

## December 29

**Scriptures:** Read 2 Kings 22

**Key Verse:** “Because your heart was tender, and you humbled yourself before the Lord when you heard what I spoke... therefore... you shall be gathered to your grave in peace.” (2 Kings 22:19, 20)

### Overview

Since Josiah took the throne at such a young age (only eight years old), he must have been under the good guidance of some godly elders or the high priest, as had Joash (11:17, 21), who grew to be a righteous king. Unlike his father Amon, and grandfather Manasseh, who did evil in the sight of the Lord, Josiah did what was right, as had his great-grandfather Hezekiah and his forefather David (22:2).

We learn from the Book of Chronicles that when Josiah was sixteen (in the eighth year of his reign) he began to seek after the Lord. At the age of twenty, he began a campaign to reform the nation spiritually by purging it of idolatry. Six years later, Josiah began to repair the Temple that had been neglected and desecrated during the previous generation. This central place of worship was very important for the community of faith. It was necessary to promote worship only at the central sanctuary so that the people might be unified and enjoy communion and fellowship with God.

In the providence of God, during the repairs, the high priest found a copy of the Book of the Law of Moses. The holy writings must have been lost somehow, or other copies were possibly destroyed by one of the evil rulers. However, God preserved these writings and brought them out into the open at a time when they were needed. No doubt the book of Deuteronomy was among the writings discovered, and it may well have been the passage on the curses for disobedience (Deuteronomy 28) that the scribe read to Josiah. Whatever portion of God’s Word was read caused Josiah to tear his clothes in grief. He saw how far the children of God had strayed from His ways and how horrible the curses upon them would be.

God used these writings at that specific time to bring a stronger warning to the people to Judah that they might repent, obey, and serve Him alone. These writings also would have prompted Josiah to be even more fervent in his moral reform and purging the land of all evil, so that God would not bring such calamities upon the remnant of His people.

Josiah immediately sought to enquire of the Lord through the prophetess Huldah, who lived nearby in Jerusalem. Jeremiah (Jeremiah 1:1-2) and likely Zephaniah (Zephaniah 1:1) were her prophetic contemporaries, but on this occasion God chose to use Huldah to bring forth His word. The message from God brought bad news for Judah. They learned that His wrath against the people of Judah for their idolatry would surely bring calamity.

The Lord, however, would grant mercy to Josiah because his “heart was tender”, meaning that when he heard the writings of the Law, he was receptive and repentant. God promised Josiah that he would not see these terrible disasters come upon Judah in his lifetime, and he would die in peace. Although he eventually died in battle (23:29), Josiah must have had inner peace with God,

because he continued to live and rule the kingdom faithfully and righteously. Indeed, as we have seen throughout the Bible, “there is no peace for the wicked” (Isaiah 57:21), but God promises peace for those who follow Him with a pure heart (John 16:33 )

### **Prayer**

Lord God, help us to be faithful in our daily reading of Your Word. Please keep our hearts receptive and repentant. We desire to serve You with a pure heart. Thank You for the peace You give us.