

2 Kings 25 - Annals of Judah: 3rd Siege on Jerusalem, Destruction; Gedaliah Made Governor of Judah; Jehoiachin Released from Prison

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2 Kings 25

(8) Reign of Zedekiah (24:17—25:7)

Nebuchadnezzar's 3rd Siege of Judah; The Destruction of Jerusalem (Cf. 2 Chr 36:17-21; Jer 52:4-30)

1 Now in the ninth year of his reign, on the tenth day of the tenth month, Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon came, he and all his army, against Jerusalem, camped against it, and built a siege wall all around it.

1 Now in the ninth year of his reign, on the tenth day of the tenth month, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came, he and all his army, against Jerusalem, camped against it and built a siege wall all around it.

1 so on the tenth day of the tenth month of the ninth year of Zedekiah's reign, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon and his entire army approached Jerusalem, attacked it, encamped against it, and built a siege wall that surrounded the city.

1 And it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, in the tenth day of the month, that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came, he, and all his host, against Jerusalem, and pitched against it; and they built forts against it round about.

- In January 588 BC (in the 10th month of Zedekiah's ninth year) Nebuchadnezzar again marched against and besieged Jerusalem
— The siege was lifted briefly when Egypt attacked Nebuchadnezzar (Jer 37:5) but the Babylonians defeated Judah's ally easily and resumed the siege

- 2 So the city was under siege until the eleventh year of King Zedekiah.
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- 2 And the city was besieged unto the eleventh year of king Zedekiah.
- Jerusalem was under siege for about 18 months (588-586 BC)

Josephus described the siege as follows:

Now the king of Babylon was very intent and earnest upon the siege of Jerusalem; and he erected towers upon great banks of earth and from them repelled those that stood upon the walls: he also made a great number of such banks round about the whole city, the height of which was equal to those walls. [Antiquities, 10:8:1]

- 3 On the ninth day of the *fourth* month the famine was so severe in the city that there was no food for the people of the land.
- 3 On the ninth day of the *fourth* month the famine was so severe in the city that there was no food for the people of the land.
- 3 By the ninth day of the fourth month, the resulting famine had become so severe in the city that no food remained for the people who lived in the land.
- 3 And on the ninth day of the fourth month the famine prevailed in the city, and there was no bread for the people of the land.
- The resulting famine that the residents experienced was only one of many that the Israelites underwent in their history for their rebellion against God
- *Yahweh* again withheld fertility as a punishment for apostasy

- 4 Then the city was broken into, and all the men of war *fled* by night by way of the gate between the two walls that were beside the king's garden, though the Chaldeans were all around the city. And they went by way of the Arabah.
- 4 Then the city was broken into, and all the men of war *fled* by night by way of the gate between the two walls beside the king's garden, though the Chaldeans were all around the city. And they went by way of the Arabah.
- 4 The city was breached, and the entire army left during the night through the gate that stood between the two walls beside the royal garden, even though the Chaldeans had surrounded the city. They escaped through the Arabah,

4 And the city was broken up, and all the men of war fled by night by the way of the gate between two walls, which is by the king's garden: (now the Chaldees were against the city round about:) and the king went the way toward the plain.

- Finally the Babylonians broke through the wall of Jerusalem. This was on July 16, 586 BC, the fourth month of Zedekiah's 11th year (v2-3).

- The few remaining soldiers (Cf. 24:16) fled by night through a gate in a section of the wall where it was double

5 But the army of the Chaldeans pursued the king and overtook him in the plains of Jericho, and all his army was scattered from him.

5 But the army of the Chaldeans pursued the king and overtook him in the plains of Jericho and all his army was scattered from him.

5 but the Chaldean army pursued the king and overtook him in the Jericho plains, where his entire army was scattered.

5 And the army of the Chaldees pursued after the king, and overtook him in the plains of Jericho: and all his army were scattered from him.

6 Then they captured the king and brought him up to the king of Babylon at Riblah, and he passed sentence on him.

6 Then they captured the king and brought him to the king of Babylon at Riblah, and he passed sentence on him.

6 The Chaldeans captured the king and brought him to Riblah, where the king of Babylon determined his sentence.

6 So they took the king, and brought him up to the king of Babylon to Riblah; and they gave judgment upon him.

- The Babylonians captured King Zedekiah while he was trying to escape, evidently at the south end of the city near the Pool of Siloam (Cf. Neh 3:15). They took him to Riblah (Cf. 23:33) where Nebuchadnezzar passed judgment on him.

7 And they slaughtered the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, then put out Zedekiah's eyes and bound him with bronze shackles, and brought him to Babylon.

