**2 Chronicles 33-36**- May 3rd

Manasseh King of Judah

**33**Manasseh was twelve years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem fifty-five (55) years. **2**He did evil in the eyes of the Lord, following the detestable practices of the nations the Lord had driven out before the Israelites. **3**He rebuilt the high places his father Hezekiah had demolished; he also erected altars to the Baals and made Asherah poles. He bowed down to all the starry hosts and worshiped them. **4**He built altars in the temple of the Lord, of which the Lord had said, “My Name will remain in Jerusalem forever.” **5**In both courts of the temple of the Lord, he built altars to all the starry hosts. **6**He sacrificed his children in the fire in the Valley of Ben Hinnom, practiced divination and witchcraft, sought omens, and consulted mediums and spiritists. He did much evil in the eyes of the Lord, arousing his anger.

**7**He took the image he had made and put it in God’s temple, of which God had said to David and to his son Solomon, “In this temple and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, I will put my Name forever. **8**I will not again make the feet of the Israelites leave the land I assigned to your ancestors, if only they will be careful to do everything I commanded them concerning all the laws, decrees and regulations given through Moses.” **9**But Manasseh led Judah and the people of Jerusalem astray, so that they did more evil than the nations the Lord had destroyed before the Israelites.

**10**The Lord spoke to Manasseh and his people, but they paid no attention.

**11**So the Lord brought against them the army commanders of the king of Assyria, who took Manasseh prisoner, put a hook in his nose, bound him with bronze shackles and took him to Babylon. **12**In his distress he sought the favor of the Lord his God and humbled himself greatly before the God of his ancestors. **13**And when he prayed to him, the Lord was moved by his entreaty and listened to his plea; so he brought him back to Jerusalem and to his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the Lord is God.

**14**Afterward he rebuilt the outer wall of the City of David, west of the Gihon spring in the valley, as far as the entrance of the Fish Gate and encircling the hill of Ophel; he also made it much higher. He stationed military commanders in all the fortified cities in Judah. **15**He got rid of the foreign gods and removed the image from the temple of the Lord, as well as all the altars he had built on the temple hill and in Jerusalem; and he threw them out of the city. **16**Then he restored the altar of the Lord and sacrificed fellowship offerings and thank offerings on it, and told Judah to serve the Lord, the God of Israel. **17**The people, however, continued to sacrifice at the high places, but only to the Lord their God.

**18**The other events of Manasseh’s reign, including his prayer to his God and the words the seers spoke to him in the name of the Lord, the God of Israel, are written in the annals of the kings of Israel. **19**His prayer and how God was moved by his entreaty, as well as all his sins and unfaithfulness, and the sites where he built high places and set up Asherah poles and idols before he humbled himself—all these are written in the records of the seers. **20**Manasseh rested with his ancestors and was buried in his palace. And Amon his son succeeded him as king.

Amon King of Judah

**21**Amon was twenty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem two years. **22**He did evil in the eyes of the Lord, as his father Manasseh had done. Amon worshiped and offered sacrifices to all the idols Manasseh had made. **23**But unlike his father Manasseh, he did not humble himself before the Lord; Amon increased his guilt.

**24**Amon’s officials conspired against him and assassinated him in his palace. **25**Then the people of the land killed all who had plotted against King Amon, and they made Josiah his son king in his place.

Josiah’s Reforms

**34**Josiah was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem thirty-one years. **2**He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord and followed the ways of his father David, not turning aside to the right or to the left.

**3**In the eighth year of his reign, while he was still young, he began to seek the God of his father David. In his twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of high places, Asherah poles and idols. **4**Under his direction the altars of the Baals were torn down; he cut to pieces the incense altars that were above them, and smashed the Asherah poles and the idols. These he broke to pieces and scattered over the graves of those who had sacrificed to them. **5**He burned the bones of the priests on their altars, and so he purged Judah and Jerusalem. **6**In the towns of Manasseh, Ephraim and Simeon, as far as Naphtali, and in the ruins around them, **7**he tore down the altars and the Asherah poles and crushed the idols to powder and cut to pieces all the incense altars throughout Israel. Then he went back to Jerusalem.

