

Jeremiah 52:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Zedekiah was one and twenty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Hamutal the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah.

Analysis

Zedekiah was one and twenty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Hamutal the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah. This final chapter provides historical appendix, confirming Jeremiah's prophecies through documentary record. Zedekiah's age (21) and reign (11 years, 597-586 BCE) establish chronological precision. The inclusion of his mother's name follows royal formula (1-2 Kings), emphasizing dynastic continuity even to the bitter end. Ironically, her father's name was "Jeremiah," though not the prophet—a poignant reminder that sharing a godly name doesn't guarantee godly character.

The detailed historical record serves theological purpose: these aren't legends but documented events. Real kings made real choices with real consequences. Zedekiah's reign ended catastrophically (verses 10-11), validating Jeremiah's forty-year prophetic ministry. The chapter's inclusion demonstrates Scripture's nature as reliable historical testimony, not mere religious mythology. God acts in history; therefore history matters for faith.

Theologically, this verse establishes: (1) Divine revelation engages concrete historical reality, not timeless abstractions; (2) genealogical and chronological precision demonstrates biblical reliability; (3) every individual bears responsibility for their response to God, regardless of heritage or position; (4) Scripture

preserves historical records to validate prophetic word. The Reformed emphasis on Scripture's trustworthiness finds support in such historical precision.

Historical Context

Zedekiah (Mattaniah) was appointed by Nebuchadnezzar after his nephew Jehoiachin's capture (2 Kings 24:17). As Babylon's vassal, he swore allegiance in God's name (Ezekiel 17:13)—making his later rebellion not merely political but covenant violation. His eleven-year reign saw Jerusalem's final agony: Babylonian siege, famine, wall breach, temple destruction, and population exile.

Archaeological evidence confirms this period's devastation. Destruction layers at Jerusalem show intense burning dated to early sixth century BCE. The "House of the Bullae" contains seal impressions from officials mentioned in Jeremiah, validating the historical context. Zedekiah's tragic end—sons executed before him, then blinded and exiled (verse 11)—fulfilled Ezekiel's cryptic prophecy: "I will bring him to Babylon... yet shall he not see it" (Ezekiel 12:13). The historical precision of biblical prophecy's fulfillment demonstrates supernatural origin.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How does biblical history's precision and verifiability strengthen your confidence in Scripture's reliability?
2. In what ways does Zedekiah's life warn against the danger of knowing truth without acting on it?
3. How does understanding that our choices have real historical consequences affect daily decision-making?

Interlinear Text

וְאַם תִּשְׁנֵה יָמָן
old and twenty eleven years Zedekiah and he reigned eleven
H1121 H6242 H259 H8141 H6667 H4427 H259

וְאַם וְיָשָׁם בְּיְרוּשָׁלָם שָׁנָה עֲשֵׂר
years and he reigned in Jerusalem name And his mother's
H6240 H8141 H4427 H3389 H8034 H517

וְאַם בָּת יְרֵמִיא הָיָה חֲמִיט לִבְנָה
was Hamutal the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah
H2537 H1323 H3414 H3841

Additional Cross-References

Joshua 10:29 (Parallel theme): Then Joshua passed from Makkedah, and all Israel with him, unto Libnah, and fought against Libnah:

2 Kings 24:18 (Kingdom): Zedekiah was twenty and one years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Hamutal, the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah.

2 Chronicles 36:11 (Kingdom): Zedekiah was one and twenty years old when he began to reign, and reigned eleven years in Jerusalem.