

Understanding the Old Testament

Instruction, Part 2

1 Kings 22-23, King Josiah and the Books of the Law

Review last week's Intro message...

- Romans 15:4-6 as our umbrella passage
- 30,000' view of the OT
- God's desire for relationship
- God's destruction of EVIL kingdoms and countries
- God's plan to show the world His character and goodness through His chosen people, as they obey His commands and live within His laws.
- And the 10 Plagues – the Exodus – how God's people weren't ready to trust Him unless He showed His power to their enemies enough times to be convinced of His deliverance.

Romans 15:4-6

- **Rom 15:4 For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. (5) May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, (6) that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.**
 - "Written for our instruction"
 - Primary Character last week was Moses
 - This week: King Josiah

Goal for today:

- It is often said that one of the primary results of effective preaching is people going home and reading the Bible.
- My goal today is to bring you down from the 30,000' view of history before Messiah, and bring you down to two levels:
 - **1) into the shoes of the people of God**
 - **2) into the mind of God Himself – as impossible as that may seem**

In order to do this, I need to give background on **The Covenants God made with His people**

- **The Edenic Covenant (Genesis 1:26-28)** – in the Garden, pre Fall
 - Image and Dominion – the earth is GIVEN to man, for man to represent God in all that he does, purposefully doing the will of God on God's behalf.
 - Just don't eat from that one tree...
 - This is why we see Jesus use so many parables about the Master going away, leaving his trusted servants behind.
 - Read those parables in the light of the Edenic Covenant
 - Jesus is saying "THOSE DAYS ARE COMING AGAIN, when I go to the cross and defeat the enemy who stole that dominion from you (Satan)."
 - An unconditional covenant

- **The Adamic Covenant (Genesis 3:15-19)**
 - Just after the Fall
 - Instead of killing Adam and Eve right away and starting over, Grace is given – for a time, albeit life now includes pain, confusion, discomfort, and a prophecy of God saving mankind from this plight in the future.
 - Again, an unconditional covenant
- **The Noahic Covenant (Genesis 6)**
 - 1000 years later, mankind became indescribably evil, and God does indeed destroy all mankind save Noah and his sons and their wives.
 - God promises – post Flood – to never again destroy all living things on the earth – this is the Noahic covenant, symbolized by the rainbow.
 - Again, an unconditional covenant
- **The Abrahamic Covenant (Genesis 15)**
 - Because Abraham BELIEVED God – put his trust in Him – God promised
 - Land (Canaan)
 - Descendants outnumbering the stars and the sand
 - The blessing of many nations through Abraham and his children
 - Again, unconditional - man's "job" in the covenant is NOTHING outside of FAITH that God will keep these promises.
 - Trust in God for all things in life.

Now, before I get to the Mosaic Covenant, let's get our minds trained in the desired direction...

(next) Some Old Testament history – True/False Questions:

(Stand for True, Sit for False)

- Abraham was born roughly 2000 years after Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden.
 - (T) – Gen 5 and 11 timelines
- About 400 years passed between God's covenant with Abraham, and Israel settling in Egypt during the famine
 - (F) – 200 years
- The Israelites lived in Egypt 430 years
 - (T) – Exodus 12:40, Galatians 3:17
- Just one month later, God gave the 10 Commandments to Moses and the people
 - (T) – Exodus 17-20

And all the sub-categories under these 10 commandments are eventually detailed in Moses' writings, and 39 years later, Moses finishes writing the 5th book of the Torah, completing what is also referred to as **The Book of the Law**.

- Most scholars believe this to be the year 1410 BC.
 - 1500 years after the Noahic Covenant
- And this Book of the Law is **The Mosaic Covenant (Exodus 20, Deut 11)**
 - A "CONDITIONAL" Covenant

- Mankind's faith is still required, but obedience has now been added as a condition upon mankind for the covenant to remain intact.
- Why?
- Gal 3:24 So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith.
- Hold that thought, and let's stay back in the year 1410 for a moment...

Now, Moses died in 1410, and Joshua had been raised up.

- Joshua lived until about 1390
- And near his death, he read the Book of the Law (Deut) out loud to the people.
- Then in a rousing speech to the Hebrew people, he said (**Jos 23:6**) **"Therefore, be very strong to keep and to do all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, turning aside from it neither to the right hand nor to the left..."**

Unfortunately, if you search for the phrase "book of the law," you will see a **glaring gap** between Joshua's final speech, and King Josiah in 2 Kings 22.

