

# Josiah Restores True Worship

Discover how to restore true worship in your life through this word study on  
2 Kings 23.



# First!!!

Before beginning this study, it is essential that you read 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings Chapter 23. Pay attention to some of the things that Josiah did to restore true worship in Jerusalem and follow this study to discover how we can take a leaf out of Josiah's book for our own life!

# Second!!

This is a “word study”, which means that I have looked at the English words that were used in this story and discovered their original Hebrew meanings. As most of us know, our English vocabulary is minute compared to that of the Hebrew and Greek. This means that there is often some meaning lost in translation. That, of course, is not to say that the English translation is wrong, but rather it may lack context at times which further study of the original word, or root word, will reveal, adding further clarification. The index of Hebrew words used through the study can be found on the last page.

# Third!

This study came about by a personal revelation from God. This means that although the study bears revealed truth, it is open to your own interpretation and life application. You may see things that have been missed or disagree with interpretations that have been made. All I can suggest is that which was spoken of by the Apostle Paul to the Church in Rome: “Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind” (Romans 14:5).

## Let's begin...

### A brief background

Josiah is the new king of Judah and unlike many of the kings before him he sets out to abolish the abominable worship of various pagan deities that had been set-up and endorsed by those in leadership before him. Beginning at verse 4 of 2 Kings 23 we will follow the instructions given by Josiah to begin the restoration of true worship; to the one true God.

## Verse 4

*Bring out of the temple all the articles that were made for Baal, Asherah and for all the hosts of heaven. He burned them outside Jerusalem in the fields of Kidron and carried the ashes to Bethel.*

### REMOVE THEM...



Here we see Josiah ordering for unclean things to be brought out of the temple in Jerusalem. But what are these “articles” that must be brought out of the temple? The English word “articles” comes from the Hebrew word *keli* which can be used to mean a ‘receptacle, utensil, tool or precious ornament’. So here we see “articles” that have been dedicated to and used for the worship of other deities that must be removed from the temple.

Here are some definitions offered by the Oxford Dictionary:

1. **Receptacle** – a hollow object used to contain something
2. **Utensil** – a tool, container, or other article, especially for household use
3. **Tool** – a device or implement, especially one held in the hand, used to carry out a particular function...a thing used to help perform a job.
4. **Ornament** – a thing used or serving to make something look more attractive but usually having no practical purpose...decoration added to embellish something.

We can see here that the word “articles” literally means *anything* that aids in performing a certain function: namely worship.

We are told in 2 Corinthians 6:16 that we are the temple of God. So we must follow Josiah’s example and bring out of our lives all the “articles” that enable us to worship anything or anyone but God alone.

So what are these idols that we are potentially worshiping? Josiah names three types of idols that were worshiped in Jerusalem.

1. Baal
2. Asherah
3. Hosts of heaven

**Baal** means ‘master’. Baal can represent idols such as those things that master/bind us (e.g. addictions/habits).

**Asherah** means ‘happiness, love and increase’. The idol Asherah is the idea that we are entitled to love and happiness at the expense of our spiritual relationship/lives in God.

**Hosts of heaven** The other “hosts” represent other countless idols that take a high place in our lives, too numerous to count.

In this verse we are not yet told to remove the idols themselves but rather the *articles* that we use to worship them. Here are 2 examples of how that would look in our life:

1. Addictions and Habits

*The habit/addiction of social drinking*

The idol = drinking/intoxication/the feeling of freedom

The vessel = socializing with drinkers and/or taking alcohol with you to social events

This example is not to have a go at those who drink alcohol, but rather points to an all-too-common idol that “masters” us. This example highlights the act of habitual and uncontrolled drinking, which often leads to addiction and intoxication. Those that have a problem in this area may or may not know about it. Josiah instructs us to remove the articles (vessels) that feed our worship of this idol. What enables a person to continue worshiping this idol? These are the things that need to be removed.

