

## Restoration

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Restoration is our most basic need as sinners. We desperately need to be restored to God. Restoration is made possible by God through Jesus. By faith in the cross of Jesus, our sins can be forgiven, our relationship with God can be reconciled, and we can share in the fellowship of God's family. Restoration is a hopeful prospect, yet such is a painstaking process.

One of the great leaders of restoration among God's people was King Josiah. For three hundred years since the rule of Jeroboam, the nations of Israel and Judah struggled with idolatry. After Israel was conquered by the Assyrians, the smaller nation of Judah continued as God's remnant. However, they were no better than their northern brother.

Josiah came from a wicked family. His father Amnon and grandfather Manasseh are among some of the most notorious kings of Judah. Amnon was such a hated king that he was assassinated. Surprisingly, the young boy Josiah was spared. As he grew older, he served Judah as king.

Concerning the reign of King Josiah, the book of Chronicles says, "Josiah removed all the statues of gods...The Lord hated those statues. Josiah had everyone in Israel serve the Lord their God" (2 Chron. 34:33). The Bible documents this period of restoration. Notice some important lessons we can learn about restoration.

### About Restoration

**1). Restoration requires a good heart.** Given his wicked family, the restoration of Josiah is quite surprising. Josiah broke the cycle of wickedness. When he was young and being educated for his role as king, he wanted to learn about the God of David (2 Chron. 34:2). Under the rule of David, Israel was at peace. The reason for Israel's peace was that they were faithful to God.

Josiah was intent on learning about the source of David's success as king: Jehovah. In his pursuit of the God of David, Josiah "did not turn to the right hand or the left (2 Chron. 34:2). From the beginning of his reign, Josiah demonstrated a heart set on serving God. God was the foundation upon which Josiah would establish his rule.

For us to be restored to God, we must desire a relationship with Him. We must reach a point in life where we recognize the futility of sin and the need for righteousness. Josiah needed to look no further than his father and grandfather to see what sin had to offer: death. Josiah wanted something more for himself, his family, and his nation.

**2). Restoration takes time.** For generations, Israel and Judah had strayed from God and served idols. Josiah had been learning about God for twelve years before he started to purge the land of idols (2 Chron. 34:3). This was an important step for the nation. However, changing hearts would require more than outlawing idolatry.

We may fail to appreciate that restoration is an incremental process. We prefer fast, easy results. Changing hearts and behaviors is difficult. Transforming a life takes time and dedication. As we look to the self-giving example of Christ, we can become more like Him day by day (2 Cor. 4:16).

**3). God's word is essential to restoration.** Another major part of Josiah's restoration was remodeling the Temple. While working on this massive project, the Law of God was discovered by the priest, Hilkiah. The book was brought to Josiah. He read the law and was greatly disturbed. The word of God showed Josiah the extent of the nation's unfaithfulness to God's covenant.

God revealed that Judah would be punished for breaking the covenant; however, Josiah would be spared. He had a tender, humble heart (2 Chron. 34:22-28). For the rest of his rule, Josiah would use the Law to govern Judah.

True restoration can only come through obedience to God's word. The Scriptures govern our relationship with Him. Concerning the purpose of the Scriptures in our lives, Paul wrote, "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work" (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

**4). Restoration unites.** Israel's rebellion only brought chaos and division. They wrecked their relationship with God. Nationally, they were broken into two separate countries. They represented everything God was wanting to reverse within the human family. Yet, for a brief time, Judah and Israel would be reunited. But how?

When Josiah had read and studied the Law, he learned about the various feast days Israel was commanded to observe. The highest holy day of Israel was the Passover. This was a national commemoration of the Exodus. For the first time in generations, the divided family of God would observe the Passover together. The book of Chronicles remembers this momentous day by saying, "No Passover like it had been kept in Israel since the days of Samuel the prophet" (2 Chron. 35:18).

This is one of the most joyous and hopeful scenes in the Bible. But this day was more than a special day in history. This day signified a greater, future reunion. By seeking our restoration through Christ, we can live and die in the hope of being reunited with the redeemed of all time.

## **Conclusion**

By the grace of God, He gives us time to seek restoration. The changes that were instituted by Josiah took eighteen years. The change came incrementally. With tender hearts, God's word, and determination, we can be restored to God and His people.

Change is difficult but possible. Like Josiah, if we are willing to tear down our idols, God will bless our efforts. What sacrifice of sin we make will pale in comparison to being eternally united with God.