

THE RISE AND FALL OF THE GOLDEN KINGDOM OF ISRAEL

I and II Kings - Session 8 / Wednesday, October 17, 2018

THE GOLDEN KINGDOM IS DESTROYED

II Kings 23 through 25

1 The very beginning of the Golden Kingdom occurred around 1040 B.C. with King Saul
2 and ended in 586 B.C. under King Zedekiah. So this kingdom endured for a little over
3 450 years.

4
5 When King Solomon died, around 931 B.C. and his son Rehoboam became king, the
6 country was divided in two over the issue of excessive taxation. Ten northern tribes
7 seceded from the “union” and became known as Israel - with Samaria (Sebaste) as its
8 Capital. The two southern tribes, Benjamin and Judah, became known as Judah and
9 retained Jerusalem as its capital. At that point then, it was Israel under King Jeroboam
10 and Judah under King Rehoboam.

11
12 On the next page, 1-A, you will find a map that clearly shows the division of the “golden
13 kingdom.”

14
15 In the four-plus centuries of the kingdom’s existence, came kings - great and horrible,
16 prophets - true and false, and heroes and traitors aplenty.

17
18 The history of Israel is found in what we call THE HISTORICAL BOOKS, Joshua
19 through Esther. We are concluding our time in these books with tonight’s lesson.

20
21 Last week we studied the horrible reign of Judah’s worst king, Manasseh, and good reign
22 of his son Josiah. Josiah reigned from 640-608 in Jerusalem. His death was very
23 unfortunate:

24
25 2 Kings 23:29-30

26 **In his days Pharaoh-nechoh king of Egypt went up against the king of Assyria to**
27 **the river Euphrates: and king Josiah went against him; and he slew him at Megiddo,**
28 **when he had seen him. [30] And his servants carried him in a chariot dead from**
29 **Megiddo, and brought him to Jerusalem, and buried him in his own sepulchre. And**
30 **the people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah, and anointed him, and made**
31 **him king in his father’s stead.**

32
33 This good and brave king died all-too-soon in a place where he had no business being.

1-A



1 During his reign of around 30 years, Josiah had set out to destroy the evils which had
2 grown up during the over 50-year reign of his father Manasseh. Josiah repaired the
3 Temple, found the scriptures, had them read to all the people (most of whom probably
4 could read themselves), and required obedience to what God said. The people began to
5 tithe. Judges who were just were appointed. Modesty and proper attitudes were
6 common again. All that pertained to the worship of Baal was destroyed and idol worship
7 strictly abolished. The people were again happy and peace and prosperity were found
8 across the land.

9
10 Then something happened. Pharaoh-Necho, king of Egypt, set out to go against the
11 rising king of Babylon. Egypt had destroyed the Assyrian Kingdom and the Pharaoh
12 believed he had the strength to defeat Babylon (Under Nebuchadnezzar). In his initial
13 approach to Babylon, Necho passed through Judah. Taking no chances, Josiah led out
14 his army and took a defensive stand at the pass at Megiddo where Judah was defeated and
15 Josiah was killed.

16
17 His body was returned to Jerusalem where the nation truly mourned for him. Pharaoh-
18 Necho continued on northward to Carchemish where in one of history's most notable
19 battles in 605 B.C., Egypt was defeated by Nebuchadnezzar's army and for the next
20 hundred years or so, that part of the world would be ruled by Babylon.

21 22 JUDAH AFTER JOSIAH'S PASSING

23
24 After the good young king died, the people of Judah lapsed into their old ways of sinful
25 living. Prosperity vanished and the nation definitely turned from God.

26
**IT WAS AT THIS POINT THAT THE MINISTRY OF JEREMIAH, THE WEEPING
PROPHET, CAME INTO BEING. BUT THE PEOPLE WOULD NOT HEED HIS
ANOINTED WARNINGS, AND THUS THE KINGDOM WAS SHORTLY TO BE
DEFEATED THREE TIMES BY THE BABYLONIANS AND THE CITY OF
JERUSALEM BECAME A JUNK HEAP, BURNING, AND DYING.**

27 People laughing all their way to hell did not want to hear the cry of the strange prophet in
28 the streets. He was publicly struck by a temple priest and placed in stocks to be mocked
29 by the passing crowds. The new king announced that Judah would no longer be a vassal
30 state to Babylon and prepared for war, Jeremiah announced instead that Jerusalem would
31 be conquered and the people carried into captivity beyond the Euphrates River. The
32 king was livid and accused the faithful prophet of God of a mortal crime, treason against
33 the state. But Jeremiah was rescued by a faithful friend who hid him from the palace.

