

HISTORY OF THE JEWS

By Josephus

Book Ten

CONTAINING THE INTERVAL OF ONE HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-TWO YEARS AND A HALF.

FROM THE CAPTIVITY OF THE TEN TRIBES TO THE FIRST YEAR OF CYRUS.

CHAPTER ONE

HOW SENNACHERIB MADE AN EXPEDITION AGAINST HEZEKIAH; WHAT THREATENINGS RABSHAKEH MADE TO HEZEKIAH WHEN SENNACHERIB WAS GONE AGAINST THE EGYPTIANS; HOW ISAIAH THE PROPHET ENCOURAGED HIM; HOW SENNACHERIB HAVING FAILED OF SUCCESS IN EGYPT, RETURNED THENCE TO JERUSALEM; AND HOW UPON HIS FINDING HIS ARMY DESTROYED, HE RETURNED HOME; AND WHAT BEFELL HIM A LITTLE AFTERWARD.

It was now the fourteenth year of the government of Hezekiah, king of the two tribes, when the king of Assyria, whose name was Sennacherib, made an expedition against him with a great army, and took all the cities of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin by force; and when he was ready to bring his army against Jerusalem, Hezekiah sent ambassadors to

him beforehand, and promised to submit, and pay what tribute he should appoint. Hereupon Sennacherib, when he heard of what offers the ambassadors made, resolved not to proceed in the war, but to accept of the proposals that were made him; and if he might receive three hundred talents of silver, and thirty talents of gold, he promised that he would depart in a friendly manner; and he gave security upon oath to the ambassadors that he would then do him no harm, but go away as he came. So Hezekiah submitted, and emptied his treasures, and sent the money, as supposing he should be freed from his enemy, and from any further distress about his kingdom. Accordingly, the Assyrian king took it, and yet had no regard to what he had promised; but while he himself went to the war against the Egyptians and Ethiopians, he left his general Rabshakeh, and two other of his principal commanders, with great forces, to destroy Jerusalem. The names of the two other commanders were Tartan and Rabsaris.

Now as soon as they were come before the walls, they pitched their camp, and sent messengers to Hezekiah, and desired that they might speak with him; but he did not himself come out to them for fear, but he sent three of his most intimate friends; the name of one was Eliakim, who was over the kingdom, and Shebna, and Joah the recorder. So these men came out, and stood over against the commanders of the Assyrian army; and when Rabshakeh saw them, he bid them go and speak to Hezekiah in the manner following: That Sennacherib, the great king, desires to know of him, on whom it is that he relies and depends, in flying from his lord, and will not hear him, nor

admit his army into the city? Is it on account of the Egyptians, and in hopes that his army would be beaten by them? Whereupon he lets him know, that if this be what he expects, he is a foolish man, and like one who leans on a broken reed; while such a one will not only fall down, but will have his hand pierced and hurt by it. That he ought to know he makes this expedition against him by the will of God, who hath granted this favor to him, that he shall overthrow the kingdom of Israel, and that in the very same manner he shall destroy those that are his subjects also. When Rabshakeh had made this speech in the Hebrew tongue, for he was skillful in that language, Eliakim was afraid lest the multitude that heard him should be disturbed; so he desired him to speak in the Syrian tongue. But the general, understanding what he meant, and perceiving the fear that he was in, he made his answer with a greater and a louder voice, but in the Hebrew tongue; and said, that "since they all heard what were the king's commands, they would consult their own advantage in delivering up themselves to us; for it is plain the both you and your king dissuade the people from submitting by vain hopes, and so induce them to resist; but if you be courageous, and think to drive our forces away, I am ready to deliver to you two thousand of these horses that are with me for your use, if you can set as many horsemen on their backs, and show your strength; but what you have not you cannot produce. Why therefore do you delay to deliver up yourselves to a superior force, who can take you without your consent? although it will be safer for you to deliver yourselves up voluntarily, while a forcible capture, when you are beaten, must appear more

dangerous, and will bring further calamities upon you.”

When the people, as well as the ambassadors, heard what the Assyrian commander said, they related it to Hezekiah, who thereupon put off his royal apparel, and clothed himself with sackcloth, and took the habit of a mourner, and, after the manner of his country, he fell upon his face, and besought God, and entreated him to assist them, now they had no other hope of relief. He also sent some of his friends, and some of the priests, to the prophet Isaiah, and desired that he would pray to God, and offer sacrifices for their common deliverance, and so put up supplications to him, that he would have indignation at the expectations of their enemies, and have mercy upon his people. And when the prophet had done accordingly, an oracle came from God to him, and encouraged the king and his friends that were about him; and foretold that their enemies should be beaten without fighting, and should go away in an ignominious manner, and not with that insolence which they now show, for that God would take care that they should be destroyed. He also foretold that Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, should fail of his purpose against Egypt, and that when he came home he should perish by the sword.

