

Sermon to the Saints of God assembled at Topeka, KS: Sunday, September 22, 2019

Good King Josiah

The scriptures tell us that King Josiah strove to obey God from his youth – honoring God’s word, His house, and His servants - such that there was *“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.”* (**2Kings 23:25**) Today, I would like to consider what the scriptures tell us about Josiah’s faithful walk, so that we might consider what lessons we can learn and apply to our own pilgrimage.

First, let’s look at the context of Josiah’s life and his reign.

- Josiah’s forebears:
 - **Ahaz** was Josiah’s great great grandfather. He reigned for 16 years (732-716 BC). Ahaz was a godless man that led Judah into new levels of apostasy and idolatry. *“2 Twenty years old was Ahaz when he began to reign, and reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem, and did not that which was right in the sight of the LORD his God, like David his father. 3 But he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, yea, and made his son to pass through the fire, according to the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out from before the children of Israel. 4 And he sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places, and on the hills, and under every green tree.”* (**2Kings 16:2-4**)
 - **Hezekiah** was Josiah’s great grandfather. He reigned for 29 years (716-687 BC). He reigned just after the Lord punished the northern kingdom of Israel, with brutal destruction at the hands of the Assyrians. As we just saw from Ahaz’s reign, Judah had similarly gone a whoring - following after the godless example of her sister Israel – but the Lord mercifully gave Judah the opportunity to learn from the horrific punishment of Israel. In the face of this stark warning from God, Hezekiah turned Judah away from their idols – he broke down their images, groves, and altars – and he restored the proper order of the priests, and work of the temple. *“And thus did Hezekiah throughout all Judah, and wrought that which was good and right and truth before the LORD his God. And in every work that he began in the service of the house of God, and in the law, and in the commandments, to seek his God, he did it with all his heart, and prospered.”* (**2Chronicles 31:20,21**) This spiritual revival was remarkable, and included miraculous deliverances at the hand of God, including the destruction of the Assyrian juggernaut that stood on Jerusalem’s doorstep, and the healing of Hezekiah, when he lay dying. The Lord mercifully gave Judah this king, these blessings, and this opportunity to turn to Him with their whole hearts; in doing so, he put them to the test. No

sooner than the pressure of the Assyrian assault was off of them, and the good king was dead, they turned immediately back to their idolatry, which leads us to ...

- **Manasseh** was Josiah's grandfather. He reigned for 55 years (687-642 BC). While Hezekiah was remarkably good and faithful, and he caused Judah to do right, Manasseh was more evil than any who had come before him, causing Judah to immediately, heartily, and violently return to their idols, including the bloody persecution of the saints and prophets of God that walked faithfully among them. Consider these stark details: *"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 Hephzibah. 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.** 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.** 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?” (2Kings 21:1-17)*

- **Amon** was Josiah’s father. He reigned for two evil filled years (642-640 BC), wherein he doubled down on Menasseh’s wickedness and idolatry. He was assassinated.
- Josiah became King at 8 years old, and reigned for 31 years (640-609 BC).
 - Like his great grandfather Hezekiah, Josiah led a spiritual revival in Judah, but it was too late – God had already commanded their destruction in the days of Manasseh, and that destruction came swiftly after Josiah died (585 BC).

With that context in mind, we will consider the details of Josiah’s life which the Holy Spirit has provided for our learning and admonition. For the sake of our analysis today, I have merged the two narratives of Josiah’s life from 2Kings 22 & 23, and 2Chronicles 34 & 35, so that 1) the events are in order, and 2) we consider the passage that provides the most detail for each event.

Seeking the Lord with the Strength of Youth

2Chronicles 34:1-7 “1 Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem one and thirty years. 2 **And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the ways of David his father, and declined neither to the right hand, nor to the left.** 3 **For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was yet young, he began to seek after the God of David his father: and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem from the high places, and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images.** 4 *And they brake down the altars of Baalim in his presence; and the images, that were on high above them, he cut down; and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images, he brake in pieces, and made dust of them, and strowed it upon the graves of them that had sacrificed unto them. 5 And he burnt the bones of the priests upon their altars, and cleansed Judah and Jerusalem. 6 And so did he in the cities of Manasseh, and Ephraim, and Simeon, even unto Naphtali, with their mattocks round about. 7 And when he had broken down the altars and the groves, and had beaten the graven images into powder, and cut down all the idols throughout all the land of Israel, he returned to Jerusalem.”*

- He began to reign at 8 years old, which means that he would have had handlers that were doing the practical work of ruling the kingdom. Those people would have been grooming him, and heavily influencing him and his official actions.

