

# 2 Chronicles 36 Commentary

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SECOND CHRONICLES The Kingdom of Israel From Splendor to Disaster				
Splendor			Disaster	
King Solomon of Judah 2 Chronicles 1-9			Successive Kings of Judah 2Chr 10-36	
Kingdom United			Kingdom Divided 2Chr 10:1-19	Rulers of the Southern Kingdom of Judah After the Split
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Building of the Temple			Decline & Destruction of the Temple	
~40 Years			~393 Years	

Click chart to enlarge  
 Chart from [Jensen's Survey of the OT](#) - used by permission  
 Click [Chart](#) from Charles Swindoll

**TIMELINE OF THE BOOKS OF  
SAMUEL, KINGS & CHRONICLES**

1107	1011				971	931	853	722	586
1 Samuel	2 Samuel				1 Kings	1 Kings	2 Kings		
31	1-4	5-10	11-20	21-24	1-11	12-22	1-17	18-25	
1 Chronicles 10		1 Chr 11-19		1 Chr 20-29	2 Chronicles 1-9	2 Chronicles 10-20	2 Chronicles 21-36		

**Legend:** B.C. dates at top of timeline are approximate. Note that 931BC marks the division of the Kingdom into Southern Tribes (Judah and Benjamin) and Ten Northern Tribes. To avoid confusion be aware that **after the division** of the Kingdom in 931BC, the Southern Kingdom is most often designated in Scripture as "**Judah**" and the Northern Kingdom as "**Israel**." Finally, note that 1 Chronicles 1-9 is not identified on the timeline because these chapters are records of genealogy.

SEE ALSO:

[ESV chart - kings of Israel - more information](#)

[ESV chart - kings of Judah - more information](#)

[Another Chart with Variable Dates for Reigns of Kings](#)

[The mysterious numbers of the Hebrew kings](#) by Edwin R Thiel

**NOTE: THESE COMMENTS ARE OFFERED IN AN "AS IS" FORMAT - IF I HAVE TIME IN THE FUTURE, THEY WILL BE UPDATED.**

**CLICK [2 CHRONICLES COMMENTARIES](#) FOR MULTIPLE SERMONS AND COMMENTARIES**

**2 Chronicles 36:1 Then the people of the land took Joahaz the son of Josiah, and made him king in place of his father in Jerusalem.**

- the people (KJV): 2Ch 26:1 33:25 2Ki 23:30-37
- Jehoahaz (KJV): 2Ki 23:31-34 1Ch 3:15 Jer 22:11
- See [BELOW FOR BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR 1-2 CHRONICLES](#) - adapted from [Paul Apple's Bible Outlines](#)

#### **[INTRODUCTION - PAUL APPLE \(Page 705\):](#)**

**August Konkell:** Every society has a propensity to disintegration. Historically, all great civilizations have ended, usually under the weight of their own dysfunction and capitulation to opposing powers. It would be unwise to think that present societies will be the exception to that pattern. For people of faith, it is not only history but also the revelation of Scripture that provides the warning. The nation Israel fell to political forces aided by its own intrigue and corruption. Theologically, it was because of their unfaithfulness to God. But the theology of divine judgment is also the reason for hope since God is a God of mercy.

**Andrew Hill:** The Babylonians sacked the city of Nineveh in 612 B.C. and then deposed the remnants of the Assyrian political establishment from Haran in 610 B.C. Thus Assyria's reign of terror in the ancient Near East came to an end. This colossal event, one the prophet Jonah longed to see and the prophet Nahum eventually witnessed, did not really bring peace to the peoples of Syria and Palestine. The resulting vacuum of political power in the Levant was quickly filled, as Pharaoh Neco II of Egypt marched to Carchemish on the Euphrates River. He intended to join with the Assyrian ruler Asshur-uballit in a last-ditch attempt to repulse the Babylonians and help restore Assyrian control in the western sector of the disintegrating empire. King Josiah's illfated attempt to intercept Neco at Megiddo only delayed the defeat the Egyptians experienced at Carchemish. Although the Egypto-Assyrian alliance failed to save the Assyrian Empire, Neco's campaign did result in Egyptian control of Syria-Palestine. It is unclear whether King Josiah was obligated to oppose Pharaoh Neco II as a vassal of Babylonia or if he acted independently. In either case, his death meant the end of political autonomy for Judah. His successor, Jehoahaz, was dethroned by Neco and deported to Egypt. Neco placed Eliakim (or Jehoiakim), the brother of Jehoahaz, on the throne, and Judah became a vassal state to the pharaoh. Judah remained under Egyptian control until 605 B.C. . . This final section of the Chronicler's history is driven by both a documentary impulse (i.e., telling what happened) and the literary impulse (i.e., telling how it happened). The references to Jeremiah the prophet (2Ch 36:12, 21) may indicate the Chronicler's dependence on the book of Jeremiah as a source for this portion of his history. In any event, the repetition of the twin themes of the exile of the last Judahite kings and the repeated plundering of the Lord's temple explains what happens to the kingdom of Judah (2Ch 36:4, 6-7, 10, 18, 20). The descriptions of King Zedekiah (who does not humble himself and will not turn to the Lord, 2Ch 36:12-13; cf. 7:14) and the priests and all the people (who are unfaithful, 2Ch

36:14; cf. 30:8) illustrate how all this happens to Judah.

**Raymond Dillard:** The Chronicler has arranged the accounts to portray two themes (cf. Williamson, 412): (1) the common fate of the last four kings, each ending in exile, and (2) the tribute paid by each, largely through spoliation of the temple. This has the effect of drawing a parallel between the fate of the Davidic dynasty and the temple: both destined for exile, but with hope of restoration.

**Martin Selman:** The fact that this is the only section of 2 Chronicles 10-36 where Chronicles has dealt more briefly than Kings with the same subject clearly indicates a special purpose. That purpose is revealed in three distinctive emphases. - The first is that responsibility for the exile did not belong to any individual or generation, but implicated the whole nation. The sense of corporate guilt is very strong and is made explicit in 2Ch 36:15-16. - The second is that the exile is remarkably comprehensive, both in its character and its effects. For the land, the monarchy, and the temple there was no remedy (2Ch 36:16), and only a remnant is left (2Ch 36:20). The only basis for future hope is that the Lord remains in charge throughout. - The third and most surprising emphasis is that despite everything, an alternative still exists. The gathering clouds of judgment have never entirely obscured the brightness of God's grace, though now it shines through the exile rather than instead of it (2Ch 36:22-23; cf. 2Ch 28:14-15; 30:9; 33:12-13). The book ends, therefore, on a definite note of hope, which neither persistent sin nor the reality of judgment is able to overcome. However, one should not be misled into thinking that this implies that final judgment will never come (e.g. Mk. 13:24-31; 1 Thes. 5:1-7; cf. Heb. 1:10-12). Though the exile provides further evidence that God is always gracious and compassionate (cf. 2 Ch. 30:9), the opportunity to call on his mercy will not always exist. It is therefore wise to take God's invitation seriously (2Ch 36:23).

**Then** - Marks progression in the narrative.

**The people of the land took Joahaz the son of Josiah, and made him king in place of his father in Jerusalem-** Joahaz's full name, is "Jehoahaz" (2Ki 23:31).

**Bob Utley on the people of the land** - This phrase has different meanings in different parts of the OT. (1) local non-Israelite people – Gen. 23:7,12,13; Ezra 9:1,11; 10:2,11, (2) poor farmers or herdsmen – 2 Kgs. 24:14; 25:12, (3) land owners and leaders – 2 Kgs. 11:14,18,19,20; 21:24; 23:30,35; 2 Chr. 23:20-21; 26:21; 33:25; 36:1; Jer. 1:18; 34:19; 37:2; 44:2

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### **Bob Utley summarizes the last kings of Judah -**

1. There is a series of faithless kings after Josiah.
  1. Joahaz, who reigned only three months and was replaced by Neco's surrogate (cf. 2 Kgs. 23:30-35; see Josephus, *Antiq.* 10.5.2.). He was exiled to Egypt (cf. Jer. 22:11-12, where he is called "Shallum").
  2. Jehoiakim, Neco's surrogate (cf. 2 Kgs. 23:36-24:7) is brought in chains to Babylon (the 2 Kings parallel does not mention this; and Jer. 22:18-19 implies he was returned quickly to Jerusalem, where he was ignobly buried; see below on [Gleason Archer, \*Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties\*](#), pp. 213-214).
  3. Jehoiachin also reigned only three months (cf. 2 Kgs. 24:8-17; Jer. 22:24-30) and was replaced by Nebuchadnezzar's surrogate, Zedekiah.
  4. Zedekiah (cf. 2 Kings 25) rebelled against Babylon, which resulted in the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in 586 b.c.

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### **Matthew Henry Notes: 2Ch 36**

We have here,

#### I. A short but sad account of the utter ruin of Judah and Jerusalem within a few years after Josiah's death.

1. The history of it in the unhappy reigns of Jehoahaz for three months (2Ch 36:1-4), Jehoiakim (2Ch 36:5-8) for eleven years, Jehoiachin three months (2Ch 36:9, 10), and Zedekiah eleven years (2Ch 36:11). Additions were made to the national guilt, and advances towards the national destruction, in each of those reigns. The destruction was, at length, completed in the slaughter of multitudes (2Ch 36:17), the plundering and burning of the temple and all the palaces, the desolation of the city (2Ch 36:18, 19), and the captivity of the people that remained (v. 20).
2. Some remarks upon it—that herein sin was punished, Zedekiah's wickedness (2Ch 36:12, 13), the idolatry the people were guilty of (2Ch 36:14), and their abuse of God's prophets (2Ch 36:15, 16). The word of God was herein fulfilled (2Ch 36:21).

#### II. The dawning of the day of their deliverance in Cyrus's proclamation (2Ch 36:22, 23).

### **2Ch 36:1-10**

The destruction of Judah and Jerusalem is here coming on by degrees. God so ordered it to show that he has no pleasure in the

ruin of sinners, but had rather they would turn and live, and therefore gives them both time and inducement to repent and waits to be gracious. The history of these reigns was more largely recorded in the last three chapters of the second of Kings.

1. Jehoahaz was set up by the people (2Ch 36:1), but in one quarter of a year was deposed by Pharaoh-necho, and carried a prisoner to Egypt, and the land fined for setting him up, 2Ch 36:2-4. Of this young prince we hear no more. Had he trodden in the steps of his father's piety he might have reigned long and prospered; but we are told in the Kings that he did evil in the sight of the Lord, and therefore his triumphing was short and his joy but for a moment.

2. **Jehoiakim was set up by the king of Egypt, an old enemy to their land, gave what king he pleased to the kingdom and what name he pleased to the king!** 2Ch 36:4. He made Eliakim king, and called him Jehoiakim, in token of his authority over him. Jehoiakim did that which was evil (2Ch 36:5), nay, we read of the abominations which he did (2Ch 36:8); he was very wild and wicked. Idolatries generally go under the name of abominations. We hear no more of the king of Egypt, but the king of Babylon came up against him (2Ch 36:6), seized him, and bound him with a design to carry him to Babylon; but, it seems, he either changed his mind, and suffered him to reign as his vassal, or death released the prisoner before he was carried away. However the best and most valuable vessels of the temple were now carried away and made use of in Nebuchadnezzar's temple in Babylon (2Ch 36:7); for, we may suppose, no temple in the world was so richly furnished as that of Jerusalem. The sin of Judah was that they had brought the idols of the heathen into God's temple; and now their punishment was that the vessels of the temple were carried away to the service of the gods of the nations. If men will profane God's institutions by their sins, it is just with God to suffer them to be profaned by their enemies. These were the vessels which the false prophets flattered the people with hopes of the return of, Jer. 27:16. But Jeremiah told them that the rest should go after them (Jer. 27:21, 22), and they did so. But, as the carrying away of these vessels to Babylon began the calamity of Jerusalem, so Belshazzar's daring profanation of them there filled the measure of the iniquity of Babylon; for, when he drank wine in them to the honour of his gods, the handwriting on the wall presented him with his doom, Dan. 5:3, etc. In the reference to the book of the Kings concerning this Jehoiakim mention is made of that which was found in him (2Ch 36:8), which seems to be meant of the treachery that was found in him towards the king of Babylon; but some of the Jewish writers understand it of certain private marks or signatures found in his dead body, in honour of his idol, such cuttings as God had forbidden, Lev. 19:28.

3. **Jehoiachin, or Jeconiah, the son of Jehoiakim, attempted to reign in his stead, and reigned long enough to show his evil inclination;** but, after three months and ten days, the king of Babylon sent and fetched him away captive, with more of the goodly vessels of the temple. He is here said to be eight years old, but in Kings he is said to be eighteen when he began to reign, so that this seems to be a mistake of the transcriber, unless we suppose that his father took him at eight years old to join with him in the government, as some think.

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#### QUESTION - [Who was King Jehoahaz in the Bible?](#)

**ANSWER** - There are three kings named Jehoahaz in the Bible. Two were kings of Judah, and one was king of Israel. The name *Jehoahaz* means "Yahweh is sustainer" or "whom Yahweh holds," but, ironically, none of these kings trusted in the Lord or followed Him.

#### ***Jehoahaz (Ahaziah) son of Jehoram, king of Judah (841 BC).***

This Jehoahaz was the youngest son of Jehoram. He is called "Azariah" in the NIV, CEV, and NLT; but he is called "Jehoahaz" in the ESV, KJV, NKJV, and NASB. The difference is due to the fact that *Ahaziah* is a variant of *Jehoahaz* in Hebrew. The people made him king of Judah since all his older brothers had been killed (2 Chronicles 21:17; 22:1). Although he ruled in the southern kingdom, Jehoahaz (Ahaziah) was actually a grandson of [Ahab and Jezebel](#) of the northern kingdom, and he followed in the sins of Ahab (2 Chronicles 22:3-4). Upon the suggestion of his advisors, Jehoahaz helped his uncle, King Joram of Israel, fight against Hazael king of Aram (2 Chronicles 22:5-6). Joram was injured in the battle, and Jehoahaz went to visit him. During the visit, Jehu showed up on his mission to wipe out the entire house of Ahab. Jehu killed Joram, all of Jehoahaz's relatives who were there, and, after a chase, Jehoahaz himself (2 Chronicles 22:7-9). So, Jehoahaz (Ahaziah) was buried after only one year on the throne of Judah.

#### ***Jehoahaz son of Jehu, king of Israel (814-798 BC).***

This Jehoahaz reigned for seventeen years over the northern kingdom Israel. "He did evil in the eyes of the LORD by following the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat, which he had caused Israel to commit" (2 Kings 13:2). About a century earlier, Jeroboam I had led the rebellion that split the kingdom into two. After the split, Jeroboam sought to keep the people in his northern kingdom from

traveling to the southern kingdom to worship God in Jerusalem. So Jeroboam set up two golden calves in the north: one in Bethel, and one in Dan (1 Kings 11—12). In this way, Jeroboam led the people into idol worship. Ruling about one hundred years later, Jehoahaz persisted in this sin of idolatry.