About the same time also the king of Assyria wrote an epistle to Hezekiah, in which he said he was a foolish man, in supposing that he should escape from being his servant, since he had already brought under many and great nations; and he threatened, that when he took him, he would utterly destroy him, unless he now opened the

gates, and willingly received his army into Jerusalem. When he read this epistle, he despised it, on account of the trust that he had in God; but he rolled up the epistle, and laid it up within the temple. And as he made his further prayers to God for the city, and for the preservation of all the people, the prophet Isaiah said that God had heard his prayer, and that he should not be besieged at this time by the king of Assyria that for the future he might be secure of not being at all disturbed by him; and that the people might go on peaceably, and without fear, with their husbandry and other affairs. But after a little while the king of Assyria, when he had failed of his treacherous designs against the Egyptians, returned home without success, on the following occasion: He spent a long time in the siege of Pelusium; and when the banks that he had raised over against the walls were of a great height, and when he was ready to make an immediate assault upon them, but heard that Tirhaka, king of the Ethiopians, was coming and bringing great forces to aid the Egyptians, and was resolved to march through the desert, and so to fall directly upon the Assyrians, this king Sennacherib was disturbed at the news, and, as I said before, left Pelusium, and returned back without success. Now concerning this Sennacherib, Herodotus also says, in the second book of his histories, how "this king came against the Egyptian king, who was the priest of Vulcan; and that as he was besieging Pelusium, he broke up the siege on the following occasion: This Egyptian priest prayed to God, and God heard his prayer, and sent a judgment upon the Arabian king." But in this Herodotus was mistaken, when he called this king not king of the

Assyrians, but of the Arabians; for he saith that "a multitude of mice gnawed to pieces in one night both the bows and the rest of the armor of the Assyrians, and that it was on that account that the king, when he had no bows left, drew off his army from Pelusium." And Herodotus does indeed give us this history; nay, and Berosus, who wrote of the affairs of Chaldea, makes mention of this king Sennacherib, and that he ruled over the Assyrians, and that he made an expedition against all Asia and Egypt; and says thus:

"Now when Sennacherib was returning from his Egyptian war to Jerusalem, he found his army under Rabshakeh his general in danger [by a plague], for God had sent a pestilential distemper upon his army; and on the very first night of the siege, a hundred fourscore and five thousand, with their captains and generals, were destroyed. So the king was in a great dread and in a terrible agony at this calamity; and being in great fear for his whole army, he fled with the rest of his forces to his own kingdom, and to his city Nineveh; and when he had abode there a little while, he was treacherously assaulted, and died by the hands of his elder sons, Adrammelech and Seraser, and was slain in his own temple, which was called Araske. Now these sons of his were driven away on account of the murder of their father by the citizens, and went into Armenia, while Assarachoddas took the kingdom of Sennacherib." And this proved to be the conclusion of this Assyrian expedition against the people of Jerusalem.

CHAPTER TWO

HOW HEZEKIAH WAS SICK, AND READY TO DIE; AND HOW GOD BESTOWED UPON HIM FIFTEEN YEARS LONGER LIFE, [AND SECURED THAT PROMISE] BY THE GOING BACK OF THE SHADOW TEN DEGREES.

NOW king Hezekiah being thus delivered, after a surprising manner, from the dread he was in, offered thank-offerings to God, with all his people, because nothing else had destroyed some of their enemies, and made the rest so fearful of undergoing the same fate that they departed from Jerusalem, but that Divine assistance. Yet, while he was very zealous and diligent about the worship of God, did he soon afterwards fall into a severe distemper, insomuch that the physicians despaired of him, and expected no good issue of his sickness, as neither did his friends: and besides the distemper itself, there was a very melancholy circumstance that disordered the king, which was the consideration that he was childless, and was going to die, and leave his house and his government without a successor of his own body; so he was troubled at the thoughts of this his condition, and lamented himself, and entreated of God that he would prolong his life for a little while till he had some children, and not suffer him to depart this life before he was become a father. Hereupon God had mercy upon him, and accepted of his supplication, because the trouble he was under at his supposed death was not because he was soon to leave the advantages he enjoyed in the kingdom, nor did he on that account pray that he might have a longer life afforded him, but in order to have sons, that might receive the government after him. And God sent Isaiah the prophet, and commanded him to inform Hezekiah,

that within three days' time he should get clear of his distemper, and should survive it fifteen years, and that he should have children also. Now, upon the prophet's saying this, as God had commanded him, he could hardly believe it, both on account of the distemper he was under, which was very sore, and by reason of the surprising nature of what was told him; so he desired that Isaiah would give him some sign or wonder, that he might believe him in what he had said, and be sensible that he came from God; for things that are beyond expectation, and greater than our hopes, are made credible by actions of the like nature. And when Isaiah had asked him what sign he desired to be exhibited, he desired that he would make the shadow of the sun, which he had already made to go down ten steps [or degrees] in his house, to return again to the same place, and to make it as it was before. And when the prophet prayed to God to exhibit this sign to the king, he saw what he desired to see, and was freed from his distemper, and went up to the temple, where he worshipped God, and made vows to him.

