

2 Chronicles 34-36 King Josiah and the Fall of Jerusalem

Teacher: Pastor Paul LeBoutillier
Calvary Chapel Ontario

2 Chronicles, and we are going to pick it up in chapter 34. Chapter 34. The history of Israel is a very interesting one. Do you know there were only three kings of Israel who really ruled over the United Kingdom? King Saul was the first. David came after him, and then Solomon came after David, of course.

And then Solomon's son, Rehoboam had pretty much just gotten started as king and he ripped the kingdom in two. In fact, that's when I was in college, that's what our professor, that's how he told us to remember it was Rehoboam. He said, just remember Rehoboam ripped. That was the little phrase that we're supposed to. Isn't that funny? I was supposed to keep that in my brain just long enough to pass the test, and here it is however, many years later.

I guess it worked, anyway. The kingdom split under Rehoboam, and so now you have a northern kingdom called Israel, a southern kingdom called Judah, the lineage of David or the descendants of David continued to rule over the southern kingdom of Judah, and there was just a smattering of kings which ruled over the northern kingdom of Israel, none of whom were good.

They all led Israel into pagan idolatry, and so Israel fell first of the two nations. When the Assyrians came up against Israel, they could not withstand them, and so the Assyrians conquered the northern kingdom of Israel. They came against the southern kingdom of Israel during the rule of king Hezekiah. But you'll remember the Lord fought on their behalf, and the king of Assyria went home in shame and disgrace.

Well, now it's been many years even since then, after Hezekiah came Manasseh, who led the nation back into idolatry. He repented at the end of his life and there was a little bit of restoration, but his kingdom was known pretty much for leading everyone back into idolatry. His son, Ammon, did the very same thing. He didn't last for very long before he was assassinated.

And whenever a king is assassinated, and particularly early on in their reign, they'll look to the son to take the throne, but many times the son isn't yet ready

to rule. That was the case with king Ammon's son, Josiah. Look with me in your Bible beginning in verse 1 of chapter 34. And it tells us that,

“Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem.”

He was just eight years old. You know, I think about that. I've got a grandson who is seven, I think, right? He'll be eight here in October, I believe. He's not ready to rule a country, let me tell you right now, I can tell you he's still struggling to rule his bedroom with any success.

Obviously when a king comes to the throne at the age of eight there's going to be individuals who are going to be helping out until such time as the king is able to take on those responsibilities himself. But the next thing we're told about Josiah here in verse 2, If you look with me in your Bible is that,

“And he did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, and walked in the ways of David his father; (And of course it refers to David, his father, not meaning that he was his direct father, but in the parentage, in the lineage of David. He came from that family. And we're told here that) and he did not turn aside to the right hand or to the left.”

And that's, of course, a picture of just staying on the straight and narrow. He didn't deviate from the path of simply serving the Lord. This is a wonderful thing to say of any king. It's a wonderful thing to say of any individual. Have you ever wondered if your name appeared in a biblical book what it would say? You ever stop to think about that? So and so was born, dah, dah, dah, and it might give the date of when you came to know Christ as Savior.

And then of course it would go on to say, and he or she walked with the Lord for this number of years, and what would it say about your walk with the Lord? And what would it say about how that that, what would characterize that walk? Would it say perhaps like Josiah, that he or she did not turn to the right hand or to the left, but kept walking consistently, with the Lord?

We know that Josiah begins his rule and reign at age eight. We know that he did what was right in the eyes of the Lord. We know that he never varied from that, and we know here, as we begin looking at verse 3, that even while he was still very young something special happened in his life. It says in verse 3,

“For in the eighth year of his reign, (do the math, he's 16 years old) while he was yet a boy, he began to seek the God of David his father, and in the twelfth

year he (actually) began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of the high places, the Asherim, and the carved and the metal images.”

Here's an interesting statement made about king Josiah, that when he was 16 years old he began to seek God. Now we're going to learn something very interesting as we get into this chapter a little bit further. We're going to find out that the Word of God was essentially buried under piles of pagan rubble. The scrolls of Moses had been given, had been written, had been placed somewhere in the temple, but then over years and years of unfaithfulness, they got lost.

