

Audio Transcript of Sermon
November 23, 2024
The Kings of Israel and Judah, Part 7

Hello. Thank you for joining us today. My name is Tom Laign with Sabbath Bible Study. Last time as we finished our study on the kings of Israel and Judah, we saw how God used an angel to secretly enter a camp of Assyrian soldiers to kill them and sparing Judah from their military might. Hezekiah was King of Judah and did what was right in the sight of God, and God spared him and his people from the Assyrians, for the sake of King David. Even people who do what is right in the sight of God must face their own mortality, and with King Hezekiah, it was no different. There came a time when he was very sick prompting a visit from Isaiah the prophet who told him he would die. That was not what Hezekiah was expecting and after Isaiah left, and after Hezekiah prayed to God, but before Isaiah had left the palace grounds God gave him a new message to give to Hezekiah, that he would live for another fifteen years and continue to defend Jerusalem against the Assyrians. Upon hearing the change in God's plan, Hezekiah wanted a sign and agreed that the sign from God would be a reversal in the sun's shadow by ten degrees on a sun dial. Second Kings twenty verse one.

2 Kings 20:1-21

- 1. In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz came to him, and said unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live.**
- 2. Then he turned his face to the wall, and prayed unto the Lord, saying,**
- 3. I beseech thee, O Lord, remember now how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore.**
- 4. And it came to pass, afore Isaiah was gone out into the middle court, that the word of the Lord came to him, saying,**
- 5. Turn again, and tell Hezekiah the captain of my people, Thus saith the Lord, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will heal thee: on the third day thou shalt go up unto the house of the Lord.**
- 6. And I will add unto thy days fifteen years; and I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake.**

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7. And Isaiah said, Take a lump of figs. And they took and laid it on the boil, and he recovered.

8. And Hezekiah said unto Isaiah, What shall be the sign that the Lord will heal me, and that I shall go up into the house of the Lord the third day?

9. And Isaiah said, This sign shalt thou have of the Lord, that the Lord will do the thing that he hath spoken: shall the shadow go forward ten degrees, or go back ten degrees?

10. And Hezekiah answered, It is a light thing for the shadow to go down ten degrees: nay, but let the shadow return backward ten degrees.

11. And Isaiah the prophet cried unto the Lord: and he brought the shadow ten degrees backward, by which it had gone down in the dial of Ahaz.

Even though the King of Assyria was to be feared, it was the son of the King of Babylon who sent gifts to Hezekiah when he heard that he was sick. Hezekiah was so grateful for the gifts that he gave a tour of the palace to the entourage that brought the gifts. That prompted Isaiah to ask him what he was doing, and eventually Isaiah explained to Hezekiah it would be the Babylonians who would carry Judah into captivity. Fifteen years later when Hezekiah died, his son Manasseh became king. Verse twelve.

12. At that time Berodach–baladan, the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present unto Hezekiah: for he had heard that Hezekiah had been sick.

13. And Hezekiah hearkened unto them, and shewed them all the house of his precious things, the silver, and the gold, and the spices, and the precious ointment, and all the house of his armour, and all that was found in his treasures: there was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah shewed them not.

14. Then came Isaiah the prophet unto king Hezekiah, and said unto him, What said these men? and from whence came they unto thee? And Hezekiah said, They are come from a far country, even from Babylon.

15. And he said, What have they seen in thine house? And Hezekiah answered, All the things that are in mine house have they seen: there is nothing among my treasures that I have not shewed them.

16. And Isaiah said unto Hezekiah, Hear the word of the Lord.

17. Behold, the days come, that all that is in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store unto this day, shall be carried into Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the Lord.

18. And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.

19. Then said Hezekiah unto Isaiah, Good is the word of the Lord which thou hast spoken. And he said, Is it not good, if peace and truth be in my days?

20. And the rest of the acts of Hezekiah, and all his might, and how he made a pool, and a conduit, and brought water into the city, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

21. And Hezekiah slept with his fathers: and Manasseh his son reigned in his stead.

Manasseh was only twelve when he became king, meaning he wasn't alive to see God's intervention in adding fifteen years to his father's life. Had that not happened, Manasseh would have never been born. The irony of the situation is that Manasseh who was born through a miracle of God by the extension of Hezekiah's life would go on and do evil in the sight of God. Doing evil did not result in a short reign as he reigned for fifty-five years. Manasseh restored all the pagan religious shrines which had been torn down by his father, including those built for Baal, and personally saw his own son consumed in fire in a pagan religious ritual. He altered the temple to include pagan shrines within the temple grounds, and the people of Judah became more and more evil. Second Kings twenty-one verse one.

