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GLENLOCK BIBLE CAMP - 2002

## JEREMIAH THE PROPHET

Speaker: Bro. Ron Cowie

Study #2: The breath of our Lips - the Anointed of Yahweh  
(Josiah)

Reading: 2 Chronicles 35

Thanks brother Mike and certainly brethren and sisters. We come to consider the connection between Josiah and Jeremiah.

It's utterly impossible to consider the life of Jeremiah without considering this relationship to Josiah. In fact, the life of Jeremiah divides very evenly between the 18 years he had along side Josiah, and the 22 years after the death of Josiah. The reason it divides like that is that the conditions which he experienced before and after the death of Josiah, were so totally and utterly different. It was hard enough in the days of Josiah, when a nation was only serving God feignedly at the king's commandment, but in comparison to the years, the last 22 years when the kings were evil, the days of Josiah were flat and level ground and easy going.

Josiah is a remarkable individual on two counts in the bible: the first count is that he was predicted many, many years before his birth, in fact 360 years before Josiah was born, his name and what he would do, was predicted by the prophet. In 1 Kings 13 verse 2, a man of God comes along and makes a prophecy about the altar of Beth-el, and he mentions the one who would desecrate that altar 360 years later, Josiah by name, 'a king will come, he says, born of the house of David, and he will offer upon this altar, the priests and the bones of the men that offer upon this altar'. That was a remarkable prophecy 360 years ahead of its fulfilment, so here was predicted in the bible that there would come a king called Josiah; but the other reason is even more remarkable, is what we read there in 2 Chronicles 35, where it says there, 'that he was killed in the valley of Megiddo' and the end of verse 24, '**all Judah and Jerusalem** mourned for Josiah', we're going to see later on that that's taken up in the book of Zechariah, and the mourning for Josiah will only be exceeded by the mourning that the Jewish nation has, when they recognize their crucified Messiah, and that's why he's a remarkable person, to actually typify the mourning that the Jews will have over Christ, but the mourning that took place for Josiah, is an incredible thing! In fact, Jeremiah's mourning is so legendary, he was so utterly devastated and bereft when Josiah died, that there is in that a great testimony to Josiah. We're going to explore why that was, why Jeremiah lamented so much?

You see, Josiah's reign was the only bright spot in the last 100 years of Judah's kingdom. There was no other good kings in that last hundred years and he inherited the

legacy of Manasseh his grandfather. He inherited a nation totally devoid of spirituality, an unhealthy knowledge of all the religions of the surrounding nations. An obsession with sexual impurities which is always a sign of a society which is rotten to the core; he inherited a nation which had a form of religion, they were still going through the rituals of the Law of Moses, but underneath the surface, tolerating all kinds of vice privately, because there was a huge absence of spiritual mindedness. The Word had been lost for over 60 years because of the reign of Manasseh, everybody did that which was right in his own eye, and except in a few families no one could hardly remember what the bible said anymore. So they were living by tradition and what you thought was right; and that's always a disaster!

Now we need to go back to understand Josiah, we need to go back to his grandfather, Manasseh. I want you to come back to chapter 33 and verse 11, you know, Manasseh, b&s, is also a remarkable bible character. We so often run Manasseh down and with great justification, but Manasseh was a son of Hezekiah, he was the son of one of the most spiritually minded men in the bible and he was a rotter until God humbled him. He's one of the great conundrums of the bible, here's a man who's responsible for the spiritual death of millions of people; here's the man that's responsible for bringing to an end, the kingdom of Judah. Irredeemable from his time, even with the likes of Josiah on the scene, and yet he's a recipient of the most wonderful acts of mercy from God. There's a great lesson in that, verse 11, 'Wherefore Yahweh brought upon the captains of the host of the king of Assyria, which took Manasseh among the thorns'. If you've got a pencil there, where it's got 'among the thorns' it should be as the Hebrew reads 'with hooks in his nose'; so when they captured Manasseh they put hooks in his nose. Can you imagine a couple of big fish hooks stuck in your nose, and they dragged him all the way back to the dungeons in Assyria. Not a very nice treatment, the Assyrians were not noted for being gentle captors, they were noted for their brutality, 'they bound him with fetters and dragged him to Babylon'. So he's carted off to Babylon, 800 miles he was dragged in chains and fetters with hooks in his nose.

Look at verse 12 , you know, we need to think about the mercy of God, 'And when he was in affliction' , now just think what that meant. You know, Assyrian dungeons were not 5 star hotels, around him would be men regularly being flayed alive, impaled upon stakes and dying over several days slowly, regularly tortured, or the lucky ones put to the sword. He would have been in the middle of total barbarous slaughter as the Assyrian dungeons were noted for, and he was no doubt probably tortured himself, because it says, '**when he was in affliction**', and here's the king of Israel being slowly pulled to pieces. It says there, 'he besought Yahweh his God and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers', and we might say, 'of course, he would'. Of course you would, what else could you do? when you're being tortured by the Assyrians? Well, not much else, but God still recognized it! That's a fantastic thing about the nature of God. You see, he remembered the training of his father, he humbled himself before the God of his fathers; he thought about Hezekiah and about some of those that went before like David, like Jehoshaphat, and he thought to himself, the family religion is not so stupid after all! and he humbled himself.

