

### ***THE ONE YEAR BIBLE Reading for July 3:***

#### *2 Kings 22:3-23:30:*

Because of the forerunners of Josiah (especially his father [Amon] and grandfather [Manasseh]) the temple had been neglected and decimated. The level of disarray in the temple is due to the fact that when Josiah came to the throne it had been 46 years since any one had taken true worship seriously, in other words, since Hezekiah's reign ended (Manasseh reigned 55 years and Amon 2, but Manasseh was a co-regent with Hezekiah for about 11 years). Right worship of the LORD had been ignored. So, King Josiah instituted repairs (22:3-7). In the process, the high priest, Hilkiah, reported to Shaphan (the secretary or scribe) that he found the Book of the Law of the LORD (22:8-10). This was most likely the book of Deuteronomy (Deuteronomy 28:61; 29:21), which was a summary of the entire Law, the covenant the LORD made with His people. When Josiah heard the words read to him, he tore his clothes in grief and instructed Shaphan to ask of a prophet what they should do and what the LORD's plan is for them—the king knew that great was the wrath of the LORD upon them since they had been so unfaithful (22:11-13). This account of Josiah is very important in the entire book of Kings for its purpose. Not only would the original readers see the grace of God given to an unfaithful people one more time through the reforms of Josiah, but in his recorded words they would also hear all too common an explanation for their own current plight in Babylon a century later. And, what is more, as if those words were not clear enough, once Shaphan, Hilkiah, and others went to Huldah, a prophetess, to inquire of the LORD, they learn through her the LORD will bring the curses of the covenant upon Judah for continual unfaithfulness—albeit not in the lifetime of Josiah due to his repentance and reforms (22:14-20). This is exactly what happened after Josiah left the throne—within four years Hebrews were taken from Judah to Babylon (605 B.C.) in the first of a three stage deportation which ended with the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. Josiah was the last time there was any stability in Judah. Chaos reigned in the last four kings in the speedy downward spiral of the nation. There should be no misunderstanding on the part of the readers as to why the deportation and destruction happened: Though the LORD time and time again showed Himself faithful, the people did not.

In 2 Kings 23:1-30 we read of Josiah's reforms and his death. Like Hezekiah the text says that Josiah was one of a kind among the kings (23:25). This was a stock way of referring to the uniqueness of each king. Josiah's reforms went even beyond Hezekiah's, so it could be argued that he was the ruler who was truly one of a kind.

Josiah's reign, then, should demonstrate to the reader how to restore God's blessing and experience pleasure to its fullest—love Him, trust Him, obey Him.

#### *Acts 21:37-22:16:*

After Paul is taken into custody in Jerusalem he is allowed to address the crowd, during which time he shares his testimony of how he came to trust in Jesus as the Christ and also shares his faithfulness to his Jewish background. We not only are challenged by Paul's boldness to be witnesses ourselves, but we also learn that for him to become a believer in

Jesus as the Christ was not contrary to his Jewish background and training, it was instead a culmination of it. Jesus truly is the Christ, the Messiah!

*Psalms 1:1-6:*

The entire collection of 150 psalms (sometimes referred to as the Psalter) is comprised of writings best described as divinely-inspired poetic-spiritual-journal-entries-set-to-music. To read them is, in essence, to look over the shoulders of very devout believers in Israel as they wrestle through life, trials, sorrow, joys, and seek to love God and each other. They teach us how to praise, how to pray, how to trust God in hard times.

This collection of powerful prayerful praise and devotional writings is written primarily for those who know, fear, and trust in the LORD, the true God. That is why the very first psalm, which serves as somewhat of an introduction to the entire collection, describes what such people are like. This wisdom psalm explains what the truly blessed person is like: they do not engage in or identify with or follow the directions of those who are not wise believers (1). Instead, their delight is in the Law of the LORD and so they carefully think about, reflect upon, and work to apply his Word day and night (2). Such a person will live a truly blessed, fruitful, and prosperous existence, no matter what comes his way (3). This is the opposite of the wicked who are not fruitful, not stable, and not part of the people of God (4-5). Certainly the LORD knows which people are which and has entered into intentional relationship and covenant with the righteous, yet the wicked will face His judgment, which is what is meant by “perish” (6 [cf. Deuteronomy 8:19-20; 30:18; Joshua 23:16; Psalms 68:2; 73:27 on “perish”]).

This psalm forms a doorway into the collection by letting us know those who will prosper the most from their content are those who are part of the people of God, those who love Him and His Word. Those people will find a wealth of knowledge, insight, and strength.

*Proverbs 18:11-12:*

Verse 11 contrasts with verse 10 and, by implication, warns the rich against trusting in their wealth instead of in the LORD. Verse 12, which seems to enhance 11, reminds us that a proud heart leads to destruction. If one truly wants honor, they must have a realistic view of self which will include trusting in the LORD and following Him (see v. 10).