

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

Jeremiah 36:1–8

1 In the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, this word came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying,
 2 “Take a scroll and write on it all the words which I have spoken to you concerning Israel and concerning Judah, and concerning all the nations, from the day I *first* spoke to you, from the days of Josiah, even to this day.
 3 Perhaps the house of Judah will hear all the calamity which I plan to bring on them, in order that every man will turn from his evil way; then I will forgive their iniquity and their sin.”
 4 Then Jeremiah called Baruch the son of Neriah, and Baruch wrote on a scroll at the dictation of Jeremiah all the words of the LORD which He had spoken to him.
 5 Jeremiah commanded Baruch, saying, “I am restricted; I cannot go into the house of the LORD.
 6 So you go and read from the scroll which you have written at my dictation the words of the LORD to the people in the LORD’s house on a fast day. And also you shall read them to all *the people of* Judah who come from their cities.
 7 Perhaps their supplication will come before the LORD, and everyone will turn from his evil way, for great is the anger and the wrath that the LORD has pronounced against this people.”
 8 Baruch the son of Neriah did according to all that Jeremiah the prophet commanded him, reading from the book the words of the LORD in the LORD’s house.

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

Jeremiah 45

Baruch’s Complaint

1 *This is* the message which Jeremiah the prophet spoke to Baruch the son of Neriah, when he had written down these words in a book at Jeremiah’s dictation, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, saying:
 2 “Thus says the LORD the God of Israel to you, O Baruch:
 3 ‘You said, “Ah, woe is me! For the LORD has added sorrow to my pain; I am weary with my groaning and have found no rest.”’

The Lord’s Assurance

4 Thus you are to say to him, ‘Thus says the LORD, “Behold, what I have built I am about to tear down, and what I have planted I am about to uproot, that is, the whole land.”
 5 But you, are you seeking great things for yourself? Do not seek *them*; for behold, I am going to bring disaster on all flesh,’ declares the LORD, ‘but I will give your life to you 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, and Jehoiakim became his servant *for* three years;

6a Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up against him

1 In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar 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 Now in the fifth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, in the ninth month, all the people in Jerusalem and all the people who came from the cities of Judah to Jerusalem proclaimed a fast before the LORD.
 10 Then Baruch read from the book the words of Jeremiah in the house of the LORD in the chamber of Gemariah the son of Shaphan the scribe, in the upper court, at the entry of the New Gate of the LORD’s house, to all the people.

Baruch Reads the Scroll to the Officials

11 Now when Micaiah the son of Gemariah, the son of Shaphan, had heard all the words of the LORD from the book,
 12 he went down to the king’s house, into the scribe’s chamber. And behold, all the officials were sitting there—Elishama the scribe, 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 Micaiah declared to them all the words that he had heard when Baruch read from the book to the people.

14 Then all the officials sent Jehudi the son of Nethaniah, the son of Shelemiah, the son of Cush, to Baruch, saying, "Take in your hand the scroll from which you have read to the people and come." So Baruch the son of Neriah took the scroll in his hand and went to them.

15 They said to him, "Sit down, please, and read it to us." So Baruch read it to them.

16 When they had heard all the words, they turned in fear one to another and said to Baruch, "We will surely report all these words to the king."

17 And they asked Baruch, saying, "Tell us, please, how did you write all these words? *Was it* at his dictation?"

18 Then Baruch said to them, "He dictated all these words to me, and I wrote them with ink on the book."

19 Then the officials said to Baruch, "Go, hide yourself, you and Jeremiah, and do not let anyone know where you are."

Jehudi Reads the Scroll to Jehoiakim

20 So they went to the king in the court, but they had deposited the scroll in the chamber of Elishama the scribe, and they reported all the words to the king.

21 Then the king sent Jehudi to get the scroll, and he took it out of the chamber of Elishama the scribe. And Jehudi read it to the king as well as to all the officials who stood beside the king.

22 Now the king was sitting in the winter house in the ninth month, with *a fire* burning in the brazier before him.

23 When Jehudi had read three or four columns, *the king* cut it with a scribe's knife and threw *it* into the fire that was in the brazier, until all the scroll was consumed in the fire that was in the brazier.

