

Lesson 104

Josiah Follows God

Judah returns to the Lord under Josiah's reign.

Studying God's Word

Don't forget! Review the Optional Supplements and determine where you can use them.

Introduction

Slide #3

Refer to Lesson 103 Theme Poster. Last week we took a break from the kings of Judah to look at the prophecies of the Messiah in the books of Micah and Isaiah. Isaiah and Micah were prophets who served during the reign of Hezekiah, whom we talked about the week before. Both prophets wrote of a ruler who would come to save us from our sins.

Where did Micah prophesy this coming ruler, the Messiah, would be born? Bethlehem. Micah also wrote about how the coming ruler would be eternal. How can Jesus be eternal? He is God.

Jesus is one of the three Persons of the Trinity: God the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Remember that Jesus was with God in the beginning; he has always been living and always will be.

What name did Isaiah give for the Messiah that means "God with us"? Immanuel.

The name Immanuel gave the people hope that God would come to save them. And that's what Jesus did! He died on the cross to save us from our sins. Jesus fulfilled all the prophecies given about his first coming (and more will be fulfilled at his second coming).

To start today's lesson, we're going to play a guessing game. I will give you clues about an item (in the room, in the church, in the parking lot, etc.), and you try to guess what it is. Raise your hand if you have a guess so I can call on you; please don't shout out your answer. We'll see how many clues it takes before you can guess it! Pick an item (i.e., whiteboard eraser, picture in the church lobby, stop sign in the parking lot) and start giving clues one at a time, starting with general clues to more specific, pausing to let students guess after each one. For example, if you have a whiteboard eraser in your room, your clues could be: 1) This item is something in the room we use every week; 2) This item is small; 3) This item is black/gray; 4) This item fits easily in your hand; 5) This item removes marks on the board. Once the item is guessed, you may give clues for another item and keep track of how many clues it takes for students to guess each one. After a few items are guessed, continue with the lesson.

We played this game to make us notice things around us that we may overlook or not think about. In today's lesson, something important was lost and forgotten, but its discovery sparked change in an entire nation!

We're going to skip over two evil kings, Manasseh and Amon, to talk about the last faithful king of Judah named Josiah. King Hezekiah had followed the Lord and led Judah in a revival, but his son Manasseh and grandson Amon led Judah astray once more. After Amon was put to death in his own house by his servants, Josiah became king.

Josiah's Reforms

Refer to the Books of the Bible Poster. The account of Josiah is recorded in 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles, which are books of history in the Old Testament. We'll be reading from 2 Chronicles.

Slide #4

Slide #5

2 Chronicles 34:1–3

Turn to 2 Chronicles 34 in your Bibles. Will someone read the first three verses?

Choose readers.

How old was Josiah when he became king?
Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign.

What other king of Judah did we learn about who became king at an early age? Joash.

Slide #6

Refer to Lesson 101 Theme Poster. Joash became king at age seven, and he had the help and guidance of the priest Jehoiada. In verse 2, what familiar phrase do we see that describes what kind of king Josiah was? He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord.

Along with doing what was right, Josiah walked in the ways of David and did not turn aside to the right or to the left. These details are important because they show how much Josiah wanted to do what was right. He was determined to follow God as David had—with his whole heart.

When does it say Josiah began to seek God? While he was still a boy. While Josiah was young, he wanted to know and obey God. Now think about Joash when he was a boy. How was his obedience to God different from Josiah's? Allow discussion.

Josiah wanted to know the Lord for himself—he made the decision; Joash followed the ways of the Lord because of the influence of the priest Jehoiada.

Let's do some math. If Josiah began to reign at age eight and began to seek the

Lord in the eighth year of his reign, how old was he then? Around 16 years old. Then what did he start to do in the twelfth year of his reign when he was about 20 years old? He began to purge the land of carved/metal images (idols) and the high places.

