



Week 2

2 Kings 22-23

The Big Idea: Revival happens when people begin to be led by the word of God and God takes over every area of their lives.

Pre-Group

STUDY: 2 Kings 22-23

Before interacting with this guide, all leaders and group members should study the referenced text using the HEAR Method.

H: Highlight, or take note of, things in the passage that stick out to you as you read.

E: Explain what the passage means by asking simple questions of the text:

- **Why was this written?**
- **To whom was it originally written?**
- **How does it fit with the verses before and after it?**
- **Why did the Holy Spirit include this passage in the book?**
- **What is He intending to communicate through this text?**

A: Apply the text to your life. What does God want you to learn from this text?

R: Respond to God in prayer.

Questions for Study and Reflection:

- 1.) When the people of Israel began to ignore the word of God they began to drift from God's plan and path. How have you seen this be true in your own life as well?
- 2.) When Christians don't listen to the word, other voices take scripture's place. What other voices direct your life instead of scripture?



Week 2

2 Kings 22-23

Major Themes:

1. Revival always starts with God's word taking the center stage in the life of believers.
2. When revival happens, God takes over every area of life. There are no silos or compartments in the Christian life. God invades every area.

Summary:

By the time Josiah comes on the scene as King of Judah things aren't just bad. The situation is desperate. For roughly 300 years the people of Israel had been on a roller coaster religiously. At the high points, the King would instruct the people to worship rightly. At the low points, the nation descended into utter chaos and idol worship. As time went on though the highs didn't go as high and they came less often, and the lows of idolatry became the norm instead of moments of disobedience.

When Josiah is put on the throne as a child there had been a fifty-seven year period of the highest wickedness imaginable. Idolatry had taken over to the point where child sacrifice to foreign gods was customary in Judah (as encouraged by Josiah's dad and granddad). Things had gotten so bad that people of God had entirely forsaken the Temple and the Law of God. In short, they had almost completely abandoned worship of God and had completely forgotten his word.

Despite this desperate situation there is a small remnant faithful to God. When Josiah becomes King, this remnant does their best to protect Josiah and lead him, such that when Josiah was in the eighth year of his reign he began to follow the Lord. When Josiah turned toward God, one of his main objectives was the restoration of the temple. As this project was completed the priest came across a book, a book long put away and forgotten. The book was the Law of God (at Least the book of Deuteronomy, quite possibly the entire Pentateuch). Picture this! The people of Israel had put away God's book and subsequently forgot about it! Talk about not reading your Bible!



Week 2

2 Kings 22-23

When the book is rediscovered it's brought to Josiah and read in his presence. At the words of God, Josiah is broken. The King realizes that the people of God have been unfaithful to God and he is broken in repentance. We are told that he seeks the advice of a prophetess who gives very bleak news. God's wrath is coming and it won't be turned away. Nevertheless, because Josiah has been faithful God will not bring wrath in his day.

Despite the horrible news, Josiah is not content to do nothing and let the people go on in sin. Instead, he leads the people to repentance and revival. In 2 Kings 23 1-3 we are told that the people all come together and make a covenant to abandon their sinful practices and pursue God. The nature of the covenant in 2 Kings 23:1-3 makes clear that this is an extensive covenant. It's a covenant to make the totality of the people's lives about God.

Josiah's story paints a picture of the process of revival. Drift happens when the people of God abandon the word of God. Revival happens when the word of God begins to direct the people of God. As revival happens it invades the totality of our lives and produces men and women who are wholeheartedly committed to God.

Group Guide

Introduction

A recent study shows that United States Evangelicals are twice as likely to use Facebook in a given day than they are to read their Bible.

If drift happens as a result of forgetting the Word of God, I don't think there is any question that the people of God in the United States are drifting. We are listening to other voices and all too often those other voices are directing our lives.

Opening question: Why is it so easy for us to ignore the Word in our lives and start to drift away from God's direction?



Week 2

2 Kings 22-23

Understanding and Discussion

Have someone read: 2 Kings 22:1-11 & 23:1-3

A Scary Situation

Josiah is introduced to the throne as a child, and the Kingdom of Judah has been in a downward spiral for the past 57 years. An eight year-old on the throne in the midst of a wicked kingdom. What could go wrong?

