

2 Kings Chapter 24

Verses 1-4: The southern kingdom's deportation occurred in three phases. The first was in 605 B.C. when "Jehoiakim ... turned and rebelled" against "Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon." The prophet Daniel was one of the captives taken at this time (Dan. 1:1-7).

2 Kings 24:1 "In his days Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up, and Jehoiakim became his servant three years: then he turned and rebelled against him."

"Nebuchadnezzar": Nebuchadnezzar II was the son of Nabopolassar, king of Babylon from (626-605 B.C.). As crown prince, Nebuchadnezzar had led his father's army against Pharaoh-nechoh and the Egyptians at Carchemish on the Euphrates River in northern Syria (605 B.C.). By defeating the Egyptians, Babylon was established as the strongest nation in the ancient Near East. Egypt and its vassals, including Judah, became vassals of Babylon with this victory. Nebuchadnezzar followed up his victory at Carchemish by invading the land of Judah. Later (in 605 B.C.), Nebuchadnezzar took some captives to Babylon, including Daniel and his friends (Dan. 1:1-3). Toward the end of 605 B.C., Nabopolassar died and Nebuchadnezzar succeeded him as king of Babylon, 3 years after Jehoiakim had taken the throne in Judah (Jer. 25:1). Nebuchadnezzar reigned from (605-562 B.C.).

"Three years": Nebuchadnezzar returned to the west (in 604 B.C.), and took tribute from all of the kings of the west, including Jehoiakim of Judah. Jehoiakim submitted to Babylonian rule from (604-602 B.C.).

In (602 B.C.), Jehoiakim rebelled against Babylon, disregarding the advice of the prophet Jeremiah (Jer. 27:9-11).

Following the defeat of the combined Assyrian and Egyptian forces at Carchemish (in 605 B.C.; see the note on 23:28-29), "Nebuchadnezzar" took all of Syro-Palestine. He made Judah his vassal. The death of his father, King Nabopolassar, in that year forced Nebuchadnezzar to return home without accomplishing all of his goals in the west. At that time, he took Daniel and others as captives to "Babylon" (Dan. 1:1-6). A later defeat of Nebuchadnezzar's forces by the Egyptians (in 601 B.C.), lured "Jehoiakim" into an anti-Babylonian alliance with Egypt.

Nebuchadnezzar and Nebuchadrezzar are the same person. We remember, that Jehoiachin is the same as Eliakim. Jehoiakim had submitted to king Nechoh in the last lesson. It appears that had lasted about three years, and now the king of Babylon will have Jehoiakim serve him three years. At the end of the three years, Jehoiakim rebels.

2 Kings 24:2 "And the LORD sent against him bands of the Chaldees, and bands of the Syrians, and bands of the Moabites, and bands of the children of Ammon, and sent them against Judah to destroy it, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by his servants the prophets."

In anticipation of a subsequent strike against Jerusalem, Nebuchadnezzar made raids against Judah's surrounding territories, subsequently using them to make forays against the Judean flanks.

With Judah weakened, every little country around took their turn attacking them. All of these attacks were punishment from the LORD; for their unfaithfulness to Him. Huldah had prophesied this recently to Josiah, but Isaiah, Jeremiah, Habakkuk, Micah, and Zephaniah had all prophesied the same thing.

2 Kings 24:3 "Surely at the commandment of the LORD came [this] upon Judah, to remove [them] out of his sight, for the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he did;"

It was the sure and certain decree of God they should be carried captive, and therefore he stirred up the spirit of Nebuchadnezzar, and gave him orders to go against it.

"For the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he did": Which were still continued among the Jews, and committed by them, though repented of by Manasseh, and he returned from them.

There really were not many treasures to take. The true reason for the troubles, was that God's wrath was poured out upon them for their sins. It was not just Manasseh, but he certainly would have been enough all by himself, he was so evil. His son Amon was just as evil as he was. The sons of Josiah even went back to the evil ways, when they became king.

2 Kings 24:4 "And also for the innocent blood that he shed: for he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood; which the LORD would not pardon."

(See 2 Kings 21:16), which cruel usage of the prophets, and servants of the Lord, was still continued (see Jer. 26:21).

"Which the Lord would not pardon": He pardoned the sins of Manasseh, who repented, but not the sins of those persons who imitated him, but repented not. Or though he personally pardoned the sins of Manasseh, so that he was saved everlastingly, yet the temporal punishment of the nation for those sins, in which they were involved with him, was not averted.

"Innocent blood" (see note on 21:16).

The main innocent blood that Manasseh shed, was Isaiah's. He persecuted many other righteous, as well. He also allowed children to be sacrificed to Moloch. This was too much for the LORD to pardon.

2 Kings 24:5 "Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim, and all that he did, [are] they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?"

