

2 Chronicles

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Date: 04 October 1964

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[0 : 00] As the Lord shall be pleased to help me, I shall call your attention to a subject you will find in the second book of Chronicles, chapter 34.

And a sentence or two in the third verse. While he was yet young, he began to seek after the God of David, his father.

Chapter 34, second book of Chronicles, and a sentence or two, you will find in the third verse.

This is a word recorded concerning Josiah, Judas King.

And it is a wonderful declaration concerning him. While he was yet young, he began to seek after the God of David, his father.

[1 : 45] When he began to seek after God, he was 16 years old. How many of you in this assembly before God have begun to seek after the God of David, desiring that you might find him to be your God, your father, and your friend?

I would look at this subject, desiring to say something at this time that might be helpful to any of you dear young people, especially the children, who might.

And you know what pastors feel as they look around the congregation week in, week out.

Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? And I venture to hope that some of you dear young people have begun to seek after the God of David.

Some of you dear children, it may be, also have known what it is and do know what it is to knock at mercy's door.

[3 : 13] And so, at this time, I'm going to give a different type of address to what I usually do. It will be one that is, at least I hope it will be, straightforward in what I desire to say.

But it will not be worked out like I sometimes have worked out my addresses to help you remember what the theme is. But I do hope it will be worked out like I sometimes have worked out my address.

Josiah's father was named Amon. And he was a very ungodly king reigning in Judah.

And Josiah's grandfather was Manasseh, who, for many, many long years, was a most wicked monarch.

So that, it says, while he lived in his earlier life, that he made Jerusalem streets to run with rivers of blood.

[4 : 50] But that, when God began to deal with him, in his affliction, he called upon the Lord his God.

And God showed him mercy and blotted out his vast iniquities, so that Manasseh's redeemed spirit is in heaven.

And I might go a little farther back and say that Josiah's great-grandfather was good king Hezekiah, of whom the word of God speaks so well.

But the Spirit of God has recorded it like this, because when Josiah was eight years old, then he had to be instated on Judah's throne.

And in the age of his reign, which means that Josiah was then sixteen years of age, while he was yet young, he began to seek after the God of David, his father.

[6 : 05] And I want to say a little to what it is to seek God, and how every poor sinner, young or old, who is set going to seek after God, to get that for his or her soul, which a man cannot receive except it be given him from heaven, will be favoured to find that which his soul seeks after.

No seeking soul ever missed finding the pearl of great price. And I want to show you first of all, some characteristics, how Josiah began to seek after God.

And now it says, that he began. The word of God gives us no details, as to how it came about that he began.

Some thought may have welled up in his breast. Or it might be, Hilkiah, who was the priest at that time.

And there were other godly men round Hilkiah. Or they may have found it in their hearts to instruct young Josiah. And the Lord opened his heart to receive the instruction.

[7 : 40] But the great thing is, it was of God that he began to seek the God of his fathers. The word of God says, I will both search my sheep and seek them out.

And when God is pleased to do that, then poor sinners begin to seek after God. If so be, they can find in him all their salvation and all their desire.

And now, as I view it, when Josiah began to seek after God, it was here a little, there a little. It was, as it were, a day of small things in his soul's experience.

There was nothing special that stood out. But he was a humble soul, seeking salvation through the Lamb's redeeming blood.

And he wanted something for his soul which God alone could bestow. I have told you, our souls being immortal, can only feed upon immortal food.

[8 : 59] And that is what a man cannot receive, except it be given him from heaven. In young Josiah's breast there came a want.

There was an aching void which this world could not fill. He could not find that which would give him what his soul sought after in any earthly source, whatever.

And he was shut up to seeking after God. Because he had to learn, as every seeking soul must learn, none but Jesus, none but Jesus can do healthiest sinners good.

And now, I must not take up time in going into too many details about Josiah's seeking after God in the beginning of it. But when you get home and have some leisure, you read in this second book of Chronicles, what is recorded about Josiah.

And you will find that there were wonderful signs following Josiah seeking after the God of David, his father.

[10 : 20] As he was Judas' king, it began to produce a wonderful influence in the land of Judah itself. And it tells us how Josiah was at the head of affairs in undoing all the idle groves and putting down idolatry throughout the length and breadth of the land.

