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2 KINGS 21:1-23:35
(2 Chronicles 33-35)

We're almost finished with our study of **2 Kings**.

Last week we buried good king Hezekiah. And this week we're going to see what we can learn from the lives of two kings...**Manasseh and Josiah**.

I do hope you've been blessed by this study as much as I have.

I believe it's absolutely essential for us to understand the history of the Jewish people in order for us to really understand the books of prophecy in Scripture. It isn't essential to our **salvation**, but it **is** essential to our **understanding** of the Old Testament!

So, with that said, let's look at the first king we'll see today.

2 Chronicles 33:1-9...

Well, this is a sad story, isn't it? And it's a big letdown from what we saw last week. What a wicked king Manasseh was! And to think that he was the son of King Hezekiah.

You **know** he must have seen his father's godly walk...you **know** he must have watched his father as he ruled the land of Judah in a godly way... But, this didn't have an influence on Manasseh, did it? Why? **Because we're all products of our own choices!**

Manasseh **chose** to seduce the people of God...
Manasseh chose to lead the people back into gross pagan sin...
Manasseh **chose** to welcome every form of idolatry into the land...
Manasseh **chose** to commit every abomination he could commit...

And on top of all that, Manasseh chose to become a mass murderer.

In fact, many Bible scholars believe Manasseh had the prophet Isaiah sawn in half.

What an evil man he was! But, I want to tell you...God won't just sit by and let this kind of thing go on forever!

I don't want us to spend all our time on Manasseh this morning, but I do want us to think of four things about Manasseh that we see from this passage.

1) The great sin Manasseh committed...

Well, you might say, **which** sin? Every sin we just read about was great, wasn't it? But, to see Manasseh's greatest sin, look down in

Verse 10...

"And the LORD spoke to Manasseh and His people and they **paid no attention.**"

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I want to tell you...**murder** is a terrible sin. And **idolatry** is a terrible sin. And **witchcraft** and **divination** and sorcery are great sins...but Manasseh's greatest sin was **paying no attention to God and leading other people to do the same!**

Listen, every sin man commits is because he hasn't listened to God!

Ezekiel 13 tells us that even the women of that day sewed magic charms on their wrists and made veils for the heads of folks who would go and hunt people down to kill them. The women as well as the men were affected by Manasseh's great sin.

The second thing I want us to see is

2) The great price Manasseh paid...

There is a price to pay for not listening to the Lord. You and I know that.

Has there ever been a time in your life when **God has called you** and you refused to listen?
Has there ever been **something God has called you to do** and you rejected His counsel?
Has there ever been something **God had told you not to do** or **God has told you to quit doing** and you went ahead and kept doing it anyway?

I believe if we were honest we would all answer a resounding "yes" to those questions. And as a child of God, there is still a price to pay.

There really is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, but we still reap the consequences when we fail to listen to God, don't we? And if we had the time to go around the room, we could all tell our own sad stories of consequences we've reaped when we turned a deaf ear to the Holy Spirit.

Manasseh failed to follow the godly example of his father, Hezekiah, and he failed to seek the direction of the Lord...

Well, the bitter consequence that Manasseh reaped is found in **Verse 11...**

Nobody is bowing down before him now.
Nobody is listening to what he says now.
Nobody is obeying his commands now.

He has a hook in his nose and he's being led off into captivity. Sin has a price tag.

Someone has said sin will carry you **farther than you want to go** and
it will **cost you more than you want to pay** and
it will **keep you longer than you want to stay**.

Not only the great sin Manasseh committed and the great price Manasseh paid for committing that sin, but also...

3) The great gift Manasseh received...

Verses 12-13...

If ever there was a man who deserved the full wrath of Almighty God it was Manasseh. And if he had received that full wrath, he would be in hell today. But, God, in His great mercy and grace, heard Manasseh when he finally came to his senses and cried out to Him!

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And if you and I were honest today, we would have to say we're not too sure we like this. I mean, when you think of all the evil that Manasseh brought upon God's land and God's people, **there's a part of us that wants him to get punished to the fullest extent...**

But, I want to tell you...we best be grateful for the mercy and grace God extended to Manasseh. And we best be grateful for the mercy and grace God has extended to each one of us!

Because whether you want to admit it or not, **your** sin and **my** sin is just as evil in the sight of the Lord as was Manasseh's. Sin is sin! And if God couldn't save Manasseh, God couldn't save you and He surely couldn't save me!

Ezekiel tells us several times that God does not take pleasure in the death of a wicked man. Why? Because God's earnest desire is for that man to turn from his wickedness, repent of his sin and live. He is not willing for any to perish, but for to come to repentance!
Ezekiel 18:23 and 18:32 and 33:11...

The last thing I want to share with you is

4) The great change in Manasseh's life...

Verses 14-16...

Do you think Manasseh was saved? I do! I believe he really did get his life together and he really did attempt great things for God...and he really did accomplish much for God!

