

THE POOREST SORT OF THE PEOPLE

2 KINGS 23:28 – 25:30

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~ Our Spiritual Safari expedition through the entire Word of God will conclude commentary on the Book of second Kings with this report on a sad note. That note is how each and every era of revival in Judah was followed by a time of deep apostasy and abject Godlessness. This report will also follow the southern kingdom of Judah into Babylonian captivity and slavery. We won't begin or end on an optimistic note – and I promise you that I am going to give the Word of God to you just as it is. Some of you will want to stop reading this report right now. God wants only *good things* for His people; but, when willful rebellion persists, His plan involves experiencing much suffering and pain.

In our previous report, we began examining the issue of revival closely. Josiah and Hezekiah were the two most outstanding kings of Judah in terms of bringing about revival in the land during their reigns. The steps these two kings took were the same steps that *MUST* be followed in our day if we desire true revival. First, the temple was repaired; things *MUST* be made right in our lives with God. Our body is the temple of God. Second, there *must be* a return to the Word of God; it is essential that the Word of God bring conviction of sin to our hearts. Only then will people repent and put away idolatry and immorality. Third, they reinstated the Passover; meaning they came back to the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ! All three of those are irrefutable, nonnegotiable elements required to bring about revival, according to Scripture.

There were other reformations that took place during the reign of Kings Josiah and Hezekiah, too. Peaceful years and decades of blessings followed these men who believed God! When the people were right with God, the Bible mentions they had gold and silver in abundance. When the people are right with God in the Word of God, the fruits of the land are always multiplied. I think that is very interesting, personally. Perhaps there is some corollary to the abject poverty being experienced by many churches today?

Maybe the problems in our lost and dying world really are spiritual after all?

Well, we reach a heartbreak in the life of Josiah. As we said, the kingdom of Judah will be in captivity before we conclude commentary in this final report from second Kings. God moved in a mighty way during one great wave of revival at the very end of their time in the sun of history. I think God desires to inform us that He can send revival even in the darkest times and most treacherous days....

XXIII

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?

29 In his days Pharaohnechoh king of Egypt went up against the king of Assyria to the river Euphrates: and King Josiah went against him; and he slew Josiah at Megiddo, when he had seen him.

30 And his servants carried Josiah in a chariot dead from Megiddo, and brought him to Jerusalem, and buried him in his own sepulchre. And the people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah, and anointed him, and made him king in his father's stead.

~ Josiah was a great man of God who made an extremely foolish decision. He should not have interjected himself in a fight that wasn't his. Remember, we saw a time when David stayed home when he should have been in the battle; but here, Josiah went to battle when he should have stayed home. Megiddo is where the battle of Armageddon will be fought, too, by the way – in the valley of Esdraelon. Maybe other modern nations could learn a lesson about when to go to war and when not to? America is notorious about meddling in affairs throughout the world that are not our problem. The only message America has for this world today is *NOT* democracy, friends, oh, no, the only message we have for this world today is the Word of God. My country was blessed when we sent out the Word of God properly, correctly and completely. However, when we send out the propaganda that we call freedom of religion, we defeat ourselves – and

then then we lose again! I don't think it will be very long before America is sent home dead in a chariot, to be quite candid. God is *NOT* in this immoral nation today; and that is the reason that we are *NOT* being blessed – in fact, that *IS* the reason we are being cursed in this modern age in which we live....

31 Jehoahaz was twenty and three years old when he began to reign; and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Hamutal, the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah.

~ I'm sure the people expected and hoped this new king assuming the throne would follow in his father's footsteps; but he didn't – he was an evil king. Because of that, he didn't even have a chance to get the throne warm and comfortable before he was deposed – just three months later. Once again, we have momma to blame for Jehoahaz's evil ways. Well, Pharaoh didn't like the way this king did business, so Pharaoh removed him from power as quickly as he could. Then, Jehoahaz was taken down to Egypt where he died....

32 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his fathers had done.

33 And Pharaohnechoh put him in bands at Riblah in the land of Hamath, that he might not reign in Jerusalem; and put the land to a tribute of an hundred talents of silver, and a talent of gold.

34 And Pharaohnechoh made Eliakim the son of Josiah king in the room of Josiah his father, and turned his name to Jehoiakim, and took Jehoahaz away: and he came to Egypt, and died there.

35 And Jehoiakim gave the silver and the gold to Pharaoh; but he taxed the land to give the money according to the commandment of Pharaoh: he exacted the silver and the gold of the people of the land, of every one according to his taxation, to give it unto Pharaohnechoh.

36 Jehoiakim was twenty and five years old when he began to reign; and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Zebudah, the daughter of Pedaiah of Rumah.

37 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his fathers had done.

