

Josiah

Introduction

Josiah is introduced to us as having been made king of Judah by the people. His wicked father Amon had begun his reign at 22 and only reigned 2 years dying at the age of 24. He died as a result of a conspiracy among his servants. Nothing is said as to what he had done to create a circumstance where his own servants plotted to kill him.

Amon was twenty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned two years in Jerusalem. 22 But he did evil in the sight of the LORD, as his father Manasseh had done; for Amon sacrificed to all the carved images which his father Manasseh had made, and served them. 23 And he did not humble himself before the LORD, as his father Manasseh had humbled himself; but Amon trespassed more and more. 24 Then his servants conspired against him, and killed him in his own house. 2Chr. 33:21-25

The one point that seems to indicate the sequence of events is “*he did not humble himself before the Lord, as his father Manasseh had humbled himself.*” There is a necessary inference that something happened to humble him and he refused to be humbled. Manasseh had refused to be humbled until he was taken into captivity. God did something to allow his son Amon to also humble himself, but he refused to do so. Whether his servants conspired against him because he did something to them because of his lack of humility, or God simply allowed this terrible event to occur because he did not humble himself is something we cannot determine.

What they did was reprehensible enough that the people in the land put them to death. This leads us to conclude that though the servants thought he was worthy of death, the people of Judah did not agree with their decision or the way they carried it out.

But the people of the land executed all those who had conspired against King Amon. Then the people of the land made his son Josiah king in his place. 2Chr. 33:25

After they executed these wicked murderers, they made his son Josiah, king at the age of 8. Since Amon was 22 when he began his reign and 24 when he died, his son Josiah was born when Amon was 16. The fact that he had an 8 year old son when he was only 24 is probably a testament to his ungodly life.

Josiah Begins His Reign

It is evident from some of the things stated in the account of his life that he did not start making the decisions of a king at 8 years of age. He had not even reached an age of accountability. The summary of his life sums up his reign from the age of 8 until his death 31 years later at 49.

Josiah was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem. 2 And he did what was right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the ways of his father David; he did not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. 2Chr. 34:1-2

But the real details are given in the explanation of how it all began. Since he began his reign at 8 and in his 8th year as king he began to seek the God of his father David, he was 16. It is interesting that while Ammon was fathering a child at 16, his son was intensely interested in seeking God. Also important is the statement that it was “*the God of his father David.*” Perhaps this meant that David had become his role model. Yet even at 16, he was not yet ready to begin. The purging started in his 12th year when he was 20.

For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was still young, he began to seek the God of his father David; and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of the high places, the wooden images, the carved images, and the molded images 2Chr. 34:3

Purging Judah and Jerusalem

So the fulness of the power of his reign did not begin until he was twenty years of age. He did not begin with the temple as Hezekiah had done. His first mission was to rid Judah and Jerusalem of

all idolatry. He did this with great zeal and was very methodical. He went out and personally oversaw it all as well as actively participating in it. Anything and everything that had anything to do with idols, he removed. We get some insight into their idols at that time. They were wooden images, carved images and molded images.

They broke down the altars of the Baals in his presence, and the incense altars which were above them he cut down; and the wooden images, the carved images, and the molded images he broke in pieces, and made dust of them and scattered it on the graves of those who had sacrificed to them. 2Chr 34:4-5

Not only did he remove them, but he took the additional step of breaking them all into dust and then carrying that dust to the graves of those who had sacrificed to them, making them unclean.

At the same time, he was taking the bones of idolatrous priests burning their bones on these altars. The interesting question about these bones is whether they were already in the graves, in some type shrine, or still alive and just executed when he burned them. In doing all this he made everything unclean for idolatry to be practiced there, but at the same time he cleansed everything in Judah and Jerusalem.

