

A YOUTH LEADS THE WAY
2 Chron. 34:3

Intro: The books of 1 and 2 Chronicles give us the spiritual history of Judah. Or, as others have said, History written from God's point-of-view.

Starting in 1 Chronicles and running through 2 Chronicles there is an emphasis that is reflected in our text tonight. Concerning Josiah it is said that "while he was yet young, he began to seek after the God of David his father" -- David, who was 17 kings back to the beginning of the Theocracy.

The emphasis began with David: 1 Chron. 16:10, 11;
22:19;
28:8, 9. } DAVID

Notice how it goes through the book of 2 Chronicles down to the last mention with Josiah: 2 Chron. 7:14; To Solomon

11:16; } REHOBOAM
12:14; }
14:4, 7 ASA }
15:2, 4, 12, 13, 15; }
16:12; }
17:4; JEHOASHAPHAT }
19:3; }
20:3, 4; }
22:9; }
26:5; UZZIAH }
34:3 (our text). HEZEKIAH }
JOSIAH } (not mentioned)

Obviously this was something that was pleasing to the Lord, and a thing which even in Judah was tragically neglected: seeking the Lord!

Looking at these verses we can see that seeking the Lord meant:

- 1) Seeking His blessing.
- 2) Seeking His will.
- 3) Trusting, or relying upon, Him.
- 4) Pleasing Him.
- 5) Forsaking sin.
- 6) Doing His will.
- 7) Rejoicing in Him.
- 8) Fellowship with Him.
- 9) A way of life, more than just an isolated incident.
- 10) A desire of the heart, not just an outward formality.

And there are probably many other things that could be said as to its meaning, but this gives us more than we can digest at one time.

Now let us think about Josiah.

I. WHO WAS HE?

He was the 17th king after David, and there were only to be 4 more kings before Judah was to go into captivity.

It was too late to do anything to spare the nation from the judgment of God.

Israel was already in captivity.

He had a very ungodly father, Amon, whose servants killed him after he had been king for only 2 years.

He had a very ungodly grandfather, Manasseh, who made Judah sin worse than the Canaanites -- until the Babylonians invaded Judah and took him captive to Babylon. After he repented, the Lord brought him back, and the rest of his life seems to have been different.

But Josiah did not have much in the way of spiritual heritage.

Add to this the fact that he was only 8 years old when he became king.

The outlook was very grim for Judah.

II. WHAT DID HE DO?

In line with the emphasis in 1 and 2 Chronicles, he is remembered for something that started when he was 16 years old. See our text. "He began to seek after the God of David, his father."

III. HOW DID HE DO IT?

There are at least 5 things of importance in chapters 34, 35.

- A. He began to take away all that was not of God -- all of the idolatry (2 Chron. 34:3b-7).
- B. When he was 26 he began to repair the Temple (2 Chron. 34:8-13).
- C. Providentially "Hilkiah, the priest, found a book of the law of the Lord given by Moses" (2 Chron. 34:14).

Can you imagine what it would mean to seek the Lord if you did not have your Bible?

When it was read to him, note what he did: vv. 18, 19, 26, 27.

- D. He and his people made a covenant with God (2 Chron. 34:31-33).
- E. In the same 18th year (see 35:19) he led his people in the observance of the Passover (2 Chron. 35:1-19) -- the greatest since the days of Samuel (v. 18).

There is nothing in Israel's history that pointed more definitely to the redemption of men than did the Passover. Here we have the Old Testament picture of the Cross, the beginning of life and redemption.

IV. HOW DID IT ALL GET STARTED?

There always has to be a kind of inability to answer such a question because it cannot be answered without knowing something about the work of God in the heart of His child.

But there is a hint of that which God used. We can see it if we look carefully at 2 Chron. 34:2, 3.

It is to be found in the two times that "David" is mentioned.

Would it be going beyond Scripture to say that Josiah's knowledge of David made him yearn to be a man like David? This had to be the case. The Lord had touched Josiah's heart with the story of David. Much would have been available to him in hearing the history, and in reading what was available.

His heart had been touched by:

- 1) David's hatred of idolatry. There was none of that in David's day.
- 2) David's desire to build the Temple. If this had been that important to David, what could keep it from being the same in Josiah's day?
- 3) After the Law was found, Josiah was moved by David's love for the Word of God.

And then as the Law was read to Josiah, another man moved into his life: the man, Moses.

And as he heard the reading of the Law, two things came into focus:

- 1) Moses pleading with Israel for their obedience.
- 2) God's command that the Passover be observed faithfully every year.

But in seeing all of this, what stands out as the main thing?

V. WHAT WAS THE FOCAL POINT?

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What is the most important point in all of this?

It is not:

- 1) That he just sought to be like David.
- 2) That he wanted to do what Moses had commanded Israel.
- 3) That the ceremonies would become an end in themselves.

No. All of those things were important. But v. 3 gives us our answer: "He began to seek after THE GOD of David, his father."

It was the Lord whom he wanted to find.

How comforting must have been Jeremiah's word, which he may have heard the prophet say:

"And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart" (Jer. 29:13).

Concl: Could I ask you tonight this question? What are you seeking as a child of God? Why do you read your Bible? Why do you pray?

Is it all an expression of a great desire in your heart for GOD -- God, the Father; God, the Son; God, the Holy Spirit? Is it?

Has your Bible reading become just a routine, or are you like a man who is seeking his Lord? WHO IS YOUR IDEAL? WHO ARE YOU FOLLOWING?

It is not always easy to find the Lord in real fellowship. But He can be found. Note Job's experience in Job 23:3. And then look at the end of the story in Job 42:5, 6.

David said it in Psa. 27:4, "One thing have I desired . . ."

Oh, may this be the cry of our hearts tonight!

If you do not know the Lord, let me give you Isa. 55:6, 7.

Why is it a seeking? Because the Lord wants this to come from our hearts.

Once you have known that wonderful fellowship with Him you will sing in those wonderful words of James McGranahan's song,

Now none but Christ can satisfy,
None other name for me;
There's love and life and lasting joy,
Lord Jesus, found in Thee.

JOSIAH STARTED
WHEN HE WAS 16!
WHEN DID YOU START?