

CHAPTER 23

We have here,

I. The happy continuance of the goodness of Josiah's reign, and the progress of the reformation he began, reading the law (v. 1, 2), renewing the covenant (v. 3), cleansing the temple (v. 4), and rooting out idols and idolatry, with all the relics thereof, in all places, as far as his power reached (v. 5-20), keeping a solemn passover (v. 21-23), and clearing the country of witches (v. 24); and in all this acting with extraordinary vigour (v. 25).

II. The unhappy conclusion of it in his untimely death, as a token of the continuance of God's wrath against Jerusalem (v. 26-30).

III. The more unhappy consequences of his death, in the bad reigns of his two sons Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim, that came after him (v. 31-37).

2 KINGS 23:1-3

RENEWAL OF THE COVENANT

Josiah had received a message from God that there was no preventing the ruin of Jerusalem, but that he should deliver only his own soul; yet he did not therefore sit down in despair, and resolve to do nothing for his country because he could not do all he would. No, he would do his duty, and then leave the event to God. A public reformation was the thing resolved on; if any thing could prevent the threatened ruin it must be that; and here we have the preparations for that reformation.

1. He summoned a general assembly of the states, the elders, the magistrates or representatives of Judah and Jerusalem, to meet him *in the house of the Lord*, with the priests and prophets, the ordinary and extraordinary ministers, that, they all joining in it, it might become a national act and so be the more likely to prevent national judgments; they were all called to attend (v. 1, 2), that the business might be done with the more solemnity, that they might all advise and assist in it, and that those

who were against it might be discouraged from making any opposition. Parliaments are no diminution at all to the honour and power of good princes, but a great support to them.

2. Instead of making a speech to this convention, he ordered the book of the law to be read to them; nay, it should seem, he read it himself (v. 2), as one much affected with it and desirous that they should be so too. Josiah thinks it not below him to be a reader, any more than Solomon did to be a preacher, nay, and David himself to be a door-keeper in the house of God. Besides the convention of the great men, he had a congregation of the *men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem* to hear the law read. It is really the interest of princes to promote the knowledge of the scriptures in their dominions. If the people be but as stedfastly resolved to obey by law as he is to govern by law, the kingdom will be happy. All people are concerned to know the scripture, and all in authority to spread the knowledge of it.

3. Instead of proposing laws for the confirming of them in their duty, he proposed an association by which they should all jointly engage themselves to God, v. 3. The book of the law was the book of the covenant, that, if they would be to God a people, he would be to them a God; they here engage themselves to do their part, not doubting but that then God would do his.

(1.) The covenant was that they should walk after the Lord, in compliance with his will, in his ordinances and his providences, should answer all his calls and attend all his motions — that they should make conscience of all his commandments, moral, ceremonial, and judicial, and should carefully observe them *with all their heart and all their soul*, with all possible care and caution, sincerity, vigour, courage, and resolution, and so fulfil the conditions of this covenant, in dependence upon the promises of it.

(2.) The covenanters were, in the first place, the king himself, who stood by his pillar (^{<2114>}2 Kings 11:14) and publicly declared his consent to this covenant, to set them an example, and to assure them not only of his protection but of his presidency and all the furtherance his power could give them in their obedience. It is no abridgment of the liberty even of princes themselves to be in bonds to God. *All the people likewise stood to the covenant*, that is, they signified their consent to it and promised to abide by it. It is of good use to oblige ourselves to our duty with all possible solemnity, and this is especially seasonable after notorious backslidings to sin and decays in that which is good. He that bears an

honest mind does not shrink from positive engagements: fast bind, fast find.

