

Bibles???

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

Open up your bibles with me to 2 Kings 23 –

We are coming up to the end of this wonderful book that the Lord has given to us, we are drawing closer to God's judgment / His correction upon His people as a result of them turning their back on Him and turning to idolatry.

The thing is church – God had warned His people that this would be the consequence of their rebellion.

It was in His word.

The problem was that His people had abandoned His word.

It wasn't until King Josiah – who as a teen, sought God – and began to bring reforms to Judah.

He cleared the temple of the idols and the altars that his wicked father and grandfather worshipped and began to repair – and as the repairs were being made and the rubble was being cleared – the last copy of God's word was found.

And they bring it to Josiah and read it to him.

When he heard the many curses God had announced on their disobedience, he was overwhelmed & tore his royal robes in grief.

He realized that his own father & grandfather had violated God's command in the most vile way & had lead the entire nation in rebellion against God.

And God had already shown his wrath in the judgment of the northern nation of Israel that had been defeated & exiled by Assyria.

Josiah reasoned, surely Judah's judgment could not be far away.

And what sets Josiah apart – is that he actually did something about it.

He didn't wait around for judgment to come –

He knew it is never wrong to do right –and he used his authority to bring reform and return the nation to the worship of Yahweh.

So we are going to see this morning how far Josiah went with his reforms.

And after our study this morning we can come to the conclusion that Josiah was an individual who sold out to God.

He was an individual whose commitment to the Lord was absolute.

Let's pray...

[2Ki 23:1-37 NKJV] 1 Now the king sent them to gather all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem to him. 2 The king went up to the house of the LORD with all the men of Judah, and with him all the inhabitants of Jerusalem--the priests and the prophets and all the people, both small and great. And he read in their hearing all

the words of the Book of the Covenant which had been found in the house of the LORD.

I want to remind you that all this is taking place after Josiah was told that judgment would not come on his watch –

He continued to bring reforms to his people and notice the first thing he does –

He gathers all the people and declared to them God's word.

Notice he gathered – “all” and he read to them “all” – not just the parts he agreed with or the parts that he liked --“all”

You see loved ones; the author of Hebrews (11:6) tells us that without faith it is impossible to please God,

Paul tells us in the book of Romans (10:17) that faith comes by hearing the Word of God.

So he read them God's Word and let the Spirit use it to convict them of their sin and ignite the spark of faith – just like it did to him.

3 Then the king stood by a pillar and made a covenant before the LORD, to follow the LORD and to keep His commandments and His testimonies and His statutes, with all [his] heart and all [his] soul, to perform the words of this

covenant that were written in this book. **And all the people took a stand for the covenant.**

When Josiah finished reading to them all, he took a stand by the pillar in the temple court – this is the place where the kings were crowned – and he, both personally and publically renewed his covenant with God and when the people saw it – they were on board also.

However, notice how the author describes it -

Josiah's commitment was sincere, he was sold out to God – his commitment involved **all** his heart and soul to keep the commandments and statutes of the Lord.

However, the author doesn't say the same for the people.

They were not all sold out for God.

Some may have been – but the majority were simply **for** the covenant, but not really **in** it.

In other words, they were for renewing the covenant with God as good national policy, but they didn't take it personally.

How do we know this?

Because as soon as Josiah's reign ends – and the people get a wicked king, they revert back to doing what their heart desires.

Church, it is not enough to simply pray that the Lord raises up a leader like Josiah – who will bring reforms to our nation.

We must pray for a deep sense of spiritual conviction for our entire nation – beginning with the Church.

4 And the king commanded Hilkiah the high priest, the priests of the second order, and the doorkeepers, to bring out of the temple of the LORD all the articles that were made for Baal, for Asherah, and for all the host of heaven; and he burned them outside Jerusalem in the fields of Kidron, and carried their ashes to Bethel. 5 Then he removed the idolatrous priests whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense on the high places in the cities of Judah and in the places all around Jerusalem, and those who burned incense to Baal, to the sun, to the moon, to the constellations, and to all the host of heaven. 6 And he brought out the wooden image from the house of the LORD, to the Brook Kidron outside Jerusalem, burned it at the Brook Kidron and ground [it] to ashes, and threw its ashes on the graves of the common people.

