

# 2 Kings 23 - Annals of Judah: Josiah Restores True Worship; Josiah Dies; Jehoahaz's Evil Reign & Captivity; Jehoiakim's Evil Reign

III. The Southern kingdom from the time of the Assyrian captivity to the Babylonian captivity (2 Kings 18:1—25:30)

(4) Josiah's reign (2 Kings 22:1—23:30)

(C) Josiah's covenant renewal (23:1-3)

(D) Josiah's reforms (23:4-25)

(E) God's imminent judgment against Judah still remains irrevocable (23:26-27)

(F) Pharaoh Neco kills Josiah (23:28-30)

(5) Reign of Jehoahaz (23:31-33)

(6) Reign of Jehoiakim (23:34—24:7)

## 2 Kings 23

(C) Josiah's covenant renewal (23:1-3) (Cf. 2 Chr 34:29-33)

1 Then the king sent *messengers*, and they gathered to him all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem.

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1 At this, the king sent for and gathered together all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem.

1 And the king sent, and they gathered unto him all the elders of Judah and of Jerusalem.

2 And the king went up to the house of the LORD and every man of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with him, and the priests, the prophets, and all the people, from the small to the great; and he read in their presence all the words of the Book of the Covenant which was found in the house of the LORD.

2 The king went up to the house of the LORD and all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with him, and the priests and the prophets and all the people, both small and great; and he read in their hearing all the words of the book of the covenant which was found in the house of the LORD.

2 The king went up to the LORD's Temple, accompanied by all the men of Judah, everyone who lived in Jerusalem, the priests, the prophets, and everyone—including those who were

unimportant and those who were important—and he read to them everything written in the Book of the Covenant that had been discovered in the LORD's Temple.

2 And the king went up into the house of the LORD, and all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with him, and the priests, and the prophets, and all the people, both small and great: and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant which was found in the house of the LORD.

- The king did not wait for the temple renovation to be completed before he called the assembly described here; this convocation took place soon after the Law was discovered — To this important temple ceremony he summoned all the elders the priests, and prophets (no doubt including Jeremiah and Zephaniah) and all the people from the least to the greatest

— The king read all the words of the Book (esp. Deut 27:15—28:68)

3 And the king stood by the pillar and made a covenant before the LORD, to walk after the LORD, and to keep His commandments, His provisions, and His statutes with all *his* heart and all *his* soul, to carry out the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people entered into the covenant.

3 The king stood by the pillar and made a covenant before the LORD, to walk after the LORD, and to keep His commandments and His testimonies and His statutes with all *his* heart and all *his* soul, to carry out the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people entered into the covenant.

3 The king stood beside a pillar and made a covenant in the presence of the LORD: to follow after the LORD, to keep his commandments, his testimonies, and his statutes with all of his heart and soul, and to carry out what was written in the covenant contained in the book. All the people consented to enter into the covenant.

**3** And the king stood by a pillar, and made a covenant before the LORD, to walk after the LORD, and to keep his commandments and his testimonies and his statutes with all their heart and all their soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people stood to the covenant.

- Upon finishing the reading of the Book of the Law, Josiah rededicated himself to Yahweh, and the people renewed their commitment to the Mosaic Covenant as a nation

(D) Josiah's reforms (23:4-25)

**4** Then the king commanded Hilkiah the high priest, the priests of the second order, and the doorkeepers to bring out of the temple of the LORD all the utensils that had been made for Baal, for Asherah, and for all the heavenly lights; and he burned them outside Jerusalem in the fields of the Kidron *Valley*, and carried their ashes to Bethel.

**4** Then the king commanded Hilkiah the high priest and the priests of the second order and the doorkeepers, to bring out of the temple of the LORD all the vessels that were made

for Baal, for Asherah, and for all the host of heaven; and he burned them outside Jerusalem in the fields of the Kidron, and carried their ashes to Bethel.

4 The king ordered Hilkiah the high priest, the priests of the secondary order, and the doorkeepers to take out of the LORD's Temple all of the implements that had been crafted for Baal, for Asherah, and for every star in the heavens. Then he burned them outside Jerusalem in the fields of the Kidron and carried the ashes to Bethel.

4 And the king commanded Hilkiah the high priest, and the priests of the second order, and the keepers of the door, to bring forth out of the temple of the LORD all the vessels that were made for Baal, and for the grove, and for all the host of heaven: and he burned them without Jerusalem in the fields of Kidron, and carried the ashes of them unto Bethel.

