

LAST CHANCE! **2 Chronicles 33-35**

Parents' *last* warning—the kids know *"the tone!"*

"I really mean it!"

"This is your *last chance!*"

The kids can tell when we've spoken for the last time.

They'll go right up to the limit.

That's what Manasseh does with God in 2 Chronicles 33.

When we left Israel at the end of Hezekiah's reign, things looked pretty good.

People are worshiping the Lord faithfully—celebrating what God has done for them.

Suddenly Josiah, Hezekiah's great grandson, has to clean house again! *What happened?*

EVIL REIGN OF MANASSEH 33:1-20

IMITATION OF PAGAN RELIGIONS 33:1-9

Although Hezekiah has been faithful to the Lord, Manasseh chooses the opposite direction.

He doesn't act like the kings of Israel, but, *"according to the abominations of the nations which Yahweh had thrown out before the children of Israel."*

He follows the ways of pagan Canaanites—an insult to God.

33:1-2

He accepts the pagan rituals of the surrounding nations.

The rituals they practice (3-9), indicate that Manasseh tries a little bit of everything.

His leadership introduces more negative effects than any other leader, even the Canaanites.

INVASION BY ASSYRIA 33:10-11

When God tries to turn them back, they refuse to pay attention.

Therefore, God sends Assyria back to attack Judah.

Assyria conquers them and takes Manasseh captive to Babylonia.

REPENTANCE AND RESTORATION 33:12-20

From his home in captivity, Manasseh cries out to the Lord and is restored **33:12-13**

Manasseh leads the people to worship the true God and orders them to serve Him alone.

The people keep worshiping Him in the high places, which is prohibited, but at least they're worshiping the true God. When they worship the Lord in the high places, they imitate the pagans.

God's people are only to worship Him in His temple, where He establishes His name and He resides among His people.

At least now they worship the Lord alone, even though it's in the wrong way. **33:15-17**

In spite of his repentance and restoration, the global effect of Manasseh's reign on the nation is negative.

He weakens the result of what Hezekiah accomplished. **33:18-20**

EVIL REIGN OF AMON 33:21-25

The permanent damage of Manasseh's reign is seen in the rule of his son Amon.

He pays no attention to the lessons his father learned at the end of his life.

He imitates the same kind of idolatry Manasseh followed at the beginning.

THE LONG TERM FRUIT OF MANASSEH'S UNFAITHFULNESS IS REPRODUCED IN HIS SON'S LIFE.

His kingdom is worse yet. But **Amon never repents.**

His life ends in a plot by his subordinate officers.

It's a fitting conclusion for a king who teaches God's people to turn their back on Him.

GOOD REIGN OF JOSIAH 34-35

HIS REFORMS 34:1-7 1-3

Although Josiah is only eight when his father dies, he learns the importance of following the Lord faithfully from his father's example.

The sad thing is that he learns it by watching the tragic end his father suffers because of his unfaithfulness.

He must have been instructed by someone during those growing years from 8 to 20 when he comes out firmly on God's side.

Someone must have taken him under his wing to lead him in the right path.

Josiah leads the nation in the last reformation previous to captivity.

Josiah seeks the Lord and eliminates the other religious systems Judah is following. 34:1-5

Josiah is more thorough in destroying false worship centers than Hezekiah. 34:4-7

His missionary vision extends toward Israel also:

He extends his campaign beyond his borders;

He goes back into the northern kingdom and removes pagan worship.

Josiah may have hoped his purifying acts would motivate God to restore them.

HIS TEMPLE REPAIRS 34:8-13

After he destroys the remnants of pagan religion,

he's motivated "by the zeal of the Lord" to repair the temple.

Josiah motivates the people to work together enthusiastically to restore the temple and present God with a worthy house. 8, 12

People gave generously, worked enthusiastically, with grateful hearts.

An indirect benefit of the temple repairs: they find the law hidden in the temple. 14

HIS READING OF THE LAW 34:14-30

Discovery of the law 34:14-18

Hilkiah => Shaphan => Josiah

Their obedience to what they know God wants them to do, leads to discovery of what will please God.