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.

7 They executed Zedekiah's sons in his presence, blinded Zedekiah, bound him with bronze chains, and transported him to Babylon.

7 And they slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, and put out the eyes of Zedekiah, and bound him with fetters of brass, and carried him to Babylon.

- There Nebuchadnezzar killed Zedekiah's sons (to cut off the heirs to the throne) before his eyes, blinded Zedekiah (to make further rebellion virtually impossible), placed him in shackles, and transported him to Babylon (Cf. Jer 32:4; 34:1-3; 39)...precisely what Ezekiel had prophesied:

Ezek 12:13: My net also will I spread upon him, and he shall be taken in my snare: and I will bring him to Babylon to the land of the Chaldeans; yet shall he not see it, though he shall die there.

(9) The Babylonian captivity (25:8-30)

(A) Destruction of Jerusalem (25:8-17)

8 Now on the seventh *day* of the fifth month, which was the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, Nebuzaradan the captain of the bodyguards, a servant of the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem.

8 Now on the seventh day of the fifth month, which was the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard, a servant of the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem.

8 On the seventh day of the fifth month, which was during the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar's reign as king of Babylon, captain of the guard Nebuzaradan, a servant of the king of Babylon, arrived in Jerusalem

8 And in the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month, which is the nineteenth year of king Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, came Nebuzaradan, captain of the guard, a servant of the king of Babylon, unto Jerusalem:

- Nebuchadnezzar sent Nebuzaradan, commander of his imperial guard, to burn Jerusalem more thoroughly, to preclude any successful national uprising

— This was on the 7th day of the fifth month of Nebuchadnezzar's 19th year (August 16, 586 BC). However, Jer 52:12 reads "the 10th day."

9 And he burned the house of the LORD, the king's house, and all the houses of Jerusalem; even every great house he burned with fire.

9 He burned the house of the LORD, the king's house, and all the houses of Jerusalem; even every great house he burned with fire.

9 and set fire to the LORD's Temple, the royal palace, and all the houses of Jerusalem. He even incinerated the lavish homes.

9 And he burnt the house of the LORD, and the king's house, and all the houses of Jerusalem, and every great man's house burnt he with fire.

- Nebuzaradan's burning of Yahweh's house (v. 9) made a statement that the Babylonians had overcome Yahweh as much as it was an effort to keep the remaining Judahites from

worshipping Him

— This act would have thoroughly demoralized even the godly in Judah, since in the ANE the condition of the house (temple) of a god reflected on that god's reputation

10 So all the army of the Chaldeans who *were with* the captain of the bodyguards tore down the walls around Jerusalem.

10 So all the army of the Chaldeans who *were with* the captain of the guard broke down the walls around Jerusalem.

10 The Chaldean army that accompanied the captain of the guard demolished the walls that surrounded Jerusalem.

10 And all the army of the Chaldees, that were with the captain of the guard, brake down the walls of Jerusalem round about.

11 Then Nebuzaradan, the captain of the bodyguards, led into exile the rest of the people who were left in the city and the deserters who had deserted to the king of Babylon, and the rest of the people.

11 Then the rest of the people who were left in the city and the deserters who had deserted to the king of Babylon and the rest of the people, Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried away into exile.

11 Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard, carried the survivors of the people who remained in the city, those who had deserted to the king of Babylon, and the rest of the multitude into exile.

11 Now the rest of the people that were left in the city, and the fugitives that fell away to the king of Babylon, with the remnant of the multitude, did Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carry away.

- The breaking down of Jerusalem's walls prevented the inhabitants from defending themselves, but it also visualized the fact that Judah no longer had any defense. *Yahweh* had been her defense

12 But the captain of the bodyguards left some of the poorest of the land to be vinedressers and farmers.

12 But the captain of the guard left some of the poorest of the land to be vinedressers and plowmen.

12 However, the captain of the guard left some of the poor people of the land to work as vinedressers and farmers.

12 But the captain of the guard left of the poor of the land to be vinedressers and husbandmen.

- Nebuzaradan also removed all but the poorest people, carrying the majority off to Babylon

— Some of these captives had surrendered to the Babylonians but others had not. The remaining farmers were intended by Nebuchadnezzar to keep the land from growing completely wild.

13 Now the Chaldeans smashed to pieces the bronze pillars which were in the house of the LORD, and the stands and the bronze Sea which were in the house of the LORD, and carried the bronze to Babylon.

