

## 2 Chronicles 34 – Thursday, May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2017

**2 Chronicles 34** -- 1 Josiah was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem. 2 And he did what was right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the ways of his father David; he did not turn aside to the right hand or to the left.

- The chapter begins by re-introducing us to Josiah the son of the evil king Amon who became king at the age of eight years old.
- It seems he wanted nothing to do with the evil ways of his father before him, even making this decision at this very young age.
- As such, Josiah did what was right in the site of the Lord fulfilling the prophecy spoken of him some three hundred years prior.

1 Kings 13:1–2 (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.’”

- I should point out how that the prophecy was of a child, by the name of Josiah, this because of how young he was at this time.
- As we’ll see next, not only was Josiah eight years old when he became king he began seeking the Lord at the young age of 16.
- Then, four years later, at the age of 20, he begins cleansing the temple and he begins repairing the temple at 26 years of age.

- The reason I point this out is because it’s a great source of encouragement for those who are young, and who have teenagers.
- In other words, even in our day, as evil as it is in the last days, it’s still possible for young people to be committed to the Lord.
- I think of Mary who was a youth, and the disciples, all of whom were young at the time the Lord had called them to follow Him.

3 For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was still young, he began to seek the God of his father David; and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of the high places, the wooden images, the carved images, and the molded images. 4 They broke down the altars of the Baals in his presence, and the incense altars which were above them he cut down; and the wooden images, the carved images, and the molded images he broke in pieces, and made dust of them and scattered it on the graves of those who had sacrificed to them. 5 He also burned the bones of the priests on their altars, and cleansed Judah and Jerusalem. 6 And so he did in the cities of Manasseh, Ephraim, and Simeon, as far as Naphtali and all around, with axes. 7 When he had broken down the altars and the wooden images, had beaten the carved images into powder, and cut down all the incense altars throughout all the land of Israel, he returned to Jerusalem.

- I don’t think Josiah’s youth at the time he did this can be overstated such that he possessed leadership and administrative gifts.
- To me, this speaks to how God’s callings are God’s enabling’s, in the sense that God always packages the how with the what.
- The reason I mention this is he doesn’t return to Jerusalem until he sees all the sinful things and people have been removed.

One commentator of this wrote, “Josiah’s reforms did not only remove sinful things, but also the sinful people that promoted and permitted these sinful things. The idols that filled the temple did not get there or stay there on their own—there were idolatrous priests who were responsible for these sinful practices. Any thorough reformation cannot only deal with sinful things; it must also deal with sinful people. If sinful people are not dealt with, they will quickly bring back the sinful things that were righteously removed.

8 In the eighteenth year of his reign, when he had purged the land and the temple, he sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, Maaseiah the governor of the city, and Joah the son of Joahaz the recorder, to repair the house of the LORD his God. 9 When they came to Hilkiah the high priest, they delivered the money that was brought into the house of God, which the Levites who kept the doors had gathered from the hand of Manasseh and Ephraim, from all the remnant of Israel, from all Judah and Benjamin, and which they had brought back to Jerusalem. 10 Then they put it in the hand of the foremen who had the oversight of the house of the LORD; and they gave it to the workmen who worked in the house of the LORD, to repair and restore the house. 11 They gave it to the craftsmen and builders to buy hewn stone and timber for beams, and to floor the houses which the kings of Judah had destroyed. 12 And the men did the work faithfully. Their overseers were Jahath and Obadiah the Levites, of the sons of Merari, and Zechariah and Meshullam, of the sons of the Kohathites, to supervise. Others of the Levites, all of whom were skillful with instruments of music, 13 were over the burden bearers and were overseers of all who did work in any kind of service. And some of the Levites were scribes, officers, and gatekeepers.

- Here, we’re told that at twenty-six years of age, Josiah begins the work of restoring the temple just as Hezekiah did before him.
- What’s interesting about this is that he is able to organize all of this and delegate the work to men who did the work faithfully.
- It’s also interesting to note that he has the Levites and the musicians oversee the work of renovating and restoring the temple.

14 Now when they brought out the money that was brought into the house of the LORD, Hilkiah the priest found the Book of the Law of the LORD given by Moses. 15 Then Hilkiah answered and said to Shaphan the scribe, “I have found the Book of the Law in the house of the LORD.” And Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan.

- This is interesting for a number of reasons, not the least of which is that, the Word of God had been lost in the temple of God.
- Sadly, this has profound application to the condition of the church today, in these last days; the Word of God has been lost.
- If you were to ask me what I thought was the sign of the Lord’s return in addition to Israel as the prophetic clock this would be it.

2 Timothy 4:1–4 (NIV) — 1 In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: 2 Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. 3 For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. 4 They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.

- I would submit that the evil in the world today is directly proportionate to the diminishing and even eliminating of God's Word.
- Here's how I get there, the Word of God is a mirror that shows us our sinful condition in the eyes of a perfect and sinless God.
- As such, when you remove the mirror of God's Word or don't do anything with what you see in the mirror sin and evil will ensue.

James 1:22–25 (NIV) — 22 Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. 23 Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror 24 and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. 25 But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do.

16 So Shaphan carried the book to the king, bringing the king word, saying, "All that was committed to your servants they are doing. 17 And they have gathered the money that was found in the house of the LORD, and have delivered it into the hand of the overseers and the workmen." 18 Then Shaphan the scribe told the king, saying, "Hilkiah the priest has given me a book." And Shaphan read it before the king. 19 Thus it happened, when the king heard the words of the Law, that he tore his clothes.

