

Anthology | Learning to Love the Stories of God

Week 9: Josiah Crushing All the Idols (2 Kings 22)

Read the story:

When?

This is during the era of the Kingdom Divided. It's toward the end of the period of kings after the Northern kingdom of Israel has already been exiled by the Assyrians but before the Southern kingdom of Judah is exiled by the Babylonians.

Who?

Josiah - This passage focuses on Josiah's reign of the King of the Southern Kingdom of Judah. Josiah became king at the age of 8. Most of the action takes place after he's been king for 18 years when he's 26 yrs. old. Jedidah, Hilkiah the high priest, Shaphan the secretary, the Lord, Asaiah, the secretary's son, the prophetess, and male cult prostitutes.

Where?

Jerusalem- the capital of Judah

Summarize the story:

Josiah is rebuilding the temple when Hilkiah, the high priest finds the book of the law. Hilkiah gives it to Shaphan who gives it to Josiah. Josiah after reading the book of the Law tears his clothes in grief. He sends officials to inquire of the Lord for two reasons:

- 1.) Because great is the wrath of the Lord.
- 2.) Because their fathers have not been obeying or caring about God's law.

They go to Huldah the prophetess and talk with her. She tells them in short: "Thus says the Lord, He will bring disaster to this place and His wrath will come to this place because of all their sin and idolatry. But Josiah, because you tore your clothes and wept, because you were sorrowful, repentant, and humble; I'm going to wait until you die before pouring out my wrath on the kingdom of Judah and Jerusalem."

Josiah reads to the people the covenant of the law to the people and they renew their covenant with the Lord. Josiah then responds to God's words, by moving through all of Judah and defiling all of the high places (altars and places where false gods are being worshipped). His violence against the idols found in Judah is extreme and thorough. He destroys and burns every idol he can find, even in neighboring lands that aren't even part of his kingdom.

Josiah also restored the celebration of the Passover (the festival that reminded God's people of how He brought them out of Egypt). Josiah is described as positively as any king in their entire era of the kings (both united or divided), but even his faithful cleansing of the kingdom isn't enough to prevent God's wrath from being poured out.

Leader Notes: While people in our culture often struggle with God's wrath, and might find it unfair that Josiah is so faithful and God pours his wrath out anyway; the point that is going to show up huge here is that as faithful as Josiah was; He wasn't Jesus. His faithfulness wasn't enough to satisfy God's wrath, but there is one coming who's holy faithfulness will be enough to satisfy God's wrath once and for all.

Analyze the story:

Attributes of God displayed:

- God is just. (There is a need for sin to be dealt with.)
- God will deal with sin at His appointed time. (Consider the first and second coming of Jesus.)
- God is merciful (God doesn't destroy Josiah because of he humbled himself and worshiped the Lord.)
- God is jealous. (God is after exclusive worship).
- God is worthy of exclusive worship.

Who is who in the story? (Who is like us? Who is like Christ?)

- We are like the people of Judah; guilty of sin, worthy of death and ignorant of God's law.
- We are like the people of Judah in that we need reminders of God's gracious faithful rescue. But even when we have good reminders (like they had Passover) we often forget the true meaning of the reminders.
- We can be like Josiah in that we can humble ourselves before the Lord and repent of our sin.
- We are like Josiah in that no amount of faithfulness on our parts can save us or the people we love. We need God to graciously satisfy His own wrath.
- Jesus is like Josiah in this story in that He relentlessly crushes idols and leads the people to worship God exclusively.
- Jesus is like Josiah in that He "turned to the Lord with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his might."

Connect the story:

Parallel Statements:

- All sin deserves wrath, judgment and punishment.
- God will go to great, extreme and even violent lengths to pursue the exclusive worship of His name (Josiah crushing idols in this story and Jesus' death in the cross in the gospel).
- God raises up kings who violently fight for his people to worship God alone. (Josiah in this story and Jesus in the gospel).
- God leads us to humble ourselves and receive His grace as someone else conquers and destroys our idols.
- God pursues His sinful people.

Apply the story:

- We should confess our sin and repent because God hates idolatry.
- Grieve your sin and fight against it. (God hates sin so much more than we do. We need to take our sin seriously).
- Relentlessly, violently, fight sin. (Whatever it takes mentality. Getting in the word and pursuing Christ is the way to fight sin).
- The only way to turn away from idols is to humble ourselves, hate our sin, turn from our idols and turn to God. Repentance is more than just "I'm going to stop doing this [insert sin]," it's a change of heart where we learn to hate our sin and ultimately a movement towards God."
- Rejoice, because God pursues us in the midst of our sin.
- We should remember all that God has done to earn our salvation.
- Rejoice because while Josiah's faithful violence against idols couldn't satisfy God's wrath, God eventually crushed His own son with His wrath.
- Fight the sin/idolatry in others. Praying for them encouraging them sharing the gospel to them.

Who needs this story?

- People who minimize the gravity of sin (Our sin is against a perfectly Holy God. Our sin is very great and grievous and must be paid for with death.)
- People who are complacent. (Fighting sin is an active fight to rest in God's grace and worship Him alone).
- People who don't pray for the salvation of others (God is after the hearts of all creation. Josiah destroyed idols even in surrounding areas. God is after the exclusive worship of his creation).
- People who run to false Gods. (God is after exclusive worship and is in relentless pursuit of His people).
- People who are hopeless (We are joining God in his mission of warring against idols. You are not alone in this fight. Jesus has accomplished and will finish the work).
- People who feel like their sin is too much for Christ to conquer (Jesus has already defeated sin).
- People who are afraid to confront those who need to hear gospel truth.