Can you imagine growing up? Now think about this for a minute. Can you imagine growing up? Your father was a pagan. Your grandfather was a pagan until the very end of his life, and he didn't really have that much time to change a whole lot. He lived mostly a pagan life. All that you can remember and here you are eight years old, and your father now has been killed, he's been assassinated.

What a wonderful thing for a young boy, and just eight years later, without a Bible, without the Word of God, this 16 year old kid begins to seek the Lord. There's just a heart, there's a heart just to seek God. I want to know God. Now there's something we know about seeking God. We know it from what Jesus told us.

He said this, seek and you will find. Knock and the door will be opened. Right? We know that when we seek God with all of our heart, God will be found by us, and God was found by Josiah. He was so impressed by what the Lord revealed to him apart from the Bible. Remember, he doesn't have the Scriptures. He doesn't have the law. It's hidden. It's buried in the temple somewhere.

They're not sure. They don't even, it's like what Bible, and his heart is becoming changed so much that it says by the 12th year of his reign, so, four years after that, he begins to purge the area of the pagan temple, temples the pagan and idols and all the other things that are there in Jerusalem, probably just all over the place. Verse 4 says that,

“And they chopped down the altars of the Baals in his presence, and he cut down the incense altars that stood above them. And he broke in pieces the Asherim and the carved and the metal images, (This is really incredible) and he made dust of them and scattered it over the graves of those who had sacrificed to them.” Meaning the priests and the people who had followed these pagan idols.

And then look at verse 5. This is very interesting. It says, *“He also burned the bones of the priests on their altars and cleansed Judah and Jerusalem.”*

You have to understand that to burn the bones of someone and sprinkle it over an altar was to defile that altar, okay? So, that it could no longer be used again. These priests had been long dead. Basically, he exhumed the bodies and burned them and scattered their ashes over these pagan idols and altars and so forth. Here's what's interesting about that. Josiah is doing this. He's still a relatively young man, right? He's probably around 20 years old.

This very act that he is doing right here was prophesied. Josiah was mentioned by a prophet, an unnamed prophet, almost, well, it wasn't almost, it was actually over 300 years earlier. Now, remember I told you about the split that happened in the kingdom? Rehoboam was the son of Solomon who, through his pride, split the kingdom, okay? Rehoboam kept the southern kingdom.

Who was the first king of the northern kingdom? A man by the name of Jeroboam. Jeroboam was a man who led Israel into pagan idolatry, and while he was in the midst of doing that, this is Jeroboam, over 300 years earlier, a prophet comes up to him and begins to speak to the pagan altar on which Jeroboam is sacrificing. He doesn't speak to Jeroboam, he speaks to the altar. Let me put this on the screen for you, you'll find this interesting.

1 Kings 13:1-2 (ESV)

And behold, a man of God came out of Judah by the word of the LORD to Bethel. Jeroboam was standing by the altar to make offerings. And the man cried against the altar by the word of the LORD and said, “O altar, altar, thus says the LORD: ‘Behold, a son shall be born to the house of David, Josiah by name, and he shall sacrifice on you the priests of the high places who make offerings on you, and human bones shall be burned on you.’”

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Over 300 years, before it took place, this prophet, this unnamed prophet comes out of Judah and begins to speak against the altar and says, God's going to raise up a man out of the line of David, and he will burn the bones of the pagan

idolatrous priests on you, oh altar, and we're seeing the fulfillment of that here in 2 Chronicles chapter 34.

This is just more amazing information about this young man named Josiah who turned to the Lord, sought the Lord, and then began to serve the Lord, even without the Scriptures and the revelation of the written Word of God. Let's keep reading. It goes on in verse 6. This is interesting. It says,

“And in the cities of Manasseh, Ephraim, and Simeon, and as far as Naphtali, (That's up around the region, Galilee and that sort of thing. It says,) in their ruins all around.”

