

Jeremiah

Lesson 3: The Last Five Kings of Israel

Memory Verse **Hand out Scriptures to read**

Jeremiah 22:16 (NKJV) *He judged the cause of the poor and needy; Then it was well. Was not this knowing Me?" says the Lord.*

Under the Rule of Josiah

Josiah was the sixteenth king to rule in the Southern Kingdom; his dates were 640-609 B.C. He became king at the age of eight, after more than half a century of moral and spiritual decline under his father (Amon) and grandfather (Manasseh), two of the most evil kings in Judah.

Josiah's reign lasted for thirty-one years.

2 Kings 22:1–2 (NKJV) *Josiah was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jedidah the daughter of Adaiah of Bozkath. ² And he did what was right in the sight of the Lord, and walked in all the ways of his father David; he did not turn aside to the right hand or to the left.*

Josiah was foretold.

*** 1 Kings 13:1–2** (NKJV) *And behold, a man of God went from Judah to Bethel by the word of the Lord, and Jeroboam stood by the altar to burn incense. ² Then he cried out against the altar by the word of the Lord, and said, "O altar, altar! Thus says the Lord: 'Behold, a child, Josiah by name, shall be born to the house of David; and on you he shall sacrifice the priests of the high places who burn incense on you, and men's bones shall be burned on you.' "* **300 years before.**

2 Chronicles 34:1–7 (NKJV) *Josiah was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem. ² And he did what was right in the sight of the Lord, and walked in the ways of his father David; he did not turn aside to the right hand or to the left.*

³ *For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was still young, he began to seek the God of his father David; and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of the high places, the wooden images, the carved images, and the molded images. ⁴ They broke down the altars of the Baals in his presence, and the incense altars which were above them he cut down; and the wooden images, the carved images, and the molded images he broke in pieces, and made dust of them and scattered it on the graves of those who had sacrificed to them. ⁵ He also burned the bones of the priests on their altars, and cleansed Judah and Jerusalem. ⁶ And so he did in the cities of Manasseh, Ephraim, and*

Simeon, as far as Naphtali and all around, with axes. ⁷ When he had broken down the altars and the wooden images, had beaten the carved images into powder, and cut down all the incense altars throughout all the land of Israel, he returned to Jerusalem.

2 Chronicles 34:14–21 (NKJV) ¹⁴ *Now when they brought out the money that was brought into the house of the Lord, Hilkiah the priest found the Book of the Law of the Lord given by Moses. ¹⁵ Then Hilkiah answered and said to Shaphan the scribe, "I have found the Book of the Law in the house of the Lord." And Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan. ¹⁶ So Shaphan carried the book to the king, bringing the king word, saying, "All that was committed to your servants they are doing. ¹⁷ And they have gathered the money that was found in the house of the Lord, and have delivered it into the hand of the overseers and the workmen." ¹⁸ Then Shaphan the scribe told the king, saying, "Hilkiah the priest has given me a book." And Shaphan read it before the king. ¹⁹ Thus it happened, when the king heard the words of the Law, that he tore his clothes. ²⁰ Then the king commanded Hilkiah, Ahikam the son of Shaphan, Abdon the son of Micah, Shaphan the scribe, and Asaiah a servant of the king, saying, ²¹ "Go, inquire of the Lord for me, and for those who are left in Israel and Judah, concerning the words of the book that is found; for great is the wrath of the Lord that is poured out on us, because our fathers have not kept the word of the Lord, to do according to all that is written in this book."*

Josiah's reforms were a combination of two things

*** Isaiah 1:16–17** (NKJV) *"Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; Put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes. **Cease to do evil, Learn to do good;** Seek justice, Rebuke the oppressor; Defend the fatherless, Plead for the widow.*

Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim: Another Descent

2 Kings 23:31–34 (NKJV) ¹ *Jehoahaz was twenty-three years old when he became king, and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Hamutal the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah. ³² And he did evil in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his fathers had done. ³³ Now Pharaoh Necho put him in prison at Riblah in the land of Hamath, that he might not reign in Jerusalem; and he imposed on the land a tribute of one hundred talents of silver and a talent of gold. ³⁴ Then Pharaoh Necho made Eliakim the son of Josiah king in place of his father Josiah, and changed his name to Jehoiakim. And Pharaoh took Jehoahaz and went to Egypt, and he died there.*

