

Teen Titans – Josiah

2 Kings 22:1-23:30, 2 Chronicles 34:1-36:1

Background

- Now that we've finished up our Wonder Woman series where we studied some of the amazing ladies of scripture, we now turn for the next several weeks to some of the Teen Titans in the bible. We're going to study 5 young men who were tried and tested who we can all learn from.
- Today we're going to begin this Teen Titan mini-series by studying King Josiah. He was the last godly king of Judah, and a young man who has some important things to teach us. His story appears in both **2 Kings** and **2 Chronicles**, and I'll be bouncing back and forth between the two. But you can open up in your bibles to **2 Chronicles 34** and follow along with me from there. As you turn to **2 Chronicles 34** (page 385 in the pew bibles) I'm going to pray.
- Pray.
- We're going to break this down into 2 parts today, the Life of Josiah and Lessons from Josiah.

Life of Josiah

- Now before we dive into Josiah's life **PP**, we need to address the two different timelines of events found in scripture. You see, Kings and Chronicles give two slightly different accounts as to how Josiah's reign unfolded.
 - The two timelines aren't contradictory, as the Chronicles timeline fits into the Kings timeline. The Chronicles account just gives more specifics as to what happened earlier in Josiah's reign. Therefore, we're going to use the Chronicles timeline.
- So, Josiah took the throne at 8 years of age, a small boy whose father Amon had just been assassinated. You can imagine that was a pretty traumatic experience, made especially more so by the fact that his father was killed by household advisors who lived around the family while Josiah was growing up.
 - As Josiah takes the throne, the influence of the Assyrian empire is crumbling around him and he rules a kingdom whose people are caught up in idol worship and witchcraft greatly expanded and promoted by his grandfather Manasseh...the faithfulness of his great grandfather Hezekiah was all but a distant memory.
- For the first 8 years of his reign we have no record of anything. But then **PP 2 Chronicles 34:3** gives us some insight, **"For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was yet a boy, he began to seek the God of David his father..."**
 - For some reason, at the age of 16 years old, scripture says that Josiah began to seek the Lord. We have no idea why this happened. Maybe he heard stories of his great grandfather Hezekiah's faithfulness, or maybe one of his godly advisors instructed

him about Yahweh, the one true God. For whatever the reason, Josiah began to seek the Lord at the age of 16.

- **2 Chronicles 34:3** continues and says, **PP** “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.”
 - After seeking the Lord for 4 years, at the age of 20, we see Josiah begin to take action against the pervasive idolatry all around him in his kingdom. Scripture makes clear that the immediate result of his seeking the Lord is to destroy all of the high places and idols he could find.
 - High places were physical locations, that were usually high up on hills and mountains – hence the name – wherein occult practices, witchcraft, and idol worship took place.
 - **2 Chronicles 34:4-5 PP** “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. He also burned the bones of the priests on their altars and cleansed Judah and Jerusalem.”
 - At the age of 20, which was the age of majority in biblical times (see **Exodus 30:14, Numbers 1:3, Numbers 14:26-35**) and was likely when Josiah actually began to make decisions for himself as the King without someone else governing as his proxy, in the 12th year of his reign, Josiah seeks to cleanse Jerusalem and Judah of all idolatry. This, of course, is a big deal and followed in the footsteps of his great grandfather the godly King Hezekiah.
 - Interestingly, according to **Jeremiah 1:2, PP** the prophet Jeremiah, most likely the son of Hilkiah the High Priest during Josiah’s reign, began to hear from the Lord in the 13th year of King Josiah’s reign, almost immediately after Josiah begins to destroy the high places of idolatry.
 - Jeremiah would almost certainly have had some degree of influence on the young king. According to **Zephaniah 1:1**, Zephaniah also prophesied during the reign of Josiah and preached a message of repentance to the people. Nahum and Habakkuk may also have been active during Josiah’s reign, though there is no specific reference to this in scripture.
 - There is certainly no coincidence that all of these great prophets began to hear from the Lord and called the people to repent after Josiah began to cleanse the land of its idol worship.
 - In fact, over the next several years Josiah didn’t just stop with Judah alone. **2 Chronicles 34:6-7 PP** “And in the cities of Manasseh, Ephraim, and Simeon, and as

far as Naphtali, in their ruins all around, 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.”