He also burned the bones of the priests on their altars, and cleansed Judah and Jerusalem. 2Chr. 34:5

Purging All the Land of Israel

Unlike other kings since the divided kingdom, he did not stop with Judah and Jerusalem, but determined to cleanse other portions of the land of Israel. Going out into the cities and breaking down the altars in “*Manasseh, Ephraim, and Simeon, as far as Naphtali.*”

*And so he did in **the cities of Manasseh, Ephraim, and Simeon, as far as Naphtali** and all around, with axes. 7 When he had broken down the altars and the wooden images, had beaten the carved images into powder, and cut down all the incense altars throughout all the land of Israel, he returned to Jerusalem. 2Chr. 34:6-7*

There is so little information given here. He may have only wanted the entire land cleansed and so he went out and destroyed all the idols in the land of Israel that were being used by the heathen. Yet it is also possible there are still Israelites living in these places and he wanted them to be cleansed as well. This fits well with something Hezekiah(great grand father) had said.

*1 And **Hezekiah sent to all Israel and Judah**, and also wrote letters to Ephraim and Manasseh, that they should come to the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, to keep the Passover to the LORD God of Israel. ... 5 So **they resolved to make a proclamation throughout all Israel, from Beersheba to Dan**, ... 6 Then **the runners went throughout all Israel and Judah** with the letters from the king and his leaders, and spoke according to the command of the king: “Children of Israel, return to the LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel; then He will return to the remnant of you who have escaped from the hand of the kings of Assyria 9 For **if you return to the LORD, your brethren and your children will be treated with compassion by those who lead them captive, so that they may come back to this land; for the LORD your God is gracious and merciful, and will not turn His face from you if you return to Him.**” 2 Chr. 30:1-9*

After sending out runners with a proclamation to all Israel inviting them to the Passover, He urged them to “*return to the LORD.*” He promised two things: First, their brethren in captivity would be treated with compassion and second, that they might “*come back to this land.*”

After fulfilling all these things, Josiah returned to Jerusalem.

Finding the Book of the Law

In the 18th year of his reign, when he was 26, he had completed the cleansing of the land and the temple and was now prepared to renovate the temple. As Hezekiah before him, he found it in severe disrepair. When we add the 29 years of Hezekiah’s reign(2Kings 18:18), the 55 years of Manasseh(2Kings 20:21) it had been more than eighty years since the temple had been fully renovated.

In the eighteenth year of his, when he had purged the land and the temple, he sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, Maaseiah the governor of the city, and Joah the son of Joahaz the recorder, to repair the house of the LORD his God. 2Chr. 34:8-9

While they are gathering up the money and beginning the work of restoring the temple, they found the Book of the Law. That it had been lost and forgotten is a terrible witness to the unfaithfulness of Judah. It is interesting that even after they find it, it does not appear to have made a very strong impression on them until they read it. It almost seems like an afterthought. Instead of beginning with the important fact that they had found the law, they begin speaking of how the work is going.

*Now when they brought out the money that was brought into the house of the LORD, **Hilkiah the priest found the Book of the Law of the LORD given by Moses.** 15 Then Hilkiah answered and said to Shaphan the scribe, **“I have found the Book of the Law in the house of the LORD.”** And Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan. 16 So Shaphan carried the book to the king, bringing the king word, saying, **“All that was committed to your servants they are doing. 17 And they have gathered the money that was found in the house of the LORD, and have delivered it into the hand of the overseers and the workmen.”** 2Chr. 34:14-17*

Even though Shaphan had already reads portions of the book, it had not made a great enough impression to make it the first and most important report to the king.

*Then Hilkiah the high priest said to Shaphan the scribe, **“I have found the Book of the Law in the house of the Lord.”** And **Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it.** 2 Kings 22:8-9*

Only after giving this report is the fact that they found the book revealed.

*Then Shaphan the scribe told the king, saying, **“Hilkiah the priest has given me a book.”** **And Shaphan read it before the king.** 2 Chron 34:18*

The King Hears the Words of the Law

The kings response to the book is much more powerful than that of his servant Shaphan. As he hears the words, the emotions finally reach the point where he tears his clothes.

*Thus it happened, **when the king heard the words of the Law, that he tore his clothes.** 2Chr. 34:19*

Tearing clothes has a long history among God’s people. Job appears to be the first, but it continued through the history of Israel. It was done as a sign of anguish and sorrow.

