



Jeremiah 4Q 2015 Lesson 8

Josiah's Reforms

SABBATH

Who was Josiah?

His great-grandfather was Hezekiah. Hezekiah was King of Judah from 715–686 BC, Hezekiah became king at age 25 and ruled for 29 years. Judah was in a weakened state at that time, and the prophets Amos and Hosea were active during Hezekiah's rule warning of impending disaster if reform did not occur. Hezekiah initiated reform in Israel. He opened the Temple, which had been closed, brought the priests back, and began religious services again. He invited the nation to celebrate the Passover, which had not been celebrated in years, and invitation was also sent to the tribes in Israel to the north.

Interestingly, that Passover was celebrated a month later than the prescribed time because the people could not get ready for it sooner. Many interesting lessons in that...

After that Passover they set about destroying the altars to the false gods, and Hezekiah even destroyed the bronze serpent Moses had made (around 1500BC), because it had become associated with a pagan god and was being worshipped.

Isaiah became active as God's spokesperson during Hezekiah's rule, and Hezekiah became sick and Isaiah told him to prepare for death. Hezekiah prayed for extension in life and was granted 15 more years.

Josiah's grandfather (Hezekiah's son) was Manasseh, who became king at age 12 and reigned over Israel longer than any other king 55 years—but who did wickedly before the Lord. He reversed the reforms of his father Hezekiah, brought in fertility worship and prostitutes into the temple, sacrificed his own son to pagan gods and was taken captive by the Assyrians who put fishhooks in his skin and drug him away. He repented sincerely and was restored to his throne and went about making reforms, but the nation never fully recovered.

His son Amon (Josiah's father), was worse than Manasseh and was so wicked that he was assassinated by his advisors after only two years on the throne and thus Josiah became king at the age of eight.

Josiah reigned from 640-609 BC. During his reign Babylon increased in power and attacked Assyria, destroyed Nineveh, which had been the capital of Assyria, and significantly decreased the ability of Assyria to maintain its control over Judah. Neco II of Egypt decided to either attack Assyria or lend



aid to Assyria (most likely aid Assyria), the commentators have it both ways, but regardless needed to cross through Judah to get to Assyria. Josiah opposed him and was wounded and died from wounds suffered in the battle.

Josiah was relentless in his goal to exterminate idol worship from Judah. So intense was his desire to do this that he opened the tombs of the false prophets and had their bones burned on the altars of the false gods, desecrating them, before destroying those altars and places of worship. At age 26 he launched a project to repair and rebuild the temple and in that project the books of the law, most believe containing some portion of the first five books of Moses, were discovered hidden away in the temple. When he heard the law read to him he sent for the prophetess Huldah, asking if the judgments could be avoided, she said they could not but that they would not occur in his lifetime. He re-intensified his efforts to eliminate pagan worship and destroyed the shrines that Solomon had erected and which were still in existence in his day. (Solomon reigned from 971-931 BC)

His death was mourned deeply in Israel and Jeremiah wrote lamentations about his death:

The Lord's anointed, our very life breath,
was caught in their traps.
We thought that under his shadow
we would live among the nations. Lam 4:20

Do you think Josiah did good or evil? The Bible says he did good—do you agree? Then what do you say about his destroying the shrines, altars, and other elements of pagan worship?

What has the Taliban been doing in areas of the world they control? They have been destroying various ancient artifacts associated with culture and worship they deem to be pagan. When you hear of this in the news, do you rejoice?

How do you think the people in Israel responded to Josiah's actions? Were all happy about it? What is the difference between the actions of Josiah and that of the Taliban?

- Josiah was destroying active centers of worship, which were corrupting the minds and injuring the people.
 - The Taliban are destroying artifacts of history and evidence of past civilizations, but these are not active centers of worship or actively destroying the minds of people.



- Josiah was destroying state led and state sponsored systems of worship, in other words, the government had been instrumental in setting up those place of idol-worship and therefore had a role in destroying them
 - The Taliban did not lead the people into worshipping the gods associated with the artifacts they are destroying. If the Taliban wants to be like Josiah, they need to dismantle their own government, lay down their arms, repent before the world, and lead the people to worship the God who Jesus revealed

Read first paragraph, “Parents know...” I want you to consider the following:

Patience and Prudence are members of the same church. They grew up in the same community, attended the same church schools, and both married Christian men. They are members of the same congregation and both have sons of near the same age—Patience’s son is named Rob and Prudence’s son is named Jude.

