

2 Chronicles Chapter 34

Verses 34:1 – 35:27

The reign of Josiah (ca. 640-609 B.C.; compare 2 Kings 22:1-23:30).

Jeremiah prophesied during this reign (2 Chron. 35:24; Jer. 1:2), as did Habakkuk, Zephaniah (Zeph. 1:1), and Nahum.

Verses 1-2

See notes on 2 Kings 22:1-2.

At the age of 16, Josiah began to cultivate a love for God in his heart, and by age 20 his character was strong enough in devotion to Him that he went into action to purge his nation.

When “Josiah”, the son of Amon, became the fifteen, legitimate king of Judah, he “walked in the ways of David”.

He had a spiritual hunger and urged the people in Israel to have the same desire.

One’s youth never has to hinder following God.

“Father”, in this case, means forefather.

That he “declined [neither] to the right hand, nor to the left” communicates his unwavering and exemplary obedience to God.

King Josiah knew only to seek God with all of his heart.

2 Chronicles 34:1 "Josiah [was] eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem one and thirty years."

And must be born when his father was but sixteen, for Amon lived but twenty-four years (2 Kings 21:19).

"And he reigned in Jerusalem one and thirty years":

And so must die at thirty-nine years of age.

Josiah was a good king.

He was very young when he began, but his reign would be similar to Hezekiah.

He wanted to please the LORD in everything he did.

We remember from 2 Kings that his mother was Jedidah.

2 Chronicles 34:2 "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."

Josiah is commended as a godly king whose faith took a straight course and who was unequalled by any Judean king in his concern for the law of God (compare 2 Kings 22:1-2; 23:25).

We discussed in an earlier lesson how the good kings were compared to king David, because his heart was stayed upon God.

The Lord Jesus (in the flesh), would be descended from David.

God had promised that David's seed would sit on the throne forever.

This of course is fulfilled in Jesus.

In some ways, Josiah was even more pleasing to the LORD than Hezekiah.

Verses 3-7

See notes on 2 Kings 23:4-20.

2 Chronicles 34:3 "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."

Being in the sixteenth year of his age.

Though Kimchi thinks it was the very year he began to reign, which was the eighth of his age.

And Jarchi observes, it may be interpreted, "though he was young, he began to seek after the God of David his father".

To pray unto him, to seek after the knowledge of him, and the true manner of worshipping him.

To learn what was his will, commands, and ordinances.

The Targum is, "to seek instruction or doctrine of the LORD God of David his father," and to be taught his ways.

Such as David his great ancestor walked in, and whom he chose to follow.

"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":

Which were made in the times of Manasseh.

And though removed by him when humbled, were restored in the reign of Amon.

Now Josiah purged the land from these, by putting them down, and destroying them.

And this he did when he was twenty years of age.

Having now more authority, being out of his minority, and from under guardians.

And one year before Jeremiah began to prophesy (Jer. 1:1).

The eighth year of his reign would have made him 16 years old.

He sought God early on in his life then.

He began the cleansing of the land, when he was twenty years old.

Jeremiah was the prophet at this time.

2 Chronicles 34:4 "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 strewed [it] upon the graves of them that had sacrificed unto them."

He not only ordered them to be broke down, but he went in person, and saw it done. These were the altars Manasseh had reared up to the idols.

And though upon his humiliation he cast them out, they were rebuilt by Amon his son (see 2 Chron. 33:3).

"And the images, that were on high above them, he cut down":

Sun images, as the word signifies.

These Chamanim might be representatives of Cham or Ham, the son of Noah.

The same with Jupiter Ammon.

And there was another Heathen deity, Amanus, Strabo speaks of, supposed to be the sun (see note on Lev. 26:30).

These, as Jarchi says, were in the form of the sun, and were set above the altars, over against the sun, to whom worship was paid.

Though some think this respects not place, but time, and that these were images in times past.

"And the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images, he brake in pieces":

Ordered them to be broken.

The groves were statues, or images in groves.

And thereby distinguished from those made of wood, and were carved.