**8**In the eighteenth year of Josiah’s reign, to purify the land and the temple, he sent Shaphan son of Azaliah and Maaseiah the ruler of the city, with Joah son of Joahaz, the recorder, to repair the temple of the Lord his God.

**9**They went to Hilkiah the high priest and gave him the money that had been brought into the temple of God, which the Levites who were the gatekeepers had collected from the people of Manasseh, Ephraim and the entire remnant of Israel and from all the people of Judah and Benjamin and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. **10**Then they entrusted it to the men appointed to supervise the work on the Lord’s temple. These men paid the workers who repaired and restored the temple. **11**They also gave money to the carpenters and builders to purchase dressed stone, and timber for joists and beams for the buildings that the kings of Judah had allowed to fall into ruin.

**12**The workers labored faithfully. Over them to direct them were Jahath and Obadiah, Levites descended from Merari, and Zechariah and Meshullam, descended from Kohath. The Levites - all who were skilled in playing musical instruments - **13**had charge of the laborers and supervised all the workers from job to job. Some of the Levites were secretaries, scribes and gatekeepers.

The Book of the Law Found

**14**While they were bringing out the money that had been taken into the temple of the Lord, Hilkiah the priest found the Book of the Law of the Lord that had been given through Moses. **15**Hilkiah said to Shaphan the secretary, “I have found the Book of the Law in the temple of the Lord.” He gave it to Shaphan.

**16**Then Shaphan took the book to the king and reported to him: “Your officials are doing everything that has been committed to them. **17**They have paid out the money that was in the temple of the Lord and have entrusted it to the supervisors and workers.” **18**Then Shaphan the secretary informed the king, “Hilkiah the priest has given me a book.” And Shaphan read from it in the presence of the king.

**19**When the king heard the words of the Law, he tore his robes. **20**He gave these orders to Hilkiah, Ahikam son of Shaphan, Abdon son of Micah, Shaphan the secretary and Asaiah the king’s attendant: **21**“Go and inquire of the Lord for me and for the remnant in Israel and Judah about what is written in this book that has been found. Great is the Lord’s anger that is poured out on us because those who have gone before us have not kept the word of the Lord; they have not acted in accordance with all that is written in this book.”

**22**Hilkiah and those the king had sent with him went to speak to the prophet Huldah, who was the wife of Shallum son of Tokhath, the son of Hasrah, keeper of the wardrobe. She lived in Jerusalem, in the New Quarter.

**23**She said to them, “This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: Tell the man who sent you to me, **24**‘This is what the Lord says: I am going to bring disaster on this place and its people - all the curses written in the book that has been read in the presence of the king of Judah.**25**Because they have forsaken me and burned incense to other gods and aroused my anger by all that their hands have made, my anger will be poured out on this place and will not be quenched.’ **26**Tell the king of Judah, who sent you to inquire of the Lord, ‘This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says concerning the words you heard: **27**Because your heart was responsive and you humbled yourself before God when you heard what He spoke against this place and its people, and because you humbled yourself before Me and tore your robes and wept in My presence, I have heard you, declares the Lord. **28**Now I will gather you to your ancestors, and you will be buried in peace. Your eyes will not see all the disaster I am going to bring on this place and on those who live here.’” So they took her answer back to the king.

**29**Then the king called together all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem.**30**He went up to the temple of the Lord with the people of Judah, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the priests and the Levites - all the people from the least to the greatest. He read in their hearing all the words of the Book of the Covenant, which had been found in the temple of the Lord. **31**The king stood by his pillar and renewed the covenant in the presence of the Lord - to follow the Lord and keep his commands, statutes and decrees with all his heart and all his soul, and to obey the words of the covenant written in this book.

