

2 Kings 24-25

Good evening, glad you could make it out tonight.

We also want to thank those of you watching online tonight.

Tonight we are going to finish another book in the Old Testament, we will be looking at the last two chapters of 2 Kings, Chapters 24-25.

If you are new to our ministry, please know our approach is simple here on Wednesday Nights.

A little over 4 years ago we started in Genesis and we are making our way through the Old Testament.

It has been an incredible journey through God's Word.

There have been many highs and many lows in the Narrative found in the Old Testament, tonight will be somewhat of a low.

And I found it interesting that as I studied through this section I felt the emotion of it all.

We have been invested as a church in our studies of the History of the Kingdoms of Israel.

We have endured through the evil kings, our hope rose up when a good King came to the throne.

I think it is human nature to think that we are somehow owed a good ending to every story.

But that certainly is not real life, the reality of human history is there are brief moments of good, but it has always been undone by the wicked ruler of this world.

The Children of the Light are in a continuous fierce battle here on earth, of course we as Christians know how all of history ends, because we know all of history is headed somewhere, are really to Someone, Jesus Christ.

One Day Jesus will come to this earth, He will be the only One who is able to take back the Title Deed to this world that was lost in the Garden of Eden to Satan, and He will rule in righteousness, and He will bring this world up to its full potential as its rightful King.

That is the Hope that guides us, the Children of Light, through this timeline of tragedy and peril.

History is headed somewhere, and things will not always be as they are.

And in the meantime, we are to stay engaged in this battle for Truth, our ultimate goal here and now is to win souls, to bring as many as we possibly can onto the side of Truth, and into a faith in the Risen Jesus.

This is mission number one, no matter if we are on a high point in human history where Light is seemingly on top, or if we are in a time when Darkness is covering the landscape, our mission remains the same and constant.

So tonight, the history of Israel and Judah will turn a page, the people of God will go into captivity, the Kingdom Age of the people of God will be behind them.

Because they turned their backs on God, He will bring to pass His Promised Justice, after centuries of being patient, attempting to bring them to Himself, Israel has rejected now for too long, they have crossed the line, and they will be dispersed throughout the nations.

So let's pray, and we will get into our study tonight.

Please turn to 2 Kings 24, as you do, please remember the last Good King the People of God had was King Josiah.

He tragically died in battle, and his son Jehoahaz begin to reign in his place.

And he was listed as a wicked king and only reigned for 3 months, during that time, the only thing we know of him was that he was a weak king, as Pharaoh Necho came and put Judah under tribute and took him off to prison and that is the last we hear of him.

Pharaoh put Eliakim, Josiah's other son in authority, and even changed his name to Jehoiakim.

Jehoiakim gave the required tribute to Egypt by taxing the land.

He was 25 years old when he became king and he is listed as another wicked king.

Now, the world at this time was always changing, as rival empires rose and fell.

And Judah right now is stuck in the middle of 2 competing world powers.

The Assyrians have fallen away, Babylon has risen to the top, and Egypt is challenging Babylon's strength.

Judah is in a back and forth between the two, and the kings will have mixed loyalties to each empire.

And no sooner did Jehoiakim pay tribute to Egypt did the Babylonians move in to rule over Judah.

This is a sad reality, and vast difference from the Glory days of King David, when God protected His people, and empowered David to fight off their enemies.

Judah is now found weak, ruled under weak kings, and the nation will pay for their weak and godless leadership.

Look now starting in verse 1 of Chapter 24...

Judah Overrun by Enemies

24:1 In his days Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up, and Jehoiakim became his vassal for three years. Then he turned and rebelled against him. 2 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. 3 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, 4 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.

5 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? 6 So Jehoiakim rested with his fathers. Then Jehoiachin his son reigned in his place.

7 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.

Jeremiah the prophet spoke to this Jehoiakim in this manner...

Jer. 22:17 "Yet your eyes and your heart are for nothing but your covetousness,

For shedding innocent blood,

And practicing oppression and violence."

He was a wicked king, and here he is now feeling the repercussions of his own sins, and the sins of his ancestors especially that of Manasseh.

The prophet Jeremiah also accused him of destroying the Word of God, which Jeremiah wrote out on a scroll for him.

The account takes place after Jeremiah sent the scroll to the king...

Jer. 36:23-24 that the king cut it with the scribe's knife and cast it into the fire that was on the hearth, until all the scroll was consumed in the fire that was on the hearth. 24 Yet they were not afraid, nor did they tear their garments, the king nor any of his servants who heard all these words.