Verse 13, b&s, is one of the amazing verses that you ever read in the bible. 'He prayed unto Him, and He was entreated of him and heard his supplication and brought him again into Jerusalem into his kingdom'. You can search the records of the Assyrian kings, but there is no other record of any king that they ever captured, being returned to his own throne except Manasseh. No other king, the Assyrians were not noted as being nice people. No other king was reinstated to his throne except Manasseh by the Assyrians, and the reason Manasseh went back is because God was in control of them. He went back to his own throne, 'then Manasseh **knew that Yahweh He was God**', I bet he did! Now Manasseh served out the rest of his life trying to **undo** what he had done wrong. Here's a great lesson for us, he **built the wall around the city of David**, verse 15, **he took away the strange gods**; he made another mistake there, do you know what Manasseh did with all the strange gods that he pulled down? he put them in storage. You'll see what Josiah does to those gods later on, very different! Manasseh just removes them, and he **reinstated the altar of Yahweh**, verse 16. So he brought back into being, what he could remember about the religion of Yahweh, but the people were still, in verse 17, offering all their Gentile sacrifices but calling them Yahweh's sacrifices now! You see, Manasseh tried to undo, all the wrong he had done, but it was too late! the hearts of the people were running away with Gentile customs, and no one respected what he was trying to do. There's a lesson in that, b&s, it's a very sad fact, that once you unleash the flesh to do its own thing, it will then resent any restraint you try and bring upon it; to try to pull it back and say, 'look we've gone too far, let's pull it back again'. People resent that! If we let go of our ethics, our high moral standards, if we let go of a determination to have a clear distinct line of doctrine that's important to us, if we let it go, b&s, it will not be recoverable! the flesh will not want to be restrained and have the line redrawn where it ought to be! You know, Manasseh couldn't even reform his son, look at verse 22, he made his son marry a godly woman, he married the mother of Josiah, her name was Jedidah 'beloved of Yahweh'. So he made his son marry a godly woman, but it was too late for Amon, his own son by this time, was a grown man, and Amon was a rotter, in verse 22, 'did evil in the sight of Yahweh, as did Manasseh his father', he copied all the bad things his father had done. He said to dad, 'I remember what you use to do, you taught me how to worship idols; why are you trying to tell me something else now?' 'He humbled not himself, in verse 23, as his father had humbled himself', too late for his own son! His own servant slew Amon after 2 years on the throne.

Manasseh is a great exhortation in two ways: firstly, we learn from Manasseh **that no one is beyond God's mercy personally!** You know, the fact that God forgave that man and restored him to his own throne, is an incredible testimony to God and to the humility of Manasseh. But he is also a lesson in this, that when you've wasted your life, when you've let go of the things that you should have stood for, **it's so hard to get them back!** Manasseh had unleashed in that nation a wave of wickedness that would lead them to destruction, and there was nothing that he could do to stop it. When Amon was killed, an 8 year old came to the throne; an 8 year old! You think of how dangerous it was for an 8 year old to be on the throne at a time like this. Now we're told in 2 Kings 22

verse 1 that his mother's name was Jedidah, 'beloved of Yahweh' (3040), she came from a place called Boscath which means 'stony ground' (1218), that doesn't tell us very much, except that it was next door to Anathoth. So his mother's home town was the neighbouring village to where Jeremiah grew up, and they were the same age! and they were close friends. Remember it said in Chronicles that it was Jeremiah that lamented over Josiah, they were close friends! The son of the king and the son of the high priest would always be close friends, particularly when they came from the same area in Benjamin.

So Josiah came to the throne at 8 years of age and it was a huge task that he was asked to do, a chaotic, confused nation entrenched in wickedness, still no bible to read, and there must have been around that vulnerable young boy, faithful people. You just think of what happened in those early years of Josiah; you see, Manasseh must have done at least one thing, he must have insured that there were people who could educate and control Josiah to do the right thing. I believe it's a testimony to Manasseh (it certainly didn't come from Amon) a testimony to Manasseh that around that throne, people in the court of Josiah, who would guide him in the right way. We know who they were, Shaphan, Maaseiah, and Hilkiah the priest, Jeremiah's father. They're mentioned there in verses 8 and 9 of chapter 34, they were the men that took control of the throne for the boy Josiah and it must have been Manasseh that told them to get hold of that boy and to make him, try and bring the nation back to God. So let's not think too badly of Manasseh perhaps he did more after his death than he achieved in his life.

We notice in verse 2 that the young Josiah 'did that which was right in the sight of Yahweh, and walked in the ways of David his father, and declined neither to the right hand, nor to the left'. Now I want you to notice three words, we'll come back to them later on, but in both the King's record and in the Chronicles' record, it's said of no other king, 3 things: **he walked in the sight of Yahweh, and neither to the right hand nor to the left**, in fact, that bit about the right hand and the left is unique to Josiah and I'll show you why later on, just remember that! **the sight of Yahweh, neither to the right nor the left**, and **he modelled himself on David his father**, and he wasn't modelling himself upon Amon or Manasseh particularly. He was modelling himself, he'd gone right back to a bible hero, David his father. It's good to have bible heroes, it's good to model ourselves on bible characters and say, 'I want to be like that man', well, that's what the young boy did! and for the first 8 years it was up to the faithful ones around him to guide him. Then when he was 16 in the 8<sup>th</sup> year of his reign, **'while he was yet young, he served his God'**, a great example to our young people, isn't it? at 16 he was seeking personally his God; then when he was 20 in the 12<sup>th</sup> year of his reign, 'he began to purge Jerusalem and Judah from the high places'. So making a commitment to God at 16, he spent 4 years preparing himself for what he had to do, and then at 20 he was ready for action and away he went. If you've got a coloured pencil you want to colour in from verse 4 onwards, 'They brake down the altars of Baalim in his presence, the groves or images above him, he cut down, he brake in pieces, he burnt the bones of the priests upon their altars'.