- Josiah then removed everything connected with the worship of false gods that his ancestors had set up in Judah and Jerusalem

— To desecrate the very center of pagan worship, he took the ashes of these relics to Bethel

5 Then he did away with the idolatrous priests whom the kings of Judah had appointed to burn incense on the high places in the cities of Judah and in the surrounding area of Jerusalem, as well as those who burned incense to Baal, to the sun, to the moon, to the constellations, and to all the *remaining* heavenly lights.

5 He did away with the idolatrous priests whom the kings of Judah had appointed to burn incense in the high places in the cities of Judah and in the surrounding area of Jerusalem, also those who burned incense to Baal, to the sun and to the moon and to the constellations and to all the host of heaven.

5 The king unseated the idolatrous priests whom the kings of Judah had appointed to burn incense in the high places throughout the cities of Judah and in the environs surrounding Jerusalem, including those who had been burning incense to Baal, to the sun, to the moon, to the constellations, and to every star in the heavens.

5 And he put down the idolatrous priests, whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense in the high places in the cities of Judah, and in the places round about Jerusalem; them also that burned incense unto Baal, to the sun, and to the moon, and to the planets, and to all the host of heaven.

- He also drove away the pagan priests who had led the people in various forms of idolatry

6 He also brought out the Asherah from the house of the LORD outside Jerusalem to the brook Kidron, and burned it at the brook Kidron, and ground *it* to dust, and threw its dust on the graves of the common people.

6 He brought out the Asherah from the house of the LORD outside Jerusalem to the brook Kidron, and burned it at the brook Kidron, and ground *it* to dust, and threw its dust on the

graves of the common people.

6 He brought the Asherah from the LORD's Temple to the Kidron Brook outside Jerusalem, burned it at the Kidron brook, pulverized the ashes to dust, and scattered it over the graves of the common people.

6 And he brought out the grove from the house of the LORD, without Jerusalem, unto the brook Kidron, and burned it at the brook Kidron, and stamped it small to powder, and cast the powder thereof upon the graves of the children of the people.

7 And he tore down the cubicles of the *male* cult prostitutes which *were* in the house of the LORD, where the women were weaving hangings for the Asherah.

7 He also broke down the houses of the *male* cult prostitutes which *were* in the house of the LORD, where the women were weaving hangings for the Asherah.

7 He also demolished the temples of the cultic male prostitutes that had been operating in the LORD's Temple, where the women had been doing weaving for the Asherah.

7 And he brake down the houses of the sodomites, that were by the house of the LORD, where the women wove hangings for the grove.

- Male prostitutes had apparently been living in the side rooms of the temple

8 Then 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; and he tore down the high places of the gates that *were* at the entrance of the gate of Joshua the governor of the city, which *were* on one's left at the city gate.

8 Then 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; and he broke down the high places of the gates which *were* at the entrance of the gate of Joshua the governor of the city, which *were* on one's left at the city gate.

8 Then he gathered together all the priests from the cities of Judah and defiled the high places from Geba to Beer-sheba, where the priests had burned incense. He also demolished the high places of the gates that had been erected to the left as one enters the city gate—that is, near the entrance operated by Joshua, the governor of the city.

8 And he brought all the priests out of the cities of Judah, and defiled the high places where the priests had burned incense, from Geba to Beersheba, and brake down the high places of the gates that were in the entering in of the gate of Joshua the governor of the city, which were on a man's left hand at the gate of the city.

9 Nevertheless the priests of the high places did not go up to the altar of the LORD in Jerusalem, but they ate unleavened bread among their brothers.

9 Nevertheless the priests of the high places did not go up to the altar of the LORD in Jerusalem, but they ate unleavened bread among their brothers.

9 Nevertheless, the priests of the high places did not approach the LORD's altar in Jerusalem, but instead they ate unleavened bread given to them by their relatives.

9 Nevertheless the priests of the high places came not up to the altar of the LORD in Jerusalem, but they did eat of the unleavened bread among their brethren.

- The king excluded the Levitical priests who had offered sacrifices on the high places from serving at the rededicated altar

10 He also defiled **Topheth**, which is in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, so that no one would make his son or his daughter pass through the fire for Molech.

10 He also 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 for Molech.

10 He also defiled Topheth, which is located in the Ben-hinnom Valley, so that no one would force his son or daughter to pass through the fire in dedication to Molech.

