

## 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

Before class, hide the Josiah Scrolls around the room for students to find later in the lesson.

### Slide #3

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

Micah prophesied the Messiah's birthplace. Where would our Savior be born?  
Bethlehem.

Micah also wrote that 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 the coming ruler—the Messiah.

To start today’s lesson, we’re going to play a game. One of you will search for a hidden object while the rest of the class guides you by singing loudly when you’re close or singing softly when you’re far away. Show the object you brought and briefly discuss its importance. (For example, without a door key, you would not be able to lock your house and re-enter.) Pick one student to leave the room while you hide the object. When the student returns, the rest of the class will guide him to the hidden object by singing a memory verse or other Bible song. The closer the student gets, the more loudly the class sings; as he moves farther from the object, the class sings more quietly. Play until the student finds the object.

In today’s lesson, something even more important than a key (or other object) was lost and forgotten for many years. When

someone found it again, it made a big difference for a whole nation!

We're going to skip over two evil kings to talk about the last faithful king of Judah—King Josiah.

## 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. Who would like to read verses 1 and 2? Choose readers.

How old was Josiah when he became king? Eight years old.

Even though he was very young, Josiah must have been wise for his age.

What kind of king was Josiah? Look at verse 2. What did he do? He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord.

And he walked in the ways of whom? David.

Josiah had decided to follow God just as King David had—with his whole heart. He did not turn aside to the right or to the left.

Josiah didn't let anything lead him away from God. He really wanted to do what was right.

Let's read verse 3. Assign a reader.  
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.

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 in the twelfth year of his reign when he was about 20 years old, he began to purge the land. To purge means to get rid of something. What did Josiah begin to get rid of in Judah? High places, Asherim, carved and metal images (idols).

### Slide #6

Show the Lesson Theme Poster. 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!

### Slide #7

### Slide #8

### Slide #9

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.

Pass out the Class Notes.

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

Complete #2.

Who will read #3? This one has more than one right answer. Choose a reader. A. High places, B. Carved images, C. Metal images. Complete #3.

### Slide #10

#### 2 Chronicles 34:8

Let's see what Josiah did next. Follow along as I read 2 Chronicles 34:8. Read the verse.

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

What is another name for the house of the Lord? It is the permanent place of worship that Solomon built for God in Jerusalem. The temple.

Even though the temple had been repaired and cleaned out many years before, the people had not continued to take care of it. After the reign of good King Hezekiah, two evil kings ruled. They led the people away from God and into idol worship again.

Now under King Josiah's reign, the temple needed to be repaired once more, and all the idols left from these two bad kings needed to be cleaned out. Josiah collected money from the people at the temple and used it to pay the workmen making the repairs.

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.

What do you think it was? Allow guesses.

### Slide #11

#### 2 Chronicles 34:14

Let's find out! 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're not sure if Hilkiah found all five of these books or just the book of Deuteronomy. But Hilkiah knew it was the law of the Lord and that this book was important. He gave it to the king's secretary, who read the book to the king. The king heard all of God's commands for the people. He heard how God wanted to

bless his people when they obeyed. But he also heard how God would have to punish their disobedience.

Let's go back to the Class Notes.

Slide #12

Slide #13

Based on what we've read, how will you answer #4? 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**

Let's see what Josiah did when he heard God's Word.

Slide #14

Slide #15

Slide #16

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.

Do you remember someone else we've studied who tore his clothes?

King Hezekiah.

Hezekiah tore his clothes when he heard that the king of Assyria was planning to



attack Judah. Tearing clothes was how people showed great sadness over sin or a terrible event.

Refer to the Lesson Theme Poster. When Josiah heard the words of the Law and tore his clothes, he was showing sadness, or grief, over the sins of his people. He knew that they had not followed God's laws and that they deserved God's punishment.

Then Josiah made a very wise decision. Follow along as I read verse 21. Read the verse.

Josiah wanted to inquire, or ask more, about what he had just heard from the Book of the Law. So, he sent Hilkiah and some other men to ask whom? The Lord. Why did Josiah say that God would pour out his wrath, or anger, on them? What had the people not kept? (Read the second sentence in verse 21 again.) 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 knew God would punish them for their sin.

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

Slide #17

Slide #18

## 2 Chronicles 34:24–25

Josiah's men went to a prophetess (a woman prophet) named Huldah. Remember, prophets spoke for God. Let's read God's message given through Huldah.

Find 2 Chronicles 34:24–25. Who will read verse 24? 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.

Let's read verse 25 and find out why God was going to punish them. Choose a reader.