**32**Then he had everyone in Jerusalem and Benjamin pledge themselves to it; the people of Jerusalem did this in accordance with the covenant of God, the God of their ancestors. **33**Josiah removed all the detestable idols from all the territory belonging to the Israelites, and he had all who were present in Israel serve the Lord their God. As long as he lived, they did not fail to follow the Lord, the God of their ancestors.

Josiah Celebrates the Passover

**35**Josiah celebrated the Passover to the Lord in Jerusalem, and the Passover lamb was slaughtered on the fourteenth day of the first month.**2**He appointed the priests to their duties and encouraged them in the service of the Lord’s temple. **3**He said to the Levites, who instructed all Israel and who had been consecrated to the Lord: “Put the sacred ark in the temple that Solomon son of David king of Israel built. It is not to be carried about on your shoulders. Now serve the Lord your God and his people Israel. **4**Prepare yourselves by families in your divisions, according to the instructions written by David king of Israel and by his son Solomon.

**5**“Stand in the holy place with a group of Levites for each subdivision of the families of your fellow Israelites, the lay people. **6**Slaughter the Passover lambs, consecrate yourselves and prepare the lambs for your fellow Israelites, doing what the Lord commanded through Moses.”

**7**Josiah provided for all the lay people who were there a total of thirty thousand lambs and goats for the Passover offerings, and also three thousand cattle - all from the king’s own possessions.

**8**His officials also contributed voluntarily to the people and the priests and Levites. Hilkiah, Zechariah and Jehiel, the officials in charge of God’s temple, gave the priests twenty-six hundred Passover offerings and three hundred cattle. **9**Also Konaniah along with Shemaiah and Nethanel, his brothers, and Hashabiah, Jeiel and Jozabad, the leaders of the Levites, provided five thousand Passover offerings and five hundred head of cattle for the Levites.

**10**The service was arranged and the priests stood in their places with the Levites in their divisions as the king had ordered. **11**The Passover lambs were slaughtered, and the priests splashed against the altar the blood handed to them, while the Levites skinned the animals. **12**They set aside the burnt offerings to give them to the subdivisions of the families of the people to offer to the Lord, as it is written in the Book of Moses. They did the same with the cattle. **13**They roasted the Passover animals over the fire as prescribed, and boiled the holy offerings in pots, caldrons and pans and served them quickly to all the people. **14**After this, they made preparations for themselves and for the priests, because the priests, the descendants of Aaron, were sacrificing the burnt offerings and the fat portions until nightfall. So the Levites made preparations for themselves and for the Aaronic priests.

**15**The musicians, the descendants of Asaph, were in the places prescribed by David, Asaph, Heman and Jeduthun the king’s seer. The gatekeepers at each gate did not need to leave their posts, because their fellow Levites made the preparations for them. **16**So at that time the entire service of the Lord was carried out for the celebration of the Passover and the offering of burnt offerings on the altar of the Lord, as King Josiah had ordered. **17**The Israelites who were present celebrated the Passover at that time and observed the Festival of Unleavened Bread for seven days. **18**The Passover had not been observed like this in Israel since the days of the prophet Samuel; and none of the kings of Israel had ever celebrated such a Passover as did Josiah, with the priests, the Levites and all Judah and Israel who were there with the people of Jerusalem. **19**This Passover was celebrated in the eighteenth year of Josiah’s reign.

The Death of Josiah

**20**After all this, when Josiah had set the temple in order, Necho king of Egypt went up to fight at Carchemish on the Euphrates, and Josiah marched out to meet him in battle. **21**But Necho sent messengers to him, saying, “What quarrel is there, king of Judah, between you and me? It is not you I am attacking at this time, but the house with which I am at war. God has told me to hurry; so stop opposing God, who is with me, or he will destroy you.”