And I praise God for the example of Manasseh's salvation. It tells us that no one is ever beyond the possibility of salvation if he will just repent and humble himself before God! But, it's sad to think he did this **after** he had done so many terrible things! And it's sad to think of the impact for good and for God that he failed to have on his son.

The rest of this chapter tells us of his son, Amon. Amon was a wicked king. He was the son of a wicked man who became saved, but we don't have any record that Amon ever came to know God as his father did.

Let's move on and look at one of my favorite characters in the Word of God!

Chapter 34:1-7...

Remember who was the father of Josiah.

And although we didn't cover Amon's life, we know he was a wicked man and a terrible king. He lived for himself. In fact, the Bible says "he did not humble himself before the LORD as his father Manasseh had done, but Amon multiplied guilt." And finally, his servants conspired against him and put him to death in his own house.

But, Amon had a godly son. And unlike his grandfather, Manasseh, who didn't come to know God until much later in life...Josiah lived for the Lord as a **young** man.

Isn't it amazing that God can reach down and take an eight year old boy, the son of one of the most wicked men who ever reigned over Judah and make him
a boy who **did right in the sight of the Lord** and
by the time he was sixteen years old he **began to seek the God of his father David,**
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by the time he was twenty years old, **he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of the high places, the Asherim, the carved images, and the molten images.**

Let me ask you...

What makes a young boy turn into a youth who **loves** the Lord and then turn into a teenager who **seeks** the Lord and then turn into a young man who **brings godly reform** to his land?

It certainly wasn't the influence of his **father**. Maybe it was the influence of his **mother**. **2 Kings** tells us his mother's name was Jedidah. Maybe Jedidah was a woman who sought the Lord and taught her son to do the same thing.

Abraham Lincoln said, *"No man is poor who has a godly mother."*

Maybe Josiah was reading what little Scripture he had access to one day and saw where David said, **"The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, no one."**

Maybe Josiah saw that and said, **"I'll be one. If God is looking down from heaven to see if there are any seeking Him, then I'll be one. I'm going to seek Him."** Maybe that's what he said...

Wasn't it D. L. Moody who said, **"The world has yet to see what God can do with a man totally committed to Him. I will be that man."**

We don't know for certain what or who God used in the life of Josiah, but by His great grace, Josiah was a great man of God!

(Don't read verses 8-13...) tell us when Josiah was twenty-six years old, he repaired and restored the temple in Jerusalem. Before he could do that, he had to raise the money.

And Josiah sent for Hilkiyah the high priest. Hilkiyah was also the father of Jeremiah the prophet.

And guess what happened? When Hilkiyah brought the money for the temple repairs to the workman, he found the book of the law in the temple.

Verses 14-19...

Why was this a big deal? Because it had been lost! The Word of God had been lost in the house of God! And no one had noticed!

Now this doesn't seem like such a big thing to us today. I counted the copies of God's Word that we have on our shelves and we have at least 20 or 25 different Bibles...and that's not counting commentaries and books **about** the Bible.

But, back then, these folks didn't have copies of the Bible laying around their house. The printing press had not yet been invented. Mass production of books hadn't yet come into being. Each copy of the Word of God was painstakingly copied by hand.

So, this was a **very big deal!** And it gives to us one indication of the way the house of God had been treated. I think you and I can imagine if this building would be turned into a place of gambling and pornography and drinking and drugs and idol worship and occultism and sex.

I mean, if that is what this building were used for, would it be any

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wonder if a Bible would be lost in it?

God's house had been allowed to fall into disrepair and it was being **misused** and **abused** and **defiled** so it's little wonder that God's Word was lost in it!

But, I want to tell you that the Word of God has been lost in many of our churches today.

Many people go to church and they hear the opinions of the preacher and the teacher.

They hear a social gospel, not the gospel as found in **1 Corinthians 15**...the death of the Lord Jesus for our sins, His burial and His resurrection!

They hear a rehashing of a sports event.

They are subjected to poetry, or secular literature or see an interpretive dance.

They hear a review of a magazine article or a newspaper article or a book.

In the words of Dr. J. Vernon McGee: "We don't need the book of the month. We need the book of the ages."

The Word of God has been lost in many of our churches today! **Praise God that's not true in ours!!!**

And the Word of God has been lost in many of our homes today!

Many years ago I heard about the preacher who visited in a home. The mother and her little boy were home at the time and I guess to impress the preacher, the mother said to the little boy, "Son, go get that big book that Mommy reads so much." And her little boy went out of the room and came back with the Sears Catalogue.

Now, I know you don't spend any time reading the Sears Catalogue, because it wouldn't do you any good today...but if the preacher came visiting and you told your grandchild to go and get the book you spend so much time reading, what would he or she bring back to you?

**Would it be the latest novel? Or the latest Christian book?
Or maybe Traditional Home or House Beautiful or Sports Illustrated or Field & Stream?**

Or would it be God's Word?

