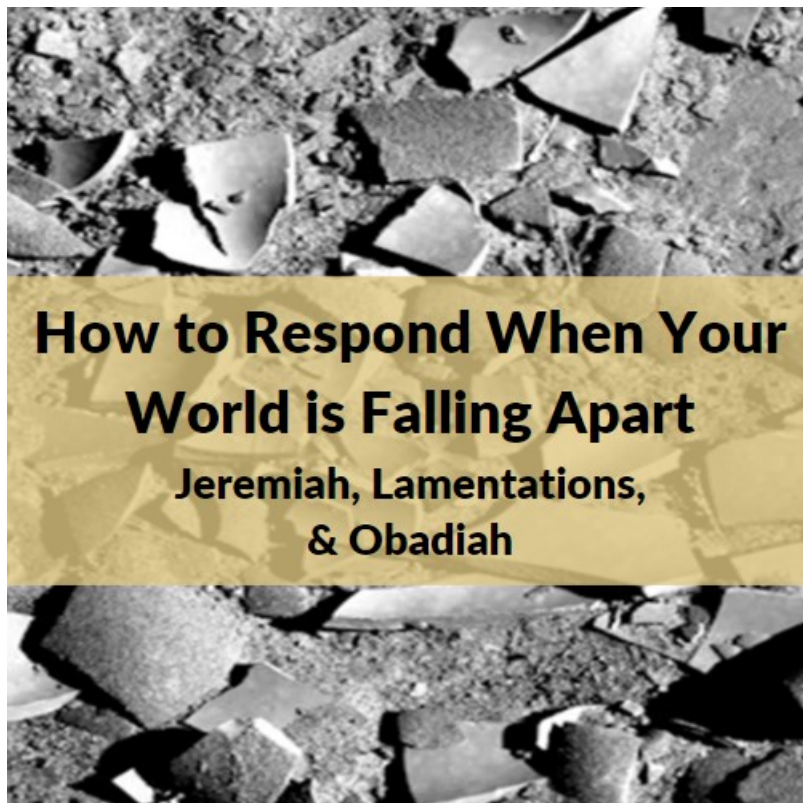


Handouts

Notes & Questions & Infographic



How are we supposed to act when things go wrong?

- *What if we had nothing to do to cause the problems that plague us?*
- *How can we help others who are going through a hard time?*
- *I have answers to these questions and more in our lesson today entitled....*

How to Respond When Your World is Falling Apart Jeremiah, Lamentations, & Obadiah

Yvon Prehn, Bible805

For centuries God has been patient

- Now things are falling apart.
- After repeatedly sending prophets to His people to remind them of the covenant He made with them where they accepted His salvation and promised to obey His commands,
- And of their failure to do what they promised or listen to the warnings of the prophets,
- The time for judgment had come for the Northern Kingdom when Assyria took them into captivity and now time is almost up the Southern Kingdom.

The history gets VERY COMPLEX here

- See infographic handout on www.Bible805.com
- The Northern Kingdom is no more.
- In the Southern Kingdom there are 4 kings after good King Josiah and they are:
- Jehoahaz—son of Josiah
- Jehoiakim—son of Josiah
- Jehoiachin—son of Jehoiakim, grandson of Josiah
- Zedekiah—son of Josiah

Where the three books, Jeremiah, Lamentations, and Obadiah fit in

- Jeremiah preached starting during the reign of the good king Josiah, through the final four kings of Judah, and after the land was conquered Babylon.
- He could then have lived a comfortable life in Babylon, but he chose to stay with the captives; he was forced to flee to Egypt, even though he told them not to go there, and he died there.
- He wrote Lamentations after the fall of Jerusalem.
- Obadiah, dating unsure, possibly at the same time, the book talks about the fall of Edom, the nation south of Israel, populated by the descendants of Jacob's brother—more on this later in the lesson.
- The theme is the same in all three books—how to act when God is judging His people and their world is falling apart.

During this time, the leaders should have warned their people, but they didn't

- Jeremiah 50:6 My people have been lost sheep; ***their shepherds have led them astray.***
- Jeremiah 6: 13 "From the least to the greatest,
all are greedy for gain;
***prophets and priests alike,
all practice deceit.***
¹⁴ They dress the wound of my people

as though it were not serious.

