

=FAVORITE BIBLE CHAPTERS=

Lesson 43
II Chronicles 34

INTRODUCTION: The chapter for this lesson deals with a revival which took place during the reign of King Josiah. Though God's people were experiencing revival, they needed a prophet to warn them of sin. Zephaniah was their prophet.

It is interesting to note that the minor prophets from Hosea through Zephaniah all deal with the period of time before the captivity. However, there were at least three different types of prophets: (1) Some of the prophets warned Israel while she was in sin that if she would turn from her sin, she could be forgiven and restored; if she would not, she would be punished. (2) There are those prophets who lamented. Judgment had already been pronounced. There was no way that God would change His mind, and the prophets lamented. (3) Zephaniah had a unique place among the prophets during the period before the captivity. He prophesied during a time of revival. Josiah was the king, and the revival was in progress. Zephaniah prophesied to the people who were righteous, warning them of what would happen if they drifted from God.

In the book of Ezekiel, Ezekiel was given two commissions from God: (1) Warn the wicked man to turn from his wickedness, and (2) Warn the righteous man not to go into wickedness. Medical science would call this "preventive medicine." Zephaniah prophesied to the people during the revival what would happen if they turned away and went back into sin.

There are two things that the church is supposed to do: (1) Reclaim the sinner who has gone into deep sin, and (2) Help the person who has not gone into sin to avoid its pitfalls. Sin is not supposed to be condemned only when it is present; we are supposed to warn the people of sin. Zephaniah was doing what we try to do to our young people who have not yet tasted the bitter end of sin. He was reminding the people never to go into sin in the first place. The people were in revival; yet the awfulness of sin was exposed so the people would stay away from it.

It is wonderful for us to hear the testimony of people who have been delivered from deep sin. It is infinitely more wonderful for us to hear the testimonies of people who have never gone into deep sin. This is what we want for our young people of Pacific Baptist Church. (Teacher, explain to the young people that that is why we preach so hard against sin. It is not always because we are afraid young people are already in sin, but it is because we want to paint sin so black that they will never want to go into it.)

Let us notice this time of revival during the reign of Josiah. Some interesting and needful lessons may be gained from the teaching of II Chronicles 34.

I. JOSIAH WAS ONLY EIGHT YEARS OLD WHEN HE BEGAN HIS REIGN. II Chronicles 34:1. Hence, Josiah had to have much counsel. He was a young child king. The priest Hilkiah was his great counselor. (Teacher, explain to the young person the importance of having counsel. Teach each pupil to have a "cabinet" composed of someone who is in the profession he plans to enter, his pastor, his parents, a dear friend, etc. He should always counsel with these people before making a decision of any importance.) Josiah could have said that he could make it on his own, but he realized his need for counsel.

II. JOSIAH DID RIGHT AND WALKED STRAIGHT. II Chronicles 34:2. (Teacher, stress the importance of our young people's walking straight and always doing right. Right should be done regardless of the consequences.)

III. IDOLS WERE BROKEN. II Chronicles 34:3-7. The idols were ground to powder, torn down, etc. (Discuss here the importance of having nothing before God. An idol can be made of wood or stone; it can also be a habit, a pleasure, work, etc. Nothing should come before Christ!)

IV. JOSIAH HAD THE TEMPLE REPAIRED. II Chronicles 34:8. True revival is always built around the house of God and the repairing of it. Today we have the New Testament church, a body of believers meeting regularly for fellowship, for the study of the Bible, and for the edification and the propagation of the Gospel. When true revival comes, it will not be outside the church—it will magnify the church and be built around the church! (Teacher, stress the importance of building one's life around the church and its activities.)

V. THE BIBLE WAS FOUND. II Chronicles 34:14. Here is an interesting thing. The Word of God had been lost in the house of God. While they were cleaning up the house of God, they found the Bible. This is always the case. When the house of God is full of sin and filth, the Bible is lost. When cleansing comes, the Bible always become important to the people again. It is sad that the Bible can be lost in the house of God. Revival is always built around the Bible.

VI. THE PEOPLE REALIZED THEIR SIN. II Chronicles 34:18-21. Notice, there was the cleansing of the house of God; then there was the finding of the Bible; now there is the realization of sin. The Bible is the mirror that shows us our need of cleansing. The people realized their sin.

VII. PEOPLE MADE A COVENANT WITH GOD. II Chronicles 34:31, 32. They gave themselves to God and covenanted to serve Him. This is always the fruit of revival. Service is the result. The Bible itself is not enough. The church itself is not enough. All of these are simply means to the end of serving Christ and doing things for Him!