

# Dr. John Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 29.1, 2 Kings 22-23, Part 1 Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

## 1. Abstract of Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 29.1, 2 Kings 22-23, Part 1, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Oswalt's lecture analyzes the reign of King Josiah of Judah, focusing on the **discovery of the Book of the Law and its impact**. The lecture highlights Josiah's unique devotion to God, contrasting him with predecessors like Manasseh who allowed the temple to fall into disrepair due to pagan influences. **Oswalt emphasizes Josiah's integrity and responsiveness to God's word, contrasting this with the skepticism of some modern scholars who question the book's authenticity**. The lecture also briefly outlines the political turmoil following Josiah's death and the subsequent reigns of his sons, leading to the Babylonian exile. **Oswalt suggests the story is a lesson in remaining open to God's word, even when it presents uncomfortable truths**. Furthermore, Oswalt also touches upon the historical context, including the decline of the Assyrian Empire and the rise of Babylon.

**2. 14 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 29.1 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament → Historical Books → Kings).**



**Oswalt\_Kings\_Sessi  
on29\_1.mp3**

### 3. Briefing Document: Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 29.1, 2 Kings 22-23, Part 1

Okay, here's a briefing document summarizing the main themes and ideas from the provided excerpts of Dr. John Oswalt's lecture on 2 Kings 22-23, focusing on Josiah's reign and the discovery of the Book of the Law:

#### **Briefing Document: Dr. John Oswalt on 2 Kings 22-23 (Josiah's Reform)**

##### **I. Overview:**

This lecture excerpt focuses on the reign of King Josiah of Judah (641-609 BC), a period marked by both hope and ultimate failure. The key event discussed is the discovery of the Book of the Law (likely Deuteronomy) during temple renovations and the subsequent religious reforms initiated by Josiah. The lecture also provides historical context, outlining the decline of the Assyrian Empire and the rise of Babylon, which significantly impacted Judah's fate.

##### **II. Key Themes and Ideas:**

- **A Moment of Hope Quenched:** Josiah's reign represents a brief period of religious revival in Judah, a "moment of hope" before the final collapse and exile. His death at a relatively young age (39) cut short this reform.
- **Josiah's Character and Devotion:** Josiah is portrayed as a uniquely devoted king, even compared to Hezekiah and Asa. "He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord...He followed the ways of his father, David, completely, not turning aside to the right or to the left." Oswalt emphasizes Josiah's "wholeheartedly" commitment to God, even noting that he had an "apostate grandfather and father."
- **The Significance of the Book of the Law's Discovery:**
- **Lost and Rediscovered:** The lecture raises the question of how the Book of the Law could have been "lost" and discusses the prevailing scholarly view that it was a later composition, perhaps written by a prophetic group during Josiah's time and then planted in the Temple.
- **Oswalt's Rebuttal:** Oswalt rejects this scholarly consensus, stating, "...at least one Old Testament student insists that, indeed, you better believe the book. If the book says it was written by Moses, that's good enough for me. That's good

enough for me." He suggests it was lost due to neglect and the prevalence of oral tradition.

- **Josiah's Reaction as a Key Indicator:** Josiah's immediate and visceral reaction to hearing the book – tearing his robes and seeking guidance from the Lord – is presented as evidence of his genuine faith and a contrast to the potential indifference of others, even the High Priest. "When the king heard the words of the Book of the Law...he tore his robes." Oswalt uses this to question whether our hearts are "tender toward the Lord."
- **Temple Neglect and Pagan Influence:** The disrepair of the temple, attributed to the reign of Manasseh and potentially a broader pagan worldview, is a significant point. Oswalt uses the example of a Hindu temple with a beautiful façade but disrepair behind it to illustrate how a worldview that sees the physical world as unreal can lead to neglect of physical structures dedicated to God. He argues that caring for the world, specifically the temple, is a sign of theology and belief in a real world God has given us.
- **Integrity and the Real World:** The honesty of the workmen overseeing the temple repairs is highlighted ("They need not account for the money entrusted to them because they are honest in their dealings"), linking it to the concept of a real world where words and behavior matter. Oswalt contrasts this with a pagan worldview where rituals and magic are prioritized over integrity.
- **The Fate of Josiah's Successors:** The lecture briefly outlines the succession of Josiah's sons (Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, and Zedekiah) and their reigns, characterized by political instability, foreign domination (Egypt and Babylon), and ultimately leading to the destruction of Jerusalem and the Babylonian exile. Zedekiah was considered a "lackey of the Babylonians."

### III. Key Quotes:

- "He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord...He followed the ways of his father, David, completely, not turning aside to the right or to the left."
- "...at least one Old Testament student insists that, indeed, you better believe the book. If the book says it was written by Moses, that's good enough for me. That's good enough for me."
- "When the king heard the words of the Book of the Law...he tore his robes."

