### 2 Chronicles

## Chapter 36

1Then the people of the land took JehoAhaz (JosiAh’s son) and anointed him as king over JeruSalem in place of his father. 2JehoAhaz was 23 years old when he started his reign, and he reigned in JeruSalem for just three months. His mother’s name was AmiTal, and she was the daughter of JeremiAh of LoBena.  
  
He acted as wickedly before Jehovah as his ancestors before him had done. Then PharaOh Necho had him imprisoned in DebLatha (in the land of HaMath), so he could no longer serve as his vassal in JeruSalem, 3and thereafter he took him to Egypt.  
  
[Necho] also demanded that [the people of IsraEl] were to pay him a tribute of 30 tons (27,000kg) of silver and 60 pounds (27.2kg) of gold.  
  
4PharaOh Necho then put JosiAh’s son EliAkim on the throne of Judah, and he changed his name to JehoiAkim.  
  
That’s when PharaOh Necho carried his brother JehoAhaz to Egypt, where he died. Then [JehoiAkim] paid the silver and gold to the PharaOh, and a tax was imposed on the land by the word of PharaOh. Each person was required to hand over his silver and gold (as they were able) to PharaOh Necho.  
  
  
5Well, JehoiAkim was 25 years old when he started his reign, and he ruled from JeruSalem for 11 years. His mother’s name was ZeKora, and she was the daughter of NerYow from RamAh.  
  
He also acted wickedly before Jehovah… Every bit as bad as did his ancestors.  
  
It was during his reign that King NebuChadnezzar [II] of Babylon came to the land and made [JehoiAkim] his vassal for three years.  
  
But then he rebelled against him, and Jehovah sent the Chaldeans (as well as bands of Syrian robbers, bands of Moabite robbers, the sons of AmMon, and [the people of] Samaria) against him... However, they all left after Jehovah had sent a warning to them through His servants the Prophets.  
  
Yet, Jehovah was still in a rage against Judah because of the sins of ManasSeh and all the [bad] things that he did, and because of all the innocent blood that JehoiAkim had spilled (for he had filled JeruSalem with the blood of the innocents); so, He planned to remove Judah from before His face.  
  
However, Jehovah didn’t want to destroy everyone.  
  
  
6Then King NebuChadnezzar [II] of Babylon attacked [JehoiAkim] and had him carried off to Babylon in shackles, 7along with many things that he’d taken from the Temple of Jehovah, which he thereafter put into his own temple in Babylon.  
  
8{Look!} The rest of the things that JehoiAkim said and did were written in the scrolls of the words of the days of the kings of Judah.  
  
Then JehoiAkim went to sleep with his ancestors, and he was buried in a tomb at GanOza with his ancestors… So his son JehoiAchin started reigning in his place.  
  
  
9JehoiAchin was 18 years old when he started his reign, and he ruled in JeruSalem for just 3 months and 10 days; for he acted wickedly in the presence of Jehovah.  
  
10Then towards the end of the year, King NebuChadnezzar [II] had him carried off to Babylon, along with many more valuable things from the Temple of Jehovah; and then his uncle, ZedekiAh, became king over Judah and JeruSalem.  
  
  
11ZedekiAh was 21 years old when he started his reign, and he ruled in JeruSalem for 11 years. 12But he also acted wickedly before his God Jehovah, and when the Prophet JeremiAh brought him word from the mouth of Jehovah, he wasn’t shamed.  
  
13Thereafter, he annulled his allegiance to King NebuChadnezzar [II] (which he had sworn before God)… He just stiffened his neck and [hardened] his heart, and he refused to return to Jehovah, the God of IsraEl.  
  
  
14Well, during that time, all the most honored men of Judah, as well as the Priests and the people of the land, just got worse... They traded goodness for wickedness and the disgusting things of the nations, and they started defiling the Temple of Jehovah in JeruSalem!  
  
15So Jehovah the God of their ancestors sent messages through His Prophets. They got up early each morning and brought [warnings] to spare His people and His Holy Place.  
  
16But all [the people] did was sneer at His messengers, treat their words with contempt, and mock His Prophets to the point where Jehovah became furious with His people, since it was so [obvious] that there was no cure.  
  
17So He brought the king of the Chaldeans against them, and their young men were slaughtered with broadswords... They didn’t spare His Holy Place, or ZedekiAh, nor did they show any mercy to the virgins.  
  
All the elders were captured and carried away, 18and everything in the Temple of God (both large and small) – all its treasures, as well as all the treasures of the king and everyone of importance – was carried off to Babylon.  
  
19Then he burned the Temple of Jehovah, tore down the walls of JeruSalem, torched its palaces, and wiped away everything that was of any beauty!  
  
  
20And after that, he carried off everyone who was left to [Empire of] Babylon, where they served as slaves for him and his sons… Until the Medes came along. 21This was in order to fulfill Jehovah’s words through JeremiAh , until the land had enjoyed its Sabbath rest and Sabbath-keeping all the years of its desolation, until the 70 years were complete. [Jeremiah 25:11-12]  
  
22It was in the 1st year of Cyrus, the king of Persia, after the fulfillment of the words of Jehovah through the mouth of JeremiAh, that Jehovah awakened the spirit of Cyrus and commanded him to send a written proclamation throughout his kingdom, that said:  
  
 23‘Cyrus the king of Persia says:  
  
 ‘All the kingdoms of the earth have been given to me by Jehovah, the God of heaven, and He told me to build a Temple to Him in JeruSalem in Judah.  
  
 ‘So, who of you are His people?  
  
 ‘His God Jehovah is now with him, so let him [return to JeruSalem]!’

# Ezra

Ezra is an historical account of the return of the Jews to JeruSalem after Babylon was defeated by the Persians.  
  
It covers the period from the 1st year of the reign of King Cyrus of Persia over Babylon, to the reestablishment and cleansing of the Priesthood.  
  
It was written by the Jewish Scribe and Priest Ezra.  
  
  
One of two versions  
  
This version of Ezra is not the version preferred by the Early Christians.  
  
There were originally two versions of Ezra: Alpha and Beta. Today, most Bible translations use the Beta version, and that’s the version accepted by most Christian and Jewish denominations.  
  
The Alpha version (also known as 1 Esdras) is longer and contains extra information. The early (Greek-speaking) Christians seemed to prefer this version, since they quoted from it far more than the Beta version.  
  
Since the Beta version is almost exactly like the Hebrew version accepted by the Jews, the Catholic Church rejected the Alpha version (through Jerome). However, should we go along with their decision?  
  
Well, the extra material in the Alpha text uses a literary device called an ‘inclusio,’ where the narration forms a certain pattern. The Beta version, however, only includes part of the material, which rips the heart out of the inclusio pattern, ruining it. This is compelling evidence for the the Alpha text being the original, with the Beta text being a later work copied from it.  
  
Why, though, would anyone create a second, shorter Ezra? Well, a few parts in the missing material stand out as being difficult for Rabbinical thought of the time, such as it calling women powerful and wise.  
  
However, it also says that truth from God is supreme – not the teachings of Rabbis. In the 1st century, Rabbinical teachings were supposed to override Biblical ones. They did not believe that God is the source of truth, but that they were.  
  
Further, these words about truth were regarded by early Christians as a Messianic prophecy, since Jesus also talked about truth. So it’s easy to see why the Rabbinical schools may have wished to produce a shorter version of Ezra – even if it meant destroying the inclusio pattern.  
  
Unfortunately, when we first began this translation, we didn’t understand these issues with Ezra, so we’ve only translated the Beta text.  
  
In the future, we’ll also translate the Alpha text. In the meantime, you can read it at the NETS project.