Jude from an early age is a good boy, obedient, on time, always dressed nicely, speaks politely, gets good grades in school, helps the teachers and is noted for his sharp and quick mind. He was elected class president, served on the debate team, helped with mission trips, and worked closely with school and church leaders. He is often called upon to read Scripture in church as he is well spoken, bright, and well liked. Eventually, he graduates college and becomes a member of the general conference committee and is involved in forming church policy.

Rob, on the other hand, struggles from an early age. He is talkative in school, plays tricks on other students, skips classes, doesn’t do his homework, and his grades are very poor. He gets in arguments and fights occasionally. His mother prays and prays, talks with him, and disciplines him but it doesn’t seem to help. In adolescence he begins drinking, drops out of school, hangs out with the wrong crowd and is soon burglarizing homes and stealing as a profession. He is eventually caught and as a repeat offender is imprisoned for his crimes.

Back at church Patience frequently runs into Prudence, who never fails to mention how wonderful her son is, his latest accomplishments and then, with contrived concern, always asks about Rob’s latest troubles and expresses how sad she is that Rob has caused her so much grief.

Which mother would you rather be? Which of these two children would you rather is yours?

Now, as Paul Harvey would famously say, for the rest of the story: Jude is better know as Judas, and Rob is better known not as “The Robber” but as “The Thief on the cross” who accepted Jesus as his



Savior—now which child would you prefer is yours? Which child turned out to be the truly successful one? What is the point of this story?

- Man looks on the outward appearance the Lord looks on the heart
- Sometimes those in active rebellion are more open to truth than those indoctrinated into religious dogma and ritual
- We don't know the future, how things will turn out—so we must stay hopeful

The next sentence says, “Thus, much of Scripture is the story of God warning His people about not making wrong choices.”

This is well said, God is warning—not threatening! Is there a difference? Why does it often sound like threatening? Because those to whom God is speaking are unable to hear warnings in any other way.

Have you ever had a child you tried to warn, but they wouldn't listen, so the only way to warn them was to phrase it like a threat?

SUNDAY

Read top paragraph, “However much we like to talk...” What is the lesson trying to say? Each of us has our own unique way of seeing reality and our perspectives may or may not harmonize with reality.

For instance, we each have an English software package. Think about your primary language, how was it learned? It is not in the DNA, it is not programmed into the brain, it is uploaded after birth. And it is assimilated by exposure, it isn't possible for a child to avoid learning their primary language.

Yet, do you ever get up in the morning and think, “Today I am going to think in English (or whatever your primary language is)?”

If, like me, you speak only one language, everything gets filtered through it. When I look out and see a plant with trunk and leaves I see a “tree” not a *baum* which is the German word for tree. It is the same object, but filtered through a different lens, the lens of English.

Do you think English is the only software that got uploaded into your mind in this way? No, your beliefs about God, male/female roles, relations, your values, morals, and so much more—when you see a deer, do you see a cute animal that brings a smile, or do you see lunch? Depending on the internal belief systems, previous experiences, etc, data gets processed and understood differently.



What factors make our subjective view of the world more distorted and further from objective reality?

