

Apply The Word

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KINGS & KINGDOMS

Message Info

Title:

Reform and Ruin

Speaker:

Steve Heitland

Date:

August 21, 2022

Scriptures:

2 Kings 22-24

Theme: Hold fast to the Lord in his word, and you will stand in the day of judgment.

Introduction: To hold fast to someone or something means to stick to it in a particularly committed and determined way; and throughout Kings, we have seen very few kings who held fast to the Lord. Rebellion and idolatry were more often what characterized Israel and Judah. These chapters cover the remarkable career of Josiah, who held fast to the Lord in a remarkable way, before concluding with the sad story of the final four kings of Judah

This story progresses through 3 stages:

1. Rediscovering the word (22:1-20)

Josiah became king at 8, and he is one of the few kings who "did what was right in the eyes of the Lord." He proved unusually responsive and obedient to God. As Josiah worked to restore the temple, the high priest discovered the "Book of the Law" (probably Deut). As it was read to him, Josiah tore his clothes in humility and penitence. He knew Judah was in trouble and sent for a prophet to confirm it. Huldah, the prophetess, prophesied that doom was in fact decreed. God's judgment was coming and there was no avoiding it; but since Josiah responded humbly, the evil would not come during his lifetime.

2. Reforming worship (23:1-30)

Faced with the promised of destruction Judah, Josiah does not despair. Instead, he trusts the Lord and proves very faithful to his responsibilities as king. In fact, he embarks on the most thorough reform in the whole OT. He roots out idols and false priests from Jerusalem, Judah, and Samaria. He defiles the high places of the false gods and destroys everything associated with them. He gets rid of the medium and necromancers, the household gods and all abominations. Josiah also demonstrates the proper response to God's word: obedience from the heart. He does not just perform duty externally, and he does not minimize duty in a quest to be 'authentic.' He authentically obeys.

3. Resuming rebellion (23:31-24:20)

After Josiah dies, Judah goes through 4 kings in 22 years as they head toward the Babylonian Captivity in 586 BC. Each of the 4 "did evil in the sight of the Lord as his fathers had done."

Judah is first under the rule of Pharaoh Neco, who taxes them, before falling to Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, who carries away the nobility, soldiers, craftsmen and smiths of Judah, as well as looting the treasures of the temple.

Questions:

1. What is your disposition toward God in his word? What authority does it have? What relevance to your life?
2. How is the Lord calling you to hold fast under trials? What grace does he offer you?