

## **II CHRONICLES**

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to II Chronicles chapter 34 as we continue our study through the Word of God. And keep in mind that at this point in the history of the Southern Kingdom of Judah, judgment is at the door. You can hear the footsteps of the coming judgment fast approaching for the Southern Kingdom of Judah. In fact, judgment was only some 35 years away. The Northern Kingdom of Israel has been in captivity for some 80 years now, as the Assyrians came against them in 721 B. C. God brought judgment upon the Northern Kingdom of Israel for their idolatry, and you would think that the Southern Kingdom of Judah would have learned the lesson, but they did not. But before God brings judgment upon Judah, one last spiritual revival will take place under the reign of King Josiah. Here is one last chance for the people to get right with God before He pours out His judgment upon them. With that said, let's begin reading in II Chronicles chapter 34, starting in verse 1 and see what the Lord has for us as we study through His Word.

## **II CHRONICLES 34**

### **VERSES 1-2**

1. Why was Josiah such a good king? Because he walked in the ways of the Lord, that was the key. He did not turn to the left or the right but focused straight ahead, his eyes were on the Lord. What a great lesson for us to follow. Don't be distracted by the things of this world, stayed focused on the Lord, keep looking at Him and walk accordingly!

VERSES 3-7

1. We are told that Josiah took the throne in Judah when he was only 8 years old. Then, when he turned 16 he began to seek the Lord with all his heart. And as God was working upon his heart, by the time he was 20 years old, he was purging the land of all the false worship that his grandfather Manasseh had started before he got saved, and all that his father Amon had done. They had filled the land with evil and now Josiah is removing all that garbage.

2. Josiah wants everyone to know what he thinks of these false places of worship and of those who sacrificed to these gods. So he goes and destroys these places of false worship, grounds them up into dust, and then he takes that dust and pours it over the graves of those who were sacrificing to them. The king led the way in showing what was wrong and what was right. By example, he will lead the people back to God.

The problem today is when we come against the false teaching in the church we are called, "Unloving." It is amazing to see the false doctrine that is pouring into the church today and the leaders, many of them are silent. In fact, many of them are embracing these false doctrines. We need to tear down those false worship structures, bring down those idols and return back to the true and living God!

3. Now here in verse 5 we see that what Josiah did was the fulfillment of a prophecy that was made some 300 years earlier, back in I Kings chapter 13. To set the stage for this prophecy, the kingdom was divided, Rehoboam to the south, and Jeroboam to the north. And Jeroboam was concerned that many of his people would go to the Temple in Jerusalem, in the south, to worship God, and they would not return to his kingdom in the north because there was no Temple, no place of worship. So he makes two golden calves, sets one in Dan and one in Bethel so the people could now go and worship God.

Now we are told in I Kings chapter 13 that, “**... a man of God went from Judah to Bethel by the word of the LORD, and Jeroboam stood by the altar to burn incense. Then he cried out against the altar by the word of the LORD, and said, ‘O altar, altar! Thus says the LORD: “Behold, a child, Josiah by name, shall be born to the house of David; and on you he shall sacrifice the priests of the high places who burn incense on you, and men's bones shall be burned on you.”**” I Kings 13:1-2.

God called Josiah by name 300 years before he was born and Josiah fulfilled this prophecy, just as God had said he would.

4. Keep in mind that the Northern Kingdom of Israel was taken into captivity at this point in their history. But there are still some people in the land, the weak, the poor, just a few and yet, we see Josiah trying to bring them back to the true and living God. He destroyed the false worship places, all the pagan worship places. You see, he was trying to bring reform to the Northern Kingdom of Israel. In fact, he went as far as Naphtali in the north because he wanted all of God's people to get right with the Lord. May we have that kind of heart; to bring people to Jesus, to destroy these false worship practices, bring them to nothing so they may see Jesus!

