

Matthew 1:11

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/matt/matt-1/matthew-111/>

In Matthew 1:11 *Matthew continues the genealogy of Jesus from David through the succession of kings from Solomon to Jeconiah whose reign ended with the Babylonian exile. Matthew is establishing Jesus' credentials as "King of the Jews." Matthew includes notable kings in Jesus's line from David's reign to the Exile, but he does not mention every Judean ruler from this era.*

There is no apparent parallel account for this genealogical record in the Gospels.

Josiah was Amon's son and successor. He was considered Judea (and Israel's) most faithful king: "Before him there was no king like him who turned to the Lord with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; nor did any like him arise after him" (2 Kings 23:25).

Josiah was only eight when he was made king after his father was murdered. As he grew up, Josiah began to personally seek after God before eventually destroying the altars and idols of false gods and executing their priests. In the eighteenth year of Josiah's reign, Hilkiah the high priest discovered the "Book of the Law." (Scholars speculate that this was portions of Deuteronomy). Upon reading it, King Josiah led Judea in a national revival as the people repented of their ways and returned to the LORD. Josiah died at age thirty-nine from a mortal wound in a battle against Egypt. He was mourned throughout the land (2 Kings 22:1-23:30 and 2 Chronicles 34-35).

Matthew concludes the line of kings from David to the Babylonian Exile with the phrase: *Josiah became the father of Jeconiah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon.* We would say *Josiah* was the grandfather of *Jeconiah*. Matthew used the custom of referring to all grandfathers as "father." The term "grandfather" shows up in the NASV translation (used by thebiblesays) twice. Once it is a translation of a Hebrew word that is literally translated "father" (2 Samuel 9:7), and the other instance it is a translation of the literal "father's fathers" (Exodus 10:6). Josiah had two sons who were kings. These unnamed brothers were Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim. Matthew simply refers to them as *Jeconiah's brothers*.

1. *Jehoahaz* was *Josiah's* son and successor. His reign was very short, lasting only three months. 2 Kings 23:31-34 tells us that he did evil in the sight of the LORD and was taken prisoner by Pharaoh Neco and perished in Egypt (2 Chronicles 36:1-4).

Jesus was not a descendant of *Jehoahaz*.

2. *Jehoiakim* was the brother of *Jehoahaz*. He was a wicked king and his reign lasted eleven years. He was made king by Pharaoh Neco following Egypt's victory over king *Josiah* and the imprisonment of *Jehoahaz*. Under *Jehoiakim* Judea was a subject state of Egypt. He was a vassal of Egypt until Babylon defeated Egypt in 605 B.C., at which time he switched his allegiance. Three years later he rebelled against Babylon and was defeated

by King *Nebuchadnezzar* who hauled him away in chains. (2 Kings 23:35-2 Kings 24:6 and 2 Chronicles 36:5-8)

Joseph was a descendant of Jehoiakim, who was the father to *Jeconiah*, who is named in Matthew's genealogy.

Jeconiah was *Josiah's* grandson and he was the son and successor of *Jehoiakim*. Like his grandfather *Josiah*, *Jeconiah* (also spelled "Jehoiachin") was only eight when he became king. His mother, *Nehushta*, ruled as his regent. *Jeconiah* (and *Nehushta*) did evil in the sight of the LORD and his reign ended three months later when they were deported to Babylon (2 Kings 24:8-16; 2 Chronicles 36:9-10; Esther 2:6; Jeremiah 24:1).

King Jesus' legal heritage through Joseph descended from this deposed king who spent his entire adult life in exile.

Before *Jechoniah* was deposed and deported, Jeremiah prophesied of the young king:

“As I live,” declares the Lord, “even though [*Jeconiah*] the son of *Jehoiakim* king of Judah were a signet ring on My right hand, yet I would pull you off; and I will give you over into the hand of those who are seeking your life, yes, into the hand of those whom you dread, even into the hand of *Nebuchadnezzar* king of Babylon and into the hand of the Chaldeans. I will hurl you and your mother who bore you into another country where you were not born, and there you will die. But as for the land to which they desire to return, they will not return to it...

...*Thus says the LORD,
‘Write this man down childless,
A man who will not prosper in his days;
For no man of his descendants will prosper
Sitting on the throne of David
Or ruling again in Judah.’*”

- Jeremiah 22:24-27, 30

God not only cut off *Jeconiah's* reign, He ended his line. (His Uncle, *Zedekiah*, was installed by *Nebuchadnezzar* in his place). This is ironic because *Jeconiah's* name means “Yahweh installs,” and the most significant thing about this king is that he was uninstalled by God in painfully strong terms.

So why does Matthew include *Jeconiah* in the ancestry of Jesus, the true King? And why does God issue such an extensive curse only to have Jesus's adoptive father later descend from such a man? Is God contradicting Himself?

Not at all. Matthew's genealogy runs through *Joseph*, the husband of *Mary*. *Mary's* genealogy is found in Luke. And while she descends through King David, she does not descend through *Jeconiah*. That makes *Jesus* the legal heir to the throne because he is *Joseph's* legal son, but unrelated to *Jeconiah*, the last non-vassal Judean king whose descendants God cursed. *Jesus* was

conceived of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, *Jesus* has a legal right to the throne without being a physical descendent of *Jeconiah*.

As can be seen with this brief review, Judah suffered poor leadership for most of its history. As the books of 1 and 2 Chronicles make clear, the *deportation to Babylon* was God making good on the provisions of His covenant with Israel, that as their Suzerain ruler, He would remove them from the land if they were disobedient (Deuteronomy 4:25-34; 1 Chronicles 9:1).

Biblical Text

11 Josiah became the father of Jeconiah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon