

King Josiah

Josiah was the 14th king of the southern kingdom called Judah. After the death of Solomon, the great Israelite kingdom that David and Solomon had assembled and ruled was ravaged by a civil war. The result was two separate kingdoms. Israel, that was also called the northern kingdom, or Samaria, and Judah, which was also called the Southern Kingdom. Apostasy and idol worship reigned to varying degrees in both kingdoms. The Northern Kingdom had 20 kings, yet never had even one “good” king, while Judah had a total of sixteen kings of whom at least 4 or 5 were “right” in the eyes of the Lord. God’s patience with the Northern Kingdom lasted 241 years. Then He used the Assyrians to destroy the country and to disperse the population to the extent that it never again was a clearly definable unit. This brought rise to the myth of the ten lost tribes of Israel. Actually the territories of nine tribes made up Israel, given that the territories of Judah, Benjamin and Simeon were all within the boundaries of the Southern Kingdom.

Furthermore, the people in the Northern Kingdom who were loyal to the Davidic line of kings, as well as those who wanted to serve God and participate in temple worship, moved south. Those native to the south who chose to separate themselves from the temple, and preferred to live “liberal” lives of idol worship and iniquity, moved north. Thus all 12 tribes were represented in the south as well as in the north. We should remember that, at no time was there a king of the blood line of David on the throne of the Northern Kingdom. It was in fact, a renegade kingdom essentially absent of any connection with the true God, except for their Abrahamic bloodline through Jacob. The first king was Jeroboam, a Benjaminite who chose to carry on the idol worshipping tradition of the backslid Solomon. This, along with a taxation issue, caused the split.

Josiah was among one of the most righteous of all of the kings of Judah, and I suggest second only to David of all the kings of the entire dynasty. However, in order to begin to build a case for the truth of that statement, we need to reach back to his grandfather and to the conditions that prevailed before his ascension to the throne. His grandfather was Manasseh, probably the very worst of all the kings. He ruled for 55 years, longer than

any of the others. He appears to have hated God and did all he could to eliminate Him from all aspects of human life. He engaged in every imaginable activity that was contrary to God's will, and forced the entire population to do likewise. He placed idols and worship altars in all of the high places and even within the temple grounds. He forbid temple worship of God, and ordered the destruction of every Bible in the land. In effect he reversed all of the reforms that his father, the good king Hezekiah had instituted. He hated most the first two commandments, and instituted sorcery, divination and witchcraft along with every conceivable immoral activity he could think of. He persecuted, or had killed, everyone who dared to oppose him. Idol worship was mandatory under penalty of death.

As I write this, I am sadly reminded of how our present governing authorities are engaged in essentially the same practices, and in making similar laws bent on eliminating God from our lives and promoting every conceivable vice and immoral behavior.

This went on for a large portion of his reign. We are told in 2 Chronicles 33:10 that the Lord spoke to him and the people but they would not listen. As so often happens when the Lord speaks and we don't listen, He responds by making the message much more loud and clear, as He did with Jonah when he chose not to obey. He used the Assyrians as His agents, who took Manasseh, bound him, and carried him off to prison in Babylon. There he repented and eventually was restored as king until his death. Even though he had repented and attempted some manner of restoration of temple worship, it was too late for the people. All of the evils that he had instituted had become ingrained, making it impossible for his "reform" to have had any significant benefit.

He was succeeded by Amon his son, whom he probably named after one the Egyptian gods. Amon, who was as wicked as his father had been, reigned only two years when he was assassinated by his own high officials. For what ever reason that they did this, it did not sit well with the people, because they in turn killed the officials. One can reasonably conclude that the people liked Amon's evil ways, and weren't happy to see him gone.

That is the heritage and the background of Josiah. He was eight years old, when he succeeded his father Amon. One might assume that it was “business as usual” with a mere child on the throne. There is no reason to believe that the evil structure of government policy, or cultural / religious values changed at that time. Nevertheless, only a few years later, God was able to say in 2 Kings 22:2 “*And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, and walked in all the way of David his father, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left.*” WOW!! That last phrase couldn’t even be said about David, without some exception, given the Bathsheba incident. Josiah was the fourth and most ardently dedicated reformer. He was also the last. The other three good kings were Asa, Jehoshaphat, and Hezekiah. Josiah’s reforms however, were far more extensive than those of his predecessors. Scripture tells us that in his eighth year, that is when he was sixteen years old, “*...he began to seek after the God of David...*” (2 Chronicles 34:3.)

It also says that when he was 20 years old he began to purge the whole country of the graven and molten images. Verse 6 indicates that he did this even as far north as Naphali which was far beyond the limit of Judea, that is even to the northern limits of the long ago obliterated Northern Kingdom. It was a campaign to get rid of all vestiges of the pagan Canaanite religion that had for so long contaminated the nation. He even smashed the idols and other paraphernalia right over the graves of their worshippers and then burned the bones of the pagan priests on their pagan altars, before he destroyed them as well. 2 Kings 23 goes into greater detail regarding this purge of apostasy. In verse 3 we are told that Josiah pledged himself to follow the Lord faithfully. As he made this pledge he may have wondered just how God wanted him to do this. Who was there to show him?

How wonderfully inspiring it is to see such powerful evidence of God at work in the hearts of those whom He has chosen to serve His purpose! How else could this boy of 16 begin to “seek after the God of David”? It’s not likely that he or anyone else had read the Bible, or had ever even seen one! A very unlikely exception might have been some very old priests, who may have been around more than 60 years ago, before all copies of the

Torah had been destroyed. Apparently there continued to be some handed down oral information about their distant ancestors and about what they come to believe was a “mythical or disinterested” God. After all, they had “done what was right in their own eyes” for a long time, and this supposedly just and great God had not interfered. So wasn’t this sure evidence that their life styles must have been ok with him? How accurate or detailed this handed down information may have been, we are not told.

However, what had gone on during these previous 60 years does not offer any assurance that what he learned from others was sufficient to turn him toward God. Just consider the odds of this happening to a normal 16 year whose entire life was one of ease and pampering in a totally ungodly environment. He could have everything he wanted, and was free to indulge in every conceivable pleasure, as well as all evil or perverse activity that was the norm of that period. All such things were common to all levels of the prevailing society. With the raging hormones of a 16 year old in such a position, and in such an environment, how else, except by supernatural appointment, could he possibly have been diverted away from human natures most powerful and sinful callings?

