

LESSON TEXT: 2 Kings 1:--4:44  
Prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

At a meeting in London, Winston Churchill gave the story of his escape when he was a young military attache from a South African military prison in Pretoria. Churchill told how, after wandering in the region round Pretoria for two or three days, and feeling at the end of his rope, he made up his mind to present himself at the door of one of the houses whose lights were twinkling in the valley below. Although a price had been set on his head, he thought there was a chance of some friendly soul in the heart of that enemy country, and he **prayed earnestly** that he might be guided to the right house. Then he went up to the door of one of the houses and knocked. A man opened the door and asked him what he wanted. "I am Winston Churchill," he replied. "Come in," said the friendly voice. "This is the only house for miles in which you would be safe."

**"Where could I go but to the Lord"** is the message we get from this lesson! The rejection of God's guidance by so many of the kings of Israel and Judah compared with the absolute trust in God of the Shunamite woman should give us all a wake-up-call that for every test, temptation and trial of life there is no place to go but to the Lord's promises as he has spoken them through his prophets and apostles in the Bible!

Refrains from one of the greatest Christian hymn-writers, Isaac Watts, are appropriate here: "O God, our help in ages past, Our hope for years to come, Our shelter from the stormy blast, And our eternal home! Under the shadow of Thy throne Thy saints have dwelt secure; Sufficient is Thine arm alone, And our defense is sure. O God, our help in ages past, Our hope for years to come, Be Thou our guard while life shall last, And our eternal home." Sad, sad, sad, that most of the kings of Israel and Judah did not remember this!

"Maybe the Lord lets some people get into trouble because that is the only time they ever think of Him." --*Nuggets*

QUESTIONS:

1. Isn't it out-of-character for a Jewish king to reject the instructions & warnings of a Jewish prophet? 1:1-16
2. How serious is God about seeking truth some place other than in his spokesmen? 1:17-18
3. Didn't Elisha understand that he was not to follow Elijah to Bethel, Jericho and the Jordan? 2:1-8. Then why did he do so?
4. What is the significance of the falling mantle, whirlwind, and chariots of fire? 2:9-18
5. How could a prophet of God curse 42 boys and bring the bears upon them to maul them? 2:23-25
6. Why would the Lord send miracles to "save the bacon" of 2 unbelievers, Jehoram and the king of Edom? 3:1-20
7. Why was Mesha (author of the Moabite Stone) such a barbarian as to sacrifice his son as a burnt offering? 3:21-27
8. Wasn't it rather cruel of the Lord to give the barren Shunamite woman a son and then let him die? 4:8-37

Moabites were descendants of Lot (Gen. 19:37); thus distantly related to the Jews. But they were idolaters. They lived in a rolling plateau of rich pasture lands lying east of the Dead Sea. Their god, Chemosh, was worshiped by child sacrifice.

Two Jewish boys, sons of Elimelech and Naomi married two Moabite girls. After 10 years Elimelech and both boys had died.

Ruth, the Moabite widow of one of the boys returned with Naomi to Bethlehem (Ruth 1:16-17) and married a Jew, Boaz.. Thus the Moabites had a hand in the founding of the House of David and centuries later, the birth of Jesus Christ!

"It isn't easy to prove that there is a God...  
But have you ever considered  
how much more difficult it is to disprove God's  
existence?" -- C. Neil Strait

LESSON TEXT: 2 Kings 5:1---7:20

Prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

**There are good Arabs and there are bad Arabs--just like in any other race or nation or social status.** In this lesson we will learn the history of a good Arab and some bad Arabs.

Among the Sioux Indians there prevailed in the days of the frontier a strange custom. If one of the tribes determined to travel for a little while in areas guarded by other tribes, always on the night before he left his camp, the traveler would be required to sit around a campfire and then before it fell back into gray ash he would be asked to arise and, silhouetted against the flames, would lift this prayer, "Great Spirit help me to never judge another until I have walked two weeks in his moccasins."

I dreamed death came the other night:

And heaven's gates swung wide.

With kindly grace an angel

Ushered me inside.

And there, to my astonishment,

Stood folks I'd known on earth.

Some I'd judged and labeled

Unfit or of little worth.

Indignant words rose to my lips,

But never were set free;

For every face showed stunned surprise....

No one expected me!