- After cleansing Judah of all of these abominable high places, **PP** he then traveled to the Northern Kingdom, Israel, and cleansed the land there. He could do this because the Assyrian Empire was so weak and had so little control in the area.
- He went all around the land and tore down all the high places that previously disobedient and evil kings had erected. Read through **2 Kings 23:4-20** for a more detailed account of all the high places that Josiah destroyed.
- But Josiah not only eliminated the High Places themselves, he also eliminated the mediums who practiced witchcraft and necromancy and the false priests of these gods (**2 Kings 23:24**). Josiah ruthlessly removed all temptation to worship anything but Yahweh.
- After several years of cleansing the land, in the 18th year of his reign, when he was 26 years old, Josiah seeks to rebuild and repair the temple of the Lord Most High. **PP** And while these repairs are going on, Hilkiah the High Priest – the father of Jeremiah – finds the Book of the Law/Covenant – which most likely refers to the book of Deuteronomy.
 - How could this scripture have been lost you might ask? Well, with 54 years of evil Kings Manasseh and Amon before him, it’s very easy to understand how the scripture of God would have been lost or set aside and forgotten.
- So the Book of the Law is brought to Josiah and read to him, and when Josiah hears the words of the Book of the Law, he tears his clothes in repentance (**2 Chron. 34:19**). He’s overcome with the sins of himself and his people and is overcome with godly sorrow over these sins.
 - He then searches for direction from the Lord regarding the disobedience of he and his people and seeks out the prophetess Huldah, most likely the aunt of the prophet Jeremiah according to **Jeremiah 32:7**.
 - She tells him, **2 Chronicles 34:27 PP** “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.”
 - She affirms his genuine repentance and promises him that the Lord’s judgment wouldn’t come upon Judah until he died. But the Lord’s judgement will come, there is no way to reverse that at this point.
 - After hearing this personally encouraging, yet disastrous message for the Kingdom of Judah, Josiah seeks to lead his people back to the Lord and has the Book of the

Law read to all the people. He makes a covenant with God to keep his law with all his heart and soul, and the people of Judah also join with him in this covenant (**2 Kings 23:3**)

- Josiah then celebrates a Passover meal that also acted as a covenant renewal the likes of which hadn't been seen in Israel since the days of Joshua (**Joshua 8:30-35, 24:1-26**).
 - **2 Kings 23:22-23 PP** "For no such Passover had been kept since the days of the judges who judged Israel, or during all the days of the kings of Israel or of the kings of Judah. But in the eighteenth year of King Josiah this Passover was kept to the Lord in Jerusalem."
- Sadly, King Josiah's reign came to an early end several years later when he was killed in battle fighting the Egyptians. But throughout his reign the people of God honored their covenant and worshipped Yahweh and heard the call of Jeremiah and the other prophets to repent of their idol worship.
- **2 Kings 23:25 PP** "Before [Josiah] there was no king like him, who 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, nor did any like him arise after him."
 - We may think that King David was the greatest of the kings of God's people, but in terms of obedience and faithfully following the Lord, scripture is clear that there was no other king like our amazing teen titan Josiah.

Lessons from Josiah

- As we reflect on the life of this Teen Titan, I want to draw our attention to several lessons **PP** that we can all learn from his story.
- Lesson Number 1) Respect the Process **PP**
 - Spiritual maturity is a process. Josiah began seeking the Lord at the age of 16. Scripture gives us no record of him responding to the Lord until the age of 20, and it wasn't until he was 26 that he found scripture and repented of his sinful ways and sought to follow the Lord with all of his heart, soul, and strength.
 - Spiritual growth is a process, and we've got to diligently seek the Lord and make our faith our own at every step of the way. You can't follow Jesus just because your parents taught you to, nor is it enough believe in Jesus because that's what everyone else around you is doing.
 - It's critical that all of us seek the Lord for ourselves, submit to Him because of our own choice and desire and then continually grow as the Lord matures us.
 - But the reality is **PP** spiritual growth takes time, will involve much failure and heartache, but the process if maturing spiritually will be the greatest and most fulfilling journey of your life.

- Every season of our life prepares us for the next season. As we seek the Lord, he will introduce new situations and circumstances to further our spiritual walk precisely when He knows we're ready to take that next step of faith.
 - And often times he does that through seasons of trial or seasons of ongoing waiting....which can be very frustrating or discouraging.
 - You who are frustrated with where you are spiritually need to stop looking to the future, don't try to rush the process. Instead, seek to serve and grow right where you are now. Not until we've learned what the Lord has for us in this season will He begin the transition to the next.
 - Spiritual Maturity is a Process...respect the process.
- Lesson Number 2) Ruthlessly Remove Idols **PP**
 - Recognize that the first thing Josiah did when things began to click for him and he really made his faith in the Lord his own was to remove all of the idols from his life and the lives of his people.
 - There is no way you can get serious with the Lord if your heart is divided and following after competing gods. In fact, you'll probably have a hard time hearing him at all because your heart and mind will be so consumed by other things.
 - You may say, well I don't have any idols I worship. Well, let's look at how you spend your time and your money. Where you spend your time and your money will tell you what you worship. (**Matthew 6:21**)
 - How much time and money do you spend on your phone or social media or video games? How much time do you spend on relationships or seeking relationship – a boyfriend or girlfriend, a husband or wife, or children? How much time do you devote to your job? How much time and money do you devote to hobbies, or sports, or exercise, or food, or education. Or how about how much time and money you spend on yourself – your own selfish pursuits. We are often our biggest idol.
 - And these are all things that in their proper place aren't necessarily bad things, but when they get out of control can consume us...there's a whole host of other things that are outright sinful that any of us can get caught up in.
 - And Josiah teaches us that **PP** if we're going to be serious about seeking God we have to remove those things from our lives that distract us from giving all of ourselves to the Lord.
 - That might mean breaking up with a boyfriend or girlfriend. It might mean taking a good long break from a hobby or activity to regain balance. It might be not taking that promotion at work or giving up

some responsibility. It might be releasing your strangle hold on your kids and letting your life revolve around the Lord instead of them.