And it shows, alas, to what a solemn past things had become in the land of Judah. And then, when he was older, and no doubt God had granted him favor, and he had gone deeper down into the things of God, when he had cleared out all the idols and wrought a great reformation in the land, then he had it in his heart to repair the house of the Lord, his God.

And he set a scheme afoot, whereby they gathered money together, and he encouraged those whose hearts were engaged in the matter to go on with the work to repair the house of the Lord, his God.

And that brings me to one characteristic of what it is to seek the Lord. You find, when you begin to do it, that the house of the Lord begins to occupy a foremost place in your life.

And you want to be found there in the attitude of worship. And in seeking the Lord, you desire, as you go up to the house of the Lord, that you may get in touch with him whose house it is.

[12 : 14] And you have a feeling like this. We love the place, O God, wherein thine honor dwells. The joy of thine abode, all earthly joy, excels.

And you can say, with David, I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.

And so, as this work of repairing the house of the Lord was going on in Josiah's day, a very wonderful thing happened.

It is indeed a wonderful thing. And it tells us in the record, Hilkiah, the priest, found a book of the law of the Lord given by Moses.

It seems very strange to contemplate that Judah's kingdom was being carried on and God should be Judah's God and yet the law of the Lord and they had to live their life in accordance with the law of the Lord was hidden up and then they came across it while they were spring cleaning the house of the Lord.

[13 : 41] And it is said to be the book of the law of the Lord given by Moses even that which was given into the hand of Moses and which was put into the ark of the Lord to water low ebb had the things of God fallen in those days when Josiah reigned as Judah's king.

And now the effect of finding this book of the law of the Lord was very great upon Josiah. and it says that the one who found it carried it to the king and it was read to Josiah and it came to pass when the king had heard the words of the law that he rent his clothes.

As he heard what the law demanded as to righteousness and how Judah's kingdom should have been carried on in relation to it Josiah trembled and rent his clothes and humbled himself before God and he said go inquire of the Lord for me and for them that are left in Israel and in Judah concerning the words of the book that is found for great is the wrath of the Lord that is poured out upon us because our fathers have not kept the word of the Lord to do after all that is written in this book and now I want I want you dear young people to keep in your minds feeling as I do that some of you have begun to seek after the

God of whom you hear the God revealed in the word of God the true and the living God and it may be as yet you cannot say very much about the dealings of God with you and sometimes when you hear the gospel preached by those whom God has ordained to preach it you feel that it is too high for you to attain to in what as yet you know of the things of God or else it is too deep and you cannot descend into it yet you are following on to know the Lord in your own measure and now this is recorded as I view it to encourage those who are seeking after God that while for quite a while it may be it is only here a little there a little line upon line precept upon precept later on in your life you may come into a deeper line of things and the good work will be made more manifest and you will have a deepening experience through the words of the law you will learn more of what you are by nature go deeper down into a knowledge of the plague of the heart and that will be good in your soul's experience and you must not be over much surprised if things do work out like that in how

God does lead you into his truth I have known some people in my ministerial life who learnt more of what they were by nature and went deeper down into the malady the leprosy which lies deep within in the later weeks of their life which was a long life than they had ever learned before and yet they were seeking souls for 50 60 years but at length they came right down to bedrock and they learned then Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am chief and now coming back to Josiah it arose from him seeking the Lord God of David his father that he had it in his heart to repair the house of the

[18 : 26] Lord his God and if you were seeking the Lord as many of you are I hope you will find as I have said that the house of the Lord will fill an important niche in your life not only on the Sabbath days but on other days too this opportunity is afforded you to worship God here or there you will have this feeling as you seek after the God of David your father like Josiah did give me O Lord a place within thy blessed abode among the children of thy grace the servants of my God and now I read to you that Josiah said go inquire of the Lord for me and this inquiry was made strange to say not of a prophet but a prophetess a godly woman whose name was

Hulda and she sent this message to young Josiah because thine heart was tender and thou didst humble thyself before God when thou heardest his words against this place and against the inhabitants thereof and humblest thyself before me and didst rend thy clothes and weep before me I have even heard thee also saith the Lord here you see the beginning of Josiah seeking after God because thine heart was tender another word is contrite and sometimes you may have sung this the Lord does happiness divine on contrite hearts bestow oh tell me gracious God is mine a contrite heart or no the hymn writer was hard put to it to know whether his heart was what he wanted it to be a tender heart a contrite heart and what does he say in conclusion of his appeal to

