

Josiah

The boy king who remained faithful

2 Chronicles 34 - 35

JOSIAH is our 3rd boy king for Israel.

The first was JOASH.

Those two have names that are similar,
that we easily confuse them.

The first one, JOASH became king at age 7,
Remember that Joash started well, but he ended terrible.

The second was MANASSEH.

He became king at age 12.

That teenager felt smart -- he knew everything.
He started terrible.
But after God punished him, he woke up, repented,
and ended well.

Now the third boy king -- Josiah [*invent a name sign*].
His grandfather was Manasseh.

Josiah became king at age 8,
because his evil father reigned only 2 years.

Josiah did not copy his father.
He did not copy his grandfather.
He copied his GREAT grandfather, HEZEKIAH

When Josiah was age 15 -- a teenager --
he began hungering for God.

He truly trusted God in his heart, for the rest of his life.

Josiah and his great grandfather, HEZEKIAH,
the two of them were really similar.

Both of them destroyed all the idols and the temples for false gods.

Both ordered clean-up and renovation [*improvements*]
for the temple of the Lord in Jerusalem.

During the both clean-ups, priests found the scrolls that had the
Laws that God gave Israel through Moses.

They didn't know God's Laws.
While growing up, they never read God's Word.
No one taught them God's Word.

Josiah and his great grandfather HEZEKIAH,
when they heard God's Laws for the first time,
they were shocked and grieved.

They both knew that Israel deserved punishment from God.

They both tried hard to teach God's Word to all the people.

They both established again celebration of Passover.

But they both had small success.

Why?

Because the people only obeyed the religious rules.
The kings truly repented, but the people didn't.
The kings truly trusted God in their hearts, but the people didn't.

The lesson for us today is clear.

What saves us for heaven?

What establishes our connection with God?

Not any faith [*trust*] that our parents had.

Not our pastor's sermons.

Not any good examples that our teachers lived.

Not any wise laws that our government leaders decide.

Not any religious activity that we do.

Not any religious activity that our ancestors did.

Not any church.

Look-at Josiah.

He understood sin means ignoring God
and not following His commands.

Josiah saw what God's Word said about his sin,
and Israel's sin.

He [*Josiah*] agreed.

That's honest confession.

Josiah also saw that God promised that He wants to forgive.
Josiah answered strongly "YES! PLEASE!.... THANK YOU!"

That is the same for us.

We also must understand that sin means ignoring God
and not following His commands.

We also must admit

what God's Word says about our sin is true.

God also wants to forgive us.

And we also answer a strong, "YES! PLEASE!... THANK YOU!"

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Now we must finish Josiah's story.

When Josiah heard what God's Word said,
he became really worried for the nation of Israel.

He understood that for a long time Israel didn't follow God's commands.

God promised Israel that
if they trust Him and obey Him, He will bless them.

But if they don't trust and obey Him,
they will lose their connection with Him.
they will lose His protection.
they will lose His blessing.
they will lose their land.

Josiah became worried.
What will God do to Israel?

Josiah sent his assistants to a prophet woman name HULDAH,
and ask her.

She answered

[quote]

²⁴ *Here is what the Lord says:
I the Lord will bring trouble to this place
and to the people living here.
All the punishments that are in My book
that the King finished read,
I will bring those punishments on Israel.*

²⁵ The people of Judah left Me and they burned incense to other gods. All the evil things they do make Me angry. They cannot quiet my anger. I will punish them."

²⁶ Tell the king of Judah, who sent you to ask the Lord, The Lord God of Israel says:

²⁷ When you heard my words against this place and its people, you became sorry for your wrong actions and you humbled yourself before me. You tore your clothes that showed you are upset about your sin, and you cried. You are truly sorry. That the reason I heard you, says the Lord

²⁸ So I will let you die in peace. You will not see all the trouble that I will bring to this place and to the people living here. [quote finish]

The king repented and trusted God,
but the people didn't.

God warned them, and warned them,
but they continually ignored Him.

Now God was fed-up.
His patience was finished.

Now He must do as He promised to Moses and Israel 500 years ago. And Josiah couldn't stop Him.

During Josiah's time,
two Old Testament prophets started their work:
JEREMIAH, and
ZEPHANIAH.

Their messages were about God's coming judgment,
and the people mocked them.

The lesson for our church and for our country is the same today.

If we have wonderful leaders that trust and follow God,
that doesn't-matter.
If the people, in their hearts,
they continue to follow their sinful lusts,
God can't continue His blessing.

