

2 Kings Lesson 25

2 Kings Chapter 25

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Memory verses for this week: *Joel 2:1 Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the LORD cometh, for it is nigh at hand;*

Introduction: In chapter 24, we studied about the beginning of the end of the southern kingdom of Judah. Nebuchadnezzar began taking them into Babylon and assigned Zedekiah as the new king. He was the uncle of former king Jehoiachin. Neither he nor Zedekiah were good kings as Josiah had been.

In our final Chapter of II Kings, the final judgment of God against Judah is unleashed. The Babylonians return in fury and destroy Jerusalem. They enslaved its rebel king Zedekiah. They destroyed the Temple of God. The third and final phase of the Babylonian captivity was effected. Details of the continuing political instability of those who remained in Judah are noted along with kindness being shown to Jehoiachin, former king of Judah.

I. Nebuchadnezzar Sends Attacks on Judah Again

2Ki 25:1 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.

2Ki 25:2 And the city was besieged unto the eleventh year of king Zedekiah.

Precise dating is given for the final return of the Babylonians against rebellious Jerusalem. The ninth year refers to that of Zedekiah's reign and the actual date is about 588 B.C. The siege was finally broken in 586 B.C. During that interval of the siege, the Babylonians erected siege forts against the city, allowing no one to leave or enter the city. Their plan was simple. They would starve the city into submission. The account in verse 1-7 is identical to that of Jeremiah 52:4-11.

2Ki 25:3 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.

2Ki 25:4 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.

With starvation facing the city, the Babylonians broke into the weakened city. However, the remaining forces of the city fled by night through an obscure gate. Zedekiah, as a coward, fled by night and headed toward the plains of Jordan by

Jericho. He was not successful.

2Ki 25:5 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.

2Ki 25:6 So they took the king, and brought him up to the king of Babylon to Riblah; and they gave judgment upon him.

2Ki 25:7 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.

The reference to the Chaldees is another name of the Babylonians which were located in the greater region of the Chaldees. The Babylonians thus caught up to Zedekiah in the vicinity of Jericho in the Jordan River valley. His army scattered and the king was captured.

Nebuchadnezzar himself had not been personally involved in the siege of Jerusalem, having delegated that to subordinate officers. He was presently at Riblah, a town in the land of Hamath, on the great road between Babylon and Palestine. There, the Babylonian forces brought Zedekiah for judgment.

Nebuchadnezzar had earlier extended mercy to Zedekiah in placing him upon the throne of Judah as his vassal. Zedekiah had completely broken that trust in his rebellion against Babylon. Clearly, Nebuchadnezzar had no more patience or kindness to him. He ordered Zedekiah's sons murdered before his eyes. He then put out the eyes of this wicked Jewish king so that the last visual memory he ever had was seeing his sons killed before him.

Though royalty, Nebuchadnezzar ordered this rebellious subordinate bound with brass fetters as a common criminal and sent to Babylon. The house of David was truncated. That removal of the descendants of David remains to this day. Only when the greatest Son of David returns will the throne of David be restored.

In the Pulpit Commentary, it says this about the flight of King Zedekiah.

And the army of the Chaldees pursued after the king. When the escape of Zedekiah and the soldiers of the garrison was discovered, hot pursuit was made, since the honor of the great king required that his enemies should be brought captive to his presence. The commanders at Jerusalem would fuel this the more sensibly, since Nebuchadnezzar had for some time retired from the siege, and left its conduct to them, while he himself exercised a general superintendence over military affairs from Riblah (see [2Ki 25:6](#)). They were liable to be held responsible for the escape.

And overtook him in the plains of Jericho. The "plains of Jericho" is the fertile tract on the right bank of the Jordan near its embouchure, which was excellently watered, and cultivated in gardens, orchards, and palm-groves. It is probable, though not certain, that Zedekiah intended to cross the Jordan, and seek a refuge in Moab. **And all his army were scattered from him** (comp. [Eze 12:14](#)). This seems to be mentioned in order to account for there being no engagement. Perhaps, thinking themselves in security, and imagining that they were not followed, the troops had dispersed themselves among the farmhouses and homesteads, to obtain a much-needed refreshment.

II. Nebuzaradan, Captain of the Babylon Guard Burns God's House

2Ki 25:8 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:

2Ki 25:9 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.

2Ki 25:10 And all the army of the Chaldees, that were with the captain of the guard, brake down the walls of Jerusalem round about.

The final fall of Jerusalem is noted with precise detail. The nineteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar is in about 586 B.C. Thus, the third and final assault against Jerusalem came after twenty years of Babylonian chastisement against Judah, having begun in 606 B.C.

The Babylonians had had enough of rebellious Judah. Nebuchadnezzar ordered the Temple of God destroyed along with the royal palace. He then proceeded to burn the entire city and then tore down the walls thereof. When Nebuchadnezzar was done, nothing was left of Jerusalem. He had totally destroyed the city.

Judah (and Israel) as a free independent state ceased to exist and remained so until 1948 when Israel was reconstituted in the land as a nation.

2Ki 25:11 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.

2Ki 25:12 But the captain of the guard left of the poor of the land to be vinedressers and husbandmen.

The third and final phase of the Babylonian captivity was accomplished. Virtually everyone living at Jerusalem was deported to Babylon. Any one of any significance in Judah was deported as well. It was Babylonian policy to mingle captured people in distant portions of their empire to mitigate against any further uprising.

Those found to be superior genetically were assimilated into society to strengthen Babylon. Seeing the value of the vineyards of Judah, the Babylonians left the lower class of the nation behind to tend these as a cash crop for Babylon.

2Ki 25:13 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 Chaldees break in pieces, and carried the brass of them to Babylon.