2. Love and Happiness

*The desire to maintain an unequally yoked relationship*

The idol = love, happiness and self

The vessel = the relationship, self is put before God and disobedience to God’s teaching

This idol is often a tough one for most people. We know that God is not against the happiness or wealth of His people, but He is against such things when they begin to take His place of worship in the life of a believer. Perhaps the desire to gain or hold onto such things challenges the Lordship of Jesus in our life.

## 2 Corinthians 6:16

*And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God.*

They were just two simple examples to highlight the difference between an idol and the articles that are used to endorse or continue their worship and lordship in our life.

### **BURN THEM!!**

Next, Josiah took all the articles outside the city of Jerusalem and burned them in the fields of Kidron and took their ashes to Bethel.

Hebrew translations:

**Jerusalem** – Peace and safety

**Kidron** – Dark, cause to mourn

**Bethel** – House of God/Almighty



**Jerusalem** was the city of Gods people. God protected and provided for them. However, one only needs to begin to read the Old Testament and they will see that when idols were worshiped instead of the One true God of Israel, its people saw fear and destruction.

The **Fields of Kidron** (better known as “Kidron Valley”) was virtually a burial ground and it was a well known refuse ground for the destruction of pagan idols (2 Chronicles 15:16, 29:16). According to Jewish tradition, Kidron Valley was also known as the Valley of Jehoshaphat. Jehoshaphat means “The Lord Judges”.

**Bethel** means “House of God”. It is referred to in scripture as a place to which the people of united Israel went in times of trouble, to ask counsel of God (Judges 20:18, 21:2). After Israel divided into two kingdoms Bethel was included in the northern kingdom under the rule of King Jeroboam. He soon made it into an idolatrous place where the people worshiped a golden calf. The prophet Hosea then contemptuously called it *Beth-aven*, which means *house of idols*, or *house of wickedness* (Hosea 4:15).

### **Wow!! What an amazing picture!!**

Here we have the process of repentance and worship demonstrated so beautifully. We, being a part of Christ and a part of His body, are provided a safe and peaceful place, but when idols enter that place they threaten and drive out all peace and ultimately put the soul in danger. This is why we must rid ourselves of idol worship.

The articles are to be removed from our lives and burned in Kidron. We are given a choice right here...we either rid ourselves of our articles of worship while we still can or we continue in idolatry and experience the “Judgment of God” when we finally stand before Him. The word Kidron also signified mourning, meaning that it will be sad separating ourselves from some of the things in our lives that we once loved.

These articles are to be burned to ash, meaning to pulverize them. It does not mean to burn them and reach into the fire to save part of them from destruction. It means to let them burn until they are no longer existent as the vessel they once were. All that should remain is the ash (or memory) of them.

Josiah took the ash of these articles to Bethel. There could be two reasons for this:

- 1) he identified the ash of the burned articles with the abominable idolatry that was performed at Bethel by King Jeroboam, or
- 2) he meant it symbolically as an offering of repentance before “The house of God”.

Either way it showed the articles for what they were. God wants us to recognise our idolatry for what it is and place it at His feet in repentance and worship. God wants to take our vessels of *dishonor* that we have burned and create new vessels of *honor* worthy of His service.

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## Verse 5

*Then he removed the idolatrous priests whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense on the high places in the cities of Judah and in the places all around Jerusalem, and those who burned incense to Baal, to the sun, to the moon, to the constellations, and to all the host of heaven.*



Here is an interesting challenge. Who do the priests represent and how do we “remove” them from our lives? The Hebrew root word for “idolatrous priests” means ‘*shriveled, deeply affected with passion*’. These men were responsible for bringing the articles of worship before the pagan deities. They were called ‘idolatrous’ because instead of serving and worship the True God they rebelled and worship idols.

So we are told to put away/rid our lives of these idolatrous priests. Note here that we are not told to kill or burn the priests! We should all take a deep sigh of relief because the priests represent us, our self-life. Our shriveled up lives that are deeply affected with passion and emotion are to be done away with. We are a ‘*royal priesthood*’ (1 Peter 2:9) and are responsible for the method and sincerity of our worship before God. If we say that we “worship God” yet allow our lives to be filled with more of us and our idol worship than we do with Him, then we too are idolatrous priests (if we could even dare to claim that title).

