

A number of years ago I was standing in the parking lot of a funeral home talking with a friend about our recently deceased friend. Since our friend was a “religious” person, our discussion shifted to a couple of biblical questions when my friend asked “How do you explain the “curse of Jehoiachin”? “Hmmm” I thought. “Who is Jehoiachin?” So as to not look any dumber than I was obviously was in regards to the Kings of Judah, I simply said “I’m not sure – I’ll check into it” and quickly changed the subject.

Later that week I did check into it and found that God spoke to the prophet Jeremiah saying that Jehoiachin - Judah’s last king - would be considered childless because none of his descendants would ever sit on the throne of David.

<sup>ESV</sup> **Jeremiah 22:30** Thus says the LORD: "Write this man down as childless, a man who shall not succeed in his days, for none of his offspring shall succeed in sitting on the throne of David and ruling again in Judah."

OK – “big deal” I thought to myself – that is until I realized that the genealogy of Yeshua – both through Joseph and Mary, list Jehoiachin in as one of His ancestors. In Matthew’s account, which gives the genealogy through Joseph, Jehoiachin is called “Jeconiah” –

<sup>NKJ</sup> **Matthew 1:11-12** Josiah begot Jeconiah and his brothers about the time they were carried away to Babylon. <sup>12</sup> And after they were brought to Babylon, Jeconiah begot Shealtiel, and Shealtiel begot Zerubbabel.

Luke’s account, which appears to give the genealogy though Mary, does not specifically list Jehoiachin, but instead lists his son Shealtiel, and his grandson Zerubbabel, which of course implies that Jehoiachin was part of the genealogy as well.

So now I had a problem. As a firm believer that God does not change (Malachi 3:6), I had to ask myself – “what changed?” So I began to search and along the way found that many “anti-missionary” websites use Jeremiah’s prophecy to show that Yeshua (Jesus) was not the Messiah! But thankfully, there were some answers and the most logical one seemed to be that Jehoiachin – like King Menasseh, repented and God removed the curse.

Though that explanation satisfied my curiosity enough to let me move on to other things, the question came up a few months back when I was looking for information on “the rapture” and ran across a study that claimed that Yeshua’s kingdom would not be on earth, but would remain in Heaven because the “curse” prohibited Yeshua from sitting on David’s “earthly throne”<sup>1</sup>. “Now I really have a problem” I thought to myself, so I decided to dig in to this problem. I decided to bypass all the web sites and commentaries and figure it out for myself. After asking for guidance and insight, the following study is what I came up with. I’m going to break it down into three broad points:

1. Jehoiachin did not lose the kingship because of unrighteousness or rebellion
2. God had already shown that the kingly line could end
3. Jehoiachin was simply the vehicle by which the line would end

### **Who was Jehoiachin?**

Jehoiachin was the grandson of Judah’s last “good” king, Josiah. He was the son of son of Josiah’s second son, Jehoiakim.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.simplybible.com/f32t-preml-no-earthly-throne.htm>



<sup>NKJ</sup> **1 Chronicles 3:15-16** The sons of Josiah *were* Johanan the firstborn, the second Jehoiakim, the third Zedekiah, and the fourth Shallum. <sup>16</sup> The sons of Jehoiakim *were* Jeconiah his son *and* Zedekiah his son.

Jehoiakim's birth name was Eliakim<sup>2</sup>, Zedekiah's birth name was Mattanyahu, and Shallam's name was changed to Jehoahaz. If that is not confusing enough, we find that Jehoiachin is referenced three different ways in the scripture. In order of occurrence, they are –

<sup>NKJ</sup> **2 Kings 24:6** So Jehoiakim rested with his fathers. Then **Jehoiachin** his son reigned in his place.

<sup>NKJ</sup> **1 Chronicles 3:16** The sons of Jehoiakim *were* **Jeconiah** his son *and* Zedekiah his son.