Interestingly, Jehoahaz's father, Jehu, had destroyed the [worship of Baal](#) in Israel. But he did not keep God's law with all his heart or turn away from the sins of Jeroboam (2 Kings 10:28–31). Still, for destroying the house of Ahab, God promised Jehu that his sons would rule to the fourth generation. Jehoahaz was the second in that dynasty.

Because Jehoahaz worshipped idols and caused Israel to continue in the idolatry of Jeroboam, God began to reduce the size of Israel, allowing Hazael and Ben-Hadad of [Aram](#) to overpower them (2 Kings 13:3, 32). After experiencing Aramian oppression for a period of time, Jehoahaz finally relented and "sought the LORD's favor" (2 Kings 13:4). God graciously raised up a deliverer, who freed the Israelites from Aram, so that they were able to live in their own homes again (2 Kings 13:5). Many biblical commentators believe the deliverer was either Jehoahaz's son Jehoash or his grandson Jeroboam II (2 Kings 13:10, 22–23; 14:23, 26–27). The biblical historian cites God's grace: "Hazael king of Aram oppressed Israel throughout the reign of Jehoahaz. But the Lord was gracious to them and had compassion and showed concern for them because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. To this day he has been unwilling to destroy them or banish them from his presence" (2 Kings 13:22–23). Inexplicably, after God delivered him from the Aramians, Jehoahaz left standing the wooden Asherah pole in Samaria, the capital (2 Kings 13:6). Israel's army and chariots had been mostly destroyed by the end of Jehoahaz's reign (2 Kings 13:7), leaving the nation vulnerable to attack. Jehoahaz's son and grandson ruled after him, completing the dynasty of Jehu. Sadly, these kings followed in the same evil footsteps as Jehoahaz (2 Kings 13:10–11; 14:23–24). Even so, God continued to be faithful to His people (2 Kings 13:24–25; 14:26–27).

#### ***Jehoahaz son of Josiah, king of Judah (609 BC).***

Although he was the fourth son of Josiah, Jehoahaz was made king over Judah once his father died (2 Kings 23:31; 2 Chronicles 36:1). Also known as Shallum (1 Chronicles 3:15), Jehoahaz only reigned for three months in Jerusalem before being deposed by Pharaoh Necho. The pharaoh installed Jehoahaz's brother, Eliakim (aka Jehoiakim) as king and deported Jehoahaz in chains. Jehoahaz later died in Egypt (2 Kings 23:31–35). This third and final Jehoahaz also "did evil in the eyes of the LORD, just as his predecessors has done" (2 Kings 23:32).

The sins of the last Jehoahaz are especially tragic because his father, Josiah, had been an exceptionally good king. Josiah had found the Book of the Law, renewed the covenant, torn down the high places of idol worship, destroyed the priests of false gods, reinstated the Passover, and turned to the Lord "with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his strength, in accordance with all the Law of Moses" (2 Kings 23:25). But his son Jehoahaz did not follow in his steps.

Sadly, none of the Jehoahazes followed the Lord. Yet, as their name communicates, the Lord did not abandon His people. [GotQuestions.org](#)

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#### **Related Resource:**

- [The mysterious numbers of the Hebrew kings](#) - Edwin R Thiele (BORROW)

**2 Chronicles 36:2 Joahaz was twenty-three years old when he became king, and he reigned three months in Jerusalem.**

#### **Joahaz was twenty-three years old when he became king, and he reigned three months in Jerusalem.**

**Thomas Constable:** In these few verses, the will of the king of Egypt contrasts with the will of Judah's people. Whereas the people still held out hope that a descendant of David would lead them to the great glories predicted for David's greatest Son (e.g., Ps. 2:1–8), such was not to be the case any time soon. Other superpowers now dominated Judah's affairs. God had given His people over into their hands for discipline (cf. Deut. 28:32–57). Jehoahaz (Joahaz), rather than lifting the Davidic dynasty to its greatest glories, ended his life as a prisoner in Egypt, the original prison-house of Israel. Jehoahaz reigned only three months. Then Pharaoh Neco replaced him, fined the Judahites, and set up Jehoahaz's brother on Judah's throne

**Raymond Dillard:** In the latter half of 609 B.C. Judah underwent great political turmoil and experienced three successive changes of monarch. Josiah's death was followed by the three month rule of Jehoahaz who was in turn succeeded by Jehoiakim. Jehoahaz, also known as Shallum, was not Josiah's firstborn; he had at least two older brothers (1 Chr 3:15). Nothing is known of the fate of Josiah's firstborn Johanan; he may have died before Josiah's own death. Jehoahaz came to the throne at age twentythree and was succeeded three months later by Jehoiakim, who was twenty-five. The people of the land made Jehoahaz king, setting aside the

right of primogeniture (21:3) probably in an effort to continue the anti-Egyptian or pro-Babylonian policies of Josiah. The same anti-Egyptian posture may explain Nebuchadnezzar's later choice of Zedekiah, Jehoahaz's younger brother by the same mother, Hamutal (2 Kgs 23:31; 24:18). The Chronicler makes no overt moral judgment on Jehoahaz's reign, content to present the themes of exile and tribute that characterize his treatment of the last four kings of Judah. The deuteronomic historian does provide a brief, formulaic moral judgment (2 Kgs 23:32). Jeremiah provides more information regarding the actual character of his reign; it is an indictment for self-aggrandizement and injustice (Jer 22:11–17).

**2 Chronicles 36:3 Then the king of Egypt deposed him at Jerusalem, and imposed on the land a fine of one hundred talents of silver and one talent of gold.**

- put him down (KJV): Heb. removed him, 2Ki 23:33
- condemned (KJV): Heb. mulcted

**Then the king of Egypt deposed him at Jerusalem, and imposed on the land a fine of one hundred talents of silver and one talent of gold.** silver amounted to 120,000 oz (3.75 tons) and the gold to 1,200 oz (75 lb). See also [ANE WEIGHTS AND VOLUMES](#).

**Andrew Hill:** Curiously, the Chronicler fails to report the death formulas for the last kings of Judah as recorded in the kings account (e.g., “and there he [Jehoahaz] died,” 2 Kings 23:34; and “Jehoiakim rested with his fathers,” 2Ki 24:6; etc.). Kingship just fades into oblivion, as if the Chronicler seeks to represent the stories of the four kings as simply “different manifestations of the same phenomenon.” In so doing, the Chronicler offers his audience hope because he leaves open the possibility for the restoration of Israelite kingship as predicted by Jeremiah (Jer. 33:15-16) and Ezekiel (Ezek. 34:23).

**2 Chronicles 36:4 The king of Egypt made Eliakim his brother king over Judah and Jerusalem, and changed his name to Jehoiakim. But Neco took Joahaz his brother and brought him to Egypt.**

- made Eliakim (KJV): 2Ki 23:34,35 1Ch 3:15
- Neco (KJV): Jer 22:10-12 Eze 19:3,4

**The king of Egypt made Eliakim his brother king over Judah and Jerusalem, and changed his name to Jehoiakim. But Neco took Joahaz his brother and brought him to Egypt.**

**Frederick Mabie:** In the ancient Near East the act of changing a name reflects a change of destiny – a destiny now being shaped by the one powerful enough to effect the name change – and carries with it the expectation of loyalty. This idea of a change of destiny enabled by the name changer and symbolized by the new name may shed light on passages such as Isaiah 62:2 and Revelation 2:17. The names given to Judean rulers by Pharaoh Neco and Nebuchadnezzar retain theophoric elements consistent with Israelite faith rather than incorporating foreign religious elements (cf. Da 1:6-7). For example, Eliakim and Jehoiakim are largely the same name, with a substitution of one theophoric element (“El[i],” God) with another (“Jeho,” Yahweh).

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#### QUESTION - [Who was King Jehoiakim in the Bible?](#)

**ANSWER** - Jehoiakim (named Eliakim at birth, 2 Chronicles 36:4) was one of the last kings of Judah before the Babylonian Captivity. Jehoiakim was a son of good King Josiah (Jeremiah 26:1) of Judah. His mother's name was Zebidah (2 Kings 23:36). Jehoiakim's father, King Josiah, had returned Judah to the Lord by tearing down idol shrines and restoring obedience to God's Law (2 Kings 23:19–25). After Josiah's death, his son [Jehoahaz](#) was chosen king by the people. But, as often happened in those days, Jehoahaz did not follow in the footsteps of his father but “did evil in the sight of the Lord” (2 Kings 23:32). Jehoahaz only reigned three months before he was taken into captivity by the king of Egypt, who replaced Jehoahaz with his brother Eliakim (2 Kings 23:26; 2 Chronicles 36:5). The Egyptian king renamed the 25-year-old Eliakim “Jehoiakim.”

Jehoiakim also did evil in the Lord's sight (2 Kings 23:37). Because of the ongoing, unrepentant sin of the nation of Judah, God sent invading armies to capture and enslave them. Jehoiakim was taken captive by [King Nebuchadnezzar](#), who put him in chains and carted him off to Babylon (2 Kings 24:1; 2 Chronicles 36:6;). It was at this time that Daniel and his three friends were also taken to Babylon (Daniel 1:1–2). Jehoiakim was later returned to Jerusalem, although he had to act as Nebuchadnezzar's servant for three years and pay tribute to him.



During the time King Jehoiakim reigned as a vassal of Babylon, the [prophet Jeremiah](#) preached in Jerusalem. God's message was that the Babylonian invasion was God's punishment for Judah's sin and that the Hebrews should repent. Jehoiakim called for Jeremiah's scroll to be read in his court. But, as every three or four columns of the scroll were read, "the king cut them off with a scribe's knife and threw them into the firepot, until the entire scroll was burned in the fire. The king and all his attendants who heard all these words showed no fear, nor did they tear their clothes" (Jeremiah 36:23–24). Rather than heed God's warning, Jehoiakim hardened his heart and tried to destroy God's Word (see Jeremiah 25:1–4). Earlier, Jehoiakim had murdered the godly prophet Uriah (Jeremiah 26:20–23).

Jehoiakim reigned eleven years (2 Kings 23:36; 2 Chronicles 36:5). Jeremiah rewrote the scroll that Jehoiakim had burned, and God pronounced judgment on the king: "Therefore this is what the LORD says about Jehoiakim king of Judah: He will have no one to sit on the throne of David; his body will be thrown out and exposed to the heat by day and the frost by night" (Jeremiah 36:30). "He will be buried like a dead donkey—dragged out of Jerusalem and dumped outside the gates!" (Jeremiah 22:19, NLT). This prophecy was fulfilled when, in the eleventh year of Jehoiakim's reign, he stopped paying tribute to Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar responded by besieging Jerusalem. According to Josephus, Jehoiakim was killed during the siege, and his body was thrown over the city wall.

After Jehoiakim's ignoble death, his son [Jehoiachin](#) succeeded him as the new king in Judah. Jehoiachin reigned only three months and ten days (2 Chronicles 36:9) before he, too, was taken to Babylon while the foreign king appointed his successor (2 Chronicles 36:10). This appointment of kings by the people or by invading armies was a far cry from the holy anointing of God's chosen ones by His prophets in days gone by. The removal of God from Judah's political process was another indication of just how far the Jewish people had fallen away from their God.

From King Jehoiakim's life, we can learn that godly parentage does not necessarily guarantee godly children. Many times in Israel's and Judah's history, the Bible records that the children of good kings and prophets "did evil in the sight of the Lord" (2 Kings 21:1–2; 1 Samuel 8:3) and did not follow the paths of their fathers. God holds each individual responsible for his or her obedience to His direction (Deuteronomy 24:16). King Jehoiakim's willful rejection of God's Word and his subsequent fate are a perfect illustration of the folly of disobedience. "Whoever remains stiff-necked after many rebukes will suddenly be destroyed—without remedy" ([Proverbs 29:1](#)) [GotQuestions.org](#)

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### **[Manners & customs of the Bible](#) (BORROW) - Changing Name**

The king of Egypt made Eliakim, a brother of Jehoahaz, king over Judah and Jerusalem and changed Eliakim's name to Jehoiakim.

It was long a custom among ancient Middle East people to change their names on the occurrence of some great event in life. It was in accordance with the divine command at the time of the renewal of the covenant that the name of Abram was changed to Abraham (Genesis 17:5 and Nehemiah 9:7) and that of Sarai to Sarah (Genesis 17:15). Jacob's name was changed to Israel in commemoration of his prevailing prayer (Genesis 32:28 and 35:10). The king of Egypt changed the name of Joseph to Zaphnath-Paaneah because of his ability to reveal secrets (Genesis 41:45). Another king of Egypt subsequently changed the name of Eliakim, the son of Josiah, to Jehoiakim when he made him king of Judah, as told in our text-verse and 2 Kings 23:34. When the king of Babylon made Mattaniah king he changed his name to Zedekiah (Esther 2:7).

When Nebuchadnezzar wished to have a few of the young Israelite prisoners taught in the Chaldean language and customs, he changed their names from Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, to Belteshazzar, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (Daniel 1:6–7). This was done to make them more Babylonian. Daniel means "God is judge," and Belteshazzar means "May Bel protect his life." Hananiah means "Yahweh is gracious," and Shadrach possibly means "command of Aku" (the moon god). Mishael means "Who is what God is?" and Meshach may mean "Who is what Aku is?" Azariah means "Whom Yahweh helps," and Abednego means "servant of Nebo." In each case the Hebrew name contained a name for the true God (either el or iah, an abbreviation for Yahweh), and the Babylonian name contained the name of a heathen god.

The effect it can have when a ruler changes his name is well illustrated in Sir John Chardin's Travels in Persia. He states that the first years of King Sefi's reign were unhappy because of wars and famine in many of the Persian provinces. So he was persuaded by his counselors to change his name as a means of changing the tide of fortune. They argued that there must be some hidden power of evil in the name Sefi. He was, therefore, crowned anew in 1666 under the name of Solyman III. All seals, coins, and other public symbols that had on them the name of Sefi were destroyed. It was as if the king had died and a successor had taken his place on the throne. Whether changing the king's name had any positive effect or not on the country is not said.

**2 Chronicles 36:5 Jehoiakim was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem;**

**and he did evil in the sight of the LORD his God.**

- Jehoiakim (KJV): 2Ki 23:36,37 Jer 22:13-19 26:21-23 36:1,27-32

**Jehoiakim was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem; and he did evil in the sight of the LORD his God.**

**Bob Utley** on **did evil in the sight of the LORD**- This is a recurrent phrase which implies disobedience to the Mosaic covenant (cf. 2 Kgs. 23:32). In Jer. 26:20-24 we see his treatment of YHWH's prophets. He imprisoned Jeremiah and Baruch (Jer. 36:26). Also notice how his actions affected the people in 2 Chr. 36:16.

**Thomas Constable:** Jehoiakim's conduct did nothing to retard the inevitable conquest of Jerusalem. Judah's captivity was one step closer when Babylon replaced Egypt as the controller of God's people. Jehoiakim was not able to establish a dynasty of kings to follow him, as Jeremiah had prophesied (Jer. 22:30)

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**Glason Archer - [New International Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties](#) - How, when, and where did Jehoiakim die?**

2 Kings 24:6 states, "So Jehoiakim slept with his fathers, and Jehoiachin his son became king in his place" (NASB). (This suggests that this wicked king enjoyed a normal burial and was buried in a royal tomb—although "slept with his fathers" might mean simply that he joined his forefathers in the realm of the dead—Sheol.)

