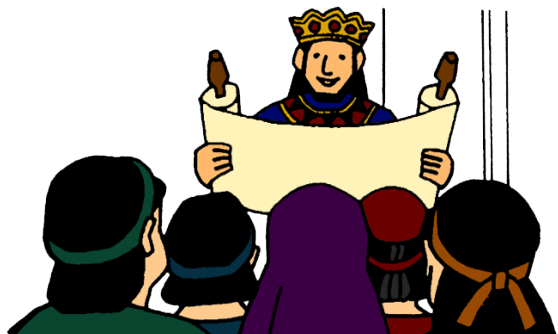


# King Josiah

Scripture Reference: [2 Kings 22-23:30](#); [2 Chronicles 34-36](#)



**Suggested Emphasis:** Read the bible regularly.

**Memory Work:** If you are teaching a number of Old Testaments stories then you might use the time to teach the names of the [Books of the Old Testament](#).



## Story Overview:

Unlike his evil grandfather and father, King Josiah tried to lead the people of Judah back to God. When he ordered the temple of the Lord cleaned and repaired, the high priest found the Book of the Law that had been lost and forgotten. Convicted by the words in the book, Josiah gathered all of the people together and read the Book of the Law to them. For the first time in hundreds of years, God's people celebrated the Passover according to God's law. Although the Word of God had been in the temple all along, it had not been read.

## Background Study:

After the death of Solomon, the people of God had divided into two kingdoms - Israel and Judah. During the reign of Hezekiah, Israel had been captured by the Assyrians. Although Judah had had some good kings, it was often corrupt and was beginning to follow more and more in the footsteps of the rebellious Israel. [Background Information on the Divided Kingdom](#).

At the age of eight Josiah inherited a corrupt kingdom that had turned away from the Lord. His father, Amon, had been the king of Israel only two years before his servants assassinated him.

Both Amon and his grandfather, Manasseh, had done “evil in the eyes of the Lord” ([2 Kings 21:20](#)). Manasseh reigned fifty-five years, longer than any other king of Judah, and he was considered the wickedest king. It was Manasseh who introduced many forms of idolatry to Israel and broke Israel’s covenant with the Lord. Eventually, it was Manasseh’s sins that destroyed the nation and led it into captivity.

Taking over such a kingdom would have been bewildering to anyone, but Josiah showed great wisdom, for he “began to seek the God of his father David” in the eighth year of his reign ([2 Chronicles 34:3](#)). By his “twelfth year” Josiah had instructed that idols were to be destroyed in Judah, Jerusalem, and throughout the land. In the eighteenth year of his reign he raised money to repair the temple.

It was during the work on the temple that a discovery was made – the Book of the Law was found. Scholars disagree whether this book included the entire Pentateuch (the first five books of the Bible) or only the Book of Deuteronomy. It may be that only Deuteronomy was found, since the reforms after this event are closely related to this book.

When Josiah read the Book of the Law, he was distressed and tore his clothes because of what it said. God’s Word told of the destruction that was to come to the nation because of the evil idolatry that had occurred under Manasseh and Amon.

The King sent Hilkiah, the priest, and four other officials to “inquire of the Lord”. This was done by going to speak to the prophetess, Huldah. Her message from God was that God’s judgement would fall on the people and their home. Because of his genuine response to God, King Josiah would not have to see this take place ([2 Kings 22:13-20](#)). Later on we will find that this was a message with both “good news” and “bad news”. The good news was that Josiah would not have to see the full measure of God’s wrath on the people. The bad news was that he did not see it because he was killed in battle ([2 Kings 23:29-30](#)).

After Huldah’s prophesy, Josiah called all the people together to read God’s Word to them. Then he renewed the covenant to keep God’s commands, regulations and decrees with all his heart and soul. The people pledged themselves to the same covenant ([2 Kings 22:1-3](#)).

Following that, there was a major cleansing of the idolatrous altars and shrines of the high places. The observance of the Passover was restored.

Josiah reigned from 640 to 609 B.C. During his reign Judah returned to reading God’s Word and experienced spiritual renewal. For his work Josiah is remembered as one of the greatest kings of Judah. *“There was no king like Josiah before or after him. He obeyed the Lord with all his heart, soul and strength. He followed all the Teachings of Moses.”* ([2 Kings 23:25](#)).



## Way to Introduce the Story:

Before class hide a scroll (rolled up paper) in the room. You can write something like “read God’s Word” on the scroll. Bring cleaning supplies to class and let the children help clean the classroom. Tell them that there is something important in the room that they might find when they are cleaning. “In today’s lesson we are going to learn about a time when someone was cleaning and found a very important scroll.”

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## The Story:

A boy named Josiah was eight years old when he became king of Judah. His father had been a bad king but Josiah wanted to be good. He obeyed God and tried to teach the people to obey God too. He was king for 31 years.

One of the things that King Josiah wanted to do was to clean up and repair the temple of the Lord. The people had ignored the temple and it looked worn out and dirty.

King Josiah sent his royal assistant, Shaphan, to the temple of the Lord to tell the priests to clean up the temple. Shaphan told the High Priest, Hilkiah, to gather the temple money that the people had given. The money was to be given to those who would do all of the repair work. People who are working to repair the temple need the money.