#### VERSES 8-13

1. Josiah first led a campaign to cleanse the land of Judah and Israel from idolatry. His next line of work, as he now is 26 years old, he is going to get the house of God, the place of worship, fixed up. You see, for some 75 years or so it was in disrepair. Manasseh reigned for 55 years and had desecrated the Temple. He only turned to the Lord towards the end of his life, and he never fully repaired the Temple. Then, his son Amon reigned for 2 years, and he was wicked, doing all kinds of evil before the Lord. Now, 18 years into the reign of Josiah, he is ready to repair the Temple.

So Shaphan goes throughout all Judah and into Israel, the Northern Kingdom, collecting money for the restoration of the Temple, and when he is finished, he brings the offering to Hilkiah, the high priest. And so now we will see this massive Temple restoration project begin. They will be removing the garbage, repairing that which was broken, and restoring the house of God to a place of worship.

2. Again, this is a great lesson for many today who have their lives cluttered with all kinds of garbage, the things of this world, idols and they need to clean house and return to the Lord. They need to develop a heart of worship!

#### VERSES 14-17

1. How many of you have misplaced something that was important to you, that was precious to you? We all have because it is so easy for something that is precious to get lost in the clutter of other things, to get lost in the garbage, and that is what happened to the Word of God. But Hilkiyah finds a copy of the books of Moses, the Pentateuch, from Genesis to Deuteronomy and he brings the Word of God to the king!

2. In many churches today the Word of God has been lost in the garbage of this world. That is the philosophies of men, psychology, and-so-on. We have seen Rick Warren going down this path of moving people away from the Word of God and filling their lives with all kinds of garbage. Listen to what he says regarding what he calls a new reformation. Warren states:

“I’m looking for a second reformation. The first reformation of the church 500 years ago was about beliefs. This one is going to be about behavior. The first one was about creeds. This one is going to be about deeds. It is not going to be about what does the church believe, but about what is the church doing.”

It sounds good on the surface but when you get down to it, it is wrong. You see, a reformation that gives more credence to works and deeds than beliefs and doctrine is flawed right from the get go. With proper beliefs and doctrine, works and deeds will follow. But it doesn't work the other way around. Good deeds are not always an indication of true godliness!

And Paul the apostle warns us of this foolishness in Colossians 2:8-10 when he says, **“Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.”** We need to *re-discover* that which has been lost - ***THE WORD OF GOD!***

Make no mistake about it. Throughout the history of the God's people, when the Word of God is recovered and spread, then spiritual revival follows. It can begin as simply as it did in the days of Josiah, with one man who finds the Word of God, reads the Word of God, believes the Word of God and then spreads the Word of God! May we be that person or those people!

VERSES 18-21

1. As the Book of the Law was brought to Josiah, as it is read to him, he tore his clothes, but why? He should have been excited to read the Word of God, so why this tearing of his garments? Because as the Word of God was read, he was convicted in his heart. He understood why judgment had come upon them. As Paul said in Romans 3:20,

**“Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.”** Josiah rightly recognized that not only did he stand guilty before God, but so did the nation. And so Josiah wanted Hilkiah and his men to go to inquire of God in what they should do next. Their sin was exposed and now they needed direction in what they should do.

It is as Paul said in Hebrews 4:12-13, **“For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.”** The Word of God is not only living, but it is powerful if we apply it to our lives as Josiah did!

VERSES 22-28

1. It is interesting that Josiah wanted to know what to do and instead of going to Jeremiah, who was a prophet in that day, he sends Hilkiah and his men to Huldah the prophetess, to inquire of God in what they should do next. Their sin was exposed and now they needed direction. I am sure that God lead them in that direction, to Huldah and as you can see, she spoke some powerful words of judgment for their sin!

Imagine someone like Huldah today! As they inquire of her Huldah tells them that the judgment of God will come upon them for their wickedness, but Josiah will be spared for his actions, because he had a heart for God. But judgment was going to come. Now that doesn't seem fair. Josiah and the people repented of their sin, why the judgment?

