I. Jerusalem Captured, 52:1-34

A. The book closes with a rather straightforward account of the exile, one that parallels the account in 2 Kings

1. It introduces King Zedekiah (52:1-3)
2. Focuses on
   a. The fate of the king and his family (52:4-11)
   b. The fate of Jerusalem (52:12-16)
   c. The fate of the temple and its furnishings (52:17-23)
   d. The fate of Jerusalem’s leading officials (52:24-27)
   e. A final “accounting” of those taken prisoner closes this section (52:28-52:1-3)


B. 52:1-3 introduces Zedekiah as a king of Judah in a way typical for the book of kings.

1. His age at his accession, the length of his reign, his mother’s name, and a general religious evaluation of his deeds.

2. The reference to all that happened (v. 3) is anticipatory, setting the stage for the destruction that is to follow.

3. It is evidence of the Lord’s anger, not his negligence of his people.

4. It (is because he is so “watchful” (see 1:12; 31:28; 44:27) that they suffer as they do.

5. He is going to thrust them from his presence, just as he had the northern tribes (7:15; cp. 2 Kgs 17:20).

6. There are no references to Jeremiah’s prophecies, but the reader recognizes that the king’s rebellion against the Babylonians is tantamount to rebellion against the LORD (5:23; 27:12-15).

C. 52:4-11: The siege lasts eighteen months (Fall 588 B.C. to Spring 586 B.C.; cp.
39:1-2), ending when the people have run out of food (see 37:21).

1. The note in 39:4 indicates that all the soldiers (52:7) might refer only to the king’s guards.

2. The last scene enacted before Zedekiah, the rebellious vassal (37:1; Ezek 17:18-21), at Nebuchadnezzar’s headquarters at Riblah was the slaughter of his sons and court officials. Then he was blinded and taken to Babylon to die in prison.

3. The rest of this adds only that the king remained in prison until his death (52:11).

D. 52:12-16 provides an expanded rendition of information given in 39:8-10

1. The length of time (one month) between the breaching of the walls of the city and the completion of the destruction, which included burning all buildings and tearing down defensive walls.

2. The destruction of the temple (cf. chapter 39) provides an account of the plundering of various parts of the temple.

3. We do not know why Nebuzaradan, Nebuchadnezzar’s field general, took these actions, other than as fulfillment of God’s will.

E. 17-23: a detailed description of the booty taken from the temple.

F. 52:24-27: Death of the religious officials.

G. 28-30: The first two deportations listed here coincide with the surrender of Jehoiachin (597; 2 Kgs 24:12-16) and the suppression of Zedekiah’s revolt (587). The occasion for the third deportation (582) is not known.

H. 31-34: 2 Kgs 25:27-30. The presence of this material proves the editing of the book was later than 560 since Jehoiachin’s restoration may well have been viewed by his contemporaries as the beginning of Judah’s restoration (23:5-6)