

1 AND 2 CHRONICLES: GAINING DIRECTION OUT OF THE AIMLESSNESS OF APOSTASY
Part V: Gaining Direction From God's Work In The Rest Of Judah's Dynasty, 2 Chronicles 13-36
R. Learning God Rewards Those Who Act Upon What Little Knowledge They Have Of His Ways
(2 Chronicles 34:1-33)

I. Introduction

- A. In our last lesson, we learned God holds one highly accountable if he has access to firsthand insight of God's ways; as Luke 12:48b says, "unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required."
- B. Conversely, if we act to honor God based on what **little** knowledge we have of His ways, there is great grace and blessing from the Lord, a lesson found via the early days of Judah's king Josiah (as follows):

II. Learning God Rewards Those Who Act Upon What Little Knowledge They Have Of His Ways.

- A. Josiah was eight years old when he became king in place of his evil father, Amon, 2 Chron. 33:25-34:1.
- B. As a child king, Josiah did right before God, seeking to walk in the ways of David his ancestor, turning neither to the right hand nor to the left as Deuteronomy 17:20 directed Israel's kings, cf. 2 Chron. 34:2.
- C. However, from the testimony of 2 Chronicles 34:14, 19, we know that when he began to reign, Josiah had no knowledge of the Law of Moses, but acted on what insight he could glean from other people.
- D. Accordingly, with this limited knowledge, Josiah did his best to purge Judah and even parts the land of the captured people of Israel in the Northern Kingdom to rid them of their idols, 2 Chronicles 34:3-13:
 - 1. It apparently took eight years to when he was sixteen for Josiah to choose to follow the God of his ancestor, David, a decision motivated possibly out of an eight year thirst for spiritual fulfillment, 34:3a.
 - 2. When he was twenty years old, Josiah knew enough to purge the idols from the land, so he did, 34:3b.
 - 3. He not only destroyed the many false gods of the land (2 Chron. 34:4a), but pulverized them and spread their debris over the graves of those who had sacrificed to them to dishonor these former idolaters so that his people would no longer respect and want to follow these men and their idolatrous ways, 34:4b.
 - 4. Josiah even killed false priests on their pagan altars, and exhumed the bones of deceased false priests to burn on their altars to destroy the motivation of others to follow them, 2 Chron. 34:5; 2 Kings 23:20.
 - 5. Then, extending his effort, Josiah purged the territories of the former Northern Kingdom of Israel that by then was in Assyrian captivity in judgment for idolatry, 2 Chron. 34:6-7 with 2 Kings 18:11-12.
 - 6. When he had finished purging these lands at age twenty-six, Josiah directed his officials to lead in directing collections to be made and given to workmen to repair the Lord's temple, 2 Chron. 34:8-13.
- E. In the process of this repair effort, Hilkiah the priest found a copy of the Law of Moses in the temple, and informed Shaphan the scribe about it, 2 Chronicles 34:14-15. Shaphan reported to king Josiah about the temple repair project, adding that that Hilkiah had found a book in the temple, 2 Chronicles 34:16-18a.
- F. Shaphan then read the book of the Law of Moses to Josiah, the first time he had heard it, and Josiah quickly reacted by tearing his clothes, a sign of deep repentance before the Lord, 2 Chronicles 34:18b, 19.
- G. Josiah commanded Shaphan and his other officials to inquire of God's direction by one of His prophets, for he realized from the Law how badly Judah had sinned, and was ripe for judgment, 2 Chron. 34:20-21.
- H. Due to the past apostasies, they could find only a prophetess, Huldah in Jerusalem's "Second Quarter," an angled wedge of the city located north and west of the temple away from the threat of past apostate kings who had dwelt in the Old City south of the temple, 34:22 ESV; Zon. Pict. Enc. of the Bib., v. Five, p. 328.
- I. Huldah reported that God indeed planned to judge Judah according to His Word for the nation's sin; however, since Josiah had immediately repented upon first hearing the Law of God, the Lord planned not judge the nation of Judah in his days, but after he had passed away in peace, 2 Chronicles 34:23-28.
- J. Josiah then gathered the nation to the temple and had the Law read to it, and made the people covenant to obey the Lord, 2 Chronicles 34:29-32. He further purged the remaining idolatrous abominations from the land and made his people serve the Lord all during his reign as king, 2 Chronicles 34:33.

***Lesson:* Though he began his rule very ignorant of God's ways, since Josiah FULLY inclined his heart to ACT in HONOR of GOD BASED ON WHAT LITTLE he KNEW, God LED him into FULLER BIBLICAL INSIGHT and thus into FULLER BLESSING as Josiah more FULLY HEADED the Lord!**

***Application:* May we incline our HEARTS to honor the Lord with what we KNOW of His will, and God will provide us the FULLER knowledge we need more FULLY to HEED Him to be FULLY BLESSED!**