

Josiah: Responding to God's Word
2 Chronicles 34:18-32

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As we read the Scriptures, we find God's Truth for ourselves and the Truth for our nation. Clearly, our nation and the nations of the world are under God's wrath, but they need not remain there. By personal and national repentance, many people and many nations have been delivered from the wrath to come.

From last week's study, we learned that Josiah had zealously followed the Lord, turning neither to the right hand nor the left. His pattern in 2 Chronicles 34 is clear to us. 1). He humbled himself before the Lord God, 2). He humbled himself before God's Word, and 3). He humbled himself before God's people. In this message, we will study these last two steps.

As ambassadors who seek the Lord, we can learn a great deal from the way that Josiah responded to the God and His Word.

As we are reminded of God's impending judgment upon a nation, we can follow Josiah's footsteps, responding to God's Holy Word. In so doing, we can learn how to be an example to this lost world, and our wicked nation.

Will you respond this way? The way of God's Word?

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Josiah's First Step

You should humbly respond to the Lord with personal confession and repentance. 18-19

18 Then Shaphan the scribe told the king, saying, Hilkiyah the priest hath given me a book. And Shaphan read it before the king.¹⁹ And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the law, that he rent ["rended" or "tore"] his clothes.

This message is about Josiah's responses. *Make the right responses as you trust the Lord for national revival.*

Josiah's Second Step

You ought to zealously seek the Lord in order to get more instruction from God for yourself and your nation. 20-28

More light about the destiny of your nation.20-25

20 And the king commanded Hilkiyah, and Ahikam the son of Shaphan, and Abdon the son of Micah, and Shaphan the scribe, and Asaiah a servant of the king's, saying,²¹ **Go, inquire of the LORD for me, and for them that are left in Israel and in Judah, concerning the words of the book that is found:** for great *is* the wrath of the LORD that is poured out upon us, because our fathers have not kept the word of the LORD, to do after all that is written in this book. ²² And Hilkiyah, and *they* that the king *had appointed*, went to Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tikvath, the son of Hasrah, keeper of the wardrobe; (now she dwelt in Jerusalem in the college;) and they spake to her to that *effect*

Seeking more light from God

.23 And she answered them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Tell ye the man that sent you to me, 24 Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, *even* 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 have burned incense unto other gods, that *they* might provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands; therefore my wrath shall be poured out upon this place, and shall not be quenched.

More light about your personal destiny. 26-28

“ 26 And as for the king of Judah, who sent you to inquire of the LORD, so shall ye say unto him, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel *concerning* the words which thou hast heard;

27 **Because** thine heart was tender, and thou didst humble thyself before God, when thou heardest his words against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, and humbledst thyself before me, and didst rend thy clothes, and weep before me; I have even heard *thee* also, saith the LORD. 28 Behold, I will gather thee to thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered to thy grave in peace, neither shall thine eyes see all the evil that I will bring upon this place, and upon the inhabitants of the same. So they brought the king word again.”

Application principle: *Remember that Light received brings more Light, but Light rejected brings darkness.* Josiah did not want his nation to lumber on into darkness. He wanted to receive the Light of God and urge others to receive it.

Make the right responses as you trust the Lord for national revival.

At this point in our study, we need to look at another king in similar circumstances. Let's take a look at Hezekiah as a study in in contrast.

2 Chronicles 32

24 In those days Hezekiah was sick to the death, and prayed unto the LORD: and he spake unto him, and he gave him a sign. 25 But Hezekiah rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him; for his heart was lifted up: therefore there was wrath upon him, and upon Judah and Jerusalem. 26 Notwithstanding Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, both he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the wrath of the LORD came not upon them in the days of Hezekiah.

2 Kings 20

18 And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon. 19 Then said Hezekiah unto Isaiah, Good is the word of the LORD which thou hast spoken. And he said, Is it not good, if peace and truth be in my days?

Application: I would like to ask the children and teens in the room this evening this question. How would you feel if the adults responded this way? What if the adults received a revelation from God? The revelation would be that “everything would be fine in their generation, but that

judgment would fall on the next generation.” How would you feel toward those adults if they relaxed and rejoiced, even though they had heard that judgment would fall on you? For the adults here this evening: Do you think this is the right response? Is this a compassionate response to the impending trials for the next generation? Yes, we can trust God’s sufficient grace to carry them through, but how should we show them this grace now? How should we show “the generation to come” (Psalm 78:4) the praises of our God?

2nd application: If you know the Lord this evening, you know that you are destined for “peace” – eternal peace with the Lord. But you live among those who are facing God’s impending wrath. Can you just relax and rest when you know the destiny they are facing?!?