- And by glaring gap, let me explain...

(next) Josiah's story is found in 2 Kings 22-23 and repeated in 2 Chr 33-35

- His father, King Amon died when Josiah was 8 – 8 years old, crowned the King of the Southern Kingdom of Judah
 - **2Ki 22:2 And he (Josiah) did what was right in the eyes of the LORD and walked in all the way of David his father, and he did not turn aside to the right or to the left.**
 - Sound familiar?
 - Josiah was a "good" king
 - He was the last of 8 "good" kings out of 20 Kings of Judah
 - ALL 19 Kings of the N.K. of Israel were bad.
 - And they were all dead, along with the N.K. by the time Josiah became King of Judah
- **(next)** 18 years into his kingdom, Josiah instructs carpenters and masons to begin repairing the temple in Jerusalem.
 - The High Priest Hilkiah, overseeing the project, finds **"The book of the law."**
 - Most scholars believe what Hilkiah found was the Book of Deuteronomy.
 - Hilkiah brought it to a servant who read it to King Josiah.
 - **2Ki 22:11-13, "When the king heard the words of the Book of the Law, he tore his clothes. (12) And the king (commanded his court), (13) 'Go, inquire of the LORD (which means go find a prophet of the Lord) for me, and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that has been found. For great is the wrath of the LORD that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not obeyed the words of this book.'"**

- Josiah then spends the next 5 years of his reign tearing down EVERYTHING his fathers had erected in the face of the Lord.
 - Every defiling thing in the temple.
 - Every idol in Jerusalem.
 - Every “high place” for which other gods were worshiped.
 - Every single thing that stood in opposition to the Book of the Law.

The glaring gap I mentioned...

- **The Book of the Law is not mentioned in Scripture even ONE time from Joshua’s death (the time of the judges) to the time of King Josiah. Not ONCE.**
 - This doesn’t mean it was completely ignored or never read.
 - King David mentions God’ Law often in the Psalms.
 - Solomon refers to God’s Law in the Proverbs.
 - ***But the kings – those whom the people cried to God for to “protect” them – failed to lead the people in was written in the Book of the Law.***
 - For a long, long time.
 - Samuel – the last judge – didn’t have anyone (including his own sons) worthy of continuing the tradition of the judges, so the people cried out to Samuel to give them a king – like the other nations had.
 - God says, “Trust Me, you don’t want a King.”
 - They cried even more.
 - And God solemnly warns the people that ***kings will do terrible things because of his great power. He’ll take from them land, children as servants, and for war, he’ll be drunk on his own power, and he will turn away from God, and lead the people to do the same.***
 - The people say, “So what! We want a king!”
 - So God said, “OK, but I wish you wouldn’t.”
 - And that’s exactly what the kings did – steered Israel away from God.
- Everyone stand up...
 - Remain standing if you believe more than 500 years passed between Joshua’s death and King Josiah’s reign.
 - More than 600...
 - More than 700...
 - More than 800...
 - **Answer: 788!**
- Take a look at what has transpired over those 788 years:
 - All the years of the Judges of Israel
 - King Saul, David, Solomon, The Divided Kingdom, The Northern Kingdom lasts 200 years and is destroyed by Assyria, all the lives of the prophets from Elijah to Joel, Jonah, Hosea, Amos, Micah, Isaiah, and Zephaniah... All 19 kings of Israel (northern kingdom) and 15 of the 20 kings of Judah (Southern Kingdom)...
 - 788 years of human history...
 - **And not ONE time is the Book of the Law a focal point during those 788 years.**

Now, this part may really surprise you:

- **Joshua also led the Israelites through Passover in his final year...**
 - We studied the first Passover last week:
 - The sacrifice of the unblemished lamb
 - The Feast of Unleavened Bread
 - Both foreshadowing Messiah
 - And the command of God to KEEP the Passover every single year, with the added command to tell your children everything God did to bring His people out of slavery and into the promised land.
- Stand up if you believe the Hebrew people were at least somewhat regular in celebrating Passover between Joshua's day and Josiah's day.
 - Grand total of Passovers celebrated: ZERO.
 - **2Ki 23:22 For no such Passover had been kept since the days of the judges who judged Israel, or during all the days of the kings of Israel or of the kings of Judah.**
 - "No such passover" refers to King Hezekiah leading a Passover, but he got some of the instructions wrong, and the people kind of fumbled through it.

Are you surprised by this?