Because Josiah and only a few truly repented of their sin, only a few really turned to God. The rest just jumped on board the band wagon and wanted to do what pleased the king. Jeremiah points this out when he says **“And yet for all this her treacherous sister Judah has not turned to Me with her whole heart, but in pretense,’ says the LORD.”** Jeremiah 3:10. You see, it was only a false appearance, half-heartedly, for the Lord tells us that their hearts were far from Him! And when Josiah dies, the people will turn from God for the last time before their captivity comes.

2. In Jeremiah chapter 7, God rebukes Judah for her false loyalty. The Temple was filled with people, and they felt the Temple was their security as they cried out, **“The temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD.”** That was where their trust was in, not the Lord. How many today trust in the church for their ticket into heaven? They have a religious affiliation but not a relationship with Jesus. They will speak and support their church or their religious affiliation but when it comes to Jesus, they move away from speaking of Him! They are trusting in the words of man instead of the Word of God and God said in Jeremiah that if you don't trust in Him then, **“Behold, you trust in lying words that cannot profit.”** Jeremiah 7:8.



VERSES 29-33

1. Again, you have to love the heart of Josiah. He could have just kicked back in his lazy-boy chair, waiting to go home with the Lord, he was saved. There was nothing he could do to stop the judgment; it was going to come upon the nation. But instead of sitting around, he leads the people by giving them the Word of God and being an example to them. And yes, many did not follow with a loyal heart, but that did not stop Josiah, he forged ahead, doing all he could do, and allowing God to do the rest. May we have that kind of heart for people because we don't save people, God does. Our responsibility is to share our faith, bring people to Jesus by the Word of God!

And here's the thing. In Luke 19:13 Jesus said, “**... Occupy till I come.**” That tells me that we are not to sit around but give the people the truths of God from the Word of God. Yes, many will follow after with a divided heart, some will laugh at us, but never stop doing the work that God has called you to do. Be busy doing the work until He comes or you go home to be with Him!

2. I think most if not all of us would love to see revival break out once again before the Lord returns. But it is not going to happen through gimmicks or programs or entertainment, but by the teaching of God's Word. Listen to what J. Vernon McGee had to say regarding revival breaking out and what needs to happen. He wrote,

A return to the Word of God brings revival. Nothing else will bring revival. What is wrong in our day? Why don't we see revival? The reason is simple. The church has neglected the Word of God. Churches have tried every known gimmick and every kind of method. Nothing happens. Revival does not come that way. Revival comes when people return to the Word of God and find out what God has to say. . . .

My friend, let's be very candid and very matter – of - fact and very direct. I believe we could have a revival today, but first there must be a return to the Word of God to find out what God wants us to do. Then I believe there will be and there must be a total commitment to God on the part of God's people. There can be none of this halfhearted service which we see. There can be none of this business of trying to go with the world and trying to go with God. It is impossible to do both. There must be a clear-cut dedication of heart and life to God. When that takes place, the Spirit of God is free to move.

- J. Vernon McGee, Thru The Bible Vol. II, pp. 471, 472

3. I realize that to you this may seem impossible, to bring reform, to bring revival, to do a mighty work of God. But folks, Joan of Ark left her mark in history by the time she died at age nineteen. Romulus founded the city of Rome when he was twenty. St. Francis began his order at the age of twenty-four. Patrick Henry said, "Give me liberty or give me death," at twenty-six years of age. Napoleon conquered all of Europe by the time he was twenty-six. Martin Luther ignited the Reformation at the age of twenty-nine. Alexander the Great conquered the known world by the time he was thirty. Therefore, whatever your age, now is the time to say with Josiah, "I'm going to seek the Lord diligently. I'm going to get rid of the idols in my life. I'm going to rediscover the Word." You can do it; we can do it if we are willing to get serious about our relationship with the Lord!

