

File No. 87

II KINGS 22:1 – 23:3, 21–23

II Chronicles 34:1 – 35:19; Deuteronomy 28:1–25

JOSIAH'S GREAT WORK FOR GOD / THE BOOK FOUND

(SBS Bk 3 Story Nos. 44 & 45)

Story Notes

Josiah was young when crowned and was a contemporary of Jeremiah. His heart was stirred, and, in the height of his reign, he sought to repair the temple damaged by years of abuse and neglect. (The account has similarities to when Joash was stirred to repair the temple at the end of Athaliah's evil reign; see II Kings 11:12–15.) This clean up located a copy of Israel's covenant with God (probably *Deuteronomy*) which recounted the duties of Israel's worship and the curses which would come if they were not performed. Josiah was dismayed (tearing of garments was a sign of deep sorrow or remorse). What did all these renovations mean if the Lord was not pleased with the nation. Wrath was already on the land and he sought from a prophetess what he should do.

The sins of our parents are ours as well if we do not flee from them. But what seems to be uppermost in Josiah's mind is not who sinned but that he stood in continuity with all the Lord's people and that God's purpose was being worked out over the generations. All he could do was stand where he stood and do what was true.

He had already done what was proper, that is, he had been penitent and humble, and this is how he would remain. The judgement would still come because of the shame brought on God's name by the sins in the days of his father Manasseh (a culmination of years of apostasy), but this judgement would not arrive in his days.

Chapter 23

Josiah vowed his own allegiance to the Lord's covenant and secured the compliance of the people. The covenant was read and the Passover celebrated. Then, he set about to purge the land of its evils. False priests were deposed, and in some cases, killed. False objects of worship were put beyond use ever again by burning and grinding, and altars were defiled with the remains of the dead. We are surprised to discover that part of what Josiah cleaned up was what Solomon had installed over 300 years before. Israel's kingdom had been marked by almost continuous idolatry.

©2000 Grant Thorpe