

# Dr. John Oswalt, Kings, Session 30, Part 1

## 2 Kings 24-25, Part 1

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I wish we could conclude on a really up note, but in fact, the book doesn't conclude that way. Although, as you see on the title that I've chosen here, it does give us a little glimmer of hope right at the end, and we'll talk about that. I talked last week about this amazing 20 or 25 years that takes place here.

Josiah died in 609. The younger of two of his sons was put on the throne, I think, probably by an anti-Egyptian faction in the government, and he only lasted three months, Jehoahaz, before the Egyptians took him off the throne and imposed a huge tribute on the land. They put his older brother, Jehoiakim, on the throne, and Jehoiakim is, in my mind, the true politician. Now, that's, if anybody is a politician here, I'm sorry, but he's a cynic, he's a skeptic, and he runs the show by power.

He changed horses from the Egyptians to the Babylonians when Nebuchadnezzar came through in 605, and then when the Babylonians suffered a setback at the border of Egypt, he changed sides again and revolted against the Babylonians. They recovered from their setback and came back and besieged the place. Joy, I can die mysteriously.

We do not know exactly what happened, but his young son, 18 years old, Jehoiakim succeeded him and immediately surrendered. He and the rest of the Royal family are taken into exile in Babylon, and the Babylonians put his uncle, the third son of Josiah, to sit on the throne of Judah, on the throne, changed his name from Mattaniah to Zedekiah and Zedekiah is a man who rules by pole. Whichever way the wind is blowing, that's the way he's blowing, and eventually, he revolted, and the Babylonians had it.

Came, besieged the city, destroyed it, killed him, well, he didn't kill him, we'll talk about that, but so that's the story. So let's look at Jehoahaz again, three months, but once again, in verse 32, he did evil in the eyes of the Lord, just as his fathers had done. And if we look down at Jehoiakim, the same thing is said about him, that he did evil as his fathers had done.

Now I wonder, what does that mean? His father, Josiah, had been a very good man, but what we're saying, I think, is we're talking about the longer, longer ancestors, farther back, in particular Manasseh and Ammon. As I've said several times, it's pretty clear that Manasseh set a pattern, and not that marker and that pattern had a break that was Josiah, but the pattern went right straight on. So, we're told several times that Judah went into captivity because of the sins of Manasseh.

But I'm confident we're not talking about things that Manasseh himself did so much, although he did, in 52 years, many terrible things. But we're talking about the sins that he planted in the nation and that were carried on, except for the Josiah blip, if I may call it that. So when we think about nations and the history of nations, we have to think about the long haul.

We in America have been living on the momentum of godly people in the last two centuries. The momentum is running out rapidly. So the question then for you and me is, what momentum are we building in our own families, in our own lines, whatever may happen to the country? I look back on my own history and am so grateful for generations of believers.

Karen's great-great-grandfather, is that right? Is that Harry's father or Harry's grandfather? Okay, great-great-grandfather was a Methodist, well, he was not, he was a Brethren circuit writer in upstate New York, John Wesley Clark. So again, there's a heritage there that prays God. So the question is, how do you and I establish a line, whatever may happen in our country? We may pray, and we must pray.

But the issue is for you and me, what sort of precedent can you and I put in place so that four generations from now, could it be said that a child walked in the way of her fathers or his mothers? Grant it, Lord, grant it. Now, why do you suppose this is pure speculation, but the Lord invites us to it? Why do you suppose he didn't follow in Josiah's footsteps? Josiah had ruled; he was 39 when he died, but he had ruled for 31 years, coming to the throne when he was eight, excuse me, 12, better check that out, eight, yes, good, all right.

Great to have memory work sometimes. So, he ruled for those years, he had clearly lived out energetically a life for God. Why do you suppose Jehoahaz didn't follow him? Got busy ruling, well, he only ruled for three months.

Afraid of Egypt, very possibly. His mother was from Libnah, a city that Joshua had destroyed. It's very, very probable that that's what's going on in all three of these boys.

Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, and Zedekiah, all three of them, sons of Josiah, none of them followed their father. As you probably know, if you were to want to become an Israeli citizen, you would have to prove that your mother was Jewish. Doesn't matter what your father was.

He could be a Hungarian, but he could be a great Jewish leader. But if your mother's not Jewish, you don't become a citizen of Israel. They understood.

And certainly, in this situation where you have a harem, the children are under the influence of their mothers. So here, two days after Mother's Day, mothers, your influence is critical. Now, we don't know this.

