

In the Thirty-Seventh Year of the Exile Jehoiachin was Released from Prison

52: 28-34

DIG: After building throughout the book to God's judgment upon Isra'el and Judah, are you surprised by the way the book ends? Why or why not? Why do you think this happier note of Jehoiachin's elevation follows Zedekiah's rebellion and imprisonment? What does this say about YHVH's mercy? As you review this book, which promises of ADONAI did Yirmeyahu live to see fulfilled? Which are still to come?

REFLECT: What happened as a result of Nebuchadnezzar's pride? How long did his trial last? What was the end result? Does that surprise you? Why? Why not? What can you learn from Nebuchadnezzar's experience? Did God discipline the Babylonian king for his good or his destruction? Has he done the same for you? Can you think of some examples? Which promises of the LORD have you seen fulfilled? Which are yet to come?

The Numbers of Deported to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar: Except for the first deportation, this data occurs nowhere else in the TaNaKh. Therefore, this is not a record of all the deportations of Jews, nor a total of all the Israelites deported by Nebuchadnezzar, but merely the number of deportations *not* recorded elsewhere.

The first deportation (605 BC): By the fall of 605 BC Nebuchadnezzar had conquered Jerusalem and took the first deportation of exiles (and some of the Temple articles) back to Babylon (Daniel 1:1-7). The Babylonian king took "hostages" to assure continued loyalty. One of the most important "hostages" taken was a godly young man named Daniel (see [Ca - Jehoiakim Ruled For 11 Years from 609/608 to 598 BC](#)).

The second deportation (598 BC): In Nebuchadnezzar's seventh year, a total of 3,032 Jews were carried into exile (52:28). In this case the year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign was according to the Babylonian system of reckoning, which omitted the first partial year and began counting the regnal year from the New Year of 604 BC. This deportation took place three months after Jehoiakim's mysterious death (see [Du - Jehoiachin Ruled For 3 Months in 598 BC](#)). Apparently placated by the rebel king's death, Nebuchadnezzar merely deported his successor and brother Jehoiachin. Of the total deported, the king of Babylon carried all the officers and fighting men, and all the skilled workers and artisans - a

total of ten thousand. He took Jehoiachin, the king's mother, his wives, his officials and the prominent people of the land captive to Babylon. In addition, Nebuchadnezzar deported to Babylon the entire force of seven thousand fighting men, strong and fit for war (Second Kings 24:14-16). Only the poorest people of the Land were left. The Babylonian king only wanted to teach Judah and other vassal nations a lesson.

The third deportation (586 BC): In Nebuchadnezzar's eighteenth by Babylonian reckoning (the nineteenth year by Jewish reckoning in Second Kings 25:8) year 832 people from Jerusalem (52:29). This deportation probably consisted of the fugitives who had followed the LORD's command by leaving Tziyon and going to the camp of the Babylonian army (38:2-4), and other captives whom Nebuchadnezzar sent off to Babylon when he withdrew temporarily from Yerushalayim to meet the challenge of Pharaoh Hophra and the Egyptian army (see Fm - [Jeremiah in Prison](#)). He destroyed Jerusalem and burnt the Temple to the ground.

The fourth deportation (581 BC): In his twenty-third year, Nebuchadnezzar took 745 Jews into exile; there were 4,600 people in all (52:30). Five years after the destruction of the Holy City (see Gb - [The Fall of Jerusalem](#)), and the same five years after Ishmael, his co-conspirators and hostages left for Egypt (see Gh - [The Flight to Egypt](#)), it is believed that Nebuzaradan, as the commander of the imperial guard, was sent back by Nebuchadnezzar as an act of reprisal against those who had killed Gedaliah (see Gg - [Gedaliah Assassinated](#)). It took a long time to get around to it, but it is generally believed that this was the reason for the fourth deportation.³⁹⁸

Nebuchadnezzar died in 562 BC. He had lived most of his life as an extremely prideful and arrogant man. But after his humbling experience living as an animal in the fields for seven years, the king of Babylon finally humbled himself and looked to YHVH. He ate grass like the ox. His body was drenched with the dew of heaven until his hair grew like the feathers of an eagle and his nails like the claws of a bird. He acknowledged that the Most High is sovereign over all kingdoms on earth and renounced his sins (Dani'el 4:24-27 and 33).

Nebuchadnezzar raised his eyes toward heaven and his sanity was restored. Then the king praised the Most High, saying: I honor and glorify him who lives forever. For His reign is everlasting, His Kingdom endures through all generations. All who live on the earth are counted as nothing. He does what He wishes with the angelic army of heaven and with those living on the earth. No one can hold back His hand or ask Him, "What are You doing" (Dani'el 4:34-35)?

He changed his focus from himself to the one true God who deserved to be worshiped and praised. At that time his sanity was restored, his honor and splendor were returned to him for the glory of his kingdom. His advisors and nobles sought him out and he became even greater than he was before. Having been brought low, he said: Now, I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and exalt and glorify the King of heaven, for all His works are truth, and His ways just; and He can humble those who walk in pride (Daniel 4:36-37). One could make the argument from these verses that Nebuchadnezzar came to personally know the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

We should notice that ADONAI brought Nebuchadnezzar low for his good, not for his destruction. It was far more important for the earthly king to know the one true heavenly God, and enter into God's eternal Kingdom, than for him to live a carefree life on earth and die without knowing the one true God.

