

# The Death of Josiah and the Fall of Judah

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**References:** 2 Kings 23-24, 2 Kings 23:30-31; 2 Kings 23:32; Acts 1:1-26; 2 Kings 23:33; 2 Chronicles 35:20; 2 Kings 22:4; 2 Kings 23:4; 2 Kings 23:6-7; 2 Kings 23:10; 2 Kings 23:15; 2 Kings 23:19; 2 Kings 23:21; 2 Kings 23:24; 2 Chronicles 35:21-27; Genesis 11:31; 2 Corinthians 5:20; Ephesians 6:12; 1 Chronicles 3:15; Ezekiel 19:1-9; 2 Kings 23:34; 2 Kings 23:35; 2 Kings 23:36-37; Jeremiah 26:1-3; Jeremiah 26:7-11; Jeremiah 26:17-24; Jeremiah 36:23-26; 2 Kings 24:1-2; 2 Chronicles 7:14; 2 Kings 24:5-6; Numbers 32:23

Well, again, good to see everyone tonight. We got to the middle, I guess, of 2 Kings 23 last week. More or less, we got to the end of the life of Josiah. So there may be some more to be said about him, and we'll see what the brethren say, but we probably should keep going into the kings that followed Josiah. So I'm going to read 2 Kings chapter 23 and the last half of verse 30. It says:

[2 Kings 23:30-31 NKJV]

<sup>30</sup> Then his servants moved his body in a chariot from Megiddo, brought him to Jerusalem, and buried him in his own tomb. And the people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah, anointed him, and made him king in his father's place.

<sup>31</sup> Jehoahaz was twenty-three years old when he became king, and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Hamutal the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah.

And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord:

[2 Kings 23:32 NKJV]

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

So we had this good King Josiah. And we had evidence of widespread repair, widespread removal, widespread repentance, widespread return to the things of the Lord in the life of Josiah. And then he dies. We would say prematurely. He rejected the counsel of the king of

Egypt. He would appear didn't seek the Lord's wisdom. And consequently, he went to battle against the king of Egypt.

And said, "Lord, we've suffered a great loss. Josiah, our good king, is gone. What can we do now?" But they seem to just fall back into the ways of the world. And by their own wisdom, anointed the king. I found it interesting—this is a tangential idea—but when you get to Acts chapter 1, there's a problem. How are we going to replace Judas amongst the 12?

[Acts 1:1-26 NKJV]

<sup>1</sup> The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, <sup>2</sup> until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, <sup>3</sup> to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. <sup>4</sup> And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," He said, "you have heard from Me; <sup>5</sup> for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." <sup>6</sup> Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" <sup>7</sup> And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. <sup>8</sup> But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." <sup>9</sup> Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. <sup>10</sup> And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, <sup>11</sup> who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven." <sup>12</sup> Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey. <sup>13</sup> And when they had entered, they went up into the upper room where they were staying: Peter, James, John, and Andrew; Philip and Thomas; Bartholomew and Matthew; James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot; and Judas the son of James. <sup>14</sup> These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers. <sup>15</sup> And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples (altogether the number of names was about a hundred and twenty), and said, <sup>16</sup> "Men and brethren, this Scripture had to be fulfilled,

which the Holy Spirit spoke before by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus; <sup>17</sup> for he was numbered with us and obtained a part in this ministry." <sup>18</sup> (Now this man purchased a field with the wages of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his entrails gushed out. <sup>19</sup> And it became known to all those dwelling in Jerusalem; so that field is called in their own language, Akel Dama, that is, Field of Blood.) <sup>20</sup> "For it is written in the Book of Psalms:

"Let his dwelling place be desolate,  
And let no one live in it';

and,

"Let another take his office.'

<sup>21</sup> "Therefore, of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, <sup>22</sup> beginning from the baptism of John to that day when He was taken up from us, one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection." <sup>23</sup> And they proposed two: Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. <sup>24</sup> And they prayed and said, "You, O Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which of these two You have chosen <sup>25</sup> to take part in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place." <sup>26</sup> And they cast their lots, and the lot fell on Matthias. And he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

And so what's the answer? Well, it goes like this. Number one, they prayed. Number two, they recognized that they were all very, very senior spiritual men. So the logic would be that having prayed, they voted. But it appeared that they didn't really trust their vote. So instead of that, they cast lots. They prayed and their collective wisdom was, "We don't have enough knowledge where to go here." So we'll let the Lord decide through the casting of lots. And I said, "Good for you men. You recognize your weakness."