- It's important to understand that the tearing of clothes on the part of Josiah was an expression of his grief and conviction of sin.
- I suppose you could say that this is a textbook response of sorts as it relates to one realizing their condition in the Word of God.
- Truth be known, all great revivals start in this way, namely, the Word of God, convicting the people of God, by the Spirit of God.

Of this Charles Spurgeon wrote, "If we want revivals, we must revive our reverence for the Word of God."

20 Then the king commanded Hilkiah, Ahikam the son of Shaphan, Abdon the son of Micah, Shaphan the scribe, and Asaiah a servant of the king, saying, 21 "Go, inquire of the LORD for me, and for those who are left in Israel and Judah, concerning the words of the book that is 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." 22 So Hilkiah and those the king had appointed went to Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tokhath, the son of Hasrah, keeper of the wardrobe. (She dwelt in Jerusalem in the Second Quarter.) And they spoke to her to that effect.

- I find it interesting that when Josiah commands them to go inquire of the Lord, they go to a woman who was basically a tailor.
- While I realize she was a prophetess, the question is; why go to her instead of other prophets like Jeremiah and Zephaniah?
- I would suggest that it's because often times, God will choose to use, the least and the last people we would ever consider.

Adam Clarke said it best this way, "We find from this, and we have many facts in all ages to corroborate it, that ...bishop, or a priest, may, in some cases, not possess the true knowledge of God; and that a simple woman, possessing the life of God in her soul, may have more knowledge of the divine testimonies than many of those whose office it is to explain and enforce them."

- I also find it rather interesting that there were women mentioned in the earthly genealogy recorded in the gospel of Matthew.
- Actually, this would be unthinkable in that day, by virtue of the fact that the culture deemed women to be of such little value.
- It's interesting to note that two of the women in Matthew's earthly genealogy of the Savior had sinful pasts involving prostitution.

- The first one named is Tamar, who fathered Perez and Zerah by Judah her father-in-law, by disguising herself as a prostitute.
- The second one mentioned is Rahab who was also a prostitute living in Jericho, who hid the spies from the king to save them.
- She herself is saved when she makes a profession of faith in the true God of Israel, and is even mentioned in the hall of faith.

Hebrews 11:31 By faith the prostitute Rahab, because she welcomed the spies, was not killed with those who were disobedient.

23 Then she answered them, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel, 'Tell the man who sent you to Me, 24 "Thus says the LORD: 'Behold, I will bring calamity on this place and on its inhabitants, all the curses that are written in the book which they have read before the king of Judah, 25 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 will be poured out on this place, and not be quenched.' " ' "

- I cannot even begin to imagine how they must have felt when they here this pronouncement of God's judgment upon all Israel.
- To think God's wrath was so aroused against them that there was no way it could ever be quenched, as we're told in verse 25.
- However, as we're about to see, in the next verse, because Josiah sought the Lord, he would be spared from God's judgment.

26 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—27 because your heart was tender, and you humbled yourself before God when you heard His words against this place and against its inhabitants, and you humbled yourself before Me, and you tore your clothes and wept before Me, I also have heard you," says the LORD. 28 "Surely 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 and its inhabitants." ' ' " So they brought back word to the king.

- We have recorded here very interesting details that I think we would do well to consider as it relates to King Josiah's response.
- First, notice we're told that there were four specific reasons that God in His grace and mercy spared Josiah of His judgment.
- The first reason is Josiah's response is in verse twenty-six, which is his first and foremost seeking of and inquiring of the Lord.

Matthew 6:33 (NIV) — 33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

Psalms 63:1 (NKJV) — 1 O God, You are my God; Early will I seek You; My soul thirsts for You; My flesh longs for You In a dry and thirsty land Where there is no water.

Hebrews 11:6 (NKJV) — 6 But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

- The second reason is Josiah's response in verse twenty-seven, which is that of his tender heart towards God and God's Word.
- I don't think one can ever overstate the paramount importance of a heart that's supple for the seed of God's word to germinate.
- I think of the parable of the sower Jesus taught concerning four different types of soils and how only the good soil bears fruit.

- The third reason is Josiah's response also in verse twenty-seven, which is he humbled himself before the Lord via God's Word.
- In other words, upon hearing God's Word, his immediate response of Josiah was to humble himself in the sight of the Lord.
- The scriptures are replete with passages about how God shows grace and mercy to the humble but that He resists the proud.

- The fourth reason is Josiah's response also in the same verse where she mentions he tore his clothes weeping before the Lord.
- In other words, it's because Josiah, convicted of sin, repented before the Lord with a godly sorrow, which leads to repentance.

29 Then the king sent and gathered all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem. 30 The king went up to the house of the LORD, with all the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem—the priests and the Levites, and all the people, great and small. 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. 31 Then the king stood in his place 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 the covenant that were written in this book. 32 And he made all who were present in Jerusalem and Benjamin take a stand. So the inhabitants of Jerusalem did according to the covenant of God, the God of their fathers. 33 Thus Josiah removed all the abominations from all the country that belonged to the children of Israel, and made all who were present in Israel diligently serve the LORD their God. All his days they did not depart from following the LORD God of their fathers.

- The chapter ends with the impact of God's Word on the part of Josiah who took heed to it with a tender and teachable heart.
- It's interesting to note Josiah himself read the words of the Book of the Covenant so that all the people small and great heard it.
- It's also interesting to note that the people, of their own volition, chose to follow Josiah's lead and commit themselves to do this.