*Then **Job** arose, tore his robe, and shaved his head; and he fell to the ground and worshiped. 21 And he said: **“Naked I came from my mother’s womb, And naked shall I return there. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; Blessed be the name of the Lord.”** Job 1:20-21*

*Then **Jacob** tore his clothes, put sackcloth on his waist, and mourned for his son many days. Gen 37:34-35*

*But **Joshua** the son of Nun **and Caleb** the son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes; Num 14:6-7*

*Then **Joshua** tore his clothes, and fell to the earth on his face before the ark of the LORD until evening, he and the elders of Israel; and they put dust on their heads. Josh 7:6-7*

*Therefore **David** took hold of his own clothes and tore them, and **so did all the men who were with him.** 12 And they mourned and wept and fasted until evening for Saul and for Jonathan his son, 2 Sam 1:11-12*

*And so it was, when **King Hezekiah** heard it, that he tore his clothes, covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the LORD. 2 Kings 19:1-2*

*When **Mordecai** learned all that had happened, he tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the midst of the city. He cried out with a loud and bitter cry. Est 4:1-2*

So when I heard this thing, I tore my garment and my robe, and plucked out some of the hair of my head and beard, and sat down astonished. Ezra 9:3-4

12 And Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul, Hermes, because he was the chief speaker. 14 But when the apostles **Barnabas and Paul** heard this, they tore their clothes and ran in among the multitude, Acts 14:12, 14

As the anguish grew within his heart, he felt a compelling need to inquire from God. The passages of the blessings and curses in Deuteronomy 27-29 would bring great fear to him.

Then the king commanded Hilkiah, Ahikam the son of Shaphan, Abdon the son of Micah, Shaphan the scribe, and Asaiah a servant of the king, saying, 21 “Go, inquire of the LORD for me, and for those who are left in Israel and Judah, concerning the words of the book that is 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.” 2Chr. 34:20-21

Evidently, they already knew about the means to consult God about this matter. We don't know what criteria God had for choosing prophets. Nor do we know why occasionally it was a woman instead of a man. Since this is the eighteenth year of his reign, Jeremiah is already working.

The words of Jeremiah the son of Hilkiah, of the priests who were in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin, 2 to whom the word of the LORD came in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign. Jer 1:1-2

Zephaniah was also working at this time, though he may not have been alive this late into Josiah's reign.

The word of the LORD which came to Zephaniah the son of Cushi, the son of Gedaliah, the son of Amariah, the son of Hezekiah, in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah. Zeph 1:1

Yet for reasons known only to God, the prophetess Huldah was chosen. Nothing more known about her.

So Hilkiah and those the king had appointed went to Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tokhath 2Chr. 34:22

God Revealed His Purpose

Her words offer no hope for the people. The decree had already been determined and because of the evil hearts of those Josiah is ruling over, Josiah's own repentance doesn't have the power change anything.

Then she answered them, “Thus says the LORD God of Israel, ‘Tell the man who sent you to Me, 24 “Thus says the LORD: ‘Behold, I will bring CALAMITY on this place and on its inhabitants, all the curses that are written in the book which they have read before the king of Judah, 25 because they have forsaken Me and burned incense 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 not be quenched.’” 2Chr. 34:23-25

But as Ezekiel pointed out not too many years later, Josiah did deliver his own soul.

The word of the Lord came again to me, saying: 13 “Son of man, when a land sins against Me by persistent unfaithfulness, I will stretch out My hand against it; I will cut off its supply of bread, send famine on it, and cut off man and beast from it. 14 Even if these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they would deliver only themselves by their righteousness,” says the Lord God. Ezek 14:12-14

Josiah has risen to the level of these three men. For God has offered deliverance to him.

But as for the king of Judah, who sent you to inquire of the LORD, in this manner you shall speak to him, ‘Thus says the LORD God of Israel: “Concerning the words which you have heard — 27 because your heart was tender, and you humbled yourself before God when you heard His words against this place and against its inhabitants, and you humbled yourself before Me, and you tore your clothes and wept before Me, I also have heard you,” says the LORD. 28 “Surely 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 calamity which I will bring on this place and its inhabitants.”’” So they brought back word to the

king. 2Chr. 34:22-28

Yet it might not have been the deliverance most of us would have look for. For he died in battle against Pharaoh.

