

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

Jeremiah 36:1–8

- 1 The LORD spoke to Jeremiah in the fourth year that Jehoiakim son of Josiah was ruling over Judah.
- 2 “Get a scroll. Write on it everything I have told you to say about Israel, Judah, and all the other nations since I began to speak to you in the reign of Josiah until now.
- 3 Perhaps when the people of Judah hear about all the disaster I intend to bring on them, they will all stop doing the evil things they have been doing. If they do, I will forgive their sins and the wicked things they have done.”
- 4 So Jeremiah summoned Baruch son of Neriah. Then Jeremiah dictated to Baruch everything the LORD had told him to say and Baruch wrote it all down in a scroll.
- 5 Then Jeremiah told Baruch, “I am no longer allowed to go into the LORD’s temple.
- 6 So you go there the next time all the people of Judah come in from their towns to fast in the LORD’s temple. Read out loud where all of them can hear you what I told you the LORD said, which you wrote in the scroll.
- 7 Perhaps then they will ask the LORD for mercy and will all stop doing the evil things they have been doing. For the LORD has threatened to bring great anger and wrath against these people.”
- 8 So Baruch son of Neriah did exactly what the prophet Jeremiah had told him to do. He read what the LORD had said from the scroll in the temple of the LORD.

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

Jeremiah 45

Baruch’s Complaint

- 1 The prophet Jeremiah spoke to Baruch son of Neriah while he was writing down in a scroll the words that Jeremiah spoke to him. This happened in the fourth year that Jehoiakim son of Josiah was ruling over Judah.
- 2 “The LORD God of Israel has a message for you, Baruch.
- 3 ‘You have said, “I feel so hopeless! For the LORD has added sorrow to my suffering. I am worn out from groaning. I can’t find any rest.”’”

The Lord’s Assurance

- 4 The LORD told Jeremiah, “Tell Baruch, ‘The LORD says, “I am about to tear down what I have built and to uproot what I have planted. I will do this throughout the whole earth.
- 5 Are you looking for great things for yourself? Do not look for such things. For I, the LORD, affirm that I am about to bring disaster on all humanity. But I will allow you to escape with your life wherever you 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 During Jehoiakim’s reign, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon attacked.

6a King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon attacked him,

1 In the third year [*accession reckoning*] of the reign of King Jehoiakim of Judah, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon advanced against Jerusalem and laid it under siege.

Jehoiakim was his subject for three years,

Jehoiakim Burns Jeremiah’s Scroll (December 605 BC)

Jeremiah 36:9–32

Baruch Reads the Scroll at the Temple

- 9 All the people living in Jerusalem and all the people who came into Jerusalem from the towns of Judah came to observe a fast before the LORD. The fast took place in the ninth month of the fifth year that Jehoiakim son of Josiah was ruling over Judah.
- 10 At that time Baruch went into the temple of the LORD. He stood in the entrance of the room of Gemariah the son of Shaphan who had been the royal secretary. That room was in the upper court near the entrance of the New Gate. There, where all the people could hear him, he read from the scroll what Jeremiah had said.

Baruch Reads the Scroll to the Officials

- 11 Micaiah, who was the son of Gemariah and the grandson of Shaphan, heard Baruch read from the scroll everything the LORD had said.
- 12 He went down to the chamber of the royal secretary in the king’s palace and found all the court officials in session there.

Elishama the royal secretary, Delaiah son of Shemaiah, Elnathan son of Achbor, Gemariah son of Shaphan, Zedekiah son of Hananiah, and all the other officials were seated there.

13 Micaiah told them everything he had heard Baruch read from the scroll in the hearing of the people.

14 All the officials sent Jehudi, who was the son of Nethaniah and the grandson of Cush, to Baruch. They ordered him to tell Baruch, "Come here and bring with you the scroll you read in the hearing of the people." So Baruch son of Neriah went to them, carrying the scroll in his hand.

15 They said to him, "Please sit down and read it to us." So Baruch sat down and read it to them.

16 When they had heard it all, they expressed their alarm to one another. Then they said to Baruch, "We must certainly give the king a report about everything you have read!"

17 Then they asked Baruch, "How did you come to write all these words? Do they actually come from Jeremiah's mouth?"

18 Baruch answered, "Yes, they came from his own mouth. He dictated all these words to me and I wrote them down in ink on this scroll."

19 Then the officials said to Baruch, "You and Jeremiah must go and hide. You must not let anyone know where you are."

Jehudi Reads the Scroll to Jehoiakim

20 The officials put the scroll in the room of Elishama, the royal secretary, for safekeeping. Then they went to the court and reported everything to the king.

21 The king sent Jehudi to get the scroll. He went and got it from the room of Elishama, the royal secretary. Then he himself read it to the king and all the officials who were standing around him.

22 Since it was the ninth month of the year, the king was sitting in his winter quarters. A fire was burning in the firepot in front of him.

