

The Eight Year Old Becomes King.

II Ki 22:1 "...Josiah was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem..."

- We must understand the background to Josiah taking on the role of a king. There was a long-standing Royal Seed-line policy in place. David was promised by God that the Messiah would come through his line. *2 Sam 7:13 "He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever."* Besides the near miss of this promise during the time of Athaliah, there was a continual line of male heirs that the kingdom of Judah, even to the time of Josiah.
- Those heirs over a three hundred year time span were the following: Rehoboam, Abijah, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Jehoram, Ahaziah, Joash, Amaziah, Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, Manasseh, Amon and now the great Josiah, the sixteenth of the divided kingdom. Many of the kings up to that point did good in the sight of God, but many of the others performed extreme evil in the Lord's eyes.
- Josiah's grandfather Manasseh was probably the most evil and long ruling king in the history of Judah. For fifty-five years, from 696 to 642 BC, he committed the country to idolatry, astrology, sexual promiscuity and child sacrifice, burning his own son on the altar of Molech. When people spoke up against him, they were silenced with death. It was Manasseh that gave the order to have Isaiah, the righteous prophet of God, sawn in two. It was during his reign that the male sodomite prostitutes actually set up shop in the Holy Temple of God along with the idolaters and baby burners to practice their trades.
- As we covered in the first lesson of this series, all nations have a beginning and an end. This period of time was one of the darkest in the history of the nation of Israel. They were supposed to be the people of God, but they were not. The Lord had had enough, calling for the end of the nation that housed His Ark of the Covenant and the Holy of His holies.
- II Ki 21:9 "...*Manasseh seduced them to do evil more than the nations whom the LORD destroyed before the sons of Israel.*" God announced the death sentence upon the nation, stating that their enemies would come and completely destroy them for this evil and shame upon the nation (2 King 21:12-16).
- When he died, his son Amon took over for a couple of years, but did not change the path of evil. *II Ki 21:23 And the servants of Amon conspired against him and killed the king in his own house.* Apparently Amon only had the one young son Josiah to take over the reign in 640 BC. He was only eight years old and in a very morally crushed culture in need of a spiritual awakening. Since obviously the servants of Amon rebelled against him, there seemed to have been a movement to bring order to this chaos and reform to the condemned culture. This was the state of affairs when this young boy assumed the throne.

What does it say about the boy king?

2 Kings 22:2 And he did right in the sight of the LORD and walked in all the way of his father David, nor did he turn aside to the right or to the left.

- Concerning the thirty-one year reign of Josiah, the text states that "...*he did right in the sight of the LORD.*" 2 Chr 34:2 says the same. He did right in a nation of

condemned wrongdoers and the result was stunning. The nation of Israel would experience something that so unique, applicable and encouraging for not only that generation, but for our generation today. In the path of a coming and inevitable destruction, the nation was given a stay of execution for a few more decades. **THAT IS RIGHT! GOD WILL DELAY THE DOWNFALL OF A DEATH-ROW NATION AND ITS PEOPLE UNDER CERTAIN CONDITIONS.** This has always been a quality of God.

- He would have spared Sodom and Gomorrah had there been a certain number of righteous people (Gen 18:26-33).
 - He spared the pagan nation of Nineveh for a few decades when they reacted righteously to the preaching of Jonah. The nation was on death row and received a temporary stay of execution.
 - Yes, based on the actions of Josiah and others, the promised destruction of the kingdom would not occur for many decades. That generation would not witness their personal obliteration because of the model leadership of Josiah.
- I must remind you that Josiah is viewed by many to be the greatest king in the history of Israel for the way he stood out on the backdrop of the worst kingdom, that of Manasseh. He shined like a light among the crooked and perverse generation of his day and because of it that generation was spared. If there had not been a Josiah Project in the days of Josiah, the destruction would have absolutely, positively taken place, but it did not because they did so.
 - We as a nation are facing tough times ahead. We have strayed from our moral roots in the founding of our country. We have become a nation on the march for sin. Though we are not exactly where Israel was, we are most definitely on the same road. As discussed in the last lesson, we are a nation marching toward our death-row execution and we will accept that. That has been and always will be the pattern set forth.
 - What we must not and will not accept is **DOING NOTHING** in the face of our own decline! Nearly everyone I know is saying they feel hopeless and helpless against the evil forces in our culture that are demeaning our godly heritage, stripping our godly legacy and robbing the coming generations of their godly future.
 - Brothers and sisters, as long as there will be nations, there will be the ends of nations, but we must not waste a good crisis to capitalize for the kingdom of our blessed Savior Jesus Christ. We must have our own **JOSIAH PROJECT** today for the sake of our generation and our children's generation or that destruction will come at a rate that you have not seen in our lifetime and in this place.
 - We cannot control what happened two generations ago or two generations from now, but we DO control OUR own generation and must do so for the sake of Christ and His church. You have the power and you have the opportunity to move mountains in God's name, but will you do so? Stop worrying about tomorrow or yesterday, but start being the pro-active force in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Plan

Here is what we will be covering in this series of lessons called the Josiah Project.

- 1) At the start we learned that all nations, cultures and civilizations have a beginning and end. That was the lesson already covered.
- 2) We must learn about Josiah and what set him apart as great. We must study the JOSIAH PROJECT of yesteryear and learn to apply these great qualities to ourselves. That is where we will be in the next few lessons.
- 3) Finally we will be going through some really awesome plans for our own Josiah Project. These ministries will answer the burning question in the hearts of many, “What can I do?” That will take place in the last lesson.