~~2274~~ 2 KINGS 23:4-24

JOSIAH REFORMS JUDAH

We have here an account of such a reformation as we have not met with in all the history of the kings of Judah, such thorough riddance made of all the abominable things and such foundations laid of a glorious good work; and here I cannot but wonder at two things: —

1. That so many wicked things should have got in, and kept standing so long, as we find here removed.
2. That notwithstanding the removal of these wicked things, and the hopeful prospects here given of a happy settlement, yet within a few years Jerusalem was utterly destroyed, and even this did not save it; for the generality of the people, after all, hated to be reformed. *The founder melteth in vain, and therefore reprobate silver shall men call them,* ~~3469~~ Jeremiah 6:29, 30. Let us here observe,

I. What abundance of wickedness there was, and had been, in Judah and Jerusalem. One would not have believed it possible that in Judah, where God was known — in Israel, where his name was great — in Salem, in Sion, where his dwelling place was, such abominations should be found as here we have an account of. Josiah had now reigned eighteen years, and had himself set the people a good example, and kept up religion according to law; and yet, when he came to make inquisition for idolatry, the depth and extent of the dunghill he had to carry away appeared almost incredible.

1. Even in the house of the Lord, that sacred temple which Solomon built, and dedicated to the honour and for the worship of the God of Israel, there were found vessels, all manner of utensils, for the worship of Baal, *and of the grove* (or *Ashtaroth*), and *of all the host of heaven*, v. 4. Though Josiah had suppressed the worship of idols, yet the utensils made for that worship were all carefully preserved, even in the temple itself, to be used again whenever the present restraint should be taken off; nay, even the grove

itself, the image of it, was yet standing in the temple (v. 6); some make it the image of Venus, the same with Ashtaroth.

2. Just *at the entering in of the house of the Lord* was a stable for horses kept (would you think it?) for a religious use; they were holy horses, *given to the sun* (v. 11), as if he needed them who *rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race* (¹⁹¹⁶Psalm 19:5), or rather they would thus represent to themselves the swiftness of his motion, which they much admired, making their religion to conform to the poetical fictions of the chariot of the sun, the follies of which even a little philosophy, without any divinity, would have exposed and made them ashamed of. Some say that those horses were to be led forth in pomp every morning to meet the rising sun, others that the worshippers of the sun rode out upon them to adore the rising sun; it should seem that they drew the chariots of the sun, which the people worshipped. Strange that ever men who had the written word of God among them should be thus *vain in their imaginations!*

3. Hard *by the house of the Lord* there were *houses of the Sodomites*, where all manner of lewdness and filthiness, even that which was most unnatural, was practised, and under pretence of religion too, in honour of their impure deities. Corporal and spiritual whoredom went together, and the vile affections to which the people were given up were the punishment of their vain imaginations. Those that dishonoured their God were justly left thus to dishonour themselves, ⁶⁰²⁴Romans 1:24, etc. There were women that *wove hangings for the grove* (v. 7), tents which encompassed the image of Venus, where the worshippers committed all manner of lewdness, and this *in the house of the Lord*. Those did ill that made our Father's house a house of merchandise; those did worse that made it a den of thieves; but those did worst of all that made it (*Horrendum dictu! — Horrible to relate!*) a brothel, in an impudent defiance of the holiness of God and of his temple. Well might the apostle call them *abominable idolatries*.

4. There were many idolatrous altars found (v. 12), some in the palace, *on the top of the upper chamber of Ahaz*. The roofs of their houses being flat, they made them their high places, and set up altars upon them (²⁴⁹³Jeremiah 19:13; ³⁰⁰⁶Zephaniah 1:5), domestic altars. The kings of Judah did so: and, though Josiah never used them, yet to this time they remained there. Manasseh had built altars for his idols in the house of the Lord. When he repented he removed them, and *cast them out of the city* (⁴³¹⁵2 Chronicles

33:15), but, not destroying them, his son Amon, it seems, had brought them again into the courts of the temple; there Josiah found them, and thence he *broke them down*, v. 12.

5. There was *Tophet, in the valley of the son of Hinnom*, very near Jerusalem, where the image of Moloch (that god of unnatural cruelty, as others were of unnatural uncleanness) was kept, to which some sacrificed their children, burning them in the fire, others dedicated them, making them to pass through the fire (v. 10), *labouring in the very fire*, ~~<3013>~~ Habakkuk 2:13. It is supposed to have been called *Tophet* from *toph*, a drum, because they beat drums at the burning of the children, that their shrieks might not be heard.