And from those that were of molten metal, and were placed elsewhere.

"And made dust of them, and strewed it upon the graves of them that had sacrificed unto them"

See 2 Kings 23:6.

See the notes on Judges 2:11-15 and 3:6-7.

This is telling of the type of false worship that Josiah destroyed in the land.

He had made a decision to live for the LORD himself, and then to lead the nation back to the LORD.

He not only sent people out to destroy the images and idols, but he went as well and made sure they were destroyed.

He had them to destroy them in his presence, so he would know it was actually done.

The strewing the ashes on the graves was for the children that had been sacrificed to these false gods.

Verses 5-7

See verse 33 and the notes on 2 Kings 23:15 and 23:16-18.

2 Chronicles 34:5 "And he burnt the bones of the priests upon their altars, and cleansed Judah and Jerusalem."

On which they sacrificed, in detestation of their idolatry, and to deter from it.

And this he did according to the prophecy of him, above three hundred and fifty years before.

"And cleansed Judah and Jerusalem":

From idolatry, and all the monuments of it.

These were not priests of Jehovah.

They were priests of Baal worship and of Ashteroth.

These false priests had led the people into this false worship.

They must be destroyed to stop them from leading the people astray.

2 Chronicles 34:6 "And [so did he] in the cities of Manasseh, and Ephraim, and Simeon, even unto Naphtali, with their mattocks round about."

Which though they belonged to the ten tribes.

Yet these being carried captive by the king of Assyria, they that were left became subject to the kings of Judah (see notes on 2 Kings 23:19).

"With their mattocks round about":

Or hammers or mauls, as Kimchi.

Or pick axes, such sort of instruments as were used in demolishing altars and images.

The Targum is, "in the house of their desolation."

And so other versions, "in their desolate places".

Which were become such, the inhabitants being carried captive, and few left behind.

He did not stop with Jerusalem, but cleansed all of the surrounding cities that he could enter.

These out-lying cities did not belong to Judah.

They were cities of Israel.

Israel had already fallen to Assyria at this time, so these cities were available to Josiah.

2 Chronicles 34:7 "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."

The statues or images in them.

"And had beaten the graven images into powder":

And strewed it on the graves of the idolaters.

"And cut down all the idols throughout all the land of Israel":

The sun images as in (2 Chron. 34:4).

"He returned to Jerusalem":

This tour of his throughout the whole land, and the things done by him.

Which are represented as done before the repairs of the temple were made, and the book of the law found and read.

And the covenant he and his people made with the LORD, are spoken of in (2 Kings 23:4), as if done after.

He tore down the things that had caused their captivity.

These were an affront to the LORD, and Josiah destroyed them.

Judah's worship of these evil false gods had first come to Israel and then crept into Judah.

Perhaps one of the reasons he went into Israel to do this, was so that Judah could not get a start from them again.

Verses 8-33

See notes on 2 Kings 22:8 – 23:20.

Verses 8-13

See notes on 2 Kings 22:3-7.

2 Chronicles 34:8 "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."

“Repair the house of the LORD”:

During the 55-year reign of Manasseh (33:1), and the two-year reign of Amon (33:21), the work of Hezekiah on the temple restoration was undone, which called for another extensive enterprise to “restore and amend” it (verses 9-13).

Josiah was now 26 years old.

He had cleansed the land of the false gods.

He now wants to repair the temple, so they could worship their LORD there again.

Shaphan is the scribe.

They were sent to oversee the repairing of the temple.

2 Chronicles 34:9 "And when they came to Hilkiah 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."

To whom they were sent to advise with about the repair of the temple.

"They delivered the money that was brought into the house of God":

That is, the High Priest, and the Levites the doorkeepers, gave it to the king's ministers.

Which money was either brought to the temple voluntarily, as the free gifts of the people for the repairs.

Or rather what was collected by the Levites, sent throughout the land for that purpose, or it may be both.

"Which the Levites that kept the doors":

Of the temple; and received the money as the people brought it.