'Peace, peace,' they say,

when there is no peace.

¹⁵ Are they ashamed of their detestable conduct?

- It was a very religious time of feel-good religion and false promises—when they should have been calling for repentance.

Instead, they asked for past miracles and condoned sins

- But God could not ignore His standards and ultimately, Lamentations records—
- *Jerusalem has sinned greatly and so has become unclean.*

.....

she did not consider her future.

Her fall was astounding;

- Lamentations 1:8-9

Application for all of us

- We all need to “consider our future.”
- We need to constantly be measuring ourselves against God’s Word and making corrections as we go along.
- Part of that is learning from these books, in the midst of the unraveling of their world, how should a believer act?
- Because of course it isn’t just their world that was unraveling, but many of us have challenging situation in our personal lives and our world is certainly experiencing some unraveling.
- So, in challenges big and small, let’s learn from those who went before us.....

In them are 5 different groups, with various responses we can learn from

- One, those not guilty of sins that lead to judgment; those who suffer because of the sins of others.
- Two, those called to speak God’s words at times of challenge and crisis.
- Three, guilty or not, how to act when you are under judgment.
- Four, how NOT to act when someone else is under judgment.
- Five, how to respond to the messages of modern-day, so called “prophets.”

Situation #1, what about people caught up in sufferings they didn’t cause?

- We see this in Jeremiah in the story of the Rechabites, though there always others who fit into this category, but we are told their story and it is instructive
- The Rechabites fled to Jerusalem when Nebuchadnezzar’s army invaded, but still held to their standards. Jeremiah calls some in, sets wine before them (nothing wrong with that) and they refuse to drink it. Here is how they explain it:
- *Jer. 35: 8 We have obeyed everything our forefather Jehonadab son of Rekab commanded us. Neither we nor our wives nor our sons and daughters have ever drunk wine⁹ or built houses to live in or had vineyards, fields or crops.¹⁰ We have lived in tents and have fully obeyed everything our forefather Jehonadab commanded us.*

More about them

- They were a peaceful people who followed God, didn’t bother anyone, whose entire life was uprooted when the armies came.
- They were not responsible for any of the evil and judgment they were caught up in.
- How did they respond when troubles came?

- ***They didn't whine or complain or throw away their convictions, they continued to serve God in the ways they always had.***
- For them it was to not drink wine—it is not that particular action, but that they stayed true to what they promised to do, which was what God commended them for and why He used them as an example.
- Unlike how Judah had promised to serve God and did not.

How did God respond to that faithfulness?

- In those days, your heritage was the greatest reward possible, and they got the promise that,
- *Jer.35: 19 Therefore this is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: 'Jehonadab son of Rekab will never fail to have a descendant to serve me.'"*
- But what about us? What application can we learn from this?
- There are many instances where we suffer from the sins of others—where we are not responsible for troubles—
- In our personal, national, financial, family, church—many areas of life.
- Some problems are self imposed, but many aren't.

So, how to act when we don't deserve what is happening to us

- ***Keep doing what you know you are supposed to do in serving God, keeping in mind Micah 6:8***
- Do justice, love mercy and kindness, walk humbly with your God. Don't be mean to others because you are hurting.
- ***Continue to fulfill your calling—if you can't do it one way, do it another. Online gives us many opportunities today. Age, health, location, finance, permission from others, none of it matters online.***
- NEVER allow yourself to think or say, "But so and so or this or that situation MADE ME do something or wouldn't let me do something."
- ***That is never true. You always have a choice in how to respond.***

Realize it is a test....

- Do you truly believe what you say you believe?
- That God is sovereign, that He is in control?
- It's easy to say that when things go surprisingly well—much harder when dreadful things happen that we don't deserve.
- Or when we see things happen to people that it doesn't seem they deserve.
- REALITY is that it may be true that you or the person you see suffering did NOTHING to deserve a bad thing that is happening to them.