## **II CHRONICLES 35**

### **VERSES 1-6**

1. Just as his great grandfather Hezekiah had done, Josiah was going to re-institute the Passover celebration.

2. Now this is interesting to me. For some reason the Ark of the Covenant was removed from the holy of holies, during a time of apostasy, and now Josiah is having it placed back where it belonged, in the holy of holies. Of this Trapp wrote, “The Hebrews tell us, that the priests in those idolatrous times had carried the Holy Ark out of the temple – that it might not stand there among those heathenish idols – and conveyed it to the house of Shallum, who was uncle to the prophet Jeremiah, and husband to the prophetess Huldah.” Now they were to bring it back into the holy of holies where it belonged!

3. In verses 4 and 5 we see Josiah get the priesthood in order. Remember that David had organized the priesthood so that once a year, for two weeks, they would serve in the Temple. Then at the end of their service they would return home and minister to their people. There were 48 Levitical cities throughout Israel so that no man was more than a day’s journey from a priest. Solomon also picked up on this and followed his father’s footsteps in organizing the priests. (I Chronicles 24, II Chronicles 8:14). And here we see Josiah do the same!

#### VERSES 7-9

1. Here we see Josiah give out of his own resources for the sacrifices used in the Passover celebration, and the other sacrifices that were being offered. He gave 30,000 lambs and young goats for the Passover (Exodus 29:38-45), and 3,000 of cattle for the fellowship or thank offerings (Leviticus 3:1-5).

And as Josiah freely gives we also see the spiritual leaders give to the people! How many times do you see that happen today? Not too often. You tend to see spiritual leaders taking from the people, looking to gain from them instead of being a servant to them. And as the people saw this they too freely gave. What a celebration this was, it more than doubled the sacrifices that Hezekiah offered during the Passover in his day! We see that the generosity of the leader prompted the generosity of others. May we be examples to others!

#### VERSES 10-15

1. As they celebrate the Passover they eat their meal quickly, just as they did in Egypt during the first Passover. In Exodus 12:11 we read, “**And thus you shall eat it: with a belt on your waist, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. So you shall eat it in haste. It is the Lord’s Passover.**”

And you can see the heart of God in these people. In fact, I love what they do here. The priests, the worship people, the gatekeepers, were so busy that they did not get a chance to partake of this meal, so the Levites prepared a meal for them and brought it to these men. That is a servant’s heart. Too many times, because of our position, we like to lord over the people, and have people take care of us, to serve us, to minister to us. But in Mark 10:45 Jesus said, “**For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.**” May we not lose focus of that truth!

We are here to serve the Lord as we serve His people!

VERSES 16-19

1. What a feast this was. We are told that this Passover celebration was even bigger than Hezekiah's!
  
2. How does this all relate to us? Folks, think about this for a minute. Week after week, month after month, year after year we come to church, to the house of the Lord where we hear the Word of God. That should bring such joy, such excitement in our lives, it should bring us to the Table of the Lord and like in Josiah's day, we should remember how the Lord delivered us from the power of sin and death that was upon our lives. We should remember how our Passover Lamb, Jesus, was crucified for our sins! May we not lose sight of that fact!
  
3. Now, in the next several verses we are going to come to the end of Josiah's life, and I think it was a premature death, as you will soon see.

VERSES 20-22

1. The year is around 610 B. C. and the Assyrian Empire was on the decline. The city of Nineveh had fallen to the up and coming Babylonians in 612 B.C., forcing the Assyrians to concentrate their forces around Haran and Carchemish, in the area of the upper Euphrates River. Egypt also was weak and ineffective by themselves. So Pharaoh Necho is coming to make an alliance with Assyria to fight off the up and coming Babylonians who sided with the Medes. And Necho will meet these Assyrian forces in the area of Carchemish. Now for some reason Josiah is coming against Pharaoh Necho, trying to prevent him from reaching Carchemish. For whatever reason, he was siding with the Babylonians.

