

was the condition of the temple at Jerusalem? What was Josiah's purpose in restoring the temple? Whom did he put in charge of this

work? How was the money collected for this purpose? Who had given money to rebuild? How did the workmen do their work?

### Questions for Younger Scholars

Who became king when Manasseh died? How long did he reign? What sort of man was he? Who became king when Amon died? How old was Josiah when he began to reign? When did he begin to seek the Lord? When did he begin to destroy the places of wicked worship? In whose sight did he do right? Did he send his servants to destroy idolatry?

*He went with his servants to tell them what to do. How did he do this work? He did it thoroughly. What influence had he over his people? What did he make laws against? What big building did he begin to mend? For whose glory was this done? What does "declined neither to the right hand nor to the left" mean? He was not changeable.*

### The Lesson Analysis

#### I. Beginning Right (verse 1 to first clause of verse 3).

(a) In childhood Josiah was seated on the throne; bound at his father's death by the childish restraints of royalty. (b) His court was divided between the Party of Immoral Indulgence (idolaters) and the Party of Moral Restraint (worshippers of Jehovah). (c) Between these parties he had to choose, and he chose "that which was right in the sight of Jehovah." (d) Very naturally he selected a model from among his royal ancestors, of whom some had been good and some bad; he "walked in the ways" of the best. (e) His character was consistent, steady, upright, straightforward. (f) Scrupulously religious as he had been in childhood, a spiritual crisis came to him when he was sixteen years of age. (g) Thenceforth he not merely imitated the virtues of David, but coming into close personal relationship with Jehovah, the God of David, became one of the best kings of history.

#### II. Breaking Down Evil (second clause of verse 3 to verse 7).

(a) For more than half a century, during the reigns of Manasseh and Amon, the kingdom of Judah had been trained to corrupt worship and vicious behavior. (b) Temples to Personified Vices were multiplied in town and country, and their worship made the worst sins respectable and popular. (c) Since Manasseh's tardy reform, which was sincere but had not gone deep, the patronage of the government worship; but masses of the people were still idolatrous and immoral. (d) At the age of twenty (according to the data given in this passage) Josiah set out to uproot the dense growth of superstition and immorality. (e) He destroyed idolatrous symbols and opportunities for indulgence of evil under the sanctification of religion. (f) He made sure of the thoroughness of this work by being present at it, and (g) personally supervising the utter destruction of all "images" (idols, emblems,

and other objects used in worship). (h) The "dust" of these (powder of crushed stone, ashes of burnt wood, scraps of broken metal) he strewed over the graves of idol worshippers, partly to discredit the memories of men who had misled the nation, partly to make the thought of idolatry repulsive. (i) But idolatrous superstition remained imbedded in thousands of hearts, and there was every likelihood that when all idol altars were destroyed their worshippers would turn the graves of the pagan priests into sanctuaries; so Josiah dug up the bones of these priests and burned them on the idol altars he was about to destroy. (j) He thus "cleansed" his little kingdom, and the region round about it also, where survivors of the kingdom of Israel cowered among the ruins of their cities. (k) Having thus done what he could to destroy false religions, he returned to his capital to establish the true religion in their stead.

#### III. Building Goodness (verses 8-13).

(a) Six years may have been spent in this work of Breaking Down Evil (but the chronology of Josiah's reign is not certain). (b) The temple of Jehovah at Jerusalem had been desecrated, and it was now cleansed. (c) It was dilapidated also, and Josiah proceeded to repair it. (d) For that purpose he appointed as a Building Committee three of the most honorable of his nobles. (e) They were to work in harmony with the high priest. (f) The money for the repairs had been contributed by the people of the land. (g) Their contributions had been made when they came to worship ("given to the Levites that kept the doors"). (h) The entire business was transacted in businesslike fashion, and the workmen regularly paid. (i) The workmen as well as the overseers were faithful. (j) Josiah reopened the temple with a full complement of ministers and helpers—priests, Levites, scribes, officers, and porters. (k) He reestablished music as a part of the public service of Jehovah.