

**Revive us, Oh Lord:
Through A Radical Return to the Bible
2 Kings 22:1-13**

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Text Introduction: I am trying to help us to think about revival. We are praying for revival. I have asked you to pray about two things this year—revival and our impact on the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. As we pray for revival, I am preaching this month on the theme of revival.

When I use the word revival, I want you to think this way with me:

A revival is a spiritual awakening in the lives of believers that results in spiritual conversion of unbelievers so large in scope that the results can only be explained as a work of God.

So far, we have talked about revival being initiated by (1) a radical dependence on God and (2) radical praying. Today, I want to add to that list by saying we must have a radical return to the Bible.

Text: Josiah was eight years old when he became king and reigned 31 years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jedidah the daughter of Adaiah; she was from Bozkath. ²He did what was right in the LORD's sight and walked in all the ways of his ancestor David; he did not turn to the right or the left.

³In the eighteenth year of King Josiah, the king sent the court secretary Shaphan son of Azaliah, son of Meshullam, to the LORD's temple, saying, ⁴"Go up to Hilkiah the high priest so that he may total up the money brought into the LORD's temple—the money the doorkeepers have collected from the people.⁵ It is to be put into the hands of those doing the work—those who oversee the LORD's temple. They in turn are to give it to the workmen in the LORD's temple to repair the damage. ⁶They are to give it to the carpenters, builders, and masons to buy timber and quarried stone to repair the temple. ⁷But no accounting is to be required from them for the money put into their hands since they work with integrity."

⁸Hilkiah the high priest told Shaphan the court secretary, "I have found the book of the law in the LORD's temple," and he gave the book to Shaphan, who read it.

⁹Then Shaphan the court secretary went to the king and reported, "Your servants have emptied out the money that was found in the temple and have put it into the hand of those doing the work—those who oversee the LORD's temple." ¹⁰Then Shaphan the court secretary told the king, "Hilkiah the priest has given me a book," and Shaphan read it in the presence of the king.

¹¹When the king heard the words of the book of the law, he tore his clothes.¹² Then he commanded Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam son of Shaphan, Achbor son of Micaiah, Shaphan the court secretary, and the king's servant Asaiah: ¹³"Go and inquire of the LORD for me, the people, and all Judah about the instruction in this book that has been found. For great is the LORD's wrath that is kindled against us because our ancestors have not obeyed the words of this book in order to do everything written about us."

Introduction: Second Kings tells the story of the fall of Judah and Israel and subsequent exile at the hands of the Babylonians. As a follower of God, these are painful chapters to read. The one difference

(in Judah's fall and Israel's fall) that makes these chapters a bit more pleasant to read is the characters of Hezekiah and Josiah. Each of these men were more devoted to God, detested the pagan worship, and demanding reform which led to brief revival in Judah. In their stories we see something about our own hope for revival.

Revivals often begin because of the work that God does in one or just a few persons.

Encounters with God in the Word of God ought to convict us of sin. Josiah's reforms were initiated because the Book of the Law (probably the first five books of our Bible) was re-discovered. When we neglect God's word we fall victim to sin. The slide was so great for Israel and Judah that they actually lost God's Word as a result of neglecting God's Word.

Today, we turn our attention to a great King with an unusual resume. The very first thing that we learn about Josiah is that he was eight years old when he became king. Verse 2 gives us a summary statement about his entire life. "And he did what was right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the ways of his father David; he did not turn aside to the right hand or to the left." That is a summary statement to underscore that so far as Israel's history is concerned Josiah is here at the top of the list, especially in regards to his spiritual influence upon the kingdom.

King Josiah, now 26 years old, commands some repairs to the house of God. The King sent some men with money to pay for the repairs. While there, the High Priest tells them that he had discovered the lost Book of the Law—the Torah—the first five books of our Bible. How they ever lost the Book of the Law is a story of their supreme neglect for the Word of God. The High Priest sends the Book back with the king's men to deliver to Josiah. Upon hearing the Word of God, Josiah's heart is touched. He leads the whole nation back to the Word of God. Josiah's story is an important story in our own hope, prayer, and struggle for revival. Just as Josiah, we must have a radical return to the Bible.

What is necessary for a Radical Return to the Bible?

Conviction that the Bible is True

How do we know that the Bible is true? How do we know that we must put all our hopes in the Word of God? Last summer, I preached on this very theme. I want to remind you of just a couple of key points.

Theological Logical Reasons

Because I believe in the reality of the resurrection of Jesus, then I trust and believe in the One who was raised from the dead.

What does this have to do with the truth of the Bible? For me, there is only logic in believing all or nothing. If I believe that Jesus rose from the grave, then I believe in what He has said.

Prophetic Reasons

Another reason that I believe that the Bible is God's Word, that is "true," is that the Bible validates itself with the accuracy of prophetic predictions. Among the multitude of examples I could give, let me focus on just a few.