---C. R. Hembree

God is no respecter of person, but in every nation any one who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. Acts 10:34. Those of every color, race, station in life, and language who know God and love and trust him through Jesus Christ our Lord will eventually stand **together** with the angels around the throne of the Lamb praising his name (Rev. 7:12).

"When you meet a man you judge him by his clothes;  
when you leave, you judge him by his heart." --Russian proverb

QUESTIONS:

1. What would prompt a Hebrew-child maid, taken from her home as a prisoner of war, find it in her heart to try to save her Arab (Syrian) captor from leprosy? 5:1-3
2. What did dipping (immersing) himself in the Jordan River have to do with Naaman's being cured of leprosy? 5:10-12
3. How was the Syrian army officer, Naaman, convinced to obey Elisha without evidence of Elisha's authority? 5:13-15
4. Did Elisha compromise the word of God by permitting Naaman to bow down before an idol? 5:16-19
5. Does God really have an *invisible* army of horses and chariots to deliver whom he wishes----or was it just an illusion or fate? 6:8-19
6. Why didn't Elisha's compassion for the Syrians he captured soften the king of Syria's heart? 6:20-25
7. Why did the king of Israel want to decapitate Elisha? 6:26-33
8. What caused the lepers to have second thoughts about hoarding all the plunder of the fleeing Syrians? 7:1-15
9. Why did the captain have to die when it was the king of Israel who didn't believe God's word from Elisha? 7:16-20

"Man is man because he is free to operate within the framework of his destiny. He is free to deliberate, to make decisions, and to choose between alternatives. He is distinguished from animals by his freedom to do evil or to do good and to walk the high road of beauty or tread the low road of ugly degeneracy."

--Martin Luther King, Jr., 1959

"There is no escape--man drags man down, or man lifts man up. You can't hold a man down without staying down with him."

---Booker T. Washington

"The right of revolution is an inherent one. When people are oppressed by their government, it is a natural right they enjoy to relieve themselves of the oppression, if they are strong enough, either by withdrawal from it, or by overthrowing it and substituting a government more acceptable."

--Ulysses S. Grant, in his *Per*

LESSON TEXT: 2 Kings 8:1---10:36  
Prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

**Desperate circumstances call for drastic responses!**  
“Secession! Peaceable secession! Sir, your eyes and mine are never destined to see that miracle. The dismemberment of this vast country without convulsion! The breaking of the foundations of the great deep without ruffling the surface! Who is so foolish--I beg everybody's pardon--as to expect to see any such thing?” --Daniel Webster in a speech in the U.S. Senate, March 7, 1850, anticipating the bloody conflict that was beginning to occur even then--the **American Civil War** which cost nearly 700,000 American military dead, many civilian dead, destruction of billions of dollars of property and agony and suffering in the souls of millions.

Israel was in the wretched clutches of the idol-loving king Ahab and his power-hungry, satanic wife, Jezebel. Extreme measures had to be taken to take them out and make a regime-change hoping for a better situation for the citizens of the northern nation of God's people. God raised up **Jehu**, son of Jehoshaphat, grandson of Nimshi, a soldier in the service of Ahab. After Ahab had died, by the providence of God, in battle, Jehu slew king Joram of Israel (son of Ahab), caused Ahaziah, king of Judah to be smitten to death; he slew Jezebel and subsequently, as king of Israel himself, executed God's judgments upon the entire family of Ahab, and killed all the worshippers of Baal he could find.

James A. Garfield said, in a speech in the House of Representatives on June 25, 1864, “A nation is not worthy to be saved if, in the hour of its fate, it will not gather up all its jewels of manhood and life, and go down into the conflict, however bloody and doubtful, resolved on measureless ruin or complete success.”

QUESTIONS:

1. Why would a man of God (Elisha) lie to Benhadad about his imminent death? 8:1-15
2. How could Jehoram be so wicked when he had such a good father? 8:16-24. Please read also, 2 Chronicles 22:1-15.
3. Was it right for God to allow Jehoram to rule Judah because of a promise made to David? 8:19
4. Isn't it unseemly for God to condemn Ahab and Jezebel and order their blood and flesh eaten by dogs? 9:1-10. Is God spiteful?
5. Why did Jehu kill Joram (Ahab's son) and throw his body on Naboth's ground--it was Ahab & Jezebel who took Naboth's vineyard? 9:11-28 (see 1 Kings 21:20-29).
6. What was Jezebel's purpose in painting her eyes and adorning her head when she saw Jehu? 9:30-37
7. Good grief! Seventy princes beheaded and *all* of the remaining members of Ahab's house slain--at the Lord's orders--is God serious about idolatry and the wicked consequences of it? 10:1-11
8. If it takes that much bloodshed to rid the people of God of apostasy, what do you think of the serious admonitions to the NT church about false teaching? 10:12-27
9. How could a man (Jehu) be so adamant in cleaning out idolatry when he continued its practices himself? 10:28-36

