

Josiah: King of Judah (Good 31 Years)

2 Kings 22:1 - 23:30

SEVEN STEPS OF JOSIAH:

1. He is characterized by individual piety;
2. He has an interest in the House of God - repairing it;
3. He has an appreciation for and submission to the word of god. finds the Word of God, trembles at it, etc.
4. He understood that there was going to be judgment on israel, but that he was going to be taken out of the world before judgment, i.e. the Church is not appointed unto wrath. Not just "from the tribulation" but "out of the hour" of it (JND);
5. He spreads the Word to the people; the fact that judgment was coming motivated him to reform the nation even though he knew he would be personally spared.
6. He gets rid of idolatry - first from the Temple. He didn't respect the failures of his fathers, but he went all the way back to the beginning because he had the authority of the Word of God. He didn't stop at Miscellaneous, but went all the way back to "David his father". He goes back to the beginning. The Reformers didn't go all the way back - their revival was based on the individual faith of Martin Luther and a few others, just like Hezekiah's. John's first epistle insists on that which was from the beginning. We need to walk in the full truth of the Apostles' doctrine. We need to turn our back on the Camp;
7. he keeps the Passover, which has the same to aspects as the Lord's Supper. It looked back to the deliverance from Egypt and on to the Sacrifice of Christ. The Lord's Supper carries us back to Christ in death.

Josiah vs. hezekiah. there are two great revivals in the history of Judah, paralleling the history of the church. Hezekiah's recovery is based on Hezekiah's individual faith in the face of great opposition and persecution. Josiah's recovery began with Josiah's obedience and led to the rediscovery of the word of god, during a time of remarkable peace. These two recoveries parallel the reformation (1500's) and the recovery of the truth (1800's).

how deep was the recovery? The book of Jeremiah, who prophesied under Josiah, shows us that in fact the moral state of the people was in no wise changed by Josiah's recovery. They consented to josiah's abolition of idolatry, but their hearts remained far from God. read

Jer. 3:6-10; Jer. 5:27-29; Jer. 6:9-15, 29; Jer. 8:8-13.

CHAPTER 22

1 Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign; and he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem; and his mother's name was Jedidah, daughter of Adaiah of Bozath. **v.1** Josiah - Jehovah is his support. Jedidah - beloved. Adaiah - Jehovah hath adorned. at the age of eight, his mother would have been a significant, Godly influence in his life. Sometimes stay-at-home moms feel like their work is futile, but there are forming a character in their children that will have a lasting impact on the assembly. we learn from 2 Chron. 34:3 that in the 8th year of his reign (16 yrs old) he began to seek the Lord... a personal relationship. Also, in the 12th year (20 yrs), he began to purge idolatry from Judah... a positive impact on the nation. Is it possible the Manasseh's good years overlapped with Josiah's young childhood such that Josiah could have been influenced for god by his grandfather, although the damage was already done to his father?

2 And he did what was right in the sight of Jehovah, and walked in all the way of David his father, and turned not aside to the right hand nor to the left. **v.2** this is the key: he went all the way back to "David his father". he did not have respect to the sins of the other kings, even the important ones. Even Hezekiah did not destroy solomon's mount of corruption. We need to be ruthless in our repentance. It isn't enough to go pack to the reformers, or even the church fathers. we need to go back to the teaching of Jesus and his apostles.

3 And it came to pass in the eighteenth year of king Josiah, *that the king sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, son of Meshullam, the scribe, to the house of Jehovah, saying,* **v.3** in the 18th year (26 yrs old) Josiah makes his concern for the state of the Lord's house known. the house of God is that aspect of the church that has to do with responsibility and testimony in this world. In the 1800's, the public testimony of the church had been severely fractured, and many small groups were splitting off from the organized churches, adding small "breaches" (v.5) to the gaping divisions that already existed. they did not need to build a new church, but repair the old one. one of the greatest recovered truths was that the assembly of the living god is the dearest object to the heart of christ, and not some special class of persons (the clergy).

4 Go up to Hilkijah the high priest, that he may sum up the money which is brought into the house of Jehovah, which the doorkeepers have gathered of the people, **v.4 the money.** The money had been gathered from the people previously. It shows that the Lord was doing a general work that this time, not just in one man. and yet the Lord used Josiah to bring it together.

