



In 2 Kings 23–25, we see a contrast between the godly king Josiah and his wicked sons. And soon, the sins of the forefathers of these wicked kings caught up with them and the nation of Judah fell to Babylon. But despite God's judgment against the nation, the Lord showed great mercy, sending Daniel and his friends to minister at the Babylonian palace, sending Ezekiel to minister to the Jews in Babylon, and sending Jeremiah to minister to the remnant in Jerusalem. Even Jehoiachin, the wicked king of Judah, experienced the mercy of God.

1. Context

a. Josiah's life

i. Josiah was the best of the kings.

1. Josiah brought reform to the nation of Judah during his reign.
2. Josiah ground to powder the idols, their altars, and the bones of the dead false prophets.
3. Putting aside sinful things is not enough; we must completely remove them so that they do not come back.

b. Josiah's death

i. Pharaoh Necho killed Josiah on his journey from Egypt to Assyria.

1. Josiah chose to begin a fight with Pharaoh Necho for an unknown reason.
2. Josiah died engaged in a battle God did not call him to fight.
3. Do not get involved in battles that are not yours.
4. **DISCUSS:** How can you tell when a battle is not yours to fight?

2. **2 Kings 23:30–37** – *“Then his [Josiah’s] servants moved his body in a chariot from Megiddo, brought him to Jerusalem, and buried him in his own tomb. And the people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah, anointed him, and made him king in his father’s place. Jehoahaz was twenty-three years old when he became king, and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Hamutal the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah. And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his fathers had done. Now Pharaoh Necho put him in prison at Riblah in the land of Hamath, that he might not reign in Jerusalem; and he imposed on the land a tribute of one hundred talents of silver and a talent of gold. Then Pharaoh Necho made Eliakim the son of Josiah king in place of his father Josiah, and changed his name to Jehoiakim. And Pharaoh took Jehoahaz and went to Egypt, and he died there. So Jehoiakim gave the silver and gold to Pharaoh; but he taxed the land to give money according to the command of Pharaoh; he exacted the silver and gold from the people of the land, from every*

one according to his assessment, to give it to Pharaoh Necho. Jehoiakim was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Zebudah the daughter of Pedaiah of Rumah. And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his fathers had done."

a. Jehoahaz

- i. Jehoahaz had a short three-month reign.
- ii. Jehoahaz's mother was Hamutal, daughter of Jeremiah.
 1. This is not Jeremiah the prophet.
- iii. Jehoahaz did evil in God's sight despite his father's great example.
 1. The children of godly people can still reject God and choose evil.
 2. Jehoahaz followed the pattern of his fathers—not his father, Josiah, but his evil predecessors that came before his father.
 3. **DISCUSS:** Do you take responsibility for having your own relationship with God and submitting to Him?

b. Pharaoh Necho

- i. The king of Egypt imprisoned Jehoahaz in Riblah, Hamath.
 1. Hamath was in Syria.
 2. Riblah was about 65 miles north of Damascus.
- ii. Pharaoh imposed a tax on Judah.
 1. The pharaoh imposed a tax of 100 talents of silver and 1 talent of gold.
 2. A talent is about 75 pounds.

c. Eliakim, or Jehoiakim

- i. Josiah had another son beside Jehoahaz named Eliakim.
 1. Eliakim means "God raises up."
- ii. Pharaoh Necho renamed Eliakim to Jehoiakim.
 1. Jehoiakim means "Yahweh raises up."
 2. Likely, the pharaoh changed Eliakim's name just because he could, as a show of his power.
- iii. Eliakim behaved wickedly like his forefathers before him.

3. **2 Kings 24:1-2** – *"In his days Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up, and Jehoiakim became his vassal for three years. Then he turned and rebelled against him. And the LORD sent against him raiding bands of Chaldeans, bands of Syrians, bands of Moabites, and bands of the people of Ammon; He sent them against Judah to destroy it, according to the word of the LORD which He had spoken by His servants the prophets."*

a. Nebuchadnezzar

- i. This is the first Biblical mention of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon.