We don't know how long it was hidden away.

We DO know that it had been a long time since *anyone*—including the king and the priests—had listened to God's Word!

It was buried away in a dark corner of the worship center.

It wasn't out on the coffee table where God's Word could guide their life!

Consultation regarding the law 34:19-28

When Josiah hears the reading of the law, he knows that the people deserve divine judgment because of their disobedience. **34:19, 21**

When he asks God, He responds that they deserve judgment.

Judgment will be postponed because of his attitude toward God.

He listens to God's Word and humbles himself before Him. Therefore, coming judgment won't affect his reign

34:26-28

Reading of the law **34:29-30**

Josiah hopes the nation will repent so God can restore them.

Josiah calls everyone together to read God's Word, before the nation.

HIS RECONFIRMATION OF THE COVENANT

34:31-33

Josiah makes a covenant to follow the Lord personally and obey Him faithfully, with the whole nation as witness.

He exhorts *them* to follow his example and reconfirm *their* relationship with God.

The people follow him, though perhaps under pressure.

Josiah's faithfulness motivates all the people to return to the Lord for as long as he lives.

HIS CELEBRATION OF THE PASSOVER 35:1-19

Josiah (*like Hezekiah*) calls the people together for the greatest celebration of the Passover since the days of Samuel. **35:18**

Through the preparations, Josiah encourages Levites and priests to sanctify themselves, serve the Lord faithfully, and teach the nation what God expects.

They provide the animals the people need to make the sacrifices.

–Josiah sets example –His leaders follow

–Levitical leaders also follow

Josiah does everything possible to assure that the people are faithful to God so that He can bless them.

Even so, you get the feeling that **all the initiative is coming from Josiah and the faithful religious leaders.**

You don't see active, wholehearted participation of the people themselves.

The reality of this conclusion is confirmed at his death.

It confirms the reformation is Josiah's, the people never take ownership of it.

It doesn't come from their hearts; it's from his.

HIS DEATH 35:20-27

After they celebrate the Passover, Josiah tries to stop Pharaoh Neco of Egypt who's on his way to fight for Assyria, against Babylonia.

Neco tries to talk him out of it. **21-22**

Text seems to agree with Neco's understanding that God is on his side!

The Bible never gives a reason, nor does God give His opinion of Josiah's action.

All it tells us is the result: Josiah dies in the conflict.

His death is lamented, in part because . . .

Josiah's reforms die with him.

As far as the nation is concerned, this is *their* last chance!

The nation begins a rapid downhill descent toward destruction.

LESSONS WE SHOULD LEARN FROM JOSIAH'S LIFE:

1. Importance of a godly influence/example

He's only 8 when he comes to the throne.

He gets no help from home.

How does he learn what God wants from him?

Someone takes him under their wing.

That's what discipleship/mentoring are about!

2. His commitment as a youth to follow the Lord.

He bucks the tide! He doesn't wait until he grows up!

The popular thing to do is follow pagan gods.

At 16 he makes a public stand to follow the Lord! **34:3**

3. His zeal to please the Lord—whatever it takes.

He tears down pagan idols and worship centers

Repairs the temple Finding the Law

His response to the law: Reading—Repentance—Inquiry

Public Reading of the Law

He makes a public covenant: 34:31; 2 Ki. 23:25

4. His commitment to take others with him 34:32-33

Word of caution based on Josiah's death

I'm not convinced we should take Neco's word for it!
Even the Chronicler could be vague here.

Josiah never checks with God about the red flag.

35:22—he refuses to listen!

Josiah's more committed to pursuing HIS agenda, than to pursuing GOD's agenda!

Are WE?

He must have been fighting the internal certainty of God's will

– the still small voice—why?

He plays the trick of disguising himself.

In Scripture, every time God's man disguises himself he's going against God's plan!

HOW CAN WE ENCOURAGE OTHERS TO SEEK GOD AND BE FAITHFUL TO HIM?

What impact might we make on God's people (or those around us) if we were willing to take the risk and stand alone against the crowd and do what God wants us to do?

The importance of our example.

Will those who come behind us find us faithful?