

SECOND CHRONICLES

Chapter 36

Jehoahaz King of Judah

Jehoahaz^a was twenty-three years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem three months.³ The king of Egypt dethroned him in Jerusalem and imposed on Judah a levy of a hundred talents^b of silver and a talent^c of gold.⁴ The king of Egypt made Eliakim, a brother of Jehoahaz, king over Judah and Jerusalem and changed Eliakim's name to Jehoiakim. But Neco took Eliakim's brother Jehoahaz and carried him off to Egypt.

36:1–4 Reign of Jehoahaz. The son of Josiah is placed on the throne by the people, the last king to be enthroned by them. Each succeeding king will be appointed by a foreign power. (TLSB)

36:2–14 Josiah is the only king of Judah to be succeeded by three of his sons (Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim and Zedekiah). The Chronicler's account of the reigns of the remaining kings of Judah is quite brief. (CSB)

36:2 See 2Ki 23:31–35. With the death of Josiah at the hands of Pharaoh Neco, Judah slipped into a period of Egyptian domination (vv. 3–4). (CSB)

three months. In 609 B.C. Neco's assertion of authority over Judah ended the brief 20 years of Judahite independence under Josiah. The Chronicler makes no moral judgment on this brief reign, though the author of Kings does (2Ki 23:32). (CSB)

36:3 *Egypt deposed him.* Judah came under the rule of Neco of Egypt, a nation once an ally (cf 2Ki 18:21), and was required to pay tribute of 100 talents of silver (c 3¾ tons) and a talent of gold (c 75 lb). (TLSB)

36:4 Just as Neco took Jehoahaz into captivity and replaced him with Eliakim, whose name he changed to Jehoiakim, so also Nebuchadnezzar would later take Jehoiachin to Babylon, replacing him with Mattaniah, whose name he changed to Zedekiah (2Ki 24:15–17). Each conqueror wanted to place his own man on the throne; the change of name implied authority over him. (CSB)

Not only did Neco take Jehoahaz to Egypt as his prisoner, but he also changed the new king's name from Eliakim to Jehoiakim. *his brother.* Jehoiakim was Jehoahaz's older brother.

Jehoiakim King of Judah

⁵ Jehoiakim was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem eleven years. He did evil in the eyes of the LORD his God. ⁶ Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon attacked him and bound him with bronze shackles to take him to Babylon. ⁷ Nebuchadnezzar also took to Babylon articles from the temple of the LORD and put them in his temple^a there. ⁸ The other events of Jehoiakim's reign, the detestable things he did and all that was found against him, are written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah. And Jehoiachin his son succeeded him as king.

36:5–8 See 2Ki 23:36–24:7. Jehoiakim persecuted the prophets and is the object of scathing denunciation by Jeremiah (Jer 25–26; 36). After the Egyptian defeat at Carchemish (Jer 46:2) in 605 B.C., Jehoiakim transferred allegiance to Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. When he later rebelled and again allied himself with Egypt, Nebuchadnezzar sent a punitive army against him. But Jehoiakim died before the army arrived, and Nebuchadnezzar took his son Jehoiachin into captivity. (CSB)

Jeremiah provides additional information, not found in 2Ki or 2Ch, about Jehoiakim's reign (Jer 22:18–23; 25:1–26:24; 36). (TLSB)

36:5 *eleven years.* 609–598 B.C. (CSB)

36:6 *bound him.* Jehoiakim was bound, but apparently the plan to take him in fetters to Babylon was not carried out. In 605 BC, the critical battle of Carchemish took place, establishing Babylonian ascendancy and Jehoiakim's submission to the victor. In 601 BC, another battle was fought between Egypt and Babylon. This likely caused Jehoiakim to withhold tribute from Babylon.

36:7 *vessels.* Nebuchadnezzar took sacred objects from the Jerusalem temple to his temple in Babylon. (TLSB)

Jehoiachin King of Judah

⁹ Jehoiachin was eighteen^a years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem three months and ten days. He did evil in the eyes of the LORD. ¹⁰ In the spring, King Nebuchadnezzar sent for him and brought him to Babylon, together with articles of value from the temple of the LORD, and he made Jehoiachin's uncle,^b Zedekiah, king over Judah and Jerusalem.

