

引言 INTRODUCTION

What will you do to survive in an adverse situation? That is the plot behind the Sci-Fi movie “The Martian.” Actor Matt Damon was an astronaut who landed on the planet Mars. The team faced a terrible dust storm and was forced to head back to the earth. They thought Damon had perished in the accident. Sometime later, the NASA personnel realized that Damon was still alive. Therefore, engineers had to figure out a plan to rescue Damon. Meanwhile, being stuck on a desert planet, food became the biggest issue. Damon played a biologist in the film. He was able to grow potato in the living quarter. One hurdle after another, Damon managed to regain contact with earth. In a dramatic fashion, he came home safely two years later. In order to survive in a harsh environment, Damon had to abide by strict protocols. He must also trust the instructions he received. In our story today, king Josiah faced a serious challenge. He cared about not only his success, but also the destiny of his country. Judah had indulged in idolatry for almost six decades due to the two previous kings. Josiah became a king when he was only eight years old. Could he bring Judah back to God? It was hard to do the right things when others were in the habit of sinning. But Josiah decided to please God instead of people. We live in a fallen world, and we are often surrounded by non-Christians. But God is always there for us. Through it all, Josiah learned an important lesson: God is faithful to furnish, but He is also faithful to punish.

解釋 EXPLANATION

1. 聽到神的話 Heard the Words

Because of God’s grace, Josiah heard the written words of the Lord. We pick up the story after Josiah had been on the throne for 18 years. One day, Hilkiah the high priest accidentally found a copy of the Book of the Law in the temple. He gave the scroll to Shaphan the secretary, and he read it. Shaphan subsequently read the book aloud to the king. We see Josiah’s reaction in 2 Kings 22:11: **When the king heard the words of the Book of the Law, he tore his robes.** The motion was an expression of grieve and remorse. The ancestors had been overlooking God’s Word. Picture a family was renovating a room. After a wall was knocked down, they discovered a hidden storage space! There they found photo albums and diaries of their ancestors. They learned some unknown history of the family. Josiah understood that the book was not some outdated literature. It was the Word of God! The book disappeared for all those years when idolatry was the dominant religion. Brothers and sisters: how many copies of the Bible do you have? I have more than a dozen of them. There is no reward for collecting a stack of Bibles. You have to read it to get the benefits. Many Christians only listen to the Bible once a week on Sunday. Does that describe you? A sermon cannot replace your daily devotion. You will suffer from malnutrition if you only eat one meal a week! You can start a reading habit today. Read one chapter or one section a day. Read the Bible before you refer to any devotional material. Josiah then gave instructions to the officials in verse 13: **“Go and inquire of the Lord for me and for the people and for all Judah about what is written in this book that has been found. Great is the Lord’s anger that burns against us because our fathers have not obeyed the words of this book; they have not acted in accordance with all that is written there concerning us.”** The book contains