24 Yet the king and all his servants who heard all these words were not afraid, nor did they rend their garments.

25 Even though Elnathan and Delaiah and Gemariah pleaded with the king not to burn the scroll, he would not listen to them.

26 And the king commanded Jerahmeel the king's son, Seraiah the son of Azriel, and Shelemiah the son of Abdeel to seize Baruch the scribe and Jeremiah the prophet, but the LORD hid them.

Baruch Rewrites the Scroll

27 Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah after the king had burned the scroll and the words which Baruch had written at the dictation of Jeremiah, saying,

28 "Take again another scroll and write on it all the former words that were on the first scroll which Jehoiakim the king of Judah burned.

29 And concerning Jehoiakim king of Judah you shall say, 'Thus says the LORD, "You have burned this scroll, saying, 'Why have you written on it that the king of Babylon will certainly come and destroy this land, and will make man and beast to cease from it?'"

30 Therefore thus says the LORD concerning Jehoiakim king of Judah, "He shall have no one to sit on the throne of David, and his dead body shall be cast out to the heat of the day and the frost of the night.

31 I will also punish him and his descendants and his servants for their iniquity, and I will bring on them and the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the men of Judah all the calamity that I have declared to them—but they did not listen.'"

32 Then Jeremiah took another scroll and gave it to Baruch the son of Neriah, the scribe, and he wrote on it at the dictation of Jeremiah all the words of the book which Jehoiakim king of Judah had burned in the fire; and many similar words were added to them.

Jehoiakim Taken to Babylon (February 604 BC)

2 Chronicles 36:6b–7

Daniel 1:2

6b and bound him with bronze *chains* to take him to Babylon.
7 Nebuchadnezzar also brought *some* of the articles of the house of the LORD to Babylon
and put them in his temple at Babylon.

2 The Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand,
along with some of the vessels of the house of God; and he brought them to the land of Shinar, to the house of his god,
and he brought the vessels into the treasury of his god.

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

Daniel 1:3–17

Daniel and His Three Friends

3 Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, the chief of his officials, to bring in some of the sons of Israel, including some of the royal family and of the nobles,

4 youths in whom was no defect, who were good-looking, showing intelligence in every *branch of* wisdom, endowed with understanding and discerning knowledge, and who had ability for serving in the king's court; and *he ordered him* to teach them the literature and language of the Chaldeans.

5 The king appointed for them a daily ration from the king's choice food and from the wine which he drank, and *appointed* that they

should be educated three years, at the end of which they were to enter the king's personal service.

6 Now among them from the sons of Judah were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah.

7 Then the commander of the officials assigned *new* names to them; and to Daniel he assigned *the name* Belteshazzar, to Hananiah Shadrach, to Mishael Meshach and to Azariah Abed-nego.

Daniel's Example of Appealing to Authority

8 But Daniel made up his mind that he would not defile himself with the king's choice food or with the wine which he drank; so he sought *permission* from the commander of the officials that he might not defile himself.

9 Now God granted Daniel favor and compassion in the sight of the commander of the officials,

10 and the commander of the officials said to Daniel, "I am afraid of my lord the king, who has appointed your food and your drink; for why should he see your faces looking more haggard than the youths who are your own age? Then you would make me forfeit my head to the king."

The Test

11 But Daniel said to the overseer whom the commander of the officials had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, 12 "Please test your servants for ten days, and let us be given some vegetables to eat and water to drink.

13 Then let our appearance be observed in your presence and the appearance of the youths who are eating the king's choice food; and deal with your servants according to what you see."

14 So he listened to them in this matter and tested them for ten days.

15 At the end of ten days their appearance seemed better and they were fatter than all the youths who had been eating the king's choice food.

16 So the overseer continued to withhold their choice food and the wine they were to drink, and kept giving them vegetables.

God Blesses Daniel With Wisdom

17 As for these four youths, God gave them knowledge and intelligence in every *branch of* literature and wisdom; Daniel even understood all *kinds of* visions and dreams.

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

Daniel 1:18–21

18 Then at the end of the days which the king had specified for presenting them, the commander of the officials presented them before Nebuchadnezzar.

19 The king talked with them, and out of them all not one was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah; so they entered the king's personal service.

20 As for every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king consulted them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians *and* conjurers who *were* in all his realm.

21 And Daniel continued 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

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

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).

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

³ Steinmann, p. 111–113.