2. The interesting thing to me is that Pharaoh Necho warns Josiah not to get involved in this battle because it did not concern him. In fact, Pharaoh Necho says that God has commanded him to do this, and to get in his way would be coming against God. And if you do get in the way, God is going to destroy you! Now it may seem strange that God would use this pagan king to come against Josiah, but God does use various people to accomplish His work. He called king Nebuchadnezzar His servant. He spoke to Balaam, who was not an Israelite. So don't let that trouble you, God could use a rock if He wanted to, but instead, here He is using Necho.

3. Now we know that Josiah was in sin because of his actions. You see, he disguised himself and went into battle. It was not a walk of faith, again, because why would he disguise himself? Here's the thing, when you walk in sin you can't disguise yourself, God sees right through that and your sin will be exposed!

#### VERSES 23-27

1. I think Josiah got involved in a situation that God had not called him into, and he died a premature death. He got involved in a needless battle, one that God had spoken to him to stay out of but he refused to listen and it cost him his life!

2. How can we apply that to our own Christian life? Well, we might not be physically killed in these battles, but maybe we have been wounded, our heart has felt the pain of doing or being where God has told us to stay away from. Maybe it is an argument, a debate, gossip or even your opinion that is causing you to meddle where you should not! And in the end you feel wounded, defeated. The solution for Josiah and for us is to avoid these battles that only bring about strife, confusion, condemnation and-so-on. This lesson in the life of Josiah is here so we can learn from it as Paul reminds us in Romans 15:4, **“For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.”** A powerful lesson for us to learn from! Josiah did not listen to the Lord and it cost him his life!



3. Josiah was truly a godly king and yet he had his weaknesses, just as we do. Josiah was still a man, just as we are. And now with the death of Josiah the judgment of God is at the door. He was the last obstacle, because of his love for the Lord, that was preventing the judgment of God and now that he has died, you can hear the footsteps of the enemy fast approaching, preparing to take the Southern Kingdom of Judah into captivity!

## **II CHRONICLES 36**

### **VERSES 1-4**

1. We now see with the death of Josiah, the people placed Jehoahaz his son on the throne in the Southern Kingdom of Judah. But he only lasted 3 months. And the reason is simple. As Pharaoh Necho defeated Josiah, he now takes control of the Southern Kingdom of Judah, the king's kingdom. You see, after Assyria's defeat at Haran and Carchemish, the Egyptian army withdrew south of the Euphrates to dominate Syria and Palestine. Judah became an Egyptian vassal state, which explains why Necho could depose Jehoahaz and require tribute. Judah had become a poor and weak nation, smaller by far than at any other time in its history. Josiah left them richer spiritually, but poorer financially.

And we see that Pharaoh Necho not only imposed a sort of protection payment on Judah, but he also replaced king Jehoahaz with his brother Eliakim. Now what the victorious kings would do many times is they would change the names of the leaders they defeated, as Necho did here. It showed who was in control now. So he changed Eliakim's name to Jehoiakim, and Jehoahaz is imprisoned in the area of Syria, the land of Hamath. Yes, Josiah brought spiritual reform to the nation, but now his son Jehoahaz did wickedly before the Lord and so too will Eliakim!

#### VERSES 5-8

1. In 606 B. C. Pharaoh Necho is defeated by the Babylonians, led by their captain, Nebuchadnezzar. On the throne in Babylon was his father Nabopolassar. As the Babylonians are victorious in the battle of Carchemish, Nebuchadnezzar gets word that his father, Nabopolassar has died, and now he is the king of Babylon. On the way home he stops in Jerusalem, and he takes captive to Babylon some of the cream of the crop from Judah. The Babylonians would take the best, the most talented, captive and train them to be leaders in Babylon. Daniel and his friends, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego were taken captive during this first invasion. The Assyrians and the Egyptians are no longer a world power; the Babylonians took that position away from them.
2. We are told in II Kings 24 that Jehoiakim was a vassal king to Nebuchadnezzar for 3 years, before he rebelled against him, and Nebuchadnezzar took him away captive to Babylon.

