

INTRODUCTION 引言

Happy Independence Day! This weekend, people all over the country are celebrating with fireworks, BBQ and watching sports. And this year feels extra special — it marks 250 years since America declared its independence. A lot of folks assume the United States is a “Christian nation.” It is true that many of the Founding Fathers believed in God, but not all of them trusted Jesus as their Savior. Even so, Christian faith helped shape this country. You can see it in the Declaration of Independence, where both “God” and “Creator” are mentioned. You can also see it in the Pledge of Allegiance, which was updated in 1954 to say we are “one nation under God.” But after all these years, we see a spiritual decline. Many people deny God and reject His standards of right and wrong. The same thing happened in the Old Testament. When Israel turned to idols, everything went downhill. But here is the good news: God is far more gracious and patient than we can imagine. He keeps giving people and nations opportunities to return to Him. In 2 Chronicles 34–35, King Josiah made that choice. His obedience started a spiritual revival in Israel. Let us be encouraged by Josiah’s story. That is why this message is called “One Mission Under God.” We borrow the phrase from the Pledge of Allegiance. It reminds us that God has a mission for both nations and individual believers. It is to do what He sees as right.

EXPLANATION 解釋

1. Return to God 回歸真神

King Josiah took the first step and returned to God. That single step changed the direction of his nation. His story begins in 2 Chronicles 34:1–3: **1 Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem. 2 And he did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, and walked in the ways of David his father; and he did not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. 3 For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was yet a boy, he began to seek the God of David his father, and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of the high places, the Asherim, and the carved and the metal images.** After his father was assassinated, Josiah became king. He was only eight years old. How could a child rule a country? Most likely, prophets, priests and officials guided him. But eventually, Josiah had to make his own decisions. For nearly sixty years, his father and grandfather had dragged the nation into idol worship. Josiah chose to turn the tide. Verse 3 gives us two key verbs that show his heart and his plan. First, he began to “seek” the God of David his father. To seek God means to consult Him. Josiah listened to spiritual advisors, but he must also seek God’s will through prayer. Seeking God is always the first step toward spiritual revival. Other than seek, another word that jumps out from the passage is “purge.” Josiah purged the structures and symbols of idol worship. High places were shrines on hilltops. Asherim were carved wooden poles used to worship the Canaanite goddess Asherah. Josiah ordered these pagan sites to be torn down. He understood that the true God and idols cannot coexist. When God’s

light shines into dark corners, something has to change. Leaders must take the initiative. That is why the Bible urges us to pray for our civil leaders, so they will govern in ways that honor God. Moreover, we should use our voting rights wisely. No candidate is perfect, but when Christians do not vote, it often gives unbelieving candidates an advantage. Josiah cleared idols from his country. We must clear idols from our hearts too. An idol is something or someone that takes the place God should have in our lives. It can be an attitude, a relationship, a lifestyle or a habit that goes against Scripture. If the way we spend money or time, the way we speak, or the way we treat people does not bring glory to God, then we should make a change. Like Josiah did, we take action. We return to God.

2. Repent for Their Sin 承認己罪

Josiah decided to return to God. Next, he repented for the sin of his people. Their failures came down to one core issue: they were unfaithful to God. After Josiah had been on the throne for eighteen years, he told his officials to repair the temple. Perhaps the place was abandoned after decades of idol worship. During the repairs, someone made a shocking discovery. Look at verses 14-15: **14 While they were bringing out the money that had been brought into the house of the Lord, Hilkiah the priest found the Book of the Law of the Lord given through Moses. 15 Then Hilkiah answered and said to Shaphan the secretary, "I have found the Book of the Law in the house of the Lord." And Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan.** Shaphan then took the scroll and read it to the king. We see Josiah's reaction in verses 19-21: **19 And when the king heard the words of the Law, he tore his clothes. 20 And the king commanded Hilkiah, Ahikam the son of Shaphan, Abdon the son of Micah, Shaphan the secretary, and Asaiah the king's servant, saying, 21 "Go, inquire of the Lord for me and for those who are left in Israel and in Judah, concerning the words of the book that has been found. For great is the wrath of the Lord that is poured out on us, because our fathers have not kept the word of the Lord, to do according to all that is written in this book."** Israel's history showed a pattern of disobedience. Because of that, God used foreign enemies, famines, diseases and death to discipline His people. When Josiah heard the words of Scripture, he tore his robe. It is a Jewish expression of deep sorrow and confession. The king did not want to repeat the same mistakes. Therefore, he sent officials to seek God's will. They went to a prophetess named Huldah. She delivered God's message: judgment would still come on the nation, but Josiah would live peacefully till he left the world. The king could have reasoned that it was none of his problems. People got what they deserved because of their sins. But that was not his mindset. He understood that the history of Israel is a continuous story. Though he received the baggage from previous kings, he could steer the nation back to the right course. What can we learn from Josiah's repentance? First, he connected Scripture to what was happening in his nation. Whenever we read God's Word we need to connect the passage to our lives too. Every command, warning and promise in God's Word still speaks to us today. Second, Josiah confessed the sins his ancestors committed. As a leader, he took responsibility for the spiritual condition of the nation. His heart was crushed by people's sins. Our hearts should also grieve when we see sin around us. But feeling sorry is just the first step of repentance. When we decide to make changes, such negative emotion