6. There were *high places before Jerusalem, which Solomon had built*, v. 13. The altars and images on those high places, we may suppose, had been taken away by some of the preceding godly kings, or perhaps Solomon himself had removed them when he became a penitent; but the buildings, or some parts of them, remained, with other high places, till Josiah's time. Those that introduce corruptions into religion know not how far they will reach nor how long they will last. Antiquity is no certain proof of verity. There were also high places all the kingdom over, from *Geba to Beer-sheba* (v. 8), and *high places of the gates, in the entering in of the gate of the governor*. In these high places (bishop Patrick thinks) they burnt incense to those tutelary gods to whom their idolatrous kings had committed the protection of their city; and probably the governor of the city had a private altar for his *penates* — *his household-gods*.

7. There were idolatrous priests, that officiated at all those idolatrous altars (v. 5), chemarim, black men, or that wore black. See ~~<3004>~~ Zephaniah 1:4. Those that sacrificed to Osiris, or that wept for Tammuz (~~<3014>~~ Ezekiel 8:14), or that worshipped the infernal deities, put on black garments as mourners. These idolatrous priests the kings of *Judah had ordained to burn incense in the high places*; they were, it should seem, priests of the house of Aaron, who thus profaned their dignity, and there were others also who had no right at all to the priesthood, who burnt incense to Baal.

8. There were conjurers and wizards, and such as *dealt with familiar spirits*, v. 24. When they worshipped the devil as their god no marvel that they consulted him as their oracle.

II. What a full destruction good Josiah made of all those relics of idolatry. Such is his zeal for the Lord of hosts, and his holy indignation against all that is displeasing to him, that nothing shall stand before him. The law was that the monuments of the Canaanites' idolatry must be all destroyed (^(R015)Deuteronomy 7:5), much more those of the idolatry of the Israelites, in whom it was much more impious, profane, and perfidious.

1. He ordered Hilkiah, and the other priests, to clear the temple. This was their province, v. 4. Away with all the vessels that were made for Baal. They must never be employed in the service of God, no, nor reserved for any common use; they must all be burnt, and the ashes of them carried to Bethel. That place had been the common source of idolatry, for there was set up one of the calves, and, that lying next to Judah, the infection had thence spread into that kingdom, and therefore Josiah made it the lay-stall of idolatry, the dunghill to which he carried the filth and offscouring of all things, that, if possible, it might be made loathsome to those that had been fond of it.

2. The idolatrous priests were all put down. Those of them that were not of the house of Aaron, or had sacrificed to Baal or other false gods, he put to death, according to the law, v. 20. He *slew them upon their own altars*, the most acceptable sacrifice that ever had been offered upon them, a sacrifice to the justice of God. Those that were descendants from Aaron, and yet had burnt incense in the high places, but to the true God only, he forbade ever to approach the altar of the Lord; they had forfeited that honour (v. 9): He *brought them out of the cities of Judah* (v. 8), that they might not do mischief in the country by secretly keeping up their old idolatrous usages; but he allowed them to *eat of the unleavened bread* (the bread of the meat-offering, ^(R014)Leviticus 2:4, 5) *among their brethren*, with whom they were to reside, that being under their eye they might be kept from doing hurt and taught to do well; that bread, that unleavened bread (heavy and unpleasant as it was), was better than they deserved, and that would serve to keep them alive. But whether they were permitted to eat of all the sacrifices, as blemished priests were (^(R012)Leviticus 21:22), which is called, in general, *the bread of their God*, may be justly questioned.