God oh make this heart rejoice or ache decide this doubt for me and if it be not broken break and heal it if it be and that is just how you feel as you helped by grace to seek after God it is a matter of supreme importance a matter of eternal moment and you cannot begin to seek the Lord until he does for you what is a miracle of grace a new heart will I give you a new spirit will I put within you I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh I will give you a heart of flesh and now that heart of flesh means this because thine heart was tender the things of God are so real to you and you look upon them as what they are holy things and you are tender in your approach to them and yet you want to have them in your life as the element in which you live and move you want them to be your meat and drink yes and you say as you seek

God spirit of truth come down reveal the things of God and it goes on for Josiah's peace of mind behold I will gather thee to thy fathers and thou shalt be gathered to thy grave in peace neither shall thine eyes see all the evil that I will bring upon this place and upon the inhabitants of the same so they brought the king word again and then there is a beautiful account of how they kept the Passover and it is very evident that it was a most amazing Passover for it says and there was no Passover like to that kept in Israel from the days of Samuel the prophet neither did all the kings of Israel keep such a Passover as Josiah kept and the priests and the

Levites and all Judah and Israel that were present and the inhabitants of Jerusalem all Josiah as he sought after God seemed to be absorbed in having matters right before God in Judah's kingdom over which it was his privilege to reign and there is something here which I want to emphasize all the people great and small were gathered together at Jerusalem and it says that Josiah read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant that was found in the house of the Lord and the king stood in his place and made a covenant before the Lord to walk after the Lord and to keep his commandments and his testimonies and his statutes with all his heart and with all his soul to perform the words of the covenant which are written in this book and now listen and he caused all that were present in

[24 : 23] Jerusalem and Benjamin to stand to it good Josiah said to all who were listening this is the life I want you to be living as you have heard recorded in the book of the law of our God this is the life I counsel you to be living that things may go well in Judas kingdom I like that wording and he caused all that were present in Jerusalem and Benjamin to stand to it but it was not so long after that good Josiah died in battle and that word was fulfilled he was gathered to his fathers best of all gathered to the grave in peace there is no doubt whatever that when good Josiah died he died realizing the blessing of the

Lord even as it is recorded blessed are the dead which die in the Lord and now I want to say no more about Josiah because I have it in my mind to work out another viewpoint of this subject but I stick to this text while he was yet young he began to seek after the God of David his father and now the next thing to contemplate is why do poor sinners seek God it is because God alone can satisfy what they feel to be their souls need the God of spirits only can fill up the vast desires of man and as

I pondered this subject it came upon my mind that I would as I said take a different line in this address and show you dear young people and children how some who were young have been helped to begin to seek after God giving you instances a little while ago I was preaching at Clifton Chapel in Bedfordshire long years ago the pastor of that chapel whose name was Septimus Sears was the editor of the little gleaner and in his day there were often records of dear young people who worshipped in his cause of truth who died in the Lord and you can go round the chapel yard and see their graves and read what is recorded on the tomb stones and as

I was going through the chapel yard to go into the vestry preparatory to going up into the pulpit I saw one tombstone which touched me very much and it said on it Esther Hale aged eight years Jesus when he left the sky and for sinners came to die in his mercy passed not by little ones like many oh it did touch me and I felt even so it is not the will of your father in heaven that one of these little ones should perish and I began to think of some of whom I had known who did begin to seek the Lord while they were yet young and some others of whom

I had read and while I was at Clifton preaching a godly woman was speaking to me about when she began to seek the Lord and she was then fourteen years old and to my great pleasure she told me that over thirty years ago when I was preaching at Clifton Chapel and she a young teenager heard the sermon and it was through what she heard as God made it real in her soul that she sent off her first cry for mercy before God with whom she had to do the subject then was this poor man cried and the Lord heard him and that was the occasion when she began to seek after

[29 : 32] God and she found him too and for a long while her name has been on the church roll and she is an honorable member of the cause of truth there and now you have heard or read of the countess of Huntington and now it is said in her life that she began to seek after God when she was nine years old and she was out a little maid of nine years old and she saw a funeral going by maybe the church yard was quite close and she followed it and she went up to the grave and stood among the people there and heard what was said and while she was by that graveside the Holy Spirit wrought upon her that she needed to be born again and that she must be born again otherwise she could not be laid in the grave ensuring certain hope of a joyful resurrection to the life everlasting and though she was nine years of age in her way as grace was given she began to seek after

