

## removing the substitutes ...

This month I want to look at obeying God's Word, taking thoughts predominantly from the life of King Josiah.

Having found the Word of God among all the pagan idols of the temple, and then having read it, Josiah is challenged to his core that the nation of Judah was far from God and needed to get back into a right relationship with the Lord.

We don't have to look far to see a similar problem, where many Christians seem to have drifted far from God. As bad as that is, what is worse is when we have a church that is content to leave that situation remain. God's faithfulness through the centuries has been clearly and wonderfully illustrated by the passionate men of God He has raised up to challenge the church to return to God.

When Josiah heard the Word of God, the proof of his truly hearing was reflected in his action. How many of us have heard sermons, or read books on prayer, evangelism or mission which we have

### **PRAISE** the Lord for:

- ★ A fantastic Impact Africa mission trip. We were very conscious of people praying for us
- ★ Partner organisations – Multi Ministries, World Hope Prison Ministries, Cornerstone Community Church who put together out itineraries while in South Africa
- ★ A successful trip to Malawi for Carl with a small team after Impact. Main ministry was sharing Jesus in several prisons with a great response
- ★ Each of our team who bring various skills and abilities to the Challenge ministry

acknowledged were good? However, we were not moved to action, indicating that our hearing was more at a superficial level, rather than a spiritual challenge to action.

Josiah was challenged to action.

What needed to be removed were the substitutes that had taken the place of the true and living God. In

**2 Kings 23:4** Josiah ordered Hilkiah the High Priest to clean out the temple of all the pagan idols. If God was

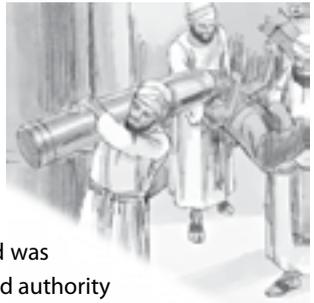
going to return in His love, power and authority

ALL of the pagan idols had to go. Peter reminded us of this in **1 Peter 4:17**, *the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God.*

When we talk evangelism, the conversation turns to methods and strategies, but rarely do I hear reference made to holiness in connection with evangelistic effectiveness.

While we may be quick to suggest that we don't worship images of Baal or the Asherah poles, we nonetheless have our idols, some more subtle than others.

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The biggest idol in the western church is materialism. We are ravenous for things, possessions, in a vain hope that they will give us peace, joy, along with some prestige and recognition.

Materialism, however, can plunge us horribly into debt to achieve our goals. This then means that many are working long hours to service debt, church attendance can become spasmodic at best, and serving in a particular ministry within the church is not even a consideration.

Josiah's follow-through came as a result of the covenant he made with the Lord, [v.3], to follow the Lord and keep His commandments and testimonies. He was determined to get right with God.

Nothing was going to dissuade him from his earnest desire. He got rid of the perverted people within the temple, the false priests and the high places. Josiah was thorough, with no room for compromise.

We live in an age where the fundamental foundation stones of the Christian faith are being brought into question, sadly by some who should know better. Key doctrines like the virgin birth, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the inerrancy of scripture and the miracles of Jesus are questioned. These sorts of false prophets need to be challenged and if they remain unrepentant, removed.

Josiah put away those who consulted mediums and spiritualists. With the explosion of the new age philosophies and practices we need to make sure they have no part in our church or family life, because we are giving Satan an access point to attack us.

Josiah challenged the people to get rid of household gods. For us in today's alleged sophisticated and civilised culture our household gods may even include the house itself, food, clothing, music, entertainment and jewellery to mention a few. We must understand that an idol is anything that removes the Lord Jesus from being number one in our lives.

Josiah read the Word of God and was challenged to his core as he heard the Word of God. His hearing was validated by his actions.

Question – *When was the last time you heard the Word of God? ... then combined it with obedience?*

Because that is truly hearing.

{ CARL CARMODY  
EDITOR CHALLENGE }

## PRAYER needed for:

- ★ The ministries we work with in South Africa. Pray for these as they follow up on commitments received
- ★ The ongoing funding for the running of the Perth office, for personal support, for the supply and funding of the Challenge paper globally
- ★ Each of our hubs around the world – USA: Andrew and Karen Trezona; Malawi: Ananda and Grace Pula; South Africa: Cobus and Christa Britz. Please pray for the Lord's care, protection and provision for each family
- ★ Challenge production team who do an incredible job staying on top of the ever pressing demands of deadlines for papers in different parts of the world

## MY RESPONSE

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