



Jeff Sweeten

# *Thus Saith the Lord*

## **A NEW COMMITMENT**

By Jeff Sweeten

Out with the old, in with the new; it is by God's grace that we still draw breath. And, how are your New Year's resolutions holding up? Indeed, the struggle to change is a perpetual challenge, and such was the challenge before Josiah.

Following evil Amon, at age 8, he apparently made no command decisions until age 18 (2 Kings 22:3). God told Josiah, "because your heart was tender, and you humbled yourself before the LORD when you heard what I spoke against this place and against its inhabitants... therefore, I will gather you to your fathers, and you shall be gathered to your grave in peace; and your eyes shall not see all the calamity which I will bring on this place" (2 Kings 22:19-20). When the young king heard the words of God through the prophetess, Huldah, he "stood by a pillar and made a covenant before the LORD, to follow the LORD and to keep His commandments and His testimonies and His statutes, with all his heart and all his soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people stood to the covenant." (2 Kings 23:3). Of the many lessons Josiah leaves us, three seem to stand out.

One, young people have a powerful influence. Much digression and innovation in the Lord's church is introduced through "youth programs" and "youth ministers." The natural, healthy inquisitiveness of young people, coupled with seemingly unlimited energy, combine for a powerful impetus toward change. This process can be godly (Romans 12:1-2) or demonic (2 Peter 3:17).

However, by possessing a tender heart subject to God's direction, and humbling that seemingly inherent youthful hubris, this king set himself apart. Those around him knew where he stood and what was expected of them if they were to stand beside him.

Two, and lest we lose sight of a major influencing factor in Josiah's life, we must ask the question:

"How is it that he became so influential?" He was only 8! It was his godly mother (Jedidah) who must have impacted the young king for good, who influenced an entire nation. I do not understand the rationalizations of mothers and fathers who whitewash their parental failures by claiming they cannot "make" their children come to Bible classes and/or worship services, or encourage attendance at youth functions, or press them to study their Bible accountably while simultaneously "making" them go to a public school 5 days a week for 9 months out of the year for 12+ years! Too often, the commitment-to-God problem is with parents, not with kids.

Three, it only takes one influential, courageous person to change the direction of a nation, and our nation so desperately needs redirection. To look to the heathen for help in this regard is foolish; it will be faithful dedicated Christians that make the difference. When Josiah stood, "all the people took a stand for the covenant." Israel changed!

The New Year is a great time to re-evaluate, reconsider, and re-affirm. This may be the year when your influence is the most critical of your lifetime. "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up" (James 4:10).

*Thus Saith the Lord*  
is presented by the

## **Park Heights Church of Christ**

1300 E. Boynton St.  
Hamilton  
254-386-3953

### **Schedule of Services**

#### **SUNDAY**

9:30 a.m. Bible Class  
10:25 a.m. Morning Worship  
1:30 p.m. Afternoon Worship

#### **WEDNESDAY**

7:00 p.m. Bible Study

Please call or email if you  
have a question or comment  
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