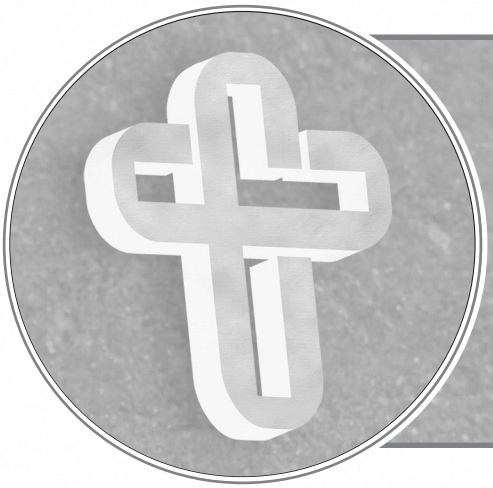


CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS
JUNE 29 2024

cleaning house

Scripture Story: 2 Kings 23; 2 Chronicles 34.
Commentary: *Prophets and Kings* (or *Royalty in Ruins*), chapter 33.

PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

This week's lesson has to do with Josiah's emerging leadership and faithfulness to God's voice on behalf of Israel. The youthful King Josiah began the process of cleanup in the kingdom, starting with the Temple. It was in the Temple that Hilkiah, the high priest, found the forgotten Book of the Law. This ancient manuscript contained basic, straightforward guidelines that marked the road to freedom and prosperity in God's revealed will.

The book of Deuteronomy begins with the urgent command to be faithful, offering the promises and blessings of single-minded devotion to God as well as clear and distinct warnings against forgetting or minimizing the importance of God's law. Then the law gets even more clear with steps and specific rules about the everyday aspects of life as a community of faith—from laws about health to guidelines on worship. This book concludes with another reminder of the importance of uncompromising fealty to God as the utmost priority in life, saying of the law: "For it is not an idle word for you; indeed it is your life" (Deuteronomy 32:47, NASB).

The vivid imagery in this week's lesson of discovering the dusty, old-forgotten manuscript is not only relevant to our day, but just as essential. Perhaps the Bible is perceived as an ancient book of rules that only stymies freedom instead of guiding people to abundant life. But as God's Word was read in the presence of the youthful king, a fire was rekindled in the hearts of people for God again.

Scripture tells us that we are the temple of the Holy Spirit (see 1 Corinthians 6:19). So, in the same way today, if God's Word is read with a seeker's heart, we can ask the Lord to begin the process of "cleanup" in our own temple, and experience a new fire of passion for God that will light up the dark places in our lives.

II. TARGET

The students will:

- Discern the magnitude of God's revealed will in the law. *(Know)*
- Feel God's hopeful plea for renewal by returning to His Word. *(Feel)*
- Value the practice of prioritizing God's direction in our life. *(Respond)*

III. EXPLORE

Unity in the Body of Christ, Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental Beliefs, No. 14

"The church is one body with many members, called from every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. . . . (Ps. 133:1; Matt. 28:19, 20; John 17:20-23; Acts 17:26, 27; Rom. 12:4, 5; 1 Cor. 12:12-14; 2 Cor. 5:16, 17; Gal. 3:27-29; Eph. 2:13-16; 4:3-6, 11-16; Col. 3:10-15.)"

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity

Refer the students to the What Do You Think? *section of their lesson. After they have completed it, discuss their responses.*

Check the response that fits your attitude about God's Word the most; then explain why.

I fail to read or apply the Bible to my life because (or my Bible collects dust because) . . .

____ I'm so busy I don't have the time it takes to study.

____ I don't know how to study the Bible in-depth.

____ I forget to integrate it into my life each day.

____ I believe that Bible study is crucial.

____ I read my Bible daily and I seek to apply in practice what I learn.

____ I enjoy studying the Bible with others regularly.

____ I consider it my responsibility not only to believe and apply what I learn from the Bible but also to share with others the treasures of God's Word.

How do you think your response compares to your peers?

