

1  **How Then Shall We Live?**

2 Chronicles 34

2  **Josiah**

- Josiah is the last of Judah's good kings, but he is also the godliest king that Israel or Judah have had since the time of David.
- *And he did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, and walked in the ways of David his father; and he did not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was yet a boy, he began to seek the God of David his father...* (2 Chron 34:2-3)

3  **Josiah**


- *Before him there was no king like him, who 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, nor did any like him arise after him.* (2Ki 23:25)

4  **Josiah**


- When Josiah becomes king, he inherits a very difficult situation: the land is ripe for judgment.
  - **Hezekiah** – in his great-grandfather Hezekiah's time, God pronounced that the Babylonians would come to Jerusalem and take away everything and everyone as punishment for Jerusalem's pride.
  - **Manasseh** – The worship of idols and the shedding of innocent blood had filled Judah's cup of iniquity to overflowing.

5  **The defiled land**

- This situation is similar to the one we find ourselves in in the United States today.
- We have long rejected the Word of God and the blood of innocents lies upon our heads and hands.
- Idolatry is rampant, and God's name is no longer held in honor.

6  **What can we do?**

- We can do one of three things: preach defeatism, preach prosperity, or follow Josiah's example:
  - Josiah sought the Lord, like David sought the Lord.
  - Josiah cleaned house.
  - Josiah built up what was broken.
  - Josiah rediscovered God's Word
  - Josiah pleaded helplessly


7  **1) Be like David**

- David sought the Lord relationally (2 Sam 7)
- David loved God's Word (Psalm 19)
- David saw God's hand (2 Sam 16)
- David relied not on his own strength, but on God's

8  **2) Clean house**

- *For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was yet a boy, he began to seek the God of David his father, and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of the high places, the Asherim, and the carved and the metal images. And they chopped down the altars of the Baals in his presence, and he cut down the incense altars that stood above them. And he broke in pieces the Asherim and the carved and the metal images, and he made dust of them and scattered it over the graves of those who had sacrificed to them. He also burned the bones of the priests on their altars and cleansed Judah and Jerusalem.* (2Ch

34:3-5)

9  **2) Clean house**

- *And the king commanded Hilkiah the high priest and the priests of the second order and the keepers of the threshold to bring out of the temple of the LORD all the vessels made for Baal, for Asherah, and for all the host of heaven. He burned them outside Jerusalem in the fields of the Kidron and carried their ashes to Bethel. (2Ki 23:4)*

10  **2) Clean house**

- *And he deposed the priests whom the kings of Judah had ordained to make offerings in the high places at the cities of Judah and around Jerusalem; those also who burned incense to Baal, to the sun and the moon and the constellations and all the host of the heavens. (2Ki 23:5)*
- *And he broke down the houses of the male cult prostitutes who were in the house of the LORD, where the women wove hangings for the Asherah. (2Ki 23:7)*

11  **2) Clean house**

- “Male cult prostitute” in the Old Testament is a reference specifically to sodomy.
- In Canaanite culture, this was the only occupation available to sodomite men.
- The very house of God itself had become a refuge for things which were an abomination to God.

12  **2) Clean house**

- *And in the cities of Manasseh, Ephraim, and Simeon, and as far as Naphtali, in their ruins all around, he broke down the altars and beat the Asherim and the images into powder and cut down all the incense altars throughout all the land of Israel. Then he returned to Jerusalem. (2Ch 34:6-7)*

13  **2) Clean house**

- Josiah’s cleansing of the cities of Manasseh and Ephraim include the calf-worship altars that Jeroboam had built at Bethel, and fulfills a prophecy made roughly 300 years ago by the prophet Iddo:

14  **2) Clean house**








- *And behold, a man of God came out of Judah by the word of the LORD to Bethel. Jeroboam was standing by the altar to make offerings. And the man cried against the altar by the word of the LORD and said, "O altar, altar, thus says the LORD: 'Behold, a son shall be born to the house of David, Josiah by name, and he shall sacrifice on you the priests of the high places who make offerings on you, and human bones shall be burned on you.'" (1Ki 13:1-2)*

15  **2) Clean house**

- *Moreover, the altar at Bethel, the high place erected by Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, that altar with the high place he pulled down and burned, reducing it to dust. He also burned the Asherah. (2Ki 23:15)*
- They also find the tomb of Iddo, the prophet who had predicted Josiah’s reforms, and Josiah orders that his tomb be left undisturbed.

16  **2) Clean house**

- It is important to note that Josiah starts purging the land by first purging his own house, Jerusalem, and the Temple of God before he then spreads his reforms to Judah or to the remnant of the nation of Israel.

