

**CALVARY PANDAN BIBLE-  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

[Adapted from Bethel Bible-Presbyterian  
Church, 10 Downing St. Oakleigh, Vic., 3166]

**DHW BIBLE CLASS  
LESSON 14A  
THE SECOND BOOK OF KINGS  
CHAPTER 24**

**INTRODUCTION**

The last good king of Judah was Josiah. After he was killed in the battle against Pharaoh Necho II of Egypt at Megiddo, four kings acceded to the throne, three of whom were his sons. But they were not like their father who did what was right in the sight of God and walked in the ways of David, a man after God's own heart. The LORD had been patient with Israel for more than 200 years. But her abominable sins had reached its limit and the Assyrians were the LORD'S rod of correction to punish Israel, the Northern Kingdom. Israel was captured in 722 B.C. and Samaria, the capital city of the Northern Kingdom, was devastated and destroyed that year.

In the latter days, the Judeans followed the evil ways of their brethren in the north. Sadly Judah failed to learn from the mistakes of her northern brother. Under the rule of King Manasseh, the Judeans sinned against

the LORD and provoked His anger. The Judeans experienced the same judgement but this time under the hands of the Babylonians who were the prevailing world power. God used Babylon to discipline Judah. It was done in three phases with the final in 586 B.C. when the King of Babylon invaded Jerusalem and took the Judeans captive to Babylon, leaving a poor small remnant.

It saddens our heart to read of the calamities which came upon the Jews, the chosen people of God. The fact that the calamities were done by pagans such as the Assyrians and Babylonians hurts even more. God reveals clearly that while He is loving and merciful, He is also holy and just; and He abhors sin, especially those of the people who are called by His holy Name.

He gives sinners ample opportunities to repent and to return to Him before He starts to discipline them. This chapter of 2 Kings narrates the inevitable closing days of Judah.

**OUTLINE**

1. The reign of King Jehoiakim (vv.1-7);
2. The reign of King Jehoiachin (vv.8-16);
3. The reign of King Zedekiah (vv.17-20).

## COMMENTARY

### The Reign of King Jehoiakim – 24:1-7

Jehoiakim (the LORD will raise), whose actual name was Eliakim (God of raising), was the elder brother of Jehoahaz (the LORD seized) who was King of Judah. Under the normal practices of royal accession, Jehoiakim should have acceded to the throne of Judah after his father died. But the Judeans immediately took Jehoahaz and anointed him king (23:30). One probable reason for the Judeans to crown the younger Jehoahaz to be their king instead of his brother Jehoiakim could be that Jehoahaz took the anti-Egyptian position of his father, Josiah (23:29). This proposition is supported by the fact that his mother, Hamutal, who came from the city Libnah, was a strong supporter of the anti-Egyptian faction in Jerusalem. Furthermore, Zedekiah another of her sons was appointed by the Babylonians to rule Judah (24:17-18). He too must have been a supporter of the anti-Egyptian party in Jerusalem.

Jehoahaz was a weak king. He did evil in the sight of the LORD. Jeremiah the prophet called him Shallum which was a term of derision and scorn. The prophet further accused him of having his eyes and heart for nothing beside his covetousness, shedding innocent blood and practising oppression and violence (Jeremiah 22:11, 17).

After his victory over Josiah at Meggido, Pharaoh Necho II sent a division of his army to march against

Jerusalem. Pharaoh could have been motivated by complaints from Eliakim that he was passed over as king and that his brother Jehoahaz was anti-Egypt. The smaller army division sent by Pharaoh captured Jerusalem and dethroned Jehoahaz. Jehoahaz was first taken in chains to Riblah where Pharaoh had just set up his military headquarters and later on to Egypt where he died.

Eliakim was made King of Judah. Pharaoh changed his name to Jehoiakim. One of the ways a king demonstrate kingship over his subjects is to change their name for names are given only by fathers or God. Pharaoh made him his puppet king and put the land of Judah under tribute. Jehoiakim reigned for 11 years in Jerusalem (609-598 B.C.). After three years of his reign, Pharaoh Necho II was defeated by King Nebuchadnezzar at Carchemish in 605 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar then subdued Jerusalem and made King Jehoiakim his puppet ruler in Jerusalem. Nebuchadnezzar took back to Babylon some of the sacred vessels from the Temple and a number of able Hebrew young men among whom was the prophet Daniel.

After three years serving Nebuchadnezzar in Jerusalem, Jehoiakim “turned and rebelled against” King Nebuchadnezzar (v.1). The year was 601 B.C. Egypt tried one more time to regain power by attacking Babylon’s army. The Egyptians caught Nebuchadnezzar’s soldiers by surprise. They won the battle but they were

unable to pursue the enemy any further and returned to Egypt. Since, the Egyptians have never left their land (v.7). The temporary setback of the Babylonian army made Jehoiakim renew his alliance with Egypt and he turned and rebelled against Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar, who was in Babylon nursing defeat by Egypt, was unable to put down Jehoiakim's rebellion. However, he tried to contain it by hiring mercenaries from amongst the Syrians, Moabites and Ammonites to join the small bands of Babylonian soldiers in Judah. Meanwhile, he rebuilt his army in Babylon. (The word "Chaldees" is another term for "Babylonians"—v.2) The divine writer accorded this to be the work of the LORD as part of His punishment upon Judah for her sins (vv.2-4).

In 598/7 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar returned to Jerusalem to punish the rebellious Jehoiakim. But before he arrived, his officers captured Jehoiakim and bound him to be taken to Babylon (2 Chronicles 36:5-6). The divine writer then mentioned that he "slept with his fathers", meaning he died. Nothing is said about his burial. The prophet Jeremiah had predicted that Jehoiakim would die a humiliating death. No one would lament for him and he would be buried with the burial of an ass, drawn and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem.<sup>1</sup> Jehoiakim lived a

disgraceful life and fittingly died a disgraceful death. His son Jehoiachin (the LORD will establish) became the King of Judah.

