

The Kingdom Overthrown

Quote: "And thou, profane wicked prince of Israel, whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: this shall not be the same: exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high. I will overturn, overturn, overturn, it: and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him."

Ezekiel 21:25-27

Bible Marking

Judah's Last Four Kings

Mark these summaries of the last 4 kings of Judah, and the family tree either in your Bible above and below 2 Kings 24, 25, and 2 Chronicles 36. OR you may wish to do it as an insert.

Jehoahaz (or Shallum) - see 2 Kgs 23:30-34; 2 Chron 36:1-4; Jer 22:10-12

Jehoahaz means: 'Yahweh upholds'.

Shallum means: 'Retribution'.

Age at Accession: 23 years.

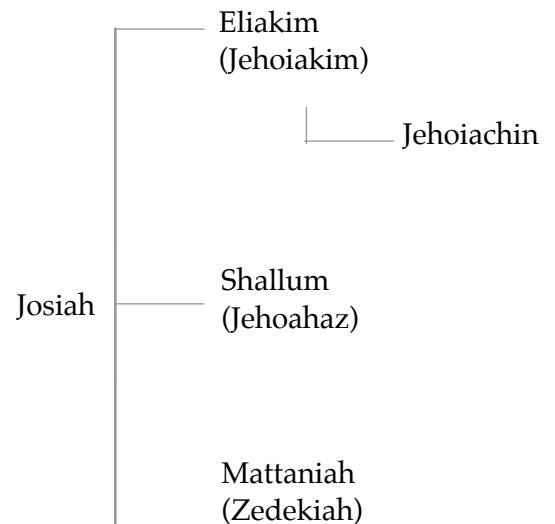
Length of reign: 3 months during 609 BC.

He appeared to show more promise than his elder brother Jehoiakim, therefore the people made him king when Josiah died.

Almost everything else recorded of Jehoahaz is negative:

- In **Ezek 19:3,5** he is seen as a "young lion" that "devoured men".
- The divine assessment of him and his reign (**2 Kgs 23:32**) indicates that he served false gods and manifested no faith in Yahweh.
- Pharaoh-necho could not trust him as a vassal king, and put him in chains, taking him to Egypt where he died (**see Jer 22:10-12**).

The Sons of Josiah: Three of Josiah's four sons reigned as kings. Very little is known of his fourth son (see **1 Chron 3:15**)



Eliakim (or Jehoiakim) - The Arrogant Tyrant - see 2 Chron 36:4-8; 2 Kgs 23:34-24:7

Jehoiakim means: 'Yah Establishes'.

Eliakim means: 'Ail Establishes'.

Age at Accession: 25 years.

Length of reign: 11 years (608-597 BC).

Jehoiakim was set up as a vassal king by Pharaoh-necho, who exacted a high tribute.

In order to pay Pharaoh, Jehoiakim taxed his people heavily (**2 Kgs 23:35; Ezek 19:7**), adding to the burden of the drought they were suffering (**Jer 14:1**). (cp Menahem who taxed only the rich to pay his tribute - **2 Kg 15:19-20**). At the same time Jehoiakim himself built for himself luxurious dwellings using unpaid labour from the poor and needy (**Jer 22:13-19**). Josephus described him as, "unjust and malignant, neither holy towards God, nor forbearing towards man".

In **2 Kgs 23:37** he is described as "evil in the sight of Yahweh". So evil was he, that he cut up the Word of God and burnt it, showing no remorse (**Jer 36:22-24**), slew Yahweh's prophet (Urijah - **Jer 26:23**) and would have killed Jeremiah and Baruch had Yahweh not hidden them (**Jer 36:26**). Therefore Yahweh brought against him the Babylonians in the 3rd year of his reign (**Dan 1:2-4**). He served Nebuchadnezzar for 3 years and rebelled. Yahweh then brought up the nations around Judah to afflict him (**2 Kings 24:1-2**). Finally Nebuchadnezzar returned in Jehoiakim's 11th year, bound him to take him to Babylon, but changed his mind and cast him off the wall, giving him the death of an ass (**Jer 22:18-19; 36:30; 2 Chron 36:6**).

Jehoiachin (or Jeconiah or Coniah) (1 Chron 3:16; Jer 22:24-28)

Jehoiachin means: 'Yahweh will Establish'.

Coniah means: 'Establish'.

Age at Accession: 18 years.

Length of reign: 3 months 10 days during 597 BC.

Jehoiachin was placed on the throne by the Babylonian overlords. His reign was short but marked by doing "evil in the sight of Yahweh" (2 Kgs 24:9). However Nebuchadnezzar soon changed his mind, and returned to take the city. Jehoiachin "went out to the king of Babylon, he, and his mother, and his servants, and his princes, and his officers" (2 Kings 24:12). He perhaps could see that his position was hopeless as Jeremiah had prophesied (Jer 13:18-19), and therefore surrendered to Nebuchadnezzar. This saved his life, and he was taken to Babylon with 10000 other captives including Ezekiel (Ezek 1:2) and Mordecai (Est 2:6). Jehoiachin lived many years in Babylon, and 37 years later Evil-merodach released him from prison and gave him very favourable treatment (2 Kings 25:27-30). A clay tablet found near the Ishtar Gate records that he received up to 20 times as much rations as the other captive kings.

Jehoiachin was to become the grandfather of Zerubbabel (Ezra 3:2; Hag 1:1) and it was through him that the line of the seed of David was perpetuated until the seed should come "whose right it is" to sit on the throne of David (Ezek 21:26-27; Matt 1).

Zedekiah (or Mattaniah) - Breaker of Covenants (1 Chron 3:16; Jer 22:24-28)

Zedekiah means: 'Righteousness of Yah'.

Mattaniah means: 'Gift of Yah'.

Age at Accession: 21 years.

Length of reign: 11 years (596-586 BC).

Zedekiah was placed on the throne by the Babylonians.

His divine assessment (2 Chron 36:12-13):

- evil in the sight of Yahweh - he presided over a period of religious apostasy and moral degeneracy (Ezek 8-11, 22).
- too proud to heed the words of Jeremiah (Jer 38:20-24).
- a covenant breaker - Nebuchadnezzar had made him swear by God that he would serve him. Zedekiah broke this covenant, foolishly turning to Egypt for support (Ezek 17:13-21)
- stiff necked and hard hearted in the face of many appeals to turn back to Yahweh (see 2 Chron 36:14-16).

Ezekiel describes him as a 'profane wicked prince' (ch 21:25). He was a weak vacillating man who feared his own people, and was more concerned with his own safety than the vindication and preservation of Yahweh's faithful prophet Jeremiah (see Jer 37,38).

Finally when the city fell Zedekiah fled by night (Jer 39:4), but was captured. His sons were slain before his eyes. His eyes were then put out and he was bound with chains and carried to Babylon (Jer 39:5-7; cp ch 32:4-5).