2 Kings 21:1-26

1. Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to reign, and reigned fifty and five years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Hephzi-bah.

2. And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, after the abominations of the heathen, whom the Lord cast out before the children of Israel.

3. For he built up again the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed; and he reared up altars for Baal, and made a grove, as did Ahab king of Israel; and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them.

4. And he built altars in the house of the Lord, of which the Lord said, In Jerusalem will I put my name.

5. And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the Lord.

6. And he made his son pass through the fire, and observed times, and used enchantments, and dealt with familiar spirits and wizards: he wrought much wickedness in the sight of the Lord, to provoke him to anger.

7. And he set a graven image of the grove that he had made in the house, of which the Lord said to David, and to Solomon his son, In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all tribes of Israel, will I put my name for ever:

8. Neither will I make the feet of Israel move any more out of the land which I gave their fathers; only if they will observe to do according to all that I have commanded them, and according to all the law that my servant Moses commanded them.

9. But they hearkened not: and Manasseh seduced them to do more evil than did the nations whom the Lord destroyed before the children of Israel.

The evil that Judah did through the reign of Manasseh prompted God to declare He finally had enough with Jerusalem and would destroy it. Evil Manasseh died at age sixty-seven and his son Amon became king. Verse ten.

10. And the Lord spake by his servants the prophets, saying,

11. Because Manasseh king of Judah hath done these abominations, and hath done wickedly above all that the Amorites did, which were before him, and hath made Judah also to sin with his idols:

12. Therefore thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Behold, I am bringing such evil upon Jerusalem and Judah, that whosoever heareth of it, both his ears shall tingle.

13. And I will stretch over Jerusalem the line of Samaria, and the plummet of the house of Ahab: and I will wipe Jerusalem as a man wipeth a dish, wiping it, and turning it upside down.

14. And I will forsake the remnant of mine inheritance, and deliver them into the hand of their enemies; and they shall become a prey and a spoil to all their enemies;

15. Because they have done that which was evil in my sight, and have provoked me to anger, since the day their fathers came forth out of Egypt, even unto this day.

16. Moreover Manasseh shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another; beside his sin wherewith he made Judah to sin, in doing that which was evil in the sight of the Lord.

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17. Now the rest of the acts of Manasseh, and all that he did, and his sin that he sinned, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

18. And Manasseh slept with his fathers, and was buried in the garden of his own house, in the garden of Uzza: and Amon his son reigned in his stead.

Amon continued the evil trajectory of his father and only was king for two years before he was killed by palace staff. We might think the death of a person who was evil would have been met with some sense of relief but the people of Judah who were upset killed all who were part of the overthrow. The people made Josiah, son of Amon, king. Verse nineteen.

19. Amon was twenty and two years old when he began to reign, and he reigned two years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Meshullemeth, the daughter of Haruz of Jotbah.

20. And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, as his father Manasseh did.

21. And he walked in all the way that his father walked in, and served the idols that his father served, and worshipped them:

22. And he forsook the Lord God of his fathers, and walked not in the way of the Lord.

23. And the servants of Amon conspired against him, and slew the king in his own house.

24. And the people of the land slew all them that had conspired against king Amon; and the people of the land made Josiah his son king in his stead.

25. Now the rest of the acts of Amon which he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

26. And he was buried in his sepulchre in the garden of Uzza: and Josiah his son reigned in his stead.

Josiah was only eight years old when he became king and did what was right in the sight of God, probably due to the influence of his mother Jedidah, though we don't know for sure. When King Josiah was in his mid-twenties he sent Shaphan, a staff member, to Hilkiah the high priest because he wanted the temple to be restored. Second Kings twenty-two verse one.