23 As soon as Jehudi had read three or four columns of the scroll, the king would cut them off with a penknife and throw them on the fire in the firepot. He kept doing so until the whole scroll was burned up in the fire.

24 Neither he nor any of his attendants showed any alarm when they heard all that had been read. Nor did they tear their clothes to show any grief or sorrow.

25 The king did not even listen to Elnathan, Delaiah, and Gemariah, who had urged him not to burn the scroll.

26 He also ordered Jerahmeel, who was one of the royal princes, Seraiah son of Azriel, and Shelemiah son of Abdeel to arrest the scribe Baruch and the prophet Jeremiah. However, the LORD hid them.

Baruch Rewrites the Scroll

27 The LORD spoke to Jeremiah after Jehoiakim had burned the scroll containing what Jeremiah had spoken and Baruch had written down.

28 "Get another scroll and write on it everything that was written on the original scroll that King Jehoiakim of Judah burned.

29 Tell King Jehoiakim of Judah, 'The LORD says, "You burned the scroll. You asked Jeremiah, 'How dare you write in this scroll that the king of Babylon will certainly come and destroy this land and wipe out all the people and animals on it?'"

30 So the LORD says concerning King Jehoiakim of Judah, "None of his line will occupy the throne of David. His dead body will be thrown out to be exposed to scorching heat by day and frost by night.

31 I will punish him and his descendants and the officials who serve him for the wicked things they have done. I will bring on them, the citizens of Jerusalem, and the people of Judah all the disaster that I threatened to do to them. I will punish them because I threatened them but they still paid no heed.'"

32 Then Jeremiah got another scroll and gave it to the scribe Baruch son of Neriah. As Jeremiah dictated, Baruch wrote on this scroll everything that had been on the scroll that King Jehoiakim of Judah burned in the fire. They also added on this scroll several other messages of the same kind.

Jehoiakim Taken to Babylon (February 604 BC)

2 Chronicles 36:6b–7	Daniel 1:2
<p>6b bound him with bronze chains, and carried him away to Babylon.</p> <p>7 Nebuchadnezzar took some of the items in the LORD's temple to Babylon and put them in his palace there.</p>	<p>2 Now the Lord delivered King Jehoiakim of Judah into his power,</p> <p>along with some of the vessels of the temple of God. He brought them to the land of Babylonia to the temple of his god and put the vessels in the treasury of his god.</p>

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

Daniel 1:3–17

Daniel and His Three Friends

3 The king commanded Ashpenaz, who was in charge of his court officials, to choose some of the Israelites who were of royal and noble descent—
 4 young men in whom there was no physical defect and who were handsome, well versed in all kinds of wisdom, well educated and having keen insight, and who were capable of entering the king's royal service—and to teach them the literature and language of the Babylonians.
 5 So the king assigned them a daily ration from his royal delicacies and from the wine he himself drank. They were to be trained for the next three years. At the end of that time they were to enter the king's service.
 6 As it turned out, among these young men were some from Judah: Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.
 7 But the overseer of the court officials renamed them. He gave Daniel the name Belteshazzar, Hananiah he named Shadrach, Mishael he named Meshach, and Azariah he named Abednego.

Daniel's Example of Appealing to Authority

8 But Daniel made up his mind that he would not defile himself with the royal delicacies or the royal wine. He therefore asked the overseer of the court officials for permission not to defile himself.
 9 Then God made the overseer of the court officials sympathetic to Daniel.
 10 But he responded to Daniel, "I fear my master the king. He is the one who has decided your food and drink. What would happen if he saw that you looked malnourished in comparison to the other young men your age? If that happened, you would endanger my life with the king!"

The Test

11 Daniel then spoke to the warden whom the overseer of the court officials had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah:
 12 "Please test your servants for ten days by providing us with some vegetables to eat and water to drink.
 13 Then compare our appearance with that of the young men who are eating the royal delicacies; deal with us in light of what you see."
 14 So the warden agreed to their proposal and tested them for ten days.
 15 At the end of the ten days their appearance was better and their bodies were healthier than all the young men who had been eating the royal delicacies.
 16 So the warden removed the delicacies and the wine from their diet and gave them a diet of vegetables instead.

God Blesses Daniel With Wisdom

17 Now as for these four young men, God endowed them with knowledge and skill in all sorts of literature and wisdom—and Daniel had insight into all kinds of visions and dreams.

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

Daniel 1:18–21

18 When the time appointed by the king arrived, the overseer of the court officials brought them into Nebuchadnezzar's presence.
 19 When the king spoke with them, he did not find among the entire group anyone like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, or Azariah. So they entered the king's service.
 20 In every matter of wisdom and insight the king asked them about, he found them to be ten times better than any of the magicians and astrologers that were in his entire empire.
 21 Now Daniel lived on 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.