At this time it was that the dominion of the Assyrians was overthrown by the Medes; but of these things I shall treat elsewhere. But the king of Babylon, whose name was Baladan, sent ambassadors to Hezekiah, with presents, and desired he would be his ally and his friend. So he received the ambassadors gladly, and made them a feast, and showed them his treasures, and his armory, and the other wealth he was possessed of, in precious stones and in gold, and gave them presents to be carried to Baladan, and sent them back to him. Upon which the prophet Isaiah came to

him, and inquired of him whence those ambassadors came; to which he replied, that they came from Babylon, from the king; and that he had showed them all he had, that by the sight of his riches and forces he might thereby guess at [the plenty he was in], and be able to inform the king of it. But the prophet rejoined, and said, "Know thou, that, after a little while, these riches of thine shall be carried away to Babylon, and thy posterity shall be made eunuchs there, and lose their manhood, and be servants to the king of Babylon; for that God foretold such things would come to pass." Upon which words Hezekiah was troubled, and said that he was himself unwilling that his nation should fall into such calamities; yet since it is not possible to alter what God had determined, he prayed that there might be peace while he lived. Berosus also makes mention of this Baladan, king of Babylon. Now as to this prophet [Isaiah], he was by the confession of all, a divine and wonderful man in speaking truth; and out of the assurance that he had never written what was false, he wrote down all his prophecies, and left them behind him in books, that their accomplishment might be judged of from the events by posterity: nor did this prophet do so alone, but the others, which were twelve in number, did the same. And whatsoever is done among us, whether it be good, or whether it be bad, comes to pass according to their prophecies; but of every one of these we shall speak hereafter.

CHAPTER THREE

HOW MANASSEH REIGNED AFTER HEZEKIAH; AND HOW WHEN HE WAS IN CAPTIVITY HE RETURNED TO GOD AND WAS

RESTORED TO HIS KINGDOM AND LEFT It TO [HIS SON] AMON.

WHEN king Hezekiah had survived the interval of time already mentioned, and had dwelt all that time in peace, he died, having completed fifty-four years of his life, and reigned twenty-nine. But when his son Manasseh, whose mother's name was Hephzibah, of Jerusalem, had taken the kingdom, he departed from the conduct of his father, and fell into a course of life quite contrary thereto, and showed himself in his manners most wicked in all respects, and omitted no sort of impiety, but imitated those transgressions of the Israelites, by the commission of which against God they had been destroyed; for he was so hardy as to defile the temple of God, and the city, and the whole country; for, by setting out from a contempt of God, he barbarously slew all the righteous men that were among the Hebrews; nor would he spare the prophets, for he every day slew some of them, till Jerusalem was overflown with blood. So God was angry at these proceedings, and sent prophets to the king, and to the multitude, by whom he threatened the very same calamities to them which their brethren the Israelites, upon the like affronts offered to God, were now under. But these men would not believe their words, by which belief they might have reaped the advantage of escaping all those miseries; yet did they in earnest learn that what the prophets had told them was true.

And when they persevered in the same course of life, God raised up war against them from the king of Babylon and Chaldea, who sent an army against Judea, and laid waste the country; and caught king

Manasseh by treachery, and ordered him to be brought to him, and had him under his power to inflict what punishment he pleased upon him. But then it was that Manasseh perceived what a miserable condition he was in, and esteeming himself the cause of all, he besought God to render his enemy humane and merciful to him. Accordingly, God heard his prayer, and granted him what he prayed for. So Manasseh was released by the king of Babylon, and escaped the danger he was in; and when he was come to Jerusalem, he endeavored, if it were possible, to cast out of his memory those his former sins against God, of which he now repented, and to apply himself to a very religious life. He sanctified the temple, and purged the city, and for the remainder of his days he was intent on nothing but to return his thanks to God for his deliverance, and to preserve him propitious to him all his life long. He also instructed the multitude to do the same, as having very nearly experienced what a calamity he was fallen into by a contrary conduct. He also rebuilt the altar, and offered the legal sacrifices, as Moses commanded. And when he had re-established what concerned the Divine worship, as it ought to be, he took care of the security of Jerusalem: he did not only repair the old walls with great diligence, but added another wall to the former. He also built very lofty towers, and the garrisoned places before the city he strengthened, not only in other respects, but with provisions of all sorts that they wanted. And indeed, when he had changed his former course, he so led his life for the time to come, that from the time of his return to piety towards God he was deemed a happy man, and a pattern for imitation. When therefore

he had lived sixty-seven years, he departed this life, having reigned fifty-five years, and was buried in his own garden; and the kingdom came to his son Amon, whose mother's name was Meshulemeth, of the city of Jotbath.