What happens here? They don't recognize their weakness. And they're happy to appoint someone to be their king who is young, inexperienced, and especially he's a **wicked** man. It's true. He's in the kingly line. He's a descendant of David. Thank you. But there probably were other men they could have chosen. Or had they poured their hearts out to the Lord, even this man might have been more beneficial. So anyway, I find it continually amazing that people don't pray enough and people don't give the Lord the opportunity to overrule. So big problems. He does evil in the sight of the Lord. Verse 33:

[2 Kings 23:33 NKJV]

Now Pharaoh Necho put him in prison at Riblah in the land of Hamath, that he might not reign in Jerusalem; and he imposed on the land a tribute of one hundred talents of silver and a talent of gold.

Soon as Josiah is dead, the land reverts to a... what do I call it? A vassal land and taxes are laid on them—or sorry, tribute is laid on them—a hundred talents of silver and a talent of gold. How quickly did the nation fall? Answer: **very** quickly, because this king only reigned for three months. So he came down fast. They all came down fast. Pharaoh Necho took over. All right, well, that's enough of this man, Jehoahaz. Jehoahaz, rather. Any comments on Jehoahaz or anything else? Perhaps I should have liaised with you a little bit. I don't think we really covered the death of Josiah adequately.

## The Death of Josiah

Okay, go ahead. I'm all in favor. Okay. The account in the book of Kings is very brief. We have more detail, I think, in the book of Chronicles, 2 Chronicles. So if you'll turn with me there to 2 Chronicles in chapter 35, and I'd like to make some comments concerning Josiah and the reasons perhaps why he actually went out to battle against Pharaoh Necho and ultimately lost his life. I think there are lessons there for us. Amen. In verse 20, we read that—2 Chronicles 35, verse 20:

[2 Chronicles 35:20 NKJV]

After all this, when Josiah had prepared the temple, Necho king of Egypt came up to fight against Carchemish by the Euphrates; and Josiah went out against him.

Thank you. That is, after Josiah had gone through the land and removed the idols, it would seem it was almost like a **one-man effort**. Harold has mentioned how shallow it was because the people of the land immediately upon his death appoint this Jehoahaz who was an evil man. And when you read the account of the reforms of Josiah, you'll see that it was he who initiated everything. It was almost—he did it almost single-handedly. Going back again to 2 Kings just for a moment, just to review there. We read even verse 4 of 22—thank you, verse 4 of 23:

[2 Kings 23:4 NKJV]

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

It was under his orders, direct orders. And verse 6:

[2 Kings 23:6-7 NKJV]

<sup>6</sup> 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. <sup>7</sup> 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.

It almost seems he personally attended to these actions. And then verse 7, he tore down the ritual booths. Verse 10, he defiled Topheth. Which?

[2 Kings 23:10 NKJV]

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.

And so on. And it goes on in verse 15:

[2 Kings 23:15 NKJV]

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.

Right. And as he turned, as Josiah turned, he saw the tombs and so on, and he inquires about that and so on, and he gives personal instructions then to leave the bones of the prophet who came from Samaria. Verse 19:

[2 Kings 23:19 NKJV]

Now Josiah also took away all the shrines of the high places that were in the cities of Samaria, which the kings of Israel had made to provoke the LORD to anger; and he did to them according to all the deeds he had done in Bethel.

And then he commanded all the people, verse 21:

[2 Kings 23:21 NKJV]

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

And so you'll see it says in verse 24, moreover:

[2 Kings 23:24 NKJV]

Moreover Josiah put away those who consulted mediums and spiritists, the household gods and idols, all the abominations that were seen in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, 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.

No doubt he was supported by Jeremiah, for one, who was, again, his contemporary. And Jeremiah had been preaching powerfully, consistently, over a period of years, about the evils in Israel and in Judah—well, in Judah particularly. But it seems like the actions were mainly, not only directly, but superintended by Josiah on every occasion. And so the revival then, or the reforms that were made, were basically by the force of his godly character. And the reforms were fairly shallow in the land. And as we picked up the life of his successor, one of his sons, we'll see that they quickly went back and converted back to their evil ways.

But I'd like to just take a look at his death. Verse 20 of chapter 35 in 2 Chronicles. After all this, when Josiah had prepared the temple, Necho, king of Egypt, came up to fight against Carchemish by the Euphrates, and Josiah went out against him. The battle of Carchemish

was a turning point in the history of the nations. There were basically four great powers at that time, competing powers. There was the rising kingdom of Babylon. And they were confederate with the Elamites. They fought against Assyria. And Assyria and Egypt were the older powers. Egypt, of course, and Assyria in Mesopotamia; Egypt in Northern Africa. And allied with Ethiopia often. And so these two great powers now joining together in a final battle at Carchemish. The Egyptians or the Assyrians had been driven out of Asher. Nineveh had fallen. And Babylon and Elam then, their armies... perfect.

