

OpenTheo

2 Kings 21 - 22



2 Kings - Steve Gregg

In this talk by Steve Gregg, the biblical story of Manasseh, the worst king Judah ever had, is explored. Despite beginning his reign by worshipping the gods of his predecessors, Manasseh eventually became a true reformer by attempting to undo the damage he had caused. Gregg also discusses how Josiah, who became king at just eight years old, discovered a copy of Deuteronomy in the temple and was disposed toward worshipping God, despite not knowing the word of God. The talk emphasizes the importance of repentance and reform, even in the face of past mistakes.

Transcript

In 2 Kings chapter 21, we have the story of Manasseh, the worst king Judah ever had, and he was not too far from the end of the line. Although after Manasseh's evil reign, there was a good king, Josiah, who did very thorough reforms, even as Hezekiah had done. It was unfortunately too little too late, because God held against Judah the sins of Manasseh.

And it was because of the sins of Manasseh, not exclusively, but very largely, that Judah came under the judgment that they later did when Babylon took them into captivity. Now, Manasseh was 12 years old when he became king, and he reigned 55 years in Jerusalem. So, one reason he was so harmful is he reigned so long.

He took the throne so young, and since he was not good, he had over half a century to perpetrate evil and to affect the culture of Judah in an extremely negative way. Since he was 12 years old at the time that Hezekiah died, it is clear that he died 3 years after Hezekiah was healed from his sickness. Hezekiah, as the previous chapter tells us, had been sick and mortally sick, and God, through the prophet Isaiah, had told him, you're going to die.

Get ready to die. Set your house in order. You're going to die.

Instead, Hezekiah had prayed for a prolongation of his life, and God said, okay, I'll give you 15 more years, which he did, and he died 15 years later, leaving a 12-year-old son who clearly was born during that extension. And, whom it is very easily seen Judah would

have been much better off without. It says, his mother's name was Hephzibah, and he did evil in the sight of the Lord according to the abominations of the nations whom the Lord had cast out before the children of Israel.

So, he adopted all the evil practices of the Canaanites, for he rebuilt the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed. He raised up altars for Baal, which of course is what Ahab had done in the northern kingdom under the influence of Jezebel. And, he made a wooden image, as Ahab, king of Israel, had done.

And, he worshipped all the hosts of heaven and served them. So, there never was an abomination. He never met an abomination he didn't like, apparently.

Whatever the pagans could worship, he made himself a worshipper of that, including the stars in the sky, Baal, Asherah poles, all the gods of the Canaanites and whatever. He also built altars in the house of Yahweh, of which the Lord had said, in Jerusalem I will put my name. And, he built altars for all the hosts of heaven in the two courts of the house of the Lord.

Apparently, the outer court and the inner court. Also, he made his sons pass through the fire, which means he sacrificed his living sons to Molech, as living burnt sacrifices. He practiced soothsaying and used witchcraft and consulted spiritists and mediums.

He did much evil in the sight of Yahweh to provoke him to anger. This list of things that Manasseh did resembles very much the list that is given of the things that Israel did as the reason for him destroying Israel. If you look back at 2 Kings 17, at verse 9 and following, we see this is telling us why God delivered them over to the Assyrians and why they were destroyed.

It says also the children of Israel secretly did against the Lord their God things that were not right. And they built for themselves high places in all the cities, from a watchtower to fortified city. They set up for themselves sacred pillars and wooden images on every high hill and under every green tree.

They burned incense in all the high places, as the nations had done, whom the Lord carried away before them. Verse 12, they served idols. Verse 15, they rejected his statutes.

They followed idols, became idolaters. They went after the nations that were around them. Verse 16, they left all the commandments of the Lord their God, made themselves molded image, two calves, made a wooden image and worshipped all the hosts of heaven, served Baal.

They caused their sons and daughters to pass through the fire. They practiced witchcraft and soothsaying, etc. The list is almost identical to the things that Manasseh did.