~ The brother of Jehoahaz was equally as wicked as he was. What we're seeing is a progression from bad to worse! We also have a great power rising up on the eastern horizon of the Euphrates River. Babylon will soon assume the title as the first great world power. Babylon is displacing Assyria at this time and will soon conquer them, and Egypt, too. We'll learn all about this rise to power in the Book of Daniel later on. Further, here is the place where the Book of Jeremiah should be read and taught; because Jeremiah was the great prophet during this time in Israel's history.

Jeremiah was attempting to call Judah back to God. Jeremiah gave them many severe warnings that if they didn't turn back to the True and Living God, then they would be taken into captivity in Babylon. That seemed unbelievable to the Jews; because Nebuchadnezzar was not a formidable force at this time. So, the false prophets were telling the people not to worry – be happy – everything was going to be just fine. The false prophets told the people of Judah that God could never get along without them and they reassured the people by reminding them how they controlled the temple - and myriad other lies! But the people bought it hook, line and sinker! Well, they're going to find out the hard way God sure can - and will - get along without them! God didn't need a temple, so it was marked for destruction at this time....

XXIV

1 In his days Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up, and Jehoiakim became his servant three years: then he turned and rebelled against him.

~ So, Jehoiakim is on the throne, and he was placed there by the king of Egypt. Nebuchadnezzar didn't care for the king of Egypt, and that caused problems for the southern kingdom of Judah. As we read on, we see every

army in the known world come against Judah. Nebuchadnezzar was uniting his own kingdom at this time by bringing many different people together; and there is just nothing anyone can do to resist his power. We're told that all of this happened because of Manasseh in verse three. I previously said that if the Shekinah Glory didn't leave the temple during the reign of Manasseh, then there just wouldn't have been any reason for the Lords' presence to abandon the temple at all. Well, the temple is now desolate, to be sure. We'll learn all about this in spiritual symbolism in Ezekiel. See, these people never departed from the sins of Manasseh; so now they are going into captivity....

2 And the LORD sent against him bands of the Chaldees, and bands of the Syrians, and bands of the Moabites, and bands of the children of Ammon, and sent them against Judah to destroy it, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by his servants the prophets.

3 Surely at the commandment of the LORD came this upon Judah, to remove them out of his sight, for the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he did;

4 And also for the innocent blood that he shed: for he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood; which the LORD would not pardon.

~ God will pardon any and all sins; but not all sins are pardoned, because not all men turn to Christ! Even amongst those who profess to believe, many times they do not believe – and they sure do not trust the Lord. Faith and trust are two different things. This is where it will do you well to examine yourself. The urgency is imperative; and I highly suggest you examine yourself. The only place in the world we can ever have our sins forgiven is by trusting and obeying the Lord Jesus Christ. Only when we come to the One Who died for us and paid the penalty for those sins will they ever be forgiven. This is where things get a little complicated; so, I urge you to read the rest of this report *SUPER* carefully and completely....

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 slept with his fathers: and Jehoiachin his son reigned in his stead.

7 And the king of Egypt came not again any more out of his land: for the king of Babylon had taken from the river of Egypt unto the river Euphrates all that pertained to the king of Egypt.

~ Remember, this is the land God promised to Abraham and his descendants; so why are they being removed? Why does the king of Babylon have possession of the Promised Land now? Well, the answer is: because they sinned against God and turned away from Him. Period. You may want to write this down a few hundred thousand times somewhere. There were conditions under which the children of Israel would occupy the land; and those conditions have been forsaken by the people at the time in which we are studying. As we read on, we see the same old monotonous story of a king doing that which was evil. We've read that so many times I'm tired of it – and we know God is tiring of it, too - because this is the end....

8 Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem three months. And his mother's name was Nehushta, the daughter of Elnathan of Jerusalem.

9 And he did that which was 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, and his servants did besiege it.

12 And Jehoiachin the king of Judah went out to the king of Babylon, he, and his mother, and his servants, and his princes, and his officers: and the king of Babylon took him in the eighth year of his reign.

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

14 And he carried away all Jerusalem, and all the princes, and all the mighty men of valour, even ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and smiths: none remained, save the poorest sort of the people of the land.

15 And he carried away Jehoiachin to Babylon, and the king's mother, and the king's wives, and his officers, and the mighty of the land, those carried he into captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon.

16 And all the men of might, even seven thousand, and craftsmen and smiths a thousand, all that were strong and apt for war, even them the king of Babylon brought captive to Babylon.

~ We have arrived at the record of the first deportation of the Jewish people from Judah to Babylon as slaves; and this would be around 605 BC. The northern kingdom was previously taken captive by Assyria; and Babylon has conquered Assyria at this time. This is the beginning of another sad and sordid account of God's people. This also brings us to the final king of Judah, Zedekiah, the uncle of Jehoiachin. We learn as we read on that Zedekiah's mother was the same mother of Jehoahaz! One would think that the first wave of deportations would have made this man sober up – but it didn't. See, friends, trouble will do one of two things to a man's heart: it will soften it and draw you to God; or it will harden your heart and separate you from God forevermore. We don't remain the same psychologically after suffering extreme periods of trials and suffering – as many of you dear readers already know....

