

SECOND KINGS

Chapter 24

During Jehoiakim's reign, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon invaded the land, and Jehoiakim became his vassal for three years. But then he changed his mind and rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar. ² The LORD sent Babylonian, Aramean, Moabite and Ammonite raiders against him. He sent them to destroy Judah, in accordance with the word of the LORD proclaimed by his servants the prophets. ³ Surely these things happened to Judah according to the LORD's command, in order to remove them from his presence because of the sins of Manasseh and all he had done, ⁴ including the shedding of innocent blood. For he had filled Jerusalem with innocent blood, and the LORD was not willing to forgive. ⁵ As for the other events of Jehoiakim's reign, and all he did, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Judah? ⁶ Jehoiakim rested with his fathers. And Jehoiachin his son succeeded him as king. ⁷ The king of Egypt did not march out from his own country again, because the king of Babylon had taken all his territory, from the Wadi of Egypt to the Euphrates River.

24:1 *Nebuchadnezzar.* Means "O (god) Nabu, protect my son!" He was the son of Nabopolassar (see note on 23:29) and the most powerful king of the Neo-Babylonian empire (612–539 B.C.), reigning 605–562 (see Da 1–4). (CSB)

Nebuchadnezzar ... came up. Neco's domination of Judah was short-lived (23:29–36). (TLSB)

invaded the land. In 605 Nebuchadnezzar, the crown prince and commander of the Babylonian army, defeated Pharaoh Neco and the Egyptians at the battle of Carchemish and again at Hamath (see 23:29; Jer 46:2). These victories had far-reaching implications in the geopolitical power structure of the eastern Mediterranean world. Nebuchadnezzar went on to conquer all of the "Hatti-country," which, according to Babylonian records, included the "city of Judah." Daniel was among the Judahite hostages taken at this time (see Da 1:1). Perhaps as early as Sept. 6, 605, Nebuchadnezzar acceded to the Babylonian throne upon the death of his father. (CSB)

servant. Vassal of Babylon. After defeating Neco at Carchemish, Nebuchadnezzar pursued him to the borders of Egypt. Jehoiakim had no other choice but to submit to the new regional conqueror. On his return to Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar took with him a group of hostages, consisting of members "of the royal family and of the nobility" (Dn 1:3). Among them were Daniel and his associates (Dn 1:1–7). (TLSB)

three years. Probably 604–602. In 604 Nebuchadnezzar returned to the west and took tribute from "all the kings of Hatti-land." It is likely that Jehoiakim was included among these kings. (CSB)

changed his mind and rebelled. In 601 Nebuchadnezzar again marched west against Egypt and was repulsed by strong Egyptian resistance. This may have encouraged Jehoiakim's rebellion, even though Jeremiah had warned against it (see Jer 27:9–11). (CSB)

When after three years the Babylonians suffered serious reverses in a battle with Neco, Jehoiakim rebelled. His trust in Egypt was unwarranted (v 7). (TLSB)

24:2 *the LORD sent.* In Judah's moment of weakness, all her neighbors exploited her. This was not simply politics but part of God's judgment. Cypr: "The adversary can do nothing against us except God shall have previously permitted it; so that all our fear, and devotion, and obedience may be turned towards God" (ANF 5:454). Nebuchadnezzar was not at once in a position to deal personally and in full force with the rebellion. During this time, the Lord sent against Jehoiakim the Chaldaean (Babylonian) occupation troops, stationed in neighboring Syria, Moab, and Ammon. Bands from these countries joined in harassing raids against Judean territory. (TLSB)

Babylonian, Aramean, Moabite and Ammonite raiders against him. Reaction to Jehoiakim's rebellion was swift. Babylonian troops, perhaps garrisoned in Aram, along with troops of other loyal vassals, were sent to put down the Judahite rebellion. (CSB)

24:3 *sins of Manasseh.* See 21:11–12; 23:26–27; Jer 15:3–4. (CSB)

24:4 *innocent blood.* See note on 21:16. *not willing to forgive.* See 22:17. (CSB)

24:5 *annals of the kings of Judah.* See note on 1Ki 14:29. (CSB)

rested with his fathers. See note on 1Ki 1:21. Jehoiakim died shortly before Jerusalem fell to the Babylonian siege (see vv. 8–12). Whether his death was due to natural causes or political intrigue is not indicated. (CSB)