God's punishment if people violated His commands. That was why God used Assyria to judge the northern kingdom. A political outcome was due to a spiritual reason. Josiah sent his officials to ask God what Judah should do to avoid the same destiny. The officials consulted a prophetess named Huldah. God then spoke to her. The first part of the message in verse 16 to 17 was for Judah: 16 'This is what the Lord says: I am going to bring disaster on this place and its people, according to everything written in the book the king of Judah has read. 17 Because they have forsaken me and burned incense to other gods and provoked me to anger by all the idols their hands have made, my anger will burn against this place and will not be quenched.' God had determined to follow His plan to judge people for their sin of idolatry. Judah would also perish. The second half of the message was for Josiah. Verse 19 to 20 read: 19 'Because your heart was responsive and you humbled yourself before the Lord when you heard what I have spoken against this place and its people, that they would become accursed and laid waste, and because you tore your robes and wept in my presence, I have heard you, declares the Lord. 20 Therefore I will gather you to your fathers, and you will be buried in peace. Your eyes will not see all the disaster I am going to bring on this place.'" So they took her answer back to the king. Josiah's heart was broken because of the disobedience of fellow Israelites. Because of Josiah's humility, God would spare him from the upcoming turmoil. That Book of the Law could contain at least chapters 27 and 28 of Deuteronomy. In that passage, Moses told the Israelites to renew their covenant with God after they crossed the Jordan river. Six of the twelve tribes would ascend one mountain to proclaim God's blessings to those who followed His commands. God would provide for their needs. He would also protect them from natural disasters and foreign enemies. The other six tribes would climb up an opposite mountain to declare God's curses to those who violated His Law. There would be drought, diseases, defeat and death. There would also be dispersals to pagan nations, and the Israelites would be forced to devote themselves to idols. Moses then solemnly asked his people to choose which outcomes they preferred. Of course, we know that they eventually chose rebellion and stubbornness. Thus, God exercised His judgment. God's covenant is like a contract we sign today. It protects the rights of both parties. Most people apply for a loan when they buy a house. There will be penalties if a home-owner skips the monthly payment. The bank has a right to kick the tenants out and repossess the property. The Israelites lost their homeland because they breached God's covenant. People only like to get God's blessings. The concept of a God who disciplines us for our sins is offensive to them. They picture God as a gentle grandpa who loves to spoil his grandkids. He gladly overlooks sins, thinking that little children are prone to make mistake. Not so with God! He knows our hearts through and through. We cannot deny that we do not know His requirements. The question is how we treat God's Word. Do we look at God's standards as commands or suggestions? God's general principles never change. He asks us to love Him and love others. God will hold people accountable for their sins, whether in this life or in eternity. We feel sad about the rampant of sins in the society. But we can find hope and comfort in God. He is still in full control no matter how messy our world will become. He will fulfill His plans.

2. 聽從神的話 Heeded the Words

Josiah heard God's words of warning. God assured the king that he would not see any of those destructions in his lifetime. How did Josiah react? Back then Hezekiah breathed a sense of relief when he heard the same message. He did not show any worry, thinking that it would not affect him. But Josiah heeded the words. He hoped he could change the course of his country. Very

often, what matters is not what you know, but what you do based on what you know. A friend of one of my relatives went to the hospital for a heart procedure. The doctor urged her to adopt a healthy diet. After she was discharged from the hospital, she went straight to a MacDonalD's because she had not enjoyed French fries for a few days! Josiah knew there would be more serious outcomes if he did not heed God's words. Therefore, he directed an extensive spiritual reform in Judah in three areas. First, Josiah **renewed God's covenant**. He gathered everyone in his country to the temple. Josiah then read the Book of the Law to them. See their reaction in 2 Kings 23:3 – **The king stood by the pillar and renewed the covenant in the presence of the Lord – to follow the Lord and keep his commands, regulations and decrees with all his heart and all his soul, thus confirming the words of the covenant written in this book. Then all the people pledged themselves to the covenant.** Josiah wanted God's blessings rather than His curses. Therefore, he declared that he would obey God's covenant wholeheartedly. The people vowed to follow the king's example. Second, Josiah **removed the idols**. That was a long-standing problem for the country. Verse 5 says: **He did away with the pagan priests appointed by the kings of Judah to burn incense on the high places of the towns of Judah and on those around Jerusalem – those who burned incense to Baal, to the sun and moon, to the constellations and to all the starry hosts.** All the pagan religious facilities were removed. The book of Second Chronicles says that in fact Josiah started removing idols six years ago. The discovery of the Book of the Law further motivated him in the effort. A few former kings took similar measures. But Josiah went a step further. Look at verse 15: **Even the altar at Bethel, the high place made by Jeroboam son of Nebat, who had caused Israel to sin – even that altar and high place he demolished. He burned the high place and ground it to powder, and burned the Asherah pole also.** Josiah pinpointed the origin of idolatry. He removed the altar at Bethel established by Jeroboam. That was the first northern king about three centuries ago after the country was split into two! Jeroboam did not want his people to go back to the temple in Jerusalem to worship Jehovah. Therefore, he crafted two golden calves and put one at Dan to the north and another one at Bethel to the south. Josiah was determined to eliminate idol worship in the whole nation. Besides renewing God's covenant and removing the idols, the third thing Josiah did was to **remember the Passover**. We find the king's order in verses 21 and 22: **21 "Celebrate the Passover to the Lord your God, as it is written in this Book of the Covenant." 22 Not since the days of the judges who led Israel, nor throughout the days of the kings of Israel and the kings of Judah, had any such Passover been observed.** The only two kings who remembered the Passover were Hezekiah and Josiah. The book of Chronicles tells us that Josiah offered over forty thousand animals, which were two times that Hezekiah sacrificed. There were also Levite musicians singing songs to worship God. We can imagine a joyful celebration. Passover recalls God's deliverance of their ancestors from Egypt. Hence, it marked the birth of Israel. Most people celebrate their birthdays. Brothers and sisters: do you remember the date when you committed yourself to Jesus? The anniversary of your salvation is a good time for you to thank God for His grace. In fact, every time we observe the communion is a proper occasion for us to re-examine our relationship with the Lord. If we take God's grace for granted, we need to ask Him for forgiveness. If we have not been following Him closely enough, then we can ask Him for guidance. We remember the communion as a church. That points to the corporate nature of our spiritual life. We can worship God alone or with our family members at home. But that does not replace a public worship. We encourage each other as we sing and pray together. We live in an individualistic culture. We may think that it does not quite matter when one person is present or absent on Sunday. God cares about each child. Therefore, I urge everyone to make worship the only priority for your Sunday morning.

