

**2 Kings 23:31 – 25; 2 Chronicles 36:  
Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah**

**Lesson 9**

**Key Verse**

For mine eyes *are* upon all their ways: they are not hid from my face, neither is  
their iniquity hid from mine eyes.

—Jeremiah 16:7

**Key Verse Thought:** Read the Key Verse and understand that God sees and knows all. God knows when His people do wrong. Nothing can be hidden from God. Keep that thought in mind as we remember the final kings of Judah today. God saw and knew of their wickedness, and He did not let it go unpunished.

**Emphasis:** We are to understand that God sees and knows all – there is nothing hidden from God. He sees mankind’s sin. We will remember again in this lesson, that there is a penalty for sin. Nevertheless, God left them with hope.

**Lesson Summary:** In our last lesson, we read of the last good king of Judah, King Josiah. He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord. King Josiah made many great reforms, including repairing the house of the Lord. While repairs were being made, a book of the Law was found. When the king heard the Words read, he rent his clothes in repentance. He led all of Judah to make a covenant with the Lord to obey His commands. King Josiah died, and we then come to the final four kings of Judah: Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah. Jehoahaz did evil and only reigned for three months because the king of Egypt took him. Jehoahaz died in Egypt. The king of Egypt made his brother, Eliakim (changing his name to Jehoiakim) king instead. He too, was an evil king, and King Jehoiakim reigned for eleven years. During his reign, Babylon became known as their enemy, and King Jehoiakim served them for three years. “**So Jehoiakim slept with his fathers: and Jehoiachin his son reigned in his stead**” (2 Kings 24:6). Babylon began to besiege Jerusalem during his reign, “**and the king of Babylon took him in the eighth year of his reign**” (2 Kings 24:12). After carrying away everything of value (including the

king, his family, princes, and servants), the king of Babylon made Jehoiakim's brother, Mattaniah, the king – changing his name to Zedekiah. Zedekiah was a bad king and he reigned for eleven years. None of these men were good kings, and all of them led Judah further from God's commands – until God allowed Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, to invade the land. He destroyed the house of the Lord, broke down the walls of Jerusalem and burned the city gates. He killed many and took more hostages to his land, making them his servants. Babylon besieged Judah in the 9<sup>th</sup> year of King Zedekiah, and then they took Judah captive. Nevertheless, we find a word of promise – God touched the heart of a king seventy years later, sending God's people home to rebuild the house of the Lord.

### **Suggested Bible Reading to Prepare for This Lesson**

- Monday: 2 Kings 23
- Tuesday: 2 Kings 24
- Wednesday: 2 Kings 25
- Thursday: 2 Chronicles 36
- Friday: Proverbs 28
- Saturday: Proverbs 29
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### **2 Kings 23:31 – 25; 2 Chronicles 36**

#### **Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah**

1. King Jehoahaz (2 Kings 23:31-34; 2 Chronicles 36:1-4)
  - King Jehoahaz did evil and reigned for three months
2. King Jehoiakim (2 Kings 23:34 – 24:7; 2 Chronicles 36:5-8)
  - King Jehoiakim did that which was evil in the eyes of the Lord
  - King Jehoiakim reigned for eleven years
3. King Jehoiachin (2 Kings 24:8-17, 25:27-30; 2 Chronicles 36:9-10)
  - King Jehoiachin did evil and reigned for three months
4. King Zedekiah (2 Kings 24:17 – 25:11; 2 Chronicles 36:11-23)
  - King Zedekiah did that which was evil in the eyes of the Lord
  - King Zedekiah reigned for eleven years
  - After mocking God's messengers, God allowed them to be taken captive by Babylon

**Note:** In our last lesson, we remembered a very good king, Josiah. He led the many great reformations in Judah and even in the land of Israel. While repairing the Temple, they found a copy of the Law. When King Josiah heard it read, he humbled himself before God. He recognized their great failings, understanding the wrath of God would fall upon them for their sin. Because he humbled himself before God, God promised these things would not happen during his kingdom – for he would have a kingdom of peace. He led the people to make a covenant with God. They eliminated the idols and groves out of the land. King Josiah led in the keeping of the Passover. Today we find out about the final four kings of Judah, who were all bad, leading the people further away from God and His commandments.

