

# Josiah

2 Kings 22:1-2; 23:1-30

## MEMORY VERSE

2 KINGS 23:25

“Now before him there was no king like him, who turned to the LORD with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his might.”

## WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

An 8 1/2” x 11” piece of paper for every two children in your class, two straws for each child, glue, scissors and markers or crayons

A nice sheet or tablecloth, paper plates and cups for each child, saltine crackers, applesauce, granola, green parsley, hard boiled eggs and grape juice.

## ATTENTION GRABBER!

### “Revival” Tag

We will learn in today’s lesson about the revival that came to the nation of Israel. When King Josiah stood for what was right, others joined in and got excited about serving the Lord. Here is how you play Revival Tag.

One child is King Josiah. When you say, “go!” King Josiah will run and tag another child. When he/she tags another child they shout, “Serve the Lord!” Then that child must join hands with King Josiah and they try to tag another child. When the next tag is made they both say, “Serve the Lord!” Then the third child joins the group. Only the last child in the line can tag. Keep playing until all of the children have been tagged. The tag doesn’t count though if the chain is broken.

Explain to the children that when they stand up for what is right God can use their lives to influence others to what is right also; just like Josiah.

## LESSON TIME!

Today we are going to study about one of the most incredible men of the Bible - Josiah. He was the leader of a time in Judah's history when they had spiritual revival. He led the nation out of a deep period of sin. A revival is nothing more than a new beginning of obedience to God. Josiah stood for what was right and helped many people turn from idolatry to God. God began using Him at a very young age. One of the biggest encouragements for us today is that God can use us at any age. Whether we are 8 years old or 80 years old, we can serve God and do great things for Him.

Before Josiah, there was no king like him who turned to the Lord with all of his heart, soul, and might to follow God's word (2 Kings 23:25). He was willing to make sacrifices, taking a stand for God and totally trust in Him with a humble heart. **Humble obedience pleases God.** Though he jeopardized his life, Josiah worked hard to bring Judah out of idolatry and into obedience to God.

### 2 KINGS 22:1-2

Josiah was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jedidah the daughter of Adaiah of Bozkath.

And he did what was right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in all the ways of his father David; he did not turn aside to the right hand or to the left.

As you look back at the list of kings in the Bible, it is very rare to find one who obeyed God completely. Josiah was an exception; he was a man who loved God. As we have studied the history of Israel, their idolatry, and how long they rebelled against God, he truly is a breath of fresh air.

Following Hezekiah's reign, his son Manasseh left a terrible mark on Israel's history that was impossible to erase. Through 55 years, Manasseh reigned as king of Judah and made idol worship a national religion. He left idolatry firmly established in Israel. For over 50 years Israel turned against God. That was until Josiah came to the throne at the young age of eight.

Josiah reigned obediently. At the age of 20 he began to make changes in Israel based on God's Word. When the Book of the Law was found in the house of the Lord, Josiah eagerly desired to do all that God commanded (verses 8-13). Josiah made an impact in the lives of those around him. He put the Lord first in his life seeking after His ways, and then he lived by them. **Humble obedience pleases God.** All the evil influences around Josiah would not hinder him from becoming one of Israel's greatest kings.

### 2 KINGS 23:1-3

Now the king sent them to gather all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem to him.

The king went up to the house of the LORD with all the men of Judah, and with him all the inhabitants of Jerusalem; the priests and the prophets and all the people, both small and great. And he read in their hearing all the words of the Book of the Covenant which had been found in the house of the LORD.

Then the king 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 took a stand for the covenant.

When examining the life of Josiah, it is evident that he was excited about serving the Lord. In the eighteenth year of his reign, while the Temple was being repaired, the Book of the Law was recovered. Once Josiah realized how disobedient the people had been, he tore his clothes which signified the breaking of his heart for the dishonor that had been done to God (2 Kings 22:11). He later received a message from God that his soul would be delivered, but the ruin of Jerusalem was inevitable (2 Kings 22:16-20).

Josiah hoped that a public recommitment to serve God would spare them from God's judgment. He summoned a general assembly and publicly made a covenant to obey God's law and he encouraged everyone to do the same. Josiah set an example for others to follow, as we should do also.