1 FOLLOWING JOSIAH CAME THE NEW KING, JEHOAHAZ

2
3 2 Kings 23:31-33

4 **Jehoahaz was twenty and three years old when he began to reign; and he reigned**
5 **three months in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Hamutal, the daughter of**
6 **Jeremiah of Libnah. [32] And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord,**
7 **according to all that his fathers had done. [33] And Pharaoh-nechoh put him in**
8 **bands at Riblah in the land of Hamath, that he might not reign in Jerusalem; and**
9 **put the land to a tribute of an hundred talents of silver, and a talent of gold.**

10
11 (Riblah) Many years ago, driving with some friends from Beirut , Lebanon, to
12 Damascus, Syria, we drove near Riblah as we crossed into Syria. It is located on the
13 eastern bank of the Orontes river, about 35 miles northeast of famed Baalbek. It was
14 here that Pharaoh-Necho established his camp after killing Josiah. It was also here later
15 that Nebuchadnezzar established his headquarter as he tightened the noose around
16 Jerusalem.

17
18 Apparently, according to some historians, the Egyptian Pharaoh, a whole lot smarter and
19 older than young Jehoahaz suckered Jehoahaz to Riblah for a “conference.” The young
20 kid king never left it on his own. He was hauled down to the Land of the Nile and in the
21 shadow of the pyramids executed.

22
23 NEXT ON THE THRONE, JEHOIAKIM

24
25 2 Kings 23:34-37

26 **And Pharaoh-nechoh made Eliakim the son of Josiah king in the room of Josiah**
27 **his father, and turned his name to Jehoiakim, and took Jehoahaz away: and he came**
28 **to Egypt, and died there. [35] And Jehoiakim gave the silver and the gold to**
29 **Pharaoh; but he taxed the land to give the money according to the commandment of**
30 **Pharaoh: he exacted the silver and the gold of the people of the land, of every one**
31 **according to his taxation, to give it unto Pharaoh-nechoh.**

32 **[36] Jehoiakim was twenty and five years old when he began to reign; and he**
33 **reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Zebudah, the**
34 **daughter of Pedaiah of Rumah. [37] And he did that which was evil in the sight of**
35 **the Lord, according to all that his fathers had done.**

36
37 Politically, while all this was going on, Babylon was displacing Assyria. Then Egypt
38 itself would fall to the warriors of Babylon. (AGAIN - READ JEREMIAH AT THIS
39 POINT). Despite Jeremiah's warnings, the false prophets told the people of Judah that
40 all was well, that they were the “chosen people,” and that God just simply could not get

1 along without them. But God did not need them, nor did He need the Temple - which
2 would be destroyed within 25 years.

4 JEREMIAH'S DIRE WARNINGS HAPPEN!

5
6 Good, young King Josiah died on a battlefield he did not need to be on, and he was
7 followed on the throne of Jerusalem by losers:

- 8 • His son Jehoahaz - a loser, on the throne for 3 months
- 9 • Another son, Jehoiakim - a loser who reigned for 11 years
- 10 • Jehoiachin - reigned for 3 months

11
12 At this point, the populace of Judah hated Jeremiah! They should have loved and
13 honored him as he was trying to save their lives. The priests mocked him, the zealots-
14 patriots in Judah denounced him, the mobs reviled him. This despite the foolishness, the
15 downright insanity, of decisions made by the trio of kings:

16
17 II KINGS 24:1 2 Kings 24:1

18 **In his days Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up, and Jehoiakim became his**
19 **servant three years: then he turned and rebelled against him.**

20
21 Babylon had subdued Judah but did not destroy the nation. Judah now served as vassals
22 to Babylon. Reluctant allies, you might say. And for three years, there was relative
23 peace. Then Jehoiakim decided to throw off Babylon's rule.

