

# Project Runway

## Designer Clothes For Disciples

### Josiah: Part 13

Written By

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**F**or the nation of Judah, the sun started setting in 641 B.C., some 55 years before the Babylonians sacked the Holy City, Jerusalem, carting the ones unfortunate enough to survive the brutality off to Babylon. Darkness just didn't encroach, it enveloped. From the death of the righteous King Hezekiah, fifty-five years of gross, unchecked, shocking wickedness commenced with his wayward son, Manasseh, which the Scriptures appropriately labels as one of the worst spiritual seducers the country had ever see (2 Kings 21:8-9). A carnal catalogue of the sins he pridefully perpetuated is detailed in 2 Kings 21.

- He openly rejected the godly upbringing of his father, Hezekiah (v. 3). He reinstated Baal and Asherah worship (v. 3).
- Pagan idolatrous altars were crafted and placed in the Holy Temple precincts (vv. 4-5). Placing a 9-foot goat-headed, bronze statue of Baphomet, the traditional caricature of Satan within the Wiccan movement, next to the Ten Commandments in Detroit is but a sad, scary illustration of our close relationship with the actions of ancient Judah.
- Child sacrifice was fired up again, literally, and the misguided King even went so far as to offer up one of his royal, Davidic sons (v.6).

- Witchcraft, and everything associated with it, became part of mainstream spirituality as the nation walked away from God (v. 6).
- A massive statue to the fertility, sex-goddess, Asherah was strategically placed in the very inner sanctum of the Holy Temple (v. 7).
- Anyone who dared to speak out against the spiritual tolerance of the King and his cohorts met with opposition and ultimately death (v. 16).

Fifty-five years of this type of bad behavior, plus two more years of it under the reign of Manasseh's carbon-copy son, Amon (2 Kings 21:19-26), verifies the fact sunset for Judah had just about arrived. Sad, isn't it, and shocking too?

The high definition historical picture of Israel is most instructive for us today. What does it teach us? Much. From Judah's planned fracture from the top down, we learn that when a nation or a person throws God's absolute spiritual truths to the proverbial wind, when they attempt to convince you that what was once evil is not righteous, when the godless call for tolerance but are intolerant of your godliness, when they call for change but that change isn't for the better but for the worse, when they vehemently oppose anyone and everyone who stands up for Jesus Christ and the Bible, when they willingly and excitedly embrace every form of false religion while rejecting Christianity hands down, when they are incapable of seeing there is a cause/effect relationship to their devious actions, when their cause célèbre is the legalization of illicit sexual relationships, when they fail to see the illogical nature of their sinful slogans ("If it feels good do it," "Do your own thing," "Live and let live," etc.), when truth is seen to be relative at all times and in every situation, when freedom of expression has no limitations, when perversion meets with little, or no cultural aversion, when outrageous ungodly behavior is legalized from the top down, when the bourgeois, Bible-believing culture repeatedly and purposefully battered by ever-increasing shocking sins, when darkness has replaced light, then sunset is nigh and more unimaginable, formerly incomprehensible evil is just one news report away.

Such describes ancient Israel in the times of Manasseh and Amon. Such describes our times. Many gifted and godly secular intellectuals, along with a handful of pastors, priests, and laypeople sense the encroaching, enveloping darkness. Charles Colson, author of *Against The Night*, represents many when he remarks:

"We sense that things are winding down, that somehow freedom, justice, and order are slipping away. Our great civilization may not yet lie in smoldering ruins, but the enemy is within the gates. The times seem to smell of sunset" (*Against The Night*: 19).

Times are *dark*, and we all know they are getting morally and spiritually darker. What are we to do? Better yet, what are we to pray for? What should we be asking God for? One word: revival. On what levels? Personal and national, and in that order. Can it come? Can an outpouring of God bring a spiritually belligerent and morally adrift people back from the brink of implosion? Absolutely. I make this definitive statement because this is what we see in the final period of Judah's kings. Judah experienced spiritual revival, a radical turn from wickedness to God, just as final curtain of darkness was about to fall on them.

How did revival come to Israel? Revival originated through the God-honoring actions of one young man born to the house of wicked King Amon. His name? Josiah. His mission? To

bring himself and his wayward people back into a vital and vibrant walk with the living God. Please.