It's amazing to see such a young man, even at the early age of eight, making such an impact for the kingdom of God. We can make a difference in the lives of others at any age, if we have a heart like Josiah's, tender and humble before the Lord (2 Kings 22:19). Don't let the attitudes of your friends influence you to behave like them. Lead the way as one who loves the Lord with all their heart, to do all for His glory. **Humble obedience pleases God.**

## **We Found The Scroll!**

When Josiah found the scrolls containing God's word, he immediately began to obey. We also need to obey God's word. This craft will help us to remember the scrolls that Josiah found.

You will need one sheet of 8 1/2" x 11" paper for every two children, two straws for each child, glue, scissors and markers or crayons. Fold the piece of paper in half and cut along the line. This should make two pieces of paper 8 1/2 " x 5 1/2 ." Make sure that each child has a piece of paper. Cut approximately 1/3 of each straw off. Glue the straws to each end of the folded paper.

Write the memory verse or theme on the paper. Next allow the children to color or decorate their scroll. When done, roll both ends of the paper together.

## 2 KINGS 23:4-14

And the king commanded Hilkiah the high priest, the priests of the second order, and the doorkeepers, to bring out of the temple of the LORD all the articles that were made for Baal, for Asherah, and for all the host of heaven; and he burned them outside Jerusalem in the fields of Kidron, and carried their ashes to Bethel.

Then he removed the idolatrous priests whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense on the high places in the cities of Judah and in the places all around Jerusalem, and those who burned incense to Baal, to the sun, to the moon, to the constellations, and to all the host of heaven.

And he brought out the wooden image from the house of the LORD, to the Brook Kidron outside Jerusalem, burned it at the Brook Kidron and ground it to ashes, and threw its ashes on the graves of the common people.

Then he tore down the ritual booths of the perverted persons that were in the house of the LORD, where the women wove hangings for the wooden image.

And he brought all the priests from the cities of Judah, and defiled the high places where the priests had burned incense, from Geba to Beersheba; also he broke down the high places at the gates which were at the entrance of the Gate of Joshua the governor of the city, which were to the left of the city gate.

Nevertheless the priests of the high places did not come up to the altar of the LORD in Jerusalem, but they ate unleavened bread among their brethren.

And he defiled Topheth, which is in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter pass through the fire to Molech.

Then he removed the horses that the kings of Judah had dedicated to the sun, at the entrance to the house of the LORD, by the chamber of Nathan-Melech, the officer who was in the court; and he burned the chariots of the sun with fire.

The altars that were on the roof, the upper chamber of Ahaz, which the kings of Judah had made, and the altars which Manasseh had made in the two courts of the house of the LORD, the king broke down and pulverized there, and threw their dust into the Brook Kidron.

Then the king defiled the high places that were east of Jerusalem, which were on the south of the Mount of Corruption, which Solomon king of Israel had built for Ashtoreth the abomination of the Sidonians, for Chemosh the abomination of the Moabites, and for Milcom the abomination of the people of Ammon.

And he broke in pieces the sacred pillars and cut down the wooden images, and filled their places with the bones of men.

After all the people heard the covenant (or promise) Josiah made publicly before the Lord, they knew that major changes were about to take place. An idolatrous and rebellious lifestyle would no

longer be permitted. Josiah led the way for spiritual renewal to worship the true God.

Apparently Josiah reacted personally against the apostate conditions that surrounded him during the first eight years of his reign. It's possible that he had godly tutors and political leaders who influenced him during these early years. At the age of 16 he began to take God into account instead of conforming to the idolatrous practices that were so prevalent in Jerusalem. Now at the age of 20 his convictions were so firmly established that he used his royal authority to initiate a religious reformation (2 Chronicles 34:3-7).

He began to purge his kingdom from the sinfulness of idolatry, destroying the high places, the carved images, altars and all the different things used in idolatry. Drastic measures were necessary to rid the kingdom of its idolatry because the people were at a place where very few of them even cared anymore.