2 Chronicles 36:5–8 reads: "Jehoiakim was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. ... Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up against him and bound him with bronze chains to take him to Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar also brought some of the articles of the house of the LORD to Babylon and put them in his temple in Babylon.... And Jehoiachin his son became king in his place" (NASB). This could be construed to mean that Jehoiakim was taken off to Babylon as a prisoner and remained there the rest of his life—an event that would have to have occurred in 598 B.C. (since he ruled eleven years from 608 B.C.) Yet the text here does not actually say that he never returned from Babylon, as a chastened vassal of Nebuchadnezzar, having given him solemn promises of loyalty and assurances that he would never again team up with Pharaoh Necho and the Egyptians against the Chaldean overlordship. If it was the latter, then this event probably took place in 604 B.C., after Nebuchadnezzar had extended his rule over Syria, Phoenicia, Samaria, and Judah, taking with him an assortment of hostages, such as Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.

Just as Ashurbanipal of Assyria took King Manasseh from his kingdom and imprisoned him for a considerable length of time in Babylon (2 Chron. 33:11–12), until he became repentant for his previous unfaithfulness to God and was finally restored to his throne by the Assyrian king, so also Jehoiakim was probably restored to his throne in Jerusalem as a chastened vassal king under the Chaldean overlordship. The Chronicles passage does not describe his deportation to Babylon in terms clearly suggestive of the downfall of Jerusalem in 597, when the young son and successor Jehoiachin was thus deported, along with "all the captains and all the mighty men of valor, ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and the smiths. None remained except the poorest people of the land" (2 Kings 24:14, NASB). Moreover, on the occasion of that second deportation, Nebuchadnezzar did not remove just "some of the articles of the house of the LORD" (2 Chron. 36:7) but, rather, "all the treasures of the house of the Lord, and the treasures of the king's house" (2 Kings 24:13, italics mine).

It therefore appears that the episode of 2 Chronicles 36:5–8 was not the same as that of 2 Kings 24:14. The former took place in 604, along with the captivity of Daniel and his friends; the latter took place in 597 and involved a different king (Jehoiachin), with a far larger amount of treasure and a huge number of captives. Thus the case for establishing a discrepancy completely fails; the data of the biblical text precludes identifying the two events as the one and same transaction.

But the manner and place of Jehoiakim's death were a bit more pathetic than the brief statement in 2 Kings 24:6 would indicate, for we read in Jeremiah 22:18–19: "Therefore thus says the LORD in regard to Jehoiakim the son of Josiah ... 'They will not lament for him:' ... He will be buried with a donkey's burial, dragged off and thrown out beyond the gates of Jerusalem" (NASB). This predicts the shameful treatment meted out to Jehoiakim's corpse after he died (apparently around 7 December 598 B.C.). Instead of a normal interment in a royal tomb—whether at the time of the funeral or sometime thereafter—that body was tossed into some open pit like that intended for a dead animal; and he was permanently interred outside the city walls by a citizenry that deeply resented his wicked and disastrous reign. His unhappy son, Jehoiachin, remained to face the full consequences of his father's oath breaking toward Nebuchadnezzar—as noted above.

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**2 Chronicles 36:6 Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up against him and bound him with bronze chains to take him to Babylon.**



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- came up (KJV): 2Ki 24:1,2,5,6,13-20 Eze 19:5-9 Da 1:1,2 Hab 1:5-10

#### Related Passages:

Jeremiah 25:9 (THE SOVEREIGN GOD CALLS NEBUCHADNEZZAR IS SERVANT! SEE ALSO Jer 27:6, 43:10) **behold**, I will send and take all the families of the north,' declares the LORD, 'and I will send to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, My servant, and will bring them against this land and against its inhabitants and against all these nations round about; and I will utterly destroy them and make them a horror and a hissing, and an everlasting desolation.

## THE SOVEREIGN GOD RAISES UP AN ADVERSARY AGAINST JUDAH

**Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up against him and bound him with bronze chains (fettters) to take him to Babylon** - Nebuchadnezzar's first invasion of Jerusalem was in 605 B.C. and the final two in 597 BC and 586 BC. In 2 Ki 24:2 the LORD sent several invaders into Judah because of Jehoiakim's faithlessness (and Manasseh's, 2Ch 36:3) - bands of Chaldeans, of Syrians, of Moabites and of Ammonites.

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**Gleason Archer - [New International Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties](#) - What was the correct age for Jehoiachin when he came to the throne, eight or eighteen?**

2 Kings 24:8 tells us that Jehoiachin "was eighteen years old when he became king." But the parallel passage in 2 Chronicles 36:9 states that he was "eight" years old when he began to reign. Obviously there has been a textual error committed by the copyist either in 2 Kings or in 2 Chronicles. This type of error occurs now and then because of blurring or surface damage in the earlier manuscript from which the copy is made. A numerical system generally in use during the fifth century (when Chronicles was probably composed—very likely under Ezra's supervision) features a horizontal stroke ending in a hook at its right end as the sign for "ten"; two of them would make the number "twenty." (See article on 2 Kings 8:26.) The digits under ten would be indicated by rows of little vertical strokes, generally in groups of three. Thus what was originally written as a horizontal hooked stroke over one or more of these groups of short vertical strokes (in this case, eight strokes) would appear as a mere "eight" instead of "eighteen."

The probabilities are that 2 Chronicles 36:9 is incorrect, both because the age eight is unusually young to assume governmental leadership—though Joash ben Ahaziah was only seven when he began to reign (2 Kings 11:21) and Josiah was only eight (2 Kings 22:1)—and because the Chaldeans treated him as a responsible adult and condemned him to permanent imprisonment in Babylon after he surrendered to them in 597 B.C. Moreover, it is far less likely that the copyist would have mistakenly seen an extra ten stroke that was not present in his original than that he would have failed to observe one that had been smudged out.

While it is true that Jehoiachin's father, Jehoiakim, must have been unusually young to have begotten him (sixteen or seventeen), nevertheless some of the Judean royalty seem to have married at an early age (in other words, if Jehoiakim was twenty-five at his accession in 608 [2 Kings 23:36], and if Jehoiachin was eighteen in 598 when his father died [2 Kings 24:8], then there must have been only a difference of seventeen or eighteen years between them). Note that Ahaz appears to have fathered Hezekiah at the age of thirteen or fourteen, judging from the fact that Ahaz was twenty on his vice-regency in 743 and that Hezekiah was twenty-five at his father's death in 725 (hardly at his first appointment as vice-regent in 728!) (cf. 2 Kings 16:2 [2 Chron. 28:1] and 2 Kings 18:2 [2 Chron. 29:1]).

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**Norman Geisler - [When Critics Ask](#) - 2 CHRONICLES 36:6—Was Jehoiakim carried to Babylon or did he die in Jerusalem?**

**PROBLEM:** The Chronicler declares that Nebuchadnezzar "came up against him [Jehoiakim], and bound him in bronze fetters to carry him off to Babylon." But elsewhere "Jehoiakim rested with his fathers" (2 Kings 24:6) and was "buried with the burial of a donkey, dragged and cast out beyond the gates of Jerusalem" (Jer. 22:19; cf. 36:30).

**SOLUTION:** Apparently, Jehoiakim was bound and fettered with the intention "to carry him off to Babylon" (2 Chron. 36:6), but he was slain instead, and his body ignominiously treated "and cast out beyond the gates of Jerusalem" (Jer. 22:19). The phrase "rested with his fathers" (2 Kings 24:6) refers to death, not necessarily to a burial in the same place. Of all the kings of Judah, Jehoiakim is the only one whose official burial is not mentioned.

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**QUESTION - [Who was Nebuchadnezzar?](#)**

**ANSWER** - Nebuchadnezzar II, sometimes alternately spelled Nebuchadrezzar, was king of Babylonia from approximately 605 BC until approximately 562 BC. He is considered the greatest king of the [Babylonian Empire](#) and is credited with the construction of the Hanging Gardens of Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar is mentioned by name around 90 times in the Bible, in both the historical and prophetic literature of the Hebrew Scriptures. Nebuchadnezzar receives the most attention in the book of Daniel, appearing as the main character, beside [Daniel](#), in chapters 1–4.

In biblical history, Nebuchadnezzar is most famous for the conquering of Judah and the destruction of Judah and Jerusalem in 586 BC. Judah had become a tribute state to Babylon in 605 BC but rebelled in 597 BC during the reign of Jehoiachin and then again in 588 BC during the reign of [Zedekiah](#). Tired of the rebellions, and seeing that Judah had not learned its lesson when he invaded, conquered, and deported Judah in 597, Nebuchadnezzar and his general, Nebuzaradan, proceeded to completely destroy the temple and most of Jerusalem, deporting most of the remaining residents to Babylon. In this, Nebuchadnezzar served as God's instrument of judgment on Judah for its idolatry, unfaithfulness, and disobedience (Jeremiah 25:9).

Secular history records Nebuchadnezzar as a brutal, powerful, and ambitious king, and the Bible, for the most part, agrees. However, the book of Daniel gives additional insight into his character. Daniel chapter 2 records God giving Nebuchadnezzar a dream about what kingdoms would arise after his own. In the dream, Nebuchadnezzar was a "head of gold" on a statue, with the descending parts of the body, comprised of silver, bronze, iron, and iron mixed with clay, representing the less powerful kingdoms that would come after him. Nebuchadnezzar demanded the astrologers and wise men to interpret his dream without him telling it to them and, when they were unable to, Nebuchadnezzar ordered all of the astrologers and wise men to be killed. Daniel spoke up and, through a miracle from God, interpreted Nebuchadnezzar's dream. The king then promoted Daniel to be one of his most influential advisers. Interestingly, when Daniel interpreted his dream, Nebuchadnezzar declared, "Truly, your God is God of gods and Lord of kings, and a revealer of mysteries, for you have been able to reveal this mystery" (Daniel 2:47).

In Daniel 3, Nebuchadnezzar created a gold statue of himself and required all the people to bow down to it whenever the music played. Daniel's three friends, [Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego](#), refused, and the king had them thrown into a blazing furnace. Miraculously, God protected them, and when they came out of the furnace, Nebuchadnezzar proclaimed, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent his angel and delivered his servants, who trusted in him, and set aside the king's command, and yielded up their bodies rather than serve and worship any god except their own God. Therefore I make a decree: Any people, nation, or language that speaks anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego shall be torn limb from limb, and their houses laid in ruins, for there is no other god who is able to rescue in this way" (Daniel 3:28–29).

In Daniel chapter 4, Nebuchadnezzar is given another dream by God. Daniel interpreted the dream for Nebuchadnezzar and informed him that the dream was a warning to the king to humble himself and recognize that his power, wealth, and influence were from God, not of his own making. Nebuchadnezzar did not heed the warning of the dream, so God judged him as the dream had declared. Nebuchadnezzar was driven insane for seven years. When the king's sanity was restored, he finally humbled himself before God. In Daniel 4:3, Nebuchadnezzar declares, "How great are his signs, how mighty his wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion endures from generation to generation." Nebuchadnezzar continued in Daniel 4:34–37, "For his dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom endures from generation to generation; all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, and he does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say to him, 'What have you done?' ... "Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, for all his works are right and his ways are just; and those who walk in pride he is able to humble."

The exclamations of Nebuchadnezzar recorded in the book of Daniel have led some to consider the possibility that Nebuchadnezzar became a believer in the one true God. History records Nebuchadnezzar being a follower of the Babylonian gods Nabu and [Marduk](#). Is it possible that Nebuchadnezzar renounced these false gods and instead only worshiped the one true God? Yes, it is possible. If nothing else, Nebuchadnezzar became a [henotheist](#), believing in many gods but worshiping only one God as supreme. Based on his words recorded in Daniel, it definitely seems like Nebuchadnezzar submitted himself to the one true God. Further evidence is the fact that God refers to Nebuchadnezzar as "my servant" three times in the book of Jeremiah (Jeremiah 25:9; 27:6; 43:10). Was Nebuchadnezzar saved? Ultimately, this is not a question that can be answered dogmatically. Whatever the case, the story of Nebuchadnezzar is an example of God's sovereignty over all men and the truth that "The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the Lord; He turns it wherever He will" (Proverbs 21:1). [GotQuestions.org](#)

**2 Chronicles 36:7 Nebuchadnezzar also brought some of the articles of the house of the LORD to Babylon and put them in his temple at Babylon.**

- the vessels (KJV): 2Ki 24:13 Ezr 1:7-11 Jer 27:16-18 28:3 Da 5:2-4

**Nebuchadnezzar also brought some of the articles of the house of the LORD to Babylon and put them in his temple at Babylon** - The confiscation of a nation's temple objects was common because it represented the complete conquest, including the god's of the city or nation (cf. Da 1:1-2; Ezra 1:7). Not only did he take objects, but he also took people (Daniel and his friends as well as Ezekiel).

**2 Chronicles 36:8 Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim and the abominations which he did, and what was found against him, behold, they are written in the Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah. And Jehoiachin his son became king in his place.**

- written (KJV): 2Ki 24:5-6
- Jehoiachin (KJV): 1Ch 3:16,17, Jeconiah, Jer 22:24,28, Coniah, Mt 1:11,12, Jechonias

Related Passages:

2 Kings 24:1-6 In his days Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up, and **Jehoiakim** became his servant for three years; then he turned and rebelled against him. 2 The LORD sent against him bands of Chaldeans, bands of Arameans, bands of Moabites, and bands of Ammonites. So He sent them against Judah to destroy it, according to the word of the LORD which He had spoken through His servants the prophets. 3 Surely at the command of the LORD it came upon Judah, to remove them from His sight **because of** the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he had done, 4 and **also for** the innocent blood which he shed, for he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood; and the LORD would not forgive. 5 Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim and all that he did, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah? 6 So Jehoiakim slept with his fathers, and Jehoiachin his son became king in his place.

**Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim and the abominations([toebah](#)) which he did, and what was found against him, behold, they are written in the Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah. And Jehoiachin his son became king in his place.**

**Iain Duguid:** To the standard concluding statement of sources, the Chronicler has added "abominations . . . and what was found against him," an evaluation warranted by the consistent negative oracles in Jeremiah, including those concerning Jehoiakim's arrogant, dismissive attitude to Jeremiah's prophetic word (Jer. 19:3-15; 22:13-23; 26:20-23; 36:1-32).

