**"A NEW COMMITMENT FOR THE NEW YEAR"**

TEXT: II Chron. 34:31

THESIS: To show the extent of Josiah's personal commitment and the ramifications it had for the entire nation of Israel.

INTRO:

A. The sweeping revival of Josiah's reign was the most far-reaching in Israel's history. Sometime - years ago - I wrote in my devotions Bible alongside v.31, "New Year’s." The passage struck me as a text for a New Year's sermon. I am calling it "A NEW COMMIT-MENT FOR THE NEW YEAR!"

B. Some dislike "New Year's Resolutions" - but all believers ought to promote "New Year's Revival!"

ILLUS: Jonathan Edwards Resolutions:

1. Resolved to live with all my might while I do live.

2. Resolved: never to lose one moment of time, to improve it in the most profitable way I can.

 3. Resolved: Never to do anything which I should despise or think meanly of in another.

 4. Resolved: never to do anything out of revenge.

 5. Resolved: never to do anything which I should be afraid to do if it were the last hour of my life."

TRANS: I want to focus on Josiah's commitment for himself before the nation. In a sense it was to be his "State of the Nation" address, because he obviously wanted the revival he experienced to permeate his people...

**I. PROGRESS: "walk..."**

 A. A Decision: v.3

1. Crowned at the tender age of 8 (v.1), converted at 16 and commited to revival at age 20! What a beginning.

NOTE: We need to reach children at the earliest age possible - they often influence others. This passage also shows that young people can be spiritual leaders.

2. All of the above is amazing since it was done apart from God's Word!

 B. A Cleansing: v.4-7

1. Those with high moral standards and deep commitment can accomplish great things for God and set an example for others.

2. Moral and biblical leadership creates national prosperity and guarantees God's blesssings.

ILLUS: Our Constitution and born-again presidents; G. Washington, Abe Lincoln, etc. as well as several of the signers of the Dec. of Independence. Sad that no recent presidents or leaders of national prominence can be included

 C. A Book: v.14

 1. The Bible Lost: v.14

a. No wonder the nation was steeped in idolatry and abominable sins!

b. Any nation which ignores the basic moral precepts of God's Word is doomed to disaster and destruction.

 2. The Bible Found: v.14

 a. The discovery of God's Word can never replace the discovery of God.

 b. The discovery of natural law is never as beneficial as the discovery of God's Law.

 c. The discovery of ancient human manuscripts is never as profitable as the discovery of ancient divine manuscripts.

ILLUS: I am speaking of a Bible that can be read -not the "inspired originals."

 3. The Bible Read: v.18

 a. Many would read it who don't have it; an argument for missions.

 b. Many have it who don't read it; an argument for preaching.

 c. Many have it who cannot read it (illiteracy, blindness); an argument for ministries.

 d. Many have it and read it with spiritual growth; an argument for inspiration.

 4. The Bible obeyed: (text)

**II. PROMISE: "keep..."**

 A. Repentance: v.19

 1. The personal example of the King.

 2. The powerful persuasion of the King.

 B. Humility: v.26-27

 1. Humility before God (and His Word) assures His blessings.

 2. God hears the prayers of the humble.

 C. Determination: (text)

 1. This commitment was made before the elders, priests, Levites and the people. v.30

 2. This covenant was not something to be ashamed of, but something to be proud of!

**III. PERFORMANCE: "perform..."**

 A. Leadership: v.31a “his place..." v.32a "He caused all..."

 1. This was both a personal and a political covenant.

 2. Israel was God's nation - unlike all others.

 3. The King was to reign under God - a Theocracy.

 B. Invitation: v.32 “to stand to it..."

 1. No sermon is complete without an invitation.

 2. Here is a public call to all to stand withhim.

 C. Evangelism: v.33 “all the countries..."

 1. Josiah did what the other Kings and leaders failed to do.

2. Josiah did what God always intended for all His people to do – to be a blessing to all nations. (Nothing has changed!)

CONCL: Here is "A NEW COMMITMENT FOR A NEW YEAR" which all of us can like- wise make!

**POEM: "Those Wasted Years'**

 **"I looked upon a farm one day, That once I used to own.**

 **The barn had fallen to the ground, The fields were overgrown.**

 **The house in which my children grew, Where we had lived for years -**

 **I turned to see it broken down And brushed aside the tears.**

 **I looked upon my soul one day, To find it too had grown**

 **With thorns and nettles everywhere, The seeds neglect had sown.**

 **The years had passed while I had cared, For things of lesser worth:**

 **The things of Heaven I let go, When minding things of earth.**

 **To Christ I turned with bitter tears, And cried, "O Lord, forgive!**

 **I haven't much time left for Thee, Not many years to live."**

 **The wasted years forever gone, The days I can't recall:**

 **If I could live those days again, I’d make Him Lord of all.**

 **-Theodore W. Brennan**