

Lesson Four of the Series

As covered in the first lesson of the series, ALL NATIONS HAVE A BEGINNING AND HAVE AN END. The pattern of history has been when a nation turns away from the principles of God concerning morality that the nation will collapse. All civilizations of the past fell when moral depravation becomes the norm. When a civilization pushes the Creator, He will push back with death row sentence for that nation.

It is with that thought in mind that I mention to you the concept of the “Cup of Wrath”. In the ancient Jewish culture they perceived that God kept a cup for each and every nation that He allowed to come to power. *Rom 13:1 For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.* It was in a nation’s cup that their national vile immoralities would be poured into. It might take years, decades or even centuries, but when that nation’s sins accumulated and reached the rim of that cup, God would pour out the wrath upon them for a destructive drink. *Gal 6:7 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.*

- This is what Jesus said about Jerusalem one generation away from her destruction. *Matt 23:32 "Fill up then the measure {of the guilt} of your fathers."*
- This is also what John said would happen to the Roman Empire in Rev 17:4 *And the woman was clothed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a gold cup full of abominations and of the unclean things of her immorality,*
- This is what God said is true of all evil rule. *Ps 75:8 For a cup is in the hand of the LORD, and the wine foams; it is well mixed, and He pours out of this; surely all the wicked of the earth must drain {and} drink down its dregs.*

Back to Josiah

- During the reign of Josiah, the nation of Israel was placed on death row. The level of their cup had been slowly rising for centuries. *Jer 25:17 Then I took the cup from the LORD'S hand, and made all the nations drink, to whom the LORD sent me:*
- It was during the fifty-five year reign of Josiah’s grandfather that the taps were wide-open, the rim had been reached and sin overflowed. *Jer 49:12 For thus says the LORD, "Behold, those who were not sentenced to drink the cup will certainly drink {it,} and are you the one who will be completely acquitted? You will not be acquitted, but you will certainly drink {it.}*
- God doomed the nation and the cup was ready to be poured out. *Zech 12:2 "Behold, I am going to make Jerusalem a cup that causes reeling to all the peoples around; and when the siege is against Jerusalem, it will also be against Judah.*
- God was going to give the nation over to destruction by Babylon. The country was going to have to die and there was nothing to be done to prevent it. God had spoken and let everyman be a liar.
- Josiah, the true seeker of God, made an effort and made a difference that not only spared his generation from the destruction of God, but allowed the same opportunity for the next generation to do the same if they so desired it.

Just because we are the United States of America does not mean that we can side-step the judgments of God for our immorality that flies in the face of God. *Prov 14:34 Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to {any} people.* We are either a nation headed to a death sentence or may have already reached the point of NO RETURN, but there is GREAT NEWS! You are the Josiah's of this crisis and you have an opportunity to hit pause on the VCR of national destruction. The question is "Will you stand up and be that Josiah that God is looking for?"

- In the last lesson we examined how Josiah made a difference by starting a movement for the Reparation of the temple. In like manner we as a church have the responsibility to go through a restoration of our damaged image. We must improve our image to the world in which we are obligated to reach out to with the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- We also covered the Re-education movement of the people, something that was needed to make better decisions. Josiah was allowing the word of God to be his guide in making life-saving decisions for his nation. We also must be the people of Re-education by recommitting to our Bibles in every way. When we do this, we will be on our way to blessing from God.

Continuation of the Series

E) There must be heartfelt Repentance.

II Ki 22:11-20 And it came about when the king heard the words of the book of the law, that he tore his clothes.

II Ki 22:18-20 "But to the king of Judah who sent you to inquire of the LORD thus shall you say to him, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel, "{Regarding} the words which you have heard, 19 because your heart was tender and you humbled yourself before the LORD when you heard what I spoke against this place and against its inhabitants that they should become a desolation and a curse, and you have torn your clothes and wept before Me, I truly have heard you," declares the LORD. 20 "Therefore, behold, I will gather you to your fathers, and you shall be gathered to your grave in peace, neither shall your eyes see all the evil which I will bring on this place.""" So they brought back word to the king.

