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Israel and Judah: 42. Judah's Last Kings, 1

by David Sielaff, February 2022

Read the accompanying "[February 2022 Newsletter](#)"

Israel and Judah: 42

Judah's
Last Kings # 1

King Josiah has just died, three to four years before the collapse of the Assyrian Empire. He was the last good king of Judah. After he died, Josiah's reforms were repealed, idolatry quickly returned because that was what the kings and religious leaders wanted. The last four kings of Judah followed after their evil ancestors, even though they had God's prophets telling truth about the horrors to come. In addition to the books of Kings and Chronicles, there is a great amount of historical information in the writings of the prophet Jeremiah.

This episode covers the reigns of the first two of the last four Kings of Judah. After Josiah's death Jeremiah published the Book of Lamentations which told what would happen to Judah and Jerusalem. Even while Josiah was alive, and even after the great revival and Passover Josiah organized, YHWH warned and declared He would not forgive the iniquities of the people of Judah. YHWH wanted total commitment:

"However Yahweh did not turn back from the great heat of His anger when His anger burned hot against Judah on account of all the vexations with which Manasseh had provoked Him to vexation. Yahweh said,

'I shall also [1] put away Judah from My presence, just as I put away Israel; and I will [2] reject this city that I chose, Jerusalem, and [3] the house of which I said, My Name shall be there.'"^a

• **2 Kings 23:26–27**

Jeremiah and the Last Kings of Judah

Jeremiah received prophecies from YHWH during his several decades of prophetic ministry. He gave YHWH's messages not just to Judah, but also to all the people and kingdoms of the world. There were three main periods when YHWH spoke to Jeremiah:

"The words of Jeremiah son of Hilkiyah, of the priests who were in Anathoth in the land of

^a See my September 2002 Commentary, "[A Name for the Temple of God](#)." God's Temple was named, among several other identifiers, "**the place of the name.**"

Benjamin, to whom

- [1] the word of Yahweh came in the days of Josiah son of Amon, king of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign;
- [2] it came **through** the days of Jehoiakim son of Josiah, king of Judah,
- [3] until the finishing of the eleventh year of Zedekiah son of Josiah, king of Judah,

that is, until the deportation of Jerusalem in the fifth month [of Zedekiah's 11th year].”

• *Jeremiah 1:1–3*

Jeremiah does not mention two of the four kings that came after Josiah. The two kings reigned only 3 months each. They are mentioned elsewhere in Jeremiah's prophecies. All four kings have historical information given in the Book of Jeremiah about events in Jerusalem and Judah beside descriptions in Kings or Chronicles.

In verse 1:2 above, Jeremiah's prophetic ministry went “**through the days of Jehoiakim**,” meaning to the end of his rule and Jeremiah's prophecies finished in the 11th year of King Zedekiah. In verse 3 “**the deportation of Jerusalem**” refers to the last of 3 deportations of people from Judah to Babylon. This deportation is notable because the people “**of Jerusalem**” were expelled from the land.

The Last Four Kings of Judah

According to the genealogical portion of significant people in the Book of First Chronicles, it is said that King Josiah had 4 sons. Here is their order of birth:

“**Josiah's sons: Johanan the firstborn, the second Jehoiakim, the third Zedekiah, the fourth Shallum** [Jehoahaz].

Jehoiakim's sons: Jeconiah his son, Zedekiah his son [i.e., Josiah's son].

The sons of Jeconiah as prisoner: Shealtiel his son ...”

• *1 Chronicles 3:15–17*

The firstborn Johanan is not mentioned again in Scripture. He did not reign, nor do we know how or when he died. Josiah's other three sons each became Kings of Judah. They did not reign according to birth order. Josiah's 4th son reigned first. Here is the order of the last four kings of Judah:

1. **Jehoahaz** (Josiah's 4th son) **reigned 3 months**. His original name was Shallum (Jeremiah 22:11; 1 Chronicles 3:15). Pharaoh Neco changed his name **TO** Jehoahaz by which he is most often known. He reigned first because the people of Judah selected him.

2. **Jehoiakim** (Josiah's 2nd son) **reigned 11 years**. His name was changed **FROM** Eliakim to Jehoiakim. He was selected to rule by Pharaoh Neco.

3. **Jehoiachin** (Josiah's grandson, son of Jehoiakim) also **reigned 3 months**. He had three other names: Joiachin, Jeconiah, and Coniah.^b

4. **Zedekiah** (Josiah's 3rd son and uncle of Jehoiachin according to 2 Kings 24:17). He had another name, Mattaniah which means “gift of YHWH.” He **reigned 11 years** (not the brother of Jehoiachin as in 2 Chronicles 36:10; see also 1 Chronicles 3:16) where it is stated that Jehoiachin (Jeconiah) had a son named Zedekiah; NOTE: Ezekiel dates his prophecies (8:1; 20:1, etc.) to the exile of Jehoiachin, not to the reign of Zedekiah. In 2 Kings 25:27 Jehoiachin is still referred to as king.

| King (in order of reign) | Length of Reign |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| <i>Jehoahaz</i> | <i>3 months</i> |
| Jehoiakim | 11 years |
| <i>Jehoiachin</i> | <i>3 months</i> |
| Zedekiah | 11 years |

^b According to the Hebrew Massoretic text, he was 8 years old when he began to reign. But a comparison of 2 Kings 24:8 with the Septuagint (Greek) of 2 Chronicles 36:9 says that he was 18 years old when he began to reign.

