

**2 Kings 25.1-21****The Fall of the Southern Kingdom Judah [aka ‘Treacherous Sister’ / Jeremiah 3.6-11]****Read 2 Kings 25.1-21****I / INTRODUCTION**

I don’t know any better way to begin this lesson than by quoting the aphorism we’ve all heard many times: *‘Those who do not learn history are doomed to repeat it.’* Winston Churchill did give this line in a 1948 speech before the House of Commons, but he was also paraphrasing an earlier statement by writer and philosopher George Santayana, *“Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.”* Regardless of who said it first or in what words, both warnings are true – and both warnings apply to the Southern Kingdom Judah ... as we will learn in this lesson.

**II / MAKING THE CONNECTION**

1. So, let’s begin where we left off in our last lesson: the Northern Kingdom Israel had been invaded, captured, and its inhabitants taken off into exile and captivity in Assyria. Yahweh was both emphatic and specific that His judgment on them was because of their repeated and flagrant violations of His covenant He had made with them / **2 Kings 17.1-18.**
2. The Holy Spirit-inspired narrator of The Books of Kings then gives a brief retrospective summary of what eventually befell the Southern Kingdom Judah as well ... 136 years later: ***Judah also did not keep the commandments of the LORD their God, but walked in the customs that Israel had introduced.*** <sup>20</sup> **And the LORD rejected all the descendants of Israel and afflicted them and gave them into the hand of plunderers, until He had cast them out of his sight.** / vv 19-20
3. The lesson is clear: Judah should have seen what Yahweh had done in Israel and turned from their own evil ways – and certainly should not have **‘walked in the customs that Israel had introduced’** which brought the disastrous consequences upon Israel.
4. But – as the narrator says, ***“Judah also did not keep the commandments of the LORD their God...”***
5. **NOTE: They followed the exact same steps and course that led to Israel’s fall: *egregious sins ... repeated warnings ... stubborn refusals and rebellions ... disastrous consequences* / see Lesson 10**
6. That’s why the prophet Jeremiah would shame Judah after their own exile and captivity into Babylon by calling them ***“the treacherous sister”*** who should have learned from the history they had just witnessed – but refused to do so: **The LORD said to me in the days of King Josiah: *“Have you seen what she did, that faithless one, Israel, how she went up on every high hill and under every green tree, and there played the whore?”*** <sup>7</sup> **And I thought, ‘After she has done all this she will return to me,’ but she did not return, and her treacherous sister Judah saw it.** <sup>8</sup> **She saw that for all the adulteries of that faithless one, Israel, I had sent her away with a decree of divorce. Yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear, but she too went and played the whore.** <sup>9</sup> **Because she took her whoredom lightly, she polluted the land, committing adultery with stone and tree.** <sup>10</sup> **Yet for all this her treacherous sister Judah did not return to me with her whole heart, but in pretense, declares the LORD.”** <sup>11</sup> **And the Lord said to me, *“Faithless Israel has shown herself more righteous than treacherous Judah.”*** / **Jeremiah 3.6-11**
7. That is the story we will unfold in this lesson – the path and course that ***‘Judah also’*** walked to follow their northern sister kingdom into exile and captivity.
8. What we will do is pick up Judah’s story here in **2 Kings 17.19-20** when Israel went into Assyrian exile and follow them king by king. There were eight kings who reigned in Judah between Israel’s Assyrian exile [722 BC] and Judah’s fall to Babylon [586 BC]. as recorded in **chapter 25.**
9. We will [1] name each king, [2] where his historical record is found in **2 Kings**, [3] how Yahweh evaluated him and his reign, and [4] how his reign affected Judah’s final fall and demise.

### III / JUDAH'S DOWNWARD SPIRAL INTO APOSTACY AND EXILE

#### [1] HEZEKIAH / 2 Kings 18.1 – 20.21 / He reigned 29 years / ch 18.2

1. **And he did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, according to all that David his father had done. <sup>4</sup>He removed the high places and broke the pillars and cut down the Asherah. And he broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made, for until those days the people of Israel had made offerings to it (it was called Nehushtan). <sup>5</sup>He trusted in the LORD, the God of Israel, so that there was none like him among all the kings of Judah after him, nor among those who were before him. <sup>6</sup>For he held fast to the LORD. He did not depart from following Him, but kept the commandments that the LORD commanded Moses. <sup>7</sup>And the LORD was with him; wherever he went out, he prospered. He rebelled against the king of Assyria and would not serve him. / ch 18.3-8**
2. Keep in mind that Hezekiah assumed the Judah throne ‘**in the third year of Hoshea...king of Israel,**’ which means he would have witnessed the invasion and capture of Samaria to his north.
3. In fact, one of the most notable accounts of Hezekiah’s reign was how the Assyrians then moved south against Jerusalem and laid siege to the city. There was a long standoff as the Assyrians demanded their surrender and mocked Yahweh and their faith in Him. Hezekiah prayed to Yahweh to intervene on their behalf. Yahweh sent Isaiah the prophet to Hezekiah with a prophecy of doom against Assyria. **And that night the angel of the Lord went out and struck down 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians. And when people arose early in the morning, behold, these were all dead bodies. / ch 19.35**
4. You will find the full account of this momentous deliverance in **chs 18 & 19 ... and also in Isaiah 36-39**