- Never underestimate the impact of one person sold out to God, regardless of what kind of home they were reared in, to bring radical spiritual change to countless lives.
- Never think, also, that all hope is lost.
- Never give into the misguided notion that your voice for spiritual truth and morality doesn't matter and lacks power for personal and societal impact.
- Never throw in the towel thinking light is not going to overcome darkness in your lifetime.
- Never be fearful of the wicked and their new forms of wickedness (Psalm 37).

Why should we not just call it a day because it appears the progression of darkness seems unstoppable? We have to stand our ground, we have to draw a line in the proverbial sand, we have to be salt to the decay about us because ...

- God is greater than the darkness.
- God is greater than the schemes of the wicked.
- God is greater than the mass rush to embrace any and all forms of deviant behavior.
- God is greater than a school board who works against the will of morally committed parents.
- God is greater than politicians who won't stand up for what is right for fear of not getting re-elected.
- God is greater than people of faith who are too timid to stand up for what is right, true, and holy.
- God is the essence of all spiritual light, and with this His brilliant presence the darkness flees. How, then, can the darkness not flee as his glory shines in and through His Church, His people?

Revival. It is what we need. This observation, of course, lead to a logical question in light of our Project Runway: Designer Clothes For Disciples series:

## How Do I Put On The Royal Robe Of Revival?

Four concepts emerge as we study the life of King Josiah who courageously wore this robe. Study them well. Better yet, kneel today before the Lord's throne, specifically asking Him to help you flesh out these truths so you can become a Josiah to our sin-shackled country.

### Inspect Your Temple (2 Kings 22:1-7)

In other words, take stock of the condition of your spiritual life. Is the building falling apart, does it need a little repair here and there, do you need to call in a structural engineer, or are you doing a good job staying on top of necessary daily maintenance? As we see from 2 Kings 22, King Josiah made a much needed appraisal of the Lord's Temple, and he didn't like what he saw.

<sup>1</sup> Josiah was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem; and his mother's name was Jedidah the daughter of Adaiah of Bozkath. <sup>2</sup> He did right in the sight of the LORD and walked in all the way of his father David, nor did he turn aside to the right or to the left. <sup>3</sup> Now in the eighteenth year of King Josiah, the king sent Shaphan, the son of Azaliah the son of Meshullam the scribe, to the house of the LORD saying, <sup>4</sup> '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. <sup>5</sup> 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, <sup>6</sup> to the carpenters and the builders and the masons and for buying timber and hewn stone to repair the house. <sup>7</sup> Only no accounting shall be made with them for the money delivered into their hands, for they deal faithfully'" (2 Kings 22).

The math here tells us that Josiah's greatest work for God didn't come until he reached twenty-six years of age. Prior to this, according to the renowned Hebrew scholars, Keil and Delitzsch, "... he probably received a pious training from his mother; and when he had ascended the throne, after the early death of his godless father, he was under the guidance of pious men who were faithfully devoted to the law of the Lord, and who turned his heart to the God of their fathers ..."<sup>1</sup> Fathers and mothers. Here's a word of sound counsel: Take the time to spiritually train your child for God and when the time is sovereignly right, you just may be shocked how they will do what is right in the sight of God. They might even be the Josiah your family, this city, and this country desperately needs to move you and us from unrighteousness to righteousness. More importantly, what are you doing to make sure your children are learning, understanding, and applying the Word of God? Are you making sure they are an active part of the programs we offer to show them the high value of the Scriptures for daily living in a godless day?

On a personal note, I must ask: how is your temple? When Josiah looked at God's Temple in Jerusalem it had suffered from fifty-seven years of neglect during the immoral and idolatrous years of the two former kings. Money was collected in "tithes" boxes for temple repairs, but nobody bothered to call any construction companies to give adequate attention to those structural issues brought on by time, weather, and wear. In many respects, then, the tattered temple became a spiritual snapshot of the condition of the nation. As any godly person would do, Josiah set out to rectify this issue, and this, in turn, became the genesis of the revival.

In the New Testament, the Apostle Paul likens our bodies, as believers, to temples which house the very presence of God. His words to the Corinthians tell us this much:

<sup>8</sup> Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body. <sup>19</sup> Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? <sup>20</sup> For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body" (1 Corinthians 6).

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<sup>1</sup> C.F. Keil & F. Delitzsch, *Commentary On The Old Testament*, Volume 3 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1983): 476.