Jehoiakim was an oppressive and greedy king who imposed heavy taxes in Judah (2 Kings 23:35) in order to pay the Egyptians. Worse, using forced labor, he had elaborate construction done on his own palace, in defiance of the Torah, which was clear about paying people for their work: Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbor, neither rob him: the wages of him that is hired shall not abide with thee all night until the morning (Lev. 19:13). Also, unlike Josiah, his father, Jehoiakim permitted pagan rites to flourish again in Judah.

The Short Reign of King Jehoiachin of Judah

***2 Kings 24:6–7 (NKJV)** *So Jehoiakim rested with his fathers. Then Jehoiachin his son reigned in his place. ⁷ And the king of Egypt did not come out of his land anymore, for the king of Babylon had taken all that belonged to the king of Egypt from the Brook of Egypt to the River Euphrates.*

Jeremiah 22:18–19 (NKJV) ¹⁸ *Therefore thus says the Lord concerning Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah: “They shall not lament for him, Saying, ‘Alas, my brother!’ or ‘Alas, my sister!’ They shall not lament for him, Saying, ‘Alas, master!’ or ‘Alas, his glory!’ ¹⁹ He shall be buried with the burial of a donkey, Dragged and cast out beyond the gates of Jerusalem.*

In about 598 carried captive to Babylon 3,023 Jews (Jer. lii. 28). He placed Jehoiachin, the dead king's son, on the throne. Three months were sufficient to prove Jehoiachin's character (Ezek. xix. 5-9). He was taken with 10,000 of the best of the people of Jerusalem and carried to Babylon. His uncle Mattaniah, whose name was changed to Zedekiah, was put on the throne by Nebuchadnezzar in 597.

The nineteenth king of Judah became Jehoiachin, son of Jehoiakim. He reigned on David's throne for barely three and a half months. In 598 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar brought his forces to Jerusalem and seized the 18-year-old king with his mother, his wives, and many other royal captives. "Nabu-kudurri-usur" = "Nebo, defend my boundary"), is found more than ninety times in the Old Testament.

Jeremiah 29:5–10 (NKJV) ⁵ *Build houses and dwell in them; plant gardens and eat their fruit. ⁶ Take wives and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons and give your daughters to husbands, so that they may bear sons and daughters—that you may be increased there, and not diminished. ⁷ And seek the peace of the city where I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray to the Lord for it; for in its peace you will have peace. ⁸ For thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Do not let your prophets and your diviners who are in*

your midst deceive you, nor listen to your dreams which you cause to be dreamed. ⁹ For they prophesy falsely to you in My name; I have not sent them, says the Lord. ¹⁰ For thus says the Lord: After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place.

In 561 b.c., in the thirty-seventh year of his captivity, Jehoiachin was given mercy by Evil-Merodach, Nebuchadnezzar's successor. He was granted the right to dine with the king of Babylon, and he could wear his kingly robes. (See 2 Kings 25:27-30, Jer. 52:31-34.)

Jehoiachin's rations tablets date from the 6th century BC and describe the rations set aside for a royal captive identified with Jeconiah, king of Judah.^{[2][3]} Tablets from the royal archives of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon were unearthed in the ruins of Babylon that contain food rations paid to captives and craftsmen who lived in and around the city. On one of the tablets, "Ya'u-kīnu, king of the land of Yahudu" is mentioned along with his five sons listed as royal princes.