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**Abominations** (detestable, loathsome) ([08441](#)) **toebah** refers to an abominable custom or thing. Abomination. Loathsome. Detestable thing. Something or someone who is loathsome and abhorrent. Toebah identifies unclean food (Dt. 14:3); the activity of the idolater (Isa. 41:24); the practice of child sacrifice (Dt. 12:31); intermarriage by the Israelites (Mal. 2:11); the religious activities of the wicked (Pr 21:27); and homosexual behavior (Lev. 18:22). In a broader sense, the word is used to identify anything offensive (Pr 8:7). Sometimes **toebah** is used as a synonym for idol, a repulsive thing, a worship object, with a focus that it is an item to be rejected (Dt 32:16; 2Ch 34:33; Isa 44:19, Jer 16:18; Eze 5:9; 7:20; 11:18, 21; 16:36). **Toebah** is even used for a specific pagan deity, as in 2Ki 23:13 where Milcom is called "the abomination of the Ammonites." And even prayer is an abomination when offered by one who refuses to obey God's Word (Pr 28:9). Uses in Kings and Chronicles - 1 Ki. 14:24; 2 Ki. 16:3; 2 Ki. 21:2; 2 Ki. 21:11; 2 Ki. 23:13; 2 Chr. 28:3; 2 Chr. 33:2; 2 Chr. 34:33; 2 Chr. 36:8; 2 Chr. 36:14

**2 Chronicles 36:9 Jehoiachin was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned three months and ten days in Jerusalem, and he did evil in the sight of the LORD.**

- eight years old (KJV): The Syriac, Arabic, and the parallel place, (on which see the Note,) have "eighteen years;" which, as Scaliger observes, is no doubt the genuine reading. 2Ki 24:8,9

**Jehoiachin was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned three months and ten days in Jerusalem, and he did evil in the sight of the LORD.**

**Believer's Study Bible** - This is another instance of a scribal misreading in textual transmission. Jehoiachin is described as a young lion catching prey and devouring men (Ezek. 19:5-9). Undoubtedly, he was 18 years of age at the time he began to reign (cf. 2 Kin. 24:5-9), rather than eight years as stated in the present text. The "ten" may have been misplaced and mistakenly used to add ten days to his reign (cf. 2 Kin. 24:8).

**John Mayer:** The cause of Nebuchadnezzar's taking of Jehoiachin is not stated. However, Josephus said that fearing the young king would seek to revenge his father's capture and ignominious casting out of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, he thought it unsafe to allow Jehoiachin to reign. Therefore he came against him, carried him away to Babylon and set up another king in his stead: Zedekiah. Others think that Nebuchadnezzar, having first made Jehoiachin king, soon repented and returned thus again. . . . But on God's part, the cause of Nebuchadnezzar's being sent against Jehoiachin was due to the latter's wickedness.

**2 Chronicles 36:10 At the turn of the year King Nebuchadnezzar sent and brought him to Babylon with the valuable articles of the house of the LORD, and he made his kinsman Zedekiah king over Judah and Jerusalem.**

- when the year was expired (KJV): Heb. at the return of the year, king Nebuchadnezzar. 2Ki 24:10-17 25:27-30 Jer 29:2 Eze 1:2
- goodly vessels (KJV): Heb. vessels of desire, 2Ch 36:7 Jer 27:18-22 Da 1:1,2 5:2,23
- Zedekiah (KJV): 2Ki 24:17, Mattaniah his father's brother, 1Ch 3:15,16 Jer 37:1

**At the turn of the year King Nebuchadnezzar sent and brought him to Babylon with the valuable articles of the house of the LORD, and he made his kinsman Zedekiah king over Judah and Jerusalem.**

**QUESTION - [Who was King Zedekiah in the Bible?](#)**

**ANSWER** - Zedekiah was the last king of Judah and was king when Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed by Babylon in 586 BC and the majority of the people were carried into exile. The story of Zedekiah is told in 2 Kings 24–25, 2 Chronicles 36, and the [book of Jeremiah](#).

Zedekiah's original name was Mattaniah. He was the son of [King Josiah](#) and the brother of [King Jehoahaz](#) and [King Jehoiakim](#). Zedekiah would not normally have been included in the line to the throne, but the kings preceding him made bad decisions, both spiritually and politically, and were removed in succession. Jehoahaz, son of Josiah, ruled for 3 months and "did evil in the sight of the Lord," and Pharaoh Necho took him to Egypt in exile (2 Kings 23:31–33). Necho put his brother Jehoiakim in his place.

Jehoiakim ruled for 11 years. During his reign, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon invaded. Jehoiakim swore allegiance to him and continued as a vassal king. He also did evil in the Lord's sight (by not removing all of the idols from the land) and then rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar. Upon his death, his son Jehoiachin succeeded him (2 Kings 24:1–7).

Jehoiachin continued his father's evil ways. He reigned for 3 months and then was removed from the throne by Nebuchadnezzar. At this point Mattaniah, son of Josiah, was put on the throne by Nebuchadnezzar to rule as a vassal king. Nebuchadnezzar changed his name to Zedekiah (2 Kings 24:8–17).

Zedekiah was 21 years old when he became king, meaning he would have only been about 10 when his father, Josiah, died and his brother Jehoahaz became king. Zedekiah ruled for 11 years but continued on all the evil of his brothers and nephew Jehoiachin (2 Kings 24: 18–20). In his ninth year on the throne, Zedekiah rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar, and, as a result, Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Jerusalem. Zedekiah was confident of Egypt's help, which never materialized. In the eleventh year of Zedekiah's reign, the city fell to Babylon.

Second Kings gives the basic historical outline, which is supplemented in 2 Chronicles 36. Jeremiah fills in much of the behind-the-scenes information and the spiritual component. In Jeremiah 21, during the siege of Jerusalem, Zedekiah asks [Jeremiah](#) to intercede to the Lord so that perhaps the Lord would deliver Judah. Jeremiah returns God's answer: He has irrevocably handed Judah over to judgment, first by plague, and those who escape that will fall to the Babylonians. The only hope that any of the people have is to surrender to the Babylonians. "Whoever stays in this city will die by the sword, famine or plague. But whoever goes out and surrenders to the Babylonians who are besieging you will live; they will escape with their lives" (verse 9).

Zedekiah heard God's definitive answer, but he did not like it. False prophets contradicted Jeremiah and preached a more favorable message (Jeremiah 23), but God reiterated His message to Jeremiah (chapters 24–25). There is a "showdown" in Jeremiah 27–28. Jeremiah comes to the king wearing a yoke around his neck as a visual of what will happen to the people—they will be taken to Babylon as exiles in bondage. The (false) prophet [Hananiah](#) took the yoke from Jeremiah and broke it, saying, "This is what the LORD says: 'In the same way I will break the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon off the neck of all the nations within two years'" (Jeremiah 28:11). The Lord then tells Jeremiah to pronounce judgment on Hananiah and tell him that, before the end of the year, he will be dead. Demonstrating the legitimacy of Jeremiah as a prophet and the truth of his prophecies, Hananiah died "in the seventh month of that same year" (verse 17).

Jeremiah sends a letter to those already in exile in Babylon telling them not to trust prophets who foretell a speedy return. He tells them to settle in, build houses and gardens, have children, and seek the prosperity of Babylon, for they will be there for a long time (he specifies 70 years, Jeremiah 29:10). However, they are promised that God will restore Judah to the land, but only in His time (Jeremiah 29–31).

In chapter 32, King Zedekiah confines Jeremiah to the courtyard of the guard in the palace (verse 2), but Jeremiah does not compromise his message.

In chapter 34, Jeremiah assures Zedekiah that he (Zedekiah) will die peacefully in Babylon, but that the city of Jerusalem will not escape. At some time in his reign, Zedekiah freed all the slaves that should have been freed every seven years, a command of the Law that had been neglected for many years. However, Zedekiah then reversed his decision and allowed the freed slaves to be enslaved again. Jeremiah delivers this message to the king: "Therefore this is what the LORD says: You have not obeyed me; you have not proclaimed freedom to your own people. So I now proclaim 'freedom' for you, declares the LORD—'freedom' to fall by the sword, plague and famine. I will make you abhorrent to all the kingdoms of the earth. . . . I will deliver Zedekiah king of Judah and his officials into the hands of their enemies who want to kill them, to the army of the king of Babylon, which has withdrawn from you. I am going to give the order, declares the LORD, and I will bring them back to this city. They will fight against it, take it and burn it down. And I will lay waste the towns of Judah so no one can live there" (verses 17, 21–22).

Finally, during the siege, Zedekiah fled the city by night but was captured. Zedekiah's sons were killed before him, and then he was blinded and taken to Babylon in chains (Jeremiah 52, see also 2 Kings 25 and 2 Chronicles 36). Then the Babylonians broke down the walls of Jerusalem, burned the temple, and took the temple articles to Babylon with them. Zedekiah died in Babylon years later. No doubt it was a peaceful death as the Lord had promised, but what awful memories he must have endured in the meantime!

Zedekiah had been presented with a tremendous opportunity. Although he missed the throne three times when two of his brothers and then his nephew were crowned, he finally received stewardship of the kingdom. Zedekiah had the benefit of seeing firsthand the mistakes of his brothers and nephew, and he also had direct messages from God through Jeremiah. Yet he would not submit to the Lord. As a result, Zedekiah lost his sons, his sight, his freedom, and his throne. Through it all God was faithful to do what He promised. He carried out the judgment He had declared, but He also brought about the restoration. Seventy years later, [Cyrus](#), king of Persia (successor to the Babylonian Empire), declared that all of the Jewish exiles who wanted to return to Jerusalem might do so, and they could take with them all the implements of the temple (Ezra 1). [GotQuestions.org](#)

## 2 Chronicles 36:11 Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem.

- one and twenty (KJV): 2Ki 24:18-20 Jer 52:1-3

**Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem-** 2 Kings 24:17 says Zedekiah was originally Mattaniah. Zedekiah means "The Lord is Righteous" which is a bit of bitter irony as the righteous judgment of Yahweh would soon be seen against Judah. This king hardly lived up to his great name as he rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar.

### Matthew Henry Notes: 2Ch 36:11-21

We have here an account of the destruction of the kingdom of Judah and the city of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans. Abraham, God's friend, was called out of that country, from Ur of the Chaldees, when God took him into covenant and communion with himself; and now his degenerate seed were carried into that country again, to signify that they had forfeited all that kindness wherewith they had been regarded for the father's sake, and the benefit of that covenant into which he was called; all was now undone again. Here we have,

#### I. The sins that brought this desolation.

1. **Zedekiah, the king in whose days it came, brought it upon himself by his own folly**, for he conducted himself very ill both towards God and towards the king of Babylon.

(1.) **If he had but made God his friend, that would have prevented the ruin.** Jeremiah brought him messages from God, which, if he had given due regard to them, might have secured a lengthening of his tranquillity; but it is here charged upon him that he humbled not himself before Jeremiah, 2Ch 36:12. It was expected that this mighty prince, high as he was, should humble himself before a poor prophet, when he spoke from the mouth of the Lord, should submit to his admonitions and be amended by them, to his counsels and be ruled by them, should lay himself under the commanding power of the word of God in his mouth; and, because he would not thus make himself a servant to God, he was made a slave to his

enemies. God will find some way or other to humble those that will not humble themselves. Jeremiah, as a prophet, was set over the nations and kingdoms (Jer. 1:10), and, as mean a figure as he made, whoever would not humble themselves before him found that it was at their peril.

(2.) **If he had but been true to his covenant with the king of Babylon**, that would have prevented his ruin; but he rebelled against him, though he had sworn to be his faithful tributary, and perfidiously violated his engagements to him, 2Ch 36:13. It was this that provoked the king of Babylon to deal so severely with him as he did. All nations looked upon an oath as a sacred thing, and on those that durst break through the obligations of it as the worst of men, abandoned of God and to be abhorred by all mankind. If therefore Zedekiah falsify his oath, when, lo, he has given his hand, he shall not escape, Eze. 17:18. Though Nebuchadnezzar was a heathen, an enemy, yet if, having sworn to him, he be false to him, he shall know there is a God to whom vengeance belongs. The thing that ruined Zedekiah was not only that he turned not to the Lord God of Israel, but that he stiffened his neck and hardened his heart from turning to him, that is, he as obstinately resolved not to return to him, would not lay his neck under God's yoke nor his heart under the impressions of his word, and so, in effect, he would not be healed, he would not live.

**2. The great sin that brought this destruction was idolatry.** The priests and people went after the abominations of the heathen, forsook the pure worship of God for the lewd and filthy rites of the Pagan superstition, and so polluted the house of the Lord, 2Ch 36:14. The priests, the chief of the priests, who should have opposed idolatry, were ring-leaders in it. That place is not far from ruin in which religion is already ruined.

**3. The great aggravation of their sin, and that which filled the measure of it, was the abuse they gave to God's prophets, who were sent to call them to repentance,** 2Ch 36:15, 16. Here we have,

(1.) **God's tender compassion towards them in sending prophets to them.** Because he was the God of their fathers, in covenant with them, and whom they worshipped (though this degenerate race forsook him), therefore he sent to them by his messengers, to convince them of their sin and warn them of the ruin they would bring upon themselves by it, rising up betimes and sending, which denotes not only that he did it with the greatest care and concern imaginable, as men rise betimes to set their servants to work when their heart is upon their business, but that, upon their first deviation from God to idols, if they took but one step that way, God immediately sent to them by his messengers to reprove them for it. He gave them early timely notice both of their duty and danger. Let this quicken us to seek God early, that he rises betimes to send to us. The prophets that were sent rose betimes to speak to them, were diligent and faithful in their office, lost no time, slipped no opportunity of dealing with them; and therefore God is said to rise betimes. The more pains ministers take in their work the more will the people have to answer for if it be all in vain. The reason given why God by his prophets did thus strive with them is because he had compassion on his people and on his dwelling-place, and would by these means have prevented their ruin. Note, The methods God takes to reclaim sinners by his word, by ministers, by conscience, by providences, are all instances of his compassion towards them and his unwillingness that any should perish.

(2.) Their base and disingenuous carriage towards God (2Ch 36:16): They mocked the messengers of God (which was a high affront to him that sent them), despised his word in their mouths, and not only so, but misused the prophets, treating them as their enemies. The ill usage they gave Jeremiah who lived at this time, and which we read much of in the book of his prophecy, is an instance of this. This was an evidence of an implacable enmity to God, and an invincible resolution to go on in their sins. This brought wrath upon them without remedy, for it was sinning against the remedy. Nothing is more provoking to God than abuses given to his faithful ministers; for what is done against them he takes as done against himself. Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? Persecution was the sin that brought upon Jerusalem its final destruction by the Romans. See Mt. 23:34-37. Those that mock at God's faithful ministers, and do all they can to render them despicable or odious, that vex and misuse them, to discourage them and to keep others from hearkening to them, should be reminded that a wrong done to an ambassador is construed as done to the prince that sends him, and that the day is coming when they will find it would have been better for them if they had been thrown into the sea with a mill-stone about their necks; for hell is deeper and more dreadful.

II. The desolation itself, and some few of the particular so fit, which we had more largely 2 Ki. 25

**1 Multitudes were put to the sword, even in the house of their sanctuary** (2Ch 36:17), whither they fled for refuge, hoping that the holiness of the place would be their protection. But how could they expect to find it



so when they themselves had polluted it with their abominations? 2Ch 36:14. Those that cast off the dominion of their religion forfeit all the benefit and comfort of it. The Chaldeans not only paid no reverence to the sanctuary, but showed no natural pity either to the tender sex or to venerable age. They forsook God, who had compassion on them (2Ch 36:15), and would have none of him; justly therefore are they given up into the hands of cruel men, for they had no compassion on young man or maiden.

**2. All the remaining vessels of the temple, great and small, and all the treasures, sacred and secular, the treasures of God's house and of the king and his princes, were seized, and brought to Babylon,** 2Ch 36:18.