3. All the images were broken to pieces and burnt. The image of the grove (v. 6), some goddess or other, was reduced to ashes, and the *ashes cast upon the graves of the common people* (v. 6), the common burying-place of the city. By the law a ceremonial uncleanness was contracted by the

touch of a grave, so that in casting them here he declared them most impure, and none could touch them without thereby making themselves unclean. *He cast it into the graves* (so the Chaldee), intimating that he would have all idolatry buried out of his sight, as a loathsome thing, and forgotten, as dead men are out of mind, v. 14. He *filled the places of the groves with the bones of men*; as he carried the ashes of the images to the graves, to mingle them with dead men's bones, so he carried dead men's bones to the places where the images had been, and put them in the room of them, that, both ways, idolatry might be rendered loathsome, and the people kept both from the dust of the images and from the ruins of the places where they had been worshipped. Dead men and dead gods were much alike and fittest to go together.

4. All the wicked houses were suppressed, those nests of impiety that harboured idolaters, the houses of the Sodomites, v. 7. “Down with them, down with them, rase them to the foundations.” The high places were in like manner broken down and levelled with the ground (v. 8), even that which belonged to the governor of the city; for no man's greatness or power may protect him in idolatry or profaneness. Let governors be obliged, in the first place, to reform, and then the governed will be the sooner influenced. He defiled the high places (v. 8 and again 5:13), did all he could to render them abominable, and put the people out of conceit with them, as Jehu did when he made the house of Baal a draught-house, ^{<2107>}2 Kings 10:27. Tophet, which, contrary to other places of idolatry, was in a valley, whereas they were on hills or high places, was likewise defiled (v. 10), was made the burying-place of the city. Concerning this we have a whole sermon, ^{<2191>}Jeremiah 19:1, 2, etc., where it is said, *They shall bury in Tophet*, and the whole city is threatened to be made like Tophet.

5. The horses that had been given to the sun were taken away and put to common use, and so were delivered from the vanity to which they were made subject; and the chariots of the sun (what a pity was it that those horses and chariots should be kept as the chariots and horsemen of Israel!) he burnt with fire; and, if the sun be a flame, they never resembled him so much as they did when they were chariots of fire.

6. The workers with familiar spirits and the wizards were put away, v. 24. Those of them that were convicted of witchcraft, it is likely, he put to death, and so deterred others from those diabolical practices. In all this he had a sincere regard to *the words of the law which were written in the book*

lately found, v. 24. He made that law his rule and kept that in his eye throughout this reformation.

III. How his zeal extended itself to the cities of Israel that were within his reach. The ten tribes were carried captive and the Assyrian colonies did not fully people the country, so that, it is likely, many cities had put themselves under the protection of the kings of Judah, ^{<400>}2 Chronicles 30:1; 34:6. These he here visits, to carry on his reformation. As far as our influence goes our endeavours should go to do good and bring the wickedness of the wicked to an end.

1. He defiled and demolished Jeroboam's altar at Bethel, with the high place and the grove that belonged to it, v. 15, 16. The golden calf, it should seem, was gone (*thy calf, O Samaria! has cast thee off*), but the altar was there, which those that were wedded to their old idolatries made use of still. This was,

(1.) Defiled, v. 16. Josiah, in his pious zeal, was ransacking the old seats of idolatry, and spied the sepulchres in the mount, in which probably the idolatrous priests were buried, not far from the altar at which they had officiated, and which they were so fond of that they were desirous to lay their bones by it; these he opened, took out the bones, and *burnt them upon the altar*, to show that thus he would have done by the priests themselves if they had been alive, as he did by those whom he found alive, v. 20. Thus he polluted the altar, desecrated it, and made it odious. It is threatened against idolaters (^{<2100>}Jeremiah 8:1, 2) that *their bones shall be spread before the sun*; that which is there threatened and this which is here executed (bespeaking their *iniquity to be upon their bones*, ^{<327>}Ezekiel 32:27) are an intimation of a punishment after death, reserved for those that live and die impenitent in that or any other sin; the burning of the bones, if that were all, is a small matter, but, if it signify the torment of the soul in a worse flame (^{<2164>}Luke 16:24), it is very dreadful. This, as it was Josiah's act, seems to have been the result of a very sudden resolve; he would not have done it but that he happened to turn himself, and spy the sepulchres; and yet it was foretold above 350 years before, when this altar was first built by Jeroboam, ^{<1132>}1 Kings 13:2. God always foresees, and has sometimes foretold as certain, that which yet to us seems most contingent. *The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord*; king Josiah's was so, and he turned it (or ever he himself was aware, ^{<2162>}Song of Solomon 6:12) to do this. No work of God shall fall to the ground.