Pursued the Assyrian and they made a last stand in a place called Haran. Haran, you'll remember, was the place that Abraham and Terah—Terah took Abraham when they left Ur of the Chaldees:

[Genesis 11:31 NKJV]

And Terah took his son Abram and his grandson Lot, the son of Haran, and his daughter-in-law Sarai, his son Abram's wife, and they went out with them from Ur of the Chaldeans to go to the land of Canaan; and they came to Haran and dwelt there.

And they built Haran, you remember, and that was named after one of the sons of Terah, Abraham's brother. And so the Assyrians then made their last stand at Haran. Now Egypt, wanting to come to their aid, was marching towards that area of western Mesopotamia, not far from the Euphrates River, a place called Carchemish. Now, Josiah was really more confederate with the Babylonians and the Elamites because of the fact that the northern kingdom had been completely destroyed by the Assyrian power. They had reigned for over 200 years and Assyria had time and again come down and threaten Jerusalem—we know in the time of Hezekiah and other times—and they were an ancient and implacable enemy of Israel.

And so when Pharaoh Necho was marching north to help the Assyrians in their standoff against the Elamites and the Babylonians, Josiah wanted to go out and hinder that march there. Perhaps—this is what the historians say—to hinder the advance of the Egyptians to give the Babylonian and Elamites time to prepare for this invasion from the south. So that was the outward purpose of Josiah, to go there. The, unfortunately, about that is that to meddle in the affairs of the world is not for the people of God. Amen. There's the lesson. No doubt it was all in good faith in the sense of his own faith. He didn't pray, as has been mentioned. We read there that he went to fight Pharaoh Necho, and verse 21 of chapter 35. It says:

[2 Chronicles 35:21-27 NKJV]

<sup>21</sup> But he sent messengers to him, saying, "What have I to do with you, king of Judah? I have not come against you this day, but against the house with which I have war; for God commanded me to make haste. Refrain from meddling with God, who is with me, lest He destroy you."

<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless Josiah would not turn his face from him, but disguised himself so that he might fight with him, and did not heed the words of Necho from the mouth of God. So he came to fight in the Valley of Megiddo. <sup>23</sup> And the archers shot King Josiah; and the king said to his servants, "Take me away, for I am severely wounded." <sup>24</sup> His servants therefore took him out of that chariot and put him in the second chariot that he had, and they brought him to Jerusalem. So he died, and was buried in one of the tombs of his fathers. And all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah.

<sup>25</sup> Jeremiah also lamented for Josiah. And to this day all the singing men and the singing women speak of Josiah in their lamentations. They made it a custom in Israel; and indeed they are written in the Laments. <sup>26</sup> Now the rest of the acts of Josiah and his goodness, according to what was written in the Law of the LORD, <sup>27</sup> and his deeds from first to last, indeed they are written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah.

Now, God was—stirred up the heart of Pharaoh Necho to come for his destruction. Refrain, he says, from meddling with God who is with me, lest he destroy you. No doubt, the word, when he got it from Pharaoh, Josiah thought, "Well, this is from a heathen. This isn't the Lord speaking." And he could very well justify his continued advance by reasoning that this wasn't from the Lord. It was just maybe Pharaoh lying about it. There's great lamentation by the little remnant that were stirred by Josiah and were encouraged during that time of reform. But reform was very shallow and remained in the hearts of just a few. And so they lamented for Josiah.

Now, Josiah died while interfering in the world's affairs. I'm just going to make that application because Egypt, you recall, the Lord had taken the children of Israel out of Egypt. They were commanded never to go back into Egypt because Egypt is a type of this world. And Israel never had to fight Egypt. God was the one who fought against the Egyptians and destroyed the Egyptians. They saw the Egyptian army dead upon the seashore. God delivered them from the powers of the enemy, Egypt, who represents the world. We do not,

in our flesh, demonstrate in the streets. We do, Christians are—we are pilgrims and we're strangers in the world. We go through the world not as participants in the affairs of the world. We are ambassadors for Jesus Christ.

[2 Corinthians 5:20 NKJV]

Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.

An ambassador doesn't meddle in the affairs of the nation that he is sent to bring word to. We are to be Christ's representatives. We are to be witnesses there, not to do battle, fleshly battle against the world. And so the world in which we live as Christians, we don't need to join any protests or anything like that. We have a greater power. It's a spiritual power. Josiah thought that he could intervene. Perhaps there was pride there in the fact that what he had done in Israel had set up Israel again, but he didn't count on the fact that it was very, very shallow. And the work that he did was spiritual. It wasn't fleshly. All his work up to this point was done against God's enemies in the spiritual realm, not the physical. We wrestle not against flesh and blood. Amen.