Only the histories of the first two of the last four kings of Judah are presented in this article. There is a great deal of information in the Book of Jeremiah about Jehoiakim, and I cannot cover it all in one article. So, we begin with a prophecy about Jehoahaz:

TEXT: The Short Reign of King Jehoahaz of Judah

2 Kings 23:30–33

³⁰ Then his servants conveyed him [Josiah] by chariot from Megiddo and brought him dying to Jerusalem. They entombed him in his tomb.

The people of the land took Josiah's son Jehoahaz, anointed him and proclaimed him king instead of his father.

³¹ Jehoahaz was twenty-three years old when he became king; and he reigned three months in Jerusalem; his mother's name was Hamutal daughter of Jeremiah from Libnah.

³² He did what was evil in the eyes of Yahweh according to all that his fathers had done.

³³ Pharaoh Neco made him prisoner at Riblah in the land of Hamath to keep him from reigning in Jerusalem, and he [Neco] imposed on the land a fine [a tribute payment] of a hundred talents of silver and a talent of gold.

2 Chronicles 36:1–4

¹ The people of the land took Josiah's son Jehoahaz and proclaimed him king instead of his father in Jerusalem.

² Joahaz [an alternate spelling of Jehoahaz] was twenty-three years old when he became king; and he reigned three months in Jerusalem.

³ The king of Egypt deposed him

in Jerusalem and fined the land a hundred talents of silver and a talent of gold.

[end text]

2 Kings 23:30. King Josiah died from a wound in battle^c and “the people of the land” anointed and proclaimed Josiah's 4th son Jehoahaz (1 Chronicles 3:15–17) to reign as king after Josiah's body was brought to Jerusalem. Normally the firstborn of Josiah would reign. Apparently “the people of the land,” and not the religious or tribal leaders, disliked Josiah's other sons, and they chose Jehoahaz to be king. Professor D.J. Wiseman understands that Jehoahaz [Shallum] was chosen because he was less pro-Egypt than his brothers.^d

2 Kings 23:30 and 2 Chronicles 36:1. The name “Jehoahaz” means “YHWH has grasped” in Hebrew. God indeed “grasped” him and sent him away.

2 Kings 23:31 and 2 Chronicles 36:2. YHWH indeed “grasped” Jehoahaz and sent him from Judah — permanently. His original name *Shallum* means “retribution” in Hebrew. [The English word “retribution” means *revenge* or *vengeance*.]

2 Kings 23:32. This verse is a parenthetical statement to the history of Jehoahaz' reign. The judgment about the evil the young king committed likely came from actions he did before he became king. The prophet Jeremiah describes him in Jeremiah 22:1–9 (below). How much evil could he do in only 3 months? Still, his actions were known were known to the writer of verse 32, and likely known by the people of Judah.

2 Kings 23:33 and 2 Chronicles 36:3. Egyptian Pharaoh Neco (spelled “Necho” in other translations) had different plans for Judah and must have discovered something he did not like in the young king of



^c For details about Josiah's death, see “[Israel and Judah: 41. Josiah, His Renewal, and Death.](#)”

^d Donald J. Wiseman, *1 and 2 Kings: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 9, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 325.

Judah. Jehoahaz was summoned and surrendered himself to Pharaoh, traveling to “**Riblah in the land of Hamath**,” located in northern Syria today west of the northern part of the Euphrates River. No Pharaoh ever again traveled so far from Egypt with an army to conquer new lands.

We are told only that Neco wanted “**to keep him from reigning in Jerusalem**.” Perhaps Neco did not trust the loyalty of Jehoahaz reigning in lands to the south of his army’s line and threatening his lines of communications, supply chain, or even a route of retreat. After all, just a few months prior, King Josiah’s army attacked when Egyptian forces “passed through” Judah along the Mediterranean coast traveling north to Riblah.

Pharaoh Neco was most concerned to support a declining Assyrian Empire attacked by armies of Babylon and the Medes northeast of Riblah. To finance his military expedition Neco wanted tribute of silver and gold from Judah.

Neco, and not the people of Judah, places another son of Josiah on the throne of Judah, someone who collects and pays the tribute without question, and someone who owes Pharaoh for his kingship. Beginning to prophesy to Jehoiakim, God through Jeremiah later tells the the fate of Jehoahaz (often called Shallum by Jeremiah).

TEXT: After Josiah’s Death, YHWH Warns King Jehoiakim, Judah, and Jerusalem

Jeremiah 22:1–9

¹ Thus says Yahweh: Go down to the house of the king of Judah and speak there this word. ² You will say, “**Hear the word of Yahweh, king of Judah, sitting on the throne of David, you and your officials and your people who enter through these gates.**” ³ Thus says Yahweh:

“**Execute right judgment and justice, and rescue the pillaged one from the hand of the exploiter. The sojourner, the orphan and the widow, do not tyrannize, and do not treat violently; do not shed innocent blood in this place.**

⁴ For **IF** you do, yea do this word, then kings who sit for David on his throne will enter through the gates of **this house**, riding in chariots and on horses, he and his officials and his people.

