

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Turn your bibles with me to 2 Kings 22

We are slowly coming to the end of this wonderful book that the Lord has given to us.

We will be spending the next two Sundays going over the life of Josiah and the reforms that he brought to Judah and we will also see the response of the kingdom – and then when I return from Rosarito – Lord willing, we will have the final two chapters of 2 Kings – that deal with judgment coming upon Judah – as God uses Babylon to come into Jerusalem and destroy it and take the people captive back to Babylon where they will remain for 70 years.

These next two chapters are very important chapters in the life of the believer because they provide us with the perfect biblical illustration for real spiritual revival.

We see, hear and use the term “revival” so freely in our society today.

And yes there is a yearning for a great revival / a great spiritual awakening

We live in times that aren't too different from that of Josiah.

Josiah lived in a time that was filled with great wickedness.

He lived in a critical point in history when God would soon be bringing His judgment.

We too live in a time of great wickedness, and we are living in a time very, very close to when God will be bringing His judgment on the world.

And the question is always -

When is the next great revival going to happen???

The next Jesus Movement like we saw in the late 60's through the 80's, the next Azusa Street Revival that happened in the early 1900's.

What we see in the life of Josiah is that revival begins with one's heart's desire for God more than self.

And that is what we will see in the life of Josiah.

Let's pray...

[2Ki 22:1-20 NKJV] 1 Josiah [was] eight years old when he became king, and he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem. His mother's name [was] Jedidah the daughter of Adaiah of Bozkath. 2 And he did [what was] right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in all the ways of his father David; he did not turn aside to the right hand or to the left.

For 57 years, the kingdom of Judah was in a state of spiritual decay.

For 55 years, they were seduced by the wickedest king Judah ever had, Manasseh, and then when his son Amon took over – he was not much better.

The people of Judah were worshipping every pagan idol – they were sacrificing their children to Molech –

In fact the scriptures tell us that their wickedness had exceeded the wickedness of that Amorites that walked the Promised Land before them.

And here in verse 1, Josiah is made king –

He inherited the mess left from his father and grandfather – but notice verse two again, *he did [what was] right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in all the ways of his father David; he did not turn aside to the right hand or to the left.*

Does this mean that he did not sin – of course not, because he is compared to David – and we know that David sinned.

This simply means that they were wholly devoted to the Lord.

They neither personally worship any of the pagan gods and they didn't allow the corporate worship of other gods.

We are told in 2 Chronicles 34 that at the age of 16 (at the eight year of his reign) – Josiah began to seek after the God of his father David –

He wanted a personal relationship with the LORD – he wanted to know the Lord.

And when the Lord went from simply being his father's God or David's God to his God – that is when all the changes began to take place.

Church many people have heard about Jesus – but not every person who hears about Jesus knows Jesus – He wants us to know Him, He wants us to have a personal relationship with Him.

It is only He that can change us – we are incapable of changing ourselves.

3 Now it came to pass, in the eighteenth year of King Josiah, [that] the king sent Shaphan the scribe, the son of Azaliah, the son of Meshullam, to the house of the LORD, saying: 4 "Go up to Hilkiah the high priest, that he may count the money which has been brought into the house of the LORD, which the doorkeepers have gathered from the people. 5 "And let them deliver it into the hand of those doing the work, who are the overseers in the house of the LORD; let them give it to those who [are] in the house of the LORD doing the work, to repair the damages of the house-- 6 "to carpenters and builders and masons-- and to buy timber and hewn stone to repair the house. 7 "However there need be no accounting made with them of the money delivered into their hand, because they deal faithfully."

So now Josiah is 26 years old.

Now, in 2 Chronicles 34, we are told that prior to this Josiah had already started to clean house by taking away the high places (the alternate form of worship) and all the idols that his father had erected during his reign.

So change was happening in Judah. He had already started instituting his reforms.

By the way, in 1 Kings and 2 Kings – we have four good kings that brought reforms to Judah.

Asa and Jehoshaphat in 1 Kings and Hezekiah and Josiah in 2 Kings.

Josiah's reforms went further and deeper than any of the other reformers.

So here he has already brought about reforms and he looks at the temple and he sees it in disrepair – remember that Manasseh had turned the Temple of God into a house of idolatry by erecting idols in the temple.

Those had all been destroyed; however refuse and rubble had begun to collect on the temple grounds – so Josiah orders the repair of the temple.

He puts an end to all the bureaucracy – he has auditors oversee the work – just like King Jehoash had done (2 Kings 12)

And as the workers are cleaning up the temple – an amazing discovery is found.