In his days Pharaoh Necho king of Egypt went to the aid of the king of Assyria, to the River Euphrates; and King Josiah went against him. And Pharaoh Necho killed him at Megiddo when he confronted him. 2 Kings 23:29-30

Yet though he perished, God still fulfilled His words. As Isaiah had revealed not too many years earlier.

The righteous perishes, And no man takes it to heart; Merciful men are taken away, While no one considers That the righteous is taken away from evil. 2 He shall enter into peace; They shall rest in their beds, Each one walking in his uprightness. Isa 57:1-2

Josiah Makes a Covenant

Josiah then called all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem and all the people great and small to the house of the LORD. Then he began to read the words that had so touched his heart to all of them.

*Then the king sent and **gathered all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem.** 30 The king went up **to the house of the LORD, with all the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem** — the priests and the Levites, and **all the people, great and small.** And he read in their hearing **all the words of the Book of the Covenant** which had been found in the house of the LORD. 2 Chr. 34:29-31*

After all the words were read, Josiah made a covenant to follow the LORD and keep His commandments. The words about the commitment of the rest of those there is summed up with the phrase: "he made all who were present in Jerusalem and Benjamin take a stand." If subsequent history had borne out the sincerity of their commitment, we could say that both free will and his command were involved. But since they all fell away as soon as he died, and Jeremiah later could find no one who was truly sincere, it is impossible to know if it was weakness, hypocrisy that led to later apostasy.

*Then **the king stood in his place and made a covenant before the LORD, to follow 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 And **he made all who were present in Jerusalem and Benjamin take a stand.** So the inhabitants of Jerusalem did according to the covenant of God, the God of their fathers. 2Chr. 34:31-32*

*"Run to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem; See now and know; And seek in her open places **If you can find a man, If there is anyone who executes judgment, Who seeks the truth, And I will pardon her.** 3 O Lord, are not Your eyes on the truth? **You have stricken them, But they have not grieved; You have consumed them, But they have refused to receive correction.** They have made their faces harder than rock; they have refused to return. 4 Therefore I said, "**Surely these are poor. They are foolish; For they do not know the way of the Lord, The judgment of their God.** 5 **I will go to the great men and speak to them, For they have known the way of the Lord, The judgment of their God.**" **But these have altogether broken the yoke And burst the bonds.** Jer 5:3-5*

Although we don't know exactly when the words of Jeremiah occurred, it could not have been during the reign of Josiah because he would have been that one man and besides that, it clearly states that the remained faithful to the Lord as long as he was king. After the death of Josiah there were only four more kings and only 23 years before the destruction of Jerusalem. Jehoahaz reigned for 3 months, then Jehoiakim who reigned 11 years(during his reign Nebuchadnezzar takes the first captives. After Jehoiakim, came Jehoiachin who reigned 3 and finally, Zedekiah the last king reigned 11 years.

*Thus Josiah removed all the abominations from all the country that belonged to the children of Israel, and **made all who were present in Israel diligently serve the Lord their God. All his days they did not depart from following the Lord God of their fathers.** 2Chr. 34:32-33*

Josiah removed All the abominations from All the country*(more detailed account)*

There is a divergence here in the writings of the Kings and Chronicles. While Chronicles has already described all the cleansing that Josiah has done, Kings now places these events between the covenant they made and the keeping of the Passover.

There are two possibilities. Either Kings is simply summing up all that Josiah had already done and the “*thus*” above is the end, or another purging began. After finding the book of the Law, it may be that a more meticulous cleansing could have begun with far greater precision. Yet some of the wording also seems to indicate that things that had already been done were being described again. The deciding factor is the chronology, there just wasn’t any time for the events in Kings to occur after.

For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was still young, he began to seek the God of his father David; and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of the high places, the wooden images, the carved images, and the molded images. 2 Chron 34:3-4

In the eighteenth year of his reign, when he had purged the land and the temple, he sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, Maaseiah the governor of the city, and Joah the son of Joahaz the recorder, to repair the house of the LORD his God. 2 Chron 34:8

In the eighteenth year of the reign of Josiah this Passover was kept. 2Chron 35:19

Cleansed the Temple and carried the ashes to Bethel

A true restoration movement. Josiah was so zealous for God, that he stripped the entire land of Israel, including the ten tribes of all idolatry. He removed everything that had anything to do with idolatry. He even removed the things that had been done by Ahaz, Manasseh, Solomon and Jeroboam. When he finished the land of Israel had been returned to it’s original condition before all these idols had been built. His example in restoring things back into the same condition they had been when the Law had originally been written is a great example of everyone who would follow.

