

King Josiah, a Man after righteousness  
(II Kings 22-23)

A man of integrity toward YAHWEH, Josiah lived to please and obey Him. Although his father was a wicked king and his grand-father Manasseh an idolatrous king, Josiah walked uprightly before YAHWEH and did that which was right in His sight. At the age of eighteenth (ten years after he was made king), Josiah set his mind to the repair of the temple of the Lord, which had been neglected, and for a long time Israel was without the book of the Law, for it had been lost with the destruction of the temple. It was during that time that book of the Law was found. Israel was in darkness of idolatry; they just went their own way and did what was wicked and abominable in the eyes of their YAHWEH. It was obvious to see it in the idolatrous ways of their kings; It seemed that King Josiah had not seen this book, neither had it been read to him before, for at the hearing of the words written in the book, he tore his clothes expressing grief and lamentation over the guilt of Judah, aware of the idolatrous ways of his forefathers and of the nation. Knowing that judgment was to come to the nation, he sends the priest, the court secretary and his servant, Asaiah to the prophetess Huldah to inquire of the Lord for himself, the people and Judah, and this is what she said to them: This is what the Lord says: I am about to **bring disaster** on this place and on its inhabitants, **fulfilling, all the words** of the book the king of Judah has read, **because they have abandoned Me and burned incense to other gods in order to provoke Me with all the work of their hands. My wrath will be kindled against this place, and it will not be quenched.** Say this to the king of Judah who sent you to inquire of the LORD: This is what the LORD GOD of Israel ways: As for the words that you heard, because your heart was tender and you humbled yourself before the LORD when you heard what I spoke against this place and against its inhabitants, that they would become a desolation an a curse, and because you have torn you clothes and wept before Me, I Myself have heard you – declares the LORD. Therefore, I will gather you to your fathers, and you will be gathered to your grave in peace; your eyes will not see all the disaster that I am bringing on this place (II Kings 22:16-20).

People without knowledge of YAHWEH and His commands are people empty of spiritual discernment. With the destruction of the temple, the Word of YAHWEH went missing for a long time, without anyone making the time and effort to look for it, knowing that there was such a book. But the zeal of Josiah to repair the temple, blessed him with the finding of the book of the Law, although too late for the wrath of YAHWEH to be removed against Judah; Israel had sinned greatly against her YAHWEH with her idolatrous ways for a long time; they were beyond forgiveness. The report they brought back to the king from the prophetess caused King Josiah to gather all the inhabitants of Jerusalem from the youngest to the oldest in the temple for the reading of the covenant that they had found. There King Josiah made a covenant to follow the Lord and to keep His commandments, His decrees, and His statutes with all his mind and with all his heart, and to carry out the words of this covenant that were written in this book ( 23:3). Josiah's determination to follow the LORD'S commandments was not only based on his emotion of fear of God's wrath; His love and zeal for righteousness and for the Word of YAHWEH guided him to act without delay to cleanse the temple from all the articles made for Baal, Asherah and the whole heavenly host. He burned all outside the city; he did away with the idolatrous priests, which were appointed by previous kings to burn incense at the high places.

He defiled the high places; he defiled Topheth, which is the Valley of Hinnom, so that no one could make his son or his daughter pass through the fire to Molech. He did away with the horses that the kings of Judah had dedicated to the sun; he tore down all the altars and defiled all the high places; even the high place where king Solomon had built for Ashtoreth, the detestable idol of the Sidonians; for Chemosh, the detestable idol of Moab; and for Milcom, the abomination of the Ammonites and much more (II Kings 23). Nothing that was accursed for destruction, escaped Him.

After the cleansing of the temple, and the city, Josiah commanded Judah to keep the Passover, as it was written in the book of the covenant. On the fourteenth of the month Josiah appointed the priests to their responsibilities and encouraged them to serve the Lord's temple, as he reinstated the Passover, according to all the LORD'S command. The Bible says that No Passover had been observed like in Israel since the days of Samuel the prophet; none of the kings of Israel ever observed a Passover like the one that Josiah observed with the priests the Levites, all Judah, the Israelites who were present in Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem (II Chronicles 35). Everything was done perfectly in harmony with the Passover meaning. Josiah did not cut corners by compromising the LORD'S principles and teachings. Imagine, not even King David had such zeal for righteousness as did Josiah, as we read in II Kings 23:25: **Before him (Josiah) there was no king like him who turned to the LORD with all his mind and with all his heart and with all his strength according to all the law of Moses, and no one like him arose after him.**

Unfortunately, (humanly speaking), the beloved king Josiah was taken out by death at a young age of thirty-nine years old, as the LORD had said through the prophetess that he was going to die in peace and that his eyes were not going to see the disaster the LORD was going to bring on Judah. All Judah and Jerusalem mourned for him, even the Prophet Jeremiah lamented for Josiah; to this day singing men and singing women speak of Josiah in their lamentations. Josiah's way of living left a legacy of determination to do what was right no matter what, for us to follow. Spiritual leaders of today could learn a few lessons of courage without compromise to do right in the sight of YAHWEH, by cleansing their churches. The strings that many members attach to their pastors for the use of control and manipulation, keep them in darkness and indifference to what needs to be done in relationship to the cleansing and purging of sin in church, and they make them afraid of losing their job, because for so many pastors, it is just a job. They are not true shepherds. YAHSHUA, the true Shepherd said, **I am the good Shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired man, since he is not the shepherd and doesn't own the sheep, leaves them and runs away when he sees a wolf coming. The wolf then snatches and scatters them. This happens because he is a hired man and doesn't care about the sheep** (John 10:11-13). For some churches today it's business as usual, under the tradition and the leadership of those who have the money, but voided of love for the sheep. We need men and women like King Josiah, who exercised courage and determination to pursue rightness and nothing stop him from going forward with its pursuit.

Read what the LORD says concerning the responsibility of a shepherd: This is what the LORD GOD says, If I say to the wicked person: you will surely die, but **you do not warn him- you don't**

**Speak out to warn him about his wicked way in order to save his life – that wicked person will die for his iniquity. Yet I will hold you responsible for his blood** (Ezekiel 3:11, 18; 33). It is a serious responsibility to be the Lord's watchman in this world of compromising, and acceptance of "Jezebel's" religion. The lack of zeal for YAHWEH'S holiness gives room for much that is wrong in the churches. The attitude of compromising is the ideal attitude harboring the hearts of those who call themselves Christians; they say one must not be rigid, neither judgmental. So it is that they "see nothing, hear nothing, and say nothing". I just wonder what would YAHSHUA do and say to the churches today in this state of compromising His truth, sacrificing the whole flock. King Josiah would have been a very good preacher had he lived today to be one, and I would have liked to be a member of his church. Wouldn't you?