

People of the Promise
Josiah: Last Light before Darkness
2 Chronicles 34-35; 2 Kings 22-23:30

Opening Song: Ancient of Days

Introduction

*NJFK—Don't just fret about the darkness;
turn on a light.*

Josiah's dad, Amon, was a wicked king who ruled Judah only two years. Before Amon was the 55-year long reign of Manasseh. He was possibly the most evil ruler Judah ever had, but toward the end of his reign, God humbled him, and unlike many who have sold themselves to doing evil, Manasseh repented. It was evidently genuine, because he spent the last years of his reign undoing much of the wicked things he had promoted and turning his efforts toward doing right.

Manasseh died when Josiah his grandson was only 6 years old. *It is possible that Josiah's earliest memories were of Manasseh's determined efforts to reverse all the evil he had done.*

Whatever God used to turn Josiah's young heart, this young man shines like a candle in the night for a nation drowning in idolatry and rushing toward judgment.

Age 8: Came to the throne

Age 16: Began to seek Yahweh

Age 20: Purged idolatry from the land

Age 26: Began repair of the temple of Yahweh; Renewed the covenant with Yahweh; Celebrated the Passover

Age 39: Killed in battle against Pharaoh Necho

Many think that they will begin serving the Lord when they get older. But to those of you that are in elementary school and high school, let me say that *you are not too young (or too old) to make a difference. It does not matter whether your parents or grandparents are faithful servants of God or not. It does not matter if you live in a nation dominated by darkness and sliding toward destruction. If you seek the Lord, there's no telling what He can do through you.*

2 Chronicles 34:1-7

¹ Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem. ² And he did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, and walked in the ways of David his father; and he did not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. ³ For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was yet a boy, he began to seek the God of David his father, and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of the high places, the Asherim, and the carved and the

metal images. ⁴ And they chopped down the altars of the Baals in his presence, and he cut down the incense altars that stood above them. And he broke in pieces the Asherim and the carved and the metal images, and he made dust of them and scattered it over the graves of those who had sacrificed to them. ⁵ He also burned the bones of the priests on their altars and cleansed Judah and Jerusalem. ⁶ And in the cities of Manasseh, Ephraim, and Simeon, and as far as Naphtali, in their ruins all around, ⁷ he broke down the altars and beat the Asherim and the images into powder and cut down all the incense altars throughout all the land of Israel. Then he returned to Jerusalem.

2 Kings 23:15-18

¹⁵ Moreover, the altar at Bethel, the high place erected by Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, that altar with the high place he pulled down and burned, reducing it to dust. He also burned the Asherah. ¹⁶ And as Josiah turned, he saw the tombs there on the mount. And he sent and took the bones out of the tombs and burned them on the altar and defiled it, according to the word of the LORD that the man of God proclaimed, who had predicted these things. ¹⁷ Then he said, "What is that monument that I see?" And the men of the city told him, "It is the tomb of the man of God who came from Judah and predicted these things that you

have done against the altar at Bethel." ¹⁸ And he said, "Let him be; let no man move his bones." So they let his bones alone, with the bones of the prophet who came out of Samaria.

1 Kings 13:1-2

¹ And behold, a man of God came out of Judah by the word of the LORD to Bethel. Jeroboam was standing by the altar to make offerings. ² And the man cried against the altar by the word of the LORD and said, "O altar, altar, thus says the LORD: 'Behold, a son shall be born to the house of David, Josiah by name, and he shall sacrifice on you the priests of the high places who make offerings on you, and human bones shall be burned on you.'"

Age 26:

**Began repair of the temple of Yahweh;
Renewed the covenant with Yahweh;
Celebrated the Passover**

Began repair of the temple of Yahweh

2 Chronicles 34:8, 19-28

⁸ Now in the eighteenth year of his reign, when he had cleansed the land and the house, he sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, and Maaseiah the governor of the city, and Joah the son of Joahaz, the recorder, to repair the house of the LORD his God.

In the process of cleaning and repairing the temple, Hilkiah the high priest found a copy of the book of the law of Moses.