But that doesn't mean God isn't at work or in charge

- Once again—remember Job—his trials were, in reality, the result of God honoring him above all humanity for his righteousness.
- You never know why God is giving you or another the trial you are going through.
- Pray for peace and trust for yourself and others—think of all who are suffering because of various climate disasters now.
- Keep in mind that in every trial there is always as Jer. 29:11 says (though this verse is so often taken out of context), "a future and a hope."
- It may not be fulfilled on this earth, but resolution of whatever the trial might be ***is assured.***

Situation #2—those called to speak God's Word at a time of crisis

- Jeremiah was in this situation. God called to preach to a nation that would mock him, ignore him, try to murder him.
- But God's call was on him and though at times he tried to ignore it, he couldn't.

- He kept preaching the message from God no matter who or what was against him or what they did to him.
- He encouraged those going through the captivity—his letter in Jer. 29 to the captives in Babylon—great advice here...

Situation #3—

to those going through trials—

Jeremiah 29, letter to the captives

- ⁴This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says to all those I carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: ⁵***“Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. ⁶Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease. ⁷Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.”*** ⁸Yes, this is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: “Do not let the prophets and diviners among you deceive you. Do not listen to the dreams you encourage them to have. ⁹They are prophesying lies to you in my name. I have not sent them,” declares the Lord....
- And follows with ¹⁰This is what the Lord says: “When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my good promise to bring you back to this place. ¹¹***For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.*** ¹²Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. ¹³You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.

Application, challenges to us

- When things are difficult, don’t immediately look for a way out of it,
- Always ask what does God want me to do TODAY, in this situation that pleases Him?
- Settle down, seek peace whatever situation you are in.
- Captives have a unique opportunity—under constraining circumstances of all sorts—
- You never know who is watching and how it might affect them.
- We know some of the famous stories, Corrie Ten Boom, Bonhoffer, many unnamed and unknown others.

And also, look for God’s mercies in the midst of trials because they will always come

- Lam. 3 (the whole chapter such a challenge and encouragement)
- ¹⁹I remember my affliction and my wandering,
the bitterness and the gall.
- ²⁰I well remember them,
and my soul is downcast within me.
- ²¹Yet this I call to mind
and therefore, I have hope:
- ²²Because of the Lord’s great love we are not consumed,
for his compassions never fail.
- ²³They are new every morning;
great is your faithfulness.
- ²⁴I say to myself, “The Lord is my portion;
therefore, I will wait for him.”
- ²⁵The Lord is good to those whose hope is in him,
to the one who seeks him;

²⁶ it is good to wait quietly
for the salvation of the Lord.

**There are lessons we will never learn without going through hardship,
visions of God we will never have without them**

- “You’ll never know that God is all you need, until He is all you have.”
- In a tiny way we experienced that when most of our earthly belongings stolen—and insurance wouldn’t pay.
- “Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for YOU are with me.” Ps 23
- I experienced the reality of it and the extraordinary peace that comes with it, when I almost died after surgery.
- Not that we seek these sorts of things out, and my failures to learn from difficulties have been many—but learning or failing, God is faithful, and we sometimes learn priceless lessons from times of suffering.

Situation #4—a few words on how NOT to act—from the book of Obadiah

- We aren’t sure of the exact timing of the writing, but we are sure of the situation. Either at this time or earlier, when God was punishing Israel, their brothers, the Edomites acted in this way:
- *Obadiah 12 You should not gloat over your brother
in the day of his misfortune,
nor rejoice over the people of Judah
in the day of their destruction,
nor boast so much
in the day of their trouble.
nor seize their wealth
in the day of their disaster.*
- ¹⁴*You should not wait at the crossroads
to cut down their fugitives,
nor hand over their survivors
in the day of their trouble.*
- NEVER, EVER gloat or rejoice when a fellow believer is undergoing a difficult time, whether they “deserve it” or not. God hates that.

Because of the Edomites behavior God says...

- Obadiah ² ***I will make you small*** among the nations;
you will be utterly despised.
- ³The pride of your heart has deceived you,
you who live in the clefts of the rocks^[a]
and make your home on the heights,
you who say to yourself,
‘Who can bring me down to the ground?’
- ⁴Though you soar like the eagle
and make your nest among the stars,
from there I will bring you down,”
- Edom today, is nothing –its lands have become merely a tourist stop.

Situation #5—how to respond to so-called Prophets today?