Yet, these things are given as the reason why God delivered Israel finally to its utter destruction at the hands of the Assyrians. And now, Manasseh is courting the same destruction in Judah. Verse 7, 2 Kings 21.7, he even set a carved image of Asherah, that's the wife of Baal in the Canaanite religion, that he had made in the house which the Lord had said to David and to Solomon, his son, in this house and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, I will put my name forever.

And I will not make the feet of Israel wander any more from the land which I gave their fathers, only if they are careful to do according to all that I have commanded them and according to all the law that my servant Moses commanded them. Now, we're reminded here by the author that God had placed a special priority on the sanctity of Jerusalem and the house of God there and had said that if they were obedient to everything Moses said, they would not have to wander throughout the nations. Now, the author, of course, is suggesting here that they have violated this and now they're going to have to wander throughout the nations.

God is going to deport them as he did deport Israel. This would not happen in Manasseh's lifetime, though, nor his son nor his son's sons, but it came within a few generations. But they paid no attention and Manasseh seduced them to do more evil than the nations whom the Lord destroyed before the children of Israel.

They were worse than the Canaanites. Now, God had said in Leviticus that the land vomited out the Canaanites because of the abominations they did. And God said, don't repeat what they did because then the land will vomit you out also.

And so they're doing even worse than the Canaanites did. They're just basically challenging God to keep his threats, to fulfill his threats. But God is a generous and gracious and forgiving God and he's slow to anger.

So even though they're doing everything that would justify him casting them out of the land, he gives them more time to repent. In Manasseh's case, this actually paid off because he actually did repent, although Kings doesn't tell us so. Chronicles does.

Verse 10 says, The Lord spoke by his servants, the prophets, saying, Because Manasseh king of Judah has done these abominations, he has acted more wickedly than all the Amorites who were before him and has also made Judah sin with his idols. Therefore, thus says the Lord God of Israel, Behold, I am bringing such calamity upon Jerusalem and Judah that whoever hears of it, both his ears will tingle. It'll make your ears hurt to hear the horrible things that I'm going to do.

People who hear about it, their ears will tingle. It'll be such an unusual and severe judgment. And I will stretch over Jerusalem the measuring line of Samaria and the plummet of the house of Ahab.

That is the plumb line. I'm going to be measuring the uprightness of the nation on the same standard that I measured the and the judgment upon the house of Ahab. I will wipe Jerusalem as one wipes a dish, wiping it and turning it upside down.

Now you wipe the dish, of course, after all the food has been eaten on it and you've got nothing left on it but garbage. And so you wipe off the garbage. In cleaning a dish, you wipe it clean of all that wasn't eaten, you know, the stuff you wouldn't eat.

The pits and stuff that you spit out of the food and leave untouched, that's garbage. So I'm going to clean the garbage off this dish, Jerusalem. I'm going to wipe it and turn it upside down, which means I'll shake off all the inhabitants and they'll be gone.

So I will forsake the remnant of my inheritance and deliver them into the hand of their enemies. And they shall become victims of plunder to all their enemies. Because they have done evil in my sight and have provoked me to anger since the day their fathers came out of Egypt, even to this day.

Now he says, I'm going to forsake the remnant. Now in all the prophets of the Old Testament, when God pronounces judgment upon a nation, whether Israel or Judah, he always makes an exception for the remnant. There's always referred to as a remnant who are righteous in the nation, who will be blessed rather than cursed.

And rather than suffer the punishment, they will, you know, be spared. But in this case, it sounds like he's going to punish the remnant because they are wicked too. Obviously here, the word remnant is not being used in the same sense.

The remnant here is being used to mean, of the 12 tribes, Judah alone is left. You know, the 10 tribes to the north have been eliminated. And Judah, the nation, is the remnant.

The only part that survives, the only remaining part of Israel is Judah. He's not talking about the righteous remnant. He's talking in terms of simply the race of Israel.