If we desire revival to come to our land, we first must ask the Spirit of God to show us the true condition of our temples. We must stop being pre-occupied with all the allurements of our culture and start being pre-occupied with coming to terms with whether we are neglecting the temple, resulting in sinful activity which contaminates, defiles, and diminishes it and its ability to turn back the darkness. So, I ask you again, “How’s your temple?” Writing about the need for a spiritual renaissance in our land and one of the reasons the Church is not as impactful as it should be, Os Guinness correctly observes:

A striking symptom of the church's problems in the West today is the fact that in a country such as the United States, Christians are still the overwhelming majority of citizens, but the American way of life has moved far from the way of the life Jesus-- which means simply that the Christians who are the majority are living a way of life closer to the world than to the way of Jesus. In a word, they are worldly and therefore incapable of shaping their culture.<sup>2</sup>

I couldn’t agree more. We are supposed to be salt to our culture in order to hold back spiritual decay so the kingdom of God can advance. However, when we allow our temples resemble and/or reflect the mis-guided and godless philosophies, mindsets, worldviews, and cravings of the world, we, as salt, lose our savor. We, on the contrary, need to individually and collectively be more purposeful and dedicated to make sure our temples of the Spirit of God look like His temples. What happens when this occurs? Os goes on show us when he remarks:

In other words, when followers of Jesus without the gospel in the world, as we are called to do, we become an incarnation of the truth of the gospel and an expression of the character in shape of its truth. It is this living-in-truth that proves culturally powerful.<sup>3</sup>

Again, I couldn’t agree more. We may not like the spiritual, moral, economic, social, and political decay about us, but I think it is biblically safe to say some of the responsibility rests with us as God’s local temples. Revival come when we do some much needed introspection before God’s holy throne, asking Him to show us what needs to go, and what needs to stay.

Josiah did this and shortly thereafter God moved in an amazing way in his life and in the life of his nation. God will do the same for you, but first you sit down and have an honest, open discussion with Spiritual Building Inspector, the Holy Spirit. He’ll show you what repairs are in order.

Secondly, revival is intrinsically tied to those who ...

## Get Into The Word (2 Kings 22:8-13)

I don’t know about you, but there are a few select places in biblical history I’d love to have seen. This is one of them. Read on and you’ll see what I mean:

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<sup>2</sup> Os Guinness, *Renaissance: The Power Of The Gospel However Dark The Times* (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 2014): 60.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 75

“<sup>8</sup> 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. <sup>9</sup> 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.’ <sup>10</sup> 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. <sup>11</sup> When the king heard the words of the book of the law, he tore his clothes. <sup>12</sup> Then the king commanded Hilkiyah the priest, Ahikam the son of Shaphan, Achbor the son of Micaiah, Shaphan the scribe, and Asaiah the king’s servant saying, <sup>13</sup> Go, inquire of the LORD for me and the people and all Judah concerning the words of this book that has been found, for great is the wrath of the LORD that burns against us, because our fathers have not listened to the words of this book, to do according to all that is written concerning us” (2 Kings 22).

Can’t you just see this in the theater of your mind? I can.

Dressed in his pastoral robes, the High Priest begins digging through the monies stored within the dimly lit side rooms of the Temple, and he, the spiritual leader of the nation, happens across a copy of the “book of the law,” or the first five books of the Old Testament. “What’s this?” he probably said to himself, as he blew the dust off the scroll. “Amazing! I’ve found the Bible!” he would have screamed in our vernacular. “What in the world was it doing buried in a darkened, cluttered, out-of-the-way room?” he must have thought. Simple. When the nation isn’t following God, when the nation loves everything but God, when the nation hates the teachings of and stories about God, and when the priesthood is basically bankrupt and guilty of serving at pagan altars themselves, and when the priesthood doesn’t need “the Bible” anymore because it would just upset the free-minded, sensitive, tolerant populace, then it’s just logical to arbitrarily relegate the outdated, overly insensitive holy book to a darkened back room.

Paul Tournier tells us more succinctly why the Word of God gets so easily set on a shelf in some out-of-the-way room:

“However powerful and learned he may be, the Bible always sets man face to face with God, reminding him thus of his frailty and his weakness.”

Mark Twain makes the same observation in dressed down language:

“It ain’t those parts of the Bible that I can’t understand that bother me, it is the parts that I do understand.”

Isn’t that the truth?

