

2290 - GOOD KING JOSIAH & PROVIDENCE

Read: 2 Chro 34:1-9 + 14-21 + 2 Kin 23:21-25 ++ 2 Chr 35:20-24

PRELIMS. Life has **conflicts** - perhaps especially for Christians! For those who **believe** God **rules** in heaven and earth - **everything!** He controls the **details** of life as well as the **global** events of life. It can be very hard for a Xn to believe that **everything** is under God's control and He has a **definite plan** for the world. So, my purpose in this sermon is to **strengthen** your faith that God is in complete control and that the Holy Scriptures is a reliable guide to life.

Yes, we Xns must **admit** that in many of the events that take place in our **personal** lives as well as in **local, national** and **global** events, there seems to be **more disorder** than **order**. 'The world is in a mess, world wars, holocaust and now **environmental problems**'!

But God in His Word has told us **this will be so!** God knew that this would be a question many people would ask, so He made sure He would cover that subject in His Word. There are **two main passages** of Scripture which handle this matter. **Ecclesiastes** - a philosophical study which clearly states ***there is a violent perversion of justice*** in life - things **will happen** to the righteous that ought to happen to the wicked, and things **will happen** to the wicked which ought to happen to the righteous. This 'injustice in life' troubled Solomon so much so, that he *gave himself to study* the subject - the whole book of Eccles.!

The Book of **Habakkuk** is another book which deals with this subject. Hab could not understand why God would use such a wicked, perverted nation as the Chaldeans, to 'punish' the wicked Assyrians! Hab thought it should be Israel or Judah, God's own people who should do that! But no! God's ways are not our ways!

For me, one of the most '**conflicting**' acts of Providence in Scripture is the sudden, unexpected, untimely **death**, in **bazaar** circumstances, of **good King Josiah!** Absolute tragedy! Josiah was the **human instigator** of the **biggest, revival, spiritual as well as civil**

reformation, Judah ever had! Josiah was a fantastic king, greatly **underrated** by the commentators and theologians of today.

Josiah began his rule at, yes, **8 years old!** Of course he had **tutors/guardians** to 'take care of things'. *the heir, as long as he is a **child**, is no different from a slave, though he is the owner of everything, but he is **under guardians and managers until the date set*** [Gal 4:1,2]

Josiah became king through a **horrendous** act of **violence!** His father, King Amon, was **assassinated** by his own servants in his own house, and in the ensuing **revolt** by the people of Judah, they made Josiah king in his father's place. [2Kin 21:23] (But God was in it all!) Yes and God is in all the violence that is going on today in the world.

Josiah's **grandfather** was King **Manasseh** - the **worst, most wicked** king Judah ever had! His son Amon, Josiah's father, was also very evil. We might think that today we live in the most evil and perverted times - but no! Here is what **Eugene Peterson** says about Manasseh: 'Assyria was the dominant world power at this time...Manasseh...filling the country with every imaginable evil...making high art of evil - cruelty, torture, lasciviousness, black magic, spirit-mediums, witches, sorcerers, child-sacrifice...he was a great admirer of all things Assyrian and **imported** its evil by the truckload...He constructed Assyria-inspired sex-and-religion shrines...erected obscene phallic figures to the sex-goddess Asherah filled Solomon's temple with foul images and relics...built rooms in the temple for the use of **male prostitutes**...' [As Kingfishers Catch Fire, page 50]. They **abandoned their past!**

That was the world little Josiah was born into! **Far worse** than our 21st Cent UK! God's covenant people have lived through **far worse** times than we in the UK do now! God's people, in OT and NT have a **history** of rejecting Him! Yet He is exceedingly **patient** with them Things have been far worse but God rules and has shown that he has indeed 'an arm that's full of power Thy hand is great in might' [Ps89]

God has not told us who hJosiah's advisors were but we know that by **age 16** Josiah was *seeking the **God of David his father!*** It might have been a tremendous **shock** to him to hear that it was David's **faith** and **obedience** to God's Word that brought him so much success! He would certainly **not** have been **encouraged** to believe and **serve** God from his father or grandfather! **APP** The importance of **passing-on!**