- Today there are many self-proclaimed “prophets” who hold conferences and meetings.
- They pronounce things over people and wanted or not, give others “a word from the Lord” that may or may not agree with anything in the Bible.
- There are churches who designate “Prophets” as those who receive directions from God they can pass on to others.
- What to make of all this?

- A few thoughts follow and in addition there are links to additional articles and comments on the www.Bible805.com website.

To review, what is a prophet?

- In its most simple form, a prophet is ***one who speaks for God, who delivers His message***—This calling is not to be taken lightly.
- In the Old Testament often the message was a reminder to return to obedience to God based on prior revelation from God and the prior promise to obey Him.
- It could also include the prediction of future events, most of them near future.
- There were true as well as false prophets then and describes a typical attitude of a false prophet is in Isa. 30:9-10 where people wanted prophets to tell them pleasant things.....

HOWEVER, most often the prophet's message was NOT one the people wanted to hear

- *For these are rebellious people, deceitful children, children unwilling to listen to the Lord's instruction. They say to the seers, "See no more visions!" and to the prophets, "Give us no more visions of what is right! Tell us pleasant things, prophesy illusions. Isaiah 30:9,10*
- And as we saw in the book of Jeremiah, there were plenty of false prophets who were willing to do just that, who told them there would not be a captivity or that it would be over soon, and Jerusalem would not be destroyed. The pleasant lies were all wrong.

But in doing that, they failed the most basic criteria for a prophet, and here it is—

Because God had decreed judgment and their positive words were a lie, which the people would discover when they didn't happen, as captivity did take place during their lifetime,—

- *DEUT. 18:18 I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their fellow Israelites, and I will put my words in his mouth. He will tell them everything I command him. ¹⁹I myself will call to account anyone who does not listen to my words that the prophet speaks in my name. ²⁰But a prophet who presumes to speak in my name anything I have not commanded, or a prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, is to be put to death."*
- *²¹You may say to yourselves, "How can we know when a message has not been spoken by the Lord?" ²²If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the Lord does not take place or come true, that is a message the Lord has not spoken. That prophet has spoken presumptuously, so do not be alarmed.*

Quite simple to tell a true from a false prophet—100% accuracy required

- What about today?
- There is no distinction given in the New Testament that the criteria for correct prophecy should be any different.
- ***What about "prophecies" today?***
- By their own statistics, the groups that promote modern day prophecy say that probably only 10-65% of what they prophesy comes true. (citations and full articles on the Bible805 website)
- And none of the sensational prophecies by prominent "prophets"

have come to pass.

- So, what should you do, if you are a “prophet” if the statistics of correctness are so low?

Go to a conference! (3 of many)

Biblical Prophets were called by God

- And frequently they DID NOT want to respond.
- The life of a prophet was almost guaranteed to be one where people hated him, didn’t believe, and sometimes ended in death.
- They did not get wealthy from their calling.
- They did not prophesy, in any places in the Bible, to tell people how to get rich.
- They couldn’t buy spiritual gifts and when in Acts 8:18-25, Simon offered to buy the gift of bestowing the Holy Spirit on people (scary similar to prophetic conferences) from Peter he was told, *“May your money perish with you, because you thought you could buy the gift of God with money!”*

In addition to failing the criteria for accuracy

- ***Many of the so-called prophecies then and today simply do not agree with the revealed Word of God.***
- In Jeremiah’s time the people were told previously in the Laws of Moses and the covenant they made with God what would happen if they did not clearly obey what God told them to do and what they promised to do.
- The false prophets ignored this and told people that God would protect them regardless of how they acted.
- Their audience should have known from the content of their messages from the start that they were wrong because their messages did not agree with previously revealed truth based on this reminder—
- ***Numbers 23:19 God is not human, that he should lie, not a human being, that he should change his mind.
Does he speak and then not act?
Does he promise and not fulfill?***

