

2 Kings 23:28-37

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Date: 08 January 2025

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[0:00] 2 Kings chapter 23, starting in verse 28, going to the end of the chapter, this gets us down to verse 37. So just a few verses. Let's put it in context so that we know where we're at.

We are some time out. We're nearing the end of the reign of the kings in Judah. So the Babylonian, the fall to the Babylonian empire is coming upon us pretty quickly, actually.

We can see that as we just go on into the next chapter. But we are in the midst of the reign of Josiah. Josiah is a king is described as no king before him did what was right like Josiah.

So he walked in the obedience and the commands that Moses had declared to the word and really even exceeded the obedience of David. Now I know David's called a man after God's own heart and we're not belittling that at all.

We're not trying to diminish that. And you say, well, if Josiah was so faithful, then why is David described as a man after God's own heart? Well, I believe we see that in David's repentance of his sins and the brokenness that he has of that nature.

[1:10] He's not in pride. He falls and he fails and we understand that. But yet he's broken in that. He has this ambition that God be honored and glorified. I read Psalm 51 where he says, restore me so that others may know of your goodness.

And it is there that we see the heart of God flowing through the heart of David. This desire that God be glorified. But in Josiah, we see a king who lives and walks in righteousness and faithfulness. He has a heart. He sets his heart to know the Lord is God. And in the midst of setting his heart to know God, the word of God is discovered.

Hilkiah is in the temple and he's cleaning it out and they find the book. Remember that? And they bring the book and he's broken over the realities of the book. The book being the Pentateuch, the first five books of scripture, which declare more than likely, he was reading from the book of Deuteronomy, that if they were often disobedient, that they would be led into captivity.

So the reality of that sinks in. He's broken. He mourns. He rends his garment. But he calls the nation back to keep the Passover and he's walking in the faithfulness. So that's kind of where we left it, right?

[2:19] The nation is celebrating the Passover event like no other time in all the nation that the nation ever done it. Even extended beyond the borders of Judah because historically, the northern kingdom fell to the Assyrians.

Remember that? But the Assyrians are descending in power right now. And you need to know that because you're going to see it in just a minute. You say, why does all this matter? Well, it kind of matters because it kind of pertains to what's going on.

So the Assyrians came out of nowhere. They arose to power out of nowhere. They swept across all the lands. They took away the northern kingdom of Israel. They captured all this other land.

And then just about as quickly as they came on the scene, they kind of pass off the scene. But in their place, it's going to be the Babylonians. But we're right here in the middle of that. The kind of, is it the Assyrians that are ruling?

Is it the Babylonians that are ruling? And that's kind of important too because what was going on is the Babylonian and the Assyrian Empire were kind of joint rulers. And the kings were going back and forth.

[3:22] And I know some of you say, this doesn't really matter. But it does. Stay with me. That this king would reign from Assyria. This king would reign from Babylon. This king would reign from, and it was kind of the same empire.

And the reason you need to know that is because there's a king that interjects into that scene who is Pharaoh Necho out of Egypt. It will meet in just a minute. And that's where Josiah gets in trouble.

Okay? That's where he gets in trouble. And we'll see that. So let's read our text. Starting in verse 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?

In his days Pharaoh Necho, king of Egypt, went up to the king of Assyria to the river Euphrates. And king Josiah went to meet him. And when Pharaoh Necho saw him, he killed him at Megiddo. 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 the place of his father.

[4 : 24] Jehoahaz was 23 years old when he became king, and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Hamotel, the daughter of Jeremiah of Libna. He did evil in the sight of the Lord according to all that his fathers had done.

Pharaoh Necho 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 100 talents of silver and a talent of gold. Pharaoh Necho made Eliakim, the son of Josiah, king in the place of Josiah his father, and changed his name to Jehoahaz. But he took Jehoahaz away and brought him to Egypt, and he died there. So Jehoahaz 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 the gold from the people of the land, each according to his valuation, to give it to Pharaoh Necho.

Jehoahaz was 25 years old when he became king, and he reigned 11 years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Zebedah, the daughter of Padaiah of Rumah. He did evil in the sight of the Lord according to all that his fathers had done.

[5 : 26] I want you to see tonight setting the stage for failure. What it looks like to set the stage for failure, because Josiah is the pinnacle of the kings. He reigns, he does what is right, but by the time Josiah ascends to the throne, and he reigns a number of years, he's very young when he comes upon the throne.

He's 39 years of age when he dies. He dies very young, but when he ascends to the throne, he is really coming into a throne in a reign that is already on its way down.

