

Jeremiah 21 and 22

This chapter brings a new division of the book as the king is now Zedekiah replacing Jehoiakim.

"Jehoiakim (named Eliakim at birth, 2 Chronicles 36:4) was one of the last kings of Judah before the Babylonian Captivity. Jehoiakim was a son of good King Josiah (Jeremiah 26:1) of Judah. His mother's name was Zebidah (2 Kings 23:36). Jehoiakim's father, King Josiah, had returned Judah to the Lord by tearing down idol shrines and restoring obedience to God's Law (2 Kings 23:19–25). **After Josiah's death, his son Jehoahaz was chosen king by the people.** But, as often happened in those days, Jehoahaz did not follow in the footsteps of his father but "did evil in the sight of the Lord" (2 Kings 23:32). **Jehoahaz only reigned three months** before he was taken into captivity by **the king of Egypt, who replaced Jehoahaz with his brother Eliakim** (2 Kings 23:26; 2 Chronicles 36:5). **The Egyptian king renamed the 25-year-old Eliakim "Jehoiakim."**

Jehoiakim ruled for 11 years. During his reign, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon invaded. Jehoiakim swore allegiance to him and continued as a vassal king. He also did evil in the Lord's sight (by not removing all of the idols from the land) and then rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar. **Upon his death, his son Jehoiachin succeeded him** (2 Kings 24:1–7).

Jehoiachin continued his father's evil ways. **He reigned for 3 months** and then was removed from the throne by Nebuchadnezzar. **At this point Mattaniah, son of Josiah, was put on the throne by Nebuchadnezzar to rule as a vassal king. Nebuchadnezzar changed his name to Zedekiah** (2 Kings 24:8–17).

Zedekiah was 21 years old when he became king, meaning he would have only been about 10 when his father, Josiah, died and his brother Jehoahaz became king. **Zedekiah ruled for 11 years** but continued on all the evil of his brothers and nephew Jehoiachin (2 Kings 24: 18–20). In his ninth year on the throne, Zedekiah rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar, and, as a result, Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Jerusalem. Zedekiah was confident of Egypt's help, which never materialized. **In the eleventh year of Zedekiah's reign, the city fell to Babylon."**

gotquestions.com bold added

The time of the 21st chapter is believed to be 588 B.C. when Babylon was marching on Jerusalem but not yet besieging the city. Chronologically, in Jeremiah, this chapter falls between chapters 37 and 38. Feinberg writes, "In the unfolding of God's plan, chapters 21-29 are of vital importance because they foretell 'the times of the Gentiles' Luke 21:24."

One of the interesting things in chapter 22 is the curse put on the Davidic line as a result of Jehoiachin's sins.

1 **The word which came unto Jeremiah from the LORD, when king Zedekiah sent unto him Pashur the son of Melchiah, and Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah the priest, saying,**

Zedekiah sends a delegation to seek Jeremiah's help. This Pashur is not the same Pashur, the son of Immer the priest, as mentioned in 20:1 but likely the important official mentioned in 38:1: "Then Shephatiah the son of Mattan, and Gedaliah the son of Pashur, and Jucal the son of Shelemiah, and Pashur the son of Malchiah, heard the words that Jeremiah had spoken unto all the people, saying."

God instructs Jeremiah on how he should respond.

2 **Enquire, I pray thee, of the LORD for us; for Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon maketh war against us; if so be that the LORD will deal with us according to all his wondrous works, that he may go up from us.**

In desperate times, even godless people will turn to God for help. Zedekiah was an evil, sinful ruler. When I think of Zedekiah's turning to Jeremiah to entreat God for him and the nation, I think of the what happened following the events of Sept. 11, 2001. The entire Congress was on the steps of the Congress building praying to God for His help for the U.S. Twenty years later we have many of those same people, and one entire party, wanting nothing to do with God.

3 Then said Jeremiah unto them, Thus shall ye say to Zedekiah:
4 Thus saith the LORD God of Israel; Behold, I will turn back the weapons of war that are in your hands, wherewith ye fight against the king of Babylon, and against the Chaldeans, which besiege you without the walls, and I will assemble them into the midst of this city.
5 And I myself will fight against you with an outstretched hand and with a strong arm, even in anger, and in fury, and in great wrath.
6 And I will smite the inhabitants of this city, both man and beast: they shall die of a great pestilence.
7 And afterward, saith the LORD, I will deliver Zedekiah king of Judah, and his servants, and the people, and such as are left in this city from the pestilence, from the sword, and from the famine, into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, and into the hand of their enemies, and into the hand of those that seek their life: and he shall smite them with the edge of the sword; he shall not spare them, neither have pity, nor have mercy.