will lead to positive outcomes. That was exactly what Josiah did next. He turned back to God and led his people to do the same.

3. Renew the Covenant 更新盟約

Josiah returned to God, and he repented for the sins of his ancestors. This young king wanted to lead his nation back to the right path. Therefore, he gathered all the people to renew their covenant with God. Verses 30–32 describe the moment: **30 And the king went up to the house of the Lord, with all the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the priests and the Levites, all the people both great and small. And he read in their hearing all the words of the Book of the Covenant that had been found in the house of the Lord. 31 And the king stood in his place and made a covenant before the Lord, to walk after 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 the covenant that were written in this book. 32 Then he made all who were present in Jerusalem and in Benjamin join in it. And the inhabitants of Jerusalem did according to the covenant of God, the God of their fathers.** Josiah, as the nation's leader, presided over the ceremony. He read the Law to the people. Then he pledged to follow the covenant wholeheartedly. Everyone who was present followed his example. They committed themselves to worship Jehovah alone. Soon after that, they kept their vow by continuing to remove idols from the land. God is pleased when His people repent and return to Him. He does not hesitate to discipline us when we wander, but He is also faithful to bless us when we come back. We are often prone to sin. Solomon understood that well. When he dedicated the temple, he prayed a long prayer asking God to hear His people whenever they admitted their disobedience and confessed their sins. God responded in 2 Chronicles 7:14: **"If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land."** God's grace is always available when we seek His face. We often forget the commitments we made to God, but He forgives when we confess our sins. Our obedience or rebellion does not change God's requirements for us. But it will change the outcome. God cherishes humility and sincerity. Every act of repentance is an opportunity to renew our faith. It is the moment we recognize our weakness and admire God's goodness. We fail when we walk away from Him. We prevail when we depend on Him and walk in His ways. Whenever we ask for help, God lifts us up and strengthens us to follow Him. It is true for individual believers and it is also true for a nation.

4. Rejoice in Worship 歡喜敬拜

King Josiah was determined to return to God. He repented for the sins of his people, and he called the nation to renew their covenant with God. The gathering concluded as people rejoiced in worship. Let us look at 2 Chronicles 35:1-3: **1 Josiah kept a Passover to the Lord in Jerusalem. And they slaughtered the Passover lamb on the fourteenth day of the first month. 2 He appointed the priests to their offices and encouraged them in the service of the house of the Lord. 3 And he said to the Levites who taught all Israel and who were holy to the Lord, "Put the holy ark in the house that Solomon the son of David, king of Israel, built.**

You need not carry it on your shoulders. Now serve the Lord your God and his people Israel.

The people observed the Passover. This signaled that the nation was returning to the root of its faith. God established the Passover when He delivered Israel from Egypt and made them His people. Josiah paid attention to every detail. The festival was held on the 14th day of the first month. Levitical priests carried out the rituals. The Ark of the Covenant was put back into the temple. Also, thousands of animals were offered. Levitical musicians and choirs praised God. It was a time of joy and unity. The author compares this Passover to earlier ones in verses 18–19. Israel had not been this united since the days of Samuel. The comparison with Hezekiah, Josiah's great-grandfather, likely refers to the number of participants and the number of sacrifices. It tells us that faithfulness to God is demonstrated in faithful worship. The kings of the northern kingdom worshiped idols at pagan altars. They appointed priests who were not Levites. Their worship had style without substance. But true worship must be focused on God and done in His ways. That kind of worship pleases His heart and binds His people together. Sadly, today some churches turn worship into a religious variety show. People expect a loud praise band, a grand orchestra, a professional choir, and sermons that sound more like motivational psychology. It produces religious consumers, not followers of Jesus. We need to return to the core of worship. We come not to watch a performance, but to participate in worship. When our mindset is right, we come with joy. Worship begins in the heart, not on the stage. It is not about what we can get, but what God will get from us. He is the only true audience. He receives our praise.