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

"I'm not a sensational guy when I speak to young people. One time, though, I couldn't resist the urge to be edgy. As I began the sermon I announced, 'Enough of this—this is so ridiculous! What are we all doing here, anyway? What does this Book have to say that's relevant to us?' I began ripping random pages, . . . crumpling them roughly and throwing them to the ground. . . .

"Gasps exploded through the chapel like gunshots on a battlefield. Students gazed at me in horror, amazed by my blasphemous treatment of the sacred Scriptures. Older adults in the back of the room began murmuring about how to get rid of me before I inflicted any further damage on innocent young minds.

" 'Relax,' I said finally. 'Anyone who knows me knows I would never tear up a Bible. I simply took a cheap . . . novel and [tore out its pages].' The tension eased a little, but before I lost the crowd's attention, I posed a question to the squirming group: 'Which is worse—openly defacing God's Word or quietly ignoring it day by day?' " (*Christwise Leaders Guide: Youth*, pp. 215, 216).

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

Whether you openly defy God's leading in your life or simply numb yourself to His voice over time, the result is the same. Almost a hundred years of dust caked over the Book of the Law that God passionately instructed the people not to forget. It was simple: keep these words before and live by them and live abundantly, or forget these words and slide into destruction. Israel's condition when Josiah became king can be described as the "brink of destruction." But even in light of the oncoming punishment from years of rebellion, Josiah faithfully sounded the call for repentance.

Out of the Story for Teachers

After you read the Into the Story *section with your students, use the following in your own words to process it with them.*

1. Read the story through a few times and make a list of elements of the story that arrest your attention during each reading.

Reading 1 _____

_____

Reading 2 _____

_____

Reading 3 _____

_____

2. *Circle* and identify all of the characters/people mentioned in this story. Who are they and what is their contribution to the story?
3. *Underline* what you think the key phrase, sentence, or verse is in this passage. Explain why you think this passage of Scripture is central.
4. What truths about people emerge from this story? What truths about God are made clear to you?
5. What other story or event in Scripture does this passage remind you of, and why?
6. It is possible that for almost a hundred years the Book of the Law had not been read or even spoken of by the king or the people. Imagine this scene and describe some of the emotions you think the king and the people listening were experiencing.
7. In this story, is there . . .
   - an example to follow?
   - a prayer to pray?
   - a sin to confess?
   - a challenge to embrace?
   - a promise to claim?

a truth to believe?
an action to take?

8. What questions do you have about the various parts of the story?
9. Do you think Israel slipped into idolatry because they lost the Book, or did they lose or set the Book aside because they deliberately chose idolatry?
10. What do you think enabled Josiah, at such a young age, to be able to make such a difference in Israel?

Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today's story:

Revelation 3:3; Hebrews 13:7; Deuteronomy 32:7; Malachi 4:4.

Sharing Context and Background

Use the following information to shed more light on the story for your students. Share it in your own words.

In this lesson there a few facets of the story that could be developed further:

1. The first work Josiah initiated had to do with getting the Temple of God back in shape. During the basic housecleaning, Hilkiah the priest found the Book of the Law. Some think this was the written Law that went alongside the ark of the covenant, and some suggest this was the book of Deuteronomy. What other seasons of housecleaning did the Temple go through? The Jewish celebration of the Feast of Lights (or Hanukkah) relives the experience where the Jews fought to get Jerusalem back from their enemies, secured the Temple, and immediately began cleaning it. There was only one flask of oil for the lights in the Temple, but that oil continued to burn miraculously for eight days. Even while the city was still a mess, the Temple services began and people found themselves in the presence of God again. Also, consider the times when Jesus stormed the Temple and caused serious upheaval (Matthew 21:12-14 and John 2:14-20). But the point of His tirade was to tear down the walls that obscured the face of God from the people who came to worship. It seems as though regular housecleaning is needed when it comes to worship.
2. When Josiah heard the words of the Book of the Law it did a spiritual work in the king. It was not simply hearing new information but hearing a call to obey God's Word to experience transformation. This may not seem like a big event—to find God's Word and read it—but remember that the Word of God had not been read in decades; maybe even close to a hundred years. The oral tradition probably continued, but few people at this time could recall the stories, promises, commands, and instructions that were written in the Law.
3. When Josiah heard the Scriptures read to him he tore his clothes. The tearing of clothing was a traditional expression conveying a deep sense of horror and astonishment. It is perhaps the most emphatic gesture one could make to show how shocked they were. Josiah showed

Teaching From . . .