24
25 2 Kings 24:2-3

26 **And the Lord sent against him bands of the Chaldees, and bands of the Syrians,**
27 **and bands of the Moabites, and bands of the children of Ammon, and sent them**
28 **against Judah to destroy it, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by his**
29 **servants the prophets. [3] Surely at the commandment of the Lord came this upon**
30 **Judah, to remove them out of his sight, for the sins of Manasseh, according to all**
31 **that he did; [6] And also for the innocent blood that he shed: for he filled**
32 **Jerusalem with innocent blood; which the Lord would not pardon.**

33
34 And another Jewish king "bites the dust:"

35
36 2 Kings 24:5-6

37 **[5] Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim, and all that he did, are they not written**
38 **in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? [6] So Jehoiakim slept with his**
39 **fathers: and Jehoiachin his son reigned in his stead.**

40 Think of it: in just 11 ½ years, Judah had three bad kings! Sinning against God does not

1 bring about stability - and that's a fact!

2
3 Here is the "epitaph" for Judah:

4
5 2 Kings 24:8-9

6 **Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he began to reign, and he reigned in**
7 **Jerusalem three months. And his mother's name was Nehushta, the daughter of**
8 **Elnathan of Jerusalem. [9] And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord,**
9 **according to all that his father had done.**

10
11

Today there are some who claim that the Jews no longer have a right to the land because of their disobedience (which we are seeing in these chapters). But at no time does God ever tell them their loss is permanent. It was disobedience and idolatry that cost them their heritage, but it was not irreparable. This teaching that the Jews have lost out is called "supercessionism" or "replacement theology." It is a heresy!

12
13 **605 B.C.**

14
15 2 Kings 24:10-15

16 **At that time the servants of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up against**
17 **Jerusalem, and the city was besieged. [11] And Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon**
18 **came against the city, and his servants did besiege it. [12] And Jehoiachin the king of**
19 **Judah went out to the king of Babylon, he, and his mother, and his servants, and his**
20 **princes, and his officers: and the king of Babylon took him in the eighth year of his**
21 **reign. [13] And he carried out thence all the treasures of the house of the Lord, and**
22 **the treasures of the king's house, and cut in pieces all the vessels of gold which**
23 **Solomon king of Israel had made in the temple of the Lord, as the Lord had said.**
24 **[14] And he carried away all Jerusalem, and all the princes, and all the mighty men**
25 **of valour, even ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and smiths: none**
26 **remained, save the poorest sort of the people of the land. [15] And he carried away**
27 **Jehoiachin to Babylon, and the king's mother, and the king's wives, and his officers,**
28 **and the mighty of the land, those carried he into captivity from Jerusalem to**
29 **Babylon.**

30
31 This is the event in which Daniel and his friends were captured and exiled to Babylon.
32 Daniel would spend the rest of his life - way up in his 90's - as a wise counselor to the
33 kings of Babylon and later the Medo-Persians.

34
35 Now will come one last king of Judah - Zedekiah!

1 In his initial attack of Jerusalem, King Nebuchadnezzar revealed only a partial aspect of
2 his anger – the worst was yet to come. Jehoiachin was still the Jewish king:

3
4 2 Kings 24:10-15

5 **At that time the servants of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up against**
6 **Jerusalem, and the city was besieged. [11] And Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon**
7 **came against the city, and his servants did besiege it. [12] And Jehoiachin the king of**
8 **Judah went out to the king of Babylon, he, and his mother, and his servants, and his**
9 **princes, and his officers: and the king of Babylon took him in the eighth year of his**
10 **reign. [13] And he carried out thence all the treasures of the house of the Lord, and**
11 **the treasures of the king's house, and cut in pieces all the vessels of gold which**
12 **Solomon king of Israel had made in the temple of the Lord, as the Lord had said.**
13 **[14] And he carried away all Jerusalem, and all the princes, and all the mighty men**
14 **of valour, even ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and smiths: none**
15 **remained, save the poorest sort of the people of the land. [15] And he carried away**
16 **Jehoiachin to Babylon, and the king's mother, and the king's wives, and his officers,**
17 **and the mighty of the land, those carried he into captivity from Jerusalem to**
18 **Babylon.**

