

JOSIAH'S RESTORATION OF TRUE WORSHIP

BIBLE TEXT : **I Kings 13:1, 2; II Kings 22:1-20; 23:1-25;**
II Chronicles 35:1-27; Jeremiah 36:1-32.

LESSON 374 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come before him: worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness" (I Chronicles 16:29).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

1 Kings 13:1-2

¹ And, behold, there came a man of God out of Judah by the word of the LORD unto Bethel: and Jeroboam stood by the altar to burn incense.

² And he cried against the altar in the word of the LORD, and said, O altar, altar, thus saith the LORD; Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name; and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and men's bones shall be burnt upon thee.

2 Kings 22:1-20

¹ Josiah *was* eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned thirty and one years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Jedidah, the daughter of Adaiah of Boscath.

² And he did *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in all the way of David his father, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left.

³ And it came to pass in the eighteenth year of king Josiah, *that* the king sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, the son of Meshullam, the scribe, to the house of the LORD, saying,

⁴ Go up to Hilkiah the high priest, that he may sum the silver which is brought into the house of the LORD, which the keepers of the door have gathered of the people:

⁵ And let them deliver it into the hand of the doers of the work, that have the oversight of the house of the LORD: and let them give it to the doers of the work which *is* in the house of the LORD, to repair the breaches of the house,

⁶ Unto carpenters, and builders, and masons, and to buy timber and hewn stone to repair the house.

⁷ Howbeit there was no reckoning made with them of the money that was delivered into their hand, because they dealt faithfully.

⁸ And Hilkiah the high priest said unto Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD. And Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it.

⁹ And Shaphan the scribe came to the king, and brought the king word again, and said, Thy servants have gathered 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 the LORD.

¹⁰ And Shaphan the scribe shewed the king, saying, Hilkiah the priest hath delivered me a book. And Shaphan read it before the king.

¹¹ And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the book of the law, that he rent his clothes.

¹² And the king commanded Hilkiah the priest, and Ahikam the son of Shaphan, and Achbor the son of Michaiah, and Shaphan the scribe, and Asahiah a servant of the king's, saying,

¹³ Go ye, enquire of the LORD for me, and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that is found: for great *is* the wrath of the LORD that is kindled

BIBLE REFERENCES:

I Josiah's Righteous Reign

1. Josiah sought God when he was 16, and at 20 he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem, II Kings 22:1-7;

2 Chronicles 34:1-3

¹ Josiah *was* eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem one and thirty years.

² 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.

³ For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was yet young, he began to seek after the God of David his father: and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem from the high places, and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images.

2. The Book of the Law was found in the Temple and read before the king, II Kings 22:8-11;

2 Chronicles 34:14-19

¹⁴ And when they brought out the money that was brought into the house of the LORD, Hilkiah the priest found a book of the law of the LORD *given* by Moses.

¹⁵ And Hilkiah answered and said to Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD. And Hilkiah delivered the book to Shaphan.

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*.

¹⁷ And they have gathered together the money that was found in the house of the LORD, and have delivered it into the hand of the overseers, and to the hand of the workmen.

¹⁸ Then Shaphan the scribe told the king, saying, Hilkiah the priest hath given me a book. And Shaphan read it before the king.

¹⁹ And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the law, that he rent his clothes.

Deuteronomy 31:16

¹⁶ And the LORD said unto Moses, Behold, thou shalt sleep with thy fathers; and this people will rise up, and go a whoring after the gods of the strangers of the land, whither they go *to be* among them, and will forsake me, and break my covenant which I have made with them.

Deuteronomy 31:17

¹⁷ Then my anger shall be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them, and I will hide my face from them, and they shall be devoured, and many evils and troubles shall befall them; so that they will say in that day, Are not these evils come upon us, because our God *is* not among us?

3. The king sends to Hulda the Prophetess to inquire of the Lord, II Kings 22:12-17;

against us, because our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this book, to do according unto all that which is written concerning us.