1. The Babylonian Empire was on the rise as the Assyrian Empire's power waned.
2. The Egyptians will have a hold on Judah for a short time before Babylon takes the Jews captive.
- ii. Nebuchadnezzar made Jehoiakim his vassal, but Jehoiakim rebelled against him.
- b. God's providence
 - i. God sent enemy nations against Judah.
 1. God had repeatedly warned the Jews of what their sins would bring, but the people did not repent.
 2. God had been patient for hundreds of years.
 - ii. God would use the Babylonians as a rod of correction for His beloved people.
 1. Just as the northern kingdom of Israel fell to Assyria in 723 B.C., the southern kingdom of Judah would fall to Babylon.
 2. The Babylonians would come in 606 B.C. to besiege Judah, and returned till Judah fell 20 years after, in 586 B.C.
 3. The people of Israel could have repented in those 20 years, but they chose not to.
 4. **Hebrews 12:11** – *"No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it."*
 5. **DISCUSS:** When has the Lord disciplined you out of His love for you? Looking back, how did that purge you?
4. **2 Kings 24:3–10** – *"Surely at the commandment of the LORD this came upon Judah, to remove them from His sight because of the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he had done, and also because of the innocent blood that he had shed; for he had filled Jerusalem with innocent blood, which the LORD would not pardon. Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? So Jehoiakim rested with his fathers. Then Jehoiachin his son reigned in his place. And the king of Egypt did not come out of his land anymore, for the king of Babylon had taken all that belonged to the king of Egypt from the Brook of Egypt to the River Euphrates. Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem three months. His mother's name was Nehushta the daughter of Elnathan of Jerusalem. And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father had done. At that time the servants of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up against Jerusalem, and the city was besieged."*

a. Manasseh

- i. Manasseh was a previous king, perhaps the worst of them.
 1. Manasseh both practiced and promoted child sacrifice in the kingdom.
 2. In Israel, the Valley of Ben-Hinnom is still called the Valley of the Children so that they would never forget that children's innocent blood was spilled there in the shadow of the temple.
- ii. There were other evil kings besides Manasseh, but God called out Manasseh in particular.
 1. Manasseh's name means "he forgets," and Manasseh and the nation forgot God.
 2. Our nation also needs the mercy of God, for 65.4 million babies have been aborted since the *Roe v. Wade* decision.
 3. Do not believe the lie that the Dobbs decision made abortion impossible for women. In 2023, over 1 million babies were aborted—that is more than any year in the last decade.
 4. **DISCUSS:** Do you pray for the nation? What are some ways you can see God working in our country?

b. The rise of Babylon

- i. The king of Egypt's power waned as Babylon's rose.
- ii. The Babylonian Empire took hundreds of thousands of square miles.
- iii. The Babylonians again went against the nation of Judah.
 1. The first deportation was in 606 B.C.
 2. The second and final deportation was in 597 B.C.

c. The second deportation

- i. During the second deportation, the Babylonians took Daniel, Hananiah, Azariah, and Mishael.
 1. These four youths were about 16–17 years old.
 2. They were renamed to reflect Babylon's pagan deities.
- ii. Among the thousands taken during the second deportation was Ezekiel the prophet.

5. **2 Kings 24:11–40** – *“And Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came against the city, as his servants were besieging it. Then Jehoiachin king of Judah, his mother, his servants, his princes, and his officers went out to the king of Babylon; and the king of Babylon, in the eighth year of his reign, took him prisoner. And he carried out from there all the treasures of the house of the LORD and the treasures of the king's house, and he cut in pieces all the articles of gold which Solomon king of Israel had made in the temple of the LORD, as the LORD had said. Also he carried into captivity all Jerusalem: all the captains and all the mighty men of valor, ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and smiths. None remained except the*

poorest people of the land. And he 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. All the valiant men, seven thousand, and craftsmen and smiths, one thousand, all who were strong and fit for war, these the king of Babylon brought captive to Babylon. Then the king of Babylon made Mattaniah, Jehoiachin's uncle, king in his place, and changed his name to Zedekiah. Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Hamutal the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah. He also did evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that Jehoiakim had done. For because of the anger of the LORD this happened in Jerusalem and Judah, that He finally cast them out from His presence. Then Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon."