19 And when the king heard the words of the Law, he tore his clothes. **20** And the king commanded Hilkiah, Ahikam the son of Shaphan, Abdon the son of Micah, Shaphan the secretary, and Asaiah the king's servant, saying, **21** "Go, inquire of the LORD for me and for those who are left in Israel and in Judah, concerning the words of the book that has been found. For great is the wrath of the LORD that is poured out on us, because our fathers have not kept the word of the LORD, to do according to all that is written in this book." **22** So Hilkiah and those whom the king had sent went to Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tokhath, son of Hasrah, keeper of the wardrobe (now she lived in Jerusalem in the Second Quarter) and spoke to her to that effect. **23** And she said to them, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: 'Tell the man who sent you to me, **24** Thus says the LORD, Behold, I will bring disaster upon this place and upon its inhabitants, all the curses that are written in the book that was read before the king of Judah. **25** Because they have forsaken me and have made offerings to other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands, therefore my wrath will be poured out on this place and will not be

quenched. ²⁶ But to the king of Judah, who sent you to inquire of the LORD, thus shall you say to him, Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: Regarding the words that you have heard, ²⁷ because your heart was tender and you humbled yourself before God when you heard his words against this place and its inhabitants, and you have humbled yourself before me and have torn your clothes and wept before me, I also have heard you, declares the LORD. ²⁸ Behold, I will gather you to your fathers, and you shall be gathered to your grave in peace, and your eyes shall not see all the disaster that I will bring upon this place and its inhabitants.'" And they brought back word to the king.

Renewed the covenant with Yahweh

2 Chronicles 34:29-33

²⁹ Then the king sent and gathered together all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem. ³⁰ And the king went up to the house of the LORD, with all the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the priests and the Levites, all the people both great and small. And he read in their hearing all the words of the Book of the Covenant that had been found in the house of the LORD. ³¹ And the king stood in his place and made a covenant before the LORD, to walk after the LORD and to keep his commandments and his testimonies and his statutes, with all his heart and all his soul, to perform the words of the covenant that were

written in this book. ³² Then he made all who were present in Jerusalem and in Benjamin join in it. And the inhabitants of Jerusalem did according to the covenant of God, the God of their fathers. ³³ And Josiah took away all the abominations from all the territory that belonged to the people of Israel and made all who were present in Israel serve the LORD their God. All his days they did not turn away from following the LORD, the God of their fathers.

Celebrated the Passover

2 Chronicles 35:16-19

¹⁶ So all the service of the LORD was prepared that day, to keep the Passover and to offer burnt offerings on the altar of the LORD, according to the command of King Josiah.

¹⁷ And the people of Israel who were present kept the Passover at that time, and the Feast of Unleavened Bread seven days. ¹⁸ No Passover like it had been kept in Israel since the days of Samuel the prophet. None of the kings of Israel had kept such a Passover as was kept by Josiah, and the priests and the Levites, and all Judah and Israel who were present, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

¹⁹ In the eighteenth year of the reign of Josiah this Passover was kept.

Age 39: Killed in battle against Pharaoh Necho

2 Chronicles 35:20-25

20 After all this, when Josiah had prepared the temple, Neco king of Egypt went up to fight at Carchemish on the Euphrates, and Josiah went out to meet him. **21** But he sent envoys to him, saying, "What have we to do with each other, king of Judah? I am not coming against you this day, but against the house with which I am at war. And God has commanded me to hurry. Cease opposing God, who is with me, lest he destroy you."

22 Nevertheless, Josiah did not turn away from him, but disguised himself in order to fight with him. He did not listen to the words of Neco from the mouth of God, but came to fight in the plain of Megiddo. **23** And the archers shot King Josiah. And the king said to his servants, "Take me away, for I am badly wounded." **24** So his servants took him out of the chariot and carried him in his second chariot and brought him to Jerusalem. And he died and was buried in the tombs of his fathers. All Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah. **25** Jeremiah also uttered a lament for Josiah; and all the singing men and singing women have spoken of Josiah in their laments to this day. They made these a rule in Israel; behold, they are written in the Laments.

Age 8: Came to the throne

God puts us in our place of service and opportunity to do good or bad.

Age 16: Began to seek Yahweh
Your heart's desire sets the direction of your life. Seek the Lord and He will use you for good.

Age 20: Purged idolatry from the land
If you want to make a real difference, get rid of whatever replaces and dishonors God.

Age 26:
Began repair of the temple of Yahweh
Do what you need to do to make worship a priority.

Renewed the covenant with Yahweh
Commit yourself to ongoing repentance from sin and loyal faith in God.

Celebrated the Passover
Rejoice in the redemption the Lord has provided to rescue you from slavery and make you His own.

Age 39: Killed in battle against Pharaoh Necho
Your time to serve the Lord is brief, so get started right away. There is no guarantee of tomorrow.