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

13 The Chaldeans also broke into pieces and carried back to Babylon the bronze pillars that stood in the LORD's Temple, along with the stands and the bronze sea that used to be in the LORD's Temple.

13 And the pillars of brass that were in the house of the LORD, and the bases, and the brasen sea that was in the house of the LORD, did the Chaldee break in pieces, and carried the brass of them to Babylon.

- The detailed desecration of the temple illustrates God's abandonment of His people (Cf. 1 Kings 9:7-9)

14 And they took away the pots, the shovels, the shears, the spoons, and all the bronze utensils which were used in temple service.

14 They took away the pots, the shovels, the snuffers, the spoons, and all the bronze vessels which were used in *temple* service.

14 They also confiscated the pots, shovels, snuffers, spoons, and the rest of the bronze vessels that were used in ministry.

14 And the pots, and the shovels, and the snuffers, and the spoons, and all the vessels of brass wherewith they ministered, took they away.

15 The captain of the bodyguards also took away the fire pans and the basins, what was fine gold and what was fine silver.

15 The captain of the guard also took away the firepans and the basins, what was fine gold and what was fine silver.

15 The captain of the guard also confiscated the fire pans, basins, and whatever had been crafted of pure gold and pure silver.

15 And the firepans, and the bowls, and such things as were of gold, in gold, and of silver, in silver, the captain of the guard took away.

- The smaller furnishings of bronze, gold, and silver were simply packed up and carted off to Babylon

16 The two pillars, the one sea, and the stands which Solomon had made for the house of the LORD—the bronze of all these articles was too heavy to weigh.

16 The two pillars, the one sea, and the stands which Solomon had made for the house of the LORD—the bronze of all these vessels was beyond weight.

16 The bronze contained in the two pillars, the one sea, and the stands that Solomon had crafted for the LORD's Temple could not be inventoried for weight.

16 The two pillars, one sea, and the bases which Solomon had made for the house of the LORD; the brass of all these vessels was without weight.

17 The height of the one pillar was eighteen cubits, and a bronze capital was on it; the height of the capital was three cubits, with latticework and pomegranates on the capital all around, all of bronze. And the second pillar was like these, same *features* with latticework.

17 The height of the one pillar was eighteen cubits, and a bronze capital was on it; the height of the capital was three cubits, with a network and pomegranates on the capital all around, all of bronze. And the second pillar was like these with network.

17 The height of one of the pillars was eighteen cubits, and the capital on top of it was three cubits high. A latticework carved in the form of pomegranates encircled the capital, crafted completely out of brass. The second pillar was identical to the first.

17 The height of the one pillar was eighteen cubits, and the chapter upon it was brass: and the height of the chapter three cubits; and the wreathen work, and pomegranates upon the chapter round about, all of brass: and like unto these had the second pillar with wreathen work.

- The two pillars on the temple porch were so huge that the amount of bronze in them could not be weighed (Cf. 1 Kings 7:15-22; Jer 52:20-23)

(B) Third deportation (25:18-21)

18 Then the captain of the bodyguards took Seraiah the chief priest and Zephaniah the second priest, with the three doorkeepers.

18 Then the captain of the guard took Seraiah the chief priest and Zephaniah the second priest, with the three officers of the temple.

18 The captain of the guard arrested Seraiah the chief priest, Zephaniah the second priest, three temple officials,

18 And the captain of the guard took Seraiah the chief priest, and Zephaniah the second priest, and the three keepers of the door:

19 And from the city he took one official who was overseer of the men of war, and five of the king's advisers who were found in the city; and the scribe of the captain of the army who mustered the people of the land; and sixty men of the people of the land who were found in the city.

19 From the city he took one official who was overseer of the men of war, and five of the king's advisers who were found in the city; and the scribe of the captain of the army who mustered the people of the land; and sixty men of the people of the land who were found in the city.

19 one overseer from the city who supervised the soldiers, five of the king's advisers who had been discovered in the city, the scribe who served the army captain who mustered the army of the land, and 60 men of the land who were discovered in the city.

19 And out of the city he took an officer that was set over the men of war, and five men of them that were in the king's presence, which were found in the city, and the principal scribe of the host, which mustered the people of the land, and threescore men of the people of the land that were found in the city:

20 Nebuzaradan the captain of the bodyguards took them and brought them to the king of Babylon at Riblah.

20 Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard took them and brought them to the king of Babylon at Riblah.

20 Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard, took them to the king of Babylon at Riblah,

20 And Nebuzaradan captain of the guard took these, and brought them to the king of Babylon to Riblah:

21 Then the king of Babylon struck them down and put them to death at Riblah in the land of Hamath. So Judah went into exile from its land.

