

“KING JOSIAH”

January 11, 2008

2 Chronicles 34-35:27

2 Kings 22-23:30

INTRODUCTION

THIS IS A SERMON THAT I'VE WANTED TO PREACH FOR A WHILE, BUT I JUST NEVER GOT AROUND TO WRITING DOWN. SO I'M GRATEFUL FOR THE OPPORTUNITY.

ONE OF MY FAVORITE MOVIES AS A CHILD WAS “THE WIZARD OF OZ” WITH JUDY GARLAND. BACK BEFORE THERE WAS SUCH A THING AS VCR'S AND DVD'S THAT YOU COULD BUY, OWN AND WATCH, AS MANY TIMES AS YOU WANT, ALL THERE WAS WAS TV.

“THE WIZARD OF OZ” CAME ON ONLY ONCE OR TWICE A YEAR AND IT ALWAYS SEEMED TO BE SHOWN WHEN WE WERE AT A FAMILY BIRTHDAY PARTY, BECAUSE I CAN REMEMBER MY BROTHER AND I WITH OUR THREE COUSINS SITTING IN FRONT OF THE TV WATCHING IT.

THE FIRST COUPLE OF TIMES THAT I WATCHED THE MOVIE IT SCARED ME. CERTAINLY MARGARET HAMILTON'S WICKED WITCH CHARACTER HAS TO BE ONE OF THE MOST FRIGHTENING VILLIANS IN MOVIE HISTORY. AND OZ WAS PRETTY SCARY THE FIRST TIME DOROTHY AND HER FRIENDS WENT INTO HIS PRESENCE.

THE FOUR CHARACTERS ALL WANTED SOMETHING FROM OZ. DOROTHY WANTED TO RETURN TO KANSAS. SCARECROW WANTED A BRAIN. THE TIN MAN WANTED A HEART. AND THE COWARDLY LION WANTED COURAGE. ONE OF THE SONGS IN THE MOVIE CENTERS AROUND THE LION WHO REFLECTS WHAT COURAGE WILL ENABLE HIM TO DO AS KING OF THE FORESTS. HE STATES THAT HE WOULD BE AFRAID OF NO ONE. NOT NOBODY! NOT NO HOW!

AS FAR OUT AS THE IDEA OF A COWARDLY LION BEING KING, PROBABLY JUST A BIZARRE AND CRAZY IS THE IDEA OF A YOUNG BOY AS KING. BUT THIS HAS HAPPENED. IN FACT, IT'S SAID THAT THE MOST FAMOUS PHAROAH OF EGYPT BEGAN RULING AT THE YOUNG AGE OF NINE. HE DIED IN HIS TEENS, SO HE DIDN'T LIVE VERY LONG. WE REMEMBER HIS NAME TODAY AS KING TUT. JUDAH HAD A KING THAT BEGAN HIS REIGN AT THE YOUNG AGE OF SEVEN: KING JOASH. AND THEN THERE'S JOSIAH NEAR THE END OF THE JUDEAN KINGDOM.

2 CHRONICLES 34:1-2

I THINK IT MIGHT BE IMPORTANT TO BACK UP AND LOOK AT WHAT HAS HAPPENED PRIOR TO JOSIAH BECOMING KING:

JOSIAH'S GREAT GRANDFATHER WAS KING HEZEKIAH, WHO WAS A VERY GODLY KING. HEZEKIAH WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR A GREAT REFORM THAT TOOK PLACE IN JUDAH. HE REOPENED THE DOORS TO THE TEMPLE OF THE LORD AND BEGAN ITS REPAIR. HEZEKIAH ALSO DESTROYED ALL OF THE PLACES OF IDOL WORSHIP AND BEGAN LEADING THE HEARTS OF THE PEOPLE BACK TO GOD.