- Any major trauma in life—the younger the trauma the more impactful the warp, and the longer the trauma remains unresolved the more deeply the warp
- Resentment and grudge holding
- Violating God’s law and refusing to repent
- Having limited facts or pieces of data, seeing only a small number of the pieces of the puzzle (The blind men and the elephant), when it comes to our world view this happens all the time:
 - Evolutionary theory is only maintained by denying and ignoring much of the evidence
 - As only one example: Geological radio-dating and astrometrics the earth and universe are billions of years old and some Christians suggest God created the earth 6000-10,000 years ago, therefore the Bible is wrong. The problem is the Bible doesn’t teach the universe is 6000 years old. It says in Job that the sons of God sang for joy when the foundation of the earth was laid. The universe was created by God sometime in eternity past, we are told how long, and later God came and terraformed planet earth from ancient matter in the dark abyss in this corner of the Milky Way.
 - Bad theology happens when people do not incorporate the entirety of Scripture but take a little here and there
 - I have found in talking with people who disagree with the God of love we present, they always have multiples pieces of evidence they fail to incorporate into their view.
 - For instance—how many, before they go to Scripture and try and understand events, first understand God’s design laws, like the law of love, the law of liberty, the law of worship? How many understand the nature and character of sin, that it is deviation from design law that results in damage and death to the deviant? Without these facts in one’s mind, and many more like it, Scripture can very quickly become confusing.
- Filling the mind with false ideas and beliefs
 - From media
 - watch closely what the media is doing to Ben Carson and you will get lessons in deceit, distortion, and twisting of facts
 - From church
 - the number one infection is the imposed law construct that serves as a filter on how we see God
 - From family



- where children learn how men treat women and husbands treat wives, what substances are okay to put in the body, how we deal with people of different race and culture etc.
- From school
 - Why do all cultures that wish to change society start with the schoolbooks? Because children are forming their filters, their operating systems and if one can upload distorted beliefs into the children's minds they can change society
- From peers
 - Parents are most impactful on forming a child's worldview and belief system up until adolescence and then it is their peers. One of the benefits of encouraging young people to associate with those who are Christlike

Our challenge is to move ever more closely to seeing the world through God's eyes, through the reality of God's character, methods, principles, motives—how God designed reality to function. Sadly, most people have a human law construct as a filter on their minds and even when reading Scripture often misunderstand and misread because it is being warped through human law lenses.

Manasseh, we mentioned briefly before, but although he was perhaps the most wicked king in the history of Israel, not only leading the nation into paganism, fertility cult practices, occult practices and human sacrifices, it is also thought he had the prophet Isaiah put in a log and sawn in half.

But, afterward he was taken away in chains and with hooks in his nose, he repented and God forgave him and restored him to his throne—what is the lesson here?

What is God concerned with—our deeds, our record, our acts, or our hearts? God does not hold grudges, or resentment, or keep records of wrongs as 1Corinthians 13 states “love keeps no record of wrongs.” God is always for us, always seeking to save and redeem. No matter how bad you feel, how lost, how wicked, how sinful, Manasseh stands as evidence, that if you will let God, He will heal and restore you!

One of the horrible thing sin does to people is it causes them to experience fear, guilt and shame—internal, in their minds and hearts. This causes them to form beliefs based on those feelings—beliefs that if anyone ever knew of their sins they would be rejected. This deep-seated fear is another factor, besides the imposed law construct, that has led to so much bad theology.



When we were at the GC, there was one person walking around handing out his business card, with a web address, telling people “learn the truth about Tim Jennings.” He was telling people that I teach heresy. I had the opportunity to talk to him and the first thing he asked me was:

“Do you believe that our sins are being erased from the books of heaven in the investigative judgment?”

I told him that sin doesn’t happen in record books, it happens in people and God wants to erase sinfulness out of the hearts, minds, and characters of people and the books of heaven are records of our characters and as he heals us the records reflects that transformation. But, God is not erasing historical facts out of books of history.

He said in a derogatory tone, “That is what I thought you taught.”

So I mentioned the evidence of David. I asked him if we will know our own family members when we get to heaven. He unreservedly said yes. Then I asked if that is true, will David and Bathsheba know Solomon is their son? What happens when Uriah walks up? Will Uriah know Bathsheba was his wife? How can they erase that record? And if they erase it, what then happens to the line of David and ultimate to Jesus who was born of that line?

I also pointed out that the Bible says we sing a song of our experience in heaven—what experience do we have other than the experience of being healed and delivered from sin? If it is being erased from history of what will we sing? Further, when the woman anointed Jesus’ feet with the costly oil, Jesus said, “Those who are forgiven much love much.” If we don’t remember the great depth of what we have been forgiven, our love and appreciation for God is undermined.

After all this he said to me, “All I know is that there are sins I have committed in the past that are being erased from the books of heaven that no one will ever know about those sins.”

