

THE KINGDOM OF JUDAH

I. JUDAH AND ASSYRIA (722-612 BC)

A. Hezekiah (715-686 BC) and the Invasion of Sennacherib

1. Hezekiah's cultic reforms (2 Ki 18:1-8; 2 Ch 29-31)
 - a. Initiates cultic reforms: limited sacrifice to Jerusalem
 - b. **High Places** (cult centers) outside Jerusalem remained
2. Hezekiah desired to rebel from Assyrian domination
 - a. Warned against joining Ashdod rebellion by Isaiah (Is 20); rebellion crushed by Sargon of Assyria (714)
 - b. Revolts at Sargon's death (705) against Isaiah's advice
3. Sennacherib ascends Assyrian throne amid major revolts
4. Hezekiah prepared for invasion (Jerusalem tunnel; fortifications) (2 Ki 20:20; Is 22:8-11; Siloam inscription)
5. **701 BC** - invasion of Sennacherib (2 Ki 18:13-19:37; 2 Ch 32:1-23; Is 36-37; Assyrian texts)
 - a. Sennacherib defeats Egyptian army; ravages Judah
 - b. 46 fortified cities taken (Assyrian texts; 2 Ki 18:13-14a; Is 36:1; 2 Ch 32:1; Micah 1:8-16)
 - c. Jerusalem spared, but Hezekiah pays heavy tribute
 - d. Miraculous deliverance (2 Ki 19:32-37; Is 37:33-38)
6. Hezekiah's sickness and recovery (2 Ki 20:1-11; 2 Ch 32:24)
7. Hezekiah receives an embassy from Babylon (2 Ki 20:12-21)

B. Manasseh (686-642)

1. Bible: most evil king of Judah
2. Loyal vassal to Essarhaddon, Assurbanipal of Assyria

II. THE FALL OF ASSYRIA AND JOSIAH'S REFORMS

A. Assurbanipal (668-627) ruled Assyria at its height

B. Widespread revolts at his death in 627, including Josiah of Judah

C. Babylonians and Medes attack a weakened Assyria

1. 614: Medes take religious capital Assur
2. 612: military capital **Nineveh** sacked (**Nahum**)

D. Josiah (640-609 BC)

1. Religious reforms
 - a. Book of the Law found in the temple (2 Ki 22)
 - b. Removed high places outside of Jerusalem (2 Ki 23:4-20)
 - 1) High places destroyed
 - 2) Priests of high places deposed
 - c. Passover kept (2 Ki 23:21-23)
 - d. Mediums and wizards "put away" (2 Ki 23:24-26)
2. Territorial advances
3. Bible: the best (most righteous) king since David

E. The Rise of Babylon (Neo-Babylonian Empire)

1. Babylon moves to claim territory formerly held by Assyria
2. Egypt tries to reestablish supremacy in the Near East
3. **609 BC: Josiah killed at Megiddo** trying to stop Necho II of Egypt (2 Ki 23:29-30; 2 Ch 35:20-27)

- a. **Necho** going to N. Syria to oppose the Babylonian advance
- b. Defeated and returning home to Egypt, Necho deposes Jehoahaz; replaces him with **Jehoiakim**, who rules as an Egyptian vassal (2 Ki 23:30-35; 2 Ch 36:1-4)
- 4. **605 BC: Battle of Carchemish** (Jer 46:2-12)
 - a. Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar soundly defeats Egyptians
 - b. Nabopolassar dies; **Nebuchadnezzar** (crown prince and general of army) went back to Babylon to claim his throne
 - c. Jehoiakim of Judah becomes a Babylonian vassal (2 Ki 24:1)

III. THE SEVENTH-EARLY SIXTH CENTURY PROPHETS IN JUDAH

[in Judah, message to Judah: Zephaniah, Jeremiah, Habakkuk]

A. Zephaniah

- 1. Setting: 7th century BC Judah; reign of Josiah (1:1)
- 2. The prophet
 - a. Not much known, lineage traced to Hezekiah (1:1)
 - b. Earlier contemporary of Jeremiah
- 3. Message/contents
 - a. Imminent judgment (1:2-3:7): the Day of the Lord
 - b. Ultimate deliverance (3:8-20)

