

YET I WILL
Rejoice

AN INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY
OF HABAKKUK

RACHEL COLLINS

TREASURING GOD'S WORD
INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY SERIES

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Edited by Kathleen B. Duncan, author of *God's Healing in Grief* and *Fun Brain Games for Adults*
<https://kathleenbduncan.com/>

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*“For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven
and do not return there but water the earth,
making it bring forth and sprout,
giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,
so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth;
it shall not return to me empty,
but it shall accomplish that which I purpose,
and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.”
(Isaiah 55:10-11)*

May the Lord accomplish His purposes in this sending forth of His Word.

Contents

Introductory Words	1
Tips for Study	3
Lesson 1 - A Nation in Crisis	5
Lesson 2 - Lord, Where are You?	35
Lesson 3 - Lord, I am Waiting	57
Lesson 4 - Lord, I See Your Justice	83
Lesson 5 - Lord, I Will Rejoice	109
Bonus Lesson - A Life of Faith	131
Habakkuk	157
Hebrews 11	165
For Small Group and Ministry Leaders	169
A Word about Inductive Bible Study	173

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Introductory Words

There are times when studying the Word of God reinforces sweet truths that the Lord has shown you or spoken to you about Himself in the past. How we love those studies, like a sweet soothing balm to a tired soul! And then there are times when the Lord shakes you out of your comfort zone and shows you that He is far bigger, far more complex, and far more powerful than you could ever imagine!

I pray that this study is the latter!

Why? Because there is so much peace, so much joy, and so much hope in having a true knowledge of Almighty God and His ways. Because when you gaze into the complexities of our infinite Lord, you can rest in His goodness even when things don't work out the way you had hoped or expected. Because life isn't all sunshine and rainbows, and we need to know that God is the God of the storm as much as He is the God of the stillness. This is the God we meet as we study the prophecy of Habakkuk.

You may be familiar with some of the closing verses of the book of Habakkuk –

*“Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines,
the produce of the olive fail and the fields yield no food,
the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls,
yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will take joy in the God of my salvation.” (Habakkuk 3:17-18)*

How we love that word “rejoice!” It's such a heart-warming, positive thought. But there is a word in this verse that comes before “rejoice,” a seemingly minor word that is easily overlooked. But in its apparent insignificance don't miss the power that it holds! It implies a decision. It makes a stark contrast between what came before and what comes after. As you think about it, the moment Habakkuk says “YET”, you know he has considered what has been revealed to him and has decided how he is going to respond.

We are going to follow Habakkuk's example as we move through this study. We're going to contemplate all that Habakkuk had to consider, seeing what he saw and feeling what he felt. We will humbly allow ourselves to be challenged by the revelations that Habakkuk received, and we will understand the meaning of the statement in Habakkuk 2:4 that says, *“The righteous shall live by his faith.”* And as we seek the Lord and bow our hearts before His throne, I pray that we will come to the same peaceful conclusion that Habakkuk does.

You'll notice the fig leaf on the cover of this study guide and echoed throughout our book. This fig leaf has been painted for us as a symbol of the presence of the Lord even in the middle of struggle. Amid all the difficulties that will come in this life, because our God is our Savior, our sovereign Lord and King who has promised that His presence will be with us forever, we can proclaim with confidence:

YET I WILL REJOICE!

Tips for Study

Take just a few moments before we begin to consider ways that you can make spending time with the Lord a priority as we work through this study. He longs to speak to you and fellowship with you regularly and has given you His Spirit who will open His Word personally to your heart.

This study guide is based on the inductive method of Bible study. You'll notice that the bulk of your time will be spent directly interacting with the text of the Scriptures themselves, with just a few summaries and explanations included to aid your study. The questions in this guide are designed to help you as you look at the text to see what it says, to guide you through a proper understanding of what it means, and to challenge you to consider your own responses to what the Lord is showing you. If you are new to inductive Bible study, take just a few minutes to read through the explanation of this method in the appendix.

Our study of Habakkuk is broken into five main lessons, each of which is divided into five parts which are designed to be completed in about 30 minutes. Sprinkled throughout each lesson are sections titled *Deeper into the Word*. These optional exercises provide you opportunities to further explore related Scripture or outside resources. At the end of each regular lesson you will find an additional optional section titled *For Further Study* that explores a topic related to that lesson. If you would like to use this study as a six-week study, you'll notice an optional bonus lesson included after Lesson 5. If you choose to complete this lesson you can opt to include it after you have completed the *For Further Study* section of Lesson 3, or after you have completed your study in Habakkuk.

