

Reading Guide for the Reigns of Jehoiakim and Jehoaichin (2 Kings 24:1-17; 2 Chronicles 36:6-10)

Nebuchadnezzar Subdues Judah and Raids the Temple (2 Ki 24:1a; 2 Chr 36:6-7)

In 605 B.C., Babylon defeated Egypt at the Battle of Carchemish and became the dominant power in Syria-Palestine (Jer. 46:2-12). It was at that time that Jehoiakim shifted his allegiance from Egypt to Babylon, which was quickly becoming a great empire led by king Nebuchadnezzar. This was also the year that the first exiles (including Daniel and others from the Judean court) were taken to Babylon.

2 Kings 24:1a

^{24:1a} In his days,
Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up

and Jehoiakim became his servant for three years.

2 Chronicles 36:6-7

⁶ Against him
Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up
and bound him in bronze shackles to take him
to Babylon.
⁷ And Nebuchadnezzar brought some of the
vessels of the house of YHWH to Babylon and
put them in his palace in Babylon.

Jehoiakim Rebels Against Nebuchadnezzar and Suffers Military Defeat (2 Ki 24:1b-4)

Three years later (601 B.C.), after several successful campaigns in Syria-Palestine, Babylon failed an attempt to invade Egypt, and Nebuchadnezzar was forced to retreat back to Babylon in order to replenish his army. It is likely that this event led to Jehoiakim's rebellion (perhaps with a coalition of other nations), seizing upon what he believed was an opportune moment to cast off Babylonian control.

The rebellion, however, proved unsuccessful. Although Nebuchadnezzar could not refit his army for another year, he hired mercenary bands to raid and destroy Judean cities in the meantime (cf. Jer 35:11). Egypt proved unable to aid Judah, as Jeremiah prophesied. Jehoiakim was thus unable to escape the certain judgment upon the nation, for the Lord had decreed it.

2 Kings 24:1b-4

^{1b} And then he turned and rebelled against him. ² And YHWH sent against him bands of Chaldeans and bands of Syrians and bands of Moab and bands of the people of Ammon. And he sent them against Judah to destroy it, according to the word of YHWH that he spoke by his servants the prophets.

³ Surely this came upon Judah at the command of YHWH, 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 that he had shed. For he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood, and YHWH would not forgive.

The Death of Jehoiakim (2 Ki 24:5-6; 2 Chr 36:8)

Jehoiakim died near the end of 598 B.C. Although there are few details regarding the end of Jehoiakim's reign, Jeremiah prophecies suggest an ignominious death:

- *"With the burial of a donkey [Jehoiakim] shall be buried, / dragged and dumped beyond the gates of Jerusalem." (Jer 22:19)*
- *Therefore thus says YHWH concerning Jehoiakim king of Judah: There will be for him no one to sit on the throne of David, and his dead body will be cast out to the heat by day and the frost by night. (Jer 36:30)*

Whatever the circumstances surrounding Jehoiakim's death, Jehoiachin, his son, was left to face the consequences of Jehoiakim's rebellion against Nebuchadnezzar and the Lord Himself.

2 Kings 24:5-6

⁵ And 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 reigned in his place.

2 Chronicles 36:8

⁸ And the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim and the abominations that 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 reigned in his place.

Babylonian Dominance Emphasized (2 Ki 24:7)

The writer of Kings emphasizes in this verse that Babylon, despite military setbacks and scattered rebellions, maintained their dominance throughout the region of Syria-Palestine. The verse also notes that Egypt had been severely weakened and was powerless to aid Judah.

2 Kings 24:7

⁷ And the king of Egypt did not come out again from his land, for the king of Babylon had taken all that belonged to the king of Egypt, from the Brook of Egypt to the river Euphrates.

Jehoiachin's Regnal Data/Deuteronomic Evaluation (2 Ki 25:8-9; 2 Chr 36:9)

Jehoiachin began his reign at the end of 598 B.C. Although there are few details regarding his reign, both writers of Kings and Chronicles note he committed the same sort of evil his father did.

2 Kings 24:8-9

⁸ Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he became king, and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Nehushta the daughter of Elnathan of Jerusalem.

⁹ And he did what was evil in the sight of YHWH, according to all that his father had done.

2 Chronicles 36:9

⁹ Jehoiachin was *eighteen years old when he became king, and he reigned three months and ten days in Jerusalem.

And he did what was evil in the sight of YHWH

Jehoiachin and Others Exiled (2 Ki 24:10-16; 2 Chr 36:10a)

The beginning of Jehoiachin's reign (Nov/Dec 598 B.C.) coincides exactly with Babylon's return to lay siege against Jerusalem for Jehoiakim's rebellion. Jehoiachin's surrender is recorded in the Babylonian Chronicle, and dated March 16, 597 B.C. The king, along with the queen, and various other court officials and skilled workers, were exiled to Babylon. The temple is also looted of much of its treasure. Finally, Nebuchadnezzar installs Zedekiah as king.

2 Kings 24:10-16

¹⁰ At that time the servants of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up to Jerusalem, and the city came under siege. ¹¹ And Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to the city while his servants were besieging it, ¹² and Jehoiachin the king of Judah went out to the king of Babylon—himself and his mother and his servants and his officials and his palace officials. And the king of Babylon took him prisoner in the eighth year of his reign.

¹³ And he brought out from there all the treasures of the house of YHWH and the treasures of the king's house, and cut in pieces all the vessels of gold which Solomon king of Israel had made for the temple of YHWH, as YHWH had said.

¹⁴ And he exiled away all Jerusalem and all the officials and all the mighty men of valor, 10,000 captives, and all the craftsmen and the smiths. None remained except the poorest people of the land.

¹⁵ And he exiled Jehoiachin to Babylon; and the king's mother, and the king's wives, and his officials, and the chief men of the land, he took into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon; ¹⁶ and all the men of valor, 7,000, and the craftsmen and the metal workers, 1,000, all of them strong and fit for war, the king of Babylon brought them into exile to Babylon.

2 Chronicles 36:10a

^{10a} And at the turn of the year

King Nebuchadnezzar sent and brought him to Babylon,

with the precious vessels of the house of YHWH.

Zedekiah Becomes King (2 Ki 24:17; 36:10b)**2 Kings 24:17**

¹⁷ And the king of Babylon made Mattaniah, his uncle, king

in his place, and changed his name to Zedekiah.

2 Chronicles 36:10b

And he made Zedekiah, his brother, king over Judah and Jerusalem.