After all the spiritual reform, was Josiah able to change God's plan of judgment? Continue to read verses 26 and 27: **26 Nevertheless, the Lord did not turn away from the heat of his fierce anger, which burned against Judah because of all that Manasseh had done to provoke him to anger. 27 So the Lord said, "I will remove Judah also from my presence as I removed Israel, and I will reject Jerusalem, the city I chose, and this temple, about which I said, 'There shall my Name be.'"** Unfortunately, Judah would suffer the same fate as Israel. The effort of Josiah could not cancel out the damage done by Manasseh. We wonder: then what is the point of the reform? It surely does matter. First, Josiah did what God expected an Israel king to do. He was a spiritual leader. Second, Josiah brought his people back to God, no matter how long that would last. Third, in doing so, God's judgment was delayed even though it was not denied. God cares about our personal relationship with Him. You should do the right things regardless of what others may do. Despite all the good work Josiah did, his reign was cut short. At that time, the Egyptian army marched through Judah on its way to help Assyria fight against Babylon. Josiah went to confront Pharaoh Neco's troop. Perhaps he thought that the ally was a threat to Judah. Regardless, Neco killed Josiah in a battle. That ended the leadership of a noble king, and the hope to undo God's judgment on Judah.

結論 CONCLUSION

God is faithful to furnish, but He is also faithful to punish. God will do what He says. In order for us to receive God's blessings, we must hear His Word and also heed His Word. This written record affects our life. That reminds me of a testimony from Kristi Noem, the governor of South Dakota. She shared a personal story in a speech early this year at a conference. Her family has a farming and ranch business. Noem's father passed away when she was 22. All of a sudden, she had to take over as the general manager. She had little clue about what seeds to plant and where to plant them. Also, how much she should sell the cattle for a fair price. She just wished she could ask her dad one more time. Noem admitted that she had been pretending to be a leader during that time. A few months later, Noem mustered up courage to clean up her dad's pickup truck. She found a tiny tape-recorder. She played the tape. It was her dad's voice. He talked about various corn varieties and which one performed better in which field. He also recalled a wet year that led to a poor harvest, and how he planned to make changes for the following season. Noem looked further in the compartment and found more tapes. She listened to one after another. Her dad talked about cows, weather and finance. Noem said: on "that day, what changed everything was his words." Noem heard her dad's words. But she must heed the words in order to be successful. The same is true for us. We must read and heed God's Word to have a victorious Christian life.

