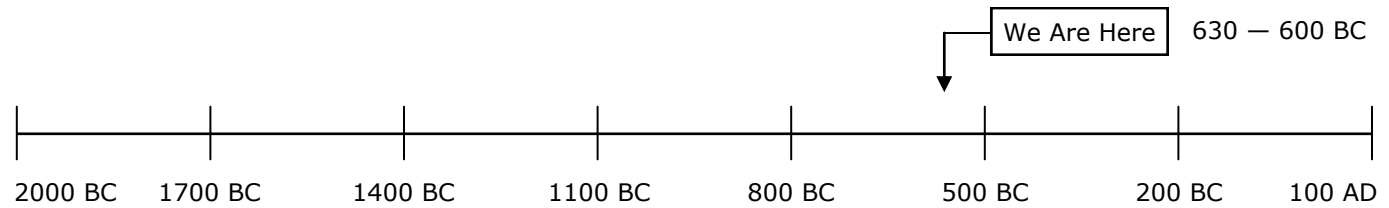


God and Country

BiAY.org | Reviews

Week 31: July 30 — Aug. 5 — *Jer. 2-46; 2 Kings 22-24; Prophets* 59% Complete — 148 Days to Go



Helpful Resources

Overview of Bible History (p.37), Kings and Prophets (p.71), Map of the Babylonian Empire (p.113)

Making Sense of It All

- The Big Picture

Although we have watched Judah experience a moral free-fall, this week we witnessed the beginning of the end — the last righteous king, Josiah. Of the last five kings, under which the prophet Jeremiah served, Josiah was the only one who sought the Lord. The others repeated the evil of their predecessors. Thus, despite the peace and prosperity that Judah enjoyed during Josiah's reign, the stage was set for doom. Through Isaiah, Jeremiah, and others, God foretold of the impending judgment, similar to that which occurred in Israel.

Unlike Israel, Judah's judgment would not come at the hands of the Assyrians; their hold on the Middle and Near East was giving way to rising stars like Persia and Babylon. In 612 BC, Nineveh, the capital city, was destroyed by the Babylonians; it was only a matter of time before they and their few allies would be conquered themselves. In 609 BC, when the Babylonians met the remainder of the Assyrian forces, along with the Egyptian army, at the magnificent Battle of Carchemish; under the brilliant command of Nebuchadnezzar, Babylon crushed its enemies and assumed world leadership. Now, the surrounding nations, including Judah, were at Nebuchadnezzar's mercy. Almost immediately, in 608 BC, the Babylonians began the first of their three sieges of Jerusalem (*2 Kings 24:1-4*); for Judah, the end was near.

We will cover the fall of Jerusalem and Judah in the next review; but, before we head in that direction, let us stop and consider the importance of the reign of Josiah. Though the Jews were on the fast track of terminal decadence, Josiah's righteousness brought a brief reprieve, which should cause us to consider what might could happen in our country.

1. **A nation's stability is linked to its morality.** We have watched Judah's history ebb and flow with the tide of its monarchs; whenever a good king honored God's statutes, the people enjoyed peace and prosperity. However, when evil kings advanced an idolatrous and immoral agenda, God's anger burned and He allowed national tragedies. Like the Assyrians, who repented and were spared upon the warning of Jonah, Judah's lifespan was extended upon its renewed commitment to God's ways. Like so many nations whose ultimate destruction was preceded by gross immorality, America's end will follow closely its acceptance of sin (*Prov. 14:34; Jer. 18:1-12*). We cannot enjoy the blessings and neglect to honor the Benefactor; we can't expect the effects and forget the Cause (*Psalms 33:12*). With national obedience comes God's favor; with disobedience comes consequences.

2. **A nation's morality is linked to its religion or view of God and man.** Behind every nation is a religion; a nation's religious principles naturally impact the nation's political policies. Judah had gone astray. Josiah realized it when the sacred scrolls were read before him; he tore his clothes and wept bitterly. The people's gross idolatry (worship of false gods) led them to allow rampant immorality; and, their sanctioning of immorality had brought their nation to ruin. Although America has a godly heritage, like Judah it has lost its way; as a result, the very freedoms and prosperity that heritage produced is eroding. As its Christian foundation is removed and another religion put it in its place — secular humanism — America's commitment to biblical morality has been abandoned and her liberties compromised. The nation that was once "under God" is now rejecting Him and will soon be under God's judgment.

3. **A nation's depravity can be checked.** While the end of terminal decadence cannot be avoided, the process can be delayed and the end postponed. It is possible for a nation to be restored! Remember the Assyrians who, being warned by Jonah, changed their ways and were spared for another 100 years? What can we do to restore our land? What Josiah did was a good start, but it was an external solution to an internal problem. People can be coerced to be moral, to obey laws; however, *it is more effective if people choose to obey the laws because an internal source controls their actions.* Since man is depraved in his sin, *his biggest problem is internal, his wicked heart; therefore, he needs an internal solution, a change of heart.* It is the Gospel of Christ that can best affect a person or a people. It is the Lord Jesus who is the hope for a nation. Change men's hearts and national morality will return.

- Personal Application

Our natural inclination, when considering what Josiah did, is to dismiss his revival based on the fact that he was a king and he had a great deal of influence, but that would be to sell ourselves and our God short. He has given us each a sphere of influence — home, friends, church, friends, neighborhood. First, each of us must be willing to take a stand like Joshua did and say, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord!" Then, where and when God gives you the opportunity, honor His Word and ways. As the Lord was our help in the past, He is also our hope for the future. Just be faithful to impact your sphere of influence!

- Prophetic Passages

1. **Fall of Assyria and Destruction of Nineveh** (*Nahum 1-3; Zeph. 2:12-15*)
2. **Fall of Judah** (*Zeph. 1:2-18; Jer. 4:3-18, 23-31; 5:15-19; 6:22, 23*)
3. **Rise and Fall of Babylonians** (*2 Chron. 35:20; 2 Kings 23:29; Hab. 1; Jer. 25:8-14*)
4. **Temple Will Be Destroyed** (*Jer. 26:4-12*)
5. **Babylonian Captivity Will Last 70 Years** (*Jer. 25:8-14*)

The Bottom Line

A nation's *stability* is linked to its *morality*; it's morality is linked to its *view of God* and man.

Questions to Consider

1. What are you doing to protect yourself and your family from the moral rot of our time?
2. Evaluate the Church's impact on our country in the last 100 years? What has happened?
3. How are you being salt and light where God has placed you? Are you affecting change?