So we can't say that he is the pinnacle of, it would be Hezekiah that was kind of the pinnacle of the Judah nation. But the nation is already on its way because of the sins of Manasseh to be led into captivity.

God had already declared that. But there's kind of this brief interval where there's this breath of fresh air, Josiah, this righteous king who shows up. After him, there's none.

None do righteous, none do what is right. There are just a number of years by the time the kingdom falls, there are four kings that sit upon the throne after Josiah, and none of them do what is right.

[6 : 27] Okay, so what we see is Josiah is kind of this breath of like, okay, maybe we don't need to despair. Maybe there is hope for the land of Judah. Maybe there is this repentance.

And yet what we see is they're really just setting the stage for failure. And while they're going to be, God is justified in the Babylonian captivity. That is to say, God is just in his judgments.

Okay, so we need to acknowledge that. That God is just in his judgments of man because of the sin of man. And we see it on display here at a national level.

This is not to say that every individual was wicked and doing what is wrong. This is just to declare to us that as a nation, as the two tribes of Judah, they're not seeking the Lord.

They have no desire for him. Really, they're just setting themselves up for failure. The first thing that we notice, again, I'll try to make my way quickly tonight so that we can get to the business part of it. How do we set the stage for failure?

[7 : 25] Number one, there is the death of a godly influence. There's the death of a godly influence. Remove the influence of the righteous and everybody suffers.

When you remove the influence of the righteous, everyone feels the ripple effects for this. This is why, and I apologize when I say this because I know it sounds a little frank, but this is why when we get to the book of Revelations, after chapter 4, literally, all hell breaks loose on the face of the earth. Because in chapter 4, the church is gathered around the throne of the Lamb worshiping, and the influence of the righteous is no longer upon the face of the earth. After chapter 4, this is where we get men and women that are crying out, and they want the mountains to fall on them and kill them, but they can't.

The sun is scorching them, and they cry out, but they won't die. And it's just a miserable, terrible place to be. Why? Because when you remove the influence of the righteous, then everyone suffers. Josiah shows us the impact of the righteous upon the land. We see the restoration of temple worship. We see the restoration of the Passover. We see obedience like we've never seen it since the days of Moses.

[8 : 45] And yet, Josiah's not perfect. He's not the one we're looking for, right? He's not the perfect one. He's not the complete one. When we look at the life of Josiah, we say, well, we see he's walking in obedience.

He's doing all these good things. He's doing everything right. But it's when we get to the end, that's why I set the stage so much here, and I ask you to read in 2 Chronicles chapter 35, that we find that Josiah has this one problem here.

And it is this. That in the midst of all this struggle of power, if you will, of the Assyrians and the Babylonians, Josiah finds himself there, and he's kind of an established king, right?

The Passover's taking place. You need to know that from the time of the Passover until his death, 13 years pass. So from verse 27 to verse 28, 13 years pass.

And in that 13 years, it's a reign of security. It's a reign of stability. See, the Assyrians are descending, the Babylonians are ascending, and there's all this land around him. And for Pharaoh Necho to get to fight the battle, he has to go through the region that's right next to Judah.

[9 : 50] And it seems like an opportune time. Now, more than likely, Josiah had aligned. Now, in our text, it says he's going to fight the king of Assyria, and the king of Assyria at this time is a king reigning from Babylon.

So it is really the emergence of the Babylonian empire. And so, more than likely, Josiah has already kind of aligned with the Assyrians to the north, at least politically a little bit, and is kind of impeding Necho.

Now, the reason it's important is because it tells us in 2 Chronicles that Pharaoh Necho looked at him and said, Don't come out and fight me. God has sent me on a mission. I'm out to fight the king. I have nothing to do with you.

If you come to fight me, you will die. Now, you say, well, all kings talk like that. Yeah, but they do, but do they have this really stamp of approval? Because it tells us that the word of God came through Necho telling Josiah to stay home.

That it was the word of God through Pharaoh Necho telling King Josiah, Don't come and fight. Yet, Josiah disregarded the word of God through Necho and went to the battle.

[11 : 00] And when he was in the battle, just like everything else, a random archer drew his bow at random and shot a guy who had disguised himself, who just happened to be Josiah. Josiah looks at his chariot driver and says, Take me out of the battle.

I'm badly wounded. They get him into another chariot. By the time he gets to Jerusalem, he's dead. So what does this tell you? He died because he disregarded the word of God that was given.

And the consequences are so much more than his death, it ripples down now that the impact of the righteous is removed from the land. Friend, listen to me. Your consequences as a result of our disobedience ripple down to others.

