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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 Migne) 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)**.