Which revealed his issue—he lives in fear, guilt and shame and he fears that if people knew of his sin he could not be loved or accepted.

This is one of the reasons the Bible says we are to confess our sins one to another—for the very purpose of demonstrating that love overrules!

Parents, think about when your children confessed some secret sin—did you love them less, did you reject them? Or did you have great compassion for them and want only to heal them and restore them



to righteousness? This is God—see Him in Eden, how He approached Adam and Eve; see Him in Jesus how He dealt with the lepers, the woman caught in adultery and others!

God is always seeking to demonstrate our sin does not cause Him to reject us! Our sin causes us to reject Him! We can't believe God is really that good, that gracious and thus we create false theologies designed to DIMINISH God's graciousness by teaching Jesus had to do something to merit it from the Father—Oh How terribly sad!

First question in the pink section at the bottom asks, “Who doesn't know personally the terrible consequences that can come even from sin that has been forgiven?”

Does this sound strange? Why is this question asked? Do we sometimes think that if we get forgiveness that we avoid the problems? Where does this idea originate?

This is what happens when we live at levels 1-4 of moral development:

1. Reward and punishment—if I am forgiven then no punishment so no problem
2. Market place exchange—if I am forgiven my debt for failing my part of the deal, then no consequence because I don't have to make good on the deal
3. Social conformity—if I am forgiven I am accepted back into the group and thus no consequence
4. Law and order—if I am forgiven, I am legally pardoned, and thus no legal punishment or no consequence

This leads to young people asking—if God will forgive me for having premarital sex then what's wrong with it?

It is only when we come to realize God's law is not like man's law, not imposed rules, that God's laws are protocols upon which reality works, and even though we may be forgiven, receive new heart and right spirit, the objective results of our actions are not erased from history or reality:

- David was forgiven and repented, but Uriah was still dead, and his actions caused a split in his family and Absalom tried to overthrow him
- Samson was forgiven and repented, but was still blind and a prisoner
- Peter was forgiven and repented, but he always had the history of his denial of Christ to remember
- A person who commits adultery and contracts HIV, is forgiven and may repent and therefore be reconciled to God, receive a new heart and right spirit, and be eternally saved, yet for the rest of their life on this earth, still has the HIV infection to deal with



What sin is not forgiven? What do we mean by forgiven? Are there sins that God, in His heart refuses to forgive? No—look at those who crucified Christ, he forgave them. Yet, are there sins that people don't repent of, don't seek forgiveness for, or said another way, don't accept the forgiveness God extends? So, then even though God forgives, those who refuse to accept that forgiveness remain in an unforgiven state!

MONDAY

Read last paragraph, “Unfortunately, the answer...” What do you think about the last phrase, “they faced the punishment that their sins brought upon them”?

This is well said! Do we often think of it in this light? That sin brings its own punishment, or do we get stuck into thinking God must punish sin?

Read first paragraph, “A preacher once said...” Israel wanted kings, God warned them against it, but they persisted and God chose their first two kings... Any other examples of God using His power to do something for the people He didn't want them to do?

- The quail in the desert
- The wars in conquering other nations
- The instructions on eating meat

What do we learn from this?

- Why did God give them what He warned them not to do?
- What were the people going to do?
- What were God's options?
- So God warned them of the dangers, then helped them do it anyway, and then was there to help pick up the pieces when they got what they insisted they wanted

Do we need to be careful for what we pray? Or is it more the attitude in which we pray?

Is it okay to pray for something evil or selfish, if your heart really wants it? Or, if your heart really wants it, but you know it is evil or selfish, is it better not to pray to God for it?

- “Happy are those who pay you back for what you have done to us- who take your babies and smash them against a rock.” Ps 137:8,9
- Balaam asked to curse Israel
- Moses asked not to go back to Egypt and then asked for someone else to speak for him



- Jonah asked not to go to Nineveh, and then actively tried to disobey
- Other examples?

If we have some evil desire in our heart, can we root it out on our own? Who is the only one who can? So, is it better to connect with God, even asking for something evil, or to disconnect from God? And if we connect with God, are we increasing the possibility of truth and love breaking through our misunderstanding and selfishness?