God and she became a most notable woman in the land in the day in which she lived and she was much used of God to do much good among his people and you might think of that when you sing this hymn for she composed it when thou my righteous judge shall come to take thy ransomed people home shall I among them stand shall such a worthless worm as I who sometimes am afraid to die be found at thy right hand and that is how she felt as she was seeking the Lord and what she felt was because she was indeed a sinner born again she would never have had such desires and such feelings arising from what she was by nature and as she was born the thing is impossible the soul that with sincere desires seeks after

Jesus love that soul the Holy Ghost inspires with breathing from above and I remember in our own cause of truth here how some in telling their tale before the church of Christ how they began to seek the Lord while they were young I remember well now 35 to 40 years ago one young woman before our church who told us as a church as we were then that she first began to seek after God and think about her soul as she went to a funeral with a friend and she saw someone laid in the grave round about her own age and she never knew that person whose redeemed spirit was in heaven and all that was mortal of her was laid in the grave but what the preacher said about her as he stood by the grave side so attracted her that she felt she wanted some religion like it that when the time came for her to be laid in the grave she might have the same words spoken over her ensuring certain hope of a joyful resurrection to the life everlasting another one who has long been a member of our church told us when he came before the church that he began to seek the

Lord when he was at a baptizing service and as he saw the pastor standing by the baptismal pool with a young woman to go down in to be baptized in the name of the Father the Son and the Holy Spirit it came into his heart that he must have that mercy which he believed that young woman possessed that she could follow the Lord as she was doing and from that night he began to see the Lord and quite a while afterwards I had the privilege to baptize him also as he followed the Lord in the watery way and then another instance is where I met a godly woman who was on holiday

I could hardly remember her at all but she told me that for many years she had been following on to know the Lord and she said do you know how I first began to seek after God I said I should like to know well she said you came to our chapel it was ever so far off and preached and your subject was peculiar people and as you went on preaching about the peculiar people something said inside me or I should like to be one of them and from that time I began to ask the Lord that I might be numbered with his people and belong to him and she was four years of age when she began to see the Lord like that and then many years ago there was a godly pastor in

[36 : 13] Wiltshire who was walking from Chittenham to Studley where he was due to preach and a young girl was walking with him because her home was in Studley and it was autumn time when all the leaves were flying around and as they went on their way which was a four mile walk all at once this godly pastor stood still and she stood and looked at him and wondered what he was standing still for and he said to her do you know what I've been thinking as I've been journeying on in a hundred years time where will you be where shall I be we should both of us be either in heaven or hell and the Lord used that for that girl to begin to seek after

God and she felt that the eye of the Lord was upon her and he made known to her her guiltiness before God to such a degree that for a while she had to be put in a mental home because it unbalanced her mind but the Lord delivered her and long years afterwards I should think at least over fifty years afterwards when I was preaching it studly I saw her on her death bed and she told me what I have told you and she said to me oh my friend I am happy as I can be in the prospect of going to heaven I'm on the rock the rock of ages healingly so but she began to seek the Lord as a girl like I have said through what seemed to be just a chance remark but it was not it was a word that had got thus saith the Lord to give it authority yes there is another thought

I have told you sometimes about a little fellow with maidstone whose name was Charlie Waggon whom I had the privilege to bury and he died when he was eight years old and he made the most wonderful end and it was a wonderful experience for me when I had to conduct the funeral service it was really a time of rejoicing not mourning because it was so evident that this little Charlie Waggon was so taught of God and he was fitted for eternity but he was eight years of age and now ever so many years ago I related that in a sermon in Union Chapel Pulpit it might be twenty something years ago and there was a little girl at that time in the pew listening who was just eight years old and she listened and God opened her heart as well as her ears and she felt

I am eight years of age and if I should die I know I should not go to heaven as I feel at the present time and she began to seek after God and many years afterwards she told us that before our church and I had the privilege to baptize her and she is in the attitude of worship in Union Chapel this Sabbath Eve I want you to observe how many things do dovetail in when poor sinners begin to seek after God other poor sinners get in touch with them and they can speak one to another about the dealings of God with their souls and now another instance I want to relate to you is this

