

II KINGS

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to II Kings chapter 24 as we continue our study through the Word of God and we will finish up this book tonight. We have seen in our studies so far that the Northern Kingdom of Israel was taken into captivity by the Assyrians in 721 B.C. and now, the Southern Kingdom of Judah did not learn the lesson from her sister and she too will be taken away into captivity. Now keep in mind that the Assyrian power is on the decline and the Babylonians are now the dominating nation and they will be the ones that God will use to bring judgment on the Southern Kingdom of Judah. Also, keep in mind that with the death of Josiah, Pharaoh Necho was exerting his power over the Southern Kingdom of Judah for a time and he placed Eliakim, the son of Josiah on the throne in Judah and changed his name to Jehoiakim and he did evil in the sight of the Lord. He did not have a heart for the Lord like his father Josiah did. And thus, as we pick up our study this evening, Jehoiakim remains on the throne in Judah. With that said, let's begin reading in II Kings chapter 24, starting in verse 1 and see what the Lord has for us as we study His Word.

II KINGS 24**VERSE 1**

1. During the days when Jehoiakim was on the throne in Judah, the Babylonians are exerting their power. Keep in mind that both the Assyrians and the Egyptians are on the decline, they are not as strong as they once were. On the throne in Babylon was Nabopolassar and his son, Nebuchadnezzar was leading the army of Babylon in these battles.

Keep in mind that the Babylonians, under their general at this time, Nebuchadnezzar, defeated Pharaoh Necho II and the Egyptians at the battle of Carchemish on the Euphrates River. This took place in 606 B.C. and on the way back Nebuchadnezzar gets word that his father, Nabopolassar has died and now he is the king of Babylon. As he heads back home he stops in Jerusalem, leaves Jehoiakim on the throne and takes the cream of the crop from Jerusalem. In that group of people were Daniel and his three friends, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. We tend to know these guys by their Babylonian names that they were given in captivity, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego. It is after the king leaves to go back to Babylon to assume the throne that I believe Jehoiakim rebels, and when we get to verse 7 we see that Egypt played a role in this rebellion and Jehoiakim will rebel against Babylon for three years.

VERSES 2-4

1. Why was the judgment of God coming upon the Southern Kingdom of Judah? One of the reasons was the sins of Manasseh. One person had made such a difference; he perpetrated so much evil that it affected an entire nation. Yes, one person can make a difference, for good or evil but here we see the evil that he brought to the land and even though he repented of his sins, the nation never did!

Not only was this judgment coming upon the nation because of what Manasseh had done, but also because of the innocent blood that was shed. What was this about? I believe it was the blood of the faithful that was shed by the wicked in Judah. You see, they tried to silence the godly men and women, the prophets of God and God is holding them accountable for their actions!

2. Now in verse 2 it speaks of these raiding bands of Chaldeans, Syrians, Moabites and Ammonites that came against Judah, I thought the Babylonians were the power, what is this about? Please understand that the Babylonians sent in these armies as the Babylonian army was made up of several nations who were willing to fight under the leadership of Babylon!

VERSES 5-7

1. For eleven years Jehoiakim reigned in Judah and then it seems like Nebuchadnezzar took him away to Babylon. There is some argument, according to Jeremiah 22:19 that he was buried outside Jerusalem but it would seem that Babylon was outside Jerusalem and he died in captivity in Babylon. Now his son, Jehoiachin is on the throne in Judah, probably placed there by Nebuchadnezzar, and as we will see, he was also an evil king in Judah!

2. Egypt did try one more rebellion against Babylon, around 601 B.C. and many feel, as I do, that it is during this time that Jehoiakim rebelled against Babylon, thinking the Egyptians would be able to help them out, but Egypt fell and so did this rebellion of Jehoiakim, probably leading to him being taken into captivity by the Babylonians.

