

Dear Heavenly Father,

### *Praise*

You said, “Behold, the days are coming, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land” (Jer 23:5). How wonderful to know that one day Jesus will rule and reign on this earth. In that day he will be called “The LORD is our righteousness.” All praise and honor to the King of kings and the Lord of lords!

### *Today in Your Word*

Today you told me about the death of Josiah in the summer of 609 BC. Three years earlier, Babylon destroyed the Assyrian capital of Nineveh just as Nahum had foretold (Nah 3:5–7). The Assyrians fell back to Haran and Carchemish, and Babylon sent its army to destroy them once and for all. Pharaoh Necho II of Egypt responded to the urgent appeal for help by Ashur-uballit II and marched his army north to aid the Assyrians. Josiah, who had no love for Assyria, tried to prevent Necho from passing through Judah. Josiah likely feared that if the Egyptian-Assyrian alliance defeated Babylon, Judah would again fall under Assyrian domination. When Josiah engaged Necho at Megiddo, Necho warned him to stand aside: “Cease opposing God, who is with me, lest he destroy you” (2 Chr 35:21). Josiah ignored this warning and ended up being killed in the ensuing battle. How could such a godly man come to such a tragic end? Josiah made the mistake of thinking that because Necho was the king of a pagan nation, he couldn’t be acting in harmony with your will. This mistake teaches me that you are sovereign over the nations, and while not everyone who claims to have a message from you really does, I would be wise to stop and consider the fact that you often use the kings of the world to accomplish your plans and purposes (cf. Isa 45:1–3). Josiah’s son, Jehoahaz became king after his father’s death, but Necho exiled him to Egypt and made his brother Jehoiakim king instead. Jehoiakim was a wicked man who was more concerned with building himself a palace of cedar than he was with obeying you. You sent Jeremiah to ask him: “Do you think you are a king because you compete in cedar? Did not your father eat and drink and do justice and righteousness? Then it was well with him. He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then it was well. Is not this to know me? declares the LORD” (Jer 22:15–16). This teaches me that knowing you means more than knowing what you have done (the stories) or knowing what you have said (the teachings). It means knowing you as a person—what brings you joy or makes you angry, your values, concerns and priorities—and then living in the light of that knowledge. Such a life brings honor and glory to you!

### *Reflection*

You told the leaders who were in charge of shepherding your people, “You have scattered my flock and have driven them away, and you have not attended to them. Behold, I will attend to you for your evil deeds, declares the LORD” (Jer 23:2). Am I being faithful to watch over those who are under my care?

### *Request*

Father, help me to live a life that declares, ‘I know the LORD!’ May my priorities and values be guided by your Word, and may I always do justice and righteousness.

### *Thanksgiving*

Thank you for the challenge that you gave to Jehoiakim. It makes me stop and think about what it really means to know you!

In Jesus’ name, Amen.

*Suggested Hymn: “I Know” – Charles W. Naylor.*

*Meditation Verse: Jeremiah 22:24.*