5 and let them give it into the hand of them that do the work, that have the oversight of the house of Jehovah; and let them give it to those that do the work in the house of Jehovah, to repair the breaches of the house, **v.5** it takes great energy to repair the breaches in the house of the Lord, using diligence to keep the unity of the spirit. the work falls to those who have the oversight... showing that the peace and unity of the assembly is a primary concern of bishops and elders. in Dublin, 1828, J. N. Darby wrote "Considerations on the Nature and Unity of the Church of Christ", an article which forever changed the way christians viewed the church, not as the catholic church or the anglican church, etc. but as one universal church of god. This might correspond to the repairing of the breaches.

6 to the carpenters and the builders and the masons, and to buy timber and hewn stone to repair the house. **v.6** in order to repair the house, to keep the unity of the spirit, the faith of individual members of the body of Christ is required. the clergy cannot produce unity, but the spirit of God working in the members of Christ's body can produce an outward testimony to the truth that the church is one!

7 But no reckoning was made with them of the money that was given into their hand, because they dealt faithfully. **v.7** the work of repairing breaches was not by man's wisdom according to human organization, but a work of faith.

8 And Hilkiyah the high priest said to Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of Jehovah. And Hilkiyah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it. **v.8** If Josiah had not had the restoration of the temple at heart, the book of the law, which was kept there (ii Chr. 34:15) would not have come to light again.

the link between the house of God and the word of God. When a small group of believers began to see the church as it really is in the sight of God, the truth of the mystery, then all the other scriptures were unlocked to them as they never had been before. The reformers never saw the church any differently than the Catholics did, and that is why the word of God was not fully recovered at that time. However, the authority of the scriptures was established in the Reformation.

9 And Shaphan the scribe came to the king, and brought the king word again and said, Thy servants have emptied out the money that was found in the house, and have delivered it into the hand of them that do the work, that have the oversight of the house of Jehovah. **10** And Shaphan the scribe informed the king saying, Hilkiyah the priest has given me a book. And Shaphan read it before the king. **vv.9-10** The recovery of the truth was a product of (1) zeal for the house and (2) obedience to the Scriptures.

11 And it came to pass when the king heard the words of the book of the law, that he rent his garments. **v.11** “he rent his garments” - the recovered word of god shed light on the ruin of the testimony, and he was truly humbled by it (trembled at his word, v.19, isa. 66:2)

12 And the king commanded Hilkijah the priest, and Ahikam the son of Shaphan, and Achbor the son of Micaiah, and Shaphan the scribe, and Asaiah a servant of the king, saying, **13** Go, inquire of Jehovah for me, and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book which is found; for great is the wrath of Jehovah that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not hearkened to the words of this book, to do according to all that is written *there* for us. **14** And Hilkijah the priest, and Ahikam, and Achbor, and Shaphan, and Asaiah, went to Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tikvah, son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe: now she dwelt in Jerusalem in the second quarter *of the town*; and they spoke with her. **v.14** Josiah’s time was characterized by revival but also profound weakness, hence we find a prophetess at Jerusalem. Not that prophets were lacking in Judah (2 Kings 23:2), but activity entrusted to a woman characterizes decline, just as with Deborah in the book of Judges.

15 And she said to them, Thus saith Jehovah the God of Israel: Tell the man that sent you to me, **vv.15-16 first message**. there seems to be two messages the prophetess gives, the first to the king as a representative of fallen man, the second to the king as an object of grace.

16 Thus saith Jehovah: Behold, I will bring evil upon this place and upon the inhabitants thereof, all the words of the book that the king of Judah hath read. **v.16** the sin of manasseh marked the point of no return for Judah. Judgment would fall because of judah’s apostacy. This reminds me of the article “[The Apostasy of the Successive Dispensations](#)” written in 1836, in which J.N. Darby demonstrates that everything committed to man’s responsibility ends in failure and results in the judgment of god. Josiah needed to learn this, and we do too.

17 Because they have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the work of their hands, therefore my fury is kindled against this place, and shall not be quenched.

