

Dr. John Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 30.1, 2 Kings 24-25, Part 1 Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 30.1, 2 Kings 24-25, Part 1, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Oswalt's lecture discusses the end of the Kingdom of Judah, focusing on the reigns of Josiah's sons and their failures to follow his righteous example. **He highlights Jehoiakim's cynicism** and manipulation, contrasting him with Josiah's response to scripture. **Oswalt emphasizes the influence of Manasseh's sins** as a long-term trajectory for the nation, leading to captivity. **The lecture also explores the concept of choice and responsibility** in biblical prophecy, using Jeremiah's scroll as an example of a chance for repentance that was rejected. **The speaker connects this historical narrative to contemporary society**, challenging listeners to establish a godly heritage.

2. 17 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 30.1 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament → Historical Books → Kings).



**Oswalt_Kings_Sessi
on30_1.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 30.1, 2 Kings 24-25, Part 1

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the main themes and important ideas from the provided excerpts of Dr. John Oswalt's lecture on 2 Kings 24-25, Part 1.

Briefing Document: Dr. John Oswalt on 2 Kings 24-25, Part 1

Subject: The Downward Spiral of Judah: Kings, Sin, and the Possibility of Repentance.

Source: Excerpts from "Oswalt_Kings_EN_Session30_1.pdf" (Dr. John Oswalt, Kings, Session 30, Part 1: 2 Kings 24-25, Part 1).

Main Themes:

- **The Reign of Evil Kings After Josiah:** The lecture focuses on the reigns of Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, and Zedekiah, all sons of the righteous King Josiah, but none of whom followed in his footsteps. All of them "did evil in the eyes of the Lord, just as his fathers had done." The lecture highlights how quickly Judah reverted to sinful ways after Josiah's death.
- **The Legacy of Manasseh:** Dr. Oswalt argues that the sins of Manasseh created a lasting "trajectory" of idolatry and disobedience that was difficult to break. "Judah went into captivity because of the sins of Manasseh." It wasn't just Manasseh's actions but the pervasive influence and the ease with which the people embraced his sinful ways.
- **The Importance of Personal and Generational Righteousness:** Oswalt emphasizes the need for individuals to establish a legacy of faith and righteousness within their own families, regardless of the state of the nation. He urges listeners to consider, "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?" He connects this to the idea that America is currently living off the "momentum of godly people in the last two centuries" and that momentum is rapidly running out.
- **The Sovereignty of God and Human Responsibility:** Oswalt stresses that while prophecy may indicate a likely outcome (exile due to sin), it is not deterministic. He argues, "Biblical prophecy is built on the glory of human freedom and responsibility." He points out that God was willing to forgive Judah if they repented, even at that late stage.

- **The Hardening Effect of Sin:** The story of Jehoiakim burning the scroll of Jeremiah's prophecies illustrates how easily people can become "hardened to the word" and reject God's warnings. This is contrasted with Josiah's reaction to the reading of Deuteronomy.

Key Ideas and Facts:

- **Josiah's Successors:** Jehoahaz reigned for only 3 months before being deposed by the Egyptians. Jehoiakim was a political opportunist who switched allegiances between Egypt and Babylon. Zedekiah was indecisive and easily swayed, eventually leading to the destruction of Jerusalem.
- **The Influence of Mothers:** Dr. Oswalt speculates on the potential influence of the kings' mothers, noting that in Israelite culture, lineage is often traced through the mother. He connects this to the idea that the kings' mothers may have come from families who did not follow God.
- **Jeremiah and Jehoiakim:** God commanded Jeremiah to write down all his prophecies on a scroll, hoping that the people of Judah would repent. Baruch read the scroll in the temple, but when it was read to Jehoiakim, he burned it piece by piece, showing no remorse.
- **Prophecy and Repentance:** The lecture makes it clear that God's pronouncements of judgment were conditional on the people's response. Repentance could avert the predicted disaster. "Because of the sins of Manasseh, you are going to go into captivity unless you repent. And you don't have to do that... Biblical prophecy is built on the glory of human freedom and responsibility."

Quotes:

- "Judah went into captivity because of the sins of Manasseh."
- "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?"
- "Biblical prophecy is built on the glory of human freedom and responsibility."
- "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."

Implications:

- The lecture serves as a warning against complacency and the easy slide into sin.
- It encourages listeners to take personal responsibility for their faith and to build a lasting legacy of righteousness.
- It emphasizes the importance of heeding God's word and repenting of sin.
- The lecture is also a commentary on the relationship between divine foreknowledge and human free will.