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

- **Key Text**
  Invite the students to share the key text with the class if they have committed it to memory
- **Flashlight**
  Read the Flashlight *statement, pointing out that most of the time it is from the commentary on this week's story found in the book* Prophets and Kings. *Ask what relationship they see between the statement and what they have just discussed from* Out of the Story.
- **Punch Lines**
  Point out to your students the verses listed in their lesson that relate to this week's story. Have them share the verse that speaks most directly to them and allow them to explain why they chose it.
- **Further Insight**
  Ask them how the quote in Further Insight *conveys the point of the story in this lesson.*

Tips for Top-Notch Teaching

RABBI 101

Dynamic Rituals

Sometimes active rituals can enhance the teaching and learning. When music is played softly during an appeal, it evokes more of our senses, enhancing our experience. Kneeling when we pray puts our body in a unique posture that can deepen our conversation with God. Rituals can become a burden as well, but there is a dynamic element to physical involvement. In this week's lesson have the students stand up as the Bible is read to them. Have five or six students stand and read expressively the punch lines or the story, and observe whether they are more attentive and thoughtful about what is being read. Some churches stand every week during the reading of God's Word to physically say, "We are at attention so God can have our attention."

his grief on his own account and on account of the nation. This was an expression of deep conviction of sin, and he resolved to renew his commitment to God and the people.

Shaphan read the book in the presence of the king, and the Word of God spread. It had been forgotten and considered to be nothing more than an old, dusty book. As a result of the Book being found and read, the reformation began to spread. Compare this reformation to the reformation that took place as a result of the Dark Ages where God's Word was obscured in a dead language, known only by priests.

III. CLOSING

Activity

Close with an activity and debrief it in your own words.

Make a list of five active ways you can remember to "not forget" or lose sight of God's Word this week. Invite the students to be as creative yet practical as possible. Have the students debrief, and share their list with the rest of the class.

Alternate Activity

Ask the students to read Matthew 5:29-30 (NASB).

Ask them to write what they think it means, and then have them rewrite it using common things such as "cell phones, media, relationships, etc."

Debrief.

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

It is amazing to witness how a young person can respond and lead so thoughtfully a whole nation of people who are disillusioned and stubborn. But the Bible is filled with agents of change! 1 Timothy 4:12, 13 says: "Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity. Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching" (NIV). Note how Josiah did it: 1. Josiah looked at his own life, his evil father, and the desperate scenario of Israel and repented before God. God begins His good work at the point we surrender our own destructive work. 2. Josiah led by doing specific activities that may seem mundane (cleaning the Temple) and discovered that God's presence found a way to his heart. 3. Josiah fearlessly followed through with clear guidelines and insights from Scripture. He was willing to disregard "cold turkey" those things that got in the way of faithfulness to God and His Word. Perhaps a much-needed reformation can happen today in your sphere of influence by following Josiah's example.



Remind the students about the reading plan, which will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is *Prophets and Kings* (or *Royalty in Ruins*), chapter 33.

CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS
JUNE 29 2024

STUDENT LESSON

Scripture Story: 2 Kings 22; 23; 2 Chronicles 34.
Commentary: *Prophets and Kings* (or *Royalty in Ruins*), chapter 33.

cleaning house



Photo by Audrey Goforth

keytext

"He did what was right in the eyes of the LORD and followed completely the ways of his father David, not turning aside to the right or to the left."

