

2 CHRONICLES 34

Chapter 33 ended with

²⁰So Manasseh slept with his fathers, and they buried him in his house,

Manasseh, the wickedest king in the history of the nation, became the most incredible testimony to the longsuffering of God, the mercy of God and grace of God.

and Amon his son reigned in his place. ²¹Amon was twenty-two years old when he began to reign, and he reigned two years in Jerusalem. ²²And he did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, as Manasseh his father had done. Amon sacrificed to all the images that Manasseh his father had made, and served them. ²³And he did not humble himself before the Lord, as Manasseh his father had humbled himself, but this Amon incurred guilt more and more. ²⁴And his servants conspired against him and put him to death in his house. ²⁵But the people of the land struck down all those who had conspired against King Amon. And the people of the land made Josiah his son king in his place.

In Chapter 34 we are introduced to Josiah — the grandson of

¹Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem.

He comes not only on the scene of Israel's history at the age of 8 — he comes to the throne of Judah at the age of 8. When he comes to the throne it is the darkest hour of the history of the Nation of Israel. The 10 northern tribes have already been judged for their relentless idolatry and have been carried away by the Assyrians. There is a shift in geopolitical power as the Babylonian Empire becomes the world dominating empire. Josiah will die in battle against Pharaoh Neco in 609 BC. Four years after that Nebuchadnezzar will surround Jerusalem and the first deportation will take place. So we're winding down to the end of the nation.

Try to imagine if your 8 old got the steering wheel of a nation! God held this boy up in the darkest hour in the history of the nation in such a radical

way that this one boy grew into a young man who became a beacon — a shining light — who had a dramatic effect on the nation.

I believe that the Lord sets Josiah before us to challenge each of us — to say to each of us as individuals that our life matters! Metro — ONE life matters. ONE life can change the course of your world (your neighborhood, your city, where you work, where you go to school, where you shop and where you just hang out) — maybe the course of a nation.

I'm not talking about sitting down with a piece of paper and charting out a plan or creating a flow chart with goals or simply trying to figure out logically how that would happen. I'm talking about living as though God really did do the things we read in the Bible and that God still desires to do such things. I mean actually living as though God can use ONE life — YOUR life!

Look at this AMAZING HISTORY of God using ONE life to change the world.

How many of you know who Edward Kimball is? He lived over a hundred years ago. He was a Sunday school teacher in Boston, where a young teenager became part of his class. That teenager was a country boy. He didn't know anything about city life. He didn't know anything about church life. But he came to Kimball's Sunday school class. When the teen first came to his class, Edward Kimball handed him a Bible. When Mr. Kimball said, "Turn to the Gospel of John," the country boy didn't know how to find the Gospel of John. Edward Kimball recognized what was happening, and while the other boys were snickering, he opened the Bible to the Gospel of John and handed it back. When he asked the boys to read, the country boy fumbled as he read. Kimball worked with him, and after some months he went down to the store where the boy was working and went into the back room where he was stacking boxes. Right there in the stock room he led Dwight to Jesus Christ. That was the beginning of the ministry of Dwight L. Moody, the greatest evangelist on this continent of the 19th. But it goes further than THAT! Kimball led a Boston shoe clerk to Christ whose name was Dwight L. Moody. Moody traveled to England to do evangelism. He was invited to speak at small church in pastored by Fredrick B. Meyer. In his sermon Moody told the story of a Chicago

Sunday School teacher he knew personally who went to every student in his class and won every student in his Sunday School class to Christ. The message changed F.B Meyer's life and ministry. Over the years Meyer came to America several times to preach. Once in Northfield, Massachusetts, a confused young preacher sitting in the back row heard Meyer say, if you are not willing to give everything to God are you willing to be made willing? That remark led J. Wilbur Chapman to accept the call of God on his life. Chapman went on to become one of the most effective evangelists of his time. A volunteer by the name of Billy Sunday helped set up Chapman's crusades and learned to preach by watching him. Sunday eventually took over Chapman's ministry and became one of the most effective evangelists of the 20th Century. In the great arenas of the nation Billy Sunday's preaching turned thousands to Christ. Inspired by a 1924 Billy Sunday crusade in Charlotte, North Carolina, a committee of Christians committed themselves to reaching that city for Christ. They invited a man named Mordecai Ham to hold a series of evangelistic meetings in 1932. A tall, skinny 16-year old sat in the huge crowd one evening absolutely riveted by the message. This 16 year old boy came back night after night until one night he finally went forward and gave his life to Christ. That teenager's name was Billy Graham — that ONE man has communicated the Gospel of Jesus Christ to more people than anyone else in the history of the world.

