

**Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes**  
**Fourth Quarter 2015: *Jeremiah***  
**Lesson 3 “The Last Five Kings of Israel”**

**Read for this week’s study**

2 Chronicles 34; Jeremiah 22:1–19, 29:1–14; 2 Chronicles 36:11–14; Jeremiah 23:2–8.

**Memory Text**

“He defended the cause of the poor and needy, and so all went well. Is that not what it means to know me?” (Jeremiah 22:16, NIV).

**Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide**

- I. Introduction
- II. Under the Rule of Josiah
- III. Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim: Another Descent
- IV. The Short Reign of King Jehoiachin of Judah
- V. At the End of the Dead End
- VI. The Remnant
- VII. Further Study

**Questions and Notes for Consideration**

**Facilitator: Zdravko Stefanović**

**NOT A TYPICAL MONARCH**

**A. Introduction**

1. The presence of a monarch was so noticeable in ancient times. What were some of the external signs of a person in power?
2. Things are not so different today. Are there any exceptions among political and religious leaders?
3. The leaders of God’s people should have known better. How were they to be different?

**B. Proscriptions & prescriptions (Deuteronomy 17:14-20)**

1. Israel’s first king was God (theocracy). Why did the people ask for a king?
2. Can you name some of the proscriptions found in this passage?
3. There are also clear prescriptions for the king’s attitude. Can you explain what they meant?
4. Not many kings of Israel followed these instructions. What about Israel’s wisest king Solomon?

### C. King Josiah's successors (2 Kings 23:31-37)

1. Josiah's son Jehoahaz "did evil in the eyes of the Lord just as his fathers had done" (v. 32). What were Josiah's immediate ancestors like?
2. Pharaoh Necho took Jehoahaz into captivity. Why did he do that?
3. The same king changed Eliakim's name to Jehoiakim. What did this change symbolize? How did the king of Judah raise money to pay the levy to Egypt?
4. Jehoiakim became a vassal king of Nebuchadnezzar. Why did he rebel against Babylon?
5. The kingdom of Judah came to an end. What happened to its last two kings?

### D. Not so with you! (Matthew 20:20-28)

1. Salome, instead of her sons, asked Jesus for a favor. How did the other ten disciples react? What does "a cup" symbolize in the Bible?
2. Ellen White defined "true greatness" as "true goodness" (PK). What did Jesus say about greatness? How does service and goodness relate to love, which is the foundation of God's Kingdom?
3. Jesus' favorite title was "Son of Man." What does a title like this one imply?

### Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

What kind of friendship is it that demands obedience? How do you fit "Keep my commandments," with "You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free"? Sometimes this is explained to mean that we are free so long as we do exactly what we are told. Have you parents ever tried that with your children?

"Now children, we want freedom in our home. We can have freedom so long as you do exactly what you are told. Do I make myself clear?" If your children are afraid of you enough, they will say, "You have made yourself clear." But inside they may have serious reservations. It seems such a contradiction. Of course, everything depends upon how we understand what it is that God has asked us to do and how we understand the reason why he even had to ask us in the first place.

I believe, as I am sure many of you do, that all of God's laws, particularly the Ten Commandments, were given for our best good. They were given especially to preserve freedom—not to infringe upon it. But law, the use of law, has been seriously misunderstood throughout the great controversy.

The most notable example of misunderstanding occurred about 1400 years after Sinai, when the Son of God came himself to live among a people who had been especially entrusted with this revelation of God's will formulated in the Decalogue, the Ten Commandments.

Of all people, they should have understood it was an emergency measure—with Moses there to explain that there was no need to be afraid. But when Jesus came, he found a group of people who were totally preoccupied with God’s laws and with obedience to their every detail. He never had to tell them not to make a graven image. They had learned their lesson in the discipline of Babylonian captivity, and they never sank into ordinary idolatry again. He never had to tell them which day was the Sabbath. They regarded it as their highest duty to obey all ten of the Ten Commandments. He never had to urge them to pay tithe. Matthew records they used to tithe even the tiniest things: the seeds of the mint, anise, and cumin. Nor did Jesus have to tell them they should obey the laws of hygiene. He commented on the fact that they would even strain gnats out of their goat’s milk lest they should eat a forbidden insect. Nor did He ever have to tell them to search the Scriptures. He said they did it all the time—though they did it for the wrong reason. (John 5:39) Nor did he ever have to tell them to be careful in their association with unbelievers. In fact, when they came in from the market place, they used to wash themselves in certain special, ceremonial ways, lest they be contaminated by association with the Gentiles. You see, they all could say, like the rich young ruler, “All these things we have obeyed from our youth up.”

