Among the nineteen kings who ruled over Judah, and the twenty kings who reigned over Israel after the division of the kingdom—excluding the first three kings who reigned over united Israel (Saul, David, and Solomon)—only one king had his birth foretold by name centuries before it happened: King Josiah.

The Division of the Kingdom

The kingdom’s division occurred as a direct consequence of Solomon’s idolatry. Though Solomon was greatly blessed with wisdom and wealth, his heart turned away from the Lord as he married foreign wives who led him to worship their gods (1 Kings 11:1-10). This provoked the Lord to anger, and He declared that the kingdom would be torn from Solomon’s lineage. Yet, out of faithfulness to His covenant with David, God preserved a remnant:

> 2 Chronicles 6:16 (NKJV)
>
> Therefore, Lord God of Israel, now keep what You promised Your servant David, my father, saying, ‘You shall not fail to have a man sit before Me on the throne of Israel, only if your

> sons take heed to their way, that they walk in My law as you have walked before Me.

God left one tribe—Judah (with Benjamin)—for David’s descendants, while the other ten tribes were given to Jeroboam, a former servant of Solomon.

God’s Conditional Promise to Jeroboam

When God granted Jeroboam the ten tribes of Israel, He gave him a clear condition:

> 1 Kings 11:38-39 (NKJV)
>
> Then it shall be, if you heed all that I command you, walk in My ways, and do what is right in My sight, to keep My statutes and My commandments, as My servant David did, then I will be with you and build for you an enduring house, as I built for David; and I will give Israel to you. And I will afflict the descendants of David because of this, but not forever.

But Jeroboam, instead of learning from Solomon’s failure, led Israel even deeper into sin. To prevent people from worshiping at the Temple in Jerusalem, he set up golden calves at Bethel and Dan. He devised his own festivals and priesthood, corrupting Israel’s worship (1 Kings 12:28-33).

The Prophecy of Josiah

At the height of this idolatry, God sent a man of God from Judah to prophesy against the altar at Bethel:

> 1 Kings 13:2 (NKJV)
>
> Then he cried out against the altar by the word of the Lord, and said, ‘O altar, altar! Thus says the Lord: “Behold, a child, Josiah by name, shall be born to the house of David; and on you he shall sacrifice the priests of the high places who burn incense on you, and men’s bones shall be burned on you.

The prophecy included a sign: the altar would split apart, and its ashes would be poured out that very day—a sign that

immediately came to pass (v. 5).

This prophecy must have seemed impossible as the years went by. Generations rose and fell; king after king reigned and died. Over 300 years passed, during which people likely mocked or forgot the prophecy—just as today many scoff at the promise of Christ’s return:

> 2 Peter 3:3-4 (NKJV)
>
> Scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, ‘Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.

The Rise of Josiah

Centuries later, during the reign of King Amon of Judah, Josiah was born. At just eight years old, Josiah became king (2 Kings 22:1). By the age of fifteen, he began to seek the God of his father David (2 Chronicles 34:3). And by nineteen, Josiah

launched one of the greatest spiritual reforms in Israel’s history:

He tore down the altars of Baal and smashed the Asherah poles.

He ground the idols to dust and scattered them over the graves of their worshipers.

He defiled the high places and burned the bones of the idolatrous priests (2 Kings 23:4-20).

Josiah did not stop at Judah’s borders. He extended his reform into the former territories of Israel, fulfilling the prophecy given centuries earlier. When he came upon a tomb near Bethel, he inquired about it:

> 2 Kings 23:17-18 (NKJV)
>
> Then he said, ‘What gravestone is this that I see?’ So the men of the city told him, ‘It is the tomb of the man of God who came from Judah and proclaimed these things which you have done against the altar of Bethel.’ And he said, ‘Let him alone; let no one move his bones.’ So they let his bones alone, with

> the bones of the prophet who came from Samaria.

Josiah’s Legacy

Josiah’s heart was unmatched:

> 2 Kings 23:25 (NKJV)
>
> Now before him there was no king like him, who turned to the Lord with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the Law of Moses; nor after him did any arise like him.

Josiah points us to a greater King—Jesus Christ—who would one day come not just to cleanse altars of stone, but to cleanse the hearts of people, fulfilling the Law and establishing a new covenant through His blood (Matthew 5:17, Hebrews 9:14-15).

Lessons for Us

Josiah’s story teaches several vital truths:

 God’s Word never fails. Though it may take time, His promises and prophecies always come to pass. “Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away” (Matthew 24:35 NKJV).

 True zeal for God transforms lives and nations. Like Josiah, we are called to seek God with our whole being. “And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength” (Mark 12:30 NKJV).

 Jesus will return. Just as the prophecy of Josiah was fulfilled against all odds, so too will the promise of Christ’s second coming. The delay is not denial; it is God’s mercy, giving time for repentance (2 Peter 3:9).

Are You Ready?

Beloved, have you given your heart fully to Christ? Just as Josiah sought the Lord in his youth, you too can seek Him today, no matter your age or background. God rewards those who diligently seek Him (Hebrews 11:6), and He has prepared good works for

you before you were even born (Ephesians 2:10).

May the Lord bless you richly as you commit your life fully to Him. Amen.

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