DON'T MISS THIS — This sequence of events started with ONE nobody named Kimble — who was living on mission in his world. In his world there was one young man that he reached out to — visited him at the shoe store he worked at. ONE man, living on mission in his world, changed the world. Millions upon millions have been affected by his decision to go to the shoe store and millions more will continue to feel the impact of that decision.

Can anything like that happen today? If it can't — we might as well go home. Quite honestly, I'm done with any kind of church or “ministry” that is going to end up being a collection of people nodding their heads and going through the motions of “church.” It's an embarrassment to God to have everything we have and not live — down to the individual man and individual woman — as though One life matters — and not want to be that ONE life.

To get a sense of just HOW radical God worked in the life of Josiah think about this — Josiah is eight years old when he begins to reign. Amon is 24 when he dies. That means that Josiah was born when Amon was 16; which means that Josiah was conceived when Amon was 15 years old. Josiah was raised by a godless 16-year old dad, who at the age of 22 became king and did everything evil he could possibly do. On top of that — it's beyond my imagination to comprehend what it was like for Josiah to have his dad murdered by his own servants in his own house.

DON'T MISS THIS — At the age of 8 Josiah had learned to love what was right in the eyes of the Lord! I have to believe it was because of the influence of his grandfather Manasseh who sinned more than any other king before him — but in a Babylonian dungeon was greatly humbled and repented and cried out to God — *and God was moved by his entreaty and heard his plea and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the Lord was God (2 Chronicles 33:13)*. I believe that God used ONE greatly humbled, broken man (ONE grandpa) to speak into the life of a boy who would influence a nation! I believe that with great brokenness and humility Manasseh took his young grandson and instructed him about the amazing grace of God.

²And he did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, and walked in the ways of David his father;

There's God's standard for the kings of Israel. Not a perfect man but a man whose heart was after the Lord's heart.

and he did not turn aside to the right hand or to the left.

The Bible says that the Christian is on a long distance journey towards a glorious forever in the presence of God.

Hebrews 12:1-3 *Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us **run with endurance** the race that is set before us, ²looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who*

for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

There are some who greatly misunderstand the nature of this race — the nature of this journey. It is not about running the race to win heaven. It is not about those who finish being those who get to enter heaven. This long distance journey has to do with those who **by faith** in Jesus ARE going to be in heaven.

***Ephesians 2:8-9** For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹not a result of works, so that no one may boast.*

It is faith in Jesus that has placed them in the race — placed them on the journey.

Jesus said that it's a narrow road that we run on. In fact, the very entrance to this narrow road is narrow.

***Matthew 7:13-14 KJV** Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: ¹⁴Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.*

It's a narrow gate because Jesus is the only way in.

***John 14:6** Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*

***Luke 9:23** And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.*

The road is narrow because it is hemmed in by His will — it is all about *His Kingdom Come and His Will Be Done!* He is the Lord and He gives the direction.

QUOTE: Timothy Keller — *Jesus is Lord, not my personal consciousness. At some point, the idea that "it is true if and only if it works for me" must be challenged.*

This narrow road is an enigma to the unbelieving world because this narrow road is the road that leads to broadness — abundance — freedom.

Our little *Kingdoms of One* were all about *MY Kingdom Come!* They were lived by the mantra, *"it is true if, and only if, it works for me."* That didn't work out so well! Our little *Kingdoms of One* kept collapsing in on us — shrinking and choking the life out of us.

It's an amazing road because it's the Kings Road!

Psalm 23:3 He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

It's an amazing road because we're not alone on it — Jesus is with us every inch of the way.

Psalm 23:3 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me;

It's on that road — on our journey towards heaven — that we get to personally know and experience Jesus; get to know more about His love and His grace, His truth and His compassion. It is where we learn of Him. It is where we grow in grace in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior. WE actually find REST in the JOURNEY.

QUOTE: Tim Chaddick — The Christian does not journey because they are restless, but because they have found rest in following Jesus

It's an amazing road — but it's not an easy road.

Acts 14:22 When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, ²²strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.

It's an amazing road because every inch of it; every bump, every delay — is intended by our redeemer God for our good!

