

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Fourth Quarter 2015: *Jeremiah*

Lesson 8 “Josiah’s Reforms”

Read for this week’s study

2 Chronicles 33; Habakkuk 1:2–4; 2 Kings 22; Philippians 2:3–8; 2 Kings 23:1–28; 1 Corinthians 5:7.

Memory Text

“Now before him there was no king like him, who turned to the LORD with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the Law of Moses; nor after him did any arise like him” (2 Kings 23:25, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. The Reigns of Manasseh and Amon
- III. A New King
- IV. Josiah on the Throne
- V. The Book of the Law
- VI. Josiah’s Reforms
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Moderator: Zdravko Stefanović

Josiah’s Reforms (2 Kings 22-23; 2 Chronicles 33)

1. Wicked Manasseh (2 Chronicles 33)

Jeremiah was born around the time Josiah was crowned as king of Judah. How old was Josiah when he became king? His grandfather Manasseh was 12 when he became king and he reigned for 55 years. Why do scholars consider Manasseh the most wicked king in Israel’s history? How is it possible that under his rule the people of Judah did more evil than even the ancient Canaanites?

In spite of his evil deeds, Manasseh was forgiven by God. Could we forgive him? What about his son Amon, did he ever repent? Could one expect any good to come from Amon’s son, Josiah?

2. A child-king (cf. Jeremiah)

Josiah became king in 639BC and his reign is contrasted with Manasseh's. How old was he when he became king? When did he begin to seek the Lord? How do the words from 2 Kings 23:25 remind us of the closing words in Deuteronomy?

In the 18th year of his reign Josiah began the work of repairing the temple. Why did Ellen White say that the reform of the chosen people seemed impossible (PK 384)? How did the king show that he trusted the reconstruction workers?

3. The Torah rediscovered

Hilkiah the priest found a copy of the Torah scroll in the temple. What had happened to all the scrolls in the land prior to Josiah's time? What was the king's reaction to this great discovery?

The king sent messengers to the prophetess Huldah. What was her message to Josiah? Did it differ from Jeremiah's? Why did Josiah decide to invite the people from the northern kingdom to the Passover celebration?

Thanks to Josiah's reform, the land was purged of idols outwardly. Were the people's hearts also purged or did they continue to worship idols in the privacy of their homes? What was Jeremiah's mission in this regard according to 2:12-13?

4. A model king in Judah

Josiah was so different from his ancestors. What does this teach us about one's power to choose good? Do you agree with this saying: "Free will is a godlike attribute"? Why did the king continue his reform when he had been told that God's punishment was unavoidable? Is God obliged to cancel His punishments when sinners repent?

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Looking to the past when there once was peace, a crisis of distrust broke out in God's family. And thus sin entered our universe for the first time. For as God explained to Moses when he disobeyed Him and smote the rock, *sin in its essence is a breach, a breakdown of trust*. We all know the story if we've ever read the Bible through. But moved by jealousy and pride, the most brilliant of all God's creatures—the one pictured in Ezekiel as standing in the very presence of God; the one pictured in Isaiah as knowing God so well that he went forth from the presence of God bearing light and truth to his fellow angels; (and that's why he was given the name *Lucifer*, which means bearer of light, teacher of truth—that's one of the names of Jesus Christ Himself). But this brilliant, most trusted, even revered angel, set out to undermine trust in God by circulating misinformation and lies about our heavenly Father. And thus he became—not a bearer of light and a teacher of truth—but a bearer of lies, even *The Adversary*. And the name

that means adversary is *Satan*. You can see why we shouldn't call him Lucifer any longer. He no longer bears light, but lies. His real name is Satan—the opponent, the adversary.

And how this adversary worked among the angels! In his pretentiously pious manner he insinuated that God Himself was an untrustworthy liar. And specifically he charged that God was arbitrary—not respectful of the freedom of His children; that God was exacting, vengeful, unforgiving, and severe. And thus he hoped to turn the angels away from God, and win them to worship him, himself. It seems unbelievable that a creature could presume to think of himself as God, and suggest that angels worship him. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *Conversations About God, #1, "The Conflict In God's Family"* 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/1MMCAG>*

Lou: Alright. Let's go on to this one. "The crisis was Satan's questioning God's authority. Did any other angels question God before? If they didn't, why didn't they? Will possibly in the future, another angel question Him again? Since it happened once, why couldn't it go on happening?"

