

Josiah

Josiah means “Yahweh supports” was the king of Judah, the son of Amon and grandson of Manasseh.

Josiah owed his promotion to the throne at the age of eight to “*the people of the land*” who also put to death his father’s assassins, [2 Kings 21:24; 2 Chronicles 33:25].

There is **no** evidence that this popular movement had religious significance.

The two accounts, recorded in God’s Word, the Christian Bible, focus on the great religious reformation which he inaugurated.

Josiah never knew his great-grandfather Hezekiah, but they were both alike in many ways.

Both had a close personal relationship with the true Creator God; both were passionate reformers among other kings of Judah who seemed set to outdo each other in disobedience and evil.

2 Kings 22:1-2 [New King James] “*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.*”

Even at a young age Josiah already understood that there was spiritual sickness in the land.

2 Chronicles 34:3-7 [New King James] “*For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was still young, he began to seek the God of his father David; and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of the high places, the wooden images, the carved images, and the moulded images. They broke down the altars of the Baals in his presence, and the incense altars which were above them he cut down; and the wooden images, the carved images, and the moulded images he broke in pieces, and made dust of them and scattered it on the graves of those who had sacrificed to them. He also burned the bones of the priests on their altars, and cleansed Judah and Jerusalem. And so he did in the cities of Manasseh, Ephraim, and Simeon, as far as Naphtali and all around, with axes. When he had broken down the altars and the wooden images, had beaten the carved images into powder, and cut down all the incense altars throughout all the land of Israel, he returned to Jerusalem.*”

Even at this young age, Josiah showed greater wisdom than many of the older kings who were before him because he had decided to seek the Creator God and His eternal perfect wisdom, [James 3:13-17; Proverbs 1:7; Proverbs 9:10].

2 Chronicles 34:14-15 [New King James] “*Now when they brought out the money that was brought into the house of the LORD, Hilkiah the priest found the Book of the Law of the LORD given by Moses. Then Hilkiah answered and said to Shaphan the scribe, ‘I have found the Book of the Law in the house of the LORD.’ And Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan.*”

This shows just how low true worship of the Creator God had sunk, that the priests were unaware of the existence of the Book of the Law that had been given to Moses by God.

The discovery of the Book of the Law in Josiah’s eighteenth year [621BC] gave fresh impetus and urgency to Josiah’s religious reforms.

2 Chronicles 34:16-21 [New King James] “*So Shaphan carried the book to the king, bringing the king word, saying, ‘All that was committed to your servants they are doing. And they have gathered the money that was found in the house of the LORD, and have delivered it into the hand of the*

overseers and the workmen.’ Then Shaphan the scribe told the king, saying, ‘Hilkiah the priest has given me a book.’ And Shaphan read it before the king. Thus it happened, when the king heard the words of the Law, that he tore his clothes. Then the king commanded Hilkiah, Ahikam the son of Shaphan, Abdon the son of Micah, Shaphan the scribe, and Asaiah a servant of the king, saying, ‘Go, inquire of the LORD for me, and for those who are left in Israel and Judah, concerning the words of the book that is found; for great is the wrath of the LORD that is poured out on us, because our fathers have not kept the word of the LORD, to do according to all that is written in this book.’”

Josiah was totally behind implementing all that was found in the Book of the Law.

The cleansing of all of Judah outside of Jerusalem was insisted by Josiah, [2 Kings 23:8-16, 19-20].

Josiah then returned to Jerusalem in time to celebrate the Passover, [2 Kings 23:21-23].

Josiah then followed what was also written in the Book of the Law about other pagan practices, even what was taking place in the personal homes of all the people of Judah, [2 Kings 23:24-25].

In spite of this great reformation, the Creator God wisely did **not** change the correction that Judah needed to remain faithful to Him, [2 Kings 23:26-27].

Josiah then made a big mistake of being involved in military conflict that he had been warned against, [2 Chronicles 35:20-24] and the result was fatal.

Josiah ignored Neco’s message because he was king of the pagan nation. The mistaken assumption that Neco could not be part of God’s larger plan cost Josiah his life, yet messages from the Creator God can come in unexpected ways.

God had spoken through pagan kings in the past, [Genesis 12:17-20; Genesis 20:3-7; Daniel 4:1-3].

We must not let prejudice or false assumptions blind us to a message from God.

Are we deeply humbled by God’s Word, the Christian Bible, as Josiah was?

Are we aware of the great gap between our lives and the life that the Creator God desires we should live, and seeking for cleansing and strength to make the changes, by the work of the active indwelling Holy Spirit?

Good intentions and even reforms are not enough, we must allow God’s Word, the Christian Bible, truly humble us and the “*fruits*” of an active Holy Spirit in us make us acceptable to a Holy Creator God, [Galatians 5:22-23].