Additionally, his father and grandfather did him a terrible disservice with their wicked example, and the fact that they largely removed the word of God from the landscape. When these are your parents, teachers, and masters, what hope do you have to find God? From the ages of 8 to 16, it appears that his reign continued in the pattern of those wicked fathers.

- ***Ecclesiastes 10:16,17*** “16 Woe to thee, O land, when thy king is a child, and thy princes eat in the morning! 17 Blessed art thou, O land, when thy king is the son of nobles, and thy princes eat in due season, for strength, and not for drunkenness!”
- Consider the despair that God’s people may well have felt as they watched this child king ascend to power, continuing for eight years in the path of Ahaz, Manasseh and Amon. But then Solomon’s words of woe turn to blessings and joy when at the tender age of 16, he suddenly shows himself the son of nobles and princes – the son of king David!
- Our Lord is mighty to save! These circumstances create a perfect backdrop for the only Potentate to show His absolute, inescapable power to call His people to himself, and to preserve them. The Holy Spirit sanctified this young man – gave him faith, and caused him to love, fear, and seek after the Lord! What hope and comfort! Josiah “sought” the Lord for four years (from the ages of 16 to 20) – praying, learning, and being obedient to the things that he understood, and was able to do. Once he came fully to years, the game changed, and he was able to take full control of the throne, so that he could serve God with his full strength.
 - Over the years, we have encountered many young people who have professed faith in our Lord, and who have expressed a desire to walk with this assembly. Their circumstance seems overwhelming to them, because their parents don’t love and fear God, and yet they must be subject to them for a short season. Have no fear, my young friends – see here how God caused this young man to grow in grace and faith, while he obediently came to years under his earthly masters. God is able to keep you and deliver you as well. Seek Him, with patience and faith; submit yourself to your earthly masters, and do what you are able to do in your present circumstance, while you patiently wait for His deliverance.
- ***Lamentations 3:27*** “27 It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth.”
 - Josiah is a wonderful exemplar of this provocation for young people to bear the yoke in their youth. What is this yoke?
 - In one sense, I believe that it speaks to the fact that young people, ought to fully employ their strength and intelligence with all the vigor of their youth. They should immerse themselves in sober-minded consideration of their family, church, and masters, and therefore fill their days with good, hard, God-pleasing work. Each of you young

people need to read carefully about Josiah's virtuous behavior, and ask yourselves whether you are laboring unto God – zealously and diligently – as you ought to be. If you aren't, then DO IT; don't make excuses for yourselves! Are you daily doing the uncomfortable work of preparing and exercising yourselves – mind, soul, and body – to be good soldiers for Christ? Or are you following the example of this doomed and rapidly failing generation around you? Are you clothing yourself with slothfulness, pride, gluttony and self-satisfaction? Each of the older people needs to ask ourselves whether we are teaching and requiring that kind of labor from our young people. We need to be teaching and coaching them to be fully engaged, and learning skills that will serve them, their families, the church, and the ministry well. We need to have a next-man-up mentality. That requires giving them opportunities, and then coaching them through those situations.

- More specifically, I believe that this is the yoke of Christ. It is best for a person to learn to be obedient to God's commands, and to submit their desires to His will, when they are young and tractable. It is best for a person to learn to mortify their pride in their youth - to quietly and patiently bow to the chastening rod of our loving father.
- **Henry:** *“Happy and wise are those who seek the Lord and prepare for usefulness at an early age, when others are pursuing sinful pleasures, contracting bad habits, and forming ruinous associations. Who can express the anguish prevented by early piety, and its blessed effects? — Diligent self-examination and watchfulness will convince us of the deceitfulness and wickedness of our own hearts, and the sinfulness of our lives.”*

Faithful Labor Rewarded:

2Chronicles 34:8-18 *“8 Now in the eighteenth year of his reign, when he had purged the land, and the house, he sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, and Maaseiah the governor of the city, and Joah the son of Joahaz the recorder, to repair the house of the LORD his God. 9 And when they came to Hilkiah the high priest, they delivered the money that was brought into the house of God, which the Levites that kept the doors had gathered of the hand of Manasseh and Ephraim, and of all the remnant of Israel, and of all Judah and Benjamin; and they returned to Jerusalem. 10 And they put it in the hand of the workmen that had the oversight of the house of the LORD, and they gave it to the workmen that wrought in the house of the LORD, to repair and amend the house: 11 Even to the artificers and builders gave they it, to buy hewn stone, and timber for couplings, and to floor the houses which the kings of Judah had destroyed. 12 **And the men did the work faithfully:** and the overseers of them were Jahath and Obadiah, the Levites, of the sons of Merari; and Zechariah and Meshullam, of the*