<sup>NKJ</sup> **Jeremiah 22:24** <sup>24</sup> "As I live," says the LORD, "though **Coniah** the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, were the signet on My right hand, yet I would pluck you off;

Since in Hebrew there is no "j" sound, Jehoiachin would be pronounced "Yechoiachin", and since his name is very similar to his father Jehoiakim's name, for the balance of this study, I'm going to refer to Jehoiachin as "Coniah" so as to keep the two separate.

### Judah's Promised Captivity

Coniah lived during one of the worst times in Judah's history. The kingdom had been departing from YHVH for many years, with only brief interludes as in the case of King Josiah who was killed in a battle against Pharaoh Necho who was passing through Judah on his way to fight against the Babylonians. The people of the land made Josiah's youngest son Jehoahaz the king in his stead. On the return from the battle with the Babylonians, Pharaoh Necho to capture Jehoahaz and installed Jehoiakim – Jehoahaz's older brother - as Judah's king in his place. Pharaoh then took Jehoahaz<sup>3</sup> to Egypt where he died.

Jehoiakim was an evil king. Jeremiah indicates that he enslaved his fellow Jews to build buildings for him, and if they refused, he would kill them<sup>4</sup>. Apparently Jehoiakim was so bad that God would not even allow him to be buried when he died -

<sup>ESV</sup> **Jeremiah 22:19** With the burial of a donkey he shall be buried, dragged and dumped beyond the gates of Jerusalem."

Because Jehoiakim's sins were so great, God stated that He would not pardon him, and furthermore, His son's would not sit on the throne of David –

<sup>ESV</sup> **2 Kings 24:4** ... and also for the innocent blood that he had shed. For he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood, and the LORD would not pardon.

<sup>ESV</sup> **Jeremiah 36:30-31** Therefore thus says the LORD concerning Jehoiakim king of Judah: He shall have none to sit on the throne of David, and his dead body shall be cast out to the heat by day and the frost by night. <sup>31</sup> And I will punish him and his offspring and his servants for their iniquity. I will bring upon them and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem and upon the people of Judah all the disaster that I have pronounced against them, but they would not hear."

Note that in the above passage, YHVH is stating that because of Jehoiakim's, his offspring's, and his servant's guilt, the disaster that He had pronounced would come upon the people of Judah. It is interesting to note that the LXX does not include the words "for their iniquity". This is an interesting detail

<sup>2</sup> 2 Chron. 36:4

<sup>3</sup> 2 Kings 23:30-34

<sup>4</sup> Jer. 22:13-17



because though YHVH does punish the people for the sins of the king, He seldom punishes a people for the sins of servants or the king's offspring. This would be especially true in Jehoiakim's case since he had only one son, and at the time of Jehoiakim's death, His son Coniah was only 18 years old. What's more, the disaster YHVH had proclaimed had actually been announced generations before – during the reign of King Manasseh. This proclamation is recorded in the book of 2 Kings –

<sup>ESV</sup> **2 Kings 21:11-14** "Because Manasseh king of Judah has committed these abominations and has done things more evil than all that the Amorites did, who were before him, and has made Judah also to sin with his idols, <sup>12</sup> therefore thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: Behold, I am bringing upon Jerusalem and Judah such disaster that the ears of everyone who hears of it will tingle. <sup>13</sup> And I will stretch over Jerusalem the measuring line of Samaria, and the plumb line of the house of Ahab, and I will wipe Jerusalem as one wipes a dish, wiping it and turning it upside down. <sup>14</sup> And I will forsake the remnant of my heritage and give them into the hand of their enemies, and they shall become a prey and a spoil to all their enemies ...