It is the same today

- For example, nowhere in the Bible are total earthly health or healing promised (we will all die). God can do whatever, whenever, in His mercy, but no guarantees.
- Promises of prosperity or validity for what they do are often wrenched out of context, e.g. false beliefs of Job’s friends are often quoted
- “By His stripes we are healed.” (Isa.53:5) Refers to Christ’s death on the cross healing us from the penalty of sin—NOT physical healing in this life.
- “Do not despise prophecies” (1 Thes. 5:20) and other passages that encouraged the early church to evaluate the prophecies that would eventually become out New Testament—***these commands were given as the canon of Scripture was being formulated AND they needed to sort out what would be in the canon and what would not be in it—it does not have to do with the words of modern-day prophets.***
- ***When the New Testament was finished—direct Revelation from God was OVER.***

Also, there are NO new Prophets today with the same authority as Biblical Prophets

- There are NO new revelations to contradict scripture.
- False claims about new revelations have been the foundation of cults

such as the Mormon Church and Jehovah Witnesses.

- Which each have claimed “new revelations” in addition to the Bible we have which they have added to or have modified things in the Bible.
- The Bible as we have it is the true and reliable Word of God—please see my series on ***How We Got Our Bible***, it answers many questions people have on how or if we can trust it.

What to do

- Know Gods Word well, His character, His plans for all of us.
- Old Testament was clear to the people then, New Testament is clear to us today—we simply need to read it and study it.
- God has given us “everything we need for life and godliness” in our relationship to Him and in His Word
(2 Pet. 1:3)
- Don’t go looking for a “special word” whatever it might be.
- God will give you the encouragement, the wisdom, the guidance on how to live if you are daily and deeply in His Word.

As to the people who do the prophesying

- “A leader’s authority does not extend beyond the Word of God,” Moriarty writes in *The New Charismatics*.
- Be a Berean, who “received the Word with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.” Acts 17:11.
- A leader/teacher should guide you in your understanding of the Word—not in claiming to get a new revelation from God for you.
- Do not put yourself in any situation where you would interact with modern-day so called “prophets.”

Final applications

- When we find ourselves in a challenging time by God’s will, therefore we must—
- Take responsibility for our actions, don’t blame others.
- Keep doing what God has called us to do no matter what.
- Always try to be an example, to encourage others.
- When others have troubles--don’t judge, don’t gloat.
- Remember that finally, as the closing of Obadiah 21 reminds us
- ***“And the kingdom will be the Lords.”***
- An eternal Kingdom of no more sorrow or sadness or pain that will never fall apart is coming and we can be sure of it—let’s act like it as we wait for it!

www.Bible805.com

- **Links to:**
- Podcasts, blogs, and eBooks
- Printables & merch of Bible verses & encouraging sayings
- Chronological Bible-reading schedules

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

How to respond when your world is falling apart, Jeremiah, Lamentations and Obediah

1. When the nation was falling apart under sin, what were the leaders and prophets supposed to do that they didn't do?
2. There are 5 groups that have different ways of responding, the first is people who don't deserve troubles, trials, and tragedy—how should they (you) respond?
3. Group #2 is those who are called to speak God's Word in crisis, how should they respond?
4. Group #3 those going through the trials, how should they respond?
5. Group #4 How should we NOT act when we see people going through trials?
6. Group #5—How should we respond to so called "prophets" today?
7. APPLICATION— Which group did you most identify with? How can you respond better to trials because of what you learned in this lesson?

Historical Summary of the last kings of Judah, 609 to 586 BC

The Southern Kingdom of Judah is all that remains after Assyria conquered and exiled the people of the Northern Kingdom of Israel.

