

2 Kings 24-25 - The Fall of Judah

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Let's go ahead and open our Bibles to 2 Kings, chapter 23. Now, the reason we're going to chapter 23 is you'll remember that we didn't finish this chapter completely last week.

We got... We basically covered in 22 and in most of 23, the life and reign of king Josiah, who was an absolutely fantastic king. But you'll remember that he died at a very young age. At 39, when he foolishly went up against Pharaoh, who was marching through the area to go and meet the king of Assyria. And Josiah went out against him and got killed in the battle.

And his son, Jehoahaz, who's not his oldest son but one of his sons, is the one who takes the throne at that point. We're not really sure why they chose him over his elder brother.

But it begins, we're in verse 31. In chapter 23:31, following the death of king Josiah, it says, "*Jehoahaz was twenty-three years old when he began to reign, and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Hamutal the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah.*" (ESV)

Now, Jehoahaz was actually his throne name. And that was not completely uncommon. He was... Personally he was known as Shallum. He went by the name Jehoahaz as king. "*And (we're told in verse 32) that he did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his fathers had done.*"

Jehoahaz began, certainly didn't complete, but began the process of undoing everything that his father Josiah had done, in ridding the land of all of the idolatry, which had really just encompassed this land for so many years. Josiah did such an amazing job. But his son did not follow in his footsteps. And he did evil in the sight of the Lord.

And this proves that you can clean house without really affecting the heart. Can't you? It's possible to clean up your surroundings without really making any difference to the internal working of your heart. And the people's hearts had not changed even though Josiah had done a great deal to rid the land of idolatry.

It goes on in verse 33 to say that *"...Pharaoh Neco put him in bonds at Riblah (which is in Syria by the way,) in the land of Hamath, that he might not reign in Jerusalem, and laid on the land a tribute (which is a taxation) of a hundred talents of silver and a talent of gold."* And that is a lot that he asked of them.

But again, Pharaoh Neco was probably in Syria because he had been battling or doing something in that region. And he called for king Jehoahaz to come and meet with him there. And we don't know the details of that meeting. But apparently when Pharaoh met with the young Judaeen king, he didn't like him. Decided maybe he wasn't going to be a team player. Because remember, Judah for all intents and purposes, is under the dominion of Egypt right now because his father foolishly went up to battle against Pharaoh Neco.

Pharaoh and Egypt is now in a position of dominance over Judah. And he calls for the king of Judah to come. He decides for some reason he doesn't like him. And he deposes him; instantly takes him off the throne. And decided to do something else.

Look at verse 34. It says, *"And Pharaoh Neco made Eliakim the son of Josiah king in the place of Josiah his father, and changed his name to Jehoiakim. But he took Jehoahaz away, and he came to Egypt and died there."* The king took Jehoahaz off the throne, took him to Egypt where he died. We don't know the details surrounding that specifically. And placed his brother Eliakim on the throne and then changed his name.

You might say, well, why did he change his name? Because he could. It was truly a way of signifying dominion over someone. To force a name change in essence, so that they would... Everybody would know that this man was under the control of the Pharaoh.

Verse 35, *"And Jehoiakim gave the silver and gold to Pharaoh, but he taxed the land to give the money according to the command of Pharaoh. He exacted the silver and the gold of the people of the land, from everyone according to his assessment, to give it to Pharaoh Necho."*

You see what's going on? This new young king who's been placed on the throne, and he's a little bit older than his brother. But Jehoiakim knows that he has a tax burden to pay to Pharaoh annually. But instead of basically paying it out of the royal coffers, he puts a heavier taxation on the people. And they have to cough up the money in essence to pay this tax to Egypt.

Verse 36, "*Jehoiakim was twenty-five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Zebidah the daughter of Pedaiiah of Rumah.* ³⁷ *And he did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his (father) fathers (rather) had done.*" That's basically where chapter 23 ends, with Jehoiakim on the throne of Judah.

But remember, the people are under the rule of Egypt temporarily, even though Assyria is the world power at this time. They are the big guys on the block. They're the ones who are basically able to beat anybody up that they want. But for right now, they've left Egypt alone. And Egypt is flexing its own muscle. And the Lord is therefore using them as His spanking spoon over the nation of Judah because of their disobedience.