America's first two Presidents warned us about that.

George Washington said that the most important foundations
[support] for political success are two things:

1. true trust in God
2. MORAL attitudes

The American Constitution forbids laws about religion.
But our 2nd President, JOHN ADAMS, said that if the American
people don't have true religion and strong morals, our Constitution
and our government will fail.

While we daily pray for our leaders,
that God will help them make wise decisions,
we must also pray for our people,
that they will also look to God,
trust Him,
and obey Him.

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How does Josiah's story end?

Age 39 -- reigning for 31 years --
Josiah became involved in a battle
that was none of his business.
God didn't call him to that fight.
Josiah died in that battle.

But maybe that was Josiah's time, anyway.

Three years later
armies from Babylon began their attack against Jerusalem.

Josiah --
he was Israel's last good king.

He tried to teach his people, but they refused to listen.

What about us?

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We pray:

*Lord God,
Help us really trust You.
We don't want to have two faces.
When You speak to our hearts from your Word,
open our eyes and help us see the truth.
Help us answer, "Yes!... Thank you!"
Amen.*

For more information:

Read the whole story about Josiah in 2 Chronicles 34 & 35.

Our first two American Presidents both said that the American system of government will work only if the *people* have true faith in God and they do what is right, not by force of law but by the convictions of their consciences.

President George Washington said in his Farewell Address (9/19/1796):

"Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of patriotism, who should labor to subvert these great pillars of human happiness."

President John Adams speaking to the military in October 1798 said:

*"We have no government armed with power capable of contending with human passions unbridled by morality and religion. Avarice, ambition, revenge, or gallantry, would break the strongest cords of our Constitution as a whale goes through a net. **Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.**"*

Old Testament Lesson: 2 Chronicles 34:1-4, 8

¹ When JOSIAH was eight years old, he became king. He reigned 31 years in Jerusalem.

² He did what the LORD said was right. He lived as his ancestor David had lived, He did not wander-left or wander-right. He continued straight

³ In his 8th year as king, while he was still young -- age 15 -- Josiah began seeking the God of his ancestor David.

In his 12th year as king -- age 19 -- Josiah began to remove idols in JUDAH and Jerusalem. He removed temples for false gods. He removed the wooden and metal idols for the false god named ASHERAH.

⁴ The people tore-down the altars for the false god named BAAL, as Josiah commanded.

⁸ In Josiah's eighteenth year as king -- age 25 -- he made JUDAH and the Temple pure again. He commanded that an assistant named SHAPHAN and two other leaders manage repair for the Temple of the LORD, the God of Josiah.

Epistle Lesson: Hebrews 4:12-16

12. The Word of God lives and is busy. That Word is more sharp than any double edged sword. That enters to divide the soul and spirit, through the JOINTS and MARROW. That judges the wishes and thoughts of people's hearts.

13. All earthly things can't hide from HIM. Everything is naked and open in-front-of HIS eyes, and we must all give answer about ourselves to HIM.

14. We have a great High Priest now living with God in heaven. That is Jesus, the Son of God. Now let us continue strongly in our faith.

15. Jesus, our High Priest can understand our weakness. While Jesus lived on earth, HE got-tempted in every way same-as us, but Jesus never sinned.

16. With Jesus our High Priest we can feel free to stand in-front-of God's throne forgiven. We will receive mercy and kindness to help us in our need.

Gospel Lesson: Matthew 21:33-43

33. Listen to another story: A man had a farm and planted grapes. He built a fence around it, and built a wine making machine, and built a watch tower. Then some farmers agreed to use that place and pay part of the grapes to him.

34. Then the man went and lived in a far country. Happened the grapes fully grew, the man sent servants to receive his share.

35. But the farmers beat one servant, killed the second servant, and stoned the third servant.

36. Then the man sent more servants to get his grapes, and the same thing happened.

37. Finally the man sent his son. He thought the farmers would respect his son.

38. But happened they saw the son coming, they said to one-another, 'This is the son. Come, let's kill him and steal the land.'

39. Then they grabbed him, threw him out of the land and killed him."

40. Then Jesus asked the Jewish leaders, "What do you think the man will do against those bad farmers?"

41. They answered, "He will kill them and give the farm to other farmers. They will give him his correct share."

42. Jesus said, "Did you forget the Holy Writings? 'The stone the builders refused to use, later that stone becomes the important stone. The Lord did this and that is wonderful to see.'

43. That's the reason I told you: God will take His kingdom from you and He will give His kingdom to people wanting to give-back to God HIS correct part."