LESSON TEXT: 2 Kings 11:1---13:25

Prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

**Religious, godly, Bible-believing leaders of a nation must exert Biblical influence on political leaders!** It is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey his will, to be grateful for his benefits, and humbly to implore his protection and favor.”--George Washington, first U.S. President. “Let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion. Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle.”--George Washington. “The God who gave us life gave us liberty at the same time; the hand of force may destroy but cannot disjoin them. Can the liberties of a nation be thought secure when we have removed their only firm basis, a conviction in the minds of the people that these liberties are...the gift of God? That they are not to be violated but with His wrath?”--Thomas Jefferson. “The belief in a God All Powerful wise and good, is so essential to the moral order of the World and to the happiness of man, that arguments which enforce it cannot be drawn from too many sources nor adapted with too much solicitude to the different characters and capacities to be impressed with it.”--James Madison. “Suppose a nation in some distant Region, should take the Bible for their only law Book, and every member should regulate his conduct by the precepts there exhibited. Every member would be obliged in Conscience to temperance and frugality and industry, to justice and kindness and Charity towards his fellow men, and to Piety and Love and reverence toward Almighty God...What a Utopia, what a Paradise would this region be.”--John Adams.

The deliverance of Judah (the southern kingdom) from the wicked clutches of Athaliah, the demonic daughter of Jezebel and Ahab, fell upon the shoulders of Jehoiada, a priest of God. He had to take under his wing the boy-king, Jehoash, and instruct him in the word of God. Thank God the USA was founded on Biblical precedents!

QUESTIONS:

1. Who was Athaliah, how did she gain the throne of Judah, and why would God permit such a woman to rule a nation? 11:1-3
2. Should this priest, Jehoiada, have involved himself and temple personnel in the violent politics of Judah? 11:4-16
3. Isn't it preposterous to think a seven-year-old boy, Joash (a.k.a. Jehoash) could rule a nation? 11:17-21 (see Isa. 3:1-4; Eccl. 10:16).
4. Is it proper to have a religious leader to have such tutorial influence on a head of state? 12:1-3
5. What's the difference in not taking money to repair the temple from acquaintances while taking it from free will offerings? 12:4-16
6. Why would servants assassinate a good ruler? 12:17-21
7. What were the sins of Jeroboam that were perpetuated in practically every succeeding king of Israel? 13:2,6,11, Ceven though the Lord sent them a savior to deliver them from the Syrians?
8. Why did Joash, king of Israel, strike the ground only three times? 13:14-25

The U.S. Constitution & Little Know Facts

Of the delegates who formed and signed the U.S. Constitution in Philadelphia in 1787, 26 were Episcopalian, 9 were Presbyterian, 7 were Congregationalists, 3 were Quakers, 2 were Dutch Reformed, 2 were Methodist, 2 were Roman Catholic, 1 was Lutheran, only **one** was an avowed Deist, Benjamin Franklin!

Two college professors, Donald S. Lutz & Charles S. Hyneman reviewed an estimated 15,000 items, and closely read 2200 books, pamphlets, newspaper articles, and monographs with explicitly political content written by America's Founding Fathers between 1760 and 1805. They reduced this to 916 items, about 1/3 of all public political writings longer than 2000 words. From these items Lutz & Hyneman identified 3154 references to sources outside their own thoughts. THE SOURCE MOST OFTEN CITED BY THE FOUNDING FATHERS WAS THE **BIBLE** which accounted for 34% of all citations. The next three most often cited authorities were 3 Christian political philosophers, Montesquieu, Blackstone, and Locke which accounted for another 19% of citations. **That means over 50% of ideas incorporated into our nation's Constitutional founding were Christian!**

LESSON TEXT: 2 Kings 14:1--16:20

Prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

**Idolatry is giving reverence to, or trusting one's eternal destiny to, any other thing or person than the Almighty God revealed in the Bible!** It is a psychological fact that all human beings become, in character and nature, like that to which they devote themselves! Compare Hosea 9:9-10 with 2 Corinthians 3:17-18). The reason many ancient people and societies behaved like animals is because they worshiped animals (Rom. 1:18-32; 2 Pet. 2:1-22). Believing in the doctrine of evolution (i.e., struggle for existence and survival of the fittest) is idolatry and, a society totally dedicated to it would eventuate in animalistic dictatorship or anarchy!