He had such contempt for God's Word, and this man Jehoiakim was nothing more than a puppet king, who was persuaded by his wicked court, he had no fear of God.

Jehoiakim reigned for eleven years, and the most significant event in his reign is the arrival here of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon.

Nebuchadnezzar was named after the Babylonian god Nebo, and his name alluded to something of the nature of Nebo protecting his empire.

Nebuchadnezzar assumed the Babylonian throne after his father, and he was the one who finally defeated Pharaoh Necho, which opened up the way to Jerusalem.

We will have more details of his campaign in the Books of Chronicles and in the Book of Daniel.

These last two chapters in 2 Kings, it seems the historian has lost his gusto, and as the wind is knocked

out of him, he is only concerned with mild details of the fall of Judah.

But during the events of these seven verses Pharaoh made one last attempt to defeat Babylon, and he regained a brief victory, and there Jehoiakim rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar, as he tried to rebuild his alliance with Egypt.

All the while the prophet Jeremiah was warning that he should not abandoned their allegiance to Babylon.

At this point, Nebuchadnezzar went back to Babylon to rebuild his forces, “licking his wounds” from his defeat.

He was not able to immediately crush the rebellion in Jerusalem, so he tried another tactic.

He empowered as we see here in verse 2, the Chaldeans, Syrians, Moabites and Ammonites to harass Judah’s territory, and he kept these mercenaries in the land until he could return with his full army.

When we see the term Chaldeans in the Bible, it is another name for the Babylonians.

The historian here in verse 2 lets us know that God had ordained all of this, this was the consequences to their rebellion against Him.

The prophets mentioned here most likely were Isaiah, Micah, Habakkuk, and Jeremiah.

The historian here gives a brief account of the king's death with no details, and he alludes to the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah for the last time. Jeremiah wrote this about the king's death...

Jer. 22:18-19

"They shall not lament for him,

Saying, 'Alas, my brother!' or 'Alas, my sister!'

They shall not lament for him,

Saying, 'Alas, master!' or 'Alas, his glory!'

19 He shall be buried with the burial of a donkey,

Dragged and cast out beyond the gates of Jerusalem.

He died and no one cared, his death coming 3 months before Jerusalem would fall to Babylon.

His son will inherit the final chapter of this tragic saga, and he will only rule for 3 months.

His son was Jehoiachin also known in other places in scripture as Jeconiah and in Jeremiah he is referred to as Coniah.

During Jehoiachin's reign Nebuchadnezzar's main army had finally arrived, and besieged Jerusalem.

Let's read now verses 8-16...

The Reign and Captivity of Jehoiachin(2 Chron. 36:9,10)

8 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. 9 And he did evil in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his father had done.

10 At that time the servants of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up against Jerusalem, and the city was besieged. 11 And Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came against the city, as his servants were besieging it. 12 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.

The Captivity of Jerusalem

13 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. 14 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. 15 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. 16 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.

There is nothing now that could advert the impending judgement of God.

It had been building up throughout their history, really since Solomon had originally compromised to idolatry for the sake of his many pagan wives, and the kingdoms were in a tailspin ever since.

Jehoiachin the teenage king had a reign of three months, and we see here his humiliating surrender to Nebuchadnezzar.

He marches out with the royal family and the leaders of the nation to surrender.

Jeremiah the prophet foretold all of this...

Jer. 22:24-27 "As I live," says the Lord, "though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, were the signet on My right hand, yet I would pluck you off; 25 and I will give you into the hand of those who seek your life, and into the hand of those whose face you fear — the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and the hand of the Chaldeans. 26 So I will cast you out, and your mother who bore you, into another country where you were not born; and there you shall die. 27 But to the land to which they desire to return, there they shall not return.

Now, the king will go into a Babylonian prison, but will be released in the next chapter and he is allowed to

live with some measure of comfort, but he would never again set foot in the Promise Land.

And it is interesting that his brief ninety days here in the historical record the Historian knew without a doubt in verse 9 that he had an evil character, and that he did evil in the sight of the Lord.

Now we see Nebuchadnezzar's strategy over his conquered vassal kingdoms was to bring the wealth and loot back to Babylon, and here we see the beginning of the destruction of the Temple, as they began to strip the gold plating from the larger parts of the structure.

And he also deported the mighty warriors that would be able to create an insurrection against his rule.

Anyone with rank, wealth, status or skill was carried away to be useful for the Babylonian conquest.

Thousands of the elite were hauled off to walk the sorrowful journey to captivity.

Then we read now starting in verse 17...

