

ONCE UPON A THRONE **“Josiah, the Last Good King”**

We are still in the midst of our sermon series “Once Upon a Throne.” After the kingdom divides, we have two very separate nations. Last Sunday, we heard one of the stories of the northern kingdom of Israel and saw how the northern kingdom turned its back on God. Ahab was one of a series of bad or evil kings and in fact, in all the histories, there was not one good king for Israel. The prophets spoke of how their wealth was destroying their relationship with God and their neighbor. Isaiah, Micah, Amos, Hosea, Joel, and Obadiah begged them to turn from their wicked ways. In 721 B.C.E. the kingdom fell to the Assyrians. The ten tribes of Israel are dispersed among the nations and those left behind in Samaria intermarry. The southern kingdom will last almost another 200 years before they fall to the Babylonians. Judah and Jerusalem will also be plagued with bad and wicked kings, but there were at least 7 good ones who remembered all that God had done and restored Judah back into right relationship with God. Hezekiah was one of the seven good kings and was in power when the northern kingdom fell. He restored the temple of Solomon and enacted sweeping religious reforms sweeping, ridding the kingdom of idols or worship other than the worship of Yahweh. He invited those left in the northern kingdom to join in the Passover feast, few did, many just mocked his efforts. Hezekiah could not reunify the kingdoms, but he had a deep desire to create unity in worship and practice. His great grandson, would be the last good king who would love God and follow in Hezekiah’s footsteps. Josiah was only eight when he ascended to the throne, but according to scripture, “he did what was right in the LORD’S eyes and walked in the ways of his ancestor David.” May his love of God and he choosing to walk in the paths of God be a witness to us and a challenge to do likewise. – Pastor Cindy Watson

Daily Prayer

God Sovereign and Generous,
Who commands the rise and fall of the nations,
Who calls and has chosen many peoples,
Who weeps when they are hard on each other,
Who haunts every local culture---including ours-
With your will for well-being
You are the one whom we praise in astonishment,
Adore in gladness,
Thank in gratitude...
Look with mercy on us this day,
On the churches we serve and love,
On all the people we name,
On all the communities so fragile in which we live.
Help us to follow you and obey you as Jesus did. Amen.
(Adapted from a prayer by Walter Brueggemann)

This week’s sermon may be viewed at <https://boxcast.tv/channel/f9yfyjzko2esfwfc5vkn>

STUDY GUIDE

Monday, July 19, 2021 2 Chronicles 24: 1-8, 2 Kings 22: 1-2

The book of Chronicles (1 & 2) tells the story of the kings. Sometimes the books of 1 and 2 Kings is identical to what is in 1 and 2 Chronicles. Sometimes Chronicles adds more to the story or expounds on the genealogy. In the case of Josiah, the story in 2 Kings is more focused on finding the Torah and on the temple repairs, where Chronicles is more interested in the covenant with all the people. In 2 Kings, Josiah's mother is named and often when women are named it is in reference to their worship of other gods. Perhaps Josiah's mother Adaiah was faithful to God and taught Josiah to be faithful as we well. What we know, is that even as a child, Josiah did what was right and walked in the way of God. *Who has guided you to be faithful and challenged you to walk in the way of God?*

Tuesday July 20,2021 2 Chronicles 34: 15-33

By the time Josiah is 26, they begin to repair the temple and find the book of Law. If you have read the Torah, you know that there are many condemnations upon those who do not keep the law. Of the twenty kings of Judah and Jerusalem, only eight were good. And the word comes from the prophetess Huldah that God would bring disaster, but not upon Josiah. It would be over 150 years before Babylon would force the people of Judah into exile, The people Israel had been destroyed not quite 100 years before so Josiah would be the last of the kings who would remain faithful to God. Josiah is promised peace and the presence of God because of his humble heart and faithfulness. *How do you see God's grace with those who humble themselves and cling to God? How do you see it in your own life?*

Wednesday July 21, 2021 2 Chronicles 35: 1-18, 2 Kings 23: 21-25

The writer of 2 Kings gives a little more insight into what happens during Josiah's reign. Both describe this first Passover celebrated in generations. Josiah embraced the need to remember God's providence and deliverance. Josiah drove out all the religious practitioners who were not faithful to God. Verse 25 states, "before him there was no king like him who turned to the LORD with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; nor did any like him arise after him." Using the phrase from Deuteronomy to follow God with all your heart, soul and might, the author sets the stage for Judah's eventual exile to Babylon. Josiah was truly the last good king and all others who would follow would once again turn their backs on the worship of Yahweh. *How do you seek God with all that you are? What do you need to put away or put aside in order to be faithful?*

Thursday July 22, 2021 2 Chronicles 25: 20-27

Here we read of the last days of Josiah. Egypt was fighting and Judah was caught between the nations. Josiah chose to become part of the battle even though word comes to him to stay home. He is wounded and died in Jerusalem. Even though he was the last good and faithful king, he was not perfect. His decision to go to battle was a bad one. His son who followed turned away from God and was enslaved by Egypt. In a few generations, Babylon would capture and destroy Judah and Jerusalem. Josiah show the way, but his sons and descendants chose another path. *Looking at your faith and your life, how do your words and actions reflect what you really believe?*

Friday, July 23, 2021 Jeremiah 31: 31-34

Prophets walked with the people and both counseled and challenged the kings and rulers. Jeremiah was one of the prophets who walked with Judah through those last days before the exile. He was a young prophet when Josiah was a young king. Both called by God at a young ago. These words of Jeremiah are sent to a people downtrodden and afraid. They are words of promise: a time is coming when people won't have to look anywhere but their own hearts and their God will write what is good and just upon them. *How do you experience God's word written on your heart and spirit?*