Idolatry is simply worship, love, and devotion given to something other than God. It happens when we allow others or things to become more important than God. We can find ourselves with an idol in our life, something we love more than God, which prevents us from giving ourselves totally to Him. We must cut out anything in our life that draws us away from allowing God to have first place in our heart. Like Josiah, we must get rid of any stumbling blocks that hinder us from living a life of obedience for the One who deserves our affection. **Humble obedience pleases God.**

## 2 KINGS 23:15-20

Moreover the altar that was at Bethel, and the high place which Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel sin, had made, both that altar and the high place he broke down; and he burned the high place and crushed it to powder, and burned the wooden image.



As Josiah turned, he saw the tombs that were there on the mountain. And he sent and took the bones out of the tombs and burned them on the altar, and defiled it according to the word of the LORD which the man of God proclaimed, who proclaimed these words.

Then he said, "What gravestone is this that I see?" So the men of the city told him, "It is the tomb of the man of God who came from Judah and proclaimed these things which you have done against the altar of Bethel."

And he said, "Let him alone; let no one move his bones." So they let his bones alone, with the bones of the prophet who came from Samaria.

Now Josiah also took away all the shrines of the high places that were in the cities of Samaria, which the kings of Israel had made to provoke the LORD to anger; and he did to them according to all the deeds he had done in Bethel.

He executed all the priests of the high places who were there, on the altars, and burned men's bones on them; and he returned to Jerusalem.

As the ancient altar of Jeroboam was destroyed, Josiah fulfilled a prophecy, which was given by a prophet declaring God's judgment on the wicked people of Israel (1 Kings 13:20-32). Here we see God actively involved, following through with His desire to discipline those in rebellion.

To destroy the site forever, Josiah removed the bones of the people who had been buried in the tombs and burned them on the altar, then the altar was crushed. Learning that a certain tombstone

marked the grave of the prophet of God from Judah, who predicted Josiah's actions, the king ordered that his grave not be disturbed out of respect for him. Josiah honored a person of obedience and humility for God.

Josiah even extended his purge into the old Northern Kingdom of Israel, which was controlled by the Assyrian Empire. He was willing to do whatever it took to rid every obstacle that would make God's people stumble back into idolatry.

We need to make every effort to get rid of any stumbling block that will hinder our relationship with the Lord. Close every door in our lives that allows us to be tempted (Colossians 3:5). Do you have rebellious friends who cause you to stumble? Do you watch movies that you know are sinful and dishonoring to God? What kinds of video games are we playing? Let's not give sin an opportunity to dwell in our hearts. **Humble obedience pleases God.**

## 2 KINGS 23:21-25

Then the king commanded all the people, saying, "Keep the Passover to the LORD your God, as it is written in this Book of the Covenant."

Such a Passover surely had never been held since the days of the judges who judged Israel, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel and the kings of Judah.

But in the eighteenth year of King Josiah this Passover was held before the LORD in Jerusalem.

Moreover Josiah put away those who consulted mediums and spiritists, the household gods and idols, all the abominations that were seen in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, that he might

perform the words of the law which were written in the book that Hilkiyah the priest found in the house of the LORD.

Now before him there was no king like him, who turned to the LORD with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the Law of Moses; nor after him did any arise like him.

Plans were begun at once for the observance of the Passover. In the Passover ritual, great care was taken to make sure that it was done just like it was recorded in the Book of the Law. Because of this desire to do it right and the extent of the people's participation, this Passover observance was the greatest since the days of Samuel (2 Chronicles 35:18).

This Passover celebration was to have been a holiday celebrated every year in remembrance of the entire nation's deliverance from slavery in Egypt (Exodus 12) but it had not been kept for many years. As a result Josiah's excitement to follow the Lord, there had not been a celebration like that since the people of Israel waked in obedience in the period of the judges.

It was a time to enjoy God's blessings, celebrating His love and faithfulness to His people. An atmosphere of spiritual renewal filled the air. Now was the time to reflect on God's commandments, and His promises. If God's people were to be changed from within they would need to repent and humbly turn to God with a desire to live in obedience. **Humble obedience pleases God.**

Josiah was close to completing all that he had set out to do. He is remembered as Judah's most obedient king. What an honor. Josiah is a man characterized as one who loved the Lord with all his heart, soul and might (verse 25). Because of his sincerity and zeal for making things right, there was none like him.

