

Lesson We Can Learn from the Life of Josiah

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During the Days of Unleavened Bread, we, obviously, focus on putting sin out of our lives. That's one of the things that we pay attention to. And we won't turn there, but we all know that in Exodus 13 and verse 7, it tells us that unleavened bread should be eaten seven days and there shall no leavening be seen with you and neither shall there be any leavening in your quarters. And we do that very diligently. And before the Days of Unleavened Bread, we clean our homes of leaven. And then we look inside ourselves and try to clean ourselves of spiritual leaven, of sin.

But the question comes: What happens after the Days of Unleavened Bread? Do we just kind of push that aside and go on to something else and forget about it? What do we do?

During this time, of course, we've all brought leaven back in our home. We have nice soft bread and all that—much to the delight of the kids. And we have leaven in our home.

But another question we could ask is: Have we allowed leaven, spiritual leaven, to come back in our lives along with the leavened bread?

Now with that question in mind, still by way of introduction, there's a powerful example in the Bible relating to this very question. And what we want to do today is study the life of the greatest king of Israel and Judah, the greatest king Israel or Judah ever had. And you might think, "Well, oh, we're going to study the life of David," or "We're going to study the life of Solomon." But that's not what the Bible says. We're going to study the life of somebody else.

Let's go to II Kings chapter 23 and verse 25 and see what the Bible says about this individual. It tells us that there was no king like him before or after. 2 Kings 23 verse 25, we're told:

II Kings 23:25. *And like unto him was there no king before him, that turned to the [Eternal] with all his heart, and with all his [life], and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; neither after him arose there any like him [neither before nor after]. (KJV)*

And there has been no king before or after because one of the signatures of this king was that under him Judah observed the single greatest Passover that had occurred in almost four hundred years. There has been no king that unleavened Israel or Judah like he did. And, yet, we're going to see that over a very short period of time something changed and sin came back into this individual's life to the point that he made one mistake and it got him killed. So the title of the

sermon today is *Lessons We Can Learn from the Life of Josiah, the Righteous King Josiah, King of Judah*.

Now what we're going to do first is let's examine the state of Judah when Josiah became king. So we have to go back a little bit before he became king so that we can look at the history of Judah to see what he inherited, what he walked into.

Now let's understand—I know it's a reminder for most everybody—the Northern Ten Tribes, the Nation of Israel had been carried into captivity by the Assyrians sixty to seventy years prior to Josiah being ordained king.

The Assyrians actually almost captured Judah at the time that they captured Israel. A hundred and eighty-five thousand people died. And remember Hezekiah was the king of Israel at that time. God extended Hezekiah's life fifteen years. Remember the shadow on the sundial turned back ten degrees. Hezekiah dug a water tunnel—It's called Hezekiah's Tunnel. It's visible today—to get water in when the city was besieged. And Hezekiah died in 686. And he was a righteous king. And his son, Manasseh reigned in his place.

Now let's turn to II Kings chapter 21. We were in chapter 23 earlier. Let's read the first two verses. And we're going to jump back and forth between Chronicles and Kings, as they obviously parallel one another referring to this time. II Kings chapter 21 verse 1 and 2. And, then, we'll jump to verse 6. It says:

II Kings 21:1. *Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to reign, and [he] reigned fifty and five years in Jerusalem. (KJV)*

Now this is prior to Josiah's reign. So he had a very long reign. It would be like a President of the United States reigning for fifty-five years. I mean think of that!

II Kings 21:1b. *And his mother's name was Hephzibah.
2) And he did that which was evil in the sight of the [Eternal], after the abominations of the heathen, whom the [Eternal] cast out before the children of Israel. (KJV)*

It is so mind blowing that here this man, this king came in as king and he did the very things that the people in the land, the Promised Land, did before Israel even got there. And God brought Israel into the land to clean the land, to establish His form of worship, His form of government. And they turned right around and did the very same thing that was extant in the land before Israel ever came there.

Verse 6:

II Kings 21:6. *And he made his son... (KJV)*

This is Manasseh.

II Kings 21:6. *made his son pass through the fire, and observed times, and used enchantments, and dealt with familiar spirits and wizards: (KJV)*

This is the king of Judah. Now think about this!

II Kings 21:6b. ...he wrought much wickedness in the sight of the [Eternal], to provoke him [with] anger. (KJV)

Now we can just read this and blow on past it, but if you look at the term "pass through the fire," it gives you an indication of just how wicked this man was.

Now Molech was a Phoenician god. And Molech, if you were to describe what an idol of Molech was, it would be like a Buddha, a fat Buddha sitting down with a cow's head. And the Phoenicians worshipped Molech. Let me read from a twelfth century Jewish Commentary about Molech.

Molech was made of brass. And they heated him from his lower parts. [Meaning: they put a fire underneath or in the belly of this idol.] And his hands being stretched out...

Through the heat conductivity of the brass, his hands were out like this and through the heat conductivity of the brass, the whole image, the whole idol, became hot, very hot.

And his hands being stretched out and made hot, they put a child between his hands and it was burned. When it vehemently cried out, the priests beat a drum that the father might not hear the voice of his son that his heart might not be moved.

And a little baby was fried, literally fried alive in the hands of this brass idol as a sacrifice. And they did so to curry favor from the god. If you sacrificed your firstborn son that was more important than sacrificing your other children and so you would be blessed.

And what we're reading here is Manasseh, the king of Judah, did the same thing. Now think about that!

Look at verse 7, II Kings 21 verse 7:

II Kings 21:7. And [not only that] he set a graven image of the grove that he had made [and he set it] in the house [of the Eternal], of which the LORD said to David, and to Solomon his son, In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all tribes of Israel, will I put my name [there] for ever: (KJV)

It was likely a cross, or some sort of phallic symbol, in the House of God.

So, to use the analogy of unleavened bread, at this time, Judah was about as full of leaven as you could get. And after Manasseh died, his son Amon reigned in his stead and he was just as corrupt as his father. And so, over the fifty-five years plus Amon's reign, which was very short, the nation, the leadership, the people were completely polluted, completely leavened.