sons of the Kohathites, to set it forward; and other of the Levites, all that could skill of instruments of musick. 13 Also they were over the bearers of burdens, and were overseers of all that wrought the work in any manner of service: and of the Levites there were scribes, and officers, and porters. 14 And when they brought out the money that was brought into the house of the LORD, **Hilkiah the priest found a book of the law of the LORD given by Moses.** 15 And Hilkiah answered and said to Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD. And Hilkiah delivered the book to Shaphan. 16 And Shaphan carried the book to the king, and brought the king word back again, saying, All that was committed to thy servants, they do it. 17 And they have gathered together the money that was found in the house of the LORD, and have delivered it into the hand of the overseers, and to the hand of the workmen. 18 Then Shaphan the scribe told the king, saying, Hilkiah the priest hath given me a book. And Shaphan read it before the king.”

- What a beautiful sight when the Lord brings his people together in one place with one spirit to labor with one accord! *“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!” (Psalms 133:1)*
- How did this book come to be hidden in this fashion? We aren’t told specifically, but we know the destructive way that those wicked kings were treating God’s house, and so I tend to think that some faithful soul(s) deliberately put it out of harm’s way. Regardless of how it played out, this is nothing short of the miraculous preservation of God’s word. Satan has been on a mission to destroy the scriptures since the day that they began to be written, but God has thwarted those efforts, such that we are able to have the scriptures at this hour. Praise God!
 - **Henry:** *“It was a great instance of God’s favour, and a token for good to Josiah and his people, that the book of the law was thus seasonably brought to light, to direct and quicken that blessed reformation which Josiah had begun. It is a sign that God has mercy in store for a people when he magnifies his law among them and makes that honourable, and furnishes them with means for the increase of scripture-knowledge. The translating of the scriptures into vulgar tongues was the glory, strength, and joy of the Reformation from Popery. It is observable that they were about a good work, repairing the temple, when they found the book of the law. Those that do their duty according to their knowledge shall have their knowledge increased. To him that hath shall be given. The book of the law was an abundant recompence for all their care and cost about the repair of the temple.”*
- Clearly there had been some understanding of the scriptures, by which Josiah was governing and tearing down idols, and by which the priests were ministering in the temple; where was that coming from, if it wasn’t coming from the scriptures? I understand this to be two things: 1) they still had, and used, parts of the scriptures, and 2) they were leaning on their verbal and written traditions, rather than the scriptures themselves. Here again, we are reminded that there is no

substitute for reading the words themselves. It is good to expound, and explain the scriptures; there is much use in preaching, practical application, instructive stories, allegories, etc., and yet we must get back to the words themselves, because THEY are God-breathed. (**2Timothy 3:16**) It's easy to see the folly of what the Jews and Catholics have done with their Talmud and Canon Law – they teach the words, wisdom, and commandments of men, rather than the pure word of God. However, we must be careful that we don't – by degrees – begin to lean on the words and wisdom of men.

Broken Heart

2Kings 22:11-20 “**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 Asahiah 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 Asahiah, 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.”

- God chastened Josiah at the height of happiness, prosperity, and hearty work for God. Sometimes when we are feeling our strongest and happiest, the Lord administers a chastening blow that brings us humbly to our knees. My friends, marvel not at these moments – see them as the loving administration of discipline that they are. Consider that your grief, sorrow, and pain are of great price to God,

and He brings them about with a holy purpose. Consider what pain and folly He is keeping you from by shaping your path in this way.

- Spurgeon: “Learn from this that you and I, in the midst of a career of success from God, when our heart is most pure and most right, must not therefore expect that all things will go smoothly, but may rather, for that very reason, expect to experience humiliating circumstances. Like Paul, when favored with an abundance of revelations, we may expect a "thorn in the flesh," lest we should be exalted above measure. Disclosures of our own weakness and sinfulness are often made to us at the very time when God is honoring us most. In order that our vessel may be able to endure a strong and fair wind of Divine favor, the Lord in infinite wisdom causes us to be ballasted with grief or trial.”

New Light – Understanding Becomes Action

2Kings 23:2-24 *“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 Bethel. 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 Beersheba, 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 Nathanmelech 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 Bethel, 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 Bethel. 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 Bethel. 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. ... 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."

- Prior to finding the book, Josiah did what he understood to do. He added virtue to his faith by doing those things with zeal, courage, diligence, and determination. Now that he has the book and the words of the prophetess, he adds knowledge to his virtue. In the face of that new understanding he immediately changes course, determined to bring that same virtue to the areas that had previously been lacking. Any ONE of the things that he took on would have been overwhelming and faced with opposition, but he took them all on - nothing wavering – and the Lord made it prosper!
 - **Proverbs 4:18** “But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.”
 - If we have hope that we are God’s, then we must expect that this will happen in our lives. If we are ever to have more light, then we are necessarily coming from a darker place. When we see more clearly what we should be doing,

then we must change course immediately; we must put on virtue and press forward in faith.