¹⁴ So Hilkiah the priest, and Ahikam, and Achbor, and Shaphan, and Asahiah, went unto Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tikvah, the son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe; (now she dwelt in Jerusalem in the college;) and they communed with her.

¹⁵ And she said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Tell the man that sent you to me,

¹⁶ Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, *even* all the words of the book which the king of Judah hath read:

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

¹⁸ But to the king of Judah which sent you to enquire of the LORD, thus shall ye say to him, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, *As touching* the words which thou hast heard;

¹⁹ Because thine heart was tender, and thou hast humbled thyself before the LORD, when thou heardest what I spake against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, that they should become a desolation and a curse, and hast rent thy clothes, and wept before me; I also have heard *thee*, saith the LORD.

²⁰ Behold therefore, I will gather thee unto thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered into thy grave in peace; and thine eyes shall not see all the evil which I will bring upon this place. And they brought the king word again.

2 Kings 23:1-25

¹ And the king sent, and they gathered unto him all the elders of Judah and of Jerusalem.

² And the king went up into the house of the LORD, 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 was found in the house of the LORD.

³ And the king stood by a pillar, 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 *their* heart and all *their* soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people stood to the covenant.

⁴ And the king commanded Hilkiah the high priest, and the priests of the second order, and the keepers of the door, to bring forth out of the temple of the LORD all the vessels that were made for Baal, and for the grove, and for all the host of heaven: and he burned them without Jerusalem in the fields of Kidron, and carried the ashes of them unto Bethel.

⁵ And he put down the idolatrous priests, whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense in the high places in the cities of Judah, and in the places round about Jerusalem; them also that burned incense unto Baal, to the sun, and to the moon, and to the planets, and to all the host of heaven.

⁶ And he brought out the grove from the house of the LORD, without Jerusalem, unto the brook Kidron, and burned it at the brook Kidron, and stamped *it* small to powder, and cast the powder thereof upon the graves of the children of the people.

2 Chronicles 34:20-25

²⁰ And the king commanded Hilkiah, 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,

²¹ 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.

²² And Hilkiah, 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*.

²³ And she answered them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Tell ye the man that sent you to me,

²⁴ 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:

²⁵ Because they have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands; therefore my wrath shall be poured out upon this place, and shall not be quenched.

Deuteronomy 29:25-27

²⁵ Then men shall say, Because they have forsaken the covenant of the LORD God of their fathers, which he made with them when he brought them forth out of the land of Egypt:

²⁶ For they went and served other gods, and worshipped them, gods whom they knew not, and *whom* he had not given unto them:

²⁷ And the anger of the LORD was kindled against this land, to bring upon it all the curses that are written in this book:

4. Because the kings' heart was tender and he humbled himself, judgments would not come in his day, II Kings 22:18-20;

2 Chronicles 34:26-28

²⁶ And as for the king of Judah, who sent you to enquire of the LORD, so shall ye say unto him, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel *concerning* the words which thou hast heard;

²⁷ Because thine heart was tender, and thou didst humble thyself before God, when thou heardest his words against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, and humbledst thyself before me, and didst rend thy clothes, and weep before me; I have even heard *thee* also, saith the LORD.

²⁸ Behold, I will gather thee to thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered to thy grave in peace, neither shall thine eyes see all the evil that I will bring upon this place, and upon the inhabitants of the same. So they brought the king word again.

5. The king gathered the people together and they made a cove-nant with the Lord, II Kings 23:1-3.

II Cleansing of the Temple and the Land

1. Josiah with the help of the people cleansed the Temple and put down the idolatrous priests, II Kings 23:4-14;

⁷ And he brake down the houses of the sodomites, that *were* by the house of the LORD, where the women wove hangings for the grove.

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 to Beersheba, and brake down the high places of the gates that *were* in the entering in of the gate of Joshua the governor of the city, which *were* on a man's left hand at the gate of the city.

⁹ Nevertheless the priests of the high places came not up to the altar of the LORD in Jerusalem, but they did eat of the unleavened bread among their brethren.

¹⁰ And he defiled Topheth, which *is* in the valley of the children of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter to pass through the fire to Molech.

