

Locked In

2 Kings 23:1-3

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A. Rise Up (vs. 1-2a):

1. Sent – Josiah on his own initiative, endlessly engulfed himself in making sure every place throughout his kingdom received this message from him.
 - a) The welfare of Israel and Judah depended upon the covenant faithfulness of the people and their king. Kings illustrates the failure of God's people to keep the covenant by describing the nation's failures in and through the person of the king (who serves as the representative of the nation). It provides us with a prophetically oriented evaluation of the spiritual and moral causes of the decline of the kings of Israel and Judah from the glory of Solomon's kingdom to the shame of captivity--history with a lesson.
 - b) The narrator's comments bring out the significance of what Manasseh did with increasing clarity: he overturned Hezekiah's reforms; he followed the practices of Ahab of Israel; he defiled YHWH's dwelling place, the very source of Israel's security in the land which was inescapably linked; he made his people behave worse than the nations of Canaan before them.
2. Sent – Our obedience to the Lord should come from such a surrendered heart that we don't depend on others or the right circumstances to do what He places upon us to get done.
3. Gather – Josiah gathers the elders to serve a specified purpose.
 - a) Evidently still had a function during the monarchy. Elders had been given authority in their local communities and may still have played a limited role in the political leadership during the monarchy. City elders also played a limited role in preserving stability and enacting laws in their communities in Babylonia. However, they did not initiate policy, as the central monarchy controlled the state's power source, economy, and armed forces.

4. Gather – Josiah remained within the structure to create change even though he was a king.
 - a) Josiah does not abandon hope in the face of this prophecy. On the contrary, he does everything in his power to bring his people back to YHWH. First, he summons all the people of Judah to a covenant renewal ceremony, in which king and people bind themselves to observe the terms of the law book (23:1–3; cf. Deut. 31:10–13).
 - b) It was an occasion of solemn interest, closely connected with a great national crisis, and the beautiful example of piety in the highest quarter would exert a salutary influence over all classes of the people in animating their devotions and encouraging their return to the faith of their fathers. [\[1\]](#)
5. Went up – Josiah continuously made every effort, no matter how difficult the task was, to go up Mount Zion, to gather all the men of Judah at the temple.
6. Went up – Josiah was determined to engage all the people to gather before God. This does not mean that their hearts were for God. It was more about what the Lord instructed him to do than what people desired to do.
7. The house of the Lord – He came to the temple because it magnifies the significance of God's relationship with Israel. God dwells there.
8. The house of the Lord – To be a change agent, we must come with a heart committed to know and to grow (1 Peter 2:9-10).
9. Read – He read the scriptures with a loud voice, seeking to create a specific response from God's people, which was to listen and obey His commands.
 - a) Even after the invention of the alphabet, many of the people in the ancient Near East were illiterate, and thus the public reading of documents had an important function. Assyrian sources describe heralds standing at city gates reading royal pronouncements to groups of onlookers.
10. Read – We must respect God's Word so deeply that when we hear it read, we listen with a heart ready to obey (Ezra 8:1-8).
11. All the words of the book – Josiah stayed committed no matter the time - whether he had to climb a mountain on a mule or gather all the men of Judah at the temple, he was determined to get it done.

12. All the words of the book – We must respect God’s Word as the authority for life, or there will be no change for the betterment of a country, a family, or a church.

a) He read all of the book he found – not some of it – all of it.

13. All the words of the book – God’s Word is not a buffet line. All of it is important (2 Peter 1:3-4).

14. Find – They found the book of the law as the result of a purposeful search.

15. Find – To walk in the light we must have a heart for God’s Word (2 Timothy 3:17; 2 Peter 1:3-11; 1 John 1:5-7).

B. Committed (v. 3):

1. Stood - Josiah took his official position, standing upright in one spot, demonstrating his determination to require all Israel to walk in the ways of the book of the law.

2. Stood – Take your place at school – whether as a student body president or in another leadership role – and commit to consistently standing for God’s principles. This makes you a change agent, not just a complainer. You can do this as a student, and no one can stop you.