The people had forsaken God. That means they had left him. Instead of worshipping God, they had made offerings to whom? Other gods.

The people had made false gods out of wood and stone (the works of their hands). How did God feel about the people worshipping these false gods? He said the people had provoked, or pushed him, to what? Anger.

God is perfect and holy. Because he is just, he doesn't let sin go unpunished. God said his wrath (anger) would be poured out on Judah because of their sin.

This was a frightening message! But God wasn't finished speaking. The Lord said he

had seen how Josiah had torn his clothes and wept over the sins of the people. God saw how sorry Josiah was that the people had turned away from the Lord. Because Josiah wanted his people to turn back to God, the Lord gave him a promise.

### Slide #19

#### 2 Chronicles 34:28

Who would like to read God's promise in verse 28? Assign a reader.

God promised Josiah that he would be gathered to his grave, or that he would die, in what? Peace.

And what did God promise that Josiah would not see? All the disaster that God was going to bring on Judah.

God promised to show mercy to Josiah. Even though he would still bring disaster to punish the people of Judah for their sins, Josiah would not have to see it. God would wait until after Josiah died before bringing the disaster.

Josiah's officials returned to the king and told him the message they had received through Huldah—a message of judgment for Judah but mercy for Josiah.

### Slide #20

### Slide #21

Look back at the Class Notes. How will you answer #6? Choose a reader. C. Tore his

clothes with grief. 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. 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 follow the Lord and keep his commandments. Josiah was faithful to God until the end, and the people followed God as long as King Josiah lived.

Refer to Lesson 101 Theme Poster.

Slide #22

Let's remember another king who might remind us of Josiah. Who else became king of Judah at a very young age? Joash.

Right. Joash became king at age seven. He also cleaned out and repaired the temple.

But what did Joash do at the end of his life? Turned away from God.

Joash did not stay faithful. Remember, he followed the Lord for as long as Jehoiada the priest was alive. But after Jehoiada

died, Joash turned to idol worship, and he even had Jehoiada's son killed for telling the truth.

How was King Josiah different from Joash?  
He was faithful to God his whole life.

Later, Josiah was injured in a battle against the king of Egypt, and he died from the wound. That's sad, isn't it? But God honored him because of his faithfulness. Remember that God had promised Josiah he would not punish the people until after Josiah died. And God kept that promise.

All the people loved Josiah. They showed great sadness when he died, and they buried him with the other kings of Judah. God would punish Judah for their sins later, but Josiah did not have to see it.

### Slide #23

Who will read #8 in the Class Notes about the differences between Josiah and Joash? Choose a reader. B. Josiah stayed faithful to God to the end. Have students complete #8.

## **Application**

### Slide #24

Have the Josiah Scrolls ready, hidden around the room.

Refer to the Lesson Theme Poster. Just as Hilkiah the priest found the Book of the Law, we're going to find six scrolls hidden somewhere in the room. Each scroll reminds us of something that King Josiah did and how his life is an example for us today. This time, everyone will search. If you find a scroll, pick it up and come back to your seat. We will search until all six have been found.

When all the scrolls have been found, have students read them in number order. Discuss each one as follows:

1. "Josiah decided to follow the Lord when he was young."

The best time to decide to follow God is now while you are young. Then you will have most of your life ahead of you to serve him. God has a plan for your life and you can start to follow it right now.

2. "King Josiah listened to God's Word."

How can we do that? Read the Bible; listen to pastors, church leaders, teachers, and parents.

3. "Josiah was sorry for his sins and for the sins of the people."

Josiah tore his clothes to show his grief. How can we show we are sorry today? Tell God we are sorry. Make things right with

those we have wronged. Ask God to help us stop doing wrong things.

When we are truly sorry for our sins, we can trust in Jesus to save us from the punishment of sin and become a child of God. The Bible says that when we confess our sins, he is faithful to forgive us.

#### 4. "King Josiah obeyed God's Word."

When we understand what God's Word says, God expects us to follow it. Once we've trusted Jesus, God sends his Holy Spirit to help us obey him.

#### 5. "Josiah removed the things that came between the people and God (idols)."

What things can come between us and God? Friends, fun things, school work, hobbies, sports.

These are all good things that God has given us, but we must be sure to keep God first in our lives.

How can we keep God first? Go to church; pray regularly; spend time with Christian friends; choose what God wants you to do; stop doing things that keep you away from God.

#### 6. "Josiah cared about the people. He read God's Word to them so that they could follow God, too."

How can we share God's love and his Word with others? Tell them about God; help them out in times of trouble; pray for them; invite them to church; be a good friend.

## Lesson Review

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



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