So here we see Josiah's reforms begin where? The temple of the Lord

[1Pe 4:17 NKJV] 17 For the time [has come] for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if [it begins] with us first, what will [be] the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?

And he begins to clean house – all the idols that were in the temple (remember that his grandfather Manasseh had converted the House of the Lord into a house of idolatry)

So all the idols and images are removed and burned up.

He also gets rid of the people who were an influence for evil – the priests that were partaking in this alternative form of worship that was being practiced.

He then takes the ashes and of the wooden images and spreads them on top of the graves – this was not done to defile the graves but to defile the ashes of the wooden images that were being worshipped.

7 Then he tore down the [ritual] booths of the perverted persons that [were] in the house of the LORD, where the women wove hangings for the wooden image.

The temple of the Lord had been turned into a brothel –

So we see why Josiah reforms were so harsh and urgent – because of how far the people had rebelled against God.

8 And he brought all the priests from the cities of Judah, and defiled the high places where the priests had burned incense, from Geba to Beersheba; (these are the extents of Judah – from the north to the south) also he broke down the high places at the gates which [were] at the entrance of the Gate of Joshua the governor of the city, which [were] to the left of the city gate. 9 Nevertheless the

priests of the high places did not come up to the altar of the LORD in Jerusalem, but they ate unleavened bread among their brethren.

Josiah rounds up all the priests that took part in the unauthorized worship of God – those that burned incense in these high places.

They were disqualified from serving in the temple – however, they were still taken care of.

10 And he defiled Topheth, which [is] in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter pass through the fire to Molech.

Josiah then turns to Topheth –

This is the place where the people would sacrifice their children to Molech.

This is the place where the fire was kept burning day and night – because that is how often people were sacrificing their children.

I had you make a note of the name Topheth – toph – is the word for drums – so this is the place where one heard the constant beating of drums to drown out the screams of the children that were being sacrificed.

11 Then he removed the horses that the kings of Judah had dedicated to the sun, at the entrance to the house of the LORD, by the chamber of Nathan-Melech, the officer who [was] in the court; and he burned the chariots of the sun with fire. 12

The altars that [were] on the roof, the upper chamber of Ahaz, which the kings of Judah had made, and the altars which Manasseh had made in the two courts of the house of the LORD, the king broke down and pulverized there, and threw their dust into the Brook Kidron. 13 Then the king defiled the high places that [were] east of Jerusalem, which [were] on the south of the Mount of Corruption, which Solomon king of Israel had built for Ashtoreth the abomination of the Sidonians, for Chemosh the abomination of the Moabites, and for Milcom the abomination of the people of Ammon. 14 And he broke in pieces the [sacred] pillars and cut down the wooden images, and filled their places with the bones of men. 15 Moreover the altar that [was] at **Bethel**, [and] the high place which Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel sin, had made, both that altar and the high place he broke down; and he burned the high place [and] crushed [it] to powder, and burned the wooden image.

So here we see more reforms from Josiah.

However, I asked you to make a note of Bethel – because now, the reforms extend outside of Judah.

Bethel was part of the Northern Kingdom – Israel, which had already been taken captive by the Assyrians.

Bethel was one of the locations where Jeroboam had set up his false worship – of the golden calf.

Turn your bibles with me to 1 Kings 13 –

I want to show you an amazing prophesy -

[1Ki 13:1-4 NKJV] 1 And behold, a man of God went from Judah to Bethel by the word of the LORD, and Jeroboam stood by the altar to burn incense. 2 Then he cried out against the altar by the word of the LORD, and said, "O altar, altar! Thus says the LORD: 'Behold, a child, **Josiah by name, shall be born to the house of David; and on you he shall sacrifice the priests of the high places who burn incense on you, and men's bones shall be burned on you.' "** 3 And he gave a sign the same day, saying, "This [is] the sign which the LORD has spoken: Surely the altar shall split apart, and the ashes on it shall be poured out." 4 So it came to pass when King Jeroboam heard the saying of the man of God, who cried out against the altar in Bethel, that he stretched out his hand from the altar, saying, "Arrest him!" Then his hand, which he stretched out toward him, withered, so that he could not pull it back to himself.