¹¹ And he took away the horses that the kings of Judah had given to the sun, at the entering in of the house of the LORD, by the chamber of Nathanmelech the chamberlain, which *was* in the suburbs, and burned the chariots of the sun with fire.

¹² And the altars that *were* on the top of the upper chamber of Ahaz, which the kings of Judah had made, and the altars which Manasseh had made in the two courts of the house of the LORD, did the king beat down, and brake *them* down from thence, and cast the dust of them into the brook 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 builded 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.

¹⁴ And he brake in pieces the images, and cut down the groves, and filled their places with the bones of men.

¹⁵ Moreover the altar that *was* at Bethel, *and* the high place which Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, had made, both that altar and the high place he brake down, and burned the high place, *and* stamped *it* small to powder, and burned the grove.

¹⁶ And as Josiah turned himself, he spied the sepulchres that *were* there in the mount, and sent, and took the bones out of the sepulchres, and burned *them* upon the altar, and polluted it, according to the word of the LORD which the man of God proclaimed, who proclaimed these words.

¹⁷ Then he said, What title *is* that that I see? And the men of the city told him, *It is* the sepulchre of the man of God, which came from Judah, and proclaimed these things that thou hast done against the altar of Bethel.

¹⁸ And he said, Let him alone; let no man move his bones. So they let his bones alone, 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 *the LORD* to anger, Josiah took away, and did to them according to all the acts that he had done in Bethel.

²⁰ And he slew all the priests of the high places that *were* there upon the altars, and burned men's bones upon them, and returned to Jerusalem.

²¹ And the king commanded all the people, saying, Keep the passover unto the LORD your God, as *it is* written in the book of this covenant.

²² Surely there was not holden such a passover from the days of the judges that judged Israel, nor in all the days of

2 Chronicles 34:4

4 And they brake down the altars of Baalim in his presence; and the images, that *were* on high above them, he cut down; and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images, he brake in pieces, and made dust *of them*, and strowed *it* upon the graves of them that had sacrificed unto them.

2. Prophecy that was given 350 years previously was fulfilled by Josiah, I Kings 13:1, 2; II Kings 23:15-20.

1 Kings 12:28-33

28 Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves *of* gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

29 And he set the one in Bethel, and the other put he in Dan.

30 And this thing became a sin: for the people went to *worship* before the one, *even* unto Dan.

31 And he made an house of high places, and made priests of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi.

32 And Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like unto the feast that *is* in Judah, and he offered upon the altar. So did he in Bethel, sacrificing unto the calves that he had made: and he placed in Bethel the priests of the high places which he had made.

33 So he offered upon the altar which he had made in Bethel the fifteenth day of the eighth month, *even* in the month which he had devised of his own heart; and ordained a feast unto the children of Israel: and he offered upon the altar, and burnt incense.

III Keeping of the Passover

1. It was the greatest Passover ever held from the days of Samuel, II Kings 23:21-23; II Chronicles 35:1-19.
2. There was no king, before or after, that turned to the Lords with all his heart, as Josiah did, II Kings 23:25.
3. Josiah is slain in battle by the Egyptians, II Chronicles 35:20-27;

Zechariah 12:11

11 In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon.

IV Jeremiah's Prophecy

1. Baruch wrote the words of Jeremiah's prophecy and read it to the people, Jeremiah 36:1-10;

Jeremiah 25:3

3 From the thirteenth year of Josiah the son of Amon king of Judah, even unto this day, that *is* the three and twentieth year, the word of the LORD hath come unto me, and I have spoken unto you, rising early and speaking; but ye have not hearkened.

2. Fear gripped the people and they wanted the roll read to King Jehoiakim, son of Josiah, Jeremiah 36:11-19.
3. When the king heard the roll read he cast it into the fire, Jeremiah 36:20-26.
4. The Lord tells Jeremiah to write another roll,

the kings of Israel, nor of the kings of Judah;

²³ But in the eighteenth year of king Josiah, *wherein* this passover was holden to the LORD in Jerusalem.

