

# Lesson #1

## Forward

### Unlocking Destiny

#### Josiah Seeks God and Cleanses the Nation

Josiah was a King of Judah, who did right in the sight of the Lord. His great grandfather, did right in the sight of the Lord as well, but Josiah's father (Amon) and grandfather (Manasseh) both did evil. As a result, when Josiah became king at the ripe old age of 8, he had little training in the things of God from his fathers. But the scriptures tell us that, at the age of 16, after being king for 8 years, Josiah began to seek the God of his father David (2 Chron 34:3).

In the twelfth year of his reign, after seeking God for 4 years, Josiah began a 6-year campaign to purge the land of Judah and Jerusalem of the idols set up by his forefathers and their places of false worship. He even burned the bones of the false priests who had participated in idol worship before him (see 2 Chronicles 34:3:7), fulfilling that which was spoken about him 250 years before he was born! This is why Josiah's story is a classic when it comes to destiny.

#### 250 Years Earlier

King Solomon was known for his wisdom and for building a house of for the Lord in Jerusalem which became known as Solomon's Temple. He was also known for his riches, which he used to create a lavish system of public services. Jerusalem was the envy of all nations, and in some ways, it was the ancient equivalent of today's "big government."

Solomon began his reign as king doing what was right in God's sight, but later in life, he drifted away from God, worshiped false gods and did evil. Because of this, God chose a man, Jeroboam, and sent a prophet to tell him he would become king over 10 tribes of Israel and have a secure kingdom while Solomon's legacy would be reduced. Upon learning of this, Solomon felt threatened and sought to kill Jeroboam, who fled to Egypt and remained there as an exile until Solomon's death.

After his death, Solomon's son Rehoboam assumed the throne. But many of the people were seeking relief from the burden of high taxation that had been imposed by Solomon. Rehoboam sought council. The older leaders, who had stood before Solomon, advised him to speak kindly to the people and grant their requests, saying, "**... and they will be your servants forever** (2 Chron 10:7). But the younger men who had grown up with Rehoboam and had grown accustomed to the lavish lifestyle of big government advised Rehoboam to speak harshly to the people and declare: "My little finger will be thicker than my father's waist," and "My father chastised you with whips, but I will chastize you with scourges."

The king rejected the advice of the elders and followed the advice of the young men. As a result Israel was split into two kingdoms: The northern kingdom, which was led by Jeroboam who returned after Solomon's death, consisted of 10 tribes and continued to be called Israel. The southern kingdom

continued under the leadership of Rehoboam and was made up of two tribes: Judah and Benjamin. This southern kingdom was called Judah and included Jerusalem with Solomon's temple.

Israel, under Jeroboam had God's promise of security, but he feared that his people would return and reunite under the king of Judah, particularly when they made their pilgrimages to worship in the magnificence of Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem. To prevent his people from traveling to Jerusalem to worship, Jeroboam rejected God, and created a new religion. He constructed two golden calves and located them strategically, placing one in the southern city of Bethel, so that anyone traveling to Jerusalem could conveniently worship there instead of going to Jerusalem. In doing this Jeroboam rejected the Lord and created a new national religion for Israel based on idol worship, which included alters and priests who offered sacrifices. God saw this as very evil and sent a prophet to prophecy against what Jeroboam had done.

<sup>1</sup> And behold, a man of God went from Judah to Bethel by the word of the LORD, and Jeroboam stood by the altar to burn incense.

<sup>2</sup> Then he cried out against the altar by the word of the LORD, and said, "O altar, altar! Thus says the LORD: 'Behold, a child, Josiah by name, shall be born to the house of David; and on you he shall sacrifice the priests of the high places who burn incense on you, and men's bones shall be burned on you.' "

1 Kings 13:1-2 (NKJV)

Both Rehoboam and Jeroboam are regarded as "doing evil" in the sight of the Lord. In Jeroboam's case, he became known more as the King that caused Israel to sin, instead of the King that fulfilled his destiny. Josiah however, who came along 250 years later, obeyed God and became a classic story about fulfilling one's destiny.