**3. The temple was burnt, the walls of Jerusalem were demolished,** the houses (called here the palaces, as Ps. 48:3, so stately, rich, and sumptuous were they) laid in ashes, and all the furniture, called here the goodly vessels thereof, destroyed, 2Ch 36: 19. Let us see where what woeful havock sin makes, and, as we value the comfort and continuance of our estates, keep that worm from the root of them.

4. The remainder of the people that escaped the sword were carried captives to Babylon (2Ch 36:20), impoverished, enslaved, insulted, and exposed to all the miseries, not only of a strange and barbarous land, but of an enemy's land, where those that hated them bore rule over them. They were servants to those monarchs, and no doubt were ruled with rigour so long as that monarchy lasted. Now they sat down by the rivers of Babylon, with the streams of which they mingled their tears, Ps. 137:1. And though there, it should seem, they were cured of idolatry, yet, as appears by the prophet Ezekiel, they were not cured of mocking the prophets.

**5. The land lay desolate while they were captives in Babylon,** 2Ch 36:21. That fruitful land, the glory of all lands, was now turned into a desert, not tilled, nor husbanded. The pastures were not clothed as they used to be with flocks, nor the valleys with corn, but all lay neglected. Now this may be considered,

(1.) **As the just punishment of their former abuse of it.** They had served Baal with its fruits; cursed therefore is the ground for their sakes. Now the land enjoyed her sabbaths; (2Ch 36:21), as God had threatened by Moses, Lev. 26:34, and the reason there given (2Ch 36:35) is, "Because it did not rest on your sabbaths; you profaned the sabbath-day, did not observe the sabbatical year." They many a time ploughed and sowed their land in the seventh year, when it should have rested, and now it lay unploughed and unsown for ten times seven years. Note, God will be no loser in his glory at last by the disobedience of men: if the tribute be not paid, he will distraint and recover it, as he speaks, Hos. 2:9. If they would not let the land rest, God would make it rest whether they would or no. Some think they had neglected the observance of seventy sabbatical years in all, and just so many, by way of reprisal, the land now enjoyed; or, if those that had been neglected were fewer, it was fit that the law should be satisfied with interest. We find that one of the quarrels God had with them at this time was for not observing another law which related to the seventh year, and that was the release of servants; see Jer. 34:13, etc.

(2.) Yet we may consider it as giving some encouragement to their hopes that they should, in due time, return to it again. Had others come and taken possession of it, they might have despaired of ever recovering it; but, while it lay desolate, it did, as it were, lie waiting for them again, and refuse to acknowledge any other owners.

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## [It's A Long Story](#)

He who is often rebuked, and hardens his neck, will suddenly be destroyed. — Proverbs 29:1

Today's Scripture: 2 Chronicles 36:11-17

In August 1989, a major fire broke out under an elevated section of New Jersey's Interstate 78. The intense heat buckled parts of the highway and forced the closing of the East Coast artery. The governor said it was the worst transportation crisis in years.

An investigation brought to light a longstanding problem. It revealed that the fire broke out in a dump site in which construction debris had been collecting for many years. The owners of the site had been convicted of a multimillion dollar conspiracy to allow the illegal dumping of construction debris. But appeals in federal and state courts frustrated New Jersey's efforts to clean up the area. Not until the day after the fire did a state appeals court finally order the operator of the dump to stop accepting trash and begin clearing the site.

That fire tells a basic story of life. Most of our problems don't just happen. They are the result of a long series of bad decisions. Second Chronicles 36 illustrates this and reminds us that God will not allow His children to continue in sin. Even though

He is longsuffering, His patience has a limit. If we don't correct the problem ourselves, we can be sure that He will discipline us.

Let's clean up the trash in our lives today. By: Mart DeHaan (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Lord, help me see my hidden sin,  
Those secret wrongs that lurk within;  
I would confess them all to Thee-  
Transparent I would always be.  
—D. De Haan

The most deadly sins do not leap upon us, they creep up on us.

**2 Chronicles 36:12 He did evil in the sight of the LORD his God; he did not humble himself before Jeremiah the prophet who spoke for the LORD.**

- humbled (KJV): 2Ch 32:26 33:12,19,23 Ex 10:3 Da 5:22,23 Jas 4:10 1Pe 5:6
- before Jeremiah (KJV): Jer 21:1-10 27:12-22 28:1-17 34:2-22 37:2-21 38:14-28
- the mouth (KJV): 2Ch 35:22

**He did evil in the sight of the LORD his God; he did not humble himself before Jeremiah the prophet who spoke for the LORD.**

[Bob Utley](#) points out that In 2 Chronicles there are two VERBS that reveal the hearts of the kings - (1) humble (see 2 Chr. 7:14; 12:6,7) and (2) seek (see 2Ch 7:14; 15:4,15) This last series of kings did neither, even though YHWH addressed them through his prophet Jeremiah. They were exactly opposite to Hezekiah (cf. 2 Chr. 32:26; 33:12,23) and Josiah (cf. 2 Chr. 34:27).

**2 Chronicles 36:13 He also rebelled against King Nebuchadnezzar who had made him swear allegiance by God. But he stiffened his neck and hardened his heart against turning to the LORD God of Israel.**

- rebelled (KJV): 2Ki 24:20 Jer 52:2,3 Eze 17:11-20
- who had (KJV): Jos 9:15,19,20 2Sa 21:2
- stiffened (KJV): 2Ki 17:4 Ne 9:16,17 Isa 48:4
- hardened (KJV): Ex 8:15,32 9:17 Ne 9:29 Ro 2:4,5 Heb 3:8,13

#### Related Passages:

2 Kings 25:7 They slaughtered the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, then put out the eyes of Zedekiah and bound him with bronze fetters and brought him to Babylon.

### **ZEDEKIAH'S FOOLISH REBELLION AGAINST NEBUCHADNEZZAR**

**He also rebelled against King Nebuchadnezzar who had made him swear allegiance by God. But he stiffened his neck and hardened his heart against turning to the LORD God of Israel.**

**August Konkell:** The offense of [maal](#) a favorite word of the Chronicler, is oath violation or a violation of the sacred space of the temple (2Ch 26:16-18). These violations are equivalent because both are directly offenses against God. Zedekiah's refusal to submit to Babylonian rule led him to oath violation and brought all of the people to increasing their unfaithfulness. Destruction and exile on a national scale follow in the wake of the [maal](#) of oath violation (Lev 26:14-17). On this basis, Ezekiel can pronounce exile for the entire nation (Ezek 17:19-21). The Chronicler's view is that [maal](#) trespasses on the divine realm by breaking the covenant oath. It is a lethal sin that destroys both the offender and his community.

**J.A. Thompson:** The oath of **allegiance** that he swore to Nebuchadnezzar in the name of his God was normal in political treaties, but his breaking of the oath only serves to reinforce the portrait of him as an apostate (cf. Ezek 17:11-21). Not only did Zedekiah display disloyal and unfaithful attitudes and responses, but all the leaders of the priests and the people behaved in the same way

(2Ch 36:14). In Zedekiah the people had the kind of king they deserved.

**2 Chronicles 36:14 Furthermore, all the officials of the priests and the people were very unfaithful following all the abominations of the nations; and they defiled the house of the LORD which He had sanctified in Jerusalem.**

**EXB** Also, all the leaders [officials] of the priests and the people of Judah became more wicked [unfaithful], following the evil example [detestable/abominable practices] of the other nations. The Lord had made holy [consecrated; sanctified] the Temple [house] in Jerusalem, but the leaders made it unholy [defiled/polluted it].

**MSG** The evil mindset spread to the leaders and priests and filtered down to the people—it kicked off an epidemic of evil, repeating the abominations of the pagans and polluting The Temple of God so recently consecrated in Jerusalem.

- all the chief (KJV): 2Ki 16:10-16 Ezr 9:7 Jer 5:5 37:13-15 38:4 Eze 22:6,26-28 Da 9:6,8 Mic 3:1-4,9-11 7:2 Zep 3:3,4
- very much (KJV): 2Ch 28:3 33:9
- polluted (KJV): 2Ch 33:4-7 Eze 8:5-16

**Furthermore, all the officials of the priests and the people were very unfaithful(maal) following all the abominations (toebah) of the nations**- These abominations refer to idols and idolatry and their associated depraved practices (especially unspeakable immorality)(cf Dt. 18:9; 1Ki 14:24; 2Ki 16:3; 21:2; 2Ch 33:2; 36:14; Ezek. 8:10-16. See list in Dt. 18:9-13,14)

**And they defiled the house of the LORD which He had sanctified in Jerusalem**- It is interesting that "the Chronicler does not mention the unfaithfulness of the Levites. He is supportive of them throughout the book." (Utley)

**Ryrie** - 2Ch 36:14-21 Two reasons are given here for the Babylonian Captivity: continued idolatry, and failure to give the land 70 sabbatical years of rest. See note on Lev. 25:2-7. For the completion of the 70 years of captivity, see note on Ezra 3:8.

**Believer's Study Bible** - In keeping with his purpose, the chronicler provides the reason for the Babylonian captivity: it resulted from the apostasy, idolatry, and arrogance of the people when they were confronted by God's messengers (cf. Jer. 25:11, 12).

**Frederick Mabie:** Sadly, the depth of unfaithfulness is not limited to the ungodly reign of Zedekiah (cf. 2Ch 36:12-13) but is likewise seen in the hearts of both people and priests. The inclusion of priestly leaders is especially egregious, since a key covenantal responsibility of priests was to "teach the Israelites all the decrees the Lord has given them" (Lev 10:11; cf. Dt 33:8-11). This dereliction of duty on the part of priests is also an issue during the Chronicler's own time, as reflected in the divine message against priests delivered via the postexilic prophet Malachi (2:1-9).

**Iain Duguid:** From Nebuchadnezzar's perspective, it was Zedekiah's rebellion that led to the final attack when Jerusalem was sacked, the temple destroyed, and kingship in Jerusalem brought to an end. For the biblical writers, however, the reason was the Lord's "wrath" because of the persistent rejection of his word. Kings simply states this fact (2 Kings 24:20), but Chronicles expands on the rejection (2 Chron. 36:12-16).

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**Unfaithful** (treachery) ([04604](#)) **maal** from the verb **maal** = to act unfaithfully or treacherously, to violate a legal obligation) is a masculine noun which refers to an unfaithful (not adhering to vows, allegiance, or duty) act, a violation of allegiance (the fidelity owed by a subject to his or her Sovereign God) or of faith and confidence. Most uses of **maal** reflect violations are against Jehovah (exception = [Job 21:34](#)). The **NAS** translates **maal** as falsehood (1), treachery (2), trespass (1), trespass\* (1), unfaithful (3), unfaithful act (4), unfaithful deeds (1), unfaithfully (6), unfaithfulness (6), very unfaithful (1). **Treachery** is that which is untrue to what should command one's fidelity or allegiance (in this case fidelity to God alone). Furthermore, **treachery** implies a readiness to betray trust or confidence. Webster's 1828 edition adds "The man who betrays his country in any manner, violates his allegiance, and is guilty of **treachery**. This is treason. The man who violates his faith pledged to his friend, or betrays a trust in which a promise of fidelity is implied, is guilty of **treachery**. The disclosure of a secret committed to one in confidence, is **treachery**. This is perfidy."

Maal - 26v - Lev. 5:15; Lev. 6:2; Num. 5:6; Num. 5:12; Num. 5:27; Num. 31:16; Jos. 7:1; Jos. 22:16; Jos. 22:20; Jos. 22:22; Jos. 22:31; 1 Chr. 9:1; 1 Chr. 10:13; 2 Chr. 28:19; 2 Chr. 29:19; 2 Chr. 33:19; 2 Chr. 36:14; Ezr. 9:2; Ezr. 9:4; Ezr. 10:6; Job 21:34; Ezek. 15:8; Ezek. 17:20; Ezek. 18:24; Ezek. 39:26; Dan. 9:7

**2 Chronicles 36:15 The LORD, the God of their fathers, sent word to them again and again by His messengers, because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place;**

- the Lord (KJV): 2Ch 24:18-21 33:10 2Ki 17:13 Jer 25:3,4 26:5 35:15 44:4,5
- his messengers (KJV): Heb. the hand of his messengers
- betimes (KJV): i.e., continually and carefully. because. Judges 10:16 2Ki 13:23 Ho 11:8 Lu 19:41-44

## **MANY PROPHETS SENT REFLECTING GOD'S GREAT COMPASSION**

**The LORD, the God of their fathers, sent word to them again and again by His messengers, because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place** - Note that time phrase **again and again**, implying that they were rejected over and over!

**THOUGHT** - Today in His great compassion, He sends "word" to us via His Spirit filled, Word centered preachers and His pure Word. Are you listening? If you are ensnared by some form of idolatry then you need to study what finally happened to Judah. (Read 1Co 10:6, 11+) God is very patient, but He does have limits, which only He knows. Confess and repent and experience forgiveness and cleansing from all unrighteousness (1Jn 1:9+).

**Bob Utley** - Judgment was the only way for YHWH to purify His people and restore His plan of revelation.

**Raymond Dillard**: The prophets and messengers spoken of in 2Ch 36:15–16 probably refer to more than those who were active only in the last decades before the exile; the author appears to be speaking of the entire prophetic succession, though this is not unambiguously clear. The role of the prophets in Chronicles is primarily that of guardians of the theocracy; they are the bearers of the word of God to kings, who are in turn blessed or judged within a short time in terms of their response. Here, however, the Chronicler describes the guilt of Israel as cumulative: rather than each generation or king experiencing weal or woe in terms of its own actions, there is a cumulative weight of guilt which ultimately irretrievably provokes the wrath of God and brings the great exile.

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### **F B Meyer - 2 Chronicles 36:15 Rising up betimes.**

What a touching and graphic phrase! How did God yearn over that sinful and rebellious city! Sending His messengers, "rising up betimes, and sending" — like a man who has had a sleepless night of anxiety for his friend or child, and rises with the dawn to send a servant on a mission of inquiry, or a message of love. How eager God is for men's salvation!

From God's eagerness, may we not learn a lesson of anxiety for the souls of men? We do not long after them enough, or rise betimes to urge them to repent. Did we realize what heaven is, or hell, what men are missing or incurring, what our duty is, as saved ourselves, we should rise up betimes to seek their eternal interests.

But if God rises betimes to seek men, should they not do the same to seek Him? Think you not, that when Adam heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden at morning prime, he would be up and away to meet Him on the up land lawns of Paradise? Can we wonder that our Master would rise up a great while before day, to meet His Father on some unfrequented height? Let us not cling to beds of sloth when God is awaiting us; let us heed His loving remonstrances, that we may be saved in the overthrow of the world; and let us, like Lot, pass on the word to others enwrapped in fatal slumber around us, bidding them to escape to the mountains, before the sun rise on the earth, lest they be consumed.

It was the practice of Sir Henry Havelock, during his campaigns in India, always to have two hours for prayer and Bible study before the march. If the camp was struck at 6:00 A. M., he would rise at 4:00.

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### **Don't Touch the Fence!**

The Lord . . . sent word to them . . . again and again, because he had pity on his people.

2 Chronicles 36:15

Today's Scripture & Insight: Jeremiah 18:1-12

As a young girl I went with my parents to visit my great-grandmother, who lived near a farm. Her yard was enclosed by an electric fence, which prevented cows from grazing on her grass. When I asked my parents if I could play outside, they consented, but explained that touching the fence would result in an electric shock.