VERSES 9-10

1. Jehoiachin, also known as Jeconiah and Coniah, is now king in Jerusalem, and he too was wicked. In II Kings 24:8 we are told that Jehoiachin was eighteen years old and here it says eight. From the best manuscripts it would seem that he was eighteen years old and here in II Chronicles 36 this is probably a copyist error.

And what we are seeing here is the second deportation to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar, which took place in 597 B. C. In this invasion many of the Temple implements were taken and more of the people were deported to Babylon. Also Jehoiachin is taken away captive to Babylon. We are told in II Kings 24:13-14 of this time. We read, **“And he carried out from there all the treasures of the house of the LORD and the treasures of the king’s house, and he cut in pieces all the articles of gold which Solomon king of Israel had made in the temple of the LORD, as the LORD had said. Also he carried into captivity all Jerusalem: all the captains and all the mighty men of valor, ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and smiths. None remained except the poorest people of the land.”**

2. Now his uncle and the son of Josiah is the one on the throne. His name is Zedekiah and he too will do evil before the Lord.

VERSES 11-12

1. Again we are told that this king, Zedekiah did evil before the Lord and it is at this point that Jeremiah the prophet is crying out that it is all over; don't fight against the Babylonians, for this is of God. In Jeremiah 21:3-10 we see the words he spoke concerning this time. We read, **“Then Jeremiah said to them, ‘Thus you shall say to Zedekiah, ‘Thus says the LORD God of Israel: ‘Behold, I will turn back the weapons of war that are in your hands, with which you fight against the king of Babylon and the Chaldeans who besiege you outside the walls; and I will assemble them in the midst of this city. I Myself will fight against you with an outstretched hand and with a strong arm, even in anger and fury and great wrath. I will strike the inhabitants of this city, both man and beast; they shall die of a great pestilence. And afterward, says the LORD, I will deliver Zedekiah king of Judah, his servants and the people, and such as are left in this city from the pestilence and the sword and the famine, into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, into the hand of their enemies, and into the hand of those who seek their life; and he shall strike them with the edge of the sword. He shall not spare them, or have pity or mercy.’ Now you shall say to this people, ‘Thus says the LORD: ‘Behold, I set before you the way of life and the way of death. He who remains in this city shall die by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence; but he who goes out and defects to the Chaldeans who besiege you, he shall live, and his life shall be as a prize to him. For I have set My face against this city for adversity and not for good,” says the LORD. ‘It shall be given into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall burn it with fire.’”**

For forty years Jeremiah was warning the people to get right with God and no one was listening and now judgment is coming, it is at their door and they still refuse to listen. That is the tragedy here, no one wanted to listen to his repeated warnings of judgment and they tried to rebel against Babylon, which God said would be a foolish thing to do. And the same will happen during the Tribulation Period as many people will refuse to listen and they will fight against God thinking they can win and they will find out they won't!

#### VERSES 13-16

1. At this point the nation is sinking deeper and deeper into idolatry, becoming more and more wicked, even after the judgment of God has begun. God even tries to warn them over and over again by sending them prophets, but they refused to listen and they **“mocked the messengers of God.”** And the oath that Zedekiah made before the Lord regarding his submission to Nebuchadnezzar he now took back and thus, Nebuchadnezzar is going to come down hard upon them for this rebellion against him!

And what we see now is that God's long-suffering has come to an end, and the people and the nation had come to the point where, **“there was no remedy.”** What a sad statement that is. God had done everything to draw them back and they refused to listen and God's longsuffering had come to an end, there was no cure for this people, they were going into captivity!