Now, by the time the events of this next chapter get going, we're going to see that there's a shift in power in the region. Because it begins here, chapter 24 of 2 Kings by saying, "*In his days, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up, and Jehoiakim became his servant for three years.*" Suddenly, Judah is now serving a new master. They have a new king or country that they are now a servant to.

And so what happened? Well, we're not told in between these two chapters. But what happened between chapter 23 and chapter 24, is that Babylon conquered Assyria. And with it, all of the other nations that Assyria had conquered, including Egypt. Assyria had come in and muscled Egypt under their thumb. But then the king of Babylon rose to power and conquered Assyria. And now Babylon is the big guy on the block. And they are the ones who will ultimately conquer Judah.

Now, we see the king of Judah is a vassal, if you will, or a servant of the king of Babylon. By the way, we know from history and also from the writings of Jeremiah, that in 605 B.C. at the battle of Carchemish on the Euphrates river, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, actually defeated an alliance of Assyrian and Egyptian forces. Almost sounds like you're hearing today's news, doesn't it? But then he moved down into the region. He pushed Egypt back. And during the evasion, Jehoiakim became his vassal.

But later, probably because Jehoiakim wanted to take advantage of the shift in power that was going on. The end of verse 1, if you'll look at it in your Bible, verse 1 ends by saying, "*Then he turned and rebelled against him.*" That means, Jehoiakim turned and rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar.

Again, Nebuchadnezzar is the world power now. Jehoiakim and the kingdom of Judah is under their thumb. But again, more than likely, because Jehoiakim is

wanting to exploit the fact that changes in power will sometimes create vacuums and weaknesses, he assumes that he's going to take advantage of that. And he rebels against the king of Babylon and basically says, I'm not going to pay you your money. I'm not going to send you all this money that we've been sending to Egypt. You can forget it. And by the way, that rebellion was in direct disobedience to the Word of God, which would have been spoken through Jeremiah.

I don't know if you've read through the Book of Jeremiah lately. But God spoke through Jeremiah during this very time, repeatedly, telling the kings of Judah that it was His will that they were going to be taken over by Babylon. And if they would surrender to the Babylonian forces, that things would go well with them. And sure they wouldn't have their control of their own country. But God had taken that control away because of their disobedience.

And he's basically telling the people of Judah submit to the disobedience, or excuse me, to the discipline of the Lord. Submit to My discipline. If you don't submit to My disciplinary actions on your behalf, it's going to go worse for you. The kings of Judah never listened. Never ever listened to what the Lord said through Jeremiah.

The Lord... Look what it goes on in verse 2 to say, *“And the LORD sent against him bands of the Chaldeans (And by the way, that's another name for the region of Babylon, Chaldeans.) and the bands of the Syrians and bands of Moabites and bands of the Ammonites, and he sent them against Judah to destroy it, according to the word of the LORD that he spoke by his servants the prophets.”*

God is turning up the heat, if you will, in a disciplinary sort of a way against His people in Judah by sending all of these nations and raiders and armies to just... They're just constantly hounded.

Can you imagine what it would be like? I mean, we really, for the most part, as far as actual boots on the ground wars, we've never fought one here on our own soil. We've been attacked most recently in the last, several years. But we've never had boots on the ground fighting going on in our own country. Well, since the Civil War, I guess, huh? We really don't know what it's like.

But can you imagine if we had nations invading us right and left. Imagine Canada came down and attacked us. And pretty much at the same time, Mexico, and some of the other, South American countries were making their way up or something. And attacking the United States or whatever. And just constantly barraging us on every front.

And of course, remember Judah takes up a very small part... I mean, you think Israel, all of Israel is small. Judah is just a portion of it. This is a very small sliver of land. They're just on the Mediterranean and easy to get to. And pretty easy to cover in a fairly short amount of time. You can just about imagine what this was like for the people living at that time.

But it tells us in verse 3 why. It says, *"Surely this came upon Judah at the command of the LORD, to remove them out of his sight, for the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he had done, 4 and also for the innocent blood that he had shed. For he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood, and the LORD would not pardon."* Speaks here of the sins of Manasseh.

Now, you'll remember Manasseh was the son of Hezekiah, a good king. His son Manasseh was the worst king. And then you'll remember also that Manasseh repented at the end of his life. God was gracious to him. But the sins that Manasseh had committed and encouraged the people to commit had left such a stain upon the land that God was now going to deal with the land.

