

1 **What Can We Do?**

2 Chronicles 34

2 **Josiah**

- Josiah was the nineteenth king of Judah and was the last godly king it would have.
- He was the son of Asa and the grandson of Manasseh, each the most wicked king that Judah had seen up till their time.
- Despite his many years of wickedness, Manasseh was humbled by God at the end of his life and so God showed him mercy – but Judah's cup of iniquity was full.

3 **Josiah**

- Josiah becomes king at only eight years of age.
- *And he did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, and walked in the ways of David his father; and he did not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was yet a boy, he began to seek the God of David his father, and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of the high places, the Asherim, and the carved and the metal images. (2Ch 34:2-3)*

4 **Josiah**

- Amon died when Josiah was 8 years of age, meaning that Manasseh died when Josiah was 6 years old.
- That means that Manasseh (who repented from his sins in the latter half of his reign) would have had 5-6 years to instill in Josiah the ways of God.

5 **Josiah**

- When Josiah becomes king, he inherits a very difficult situation: the land is ripe for judgment.
  - Hezekiah – in his great-grandfather Hezekiah's time, God pronounced that the Babylonians would come to Jerusalem and take away everything and everyone as punishment for Jerusalem's pride.
  - Manasseh – The worship of idols and the shedding of innocent blood had filled Judah's cup of iniquity to overflowing.

6 **Manasseh's sins**

- *Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty-five years in Jerusalem. And he did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD drove out before the people of Israel. (2Ch 33:1-2)*
- The original inhabitants of the land were driven out because their "cup of iniquity" was "full" (Genesis 15:13-16).

7 **Manasseh's sins**

- King Manasseh was so wicked that:
  - *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. (2Ki 23:26)*
- This verse is speaking of the mercy God showed to Judah during Josiah's lifetime because of Josiah's faithfulness and love for God.

8 **Manasseh's sins**

- Perhaps even more telling is this verse in 2 Kings, which gives the reason for the Babylonian invasion:

– Surely this [the Babylonian invasion] 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, and also for the innocent blood that he had shed. For he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood, and the LORD would not pardon. (2Ki 24:3-4)

9  **Defiling the land**

- Moreover, you shall accept no ransom for the life of a murderer, who is guilty of death, but he shall be put to death. (Num 35:31)
- You shall not pollute the land in which you live, for blood pollutes the land, and no atonement can be made for the land for the blood that is shed in it, except by the blood of the one who shed it. You shall not defile the land in which you live, in the midst of which I dwell, for I the LORD dwell in the midst of the people of Israel. (Num 35:33-34)

10  **Defiling the land**


- The Old Testament establishes for us the principle that the sins of a nation – and specifically the shedding of innocent blood – stain the land and if judgment is not meted out, then that judgment will come upon the land itself.
- The innocent blood shed in Manasseh's time was such that it pushed Judah over the edge and filled their cup of iniquity to overflowing.

11  **The defiled land**

- This situation is similar to the one we find ourselves in in the United States today.
- We have long rejected the Word of God and the blood of innocents lies upon our heads and hands.
- Idolatry is rampant, and God's name is no longer held in honor.

12  **The defiled land**

- Manasseh led Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem astray, to do more evil than the nations whom the LORD destroyed before the people of Israel. The LORD spoke to Manasseh and to his people, but they paid no attention. (2Ch 33:9-10)
- As a nation, we are ignoring the Word of God.

13  **The question**

- The question I find myself asking is this: what can we do?
- It is not fitting nor biblical to preach a theology of defeatism – but it is equally false and damaging to ignore coming judgment and teach that we are about to usher in a new era of peace and prosperity.
  - This is precisely what false prophets in Israel did before the nation was carried into captivity by Assyria.

14  **What can we do?**

- Faced with this situation, I think we could do no better than to follow Josiah's example:
  - Josiah sought the Lord, like David sought the Lord.
  - Josiah cleaned house.
  - Josiah built up what was broken.
  - Josiah rediscovered God's Word
  - Josiah pleaded helplessly

15  **1. Seek the Lord like David**

- And he did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, and walked in the ways of David his father; and he did not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. (2Ch 34:2)
- David was a shockingly-imperfect example.

- With a short list of his worst sins including fornication, adultery, and murder, he doesn't seem like the kind of man God would use.

16  **1. Seek the Lord like David**

- David sought the Lord relationally:
  - The one thing that David did right, that made him the standard for all other kings, was that he passionately sought to have a relationship with God and to repair that relationship when it was damaged.
  - It was this relational love that David especially expressed through his desire to build God a house, which is the context and setting for the giving of the Davidic covenant (2 Samuel 7).

17  **1. Seek the Lord like David**

- David loved God's Word:
  - *Oh how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day.* (Psa 119:97)
  - *The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; the precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; the rules of the LORD are true, and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb. Moreover, by them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward.* (Psa 19:7-11)

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18  **1. Seek the Lord like David**

- David learned to look for God's hand, even in the hardships he faced:
  - *When King David came to Bahurim, there came out a man of the family of the house of Saul, whose name was Shimei, the son of Gera, and as he came he cursed continually. And he threw stones at David and at all the servants of King David, and all the people and all the mighty men were on his right hand and on his left. And Shimei said as he cursed, "Get out, get out, you man of blood, you worthless man! The LORD has avenged on you all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose place you have reigned, and the LORD has given the kingdom into the hand of your son Absalom. See, your evil is on you, for you are a man of blood."* (2Sa 16:5-8)

19  **1. Seek the Lord like David**

- David learned to look for God's hand, even in the hardships he faced:
  - *Then Abishai the son of Zeruiah said to the king, "Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? Let me go over and take off his head." But the king said, "What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah? If he is cursing because the LORD has said to him, 'Curse David,' who then shall say, 'Why have you done so?'" And David said to Abishai and to all his servants, "Behold, my own son seeks my life; how much more now may this Benjaminite! Leave him alone, and let him curse, for the LORD has told him to. It may be that the LORD will look on the wrong done to me, and that the LORD will repay me with good for his cursing today."* (2Sa 16:9-12)

20  **1. Seek the Lord like David**

- David relied on God, not on his own strength.
  - Often when pursued by his many enemies, David would sing songs of deliverance, songs of helplessness, and songs of praise for God's blessings even in the midst of hardships.
  - David failed in this at the end of his life when he took a forbidden census, but he was quick to throw himself not just on God's mercy, but on God's justice.