[Ephesians 6:12 NKJV]

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

And so we can—I think we can take Josiah's life and his death, both of it, and both ends of it. And we can be encouraged by this great man who almost single-handedly made great reform and held off the judgment that God was going to bring upon the earth that he promised to bring. But, however, we can also take the warning not to meddle in the affairs of the world. How many men, how many Christian men and women, perhaps, that have gone into politics and it's been the end of their active spiritual life? I'm wondering if, indeed, people say, "Well, as a Christian, it would be good to have a Christian as a prime minister," or something like that. Well, that would be lovely if the Lord did it. But for a Christian to want to achieve that, he must compromise greatly. And the Lord sent an arrow from heaven itself to take his saint home.

And he died. Yes, there was a prediction that he would die in peace. And he did die in peace. He died in peace and he died at home. The Lord took him and his career was ended. His work was finished. But he died in peace and went to a great reward, no doubt. His great reward. So the life and the death of Josiah, I think, gives us much encouragement when we consider that life that was lived so long ago and yet still stands as a great example to every one of us. Tearing out the idols of our hearts and being pilgrims of strangers and witnesses and a light in the world—that is our goal for each one of us. We trust the Lord will help each one to apply Josiah to our own individual lives.

## The Sons of Josiah

As for Jehoahaz, it's interesting. Jehoahaz was the youngest son of Josiah. Jehoiakim was the older. If you turn to 1 Chronicles 3, we read in verse 15:

[1 Chronicles 3:15 NKJV]

The sons of Josiah were Johanan the firstborn, the second Jehoiakim, the third Zedekiah, and the fourth Shallum.

Shallum is indeed another name for Jehoahaz. It's really confusing because every one of these kings has two or even three names. Jehoiachin had three names. The rest of them had two names. It gets very, very confusing. But we read there that Shallum, or Jehoahaz, was the youngest. And the people of the land, it says there in verse 2 Kings chapter 23 and the last half of verse 30, it says the people of the land took Jehoahaz, the son of Josiah, anointed him and made him king in his father's stead. It was the people of the land. There wasn't the succession; the proper succession of kingship would go to—should go to the eldest, Jehoiakim. Because we don't read about Johanan. Johanan may have died with his father in battle there on Megiddo or died in some way because we don't read any record of him at all, the firstborn. But the second was Jehoiakim. Jehoiakim should have been the proper successor of Josiah. So we find that this Shallum or Jehoahaz became king.

Now, it's interesting. Ezekiel gives a graphic description of this king Jehoahaz in Ezekiel chapter 19. If you'll turn there, Ezekiel chapter 19. And here Ezekiel writes, we have a graphic portrayal, a poetic portrayal of this man here. Verse 1:

[Ezekiel 19:1-9 NKJV]

<sup>1</sup> "Moreover take up a lamentation for the princes of Israel, <sup>2</sup> and say:

"What is your mother? A lioness:  
She lay down among the lions;  
Among the young lions she nourished her cubs.

<sup>3</sup> She brought up one of her cubs,  
And he became a young lion;  
He learned to catch prey,  
And he devoured men.

<sup>4</sup> The nations also heard of him;  
He was trapped in their pit,  
And they brought him with chains to the land of Egypt.

<sup>5</sup> "When she saw that she waited, that her hope was lost, She took another of her cubs and made him a young lion. <sup>6</sup> He roved among the lions, And became a young lion; He learned to catch prey; He devoured men. <sup>7</sup> He knew their desolate places, And laid waste their cities; The land with its fullness was desolated By the noise of his roaring. <sup>8</sup> Then the nations set against him from the provinces on every side, And spread their net over him; He was trapped in their pit. <sup>9</sup> They put him in a cage with chains, And brought him to the king of Babylon; They brought him in nets, That his voice should no longer be heard on the mountains of Israel.

And, of course, that's what happened to Jehoahaz. He was taken by King Necho and put in chains, taken down. Those two sons of Josiah inherited something of the character, the strength of character of Josiah, but not his spirituality. Amen. And so they were—yes, they were like young lions—but Jehoahaz was taken to Egypt and trapped like a young lion in the cage. And Jehoiakim, he went roving in the country; he caused a lot of problems in the nation. And he was finally then taken to Jerusalem or to Babylon as we will see. And so I'll turn it over back over to Harold and he will bring us through the life, the short account of Jehoiakim. Any other comments?

