

KING JOSIAH THE MANCHILD

In reading the annals of the kings of Israel and Judah, many come to the conclusion that David was the greatest of the kings, and understandably so, for he was a man after God's own heart. But there is a later king of whom it is said:

...before him there was no king like him, who turned to the LORD with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the Law of Moses; nor after him did any arise like him. (2 Kings 23:25)

I refer of course to King Josiah, whose reign is not quite as famous as David's, but who nevertheless received the noble testimony that there was no king like him, and that he turned to the Lord, completely – heart, soul, and might. The purpose of this writing is to examine Josiah's symbolic relationship to the overcoming Man-Child, and the symbols found in his story.

THE ROYAL MAN CHILD

¹ Josiah was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem. ² And he did what was right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the ways of his father David; he did not turn aside to the right hand or to the left.... (2 Chronicles 34:1-2)

Josiah is here revealed to be a type of the Man Child, being a King that reigns in complete obedience to God. Eight is a number closely related to resurrection and new beginnings in the numerology of scripture, and I believe this connection to show the new life of the fullness of Christ that is entered into by the sons of God. This passage is also significant inasmuch as it points to the perfected righteousness of the Man Child (not turning aside "to the right or to the left") brought into conformity to the imputed righteousness of Christ within.

CLEANSING THE LAND OF IDOLS

The next significant act recorded in the life of Josiah is his cleansing of the land. The land speaks of our inheritance in Christ, that land which *we are*, collectively and individually, and the cleansing of the land relates to the casting down of idols, whether those things we hold in place of God, or false images we have of God Himself, and also speaks of the removal of sin from the body.

³ For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was still young, he began to seek the God of his father David; and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of the high places, the wooden images, the carved images, and the molded images. ⁴ They broke down the altars of the Baals in his presence, and the incense altars which were above them he cut down; and the wooden images, the carved images, and the molded images he broke in pieces, and made dust of them and scattered it on the graves of those who had sacrificed to them. ⁵ He also burned the bones of the priests on their altars, and cleansed Judah and Jerusalem. ⁶ And so he did in the cities of Manasseh, Ephraim, and Simeon, as far as Naphtali and all around, with axes.^[a] ⁷ When he had broken down the altars and the

wooden images, had beaten the carved images into powder, and cut down all the incense altars throughout all the land of Israel, he returned to Jerusalem. (2 Chronicles 34:3-7)

Among the idols cast down in the Book of Kings account, is that of the pagan god Molech:

¹⁰ And he defiled Topheth, which is in the Valley of the Son^[e] of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter pass through the fire to Molech. (2 Kings 23:10)

Now this particular incident is of great interest, for Molech was the demonic deity whose outstretched hands were heated up to receive sacrifices, including the loathsome burnings of human babies – hence sons or daughters “passing through the fire”. The site of his worship was Topheth, which was located in the Valley of Hinnom. After Josiah’s desecration of the worship site, the valley ultimately became a symbol for uncleanness, even – according to tradition – becoming a rubbish heap for the city, where all manner of refuse was flung, even dead bodies of animals and criminals. A perpetual fire was said to be kept burning there because of the foulness. This same Valley of Hinnom is the Greek ‘Gehenna’ which is translated into our fiery ‘Hell’ in English. This word was only used by Jesus and his brother James (in his epistle), and only towards the Jews, who would have understood it not to be a literal cosmic location in the afterlife, but a metaphor for judgment.

It is my belief that, in light of the false image of an angry God who casts the majority of creation into hopeless agony (a deception among the people of God with spiritual roots that can be symbolically paralleled to this Molech), this pagan god stands as a symbol for this false idol that has been erected in the heart of the church for all of these centuries. And to desecrate Topheth is to fling down that false image within our hearts. Thus, Josiah is shown again to be a type of the sons of God, who have had that abominable idol cast down within them once and for all, and are ultimately empowered by Christ within to throw down the same ancient lie before mankind also!