The modern world's greatest worshipers of idols are the Hindus. They have 330 million gods and goddesses, or 8 for every Hindu family. Hindu religion teaches the sanctity of animal life. And so, while they themselves usually live in abject poverty the animals among them are maintained as royalty. India's 500 million Hindus have roughly 100 million cows to worship. Moreover, they allow monkeys, rats and other pests to eat and damage their crops because they are "gods."

In ancient Egypt the two chief deities were Osiris and Isis (supposed to be sun and moon). Other inferior gods were the stork, ape, cat, hawk, and some 20,000 other creatures. Thebes worshiped a ram, Memphis an ox (Apis), Bubastis a cat, Momemphis a cow, the Mendesians a he-goat, the Hermopolitans a fish called Latus, the Paprimas the hippopotamus, the Lycopolitans, the wolf. The ibis was deified because it fed on serpents; the crocodile out of terror, the ichneumon because it fed on crocodile-eggs.

Before we become smug in America that we have no idolaters here **remember** all the greenies, tree-huggers, and PETA people who say that human beings need to be dispensed with so animals and forests may flourish--all the abortionists who advocate killing unborn children as sacrifices to selfish desires and ambitions--the humanists and evolutionists who want to totally banish God, Jesus Christ and the Bible from every segment of our social order--the hundreds of thousands who devote their every leisure hour to fawning over movie and TV stars, rock and rap stars, criminals, and sports stars. --GOD HAVE MERCY ON AMERICA!

QUESTIONS:

1. Are the sins of the fathers visited upon succeeding generations or not? 14:1-6 (see also Exodus 20:4-6; Deut. 24:16; Ezek. 18:4,20; Jer. 31:30).
2. Why couldn't Amaziah, king of Judah, defeat Israel? 14:7-16 (see also 2 Chron. 25:1-24).
3. Another boy ruler, Azariah (a.k.a. Uzziah) just 16 years of age!--how did he pull it off? 14:21-22; 15:1-7 (2 Chron. 26:1-23).
4. Why would God give such success to Jeroboam II who was so utterly wicked? 14:23-29
5. Would you like to live in a nation (like Israel) where the political leadership was changed every year or so by assassination, 15:1-26, and you were taxed 50 shekels (50 days wages) for tribute to a *foreign* power?
6. If the Lord said he would not blot out the name of Israel, why did he allow Tiglath-pileser (Assyrian king) to carry Israel's people into captivity? 15:29-31
7. How could Ahaz, son of the good king Jotham, burn his son as a sacrifice to idols, 16:1-4, and put an idolatrous altar in God's temple 16:10-16?
8. For what else is Ahaz infamous? (See Isa. 7:1-16).

Absurdities of Idolatry

In Foochow, China, a number of years ago, one of the 15 wooden statues of Buddha on a temple shelf accidentally toppled on a man, killing him. His family demanded court trial of the Buddhas for murder. The court found the other 14 statues of Buddha also guilty and sentenced them to death. The 14 statues of Buddha were beheaded in public execution.

The traveler to Pompeii is shown in the temple of Isis the statue of the divinity through whose open lips the credulous worshipers of long ago (the ancient Roman empire) fancied they obtained trustworthy answers to their petitions. But alongside the ruined shrine he also sees the secret staircase by which the fraudulent priest reached the back of the statue and the concealed pipe through which he murmured the responses of the oracle  
(See Rev. 13:11-18)

LESSON TEXT: 2 Kings 17:1--19:37

Prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

**All human beings are flawed, no matter how good they may appear to be by human standards!** Emperor Francis Joseph of Austria was buried in the gloomy crypt of the Church of the Capuchin in Vienna, where sleep all his fathers of the house of Hapsburg. At the entrance to the vault the procession was halted by a voice from within: "Who is there?" The reply was: "His most serene majesty, the Emperor Francis Joseph." The challenger then said, "I know him not. Who is there?" A second reply was made: "The Emperor of Austria and Apostolic King of Hungary is outside." Again the challenger answered: "I know him not. Who is there?" This time the voice without replied, "A sinful man, our brother Francis Joseph." Then the portal was opened and the king was laid to rest among his fathers.

