

# JOSIAH'S SONS

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Josiah king of Judah was one of the most righteous kings that ever lived: *“And like unto him was there no king before him, that 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; neither after him arose there any like him”* (2 Kgs 23:25). Sadly, three of his sons who sat on the throne of Judah after him were all wicked. In Josiah’s days, the prophet Zephaniah foretold that the Lord would one day hold a “sacrifice” and “punish the princes, and the king’s children” (Zeph 1:8).

## **King Jehoahaz**

In Ezekiel 19:2-4, God said to the princes, *“What is thy mother? A lioness: she lay down among lions, she nourished her whelps among young lions. And she brought up one of her whelps: it became a young lion, and it learned to catch the prey; it devoured men. The nations also heard of him; he was taken in their pit, and they brought him with chains unto the land of Egypt.”* As clearly demonstrated in Ezekiel chapter 28, the word “prince” may be a reference to a king (Ezek 28:2,12). So it is in this particular passage. This “lioness” is the mother of the princes (these words were spoken to “the princes of Israel” and verse 2 says this is *their* mother), and this whelp, therefore, is one of the kings of Judah. This king ruled but was removed from his throne and carried captive to Egypt. This is speaking of Josiah’s son Jehoahaz (2 Kgs 23:30-34; 2 Chr 36:1-4; Jer 22:11-12). Jehoahaz was wicked (2 Kgs 23:32), and had only reigned as king of Judah for 3 months (2 Kgs 23:31; 2 Chr 36:2), because *“Pharaoh Nechoh put him in bands at Riblah in the land of Hamath, that he might not reign in Jerusalem; and put the land to a tribute of an hundred talents of silver, and a talent of gold”* (2 Kgs 23:33). *“And Necho took Jehoahaz his brother, and carried him to Egypt”* (2 Chr 36:4). *“And he (Jehoahaz) came to Egypt, and died there”* (2 Kgs 23:34). Verses 2-4 are a lamentation for king Jehoahaz being removed from the throne and taken to Egypt for the rest of his life.

## **King Jehoiakim**

Of the next king of Judah after Jehoahaz, Ezekiel 19:5-9 foretold: *“Now when she saw that she had waited, and her hope was lost, then she took another of her whelps, and made him a young lion. And he went up and down among the lions, he became a young lion, and learned to catch the prey, and devoured men. And he knew their desolate palaces, and*

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(continued)

*he laid waste their cities; and the land was desolate, and the fullness thereof, by the noise of his roaring. Then the nations set against him on every side from the provinces, and spread their net over him: he was taken in their pit. And they put him in ward in chains, and brought him to the king of Babylon: they brought him into holds, that his voice should no more be heard upon the mountains of Israel”*

(Ezek 19:5-9). Jehoiakim, the brother of Jehoahaz, became the next king of Judah (2 Kgs 23:34; 2 Chr 36:4). Jehoiakim also was unrighteous (2 Kgs 23:36-37; 2 Chr 36:5; Jer 22:13-19; Zeph 1:8). Jehoiakim ruled for 11 years, and was removed from the throne by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon (2 Kgs 23:34-24:6; 2 Chr 36:4-8). Jehoiakim was indeed brought to the king of Babylon, but evidently he was never actually carried to the land of Babylon. Jeremiah prophesied of this same king: *“Therefore, thus saith the Lord concerning Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah; They shall not lament for him, saying, Ah my brother! Or, Ah sister! They shall not lament for him, saying, Ah lord! Or, Ah his glory! He shall be buried with the burial of an ass, drawn and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem”* (Jer 22:18-19). After cutting up the scroll containing God’s word and casting into the fire, the Lord responded with another prophecy of the king’s death: *“Therefore thus saith the Lord of Jehoiakim king of Judah; He shall have none to sit upon the throne of David: and his dead body shall be cast out in the day to the heat, and in the night to the frost”* (Jer 36:30).

## **King Zedekiah**

Ezekiel also prophesied about Josiah’s youngest son, the last king of Judah. He was wicked like his brothers before him (2 Kgs 24:19; 2 Chr 36:11-12; Jer 52:1-2). In Ezekiel 21:25, the Lord said that Zedekiah’s day had come: *“And thou, profane wicked prince of Israel, whose day is come.”* God was going to bring an end to Zedekiah’s iniquity by removing his diadem and crown, abasing him and overturning him (Ezek 21:26-27; see also 12:3-16; 17:1-24). Zedekiah and the kings of Judah would *“be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him”* (Ezek 21:27). This is exactly what came to pass. As the Lord also said through Ezekiel: *“The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son”* (Ezek 18:20). Such was the difference between Josiah and his sons.