I suspect that a part of that supernatural was applied by his having been given a godly mother. Her name was Jedidah meaning “God’s Darling.” With his father much too busy engaged in blasphemous conduct to waste his time on his son, it is likely that his mother provided the godly foundation that would serve him well throughout his life. This was not a trivial or superficial, or even a temporary involvement with God, for it grew and did last throughout the rest of his life. Perseverance in the faith is a true measure of a saved soul. Read what it says in verse 2 and 3 in 2 Chronicles 34 about where his heart was and how he responded to God’s purpose for him. *“² And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, and walked in the ways of David his father, and declined neither to the right hand, nor to the left. ³ For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was yet young, he began to seek after the God of David his father: and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem from the high places, and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images.”*

We find that Jeremiah began his ministry in the 13th year of Josiah's rule. That is when Josiah was 19 years old and a year after he began his purges of idolatry. This suggests that Jeremiah may have been about 30 years old, given that this was the age when priests began their ministries. Habakkuk and Zephaniah began prophesying considerably later during Josiah's reign. With this in mind, we can see that the Godly Jeremiah may also have had some influence regarding the later part of Josiah's spiritual development, because it is possible that they became friends even a little earlier, even before Jeremiah was called by God to be a Prophet. Jeremiah lived in a city called Antathoth, which was only about 2 miles from Jerusalem. It was one of the original cities given over to the Levites. (Numbers 35)

What impressive works Josiah performed for the greater glory of God! Again, remember that this was six years before he had any knowledge of even the existence of the Book of God, and so knew nothing of the divine edicts regarding right or wrong, or even whether or not the worship of both God and of idols was permitted! If this seems absurd, remember that during much of Hebrew history, we are told that even the priests, while worshipping in the temple, also had their favorite idol that they worshipped, "after hours." Only God's supernatural voice, that inner voice, told Josiah the truth about these things. To have done what he did was totally contrary to worldly man's customs, desires, and sinful nature, and also to the then general will of the people. This is greatly evidenced, as we shall see, by the continuing hardened hearts of the vast majority, that only superficially embraced his "new religion". We see this by how quickly, after his death, they came "out of the closet" and again built their altars and idols in the high places. The godless perversions and iniquities consistent with such worship resumed as well, this time with even greater abandon than before. Ironically, we see this revealed most strongly in Jehiachin on whom God pronounced a blood curse, thus breaking the effectiveness of the royal blood line that connected David to Jesus!

Next we read in 2 Chronicles 34:8 that in Josiah's 18th year of reign, that's after 6 years of eradicating all "visible" evidences of idol worship, both on the high places, and also, in private residences, he then ordered priests to begin repair of the house of the Lord, his

God. The temple had fallen into a sad state of disrepair, not having been used, and even abused, for more than a half a century. In the process of repairing the Temple, we are told in 2 Chronicles 34:14 that the “...*Hilkiah the priest found a book of the law of the Lord given by Moses.*” What an incredible thing! The God of Glory had seen to it that there would be at least one copy of His Word that would survive Satan’s work through Manasseh and Amon! Many scholars believe that this may have been the original copy! I doubt that it was the original, because it had been 870 years earlier when Moses did his writings. I prefer to believe that it probably was the “file copy”, the one from which all other copies were derived as time rendered the other scrolls structurally endangered. The then current edition of this primary copy, would naturally have been kept in some very secret and well concealed place to preserve it and prevent the premature deterioration that would result had it been simply one of the “working” manuscripts. Can you imagine the awe, curiosity and excitement that this find caused? Hilkiah the priest, immediately recognized what it was and gave it to Shaphan the scribe who then read the whole thing to the king.

As a peripheral point of interest, consider verse 16, of chapter 15 in the Book of Jeremiah, where Jeremiah excitedly reports to the Lord, “*Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O Lord God of hosts*” God’s Words were found! For over 14 chapters, Jeremiah’s journal deals with his one-on-one relationship with the Lord. Until this verse, we must conclude that he had no knowledge of Scripture or even if its existence. When did he first read it? When it was found in the Temple and Josiah provided it to his friend to read. Once again we must marvel at how integrated the Scripture is and how incredibly delightful it is to read, to savor and to understand!

What a shocker that was to Josiah! He suddenly realized how wrong everything was! He had known for some time, through the working of the Holy Spirit in his heart, that the Almighty God must have been greatly displeased with idols as competitors, and so had decided to destroy them. However, until he heard God’s holy written Word, he had no idea at all about the prescribed manner of true ordained worship, and of the laws by

which the people were required to live. His extreme emotion regarding the total departure from God's ways that he had seen all of his life is symbolized by the fact that he rent his clothes, and probably went deep into despondency, remorse, and anguish. As one who worshipped God and struggled mightily in the darkness of ignorance regarding how to do what was right, he suddenly realized that very little was right in the eyes of God. Of particular concern to him must have been Deuteronomy 17:18-20 where it describes the duties of the king in regards to keeping and administering the law.

Josiah saw from this recorded history of his people, how God had, over and over again, punished and rewarded in accordance with their behavior and spiritual state. Now he realized, that given their persistent apostate state, which had lasted for such a long time, they were again ripe for a round of very severe punishments. Don't you get the same sense of foreboding today? Aren't our present conditions, like the calm before the storm of utter destruction and descent into slavery that Judah experienced? I believe that this is one exceedingly accurate prototype of what exists today in this country, and where it too is heading. If you don't see this, I suggest that you look around a little more carefully, and search the Scripture where I'm sure can be found even stronger evidences of why this is so.

It is likely that the high priest Hilkiah and a few others shared Josiah's faith to some degree and were his loyal subjects. This seems evident because his first act, after having heard the Word, was to entrust him and some others to "*...inquire of the Lord for me, and for the people, and for all of Judah, concerning the words of the book,...*" (2Kings 22:13) He went on to explain the urgency of this missions, for he could see from the Word that the wrath of God could not be long in coming, because of the many years of godlessness that existed prior to his ascension to the throne. Their response was to go to Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum who was the keeper of the wardrobe. She apparently was the best around, and perhaps the only one around that had a reliable track record worthy of respecting.

