

When Evil Leaders Die

Commentary for December 1, 2016 — How Should We React?

How should we react when evil leaders die? How should we react when evil regimes, like the Soviet Union or the incredibly brutal Assyrian Empire falls after hundreds of years of domination? Few were saddened by the destruction of the evil Assyrian empire, kings, and armies.

"Israel and Judah: 21. Good Kings, Bad Kings" is the subject of this month's article that deals with what happens when Kings of Israel and Judah obey or disobey God's commands to worship Him only. The "[December 2016 Newsletter](#)" goes into this matter further.

Death of Fidel Castro

The tyrannical dictator Fidel Castro died on November 25, 2016. There were no celebrations in Cuba (they were forbidden by the Cuban government), but there were great celebrations and rejoicing in Miami and other places where the exiled Cuban population reside. In his lifetime one estimate is that Castro survived [638 assassination attempts](#), giving us a strong confirmation that, for some reason, God chooses leaders and sets up the basest of men (Daniel 4:17).

After all, those who do evil rejoice in their depravity, as King Solomon tells us:

"When wisdom enters into your heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto your soul; Discretion shall preserve you, understanding shall keep you [to what purpose?]:

To deliver you

from the way of the evil man,

from the man that speaks **froward [devious] things;**

Who leave the paths of uprightness, to walk in the ways of darkness;

Who rejoice to do evil, and

delight in the **frowardness of the wicked;**

Whose ways are crooked, and they [are] **froward in their paths."**

• *Proverbs 2:10–15*

Death of the Wicked, Should We Be Happy?

God does not rejoice (as you will read below), but men do. Job did so without sinning. We are children of Adam, and not God who can bring the dead back to life and judge the wicked for their evil deeds. God can and will do so.

"If I have rejoiced in the misfortune [destruction] of the one hating me, And I have roused myself in joy because evil had overtaken him. (Yet I have not allowed my mouth to sin by asking with an imprecation [oath] against his soul)."

• *Job 31:29–30, Concordant Literal Version*

YHWH tells us His thoughts through the prophet Ezekiel about the death of evil people:

“Have I any pleasure at all

[1] that the wicked should die? says the Lord YHWH: and

[2] not that he should return from his ways, and live?”

• *Ezekiel 18:23*

These are two rhetorical question with two implied answers: No. God does not have any pleasure on the death of the wicked (the second “no” makes a double negative in that phrase). He wants the wicked to turn from their ways and live. At times God lets the wicked have great sway in the lives of others. At other times, He limits the evil that the wicked do. One way He does that is through the death of wicked people. He does this because He has the power over death and *hades* (the grave), and has the ability to judge and save the wicked through the work of Christ. We know that all will be saved (1 Timothy 4:10) through Christ. It is God’s will (1 Timothy 2:4).

In fact, God would rejoice in the repentance of the wicked, as Scripture states many times. It would please Him for that to happen, but He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked.

Later God repeats that message again through Ezekiel to all the tribes of Israel.

“Say unto them, ‘As I live,’ says the Lord YHWH, ‘I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but [I have pleasure] that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn you, turn you from your evil ways ...”

• *Ezekiel 33:11*

God will laugh when He judges the nations as they conspire against Him. We should have the same attitude God has toward the death of the wicked.

“Standing by are the kings of the earth, And the chancellors, they are gathered together against Yahweh and against His Anointed One, saying, ...

The One sitting in the heavens, He shall ridicule [laugh]; Yahweh, He shall deride [mock] them. Then He shall speak to them in His anger, And in His hot anger He shall fill them with panic ...”

• *Psalms 2:2, 4–5*

Evil from God

At times, we must undergo God’s judgments for our sins, and the evils of life must be endured. God’s judgments are for correction. Sometimes nations receive that evil. For most every evil person, correction will come after death (Hebrews 9:27).

“O satisfy us early with your mercy; that we may rejoice and be glad all our days. Make us glad according to the days wherein you have afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil.”

• *Psalms 90:14–15*

Judgments of God have a purpose. The death of people because of God’s judgments upon an individual, a group, or an entire nation, are for repentance and education. God will bring those people, groups, and nations back to life — at a time of His choosing — then they will pay attention to their salvation through Christ for reconciliation to God.

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