²⁴ Moreover the *workers with* familiar spirits, and the wizards, and the images, and the idols, and all the abominations that were spied in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, did Josiah put away, that he might perform the words of the law which were written in the book that Hilkiah the priest found in the house of the LORD.

²⁵ And like unto him was there no king before him, that turned to the LORD 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 *any* like him.

2 Chronicles 35:1-27

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 And he set the priests in their charges, and encouraged them to the service of the house of the LORD,

³ And said unto the Levites that taught all Israel, which were holy unto the LORD, Put the holy ark in the house which Solomon the son of David king of Israel did build; *it shall not be* a burden upon *your* shoulders: serve now the LORD your God, and his people Israel,

⁴ And prepare *yourselves* by the houses of your fathers, after your courses, according to the writing of David king of Israel, and according to the writing of Solomon his son.

⁵ And stand in the holy *place* according to the divisions of the families of the fathers of your brethren the people, and *after* the division of the families of the Levites.

⁶ So kill the passover, and sanctify yourselves, and prepare your brethren, that *they* may do according to the word of the LORD by the hand of Moses.

⁷ And Josiah gave to the people, of the flock, lambs and kids, all for the passover offerings, for all that were present, to the number of thirty thousand, and three thousand bullocks: these *were* of the king's substance.

⁸ And his princes gave willingly unto the people, to the priests, and to the Levites: Hilkiah and Zechariah and Jehiel, rulers of the house of God, gave unto the priests for the passover offerings two thousand and six hundred *small cattle*, and three hundred oxen.

⁹ Conaniah also, and Shemaiah and Nethaneel, his brethren, and Hashabiah and Jeiel and Jozabad, chief of the Levites, gave unto the Levites for passover offerings five thousand *small cattle*, and five hundred oxen.

¹⁰ So the service was prepared, and the priests stood in their place, and the Levites in their courses, according to the king's commandment.

¹¹ And they killed the passover, and the priests sprinkled *the blood* from their hands, and the Levites flayed *them*.

¹² And they removed the burnt offerings, that they might give according to the divisions of the families of the people, to offer unto the LORD, as *it is* written in the book of Moses. And so *did they* with the oxen.

¹³ And they roasted the passover with fire according to the ordinance: but the *other* holy *offerings* sod they in pots, and in caldrons, and in pans, and divided *them* speedily among all the people.

¹⁴ And afterward they made ready for themselves, and for the priests: because the priests the sons of Aaron *were busied* in offering of burnt offerings and the fat until night; therefore the Levites prepared for themselves, and for the priests the sons of Aaron.

¹⁵ And the singers the sons of Asaph *were* in their place, according to the commandment of David, and Asaph, and

Jeremiah 36:27-32.

NOTES:

Josiah's Crusade Against Idolatry

Josiah "did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in all the way of David his father, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left" (II Kings 22:2). That is the greatest tribute that could be paid to the man. So few are willing to walk in the centre of the will of God. In religion it seems so easy to veer to the right and be cold and formal, or to the left and be fanatical and unbalanced.

By the time Josiah was sixteen he sought the Lord, and before he was twenty he began his purge of Judah. What a good feeling it must have placed in the hearts of Josiah and his group of crusaders as they marched from city to city with their mauls and axes and began cleaning out all the idols, altars, and groves! Oh, how the Lord must have blessed as the graven images crashed to the ground and the men swung their sledges until the stones were pulverised! What a wholesome atmosphere must have been created as the men scraped up the debris and the bonfires burned and the polluted land became clean again! This purge was not the work, of a hasty mob, but a deliberate work of six years to destroy idol worship.

What a glorious day it would be for us if a man like Josiah could go through our land and break all the bottles of liquor, burn all the tobacco, tear down all the theatres and dance halls, break all the gambling devices to bits, and clean out all the haunts of sin!

When Josiah was at Bethel breaking down the altar of the golden calves of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, and burning men's bones thereon, he spied an inscription on a sepulchre. "What title is that that I see?" he asked. The men of the city told him that that was the sepulchre of the prophet who had called him by name and proclaimed the very things he had done to the altar of Bethel.

