

---- Jerusalem Destroyed 588 BC ----



3405d AM, 4115 JP, 599 BC

806. Nebuchadnezzar made Mattaniah, the son of Josiah, king in place of his nephew Jeconiah and changed his name to Zedekiah, meaning the justice of the Lord. {#Jer 37:1 2Ki 24:17} Nebuchadnezzar had made a covenant with Zedekiah, requiring an oath of allegiance from him, and Zedekiah had sworn an oath by God to comply. {#2Ch 36:13 Eze 17:13,14,18} By giving him this new name, he intended to remind Zedekiah of the just judgment of God, if Zedekiah would break the oath.

807. Zedekiah reigned a full eleven years in Jerusalem and did evil in the sight of the Lord his God. [E87] He did not humble himself before Jeremiah, the prophet, who spoke to him in the name of the Lord, but stiffened his neck and hardened his heart, so that he would not return to the Lord God of Israel. {#Jer 1:3 32:1,2 2Ki 24:18,19 2Ch 36:11-13}

Indeed, all the leaders of the priests, and the people of the whole land, transgressed the law and polluted the house of the Lord which God had sanctified in Jerusalem. Nor would they listen to the word of the Lord, which came to them by the mouth of his prophet Jeremiah and other prophets. Instead, they despised them and mocked the messengers which God sent to them, until the fire of God's fury burst upon his people. {#Jer 37:2 2Ch 36:14-16}.

3414d AM, 4124 JP, 590 BC

834. God told the prophet Jeremiah to tell Zedekiah of the complete destruction and burning of Jerusalem at the hands of the king of Babylon. Zedekiah himself was to be carried away prisoner to Babylon, but he would die in peace and have an honourable burial. {#Jer 34:1-7}

835. For this prophecy, Zedekiah imprisoned Jeremiah in the king's prison house. This happened in the tenth year of Zedekiah and the beginning of the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar. Jeremiah recovered the land of Hanameel by right of redemption. {#Jer 32:1-16} Then everything came to pass which Jeremiah had foretold and which is contained in his book. {#Jer 32:1-33:26}

3415d AM, 4125 JP, 589 BC

842. As the siege continued, Zedekiah again inquired of Jeremiah, but he still sent him the same answer: both the king and people must fall into Nebuchadnezzar's hands. He said if any stayed in the city they would perish by the sword, or from famine or pestilence. However, any who would go out and submit to the king of Babylon would have their lives spared. {#Jer 21:1-14}

843. The princes cast Jeremiah into Malchiah's dungeon, which was in the court of the prison, for answering the king in this way.

3416d AM, 4126 JP, 588 BC

847. Near the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah, {#Jer 1:3} on the ninth day of the fourth month (Wednesday, July 27th), the famine became quite severe in Jerusalem. The city wall was broken through and the Chaldeans entered. {#2Ki 25:2-4 Jer 39:2,3 52:5-7}

848. When the city was taken, Zedekiah and all the men of war fled by night.

849. The Chaldeans pursued them and took Zedekiah, bringing him as a prisoner to Riblah, where Nebuchadnezzar was. He saw his children slaughtered, and then he had his eyes put out. He was chained with bronze shackles and taken away from there to Babylon. {#2Ki 25:4-7 Jer 39:4-7 52:7-11} The prophecies were fulfilled which said that he would see the king of Babylon, {#Jer 32:4 34:3} but he would not see Babylon, although he would die there. {#Eze 12:13}

850. On the seventh day of the fifth month (Wednesday, August 24th) Nebuzaradan, captain of the guard, was ordered by Nebuchadnezzar to enter the city. {#2Ki 25:8} He spent two days preparing provisions. On the tenth day of that month, (Saturday, August 27th) he carried out his orders. He set fire to the temple and to the king's palace. He also burned all the noblemen's houses to the ground, with all the rest of the houses in Jerusalem. {#Jer 52:13 39:8}

4076c AM, 4786 JP, 73 AD

6996. Cornelius Tacitus and Suetonius related that there were six hundred thousand Jews killed in this war. Josephus, a Jew, was a commander in that war and also deserved thanks and pardon from Vespasian, for foretelling him that he would be emperor. Josephus wrote that a million perished

by the sword and through famine, and that the rest of the Jews that were dispersed all over the world and put to death in various ways, numbered ninety thousand. Orosius also stated the same. {Orosius, l. 7. c. 9.} I cannot find the number of six hundred thousand of those who were killed, in Suetonius' writings. [E907] In Josephus, the number of captives was ninety-seven thousand, while the other number of one million and one hundred thousand refers only to those who perished in the six-month siege of Jerusalem. {*Josephus, Jewish War, l. 6. c. 9. s. 3. (420) 4:299}

6997. Justus Lipsius made the following catalogue from Josephus of those who perished outside of Jerusalem during the whole seven years. {Lipsius, de Constantia, l. 2. c. 21.}

At Jerusalem, first killed upon the command of Florus	630
By the inhabitants of Caesarea in hatred toward them and their religion	20,000
At Scythopolis (a city of Syria)	30,000
At Askelon in Palestine by the inhabitants	2,500
Likewise at Ptolemais	2,000
At Alexandria in Egypt under Tiberius Alexander	

the Governor	50,000
At Damascus	10,000
At the taking of Joppa by Gessius Florus	8,400
At a certain mountain called Cabulo	2,000
In a fight at Askelon	10,000
By an ambush	8,000
At Aphaca when it was taken	15,000
Killed at Mount Gerizim	11,600
At Jotapata, where Josephus was	30,000
At Joppa, when it was taken, were drowned	4,200
Killed at Tarichea	6,500
At Gamala, killed, as well as those who threw themselves down over a cliff	9,000
(The only survivors in the whole city were two women who were sisters.)	
When they forsook Gischala, [K702] killed in the flight	2,000
Killed of the Gadarenes, besides an infinite number that leaped into the river	13,000
Killed in the villages of Idumea	10,000

At Gerizim	1,000
At Machaerus	1,700
In the wood of Jardes	3,000
In the citadel of Masada, who killed themselves	960
In Cyrene by Catullus the Governor	3,000
Which number of the dead, being added to those who died at the siege of Jerusalem	1,100,000
Total	1,337,490

6998. An innumerable company were omitted who perished through famine, banishment and other miseries. (Josephus estimated that at the passover feast, a few years earlier, there had been about three million people in Jerusalem. {*Josephus, Jewish War, l. 6. c. 9. s. 3. (424-426) 4:301} {See note on 4069b AM. <<6927>>} There were probably this many there for the passover when Titus began the siege. Most were unaccounted for, which would make the official death toll low by at least two million. Current estimates place the number of people in Jerusalem at more than three million. Most perished! Editor.)