And again, it refers to the sins of Manasseh. And he was a, piece of work. But frankly, so were all these last kings of Judah as well. They were wicked in their own ways. Including the king that we're dealing with right now, king Jehoiakim.

King Jehoiakim was... God was so gracious to him. He raised up prophets like Jeremiah. And Uriah, someone you may not remember. Because there isn't a book of Uriah. But Uriah spoke... Had the boldness to speak to King Jehoiakim about his sins telling him to turn. And the king had him put to death. And he persecuted Jeremiah.

And when Jeremiah sent King Jehoiakim a scroll containing the writings of the prophetic words that God had given him. The king had them read. And after each line was read, he took a knife and cut that piece of the scroll off and burned it in the fire. And then they read the next portion of the Word of the Lord he cut it off with his knife and threw it in the fire until the entire scroll was consumed. That was his disdain for the Word of God.

Verse 5 goes on and says, *"Now the rest of the deeds of Jehoiakim and all that he did, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah? 6 So Jehoiakim slept with his fathers, (which by the way is just a euphemism for death) and Jehoiachin his son reigned in his place."*

Now, we're not given the details here of the death of Jehoiakim, only that he slept with his fathers. And again, that just simply means "he died like his fathers died."

But I wanted to share with you some prophecies that Jeremiah gave to King Jehoiakim while he was still alive. The first one is from Jeremiah chapter 22. Look at this.

Jeremiah 22:18-19 (ESV)

Therefore thus says the LORD concerning Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah: "They shall not lament for him, saying, 'Ah, my brother!' or 'Ah, sister!' They shall not lament for him saying, 'Ah, lord!' or 'Ah, his majesty!' With the burial of a donkey he shall be buried, dragged and dumped beyond the gates of Jerusalem."

Therefore thus says the LORD concerning Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah: "They shall not lament for him, saying, 'Ah, my brother!' or 'Ah, sister!' They shall not lament for him saying, 'Ah, lord!' or 'Ah, his majesty!' With the burial of a donkey he shall be buried, dragged and dumped beyond the gates of Jerusalem."

Isn't that interesting? Jeremiah prophesied that King Jehoiakim would not even be given a proper burial. That he was so evil that God was not going to allow him that. And then check this in Jeremiah chapter 36, it says,

Jeremiah 36:30 (ESV)

Therefore thus says the LORD concerning Jehoiakim king of Judah: He shall have none to sit on the throne of David, and his dead body shall be cast out to the heat by day and the frost by night.

Therefore thus says the LORD concerning Jehoiakim king of Judah: He shall have none to sit on the throne of David, and his dead body shall be cast out to the heat by day and the frost by night.

Again, speaking of the fact that he would not be given a proper burial. But that his body would lie exposed. And that was a huge issue to the Jews.

All right, let's go on. Verse 7 here in the text. *"And the king of Egypt did not come again out of his land, for the king of Babylon had taken all that belonged to the king of Egypt from the Brook of Egypt to the river Euphrates.*

8 Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he became king, and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. (Yeah three months.) His mother's name was Nehushta the daughter of Elnathan of Jerusalem. 9 And he did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father had done.

10 At that time the servants of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up to Jerusalem, and the city was besieged. 11 And Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to the city while his servants were besieging it, 12 and Jehoiachin the king of Judah gave himself up to the king of Babylon, himself and his mother and his servants and his officials and his palace officials. The king of Babylon took him prisoner in the eighth year of his reign 13 and carried off 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 in the temple of the LORD, which Solomon king of Israel had made, as the LORD had foretold."

Now, you guys know again what it means when an enemy army comes to "besiege" a city. They basically camp around it - the entire city. And they don't let anybody come in. And they don't let anybody go out. And they essentially they are there just to starve them out. But king Jehoiachin doesn't allow it to happen. He surrenders. We don't know how exactly long it took. But he just decided he was going to surrender to the king of Babylon. And he was taken.

