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Dear Associates and Friends,

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This month continues the 41st article of the Israel and Judah history series. “[Israel and Judah: 41. Josiah, His Renewal, and Death](#)” tells about the actions of Josiah, a “good” king of Judah. After Josiah’s death the kingdom went through steady decline to ultimate and total disaster as the prophets of God warned about and predicted in gruesome detail.

The three kings that followed Josiah, the leaders of the government, leaders of the tribes of Judah, Benjamin, and Levi, the Aaronic priests, false prophets, and the majority of people, consistently refused to acknowledge and worship only YHWH. To us today that seems to be a logical and simple task. However, we would act no different if we were Israelites in those days. God through His prophets worked hard to save and preserve the people and kingdom from the inevitable judgments of YHWH if the sins, rebellion, and idolatry continued. They did continue and became worse.

Josiah continued to mature and grow in knowledge, understanding, and wisdom. The writers of Second Kings and Second Chronicles rightly wrote that King Josiah “**was upright in the eyes of Yahweh and walked in all the way of his father David**” (2 Kings 22:2; 2 Chronicles 34:2). Yet Josiah’s piety could not save His people from God’s judgments to come.

Cast of Characters:

YHWH. Creator of heaven and earth. YHWH commends Josiah for his piety and justice to fight sin and evil, according to YHWH’s covenant through Moses, established with all Israel and now renewed with the remnant of Judah. God does “**all things after the counsel of his own will**” (Ephesians 1:11). The continuing and hidden idolatry of the people of Judah during the reign of Josiah will cause YHWH to bring upon Judah severe punishments predicted by the prophets since Moses, and as He imposed upon the northern Kingdom of Israel. YHWH appreciates Josiah but He no longer will delay His judgments.

Josiah. King of Judah. He is the last “good” king of Judah before its long downfall and final destruction due to God’s punishment. He is devout and continues his reforms and punishments against pagan religious places, rites, sacrifices, and priests of pagan cults. His repair and restoration of the Temple of YHWH allowed him to conduct a proper Passover. Yet he will die prematurely and unnecessarily but with his kingdom at peace.

Three of Josiah’s sons will follow him to rule Judah. All three will be sinful, evil, make mistakes in judgment, and will refuse to follow the commands of YHWH. All this was predicted in the Scroll of the Law discovered in the Temple during Josiah’s reign.

Hilkiah. The Great Priest. He is likely the High Priest presiding over repairs of the Temple, its administration of the rituals, and of “the best Passover feast ever!” Hilkiah discovered the Book of the Law in the Temple. He oversaw reforms within the city of Jerusalem to eliminate pagan structures, rituals, and priests. He may be the father of Jeremiah the prophet, but this is not stated in Scripture.

Jeremiah. Prophet of God. In this episode Jeremiah is in the background. The Book of Jeremiah begins in the 13th year of Josiah (Jeremiah 1:2). He wrote the Book of Lamentations both to lament the death of Josiah, but also to lament (and warn) of YHWH’s coming punishment and destruction of Jerusalem and

the Kingdom of Judah. Only after Josiah dies does Jeremiah come on the public scene, although he may have been active outside of Judah during his international prophetic ministry. This is explained in Dr. Martin's article, "[Prophetic Birth of Our Civilization](#)."¹

Jeremiah was very busy traveling. Then he came back to Judah and was harassed, threatened, beaten, and put in a pit of waste until he was rescued. Jesus was likely referring to Jeremiah, among others, when He said, "**A prophet is not without honor, but [1] in his own country, and [2] among his own kin, and [3] in his own house**" (Mark 6:4).

Zephaniah. Another prophet who lived and wrote during Josiah's life (Zephaniah 1:1). Zephaniah received his prophecies during Josiah's reign, but we do not know when. All his prophecies were fulfilled either after Josiah's reign or in the far future. Nor do we know when Zephaniah taught or preached to the people of Judah.

His prophecies predicted the soon-coming downfall of Assyria (which did happen). That was the good news. Then he presented a comprehensive list of other news, mostly horrific:

- Zephaniah warned of the wickedness of Jerusalem,
- the coming judgment upon Judah,
- judgment upon the enemies of the people of Israel and Judah,
- the punishment and conversion of the nations of the world, and
- far in the future (and still future to us) the Great Day of YHWH,

And he says all this in three chapters! While this material is somewhat difficult to follow, Dr. Martin's article "[The Book of Zechariah](#)" helps us all understand Zephaniah's background and teaching.

Jeremiah and Zephaniah do not refer to each other in their writings, yet each of their messages are worldwide. Jeremiah announces a new kind of civilization and Zephaniah alternates between information about creation, conditions in his time, and the destruction of the creation in the Day of YHWH.

In this month's episode of "Israel and Judah" you will learn a great deal more about the sins, depraved evils done by the former Kings of Judah, but also the good things done by the leaders, clergy, and the people of Judah. In sum, it seems like the days we live in. One horror after another is brought to public notice with seemingly little judgment or punishment of the illegal and immoral acts, just like in the days of Josiah.

Thank You

Thank you for helping keep the ASK website available to all in the world. God the Father and Christ Jesus are pleased with the work ASK has done under Dr. Martin's leadership and as we continue that work today. All of you make that happen by studying the Scriptures and using our productions (and most all are available for free), that help explain the Scriptures you study. Those who contribute to ASK respect God's teachings. You likely also have an attitude of prayer in praise and thanksgiving to God and Christ for their protection and attention not just to your needs, but the needs of others, and yes, even the needs of ASK. Thank you, each one of you, for your prayers on our behalf. When we are concerned with one another, we also bless ourselves. We are God's own children. He will not fail us. May God bless each of you abundantly.

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¹ This article by Dr. Martin is one of my personal favorites. It covers so much information in a short space about the difference between the pre-Nebuchadnezzar kingdoms of the world and the post-Nebuchadnezzar Babylonian system. Dr. Martin wrote:

"Events coalesce around the time of Nebuchadnezzar. Now when was this time? It was the beginning of the 6th century BC, specifically around 585, 586 BC. This 6th century BC when God speaks about a Head of Gold coming along (a new type of civilization), is one of the deep-cut times in history, a major historical line of demarcation."

See also the articles "[Introduction to Jeremiah](#)," "[Jeremiah, Part 2](#)," "[Jeremiah, Part 3](#)," and "[Jeremiah, Part 4](#)."