引言 INTRODUCTION

你如何才能在不利的環境中生存下來？這是科幻電影火星人背後的情節。演員馬特·達蒙 (Matt Damon) 是一名登上火星的太空人。因為一場嚴重的沙塵暴，整個隊伍被迫返回地球。他們以為達蒙在事故中喪生了。一段時間之後，美國太空局的工作人員發現達蒙仍然生還。因此，他們必須想辦法拯救達蒙。他被困在一個沙漠星球上，食物成了最大的問題。他在電影中扮演一位生物學家。他成功地在宿舍種馬鈴薯。克服一個又一個障礙之後，達蒙也重新與地球通訊。兩年後，他終於安全地回家。為了在惡劣的環境中生存，達蒙必須嚴格遵守安全措施，還需要相信他收到的指示。在我們今天的故事中，約西亞王面臨著艱巨的挑戰。他不僅看重自己的成敗，他也關心國家的命運。在他之前的兩位君王使猶大陷在偶像敬拜將近六十年。約西亞登基時才八歲。他能把猶大帶回神面前嗎？當身旁的人都在犯罪時，你就很難去做正確的事情。但約西亞決定取悅神而不是取悅人。我們生活在一個墮落的世界，我們經常被非基督徒包圍。但神總是在我們身邊。經過一切事情，約西亞學到了一個重要的功課：神是信實的，祂會供應，但祂也能懲罰。

解釋 EXPLANATION

1. 聽到神的話 Heard the Words

因著神的恩典，約西亞聽到了神的話。在約西亞登上王位 18 年後，一天，大祭司希勒家無意中在聖殿裡發現了一本律法書。他把書卷交給書記沙番，他讀了一遍內容。沙番隨後向王朗讀這本書。我們在列王紀下 22:11 中看到約西亞的反應：**王聽見律法書上的話，便撕裂衣服**。這個動作是表達悲傷和痛悔的心情。列祖一直在忽視神的話。想像一個家庭正在裝修房間。一面牆被推倒後，他們發現了一個隱藏的空間！在那裡，他們找到了祖先的相冊和日記。從中他們了解了以前不知道的家族歷史。約西亞明白那本書並不是一些過時的文學作品。那是神的話語！在偶像敬拜的那些年裡，這本書消失了。弟兄姊妹：你們有多少本聖經？我有十多本。收集聖經越多並沒有任何獎勵。你必須閱讀聖經才能獲得好處。許多基督徒每週只在星期日聽一次聖經。你也是那樣嗎？聽講道不能代替你每天的靈修。如果你一周只吃一頓飯，你肯定會營養不良！你可以從今天開始養成讀聖經的習慣。每天讀一章或一段。請先閱讀聖經，然後再看靈修材料。約西亞接著在第 13 節中吩咐官員說：**「你們去為我、為民、為猶大眾人，以這書上的話求問耶和華；因為我們列祖沒有聽從這書上的言語，沒有遵著書上所吩咐我們的去行，耶和華就向我們大發烈怒。」**這本書提到神會懲罰違反祂命令的人。這就是為什麼神使用亞述來審判北