⁵ Yet **IF** you do NOT hearken to these words, by Myself have I sworn, averring [declaring] is Yahweh, that this house shall become a waste.”

⁶ For thus says Yahweh concerning the house of the king of Judah:

“**Though you are Gilead to Me, the summit of Lebanon, Assuredly I shall make you a wilderness, cities that are not indwelt.** ⁷ I will hallow [prepare, separate] **ruiners** [destroyers] **against you, each with his implements** [weapons]. **And they will cut down your choice cedars and cast them on the fire.**

⁸ **When many nations pass by this city, and they say each one to his associate, ‘On what grounds has Yahweh done thus to this great city?’** ⁹ **then they will reply, ‘Because they [1] forsook the covenant of Yahweh their Elohim, and they [2] worshiped other elohim and [3] served them.’”** [end text]

Jeremiah 22:1. YHWH gives orders to Jeremiah to speak the prophetic words directly to Shallum. It is not stated who was king at the time. But later in Jeremiah chapter 22 it is clear that Shallum [Jehoahaz] was in Egypt and not on the throne.

Verse 2. Jeremiah is to instruct all the court to listen to the words of YHWH.

Verses 3–5. These verses are similar to Psalm 82:2–6.^e The difference is that Psalm 82 (written centuries

^e These verses express thoughts very similarly to those in Psalm 82:2–6:

“**How long shall you judge with iniquity And lift up the faces of the wicked? Interlude**

before Jeremiah in the time of King David) talks about God’s judgment of supernatural beings while Jeremiah 22:3–4 refers to a human king and human leaders of Judah. However, just as God punishes his own “**sons of the Supreme**” (“**the most High**” in the KJV) in Psalm 82, He will also punish the King descended from David, the religious and tribal leaders, and His chosen people of Judah.

Verse 6. YHWH is saying He cares about Jehoiakim as much as Jehoiakim cares about the cedar wood of Gilead. Gilead was an extremely productive agricultural area and groves of cedar trees grew there for the fine wood desirable for palaces.

Verse 7. God will bring men to attack Gilead, a rich portion of land near Judah. We learn later that this prophecy was not fulfilled by the Babylonian army and Nebuchadnezzar, whose name means “Nabu has protected my offspring.”^f

Verse 8. Foreign people will walk near the capital city of Jerusalem and wonder why YHWH has done this to His own city.

Verse 9. YHWH gives Jeremiah two reasons to tell the people why He will punish Judah and Jerusalem their sins, like many other prophets to Judah in the past. YHWH’s patience has ended.

YHWH’s Preaching Orders for Jeremiah

At the beginning of the Book of Jeremiah the prophet was commanded to travel to all the nations of the world, but he also was sent to the people, leaders, to Josiah, and to the last four kings of Judah. God warned Jeremiah about the opposition he would encounter when he gave these people the messages from YHWH:

“As for Me, behold, I have made you today into a fortress city, Into an iron column and a strong bronze wall

- **Against the entire land,**
- **Against the kings of Judah,**
- **against its chief officials,**
- **Against its priests and**
- **against the people of the land.**

They will [1] fight against you, Yet [2] they shall not prevail against you; For [3] I am with you, averring [declaring] is Yahweh, [4] to rescue you.”

• **Jeremiah 1:18–19**

Jeremiah’s role as a prophet sent by YHWH would antagonize everyone in Judah, except those who love and honor YHWH, and even they would not want to learn about the destruction of their homeland. Despite severe and dangerous opposition, Jeremiah himself was promised God’s protection, and even rescue when necessary.

Jeremiah 22:1–9 (above) gave general advice to the Kings of Judah that came after Josiah. This next section was a specific message about Shallum to the court of his brother Jehoiakim. He did not heed God’s warning. Jeremiah gave this message in Jeremiah 22:10–17:

TEXT: YHWH Says, Do Not Lament Shallum, But Warn the Kings After Shallum

Jeremiah 22:10–17

¹⁰ **Do not lament for the dead one [King Josiah], And do not bemoan him; Lament, yea lament for him who has gone away, For he shall not return again Or again see the land of his kindred.”** ¹¹ For thus says Yahweh

Redress the poor one and the orphan; To the humble and destitute one grant justice. Deliver the poor and the needy one; From the hand of the wicked, give rescue. (They do not know and are not understanding; In darkness are they walking about; All the foundations of the earth are slipping.)

I Myself have said: ‘you are elohim, And sons of the Supreme [the Most High] are all of you. Yet you shall die like common humanity, And like any other of the chiefs you shall fall.’

^f D. J. Wiseman, *1 and 2 Kings*, 327.

concerning Shallum [Jehoahaz] son of Josiah, king of Judah, who was made king in place of his father Josiah, but who went forth from this place:

“He shall not return there again.”¹² For in the place where they deported him, [1] there shall he die, and [2] he shall not see this land again.