Despite having the odds stacked against him, Josiah begins trying to lead the people of Israel toward proper worship in the beginning of his reign. As a young man he notices the state of the Temple and orders repairs to be made.

Everything that is going to happen after this is the result of one person taking a stand and beginning to pursue God.

Revival is a movement of God's people, but we have to remember that revival starts with one person.

Question: Do you believe that revival can start with one person like you? How can you take steps in your life that can lead to revival among God's people?

The Word Takes Center Stage

Thankfully, God's word is recovered in Josiah's project. When it is, it takes center stage among God's people. Josiah is broken that the people have disregarded the commands of God. Later in 2 Kings 23:1-3, the people of God commit to follow the commands of



Week 2

2 Kings 22-23

God found in the word in its entirety. The people fully commit themselves to the word. All of it.

We too must remember that if we are going to have revival it will happen as a result of the word of God taking center stage in the people of God and the people of God submitting themselves to every part of it.

Question: Do you find that there are parts of the Bible, or teachings of the Bible, that are hard for you to accept? How do you submit yourself fully to the Word of God, even if it goes against our fleshly instincts?

Question: How do you make the word of God a routine part of your life?

God Wants Everything

One final thing to notice about Josiah's revival is the way that it invaded every part of life.

First, notice that this was not just a personal affair. This was a corporate affair. Revival starts with one person, but if a revival is truly a revival it moves in the entire population of God's people.

Second, notice that this affected every area of people's lives. The commitment we see in v. 2-3 of chapter 23 indicates a commitment that covers every known area of the



Week 2

2 Kings 22-23

Jewish life, public, private, religious, and home. The point is that God has not come for part of our lives. He's come for all of our lives. We don't get to compartmentalize our walk with God. He's either God of everyday or not God at all.

Question: Are there times when you are tempted to compartmentalize your walk with God? How do you fight against that?

Prayer:

Before you pray, go around the group and ask if there are any prayer concerns.

Close your group in prayer by asking for God to help us live lives that are wholly dedicated to him.

Resources

Teacher's Bible Commentary

The Spiritual Revival Under Josiah (2 Kings 22:1–23:30)

The passage.—Most of what is said in the Bible about Josiah relates to the reformation that came about during his reign. We learn from the general background of the passage that there must have been many in Judah who were trying to bring the nation back to God. The project of repairing the Temple was already being planned.

The book of the law of God was found in the course of the repair of the Temple. Probably it was portions of the book of Deuteronomy. When Josiah heard it read he realized how wicked his nation was. He led his people to repent. The public reading of



Week 2

2 Kings 22-23

the Word of God was a vital part of the spiritual revival. Josiah directed that the heathen shrines be destroyed and the idolatrous priests be removed. Cult prostitutes were driven out. Heathen altars were desecrated to render them unusable. Josiah carried his reforms throughout Judah and even into the territory formerly held by Israel.

The public celebration of the Passover in Jerusalem was instituted. Prior to this it had been a home ceremony.

Truth for today.—Spiritual revival in our day waits for a renewal of interest in seeking the will of God above all else. The Word of God is powerful still. Public reading of it by our leaders in the spirit of repentance would enable God to speak to the people. The secret of the revival under Josiah consisted of prayer, Bible reading, repentance, and forceful action against sin.

Tatum, S. L. (1972). [2 Kings](#). In H. F. Paschall & H. H. Hobbs (Eds.), *The teacher's Bible commentary* (pp. 218–219). Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers.

The Bible Panorama

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

V 1–2: RIGHTEOUS Surprisingly, King Josiah is righteous. Coming to the throne at the age of eight, he reigns for thirty-one years in Jerusalem as king of Judah. He walks righteously and straightforwardly with the Lord. **V 3–7: REPAIRS** He orders the temple to be repaired. **V 8–11: READING** Hilkiah, the high priest, finds God's Book of the Law. Shaphan, the scribe, reads it to King Josiah, who immediately tears his clothes as a sign of mourning. **V 12–13: RESPONSIVE** So responsive is Josiah to the Word of God, that he commands that enquiry is made of the Lord about the book, recognising that God's wrath has been incurred by His people's disobedience. **V 14–20: REVELATION** A party of five men, including Hilkiah and Shaphan, go to Huldah the prophetess. She confirms God's anger against Israel and Judah, but that He has noted the tender-heartedness and humility of King Josiah. Accordingly, Josiah will not be judged for this with the rest of his people. God's revelation is relayed to Josiah.