All that is left after the fall of the Northern Kingdom is Judah. And so that's what he means by the remnant, not the godly remnant. Then, verse 16, Moreover, Manasseh shed very much innocent blood, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to the other.

Besides his sin, with which he made Judah to sin, and do an evil in the sight of the Lord. Now, innocent blood shed could be a reference to the sacrifice of babies. Many times the prophet spoke about those who worshiped Molech as shedding the blood of innocents, meaning children.

Little babies and children that were sacrificed to Molech. And we do know that it says that he caused his children to pass through the fire, that is, he sacrificed them to Molech. But it says he filled the whole land with innocent blood shed.

Now, this might mean that the worship of Molech became a national pastime, and people were sacrificing their children widely. It's also, of course, possible that the shedding of innocent blood could speak of ordinary murder. It may be that if there were people who objected to him, maybe even prophets that spoke against him, that he killed them.

And that anybody who displeased him, he simply was a tyrant, and he just killed them. So that he was guilty of shedding much innocent blood, as well as idolatry. Things that the law of Moses made very clear would defile a land, and would cause the land not to be forgiven.

And it says, now the rest of the acts of Manasseh, all that he did, and the sin that he committed, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? So Manasseh rested with his fathers, and was buried in the garden of his own house, in the garden of Uzzah. Then his son Ammon reigned in his place. I wonder if the garden of Uzzah was named after Uzzah, who stabilized the ark, you know, as it was being brought in Jerusalem.

Maybe where he fell was named after him, the garden of Uzzah. I don't know. And it had later become part of Manasseh's private property in Jerusalem.

In any case, we don't read of any positives, of course, about Manasseh, only negatives in 2nd Kings. But, in 2nd Chronicles, we have the surprising story of Manasseh's repentance, as he came under the chastisement of God. This chapter, it's surprising that something as significant as this would be left out of the book of Kings.

But, as the book of Kings is drawing near its end, it may be that the author realized that he was going to run out of space if he told everything. So, he left some space to tell about the remaining kings before he ran out of parchment, and left out some things that are of interest, which are included here. 2nd Chronicles, chapter 33, verses 1 through 9 actually tell the same material about Manasseh's apostasy that we read about in 2nd Kings.

But, in verse 10, it says, And the LORD spoke to Manasseh and his people, but they wouldn't listen. Therefore the LORD brought upon them the captains of the army of the king of Assyria, who took Manasseh with hooks and bound him with bronze fetters. In all likelihood, these hooks were put through his nose.

And so, he was painfully taken into captivity by the Assyrians. And they carried him off to Babylon. Because, at that time, Babylon was pretty much under Assyria's power.

So, it was kind of a city in the Assyrian Empire. Now, when he was in affliction, he implored the LORD his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, and prayed to him. And he received his entreaty, heard his supplication, such is the grace of God, that a man who had done so many horrible things, killed so many innocent

people, offended God so blatantly and carelessly, that as soon as he humbles himself and repents, God says, Okay, I'll forgive you.

I mean, that's the nature of God. How people can ever speak of the God of the Old Testament as a wrathful God, I cannot imagine. They simply must not have ever read the stories about him.

You'd think he would just say, Manasseh, you made your bed. Now you sleep in it. You know, instead, he hears him, he received his entreaty, he heard his supplication, and brought him back to Jerusalem, into his kingdom.

Then Manasseh knew that the LORD was God. Now, this little story about Manasseh being taken into captivity for his idolatry, in Babylon, and their repenting and being restored back to Jerusalem, is in itself like a little parable of what would happen to Judah because of Manasseh. Their idolatry is what caused God to cause them to go into captivity in Babylon, as he himself did.

And, in Babylon, some of them repented. And God brought the remnant of them back to Jerusalem with a new heart, who now knew God. So, there's a sense in which this story may be told by the chronicler in order to suggest that what happened with Manasseh here is like a microcosm of what's going to happen to the whole nation.

The whole nation followed him into idolatry, then followed him into captivity in Babylon, as it were. And a remnant of them followed him back to Jerusalem at the end of that captivity. Followed in the sense that they took the same course that he had taken in his own life.

His own personal fate in this regard and behavior becomes like a type of the national fate. After this, he built a wall outside the city of David on the west side of Gion in the valley, as far as the entrance of the fish gate, and an enclosed offal, and he raised it to a very great height. Then he put military captains in all the four or five cities of Judah.

He took away the foreign gods and the idol from the house of the Lord and all the altars that he had built in the mount of the house of the Lord and in Jerusalem. And he cast them out of the city. He also repaired the altar of the Lord, sacrificed peace offerings and thank offerings on it, and commanded Judah to serve the Lord God of Israel.

Nevertheless, the people still sacrificed on the high places, but only to the Lord their God. So they stopped sacrificing to the Canaanite gods on high places, but they still sacrificed there, but they offered their sacrifices to Yahweh. Then it says, Now the rest of the acts of Manasseh, his prayer to his God in the words of the seers who spoke to him in the name of the Lord God of Israel.

Indeed, they are written in the book of the kings of Israel. Now we can see that there is no corresponding information of this type in our book of kings, so it's a different book.

Also, his prayer and how God received his entreaty and all his sin and trespass and the sites where he built high places and set up wooden images and carved images before he was humbled.

Indeed, they are written among the saints of Hosei, whose work, of course, we have no other record of. Hosei, by the way, in the Septuagint, is rendered as the seers among the saints of the seers or the prophets in general. So Manasseh rested with his fathers and they buried him in his own house.

Then his son Ammon raised in his place. Now we see that Manasseh, in the end of his life, became a true reformer and undid the damage that he had at least attempted to undo the damage that he had caused. In tearing down the idols and cleansing the temple and so forth, he was in a small way duplicating the kind of activity his father Hezekiah had done, trying to clean house in Judah.

But again, it was too little too late. The nation was already corrupted. We can see it by the fact that his son Ammon was evil.

His son followed him into sin but didn't follow him back to Yahweh. This is something that's a great tragedy that can be seen many times over in the lives of people who raise their children pagan and then the parents become Christian. But the kids don't.

Of course, the parents live to regret the way they raise their children, though they can't undo it. The parents, in turning to the Lord, may salvage what's left of their own life for God, but they have sacrificed their children, as it were, to Moloch. They've sacrificed their children to the pagan gods, to the world, really.

You can lead your children into sin, but you can't guarantee that you can lead them out again. You think of Lot, who, when given the choice of where to live, he chose to live near Sodom. And then he moved into Sodom, probably because it was a place where he could prosper.

He was certainly elevated in Sodom society. He was sitting in the gate of the city like one of the judges. And he raised his children there.

Then when the time came when the angels of the Lord sought to get him to safety out of Sodom, he went and warned his sons-in-law, who had married his daughters, and they didn't go with him when he left. His own wife didn't get far out of Sodom either. She looked back longingly at the life that they were leaving behind there, and she fell under the judgment that came upon Sodom and became a pillar of salt herself.

Then his daughters, who did escape with him, still had a lot of Sodom in them. And we know that they got their father drunk and got themselves pregnant by him. And, you know, pretty gross story.

Lot had been raised in Abraham's home, fearing Yahweh. But he had made choices which looked like compromise to us. And he raised his children in Sodom.

He took his family into Sodom. But when he escaped, he couldn't get his family out. And it's something that people who have not yet turned to God do not contemplate.

You know, some people say, well, I'll turn to God on my deathbed, maybe. Or they don't think about it at all. People who are foolish enough to just forget God in their youth and not to realize that they might get smart someday and want to follow God.

But it may be too late for their families when they do. This is what Manasseh did. He turned to God too late for his family's influence, or for the nation's, because the nation tended to go back to idolatry.

He tried to clean it up because he had a change of heart. But he couldn't duplicate that change of heart in his sons. And we read, therefore, in 2 Kings 21.19, Ammon, who is the son of Manasseh, was 22 years old when he became king.

