

[HOME](#) | [BIBLE STUDIES & SERMONS](#) | [ABIDING IN CHRIST](#) | [SEARCH](#) | [DEVOTIONS](#) | [PERSONAL GROWTH](#) | [LINKS](#) | [LATEST ADDITIONS](#)



## **Babylonian Captivity 586 B.C.**

Upon the death of Solomon in 931 B.C. the united kingdom of Israel was split with ten northern tribes pulling away and forming their own nation using the name Israel. The two remaining tribes in the south continued under the name of Judah.

During the next 209 years the northern kingdom of Israel continued its worship of idolatry until in 722 B.C. God used the Assyrians as His hammer of judgment. The southern kingdom of Judah continued on for another 134 years after Israel's fall only to be judged for its spiritual adultery by the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar (2 Chron. 36:17-20).

## **FALL OF JERUSALEM (586 B.C.)**

The Northern Kingdom of Israel fell captive to the Assyrians in 722 B.C. The reason was because of their idolatry. Shalmaneser besieged Israel for three years and his successor, Sargon, finished the task and carried the people into captivity. The king of Assyria brought people from other captured countries and settled them in Samaria, who married the poorer people who remained in the country. The upper class people were carried away to Assyria who then inter-married with Assyrians. As a result the religion of Samaria became even more mixed with paganism. The resulting mixed marriages were the Samaritans who were later despised by the pure Jews who returned from Babylon to reclaim the land.

The ten tribes of the Northern Kingdom of Israel were carried to Assyria never to come back to their homeland. Please keep in mind that "many imaginary and untrustworthy accounts have been given seeking to identify these Lost Tribes with later peoples" (Russell Jones, *Survey of Old and New Testaments*, p. 154).

Samaritans were a mixed race resulting from the intermarriages of the poorer residents of the Northern Kingdom who were left in the land after the Assyrian captivity. Assyria brought in settlers from other regions along the Tigris and Euphrates River who intermarried with these local people. The Jews in Judea hated the Samaritans who worshipped a corrupted Judaism based on the Pentateuch.

The Southern Kingdom of Judah survived for another 134 years and fell to the Babylonians in 586 B.C.

During the last 25 years the prophet Jeremiah, realizing the nation's decay of moral and spiritual values had reaped its harvest, remained faithful urging the people of Judah to accept God's punishment upon the nation.

Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, spoiled Jerusalem and took treasures from Solomon's Temple. Ten thousand of the leading men of Judah were taken into captivity to Babylon. The national leadership in Jerusalem continued to follow their wicked ways until Nebuchadnezzar laid siege of the city and a breach was made into the city wall. King Zedekiah (Mattaniah, 597-586 B.C.) attempted to escape, but was captured and taken to Babylon in chains. The Babylonians killed his sons in his sight and then blinded him. The walls of Jerusalem were destroyed and the temple burned to the ground. All of the city's treasures were taken to Babylon. The remaining leaders of Judah were killed and the rest of the people were carried into captivity to Babylon. Only the very poorest people remained in Judah in the hills who later fled to Egypt (2 Kings 25:23-30).

It has been estimated by scholars that about 50,000 people were marched into captivity in Babylon. The important thing to note is that the Babylonians did not replace the people of Judah with other captives as the Assyrians had done in the Northern Kingdom in 722 B.C. The land of Judah and Jerusalem remained vacant for seventy years until the Lord brought a remnant of His people back to the Promised Land.

The Chronicler tells us in vivid terms the reason for the exile (2 Chron. 36:14-16). "They mocked the messengers of God, and despised His words, and misused His prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against His people until there was no remedy." But even this captivity was a part of God's plan.

The prophet Jeremiah wrote his "Funeral Hymn" as the walls burned down. Lamentations of Jeremiah describe the vivid agonizing emotions of the prophet as he weeps over Jerusalem and God's chosen people. The result of the Babylonian captivity was a purging of idolatry from the heart of the people of God.

## BABYLON

Nebuchadnezzar was the king of the most powerful nation on earth at this time. His father, Nabopolassar, had founded the Babylonian empire after defeating the Assyrians and developing the commerce and massive building program. He extended the empire as far as the Mediterranean Sea.

### *Three waves of captives*



**Free  
Christian  
Magazine**

**History  
and  
Biography**

**Free 6-Month  
Subscription**

www.lebenusa.com  
Ads by Google

The Jewish captives were settled along the Chebar River and treated as colonists. They were given freedom to lead normal lives as long as they remained politically loyal to the Babylonian government. Daniel became a government official. Many became quite wealthy in Babylon and their families remained there after the seventy years of captivity were over.