Zedekiah Reigns in Judah(2 Chron. 36:11-14; Jer. 52:1-3)

17 Then the king of Babylon made Mattaniah, Jehoiachin's uncle, king in his place, and changed his name to Zedekiah.

18 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. 19 He also did evil in the sight of the Lord, according to all that Jehoiakim had done. 20 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.

Nebuchadnezzar had to fill the empty throne with a Babylonian loyalist, and he finds the king's uncle Mattaniah to be this man, and he changes his name to Zedekiah which means "the righteousness of Yahweh."

In verse 19, he followed the same political platform of his brother and nephew, for he did evil in the sight of the Lord.

Jeremiah the prophet had little to no respect for this king Zedekiah, he was weak and indecisive, vacillating between wanting to hear from the prophet, but seemingly always capitulating to the more dominant men left in the kingdom.

Jeremiah spoke to him, after he came to Jeremiah for a Word in **Jer. 38:15 Jeremiah said to Zedekiah, "If I declare it to you, will you not surely put me to death? And if I give you advice, you will not listen to me."**

His word meant nothing to the Prophet of God.

Now think of how weak this Zedekiah really is, Nebuchadnezzar has already taken all of the power

players to Babylon, so out of the weak and poor, this king Zedekiah cannot even lead them.

And he will always be conflicted with the pro-Egyptian voices within his government.

The historian here in 2 Kings tells us at the end of verse 20 that those pro-Egyptian voices prevailed in their influence over the young king, and he rebelled against Babylon.

When we get to the Book of Jeremiah we will see the prophet warning the king against this maneuver to align with Egypt, but the king had no backbone, and was pressured to go against the prophet's Word.

There is nothing more tragic than a wishy washy, back and forth leader.

A weak character in a leader, one who goes with the flow, will always give in to the demands of the mob.

We see this today with spineless politicians bowing to those who are making all kinds of unreasonable requests.

We see, because they have no back bone, even when they capitulate to the mob rule, the mob then turns against them.

Many of these politicians that are advocating for the riots and mayhem in the streets, are finding the mob is now trying to remove them as well.

It never pays for a leader to go with every new wind that blows through, they need to know what they stand for, and with all conviction lead with inspiration.

It is impossible to make everyone happy, it is impossible to cater to every request.

I get so many demands made on me, and many times one demand goes against another demand.

If I made decisions here by what the people demand of me and the ministry, we would go nowhere.

I have to hear from the Lord, and then move forward with what I believe is His Will for the Body.

You don't want a pastor that is a people pleaser, nothing would get done.

If God has placed you in a place of leadership, be it here in the ministry, or in the workplace, understand this, yes it is wise to hear the opposing views and consider them, but you must at some point make a decision to move ahead in the direction that God has spoken to you.

Zedekiah had the wonderful privilege to have Jeremiah there to help guide him in the right way, the way where God's Mercy would be most felt, but he was weak, and followed the foolish wisdom of those around him, and he rebelled against Babylon, who God wanted him to join with.

He should have stood courageously on God's Word.

Because he did not, this was the straw that broke the camel's back, and this action will bring the final destruction of Jerusalem about.

Look now starting in verse 1 of Chapter 25...

The Fall and Captivity of Judah(2 Chron. 36:15-21; Jer. 52:4-30)

25:1 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. 2 So the city was besieged until the eleventh year of King Zedekiah. 3 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.

4 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. 5 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. 6 So they took the king and brought him up to the king of Babylon at Riblah, and they pronounced judgment on him. 7 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.

Zedekiah's revolt against Babylon and the will of God was terribly costly.

Nebuchadnezzar responded by marching his powerful army back to Jerusalem and besieged the Holy City.

They were under siege for 2 years, and understand siege warfare is cruel and demoralizing.

It was however an effective strategy, as the surrounding forces would cut off food supplies and even water supplies, and they would wait for the inhabitants to starve and become disease ridden from malnutrition.

The Babylonians built a siege wall around the city, and from the wall they could shoot arrows at the defenders to further frustrate them.

On our trips to Israel, we usually visit the fortress of Masada, and it is an incredible sight.

The fortress is built on the top of a mountain with cliffs on all sides.

Today we take a sky tram up to the sight, but 2000 years ago there was a trail that went up to it.

It was impregnable, and easily defended.

But it was no match for the master conquerors within the Roman War Machine.

From the top of Masada looking down, you can see where the Roman encampments were all around the fortress, and even the original wall they build to stop anyone from escaping or coming in.

This was the place of the Jewish rebellion's final stand, and the Roman determination and what is terribly put on display there.

It is no wonder the world feared their legions.

Rome used Jewish slaves to build a ramp up the side of one of the cliffs, and that terrifying ramp is still there today.