Hilkiah did as Shaphan asked. The money was given to the supervisors of the work on the temple. There were carpenters, builders and stoneworkers. The money was also used to buy timber and cut stone to repair the temple.

Everyone worked very hard to repair and clean the temple. Hilkiah found something in the temple and brought it to Shaphan. It was a scroll. This scroll was very special. It told all about the Law of God. Some of the laws in the scroll were laws that the people had forgotten about. Hilkiah told Shaphan to read it because it was God's word.

When Shaphan read the scroll he knew it was very important. He took it to King Josiah and reported, "The money has been given to the workers and supervisors at the temple. And Hilkiah the priest gave me this scroll." Shaphan read the scroll to King Josiah.

Josiah was very upset when he heard the words of the scroll. He knew that the people had not been obeying the Lord. He sent word to Hilkiah the priest that he wanted everyone to obey God's word. King Josiah told Hilkiah and four of his most important helpers to go and ask advice from the Prophetess, Huldah. As a prophetess, Huldah gave people special messages from God. Huldah's message was that the people had disobeyed God for a very long time and they would have to be punished. The Lord knew that the King loved his people so the message from the prophetess was that King Josiah would not live to see his people suffer.

Once King Josiah heard God's message, he asked the elders of the people to gather all of the people. The King went to the temple and spoke in front of all the people. He made a promise to God. He promised to follow God and obey His commands, rules and laws. He promised to do what was written in God's Word. Then all the people made the same promise.

One of the things written in the scroll was about the Passover. The Law of God said that the Jews should celebrate the Passover every year. The people had not celebrated the Passover for many years. They had not obeyed God because they had not read his word. It is easy to disobey the Lord if we do not read his words.

When the people heard what God wanted, they celebrated the Passover. They learned God's Word and obeyed Him. The people were happy that they could read God's Word. Have you read God's word - the bible - today?

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## Ways to Tell the Story:

This story can be told using a variety of methods. Always remain true to the facts found in the Bible but help children connect to its meaning by using drama, visual aids, voice inflection, student interaction and/or emotion.

[Click here for visual aids and story-telling methods.](#)

[Click here to download these illustrations and slideshow.](#) Be selective. Each teacher is unique, so only use the

illustrations that best relate to how YOU tell the story in THIS lesson. Too many illustrations can be confusing, so eliminate any that cover other stories or details you do not wish to emphasise in this lesson.

## Review Questions:

1. How old was Josiah when he became king? Eight years old
2. What did the High Priest find when he was cleaning and repairing the temple? A scroll of God's word
3. When King Josiah heard the words in the scroll what did he do with the scroll? He read it to the people
4. Why had the people not been celebrating the Passover every year? Because God's Law had been lost and they had not read about it
5. How will we know how to obey God? Read His word - the bible.

## Song Suggestions:

- [Read Your Bible, Pray Every Day Song](#)
- [B-I-B-L-E Song](#)
- [Books of the Old Testament Song](#)
- [Books of the Old Testament](#)
- [B-I-B-L-E](#)
- Refer to the [Song Page](#) on this website for more options.

## Learning Activities and Crafts:

[\(How to choose the best learning activities for my teaching situation\)](#)

*Activities:*

- Review how to look up a scripture (testament, book, chapter, verse)
- Older children can learn how to use a concordance
- Choose a passage of scripture ([Psalm 119:9-11](#), [Romans 10:17](#), [Matthew 7:24](#) or [2 Timothy 3:16-17](#), for instance) and let children take turns reading it aloud to the class
- Have bible drills where you call out a scripture reference (book, chapter, verse) and the children race to find it and read it aloud.
- Arrange to meet after church and clean and straighten the auditorium (be sure to hide a scroll for the children to find while they are cleaning)
- Bring a food item or candy bar to class and place in front of the children. Lay your bible beside it. Talk about how simply looking at the candy bar is not enough. It is not until we take it and eat it that we can enjoy it. The Bible is the same. Just carrying it around or looking at it is not enough. It is not until we read it that we can receive the benefits. Read a few Scriptures you have chosen beforehand. After you have discussed this with the children then let them enjoy the candy bar.



- [\(Costumed Bible Characters\)](#) A little play-acting is often a fun way to tell the story or review what has been learned. Here are some ways you might use the idea:
  - After telling the story guide the children in dressing up in costumes and acting it out.
  - Or, you can dress up in a simple costume to act the part of one of the Bible characters. As you begin to speak “get into character” as if you were actually the person in the story visiting the class today to tell them what has happened to you.
  - Or, later in the class session, as a review, the teacher can also use the same method to ask the children review questions as if you are one of the characters in the story talking to the children.

#### Crafts:

- Make a bible times scroll

Check the [Teaching Ideas](#) page on this website for ideas that are adaptable to any lesson.



[Click here for “King Josiah” printables to print on A4 size paper](#)

[Click here for “King Josiah” printables \(Letter size-USA\)](#)

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## Other Online Resources:

- [Colouring page and puzzle worksheets-King Josiah \(Calvary Curriculum\)](#)
- [Colouring page with text \(Ministry Spark\)](#)

- [Craft: Instructions for a simple paper crown \(DLTK\)](#)

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