¹³ **Woe to him who builds his house without justice, And his upper chambers without right judgment, Who forces service on his associate gratuitously, And does not give him his wages,¹⁴ Who is saying, ‘I shall build a spacious house for myself, With ventilated upper chambers’; And who amplifies his windows for himself, Ceiled with cedar and painted with ocher [a yellow pigment].**

¹⁵ **Are you made king because you compete in cedar? Your father, did he not eat and drink, Yet also execute right judgment and justice? Then it was well for him.¹⁶ He adjudicated the rightful adjudication [judgment] of the humble one and the needy one; Then it was well. Did that not show knowledge of Me? averring [declaring] is Yahweh.**

¹⁷ **But your eyes and your heart [Jehoiakim] are set on nothing save [1] on your own gain, [2] On shedding the blood of the innocent, [3] On extortion and [4] on committing incursion [violence]. [end text]**

Jeremiah 22:10. This part of Jeremiah’s prophecy refers to Shallum, Josiah’s 4th son, seized and held prisoner by Pharaoh Neco. Through Jeremiah, God’s words say the people should lament for Shallum [Jehoahaz] and not for Josiah, the last just king of Judah. The people seemed to think Shallum would return as king. We are not told why they thought that to be true.

Verses 11–12. This prophecy was given after Shallum was taken captive by Pharaoh Neco. God is telling King Jehoiakim, leaders, and people that Shallum will not return to reign. Shallum stayed at Riblah until he was sent to Egypt where he died (2 Kings 23:34, below). It is too late for Shallum to repent.

First Josiah was killed in battle. Then three months later, the king the people chose has been captured. Now Jeremiah brings the evil prophecy that Shallum will die as a captive in Egypt. The people are not happy.

Verses 13–14. So ... who is being addressed from verse 13 to 17? Commentators are divided, but I believe the focus shifts from Shallum (Jehoahaz) to Jehoiakim, who was appointed to be King of Judah by Neco. Shallum reigned only 3 months. He would not have had time to deal think about construction of a palace. Jehoiakim ruled Judah 11 years, first as Neco’s vassal, and then under Nebuchadnezzar as his vassal. As we read Jehoiakim was more interested in building his palace than ruling the kingdom justly.

Verses 15–16. **“Your father”** refers to Josiah, father of both Shallum and Jehoiakim who died earlier than anyone expected. God is addressing Jehoiakim as well as the people of Judah. Perhaps there was communication with Shallum and an expectation that he might be released. Perhaps false prophets in Jerusalem said Shallum would be freed. Whatever the case, both Shallum and Jehoiakim knew from Josiah’s example how to rule justly. Both chose to do evil.

Verse 17. So Shallum was known to be evil and unjust even before he became king to rule for only three months. We do not know when Jeremiah received this prophecy, nor when Jeremiah “went public” and preached to the people about this prophecy from God. Nor do we know how long Jehoahaz was held prisoner.

The rest of Jeremiah 22:18–23 is given below.

For more about the world-wide extent of Jeremiah’s prophetic ministry, see Dr. Martin’s articles: [“Introduction to Jeremiah”](#), [“Jeremiah, Part 2”](#), [“Jeremiah, Part 3”](#) and [“Jeremiah, Part 4,”](#) and my article, [“The Book of Lamentations.”](#)

Momentous events were taking place in the lands outside of Judah. Jehoiakim’s reign of 11 years took place when there were significant changes in the world. Below is an excerpt from the article [“Jehoiakim,”](#) in ISBE, the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*. The years are approximate:

“... it [was] one of the most momentous epochs of ancient history. By the fall of Nineveh in 606 to the assault of Nebuchadnezzar, then crown prince of the rising Babylonian empire, Assyria, “the rod of (Yahweh’s) anger” (Isaiah 10:5), ended its [Assyria’s] arrogant and inveterate sway over the nations.

Nebuehadnezzar, coming soon after to the Chaldean throne, followed up his victory by a vigorous campaign against Pharaoh-neco [who was] ... advancing toward the Euphrates in his attempt to secure Egyptian dominion over Syria and Mesopotamia. The encounter took place in 605 at Carehemish on the northern Euphrates, where Neco was defeated and driven back to the borders of his own land, never more to renew his aggressions (2 Kings 24:7).

The dominating world-empire was now in the hands of the Chaldeans, 'that bitter and hasty nation' (Habakkuk 1:6); the first stage of the movement by which the world's civilization was passing from Semitic to Aryan control.^g

With this world-movement Israel's destiny was henceforth to be intimately involved; the prophets were already dimly aware of it, and were shaping their warnings and promises, as by a Divine instinct, to that end. It was on this larger scale of things that they worked; it had all along been their endeavor, and continued with increasing clearness and fervor, to develop in Israel a conscience and stamina which should be a leavening power for good in the coming great era (compare Isaiah 2:2-4; Micah 4:1-3)."

"Jehoiakim," article in ISBE

The changes were far greater than "the world's civilization was passing from Semitic to Aryan control." With that background in mind, let's return to analysis of Kings and Chronicles:

TEXT: King Jehoiakim of Judah — and Pharaoh Neco of Egypt

2 Kings 23:34-37

³⁴ Then Pharaoh Neco made Josiah's son Eliakim king instead of his father Josiah and turned his name around to Jehoiakim.

He took Jehoahaz who came to Egypt; and there he died.