Well, what happened when the Word of God was found in the house of God?

It was brought to the king and read to him. Imagine this....Josiah was hearing the law of God for the first time!

I've mentioned this several times in our study of **2 Kings**. But, this was something that was supposed to be **routine**. This was a requirement of the kings of Israel.

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Deuteronomy 17 tells us the king was to copy for himself a copy of the law on a scroll and he was to read it all the days of his life...so that he would know what God expected of him and so that he could rule God's people the way they should be ruled!

Why? Why is God's Word so very important? It's so very important because of the convicting power of it!

God's Word is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, the writer of Hebrews says. **It has the power to pierce as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.**

When we get into the Word of God, the Word of God gets into us! And it **penetrates** our soul and it **pierces** our spirit and it **convicts** our thought life and the things we do or even plan to do!

No wonder the king tore his clothes and mourned! Josiah knew the state of the kingdom was **bad**...but he didn't know how bad it was until he heard the book of the law read to him. No wonder he instructed the high priest and the scribe and his servant to go and inquire of the Lord...

Verse 21...

And Hilkiah went to a prophetess and let's see what she said...

Verse 23-25...God's wrath will be poured out on Judah...

But, look what God says to Josiah personally...

Verses 26-28...

Does this sound familiar? We saw this last week with Hezekiah, didn't we?

God cares for his faithful servants. He has not appointed His children to wrath...and that's one of the primary reasons we believe Jesus will rapture the church before the Tribulation.

Now, this would have stopped some men. I mean, if told that judgment was coming but not in his lifetime, a lesser man would have said, "**Whew! Am I glad of that! I can just live the rest of my life in comfort and ease and let the next generation suffer all God's wrath.**"

But, not Josiah!

If you read your lesson you would know that **2 Kings 23** tells us that Josiah gathered all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem and he had the Word of God read to the people of Judah. You would also find that entire chapter gives in great detail the many reforms that Josiah put in place!

And he also had the Passover celebrated! In fact, **chapter 35** tells us Josiah celebrated a Passover unlike any Passover celebrated since the days of Samuel...some 300 plus years before...

Well, Josiah died at the hand of Pharaoh Neco, king of Egypt.

And the few kings that followed Josiah were bad kings.

Joahaz, the son of Josiah followed Josiah. And he was **deposed** by the king of Egypt. Jehoiakim followed Joahaz and we'll see what happened to him next week.

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I hope we can take some solid lessons with us today from the life of Josiah!

Josiah decided at an early age to walk with God. But, Josiah didn't know all that the Lord wanted. To a large degree, he and his counselors were uninformed and ignorant of the Word of God! Why? Because God's Word had been lost!

But, listen - Josiah wasn't any different from you and me. I mean, yes, he was a king...he had a high position...but everything we see in his life can be applied to our life today...

And we can be as focused as we can be on following after God, we can even go to church every Sunday. That's **good!** And we can do **good** things every day, but until you and I have a knowledge of the Word of God, we'll never know that we are sinners in need of a Savior. We'll never know the only way we can be saved is through the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ!

And many times we read our Bibles and suddenly we're overcome with conviction that we've been leaving something undone that God wanted us to do and/or been doing something that God didn't want us to do! **That's the Holy Spirit, folks!**

Warren Wiersbe: "When the **child** of God looks into the **Word** of God and sees the **Son** of God, he is changed by the **Spirit** of God into the **image** of God for the **glory** of God."

That's why you and I should be in this Word every day! I want to tell you this...you need a good reading program...some schedule or format that will take you through the Word of God systematically. And if you don't have one, please let me know. I do. And I will tell you how to get one for yourself!

Another way God brings conviction to us is by the preached and taught Word.

The other night as we were getting out of our pew at the seminary and the professor reached over to hug my neck and the aisle was very crowded and I accidentally stepped on his toe. I said, "Oh, I'm so sorry I stepped on your toe." He said, "That's okay, the pastor's been stepping on them all night!"

Now, if he feels the conviction of the Holy Spirit when **he** hears a sermon...how much more should we?

Josiah had a good heart, but it was a heart that was ignorant of God's Word. People with good hearts go to hell every day. It's people with saved hearts who go to heaven.

And when Josiah knew God's Word and God's expectations and God's commandments, then Josiah knew how bad things really were...how great the change must be...and Josiah made a covenant before the Lord to keep His commandments and His testimonies and His statutes with all his heart and with all his soul, and to perform the words of the covenant written in His word.

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What a king! May God help us to walk according to all that we know of Him. And may God help us to long to know more and more!

And it goes without saying that we will never have this longing apart from the Lord Jesus Christ! So, I hope every one of us knows beyond a shadow of a doubt that we belong to Him!

Next week we're going to see the end of **2 Kings**. It won't be a pretty sight, but God's Word always serves to teach us...so please study this passage of Scripture.