21 Then the king of Babylon struck them down and put them to death at Riblah in the land of Hamath. So Judah was led away into exile from its land.

21 where the king of Babylon executed them in the land of Hamath. And so Judah was transported into exile from the land.

21 And the king of Babylon smote them, and slew them at Riblah in the land of Hamath. So Judah was carried away out of their land.

- The Babylonians also cut the priesthood back by killing many priests so the people could not unite around the priests and rebel

There were three Babylonian invasions of Judah by Nebuchadnezzar. The first occurred in 605 BC, during Jehoiakim's reign, when Nebuchadnezzar took many of the nobles captive, including Daniel and his three friends. The second invasion and deportation occurred in

597 BC, during the reign of Jehoiachin, when Nebuchadnezzar took Jehoiachin, Ezekiel, and about 10,000 other Jews into exile. The third invasion and deportation took place in 586 BC, during the reign of Zedekiah, when Nebuchadnezzar sacked Jerusalem, destroyed the temple, and took Zedekiah and all but the poorest of the remaining Jews captive. Some of the Jews later returned to the land from Babylon in three waves: in 536, 458, and 444 BC.

(C) Nebuchadnezzar installs puppet governor Gedaliah to encourage the exiles to submit to Babylon (25:22-24)

22 Now as for the people who were left in the land of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had left, he appointed Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan over them.

22 Now as for the people who were left in the land of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had left, he appointed Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan over them.

22 Now as for the people who remained in the land of Judah whom King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon had left behind, he appointed Ahikam's son Gedaliah, the grandson of Shaphan, to rule.

22 And as for the people that remained in the land of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had left, even over them he made Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, ruler.

- Gedaliah was a descendant of Josiah's secretary of state (22:3) and a friend of Jeremiah (Jer 39:14), who followed that prophet's advice to cooperate with the Babylonians

23 When all the captains of the forces, they and *their* men, heard that the king of Babylon had appointed Gedaliah *governor*, they came to Gedaliah at Mizpah, namely, Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, Johanan the son of Kareah, Seraiah the son of Tanhumeth the Netophathite, and Jaazaniah the son of the Maacathite, they and their men.

23 When all the captains of the forces, they and *their* men, heard that the king of Babylon had appointed Gedaliah *governor*, they came to Gedaliah to Mizpah, namely, Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and Johanan the son of Kareah, and Seraiah the son of Tanhumeth the Netophathite, and Jaazaniah the son of the Maacathite, they and their men.

23 When all the captains of the armies, along with their men, heard that the king of Babylon had appointed Gedaliah, these men visited Gedaliah at Mizpah: Nethaniah's son Ishmael, Kareah's son Johanan, Tanhumeth the Netophathite's son Seraiah, and Jaazaniah, who was descended from the Maacathites.

23 And when all the captains of the armies, they and their men, heard that the king of Babylon had made Gedaliah governor, there came to Gedaliah to Mizpah, even Ishmael the

son of Nethaniah, and Johanan the son of Careah, and Seraiah the son of Tanhumeth the Netophathite, and Jaazaniah the son of a Maachathite, they and their men.

- Ishmael possessed royal blood and evidently wanted to rule over Judah (Jer 41:2)

— Gedaliah had been warned of this possibility but had refused to take it seriously (Jer 40:13-16). Gedaliah's associates were also slain.

- Mizpah, the Babylonian provincial capital, was seven miles north of Jerusalem (Cf. 1 Sam 7:5-12)

24 And Gedaliah swore to them and their men and said to them, "Do not be afraid of the servants of the Chaldeans; live in the land and serve the king of Babylon, and it will go well for you."

24 Gedaliah swore to them and their men and said to them, "Do not be afraid of the servants of the Chaldeans; live in the land and serve the king of Babylon, and it will be well with you."

24 Gedaliah made this promise to them and to their men: "Don't be afraid of the servants of the Chaldeans. Live in the land and serve the king of Babylon, and things will go well with you."

24 And Gedaliah swore to them, and to their men, and said unto them, Fear not to be the servants of the Chaldees: dwell in the land, and serve the king of Babylon; and it shall be well with you.

(D) The exiles migrate to Egypt after assassinating Gedaliah (25:25-26)

25 But it happened in the seventh month, that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, the son of Elishama, of the royal family, came with ten men and struck Gedaliah down so that he died along with the Jews and the Chaldeans who were with him at Mizpah.

25 But it came about in the seventh month, that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, the son of Elishama, of the royal family, came with ten men and struck Gedaliah down so that he died along with the Jews and the Chaldeans who were with him at Mizpah.