Slide #7

Refer to the Lesson Theme Poster. Verses 4 through 7 in chapter 34 describe how Josiah started removing all the idols and false places of worship, called high places, in the land. While some other good kings of Judah also did this, none of them worked as hard as Josiah did. He chopped down altars to Baal, broke idols in pieces, and even beat the wood and metal into dust and powder!

Josiah started this cleansing of the land in Jerusalem and Judah, but then he went north into the land of Israel and broke down the altars and destroyed idols there, too.

Why do you think Josiah cared about helping the people in the northern nation of Israel stop worshipping idols and disobeying God? Allow answers.

Pass out the Class Notes.

The northern tribes of Israel, like the people from the tribe of Judah, were also God's chosen people. They were all descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Israel), the people God miraculously brought out of

Egypt and gave the promised land. Josiah wanted to see all the tribes of Israel return to the Lord.

Slide #8

Slide #9

Slide #10

Let's start the Class Notes. You'll circle the correct answer for each question. Who will read #1 and give the answer? Choose a reader. B. Eight. Have students complete #1.

Who will read #2 about Josiah as a boy? Choose a reader. D. Seek the Lord.

Complete #2.

Who will read #3? Choose a reader. D. All the tribes of Israel. Complete #3.

Slide #11

2 Chronicles 34:8

Let's see what Josiah did next. Who will read 2 Chronicles 34:8? Choose a reader. In what year of Josiah's reign is this? The eighteenth year of his reign.

This is the eighteenth year of Josiah's reign, so he would have been about 26 years old.

What did Josiah start to restore? The house of the Lord.

What is another name for the house of the Lord, the permanent building Solomon built for worshipping God in Jerusalem? The temple.

We learned in an earlier lesson that Joash repaired the temple. Why would the temple need to be repaired again? It has to do with the two kings before Josiah. Allow answers. The previous kings were evil and turned away from worshipping the Lord. The temple was ignored and misused during those years.

King Hezekiah's son Manasseh reigned for 55 years, and he did much evil during his reign, including ignoring the temple and even using it for the worship of false gods. Manasseh's son Amon also abused and neglected the temple, so all the work they did earlier to restore the temple was ruined. It needed repairs again, and it needed to be cleansed of all the idols and items left from the two bad kings.

Josiah used the same method as Joash to begin the repairs. He collected money from the people at the temple and then used the money to pay workmen who could make the repairs. The carpenters and stone workers bought the supplies they needed and did the work until the temple was fixed.

Slide #12

2 Chronicles 34:14

King Josiah's officials and the priests and Levites all helped with the temple project. Then, something was found that had been lost for many years! Let's find out what it

was. Who will read 2 Chronicles 34:14?

Choose a reader.

Who was Hilkiah? A priest.

What did he find in the temple? The Book of the Law.

Refer to the Books of the Bible Poster.

Which books in the Old Testament are the books of the law? Genesis through Deuteronomy.

We know that this book was the law of the Lord written by Moses, but we're not sure if it was the book of Deuteronomy or all five books that Hilkiah discovered.

Hilkiah knew this book was important, so he gave it to the king's secretary, who read it to the king. As King Josiah listened, he heard the commands God had given to Moses for the Israelites to obey. He heard the blessings, or good things, God would give if his people obeyed—and also the curses, or punishments, God would send if they disobeyed.

Slide #13

Slide #14

Based on what we've read, how will you answer #4 in the Class Notes? This one has more than one correct answer. Choose a reader. A. Destroyed idols in the land. C. Repaired the temple. Complete #4.

What did Hilkiah find for #5? Choose a reader. A. Book of the Law. Complete #5.

Josiah's Response

Now that we have an idea what Josiah might have heard in the Book of the Law, let's look at how he responded.