CHAPTER FOUR

HOW AMON REIGNED INSTEAD OF MANASSEH; AND AFTER AMON REIGNED JOSIAH; HE WAS BOTH RIGHTEOUS AND RELIGIOUS. AS ALSO CONCERNING HULDAH THE PROPHETESS.

THIS Amon imitated those works of his father which he insolently did when he was young: so he had a conspiracy made against him by his own servants, and was slain in his own house, when he had lived twenty-four years, and of them had reigned two. But the multitude punished those that slew Amon, and buried him with his father, and gave the kingdom to his son Josiah, who was eight years old. His mother was of the city of Boscath, and her name was Jedidah. He was of a most excellent disposition, and naturally virtuous, and followed the actions of king David, as a pattern and a rule to him in the whole conduct of his life. And when he was twelve years old, he gave demonstrations of his religious and righteous behavior; for he brought the people to a sober way of living, and exhorted them to leave off the opinion they had of their idols, because they were not gods, but to worship their own God. And by repeating on the actions of his progenitors, he prudently corrected what they did wrong, like a very elderly man, and like one abundantly able to understand what was fit to be done; and what he

found they had well done, he observed all the country over, and imitated the same. And thus he acted in following the wisdom and sagacity of his own nature, and in compliance with the advice and instruction of the elders; for by following the laws it was that he succeeded so well in the order of his government, and in piety with regard to the Divine worship. And this happened because the transgressions of the former kings were seen no more, but quite vanished away; for the king went about the city, and the whole country, and cut down the groves which were devoted to strange gods, and overthrew their altars; and if there were any gifts dedicated to them by his forefathers, he made them ignominious, and plucked them down; and by this means he brought the people back from their opinion about them to the worship of God. He also offered his accustomed sacrifices and burnt-offerings upon the altar. Moreover, he ordained certain judges and overseers, that they might order the matters to them severally belonging, and have regard to justice above all things, and distribute it with the same concern they would have about their own soul. He also sent over all the country, and desired such as pleased to bring gold and silver for the repairs of the temple, according to every one's inclinations and abilities. And when the money was brought in, he made one Maaseiah the governor of the city, and Shaphan the scribe, and Joab the recorder, and Eliakim the high priest, curators of the temple, and of the charges contributed thereto; who made no delay, nor put the work off at all, but prepared architects, and whatsoever was proper for those repairs, and set closely about the work. So the temple was repaired by this means, and became

a public demonstration of the king's piety.

But when he was now in the eighteenth year of his reign, he sent to Eliakim the high priest, and gave order, that out of what money was overplus, he should cast cups, and dishes, and vials, for ministration [in the temple]; and besides, that they should bring all the gold or silver which was among the treasures, and expend that also in making cups and the like vessels. But as the high priest was bringing out the gold, he lighted upon the holy books of Moses that were laid up in the temple; and when he had brought them out, he gave them to Shaphan the scribe, who, when he had read them, came to the king, and informed him that all was finished which he had ordered to be done. He also read over the books to him, who, when he had heard them read, rent his garment, and called for Eliakim the high priest, and for [Shaphan] the scribe, and for certain [other] of his most particular friends, and sent them to Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum, (which Shallum was a man of dignity, and of an eminent family,) and bid them go to her, and say that [he desired] she would appease God, and endeavor to render him propitious to them, for that there was cause to fear, lest, upon the transgression of the laws of Moses by their forefathers, they should be in peril of going into captivity, and of being cast out of their own country; lest they should be in want of all things, and so end their days miserably. When the prophetess had heard this from the messengers that were sent to her by the king, she bid them go back to the king, and say that "God had already given sentence against them, to destroy the people, and cast them out of their

country, and deprive them of all the happiness they enjoyed; which sentence none could set aside by any prayers of theirs, since it was passed on account of their transgressions of the laws, and of their not having repented in so long a time, while the prophets had exhorted them to amend, and had foretold the punishment that would ensue on their impious practices; which threatening God would certainly execute upon them, that they might be persuaded that he is God, and had not deceived them in any respect as to what he had denounced by his prophets; that yet, because Josiah was a righteous man, he would at present delay those calamities, but that after his death he would send on the multitude what miseries he had determined for them.

