

GOD'S COVENANT IN JUDAH (Southern Kingdom)
2 Kings 22–23; 2 Chronicles 34–36

Memory Verse: *“But this is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word”* (Isa. 66:2b ESV).

Background Helps:

This week's readings include the moving story of King Josiah's rediscovery of the Book of the Law in the temple in Jerusalem and the resulting reforms he instituted in the southern kingdom of Judah (2 Kings 22:3–23:25; 2 Chron. 34:8–35:19). Some interpreters hold that this “Book of the Law” refers to the whole Pentateuch (the five books of Moses); others that it refers to only the book of Deuteronomy. Either way, this rediscovery, after the long, wicked reign of King Manasseh, occasioned a renewal of the Mosaic covenant in Judah. Notice the specific references in the readings to this “covenant” or to the “Book of the Covenant”: 2 Kings 23:2-3, 21; 2 Chronicles 34:30-32.

Actually, the reforms under Josiah took place in several stages:

1. First, his own disposition to the walk in the ways of the Lord from the age of eight (2 Kings 22:1-2; 2 Chron. 34:1-2).
2. Then at age sixteen, he began to seek God (2 Chron. 34:3a).
3. At age twenty, he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of its idolatry (2 Chron. 34:3b-7).
4. But apparently, the major reforms took place after his rediscovery the Book of the Covenant at age twenty-six. Your lesson should concentrate on this event and its results.


Lesson Helps:


A possible lesson aim: My students will learn about Josiah's rediscovery of the Book of the Covenant, so that they will read and obey the Scriptures in their own lives.

A few tips for your lesson:

- Tell the story of the rediscovery of the Book of the Covenant, using story-telling techniques reviewed in previous forecasts (e.g., Week #27).
- Consider using drama in class, including the discovery of a hidden book!
- Practical application: Make this lesson an opportunity for “rediscovery” of the Word of God by members of your class. Give practical instruction on how to have personal devotions, including daily reading of the Bible.
- Emphasize the memory verse, Isaiah 66:2b, which well summarizes Josiah's reaction to his rediscovery and hearing of God's Word (see 2 Kings 22:11-20; 2 Chron. 34:19-28).
- Ask: How will you respond to the reading of the Word of God? What changes will it make in your life? Give opportunity for you students to respond (by writing it down?).

Home Assignment:

 Read Nehemiah 1–2; 4; 8–10.

 Memorize Psalm 111:9 ESV.