What YHVH is saying is that just as He had removed the northern kingdom from Samaria, and had ended Ahab's kingly lineage, He was going to remove the Jewish people from Judea and "turn the plate over" indicating that the land would not be used. In other words, Judah would eventually go into captivity.<sup>5</sup>

Even though Manasseh eventually repented, the damage he had done to Jerusalem and the Judean people was so great, YHVH stated through Jeremiah that he would never reverse His judgment on them

<sup>ESV</sup> **Jeremiah 15:1-4** Then the LORD said to me, "Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my heart would not turn toward this people. Send them out of my sight, and let them go! <sup>2</sup> And when they ask you, 'Where shall we go?' you shall say to them, 'Thus says the LORD: " Those who are for pestilence, to pestilence, and those who are for the sword, to the sword; those who are for famine, to famine, and those who are for captivity, to captivity.' <sup>3</sup> I will appoint over them four kinds of destroyers, declares the LORD: the sword to kill, the dogs to tear, and the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth to devour and destroy. <sup>4</sup> And I will make them a horror to all the kingdoms of the earth because of what Manasseh the son of Hezekiah, king of Judah, did in Jerusalem.

When you consider the fact that the promised disasters was the result of the evil deeds of King Manasseh and tie that to Jeremiah 36:30-31 (above) we see that Jehoiakim's sins are simply what triggered the disaster to begin. This is further substantiated by Jeremiah where he said –

<sup>ESV</sup> **2 Kings 24:1-3** In his days, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up, and Jehoiakim became his servant three years. Then he turned and rebelled against him. <sup>2</sup> And the LORD sent against him bands of the Chaldeans and bands of the Syrians and bands of the Moabites and bands of the Ammonites, and sent them against Judah to destroy it, according to the word of the LORD that he spoke by his servants the prophets. <sup>3</sup> Surely this came upon Judah at the command of the LORD, to remove them out of his sight, **for the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he had done ...**

So the Jewish captivity came about as a result of the deeds of King Manasseh, not by the 'sins' of Coniah.

### Coniah's Sins?

Now that we know the reason why the people of Judea were taken captive, and why it began at the time it did, we have to ask the question "what part did Coniah play in bringing this on the Jewish people?" "What

<sup>5</sup> See also Jeremiah 15:1-4



grievous sins did he commit that would cause YHVH to put a curse on him?" The answer is quite simply – there is no indication that the ‘curse’ was a result of sin. Why? Because the scripture is silent in regards to his sins. There is no place where God says something along the lines of “... because of Coniah’s sins ...”.

But does not the scripture say that he was just like his father? Yes it does -

<sup>ESV</sup> **2 Kings 24:6-9** So Jehoiakim slept with his fathers, and Jehoiachin his son reigned in his place. <sup>7</sup> And the king of Egypt did not come again out of his land, for the king of Babylon had taken all that belonged to the king of Egypt from the Brook of Egypt to the river Euphrates. <sup>8</sup> Jehoiachin (Coniah) was eighteen years old when he became king, and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Nehushta the daughter of Elnathan of Jerusalem. <sup>9</sup> And he did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father had done.

The scripture does indeed indicate that he followed in his father’s footsteps, but again - there is no record of any evil perpetrated by him. It is interesting to note that the same was said of both his father Jehoiakim and his uncle Jehoahaz; both sons of King Josiah - one who is portrayed as a ‘good’ king. Though he surely did sin from time to time, God chose to provide no record of Josiah’s sins. The same holds true for Josiah’s son Jehoahaz who only reigned for 3 months and was removed by Pharaoh Necho; and for Coniah – Josiah’s grandson who also reigned for only 3 months and of whom there is no record of his sins. This is not the same though for Jehoiakim – Coniah’s father - who became king after Jehoahaz and whose sins are well documented.

When you think about it, a king that reigns for only three months has little time to move the people in one direction or another. It is not enough time to reverse the evil of his father, or to pervert a righteous people. So by God showing us the extremely short duration of Coniah’s or his uncle’s reign, we could assume that He is also showing us that these kings could not really be classified either “bad” or “good”, though in Coniah’s case, as we study further we might be able to make a judgment ourselves.

### Jeremiah’s Prophecy

To understand what happened with Coniah and why God put a ‘curse’ on him, we need to see what the prophet Jeremiah was facing.