17 And the king of Babylon made Mattaniah his father's brother king in his stead, and changed his name to Zedekiah.

18 Zedekiah was twenty and one years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Hamutal, the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah.

19 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that Jehoiakim had done.

20 For through the anger of the LORD it came to pass in Jerusalem and Judah, until he had cast them out from his presence, that Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.

~ Remember, the false prophets were insisting God was on their side. They probably told the king that those who had been carried away had simply not trusted God. Sound familiar? The problem was: God was against Judah at this time. So many so-called Christians need to be very, very careful about this issue. People claim they know God's will for their lives, so they barrel headlong and head strong into whatever scheme they have dreamed up, expecting God to bless it; but God isn't even *CLOSE* to being with them in *MOST* cases! Then, these people fail hard, and their faith is shattered – never to be fully restored again. So many people are so adamant they are in the will of God when they aren't even on the same planet as the Lord as far as His will for their lives is concerned. We had better be sure, friends; before we go on our own miserable way. And if you're sure, you'll be capable of iterating to me how God spoke to you. If you can't tell me how the Lord spoke to you – then He didn't. It's really as simple as that.

When we begin to talk about how God is on our side, we do well to consider the false prophets said the same thing in the time in which we are studying. These are the days of Jeremiah, too, by the way. *God told His chosen people He would fight against them!* That ought to be a very rude wake-up call, last call and a sobering reality checkpoint for every single one of us. See, I don't want God on my side – I want to make sure I am on *HIS* side! There is a huge difference, my beloved. If you think your will is God's will, there is a one hundred percent chance that *YOU* are dead wrong. Now, don't tell me I should have more faith in some pious and condescending manner, or that God is going to heal all of us and all that ridiculously stupid nonsense; what I know is that I want glorify the Lord Jesus Christ according

to His commands in Holy Write! And I can tell you what those commands are, friends. They're written down so we can all be on the same page. Exactly what that looks like in my life is as big of a mystery to me as yours is for you. But I am in His hands now! How about you? Are you sure? Whatever His will is for my life, I will have to bow down and accept it. How about you, my beloved readers – do you accept His will – or will you persist in your own stubbornness? We follow Christ's chariot, or we go our own way; and His path will never cross our path, I can promise you that! ~

XXV

1 And it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, in the tenth day of the month, that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came, he, and all his host, against Jerusalem, and pitched against it; and they built forts against it round about.

2 And the city was besieged unto the eleventh year of King Zedekiah.

~ Nebuchadnezzar came against Jerusalem three separate times. The first time, he didn't destroy the city; he simply installed Zedekiah as the king. When Zedekiah rebels, the prediction of Jeremiah comes true; and it is a terrifying prophecy! The last thing King Zedekiah sees are all of his sons murdered in front of him – and then they gouged out his eyes. Those last images were all Zedekiah had to think about for the rest of eternity. Remember, Jeremiah had been considered a traitor for telling this truth. They threw him in the dungeon for his prophecy at *THIS* time. Zedekiah has now been totally deceived by false prophets, and he will now pay the price – never to be redeemed again. Tragically, he absolutely refused to listen to God's true prophet....

3 And on the ninth day of the fourth month the famine prevailed in the city, and there was no bread for the people of the land.

4 And the city was broken up, and all the men of war fled by night by the way of the gate between two walls, which is by the king's garden: (now the Chaldees were against the city round about) and the king went the way toward the plain.

5 And the army of the Chaldees pursued after the king, and overtook him in the plains of Jericho: and all his army were scattered from him.

6 So they took the king, and brought him up to the king of Babylon to Riblah; and they gave judgment upon him.

7 And they slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, and put out the eyes of Zedekiah, and bound him with fetters of brass, and carried him to Babylon.

8 And in the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month, which is the nineteenth year of king Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, came Nebuzaradan, captain of the guard, a servant of the king of Babylon, unto Jerusalem:

9 And he burnt the house of the LORD, and the king's house, and all the houses of Jerusalem, and every great man's house burnt he with fire.

10 And all the army of the Chaldees, that were with the captain of the guard, brake down the walls of Jerusalem round about.

11 Now the rest of the people that were left in the city, and the fugitives that fell away to the king of Babylon, with the remnant of the multitude, did Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carry away.

12 But the captain of the guard left of the poor of the land to be vinedressers and husbandmen.

13 And the pillars of brass that were in the house of the LORD, and the bases, and the brasen sea that was in the house of the LORD, did the Chaldees break in pieces, and carried the brass of them to Babylon.