### **1. King Jehoahaz (2 Kings 23:31-34; 2 Chronicles 36:1-4)**

Josiah was the last good king of Judah. After good King Josiah died, “Then the people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah, and made him king in his father's stead in Jerusalem” (2 Chronicles 36:1). After reading what a great king that Josiah had been, read what a disappointment his son is. “31. Jehoahaz *was* twenty and three years old when he began to reign; and he reigned three months in Jerusalem ... 32. And he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his fathers had done” (2 Kings 23:31-32). He was twenty-three years old when he became king and reigned for three months. Moreover, he did evil in the sight of the Lord.

The king of Egypt took Jehoahaz from Jerusalem and placed him in the land of Hamath (in Syria) and he then taxed the people of Judah. The king of Egypt made Eliakim, the son of Josiah, king – changing his name to Jehoiakim. “And the king of Egypt made Eliakim his brother king over Judah and Jerusalem, and turned his name to Jehoiakim. And Necho took Jehoahaz his brother, and carried him to Egypt” (2 Chronicles 36:4).

“... and took Jehoahaz away: and he came to Egypt, and died there” (2 Kings 23:34b).

### **2. King Jehoiakim (2 Kings 23:34 – 24:7; 2 Chronicles 36:5-8)**

When the king of Egypt made Jehoiakim king of Judah, Jehoiakim gave the king of Egypt silver and gold – taxing Judah according to what the king of Egypt commanded him to do. “36. Jehoiakim *was* twenty and five years old when he began to reign; and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. ... 37. And he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that

his fathers had done” (2 Kings 23:36-37). Jehoiakim was twenty-five years old when he became king and reigned for eleven years in Jerusalem.

As we begin Second Kings chapter twenty-four, we find Babylon come into the picture as an enemy nation. We read that Jehoiakim became Babylon’s servant for three years. Then God sent the Chaldees, the Syrians, Moabites, and the Ammonites against Judah to destroy it according to the word of the Lord that He sent by His prophets.

3. Surely at the commandment of the LORD came *this* upon Judah, to remove *them* out of his sight, for the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he did; 4. And also for the innocent blood that he shed: for he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood; which the LORD would not pardon. (2 Kings 24:3-4)

Do you remember the warnings God had sent? Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, carried King Jehoiakim captive into Babylon – along with the vessels of the house of the Lord, putting them in his own temple. “Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim, and his abominations which he did, and that which was found in him, behold, they *are* written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah: and Jehoiachin his son reigned in his stead” (2 Chronicles 36:8).

“So Jehoiakim slept with his fathers: and Jehoiachin his son reigned in his stead” (2 Kings 24:6).

**A Deeper Path:** It would help to remember the warning that God gave Moses to give to the people. They were to obey God’s commands, and keep their promises, as they entered to take the Promised Land. “But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out” (Numbers 32:23). When God’s people make a promise to obey His commands, God expects His people to keep that promise. The same should be true for Christians, today. Remember Ecclesiastes 5:4-5: “4. When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for *he hath* no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed. 5. Better *is it* that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay.” Over the last few weeks in our lessons with the kings, the people had made covenants (promises) with God to obey His Words. They had failed to keep their word. God was allowing the enemies to move in.

### 3. King Jehoiachin (2 Kings 24:8-17, 25:27-30; 2 Chronicles 36:9-10)

Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he began to reign and reigned only three months and 10 days (see 2 Chronicles 36:9). “8. Jehoiachin *was* eighteen years old when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem three months ... 9. And he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father had done” (2 Kings 24:8-9). Babylon sent servants with King Nebuchadnezzar to besiege Jerusalem. Then Jehoiachin, along with his mother, servants, princes and officers, went out against Nebuchadnezzar, “... and the king of Babylon took him in the eighth year of his reign” (2 Kings 24:12b). Remember what Isaiah told King Hezekiah? (That all of the treasures that he had shown to Babylon would be stolen from him.) Read what happened in Second Kings.