Jeremiah as given the task of warning the kings that came from Josiah of the disaster that was soon to befall Judea. As one might imagine, this was not an easy task. Not only were his prophecies rejected, his life was threatened by those who claimed that he was only spreading fear. Furthermore, there were those who claimed to be prophets who were providing an alternative view – that Judah would remain strong.

Nebuchadnezzar became king of Babylon during the fourth year of Jehoiakim’s reign (a little over four years since the death of King Josiah), and at that time God sent his word through Jeremiah to the people of Judea. He explained that for a quarter century<sup>6</sup> God had been warning them to turn from evil and seek God. Apparently, even though Josiah had tried to restore the people to God, the multitudes had continued to practice idolatry. So Jeremiah prophesied –

<sup>ESV</sup> **Jeremiah 25:8-11** <sup>8</sup> "Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts: Because you have not obeyed my words, <sup>9</sup> behold, I will send for all the tribes of the north, declares the LORD, and for Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and I will bring them against this land and its inhabitants, and against all these surrounding nations. I will devote them to destruction, and make them a horror, a hissing, and an everlasting desolation. <sup>10</sup> Moreover, I will banish from them the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride,

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<sup>6</sup> Jeremiah 25:1-7



the grinding of the millstones and the light of the lamp. <sup>11</sup> This whole land shall become a ruin and a waste, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.

Being that this prophecy took place in the fourth year of Jehoiakim's reign, and since he reigned for eleven years<sup>7</sup>, it is still 7 years before Coniah will become king, which further substantiates the premise that the disaster was not due to Coniah's behavior.

Jeremiah's prophecy was not well received by the Jewish leadership of that day, and so they set out to destroy him.

<sup>ESV</sup> **Jeremiah 26:8-11** And when Jeremiah had finished speaking all that the LORD had commanded him to speak to all the people, then the priests and the prophets and all the people laid hold of him, saying, "You shall die! <sup>9</sup> Why have you prophesied in the name of the LORD, saying, 'This house shall be like Shiloh, and this city shall be desolate, without inhabitant?'" And all the people gathered around Jeremiah in the house of the LORD. <sup>10</sup> When the officials of Judah heard these things, they came up from the king's house to the house of the LORD and took their seat in the entry of the New Gate of the house of the LORD. <sup>11</sup> Then the priests and the prophets said to the officials and to all the people, "This man deserves the sentence of death, because he has prophesied against this city, as you have heard with your own ears."

Though the people's threats against Jeremiah were serious, he had allies who defended him and therefore was not killed. Instead he faced ridicule as other "prophets" claimed that either the disaster would not come about, or that the captivity would be very short.<sup>8</sup> As we continue through Jeremiah's prophecy, we find more instructions that help us to understand more of Coniah's relationship to Jeremiah and to YHVH.

Jeremiah continued to prophecy that Judea and the nations surrounding her would be taken by captive by Nebuchadnezzar, and that the peoples of those nations should not resist -

<sup>NKJ</sup> **Jeremiah 27:8** 'And it shall be, that the nation and kingdom which will not serve Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, and which will not put its neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, that nation I will punish,' says the LORD, 'with the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, until I have consumed them by his hand.'

Jeremiah was given a vision – one that would apply to Coniah and those who heeded Jeremiah's warning to surrender and one that would apply to Zedekiah – the king that followed Coniah and to those who resisted the Babylonians. In the vision Jeremiah saw two baskets of figs; one with good figs and one with bad figs – so bad they could not be eaten. God explained the good figs like this –

<sup>ESV</sup> **Jeremiah 24:5-7** Like these good figs, so I will regard as good the exiles from Judah, whom I have sent away from this place to the land of the Chaldeans. <sup>6</sup> I will set my eyes on them for good, and I will bring them back to this land. I will build them up, and not tear them down; I will plant them, and not uproot them. <sup>7</sup> I will give them a heart to know that I am the LORD, and they shall be my people and I will be their God, for they shall return to me with their whole heart.

