2 weeks?

And people are freaking out about TP & bottled water. // Imagine 2 yrs, **and no food!**

³ By the 9th *day* of the 4th month the famine had become so severe in the city that there was no food for the people of the land. ⁴ Then the city wall was broken through, and all the men of war *fled* at night by way of the

gate between 2 walls, which was by the king's garden, even though the Chaldeans *were* still encamped all around against the city. And *the king* went by way of the plain.⁵ But the army of the Chaldeans pursued the king, and they overtook him in the plains of Jericho. All his army was scattered from him.⁶ So they took the king and brought him up to the king of Babylon at Riblah, and they pronounced judgment on him.⁷ Then they killed the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, put out the eyes of Zedekiah, bound him with bronze fetters, and took him to Babylon.

Imagine the horror of watching your children tortured to death, then your own eyes put out so that the last thing you ever see is that!

⁸ And in the 5th month, on the 7th day of the month (which *was* the 19th year of King Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon), Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard, a servant of the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem.⁹ He burned the house of the Lord and the king's house; all the houses of Jerusalem, that is, all the houses of the great, he burned with fire.¹⁰ And all the army of the Chaldeans who *were with* the captain of the guard broke down the walls of Jerusalem all around.

The city was totally razed; left a smoking heap of broken stones and burnt timbers.

¹¹ Then Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried away captive the rest of the people who remained in the city and the defectors who had deserted to the king of Babylon, with the rest of the multitude.¹² But the captain of the guard left *some* of the poor of the land as vinedressers and farmers.

In vs13-17, any & all metal was carted off as plunder.

Mentioned specifically was all the artwork and furnishing of the temple.

In vs 18-21, A bunch of people are given who were hauled before Neb for execution.

They'd been the main trouble-makers & rebels.

Because the prophet Jeremiah was well-known to the Babylonians as telling the last 3 kings of Judah to **submit** to them, he was left behind to help lead the few left to tend the fields.

²² Then he made Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, governor over the people who remained in the land of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had left.

Gedaliah was a good guy & friend to Jeremiah.

²³ Now when all the captains of the armies, they and *their* men, heard that the king of Babylon had made Gedaliah governor, they came to Gedaliah at Mizpah—

The new capital of Judah, since Jrz was in ruins.

The last part of v23 is the names of the guys who came to Gedaliah.

They were warriors who'd gone into hiding till the Babylonian army left.

²⁴ And Gedaliah took an oath before them and their men, and said to them, "Do not be afraid of the servants of the Chaldeans. Dwell in the land and serve the king of Babylon, and it shall be well with you."

These guys made an oath to not resist the Babylonian rule.

²⁵ **But** it happened in the 7th month that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, the son of Elishama, of the royal family, came with 10 men and struck and killed Gedaliah, the Jews, as well as the Chaldeans who were with him at Mizpah.²⁶ And all the people, small and great, and the captains of the armies, arose and went to Egypt; for they were afraid of the Chaldeans.

These guys deemed themselves Jewish loyalists, dedicated to **resisting** the Babylonians.

If they'd listened to Jeremiah, they'd have realized they were traitors because they resisted God!

Knowing these assassinations would bring down the wrath of the Babylonians, they scrambled to Egypt.

Their descendants ended up forming a substantial Jewish colony there.

²⁷ Now it came to pass in the 37th year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the 12th month, on the 27th day of the month, *that* Evil-Merodach king of Babylon, in the year that he began to reign, released Jehoiachin king of Judah from prison.²⁸ He spoke kindly to him, and gave him a more prominent seat than those of the kings who *were* with him in Babylon.²⁹ So Jehoiachin changed from his prison garments, and he ate bread regularly before the king all the days of his life.³⁰ And as for his provisions, *there was* a regular ration given him by the king, a portion for each day, all the days of his life.

A new regime often meant a change in policy.

This new king decided to treat some of the political prisoners with greater kindness.

The king of Judah was one to benefit.

This turn around was a foreshadowing of God's return of the Jews to Judea after 70 years in exile.

The Captives

Did you note there were 3 waves of captives that were taken from Judah to Babylon?

First: 24:1 – When Neb was returning from the conquest of Egypt and stopped in Jrz to assert his dominance there.

He took just some of Jrz's nobility as hostages to make sure they paid the annual tribute.

Daniel and his 3 friends were a part of this smaller group.

Second: 24:10-16 – When King Jehoiachin rebelled, the Babylonians laid a siege against Jrz.

Jehoiachin surrendered and the entire royal house along with most of the nobility & commanders were carried back to Babylon as captives.

Third: Ch25 -When King Zedekiah rebelled, Neb decided he'd had enough of those troublesome Jews and decided to utterly crush them.

Jrz was left a pile of smoking rubble and all but a handful of the most poor were carted off into captivity.