REBUILDING THE HOUSE

With the land cleansed and the idols thrown down, the young king is now ready to turn his attention to the house of God:

⁸ In the eighteenth year of his reign, when he had purged the land and the temple,^[b] he sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, Maaseiah the governor of the city, and Joah the son of Joahaz the recorder, to repair the house of the LORD his God. (2 Chronicles 34:8)

King Josiah is revealed here as a restorer of the house of God, having first “purged the land and the temple.” It is only when the refining fire has swept through our land and devoured the idols and desecrated the carnal abominations, that the house of God may be repaired and established within us both individually and corporately.

For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? (1 Peter 4:17)

This judgment, this sweeping fire that burns up the wood, hay and stubble erroneously built upon the foundation of Christ, is the precursor to the house of God being properly established. It is for this reason that judgment so often and so particularly refers to the Body and the servants of God, as we must become purified and refined to be a fitting dwelling place for the Spirit of God:

For what have I to do with judging those also who are outside? Do you not judge those who are inside? ¹³ But those who are outside God judges. Therefore “put away from yourselves the evil person.” (1 Corinthians 5:12-13)

It is vital to understand this sense of judgment as *preparation*, for we have become so used to simply hearing ‘condemnation’ rather than anything else. But indeed, God’s judgments are always a preparation for something better, and every person must enter that crucible to be molded into the image of the son of God.

THE REVELATION OF THE WILL OF GOD

In the next major chronicled event in the life of this young king, the Book of the Law is stumbled upon:

¹⁴ Now when they brought out the money that was brought into the house of the LORD, Hilkiyah the priest found the Book of the Law of the LORD given by Moses. ¹⁵ Then Hilkiyah answered and said to Shaphan the scribe, “I have found the Book of the Law in the house of the LORD.” And Hilkiyah gave the book to Shaphan. ¹⁶ So Shaphan carried the book to the king, bringing the king word, saying, “All that was committed to your servants they are doing. ¹⁷ And they have gathered the money that was found in the house of the LORD, and have delivered it into the hand of the overseers and the workmen.” ¹⁸ Then Shaphan the scribe told the king, saying, “Hilkiyah the priest has given me a book.” And Shaphan read it before the king.

¹⁹ Thus it happened, when the king heard the words of the Law, that he tore his clothes. ²⁰ Then the king commanded Hilkiyah, Ahikam the son of Shaphan, Abdon^[c] the son of Micah, Shaphan the scribe, and Asaiah a servant of the king, saying, ²¹ “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 34:14-21)

Surely the sons of God are moving from glory to glory, and are receiving the revelation of the true heart of the Lord, one that has long been concealed from mankind by the interference of carnally minded taskmasters. In this case we see a book that has long been hidden and closed, now finally brought to light and opened. This speaks of revelation of the true will of God, and of His ways being written into us:

You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men; ³ clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart. (2 Corinthians 3:2-3)

And again:

Then I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God. And he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, ³ saying, “Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.” (Revelation 7:2-3)

The book of the true law of love is being opened within those who are apprehended to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ as firstfruits to God, and we are sealed with the very mind of Christ.

BEING SAVED FROM WRATH

After the will of God is revealed in the book of the law, Josiah realizes just how great the sin of his people has been, and sends for someone to enquire of the Lord with regards to the consequences. God’s words come back with dire prophecy upon the nation as a whole, but mercy upon the godly king:

²² So Hilkiah and those the king had appointed went to Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tokhath,^[d] the son of Hasrah,^[e] keeper of the wardrobe. (She dwelt in Jerusalem in the Second Quarter.) And they spoke to her to that effect.

²³ Then she answered them, “Thus says the LORD God of Israel, ‘Tell the man who sent you to Me, ²⁴ “Thus says the LORD: ‘Behold, I will bring calamity on this place and on its inhabitants, all the curses that are written in the book which they have read before the king of Judah, ²⁵ because they have forsaken Me and burned incense to other gods, that they might provoke Me to anger with all the works of their hands. Therefore My wrath will be poured out on this place, and not be quenched.’”” ²⁶ But as for the king of Judah, who sent you to inquire of the LORD, in this manner you shall speak to him, ‘Thus says the LORD God of Israel: “Concerning the words which you have heard— ²⁷ because your heart was tender, and you humbled yourself before God when you heard His words against this place and against its inhabitants, and you humbled yourself before Me, and you tore your clothes and wept before Me, I also have heard you,” says the LORD. ²⁸ “Surely I will gather you to your fathers, and you shall be gathered to your grave in peace; and your eyes shall not see all the calamity which I will bring on this place and its inhabitants.””” So they brought back word to the king. (2 Chronicles 34:22-28)