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

- "...Topheth" - the location where child sacrifice took place (Cf. 16:3; Joshua 15:8)

11 And he did away with the horses that the kings of Judah had given to the sun, at the entrance of the house of the LORD, by the chamber of Nathan-melech the official, which was at the covered courtyard; and he burned the chariots of the sun with fire.

11 He did away with the horses which the kings of Judah had given to the sun, at the entrance of the house of the LORD, by the chamber of Nathan-melech the official, which was in the precincts; and he burned the chariots of the sun with fire.

11 He abolished the horses that the kings of Judah had dedicated to the sun at the entrance to the LORD's Temple, near the offices of Nathan-melech, the official, that were in the precincts. He also set fire to the chariots of the sun.

11 And he took away the horses that the kings of Judah had given to the sun, at the entering in of the house of the LORD, by the chamber of Nathanmelech the chamberlain, which was in the suburbs, and burned the chariots of the sun with fire.

- He also removed the sacred horses that were used in formal processions honoring the sun

— These animals had been dedicated by the kings of Judah (probably Ahaz, Manasseh, and Amon) and were stabled in the temple courtyard

12 The king also tore down 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

courtyards of the house of the LORD; and he smashed them there and threw their dust into the brook Kidron.

12 The altars which *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 he smashed them there and threw their dust into the brook Kidron.

12 The king demolished the rooftop altars on top of Ahaz's upper chamber that the kings of Judah had erected, as well as the altars that Manasseh had made in the two courts of the LORD's Temple. He pulverized them where they stood and cast their dust into the Kidron Brook.

12 And the altars that were on the top of 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, did the king beat down, and brake them down from thence, and cast the dust of them into the brook Kidron.

- Ahaz had evidently built an upper room on one of the buildings at the gate of the temple

— On the roof near that structure Ahaz had built altars, probably to the stars and planets (Cf. Zeph 1:5; Jer 19:13; 32:29)

— Hezekiah undoubtedly destroyed these altars but apparently Manasseh or Amon had rebuilt them

— Manasseh also had built altars in the temple courtyards (2 Kings 21:5)

— All these Josiah destroyed and tossed into the Kidron Valley (Cf. v6)

13 And the king defiled the high places that *were* opposite Jerusalem, which *were* on the right of the **mount of destruction** which Solomon the king of Israel had built for Ashtoreth the abomination of the Sidonians, for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, and for Milcom the abomination of the sons of Ammon.

13 The high places which *were* before Jerusalem, which *were* on the right of the mount of destruction which Solomon the king of Israel had built for Ashtoreth the abomination of the Sidonians, and for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, and for Milcom the abomination of the sons of Ammon, the king defiled.

13 The king defiled the high places which faced Jerusalem on the south side of Corruption Mountain, which King Solomon of Israel had constructed for Ashtoreth, the Sidonian abomination, for Chemosh, the Moabite abomination, and for Milcom, the Ammonite abomination.

13 And the high places that were before Jerusalem, which were on the right hand of the mount of corruption, which Solomon the king of Israel had builded for Ashtoreth the abomination of the Zidonians, and for Chemosh the abomination of the Moabites, and for Milcom the abomination of the children of Ammon, did the king defile.

- "...mount of destruction" - the hill on the southern portion of the Mount of Olives, later known as the Hill of Corruption (Cf. 1 Kings 11:5,7)

14 He also smashed to pieces the memorial stones and cut down the Asherim, and filled their places with human bones.

14 He broke in pieces the *sacred* pillars and cut down the Asherim and filled their places with human bones.

14 He broke the pillars to pieces, cut down the Asherim, and filled their locations with human bones.

14 And he brake in pieces the images, and cut down the groves, and filled their places with the bones of men.

**15** Furthermore, the altar that *was* at Bethel *and* the high place which Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who misled Israel into sin, had made, even that altar and the high place he tore down. Then he burned the high place, ground *the remains* to dust, and burned the Asherah.

**15** Furthermore, the altar that *was* at Bethel *and* the high place which Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel sin, had made, even that altar and the high place he broke down. Then he demolished its stones, ground them to dust, and burned the Asherah.

**15** Furthermore, he even broke down the altar that had been at Bethel as well as the high place constructed by Nebat's son Jeroboam, who had caused Israel to sin. He demolished its stones, pulverized them to dust, and burned the Asherah.

**15** Moreover the altar that was at Bethel, and the high place which Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, had made, both that altar and the high place he brake down, and burned the high place, and stamped it small to powder, and burned the grove.

