

Josiah and the Book 4-19-A

Josiah, who was only eight years old when he became king, did what was right. He walked in God's ways like his ancestor David. The Bible says he did not turn to the right or the left, but was determined to honor God. When Josiah was 26 years old, he sent his secretary to the temple to tell the high priest that the house of God was in need of repair. The temple where they worshipped God had become dirty and decayed over time. Former kings who did not serve God had allowed it to fall into ruin. Josiah knew it was important to use the offerings to make the temple a place of honor to God again.

The secretary and the high priest gathered the money from the offering chest and divided it amongst the men who would supervise the repair work. These carpenters, builders, and masons were very trustworthy and began the repairs quickly. One day the workers found the book that contained the Words of God. Hilkiah the high priest took the Book of the Law that was found hidden in the rubble to Shaphan the secretary.

Shaphan read it carefully and went to the king with a report. He assured Josiah that the repair work was going well and then showed him the Book of the Law that had been found. Shaphan read the Book to the king. Josiah tore his robes when he heard the words from the Book. The king knew the people of God had not been obeying His laws. He was very worried God would send punishment on them for not being obedient. He told the priest to ask the Lord what he and the people should do to make things right. He wanted to ask for God's forgiveness for the sins of the kings who had led the people away from God. These men hurried to the prophetess Huldah who told them God would bring disaster on their nation. Huldah also said that since Josiah had tried to make things right, he would be spared and would die in peace before the judgment came.

Then King Josiah called the priest and all the people together to hear the Words of the Lord from the scroll that had been found. The people pledged themselves to obeying God's commands and renewed the covenant promise they had made with God many generations earlier. They were quick to remove any unclean things from the temple of God and burn them outside Jerusalem.

With a renewed desire to obey and honor God, the king led the people into many parts of their land to destroy idols, shrines and anything that displeased God. He even destroyed the altars a former king had made that caused people to sin. He showed honor to the grave of a prophet who had tried to warn people about lifestyles that were displeasing to God. Josiah finally ordered the slaughter of all the false priests who had led the people in worship to idols and false gods. He had them burned on their evil altars and then returned to Jerusalem to continue leading the nation in obedience to God. The next thing King Josiah planned was to help the people celebrate the Passover festival in the way it was written in God's Word.

Teacher's Notes

- I. **A Heart For God**
 - A. Walking in God's ways
 - B. Witnessing the disrepair
- II. **The Temple Repaired**
 - A. The work begun
 - B. The book found
- III. **A Humble Response**
 - A. The king's attitude
 - B. The country followed
- IV. **The Covenant Renewed**
 - A. Idols and shrines destroyed
 - B. Leaders of wickedness killed

Activity

A simple familiar object will often help students understand a concept and help them remember that idea for a longer period of time. These lessons have been a clear reminder of the truths set forth in Psalm 1. When the kings followed God's precepts, they prospered. When they turned away from the Lord, they had to pay the consequences. Teacher, "delight in the law of the Lord" and teach your students to do likewise. Then you will be like "a tree planted by streams of water..." and whatever you do will prosper.

Teacher Growth

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Scripture Passages:

2 Kings 22:1-23:20; 2 Chronicles 34

Memory Verse:

Psalm 119:105 "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path."