JOSIAH'S GRANDFATHER WAS KING MANNASEH, WHO ARGUABLY WAS JUDAH'S MOST WICKED KING. MANNASEH UNDOID EVERYTHING HEZEKIAH DID. HE REBUILT THE HIGH PLACES USED FOR IDOL WORSHIP, HE SET UP ALTARS FOR BAAL AND ERECTED ASHERAH POLES, ALSO USED FOR IDOL WORSHIP. IN ADDITION, MANNASEH SET UP ALTARS IN THE TEMPLE OF THE LORD AND SACRIFICED HIS SONS TO IDOLS. MANNASEH PRACTICED WITCHCRAFT, SORCERY AND HE CONSULTED MEDIUMS AND SPIRITS.

2 CHRONICLES 33:10 SAYS THAT THE LORD SPOKE TO MANNASEH AND THE PEOPLE, BUT THEY PAID NO ATTENTION. SO GOD BROUGHT UP THE ASSYRIAN ARMY WHO CAPTURED MANNASEH AND PLACED HIM IN CHAINS AND PUT A HOOK IN HIS NOSE AND HE WAS TAKEN TO BABYLON. IT WAS HERE THAT MANNASEH FINALLY TURNED TO GOD AND REPENTED AND HE SPENT THE FINAL YEARS OF HIS 55 YEAR REIGN TRYING TO UNDO ALL OF THINGS HE HAD DONE. WHILE NOBLE, HE COUNTED UNDO EVERYTHING BEFORE HE DIED.

JOSIAH'S FATHER WAS AMON WHO REIGNED ONLY TWO YEARS. THE BIBLE SAYS THAT HE WAS A WICKED MAN WHO DID EVIL IN THE EYES OF THE LORD. THE PEOPLE IN THE LAND ASSASSINATED AMON AND JOSIAH WAS NAMED KING AT THE YOUNG AGE OF EIGHT.

NOW THIS FACT IS PRETTY ASTOUNDING, BECAUSE MY JOSIAH IS EIGHT AND I KNOW THAT HE WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO LEAD AN ENTIRE NATION AT THIS STAGE OF HIS LIFE. THANKFULLY HE DOESN'T HAVE TO, BUT KING JOSIAH FOLLOWED HIS FATHER TO THE THRONE.

AND THE BIBLE SAYS THAT HE DID RIGHT IN THE EYES OF THE LORD. NOTICE THAT IT DOES NOT SAY RIGHT "IN THE SIGHT OF POLITICAL CORRECTNESS." NOT IN THE SIGHT OF THE "WORLD" BUT JOSIAH DID RIGHT IN THE SIGHT OF THE LORD AND HE WALKED IN THE WAYS OF HIS FATHER DAVID.

I THINK THAT IS AN INTERESTING POINT. IN TODAY'S SOCIETY WE HEAR A LOT SAID ABOUT NOT OFFENDING ANYBODY, BUT TO BE POLITICALLY CORRECT. WELL, IN ALL FAIRNESS TO POLITICAL CORRECTNESS, IF OUR LIFESTYLE IS IN DIRECT CONTRAST TO WHAT GOD HAS TOLD US IN HIS WORD, IT'S WRONG. THERE'S NOWHERE IN SCRIPTURE THAT INDICATES THAT GOD ACCEPTS WHO WE ARE AND DOESN'T EXPECT US TO CHANGE IN ACCORDANCE TO HIS WORD. WE NEED TO BE A PEOPLE LIKE JOSIAH WHO DIDN'T CARE ABOUT WHAT OTHER PEOPLE THOUGHT AS MUCH AS HE CARED ABOUT PLEASING THE LORD. AND WE'RE GOING TO FIND OUT JUST HOW SERIOUS THIS WAS TO HIM.