Zedekiah probably despised Jeremiah for the answer he got.

Vs. 4 The weapons of war belonging to Judah will be worthless in the battle with Babylon.
Vs. 5 God will be fighting against Judah in anger, fury, and in great wrath.
Vs. 6 God will judge both man and beast with death and pestilence.
Vs. 7 Zedekiah, his servants, and the nation that are left after the judgments from God will be taken into Babylonian captivity.

8 And unto this people thou shalt say, Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I set before you the way of life, and the way of death.
9 He that abideth in this city shall die by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence: but he that goeth out, and falleth to the Chaldeans that besiege you, he shall live, and his life shall be unto him for a prey.

Jeremiah is told by God to speak to the people of the nation and tell them that either life or death lies before them. Death at the hands of the Babylonian armies, pestilence or famine. Or, if they leave the city, life, but in captivity to the Babylonians.

10 For I have set my face against this city for evil, and not for good, saith the LORD: it shall be given into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall burn it with fire.

When God has turned His back (face) against a nation (the city of Jerusalem represented the nation) there is Absolutely nothing that can be done to save the nation.

11 And touching the house of the king of Judah, say, Hear ye the word of the LORD;
12 O house of David, thus saith the LORD; Execute judgment in the morning, and deliver him that is spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor, lest my fury go out like fire, and burn that none can quench it, because of the evil of your doings.

God now directly addresses the leader of the nation. Do what is right or you will be destroyed because of your evil ways.

13 Behold, I am against thee, O inhabitant of the valley, and rock of the plain, saith the LORD; which say, Who shall come down against us? or who shall enter into our habitations?
14 But I will punish you according to the fruit of your doings, saith the LORD: and I will kindle a fire in the forest thereof, and it shall devour all things round about it.

God now addresses the nation, which has followed the path of their evil rulers, and says that destruction will also come upon the people of the nation.

Jeremiah 22

1 Thus saith the LORD; Go down to the house of the king of Judah, and speak there this word,
2 And say, Hear the word of the LORD, O king of Judah, that sittest upon the throne of David, thou, and thy servants, and thy people that enter in by these gates:

Once again Jeremiah is told to go and speak to the king, his servants, and the people of the city.

- 3 Thus saith the LORD; Execute ye judgment and righteousness, and deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor: and do no wrong, do no violence to the stranger, the fatherless, nor the widow, neither shed innocent blood in this place.**
- 4 For if ye do this thing indeed, then shall there enter in by the gates of this house kings sitting upon the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, he, and his servants, and his people.**

Jeremiah's message was that if righteousness be the rule of the leaders, then blessing will follow for not only the leaders, but his servants, and the people of the nation. Perhaps the foremost responsibility of political leaders is to "execute justice and righteousness."

Speaking to the nation of Israel Micah asks the people: "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" Micah 6:8

- 5 But if ye will not hear these words, I swear by myself, saith the LORD, that this house shall become a desolation.**

But if the leaders don't listen to the words of Jeremiah, destruction will follow - "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people." Proverbs 14:34

- 6 For thus saith the LORD unto the king's house of Judah; Thou art Gilead unto me, and the head of Lebanon: yet surely I will make thee a wilderness, and cities which are not inhabited.**
- 7 And I will prepare destroyers against thee, every one with his weapons: and they shall cut down thy choice cedars, and cast them into the fire.**

God speaks to the King about the coming destruction. Gilead and Lebanon were noted for their forests and the cedars of Lebanon were used in building the king's palace.

- 8 And many nations shall pass by this city, and they shall say every man to his neighbour, Wherefore hath the LORD done thus unto this great city?**
- 9 Then they shall answer, Because they have forsaken the covenant of the LORD their God, and worshipped other gods, and served them.**

The coming destruction of the nation would produce amazement in surrounding nations, wondering and questioning why this destruction was brought by God. The answer is two-fold. They have forsaken the Mosaic Covenant and worshiped false gods. Because of this God says not weep for those who died but mourn for those taken into captivity.