1. God very clearly entered into a covenant with Abraham about the promise of land in a little strip of land now called Israel. Over the scores of years that have passed, there have been numerous threats to the security of that land and at times discipline from God involving that land, but the descendants of Abraham continue to occupy that land.
2. The prophets of the Old Testament prophesied (predicted) that invaders from the North would overtake the land of Israel and send many of the inhabitants of Israel into exile.
3. Another feature that dominates the prophets of the Old Testament is the correct prophesy of the Messiah—details of Jesus’ birth, life, and death are all prophesied with accuracy centuries before Jesus’ coming.
4. Finally, the Prophet Daniel prophesies the existence of four major kingdoms of the world that would follow from his lifetime to the time of Jesus.

Historical Reasons

For me, this is one of the greatest reasons. We stand on the shoulders of those believers who lived much closer to the time of Christ’s time on the earth. Here’s the big thing: The early church believed that these 66 books were inspired by God. They preserved them, protected them, and were willing to give their life for these books all because they believed that here are the very words of God. This is very important to me. It was not one man who said, “I have the word of God.” It was not one man that said here are the books that are authoritative. The church in unified agreement said “Here are the books.” How did they decide you ask? Their chief guide or measuring rod was the agreement of the book with the teaching of the apostles.

One of the leading evangelical scholars in this area of study is a man by the name of Bruce Metzger. He died in 2007, but he was one of the church’s greatest scholars on the subject of the ancient texts. Lee Strobel asked him, “All these decades of scholarship, of study, of writing textbooks, of delving into the minutiae of the New Testament text—what has all this done to your personal faith?”

Metzger answered, “It has increased my faith. It has built it. I’ve asked questions all my life. I’ve dug into the text, I’ve studied this thoroughly, and today I know with confidence that my trust in Jesus has been well placed—very well placed.”¹

Personal Reasons

I could say the very same thing that Dr. Metzger said. God speaks to me through His Word. It is my most important tool for maintaining and growing my relationship with God. I am comforted by His Word. And, by the way, His word tells me in Psalm 119:52 that I ought to find comfort. I find conviction in His Word. I find direction in His Word. His word is described in Hebrews 4:12 as a living word. I have found that to be true in my life.

C. H. Spurgeon said, “I would recommend you either believe God up to the hilt, or else not to believe at all. Believe this book of God, every letter of it, or else reject it. There is no logical standing place between the two. Be satisfied with nothing less than a faith that swims in the deeps of divine revelation; a faith that paddles about the edge of the water is poor faith at best. It is little better than a dry-land faith, and is not good for much.”

¹ Lee Strobel, *The Case for Christ*, Zondervan Publishing House, 1998, p. 71.

Bob Russell was the pastor of a great church in Louisville, Kentucky, called Southeast Bible Church. Pastor Russell wrote a book, which documents the growth of the church. The title of the book is *When God Builds a Church*. In this book, he cites the 10 reasons that he believes that God has blessed that church to grow from 125 in 1966 to over 16,000 today. The first principle of his book is Preach the truth. In fact, the way he says it is this: Preach the Truth, Most Churches Don't. He tells a story about his boyhood preacher, a D.P. Shaffer. After Bro. Shaffer left they had an arrogant young preacher preach for them one Sunday. The young preacher used almost no Scripture in his sermon that morning. After the service Bob Russell's mother, who rarely spoke a negative word said to that young preacher, "I remember what D.P. Shaffer used to say about preaching: 'Whenever you preach, always use a lot of Scripture, because that's one thing you know is true.'"

Commitment to Obey at all Times

I want to consider a couple of verses of Scripture.

- James 1:22—I think you know what James said. "But be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves."
- Nehemiah 8:6—Nehemiah tells us of another great revival led by return to the Bible. Nehemiah's story is after the exile. After the rebuilding of the wall, which is most the most well-known part of Nehemiah's story, there is another story of rebuilding—the rebuilding of worship. The rebuilding story is based on a return to the Word of God. Nehemiah tells us about a scene of worship—worship built around the reading and preaching of the Word of God. Nehemiah 8:6 gives us a good word about the commitment to obey.

Ezra praised the LORD, the great God, and with their hands uplifted all the people said, "Amen, Amen!" Then they bowed down and worshiped the LORD with their faces to the ground.

The amen, amen must come before, not after the understanding.

Most of us want to decide if we are going to obey the Scripture after we understand what the Scripture says. Nehemiah's example gives us a different picture. We agree to obey even before we understand.

Courage to Believe the Bible is sufficient for all Things

Third, we must have courage to believe that the Bible is sufficient for all things. This is important in the practice of church methodology. So, I want to give you three Scriptures.

- Isaiah 55:11-- so My word that comes from My mouth will not return to Me empty, but it will accomplish what I please and will prosper in what I send it to do."
- Ezekiel 37:3-4-- Then He said to me, "Son of man, can these bones live?"
I replied, "Lord GOD, only You know."

⁴ He said to me, "Prophesy concerning these bones and say to them: Dry bones, hear the word of the LORD!

- Romans 10:17-- So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the message about Christ.

So What?

It starts at least with reading God's Word, doesn't it? Joshua 1:8 says:

This book of instruction must not depart from your mouth; you are to recite it day and night so that you may carefully observe everything written in it. For then you will prosper and succeed in whatever you do.