When you are on top of that fortress, you cannot but help feel the fear and agony that those Jews felt as they watched helplessly their patient enemies build this ramp, the Jews could have easily killed the ramp builders, but when they found out they were Jewish slaves, they could not bring themselves to kill their own countrymen.

They could only watch helplessly as the ramp came closer every day to the top, until Rome could bring their battering rams to the top.

Now, the fortress was built by Herod the Great, and he built an incredible water system up there, and the Jews were able to store ample amounts of food, they were not able to starve them out.

But knowing that they could not stand against the Roman spears about to crest the walls, the Jews

decided instead of facing slavery and bondage they would kill themselves.

So each soldier killed his own family, then ten were selected to kill the rest, then one of the ten was selected to kill the other nine, and after setting fire to the fortress he killed himself.

And after all the work of the Roman siege, they finally arrived into the city to see everyone dead.

But this sight really forces you to feel the terror of an ancient siege.

Here Nebuchadnezzar surrounded Jerusalem in the same manner, at this time they had no serious soldiers or formidable weapons within the city walls, but the defenses of Jerusalem still kept the mighty Babylonians at bay for 2 years.

The city of Jerusalem is set on top of a hill and has many natural defenses.

This siege however interrupted two harvest seasons and the famine became perilous.

Of course their will to fight waned, and the demoralized Jewish king tried to flee.

And he is caught in Jericho, and the last thing his eyes see are his sons being killed, then his eyes were gauged out.

The last king of the Davidic line goes out terribly here, where he is imprisoned and blind.

There is no mention of his death here, but the prophet Ezekiel speaks of him dying in Babylon.

Ezek. 12:13 I will also spread My net over him, and he shall be caught in My snare. I will bring him to Babylon, to the land of the Chaldeans; yet he shall not see it, though he shall die there.

He could not see it, because he was blind of course, but he did die there apparently.

Now, how tragic is it that at the very spot where Joshua led Israel into the first victory in the Promise Land, is now the same place that the final Davidic king is defeated and captured.

Here where Israel once had experienced great triumph, where the walls of Jericho came supernaturally crumbling to the ground, was now the scene of Israel's final defeat.

The same place where the covenant was renewed, the broken covenant is now avenged.

The end is here where it all began... what a tragedy indeed.

Now the tragedy is further amplified as Nebuchadnezzar sends his master demolition expert to undo hundreds of years of Israel's history, and to bring a terrible disaster upon God's Chastened people.

Starting now in verse 8...

8 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. 9 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. 10 And all the army of the Chaldeans who were with the captain of the guard broke down the walls of Jerusalem all around.

11 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. 12 But the captain of the guard left some of the poor of the land as vinedressers and farmers. 13 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. 14 They also took away the pots, the shovels, the trimmers, the spoons, and all the bronze utensils with which the priests ministered. 15 The firepans and the basins, the things of solid gold and solid silver, the captain of the guard took away. 16 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. 17 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.

18 And the captain of the guard took Seraiah the chief priest, Zephaniah the second priest, and the three doorkeepers. 19 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. 20 So Nebuzaradan, captain of the guard, took these and brought them to the king of Babylon at Riblah. 21 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.

It was about a month after the fall of Jerusalem that Nebuzaradan, here called the captain of the guard was sent to do his work.

The title means “Chief Executioner, or Slaughterer.”

And he systematically, piece by piece demolished the Holy City.

All of the centuries of work and history were carried off to Babylon.

This Slaughterer did not stop at the infrastructure, but he also rounded up all the inhabitants that were left, and started them on their long journey to captivity.

He only left a few peasants back to care for the crops and the land.

But all the officers, even the religious leaders, and political men he brought before Nebuchadnezzar in Riblah who executed them one by one.

The Slaughterer's job was complete, as he left the City set on a Hill a pile of rubble now.

Now, many believe the book of 2 Kings ends here at verse 21, and these next verses are an appendage to the narrative, added in much later to give further clarity to what all happened in the land after the time of the kings was over in Judah.

The record continues in an emotionless form of quick details...

Gedaliah Made Governor of Judah(Jer. 40:5-41:18)

22 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. 23 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. 24 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."

25 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. 26 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.

So we have our first of 2 anticlimactic scenes here at the end of the Book of 2 Kings.

Gedaliah was a friend of Jeremiah, and if you remember back under Josiah's reign, he was part of the delegation to go and receive God's Word from the prophetess Huldah in 2 Kings 22:12.

He is now left as governor over Judah.