CONCLUSION 結論

God's mission is the same for a nation and for individual believers: do what He sees as right. King Josiah made that choice, and God is giving us the same invitation today. This is why Israel's history still matters to America. Today, many faithful Christians are calling people to return to God, just as Josiah did. On May 17 of this year, an event called "Rededicate 250" was held in Washington, D.C. Faith and civic leaders gathered to rededicate the United States as One Nation Under God. The date was chosen because exactly 250 years earlier, on the same day, Congress called for a "Day of Humiliation, Fasting, and Prayer" before the Revolutionary War. One of the speakers this year was Pastor Franklin Graham. His message carried both warning and hope. He described America as "morally sick." Many people have rejected the Christian faith, leading to immorality, violence and other sins — things that grieve the heart of God. He warned that God's judgment is inevitable unless we repent. Therefore, he urged everyone to humble themselves, confess their sins and return to God. Without repentance, there can be no revival. He emphasized that salvation is found only in Jesus Christ. He alone is the hope for every person and for this nation — not political power, cultural influence or military strength. The message to America, to every nation, and to us is the same: Return. Repent. Renew. Rejoice.

INTRODUCTION 引言

獨立日快樂！這個週末，全國各地的人們都用煙火、烤肉和看體育節目來慶祝。而今年格外特別，因為這是美國宣告獨立的 250 週年。很多人以為美國是一個「基督教國家」。確實，許多開國先鋒相信神，但並不是每一位都接受耶穌為救主。即便如此，基督信仰仍然深深影響了這個國家。你可以在《獨立宣言》中看到「神」和「造物主」兩個稱呼。你也可以在《效忠誓詞》中看到這種影響——1954 年，美國把誓詞更新為「在上帝之下的一個國家」。然而，經過這麼多年，我們看見了屬靈的敗壞。許多人否認神，也拒絕祂所定的善惡標準。舊約時代也發生了同樣的事：當以色列人轉向偶像，一切就開始走下坡。但好消息是：神比我們想像的更有恩典、更有耐心。祂不斷給人和國家機會回轉歸向祂。在歷代志下 34 至 35 章中，約西亞王做出了正確的選擇，他的順服帶來了以色列的屬靈復興。願約西亞的故事成為我們的鼓勵。因此，今天信息的題目叫做「上帝之下，唯一使命」。我們借用了《效忠誓詞》中的一句話提醒自己：神對國家和每一位信徒都有同樣的使命——行祂眼中看為正的事。

EXPLANATION 解釋

1. Return to God 回歸真神

約西亞王踏出了第一步，他回歸真神。這一步改變了整個國家的方向。他的故事從歷代志下 34:1-3 開始：**1 約西亞登基的時候年八歲，在耶路撒冷作王三十一年。2 他行耶和華眼中看為正的事，效法他祖大衛所行的，不偏左右。3 他作王第八年，尚且年幼，就尋求他祖大衛的神。到了十二年才潔淨猶大和耶路撒冷，除掉邱壇、木偶、雕刻的像，和鑄造的像。**在父親被暗殺之後，約西亞成為王。那時他才八歲。一個孩子怎麼可能治理國家呢？很可能是先知、祭司和官員在背後指引他。但是最終，約西亞仍必須自己做出正確的決定。在過去的六十年以來，他的父親和祖父把整個國家拖進偶像敬拜。約西亞決定扭轉局勢。我們在第 3 節看到兩個關鍵詞，顯示出他的心志和計畫。第一，他開始「尋求」他祖先大衛所敬拜的神。尋求神，就是向祂請教。約西亞聽從屬靈領袖的建議，但他也必須透過禱告來尋求神的旨意。尋求神永遠是屬靈更新的第一步。第二個字是「除掉」。約西亞清除偶像崇