She confirmed Josiah's worst fears regarding God's coming wrath. If we had witnessed this conversation, perhaps we might have heard her say first, "Well, I have some good

news, and some bad news for the person who sent you.” Then she might have said, in essence, “yes, God’s wrath is coming soon, and He’s going to throw the Book at them.” As, for the “good” news, she told them that because of his faith and goodness, the king wouldn’t live to see it! (2Kings 22:15-20) As we know, Josiah died 14 years later, at age 39, and in that same year, Judah became a vassal state as the first increment of God’s increasing wrath. This wrath culminated 23 years later in the destruction of Jerusalem and of the Temple, as well as the beginning of the nation’s final 50 years of slavery in Babylon.

Next we find, that Josiah “...gathered unto him all the elders of Judah and of Jerusalem.” (2Kings 23:1) In the next verse we are told that he brought the entire population to the Temple. I don’t believe that was physically possible for everyone to gather within hearing distance, and so it was through the gathered elders and priests that the entire population was represented and fully informed of what was he was about to say. Verse three says, “*And the king stood by a pillar, and made a covenant before the Lord, to walk after the Lord, and to keep His commandments and his testimonies, and His statutes with all of their heart, and all their soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this Book....*” (2Chronicles 34:31) Then he caused everyone there to, “*stand to it*” With this covenant, Josiah was responding to Deuteronomy 17:14-20 regarding instruction concerning kings.

The 2Kings version of this event says that he stood by the pillar while 2Chronicles says that he stood in his place. I like the pillar location as his place because it is quite specific as well as revealing. It tells us that he stood on the porch of the Temple near the door to the Holy Place, well above the courtyard where the people were assembled. Apparently this was the chosen place where kings would address the people on certain occasions, because we see this also as where King Asa had stood about 250 years earlier. (2 Kings 11:14) On that porch there were two huge free standing bronze pillars, which supported nothing, that is they had no structural purpose. While seemingly decorative, they also expressed some symbolic purpose, in that they were given names (1Kings 7:21). The one to the left was named Boaz, meaning “in his strength”, and the other was named Jachin,

meaning “he shall establish.” A fitting interpretation could be that these pillars expressed God’s power and purpose. As the guardians to the entrance to the Temple, they were eminently strong and stable. As such, they symbolized the strength of God that would establish and protect the Temple and His people, if they would keep the faith and the conditions that He required of them.

What a highly emotional time this must have been for this 26 year old king. He had committed himself to God ten years earlier, but had worshipped almost total ignorance regarding the manner in which he was supposed to express his commitment to God. Suddenly there was this explosion of light and guidance that became manifest through this discovery of God’s long lost written Word! A heart and mind so committed and eager to serve, must have felt an incredible sense of joy and relief, as if it had just been liberated from a deep dark spiritual dungeon, and brought out into the blissful radiance and freedom of God’s blessed light. First, he had need to shout out to the world, to share this great discovery with every one of God’s people, or anyone else that he could find willing to hear. Don’t we all feel this way whenever some profound, biblical truth finds us? Can you not see this emotion-filled young king standing there in front of the crowd, on God’s holy Temple porch next to this great pillar that symbolized God’s strength, reading God’s most precious and holy Words?

Picture him there, often choked with emotion, sometimes leaning against this pillar of strength while so tenderly and lovingly sharing this incredible heavenly message to all who could hear. The Word must have been on several rolled scrolls, perhaps five, one for each of the five Books of Moses. No doubt there were priests holding the scrolls in front of him, rolling them out from one end to the other as he read. Bible statistics indicate that the entire Bible can be read out loud in 70 hours. The Torah includes about 25% of the entire Bible. On this basis, if the Hebrew reading of the Torah can proceed at about the same rate as our English translation, it would have taken Josiah around 17.5 hours to present all of it to the people. Given his great passion and emotional state at that time, I would expect that he may have held them there and read all of it in one “standing”.

Apparently, there were idols yet in the Temple and many other places that either were missed or for some reason avoided during his first purge. 2 Kings 23:4-20 give a detailed description of how he ordered the complete destruction of all elements related to idol worship. He also had killed the many priests that were involved in these practices. Of note, in this second purging, was the “¹³ ...mount of corruption, which Solomon the king of Israel had builded...” This was where, when Solomon was old, and under the influence of his many foreign wives, that he built high places for the worship of several pagan gods. Perhaps these escaped his first purging because he was intimidated by his awe of Solomon, and so was less certain of what to do with this particular situation. 2Kings 23:7 Of note also, is that he broke down “...the houses of the sodomites that were in the house of the Lord, where the women wove hangings for the grove.” It would seem that there was a strong relationship between sodomy and idol worship. It is of interest to note that Scripture mentions twice before, when serious reformations took place, that the removal of the sodomites was included in the programs that purged the nation of idols and other abominations. These other purges took place under King Asa and Jehoshaphat (1 Kings 16:12, 22:46)

Can you imagine the great turmoil, fear and resentment that Josiah’s purges and new religious edicts must have caused the whole population? Idol worship was a firm, well ingrained and primary fixture in the lives of these people. Whatever remnant of “believers” remained at that time were probably “underground”. This great reformation that Josiah so ably caused, brought it above ground and may even have increased its number somewhat. But as we’ll see later, the reformation was mostly superficial. Nevertheless, “he had them going” for a while, that is, at least going through the motions, as he then began to institute some of the prescribed demonstrations of Godly worship. This first appears to have been the celebration of Passover. It is 2 Kings 24:22, that tells us that this was the greatest Passover celebration from all the days of the Judges and on through the entire period of the Kings. Judah was very prosperous during the reign of Josiah. This is expressed to some degree in that for the Passover celebration, 33,000 bullocks, 7600 small cattle and 800 oxen plus many flocks of lambs and goats were

sacrificed. Apparently this was the mother of all religious celebrations ever to have taken place in the history of Israel to that date and beyond.

This Passover occurred in Josiah's 18th year of reign in 622 B.C. It suggests that the trappings of sincere and faithful worship, all in accordance with the biblical laws, were practiced for the next 23 years, that is, until Josiah's death. I have expressed the revival this way because, as already mentioned, subsequent recorded evidence suggests that idol worship, and all other ungodly behavior came back in vogue very quickly after Josiah's departure. It then continued undiminished for the next 24 years, right to the very end, that is to the total destruction of Jerusalem and of the Temple. Shallow faith is superficial faith, and effectually, no faith at all, from the perspective of salvation. It is the faith that simply goes along in order to get along, that puts on the white robes of righteousness in the Temple, but sheds them as soon as possible in favor of the filthy rags of the sinful, carnal ways of the rest of the world. We read in Josiah's covenant with the Lord that he pledged to keep God's statutes and perform the words of the covenant that are written in the Book. These would include of course, observing all of the Holy days as commanded in the Torah, including the six Feasts, of which the Passover was the first. As we have noted, none of these had been practiced, under the previous kings for at least the past half century, with their very existence and meaning, probably long forgotten.

