

## 2 Kings 22 – 23:30; 2 Chronicles 34-35:

Josiah

### Lesson 8

#### Key Verse

Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it.

—Psalm 34:14

**Key Verse Thought:** As you read the Key Verse, think about what it means to “depart from evil.” Read the following to help in the understanding: **depart** means “*to turn away; to remove; to put away*” and the word **evil** comes from the word that means “*to make useless, to break; to live wickedly or contrary to God’s will; i.e. an attitude that rejects God’s authority.*” Instead of evil, we are to do **good** (means “*right; correct; virtuous*”). Not only that, but we are to seek peace (remember that **seek** means “*to look, search*”). Christians are to stay away from things contrary to God’s will and instead search, choosing to do what is right or virtuous. We will learn about a king who rejected the evil things of his fathers, and instead chose to seek after the things of God – and he pursued them.

**Emphasis:** In this lesson, we will learn the importance of departing from evil, much like King Josiah, and choosing instead to do what is right.

**Lesson Summary:** After learning about the prophets Zephaniah and Habakkuk in our last two lessons, we can now better understand the condition of the people of Judah. Especially remember the reign of King Manasseh and King Amon and there will be no question about the state of Judah. They were living very wicked, idolatrous lives. Amon was a bad king and did evil in the sight of the Lord. He never humbled his heart as his father, Manasseh had. Remember that there was a conspiracy against bad King Amon after only two years. When he was killed, his son Josiah became king of Judah. “1. Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned thirty and one years in Jerusalem ... 2. And he did *that which was right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in all the way of David his father, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left*” (2 Kings 22:1-2).

King Josiah was the last good king of Judah. We will learn today that he sought God while he was still young, and he removed much of the wickedness out of the land. He did that

which was right in the sight of the Lord. King Josiah made many great reformatations, including repairing the house of the Lord. While repairs were made, a book of the Law was found. When the king heard God's Word read, he rent his clothes in repentance. After the book of the Law was read to all of the people, a covenant was made before God, and King Josiah reinstituted the temple worship. He led all of Judah to make a covenant with the Lord to obey His commands. Not only did King Josiah remove idol worship out of Judah and Israel, he led the people to keep the Passover in Jerusalem.

King Josiah died in battle with Egypt, and his son, Jehoahaz, became king in his stead.

### **Suggested Bible Reading to Prepare for This Lesson**

- Monday: 2 Kings 22
- Tuesday: 2 Kings 23
- Wednesday: 2 Chronicles 34
- Thursday: 2 Chronicles 35
- Friday: Proverbs 21
- Saturday: Proverbs 22

### **2 Kings 22 – 23:30; 2 Chronicles 34-35**

#### **Josiah**

1. Josiah Becomes King (2 Kings 22:1-2; 2 Chronicles 34:1-7)
  - Did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, and walked in the ways of David
  - King Josiah reigned for thirty-one years
  - King Josiah purged the land
2. King Josiah Opened the Temple (2 Kings 22:3 – 23:2; 2 Chronicles 34:8-30)
  - Josiah repaired the Temple
  - The book of the Law was found and read
3. King Josiah's Covenant (2 Kings 23:3-20; 2 Chronicles 34:31-33)
  - Josiah's reformatations in Judah
  - Josiah's reformatations in Israel
4. King Josiah Keeps the Passover (2 Kings 23:21-30; 2 Chronicles 35:18-27)
  - A great Passover
  - King Josiah's battle with Necho, king of Egypt

**Note:** We took a break from studying the kings for a couple of lessons to learn about two prophets as closely to where they fit in the history of the kings of Judah as we can. They spoke about the time of the king we will study in this lesson, King Josiah. First, it would be good to remember a little of the last two kings that we studied: King Manasseh and King Amon, both of Judah. The condition of the nation of Judah was deplorable. Manasseh was very wicked, and although he humbled himself before God and took away the strange gods from the land, his son Amon restored them once he became king, becoming even worse. He died after only being king for two years, and his son, Josiah, became king of Judah. “... the people of the land made Josiah his son king in his stead” (2 Chronicles 33:25).