Preparatory to beginning a meeting in a large city, famed evangelist Billy Sunday wrote a letter to the mayor in which he asked for the names of individuals he knew who had spiritual problem and needed help and prayer. How surprised the evangelist was when he received from the mayor a city directory!

Hezekiah was a **good** man and a **good** king. It is said of him: "And he did right in the eyes of the Lord, according to all that David his father (grandfather) had done....He trusted in the Lord the God of Israel; so that there was none like him among all the kings of Judah after him, nor among those who were before him." (2 Kings 18:1-5). *But Hezekiah had his flaws--his sins--just like the rest of us!* **Sin** is the one common-denominator of all humanity. None is righteous, no, not one...all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:10,23).

But all praise to our Merciful God for justifying us by his grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus (Rom. 3:24). There's just one catch! The grace of God through Jesus Christ is not imputed to us unless we want it and are willing to accept it through the terms of the **covenant** which God has decreed in his New (and final) Testament! **BE IN BIBLE SCHOOL AND LEARN WHAT THOSE COVENANT TERMS ARE!**

QUESTIONS:

1. So what was the Biblical cause of Israel's exile to Assyria? 17:1-14
2. What led Israel to *despise* God's covenant and commandments? 17:14-23
3. Why did the king of Assyria emigrate Mesopotamian people into the land of Israel? 17:24-28
4. What was wrong with a little doctrinal ecumenicity or eclecticism (liberalism) in Judaism at the direction of the king of Assyria? 17:29-41. Is it o.k. for the NT church today to be ecumenical and eclectic in doctrine?
5. What did Hezekiah gain by kow-towing to, and bribing, the king of Assyria to secure safety for his country? 18:1-18
6. Name 4 aspects of psychological warfare practiced by the Rabshakeh on Hezekiah and the citizens of besieged Jerusalem. 18:19-37 (see Isa. chs. 36-37). Does the devil practice that on Christians today?
7. What were Hezekiah's two responses to the intimidating and terrorizing threats of the Rabshakeh? 19:2-15 (see Isa. chs. 36-37).
8. How did the Lord keep his promise to deliver Judah from Assyria? 19:20-37.

Donald Grey Barnhouse tells of a literary review in the Literary Supplement to the *London Times* news paper which complained that American writers of detective stories do not keep to the proper rules of the game. "In the traditional English detective story the author--unless without a sense of craftsmanship --does not have the murder done by a clergyman; he does not extract skeletons from the cupboards of those who are to live happily ever after. Within the limits of the genre his characters observe the conventions of their social position to the point that where they disdain their social position they are marked down as suspects. But in the American detective story, spotting the culprit is more difficult ***because anybody may have done anything.***"

LESSON TEXT: 2 Kings 20:1--22:20

Prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

“You can’t carry coals in your bosom without getting burned” so saith the writer of Proverbs. **And you can’t flirt with sin without falling!** There was, years ago, an awful tragedy in Georgia at Stone Mountain, the largest boulder in the world. Atop the mountain, a young man walked daringly along, unaware of the *gradual* and *almost imperceptible* downward curvature of the dome-like mountain. Suddenly, he became aware of the fact that he was powerless to retrace his steps to safety. He had gone to the point of no return. Frantically, he cried, “Help! Help!” His piteous plea was to no avail. Horrified spectators watched as he hurtled to his death thousands of feet below.

Hezekiah was a good king who reigned over Judah. He was one of the best! But Hezekiah thought he could cozy up to sin without suffering any consequences. The Lord allowed circumstances to come to Hezekiah to try him and to know all that was in his heart (2 Chron. 32:31). Hezekiah entrapped himself in **pride**. The Bible warns, “Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. God says, “Pride and arrogance and the way of evil and perverted speech I hate” (Prov. 8:13). Even Nebuchadnezzar had to learn the hard way “those who walk in pride he (God) is able to abase.” (Dan. 4:37). **Pride** was the trap into which Satan fell (1 Tim. 3:6-7) and was banished from God’s presence forever!