Another contrast is found in Isaiah 22

12 And in that day did the Lord GOD of hosts call to weeping, and to mourning,

And to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth:

13 And behold joy and gladness, Slaying oxen, and killing sheep, Eating flesh, and drinking wine: Let us eat and drink; for to morrow we shall die. 14 And it was revealed in mine

ears by the LORD of hosts, Surely this iniquity shall not be purged from you till ye die, saith the Lord GOD of hosts. [This last verse has been called one of the saddest and most dangerous verses in the Old Testament!]

When the Lord called for national repentance (weeping, mourning), the people responded with eating and drinking, saying “let us eat and drink for tomorrow we shall die!”

If we are “ambassadors” in this world, and not comfortable tourists, how should we respond to impending national judgment? With parties? With eating and drinking for tomorrow we may die?!

Josiah was not of this spirit.

Make the right responses as you trust the Lord for national revival.

As a study in contrast, note that Josiah did not stop in that place of rest. He was not content merely to have rest, peace and truth in his day. Josiah zealously and earnestly instructed others to follow the Lord. Josiah’s example shows us what loving compassion looks like. It wasn’t enough for him to find rest for his soul. He wanted others to find rest for their souls. This reminds us of the compassionate invitation of Jesus Christ in Matthew 11:28-30:

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

We proclaim Jesus Christ as the only Redeemer who gives rest to the souls of men. We do so out of the joy we find for our own souls, and out of compassion for those around us.

Look again at verses 27 and 28, and give careful attention to that first word: “Because”

27 Because thine heart was tender, and thou didst humble thyself before God, when thou heardest his words against this

place, and against the inhabitants thereof, and humbledst thyself before me, and didst rend thy clothes, and weep before me; I have even heard *thee* also, saith the LORD. 28 Behold, I will gather thee to thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered to thy grave in peace. . .

Josiah knew “the because.” He knew the reason. He wanted others to show that same tender response to God’s Word – knowing full well that if they repented, they could also enter into rest. In fact, if his nation would tenderly repent, that God might reduce the terrible sentence of judgment.

So, Josiah was leading by example:

Josiah’s Third Step

You ought to compassionately seek to help others with the instruction that God gives. 29-32

29 Then the king sent and gathered together all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem. 30 And the king went up *into* the house of the LORD, and all the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the priests, and the Levites, and all the people, great and small: and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant that was found *in* the house of the LORD.31 And the king stood in his place, and 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.

By the reading of God’s Holy Word, 29-30

By your personal commitment to follow the Lord, 30-31

- He used his position to be an example.
- He used his speech to be an example.
- He used his example to show that he was accountable under God’s authority.

Make the right responses as you trust the Lord for national revival.

Josiah’s Fourth Step

By encouraging others to make the personal commitment to follow the Lord, 32

32 And he caused all that were present in Jerusalem and Benjamin to stand *to it*. And the inhabitants of Jerusalem did according to the covenant of God, the God of their fathers.

What is the point of this message?

Make the right responses as you trust the Lord for national revival. Follow Josiah on your way to following Jesus.

An Example:

A note from David Brainerd's Journal

Melted with Affection for Christ

Aug. 26. Preached to my people from John VI. 51-55. After I had discoursed some time, I addressed those in particular who entertained hopes that they were "passed from death to life." Opened to them the persevering nature of those consolations Christ gives his people, and which I trusted he had bestowed upon some in that assembly; showed them that such have already the "beginnings of eternal life," (ver. 54.) and that their heaven shall speedily be completed, &c.

I no sooner began to discourse in this strain, but the dear Christians in the congregation began to be melted with affection to, and desire of, the enjoyment of Christ, and of a state of perfect purity. They wept affectionately, and yet joyfully, and their tears and sobs discovered brokenness of heart, and yet were attended with real comfort and sweetness; so that this was a tender, affectionate, humble, delightful melting, and appeared to be the genuine effect of a Spirit of adoption, and very far from that spirit of bondage that they not long since laboured under. The influence seemed to spread from these through the whole assembly,

And there quickly appeared a wonderful concern among them. Many who had not yet found Christ as an all-sufficient Saviour, were surprisingly engaged in seeking after him. It was indeed a lovely and very desirable assembly. Their number was now about ninety-five persons, old and young, and almost all affected either with joy in Christ Jesus, or with utmost concern to obtain an interest in him.

The following page is the outline for distribution

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Additional study: Hezekiah, 2 Kings 20:16-19, 2 Chronicles 32:24-26, Isaiah 22:8-14