### **1. Josiah Becomes King (2 Kings 22:1-2; 2 Chronicles 34:1-7)**

“1. Josiah *was* eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned thirty and one years in Jerusalem ... 2. And he did *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in all the way of David his father, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left” (2 Kings 22:1-2). King Josiah was a very good king. He chose to do what was right. We can read that he too, was compared to King David, and an additional thing was recorded – “and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left.” **Turned not aside** means “*being faithful to God; to veer neither to the right nor to the left.*” But see what other information we are given in Second Chronicles. “For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was yet young, he began to seek after the God of David his father ...”(2 Chronicles 34:3). It is because he sought God while he was yet young that we see many of the great reforms he was able to make.

#### **Compare some good kings and the description recorded:**

- King David, the man after God’s own heart. “Because David did *that which was* right in the eyes of the LORD, and turned not aside from any *thing* that he commanded him all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite” (1 Kings 15:5).
- In speaking of Jehoshaphat, the second good king of Judah. “And he walked in all the ways of Asa his father; he turned not aside from it, doing *that which was* right in the eyes of the LORD: nevertheless the high places were not taken away; *for* the people offered and burnt incense yet in the high places” (1 Kings 22:43).

- Also, see King Hezekiah, the best king Judah ever had. “For he clave to the LORD, *and* departed not from following him, but kept his commandments, which the LORD commanded Moses” (2 Kings 18:6).
- And finally, King Josiah that we read in Second Kings. “And he did *that which* was right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in all the way of David his father, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left” (2 Kings 22:2).

Notice what we see about young King Josiah in Second Chronicles. “For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was yet young, he began to seek after the God of David his father: and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem from the high places, and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images” (2 Chronicles 34:3). This is very important, for we must understand that while he was yet young, he began to seek after God, and then he began to purge the land of the false gods and religious practices. The phrase “to purge Judah and Jerusalem” was only included for us to read in Second Chronicles. Read what this entailed:

#### **2 Chronicles 34:3-7:**

- “3. ... and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem from the high places,
- and the groves,
- and the carved images,
- and the molten images.
- 4. And they brake down the altars of Baalim in his presence;
- and the images, that *were* on high above them, he cut down;
- and the groves,
- and the carved images,
- and the molten images, he brake in pieces, and made dust *of them*, and strowed *it* upon the graves of them that had sacrificed unto them.
- 5. And he burnt the bones of the priests upon their altars,
- and cleansed Judah and Jerusalem. 6. And *so did he* in the cities of Manasseh, and Ephraim, and Simeon, even unto Naphtali, with their mattocks round about.
- 7. And when he had broken down the altars and the groves, and had beaten the graven images into powder, and cut down all the idols throughout all the land of Israel, he returned to Jerusalem.”

Not only did he break the idols and groves down, but he also broke them in pieces “*and made dust of them.*” They were utterly destroyed. Especially recognize that those things had to be eliminated (purged from the land). This information is very important to take note of, because the land had to be purged before reformations could begin.

**A Deeper Path:** It was good for Josiah to seek God early in his life. “*I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me*” (Proverbs 8:17). Also, see that it is important to ask God for wisdom. “*If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him*” (James 1:5).

See what each person is to do today once they seek after God (accept Jesus into their heart): “*Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new*” (2 Corinthians 5:17). Just as Josiah removed and destroyed all of the old ways of their lives, utterly destroying them, Christians must remove all of the ways of their life before Christ and begin anew.

## **2. King Josiah Opened the Temple (2 Kings 22:3 – 23:2; 2 Chronicles 34:8-30)**

Once King Josiah sought God and purged the land of the idol worship, he began to repair the house of the Lord. “*Now in the eighteenth year of his reign, when he had purged the land, and the house, he sent Shaphan ... and Maaseiah the governor of the city, and Joah ... to repair the house of the LORD his God*” (2 Chronicles 34:8). They delivered the money that had been gathered for the repairs to the workers. “*And the men did the work faithfully ... 14. And when they brought out the money that was brought into the house of the LORD, Hilkiyah the priest found a book of the law of the LORD given by Moses*” (2 Chronicles 34:12a, 14). See this also recorded in 2 Kings 22:3-7. Once they began the work on the Temple, something important was found – the book of the Law. Hilkiyah, the high priest, told the scribe that he had found the book of the law in the house of the Lord. “*... And Hilkiyah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it*” (2 Kings 22:8). Shaphan, the scribe, returned to the king letting him know that the money had been gathered and given to the workers to repair the house of the Lord. However, he also told the king what the high priest had found. “*... And Shaphan read it before the king*” (2 Kings 22:10). What did the king do? “*And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the book of the law, that he rent his clothes*” (2 Kings 22:11). Read what King Josiah understood once he