8 Then Hilkiyah the high priest said to Shaphan the scribe, "I have found the Book of the Law in the house of the LORD." And Hilkiyah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it.

I think that this verse pretty much sums up the reason that Judah had turned their back on God – they neglected God's word.

In the book of Deuteronomy, instructions were given to the Levites that a copy of the Book of the Law was supposed to be placed next to the Ark of the Covenant

Instructions were given that every king had to have a copy of the law and he was to read it (Deut 17)

Instructions were given that every seven years, at the Feast of the Tabernacles, the nation was supposed to assemble and the entire law was supposed to be read to them. (Deut 31) Up to this point in scripture, we only have three recorded instances of the Children of Israel doing this.

Joshua had the priests do this (Joshua 8), King Jehoshaphat (2 Chron 17) and Josiah does it (in 2 Chron 34)

In the entire nation of Judah – this was the last copy of the law.

But what's most troubling about this church is how the Word of God could have gotten lost in the House of God.

How is it that the priests, those men charged with representing the Lord had not kept tabs on it and made it the center of their ministry?

How is it that they could think the House of God could operate without the Word of God?

How could they, the priests of God, how could they minister to the people of God without the Words of God.

They had the wonderful privilege of bringing people into a relationship with God by showing them God's revelation of Himself

But they had neglected this most vital part of their ministry

They neglected the teaching of the Word of God and turned to something easier and more exciting - temple service

The offerings and sacrifices were still made

The ritual continued to be performed

The horns continued to be blown and the lamps continues to be lit

The show went on

But no one knew why or what for-

Here is the real scary thing church –

Nothing has changed.

There are thousands of churches today that operate on human programs, teachings filled with religious principles and spiritual sentiment but the Word of God is absent.

Sure, they sprinkle their opinion or agenda with a bible verse here and there – in an effort to sanctify it – but the truth is that the Word of God is lost the House of God – covered up by piles of religious rubbish.

Because of that, there's no power, no conviction, no interest in dealing with the evil that's taking over more & more of the culture today.

Think about what Jesus commanded Peter at the end of the gospel of John when He restored him.

Jesus didn't say, "Thrill my sheep" or "Entertain my sheep"

He didn't even say, "Gather my Sheep"

He said, "Feed my sheep"

The basic function of a pastor – his number one duty is to feed the flock of God.

And that is done by giving the sheep a good, steady diet of the bread of life.

9 So Shaphan (Shafan) the scribe went to the king, bringing the king word, saying, "Your servants have gathered the money that was found in the house, and have delivered it into the hand of those who do the work, who oversee the house of the LORD." 10 Then Shaphan the scribe showed the king, saying, "Hilkiah the priest has given me a book." And Shaphan read it before the king.

Notice one copy of the Word of God.

Did Shaphan go place it in a safe somewhere? Did he put it in a museum?

No, he read it before the king.

The key to God's Word is not simply owning a copy but reading it.

11 Now it happened, when the king heard the words of the Book of the Law, that he tore his clothes. 12 Then the king commanded Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam the son of Shaphan, Achbor the son of Michaiah, Shaphan the scribe, and Asaiah a servant of the king, saying, 13 **"Go, inquire of the LORD for me, for the people and for all Judah,** concerning the words of this book that has been found; for great [is] the wrath of the LORD that is aroused against us, because our fathers have not obeyed the words of this book, to do according to all that is written concerning us."

When the Book of the Law was read to Josiah, he realized just how far Judah had fallen from the true worship of God.

When he heard of the warnings and curses God had pronounced in Deuteronomy & Joshua, he knew everything God had said they ought not do, and he knew that his father & grandfather had taken a delight in doing.

Surely judgment was not far away.

So he tore his royal robes in the sign of the utmost grief and repentance.

It's important to note that Josiah's reforms began by his noticing that "something" is wrong with the Temple.

Even though he didn't have the Bible—or even knew of its existence—he knew in his heart that "something" was wrong and that God's house needed to be repaired.

What ensued was God showing Josiah what was REALLY needed to repair and cleanse His house was only going to be done by complete obedience to His Word.

You see, it wasn't the temple that needed cleansing as much as the people using the temple.

So here Josiah is having his guys inquire to the Lord for himself and then for his people.

Revival begins first with me!

Say it with me – Revival begins with me!

In the 1800's there was a famous British evangelist that went by the name Gypsy Smith.

And he traveled throughout the world preaching the gospel.

And everywhere he preached revival broke out.

So one day, a delegation came to him and asked if revival was truly possible in their area – they wanted to see revival but the area was appeared to be too dry and dead.

So they asked him, what should we do?

And he responded, go home, lock yourself in a room, get a piece of chalk and draw a circle on the floor, then kneel in the circle and pray fervently that God would start a revival in that circle.

