

The Curse on Coniah

(and the kings men – 450 years after David)

Last week we studied how that “*the sword*” had severed David’s future family almost to annihilation. As if this pursuing sword were not enough, God made the situation for David’s seed to produce the promised Messiah seem absolutely impossible when He pronounced a curse on Coniah, son of King Jehoiakim. Unless we are aware of this story, we have no idea of what an incredible miracle Christmas was.

The Most Wicked King

In the year 498 B.C. the king of Judah (the south half of Israel) was a man named Jehoiakim, a man of extraordinary evil.

His story is found in the 23rd and the 24th chapters of 2 Kings. Chapter 23 and verse 37 says, “*And he [Jehoiakim] did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD.*” And chapter 24, verse 5 says, “*Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim, and all [the abominations] that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?*”

He had many wicked forbears in the kingly line that had deliberately led Israel into every detestable practice of the Canaanites, but he added to their sensual sins a most unusual insult to the God of Israel. For this, a specific curse was pronounced upon his son, Coniah.

Jehoiakim, King of Judah, had a problem. It was the prophet Jeremiah who was a thorn in his side. All during Jehoiakim’s 11 years reign in Jerusalem the Babylonian army was harassing his land and threatening the destruction of his city, Jerusalem. Jeremiah was no comfort to the king. Jeremiah was called the “*weeping Prophet*” because the Lord had revealed to him what was going to happen -- that the land and the city would be taken by Nebuchadnezzar, the city destroyed, and the people killed or made captives. So when Jeremiah preached, he wept. (Who could preach impending judgment without tears?) When the Lord finally pronounced another judgment on Jerusalem in the days of Rome, Jesus wept over the city (Luke 19:41).

“Signet Ring”

Jehoiakim could not believe that any of that would ever happen. He continued his idolatrous practices, but also, insisted that, since they were Jehovah’s chosen people, they would be automatically protected from judgment no matter what they did. When Jehoiakim had reigned three years, his first son was born, and Jehoiakim named him “*Jeconiah*” -- “*Je*” for “*Jehovah*” and “*Coniah*” meaning “*signet ring.*” He was asserting that his royal house was as secure as the signet ring on the hand of Jehovah, But God, (in irony of it all) always called him just, “*Coniah.*”

“*As I live, saith the LORD, though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah were the signet upon my right hand, yet would I pluck thee thence; And I will give thee [Coniah] into the hand of...the king of Babylon*” (Jeremiah 22:24-25).

But that was not all; there were two more chilling prophecies, one for Jehoiakim and one for Coniah.

So to stop this demoralizing preaching, Jehoiakim put Jeremiah in prison. He was afraid to kill him at that time.

God, in mercy to Israel, sought to postpone judgment. He spoke to Jeremiah in prison and Jeremiah dictated the message to Baruch, the scribe.

The Unpardonable Sin

When this message of warning was presented to the king by some of his nobles, this is what happened:

*“And Jehudi read it in the ears of the king, and in the ears of all the princes which stood beside the king. Now the king sat in the winterhouse in the ninth month: and there was a fire on the hearth burning before him. And it came to pass, that when Jehudi had read three or four leaves, he [Jehoiakim] cut it [the scroll] with the penknife, and cast it into the fire that was on the hearth, until all the roll was consumed in the fire that was on the hearth. Yet they were not afraid, nor rent their garments, neither the king, nor any of his servants that heard all these words. Nevertheless Elnathan and Delaiah and Gemariah had made intercession to the king that he would **not** burn the roll: but he would not hear them”* (Jeremiah 36:21-25).

So what did God do about this?

Then the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah after that the king had burned the roll, saying, *“Take thee again another roll, and write in it all the former words that were in the first roll, which Jehoiakim the king of Judah hath burned. And thou shalt say to Jehoiakim king of Judah, Thus saith the LORD; **Thou hast burned this roll**, saying, Why hast thou written therein, saying, The king of Babylon shall certainly come and destroy this land, and shall cause to cease from thence man and beast? Therefore thus saith the LORD of Jehoiakim king of Judah; He shall have none to sit upon the throne of David: and his dead body shall be cast out in the day to the heat, and in the night to the frost”* (Jeremiah 36:28-30).

“Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah; They shall not lament for him, saying, Ah my brother! or, Ah sister! they shall not lament for him, saying, Ah lord! or, Ah his glory! He shall be buried with the burial of an ass, drawn and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem” (Jeremiah 22:18-19).

The Curse on Coniah

*“O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the LORD. Thus saith the LORD, Write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days: **for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David**, and ruling any more in Judah”* (Jeremiah 22:29-30).

Incredible! Think of it! God had chosen among the sons of David and had said that *the right to the throne would be vested in Solomon and his line* - now, Coniah was the inheritor of that line -- and we read, *“no descendant of his could ever prosper on the throne.”* *“Write ye this man childless”* (from Jeremiah 22:29) -- meant that in God’s sight he would be considered childless. God would not accept any offspring of his -- even though he already had children.

Joseph of Nazareth was the direct descendant of Coniah (See Matthew 1:6, 11 & 16); he was under the curse should he ever try to be king. His sons James, Judah, Joseph (Jr.) and Simon (Matthew 13:55) were also inheritors of that curse.

But, Mary was descended from David through his son Nathan. Nathan's line had no right to the throne, but they had the blood of David as truly as Solomon's line. In Mary, the Lord Jesus inherited the blood line of David; in Joseph, by legal adoption, He inherited the legal right to the throne without the curse, because He is not of the "seed" of Joseph -- or Coniah. *The Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ is the only means whereby there could ever again be a king in Israel.* God put a lock on the throne that only He could open. There is only one Jew alive who can claim David's throne; He sits, today, at God's right hand.

One more note: when the Temple was burned in 70 A.D. nearly all of the scrolls of the genealogies of the families of Israel were destroyed; all except the two also recorded in Matthew and Luke. No other Israelite can ever claim that he is the legal heir to the throne of David; no one but Jesus of Nazareth whose mother's and father's royal rights are now published in almost every language on the earth.