(2 Kings 22:2, NIV)

flashlight

"Thus Josiah, from his earliest manhood, had endeavored to take advantage of his position as king to exalt the principles of God's holy law. And now, while Shaphan the scribe was reading to him out of the book of the law, the king discerned in this volume a treasure of knowledge, a powerful ally, in the work of reform he so much desired to see wrought in the land. He resolved to walk in the light of its counsels, and also to do all in his power to acquaint his people with its teachings and to lead them, if possible, to cultivate reverence and love for the law of heaven" (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 398).

what do you think?

Check the response that fits your attitude about God's Word the most; then explain why.

____ I fail to read the Bible or apply it to my life because (or my Bible collects dust because) . . .
____ I'm so busy I don't have the time it takes to study.
____ I don't know how to study the Bible in-depth.
____ I forget to integrate the Bible into my life each day.
____ I believe that Bible study is crucial.
____ I read my Bible daily and I seek to apply in practice what I learn.
____ I enjoy studying the Bible with others regularly.
____ I consider it my responsibility not only to believe and apply what I learn from the Bible but also to share with others the treasures of God's Word.

How do you think your response compares to your peers?

did you know?

The king sought further to establish the faith of Judah in the God of their fathers by holding a great Passover feast, in harmony with the provisions made in the book of the law. Preparation was made by those having the sacred services in charge, and on the great day of the feast, offerings were freely made. 'There was not holden such a Passover from the days of the judges that judged Israel, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel, nor of the kings of Judah.' 2 Kings 23:22. But the zeal of Josiah, acceptable though it was to God, could not atone for the sins of past generations; nor could the piety displayed by the king's followers effect a change of heart in many who stubbornly refused to turn from idolatry to the worship of the true God."—Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings*, p. 405

INTO THE STORY

"Josiah was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem thirty-one years. His mother's name was Jedidah daughter of Adaiah; she was from Bozkath. He did what was right in the eyes of the LORD and followed completely the ways of his father David, not turning aside to the right or to the left.

"In the eighteenth year of his reign, King Josiah sent the secretary, Shaphan son of Azaliah, the son of Meshullam, to the temple of the LORD. He said: 'Go up to Hilkiah the high priest and have him get ready the money that has been brought into the temple of the LORD, which the doorkeepers have collected from the people. Have them entrust it to the men appointed to supervise the work on the temple. And have these men pay the workers who repair the temple of the LORD—the carpenters, the builders and the masons. Also have them purchase timber and dressed stone to repair the temple. But they need not account for the money entrusted to them, because they are honest in their dealings.'

"Hilkiah the high priest said to Shaphan the secretary, 'I have found the Book of the Law in the temple of the LORD.' He gave it to Shaphan, who read it. Then Shaphan the secretary went to the king and reported to him: 'Your officials have paid out the money that was in the temple of the LORD and have entrusted it to the workers and supervisors at the temple.' Then Shaphan the secretary informed the king, 'Hilkiah the priest has given me a book.' And Shaphan read from it in the presence of the king.

"When the king heard the words of the Book of the Law, he tore his robes. He gave these orders to Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam son of Shaphan, Akbor son of Micaiah, Shaphan the secretary and Asaiah the king's attendant: 'Go and inquire of the LORD for me and for the people and for all Judah about what is written in this book that has been found. Great is the LORD's anger that burns against us because those who have gone before us have not obeyed the words of this book; they have not acted in accordance with all that is written there concerning us.' "

(2 Kings 22:1-13, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

Circle and identify all of the characters/people mentioned in this story. Who are they and what is their contribution to the story?

Underline what you think the key phrase, sentence, or verse is in this passage. Explain why you think this passage of Scripture is central.

What truths about people emerge from this story? What truths about God are made clear to you?

_____

_____

What other story or event in Scripture does this passage remind you of, and why?

_____

_____

It is possible that for almost 100 years the Book of the Law had not been read or even spoken of by the king or the people. Imagine this scene and describe some of the emotions you think the king and the people listening were experiencing.

In this story, is there . . .

an example to follow? _____
a prayer to pray? _____
a sin to confess? _____
a challenge to embrace? _____
a promise to claim? _____
a truth to believe? _____
an action to take? _____

Do you think Israel slipped into idolatry because they lost the Book, or did they lose or set the Book aside because they deliberately chose idolatry? Explain.