Slide #15

Slide #16

Slide #17

2 Chronicles 34:19 & 21

Find verse 19 in 2 Chronicles 34. Who will read that? Choose a reader.
What did Josiah do when he heard the words of the Law? He tore his clothes.
Does anyone remember why people back then tore their clothes? We talked about it in the lesson with King Hezekiah. Hezekiah tore his clothes when he heard the king of Assyria was planning to attack Judah.
Tearing clothes was how people showed great sadness over sin or a terrible event.

Show the Lesson Theme Poster. When Josiah heard the words of the Law, he realized that he and his people had sinned and deserved God's judgment. He tore his clothes to show his grief and sadness over the guilt of his people and the punishment God promised as a result. Then Josiah had a job for Hilkiah and some of his other men.

Who will read what Josiah said in verse 21? Choose a reader.

What did Josiah send Hilkiah and the others to do? He sent them to inquire of the Lord.

This was a wise decision for Josiah to immediately want to hear from the Lord.

Why did Josiah say that the wrath of the Lord was going to fall on them? Because they had not kept the word of the Lord according to the laws of the book.

Josiah understood that the people of Judah had been disobeying God's commands for a long time. He believed that punishment would come on them for their sin.

Refer to the Attributes of God Poster. What attribute means that God must punish sin? Just.

Slide #18

Slide #19

2 Chronicles 34:24–25

Josiah's men went to a prophetess named Huldah. Let's read what message she had from God for Josiah in 2 Chronicles 34:24–25. Choose a reader.

What did God say he was going to bring on Judah and its people? Disaster. All the curses (punishments) written in the book that the king heard.

Why did God say he was going to punish them with disaster? They had forsaken him

and made offerings to other gods.
What is it called when someone worships false gods? Idolatry.
How did God feel about the people worshipping and sacrificing to false gods made of wood and stone? Angry.

God is serious about sin because he is perfect and holy. He doesn't let sin go unpunished because he is just. He said his wrath would be poured out on Judah because of their sin.

This was a frightening message! But God wasn't finished speaking. He had a special promise for Josiah.

Slide #20

Slide #21

2 Chronicles 34:27–28

Who will read that in verses 27–28? Choose a reader.

What did the Lord say about Josiah and how he responded when he heard God's words in the book? Josiah's heart was tender; he humbled himself, wept, and tore his clothes.

God saw that Josiah was grieved at how the people had turned away from God. Josiah wanted the people to repent so God wouldn't have to bring the disaster.

What did the Lord promise Josiah in verse 28? Josiah will die in peace and not see the

disaster God will bring.

God promised to show mercy to Josiah. He would wait to bring the coming judgment on Judah until after Josiah died. Josiah's officials returned to the king and delivered the message they had heard from God.

Slide #22

Slide #23

Look back at the Class Notes. How will you answer #6? Choose a reader. D. Grieved and inquired of the Lord. Have students complete #6.

Who will read #7 and give the answer about God's promise? Choose a reader. B. Josiah would die before God sent the disaster. Complete #7.

Josiah could've thought, "Oh good, I'm safe from the judgment, so I don't need to worry about the rest of the people obeying God." But he didn't. Josiah gathered all the people, great and small, and read to them the Book of the Law. He wanted them to hear God's Word just as he had. Then he and all the people made a promise to walk after the Lord and keep his commandments. And they kept that promise all the days of King Josiah.

Slide #24

2 Chronicles 35:18

In the same year, Josiah also held the Passover celebration. The Passover was the special feast

the Jewish people were supposed to celebrate to remember how God delivered them from slavery in Egypt. They would eat a meal of roasted lamb, unleavened bread, and bitter herbs. God wanted his people to do this every year because it also reminded the people that a sacrifice was needed for them to be saved. We know now that this special time also points forward to Jesus, who was the Lamb of God that would come to die for the sins of the world.

Who will read 2 Chronicles 35:18 about Josiah's Passover? No king had held a Passover like this one since the days of Samuel.