The questions in this study are based on the English Standard Version (ESV) of the Bible, and you will find the full ESV text of the book of Habakkuk in the appendix of this study guide. Feel free to make a copy of these pages for your personal use so that they can be readily available. Mark them up, take notes, record any questions you have, and answers you receive. You can choose any translation you prefer for your study, but if a question doesn't make sense in your preferred translation, see if referring to the ESV aids in your understanding. In addition to the ESV, there will be some questions where you will look up verses in the New Living Translation (NLT) or the New King James Version (NKJV).

Remember that Bible study is a privilege, not an obligation, and that working through this study guide is not to be seen as homework. Enjoy this sweet opportunity to get to know the Lord personally – His attributes, His ways, what pleases Him, what displeases Him, how He sees you, and how He wants you to see Him. If you are using this guide with a group, don't worry about "falling behind." Begin each lesson along with your group with no guilt for what didn't get completed in the previous lesson.

Most importantly, make sure to begin your time of study in prayer. This is so easily neglected, and yet is the key to a rich, deep time in the Word. As 1 Corinthians 2:6-16 explains, it is the Spirit of God who explains to us the wisdom of God. Through prayer we recognize our need for the Spirit to open our ears and our hearts to the things of God, so that we are reading His Word with spiritual understanding rather than natural understanding. Pray for an open heart as you begin your study, pray for understanding as you continue in your study, and pray in response as you complete each time of study. May the Lord pour out His unlimited riches of wisdom and insight into your heart as you meditate on His Word!



Lesson 1 - A Nation in Crisis

Before we begin to get into the heart and mind of Habakkuk himself, we are going to spend a few days looking into the world in which he lived. We're going to go to a time when the nation of Israel was experiencing a period of political instability like nothing it had ever seen before. As you follow the storyline of the kingdom of Israel through the books of Samuel and Kings, and echoed in Chronicles, you'll see that the once unified kingdom ruled by David, a man after God's own heart, had divided just two generations later as David's descendants failed to follow the example he had set for them in being faithful to the Lord.

The northern kingdom of ten tribes was ruled by family after family, falling further and further away from the Lord. He had sent prophets to them, warning them, and calling them to repent, showing great and mighty signs of His unique rule, but they would not listen. And so, because of their hard hearts, the Lord finally gave them over to the Assyrian empire, and the northern kingdom of Israel went into captivity (2 Kings 17:6-18).

Meanwhile, the southern kingdom, ruled by a continuous line of the descendants of David, had their own ups and downs with the Lord, with times of great apostasy interspersed with times of great revival. Yet the influence of the world around them was strong, and the people of God forgot the One who had redeemed them, the One who had set them apart and who had called them His own (Isaiah 17:10, Hosea 4:6).

This week we'll look at the final years of the nation of Judah, the southern kingdom. We're going to start with the end of the reign of King Hezekiah, one of Judah's greatest kings. Although Hezekiah was a king who was devoted to the Lord, it is in Hezekiah's time that we see the very first shadows of what would eventually become a reality in Habakkuk's time. We'll follow the history right up through the final kings of Judah, a time of great political instability and upheaval, a time when outside nations seemed to have more say over the people of Judah than the leaders of Judah itself. This is the time in which Habakkuk lived and prophesied; these are his people, and his nation, his family. And while there are thousands of years between Habakkuk and us, we're going to see how, in many ways, people are the same now as they were then. The temptations were the same, the fears were the same, the concerns were the same. And even more, the God that they served is the same God we serve, a God who is the same today as He was yesterday, a God of both mercy and justice, a God who is holy, and who calls His people to be holy.

Part 1 – A Good King, a Poor Decision (Hezekiah)

We start our study with a king who had a heart to serve the Lord but who allowed his pride to get the better of him. As you sit down to study today, and every day, make sure to go to the Lord in prayer before you begin. Ask Him to open your ears to hear what He is speaking to you, your eyes to see His truth, and your heart to understand His wisdom.