What is it saying here? Remember something people. Now it's referring to the tribal allotments in the northern kingdom of Israel. They've been taken captive. Those people are gone except for the very, very poorest of the Jews might still be remaining in the land. Very, very few people. King Josiah is so filled with zeal for the Lord he goes up into Assyrian territory. It's now Assyrian territory because they conquered Israel, and he begins to cleanse that area.

He begins to tear down. This takes guts by the way. He's walking into another man's property, but he knows that it was originally given by the Lord. He walks up into Israel, and he begins to cleanse that area from all of their pagan idols and so forth and so on. This is incredible. Verse 7, it says,

“he broke down the altars and beat the Asherim and the images into powder and cut down all the incense altars throughout all the land of Israel. Then he returned to Jerusalem. (He did it at home and he did it up north as well) ⁸ Now in the eighteenth year of his reign, when he had cleansed the land and the house, he sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, and Maaseiah the governor of the city, and Joah the son of Joahaz, the recorder, to repair the house of the LORD his God.”

Now it's time to get the temple into good condition, right? He begins to tell these guys, listen, we're going to get the temple cleaned out and prepared.

⁹ *“They came to Hilkiah the high priest and gave him the money that had been brought into the house of God, which the Levites, the keepers of the threshold, had collected from Manasseh and Ephraim and from all the remnant of Israel and from all Judah and Benjamin and from the inhabitants of Jerusalem.”*

It speaks of some of that, the remnant of people still living up north, even after the Assyrians conquered them and they gave too, for the repair of the temple, and it says in verse 10 that,

“And they gave it to the workmen who were working in the house of the LORD. And the workmen who were working in the house of the LORD gave it for repairing and restoring the house. (And) ¹¹ They gave it to the carpenters and the builders to buy quarried stone, and timber for binders and beams for the buildings that the kings of Judah had let go to ruin.

¹² And the men did the work faithfully. Over them were set Jahath and Obadiah the Levites, of the sons of Merari, and Zechariah and Meshullam, of the sons of the Kohathites, to have oversight. (And) The Levites, all who were skillful with instruments of music, ¹³ were over the burden-bearers and directed all who did work in every kind of service, and some of the Levites were scribes and officials and gatekeepers.”

Check this out, check this out. Look at verse 14.

“While they were bringing out the money that had been brought into the house of the LORD, Hilkiyah the priest found the Book of the Law of the LORD given through Moses. ¹⁵ Then Hilkiyah answered and said to Shaphan the secretary, “I have found the Book of the Law in the house of the LORD.” And Hilkiyah gave the book to Shaphan. ¹⁶ Shaphan brought the book to the king, and further reported to the king, “All that was committed to your servants they are doing.

¹⁷ They have emptied out the money that was found in the house of the LORD and have given it into the hand of the overseers and the workmen.” ¹⁸ Then Shaphan the secretary told the king, (Oh, and by the way, I just threw that in there) “Hilkiyah the priest has given me a book.” And Shaphan read from it before the king. ¹⁹ And when the king heard the words of the Law, he tore his clothes.

²⁰ And the king commanded Hilkiyah, Ahikam the son of Shaphan, Abdon the son of Micah, Shaphan the secretary, and Asaiah the king's servant, saying, ²¹ “Go, inquire of the LORD for me and for those who are left in Israel and in Judah, concerning the words of the book that has been found. For great is the wrath of the LORD that is poured out on us, because our fathers have not kept the word of the LORD, to do according to all that is written in this book.

²² So Hilkiyah and those whom the king had sent went to Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tokhath, son of Hasrah, keeper of the wardrobe

(now she lived in Jerusalem in the Second Quarter) and spoke to her to that effect. ²³ And she said to them, “Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: ‘Tell the man who sent you to me,

²⁴ Thus says the LORD, Behold, I will bring disaster upon this place and upon its inhabitants, all the curses that are written in the book that was read before the king of Judah. ²⁵ Because they have forsaken me and have made offerings to other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands, therefore my wrath will be poured out on this place and will not be quenched.” Listen to this though.