This prophecy, recorded in I Kings 13:3 (**1 Kings 13:3**)

³ And he gave a sign the same day, saying, This *is* the sign which the LORD hath spoken; Behold, the altar shall be rent, and the ashes that *are* upon it shall be poured out), was most remarkable in that it was made more than 300 years before Josiah was born. We have no record of anyone's having named his son Josiah during those years or attempting to fulfil the prophecy until the appointed time. Then Amon, a wicked prince, named his son Josiah, although he does not appear to have been aware of the prophecy until after he had fulfilled it.

It must have given Josiah a great satisfaction to know that he was accomplishing the very thing God had foretold that he would do. It was good to know that he was turning neither to the right hand nor to the left, but was in the centre of God's will.

A True Foundation

After the purge, Josiah began the work of repairing and rebuilding the house of God. Too often men in their haste build on the old rubble without first having cleared the ground for a good foundation. Just as

Heman, and Jeduthun the king's seer; and the porters waited at every gate; they might not depart from their service; for their brethren the Levites prepared for them.

¹⁶ So all the service of the LORD was prepared the same day, to keep the passover, and to offer burnt offerings upon the altar of the LORD, according to the commandment of king Josiah.

¹⁷ And the children of Israel that were present kept the passover at that time, and the feast of unleavened bread seven days.

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.

¹⁹ In the eighteenth year of the reign of Josiah was this passover kept.

²⁰ After all this, when Josiah had prepared the temple, Necho king of Egypt came up to fight against Carchemish by Euphrates: and Josiah went out against him.

²¹ But he sent ambassadors to him, saying, What have I to do with thee, thou king of Judah? *I come* not against thee this day, but against the house wherewith I have war: for God commanded me to make haste: forbear thee from *meddling with God*, who *is* with me, that he destroy thee not.

²² Nevertheless Josiah would not turn his face from him, but disguised himself, that he might fight with him, and hearkened not unto the words of Necho from the mouth of God, and came to fight in the valley of Megiddo.

²³ And the archers shot at king Josiah; and the king said to his servants, Have me away; for I am sore wounded.

²⁴ His servants therefore took him out of that chariot, and put him in the second chariot that he had; and they brought him to Jerusalem, and he died, and was buried in *one of* the sepulchres of his fathers. And all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah.

²⁵ And Jeremiah lamented for Josiah: and all the singing men and the singing women spake of Josiah in their lamentations to this day, and made them an ordinance in Israel: and, behold, they *are* written in the lamentations.

²⁶ Now the rest of the acts of Josiah, and his goodness, according to *that which was* written in the law of the LORD,

²⁷ And his deeds, first and last, behold, they *are* written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah.

Jeremiah 36:1-32

¹ And it came to pass in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, *that* this word came unto Jeremiah from the LORD, saying,

² Take thee a roll of a book, and write therein all the words that I have spoken unto thee against Israel, and against Judah, and against all the nations, from the day I spake unto thee, from the days of Josiah, even unto this day.

³ It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the evil which I purpose to do unto them; that they may return every man from his evil way; that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin.

⁴ Then Jeremiah called Baruch the son of Neriah: and Baruch wrote from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the LORD, which he had spoken unto him, upon a roll of a book.

⁵ And Jeremiah commanded Baruch, saying, I *am* shut up; I cannot go into the house of the LORD:

⁶ Therefore go thou, and read in the roll, which thou hast

cement will not adhere to a rock covered with dirt, so our building will not stand unless it clings solidly to a sure foundation. Any dirt between our building and the rock will result in a faulty bond and a weak structure. Any sin will separate us from the true love of God.

Honest Men

There was no reckoning made with them of the money that was delivered into their hand, because "they dealt faithfully" (II Kings 22:7). How different this is from our day when public funds must be counted and recounted, and even then there are cases of embezzlement. Josiah must have surrounded himself with a group of honest men instead of clever politicians.