Read 2 Kings 18:1-6

How is King Hezekiah described? (v. 3)

According to the text, why is he described this way? (vv. 4-6)

It was in the sixth year of Hezekiah's reign that the Assyrian empire came and conquered the northern kingdom, captured Samaria, the capital of Israel, and took the northern king captive (**2 Kings 18:9-12**). Several years later, Assyria came up against Judah, Hezekiah's kingdom, and laid siege to Jerusalem. Hezekiah cried out to the Lord, and He miraculously delivered them without Judah having to lift a finger (**2 Kings 18:13-19:36**). It is about this time that a different, far less powerful, nation starts to make itself known in Judah.

Read 2 Kings 20:1-6 (up through 11 if you have time)

What happened to Hezekiah? (v. 1)

What did Isaiah tell him? (v. 1)

How did Hezekiah respond? (vv. 2-3)

How did the Lord respond to Hezekiah's prayer? (vv. 5-6)

Deeper into the Word

Read **Isaiah 38:9-20** to hear Hezekiah's song of praise for his recovery. Have you ever been in a place like this? How did the Lord walk you through it? Use the space below to record your thoughts.

The Lord was true to His Word, and Hezekiah recovered. Word of Hezekiah's recovery spread and caught the attention of distant nations.

Read 2 Kings 20:12-13

Who came to visit Hezekiah? Just so you don't miss it, what nation were they from?

How did Hezekiah receive them?

Yet I Will Rejoice

Lesson 1 – Historical Background

At first glance, does this seem like an appropriate response for a king to make to a foreign envoy?

Read 2 Kings 20:14-15

Who questioned Hezekiah about the envoys?

How did Hezekiah respond?

From what you can see here, how does Hezekiah seem to feel about the envoys' visit?

Read 2 Kings 20:16-18

What was the word of the Lord to Hezekiah?

Before reading verse 19, how do you think Hezekiah would respond to this word? Notice how he responded to the Assyrian threat in **2 Kings 19:1-4** and **14-19** and remember how he responded to the threat of his own death in **2 Kings 20:2-3**. What would you expect him to say or do at this point?

Now read verse 19. How does Hezekiah respond? How does this strike you?

Why do you think Hezekiah's response is different than what we saw in **2 Kings 19:14** and **20:2-3**, two other times when he faced significant challenges?

Think for a moment about your own response to news of disaster. How do your prayers for things that affect you personally compare with your prayers for things that are more distant or detached?

Part 2 – A Corrupt Leader, a Corrupt Nation (Manasseh)

Hezekiah lived the extra fifteen years that the Lord had granted him in response to his prayer for recovery. Eventually though, his time ended, and his son became king in his place.

Read 2 Kings 20:21 – 21:1-2

Who was king after Hezekiah?

How old was he when he began to reign? How long was his reign?

How is he described? (v. 2)

Read 2 Kings 21:3-9

Based on what you see in the following verses, how did Manasseh influence Judah's religious life?

21:3

21:4-5

21:6

21:7a

What was the promise that God had given years before to David and Solomon? (vv. 7b-8)

What condition does the Lord make on this promise? (v. 8)

What was the impact of Manasseh's influence on this promise?

We just saw how Manasseh led Judah away from single-hearted worship of the Lord into deep idolatry, nullifying this conditional promise that God made to keep them from falling back into slavery and exile. Even though we are under a different covenant, with even better promises (**Hebrews 8:6**), in what ways do we, as blood-bought believers in Jesus, fall short of single-hearted worship of the Lord?

Yet I Will Rejoice

Lesson 1 – Historical Background

Is this something you personally struggle with? Take a moment in prayer as you answer this, asking the Lord to reveal to you the secrets of your heart (**Psalm 139:23-24**). How can we prevent this?

Let's go back to Manasseh:

Read 2 Kings 21:10-15

What is the Lord's evaluation of Manasseh? (v. 11)

What was the Lord's pronouncement against Judah? (vv. 12-14)

Look at **2 Kings 20:17-18** again. How does what the Lord tells Manasseh in chapter 21 compare with what the Lord had told Manasseh's father Hezekiah?

Deeper into the Word

Look up **Genesis 15:16** for an interesting cross-reference regarding the Amorites and read it in its context (vv. 12-16). Why did Israel stay so long in captivity in Egypt? What was the Lord waiting on? How does this affect what you saw in **2 Kings 21:11**? What does this tell you about the Lord's timing of world events?