Verse 6 of 2 Chronicles, he did so in the cities of Jerusalem, verse 7, 'he'd broken down' and Josiah is in charge of this purging of the nation of the idolatry that was there from the days of Manasseh. Then he sent out the Levites to teach, so you see, he wasn't just destroying the idolatry, but he was also trying to reinstate the knowledge of Yahweh in the nation. Then in the 13<sup>th</sup> year of his reign, was the year that Jeremiah was called to service. Josiah was 21 and Jeremiah was about 20 in the 13<sup>th</sup> year; he now has a companion in the task. Jeremiah and Josiah, two 21 year olds or there about, set out between them to try and reform the heart of the nation; we can only imagine Hilkiyah and Shaphan and Maaseiah, encouraging this young twosome to go to the work with vigour. There's no question that Jeremiah and Josiah worked extensively to try and reform the nation together. In fact, Jeremiah 2 to 9, is written in the first 5 years of purging, and there Jeremiah is talking about how terrible it is, that the Jews had changed their gods and how stupid idols are! and there's Josiah going around getting rid of those idols, and the two of them are working hand in glove.

But for all the dramatic appeals of Jeremiah, the people only turned to God feignedly. It says in Jeremiah 3 verse 10, 'this people has only turned **feignedly**,' but when Josiah was 26, in the 18<sup>th</sup> year of his reign, a dramatic event happened which was the last chance for the nation. I want you to come to 2 Kings 22, I think we need to understand just how dramatic this event was and how significant it was for both Jeremiah and Josiah. It was the finding of the book of the Law, 2 Kings 22, 'within the 18<sup>th</sup> year, that he set about to restore the temple, verse 3, 'It came to pass in the 18<sup>th</sup> year of king Josiah, that the king sent Shaphan and he sent Hilkiyah in verse 4, to go down to repair the house'. When they began to move the masonry around to repair the house, they uncovered, tucked away in the wall, underneath the rubble and the destruction of Manasseh's day, they found a copy of the Law. In fact, it is believed that it may well have been the original copy written by Moses, and the priests had hidden that away, in the days when Manasseh was burning every copy of the Law that he could get his hands on, and maybe they had hidden it, just before they were put to death. But the roll or scroll of the book was preserved and now it had been uncovered. 'Then Hilkiyah the high priest said to Shaphan the scribe said, 'I have found the book of the Law in the house of Yahweh'; and you can imagine men like Hilkiyah who had remained faithful through all those dark years, and here's Shaphan the scribe, a tremendously faithful man with a very faithful family, and he can read the original Hebrew. He's a scribe, and that's what his job was; and he read it and he went straight to the king; and they wouldn't have done that in the early days of Manasseh or the days of Amon, but they knew this king would be interested and they went in to Josiah who is now 26 years of age and they said, 'we've found the book of the Law', 'well, read it to me', said the king. I don't think we understand what it would be like to have the bible read the first time in 50 years. Josiah had never heard the bible read before; he might have heard it recited by his relatives or by Hilkiyah the high priest, but he had never heard the bible read before! And you can imagine as he read through the curses, as he read through the Law of Moses and heard for the first time the full revelation of the mind of God through Moses; what a dramatic impact it had upon him. He was absolutely astonished; he rent his clothes in verse 11, and said to Shaphan and Hilkiyah, 'you go and inquire of

Yahweh, and go to Huldah the prophetess and **find out what situation we're in**; what are we going to do now that we know how wrong we are, and how far we've slipped away from the good things of God? 'Go and ask Huldah, 'and so they went and came to Huldah and it was a very sad response.

Look at verse 16, this is what Huldah said, 'Go tell the man that sent you to me, Thus saith Yahweh, I will bring evil upon this place, upon the inhabitants therefore, even all the words of the book which you have read. We know he had been reading Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28, all the curses. It's all going to happen was the message. Why? verse 17, 'Because they have forsaken Me, they've burnt incense to other gods, I've had enough', says God. It's all over! Then in verse 18, there was a personal message from God to Josiah, 'But to the king of Judah which sent you to inquire of Yahweh, thus shalt thou say to him; thus saith Yahweh God of Israel, touching the words which ye have heard', (and notice that) because **you** responded to the Word, Josiah, this is what is going to happen to you; because your heart was tender (which is just the opposite of being hard), because your heart was soft, because My word penetrated and you've humbled yourself before Yahweh, when you heard what I spake against this place (that it would become a desolation etc.) and because you rent your clothes and wept before Me, **I have heard you**, saith Yahweh'. B&S, the Word needs to have that impact on us; God's Word is living and energetic and the terms of Josiah was that his heart was **tender, he wept, when he heard the Word**. You know, we have the problem of over familiarity, that we have unlimited amount of bible classes that we can go to, tapes we can get, books we can read, the bible is always available to us; it's hard to get that impact, isn't it? but we need to respond to the words of God like that!