#### [2] MANASSEH / 2 Kings 21.1-18 / He reigned 55 years / ch 21.1

1. **And he did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to the despicable practices of the nations whom the LORD drove out before the people of Israel. / ch 21.2**
2. Read what all he re-introduced into the mainstream of Judah’s religious, national, and social culture / **ch 21.3-9**
3. We need to stop and focus on Manasseh before going on ... because *Yahweh specifically names Manasseh as being the ‘tipping point’ of Judah’s apostacy and destruction.* Manasseh greased the skids that sent Judah careening down the course of their rebellion against Yahweh.
4. In fact, *Yahweh places the weight of blame on Manasseh for tipping the scales of Yahweh’s holiness, justice, and wrath against Judah toward their inevitable destruction and exile.* Read it in **ch 21.10-16**
5. *We will note it when we come to it, but Yahweh will ‘circle back’ again to Manasseh when He credits a couple future kings of Judah for their temporary reforms they instituted, trying to save Judah from His wrath. But as Yahweh will say, “the die has been cast” by Manasseh / see ch 23.26-27 & 24.1-4*

#### [3] AMON / 2 Kings 21.19-26 / He reigned 2 years / ch 21.19

**And he did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, as Manasseh his father had done. <sup>21</sup>He walked in all the way in which his father walked and served the idols that his father served and worshiped them. <sup>22</sup>He abandoned the LORD, the God of his fathers, and did not walk in the way of the LORD. / ch 21.20-22 / That’s all we need to know about Amon...**

#### [4] JOSIAH / 2 Kings 22.1 – 23.30 / He reigned 31 years / ch 22.1

1. **And he did what was right in the eyes of the LORD and walked in all the way of David his father, and he did not turn aside to the right or to the left. / ch 22.2**
2. **Before him there was no king like him, who turned to the LORD with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his might, according to all the Law of Moses, nor did any like him arise after him. / ch 23.25**

3. **ch 22.8-10** / Josiah is one of the brightest of the shining stars of Judah's kings. Almost two whole chapters are given to chronicle how he repaired the Temple of Yahweh ... and in the process, they discovered the long-neglected Torah, **the Book of the Law in the house of the LORD.**
4. **ch 22.11-17** / When they read what Yahweh had pronounced against them if they violated His covenant and commandments as they had done for centuries, they were terrified at the prospects of the impending judgments that loomed over them.
5. **ch 22.18-20** / However, Yahweh assured Josiah that because his own heart was penitent toward Yahweh, and because he had made sweeping reforms and called Judah back to Yahweh, the judgment would not fall on Judah during his lifetime. It would come, but it would be later after he had died.
6. Still, after all the good he did, he couldn't re-tip the scales of Yahweh's holiness, justice, and wrath back to pre-Manasseh / **ch 23.26-27: Still the LORD did not turn from the burning of His great wrath, by which His anger was kindled against Judah, because of all the provocations with which Manasseh had provoked Him.** <sup>27</sup> **And the LORD said, "I will remove Judah also out of my sight, as I have removed Israel, and I will cast off this city that I have chosen, Jerusalem, and the house of which I said, 'My name shall be there.'"**

**[5] JEHOAHAZ / 2 Kings 23.31-33 / He reigned 3 months / ch 23.31**

**And he did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his fathers had done. / ch 23.32**

**[6] JEHOIAKIM / 2 Kings 23.34-37 / He reigned 11 years / ch 23.36**

1. His original name is Eliakim. But when Judah was subjected to be a subservient state to the Egyptians, the Pharaoh Neco appointed him to be king and changed his name to Jehoiachim. He was Jehoahaz's brother and the son of Josiah.
2. **And he did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his fathers had done. / ch 23.37**
3. **ch 24.1-2** / The beginnings of the end began during Jehoiakim's reign: **In his days, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up, and Jehoiakim became his servant for three years. Then he turned and rebelled against him.** <sup>2</sup> **And the LORD sent against him bands of the Chaldeans and bands of the Syrians and bands of the Moabites and bands of the Ammonites, and sent them against Judah to destroy it, according to the word of the LORD that he spoke by his servants the prophets.**
4. **ch 24.3-4** / And yet again, Yahweh circles back to Manasseh, telling us again that Manasseh's sins had cast this die that was now being filled with the inevitable wrath of Yahweh and the destruction of the kingdom: **Surely this came upon Judah at the command of the LORD, to remove them out of His sight, for the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he had done,** <sup>4</sup> **and also for the innocent blood that he had shed. For he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood, and the LORD would not pardon.**

