



Refresh – Our Commitment to Purity
2 Chronicles 34

The Roller Coaster of Devotion to God

After Solomon's kingdom was divided into the Northern (Israel) and Southern (Judah) kingdoms, Judah had 20 kings over 345 years. The nation fluctuated between worshiping God and worshiping Baal and Asherah. Rehoboam's and Abijah's reigns of 20 years of evil were followed by 66 years of reform and good rules by Asa and Jehoshaphat. Then, 15 years of evil ruled during Jehoram, Ahaziah and Queen Athaliah's rules. Joash restored the temple and ruled for 40 years followed by 97 years of good kings in Amaziah, Uzziah and Jotham's rules. Ahaz was the worst of the kings, even sacrificing his own children to false gods. His rule of 16 years was followed by the restoration of worship and the temple by Hezekiah. His son reestablished false worship, but he repented toward the end of his 15-year reign. Amon continued the false religions for the 2 years he ruled. But Josiah restored the temple and worship for the 31 years he ruled. The last four kings of Judah were all evil and their combined rule was only 22 years as the kingdom of Judah ended in captivity in Babylon.

How to Stop the Roller Coaster

Does the history of Judah sound like your life's history? Are their seasons of dedication to God followed by seasons of sin in a vicious cycle. Your life doesn't have to be that way. From Psalm 119:9-11 we learn how we can keep our way pure.

- *Commitment to Purity* – The psalmist says, "I have sought you with my all my heart." Too many times we denounce sin while still seeing it as exciting and fun. We must stop and seek God with everything we have. Josiah was king at 8 years old. By 16 we sought the Lord, by 20 he started religious reforms, and by 26 he restored the temple and worship.
- *Read, Meditate and Obey God's Word* – The entire 176 verses of Psalm 119 is a song to the importance of God's Word. Verses 9-11 teach treasuring and keeping God's word so that we might not sin against God. During the temple renovations Hilkiah the priest found a copy of first five books of the Bible (Book of the Law). He read it to Josiah. Then Josiah went to the prophetess Huldah, he read the book in the presence of the leaders and people, he and the people made a covenant with God, and they celebrated the Passover unlike any since the days of Samuel.
- *Rely on God's Strength and Not Our Own* – Romans 13:14 says, "But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and don't make plans to gratify the desires of the flesh." Too many times allow ourselves to be put in situations where sin is a huge temptation, thinking we can handle it. Rather what we should do is set up boundaries in our lives to keep us from temptation and pray for God's strength when we are tempted (1 Cor 10:6-13). Also, we have God the Holy Spirit living in us who empowers us to say "no" to sin and "yes" to God. Paul writes, "Walk by the Spirit and you will certainly not carry out the desire of the flesh" (Gal 5:16).
- *Make a List of What Sin Has Cost You.*