VERSES 8-9

1. Jehoiachin, also known as Jeconiah and Coniah, is now king in Jerusalem. And Jehoiachin was also a wicked king. And because of that God places a blood curse on Jehoiachin and his descendants. Listen to what we are told in Jeremiah 22:24-30, **“As I live,’ says the Lord, ‘though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, were the signet on My right hand, yet I would pluck you off; and I will give you into the hand of those who seek your life, and into the hand of those whose face you fear — the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and the hand of the Chaldeans. So I will cast you out, and your mother who bore you, into another country where you were not born; and there you shall die. But to the land to which they desire to return, there they shall not return. Is this man Coniah a despised, broken idol — A vessel in which is no pleasure? Why are they cast out, he and his descendants, And cast into a land which they do not know? O earth, earth, earth, Hear the word of the Lord! Thus says the Lord: “Write this man down as childless, A man who shall not prosper in his days; For none of his descendants shall prosper, Sitting on the throne of David, And ruling anymore in Judah.””**

Now this is a big problem. How in the world could the Messiah be born of the royal lineage of David if there is a blood curse upon it? If the descendants of Jehoiachin will never sit upon the throne, how could the Messiah sit on the throne of David? And think about this. With all the attempts by Satan to not allow the seed of the woman to be born, the Messiah, this one must have made him feel very good! He tried destroying the descendants of David by having Athaliah kill all the heirs to the throne, but she missed one, and he was raised by the High Priest and ascended to the throne at the age of 7. His name was Joash.

But how could God bring forth the Messiah from lineage that has been cursed? All things are possible with God and don't ever forget that. Don't ever think that Satan has outsmarted God! Let me show you what God has done. In Matthew chapter 1, we are given the royal line through Solomon to Joseph. Then in Luke chapter 3, we are given another line, through Nathan, David's other son, to Mary. Some of you may be saying, "Big deal!" Well, it really is a big deal!

You see, being born of Mary made Jesus a blood descendant of David, just as God said. But there is no royal line through Mary, that has to come through Joseph. Jesus was the adopted son of Joseph and thus it gave him all the rights of his father Joseph, who adopted him. Thus, he had royal blood through Joseph, and yet without the blood curse. As I said, with God, all things are possible!

VERSES 10-16

1. Here we see the second attack against Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians. And now they are talking whatever valuables are left in the temple and the royal palaces in Jerusalem. And keep in mind that Jerusalem did not fall all at once, it fell in stages. Let me put it in order for you so you can get a picture in your mind of what was taking place during this time.

- In 606 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar made his first invasion into Jerusalem, taking with him Daniel and his three friends, besides others.
- Then, from around 601 to 598 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar sent in raiding bands of Chaldeans, Syrians, Moabites and Ammonites to besiege Jerusalem. And again, keep in mind that they were all under the control of Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians; they were fighting under the Babylonian banner.
- Then, in 597 B.C., what we are reading about here is the second invasion by Nebuchadnezzar.
- And the last invasion, the fall of Jerusalem occurred in 586 B.C. as the Babylonians, under the leadership of Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem and burned the temple to the ground.

2. The Babylonians left the poor in the land and took the wealth of the city with them, including many of the people. One of the captives during this second invasion was the prophet Ezekiel, who wrote his book during his captivity in Babylon. Now why did they leave the poor in the land? First of all they were of no use to the Babylonians and secondly, “With only the poor and unskilled people of the land remaining, it might be assumed that Jerusalem would cause no further trouble.” (Patterson and Austel)

3. One more point here. When you look at what the Babylonians took, what they possessed, it is very similar to what another Babylon will take. You see, here we see them not only take the material treasures of Judah, but also the human treasures. When we go and look in the book of Revelation we see another Babylon and we are told of this Babylon as it will fall, that they, **“The kings of the earth who committed fornication and lived luxuriously with her will weep and lament for her, when they see the smoke of her burning, standing at a distance for fear of her torment, saying, ‘Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! For in one hour your judgment has come.’ And the merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her, for no one buys their merchandise anymore: merchandise of gold and silver, precious stones and pearls, fine linen and purple, silk and scarlet, every kind of citron wood, every kind of object of ivory, every kind of object of most precious wood, bronze, iron, and marble; and cinnamon and incense, fragrant oil and frankincense, wine and oil, fine flour and wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and chariots, and bodies and souls of men. The fruit that your soul longed for has gone from you, and all the things which are rich and splendid have gone from you, and you shall find them no more at all. The merchants of these things, who became rich by her, will stand at a distance for fear of her torment, weeping and wailing.”** Revelation 18:9-15.

