

## *Josiah and Jeremiah*

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**Introduction:** Where does acceptable service to God begin?

- A. Jesus plainly 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.
- B. Also we need to understand how the heart is changed.
  - 1. Again this change of the heart does not come from “making people” outwardly conform.
  - 2. In our case we must do more than just getting people in the pews.
  - 3. The battle for the hearts takes place one person at a time with the powerful gospel. There is no other way. (**2 Cor 10:3-5**)
  - 4. 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 later 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?
  - 4. 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. How much could Josiah do? He did not stop at Jerusalem but went on a rampage! (**2 Chron 34:6-7**)
  - 6. How many enemies did he make? It did not matter because he was serving 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 to follow the Lord’s will. Where do we stand?

E. The tender heart of Josiah.

1. He has the law read to him. He reacts in deep 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)
6. Is this your heart? Is this your strength?

F. The efforts of Josiah to save his nation. (2 Chron 34:30-33)

1. Have you ever thought: “I will make them do what is right!”?
2. He had 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 like 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. Maybe it even became the popular thing to do. Jesus never trusted the crowds that followed Him. (Jn 2:24-25)

C. Jeremiah was not a popular preacher.

1. He called Judah’s actions a pretense. (Jer 3:9-10)
2. The people thought that they could blackmail God because His temple was in their midst. (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. What are we saying in our worship? (Ex. Laughing and ignoring the invitation song.)

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. Why do we conform to the outward things? (Heb 5:9)
3. Are you weary in your worship? (Mal 1:13; Isa 43:22-24)
4. If the answer is yes, you have a heart problem.
5. Some look at men rather than God in their worship. Why are you here?

**Conclusion:** Let us open our hearts to real change. Will you open the door?

(2 Cor 7:1-2)