(In 2 Chronicles 36:8), it is added, "His abominations, and that which was found in him". Which besides his rebellion against the king of Babylon, and his shedding innocent blood, is interpreted of marks made in his body for superstitious and idolatrous purposes (so Lyra).

One of the terrible things he did was execute Urijah. There are many of the things he did, written in the book of Jeremiah. (The 26th chapter of Jeremiah), has a great deal of the prophecy Jeremiah made to him from God.

2 Kings 24:6 "So Jehoiakim slept with his fathers: and Jehoiachin his son reigned in his stead."

He died as they did, but was not buried with them, and indeed had no burial at all, according to the prophecy of Jeremiah (Jer. 22:18). For, falling into the hands of the king of Babylon, he was bound in chains, in order to be carried to Babylon, but died as soon as he came out of Jerusalem, at the gates of which he was cast, and had no burial (2 Chron. 36:6). At this time, also some of the vessels of the temple were carried away, and put in the idol's temple at Babylon (2 Chron. 36:7). And Eupolemus says, that whatever gold, silver, and brass, were in the temple, were carried away.

"And Jehoiachin his son reigned in his stead": Called sometimes Jeconiah, and by contempt Coniah (Jer. 22:24).

Jehoiachin is known by Jechonias, Jechoniah, Jeconiah, and Coniah. He was captured and spent 36 years in Babylon.

2 Kings 24:7 "And the king of Egypt came not again any more out of his land: for the king of Babylon had taken from the river of Egypt unto the river Euphrates all that pertained to the king of Egypt."

"King of Egypt": (In 601 B.C.), Nebuchadnezzar again marched west against Egypt and was turned back by strong Egyptian resistance. However, Egypt, though able to defend its own land, was not able to be aggressive and recover its conquered lands or provide any help for its allies, including Judah.

Egypt could not attack or help Judah, because they were having trouble with Babylon themselves. The first time the king of Egypt came to attack Judah, they were very successful. The next time they ventured out, the Babylonians attacked them, and they lost much of the territory they had gotten the first time. Now they have decided it is better to stay home.

2 Kings 24:8 "Jehoiachin [was] eighteen years old when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem three months. And his mother's name [was] Nehushta, the daughter of Elnathan of Jerusalem."

"Eighteen": This reading is preferred over the "eight" of (2 Chron. 36:9; see note).

"Three months": Having regrouped, Nebuchadnezzar invaded Judah for a second time (in the spring of 597 B.C.). Before he could enter Jerusalem, Jehoiakim died and was succeeded as king of Judah by his son, Jehoiachin, Jehoiachin ruled for a short time (in 597 B.C.; see note on 2 Chron. 36:9-10).

In the (36th chapter of 2 Chronicles), it speaks of him as being only 8 years old, but the 18 years old here is, probably, correct. His mother was the daughter of Elnathan, who was a prominent prince in the reign of Jehoiachin. Whether he was 8, or 18, his mother might have greatly influenced him.

2 Kings 24:9 "And he did [that which was] evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father had done."

Being partner with him in his throne, he was in his sins, and continued therein (see 2 Kings 23:37).

It appears from this, that he made no attempt to restore the worship of the LORD. Of course, he was not in office in Jerusalem very long. He seemed to just follow along with the evil that was already going on.

Verses 10-16: "Nebuchadnezzar" sent a major striking force against Judah (in 598 B.C.). Jehoiakim had died before Nebuchadnezzar could reach "Jerusalem." Accordingly, his son "Jehoiachin" was led away captive to Babylon." Nebuchadnezzar took away much booty as a spoil of war. He also seized and deported the leadership of Jerusalem, among whom was the prophet Ezekiel (Ezek. 1:1).

The second deportation took place (in 597 B.C.), when Nebuchadnezzar "carried away Jehoiachin to Babylon".

The Babylonian siege of Jerusalem was begun by the troops of Nebuchadnezzar. Later, Nebuchadnezzar himself went to Jerusalem and it was to the king himself that Jehoiachin surrendered (verse 12).

2 Kings 24:10 "At that time the servants of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up against Jerusalem, and the city was besieged."

When Jehoiachin reigned. When the year was expired; so it is (in 2 Chron. 36:10), or at the revolution of the year. Which some take to be autumn, the beginning of the civil year with the Jews; but rather it was the spring, the time when kings went out to battle (2 Sam. 11:1).

"The servants of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up against Jerusalem": That is, his army under proper generals and officers and by his orders.

"And the city was besieged": In form by the Chaldean army.

2 Kings 24:11 "And Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came against the city, and his servants did besiege it."

He came in person, following his army.

“And his servants did besiege it”: very closely.

As far as Nebuchadnezzar was concerned, this siege of Jerusalem was not of a great consequence, so his main army was engaged in another war. He sent his servants to take care of this. It appears that Jerusalem did not put up much resistance.