Notice the trafficking of material treasures and human treasure as they are selling the bodies and souls of men, taking them captive! But God will bring them down just as He will do with the Babylonians after His judgment is brought upon His people, the Southern Kingdom of Judah!

VERSES 17-20

1. So now with the blood curse on Jehoiachin, none of his descendants will sit on the throne and thus, Mattaniah, his uncle and the third son of Josiah is now on the throne. And they change his name to Zedekiah. Interestingly enough, the name “Zedekiah” means “The Lord is righteous” and that is exactly what the Southern Kingdom of Judah will see, the righteous judgment of God upon them for their idolatry! And Zedekiah was placed in this position by Nebuchadnezzar and the reason was that the king of Babylon thought he would have control over this man and the weakened nation but Zedekiah refused to heed the warnings of God from the prophets and as we are told, he rebelled against Babylon. Not a smart thing to do!

You see, not only did Zedekiah do evil before the Lord, but he was also foolish in his decision to make trouble against Babylon. In fact, one of the prophets that were warning the nation was Jeremiah, and he warned them that they would be taken into captivity, not to fight against Babylon, this was a judgment of God but they refused to heed those warnings. Instead they tried to rebel against Babylon, and as I said, that was a foolish thing to do. We are going to see Babylon make their third and final invasion into Jerusalem, destroying the city and the temple. Instead of listening to the prophets of God, they listened to the false prophets who were telling them to fight against Babylon and like today, that won't work folk's. There are many false prophets out there today speaking forth doctrines of demons and people may listen to them, but it doesn't mean that they will come to pass. What God has said will come to pass, He has not failed to fulfill His promises yet, and He will never fail to fulfill His promises!

II KINGS 25**VERSES 1-3**

1. It seems that Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians had reached the point of frustration with the Southern Kingdom of Judah. They tried to put vassal kings in place, but they kept rebelling and so now we see him invade Jerusalem. The time is 586 B.C. and this is the third and final assault on Jerusalem. And as the Babylonians cut off the city from getting food and supplies, the people of Jerusalem are now finding themselves in a severe famine. And now it was only a matter of time before the Babylonians would break through the wall of the city and take away the people back to Babylon. It did not have to be this way, but because they listened to the false prophets and refused to listen to the prophets of God, this was coming upon them. They could have gone into captivity without all this disaster!

2. Keep in mind that during this time Jeremiah wrote Lamentations as he was watching the city being taken captive by the Babylonians and it broke his heart. The fall of the Southern Kingdom is very close, as Jeremiah laments over this event.

VERSES 4-7

1. The famine is severe, the people are starving to death, and thus, in this weakened condition they were not able to protect the walls and the Babylonians breached the walls of the city of Jerusalem. Once this happened, once the walls were broken through, the king and his army saw they were in trouble and what do they do? They exit stage left you might say, they flee for their lives under the cover of night! They all scattered trying to escape from the Babylonians, including the king!

2. The king and his sons fled to Jericho, which was a considerable distance from Jerusalem and they probably felt that they were safe now. That the words that the prophets spoke were not going to come to pass for them, but God's Word would come to pass and they were captured in the plains of Jericho. Russell Dilday makes these interesting remarks where the last king in Judah was captured. He wrote, "It seems ironic that here, at the very spot where Israel first set foot on the Promised Land, the last of the Davidic kings was captured and his monarchy shattered. Here, where Israel experienced her first victory as the walls of Jericho fell before unarmed men who trusted God, was the scene of her last defeat." A very interesting point indeed!