Graham: Ah, fair enough—because I don't think there's anything wrong about raising questions. God has invited that. Jesus always did. But the rebelliousness that was behind Satan's questioning, and the irreverence! And it led to the war. I don't know of any text that suggests any other angels did this. The Bible only tells us a little of what happened. You remember that John said, "If I were to record everything that Jesus said and did, there wouldn't be room in the world for all the books that could be written." It's enough to learn of Lucifer's questioning rebellion, and the consequences. But now, will this ever happen again? What about raising questions reverently? Oh, I think we'll do that for eternity, or how could we learn? God is not afraid of reverent questioning at all. I think He's complimented by it. But the kind of rebellion that arose, the Bible suggests never will arise again. Not that our freedom has been taken away, but what a costly basis has been established so that we may have answers. And Jesus will always be there in His human form to remind us of all the answers God gave. And we'll remember. And that will guarantee peace for eternity. But it will not take away our freedom.

Lou: So the evidence will be so compelling. It isn't that we can't ask the questions. But to question would be foolish. Who would want to? {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *Conversations About God, #2 with Lou Venden, "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>*

Lou: If God knew that Lucifer would be such an instigator of trouble upon the human race, why did He create him? This question baffles many, and a good, understandable answer would settle many people's questioning.

Graham: That's quite an order now! As I mentioned last week, I never like to limit God. I don't like to limit His foreknowledge. So I like to believe that when God created Lucifer, He knew he would cause the trouble. But God also knew what He would do, and He said, "I'm willing, as I create this magnificent person; it's going to cost me, and I'm willing to pay." And I think that's even more wonderful, that He would go ahead, knowing that he would cause the trouble.

What was the second part of that? Is God then responsible? God has never created anybody imperfect. His creations are perfect. Lucifer had no bent to evil, whatever. He brought that up himself; which does suggest a wonderful thing. God creates us perfect, but part of that is giving us the ability even to rebel. So when we say we love God, it isn't because we're programmed that way, because we can also say "we hate you." Adam and Eve showed that. When they sinned in the Garden they were free to sin.

Lou: So then, Satan didn't go wrong because of some malfunction in the way he was made, like an automobile that has to be recalled. He was perfect.

Graham: He was perfect.

Lou: But with that freedom to make choices, it could lead to all kinds of consequences.

Graham: Yes. But God is in no way responsible. Another wonderful thing about God is that He has paid the price as if it were His fault. You know, He's assumed the responsibility, as if it were His fault. I think it's because *freedom* means so much to God, He would rather go this costly way, than take some shortcut and program us so we would all behave. Then, when we would line up and say how much we loved Him, He's just listening to a record, or a tape recorder. And that wouldn't please our intelligent God. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *Conversations About God*, #2 with Lou Venden, "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>*

Solomon came to his senses, and he remembered God. He said, "God, I'm sorry. Can I come back? And I'd be willing just to sweep floors." Does God take people back that way? Or does He take them completely back? How about the Prodigal Son? Did he come back as a servant, or did he come back fully reinstated? So God took Solomon back. How fully did He take him back?

"Well," Solomon said, "Can I do anything to help others not do what I've done?" And God says, "Yes. You can write me a book." And Solomon said, "But only holy men of God, moved by the Holy Spirit, write books in the Bible."

Isn't it stunning that a man who wasted so much is listed among the holy men of God and was asked to write yet another book in the Bible? Once again, I'm glad God is in charge, because when somebody disgraces himself in our church, from then on, he's a back pew man, isn't he? We don't let him up front very much. God puts them up front, and even asks them to write more of the Bible. Now, what about that? Are we too hard?" {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in All 66 – Joshua, Judges, and Ruth, recorded 1981, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

*Audio links to the West Covina series recorded in 1983:

<http://pkp.cc/11MMPOGIA66> (Pt 1 Joshua & Judges)

<http://pkp.cc/12MMPOGIA66> (Pt 2 Joshua & Judges)

<http://pkp.cc/13MMPOGIA66> (Pt 1 Ruth & 1 Samuel)

<http://pkp.cc/14MMPOGIA66> (Pt 2 Ruth & 1 Samuel)

Lou: This person also wanted to ask, "How does God forgive sins, and what is involved in receiving the remission of our sins?"

