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A Biographical Study of Josiah

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Josiah

CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY

I. Doing the work of God

A. The prophecy involved

1. He was the sixteenth ruler of Judah.
2. He ruled for 31 years (2 Kings 22:1).
3. He was eight years old when he became king (2 Kings 22:1).
4. He really began seeking God when he was only 16 (2 Chron. 34:3).
5. He was the greatest king since David (2 Kings 23:25).
6. His birth, name, and ministry were predicted nearly three centuries in advance by a prophet of God in the city of Beth-el (1 Kings 13:1-2).

B. The purge involved—When he was 20, Josiah began his great work of reform (2 Kings 23:4-20; 2 Chron. 34:3-7).

1. He purged Judah and Jerusalem of the pagan high places.
2. He destroyed the Asherah poles, carved idols, and cast images.
3. He cut down the idols of Baal.
4. He then broke them to pieces and scattered them over the graves of those who had sacrificed to them, burning the bones of the priests on their altars.
5. He thus fulfilled the three-century-old prophecy concerning him (see 1 Kings 13:1-2).
6. He did away with the pagan priests appointed by previous evil kings of Judah.
7. He tore down the quarters of the male shrine prostitutes and executed them.
8. He desecrated Topheth, a place in the valley of Hinnom, so no one could use it to sacrifice his sons or daughters in the fire of Molech, the devil god.
9. He removed the sacred horses from the entrance of the temple which had been dedicated by previous evil Judean kings to the sun god.
10. He burned the sacred chariots which were also dedicated to the sun god.
11. He smashed to pieces the pagan high places Solomon himself had once built.
12. He carried out similar reform outside of Judah in Beth-el and Samaria.

C. The Passover involved—Josiah organized and presided over a special Passover service when he was 26 (2 Chron. 35:1-19).

1. He began by ordering the Ark of the Covenant to be put back in the holy of holies. For some undisclosed reason it had apparently been removed. This marked the last known whereabouts of the Ark.
2. He then provided the following animals to be sacrificed for his people: 30,000 sheep and goats; 3000 cattle.
3. His officials also contributed animals for this purpose: 7600 lambs; 800 cattle.
4. This was said to be the greatest Passover since the days of the prophet Samuel.

II. Discovering the Word of God

A. When he was 26, Josiah gave orders to repair the temple of God (2 Chron. 34:8).

- B. During a cleaning of the temple, a copy of the Law of Moses (perhaps the only one in existence) was found. Upon hearing it read, the king went into mourning, then assembled the priests, Levites, and common people into the temple area, where he personally read them the Law and urged all to follow it (2 Chron. 34:19, 29-32).
- C. He then received a special message from God through the prophetess Huldah (2 Chron. 34:22-28).
 1. God would soon bring down upon the people of Judah all the curses of the Law because of their sin.
 2. Josiah, however, would be spared all this because of his godly behavior.

III. Disregarding the warning of God

- A. The foolish war—Josiah refused to honor the request of Necho, king of Egypt (who had acted at God’s command) to peacefully march through the land of Judah to Carchemish to do battle with the Babylonians (2 Chron. 35:20-21).
- B. The fatal wound
 1. Josiah attacked Necho and was mortally wounded by the Egyptian archers at Megiddo (2 Chron. 35:22-24; 2 Kings 23:29).
 2. Jeremiah the prophet composed a funeral dirge in memory of Josiah (2 Chron. 35:25).

STATISTICS

Father: Amon (2 Kings 21:24)

Mother: Jedidah (2 Kings 22:1)

Spouses: Hamutal and Zebidah (2 Kings 23:30-36)

Sons: Johanan, Jehoiakim, Zedekiah, and Jehoahaz (also called Shallum) (1 Chron. 3:15)

First mention: 1 Kings 13:2

Final mention: Matthew 1:11

Meaning of his name: “God supports”

Frequency of his name: Referred to 51 times

Biblical books mentioning him: Seven books (1 Kings, 2 Kings, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, Jeremiah, Zephaniah, Matthew)

Occupation: King of Judah

Place of birth: Jerusalem

Place of death: On a battlefield at Megiddo (2 Chron. 35:22)

Circumstances of death: He was killed in battle by the Egyptians (2 Chron. 35:20-24).

Important fact about his life: He was both the finest and final saved king of Judah (2 Chron. 34:1, 26-28).