“²⁶ But to the king of Judah, who sent you to inquire of the LORD, thus shall you say to him, Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: Regarding the words that you have heard, ²⁷ because your heart was tender and you humbled yourself before God when you heard his words against this place and its inhabitants, and you have humbled yourself before me and have torn your clothes and wept before me, I also have heard you, declares the LORD.

²⁸ Behold, I will gather you to your fathers, and you shall be gathered to your grave in peace, and your eyes shall not see all the disaster that I will bring upon this place and its inhabitants.”” And they brought back word to the king.”

Interesting, isn't it? The word that's given to king Josiah, the Lord says, yeah, everything that you read there in the law, all the things that I promised, all the curses that I said would come upon this nation if they were to depart from obedience. and worship other gods. I'm going to bring all those things upon the land and I'm about to do this, but because when you heard My Word, your heart was broken and you trembled at My Word, you're not going to see any of these things and I will bring this after your time.

The heart of Josiah is a pretty amazing thing, but this is something the Lord has always told us that he loved. The heart that is responsive to His word. I want to show you a passage from the Book of Isaiah. This is a really interesting passage in the 66th chapter. It says,

Isaiah 66:1-2 (ESV)

Thus says the LORD: “Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool; what is the house that you would build for me, and what is the place of my rest? All these things my hand has made, and so all these things came to be, declares the LORD. But this is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word.

Thus says the LORD: "Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool; what is the house that you would build for me, and what is the place of my rest? All these things my hand has made, and so all these things came to be, declares the LORD. But this is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word.

Fascinating passage, huh? What's the Lord saying here? He's saying, I am the God who created all things, and you can't contain Me. Who's going to make a house for me? I'm too great. There's no way that you can possibly do anything that's going to impress me. But let me tell you what gets my attention. Even though I am the God who dwells forever and looks upon the sons of men and their lives as if they are but a breath. Let me tell you what gets my attention. He who is humble, contrite in spirit, and who trembles at My Word.

Isn't that a wonderful statement? Oh, it just makes me want to say, Lord, make me that person. I want to be that person. I want to be that person who's humble. I want to be that person who's contrite. I want to be that person who trembles at your Word. The reason that that response, the response that we see given by Josiah, the response that's spoken of by God to Isaiah, is so important is because it is in our nature as humans not to respond that way.

When we're confronted by sin, our human nature is to either pass the buck. That happened in the garden. I mean, it happened at the very first-time sin was ever confronted. Adam, what did you do? It was the woman you gave me. That's in our nature. Do you understand that that's just not something that Adam did? It is something that is imprinted on our nature. Our nature wants to deny any culpability.

Our nature wants to make excuses. Well, if you were put in my situation, or some people will say, well what am I supposed to do? What was I supposed to do? As if there's no other possible option but sin. What was I supposed to do? Or the other thing we do, and this is imprinted in our nature, is to make light of it. Somebody says something to us about some area of sin, and we're just like, it's not that big of a deal.

I mean, you ought to see my neighbor. That guy came over and he was confessing his sins in front of me the other day, goodness gracious, At least I'm not like him. And in so doing, we just, we pass it off as it's really not that big of a deal. It's really not that much of a problem. That's in our nature. Did you notice Josiah did none of those things? He did none of those things. Josiah instead accepted the indictment of the Lord, and he accepted it on behalf of his

people and Josiah was broken-hearted and showed his personal grief in the Word that the Lord had given.

And the reason that's significant is because in the last chapter we're going to deal with tonight, and it's not going to talk about it in Chronicles. Chronicles is more of a brief chapter story of these last kings after Josiah. But we know from the Book of Jeremiah, because Jeremiah was alive during that time, that Jeremiah had actually written a prophecy and given it to the king, one of the final kings. And the king invited his people to come in and read the prophecy that Jeremiah had given him.