WE'RE NOT TOLD WHO MAY HAVE INFLUENCED JOSIAH TO FOLLOW THE LORD. SOME SUGGEST THAT MAYBE THE HIGH PRIEST HILKIAH DID, BUT THE BIBLE DOESN'T SAY. WE DO KNOW THAT AT THE AGE OF 16, WHILE HE WAS STILL YOUNG HE BEGAN TO SEEK THE GOD. AND HIS DESIRE OF GOD WAS THE DRIVING FORCE BEHIND HIS REIGN. AT THE AGE OF 20 HE BEGAN TO DESTROY THE PLACES OF IDOL WORSHIP NOT JUST IN JUDAH BUT ALSO IN ISRAEL, WHO WAS ALREADY TAKEN CAPTIVE BY ASSYRIA

2 KINGS 23:8-16

THESE WORDS FULFILLED PROPHECY SPOKEN DURING THE REIGNS OF JEREBOAM OF ISRAEL AND REHEBOAM OF JUDAH: IT SAYS IN 1 KINGS 13:1-3

“BY THE WORD OF THE LORD A MAN OF GOD CAME FROM JUDAH TO BETHEL, AS JEREBOAM WAS STANDING BY THE ALTAR TO MAKE AN OFFERING. HE CRIED OUT AGAINST THE ALTAR BY THE WORD OF THE LORD: “O ALTAR, ALTAR! THIS IS WHAT THE LORD SAYS: A SON NAMED JOSIAH WILL BE BORN TO THE HOUSE OF DAVID. ON YOU HE WILL SACRIFICE THE PRIESTS OF THE HIGH PLACES WHO NOW MAKE AN OFFERING HERE, AND HUMAN BONES WILL BE BURNED ON YOU.””

FROM THE POINT THAT THE UNITED NATION OF ISRAEL SPLIT TO BECOME TO NATIONS, GOD REVEALED, BY NAME, THAT JOSIAH WOULD COME. AND THE AREAS WHERE BONES WERE BURNED DEFILED THE LAND TO PREVENT ISRAEL FROM ERECTING IDOLS IN THE FUTURE. JOSIAH BURNED TO POWDER ALL OF THE ALTARS THAT WERE USED TO DEFILE THE PEOPLE AND THE LAND.

POINT NUMBER ONE, WE TOO NEED TO TEAR DOWN THE FALSE GODS IN OUR LIVES. WE MUST DESTROY THAT HAS COME BETWEEN GOD AND US.

1 CORINTHIANS 3:16-17 SAYS, "DON'T YOU KNOW THAT YOU YOURSELVES ARE GOD'S TEMPLE AND THAT GOD'S SPIRIT LIVES IN YOU? IF ANYONE DESTROYS GOD'S TEMPLE, GOD WILL DESTROY HIM; FOR GOD'S TEMPLE IS SACRED, AND YOU ARE THE TEMPLE."

WE ARE THE TEMPLE! AND YET WE FILL OUR TEMPLES UP WITH THINGS THAT DEFILE OUR TEMPLES IN THE SAME WAY THE BAAL ALTARS AND ASHERAH POLES DEFILED JUDAH AND ISRAEL. OUR EYES DESIRE THE LUST THAT DWELLS WITHIN OUR HEARTS. LUST FOR SEXUAL IMMORALITY! LUST FOR GREED AND POWER! THE SECRET SINS AND PLACES WE GO TO THAT CONTINUE TO SEPARATE US FROM GOD.

JESUS SAID HIMSELF THAT FROM WITHIN MEN'S HEARTS, COME EVIL THOUGHTS, SEXUAL IMMORALITY, THEFT, MURDER, ADULTERY, GREED, MALICE, DECEIT, LEWDNESS, ENVY, SLANDER, ARROGANCE AND FOLLY. **(MARK 7:21-22)**

THESE ARE THINGS THAT CAUSE SERIOUS ISSUES WITH OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LORD. IDOLS CAUSED THE PEOPLE TO FALL AWAY IN THE TIME OF THE KINGS. THEY CONTINUE TO DO SO TODAY. AND, WE MUST DEMOLISH, SMASH, TEAR DOWN AND GET RID OF THE IMPURITIES WE STORE UP IN OUR TEMPLES. IN OUR LIVES!