2 Kings 24:12 "And Jehoiachin the king of Judah went out to the king of Babylon, he, and his mother, and his servants, and his princes, and his officers: and the king of Babylon took him in the eighth year of his reign."

“Eighth year”: 597 B.C. For the first time, the books of Kings dated an event in Israelite history by a non-Israelite king. This indicated that Judah’s exile was imminent and the land would be in the hands of Gentiles.

This is speaking of the eighth year of Nebuchadnezzar’s reign. It seemed that Jehoiachin and his mother, and his servants went out and surrendered to the troops of Babylon. He would be released from captivity in Babylon after 36 years.

2 Kings 24:13 "And he carried out thence all the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king's house, and cut in pieces all the vessels of gold which Solomon king of Israel had made in the temple of the LORD, as the LORD had said."

Nebuchadnezzar plundered the treasures of the temple and king’ palace, just as the Lord had said he would (20:16-18).

The treasure had been taken before. It seems they had either accumulated more, or some of the things had been overlooked on the other times. We know that the king of Judah had taken the things out and sent them before. Now the Babylonians had come into Jerusalem and even gone into the temple, and taken what they wanted. They had no regard for the temple or what it contained. That is easily seen, by them cutting the vessels of gold.

2 Kings 20:17 "Behold, the days come, that all that [is] in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store unto this day, shall be carried into Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the LORD."

Verses 14-16: In 597 B.C., Nebuchadnezzar took an additional 10,000 Judeans as captives to Babylon, in particular the leaders of the nation. This included the leaders of the military and those whose skills would support the military. Included in this deportation was the prophet Ezekiel (see notes on Ezek. 1:1-3). Only the lower classes remained behind in Jerusalem. The Babylonian policy of captivity was different from that of the Assyrians who took most of the people into exile and resettled the land of Israel with foreigners (17:24). The Babylonians took only the leaders and the strong, while leaving the weak and poor, elevating those left to leadership and thereby earning their loyalty. Those taken to Babylon were allowed to work and

live in the mainstream of society. This kept the captive Jews together, so it would be possible for them to return, as recorded in Ezra.

2 Kings 24:14 "And he carried away all Jerusalem, and all the princes, and all the mighty men of valor, [even] ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and smiths: none remained, save the poorest sort of the people of the land."

The inhabitants of it; not every individual of them, but the chief of them, the more honorable, rich, and useful. For the poorer sort were left, as afterwards expressed.

"And all the princes, and all the mighty men of valor, even ten thousand captives": Which was the number of them in the whole; the particulars are after delivered.

"And all the craftsmen and smiths": Besides the nobles and the soldiers, he took all the artificers that exercised any handicraft trade or business. Carpenters and blacksmiths, as some interpret these two words; so that there were none left to make arms for them.

"None remained, save the poorest sort of the people of the land": Who were left to till it, and to dress the vines (see 2 Kings 25:12).

This is just the first siege. These ten thousand were chosen for their abilities. They would be useful slaves to the king of Babylon. The poor people are probably speaking of the farmers and herdsmen. There were a few princes left and a few of the upper-class, but the majority were those who worked at menial labor.

2 Kings 24:15 "And he carried away Jehoiachin to Babylon, and the king's mother, and the king's wives, and his officers, and the mighty of the land, [those] carried he into captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon."

Where he continued at least thirty seven years (2 Kings 25:27).

"And the king's mother": Whose name was Nehushta (2 Kings 24:8). Fulfilment of Jeremiah 22:24-27.

"And the king's wives": For though he was so young, it seems he had many wives, as was the custom of those times. Or his "women", who were either his concubines, or servants in his family.

"And his officers": In his court: and the mighty of the land; the princes and nobles thereof. Or "the fools of the land", as the word is written; so the people generally were.

"Those carried he into captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon": Which, according to Bunting, were six hundred and eighty miles distant from each other.

The fact that the king had wives make us believe that he was definitely 18, when he took office as king. It would be highly unlikely that a boy of 8 would have wives. There does not seem to be a massacre of people in this first siege and capture of the people.

2 Kings 24:16 "And all the men of might, [even] seven thousand, and craftsmen and smiths a thousand, all [that were] strong [and] apt for war, even them the king of Babylon brought captive to Babylon."

The particulars of the 10,000 carried captive are here given. 7000 of which were the principal men of the land.

"And craftsmen and smiths one thousand": Which made 8000.

"All that were strong, and apt for war": Of these consisted the other 2000; so Abarbanel reckons them. But, according to the Jewish chronologer, which Jarchi and other Jewish commentators follow, the 7000 were out of the tribe of Benjamin and the rest of the tribes, and the 3000 out of the tribe of Judah, which are supposed to be those Jeremiah speaks of (Jer. 52:28).