heard the words of the book of the law, “... for great *is* the wrath of the LORD that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this book, to do according unto all that which is written concerning us” (2 Kings 22:13b). The king recognized just how far from right the nation was living, so he gave a command.

Go, enquire of the LORD for me, and for them that are left in Israel and in Judah, concerning the words of the book that is found: for great *is* the wrath of the LORD that is poured out upon us, because our fathers have not kept the word of the LORD, to do after all that is written in this book.  
(2 Chronicles 34:21)

He not only sought God, but he acknowledged the sin of this people and his father’s before them.

Several men gathered to decide what to do. They went to Huldah, the prophetess, and spoke with her. Read her response:

15. And she said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Tell the man that sent you to me, 16. Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, *even* all the words of the book which the king of Judah hath read: 17. Because they have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands; therefore my wrath shall be kindled against this place, and shall not be quenched. (2 Kings 22:15-17)

She received a word from the Lord to give to the king of Judah. She sent the message that God would allow all of the curses recorded in the books of the Law to befall Judah. However, there was more.

18. But to the king of Judah which sent you to enquire of the LORD, thus shall ye say to him, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, *As touching*

the words which thou hast heard; 19. Because thine heart was tender, and thou hast humbled thyself before the LORD, when thou heardest what I spake against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, that they should become a desolation and a curse, and hast rent thy clothes, and wept before me; I also have heard *thee*, saith the LORD. 20. Behold therefore, I will gather thee unto thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered into thy grave in peace; and thine eyes shall not see all the evil which I will bring upon this place. And they brought the king word again. (2 Kings 22:18-20)

Once again, we read of the imminent wrath of God that would fall upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem because they forsook God. But, also recognize the extension of grace upon this generation – all because the king recognized the great sin of the people, sought God, and repented before Him. Because King Josiah repented and humbled his heart before the Lord when he heard the words of the law, God would not allow those terrible things to happen until he was dead. Josiah would rule in a kingdom of peace.

When the king heard the Words of the Lord from the prophetess, “29. Then the king sent and gathered together all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem. 30. And the king went up into the house of the LORD, and all the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the priests, and the Levites, and all the people, great and small: and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant that was found in the house of the LORD” (2 Chronicles 34:29-30). After hearing Huldah’s words, King Josiah called all of the elders together to the house of the Lord. He read them the words in the book of the Law. Although it is good for a people to take instruction from their authority, so much better is it for a people to hear God’s Word for themselves and then to choose to obey the words therein.

### **3. King Josiah’s Covenant (2 Kings 23:3-20; 2 Chronicles 34:31-33)**

After reading the book of the Law, see what King Josiah did. “And the king stood by a pillar, 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 *their* heart and all *their* soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people stood to the

covenant” (2 Kings 23:3). The king led by making a covenant before the Lord. A **covenant** means “*a treaty; an alliance; a pledge; as in a contract.*” The people followed King Josiah’s example, and they, too, made a covenant with the Lord. Especially see what we read in 2 Chronicles 34:32b: “... And the inhabitants of Jerusalem did according to the covenant of God, the God of their fathers.” Not only did they make a covenant with the Lord, they kept it!

