

God Tells Jeremiah to Write the Prophecies on a Scroll (early 605 BC)

Jeremiah 36:1–8

1 And then in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, the king of Judah, this word came to Jeremiah from Yahweh, saying,
 2 “Take for yourself a scroll and you must write on it all the words that I have spoken to you against Israel, and against Judah, and against all the nations, from *the day that* I spoke to you, from the days of Josiah, and until this day.
 3 Perhaps *when* the house of Judah hears all the disasters that I *am* planning to do to them, then they may turn back each one from his evil way, and I will forgive their guilt and their sin.”
 4 Then Jeremiah called Baruch the son of Neriah, and Baruch wrote from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of Yahweh that he had spoken to him on a scroll.
 5 And Jeremiah instructed Baruch, saying, “I *am* held back, I am not able to enter the temple of Yahweh.
 6 So you must go and you shall read aloud from the scroll that you have written from my mouth the words of Yahweh in the hearing of the people *in* the temple of Yahweh on a day of fast, and also you shall read aloud in the hearing of all those of Judah who came from their towns.
 7 Perhaps their plea will fall before Yahweh and each one will turn away from his evil way, for great *is* the anger and wrath that Yahweh pronounced against this people.”
 8 And Baruch the son of Neriah did all that Jeremiah the prophet instructed him, to read aloud from the scroll the words of Yahweh *in* the temple of Yahweh.

Jeremiah Gives Baruch a Message from God (early 605 BC)

Jeremiah 45

Baruch’s Complaint

1 The word that Jeremiah the prophet spoke to Baruch, the son of Neriah, at his writing these words on a scroll from the mouth of Jeremiah, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah, the king of Judah, saying,
 2 “Thus says Yahweh, the God of Israel, to you, *O* Baruch:
 3 ‘You said, “Woe please to me, for Yahweh has added sorrow to my pain. I am weary in my groaning and I do not find rest.”’

The Lord’s Assurance

4 Thus you will say to him: ‘Thus says Yahweh, “Look, what I have built I *am* about to tear down, and what I have planted I *am* about to pluck up, it *is* all the land.
 5 And you, *do* you seek great *things* for yourself? *Do* not seek *great things*, for look, I *am* about to bring disaster upon all flesh,” declares Yahweh, “but to you I will give your life as booty in all the places where you may go.”’”

Nebuchadnezzar’s [Babylon] First Siege of Jerusalem (June 605–January 604 BC)

2 Kings 24:1a

2 Chronicles 36:6a

Daniel 1:1

1a In his days,

Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up *because* Jehoiakim had become his servant *for* three years;

6a Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon went up against him,

1 In *the* third year [*accession reckoning*] of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it.

Jehoiakim Burns Jeremiah’s Scroll (December 605 BC)

Jeremiah 36:9–32

Baruch Reads the Scroll at the Temple

9 And then in the fifth year of Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah, the king of Judah, in the ninth month, all the people in Jerusalem and all the people who came from the towns of Judah to Jerusalem proclaimed a fast before Yahweh.
 10 Then Baruch read aloud from the scroll the words of Jeremiah *in* the temple of Yahweh, in the chamber of Gemariah, the son of Shaphan, the secretary, in the upper courtyard *at* the entrance of the New Gate of the temple of Yahweh in the hearing of all the people.

Baruch Reads the Scroll to the Officials

11 When Micaiah, the son of Gemariah, the son of Shaphan, heard all the words of Yahweh from the scroll,
 12 he went down *to* the house of the king, to the chamber of the secretary, and look, all the officials *were* sitting there: Elishama the secretary, and Delaiah, the son of Shemaiah, and Elnathan, the son of Achbor, and Gemariah, the son of Shaphan, and Zedekiah, the

son of Hananiah, and all the *other* officials.

13 And Micaiah told them all the words that he had heard at the reading aloud of Baruch from the scroll in the hearing of the people.

14 Then all the officials sent Jehudi, the son of Nethaniah, the son of Shelemiah, the son of Cushi, to Baruch, saying, “The scroll that you read aloud from in the hearing of the people, take it in your hand and come.” And Baruch the son of Neriah took the scroll in his hand and he came to them.

15 And they said to him, “Sit please and read it aloud in our hearing.” So Baruch read aloud in their hearing.

16 And then, the moment of their hearing all the words, they turned to one another in alarm and they said to Baruch, “We must certainly report all these words to the king!”

17 Then they asked Baruch, saying, “Tell us please, how did you write all these words, from his mouth?”

18 And Baruch said to them, “From his mouth. He dictated to me all these words and I *was* writing on the scroll with the ink.”

19 Then the officials said to Baruch, “Go, hide yourself, you and Jeremiah, and let not a man know where you *are*.”

Jehudi Reads the Scroll to Jehoiakim

20 And they went to the king, *to the* courtyard, and they put the scroll for safe-keeping in the chamber of Elishama the secretary, and they reported all the words in the hearing of the king.