So, what is a healthy way to pray when we really want something?

“Father, I really, really, really want this—if it is possible, if it is in harmony with your will, if it won’t hurt me or others or your cause, then I ask you to do this. But Father, if this is not good, if even though from my perspective it seems the best, I trust you. I know you see millions of facts and possibilities I cannot even imagine, so God if it is not good, then don’t let me have it, and please give me some insight so I can understand.”

TUESDAY

The lesson asks us to read 2Kings 22:3-7:

In the eighteenth year of his reign, King Josiah sent the court secretary Shaphan, the son of Azaliah and grandson of Meshullam, to the Temple with the order: ⁴“Go to the High Priest Hilkiyah and get a report on the amount of money that the priests on duty at the entrance to the Temple have collected from the people. ⁵Tell him to give the money to the men who are in charge of the repairs in the Temple. They are to pay ⁶the carpenters, the builders, and the masons, and buy the timber and the stones used in the repairs. The men in charge of the work are thoroughly honest, so there is no need to require them to account for the funds.” GNB

Read last paragraph, “Today we would say...” What do you think about the idea that if one is faithful they don’t have to account for the money they are spending? When is this true and when is this not true?

When is it true that a faithful person doesn’t have to account for the money? When they are the subordinate and have the trust of the superior.

But, what if they don’t have the trust of their superior, even if they are trustworthy?



Then, what about a superior who is trustworthy, but doesn't have the trust of the subordinates—does the superior get a pass, or does the superior have to give an account?

What about God in the Great Controversy—is He trustworthy? Is He giving an account to us and the onlooking universe? Why? Because He has an enemy that has lied about Him and many beings have believed those lies!

Do you find it interesting that in a time when the knowledge of God had been lost, the books of the law had been lost, where Manasseh and Amon had just led the people into decades of basest heathenism, that there were tradesman who were so honest and trustworthy that they didn't have to keep track of the money?

What does this mean? That the Holy Spirit is working through nature and experience to lead men to a knowledge of God and God's methods of truth, love and freedom!

Remember in Elijah's day there were 7000 who had not bowed the knee, and likely didn't have access to Scripture.

WEDNESDAY

The book of the law is found, Josiah is convicted and concerned that disaster is awaiting Israel. He calls for the prophetess who confirms this.

Read last paragraph, "Through Huldah..." What do you think of the idea of judgment and punishment used in this context? What is God's judgment? That they are beyond healing, that a therapeutic intervention is needed to save the nation and keep open the avenue for Christ. And what is the punishment? Is it an infliction by God or a natural consequence of what happens in a selfish world when we separate ourselves from God?

David had neglected the duty of punishing the crime of Amnon, and because of the unfaithfulness of the king and father and the impenitence of the son, **the Lord permitted events to take their natural course, and did not restrain Absalom.** When parents or rulers neglect the duty of punishing iniquity, **God Himself will take the case in hand. His restraining power will be in a measure removed from the agencies of evil, so that a train of circumstances will arise which will punish sin with sin.** {PP 728.1} [Wow—did you hear that? How does God punish sin? By setting people who choose to sin, which is separation from Him, to have what they have chosen and thus they are punished by sin. This is exactly what Scripture teaches, "the wages of sin is



death,” “sin when full grown brings forth death” “the one who sows to the carnal nature, from that nature reaps destructions”]

As Paul thus approaches Corinth, **how striking the contrast to the close of a former journey**, when Saul, "**breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord**," drew near to Damascus! How widely different the appearance, purposes, and spirit of Saul and Paul! Then he was **intrusted with the sword of secular power**, he was the agent of the Sanhedrim, the Jewish inquisitor, the exterminator of heretics, seeking victims to imprison, to scourge, or to stone. Filled with pride, he rode toward Damascus, with servants at his command to convey his prisoners to Jerusalem. Now he journeys on foot, with no outward tokens of rank or power, and no officers of justice to do his bidding. **The utmost that he can do to punish those who disregard his authority, is to separate them from a society whose members are everywhere regarded as ignorant and degraded.** His enemies declare that his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible. Yet the apostle is not so powerless as he is represented. He bears a commission from the King of kings. All Heaven is enlisted to sustain him. His weapons are not carnal, but mighty through God to overthrow the strongholds of sin and Satan. {Sketches from the Life of Paul 185.1}

THURSDAY

The lesson focuses on cleaning up the Temple, read third paragraph, “The king did not execute...”
What is the lesson we take from this? What is the OT temple symbolic of?

