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Jehoiakim Ruled For 11 Years from 609/608 to 598 BC



Jehoiakim, Josiah's second son was 25 years old when Necho II, Pharaoh of Egypt, placed him on the throne. He reigned 11 years until 598 BC (Second Kings 24:7 to 25:36; Second Chronicles 36:5-8). Earlier in 609, after Josiah was killed, **the people chose Jehoahaz** as the new king of Judah. **He** was, however, an evil **king** and reigned only 3 months when **Necho II** summoned **him to Riblah**. There, **Jehoahaz** was captured and taken back to **Egypt**.

Josiah's purge of false gods came to a sudden stop when **Jehoiakim** became **king**. In fact, **Jehoiakim** and **his** pro-Egyptian party seem to have made a deliberate attempt to reverse the reform movement. **Yirmeyahu** is not mentioned in connection with the purge. In fact, the only reference to **Jeremiah's** prophetic activity is in **Second Chronicles 35:25**, which reports that **the priest from Anathoth** made a lament for **Josiah** after **his** death.¹¹¹

For the next several years, from 609/608 to 606 BC, **Judah** was under **Egyptian** domination. **Pharaoh** personally appointed **Jehoiakim**, another son of **Josiah**, as **his** vassal king and plundered the treasuries of Tziyon. **Jehoiakim** was **his** throne name, but **Eliakim** was **his** personal name. **He** was very extravagant and built a fine palace for **himself** with forced labor (**22:13-19**). But more damning, **he**

allowed Josiah's reform to lapse and played into the hands of those who had always opposed it to begin with. **He** remained a loyal vassal to Egypt and was a poor substitute for **his** father who had sought **God** with his whole heart.

In 605 BC **Jeremiah** first declared that **Isra'el** would **serve the king of Babylon** for **seventy years** (**to see link click [Dd - Isra'el Will Serve the King of Babylon Seventy Years](#)**).

For four years **the Babylonians** tried unsuccessfully to secure positions near Carchemish, to dislodge **the Egyptians**. Then in the summer of 605 BC, General **Nebuchadnezzar** made a surprise attack on **the Egyptians** at Carchemish, dealing them a stunning defeat. **Jeremiah 46:3-12** is a poem in which **the prophet** mocks the weakness of **the Egyptian** army in that decisive battle (see **[Dh - A Message Concerning Egypt](#)**).

In August of 605 BC the Babylonian advance was delayed by **Nabopolassar's** death, but only briefly, for by September **Nebuchadnezzar** had returned home to succeed **his** dead **father**. Suddenly Egypt was no longer a power and **the Babylonian** army marched down the coast of Palestine and destroyed the city of **Ashkelon (Jeremiah 47:1-7)** the last remaining stronghold of the Philistines - only forty miles west of Jerusalem. Seemingly overnight **Babylon** had replaced Egypt as the great power in the region. Soon **Jehoiakim** would be forced to switch sides and become a vassal to **Babylon (Jeremiah 46:2; 2 Kings 24:1-7; Second Chronicles 36:6)**. **During Jehoiakim's reign, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon invaded the land of Judah.**

By the fall of 605 BC **Nebuchadnezzar** conquered Jerusalem and took **the first deportation** of exiles (and some of **the Temple articles**) back to **Babylon (Dani'el 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 **Dani'el**.

Back in Yerushalayim, after each of the first three deportations, the pro-Egypt party was hard at work. They always seemed to think that if they could just align **Judah** with **Egypt** they would be protected. This never materialized, but they kept trying.

In 605 BC **Yirmeyahu** begins to dictate **his** prophecies to **Baruch**.

In 605/604 BC **Jeremiah's** scribe, **Baruch**, read **the scroll** dictated to **him** by **the**

prophet to **Jehoiakim**. But **the king of Judah** defiantly burned it up (see [Df - Jehoiakim Burns Jeremiah's Scroll](#)). **Here was a shift**. Up to that point the purpose of **the scroll** had been to warn. But **Jehoiakim** did not respond to the warning. **He** burned it. How could **the people** respond if **the king**, who represents **the people**, fails to respond? **The king's burning of the scroll was the catalyst for the shift in Jeremiah's perception: no longer are the scenarios of the enemy from the north merely scenarios, plans, or possibilities in God's hands. No . . . now YHVH will irrevocably set the plan in motion.**

In 603 BC Ekron (Tel Miqne) was destroyed.

In 602-601 BC **Jehoiakim** remained a loyal vassal to Babylon until late in 601 BC. At that time **Nebuchadnezzar** made another advance through Palestine. **His** objective was to conquer **Egypt**, but **his** goal was not achieved. Both sides suffered heavy losses. Egypt may have even been the victor. In any case, the Babylonian army retreated back to Babylon, after which the pro-Egyptian party gained the upper hand in Jerusalem and **Jehoiakim** switched sides again, this time **he** supported **Egypt**, and **rebelled** against **Babylon (Second Kings 24:1b-2)** and refused to pay **tribute** to **Nebuchadnezzar**. Bad career decision. **Jehoiakim** was not a very wise political chameleon. **He** had switched allegiance from **Egypt** to **Babylon** in 605 BC with **Nebuchadnezzar's** victory over Necho II at Carchemish.

By December of 598 BC **ADONAI** sent **Babylonian, Aramean, Moabite and Ammonite raiders against Jehoiakim to destroy Judah, in accordance with the word of the LORD proclaimed by His servants and prophets (Second Kings 24:2)**. As **the Babylonians** were approaching to besiege Jerusalem . . . **Jehoiakim** conveniently died. We don't know exactly how it happened, but since **he** was rebelling against powerful **Babylon** **he** might have been assassinated **(22:18-19; 36:30)** in the hope that **Judah** might be disciplined lightly. Perhaps **she** was, for **Jerusalem** and **the Temple** were not destroyed. **Nebuchadnezzar** only wanted to teach **Judah** and other vassal nations the awful consequences of rebellion against **Babylon**. Hence, the **Babylonian king** took **3,023 Jews** as a warning against further rebellion **(52:28)**.