He then explained the bad figs -

<sup>ESV</sup> **Jeremiah 24:8-10** Like the bad figs that are so bad they cannot be eaten, so will I treat Zedekiah the king of Judah, his officials, the remnant of Jerusalem who remain in this land, and those who dwell in the land of Egypt. <sup>9</sup> I will make them a horror<sup>1</sup> to all the kingdoms of the earth, to be a reproach, a byword, a taunt, and a curse in all the places where I shall drive them. <sup>10</sup> And

<sup>7</sup> reference for Jehoiakim's reign

<sup>8</sup> Jeremiah 27:16 – 28:17



I will send sword, famine, and pestilence upon them, until they shall be utterly destroyed from the land that I gave to them and their fathers."

The death of the "bad figs" – those who failed to surrender to Nebuchadnezzar was severe and is documented in 2 Kings 25 and Lamentation 4.

Jeremiah later prophesied<sup>9</sup> after being prompted by a couple of King Zedekiah's surrogates to ask YHVH to intervene on Judah's behalf. Jeremiah's response was –

<sup>ESV</sup> **Jeremiah 21:4-5** "Thus you shall say to Zedekiah, 'Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: Behold, I will turn back the weapons of war that are in your hands and with which you are fighting against the king of Babylon and against the Chaldeans who are besieging you outside the walls. And I will bring them together into the midst of this city. <sup>5</sup> I myself will fight against you with outstretched hand and strong arm, in anger and in fury and in great wrath.

YHVH was telling the king that that instead of protecting them from Nebuchadnezzar's army, He would fight against Zedekiah and Judah if the people of Judea did not surrender. Jeremiah then directed the prophecy to the people themselves -

<sup>ESV</sup> **Jeremiah 21:8-9** <sup>8</sup> "And to this people you shall say: 'Thus says the LORD: Behold, I set before you the way of life and the way of death. <sup>9</sup> He who stays in this city shall die by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence, but he who goes out and surrenders to the Chaldeans who are besieging you shall live and shall have his life as a prize of war.

Most of these prophecies were delivered to Judah in the days of King Jehoiakim, and though he lived to see the Nebuchadnezzar's rise to power and his exploits as he began to subdue the nations around him, he died before Judea was taken captive.

### Coniah's Choice

When Coniah became king at the young age of eighteen years old, he immediately faced a crisis. He had to determine if he was going to resist the approaching Chaldean army or heed the instructions of God as delivered by His prophet Jeremiah. If he heeded the warning by surrendering, he obviously believed his people would have a much better chance of survival than they would if they resisted or if they fled. In the face of certain ridicule by his advisers, military leaders, religious leaders, and his own uncle, he chose to surrender - and apparently encouraged all Jerusalem to do so as well.

<sup>ESV</sup> **2 Kings 24:10-14** At that time the servants of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up to Jerusalem, and the city was besieged. <sup>11</sup> And Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to the city while his servants were besieging it, <sup>12</sup> and **Coniah the king of Judah gave himself up to the king of Babylon, himself and his mother and his servants and his officials and his palace officials.** The king of Babylon took him prisoner in the eighth year of his (Nebuchadnezzar's) reign <sup>13</sup> and carried off all the treasures of the house of the LORD and the treasures of the king's house, and cut in pieces all the vessels of gold in the temple of the LORD, which Solomon king of Israel had made, as the LORD had foretold. <sup>14</sup> He carried away all Jerusalem and all the officials and all the mighty men of valor, 10,000 captives, and all the craftsmen and the smiths. None remained, except the poorest people of the land.

This was the first siege of Jerusalem. Coniah gave himself up – he left voluntarily. He heeded the words of Jeremiah and rejected the words of the false prophets. By his example, he saved the lives of those who believed the words of YHVH and Jeremiah His prophet.