國。屬靈的原因導致政治的結果。約西亞派他的官員去求問神，猶大應該怎樣做才能避免同樣的命運。官員們諮詢了一位名叫戶勒大的女先知。然後神對她說話。第 16 至 17 節信息的第一部分是給猶大的：16 『耶和華如此說：我必照著猶大王所讀那書上的一切話，降禍與這地和其上的居民。17 因為他們離棄我，向別神燒香，用他們手所做的惹我發怒，所以我的忿怒必向這地發作，總不止息。』神決定按照祂的計劃來審判他們拜偶像的罪。猶大也將被滅。信息的後半部分是給約西亞的。第 19 至 20 節說：「『...至於你所聽見的話，19 就是聽見我指著這地和其上的居民所說、要使這地變為荒場、民受咒詛的話，你便心裡敬服，在我面前自卑，撕裂衣服，向我哭泣，因此我應允了你。這是我耶和華說的。20 我必使你平平安安的歸到墳墓到你列祖那裡；我要降與這地的一切災禍，你也不至親眼看見。』」他們就回覆王去了。約西亞因著以色列同胞的不順服感到難過。由於約西亞的謙卑，神會讓他免於即將到臨的災難。那本律法書至少可能包含申命記的第 27 和 28 章。在那段經文中，摩西告訴以色列人在渡過約旦河後要重新與神立約。十二個支派中的六個要登上一座山，宣告神會祝福遵行祂命令的人。神會供應他們的需要，並保護他們免受自然災害和外敵的侵害。另外六個支派會爬上對面的一座山，宣布神會如何咒詛違背祂律法的人。刑罰包括乾旱、疾病、戰敗和死亡。以色列人也會分散在異國，並被迫敬拜偶像。摩西然後嚴肅地要求他的子民選擇他們喜歡的結果。當然，我們知道他們選擇了叛逆和固執。因此，神執行祂的審判。神的約就像我們今天簽署的契約，它保護了雙方的利益。大多數人在買房子時會申請貸款。如果住戶不每月付款，將會受到處罰。銀行甚至有權把住戶趕出來並沒收房子。以色列人因為違背神的約而失去了家園。一般人都只喜歡得到神的祝福。他們難以接受一位會管教人的神。他們把神看為一位慈祥的爺爺，他總是喜歡寵孫子。他樂於容忍罪惡，因為他認為小孩子容易犯錯。神卻不是這樣！祂徹底地了解我們的心。我們不能藉口說我們不知道神的要求。問題是我們如何對待神的話語。我們將神的標準視為命令或是建議？神的普遍原則永遠不會改變。祂要求我們愛祂並愛別人。神會追討人的罪，不是在今生便是在永恆。我們會為社會上罪惡的泛濫感到難過。但我們可以在神那裡找到盼望和安慰。無論我們的世界變得多么混亂，神仍然掌權。祂會實現祂的計劃。

2. 聽從神的話 Heeded the Words

約西亞聽到了神警告的話。神向王保證，在他有生之年不會看到任何那些災難。約西亞有何反應？之前希西家聽到同樣的信息，他鬆一口氣。他沒有擔心，因為他知道災禍不會臨到他。但是約西亞選擇聽從神的話。他希望能改變國家的命運。很多時候，重點不是你知道什麼，而是你如何根據你所知道的去做決定。我一位親戚的一個朋友去醫院做心臟治療。醫生勸告她要改變飲食習慣。她出院後馬上跑去麥當勞，因為她已經好幾天沒有吃薯條了！約西亞知道如果不聽從神的話，後果會更嚴重。因此，他在三方面進行全面的屬靈改革。首先，約西亞更新了神的約。他召集