So these messengers, upon this prophecy of the woman, came and told it to the king; whereupon he sent to the people every where, and ordered that the priests and the Levites should come together to Jerusalem; and commanded that those of every age should be present also. And when they had gathered together, he first read to them the holy books; after which he stood upon a pulpit, in the midst of the multitude, and obliged them to make a covenant, with an oath, that they would worship God, and keep the laws of Moses. Accordingly, they gave their assent willingly, and undertook to do what the king had recommended to them. So they immediately offered sacrifices, and that after an acceptable manner, and besought God to be gracious and merciful to them. He also enjoined the high priest, that if there remained in the temple any vessel that was dedicated to idols, or to foreign gods, they should cast it out. So when a great

number of such vessels were got together, he burnt them, and scattered their ashes abroad, and slew the priests of the idols that were not of the family of Aaron.

And when he had done thus in Jerusalem, he came into the country, and utterly destroyed what buildings had been made therein by king Jeroboam, in honor of strange gods; and he burnt the bones of the false prophets upon that altar which Jeroboam first built; and, as the prophet [Jadon], who came to Jeroboam when he was offering sacrifice, and when all the people heard him, foretold what would come to pass, viz. that a certain man of the house of David, Josiah by name, should do what is here mentioned. And it happened that those predictions took effect after three hundred and sixty-one years.

After these things, Josiah went also to such other Israelites as had escaped captivity and slavery under the Assyrians, and persuaded them to desist from their impious practices, and to leave off the honors they paid to strange gods, but to worship rightly their own Almighty God, and adhere to him. He also searched the houses, and the villages, and the cities, out of a suspicion that somebody might have one idol or other in private; nay, indeed, he took away the chariots [of the sun] that were set up in his royal palace, which his predecessors had framed, and what thing soever there was besides which they worshipped as a god. And when he had thus purged all the country, he called the people to Jerusalem, and there celebrated the feast of unleavened bread, and that called the passover. He also gave the people for

paschal sacrifices, young kids of the goats, and lambs, thirty thousand, and three thousand oxen for burnt-offerings. The principal of the priests also gave to the priests against the passover two thousand and six hundred lambs; the principal of the Levites also gave to the Levites five thousand lambs, and five hundred oxen, by which means there was great plenty of sacrifices; and they offered those sacrifices according to the laws of Moses, while every priest explained the matter, and ministered to the multitude. And indeed there had been no other festival thus celebrated by the Hebrews from the times of Samuel the prophet; and the plenty of sacrifices now was the occasion that all things were performed according to the laws, and according to the custom of their forefathers. So when Josiah had after this lived in peace, nay, in riches and reputation also, among all men, he ended his life in the manner following.

CHAPTER FIVE

HOW JOSIAH FOUGHT WITH NECO [KING OF EGYPT.] AND WAS WOUNDED AND DIED IN A LITTLE TIME AFTERWARD; AS ALSO HOW NECO CARRIED JEHOAHAZ, WHO HAD BEEN MADE KING INTO EGYPT AND DELIVERED THE KINGDOM TO JEHOIAKIM; AND [LASTLY] CONCERNING JEREMIAH AND EZEKIEL.

NOW Neco, king of Egypt, raised an army, and marched to the river Euphrates, in order to fight with the Medes and Babylonians, who had overthrown the dominion of the Assyrians, for he had a desire to reign over Asia. Now when he was come to the city Mendes, which belonged to the kingdom of Josiah, he brought an army to hinder him from

passing through his own country, in his expedition against the Medes. Now Neco sent a herald to Josiah, and told him that he did not make this expedition against him, but was making haste to Euphrates; and desired that he would not provoke him to fight against him, because he obstructed his march to the place whither he had resolved to go. But Josiah did not admit of this advice of Neco, but put himself into a posture to hinder him from his intended march. I suppose it was fate that pushed him on this conduct, that it might take an occasion against him; for as he was setting his army in array, and rode about in his chariot, from one wing of his army to another, one of the Egyptians shot an arrow at him, and put an end to his eagerness of fighting; for being sorely wounded, he command a retreat to be sounded for his army, and returned to Jerusalem, and died of that wound; and was magnificently buried in the sepulcher of his fathers, when he had lived thirty-nine years, and of them had reigned thirty-one. But all the people mourned greatly for him, lamenting and grieving on his account many days; and Jeremiah the prophet composed an elegy to lament him, which is extant till tills time also. Moreover, this prophet denounced beforehand the sad calamities that were coming upon the city. He also left behind him in writing a description of that destruction of our nation which has lately happened in our days, and the taking of Babylon; nor was he the only prophet who delivered such predictions beforehand to the multitude, but so did Ezekiel also, who was the first person that wrote, and left behind him in writing two books concerning these events. Now these two prophets were priests by birth, but of them Jeremiah dwelt

in Jerusalem, from the thirteenth year of the reign of Josiah, until the city and temple were utterly destroyed. However, as to what befell this prophet, we will relate it in its proper place.