2Ki 25:14 And the pots, and the shovels, and the snuffers, and the spoons, and all the vessels of brass wherewith they ministered, took they away.

2Ki 25:15 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.

2Ki 25:16 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.

2Ki 25:17 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.

Before departing, the Babylonians proceeded to strip and loot anything of value from the destruction of Jerusalem. All of the brass of the Temple was stripped and broken up for shipment back to Babylon. Nothing of value was left. All of the metal work of the Temple from whatever golden vessels remained to all of the brass work was stripped and shipped back to Babylon. They left Jerusalem totally desolate. Jeremiah lamented of this desolation in Lamentations 3-4.

Matthew Henry said this about the things looted from the Temple.

Some things remained of gold and silver (2Ki 25:15) which were now carried off; but most of this plunder was brass, such a vast quantity of it that it is said to be *without weight*, 2Ki 25:16. The carrying away of *the vessels wherewith they ministered* (2Ki 25:14) put an end to the ministrations. It was a righteous thing with God to deprive those of the benefit of his worship who had slighted it so long and preferred false worships before it. Those that would have many altars shall now have none. 5. Several of the great men are slain in cold blood - Seraiah the chief priest (who was the father of Ezra as appears, Ezr 7:1), the second priest (who, when there was occasion, officiated for him), and three door-keepers of the temple (2Ki 25:18), the general of the army, five privy-counsellors (afterwards they made them up seven, Jer 52:25), the secretary of war, or pay-master of the army, and sixty country gentlemen who had concealed themselves in the city.

These, being persons of some rank, were brought to the king of Babylon (2Ki 25:19, 2Ki 25:20), who ordered them to be all put to death (2Ki 25:21), when, in reason, they might have hoped that surely the bitterness of death was past. These the king of Babylon's revenge looked upon as most active in opposing him; but divine justice, we may suppose, looked upon them as ringleaders in that idolatry and impiety which were punished by these desolations. This completed the calamity: *So Judah was carried away out of their land*, about 860 years after they were put in possession of it by Joshua. Now the scripture was fulfilled, *The Lord shall bring thee, and the king which thou shalt set over thee, into a nation which thou hast not known*, Deu 28:36.

2Ki 25:18 And the captain of the guard took Seraiah the chief priest, and Zephaniah the second priest, and the three keepers of the door:

2Ki 25:19 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:

2Ki 25:20 And Nebuzaradan captain of the guard took these, and brought them to the king of Babylon to Riblah:

2Ki 25:21 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.

All remaining religious, military, and civil leaders were rounded up and marched to Riblah where Nebuchadnezzar's regional headquarters were located. There,

the king of Babylon smote them, and slew them at Riblah in the land of Hamath.

Israel as a nation was no longer. The northern kingdom had been deported by the Assyrians approximately 136 years earlier. Now, the southern kingdom ceased to exist as well. God had removed His people from their land as He had warned in Deuteronomy 28 as well as through later prophets.

III. Nebuchadnezzar Appoints Gedaliah to be Regional Governor

2Ki 25:22 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.

2Ki 25:23 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.

2Ki 25:24 And Gedaliah sware 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.

Some Jews were left in the land to dress the vineyards for the Babylonians. Having intimidated them, Nebuchadnezzar appointed Gedaliah to be regional governor over them. He evidently was willing to pledge allegiance to Nebuchadnezzar in return for this privilege. Precisely who Gedaliah was is not certain. However, his lineage as noted clearly was not of the line and lineage of David.

Evidently, some of the Jewish forces which had fled before the Babylonians now returned from hiding to meet with Gedaliah. Loyal now to Nebuchadnezzar, Gedaliah urged to them submit to Babylonian authority and live in the land. He assured them that all would be well for them in so doing. This portion closely parallels the ministry of Jeremiah the prophet. (See Jeremiah 40 for additional detail).

2Ki 25:25 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.

2Ki 25:26 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.

In the seventh month of that year, one named Ishmael who was of royal descent took ten men with him and killed Gedaliah along with the Jews and Babylonians with him. They undoubtedly considered him a traitor. Seeing what Ishmael had done and fearing retribution from the Babylonians, the remnant of Jews left in the

land fled to Egypt. (Read Jeremiah 41-43).

2Ki 25:27 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;

2Ki 25:28 And he spake kindly to him, and set his throne above the throne of the kings that were with him in Babylon;

2Ki 25:29 And changed his prison garments: and he did eat bread continually before him all the days of his life.

2Ki 25:30 And his allowance was a continual allowance given him of the king, a daily rate for every day, all the days of his life.

Nebuchadnezzar had died. His son Evilmerodach ascended the throne of Babylon. The name Evilmerodach means the man or soldier of Merodach, a pagan god of Babylon. Some think him to be the same as Belshazzar. Perhaps Jehoiachin had truly repented and God in mercy put it in the heart of the new Babylonian ruler to show kindness to him. It also may be that Daniel, who by now was in a position of rank in Babylon, influenced Belshazzar to show mercy to this wretched Jewish king.

Jewish tradition holds that Belshazzar had been imprisoned for a time by his father Nebuchadnezzar and got to know Jehoiachin in prison. Upon ascending the throne, Belshazzar therefore showed kindness to him.

Jehoiachin was promoted to a place befitting his royal lineage in Babylon. He there prospered to the end of his life. God was merciful to him. Here, the book of the Kings abruptly ends. The last living king of Judah was a vassal in a gentile nation. Israel and Judah would remain so generally until 1948 though a remnant of Judah would return under Ezra and Nehemiah.

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Prov 4:18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

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Practice Random Acts of Kindness. Each act spreads, and many will be blessed.

