

Norwood's Notes: Brief Summaries of Bible Stories

These "notes" are intended to provide a general overview of the basic stories of the Bible in the hope of building greater biblical knowledge and encouraging Bible reading and study. For more information, visit www.UjimaChurch.org

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30 - Highlights from 2Kgs 24-25; 2Chr 36; Jer; Ezek; Dan 1, "The Babylonian Exile"

The prophet Jeremiah sent words of warning to the evil King Jehoiakim of Judah that punishment was coming from the Lord. But, the king was only angered by the Word of the Lord and burned the scroll containing the prophesy (Jer 36) and even ignored the second copy of the prophesy Jeremiah had dictated.

King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon subdued King Jehoiakim of Judah, making Judah serve the Babylonian Empire. After three years, King Jehoiakim rebelled and Nebuchadnezzar bound him in chains and took him off to Babylon, along with many of the vessels of the House of the Lord (2Kgs 24 & 2Chr 36). Certain nobles and members of the royal family were also taken away to Babylon, including the Prophet Daniel (Dan 1).

Jehoiachin, son of Jehoiakim, began to reign in his father's place when he was only eighteen years old and continued in the evil ways of his father. He only reigned three months before Nebuchadnezzar had him brought to Babylon and replaced him with his uncle, Zedekiah, as king over Judah in Jerusalem.

King Zedekiah also did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, ignoring the warnings of Lord given through Jeremiah the Prophet, just as his brother had done before him. Under Zedekiah's rule, even the priest, Pashhur, had Jeremiah arrested, whipped, and put in stocks (Jer 20).

Against the Prophet Jeremiah's warnings, King Zedekiah rebelled against King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. Then Nebuchadnezzar sent his army against Jerusalem and surrounded it. The siege lasted so long that there was a severe famine in the city (2Kgs 25). Zedekiah attempted to escape the besieged Jerusalem by night, but Nebuchadnezzar's forces captured him and brought him before their king who ordered that Zedekiah's sons be slaughtered in front of him and then had Zedekiah's eyes put out and took him in chains to Babylon, along with the treasures of the House of the Lord. The Babylonians burned the House of the Lord, destroyed the royal houses, tore down the walls of Jerusalem, and took many of the people into exile, while leaving the poor to tend to the land. This all happened just as Jeremiah had prophesied, saying "[The Lord has] given all these lands into the hand of

Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, my servant, and I have given him also the beasts of the field to serve him. 7 All the nations shall serve him and his son and his grandson, until the time of his own land comes. Then many nations and great kings shall make him their slave" (Jer 27:6-7 (ESV).

Just as the Prophet Jeremiah prophesied (Jer 25:12), for seventy years the people of Judah remained in exile until the Babylonians were overthrown by the Persians. Then, just as the Prophet Isaiah had prophesied (Isa 44:28), Cyrus, king of Persia, gave an order to have the House of the Lord restored in Jerusalem.

During the conquest of Judah by Nebuchadnezzar, the fall of Jerusalem, and the seventy years of the people of Judah (now called "Jews") were in Babylonian exile, there were prophets who spoke the word of the Lord while in exile. Ezekiel prophesied about the fall of Jerusalem (Ezek 5) and spoke of the judgement of God against idolatry (Ezek 6). The Prophet Ezekiel also prophesied of the eventual restoration of the people back to the land of promise by the mercy of God (Ezek 37) and of the Glory of God filling a restored Temple (Ezek 43).

Another prophet in exile was Daniel, whom King Nebuchadnezzar had given the name, "Belteshazzar." Daniel and his three friends, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were determined to stay faithful to the Lord and declined to eat the meat that was not prepared in accordance with the dietary laws given through Moses. Yet, while the Babylonian official in charge of their care assumed they would waste away only eating vegetables and water, they thrived and remained healthy because the Lord blessed their obedience. The Lord also gave them great wisdom and knowledge, so much so that King Nebuchadnezzar would regularly consult with them (Dan 1).