Josiah was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem. 2 And he did what was right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the ways of his father David; he did not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. 2Chr. 34:1-2

Now before him there was no king like him, who turned to the Lord with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the Law of Moses; nor after him did any arise like him. 2Kings 23:25

If there is any example that revealed how important our own attitude is today regarding the desire to bring the church into the exact condition it was at the time of Christ and His apostles it is this verse. He was considered the greatest king before or after. He was commended because he *turned to the Lord with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the all the Law of Moses*. That is exactly what we are doing if we do the same with the Law of Christ. Seeking to make God’s eternal purpose as pristine as possible so even the angels can see His manifold wisdom and not ours.

to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, 11 according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord, Eph 3:10-12

Josiah commanded the high priest and the priests under him along with the Levites(doorkeepers) to remove anything in the temple that had any connection with idolatry. They took them outside of the city and burned them. It specifically states that he carried the ashes of all forms of idols found in the temple to Bethel, which will become very important as this account proceeds.

And the king commanded Hilkiah the high priest, the priests of the second order, and the doorkeepers, to bring out of the temple of the LORD all the articles that were made for Baal, for Asherah, and for all the host of heaven; and he burned them outside Jerusalem in the fields of Kidron, and carried their ashes to Bethel. 2Kings 23:5

Removed the Idolatrous priests and everything connected with them

After cleansing the temple itself, he moved to the city of Jerusalem and the cities of Judah. He removed the priests, the places (temples, groves, etc.) and their contents. The ritual booths would be the houses of prostitution created to worship the idols. Josiah also did all he could to defile them to the point where no one could come back to them later.

*Then he **removed the idolatrous priests** whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense on the **high places in the cities of Judah** and in the **places all around Jerusalem**, and those who **burned incense to Baal, to the sun, to the moon, to the constellations, and to all the host of heaven**. 6 And he brought out the wooden image from the house of the LORD, to the Brook Kidron outside Jerusalem, burned it at the Brook Kidron and ground it to ashes, and threw its ashes on the graves of the common people. 7 Then he **tore down the ritual booths of the perverted persons that were in the house of the LORD**, where the women wove hangings for the wooden image. 8 And he brought all the priests from the cities of Judah, and **defiled the high places where the priests had burned incense, from Geba to Beersheba** 2Kings 23:*

Once again, "Topheth, in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom" is mentioned as it was in the days of Manasseh his grandfather. Josiah did all he could to defile this place, Jeremiah was sent there later to prophesy against it. The timing is about right since Jeremiah began his work in Josiah's thirteenth year, but there is nothing to tie it directly.

And he defiled Topheth, which is in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter pass through the fire to Molech. 2Kings 23:10

The words of Jeremiah ... to whom the word of the LORD came in the days of Josiah, in the thirteenth year of his reign. Jer 1:1-2

***And go out to the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, which is by the entry of the Potsherd Gate; and proclaim there the words that I will tell you**, 3 and say, 'Hear the word of the LORD, O kings of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem. Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: "**Behold, I will bring such a catastrophe on this place, that whoever hears of it, his ears will tingle.** 4 "**Because they have forsaken Me and made this an alien place, because they have burned incense in it to other gods whom neither they, their fathers, nor the kings of Judah have known, and have filled this place with the blood of the innocents** Jer. 19:2-4*

By the time of Jesus, this valley had become the very thing God had proclaimed. Then it was called *gehenna*, which is the Greek rendering of this valley. It is the name we use translate "hell."

He removed even the vestiges that Hezekiah and Manasseh had not fully removed, going back even to the days of Solomon.