拜的建築和象徵。邱壇是建在山頂的祭壇。而木偶是用來敬拜迦南女神亞舍拉的柱子。約西亞下令拆毀這些異教設施。他明白真神和偶像不能共存。當神的光照進黑暗的角落時，就必須作出改變。領袖要帶頭行動。因此聖經提醒我們為執政掌權者禱告，使他們能按照神的心意治理國家。同時，我們也應該善用投票的權利。雖然沒有完美的候選人，但若基督徒不投票，往往會讓不信主的人更容易勝出。約西亞除掉了國中的偶像，我們也要除掉心中的偶像。偶像可以是任何佔據神應有位置的事物或人。可能是一種態度、一段關係、生活形態，或違反聖經的習慣。如果我們花錢、花時間的方式，說話的方式，或對待人的方式不能榮耀神，那就需要改變。像約西亞一樣，我們採取行動，回歸真神。

2. Repent for Their Sin 承認己罪

約西亞決定回歸真神。接著，他為百姓承認己罪。他們的失敗都是由於一個核心問題：他們對神不忠心。約西亞在位十八年後，吩咐官員修理聖殿。那個地方可能因為長期的偶像崇拜而被荒廢。在修理的過程中，有人有了驚人的發現。請看 14-15 節：**14 他們將奉到耶和華殿的銀子運出來的時候，祭司希勒家偶然得了摩西所傳耶和華的律法書。15 希勒家對書記沙番說：「我在耶和華殿裡得了律法書。」遂將書遞給沙番。沙番把找到的書卷帶去念給王聽。我們在 19-21 節看到約西亞的反應：19 王聽見律法上的話，就撕裂衣服，20 吩咐希勒家與沙番的兒子亞希甘、米迦的兒子亞比頓、書記沙番，和王的臣僕亞撒雅說：21 「你們去為我、為以色列和猶大剩下的人，以這書上的話求問耶和華；因我們列祖沒有遵守耶和華的言語，沒有照這書上所記的去行，耶和華的烈怒就倒在我們身上。」**以色列的歷史充滿了不順服。因為這樣，神用外敵、饑荒、疾病和死亡來管教祂的百姓。當約西亞聽見經文的話語時，他撕裂衣服——這是猶太人表達深切悲傷與認罪的表現。王不想重蹈覆轍。因此，他派官員去尋求神的旨意。他們找到了女先知戶勒大。她傳達了神的信息：審判仍會臨到這個國家，但約西亞本人會平安度過他的一生。王本可以認為這些事與他無關，百姓的受苦是罪有應得的。但這不是他的心態。約西亞明白，以色列的歷史是一個延續的故事。雖然他繼承了前任君王的包袱，但是他仍能把國家帶回正確的方向。我們能從約西亞的認罪中學到什麼呢？首先，他把聖經的話與國家發生的事連結起來。我們讀神的話時，也需要把經文與自己的生命連結。神的每一個命令、警告和應許今天仍然與我們息息相關。第二，約西亞承認祖先所犯的罪。作為領袖，他為國家的屬靈光景負起責任。他的心因百姓的罪而破碎。當我們看到周遭的罪惡

時，心中也應該感到憂傷。但難過只是悔改的第一步。當我們決定改變，這種負面的情緒就會帶來正面的結果。這正是約西亞接下來所做的——他回到神面前，也帶領百姓一起回轉。

3. Renew the Covenant 更新盟約

約西亞回歸真神，並且為祖先承認己罪。這位年輕的王渴望帶領國家回到正確的道路上。因此，他召集全體百姓，與神更新盟約。30 至 32 節記載了那一刻：**30 王和猶大眾人，與耶路撒冷的居民，並祭司利未人，以及所有的百姓，無論大小，都一同上到耶和華的殿；王就把殿裡所得的約書念給他們聽。31 王站在他的地位上，在耶和華面前立約，要盡心盡性地順從耶和華，遵守他的誡命、法度、律例，成就這書上所記的約言；32 又使住耶路撒冷和便雅憫的人都服從這約。於是耶路撒冷的居民都遵行他們列祖之神的約。**作為國家的領袖，約西亞主持了這場儀式。他向百姓宣讀律法，並起誓要全心全意遵守這約。所有在場的人都跟隨他的榜樣，決心只敬拜耶和華。之後，他們履行諾言，繼續把國中的偶像清除乾淨。當神的子民悔改、回轉時，神就喜悅。當我們偏行己路時，祂會按時管教。但當我們回到祂面前時，祂也必信實地賜福。我們常常容易犯罪，所羅門深知這一點。當他奉獻聖殿時，他向神獻上長長的禱告，求神在百姓承認不順服、悔改時垂聽他們的禱告。神在歷代志下 7:14 回應說：**「這稱為我名下的子民，若是自卑、禱告，尋求我的面，轉離他們的惡行，我必從天上垂聽，赦免他們的罪，醫治他們的地。」**當我們尋求祂的面時，神的恩典永遠敞開。我們常常忘記自己向神所立的承諾，但當我們認罪時，祂就赦免我們。我們順服或悖逆並不會改變神對我們的要求，但卻會影響結果。神珍惜人的謙卑與真誠。每一次的悔改都是重新堅定信仰的好機會，是承認自己的軟弱、讚嘆神良善的時刻。當我們遠離神的時候就會失敗；當我們倚靠神、行在祂的道路上時，就會得勝。每當我們求神幫助，祂就會把我們扶起來，賜我們力量，使我們跟隨祂。這對每個信徒是真實的，對一個國家也同樣如此。