³⁵ Jehoiakim gave the silver and the gold to Pharaoh; however he [*Jehoiakim*] had the land appraised to give the silver at the bidding of Pharaoh. Of each man, according to his appraisal, he exacted the silver and the gold from the people of the land in order to give it to Pharaoh Neco.

³⁶ Jehoiakim was twenty-five years old when he became king; and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem; his mother's name was Zebidah daughter of Pedaiah from Rumah.

³⁷ He did what was evil in the eyes of Yahweh according to all that his fathers had done.

2 Chronicles 36:4-5

⁴ Then *the king of Egypt* made his brother Eliakim king over Judah and Jerusalem and turned his name around to Jehoiakim.

Pharaoh Neco took his [*Jehoiakim's*] brother Joahaz [*Jehoahaz*] and brought him to Egypt; and there he died.

⁵ Jehoiakim was twenty-five years old when he became king; and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem.

He did what was evil in the eyes of Yahweh *his Elohim.*

[end text]

2 Kings 23:34 and 2 Chronicles 36:4. After deposing Jehoahaz, Pharaoh appointed Eliakim to be king over Judah. The people had no choice in the matter. Pharaoh changed his name to Jehoiakim. (*Eliakim* means

^g See Dr. Ernest Martin's article "[The Prophetic Birth of Our Civilization](#)." Then go much deeper with the beginnings and future of our Western Civilization in two additional Dr. Martin's studies that are both profound and relevant at this moment in history: "[Origin and Goal of Western Civilization, Part 1](#)," and "[Origin and Goal of Western Civilization, Part 2](#)."

"We will examine what the central goal of Western civilization has been in the past, how it is very much in action today, and how it will find a fulfillment just prior to the second advent of Christ back to this earth. What was that goal? Simply this: (1) to bring in a one-world government that has political, economic, and religious unity among all the peoples of the world and (2) that the one true God of heaven and earth would be worshipped."

“God sets up” or “God establishes” while *Jehoiakim* means “YHWH establishes.”) We are not told why Pharaoh changed his name. Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon will also change the name of a future king of Judah. Whatever the situation, Jehoiakim was given a beautiful name but he himself had a miserable fate.

The deposed king Shallum [Jehoahaz] was taken to Egypt where he died. This was a message to Jehoiakim of his fate should he displease Neco.

2 Kings 23:35. The process of collecting the tribute given to Pharaoh Neco from the people of Judah is described. While the amount does not seem large it was likely the first of annual tributes required by Neco. Jehoiakim did as ordered. He collected and paid the tribute to Pharaoh.

2 Kings 23:36 and 2 Chronicles 36:5. Jehoiakim was two years older than his deposed brother Jehoahaz, and the new king was not the popular choice. The people chose the younger brother Jehoahaz. The less popular new king had the duty of imposing a new tax upon the people which he sent to Neco.

The 3 month’s reign of Jehoahaz’ and Jehoiakim’s 11-year reign saw major events occur within Judah and outside her borders. Outside Judah there was a major military and political power shift. Assyria was conquered by Babylon and a Persian/Mede coalition of tribes. Rather than Assyria, Babylon became a new threat to the people and kingdom of Judah, and ultimately to all the old kings on earth.

2 Kings 23:37. The narratives of Kings and Chronicles focus on the rulers of the Kingdom of Judah. Meanwhile, great events are happening in the struggle between Pharaoh and the Assyrians and a later struggle between Pharaoh against Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon (after the dissolution of the Assyrian Empire). Judah was a potential battlefield not far from the Mediterranean coast. Nebuchadnezzar was to be God’s instrument to punish Judah and cause the world to submit to his domination as the first “world ruler.”^h

Jeremiah’s word from YHWH predicted Egyptian decline and the rise of Babylonian power:

“That which came as the word of Yahweh to Jeremiah the prophet concerning the nations: Concerning Egypt, about the army of Pharaoh Necho king of Egypt which was at the stream Euphrates in Carchemish, which Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon smote in the fourth year of Jehoiakim son of Josiah king of Judah.”



• **Jeremiah 46:1–2** *Permission for use granted by Herald of Hope, January 2022*

So, in the 4th year of Jehoiakim’s 11-year reign, the Egyptian army was defeated in Syria and retreated from the Euphrates River at a battle called Carchemish. This battle is a major “turning point” in history.

This next segment from Jeremiah is very interesting. Shortly after Jehoiakim became king, Jeremiah spoke to all the people publicly and no doubt loudly giving warnings for the king, the people, and Jerusalem. Note who are the strongest opponents to Jeremiah’s call to repentance, and who defends him.

Nothing Jeremiah says is different than what other prophets have said before, and recently while Josiah was still alive only months before.

^h See footnote “g” above. Dr. Martin 1975 presentation, “[Prophetic Birth of Our Civilization](#)” explains the role Nebuchadnezzar served in history. Nebuchadnezzar’s influence lasts to our present day.

TEXT: Jeremiah's Warning To Judah, From Within the Temple Court

Jeremiah 26:1–24

¹ **In the beginning** of the kingship of Jehoiakim son of Josiah, king of Judah, came this word from Yahweh, saying,

² **“Thus says Yahweh: Stand in the court of the house of Yahweh and speak to all those of the cities of Judah, who are coming to worship in the house of Yahweh, all the words that I instruct you to speak to them. Do not subtract a word.**

³ **PERHAPS** they shall hearken and turn back, each one from his evil way. Then I will regret the evil that I had designed to do against them in view of their evil actions.