Now, ultimately, God is sovereign. He knew that that day was coming. We understand all that. But Josiah, it is implied from the word, could have went back home. He didn't.

And in his decision to stay, now he has removed the influence of the righteous from the land. And the death of the godly influence leads to the quick descent of the nation.

[12 : 08] It tells us elsewhere in scripture that when the one who restrains them is removed, the sin runs rampant. That's what it tells us at the end of the days, that the one who restrains the sin of the lawless one, the one who restrains him will be removed.

And I believe in my interpretation of that, that is the spirit of the Lord is removed from restraining the man of lawlessness, and the man of lawlessness will have his way. And the reason and the way that restraint is removed is when the church is taken out of place.

Josiah here is that one who is restraining the sin of the nation. Because of his choice to disregard the warning of God, he dies in this battle. And unfortunately, when the godly fail to heed the warnings, many people suffer.

And we see this nation setting themselves up for failure. But we don't blame Josiah for everything that took place, because some of the blame needs to rest on the people. So we move to the second

thing. There's the death of the godly influence.

Number two, there's a departure from the way of truth. There's the departure from the way of truth. So, Josiah is the one who's holding them in balance. He disregards the warning through Pharaoh and Necho.

[13:20] He ends up dying in battle. And it says, and then the people took his son, and they took his son, Jehoaz, and put him up on the throne. So, they wanted Jehoahaz to be there.

Now, notice it is the people of Judah who make Jehoahaz king in his place. Jehoahaz is the younger brother. He is not the older brother. But he's also, at this time, 23 years of age.

So, he's lived some time among the people. He only reigns three months. But in that three-month reign, it tells us that he did what was wicked in the sight of the Lord. So, it didn't take very long, right?

It didn't take very long for them to go back to how they were living pre-Josiah. Three months. Now, my interpretation of that is, surely, at 23 years of age, the people knew what he was like.

And yet, this was the king they wanted. He should have walked in the ways of his father, Josiah, but he does not. He does what is wicked in the sight of the Lord. And in just a three-month period, all of a sudden, they begin to go back to this desperation.

[14:26] In case we want to be too compassionate and say, well, here's the people that were reading the Word and repenting of the Word, and now, all of a sudden, God's going to judge them. Well, now that the restraint has been removed, that is, the king, now we see the true intentions of their heart.

Now we begin to see the heart of the people. It's easy to do right as long as the one ruling over you makes you do right. But as soon as the people had their way, the king they set before them was one who did what was wicked in the way of the Lord.

And all of a sudden, they're following in the same way. God still has his servants, the prophets. Jeremiah is still there. It tells us that when Josiah dies, it tells us in 2 Chronicles that Jeremiah wrote a lament, and he was broken over.

We don't know what that song of lament was. They gave this big burial, and they gave him all the due respect that he was worthy of. But yet, three months later, Jeremiah is still present. Jeremiah is there until the Babylonians come, by the way.

There are other prophets that are present, but they disregard them. What do they do? They tell them they're foolish. They throw them in the empty wells, and they say, Oh, we can ignore you.

[15:30] You can ignore a prophet, but you can't ignore a king. But as soon as the godly king was removed, the people began to do what they wanted to do. And we see they just disregard.

They depart from the way of truth. And this king only reigns a little bit of time because Pharaoh Necho made Eliakim, the king and son of Josiah, in his place, which we'll get to that in just a moment.

So from the point of Josiah's death onward, what we find is the people choose to do what is wicked because, again, the godly influence has been removed.

So when you remove the godly influence and you depart from the way of truth, you're setting your stage for failure. I told my wife earlier today, I was listening to Adrian Rogers preach.

I had just a few moments into my day, so I was listening to a message by Adrian Rogers. And when I first came to Christ, that's who I listened to, and I still occasionally, if I'm listening to a pastor, I like to listen to him. Adrian is like, the Adrianisms is what they called him.

[16:33] He was like the best one lines ever, right? And Adrian Rogers was preaching on the family and morality and all these things, and he made the statement. He said, we took the Ten Commandments off of the wall of our schools and we put police officers in the halls of our schools.

Think about that for just a moment. When you remove the influence of the godly, then you have to, I'm not saying that police officers aren't godly, but there's a lot of truth in that, right?

When you took the commandments off the wall, you had to put officers in the hall. Because you said, we don't want the influence of God in our schools, so now we're going to let the world try to solve our problems.

