

JOSIAH'S TIMELY DEATH

“There is an appointed time for everything. And there is a time for every event under heaven – a time to give birth, and a time to die.” (Eccl.3:1-2)

This will be true for the timely death of Josiah even though after hearing the details of his death you may find this doctrinal principle difficult to understand (2 Chron.35:20-24).

Often we confuse the details of death and/or the timing of it with its relation to the plan of God.

“And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment.” (Heb.9:27).

This lesson will study SIX aspects of Josiah's Timely Death.

1. Josiah was given a special prophecy by the prophetess Huldah regarding his death related to the plan of God (2 Kings 23:18-20/ read).

“This prediction refers to Josiah's death before God's judgment on Jerusalem through Nebuchadnezzar and so is not contradicted by his death in battle with Pharaoh Neco of Egypt (see 23:29-30). Josiah was assured that the final judgment on Judah and Jerusalem would not come in his own days.” (NIV, 2 Kings 22:20)

2. 2 Kings 23:29 gives a brief account of the circumstances surrounding the death of Josiah. However, 2 Chron.35:20-24 gives more details surrounding the timely death of King Josiah.

A special statement preceded the details surrounding the **timely death** of King Josiah – “*After all this, when Josiah had set the temple in order.*” (35:20) This shows that Josiah's purpose as king in the plan of God was completed.

We are not told why Josiah went to war against Egypt.

Neco king of Egypt went to war with Assyria against the aggression of Babylon at Carchemish on the Euphrates River (35:20). “Pharaoh Neco intended to help Ashur-Uballit II, the last Assyrian King, in his struggle against the rising power of Babylon under Nabopolassar. The Assyrian capital, Ninevah, had already fallen to the Babylonians and Medes in 612 (see book of Nahum). The remaining Assyrian forces had regrouped at Haran, but in 609 they were forced west of the Euphrates. It appears to be at this time that the Egyptians under Neco were coming to the Assyrian' aid. King Josiah marched out to meet him in battle. Perhaps Josiah opposed the passage of Neco's army through the pass at Megiddo (See 2 Chron.35:20-24) because he feared that the growth of either Egyptian or Assyrian power would have adverse results for the continued independence of Judah.” (NIV, 2 Kings 23:29)

But we are told that he was warned by a prophetic word not to do it.

3. Neco sent word to Josiah that God had told him to immediately attack Babylon “so stop opposing God who is with me, or he will destroy you.” (35:21)

Josiah refused to accept the word of the Lord from Neco and went to fight against him on the plain of Megiddo. “Josiah, however, would not turn away from him, but disguised himself to engage him in battle. He would not listen to what Neco has said at God's command but went to fight him on the plain of Megiddo.” (35:22)

Josiah was wounded by an archer in battle and died in Jerusalem and was buried in the tombs of his fathers (35:23-24).

4. This battle is interesting because of its historical role and timing in the plan of God.

“Nabopolassar was on the throne of Babylon, while his son Nebuchadnezzar was commanding the armies in the field. Nebuchadnezzar would succeed his father after another battle at Carchemish against Egypt in 605 BC Josiah may have been an ally of Babylon (see 32:31; 33:11 and notes).” (NIV, 2 Chron.35:21)

Nebuchadnezzar was the ruler of Babylon and brought the 5th cycle of divine discipline upon Judah (2 Chron.36:15-23).

5. Yet Josiah was spared this 5th cycle which occurred shortly after his death. This shows God faithfulness to His word and His plan in the timely death of Josiah.

“If we are faithless, He remains faithful; for He cannot deny Himself.” (2 Tim.2:13)

God promised Josiah that he would not go through the 5th cycle to Judah and that he would be buried with his fathers in peace (2 Kings 22:19-20).

Do you see that even in Josiah’s unfaithfulness to God, God remained faithful to Josiah.

6. Jesus Christ removed the “sting of death” thus enabling the spiritual advancing believer to look forward to physical death because absence from the body is presence with Lord (1 Cor.15:53-57; 2 Cor.5:6-8; Phil.1:21).

“You will know that your tent is secure for you will visit your abode and fear no loss.” (Job 5:24; Heb.2:15)
A believer will die for at least the following five reason:

- Phase II work finished (2 Tim.4:7)
- Glorify God by dying under special conditions like martyr (Stephen / Acts7; Rev.2:13) or combat (Jonathan / 1 Sam.31:1-3) or what people call accidents (Josiah/ 2 Chron.35:20-24) or natural –unnatural causes (Lazarus / John 11:3-4, 13-14, 25-26, 40-44)
- Rapture (no physical death / 1 Cor.15:5-52)
- Suicide (Saul / 1 Sam.31:4)
- Sin unto death (1 John 5:16; Acts 5 / Ananias and Sapphira).

“For in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.” (2 Pet.1:11 / dying grace)

“The Lord will deliver me safely to His heavenly kingdom; to Him be the glory forever and ever.” (2 Tim.4:18 / dying grace)