(2.) It was demolished. He broke down the altar and all its appurtenances (v. 15), burnt what was combustible, and, since an idol is nothing in the world, he went as far towards the annihilating of it as he could; for he *stamped it small to powder* and made it *as dust before the wind*.

2. He destroyed all the houses of the high places, all those synagogues of Satan that were *in the cities of Samaria*, v. 19. These the kings of Israel built, and God raised up this king of Judah to pull them down, for the honour of the ancient house of David, from which the ten tribes had revolted; the priests he justly made sacrifices *upon their own altars*, v. 20.

3. He carefully preserved the sepulchre of that man of God who came from Judah to foretel this, which now a king who came from Judah executed. This was that good prophet who *proclaimed these things against the altar of Bethel*, and yet was himself slain by a lion for disobeying the word of the Lord; but to show that God's displeasure against him went no further than his death, but ended there, God so ordered it that when all the graves about his were disturbed his was safe (v. 17, 18) and no man moved his bones. He had entered into peace, and therefore should rest in his bed, ^{<257D>}Isaiah 57:2. The old lying prophet, who desired to be buried as near him as might be, it should seem, knew what he did; for his dust also, being mingled with that of the good prophet, was preserved for his sake; see ^{<0E30>}Numbers 23:10.

IV. We are here told what a solemn passover Josiah and his people kept after all this. When they had cleared the country of the old leaven they then applied themselves to the keeping of the feast. When Jehu had destroyed the worship of Baal, yet he took no heed to walk in the commandments and ordinances of God; but Josiah considered that we must learn to do well, and no *only* cease to do evil, and that the way to keep out all abominable customs is to keep up all instituted ordinances (see ^{<6B83>}Leviticus 18:30), and therefore he commanded all the people to keep the passover, which was not only a memorial of their deliverance out of Egypt, but a token of their dedication to him that brought them out and their communion with him. This he found written in the *book of the law*, here called *the book of the covenant*; for, though the divine authority may deal with us in a way of absolute command, divine grace condescends to federal transactions, and therefore he observed it. We have not such a particular account of this passover as of that in Hezekiah's time, 2 Chronicles 30. But, in general, we are told that *there was not holden such*

a passover in any of the foregoing reigns, no, not *from the days of the judges* (v. 22), which, by the way, intimates that, though the account which the book of Judges gives of the state of Israel under that dynasty looks but melancholy, yet there were then some golden days. This passover, it seems, was extraordinary for the number and devotion of the communicants, their sacrifices and offerings, and their exact observance of the laws of the feast; and it was not now as in Hezekiah's passover, when many communicated that were not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary, and the Levites were permitted to do the priests' work. We have reason to think that during all the remainder of Josiah's reign religion flourished and the feasts of the Lord were very carefully observed; but in this passover the satisfaction they took in the covenant lately renewed, the reformation in pursuance of it, and the revival of an ordinance of which they had lately found the divine original in the book of the law, and which had long been neglected or carelessly kept, put them into great transports of holy joy; and God was pleased to recompense their zeal in destroying idolatry with uncommon tokens of his presence and favour. All this concurred to make it a distinguished passover.

<1235> 2 KINGS 23:25-30

THE DEATH OF JOSIAH

Upon the reading of these verses we must say, Lord, though *thy righteousness* be *as the great mountains* — evident, conspicuous, and past dispute, yet *thy judgments are a great deep*, unfathomable and past finding out, <1316> Psalm 36:6. What shall we say to this?