And the Bible tells us that after they read a line of that prophecy on this girl, he took a knife and he cut it off and he threw it in the fire. And then they read the next line and he cut it off and threw it in the fire. And then until the entire prophecy had been burned up. That's how much the kings who came after Josiah cared about the Word of the Lord. In other words, not at all. So, the attitude and the heart that we see in King Josiah is really that much more amazing. Verse 29 in your Bible,

“Then the king sent and gathered together all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem.³⁰ And the king went up to the house of the LORD, with all the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the priests and the Levites, (and in fact) all the people both great and small. And he read in their hearing all the words of the Book of the Covenant that had been found in the house of the LORD.

Now this is interesting, the king got up and actually read everything that Moses had written in the law. This was not, this was supposed to happen like every year. It was actually commanded in the writings of Moses that the king was to get up in front of the people and read through the law on a regular basis. Of course, it hadn't been done, but king Josiah is doing it.

³¹ “And the king stood in his place 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 perform the words of the covenant that were written in this book. ³² Then he made all who were present in Jerusalem and in Benjamin join in it. And the inhabitants of Jerusalem did according to the covenant of God, the God of their fathers.”

Can I ask you a question just for a moment? If God came to you in very clear terminology and told you that because of the sins of the nation in which you were living, judgment was about to fall, was very close to falling, and basically

the Lord communicated it in such a way as to say, this is a done deal, I'm not going to turn from my wrath. This nation will fall, and the Lord told you that.

What would your response be to the, what would your response be to His Word from that point on? I mean, do you go find a new place to live? You go find a new country? Do you just say well, this baby's coming to a close eat drink and be merry for tomorrow we're judged? I don't know. What do you do? How do you respond?

I just find it very interesting that Josiah really doesn't have two options here before him. The only thing he knows to do is well, you know what we're going to do We're going to read the covenant and he does, and then he tells the people we're going to confirm this covenant with God. Now he knows that Israel has broken this covenant to the point where judgement is going to fall, and yet he is saying to the people, we will be obedient to God. We're going to confirm this covenant. We're going to follow the Lord, the God of our fathers. I just, I find that really quite fascinating. It ends the chapter by saying,

³³ “And Josiah took away all the abominations from all the territory that belonged to the people of Israel and made all who were present in Israel serve the LORD their God. All his days they did not turn away from following the LORD, the God of their fathers.”

Now, if you want to go back and read all about the things that Josiah did to promote faithfulness to the Lord, it's given frankly, in much more detail in second Kings. And if you're taking notes, it's in the 23rd chapter. You can go and read it on your own time if you want, just suffice to say it was unprecedented in terms of the national renewal that took place under this man.

Now, as we get into the next chapter, the first 19 verses of this chapter are going to tell us how they kept the Passover. And we've read this before from other kings. Hezekiah kept the Passover and, but there's something special about Josiah and the way he did it. Let's just take a look at these verses. It says,

“Josiah kept a Passover to the LORD in Jerusalem. And they slaughtered the Passover lamb on the fourteenth day of the first month. ² He appointed the priests to their offices and encouraged them in the service of the house of the LORD. ³ And he said to the Levites who taught all Israel and who were holy to the LORD, “Put the holy ark in the house that Solomon the son of David, king of Israel, built. You need not carry it on your shoulders. Now serve the LORD your God and his people Israel.”

And by the way, we have no background information on why the ark was not in the temple. It should have been in there the whole time. It should have been in the Holy of Holies, but apparently it got taken out. We don't know why. We don't know by whom. All we know is it had left the Holy of Holies, and the Levites were carrying it around.

And Josiah may, I don't know, maybe they finally got things cleaned out. I'm not sure what the deal is, but he says, bring it back and let's put it there. You no longer need to carry it on your shoulders. Anyway, we're guessing there, but he goes on to say,

⁴ “Prepare yourselves according to your fathers' houses by your divisions, as prescribed in the writing of David king of Israel and the document of Solomon his son. ⁵ And stand in the Holy Place according to the groupings of the fathers' houses of your brothers the lay people, and according to the division of the Levites by fathers' household. ⁶ And slaughter the Passover lamb, and consecrate yourselves, and prepare for your brothers, to do according to the word of the LORD by Moses.”

And then it goes on to tell us the number of animals.

