

Chapter III Ezekiel's Captivity

2 Kings 24:1; 8-18

In his days Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up, and Jehoiakim became his servant three years:

*then he turned and rebelled against him. 8 Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem three months. And his mother's name was Nehushta, the daughter of Elnathan of Jerusalem. 9 And he did that which was evil in the sight of YHWH, 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, and his servants did besiege it. 12 And Jehoiachin the king of Judah went out to the king of Babylon, he, and his mother, and his servants, and his princes, and his officers: **and the king of Babylon took him in the eighth year of his reign.** 13 And he carried out thence all the treasures of the house of YHWH, and the treasures of the king's house, and cut in pieces all the vessels of gold which Solomon king of Israel had made in the temple of YHWH, as YHWH had said. 14 **And he carried away all Jerusalem, and all the princes, and all the mighty men of valour, even ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and smiths: none remained, save the poorest sort of the people of the land.** 15 And*



Ezekiel by Michael Angelo

he carried away Jehoiachin to Babylon, and the king's mother, and the king's wives, and his officers, and the mighty of the land, those carried he into captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon. 16 And all the men of might, even seven thousand, and craftsmen and smiths a thousand, all that were strong and apt for war, even them the king of Babylon brought captive to Babylon. 17 And the king of Babylon made Mattaniah his father's brother king in his stead, and changed his name to Zedekiah. 18 Zedekiah was twenty and one years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Hamutal, the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah.

Ezekiel was one of the great prophets of YHWH. Not only was he a great prophet he also provided much chronology with which to date some of the great events of his time not found anywhere else in the Scripture. Ezekiel was a contemporary of Jeremiah. He was taken captive to Babylon along with many others in the 8th year of Nebuchadnezzar. The book of Ezekiel provides valuable insights into the events of the captivity period. His chronological synchronisms provide further evidence for the accuracy of the Scriptural narrative concerning the captivity period. In my view one of most the unique features of Ezekiel's narrative is that he may well provide the only direct synchronism between secular chronology and the Scriptural Jubilee cycle. This amazing evidence has profound implications for our understanding of Daniel's Seventy "Weeks". It shows that Daniel's Seventy "Weeks" and the countdown to the Messiah precisely happened according to an established plan. Before we further investigate these intriguing possibilities we must first lay a chronological foundation for Ezekiel.

Nebuchadnezzar took Daniel captive in 604 BC which was the 3rd year of Jehoiakim (Daniel 1:1-2). Jehoiakim became the vassal of Nebuchadnezzar for 3 years and then rebelled. He ruled until his 11th year and died. His son, Jehoiachin, took the throne at 18 years of age. Jehoiachin only ruled for 3 months before Nebuchadnezzar came up a 2nd time to Jerusalem in 595 BC. This was the 8th year of Nebuchadnezzar (2Kings 24:12). As the passage above shows Nebuchadnezzar took many captives. This started the 2nd captivity period of Judah. Ezekiel was taken captive to Babylon at this time. Nebuchadnezzar also took the remaining Temple treasure as well as the king's treasure to Babylon. He carried away "all the princes, and all the mighty men of valor".

In 2 Kings 24 it does not say specifically who was taken captive other than Jehoiachin, his mother. We have to turn to Ezekiel to establish if in fact he was taken to Babylon. The book of Ezekiel is rich with specific chronological details. Although Ezekiel does not state specifically the year his captivity started he does provide us with the answer in an indirect way. Ezekiel 40:1 gives us a key to dating the start of his captivity.

Ezekiel 40:1

In the five and twentieth year of our captivity, in the beginning of the year, in the tenth day of the month, in the fourteenth year after that the city was smitten, in the selfsame day the hand of YHWH was upon me, and brought me thither.

In this verse Ezekiel states that his captivity, or as he called it “our captivity” started 25 years earlier. He also states that this year of the captivity was 14 years from when the city was smitten. In the context which Ezekiel is speaking the “city” is a reference to Jerusalem. All we need to complete this equation is the year in which the city of Jerusalem was “smitten”. For this information we turn to 2 Kings 25:8-11.



2 Kings 25:8-11

8 And in the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month, which is the nineteenth year of king Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, came Nebuzaradan, captain of the guard, a servant of the king of Babylon, unto Jerusalem: 9 And he burnt the house of YHWH, and the king's house, and all the houses of Jerusalem, and every great man's house burnt he with fire. 10 And all the army of the Chaldees, that were with the captain of the guard, brake down the walls of Jerusalem round about. 11 Now the rest of the people that were left in the city, and the fugitives that fell away to the king of Babylon, with the remnant of the multitude, did Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carry away.

From the above we can deduce the following information:

1. The Temple and Jerusalem were destroyed in the 19th year of Nebuchadnezzar which was the year 584 BC.
2. 14th year after the city was smitten was the 32nd year of Nebuchadnezzar or 571 BC.
3. The captivity of Ezekiel started 25 years earlier in the year 595 BC.