<sup>9</sup> this prophecy appears earlier in the book, but was directed to a later king



This was a tremendous example of faith and courage. In those days, kings were typically put to death when captured, and their surrogates were killed or imprisoned. Yet Coniah had apparently convinced them all to heed the prophecies of Jeremiah, and to not put up a fight. Though many died along the way from Judea to Babylon, for those who survived, Jeremiah prophesied in a letter stating –

<sup>ESV</sup> **Jeremiah 29:4-7** "Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: <sup>5</sup> Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce. <sup>6</sup> Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. <sup>7</sup> But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare (peace) you will find your welfare (peace) ...

Jeremiah sent this letter because, as was mentioned earlier, false prophets had stated that the captivity would be very short and that they would soon return to Judea. He went on to say –

<sup>ESV</sup> **Jeremiah 29:10-14** "For thus says the LORD: When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will visit you, and I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place. <sup>11</sup> For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for wholeness and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. <sup>12</sup> Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. <sup>13</sup> You will seek me and find me. When you seek me with all your heart, <sup>14</sup> I will be found by you, declares the LORD, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, declares the LORD, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile.

Because Coniah chose to follow YHVH's instructions, many of the Jewish people were saved and apparently survived the 70 year captivity in relative peace. Though it cannot be clearly established, it is likely that the descendants of those who surrendered with Coniah later became the first to return to the land years later at the decree of Cyrus, the king of Persia.

### The "Curse"

After Coniah was taken captive, Zedekiah, Coniah's uncle became king. Like his brother Jehoiakim, Zedekiah was a **bad king**. He led those who remained in Judea even deeper into idolatry and even enslaved his Jewish brothers.

For a number of years, God sent Jeremiah to Zedekiah to warn him of the coming calamity, but Zedekiah would not heed his words. Finally, God sent Nebuchadnezzar back to Judea to capture the remaining Jews. In a desperate appeal, Zedekiah asked Jeremiah to petition God on his behalf. God's answer was not what Zedekiah would have wanted.

Through Jeremiah, God answered him by prophesying about each of the kings that had descended from Josiah, showing him their sins, and telling him that He was going to put an end to the dynasty of King David. He said –

<sup>ESV</sup> **Jeremiah 22:5** ... if you will not obey these words, I swear by myself, declares the LORD, that this house shall become a desolation.

God was speaking about the 'house of David' – the dynasty of the Davidic kingdom. Though the dynasty had been broken by the splitting of the kingdom, now the dynasty would come to an end. God had already proclaimed this to Jehoiakim, Coniah's father.

**Jeremiah 36:30-31** Therefore thus says the LORD concerning Jehoiakim king of Judah: He shall have none to sit on the throne of David, and his dead body shall be cast out to the heat by day and the frost by night. <sup>31</sup> And I will punish him and his offspring and his servants for their iniquity.



I will bring upon them and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem and upon the people of Judah all the disaster that I have pronounced against them, but they would not hear."

Thus it appears that the dynasty was going to end with Jehoiakim, but God – for whatever reason - let it continue for one more generation. Continuing his prophecy to Zedekiah (Jer. 22), Jeremiah said that the dynasty would definitely end with Coniah. He starts by showing that God's decision is something that had to be done and had nothing to do with Coniah's state of righteousness. He shows that even if Coniah was his valued signet ring, He would still have to take it off and get rid of it.

<sup>ESV</sup> **Jeremiah 22:24** "As I live, declares the LORD, though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, were the signet ring on my right hand, yet I would tear you off..."

A ring is an inanimate object. It cannot sin. God then shows that He will allow Coniah and his household to be taken captive. Keep in mind that Coniah was only 18 years old, and had only been king for 3 months. Jeremiah continues -

<sup>ESV</sup> **Jeremiah 22:25-27** "... and give you into the hand of those who seek your life, into the hand of those of whom you are afraid, even into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and into the hand of the Chaldeans. <sup>26</sup> I will hurl you and the mother who bore you into another country, where you were not born, and there you shall die. <sup>27</sup> But to the land to which they will long to return, there they shall not return."