And he reigned two years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Meshulamith, the daughter of Heruz of Jotbah. And he did evil in the sight of the Lord, as his father Manasseh had done.

So he walked in all the ways that his father had walked, and he served the idols that his father had served and worshipped them. He forsook Yahweh, God of his fathers, and did not walk in the way of Yahweh. Then the servants of Ammon conspired against him and killed the king in his own house.

Same kind of thing that happened in Israel so often. So many of the kings of Israel had been assassinated by their servants. This had not been in common place at all in the southern kingdom.

In fact, I don't remember that any of the kings of Judah had previous to this been assassinated by their servants. But, I take that back, there was a case, I believe. But not commonly in the southern kingdom.

It says, But the people of the land executed all those who had conspired against king Ammon. Then the people of the land made his son Josiah king in his place. Now the rest of the acts of Ammon, which he did, are they not written in the book of Chronicles of the kings of Judah? And he was buried in his tomb in the garden of Uzzah with his dad.

Then Josiah his son reigned in his place. Now, Josiah wasn't very old because his father wasn't very old. When Ammon came to the throne, he was 22 years old.

And he only reigned, what, a couple of years, right? So, at age 24, he died and left an 8-year-old son. Or maybe a younger son than that, and there's time that passes. You know,

they may have waited until Josiah was 8 years old.

But it would appear that Ammon may have become the father of Josiah when Ammon was 16 years old. Now, Josiah, chapter 22, is 8 years old when he became king. And he reigned 31 years in Jerusalem.

His mother's name was Jedidah, the daughter of Adiah of Bozketh. And he did what was right in the sight of the Lord, and walked in all the ways of his father David. He did not turn aside to the right hand or to the left.

Now, this is, of course, an encouraging story. During the reign of Manasseh, apparently the temple in Jerusalem and the priests and Levites there were, you know, desecrated. And maybe the priests were not even working, or maybe they were working for the wrong god.

But remember, there was 50 some odd years that Manasseh had reigned there. And so the temple had been neglected. And, most importantly, the law of God had been neglected.

So much so that a generation or more had lived without any knowledge of Moses' law. And we find that a copy of Deuteronomy, apparently, a scroll, is discovered in the temple in the time of Josiah. And even the priest doesn't know what it is.

The king doesn't know what it is. They read it, and then they're shocked. And they realize this is the law of God.

This is a covenant document God made with our ancestors through Moses. But they had been totally unfamiliar with it. Just one long bad reign of Manasseh had led to a complete unfamiliarity with the law of God.

And you know what? I sometimes think that the same thing might happen in this country if we survive another half a century. There might be, essentially, a generation of Americans that grew up without ever having heard of God or Jesus or whatever. Or if the trend that is present continues so that all mention of God is banished from the public square.

Schools are not allowed to mention God or the Bible. Those who worship God are marginalized, looked at as kooks, and so forth. That, essentially, a whole generation could rise up where virtually nobody even knows what the Bible is.

That can be positive for a later time. But it certainly is bad for that generation that doesn't know the word of God. When I say it could be positive for a later time, that's because it's harder to win a pre-Christian culture to Christ than a post-Christian culture.

We are living in a post-Christian age. America is known to have had Christian roots and

Christian influence throughout its history. And people still know about that.

They're trying to deny it. The history books are being rewritten and trying to eliminate all mention of Christian influence in the founding of our country and so forth. So another generation may come up that doesn't know anything about Christianity or the Christian roots of their country.

Which is rather amazing to consider. It could be our children's generation or maybe our grandchildren's generation. But it may be that they could live their whole lifetimes without ever even knowing what the Bible is.

Not knowing that Christianity was once the dominant paradigm that formed our culture. Thinking that killing babies in the womb and maybe even killing babies out of the womb is like a normal thing to do. Sacrificing children to Moloch.

