

## Lesson 10    10 January, 2021

### Josiah Heeds the Word

**Lesson Scope:** [2 Chronicles chapters 34 and 35](#)

*References in brackets relate to Lesson Scope unless noted otherwise*

#### Lesson Focus

Manasseh's revival seems to have missed his son Amon. Amon reigned but two years and did evil in the sight of the Lord. Manasseh's grandson Josiah became king at the tender age of eight. He began to seek after God at the age of sixteen. Perhaps his earliest memories were sitting on his grandfather's knee and hearing him speak about God. Whatever influenced Josiah rightly had happened early in his life and it most certainly did not come from his father.

As Josiah's knowledge of God increased, he set out to purge the land. He broke down the altars of Baal. He ground the images into powder and strewed the dust on the graves of those who worshiped those images. He even required this cleansing in the countries around about that pertained to the children of Israel (34:33).

The house of God had fallen into disrepair. Josiah gave the command to repair the temple. In the temple they found the Book of the Law. The Book told of the evil the children of Israel had done and explained how judgment was about to fall. Josiah rent his clothes and fell on the ground before God. God heard his prayer and delayed judgment until after Josiah's death. "Blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it." God faithfully enlightens those who walk after Him and keep His commandments with all their hearts. God's Word is special. It is inspired by God and written by men. It is absolute truth in its original writing; we cannot add to that or take away from it. A proper regard for it will change our lives. Josiah first followed the teaching he knew: he cleansed the land of idols. When the Book of the Law was found and read, he understood how God saw the children of Israel he was part of. He repented in sorrow and sought with urgency to know what could be done to avoid God's judgment. Because of his response, God gave relieve while Josiah lived. His influence was strong, and the people's worship was purer than it had been since the time of Samuel

**Lesson Aim:** To show how a proper regard for God's Word affects a person's life.

**Theme Verse:** [Isaiah 66:2b](#). But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.

## Lesson Text

### Finding the Book of the Law

[2 Chronicles 34:1-2](#) <sup>(KJV)</sup> Josiah *was* eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem one and thirty years. <sup>2</sup> And he did *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the ways of David his father, and declined *neither* to the right hand, nor to the left.

[2 Chronicles 34:8](#) Now in the eighteenth year of his reign, when he had purged the land, and the house, he sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, and Maaseiah the governor of the city, and Joah the son of Joahaz the recorder, to repair the house of the LORD his God.

[2 Chronicles 34:14](#) 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.

### Reading the Book of the Law

[2 Chronicles 34:16](#) And Shaphan carried the book to the king, and brought the king word back again, saying, All that was committed to thy servants, they do *it*.

[2 Chronicles 34:19-24](#) And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the law, that he rent his clothes. <sup>20</sup> And the king commanded Hilkiyah, and Ahikam the son of Shaphan, and Abdon the son of Micah, and Shaphan the scribe, and Asaiah a servant of the king's, saying, <sup>21</sup> 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. <sup>22</sup> And Hilkiyah, and *they* that the king *had appointed*, went to Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tikvath, the son of Hasrah, keeper of the wardrobe; (now she dwelt in Jerusalem in the college:) and they spake to her to that *effect*. <sup>23</sup> And she answered them,

Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Tell ye the man that sent you to me, <sup>24</sup> Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, *even* all the curses that are written in the book which they have read before the king of Judah: [2 Chronicles 34:30](#) 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.

### **Keeping the Book of the Law**

[2 Chronicles 34:31-33](#) And the king stood in his place, 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 his heart, and with all his soul, to perform the words of the covenant which are written in this book. <sup>32</sup> And he caused all that were present in Jerusalem and Benjamin to stand *to it*. And the inhabitants of Jerusalem did according to the covenant of God, the God of their fathers. <sup>33</sup> 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 35:1](#) **Moreover** Josiah kept a passover unto the LORD in Jerusalem: and they killed the passover on the fourteenth *day* of the first month.

[2 Chronicles 35:18](#) 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.

### **Questions for Study**

#### **Finding the Book of the Law**

1. What does it mean to follow, not turning to the right or the left?
2. How do we repair God's house today?

#### **Reading the Book of the Law**

3. What response did reading the very Word of God call from Josiah?

4. When Josiah experienced God's forgiveness, what did it cause him to do for others?

5. Why is God's Word so important?

### **Keeping the Book of the Law**

6. Why was Josiah's example so important?

7. What does a covenant relationship do for us?

8. What results does careful obedience to God's Word produce?

### **Analysing the Passage**

Josiah's outstanding revival began with him doing what he knew was right and walking according to "the ways of David his father." Josiah was the last good king of Judah. He reigned shortly before they were taken into captivity.

The images (34:3) were likely made by his grandfather, Manasseh (33:7), removed on his return from captivity (33:15), and replaced by his son Amon (33:22). Now Josiah annihilates them (34:4, 7). The prophecy of the prophet of Judah (1 Kings 13:2) is fulfilled in this cleansing (34:5) of Judah and Jerusalem.

Josiah's revival was greatly enhanced by the finding of the Book of the Law the temple (34:14-15). The fact that it was lost speaks of the lack of spiritual interest among the people. The fact that it remained preserved speaks of the sovereignty of God.

Josiah's humble response brought God's approval and blessing upon him (34:26-28).

The Book of the Law commanded the keeping of the Passover. Josiah and the people kept the Passover in strict accordance to the Law (35:17). There had not been such a Passover held since the days of the prophet Samuel (35:18).

### **Principles and Applications**

#### **Finding the Book of the Law**

I. Those who properly regard the Word will walk in the ways of Scriptural forefathers (34:2). As time continues, the church faces new issues that need to be addressed. An understanding that practical applications of the past are based directly on Scriptural principle will help us to be slow to discard them. It will also help us to know how to approach new issues that we face today.