God then asks the question – "what did Coniah do to deserve this?"

<sup>ESV</sup> **Jeremiah 22:28** Is this man Coniah a despised, broken pot, a vessel no one cares for? Why are he and his children hurled and cast into a land that they do not know?

In other words, what has this young man and his family done to deserve this? The Septuagint (LXX) renders it like this –

<sup>LXE</sup> **Jeremiah 22:28** Jechonias is dishonored as a good-for-nothing vessel; for he is thrown out and cast forth into a land which he knew not.

A person being dishonored and rejected does not necessarily mean he is a bad person, does it? Does a pot have to be broken to be of no value? Certainly not! It could just be that you no longer have a use for it. God then summoned the land (of Israel) to witness the proclamation He was about to make.

<sup>ESV</sup> **Jeremiah 22:29** O land, land, land, hear the word of the LORD!

He wanted it understood for all time that He was doing what He had said he would do years ago. He then makes this declaration -

<sup>ESV</sup> **Jeremiah 22:30** Thus says the LORD: "Write this man down as childless, a man who shall not succeed in his days, for none of his offspring shall succeed in sitting on the throne of David and ruling again in Judah."

God was going to end the continuing line of kings that descended from David, and since Coniah was the current king, his line would end before he had any children. As a "pot", he would no longer be needed.

This was the supposed "curse" that was put on Coniah, but to understand the alleged curse, we must understand what God meant when He said "... none of his offspring shall succeed in sitting on the throne of David ...".

The Hebrew word for "offspring" in this passage is "zera" (זֵרָע) – 2233) which means 'seed', 'child', 'posterity'. It can apply to your immediate offspring or to children born generations later. In the





scriptures, it is used both ways. For instance, in the following passage in Leviticus, it applies to your immediate offspring<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>ESV</sup> **Leviticus 18:21** You shall not give any of your children to offer them<sup>1</sup> to Molech, and so profane the name of your God: I am the LORD.

Let's see how this applies to Coniah.

While in captivity, Coniah spent the first 37 years in prison, but after the death of Nebuchadnezzar, he was released from prison and became quite prominent in the Babylonian government.

<sup>ESV</sup> **2 Kings 25:27 - 30** And in the thirty-seventh year of the exile of Coniah king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, Evil-merodach king of Babylon, in the year that he began to reign, graciously freed<sup>1</sup> Coniah king of Judah from prison. <sup>28</sup> And he spoke kindly to him and gave him a seat above the seats of the kings who were with him in Babylon. <sup>29</sup> So Coniah put off his prison garments. And every day of his life he dined regularly at the king's table, <sup>30</sup> and for his allowance, a regular allowance was given him by the king, according to his daily needs, as long as he lived.

Before his death, he went on to have seven sons<sup>11</sup> (1 Chron. 3:17-18) and multiple grandchildren, but none of his sons became the king of Judah. But his grandson Zerubbabel did become the governor of Judah when the captives were allowed to return<sup>12</sup>. Thus with the death of Coniah, the line of kings that descended from David ended.

### Where is the Curse?

Up to this point we have seen this about Coniah:

- there is no evidence of him being a wicked king other than the general statement found in 2 Kings 24:9
- his reign lasted only three months and a few days, leaving him little time to build a bad reputation
- he willingly heeded the prophecies of Jeremiah
- he convinced many of his people to heed the prophecies as well
- he was not killed after being captured
- he was eventually raised to a high position in the Babylonian kingdom
- he had a number of children
- his grandson became the governor of Judea

These facts could lead one to believe that Coniah was not that bad after all. In fact, in some cases he seems to be upright and courageous. So why did God put a curse on him? The answer is really simple – God never did put a curse on him. Let's read the text again –

<sup>ESV</sup> **Jeremiah 22:30** Thus says the LORD: "Write this man down as childless, a man who shall not succeed in his days, for none of his offspring shall succeed in sitting on the throne of David and ruling again in Judah."