21 Then the king sent Jehudi to take the scroll, and he took it from the chamber of Elishama the secretary, and Jehudi read it aloud in the hearing of the king, and in the hearing of all the officials who stood next to the king.

22 Now the king *was* sitting *in* the quarters of the winter in the ninth month, and a fire-pot *was* burning before him.

23 And then, as Jehudi read three or four columns, he would cut it up in pieces with the knife of the scribe, and he would throw *it* into the fire that *was* in the fire-pot until the whole of the scroll *was* consumed in the fire that was in the fire-pot.

24 And the king and any of his servants who heard all these words were not startled, and they did not tear their garments.

25 And even *when* Elnathan, and Delaiah, and Gemariah urged the king not to burn the scroll, he would not listen to them.

26 And the king commanded Jerahmeel, the son of the king, and Seraiah, the son of Azriel, and Shelemiah, the son of Abdeel, to arrest Baruch the secretary and Jeremiah the prophet, but Yahweh hid them.

Baruch Rewrites the Scroll

27 And the word of Yahweh came to Jeremiah after the king burned the scroll and the words that Baruch wrote from the mouth of Jeremiah, saying,

28 “Take again for yourself another scroll and write on it all the former words that were in the first scroll which Jehoiakim, the king of Judah, has burned.

29 And concerning Jehoiakim, the king of Judah, you shall say, ‘Thus says Yahweh, “You have burned this scroll, saying, ‘Why have you written in it, saying, “The king of Babylon will certainly come and he will destroy this land, and he will cause to disappear from it humankind and animals?”’”

30 Therefore thus says Yahweh concerning Jehoiakim, the king of Judah, “There will not be for him *one who* sits on the throne of David. And his dead body will be thrown out to the heat in the day and to the frost in the night.

31 And I will punish him, and his offspring, and his servants for their guilt, and I will bring on them, and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and on the people of Judah all the disaster with which I have threatened them, but they would not listen.” ”

32 Then Jeremiah took another scroll and gave it to Baruch the son of Neriah, the secretary, and he wrote on it from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the scroll that Jehoiakim, the king of Judah, had burned in the fire, and furthermore was added to them many words like these.

Jehoiakim Taken to Babylon (February 604 BC)

2 Chronicles 36:6b–7

Daniel 1:2

6b and he bound him with bronze fetters to bring him to Babylon.

7 And Nebuchadnezzar brought to Babylon the objects of the house of Yahweh

and put them into the temple in Babylon.

2 And the Lord gave Jehoiakim the king of Judah into his hand

and some of the utensils of the temple of God, and he brought them *to* the land of Shinar *to* the temple of his gods, and he brought the utensils to the treasury of his gods.

Daniel and His Friends are Exiled to Babylon (February 604 BC)

Daniel 1:3–17

Daniel and His Three Friends

3 And the king ordered Ashpenaz, the commander of his court officials, to bring some of the Israelites from the royal family and from

the lords,

4 youths who have no physical defect, and *who are* handsome, and *who are* prudent in all wisdom and endowed with knowledge, and *who* understand insight, and *who have* the ability in them to serve in the palace of the king. *And the king ordered him* to teach them the literature and the language of *the* Chaldeans.

5 And the king assigned to them his daily portion from the fine food of the king, and from the wine that he drank, and *instructed that* they were to be educated for three years. And at the end *of their training*, they were to be stationed before the king.

6 Now there was among them from the Judeans, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah.

7 And the commander of the court officials gave them names, and he called Daniel, Belteshazzar; and Hananiah, Shadrach; and Mishael, Meshach; and Azariah, Abednego.

Daniel's Example of Appealing to Authority

8 Now Daniel resolved that he would not defile himself with the fine food of the king, and with the wine that he drank, and *so* he requested from the commander of the court officials *permission so* that he would not defile himself.

9 And God gave Daniel favor and compassion before the commander of the court officials,

10 and the commander of the court officials said to Daniel, "*I am* afraid *of* my lord, the king, who has determined your food and your drink, for why should he see your face having a worse appearance than the young men who are your age? Then you will endanger my head with the king."

The Test

11 Then Daniel asked the guard whom the commander of the court officials *had* appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah,

12 "Please test your servants *for* ten days, and let them give us some of the vegetables, and let us eat and let us drink water.

13 Then let our appearances and the appearance of the young men who are eating the fine food of the king be compared before you, and *then* deal with your servants according to what you see."

14 So he agreed to this proposal with them, and he tested them *for* ten days.

15 And at the end of ten days their appearances appeared better and *they were* healthier of body than all the young men who were eating the fine food of the king.

16 So the guard continued to withhold their fine food and the wine of their drink, and he gave them vegetables.

God Blesses Daniel With Wisdom

17 And as for these four young men, God gave to them knowledge and insight into all literature and wisdom, and Daniel had insight into all visions and dreams.

Daniel Enters Nebuchadnezzar's Service (c. Fall 603 BC)

Daniel 1:18–21

18 And at the end of the time the king had set to bring them, the commander of the court officials brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar.