Unfortunately I ignored their warning, put a finger to the barbed wire, and was zapped by an electrical current strong enough to teach a cow a lesson. I knew then that my parents had warned me because they loved me and didn't want me to get hurt.

When God saw the ancient Israelites in Jerusalem crafting and worshiping idols, He "sent word to them . . . again and again, because he had pity on his people" (2 Chron. 36:15). God spoke through the prophet Jeremiah, but the people said, "We will continue with our own plans" (Jer. 18:12). Because of this, God allowed Nebuchadnezzar to destroy Jerusalem and capture most of its inhabitants.

Maybe God is warning you today about some sin in your life. If so, be encouraged. That is proof of His compassion for us (Heb. 12:5-6). He sees what's ahead and wants us to avoid the problems that will come. By: Jennifer Benson Schuldt (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Lord, give me the ability to hear not just Your words but also Your heart. Help me to learn from the mistakes of those whose stories You have given us. Help me to honor You with my life.

God's warnings are to protect us, not to punish us.

**2 Chronicles 36:16 but they continually mocked the messengers of God, despised His words and scoffed at His prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against His people, until there was no remedy.**

- mocked (KJV): 2Ch 30:10 Ps 35:16 Isa 28:22 Jer 5:12,13 20:7 Lu 18:32 22:63,64 Lu 23:11,36 Ac 2:13 17:32 Heb 11:36
- despised (KJV): Pr 1:24-30 Lu 16:14 Ac 13:41 1Th 4:8
- misused (KJV): Jer 32:3 38:6 Mt 5:12 21:33-41 Ac 7:52
- the wrath (KJV): Ps 74:1 79:1-5
- till (KJV): Pr 6:15 29:1
- remedy (KJV): Heb. healing

### **NO REMEDY FOR THOSE DESPISING GOD'S WORD!**

This has to be one of the saddest, most tragic passages in the entire Bible.

**but they continually mocked the messengers of God, despised His words and scoffed at His prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against His people, until there was no remedy** - This description could be an apt summation of Judah's repeated response in the Chronicles! To despise His words is to despise Him! And the same parallel applies to mocking and scoffing!

**THOUGHT** We never do that do we? Of course we do, for every time we willfully commit a sin we know God abhors, we are in effect doing just what Judah did! But remember God's patience does have limits!

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#### **James Smith - A SAD CASE 2 CHRONICLES 36:16**

1. God's Messengers Mocked.
2. God's Word Despised.
3. God's Prophets Misused.
4. God's Wrath Aroused.
5. God's Presence Withdrawn. "No remedy."

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#### **Who Knows Best?**

They mocked the messengers of God, despised His words, and scoffed at His prophets. — 2 Chronicles 36:16

Today's Scripture: 2 Chronicles 36:15-21

"I love my job," said Maggie, a young nurse, "but it's so frustrating when I tell people what they need to do to stay healthy and they don't follow my advice."

I smiled in empathy. "I felt that way when I started my editorial career," I told her. "It was frustrating when authors would disregard the advice I gave them about improving their manuscripts."

Then I realized the spiritual implication. “If you and I feel frustrated when people don’t follow our professional advice,” I said, “imagine how God feels when we ignore His.” He’s the only One with perfect knowledge of what’s good for us, yet we often behave as if we know better.

This was the case in ancient Israel. Thinking that they knew more than God did, the people followed their own way (2 Chronicles 36:15-16). As a result, Jerusalem and the house of God fell into the hands of the Babylonians.

This is also the case with us when God’s instructions seem difficult. We may conclude that He had exceptions in mind for our particular circumstance.

God graciously teaches what is best (Isaiah 48:17-18) but doesn’t force us to do it. He patiently presents what is right and good, and allows us to choose it. By: Julie Ackerman Link (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

What freedom lies with all who choose  
To live for God each day!  
But chains of bondage shackle those  
Who choose some other way.  
—D. De Haan

God’s teaching may not always make sense, but it’s always senseless to think we know better.

**2 Chronicles 36:17 Therefore He brought up against them the king of the Chaldeans who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion on young man or virgin, old man or infirm; He gave them all into his hand.**

- he brought (KJV): 2Ch 33:11 De 28:49 2Ki 24:2,3 Ezr 9:7 Jer 15:8 32:42 40:3 Da 9:14
- the king (KJV): 2Ki 25:1-30 Jer 39:1-18 52:1-34
- who slew (KJV): Lev 26:14-46 De 28:15-68 29:18-28 30:18 31:16-18 32:15-28 Ps 74:20 79:2,3 Jer 15:9 18:21 La 2:21,22
- in the house (KJV): 2Ch 24:21 La 2:20 Eze 9:5-7 Lu 13:1,2
- no compassion (KJV): De 28:50 Ps 74:20

**Therefore He brought up against them the king of the Chaldeans who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion on young man or virgin, old man or infirm; He gave them all into his hand** - Do not miss the phrase which demonstrates God's sovereign and His willingness to use pagan to punish His people.

**THOUGHT** - Beloved, if you are in a sin that has you caught like a rat in a trap and you are unwilling to confess and repent, be aware that the unchanging God may use pagans like He did with Judah to discipline you, for His ultimate desire for you is that you experience the peaceful fruit of righteousness (Heb 12:11+).

**Martin Selman:** The end comes remarkably swiftly, like a bird of prey suddenly swooping down after circling repeatedly over its victim.... The final collapse under Zedekiah is therefore merely the final stage in a process that has long been inevitable.

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#### **QUESTION - [Who were the Chaldeans in the Bible?](#)**

**ANSWER** - The Chaldeans were people who lived in southern Babylonia which would be the southern part of Iraq today. Sometimes the term *Chaldeans* is used to refer to Babylonians in general, but normally it refers to a specific semi-nomadic tribe that lived in the southern part of Babylon. The land of the Chaldeans was the southern portion of Babylon or Mesopotamia. It was generally thought to be an area about 400 miles long and 100 miles wide alongside the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers.

The Chaldeans are mentioned multiple times in the Bible in both contexts. For example, Genesis 11:28 speaks of Abraham’s father [Terah](#), who lived in “Ur of the Chaldeans,” home to the specific tribe or people known as the Chaldeans. We know from verses such as Genesis 11:31 and Genesis 15:7 that God called Abraham, a descendant of Shem, out of Ur of the Chaldeans so that Abraham would follow God to the land that God had promised to him and his descendants.

The Chaldeans were an intelligent and sometimes aggressive, warlike people. In 731 BC Ukinzer, a Chaldean, became king of Babylon; however, his reign was short-lived. A few years later Merodach-Baladan, also a Chaldean, became king over Babylon. Then in 626 BC Nabopolassar, another Chaldean, began what would be an extended period of time during which Babylon was ruled



by a Chaldean king. During this time the word *Chaldean* became synonymous for *Babylon*, and we see many verses in Scripture where the word Chaldean was used to refer to Babylonians in general (Isaiah 13:19; 47:1, 5; 48:14, 20). Successors to Nabopolassar were Nebuchadnezzar, Amel-Marduk, Nabonidus and then Belshazzar, "king of the Chaldeans" (Daniel 5:30).

At the height of the Babylonian Empire, the Chaldeans were an influential and highly educated group of people. Some historians believe that, after Persia conquered Babylon, the term *Chaldean* was used more often to refer to a social class of highly educated people than to a race of men. The Chaldeans influenced Nebuchadnezzar's decision to throw Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego into the fiery furnace (Daniel 3:8) and were well known as wise men and astrologers during the time of Jewish captivity in Babylon. (Daniel 1:4; 2:10; 4:7; 5:7, 11). At the time of Daniel, Babylon was the intellectual center of western Asia, and the Chaldeans were renowned for their study and knowledge of astrology and astronomy. They kept detailed astronomical records for over 360 years, which can help us understand how the wise men from the East would have been able to recognize and follow the star that would lead them to the King of the Jews (Matthew 2:2). [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

#### Related Resources:

- [SPECIAL TOPIC: CHALDEANS](#).

**2 Chronicles 36:18 All the articles of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king and of his officers, he brought them all to Babylon.**

- all the vessels (KJV): 2Ch 36:7,10 2Ki 25:13-17 Jer 27:18-22 52:17-23 Da 5:3
- treasures (KJV): 2Ki 20:13-17 Isa 39:6 Zec 1:6

**All the articles of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king and of his officers, he brought them all to Babylon.**

**Believer's Study Bible** has an interesting postulate - It is noteworthy that, while the great temple is destroyed and all its treasures taken to Babylon, no mention whatever is made of its most sacred occupant, the ark of the covenant. God evidently would not allow it to be desecrated again and so translated it directly (like Enoch and Elijah) to the heavenly temple, where it was seen by John five hundred years later when he himself was translated into the distant future of the end-times (Revelation 11:19).

**Dillard:** The Talmud declares that when the Babylonians entered the temple, they held a two-day feast there to desecrate it; then, on the third day, they set fire to the building. The Talmud adds that the fire burned throughout that day and the next.

**Martin Selman:** The over-all impression is of unrelieved destruction. 'All, every' is used fivefold in verses 17-19, which together with young and old, large and small, and finally (literally), 'to destruction' confirms that there was no respite, no escape.

**2 Chronicles 36:19 Then they burned the house of God and broke down the wall of Jerusalem, and burned all its fortified buildings with fire and destroyed all its valuable articles.**

- they burnt (KJV): 2Ki 25:9 Ps 74:4-8 79:1,7 Isa 64:10,11 Jer 7:4,14 52:13 La 4:1 Mic 3:12 Lu 21:6
- brake down (KJV): 2Ki 25:10,11 Jer 52:14,15

## JERUSALEM SACKED TEMPLE DESTROYED 586 BC

**Then they burned the house of God and broke down the wall of Jerusalem, and burned all its fortified buildings with fire and destroyed all its valuable articles.**

**2 Chronicles 36:20 Those who had escaped from the sword he carried away to Babylon; and they were servants to him and to his sons until the rule of the kingdom of Persia,**

- And them that had escaped from (KJV): Heb. And the remainder from
- they were servants (KJV): De 28:47,48 Jer 27:7
- until the reign (KJV): 2Ch 36:22 Ezr 1:1-11

**Those who had escaped from the sword he carried away to Babylon; and they were servants to him and to his sons until the rule of the kingdom of Persia,**

**Andrew Hill:** Essentially the Chronicler offers his generation a twofold rationale for Judah's expulsion from the land of the promise. (1) Both king and people have rejected God's word spoken by his prophetic messengers (2Ch 36:16). (2) The people of Judah have failed to keep the covenant stipulation of giving the land "its sabbath rest" (2Ch 36:21; cf. Lev. 25:1-7). Here again the compiler assumes his audience has a working knowledge of the Torah and the Prophets in the intertwining of the covenant curse (Lev. 26:34) and the word of Jeremiah (Jer. 29:10).

**Dillard:** The fall of Jerusalem didn't come about in one cataclysmic battle; it occurred in stages.

- Nebuchadnezzar's initial subjugation of the city about 605 B.C.
- The destruction by Nebuchadnezzar's marauding bands, 601 to 598 B.C.
- The siege and fall of Jerusalem under Nebuchadnezzar's main army on 16 March, 597 B.C.
- Nebuchadnezzar's return to completely destroy and depopulate Jerusalem in the summer of 586 B.C.

**2 Chronicles 36:21 to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed its sabbaths. All the days of its desolation it kept sabbath until seventy years were complete.**

- To fulfil (KJV): Jer 25:9,12 26:6,7 27:12,13 29:10 Da 9:2 Zec 1:4-6
- until the land (KJV): Lev 25:4-6 26:34,35,43 Zec 1:12

#### **Related Passages:**

Jeremiah 25:11 'This whole land will be a desolation and a horror, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon seventy years.

Jeremiah 29:10 "For thus says the LORD, 'When seventy years have been completed for Babylon, I will visit you and fulfill My good word to you, to bring you back to this place.

Daniel 9:2 in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, observed in the books the number of the years which was revealed as the word of the LORD to Jeremiah the prophet for the completion of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years.

**to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed its sabbaths**

**All the days of its desolation it kept sabbath until seventy years were complete.**

**Frederick Mabie:** The beginning point and ending point of this seventy-year period (Jer 25:8-11; 29:10) is not exactly specified within the biblical material. The most likely possibility is that the destruction of the temple in 586 BC started the seventy-year period, which comes to a close with the dedication of the Second Temple (ca. 516 BC). Another possibility is that the end of the seventy-year period is connected with the Decree of Cyrus (539 BC; cf. 2Ch 36:22), which would imply a beginning point around the death of Josiah (609 BC), after which Judah became a pawn to the geopolitical interests of Egypt and Babylonia.

**Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary** on the "sabbath rests": "The return of every seventh was to be held as a sabbatic year, a season of rest to all classes, even to the land itself, which was to be fallow. This divine institution, however, was neglected—how soon and how long, appears from the prophecy of Moses (Lev. 26:34), and of Jeremiah in this passage..., which told that for divine retribution it was now to remain desolate seventy years. Since the Assyrian conquerors usually colonized their conquered provinces, so remarkable a deviation in Palestine from their customary policy must be ascribed to the overruling providence of God."

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#### **G Campbell Morgan - -2 Chr 36.21**

Jeremiah conducted a prophetic ministry in Judah for forty years, and—so far as producing any result in the directing of the people back to God—without success. Through stress and strain, and as against the keenest hatred and hostility, he continued to declare the word of Jehovah to a rebellious and stiff-necked people. As we said in speaking of King Josiah, in whose reign Jeremiah began his work, such service is the most heroic. In these words the chronicler reminds us that he was vindicated in the march of events. All the things he had foretold, the foretelling of which had stirred the anger of the people, were literally fulfilled. The writings of this great prophet, preserved for us, show that he had no joy in the sorrows that befell his people through their sins, but rather the acutest suffering. Nevertheless he must have had great satisfaction at last in the fact that he had been true to the word of Jehovah delivered

to him. The word of Jehovah is always fulfilled, by whosoever mouth it is proclaimed. Happy indeed, in all the deepest senses of that word, is that man who never fails nor falters in the delivery of that word. It is not so much the selfish joy of seeing things turn out as he predicted; but rather the high joy of realizing that he has been honoured in being the messenger appointed to deliver the Word which cannot fail.

**2 Chronicles 36:22 Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia—in order to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah—the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he sent a proclamation throughout his kingdom, and also put it in writing, saying,**

- This verse and the next have a double aspect. They look back to the prophecy of Jeremiah, and show how that was accomplished; and they look forward to the history of Ezra, which begins with a repetition of these two last verses.
- in the first (KJV): Ezr 1:1-3
- Cyrus (KJV): Isa 44:28 Da 10:1
- that the word (KJV): 2Ch 36:21 Jer 25:12,14 29:10 32:42-44 33:10-14 Heb 10:23
- the Lord stirred (KJV): 2Ch 21:16 1Sa 26:19 1Ki 11:14,23 1Ch 5:26 Ezr 1:5 Isa 13:3-5,17,18 44:28 45:1-5 Hag 1:14
- a proclamation (KJV): 2Ch 24:9 30:5

#### **Related Passages:**

Ezra 1:1-3 Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, in order to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he sent a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and also put it in writing, saying: 2 “Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, ‘The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and He has appointed me to build Him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. 3 ‘Whoever there is among you of all His people, may his God be with him! Let him go up to Jerusalem which is in Judah and rebuild the house of the LORD, the God of Israel; He is the God who is in Jerusalem.