"Even them the king of Babylon brought captive to Babylon": Among these were Ezekiel the prophet, and Mordecai, the uncle of Esther.

The military men and the craftsmen would be used in the army of Babylon. In fact, all of these captives would be workers and not put into prison. They were taken strictly for their usefulness to Babylon. At least, they would not die.

Verses 17-20: "Mattaniah" (or Zedekiah) was Josiah's last remaining son. He was totally apostate.

2 Kings 24:17 "And the king of Babylon made Mattaniah his father's brother king in his stead, and changed his name to Zedekiah."

"Mattaniah ... Zedekiah": Mattaniah was a son of Josiah and an uncle of Jehoiachin (1 Chron. 3:15; Jer. 1:3). Mattaniah's name, meaning "gift of the Lord", was changed to Zedekiah, "righteousness of the Lord." Nebuchadnezzar's changing of Zedekiah's name demonstrated his authority as lord over him (see note on 23:34; see notes on 2 Chron. 36:11-21).

Mattaniah, the uncle of the king of Babylon, was like a puppet king. He was under direct orders from Babylon. "Mattaniah" means gift of Jehovah. "Zedekiah" means righteousness of Jehovah. The strange thing is, that this uncle of the king of Babylon was also the son of Josiah.

2 Kings 24:18 "Zedekiah [was] twenty and one years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name [was] Hamutal, the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah."

“Eleven years”: Zedekiah ruled in Jerusalem, under Babylonian sovereignty (from 597-586 B.C.).

For this 11 years that he reigned, there was no war with Babylon. He was full brother with Jehoahaz, and half-brother with Jehoiakim. The people in Jerusalem would accept him, because he was in the lineage to be king. The Babylonians wanted him, because he was related to their king, and they felt they could control him. His youth would be on their side also.

2 Kings 24:19 "And he did [that which was] evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that Jehoiakim had done."

So that he was but between nine and ten years of age when his father Josiah died; for Jehoahaz reigned three months, Jehoiakim eleven years, and his son three months and ten days.

"And he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Hamutal the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah. By which it appears that he was the brother of Jehoahaz by father and mother's side (2 Kings 23:31). This and the two following verses are expressed in the same words as in Jeremiah (see Jer. 52:1-3; 2 Chron. 36:10), besides what is here said. It is written, that he humbled not himself before Jeremiah the prophet of the Lord that spoke in his name, but opposed him. And rebelling against the king of Babylon, broke his oath, and hardened his neck and heart against the Lord, and was obstinate, stubborn, and self-willed.

It seemed that Zedekiah just allowed the heathen worship to continue, that had begun again in his brothers reign. He did not seem to aggressively pursue it, or stop it. He was more a puppet king. He was king in name only.

2 Kings 24:20 "For through the anger of the LORD it came to pass in Jerusalem and Judah, until he had cast them out from his presence, that Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon."

Zedekiah rebelled”: In 588 B.C., Apries (also called Hophra), the grandson of Nechoh, became Pharaoh over Egypt. He appears to have influenced Zedekiah to revolt against Babylon (see note on 17:18-23; Ezek. 17:15-18).

This rebellion against Babylon (which God put in their hearts to do), will bring on the war that will totally destroy Jerusalem and Judah. By this time Zedekiah is about 30, and he is feeling more like a king. We find him trying to get help from Egypt to fight Babylon. Of course, this is part of God's plan for the wrath of God to come on Judah. Many times, God uses wars to punish people.

2 Kings Chapter 24 Questions

1. Who did Jehoiachin become servant to for three years?

2. What is another name for Jehoiachin?
3. At the end of three years, what does Jehoiachin do?
4. Why were all of these bands of the little countries around Judah coming against them?
5. At the commandment of the _____ came this upon Judah.
6. Who had filled Jerusalem with innocent blood?
7. Who was the main innocent blood he killed?
8. Who did they sacrifice to Moloch?
9. Who was one person that Jehoiachin, killed?
10. What are some other names for Jehoiachin?
11. Why could Egypt not attack, or help, Judah?
12. How old was Jehoiachin, when he became king?
13. What kind of king was he?
14. Who was king of Babylon at this time?
15. Who attacked Jerusalem from Babylon?
16. What did they take from the temple?
17. Who did Babylon take captive?
18. What settles the fact, that the king of Judah was 18, and not 8?
19. Why did Babylon pick the particular captives they took?
20. Who did Nebuchadnezzar make king of Judah?
21. What did he change his name to?
22. What does "Mattaniah" mean?
23. What does "Zedekiah" mean?
24. What was strange about who he was related to?
25. How long did he reign?
26. Who was his mother?

27. What kind of a king was he?

28. Who really caused the war on Judah?