Refer to the Exodus to Malachi Timeline. Samuel was the last judge before he anointed Israel's first king, Saul. In all the years of kings in Israel and Judah since then, no one had a Passover like this one! Josiah followed all of God's laws from Moses for how to celebrate the Passover correctly. He was keeping his promise to follow the Lord and his commands.

We've seen some similarities between King Joash and King Josiah. They both became kings at an early age, and they both restored the temple.

Who remembers what Joash did at the end of his life? Did he continue to follow the Lord? No. After Jehoiada the priest died,

Joash listened to the princes of Judah and turned to idolatry.

Sadly, Joash turned away from the Lord and worshipped false gods. He did even more evil when he murdered the son of Jehoiada for speaking the truth about his sin. He was eventually killed by his own servants, and the people didn't bury him with the kings.

What about Josiah? Will he do what's right to the end of his life?

Slide #25

Slide #26

2 Chronicles 35:24–25

Well, years after the big Passover feast, Josiah decided to go fight the king of Egypt. During the battle, Josiah was shot by archers.

Look in 2 Chronicles 35:24–25. Who will read that? Choose a reader.

Did Josiah recover from being shot? No. He died.

Where was he buried? In the tombs of his fathers.

Who mourned his death? All Judah and Jerusalem; the prophet Jeremiah; the singers.

What did the singers do for Josiah? Wrote laments about him.

Josiah was given an honorable burial with the other kings of Judah. Everyone was sad

when he died. The prophet Jeremiah and the singers wrote songs about him! That's what a lament is.

So, did Josiah stay faithful and obedient to God to the end? Yes.

He sure did! Unlike Joash, Josiah kept his promise to God and didn't turn from loving and serving him all his life. Even though he died from a battle wound, Josiah did not see the disaster God would bring on Judah for their sin. We'll see when that happened in our next lessons.

Slide #27

Who will read #8 in the Class Notes about the differences between Josiah and Joash? This one has more than one correct answer. Choose a reader. B. Josiah remained faithful to God to the end. D. Josiah was buried with the kings of Judah. Have students complete #8.

Application

Slide #28

Refer to the Lesson Theme Poster. King Josiah was a good king, faithful and obedient to God. He cleansed the land of idolatry and repaired the temple so the people could worship God and offer sacrifices again. Josiah was grieved when he heard the Book of the Law and realized the sin the people were committing by breaking

God's laws. He and the people of Judah promised to follow God, but God would not relent from bringing disaster. His judgment would stand, but because of his mercy, Josiah would not see it.

Josiah is a great example for you! He decided as a boy to seek the Lord. He wanted to know the Lord for himself.

What are some ways you can seek the Lord now? Allow discussion. Read the Bible to learn more about God. Pray every day. Learn about God and his Word at church. Decide to live for God and obey his Word.

The decision Josiah made as a boy affected his whole life, and he is remembered as one of the most faithful and godly kings of Judah. The decisions you make now can affect the kind of person you will be, too.

When Josiah heard God's Word, he listened and obeyed. He was sorry for his sin and the sins of his people. What about you? When you hear from God's Word, do you listen and obey? Are you sorry for your sin and the ways you've broken God's laws? If you are, you can pray and tell God that you don't want to sin anymore. You can be saved from the punishment of sin by trusting in Jesus and what he did for you by dying on the cross. And the Holy Spirit will live in you to give you the desire and power to honor God.

If you've already prayed and confessed your sin to God and put your faith in Jesus alone to save you, how can you be like Josiah? What did he do for his people? Allow discussion. He removed idols (anything people love more than God). He made worship a priority. He taught the people God's Word. He set an example of obeying God's laws. He wanted to see other people repent of idolatry and turn to the Lord.

We can follow Josiah's example today by sharing God's Word with others. We should live in such a way that people notice we're different because we choose to obey God and avoid sin. This pleases God and enables him to use us to spread his message of justice and mercy to others.

Lesson Review

We all learn best with review and repetition! We encourage you to play a lesson review game.

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