Upon the death of Josiah, which we have already mentioned, his son, Jehoahaz by name, took the kingdom, being about twenty-three years old. He reigned in Jerusalem; and his mother was Hamutal, of the city Libhah. He was an impious man, and impure in his course of life; but as the king of Egypt returned from the battle, he sent for Jehoahaz to come to him, to the city called Hamath which belongs to Syria; and when he was come, he put him in bands, and delivered the kingdom to a brother of his, by the father's side, whose name was Eliakim, and changed his name to Jehoiakim and laid a tribute upon the land of a hundred talents of silver, and a talent of gold; and this sum of money Jehoiakim paid by way of tribute; but Neco carried away Jehoahaz into Egypt, where he died when he had reigned three months and ten days. Now Jehoiakim's mother was called Zebudah, of the city Rumah. He was of a wicked disposition, and ready to do mischief; nor was he either religious towards God, or good-natured towards men.

CHAPTER SIX

HOW NEBUCHADNEZZAR, WHEN HE HAD CONQUERED THE KING OF EGYPT MADE AN EXPEDITION AGAINST THE JEWS, AND SLEW JEHOIAKIM, AND MADE JEHOLACHIN HIS SON KING.

NOW in the fourth year of the reign of Jehoiakim, one whose name was Nebuchadnezzar took the government over the Babylonians, who at the same

time went up with a great army to the city Carchemish, which was at Euphrates, upon a resolution he had taken to fight with Neco king of Egypt, under whom all Syria then was. And when Neco understood the intention of the king of Babylon, and that this expedition was made against him, he did not despise his attempt, but made haste with a great band of men to Euphrates to defend himself from Nebuchadnezzar; and when they had joined battle, he was beaten, and lost many ten thousands [of his soldiers] in the battle. So the king of Babylon passed over Euphrates, and took all Syria, as far as Pelusium, excepting Judea. But when Nebuchadnezzar had already reigned four years, which was the eighth of Jehoiakim's government over the Hebrews, the king of Babylon made an expedition with mighty forces against the Jews, and required tribute of Jehoiakim, and threatened upon his refusal to make war against him. He was affrighted at his threatening, and bought his peace with money, and brought the tribute he was ordered to bring for three years.

But on the third year, upon hearing that the king of the Babylonians made an expedition against the Egyptians, he did not pay his tribute; yet was he disappointed of his hope, for the Egyptians durst not fight at this time. And indeed the prophet Jeremiah foretold every day, how vainly they relied on their hopes from Egypt, and how the city would be overthrown by the king of Babylon, and Jehoiakim the king would be subdued by him. But what he thus spake proved to be of no advantage to them, because there were none that should escape; for both the multitude and the rulers, when they heard him, had no concern about what they heard;

but being displeased at what was said, as if the prophet were a diviner against the king, they accused Jeremiah, and bringing him before the court, they required that a sentence and a punishment might be given against him. Now all the rest gave their votes for his condemnation, but the elders refused, who prudently sent away the prophet from the court of [the prison], and persuaded the rest to do Jeremiah no harm; for they said that he was not the only person who foretold what would come to the city, but that Micah signified the same before him, as well as many others, none of which suffered any thing of the kings that then reigned, but were honored as the prophets of God. So they mollified the multitude with these words, and delivered Jeremiah from the punishment to which he was condemned. Now when this prophet had written all his prophecies, and the people were fasting, and assembled at the temple, on the ninth month of the fifth year of Jehoiakim, he read the book he had composed of his predictions of what was to befall the city, and the temple, and the multitude. And when the rulers heard of it, they took the book from him, and bid him and Baruch the scribe to go their ways, lest they should be discovered by one or other; but they carried the book, and gave it to the king; so he gave order, in the presence of his friends, that his scribe should take it, and read it. When the king heard what it contained, he was angry, and tore it, and cast it into the fire, where it was consumed. He also commanded that they should seek for Jeremiah, and Baruch the scribe, and bring them to him, that they might be punished. However, they escaped his anger.