Read what King Josiah then commanded the priests to do:

**2 Kings 23:4b-14:**

- “4b. ... to bring forth out of the temple of the LORD all the vessels that were made for Baal, and for the grove, and for all the host of heaven: and he burned them ...
- 5. And he put down the idolatrous priests ... them also that burned incense unto Baal, to the sun, and to the moon, and to the planets, and to all the host of heaven.
- 6. And he brought out the grove from the house of the LORD ... and burned ... and stamped *it* small to powder, and cast the powder thereof upon the graves of the children of the people.
- 7. And he brake down the houses of the sodomites, that *were* by the house of the LORD ...
- 8. And he brought all the priests out of the cities of Judah, and defiled the high places where the priests had burned incense ... and brake down the high places of the gates ...
- 9. Nevertheless the priests of the high places came not up to the altar of the LORD in Jerusalem, but they did eat of the unleavened bread among their brethren.
- 10. And he defiled Topheth ... that no man might make his son or his daughter to pass through the fire to Molech.
- 11. And he took away the horses that the kings of Judah had given to the sun ... and burned the chariots of the sun with fire.
- 12. And the altars that *were* on the top of the upper chamber of Ahaz ... and the altars which Manasseh had made in the two courts of the house of the LORD, did the king beat down, and brake *them* down from thence, and cast the dust of them into the brook Kidron.
- 13. And the high places that *were* before Jerusalem, which *were* on the right hand of the mount of corruption, which Solomon the king of Israel had builded for Ashtoreth ... and for Chemosh ... and for Milcom ... did the king defile.



- 14. And he brake in pieces the images, and cut down the groves, and filled their places with the bones of men.”

After eliminating all of the false worship and the priests and even everything they had used in their false worship practices, continue reading what else King Josiah did:

## 2 Kings 23:15-20:

- “15. Moreover the altar that *was* at Bethel, *and* the high place which Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, had made, both that altar and the high place he brake down, and burned the high place, *and* stamped *it* small to powder, and burned the grove.
- 16. And as Josiah turned himself, he spied the sepulchres that *were* there in the mount, and sent, and took the bones out of the sepulchres, and burned *them* upon the altar, and polluted it, according to the word of the LORD ...
- 17. Then he said, What title *is* that that I see? And the men of the city told him, *It is* the sepulchre of the man of God, which came from Judah, and proclaimed these things that thou hast done against the altar of Bethel. 18. And he said, Let him alone; let no man move his bones. So they let his bones alone, with the bones of the prophet that came out of Samaria.
- 19. And all the houses also of the high places that *were* in the cities of Samaria, which the kings of Israel had made to provoke *the LORD* to anger, Josiah took away, and did to them according to all the acts that he had done in Bethel.
- 20. And he slew all the priests of the high places that *were* there upon the altars, and burned men's bones upon them, and returned to Jerusalem.”

See that not only did he remove them from the land of Judah, but he continued on into the land of Israel where the kings of Israel had led the people to worshiped idols. Once all of the false gods and the practices of them were destroyed, King Josiah reinstituted the worship of the one true God and all of the words of the law that were written in the books found in the temple. See what happened after removing the abominations out of the country and causing all of Israel to serve God. “And Josiah took away all the abominations out of all the countries that *pertained* to the children of Israel, and made all that were present in Israel to serve, *even* to serve the LORD their God. *And* all his days they departed not from following the LORD, the God of their fathers” (2 Chronicles 34:33).

But King Josiah did not stop there.

**A Deeper Path:** See one more thing we have recognized as good kings have led in revival. “The house of the wicked shall be overthrown: but the tabernacle of the upright shall flourish” (Proverbs 14:11).

#### **4. King Josiah Keeps the Passover (2 Kings 32:21-30; 2 Chronicles 35:18-27)**

After this, Josiah kept a Passover in Jerusalem.

##### **2 Kings 23:21-24:**

- “21. And the king commanded all the people, saying, Keep the passover unto the LORD your God, as *it is* written in the book of this covenant.
- 22. Surely there was not holden such a passover from the days of the judges that judged Israel, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel, nor of the kings of Judah;
- 23. But in the eighteenth year of king Josiah, *wherein* this passover was holden to the LORD in Jerusalem.
- 24. Moreover the *workers with* familiar spirits, and the wizards, and the images, and the idols, and all the abominations that were spied in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, did Josiah put away, that he might perform the words of the law which were written in the book that Hilkiah the priest found in the house of the LORD.”