3. Now before we move on we must deal with a little controversy regarding the events of the capture of Zedekiah. Of this event we are told in Jeremiah 34:3, “**And you shall not escape from his hand, but shall surely be taken and delivered into his hand; your eyes shall see the eyes of the king of Babylon, he shall speak with you face to face, and you shall go to Babylon.**” Pretty straight forward, Zedekiah will be taken to Babylon and his eyes shall see the king of Babylon.

But, Ezekiel, in speaking of this same event, tells us in Ezekiel 12:13, “**I will also spread My net over him, and he shall be caught in My snare. I will bring him to Babylon, to the land of the Chaldeans; yet he shall not see it, though he shall die there.**” How can he go to Babylon and yet not see it?

Well, we are told in II Kings that Zedekiah had his eyes put out; he was blinded just after they killed his sons before him. The last thing he saw was his sons being put to death and then he was blinded, put in bronze fetters and taken away captive to Babylon. He went to Babylon and yet he did not see it just as God’s Word has said!

4. In Jeremiah 34:4-7 we are told, **“Yet hear the word of the Lord, O Zedekiah king of Judah! Thus says the Lord concerning you: ‘You shall not die by the sword. You shall die in peace; as in the ceremonies of your fathers, the former kings who were before you, so they shall burn incense for you and lament for you, saying, “Alas, lord!” For I have pronounced the word, says the Lord.” Then Jeremiah the prophet spoke all these words to Zedekiah king of Judah in Jerusalem, when the king of Babylon's army fought against Jerusalem and all the cities of Judah that were left, against Lachish and Azekah; for only these fortified cities remained of the cities of Judah.”**

So Jeremiah is telling us that Zedekiah will die in captivity, before the city ever fell to the Babylonians and Knapp adds this to this event as he wrote, “Josephus (*Antiquities* x.8.8) says Nebuchadnezzar ‘kept Zedekiah in prison until he died; and then buried him magnificently.’”

VERSES 8-10

1. To me this is a sad day, to see the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple of God. It did not have to be that way but because of their idolatry, judgment came upon them. And the city, the temple were burned, the walls of the city were broken down! It is interesting to note that when archeologists have dug down to this period of time, according to professor Shilo, who headed some of these digs, that the rock layers are charred indicating that the area was burned.

Now some may wonder why God was so harsh with His people. I don't see it that way, I think He was very gracious. How can I say that? Simply, it is what they found when they excavated this area during this period of time, it is hard to believe what they found. Within the walls of some of the homes were jars that had the remains of infants in them. They were placed there for good luck. Can you even imagine, these infants placed in these jars for good luck, I don't think God was unfair in His judgment! Not only that, they found many, many idols within these homes. Idolatry was rampant in Judah and thus, God's judgment was not unfair, they were asking for it, and they deserved it and they got it!

2. Russell Dilday gives us some insight into what transpired during the destruction of Jerusalem. He wrote, "The Talmud declares that when the Babylonians entered the temple, they held a two-day feast there to desecrate it; then, on the third day, they set fire to the building. The Talmud adds that the fire burned throughout that day and the next."
3. Also, in regards to this person, Nebuzaradan, who is the captain of the guard, Russell Dilday once again makes these interesting comments. He wrote, "That title in Hebrew is literally, 'the chief executioner' or 'the slaughterer.' Methodically, he set about to demolish the beautiful city, burning the palace and the chief buildings, breaking down the walls, and wrecking the temple." Not a pretty picture, nor is it intended to be!

VERSES 11-17

1. Now Nebuzaradan begins to take the remaining valuables from Jerusalem. He even takes those two bronze pillars, those huge free standing pillars that were located on each side of the temple entrance. One was called Jachin and the other Boaz. And the Babylonians are plundering the city of Jerusalem!