Verses 7 through 9, it says that, “...*Josiah contributed to (all of) the lay people, (meaning not non ministerial people) as Passover offerings for all who were present, lambs and young goats from the flock to the number of 30,000, (Wow) and 3,000 bulls; (the bulls would have been used for like fellowship offerings) these were from the king's possessions.*

⁸ And his officials (even) contributed willingly to the people, to the priests, and to the Levites. Hilkiyah, Zechariah, and Jehiel, the chief officers of the house of God, gave to the priests for the Passover offerings 2,600 Passover lambs and 300 bulls. ⁹ Conaniah also, and Shemaiah and Nethanel his brothers, and Hashabiah and Jeiel and Jozabad, the chiefs of the Levites, gave to the Levites for the Passover offerings 5,000 lambs and young goats and 500 bulls.

¹⁰ When the service had been prepared for, the priests stood in their place, and the Levites in their divisions according to the king's command. ¹¹ And they slaughtered the Passover lamb, and the priests threw the blood that they received from them while the Levites flayed the sacrifices. ¹² And they set aside the burnt offerings that they might distribute them according to the groupings of the fathers' houses of the lay people, to offer to the LORD, as it is written in the Book of Moses. And so, they did with the bulls.

¹³ And they roasted the Passover lamb with fire according to the rule; and they boiled the holy offerings in pots, in cauldrons, and in pans, and carried them quickly to all the lay people. ¹⁴ And afterward they prepared for themselves and for the priests, because the priests, the sons of Aaron, were offering the burnt offerings and the fat parts until night; so, the Levites prepared for themselves and for the priests, the sons of Aaron. ”

That means the Levites prepared the Passover lamb for their brothers, the priests, because the priests were busy taking care of their part of the sacrifice, and they didn't have time to prepare their own sacrifices.

¹⁶ “So all the service of the LORD was prepared that day, to keep the Passover and to offer burnt offerings on the altar of the LORD, according to the command of King Josiah. ¹⁷ And the people of Israel who were present kept the Passover at that time, and the Feast of Unleavened Bread seven days. ”

Verse 18 is significant because it says this,

“No Passover like it had been kept in Israel since the days of Samuel the prophet. None of the kings of Israel had kept such a Passover as was kept by Josiah, and the priests and the Levites, and all Judah and Israel who were present, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. ¹⁹ In the eighteenth year of the reign of Josiah this Passover was kept. ”

And it says, after all this, after all this, that's an interesting thing how the Bible just does that doesn't it after all this. Do you know that it's now 13 years later? Yeah, 13 years later it says,

²⁰ “....when Josiah had prepared the temple, Neco king of Egypt went up to fight at Carchemish on the Euphrates, and Josiah went out to meet him. ”

All right, stop there for just a moment if you would please. Let me explain what's going on from a military standpoint because you need to know what's happening. As I said, it has been 13 years now since Josiah first commanded Judah to celebrate the Passover, and now we read that he learns that the king of, now Egypt is marching through his region heading to Carchemish to fight.

What we're not told at this point is that the Assyrian empire, who conquered Israel, had been slowly losing power over the years of Josiah's reign, and three years previous to this, the capital city of Assyria fell to the Babylonian empire. Now, Assyria isn't out yet. They're still battling, but three years earlier, okay, three years earlier, their capital city fell. Well, the Assyrians had now

regrouped, and they were gathering their army at Carchemish and they were going to fight the Babylonians.

Pharaoh or the king Neco of Egypt, who was pro Assyrian, was marching out with his army to help the Assyrians battle the Babylonians. The king of Egypt was nervous about the rule and the reign of Babylon, and he probably had good reason to be. He's going to go out and help the Assyrians. All right? Well, we're told here in verse 20 that king Josiah hears about the king of Egypt crossing his territory to go help the Assyrians, and Josiah doesn't want him to do that. He comes out against Pharaoh Neco and says, you can't cross my land, and in fact, I'm going to fight you. Here's where we pick it up in verse 21,

“But he (and that’s King Neco. That’s the Pharaoh from Egypt) sent envoys to Josiah saying, “What have we to do with each other, king of Judah? I am not coming against you this day, but against the house with which I am at war. And God has commanded me to hurry. Cease opposing God, who is with me, lest he destroy you.”