Again, I say it's speculation, but it's just very interesting to me that, for some reason, Josiah did not have an impact on his son's life. Part of the tragedy. So look then at chapter 24, verses 3 and 4. These things happened to Judah according to the word's command in order to remove them from his presence because of the sins of Manasseh and all that he had done.

There it is. He set a trajectory that was not to change in the hearts and minds of the people. The truth is we slide downhill.

You have to climb to go uphill. So that it's easy, it's easy to become idolaters. It's difficult to give up your control of your environment, of your life, of your nature and put it into the hands of a God whom you cannot see.

So the way that he led his people in was the easy one. And what Josiah was calling them to, that was hard. And they clearly did not want to go that way.

So again, it's not that Manasseh did bad things, and therefore, no matter what good things the people might have done afterward, God was going to get them. No, Manasseh set a trajectory that they were glad to follow. And as soon as Josiah was gone, they slid right back into those old ways without a murmur, evidently.

So Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim both are treading the same path established by Manasseh. Now, we know most about Jehoiakim from the book of Jeremiah. And I want you to look at a passage in Jeremiah that reflects who this man Jehoiakim was.

God told Jeremiah, During the fourth year that Jehoiakim, son of Josiah, was king in Judah, the Lord gave this message to Jeremiah: Get a scroll, write down all my messages against Israel, Judah, and the other nations. Begin with the first message from the days of Josiah. Write down every message right up to the present time.

Perhaps the people of Judah will repent when they hear again all the terrible things I have planned for them. Then, I will be able to forgive their sins and wrongdoings. And that's very interesting.

Oh, the trajectory is set. Manasseh did some things, and judgment is going to fall on them because of the sins of Manasseh. Unless, unless they repent.

And if they repent, I'll be glad to forgive them. See, that's what I've talked to you before about Israelite prophecy. For the pagan, you look at the stars, you look at the

sheep's liver, you look at the flights of the birds, and you say that has to happen tomorrow.

It's predetermined by the shape of all of these signs. The Hebrew prophet says, Because of the sins of Manasseh, you are going to go into captivity unless you repent. And you don't have to do that.

Captivity is a foregone conclusion. Manasseh, unless your choices change. Biblical prophecy is built on the glory of human freedom and responsibility.

So, it's very interesting to me. I look at a prophet who says. Like Zechariah, Jerusalem will never fall again.

It's fallen several times since. Zechariah was Zechariah, a false prophet. No.

If they had been faithful if they had believed. Jerusalem would never fall. We get into this pagan mindset.

Oh, well, God predicted it. So, it has to happen. Doesn't matter.

No, Judah. Even at that late date. Could have been spared from exile.

It's likely to happen. No. Given the pattern that's been established and the ease with which we fall into sinful behavior.

But could it be changed? Absolutely. So anyway, here it is. Write it down.

Write it down. We're four years into Joachim's reign. He's about to sell out to the Babylonians.

Get a scroll. Write down every message you've ever given. Wow.

Somebody had a good memory. But that, of course, in those days, was the job of the disciple. Disciples were supposed to memorize everything the master said.

So, he got Baruch, the scribe. He wrote it all down and put it on a scroll, and Baruch went to the temple.

He's intervening verses here between 3 and 21. Baruch went to the temple on a feast day when there were lots of people there. And he read it.

And there were some people who were shocked. Who were stunned when they heard it. And they said, hey, some of the leaders need to hear that.

And so, the leaders took it and read it. And finally, the word got to Joachim. The king sent Yehudi to get the scroll.

Yehudi brought it from Elishama's room and read it to the king as all his officials stood by. It was late autumn, and the king was in a winterized part of his palace, sitting in front of a fire to keep warm. Each time Yehudi finished reading three or four columns, the king took a knife and cut off that section of the scroll.

He threw it into the fire, section by section. Until the whole scroll was burned up. Neither the king nor his attendants showed any signs of fear or repentance at what they heard.

Even when Elnathan, Deliah, and Gemariah begged the king not to burn the scroll, he would not listen. That's the man. Now, you think about what he did when they read Deuteronomy to Josiah. He tore his clothes in anguish.

Is that the word of God? Oh, my goodness. But not this guy. Not this guy.

So, he's an Egyptian first, then he's a Babylonian. Then, when it looks like he can revolt against the Babylonians, he revolts and pays the price. Oh, dear God.

It is so easy to become hardened to the word, so that it's just a book. An old book. An antique book.

No. No. It is the very word of God. In that slim volume is the revealed word of God, for all time and for tonight.