

Lesson Three of the Series

In the first lesson of the series, we discussed the pattern of history of fallen nations, civilizations and cultures that have failed to follow the laws of nature and of nature's God. Many of the great empires have fallen when they reached a level of moral depravity that our nation is approaching. We concluded that for us to think that our nation can do the same things of the past and expect a different result would be insanity. Our nation and culture will meet and end, but there are factors that will determine the time.

In the second lesson, we turned to an event of history on which the series "The Josiah Project" was named. It was shortly before his period of reign that the nation was entrenched most deeply in sin and against God. It was only a few years prior that God put the nation on death row. As discussed, it said that King Josiah did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord and his generation was spared the eminent destruction. In what way did Josiah do right in the eyes of the Lord and can that be repeated in our own generation by the people of God?

In lesson two we learned the first two steps that were taken by Josiah. A) At age sixteen he sought for God. B) At age twenty he cleansed his environment of sin. These are absolutely momentous events to be carried out in the lives of the people of God today for their Josiah Project to be effective and blessed by God. All the movements in the world are no good unless we seek for God and seek to cleanse our own lives.

It at this time that we must continue with next section of the series concerning our place in the present crisis for our nation. We have a great power to preserve not only ourselves, but the culture. That privilege as the people of God comes with great responsibility. Let us continue the text of the scriptural and historical account of Josiah.

C) At age twenty-six, he started the REPARATION of the temple.

II Ki 22:3-7 Now it came about 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, 4 "Go up to Hilkiyah the high priest that he may count the money brought in to the house of the LORD which the doorkeepers have gathered from the people. 5 "And let them deliver it into the hand of the workmen who have the oversight of the house of the LORD, and let them give it to the workmen who are in the house of the LORD to repair the damages of the house, 6 to the carpenters and the builders and the masons and for buying timber and hewn stone to repair the house. 7 "Only no accounting shall be made with them for the money delivered into their hands, for they deal faithfully."

- The temple was built by Solomon three hundred years prior and it took seven years to complete (1 Kings 6:38). Its dedication was a glorious event and was one of the high points of Jewish history. *2 Chr 7:1-2 Now when Solomon had finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the LORD filled the house. 2 And the priests could not enter into the house of the LORD, because the glory of the LORD filled the LORD'S house.*

- We must understand that for multiple decades the glorious temple of Solomon had gone through many periods of abuse and neglect. Items were removed and sold for cash or protection; walls and ceilings were weakened; veils and interiors were faded, paneling dried up and foundations threatened by overgrowth. By the time Josiah assumed office it was in some pretty pitiful shape and in need of repair. Now that the land was cleansed of the rampant sin of the people, it was time to do something about this eyesore.
- He had a contingency of good quality foremen to carry out the work. *2 Chr 34:12 And the men did the work faithfully with foremen over them to supervise:* The text goes on to say that they repaired stone and structural damage. Their goal was to fix not only the structure called the temple of the LORD, but the image of the glory that had been so neglected. God was not looking glorious in view of the temple. The perception of the public must be changed.

Church, we must experience Reparation!

- We have an obligation as the people of God to make sure that when world sees us that they see Him! *2 Cor 3:2-3 You are our letter, written in our hearts, known and read by all men; 3 being manifested that you are a letter of Christ, cared for by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone, but on tablets of human hearts.*
- I must admit that in the past few decades the universal church as a whole has not done well in their public image before the world. The result has been an eyesore for the society around us.
 - There has been division. There has been years of congregations that have split for one reason or another. *1 Cor 12:25 "...that there should be no division in the body, but {that} the members should have the same care for one another."* What do you think the world is thinking when they see the greatest family not acting like a family? We must fix this if it is a problem.
 - There has been gospel laziness. Jesus saved us from our sins with the greatest news of all-time called the gospel. We have the obligation to share this news with others, but many have not. *1 Cor 9:16 For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for I am under compulsion; for woe is me if I do not preach the gospel.*
 - There has been public unrighteousness. *Prov 14:34 Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to {any} people.* This also includes the people of God. When we look like hypocrites, we will receive the reward of the hypocrite. *Rom 13:12 The night is almost gone, and the day is at hand. Let us therefore lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.*
 - There has been isolation. In the name of protection we have become isolated. The church family must be accessible for the world to be called out of their present life. We must repair our image of being there for those who want to escape this crooked and perverse generation. *Matt 5:16 "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."*

- It is not with hewn stone and cut timber that we repair our image to the world, but through REPAIR of our negative actions, negative decisions and negative perceptions.