At times you will face difficult people or difficult situations in your life. When this happens, ask yourself this question, "Is God in control?" Of course He is. That doesn't mean it will be easy and that is not to diminish anyone's trials, but knowing ADONAI is in control and that He always wants what's best for us, we can have true peace. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:7 NLT).

The Release of Jehoiachin from Prison in 561 BC by Amil-Marduk: In the thirty-seventh year of the exile of Jehoiachin king of Judah (561/560 BC), in the year Evil-Marduk (or the Babylonian form of the name being Amil-Marduk, or man of Marduk). The Hebrew spelling turned out to be an insulting pun: *ewil* means *fool*, so to the Jews his name really meant *the fool who worships Marduk*. Nevertheless, he succeeded his father Nebuchadnezzar in 562 BC and became king of Babylon, on the twenty-fifth day of the twelfth month of the Jewish calendar, or March 21st, 561 BC, he released Jehoiachin king of Judah and freed him from prison. There is no reason given for Jehoiachin's release. Perhaps it was part of a general amnesty proclaimed at the beginning of Amil-Marduk's reign. This might have been because of Daniel's influence. The prophet had been living in Babylon for some time at this point.

He spoke kindly to him and gave him a seat of honor higher than those of the other kings who were with him in Babylon. Babylonian kings enjoyed capturing kings of various nations and then giving them a place at the royal table. It was a constant visible witness that the king of Babylon was the greatest of all kings. So Jehoiachin put aside his prison

clothes and for the rest of his life ate regularly at the king's table. Day by day the king of Babylon gave Jehoiachin a regular allowance as long as he lived, till the day of his death (Jer 52:31-34; 2 Kings 25:27-30). There is some archeological verification of these verses. Some jar handles have been found at the Ishtar Gate in Babylon that read, "Yaukim (Babylonian for Jehoiachin) king of Judah and his sons." We know that Jehoiachin had five sons. Jehoiachin was never guilty of revolting against Babylon like his father Jehoiakim, so he was treated well. But, Zedekiah *did* revolt and had to witness the execution of all his sons before his eyes were gouged out. He died in a Babylonian prison.

It is interesting that YHVH cursed Jehoiachin in the past (22:24 and 28, 37:1), yet he was given mercy here. Just as Jeremiah's prophecies of destruction had come true, so now his prophecies of future blessing were beginning. Jehoiachin's favor gave hope to the exiles that God's promised blessings and restoration would come.³⁹⁹

Amil-Marduk, the son and successor of Nebuchadnezzar, ruled for two years and was assassinated by the priestly party, who brought about the accession of Nergal-Sharezzer, his brother-in-law who ruled from 559 to 555. It was very ironic that Neriglissar (as he was commonly known) participated in the assassination of his brother-in-law the king, because his name meant, *Oh god Nergal, preserve and defend the king.*

In 539 BC Babylon fell at the hands of Cyrus the Great and the Israelites were able to return to Judah from Babylon (see the commentary on [Isaiah Ia - The Deliverance by Cyrus the Great](#)) so that they could reestablish their Temple worship (see [Gt - Seventy Years of Imperial Babylonian Rule](#)). This seems to reinforce the great promise of ADONAI to David in Second Samuel 7:1-16 CJB.

After the king had been living in his palace a while and ADONAI had given him rest from all his surrounding enemies, the king said to the Nathan the prophet, "Here, I'm living in a cedar-wood palace; but the ark of God is kept in a tent!" Nathan said to the king, "Go, do everything that is in your heart, for the LORD is with you."

But that same night the word of ADONAI came to Nathan and said, "Go and tell my servant David that this is what YHVH says: You are going to build Me a house to live in? Since the day I brought the people of Isra'el out of Egypt until today, I never lived in a house; rather, I traveled in a tabernacle. Everywhere I went with all the people of Isra'el, did I ever speak a word to any of the tribes of Isra'el, whom I ordered to shepherd my people Isra'el, asking: Why haven't you built Me a cedar-wood home?"

Therefore say this to My servant David that this is what ADONAI-Tzva'ot says: I took you from the sheep-yards, from following the sheep, to make you chief over My people, over Isra'el. I have been with you wherever you went: I have destroyed all your enemies ahead of you; and I am making your reputation great, like the reputations of the greatest people on earth. I will assign a place to My people Isra'el; I will plant them there, so that they can live in their own place without being disturbed any more. The wicked will no longer oppress them, as they did at the beginning, and as they did from the time I ordered judges to be over My people Isra'el; instead, I will give you rest from all your enemies.

Moreover, ADONAI tells you that ADONAI will make you a house. When your days come to an end and you sleep with your ancestors, I will establish one of your descendants to succeed you, one of your own flesh and blood; and I will set up his kingdom. He will build a house for My name, and I will establish His royal throne forever. I will be a father for him, and he will be a son for me. If he does something wrong, I will punish him with a rod and blows, just as everyone gets punished; however, My grace will not leave him, as I took it away from Sha'ul, whom I removed from before you. **Thus, your house and your kingdom will be made secure forever before you; your throne will be set up forever.**

The destruction of **Jerusalem** and **Judah** was not an indication that history had somehow gotten beyond **the LORD's** control. **Isra'el's God** was the **God** of the nations. Moreover, that **His** wrath had been provoked by **Isra'el's** own wickedness indicated that divine wrath is contingent and not an essential characteristic of **YHVH**. If there were no sin, there would be no wrath. So **the Babylonian** captivity would not be seen as **Ha'Shem's** final word to the exiles. The future did not belong to **the Babylonians . . . but to God.**⁴⁰⁰