2 Kings 22:1-20

- 1. Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned thirty and one years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Jedidah, the daughter of Adaiah of Bozkath.**
- 2. And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, and walked in all the way of David his father, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left.**
- 3. And it came to pass in the eighteenth year of king Josiah, that the king sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, the son of Meshullam, the scribe, to the house of the Lord, saying,**
- 4. Go up to Hilkiah the high priest, that he may sum the silver which is brought into the house of the Lord, which the keepers of the door have gathered of the people:**
- 5. And let them deliver it into the hand of the doers of the work, that have the oversight of the house of the Lord: and let them give it to the doers of the work which is in the house of the Lord, to repair the breaches of the house,**
- 6. Unto carpenters, and builders, and masons, and to buy timber and hewn stone to repair the house.**
- 7. Howbeit there was no reckoning made with them of the money that was delivered into their hand, because they dealt faithfully.**

While visiting with Hilkiah, the high priest gave Shaphan the book of the law which he had found in the temple, and Shaphan read it. When he returned to King Josiah, Shaphan brought the book of the law with him and read it to the king which caused the king to demonstrate repentance by tearing his clothes. He then directed the high priest and others to pray to God knowing that the people of Judah were living in a manner inconsistent with what was in the book of the law. God let them know that he would bring evil upon the people because they had forgotten about Him and were not doing what was in the book of the law. That message was taken back to Josiah who was also told the evil that would come to Judah would come after Josiah was dead. Verse eight.

- 8. And Hilkiah the high priest said unto Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the Lord. And Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it.**
- 9. And Shaphan the scribe came to the king, and brought the king word again, and said, Thy servants have gathered the money that was found in the house,**

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and have delivered it into the hand of them that do the work, that have the oversight of the house of the Lord.

10. And Shaphan the scribe shewed the king, saying, Hilkiah the priest hath delivered me a book. And Shaphan read it before the king.

11. And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the book of the law, that he rent his clothes.

12. And the king commanded Hilkiah the priest, and Ahikam the son of Shaphan, and Achbor the son of Michaiah, and Shaphan the scribe, and Asaiah a servant of the king's, saying,

13. Go ye, enquire of the Lord for me, and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that is found: for great is the wrath of the Lord that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this book, to do according unto all that which is written concerning us.

14. So Hilkiah the priest, and Ahikam, and Achbor, and Shaphan, and Asaiah, went unto Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tikvah, the son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe; now she dwelt in Jerusalem in the college; and they communed with her.

15. And she said unto them, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Tell the man that sent you to me,

16. Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, even all the words of the book which the king of Judah hath read:

17. Because they have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands; therefore my wrath shall be kindled against this place, and shall not be quenched.

18. But to the king of Judah which sent you to enquire of the Lord, thus shall ye say to him, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, As touching the words which thou hast heard;

19. Because thine heart was tender, and thou hast humbled thyself before the Lord, when thou heardest what I spake against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, that they should become a desolation and a curse, and hast rent thy clothes, and wept before me; I also have heard thee, saith the Lord.

20. Behold therefore, 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. And they brought the king word again.

Hearing this message, Josiah gathered the elders of Judah and Jerusalem and together with the people of Jerusalem went to the temple to hear the reading of the book of the law. Josiah publicly proclaimed to do all that God required. He then directed all vestiges of pagan religion to be destroyed and even destroyed private homes that were used by woman to weave religious artifacts for the groves. He even killed the priests of pagan religions and cremated their bodies. Second Kings twenty-three verse one.

2 Kings 23:1-37

- 1. And the king sent, and they gathered unto him all the elders of Judah and of Jerusalem.**
- 2. And the king went up into the house of the Lord, and all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with him, and the priests, and the prophets, and all the people, both small and great: and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant which was found in the house of the Lord.**
- 3. And the king stood by a pillar, and made a covenant before the Lord, to walk after the Lord, and to keep his commandments and his testimonies and his statutes with all their heart and all their soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people stood to the covenant.**
- 4. And the king commanded Hilkiah the high priest, and the priests of the second order, and the keepers of the door, to bring forth out of the temple of the Lord all the vessels that were made for Baal, and for the grove, and for all the host of heaven: and he burned them without Jerusalem in the fields of Kidron, and carried the ashes of them unto Beth-el.**
- 5. And he put down the idolatrous priests, whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense in the high places in the cities of Judah, and in the places round about Jerusalem; them also that burned incense unto Baal, to the sun, and to the moon, and to the planets, and to all the host of heaven.**
- 6. And he brought out the grove from the house of the Lord, without Jerusalem, unto the brook Kidron, and burned it at the brook Kidron, and stamped it small to powder, and cast the powder thereof upon the graves of the children of the people.**
- 7. And he brake down the houses of the sodomites, that were by the house of the Lord, where the women wove hangings for the grove.**
- 8. And he brought all the priests out of the cities of Judah, and defiled the high places where the priests had burned incense, from Geba to Beer-sheba, and**

brake down the high places of the gates that were in the entering in of the gate of Joshua the governor of the city, which were on a man's left hand at the gate of the city.