- Israel never celebrated Passover – starting just one year after Joshua's speech!
- King David never celebrated Passover.
- Nor Solomon. No ANY of the 39 Kings of Israel or Judah, save Josiah (in the proper manner).

We've often heard that God's people failed time and again obeying the Mosaic Covenant.

- **Now we see much clearer as to WHY.**
- Nobody was reading it to the people!
 - The kings and priests failed to lead well!

Would you say God is a Patient God?

- God spent over 800 years teaching mankind – who by their actions and by their occasional demands of God to give them what they wanted – **that a "conditional" covenant, where the people have an obligation to obey in order for the covenant to work, is simply impossible for sinful man.**
 - But also consider this: **The Abrahamic Covenant based on Faith was never annulled by the Mosaic Covenant.**
 - Nowhere in scripture is it suggested that the Mosaic Covenant threw out the Abrahamic Covenant.
 - We know that to be true especially now, because we see Jesus in the direct line of Abraham – fulfilling the promise of the blessing of many Nations through His descendant.

- This one descendant – Jesus – would amplify the Abrahamic Covenant by placing Messiah and His Holy Spirit WITHIN OUR HEARTS, doing away with obedience to the law for salvation, and once for all ushering in Grace and Faith as the keys to eternal salvation.

Conclusion/Application: **Josiah's Appropriate Response to finding the law.**

- The conviction, the sorrow of sinful living, the renewed life, tearing down the old, starting again fresh with God's ways, not mine.
- Josiah can be compared to the sorrow and anguish Martin Luther felt in 1517, upon translating the Latin Bible into German and seeing how far the Roman Catholic Church had swayed from the Truth.
 - His anguish is well documented, and His fight with the Roman Catholic Church ushered in a Reformation that spawned a movement back to the Truth of Scripture, this time with the NEW Covenant in addition to the Book of the Law.

When Josiah tore his clothes...

- This was a symbol and traditional response of grief and loss.
- An outward expression of the emotions on the inside.
- The Prophet Joel, who prophesied to the Southern Kingdom several generations before Josiah, wrote **"Turn to me now, says the LORD, while there is time. Give me your hearts. Come with fasting, weeping, and mourning. Don't tear your clothing in your grief, but tear your hearts instead." Return to the LORD your God, for he is merciful and compassionate, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love. He is eager to relent and not punish" (2:12-13).**
- And Josiah did indeed repent – in heart and action, removing all the false gods and idols and opposing things.

A question to close out the message:

- King Josiah – a man who did what was right in the sight of the Lord – found the Book of the Law – the words of the God of the universe – and grieved over a kingdom that had been missing God's Will for generations.
- The question: **When God's truth and your ways collide, how do YOU respond?**
 - Is there a "tearing of your heart"?
 - A grieving for what has been so lost?
- Or do you fight it?
 - Well, I didn't know, so what's the big deal?
 - Most of us would give a pass to Judah – they didn't KNOW, so why was God so angry with them??? 😊
- Or blame it on your teachers/pastors/mentors?
 - If so-and-so would have read this to me, I would've changed long ago. But they didn't and now it's too late – too hard for me to change my ways.
- Or do you flippantly say, "Well, God is a forgiving God, so I'm good!"

I'll tell you, I think we live in a time where conviction and repentance among long-time believers is almost NEVER heard about.

- Justifications for living so long in our ways is the norm.
- Don't try to teach this old dog new things.
- Even the Holy Spirit can't change me.
- Instead of tearing our hearts when convicted of God's truth, we turn our hearts away.
 - Like Gollum from the Lord of the Rings, "my precious..." not wanting to surrender whatever it is we're convicted about.

(next) I want to go on record with you:

- The next time I am confronted with Truth and I've been living ignorantly or in opposition to it, I want to sincerely have a "tear my heart" response.
- Did you notice Josiah didn't have GUILT as a response?
 - He had great remorse and mourning, but if guilt was a part of the emotional response, it didn't last long.
 - Josiah knew guilt leads to nothing but a further chasm between Judah and God.
 - No, the LOSS of what Judah had been missing for generations was on Josiah's heart.
 - "I missed this Book!"
 - And now that it is found, life is going to drastically change!

Is that how you respond?

- If so, praise the Lord, He has your heart and blesses you mightily as you also bless Him with your soft heart, I'm sure.
- If not, will you join me in giving our hearts to the Lord – surrendering to ALL of His truth, and not just the truth I deem important enough to walk in?

PRAY