Well, Josiah found David's God, for by the time he was **20** he started reforming the nation *he **did** what **was right** in the eyes of the **Lord**, and **walked** in the ways of the **Lord** and did not turn aside to the right hand or to the left* [2 Chr 34:1-4] He **cleaned out** all the idolatry and evil places which peppered the land. *he **deposed** all the **priests**..who burned incense to **Baal**...the **sun**...the **moon** and the constellations +he broke down the houses of the **male cult prostitutes** who were **in the house** of the Lord, where the women wove hangings for the Asherah* [2Kin 23:5-7] **APP** a tremendous feat! **Equivalent to Boris** closing all the **sex-shops** and **gay bars** in the country!!

And then a **wonderful thing** happened when Josiah was **26**! He had already started his work of reformation and was **repairing** the Temple when an **amazing discovery** was made, they found a **written copy** of **God's Word**! Up till then they depended on the **fragments/copies** by the priests/scribes and people's **memories** of God's Word!

APP An **excuse** for Judah's sins? They had **no Scriptures**! But we in the UK **cannot** plead such **ignorance**! Many in Judah did **not know** the truth - we on the other hand, **reject** the Scriptures we do know!

When Josiah *heard the words of the Law* **he tore his clothes**... *Go inquire of the Lord for me...for great is the wrath of the Lord... because our fathers have **not kept** the word of the Lord **to do** according to **all** that is written in this book* [2 Chr 34:19-21]

Josiah did great things before this Book was found but **even more** afterwards! He ensured that the **Church** (priests) their job aright!! Their sin was **syncretism** - the **joining up**, **amalgamating** with other gods/religions! That was the popular and **acceptable** position of the world's understanding of what faith is - as **Postmodernism** today! Josiah recognised that **faith** was vital - faith in Yahweh, the One **Almighty**, all powerful, omniscient, infinite, eternal and holy God!

The **acknowledgment and worship of the true God** needed to be honoured - the **Passover** - that **ordinance** which **testifies** to

salvation being entirely by **grace**! Well Josiah **did reform** the Church for *No such Passover had been kept since since the days of the Judges ...during all the days of the kings of Israel or of the kings of Judah...this Passover was kept to the Lord in Jer 'lem [2Kin23:22]*

*Yes, good King Josiah was a **great man** who did great things for God's people Israel. Things were **never better** - yet **God in His Providence** brought a **tragedy** into that situation! The '**unnecessary death**' of good King Josiah - through his **own folly**!!!!

Josiah foolishly went into battle with Neco of Egypt, when Neco himself **advised** him not to, for *I am **not coming against you*** (they were fighting the **Babylonians**!) Josiah **refused** to listen and even **disguised himself** and was **killed** in the battle! **Read 2 Chr 35:20-24**

Here was a godly King, who did wonderful things for God's people, yet ultimately *did **not listen to the words of Neco from the mouth of God** but came to fight in the plain of Megiddo [2 Chr 35:22cf]* Thus ended the revival - and evil kings took over the reigns till the end of Judah. Yes, God's Providence **includes tragedies** and **mistakes** by God's people but it all fulfils God's plan of salvation for every nation

Yes, but in history there was one **tragedy that was even bigger than the death of King Josiah - the **death of the Lord Jesus Christ**! How could God allow such a good Man to die such an **unjust death**?
Ans: Because God was doing **something better** for us and for the world. In the death of Christ, God was fulfilling His **long-term plan** to save His people. Friends - that was the **greatest tragedy** of all history - and yet it was the **best thing** that ever happened! Think of the distraught of the 11 Apostles looking down on the dead carcass of Jesus! What **sense** could they make of it? The Messiah, miracle-worker - **dead as a corpse**! It did not make sense - at the time!

So how do we respond to **strange conflicting Providences** in our lives? We must trust God's Word, believe it, serve Him. Solomon's conclusion: ***fear God and keep His commandments***