And it says that they took a lot of the treasures of the king's house. Many things from the temple of the LORD. And look at verse 14. It says, "*He carried...*" And this is speaking of Nebuchadnezzar. "*He carried away all Jerusalem and all the officials and all the mighty men of valor, 10,000 captives, and all the craftsmen and the smiths. None remained, except the poorest people of the land.*

Now this is interesting. But this is actually when the prophet Ezekiel was taken to go live in Babylon. And you know that Ezekiel's ministry of prophecy took place almost exclusively all in the Persian kingdom, or in the kingdom of Babylon. And this is also the time when Daniel and the young men with him were also taken captive to Babylon. And those men spent the remainder of their lives in that area.

Because as you know the kingdom of Judah is going to be captive in Babylon for 70 years. Because that's what God determined. And through the prophecies of Jeremiah, God said, I will take you captive and there you will remain for 70 years in the kingdom of Babylon. One of the reasons that we... I mean, it's in the Book of Daniel frankly, that we read about this exile. Let me show you this one too. On the screen from Daniel 1.

Daniel 1:1-2 (ESV)

In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. And the LORD gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with some of the vessels of the house of God. And he brought them to the land of Shinar, to the house of his God and placed the vessels in the treasury of his god.

In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. (Daniel writes,) And the LORD gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with some of the vessels of the house of god. And he brought them to the land of Shinar, (Which is the ancient name for the kingdom of Babylon.) to the house of his God and placed the vessels in the treasury of his god.

Nebuchadnezzar came and took all these things out of the temple. And he put them in the temple of his own god.

Okay. Lets keep reading. *"¹⁵ And he carried away Jehoiachin to Babylon. The king's mother, the king's wives, his officials, and the chief men of the land he took into captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon. ¹⁶ And the king of Babylon brought captive to Babylon all the men of valor, 7,000, and the craftsmen and the metal workers, 1,000, all of them strong and fit for war.*

¹⁷ And the king of Babylon made Mattaniah, Jehoiachin's uncle, king in his place, and changed his name to Zedekiah."

Now this is interesting. But Jeremiah had actually predicted that none of king Jehoiakim's sons would ever sit on the throne. While he was reigning, this evil Judean king, Jeremiah wrote about him through the inspiration of the Lord. And said this. Let me put this on the screen from Jeremiah chapter 22.

Jeremiah 22:30 (ESV)

Thus says the LORD: "Write this man down as childless, a man who shall not succeed in his days, for none of his offspring shall succeed in sitting on the throne of David and ruling again in Judah."

Thus says the LORD: "Write this man down as childless, a man who shall not succeed in his days, for none of his offspring shall succeed in sitting on the throne of David and ruling again in Judah."

And then according to that prophecy, the king of Babylon put his uncle, which is now the third son of Josiah, on the throne in Judah. And he changed his name to Zedekiah. Now, Zedekiah will be the very last of the kings of Judah. Interesting that it begins with a Z huh?

Verse 18 says,

"Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Hamutal the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah. 19 And he did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all the law that Jehoiakim had done. 20 For because of the anger of the LORD it came to the point in Jerusalem and Judah that he cast them out from his presence.

And Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon."

Boy, after all that. After all they had seen, Zedekiah still rebelled against the king of Babylon. The king of Babylon had essentially come and emptied the land. He took all the people of valor, he took all the metal workers, and people that could serve him in whatever capacity they could. He carted them off, left really the poor people to stick around and work the land. And he put this puppet king in place, this Zedekiah.

But after a period of time, this Zedekiah, starts thinking so highly of himself and his power, that he actually rebels against the king of Babylon. Again, contrary to what the Lord told him to do. God said through Jeremiah, this is your discipline! So take your medicine! Right? Don't fight against it. Don't fight against what the Lord is doing. Take your medicine. If you just simply take your medicine, things will go well. If you fight against this thing, God said, you're fighting against Me.

Here's the interesting thing about the king of Babylon. The king of Babylon came into Judah and conquered the land by the Lord's direction. He was the servant of the Lord. I'm not saying he was a godly man. He was a pagan. I mean, he was a pagan from the word go. But he was used of God. He was utilized by God, as the one who would bring discipline to the nation of Judah. He's operating in conjunction with the will of the Lord.

And when Zedekiah, or all the other kings that came before him, bucked against that disciplinary action, they were bucking against the Lord themselves. And you can't win. You can't win against God.