You see church, revival doesn't start by first praying for your spouse, or for your community, or your nation – it begins when we get on our face before the Lord and say, "Let it begin with me"

Just like Josiah.

14 So Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam, Achbor, Shaphan, and Asaiah went to Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tikvah, the son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe. (She dwelt in Jerusalem in the Second Quarter.) And they spoke with her.

So the question comes up – why didn't Josiah simply ask Hilkiah the priest to inquire of the Lord.

Why did he send them to Huldah – ???

And the reason was that Hilkiah was the priest in name only. He didn't know the law – he was just going through the motions.

However, Huldah was recognized as a prophetess and she could reveal the heart and mind of God.

15 Then she said to them, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel, 'Tell the man who sent you to Me, 16 "Thus says the LORD: 'Behold, I will bring calamity on this place and on its inhabitants--all the words of the book which the king of Judah has read-- 17 'because they have forsaken Me and burned incense to other gods, that they might provoke Me to anger with all the works of their hands. Therefore My wrath shall be aroused against this place and shall not be quenched.' " "

For over four hundred years, the people of Judah had rebelled against the statutes of God.

They had turned their back on Him and turned to other gods.

So here, the Lord pronounces judgment upon the nation of Judah

Judgment will come.

Church, sin always brings about repercussions.

[Gal 6:7 NKJV] 7 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.

And for four hundred years the people of Judah had been sowing abominations – they had been sowing rebellion.

And now, the scales of justice have been tipped to judgment – it is too late to turn aside God's wrath.

This is the bad news.

18 "But as for the king of Judah, who sent you to inquire of the LORD, in this manner you shall speak to him, 'Thus says the LORD God of Israel:

"[Concerning] the words which you have heard-- 19 "because your heart was tender, and you humbled yourself before the LORD when you heard what I spoke against this place and against its inhabitants, that they would become a desolation and a curse, and you tore your clothes and wept before Me, I also have heard [you]," says the LORD. 20 "Surely, therefore, I will gather you to your fathers, and you shall be gathered to your grave in peace; and your eyes shall not see all the calamity which I will bring on this place." ' " So they brought back word to the king.

The bad news was that judgment was still coming to Judah

The good news was that God's judgment was pushed back because Josiah humbled himself and because his heart was tender.

Tender to what?

To the Word of God – and because it was tender, the Holy Spirit brought about the conviction that led repentance.

Now, the opposite of a tender heart is what? A hardened heart.

Turn with me to Jer 4

[Jer 4:3-4 NKJV] 3 For thus says the LORD to the men of Judah and Jerusalem: "Break up your fallow ground, And do not sow among thorns. 4 Circumcise yourselves to the LORD, And take away the foreskins of your hearts, You men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, Lest My fury come forth like fire, And burn so that no one can quench [it], Because of the evil of your doings."

Here the prophet Jeremiah is speaking to the inhabitants of Judah.

Regarding the condition of their hearts

And unlike Josiah – their hearts were hardened.

Fallow ground is uncultivated ground – soil that has been abandoned –

And the foreskins of your heart is in reference to flesh that had corrupted their hearts as they turned from God.

So the message that God speaks here through the prophet Jeremiah is that He wants them to have a tender heart like Josiah so they would respond to the conviction of the Holy Spirit and repent – because judgment was just around the corner.

You see church,

Even though Josiah instituted the reforms that brought about revival to Judah, not all the people of Judah responded with sincerity.

Church always remember -

God's judgment will inevitably come, but lingers in the presence of those burdened to see others reconciled to Him, burdened for the work of the Lord.

God provides extended time for repentance and then brings judgment when the response to it flickers out.

I pray that we may all have a heart like Josiah

Amen

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.



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Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

Olympics

1. There was a television program before the 1988 Winter Olympics that featured blind skiers being trained for the slalom
2. Paired with sighted skiers, they were first taught to turn on gentle slopes
3. Then they were taken up on to the slalom course and with their sighted partners behind them, they slowly worked their way down the slope, turning to pass each gate as the guides told them, "Left" then "Right"
4. With a few runs, they grew accustomed to the routine, and it wasn't long before they were moving down the course with great confidence
5. But the critical issue was this; the blind skier had to place complete trust in the directions of the one who could see and follow their directions

6. This is a vivid picture of the Christian life in this world, we are in reality blind about what course to take we must rely solely on the Word of the Only One who is truly sighted— God Himself

c. His word gives us the direction we need to finish the course

[Num 6:24-26 NLT] 24 'May the LORD bless you and protect you. 25 May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you. 26 May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace.'



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