Graham: Now, remission meaning *forgiveness* –and not just suppressing it for a little while like the medical term. What's involved in God forgiving? I believe God is forgiveness personified. And you and your brother Morrie, when you tell the Prodigal Son story, you make that so clear. That's beautifully done. What had to be done for the father to receive his son back—dirty, and diseased and malnourished as he was? All the boy had to do was come home and find his father had forgiven him long before. In fact, it's when he found that his father had forgiven him, that he repented. It isn't, "If I repent, He'll forgive me." When I find how forgiving He is, that leads me to repentance. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #9 with Lou Venden, "There Is No Need To Be Afraid Of God" recorded March, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/9MMCAG>*

Further Study with Ellen White

God does not control our minds without our consent; but if we desire to know and to do His will, His promises are ours: "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." "If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching." John 8:32; 7:17, R. V. Through faith in these promises, every man may be delivered from the snares of error and the control of sin. {DA 258.5}

Every man is free to choose what power he will have to rule over him. None have fallen so low, none are so vile, but that they can find deliverance in Christ. The demoniac, in place of prayer, could utter only the words of Satan; yet the heart's unspoken appeal was heard. No cry from a soul in need, though it fail of utterance in words, will be unheeded. Those who will consent to enter into covenant relation with the God of heaven are not left to the power of Satan or to the infirmity of their own nature. They are invited by the Saviour, "Let him take hold of My strength, that he may make peace with Me; and he shall make peace with Me." Isaiah 27:5. The spirits of darkness will battle for the soul once under their dominion, but angels of God will contend for that soul with prevailing power. {DA 258.6}

God's promise is, "Ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart." Jeremiah 29:13. {SC 43.1}

The whole heart must be yielded to God, or the change can never be wrought in us by which we are to be restored to His likeness. By nature we are alienated from God. The Holy Spirit describes our condition in such words as these: "Dead in trespasses and sins;" "the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint;" "no soundness in it." We are held fast in the snare of Satan, "taken captive by him at his will." Ephesians 2:1; Isaiah 1:5, 6; 2 Timothy 2:26. God desires to heal us, to set us free. But since this requires an entire transformation, a renewing of our whole nature, we must yield ourselves wholly to Him. {SC 43.2}

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}

In the work of redemption there is no compulsion. No external force is employed. Under the influence of the Spirit of God, man is left free to choose whom he will serve. In the change that takes place when the soul surrenders to Christ, there is the highest sense of freedom. The expulsion of sin is the act of the soul itself. True, we have no power to free ourselves from Satan's control; but when we desire to be set free from sin, and in our great need cry out for a power out of and above ourselves, the powers of the soul are imbued with the divine energy of the Holy Spirit, and they obey the dictates of the will in fulfilling the will of God. {DA 466.4}

The only condition upon which the freedom of man is possible is that of becoming one with Christ. “The truth shall make you free;” and Christ is the truth. Sin can triumph only by enfeebling the mind, and destroying the liberty of the soul. Subjection to God is restoration to one’s self,—to the true glory and dignity of man. The divine law, to which we are brought into subjection, is “the law of liberty.” James 2:12. {DA 466.5}

But forgiveness has a broader meaning than many suppose. When God gives the promise that He “will abundantly pardon,” He adds, as if the meaning of that promise exceeded all that we could comprehend: “My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.” Isaiah 55:7-9. God’s forgiveness is not merely a judicial act by which He sets us free from condemnation. It is not only forgiveness *for* sin, but reclaiming *from* sin. It is the outflow of redeeming love that transforms the heart. David had the true conception of forgiveness when he prayed, “Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.” Psalm 51:10. And again he says, “As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us.” Psalm 103:12. {MB 114.1}

The heart of Infinite Love yearns after those who feel powerless to free themselves from the snares of Satan; and He graciously offers to strengthen them to live for Him. “Fear thou not,” He bids them; “for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness.” “I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee. Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye man of Israel; I will help thee, saith the Lord, and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.” Isaiah 41:10, 13, 14. {PK 316.3}