### The Reign of King Jehoiachin – 24:8-16

Jehoiachin was 18 years old when he was crowned King of Judah (598-597 B.C.).<sup>2</sup> He reigned only three months. He also did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD (vv.8-9). Nebuchadnezzar returned to Jerusalem in March 597 B.C. and laid siege to the city. Laying siege to a city was a cruel way of forcing the inhabitants to surrender by depriving the city of any food and water in order to starve the inhabitants to either surrender or die.

Jehoiachin led his family and leaders of Judah to surrender to Nebuchadnezzar. This humiliating event was prophesied by the prophet Jeremiah (Jeremiah 22:24-30). Jehoiachin, his family, together with the leaders of Judah were taken prisoners to Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar also deported thousands of great and able Judeans including craftsmen and smiths to Babylon. Among the captives taken to Babylon in this batch was the prophet Ezekiel (Ezekiel 1:1-3). The Babylonians

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him, *saying*, Ah lord! or, Ah his glory! 19 He shall be buried with the burial of an ass, drawn and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem.

<sup>2</sup> He was also known as Jeconiah in the book of Chronicles and also as Coniah by Jeremiah: 1 Chronicles 3:16 And the sons of Jehoiakim: **Jeconiah** his son, Zedekiah his son. Jeremiah 22:24 *As I live*, saith the LORD, though **Coniah** the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah were the signet upon my right hand, yet would I pluck thee thence;

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<sup>1</sup> Jeremiah 22:18 Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah; They shall not lament for him, *saying*, Ah my brother! or, Ah sister! they shall not lament for

left the poorest Judeans behind. Nebuchadnezzar's intention was clear; he wanted to make sure that there would be no more organized military resistance and manufacture of weapons of war to be used against him.

### **The Reign of King Zedekiah – 24:17-20**

With Jehoiachin taken captive to Babylon, Judah had no king. Nebuchadnezzar made Mattaniah (the gift of the LORD), the brother of Jehoiakim, to be his vassal king. Nebuchadnezzar changed his name to Zedekiah (the righteousness of the LORD). He was 21 years old when he began to reign; and he ruled for 11 years (597-586 B.C.). He did evil in the sight of the LORD like his brother Jehoiakim. The divine writer skipped over almost nine years of his reign and then mentioned that Zedekiah rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar.

Although Zedekiah embraced his mother's, Hamutal's anti-Egyptian sentiment, he was weak and wavering in character. He was easily influenced by the pro-Egyptian faction in his court. In the fourth year of his reign (594 B.C.) he took part in an anti-Babylonian movement. They encouraged him to form an alliance with Egypt and rebel against Babylon.<sup>3</sup> The prophet Jeremiah repeatedly warned him not to but to remain under the control of the Babylonians and live for that was the will

of the LORD. Jeremiah's words fell on deaf ears and for speaking the Word of the LORD, he was thrown into prison. While secretly courting the help of Pharaoh Hophra of Egypt, he pretended to submit to Babylon. He made a visit to Babylon and even hypocritically swore that he would be faithful to Nebuchadnezzar (2 Chronicles 36:13; Ezekiel 17:11-18). Finally, Zedekiah decided to rebel against the King of Babylon.

### **PRACTICAL VALUE**

The sons of Josiah did not exemplify the kind of character and spiritual conduct of Josiah. Instead, they were evil, wicked and selfish. This goes to show that one's personality traits do not always pass on to one's children. Good habits, thoughts and behaviour, both natural and spiritual, must be cultivated and taught by parents and other associates. The Word of God is the greatest and most powerful means for Christian parents to use to build up their children. Encourage children to attend church, Sunday School, young people's group activities and the major events of the church. These are avenues in which lasting godly character traits are formed to meet the many temptations and trials of life.

God is true to His Word. His judgement concerning Judah was fulfilled as He had so declared. We learn that God is not only loving, forgiving and merciful, but He is equally

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<sup>3</sup> The account is given by the prophet Jeremiah, chapters 37 & 38.

holy, righteous and just. The only way with God is to be humble and obey Him. We also learn that God can use non-believers as instruments of discipline and chastisement against His own people. That does not make the non-believers any better or righteous. This establishes God's sovereignty over the world. Nothing and no one can thwart His decreative plan and purpose. This revelation of God's character should move Christians to love and serve God wholeheartedly and unreservedly. AMEN

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2. What is the significance of the phrase "the LORD sent" in verse 2? How is this comforting to the believers?

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**DAILY READINGS & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

**Daily Readings**

**MONDAY:** 2 Kings 24:1-7; Jeremiah 22:18-19

**TUESDAY:** 2 Kings 24:8-16; Jeremiah 22:24-30

**WEDNESDAY:** 2 Kings 24:17-20; Jeremiah 21:1-10

**THURSDAY:** 2 Kings 24:1-20;

**FRIDAY:** 2 Kings 24:1-20;

3. What reasons are given in 2 Kings 24 for the captivity? What does this teach us about the end of persistent sinning? Yet what ray of hope is seen in the closing chapter of the book?

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**Discussion Questions**

1. What are some possible reasons present generations do not learn from the mistakes of their forefathers?

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4. Which is easier to do: trust in man or trust in God? Give reasons for your answer.

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5. Why did these evil kings give to the captured vassal kings of Judah good names that contain the name of the LORD such as Zedekiah?

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6. What can we learn about God when He allowed wicked men to judge His own people?