Week 2

2 Kings 22-23

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

V 1–3: READING AND RIGHTEOUSNESS King Josiah of Judah reads the Book of the Covenant before all the people, small and great. This includes the priests and the prophets. He makes a covenant on behalf of the people to follow the Lord wholly and wholeheartedly. All the people agree with this covenant, to practise righteousness according to God's Word. **V 4–16: REPENTANT AND RADICAL** In a sweeping, thorough and godly reformation, King Josiah removes anything used in worship which is tainted with idolatry, immorality, child-sacrifice or false worship. Idolatrous priests are also removed. Idols are ground to powder and cast in the brook Kidron. Even the bones of false prophets are burned. **V 17–18: REGARD AND REVERENCE** When Josiah realises that one of the tombs belongs to the man who prophesied against idolatry and against the altar, and in fact had prophesied the very actions that Josiah was taking, the king highly esteems this prophet of God and reverently tells his men to leave his bones where they are. **V 19–25: REMOVAL AND REMEMBRANCE** All the shrines and the high places in Samaria are also removed, the priests executed, and mediums and spiritists put away. The remembrance of the Passover is reinstated in the eighteenth year of Josiah's reign. Just as Hezekiah's trust in God was unique among the kings of Judah, past or future, so is Josiah's wholehearted repentance. **V 26–27: RESOLUTE AND REJECTING** Even the righteousness of Josiah cannot turn away the wrath of God against all the wickedness that Judah has done through Manasseh and Ahab. Judah will still bear its judgement. **V 28–30: REIGN AND RESPECT** The reign of Josiah continues until he is killed in battle against Pharaoh Necho, king of Egypt. His respectful servants take him to Jerusalem to bury him. His son, Jehoahaz, succeeds him as king of Judah. **V 31–37: RULERS AND RETURN** King Jehoahaz of Judah only reigns for three months after succeeding Josiah, at the age of twenty-three. After such a godly father comes an evil son, who is taken captive by Pharaoh Necho of Egypt. He makes Eliakim, Josiah's son, king in the place of Jehoahaz, and changes his name to Jehoiakim. Jehoiakim is Necho's puppet, and gives him all the wealth of the country. He is twenty-five years old and reigns for eleven years in Jerusalem as king of Judah. He also is an evil king. After the reign of godly King Josiah, the kings return to evil.



Week 2

2 Kings 22-23

Chrispin, G. (2005). [*The Bible Panorama: Enjoying the Whole Bible with a Chapter-by-Chapter Guide*](#) (pp. 170–171). Leominster, UK: Day One Publications.

Wiersbe Expository Outline

II. Josiah's Reign (22–23)

The assassination of Amon brought Josiah to the throne at the young age of eight years. Four key events summarize this godly king's brief life and reign:

A. Salvation (22:1–2; 2 Chron. 34:3).

In the eighth year of his reign, when he was sixteen, Josiah began to seek the Lord. No doubt Hilkiah the high priest taught the lad the Word of God. It is interesting that his mother's name (Jedidah) is the same "pet name" that God gave to Solomon (2 Sam. 12:25). It means "beloved of the Lord" and may indicate that Josiah's mother was also a godly influence in his life. Jeremiah and Zephaniah were also ministering then.

B. Reformation (2 Chron. 34:3–7).

The king was now twenty years old and mature enough to start purifying the city and the land of the idolatry of Manasseh and Amon. Josiah's ultimate goal was to restore the temple and bring the nation back to the worship of the Lord, but he knew that he would have to destroy the old sins before he could establish new obedience. Unfortunately, "Josiah's revival" was a surface thing; it never did get to the hearts of the people. While Jeremiah the prophet wept much at Josiah's death (2 Chron. 35:25; Jer. 22:10–12), we do not find him commending the youthful king for his so-called "revival." Certainly the king and his council were sincere in their attempts at reform, but the people did not follow; they remained idolaters at heart.