Read 2 Kings 21:16-18

Besides spiritual evils, what else characterized Manasseh's reign?

How would you summarize the state of the nation of Judah because of Manasseh's leadership?

Yet I Will Rejoice

Lesson 1 – Historical Background

What does this tell you about the importance of leadership, whether in a nation, a church, or a home?

In what areas do you have influence as a leader? Looking at the fruit of your leadership, how has your influence affected the spiritual condition of those who have been entrusted to you?

Deeper into the Word

There is so much more to the story of Manasseh than just his apostasy that is recorded in 2 Kings. Read **2 Chronicles 33:10-13**, as well as the fruit of this encounter in **vv. 14-16**, and rejoice in the grace of God on behalf of one of His greatest prodigals.

As you close your study for today, take some time to pray for the leaders in your home, in your church, in your community, and in your nation, according to **1 Timothy 2:1-4**. Feel free to write your prayer here.

Part 3 – A Spark of Revival (Josiah)

Manasseh's son Amon ruled after Manasseh's death, and he was every bit as evil as Manasseh was before Manasseh's conversion. After just two years Amon's servants revolted against him and killed him, but those who were faithful to David's household and dynasty made sure that it was Amon's son (and not the conspirators) who ended up on David's throne in Jerusalem (**2 Kings 21:19-25**). That son of Amon was 8-year-old Josiah, and his reign was like a cleansing shower on the defiled land of Judah. Even so, as you read between the lines of Josiah's story, see if you can discern just how thoroughly idolatry had infiltrated God's holy people.

Read **2 Kings 22:1-2**

How is Josiah's reign summarized?

Think back to the legacy that was left by his grandfather, King Manasseh, and his father, King Amon. What would Josiah have to overcome to have his legacy characterized this way?

Read **2 Chronicles 34:1-3** (a parallel passage to **2 Kings 22:1-2**)

What was it about Josiah that made the difference in Josiah's reign? (v. 3)

Four years later, what did Josiah begin to do? (v. 3)

At 16 years old (eight years into his reign), Josiah began to seek the Lord. At 20 years old (12 years into his reign), he began the purge of Israel that would characterize his reign. **2 Kings 22:3-13** tells of a pivotal event that happened just a few years later, during Josiah's 18th year as king. Josiah saw that the temple was suffering from neglect, and he commissioned some men to restore it. As they did, they made an amazing discovery.

Read 2 Kings 22:8-13

What happened as they were repairing the temple?

How did Josiah respond to this discovery? (vv. 11, 13)

Read 2 Kings 22:14-20

Who did Josiah send his servants to speak to?

What does she tell them:

About Judah? Why? (vv. 16-17)

About Josiah? Why? (vv. 18-20)

Yet I Will Rejoice

Lesson 1 – Historical Background

Think about your own relationship with the Word of God. When you see Josiah's response to the reading of the Law, how does that compare with your reaction to the reading of the Word?

Read 2 Kings 23:1-3. What actions did Josiah take after hearing the Book of the Law and hearing the Lord's judgment through the prophetess Huldah?

Think back to Josiah's great-grandfather, Hezekiah, and how he responded to a similar word from Isaiah (2 Kings 20:16-20 if you need a reminder).

How does Josiah's response compare with Hezekiah's?

What does this tell you about Josiah's faith? About his heart for the Lord?

Deeper into the Word

This revelation of the Word of God sparked a renewed effort on Josiah's part to cleanse Judah and Israel from the idolatry that had entirely infiltrated the culture. Read **2 Kings 23:4-24** and look at all that Josiah had to do to complete this cleansing. What did he have to remove from the temple (vv. 4, 6, 7, 11, 12)? How about the priesthood, the ones who were set apart for the Lord to do His service (vv. 5, 8, 9)? What did he do around the capital city, Jerusalem (vv. 8, 10, 13-14)? And in the rest of Judah and all the way into Israel (vv. 15, 19, 24)?

Think for a moment about what the Lord saw as He looked at His beloved nation, the nation He redeemed out of Egypt, the nation He carried through the wilderness, the nation that were the special recipients of His promises and His covenants. It was a nation that He Himself selected to be set apart for Him, unique in their witness, intended to be a beacon of truth to all the nations. Look again at all that Josiah had to do to cleanse the nation, looking through the eyes of the Lord as you consider these reforms. What comes to mind?