## **The Reign of Jehoiakim**

Just one comment on what Eric said regarding the world and Josiah. We live in a strange land right now where the church has become involved in politics in a peculiar way in the United States. And much of the evangelical movement in the Republican Party has made a bit of a hero, if you like, out of Donald Trump. And Donald Trump at best is a confusion and maybe a whole lot worse. It probably, in retrospect, would have been better for the evangelical community not to have been backing Donald Trump. Many other things could

have happened. But I think we see there a parallel problem. And the Christian is not to be involved in the politics of the land. I think that they got themselves into deep trouble when they brought Donald Trump ahead. And frankly, I'm not sure that we have seen the end of Donald Trump's trouble yet. Sure, there's lots of trouble in the world. It's true, it's hard to know how to resolve it. But I'm just not always sure that Donald Trump behaves himself in the wisest way. So big problems. Ours is not political. Our problems are spiritual. We keep on preaching the gospel. But I think we can see a problem that has developed there in part because the church didn't learn the lesson of Josiah.

All right, so back now to the next king to arrive who is called Eliakim. Verse 34, chapter 23 of 2 Kings:

[2 Kings 23:34 NKJV]

Then Pharaoh Necho made Eliakim the son of Josiah king in place of his father Josiah, and changed his name to Jehoiakim. And Pharaoh took Jehoahaz and went to Egypt, and he died there.

So Pharaoh Necho was running things after Josiah. Pharaoh Necho was running things in Israel. What a tragedy. Yeah. Who's to set up the king? Well, that's the Lord's responsibility. Who anointed David to be king? Well, that was the Lord. Who anointed Solomon to be king? Well, that was the Lord and David. Who anointed Jehoiakim, Eliakim to be king? Well, I'm not sure that he was anointed at all. But Pharaoh Necho was the boss. And I don't think Pharaoh Necho, though he said, "God sent me to destroy, to fight against whoever he was fighting against when Josiah went up to him"—but the Lord wasn't in it.

So here we are now. Pharaoh Necho basically saying, "I'm the boss here. This is what I'm going to do." First thing he does is change this man's name. He was Eliakim. That's the name that Josiah gave him. And he changes his name to Jehoiakim. So what's Eliakim mean? And Newbery says his name means **God will raise up**. And so the El at the beginning of Eliakim is God. And Iakim would be raised up. And so he changes his name from Eliakim, **God will raise up**, to Jehoiakim, **Jehovah will raise up**. Which is very strange. What did Pharaoh Necho know about Jehovah? Jehovah was the God of Israel, the God of Judah, certainly not the God of Egypt. And I just wonder whether Pharaoh Necho basically was saying here, "I just want people to realize how foolish God is. I'm going to change his name from God to Jehovah so everybody can look at him and the mistakes he makes and the problems he gets himself into, and we can all laugh at God together."

It's amazing to me how people mock the Lord. You remember the words of the Lord to his disciples as he was going up to Jerusalem. He took them aside and he said, "We're going to Jerusalem. I will be delivered to the Gentiles, and ultimately, they will kill me." And the disciples didn't understand it. But what he says is, "I will be delivered to the Gentiles and they will mock." Mocking God is a theme that has gone all down through history. They don't mock the evil gods who are not gods, but they delight to mock God. And so I think that's what Pharaoh Necho was doing anyway. He changed his name from God will raise up to Jehovah will raise up, and he took Jehoahaz away; he came to Egypt and died. And so that's the end of Jehoahaz. Verse 35:

[2 Kings 23:35 NKJV]

So Jehoiakim gave the silver and gold to Pharaoh; but he taxed the land to give money according to the command of Pharaoh; he exacted the silver and gold from the people of the land, from every one according to his assessment, to give it to Pharaoh Necho.

Why did Pharaoh seize the opportunity to take control of Judah? Pharaoh Necho said to—all these names, Eric says there's too many names, he's right—and anyway, Josiah, Pharaoh Necho says, "Josiah, God did not tell me to conquer you. He sent me north to conquer up there." But he was jolly happy to conquer Judah when Josiah died. You really wonder about this guy, Pharaoh Necho, don't you? You ever notice that the world doesn't always treat you properly? You ever notice that you can't always depend on everything that's said in the world? And I often wonder how people survive in negotiations between governments. If you were the ambassador for Iran at the present time, and someone else was the ambassador for the United States, and you simply sat down to reach a peace, which of the two ambassadors would you believe? Probably you wouldn't believe either of them. Awfully hard to believe what's going on.

So here's Pharaoh Necho, and he isn't to be believed either. He says, "I'm not set against you," but as soon as I get the opportunity, I'll take control of the whole thing. Why will I do it? Well, it's very simple. Verse 35 again, Jehoiakim gave silver and gold to Pharaoh. That's what it's all about. And he taxed the land to give money according to the commandment of Pharaoh. He exacted the silver and the gold of the people of the land, of everyone according to his taxation, to give it unto Pharaoh Necho. So Pharaoh Necho says to Jehoiakim, "I've made you king; I want your money." And Jehoiakim says, "You're not going to get my money; I'll give you the money of all the people."