2. Now there is something that I think is easy to miss here as you read over what was taken in this invasion and that is something that is not mentioned! We are given a list, an inventory of all that was taken from Jerusalem, and it seems very complete, even in Jeremiah 52:17-23 we see this list in detail of what was taken, except for one thing. There is nothing mentioned about the Ark of the Covenant. Why? Well we can only speculate on that, but one thing is for sure, it was not out for the Babylonians to take, for they would have had it listed. Tradition tells us that Jeremiah, knowing that all this was coming down, took the Ark and hid it in one of the underground chambers that ran under the temple. Today, the Temple Institute, who are preparing to rebuild the temple, sending priests to school to learn the sacrificial system, most of the temple implements have been made, and they even have plans drawn up on what the new temple will look like, they say that the Ark is hidden in one of those chambers and some of them have seen it. They are just waiting for the right time to reveal it. I truly believe that the Ark will be found, I don't know if they have found it yet, but it makes for a very interesting debate. Does it have to be found? No, it was not in the Temple in Jerusalem during Jesus day, it was missing since the Babylonian captivity.

Let me just share this with you because I do believe that Jeremiah hid the Ark of the Covenant under the Temple. In this article called, “The Temple and The Ark of the Covenant”, we are told,

On May 15, 1992, CBS broadcast a unique two-hour television special called *Ancient Secrets of the Bible*. It was the first positive examination of biblical history by a secular television network and won the highest ratings with forty million viewers. The location of the lost Ark of the Covenant was one of the topics. The narrator reported that Rabbi Getz claimed that they have discovered the Ark of the Covenant in the tunnels. However, my Israeli sources report that they were unable to examine the object. Although they could only see it with flashlights for a few minutes in a darkened tunnel from fifty feet away, Rabbi Getz and Rabbi Goren concluded they had found the Ark. Unfortunately the Arabs heard them and broke into the tunnel from the sub-structures beneath the Dome of the Rock. A terrible fight took place which prevented the rabbis from actually examining the object. Within hours the Arabs sealed the gate with concrete preventing Jewish archaeologists from exploring this tunnel area. At this point we cannot be certain if it was the Ark or another object.

- Grant R. Jeffrey, Prince of Darkness:
Antichrist and the New World Order

I guess time will tell if they found the Ark of the Covenant and I truly believe, if it is located, it will be revealed during the Tribulation Period, when the Temple is rebuilt!

VERSES 18-21

1. Did you notice as you read this there is no emotion, just the facts of the event of the destruction of Jerusalem and the deportation of her people, including the murder of many of them. To see the emotion of this tragic event, you need to read the book of Lamentations as Jeremiah weeps over what has taken place. What we see here in II Kings is just the facts, they went into captivity because of their idolatry and it did not have to be that way, but they refused to repent and get right with God and thus, judgment came upon them! Morgan summarizes it like this, “Thus the nation called to peculiar position of honor, became a people scattered and peeled, losing all their privileges because of their failure to fulfill responsibility.”

What about us? Have we not been called by God to a peculiar position? You bet we have! We are to be salt and light to this world that is decaying and in darkness. We are to point them to Jesus but we, like Israel and Judah can move away from God and in doing so we have lost our flavor and our light just as they did. In fact, Meyer makes this remark about Judah and it can be applied to us. He wrote, “Israel wanted to be as the other nations around her, imitating their organization, and allying herself now with one, and then with another; in consequence she was swept into captivity to the very nation whose fashions she most affected (Isaiah 39).”

2. Keep in mind that they went into captivity here in 586 B.C., this was the final deportation, but the first invasion and deportation came in 606 B.C. and the Lord said that they would be in captivity for 70 years because they did not let the land have its Sabbath rest for 490 years and thus, they owed Him 70 years. Guess what? They began to return home to Israel, granted only a few because most had become comfortable living in Babylon, but they returned in 536 B.C., 70 years just as God said! God is faithful, may we trust in Him!