"Had gathered of the hand of Manasseh and Ephraim, and of all the remnant of Israel, and of all Judah, and Benjamin":

They went throughout all the land of Israel and Judah, and collected money for the above purpose.

"And they returned to Jerusalem":

With it, which the High Priest took the sum of (see 2 Kings 22:4), of whom the king's ministers now received it.

There had been a collection from among the people for the money to repair the temple.

The high priest had turned this over to those that Josiah had sent to take care of the funds for the rebuilding.

The money was for the materials needed, and the skilled laborers to do the job.

2 Chronicles 34:10 "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:"

The king's ministers did.

"In the hand of the workmen that had the oversight of the house of the LORD":

Whose business it was to inspect the temple, and see what repairs were necessary.

And to overlook the workmen in making those repairs.

The names of these overseers are in (2 Chron. 34:12).

"And they gave it to the workmen that wrought in the house of the LORD, to repair and mend the house":

That is, the overseers gave the money they received to the laborers, as the hire of their labor.

And the reward of their work, and to buy materials with, as follows in the next verse.

Each workman was paid according to what he had needed for the job.

The workmen possibly also rounded up the material to be bought.

This particular money was to be used just for the temple.

2 Chronicles 34:11 "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."

To the masons and carpenters.

"To buy hewn stone":

To put in the room of that which was decayed or fallen down.

"And timber for couplings":

Of boards, beams, and rafters.

"And to floor the houses":

The chambers, the apartments in the temple, which belonged to the priests and Levites.

"Which the kings of Judah had destroyed":

The idolatrous ones, who had let them go to decay and ruin, taking no care of them.

Now we see some of the details of what the workers were to do, and where the hewn stone, timber, and the other needed materials had been acquired.

2 Chronicles 34:12 "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 music."

The laboring men, as also their inspectors (see 2 Kings 22:7).

"And the overseers of them were Jahath and Obadiah, the Levites, of the sons of Merari":

The third son of Levi.

"And Zechariah and Meshullam, of the sons of the Kohathites":

Who had their name from Kohath, the second son of Levi.

"To set it forward":

To urge and animate the men to their work, to keep them constant to it, and see that they did it well.

"And other of the Levites, all that could skill of instruments of music":

These, when they were not employed in singing in the temple, attended this service.

To look after the workmen at the repairs of it.

And perhaps they might play, as some think, on their instruments of music, while the men were at work.

That they might go on in it the more pleasantly and cheerfully.

This is just explaining that much of the work was done by members of the Levitical tribe.

If they did work fine enough to carve instruments of music, they could certainly do the beautiful handwork for the temple.

2 Chronicles 34:13 "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."

Who carried the timber and stones to the workmen.

To look after them, that they were not slow or lazy.

And that the workmen might not stand still for want of materials being brought to them to work with.

"And were overseers of all that wrought the work in any manner of service":

Whether in the way of masonry, or in that of carpenters.

Or of such that served them, or in whatsoever way.

"And of the Levites there were scribes, and officers, and porters":

Some to take the account of the money carried in and paid.

Who were the scribes, according to Jarchi.

And others who looked after the men, and kept them to work.

Who were the officers; and others that let them in and out, called porters.

It appears from this that the Levites were actually overseeing the job to see that it was done correctly.

The porters were the keepers of the door.

Verses 14-19

"A book of the law" is likely a scroll of Deuteronomy that had been lost or hidden during the many years of ungodly leadership in Judah (2 Kings 22:3-13).

The "words of the Law" cut to the heart of the king (Heb. 4:12).

Hearing those words led to sorrowful submission, and he personally subscribed to obey them.

Knowing the consequences of neglecting God's Word and what our sin deserve, how can we not be cut to the core in the same way?

2 Chronicles 34:14 "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."

The Levites, who brought it out of the country into the temple.

And from thence brought it to the High Priest, who delivering it to the king's ministers, and they to the overseers, the repairs were begun.

"Hilkiah the Priest found a book of the law of the LORD given by Moses":

The Levites, who brought it out of the country into the temple, and from thence brought it to the High Priest.

Who delivering it to the king's ministers, and they to the overseers, the repairs were.