16 Now when Josiah turned, he saw the graves that *were* there on the mountain, and he sent *men* and took the bones from the graves, and burned *them* on the altar and defiled it in accordance with the word of the LORD which the man of God proclaimed, *the one* who proclaimed these things.

16 Now when Josiah turned, he saw the graves that *were* there on the mountain, and he sent and took the bones from the graves and burned *them* on the altar and defiled it according to the word of the LORD which the man of God proclaimed, who proclaimed these things.

16 As Josiah turned around, he observed the graves located there on the mountain, so he sent for and recovered the bones from the graves and burned them on the altar to defile it, in keeping with the message from the LORD that the godly man had proclaimed when he was declaring these things.

16 And as Josiah turned himself, he spied the sepulchres that were there in the mount, and sent, and took the bones out of the sepulchres, and burned them upon the altar, and polluted it, according to the word of the LORD which the man of God proclaimed, who proclaimed these words.

- Josiah finally destroyed Jeroboam's altar at Bethel and desecrated the site

— A young prophet from Judah had predicted Josiah's actions back in Jeroboam's day (Cf. 1 Kings 13:2-3)

17 Then he said, "What is this gravestone there that I see?" And the men of the city told him, "*It is the grave of the man of God who came from Judah and proclaimed these things which you have done against the altar of Bethel.*"

17 Then he said, "What is this monument that I see?" And the men of the city told him, "It is the grave of the man of God who came from Judah and proclaimed these things which you have done against the altar of Bethel."

17 He asked, "What is this monument that I'm looking at?"

The men who lived in that city answered him, "It's the grave of that godly man who came from Judah and predicted these things that you've done against the altar at Bethel!"

17 Then he said, What title is that that I see? And the men of the city told him, It is the sepulchre of the man of God, which came from Judah, and proclaimed these things that thou hast done against the altar of Bethel.

18 And he said, "Leave him alone; no one is to disturb his bones." So they left his bones undisturbed with the bones of the prophet who came from Samaria.

18 He said, "Let him alone; let no one disturb his bones." So they left his bones undisturbed with the bones of the prophet who came from Samaria.

18 Josiah replied, "Leave him alone. No one is to disturb his bones." So they preserved his bones undisturbed, along with the bones of the prophet who had come from Samaria.

**18** And he said, Let him alone; let no man move his bones. So they let his bones alone, with the bones of the prophet that came out of Samaria.

- Learning that a certain tombstone marked the grave of the man of God from Judah who had predicted Josiah's action (v16; Cf. 1 Kings 13:2-3), the king ordered that his grave not be disturbed out of respect for him

— The bones of the old prophet from Bethel who had been buried next to the younger prophet (1 Kings 13:31-32) were left undisturbed too

19 Then Josiah also removed all the houses of the high places which were in the cities of Samaria, which the kings of Israel had constructed, provoking the LORD to anger; and he did to them just as he had done in Bethel.

19 Josiah also removed all the houses of the high places which *were* in the cities of Samaria, which the kings of Israel had made provoking the LORD; and he did to them just as he had done in Bethel.

19 Josiah also removed all of the temples on the high places that had been in the cities of Samaria and that the kings of Israel had erected, thereby provoking the LORD. He treated Samaria just as he had Bethel.

**19** And all the houses also of the high places that were in the cities of Samaria, which the kings of Israel had made to provoke the LORD to anger, Josiah took away, and did to them according to all the acts that he had done in Bethel.

20 And he slaughtered all the priests of the high places who *were* there on the altars, and burned human bones on them; then he returned to Jerusalem.

20 All the priests of the high places who *were* there he slaughtered on the altars and burned human bones on them; then he returned to Jerusalem.

20 After he had slaughtered all the priests who served at the high places and burned their bones on those high places, he returned to Jerusalem.

20 And he slew all the priests of the high places that were there upon the altars, and burned men's bones upon them, and returned to Jerusalem.

- Josiah even extended his purges into the territory of the former northern kingdom

**21** Then the king commanded all the people, saying, "Celebrate the Passover to the LORD your God as it is written in this Book of the Covenant."

**21** Then the king commanded all the people saying, "Celebrate the Passover to the LORD your God as it is written in this book of the covenant."

**21** After this, the king commanded all of the people, "Celebrate the Passover to the LORD your God, just as it's prescribed in this Book of the Covenant."