The Purpose

I promise that the aim of these lessons will be to bring the greatest amount of encouragement for the disheartened over the culture, action for those lacking so and glory of the highest for our God.

How did Josiah do right in the eyes of the Lord?

As the scripture makes clear, Josiah had a life that did right in the eyes of the LORD. What was it that stood out about this young man that stood out and led to national revitalization? How was he right in the eyes of God?

A) At age sixteen he eagerly sought for God.

2 Chr 34:3a “For in the eighth year of his reign while he was still a youth, he began to seek the God of his father David...”

- For eight years it appears that he was receiving some sort of guidance from godly sources. Perhaps Shaphan the scribe, Huldah the prophetess and Hilkiah the high priest were among the many in his religious circle; we do not know for sure. Whatever the circumstances that might have existed, it is obvious that at age sixteen he went on a quest to know more about the God of his formerly great nation.
- He had a heart burning in him that wanted to know more about the Father. He knew there had to be something better for the nation than that of the generation before him. He knew that there had to be changes and that those changes were anchored in some way in God.
- While other sixteen year-olds were out trying to get their driver’s license, playing sports and deciding who to take to the prom, Josiah had a heart that was seeking the LORD. Doing right in the eyes of the Lord must start out here, for God cannot resist the soul that wants to draw closer to Him. *Matt 6:33 “But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you.”*

We have to be seekers of God when it comes to our attitudes.

- If we are ever going to be effective in this morally crippled and dying culture, WE MUST BE GOD-SEEKERS! *Matt 7:7-8 “Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. 8 “For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it shall be opened.*

- We must be a people that can drop to our knees and say to God in our prayers, “I want to know You and draw closer to You than at any other time in my life.” *Ps 14:2 The LORD has looked down from heaven upon the sons of men, to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God.*
- We must hang out with other seekers of God, wanting to know Him like a Father, Savior and Friend. *Ps 27:8 {When Thou didst say,} "Seek My face," my heart said to Thee, "Thy face, O LORD, I shall seek."*
- We need to have an attitude that I will not let You go until I know what you want in my life! *Ps 70:4 Let all who seek Thee rejoice and be glad in Thee; and let those who love Thy salvation say continually, "Let God be magnified."*
- This is one of the things that made Josiah a great leader and is one of the things that will change the outcome for us. God cannot bless the people who are not sincerely seeking Him. If we do, then it will lead us in the right way.

Challenge One: Develop a Seeker's Attitude

- This week pray every day for God to create in you a heart that sincerely seeks Him.
- Talk to others in the church family about ways that you can be more motivated internally about getting to know your Lord to a greater degree.
- Be on the lookout for those opportunities to draw closer to Him.
- Be willing to share your thoughts and experiences with the others of the congregation concerning this topic.

B) At age twenty he cleansed his environment of sin.

2 Chr 34:3b "...and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of the high places, the Asherim, the carved images, and the molten images.

- For over the next six years, this young man did what was in his power to drive the evil away. 2 Chr 34:4-7 says that he tore down pagan altars "*in his presence*". He had all of it destroyed! Incense altars and images were hacked to pieces, graves honoring the pagan priests were destroyed and statues honoring the Asherim were pounded until they were powder. By the time he was done, there was not a soul in the nation who did not know where his heart stood on the issue of sin.
- His grandfather was a vile sinner and his father was a vile sinner, but he was going to be different. He knew quite well that if the evil continued in the land and pressure was not carried out against it, then there would be no hope for his nation. He was not going to play games with sin anymore!

We must war against the sin in our environment!

- This is not saying that we are to go down the street and beat up our neighbor that is the drunk or the fornicator in the bar downtown, for that is not in God's interest or within our power from Him. What it is saying is that we do have an environment of our own in which we do have control. The question is: Have we purged this environment of sin?
- This applies to all, not just to you!
 - What have we been watching on the television in our kingdom?

- What has been the language that we have been using in our kingdom?
- How have we been filing our taxes in our kingdom?
- How do we drive in our kingdom?
- Do we lie, cheat and steal in our kingdom?
- Do we allow fornication, drunkenness, gluttony, gossiping, slander, hate and a thousand other behaviors in our kingdom?
- *1 Cor 6:18-20 Flee immorality. Every {other} sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body. 19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? 20 For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.*
- You may not have an entire nation in your control, but you do have a life that calls for self-control and until we surrender it to God, we will not be blessed and we cannot be part of a Josiah Project.
- We have a life that needs a purging of sin! We cannot take the path of death and expect it to lead to prosperity. *Col 3:5-6 “Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. 6 For it is on account of these things that the wrath of God will come...”*
- You are the Josiah of your own house and there are decisions that must be made. Will you fight against the sin of your land and receive the blessing of God or will you cave into it? I can't control your kingdom, “...but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.” (*Josh 24:15*)

Challenge Two: Purge your own kingdom of sin.

- Take an inventory of the items in your life that you struggling to put away.
- Find a brother or sister to confide in. Share it with them and vice-versa.
- Pray for one another and hold each other accountable to the Lord.
- Sit down as a family and discuss together the behaviors that need to be addressed. Make a pledge together to do so, praying and encouraging one another continually.
- Be willing to share your thoughts and experiences with the others of the congregation concerning this topic.