This kindness towards the humble king on the part of God has some obvious parallels to the word to the overcomers in the church at Philadelphia, in the book of Revelation:

“These things says He who is holy, He who is true, “He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens”: ⁸ “I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name. ⁹ Indeed I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie—indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you. ¹⁰ Because you have

kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. (Revelation 3:7-11)

In both type and anti-type, the overcomer is separated from the sin of the overall house of God, and shown great mercy.

HONORING THE COVENANT OF THE LORD

After all of this, the king gathers all of the people of God together and reads the book of the law in their hearing, making a covenant with God and encouraging the backslidden nation to do likewise:

Then the king sent and gathered all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem. ³⁰ The king went up to the house of the LORD, with all the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem—the priests and the Levites, and all the people, great and small. And he read in their hearing all the words of the Book of the Covenant which had been found in the house of the LORD. ³¹ Then the king stood in his place and made a covenant before the LORD, to follow the LORD, and to keep His commandments and His testimonies and His statutes with all his heart and all his soul, to perform the words of the covenant that were written in this book. ³² And he made all who were present in Jerusalem and Benjamin take a stand. So the inhabitants of Jerusalem did according to the covenant of God, the God of their fathers. ³³ Thus Josiah removed all the abominations from all the country that belonged to the children of Israel, and made all who were present in Israel diligently serve the LORD their God. All his days they did not depart from following the LORD God of their fathers. (2 Chronicles 34:29-33)

This again speaks of the Man Child, those overcomers who then teach the ways of God to a hungry world:

**Many nations shall come and say,
“Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,
To the house of the God of Jacob;
He will teach us His ways,
And we shall walk in His paths.”
For out of Zion the law shall go forth,
And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. (Micah 4:2)**

And also:

**Then saviors shall come to Mount Zion
To judge the mountains of Esau,
And the kingdom shall be the LORD’s. (Obadiah 1:21)**

So then, the king has now cleansed and purified the land, rebuilt the house of God, had a revelation of the will of God, and made all of the people diligently serve the Lord as he himself does. In his fervent zeal, Josiah then calls for the Passover to be kept, and there is a lengthy,

climactic description of the glorious feast that ensues, culminating in the assertion that there had been no feast like it in all the days of the kings:

So all the service of the LORD was prepared the same day, to keep the Passover and to offer burnt offerings on the altar of the LORD, according to the command of King Josiah.¹⁷ And the children of Israel who were present kept the Passover at that time, and the Feast of Unleavened Bread for seven days.¹⁸ There had been no Passover kept in Israel like that since the days of Samuel the prophet; and none of the kings of Israel had kept such a Passover as Josiah kept, with the priests and the Levites, all Judah and Israel who were present, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.¹⁹ In the eighteenth year of the reign of Josiah this Passover was kept. (2 Chronicles 35:16-19)

This keeping of the Passover can symbolize many things, but I believe in part it concerns the Man Child bringing the people into identifying fully with Christ, something that has been sadly lacking as much in the church age as the keeping of the feast was in those days of the Israelite kings. Throughout the life of the king there is a gradual build up to this point of crescendo, as Josiah grows in stature and moves through the different elements of preparation, from cleansing and refining to rebuilding and restoring, and finally on to revelation and manifestation. In this story of the young king, the thread of divine processing can be clearly seen in all of God's wisdom and genius.

I am convinced there is much more that can be meditated upon in the life of Josiah, including his untimely death at Megiddo (Armageddon), and how that may link to the sixteenth chapter of Revelation. This short paper is simply intended to show some of the wonderful connections between this child king and the Man Child that he surely symbolizes.