

Josiah – founded by God.

- 2Ki 22:1** Josiah *was* eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned thirty and one years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Jedidah, the daughter of Adaiah of Boscath.
- 2Ki 22:2** And he did *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in all the way of David his father, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left.
- 2Ki 22:3** And it came to pass in the eighteenth year of king Josiah, *that* the king sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, the son of Meshullam, the scribe, to the house of the LORD, saying,
- 2Ki 22:4** Go up to Hilkiah the high priest, that he may sum the silver which is brought into the house of the LORD, which the keepers of the door have gathered of the people:
- 2Ki 22:5** And let them deliver it into the hand of the doers of the work, that have the oversight of the house of the LORD: and let them give it to the doers of the work which *is* in the house of the LORD, to repair the breaches of the house,
- 2Ki 22:6** Unto carpenters, and builders, and masons, and to buy timber and hewn stone to repair the house.
- 2Ki 22:7** Howbeit there was no reckoning made with them of the money that was delivered into their hand, because they dealt faithfully.
- 2Ki 22:8** And Hilkiah the high priest said unto Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD. And Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it.
- 2Ki 22:9** And Shaphan the scribe came to the king, and brought the king word again, and said, Thy servants have gathered the money that was found in the house, and have delivered it into the hand of them that do the work, that have the oversight of the house of the LORD.
- 2Ki 22:10** And Shaphan the scribe shewed the king, saying, Hilkiah the priest hath delivered me a book. And Shaphan read it before the king.
- 2Ki 22:11** And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the book of the law, that he rent his clothes.
- 2Ki 22:12** And the king commanded Hilkiah the priest, and Ahikam the son of Shaphan, and Achbor the son of Michaiah, and Shaphan the scribe, and Asahiah a servant of the king's, saying,
- 2Ki 22:13** Go ye, enquire of the LORD for me, and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that is found: for great *is* the wrath of the LORD that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this book, to do according unto all that which is written concerning us.
- 2Ki 22:14** So Hilkiah the priest, and Ahikam, and Achbor, and Shaphan, and Asahiah, went unto Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tikvah, the son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe; (now she dwelt in Jerusalem in the college;) and they communed with her.
- 2Ki 22:15** And she said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Tell the man that sent you to me,
- 2Ki 22:16** Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, *even* all the words of the book which the king of Judah hath read:
- 2Ki 22:17** Because they have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands; therefore my wrath shall be kindled against this place, and shall not be quenched.
- 2Ki 22:18** But to the king of Judah which sent you to enquire of the LORD, thus shall ye say to him, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, *As touching* the words which thou hast heard;
- 2Ki 22:19** Because thine heart was tender, and thou hast humbled thyself before the LORD, when thou heardest what I spake against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, that they should become a desolation and a curse, and hast rent thy clothes, and wept before me; I also have heard *thee*, saith the LORD.
- 2Ki 22:20** Behold therefore, I will gather thee unto thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered into thy grave in peace; and thine eyes shall not see all the evil which I will bring upon this place. And they brought the king word again.
- 2Ki 23:1** And the king sent, and they gathered unto him all the elders of Judah and of Jerusalem.
- 2Ki 23:2** And the king went up into the house of the LORD, and all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with him, and the priests, and the prophets, and all the people, both small and great: and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant which was found in the house of the LORD.
- 2Ki 23:3** And the king stood by a pillar, and made a covenant before the LORD, to walk after the LORD, and to keep his commandments and his testimonies and his statutes with all *their* heart and all *their* soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people stood to the covenant.

- 2Ki 23:4 And the king commanded Hilkiah the high priest, and the priests of the second order, and the keepers of the door, to bring forth out of the temple of the LORD all the vessels that were made for Baal, and for the grove, and for all the host of heaven: and he burned them without Jerusalem in the fields of Kidron, and carried the ashes of them unto Bethel.
- 2Ki 23:5 And he put down the idolatrous priests, whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense in the high places in the cities of Judah, and in the places round about Jerusalem; them also that burned incense unto Baal, to the sun, and to the moon, and to the planets, and to all the host of heaven.
- 2Ki 23:6 And he brought out the grove from the house of the LORD, without Jerusalem, unto the brook Kidron, and burned it at the brook Kidron, and stamped *it* small to powder, and cast the powder thereof upon the graves of the children of the people.
- 2Ki 23:7 And he brake down the houses of the sodomites, that *were* by the house of the LORD, where the women wove hangings for the grove.

Back in 1982 I had recently repented of being a disciple (pupil) of the group of folks I had been associating with instead of Jesus and by the grace of God had been allowed a further opportunity to follow Jesus instead.

At the time I was an elder in a small Assemblies of God work in Morpeth, Northumberland and would occasionally be asked to speak at meetings to fill in the rota. The Holy Spirit told me, 'If I give you something to say, say it. If I don't give you anything to say, keep quiet.'

Accordingly I agreed with the other two elders that I would no longer be asked to speak on pre-arranged occasions but that I could share anything the Lord may give me from time to time, with their consent. Shortly after this the Lord told me to resign from being an elder and this I did.