36:9–10 See 2Ki 24:8–17; see also Jer 22:24–28; 24:1; 29:2; 52:31. Although Jehoiachin was taken into captivity (597 B.C.) with a large retinue, including the queen mother and high officials, and was succeeded by Zedekiah, the exiles continued to date in terms of his reign (Jer 52:31; Eze 1:2; cf. Est 2:5–6). (CSB)

36:9 *three months and ten days.* 598–597 B.C. (CSB)

Reign of Jehoiachin. (TLSB)

evil in the sight of the LORD. The Babylonian Chronicle dates these events in the seventh year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign on the second day of Adar. (TLSB)

36:10 *brother.* A wider range of meanings than a biological brother; may also refer to a relative. Zedekiah was his brother in the broader sense. Strictly speaking, he was Jehoiachin's father's brother, thus an uncle. Jehoiachin disappears from the Chronicler's history at this point, but he appears at the end of Kings as the recipient of kindness by King Evil-merodach of Babylon (2Ki 25:27–30). Jehoiachin is the legitimate Davidic king; thus it is he, not Zedekiah, through whom the Chronicler traces the royal lineage in the genealogy of 1Ch 3:16–24. (TLSB)

Zedekiah. Also known as Mattaniah. King of Babylon changed his name to Zedekiah. (TLSB)

Zedekiah King of Judah

¹¹ Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem eleven years. ¹² He did evil in the eyes of the LORD his God and did not humble himself before Jeremiah the prophet, who spoke the word of the LORD. ¹³ He also rebelled against King Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him take an oath in God's name. He became stiff-necked and hardened his heart and would not turn to the LORD, the God of Israel. ¹⁴ Furthermore, all the leaders of the priests and the people became more and more unfaithful, following all the detestable practices of the nations and defiling the temple of the LORD, which he had consecrated in Jerusalem.

36:11–16 Rather than dwell on the events of Jerusalem's last days, as given in 2Ki 24:18–25:21, the writer of Chronicles takes pains to make clear why the city was doomed. God was long-suffering, but finally there came a point when His wrath "rose against His people, until there was no remedy" (v 16). Let no one mistakenly believe that mocking God's messengers, despising His Word, and scoffing at the threat of punishment is a less offensive crime today than it was when Jerusalem received the wages of sin (Gal 6:7). (TLSB)

6:11–14 See 2Ki 24:18–20; Jer 52:1–3. Verses 13b–14 are unique to the Chronicler (cf. Jer 1:3; 21:1–7; 24:8; 27:1–15; 32:1–5; 34:1–7, 21; 37:1–39:7). Zedekiah succumbed to the temptation to look to Egypt for help and rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar. Babylonian reaction was swift. Jerusalem was besieged (Jer 21:3–7) in 588 B.C. and held out for almost two years before being destroyed in the summer of 586. (CSB)

36:11 *eleven years.* 597–586 B.C. (CSB)

36:12 *Jeremiah*. Cf Jer 34:8–22; 37:1–2 for rejection of his message by Zedekiah and the people. (TLSB)

36:13–16 Unique to 2Ch. (TLSB)

36:16 *mocking ... despising ... scoffing*. Emphasize the disdain the people expressed toward the Word and the prophets. (TLSB)

36:1–16 The Chronicler quickly describes the last kings of Judah (Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah), who were dominated by Babylon. He likewise records how stubbornness dominates the people of Judah (vv 15–16). Though persistence can be a helpful trait, stubbornness leads to self-destruction. Always check your will against God’s will, recorded in Scripture, so that He may teach you persistence in faith and break your sinful stubbornness. Thanks be to God, He has a remedy for all your faults through His gift of forgiveness, His Spirit, and instruction in righteousness. • Remedy my faults, Great Physician, and grant me a willing heart to believe Your Word. Amen. (TLSB)