### **Josiah Discovers the Law of Moses**

When Josiah's purge of the land was complete, Josiah began to restore the temple of the Lord in Jerusalem which had been neglected and fallen into disrepair. It was then that the workers found the book of the law of Moses and brought it to the King. Upon hearing the book of the law, it became immediately clear to Josiah why Judah and Israel had suffered hardship. Not only had the nation been divided, but the northern kingdom of Israel was now in Syrian captivity. The wrath of the Lord had been poured out upon them. Josiah spoke to the priests saying:

"Go, inquire of the LORD for me, and for those who are left in Israel and Judah, concerning the words of the book that is found; for great is the wrath of the LORD that is poured out on us, because our fathers have not kept the word of the LORD, to do according to all that is written in this book."

-2 Chronicles 34:21

After the reading of the Word of God, Josiah reestablished worship and initiated a national revival. When Josiah burned the bones of the false prophets and priests, it is not clear whether he was aware of the prophecy about him doing so (which was recorded in the Chronicles of the Kings), or whether he learned about it at the same time the book of the law of Moses was discovered during renovation of the

temple. Regardless, there is a lesson we can take from the life of Josiah: **Destiny is discovered and realized as we seek the Lord, separate ourselves from evil, read the Scriptures, and obey.**

### **Our Destiny is Written**

The Scriptures reveal that God has a specific purpose and a plan for each of us, He is no respecter of persons (see Acts 10:34). He told Jeremiah, "... before I formed you in the womb; before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations." (Jer 1:5). The psalmist writes, "Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, The days fashioned for me, When *as yet there were* none of them." (Ps 139:16). Paul wrote to Timothy that God has, "...called *us* with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began." (2 Tim 1:9). Our calling and purpose (and the grace to do it) was given to us before time began. This purpose was hidden in Christ, but is now revealed through Jesus Christ.

We also see from Revelation 20:12 and Daniel 7:10, that there are multiple books. Daniel says, "The court was seated, and the books were opened." In Revelation, it says, "And the dead were judged according to the things written in the books." From these and other scriptures, some conclude that God has a book for each of us, even books for nations, tongues, and peoples. But it is certain that God has a plan for each of us. The only question that remains is whether we will obey Him and fulfill our destiny. God has given us a free will and He has set before us blessing and cursing. Blessing if we obey and cursing if we rebel.

### **We are Predestined "In Him"**

The term "predestination" is mentioned several times in the Bible. Some look at this concept and conclude that, since God planned everything out in advance even before the foundation of the world, then we really have no choices to make in this life. Some even believe that whatever happens is God's will, because it happened!

But that is a misunderstanding of what is meant by predestination. Predestination is simply a pre-planned destination. Whether we choose to go there or not is a different matter. If we are obedient to our calling, we will certainly arrive at the destination that God has planned for us. But if we refuse to follow God's plan for our lives, we will not. It is only as we are "**in Christ**" that our predestination is sure. Notice that Ephesians 1:11 starts with "In Him..." and makes it clear that our predestination is "according to the purpose" of God:

"In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will,..."

— Ephesians 1:11 (NKJV)

### **Destiny Revealed by Seeking God**

As we saw in the life of Josiah, the steps to destiny include seeking God, repentance, study, and obedience. We also see that God issues prophetic gifts as encouraging confirmations along life's path

to help guide us. This can be seen in the life of young Timothy, Paul’s son-in-the-faith. In his first letter, Paul referred to the prophecies spoken over Timothy, telling him to use them to fight the good fight.

<sup>18</sup> This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare,

— 1 Timothy 1:18 (NKJV)

In his second letter to Timothy, Paul exhorted Timothy to prove himself as a minister by diligently studying and learning how to handle the scriptures which make for wisdom and prepares one for good works. Consider these verses:

<sup>15</sup> Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

— 2 Timothy 2:15 (NKJV)

<sup>14</sup> But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned *them*,

<sup>15</sup> and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

<sup>16</sup> All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,

<sup>17</sup> that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

— 2 Timothy 3:14-17 (NKJV)

## **Good Food**

All of us have a hunger to have meaning and purpose in life and nothing satisfies the pangs of hunger like good food. Jesus said, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent me and accomplish His work” (John 4:34 NASB). Likewise, finding the will of God for our lives (our destiny) and taking steps to accomplish it is good food.

We were made by God for God and His purposes. If we seek the Lord and study the scriptures, we will find keys that unlock our destiny. In the Word of God, we will find ourselves and our purpose. It starts with a revelation that God has a plan for our lives. Then, like Josiah, we will grow into our destiny as we seek God, purge that which was unclean from our lives, study the Word, and walk in obedience. As we seek to accomplish His will, we will find our place in it.