For details as to the nature and importance of the "book of the law" (see the note on 2 Kings 22:8).

It is interesting to me that the High Priest had not known it was there all along.

This book of the law was in the temple, so the High Priest could see that the people knew the wishes of the LORD contained in His law.

This would have contained the book of Leviticus, where the law was spelled out.

2 Chronicles 34:15 "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."

Not at the first time of his message to him, but afterwards that he attended on him upon the same business.

After the High Priest had examined the temple to know what repairs it wanted, and where.

"I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD":

Some think this was only the book of Deuteronomy, and some only some part of that.

Rather the whole Pentateuch, and that not a copy of it, but the very autograph of Moses, written with his own hand, as it seems from (2 Chron. 34:14).

"And Hilkiah delivered the book to Shaphan":

And he read it.

And though there might be some copies of it in private hands, yet scarce; and perhaps Shaphan had never seen one.

At least a perfect one, or however had never read it through, as now he did.

This book had been kept with the ark of the Covenant.

Shaphan would be reporting back to king Josiah.

The High Priest sent it back with Shaphan.

This is not just any book.

It was the book Moses had written.

2 Chronicles 34:16 "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]."

Of the delivery of his message to the High Priest, and of what had been done upon it.

All that was committed to thy servants, they do it":

That have the oversight of the house of the LORD; according to the king's orders.

It seemed the temple had been in disarray.

The first 5 books of the Bible are spoken of as the law.

This would have been in Moses' own handwriting.

The servants had carried out the errand Josiah had sent them on, but now they had brought the law with them as well.

2 Chronicles 34:17 "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."

Meaning Hilkiah and himself, who had examined the chest in the temple.

Into which the money was put for the repairs of it, and had taken it out, and told it.

"And have delivered it into the hand of the overseers, and to the hand of the workmen":

That have the oversight of the house of the LORD; according to the king's orders.

This is speaking of them giving an accounting unto the king of where the money was being spent.

2 Chronicles 34:18 "Then Shaphan the scribe told the king, saying, Hilkiah the priest hath given me a book. And Shaphan read it before the king."

Further related to him what follows.

"Saying, Hilkiah the priest hath given me a book":

But did not say what book it was.

"And Shaphan read it before the king":

Part of it.

And it is thought by Kimchi and Ben Gersom that he particularly read the reproofs and threatening's in the book of Deuteronomy.

They suppose that Hilkiah read those to Shaphan, and directed him to read them to the king.

That he might take into consideration a further reformation.

We may safely assume this is speaking of him reading the laws in Leviticus to the king.

2 Chronicles 34:19 "And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the law, that he rent his clothes."

From whence it appears that he had never written out a copy of it.

As the kings of Israel were ordered to do, when they came to the throne (Deut. 17:18).

Nor had read it, at least not the whole of it.

And yet it seems strange that he should be twenty-six years of age, as he now was, and had proceeded far in the reformation of worship, and yet be without the book of the law.

And the High Priest also.

It looks as if it was, as some have thought, that they had till now only some abstracts of the law, and not the whole.

And perhaps the reformation hereto carried on chiefly lay in abolishing idolatry.

And not so much in restoring the ordinances of worship to their purity.

For it was after this that the ordinance of the Passover was ordered to be kept.

And when the king observed, on hearing the law read, that it had not been kept as it should, that such severe threatening was denounced against the transgressors of it.

"That he rent his clothes":

As expressive of the rending of his heart.

And of his humiliation and sorrow for the sins he and his people were guilty of.

(See the note on 2 Kings 22:11).

The reading of the law showed Josiah just how far away from the LORD that Judah had strayed.

He rent his clothes in mourning for his own sins, and for the sins of the people.

2 Chronicles 34:20 "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,"

The High Priest, as he is called (2 Kings 22:4).

"And Ahikam the son of Shaphan":

Whether the same with Shaphan the scribe, before mentioned, or another of the same name, is not certain.

"And Abdon the son of Micah":

Who is also called Achbor the son of Michaiah.