Now, with the intensive study of the Torah that followed its discovery, Josiah was committed to honor them all. With the Passover completed, we can see that he then applied his commitment to continue this process. 2 Kings makes no specific mention of this, however, in 2 Chronicles 35:3, we read that Josiah commanded the Levites, the holy priests of God, to put the Ark of the Covenant back into the Temple. Before the scroll had been found, he must have noticed that the Holy of Holies room was empty. He knew what the Ark and the Mercy Seat looked like from the instructions God gave Moses as He commanded that it be built. Originally, he had no idea as to what should have been there, but after reading the Book, he knew that this furniture belonged there, and that the Mercy Seat was of extreme importance. Without it, there could be no celebration of the Day of Atonement, also called Yom Kippur.

This was the once a year requirement where the chief priest was to enter into the Holy of Holies and sprinkle atoning blood onto the Mercy Seat. Absent this act, how could the sins of the people be covered so that they would be protected from the eternal wrath of God? It is interesting that while he directed that the Ark be returned to its place, there is no evidence that the Levites ever accomplished the task, or that Yom Kippur was ever again celebrated in the Temple. Beyond this point, where it deals with Josiah, Scripture is silent regarding the Ark. All we read are details about the great Passover feast, and how Josiah met his untimely death at Megiddo. After a careful reading of the account of his last days, one has to be left very curious regarding the cause of Josiah's strange behavior.

In an attempt to make sense of this behavior, much of what follows is a blend of biblical truths, historical facts, difficult to dismiss traditions, and some much prayed over logic based hope. It is hoped that through this we might approach the true cause of this behavior, and also shed some light on what happened to the Ark. I believe that Josiah's behavior, and where he believed the Ark was located, are intimately related.

Knowing all that we have learned about Josiah, and his character, his faith, and his vow to live and reign in the ways of the Lord, we must conclude that the absence of the Ark was a severe blow to him, as well as a continual debilitating source of emotional pain, anxiety and sleepless nights. Can you imagine how distraught he must have been when the priests admitted that the Ark was nowhere to be found? Scripture doesn't say specifically that the Ark was missing, but I believe that it is strongly evidenced by the several allusions regarding the repeated desecration of the Temple, and the carrying off of its treasures. In reading the Torah, he learned how very important it was to God as he directed Moses to build an exact replica of the one that is in heaven. (Revelation 11:19) At God's direction, Moses also built a portable Temple called the Tabernacle in which to house the Ark in the Holy of Holies. This Tabernacle was carried around by the Levi's during their 38 years of wandering, and then throughout the Promised Land for another 347 years until it was replaced by the permanent masonry Temple built by Solomon. This was the same Temple that Josiah cleaned out and attempted to restore to its original

purpose, 380 years after its construction. Josiah knew from the Torah that the Ark belonged in the Holy of Holies, and that it was on the Mercy Seat where God was when He was with His people. Had it been there at that time, he would not have asked the Levites to put it back.

For those next, and last 14 years of his life, Josiah must have grieved over this, and probably tore apart all of Judah in his search for the Ark. It seems likely that eventually he heard some of the many stories that sought to explain its disappearance. One of these would have been the story of the Queen of Sheba, and how legend indicated that she had a son by Solomon, called Menelik who is said to have carried it away to Ethiopia. He also might have heard that King Shishak of Egypt took away all of the Temple treasures soon after Solomon died. (1Kings 14:25, 26) Scripture says all. That means the Ark and the Mercy Seat was taken by him, if it was still there in the Temple. Another rumor was, that as Judah sunk ever more deeply into apostasy, the faithful priests hid the Ark in order to protect it from destruction. Had it been there in his grandfather's Manasseh's time it surely would have been destroyed. There are several other variations to the legend of the lost Ark. Some say it is still hidden under Jerusalem, placed there for its protection, and having for a while been replaced in the Holy of Holies with a facsimile. Another is that it is hidden in a sealed cave under Mt. Nebo. This is based on 2 Macabees 2:1-8, which claims that Jeremiah hid it there to await the second coming. However, I don't believe that any of these, or several others that have been suggested in the past, are able to withstand careful examination.

It is my belief, that at some point, the Ark was removed and taken to Ethiopia for safe keeping, until it could be safely returned to a restored godly kingdom. Whether this was done by Solomon's son, or by some other agency, I believe that the Ark was removed toward the end of Solomon's reign, before the Shishak invasion, and taken to Ethiopia, where it has remained to this day. I also believe that Josiah finally came to the same conclusion, and committed his life to having it returned. Adding some credence to this supposition, there is yet today a huge assembly of people that are Jews by faith in Ethiopia, and they sincerely believe that they have the Ark. Ethiopian leaders for many

centuries have proclaimed it as fact. Their tradition insists that Solomon had a son by their Queen, and they continue in expectation of returning the Ark to Jerusalem when the Messiah does return and sits on David's throne in accordance with Scripture. The official history of Ethiopia recognizes Menelik as the king of that nation beginning around 975 BC, about the time of Solomon's death. They record his dynasty as lasting 225 generations with very few interruptions until 1974 with the death of Emperor Haile Selassie. It is estimated that today, half of the 25 million population of Ethiopia claim the Hebrew faith. They trace their religion all the way back to Menelik.

In the context of all of this, we might also consider as relevant, the story of the Eunuch returning to Ethiopia from Jerusalem after the crucifixion. (Acts 8:26-39) Why had this keeper of the treasury, this very high official, embarked on such a very long and dangerous journey to Jerusalem at that time? If we accept as facts of Ethiopian beliefs in these matters, we can well reason that word had gotten to Ethiopia indicating that the Messiah indeed had come. And that's why he journeyed to Jerusalem. It was to deliver the Ark to the Messiah! However, when he got there, he found that the one who called himself the Messiah had been crucified and was dead. Not being able to complete his mission, he headed back home, Ark and all. The whole situation must have been very confusing to him, so he sought an explanation in the Bible. The fact that he had a Bible to refer to, speaks compellingly as to his religious persuasion and to the before mentioned Ethiopian tradition.