25 Nevertheless, seven months later, Nethaniah's son Ishmael, the grandson of Elishama from the royal family, came with ten men and attacked Gedaliah. As a result, he died along with the Jews and Chaldeans who were with him at Mizpah.

25 But it came to pass in the seventh month, that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, the son of Elishama, of the seed royal, came, and ten men with him, and smote Gedaliah, that he died, and the Jews and the Chaldees that were with him at Mizpah.

- Some time later, Ishmael conspired against Gedaliah and slew him (Cf. Jer 41:2)

— Gedaliah had been warned of this possibility but had refused to take it seriously (Jer 40:13-16). Gedaliah's associates were also slain.

26 Then all the people, from the small to the great, and the captains of the forces set out and came to Egypt; for they were afraid of the Chaldeans.

26 Then all the people, both small and great, and the captains of the forces arose and went to Egypt; for they were afraid of the Chaldeans.

26 Then all the people, including those who were insignificant and those who were important, fled with the captains of the armed forces to Egypt, because they were afraid of the Chaldeans.

26 And all the people, both small and great, and the captains of the armies, arose, and came to Egypt: for they were afraid of the Chaldees.

- Fearing reprisals from Nebuchadnezzar, all the Judahites including the army officers who had failed to prevent this assassination fled to Egypt for safety, forcing Jeremiah to go with them (Jer 41:1—43:7)

— It is ironic that the Judahites who rebelled against the Babylonians—and God's will—in an attempt to secure their independence ended up fleeing back to Egypt. Their forefathers had been slaves there, and God had liberated them from Egypt 850 years earlier (Cf. Deut 28:68).

(E) Evil-merodach releases Jehoiachin from house arrest (25:27-30)

27 Now it came about in the thirty-seventh year of the exile of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the twenty-seventh *day* of the month, that Evil-merodach king of Babylon, in the year that he became king, released Jehoiachin king of Judah from prison;

27 Now it came about in the thirty-seventh year of the exile of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the twenty-seventh *day* of the month, that Evil-merodach king of Babylon, in the year that he became king, released Jehoiachin king of Judah from prison;

27 Later on, after King Jehoiachin of Judah had been in exile for 37 years, on the twenty-seventh day of the twelfth month, during the first year of his reign, King Evil-merodach of Babylon released King Jehoiachin of Judah from prison.

27 And it came to pass in the seven and thirtieth year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the seven and twentieth day of the month, that Evilmerodach king of Babylon in the year that he began to reign did lift up the head of Jehoiachin king of Judah out of prison;

- In 562 BC the Babylonian king Evil-merodach (562-560 BC) permitted Johoiachin to enjoy a measure of freedom

28 and he spoke kindly to him and set his throne above the throne of the kings who *were* with him in Babylon.

28 and he spoke kindly to him and set his throne above the throne of the kings who *were* with him in Babylon.

28 He spoke kindly to him and elevated his position above the thrones of the kings with him in Babylon.

28 And he spake kindly to him, and set his throne above the throne of the kings that were with him in Babylon;

- Jehoiachin was treated with greater respect than the other conquered kings who were also prisoners in Babylon

29 So Jehoiachin changed his prison clothes, and had his meals in the king's presence regularly all the days of his life;

29 Jehoiachin changed his prison clothes and had his meals in the king's presence regularly all the days of his life;

29 Jehoiachin changed out of his prison clothes and had regular meals in the king's presence every day for the rest of his life,

29 And changed his prison garments: and he did eat bread continually before him all the days of his life.

30 and as his allowance, a regular allowance was given to him by the king, a portion for each day, all the days of his life.

30 and for his allowance, a regular allowance was given him by the king, a portion for each day, all the days of his life.

30 and a regular stipend was provided to him by the king in accordance with his needs for as long as he lived.

30 And his allowance was a continual allowance given him of the king, a daily rate for every day, all the days of his life.

- For the rest of his life Jehoiachin lived in minimum security prison conditions and ate regularly the food Evil-Merodach provided for him (Cf. Jer 52:31-34)

The positive note on which 2 Kings ends reveals again the Lord's mercy, which stands out repeatedly in 1 and 2 Kings. This notation also points to the continuation of the Davidic dynasty which God had promised would lead His people forever (2 Sam 7:16). Evil-Merodach's attitude toward Jehoiachin was followed by policies that allowed the Israelites more freedom. When Cyrus overthrew Babylonia he allowed—in fact, encouraged—the Jews to return to their land (Ezra 1:1-4).