Who wants to be convicted that same-sex marriage, abortion, living with your girlfriend, having an affair, coveting what your neighbor has, being spiteful and mean-spirited, or worshipping another god along with Jesus for the sake of unity between in-laws is inherently wrong? Not sinners. Who wants to hear that spiritual truth is absolutely, absolute, unbending and unchanging? Not sinners. Who wants to hear that what you see and hear can negatively affect you? Not sinners? Who wants to hear that God does, in fact, judge sin and there are undesirable repercussions for promiscuous, wicked behavior? Not sinners. Who even wants to

hear there is such a thing as sin? Better to re-classify old sins as new, acceptable lifestyles. What's a sinner to do, then? Make sure that black book is relegated to the storage closet where nobody usually goes, or to, at least, make sure it's profound, practical, timeless teachings and doctrines are so watered down and distorted they are, in a sense, powerless. This is Ross Douhat's premise in his best-selling book *Bad Religion: How We Became A Nation Of Heretics*:

That's because America's problem isn't too much religion, or too little of it. It's bad religion: the slow-motion collapse of traditional Christianity and the rise of a variety of destructive pseudo-Christianities in its place. Since the 1960s, the institutions that sustained Orthodox Christian belief—Catholic and Protestant alike—have entered a state of near-terminal decline ... The United States remains a deeply religious country, and most Americans are still drawing some water from the Christian well. But a growing number are inventing their own versions of what Christianity means, abandoning the nuances of traditional theology in favor of religions that stroke their egos and indulge or even celebrate their worst impulses. These faiths speak from many pulpits—conservative and liberal, political and pop-cultural, traditionally religious and fashionable “spiritual” —and many of their preachers call themselves Christian or claim a Christian warrant. But they are increasingly offering distortions of traditional Christianity, not the real thing.<sup>4</sup>

The solution, then, is to get back to sound doctrine (orthodoxy) and sound practice (orthopraxy), and all of this, of course, is inexorably tied to a high view of the Word of God. This is how you stop the rot. This is how you bring light where there is darkness. This is how you bring personal and social order where there is chaos and confusion. You move away from relativistic, any-thing-is-true teaching, to the absolutist, never changing, and life-giving truth of the eternal Word of God.

As a preacher, as a man sold out and convinced that the Bible is THE holy book of all so-called holy books, I am committed to unadulterated, un-modified, and consistent teaching of the whole counsel of God from Genesis to Revelation, because this is my divine call (2 Timothy 4:2) and because this is the source of cultural change. The renowned Old Testament scholar, Walt Kaiser, substantiates this valid premise in his book *Preaching And Teaching From The Old Testament*:

The Book of Acts gives us precedence to expect that where the Word of God is preached faithfully—both in its replication of the exact content of the passage and in its structure—there we can expect to see the power of the Holy Spirit joining the Word of God and having a profound effect not only on the speaker, but on the hearer as well. Not every message or any kind of preaching will cut through the barriers of our anti-Christian and postmodern culture. Only diligent exposition of the text under the mighty hand of God's Holy Spirit will fill the vacuum of our day.<sup>5</sup>

Dr. Kaiser couldn't be more correct. I'm sure Hilkiah, the High Priest, could have quickly and easily said “Amen” to this statement.

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<sup>4</sup> Ross Douhat, *Bad Religion: How We Became A Nation Of Heretics* (New York: Free Press, 2012): 3-4.

<sup>5</sup> Walt Kaiser, *Preaching And Teaching From The Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003): 174-175.

Hilkiah knew this book, of all books, had to be brought front and center before the people. He started by giving the scroll to the scribe, Shaphan. This great man, then, read it in the presence of the King. What did he read? We'll let the scholars sort that out. For you armchair biblical "scholars," I'd say it was either the entire Pentateuch, which would have taken some time to read, or he read through the book of Deuteronomy, which was a summation of all of the Law of Moses. Either way, the Word of God was read, and it did what it always does: It brought guilt and conviction to sinners so they could be challenged to move toward repentance and divine restoration and blessing.

How did Josiah respond? He feared God's holy wrath, so he commissioned a team of spiritually minded men to approach God and seek His mind and mercy. Passages like Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28 clearly revealed that God judges those who walk away from His truth.

Is this not what our country needs? We don't need politicians who want to primarily clean up Washington lobbying, who want to create greenhouse laws, who are itching to give the middle class some tax relief, who want U.S. students to have a world-class education, or who want to make sure we do our part to ease global warming. No! What we need are politicians ... and pastors ... who will bring us all back to the transforming power of the Word of God. When this occurs, when we get back to listening humbly to the Almighty Sovereign, we our leaders seeks His face and aren't worried about saving face, then and only then will the fire of revival begin to burn.