The Fall of Jerusalem

15 The LORD, the God of their fathers, sent word to them through his messengers again and again, because he had pity on his people and on his dwelling place. **16** But they mocked God’s messengers, despised his words and scoffed at his prophets until the wrath of the LORD was aroused against his people and there was no remedy. **17** He brought up against them the king of the Babylonians,^a who killed their young men with the sword in the sanctuary, and spared neither young man nor young woman, old man or aged. God handed all of them over to Nebuchadnezzar. **18** He carried to Babylon all the articles from the temple of God, both large and small, and the treasures of the LORD’s temple and the treasures of the king and his officials. **19** They set fire to God’s temple and broke down the wall of Jerusalem; they burned all the palaces and destroyed everything of value there. **20** He carried into exile to Babylon the remnant, who escaped from the sword, and they became servants to him and his sons until the kingdom of Persia came to power. **21** The land enjoyed its sabbath rests; all the time of its desolation it rested, until the seventy years were completed in fulfillment of the word of the LORD spoken by Jeremiah. **22** In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, in order to fulfill the word of the LORD spoken by Jeremiah, the LORD moved the heart of Cyrus king of Persia to make a proclamation throughout his realm and to put it in writing: **23** “This is what Cyrus king of Persia says: “The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and he has appointed me to build a temple for him at Jerusalem in Judah. Anyone of his people among you—may the LORD his God be with him, and let him go up.”

36:17–21 The Chronicler noted that Saul died because the Lord killed him (1Ch 10:13–14). Here he notes that the Lord brings the Chaldeans (Babylonians) to punish Judah. (TLSB)

36:19 Babylonians razed the city to make it indefensible and prevent future rebellions. (TLSB)

36:20–21 The conclusion of the two Biblical histories is interestingly different: The writer(s) of Samuel and Kings had sought to show why the exile occurred and had traced the sad history of Israel's disobedience to the exile, the time in which the writer(s) of those books lived. With the state at an end, he could still show God's faithfulness to his promises to David (2Ki 25:27–30) by reporting the favor bestowed on his descendants. The Chronicler, whose vantage point was after the exile, was able to look back to the exile not only as judgment, but also as containing hope for the future. For him the purified remnant had returned to a purified land (vv. 22–23), and a new age was beginning. The exile was not judgment alone, but also blessing, for it allowed the land to catch up on its sabbath rests (Lev 26:40–45). And God had remembered his covenant (Lev 26:45) and restored his people to the land. (CSB)

36:21 Unique to 2Ch. *the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah*. Cf 29:10; 36:2. (TLSB)

Sabbaths. Cf Lv 26:34, 40–45 for the description of the exile as a Sabbath. This was a purifying time of rest and repentance and, despite its pain and horror, a time of hope for the future (cf Jer 29:10–14). Seventy years is a round or symbolic figure for the length of the exile. Some captives were carried off 20 years before the city fell in 587 BC (Dn 1:1–6). In 538 BC, the first exiles were permitted to return. Cf Ezr 1:1. (TLSB)

36:22–23 The writer of Kings concluded his history before the restoration; so this text is not paralleled in his account. It is repeated, however, at the beginning of Ezra (1:1–4), which resumes the history at the point where Chronicles ends—indicating that Chronicles and Ezra may have been written by the same author. See the prophecy of Jeremiah (Jer 25:1–14; cf. Da 9). Cyrus also issued decrees for other captive peoples, allowing them to return to their lands. Under God's sovereignty, this effort by a Persian king to win the favor of peoples treated harshly by the Babylonians also inaugurated the restoration period. See notes on Ezr 1:1–4. (CSB)

The Chronicler includes the return prophesied by Jeremiah and Isaiah, assuring the reader that the chosen people would not remain in the Babylonian captivity. See the same intimation of hope at the end of Kings (2Ki 25:27). (TLSB)

36:23 *LORD, the God of heaven*. Cyrus's declaration implies he knew Yahweh, the true God (see notes, 1Ki 5:7; 10:9). However, he may express himself this way for the sake of the Judeans he ruled (i.e., “Your God told me to do this, so listen”; and “may the LORD his [a Judean's] God” [v 23b]). (TLSB)

36:22–23 The Lord stirs the Persian king Cyrus to declare that the Judeans could return home from exile. Ironically, the people who would not hear God’s Word from the prophets now hear His decree from the mouth of a foreign ruler who may have been a pagan. The Lord goes to great lengths to reach His people. How great is His patience and mercy toward us! • Fulfill Your Word for me, O Lord, according to Your mercy in Christ, who set me free. Amen. (TLSB)