

September 4, 2008

## Notwithstanding

We had a Bible Study this morning on II Kings 22. King Josiah was set on the throne and began to rule the kingdom of Judah. It seems that someone found the Book of the law by accident and brought it to his attention. His response was one of repentance-- a broken and tender heart. God saw his heart and responded with a promise of peace to him but a promise of judgment to the people of Judah. What follows is a time of removal of sin in Judah and especially in the Temple of God.

First of all, it's amazing at what was going on in the temple of the Living God. Idols had to be removed from the temple, sodomites were removed from living next to the temple, and all of the ungodly things were burned, ground up to powder and utterly destroyed. All of chapter 23 is a deep cleansing of the land and removal of all sin.

Do we see the true response of revival taking place in a leader's heart with the far-reaching results in the land and especially in the worship of God and His Temple? Here is a clear picture of revival and the right response of God's people.

But please don't miss this point. There was still judgment from God for their sins. It says in II Kings 23:25, "and like unto him there was no king before him, that turned to the Lord with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might..." but vs. 26 follows with, "notwithstanding the Lord turned not from the fierceness of his great wrath, where his anger was kindled against Judah".

You see, there is not a promise from God of no consequences, even when we turn back from our sins. There is certainly the promise of forgiveness of sins and blessings from the Lord, but again, all of this is completely up to God.

Let's get it right. If we return to the Lord, it is understanding that we are just sinners, and we give ourselves totally to Him, to do with us what He wills. We do not return for a good, easy life. We're not looking for a fire escape that allows us to get out of trouble or even ease our pain. I come to Christ and yield my life, give myself totally to Him to do with me as He wills. I deserve nothing except for total judgment. I plead for mercy upon

the merits of the work of Christ on the cross.

As a pastor, I see this situation over and over again. People get right with God, but their marriage still fails. People come to Christ, but their health is already ruined and failing. Others come, but their children are too far in the world and they can't seem to win them back. Doesn't it seem that if we say we're sorry to God that He should fix all our problems and make our wrongs right? He does forgive from this point forward, and He can "restore the years" as He promised. But sometimes the "notwithstanding" is still present-- the idea that we may still have to suffer the consequences of our past sins and the problems of life in a sinful world. The beauty is that we can still serve the Lord with thanksgiving for His mercy and grace and praise Him for His goodness whatever the consequences may be.

*Pastor Pat Hall*