

August 10 Answers

- 1) The death of Josiah (Summer 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 of Assyria 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 God’s will (cf. Isa 36:10). His mistake teaches us that God is sovereign over the nations, and while not everyone who claims to have a message from God really does, we would be wise to stop and consider the fact that God often uses the kings of the world to accomplish His 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 God. God sent Jeremiah to rebuke 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 us that knowing God means more than knowing what He has done (the stories) or knowing what He has said (the teachings). It means knowing God as a person—what brings Him joy or makes Him angry, His values, concerns and priorities—and then living in the light of that knowledge. Such a life brings honor and glory to God!