

Josiah's Righteous Reign

Key Verse: *“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.”*
—II Kings 23:25

Selected Scripture:
II Kings 22:1-20;
23:1-30

TODAY'S KEY VERSE

describes Josiah, a king of opposite character from his two predecessors. His grandfather, Manasseh, had committed such evil that God proclaimed he would give Jerusalem and Judah over to their enemies. Josiah's father, Amon, followed Manasseh's evil practices and was assassinated by his own palace servants. (II Kings 21:1-23) As a result of this act, “the people of the land slew all them that had conspired against king Amon; and the people made Josiah his son king in his stead.”—vs. 24

Josiah means “Jehovah will support.” Becoming king at the age of eight, it is reasonable to infer that the religiously inclined boy was under the care of his mother and grandmother. (II Kings 22:1,2) His mother's name was Jedidah which means “beloved of Jehovah,” and his grandmother was named Adaiyah, which means “honored of Jehovah.” Their guidance must have helped shape the righteous character of Josiah. The words of Proverbs 31:10-31 speak to the influence that mothers of high morals and righteous characters have on their

children and families.

In the twelfth year of his reign, Josiah ordered the destruction of idolatry which had been established during the rule of his grandfather, King Manasseh. Manasseh promoted idolatry throughout his kingdom, built pagan temples, and even sacrificed one of his sons in the fires of the heathen god, Molech. The destruction of these idols took six years to complete. (II Chron. 34:3-7) Following this, in the eighteenth year of his reign, Josiah turned his attention to repairing the Temple.—II Chron. 34:8; II Kings 22:3-6

This order of events provides a model for our Christian lives. Like Josiah we must first purge ourselves of selfishness and the fleshly idols of the heart. (II Cor. 7:1; Col. 3:8) After having thus become servants of righteousness, we may look toward building up the true temple of God, which the apostles declare consists of Christ's footstep followers, the church.—I Cor. 3:16,17; II Cor. 6:16; I Pet. 2:4,5

Josiah's repairing of the Temple led to the discovery of an ancient manuscript. It was a copy of the "book of the law," either complete or in part, which Moses had written and commanded it to be placed inside the ark of the covenant along with the golden pot of manna and Aaron's rod that budded. When Josiah heard the contents of this lost book, he rent his clothes and was deeply concerned because it indicated the future destruction of his kingdom as a result of the evil done by kings that came before him.—II Kings 22:8-13; Heb. 9:4

To bring the people back to their God, Josiah reinstated the Passover and set the priests and Levites back to their appointed duties in the Temple. (II Chron. 35:1-19) Though Israel would be punished as a nation for breaking their covenant arrangement with God, Josiah was told it would not happen while he was alive. In love God said, "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."—II Kings 22:20 ■