Gedaliah followed Jeremiah's advice, and pled with the people to serve Babylon, but it fell on deaf ears.

And we see the pro-Egypt party was still very popular and active in the land, and Ishmael, who was perhaps coveting the ruling position, we are told in verse 25 that he was a part of the royal family, he assassinates the governor Gedaliah.

We will have greater detail about this incident when we get to Jeremiah.

But Gedaliah was actually warned of the danger, but he did not believe it.

His downfall was not a terrible thing, but he trusted people too much, and his naiveté was his undoing.

If there is anything we can learn about humanity, is man cannot be trusted.

That used car salesman is not your friend, he is only looking out for himself.

The employee buttering you up every day is probably looking for promotion.

Humanity is terribly selfish, and be prayerful and cautious about who you let into your life, and into your circle of trust.

Even Jesus, who knew the heart of man, and what was in man, He even prayed before He chose His inner circle of 12 men, and even after He prayed He still chose His Betrayer and a Denier.

Luke 6:12-13 Now it came to pass in those days that He went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. 13 And when it was day, He called His disciples to Himself; and from them He chose twelve whom He also named apostles:

Give your heart away and trust others prayerfully.

I know personally, many times I have been a Gedaliah, I have learned many hard lessons on letting people into my trust life.

We should be loving to all, but be sure your friends and those close to you are God sent, through prayer and contemplation.

Make sure they are going to be there to push you in the right direction, and they are not there for selfish reasons.

Gedaliah paid for his ignorance with his life.

So 26 years after the fall of Jerusalem, Nebuchadnezzar died.

And his son Evil-Merodach will began his reign, and this brings to pass a change in the life of the imprisoned king Jehoiachin...

Let's finish out this chapter and book starting in verse 27...

Jehoiachin Released from Prison(Jer. 52:31-34)

27 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. 28 He spoke kindly to him, and gave him a more prominent seat than those of the kings who were with him in Babylon. 29 So Jehoiachin changed from

his prison garments, and he ate bread regularly before the king all the days of his life. 30 And as for his provisions, there was a regular ration given him by the king, a portion for each day, all the days of his life.

We are not told why Evil-Merodach was merciful to his Jewish prisoner.

There is some Jewish writers who claim that after the death of Nebuchadnezzar, his son, the heir dug up the body and dragged him through the streets of the Babylonian capital.

And there may have been some contempt between father and son, and the reason he was so kind to Jehoiachin was because he wanted to dramatically contrast his own rule to that of his fathers.

So we end on somewhat of a bright note here, and there is a hopeful sign that a better future is in store for God's people.

Now while in captivity we will get glimpses of Jewish History through Ezra and Nehemiah, and the prophets as well, and we will journey right out of the Old Testament period where God spoke through His prophets.

Then there will be 400 years of silence prior to the angel coming to Zachariah and announcing to him that he would father the forerunner to the long awaited Jewish Messiah.

The Silence will be broken after 400 years of captivity and enduring through God's Chastening.

And this is an important point here, no matter what is happening in History, it is never about us, it is all about God's Timeline, and His story being told.

The history of the Kings of Israel and Judah was only a small part of the bigger picture.

One day the Davidic Line will be restored, of course we live in a privileged time, because Jesus did come once, and we have the New Testament giving us the evidence of this restored lineage in Jesus.

He was first offered as the Ultimate Sacrifice for mankind's sins.

His first coming He came as the Suffering Servant spoken of by the Prophet Isaiah.

But the Bible also promises us a Second Coming where Jesus will rule as King of kings and Lord of lords, He will rule with a rod of iron, righteousness will not be negotiable.

Fairness and equity will abound, truth and justice will always prevail, and this corrupted earth will be made right.

And we who are waiting in hope for this day, will be rewarded and we will rule with our Redeemer.

Today, Darkness seems to be prevailing, but understand something, our God so graciously did not leave us without hope.

God has given us His Sure Word, and we know how the Meta-Narrative ends, and we know where all of this is headed.

Church, we know it must get worse before it gets better, the Bible tells us this.

But we have a blessed assurance, our God is coming for us, there is hope, there is cause for rejoicing, there is work to do.

While we wait, we sow the Seed of God's Word, and we share this wonderful Gospel, and we Gather in as many as we can until the Day comes.

Paul said in... **Rom. 8:22-25** For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. 23 Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. 24 For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.

I don't know about you, but I am groaning within as I eagerly await this glorious day!

This world's tragic history is only part of the story, there is hope, and the Light is soon coming to rid this world of Darkness once and for all.

Our King is coming soon church, live with this hope, and you will truly live the life God has willed for you.

Let's pray...