JOSIAH'S NEXT PLAN WAS REPAIRING TEMPLE OF THE LORD. AND AS THE TEMPLE WAS OPENED TO ALLOW REPAIRS TO BEGIN, THEY UNCOVERED SOMETHING INTERESTING.

2 CHRONICLES 34: 14-21

AFTER JOSIAH HAD PURIFIED THE LAND OF IDOLATRY, HE PROCEEDED TO REPAIR AND BEAUTIFY THE TEMPLE. IN DOING SO, HILKIAH, THE HIGH PRIEST, FOUND A VOLUME, WHICH PROVED TO BE THE BOOKS OF MOSES. THE TERMS EMPLOYED WOULD SEEM TO LEAD TO THE CONCLUSION THAT THIS WAS THE ORIGINAL AS WRITTEN BY MOSES. IT IS EVIDENT THAT JOSIAH FOUND THINGS WITH WHICH HE HAD NOT BEEN FAMILIAR. IT WOULD INDICATE THAT HE WAS NOT IN POSSESSION OF THE ENTIRE LAW.

WHAT IS OF PECULIAR IMPORTANCE IS THE FACT THAT JOSIAH FOUND IN THIS COPY THE JUDGMENT AGAINST DISOBEDIENCE ON THE PART OF ISRAEL, AND AGAINST THE DEFECTIONS OF THE NATION. JOSIAH WAS PROFOUNDLY MOVED. HE CALLED FOR HULDAH THE PROPHETESS, WHO DECLARED THAT THE PUNISHMENT WOULD SURELY BE INFLECTED, BUT ASSURED HIM THAT HE WOULD CLOSE HIS REIGN IN PEACE PRIOR TO THE FULFILLMENT OF THESE STATEMENTS IN THE LAW.

JOSIAH IMMEDIATELY CALLED THE PEOPLE TOGETHER FOR A SOLEMN RENEWAL OF THE COVENANT WITH THE LORD. THE FINDING AND READING OF THE LAW MADE THE DEEPEST IMPRESSION, CAUSED THE GREATEST CONCERN AND RESULTED IN A RIGHTEOUS REFORMATION.

IN OTHER WORDS, THEY HAD SOME BIBLE PREACHING AND THE PEOPLE RESPONDED TO THE WORDS OF GOD. IS IT ANY DIFFERENT FOR US? WHEN WE HEAR THE WORDS OF GOD, IT'S SUPPOSED TO MOVE US TO ACTION. THAT ACTION MAY BE TO REPENT OF SOME SIN THAT KEEPS US IN BONDS.

THAT ACTION MAY BE TO GET BUSY WITH WHATEVER THE LORD HAS TOLD US TO DO. WHATEVER IT IS, GOD'S WORD IS SUPPOSED TO MOVE US TO ACTION. AND WHEN WE CHOOSE TO IGNORE IT, WE KEEP OURSELVES FROM GIVING ALL WE HAVE TO HONOR AND GLORIFY THE LORD.

ANOTHER INTERESTING THOUGHT IS THIS: THE "LOST" BOOK OF THE LAW WAS FOUND IN GOD'S TEMPLE. IT HAD BEEN THERE THE WHOLE TIME. AND IT WAS FOUND INSIDE THE TEMPLE OF THE LORD. THE SAD REALITY OF THE 21ST CENTURY IS THAT GOD'S WORD STILL IS A LOST BOOK. WE HAVE CHURCHES THAT CHOOSE NOT TO PREACH FROM GOD'S WORD, BUT RATHER RELY ON THEIR LIFE STORIES. THERE ARE CHURCHES WHO DON'T ENCOURAGE READING THE BIBLE.