And this is what Josiah inherited. He comes on the scene, as we're going to see, as a very young boy and he walks into this. Now think about that. How would you like to be put in this position?

So, let's look at the life of Josiah now. We've seen what he inherited. Let's look at the life of Josiah to see what we can learn about him.

He ruled from 640 BC until 609 BC. And he was a contemporary of Zephaniah, Nahum, Habakkuk, and Jeremiah. They were alive during his reign. Now, after his death, Judah would fall twenty-three years later. So this was right at the end of the Kingdom of Judah. And they, obviously, after his death, went into complete corruption and God had to remove them as He had promised to do as we will see.

Now, let's go to 2 Chronicles chapter 34. And, if you have a ribbon or a marker in your Bible, you might want to put it in this area because we'll be coming back to it. And occasionally, we'll go back to Kings, but mostly we'll be here in 2 Chronicles. We're going to read the first seven verses of 2 Chronicles chapter 34. And we want to notice some things that are very important. 2 Chronicles 34 verse 1:

2 Chronicles 34:1. *Josiah was eight years old... (KJV)*

This is 640 BC.

2 Chronicles 34:1b. *...when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem [thirty-one] years. (KJV)*

Verse 2, 2 Chronicles 34 verse 2:

2 Chronicles 34:2. *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. (KJV)*

Now, how did he get there? Obviously, if his advisors and his educators were part of Manasseh's reign and Amon's reign, he didn't get a lot of help in the righteousness department from all of those men. So, it was obvious that he began to study the Bible. I mean he began to go back and study God's way. It could have been from the priests and the oral traditions at the time because he didn't have a Bible to study at this moment in time as we'll see in a minute.

So, he began to reign at a very, very early age. And, then, in the eighth year, this is now he was 16-years-old, notice what happens, "He began, while he was yet young, to seek after the God of David his father: and in the twelfth year" [20-years-old] "he began to take action (2 Chronicles 34:3a paraphrased). He was sixteen years old and, then, in his twentieth year, notice what happens.

2 Chronicles 34:3b. *...he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem from the high places, and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images. (KJV)*

So, when he was eight, he began to reign and then over a period of time, for eight years or so, he began to learn of God's way, obviously. We don't know exactly how. And, then, at age sixteen, he really began to seek after God his Father as we read in verse 3. And then, at the age of twenty, he began to do something about it. He began to take action and he began to get rid of the high places and the groves and the idols and all of that.

Verse 4:

2 Chronicles 34:4. *And [he broke] down the altars of [Baal] in his presence; and the images, that were on high above them, he cut [them] down; and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images, he broke in pieces, and [he] made dust of them, and [scattered] it upon the graves of them that had sacrificed unto them. (KJV)*

He did that to desecrate those idols and show them that they're just dust. They're just pieces of metal or pieces of wood.

Verse 5:

2 Chronicles 34:5. *And he burnt the bones of the [prophets] upon their altars, (KJV)*

And this is a direct fulfillment of the prophecy—we won't turn back there; we've covered it before—in 1 Kings 13 and verse 2 where the man of God came and prophesied against the altar and against the priests. And he was the one that was killed by the lion by the way when he did not obey God. This is a direct fulfillment of that.

2 Chronicles 34:5b. *...[he] cleansed Judah and Jerusalem.
6) And so did he in the cities of Manasseh, and Ephraim, and Simeon, even unto Naphtali, with their [weapons] round about.
7) And when he had broken down the altars and the groves, and had beaten the graven images into powder, and cut down all the idols throughout all the land of Israel, he returned to Jerusalem. (KJV)*

He was on a mission. He went through the land of Judah and just got rid of all the idols, did so in front of the people as an example that this is against God's way and against God's Law. Even as a young man, we see that he had a passion for God, but it was more remarkable because he most likely went against the advice of his counselors, who were the same counselors that advised wicked Manasseh and Amon. So, at a young age, he had a passion for God and it was great enough that he could even go against the high officials of the government that he walked into, in a sense, when he became king.

Now look at verse 8 and then, we'll jump to verse 14.

2 Chronicles 34:8. *Now in the eighteenth year of his reign [He was twenty-six at this point.], when he had purged the land, and the house, he sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, and Maaseiah the governor of the city,*

and Joah the son of Joahaz the recorder, to repair the house of the [Eternal] his God.

It had, obviously, gone into disrepair. After Manasseh's fifty-five years of reign, it was in great disrepair.

Verse 14 now:

2 Chronicles 34:14. *And when they brought out the money that was brought into the house of the [Eternal], Hilkiah the priest found a book [It was a book] of the law ... given by Moses. (KJV)*

Now most commentators say that this book was the Book of Deuteronomy. Some say it was the first five Books of the Bible. And, then, a few believe that it was the original copies of the first five Books of the Bible written by Moses. Someday we'll find out. We don't know.

Now look at verse 16.

2 Chronicles 34:16. *And Shaphan carried the book to the king, and brought the king word back again, saying, All that was committed to [the] servants, [he says, they've done it. They're doing] it. (KJV)*

Verse 17:

2 Chronicles 34:17. *And they have gathered together the money that was found in the house of the [Eternal], and have delivered it into the hand of the overseers, and to the hand of the workmen [as they began the refurbishing of the Temple]. (KJV)*

Verse 18:

2 Chronicles 34:18. *Then Shaphan the scribe told the king, saying, Hilkiah the priest [has] given me a book. And Shaphan read it before the king.
19) And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the law, that he [tore] his clothes. (KJV)*

He was so shocked and so ashamed!

Now this is similar to what happened during Nehemiah's day, a hundred and thirty years later, after Judah had come back from the Babylonian captivity. So, keep your finger here and let's go to Nehemiah chapter 8 and we're going to read three verses just to show and maybe amplify a little bit about what was going on in the time of Josiah by looking into what happened briefly during Nehemiah's day. Nehemiah 8 verse 1

Nehemiah 8:1. *And all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street that was before the water gate; and they spoke unto*

Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded to Israel. (KJV)

Now, Nehemiah 8, let's read verse 8.

Nehemiah 8:8. *So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, (KJV)*

Meaning to interpret it and explain it to the people.