But what a strange reward! It's amazing to think, isn't it? of the lessons that God gave to king Josiah. Look what it says in verse 20 of 2 Kings 22, 'Behold therefore', (because you're such a wonderful fellow, Josiah, because you're so responsive, you're going to **die**). Now we're find that a very strange reward for trembling at the Word of God. But that's exactly what's said to him, 'Behold, I will gather thee unto thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered into thy grave in peace; and thine eyes shall not see all the evil which I will bring upon this place'. It was just as well that he didn't! his own sons and grandsons turned out to be diabolically rotten, and God removed them one by one. Then the city he loved and the temple he loved and had restored so lovingly was to be burnt to the ground and the people taken into captivity, and God said to Josiah, 'I'm going to spare you from seeing that! because I love you'.

Now what would you do if you were Josiah? You've been told that you're going to die; that nothing you do is going to change the outcome, what would you do? Well, I guess I might say that I'll eat, drink and be merry, because nothing I'm going to do will make any difference. It's not what Josiah did, look at chapter 23! Again, if you've got a coloured pencil, between verse 1 and verse 8, every verse starts off the same way: 'and the king sent; verse 2, and the king went up to the house of Yahweh; verse 3, the king stood by the pillar and made a covenant; verse 4, the king commanded Hilkiah the high priest; verse 5, he put down the idolatrous priests; verse 6, he brought out the grove from the

house of Yahweh; verse 7, he brake down the house of the sodomites; verse 8, he brought all the priests out of the cities of Judah'. Every verse starts off with the king totally and utterly involved in action, you see, he was not fatalistic. He didn't just wait to die! he went out and he taught the Word of God; he got hold of the priest and he said, I'll make a covenant with the priest; he got hold of the Levites and told them to go and teach everybody the Law, you go read this book in every city of Judah.

Now began the second reformation of Josiah! **an absolute purge!** Look at verse 12, 'And the altars that were on the top of the upper chamber of Ahaz, which the kings of Judah had made, and the altars which Manasseh had made in the two courts of the house of Yahweh, did the king beat down, and brake them down from thence, and cast the dust of them in the brook Kedron'. Now Manasseh had got rid of that idol; when Manasseh came back from Assyria, he got rid of that idol but he put it in storage. The minute he was dead, they put it back in its place; when Josiah got his hands on it, it was dust! Now I want you to notice this, verse 6, he took the grove from the house of Yahweh, he burned it, he stamped it to powder and he put the powder from the grove on the graves of the children of the people. Utter desecration! you could never find that idol again. Again there in verse 12, he made dust of them and cast them into the brook; verse 15, he took the altar, he brake it down, he burned the place, he stamped it to powder and he burned the grove. You see, he didn't just put the idols in storage, he learnt something from Manasseh, you see, b&s, sometimes in our life we have those purges, don't we? I'm going to get rid of these temptations out of my life and we put them in the cupboard; but that's not how Josiah got rid of temptation.

Now remember the words that I said to you, 'that he walked in the sight of Yahweh and that he turned neither to the left or to the right', now have a look at this. It says in verse 8, (very unusual language) 'he brake down the high places of the gate that were in the entering in of the gate of Joshua the governor of the city, which were on a man's left hand as he came into the city'. Why do we need to know what side of the gate it's on? Then you come to verse 13, 'And the high places that were before Jerusalem, which were on the right hand of the mount of corruption, he took away'. So there were temptations on the left and the right and he got rid of them, and what about the sight? Well, look what it says in verse 16, 'Josiah turned himself and he **spied** the sepulchres of the false priests; and he took the bones out and he burnt them on the altar according to the Word of Yahweh', and the words of 1 Kings 13 were fulfilled there in verse 16. A 360 year old prophecy fulfilled, he just happened to turn himself, there's providence! Why did he suddenly turn around? well, he just had some reason to turn around; oh, what are those graves up there? they're the graves of Jeroboam's prophets! 'drag them out and burn them'.

But look at verse 24, 'All the abominations that were **spied** in the land of Judah', he walked around that land like the eyes of God, and he looked everywhere for corruption and got rid of it. So neither to the right hand nor to the left was he tempted, and walking in the sight of Yahweh, he spied all the problems and wiped them out. He totally wiped them out. He got rid of the sodomites, he got rid of the wizards in verse 24, he did

everything that one man could do, even though he was under a death sentence. Look at what God said in verse 25, 'Like unto him, there was no king before him, that turned to God will **all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might** according to the Law of Moses'. Where did he get that from? that's straight from Deuteronomy 6, isn't it? 'Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thy mind, and soul and heart', and he had soaked the bible in and he was absolutely zealous for the things of God. Look at verse 28, a divine epitaph over Josiah, 'Now the rest of the acts of Josiah and all that **he did**', he was a doer of things; it wasn't that he was a forgetful hearer, **he did things**. Now we might be forgiven for thinking that Josiah was a man of action and vitality and uncompromising, a router out of idols; but you know, b&s, he was also an incredible **responder** to the Word, and he made sure that that Law was taught through the nation.

