

## Josiah's Reform

*II Chronicles 34:29-33*

*Children's Sunday*

*JUN 14 2009*

Here's a story about someone you've probably never heard of before. His name was Josiah and he lived between the years of 649 and 609 BC. At the age of eight, Josiah became the King of Judah. Josiah's father had been assassinated, and that should tell you right from the start that Josiah lived during dangerous times. Can you imagine becoming a king at the age of eight? It was a dangerous time for a king of any age. There were rivals in Jerusalem who might try to kill him in the same way his father had been killed. And there was always the danger of war with enemies from Assyria, Babylon and Egypt who were eager to attack and conquer Jerusalem.

Though you might think that a king living in Jerusalem would know all about the teachings of God, though you might think that the King of Judah would know about the stories of Creation, Adam and Eve, and Noah and the Ark, and though you might think a king in Jerusalem would rule wisely following God's teachings, we find in our story from the Book of Chronicles that the books that contained those stories had been forgotten and lost for a long time.

How were they lost and forgotten? I have a theory that at one time everyone knew the stories and knew where the books were kept. But then they slipped into a bad habit. They thought they knew the stories, so they didn't bother to read them anymore, and they put the books away, on a dusty shelf in the back of a dark room in the basement. And then when the next generation came into being, no one remembered the stories, and no one even knew where to find the books where the stories were written.

Even though he did not have the books, Josiah tried to be faithful to God. One thing he did was to clean up the temple and also to make some major repairs. While repairing one section of the Temple, Hilkah found one of the forgotten books and brought it to Josiah. Josiah read the book out loud to the people, and they were so moved by what they heard that they made a commitment to live by the teachings that they heard.

The story about Josiah is a long one, and I've only given some of the details. But there are some very important things we can learn from it.

The first lesson is that the book of God's teachings, what we call The Bible, is always in danger of being forgotten and lost. That's why this day is so important. By passing the Bible to the next generation we are doing our part to make sure that the stories are never forgotten or lost.

It's also a story about renewal. That there are lots of Bibles in the hands of church members, but all too often they sit on a shelf gathering dust. We need to open them like Josiah did, and read them. Why would Samantha, Chelsea, Ben and Bethany take this book seriously if they see that no one else is reading the book?

If, for any reason, you do not have a Bible, please let any one of the elders of the church know that and we will find one for you.

We're in this together, the oldest ones here who received their Bible back in 1909, and the ones who have received their Bibles today in 2009. It's up to each one of us to keep the message of the Bible alive, and to live that message.