In this passage, as well as all the passages that pertain to Coniah, you never find the word curse. Instead, you find that God simply made a 'declaration' –

<sup>ESV</sup> **Jeremiah 22:24** "As I live, declares the LORD, though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, were the signet ring on my right hand, yet I would tear you off ..."

<sup>10</sup> Gen. 4:25; Gen. 15:3; Lev. 15:16

<sup>11</sup> Chron.3:17-18

<sup>12</sup> 1 Chron. 3:16-21



What God is declaring is that the kingly line of Judah was going to end with Coniah. Why? Because God's promise of a perpetual line of kings was conditional – it was conditioned on obedience to God<sup>13</sup>. We see this in God's promise to Solomon as he inherited the throne of his father David -

<sup>ESV</sup> **2 Chronicles 7:17-20** And as for you, if you will walk before me as David your father walked, doing according to all that I have commanded you and keeping my statutes and my rules, <sup>18</sup> **then I will establish** your royal throne, as I covenanted with David your father, saying, 'You shall not lack a man to rule Israel.' <sup>19</sup> "But if you<sup>1</sup> turn aside and forsake my statutes and my commandments that I have set before you, and go and serve other gods and worship them, <sup>20</sup> then I will pluck you<sup>1</sup> up from my land that I have given you, and this house that I have consecrated for my name, I will cast out of my sight, and I will make it a proverb and a byword among all peoples. (see also 1 Kings 9:1)

Like the kings of Israel, the majority of the Judean kings did not follow in the footsteps of their father David, and therefore, in order to preserve His own name, He had to put an end to the kingly line. It was with Coniah that He chose to do so.

The name 'Coniah' means "Yahwey establishes". It comes from the root word "quwm" (קוּם – 6965) which means "to rise" or to "rise above and persist". It is the same word used in verse eighteen of the passage above. "To establish" means that God will make it come to pass. As for the kings of Judah, the perpetual line of kings was contingent on obedience. Once they failed to be obedient – as was the case of King Solomon and many of his successors – God was unable to "establish" His promise to David through them. In His words to Solomon above, God's name would be preserved either by the Judean kings following after their father David, or by removing the line of kings if they did not. They chose not to follow David's example. So what we have is not a curse, but a confirmation. By removing Coniah and ending the kingly line, God was confirming his oath to David.

It is interesting to note that in reality, the kingly line actually ended with Josiah, who for all practical purposes, was Judah's last 'good' king. After Josiah died, the kingdom should have gone to Josiah's oldest son Johanan, but for some reason, the people did not follow the normal lineage, and made Shallum, the youngest son, the king. His name was changed to Jehoahaz and he was removed by Pharaoh. Pharaoh then made Jehoiakim, the second oldest son to be king. He was followed naturally by Coniah, but after Coniah surrendered, Nebuchadnezzar made Zedekiah the king. Of these last four kings, all were chosen by men except Coniah. The break in the natural line happened after Josiah, and Coniah was the official end.

### Conclusion:

With this study, we see that the "curse" of Coniah does not create a conflict in regards to the lineage of Messiah Yeshua. The proclamation did not apply to all generations; it simply applied to Coniah's immediate family. In many cases, it actually prevented a conflict since if God had not stopped the natural kingly succession because of their failure to keep His ways, He would have been guilty of breaking his oath to King David.

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<sup>13</sup> 1 Samuel 7:16 implies a perpetual kingdom with a perpetual line of kings descending from David, but David understood that to be conditioned upon obedience as shown by his words to his son Solomon in 1 Kings 2:4. YHVH reiterates the conditional status of the promise in 2 Chron. 7:17-20. Jeremiah 33:14-18 shows that the promise of a perpetual king and kingdom will be fulfilled in Messiah Yeshua.