One Sunday afternoon the Lord give me a small word from the above passage concerning Josiah and the book of the Law found in the temple. He told me that it would be the last word I would ever give in that place. I was upset at this and telephoned a brother to ask him to be praying about the matter. I wasn't upset at the idea of me not speaking there anymore, but rather because it seemed as if the Lord was washing His hands of the local situation.

After the evening gospel message I asked the other two elders if it was okay for me to share a short word. We read the above passage and I made a short application of it to the situation in Western Christianity.

Josiah in Hebrew means 'founded of God' and this passage is concerning those founded of God, all those born from above, not of the will of man, but of the Spirit.

Many of us were worshipping and serving the Lord in the ways of our fathers to the best of our ability and according to the best traditions we had received from them. However, this was not according to the word of the Lord. The ways of David are not the ways of the Lord. We can do what is right in the sight of the Lord personally yet be party to gross communal apostasy and deviation from the way of the Lord!

Traditions will blind us to a true state of affairs. Josiah had grown up with the temple being in the state it was in. To him and his contemporaries this was the normal state of affairs. He was on the throne for eighteen years before being moved to make improvements to the condition of the Temple. If he had just arrived in Jerusalem by time travel from the days of Solomon he would have been aghast at the conditions, structurally and morally. When comparing what passes for the normal life of the body of the Lord Jesus Christ in our days with that in the book of Acts you have to conclude; 'It was not so in the beginning.'

Things have been added and things have been taken away. Many vitally important matters among them. But what has become normal to us may well be abnormal to God.

Because previous Kings that were not 'founded of God' had introduced false gods, idolatrous practices and equipment into the temple, at the same time removing the God ordained furnishings and equipment, the temple had become a disgrace. It was a disgrace physically and morally. The temple still had a very important place in the life of the nation of Israel and was still being supported by the people financially.

Josiah started by recognising the need for renewal and repair to the fabric of the temple. This was the obvious, visible need. He was totally un-aware of the tragic scale of deviation from the laws of the God of Israel.

He hadn't seen or heard the book of the law at any time in his life but when he did hear it read to him he recognised it as the word of the Lord. He believed it and was moved to mourning, fear and repentance leading to entreating the Lord. Notice he involved and co-operated with the priests, scribes and prophetess. This was a matter that affected the whole of the people and the whole of the people were called to share in confronting and rectifying the situation.

Just as it took the discovery and hearing of the word of Law to bring revelation to Josiah, it takes the hearing of the word of the Lord by the Holy Spirit to lead us into all the truth.

The consequences of finding the Law, hearing the Law, believing the Law, obeying the Law, was the complete removal of abominations, idolatry and brazened immorality.

What started with an attempt to fix-up the physical fabric of the temple ended up with confession, repentance and spiritual revival. It even resulted in the removal of the 'alternative' altar at Bethel and other false altars throughout Israel and Judah.

Our application is that the temple (the one made of living stones, without hands, the body of Jesus Christ on earth) is in an even bigger mess than what we can plainly see. Those who feel concern and are moved to do something about it may find that the Holy Spirit has a revelation for them that will be very disturbing, perhaps confusing and upsetting.

But godly sorrow works a change of thought (repentance). The exchange of our thoughts for God's thoughts; when we have the mind of Christ, who is the Holy Spirit.

I don't know how things will turn out in the temple made without hands. I just have to be willing to co-operate and respond.

After sharing this little word some of the guys really received something from the Lord.

I was told later that some on the platform behind me were gnashing their teeth.

Later that evening I had a phone call asking me to meet with the two elders the next evening.

There I was told that there had been phone calls from concerned members of the congregation and that I would not be allowed to speak anymore in any of the meetings. Within in two years the place was closed down.

By the grace of God I was born from above by the Holy Spirit in the street outside a religious building in Brighton, 1966.

I had not then heard the whole good news message of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ as preached by Peter on the day of Pentecost, Phillip in Samaria or Paul in Ephesus.

I had only heard of the healing power of the name of Jesus Christ from one who had been healed of a fatal kidney condition and had believed it might be so.

The Holy Spirit had convinced me that God loved me.

When I was born from above the Holy Spirit told me that God was now my Father and that my destination was to be with him in heaven.

I had become a new creation but no-one had told me about immersion (baptism) into the name of Jesus Christ or of the kingdom of God. I returned home to Gateshead and started attending a local 'church' where I assumed I would learn whatever I may need to learn and was happy to live one day at a time with Jesus.

At this place I learnt what the folks there knew, did what the folks there did.

It took sixteen years for me to realise I had become a disciple of men rather than a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It then took another twenty seven years for me to be aware of the need to be baptised (immersed) into the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I have no complaints; rather I thank my Father in heaven for His great grace and patience. I rejoice in the goodness and mercy that He has bestowed upon me in Jesus Christ.

In 2009 I am still discovering things I have yet to learn about the good news of the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ. Many of them are extremely important and basic to being a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thankfully, God is patient; let us be impatient, for the violent take the Kingdom of God by force.

Colin Thompson, Gateshead, England. (Nobody important.)

Comments welcome by email to colin@followingjesuschrist.co.uk

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