



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

God's Leader Series: King Josiah

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Dave DePue / PO Box 1775, Topeka, KS 66603 / dave.depue@capitolcom.org

In the year 722 B.C. Israel was conquered by Assyria. The LORD allowed this because His people had gone into idol worship, including sacrificing their children through fire. Judah, the southern kingdom of Israel, survived another 136 years, through a series of "evil" and "good" kings. Judah's King Amon abandoned the LORD and was a wicked ruler. Leaders were cautioned about worshiping the idols of power, riches, and pleasure which provoke the LORD to withdraw His protective hand (Jeremiah 7:6; 22:3, 17). Amon was murdered by his servants in 642 B.C.. A group of national leaders killed the assassins of Amon and installed his son, Josiah, on the throne, continuing the dynasty of King David.

INTRODUCTION

Josiah was only eight years old when he became king. He purposed to follow in the ways of his renowned ancestor David. Josiah learned the traditions passed down from Moses and developed a love for Yahweh. As a teenager, he led the work of tearing down the carved images of idols and altars of Baal throughout the land, grinding the pieces to powder. King Josiah then began the monumental work of restoring the temple which had been let go to ruin (2 Kings 22:1-7; 2 Chronicles 34:1-13). We are inspired to see that even a child can break the cycle of evil and corruption in leadership. Some of our Kansas leaders also were put into roles where they had little or no direct experience. They seek God's favor!

THE LOST BOOK IS DISCOVERED

2 Chronicles 34:14b-15a Hilkiyah the priest found the Book of the Law of the LORD that was written by Moses. Hilkiyah said to Shaphan the court secretary, "I have found the Book of the Law in the LORD's Temple!"¹

Young King Josiah, rather than impose a tax to restore the temple, asked the people of Judah to give offerings. This financed the timber, stones, and workers. Officials from the king's court and the high priest supervised the monumental project. An important scroll was found as the reconstruction began. This was read to King Josiah who tore his clothes in an expression of grief. Scholars feel that they read from Deuteronomy, chapters 28-30, warning of curses for violating the national covenant.²

THE BOOK IS READ TO THE PEOPLE

2 Kings 23:1-2 And the king went up to the house of Jehovah, and all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with him, and the priests, and the prophets, and all the people, both small and great: and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant which was found in the house of Jehovah.³

This reading was certainly part, likely all of the Pentateuch, the Torah, the first five books of the Bible "The Books of Moses." The LORD, Yahweh, promised Abraham that He would give the Hebrew people land, descendants, and blessings (Genesis 12:1-3). This later expanded into a covenant (Genesis 15:7). The role of the people was to revere the LORD and live in accordance with His statutes. This seems a simple prescription for life! King Josiah finished the reading and made a public covenant before the LORD. All the people present joined in the covenant promise.

JOSIAH LEADS JUDAH IN REFORMS

2 Chronicles 34:33 And Josiah threw out the hateful idols from all the land that belonged to the Israelites. He led everyone in Israel to serve the LORD their God. While Josiah lived, the people obeyed the LORD, the God of their ancestors.⁴

Josiah removed the priests that burned incense to false gods, destroying the vessels and articles of pagan worship. He broke down the tents of prostitution which had been in the temple and purged the land of sacred pillars, high places for idol worship. Ashes of these were scattered in the Hinnom valley (Gehenna in the Greek) to defile the place where child sacrifices were made, keeping it from being used for that vile purpose again. Throughout the lifetime of Josiah, the people did not turn from following Jehovah, the God of their fathers. This conclusion illustrates the powerful and perhaps eternal impact that a leader can have on the lives of the people in a state or a nation.

BIBLE STUDIES

LEADERSHIP STUDY WEDNESDAYS: 7 TO 7:50AM, CAPITOL ROOM 142 SOUTH

STAFF/GUESTS: WEDNESDAYS: 12:05 TO 12:55 PM, GOVERNOR'S CONFERENCE ROOM – CAPITOL 264WEST

Kansas

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JOSIAH RESTORES THE PASSOVER

2 Chronicles 35:1a King Josiah celebrated the Passover to the Lord in Jerusalem.⁵

Judah's celebration of the Passover conformed more closely to the Mosaic Law (Deuteronomy 16:2-8) than any in the previous 400 years, during the days of the Kings of Israel. Josiah loved the LORD and strived to earn His favor. ***There was no king like Josiah before or after him. He obeyed the LORD with all his heart, soul, and strength, following all the Teachings of Moses*** (2 Kings 23:25)

JOSIAH DIES IN BATTLE

2 Kings 23:29b King Neco of Egypt led an army to the Euphrates River to help the emperor of Assyria. King Josiah tried to stop the Egyptian army at Megiddo and was killed in battle.⁶

The Egyptian army marched through Israel to the north of Judah to join forces with an army from Assyria against Babylon. Josiah led his army to intercept the Egyptian forces. ***But Neco sent Josiah this message: "This war I am fighting does not concern you, King of Judah. I have not come to fight you, but to fight my enemies, and God has told me to hurry. God is on my side, so don't oppose me, or he will destroy you"*** (2 Chronicles 35:21). King Josiah would not turn back but disguised himself and engaged Neco's army near Jezreel. Archers shot Josiah. His chariot driver took him back to Jerusalem where he died. It is unclear why Josiah did not heed Neco's warning. Scholars find no reason to believe that God was punishing Josiah for disbelief. Josiah likely thought Neco was lying and once victorious with Assyria over Babylon, they would join to attack Judah.⁷ However, there was no indication that Josiah inquired of God, the high priest, or one of prophets of his day. The Jewish nation suffered exile and foreign rule for most of the next 2500 years. What is clear is that God withheld His judgment of Judah during the reign of Josiah (2 Kings 22:15-20). Do you think God is beginning judgment of America?

CONCLUSION

Josiah lived less than forty years, yet he preserved a nation during his days in leadership. His love for the LORD won favor with God and the people. His national reforms brought peace and prosperity during that time. Josiah's praises were sung by the people for the next 200 years. Listed in eternity as a "good king" he was the last of these. Through captivity and foreign rule, the Jewish people learned a hard lesson. They have never since turned to worship pagan idols. Are there things, habits, or destructive forces that you are devoted to? Worship should be reserved for the Lord God, not the things of the world which are temporary.

¹ The Holy Bible, New Living Translation. (Tyndale House Publishers). 2007.

² John MacArthur, The MacArthur Study Bible. (Thomas Nelson Inc.). 2005 p546.

³ The Holy Bible, American Standard Version. (Public Domain). 1901.

⁴ The Holy Bible, New Century Version. (Thomas Nelson Inc.). 2005.

⁵ Ibid

⁶ The Holy Bible, Good News Translation. (American Bible Society). 1992.

⁷ John MacArthur, The MacArthur Study Bible. (Thomas Nelson Inc.). 2005 p624