- When King Josiah heard the words of the Book of the Law and realized the certain destruction of his nation because of the sin, he immediately tore his clothes. The tearing of one's personal clothing was a sign of great grief at the loss of that which was dear to them. Often times it was followed by the wearing a sackcloth and ashes which was the covering of humility for the ancients.
 - It is what Jacob did when he was told his son Joseph was supposedly dead. *Gen 37:34 So Jacob tore his clothes, and put sackcloth on his loins, and mourned for his son many days.*
 - It is what Joshua did when his men did in the first battle of Ai. *Josh 7:6 Then Joshua tore his clothes and fell to the earth on his face before the*

ark of the LORD until the evening, {both} he and the elders of Israel; and they put dust on their heads.

- It is what David did when he found out that Saul and Jonathon were dead. *2 Sam 1:11 Then David took hold of his clothes and tore them, and {so} also {did} all the men who {were} with him.*
- It is what Job did upon finding all his children dead and property destroyed. *Job 1:20 Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head, and he fell to the ground and worshiped.*
- It was also what Josiah did when he found out that his nation was DEAD in the eyes of the LORD. He had come to the sad and overwhelming thought that his nation was going to be destroyed just as God said it would, for there was a rampant sin problem. This was too much for him and he was compelled from the heart to humble himself before God.
- It was for this reason that God said He would delay the destruction of the nation for that generation. *Ps 51:17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.*

Church, we must also experience true Repentance!

- Brothers and sisters in Christ, it is time that we come clean with God about our role in the present crisis. We seem to think that we have reached perfection instead of forgiveness. We are all struggling with something in our life and we need some personal “Sackcloth and Ash” time with the Lord. Let me ask...
 - When was the last time that you had a true heartfelt repentance before our Creator?
 - When was last time that you fell on your face before the Lord concerning those frailties that you have not been able to overcome?
 - When was the last time that you really hurt inside for not following God in the way that He would have you to do?
 - When was the last time that your eyes drained in repentance concerning our weakened moralities?
- A true repentance is when embraced sin meets a wound to the heart and the result of a resolution to change for God. Our heart must break for God before we can be of use to Him.

Examples for us from the scriptures:

- The Weeping Woman -Luke 7:37-39 And behold, there was a woman in the city who was a sinner; and when she learned that He was reclining {at the table} in the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster vial of perfume, 38 and standing behind {Him} at His feet, weeping, she began to wet His feet with her tears, and kept wiping them with the hair of her head, and kissing His feet, and anointing them with the perfume. 39 Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet He would know who and what sort of person this woman is who is touching Him, that she is a sinner."
- The Prodigal Son -Luke 15:20-21 "And he got up and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him, and felt compassion {for him,} and ran and embraced him, and kissed him. 21 "And the son said to him,

'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'

- The Tax gatherer -Luke 18:13-14 "But the tax-gatherer, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!' 14 "I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled, but he who humbles himself shall be exalted."

What can I do today to have a true repentance?

1) Do not focus on the consequences, but on the missed opportunities to glorify God.

- 2 Cor 7:10 For the sorrow that is according to {the will of} God produces a repentance without regret, {leading} to salvation; but the sorrow of the world produces death.
- Gen 4:13-14 And Cain said to the LORD, "My punishment is too great to bear! 14 "Behold, Thou hast driven me this day from the face of the ground; and from Thy face I shall be hidden, and I shall be a vagrant and a wanderer on the earth, and it will come about that whoever finds me will kill me."
- Heb 12:16-17 that {there be} no immoral or godless person like Esau, who sold his own birthright for a {single} meal. 17 For you know that even afterwards, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought for it with tears.

2) Be open and honest with God, for He already knows.

- 1 Jn 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
- Ps 44:21 Would not God find this out? For He knows the secrets of the heart.
- Lam 1:18 "The LORD is righteous; for I have rebelled against His command; hear now, all peoples, and behold my pain..."
- Jer 3:25 "Let us lie down in our shame, and let our humiliation cover us; for we have sinned against the LORD our God..."

3) Be willing to weep over your sins and the sins around you.

- Matt 5:4 "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted."
- Joel 2:13 And rend your heart and not your garments. "Now return to the LORD your God, for He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, abounding in lovingkindness, and relenting of evil.
- James 4:8-9 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. 9 Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy to gloom.