So he taxes the people. You ever heard of that? I think it was Margaret Thatcher said it a long time ago—I've repeated it many times since—she says the only trouble with socialism is that pretty soon you run out of everybody else's money. Not your own—not their own money they run out of—they run out of **your** money. And the world loves money, and the world loves to take someone else's money and put it in their own. And the Lord's people love to take the money from their pocket and put it in the Lord's pocket so that it can be used for his work and for his glory. So I marvel at this man, Eliakim, who becomes Jehoiakim. Verse 36:

[2 Kings 23:36-37 NKJV]

<sup>36</sup> Jehoiakim was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Zebudah the daughter of Pedaiah of Rumah. <sup>37</sup> And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his fathers had done.

Jehoiakim was 25 years old when he began to reign, which means that, as Eric has just pointed out, he was an older brother than Jehoahaz. And he reigned 11 years in Jerusalem. How many godly sons did Josiah have? God is scary, isn't it? Good man, Josiah. But he didn't have godly sons. And so we cry to the Lord. We say, "Lord, we want the blessing of God in us and around us. But we want it through us as well. Lord, will you give us godly children?" Josiah was a wonderful man of God. They didn't have godly sons. David had to learn about being a good father as well as a good general and a good governor and a good soldier. So the very sad story. I guess maybe that's a good place to leave it. We'll pick up 24 after any other comments.

## **Jeremiah's Warning to Jehoiakim**

Certainly Jeremiah had a lot to say about him. Jeremiah was, of course, involved very a lot right in Jerusalem when he was prophesying. So if you turn with me to Jeremiah chapter 26. Sometimes it's hard to piece together all the prophecies, because when these prophets prophesied, like Jeremiah, he prophesied for many, many years—Isaiah and he and others. They prophesied sometimes 50, 60, or even 70 years. And their prophecies are a collection of their sermons, their messages, their visions, and so on. And so that it—they weren't all given at one time. These prophecies like Jeremiah, we read in chapter 26, we read it was in the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah, king of Judah:

[Jeremiah 26:1-3 NKJV]

<sup>1</sup> In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, this word came from the LORD, saying, <sup>2</sup> "Thus says the LORD: "Stand in the court of the LORD's house, and speak to all the cities of Judah, which come to worship in the LORD's house, all the words that I command you to speak to them. Do not diminish a word. <sup>3</sup> Perhaps everyone will listen and turn from his evil way, that I may relent concerning the calamity which I purpose to bring on them because of the evil of their doings.'

His longing was for their repentance. And he gives the warning. So we read about the verse 7:

[Jeremiah 26:7-11 NKJV]

<sup>7</sup> So the priests and the prophets and all the people heard Jeremiah speaking these words in the house of the LORD. <sup>8</sup> Now it happened, when Jeremiah had made an end of speaking all that the LORD had commanded him to speak to all the people, that the priests and the prophets and all the people seized him, saying, "You will surely die! <sup>9</sup> Why have you prophesied in the name of the LORD, saying, "This house shall be like Shiloh, and this city shall be desolate, without an inhabitant?" And all the people were gathered against Jeremiah in the house of the LORD. <sup>10</sup> When the princes of Judah heard these things, they came up from the king's house to the house of the LORD and sat down in the entry of the New Gate of the LORD's house. <sup>11</sup> And the priests and the prophets spoke to the princes and all the people, saying, "This man deserves to die! For he has prophesied against this city, as you have heard with your ears."

And this is only just a few months after the death of good King Josiah. Amen. Because Shallum or Jehoahaz only reigned for three months, and this was in the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim. So now it's only a very short time after the death of Josiah when the will of the people once again is made known, and that is to depart from the living God. So-called prophets and the priesthood. So they wanted to now—they brought him to the king, they're going to bring him to the king and have the king execute him, have him do it. Verse 17:

[Jeremiah 26:17-24 NKJV]

<sup>17</sup> Then certain of the elders of the land rose up and spoke to all the assembly of the people, saying: <sup>18</sup> "Micah of Moresheth prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah, and spoke to all the people of Judah, saying, "Thus says the LORD of hosts:

"Zion shall be plowed like a field,  
Jerusalem shall become heaps of ruins,  
And the mountain of the temple  
Like the bare hills of the forest."