300 years before 2 Kings 23, God sent a man of God to pronounce judgment upon the altar at Bethel.

And the “man of God” even told Jeroboam the name of the individual who God was going to use to bring judgment upon them.

Josiah –

Guess how many Kings of Judah had the name Josiah? 1

16 As Josiah turned, he saw the tombs that [were] there on the mountain. And he sent and took the bones out of the tombs and burned [them] on the altar, and defiled it according to the word of the LORD which the man of God proclaimed, who proclaimed these words. 17 Then he said, "What gravestone [is] this that I see?" So the men of the city told him, "[It is] the tomb of the man of God who came from Judah and proclaimed these things which you have done against the altar of Bethel." 18 And he said, "Let him alone; let no one move his bones." So they let his bones alone, with the bones of the prophet who came from Samaria.

So in verse 16, you have the fulfillment of the prophetic word that the man of God had pronounced upon the altar at Bethel.

Now, in 1 Kings 13, after the man of God leaves Jeroboam, he is met by an old prophet.

He invites the man of God home for dinner – however, God had warned the man of God to not eat bread nor drink water there.

The old prophet then lies to the man of God and tells him that an angel told him that God was cool with him having dinner with him,

So the man of God agrees – and as they are eating, God sends a message through the old prophet and pronounces judgment on the man of God – and the message is that his bones were never going to lie in the tombs of his father.

The man of God leaves and he is torn apart by a lion – but get this, the lion doesn't do anything to the donkey – and as people walk by there was the lion sitting next to the body of the man of God and the donkey.

So the old prophet buries him and gives instructions that when he dies, that they bury him next to the man of God.

So 300 years later, Josiah finds out that this tomb belongs to the man of God – and in order to honor the prophet that spoke of him and out of respect, he didn't touch his bones.

19 Now Josiah also took away all the shrines of the high places that [were] in the cities of Samaria, which the kings of Israel had made to provoke the LORD to anger; and he did to them according to all the deeds he had done in Bethel. 20 He executed all the priests of the high places who [were] there, on the altars, and burned men's bones on them; and he returned to Jerusalem.

Though Samaria was technically under the rule of Assyria at this time, they were so weak and preoccupied with their own problems they had no ability to stop Josiah's campaign to eradicate idolatry.

And Josiah, informed as he was by God's word, understood that the territory of Israel didn't stop at Judah's northern boundary with the northern Kingdom.

The whole split that took place between the 2 nations was wrong so he determined to extend his reforms throughout the length & breath of the territory given them by God.

21 Then the king commanded all the people, saying, "Keep the Passover to the LORD your God, as [it is] written in this Book of the Covenant." 22 Such a Passover surely had never been held since the days of the judges who judged Israel, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel and the kings of Judah. 23 But in the eighteenth year of King Josiah this Passover was held before the LORD in Jerusalem.

God had commanded His Children to observe the Passover – every year – to commemorate the Lord's work of redemption on their behalf as it pointed to the Lamb of God – Jesus Christ.

For four hundred years – it was widely ignored.

Until Josiah celebrated it the right way.

In 2 Chronicles 35, it tells us that there hadn't been a Passover like this one since the days of Samuel.

It means that Josiah's was the best Passover ever.

The feast was held exactly as the Lord had commanded it should be.

24 Moreover Josiah put away those who consulted mediums and spiritists, the household gods and idols, all the abominations that were seen in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, that he might perform the words of the law which were written in the book that Hilkiah the priest found in the house of the LORD.

King Josiah was simply fulfilling God's commandments.

God commanded the Children of Israel when they left Egypt – to put away those that practiced the occult.

And here we see Josiah being obedient to His word.