- a. In 586 B.C., Nebuchadnezzar came against Judah for the third time.
 - i. Nebuchadnezzar breached the walls of Jerusalem.
 - ii. Nebuchadnezzar ransacked Solomon's temple.
 1. Nebuchadnezzar cut up and removed the articles of the temple.
 - iii. Nebuchadnezzar confiscated the treasures of the king's house.
 - iv. Nebuchadnezzar took captive 10,000 people, among whom were:
 1. All leaders, commanders, and skilled workers were taken.
 - a. Captains
 - b. Mighty men
 - c. Military commanders
 - d. Craftsmen
 - e. Blacksmiths
 - f. Artisans
 2. The poorest Jews were left behind.
 - a. Nebuchadnezzar did not consider the poorest people a threat to his rule.
 - b. However, God did not forget His remnant, for Jeremiah the prophet was left in the land of Judah.
- b. Mattaniah became king of Judah.
 - i. Nebuchadnezzar made Mattaniah king over Judah.
 - ii. Mattaniah was one of Josiah's other sons.
 1. Mattaniah was the uncle of Jehoachin, who was the son of Jehoiakim.
 2. Jehoiakim was a son of Josiah, and therefore so was Mattaniah.
 - iii. Nebuchadnezzar changed Mattaniah's name to Zedekiah.
 1. Mattaniah means "gift of Yahweh."
 2. Zedekiah means "Yahweh is righteous."
- c. Zedekiah reigned as a wicked king for 11 years.

- i. Most of the kings did evil in God's sight, thinking they could get away with sin.
 - 1. Like the kings of Israel and Judah, we can fool ourselves into thinking that we will get away with evil when the Judge of all the earth sees all things.
 - 2. **DISCUSS:** What lies do you tend to believe when you give into temptation? How have you learned to identify these lies and lean on God's truth instead?
 - d. God judged His people but did not give up on them.
 - i. God sent out His servants to minister to the people around them.
 - 1. God put Daniel in the palace of Babylon to influence kings.
 - 2. God put Ezekiel among the Jews in Babylon to influence them.
 - 3. God put Jeremiah in Jerusalem to influence the remnant.
 - 4. God is providentially working behind the scenes—trust Him.
 - 5. **DISCUSS:** Who has God put in your path? How can you positively influence each other?
 - ii. God's mercy is present even in His justice.
6. **2 Kings 25:1–7** – *“Now it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, on the tenth day of the month, that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and all his army came against Jerusalem and encamped against it; and they built a siege wall against it all around. So the city was besieged until the eleventh year of King Zedekiah. By the ninth day of the fourth month the famine had become so severe in the city that there was no food for the people of the land. Then the city wall was broken through, and all the men of war fled at night by way of the gate between two walls, which was by the king's garden, even though the Chaldeans were still encamped all around against the city. And the king went by way of the plain. But the army of the Chaldeans pursued the king, and they overtook him in the plains of Jericho. All his army was scattered from him. So they took the king and brought him up to the king of Babylon at Riblah, and they pronounced judgment on him. Then they killed the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, put out the eyes of Zedekiah, bound him with bronze fetters, and took him to Babylon.”*
- a. Zedekiah's rebellion
 - i. Zedekiah rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon.
 - ii. Nebuchadnezzar's siege began in his 9th year as king and ended in his 11th year.
 - 1. The siege lasted two years.
 - 2. Siege warfare was common in those days. It was a waiting game of whether the people inside or outside the city would run out of food and water.