Also, we must realize that this was an official trip, most certainly ordered by the ruling authority of Ethiopia. For him to be carrying a Bible for guidance, further advances the contention that Ethiopia was a Bible believing country, at least at the highest political level. How prophetic it was that upon Philip's arrival at the caravan, the eunuch was reading the very portion of Scripture that could explain the situation that was confusing him (Isaiah 53). Thus, I believe that he brought the Ark back to Ethiopia, and it remains there again, awaiting the return of the Messiah King. Notice how this Eunuch episode stands alone in the Scripture having no relation to anything that precedes it or follows it. Our Lord wrote nothing in His Book that didn't have a purpose or a meaning of great

significance. Might not the significance of this be the clue I here suggest it is, regarding the location of the Ark?

What's all of this have to do with Josiah, you ask? I believe that the issue of the Ark, and where it was, was the cause of what seems to have been Josiah's irrational behavior that led to his early death. It appears to me that he was obsessed with an urgency to have it back in the Temple. I believe that he became convinced that Egypt's Pharaoh Necco, and Ethiopian had the Ark. In that context, let us look at the events that led to his death as recorded in 2 Chronicles 35:20-24 *"²⁰ After all of this, when Josiah had prepared the temple, Necco king of Egypt came up to fight against Carchemish by Euphrates: and Josiah went out against him. ²¹ But he sent ambassadors to him, saying, What have I do with thee, thou king of Judah? I come not against thee this day, but against the house wherewith I have war: for God commanded me to make haste: forbear thee from meddling with God, who is with me, that he destroy thee not. ²² Nevertheless, Josiah would not turn his face from him, but disguised himself that he might fight with him, and hearkened not unto the words of Necco from the mouth of God, and came to fight in the valley of Megiddo. ²³ And the archers shot at king Josiah; and the king said to his servants, Have me away; for I am sore wounded. ²⁴ His servants therefore took him out of that chariot, and put him in the second chariot that he had; and they brought him to Jerusalem, and he died, and was buried in one of the sepulchres of his fathers. And all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah"*.

In order to put the then current situation in perspective, we need to look back a little and examine some of the relevant past. In 721 BC the Assyrians under Shalmanesse captured the Northern Kingdom, completely obliterating it and dispersing the population across their entire empire. Only 12 years later in 709 BC, Assyria, under Sennacherib was all set to do the same to Judah. One night an angel killed 186,000 of the Assyrian soldiers that had surrounded Jerusalem ready for a morning attack. Sennacherib retreated, and Assyria never again attacked Judah. The might of Judah's God put a great and lasting fear into the Assyrians. That fear, and the resulting peace, never ended. Now, in 609 BC Assyria was in steep decline. Only three years earlier, in 612 BC, the Babylonians had

destroyed the Assyrian capital, that magnificent and “impregnable” city of Nineveh. At that time, Babylon was a small vassal state that had been under Assyrian control for centuries. It rebelled under the leadership of their king, Nabopolassar. In alliance with the neighboring Medes, the Babylonians, they set out to rid themselves of Assyrian rule. With Nineveh gone, the Assyrians retreated to Haran further up the Euphrates River and made it their capital. The Babylonian hordes soon pushed them out, causing them to make what was to be their last stand at Carchemish, about 60 miles to the west. It was from there that the Assyrians, with the aide of the Egyptians, hoped to stop the invaders. Egypt’s assistance wasn’t enough. And so the greatness, and the very existence of Assyria left the pages of history. So complete was its demise, that for centuries, its existence was considered just another Bible fable. Bible scoffers claimed that there had never been such an empire, and that even Nineveh had never existed. It was as late as the 1800’s that ruins were discovered along with artifacts, including clay tablets that revealed its fabulous history. This of course, sent scoffers scurrying off to find another “biblical error”. We will deal with another one of these so called “biblical errors”, a few pages from here.

Skipping many interesting details about this intriguing part of ancient history, we come to the Assyrian’s desperate pleas for aid from their former enemy. Egypt could see the great threat that this horribly cruel, and seemingly invincible Babylon now posed to Egypt. For this reason Pharaoh Necco chose to aid the Assyrians, and began to march toward Carchemish. It was at that point in this great drama, that Josiah entered the scene as a “spoiler”, as described in 2 Chronicles 35:26-24. Instead of letting Necco pass on through Judea, or perhaps even as requested joining him in going to the aid of those fighting the Babylonian tidal wave, he went against Necco.

Josiah rushed to Megiddo, where he intercepted Necco. This also was where Necco severely wounded Josiah and defeated his army. This delayed Necco’s arrival at Carchemish. Meanwhile, the Babylonians destroyed the rest of the Assyrian army, and then decimated a large part of the Egyptian army, as well as driving the remainder back to Egypt. It was on the way back, still in 609 BC, that Necco stopped off to take tribute

and make Judah his vassal state. Very soon after that however, Nabopolassar's son Nebuchadnezzar marched into, and conquered Egypt. On his way back to Babylon in 606 BC, he too stopped off at Jerusalem, forcing it into submission and causing Judah to become his vassal state. As tribute, he took with him to Babylon, both the treasures of the temple and the cream of Judah's brain power, including the prophet Daniel.

Going back to the above, as included in 2 Chronicles 35, we see that Necco must have been astounded, as his words seem to portray, when he learned of Josiah's resolve to go against him. Their relationship had been peaceful enough for a long time. The on-going, passivity of Assyria regarding Judah had existed for a hundred years. Now the great empire was collapsing in the wake of a far more onerous and immediate threat to their survival as nations. Couldn't Josiah see this? Hadn't he seen how easily these eastern hordes had leveled the great city of Nineveh? How could he not see the assurance of inevitable doom for Judah unless this plague could be stopped? This would only be possible, if at all, through a coalition of armies. To further make his case, Necco claimed he had God on his side. I believe that this was, to Josiah, the confirming clue as to who had the Ark! On what other possible basis could this idol worshipping pagan, who knew nothing about the true God, have the gall to say that, and in any way claim God's guidance? Necco, told him that he had been commanded by God to make haste in this matter, and to inform Josiah that his meddling with God's direction would cause him to be destroyed. It may be that God did use him to deliver the message to Josiah, which of course he did not heed, because he couldn't believe that God would use this heathen to convey His instruction.