## Passover Meal

Josiah began to honor the Passover again in Israel. It had been set aside for a long time. You can demonstrate some of the elements of the Passover with the following items. You will want to bring a nice sheet or tablecloth and set out paper plates or cups for each child.

1. Matzah – Represents God’s swift salvation (demonstrate with saltine crackers).
2. Charoseth - Mortar for bricks to remind the Israelites of their slavery in Egypt (applesauce with a little granola in it).
3. Hope to come in the spring (green parsley).
4. Salt-water – The tears cried in sin and bondage in Egypt (use one small bowl of salt water to dip parsley into).
5. Hard boiled eggs – the rebirth as represented in Jesus (1/2 per child).
6. Blood of the Lamb – grape juice

Talk with your class how that the Passover meal represents the Messiah, Jesus.

### 2 KINGS 23:26-30

Nevertheless the LORD did not turn from the fierceness of His great wrath, with which His anger was aroused against Judah, because of all the provocations with which Manasseh had provoked Him.

And the LORD said, "I will also remove Judah from My sight, as I have removed Israel, and will cast off this city Jerusalem which I have chosen, and the house of which I said, 'My name shall be there.'"

Now the rest of the acts of Josiah, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

In his days Pharaoh Necho king of Egypt went to the aid of the king of Assyria, to the River Euphrates; and King Josiah went against him. And Pharaoh Necho killed him at Megiddo when he confronted him.

Then his servants moved his body in a chariot from Megiddo, brought him to Jerusalem, and buried him in his own tomb. And the people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah, anointed him, and made him king in his father's place.

Though Josiah's reformation brought about one of Israel's greatest spiritual revivals, he could not dispel the accumulated wrath of God against Judah for her years of rebellion, especially under Manasseh's leadership (2 Kings 22:16-17). Josiah experienced God's mercy personally because he responded to God's Word and had humbled himself before the Lord when he heard the Law of Moses (2 Kings 22:19-20). God had said that King Josiah would die and be buried before judgment would descend on Judah. **Humble obedience pleases God.**

There are always consequences for sin, for whatever a man sows this he will also reap (Galatians 6:7-8). Judah had sown pride, rebellion and selfishness. In time God will discipline them just as He will do with us when we sow the same seeds of disobedience in our lives.

Whether this period under Josiah represented a long lasting revival among the common people is doubtful. Since it was initiated and executed under royal orders, the opposition was restrained as long as Josiah lived. Immediately after his death, the people reverted back to idolatry under his son, Jehoahaz.

Jeremiah, a prophet who worked with Josiah in the reformation, reflects on the strained relationship between God and Israel. Like a faithless wife who breaks her marriage vows, Israel had forsaken God (Jeremiah 2:4). The people of Judah had no regard for what God wanted for them. They went their own way.

Josiah gave of himself to serve God as well as laying down his life to serve his people. Hoping to stop Egypt's attempt to form an alliance with Assyria to do battle with Babylon, Josiah was killed and his army defeated. Unfortunately for the nation of Judah, they had lost a great king and became a servant of Egypt (609 BC). Josiah stood in the gap for God's people as a humble and obedient king.

A revival will go away unless Christians are frequently revived. We need to keep ourselves in the spirit of revival, being also convicted and humbled and broken down before God and have a desire to live in obedience. We need to stay excited about God and His will in our lives, just as Josiah was all of his life. **Humble obedience pleases God.**

It's easy to allow our heart to get hard, losing our love for things of the Lord, also making our prayer life to be weak. Such was the fate of Judah whose heart was stubborn and disobedient (Jeremiah 11:1-14). If a revival is to start within our heart, we must be filled with the Spirit of God, totally yielding to Him, forsaking sin with deep humility as Josiah did. Live a life that pleases God, with a new heart of obedience.

## **PRAYER**

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment towards obedience. Pray together for humility and revival in our hearts. That God would fan the flame in our hearts that keeps us on fire for Him. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the gospel, give them opportunity to do so.