*Then he **removed the horses that the kings of Judah had dedicated to the sun**, at the entrance to the house of the LORD, by the chamber of Nathan-Melech, the officer who was in the court; and he **burned the chariots of the sun with fire**. 12 **The altars that were on the roof, the upper chamber of Ahaz, which the kings of Judah had made, and the altars which Manasseh had made in the two courts of the house of the LORD**, the king broke down and pulverized there, and threw their dust into the Brook Kidron. 13 Then the king **defiled the high places that were east of Jerusalem, which were on the south of the Mount of Corruption, which Solomon king of Israel had built for Ashtoreth the abomination of the Sidonians, for Chemosh the abomination of the Moabites, and for Milcom the abomination of the people of Ammon**. 14 And he broke in pieces the sacred pillars and cut down the wooden images, and filled their places with the bones of men. 2Kings 23:*

He then went to Bethel, which was the seat of the false religion set up by Jeroboam and destroyed it. It was mentioned above that Josiah had burned all the idolatrous artifacts he had found in the temple at Jerusalem and brought the ashes to Bethel. Perhaps all this happened at the same time, or he returned later to do all this.

To the last detail (including his name), he fulfilled everything that priest had prophesied so many years ago.

And behold, a man of God went from Judah to Bethel by the word of the LORD, and Jeroboam

stood by the altar to burn incense. 2 Then he cried out against the altar by the word of the LORD, and said, "O altar, altar! Thus says the LORD: **'Behold, a child, Josiah by name, shall be born to the house of David; and on you he shall sacrifice the priests of the high places who burn incense on you, and men's bones shall be burned on you.'**" 1Kings 13:1-2

Whether Josiah was following this or doing it on his own is not stated. But it would be difficult to read your own name in the prophesy and not seek to do everything God had said about him.

Moreover the altar that was at Bethel, and the high place which Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel sin, had made, both that altar and the high place he broke down; and he burned the high place and crushed it to powder, and burned the wooden image. 16 As Josiah turned, he saw the tombs that were there on the mountain. **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 which the man of God proclaimed, who proclaimed these words.** 17 Then he said, **"What gravestone is this that I see?"** So the men of the city told him, **"It is the tomb of the man of God who came from Judah and proclaimed these things which you have done against the altar of Bethel."** 18 And he said, **"Let him alone; let no one move his bones."** So they let his bones alone, with the bones of the prophet who came from Samaria. 2Kings 23:15-18

Now Josiah also took away all the shrines of the high places that were in the cities of Samaria, which the kings of Israel had made to provoke the LORD to anger; and he did to them according to all the deeds he had done in Bethel. 20 **He executed all the priests of the high places who were there, on the altars, and burned men's bones on them; and he returned to Jerusalem.**

This concludes the specifics of Josiah restoration of the worship of the LORD and the complete removal of all the taints and errors of all previous kings.

Josiah's Passover

While Kings merely sums up this Passover event, Chronicles gives the details. Yet some very critical things are stated in this summary. Again emphasizing the importance of a full restoration to the original words to be followed.

It is made very clear that Josiah's command was clear: **"Keep the Passover to the LORD your God, as it is written in this Book of the Covenant."** They did not rely on tradition or human wisdom. Josiah was very specific! It must be kept **"as it is written in this book of the Covenant."** So they followed precisely what the book had decreed.

We do exactly the same thing with the Lord's supper. We have stripped away all the traditions from the Catholics and everything that was added during the middle ages and do it exactly as it is revealed in the New Testament. We follow frequency, day, elements and purpose.

Because Josiah did this, God is very clear: **"Such a Passover surely had never been held since the days of the judges who judged Israel, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel and the kings of Judah."** What an amazing commentary! Just to do things exactly as they were originally recorded made this passover different than anything that had been observed since the days of the judges.

Then the king commanded all the people, saying, "Keep the Passover to the LORD your God, as it is written in this Book of the Covenant." 22 Such a Passover surely had never been held since the days of the judges who judged Israel, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel and the kings of Judah. 23 But in the eighteenth year of King Josiah this Passover was held before the LORD in Jerusalem. 2Kng. 23:22

Details in Chronicles

These details now become more powerful since they explain why the above statements were made, making it clear that he followed the Law of Moses to the letter.