⁴ **And you will say to them, Thus says Yahweh:**

‘If you shall not hearken to Me to walk in My law which I set before you, ⁵ to hearken to the words of My servants the prophets whom I am sending to you, rising early and sending, yet you will not hearken, ⁶ then I will make this house like Shiloh, and I shall make this city a malediction [curse] to all the nations of the earth.’

⁷ Now [1] the priests and [2] the prophets and [3] all the people heard Jeremiah speaking these words in the house of Yahweh. ⁸ Yet it came to be as soon as Jeremiah finished speaking all that Yahweh had instructed him to speak to all the people, that [1] the priests and [2] the prophets and [3] all the people **grasped him**, saying:

“You shall die, yea die. ⁹ For what reason do you prophesy in the Name of Yahweh, saying: ‘This house shall become like Shiloh, and this city shall be deserted without a dweller?’”

Then all the people assembled around Jeremiah in the house of Yahweh. ¹⁰ When the chief officials of Judah heard these words they went up from the king’s house to the house of Yahweh and sat at the portal of the new gate of the house of Yahweh.

¹¹ And the priests and the prophets[!] spoke to the chief officials and to all the people, saying:

“The judgment of death for this man! For he prophesied against this city just as you have heard with your own ears.”

¹² Then Jeremiah spoke to all the chief officials and to all the people, saying:

“Yahweh sent me to prophesy against this house and against this city all the words which you have heard. ¹³ So now amend your ways and your actions, and hearken to the voice of Yahweh your Elohim so that Yahweh may regret the evil that He has spoken against you.

¹⁴ **As for me, behold, I am in your hand; do to me as seems good and upright in your eyes. ¹⁵ However, you shall know, yea know that if you put me to death you are bringing innocent blood on yourselves and on this city and on its dwellers, for in truth, Yahweh has sent me to you to speak all these words in your ears.”**

¹⁶ Then the chief officials and all the people said to the priests and to the prophets, **“There will be no judgment of death for this man, for in the Name of Yahweh our Elohim he has spoken to us.”**

¹⁷ Also some men from the elders of the land arose and they spoke to all the assembly of the people, saying:

¹⁸ **“There was Micah of Moresheth who prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah, and he spoke to all the people of Judah, saying,**

‘Thus says Yahweh of hosts: Zion shall be plowed like a field, And Jerusalem shall become rubbish heaps, And the mountain of the house for high-places of a grove.’

¹⁹ **Did Hezekiah king of Judah or anyone of Judah put him to death, yea death? Did he not fear Yahweh and beseech the face of Yahweh, so that Yahweh regretted the evil that He had spoken against them? Now we would be doing great evil against our souls.”**

²⁰ But again there was a man who prophesied in the Name of Yahweh, Uriah son of Shemaiah from Kiriath-jearim, and he prophesied against this city and against this land in terms like all the words of Jeremiah. ²¹ When king Jehoiakim and all his masterful men and all the chief officials heard his words, then the king sought to put him [Uriah] to death. Yet Uriah heard and was fearful, and he fled away and entered Egypt.

²² But king Jehoiakim sent men to Egypt, Elnathan son of Achbor and men with him to Egypt, ²³ and they brought forth Uriah from Egypt and brought him to king Jehoiakim. And he smote him with the sword and flung his carcass into the burying ground of the sons of the people.

²⁴ However, the hand of Ahikam son of Shaphan came to be with Jeremiah so that he not be given up into the hand of the people to put him to death. [end text]

Jeremiah 26:1. This event took place in the early weeks or months of Jehoiakim's 11-year reign.

Verse two. YHWH commanded Jeremiah to speak in the most public place — the court of the Temple. Remember, Jeremiah was the son of a priest.

Verse 3. Jeremiah puts the proposition as a possibility they will respond positively, and gives them a choice: listen, repent, and be saved — or continue and be destroyed.

Verse 4. Here begins a warning given to Judah to obey.

Verses 5–6. There will be a series of diligent prophets from YHWH to His people Judah. Do not ignore them. Dire punishment will ensue if they will not listen. God's Temple will be desolated and Jerusalem a curse to all nations.

Verses 7–8. All those who heard Jeremiah speak raised an uproar and seized Jeremiah and threatened him.

Verse 9. The crowd repeated Jeremiah's words.

Verse 10. The "**chief officials**" were the secular administrative leaders that ran the government under the king.

Verse 11. It is interesting that "priest and the prophets" called the loudest for Jeremiah's death. They were false prophets, and false priests for not upholding YHWH's written words and now His prophetic words.

Verses 12–13. Jeremiah replies in his own defense. He said, listen to YHWH's words and He may change his mind to withhold punishment.

Verses 14–15. Do what you think right, but be careful not to shed innocent blood. You will be held accountable for my death.

Verse 16. Jeremiah's words made sense to the chief officials and the people.

Verses 17–18. Some "**elders of the land**" spoke to the people. And called to mind Micah of Moresheth in King Hezekiah's reign. See Micah 1:1 and 3:12 about Micah speaking YHWH's words like Jeremiah's words.