18 But to the king of Judah, who sent you to inquire of Jehovah, thus shall ye say to him: Thus saith Jehovah the God of Israel touching the words which thou hast heard: **19** Because thy heart was tender, and thou didst humble thyself before Jehovah, when thou heardest

what I spoke against this place and against the inhabitants thereof, that they should become a desolation and a curse, and didst rend thy garments and weep before me, I also have heard *thee*, saith Jehovah. **vv.18-20 second message.** because of josiah's humility and submission to the word of God, he would be spared from the judgment that would fall.

20 Therefore, behold, I will gather thee unto thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered to thy grave in peace; and thine eyes shall not see all the evil that I will bring upon this place. And they brought the king word again. **v.20** for us, we the church will be exempted from the coming tribulation by the rapture. we do not look for death to take us, but the Lord himself.

CHAPTER 23

1 And the king sent, and they gathered to him all the elders of Judah and of Jerusalem. **v.1** when the recovered truth of god is known, the soul desires that it should be spread to others. the truth belongs to the whole church of god, not just the gathered saints. it is our duty to restore the truth to those who have lost it.

2 And the king went up into the house of Jehovah, and all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with him, and the priests and the prophets, and all the people, both small and great; and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant which had been found in the house of Jehovah. **v.2** "all the words" - for there to be true revival, every part of the word fo God needs to be read, understood, and acted upon. to set aside one book, e.g. 1 Corinthians, is to miss out on the recovery. "the book of the covenant" - would include the covenant made at sinai, and the covenant made in the plains of moab, the book of deuteronomy, which insisted on obedience in the Land of Israel. The people were being informed the that reason for the impending captivity was their idolatry and disobedience to the word of god (Deut. 28:25).

3 And the king stood on the dais, and made a covenant before Jehovah, to walk after Jehovah, and to keep his commandments and his testimonies and his statutes with all *his* heart, and with all *his* soul, to establish the words of this covenant that are written in this book. And all the people stood to the covenant. **v.3** Josiah stood by a pillar, reminding us that the church is to be the pillar (witness) and ground (support) of the truth (I Tim. 3:15). There will be a "witness" when the truth is really recovered. "all the people" entered into the covenant, but their hearts were not in it. The book of Jeremiah, who prophesied under Josiah, shows us that in fact the moral state of the people was in no wise changed by Josiah's recovery. They consented to josiah's abolition of idolatry, but their hearts remained far from God. read Jer. 3:6-10; Jer. 5:27-29; Jer. 6:9-15, 29; Jer. 8:8-13.

4 And the king commanded Hilkijah the high priest, and the priests of the second order, and the doorkeepers, to bring forth out of the temple of Jehovah all the vessels that had been made for Baal, and for the Asherah, and for all the host of the heavens; and he burned them outside Jerusalem in the fields of Kidron, and carried the ashes of them to Bethel. **5** And he abolished the idolatrous priests, whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense on the high places in the cities of Judah, and the environs of Jerusalem; and them that burned incense to Baal, to the sun, and to the moon, and to the constellations, and to all the host of heaven. **v.5** He puts down the Chemarim, the priests established by the kings of Judah to burn incense before false gods (Zeph. 1:4).

6 And he brought out the Asherah from the house of Jehovah, outside Jerusalem, to the torrent of Kidron, and burned it at the torrent of Kidron, and stamped it small to powder, and cast the powder upon the graves of the children of the people. **v.6** the Asherah, a lewd statue to the goddess of love, was found in the house of Jehovah.

7 And he broke down the houses of the sodomites, which were in the house of Jehovah, where the women wove tents for the Asherah. **8** And he brought all the priests out of the cities of Judah, and defiled the high places where the priests had burned incense, from Geba even to Beer-sheba; and he broke down the high places of the gates, those at the entrance of the gate of Joshua the governor of the city, *and* those on the left hand of any *going in* at the gate of the city. **9** Nevertheless the priests of the high places came not up to the altar of Jehovah in Jerusalem, but they ate of the unleavened bread among their brethren. **v.9** fellowship with other altars was broken. it sounds like the priests of the high places either weren't allowed or didn't feel comfortable with coming up to jerusalem.