I just want you to notice a comparison of three people, and how they responded to the Word of God. We've already seen how Josiah responded, **he wept, he rent his clothes, and he humbled himself before the Word**. When Jeremiah got hold of the bible, now remember he's 26, he gets hold of the Law that's just been found and he says this, 'Thy words were found and **I did eat them**' and Gesenius has for that word 'eat' (398) in Jeremiah 15, he has '**to eagerly devour**' and that's a wonderful figure, isn't it? We instinctively feed ourselves regularly with the things of this life, but there's got to be an appetite for the words of God, a hunger to know; we need to be at the bible class where the word of God has been broken small and carefully prepared and served up on a plate, and to go away with the keys that we might unlock our own personal studies, we need to be there, b&s, we need to have the words of Jeremiah, 'thy words were found and I'm going to eat them'. It was a joy and rejoicing of his heart, what a tragedy later on when Jehoiakim is on the throne, a son of Josiah, and he gets the bible presented to him and he burns it, doesn't want to hear it. Just different responses of the bible, isn't it?

You can imagine how Jeremiah was thrilled! just come to Jeremiah 15, and look at the response of Jeremiah to that finding of the bible. You can imagine him, can't you? getting hold of the copy as soon as the king had stopped reading it and Shaphan and Hilkiyah had pondered over it; he says, 'Can I have a read of that?' and perhaps with Shaphan, sitting down in the corner somewhere and listening to every word of the Law of Moses being read.

Jeremiah found something interesting from his reading, look what he says in verse 16, 'Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: why?' Well, he's learnt something about his own name! for he says, '**I am called by thy name**' O Yahweh of hosts'. It's very likely the understanding of the divine name had fallen into disrepair, without Exodus 3, without the understanding of the Yahweh name, that particular concept had been lost in Israel, and now Jeremiah is saying (and they're reading original Hebrew, remember, where God reveals His name to Moses: I WILL BE WHOM I WILL BE, that's the name of YAH. Jeremiah says, 'hang on, my name is Jere-mi-yah((3414), I'm called by thy name; my name and God's name are together. He's learnt something from the bible straight away; he's thrilled about that! that's what bible study should do for us, it should be a joy and rejoicing to our heart, as



we see the great things of God unfolding before us and we go away and our hearts are lifted up because it's been beautifully revealed in the bible. You can imagine him understanding every word!

God gave Jeremiah and Josiah 13 more years together! before Josiah was taken away. Then after Josiah died, God gave Jeremiah 4 years to finish off the work that Josiah and Jeremiah had started together. Do you know what that work was? They didn't change the hearts of the nation, they worked on the **remnant**, and in that 13 years plus the 4 before the captivity in the 4<sup>th</sup> year of Jehoiakim, in that 17 years Josiah and Jeremiah developed the most wonderful Sunday School class and youth group that you could ever imagine. You think of the calibre of these people, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, Azariah, Baruch, Ezra, Mordecai, Ahiakim, Gemariah, Michaiah, Zephaniah, Habakkuk and Joel. These were all living as teenagers in that 17 years. Would you like a Sunday School class like that? and that's only the boys we know, there was probably an equal quantity of young girls, and you see, they worked on the remnant, together they worked on the remnant. You know, later they became the good figs that were taken away; look at Jeremiah 24, you know, after the captivity, Jeremiah wrote to those who had been taken away in the first captivity in the 4<sup>th</sup> year of Jehoiakim and they're called in verse 5, 'My God, good figs like these good figs, I will acknowledge them that are carried away of Judah and have gone to the land of the Chaldeans for their good. **I will set Mine eyes upon them for good and I will bring them again to this Land.** I will build them and God says, I love these people, I will give them a heart to know Me'. God had laid the foundation of restoration in that Sunday School class. Incredibly, b&s, Ezra came back; Ezra came back to open the walls of Jerusalem when he was an 120 odd years old. Amazing, isn't it? God says, 'I will bring them back, and Ezra's a representative of all that class that came back from captivity. Daniel lived right to the end of the decree of Cyrus, amazing isn't it? that God provided that little Sunday School class and the prophet and the king working together, did have an impact on the few, even though they couldn't change the nation. That's why Jeremiah broke his heart when Josiah died.

Let's go back to 2 Chronicles 35 and see the death of Josiah. It's very difficult to understand the motivation of Josiah in confronting the king of Egypt. The king of Egypt told Josiah that God had set him forth to fight against the Babylonians and that Josiah should not oppose that work. For some reason Josiah did not believe the king of Egypt that he'd been spoken to by God. I believe, the king of Egypt had been spoken to by God. Verse 20, 'After all this when Josiah had prepared the temple, Necho king of Egypt came up to fight (again, if you've got your pencil, it's not against Carchemish, but it's **with Carchemish** by the Euphrates'. He was actually fighting with the Assyrians against the new power of Babylon. Babylon was now emerging as a power in the east, and the Assyrians and the Egyptians fought together against the Babylonians and lost the battle of Carchemish.

But the king of Egypt as he was going up to that battle, he said, 'look God has commanded with him to make haste, don't meddle with God. Then in verse 22, it says, 'He hearkened not to the words of Necho **from the mouth of God**'. So clearly, God had

told Necho to go up there and to just hold them back a bit longer by resisting the Babylonians, they wouldn't yet come into the Land. But Josiah thought it was his duty to take Necho on; and though he was disguised in verse 22, the arrow still found him. An arrow from the Egyptians brought to an end, the lovely life of Josiah. But remember it was God's mercy, b&s, that he should be taken away, and he died there in the valley of Megiddo, and everybody cried! His servants took him and put him in the second chariot and brought to Jerusalem, and he died and was buried in one of the sepulchres of his fathers. And **all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah**'. Even the apathetic and the evil who were in the land of Judah, knew that they had lost a great man that day in Israel. They might not have agreed with his reformation, they might have still wanted to have their idols, but they respected that man! Everybody cried for Josiah! but none of them cried like Jeremiah.