Just living totally in the world's ways without any restriction from the word of God on the conscience of the people. But if that does happen, then America will then have become a pre-Christian culture again. That is a culture that doesn't know anything about Christianity.

And pre-Christian cultures are fairly easy to win. When the gospel goes out to lands that have never heard of Christ, the gospel is received very eagerly in most cases. And there could be a complete cycle a century from now.

In this country it might be a 100% pagan country as much so as before Christianity was ever preached here. In which case revival could come again if God tarries. You just never know what God's going to do.

These fluctuations happened in Israel. They happen in history. We live in such a small segment of the overall history.

This nation is only a little over 250 years old or something like that. Not even quite 250 years old. And yet there's been fluctuations already.

There's been revivals and there's been downturns. We look at our own time and we try to anticipate where things are going to go. Ultimately we can't.

Because we're looking at a little piece of time only. The piece we're living in. But 100 years from now we can't predict what things will be.

Things may go to a much lower point than they are now. And stay there for a while like they did in the time of Manasseh. And yet then a later generation may find a copy.

Find a copy of the law of God. Find a copy of the Bible and say, what is this? And actually read it. And say, wow.

This is something none of us have known about. But it's worth knowing. And that's what happened to Josiah.

He had never heard of the law of God. Even the priests in his day had not heard of it. And it says, now it came to pass in the 18th year of King Josiah.

That the king sent Shefan the scribe, the son of Azaliah, the son of Meshulam. To the house of the Lord saying, go up to Hilkiah the high priest. That he may count the money which has been brought into the house of the Lord.

Which the doorkeepers have gathered from the people. And let them deliver it into the hand of those doing the work. Who are the overseers in the house of the Lord.

And let them give it to those who are in the house of the Lord. Doing the work to repair the damages of the house. To the carpenters and the builders and the masons.

And to buy timber and hewn stone to repair the house. However, there need be no accounting made with them of the money delivered to their hand. Because they deal faithfully.

Once again, these men who were known to be faithful were not held accountable for the money. They just knew that these men's character were such. They could be trusted to do the right thing with it.

Now, Josiah apparently at an early point in his reign. Even though he didn't know the law of God. He was disposed toward the worship of God.

And the temple of God. The temple of God had fallen into terrible disrepair. During the reigns of Manasseh and Ammon.

Who had hated God. And now Josiah who thinks it's a shame. That this big beautiful building has gone into ill repair.

And that the gods of his great grandfather Hezekiah and so forth. Have been neglected. That God.

It's not clear how much he knew about Yahweh. But he was disposed toward restoring at least Yahweh's temple. So he said whatever donations are coming into the temple.

Use those to fix things up. Give it to the carpenters and the stonemasons. And have them repair this beautiful building.

Then Hilkiah the high priest said to 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.

So Shaphan the scribe went to the king. Bringing the king words saying. Your servants

have gathered the money that was found in the house.

And have delivered it into the hand of those who do the work. Who oversee the house of the Lord. Then Shaphan the scribe showed the king saying.

Hilkiah the priest has given me a book. And Shaphan read it before the king. Notice a book.

He didn't say oh the long lost law of Moses. He said this is a book he found. It's like there's not any commitment to its significance.

Or it being a holy book. It's just the priest had found this book. And he wanted you to see it.

So as the king sat probably on his throne. Shaphan the scribe read this book. Now it happened when the king heard the words of the book of the law.

That he tore his clothes. Then the king commanded Hilkiah the priest. Ahikam the son of Shaphan.

Akbor the son of Micaiah. Shaphan the scribe and Isaiah. A servant of the king saying.

Go inquire of Yahweh for me. For the people and for all Judah concern the words of this book. That has been found.

For great is the wrath of Yahweh. That is aroused against us because our fathers have not obeyed the words of this book. To do according to all that is written concerning us.

Now I said that this is the book of Deuteronomy. All scholars pretty much agree about that. The book of 2nd Kings and 2nd Chronicles.

