

Wings

*"Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles."
Isaiah 40:31*



October 23, 2016

Who Will Weep for Me?

How people remember us at our death will be determined by how we lived. But the best legacies, ironically, are created by those who live for something higher than themselves, not their legacy.

"[Jehoram] was thirty-two years old when he became king. He reigned in Jerusalem eight years and, to no one's sorrow, departed" (2 Chron. 21:20).

"So [Josiah] died, and was buried in one of the tombs of his fathers. And all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah. Jeremiah also lamented for Josiah. And to this day all the singing men and the singing women speak of Josiah in their lamentations" (2 Chron. 35:24-25).



Jehoram and Josiah, separated by over two hundred years, were both kings of Judah. Both were in the lineage of David, which means both were ancestors of Jesus the Messiah. But for all their similarities, the characters of these two men could not have been more different.

Jehoram was married to Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel of Israel. It's hard to be loyal to God when you have the devil for an in-law, and Jehoram's life proves it. He championed Baal worship in Judah, and pursued a disastrous foreign policy that weakened

Judah's position with her neighbors. He contracted a gruesome intestinal disease, and departed "to no one's sorrow" ("with no one's regret", ESV). It says a lot about a king when, at his death, his subjects do not grieve for his loss.

Josiah was the polar opposite of Jehoram. He was a good and decent man who at an early age sought God with a pure heart. He came to power in a dark time in Judah's history, when the nation was mired in depravity. He cleansed the country of false idols, restored the temple and true worship, and led a spirited campaign to rebuild the nation's moral fabric. When Josiah died in a battle against the Egyptians, his death sent a shock wave through the kingdom. "All Judah and Jerusalem mourned" for the young king, and the lamentations continued for years to come. The general population may have been corrupt, but they knew a good king when they saw one, and Josiah's death left a gaping hole in the nation's soul.

The stories of these two kings and their funerals serve as a caution to every one of us. Like Jehoram and Josiah,

death awaits us all. When that day comes, how will people react to our passing? Will they mourn with great lamentation, as the nation did for Josiah? Or will they shrug it off with an attitude of "good riddance" as they did for Jehoram?

The answer, of course, depends on how we live our lives. If we live for ourselves, caring only for what we can grab, using others as tools for our own selfish interests, folks won't be sorry to see us go. But if our life is devoted to a higher purpose than ourselves, and we spend our days serving others, we will be missed. It's not hard to figure out.

The objective here is not to "create a legacy" for ourselves. People who do that are usually seen as manipulative and vain—and are remembered as such. Rather, our goal in life should be to serve God and our fellow man, whatever our gifts and opportunities might be. The unselfish life is one of service and sacrifice, often unappreciated while we are living it. But after we are gone, the cumulative effect of what we did will be remembered—and respected.

— David King