It says, 'Jeremiah lamented for Josiah', and you know, that word 'lamented' is exactly the same as David mourning for Jonathan; **heart broken**, howling, sobbing, was Jeremiah. The lamentations of Jeremiah and the singing women, it says, 'behold, they are written in the book of the lamentations'. See only Jeremiah knew how much they had lost, and they were written in the Lamentations. I'll put them up, here are some of the sentiments of Jeremiah about the death of Josiah. Lamentations 2 verse 4 says this, talking about God, he says, 'He hath bent His bow like an enemy'; here we were trying to reform the nation for God and God like an enemy has bent His bow and taken Josiah away. 'He stood with His right hand as an adversary, He slew all that were pleasant to the eye in the tabernacle of the daughter of Zion: He poured out His fury like fire', Why has God taken Josiah away? Lamentations 3 verse 12, 'He hath bent His bow, and set me as a mark for the arrow', and Jeremiah had felt the pain of Josiah. He saw that body with a great arrow through it, and he felt every pain that Josiah had been through; he said, I feel as if God shot me with an arrow; verse 13, 'He hath caused the arrows to enter into my reins'. Then those incredibly gracious words of Lamentations 4 verse 20, which shows to us how Jeremiah viewed Josiah, 'The breath of our nostrils, the anointed of Yahweh, was taken in their pits, of whom we said, Under His shadow we shall live among the heathen'. Jeremiah and his friends and his Sunday School class would say, as long as we've got Josiah on the throne, God won't destroy this nation; we will survive all these invasions that are going on around us, the Egyptians and the Babylonians, we'll survive because we have Josiah on the throne! he's a good king - and now he's gone!' Jeremiah lamented grievously for Josiah! It was 20 years later and he was still crying for Josiah, and God had to come to him and say, 'Jeremiah, stop crying'. We'll look at that in our class on Tuesday night, He had to say to Jeremiah, 'stop crying for Josiah', 20 years later he was still crying. 'Weep not for the dead'!

You see, b&s, it was an incredible mourning for Josiah! Let's come to Zechariah 12 and see where that is taken up in the prophecy of Zechariah. Yes, they all cried when Josiah died, but none of them cried like Jeremiah. Zechariah 12 we have a description of the day when the Lord Jesus Christ reveals His hands to the children of Israel, and they say, 'what are these wounds in thy hands? and He said, 'those which I received in the house of My friends', and what will they do? Well, it says in verse 10 half way through,

'They shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. In that day there shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem **as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddo.**' They'll mourn for Christ, they'll mourn for their rejection of Christ, and they will be so heart broken, so grief stricken that it will even exceed the mourning of Jeremiah over Josiah. It shows us how great was the loss of Josiah to Jeremiah. Jeremiah was left with a very grief stricken Sunday School class and 4 sons of Josiah, some of whom were only teenagers and God now began to hasten the end of Judah. All hopes of revival were now lost, but what a witness to Josiah!

Now I said earlier that Josiah was not just an uncompromising reformer, there was another side to Josiah that God recognized. You come to Jeremiah 22 and verse 16, we're going to do chapter 22, God willing, on Tuesday night, but I just want to pick out Josiah from this chapter. Jeremiah 22 gives us the whole family of Josiah, so let's just pick out from verse 15 and 16. Now this chapter is a condemnation of Jehoiakim and his wife Nehushta, directed at Jehoiakim who was on the throne at the time this chapter was written, and he condemns Jehoiakim by comparing him to his own father, Josiah. Verse 15, 'Shalt thou reign Jehoiakim because thou closest thyself in cedar?' (You think you're going to have this glorious palace of cedar, remember your father, Jehoiakim!) 'did not thy father Josiah eat and drink and do judgment and justice, and it was well with him?' You see, Josiah was content not just to have a glorious palace, but he spent his whole time purging the Land or building the house of God! Jehoiakim robbed the people to build his own palace; and he said, Remember your father, Jehoiakim! and 'he did judgment and justice'. He wasn't a king that you could bribe, he was straight down the line. But look at verse 16, 'He judged the cause of the poor and needy, then it was well with him; was not this to know Me?' said God. To know God, b&s, is to know the God that cares for the stranger and loves the stranger. To know God is to be merciful and kind and gracious and Josiah was never too busy, never too high and mighty to look after the poor and needy in the Land. He knew his God! and God hates the proud, He hates injustice, He hates oppression, but He loves those who are like Himself, and with judgment and justice cared for the poor and needy. That was the character of Josiah, yes, he was an uncompromising reformer but he had a side to him that was to know God as well and that was the character of the Father taken on board.