Verse 19. Hezekiah honored Micah and heeded his prophecy.

Verse 20. Sometime later, a prophet of YHWH named Uriah also made a dire prophecy against the city and the land as did Jeremiah.

Verses 21–22. Uriah was threatened by King Jehoiakim who sent men to kidnap him from Egypt. This ill treatment of one of God's prophets (aside from Jeremiah), may be the reason YHWH said Jehoiakim's body would be cut in pieces when he was buried — just like God's prophet's body was cut in pieces when he was buried.

Verse 23. Uriah was captured, brought back to Jerusalem, and killed with the sword, perhaps by Jehoiakim himself.

Verse 24. God's promise of protection and help for Jeremiah was fulfilled, this and other times.

This next narrative section is somewhat out of sequence and it is not said when Jeremiah received it from YHWH.

Let us move on to what happened to Jehoiakim and Judah after the Babylonian victory over Egypt. What kind of a man was Jehoiakim? God tells us through Jeremiah preaching to the people:

TEXT: YHWH's Message Concerning King Jehoiakim of Judah

Jeremiah 22:18–23

¹⁸ Therefore, thus says Yahweh concerning Jehoiakim son of Josiah, king of Judah:

**“They shall not wail for him, Woe, my brother, and woe, sister!
They shall not wail for him, Woe, lord, and woe, his splendor!**

¹⁹ **He shall be entombed with a donkey's entombment, Pulled in pieces And flung beyond the gates of Jerusalem.**

²⁰ **Go up to the Lebanon and cry, In Bashan lift up your voice, And cry from Abarim; For all your lovers have been broken.**

²¹ **I spoke to you in your ease; You said, ‘I shall not hearken’; This is your way from your youth, For you have not hearkened to My voice.**

²² **The wind shall graze all your shepherds, And your lovers, they shall go into captivity; Indeed, then you shall be ashamed And mortified [Why?] because of all your evil.**

²³ **Dweller in Lebanon, Nester in the cedars, How much grace will you be shown when cramps come upon you, Travail like that of a woman giving birth?”** [end text]

Jeremiah 22:18. These verses 18 to 23 are not addressed by YHWH to Jehoiakim, but they are about Jehoiakim. YHWH is not pleased with Jehoiakim, to say the least. God warns him several times, in several ways. Yet the young king is stubborn. Jehoiakim's fate will be a proverbial saying repeated by the people of Judah for years to come.

Verse 19. This sobering prediction says that after his death Jehoiakim's dismembered body will be buried like an animal in a small grave, buried in the Garden of King Uzziah (2 Chronicles 36:8).

Verse 20. This verse is unclear, but it seems he cared more about the cedar wood from north of Judah for his palace than anything else.

Verse 21. This is sad. YHWH communicated with Jehoiakim through Jeremiah (and others?) when he was younger, but he declined the offer! What a special and unique opportunity! He squandered and rejected an offer directly from the Creator! God made this offer because Jehoiakim was a King of Judah, descended from King David.

Verse 22. YHWH's judgment is pronounced upon Jehoiakim.

Verse 23. The young king cared more about cedar wood in Lebanon for his palace and construction details than ruling God's people justly. The details in this verse tell us that Jehoiakim will suffer greatly in captivity.

That captivity will not come from Pharaoh Neco or an Assyrians king, it comes from another invading king, Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. He will cause the utter destruction and bring death to the Kingdom of Judah.

Let us learn what happened to Jehoiakim and Judah after the Babylonian victory over Egypt. What kind of man was Jehoiakim? God tells us through Jeremiah preaching to the people:

TEXT: King Jehoiakim of Judah — and King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon

2 Kings 24:1–7

¹ In his [Jehoiakim's] days, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up, and Jehoiakim became his

2 Chronicles 36:6–8

⁶ Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up *against him; he bound him with*

servant for three years; yet he turned back and revolted against him.

² Yahweh sent Chaldean raiders and Syrian raiders, Moabite raiders and raiders of the sons of Ammon against him. And He sent them against the land of Judah in order to destroy it, according to Yahweh's word that He had spoken by means of His servants the prophets.

³ It was only at the bidding of Yahweh that this occurred to Judah, to put it away from His presence for the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he had done, ⁴ and also for the innocent blood which he had shed, so that he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood; and Yahweh would not pardon.

⁵ As for the rest of the affairs of Jehoiakim and all that he did, are they not written on the scroll of the annals of the days of the kings of Judah?

⁶ Then Jehoiakim lay down with his fathers, and his son Jehoiachin reigned in his stead.

⁷ The king of Egypt never again proceeded to march forth from his land; for the king of Babylon had taken all the territory that had been under the king of Egypt, from the wadi of Egypt as far as the stream Euphrates.

two bronze fetters to lead him off to Babylon.

⁷ *Nebuchadnezzar also brought some of the vessels of the house of Yahweh to Babylon and put them in his temple at Babylon.*

⁸ As for the rest of the affairs of Jehoiakim, and his abhorrences which he committed, and what was found against him, behold, they are written on the scroll of the kings of Israel and Judah.

Then Jehoiakim lay down with his fathers and was entombed in the garden of Uzza with his fathers. His son Jehoiachin reigned in his stead.

