

Josiah and Jeremiah

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Introduction: Where does acceptable service to God begin?

- A. What is the proper solution to spiritual decay and apathy?
 - 1. Often a younger generation arises that seeks to make changes on personal relevance.
 - 2. Sadly a sincere desire to make things better can lead to additional deception.
 - 3. Should worship be centered on man? Consider this recent quote:
"Do good because God wants you to be happy," she said. "When you come to church, when you worship Him, you're not doing it for God really. You're doing it for yourself, because that's what makes God happy. Amen?" – Victoria Osteen
 - 4. One critic titled an article "Joel Osteen worships Himself."
- B. Jesus taught that acceptable service must come from the heart. **(Mk 12:29-30)**
 - 1. It is easy to neglect the heart. **(Prov 4:23)**
 - 2. Often people find themselves in religious activity purely as a result of tradition and peer pressure. These need to be converted.
 - 3. We will see these truths illustrated clearly in the reign of the OT king Josiah.

I. The Reforms of Josiah

- A. The background of Josiah. **(2 Chron 33:22-34:1)**
 - 1. His grandfather was Manasseh and his father was Amnon. These were two of the most wicked kings Judah ever knew.
 - 2. The fall of Judah was credited to the evil of Manasseh. **(2 Kings 24:3-4)**
 - 3. He was only eight years old when he began to reign. What kind of advisors did he have? What chance would you give this young man of doing right?
- B. God called Josiah a son of David. **(2 Chron 34:2-3)**
 - 1. Why is he called a son of David? Was not Amnon his father? In truth you are a son of who you act like! **(Matt 5:44-45; Mark 3:17)**
 - 2. Every man in spite of his background can make a choice to do right. **(Josh 24:15)**
- C. The conversion and early reforms of Josiah. **(2 Chron 34:4-5)**
 - 1. At 16 years old he began to seek after God. What did he learn?
 - 2. At 20 years old he cleansed the city of Jerusalem.
 - 3. How many years had these things been allowed to go on unopposed? What if they argued "we have always done it this way?"
 - 4. The truth is the people were not that concerned, they were willing to go along with whatever the king wanted. **(Jer 5:31)**
 - 5. Josiah did not just stop at Jerusalem but went on a rampage! **(2 Chron 34:6-7)**
 - 6. How many enemies did he make? His heart was on the Lord. **(1 Pet 3:12-13)**
- D. Later reforms of Josiah.
 - 1. He began the work of restoring and repairing the temple. **(2 Chron 34:8)**
 - 2. For the first time in years the book of the law was found. **(2 Chron 34:14-15)**
 - 3. How could this have happened? They had long stopped reading it!
- E. The tender heart of Josiah.

1. The law is read to him. He reacts in great mourning. **(2 Chron 34:18-19, 21)**
 2. Did others hear the same words? What is their reaction? What is the difference?
 3. Josiah now wants to know exactly where he and his nation stands. He was not willing just to “try to have positive thoughts”. He wanted the truth of God.
 4. The answer should not have surprised him. **(2 Chron 34:23-25)**
 5. God however recognized Josiah. **(2 Chron 34:26-28; 2 Tim 2:19)**
- F. Josiah tries to save his nation. **(2 Chron 34:30-33)**
1. Have you ever thought: “I will make them do what is right!”?
 2. *He commanded them* observe the Passover. **(2 Chron 35:1, 5, 7, 18-19)**
 3. He had to try and he did! *What did God think of the fruits of his efforts?*

II. Jeremiah’s Response to the Reforms of Josiah

- A. Jeremiah started preaching during the reign of Josiah. **(Jer 1:1-2)**
1. Would you liked to have preached with such a king in power?
 2. If Jeremiah looked at *what he could see with his eyes*, all is well!
- B. What did Jeremiah say about the reforms of Josiah? ---- **NOTHING!**
1. Why? *God does not look* at the number in the temple, the lambs offered, or how many knees were on the ground. He sees the heart. **(1 Sam 16:7)**
 2. Josiah could make them go to worship but he could not make them serve God.
 3. Many went because the king said so. *It became culturally popular*. **(Jn 2:24-25)**
- C. Jeremiah was not a popular preacher.
1. He called Judah’s actions a pretense. **(Jer 3:9-10)**
 2. They thought that they could blackmail God because of His temple **(Jer 7:4)**
 3. He went so far as to tell them that prayer will not help. **(Jer 7:16; 15:1)**
 4. What about their sacrifices? He told them to eat them, that was the only profit they would be for them. **(Jer 7:21)**

III. We cannot Obligate God to us.

- A. This is the God we serve, know Him! **(Isa 40:15-16)**
1. We should ask the question: “What does God want?” **(Micah 6:8; Jn 4:23-24)**
 2. Some contend we can make worship more relevant by having spontaneous worship, less teaching and applauding rather than saying amen.
 3. One man boasted how he “rebooted” how we do church.
 4. Francis Chan recently said that today’s “church” is not what God intended. He then appeals to emotionalism attributed to the Holy Spirit. No Jeremiah for Him!
 3. A generation that places “relevance over reverence” will not know God.
- B. Outward conformity has never been the only test of faithfulness.
1. God wants a circumcised heart. **(Jer 9:23-26; Micah 6:6-8)**
 2. An older generation that is dead will also find a way to leave hearts untouched.
 3. Are you weary in your worship? **(Mal 1:13; Isa 43:22-24)**
 4. All of us must start with our personal relationship and worship to God.
Wherever we are at in our private lives will be what we bring to worship.

Conclusion: Let’s open our hearts to God. Will you open your door? **(Rev 3:19-20)**