10 And he defiled Topheth, which is in the valley of the sons of Hinnom, that no man might cause his son or his daughter to pass through the fire to Molech. **11** And he abolished the horses that the kings of Judah had appointed to the sun at the entrance of the house of Jehovah, by the chamber of Nathan-melech the chamberlain, which was in the suburbs, and burned the chariots of the sun, with fire. **12** And the king broke down the altars that were on the roof of the upper chamber of Ahaz, which the kings of Judah had made, and the altars that Manasseh had made in the two courts of the house of Jehovah, and he shattered them, *removing them* from thence, and cast the powder of them into the torrent of Kidron. **13** And the high places that were before Jerusalem, which were on the right hand of the mount of corruption, which Solomon the king of Israel had built for Ashtoreth the abomination of the Zidonians, and for Chemosh the abomination of the Moabites, and for Milcom the abomination of the children of Ammon, did the king defile. **v.13** he not even have respect for the altars built by Solomon. It is one thing to do away with evil that has come in in recent

years, is is another to do away with evil that had been accepted for centuries, established by “great men” in Christendom.

14 And he broke in pieces the columns, and cut down the Asherahs, and filled their place with the bones of men. **15** Moreover the altar that was at Bethel, the high place that Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who caused Israel to sin, had made, both that altar and the high place he broke down; and burned the high place, stamped it small to powder, and burned the Asherah. **Vv.15-16** see I kings 13:2, he condemns the copycat altar, but recognizes anything of God... the grave of the prophet of Samaria, who humbled himself.

16 And Josiah turned himself, and saw the sepulchres that were there on the mount; and he sent and took the bones out of the sepulchres, and burned *them* upon the altar, and defiled it, according to the word of Jehovah, that the man of God had proclaimed, who proclaimed these things. **v.16** “he spied”... he was operating in a mode that is anything came into his field of vision that was not according to the word of God, he would set it right. this is to be the way we live every day.

17 Then he said, What tombstone is that which I see? And the men of the city told him, It is the sepulchre of the man of God who came from Judah and proclaimed these things which thou hast done against the altar of Bethel. **18** And he said, Let him alone; let no man move his bones. And they saved his bones, with the bones of the prophet that came out of Samaria. **19** And all the houses also of the high places that were in the cities of Samaria, which the kings of Israel had made to provoke *Jehovah* to anger, Josiah removed, and did to them according to all the acts that he had done in Bethel. **20** And he sacrificed upon the altars all the priests of the high places that were there, and burned men’s bones upon them. And he returned to Jerusalem. **v.20** This act was a fulfillment of prophecy given 350 years before (I Kings 13), which precisely named the man who would destroy Jeroboam’s altar. In like manner Jehovah named Cyrus hundreds of years before his birth (Isa. 45:1). The word of God is perfect, and its fulfillment sure.

Hezekiah’s vs. Josiah’s passover. At the time of Hezekiah’s revival, the Passover was not celebrated on the fourteenth day of the first month, but of the second month (II Chr. 30:15), the date authorized by the Word for those who were unclean or on a journey at the time of the celebration of the feast (Num. 9:11). The priests found themselves in the first situation, having lacked the zeal to sanctify themselves, they were unclean, and Hezekiah moves it to the second month. Josiah’s Passover was celebrated on the appointed date of the first month (II Chr. 35:1). it wasn’t until the recovery of the truth in the mid-1800’s that christian’s began remembering the Lord Jesus according to scripture.

21 And the king commanded all the people saying, Hold the passover to Jehovah your God, as it is written in this book of the covenant. **v.21** the combination of; (1) getting rid of the idolatry of the world and its religious traditions (high place worship), and (2) returning to the Holy Scriptures, will result in proper worship of the Lord. The celebration of the passover is mentioned only in few words in II Kings, whereas II Chronicles describes it at length (2 Chr. 35:1-19);

22 For there was not holden such a passover from the days of the judges that judged Israel, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel, nor of the kings of Judah; **23** but in the eighteenth year of king Josiah was this passover holden to Jehovah in Jerusalem. **vv.22-23** **The passover** was the memorial of israel's redemption from the land of bondage by the blood of the passover lamb. Through it, the people were sheltered from God's judgment which overtook Egypt. The people, placed under the sprinkling of the blood, ate the passover. It was a figure of the appropriating of the sacrifice of Christ that faith does for us once for all (John 6:53). The corresponding privilege in Christianity is eating of the Lord's supper, the remembrance of christ in his death. it was Israel's most fundamental institution, first of all in the wilderness (Num. 9:1-14) and then upon entering Canaan (Joshua 5:10). **no passover like it** ever before... god is able to pour out a special blessing on those who are faithful in a dark day, right before the close of a dispensation.