Nehemiah 8:8b. *...and caused them to understand the reading. 9) And Nehemiah... (KJV)*

It gives a title here of the Persian governor. That's just a Persian name for "governor," which he was.

Nehemiah 8:9b. *...and Ezra the priest the scribe, and the Levites that taught the people, said unto all the people, This day is holy unto the [Eternal] your God; mourn not, nor weep. (KJV)*

He said that because we're told here in this last sentence:

Nehemiah 8:9 continued. *For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the law. (KJV)*

Because, (a) they were glad to hear those words; they hadn't heard them in years. But also they looked at themselves, as we do, at the time of the Passover and see how far short we fell. And they wept. And they were sorrowful.

And this is exactly what happened in Josiah's day. And he tore his clothes, but, undoubtedly, he wept. And the people wept when they realized how far they had drifted from God.

And, obviously, God wants us to do the same, especially at this time of year. Now, we've had the Passover, but the question in the beginning was: What do we do after the Passover? What do we do after the Days of Unleavened Bread?

God wants us to have the following attitude. Let's go to Joel chapter 2. We'll come back to Chronicles after we read this. Joel chapter 2 and let's read verses 12 and 13. This is the attitude God wants us to have. This is the attitude many had during the time of Nehemiah and many had during the time of Josiah. Joel chapter 2 verse 12 and 13:

Joel 2:12. *Therefore also now, [says the Eternal], turn [you] even to me with all your heart, (KJV)*

Not with sacrifices, animal sacrifices. He says:

Joel 2:12b. *...turn ... to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning:*

13) And [He says, and tear] your heart, and not your garments, (KJV)

That's what God wants. Now tearing the garment was an outward show of what should have been tearing the heart inside. And He says:

Joel 2:13b. *...and turn unto the LORD your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and [repents] him of the evil. (KJV)*

And God forgives our sins. And, then, we can, washed with the blood of Jesus Christ, go forward sin free, white as snow. So, these two Scriptures give us an indication of what God wanted and what God wants with us today.

Now let's go back to 2 Chronicles chapter 34. We had finished in verse 19 when Josiah read, that was read to him and began to tear his clothes because he was so grief stricken. Let's jump to verse 29.

2 Chronicles 34:29. *Then the king sent and gathered together all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem.
30) And the king went up into the house of the [Eternal], and all the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the priests, and the Levites, and all the people, great and small: (KJV)*

This is what he did after he heard the words of the Book and after he had torn his clothes.

2 Chronicles 34:29b. *...he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant that was found in the house of the [Eternal]. (KJV)*

He didn't keep it to himself. He read it to the people.

2 Chronicles 34:31. *And the king stood in his place, (KJV)*

And notice what he did in front of the people.

2 Chronicles 34:31b. *...[he] made a covenant before the [Eternal], to walk after the LORD, and to keep his commandments, and his testimonies, and his statutes, (KJV)*

But notice!

2 Chronicles 34:31 continued. *...with all his heart... (KJV)*

Not an outward show, but with his innermost being, as we read in Joel.

2 Chronicles 34:31 continued. *...and with all his [life], to perform the words of the covenant which are written in this book. (KJV)*

So, he took a stand in front of the people and said, "This is what we're going to do." This is a hallmark of a leader. He didn't check opinion polls. He didn't see

what the people wanted. He knew what God wanted. He stood up in front of the people and said, "This is what I'm going to do."

Verse 32:

2 Chronicles 34:32. *And he caused all that were present in Jerusalem and Benjamin... (KJV)*

The King James says, "to stand to it." The New King James says, "to take a stand."

And he said, "I'm requiring you to do the same thing I'm doing. I'm not asking you to do anything that I wouldn't do myself. But I'm saying, as your king, this is what this nation is going to do. And this is what you're going to do."

2 Chronicles 34:32b. *And the inhabitants of Jerusalem did according to the covenant of God, the God of their fathers. (KJV)*

So, within a relatively short period of time, we have a major turn around in the nation after over fifty-five years of debauchery and going against God.

Now look at chapter 35 and we'll read the first three verses. This led to this Passover that we talked about in the beginning.

2 Chronicles 35:1. *Moreover Josiah kept a Passover unto the [Eternal] in Jerusalem: and they killed the Passover on the fourteenth day of the first month.*

2) *And he set the priests in their charges, and encouraged them to the service of the house of the [Eternal],*

3) *And said unto the Levites that taught all Israel, which were holy unto the [Eternal], [He says,] Put the holy ark in the house... (KJV)*

Now, that tells us that the Ark wasn't in the House. He says:

2 Chronicles 32:3b. *Put the holy ark in the house which Solomon the son of David king of Israel did build; it shall not be a burden upon your shoulders: serve now the [Eternal] your God, and his people Israel, (KJV)*

Now, this is the last reference of the Ark being in the Temple, the last reference of the fact that it was put back into the Temple. Nothing is said from this point on.

Now, it could have been that the Ark was taken out of the Temple by Manasseh when he placed his carved images in the Holy Place and desecrated the Holy Place. That's a possibility. Or, it could have been removed during the refurbishing of the Temple. That's another possibility.

Jewish tradition has it that it was hidden by the priests. And the righteous priests, when an unrighteous king came, they would take the Ark and they would hide it, Jewish tradition says. When an evil king ruled, they got it out of there.

And maybe it's happened again. We don't know. Maybe that Ark is in hiding. Many people have speculated about that—the sacrifices in Daniel 12 and all. We don't know, but the fact is that it was placed back in the Holy of Holies at this time.

Verse 7, and Josiah—notice what he did!

2 Chronicles 35:7. *And Josiah gave to the people, (KJV)*

What a concept! That a leader would give to the people!

Dorothy and I are watching a series on the English House of Tudor, King Henry VIII. And talk about the opposite! He took from the people. He taxed the people. He abused the people. He didn't even acknowledge the people. Didn't care about the people. All he cared about was himself.