Through Christ was to be fulfilled the purpose of which the tabernacle was a symbol--that glorious building, its walls of glistening gold reflecting in rainbow hues the curtains inwrought with cherubim, the fragrance of ever-burning incense pervading all, the priests robed in spotless white, and in the deep mystery of the inner place, above the mercy seat, between the figures of the bowed, worshipping angels, the glory of the Holiest. In all, God desired His people to read His purpose for the human soul. It was the same purpose long afterward set forth by the apostle Paul, speaking by the Holy Spirit: {Ed 36.2}

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." 1 Corinthians 3:16, 17. {Ed 36.3}

So if the Temple was symbolic of the human soul, what is the lesson described here? What had accumulated in the temple? What does that symbolize within the human soul? And what removes it?



- The pagan images symbolize the pagan god constructs and methods of action that infect the human soul—power over, coercion, self-first, appeasement
- The reading of the law, symbolizes the comprehension of God’s design law, His methods, the truth about how reality works—that love cannot be achieved by force, coercion, threat, only in freedom
- The removal and rebuilding of the temple is symbolic of the removal of lies from our minds and rebuilding of our characters in harmony with God’s

In our character building we must build on Christ. He is the sure foundation--a foundation which can never be moved. The tempest of temptation and trial cannot move the building which is riveted to the Eternal Rock. {CG 166.1}

He who would grow into a beautiful building for the Lord must cultivate every power of the being. It is only by the right use of the talents that the character can develop harmoniously. Thus we bring to the foundation that which is represented in the Word as gold, silver, precious stones--material that will stand the test of God's purifying fires. In our character building Christ is our example. {CG 166.2}

Bottom pink asks, “What should the symbolism of the Passover mean to us now, as Seventh-day Adventists?” I would say as Christians?

While the institution of the Passover was pointing backward to the miraculous deliverance of the Hebrews, it likewise pointed forward, showing the death of the Son of God before it transpired. In the last Passover our Lord observed with His disciples, He instituted the Lord's Supper in place of the Passover, to be observed in memory of His death. No longer had they need of the Passover, for He, the great antitypical Lamb, was ready to be sacrificed for the sins of the world. Type met antitype in the death of Christ (Youth's Instructor, May 1873). {LHU 31.7}

What would be a potential problem of celebrating the Passover today?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss the lesson



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Let us welcome Gary Jones, our new team manager for Come And Reason Ministries! Gary is a retired, non-commissioned officer in the Canadian Army who has moved to Chattanooga in order to volunteer to facilitate media shipments and day-to-day administrative needs. He just arrived the first week of Nov. and has much settling in to do. He's currently looking for a vehicle and commercial space that our Ministry can lease to serve as a storage and distribution hub for our materials. Once those two objectives are accomplished, he will then be active in outreach and promotions for Come and Reason. Gary will also be the voice behind our new ministry phone number... (423) 661-4734!

The God-Shaped Brain is now available in Korean and is available at this website:
http://book.naver.com/bookdb/book_detail.nhn?bid=9519886

The Remedy – Dr. Jennings' New Testament Paraphrase– ALL GLITCHES NOW FIXED in the IOS Version! So please UPDATE to latest version.

The Journal of the Watcher is now available as a movie in itunes for everyone without ios or android, you can now get it in itunes.

January 9, 2016: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Carmichael SDA church in Sacramento, California.

January 29-30, 2016: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at The Haven Church in St. Helena, CA.

February 20, 2016: Class will meet at Hamilton Community Church due to the Courthouse being unavailable.

March 11-12, 2016: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Village Church, College Place, WA.

April 1-2, 2016: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Spring Branch Hispanic SDA church, Houston, TX.