[end text]

2 Kings 24:1 and 2 Chronicles 36:6. Pharaoh made Jehoiakim [Eliakim] king over Judah. But 4 years into Jehoiakim's reign the battle of Carchemish was fought. King Nebuchadnezzar won the battle (apparently troops of Judah did not fight for Egypt) and kept Jehoiakim on the throne of Judah. He served Nebuchadnezzar for 3 years and then revolted. Not a smart response.

A passage in the Book of Daniel deals with the same period, but it is difficult to reconcile with 2 Kings chapter 24 and 2 Chronicles chapter 36. It is found in the opening verses of the Book of Daniel.

“In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. Yet Yahweh gave into his hand Jehoiakim king of Judah and some of the furnishings of the house of Elohim. Then he brought them to the land of Shinar to the house of his elohim; he brought the furnishings to the treasure house of his elohim.

The king said to Ashpenaz the grandee [dignitary in charge] of his eunuchs to bring some of the sons of the grandees of Israel, of the seed royal and of the highborn,”

• **Daniel 1:1–3**

So, Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem, captured it, took King Jehoiakim captive, as well as Daniel and other young men from Israel who were eunuchs. When they were made to be eunuchs is unknown. This would have been the 1st of 3 sieges of Jerusalem by the Babylonian army. The first siege probably did slight damage before the city surrendered.

2 Kings 24:2. After his victory at Carchemish Nebuchadnezzar and his army were campaigning in Egypt. However, YHWH caused neighboring peoples to attack Judah (with Babylonian approval), as Jeremiah and other unnamed prophets said would happen.

2 Chronicles 36:7. This brief (but out of sequence) explanation tells that “**the vessels of the house of Yahweh**” were seized and taken to Babylon. These cups and basins were prominent decades later in the history of Daniel chapter 5. The Babylonian king used them as party dishes and decorations for the huge feast:

“While tasting the turbid wine, Belshazzar ordered to bring hither the gold and silver vessels which his grandfather Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple in Jerusalem, so that they might drink from them — the king and his grandees, his consorts and his concubines.”

• *Daniel 5:2*

It was then during the siege of Babylon that the incident of the “handwriting on the wall” occurred.

2 Kings 24:3–4. This verse states that the events of verse 2 happened only because YHWH caused them. It also explains why these events took place. It was because of King Manassah’s sins, particularly the shedding of innocent blood (in human sacrifice and other reasons) and the refusal by the people of Judah and Jerusalem to repent and honor YHWH as their God, despite the “good” done by King Josiah and his reforms. Here is the promise YHWH made:

“Wherefore thus speaks Yahweh Elohim of Israel: Behold, I am bringing such evil on Jerusalem and Judah, if anyone hears of it, both his ears shall tingle.

I WILL stretch out over Jerusalem the measuring tape of Samaria and the plummet of the house of Ahab. [I will measure Judah’s sins with the same measure as I judged Samaria]

I WILL wipe out Jerusalem just as one wipes a pan, wiping it and turning it on its face.

I WILL abandon the remnant of My allotment and

[I] WILL give them into the hand of their enemies; and they will come to be for plunder and for robbery to all their enemies,

[Why all this?] **because [1] they have done what is evil in My eyes and [2] were provoking Me to vexation from the day when their fathers came forth from Egypt, even until this day.”**

• *2 Kings 21:12–15*

Verses 5 and 8. Verse 8 tells us that Jehoiakim committed his own abhorrent acts against God’s law and against God’s people.

Verses 6 and 8. Most commentators think this “Garden of Uzza” where Jehoiakim was buried, is also the burial site of the evil kings Manasseh and Amon.

2 Kings 24:7. This added comment points out that the king of Egypt never again goes outside the boundaries of traditional north and south kingdoms of Egypt. The land conquered and held by Egypt on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea up to northern Syria will never again be ruled by an Egyptian king.

Partial Conclusion

I must break off this episode and article at this point because the next narratives in Jeremiah, Kings, and Chronicles are too lengthy and detailed to break between articles. Part of the problem is that some prophetic books like Jeremiah are not organized in ways we today would wish them to be.

There is no chronological order to Jeremiah’s prophecies, nor is there a easily recognized topical order of YHWH’s messages within Jeremiah. Yet scholars continue to try. I recommend an outline from E.W. Bullinger in his *Companion Bible*, set out wonderfully in color in “[The Book of the Prophet Jeremiah](#).”

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- A** Introduction (Jeremiah 1:1–3).
 - B** Jeremiah’s commission given (Jeremiah 1:4–19).
 - C** Prophecies addressed to Jews (Jeremiah chapters 2–20).
 - D** History, etc., Jehoiakim [not chronological] (Jeremiah chapters 21–35).
 - E** Baruch’s mission to Jehoiakim (Jeremiah chapter 36).
 - D’** History, etc., Zedekiah [not chronological] (Jeremiah chapters 37–45).
 - C’** Prophecies addressed to Gentiles (Jeremiah chapters 46–51:64a).
 - B’** Jeremiah’s commission ended (Jeremiah 51:64b).
 - A’** Conclusion (Jeremiah chapter 52).
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Keep studying. And ask God that He bless your efforts ... this historical information is not easy to learn.

David Sielaff, February 2022