**[7] JEHOIACHIN / 2 Kings 24.6-9 / He reigned 3 months / ch 24.8**

1. **And he did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father had done. / ch 24.9**
2. **v 10** / It was during his reign that the Babylonians began their final and fatal siege against Jerusalem.
3. **vv 11-12** / Jehoiachin surrendered himself to the king of Babylon along with many of his relatives, kingdom officials, and prominent leaders. They were carried off to Babylon / **vv 15-16**
4. **v 13** / The Babylonians began plundering and stripping the Temple of all its treasures and gold that Solomon had made.
5. **v 14** / They captured and carried away 10,000 of the 'brightest and best' of the inhabitants of Jerusalem. **None remained, except the poorest people of the land.**
6. **v 17** / **And the king of Babylon made Mattaniah, Jehoiachin's uncle, king in his place, and changed his name to Zedekiah.**

**[8] ZEDEKIAH / 2 Kings 24.18-19 / He reigned 11 years / ch 24.18**

And he did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that Jehoiakim had done. <sup>20</sup> For because of the anger of the LORD it came to the point in Jerusalem and Judah that He cast them out from His presence.

And Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon. ch 24.19-20.

**CHAPTER 25 / “AND NOW, THE END IS NEAR, AND SO I FACE THE FINAL CURTAIN...”**

1. That’s right – Zedekiah started in on his own rendition of “I did it my way!” ... it didn’t end well
2. **v 1** / He submitted to his role as vassal king for nine of his eleven years ... but in the ninth year of his reign, he decided he would rebel against the king of Babylon and take Judah back from him. He kinda declared Judah’s independence from Babylon.
3. **vv 2-3** / Once again, the king of Babylon moved against Jerusalem and laid a two-year siege against the city and its remaining inhabitants ... they ran out of food ... famine ensued.
4. **vv 4-5** / The walls of the city were breached, and the Babylonians surged into the city ... all the remaining soldiers and **men of war** fled in their vain efforts to escape...
5. **vv 6-7** / **Then they captured the king and brought him up to the king of Babylon at Riblah, and they passed sentence on him. <sup>7</sup> They slaughtered the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, and put out the eyes of Zedekiah and bound him in chains and took him to Babylon.**
6. **vv 8-10** / **In the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month—that was the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon—Nebuzaradan, the captain of the bodyguard, a servant of the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem. <sup>9</sup> And he burned the house of the LORD and the king's house and all the houses of Jerusalem; every great house he burned down. <sup>10</sup> And all the army of the Chaldeans, who were with the captain of the guard, broke down the walls around Jerusalem.**
7. **vv 11-17** / More of the inhabitants of Jerusalem taken as prisoners and **carried into exile** ... along with all the treasures, gold, silver, bronze and everything else of material value was stripped from the Temple before they burned it – and all of it was carted off to Babylon. [*Some of these treasured vessels will re-surface in Babylon in Daniel 5.1-4 when Belshazzar brings them out to mock Yahweh ... that didn’t end well, either*].

So, let’s go back to where we began this lesson in **2 Kings 17.19-20 / Judah also did not keep the commandments of the LORD their God, but walked in the customs that Israel had introduced.**

<sup>20</sup> **And the LORD rejected all the descendants of Israel and afflicted them and gave them into the hand of plunderers, until He had cast them out of His sight.**

- **ch 17.23b:** So Israel was exiled from their own land to Assyria until this day.
- **ch 25.21:** So Judah was taken into exile out of its land.

**2 Chronicles 36.15-16 / The LORD, the God of their fathers, sent persistently to them by His messengers, because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place. But they kept mocking the messengers of God, despising His words and scoffing at His prophets, until the wrath of the LORD rose against His people, until there was no remedy.**

**BUT ... YAHWEH HAS PROMISED ‘YOU SHALL NOT LACK A MAN ON THE THRONE OF ISRAEL.’ / 1 Kings 2.4; 8.25; 9.5; 2 Chronicles 6.16; 7.18; Jeremiah 33.17**

**WE WAIT AND LONG FOR HIM TO COME! / Luke 2.25, 38**

**“THE KING IS COMING!” / Luke 1.26-33**