

Ignite: Lessons from Josiah

Objective: By the end of the lesson the student will be able to understand why God's ways are beyond our understanding sometimes.

Bible Verses:

Luke 13:4	John 9:1-3
I Chronicles 34:1-14	II Chronicles 35:23-24
II Chronicles 34:23-28	Genesis 20:1-13
Daniel 4:1-3	Ezra 1:1-4
Romans 13:1	Job 1:6-12

Essential Questions? Should we always be obedient to God? Will God work with people we might not expect Him to work with?

Opening:

Read **Luke 13:4**. We learn from this scripture that time and chance can happen to anyone in this world. Just because you suffer tragedy does not mean you are more sinful than other people. God can protect us, but He is not always getting involved in the day to day occurrences that happen in life. Sometimes bad things happen to people for God's greater purpose (Read **John 9:1-3**).

Content:

Another reason bad things happen in this world is due to God allowing Satan to influence and deceive the world. God also uses bad things to teach us lessons and build our character. In some cases a greater good comes from what we initially think is bad. Think about the sacrifice of Christ. What are some other biblical examples you can think of (Job and Joseph)?

Let's learn a little bit about the reign of Josiah King of Judah by reading **II Chronicles 34:1-14**. From the text we read that Josiah did what was right in the eyes of the Lord. He stopped false worship in the land and repaired the temple of God. Despite Josiah's belief and obedience to God he was killed in a battle at the age of 39 (**II Chronicles 34:23-24**). God allowed Josiah to die young because he did not want him to witness the punishment He was going to allow Judah to experience (**II Chronicles 34:23-28**).

Josiah was killed in battle because he did not heed the words of Neco the king of Egypt who warned him not to oppose him. God had given the word to the Egyptian King to go up against the Babylonians. Josiah may have opposed the Egyptians because they were allied with the Assyrians who were enemies of Judah. Perhaps he didn't think God would be giving a message to a pagan King.

What we learn from this story is tragedy can still happen to God's people. Even if we are obedient to God our life can end early. There are many examples of this in scripture: Jesus, John the Baptist, many of the apostles.

Another lesson from this story is God is in charge and He will work out His will with whoever He wishes. There are other examples in scripture where God worked with pagans for His will to be done. In **Genesis 20:1-13** God spoke to the pagan King Abimelech in a dream.

God also spoke to pagan King Nebuchadnezzar in a dream (**Daniel 4:1-3**). The dream was interpreted by Daniel the prophet and eventually came true.

In **Ezra 1:1-4** we read about Persian King Cyrus fulfilling the word of God from the prophet Jeremiah by allowing the Jews to return to Jerusalem to build a temple for God.

So let's review what we have learned in our scriptures today. Even the best of us (Josiah) are not perfect. By going against God's wishes Josiah died an early death. But God's will was not to have Josiah see the demise of Judah due to their previous sins. This may have had something to do with why Josiah died when he did. In the end God is ultimately in control. Sometimes His will is not to have us live a long life (Josiah, Jesus, Stephen, Paul, Peter etc.).

The second big lesson is God will use whomever He wants in order for His purposes to be worked out here on earth. He will even use pagan Kings who believe in other gods. We need to keep this in mind when we think about politics in this world. This is Satan's world and God is allowing Him to control it to some degree. But God is ultimately in control and God allows leaders to rise and fall (**Romans 13:1**).

Independent Practice:

Have students break into pairs to share with each other what surprised them about today's lesson. Ask them to answer these question: Did you think it was fair for God to allow Josiah to die at age 39? Do you know any good people who have died young? Bring the group back together and see if some are willing to share their answers with the group. How does the group feel about the answers that were shared?

Close/Reflect

What's another lesson we learn from God's dealings with the pagan kings? See how they respond and make sure you add that we need to be careful in judging people in the world. God can work in and through anyone. God can also allow pain and suffering for His higher purposes (**Job 1:6-12**).