

THE REVIVAL UNDER KING JOSIAH

TEXT: II CHRONICLES 34:1-33

INTRODUCTION:

1. I am going to preach this morning about the revival that took place during the reign of King Josiah.
 2. King Josiah was the last good king of Judah. Second Kings 23:25 says, “And like unto him was there no king before him, that turned to the LORD with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; neither after him arose there any like him.”
 3. Before we get started, there are several important things I want to point out about King Josiah. First of all, he started seeking after God when he was very young (II Chron. 34:1-3).
 4. Secondly, King Josiah walked straight. He “walked in the ways of David his father, and declined neither to the right hand, nor to the left” (34:2).
 5. Proverbs 4:26 and 27 says, “Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil.” This is what King Josiah did (34:2).
 6. Too many people are up and down, in and out, and all over the place. They are inconsistent, inconstant, irregular, irresponsible, erratic, unsteady, unsettled, uneven, unstable, unreliable, undependable, and unpredictable.
 7. Maybe I shouldn’t say “unpredictable,” because oftentimes we can accurately predict certain people are not going to show up.
 8. Some Christians are so unreliable and undependable, that if all of the church members were like them we’d have to close the church down. In fact, that is usually why most churches do close down.
 9. Most church members do not win souls or invite people to church so then the attendance dwindles.
 10. Members do not support the church financially so the offerings go down.
 11. Members do not support the prayer meeting or Sunday evening service so eventually they stop having evening services.
 12. Oftentimes, when churches are in decline, they resort to worldly gimmicks.
 13. We do not need worldly gimmicks, we need revival!
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1. A HEART FOR GOD (34:3)
 2. OBEDIENCE TO THE WORD OF GOD (34:14)
 3. A COVENANT WITH GOD

I. A HEART FOR GOD (34:3)

1. King Josiah was tender-hearted toward God. When Josiah was a little boy, his father, King Amon was murdered by his servants (33:21-25).
2. King Josiah's father, King Amon, was not a good king. He would not humble himself, and that led to his downfall (33:21-24).
3. But King Josiah was humble, and that is why God used him.
4. The Bible says, "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble" (James 4:6; I Peter 5:5).
5. The second commandment is, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image" (Exodus 20:4). King Josiah got rid of all the idols in Judah (34:3-7).
6. King Josiah got rid of the idols and he got rid of the sodomites too. Second Kings 23:7 says, King Josiah "brake down the houses of the sodomites, that were by the house of the LORD."
7. Notice that the sodomites built their homes close to the temple (II Kings 23:7). These sodomites were religious prostitutes.
8. The good kings of Judah always got rid of the idols and the sodomites. First Kings 15:12 says, King Asa "took away the sodomites out of the land, and removed all the idols that his fathers had made."
9. Second Kings 18:4 says King Hezekiah "removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves."
10. First Kings 22:46 says that King Jehoshaphat removed the sodomites out of the land. Romans 1 describes homosexuality as unclean, lustful, dishonorable, a lie, vile affections, unnatural, against nature, unseemly, reprobate, not convenient.
11. King Josiah had a heart for God. He not only smashed up all of the idols in Judah, he scattered the dust of the broken idols over the graves of the idolaters (II Chron. 34:4).
12. The Bible says, "Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after" (I Timothy 5:24).
13. King Josiah also burned the dead bones of the idolatrous priests on their pagan altars (II Chron. 34:5). This was all part of the necessary cleansing (34:5b).
14. In doing this, King Josiah was fulfilling a prophecy made three hundred years earlier (cf. I Kings 13:1-5).
15. Furthermore, King Josiah put away all of the witchcraft (cf. II Kings 23:24, 25). After purging the land of idolatry and witchcraft, King Josiah started to repair the temple in Jerusalem (34:8-13).

16. This is a sure sign of revival. The same thing happened during the reign of King Hezekiah. And the same thing happened when the remnant returned from the Babylonian captivity and rebuilt the temple.
17. When God's people are revived, they take care of God's house. I cannot understand people who say they love Jesus but they avoid attending church.
18. The Bible says Christ "loved the church, and gave himself for it" (Ephesians 5:25).
19. Our Lord said to Peter, "I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18).
20. First Timothy 3:15 says the church is "the house of God." It is "the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."
21. If you love God, you will love His church and do everything you can to see that it prospers and grows, and that it is successful in evangelizing the community. And "the regions beyond."
22. Before King Josiah came along, the temple had been neglected for many years. And today, churches all over America are being neglected. Church members start to get cold and backslidden, and so they close down the prayer meeting, and the Sunday School, and the Sunday evening services because the people have no appetite for Bible teaching and preaching.
23. Oh, the people do have a great appetite for sports and other amusements. It is very sad that many professing Christians are absorbed with sports and entertainment while the whole country is under the judgment of God (34:21).
24. Many professing Christians do not attend church services regularly, nor do they support the church financially. In churches all over America, people are not getting saved, and new converts are not getting baptized.
25. I read an article a while ago that said in the majority of Baptist churches in America, the only people getting baptized are children of members.
26. And many churches aren't even doing that. Church doors are closing everywhere. This was what it was like in the days of King Josiah. He organized some workers "to repair the house of the LORD his God" (34:8).