You would think that in the face of such rigorous obedience and willingness to do precisely what they were told—you would think Jesus would be pleased, and they would recognize and welcome him when he came. But all heaven watched the incredible scene of those who claimed to love God’s law, denouncing the Lawgiver as a lawbreaker. It must have puzzled the angels a great deal. So Jesus ventured to suggest that while they were working so hard to obey, that actually they were obeying for the wrong reason. Because they were obeying for the wrong reason, they really were not obeying at all. You can imagine how offensive this was to them. In fact, he went further and suggested that if only they knew the God who had given the law, they would keep the law for an entirely different reason: a reason that would make it possible for them to be obedient and free at the same time.

The Old Testament prophets had dealt with this, centuries before. Just to mention two, you will remember Amos and Isaiah had chided the people for their very reluctant Sabbath keeping. Amos records, “Oh, when will the Sabbath be past that we may buy and sell and get gain?” Isaiah deplores their mechanical unthinking obedience, particularly on the Sabbath. Jesus quoted those words of Isaiah and commended him for telling the truth. Look at Isaiah 29:13: “The Lord said, ‘These people claim to worship me, but their words are meaningless and their hearts are somewhere else. Their religion is nothing but human rules and traditions, which they have simply memorized.’” (GNB)

Or, as one translation has it: “Their worship of me is but the commandments of men learned by rote.” And rote, unthinking worship is such an insult to our intelligent God. Then Jesus set out to tell the truth about his Father and the kind of obedience that is really pleasing to him.

{Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #12, “God’s Law is No Threat To Our Freedom” recorded April, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/12MMCAG>*

Now this raises the significant point, how could it be said that Israel does not know God? Who else knew God so well? Look at all the prophets, and all their marvelous pictures of God. Jeremiah said, “I’m glad to know God as I do.” But the way many people knew God those days was not knowing God in the special, biblical sense. That is, to know God as a friend; to even know God intimately as a husband and a wife know each other. The Bible says, “Adam knew Eve” his wife. And as a result, they didn’t learn each other’s names—they had a baby! Elsewhere, God says of Israel, “Thee only have I known.” He knew all the rest. But he knew *them* in a special way. And when those disappointed saints find that they are not acceptable in the kingdom, and they plead, “Lord, Lord. Open unto us.” He says, “Go away. I never knew you.” Why, he knew the hairs on their head, but he did not know them as friends. And friendship is the very essence of the relationship God wishes to have with his people. If Israel had really *known* God, they would have been better friends. They would have been jealous for his reputation. And they would have been better people themselves, as were the wonderful prophets in the Old Testament who wrote so well of God. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #2, “What Went Wrong in God’s Universe?” recorded January, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/2MMCAG>*

### **Further Study with Ellen White**

Angels help and protect those who walk humbly before God. Never will our Lord betray one who trusts in Him. As His children draw near to Him for protection from evil, in pity and love He lifts up for them a standard against the enemy. Touch them not, He says; for they are Mine. I have graven them upon the palms of My hands. {PK 570.4}

God has provided divine assistance for all the emergencies to which our human resources are unequal. He gives the Holy Spirit to help in every strait, to strengthen our hope and assurance, to illuminate our minds and purify our hearts. He provides opportunities and opens channels of working. If His people are watching the indications of His providence, and are ready to cooperate with Him, they will see mighty results. {PK 660.3}

If the curtain could be rolled back, and each one could discern the constant activities of the heavenly family to preserve the inhabitants of the earth from Satan’s seductive wiles, lest in

their careless attitude they should be led astray through satanic strategy, they would lose a large degree of their self-confidence and self-assurance. They would see that the armies of heaven are in continual warfare with satanic agencies, to obtain victories in behalf of those who do not sense their danger, and who are passing on in unconscious indifference (MS 32, 1900). {6BC 1120.4}

Satan is constantly urging men to accept his principles. Thus he seeks to counterwork the work of God. He is constantly representing the chosen people of God as a deluded people. He is an accuser of the brethren, and his accusing power he is constantly using against those who work righteousness. The Lord desires through His people to answer Satan's charges by showing the result of obedience to right principles. {6T 11.2}

The government of God is not, as Satan would make it appear, founded upon a blind submission, an unreasoning control. It appeals to the intellect and the conscience. "Come now, and let us reason together" is the Creator's invitation to the beings He has made. Isaiah 1:18. God does not force the will of His creatures. He cannot accept an homage that is not willingly and intelligently given. A mere forced submission would prevent all real development of mind or character; it would make man a mere automaton. Such is not the purpose of the Creator. He desires that man, the crowning work of His creative power, shall reach the highest possible development. He sets before us the height of blessing to which He desires to bring us through His grace. He invites us to give ourselves to Him, that He may work His will in us. It remains for us to choose whether we will be set free from the bondage of sin, to share the glorious liberty of the sons of God. {SC 43.4}