19
20 Bear in mind that there will be a total of THREE attacks on the Holy City by the
21 Babylonians. Each one will be more deadly. Despite his personal and pathetic pleas
22 to the Babylonians, Jehoiachin was carried to Babylon to await his fate. And now
23 Nebuchadnezzar would decide who would rule in Jerusalem:

24
25 2 Kings 24:17-20

26 **And the king of Babylon made Mattaniah his father's brother king in his stead,**
27 **and changed his name to Zedekiah. [18] Zedekiah was twenty and one years old**
28 **when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And his mother's**
29 **name was Hamutal, the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah. [19] And he did that which**
30 **was evil in the sight of the Lord, according to all that Jehoiakim had done. [20] For**
31 **through the anger of the Lord it came to pass in Jerusalem and Judah, until he had**
32 **cast them out from his presence, that Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.**

33
34 Power, it is said, corrupts! And absolute power corrupts absolutely! Case in point, the
35 final four kings of Judah - whose total years of reign totaled a little over 22 years.
36 Would you not think that these “rulers” would learn something?

37
38 The last one is Zedekiah, Jehoiachin’s uncle. Some has written that *trouble will do one*
39 *of two things to an individual: it will either soften or harden you.* Zedekiah didn’t
40 seem to comprehend that he only ruled and lived according to the whims of the

1 Babylonian emperor Nebuchadnezzar. He surrounded himself with young advisors who
2 did not know God or Scriptures. They assured him that his tiny and untrained militia
3 could defeat the Babylonians. They were far from God, yet they believed that God was
4 on their side and would protect them.

5
6 We will see now that the Babylonians would come against Jerusalem three times.
7 Nebuchadnezzar deported the royalty, the intelligentsia (Daniel, his friends, Ezekiel and
8 others), the military, the skilled workmen and others. It reminds me of Ayn Rand's
9 classic novel, *Atlas Shrugged*, in which all the movers and shakers leave America, leaving
10 it in the hands of people who are unskilled, untrained and uncaring. It is a nightmare
11 scenario. It will take Judah a couple decades to die, but it will be a ghastly and painful
12 demise!

13 14 CHAPTER 25 - THE SEIGE AND DEATH OF JUDAH

15
16 2 Kings 25:1-6

17 **And it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, in the tenth**
18 **day of the month, that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came, he, and all his host,**
19 **against Jerusalem, and pitched against it; and they built forts against it round**
20 **about. [2] And the city was besieged unto the eleventh year of king Zedekiah. [3]**
21 **And on the ninth day of the fourth month the famine prevailed in the city, and there**
22 **was no bread for the people of the land.**

23 **[4] And the city was broken up, and all the men of war fled by night by the way of**
24 **the gate between two walls, which is by the king's garden: (now the Chaldees were**
25 **against the city round about:) and the king went the way toward the plain. [5] And**
26 **the army of the Chaldees pursued after the king, and overtook him in the plains of**
27 **Jericho: and all his army were scattered from him. [6] So they took the king, and**
28 **brought him up to the king of Babylon to Riblah; and they gave judgment upon him.**

29
30 I have journeyed from Jerusalem to Jericho literally dozens of time, and each time I think
31 of King Zedekiah running for his life. Behind him, the Holy City of Jerusalem is
32 nothing more than a massive bonfire, burning both people and property. He was caught
33 and the next scene is gruesome.

34
35 *Nebuchadnezzar gave sentence and the executioner began his work. The sons of*
36 *Zedekiah, and certain of the Judean noblemen, were put to death before the eyes of the*
37 *captured kin. Then with such gruesome scenes the last he would see, the eyes of the*
38 *once proud king of Judah were put out, and, in chains, he was taken to Babylon.*
39 *Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard, took possession of the gold, silver and brass*
40 *vessels of the Temple and all the principle buildings in Jerusalem and sent many of the*

1 *massive stones rolling to the bottom of the Kidron Valley. With his thousands of*
2 *captives he started marching them northward to present the captives to*
3 *Nebuchadnezzar, already waiting in Riblah.*
4