4. Study Guide: Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 30.1, 2 Kings 24-25, Part 1

2 Kings 24-25 Study Guide: The Fall of Judah

Quiz

Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. Why does Dr. Oswalt refer to Josiah's reign as a "blip" in Judah's history?
2. What pattern did Manasseh establish in Judah, and why was it so difficult to break?
3. According to Dr. Oswalt, what crucial factor differentiates biblical prophecy from paganistic divination?
4. What was Jehoiakim's initial reaction upon hearing Jeremiah's prophecies read aloud?
5. Why might the influence of the mothers of Josiah's sons have contributed to their unfaithfulness?
6. How did Jehoiakim demonstrate his political cynicism and lack of commitment?
7. Explain the significance of the phrase "he did evil in the eyes of the Lord, just as his fathers had done" in relation to Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim.
8. What was the role of Baruch in conveying Jeremiah's prophecies to the people?
9. In what way does Dr. Oswalt connect the history of Judah to contemporary issues facing America?
10. What does the end of the book of Kings offer the reader?

Quiz Answer Key

1. Josiah's reign is considered a "blip" because, despite his efforts to reform Judah and turn the people back to God, his sons and the majority of the people quickly reverted to their former idolatrous and sinful ways after his death, suggesting that his reforms did not have a lasting impact. Josiah's reign was the exception, not the rule.
2. Manasseh established a pattern of idolatry, syncretism, and moral corruption that permeated Judah for decades. This pattern was difficult to break because it

appealed to the people's desire for immediate gratification and control over their lives, making it easier to slide into sinful habits than to embrace the challenging path of obedience to God.

3. Biblical prophecy is conditional and based on human freedom and responsibility, offering the possibility of repentance and altered outcomes. In contrast, pagan divination is deterministic, asserting that events are predetermined by external forces and cannot be changed, regardless of human actions.
4. Jehoiakim reacted with defiance and contempt, cutting the scroll into pieces and burning it in the fire, demonstrating his rejection of God's word and his unwillingness to repent or heed the warnings of judgment. He showed no fear nor repentance.
5. Josiah's sons' mothers, likely from different backgrounds and possibly even foreign nations, may have instilled in them values and beliefs that were contrary to Josiah's devotion to God, influencing them to turn away from their father's example and embrace the idolatrous practices of their ancestors. This is not stated as fact, but rather presented as a likely theory.
6. Jehoiakim demonstrated his political cynicism by shifting his allegiance between Egypt and Babylon based on which power seemed most advantageous at the moment. His decisions were driven by self-interest and political expediency rather than loyalty or principle, highlighting his lack of commitment to any cause beyond his own survival.
7. This phrase indicates that Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim were continuing the sinful practices of their ancestors, particularly Manasseh and Ammon, who had led Judah into idolatry and moral decay. They rejected the reforms of their father, Josiah, and chose to follow the well-worn path of disobedience to God.
8. Baruch served as Jeremiah's scribe, writing down the prophet's messages on a scroll and reading them aloud to the people in the temple. He was a key figure in communicating God's warnings and call to repentance to the people of Judah.
9. Dr. Oswalt draws a parallel between Judah's history and contemporary issues in America by suggesting that America has been living on the momentum of godly people from past generations, but that momentum is fading. He emphasizes the importance of individuals establishing a legacy of faith and righteousness in their own families, regardless of the nation's trajectory.

10. While the book of Kings doesn't conclude on an extremely hopeful note, the title chosen gives "a little glimmer of hope right at the end," which alludes to the possibility of restoration and redemption. While the immediate circumstances are bleak, the narrative hints at God's enduring faithfulness and the potential for future blessings.

Essay Questions

1. Analyze the role of leadership in the downfall of Judah, focusing on the contrasting examples of Josiah and his sons.
2. Discuss the concept of "trajectory" as it relates to the history of Judah, explaining how the actions of past generations influenced the present and future.
3. Compare and contrast biblical prophecy with pagan divination, highlighting the implications of each for human agency and responsibility.
4. Examine the significance of repentance in the context of the prophetic message, considering whether Judah could have avoided exile if they had heeded the call to turn back to God.
5. Explore the lessons from the history of Judah that can be applied to contemporary societies, particularly regarding the importance of moral and spiritual leadership, the influence of family, and the need for national repentance.