"And Shaphan the scribe":

Who brought and read the book to the king.

"And Asaiah a servant of the king's":

That waited on him constantly.

"Saying":

As follows.

2 Chronicles 34:21 "Go, inquire 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."

Of some of his prophets, as Jeremiah, who began to prophesy in the thirteenth year of Josiah's reign.

And had been a prophet five years (Jer. 1:1).

"And for them that are left in Israel and in Judah, concerning the words of the book that is found":

For he observed that this book threatened and foretold not only the captivity of the ten tribes, but of Judah, and of their king.

And Jarchi thinks, he had a particular respect to that passage.

The LORD shall bring thee and thy king, etc. (Deut. 28:36).

And therefore, was desirous of knowing what he and his people must do to avert those judgments.

"For great is the wrath of the LORD that is poured out upon us":

Which he concluded from the threatenings denounced.

"Because our fathers have not kept the word of the LORD, to do after all that is written in this book":

To do according to all which is written concerning us.

He clearly saw that his ancestors more remote and immediate had been very deficient in observing the laws, commands, and ordinances prescribed to them in that book.

And therefore, feared that what was threatened would fall upon him and his people.

Who, he was aware, came short of doing their duty.

Hilkiah was the High Priest at this time.

Josiah was suddenly aware of why Israel was in captivity.

He also was aware that Judah had not followed in the ways of the LORD.

Josiah wanted to hear what the fate of Judah and himself was to be.

The wrath of the LORD was apparent from reading the law.

Verses 22-28

See the note on 2 Kings 22:14-20.

2 Chronicles 34:22 "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]."

Such as were Miriam and Deborah; in imitation of those Satan had very early his women prophetesses.

The Sibyls, so called from their being the council and oracle of God, and consulted as such on occasion, as Huldah now was.

"The wife of Shallum the son of Tikvath, the son of Hasrah, keeper of the wardrobe":

But whether the king's wardrobe in the palace, or the priest's in the temple, is not certain.

"Now she dwelt in Jerusalem in the college":

In the college of the prophets.

In the house of instruction, as the Targum.

The school where the young prophets were instructed and trained up.

Though Jarchi observes, that some interpret this "within the two walls".

Jerusalem, it seems had three walls, and within the second this woman lived.

There were gates in the temple, as he also observes, called the gates of Huldah, but whether from her cannot be said.

Jeremiah was the prophet in the time that this happened.

Whether he was unavailable at this time or not, we are not told.

Huldah was a prophetess.

Her husband was not a prophet.

He was a keeper of the wardrobe.

We may safely assume she was teaching in the college of the prophets, because she dwelt in Jerusalem in the college.

The only known college was the school of the prophets.

This shows that God uses women in the ministry the same as He does men.

God does not look on the outward appearance, but on the heart.

This Huldah was a prophetess after the heart of God.

Notice also the heads of the religious and the civil government came to her to find out what God's Word to them would be.

2 Chronicles 34:23 "And she answered them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Tell ye the man that sent you to me,"

The king's messengers.

"Thus saith the LORD God of Israel":

Being immediately inspired by him, she spake in his name, as prophets did.

"Tell ye the man that sent you to me":

Which may seem somewhat rude and unmannerly to say of a king.

But when it is considered she spake not of herself, but representing the King of kings and LORD of lords.

It will be seen and judged of in another light.

"Thus saith the LORD":

Let's us know that she spoke as an oracle of God.

The message was not hers, the message was God's.

2 Chronicles 34:24 "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:"

Destruction to the place, and captivity to the inhabitants of it.

"Even all the curses that are written in the book which they have read before the king of Judah":

Particularly what is contained in (Lev. 26:14).

Even all the curses in it.

2 Chronicles 34:25 "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."

My worship, as the Targum; his word and ordinances.

"And have burned incense unto other gods":

To Baal, to the host of heaven, and other Heathen deities.

"That they might provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands":

Their idols of wood, stone, gold, and silver, which their hands had made to worship.

Than which nothing was more provoking to God.

