

July, 2006

Pause Ponder Profit

“Without Being Desired”

by Lowell Blasingame

Of king Asa it is said that he “*slept with his fathers*” and was buried — with “*sweet odors and divers kinds of spices prepared by the apothecaries’ art: and they made a very great burning for him.*” (2 Chr. 16:13-14). Zerr, in commenting upon this, suggests that these burnings were to honor the deceased. Probably this then is comparable to our placing floral gifts upon the grave of the deceased as a display of honor or affection shown for the deceased. The fact that a very great burning was made for Asa would tell us that he was greatly respected and highly loved by his subjects.

By way of contrast when his grandson, Jehoram, died “*his people made no burning for him, like the burning of his fathers*” and the observation is made that he “*departed without being desired,*” (2 Chr. 21:19-20). Jehoram had reigned as king for eight years. However, when he died no one mourned or grieved his passing. What a sad, sad commentary this is, on the life of this man that inspiration would say that he died “*without being desired.*”

Jehoram was a son of Jehoshaphat and a grandson of Asa. These were two of Judah’s most highly respected kings. His father had given him the kingdom, “*because he was the first-born.*” Provisions had been made for the other sons by Jehoshaphat in gifts of silver, gold, precious things but the throne became the possession of Jehoram who when he had increased his power killed his brothers and various others of the princes in Judah (2 Chr. 21:4).

Jehoram chose the wrong example to follow. Rather than following his father and grandfather in worshipping Jehovah he chose to walk in the steps of his father in law, Ahab, king of Israel, “*for he had the daughter of Ahab to wife,*” (2 Chr. 21:6). His wife was the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel and as Jezebel was an influence for evil on Ahab, Athaliah became such upon Jehoram.

“*And he wrought that which was evil in the eyes of the Lord,*” and “*he made high places in the mountains of Judah, and caused the inhabitants of Jerusalem to commit fornication, and compelled Judah thereto,*” (2 Chr. 21:11). Elijah, the prophet, wrote him a letter warning him of the terrible fate that would befall him and horrible death he would die but he refused to listen — and he died and no one cared!

What impact will your death make upon others? Balaam’s wish was to “*die the death of the righteous,*” but to do this, one must live the life of the righteous.

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Lessons From Josiah

by Lowell Blasingame

Josiah was the fifteenth king in the Davidic line to rule over the southern kingdom and likely the best king that it had. His father, Amon, and grandfather, Manasseh, by contrast would rank at the top of the most wicked kings in Judah's history. So when Josiah came to the throne, he inherited a kingdom that was morally and spiritually bankrupt. Josiah led the way in making reforms in the kingdom by putting away idols and their altars and groves and in restoring the worship of Jehovah.

Josiah lived in a period of political change. Assyria, to the north, had been a mighty empire for centuries but it was beginning to crumble. Nabopolassar, the general who anchored the southeastern part of the empire, saw in Assyria's problems an opportunity for establishing an empire of his own and led an attack on Babylon and successfully routed the Assyrian forces, who fled to Haran. Within two years Nabopolassar had consolidated his gains and made Babylon the capital of his kingdom. He put his son, Nebuchadnezzar in charge of his army and sent him against the Assyrians at Haran and was successful again with the remnants of the Assyrian army fleeing to Carchemish. Not long afterward, Nebuchadnezzar attacked and defeated the remnants of the Assyrian army at Carchemish and was victorious again.

As the battle of Carchemish was nearing, Pharaoh-Necho in Egypt decided to come to the aid of the Assyrians and marched his army through Israel. For some unknown reason Josiah put his army in the path of the Egyptian army. Necho sent messengers to him telling him that he had no quarrel with him but Josiah refused to withdraw his troops so the Egyptians attacked and in the ensuing battle, Josiah was mortally wounded, taken back to Jerusalem and died. He

did delay the Egyptians long enough for the Nebuchadnezzar to defeat the Assyrians before they arrived. This brought to an end the life of Josiah after a reign of thirty nine years. There are some excellent lessons that may be learned from his life.

The Importance Of Seeking The Lord Early In Life

Josiah's father and grandfather had not been good role models for this young man. Manasseh, his grandfather, reigned fifty-five years, the longest of any king of Judah, and the first fifty years were a very evil period. God allowed him to be taken captive by the Babylonians and "in his distress" he turned to the God of his father, returned to Jerusalem and during the last five years tried to undo in Jerusalem what he had done there. But it was the sad story of many — too little, too late. His father, Amon, reigned only two years and he followed the early life of his father and was very wicked.