13. And he carried out thence all the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king's house, and cut in pieces all the vessels of gold which Solomon king of Israel had made in the temple of the LORD, as the LORD had said. 14. And he carried away all Jerusalem, and all the princes, and all the mighty men of valour, *even* ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and smiths: none remained, save the poorest sort of the people of the land. (2 Kings 24:13-14)

After carrying away everything of value (including the king, his family, princes, and servants, and the goodly vessels of the house of the Lord), the king of Babylon made his father's brother, Mattaniah, king – changing his name to Zedekiah, and “... made Zedekiah his brother king over Judah and Jerusalem” (2 Chronicles 36:10). Do you want to know how Jehoiachin spent the rest of his life?

31. And it came to pass in the seven and thirtieth year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah ... *that* Evilmerodach king of Babylon in the *first* year of his reign lifted up the head of Jehoiachin king of Judah, and brought him forth out of prison, 32. And spake kindly unto him, and set his throne above the throne of the kings that *were* with him in Babylon,

33. And changed his prison garments: and he did continually eat bread before him all the days of his life. 34. And *for* his diet, there was a continual diet given him of the king of Babylon, every day a portion until the day of his death, all the days of his life. (Jeremiah 52:31-34)

After having been held captive, in prison for thirty-seven years, the new king of Babylon brought him out of prison.

#### **4. King Zedekiah (2 Kings 24:17 – 25:11; 2 Chronicles 36:11-23)**

Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he began to reign, and he reigned for eleven years in Jerusalem. “18. Zedekiah *was* twenty and one years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem ... 19. And he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that Jehoiakim had done” (2 Kings 24:18-19).

Jeremiah had much to say to King Zedekiah. We will look at some of those words when we study the book of Jeremiah. Read a few things of importance:

**Jeremiah 21:3-7:** “3. Then said Jeremiah unto them, Thus shall ye say to Zedekiah:

- 4. Thus saith the LORD God of Israel; Behold, I will turn back the weapons of war that *are* in your hands, wherewith ye fight against the king of Babylon, and *against* the Chaldeans, which besiege you without the walls, and I will assemble them into the midst of this city.
- 5. And I myself will fight against you with an outstretched hand and with a strong arm, even in anger, and in fury, and in great wrath.
- 6. And I will smite the inhabitants of this city, both man and beast: they shall die of a great pestilence.
- 7. And afterward, saith the LORD, I will deliver Zedekiah king of Judah, and his servants, and the people, and such as are left in this city from the pestilence, from the sword, and from the famine, into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and into the hand of their enemies, and into the hand of those that seek their life:
  - and he shall smite them with the edge of the sword; he shall not spare them, neither have pity, nor have mercy.”

Notice that not only would God take away their weapons, but also he would allow the Babylonians to come into the city. Worse than that, God would fight against Judah as well – in

anger, fury and wrath. God would send a pestilence, killing man and beast. Then God would deliver King Zedekiah, his servants, and the people that lived, into Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon's, hands. Moreover, he would have no mercy.

Nevertheless, Jeremiah had warned them why. "8. And unto this people thou shalt say, Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I set before you the way of life, and the way of death ... 10. For I have set my face against this city for evil, and not for good, saith the LORD: it shall be given into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall burn it with fire" (Jeremiah 21:8, 10). God had told them what He expected of them, but they had not done what He said. Now there would be no escaping the wrath that would fall. God was going to allow the king of Babylon to destroy the city of Jerusalem. Not only was Zedekiah a bad king, but he did not humble himself when he heard the Word of the Lord. "And he did *that which was evil* in the sight of the LORD his God, and humbled not himself before Jeremiah the prophet *speaking from the mouth of the LORD*" (2 Chronicles 36:12).

God sent Nebuchadnezzar – just as He had said. "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" (2 Kings 25:1). King Zedekiah rebelled against him. "And he also rebelled against king Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him swear by God: but he stiffened his neck, and hardened his heart from turning unto the LORD God of Israel" (2 Chronicles 36:13).

Nevertheless, it wasn't just the king that rejected God and His Word. "Moreover all the chief of the priests, and the people, transgressed very much after all the abominations of the heathen; and polluted the house of the LORD which he had hallowed in Jerusalem" (2 Chronicles 36:14). We read that the chief of the priests and the people transgressed very much. God sent messengers to warn them, because God had compassion on His people. "But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against his people, till *there was no remedy*" (2 Chronicles 36:16).