The Book of the Law

"I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD" (II Kings 22:8). That is where one would expect to find in the house of the Lord. In Jesus' day he found changers of money with their money tables in his house. Today, oftentimes one finds pool games, dancing, and even gambling where the Book of the Law should be found.

It was after Josiah had sought the Lord that the Book of the Law was found. If a person is honest and sincere in his search for the Lord, God will let him find the truth. The devil may have many false ways around to deceive the people, but God is able to guide an honest soul into the way of righteousness.

A Tender Heart

"Because thine heart was tender, and thou hast humbled thyself before the LORD, when thou heardest what I spake . . . I also have heard thee, saith the LORD" (II Kings 22:19). A tender heart! "A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise" (Psalm 51:17). "The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit" (Psalm 34:18). Josiah rent his heart as well as his garment (Joel 2:13 13 And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he *is* gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil.), when he heard of the evil pronounced against Judah for their sins. God stayed his judgments and granted mercy unto the people all the days of Josiah because he humbled himself and had a tender heart.

A Covenant with the Lord

After a thorough cleanup of the land, Josiah called all Judah and Jerusalem together to make a covenant with the Lord. The next step was to observe the Passover. Let us not expect to have the Lord bless us in the partaking of the Lord's Supper, which is our Passover, until first we are free from sin and have entered into a covenant to obey the commandment of the Lord. Only those who are saved have a right to partake of the Lord's Supper.

What a Passover they held in the eighteenth year of Josiah! "Surely 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" (II Kings 23:22). With their house in order, and their hearts clean; the Lord was ready to

written from my mouth, the words of the LORD in the ears of the people in the LORD'S house upon the fasting day: and also thou shalt read them in the ears of all Judah that come out of their cities.

⁷ It may be they will present their supplication before the LORD, and will return every one from his evil way: for great *is* the anger and the fury that the LORD hath pronounced against this people.

⁸ And Baruch the son of Neriah did according to all that Jeremiah the prophet commanded him, reading in the book the words of the LORD in the LORD'S house.

⁹ And it came to pass in the fifth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, in the ninth month, *that* they proclaimed a fast before the LORD to all the people in Jerusalem, and to all the people that came from the cities of Judah unto Jerusalem.

¹⁰ Then read Baruch in the book the words of Jeremiah in the house of the LORD, in the chamber of Gemariah the son of Shaphan the scribe, in the higher court, at the entry of the new gate of the LORD'S house, in the ears of all the people.

¹¹ When Michaiah the son of Gemariah, the son of Shaphan, had heard out of the book all the words of the LORD,

¹² Then he went down into the king's house, into the scribe's chamber: and, lo, all the princes sat there, *even* Elishama the scribe, and Delaiah the son of Shemaiah, and Elnathan the son of Achbor, and Gemariah the son of Shaphan, and Zedekiah the son of Hananiah, and all the princes.

¹³ Then Michaiah declared unto them all the words that he had heard, when Baruch read the book in the ears of the people.

¹⁴ Therefore all the princes sent Jehudi the son of Nethaniah, the son of Shelemiah, the son of Cushi, unto Baruch, saying, Take in thine hand the roll wherein thou hast read in the ears of the people, and come. So Baruch the son of Neriah took the roll in his hand, and came unto them.

¹⁵ And they said unto him, Sit down now, and read it in our ears. So Baruch read *it* in their ears.

¹⁶ Now it came to pass, when they had heard all the words, they were afraid both one and other, and said unto Baruch, We will surely tell the king of all these words.

¹⁷ And they asked Baruch, saying, Tell us now, How didst thou write all these words at his mouth?

¹⁸ Then Baruch answered them, He pronounced all these words unto me with his mouth, and I wrote *them* with ink in the book.

¹⁹ Then said the princes unto Baruch, Go, hide thee, thou and Jeremiah; and let no man know where ye be.

²⁰ And they went in to the king into the court, but they laid up the roll in the chamber of Elishama the scribe, and told all the words in the ears of the king.

²¹ So the king sent Jehudi to fetch the roll: and he took it out of Elishama the scribe's chamber. And Jehudi read it in the ears of the king, and in the ears of all the princes which stood beside the king.