C. Restoration (22:3–23:28).



Week 2

2 Kings 22-23

Having purged away the idols, Josiah could now concentrate on re-establishing the true worship of Jehovah. It is not enough to tear down; we must also build up. He commanded the priests to gather money and repair the temple. See 2 Chron. 34:8–35:19. While repairing the temple, the high priest discovered a copy of the Law of Moses, long since discarded by an idolatrous nation. When he heard the Law read, Josiah immediately knew that Judah was in great danger, and he sent to inquire of the Lord what to do. Huldah the prophetess, who lived in the “second quarter” of the city (“college” in 22:14), gave the anxious king God’s message: (1) Judah and Jerusalem would be judged for their sins, but (2) King Josiah would not see these judgments because he had humbled himself before the Lord. Josiah immediately shared the Word of God with all the elders of the land, and he led the way in a great service of dedication, reaffirming the Covenant of God. He continued further purges of the land, including the defiling of “Topheth”—the valley of the son of Hinnom where the people burned their children as sacrifices to Molech. As we noted earlier, the king made this valley a garbage dump and Ge-hinnom became, in the NT, “Gehenna”—a vivid illustration of hell. The Mount of Olives had been a “mount of corruption” (23:13), but Josiah restored it. During his purge, Josiah uncovered the altar of wicked King Jeroboam as well as the tomb of the prophet who had warned him; and thus Josiah fulfilled the prophecy of 1 Kings 13:1–5. God’s Word never returns void. The king not only restored the temple and the Law, but he also restored the Passover feast that had long been neglected by the nation. He wanted to remind his people that they had been “bought with a price.”

What did Josiah’s reforms and restorations accomplish? During Josiah’s day, there was peace and blessing; but God did not withdraw His original promise of judgment because of the sins of Manasseh (23:26–27). Josiah’s godly life and ministry had stayed the hand of judgment a few more years, but captivity was coming and nothing could prevent it.

D. Assassination (23:29–37; 2 Chron. 35:20–27).

The Egyptian army probably came by sea and landed on the coast of Palestine. Pharaoh made it clear that he was not against Judah, but only moving on his way to



Week 2

2 Kings 22-23

attack Assyria. Josiah did not seek the mind of the Lord; in fact, it appears that he deliberately disobeyed God's will; see 2 Chron. 35:22. Even his disguise could not protect him once he was out of the Lord's will, and he was slain in battle. See Zech. 12:11 for an allusion to the great mourning at Megiddo for Josiah. The king should have heeded the wisdom of Prov. 20:3 and 26:17. Perhaps Judah was an ally of Assyria at this time and the king was obligated to act, but it is clear that Pharaoh would have preferred not to battle King Josiah. Josiah's son Jehoahaz reigned only three months before Pharaoh deposed him and put him in bonds. Pharaoh chose another of Josiah's sons, Eliakim, and made him king, giving him the new name of "Jehoiakim"—"whom Jehovah will raise up." We will consider his life and reign in our next study.

Wiersbe, W. W. (1993). [*Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the Old Testament*](#) (2 Ki 22–23). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

Holman Concise Bible Commentary

Josiah (22:1–20). Josiah (640–609 b.c.) began to reign at age eight after the assassination of his father. In his eighteenth year of reign (621 b.c.), Josiah initiated repairs on the temple Manasseh and Amon had neglected. The high priest Hilkiah recovered the book of the law among the rubble of the temple.

When the book was read before the king, he feared the Lord's wrath and sent a delegation to the prophetess Huldah to inquire of the Lord concerning Judah's fate. She prophesied that the Lord would destroy Judah for its idolatry but that Josiah would not witness it because he had repented. Scholars generally agree that this "book" was Deuteronomy or some part of it.

Josiah's Reforms and Death (23:1–30). Josiah renewed the covenant with the Lord and celebrated the Passover in an unprecedented way. He removed all evidence of pagan worship and centralized worship in Jerusalem. As the prophet had predicted (1 Kgs. 13:32), Josiah tore down the shrine at Bethel, which Jeroboam had erected three centuries earlier. The biblical writer gave Josiah the highest commendation of all the



Week 2

2 Kings 22-23

kings: “Neither before nor after Josiah was there a king like him who turned to the Lord as he did.” Jerusalem enjoyed a national revival under Josiah. However, it came to a crashing halt when the king was killed at Megiddo by Pharaoh Neco. Josiah had attempted to block Neco’s efforts to aid the faltering Assyrians in their last stand against Nebuchadnezzar’s Babylonian armies.

Mathews, K. A. (1998). [The Historical Books](#). In D. S. Dockery (Ed.), *Holman concise Bible commentary* (p. 153). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.