VERSES 22-24

1. The Babylonians now place Gedaliah as the governor over Jerusalem to oversee the people who remained. And Gedaliah was a good man, he was a godly man. He also was a friend of Jeremiah, (Jeremiah 39:14), and thus realized that this judgment was coming and was not going to fight against it. That is one of the reasons the king of Babylon put him in charge, for he was not going to rebel as some of the other kings had done. Now looking at this from purely a human perspective, this was an unpatriotic thing to do, you have to fight against the enemy, and you don't give in! Folk's, this was a judgment of God and you don't fight against the judgment of God, you repent, you get right and obey what God has said. That is what Gedaliah was trying to get across to the people, something that they refused to hear when Jeremiah was saying it!

2. And so we now see that these people who had fled for their lives return and seek counsel from Gedaliah in what they should do. And the governor tells them that this is from God and don't fight against it, as I have said. It is better to humble yourself and submit to God, even in His judgment than to fight against Him!

VERSES 25-26

1. Here is this man of God telling the people what they needed to do and there was this other group who saw Gedaliah as a traitor and they assassinate Gedaliah. How sad and yet we see that today with people trying to silence the men and women of God instead of listening to what they have to say and not only listening, but also obeying!

2. Now notice what they do after they assassinate Gedaliah, they fled to Egypt. Why did they do that? Because they were afraid of what the Babylonians would do to them because they not only killed Gedaliah, but others including some Chaldeans or Babylonians! Interestingly enough, Russell Dilday gives us this information substantiating what the Bible has to say regarding some Jews fleeing to Egypt. He wrote, "The existence of the Jews in Egypt in the fifth century is now illustrated by the Elephantine Papyri."

VERSES 27-30

1. Remember back in II Kings 24:15 we were told that Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, “**. . . carried Jehoiachin captive to Babylon. The king’s mother, the king’s wives, his officers, and the mighty of the land he carried into captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon.**” And so Jehoiachin has been in captivity for some 37 years, and now the king releases him. Evil-Merodach, the son of Nebuchadnezzar is now on the throne in Babylon and he treats Jehoiachin kindly.
2. As we have been studying II Kings over the past several weeks we have seen the demise of the Northern Kingdom of Israel or Samaria and now, for the same reasons, idolatry, we see the demise of the Southern Kingdom of Judah. They did not learn the lessons and because of that, judgment came upon them.
3. Next time, as we continue in our study through the Word of God, we will begin our study in the book of I Chronicles, and once again we will be looking at the kings of Israel and specifically we will be focusing on the Southern Kingdom of Judah.

4. As I close this evening, let me leave you with this to think about. Because we are living in a day where the church does not like to talk about sin, they don't like to talk about judgment and yet the Bible speaks freely on these subjects. The church instead likes to talk about being positive, feeling good, being happy, there are no sins just misgivings, mistakes, addictions. There is no judgment, only good things come from God. But listen to this story and you will see that we can't ignore what the Bible says about sin and judgment. You can ignore it but it won't make them go away. We are told,

Dr. J. Wilbur Chapman told of a distinguished minister, Dr. Howard, from Australia who preached very strongly on the subject of sin. After the service, one of the church officers came to counsel with him in the study. "Dr. Howard," he said, "we don't want you to talk as openly as you do about man's guilt and corruption, because if our boys and girls hear you discussing that subject they will more easily become sinners. Call it a mistake if you will, but do not speak so plainly about sin." The minister took down a small bottle and showing it to the visitor said, "You see that label? It says strychnine - and underneath in bold, red letters the word 'Poison!' Do you know, man, what you are asking me to do? You are suggesting that I change the label. Suppose I do, and paste over it the words, 'Essence of Peppermint'; don't you see what might happen? Someone would use it, not knowing the danger involved, and would certainly die. So it is, too, with the matter of sin. The milder you make your label, the more dangerous you make your poison!"

- Source Unknown

It all boils down to this, as Paul reminds us in Romans, “**For the wages of sin is death, but the [free] gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.**” May we not forget it, may we understand that the wages of sin is death, but God has given to us a free gift of eternal life that is found in Christ! May we share the bad news so we can give them the good news!