3. The Babylonian army outwaited the people of Judah, because those in Jerusalem resorted to cannibalism and ate their children.
 4. On July 16, 586 B.C., the Babylonians broke through.
 - b. Zedekiah's punishment
 - i. The Babylonians killed Zedekiah's sons before him and gouged out his eyes so that the murder of his line would be the last thing he saw.
7. **2 Kings 25:8–21** – *“And in the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month (which was the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon), Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard, a servant of the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem. He burned the house of the LORD and the king's house; all the houses of Jerusalem, that is, all the houses of the great, he burned with fire. And all the army of the Chaldeans who were with the captain of the guard broke down the walls of Jerusalem all around. Then Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried away captive the rest of the people who remained in the city and the defectors who had deserted to the king of Babylon, with the rest of the multitude. But the captain of the guard left some of the poor of the land as vinedressers and farmers. The bronze pillars that were in the house of the LORD, and the carts and the bronze Sea that were in the house of the LORD, the Chaldeans broke in pieces, and carried their bronze to Babylon. They also took away the pots, the shovels, the trimmers, the spoons, and all the bronze utensils with which the priests ministered. The firepans and the basins, the things of solid gold and solid silver, the captain of the guard took away. The two pillars, one Sea, and the carts, which Solomon had made for the house of the LORD, the bronze of all these articles was beyond measure. The height of one pillar was eighteen cubits, and the capital on it was of bronze. The height of the capital was three cubits, and the network and pomegranates all around the capital were all of bronze. The second pillar was the same, with a network. And the captain of the guard took Seraiah the chief priest, Zephaniah the second priest, and the three doorkeepers. He also took out of the city an officer who had charge of the men of war, five men of the king's close associates who were found in the city, the chief recruiting officer of the army, who mustered the people of the land, and sixty men of the people of the land who were found in the city. So Nebuzaradan, captain of the guard, took these and brought them to the king of Babylon at Riblah. Then the king of Babylon struck them and put them to death at Riblah in the land of Hamath. Thus Judah was carried away captive from its own land.”*
- a. Jewish sovereign rule
 - i. July 14, 586 B.C. saw the end of Jewish sovereign rule over the land of Israel.
 - ii. It was not until May 14, 1948, that the Jews ruled their own land again.

1. Israel's renewed status as a sovereign nation is a miracle of God.
 2. Through God, Israel was able to regain control over part the Promised Land and win against their many enemies.
 - iii. Israel's time in exile was a time God used to purge the nation of Israel.
 1. **DISCUSS:** Do you treat your circumstances as a purging process? How is God purging you?
 - b. Nebuzaradan's ransacking
 - i. The Bible does not say the ark of the covenant was taken.
 - ii. There are various theories about what happened to the ark, but the Bible does not provide answers to this question.
8. **2 Kings 25:22–30** – *“Then he made Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, governor over the people who remained in the land of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had left. Now when all the captains of the armies, they and their men, heard that the king of Babylon had made Gedaliah governor, they came to Gedaliah at Mizpah—Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, Johanan the son of Careah, Seraiah the son of Tanhumeth the Netophathite, and Jaazaniah the son of a Maachathite, they and their men. And Gedaliah took an oath before them and their men, and said to them, ‘Do not be afraid of the servants of the Chaldeans. Dwell in the land and serve the king of Babylon, and it shall be well with you.’ But it happened in the seventh month that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, the son of Elishama, of the royal family, came with ten men and struck and killed Gedaliah, the Jews, as well as the Chaldeans who were with him at Mizpah. And all the people, small and great, and the captains of the armies, arose and went to Egypt; for they were afraid of the Chaldeans. Now it came to pass in the thirty-seventh year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, that Evil-Merodach king of Babylon, in the year that he began to reign, released Jehoiachin king of Judah from prison.”*
- a. Gedaliah the governor
 - i. Nebuchadnezzar made Gedaliah governor.
 - ii. Gedaliah echoed Jeremiah's words about submitting to the king of Babylon.
 1. Gedaliah understood that Judah ought to surrender to God's discipline rather than make matters worse.
 - b. Ishmael
 - i. Ishmael killed Gedaliah, not liking the sound of this correction.
 - ii. The people of Judah fled, afraid and ignoring the wisdom of Gedaliah.
 - c. Jehoiachin
 - i. Jehoiachin, king of Judah, had been imprisoned for 37 years.
 - ii. Jehoiachin was freed during Evil-Merodach's reign.

d. Evil-Merodach

- i. Evil-Merodach's name means "man of Marduk."
- ii. Evil-Merodach was the king after Nebuchadnezzar.
 1. This was a pagan king, but he showed kindness to the stranger, Jehoiachin.
 2. God put it in Evil-Merodach's heart to show mercy to an evil king like Jehoiachin, giving him a seat at the king's table.
 3. **DISCUSS**: How has God showed you mercy and grace amid God's judgment?

* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New King James (NKJV)