- "They need not account for the money entrusted to them because they are honest in their dealings."

#### **IV. Implications and Applications:**

- **Personal Faith and Responsiveness to God's Word:** The lecture challenges listeners to examine their own hearts and responsiveness to God's word.
- **The Importance of Integrity:** Emphasizes the connection between faith and integrity in daily life and work.
- **Engaging with Scripture:** Encourages belief and acceptance of the scripture, rather than to doubt or dismiss it.
- **Historical Context and Theological Understanding:** Underscores the importance of understanding the historical context of the biblical narrative to deepen theological understanding.

## 4. Study Guide: Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 29.1, 2 Kings 22-23, Part 1

### Josiah's Reform: A Study Guide

#### I. Key Concepts and Themes

- **Josiah's Reign as a Moment of Hope:** Understand why Josiah's reign is seen as a brief period of potential renewal amidst the decline of Judah.
- **The Collapse of the Assyrian Empire:** Know the timeline and contributing factors to the swift decline of Assyria and its impact on the region.
- **Josiah's Death at Megiddo:** Analyze the circumstances surrounding Josiah's death and its consequences for Judah's reform.
- **Succession After Josiah:** Know the sequence of kings after Josiah, including Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, and Zedekiah, and their respective reigns.
- **The Role of Egypt and Babylon:** Trace the shifting alliances and power struggles between Egypt and Babylon and their influence on Judah's fate.
- **The Discovery of the Book of the Law:** Examine the significance of finding the Torah, its potential implications, and different scholarly perspectives.
- **Josiah's Reaction to the Torah:** Analyze Josiah's response to the rediscovered Book of the Law and its connection to his character.
- **Temple's Disrepair:** Consider Manasseh's role in neglecting the temple and the symbolism of its physical state.
- **Integrity and Action:** Contemplate the relationship between belief, action, and integrity in the context of religious practice.

#### II. Quiz

Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each, based on the provided source material.

1. What made Josiah's reign a "moment of hope" for Judah?
2. What factors contributed to the collapse of the Assyrian Empire?
3. Why did Pharaoh Necho of Egypt march north towards Assyria, and what was the outcome of his encounter with Josiah at Megiddo?

4. Describe the reigns of Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim after Josiah's death.
5. What significant event occurred in 605 BC that impacted Judah's allegiance?
6. How do the books of Kings and Chronicles differ in their accounts of Jehoiakim's death?
7. Why does the Bible not consider Zedekiah a legitimate king?
8. What is unique about the description of Josiah's reign in 2 Kings 22:2 compared to previous kings?
9. According to Dr. Oswalt, what does the state of the temple during Josiah's reign reveal about Manasseh's worldview?
10. What does Josiah's reaction to the Book of the Law reveal about his character and spiritual state?

### **III. Quiz Answer Key**

1. Josiah's reign was a moment of hope because he demonstrated a wholehearted devotion to God, unlike his predecessors, initiating religious reform.
2. The Assyrian Empire collapsed due to internal issues, including a potential period of complacency after significant conquests and the death of their last significant king, Ashurbanipal.
3. Pharaoh Necho marched north to support the weakened Assyrians as a buffer against Babylon. Josiah attempted to stop him at Megiddo and was killed.
4. Jehoahaz was chosen by the people but quickly deposed by the Egyptians, who then installed Jehoiakim, who was subservient to Egypt.
5. In 605 BC, Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon came through Judah, causing Jehoiakim to switch his allegiance from Egypt to Babylon.
6. Kings says nothing about Jehoiakim's death but Chronicles states that Jehoiakim died in captivity in Babylon.
7. The Bible never considers Zedekiah a legitimate king because he was installed by the Babylonians and ruled as their puppet.
8. Josiah is said to have followed the ways of his father, David, completely, not turning aside to the right or to the left, which is a stronger endorsement than those given to even the best previous kings like Hezekiah and Asa.

9. The state of the temple reveals Manasseh's acceptance of a pagan worldview, which devalued the physical world and prioritized magical rituals over maintaining God's temple.
10. Josiah's reaction, tearing his robes, reveals his deep reverence for God and his willingness to respond to God's word, demonstrating a tender and open heart toward the Lord.

#### **IV. Essay Questions**

Consider the following essay prompts, drawing upon the source material and your understanding of the period.

1. Analyze the political landscape surrounding Judah during Josiah's reign, focusing on the roles of Assyria, Egypt, and Babylon in shaping Judah's destiny.
2. Discuss the significance of the discovery of the Book of the Law during Josiah's reign. Explore its potential impact on Judahite society and religion, and analyze the various scholarly perspectives regarding its authenticity and origins.
3. Contrast the reigns of Josiah and Manasseh. How did their leadership styles and religious beliefs impact the spiritual and physical state of Judah?
4. Examine the character of Josiah as presented in 2 Kings 22-23. What qualities made him a righteous king, and how did his personal convictions influence his actions and decisions?
5. Assess the overall impact of Josiah's reform on Judah. To what extent did his efforts succeed in revitalizing Judah's spiritual life, and what factors ultimately contributed to the nation's downfall?