They don't mention that it's the book of Deuteronomy specifically. Partly because they just call it the law. But the reason that all scholars agree that it was a copy of Deuteronomy.

Is because he became aware of the curses. That were to come upon them. And it is Deuteronomy.

Not Exodus. Not Leviticus. Not Numbers.

It is Deuteronomy where God makes the severe threats. That if the people neglect his law. They'll be cursed.

Most notably of course Deuteronomy chapter 28. Now there are curses by the way. There are curses in Leviticus and Numbers.

That are uttered on law breakers. But it's in Deuteronomy that God points out. That the

whole nation will come under God's curse.

If they don't keep the law. And so Josiah hearing this read. Realized that the wrath of the Lord was aroused against the nation.

Because of all the things that had been neglected in this book. So Hilkiah the priest. Ahicham, Akbar, Shaphan, Isaiah.

Went to Huldah the prophetess. The wife of Shalom. The son of Tikva.

The son of Harhas. Keeper of the ward robe. She dwelt in Jerusalem in the second quarter.

And they spoke with her. Then she said to them. Thus says the Lord God of Israel.

Tell the man who sent you to me. Thus says the Lord. Behold I will bring calamity on this place and on its inhabitants.

All the words of the book which the king of Judah has read. Because they have forsaken me and burned incense to other gods. That they might provoke me to anger.

With all the works of their hands. Therefore my wrath shall be aroused against this place. And shall not be quenched.

But the king of Judah who sent you to inquire of the Lord. In this manner you shall speak to him. Thus says the Lord God of Israel.

Concerning the words which you have heard. Because your heart was tender. And you humbled yourself before the Lord.

When you heard what I spoke against this place. And against its inhabitants. That they would become a desolation and a curse.

And you tore your clothes and wept before me. I also have heard you. Says the Lord.

Surely therefore I will gather you to your fathers. And you shall be gathered to your grave in peace. And your eyes shall not see all the calamity which I will bring on this place.

So they brought word to the king. So Huldah the prophetess. Now where was Isaiah? Isaiah was dead by now.

According to the book of Isaiah. He prophesied during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah. He does not mention that he prophesied in the reign of Manasseh the next king.

There is a Jewish tradition. That Manasseh killed Isaiah. We do read of course.

That Manasseh filled the land with innocent bloodshed. And it is very possible that Isaiah was one of the victims of his apostasy. And of his atrocities.

His tyranny. The tradition of the rabbis is. That Manasseh put Isaiah in a log.

And sawed it in two. With him in it. It is a pretty gruesome way to go.

So it would not simply be eliminating the prophet. But torturously eliminating a very old man. Who would have by that time been probably in his 70s at least.

Or thereabouts. At that time that would be a very old man. Now of course 70 is the new 50.

But Isaiah would be an old prophet at this time. And the fact that this is only a tradition. May make us wonder whether it is true.

We do know that Isaiah only claims to have prophesied during the reigns. As late as Hezekiah not Manasseh. But there is some reason to believe the tradition is confirmed scripturally.

Not in the Old Testament but in the New. Because in Hebrews chapter 11. When the writer of Hebrews is cataloging all the works of faith.

That were done by Old Testament characters. Eventually he stops being specific about individuals. And just starts summarizing.

Things that have been suffered by people who were men of faith. And in verse 36 of Hebrews 11. He says, still others had trial of mockings and scourgings.

Yes and of chains and imprisonment. They were stoned. They were sawn in two.

They were tempted. They were slain with the sword. They wandered in sheepskins and goatskins, etc.

Now in cataloging some of the ways in which the godly people in the Old Testament. Are known to have suffered their deaths or otherwise suffered. He says they were stoned.

They were sawn in two. These are some of the ways that he says people suffered martyrdom in the Old Testament. Now as far as I know there is only one known tradition.

About any godly person in the Old Testament being sawn in two. And that is Isaiah. And the writer of Hebrews would know that.