<sup>19</sup> Did Hezekiah king of Judah and all Judah ever put him to death? Did he not fear the LORD and seek the LORD's favor? And the LORD relented concerning the doom which He had pronounced against them. But we are doing great evil against ourselves." <sup>20</sup> Now there was also a man who prophesied in the name of the LORD, Urijah the son of Shemaiah of Kirjath Jearim, who prophesied against this city and against this land according to all the words of Jeremiah. <sup>21</sup> And when Jehoiakim the king, with all his mighty men and all the princes, heard his words, the king sought to put him to death; but when Urijah heard it, he was afraid and fled, and went to Egypt. <sup>22</sup> Then Jehoiakim the king sent men to Egypt: Elnathan the son of Achbor, and other men who went with him to Egypt. <sup>23</sup> And they brought Urijah from Egypt and brought him to Jehoiakim the king, who killed him with the sword and cast his dead body into the graves of the common people. <sup>24</sup> Nevertheless the hand of Ahikam the son of Shaphan was with Jeremiah, so that they should not give him into the hand of the people to put him to death.

What they do there is they give some historical examples of Micah of Moresheth—that is Micah the prophet that we have a record of his written record. Even some of the leaders spoke up against the priests and the prophets and sided with Jeremiah saying, "He's prophesying; we ought to act like Hezekiah." And verse 20, now there was also a man who prophesied in the name of the Lord, Urijah, of whom we have no record of beyond this, what we have here. There's Jehoiakim. That's what he was like, a young lion, right? So Jeremiah had some confederates there that helped him in his troubles. But there it gives you just a little snapshot really of this king Jehoiakim—what kind of an evil man he was to put this Urijah, who was echoing the preaching of Jeremiah and trying to encourage the people to turn.

Yeah. Also it was that same Jehoiakim—we won't need to necessarily go there—but it was he who, when Jeremiah wrote down the judgments that God was going to bring against the city, and he read them in the temple, and some of them said, "We gotta take this to the king." So they took it to King Jehoiakim. Jeremiah 36:14... No. Oh yeah, verse 36. Yes, chapter 36, I was wrong. Yes. And you can read that. It's a long thing, but anyway, a long section. But as the king read a page, he cut it out of the scroll with a penknife and threw it in the fire because during the wintertime they had a fire burning before him and he threw it in the fire. And so he destroyed that scroll that was written. Verse 23 of chapter 36:

[Jeremiah 36:23-26 NKJV]

<sup>23</sup> And it happened, when Jehudi had read three or four columns, that the king cut it with the scribe's knife and cast it into the fire that was on the hearth, until all the scroll was consumed in the fire that was on the hearth. <sup>24</sup> Yet they were not afraid, nor did they tear their garments, the king nor any of his servants who heard all these words. <sup>25</sup> Nevertheless Elnathan, Delaiah, and Gemariah implored the king not to burn the scroll; but he would not listen to them. <sup>26</sup> And the king commanded Jerahmeel the king's son, Seraiah the son of Azriel, and Shelemiah the son of Abdeel, to seize Baruch the scribe and Jeremiah the prophet, but the LORD hid them.

Thank you. And then Jeremiah rewrites the scroll and adds a lot of words to them, which I find amusing as well, that God would heap coals of fire upon this man who spurned, utterly spurned the word of God. So God has compassion, but there is a limit to his mercy. There has to be a time. Mercy has a time factor. Grace has a time factor built into it. Because God, in righteous judgment, must bring judgment. And in the end, he does.

## **The Babylonian Siege**

And then you go back to... I guess chapter 24 now of 2 Kings. He did evil, it says in the last verse of chapter 23, he did evil in the sight of the Lord according to all that his fathers had done. That pattern was repeated over and over again. But again, you know, the Lord has his men there, and he names them those few that stood up to the king, those that helped Josiah—or helped Jeremiah, rather, in his distress. So I guess we've covered down now to the end of chapter 23, Harold? Yeah.

So my question is, who's the boss? Well, I think Jehoiakim would say, "I'm the boss." Pharaoh Necho says, "No, you're not the boss. Send me some money." "Okay, I will." And so that's what goes on there. Chapter 24:

[2 Kings 24:1-2 NKJV]

<sup>1</sup> In his days Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up, and Jehoiakim became his vassal for three years. Then he turned and rebelled against him. <sup>2</sup> And the LORD sent against him raiding bands of Chaldeans, bands of Syrians, bands of Moabites, and bands of the people of Ammon; He sent them against Judah to destroy it, according to the word of the LORD which He had spoken by His servants the prophets.

Thank you. So who's the boss? Well, Nebuchadnezzar is the boss. And Jehoiakim carries on. He serves him for three years and then he rebels against him. What's going on here? Would you believe a word that came out of Jehoiakim's mouth? No. He had no respect for the Lord. He burned what Jeremiah had said. And now he's embattled against the Egyptians. And then he's in battle now against the Babylonians. And in verse 2, it says, "And the Lord sent against him, Jehoiakim, bands of the Chaldees and bands of the Syrians and bands of the Moabites and bands of the children of Ammon and sent them against Judah to destroy it, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by his servants, the prophets, such as Jeremiah."