- 10 Weep ye not for the dead, neither bemoan him: but weep sore for him that goeth away: for he shall return no more, nor see his native country.**
- 11 For thus saith the LORD touching Shallum the son of Josiah king of Judah, which reigned instead of Josiah his father, which went forth out of this place; He shall not return thither any more:**
- 12 But he shall die in the place whither they have led him captive, and shall see this land no more.**

Jeremiah tells the people not to mourn over the loss of the godly king Josiah, but to mourn over Josiah's son, Shallum, whose name was changed to Jehoahaz, who "did evil in the sight of the Lord" (2 Kings 23:32) and was exiled from the land never to return.

"And the sons of Josiah were, the firstborn Johanan, the second Jehoiakim, the third Zedekiah, the fourth Shallum." 1 Chronicles 3:15

- 13 Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong; that useth his neighbour's service without wages, and giveth him not for his work;**
- 14 That saith, I will build me a wide house and large chambers, and cutteth him out windows; and it is cieled with cedar, and painted with vermilion.**

Jeremiah gives a scathing rebuke to king Jehoiakim for building his own wealth and holdings by unrighteously using the work and monies of his subjects. The condemnation of this practice is an indictment against all leaders who use their position of power to enrich themselves at the expense of their citizens. How does the apply to the members of Congress and the Presidency of the U.S.?

Most "public servants" who serve in congress leave their office as multi-millionaires. Think of President Biden, as one example, who has been a "public servant" all his life in politics. He is a wealthy man!

If one wants another reason for God's judgment on our country the gaining of wealth by politicians at the expense of the common people is one.

- 15 Shalt thou reign, because thou closest thyself in cedar? did not thy father eat and drink, and do judgment and justice, and then it was well with him?**
- 16 He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then it was well with him: was not this to know me? saith the LORD.**
- 17 But thine eyes and thine heart are not but for thy covetousness, and for to shed innocent blood, and for oppression, and for violence, to do it.**

The evil, sinful Jehoiakim is contrasted with his righteous, godly father, Josiah. There are some politicians who:

1. Josiah eating and drinking speaks of a basic life style, like the people.
2. Josiah practiced justice.
3. Josiah made sure the poor and downtrodden received justice.
4. Josiah's end result was things went well.
5. Josiah's motivation was his desire to know and serve God.

In contrast, Jehoiakim's "eyes and heart" were focused on himself and his greed, and to get what he wanted he shed innocent blood, oppressed people, and had violence done against people. So, God asks, will you rule because you have surrounded yourself with wealth ("closest thyself in cedar")?

Jehoiakim persecuted the prophet's of God as he wanted to hear nothing from God.

Jeremiah 26:

- 20 And there was also a man that prophesied in the name of the LORD, Urijah the son of Shemaiah of Kirjathjearim, who prophesied against this city and against this land according to all the words of Jeremiah:
- 21 And when Jehoiakim the king, with all his mighty men, and all the princes, heard his words, the king sought to put him to death: but when Urijah heard it, he was afraid, and fled, and went into Egypt;
- 22 And Jehoiakim the king sent men into Egypt, namely, Elnathan the son of Achbor, and certain men with him into Egypt.
- 23 And they fetched forth Urijah out of Egypt, and brought him unto Jehoiakim the king; who slew him with the sword, and cast his dead body into the graves of the common people.

- 18 Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah; They shall not lament for him, saying, Ah my brother! or, Ah sister! they shall not lament for him, saying, Ah lord! or, Ah his glory!**
- 19 He shall be buried with the burial of an ass, drawn and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem.**

History will record Jehoiakim as an evil, sinful ruler that the people won't mourn upon his death. The burial of an ass speaks of the dishonor accompanying this ruler. The donkey, upon death, is left to the birds of prey, having no actual burial. It is believed that Jehoiakim's body, upon death, was thrown over the walls of Jerusalem, thus he had no burial.

- 20 Go up to Lebanon, and cry; and lift up thy voice in Bashan, and cry from the passages: for all thy lovers are destroyed.**
- 21 I spake unto thee in thy prosperity; but thou saidst, I will not hear. This hath been thy manner from thy youth, that thou obeyedst not my voice.**
- 22 The wind shall eat up all thy pastors, and thy lovers shall go into captivity: surely then shalt thou be ashamed and confounded for all thy wickedness.**
- 23 O inhabitant of Lebanon, that makest thy nest in the cedars, how gracious shalt thou be when pangs come upon thee, the pain as of a woman in travail!**

The indictment upon the leaders and the nation is devastating. They have prospered, from the hand of God, but, even in their prosperity, they refused to heed God. All who supported ("thy lovers") the nation will turn on the nation and their pastors have no good counsel for them.