9. Nevertheless the priests of the high places came not up to the altar of the Lord in Jerusalem, but they did eat of the unleavened bread among their brethren.

10. And he defiled Topheth, which is in the valley of the children of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter to pass through the fire to Molech.

11. And he took away the horses that the kings of Judah had given to the sun, at the entering in of the house of the Lord, by the chamber of Nathan—melech the chamberlain, which was in the suburbs, and burned the chariots of the sun with fire.

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 the Lord, did the king beat down, and brake them down from thence, and cast the dust of them into the brook Kidron.

13. And the high places that were before Jerusalem, which were on the right hand of the mount of corruption, which Solomon the king of Israel had builded for Ashtoreth the abomination of the Zidonians, and for Chemosh the abomination of the Moabites, and for Milcom the abomination of the children of Ammon, did the king defile.

14. And he brake in pieces the images, and cut down the groves, and filled their places with the bones of men.

15. Moreover the altar that was at Beth—el, and the high place which Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, had made, both that altar and the high place he brake down, and burned the high place, and stamped it small to powder, and burned the grove.

16. And as Josiah turned himself, he spied the sepulchres that were there in the mount, and sent, and took the bones out of the sepulchres, and burned them upon the altar, and polluted it, according to the word of the Lord which the man of God proclaimed, who proclaimed these words.

17. Then he said, What title is that that I see? And the men of the city told him, It is the sepulchre of the man of God, which came from Judah, and proclaimed these things that thou hast done against the altar of Beth—el.

18. And he said, Let him alone; let no man move his bones. So they let his bones alone, with the bones of the prophet that came out of Samaria.

19. And all the houses also of the high places that were in the cities of Samaria, which the kings of Israel had made to provoke the Lord to anger, Josiah took away, and did to them according to all the acts that he had done in Beth-el.

20. And he slew all the priests of the high places that were there upon the altars, and burned men's bones upon them, and returned to Jerusalem.

Josiah had the people observe the Passover, and it was better kept than during most of the history of Israel. Similarly, there was no king like Josiah who worked so hard to do what was right in the sight of God and to restore proper religious practices to the people. But all of what Josiah did would not sway God's mind. Manasseh brought great evil to the people of Judah, and likely the people of Judah preferred the pagan religious practices over the truth that Josiah had restored. Even though Josiah acted as a strong leader, the people were probably just giving him lip service so Josiah would not target them. Josiah would die in his late thirties while involved in a military battle, and his son, Jehoahaz, became king. Verse twenty-one

21. And the king commanded all the people, saying, Keep the passover unto the Lord your God, as it is written in the book of this covenant.

22. Surely there was not holden such a passover from the days of the judges that judged Israel, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel, nor of the kings of Judah;

23. But in the eighteenth year of king Josiah, wherein this passover was holden to the Lord in Jerusalem.

24. Moreover the workers with familiar spirits, and the wizards, and the images, and the idols, and all the abominations that were spied in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, did Josiah put away, that he might perform the words of the law which were written in the book that Hilkiah the priest found in the house of the Lord.

25. And like unto him was there no king before him, that turned to the Lord with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; neither after him arose there any like him.

26. Notwithstanding the Lord turned not from the fierceness of his great wrath, wherewith his anger was kindled against Judah, because of all the provocations that Manasseh had provoked him withal.

27. And the Lord said, I will remove Judah also out of my sight, as I have removed Israel, and will cast off this city Jerusalem which I have chosen, and the house of which I said, My name shall be there.

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 Pharaoh—neco king of Egypt went up against the king of Assyria to the river Euphrates: and king Josiah went against him; and he slew him at Megiddo, when he had seen him.

30. And his servants carried him 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.

Jehoahaz would be king for only three months and quickly returned to the evil that had been previously known throughout Judah. Pharaoh Neco of Egypt would take him prisoner and installed Eliakim, another son of Josiah, as king. The Pharaoh also changed Eliakim's name to Jehoiakim. To get the deposed king Jehoahaz out of the way, the Pharaoh had him taken to Egypt where he died. Jehoiakim continued to do what was evil in the sight of God. Verse thirty-one.

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.

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

33. And Pharaoh—neco 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 Pharaoh—neco 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 Pharaoh—neco.

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.

