

The Book of the Law Found

Key Verse: *“The king went up into the house of the LORD, ... and all the people, great and small: and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant that was found in the house of the LORD.”*
—II Chronicles 34:30

Selected Scripture:
II Chronicles
34:1,2,8-21,29-33

JOSIAH BECAME KING OF Judah when he was eight years old, reigning thirty-one years in Jerusalem. He “did that which was right in the sight of the LORD.” In the eighth year of his reign, he began to “seek after the God of David his father.” Four years later he purged all the carved images in Judah and Jerusalem, and he also destroyed all the idols throughout the land of Israel.
—II Chron. 34:1-7

In the eighteenth year of his reign Josiah sent Shaphan, governor of the city of Jerusalem, and Joah to repair the Temple. They went to Hilkiah the high priest, delivering money that was in the Temple treasury, to begin the work of restoring the house of God.—vss. 8-12

At this time the high priest found in the Temple a copy of the Book of the Law and gave it to Shaphan to take back to Josiah. Idolatry had supplanted the worship of the true God to such an extent that even the Jewish high priest had only by accident, and for the first time,

seen the Book of the Law. Apparently, he did not realize the significance of this book.—vss. 14-17

As Shaphan read the words of the Law in the book, Josiah became sorrowful and “rent his clothes,” because he realized the extent to which the Israelites had departed from the laws and statutes of the Lord. Josiah ordered a further investigation of the matter, asking Hilkiah and others: “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: ... because our fathers have not kept the word of the LORD.”—vss. 18-21

Those the king had appointed went to a prophetess of Judah, named Huldah, to inquire. She confirmed that the people were guilty of gross sin in departing from the worship of the true God, and his wrath would surely fall upon the nation. However, the Lord had said that because of the tenderness of Josiah’s heart and his humility and desire to please the Lord, he would be permitted to die in peace and would be gathered to his fathers before calamity came upon the nation.—vss. 22-28

Josiah went up to the house of the Lord, along with all the people, and read to them “all the words of the book of the covenant that was found in the house of the LORD.” Then he made a covenant before the Lord, promising to walk according to his commandments, testimonies, and his statutes, “with all his heart, and with all his soul.”—vss. 29-31

Josiah is a wonderful example of those who seek after the Lord and become dedicated to doing his will, once they are enlightened sufficiently to know what he wants them to do. This principle has always been true, whether in the past Jewish Age, the present Gospel Age, or during the future Messianic kingdom. Those who progress in the grace and knowledge of the Lord must make faithful use of the understanding that is revealed to them.—Luke 12:48 ■