

## 17. A revival in the land

September 6, 2009

Here are some quotes regarding revival from famous theologians of yesteryear: Revival is nothing less than a new beginning of obedience to God. – Charles Finney, a 19th Century American Presbyterian minister and evangelist

Revival is an invasion from heaven that brings a conscious awareness of God. – Stephen Olford, a 20th Century British evangelist and Bible teacher

Revival cannot be organized, but we can set our sails to catch the wind from heaven when God chooses to blow upon His people once again. – G. Campbell Morgan, a 19th Century British minister and Bible teacher

Notice one thing in common? Obedience to the Lord through repentance of our sins. Without it, there is no revival and the church in the 21st Century will be dead as a doornail.

Right after a great and godly king Hezekiah of Judah, we find five kings in these three chapters. With an exception of king Josiah, four of them were wicked and ungodly. Hezekiah's son Manasseh was the worst of all. The kingdom of Judah was in a desperate need of revival by the time king Manasseh died.

I believe that the Lord will teach us about the principles of revival through the example of king Josiah, because the Christian churches in America is in an urgent need of revival from the Lord Jesus.

### A. THE WICKED KING LED THE KINGDOM TO IDOL WORSHIP

*2 Kings 21:1-2 Manasseh was twelve years old when he became king, and he reigned fifty-five years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Hephzibah. 2 And he did evil in the sight of the Lord, according to the abominations of the nations whom the Lord had cast out before the children of Israel.*

*2 Kings 21:9 But they paid no attention, and Manasseh seduced them to do more evil than the nations whom the Lord had destroyed before the children of Israel.*

*2 Kings 21:16 Moreover Manasseh shed very much innocent blood, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another, besides his sin by which he made Judah sin, in doing evil in the sight of the Lord.*

Hezekiah was the best king since king David. During his extended 15 years from the Lord he fathered a son who became the worst king that ever reigned in the southern kingdom Judah. All that his godly father Hezekiah had torn down, Manasseh rebuilt as he led the nation right back into idolatry, including Baal worship.

In v9, we find Manasseh himself seducing the people in his kingdom to do more evil of idolatry. It is bad enough for a person to sin, but it is far worse when that person leads others to sin against the Lord. You may say, "I am not a leader, so this doesn't apply to me." No, that is not true. Are you parents? Then you are the leaders of your family. Are you a born-again Christian? Then you are supposedly leading the unbelievers around you to the Lord with your life.

Manasseh didn't hesitate to kill any godly people who stood in his way. According to the Jewish tradition, Manasseh had killed his father Hezekiah's prophet Isaiah by sawing him in half. I say Isaiah was totally beside himself.

*2 Chronicles 33:11-13 Therefore the Lord brought upon them the captains of the army of the king of Assyria, who took Manasseh with hooks, bound him with bronze fetters, and carried him off to Babylon. 12 Now when he was in affliction, he implored the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, 13 and prayed to Him; and He received his entreaty, heard his supplication, and brought him back to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the Lord was God.*

Manasseh thought he was cat's meow until God started to discipline him through the king of Assyria. They took him with hooks on his nose and carried him off to Babylon. Inside of his jail cell, he had a lot of time to think about the one true God and repented. God was not only so merciful to forgive this wicked king, but also He had him released and restored him as a king.

*Ezekiel 33:11 Say to them: 'As I live,' says the Lord God, 'I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways! For why should you die, O house of Israel?'*

By the way, some biblical scholars believe that Manasseh's nose hook was the origin of the nose ring fashion that you see nowadays.

## **B. A BREATH OF FRESH AIR IN THE MIDDLE OF CESSPOOL**

*2 Kings 22:1-4 Josiah was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jedidah the daughter of Adaiah of Bozkath. 2 And he did what was right in the sight of the Lord, and walked in all the ways of his father David; he did not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. 3 Now it came to pass, in the eighteenth year of King Josiah, that the king sent Shaphan the scribe, the son of Azaliah, the son of Meshullam, to the house of the Lord, saying: 4 "Go up to Hilkiah the high priest, that he may count the money which has been brought into the house of the Lord, which the doorkeepers have gathered from the people.*

To those godly people who lived in Judah, king Josiah's reformation must have been a breath of fresh air in the middle of cesspool. King Josiah didn't turn to any of the things his father Manasseh did, but followed the Lord wholeheartedly. What a godly young man he must had been!

I find five principles of revival:

### **1) Christians need to recognize an urgent need of revival in his or her heart individually. – v2**

Now America has not only forgotten God, she has become an immoral nation. It is unfortunate that many of our political leaders – whether they are Republicans or Democrats or Green Party or Purple Party, seem to be interested only in getting elected, so that they can have more power and wealth. Socialism is overtaking this country today. It seems that they are actually willing to sell and bankrupt our country in order to do that. We are living in dangerous days.

It is my firm conviction today that the only thing that can save our nation is not a better economy, nor a more tolerant culture as the liberals of this country want, but a revival in the land. It is either going to be revival or repudiation from God.

There is corruption in government on all levels – federal and state, corruption in Congress and Senate, corruption in the court systems and corruption in financial sector. Immorality and lawlessness are abound.

