

Josiah

I am Josiah, son of Amon, son of Manasseh, son of Hezekiah, I heard stories of the history of my family and especially liked hearing about the battles. My mother told me about the LORD and how he fought the battles for us when we obeyed him.

One day, I was told that I was king because my father had died. I was only 8 years old and found out little by little that his officials had killed him because he was a bad man. He had always been nice to me. I knew that I could not make all the decisions a king needed to make and was glad for good teachers like Hilkiyah, Jeremiah and Shallum.

I listened to them and followed the LORD's Law. At age 26, I called for the cleansing of the Temple. As the evidence of my father and grandfather's idolatry was removed, the Book of the Law was found by Hilkiyah the priest. When it was read to me by the secretary, Shaphan, I knew that we had not been obeying it. I tore my clothes to signify my distress and mourning. The prophetess Huldah declared that because I had humbled myself, the destruction would come after my time.

I assembled the priests, prophets and all the people from greatest to least and had the Law read to them. We all pledged to follow the LORD and keep his commands. We removed the pagan idols and burned them in the Kidron Valley. There were not just things, there were people dedicated to the worship of the pagan gods. They all had to die, the priests of Asherah and Baal as well as those who burned incense to the sun and the stars. There were the shrine prostitutes, the weavers of Asherah, mediums and spiritists who all had to be destroyed as well as the altar where sons and daughters were burned to Moloch.

I had no idea how corrupt we were as a nation. Then we celebrated the Passover as it had not been celebrated for many years, centuries actually. We performed the sacrifices, listened to the musicians and ate the feasts. I had the LORD's guarantee of safety for the kingdom during my lifetime. So why would I take an unnecessary chance in battle? Pharaoh Neco passed by on his way to Carchemish and I gathered the army to engage him.

Pharaoh Neco sent messages to me that he was on a Divine mission and had no quarrel with Judah. For some reason I could not hold back, and we entered the battle where I received my fatal wound. I am told that I was lamented when I died. But more importantly, I had affected world history. By delaying Pharaoh Neco's march to Carchemish, I had allowed time for Babylon to dispose of Assyria and be ready to defeat the Egyptian army. Thus, Babylon became the world's only superpower and was ready to capture and hold Judah for 70 years, as prophesied by Jeremiah.

2 Kings 22,23, 2 Chronicles 34,35