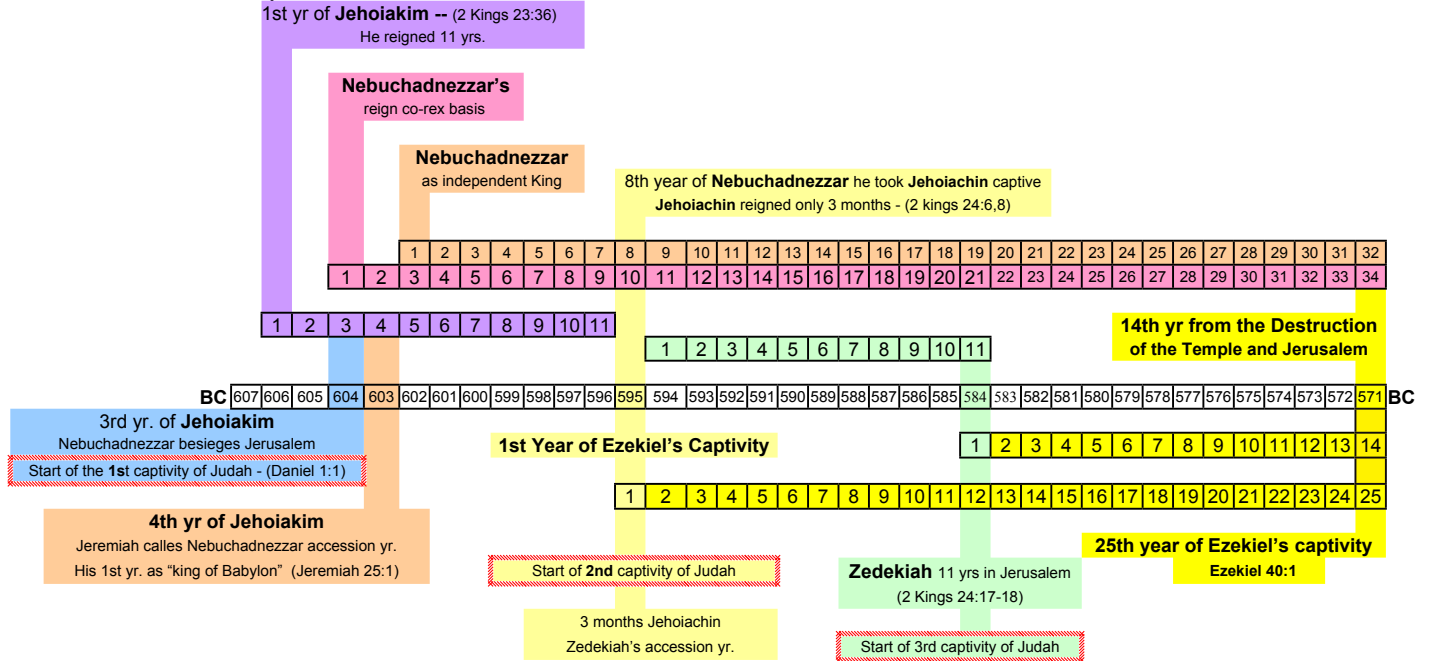
(See Table 3.1 on next page for further explanation)

An important part of Ezekiel's captivity chronology is establishing Jehoiachin's captivity. There is an interesting difference in the accounts between 2 Kings 24:1-18 and 2 Chronicles 36:5-10. (Besides the fact that one says he was 18 and the other 8 years old when he began to reign.) In 2 Kings it states that Jehoiachin was taken captive in the 8th year of Nebuchadnezzar after he had ruled for 3 months. In 2 Chronicles it also states that Jehoiachin only ruled for 3 months but Nebuchadnezzar did not take him captive to Babylon until the “year had expired”. The Hebrew word for “expired” is ‘teshuwbah’. It can be used to mean recurrence, returned or completion. It is likely then while Jehoiachin may have surrendered to Nebuchadnezzar in 597 B.C. He was not

תשובה **teshuwbah** {tesh-oo-baw'} or תשובה **teshubah** {tesh-oo-baw'}
Meaning: 1) a recurrence, an answer, return 1a) return 1a1) completion of a year, return of a year 1b) at the return (construct) 1c) answer, reply

taken to Babylon until the following year. Thus his 1st year of captivity did not begin until at least 594 B.C. Which means the 1st full year of Zedekiah's rule and the 1st year of Jehoiachin's captivity would be in the same year. The importance of this is seen when we find that Ezekiel dates some events from Jehoiachin's captivity and others from "our" captivity.

Table 3.1 – The Captivities of Judah



2 Chronicles 36:5-10

5 Jehoiakim was twenty and five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem: and he did that which was evil in the sight of YHWH his God. 6 Against him came up Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and bound him in fetters, to carry him to Babylon. 7 Nebuchadnezzar also carried of the vessels of the house of YHWH to Babylon, and put them in his temple at Babylon. 8 Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim, and his abominations which he did, and that which was found in him, behold, they are written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah: and Jehoiachin his son reigned in his stead. 9 Jehoiachin was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned three months and ten days in Jerusalem: and he did that which was evil in the sight of YHWH. 10 And when the year was expired, king Nebuchadnezzar sent, and brought him to Babylon, with the goodly vessels of the house of YHWH, and made Zedekiah his brother king over Judah and Jerusalem.

In conclusion we have found Ezekiel's captivity began in the year 595 BC. This year being the accession year of Zedekiah as well as being the same year as the start of the 2nd captivity of Judah. We also found that Jehoiachin's 1st year of captivity started

Jeremiah 40:1

The word that came to Jeremiah from YHWH, after that Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard had let him go from Ramah, when he had taken him being bound in chains among all that were carried away captive of Jerusalem and Judah, which were carried away captive unto Babylon.

one year later in 594 BC. Zedekiah's 1st full year of rule and Jehoiachin's 1st year of captivity being the same.



Ramah