At the End of the Dead End

Jeremiah 21:9–10 (ESV) ⁹ *He who stays in this city shall die by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence, but he who goes out and surrenders to the Chaldeans who are besieging you shall live and shall have his life as a prize of war. ¹⁰ For I have set my face against this city for harm and not for good, declares the Lord: it shall be given into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall burn it with fire.'*

2 Chronicles 36:11–14 (NKJV) ¹¹ *Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. ¹² He did evil in the sight of the Lord his God, and did not humble himself before Jeremiah the prophet, who spoke from the mouth of the Lord. ¹³ And he also rebelled against King Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him swear an oath by God; but he stiffened his neck and hardened his heart against turning to the Lord God of Israel. ¹⁴ Moreover all the leaders of the priests and the people transgressed more and more, according to all the abominations of the nations, and defiled the house of the Lord which He had consecrated in Jerusalem.*

The Fall of Jerusalem

2 Chronicles 36:15–21 (NKJV) ¹⁵ *And the Lord God of their fathers sent warnings to them by His messengers, rising up early and sending them, because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place. ¹⁶ But they mocked the messengers of God, despised His words, and scoffed at His prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against His people, till there was no remedy. ¹⁷ Therefore He brought against them the king of the Chaldeans, who killed their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion on young man or virgin, on the aged or the weak; He gave them all into his hand. ¹⁸ And all the articles from the house of God, great and small, the treasures of the house of the Lord, and the treasures of the king and of his leaders, all these he took to Babylon. ¹⁹ Then they burned the house of God, broke down the wall of Jerusalem, burned all its palaces with fire, and destroyed all its precious possessions. ²⁰ And those who escaped from the sword he carried away to Babylon, where they became servants to him and his sons until the rule of the kingdom of Persia, ²¹ to fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths. As long as she lay desolate she kept Sabbath, to fulfill seventy years.*

The Dark Years

Jeremiah 39:8–9 (NKJV) *And the Chaldeans burned the king's house and the houses of the people with fire, and broke down the walls of Jerusalem. ⁹ Then Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried away captive to Babylon the remnant of the people who remained in the city and those who defected to him, with the rest of the people who remained.*

Judah is the “Southern Kingdom” with 2 of the original 12 tribes, Judah and Benjamin, Plus the Levites.

KINGS OF JUDAH: (After the Split)

Rehoboam, bad mostly, 933-916 B.C.
 Abijah, bad mostly, 915-913 B.C.
 Asa, GOOD, 912-872 B.C.
 Jehoshaphat, GOOD, 874-850 B.C.
 Jehoram, bad, 850-843 B.C.
 Ahaziah, bad, 843 B.C.
 Athaliah, devilish, 843-837 B.C.
 Joash, good mostly, 843-803 B.C.
 Amaziah, good mostly, 803-775 B.C.
 Uzziah, GOOD mostly, 787-735 B.C.
 Jotham, GOOD, 749-734 B.C.
 Ahaz, wicked, 741-726 B.C.
 Hezekiah, THE BEST, 726-697 B.C.
 Manasseh, the worst, 697-642 B.C.
 Amon, the worst, 641-640 B.C.
 Josiah, THE BEST, 639-608 B.C.
 Jehoahaz, bad, 608 B.C.
 Jehoiakim, wicked, 608-597 B.C.
 Jehoiachin, bad, 597 B.C.
 Zedekiah, bad, 597-586 B.C.

Israel is the “Northern Nation” with 10 of the 12 original tribes. The Kings of Israel are listed below along with the years of their reign.

KINGS OF ISRAEL: (After the Split)

Jeroboam, bad, 930-909 B.C.
 Nadab, bad, 909-908 B.C.
 Baasha, bad, 908-886 B.C.
 Elah, bad, 886-885 B.C.
 Zimri, bad, 885 B.C.
 Tibni, bad, 885-880 B.C.
 Omri (overlap), extra bad, 885-874 B.C.
 Ahab, the worst, 874-853 B.C.
 Ahaziah, bad, 853-852 B.C.
 Joram, bad mostly, 852-841 B.C.
 Jehu, not good but better than the rest, 841-814 B.C.
 Jehoahaz, bad, 814-798 B.C.
 Joash, bad, 798-782 B.C.
 Jeroboam II (overlap), bad, 793-753 B.C.
 Zechariah, bad, 753 B.C.
 Shallum, bad, 752 B.C.
 Menahem, bad, 752-742 B.C.
 Pekahiah, bad, 742-740 B.C.
 Pekah (overlap), bad, 752-732 B.C.
 Hoshea, bad, 732-722 B.C.