24 Moreover the necromancers and the soothsayers, and the teraphim and the idols, and all the abominations that were seen in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, Josiah took away, that he might perform the words of the law which were written in the book that Hilkijah the priest had found in the house of Jehovah. **v.24** again we find the word "spied"... he was operating in a mode that is anything came into his field of vision that was not according to the word of God, he would set it right. this is to be the way we live every day.

25 And before him there had been no king like him that turned to Jehovah with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; neither after him arose there his like. **v.25** this gives us the key to Josiah's revival. He turned to the Lord with his whole being, and aligned everything in his control with the word of god.

26 But Jehovah turned not from the fierceness of his great wrath, wherewith his anger was kindled against Judah, because of all the provocations with which Manasseh had provoked him. **vv.26-28** the great revival of Josiah would not change God's mind. The sin of manasseh was the turning point, and the judgment would fall regardless of this wonderful revival. The same it true with the recovery of the truth. The apostacy of christendom is steadily rising, and the Lord is now working with a remnant company.

27 And Jehovah said, I will remove Judah also out of my sight, as I have removed Israel, and will reject this city Jerusalem which I have chosen, and the house of which I said, My name shall be there. **v.27** Jehovah had to be faithful to his own character. He was willing to cast off the city that he had chosen and the house that he had chosen because of the great sin that had come in.

28 And 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?

a battle for world domination. According to the Book of Jeremiah in the summer of 605 BC Carchemish was the site of an important battle which was fought by the Babylonian army of Nebuchadnezzar II and that of Pharaoh Necho II of Egypt who was coming to the aid of Assyria. Assyria was losing strength, and so was Egypt. This battle was a last gasp for world-supremacy. Pharaoh's best route against his enemy was through Palestine. Josiah's interference delayed Egypt slightly. The Egyptians met the full might of the Babylonian and Median army led by Nebuchadnezzar II at Carchemish (Megiddo) where the combined Egyptian and Assyrian forces were destroyed. Assyria ceased to exist as an independent power, and Egypt retreated and was no longer a significant force in the Ancient Near East.

29 In his days Pharaoh-Nechoh king of Egypt went up against the king of Assyria to the river Euphrates; and king Josiah went against him; but *Nechoh* slew him at Megiddo, when he had seen him. **30** *And his servants carried him in a chariot dead from Megiddo, and brought him to Jerusalem, and buried him in his own sepulchre. And the people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah, and anointed him, and made him king in his father's stead.* **vv.29-30 an opened door.** Another thing that God had given Josiah was peace from his enemies. during this time there were no "distractions" for Josiah. In the same way, the gospel and the recovered truth spread around the globe and changed it forever. the state of the British empire during the recovery of the truth was a state of relative peace and prosperity. It was Josiah meddling in the affairs of Egypt and Assyria that ended this wonderful recovery. the Lord says to Philadelphia, "behold, i have set before you an opened door, and no man can shut it." The Lord opened the door for the recovery of the truth, but the recovery came to an end with the rise of Laodicea... carrying on the truths recovered to Philadelphia in head knowledge only, and in a spirit of pride that leads to interference in areas that do not belong to the church... the arena of politics. the world knows better than the church! they see the need for separation between church and state... why don't Christians? the world punishes us for our intervening in its affairs. "What have I to do with thee, thou king of Judah?" Pharaoh, who is conscious of being an instrument of God, says to him: "God . . . is with me. God has told me to make haste," and "the words of Nechoh came

from the mouth of God" (II Chr. 35:20-22). From the moment that Josiah began down this path, he lost his discernment of the mind of the Lord and was no longer able to recognize the will of God. Let this be a lesson to evangelical Christians (including the Plymouth Brethren), that ever-appealing temptation to interfere in the politics of this world. We see the government of God in taking Josiah's life as a result of his interference.