24:7 *The king of Egypt did not march out from his own country again.* This was due to the Egyptian defeat at Carchemish (see Jer 46:2) in 605 B.C., and it explains why Jehoiakim received no help from Egypt in his rebellion against the Babylonians. (CSB)

Wadi of Egypt. See note on 1Ki 8:65. (CSB)

Brook of Egypt ... river Euphrates. All of Canaan and Aram. (TLSB)

23:36–24:7 The Lord arranges regional politics against Jehoiakim and Judah, determined to avenge the evils committed by Judah's kings. Sins, even when forgiven, continue to bear consequences in our lives. As you consider your life in view of God's Word, consider also the lives and futures of those against whom you sin and ask the Lord for mercy, not only for yourself, but also for those affected by your sins. The Lord, whose mercies are new every morning, will surely hear your prayers. Entrust all things to His good and gracious will. • Take away my sins, O Savior, and guard others from the consequences of my faults. Amen. (TLSB)

Jehoiachin King of Judah

⁸ Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem three months. His mother's name was Nehushta daughter of Elnathan; she was from Jerusalem. ⁹ He did evil in the eyes of the LORD, just as his father had done. ¹⁰ At that time the officers of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon advanced on Jerusalem and laid siege to it, ¹¹ and Nebuchadnezzar himself came up to the city while his officers were besieging it. ¹² Jehoiachin king of Judah, his mother, his attendants, his nobles and his officials all surrendered to him. In the eighth year of the reign of the king of Babylon, he took Jehoiachin prisoner. ¹³ As the LORD had declared, Nebuchadnezzar removed all the treasures from the temple of the LORD and from the royal palace, and took away all the gold articles that Solomon king of Israel had made for the temple of the LORD. ¹⁴ He carried into exile all Jerusalem: all the officers and fighting men, and all the craftsmen and artisans—a total of ten thousand. Only the poorest people of the land were left. ¹⁵ Nebuchadnezzar took Jehoiachin captive to Babylon. He also took from Jerusalem to Babylon the king's mother, his wives, his officials and the leading men of the land. ¹⁶ The king of Babylon also deported to Babylon the entire force of seven thousand fighting men, strong and fit for war, and a thousand craftsmen and artisans. ¹⁷ He made Mattaniah, Jehoiachin's uncle, king in his place and changed his name to Zedekiah.

24:8 Three years after Jehoiakim's rash revolt, Nebuchadnezzar was ready to mount a full-scale attack against Jerusalem. In the meantime, Jehoiakim, only 36 years old (23:36), had died or been assassinated. (TLSB)

Jehoiachin. Jehoiakim's 18-year-old son, also called Jeconiah and Coniah. (TLSB)

three months. In 598–597 B.C. Babylonian records place the fall of Jerusalem to Nebuchadnezzar on Mar. 16, 597. This means that the three-month and ten-day reign (see 2Ch 36:9–10) of Jehoiachin began in December, 598. (CSB)

24:9 *as his father.* See 23:37; Jer 22:20–30. (CSB)

24:11 *Nebuchadnezzar himself came up to the city.* Babylonian records say that Nebuchadnezzar “encamped against the city of Judah, and on the second day of the month of Addaru [i.e., Mar. 16, 597 B.C.] he seized the city and captured the king.” (CSB)

24:12 *gave himself up.* Jehoiachin became Nebuchadnezzar's prisoner in 597 BC.

eighth year. April, 597 B.C. (see 2Ch 36:10; see also note on Jer 52:28, where a different system of dating is reflected). (CSB)

Of Nebuchadnezzar. (TLSB)

24:13 *As the LORD had declared.* See 20:13, 17. (CSB)

Cf 20:17–18. This final sad episode, the destruction of the temple, also happened according to the Lord’s purposes. Ambr: “It was far better to preserve souls than gold for the Lord. For He Who sent the apostles without gold also brought together the churches without gold. The Church has gold, not to store up, but to lay out, and to spend on those who need.... Is it not much better that the priests should melt it down for the sustenance of the poor, if other supplies fail, than that a sacrilegious enemy should carry it off and defile it? Would not the Lord Himself say: Why did you suffer so many needy to die of hunger? Surely you had gold? You should have given them sustenance. Why are so many captives brought on the slave market, and why are so many unredeemed left to be slain by the enemy? It had been better to preserve living vessels than gold ones. To this no answer could be given. For what would you say: I feared that the temple of God would need its ornaments? He would answer: The sacraments need not gold, nor are they proper to gold only—for they are not bought with gold. The glory of the sacraments is the redemption of captives. Truly they are precious vessels, for they redeem men from death. That, indeed, is the true treasure of the Lord which effects what His blood effected” (*NPNF* 2 10:64). Cf Ex 25:10–22 regarding the ark of the covenant. (TLSB)