This must have sent Josiah into a rage of indignation and a resolve to seek, at all cost, the return of this most precious Ark. The spiritual security of his people depended on it. For how else could the sacrament of atonement be administered to them, absent the Mercy Seat on which the atoning blood had to be sprinkled? Perhaps Josiah recalled the story about when the Philistines had captured the Ark, believing that it would give them access to the power of God, only to find it to be a curse in their pagan hands. Josiah could easily have visualized Necco in a similar posture, hauling the Ark in front of him, also assuming

that it gave him access to the spiritual powers of the great God. So what if Babylon did over run Judah. I suspect that Josiah reasoned that physical suffering and death were but temporary problems. The saving of souls was paramount, and the only worthy priority in his life, and so, he became the first “Crusader” marching out to retrieve the “Holy Grail”. If Necco had the Ark, it’s not likely that he would have risked its capture or destruction by carrying it into battle with the Babylonians. I believe that he probably recognized its sacredness, and if he had it with him, it probably was well protected and not out in front of his advancing army.

What was the significance of Josiah disguising himself, rather than leading the mission as king? Some say, it was to make him a less conspicuous target, but I believe that it was more than that. An open frontal attack on Necco, in his effort to retrieve the Ark would not have been fruitful. Neccos’ army was too big. I believe that he chose the more subtle tactic of perhaps infiltrating the Egyptian lines with a small group disguised, so as to not attract attention, while his main forces were to provide a diversionary attack against Necco. This way he might find the Ark, surprise the guards, perhaps at night, and take the Ark back to Jerusalem. Obviously, the mission failed, and Josiah was mortally wounded. I believe that the arrows that found his vital organs were divinely placed there for two reasons. First, as Huldah’s prophecy revealed, the doom of Judah was near at hand, but Josiah would be spared from seeing it.

Thus it was time for God to take him to “Abraham’s Bosom,” before the fireworks began. Immediately, after his death, Judah, in becoming a vassal state, fulfilled the first phase of the foretold destruction. Necco’s first installment of “tribute” that Judah paid to him was one hundred talents of silver and one talent of gold. Second, it was not yet time for the Ark to be returned, anymore than when the eunuch made his fruitless trip. Had Josiah comprehended the full meaning of the prophecy, he would have realized, that because of the wrath that was to follow, as the people and his successors again fell even more deeply into apostasy, Jerusalem was not the place where the Ark belonged, or where it could remain safe until the Messiah returned. The fact that only three years later, Nebuchadnezzar emptied the temple of its treasures, and that the total destruction of the

temple occurred a mere 20 years after that, provides ample evidence of why God prevented the Ark's return, at that time.

Have I made way too much of this "Ark thing" in this commentary about Josiah? After all, the Ark is only mentioned once, and quite briefly, when Josiah simply asks the Levites to put it back in the Holy of Holies. Perhaps I have, but I believe the Lord has left certain facts for us to discover "the hard way", facts that when exposed, can greatly expand our understanding of His magnificent Word! This erratic behavior of Josiah's is one of the things that He has left for us to ponder. If we choose to seek an explanation, He is eager to provide us with the appropriate insights and resources through which answers can be found. Of course, only through sincere prayer, confidence in that prayer, and perseverance of effort, can we be so rewarded. The above and what follows, is what I believe He has chosen for me to accept, and to share for what ever benefit it may be to anyone else.

The remainder of the Davidic dynasty which followed Josiah, after his death in 609 BC, until the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BC is also most intriguing, and at first, difficult to follow but worth the effort. It is difficult to follow because of the multiple names of each king, and a seemingly insurmountable "biblical error" regarding the age of one of the kings when he took office. The name confusion comes mostly from the fact that Judah became a vassal state at the death of Josiah, and that the conquering kings renamed each of these vassal kings. This commentary is about Josiah, so why delve into what followed his Death? Read on, and you'll see. "Trust me," it will be worth it!

As mentioned in Scripture, after Josiah's death, "*...the people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah, and anointed him and made him king in his father's stead.*" (2Kings 23:30) However, after Pharaoh Necco killed Josiah, and assumed control over Judah, he chose to remove Jehoahaz who had only reigned 3 months. Necco replaced him with Eliakim whom he renamed Jehoiakim. Eliakim was also one of Josiah's three natural sons. He was 25 years old when he became king, and reigned as a vassal king for 11 years, until 598 BC.

In 606 BC, Nebuchadnezzar conquered Egypt and Judah. He allowed Jehoiakim to continue on as a vassal king under the Babylonian empire. When Eliakim, (Jehoiakim) died in 598 BC his son, Jeconiah (also called Jehoiachin or Coniah, or Jeconiah (Matthew 1:11) became king. However, because of the continuing rebellious nature of Judah and its rulers, Nebuchadnezzar returned for a second siege of Jerusalem. After only 3 months as king, Jehoiachin was replaced by Zedekiah the third son of Josiah. He was the last king of Judah and of the earthly Davidic dynasty. Mattaniah was his original name, Nebuchadnezzar renamed him when he set him up as King of Judah in 587 BC. He too refused to listen to the true prophets such as Jeremiah, and rebelled against Babylon. Eleven years later, in 586 BC, the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple.

Again, what's the point of going into all of this post-Josiah history when the topic is Josiah? Several reasons. The first, is to clear up in my own mind this complicated and confusing portion of our Savior's genealogy. One cannot help but be confused about "whose on first" during this last 23 years of Judah's existence as a kingdom nation. Each of the last four kings are called by any one of two or more names, depending on where in Scripture they are mentioned. Second, of the 16 Old Testament Prophets identified by their own books, eight of them were given prophetic messages from God warning Judah of what judgments their continued apostasy would bring on them during this period. To understand who and when each of the kings reigned, and how they behaved in relationship to these warnings, is vital, if one is to understand the meaning, and specific purpose of what the prophets wrote.

Third, there is what appears to be a serious conflict regarding the age of Jehoichin when he became king. 2Kings 24:8 tells us he was 18 years old when he began his three month reign, while 2Chronicles 36:9 says he was 8 years old when he began his three month and ten day reign. Establishing the whose and whens as summarized above is a necessary first step in reconciling the issue. What follows I pray, is a God and Scripture honoring answer to the problem that many commentators ignore or simply assign as "scribal error".

We might accept “translational error” if it were true, but it can in no way be scribal error, because the scribes were the copiers of the original texts. Such an error, would necessarily cast doubt on the inerrancy of the entire Scripture, rendering all of it suspect. That is impossible!