What can I do today to begin REPARATION?

- Strive to be unified in love. If there is a brother or sister that you are not getting along with, make it your goal to repair the relationship. If there is a group of people that you might not like, love them. Make them know that you are a Christian by your love, by your love. Make them know you are Christians by your love.
- Make progress, not excuses. Often times we try to justify our poor actions that we have carried out before the world. Stop it! Many times children of well-intentioned Christians have children that leave the faith because of the excused behavior of a parent. Stop it! Make progress against this by changing the behavior.
- Apologize where apology is needed. I know that apologizing does not change the history, but it does put it in perspective. They must know that you are simply one beggar showing the other beggars where they can find bread.
- Preach Christ, not rules. Being a Christian is not about how many rules you can keep, but how much you love Jesus and what He did for us on the cross. Don't Bring them into a debate of doctrine but the adoration of a Savior.
- Have ministries that target the heart of the world. This is not talking about having a fancy building with spotlights and awesome sound systems, but ministries that are targeted at the heart of the world. We will have much more on this in the closing of the series.

Without a doubt there are sinners that do not care what we do or who we are because they are so entrenched in the workings of the world, but there are many that are searching. God has a great desire that all come to the knowledge of the truth, but we must repair the damage that has been done. Josiah took a dilapidated structure called the temple of God and sought to repair it and it made a momentary difference. We must also need to be a people that will strive to repair the image of the church family so that they will value what most of us already know. *Rev 21:2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband.*

There must be Re-education!

II Ki 22:8-10 Then Hilkiyah the high priest said to Shaphan the scribe, "I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD." And Hilkiyah gave the book to Shaphan who read it. 9 And Shaphan the scribe came to the king and brought back word to the king and said, "Your servants have emptied out the money that was found in the house, and have delivered it into the hand of the workmen who have the oversight of the house of the LORD." 10 Moreover, Shaphan the scribe told the king saying, "Hilkiyah the priest has given me a book." And Shaphan read it in the presence of the king.

- There is something of great interest that occurred while they were renovating the temple. They found the book of the law in the sanctuary. The curious thought about this was that it appeared that the nation had slid so far from God that they

- did not have a copy of the Law available to them. We do not know if they outlawed the scriptures or removed some text. What we do know is that when he brought the copy of the law to the kings and read the curses for a nation that does not follow God, Josiah tore his clothing in reaction.
- What was he reading from the first five books of the Bible that awakened him further in the Josiah Movement? Many say it was probably from Deut 27:15-26, the pearl strand of curses to a renegade nation.
 - 15 'Cursed is the man who makes an idol or a molten image, an abomination to the LORD, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and sets {it} up in secret.' And all the people shall answer and say, 'Amen.'
 - 16 'Cursed is he who dishonors his father or mother.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'
 - 17 'Cursed is he who moves his neighbor's boundary mark.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'
 - 18 'Cursed is he who misleads a blind {person} on the road.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'
 - 19 'Cursed is he who distorts the justice due an alien, orphan, and widow.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'
 - 20 'Cursed is he who lies with his father's wife, because he has uncovered his father's skirt.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'
 - 21 'Cursed is he who lies with any animal.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'
 - 22 'Cursed is he who lies with his sister, the daughter of his father or of his mother.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'
 - 23 'Cursed is he who lies with his mother-in-law.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'
 - 24 'Cursed is he who strikes his neighbor in secret.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'
 - 25 'Cursed is he who accepts a bribe to strike down an innocent person.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'
 - 26 'Cursed is he who does not confirm the words of this law by doing them.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'
 - This is what RE-EDUCATION does for a king and a nation, for “*My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge...*” (Hosea 4:6). The people of Israel had violated all of these issues and become desensitized to poor behavior. Yes, Josiah did the best that he could with what information he had, but it was limited. When he was exposed to the scripture and he could see how much further they had to go, he reacted.
 - RE-EDUCATION leads to better decisions and better decisions lead to blessings from God. With that thought in mind, listen to *Deut 30:19-20* “*I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants, 20 by loving the LORD your God, by obeying His voice, and by holding fast to Him; for this is your life and the length of your days, that you may live in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them.*”

Church, we must be a people of RE-EDUCATION!