So what are we to do with ourselves, the idolatrous priest!? Unfortunately that is the biggest battle that believers have; the self-life. While in our mortal bodies, we will always have alive in our flesh, the ‘self’. Well, we know that we aren’t expected to go out and kill ourselves, but we are told by our Lord Jesus to “deny ourselves” (Luke 9:23). We see Josiah remove the idolatrous priests who are later replaced by priests devoted to the worship of God.

But take note here...The priests were not only taken from Jerusalem but also from the cities that enclosed it. Jerusalem, being the holy place of worship, should certainly be cleaned of its idolatrous priests, but did Josiah really need to worry about the outskirts which don’t matter so much?

If we consider for a moment our own lives we will see a similar scenario played out before our eyes. We would all agree that the hub of our faith should be consecrated to the worship of God alone, but how many of us consider the outskirts of our daily lives? Josiah is showing us here that we, as entire beings, should be entirely consecrated. Not just our Sunday services or our prayer and Bible times, but also the television shows we watch the humor we entertain and the company we keep. We shouldn’t need to look far to see that we have corrupted other aspects of our lives that we don’t deem to be “spiritually influenced” and there we find “self” once again.

Josiah also mentions those that ‘burn incense to Baal’. **Incense** means ‘*to enclose or join*’. The burning of incense was an act of worship required by God offered as a sweet smelling aroma pleasing to Him. If we remember that Baal represents those things that master us, we can see that by continuing to indulge ourselves in destructive and defiling acts or thoughts we are voluntarily enclosing our life within that lifestyle and joining ourselves to the driving force, evil.

We all have things that master us, restricting us from being the man or woman of God that we desire to be. Some quiet reflection would reveal to us that we are feeding our addiction rather than fighting against it.

*Ecclesiastes 8:8*

*"...wickedness will not release those who practice it." NIV*

Josiah goes on to mention a variety of pagan deities. The mention of the sun, moon, constellations and hosts of heaven remind us of all the other idols in our life that we give our worship to (e.g. time, money and affection). There are also a few specific things worshiped here, such as the zodiac and created things, rather than the creator Himself. There are many powerful and majestic things in this world, but they only point to the even more potent power and majesty of God.

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## Verse 6

And he brought out the wooden image from the house of the LORD, to the Brook Kidron outside Jerusalem, burned it at the Brook Kidron and ground it to ashes, and threw its ashes on the graves of the common people.

Here we see Josiah remove the wooden image, which is Asherah and burns it outside Jerusalem. My first thought was "What about Baal?" I discovered that the term Baal was a generic name used to idolize something. Cultures would deem different parts of creation to be master of or have dominion over that part of creation/life. For example:

- Baal-gad – master of fortune
- Baal-tsphown – master of winter
- Baal-zbuwb – master of the fly



Asherah was an actual image that was worshiped. I stopped and thought for a moment about an 'image; that I worship. For a while I couldn't think of one and deemed it irrelevant to me in this era. But God was quick to enlighten me!! I came to realise that 'we' are Asherah. Our "self" is ultimately and instinctively what we spend our time, money and affection on (worship). We are our own idol. All other idols are things that we create them to be, but "self" is an image that we see all the time, an image that remains when the seasons change and day turns to night. All the other idols in our life could be termed as temporal or revolving. For example, on the weekends we might worship our "free-time", in the evening we might worship the television, and during the week we might worship our work, but these all stem from our most dangerous idol, ourselves.

We need to realise the importance of denying self. The wooden image was so abominable that it was ground to ashes and thrown on the graves of the common people. The priests were a tribe chosen to dedicate their lives in worship of God, but the idol that they were worshiping was so worthless that in its destruction it was scattered on the graves of common people, not graves of kings or priests, but common people. Historically, good kings were buried amongst other kings, but wicked kings were usually buried elsewhere, such as the display of honor.

It appears to me that God does not regard the 'self' of His people. He loves us with an unchanging love, but our 'self' is what got us into sin in the first place and it is the sin of 'self' that He is determined to conquer.