We have in this apparent “biblical discrepancy”, a scoffer’s paradise, which we must not let go unresolved. Several “solutions” have been offered over the years, but none seem to me to be sufficiently plausible to put the issue solidly away, except the one Dr. Floyd Nolen Jones touched on in his “the Chronology of the Old Testament.” The first big clue is found in Matthew 1:11 where it says that “...*Josiah begat Jeconiah and his brethren...*” However, we know from 2Kings 24:6 that Jeconiah (Jehoiachin) was the son of Johoiakim and not the son of Josiah. Is this another mistake? No, of course not! For the Holy Spirit to have taken such pains to make this point where it seems to have absolutely no relevance is indeed very strange, and in itself begs for further study. In doing so it also leads us, into a whole facet of Scripture that I didn’t know about. This we will discuss a little later. In that Scripture refers to him as Josiah’s son, he would have had to have adopted him, just as Jacob adopted Joseph’s two sons Ephriam and Manasseh. The obvious challenge to this is that a loose interpretation of “son” can include any male descendant, such as the idea that all are “sons of Abraham” and that Scripture has no specific word for “grandson”. However, neither context nor serious reasoning allow for such an interpretation. Why would Josiah adopt Jehoiachin, and how does it become a clue toward solving this “age” problem?

In order to answer this, we must go back about 14 years before Josiah’s death. That is after the Torah was discovered, read, and faithfully applied. When he had heard God’s words from the Book, he instructed the temple priests to inquire of the Lord regarding the wrath that He would apply against Judah. As we know’ the priests took the matter to Huldah, the prophetess. She confirmed that the Lord of Lords would take him before He began to render his judgment which was soon to fall on Judah. However, she said that he would die before it happened. In 609 BC when he left Jerusalem to battle Necco, he had been king for 39 years, and very likely knew that he might never come back alive. He

could see that even though he had instituted great reforms pleasing to God, these had not penetrated very deeply into the general population. The vast majority of the people remained idol worshippers, and filled with iniquity in their hearts even though the external facade of true God worship had been restored. As we already know, Huldah's prophecy came true. He died very soon after he was carried back to Jerusalem. As soon as Necco got to Jerusalem, the wrath commenced, as Necco set Judah up to be a vassal state. God used Necco first, then Nebuchadnezzar, as the instruments of His wrath on the people as they suffered increasingly for the next 23 years in Judah and for another fifty years of captivity in Babylon.

Now let's try to put ourselves in Josiah's place as he lay on his death bed upon his return from Megiddo. He had three sons, Jehoiakim, 25 years old, Jehoahaz age 23, and Zedekiah age 9. By then he realized with certainty that all three were already very wicked, and he didn't want any of them to succeed him. Probably even the youngest was already showing a corrupt nature. But then there was Jehoiakim's son, Jehoiachin. The early signs of his growing character perhaps looked the most promising, even though we know that in his adult years he became as bad, and even worse than the others. However, knowing what he knew, what other choice did he have? What could Josiah do? The Davidic dynasty had to be persevered, and yet he could not in good conscience choose any of his three sons to follow him. Praying for God's direction, and perhaps out of urgency and desperation, he formally adopted his 8 year old grandson, Jeconiah (Jehoachin) and then anointed him as his successor, just before he died. Remember, that he himself had been anointed when he was eight, and perhaps he prayed and hoped that under the guidance of Jeremiah and other godly mentors, this child could also grow in the ways of the Lord. Note also, that through adoption, the boy was now entitled to all the rights and privileges of a directly sired son.

I believe Josiah anointed eight year old Jehoiachin king in 609BC just before he died, However, the people immediately rejected him, insisting instead that 23 year old Jehoahaz was to be king. Three months later Necco deposed Jehoahaz and put Jehoiakim on the throne of this now vassal state. All of this took place in 609 BC.

Thus we have the 8 year old Jehoiachin anointed, but not accepted as king. 2Kings 23:36 tell us that it was Jehoiakim who ruled for eleven years. Thus he was king when Nebuchadnezzar took Jerusalem three years later in 606 BC. After taking what he wanted of the nation's wealth, of the people, and of the treasures of the temple, he left Jehoiakim to remain as king. It was in Jehoiakim's eleventh year when his rebellious activities finally caused Nebuchadnezzar to again raid the city. He replaced him with Jehoiachin who was then 18 years old. He also reigned for only three months. (2Kings 24:8) This was in the 8th year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign. Verse 15 tells us that Jehoiachin was carried away with his wives, his mother etc. Zedekiah, Josiah's youngest son, and the last of the kings, was then put on the throne. 2Chronicles 36:9 tells the same story except that it tells us that Jehoiachin was 8 years old when he was deposed. Obviously an eight year old didn't have wives, so it couldn't have been the eight year old that was taken to Babylon.

The books of Kings, and of Chronicles, parallel each other as each describe the history of the Davidic kingdom. Each provide near identical descriptions of the two kingdoms, Israel and Judah, from their inception to their individual destruction. However, there are some scholars who find reason to distinguish them in an interesting way. They find the books of Kings to be a history written from a human perspective, while they perceive Chronicles to have been written more from God's perspective. Might it be then, that when Chronicles 36:9 claims that "Jehoiachin was eight years old when he began to reign, that God was looking back to Josiah's anointing of him in 609 BC? This was when he began his legitimate reign, even though it was only positional. Josiah's anointed Jehoiachin before he died. He was the only one of the last 4 kings that was properly anointed. The first was installed by the people, and the other two were appointed either by Necco or Nebuchadnezzar. It's interesting that in 2Chronicles 36:9 we are informed that Jehoahaz reigned for the specific 3 months and 10 days, while the "18 year old" of 2Kings reigned the rounded number of 3 months. From God's perspective, a purely positional reign by Jehoiachin began, in 609 BC, when he was eight years old, and became a functional reign when he was 18 years old.

This is not as absurd as some may think, given that there are a number of historical precedents. David was anointed king by Samuel in 1070 BC, while Saul was yet functionally the king. Thus David was positionally king for 15 years, until Saul died. Only then was he able to sit experientially on the throne and function as king. Remember also, that Herod was anointed king over Judea by Rome while it was yet in Parthean control. This made Herod a king “positionally”, a condition that lasted for two years until the Romans regained control of Israel. Then, he entered Jerusalem and reigned as king, functionally. The resurrection of our Lord and Savior marked the beginning of His Kingship over the world. Today His Kingship is only positional. It will become functional only after Satan, the present prince of this world, is brought down and delivered to hell in chains after the Great Tribulation. Only then, during the millennium will our Savior and Lord Christ Jesus sit on His throne, truly functioning as King.

