

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!

For over 50 years, Israel turned away from God. Israel was entrenched in sin and idolatry; the picture was dark, until Josiah came to the throne of Judah at only eight years old!

The Bible says, "...There was no king like him, who turned to the Lord with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his might..." to follow God's Word (2 Kings 23:25). Josiah was not only determined to serve the Lord personally; as a passionate leader, he desired to see the whole nation turn from their wickedness and re-establish a relationship with the one true 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.

Josiah desired to obey and serve the Lord with his whole heart. In the eighteenth year of his reign, while the Temple was being repaired, the Book of the Law was recovered. When 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). Soon after, he received a message from God that his soul would be delivered, but the ruin of Jerusalem was inevitable (2 Kings 22:16-20).

Josiah began to make changes in Israel based on God's Word. He eagerly desired to do all that God commanded (2 Kings 22). **Humble obedience pleases God.**

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.

Josiah hoped that a public recommitment to serve God would spare Judah from God's judgment. He summoned a general assembly and publicly made a covenant (a promise) to follow the Lord and keep His commandments, and he encouraged the people to do the same. May our commitment set an example for others to follow as did Josiah's commitment.

Though a young man, Josiah was able to impact a nation, encouraging them to turn back to the Lord! If we have a heart like Josiah's, tender and humble before the Lord (2 Kings 22:19), we too can make a difference in the lives of others at any age. **Humble obedience pleases God.**

All the evil influences around Josiah would not hinder him from becoming one of Israel's greatest kings. Josiah took a stand for the Lord, though it was not in line with the popular movement of Judah at the time. May we take a stand for the Lord. Let us not allow the attitudes of friends or people around us to influence us. Let us "lead" the way, without compromise, as one who loves the Lord with a whole heart.

We Found The Scroll!

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

Precut 8 1/2" x 11" paper in half (8 1/2" x 5 1/2"). Give each child one paper, two straws (may be precut to 7 inches), glue, scissors, and markers or crayons. Glue the straws to each ends of the 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.

Josiah had most likely been keenly aware of the apostate conditions that surrounded him during the first eight years of his reign. Perhaps, he had godly tutors and political leaders who influenced him during these early years. At the age of 16, he began to seriously consider his relationship to God rather than conform to the idolatrous practices so prevalent in Jerusalem.

When the people heard the covenant Josiah made publicly before the Lord, we can be sure they knew that major changes were about to take place. 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).

An idolatrous and rebellious lifestyle would no longer be permitted. He began to purge his kingdom, destroying the high places, the carved images, altars and all the different things used in idolatry. Such drastic measures were necessary in a nation that had been lulled to sleep through years of idolatry.

Idolatry is worship, love, and devotion given to something other than God. Is anything in your life more important than God. Be careful! Like Josiah, we must get rid of any stumbling blocks—anything that draws us away--that could 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 Bethel was destroyed, Josiah fulfilled the prophecy of a young prophet during the reign of Jeroboam which declared God's judgment on the wickedness of the people of Israel (1 Kings 13). God will always do what He says He will do.

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, and then the altar was crushed. Josiah was careful not to disturb the grave of the faithful young prophet who had predicted the destruction of Jeroboam's altar.

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

May we as Josiah, rid ourselves of every stumbling block, anything that could hinder our relationship with the Lord. Hebrews 12:1 states, "...let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us." Let us 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 and hinder our relationship with 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 Hilkiah 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. Great care was taken to make sure that the Passover was observed just as it was recorded in the Book of the Law. The 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. Because Josiah was diligent to lead the people in observance of the Passover as God intended, this Passover observance was the greatest celebration since the days of Samuel (2 Chronicles 35:18).

The Passover was a time to enjoy God's blessings, celebrating His love and faithfulness to His people. An atmosphere of spiritual renewal must have 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.**

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. Green parsley: Hope to come in the spring.
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. Grape juice: Blood of the Lamb.

Discuss with your class how the Passover meal creates a beautiful picture of our 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.

Josiah was willing to lay down his life to serve God and lay down his life to serve his people. Hoping to stop Egypt's attempt to form an alliance with Assyria, Josiah was killed and his army defeated. Judah lost a great king.

Josiah had stood in the gap for the people of Judah as a humble and obedient king. His heart was fixed on the Lord and zealous to turn the hearts of the people back to God. Yet an outward conversion on the part of the people was not enough. Without genuine repentance, the people of Judah would face God's judgment.

Oh that the personal relationship Josiah had with God—His passion and fervency—had been the experience of all the children of Israel. The nation would not be facing God's judgment; they would be receiving His blessing. The Bible says, "For whatever a man sows, that he will also reap" (Galatians 6:7-8). May our commitment to the Lord be genuine, for God sees our hearts. May we determine as did Josiah to allow no compromise with sin and to serve the Lord wholly. **Humble obedience pleases God.**

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to obey and serve the Lord. May God fan the flame of genuine revival in our hearts. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the Gospel, give them opportunity.