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## Verse 7

Then he tore down the ritual booths of the perverted persons that were in the house of the LORD, where the women wove hangings for the wooden image.

Josiah tears down and overthrows the ritual places of the men who perverted and prostituted themselves to licentious idolatry. These ritual places could be defined in our lives as the places where we spend our time prostituting ourselves to other idols in our life. It may be the television room, the gym, the workplace, the shopping center, the internet, our thoughts and meditations, our entertainment. It doesn't matter what it is, we are told to overthrow those areas of our life and make them a dwelling place for God. This may mean removing the television from the lounge room, which might be enough to give most people an anxiety attack. What are the inward and outward places that need to be overthrown in your life?



The woven hangings represent those things that we bring to our idols in worship, to furnish its place in our life. Take the drinking example used earlier; not only do we endorse the vessel that leads us to idol worship (the vessel - socializing with drinkers and/or taking alcohol with you to social events) we also do it in style! We take the drink that tastes the best, looks the best, and costs the most, all to feed the idols of self, image and lifestyle.

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## Verse 8

*And he brought all the priests from the cities of Judah, and defiled the high places where the priests had burned incense, from Geba to Beersheba; also he broke down the high places at the gates which were at the entrance of the Gate of Joshua the governor of the city, which were to the left of the city gate.*

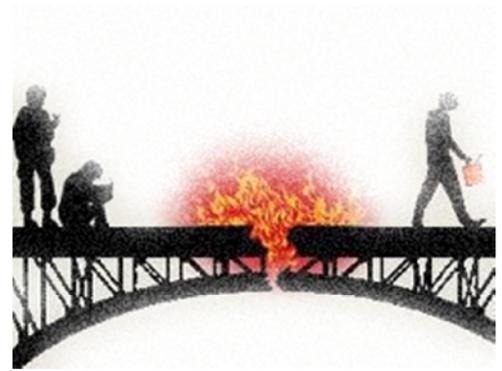
In this passage, Josiah calls for all the priests that were serving in the high places of worship to come to Jerusalem so that they could be watched, to ensure they did not continue to offer sacrifices and worship to idols. This almost looks like a call to all "Christians" to step out of their places of idolatrous worship and have them known by selected others so that together you can keep watch in your life to keep you from returning to the old patterns of worship.

There is another note to make about the priests. According to various commentaries, the priests were apparently offering sacrifice and worship to the one true God, but had defiled that worship with other idolatrous worshiping rituals. This puts a different twist to the passage.

How many of us are offering sacrifices of praise and worship to God which do not represent that which is called for in the Bible? Perhaps we've seen people raising their hands in church with tears running down their face, yet only the day before we saw them in their unrepentant sin. This is idolatrous worship. If we really knew God intimately, we would know that our lip service on Sunday is an abomination to Him if our everyday life is at enmity with Him. If we are to offer up sacrifices of praise and worship to the true God we must do it as He has asked for it, anything else is dishonoring to Him.

Let's look next at this interesting act – '**defiling the high places**'. Josiah instructs for all of the high places (usually hills) that were used to worship other gods to be defiled. Defile means '*to pollute*'. Josiah ensured that the high places were so polluted that it would be dishonoring of the idols if worship to continued to be performed there. This was done so that even if the priests wanted to go back to their old places and patterns of worship, they couldn't.

How does that look in our daily lives? Let's say for example you are in an adulterous relationship and you want to defile that relationship so that you are unable to return there. How would you do that? If you don't burn that bridge it can still be walked over. Perhaps admitting to someone that you have a struggle or denying to your adulterous partner that you feel love for them, could help to defile that relationship. Once sin is exposed it no longer has the same grip that it used to have and although painful for the other person, denying them the affection of love could be enough to destroy that adulterous relationship freeing you from its grip. Each high place calls for its own method of pollution. If you don't pollute it, you *will* return there.



### ***A quick note on Geba and Beersheba...***

A word search on Geba and Beersheba reveals them to mean 'small hill/convex' and 'pit' respectively. Could this mean that we are to step away from **all** places of idolatrous worship in our lives? Not only those things that cause obvious pits of filth, but also those which seem to be only small, shallow things, that don't really seem to matter. Maybe you've been at it so long that you have seared your conscience with regard to the "small" things. Now is a good time to renew your conscience and start to bring these small things into the light of Christ.