In Jeremiah 32:1-5 we read, **“The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD in the tenth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, which was the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar. For then the king of Babylon’s army besieged Jerusalem, and Jeremiah the prophet was shut up in the court of the prison, which was in the king of Judah’s house. For Zedekiah king of Judah had shut him up, saying, ‘Why do you prophesy and say, ‘Thus says the LORD: ‘Behold, I will give this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall take it; and Zedekiah king of Judah shall not escape from the hand of the Chaldeans, but shall surely be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon, and shall speak with him face to face, and see him eye to eye; then he shall lead Zedekiah to Babylon, and there he shall be until I visit him,’ says the LORD; ‘though you fight with the Chaldeans, you shall not succeed?’”**

#### VERSES 17-21

1. The time is now 586 B. C., and the Babylonians make their third and final invasion into Jerusalem, destroying the city, the Temple and taking with them the rest of the people, killing many of them. The first two times he knocked on the door of Judah, but now, with the continued rebellion against him, he kicked down the door and destroyed the city!

It is during this time that Zedekiah and his sons are captured, and his sons are executed before his eyes. Then the Babylonians put out the eyes of Zedekiah and the last thing he saw before being led away captive to Babylon, was the death of his sons.

2. The Southern Kingdom of Judah was in captivity for 70 years, from 606 B. C. to 536 B. C., because of their idolatry and because they did not give the land its proper rest, as God had instructed them to do. For 6 years they were to work the land and in the seventh they were to let the land rest. God was going to provide enough food for them during that time, but they neglected to obey God's command for 490 years, and thus God was letting the land get its 70 years of rest, the years they were in captivity.

3. In regards to the judgment and destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, Dilday made these remarks, "The Talmud declares that when the Babylonians entered the temple, they held a two-day feast there to desecrate it; then, on the third day, they set fire to the building. The Talmud adds that the fire burned throughout that day and the next."

Also, Clarke makes these comments regarding the people of God. He wrote, "Thus, ends the history of a people the most fickle, the most ungrateful, and perhaps on the whole the most sinful, that ever existed on the face of the earth. But what a display does all this give of the power, justice, mercy, and long-suffering of the Lord! There was no people like this people, and no God like their God." Don't be too hard on them, we are no different! And I am thankful that our God is patient, that He is longsuffering towards us or we would all be in trouble!

Lastly, Selman made these comments, “In the end, the exile came not because Israel sinned, but because they spurned God’s offers of reconciliation.” How true that is even today. People are not sent to Hell because of their sin but because they have rejected the offer of reconciliation that has been extend to them in Christ. Paul put it like this in Romans 5:11, **“And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.”** And in II Corinthians 5:18-21 Paul tells us again of this reconciliation we have in Christ, **“Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”**

God has not only reconciled us back to Him through Christ, but now that we have been reconciled to Him He has given to us the ministry of reconciliation. We are His ambassadors to go out and bring Jesus to people so that they too can be reconciled to God through Him!



VERSES 22-23

1. As we come to the end of II Chronicles we see that it shows us the faithfulness of God as He will once again gather His people into the land. As the Babylonian Empire came to an end, and the Medo Persian Empire came on the scene, Cyrus is going to let the Jewish people return to the land. And as you read over these verses here in II Chronicles you will see that they are similar to the opening verses in the book of Ezra. Thus, we will continue on in our study as the Jews get ready to return home, but as we shall see next time, not all will return. In fact, only a few will return.

2. As I close this evening, let me leave you with a couple of encouraging comments regarding this book. Payne reminds us, “Unlike the Book of Kings, with its central message of stern moral judgments, Chronicles exists essentially as a book of hope, grounded on the grace of our sovereign Lord. . . . [Chronicles shows that] History is a process, not of disintegration, but of sifting, of selection, and of development.”

And Selman makes these remarks, “In the end, therefore, the end is also a fresh start. God’s promises continue through the exile, on through his own generation and into the future.”

There is coming a day of judgment upon this land and it looks as if that day is fast approaching. But after that judgment will be a time of re-gathering, a fresh start you might say. Yes, as Christians we will be taken out before the Tribulation Period starts, but many who come to Christ during that period will have to endure and in the end there is hope. There is a coming Kingdom where the Prince of Peace will rule and reign, Jesus Christ. We long for that day!