**22**Josiah, however, would not turn away from him, but disguised himself to engage him in battle. He would not listen to what Necho had said at God’s command but went to fight him on the plain of Megiddo.

**23**Archers shot King Josiah, and he told his officers, “Take me away; I am badly wounded.” **24**So they took him out of his chariot, put him in his other chariot and brought him to Jerusalem, where he died. He was buried in the tombs of his ancestors, and all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for him.

**25**Jeremiah composed laments for Josiah, and to this day all the male and female singers commemorate Josiah in the laments. These became a tradition in Israel and are written in the Laments.

**26**The other events of Josiah’s reign and his acts of devotion in accordance with what is written in the Law of the Lord - **27**all the events, from beginning to end, are written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah.

**36 1**And the people of the land took Jehoahaz son of Josiah and made him king in Jerusalem in place of his father.

Jehoahaz King of Judah

**2**Jehoahaz was twenty-three years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem three months. **3**The king of Egypt dethroned him in Jerusalem and imposed on Judah a levy of a hundred talents of silver and a talent of gold. **4**The king of Egypt made Eliakim, a brother of Jehoahaz, king over Judah and Jerusalem and changed Eliakim’s name to Jehoiakim. But Necho took Eliakim’s brother Jehoahaz and carried him off to Egypt.

Jehoiakim King of Judah

**5**Jehoiakim was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem eleven years. He did evil in the eyes of the Lord his God.

**6**Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon attacked him and bound him with bronze shackles to take him to Babylon. **7**Nebuchadnezzar also took to Babylon articles from the temple of the Lord and put them in his temple there.

**8**The other events of Jehoiakim’s reign, the detestable things he did and all that was found against him, are written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah. And Jehoiachin his son succeeded him as king.

Jehoiachin King of Judah

**9**Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem three months and ten days. He did evil in the eyes of the Lord. **10**In the spring, King Nebuchadnezzar sent for him and brought him to Babylon, together with articles of value from the temple of the Lord, and he made Jehoiachin’s uncle, Zedekiah, king over Judah and Jerusalem.

Zedekiah King of Judah

**11**Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem eleven years. **12**He did evil in the eyes of the Lord his God and did not humble himself before Jeremiah the prophet, who spoke the word of the Lord. **13**He also rebelled against King Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him take an oath in God’s name. He became stiff-necked and hardened his heart and would not turn to the Lord, the God of Israel. **14**Furthermore, all the leaders of the priests and the people became more and more unfaithful, following all the detestable practices of the nations and defiling the temple of the Lord, which he had consecrated in Jerusalem.

The Fall of Jerusalem

**15**The Lord, the God of their ancestors, sent word to them through his messengers again and again, because he had pity on his people and on his dwelling place. **16**But they mocked God’s messengers, despised his words and scoffed at his prophets until the wrath of the Lord was aroused against his people and there was no remedy. **17**He brought up against them the king of the Babylonians, who killed their young men with the sword in the sanctuary, and did not spare young men or young women, the elderly or the infirm. God gave them all into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar. **18**He carried to Babylon all the articles from the temple of God, both large and small, and the treasures of the Lord’s temple and the treasures of the king and his officials. **19**They set fire to God’s temple and broke down the wall of Jerusalem; they burned all the palaces and destroyed everything of value there.

**20**He carried into exile to Babylon the remnant, who escaped from the sword, and they became servants to him and his successors until the kingdom of Persia came to power. **21**The land enjoyed its sabbath rests; all the time of its desolation it rested, until the seventy years were completed in fulfillment of the word of the Lord spoken by Jeremiah.

**22**In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, in order to fulfill the word of the Lord spoken by Jeremiah, the Lord moved the heart of Cyrus king of Persia to make a proclamation throughout his realm and also to put it in writing: **23**“This is what Cyrus king of Persia says: “‘The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and he has appointed me to build a temple for him at Jerusalem in Judah. Any of his people among you may go up, and may the Lord their God be with them.’”