Jehoiakim became a vassal leader of Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, for three years, until the King of Judah decided to rebel. God would not find favor for Judah, and once they had rebelled against Babylon, God made sure to send the Chaldeans, Syrians, Moabites, and Ammonites to destroy Judah, to repay for the evil of Manasseh. Jehoiakim fought battles through the rest of his life and when he died, his son, Jehoiachin became King. Jehoiachin would not be challenged by Egypt because by this time, the King of Babylon had weakened the Kingdom of Egypt. Facing no threat from Egypt and knowing that Judah had suffered at the hands of the Chaldeans, Syrians, Moabites, and Ammonites, King Nebuchadnezzar set his sight on Jerusalem, and laid siege to the city, taking King Jehoiachin as a prisoner in the eighth year of his reign. Second Kings twenty-four verse one.

2 Kings 24:1-20

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

2. And the Lord sent against him bands of the Chaldeans, 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.

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.

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.

With the King of Judah and Judean leadership taken prisoner, Nebuchadnezzar then went about looting the palace and temple. Everything that had at one time been symbols of the strength of the Kingdom of Israel and even the divided Kingdom of Judah was reduced to nothing. Also taken into captivity was anyone of any importance or possessing any skill, along with the soldiers.

Nebuchadnezzar installed Mattaniah as King of Judah and changed his name to Zedekiah. It should come as no surprise that a person chosen by a foreign king would also do evil in the sight of God. After about a decade in power, Zedekiah decided to rebel against the King of Babylon. Verse thirteen.

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.

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.

Nebuchadnezzar would not let the rebellion go without a response and came to lay siege to Jerusalem and did so for a period of about eighteen months. In the end people were starving inside Jerusalem and soldiers facing starvation and certain death sought to secretly escape to save their lives, and the life of King Zedekiah. They broke through the wall and were chased all the way to Jericho by Chaldeans who captured them. The Chaldeans took Zedekiah and Zedekiah's sons, who would have been no older than teenagers, to the King of Babylon. The Babylonian king had Zedekiah's sons killed right before him, and then removed Zedekiah's eyes so that the last thing he saw was the death of his sons.

Nebuchadnezzar was done with Jerusalem and ordered the prominent buildings burned to the ground. Except for very poor people, the remaining people were taken captive and taken back to Babylon. Second Kings twenty-five verse one.

2 Kings 25:1-30

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.

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 Chaldeans were against the city round about: and the king went the way toward the plain.

5. And the army of the Chaldeans 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 Nebuzar–adan, 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 Chaldeans, 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 Nebuzar–adan 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.**

Anything remaining of value was looted and taken back to Babylon. Even priests of the temple were taken along with artifacts used for ceremonial purposes. When it came to items from the temple, some of them were so large they could not be weighed. These were all taken to the King of Babylon, along with prominent people of the court of the King of Judah. These prominent people were all killed by Nebuchadnezzar. Verse thirteen.

- 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 Chaldeans 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.**
- 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 Nebuzar–adan 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.

Nebuchadnezzar left Gedaliah in charge as ruler over Judah who tried to convince the locals of the value of living in peace under the Babylonians, especially those remaining Judeans not taken into captivity who had prior military experience. Gedaliah was given a honeymoon of seven months and then was killed by Ishmael, son of Nethaniah, who had been part of the royal family. Those remaining fled to Egypt to avoid the wrath of the Babylonians. Meanwhile back in Babylon, eventually Jehoiachin, one of the last kings of Judah, was treated with kindness and allowed to live a somewhat royal lifestyle throughout the remainder of his life. Verse twenty-two.

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 Kareah, 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 Chaldeans: 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 Chaldeans 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 Chaldeans.

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 Evil-merodach 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.

Israel and Judah were no longer kingdoms to be reckoned with. With the absence of these kingdoms, we should not be surprised with the seemingly never-ending dispute over Israel in the Middle East. From the end of the Kingdom of Judah, even though Josiah really did everything right, by the time Josiah acted, the people's hearts had been corrupted and were focused on doing what was evil, to the point that God could find no reason to extend mercy anymore. A nation must be pretty evil for God to recognize the good that its leader does but because of the evil of the people to allow the nation to be destroyed. From this what can we learn? It's not always sufficient in the sight of God for just the leader of a nation to do what is right. God also needs the people of the nation to do what is right. With our coming to the end of the second book of Kings, our study on the kings of Israel and Judah also comes to an end. If you would like to read more about the kings of Israel and Judah, please consider a study on the first and second book of Chronicles.

Thank you for joining us today. God-willing we'll get together next time on the Sabbath. Until then, thank you for joining us today.