First he chose the right day, and he **"set the priests in their duties and encouraged them for the service of the house of the LORD."**

Now Josiah **kept a Passover to the LORD in Jerusalem**, and they slaughtered the Passover lambs **on the fourteenth day of the first month**. 2 And he and **set the priests in their duties encouraged them** for the service of the house of the LORD. 2Chr. 35:1-2

Second, he commanded them to do everything as it had been commanded “*following the written instruction of David king of Israel and the written instruction of Solomon his son.*” Because the temple had been built, and the ark was no longer being moved from place to place the Levites had fulfilled their initial role and had been instructed in how to serve in the temple. They must prepare themselves exactly as commanded, not just by Moses, but also by David and Solomon who were also inspired.

This is very similar to those today those who claim the words of Jesus have more power than the words of His apostles.

*Then he said to the Levites who taught all Israel, who were holy to the LORD: "Put the holy ark in the house which Solomon the son of David, king of Israel, built. It shall no longer be a burden on your shoulders. Now serve the LORD your God and His people Israel. 4 **Prepare yourselves according to your fathers' houses, according to your divisions, following the written instruction of David king of Israel and the written instruction of Solomon his son.** 2Chr. 35:3-4*

Third, they were to slaughter the Passover, consecrate themselves, prepare them for the brethren, **that they may do according to the word of the LORD by the hand of Moses.**" Once again, Josiah is deeply concerned about following the Law.

*And stand in the holy place according to the divisions of the fathers' houses of your brethren the lay people, and according to the division of the father's house of the Levites. 6 So **slaughter the Passover offerings, consecrate yourselves, and prepare them for your brethren, that they may do according to the word of the LORD by the hand of Moses.** 2Chr. 35:5-6*

Fourth, Josiah was generous in making certain that everyone had what was necessary to keep the Passover. Josiah gave 33,000; his leaders gave 2,500; and the leaders of the Levites gave 5,500.

*Then Josiah gave the lay people lambs and young goats from the flock, all for Passover offerings for all who were present, to the number of thirty thousand, as well as three thousand cattle; these were from the king's possessions. 8 And his leaders gave willingly to the people, to the priests, and to the Levites. Hilkiah, Zechariah, and Jehiel, rulers of the house of God, gave to the priests for the Passover offerings **two thousand six hundred from the flock, and three hundred cattle.** 9 Also Conaniah, his brothers Shemaiah and Nethanel, and Hashabiah and Jeiel and Jozabad, chief of the Levites, gave to the Levites for Passover offerings **five thousand from the flock and five hundred cattle.** 2Chr. 35:7-9*

Fifth, everything was prepared. Josiah made certain that everything necessary from the Law was done, then it was fulfilled exactly as the Law demanded.

*So **the service was prepared, and the priests stood in their places, and the Levites in their divisions, ACCORDING TO THE KING'S COMMAND.** 11 And they slaughtered the Passover offerings; and the **priests sprinkled the blood** with their hands, while the **Levites skinned the animals.** 12 Then **they removed the burnt offerings** that they might give them to the divisions of the fathers' houses of the lay people, **to offer to the LORD, AS IT IS WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF MOSES.** And so they did with the cattle. 13 Also **they roasted the Passover offerings with fire ACCORDING TO THE ORDINANCE;** but the other holy offerings they boiled in pots, in caldrons, and in pans, and divided them quickly among all the lay people. 14 Then **afterward they prepared portions for themselves and for the priests, because the priests, the sons of Aaron, were busy in offering burnt offerings and fat until night; therefore the Levites prepared portions for themselves and for the priests, the sons of Aaron.** 15 And the singers, the sons of Asaph, were in their places, ACCORDING TO THE COMMAND OF DAVID, Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun the king's seer. Also the gatekeepers were at each gate; they did not have to leave their position, because their brethren the Levites prepared portions for them. 2Chr. 35:1-15*

Finally, joined with the Passover was the feast of unleavened bread which was also observed exactly as the Law had prescribed. Again, as Kings has summarized, this was a remarkable

Passover and nothing like it had been done since the time of Samuel. None of the kings of Israel had been as meticulous as King Josiah, and God took notice and commended it!