"Therefore my wrath shall be poured out upon this place, and shall not be quenched":

The decree for the destruction of Jerusalem was gone forth, and not to be called back.

The execution of it could not be stopped or hindered by cries, prayers, entreaties, or otherwise.

This wrath of God was an emblem of the unquenchable fire of hell (Matt. 3:12).

She verified their worst fears.

God's Word was true.

His Word said they would be destroyed for the evil they had done, and they would.

It was their choice to be blessed of God by keeping His commandments.

They had chosen to disregard His Word and His commandments and they had worshipped false gods.

They deserved the punishment God was sending to them.

Verses 26-28

Because Josiah did “humble thyself before God”, God would delay His judgment against evil Judah so that He would not see the destruction of His people.

This language echoes the prayer of Solomon at the dedication of the temple (7:14), and shows what a difference one godly person can make.

2 Chronicles 34:26 "And as for the king of Judah, who sent you to inquire of the LORD, so shall ye say unto him, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel [concerning] the words which thou hast heard;"

That is, with respect to him, or what may concern him.

"So shall ye say unto him":

Carry back this message to him as from the LORD he desired to inquire of.

"Thus saith the LORD God of Israel concerning the words which thou hast heard":

Read out of the law, concerning the destruction of the land, and its inhabitants therein threatened.

God would not punish an individual who was doing right in His sight along with the sinners.

Notice, there was a separate message for Josiah.

God saves an individual in the masses.

2 Chronicles 34:27 "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."

Soft like wax, and susceptible of impressions.

Or was "moved", or "trembled", as the Targum.

For God has respect to such as are of contrite hearts, and tremble at his word (Isa. 66:2).

"And thou didst humble thyself before God":

External humiliation, such as in Ahab, was regarded by the LORD.

Much more internal and cordial humiliation is regarded by Him (see 1 Kings 21:29).

"When thou heardest his words against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, and humbledst thyself before me":

That they should become a desolation and a curse (as in Lev. 26:1).

"And didst rend thy clothes, and weep before me":

As expressive of the inward contrition, sorrow, and grief of his heart.

"I have even heard thee also, saith the LORD":

His cries and prayers.

2 Chronicles 34:28 "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."

To his godly ancestors, to share with them in eternal life and happiness.

Otherwise it could be no peculiar favor to die in common, as his fathers did, and be buried in their sepulchers.

"And thou shalt be gathered to thy grave in peace":

In a time of public peace and tranquility.

For though he was slain in battle with the king of Egypt, yet it was what he was personally concerned in.

And it was not a public war between the two kingdoms, and his body was carried off by his servants, and was peaceably interred in the sepulcher of his ancestors (2 Kings 23:29).

As well as he died in spiritual peace, and entered into eternal peace, which is the end of the perfect and upright man, as he was (Psalm 37:37).

But this chiefly regards his not living to be distressed with the calamities of his nation and people, as follows.

'Neither shall thine eyes see all the evil that I will bring upon this place":

He being removed first, though it came upon it in the days of his sons.

"So they brought the king word again":

Of what Huldah the prophetess had said unto them.

God knew the heart of Josiah.

God liked the heart of Josiah.

He had humbled himself before the LORD.

He had inquired of the wishes of the LORD in His law.

He not only would be spared the terrible punishment of the masses, but God would not let it happen during his reign.

God would take him before all of these terrible times began.

2 Chronicles 34:29 "Then the king sent and gathered together all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem."

Josiah sent messengers throughout the land, and convened all the principal men in it at Jerusalem.

2 Chronicles 34:30 "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."

To the temple, from his palace.

"And all the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem":

They met him there.

"And the priests, and the Levites":

The prophets Jeremiah, Zephaniah, and Uriah, who, though they might not be at Jerusalem when the book of the law was found.

Yet, upon this message of the king's, might come up there from the countries where they were.

The Targum interprets the word "scribes": and some take them to be the sons of the prophets, their disciples (in 2 Chron. 34:30, they are called Levites).

"And all the people, great and small":

And great.

A very numerous assembly.