5 2 Kings 25:7-14

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

8 **[8] And in the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month, which is the**
9 **nineteenth year of king Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, came Nebuzar-adan,**
10 **captain of the guard, a servant of the king of Babylon, unto Jerusalem: [9] And he**
11 **burnt the house of the Lord, and the king's house, and all the houses of Jerusalem,**
12 **and every great man's house burnt he with fire. [10] And all the army of the**
13 **Chaldees, that were with the captain of the guard, brake down the walls of**
14 **Jerusalem round about. [11] Now the rest of the people that were left in the city, and**
15 **the fugitives that fell away to the king of Babylon, with the remnant of the**
16 **multitude, did Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard carry away. [12] But the**
17 **captain of the guard left of the poor of the land to be vinedressers and husbandmen.**
18 **[13] And the pillars of brass that were in the house of the Lord, and the bases, and**
19 **the brasen sea that was in the house of the Lord, did the Chaldees break in pieces,**
20 **and carried the brass of them to Babylon. [14] And the pots, and the shovels, and the**
21 **snuffers, and the spoons, and all the vessels of brass wherewith they ministered, took**
22 **they away.**

23
24 Jerusalem, the beloved city, has been destroyed 27 times. Each time the city has been
25 rebuilt upon the rubble.

26
27 Now note this:

28
29 Nebuchadnezzar appointed a man named Gedaliah to be the ruling governor over the
30 remnant in Jerusalem, living among charred structures, wading through tons of blackened
31 ash. Gedaliah was a wise man who tried to help the remnant in the holy city.

32
33 2 Kings 25:24

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

37
38 So what did these unrepentant people do?

39
40 2 Kings 25:25-26

1 **But it came to pass in the seventh month, that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, the**
2 **son of Elishama, of the seed royal, came, and ten men with him, and smote Gedaliah,**
3 **that he died, and the Jews and the Chaldees that were with him at Mizpah. [26] And**
4 **all the people, both small and great, and the captains of the armies, arose, and came**
5 **to Egypt: for they were afraid of the Chaldees.**

6
7 They assassinated the very man who trying to help them. Many of the remnant fled to
8 Egypt where they became colonists - including Jeremiah the prophet.

9
10 With his last look at the city of Jerusalem that he loved so, now destroyed, Jeremiah
11 wrote:

12
13 Lament. 1:1-9

14 **How doth the city sit solitary, that was full of people how is she become as a**
15 **widow she that was great among the nations, and princess among the provinces, how**
16 **is she become tributary [2] She weepeth sore in the night, and her tears are on her**
17 **cheeks: among all her lovers she hath none to comfort her: all her friends have dealt**
18 **treacherously with her, they are become her enemies. [3] Judah is gone into captivity**
19 **because of affliction, and because of great servitude: she dwelleth among the**
20 **heathen, she findeth no rest: all her persecutors overtook her between the straits. [4]**
21 **The ways of Zion do mourn, because none come to the solemn feasts: all her gates**
22 **are desolate: her priests sigh, her virgins are afflicted, and she is in bitterness. [5]**
23 **Her adversaries are the chief, her enemies prosper; for the Lord hath afflicted her**
24 **for the multitude of her transgressions: her children are gone into captivity before**
25 **the enemy. [6] And from the daughter of Zion all her beauty is departed: her princes**
26 **are become like harts that find no pasture, and they are gone without strength**
27 **before the pursuer. [7] Jerusalem remembered in the days of her affliction and of**
28 **her miseries all her pleasant things that she had in the days of old, when her people**
29 **fell into the hand of the enemy, and none did help her: the adversaries saw her, and**
30 **did mock at her sabbaths. [8] Jerusalem hath grievously sinned; therefore she is**
31 **removed: all that honoured her despise her, because they have seen her nakedness:**
32 **yea, she sigheth, and turneth backward. [9] Her filthiness is in her skirts; she**
33 **remembereth not her last end; therefore she came down wonderfully: she had no**
34 **comforter. O Lord, behold my affliction: for the enemy hath magnified himself.**

35
36 **This is the last study in this series. For the next few Wednesday nights I will**
37 **address subjects of current interest. The first Wednesday night in December, I will**
38 **begin a lengthy series and perhaps the most important one I have ever done:**

WHO IS JESUS?