### **This next bit blew my mind**

Josiah goes to the gate of the city and breaks down the high places which were to the left of the gate.

Hebrew meanings:

**Joshua** – Jehovah saves (salvation)

**High Places** – Elevation (pride and self sufficiency)

**Left** – Dark, wrap up (dark covered places)

A word search shows this figuratively to mean that Josiah goes to the gate of Joshua (salvation) and destroys the high places (pride and self-sufficiency) which dwell to the left (in the dark/covered places) of the gate.



Essentially this process is removing the things that hinder our acceptance and walk in the salvation given through Christ such as pride and self-sufficiency. These are things hidden away in the dark places of our mind and spirit, often unseen to those that possess them. The King Himself will be needed for this task!

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## Verse 9

*Nevertheless the priests of the high places did not come up to the altar of the LORD in Jerusalem, but they ate unleavened bread among their brethren.*

This passage may need a brief explanation. The priests were from the tribe of Levi and were ordained by God to minister before Him in the Temple. The priests were not allocated an inheritance of land when they entered the Promised Land as the other tribes were. All the children of Israel were allocated an area of land in which to live and earn a living, such as growing crops and keeping livestock. The Levites did not earn a living in the same way as the other people. Their life was dedicated to serving God and His people in spiritual concerns and their livelihood was maintained by the offerings of animals, grain and money made to God at the temple.

Although these priests were idolaters, their livelihood and inheritance was still found in their tribe. Josiah permitted them to return to their people and eat of the food given to them but they were not permitted to enter into the temple to perform their normal duties before God.

It seems right to liken these priests to those in the Church who hold a role of leadership (e.g. worship leaders, ministering to new believers). Although we are all priests before God, those of us that are engaged in leading or ministering to the flock of Jesus need to be free from idolatry, lest we lead other into it.

Forgiveness is always offered to the repentant heart, but God requires leaders in the Church to be of a righteous standard. Stepping down from ministry is often an appropriate action depending on the nature of the sin. We all struggle with sin, but unaddressed sin in the leaders of the Church is a deep concern. Fellowship with the brethren is not denied, but leadership may be withdrawn for a time.

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## Verse 10

*And he defiled Topheth, which is in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter pass through the fire to Molech.*

The word **Topheth** means ‘contempt or smite’. Topheth is located in Jerusalem, in the Valley of Hinnom. It was the scene of idolatrous practices in the days of Ahaz (2 Chronicles 28:3) and of Manasseh, who sacrificed their first-born children to the god Moloch by burning them alive (2 Chronicles 33:6).

It was on account of these evil practices that Jeremiah (7:32; 19:6) announced the future change of name to “The Valley of Slaughter”. Into this valley dead bodies were cast to be consumed by the dogs and fires were here kept burning to consume the rubbish of the city. Such associations led to the reference to Hinnom as ‘Ge-Hinnom’ (New Testament "Gehenna") giving rise to the idea of a fiery Gehenna of judgment, becoming the "type of Hell".



So, how does this apply to us as worshipers?

The root meaning for son/daughter (children) is ‘to build or make’. I liken this to the “work of our hands”. With our God given abilities we go about our daily lives doing what humans do. We aim to build for ourselves a life of wealth, possessions, status and relationship. These things, in themselves, are not wrong but our attitude and affection toward these things is what gives them a place in our lives as righteous or unrighteous, holy or unholy, clean or unclean.

In Biblical times, the first born child, animal or crop was significant. In Exodus (13:2,

22:29) God commands that all first born and first fruits of Israel were to be dedicated to God in remembrance of the sparing of their first born child during the Passover in Egypt. So not only is the sacrifice of their infants in itself detestable, it also held the Living God to whom they owed their allegiance, in contempt.