2. God's Word must be recognized as authoritative in order to be effective (34:14). 'Is God's Word our final answer? Or do we seek for ways to excuse ignoring it? If we accept it as God's Word to us, it will affect how we think about it as well as what we do with it. The Bible does not contain God's Word: it is God's Word.

### **Reading the Book of the Law**

3. A respect for God's Word leads to repentance and produces revival (34:19-21). Looking into the mirror of God's Word causes us to see our sin and desire to repent of it. Respect for God's Word allows the Word to work in us first so we can inspire others to a closer walk with God.

4. Those who properly regard God's Word seek to share it with others (34:30). When we discover answers to our questions, the first thing we wish to do is to help others to find answers too. The basic questions "Where did I come from?" "What am I here for?" and "Where am I going?" are answered in the Bible. If the truth of its message grips our hearts, we will be motivated to share it with others. Our hearts will bum within us.

### **Keeping the Book of the Law**

5. Those who believe the Word seek to enter a covenant relationship with God (34:31). When we believe God's Word, we desire to be identified with it. We want to be part of God's family. If we are not ashamed of Him, He will not be ashamed to call us brethren.

6. Those who believe the Word will be wholeheartedly committed to obeying its precepts (34:31-32). It takes all our soul, all our strength, and all our mind to be wholly committed. We cannot take a half-hearted approach. We must make a willing, personal sacrifice.

7. Those who properly regard God's Word will destroy all false worship and serve God only (34:33). No corner of our heart may be reserved. Every bit of self and pride must be removed. Every idol that we worship must be destroyed.

8. Godly leaders strongly influence their people's obedience to the Word of God (34:33). Obedience to the Scriptures is not just a good idea that we can take or leave. Obedience is God's will, and accepting it or rejecting it is a matter of life or death. No man can intentionally disobey God and reach heaven. We give the strongest influence when we live what we know is right.

9. Total obedience to the Word brings unparalleled results (35:1, 18).

We marvel at what God can do through men who are wholly committed to Him. Too often God's power is limited in our lives because we lack total obedience. Think of what God did through Noah, Abraham, Daniel, and Paul. These men did not flinch or turn, but gave themselves wholly into His keeping.

### **Important Teachings**

1. Those who properly regard the Word will walk in the ways of Scriptural forefathers (34:2).
2. God's Word must be recognized as authoritative in order to be effective (34:14).
3. A respect for God's Word leads to repentance and produces revival (34:19-21).
4. Those who properly regard God's Word seek to share it with others (34:30).
5. Those who believe the Word seek to enter a covenant relationship with God (34:31).
6. Those who believe the Word will be wholeheartedly committed to obeying its precepts (34:31-32).
7. Those who properly regard God's Word will destroy all false worship and serve God only (34:33).
8. Godly leaders strongly influence their people's obedience to the Word of God (34:33).
9. Total obedience to the Word brings unparalleled results (35:1, 18).

### **Answers to Questions**

1. What does it mean to follow, not turning to the right or the left?  
David loved the Lord and lived his life guided by godly principles. Josiah took these principles and made them his very own. He faced some challenges David had not, but he used these principles to guide his choices. We face challenges in our day that church leaders and parents of fifty years ago never dreamed of. But the guiding principles they used to make decisions are still applicable today. While it may call for some adjustments in practice at times, we must be careful not to sacrifice principle.
2. How do we repair God's house today? We repair God's house today by removing any worship practices that take our focus away from God.

We can learn from Josiah's thorough performance. He tore the idols apart. He broke them in pieces. He burned them. When he repaired, he collected an offering to buy what was needed.

We need to rid ourselves of human philosophies that may have crept into our midst, such as believing that spanking is child abuse, that we need to be more tolerant, or that sin should be excused because of some mental or physical disorder.

3. What response did reading the very Word of God call from Josiah?

It called for repentance, humility, and a proper fear of God. Josiah rent his clothes, a sign of deep grief; and he wept.

4. When Josiah experienced God's forgiveness, what did it cause him to do for others?

He wanted them to experience forgiveness also. He wanted others to hear and keep God's covenant.

5. Why is God's Word so important? It is important because it is God's Word. It tells us what we need to know in order to reach heaven. It is not the words of man, even though it was written by men. It is God speaking to us.

6. Why was Josiah's example so important? He filled a place of great influence. The people he was responsible for followed him all the days of his life.

7. What does a covenant relationship do for us? It helps us become more accountable. All of us want to be men of our word. When we covenant with God, we find it more difficult to turn back because we know that God will hold us to our word.

8. What results does careful obedience to God's Word produce? Peace, satisfaction, and joy result, where a brotherhood can work together and great things can be accomplished. "A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid" (Matthew 5:14). "Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them" (Psalm 119:165). "For with

God nothing shall be impossible" (Luke 1:37). The Israelites laboured together to destroy idolatry. They worked in unison to repair the temple. Together they brought their offerings to meet the present expenses. They worshiped together with unparalleled unity. How beautiful it is when men labour together in a common cause and common goal in view.

### **Summarizing the Lesson**

Thy Word is a lamp to my feet,  
A light to my path alway;  
To guide and to save me from sin,  
And show me the heav'nly way.  
Forever, O Lord, is Thy Word  
Established and fixed on high;  
Thy faithfulness unto all men  
Abideth forever nigh.  
—Ernest O. Sellers

### **Research Guide**

1. Read the parallel account in 2 Kings 23.
2. Note the fulfillment of 1 Kings 13:2.
3. Thy Word Is Truth, by Lester Bauman.
4. For background read the first several chapters of Jeremiah.