25 Now before him there was no king like him, who turned to the LORD with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the Law of Moses; nor after him did [any] arise like him. 26 Nevertheless the LORD did not turn from the fierceness of His great wrath, with which His anger was aroused against Judah, because of all the provocations with which Manasseh had provoked Him. 27 And the LORD said, "I will also remove Judah from My sight,

as I have removed Israel, and will cast off this city Jerusalem which I have chosen, and the house of which I said, 'My name shall be there.' "

God was not pushed over the edge by Manasseh alone.

If that were the case, he would have poured out his fury on Manasseh himself.

What we're seeing here is that AFTER Josiah's excellent reign, the SINS of Manasseh were still embedded in the people's hearts.

Josiah's reforms had not brought about a genuine revival.

They were enough to delay judgment, but not reverse it.

Know this – if the spiritual cancer of Manasseh had been removed by their sincere repentance, God would have put off this judgment.

28 Now the rest of the acts of Josiah, and all that he did, [are] they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? 29 In his days Pharaoh Necho king of Egypt went to the aid of the king of Assyria, to the River Euphrates; and King Josiah went against him. And [Pharaoh Necho] killed him at Megiddo when he confronted him. 30 Then his servants moved his body in a chariot from Megiddo, brought him to Jerusalem, and buried him in his own tomb. And the people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah, anointed him, and made him king in his father's place.

As Babylon and Assyria were busy fighting each other in the north, Assyria forms an alliance with Egypt –

Josiah decides to get involved – in fact, when you read 2 Chronicles 35, King Necho warns Josiah – “Refrain from meddling with God, who is with me, lest He destroy you.”

Josiah dies in a battle that he had no place being in –

Nowhere do the scriptures point out that Josiah prayed before going into battle – he just took it upon himself.

He got involved in a battle not meant for him.

Church, there are no exemptions from stupidity

It is wrong to think that if we are living our lives in a godly fashion that we are invincible.

An interesting thing about Jehoahaz – he wasn't the rightful heir to the throne – he was the fourth oldest son of Josiah (1 Chron 3)

He was hand-picked by the people to rule – the people felt that he was more pliable & subject to their desires.

31 Jehoahaz [was] twenty-three years old when he became king, and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. His mother's name [was] Hamutal the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah. 32 And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all

that his fathers had done. 33 Now Pharaoh Necho put him in prison at Riblah in the land of Hamath, that he might not reign in Jerusalem; and he imposed on the land a tribute of one hundred talents of silver and a talent of gold. 34 Then Pharaoh Necho made Eliakim the son of Josiah king in place of his father Josiah, and changed his name to Jehoiakim. And [Pharaoh] took Jehoahaz and went to Egypt, and he died there. 35 So Jehoiakim gave the silver and gold to Pharaoh; but he taxed the land to give money according to the command of Pharaoh; he exacted the silver and gold from the people of the land, from every one according to his assessment, to give [it] to Pharaoh Necho. 36 Jehoiakim [was] twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. His mother's name [was] Zebudah the daughter of Pedaiah of Rumah. 37 And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his fathers had done.

Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim both did evil in the sight of the Lord –

However, Jehoiakim sought to reverse all the reforms that King Josiah had made.

In fact in Jeremiah 36, the scroll (Word of God) is read in front of Jehoiakim – and

instead of tearing his clothes like King Josiah did – Jehoiakim takes the scroll – tears it into pieces and he throws it into the fire.

I read a quote from FB Meyers – he said that just because a captain destroys the map that tells him where all the rocks are – it doesn't mean that the rocks are not going to be there to tear apart his ship.

Men may deride and destroy the Bible; but this will not empty the future of hell, or hell of its bitter remorse.

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.

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.

I was reading recently about the Welsh revival in 1904

Churches were filled from 6 AM until Midnight

Within a few months – crime was nonexistent on the island

Every single tavern / pub in the island closed down – not because Christians were out there picketing – but because no one was going.

In fact, many of the pub owners, they would go to the church to complain and while they were at church – they would accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

Church, morality cannot be legislated.

Revival is what is needed – when people are touched by the Lord, their lives begin to change and sin begins to be removed.

We don't fight darkness with darkness – we simply turn on the light.

[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.'