When we become believers *everything* that we are, have and do, belong to God and are to be used to glorify Him. However, being the “self” centered beings that we are, we tend to think that God is entitled to a certain part of us and the rest is ours to conduct as we will. Some of us go even further as to use those supposedly “unsanctified” parts of our life to engage in outright wickedness. It is true that most of us don’t even realise we are doing it, but this is the saddest part of all! How far have we fallen in today’s Church that the supposed Body of Christ has become so watered down and so corrupted by the sometimes subtle wickedness of society that we fail to see the difference between righteousness and unrighteousness.

Our pride and contempt for the things of God needs to be totally destroyed to ensure that the work of our hands are not offered to other idols in our life (ultimately to Satan), but to God alone.

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## Verse 11

*Then he removed the horses that the kings of Judah had dedicated to the sun, at the entrance to the house of the LORD, by the chamber of Nathan-Melech, the officer who was in the court; and he burned the chariots of the sun with fire.*

The word horse means to ‘leap for joy’ and is also displayed by the swallow in its rapid flight (up and down motion). The word chariot means ‘saddle or seat’.

There are 2 things happening here:

1. The horses dedicated to the sun god will be removed
2. The chariots used in worship of the sun god will be destroyed

How does this look for us?

1. *The joy that we find in our idols will be removed (horses – leap for joy)*
2. *We only ever have alternating joy& sorrow as idols come and go in our life (horses likened to a swallow in flight – up and down motion)*
3. *The things that enable us to ride the wave of worldly joy and fulfillment will be burned (chariots)*

Firstly, I can see two notions presented by the two meanings used to describe the word ‘horse’ in the above scripture.

- ***Joy received from idol worship (horse – leap for joy)***

If the basis of our joy in life comes from the time, money and affection spent in our idolatrous activities, then God will be sure to take that joy away. It is better for a man to be “poor in spirit” and downhearted because of his lack of fulfillment in life, and thus searches for God, than for him to be full of joy from earthly pursuits and never see God. But we have a promise from God that says He will heal the brokenhearted and the loss of joy from this world will be placed with an unquenchable joy in Christ.





- ***The alternating joy as idols come and go in our life*** (*swallow in flight – up and down motion*)  
One of the side-effects of pursuing joy in this world is that of disappointment and loss. If we have set ourselves up as ministers to the things of this world we will always have disappointment. A person who idolizes another person is sure to see the day when their idol is taken from this world, leaving them with heartache and sorrow. The same outcome is evident with anything that is temporal (i.e. all things in this world). The only thing that will never leave or diminish, but rather, will come ever closer and expand, is God. As things in this world come and go we will always feel pain and sorrow, but if we have the one thing that will never change or move then we will always have joy, even if it is amidst our pain.

Secondly, as already discussed in verse four, we are to remove the things in our life that enable us to worship the idols in our life. If we don't opt to do it voluntarily, then God will have to do it for us...the choice is ours.

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## Verse 12

*The altars that were on the roof, the upper chamber of Ahaz, which the kings of Judah had made, and the altars which Manasseh had made in the two courts of the house of the LORD, the king broke down and pulverized there, and threw their dust into the Brook Kidron.*

We have 2 alters here:

1. Ahaz' altar that was on the roof, the upper chamber
2. Manasseh' altars in the 2 courts of the house of the Lord

### **Ahaz' Altar**

Definitions:

**Ahaz** - *possessor, to seize or take hold of*

**Roof** - *to rise, majestic*

**Upper chamber** - *high and lofty*

This altar seems to talk of the work of Satan in our life. Satan is a majestic angel and the self exalted king of this world, with no other intention than to take hold of our life, seizing us so that we do not accept the Word of God and His salvation. His hold and apparent majesty needs to be destroyed in our life.

### **Manasseh' Altars**

Manasseh means 'to cause to forget, neglect or remove' and his altars were placed in the very courts of the house of God. Again we see here the work of Satan. He tries (often successfully) to step into our lives, which are the temples of God, to distract us with the things of this world so that we forget, neglect and often remove the presence of the Holy Spirit from our lives. The best thing that Satan can do is cause us to become complacent through things such as; not reading the Word, missing Church or Bible Study, staying away from fellowship, neglecting to pray etc. All of these things lead us out of the presence of God and into a self-indulged life in the world. Satan knows that God would rather us be hot or cold, so if he can cause us to become luke-warm then he knows that we will become detestable to God.