This nation is wallowing like a pig in a pig's sty. Unlike the repented prodigal son in a far country in the pigpen with the pigs, the majority of people in America don't even realize that we are in a neck deep trouble from God. Without revival, repudiation from God stares us in the face.

## **2) As king Josiah started to repair the temple, we must repair the church spiritually. – v4**

Many churches in America today are in the middle of apostasy. The Episcopal Church recently appointed an unrepented homosexual bishop Gene Robinson and gave their blessings to same-sex relationship.

Some church pastors would like to talk about their private sex lives from the pulpit and don't see any problem using cuss words in their sermons. They think that using cuss words from the pulpit is a hip and relevant to the general public. It is flat out wrong.

*Ephesians 4:29 Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.*

The church leaders who do not follow the Lord and His Word must be rejected.

## **3) True repentance is vital in revival. – v11**

*2 Kings 22:10-13 Then Shaphan the scribe showed the king, saying, "Hilkiah the priest has given me a book." And Shaphan read it before the king. 11 Now it happened, when the king heard the words of the Book of the Law, that he tore his clothes. 12 Then the king commanded Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam the son of Shaphan, Achbor the son of Michaiah, Shaphan the scribe, and Asaiah a servant of the king, saying, 13 "Go, inquire of the Lord for me, for the people and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that has been found; for great is the wrath of the Lord that is aroused against us, because our fathers have not obeyed the words of this book, to do according to all that is written concerning us."*

*2 Kings 22:18-19 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-- 19 because your heart was tender, and you humbled yourself before the Lord when you heard what I spoke against this place and against its inhabitants, that they would become a desolation and a curse, and you tore your clothes and wept before Me, I also have heard you," says the Lord.*

The Word of God reveals people's sin. That is why many people hate this Book and Satan doesn't want them to know it. Show me any other book that get persecuted as much as the Bible. Kings tried to burn it; emperors tried to destroy it; dictators tried to blow it away. They came and went, but the Word of God is still here.

All the Christian books in the world will not bring a revival, but true repentance of a sinner, broken before the Lord, will. Repentance is an expression of deep conviction of sin and turning away from what he or she has done.

## **4) We need to return to the Word of God, the Bible. – v2**

*2 Kings 23:1-3 Now the king sent them to gather all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem to him. 2 The king went up to the house of the Lord with all the men of Judah, and with him all the inhabitants of Jerusalem--the priests and the prophets and all the people, both small and great. 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. 3 Then the king stood by a pillar 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 this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people took a stand for the covenant.

There is a brazen denial of the Word of God even in so-called evangelical churches. The Word of God has been lost in churches, and there are many atheists today in the pulpit.

Any church that discards reading and studying the Word of God – including churches reading only one or two verses out of the Bible during the service out of obligation or ritual, has a tendency to put more emphasis in their own denominational traditions and ways over God's Word and His will. How can anyone honor the Lord without studying and following His Word? No one can.

#### **5) Immediate obedience is a must in revival.**

From v4 of chapter 23 to v24, king Josiah led the reformation by removing all the things and people who were involved with idolatry in Judah and Israel. He did not leave anything behind.

Immediate obedience is the only kind of obedience there is. Delayed obedience is disobedience. Whoever strives to withdraw from obedience, withdraws from God's grace.

### **C. THE GREATEST INHERITANCE YOU CAN GIVE**

Unfortunately, after this great king Josiah died two ungodly sons of his, Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim reigned in Judah. We don't know what kind of spiritual inheritance Josiah left to these wicked kings.

In my opinion, the greatest inheritance you can leave with your children is loving Jesus Christ and living for Him. It is not your house you can pass on to them, because your children will not remember much about the house they lived in, but they will remember what happened in that house. Nor will they remember what kind of car you drove, but they will remember what kind of conversations they had in that car.

Let each conversation with your children be a teachable moment to shape and mold them to follow the Lord Jesus for the rest of their lives.

You may say, "I don't have children at my home anymore." Then you can pass your godly inheritance to your grandchildren. You might say, "I don't have grandchildren to do that." Guess what, we have 30-40 children and youth in our church in any given Sunday. You can be a part of their spiritual growth by participating in our Kids' Chapel ministry or our Youth Group.

Our children and youth are the main target of satanic onslaughts through music, movies, video games, drugs, alcohol, internet and now even cell phones. I am sure that many of you have heard a new word "Sexting". Porno industry, pedophiles, even their own age kids sending out uninvited illicit texts with porno images to our children's cell phones. Satan is using these perverts to pollute our children's minds and to destroy their future decisions for Jesus.

We must guard them physically and spiritually. Invest your time and effort to bring these young people to Jesus Christ our Lord. We are going to send our Youth Group to the Costa Rica Mission place some time early next year. I strongly believe that their lives will be changed and burn for Jesus.

Please remember this. Christianity in America is only one generation away from its extinction if we don't have a revival and do not pass this godly heritage to our children.

#### ***D. APPLICATIONS***

- 1) Christians need to recognize an urgent need of revival in his or her heart individually.
- 2) We must repair the church spiritually.
- 3) True repentance is vital in revival.
- 4) We need to return to the Word of God, the Bible.
- 5) Immediate obedience is a must in revival.
- 6) The greatest inheritance to our children is Jesus.