If you are not yet convinced of the efficacy of this reasoning, go back again, to Matthew 1:11-13 where you will find the genealogy listing Josiah, followed directly by Jeconiah as the last king before the captivity. Then there followed Salathiel and the other non-kings who continued the royal blood line to Joseph. Where are the three other kings, the sons of Josiah? Most certainly Jehoiakin, Jeconiah’s father should have been there according to the Kings and Chronicles accounts. Only by virtue of the adoption and legitimate anointment of Jeconiah by Josiah, and God’s “blotting out” of Jehoiakim could this have been possible. At this point we might ask this question.

How can what we all consider a complete genealogy of Jesus, as listed in Matthew 1, not include Jehoiakin? How can this be when both 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles clearly identify him as the son of Josiah and the father of Jeconiah? It is evident that God chose to simply omit Jehoiakim from Jesus’ genealogy. By what authority did He do this? An absurd question, you say! It’s not so absurd if we apply the promise He gave us in Amos 3:7! There we are assured that *“Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants and the prophets”*. Of course, our ever faithful God who cannot lie did “revealeth”. He revealed that “authority” in His decree found in

Deuteronomy 29:20 where He speaks of evil, idol worshiping man, and we are told “...*the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven*”.

We also find God speaking of similar “blotting out” in Psalm 69:20, and 109:13; in Exodus 32:33, and in Revelation 3:5. Based on the above explanation, this “8 verses 18” issue is not a Scriptural error, and so the scoffers must search elsewhere to satiate their thirsts to discredit God’s inerrant Word.

Going back again to the commentary on Josiah where I have put so much emphasis on the Ark, it would not be complete without some discussion of Jeremiah 3:16, “*And it shall come to pass, when ye be multiplied and increased in the land, in those days, saith the Lord, they shall say no more, The ark of the covenant of the Lord: neither shall it come to mind; neither shall they remember it; neither shall they visit it; neither shall that be done any more.*” Is this verse telling us, that the usefulness of the Ark will come to an end, and will at some point, no longer have a place or purpose in God’s kingdom, and therefore will be forgotten? It would seem so. When will it be? Has the time already come? Has it long past? Or is it yet in the future? The verses following verse 16 seem to identify when that will happen. It will be when “...*they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord...*” and “...*all nations shall be gathered into it...*” and “...*neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart.*” (Verse 17) It will be when “...*Judea shall walk with the house of Israel, and they shall come together out of the land of the north to the land that I have given for an inheritance unto your fathers.* (verse 18) It will be when (the Jews) “...*Thou shalt call me, My Father; and shalt not turn away from me.*” (Verse 19)

When will the events and circumstances mentioned here come to pass? Since May 14, 1948 they have been called back into the land God gave them, although only into a small and shrinking part of it. (less than 10%). However, the Jews have never, or do they yet call God their Father. This, I believe will happen during the Great Tribulation, when the remnant is called out of Jerusalem and kept safe in Bozrah. That is when they will acknowledge Jesus. It will be when they “...*shall look upon me whom they have pierced....*” (Zechariah 12:10) From Scripture, it is evident that there will be a third

temple in existence during the 70th weeks of Daniel. The detailed preparations for it have been going on for years. The temple utensils have been constructed, priests trained, and many details provided for as they wait for its location to be established and made ready. In it there will be a holy of holies place in which it seems evident that the Mercy Seat will be installed, or else how could Antichrist desecrate it as predicted by Jesus as recorded in Matthew 24:15? There He said, *“When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand,)”*

When the Ark of the Covenant is spoken of, it is almost always viewed as a chest with the Mercy Seat as its cover. However, these are two separate items of furniture in the temple. The gold plated chest contained the two tablets on which God wrote the 10 commandments, a container of manna, and Aaron’s rod. With the coming of our Lord Christ Jesus these symbols of the past dispensation were no longer of any great relevance. However, as the support for the Mercy Seat, that sacred object on which God is said to have sat when He was in the Temple, I don’t believe has yet lost its significance. I believe that it will be in the holy place in order for the Matthew 24:15 prophecy to be fulfilled. Figuratively speaking, it may make no difference whether or not it is supported by the Ark, or by a milk crate as long as its there, and supported in some way as a seat.

Obviously God’s words to Jeremiah are a prediction yet to be fulfilled. The Ark and its cover still have a significant role to play before the Ark is to be forgotten. Thus what has here been written regarding the Ark, and its cover in no way negates Jeremiah 3:16.

As I here end my trek along this long paper trail strewn with both agonies and ecstasies, I feel I have walked arm and arm with Josiah. Because of my own experience, I shared his agony when he discovered God, but knew nothing about how to properly worship Him. When he first discovered the Book of instruction written by our Creator, I could identify completely in the ecstasy of that discovery. In his resulting jubilation as he read God’s truth to all who could listen, I cried out with that same joy when I first shared with others my own discovery of God’s most precious Word. Finally, as Josiah was greatly saddened

by the spiritual condition of his family, and with his failure to provide the means by which the atonement of the sins of his people could be provided, my heart cries as did his and for the same reason. Every truly saved Christian shares Josiah's great desire to draw people to God, and to fulfill God's other purposes for them. Do we not all grieve for the unsaved souls of our loved ones and also over our own inadequacies and failures in serving God most faithfully?

Every moment when I am immersed in God's Word, whether it is in simple reading, or in-depth study, or deep in my musings about some aspect of it, I am always in awe of its perfection, its soul nurturing qualities, and the repeatedly self verifying proof of its divine authorship. For those guided by the Holy Spirit, that proof is seen on every page.

However, it is also most profoundly established by the evidence that the Old and the New Testaments are one Book, so intricately woven together, that many of the truths in one can only be extracted and understood through passages found in the other. Having said all this, there are even greater moments when the significance of words resonate deeply within my soul. One of these is as recited above, which I have read many times, leap from the page in an explosion of deeper understanding than would have seemed possible. In 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles we are given insights regarding the days of Josiah and what followed to the end of the earthly Davidic dynasty. It is when the tinder of the Old Testament narrative is exposed to the spark provided by New Testament testimony found in Matthew 1:11 that these magnificent moments of brilliant Holy Light are able to manifest. It is through these manifestations that the many pockets of fog that seem to obscure the meaning of God's Word are lifted, thereby allowing the light that provides understanding to shine through. I pray that in this long assembly of words, some portion of what I have found will touch your heart and help you appreciate what God has given us in His incredible Word.