"And he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant that was found in the house of the LORD":

That is, he caused it to be read by others, and perhaps by more than one, the congregation being so large.

One of the main reasons that I have written these Bible studies, is to encourage people today to get back into the study of God's Word.

We must all strive to do the will of God.

We cannot do the will of God, unless we know what that will is.

Josiah saw that they heard the law of God.

Josiah wanted them to know what they had done wrong.

What they did with the knowledge of the law he had read them, was up to them.

He would feel as if he had done all he could.

Verses 31-32

Josiah did not try to please those around him but sought to please God and restore His law to the center of national life.

This motivated those around him to “to stand” for God.

We need the same zeal for God’s law today to persuade people to believe in light of God’s coming judgment (2 Cor. 5:11).

2 Chronicles 34:31 "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."

As the manner of kings was (2 Kings 11:14).

And is thought to be the brazen scaffold erected by Solomon, on which he stood at the dedication of the temple.

And now Josiah at the reading of the law (2 Chron. 6:13).

It is said to be his place (see note on 2 Kings 11:14).

"And made a covenant before the LORD":

Agreed and promised in the presence of God, both he and his people.

"To walk after the LORD":

The worship of the LORD, as the Targum.

Closely to attend to that.

"And to keep his commandments, and his testimonies, and his statutes":

All the laws of God, moral, civil, and ceremonial.

"With all his heart, and with all his soul":

Cordially and sincerely.

"To perform the words of the covenant which are written in this book":

Lately found, and now read unto them.

And all the people stood to the covenant and agreed to it.

And promised to keep it.

So the Targum, "all the people took upon them the covenant," engaged to observe it.

These people were his witnesses that he determined in his heart to keep God's commandments.

He would not do this from obligation either, but because it was the desire of his heart to please God.

2 Chronicles 34:32 "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."

He caused them to engage by an oath or covenant, that they would observe the laws of God.

As his predecessors had formerly done, and which indeed they were before obliged to do.

"The inhabitants of Jerusalem did according to the covenant of God":

They complied with God's and the king's command, as to the outward acts of God's worship, though not with an upright and renewed heart, as appears by the history.

This just means he commanded his people to keep God's law as well.

He had them to stand and agree to keep the commandments of God.

2 Chronicles 34:33 "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."

“All his days”:

This noble king had a life-long influence by the power of his godly life and firm devotion to God and His Word.

The strength of his character held the nation together serving the LORD.

It stated because as a young man he “began to seek ... God” (compare verse 3).

Josiah did just as he had covenanted with God to do.

He continued to cleanse the land of all things that displeased God.

Notice he even insisted on the remnant of Israel doing the same things as he had covenanted with God to cause Judah and Jerusalem to do.

Josiah was indeed a man after God's own heart.

2 Chronicles Chapter 34 Questions

1. How old was Josiah, when he began to reign?
2. Whose reign would his be like?
3. Who was he compared to in verse 2?
4. When did Josiah begin to seek after the God of David?
5. When did he begin to purge Judah and Jerusalem of the high places?
6. In verse 4, we read that they brake down the altars of _____ in his presence.
7. What were the ashes strewn on the graves for?
8. He burned the bones of what priests?
9. What was unusual about the cleansing of the places, mentioned in verse 6?

10. When did he return to Jerusalem?
11. In what year of his reign did Josiah decide to repair the temple?
12. Who was high priest at this time?
13. What was the money used for?
14. Who were the overseers of the work?
15. What had Hilkiah found in the temple?
16. Where did he send the law?
17. Who read the law to the king?
18. What did the king do, when he heard the law read?
19. What did the king command Hilkiah to do?
20. Who was the prophet in the land at this time?
21. Who did Hilkiah go to for Josiah's answer from the LORD?
22. What was her husband's ministry?
23. Where did she live?
24. How did she begin her message to them?
25. What was God's message to these evil people?
26. What separate message did God send to Josiah?
27. Who did Josiah call together to read the law to?
28. Josiah made a _____ with God before all of these people.
29. What did he cause the others present to do?