- It should be no different for us – before demanding holiness of a world that does not know God, we should first apply those same standards to our own homes and churches.
- 17  **3) Build up what is broken**
- *Now in the eighteenth year of his reign, when he had cleansed the land and the house, he sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, and Maaseiah the governor of the city, and Joah the son of Joahaz, the recorder, to repair the house of the LORD his God. (2Ch 34:8)*
  - In the space of just two generations, the House of God which Hezekiah had restored had once again fallen into disuse and disrepair.
- 18  **3) Build up what is broken**
- Man's social institutions were created and ordained by God to serve specific purposes:
    - The family – to mirror the relationship between Christ and his church and to be responsible for passing on a heritage to the next generation.
    - The Church – the ultimate relationship, to spread the kingdom of Jesus Christ to every corner of the globe, and to be the living extension of God's love and generosity.
- 19  **3) Build up what is broken**
- Man's social institutions were created and ordained by God to serve specific purposes:
    - Government – God established government for two purposes: To punish evil, and to reward good.
  - Things start breaking down when we try to change or deny the purposes of these God-ordained institutions.
- 20  **4) Rediscover God's Word**
- *While they were bringing out the money that had been brought into the house of the LORD, Hilkiah the priest found the Book of the Law of the LORD given through Moses. Then Hilkiah answered and said to Shaphan the secretary, "I have found the Book of the Law in the house of the LORD." And Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan. (2Ch 34:14-15)*
- 21  **4) Rediscover God's Word**
- *Then Shaphan the secretary told the king, "Hilkiah the priest has given me a book." And Shaphan read from it before the king. And when the king heard the words of the Law, he tore his clothes. (2Ch 34:18-19)*
  - It takes merely the reading of God's Word for Josiah to realize just how dire their situation is, and the curses of the law which they have brought upon themselves.
- 22  **4) Rediscover God's Word**
- The Word of God is both infinitely relevant and incredibly potent.
  - It ought to be the focus of our preaching, the standard for our living, and the final word for our morality.
  - Since the time of Manasseh, the people of Judah had willfully rejected and ignored the Word of God.
- 23  **4) Rediscover God's Word**
- When the king realizes just how dire their situation is, he gathers together all of Jerusalem and Judah and reads to them the words of the law they have forgotten.
  - *And the king went up to the house of the LORD, with all the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the priests and the Levites, all the people both*

*great and small. And he read in their hearing all the words of the Book of the Covenant that had been found in the house of the LORD. (2Ch 34:30)*

24  **5) Plead helplessly**

- *And the king commanded Hilkiah, Ahikam the son of Shaphan, Abdon the son of Micah, Shaphan the secretary, and Asaiah the king's servant, saying, "Go, inquire of the LORD for me and for those who are left in Israel and in Judah, concerning the words of the book that has been found. For great is the wrath of the LORD that is poured out on us, because our fathers have not kept the word of the LORD, to do according to all that is written in this book." (2Ch 34:20-21)*

25  **5) Plead helplessly**

- *And she said to them, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: 'Tell the man who sent you to me, Thus says the LORD, Behold, I will bring disaster upon this place and upon its inhabitants, all the curses that are written in the book that was read before the king of Judah. Because they have forsaken me and have made offerings to other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands, therefore my wrath will be poured out on this place and will not be quenched. (2Ch 34:23-25)*

26  **5) Plead helplessly**

- *But to the king of Judah, who sent you to inquire of the LORD, thus shall you say to him, Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: Regarding the words that you have heard, because your heart was tender and you humbled yourself before God when you heard his words against this place and its inhabitants, and you have humbled yourself before me and have torn your clothes and wept before me, I also have heard you, declares the LORD. Behold, 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 disaster that I will bring upon this place and its inhabitants.'" And they brought back word to the king. (2Ch 34:26-28)*

27  **5) Plead helplessly**

- God graciously extends mercy toward Josiah, and grants Judah a stay of judgment as long as they humble themselves before Him.
- God is a loving and merciful God who gets glory from showing mercy, especially to those who are most undeserving.
- God has shown mercy to our nation and He will continue to do so if we as a nation will humble ourselves before Him.

28  **It starts at home**

- While these things are difficult and perhaps even impossible for you to effect at a national level, you can begin today by implementing them at a personal level.
  - Love God like David
  - Clean house, starting with your own heart
  - Build up what is broken, the things of God that have fallen into neglect
  - Rediscover the treasures of God's Word for yourself and your family
  - Plead helplessly every day for the mercy of God upon this nation and upon our families