So he was a wonderful balanced individual was Josiah: I want you to think of what was left when he was dead. What was Jeremiah left with? Well, he felt **terribly alone!** Come to Jeremiah 12 because I believe this chapter was written around that time. Jeremiah's complaining again, and I don't say that flippantly because Jeremiah had every reason to complain, he lived a miserable existence. Verses 1 to 4 is a complaint of Jeremiah (we haven't got time to look at it now, but he's complaining to God). He says, 'I know you're righteous, God, I know you're watching me, but how long is this going to go on?' And the answer in verse 5, is quite a remarkable answer: 'Jeremiah, If you have run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, Jeremiah, if you've been running in a race and running against other people on foot; do you think that's hard? Jeremiah, try running

against horses'. In the days of Josiah, it was like running in a race, yes, it was hard work to keep up, it was hard to keep ahead of the pack, now you've got horses running against you, Jeremiah. 'If you in the land of peace wherein you trusted, they wearied thee', when you had Josiah on the throne and it was a peaceful time, there was no international conflict to speak of, and you trusted that he'd be the one to protect you from the heathen; if you found that hard, Jeremiah, well, go down and run alongside the river Jordan and see how you get on. Where it's all covered in with rubbish and overgrowth, and all the residue of the floods, and there are lions and snakes and serpents down there, try that, Jeremiah, and see how you get on! If you can't handle the level ground, Jeremiah, it's going to get worse!

Verse 6, 'For even your own brethren, your own house of your father, are conspiring against thee'. Even one of Jeremiah's cousins was very soon conspiring with the false prophet in Babylon, to get rid of Jeremiah. Jeremiah, it's going to get worse, you're now running against horses, you've now got on the throne the evil, Jehoiakim! and he's going to give you a run for your money! So Jeremiah was left with that little Sunday School class, and he continued the work, and a faithful remnant went to Babylon. There was another tragedy in the 4<sup>th</sup> year of Jehoiakim when almost the whole Sunday School class was taken away from his control. He had to watch them go off into captivity, wondering how they'd survive in Babylon, but knowing that he and Josiah had done everything they could to get the word of God into those boys.

So what are the lessons we can take from Josiah and from Jeremiah? Well, certainly the lesson of **co-operation**, particularly while we're young. Co-operation in the things that we aspire to, b&s, is a wonderful thing; working together to try and raise the standard of the people of God, working together to try and impart to young minds, divine principles. Co-operating like Jeremiah and Josiah did, is a wonderful thing, and it will only come when we have a common zeal for the bible. o develop trust and make friendships that will survive through the years! We've got to joy and rejoice in the Word together, to develop common ideals and a common hatred for that which is evil and we can achieve so much, we mightn't save everybody but we can work on the remnant. So let's strive together like those two did, to develop spirit mindedness in a generation. Let's also learn that God's view of death is different to ours. You know, God said to Jeremiah, 'Jeremiah stop crying, it's 20 years since he died, stop crying for him! If you want to cry, Jeremiah, you cry for the current generation, because Josiah is assured of his reward; there's a beautiful verse in Revelation 14 verse 12 that says, 'here is the patience of the saints, I heard a voice from heaven saying, write, blessed are the dead that die in the Lord from henceforth'. Josiah's death for Josiah was a blessing, he didn't see the evil that came upon his sons; he didn't see the temple and the city burnt. God took him away in His mercy because his heart was tender. 'Blessed are they which die in the Lord from henceforth; may they rest from their labours and their works do follow them'. Ah, think about that, b&s, their works do follow them, and the work of Josiah and Jeremiah was that Sunday School class! the good figs that went to Babylon for their good, and what a calibre they were!

**Perseverance**, he knew it was hopeless, he would not save the nation, and yet he gave it everything that he could; he tried to reform them, he stamped the idols to powder, he pleaded with them to not go back to the idols of the nations. It's often said of Josiah, that you can't command obedience; he went around the Land saying 'you won't do that and you will do this, and you will keep the Passover', and it's often remarked that you can't command obedience, and no more you can; you can't command people to keep the things of God, in the end people have to do it from their own motivations. But God loved his efforts, God recognized his attempts, God loved his big heart to keep trying and pointing in the right direction of where they ought to be going. We too, need in our ecclesias people of hope and vision, with a godly zeal to say this is the right way; don't go to the right hand, don't go to the left. Also God didn't forget his labour of love and his attempts to do the right thing. You know, there's a divine epithet that's been inscribed by God over Josiah, beautiful words, **Now the rest of the acts** (you see, he was a man of action) **the rest of the acts of Josiah and his goodness** (now there's the balance; he was a doer, he was an uncompromising reformer but he was a **good** man! The word 'goodness' there is the Hebrew word 'cheched', (2617) one of the primary characteristics of the Father, **'abundant in goodness and truth**, was not this to know Me?' Josiah knew his God! **'His deeds first and last are written in the books of the kings of Israel and Judah'**, and we have to be the balance between uncompromisingly standing for the things of God and doing something about it, but also being people of goodness with mercy and kindness. That's to know God, isn't it? that's the beautiful balance that we must have; so Josiah sleeps, b&s, awaiting the day of resurrection.

Have you ever thought how sad it's going to be for Josiah, when he finds out, what his sons turned out like? You know, they were convinced by Zephaniah, who was contemporary with Jeremiah. Zephaniah said this, he wrote in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah, that's when Zephaniah prophesied, in the days of Josiah. Look what he said about the king's sons, Zephaniah 1 verse 8, 'It shall come to pass in the day of Yahweh's sacrifice, that I will punish the princes and the king's children, and all such as are clothed with strange apparel'. They were imitating the nations by wearing the garments of the nations and Zephaniah said, even the king's sons are going to suffer! That was said while Josiah was alive, and you can think of his sons, they were not a very impressive bunch. Jehoiakim was a rotter to the core; he burnt the bible, he persecuted Jeremiah, he slew Urijah the prophet, he was a rotter! probably the worst of the sons of Josiah. Jehoahaz lasted 3 months, and God took him away and threw him into Egypt where he was going to die. Jehoiachin, his grandson, came to the throne, the son of Jehoiakim, 3 months and he was taken into captivity; and the last son to sit on the throne was Zedekiah, a profane, wicked prince of Israel. 'The twilight prince' the bible calls him, always wanting to know what the Word of God is, but not willing to do it. 'Thou profane, wicked prince of Israel, whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end. Take off the crown, condemned, his eyes thrust out by the king of Babylon, carted off in chains to die. That's the family of Josiah! what can we learn from that, b&s?