2 Chronicles 35:7. *[But] Josiah gave to the people, of the flock, lambs and kids, all for the Passover offerings, (KJV)*

He gave them out of his abundance, his wealth. He gave them something to offer on this restored Passover. It says:

2 Chronicles 35:7b. *for all that were present, to the number of thirty thousand, and three thousand bullocks: [that] were of the king's substance. (KJV)*

Now a herd 33,000 animals is a big herd! Sometimes you can just read over it and not think much of it. But that took a lot of money, a lot of work, and a lot of effort so that they could sacrifice during this first Passover in many, many years. It's the hallmark of righteous leadership—the king giving to the people.

And then in verse 8 and 9—we won't read it—but the princes gave another 8,100 animals to the people also. They followed the kings' example.

Now remember what caused the split of Israel in the beginning? You see this very thing caused the split of Israel in the very beginning. You recall that Solomon put a heavy, heavy tax burden on the people to finance all of the buildings and his armies and all of the stuff that he did. The people were taxed very heavily.

And when he died, the people begged his son Rehoboam for some relief. And you remember what Rehoboam said? He says, "My little finger will be thicker than my father's waist." What he was saying, "You think you've been taxed before. You wait and see what I've got for you." In other words he was taking. He was selfish.

And yet, righteous Josiah was concerned about the people and he gave to the people to serve the people. And, of course, Christ set the perfect example of that in leading by serving others. He washed the disciples' feet. He gave His very

life. And that's what a leader should do. And Josiah set that example. What an example it was.

Okay, back to 2 Chronicles 35 now. We're going to read verses 16 through 18. This is about 622 BC.

2 Chronicles 35:16. *So all the service of the [Eternal] was prepared the same day, to keep the Passover, and to offer burnt offerings upon the altar of the [Eternal], according to the commandment of king Josiah.
17) And the children of Israel that were present kept the Passover at that time, and the feast of unleavened bread seven days. (KJV)*

Hadn't happened in over fifty years for sure. Verse 18:

2 Chronicles 35:18. *And there was no Passover like [it] that kept in Israel from the days of Samuel the prophet; neither did all the kings of Israel keep such a Passover as Josiah kept, (KJV)*

Now that includes David and Solomon, because Samuel predated David and Solomon. And he says:

2 Chronicles 35:18b. *Josiah kept it and the priests, and the Levites, and all Judah and Israel that were present, (KJV)*

There were some remnants from Israel that weren't taken away captive.

2 Chronicles 35:18 continued. *...and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. (KJV)*

Now remember Samuel died shortly before David took his throne in about 1000 BC. And so there was a minimum—now think about this—there was a minimum of 378 years since that time—since David became king and they kept the Passover under David—until the time of Josiah. And what we're being told here is that in those 378 years there was never a Passover kept like what was being kept in the days of Josiah that we're reading about now.

Now to put it in a modern perspective, think about this. Three hundred and seventy-eight years ago from today was in the days of Galileo. And Galileo, if you recall, had to face the Roman Inquisition because he had the gall to say that the earth rotated around the sun. Not the other way around.

Now that was 378 years ago. Now think! A Passover like that has not been kept since the Days of Galileo! That's what happened in the nation of Israel and what a Passover it was! What an incredible time it was.

And so, we've seen here that through Josiah, Judah was unleavened in a way that it hadn't been unleavened before. And the Covenant was made with God. He reinstated God's Law. He reinstated the Holy Days. And Judah kept the greatest Passover in almost four hundred years.

And, think about this. Josiah was only twenty-six-years old. I think about what I was like when I was twenty-six. And that says something about this young man and his character and his desire and his passion to obey God.

Okay, well. What's the point of all of this? Why? What does this have to do with today and is there a lesson for us in this example?

Now what I've done is purposely jumped over a very important instance that happened during this time. And that's when Josiah read the Book of the Law. This instance was not given in Chronicles, but it was given in Kings. So, let's go back to 2 Kings chapter 22 and we'll read verses 11 through 13. Now the context we're jumping in, Josiah had just heard the reading of the Law. He had rent his clothes. Now notice what he does. This is very, very important! Notice what he does.

II Kings 22:11. *And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the book of the law, that he rent his clothes.
12) And the king commanded... (KJV)*

Notice the action he took!

II Kings 22:12. *And the king commanded [that] Hilkiah the priest, and Ahikam the son of Shaphan, and Achbor the son of Michaiah, and Shaphan the scribe, and Asahiah a servant of the king's, saying, (KJV)*

This is what he told his advisors and leaders. He said:

II Kings 22:13. *Go [you], inquire of the [Eternal] for me, and for the people, and for all [of] Judah, concerning the words of this book that is found: (KJV)*

He says, "The reason I want you to do that is because:"

II Kings 22:13b. *...for great is the wrath of the [Eternal] that is kindled against us, because our fathers [haven't listened] unto the words of this book, to do according unto all that which is written concerning us. (KJV)*

And he said, "I want you to go and seek God and see what His thinking is. See what His mind is. See what His will is." That's the very first thing that he did. That's very important! It sets an example for us that we'll talk about a little bit later.

He realized that the magnitude of his sins and the nation's sins. And he went to inquire of God to see what God's will was and to see where they stood with God because he didn't know. He's reading all these punishments that are going to come upon the nation and he wanted to know where he stood and how God viewed him and looked at him.

Now look at verse 14 of II Kings 22.

II Kings 22:14. *So Hilkiah the priest, and Ahikam, and Achbor, and Shaphan, and Asahiah, went unto Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tikvah, the son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe; (now she dwelt in Jerusalem in the college;) and they communed with her. (KJV)*

Now, we don't know why on earth he went to Huldah because Jeremiah was alive, other prophets were alive. Maybe they were somewhere else. We just don't know, but he went to Huldah, a prophetess, to ask her about what God was thinking.

II Kings 22, we're going to read verses, now, 15 through 20. This is what she said.

II Kings 22:15b. *Thus [says] the [Eternal] God of Israel, Tell the man that sent you to me,
16) Thus [says] the [LORD], Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, even all the words of the book which the king of Judah [has] read: (KJV)*

He said, "I'm going to do it. I'm going to do what I said." Verse 17:

II Kings 22:17. *Because they have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, that they might provoke me to anger... (KJV)*

Now you think back about making your sons pass through the fire that we just read, all of the evil, the witchcraft, the demonism that occurred decade after decade after decade. God says:

II Kings 22:17b. *[They've provoked] me to anger with all the works of their hands; therefore my wrath shall be kindled against this place, and shall not be quenched. (KJV)*

Now that's pretty sobering news when you hear those first few sentences.