²² Now the king sat in the winterhouse in the ninth month: and *there was a fire* on the hearth burning before him.

²³ And it came to pass, *that* when Jehudi had read three or four leaves, he cut it with the penknife, and cast *it* into the fire that *was* on the hearth, until all the roll was consumed in the fire that *was* on the hearth.

²⁴ Yet they were not afraid, nor rent their garments, *neither* the king, nor any of his servants that heard all

enter His holy Temple.

Jehoiakim's Indifference

With his father Josiah dead, his brother Jehoahaz a captive in Egypt, himself a puppet king of the Egyptian throne, one would think that Jehoiakim would implore the help of God for his land. A fast was proclaimed, but not by the king. The words of Jeremiah were read, but the king was not present, neither were the princes. What a contrast to the days when the king's father, Josiah, led the people in the worship of God. Someone told the princes of the judgments of God which were read from the roll of Jeremiah. The princes sent to hear the words and were afraid and told them to the king. He requested that the book be brought to him.

The king sat in his winter-house in front of the fireplace and his princes stood about the fire when the roll was read to them. As the pages were turned, the king took his penknife and cut them off and tossed them into the fire. This warning that God in His mercy had sent was lightly esteemed. God told Jeremiah: "It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the evil which I purpose to do unto them; that they may return every man from his evil way; that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin" (Jeremiah 36:3).

A Warning Today

God's judgments are just as surely decreed for this age: "There shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time" (Daniel 12:1). God is calling today that people might repent and get ready to escape His judgments, but the majority toss is off just as Jehoiakim burned the roll. What a pity that sinners fail to heed the warning, when it means their eternal salvation! What a shame that the nations of our day continue on in their sin in the face of the pronounced judgments of God, when He offers peace! The world is looking for a solution for its ills, but is rejecting the Saviour, the only One who can solve the problems.

QUESTIONS

1. How old was Josiah when he began to reign?
2. When was the greatest Passover feast in Jerusalem held?
3. Name some of the things that Josiah did prior to this Passover.
4. By whom were some of the idols erected that Josiah destroyed?
5. Why was it not necessary to keep a record of the money for the repair of the Temple?
6. Approximately how long did the idolatrous altar at Bethel stand?
7. Tell some of the good things that were said of Josiah.
8. Who succeeded Josiah to the throne? How long did he reign? What happened to him?
9. What was the answer given by Huldah, the prophetess, to Josiah's inquiry concerning the words in the Book of the Law?
10. What parallel is there between Jehoiakim's attitude and that of men today?

these words.

²⁵ Nevertheless Elnathan and Delaiah and Gemariah had made intercession to the king that he would not burn the roll: but he would not hear them.

²⁶ But the king commanded Jerahmeel the son of Hammelech, and Seraiah the son of Azriel, and Shelemiah the son of Abdeel, to take Baruch the scribe and Jeremiah the prophet: but the LORD hid them.

²⁷ Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, after that the king had burned the roll, and the words which Baruch wrote at the mouth of Jeremiah, saying,

²⁸ Take thee again another roll, and write in it all the former words that were in the first roll, which Jehoiakim the king of Judah hath burned.

²⁹ And thou shalt say to Jehoiakim king of Judah, Thus saith the LORD; Thou hast burned this roll, saying, Why hast thou written therein, saying, The king of Babylon shall certainly come and destroy this land, and shall cause to cease from thence man and beast?

³⁰ Therefore thus saith the LORD of Jehoiakim king of Judah; He shall have none to sit upon the throne of David: and his dead body shall be cast out in the day to the heat, and in the night to the frost.

³¹ And I will punish him and his seed and his servants for their iniquity; and I will bring upon them, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and upon the men of Judah, all the evil that I have pronounced against them; but they hearkened not.

³² Then took Jeremiah another roll, and gave it to Baruch the scribe, the son of Neriah; who wrote therein from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the book which Jehoiakim king of Judah had burned in the fire: and there were added besides unto them many like words.