In verse 22 the illustration of childbirth is used to show that destruction is definitely coming. The reference to Lebanon and their nest in the cedars refers to the king and his underlings who live in their palatial homes. As the pains of childbirth is certain, so the destruction of the leaders is certain.

- 24 **As I live, saith the LORD, though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah were the signet upon my right hand, yet would I pluck thee thence;**
 25 **And I will give thee into the hand of them that seek thy life, and into the hand of them whose face thou fearest, even into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, and into the hand of the Chaldeans.**
 26 **And I will cast thee out, and thy mother that bare thee, into another country, where ye were not born; and there shall ye die.**
 27 **But to the land whereunto they desire to return, thither shall they not return.**

Coniah is also known as Jeconiah and Jehoiachin was an evil king who reigned for 3 months. He was so evil that God told him he would die in a strange country, Babylon. His mother would also be cast out and there would be no return to Israel. He was so evil that God pronounced a curse upon him.

- 28 **Is this man Coniah a despised broken idol? is he a vessel wherein is no pleasure? wherefore are they cast out, he and his seed, and are cast into a land which they know not?**
 29 **O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the LORD.**
 30 **Thus saith the LORD, Write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days: for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah.**

Coniah is a despised king. He is compared to a broken idol and a vessel where there is no pleasure. So despised was he by God, that the entire earth is called to hear God's word of judgment. The curse was that he would be childless, but he had 7 sons, with none of his seed sitting on the throne of David. How are we to understand this curse then? This curse also causes a problem in that he is in the royal lineage of David, the Messianic line.

Charles Ryrie notes: "Although Coniah had seven sons (perhaps adopted; cf. 1 Chron. 3:17), none occupied the throne. So, as far as a continuing dynasty was concerned, Coniah was to be considered "childless." Although his line of descendants retained the legal throne rights, no physical descendant (no man of his seed) would ever prosperously reign on the Davidic throne.

THE NECESSITY OF THE VIRGIN BIRTH

Royal line (lineage found in Matthew

Regal line (lineage found in Luke 3)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>6 And Jesse begat David the king; and David the king begat Solomon of her that had been the wife of Urias;</p> <p>7 And Solomon begat Roboam; and Roboam begat Abia; and Abia begat Asa;</p> | <p>23 And Jesus himself began to be about thirty, years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli,</p> |
| <p>11 And Josias begat Jechonias and his brethren, about the time they were carried away to Babylon:</p> <p>12 And after they were brought to Babylon, Jechonias begat Salathiel; and Salathiel begat Zorobabel;</p> | <p>31 Which was the son of Melea, which was the son of Menan, which was the son of Mattatha, which was the son of Nathan, which was the son of David,</p> |
| <p>16 And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.</p> | |

Joseph had the "royal" right to the Davidic throne, meaning, he was the descendant in the Messianic line who had the "royal" right to be king. The curse on Jeconiah precluded this. Jesus, being the adopted son of Joseph, but not the physical son (i.e. the virgin birth), had the "royal" right to the throne. If Jesus would have been Joseph's flesh and blood the curse would have prevented him from reigning on the throne of David. Through Mary, whose lineage goes back to David, Jesus was a physical descendant from David but not through the "royal" line going back to David through Solomon, but through the "regal" line, going back to David through Nathan.

Charles Ryrie comments: "The genealogy of Matthew traces the descent of Jesus through Solomon and Jeconiah (Heb., Coniah; Matt. 1:12); this is the genealogy of Jesus' legal father, Joseph. Luke traces Jesus' physical descent back through Mary and Nathan to David, bypassing Jeconiah's line and showing accurately the fulfillment of this prophecy of Jeremiah. If Jesus had been born only in the line of Joseph (and thus of Jeconiah), He would not have been qualified to reign on the throne of David in the Millennium."

Zerubbabel, Jehoiachin's grandson (1 Chronicles 3:19), returned to the land as one of the foremost leaders of the restoration community (cf. Ezra 1-6), but he was not a king. Kings ended with Zedekiah.