Verse 18:

II Kings 22:18. *But to the king of Judah which sent you to inquire of the [Eternal, he says, "This is what I want you to say] to him, Thus [says] the LORD God of Israel, As touching the words which [you have] heard;
19) Because [your] heart was tender, and [you have] humbled yourself] before [Me, and] when [you heard] what I spoke against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, that they should become a desolation and a curse, and [you have] rent [your] clothes, and [you have] wept before me; (NKJ)*

Like we read in the time of Judah's return back to the Promised Land a hundred and thirty years later, God says:

II Kings 22:19b. *I also have heard [you], [says] the [Eternal]. (KJV)*

Now, I'm sure a huge sigh of relief was going on in his mind at that point.

II Kings 22:20. Behold therefore, I will gather [you] unto [your] fathers, and [you shall] be gathered into [your] grave in peace; (KJV)

Now, remember this verse because this comes up later and it's extremely important. He was promised at this time, because of what he did, that he would be gathered to his grave in peace.

II Kings 22:10b. ...and [your] eyes shall not see all the evil which I will bring upon this place. (KJV)

So God made him two promises at that point—because of what you've done, you're going to go to your grave in peace, and you're eyes are not going to see the destruction that's going to come upon this nation.

Now, let's think about this. What did righteous Josiah do? When he heard these words, he rent his clothes. What did he do? He immediately sought God's will. We can't forget that. And we're going to see that has application for us today. The first thing he did! He didn't do what was right in his own eyes. He didn't take a poll. He didn't discuss with his counselors. He wanted to know what God thought. And seeking His will was a hallmark of Israel's greatest kings.

Because David, remember we read in the Psalms, David sought God morning, noon, and night. He wanted to know where he stood. He wanted to know God's will. He could have decided for himself, but instead, he sought God's will and this is extremely important.

Christ tells us to do the same thing. We won't turn there. We know in Matthew 6, the model prayer. "In this manner," we should pray. "Our Father, which art in Heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come." What? "Your will be done in earth, as it is in heaven," and certainly in our lives! Christ set that example. And Josiah was following that Biblical principle—the principle of seeking God's will.

So, let's summarize now to this point. Because he sought God's will, they kept the greatest Passover in almost four hundred years, because he went to Huldah before they kept the Passover. And, as a result of what God said, he had the greatest Passover that's ever been kept in Israel. Judah became unleavened and Judah began to follow God. Now think about that and he was a young man—just a very, very young man.

Now what we want to do is from this greatest Passover, let's fast-forward thirteen years.

And in that interval, we're not told anything. We don't know what happened in that interval. We can speculate. We can surmise, but we don't know. The Bible is silent.

Now thirteen years later, Josiah's still a very young man. He's thirty-nine-years old. And looking back from my almost sixty-nine years, I look back and say, "What did I know at age thirty-nine?" I thought I knew a lot, but I didn't know squat. And, yet, Josiah had a lot of wisdom and a lot of God's mind at thirty-nine years old.

But we're going to see something gradually changed. Something happened. And, again, it's going to necessitate a little bit of speculation, but I don't think we're going too far afield because something changed.

Let's go to 2 Chronicles, now, chapter 35 verse 20.

2 Chronicles 35:20. *After all this, (KJV)*

The reformation of Judah, the Passover, the Covenant that was made:

2 Chronicles 35:20. *After all this, when Josiah had prepared the temple, (KJV)*

The Temple was finished. Thirteen years later:

2 Chronicles 35:20b. *...Necho king of Egypt came up to fight against Carchemish by Euphrates: and Josiah went out against him. (KJV)*

He went out to fight.

Now let's look at the background here. During Hezekiah's reign, Assyria, who carried the Northern Ten Tribes captive, but during Hezekiah's reign, Assyria was a crumbling empire. Their light was going out. They were deteriorating like the United States is today. And Babylon was the new superpower. Babylon was on the rise. Assyria was beginning to crumble.

Now Babylon, if here's Jerusalem, Babylon is about five hundred miles due east of Jerusalem. And Assyria is about five hundred miles northeast of Jerusalem. And Egypt is about two hundred miles south of Jerusalem. So, knowing that geography, let's understand that Babylon was the new superpower, due east of Jerusalem. And Babylon began to attack Assyria which was to the north. Babylon was on the rise. Assyria was on the descent and Babylonia began to attack Assyria.

Now Egypt and Assyria were allies. Assyria is crumbling. Babylon is the new superpower. Assyria wants some help from Egypt and asks help from Egypt. And Pharaoh Necho was coming to the aid of Assyria. So, Egypt being to the south, he had to come up through the land controlled by Josiah to get to the area where the battles were occurring where he could help. To fight against the Babylonians, he had to come through the land that was controlled by Josiah. And Carchemish was about three hundred and forty miles north of Jerusalem. So, to get there, Pharaoh had to come up through Josiah's territory.

And Josiah went out to fight him! Now that seems king of strange. Why would he do that? As we would say, "He didn't have a dog in this hunt. He wasn't part of that." Notice 2 Chronicles 35 verses 21 and 22.

2 Chronicles 35:21. *But he [Necho] sent ambassadors to him [referring to Josiah], saying, What have I [got] to do with [you], king of Judah? [Why are you coming out against me? What's going on here? He says, "I haven't] come against [you] this day, but against the house wherewith I have war: (KJV)*

He says, "I'm coming to fight the Babylonians. I'm not coming to fight you. Why are you doing this?"

2 Chronicles 35:21b. *[He says] for God commanded me to make haste: (NKJ)*

Now this is a pagan king saying God commanded him to make haste. He says:

2 Chronicles 35:21 continued. *[So, stop] from meddling with God, who is with me, that he [doesn't] destroy [you].*

22) Nevertheless Josiah would not turn his face from him, but [he] disguised himself, that he might fight with him, and [he listened] not unto the words of Necho from the mouth of God, (KJV)

Notice this. The writer here, the chronicler here says that this was from the mouth of God.