24:14 *ten thousand*. This figure may include the 7,000 fighting men and 1,000 craftsmen mentioned in v. 16 (see note on Jer 52:28, where a different number of captives is mentioned). (CSB)

men of valor. Soldiers. (TLSB)

10,000 captives. Nebuchadnezzar deported with him the royal family, the palace officials, and a large segment of the population, leaving behind only the poorest. Among these captives was the prophet Ezekiel (Ezk 1:2–3). (TLSB)

24:15 *Jehoiachin captive to Babylon*. Fulfilling Jeremiah’s prophecy (Jer 22:24–27; see 2Ki 25:27–30). (CSB)

24:16 *men of valor*. Soldiers for his army. (TLSB)

craftsmen and the metal workers. Skilled laborers to strengthen his kingdom. (TLSB)

24:17 *Mattaniah, Jehoiachin’s uncle*. Mattaniah was a son of Josiah (see 2Ch 3:15; Jer 1:3) and brother of Jehoiachin’s father, Jehoiakim. (CSB)

changed his name to Zedekiah. Mattaniah’s name (meaning “gift of Yahweh”) was changed to Zedekiah (“righteousness of Yahweh”). Perhaps Nebuchadnezzar wanted to imply that his actions against Jerusalem and Jehoiachin were just. In any case, the name change signified subjection to Nebuchadnezzar (see note on 23:34). (CSB)

24:8–17 In the surrender of Jehoiachin, the Lord allows the dismantling of the temple David had planned and Solomon had built. Thanks be to God, He does not dwell in temples we make, as He explained to Solomon at the beginning (1Ki 8:27). He dwells instead in the hearts of His people

by faith. • “Abide with me, fast falls the eventide. The darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide. When other helpers fail and comforts flee, Help of the helpless, O abide with me.” Amen. (*LSB* 878:1). (TLSB)

Zedekiah King of Judah

18 Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem eleven years. His mother’s name was Hamutal daughter of Jeremiah; she was from Libnah. **19** He did evil in the eyes of the LORD, just as Jehoiakim had done. **20** It was because of the LORD’s anger that all this happened to Jerusalem and Judah, and in the end he thrust them from his presence.

24:18 *Zedekiah*. Son of Josiah; brother of Jehoahaz (23:30–31). Cf v 17.(TLSB)

became king. Puppet ruler whom Nebuchadnezzar had not removed. (TLSB)

eleven years. 597–586 B.C. (CSB)

Jeremiah. See note on 23:31. (CSB)

Libnah. See note on 8:22. (CSB)

24:19 *did evil ... as Jehoiakim*. See note on 23:37. During Zedekiah’s reign idolatrous practices continued to increase in Jerusalem (see 2Ch 36:14; Eze 8–11). He was a weak and indecisive ruler (see Jer 38:5, 19), who refused to heed the word of the Lord given through Jeremiah (2Ch 36:12). (CSB)

24:20 *Zedekiah rebelled*. Most interpreters link Zedekiah’s revolt with the succession to the Egyptian throne in 589 B.C. of the ambitious pharaoh Apries (Hophra). Zedekiah had sworn allegiance to Nebuchadnezzar (Eze 17:13), he had sent envoys to Babylon (see Jer 29:3), and he had made a personal visit (see Jer 51:59). However, he seems to have capitulated to the seductive propaganda of the anti-Babylonian and pro-Egyptian faction in Jerusalem (see Jer 37:5; Eze 17:15–16) in a tragically miscalculated effort to gain independence from Babylon. (CSB)

He cast them out from His presence. The Lord would reject even the rule of this vassal king over the Promised Land.

24:18–20 The Lord remains repulsed by Judah’s evils, rejecting even the vassal rule of Zedekiah. The depth of God’s anger and disappointment over sin is beyond our ability to fathom, just as surely as we cannot understand the depth of our own sins. Yet, the Lord does not cast off His people forever but calls them to repent. Ever present in His Word and Sacraments, He administers to us the full blessings of forgiveness. • “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Thy presence, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation, and uphold me with Thy free spirit.” Amen. (*LSB*, pp 192–93). (TLSB)