Now, a little time afterwards, the king of Babylon made an expedition against Jehoiakim, whom he received [into the city], and this out of fear of the foregoing predictions of this prophet, as supposing he should suffer nothing that was terrible, because he neither shut the gates, nor fought against him; yet when he was come into the city, he did not observe the covenants he had made, but he slew such as were in the flower of their age, and such as were of the greatest dignity, together with their king Jehoiakim, whom he commanded to be thrown before the walls, without any burial; and made his son Jehoiachin king of the country, and of the city: he also took the principal persons in dignity for captives, three thousand in number, and led them away to Babylon; among which was the prophet Ezekiel, who was then but young. And this was the end of king Jehoiakim, when he had lived thirty-six years, and of them reigned eleven. But Jehoiachin succeeded him in the kingdom, whose mother's name was Nehushta; she was a citizen of Jerusalem. He reigned three months and ten days.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THAT THE KING OF BABYLON REPENTED OF MAKING JEHOIACHIN KING, AND TOOK HIM AWAY TO BABYLON AND DELIVERED THE KINGDOM TO ZEDEKIAH. THIS KING WOULD NOT RELIEVE WHAT WAS PREDICTED BY JEREMIAH AND EZEKIEL BUT JOINED HIMSELF TO THE EGYPTIANS; WHO WHEN THEY CAME INTO JUDEA, WERE VANQUISHED BY THE KING OF BABYLON; AS ALSO WHAT BEFELL JEREMIAH.

BUT a terror seized on the king of Babylon, who had given the kingdom to Jehoiachin, and that

immediately; he was afraid that he should bear him a grudge, because of his killing his father, and thereupon should make the country revolt from him; wherefore he sent an army, and besieged Jehoiachin in Jerusalem; but because he was of a gentle and just disposition, he did not desire to see the city endangered on his account, but he took his mother and kindred, and delivered them to the commanders sent by the king of Babylon, and accepted of their oaths, that neither should they suffer any harm, nor the city; which agreement they did not observe for a single year, for the king of Babylon did not keep it, but gave orders to his generals to take all that were in the city captives, both the youth and the handicraftsmen, and bring them bound to him; their number was ten thousand eight hundred and thirty-two; as also Jehoiachin, and his mother and friends. And when these were brought to him, he kept them in custody, and appointed Jehoiachin's uncle, Zedekiah, to be king; and made him take an oath, that he would certainly keep the kingdom for him, and make no innovation, nor have any league of friendship with the Egyptians.

Now Zedekiah was twenty and one year's old when he took the government; and had the same mother with his brother Jehoiakim, but was a despiser of justice and of his duty, for truly those of the same age with him were wicked about him, and the whole multitude did what unjust and insolent things they pleased; for which reason the prophet Jeremiah came often to him, and protested to him, and insisted, that he must leave off his impieties and transgressions, and take care of what was right, and neither give ear to the rulers, (among

whom were wicked men,) nor give credit to their false prophets, who deluded them, as if the king of Babylon would make no more war against them, and as if the Egyptians would make war against him, and conquer him, since what they said was not true, and the events would not prove such [as they expected]. Now as to Zedekiah himself, while he heard the prophet speak, he believed him, and agreed to every thing as true, and supposed it was for his advantage; but then his friends perverted him, and dissuaded him from what the prophet advised, and obliged him to do what they pleased. Ezekiel also foretold in Babylon what calamities were coming upon the people, which when he heard, he sent accounts of them unto Jerusalem. But Zedekiah did not believe their prophecies, for the reason following: It happened that the two prophets agreed with one another in what they said as in all other things, that the city should be taken, and Zedekiah himself should be taken captive; but Ezekiel disagreed with him, and said that Zedekiah should not see Babylon, while Jeremiah said to him, that the king of Babylon should carry him away thither in bonds. And be-

Now when Zedekiah had preserved the league of mutual assistance he had made with the Babylonians for eight years, he brake it, and revolted to the Egyptians, in hopes, by their assistance, of overcoming the Babylonians. When the king of Babylon knew this, he made war against him: he laid his country waste, and took his fortified towns, and came to the city Jerusalem itself to besiege it. But when the king of Egypt heard what circumstances Zedekiah his ally was in, he took a great army with him, and came into Judea, as if he

would raise the siege; upon which the king of Babylon departed from Jerusalem, and met the Egyptians, and joined battle with them, and beat them; and when he had put them to flight, he pursued them, and drove them out of all Syria. Now as soon as the king of Babylon was departed from Jerusalem, the false prophets deceived Zedekiah, and said that the king of Babylon would not any more make war against him or his people, nor remove them out of their own country into Babylon; and that those then in captivity would return, with all those vessels of the temple of which the king of Babylon had despoiled that temple. But Jeremiah came among them, and prophesied what contradicted those predictions, and what proved to be true, that they did ill, and deluded the king; that the Egyptians would be of no advantage to them, but that the king of Babylon would renew the war against Jerusalem, and besiege it again, and would destroy the people by famine, and carry away those that remained into captivity, and would take away what they had as spoils, and would carry off those riches that were in the temple; nay, that, besides this, he would burn it, and utterly overthrow the city, and that they should serve him and his posterity seventy years; that then the Persians and the Medes should put an end to their servitude, and overthrow the Babylonians; "and that we shall be dismissed, and return to this land, and rebuild the temple, and restore Jerusalem." When Jeremiah said this, the greater part believed him; but the rulers, and those that were wicked, despised him, as one disordered in his senses. Now he had resolved to go elsewhere, to his own country, which was called Anathoth, and was twenty furlongs distant from Jerusalem; and as

he was going, one of the rulers met him, and seized upon him, and accused him falsely, as though he were going as a deserter to the Babylonians; but Jeremiah said that he accused him falsely, and added, that he was only going to his own country; but the other would not believe him, but seized upon him, and led him away to the rulers, and laid an accusation against him, under whom he endured all sorts of torments and tortures, and was reserved to be punished; and this was the condition he was in for some time, while he suffered what I have already described unjustly.

