

1 AND 2 CHRONICLES: GAINING DIRECTION OUT OF THE AIMLESSNESS OF APOSTASY
Part V: Gaining Direction From God's Work In The Rest Of Judah's Dynasty, 2 Chronicles 13-36
S. Learning To KEEP FOLLOWING God After Spiritual Advances
(2 Chronicles 35:1-27 et al.)

I. Introduction

- A. When the believer begins to grow in Christ, the temptation can arise for him to rest on his own viewpoint.
- B. However, even the very wise Solomon warned against leaning on our own understanding, Proverbs 3:5-6! Our understanding is impotent in the face of deceptive forces in the angelic conflict, a lesson learned from viewing the latter part of the life of Judah's king Josiah (as follows):

II. Learning To KEEP FOLLOWING God After Spiritual Advances, 2 Chronicles 35:1-27 et al.

- A. In our last lesson, we found that when Josiah honored God based on hearsay when he as yet did not know Scripture, God exposed him to the Law that he might more fully heed it, 2 Chronicles 34:1-18, 19-33!
- B. Indeed, for heeding Scripture when it was first read to him, the Lord promised to withhold His promised judgment on Judah so that Josiah could enjoy a long, blessed life and a peaceful death, 2 Chron. 34:24-28.
- C. Yet, that blessed goal was not realized: Josiah died a violent, untimely death, 35:23-24 in view of 34:1!
- D. The explanation for Josiah's failing to reach that goal rests in his *failure* to **keep following** God, 35:1-27:
 - 1. 2 Chronicles 35:1-19 records the great Passover Josiah hosted as he initially followed the Lord:
 - a. The 2 Chronicles 35:1-19 Passover was kept in close obedience to the Law (35:6b, 12b, 13a, 15a).
 - b. Josiah also liberally supplied many of his own herds to feed the people (2 Chronicles 35:7), a deed Judah's princes mimicked in donating much of their goods to the people, 2 Chronicles 35:8.
 - c. Thus, the Passover became the greatest one since the time of Samuel, 2 Chronicles 35:18-19.
 - 2. However, when Pharaoh Necho came through Judah en route to fight at Carchemish, Josiah ceased following the Lord, and so met a violent, untimely end opposite God's original plan, 35:20-24:
 - a. Pharaoh's army sought to pass through Judah en route to fight at Carchemish, 2 Chronicles 35:20a.
 - b. Josiah saw this Egyptian force traversing his land, and went out against Pharaoh, 2 Chron. 35:20b.
 - c. Pharaoh sent word to Josiah, explaining he had no quarrel with him, and that Josiah's God was leading him to Carchemish, so Josiah's effort to oppose him opposed God's will, 2 Chron. 35:21!
 - d. We can understand how Josiah might not trust this word of a foreign king. However, he should have responded like David did when facing the Philistines in 1 Chronicles 14:9-12, 13-17: David asked for God's insight, an act Josiah himself did when he first heard the Law, 2 Chron. 34:18-22!
 - e. However, Josiah ceased to seek God's leading, and, based on his own judgment, concluded Pharaoh was not telling the truth, so he even disguised himself so that Pharaoh would fight him, 35:22.
 - f. Josiah was thus wounded by the archers and died a violent, untimely death, 2 Chronicles 35:23-24.
- E. These events have great applications for God's people in view of other Scripture passages (as follows):
 - 1. Like Josiah's confrontation with Pharaoh (2 Chron. 35:22), future Great Tribulation believers will face a similar temptation: Rev. 16:14-16 reveals God's warning for them to keep their garments and not be deceived to fight with antichrist against Christ at Armageddon, the same spot where Josiah changed his clothes to fight Pharaoh, Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978 ed., ftn. to Rev. 16:16!
 - 2. Josiah's death also recalls how Israel's king Ahab who was deceived by his false prophets disguised himself to avoid death at Ramoth-Gilead only to meet his death by an archer, 2 Chron. 18:5, 14-34!
 - 3. In similar application, God calls today's Evangelicals (cf. our lesson series on Rev. 3:14-22) who are also being deceived to leave God's assignment of supporting faithful Bible exposition at the local church and join other errant groups to achieve other ends versus God's will, cf. Rev. 3:18 with 16:14-16! We also must avoid such deception and continue in our initial God-assigned tasks without being sidetracked into what is against God's will and even brings His untimely, severe discipline!

Lesson: *Though he began well in closely heeding God's leading only to enjoy great blessing, once Josiah failed to KEEP looking to GOD for guidance, he suffered a tragic, untimely end of blessing!*

Application: *(1) May we recall that we can NEVER rest on our OWN understanding, for we are always subject to being DECEIVED away from doing God's will. (2) May we ALWAYS SEEK the LORD'S leading in life and ministry and so STAY IN HIS will and enjoy HIS blessing.*