

Lesson 3 – Amon & Josiah

Amon reigned from 642 to 640 BC, and Josiah reigned from 640 to 609 BC. We have a firm date for the end of Josiah's reign from the historical situation relating to his death. Josiah reigned during an eventful time. In 626, Nabopolassar of Babylon revolted against Assyrian rule and liberated Babylon. Assyria tried several times to reconquer Babylon but was unsuccessful. In 614 BC, the Median king, Cyaxares, invaded Assyria and conquered Asshur, an important cultural and religious city. Nabopolassar arrived after the battle and a Medo-Babylonian alliance was created. In 612, the Medo-Babylonian alliance conquered Nineveh, the Assyrian capital. It seems the Assyrian king died there. The new Assyrian king made Harran the new capital and rallied the Assyrian army there. Egypt wanted to salvage Assyria as a buffer against Babylon and Media, so they tried to aid the Assyrians. Medo-Babylonian forces conquered the Assyrian-Egyptian forces and took Harran. This is considered the end of the Assyrian Empire. Pharaoh returned with a large army to help the Assyrians retake Harran, passing through Judah along the way. Judah had formed a friendship with Babylon in Hezekiah's day, and Judah had been a vassal to Assyria, so Josiah wanted to delay Pharaoh to help the Medo-Babylonian forces defeat the Assyrians, but Josiah was killed. Judah made Josiah's son, Jehoahaz, king. Egypt and Assyria failed to retake Harran. As Pharaoh returned to Egypt, he deposed Jehoahaz and made his brother, Jehoiakim (Eliakim), king in his place as a loyal vassal to Egypt. In 605, Egypt marched north again to Carchemish, the last Assyrian capital. There, Egypt and the remnant of Assyrian forces were decisively defeated by Medo-Babylonian forces. Back in Babylon, Nabopolassar died, and his son, Nebuchadnezzar, got the news and quickly returned to Babylon to succeed his father. Egypt's concerns about Babylon were correct. A struggle for control of the Levant ensued, and Egypt lost. Babylon ruled the West all the way to Egypt's border, and Media ruled the East. The prophets had foretold the fall of Assyria, Egypt's inability to stop it, Media's role, and Babylon's rise to power.

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2 Kings 21-23; 2 Chron. 33-35

1. What example did Amon follow? (2 Kings 21:20-22; 2 Chron. 33:22-23)
2. How long did Amon reign? How did he die? (2 Kings 21:19, 23-24)
3. Whose example did Josiah follow? (2 Chron. 34:2)
4. When did Josiah begin to seek God and purge idolatry from Judah?
(2 Chron. 34:3-4)
5. What project did Josiah initiate in his eighteenth year? What else was done in his eighteenth year? (2 Kings 22:3-7; 2 Chron. 35:19)
6. What was found in the temple? How did Josiah react to it? (2 Kings 22:8-13)
7. What did Huldah prophesy concerning Judah's future? (2 Chron. 34:22-25)
8. How did God respond to Josiah's obedience? (2 Chron. 34:26-28)
9. What had been done in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom by recent kings?
(2 Chron. 28:3; 33:6)

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10. What did Josiah do the altar at Bethel? When was this prophesied, and where is the prophecy found in the Bible? (2 Kings 23:15-18)
11. What else did Josiah do in Samaria? (2 Chron. 34:6-7)
12. Why did Josiah try to stop Pharaoh from helping Assyria retake Harran? (2 Chron. 35:20-22; see the introduction to this lesson)
13. How and where did Josiah die? (2 Chron. 35:22-24)
14. Who made a lament for Josiah? (2 Chron. 35:25)
15. Further research: Using the supplemental article or other resources, answer the following questions about the Valley of Hinnom.
 - a) What was it used for in Jesus' time?
 - b) What was it called in first century Aramaic? Note: the Greek transliteration is found in the footnotes of many Bibles (ESV, NASB, NKJV, NET), and the YLT and LSV leave the word untranslated.
 - c) What did Jesus and James use it to describe metaphorically, and how is it usually translated in English? (Matt. 5:22, 29-30; 10:28; James 3:6)