



Lesson 148

King Josiah the Mighty Iconoclast

Story Elements

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text: 2 Kings 22:1-23:30; 2 Chronicles 34:1-35:25 • Setting: circa 642 – 609 BC, in Jerusalem • Main Characters: God, Josiah, Hilkiah the priest, Shaphan the scribe, and Huldah the prophetess • Plot: Josiah, Hezekiah's great grandson, | <p>becomes a zealous king and reformer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key word(s): “the _____” • Climax: <i>2 Kings 22:8 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.</i> |
|---|--|

Repairing and Reading

1. (2 Ki. 21:19-26) After Manasseh's death, his son Amon began to reign. Amon was a wicked king who walked in the wickedness of Manasseh. Amon's reign was cut to _____ short years when he was assassinated by his own servants in his own house.
2. (2 Ki. 22:1-7) Amon's son Josiah began to reign at the tender age of eight. Unlike his father and grandfather, Josiah was a godly man who loved the LORD with all his heart. In the eighteenth year of his reign, he began to repair the _____.
3. (2 Ki. 22:8-11) During the rehabilitation of the temple, Hilkiah the priest found the book of the Law, or the _____ – the writings of Moses.
 - (a) For many years the written Word had either been destroyed by wicked kings like Manasseh or hidden by faithful priests. Shaphan the scribe read the book to King Josiah who, upon hearing the words of the Law, _____ his clothes.
 - (b) There were probably other copies of the Torah, but they had become rare during the reign of pagan kings. The finding of this official copy in the temple prompted Hilkiah to share it with the king. It is possible that the passage that evoked such an emotional response was Deuteronomy chapters 28-30.¹
 - (c) (2 Ki. 22:12-13) Josiah was so overwhelmed with the understanding of God's judgment, that he sent his men to “*inquire of the LORD,*” i.e., to seek the guidance of a _____ to know what to do.
 - (d) (2 Ki. 22:14-20) The prophetess _____ confirmed the impending doom of Judah but said that the kingdom's godly leader would not see the wrath of God in his lifetime.

Reviving and Reforming

4. (2 Ki. 23:1-14) Inspired by the words of the prophetess and the newly found Torah, Josiah implemented extensive religious reforms in his kingdom including:
 - (a) cleansing of the _____ of any Baal, Asherah, and star-worship paraphernalia;
 - (b) demolishing the houses of the _____ that plied their trade as cult worshipers;
 - (c) destroying the _____ that were used for syncretic worship of the LORD (even the ones that had been built by Solomon many years before – v 13);

¹ Especially note Deu. 29:24-26

- (d) defiling the Topheth used for _____ sacrifice; removing the horse and chariot statues used for sun worship;
- (e) and pulling down _____ pagan altar that was constructed at Bethel.
5. (2 Ki. 23:15-20) Josiah's zealous reform extended all the way into Samaria:
- (a) He destroyed the pagan shrines of old and burned the bones of dead pagan priests and executed the remainder of the living ones on their pagan _____.
- (b) As he viewed an ancient cemetery, Josiah noticed one tomb with a peculiar gravestone. It was the tomb of the unnamed prophet who had previously prophesied (hundreds of years before) saying: *"O altar, altar, thus saith the LORD; Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, _____ 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."* (1 Ki. 13:2, cf. 31-32)
6. (2 Ki. 23:21-27) Josiah also revived the observance of Passover and celebrated it according to the Law of Moses. So good and right was Josiah's Passover celebration that it was said of it that *"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."* (2 Ch. 35:18)
7. (2 Ch. 35:20-27) The bright light of Josiah's reign was snuffed out when he fell in battle to Pharaoh Necho of Egypt. Ironically, Necho had warned Josiah that God had spoken to him to go to war, but not against _____, and if Josiah opposed him in battle, then he would be destroyed. (2 Ch. 35:21)

Application

8. As well-meaning as Josiah was in his zeal and extensive religious reforms, the effect they had on Judah was superficial. What the people needed was not a top-down reform but an inside-out _____ – they needed the one, true Son of David to break the idols of their hearts.
9. 2 Kings 22:15-20) Huldah the prophetess avoided royal niceties in her message to the king and instead spoke as to a common man – for that is who all men are in God's sight. Matthew Henry remarks, *"Even kings, though gods to us, are men to God, and shall so be dealt with; for with him there is no _____ of persons."*²

Notes: _____

Answer Key: Key word(s): "book" • 1. two • 2. temple • 3. Pentateuch; a) rent; c) prophet; d) Huldah • 4. a) temple; b) sodomites; c) high places; d) human; e) Jeroboam • 5. a) altars; b) Josiah • 7. Judah • 8. conversion • 9. respect

How to use this worksheet for personal Bible study: (1) Read the Bible passage given in the **Story Elements** section. (2) Read through the worksheet and try to fill in the blanks without looking at the **Answer Key**. (3) Check your answers with the key and make the necessary corrections. Keep in mind that some answers are a matter of opinion, and often more than one answer is correct. (4) Write down your own thoughts, applications, and questions for further study in the **Notes** section.

² Henry, Matthew. *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume*. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994. Print.