**21** And the king commanded all the people, saying, Keep the passover unto the LORD your God, as it is written in the book of this covenant.

- Josiah did more than simply eliminate idolatry; he also reestablished the divinely ordained Passover feast

— This important feast commemorated God's redemption of His people from their bondage in Egypt. It was also Israel's oldest feast.

22 Truly such a Passover had not been celebrated since the days of the judges who judged Israel, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel and the kings of Judah.

22 Surely such a Passover had not been celebrated from the days of the judges who judged Israel, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel and of the kings of Judah.

22 From the days of the judges who ruled in Israel, no Passover had been celebrated like this, not even in all the reigns of the kings of Israel and the kings of Judah.

22 Surely 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;

- This observance by Josiah was conducted with more careful attention to the Law than any Passover since the days of the Judges

— King Hezekiah had held a Passover (2 Chr 30), but he had done so with some modification of the Mosaic Law (Cf. 2 Chr 30:13-20)

— It also was unusual because people from both the kingdom of Judah and the old kingdom of Israel participated together (2 Chr 35:18)

23 But in the eighteenth year of King Josiah, this Passover was celebrated to the LORD in Jerusalem.

23 But in the eighteenth year of King Josiah, this Passover was observed to the LORD in Jerusalem.

23 In the eighteenth year of the reign of King Josiah, this Passover was observed in Jerusalem to honor the LORD.

23 But in the eighteenth year of king Josiah, wherein this passover was holden to the LORD in Jerusalem.

**24** Moreover, Josiah removed the mediums, the spiritists, the household idols, the idols, and all the abominations that were seen in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, so that he might fulfill the words of the Law which were written in the book that Hilkiyah the priest found in the house of the LORD.

**24** Moreover, Josiah removed the mediums and the spiritists and the teraphim and the idols and all the abominations that were seen in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, that he might confirm the words of the law which were written in the book that Hilkiyah the priest found in the house of the LORD.

24 Furthermore, Josiah removed the mediums, the necromancers, the household gods, the idols, and every despicable thing that could be seen in the territory of Judah and in Jerusalem, so that he might confirm the words of the Law that had been written in the book that Hilkiyah the priest had discovered in the LORD's Temple.

24 Moreover the workers with familiar spirits, and the wizards, and the images, and the idols, and all the abominations that were spied in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, did Josiah put away, that he might perform the words of the law which were written in the book that Hilkiyah the priest found in the house of the LORD.

- Josiah's purge weeded out even the informal practitioners (mediums and spiritists; Cf. 21:6) of rites God had condemned (Lev 20:27; Deut 18:9-12)

25 Before him there was no king like him who turned to the LORD with all his heart, all his soul, and all his might, in conformity to all the Law of Moses; nor did any like him arise after him.

25 Before him there was no king like him who turned to the LORD with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; nor did any like him arise after him.

25 There had been no king like him before him, who turned to the LORD with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his strength, in obeying everything in the Law of Moses. No king arose like Josiah after him.

25 And like unto him was there no king before him, that turned to the LORD with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; neither after him arose there any like him.

- There was not a king before or after him who so conscientiously observed the Word of the LORD (Cf. Deut 6:5; Jer 22:15-16)

— He is the only king described with the exact wording of Deut 6:5

Notice that in the sequence of reforms that the writer narrated, the discovery of the Law (22:8-13), which took place during the repairing of the temple (22:3-7), led to the other reforms. This order is another indication of the writer's purpose: He emphasized the centrality of the Law in Israel's life. When leaders recommit themselves to following God's Word wholeheartedly, good things result for their followers.

(E) God's imminent judgment against Judah still remains irrevocable (23:26-27)

**26** Nevertheless, the LORD did not turn from the fierceness of His great wrath with which His anger burned against Judah, because of all the provocations with which Manasseh had provoked Him.

**26** However, the LORD did not turn from the fierceness of His great wrath with which His anger burned against Judah, because of all the provocations with which Manasseh had provoked Him.

**26** Even so, the LORD did not turn away from his fierce and great anger that burned against Judah because of everything with which Manasseh had provoked him.

**26** Notwithstanding the LORD turned not from the fierceness of his great wrath, wherewith his anger was kindled against Judah, because of all the provocations that Manasseh had provoked him withal.

