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 succeeded **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)**.