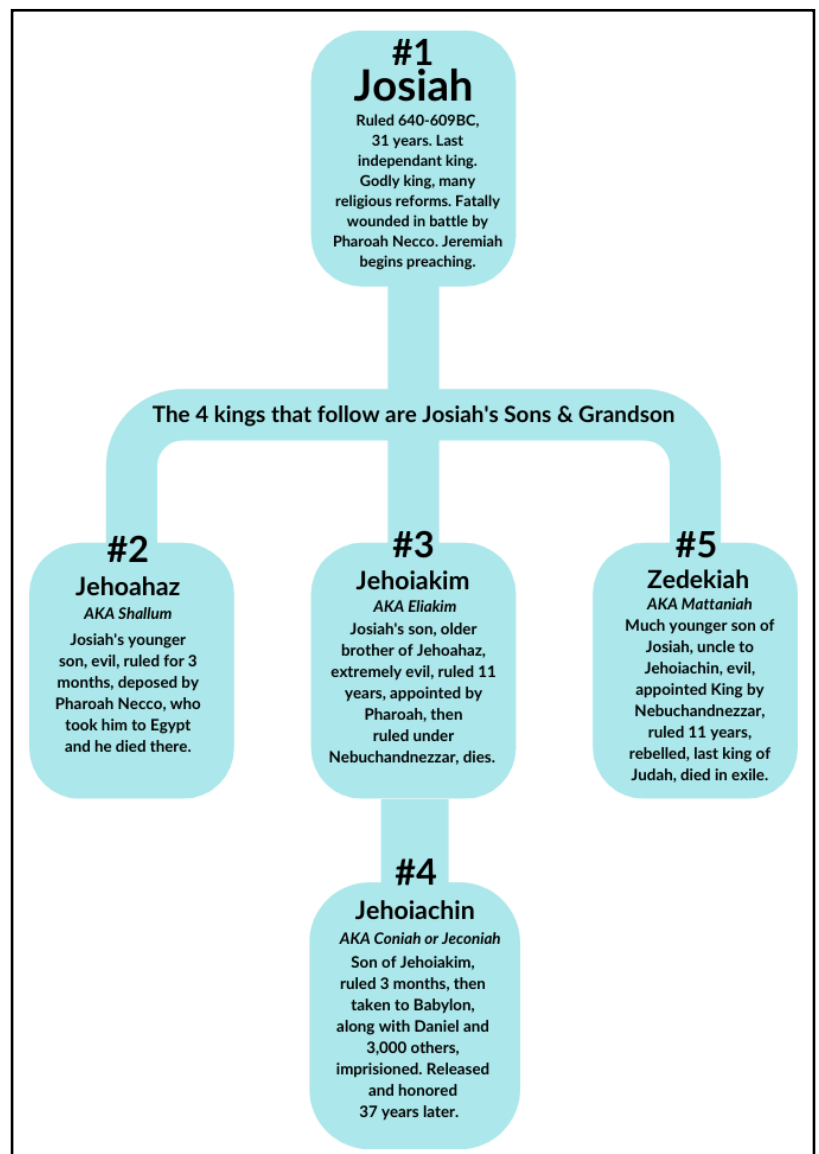
Josiah, in the line of David, was the last of the independent kings. His sons and grandson, while holding the title of King, were vassal states of first Egypt and then Babylon until Jerusalem was totally destroyed in 586 BC. Josiah was also the last good and godly king and he ruled 31 years. Jeremiah the prophet began preaching during Josiah's life and continued through the lives of the following four kings and are recorded in and Lamentations. Though ignored and mocked, he preached faithfully.

Near the end of his life, Josiah (#1) foolishly went out to fight Pharaoh Necco, where he was fatally wounded. After Josiah died, his second son, Jehoahaz (#2) was made king, but he only lasted three months because Pharaoh took control of Judah, deposed Jehoahaz, and installed his older brother Jehoiakim (#3) as king.

Jehoiakim was incredibly evil, but ruled for 11 years and in the last three years of his life Nebuchadnezzar defeated Egypt and took over Judah. When Jehoiakim died, his son, Jehoiachin (#4) became king, but Nebuchadnezzar deposed him and appointed his uncle, Zedekiah (#5), who was also a son of Josiah as king. He took Jehoiachin to Babylon, where he was imprisoned for 37 years, eventually released, and honored. At the same time he was deported, all the royal household and 3,000 of the people, including Daniel, were taken to Babylon.

Zedekiah was the last king of Judah. He tried to betray Babylon, but Egypt did not come to his aid as he hoped for. Nebuchadnezzar came to Judah, totally destroyed it; murdered Zedekiah's sons, put out his eyes, and took him in chains to Babylon where he died.

Infographic of the Last 5 Kings of Judah



The lives of these Kings illustrate the truth that though it might be hard to follow God's commands, life is ultimately far more difficult and the endings disastrous both for the king personally and for the nation when they do not follow God's commands.

The Biblical account of the lives of these kings is found in 2 Kings 23-25 and 2 Chronicles 36.