## V. Glossary of Key Terms

- **Josiah:** King of Judah who initiated significant religious reforms after the discovery of the Book of the Law.
- **Ashurbanipal:** The last significant king of the Assyrian Empire.
- **Megiddo:** A strategic location in ancient Israel where Josiah was killed in battle against Pharaoh Necho.
- **Jehoahaz:** Son of Josiah, briefly served as king before being deposed by Egypt.
- **Jehoiakim:** Son of Josiah, placed on the throne by Egypt and later became a vassal of Babylon.
- **Nebuchadnezzar:** King of Babylon who conquered Judah and took many of its people into exile.
- **Zedekiah:** Son of Josiah, installed as king by Nebuchadnezzar and ultimately rebelled against Babylon.
- **Book of the Law:** Refers to the Torah, specifically the book of Deuteronomy, rediscovered during Josiah's reign.
- **Manasseh:** King of Judah known for his idolatry and wickedness, contributing to the spiritual decline of the nation.
- **Temple:** The central place of worship for the Israelites in Jerusalem, which fell into disrepair during the reign of Manasseh.
- **Pseudepigrapha:** Writings whose claimed authorship is false.



## 5. FAQs on Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 29.1, 2 Kings 22-23, Part 1, [Biblicalelearning.org](http://Biblicalelearning.org) (BeL)

### FAQ on Josiah's Reign and the Discovery of the Book of the Law

- **What were the key historical circumstances surrounding Josiah's reign?**
- Josiah's reign (641-609 BC) coincided with the rapid decline of the Assyrian Empire. As Assyria weakened, Egypt attempted to intervene to maintain a buffer against Babylon. Josiah's attempt to prevent the Egyptian army from aiding the Assyrians led to his death at the Pass of Megiddo, abruptly ending his reforms. This power vacuum and the subsequent rise of Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar significantly impacted Judah's fate.
- **What made Josiah's devotion to God unique compared to previous kings?**
- While many kings were described as doing what was right in the eyes of the Lord, Josiah is specifically noted for following the ways of his father David "completely, not turning aside to the right or to the left." This suggests an unusually wholehearted and undivided devotion to God, even despite growing up with apostate influences.
- **Why was the temple in need of repair during Josiah's reign, and what does this signify?**
- The temple was in disrepair due to the 52 years of corruption under Josiah's predecessors, Manasseh and Ammon, who promoted pagan worship. This neglect signifies not only a rejection of Yahweh but potentially a broader acceptance of a pagan worldview where the physical world, and thus the temple's upkeep, was considered less significant. The temple became filled with pagan items and symbols, so Josiah was not only repairing the building but also cleansing it of these pagan symbols.
- **What was the significance of finding the Book of the Law (Torah) in the temple?**
- The discovery of the Book of the Law highlights the extent to which the knowledge and practice of God's law had been lost in Judah. It emphasizes how easily the word of God can become neglected or forgotten, even within religious institutions. The fact that the High Priest recognized the book while the scribe did not illustrates that the rediscovery of God's word is for all people, not just the religious.

- **What is the scholarly debate surrounding the Book of the Law and its discovery?**
- Many modern Old Testament scholars believe the discovered book, likely Deuteronomy, was a newly written text "found" during temple repairs to promote monotheism and reform. They argue that the book wasn't actually "lost." However, others argue that the text was indeed ancient and written by Moses.
- **How did Josiah react upon hearing the words of the Book of the Law, and why?**
- Josiah tore his robes in response to hearing the Book of the Law. This act of mourning and repentance demonstrates his belief in the book's authenticity and his immediate recognition of Judah's failure to adhere to God's commandments. His pre-existing devotion and tender heart towards the Lord prepared him to receive and respond to the word.
- **What happened to Judah after Josiah's death?**
- After Josiah's death, Judah experienced political instability and further decline. Egypt installed Jehoiakim as king, who then became a Babylonian vassal. Jehoiakim revolted, leading to Babylonian sieges and raids. His son Jehoiachin briefly ruled before surrendering to Nebuchadnezzar, who then installed Zedekiah, Josiah's third son, as a puppet king. Zedekiah's eventual rebellion led to the final destruction of Jerusalem and the exile of its inhabitants to Babylon.
- **What is the enduring message from this account for contemporary readers?**
- The account of Josiah's reign and the discovery of the Book of the Law serves as a reminder of the importance of maintaining a tender heart towards God, remaining open to His word, and consistently examining one's own life in light of God's commandments. It underscores the dangers of spiritual complacency and the need for integrity in both word and deed.