Josiah, having found the book of the Law, made sure everything in preparation and performance of the Passover was done – according to the Law (see 2 Chronicles 35:1-19). “And there was no passover like to that kept in Israel from the days of Samuel the prophet; neither did all the kings of Israel keep such a passover as Josiah kept, and the priests, and the Levites, and all Judah and Israel that were present, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem” (2 Chronicles 35:18).

Especially notice what we read after King Josiah made all of these great reforms in Judah. “And like unto him was there no king before him, that turned to the LORD with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; neither after him arose there *any* like him” (2 Kings 23:25). Nevertheless, even with that amazing statement, there was still some very bad news.

26. Notwithstanding the LORD turned not from the fierceness of his great wrath, wherewith his anger was kindled against Judah, because of

all the provocations that Manasseh had provoked him withal. 27. And the LORD said, I will remove Judah also out of 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. (2 Kings 23:26-27)

Just as Israel had been carried from their land as captives for the evil they did against God, Judah too, would be carried captive – because of the evil with which Manasseh had provoked God.

After this time, Josiah went to battle with Necho, king of Egypt – a battle that wasn't his to fight. “But he sent ambassadors to him, saying, What have I to do with thee, thou king of Judah? *I come* not against thee this day, but against the house wherewith I have war: for God commanded me to make haste: forbear thee from *meddling with* God, who *is* with me, that he *destroy thee not*” (2 Chronicles 35:21). For some reason, Josiah did not recognize that God was with the king of Egypt, and he should not go up against this king. Even with this warning, see what King Josiah did. “Nevertheless Josiah would not turn his face from him, but disguised himself, that he might fight with him, and hearkened not unto the words of Necho from the mouth of God, and came to fight in the valley of Megiddo” (2 Chronicles 35:22). It was in this battle that he was shot with an arrow, and subsequently died. Read the interesting note we find: “24b. ... And all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah. 25. And Jeremiah lamented for Josiah: and all the singing men and the singing women spake of Josiah in their lamentations to this day, and made them an ordinance in Israel: and, behold, they *are* written in the lamentations” (2 Chronicles 35:24b-25). King Josiah died in battle with Egypt and his son, Jehoahaz, became king in his stead.

**A Deeper Path:** Remember what we have learned before. “He that passeth by, *and meddleth with strife belonging not to him, is like one that taketh a dog by the ears*” (Proverbs 26:17). One cannot help but wonder what other good Josiah could have done for God's people if he had left the matter with Necho, king of Egypt, alone. We should learn something important from this. If the matter does not pertain to us, leave the situation alone. For it would be better to leave well enough alone than to be bitten – as if you took a dog by the ears.

### **2 Kings 22-23 at a Glance:**

Chapter 22: King Josiah's reign; repaired breaches in the temple; found book of the Law; king repented, and God speaks

Chapter 23: King Josiah's covenant with God; reformatations (destruction of idols and groves and reinstitution of God's Law; King Josiah died in battle and Jehoahaz reigned, then Eliakim (Jehoiakim)

### **2 Chronicles 34-35 at a Glance:**

Chapter 34: Josiah did right like David; sought after God while he was young; made many reformatations in Judah (removing idols and repaired the house of the Lord); found the book of the Law – king rent clothes; prophet told them all of the curses written would fall because they forsook God – but not in Josiah's day

Chapter 35: Josiah kept the Passover; charged the Levites; Josiah went out against the king of Egypt even when he was told not to; Josiah wounded in that battle and died

**Reinforcement:** King Josiah led one final revival in Judah. He was a good king, for when he heard the Law read, he humbled himself before God. We then noticed God's longsuffering and extension of Judah's kingdom because of King Josiah's reforms (his repentance and covenant with God after reading the book of the Law). One thing we should understand from today's lesson is the importance of reading God's Word. Once King Josiah heard God's Word read, he understood and knew what God had expected from His people – and just how far they had fallen short. God's Word (the Bible) is to bring that same repentance in our hearts and lives today. We too, must do as King Josiah did – depart from evil and do what is right.

**Closing:** It would be good to close with a short prayer reinforcing today's lesson. Always include any prayer requests you may have. *Today, pray that we will be faithful to read God's Word so we can learn to depart from evil and choose to do what is right.*