- We have been neglecting the word of God like no other generation in the history of our nation. *Isa 5:13* “Therefore My people go into exile for their lack of knowledge...”
- Studies by The Barna Group and the Gallup Organization conclude that any reasonable understanding of biblical facts and truths is seriously lacking among Americans. Today, basic Christian truths are virtually unknown to a majority in this nation.
- “American Christians are biblically illiterate. Although most of them contend that the Bible contains truth and is worth knowing, and most of them argue that they know all of the relevant truths and principles, our research shows otherwise. And the trend line is frightening: the younger a person is, the less they understand about the Christian faith.” —Barna
- “Bibles everywhere don’t seem to be making much of a difference. About the same number of people who attend church weekly read the Bible during the week (45%).” “Women’s Bibles, men’s Bibles, student Bibles, even software Bibles or the Bible on-line have not increased the numbers of people reading what remains as the bestselling book of all time.” —Barna
- According to a recent Gallup poll, about six in ten Americans (59%) say they read the Bible at least on occasion, with the most likely readers being women, non-whites, older people, Republicans, and political conservatives. Readership of the Bible has declined from the 1980s overall, from 73% to 59% today. The percentage of frequent readers, that is, those who read the Bible at least once a week, has decreased slightly over the last decade, from 40% in 1990 to 37% today.
- About one American in seven reports an involvement that goes beyond reading the Bible. Fourteen percent currently belong to a Bible study group. In terms of frequency of readership, 16% of Americans say that they read the Bible every day, 21% say they read it weekly, 12% say they read the Bible monthly, 10% say less than monthly and 41% say that they rarely or never read the Bible. (Source to follow)
- Based on interviews with 601 Senior Pastors nationwide, representing a random cross-section of Protestant churches, Barna reports that only half of the country’s Protestant pastors – 51% - have a biblical worldview (Barna Research Group, January 12, 2004).
- George Barna argued, “The low percentage of Christians who have a biblical worldview is a direct reflection of the fact that half of our primary religious teachers and leaders (senior pastors) do not have one.”
- In some denominations, the vast majority of clergy do not have a biblical worldview, and it shows up clearly in the data related to the theological views and moral choices of people who attend those churches” (Barna Research Group, January 12, 2004).
- If I were to poll the church, the people saved by the gospel that is found in the Bible, we would be shocked at the results. We are not reading the Bible like we could and should. We have however increased the time we spend with the television and music. Let me ask the following questions to see if that might be

true here. Which names are familiar to you: Lamech, Queen of Sheba, Queen Latifah, Herod, Homer, Mephibosheth, Simon, Amnon, Stewie, Solomon, Bradgelina, Bathsheeba, Rosie, Noah, Oprah, Obadiah, Obama, Eliphaz and Ellen. We know more about the maps on Counter Strike and Doom than the maps of the Bible. How can we be influential with the people of the world concerning the Bible if we are only speaking fluent world? We must make the Bible the source of information first and go from there.

What can I do today to begin RE-Education?

- READ, READ, READ the Bible everyday! *Acts 17:11 Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily, {to see} whether these things were so.*
- Listen to Bible CDs or tapes. *Rev 1:3 Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near.*
- Be involved in the small home-group Bible studies. *John 17:17 "Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth.*
- Do scripture memory verses. *Prov 3:3 Do not let kindness and truth leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart.*
- Actually study and struggle with the verses of the text. *Ps 119:11 Thy word I have treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against Thee.*
- Be willing to back up your opinions with the actual Bible. *2 Tim 2:15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth.*