

Finishing Strong: The Passion and Pitfall of King Josiah

King Josiah was a man on fire for God. After discovering the Book of the Law, he led Judah in one of the most passionate spiritual renewals the nation had ever seen. Chapter 35 opens with Josiah organizing a national Passover celebration—one that surpassed anything since the days of the prophet Samuel.

“And there had been no Passover kept in Israel like that since the days of Samuel the prophet... for Josiah kept such a Passover.” (v. 18–19)

He prepared the temple, mobilized the priests and Levites, and made sure that everyone—from the leaders to the common people—had what they needed to fully participate in this act of worship. It was heartfelt, organized, and joyful—an incredible expression of national devotion to the Lord.

Personal Application:

Worship is not just about emotion—it involves preparation, obedience, and leadership. Josiah didn’t delegate worship—he *led* it. We, too, are called to create rhythms of worship in our lives and families. You don’t have to be a king to set the tone. *Your leadership matters.*

Ask yourself: What kind of example are you setting in your home, church, or circle of influence when it comes to prioritizing worship?

When Passion Turns to Presumption

As beautiful as Josiah’s heart for God was, his life took a tragic turn near the end. When Pharaoh Necho of Egypt came north to fight at Carchemish (modern-day Syria), Josiah went out to confront him.

“But Necho sent messengers to him, saying, ‘What have I to do with you, king of Judah? I have not come against you... God has commanded me to make haste. Refrain from meddling with God, who is with me, lest He destroy you.’” (v. 21)

Pharaoh’s message was clear: *This isn’t your battle. Don’t interfere.* But Josiah didn’t listen. He disguised himself, entered the fight anyway—and was struck by an archer. Wounded, he was taken back to Jerusalem, where he died.

Personal Application:

Sometimes, even godly people fight battles they were never called to fight. Josiah’s heart was right, but his discernment failed. He stepped into a conflict that God had not assigned to him—and it cost him his life.

There’s a big difference between godly courage and spiritual presumption. Not every open door is yours to walk through. Not every fight is yours to fight. Wisdom listens for God’s voice before taking action—even when your motives are pure.

Ask yourself: *Am I rushing into situations that God never called me to? Am I ignoring warning signs or wise counsel because I feel passionate?*

A Legacy of Sorrow and Honor

When Josiah died, all of Jerusalem mourned. Even the prophet Jeremiah wrote a lament for him. The nation recognized that they had lost a righteous leader—someone whose shadow they had hoped to live under for years to come.

“All Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah. Jeremiah also lamented for Josiah.” (vv. 24–25)

Though Josiah’s death was premature, his life still left a deep impact. His reforms, his zeal, his return to the Word of God—those things outlived him. And even the grief of his people reflected how deeply they had been shaped by his leadership.

Personal Application:

Your legacy is not just about how you die—it’s about how you live. Josiah left behind a nation that had seen revival, heard God’s Word, and re-learned what it meant to worship. Even if you stumble, *a life marked by faithfulness can still leave an eternal imprint.*

Final Reflection:

Josiah’s life teaches us that a heart for God can accomplish great things—but it must be matched with discernment, humility, and obedience to God’s timing. Passion alone isn’t enough; we need to know when to step forward—and when to step back.

- Lead in worship like Josiah.
- Seek God early and obey His Word.
- Know your lane. Don’t meddle in battles that aren’t yours.
- Leave a legacy of righteousness, even if your story takes a hard turn.

Let Josiah’s life remind us: starting strong is good—but finishing well is even better.