ONE OF THE THINGS I'M MOST GRATEFUL FOR HERE AT CEDARLOO IS THAT EACH SUNDAY AND WEDNESDAY NIGHT WE GET THE WORD OF GOD PREACHED TO US. AND IF WE EVER FIND OURSELVES IN A SITUATION WHERE THAT IS NOT THE CASE, WE NEED TO GET OUT IMMEDIATELY.

BUT THAT'S NOT THE ONLY REASON THE BIBLE IS A "LOST" BOOK TODAY. WE LIVE IN A TIME WHERE TOO MANY CHURCH GOING PEOPLE DON'T EVEN READ IT. WE LIVE IN A HIGHLY BIBLE ILLITERATE WORLD, EVEN WITHIN THE CHURCH.

ACCORDING TO THE BARNA RESEARCH GROUP, WHILE AMERICANS REMAIN INTERESTED IN FAITH AND CONSIDER THEMSELVES TO BE RELIGIOUS PEOPLE, LITTLE HAS CHANGED IN RELATION TO THE RELIGIOUS PRACTICES OF AMERICA.

THEIR STATISTICS SHOWED THAT ONLY 37% OF THOSE CONSIDERED INTERESTED IN FAITH READ THEIR BIBLE. ONLY 42% GO TO CHURCH. ONLY 19% ATTEND AN ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL.

IT SAYS THAT 4 OUT OF 10 "BORN AGAIN" CHRISTIANS DO NOT ATTEND CHURCH OR READ THEIR BIBLE IN A TYPICAL WEEK.

ALSO IT SHOWS THAT WOMEN BOTH ATTEND CHURCH AND READ THEIR BIBLES MORE THAN MEN DO.

ACCORDING TO THE CHRISTIAN NEWSWIRE, NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED RESEARCH ORGANIZATIONS FOUND THAT 65% OF ADULTS WHO IDENTIFIED THEMSELVES AS BIBLE READERS HAVEN'T READ THE ENTIRE NEW TESTAMENT.

AFTER GLENDA AND I NAMED OUR SON JOSIAH, FOR SOME REASON SOME MEMBERS OF MY FAMILY WANTED TO KNOW WHERE EXACTLY IN THE BIBLE WAS THE NAME JOSIAH. MY AUNT CALLED UP MY MOM AND TOLD HER THAT HER HUSBAND, MY UNCLE, KNEW HIS BIBLE PRETTY WELL AND HE SWEARS THE NAME OF JOSIAH IS NOT IN THE BIBLE.

WHILE THAT WAS PRETTY HUMEROUS AT FIRST, IT IS A SAD CONDITION THAT A NUMBER OF PEOPLE HAVE. THIS IDEA THAT WE KNOW WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS WITHOUT EVER HAVING READ IT.

WHAT WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND IS THAT THE BIBLE IS THE LIVING WORD OF GOD. IN IT CONTAINS TRUTH AND HOPE FOR THOSE WHO TRULY WANT TO FIND IT.

PSALM 18:30 SAYS, "AS FOR GOD, HIS WAY IS PERFECT; THE WORD OF THE LORD IS FLAWLESS."

PSALM 119:105, "THY WORD IS A LAMP TO MY FEET, AND A LIGHT FOR MY PATH."

ISAIAH 40:8, "THE GRASS WITHERS AND THE FLOWERS FALL, BUT THE WORD OF OUR GOD STANDS FOREVER."

2 TIMOTHY 3:16, "ALL SCRIPTURE IS GOD BREATHED AND IS USEFUL FOR TEACHING, REBUKING, CORRECTING AND TRAINING IN RIGHTEOUSNESS."

IN ACTS 17:11, IT SAYS, "THE BEREANS WERE OF MORE NOBLE CHARACTER THAN THE THESSALONIANS, FOR THEY RECEIVED THE MESSAGE WITH GREAT EAGERNESS AND EXAMINED THE SCRIPTURES EVERY DAY TO SEE IF WHAT PAUL SAID WAS TRUE."