**Pride** is what made Peter boast, “Even if I must die with you I will not deny you. And so said all his disciples.” (Matt. 26:35). **No human being, no matter how good, can flirt with pride or any other sin, without falling!** We must submit ourselves to God...resist the devil and his temptations...and he will flee from us. Thankfully, Hezekiah repented of his pride (2 Chron. 32:36) so may we---“**Just do it!**”

QUESTIONS:

1. Why did the Lord deliver Hezekiah from death & Assyria for David’s sake? 20:1-11
2. If Hezekiah was at fault for showing off why didn’t the Lord punish him instead of his sons? 20:12-21
3. How could such a wicked-devil-of-a-son as Manasseh come from such an exemplary father as Hezekiah? 21:1-9
4. What was the impact of Manasseh’s wickedness upon the nation? 21:10-16
5. Didn’t Manasseh ever have a guilty conscience about his blatant wickedness? (See 2 Chron. 33:10-22).
6. How did Josiah, son of Manasseh, become a good king when only 8 years old? 22:1-7
7. How had the book of the law of God been **lost** and not found until Josiah was 26 years of age? 22:8-13
8. Why didn’t the Lord hold Josiah responsible for the impenitence of his subjects? 22:8-20

“When I survey the wondrous cross  
On which the prince of glory died,  
My richest gain I count but loss,  
And pour contempt on all my pride.”  
—Isaac Watts

LESSON TEXT: 2 Kings 23:1--25:30

Prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

**God chastens to purify and consecrate.** John Noble, an American citizen by birth, lived in east Germany during WWII. He and his father were imprisoned by the Soviets when they overran Dresden. He wrote of their experiences in his book, *I Found God in Soviet Russia*. For twelve days he was deprived of all food (not even a scrap of bread--just water). John Noble states, "I was completely disillusioned. Surely God has abandoned me, I thought; I have prayed earnestly to him in my hour of need and he has denied me. I was done with God, and He, it seemed clear, was done with me!" After nine days, Noble writes, "With my last strength,( lying on the floor of his cell, dying), I struggled onto my knees and earnestly asked the Lord simply to close my eyes this night and release me from my mortal suffering. I said, in effect, Dear Lord, I give up; I can't go on any longer. I have no way out but through Thee. Lord, close my eyes and take me to Thee, or if it be Thy will that I must go on, give me the strength to do so, and lend me Thy hand to guide me. My will is broken. Thy will be done. Amen." Finally, after 12 days of starvation, he was given some stale crumbs on a piece of paper amounting to 2 ounces and later still 3 slices of bread. John Noble lived through 10 years of Communist imprisonment, not merely clinging to faith in Christ, but boldly witnessing of it to fellow-prisoners and Communist prison guards.

Richard Wurmbrand, another Christian imprisoned and brutally tortured by the Communists said that he learned from the guards. "As they allowed no place for Jesus in their hearts, I decided I would leave not the smallest place for Satan in mine." A fruit tree will not bear much fruit unless it is pruned and the useless branches cut away. The vine will not bear grapes unless it is pruned and the deadwood cut away. So it will be necessary for every Christian to endure some pruning, some cutting away of deadwood, that he/she may bear good fruit (1 John 15:1-2; 2 Cor. 1:8-11; 12:7-10; Heb. 12:1-17; Jas. 1:2-4).

QUESTIONS:

1. Was it necessary for godly Josiah to *slay* all the priests of the high places to carry out his *reform* of Judaism? 23:1-20. Why?
2. Why didn't Josiah give heed to the Egyptian king's warning to cease opposing God. 23:21-30 (see 2 Chron. 35:20-27).
3. What gave Jehoiakim the idea he could rebel against Nebuchadnezzar? 23:36C24:7
4. If Jehoiakim rebelled, why did his son, Jehoiachin, surrender? 24:8-17.
5. Who was Zedekiah and why did he give no heed to the prophet Jeremiah's message from God? 24:18C25:4 (see Jer. 27:1-15).
6. When he took Judah into exile, why would Nebuchadnezzar leave some of the poorest in Judea? 25:5-12
7. Nebuchadnezzar and his army despicably desecrated God's temple and razed God's holy city, Jerusalem--why did God allow that? 25:13-21
8. After the Jews assassinated, Gedeliah, the governor Nebuchadnezzar had appointed, what would cause the king of Babylon to be so gracious to Jehoiachin, king of Judah? 25:22-30

Discipline is demanded of the athlete to win a game. Discipline is required for the captain running his ship. Discipline is needed for the pianist to practice for the concert. Only in the matter of personal conduct is the need for discipline questioned. But if we believe standards are necessary, then discipline is needed to attain them. —ptb