_____

_____

_____

What do you think enabled Josiah, at such a young age, to be able to make such a difference in Israel?

_____

_____

_____

_____

punch lines

"Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful" **(Joshua 1:8, NIV).**

"I desire to do your will, my God; your law is within my heart" **(Psalm 40:8, NIV).**

"Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law" **(Psalm 119:18, NIV).**

"Keep me from deceitful ways; be gracious to me and teach me your law" **(Psalm 119:29, NIV).**

"I long for your salvation, LORD, and your law gives me delight" **(Psalm 119:174, NIV).**

"Great peace have those who love your law, and nothing can make them stumble" **(Psalm 119:165, NIV).**

"This is love for God: to keep his commands. And his commands are not burdensome" **(1 John 5:3, NIV).**

"Be very strong; be careful to obey all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, without turning aside to the right or to the left" **(Joshua 23:6, NIV).**

further insight

"God speaks to us in His word. Here we have in clearer lines the revelation of His character, of His dealings with men, and the great work of redemption.

. . .

"Fill the whole heart with the words of God."—Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, pp. 87, 88

Sabbath

Read Psalm 119:18, 29, 165, 174.

Respond to the exercise in the *What Do You Think?* section of this week's lesson. Based on today's Bible passages, compare David's passion for God's law to the people in Josiah's time. How do you think David would have reacted to discovering the dust-covered Book of the Law buried deep in a storage closet?

How could you overcome obstacles that prevent you from studying God's Word?

Sunday

Read 1 John 5:3.

As you read *Into the Story*, answer the questions in the *Out of the Story* section and try to imagine what this story would look like if it happened today. What message do you think God has for you in this passage?

When Josiah tried to start a reformation he began with a cleaning of the Temple to get the people back into the presence of the Lord. What kind of housecleaning can you do spiritually this week to get into God's presence? Think of some specific activities you could do to make room for God's Word in your life.

Monday

Read 2 Kings 22:2.

The *Key Text* for this week is a brief but powerful statement about Josiah: "He did what was right in the eyes of the LORD and followed completely the ways of his father David, not turning aside to the right or to the left" (2 Kings 22:2, NIV). A reference is made to David (a great-, great-, great-, etc. grandfather) instead of Amon, Josiah's dad. Why do you think Josiah called David his father instead of Amon? What relative in your family do you take after most? How?

Tuesday

Read Joshua 23:6.

Read the quote from *Prophets and Kings* in the *Flashlight* section and remember that Josiah was perhaps younger than you. What do you think was Josiah's greatest challenge: his perceived youth or the problem of how ignorant people were of God's law of love? Explain.

Whom do you know that possesses great leadership qualities at a young age? Affirm them this week and remind them of Josiah's mark on Israel.

Wednesday

Read the *Punch Lines* verses and choose the one that speaks to you the most. Rewrite it in your own words. Pray this week to encounter someone who is seeking to know God but is not sure where to begin. Be ready to share some of the beautiful passages about how God's Word can transform hearts and lives.

Thursday

Read Joshua 1:8.

Place your Bible on a chair in the middle of your room so it is in the way and not put away this week. If you deliberately place God's Word in your path you will think about reading it more often than if it were on a shelf or in a drawer. What do you think some of your thoughts will be as you walk past it?

Friday

Read 1 Timothy 4:12; Deuteronomy 7:9.

Josiah was told by the prophetess that even a full-blown repentance would not stop the calamity that would soon come upon Israel. He was also told that because of his faithfulness he would not have to witness the sadness of that day. Still, Josiah pressed on with determination to lead Israel to a place where they would be sensitive to God's Word. If they had listened, what might this story look like today?

With whom can you partner for encouragement in order to be more faithful to God in your life, as well as to encourage faithfulness in your home and church?

this week's reading*

Prophets and Kings (or *Royalty in Ruins*), chapter 33.

**Royalty in Ruins* is a special adaptation of *Prophets and Kings*, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press®. Get more information about it at http://www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#.URlhF1rBO9s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.