- Even Josiah's reformation, as great as it was, could not dispel the accumulated wrath of God against Judah for her years of rebellion, especially under Manasseh's leadership (Cf. 22:16-17)

27 And the LORD said, "I will also remove Judah from My sight, just as I have removed Israel. And I will reject this city which I have chosen, Jerusalem, and the temple of which I said, 'My name shall be there!'"

27 The LORD said, "I will remove Judah also from My sight, as I have removed Israel. And I will cast off Jerusalem, this city which I have chosen, and the temple of which I said, 'My name shall be there.'"

27 The LORD said, "I'm going to remove Judah from my sight as well, just as I've removed Israel. I will abandon Jerusalem, this city that I've chosen, as well as the Temple, about which I've spoken, 'My Name shall remain there.'"

27 And the LORD said, I will remove Judah also out of my sight, as I have removed Israel, and will cast off this city Jerusalem which I have chosen, and the house of which I said, My name shall be there.

- The Lord's words may be a direct quotation of a prophecy given through an unnamed prophet at that time, or a free quotation taken from God's previous words of warning. God would reject His people, their city, and His temple in the sense of handing them over to their enemies for discipline. To be removed from His presence (Cf. 24:3,20) meant being removed from the land (Cf. 17:18,20,23). [Cf. the *Diaspora* beginning in 70 AD]

(F) Pharaoh Neco kills Josiah (23:28-30) (Cf. 2 Chr 35:20-27)

**28** Now the rest of the acts of Josiah and all that he did, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah?

**28** Now the rest of the acts of Josiah and all that he did, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah?

**28** Now the rest of Josiah's actions, including everything that he did, are recorded in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah, are they not?

**28** Now the rest of the acts of Josiah, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

29 In his days Pharaoh Neco king of Egypt went up to the king of Assyria at the river Euphrates. And King Josiah went to meet him, and when *Pharaoh Neco* saw him he killed him at Megiddo.

29 In his days Pharaoh Neco king of Egypt went up to the king of Assyria to the river Euphrates. And King Josiah went to meet him, and when *Pharaoh Neco* saw him he killed him at Megiddo.

29 During his reign, Pharaoh Neco, king of Egypt, marched out toward the Euphrates River to meet the king of Assyria. King Josiah went out to engage him in battle, but Pharaoh Neco killed him at Megiddo as soon as he saw him.

29 In his days Pharaoh Necho king of Egypt went up against the king of Assyria to the river Euphrates: and king Josiah went against him; and he slew him at Megiddo, when he had seen him.

- Josiah seems to have been motivated to fight Pharaoh Neco II (610-595 BC) of Egypt, possibly to regain the Ark of the Covenant which the Levites had relocated to protect it from the ravages of Manasseh (Cf. 2 Chr 35:3)

- Egypt and Assyria were allies, trying to stop Babylonia from becoming the new world leader. As Pharaoh Neco marched his troops up the Mediterranean coastline in 609 BC, Josiah headed northwest with his army, determined to stop Neco at Megiddo, a well-fortified stronghold in old Israel.

- Unfortunately for Judah, Josiah died in the ensuing battle

Egypt's forces then continued marching north, united with the Assyrian army, and battled Babylon at Carchemish on the upper Euphrates River. There Babylon defeated the allies and broke the domination of the Assyrian Empire over the ancient Near Eastern world. The Battle of Carcemish in 605 BC was one of the most important in ancient Near Eastern history for this reason.

30 His servants carried his body in a chariot from Megiddo, and brought him to Jerusalem and buried him in his own tomb. Then the people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah and anointed him and made him king in place of his father.

30 His servants drove his body in a chariot from Megiddo, and brought him to Jerusalem and buried him in his own tomb. Then the people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah and anointed him and made him king in place of his father.

30 Josiah's servants drove his corpse in a chariot from Megiddo to Jerusalem and buried him in a tomb made for him.

The people of the land took Josiah's son Jehoahaz, anointed him, and installed him as king in his father's place.

30 And his servants carried him in a chariot dead from Megiddo, and brought him to Jerusalem, and buried him in his own sepulchre. And the people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah, and anointed him, and made him king in his father's stead.