### **AFTER 70 YEARS OF BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY**

**Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia—in order to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah—the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he sent a proclamation throughout his kingdom, and also put it in writing, saying,**

**Morris** - The last two verses of the Chronicles (2 Chronicles 36:22,23) are essentially the same as the first three verses of Ezra (Ezra 1:1-3). Quite possibly, this could have been a device used by Ezra to tie the two books together. Although it cannot be proven definitely, the consensus of conservative Old Testament scholars is that Ezra was indeed the author of Chronicles.

**Ryrie** on the **first year**. -, the first year that Cyrus was ruler of the conquered Babylonian Empire (538 B.C., though he had been king of Persia since 559). Verses 22-23 (identical to Ezra 1:1-2) lead the reader directly to the continuing historical account in the book of Ezra.

**Thomas Constable:** These two verses reflect the whole mood of Chronicles. Rather than ending with the failure of people, the writer concluded by focusing attention on the faithfulness of God (cf. Lam. 3:22-23). God was in control of the Persian king as He had controlled the kings of Babylon, Egypt, and Israel. God had promised Israel a future as a nation. His people would experience this future under the rule of a perfect Davidic Son. Yahweh was moving now—after 70 years of captivity—to bring that future to pass (cf. Isa. 9:7). Even though the Babylonian army had burned Yahweh’s temple to the ground (2Ch 36:19), it would rise again (2Ch 36:23).

**Raymond Dillard:** Concluding the narrative with these two verses highlights the hopefulness already intimated in 36:20–21 and directs the reader to the continuation of the narrative in Ezra. The book ends with a new exodus at hand: not because God forced the hand of a reluctant Pharaoh, but because he moved the heart of a Persian king. The people of God will again go free and build a sanctuary.

**J.A. Thompson:** The Lord had appointed Cyrus to build a temple for him in Jerusalem. In fact, the tabernacle and the first and second temples were all built in part with funds provided by Gentile nations. Cyrus’ authorization for the rebuilding of the temple included not only the building but also the return of the implements taken from the first temple by Nebuchadnezzar and the funding of the project from the Persian treasury (Ezra 6:4-5). The book thus ends with the possibility of a new exodus. As God had once

forced the hand of a reluctant pharaoh, now he moved the heart of a Persian king. The Book of Chronicles thus ends with the promise that the people of God would again go free to build a sanctuary where they could worship him in the land he had promised to their ancestors.

### **Matthew Henry Notes: 2Ch 36:22-23**

These last two verses of this book have a double aspect.

1. They look back to the prophecy of Jeremiah, and show how that was accomplished, 2Ch 36:22. God had, by him, promised the restoring of the captives and the rebuilding of Jerusalem, at the end of seventy years; and that time to favour Sion, that set time, came at last. After a long and dark night the day-spring from on high visited them. God will be found true to every word he has spoken.
2. They look forward to the history of Ezra, which begins with the repetition of these last two verses. They are there the introduction to a pleasant story; here they are the conclusion of a very melancholy one; and so we learn from them that, though God's church be cast down, it is not cast off, though his people be corrected, they are not abandoned, though thrown into the furnace, yet not lost there, nor left there any longer than till the dross be separated. Though God contend long, he will not contend always. The Israel of God shall be fetched out of Babylon in due time, and even the dry bones made to live. It may be long first; but the vision is for an appointed time, and at the end it shall speak and not lie; therefore, though it tarry, wait for it.

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### **Walter Kaiser - 2Ch 36:22–23 Did the Pagan King Cyrus Believe in the God of Israel? - Hard Sayings of the Bible**

Does the text of Ezra 1:1 (2Ch 36:22–23) imply that Cyrus was using these titles for Yahweh, engaging in the task of building the temple in Jerusalem and releasing those who wished to return from their exile to Israel, because he was a convert to the Lord God of Israel?

The oral proclamation (which was also recorded in writing) referred to here is the famous [Edict of Cyrus](#). A similar inscription from the same king was found by Hormuzd Rassam's excavations of Babylon in 1879–82, called the ["Cyrus Cylinder"](#). This clay, barrel-shaped artifact demonstrates that Cyrus made similar proclamations concerning other people's gods, so very little can be gained from his use of such terms as "Yahweh" (here translated "LORD"), "the God [or god] of heaven," or even that God "moved on his heart," other than the fact that this king had a knack for being politically correct long before this term ever came into vogue.

From the writer's point of view, it was Yahweh who had moved the heart of Cyrus to adopt a policy of repatriating and erecting the houses of worship of those peoples whom he helped to repatriate. The heart of the king, regardless of his own religious proclivities, is in the hand of the Lord (Prov 21:1).

Jeremiah had predicted that Judah would be seventy years in Babylonian captivity (Jer 25:1–12; 29:10). Some two hundred years prior to Cyrus's day, Isaiah had foretold that a man named Cyrus would both enact the policy of repatriation and aid in the reconstruction of the temple; indeed, Cyrus would be the Lord's "shepherd" (Is 44:28; 45:1).

Judah was not the only nation to benefit from Cyrus's enlightened policies; his generosity went to all his subjects alike, to judge from those archaeological records that are left to us. Cyrus probably, like the other Achaemenidian kings, was influenced by Zoroastrianism. No evidence exists that he ever became a believer in the Lord God who revealed himself in Israel and Judah.

**2 Chronicles 36:23 "Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, 'The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and He has appointed me to build Him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever there is among you of all His people, may the LORD his God be with him, and let him go up!'"**

- All the kingdoms (KJV): Ps 75:5-7 Da 2:21,37 4:35 5:18,23
- he hath charged (KJV): Isa 44:26-28
- Who is there (KJV): 1Ch 22:16 29:5 Ezr 7:13 Zec 2:6,7 Ro 8:31

**Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, 'The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and He has appointed me to build Him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever there is among you of all His people, may the LORD his God be with him, and let him go up!'"**

**Martin Selman:** "To build him a house" is a deliberate echo of the central promise of the Davidic covenant (cf. 1 Chronicles 17:11-12; 22:10; 28:6; 2 Chronicles 6:9-10). Cyrus of course is thinking only of the house in Jerusalem, but in the Chronicler's thought this

phrase is inevitably connected with both houses of the Davidic covenant, the dynasty as well as the temple.

**J. Sidlow Baxter:** Most of all, may that central message of the Chronicles grip our minds, namely, that response to God is the really decisive factor. It is true both nationally and individually. It was true of old: it is true today. The first duty and the only true safety of the throne lies in its relation toward the temple. Our national leaders of today might well ponder that fact. When God is honoured, government is good and the nation prospers. But when God is dishonoured, the cleverest statesmanship cannot avert eventual disaster. The call to our nation today, as clearly as in the Edict of Cyrus quoted at the end of 2 Chronicles, is to “go up” and REBUILD THE TEMPLE.

#### PAUL APPLE - DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) Why did the Chronicler dispatch these four kings with such abbreviated reporting?
- 2) How does the persistent stubborn rebellion of God’s elect nation highlight God’s longsuffering patience and faithfulness to His covenant promises?
- 3) How has God demonstrated His patience and compassion in your life?
- 4) How would this account of God’s justification for the seventy year Babylonian Captivity impact the current generation of exiles as they return to rebuild the temple?
- 5) Are we confident that God is sovereignly directing current world leaders to fulfil His kingdom agenda today?
- 6) How should we use fulfilled prophecy today as a strong Christian apologetic?
- 7) Why is the temple so central in God’s kingdom agenda?
- 8) How is it possible for such a gloomy book of the decline and fall of the kingdom of Judah (with the repeated rebellion and failure of king after king) to end on such a positive note of hope?

#### **QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:**

**Raymond Dillard:** After his account of the reign of Josiah the Chronicler moves quickly through the reigns of the last four kings. Each king anticipates the fate of the nation through his own experience of exile; the temple too is successively plundered, anticipating its ultimate destruction. But this is not the end of the story: as nation and temple were inextricably bound in destruction, so they are also linked in restoration and renewal. A prepared and purged people return to a prepared land to build again the temple of God.

**Andrew Hill:** Zedekiah was a weak king, unable to control the resurgent nationalism in Judah and apparently easily manipulated by the nobles and advisers around him. After a series of political missteps, Zedekiah finally rebelled against the king of Babylon in 589 B.C. The Babylonian response was swift and thorough. King Nebuchadnezzar lay siege to Jerusalem early in 588 B.C. The end came in July of 587 B.C., with the carnage so appalling and the devastation so sweeping that survivors could only sit aghast in silence as they mourned “the Daughter of Zion” (see the book of Lamentations).

**Iain Duguid:** In addressing his audience, the Chronicler reminds them that disobedience was widespread, involving “all the officers of the priests and the people.” He piles up strong words, with everything coming to an explosive climax. He speaks of worship and the temple (2 Chron. 36:14) and of the rejection of prophets (2Ch 36:15–16). Sins and attitudes that may have been individual or short-term are now systemic and persistent; what was previously described as “unfaithful(ness)” is now described as “exceedingly unfaithful” (an emphatic phrase using the verb “make many” and *ma’al* twice. The people were following the “abominations of the nations” whom the Lord had driven out of the land (28:3; 33:2; 34:33), and they had “polluted” (“made unclean”; contrast 2Ch 23:19) the house that God had “made holy” (2Ch 7:16, 20; “I consecrated”). This language is common throughout Ezekiel in condemning the extent of the pollution of the temple (e.g., Ezek. 5:9, 11; 8:6–18; 20:30; 22:26). The description and depth of feeling evident in 2 Chronicles 36:15–16 is probably influenced by (and so alluding to) Jeremiah and Ezekiel. God had been earnest and persistent in sending warnings. . . Chronicles began with all-embracing genealogies and has told of kings and people and their various involvements (or non-involvement) in faithful worship centered in the temple. Following the genealogies and the account of Saul’s death due to his “breach of faith” (*ma’al*; 1 Chron. 10:13), which set the scene for the following history, the anointing of David as king was “according to the word of the Lord by Samuel” (1 Chron. 11:3), and the story continued to be accompanied by the Lord’s “word” (e.g., 1 Chron. 17:3; 22:8; 2 Chron. 6:17; 10:15; 11:2; 12:7; 18:18; 30:12). Now the storytelling ends, not with destruction and exile due to the people’s being “exceedingly unfaithful” (2 Chron. 36:14), but in an open-ended manner as God fulfills his word through another prophet, Jeremiah (2 Chron. 36:22). There is hope for the future because God keeps his word concerning “all his people.” On that solid basis, the book ends with an open call for “you” to “go up.”

**August Konkel:** The Chronicler’s goal involves the greatest contrast with the previous history. In the conclusion of Kings, the restoration of the exiled king Jehoiachin leaves the people in a kind of exile and lacks any mention of the promise of restoration

found in the prophets (2 Kings 25:27-30). In Chronicles, exile is countered by a new era, introduced as the fulfillment of a prophecy of Jeremiah (2 Chron 36:21) and the actions of Cyrus. In Isaiah 45:1, Cyrus the Great is identified as one whom the Lord anointed. In Hebrew, he is masiah, the same term used for the ruler in Zion in Psalm 2:2, the biblical basis for Jesus being called “the Messiah” (as in Matt 1:1). The conclusion of Chronicles shows that humility and repentance will bring healing from exile. Manasseh is a compelling example of restoration rather than being the villain causing exile. However severe his sins, his legacy is presented as a king of restoration. Manasseh prayed, his prayer was heard, and he returned to Jerusalem. The same hope is extended to all who feel that they live with the burden of exile.

**Frederick Mabie:** In addition to allowing exiled people groups to return to their homeland, Cyrus also sought to placate the gods of the conquered nations by allowing freedom of worship, as reflected in his respect of Marduk and his reverential words acknowledging Yahweh’s sovereignty (v. 23). Regardless of the sincerity of Cyrus, Yahweh is clearly using him to advance the divine plan (2Ch 36:22; cf. Isa 44:28; 45:13), which included not only the return of the Judean people from exile, but also the return of the consecrated items from the temple from exile, and even the Persian funding of the rebuilding of Yahweh’s temple (cf. Ezr 1:2-8; 6:1-2).

**Peter Wallace: The Eschatology of Jerusalem – the End as Beginning** The Chronicler has been concerned with kings and priests – with the temple and the throne – both are now destroyed. Dillard points out that the Chronicler weaves together the language of throne and temple in such a way that you might begin to think that even as they fall together, so also will they rise together. The events of 2 Chronicles 36:1-21 take 23 years – from the death of Josiah in 609 to the destruction of the temple in 586. Josiah was only 39 years old when he died – cut down in the prime of his manhood. No doubt the people of Judah had hoped that he would reign for decades more – but in the span of 23 years, Jerusalem went from the pinnacle of hope to utter obliteration. . . The Babylonian invasion is the last war – the war to end all wars! It is an eschatological war. It brings an end to the temple of Solomon, the house of David, and the city of Jerusalem. It also removes the people of God from the Promised Land. Those who escaped the sword became exiles – servants to Nebuchadnezzar and his sons. . . The Chronicler says that the land rested for 70 years – until the land had enjoyed its Sabbaths. Moses had said that Israel was supposed to take a sabbatical year every 7th year. They were to leave the land fallow, and eat whatever the land produced. Apparently Israel didn’t do this. Because there were 70 years of sabbaticals backed up (**which would mean that Israel had failed to practice the sabbatical year for around 490 years**– since 1077 BC, right around the birth of king Saul). The “70 years” of the exile have at least two different fulfillments. In Chronicles like in Jeremiah 25 or Daniel 9 – the decree to rebuild is taken to be the end of the 70 years. The decree took place in the first year of Cyrus, king of Persia – in 539 BC, which would mean that the beginning of the exile is reckoned from the first deportation in the days of Jehoiakim (605) [the year of Jeremiah’s prophecy of the 70 years in Jeremiah 25]. Of course, in Zechariah 1, it appears that the 70 years run from the destruction of the temple in 586 to the dedication of the second temple in 516. . . But, with the 70 years of sabbaticals repaid, and with the judgment of God against Jerusalem fulfilled, the Chronicler reminds his hearers that God is still faithful to his promises. Because in spite of the judgment upon Jerusalem, there are three things that remain:

- First, the word of the LORD endures. God had spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah (2Ch 36:20) and God’s word came to pass. The people were enslaved and the land was left desolate. As Willcock puts it, “nothing of what has happened is outside the plan of God. Indeed, none of it is outside his declared plan.” (286) The people of God may rest secure in knowing that God’s word continues to govern all things.
- Second (in 2Ch 36: 20), “those who had escaped from the sword” – there is a remnant that will always survive. After all, if God has promised – and God is faithful to his word – then you may be sure that he will triumph in the end. While David’s throne and Solomon’s temple may no longer stand, the things that they stood for will always endure.
- Third, the land is still there. Yes, it lay desolate for 70 years – one year for every seven since the beginning of the monarchy. But this is still the place where God spoke – the land that he promised to Abraham, the land that Moses saw, the land that Joshua caused Israel to possess – and where David reigned, and Solomon built the temple.