2 Chronicles 35:22b. *[But he] came to fight in the valley of Megiddo. (KJV)*

Now, often foreign monarchs, as we even see today in the Middle East, foreign monarchs use God's name and claim it's of God. The Al Qaeda having lost their martyr here says, "Well, God's will that we go out and wipe all these infidels out." So it's not unusual for a dignitary or a potentate to use "God's will" even if they don't know God. Pharaoh does here.

But, as I said, the writer in verse 22 says it was from the mouth of God. Now, Josiah had no reason to believe Pharaoh when he said, "Well, God told me this." We could logically say, "Well, why would God talk to Pharaoh?" That doesn't make sense to me. And it wouldn't make any sense unless God had talked to Pharaoh. And, the chronicler here says, "Yes, indeed, that has happened."

But regardless, Josiah went out to fight Pharaoh Necho and he did what he wanted to do. Now that should raise up some red flags, because that's totally different than what happened thirteen years earlier. So, let's see the result. We'll read verses 23 through 25.

2 Chronicles 35:23. *And the archers shot at king Josiah; and the king said to his servants, [he says, Take] 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 [he] was buried in one of the sepulchres of his fathers. And all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah.

25) And Jeremiah lamented for Josiah: and all the singing men and the singing women spoke of Josiah in their lamentations to this day, and made them an ordinance in Israel: and, behold, they are written in the lamentations. (KJV)

So he went out. He did what he thought was right, what he wanted to do and he paid for it. He went ahead with his own plan and he was killed. And he was thirty-nine-years old. What a shame! If he could have ruled another twenty or thirty or forty years, the way he ruled in the very beginning, what a wonderful nation it would have been! What a blessing to the people, but that did not happen.

Now, does anything strike you as odd about this incident, given what happened in the very beginning and what happened at the end? Is there something—a disconnect—here that doesn't sound right?

He unleavened the nation of Judah more than any other king. And he always sought to follow God's will. Remember he sent the high priest to Huldah the prophetess in 2 Kings chapter 22. And, yet, thirteen years later, he went out and did not seek God's will. Something happened in those thirteen years.

Now look at the helps he had available. Look at the aid he had available. Let's go to Numbers chapter 27 and we're going to read verses 18 through 21. This is obviously in the days of Moses. We can maybe draw some conclusions here. Numbers 27 verse 18:

Numbers 27:18. *And the LORD said unto Moses [talking to Moses here], Take [you] Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay [your hands] upon him;
19) And set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation; and give him a charge in their sight. (KJV)*

So, we see here that Moses through God is giving [Joshua] a job and a charge. Verse 20:

Numbers 27:20. *And [you shall] put some of [your] honor upon him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient.
21) And he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall ask [the] counsel for him after the judgment of [the] Urim before the [Eternal]: at his word shall they go out, and at his word they shall come in, both he, and all the children of Israel with him, even all the congregation. (KJV)*

Now we see here that Joshua was given some help. He had the Urim. He had the high priest. And with the Urim or the high priest, you could ask God's will and you could get an answer.

Now, if Josiah still had the Ark of the Covenant—he put it back in the Temple—it's very likely that he had the Urim too. Because if the Ark was spared, why would not the Urim be spared? Now we don't know, but it's a good question to ask.

Or, at this juncture when Pharaoh Necho was coming up from the south, at least he could have gone back to Huldah the prophetess and say, "This pharaoh is coming up from the south. He wants the pass through Judah. What should I do?" as he did before. He could have asked. Also, remember that Nahum and Habakkuk and Jeremiah were all still alive. He could have gone to ask them. And he had all of these helps—high priest, possibly the Urim, the prophets, Huldah were all there—but he didn't seek any of them unlike he did thirteen years before.

Something had changed in Josiah. And the Bible is very sparse in describing what changed. And we have to remember what God said to Josiah through Huldah the prophetess. We read it earlier in II Kings 22 verse 20. It says: "You shall be gathered to your grave in peace." Well, was he gathered to his grave in peace? Unh uh, he was shot full of arrows! So, something changed. Something has changed.

And I think it is safe to say that Josiah assumed that he knew what God's will was. He didn't check with all these helps he had available to him. He didn't check. He just assumed he knew what God's will was. Tore off on a wild hair and just did what he thought was right.

Thirteen years prior, he tore his clothes and he sought God's will and instituted the greatest Passover in almost four hundred years. And since that time though, the emotional high of that Passover had worn off. They had had thirteen Passovers since then. And it probably became, as it could with us, a little ho-hum or a little routine or "Here, we go again" or "Got to get the house unleavened" or whatever it might be.

He became comfortable in knowing God and thinking he knew what God's will was. And that's, as we can see, a very dangerous thing to have happen because he paid for it with his life! He probably thought he knew God well enough by then to know what God's will was so he didn't need to go to Huldah or he didn't need to check the Urim or he didn't need to go to any of the prophets. He did what was right in his own eyes.

Proverbs 14 verse 12, we know that by heart. "There is a way that seems right to a man"—this obviously seemed right to him—"but the end thereof are the ways of death." He thought it was right, went out and did it, and paid with his life.

Now we have to ask the question: Why didn't he seek God's will as before? Why didn't he do it? What changed?

It is obvious, I think, that he allowed leaven to come back into his life. He had unleavened Israel, had been the leader in unleavening Israel and in getting the priesthood restored, and the Levites restored, the teachers restored, the leaders

onboard with all of this and they de-leavened Israel from sin. And, then, thirteen years later this happens. And it's obvious that he allowed leaven to come back into his life.

Why would he seek God's will during this original unleavening [process and then not do it thirteen years later? Something happened. We don't know for sure, but we can speculate.

Let me ask the question: Could it have been the same thing that happened to Nebuchadnezzar? Could it have been pride? We're speculating. Let's go to Daniel chapter 4 and just refresh the account of what happened to Nebuchadnezzar. Remember Daniel prophesied against Nebuchadnezzar. And Nebuchadnezzar did not take heed of that prophecy. So, we're breaking in now in Daniel 4. We'll begin in verse 28. And it says:

Daniel 4:28. *All this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar. (KJV)*

Meaning: all of the prophecy of Daniel.

