

JOSIAH, THE LAST GOOD KING OF JUDAH

TEXT: II CHRONICLES 34

INTRODUCTION:

1. 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."
2. King Josiah tried to lead the people of Judah back to God. When he began his reign, the country was on the road to judgment because of the sins of King Manasseh, King Josiah's grandfather (cf. Jer. 15:1-4).
3. In many ways, America is in the same dangerous position today.
4. The four kings who followed King Josiah were all bad. Three of them were his sons, and one of them, Jehoiachin was his grandson.
5. 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 till the second coming of Christ.

I. KING JOSIAH'S EARLY PIETY (34:1-7).

1. King Josiah was saved at an early age (34:3a). There are many important lessons here.
2. King Josiah's father, King Amon, was not saved. He was a wicked man. He was not a good king. He only reigned for two years, and then his servants conspired against him and killed him in his house (33:21-25).
3. Despite having a wicked father, King Josiah had a heart for God. Perhaps the key is found in II Kings 22:1, where we read, "His mother's name was Jedidah, the daughter of Adaiah of Boscath."
4. Timothy's father was not saved but he grew up to be a good preacher. The apostle Paul wrote to Timothy and said, "When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also" (II Timothy 1:5).
5. This is an encouragement for godly mothers, as well as Sunday School teachers and all church workers -- many young people grow up without a godly father but still turn out right.
6. Another important lesson: many great men of God were saved at a young age -- Samuel, David, Daniel, and Timothy, to name but a few.

7. Ecclesiastes 12:1 says, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them."
8. In Mark 10:14, Jesus said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God."
9. I read that at eight years of age, eighty percent of a person's character is formed. The apostle Paul wrote to Timothy, "And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (II Timothy 3:15).
10. Let us keep reaching and training young people through our Sunday School, and Children's Church, and Vacation Bible School, and youth group meetings, and preaching services, etc.

II. KING JOSIAH'S REFORMATIONS (34:3-22).

1. Second Chronicles 34:3 says that in the twelfth year of his reign (King Josiah was 20 years old at the time) "he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem from the high places, and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images."
2. The Bible tells us that King Asa and King Hezekiah did the very same thing when they sat on the throne in Jerusalem.
3. King Josiah started to remove all of the idols in the twelfth year of his reign (34:3-5).
4. It is significant that this reform is mentioned first.
5. Before God said, "Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness" (Exodus 20:13-16), God said, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me," and "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image" (Exodus 20:3, 4).
6. King Josiah not only destroyed all the idols in Judah, he went up into the northern kingdom of Israel and cleaned that up too (34:6, 7).
7. In his great zeal to cleanse Judah and Jerusalem from idolatry, King Josiah burned the bones of the idolatrous priests upon their heathen altars (34:4-7).
8. By doing this, King Josiah was fulfilling a prophecy made over 300 years earlier (34:5; cf. I Kings 13:1-5; II Kings 23:14-20).
9. King Josiah also tore down the houses of the sodomites (II Kings 23:7).
10. Notice that the sodomites built their homes close to the temple (II Kings 23:7). These sodomites were religious prostitutes.

11. Furthermore, King Josiah put away all of the witchcraft (cf. II Kings 23:24, 25).
12. After purging the land of idolatry and witchcraft, King Josiah started to repair the temple in Jerusalem (34:8-13). During the reign of King Manasseh, and during the reign of King Amon, the temple had been neglected.
13. 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 they have no appetite for Bible teaching and preaching.
14. Oh, people do have a great appetite for sports and other amusements. It is rather ridiculous that the news media is in an uproar over deflated footballs while the whole country is under the judgment of God (34:21).
15. Many professing Christians do not attend church services regularly, nor do they support the church financially. All over America, cobwebs cover the baptistery because people are not getting saved, and new converts are not getting baptized.
16. 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).
17. While repairing the temple, Hilkiah the high priest "found a book of the law of the LORD given by Moses" (34:14-18).

III. KING JOSIAH'S RESPONSE TO THE WORD OF GOD (34:19).

1. It was a wonderful day for King Josiah when the Word of God was read to him.
2. Psalm 119:130 says, "The entrance of thy words giveth light." Light dispels darkness.
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 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 repentant. King Josiah was concerned about the wrath of God (II Chron. 34:21).
6. Are you concerned about the wrath of God? 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.”

7. Revelation 6:16 refers to “the wrath of the Lamb.” And then the next verse says, “For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?” 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?
8. King Josiah humbled himself before God, and the LORD commended him (34:27).

CONCLUSION:

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. Personally I think it may be too late for the United States of America.
5. Let us pray for revival.
6. "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).