The first group of captives to be led away to Babylon included the prophet Daniel in 605 B.C. A few years later in 597 B.C. ten thousand captives, including the prophet Ezekiel followed. Finally, when the city of Jerusalem fell in 586 B.C. the final captives were led away to the banks of the River Chebar in Babylon (2 Kings 24:1-18; 2 Chron. 36:11-21; Jer. 52:1-11; Ezek. 1:1-2; Daniel 1:1-7).

The important lesson from the captivity was the purging of idolatry from the hearts of God's people. They never forgot the penalty of turning from Yahweh to follow other gods. They were more faithful to Him in Babylon than in Jerusalem.

### **Benefits of the Exile**

J. B. Tidwell summarizes the benefits of the captivity for the Jewish people (*Introducing the Old Testament*, p. 178).

1. The Jews became a *separate people* who did not want to become like their neighbors ever again. The Pharisees came from this era of Jewish history.
2. They became *pure monotheistic*, giving up idolatry completely.
3. They developed theological literature and *renewed interest in the Law of Moses*.
4. They *repented* of their sins against Yahweh.
5. The *synagogues* were established as a place of worship centered on God's Word, prayer, praise and study.
6. Judaism became *personal rather than a formal ritualism*.
7. They became a *missionary people to all the nations*.
8. During this time God placed *a longing for the coming of the Messiah* in their hearts. The Pharisees were especially instrumental in keeping the Messianic hope before the eyes of the people.

### **JEWES IN EGYPT**

Not all of the Jews were taken into exile to Babylon, however. Some fled to Egypt because of the deplorable conditions in Judah. The prophet Jeremiah went with this group to Tahpanhes (Daphne) on the Egyptian frontier where they built a temple in Elephantine (cf. Jeremiah 42:15-22; 44:26-28).

The prophets of the Babylonian exile were Jeremiah (in Jerusalem and Egypt), Ezekiel and Daniel in Babylon.

### **RETURN TO JERUSALEM**

The sovereign control of Yahweh over His people while in Babylonian captivity is clearly seen in the books of Daniel, Ezekiel, Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther. God continued to reveal Himself through the post-exile prophets Zechariah, Haggai and Malachi.

Even though God disciplined His people, He did not abandon them. He was there all the time watching over them until the coming of His "Anointed One." The theme of the providential protection of God over the Jewish people in exile is clearly presented in Esther. A sovereign God is firmly in control over the pagan kings of Babylon and Persia.

Just as the exile to Babylon consisted of three waves, the return from Babylonian captivity to Jerusalem occurred as a "second exodus" to the Promised Land. God was faithful to His prophecy through Isaiah 44:28-45:4, and Moses in Deuteronomy 30:1-5. Nehemiah claimed these promises when prayed in 1:8-10. When Cyrus the Persian captured Babylon in 539 B.C. the Jewish captives were free to return to Judah.

The first group of Jewish people returned to Jerusalem in 538-539 B.C. under the leadership of Zerubbabel, the second group were led by Ezra in 458 B.C. and Nehemiah led a group back in 444 B.C. The rebuilt Jerusalem was much smaller than the city before the fall. The book of Nehemiah completes the historical account of the Jewish people 400 years before the birth of the Messiah.

If you need help in becoming a Christian here is [A Free Gift for You](#).

Index to this Series on the Introduction to books of the Bible [A Look at the Book](#)

---

Title: Babylonian Captivity 586 B.C.

Series: [A Look a the Book](#)

Message by Wil Pounds (c) 2005. Anyone is free to use this material and distribute it, but it may not be sold under any circumstances whatsoever without the author's written consent. Scripture quotations from the New American Standard Bible (c) 1973, 1995 Update, The Lockman Foundation.

Unless otherwise noted "Scripture quotations taken from the [NASB](#)." "Scripture taken from the **NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE**®, © Copyright 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation Used by permission." ([www.Lockman.org](http://www.Lockman.org))

Scripture quoted by permission. Quotations designated (NET) are from the NET Bible® copyright ©1996-2006 by Biblical Studies Press, L.L.C. <http://www.bible.org/>. All rights reserved.

Wil is a graduate of William Carey College, B. A.; New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, Th. M.; and Azusa Pacific University, M. A. He has pastored in Panama, Ecuador and the U. S, and served for over 20 years as missionary in Ecuador and Honduras. He had a daily expository Bible teaching ministry head in over 100 countries for ten years. He continues to seek opportunities to be personally involved in world missions. Wil and his wife Ann have three grown daughters. He currently serves as a Baptist pastor and teaches seminary extension courses in Honduras.

**Didn't find what you wanted on this page? [Search this Website Here](#)**

**[HOME](#) | [BIBLE STUDIES & SERMONS](#) | [ABIDE IN CHRIST](#)  
[SEARCH](#) | [PERSONAL GROWTH](#) | [LINKS](#) | [LATEST ADDITIONS](#) | [FEEDBACK](#)**

**[MAKE ABIDE IN CHRIST YOUR START PAGE](#)**