Would that we had a man like Woodrow Wilson at the helm for such dark spiritual days:

"Give the Bible to the people, unadulterated, pure, unaltered, unexplained, uncheapened, and then see it work through the whole nature. It is very difficult indeed for a man or for a boy who knows the Scriptures ever to get away from it. It follows him like the memory of his mother. It haunts him like an old song. It reminds him like the word of an old and revered teacher. It forms a part of the warp and woof of his life."

If a President spoke like this today, he'd have the ACLU beating down his door with lawsuits concerning the separation of Church and State. I'd say, we need more men like this or God will be beating down our door.

Oh, for more pastors and biblical teachers like Dwight L. Moody we fearlessly said in his day:

"Sin will keep you from this book. This book will keep you from sin."

Are you the next Dwight? Your family needs you. So, too, does your country.

Oh, for more men like Martin Luther who courageously observed:

"The Bible is alive, it speaks to me; it has feet, it runs after me; it has hands, it lays hold on me."

The living Word of God laid its hand on Martin and the world has never been the same since.

Based on all of this I must ask you: "Where's the Word of God in your home? In your life? Additionally, I must tell you all of this moves my soul to say:

- Oh God, forgive us for being people of the Word but not being people in the Word.
- Oh God, forgive us for being preoccupied with everything else but the Word.
- Oh God, forgive us for being all about biblical information but not all about spiritual transformation.
- Oh God, forgive us for putting what's on the New York Times bestsellers list above the Word.
- Oh God, forgive us for spending in inordinate amount of time playing video games instead of praying our way through the Word.
- Oh God, forgive us for compartmentalizing our lives so neatly we have forgotten about the total life impact of the Word.
- Oh God, forgive us for being busy about work, but not being busy about the Word.
- Oh God, forgive us for letting dust collect on the Word.
- Oh God, forgive us living sub-prime lives because we've not been in the Word.
- Oh God, forgive us for buying in, hook-line-and sinker, into the false, devilish notion that spiritual truth is relative and no absolutist.

God is good. He will hear these words, and He will sense this emotion, and it will move Him to restore and rejuvenate. He did it in Josiah's day. He can do it your day, and in my day.

Once we are convinced the Word of God needs to be central, what is our next course of action to stoke the fires of righteous revival? The last two sections from 2 Kings tell us. Believe me, there is a lot of information here, so for sake of time, I hope you won't mind if I summarize.

### Take Radical Action (2 Kings 23:4-14)

Sin is like mistletoe in the tree. If you don't cut it out when it first appears, if you decide to leave it there for a few Christmases, it will take over and destroy the once healthy tree. Really, the only way to effectively treat mistletoe, which is a pervasive problem in forested areas of the nation, is to go after it with a vengeance. Our approach to the sin the Lord's Spirit points out to us must be the same. No room for a laid back, surfer attitude here. No, once the sin is known, it's time to call for the arborist's version of a triage team. Josiah did just this.

<sup>4</sup> Then the king commanded Hilkiah the high priest and the priests of the second order and the doorkeepers, to bring out of the temple of the LORD all the vessels that were made for Baal, for Asherah, and for all the host of heaven; and he burned them outside Jerusalem in the fields of the Kidron, and carried their ashes to Bethel. <sup>5</sup> He did away with the idolatrous priests whom the kings of Judah had appointed to burn incense in the high places in the cities of Judah and in the surrounding area of Jerusalem, also those who burned incense to Baal, to the sun and to the moon and to the constellations and to all the host of heaven. <sup>6</sup> He brought out the Asherah from the house of the LORD outside Jerusalem to the brook Kidron, and burned it at the brook Kidron, and ground it to dust, and threw its dust on the graves of the common people. <sup>7</sup> He also broke down the houses of the male cult prostitutes which were in the house of the LORD, where

the women were weaving hangings for the Asherah. <sup>8</sup> Then he brought all the priests from the cities of Judah, and defiled the high places where the priests had burned incense, from Geba to Beersheba; and he broke down the high places of the gates which were at the entrance of the gate of Joshua the governor of the city, which were on one's left at the city gate. <sup>9</sup> Nevertheless the priests of the high places did not go up to the altar of the LORD in Jerusalem, but they ate unleavened bread among their brothers. <sup>10</sup> He also defiled Topheth, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter pass through the fire for Molech. <sup>11</sup> He did away with the horses which the kings of Judah had given to the sun, at the entrance of the house of the LORD, by the chamber of Nathan-melech the official, which was in the precincts; and he burned the chariots of the sun with fire. <sup>12</sup> The altars which were on the roof, the upper chamber of Ahaz, which the kings of Judah had made, and the altars which Manasseh had made in the two courts of the house of the LORD, the king broke down; and he smashed them there and threw their dust into the brook Kidron. <sup>13</sup> The high places which were before Jerusalem, which were on the right of the mount of destruction which Solomon the king of Israel had built for Ashtoreth the abomination of the Sidonians, and for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, and for Milcom the abomination of the sons of Ammon, the king defiled. <sup>14</sup> He broke in pieces the sacred pillars and cut down the Asherim and filled their places with human bones" (2 Kings 23).