Now, here's the interesting thing about this. The Bible says that God still disciplines those whom He loves. Okay? God still disciplines His children. He will bring discipline into your life. I'm not talking about conquering nations or anything like that. But God still disciplines His children. He's a good father. And He knows when we've gotten off track. And He knows how to get us back on track.

And that discipline can come in lots of different ways. Not the least of which is making us miserable. Miserable in the midst of our sin. And some of us could probably stand up if we were given the opportunity and talk about it tonight. How you were living a life of just doing your own thing, going your own way. And you were miserable. God allowed you to be miserable as an act of discipline on your behalf so that you would turn from your ways. And remember, that's always God's point or goal in discipline. Okay?

Do you understand that discipline doesn't always have to be painful? We make it painful, usually. But discipline simply comes from the concept, same word that we get, disciple. To be a disciple is to be a follower. But to be a disciple there is an element of training that comes into play. And we all need to be trained. And God is training us to be more Christ like. He's training us to be more obedient. He's training us to be more respectful of His Word and responsive to His spirit when He convicts us of sin and that sort of thing.

And sometimes that training takes on an element that is punitive. And those actions on God's part are corrective and disciplinary from the standpoint that we're going through painful measures by the Lord, to bring us to a place of brokenness and repentance.

Many times though, Christians will fight against that very thing. Just like the kings of Judah. And they'll...They won't accept it. They'll either blame Satan... You guys understand, don't you that Satan is a pawn? Do you get that from the Word?

I mean, so many Christians have this idea like God and Satan are in this match and they're equally matched. And you got this mental picture of God and Satan duking it out. And some days Satan gets the upper hand. And some days God gets the upper hand. But we never really know for sure who's going to beat each other up on any particular day. It could go either way depending.

Do you guys understand that Satan is a created being. Right? And that's all. Just like you, he's a created being. Now, he's certainly more powerful than you are. And he's been around a lot longer. And I think we should certainly have an

element of respect. But listen people, he's no match for the living God. No match.

Listen, we're told in the Book of Revelation that an angel is going to overcome him at some point, bind him with chains, and cast him for a period of time, a thousand year period of time, into an abyss. An angel is going to do it. Another created being is going to overpower Satan, bind him with chains, and so forth. If an angel can overpower Satan, I mean, it's ridiculous to even think that somehow God has met His match in the work, or the person of Satan.

You understand that Satan gets used by God. And I don't know if that tweaks your theology or not. Maybe it bothers you a little bit to think that God uses Satan to accomplish His purposes. If it bothers you I'm sorry, but it's in the Bible.

At the Last Supper, you guys know the story. Jesus said to Peter, Peter, this very night Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. He's asked to sift you as wheat. But I've prayed for you. And so when you return, strengthen your brothers. (Luke 22:31) Satan had a hand in the process of refining that took place in Peter's life. And that was, make no mistake about it, that was discipline. God was disciplining Peter for his attitude of, I'm Peter and I'm something. And God had to show him that he was nothing without the Lord.

Well, it was a painful experience for Peter to go through. But it was an important one. And Satan was used in the process of bringing Peter to that place. Listen, just because God uses evil to accomplish His purpose doesn't mean God is evil.

Nebuchadnezzar, as I said before, is an evil king. He is a pagan king. But God is using this king as His spanking spoon during this time. All right.

Now, chapter 25 begins here in verse one. It says, *"¹ And in the ninth year of his reign, (This is the reign of the final king, king Zedekiah.) in the tenth month, on the tenth day of the month, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came with all his army against Jerusalem and laid siege to it. And they built siegeworks all around it. ² So the city was besieged till the eleventh year of King Zedekiah."*

We don't know the exact month there but you do the math. From the ninth, late in the ninth year, to the 11th year, they are under siege. They are not able to leave the city.

Well, except... According to Jeremiah, there was a brief interruption in the siege because Egypt got its mojo together and attacked the king of Babylon. But that didn't last long. In fact, we read about that in Jeremiah. Let me put this passage up also on the screen here. From Jeremiah 37, it says,

Jeremiah 37:5 (ESV)

The army of Pharaoh had come out of Egypt. And when the Chaldeans, who were besieging Jerusalem heard news about them, they withdrew from Jerusalem.

The army of Pharaoh had come out of Egypt. And when the Chaldeans, (that's the Babylonians) who were besieging Jerusalem heard news about them, they withdrew from Jerusalem.