19 And the king spoke with them, and among all of them no one was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah; then they stood before the king.

20 And in every matter of wisdom *and* understanding *about* which the king inquired from them, he found them ten times better *than* all *of* the magicians *and* conjurers that were in his entire kingdom.

21 And Daniel was *there* until the first year of Cyrus the king.

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Chronological Notes

- 1) "The first phrase of Daniel 1:1, 'in the third year' of Jehoiakim, has been a historical problem for interpreters because Jeremiah 25:1 equates the fourth year of Jehoiakim with Nebuchadnezzar's first year. The problem is easily solved, however, when it is noted that Jeremiah employs the nonaccession-year system for counting the years of a king's reign. Under this system, if a king began his reign in the middle of a year, this first, partial year was counted as his first year. Daniel, however, uses the accession-year system that was current in Babylon under the Babylonian and Persian kings. This system did not count the partial year at the beginning of a king's reign. Thus under the nonaccession-year system used by Jeremiah, this was Jehoiakim's fourth year, counting his partial first (accession) year as his first year. However, under the accession-year system used by Daniel, this was

Jehoiakim's third year, with his accession year not counted in the total."¹

- 2) Jehoiakim's fifth year began on Tishri 1 in the fall of 605 BC and ended on the last day of Elul in the fall of 604 BC. When Jeremiah 36:9 says that the fast took place in the "ninth month of the fifth year," this means that the fast took place in Kislev of 605 BC—months were always counted from Nisan, whether or not the regnal year started in Tishri and Nisan.²
- 3) Daniel's Training.³
 - A) Critical scholars often point to the date notice at the beginning of chapter 2 as an inaccuracy in Daniel and a sign that the author was confused over the sequence of the historical events. That confusion allegedly created another contradiction between chapters 1 and 2. The second year of Nebuchadnezzar (2:1), they argue, would occur before the end of the three-year period (1:5) prescribed before the young Judean men would complete their training (1:18). Their promotion to positions of prominence in Babylon (2:48–49) would then come before their interview with Nebuchadnezzar, which completed their training (1:18–19).
 - B) However, there is no conflict here. Nebuchadnezzar's second regnal year is actually the third year in the Daniel narratives. The Babylonian system of reckoning the years of a king's reign did not count his first partial (accession) year. Nebuchadnezzar's accession year lasted from 1 Elul 605 BC to the end of Adar 604 (September 7, 605–April 1, 604). His first (full) regnal year was from 1 Nisan 604 to the end of Adar 603 (April 2, 604–March 21, 603). His second regnal year lasted from 1 Nisan 603 to the end of Adar 602 (March 22, 603–April 9, 602). Since it was normal for people in the ancient Near East to count partial years when reckoning time spans, the Judeans would have been in training during the last part of Nebuchadnezzar's accession year, his entire first year, and part of his second year, making three years according to Hebrew count, fulfilling the "three years" in 1:5. Thus the notice that the events of chapter 2 took place in Nebuchadnezzar's second year (2:1) implies that it was shortly after Daniel and his companions had completed their training (1:18). Therefore, chapter 2 immediately illustrates the statement in 1:20 that Daniel was superior in every way to Nebuchadnezzar's other wise men.
 - C) Thus the time notices in Daniel 1 and 2 imply this sequence of events:
 - (1) Nebuchadnezzar's Accession Year (First Year of Training).
 - (a) Sometime between June 605 and January 604, Jerusalem capitulates to Nebuchadnezzar (Dan 1:1–2). (Nebuchadnezzar assumes the throne in September 605.)
 - (b) In February 604, captives from the Judean nobility (1:3) are taken to Babylon.
 - (c) Sometime between February 604 and April 1, 604, Daniel, Hananiah, Azariah, and Mishael begin their training (1:3–7). This is year 1 of that training.
 - (2) Nebuchadnezzar's First Year (Second Year of Training).
 - (a) From April 2, 604, to March 21, 603, Nebuchadnezzar's first regnal year, the Judeans are in training to serve in Nebuchadnezzar's court (1:8–17). This is year 2 of their training.
 - (3) Nebuchadnezzar's Second Year (Third Year of Training).
 - (a) Sometime between March 22, 603, and fall 603, during Nebuchadnezzar's second regnal year, the Judeans complete their training (1:18–19, fulfilling 1:5). This is year 3 of their training.
 - (b) Also during his second regnal year, in fall 603 or winter 603–602, Nebuchadnezzar dreams the dream recorded in Daniel 2; God reveals the dream and its interpretation to Daniel; and the Judeans are promoted (2:48–49).

¹ Andrew E. Steinmann, "Daniel," *Concordia Commentary*, (Concordia Publishing House, 2008), p. 81.

² Rodger C. Young, "Tables of Reign Lengths from the Hebrew Court Recorders," *JETS* 48.2 (June 2005): 225.

³ Steinmann, p. 111–113.