



LET'S BEGIN HERE

What does it mean to “think biblically”? How do we know when our thoughts reflect the heart of God’s Word? Nestled in the historical account of the monarchs of Israel, Josiah’s example is preserved for our admonition as an enduring model of biblical thinking . . . and action. Amazingly, this boy-king reflected the zeal and love for the Lord ten years before he discovered a single scroll of Scripture and despite his checkered paternal lineage. If Josiah—with those disadvantages—could please the Lord, how much more so can we?



How to Handle Biblical History

History in the Bible concerns itself with three broad subjects: the history of God’s activities in the world, the history of humanity, and the history of God’s chosen ones—Israel and the church. Every interpretation of Scripture must consider one or more of these subjects.

Regardless of the specific passage we’ve chosen to study, we must step back and ask questions about the book. Because every book of the Bible was written by a specific historical author to a specific historical audience living in a specific historical situation, to arrive at a general theological principle—a timeless truth—we must explore the specific history of each biblical book.

Two major sources used in recreating accurate biblical history are the Bible itself (primary source) and extra-biblical references (secondary sources), such as histories about ancient Israel, Egypt, Babylon, or Greece, biographies about biblical personalities, a Bible dictionary, a Bible atlas, a Bible commentary, or a Bible encyclopedia. Looking internally at the Bible and externally at the work of Bible scholars, we want to determine the general historical setting of the author and the audience.

Quotable

A person who takes God seriously says that His Word is my guide for the priorities I choose, the decisions I make, and the way I handle things in my home.

— Charles R. Swindoll





DIGGING DEEPER

Using the resources listed above (or online resources like the NET Bible or biblegateway.com), let's dig into the background surrounding 2 Chronicles 34.

Who wrote the Chronicles (early Hebrew manuscripts did not divide the books into 1 and 2 Chronicles)?

While scholars do not know the identity of the author of the Chronicles, they agree that a single author penned the works, due to the uniformity of writing style. Some scholars hypothesize that the Chronicles were written by Ezra.

Who was the original audience?

Because of the emphasis on the Davidic line and the priestly emphases, the people of Judah were most likely the original audience.

When were the Chronicles written?

Scholars estimate that the book couldn't have been written prior to 400 BC.

What purpose did the Chronicles serve in the Bible?



Two Filters for the Brain

Romans 12:2 says, “Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect” (NLT).

The world’s system is the air we breathe. Our issues aren’t that different than the ones Josiah’s generation faced. We still have idols vying for our time: materialism, sex, greed, self-promotion, pleasure-seeking and amusement, to name a few. Many of us have privileges that rival or surpass the kings of ancient Israel—information and virtual connection at the touch of a button, food to eat that we don’t cultivate, clean water, fast transportation. And like the kings of ancient Israel, we can be good stewards of the resources the Lord has blessed us with or we can take them for granted or even abuse them. The world’s system calls these abuses “the pursuit of happiness.” But God’s Word says, in contrast:

There is a path before each person that seems right,
but it ends in death. (Proverbs 14:12 NLT)

To think biblically, we need *filters* from the world’s air. Josiah had two important filters that Chuck mentions in his message.

Filter #1: Josiah had a believing parent instructing him.

Absolute power corrupts absolutely without a filter—Josiah’s father Amon and grandfather Manasseh testified to this sad maxim. We know that Josiah began to “seek the God of his ancestor David” (2 Chronicles 34:3 NLT) when he was 16 years old, but that Law (scholars surmise that they had unearthed a copy of Deuteronomy) wasn’t discovered until Josiah was 26 years old (34:15). Who stood in the gap, telling Josiah about Yahweh?

Read 2 Kings 22:1.

Who was Josiah’s mother?

Read Deuteronomy 6:7.



What were God's instructions to parents?

Read 2 Chronicles 17:7–9.

What did King Jehoshaphat do to instruct the people?

Chuck says “Why did [Josiah] do what he did? Why did he think like he thought? First was the influence of a godly parent. I’m convinced that Jedidah nurtured and nourished her son in the things of God. . . . Not unlike Timothy, who was under the influence of Eunice.”

Jedidah resisted the idolatry that plagued her kingdom and her household. Her dedication to the Lord was a filter of righteousness for her young son until he was old enough to honor God himself.

How could you use the story of Jedidah to encourage women?

How could you use her example to instruct parents?



Jedidah's testimony as a godly woman shines far beyond the one verse in which she's mentioned. Do you want to honor mothers on Mother's Day? Would you like to seek opportunities to build into the lives of the women in your churches? Tell them about Jedidah.

Filter #2: Josiah had a dynamic reception of God's Word.

In other words, the second filter was the Word of God itself and Josiah's willingness to act upon it. Let's consider this filter by correlating the narrative of 2 Chronicles 34 with other Bible passages.

Read James 1:22–25:

But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves. For if you listen to the word and don't obey, it is like glancing at your face in a mirror. You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like. But if you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free, and if you do what it says and don't forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it. (NLT)

This passage contains a metaphor for Bible reading. What is the metaphor?

What is the blessing promised in this passage?

The Bible is consistent across the Old and New Testaments. Before the half-brother of Jesus was born, Josiah lived out James' inspired words.

Read 2 Chronicles 34:19. How did Josiah react when he "looked in the mirror" of God's Law?



Why would Josiah tear his clothes in despair? He surely heard some sobering commands.

Read Deuteronomy 17:18–20. What were the requirements outlined for the king in this passage?

Read 2 Chronicles 34:29–32. Did Josiah “walk away” or “look carefully” after hearing God’s Law?



Application

In today’s world, we still ought to think biblically. Chuck offers three ways to think more biblically—starting today:

- Where to start: wherever you are allowing the world’s system to corrupt your mind
- What to ignore: whatever is keeping you from taking God seriously
- How to proceed (filters!):
 - Start with an open Bible
 - Cultivate a tender heart
 - Be willing to change



What are some additional applications that you picked up from engaging with 2 Chronicles 34? Write them down here.



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, help us do as Paul described in Philippians 4:8: “Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise.” May our actions follow our thoughts, and may our thoughts and actions glorify You. Amen.



WISE COUNSEL FOR TROUBLED TIMES

Thinking Biblically

2 Chronicles 34

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

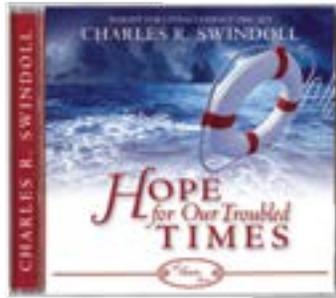
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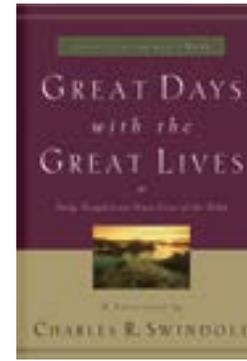
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For the 2017 broadcast, this Searching the Scriptures study was developed by the Pastoral Ministries Department in collaboration with Mark Tobey, based upon the original outlines, charts, and sermon transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages.



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