Who influenced Josiah to be the good person that he was is unknown. Of him it is said, "*For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was yet young, he began to seek after the God of David his father,—*" (2 Chr. 34:3). Josiah became king at the age of eight and some have guessed that he had a godly mother, as did Timothy, and that her godly life had influenced that of her son. Abraham Lincoln is quoted as once saying, "All that I am, or ever hope to be, I owe to my angel mother." Others have thought that tutors of the young king had held up lives of good kings such as David, Jehoshaphat and Hezekiah as role models worthy of imitation, so at sixteen he was walking in the ways of David "*and declined neither to the right hand, nor the left,*" (2 Chr. 34:2).

I find it strange that parents are concerned about the physical and mental well-being of their children but are so unconcerned about their spiritual training. Parents will make sure that their

(Lesson From Josiah — Continued from page 2)

children receive their vaccinations, see the doctor and dentist for regular check-ups, get to school and do their homework but are totally indifferent to their moral and spiritually needs. And while we sleep on the job of training “*a child in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*” (Pro. 22:6), you can be assured that there are people on the “idiot box” who are doing their best to teach them wrong things and what you thought was a “free babysitter” for you while you were busy doing your thing has cost you a son or daughter. Teach your child the importance of seeking the Lord early in its life.

Josiah Laid To Heart What God Said

He walked in the ways of David “*and declined neither to the right hand, nor to the left,*” (2 Chr. 34:2). Decline is translated from a word meaning “to turn aside.” In our time we would say that he stuck to the letter of what he was taught.

While cleaning the temple and getting it ready for Jehovah’s worship a copy “*of the book of the law of the Lord was found in the house of God,*” and Hilkiah, the priest, gave it to Shapan, who brought it to the king and read it in his hearing. This is thought to be a copy of the book of Deuteronomy, which Moses had commanded to be attached to “*the side of the ark of the covenant*” (Deut. 31:26) and which plainly spelled out God’s curses upon Israel for not obeying them. Upon hearing the reading of this, Josiah “*rent his clothes*” and sent men to Huldah, the prophetess, to make inquiry about what to do. He knew that his people had not kept the Lord’s word and were subject to the outpouring of His great wrath (2 Chr. 34:18-21). Huldah returned word to Josiah that God would punish Judah because they had forsaken Him and burned incense to idols but because the king’s heart had been tender and he had humbled himself, that it would not come in his day but after he had been

gathered to his fathers.

Josiah’s reaction upon hearing God’s word was very different from the present day, “*Ho-hum, So what,*” “*Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee,*” (Acts 24:25), response that is given to it today. Then there is the “*I know there is no Scripture for what we are doing, but I like it and see nothing wrong with it!*” We would do well to take seriously what the Lord says and, like Josiah, “*decline neither to the right hand, nor the left,*” from it.

Crossing The Line Of No Return

The Lord’s answer to Josiah about the fate of His people was, “*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 before the king of Judah: Because they have forsaken me, and have burned incense to 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,*” (2 Chr. 34:24-25).

Through Jeremiah the Lord said, “*Hear, O earth: behold, I will bring evil upon this people, even the fruit of their thoughts, because they have not hearkened unto my words, nor to my law, but rejected it.*” (Jer. 6:19). God said to Judah, “*Amend your ways and doing, and I will cause you to dwell in this place,*” (Jer. 7:3) “*and I called you, but you answered not,*” (v. 13) “*and I will cast you out of my sight, as I cast out all your brethren, even the whole seed of Ephraim,*” (v. 14). So God said, “*Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to me: for I will not hear thee,*” (Jer. 7:16). Judah had crossed the line of no return. We need to understand that while God is rich in love and abundant in grace, the fact

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 remains that continual rejection of His call and hardening of our hearts can bring us to the line of no return — *"There's a line that is drawn by rejecting the Lord, where the call of the Spirit is lost —."* Have you crossed that line?

400 N. 2nd St.
Paragould, AR

Second and Walnut Church of Christ

Gospel Meeting

July the 23rd through July the 28th, 2006
Sunday 9:45, 10:45, & 6:00 P.M.
Monday — Friday 7:00 P.M.
Speaker: Lowell Blasingame
From: Grenada, MS

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 Bible Study 9:45 A.M.
 Worship 10:45 A.M.
 Worship 6:00 P.M.
Wednesday
 Bible Study 7:00 P.M.

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