Romans 8:28 NLT *And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.*

It's an amazing road because on it we are daily being conformed to the image of Jesus.

Romans 8:29 *For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son*

While we are traveling towards this destination, we are not only enjoying the presence of Jesus; getting to know Jesus; being conformed to the image of Jesus — we are also on mission with Jesus. He leads us to cross borders into people's worlds where we people who are not on the way to heaven see us following Jesus humbly, living as men and women who know that they are the recipients of grace— who know that there isn't a day we've been loved by Jesus with a love we deserved.

This road, this race, this journey is amazing because it has an ending that's a beginning — it has a destination that never ends! The end of this road is eternity in the presence of the Lord, in a new heaven and a new earth where we will fully and perfectly enjoy God forever — and where God will fully and perfectly enjoy us forever.

This blew my mind last week in preparing for our study of the last chapter in the Book of Daniel.

Daniel 12:3 *And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.*

In the Kingdom of God “we'll shine like stars.”

***Matthew 13:43** Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father.*

Follow me here — When we see Jesus transfigured

***Matthew 17:2** And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light.*

When Paul sees Jesus on the road to Damascus

***Acts 22:6; 9** “As I was on my way and drew near to Damascus, about noon a great light from heaven suddenly shone around me....⁹Now those who were with me saw the light but did not understand the voice of the one who was speaking to me.*

The Scriptures declare that when we at the end of our journey our bodies will be fashioned like unto His glorious body.

***Philippians 3:20-21** But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.*

In that kingdom state you and I will shine — we will possess bodies that reflect the majestic glory of God — shining like the stars of heaven. I think that this is what the body of Adam was like before the fall — before the light went out.

Take all of that to **Revelation 21-22** and the description of the New Jerusalem — a city where the walls are made of jewels and the streets are made of gold — but that gold is clear as glass. **EVERYTHING** in that city is made to **REFLECT** and **REFRACT** light. In that place there will be the innumerable company of saints — each one shining like the stars of heaven. And there is the **throne** of God and the lamb Himself in the middle of it all shining — it says, “*brighter than the noon day sun.*” **IMAGINE** what a scene it will be — glistening like a diamond in the heavens throughout eternity. His Kingdom is one of LIGHT and LIFE! Those in His Kingdom will **spend eternity** in HIS light. They will possess glorified bodies that will

have the capacity to **stand** in the brilliance of His glory — which is the tangible expression of His perfect nature and attributes. Not just stand — but look upon His brilliance — fully appreciate Him in ALL of His majesty and respond to Him in worship

THAT is what we were made for! The destination of this road is actually the world that mankind so deeply longs for — a world marked by peace and love; justice and mercy; kindness and compassion — because the destination of this road is a new heaven and a new earth ruled by God.

THAT is why Paul says that *eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.*

THAT — is what has **forever** been at the heart of His **relentless pursuit to redeem and reconcile** fallen man to Himself.

THAT is why we preach the Gospel — we are a part of HIS mission to redeem and reconcile men and women to Himself.

John 12:46 I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness.

To **“remain”** in darkness means to live eternally separated eternally from God, who is light (1 John 1:5; Revelation 21:23) — in the *outer darkness* of hell (Matthew 8:12; 22:13; 25:30).

Every day, as we follow the Lord, as we are on our way to heaven, there are going to be tons of choices set before us to **turn aside to the right hand or to the left** — exit signs, if-you-would, deviations from following Jesus — interruptions in our progress in knowing Jesus and being on mission with Jesus.

Here’s the picture that comes to my mind — On those long stretches of road on Interstate 5 going towards Southern California or north to Oregon and Washington you see **exit signs** that have icons on them for gasoline, hotels, restaurants — sometimes the corporate logos of Starbucks, In-N-Out, MacDonald’s. Those are intended to give you a reason to get off the

highway right at that point. If I'm on that stretch of Interstate 5 it's because I'm on a journey with my family towards a destination: THE BEACH, WAHOOS Fish Tacos, RUBY'S DINER — a BEACH CHAIR in the sand, SALT water and SALT air, on shore breezes at 3:00 in the after noon — thank Jesus and repeat again the next day for as many days as possible. It's not a short trip. It's not an easy trip (up at 3:30am — some long stretches of bumpy road with a full bladder). I do not want any detours, any delays. But all along the way there are those signs that tell me that I really should get off the road right there — I really need to delay the journey — because I *deserve* a rest; I *need* a double double, mustard only. But I only exit when it is right and serves the purpose of the completing the journey. The same thing happens on the return journey. Same signs — same icons. I don't want to stop — I just want to GET HOME!