Why did his sons turn out like that? I want you to come to 1 Chronicles 3; you know, I often think in the day of resurrection, when Josiah is brought up to date on his family, it's

going to be a particularly sad event. There's a good chance that Jehoiachin, his grandson, will be there, because Jehoiachin repented at the end of his life and was blessed by God for repenting but that was after 37 years of captivity. One of the reasons why I believe Josiah's sons were so difficult to manage, not only that they were princes, and princes, of course, are always hard to manage because no one can tell them what to do; they've got no need to work and they've got all the money they want. So princes are always hard to manage, but you look at the age of Josiah when he began to have children; he was married off to 2 different women at the age of 13, why? Amon had reigned for 2 years, Josiah was 8 when he came to the throne, they were in great danger of losing the dynasty; if Josiah had died in his teens, there was no one to take over. The house of David would have been extinct, so they married him off at 13 to two different women. Jehoiakim was born when Josiah was 14, Jehoahaz when he was 16, Zedekiah was born when he was 29; Jehoiachin was the son of Jehoiakim and he was born when Josiah was 32; he was a grandfather at 32! It's hard enough to bring up children when you're 20 years older than them, it's almost impossible when you're 13 years older than them. That was the problem he had; they were princes but they were almost like brothers. But you notice in 1 Chronicles 3 verse 15, 'The sons of Josiah were, the firstborn Johanan, the second Jehoiakim, the third Zedekiah, the fourth Shallum. And the sons of Jehoiakim: Jeconiah his son (that's Jehoiachin), and Zedekiah his son'. Now careful bible reading - what did you notice there? did you notice that there's a fourth son there called Shallum? You've got Jehoiakim, Johanan which is Jehoahaz, you've got Zedekiah and you've got Jehoiachin, all sat upon the throne. But there's another son there called Shallum, now let me show you something. I've got to ask you to just open your mind a little bit to something here that you might not have thought of before!

We'll just take this slow! 4 sons of Josiah: an important fact, they all had more than one name. It was very typical of kings to have their sons with a lot of names; remember when Prince Charles was married? I, Charles Arthur George William Fred - all the family names are picked up from about 6 generations with the sons of kings. So many names are common that are picked for the sons of kings, and they all had more than one name:

Jehoahaz was called Johanan and he also was called Shallum  
 Jehoiakim was also called Eliakim  
 Zedekiah was also called Mattaniah  
 Jehoiachin, the grandson, was called Coniah or Jeconiah.

So you see, multiple names were very common for the sons and grandsons of these kings. All the sons and the grandson were given the throne of Judah except Shallum, the 4<sup>th</sup> son of Josiah. He's mentioned there, isn't he? the 4<sup>th</sup>. Shallum. God had prophesied to Hezekiah, Josiah's great grandfather in Isaiah 39 verse 7 in these words, 'Of thy sons that issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon'. So Josiah's great grandfather had been prophesied to that of his children they would go to Babylon and they would be

eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon. Something to think about, I might suggest to you that Shallum, the 4<sup>th</sup> son of Josiah was actually Daniel. In the book of Daniel we read, that a 17 year old of the **king's seed** arrives in Babylon in the 4<sup>th</sup> year of Jehoiakim, which means that if he was 17 years old when he arrived in Babylon in the 4<sup>th</sup> year of Jehoiakim, what year was he born? He was born in the year that the Law was found. What a way for God to reward Josiah for his response to the Word, when he heard the judgments of God, to give him a son whose name means 'the judgment of God' (7967) - Daniel. You see, he was of the king's seed, he was made a eunuch of the court of Babylon, who else could he be? Hezekiah only had one son, Manasseh had only one son, Amon, there was not many of the king's seed around and Daniel is of the king's seed, and look at the calibre of the boy that arrives in Babylon.

He was only 13 when Josiah was killed; whether or not he was the son of Josiah, he was only 13 and he was in Jerusalem at the time of Josiah and Jeremiah. He went to Babylon as a eunuch in the 4<sup>th</sup> year of Jehoiakim, a wonderful 17 year old with faith, courage and an excellent spirit, and arrives in Babylon. Where did he get that from in the kingdom of Judah? He totally refuses any connection to idolatry; education, no problem; king's meat, no way! because it's been offered to idols-I want no part of it. Where did he learn that? He's discreet, he's a natural leader and able to stand before kings, he can handle himself in a king's palace. He's described as the king's seed, and what better way to get Jehoiakim to obey himself than for the king of Babylon to take his younger brother off to Babylon? You behave, Jehoiakim because I've got Daniel over there in my court; and I say to you, b&s, as sad as it might be when Josiah finds out what happened to his other sons, maybe God has in store the most glorious reward at the resurrection, when that boy who became a eunuch at 17, is brought forward to meet his father. It's worth thinking about, isn't it? who else could Daniel be?