WE NEED TO BE LIKE THE BEREANS. WE NEED TO BE IN THE SCRIPTURES EVERY DAY. IT'S GOD'S MESSAGE TO EACH ONE OF US. AND WHEN WE START SPENDING TIME EVERY DAY IN THE SCRIPTURES, GOD WILL REVEAL MORE AND MORE TO US. BEING IN THE SCRIPTURES ALLOWS US TO GROW IN OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LORD.

HEARING THE SCRIPTURES GAVE A DEEP YEARNING WITHIN THE PEOPLE OF JUDAH. THE BIBLE SAYS THAT AFTER KING JOSIAH REMOVED THE DETESTABLE IDOLS FROM ALL THE TERRITORY BELONGING TO THE ISRAELITES, THAT AS LONG AS HE LIVED THEY DID NOT FAIL TO FOLLOW THE LORD.

2 CHRONICLES 35 SAYS THAT THEY CELEBRATED THE PASSOVER IN JERUSALEM. THE PASSOVER WAS TO BE AN ANNUAL REMINDER OF HOW GOD RESCUED THE ISRAELITES FROM BONDAGE IN EGYPT IN THE TIME OF MOSES. GREAT CARE AND ATTENTION WENT TO FOLLOW EVERYTHING GOD HAD COMMANDED FOR THE CELEBRATION.

AND IN VERSE 18 IT SAYS, **“THE PASSOVER HAD NOT BEEN OBSERVED LIKE THIS IN ISRAEL SINCE THE DAYS OF THE PROPHET SAMUEL, AND NONE OF THE KINGS OF ISRAEL HAD EVER CELEBRATED SUCH A PASSOVER AS DID JOSIAH, THE PRIESTS, THE LEVITES AND ALL OF JUDAH AND ISRAEL, WHO WERE THERE WITH THE PEOPLE OF JERUSALEM.”**

THIS IS A VERY PROFOUND PEACE OF SCRIPTURE. ISRAEL HAD CELEBRATED THE PASSOVER DURING THE TIME OF DAVID, SOLOMON AND HEZEKIAH. BUT DURING THE REIGN OF KING JOSIAH, THE PASSOVER CELEBRATION SURPASSED EVEN THOSE GODLY KINGS.

AND THAT'S WHAT THE WORD OF GOD SHOULD BE FOR US TODAY. I CAN'T THINK OF ANY OTHER REASON TO CELEBRATE THAN PRAISING GOD FOR ALL THAT HE'S DONE FOR ME. THE FACT THAT HE DIED FOR ME IS PRETTY AMAZING, BUT THE FACT THAT GOD CHOSE ME TO BE HIS SON, THAT GOD WANTS ME TO BE WITH HIM, THAT GOD LOVES ME EVEN THOUGH I SOMETIMES DO STUPID THINGS, IS REASON FOR CELEBRATION.

THE STORY OF JOSIAH IS NOT JUST A FEEL GOOD STORY THAT'S TUCKED AWAY IN THE BIBLE. THE STORY OF JOSIAH IS ABOUT A GODLY MAN WHO MADE EVERY EFFORT TO PLEASE AND HONOR GOD. THERE ARE MANY LESSONS FOR US TO LEARN BY THE LIFE OF THIS MAN. MY HOPE AND PRAYER IS THAT WE REALIZE HOW MUCH WE NEED THE WORD OF GOD IN OUR LIVES. HOW MUCH WE NEED TO RID OURSELVES FROM OUR OWN IDOL IMAGES. ONE TRULY AMAZING THING THAT I FIND

TO BE TRUE: WHEN WE GET RID OF THE PHYSICAL IDOLS WITHIN OUR LIVES, GOD HELPS US GET RID OF THE REST. GOD REMOVES OUR SINS THROUGH HIS GRACE AND MERCY AND HELPS US TO REALIZE THAT THE THINGS WE THINK WE NEED IN OUR LIVES ARE LITTLE INCOMPARISON IN HAVING GOD.