DON'T MISS THIS — Though your adversary the devil posts tons of those exit signs and works without ceasing to get you to **turn aside to the hand or to the left** — convince you to take a self serving off ramp — he can never rob you of your salvation — nor can he cause you to lose your salvation.

John 10:29 “And no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand, because he is stronger than all.”

The issue is this — salvation is not mine. Jonah says ([Jonah 2:9](#)) that *salvation belongs to the Lord*. If salvation is a gift, I didn't earn it. How can I lose what I have not earned? If it's eternal, how can it end? And in addition to all of that — who's going to overwhelm God? Who's going to steal me and snatch me out of the hand of my Father? The question is not “can you lose your salvation?” The question is “can God be overpowered, and can someone steal you from him?” The bottom line issue is this — “can God fail?” In that light — I'm secure because God can never fail!

We have been redeemed and rescued from this fallen world that is organizing itself without God and against God. **God** has placed us into His Kingdom — **by** the grace of God we are now **His** collection of redeemed and reconciled rebels. We are **HIS** purchased possession!

Having said that — It is no small thing when a Christian **turns aside to the hand or to the left** because it is the strategy of our adversary the devil to get us off the road that most expresses *Thy Kingdom Come and Thy Will Be Done*. God forever saved us from our doomed little *Kingdoms of One* so that our lives individually and corporately would be the expression of *His Kingdom and His Will*. We too often think that **turning aside to the hand or to the left** looks like a car failing to navigate a turn and flying over the embankment and rolling and bursting into flames. It almost always never looks like that — it almost always doesn't even look like an exit. It almost always looks more like getting caught in a lane that leads to another freeway going in a different direction. In our Christian life we can **turn aside to the right hand or to the left** by something as subtle as compartmentalizing our faith.

QUOTE: J.C. Ryle — *"The Gospel was not meant merely to reside in our intellect, memories, and tongues, but to be seen in our lives."*

We can actually begin to think that **right thinking about the Gospel = Gospel living**. And we conclude that since we think right about the Gospel we are therefore living the Gospel. **WRONG** — Gospel living means surrendering our life to the lordship of Jesus Christ.

It is no small thing when a Christian **turns aside to the hand or to the left** because it is the strategy of our adversary the devil to **distract** us from or mission, or **delay** us being on mission with Jesus. We **know** that Jesus crossed borders to reach lives with His redeeming love those who were thought by most to be beyond the reach of God's love. We also **know** that we are following Jesus on His mission — but as we're on this amazing road with Jesus we see an exit sign that has a little "career" icon and a "wife/husband" icon. Somebody else is going to have to cross borders into culture and into other people's worlds because right now you just have to get off at this exit — cause if you don't you'll never have a career and never get married.

The tragedy is that Jesus has His best waiting for you back on the freeway where you are simply loving Jesus, following Jesus, living on mission, in culture — Loving fallen men and women, serving fallen men and women, serving and loving other redeemed and reconciled rebels. You can go to

church 2-3 times a week; you can be sitting here tonight and all the while you've **turned aside to the right hand or to the left** because you've lost sight of the fact that as a redeemed, reconciled rebel you've been chosen and graced to live for something vastly bigger than you. It's so big and so amazing that *eye hasn't seen, ear hasn't heard, it hasn't even entered into the heart of man what things God has prepared for them that love him.*

QUOTE: Paul Tripp — *You're wasting your time figuring out your future. Your Lord has already figured it out and he simply calls you to trust and obey.*

It is no small thing when a Christian **turns aside to the hand or to the left** because it is the strategy of our adversary the devil to make you think that you need to be in control — that your plan for plan is actually better than the plan of God, who so loved you that He sent His Son to die for your sins — when in reality you used to be in control; and how did that work out for you?

QUOTE: Paul Tripp — You don't have to have control because your Savior rules over all things for your sake and his glory.

It is no small thing when a Christian **turns aside to the hand or to the left** because it is the strategy of our adversary the devil to make you think that your hope and your identity can only be found in his proposed off ramp rather than Jesus Himself. If you take the exit you don't lose your salvation — you just find your hopes crashed. And all the while you've **turned aside to the right hand or to the left** you've been kept from being a part of the most important work in the universe for the most important person in the universe.