Now in the ninth year of the reign of Zedekiah, on the tenth day of the tenth month, the king of Babylon made a second expedition against Jerusalem, and lay before it eighteen months, and besieged it with the utmost application. There came upon them also two of the greatest calamities at the same time that Jerusalem was besieged, a famine and a pestilential distemper, and made great havoc of them. And though the prophet Jeremiah was in prison, he did not rest, but cried out, and proclaimed aloud, and exhorted the multitude to open their gates, and admit the king of Babylon, for that if they did so, they should be preserved, and their whole families; but if they did not so, they should be destroyed; and he foretold, that if any one staid in the city, he should certainly perish by one of these ways, - either be consumed by the famine, or slain by the enemy's sword; but that if he would flee to the enemy, he should escape death. Yet did not these rulers who heard believe him, even when they were in the midst of their sore calamities; but they

came to the king, and in their anger informed him what Jeremiah had said, and accused him, and complained of the prophet as of a madman, and one that disheartened their minds, and by the denunciation of miseries weakened the alacrity of the multitude, who were otherwise ready to expose themselves to dangers for him, and for their country, while he, in a way of threatening, warned them to flee to the enemy, and told them that the city should certainly be taken, and be utterly destroyed.

But for the king himself, he was not at all irritated against Jeremiah, such was his gentle and righteous disposition; yet, that he might not be engaged in a quarrel with those rulers at such a time, by opposing what they intended, he let them do with the prophet whatsoever they would; whereupon, when the king had granted them such a permission, they presently came into the prison, and took him, and let him down with a cord into a pit full of mire, that he might be suffocated, and die of himself. So he stood up to the neck in the mire which was all about him, and so continued; but there was one of the king's servants, who was in esteem with him, an Ethiopian by descent, who told the king what a state the prophet was in, and said that his friends and his rulers had done evil in putting the prophet into the mire, and by that means contriving against him that he should suffer a death more bitter than that by his bonds only. When the king heard this, he repented of his having delivered up the prophet to the rulers, and bid the Ethiopian take thirty men of the king's guards, and cords with them, and whatsoever else they understood to be necessary for the prophet's

preservation, and to draw him up immediately. So the Ethiopian took the men he was ordered to take, and drew up the prophet out of the mire, and left him at liberty [in the prison].

But when the king had sent to call him privately, and inquired what he could say to him from God, which might be suitable to his present circumstances, and desired him to inform him of it, Jeremiah replied, that he had somewhat to say; but he said withal, he should not be believed, nor, if he admonished them, should be hearkened to; "for," said he, "thy friends have determined to destroy me, as though I had been guilty of some wickedness; and where are now those men who deceived us, and said that the king of Babylon would not come and fight against us any more? but I am afraid now to speak the truth, lest thou shouldst condemn me to die." And when the king had assured him upon oath, that he would neither himself put him to death, nor deliver him up to the rulers, he became bold upon that assurance that was given him, and gave him this advice: That he should deliver the city up to the Babylonians; and he said that it was God who prophesied this by him, that [he must do so] if he would be preserved, and escape out of the danger he was in, and that then neither should the city fall to the ground, nor should the temple be burned; but that [if he disobeyed] he would be the cause of these miseries coming upon the citizens, and of the calamity that would befall his whole house. When the king heard this, he said that he would willingly do what he persuaded him to, and what he declared would be to his advantage, but that he was afraid of those of his own country that had

fallen away to the Babylonians, lest he should be accused by them to the king of Babylon, and be punished. But the prophet encouraged him, and said he had no cause to fear such punishment, for that he should not have the experience of any misfortune, if he would deliver all up to the Babylonians, neither himself, nor his children, nor his wives, and that the temple should then continue unhurt. So when Jeremiah had said this, the king let him go, and charged him to betray what they had resolved on to none of the citizens, nor to tell any of these matters to any of the rulers, if they should have learned that he had been sent for, and should inquire of him what it was that he was sent for, and what he had said to him; but to pretend to them that he besought him that he might not be kept in bonds and in prison. And indeed he said so to them; for they came to the prophet, and asked him what advice it was that he came to give the king relating to them. And thus I have finished what concerns this matter.