But it was a very short reprieve. The Chaldean army withdrew. They went over and just bloodied the nose of Egypt. And then they came back and reestablished their siege of Jerusalem.

Verse 3, "On the ninth day of the fourth month the famine was so severe in the city that there was no food for the people of the land. 4 Then a breach was made in the city, and all the men of war fled by night by the way of the gate between the two walls, by the king's garden, and the Chaldeans were around the city. And they went in the direction of the Arabah. 5 But the army of the Chaldeans pursued the king and overtook him in the plains of Jericho, and all his army was scattered from him."

Boy! Again, if you read through Jeremiah, you will see that Jeremiah repeatedly sent messages to king Zedekiah during this siege and said, just surrender. And do not try to run. Just surrender. It'll be..." And Jeremiah was making some inroads with some of the king's men. But there were others who kept propping up the king artificially telling him, don't worry, God's never going to allow the this city to fall completely because the temple is here.

Verse 6 says, "Then they captured the king and (look at this) they brought him up to the king of Babylon at Riblah, and they passed sentence on him. They slaughtered the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, and put out the eyes of Zedekiah and bound him in chains and took him to Babylon."

Doesn't that just sound incredibly sad to you? Especially when God had been speaking to this man for so long. They catch him. They pronounce sentence on him. They make him watch as they slaughter his children in front of his eyes. And that's the last thing he will ever see in his life. Because right after that, they

put out his eyes. They gouged out his eyes. And that is the last thing King Zedekiah ever sees. And then they chain him and they take him to Babylon. And you know what's interesting? This is exactly what Jeremiah said would happen. Jeremiah, chapter 34,

Jeremiah 34:1-3 (ESV)

The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, when Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and all his army and all the kingdoms of the earth under his dominion and all the peoples were fighting against Jerusalem and all of its cities: "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: Go and speak to Zedekiah king of Judah and say to him, 'Thus says the LORD: Behold, I am giving this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall burn it with fire. You shall not escape from his hand but shall surely be captured and delivered into his hand. You shall see the king of Babylon eye to eye and speak with him face to face. And you shall go to Babylon.'

The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, when Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and all his army and all the kingdoms of the earth under his dominion and all the peoples were fighting against Jerusalem and all of its cities: "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: Go and speak to Zedekiah king of Judah and say to him, 'Thus says the LORD: Behold, I am giving this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall burn it with fire. You shall not escape from his hand but shall surely be captured and delivered into his hand. You shall see the king of Babylon eye to eye and speak with him face to face. And you shall go to Babylon.'

And that is exactly what took place.

Verse 8 in your Bible. *"In the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month—that was the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon—Nebuzaradan, the captain of the bodyguard, a servant of the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem.*

9 And he burned the house of the LORD and the king's house and all the houses of Jerusalem; every great house he burned down. 11 And all the army of the Chaldeans, who were with the captain of the guard, broke down the walls around Jerusalem. 11 And the rest of the people who were left in the city and the deserters who had deserted to the king of Babylon, together with the rest of the multitude, Nebuzaradan and the captain of the (army) carried into exile."

And this is tremendously sad. Because the King Nebuchadnezzar finally, after so much rebellion from the city, decided, if we allow this city to stand, it will

continue to be a city of rebellion against our kingdom. And he sent the captain of the guard telling him to go to Jerusalem and just burn the place.

This is the temple. This is this grand, beautiful temple that Solomon built with all of its gold architecture, it's beautiful workings, embroideries and carvings. It was absolutely stunning. And now it's gone. It's completely burned down, broken down and decimated. In fact, along with the majority of the city of Jerusalem. It's just smoke and heaps.

Verse 12 says, *"But the captain of the guard left some of the poorest of the land to be vinedressers and plowmen."* In other words, you leave some people to work the land so it doesn't lie fallow and unproductive.

"13 And the pillars of bronze that were in the house of the LORD, and the stands and the bronze sea that were in the house of the LORD, the Chaldeans broke in pieces and carried the bronze to Babylon.