There's a lot of truth in that, right? We see that personally, we see that here, and we see it nationally right here. Now Josiah is gone, and the people are doing, they're departing from the way of the truth, they want their own way, and we see it further in the third and final thing.

There's the death of the godly influence, the departure of the way of truth, and the dependence on the power of the world. The dependence on the power of the world. So, let's finish our historical march here.

[17 : 39] Pharaoh Necho is on his way to meet the king of Assyria, who is actually ruling from Babylon. Josiah goes out and meets him, says, ah, he says, don't come here, Josiah dies as a result of the battle. Pharaoh Necho goes on to fight that battle.

The Babylonians aren't yet the powerhouse yet, because Nebuchadnezzar ascends the throne in just a minute, next chapter. But anyway, Necho goes to fight that battle. While he's fighting that battle, the people of Judah put Jehoahaz on the throne.

Necho goes and fights the battle. Three months later, he comes back home. He says, I don't want Jehoahaz on the throne. He removes Jehoahaz, makes him one of his captives, right? Takes him to Egypt.

Jehoahaz ends up dying in Egypt. And then Necho appoints another child of Josiah to make him king. Pay attention to this. It says, so Pharaoh Necho made Eliakim.

Now, there's a problem when Egypt is putting the man on the throne in Judah. It's a problem.

Because the one who used to hold you captive now is setting up your ruler.

[18 : 37] He removed Jehoahaz, and Necho puts Eliakim on the throne. And then they change his name, right? Now, both of these names, Eliakim means God shall provide, or God shall sustain.

Jehoikim means Jehovah shall sustain. So, essentially, they mean the same thing. So, there's this one little caveat right there. It says that he put down, and changed his name to Jehoikim.

So, who changed his name? Pharaoh Necho. You say, oh, well, he used the covenant name of God. Well, you're right, he did. He gave him a very Judah name. He gave him a very Israel name.

But who named him? Pharaoh Necho. In scripture, to name means to rule over. God called him Adam.

And then he told Adam to name the animals that came to him. And then he said, rule over creation, right? To name something, this is why nobody can declare the name of God. God has to reveal that name.

[19 : 35] To name something means to have control or rule over something. Now, the Pharaoh of Egypt is changing the name of the king of Judah.

And in demonstration, he said, I'll give you, I'll give you a very Jewish name. But make no bones about it. I'm still over you. I'll take your name from this meaning to this meaning, and I'll rule over you.

And the way we know he did it is because he mandated that they pay him this fine. He imposed on the land a fine. But your whole income had no problem whatsoever paying that fine because he just taxed the people and he sent the money.

So tax the people, send the money. Tax the people, send the money. It's not an absurd amount of money. I mean, it's quite a bit amount of money, but it's not absurd. There are greater fines than that found in scripture. But what we find is that what we pay is what we depend on.

And he began to pay this. And he began to pay this. And he began to pay this. And now the dependence. He is depending upon his faithfulness. To the Pharaoh, go back to Jeremiah.

[20 : 42] What is Jeremiah telling the people the whole time the Babylonians are coming? Don't go to Egypt. There's no help in Egypt. Right? Even after the Babylonians come, which is the next chapter in our text before us, and Nebuchadnezzar takes some of the people away, what do they do?

Well, we're going to flee to Egypt. We'll find help in Egypt. And Jeremiah's like, don't go to Egypt. They take him to Egypt anyway. And guess what? God's in Egypt there too. And then all of a sudden, the Egyptians fall to who? The Babylonians. Because Jeremiah kept saying, you can't flee the disciplined hand of God.

Don't go there. What are they doing? They are showing and demonstrating their dependence upon the power of the world. They never, by the way, the whole thing that Jeremiah says, don't go to Egypt.

But what does he say? Stay where you're at. Just trust that God is faithful. Right? You're being disciplined. You've done wrong. But just give up.

I mean, that's essentially it, right? Surrender to the Babylonians. And everybody's like, no, we're not going to do that. We're stronger. He said, you did wrong. Just quit. Accept the discipline of God.

[21 : 50] Because it is safer to be under the discipline of God. than to be running to the powers of the world to try to avoid it. But too often, we set ourselves up for failure when the godly are removed, we depart from the truth, and we depend on the ways and the powers of the world.

These are the things that set us up for failure. It's what set the nation of Judah up, and it's what sets us up. When we remove the godly influence, we depart from the way of truth, and then we depend upon the ways and the power of the world.

And we see it recorded for us here in 2 Kings 23, 28 through 37. Hey, I finished right on time. If we were to win 2 Kings 2, Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[24 : 26] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.