He'd know the Jewish tradition about Isaiah. And apparently he took it to be true. And confirmed it.

He listed the way that Isaiah died at the hands of Manasseh. Among the many ways that

godly people died in the Old Testament times. That inclusion by Hebrews chapter 11.

Would seem to give great credibility to the tradition of the Jews. That Isaiah died that way. Though the writer of Hebrews doesn't mention Isaiah by name.

Yet the means of death that he mentions. Is only known to have been attributed to Isaiah. And to no other in Jewish tradition.

So he seems to be affirming the correctness of that tradition. So they didn't have Isaiah to consult. Didn't have him to kick around anymore.

He was gone. And so it was Huldah the prophetess. Who is now speaking for God.

And we can see that although it's less common. God did not object to raising up women as prophetesses. We know that Deborah in the book of Judges was not only a judge.

But she was a prophetess the Bible says. And so women can prophesy too. In Joel chapter.

Well even before we get to Joel. We can go back to the book of Numbers. Where both Miriam and Aaron.

Were upset about Moses for his choice of a mate. And they begin to criticize him. And they said has God only spoken by Moses.

Has not God spoken by us also. That is to say that Aaron and Miriam. Both claim to be persons by whom God had spoken.

And apparently correctly. God had. But in Joel chapter 2. It says that God will prod his spirit on all flesh.

And your sons and your daughters will prophesy. He said. In Joel chapter 2 around verse 28 I guess it is.

And so the spirit of God coming on the church at Pentecost. Resulted in sons and daughters prophesying. And as Peter goes on to quote.

That passage from Joel. He goes on to quote. Upon my servants and upon my handmaidens.

I will prod my spirit and they shall prophesy. So there is apparently no distinction in God's mind. As to who can prophesy.

Men or women. Likely Paul said. In first Corinthians 11.

That women. It is a shame for them to pray or prophesy. If they don't have their head covered.

But he apparently believed that if their heads were covered. They could both pray and prophesy. Both of which are.

Ministries that are open to them. As women. Now this is not the same thing as being an overseer of the church.

There were certain things that Paul did not place women in. Did not think it was their proper place. But prophecy which is the greatest of the gifts.

Paul said. Paul said. Earnestly desire the best gifts.

Especially that you might prophesy. Prophecy is treated by Paul as the greatest of the gifts. The most desirable.

And he makes it very clear. The New Testament and the Old Testament. That God has never withheld that gift from women.

Any more than men. And so Huldah basically says. Yes.

It is true. Israel has violated my laws. They are coming under curse.

They are going to be going into captivity. But. Because Josiah has humbled himself.

Because he has been tender toward God. And because he has repented. It won't happen in his day.

He will go to his death in peace. He will die peaceably. Well not exactly peaceably.

Because he died in war. He died in war against Pharaoh Necho. That was against God's instructions though.

We shall find that at the end of Josiah's life. He went out to war against the Pharaoh Necho. And to intercept Pharaoh's armies.

As Pharaoh was going out to fight against Assyria. And a prophet told Josiah. Don't go.

Don't go. And he went anyway. And then he died not in peace.

Obviously when it says he will. He says I'll bring. What does she say? Surely therefore I will gather your fathers.

You shall be gathered to your grave in peace. That is the way it could have been. If he was obedient to the end.

God's prophecies. God's promises are conditional. And this is what God had determined.

He would do for Josiah. Because of Josiah's repentance. God was not going to bring calamity in the land.

In his days. And he could die peacefully. However.

That does not take into consideration. If he disobeys God. And goes to war outside the land.

He didn't die as a result of an invasion. Of Judah. He died because he meddled in a war that wasn't his own.

And so as it turns out. He didn't come to his grave in peace. But would have.

Well. Chapter 23. Which gives us the remainder.

Of Josiah's reign. Is too long for us to begin. In the time that we have left.

We only have a few minutes left of the class. So we will hold off. And finish up the story of Josiah.

And move beyond it in our next class. At this point we'll take our break.