So all the service of the LORD was prepared the same 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 children of Israel who were present kept the Passover at that time, and the Feast of Unleavened Bread for seven days. 18 There had been no Passover kept in Israel like that since the days of Samuel the prophet; and none of the kings of Israel had kept such a Passover as Josiah kept, with the priests and the Levites, 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. 2Chr. 35:1-19

The Close of Josiah's Life

After this description of the Passover in his 18th year, the final 13 years are left in silence. Evidently, he continued to be faithful until his death as the summary of his life indicates. First, there was no king like him either before him or after him. Second, he turned to the Lord with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the Law of Moses. There is no indication that he did not remain like this until the end of his life.

Now before him there was no king like him, who turned to the Lord with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the Law of Moses; nor after him did any arise like him. 2K. 23:25

After Josiah completed all these good things, he died in battle. The events surrounding the battle are vague. In Kings, only the detail that he died are given. For reasons nowhere given, Josiah decided to oppose this Pharaoh.

Now the rest of the acts of Josiah, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? 29 In his days Pharaoh Necho king of Egypt went to the aid of the king of Assyria, to the River Euphrates; and King Josiah went against him. And Pharaoh Necho killed him at Megiddo when he confronted him. 30 Then his servants moved his body in a chariot from Megiddo, brought him to Jerusalem, and buried him in his own tomb. 2Kng. 23:28-30

A few more details of this event are given in Chronicles, but still not enough to fully comprehend what occurred. The Pharaoh sent a message to him that Judah was not the object of this war. With this message, one would have thought that Josiah would have returned home.

Yet added to this was a claim of God's involvement. This was either a lie or the truth, and Josiah was either going against God or did not believe him. Perhaps by using God's name, Josiah had doubt of the true intent of Pharaoh. There just isn't any way to know what was in his heart that led to these final events. The fact that he disguised himself so he could fight against him is another fact that adds to the perplexity of what motivated him. Pharaoh had warned him that God might destroy him. That he was such a godly and righteous man and did not heed this words is so out of his character that we have no basis upon which to even speculate.

But he sent messengers to him, saying, "What have I to do with you, king of Judah? I have not come against you this day, but against the house with which I have war; for God commanded me to make haste. Refrain from meddling with God, who is with me, lest He destroy you." 22 Nevertheless Josiah would not turn his face from him, but disguised himself so that he might fight with him, and did not heed the words of Necho from the mouth of God. So he came to fight in the Valley of Megiddo. 2Chr. 35:21-22

Sadly, even though he was disguised, the terrible warning Pharaoh had given came to pass. Josiah was hit with an arrow and though he lived long enough to return to Jerusalem, he could not be healed.

And the archers shot King Josiah; and the king said to his servants, "Take me away, for I am severely wounded." 24 His servants therefore took him out of that chariot and put him in the second chariot that he had, and they brought him to Jerusalem. So he died, and was buried in one of the tombs of his fathers. And all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah. 2Chr. 35:23-24

This does not end the story of this Pharaoh that does cast some doubt on his credibility. Only a few months after Josiah's death, Pharaoh does attack Judah. Whether this was as revenge for Josiah's

intervention or an indication of his deceit to Josiah is impossible to guess.

*Then the people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah, and made him king in his father's place in Jerusalem. 2 Jehoahaz was twenty-three years old when he became king, and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. 3 Now **the king of Egypt deposed him at Jerusalem; and he imposed on the land a tribute of one hundred talents of silver and a talent of gold.** 4 Then **the king of Egypt made Jehoahaz's brother Eliakim king over Judah and Jerusalem, and changed his name to Jehoiakim. And Necho took Jehoahaz his brother and carried him off to Egypt.** 2Chr 36:1-4*

Not only did the people mourn for Josiah, but Jeremiah also mourned for him. One can only imagine the depth of Jeremiah's grief. Josiah was an ally and a help to Jeremiah in his work. With the death of Josiah, Jeremiah is immediately attacked and those attacks continued for the rest of his life.

Jeremiah also lamented for Josiah. And to this day all the singing men and the singing women speak of Josiah in their lamentations. They made it a custom in Israel; and indeed they are written in the Laments.