Daniel 4:29. *At the end of twelve months... (KJV)*

This was a year after the prophecy! So, Nebuchadnezzar thought, "Hey, everything's cool. Go on as before. Don't need to change anything. The prophecy hasn't come to pass."

Daniel 4:29. *[After twelve months,] he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon.*

30) The king spoke, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honor of my majesty? (KJV)

He hadn't learned a thing! Verse 31:

Daniel 4:31. *While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to [you] it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from [you]. (KJV)*

Verse 34:

Daniel 4:34. *And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar... (KJV)*

Now he's looking back.

Daniel 4:34b. *...lifted up [my] eyes unto heaven, and [my] understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honored him that [lives] for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: (KJV)*

After this trial, after his mind returned—remember he lived like an animal—his mind returned, he looked back and said, "Yes, God is, indeed, sovereign. God

controls everything. This Babylonian Kingdom had no more to do with me than it would a mouse running around the floor. God is sovereign and God raises kings and puts kings down."

Verse 35, he says:

Daniel 4:35. *And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: (KJV)*

He finally learned this!

Daniel 4:35b. *...and he [does] according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What [are you doing? What are you doing, God]? (KJV)*

And Nebuchadnezzar learned that. The question we're asking is "Did the king of Israel learn that?" Verse 37—or understand that.

Daniel 4:37. *Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to [debase]. (KJV)*

That is the same thing that is prevalent today in Laodicea. "I have need of nothing. I don't need advice. I don't need counsel. I'm sitting here and I've got a free ride into the Kingdom of God. I don't need anything. I don't need to change myself." I don't need to change my mind, my behavior. As long as I'm with this group" or "as long as sitting here, the skids are greased."

But for whatever the reason, Josiah changed in his latter days. Could it have been pride? I think probably it was, but someday we will find out. But Josiah changed in those thirteen years.

And, so, the fact that he did and he paid for his life and it started out so wonderfully, there are obviously lessons for us today because in the New Testament we read in a couple of places that these are examples for us so that we can learn from those examples. And we know all Scripture is inspired by God. So, there are some lessons for us today. Otherwise, it wouldn't be in the Bible.

So what are the lessons that we can learn from the life of Josiah?

First One:

I. After we remove the leaven, we must replace it with something.

After we remove the leaven, we must replace it with something. And that's exactly what Josiah did in the beginning. He removed the pagan worship. He removed all the pagan symbols and altars and all of that. And he stopped the people from observing the festivals of pagan religions and worshipping pagan gods.

But he just didn't leave it there. He didn't stop there. What did he do? He replaced it with the Sabbath and the Holy Days. He replaced it with something that was true and honest.

And that's exactly what we did when we first came into the Church, when we found out about the Sabbath, when we found about the Holy Days. Just as Judah did back then, we got rid of Easter and Valentines and Halloween and Christmas. And we just didn't leave it there; have this empty void in our life. We replaced it with the Sabbath and the Holy Days and we rehearsed God's Plan of Salvation. And, we, as doing exactly the same thing, we remember those first few Passovers or very first Passover. We were like ancient Judah. We had an emotional high, a joy beyond measure in coming into the Truth. And for the first time in our lives, after renting our clothes, so to speak, or weeping in front of God and realizing how sinful it was—our previous life—now we come in and keep the Truth just like Judah did back then under Josiah.

But, as I said, over thirteen short years, Josiah changed and didn't continue as he did before. He didn't seek God as he had done before. And we can't continue—we cannot, rather, make that same mistake.

What we have to do in replacing the leaven that we throw out, and, as you know, we have to do it every day. It's not just at a certain time in the Spring. We do it every day!

So, what do we replace? We throw out the old leaven—the carnal mind, the carnal attitudes, the wrong thoughts, the wrong deeds. What do we do? We throw out the old man. We have to put the new man in. We have to put the new person in every day of our lives. We can't leave a vacuum.

And this First Point, after you remove the leaven, you have to replace it with something. And so, we have to call on God every day for more of His spirit. "Replace the evil that's in me with good." That's the First Point.

The Second Point is:

II. We must never lose the spiritual urgency of overcoming.

When we first kept the Passover, we had this urgency of following God.

Josiah had that urgency in the beginning. He cleaned—I mean he traveled throughout the whole nation, tore away all the idols, tore away the high places, ground them up into powder. Set an example for the people, refurbished the Temple, set up the priesthood again and the Levites and began teaching the people, had the sacrifices and on and on and on. He did all of that.

And we did the same thing when we first came in the Church.

But with him, things changed in a very short period of time. And could it be that maybe he became a little lukewarm? A little complacent? Saying, "Look what

I've done!" Maybe a little prideful? "Look at the nation now. We're pleasing to God." And walking around looking at the Temple and maybe taking pride in the look of the Temple now as opposed to when he first started. Maybe he did that. We're not for sure. This is speculation.

But we can do exactly the same thing!

If you look at the greater Church of God today, the situation, by and large, the Church is older, much older than when we came in the fifties or sixties or seventies or eighties. And most of us have had thirty-plus Passovers under our belt. He had thirteen. We've got in some cases three or four times that many. And the initial tearing of our garments and the initial emotional high that we had was for many of us decades ago. Not just thirteen years ago, but decades ago!

And, so, it's easy over that time to lose that spiritual sense of urgency that we had in the beginning of getting rid of leaven and allowing God's spirit to work in us and being unleavened spiritually. It's easy to lose that passion for God and His way and just tread water—just treading water until Christ returns.

So the Second Point is:

II. We can't lose that spiritual urgency in overcoming.

The Third Point—and this is one that I have a particular problem with—is:

III. When things are going well, that's when we must be the most careful, the most vigilant.

When things are going well in our life! Because, you see, trials drive us closer to God. And some people can understandably moan when they go through trials, but I'll tell you one of the benefits of trials is to force you, force us, force me to get closer to God when you go through a trial. But, then, when the trial eases up, then it's easy just to coast. It's easy then to not be careful, not be vigilant, not be on guard in that sense. We tend to let up when life is going well and that is when we can get off track.

