

Exposition of
2 Chronicles 34

Sermon Series:
Spiritual Lessons from OT Kings

Sermon Title:
Restoration among Ruin
Lessons from King Josiah

First delivered on:
2/19/17

Christ Reformed Baptist Church
New Castle, IN

INTRODUCTION

Joshua 24:15 And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that [were] on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.

We have here the one of the most sobering questions presented to us in all of Scripture. This penetrating question was one which the decedents of Abraham would wrestle with throughout all their existence as a people while under the Old Covenant.

Their struggle to walk upright and according to the conditions of the various covenants God made with them has, in part, been displayed for us in this series dealing with the OT Kings.

At times we have witnessed great revivals (such as the one last week under king Hezekiah) and other times great apostasy as it was under king Ahaz.

During this series, in some measure (as it often is with the historical narrative of Abraham's physical decedents during the time of the promise prior to New Covenant fulfillment) we have been given a birds-eye view of two active theme's running alongside one another. That of faithful believer's, a remnant following God from a true and converted heart, and those whose hearts were hardened against God and His ways thus, leading them into deeper and deeper sin.

To say in another way, those who were partakers of the unconditional covenant of Grace through faith in God's promised messiah which was prophesied to come through the line of Judah (David, Asa, Jehosophat, Hezekiah, Josiah), and those who were only partakers of the condemnation which fell upon them for not keeping the conditions of the covenant which God had arranged with their fore-fathers. (Jeroboam, Rehoboam, Ahab, Uzziah).

Yes, they all were under the administration of the national/physical covenant which carried with it many conditions, however only those blessed by God's Spirit were given saving interest in the Covenant of Grace which would later be fully revealed in Christ and the New Covenant.

This observation, of two covenants (conditional and unconditional) which has been under the surface all along, I have not pressed upon you too much throughout the series, however it has been sprinkled throughout all the messages if one listens closely. In fact, this is the grand gospel theme which runs throughout all of history, a conditional covenant by which all mankind is condemned by thus pointing them to their only hope, their only refuge the Messiah, the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. The only divine God-Man who after fulfilling all the conditions of God's covenant obligations upon mankind then gave Himself to be propitiation/payment for the sins of all those whom He says in John 6:37 the Father gave unto Him for a people.

Today our text introduces us to king Josiah, one, who through saving faith in the Messiah seeks to bring about restoration among ruin.

Establish Context:

57 yrs. since Hezekiah

Reversal of Reformation:

Mannasseh (Hezekiah's son) reigned 55 yrs. then Amon (2 yrs)

2 Kings 21

Brief Restoration prior to Final Judgement

Josiah the las good king.

Final Condemnation:

After Josiah 22 yrs. then conquered by the Babylonians lead by the infamous king Nebuchadnezzar.

Why then this brief restoration of 31 yrs. by Josiah?

586BC destruction comes – then 70yrs. captivity where the remnant would still be holding on, trusting in the promised Messiah, passing on the laws of Moses to their children,

v.2

“Declined neither to the right hand, nor to the left.”

- Especially in matters of the Mosaic Law.
- We know from later accounts he had at least two wives, because two of his sons are recorded as having different mothers. Does not necessitate his guilt of polygamy.
- The best of OT kings was still not perfect, pointing of course to our one and only perfect King – Jesus Christ.

v.3-7 GOD’S WORSHIP IS RESTORED

- v3A – In the eighth year (16yrs. old)

“...he began to seek after the God of David his father...”

Who was this God?

How did he seek Him? ‘seek’ in the Hebrew “seek with care, enquire after something with diligence”

Jhn 6:37 “All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.”

SPIRITUAL LESSON – Josiah’s restoration began first in seeking and finding the God of his fathers.

- v3B – *“...in the twelfth year (20 yrs. old) he began to purge Judah...”* This “purging of the land” goes on for six years. (more detail in 2 Kings 22).
- 1 Kings 13: Aprox. 275 yrs. earlier the man of God foretold of this event when confronting Jeroboam.