14 And they took away the pots and the shovels and the snuffers and the dishes for incense and all the vessels of bronze used in the temple service, 15 the fire pans also in the bowls. What was of gold the captain of the guard took away as gold, and what was of silver, as silver. 16 As for the two pillars, the one sea, and the stands that Solomon had made for the house of the LORD, the bronze of all these vessels was beyond weight. 17 The height of the one pillar was eighteen cubits, (and it was) and on it (rather) was a capital of bronze. The height of the capital was three cubits. A latticework and pomegranates, all of bronze, were all around the capital. And the second pillar had the same, with the latticework."

And again, it's just going over and talking about the beautiful craftsmanship that was part of the temple and all of its surroundings.

"18 And the captain of the guard took Seraiah the chief priest and Zephaniah the second priest and the three keepers of the threshold; 19 and from the city he took an officer who had been in command of the men of war, and five men of the king's council who were found in the city; and the secretary of the commander of the army, who mustered the people of the land; and sixty men of the people of the land, who were found in the city. 20 And Nebuzaradan and the captain of the guard took them and brought them to the king of Babylon at Riblah. 21 And the king of Babylon struck them down and put them to death at Riblah in the land of Hamath. So Judah was taken into exile out of its land.

22 And over the people who remained in the land of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had left, he appointed Gedaliah, the son of Ahikam, son of Shaphan, governor."

No more kings. And of course all the kings that were allowed to reign in the land were puppet kings. Even the kings that were placed there by Egypt. But now the king of Babylon says, no more. Because whenever there's a king, they're just so liable to rebellion. We're not going to let a king rule in the land any longer. Now, he appoints a governor.

Now, this man by the name of Gedaliah is a good man. He's a godly man and he's a friend of the prophet Jeremiah. And he became governor of the land because he took Jeremiah's advice, believing it was from the Lord, to basically just put up with the king of Babylon and to live in the land at peace. And don't rebel. And just again, take your medicine. Gedaliah was chosen to be the governor.

Verse 23, "Now when all the captains and their men heard that the king of Babylon had appointed Gedaliah governor, they came with their men to Gedaliah at Mizpah, (which is apparently where Gedaliah had set up his office because, again, Jerusalem was in ruins. And these men who came to him were) "namely, Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and Johanan the son of Kareah, and Seraiah the son of Tanhumeth the Netophathite, and Jaazaniah the son of the Maacathite. 24 And Gedaliah swore to them and their men, saying, "Do not be afraid because of the Chaldean officials. Live in the land and serve the king of Babylon, and it shall be well with you."

Now I need to remind you when Jeremiah said those things. And said, this is... Thus says the Lord, just live in the land and serve the king of Babylon, he was considered to be a traitor against the crown and against the Lord. And they persecuted him for it.

Now Gedaliah, the governor, is saying the same thing, just deal with it. Don't rebel. Live peaceably in the land. And do what the king of Babylon tells you to do. And it will go well with you. But of course, that's never going to sit well with rebellious people. Because rebellious people can't be told. They can't be told anything. And the last thing a rebellious person is going to hear is the word submit.

In verse 25 we're told, *"But in the seventh month, Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, the son of Elishama, of the royal family, (And we're not exactly sure how he has royal blood.) came with ten men and struck down Gedaliah. (It's a nice way of*

saying they assassinated him.) *and put him to death along with the Jews and the Chaldeans who were with him at Mizpah."*

The Chaldeans would have been a regiment of the Babylonian army that was left there in the land to keep the peace. They assassinated those men, those soldiers as well.

Verse 26 says, *"Then all the people, both small and great, and the captains of the forces arose and went to Egypt, for they were afraid of the Chaldeans."* And what that means is, when they realized what these rebellious men had done, they knew that this was going to be considered an act of rebellion. And the king of Babylon was going to come back.

And he wasn't going to ask any questions as to who did this. He was just probably going to kill everybody. And they knew that. They ran to Egypt, hoping they could probably just blend in with the people.

Now, again, if you go to the Book of Jeremiah, a man who prophesied and wrote during all these events, you will read in the, toward the end of his book, that he prophesied to these people saying, do not go to Egypt. Submit to the king of Babylon. And he said, if you go to Egypt, you're going to die by the sword there anyway.

What's interesting is they forced Jeremiah to go along. When they... When all these people went to Egypt they made him come with them. And that's where he went. For how long we're not exactly sure.