Yet I Will Rejoice

Lesson 1 – Historical Background

Josiah heard the Word of the Lord, repented, and put his repentance into action (**James 1:22**). His desire to please the Lord led him to complete an extensive restoration of Israel, followed up with a Passover celebration that was unlike any that had been kept through all the days of Israel, from the days of the judges all the way through Josiah's time (**2 Kings 23:21-23**).

As we close, look at **2 Kings 23:25-27**.

What does this tell you about the Lord's heart?

Think about what this says about Judah's heart. Do you think they had a true repentance? Why or why not?

How about you? Is your heart like Josiah's, a heart that truly seeks after the Lord, with revival in your wake? Or are you like Israel, turning this way and that way following the influences of the culture around you?

Part 4 – Habakkuk’s Prophecy

The reforms that had begun under King Josiah were very short lived. His son Eliakim (renamed Jehoiakim) did not follow in Josiah’s ways but returned to the typical evil of the kings before him (**2 Kings 23:37**). Because of the historical details in Habakkuk’s prophecy, it is likely that it was during Jehoiakim’s reign that this conversation with the Lord took place.

We are going to spend today simply reading through the text of Habakkuk. I recommend using the plain ESV text that has been included in the appendix of this study so that you don’t get distracted by notes that may be included in your Bible. Part of the joy of inductive study is interacting with the text of the Bible on its own, listening for the Lord’s voice, and discovering the sweet insights that the Lord has for you. Commentary notes are good, but they should be saved for after you have had the chance to study on your own.

Begin in prayer, and then **read through Habakkuk** in its entirety without taking any notes.

What are your first impressions of this prophecy?

Read through Habakkuk a second time. As you do:

Put a ? in the margin next to anything you don’t understand.

Put a ! in the margin next to anything that surprises you.

Put a * in the margin next to anything that encourages you.

What were some of the things that you had a question about? (Come back to this as we continue our study and see how the Lord answers your questions.)

What were some things that surprised you?

Yet I Will Rejoice

Lesson 1 – Historical Background

What was encouraging to you?

After your read-throughs today, how do you anticipate this study making a difference in your life?

Deeper into the Word

Read through Habakkuk one more time. As you do, add a short summary in the margin next to the text of Habakkuk that gives a short (5-10 word) summary of what is happening in that paragraph. For example, next to verses 2-4, you could write something such as: “Habakkuk cries out to the Lord for help.” Don’t worry if you can’t do this for all the paragraphs just yet. Summarize as much as you can at this point, add your summaries of any paragraphs that you missed as we continue in our study.

Part 5 - Wrapping It Up

The Bible isn't simply a history book to give us facts about the past, but rather it is carefully curated to tell the story of redemption, the story of sin and salvation, of faith, of judgment and of mercy. Taken as a whole, the Bible is a gospel tract, telling the story of Jesus. Passages like what we are reading this week can be difficult because they are just one piece of the picture. Let's think through this for just a moment.

How does the history of Israel illustrate the truth of the first part of **Romans 6:23** which says, "*For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord?*"

Read **1 Corinthians 6:9-11**, as well as **Galatians 5:19-21**. What did you see in the account of Judah that illustrates these verses?

What value is there in learning about the history of God's relationship with Judah? How did you see God's grace and mercy in the passages we studied this week?

Yet I Will Rejoice

Lesson 1 – Historical Background

Think back to **2 Kings 20:16-19** and **22:15-20**. Now that we have seen the outcome of these warnings, what do you think about Hezekiah's and Josiah's responses? Do you think they would have responded differently if they could have known more fully what was going to happen?

Unlike these men, we have the good news of salvation in Jesus fully revealed. Read **Titus 3:3-7** carefully. What difference does the gospel make in your life? In the lives of those who are in your sphere of influence? Are you more like Hezekiah, thankful for your salvation and keeping it to yourself, or are you like Josiah, using the gifts and position the Lord has given you to impact the world around you?

As we will be studying Habakkuk in the weeks to come, look again at Judah through Habakkuk's eyes, the eyes of a person living during the time of Josiah's reign. What does he see? What did he experience? How might this have shaped his impressions of the Lord?



