

Lesson VI.

JOSIAH'S GOOD REIGN

August 6, 1905

2 Chronicles 34: 1-13. Commit to memory vs. 1-3.

GOLDEN TEXT—Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth.—Ecclesiastes 12: 1.

1 Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned ¹ in Jeru'salem one and thirty years.

2 And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, and walked in the ways of David his father, and ² declined neither to the right hand, ³ nor to the left.

3 For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was yet young, he began to seek after the God of David his father: and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jeru'salem from the high places, and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images.

4 And they brake down the altars of Ba'alim in his presence; and the images, that were on high above them, he cut down; and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images, he brake in pieces, and made dust of them, and strowed it upon the graves of them that had sacrificed unto them.

5 And he burnt the bones of the priests upon their altars, and cleansed Judah and Jeru'salem.

6 And so did he in the cities of Manasseh, and Ephraim, and Sim'oon, even unto Naph'tali, ¹¹ with their mattocks round about.

7 ¹² And when he had broken down the altars and the groves and ¹³ had beaten the graven images into powder, and cut down all the idols throughout all the land of Israel, ¹⁴ he returned to Jeru'salem.

Revised Version.—thirty and one years in Jerusalem; ² eyes; ³ turned not aside; ⁴ or; ⁵ Asherim; ⁶ graven; ⁷ the; ⁸ sun-images; ⁹ hewed; ¹⁰ purged; ¹¹ in their ruins round about; ¹² And he brake; ¹³ beat the Asherim and the graven images; ¹⁴ and returned; ¹⁵ Omit when; ¹⁶ and delivered; ¹⁷ the keepers of the door; ¹⁸ of the inhabitants of Jerusalem; ¹⁹ delivered it into; ²⁰ Omit they gave it to; ²¹ gave it to amend and repair; ²² carpenters and to the builders; ²³ make beams for; ²⁴ set forward all that did the work in every manner.

THE LESSON EXPLAINED



Baal, the Sun God

Time and Place — 640 to 622 B.C.; Jeru'salem.

Connecting Links — Manasseh succeeded on the throne by his son Amon, whose wicked and

idolatrous reign of two years was ended by his murder at the hands of his servants. Josiah his son then became king. (See ch. 33: 21-25.)

I. FOLLOWING A GOOD EXAMPLE. — 1-3

(a). Josiah; "the last good king" of Judah. And he was good, though he had a wicked father and lived in evil times. Perhaps his mother, Jedidah (2 Kgs. 22: 1), was a godly woman and had trained her son well. Eight years old; a boy, with all a boy's temptations. Did... right in the eyes of the Lord (Rev. Ver.). This means that his heart was right, as well as his acts, for God searches the heart, Jer. 17: 10. In the ways of David his father; that is, his ancestor. With the example of many wicked kings, and of a good king like David, before him, he follows the good. Turned not aside, etc. (Rev. Ver.) His life was like a straight path; that is, he lived righteously and in the fear of God. For in the eighth year; when he was sixteen years old. He began to seek after the God of David. At sixteen boys are just starting out in life for them-

8 Now in the eighteenth year of his reign, when he had purged the land, and the house, he sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, and Maaseiah the governor of the city, and Joah the son of Joahaz the recorder, to repair the house of the Lord his God.

9 And ¹⁵ when they came to Hilki'ah the high priest, ¹⁶ they delivered the money that was brought into the house of God, which the Le'vites ¹⁷ that kept the doors had gathered of the hand of Manasseh and Ephraim, and of all the remnant of Israel, and of all Judah and Benjamin; and ¹⁸ they returned to Jeru'salem.

10 And ¹⁹ they put it in the hand of the workmen that had the oversight of the house of the Lord, and ²⁰ they gave it to the workmen that wrought in the house of the Lord, ²¹ to repair and amend the house:

11 Even to the ²² artificers and builders gave they it, to buy hewn stone, and timber for the couplings, and to ²³ floor the houses which the kings of Judah had destroyed.

12 And the men did the work faithfully: and the overseers of them were Ja'hath and Obadi'ah, the Le'vites, of the sons of Mera'ri; and Zechariah and Meshul'am, of the sons of the Kohathites, to set it forward; and others of the Le'vites, all that could skill of instruments of music.

13 Also they were over the bearers of burdens, and ²⁴ were overseers of all that wrought the work in any manner of service; and of the Le'vites there were scribes, and officers, and porters.

selves. What better thing can they do than seek God for their Guide?

II. DESTROYING FALSE WORSHIP.—3 (b)-5. In the twelfth year; twenty now. To purge; cleanse. Judah and Jerusalem. The king began his reformation at home, in the capital and its neighborhood, gradually extending it until it reached the northern regions, v. 6. High places; idol shrines, often built on the top of hills. Baalim; plural of Baal, referring to the different forms under which he was worshipped. Sun-images (Rev. Ver.); symbols of the sun to which worship was offered. Groves; poles used in the worship of the vile goddess Ashtoreth. The dust of all these idol symbols, the king strowed... upon the graves of their worshippers; treating the graves as guilty of the evil deeds of those lying in them. Burnt the bones (taken from the graves) of the priests upon their altars. This would defile the idolatrous altars, so that they could no longer be used for worship.

6, 7. The places mentioned in v. 6 were in the Northern Kingdom, whose inhabitants had been carried away as captives into Assyria about a hundred years before. It seems that Josiah claimed authority over this kingdom, as well as over Judah, and was resolved to clear it also of idolatry.

III. REPAIRING GOD'S HOUSE.—8-10. In the eighteenth year. Josiah was now twenty-six. When he had purged the land, and the house; God's house, the temple. The evil had been destroyed, and now the good is put in its place.