Now, one of the things you'll notice as you read through this account, here in 2 Kings is how matter of fact it is. Did you notice there's really no emotion that goes along with it as far as the fall of the city of Jerusalem, the destruction of the temple. It's all just given us in historic detail. And frankly not all that much detail.

It's just, and Nebuchadnezzar broke down the walls of the city. And he came in with his army. And they took the... Then they captured the king and put his eyes out and all these things. And then how the captain came back and decimated the city. And destroyed the temple. And burned down the house. It's all given to us in fairly matter of fact language.

If you want to get the emotion of what took place, there's an eyewitness account that you can read. And it was written by Jeremiah. But it's not the Book of

Jeremiah. It's the Book of Lamentations. And as you know a lamentation is a cry. And Jeremiah was referred to, is referred to, as the weeping prophet.

Jeremiah was heartbroken. He was heartbroken beginning with the death of Josiah. He loved Josiah. And he loved the reforms that Josiah was bringing into the land. But when Josiah died at the age of 39, Jeremiah was heartbroken. And he was additionally heartbroken to see Josiah's sons ascend to the throne, and act nothing like their father. And in fact, undo all that their father had done in his reforms to keep idolatry out of the land. And when Josiah...

Josiah's ministry was a hard ministry. And God told him from the very beginning it would be a hard ministry. I don't think you would have wanted Jeremiah's job. I think I said Josiah a moment ago. I meant Jeremiah. You would not have wanted Jeremiah's job.

God came to Jeremiah at the very beginning and said, I am going to give you a message to My people. And they won't listen to you. There are rebellious people. They are stiff necked people. And you will speak, but they will not listen.

And, Jeremiah was not the kind of man who put in his hours. He wasn't like, well, I'm God's prophet, I'm going to go say what they want, and then I'm going to go home and watch some TV. Forget these guys, they're losers. He was heartbroken. He hated what was going on in the land. He hated seeing the collapse of the nation around him. And it must have been awful to see the temple being destroyed.

But the Book of Lamentations, that contains all of the emotion, all of the sorrow of an eyewitness account.

Verse 27 as we finish out not only the chapter, but the book, it says, *"And in the thirty-seventh year of the exile of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, Evil-merodach king of Babylon, in the year that he began to reign, graciously freed Jehoiachin king of Judah from prison. 28 And he spoke kindly to him and gave him a seat above the seats of the kings who were with him in Babylon. 29 So Jehoiachin put off his prison garments. And every day of his life he dined regularly at the king's table, 30 and for his allowance, a regular allowance was given him by the king, according to his daily needs, as long as he lived."* But he, of course, died in exile.

It's an interesting way for the book to end. And you wonder if it's just so hurtful that they wanted to end this thing on an up note. Well, I guess there's that one

issue. Jehoiachin got treated kindly toward the end of his life. One of the sons of Nebuchadnezzar came up and reigned in his father's place. And the kings at that time, when they conquered a land they would take the king that they conquered and put him in prison. And it's like a trophy case.

And this son of Nebuchadnezzar took note of the king of Judah and treated him kindly. Brought him up out of prison, gave him even a daily allowance, and allowed him to eat food from the king, and so forth. And that's where it ends.

What's very interesting however, about this again, is that God told the people of Israel that they would be in exile for 70 years. And if you read the Book of Daniel, you will find that Daniel actually had access to the writings of Jeremiah. And the prophecies that he gave during that time. And Jeremiah, or excuse me, Daniel read those and took note of the fact. And he lived that long that they were almost at the very end of the 70 years.

And he began to pray. He began to pray about the time when Israel would be allowed to go back to their homeland and rebuild the temple. And then later rebuild the walls of the city. And it really is a beautiful story.

Because you know Babylon didn't last either. They eventually got conquered. They got conquered by the Medo-Persian Empire. That happened during the 70 years of exile. Israel was in exile in the Persian Kingdom during the power days of Babylon. And then the power days of the Medo-Persian Empire.

In fact, if you read the Book of Daniel, you will see in his book he actually chronicles the changeover of power from Babylon to Medo-Persia. The Medes and the Persians, when they conquered the Babylonian army, a kingdom, if you will, and took over. But that ended up being a very good thing. Because one of the Medo-Persian kings eventually was raised up. And God laid upon his heart to send the Jews home. Whoever wanted to go and to begin to rebuild the temple.