In addition, Nebuchadnezzar came up to Jerusalem in the ninth year of King Zedekiah, "And the city was besieged unto the eleventh year of king Zedekiah" (2 Kings 25:2). God brought upon His people the king of the Chaldees (the Babylonians). "Therefore he brought upon them the king of the Chaldees, who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their

sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man, or him that stooped for age: he gave *them* all into his hand” (2 Chronicles 36:17).

There was a famine in the city (no food), houses were burnt, the temple was burnt, the wall of the city was broken down, everything (the implements of worship) from the temple were carried away, and the people taken captive – where they became servants. “To fulfil the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths: *for* as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years” (2 Chronicles 36:21). For another record of these events, see also Jeremiah 25:1-11. As for the king: “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” (2 Kings 25:7). King Zedekiah’s sons were killed, his eyes were put out, and he was carried captive to Babylon.

But the final words we read in Second Chronicles are words that will lead us into our study next quarter as we see the people of the Lord slowly restored to their homeland (after the seventy years of captivity were fulfilled).

22. Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD *spoken* by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and *put it* also in writing, saying, 23. Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath the LORD God of heaven given me; and he hath charged me to build him an house in Jerusalem, which *is* in Judah. Who *is there* among you of all his people? The LORD his God *be* with him, and let him go up. (2 Chronicles 36:22-23)

God touched the heart of King Cyrus to send His people home to rebuild Him a house.

**A Deeper Path:** God used the enemy kings to discipline His people when they forsook God and His Commands. “The king's heart *is* in the hand of the LORD, *as* the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will” (Proverbs 21:1). In future lessons, we will see God use the enemy kings to help His people return home.

## **2 Kings 23-25 at a Glance:**

Chapter 23: King Josiah's covenant with God; reformations (destruction of idols and groves) and reinstatement of God's Law; King Josiah died in battle and Jehoahaz reigned, then Eliakim (Jehoiakim)

Chapter 24: Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, came up against Jehoiakim; Jehoiakim died and Jehoiachin reigned; Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem and carried Jehoiachin and Jerusalem captive (along with all of the treasures) and made Mattaniah king, changing his name to Zedekiah; Zedekiah rebelled against Babylon

Chapter 25: Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem; the fall of Jerusalem; King Zedekiah and Judah taken captive

## **2 Chronicles 36 at a Glance:**

Chapter 36: King Jehoahaz taken by king of Egypt and his brother Jehoiakim made king; Jehoiakim taken by Nebuchadnezzar into Babylon; Jehoiachin (his son) made king; Nebuchadnezzar took Jehoiachin into Babylon and left Zedekiah (Jehoiachin's brother) as king in Judah and he did not humble before God's prophet, Jeremiah; after Judah mocked God's messengers, God allowed them to be taken captive by Babylon

**Reinforcement:** In this lesson, we completed the history of Judah, as they were carried captive because they refused to hear God's prophets and repent. Even though there were a few times of good, God saw the people living in a continual state of wickedness. Although Josiah led one final revival in Judah, where the people sought God, they had forsaken God long enough that there was only room for discipline. We can understand that time of renewal was not enough – for as soon as King Josiah died, the people reverted back to their idolatrous practices. None of the last four kings even hinted toward any kind of reform. See one important thing that they had forgotten: “**There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death**” (Proverbs 14:12). When they chose to do what they wanted over faithfully obeying God's commands, they lost their kingdom, riches, land, and many people died. From this point on, God's people never had a reigning king. If we remember nothing else, we should recognize that God's people had a really hard time remembering to obey God's Words. We saw the fulfillment of the promise of God when He warned that there would be a curse for disobedience to God's

commands. But, as always, we read of a hope that God had not forsaken His people. We saw that after seventy years, God would touch the heart of another king – allowing God’s people to return to their land and rebuild a house for the Lord (see 2 Chronicles 36:22-23).

**Closing:** It would be good to close with a short prayer reinforcing today’s lesson. Always include any prayer requests you may have. *Today, pray that we will remember that God sees and knows when we sin against Him. Pray that we will humble ourselves in repentance, and pray, knowing that He will forgive.*