II. OBEDIENCE TO THE WORD OF GOD (34:14-16)

1. Light dispels darkness. Psalm 119:130 says, "The entrance of thy words giveth light."
2. While they were repairing the temple, "Hilkiah the priest found a book of the law of the LORD given by Moses." (34:14).

What a discovery! The Word of God had been neglected for many years.

There are many churches that have neglected the Word of God. Mark Galli, the senior managing editor of *Christianity Today*, recently wrote these strange words: “It is well and good for the preacher to base his sermon on the Bible, but he better get to something relevant pretty quickly, or we start mentally to check out.”

It is tragic that an editor of a popular Christian magazine does not think the Bible is “relevant”!

I recall hearing Dr. J. Vernon McGee say on the radio, “Evangelicals claim they believe in the inerrancy of Scripture, but very few of them obey the Bible or preach the Bible or believe the Bible.” That is sad but true!

Jesus said to the religious leaders, “Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God” (Matthew 22:29).

3. When Shaphan the scribe read the Word of God to King Josiah, the king “rent his clothes” in dismay and consternation (34:19).
4. In the Bible, rending one’s clothes always indicates grief and great emotion. Joel 2:13 says, “And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God.”
5. King Josiah was humble, and he was concerned about the wrath of God (II Chron. 34:21).
6. Are *you* concerned about the wrath of God?
7. John 3:36 says, “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.”
8. Revelation 6:16 refers to “the wrath of the Lamb.”
9. And then the next verse says, “For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?”
10. The day of God’s wrath is coming, and it is coming very soon. King Josiah was concerned about the wrath of God. Are you?
11. King Josiah humbled himself before God, and the LORD commended him (34:27)
12. Just as it is ridiculous for a man who seldom attends church to claim to love God, it is just as ridiculous for a man to claim to love God while he disobeys the Word of God.
13. Jesus said, “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15).

Someone said, “The neglect of the Word can only lead to disaster, disobedience, and death. God rescues his church from error, preserves his church in truth, and propels his church in witness only by his Word...In the end, an impatience with the Word of God can be explained only by an impatience with God. We all, both individually and congregationally, neglect God’s Word to our own ruin” (Albert Mohler).

King Josiah “rent his clothes” (34:19). Verse 27 says King Josiah wept.

King Josiah realized that the people were in trouble with the Lord for not obeying the Word of God (34:21).

Several of the king’s men went to Huldah the prophetess, and she answered them, “Thus saith the LORD...” (34:22, 23). Her message was a message of impending judgment (34:24, 25).

“The curses that are written in the book” (34:24) refer to curses in Deuteronomy 29:18-29.

King Josiah was spared the judgment of God because he humbled himself before God (34:27). However, the judgment came swiftly.

King Josiah’s sons were not humble, and God judged them for their wickedness (cf. 36:1-10).

The four kings who followed King Josiah were all bad. Three of them were his sons, and one of them, Jehoiachin was his grandson.

King Josiah’s son Zedekiah was the last king, and there has not been a king in Israel since then, and there won’t be until the second coming of Christ.

III. A COVENANT WITH GOD

1. Second Chronicles 34:31 says, King Josiah “made a covenant before the LORD, to walk after the LORD, and to keep his commandments, and his testimonies, and his statutes, with all his heart, and with all his soul, to perform the words of the covenant which are written in this book.”
2. But King Josiah’s repentance, and his weeping, and his reforms, and his covenant with the LORD were not enough to turn back the judgment of God.
3. It was too late (cf. II Kings 23:25-27).

4. Perhaps it is too late for the United States of America. Some say we have reached the point of no return. Only God knows.
5. Let us pray for revival.
6. Vance Havner said that “the greatest need of the church today is not more members, more buildings, or more money. The supreme issue is not even missions or evangelism. It is repentance and revival. We are so busy building bigger orchestras that we cannot stop to tune our instruments...Just as we are often too busy to have a physical checkup, so the church is often too occupied to submit to spiritual examination. Yet we never needed it more.”
7. “If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land” (II Chronicles 7:14).

CONCLUSION:

God’s prescription for revival is found in II Chronicles 7:14:

- “If my people...” God’s people need revival. Lost sinners need salvation.
- “shall humble themselves” – we need to humble ourselves. God hates pride.
- “and pray” – Jesus said, “that men ought always to pray, and not to faint.” (Luke 18:1).
- “and seek my face” – we need brokenness, prayerfulness, and earnestness!
- “and turn from their wicked ways” – repentance!

God’s promise – “then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.”