Keeping the Passover – By Faith!

2Chronicles 35:1-19 *“1 Moreover Josiah kept a passover unto the LORD in Jerusalem: and they killed the passover on the fourteenth day of the first month. 2 And he set the priests in their charges, and encouraged them to the service of the house of the LORD, 3 And said unto the Levites that taught all Israel, which were holy unto the LORD, Put the holy ark in the house which Solomon the son of David king of Israel did build; it shall not be a burden upon your shoulders: serve now the LORD your God, and his people Israel, 4 And prepare yourselves by the houses of your fathers, after your courses, according to the writing of David king of Israel, and according to the writing of Solomon his son. 5 And stand in the holy place according to the divisions of the families of the fathers of your brethren the people, and after the division of the families of the Levites. 6 So kill the passover, and sanctify yourselves, and prepare your brethren, that they may do according to the word of the LORD by the hand of Moses. ... 17 And the children of Israel that were present kept the passover at that time, and the feast of unleavened bread seven days. 18 **And there was no passover like to that kept in Israel from the days of Samuel the prophet; neither did all the kings of Israel keep such a passover as Josiah kept, and the priests, and the Levites, and all Judah and Israel that were present, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.** 19 In the eighteenth year of the reign of Josiah was this passover kept.”*

- Again, we see Josiah showing great diligence and care when it comes to serving God – doing all things heartily. Having set about to eliminate idolatry and the worship of false gods, he proceeds with setting proper worship before the people. Similarly, we know that while we preach to others with zeal, we must maintain our own obedience and humility before God.
- “Through faith [Moses] kept the Passover ...” (Hebrews 11:28) Similarly, this was an act of faith for Josiah; it wasn’t about trying to escape the doom that had been proclaimed against Judah - he knew full well that destruction was absolutely coming. However, he also believed that the hope of God’s people is in the Messiah that the Passover foreshadowed. He boldly proclaimed his faith and hope in Christ, and it was counted to him for righteousness. Similarly, when we present ourselves to worship (to preach, to hear, to perform the ordinances, to sing, to pray) it must be a matter of spirit and faith, not of logistics and prescribed ceremony.

Flesh is Grass

2Chronicles 35:20-27 *“20 After all this, when Josiah had prepared the temple, Necho king of Egypt came up to fight against Carchemish by Euphrates: and Josiah went out against him. 21 But he sent ambassadors to him, saying, What have I to do with thee, thou king of Judah? I come not against thee this day, but against the house wherewith I have war: for God*

commanded me to make haste: forbear thee from meddling with God, who is with me, that he destroy thee not. 22 Nevertheless Josiah would not turn his face from him, but disguised himself, that he might fight with him, and hearkened not unto the words of Necho from the mouth of God, and came to fight in the valley of Megiddo. 23 And the archers shot at king Josiah; and the king said to his servants, Have me away; for I am sore wounded. 24 His servants therefore took him out of that chariot, and put him in the second chariot that he had; and they brought him to Jerusalem, and he died, and was buried in one of the sepulchres of his fathers. And all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah. 25 And Jeremiah lamented for Josiah: and all the singing men and the singing women spake of Josiah in their lamentations to this day, and made them an ordinance in Israel: and, behold, they are written in the lamentations. 26 Now the rest of the acts of Josiah, and his goodness, according to that which was written in the law of the LORD, 27 And his deeds, first and last, behold, they are written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah.”

2Kings 23:25-27 “**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.”

- Remember – the Lord promised Josiah that he would be gathered into his grave in peace. (**2Kings 22:20**) How does this bloody, violent death align with that promise?
 - The only true, meaningful, lasting peace is that peace which has been mediated by Christ Jesus between God and depraved, fallen, sin-sick men; that peace which brings with it the promise of eternal life, and rest in our Lord. That is the only peace worth having; it is the only peace that we desire; it is the peace that Josiah had. That peace contains no promise that we will have ease and prosperity in this life, or that we will depart this life in a gentle, easy way. What we know, is that our frames will certainly turn to dust; how we exit this world is not the driver, or the measure of our salvation. We ought to be very careful not to speak hastily and foolishly about the state of a man’s eternal souls. “*Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.*” (**1Corinthians 4:5**)
 - **1Thessalonians 4:13-18** “13 But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have

no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. 15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. 16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: 17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. 18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

I love you all. Amen.