## Verse 13

*Then the king defiled the high places that were east of Jerusalem, which were on the south of the Mount of Corruption, which Solomon king of Israel had built for Ashtoreth the abomination of the Sidonians, for Chemosh the abomination of the Moabites, and for Milcom the abomination of the people of Ammon.*

Here we have a defilement of the high places that were:

- east (above/against) of Jerusalem (peace and safety)
- south (strong/firm) of the Mount of Corruption (decay/ruin/snare) which Solomon (peace/health and prosperity) built for:
  - a. Ashtoreth (love and happiness) the abomination (filth) of the Sidonians (which lie alongside in wait)
  - b. Chemosh (subdue/powerful) the abomination (filth) of the Moabites (Moab - incestuous son of Lot)
  - c. Milcom (idol or chief deity) the abomination of the people of Ammon (inbred/tribal)

Here we see a variety of examples of how idols work in our life; they lie in wait for us and subdue us with power, while all along we think we are moving toward happiness.

There also seems to be a trend in this passage with regard to “family”. Incestuous relationships leading to inbreeding could point to sexual immorality, however I think it’s also important to note the part that family plays in our life. Family is a gift from God and should be cherished, however putting family and their opinions or beliefs before God is a dangerous ground to tread. It may or may not be our immediate family such as wife or children, but it may be the compromise that we make with extended family. Do we allow their opinions to affect our decision to walk in righteousness before God? Do we allow their actions to lead us into temptation and sin? Do we back down from our firm beliefs because they challenge us with rejection?

Let us keep family in the place that God originally placed it, under Him.

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## Verse 14

*And he broke in pieces the sacred pillars and cut down the wooden images, and filled their places with the bones of men.*

Josiah broke in pieces the pillars, which represents ‘something stationed’ in our life; most likely something that is long standing and has been built to stand firm. My first thought on this one led to that of our upbringing, the things in our life that we have had for a long, long time. It may be something like walls of pain, past hurt, unforgiveness, culture, religions, relationships, just to name a few. Josiah then fills (consecrates) their place with bones of men (strength and life). A very nice analogy.



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## Verse 15

*Moreover the altar that was at Bethel, and the high place which Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel sin, had made, both that altar and the high place he broke down; and he burned the high place and crushed it to powder, and burned the wooden image.*

We see here another way in which we harbor unrepentant sin. Despite being the ‘house of God’ (Bethel) we are all too often found contending for and defending sins in our life because we regard them with pleasure or favor. If it feels good it can’t be bad for us can it? Our own pleasure ‘seeking and protecting’ is one of the hardest things for humans to admit to and then let go of. It just seems to go against our grain. We are self-centered people and God intends to crush us to powder until we see it and turn from it.

# Finally...

Let's sum up what we have learned in our art of worship:

1. Recognise and remove all things or avenues that enable us to participate in the worship of idols in our life
2. Confess and consecrate them to God under His fiery eyes and leave them with Him, taking nothing back for ourselves
3. Recognise the snare that "self" plays in our lives and remove it from, not only the notably spiritual parts of our life but from even the smallest and seemingly insignificant parts of life.
4. Acknowledge that "self" has become our main idol and anything that promotes our pleasure above are relationship and obedience before God.
5. We need to recognise the "places" in our lives that we spend in time of idolatrous worship. We then need to deal brutally with them, tearing and tear them down so they can no longer be a place of idolatrous worship (for example: television, secular radio, internet, facebook and night clubs).
6. Defile the idolatrous 'high places' in our life. Recognise the idolatrous areas of our life and 'burn the bridge' so you can't go back even if you wanted to!!
7. Spend some time searching your heart and mind for places of arrogance and pride that prevent the Holy Spirit from completing and perfecting His perfect work of Salvation in your life. Pride always comes before a fall.
8. If you are a leader in the congregation, take special time to evaluate your life before God. Deal treacherously with your unrepentant sin, so that you may not be removed from your place of service before God and it be given to another. If you don't, He will. He will not allow idolatrous priests ministering before Him.
9. Be careful to guard the work of your hands and the use of your abilities. They are a gift to you from God and He expects them to be dedicated to Him. Do not allow you labour of you hands to be given to another!!
10. Recognise that the joy that you receive and the pleasure that you take in you idols will be stripped from you. Maybe not now in this world but ultimately when you stand before God.
11. Look back over your life and note the ever changing 'joy to sorrow' produced by the temporal things of this world and let that draw you closer to God and the eternal!
12. Remember that this earthly life is a spiritual battle. Satan prowls around like a roaring lion ready to devour you. If he can't crush you he will work subtly to deceive you and cause you to forget the significance of God's place in your life. This ultimately is more dangerous because you won't even know its happening. Don't allow Satan to cause you to become luke-warm.
13. Keep family in its right place, under God.
14. Recognise the 'stationed' things in your life that you have had for a while. Things such as past hurts and upbringing can cause us to build a wall keeping the healing hand of God from our life. Humble yourself before God in obedience and watch as He fills you with His Life.