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Jehoahaz:** The younger son of Josiah who reigned for only three months before being deposed by the Egyptians.
- **Jehoiakim:** The older son of Josiah who was placed on the throne by the Egyptians and later rebelled against Babylon.
- **Zedekiah:** The uncle of Jehoiakim and the last king of Judah, appointed by the Babylonians.
- **Josiah:** A righteous king of Judah who initiated religious reforms and sought to restore the worship of Yahweh.
- **Manasseh:** A king of Judah known for his extreme wickedness and idolatry, who is often blamed for Judah's eventual exile.
- **Nebuchadnezzar:** The king of Babylon who conquered Jerusalem and took the people of Judah into exile.
- **Jeremiah:** A prophet of God who warned Judah of impending judgment and called them to repentance.
- **Baruch:** Jeremiah's scribe who wrote down his prophecies and read them to the people.
- **Repentance:** A turning away from sin and a return to God, involving sorrow for past actions and a commitment to change one's behavior.
- **Exile:** The forced removal of a people from their homeland, specifically referring to the Babylonian exile of the people of Judah.
- **Prophecy:** A message from God, often delivered through a prophet, which may include warnings, promises, or revelations about the future.
- **Trajectory:** A course or direction, often used to describe the long-term consequences of past actions or decisions. In this case, the course or pattern of behavior set in motion by Manasseh.

5. FAQs on Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 30.1, 2 Kings 24-25, Part 1, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions on 2 Kings 24-25

- **Why does the book of 2 Kings end on a somber note, despite a "glimmer of hope" mentioned?**
- The book concludes with the destruction of Jerusalem and the exile of its people to Babylon, a direct consequence of the people's unfaithfulness and the sins of their leaders. This destruction overshadows any positive conclusion, creating a somber tone. The "glimmer of hope" may refer to a later event that suggests the Davidic line and God's promises were not entirely extinguished.
- **Who were the key kings of Judah during the period leading up to the Babylonian exile, and what were their significant actions?**
- The key kings were Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, and Zedekiah. Josiah was a righteous king who instituted reforms, but his sons, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, and Zedekiah, reverted to idolatry and political maneuvering. Jehoahaz reigned briefly and was deposed by Egypt. Jehoiakim was a cynical politician who shifted alliances and rejected Jeremiah's prophecies. Zedekiah was indecisive and eventually rebelled against Babylon, leading to Jerusalem's destruction.
- **What is the significance of the phrase "he did evil in the eyes of the Lord, just as his fathers had done," in relation to Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim?**
- This phrase highlights the continuity of sin and idolatry in the kings of Judah, referencing not just their immediate predecessors, but also further back to kings like Manasseh and Ammon. It shows a pattern of unfaithfulness that persisted despite Josiah's reforms. The repetition emphasizes a deep-seated spiritual problem within the nation.
- **How did King Manasseh contribute to the downfall of Judah, even after his reign?**
- Manasseh's long reign was marked by widespread idolatry and wickedness. Even though Josiah temporarily reversed some of his policies, Manasseh established a trajectory of sin that persisted in the hearts and minds of the people. His actions set a pattern that the people readily embraced after Josiah's death.

- **What does the text suggest about the role of individual choice and repentance in averting divine judgment?**
- The text highlights the importance of individual choice and repentance. Despite the established trajectory of sin set by Manasseh, the people of Judah had the opportunity to repent and avert judgment. However, they failed to do so, hardening their hearts and ultimately facing the consequences of their actions.
- **What is the story of Jehoiakim and the scroll of Jeremiah, and what does it reveal about his character?**
- Jehoiakim rejected the word of God by burning a scroll containing Jeremiah's prophecies. As the scroll was read to him, he would cut off sections and throw them into the fire. This act demonstrates his defiance, lack of fear, and rejection of divine warnings.
- **What is the significance of the influence of mothers on the actions of Josiah's sons?**
- It is speculated that the mothers of Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, and Zedekiah played a significant role in their lives and actions. The text references that children in a harem would have been heavily influenced by their mothers. Despite Josiah's attempts to instill righteousness in his sons, the influence of their mothers may have swayed them towards the idolatrous practices of their ancestors.
- **What lesson can modern readers draw from the account of Judah's downfall, particularly in terms of national identity and individual responsibility?**
- The account of Judah's downfall serves as a warning about the long-term consequences of sin and the importance of individual responsibility in shaping national identity. It emphasizes the need for individuals to establish a legacy of faith and righteousness that can influence future generations. The rise and fall of civilizations is impacted by the momentum of individuals, thus the present moment is critical for action.