**J. Barton Payne:** Unlike the Book of Kings, with its central message of stern moral judgments ... Chronicles exists essentially as a book of hope, grounded on the grace of our sovereign Lord.

#### **Geoffrey Kirkland: The Return – All by God’s Grace**

- The MAN God used (Cyrus king of Persia)
- The MOMENT God appointed (in the first year...to fulfill)
- The MOUTHPIECE God equipped (Jeremiah)
- The MESSAGE God gave (let the Jews return and go up to Jerusalem)
- The MAJESTY God has (the Lord of heaven & earth)



- The MERCY God offers (let him go up; still waiting for more; a new 'ending')

### **SOME CONCLUDING LESSONS from the book of 2 CHRONICLES:**

- God has a plan [and it can surprise us at times!]
- God's is immutable (his character doesn't change)
- God isn't swayed by evil; he uses it
- God has the victory (he's guaranteed it)
- God's people will triumph

### **STEVEN COLE - When God's Axe Falls (2 Chronicles 36)**

C. S. Lewis once heard a young British pastor, fresh out of seminary, who ended his sermon by telling people of the need to receive Jesus Christ. He said, "If you receive Jesus Christ you will have eternal life, but if you do not it will drastically alter your eschatological destiny." Lewis pulled the preacher aside afterwards and said, "Young man, do you mean that they will go to hell?" "Well, yes," he said hesitantly. "Then tell them that that is what will happen. Say it!"

The hesitancy of that young preacher to speak plainly about hell is probably shared by many American evangelical Christians. With the exception of a few "hellfire and damnation" preachers from the Bible belt, the subject of God's judgment is strangely missing from Bible-believing churches in our day. I say *strangely* because God's judgment is a prominent theme from Genesis to Revelation. Jesus Himself spoke often about hell and judgment, so much so that we cannot rightly call ourselves Christians if we deny the topic. Yet if the truth were known, the theme of God's judgment embarrasses many of us. It's too out of step with our tolerant culture. But the Bible is clear:

Although God is patient and compassionate, when people continue to reject His Word, judgment is certain.

Our text makes this point as it narrates the end of the line for the kingdom of Judah. The godly king Josiah was killed in battle by Pharaoh Neco. His son Joahaz took the throne and lasted three months before Pharaoh deposed him and took him captive to Egypt. Pharaoh then installed Joahaz's older brother Jehoiakim on the throne. He lasted for eleven years, first subject to Pharaoh and then to Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. He did evil (2Ch 36:5) and committed "abominations" (36:8). After his death, his 18 year-old son Jehoiachin took over for three months and ten days before Nebuchadnezzar took him to Babylon, where he spent the next 37 years in prison. Even so he managed, in three months, to do evil in the sight of the Lord (2Ch 36:9).

Nebuchadnezzar replaced Jehoiachin with his uncle Zedekiah (son of Josiah), who also did evil (2Ch 36:12). Finally he rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar, who in turn besieged Jerusalem, which fell and was sacked in the summer of 586 B.C. (2Ch 36:19). Those who escaped the sword were taken captive to Babylon. The 70 years (2Ch 36:21) probably refers to the time from the first deportation (605 B.C.; 2Ch 36:6-7) to the return of the exiles (536 B.C.). All this happened, not by chance, but "to fulfill the word of the Lord" (2Ch 36:21). It's a dreadful thing when God's axe falls upon a nation! But before we look at God's judgment, note that:

## **1. God is patient and compassionate toward sinful people.**

There had been a number of high and low points during the almost 400 years since Solomon had begun his idolatry. Some of the lows were so bad that you would think that God's judgment would have fallen, but He stayed His hand. Over those years, He patiently waited and entreated. Note 36:15: "And the Lord, the God of their fathers, sent word to them again and again by His messengers, because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place." Instead of "again and again," the Kings James Version reads, "He rose up early," a graphic picture of God's earnestness in seeking to bring the rebellious nation to repentance.

God is more patient and compassionate toward sinners than we are (see the story of Jonah). Because of modern news media, we see and hear more horrible things going on all over the world than any previous generation--murders, wars, child abuse, sexual perversity, and other atrocities. It disgusts us and we cry out, "Lord, how long before You judge the world?" But remember, God sees every evil deed, even those committed in secret; and not only that but He knows all the evil thoughts that never are carried out in deed (Gen. 6:5). But we forget that if He were as swift in judging sinners as we desire, we ourselves might never have come to repentance!

After delivering one his defiant speeches the nineteenth century atheist, Robert Ingersoll, pulled his watch from his pocket and said, "According to the Bible, God has struck men dead for blasphemy. I will blaspheme Him and give Him five minutes to strike me dead and damn my soul."

The crowd was silent while one minute ticked by; two minutes passed, and you could feel the nervousness in the audience; three

minutes, and a woman fainted; four minutes and Ingersoll curled his lip. At five minutes, he snapped shut his watch, put it in his pocket, and said: "You see, there is no God, or He would have taken me at my word."

The story was told later to British preacher Joseph Parker, who said, "And did the American gentleman think he could exhaust the patience of God in five minutes?" God is patient toward sinners. But in spite of His great patience, ...

## **2. People continue to reject God's Word.**

In spite of God's repeated appeals, the people of Israel continued to reject His word through the prophets (2Ch 36:15-16). Why would people reject God's gracious offer of forgiveness? Our text reveals four reasons:

### **A. PEOPLE REJECT GOD'S WORD BECAUSE OF PRIDE (2Ch 36:12).**

Zedekiah "did not humble himself before Jeremiah the prophet who spoke for the Lord." God's word requires sinners to respond with humility, because it confronts our wicked ways and brings us to the cross, where no one can boast. Because of our pride, three of the most difficult words to say are, "I was wrong." But no one can come to God who will not humble himself and admit his sin.

### **B. PEOPLE REJECT GOD'S WORD BECAUSE OF HARD HEARTS (2Ch 36:13).**

George Orwell wryly observed, "On the whole, human beings want to be good, but not too good, and not quite all the time." The problem is human depravity. In our day of positive Christianity we minimize the doctrine of depravity. We don't like to think about it or to use the term, unless it is to describe the worst of criminals: "Terrorists and murderers are depraved; but me? I'm not such a bad guy!"

But the Bible teaches that every human heart is depraved. This does not mean that every person is as bad as he possibly could be. If that were so, the human race would have self-destructed centuries ago! Through common grace and the restraining ministry of the Holy Spirit there are a number of decent, law-abiding, "good" people in the world who do not know Christ. But depravity means that because of the fall, every person has an inborn bent toward sin, a rebellious nature that says, "I do not want to submit to God." God's Word is clear: "There is none righteous, not even one" (Rom. 3:10).

Even the British infidel playwright George Bernard Shaw reluctantly concluded (in response to the German concentration camps), "There is only one empirically verifiable doctrine of theology--original sin." Pride, hard hearts ...

### **C. PEOPLE REJECT GOD'S WORD BECAUSE OF WORLDLY INFLUENCE (2Ch 36:14).**

"Following all the abominations of the nations..." Because all have sinned and we ourselves have a bent toward sin, we are prone to the influence of other sinners. We see people engaging in sin who seem to be enjoying life. So we're drawn to try it for ourselves. This generation is bombarded with more solicitations to sin than any other in history. Even when I was growing up, as the first generation with TV, about the most racy thing on the tube was "77 Sunset Strip"! Today you can bring the worst filth into your living room. Even many commercials are lewd. Pornography is readily available at the local video store or over on-line computer networks. Worldly influence combined with our self-gratifying sinful nature is a powerful force!

Thus, people reject God's Word because of pride, hard hearts, and worldly influence.

### **D. PEOPLE REJECT GOD'S WORD BECAUSE THEY DON'T TAKE GOD'S WARNINGS SERIOUSLY (2Ch 36:16).**

"They mocked the messengers of God, despised His words and scoffed at His prophets, ..." People have always mocked the idea of God's judgment because they mistake God's delay to mean that it won't ever happen. Or, they compare themselves with those who are more flagrantly sinful and surmise that if and when judgment ever does come (which they doubt, but if it does), they will fare well. But they flatter themselves!

We neglect God's warnings to our own destruction! There used to be a sign on the river above Niagara Falls that read, "POINT OF NO RETURN." If a boat drifted beyond that point, there was no escape from the strong current that would suck the boat and its passengers to certain doom. God's warnings are like that. Although He is patient, ...

## **3. If people ignore God's Word, judgment is certain.**

"Until there was no remedy" (2Ch 36:16)--frightening words! Both nations and individuals can reach the point of being so hardened

in sin that there is no remedy! Just because God is patient and hesitant to judge is no reason to doubt that He *will* judge. We need to understand two things about God's certain judgment: *How is it expressed?* and, *How do we know it is certain?*

*How is God's judgment expressed?*

## **A. GOD'S JUDGMENT IS EXPRESSED TEMPORALLY AND ETERNALLY.**

(1) *Temporal judgment.* This is what we see in 2 Chronicles 36: God's judgment upon a particular person or group at a particular point in history. It can be lifted, as we see at the end of the chapter when Cyrus issued an edict for the Jews to return to their land.

When God's temporal judgment falls on a nation, it's a frightening thing, as we have recently witnessed in Rwanda! The society is ripped apart. In Judah, families were uprooted from their homes and deported to Babylon. Many were killed by the sword. The survivors became slaves in Babylon. There was political oppression and the loss of religious freedom. The Temple was destroyed. In Babylon (as we read in Daniel), the king tried to force them to bow down to his image. Israel was no longer a testimony for the Lord to the nations.

We need to understand that when God's temporal judgment falls on a nation, the godly suffer along with the ungodly. Children suffer for their parents' sins. While God had compassion before judgment (2Ch 36:15), the Babylonians (the instrument of His judgment) had no compassion (36:17). Girls were raped; the elderly and sick were slaughtered; pregnant mothers were ripped open with the sword; babies were dashed against the rocks. It was an awful thing not only for those who had thumbed their noses at God, but also for those who had sought to obey Him. The good and wicked alike are afflicted when God's axe falls.

This means that we cannot be complacent against the sins of our nation. We're sadly mistaken if we think that because we know Christ and obey God we're immune from God's judgment on our land. God could remove the lampstand of American Christianity as He has done in other cultures. It's sobering to think of Turkey, which was the cradle for Gentile Christianity. Many of Paul's letters were written to churches there. Today there are more believers in our small city than in all of Turkey!

You ask, "What can I do about national sin?" In the first place we must make sure that we walk uprightly. We would be hypocrites to call others to repentance if we live with secret sin. We must pray, even as Abraham pled with the Lord about judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah. We must do all we can to call others to repentance. We dare not be complacent about the violence or moral degradation in our land. The life you save may be your own! Temporal judgment is a real danger; if America comes under judgment, we will not escape just because we know the Lord.

(2) *Eternal judgment.* Whereas temporal judgment may be lifted, eternal judgment is fixed, final and ultimate. Hebrews 9:27 declares, "... it is appointed for men to die once, and after this comes judgment."

All sin will be judged. God will not shrug it off. You may not like the idea of God judging sin. You may think that the notion of God punishing "good" people in the flames of hell for all eternity is sadistic and cruel. You may think, "I don't believe in a God like that. I believe in a God of love, who forgives everyone." But your believing it doesn't make it true! The question you have to come to grips with is, "*Was Jesus Christ a liar and charlatan, or is He the living Word who revealed the Father to us as He claimed?*" If you shrug Him off, you'll still have to face Him someday, when He comes "from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. And these will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power" (2 Thess. 1:7-9).

If you believe the witness that Christ is Savior and Lord, then you must believe and submit to His witness about the terrors of hell. Jesus used the most frightening word pictures to describe it: a place where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched (Mark 9:48); a place of outer darkness, of weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matt. 25:30); a place of eternal fire (Matt. 25:41). It's not a user-friendly sort of place!

Perhaps you're thinking, But I thought that God is a God of love. Won't He forgive everyone's sin?

*How do we know that God's judgment is certain?*

## **B. GOD'S JUDGMENT IS CERTAIN BECAUSE OF HIS CHARACTER.**

If you think about it for a moment, for God to be God, He must be holy. An unrighteous supreme being would not be God, but a devil. To be righteous and to resolve the problem of evil, He must judge all sin. If any sin goes unpunished, God is not just. God's love and grace never negate His holiness and justice. While His patience is great, it never negates His righteousness.

And God always keeps His Word. God had told Moses that every seventh year was to be a year of rest for the land of Israel (Lev. 25:1-7). That year the people were to let the ground lie fallow; God promised to make it up to them with a bountiful crop. But that

took some faith to obey! What if God didn't come through? God also said (Lev. 26:33-35) that if the people did not obey, He would scatter them from the land until the land enjoyed its sabbaths.

Would God expect His people to abide by some obscure passage in Leviticus? Note Lev 26:21. God's Word is true! "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap" (Gal. 6:7). God's Word is like the law of gravity: if you break it, it turns around and breaks you! As a God of justice, holiness, and truth, He will judge sin. He will judge it *temporally* when people continue to reject His Word. And He will judge it *eternally* if a person rejects Christ in this lifetime. Just because His judgment isn't quick does not mean that it isn't certain.

## Conclusion

Neither you nor I can guarantee that God's judgment will not fall on our nation. We can live, pray, and work toward the end that He will spare us. But we can't be certain.

But every person here can be certain about escaping God's eternal judgment on a personal level. Scripture says that "Christ died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, in order that He might bring us to God" (1 Pet. 3:18). God made Christ, who knew no sin, to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (2 Cor. 5:21). That righteousness comes to us not by our good deeds, but only through faith in Jesus Christ (Rom. 3:22, 26). If you will trust in Him, your sins will be charged to His account and you will escape God's coming wrath. Jesus Himself promised, "He who hears My word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life" (John 5:24).

You have up to the point of death, but no later, to put your trust in Christ and escape God's eternal judgment. Maybe you're thinking, "I'm young; I want to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a while. I'll wait." That's foolish! You may be hardened beyond remedy! You could die today! Christ could return at any moment and you'd be lost. You're gambling against eternity!

In 1982, "ABC Evening News" reported on an unusual work of modern art--a chair affixed to a shotgun. It was to be viewed by sitting in the chair and looking directly into the gun barrel. The gun was loaded and set on a timer to fire at an undetermined moment within the next one hundred years.

The amazing thing was that people waited in line to sit and stare into that gun barrel! They all knew it could go off at point-blank range at any moment, but they were gambling that the fatal blast wouldn't happen during their minute in the chair.

I wonder, could you be sitting in that chair today, betting that the gun will not go off in your face? Unless you have put your trust in Christ, you're playing with your eternal destiny. God is patient, but if you continue to reject His Word, judgment is certain! Flee to Christ now!

## Discussion Questions

1. Should we bring up the subject of hell when we witness? If so, when and how?
2. We often hear that God's love is unconditional. Is it? What does that mean?
3. How would you answer the charge that God is unfair if good people suffer along with the wicked in His temporal judgment?
4. What would you say to a person who said, "I believe in a God of love, not a God of vengeance and punishment"?

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