*There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are
in Christ Jesus.*

(Romans 8:1)

For Further Study

We've covered quite a bit of historical ground this week, laying a foundation for understanding Habakkuk's prophecy. We started at the end of Hezekiah's reign with some foreshadowing of the trouble to come. We saw what Judah looked like after Manasseh led them deeper and deeper into idolatry and evil. Even then we saw the Lord's mercy and grace working through Josiah, as Judah went through a time of cleansing and restoration. However, that cleansing was short-lived. As we read through Habakkuk's prophecy we saw in the first few verses just how far Judah had fallen from the Lord's ideal. Judah's final years were a chaotic time as they drifted further and further away from their God, and as their God started to give them over into the hands of their enemies. Let's skim through the final chapters of Kings and see what it was like to live in Judah during these tumultuous final years. This will help us to understand Habakkuk's concerns and shed some light on those famous verses at the end of Habakkuk 3.

*Note: This era is echoed in **2 Chronicles 35:20 – 36:23** if you'd like to read the parallel account. For our study today, we will be studying the account as it is told in 2 Kings.*

At the end of this lesson you'll find a chart entitled "Kings of Judah." Hezekiah has been filled out for you as an example. Look through your lesson this week and add what you learned about Manasseh, Amon, and Josiah to the chart.

Read 2 Kings 23:28-30

How does Josiah die?

Who became king in his place? Who anointed him as king?

Read 2 Kings 23:31-37

How long did Jehoahaz reign?

How was his reign characterized? (v. 32)

What happened to him?

How was he replaced? (v. 34)

How long did he reign? How was his reign characterized? (vv. 36-37)

What do you notice about the influence that Egypt has in Judah at this time?

What happened to the reforms of Josiah's time? Why do you suppose this is?

Read 2 Kings 24:1-7

What is going on in the world's political climate during this time? Notice the interaction between the nations.

Yet I Will Rejoice

Lesson 1 – Historical Background

What happened to Jehoiakim and Judah during this time of world-wide unrest? (vv. 2-4, 6)

What does it say in verse 2-4 about the Lord's role in this upheaval?

Add what you've learned about Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim to your chart of the kings.

Read 2 Kings 24:6-9

Who followed Jehoiakim as king? (v. 6)

How long did he reign? How was his reign characterized?

Read 2 Kings 24:10-20

What happened:

To Jehoiachin and his family?

To the temple and the king's house?

To the people of the land?

Who was made king in his place? (v. 17) Who was taken away, and who was left in Judah for him to rule? (vv. 14, 16)

How long did he reign? How was his reign characterized?

Skim through 2 Kings 25:1-21

For the sake of time, we're not going to go in depth into these verses. Just read through and get a feel for the destruction that sin brought on Jerusalem. Look at the what the Babylonians did, how they fought, how they treated the king, and what they did to the people.

What would it have been like to be in Jerusalem during this time?

Yet I Will Rejoice

Lesson 1 – Historical Background

Imagine yourself as a person who was faithful to the Lord, living in Jerusalem during this time. What questions would you have? What would be the prayer of your heart?

Finish your chart of the kings of Judah, adding what you've learned about these kings.

Kings of Judah

KING (REFERENCE)	AGE/ LENGTH OF REIGN	GOOD/ EVIL	IMPACT ON ISRAEL/ MAJOR EVENTS DURING REIGN
HEZEKIAH (2 KINGS 1:1- 20:21)	25/29 years	Good	<i>Removed high places and Asherah (restored true worship) Assyria captured northern kingdom and threatened Judah Prayed for deliverance from both Assyria and his own illness God granted deliverance Welcomed envoys from Babylon Warning of future Babylonian invasion Thankful for peace and security in his own days</i>
MANASSEH (2 KINGS 21:1-18)			
AMON (2 KINGS (21:19-26)			
JOSIAH (2 KINGS 22:1-23:30)			

Yet I Will Rejoice

Lesson 1 – Historical Background

JEHOAHAZ
(2 KINGS
23:31-35)

JEHOIAKIM
(2 KINGS
23:36-24:7)

JEHOIACHIN
(2 KINGS
24:8-17)

ZEDEKIAH
(2 KINGS
24:18-21)