Now, here's what we're wondering. Is Pharaoh blowing smoke about being commanded by the Lord to go do this? Actually, no. Look at verse 22.

“Nevertheless, Josiah did not turn away from him, but disguised himself in order to fight with him. He did not listen to the words of Neco from the mouth of God but came to fight in the plain of Megiddo.”

By the way, the plain of Megiddo is an area that's very famous for its battles. It is literally also referred to as the area of Armageddon, where the final battle will take place in human history. But Josiah is unwilling to listen. We don't read anything here about him consulting the Lord about this. He just goes up against Pharaoh and says, nope, I'm going to fight against you because I don't want you to go and help the Assyrians. I don't like the Assyrians. They already conquered my relatives to the north and I don't want you helping them. And so, he goes out against the king of Egypt, look at verse 23,

“And the archers shot King Josiah. And the king said to his servants, “Take me away, for I am badly wounded.”²⁴ So his servants took him out of the chariot and carried him in his second chariot and brought him to Jerusalem. And he died and was buried in the tombs of his fathers. All Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah.”

Oh, and by the way, after Josiah died, Judah became subject to Egypt, and it's explained much more fully in 2 Kings chapter 23. But another thing that's

probably interesting for you to know, that's kind of a side point that you don't read here, but Niko, Pharaoh Niko did actually go to Carchemish and he was successful, temporarily, holding off the Babylonian army for a period of about four years.

But he was eventually defeated by Babylon. Soundly defeated, and Babylon then moved into the spotlight as the prominent kingdom in the region. They were the tough guy on the block, and they are the one who will eventually come and overthrow Judah because of their unfaithfulness to the Lord. Verse 25 tells us that,

“Jeremiah also uttered a lament (which is a cry) for Josiah; and all the singing men and singing women have spoken of Josiah in their laments to this day. They made these a rule in Israel; behold, they are written in the Laments.

²⁶ “Now the rest of the acts of Josiah, and his good deeds according to what is written in the Law of the LORD, ²⁷ and his acts, first and last, behold, they are written in the Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah.

But I want to just, as we end Josiah's reign, I want to show you something that is said here in Second Kings. Let me put this on the screen from 2 Kings chapter 23 verse 25. It says,

2 Kings 23:25 (ESV)

Before (Josiah) 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.

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Isn't that amazing? That's what the Book of Kings says. And finally, chapter 36, and this is where we come to the conclusion, and the rest of the kings that rule in Judah are summarized in this chapter. It says that,

“The people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah and made him king in his father's place in Jerusalem. ² Jehoahaz was twenty-three years old when he began to reign, and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. ³ Then the king of Egypt deposed him in Jerusalem and laid on the land a tribute of a hundred talents of silver and a talent of gold.

⁴ *And the king of Egypt made Eliakim his (older, and I threw in older there because he is his older brother) brother king over Judah and Jerusalem and changed his name to Jehoiakim. But Neco took Jehoahaz his brother and carried him to Egypt. ⁵ Jehoiakim was twenty-five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. He did what was evil in the sight of the LORD his God.*

⁶ *Against him came up Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and bound him in chains to take him to Babylon. ⁷ Nebuchadnezzar also carried part of the vessels of the house of the LORD to Babylon and put them in his palace in Babylon. ⁸ Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim, and the abominations that he did, and what was found against him, behold, they are written in the Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah. And Jehoiachin his son reigned in his place.”*

And by the way, Chronicles doesn't record the fact, but we know that Jehoiakim, this previous king, died in disgrace while he was still living in Jerusalem as Jeremiah actually foretold that he would. Verse 9,

“Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he became king, and he reigned in his place, three months and ten days in Jerusalem. He did what was evil in the sight of the LORD. ¹⁰ In the spring of the year King Nebuchadnezzar sent and brought him to Babylon, with the precious vessels of the house of the LORD, and made his brother Zedekiah king over Judah and Jerusalem.”