14 And the pots, and the shovels, and the snuffers, and the spoons, and all the vessels of brass wherewith they ministered, took they away.

15 And the firepans, and the bowls, and such things as were of gold, in gold, and of silver, in silver, the captain of the guard took away.

~ After the seventy years of Babylonian captivity, Nehemiah will come along and survey the wasteland that is now Jerusalem. It almost seemed hopeless, and I am sure he felt helpless. When Nehemiah rallied the people, the number one problem to overcome was discouragement! The returning remnant will be thoroughly discouraged with what they see. The army of Nebuchadnezzar is in total control of the city of Jerusalem and the false prophets have been exposed as such! They had said that God would never let the city be destroyed; but the city is in ruins at this time.

There are so *MANY* people giving out a false message to the world today that the genuine Gospel of Christ is totally drowned out. The liberal will say utterly stupid things; such as '*we are part of the ten lost tribes*' or '*God is on our side*' – and He will never let us down. Friends, God doesn't have to have us around. Who do you think you're kidding with that foolishness? Candidly, modern religion is an absurd notion; and it only comes from false prophets. The reality is, Judah is now in captivity! I'm sure they couldn't believe their eyes as they looked back upon a burning city as they were led away in a prisoner march. This conclusion to Kings should all be a *VERY* strong lesson for us in our day, too. This is where it all got real for Judah. We have just read how Nebuchadnezzar plundered and wiped out the temple; and then destroyed it with fire. And he didn't stop there, notice he even broke up the foundation. Turn that over in your minds a few times and see what you come up with....

16 The two pillars, one sea, and the bases which Solomon had made for the house of the LORD; the brass of all these vessels was without weight.

17 The height of the one pillar was eighteen cubits, and the chapter upon it was brass: and the height of the chapter three cubits; and the wreathen work, and pomegranates upon the chapter round about, all of brass: and like unto these had the second pillar with wreathen work.

18 And the captain of the guard took Seraiah the chief priest, and Zephaniah the second priest, and the three keepers of the door:

19 And out of the city he took an officer that was set over the men of war, and five men of them that were in the king's presence, which were found in the city, and the principal scribe of the host, which mustered the people of the land, and threescore men of the people of the land that were found in the city:

20 And Nebuzaradan captain of the guard took these, and brought them to the king of Babylon to Riblah:

21 And the king of Babylon smote them, and slew them at Riblah in the land of Hamath. So Judah was carried away out of their land.

22 And as for the people that remained in the land of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had left, even over them he made Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, ruler.

23 And when all the captains of the armies, they and their men, heard that the king of Babylon had made Gedaliah governor, there came to Gedaliah to Mizpah, even Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and Johanan the son of Careah, and Seraiah the son of Tanhumeth the Netophathite, and Jaazaniah the son of a Maachathite, they and their men.

24 And Gedaliah sware to them, and to their men, and said unto them, Fear not to be the servants of the Chaldees: dwell in the land, and serve the king of Babylon; and it shall be well with you.

25 But it came to pass in the seventh month, that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, the son of Elishama, of the seed royal, came, and ten men with him, and smote Gedaliah, that he died, and the Jews and the Chaldees that were with him at Mizpah.

26 And all the people, both small and great, and the captains of the armies, arose, and came to Egypt: for they were afraid of the Chaldees.

27 And it came to pass in the seven and thirtieth year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the seven and

twentieth day of the month, that Evilmerodach king of Babylon in the year that he began to reign did lift up the head of Jehoiachin king of Judah out of prison;

28 And he spake kindly to him, and set his throne above the throne of the kings that were with him in Babylon;

29 And changed his prison garments: and he did eat bread continually before him all the days of his life.

30 And his allowance was a continual allowance given him of the king, a daily rate for every day, all the days of his life.

~ Jerusalem has been destroyed twenty-seven times that we know of in documented and verifiable history. Each time it has been rebuilt upon the rubble of the previous city – one upon another. The hill that Jerusalem is built on is completely the rubble heap of past cities. The tourist agents in Israel will tell you they're going to take you to the places that Jesus walked; but that's simply impossible. Some spots were originally more than fifty feet down where Jesus lived and walked. The Wailing Wall likely extends down more than one hundred feet. Well, if these people had only listened to Jeremiah, they wouldn't be in the sad condition we're going to leave them in as we exit the second book of Kings in our Spiritual Safari. As we have read, a great many Jews fled into Egypt and formed colonies there. Jeremiah was ultimately forced to go with them. This may seem like a strange way to break off our lesson in this book but – that's it – my commentary is complete being incomplete. Our next report from this expedition through the entire Word of God will lead us into the New Testament epistle the apostle Paul wrote to the Romans; I hope to meet you there ~