- I trust that whatever it is the Lord is laying that on your heart right now. Do you feel it? Do you hear it? That's the Lord showing you what idols compete for your devotion to Him alone. Listen to Him, respond to His Spirit and do not hesitate to remove them from your life so that you can hear Him more clearly, draw closer to Him in devotion, and experience His power in your life more vividly than ever before.

- Ruthlessly remove the idols in your life

- Lesson Number 3) Repent **PP**

- Humble yourself and repent. It's one thing to seek the Lord and follow His ways and do the things you know you should do. But one of the true marks of genuine submission to the Lord is when you're confronted with your sin. Do you experience true godly sorrow and repent of your sin like Josiah did? Our teen titan tore his clothes when he learned of his sin, a very clear sign of his sorrow and desire for repentance, and sought the Lord's direction as to how to rectify his sin.
- **2 Corinthians 7:10 PP** "For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death."
- The word repent is just a fancy way of saying acknowledge your sin before the Lord, turn away from your sin, receive the forgiveness of God and run to Him.
- There is no spiritual growth without repentance. In fact, there is no true relationship with God without repentance.
 - Every single one of us has fallen short of God's perfect standard (**Rom. 3:10, Rom. 3:23**). The only way we can have forgiveness and hope in the future and relationship with the God of the universe is to acknowledge that we're messed up and need someone to rescue us. That's what Jesus has done for us. He took our punishment by dying on a cross for us. He took what we deserve so that through submitting to Him in faith we might have true life, and unquenchable hope, and lasting peace, and experience real love for the rest of our lives.
 - Josiah recognized his need for a savior and cried out to the Lord and the Lord forgave him and saved him and used him to do a mighty work in all of Judea.
- Repent and turn to Jesus Christ. He's waiting for all us with open arms, and will give us His Spirit that we may overcome our trials and draw closer to Him.

- Lesson Number 4) Read the Word of God **PP**

- Josiah's repentance came after he heard the Word of God. (**Romans 10:17**) Church, if you're not reading your bible regularly you will not grow spiritually because there'll be no repentance and maturation. It's as simple as that.
 - Now I know many of you don't like to read. Fine, then listen to the bible. You all have phones that will literally read it to you. You can download the bible app and have it read right to you.
 - But don't just read the bible – study it, memorize it, meditate upon it, talk about it with other believers. Let the word of God sink into your heart.
 - **Psalm 1:1-3 PP** “Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law [the Word of God] he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.”
- And don't only read scripture, as you mature in your faith it will become necessary to read the works of godly saints who have gone before us who can encourage us with the truth of scripture and give us new insights.
 - Read biographies on godly people who did amazing things for the Lord. Study apologetics and theology, practice spiritual disciplines. Listen to sermons from other godly men and women gifted in teaching and preaching.
- The more you read the Word of God and submit to its truth the more you will walk in the blessings of the Lord.
- Lesson Number 5) Remain in Godly Community **PP**
 - Church, recognize that Josiah did not do this alone. He had godly men and women around him speaking into his life fueling his spiritual growth. From Hilkiah, to Jeremiah, to Huldah the prophetess, Josiah relied on those more spiritually mature than he to help guide him and speak truth into his life so that he may grow.
 - Seek out discipleship. Find more mature, wiser followers of Jesus from whom you can learn and be poured into.
 - Church, we have got to live life in godly community. Join a life group. There's no excuse not to make the time for a life group or some other expression of more intimate godly community. And if you believe you absolutely don't have time, then I would hope that you honestly evaluate your life for idolatry, because there's probably some to be found.
 - Surround yourselves with godly friends who'll be good influences in your lives. Just as importantly, remove those individuals who are bad influences in your life.

- There is no excuse for not living in community. Its a choice that you make to isolate yourself or don't seek to plug in or serve. Yes, I know it can be difficult, especially for the more introverted among us or those who have young kids. And yes, I know that God's people can be real jerks sometimes and we're not always great at welcoming newcomers. Ask the Lord to help you overcome those things and meet people who can love you and speak truth into your life right where you are, and who you can just enjoy being with.

Conclusion

- Church, remember the life of this teen titan, but more than that take these lessons to heart **PP**: respect the spiritual process, ruthlessly remove the idols in your life, repent, read the word of God, and remain in godly community. If you do these things, I promise you your life will be full of struggle, and like Josiah you may die on the battlefield of this world, but the Lord will strengthen you as you go and you will experience joy, peace, and hope like never before and you will be remembered as a godly servant of the Lord and will enjoy the blessings of God for all eternity. Amen. Amen.