SPIRITUAL LESSON – God’s delayed judgement is never to be mistaken as disinterest in the affairs of man.

• v.6-7 Evidence here of two things:

First, the control of the Assyrians had evidently become relaxed, thus allowing Josiah and his men to enter these cities.

Second, Josiah had a zeal and passion for the glory of God which regarded all the remnant.

SPIRITUAL LESSON – Often, we can become isolated from the needs of larger evangelical church around us as we focus on the particular work which is set before us, however like Josiah let us remember that important part of restoration as we seek to be a help and aid amid these troubled times.

vv. 8-13 GOD’S HOUSE IS RESTORED

v.8 “...in the eighteenth year of his reign...”

v.9 We must ask the question from this mass collection which took place throughout Israel and Judah, who was it that gave money?

1. We know that much of the people were stiff necked and in rebellion against God during this time according to the record of Isaiah.

2. Could it have been the faithful remnant who desired a restoration of the Temple and a united kingdom?

SPIRITUAL LESSON – Any significant and lasting restoration is organically to be connected to the local, visible, church.

vv. 14-19 GOD’S LAW IS RESTORED

v.14 The book of the law was found. No doubt hidden by haters of God’s rule over their lives. This is exactly the extent of the problem we are facing today in both the church and larger society.

v.19 ‘rent his clothes’ this was an expression in these ancient times of deep emotional remorse. Although Josiah had perceived some needed reforms related to worship and the Temple, it was the power of God’s Word as it outlined God’s Covenant established through Moses that brought into sharp focus all the other areas that needed repented of and corrected within Josiah’s life!

Hbr 4:12-13 For the word of God [is] quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and [is] a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things [are] naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

- God’s Word when declared challenges us because the information it contains is not merely intellectual, but God-breathed and that is why it penetrates the depths of our conscious. God’s Word is not just another generic piece of literature about an optional religious system for your mental well being!
- This explains the reaction of Josiah. If God’s Word when read had only been just a matter of receiving some more information about the manner in which the Temple should be repaired or how the ceremonial rituals were to be performed Josiah would not had reacted so intensely... which is evidence of power and demands of God’ Word.
- Just as it confronted Josiah, so it does all of mankind – it demands that we either believe or reject its message.
- As evident in Josiah’s response he accepts its truth and notice that it then becomes much more than intellectual, it effects much more than his orthodoxy, his doctrine – it also greatly effects his orthopraxy his actions, his lifestyle! Often, you hear me express privately and publicly to you all about my concern of the New Calvinist movement who want the appearance of sound and historic doctrine, but in their zeal to be culturally relevant and

culturally affirming they deny the doctrine's implication on their lifestyle. They want the doctrine, but not the holy, separated, devotion unto God, which is apart from the corrupted world and its various expressions of humanistic philosophy, drunkenness and idolatry.

vv. 20-28 GOD'S SHOWS MERCY

vv.29-33 GOD'S COVENANT RESTORED

CLOSING THOUGHTS

- Following the death of Josiah another 22 +/- years of wicked kings and apparently false commitment from the people would undo all these acts of restoration and result in the final judgement as recorded in Chp. 36 by which God used Nebuchadnezzar the king of the Chaldees to utterly destroy the temple and Jerusalem and carry the people off to Babylon.
- However, the historical record of the physical decedents of Abraham doesn't end here, but rather with a ray of hope it offers us a glimpse into the continuation of the purpose and further revealing of God's unconditional promise...that one day a Messiah would be born to rule and reign over both Jews and Gentiles.
- As we walk away from reviewing the historical accounts and spiritual lessons from these various OT kings, let us be reminded that God's mercy and covenant faithfulness are precious and sure to those in Christ, however also let us be certain to observe that His righteous anger and justice will also be exercised upon those who shake their fist at His authority.