So Jehoiakim, who are your enemies? Well, Jehoiakim said, "Just about everybody." They're all coming against me. It's amazing. When people turn from the Lord, who are their enemies? Left, right, center—they're coming against him. Frankly, as I've told you often, I'm learning a lot from these studies in Kings. I used to think that because Israel rebelled against the Lord in the days of Manasseh, the Lord sent the Babylonians against them and carried them off to Babylon, and that's a very good summary of what happened. It's just that that didn't happen in a day. When the Lord destroyed in the days of Noah, how long did the destruction take? Answer: just a few days; they were all drowned a few days later. In the days of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, how long did destruction take? Well, a few hours. And when the Lord destroyed in the days of Israel after Josiah, how long did it take? Answer: a long time.

We'll get into the details as we go through chapter 24 and beyond. But the Lord doesn't always complete his destruction in a very short time. He usually takes his destruction one distress after another. One destruction at a time. What's that mean? Well, it means that foolish men like Jehoiakim can pretend that, "I didn't get out of it last time. If I do this

differently—if I didn't survive under the Egyptians, maybe I'll survive under the Babylonians. Well, maybe I'll have to do the Moabites and the Ammonites." And he's fighting here, there, everywhere. But I think it's easier to repent when you get hammered down quickly.

How long did it take the prodigal son to repent? Well, once the money was gone, I think it came pretty fast. And the Lord's destruction here of Judah is slow. It's one enemy after another after another. And it seems that many of the events of the past came back to accumulate against them. And it wasn't just one thing. It was many. But as Eric has pointed out, Jeremiah keeps on saying to them, "Why don't you repent and the Lord will turn away his anger?"

[2 Chronicles 7:14 NKJV]

if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

That wasn't a completely accurate translation, but nevertheless. So my question then is, this wasn't a sudden destruction. This took place slowly over a long time, and many people had a chance to think it through, to pray it through, and to decide what they were going to do. The kings, they were just liars. And the people who followed them were extremely fickle. Imagine, as Eric has pointed out, just a few months after Josiah's death, and the people were calling for the destruction of Jeremiah. How tragic.

So let's go back to our verses again. Verse 2: "the Lord sent against Jehoiakim bands of the Chaldeans, bands of the Syrians, bands of the Moabites, bands of the children of Ammon, and sent them against Judah to destroy it, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by his servants, the prophets." How many prophecies are implied behind the actions of verse number 2? Well, the prophecies against the Chaldeans, the Syrians, the Moabites, the Ammonites. Many, many prophecies coming to be fulfilled in the life of Judah, Jehoiakim and his people. Verse 5:

[2 Kings 24:5-6 NKJV]

<sup>5</sup> Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? <sup>6</sup> So Jehoiakim rested with his fathers. Then Jehoiachin his son reigned in his place.

So Jehoiakim slept with his fathers and Jehoiachin, his son, reigned in his stead. So the question is, how long did Jehoiakim reign? And I think the number was 11 years, was it not? I'm just trying to go back to find it here. Yes, verse 36 of chapter 23. Jehoiakim was 25 years old when he began to reign. He reigned 11 years in Jerusalem, which means he reigned from age 25 to 36. What? That's not very long life expectancy. Why would a man want to be king? I think maybe if I were Jehoiakim—Eliakim—and Pharaoh Necho said, "I want you to be king," I think maybe I would have said, "Sorry, I'm not interested, thank you." And I would have been on the first train out of there to wherever I could go. Who wants to be king? Jehoiakim wanted to be king because he got what he wanted. He got money, he got position, he got power. What a tragedy.

So these stories distressed me greatly because we see the profound wickedness of man. Sooner or later, the prophecies will be fulfilled. All these prophecies involving the Syrians, the Moabites, the Ammonites—all these prophecies against Israel from so many different directions. And they're all going to be fulfilled. They're all coming to have at least partial fulfillment in the life of Jehoiakim. So verse 6 again: "So Jehoiakim slept with his fathers, and Jehoiachin, his son, reigned in his stead." So unfortunately our time is gone. And so we'll probably pick up a little more on the finishing up of the life of Jehoiakim, and then carry on down through these stories. The detail is very interesting, enough to confuse me, and I'm sure some of you get confused, but wonderful stories in the fact that the Lord keeps remembering, and he keeps the details coming, and he keeps doing what he is going to do.

[Numbers 32:23 NKJV]

But if you do not do so, then take note, you have sinned against the LORD; and be sure your sin will find you out.

Be sure your sin will find you out. Anything else before we close off tonight? All right, we're going to ask someone just to close in prayer, and we'll carry on by the grace of God next week.