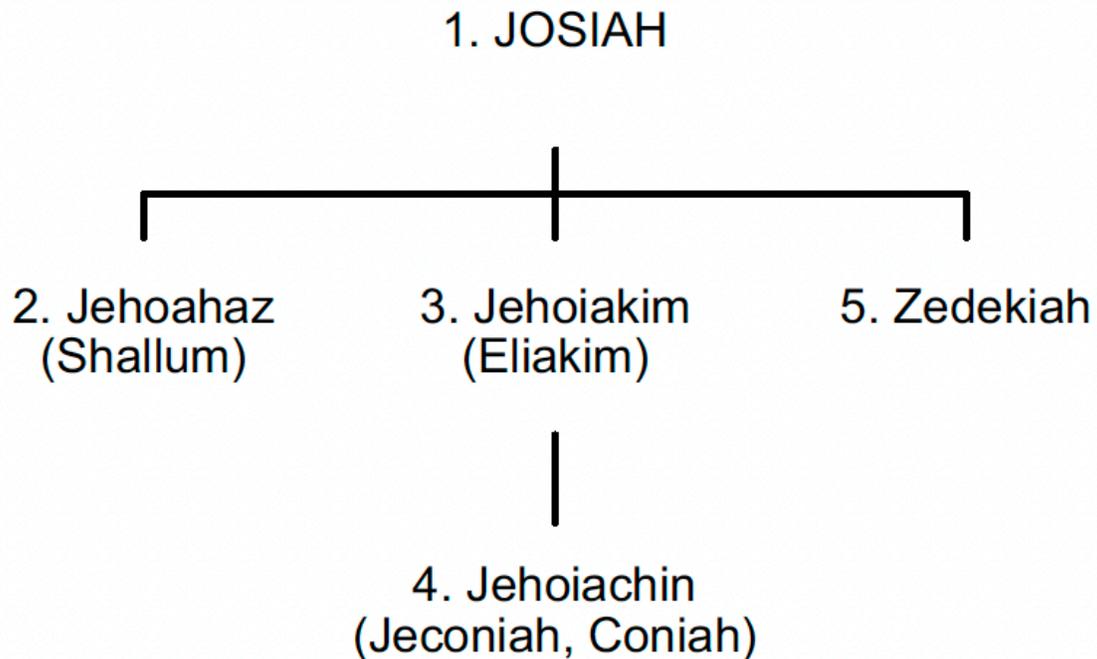
- His body was returned to Jerusalem where it was given a royal burial

- Josiah was a strong influence for righteousness in his day and also a most capable ruler

- The success of his sweeping reforms indicates that he had the ability to overcome strong popular opinion which undoubtedly opposed his convictions

- His influence even extended into the territory of the fallen Northern Kingdom. Tragically his reign ended prematurely.

# The Last Five Kings of Judah



(5) Reign of Jehoahaz (23:31-33) (Cf. 2 Chr 36:1-4)

**31 Jehoahaz** was twenty-three years old when he became king, and he reigned for three months in Jerusalem; and his mother's name was Hamutal the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah.

**31** Jehoahaz was twenty-three years old when he became king, and he reigned three months in Jerusalem; and his mother's name was Hamutal the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah.

**31** Jehoahaz was 23 years old when he became king. He reigned three months in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Hamutal. She was the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah.

**31** Jehoahaz was twenty and three years old when he began to reign; and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Hamutal, the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah.

- "Jehoahaz" - "The LORD Has Grasped"; his other name was Shallum

- Josiah had four sons, three of whom ruled over Judah after their father's death

— Jehoahaz was the middle son and was chosen by the people to succeed Josiah. He was 23 years old when he acceded, but he reigned only 3 months (in 609 BC).

32 He did evil in the sight of the LORD, in accordance with all that his forefathers had done.

32 He did evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his fathers had done.

32 He practiced what the LORD considered to be evil, just as all of his ancestors had done.

32 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his fathers had done.

33 And Pharaoh Neco imprisoned him at Riblah in the land of Hamath, so that he would not reign in Jerusalem; and he imposed on the land a fine of a hundred talents of silver and a talent of gold.

33 Pharaoh Neco imprisoned him at Riblah in the land of Hamath, that he might not reign in Jerusalem; and he imposed on the land a fine of one hundred talents of silver and a talent of gold.

33 Pharaoh Neco placed him in custody at Riblah, in the land of Hamath, so that he would not reign in Jerusalem, and imposed a tribute of 100 talents of silver and a talent of gold.

33 And Pharaoh Neco put him in bands at Riblah in the land of Hamath, that he might not reign in Jerusalem; and put the land to a tribute of an hundred talents of silver, and a talent of gold.