I read this in the life of a godly minister minister and I heard that godly minister preach several times and he tells in his life about a godly woman who died in the Lord who belonged to his cause but when she was a little girl of seven years of age she was a weakly child and she had lost her mother and her home life was rather sad because she had sisters but they were so much older than she was that she felt somewhat in the way but the Lord began to deal with this little maid of seven years of age and one sabbath morn when she awoke a voice as it were said inside her who waits for thy salvation Lord shall thy salvation see and she began to ponder what the meaning of it was for she was only seven years of age she could not go very deep down into the doctrine of salvation but she went to chapel and mr philpot was preaching and he began to speak about what it was to seek the

[42 : 22] Lord and how sure they that did begin to seek the Lord would ultimately find and then in his sermon he said this it might be that God would say to a little maid of seven years of age who waits for thy salvation Lord shall thy salvation see and she would see it if she lived to be eighty years of age she would get it then if she did not get it before and now that was just what happened and that little maid of seven followed on to know the Lord till she was eighty years of age but she did not get the great question put out of question to see the salvation of God as her soul desired to see it see her own part and lot in it but when she was eighty years of age she fell and broke her thigh and that brought her down to her end and the

Lord appeared for her then and she was filled with joy and happiness unspeakable and full of glory and she died in rejoicing in the salvation of God you see dear young people dear children it is a great thing to be seeking after God because there is a sure guarantee ask and ye shall receive seek and ye shall find knock and it shall be open unto you and as you seek after God it may be you will not broadcast much about it but you will ponder things in your heart and you will be like you read in Malachi one of those that think upon his name and now as I come toward the closing of my address there is one more instance here which I particularly want you to listen to and that is regarding a little maid of six years of age who was a

Sunday school scholar and she was a very bright scholar always ready with her text and ready to answer a question if she could but she suffered from an incurable complaint and just a few days before she was going to heaven the godly minister gave a little address in the Sunday school where this scholar was and he gave the address on a word in Isaiah he shall gather the lambs with his arm and carry them in his bosom and he spoke about the little ones who were helped to believe in god as being the lambs and then when he was concluding his address he looked round and he said are there any lambs in my school and this little maid six years of age suddenly felt oh I should like to be one and lie in Christ's bosom and know that he loved me and she was brought into great concern but she was afraid she never could be a lamb then when she tossed on her bed at night thinking about it all she remembered the minister said that all Christ's sheep and lambs are lost till he seeps and saves them and she felt perhaps I'm a lost lamb and she got out of bed and knelt down began to pray to the good shepherd and all she could find to say was

I'm a lost lamb I'm a wicked child do save me do forgive me and she continued to pray like that day after day and one day she was made to feel sure that Jesus heard her cries and she was made happy as she realized her sins were all gone and a few days after that she died in the Lord and she said I am sure now Jesus loves me and has made me a lamb I am not afraid to die for I know he will take me to heaven she was six years of age she sought the Lord and she found him soon and I might ask are there any lambs under Union Chapel Ruth are there any lost lambs for that is a good sign to feel like that the son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost are there any lambs who gather in our

Sunday school week in week out all that is what we do desire God will enable you to be all that he might make you manifest as a lamb a bleating lamb and remember what you sometimes have sung I think the language is very beautiful beautiful in its simplicity I think when I read that sweet story of old when Jesus was here among men and we brought little children as lambs to his fold I should like to have been with him then I could wish that his hand had been placed on my head that his arm had been thrown around me and that I might have seen his kind look when he said let the little ones come on to me while he was yet young he began to seek after the God of David his father and now

[48 : 51] I will conclude by reading you a little extract from the pilgrim's progress this woman said great heart is the wife of one Christian a pilgrim of former times and these are his four children the boys all take after their father and do covet to tread in his steps yea if they do but see any print of his foot it ministereth joy to their hearts and they covet to tread in the same and now you get that sweet blessed feeling following on when you begin to seek after God as you journey on and sometimes you get a sweet experience like this we are traveling home to God in the way our fathers trod they are happy now and we hope their happiness to see all that the Lord in his great mercy will be pleased to lead you dear young people and children into his truth and set you seeking after him that you may find in him all your salvation and all your desire and remember if you are favored to begin to seek after

God there is every encouragement possible in the word of God for you to continue to seek after God however long you may have to wait till you see the salvation of God as you desire in the end you will see it you will be like Simeon when he said Lord lettest thou thy servant depart in peace for mine eyes have seen thy salvation according to thy word the time of love will come when each should clearly see not only that Christ shed his blood but each shall save from me the Lord bless you bless you indeed amen WHAT