國民到聖殿去。約西亞然後給他們念了律法書。看看他們在列王紀下 23:3 中的反應：**王站在柱旁，在耶和華面前立約，要盡心盡性地順從耶和華，遵守他的誡命、法度、律例，成就這書上所記的約言。眾民都服從這約。**約西亞想要得到神的祝福而不是祂的咒詛。因此，他立志全心全意遵守神的約。人民承諾會效法王的榜樣。其次，約西亞清除偶像。那是一個長久以來的毛病。第 5 節說：**從前猶大列王所立拜偶像的祭司，在猶大城邑的邱壇和耶路撒冷的周圍燒香，現在王都廢去，又廢去向巴力和日、月、行星，並天上萬象燒香的人。**所有異教的設施都被拆除。歷代志下說，事實上，約西亞從六年前就開始去掉偶像。發現律法書後進一步激勵他的努力。一些以前的君王也做過類似的事情。但約西亞做得更加徹底。請看第 15 節：**他將伯特利的壇，就是叫以色列人陷在罪裡、尼八的兒子耶羅波安所築的那壇，都拆毀焚燒，打碎成灰，並焚燒了亞舍拉。**約西亞針對偶像崇拜的發源地。他拆除了耶羅波安在伯特利設立的祭壇。他是三個世紀前，國家一分為二後的第一位北國的王！耶羅波安不想他的子民回到耶路撒冷的聖殿敬拜耶和華。因此，他製造了兩隻金牛犢，一隻放在北邊的但，另一隻放在南邊的伯特利。約西亞決心在全國消除偶像崇拜。除了更新神的約和除去偶像之外，約西亞做的第三件事就是記念逾越節。我們在第 21 節和第 22 節中看到王的命令：**21 王吩咐眾民說：「你們當照這約書上所寫的，向耶和華你們的神守逾越節。」22 自從士師治理以色列人和以色列王、猶大王的時候，直到如今，實在沒有守過這樣的逾越節。**唯一守逾越節的兩位君王是希西家和約西亞。歷代志告訴我們，約西亞獻的牲畜超過四萬隻，是希西家所獻的一倍。當時也有利未人的詩班唱歌讚美神。我們可以想像到一個歡樂的慶祝氣氛。逾越節是紀念神從埃及拯救他們的祖宗。因此，它標誌著以色列國的誕生。一般人都會慶祝他們的生日。弟兄姊妹：你還記得你是什麼時候接受耶穌的嗎？你得救的周年紀念日是你感謝神恩典的好時機。事實上，每次當我們守聖餐，都是我們重新審視我們與主的關係的適當時機。如果我們把神的恩典視為理所當然，我們就需要請求神的赦免。如果我們沒有緊緊地跟隨神，那麼我們可以尋求神的指引。我們是整個教會一起守聖餐的。這就指出我們是一個信仰群體。我們可以單獨或與家人一起在家敬拜神。但這並不能取代集體敬拜。當我們一起唱詩和禱告時，我們便能互相鼓勵。我們生活在個人主義的文化中。我們可能認為星期天某個人有否出席並不重要。但是神卻關心每一個兒女。因此，我鼓勵大家把主日崇拜看為你在週日的唯一的事情。當完成了屬靈改革後，約西亞能改變神的審判計劃嗎？繼續閱讀第 26 和 27 節：**26 然而，耶和華向猶大所發猛烈的怒氣仍不止息，是因瑪拿西諸事惹動他。27 耶和華說：「我必將猶大人從我面前趕出，如同趕出以色列人一般；我必棄掉我從前所選擇的這城耶路撒冷和我所說立我名的殿。」**很可惜，猶大將遭受與以色列相同的命運。約西亞的努力無法抵消瑪拿西造成的破壞。我們會問：那麼約西亞的改革意義何在？這絕對是正確的事情。首先，約西亞按照神對以色列君王的要求去做。王是一位屬靈領袖。其次，約西亞將他的子民帶回神面前，無論這個改變能持續多久。第三，雖然神沒有停止祂的審判，但計劃被推遲了。神關心我們與祂的個人關係。不管別人怎麼做，你都應該做正確的事情。儘管約西亞

做了很多好事，他敬虔的領導卻被中斷了。當時，埃及軍隊經過猶大，要去幫助亞述與巴比倫打仗。約西亞去阻擋法老尼哥的軍隊。也許他以為這個聯盟會對猶大造成威脅。無論如何，尼哥在戰爭中殺死了約西亞。這便結束了一位好王的領導，並無法攔阻神對猶大的審判。

結論 CONCLUSION

神是信實的，祂會供應，但祂也能懲罰。神會照祂所說的去做。我們若想要得到神的祝福，就必須聽到祂的話，也要聽從祂的話。這本文字的記錄會影響我們的生命。這就讓我想起了南達科他州州長克里斯蒂·諾姆 (Kristi Noem) 的見證。今年年初，她在一次會議上的演講中分享她的個人故事。她的家族經營農業和牧場生意。諾姆的父親在她 22 歲時去世。突然間，她必須接任總經理的角色。她根本不知道該種什麼種子以及在哪裡種。她也不知道牛應該賣多少錢才算合理。她真希望能再一次請教她的父親。諾姆承認在那段時候她一直在裝作一個領袖。幾個月後，她終於鼓起勇氣清理她父親的卡車。她找到了一個小型錄音機。她便播放那一卷錄音帶。她聽到了爸爸的聲音。他談到各種玉米品種，哪個品種適合在哪一塊田生長。他還回憶某一年下雨太多，影響收成，他打算在下一個季節做出什麼調整。諾姆在車子裡找到更多的錄音帶。她一卷接一卷地聽著。她的父親談到牛、天氣和資金管理。諾姆說：「那天，爸爸的話改變了一切。」諾姆聽到了她父親的話。但她必須聽從他的話才能成功。我們也是一樣。我們必須閱讀並聽從神的話才能過得勝的基督徒生活。