- When Pharaoh Neco defeated Josiah at Megiddo (Cf. v29) Judah fell under Egyptian control

— The Egyptian king later continued marching northward toward his encounter with Nabopolassar the Babylonian at Haran, even farther north

— Evidently Neco judged Jehoahaz to be an uncooperative vassal, so he imprisoned him and sent him to Egypt (v34) where Jehoahaz eventually died (Cf. Jer 22:10-12). He was the first Judean king to die in prison.

— Neco also imposed a heavy tax on Judah, and installed Jehoahaz's older brother Eliakim on the throne as a puppet (vassal)

(6) Reign of Jehoiakim (Eliakim) (23:34—24:7) (Cf. 2 Chr 36:5-8)

34 Then Pharaoh Neco made **Eliakim** the son of Josiah king in the place of his father Josiah, and he changed his name to **Jehoiakim**. But he took Jehoahaz and brought *him* to Egypt, and he died there.

34 Pharaoh Neco made Eliakim the son of Josiah king in the place of Josiah his father, and changed his name to Jehoiakim. But he took Jehoahaz away and brought *him* to Egypt, and he died there.

34 Pharaoh Neco installed Josiah's son Eliakim as king to replace his father Josiah and changed his name to Jehoiakim. He transported Jehoahaz off to Egypt, where he died.

34 And Pharaoh Neco made Eliakim the son of Josiah king in the room of Josiah his father, and turned his name to Jehoiakim, and took Jehoahaz away: and he came to Egypt, and died there.

- "...Eliakim" - "God Establishes"

- "...Jehoiakim" - "Yahweh Has Established"

— The naming of a person was regarded in the ANE as a sovereign prerogative; by doing this Neco was demonstrating that he controlled Judah

— He reigned as a puppet king under Neco for 11 years (609-598 BC)

— He was a weak ruler who did not stand up for Judah's interests against hostile enemies

35 So Jehoiakim gave the silver and gold to Pharaoh, but he assessed the land in order to give the money at the command of Pharaoh. He collected the silver and gold from the people of the land, each according to his assessment, to give to Pharaoh Neco.

35 So Jehoiakim gave the silver and gold to Pharaoh, but he taxed the land in order to give the money at the command of Pharaoh. He exacted the silver and gold from the people of the land, each according to his valuation, to give it to Pharaoh Neco.

35 As a result, Jehoiakim paid the silver and gold tribute to Pharaoh, but he passed on the costs to the inhabitants of the land in taxes, in keeping with Pharaoh's orders. He exacted the silver and gold from the people who lived in the land, from each according to his assessment, in order to pay it to Pharaoh Neco.

**35** And Jehoiakim gave the silver and the gold to Pharaoh; but he taxed the land to give the money according to the commandment of Pharaoh: he exacted the silver and the gold of the people of the land, of every one according to his taxation, to give it unto Pharaoh Neco.

In 605 BC, Prince Nebuchadnezzar—he was not yet king—led the Babylonian army of his father Nabopolassar against the allied forces of Assyria and Egypt and defeated them at Carchemish in Syria (Aramea). This victory, as previously explained, gave Babylon supremacy in the ancient Near East.

With Babylon's victory at Carchemish, Egypt's vassals, including Judah, came under Babylon's control. Shortly after that event, in the same year that Nabopolassar died, Nebuchadnezzar succeeded him as king of Babylon.

Shortly after he became king, Nebuchadnezzar moved south and invaded Judah (605 BC). He took some captives to Babylon including Daniel (Dan 1:1-3). This was the first of Judah's three deportations in which the Babylonians took groups of Judahites to Babylon. Jehoiakim submitted to Nebuchadnezzar for three years and, according to Josephus, paid him tribute of 100 talents of silver and a talent of gold.

**36** Jehoiakim was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned for eleven years in Jerusalem; and his mother's name was Zebidah the daughter of Pedaiiah of Rumah.

**36** Jehoiakim was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem; and his mother's name was Zebidah the daughter of Pedaiiah of Rumah.

36 Jehoiakim was 25 years old when he became king, and he reigned for eleven years in Jerusalem. His mother was named Zebidah. She was the daughter of Pedaiiah of Rumah.

36 Jehoiakim was twenty and five years old when he began to reign; and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Zebudah, the daughter of Pedaiiah of Rumah.

37 He did evil in the sight of the LORD, in accordance with all that his forefathers had done.

37 He did evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his fathers had done.

37 Eliakim practiced what the LORD considered to be evil, just as his ancestors had done.

37 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his fathers had done.