3. Made a covenant – The king acted first by cutting an animal in two and walk in its blood ratifying a covenant before God and His people (Genesis 15:9,10, 18).

a) Josiah renewed the covenant with the Lord and celebrated the Passover in an unprecedented way. He removed all evidence of pagan worship and centralized worship in Jerusalem. As the prophet had predicted (1 Kgs. 13:32), Josiah tore down the shrine at Bethel, which Jeroboam had erected three centuries earlier. The biblical writer gave Josiah the highest commendation of all the kings: “Neither before nor after Josiah was there a king like him who turned to the LORD as he did.” Jerusalem enjoyed a national revival under Josiah. However, it came to a crashing halt when the king was killed at Megiddo by Pharaoh Neco. Josiah had attempted to block Neco’s efforts to aid the faltering Assyrians in their last stand against Nebuchadnezzar’s Babylonian armies.[\[2\]](#)

4. Made a covenant - The king acted first. His efforts were continuous, demonstrating his determination and passion to accomplish God's purposes.
5. Made a covenant before – In the presence of God and His people, the covenant was ratified. Josiah committed to:

- a) Walk after the Lord - Josiah committed that the Word of God would continually direct his lifestyle. His commitment was to live a righteous life in the sight of God.
- b) Lord – Josiah's lifestyle was going to be directed by the Word of the Lord because he views the Lord as the One who has all authority and power and is in control of everything.
- c) Keep – Because it can be challenging and sometimes highly emotional, we must make every effort, like in the case of Christ, to be about the Lord's business (David – Psalm 119:9-11).

- Commandments – His divine will, which provides clear cut directives of God's moral law. Josiah was committed to maintaining the conditions of God's covenant with His people.
- Testimony - This word refers to the Ten Commandments as a solemn divine charge or duty – refers to the entire law of God. It is most frequently connected with the tabernacle (James 1:10). It is not good to hold onto verses that we like, but rather to accept all that the Lord provides for us.
- Statutes – It is a specific reference to God's law, denoting the law of a particular festival or ritual - Refers to enacting a decree. Josiah is committed to celebrating God.
- With all his heart – By saying heart, Josiah has committed his life to fulfill commandments, testimonies, and His statutes.

Ø The agreement (pledge) is to walk following the Lord, and probably the next words define the essence of this—to do it by obeying His word with a whole heart ("all" the heart, etc.). The commitment the leader makes is one that those led make as they follow the example.

- Soul – He will maintain his commitment to God with every breath.

- Carry out, to establish – Josiah has determined to build this into his life like the work required to construct a building.
- Word – Our commitment to obey the Lord must only be to what is in the Bible that the Lord has seen fit to preserve for centuries. Not visions, people spewing prophecies, and podcasting grand statements.

6. All the people entered into the covenant – The people took their stand with the king, with no intentions of moving. The people were committed to obeying God with the same determination that was in the heart of Josiah.

- a) The Bible relates God's "covenant" purpose, that man be joined to Him in loving service and have an eternal fellowship with Him through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ.
- b) With all their heart and all their soul—obedience was worthless, unless paid from the heart and soul (see Deut. 4:29; 30:2; Joel 2:12, 13)—to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people stood to the covenant. The representatives of the people, one and all, were parties to the promise made on their behalf by the king, and signified their consent, probably as they had done in Horeb, when “Moses took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people; and they said, All that the Lord has said will we do, and be obedient” (see Deut. 24:7).[\[3\]](#)

7. All the people entered into the covenant – One person’s determination and commitment to ‘Lock In’ changes a nation’s commitment to God - the same with Joseph, Daniel, Elijah, and Paul.

- a) Spiritual revival in our day waits for a renewal of interest in seeking the will of God above all else. The Word of God is powerful still. Public reading of it by our leaders in the spirit of repentance would enable God to speak to the people. The secret of the revival under Josiah consisted of prayer, Bible reading, repentance, and forceful action against sin.[\[4\]](#)
- b) On the one side of the covenant was God with His Word, and on the other is Josiah and those joining with him, speaking their hearts and words that agree with God.[\[5\]](#)

8. All the people entered into the covenant – It does matter what the obstacle may be; people who may seek to challenge us, it is about surrendering to the Lord's Word, a commitment to obey Him, and a willingness to trust in His ability, not ours.

[1] Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., & Brown, D. (1997). *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible* (2 Ki 23:1). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

[2] Mathews, K. A. (1998). The Historical Books. In D. S. Dockery (Ed.), *Holman concise Bible commentary* (D. S. Dockery, Ed.) (153). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

[3] *2 Kings*. 1909 (H. D. M. Spence-Jones, Ed.). The Pulpit Commentary (451–452). London; New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company.

[4] *The teacher's Bible commentary*. 1972 (F. H. Paschall & H. H. Hobbs, Ed.) (218–219). Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers.

[5] Rosscup, J. E. (2008). *An Exposition on Prayer in the Bible: Igniting the Fuel to Flame Our Communication with God* (652). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.