And the fact is that that, I think, is what happened with this greatest king of Israel and Judah. When things were going well in that thirteen year period, Judah was on the rise; they had peace; they had prosperity; God's religion was being restored; they had a case over time of spiritual drift or spiritual let down.

And over the years, we can do the same thing. Exactly the same thing! And when things go well in the United States, I don't care how poor we are, I don't care what part of the country we live in, I don't care what our annual income is, we live like kings compared to the rest of the world.

I had a call from a young man in Africa night before last. He said—he got mixed up on the time difference. So, it was really late at night when he called. He apologized. But he said that inflation in his country is now a hundred percent.

And compared to a year ago at the last Passover, food prices are doubled. And it is a very poor nation. And he said they're down to one meal a day.

And so, you look at us. I don't care how much we make, we've got a full tummy and we have heating and cooling. And we can pump a few gallons of gas if we need to go somewhere and all of that. So, when things are good—and in the United States they are good relative to the rest of the world and relative to nations of past history—we can get off track. We can get off track. And let's take care not to do that.

The Fourth Point—and this is one that's obvious:

IV. We must seek God's will in all we do!

Everything we do! Josiah did in the beginning, but not seeking God's will led to his death. And, as we get closer to the end, if we don't seek God's will in everything we do, the message is: We're going to die! But not just the First Death! We're going to die the Second Death because now is our time. Judgment is on the House of God.

And so, this is—I put it to myself personally. As far as the Pacific Church of God and in my personal life—and I know you do in your personal life—we must continue to seek God's will. Not what we want! What He wants because that's the only way we're on safe ground. That's the only way we're not on thin ice because when we get going after our will, as Josiah did, we are on thin ice. And you can be gone in an instant (fingers snapping) when you're on thin ice. And we cannot allow that to happen.

So the Fourth Point is:

IV. We've got to seek God's will in all we do.

And the Fifth and the Last Point is—it's obvious too—that:

V. How we end our lives is what counts.

Not how we begin. It's how we end. Josiah started with zeal and fervor and change and growth and seeking God's will. And he ended shot full of arrows. When God said, "I'll take you down to your grave in peace" but it didn't end that way.

Now, Christ warns us. Let's go to Matthew 24 beginning in verse 9. Christ warns us it's how we end up. Not how we begin. Therefore, we can't look back to our beginning and moan and whine and cry that we don't have an education or we don't have a good job or "My parents did this," or whatever. It doesn't make any difference. It's how we end up that counts. Matthew 24 verse 9:

Matthew 24:9. *Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and [you] shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.*

10) *And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. (KJV)*

Referring to our time today! Verse 11:

Matthew 24:11. *And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.*

12) *And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. (KJV)*

That is happening today. Verse 13 is the key.

Matthew 24:13. *But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. (KJV)*

It's how we wind up. Not how we begin.

Paul warns us also. Let's go to Hebrews chapter 12 and look at the first two verses. Paul sets a warning for us today through the Book of Hebrews, chapter 12. Paul is telling us something very important.

Hebrews 12:1. *Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which [does] so easily beset us, (KJV)*

What he's saying is: "Be unleavened! Get rid of the sin. Get rid of the weights. Get rid of the hindrances."

And, I'll tell you in counseling with people, so many times people find it very difficult to get rid of the past. "Oh, well. My parents did this to me," or "Oh, that didn't turn out the way I wanted." And it just becomes a weight that drags them down. And it's always an excuse not to do what God wants them to do.

And Paul is saying, "Lay it aside. Get rid of it. And get rid of the sin. Become unleavened." And he says:

Hebrews 12:1b. *and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, (KJV)*

It's how we finish that counts. The race—you can't tell anything about the race in the middle of the race. You can't tell anything about the race at the beginning of the race. But you can tell everything about the race at the finish line. That tells you everything you need to know.

And Paul is saying, "We've got to run with patience this race that God's put before us." Verse 2 of Hebrews 12:

Hebrews 12:2. *Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; (KJV)*

If we look to Christ, if we look to Him and seek His will in our lives, then He has already finished His race; He has set the example and we can do likewise.

***Hebrews 12:2b.** ...Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. (KJV)*

We have those same promises! To be pillars in the Church, to be with God at His throne! That is the finish! And we can work and overcome for decades and lose it at the very end if we let up.

We can have the same thing happen to us that happened to Josiah. And that's the big message! Josiah was shot full of arrows. He died. And the message for us is if we can endure to the end, we can sit down with the Father and with Christ in Their throne. Or we can be shot full of arrows. You see it's our choice.

So, let's understand as we conclude. We've taken the leaven back into our homes. We have done that—all of us.

The question is: Will we allow the spiritual leaven back in with the physical leaven?

And the point is that as long as we are flesh, sin will creep back into our lives **if**—and these are **big ifs**—as long as we're flesh, sin will creep back into our lives, **if** we don't diligently work every day to keep it out. Praying, studying, getting close to God, meditating, fasting, seeking God's will in everything we do—if we diligently do that, then sin will not come back. Leaven will not come back, if we're staying close to God—if we're staying close to God.

So, the spiritual high of Unleavened Bread has ended. And it's the nature of the flesh to coast. It's the nature of the flesh to tread water. It's the nature of the flesh to let up and relax and put the feet up and just not have the sense of urgency that we need to have as we see the end time approaching. And we saw that as the example of Josiah, because, obviously, during those thirteen years, some coasting, and some letting up, and some relaxing, and some spiritual lethargy set in. We cannot, we must not allow this to happen! We just can't do that! And I'm speaking to myself more than anybody. We cannot allow that to happen. Christ commands us to endure until the very end.

And so, while we can put out physical leaven—excuse me—while we can now eat physical leaven, it doesn't mean that we should eat spiritual leaven. It doesn't mean that we should bring spiritual leaven back into our lives. And so what we have to do is, as we go forward now toward Pentecost, is we must redouble our sense of urgency to stay spiritually unleavened and to be on guard against any sense of complacency and to learn the lessons from King Josiah.