4. Rejoice in Worship 歡喜敬拜

約西亞王立定心志要回歸真神。他為百姓承認己罪，並呼召國民與神更新盟約。這次聚會最後以歡喜的敬拜作結束。讓我們看歷代志下 35:1-3：**1 約西亞在耶路撒冷向耶和華守逾越節。正月十四日，就宰了逾越節的羊羔。2 王分派祭司各盡其職，又勉勵他們辦耶和華殿中的事；3 又對那歸耶和華為聖、教訓以色列人的利未人說：「你們將聖約櫃安放在以色列王大衛兒子所**

羅門建造的殿裡，不必再用肩扛抬。現在要事奉耶和華你們的神，服事他的民以色列。百姓守逾越節，這表示整個國家回到信仰的根基。神在拯救以色列人脫離埃及、使他們成為祂的子民時，就設立了逾越節。約西亞留意每一個細節：節期在正月十四日舉行；利未祭司執行禮儀；約櫃被重新安置在聖殿中。此外，成千上萬的牲畜被獻給神，利未人的樂師與詩班也讚美神。那是充滿喜樂與合一的時刻。作者在 18-19 節把這次逾越節與過去的幾次相比較。自從撒母耳作先知以來，以色列可能從未如此同心。與約西亞的曾祖父希西家相比，或許是指參與的人數與獻祭的規模。這裡告訴我們忠心的敬拜顯示出對神的忠心。北國的君王在外邦祭壇敬拜偶像，甚至任命不是利未人的祭司。他們的敬拜只有外表卻沒有實質。但真正的敬拜必須以神為中心，並且按照祂的吩咐進行。這樣的敬拜能討神喜悅，也能使祂的子民合一。可惜的是，今天有些教會把敬拜變成宗教綜藝節目。人們期待震耳欲聾的敬拜樂團、華麗的管弦樂團、專業的詩班，講道信息聽起來像勵志的演說。這樣的敬拜製造了一些宗教消費者，而不是跟隨耶穌的人。我們需要回到敬拜的核心。我們來到教會，不是為了參觀一場表現，而是為了參與敬拜。當心態正確時，我們就會帶著喜樂而來。敬拜應該是發自內心的，而不是從台上的節目開始。敬拜不是看我們能得到什麼，而是看神能從我們得著什麼。祂是唯一的觀眾。祂接受我們的讚美。

CONCLUSION 結論

神對一個國家和對每一位信徒的使命都是一樣的：行祂眼中看為正的事。約西亞王做出了這個選擇，今天神也向我們發出同樣的邀請。因此以色列的歷史對美國仍然有意義。今天，許多忠心的基督徒正呼籲人們像約西亞一樣回到神面前。今年 5 月 17 日，在首都華盛頓舉行了一場名為「重新立志 250」的聚會。信仰領袖和公眾領袖一起將美國重新奉獻為在神之下的一個國家。之所以選在這一天，是因為整整 250 年前的同一天，國會在革命戰爭前舉行了一次「謙卑、禁食與禱告日」。今年的講員之一是富蘭克林·葛理翰牧師。他的訊息既有警告，也帶著盼望。他形容美國有道德上的疾病。許多人拒絕基督信仰，導致不道德、暴力和各樣的罪，這些情形都使神的心憂傷。他警告說：若不悔改，神的審判必然臨到。因此，他敦促所有人要謙卑自己、認罪悔改、回到神面前。沒有悔改，就沒有復興。他也強調：救恩只能在耶穌基督裡找到。祂是每一個人、也是這個國家的唯一盼望——不是政治權力、不是文化影響力，也不是軍事力量。給美國、每一個國家、我們個人的訊息都是一樣的：回轉、悔改、更新、喜樂。