B. Jeremiah

- 1. Setting
 - a. 7th - early 6th century BC
 - b. Southern kingdom of Judah: 627-585 BC
 - c. Babylonian crisis
- 2. The prophet
 - a. of Anathoth, N of Jerusalem
 - b. son of Hilkiah, a priest
- 3. Contents
 - a. Not chronological, difficult to outline
 - b. Theological ideas
 - 1) Old and new covenants (31:31)
 - 2) Personal, genuine faith
- 4. The role of **Baruch**, Jeremiah's scribe

C. Habakkuk

- 1. Late 7th century BC Judah: Babylonian crisis
- 2. Content/message
 - a. Problem (1:1-4): God has not judged Judah's sin
 - b. Answer (1:5-11): Babylon will judge them
 - c. Problem (1:12-17): How can God use Babylon to punish a nation (Judah) more righteous than they
 - d. Answer (2): The righteous shall live by faith (2:4)
 - e. Habakkuk's response (3)

[against enemies: Nahum and Obadiah]

D. Nahum: Judgment on/fall of Nineveh (612 BC)

E. Obadiah: ca. 586 BC; oracles against Edom for hostility to Judah

[in exile: Ezekiel]

F. Ezekiel (see below)

IV. THE BABYLONIAN CRISIS: LAST DAYS OF JUDAH (612-587 BC)

- A. Jehoiakim rebels against Babylon (c. 601 BC; 2 Ki 24:1)
 - 1. Relied on Egyptian help (2 Ki 24:7)
 - 2. Local Babylonian vassals harass Judah (2 Ki 24:2)
 - 3. Babylon invades (Dec. 598 BC)
 - 4. **Jehoiakim dies**, succeeded by **Jehoiachin** (2 Ki 24:6-10)
 - 5. 16 March **597 BC**: Nebuchadnezzar takes Jerusalem
 - a. **Jehoiachin** surrenders city (2 Ki 24:10-16; 2 Ch 36:9-10)
 - b. 1st deportation (upper class) to Babylon (2 Ki 24:14-16)
 - c. **Zedekiah** placed on throne (2 Ki 24:17; 2 Ch 36:10)

- B. Destruction of Jerusalem and the temple
 - 1. **Zedekiah rebels** against Babylon c. 589 BC (2 Ki 24:18-20)
 - 2. **Jeremiah opposed the rebellion** (2 Ch 36:12)
 - a. Warnings to Zedekiah (Jer 27:12-22)
 - b. Hananiah's false prophecy (Jer 28)
 - c. Jeremiah's arrest (Jer 32:1-5)
 - d. Jeremiah preached judgment (1-25) and restoration (30-33)
 - 3. Judah ravaged (Lachish letters); Jerusalem besieged
 - 4. **587/586 BC: Fall of Jerusalem / Destruction of the temple** (2 Ki 25:3-10)
 - a. Zedekiah and the army fled the city; captured in Jericho
 - b. Jerusalem and the temple systematically looted, burned
 - 5. 2nd deportation in 586 BC (2 Ki 25:11-21; Jer 52:15-30)
 - 6. **Lamentations**: Dirge over the city; acrostic form; part of Writings

- C. **Gedaliah** placed on throne; rules from Mizpah (2 Ki 25:22-26)
 - 1. Gedaliah assassinated by Ishmael (2 Ki 25:25; Jer 40-41)
 - 2. Many Jews fled to Egypt (2 Ki 25:26; Jer 41:17-43:7)
 - 3. 3rd deportation in 582 BC

V. THE EXILE (587-539 BC) AND ITS PROPHETS

- A. Deported Jews settled as communities in and around Babylon
 - 1. Psalm 137, etc.
 - 2. Jehoiachin in exile (2 Ki 25:27-30; Jer 52:31-34; Babylonian text)

- B. **Ezekiel**
 - 1. Setting: 593-571 BC; in exile in **Babylon**
 - 2. The prophet
 - a. Son of Buzi; of priestly family (1:3)
 - b. Probably of Jerusalem; taken into exile in 597 BC
 - 3. The book
 - a. Judgment on Israel (1-24)
 - b. Judgment on the nations (25-32)
 - c. Restoration of Israel (33-48)

- C. **Daniel**: possibly taken into exile 605-604 BC