I have found that the key to true worship is honesty and humility. Without honesty you will never acknowledge your idols or the need for change. Without humility you can't be honest nor can you lower yourself before God admitting His sovereignty over your life. The denial of self requires the daily practice of humility. Humility is an art, it takes dedicated practice and attention.

**Let's learn to worship God with *all* of us!**

## Word Study Index

Word	Strong's #	Referred to in verse	Meaning
Abomination	8251	13	Filth
Ahaz	271	12	Possessor, to seize, take hold
Ammon	5983	13	Inbred, tribal
Articles	3627	4	Receptacle/utensil
Ash	6083	6	Pulverise/rubbish
Asherah	842	4	Happiness, love & increase
Ashtoreth	6253	13	Increase, goddess of love
Baal	1168	4,5	Master
Beersheeba	884	8	Pit
Bethel	1008	4,15	House of God/almighty
Bones	6106	14	Strength/life
Chariots	4818	11	Seat, covering, saddle
Chemosh	3645	13	Subdue, powerful
Constellations	4208	5	Planets/Zodiac
Defiled	2930	8	Polluted
East/Before	5921,6640	13	Above/upon
Filled	4390	14	Accomplish/consecrate
Gates	8179	8	An opening
Geba	1387	8	Small hill/convex
Horses	5483	11	Leaping for joy, a swallow in its rapid flight
High Places	1116	8	Elevation, wave
Hosts	6635	4,5	Mass of people
Idolatrous priests	3649	5	Deeply affected with passion
Jeroboam	3379	15	The people will contend/ defend
Jerusalem	3389	4,5,6	Peace & safety
Joshua	3091	8	Jehovah saves
Kidron	6939	4,6,12	Dusky place/mourn/ash/dark
Left hand	8040	8	Dark/wrap up
Manasseh	4519	12	Causing to forget, neglect, remove
Milcom	4445	13	Idol, chief deity
Moabites	4124	13	Moab – Incestuous son of Lot
Molech	4432	10	King, enthrone, royalty
Mount of Corruption	4889	13	Snare/decay/ruin
Nebat	5028	15	Regard with pleasure, favor or care
Officer	5631	11	Castrate, minister of the state
Outside	2351	4	Sever/separate by a wall
Perverted person	6945	7	Sodomite/licentious idolatry/unclean
Pillars	4676	14	Something stationed
Removed	7673	11	Put away/rid/cease
Ritual booths	1004	7	House/family/inward place
Roof	1406	12	On top, to rise, majestic
Sidonians	6722	13	To lie alongside in wait
Solomon	8010	13	Peace, health & prosperity
Son & Daughter/Children	1121,1323	10	To build, make
South/Right side	3225	13	Strong/firm
Topheth	8612	10	Smiting, contempt
Tore down	5422	7	Overthrow
Upper chamber	5944	12	Something lofty
Valley	1516	10	Gorge, exaltation, arrogance, price
Wooden image	842	6,7,14,15	Grove/Asherah