I. It is here owned that Josiah was one of the best kings that ever sat upon the throne of David, v. 25. As Hezekiah was a non-such for faith and dependence upon God in straits (<1218> 2 Kings 18:5), so Josiah was a non-such for sincerity and zeal in carrying on a work of reformation. For this there was none like him,

1. That he *turned to the Lord* from whom his fathers had revolted. It is true religion to turn to God as one we have chosen and love. He did what he could to turn his kingdom also to the Lord.

2. That he did this *with his heart and soul*; his affections and aims were right in what he did. Those make nothing of their religion that do not make heart-work of it.

3. That he did it with *all his heart*, and *all his soul*, and *all his might* — with vigour, and courage, and resolution: he could not otherwise have broken through the difficulties he had to grapple with. What great things may we bring to pass in the service of God if we be but lively and hearty in it! 4. That he did this *according to all the law of Moses*, in an exact observance of that law and with an actual regard to it. His zeal did not transport him into any irregularities, but, in all he did, he walked by rule.

II. Notwithstanding this he was cut off by a violent death in the midst of his days, and his kingdom was ruined within a few years after. Consequent upon such a reformation as this, one would have expected nothing but the prosperity and glory both of king and kingdom; but, quite contrary, we find both under a cloud.

1. Even the reformed kingdom continues marked for ruin. For all this (v. 26) *the Lord turned not from the fierceness of his great wrath*. That is certainly true, which God spoke by the prophet (²⁴⁸⁰⁷Jeremiah 18:7, 8), that if a nation, doomed to destruction, *turn from the evil* of sin, God will *repent of the evil* of punishment; and therefore we must conclude that Josiah's people, though they submitted to Josiah's power, did not heartily imbibe Josiah's principles. They were turned by force, and did not voluntarily *turn from their evil way*, but still continued their affection for their idols; and therefore he that knows men's hearts would not recall the sentence, which was, That Judah should be removed, as Israel had been, and Jerusalem itself cast off, v. 27. Yet even this destruction was intended to be their effectual reformation; so that we must say, not only that the criminals had filled their measure and were ripe for ruin, but also that the disease had come to a crisis, and was ready for a cure; and this shall be all the fruit, even the taking away of sin.

2. As an evidence of this, even the reforming king is cut off in the midst of his usefulness — in mercy to him, that he might not see the evil which was coming upon his kingdom, but in wrath to his people, for his death was an inlet to their desolations. The king of Egypt waged war, it seems, with the king of Assyria: so the king of Babylon is now called. Josiah's kingdom lay between them. He therefore thought himself concerned to oppose the king

of Egypt, and check the growing, threatening, greatness of his power; for though, at this time, he protested that he had no design against Josiah, yet, if he should prevail to unite the river of Egypt and the river Euphrates, the land of Judah would soon be overflowed between them. Therefore *Josiah went against him*, and was killed in the first engagement, v. 29, 30. Here,

(1.) We cannot justify Josiah's conduct. He had no clear call to engage in this war, nor do we find that he asked counsel of God by urim or prophets concerning it. What had he to do to appear and act as a friend and ally to the king of Assyria? *Should he help the ungodly and love those that hate the Lord?* If the kings of Egypt and Assyria quarrelled, he had reason to think God would bring good out of it to him and his people, by making them instrumental to weaken one another. Some understand the promise made to him that he should *come to his grave in peace* in a sense in which it was not performed because, by his miscarriage in this matter, he forfeited the benefit of it. God has promised to keep us *in all our ways*; but, if we go out of our way, we throw ourselves out of his protection. I understand the promise so as that I believe it was fulfilled, for he *died in peace* with God and his own conscience, and saw not, nor had any immediate prospect of, the destruction of Judah and Jerusalem by the Chaldeans; yet I understand the providence to be a rebuke to him for his rashness.