By the way, just so you know, Jehoiakim spent the next 37 years in prison, and now Zedekiah is king in Jerusalem.

¹¹ *“Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. ¹² He did what was evil in the sight of the LORD his God. He did not humble himself before Jeremiah the prophet, who spoke from the mouth of the LORD. ¹³ He also rebelled against King Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him swear by God. He stiffened his neck and hardened his heart against turning to the LORD, the God of Israel.*

¹⁴ *All the officers of the priests and the people likewise were exceedingly unfaithful, following all the abominations of the nations. And they polluted the house of the LORD that he had made holy in Jerusalem. ¹⁵ The LORD, the God of their fathers, sent persistently to them by his messengers, (meaning the prophets) because he had compassion on his people and on his dwelling place. ¹⁶ But they kept mocking the messengers of God, despising his words and scoffing at his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD rose against his people, until there was no remedy.*

17 Therefore he brought up against them the king of the Chaldeans, (and that's another name for Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon) who killed their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary and had no compassion on young man or virgin, old man or aged. He gave them all into his hand. 18 And all the vessels of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king and of his princes, all these he brought to Babylon.

19 And they burned the house of God and brought down the wall of Jerusalem and burned all its palaces with fire.” What we're not told here in Chronicles is that the Babylonian army actually laid siege to the city of Jerusalem for a period of 18 months, and they literally starved the people to the point where they just fell.

Verse 20 says “*...He took into exile in Babylon those who had escaped from the sword, and they became servants to him and to his sons until the establishment of the kingdom of Persia,*”

And what that's referring to is the next tough guy on the block. You know, nobody stays the tough guy forever, and eventually, a Medo- Persian Empire arose and conquered the Babylonians. That's what it's referring to. And this says in verse 21,

“to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed its Sabbaths. All the days that it lay desolate it kept Sabbath, to fulfill seventy years.

Now, what that's talking about is that God had commanded the nation of Israel that every seven years they were to let the land lie fallow. They were not to plant crops on the seventh year. It was to be a Sabbath year of rest for the land, and apparently, they owed God 70 years of rests which would come to 490 years. Now, the Israel had been in the land much longer than 490 years, but apparently that's what they owed him in terms of rests.

And so, God said, the land's going to get its rest one way or another. I'm going to take you out of the land, and the land will rest for 70 years. God had actually, promised to Israel, many years earlier, that this is what He would do. Let me show you this passage from Leviticus. Check this out. God says,

Leviticus 26:33-35 ESV

“And I will scatter you among the nations, and I will unsheathe the sword after you, and your land shall be a desolation, and your cities shall be a waste. “Then the land shall enjoy its Sabbaths as long as it lies desolate, while you are in your enemies’ land; then the land shall rest, and enjoy its Sabbaths. As long as it lies desolate it shall have rest, the rest that it did not have on your Sabbaths when you were dwelling in it.

“And I will scatter you among the nations, and I will unsheathe the sword after you, and your land shall be a desolation, and your cities shall be a waste. “Then the land shall enjoy its Sabbaths as long as it lies desolate, while you are in your enemies’ land; then the land shall rest, and enjoy its Sabbaths. As long as it lies desolate it shall have rest, the rest that it did not have on your Sabbaths when you were dwelling in it.

All right, final verses of the chapter

²² *“Now in the first year of Cyrus (Now you can tell that the chronicler has moved ahead to the very end of the 70-year period of exile for the nation of Israel. And it says in the first year of Cyrus) king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom and also put it in writing: ²³ “Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, ‘The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever is among you of all his people, may the LORD his God be with him. Let him go up.’”*

And so that's where 2 Chronicles ends. It ends with the fulfillment of yet another prophecy, a prophecy that was made about the king by the name of Cyrus, a Medo-Persian king, who made a proclamation at the end of 70 years and said to all of the Jews, you're free to go. You're free to go back to your land and to build the temple and worship the Lord your God in your own land. And that is where 2 Chronicles ends.