I'm purposefully not going to teach you about the historical/cultural background of Josiah's eradication of evil from his country. I think it most appropriate to simply let the text speak for itself. Who cannot read this and fail to see what King Josiah did? He destroyed every vestige of evil he was aware of in order to bring his life and nation back from the brink of divinely induced oblivion.

Is this not how Jesus told us to deal with sin? No doubt.

<sup>27</sup>You have heard that it was said, 'YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY'; <sup>28</sup>but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. <sup>29</sup>"If your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. <sup>30</sup>"If your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to go into hell" (Matthew 5).

Our Lord's words were hyperbolic, yet they are every bit radical, are they not?

So I ask you another pragmatic question: "What radical action concerning sin do you need to take in your family? In your business dealings? In your job? In your life? What needs to go and go now? What needs to be burned, crushed, defiled, and ground to powder ... as it were? What socially acceptable but divinely repulsive viewpoint needs to be vaporized? What bottle needs to be poured down the drain? What drug needs to be tossed out? What vile video needs to be vanquished? What destructive relationship needs to be terminated? What books need to be trashed (The Ephesian believers got rid of all those spiritually dangerous books on sorcery and witchcraft, Acts 19:19). If you will get radical regarding the presence of pervasive evil in your

life, as you are aided by the power of the Spirit of God (Romans 6:19ff; Ephesians 5:18ff), the fresh wind of revival will blow through your life bringing joy, hope, and peace. And, as enough of us are committed to this, a culture cannot help but be positively impacted and re-directed back toward God.

One final item you need to give attention to as you seek after revival is this:

### Return To The Basics (2 Kings 23:21-23)

What basics? The basics of worshipping the one, true, living God. Substitutes will not do. To worship Him is to find joy and direction for living. To worship Him is to fulfill the core reason for your creation (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14). To worship Him is to bring order and balance to your life because you are doing what you are supposed to do. To worship Him is to move you from the mundane to the magnificent, from the worldly to the otherworldly, and from the temporal to the eternal. To worship Him is to hear how to live a really full, enjoyable life. To worship Him is to find inner healing, joy, and lasting peace in a world which only offers cheap substitutes.

Moving the people back to the worship of the living God was exactly what King Josiah did for his people:

“<sup>21</sup> Then the king commanded all the people saying, ‘Celebrate the Passover to the LORD your God as it is written in this book of the covenant. <sup>22</sup> Surely such a Passover had not been celebrated from the days of the judges who judged Israel, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel and of the kings of Judah. <sup>23</sup> But in the eighteenth year of King Josiah, this Passover was observed to the LORD in Jerusalem” (2 Kings 23)

For over 400 years, yes, you read that right, they had failed to observe Passover, that one amazing annual divinely ordained feast which reminded them how they had escaped the bondage of Egypt. So enamored were these sinners with all the pleasurable temptations of sin they gradually became calloused to the elementary spiritual disciplines designed to keep them humble and close to God. Are you guilty?

- You don't go to church regularly.
- You certainly don't spend any quality time in your Bible.
- Your prayers, if there are any, are short, sweet, and concerned with God getting you out of a jam you've created.
- You are not tied into a small group because you don't like the accountability.
- You'd never think of getting up for Sunday School, after all, you stay up late most Saturday evenings.

If you are hearing God's voice right now, I know He's telling you it's time to get back to the basics. Do this, commit to this and He'll sovereignly send life-giving waters of revival will flow across the parched sands of your life, resulting in new life and new fruit.

Darkness is descending. We all sense it. What are we to do? Do what King Josiah did in order to bring about revival:

- Inspect Your Temple (2 Kings 22:1-7)
- Get Into the Word (2 Kings 22:8-13)

- Take Radical Action (2 Kings 23:4-14)
- Return To The Basics (2 Kings 23:21-23)