(2.) We must adore God's righteousness in taking away such a jewel from an unthankful people that knew not how to value it. They greatly lamented his death (⁴⁸²⁵2 Chronicles 35:25), urged to it by Jeremiah, who told them the meaning of it, and what a threatening omen it was; but they had not made a due improvement of the mercies they enjoyed by his life, of which God taught them the worth by the want.

~~1238~~ 2 KINGS 23:31-37

REIGNS OF JEHOAHAZ AND JEHOIAKIM

Jerusalem saw not a good day after Josiah was laid in his grave, but one trouble came after another, till within twenty-two years it was quite destroyed. Of the reign of two of his sons here is a short account; the former we find here a prisoner and the latter a tributary to the king of Egypt, and both so in the very beginning of their reign. This king of Egypt having slain Josiah, though he had not had any design upon Judah, yet,

being provoked by the opposition which Josiah gave him, now, it should seem, he bent all his force against his family and kingdom. If Josiah's sons had trodden in his steps, they would have fared the better for his piety; but, deviating from them, they fared the worse for his rashness.

I. Jehoahaz, a younger son, was first made king by *the people of the land*, probably because he was observed to be of a more active warlike genius than his elder brother, and likely to make head against the king of Egypt and to avenge his father's death, which perhaps the people were more solicitous about, in point of honour, than the keeping up and carrying on of his father's reformation; and the issue was accordingly.

1. He did ill, v. 32. Though he had a good education and a good example given him, and many a good prayer, we may suppose, put up for him, yet he *did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord*, and, it is to be feared, began to do so in his father's lifetime, for his reign was so short that he could not, in that, show much of his character. He did *according to all that his wicked fathers had done*. Though he had not time to do much, yet he had chosen his patterns, and showed whom he intended to follow and whose steps he resolved to tread in; and, having done this, he is here reckoned to have done according to all the evil which those did whom he proposed to imitate. It is of great consequence to young people whom they choose to take for their patterns and whom they emulate. An error in this choice is fatal. ^{<3187>}Philippians 3:17, 18.

2. Doing ill, no wonder that he fared ill. He was but three months a prince, and was then made a prisoner, and lived and died so. The king of Egypt seized him, and put him in bands (v. 33), fearing lest he should give him disturbance, and carried him to Egypt, where he died soon after, v. 34. This Jehoahaz is that young lion whom Ezekiel speaks of in his *lamentation for the princes of Israel*, that learnt to *catch the prey and devour men* (that was the evil which he did in the sight of the Lord); but *the nations heard of him, he was taken in their pit, and they brought him with chains into the land of Egypt*, ^{<3191>}Ezekiel 19:1-4. See ^{<3220>}Jeremiah 22:10-12.

II. Eliakim, another son of Josiah, was made king by the king of Egypt, it is not said *in the room of Jehoahaz* (his reign was so short that it was scarcely worth taking notice of), but *in the room of Josiah*. The crown of Judah had hitherto always descended from a father to a son, and never, till

now, from one brother to another; once the succession had so happened in the house of Ahab, but never, till now, in the house of David. The king of Egypt, having used his power in making him king, further showed it in changing his name; he called him *Jehoiakim*, a name that has reference to Jehovah, for he had no design to make him renounce or forget the religion of his country. "All people will walk in the name of their God, and let him do so." The king of Babylon did not do so by those whose names he changed, ^{<20107>}Daniel 1:7. Of this Jehoiakim we are here told,

1. That the king of Egypt made him poor, exacted from him a vast tribute of 100 *talents of silver and a talent of gold* (v. 33), which, with much difficulty, he squeezed out of his subjects and gave to Pharaoh, v. 35. Formerly the Israelites had spoiled the Egyptians; now the Egyptians spoil Israel. See what woeful changes sin makes.

2. That which made him poor, yet did not make him good. Notwithstanding the rebukes of Providence he was under, by which he should have been convinced, humbled, and reformed, he *did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord* (v. 37), and so prepared against himself greater judgments; for such God will send if less do not do the work for which they are sent.