

# **Lesson 12**

## **The Story of Jewish Captivity, The Return, and The Restoration**

The previous lesson took a close look at the Kings of Judah that were contemporary with the fall of the nation into Babylonian captivity.

The names of the prophets in **red** were of the same period.

## PROPHETS

Jonah  
Joel  
Amos  
Hosea  
Isaiah  
Micah  
**Jeremiah**  
**Zephaniah**  
**Nahum**  
**Habakkuk**  
**Obadiah**  
**Daniel**  
**Ezekiel**  
Haggai  
Zechariah  
Malachi

Names in **blue** prophesied during the Persian Empire

## KINGS OF JUDAH

Rehoboam  
Abijah  
Asa  
Jehoshaphat  
Jehoram  
Ahaziah  
Athaliah  
Joash  
Amaziah  
Uzziah  
Jotham  
Ahaz  
Hezekiah  
**Manasseh**  
**Amon**  
**Josiah**  
**Jehoahaz**  
**Jehoiakim**  
**Jehoiachin**  
**Zedekiah**

# Here is a helpful chart of those prophets:

**Jeremiah** – Prophesied from Jerusalem

**Nahum** - Predicted the fall of Nineveh

**Zephaniah** and **Habakkuk** - Helped Jeremiah in Jerusalem.

**Obadiah** – Predicted the fall of Edom.

**Daniel** – Prophesied during the Babylonian captivity.

He actually served in the palace of Nebuchadnezzar.

**Ezekiel** - A Levitical priest. He preached in Babylon among the captives the same theme that Jeremiah was preaching in Jerusalem.

**But what of the foreign kings  
that are just as much a part of  
this time in history?**

**This lesson will include the circumstances of  
the foreign powers during the captivity, the  
return, and the restoration of the Jews.**



**Sargon II** was King of Assyria when Israel was taken into captivity. His son, **Sennacherib** was the next king, and **Esarhaddon** was the son and successor of **Sennacherib**.



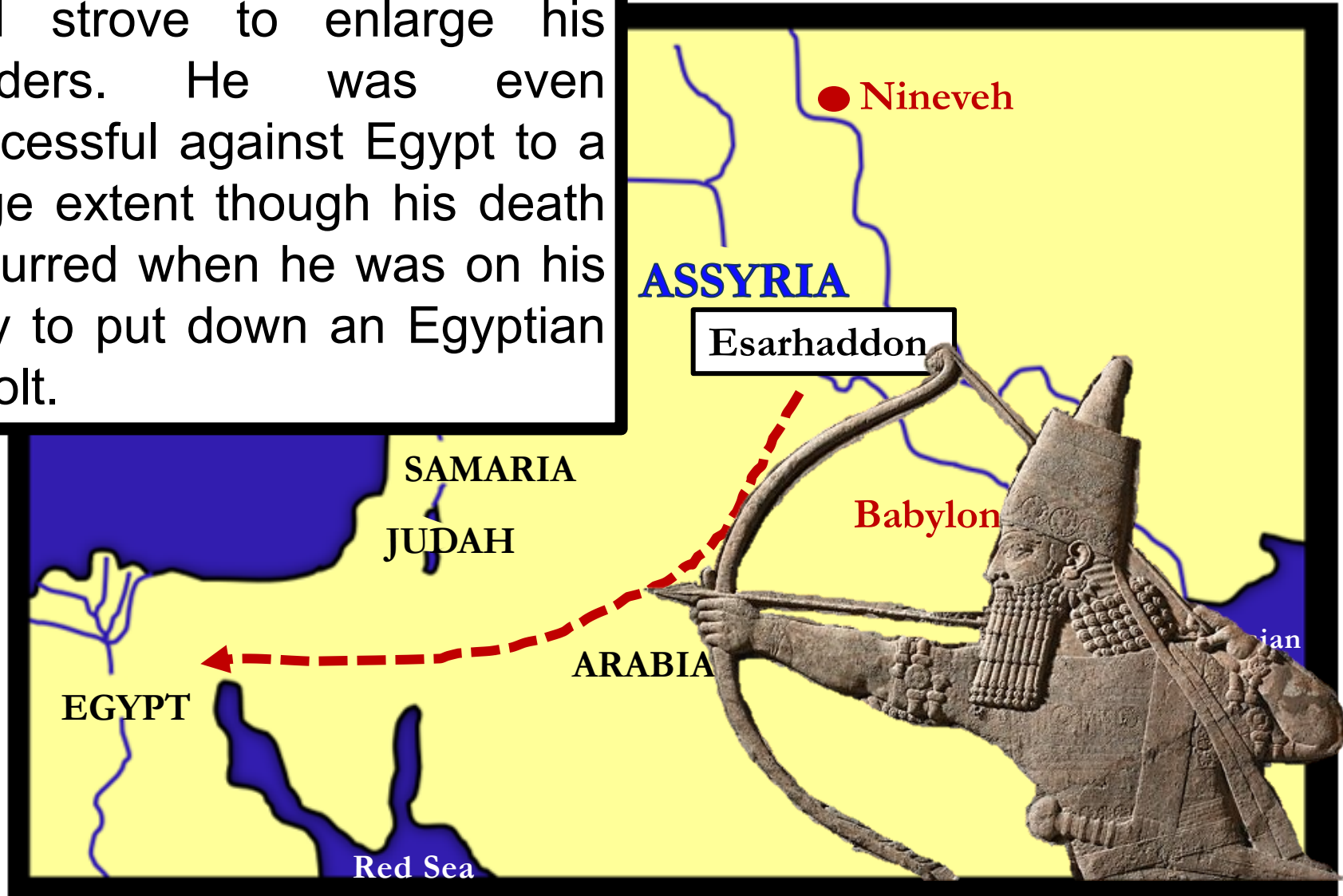
Sennacherib despised the city of Babylon and had tried to destroy it, but his son Esarhaddon saw Babylon as an opportunity for more power, so he began restoring that which his father had torn down.



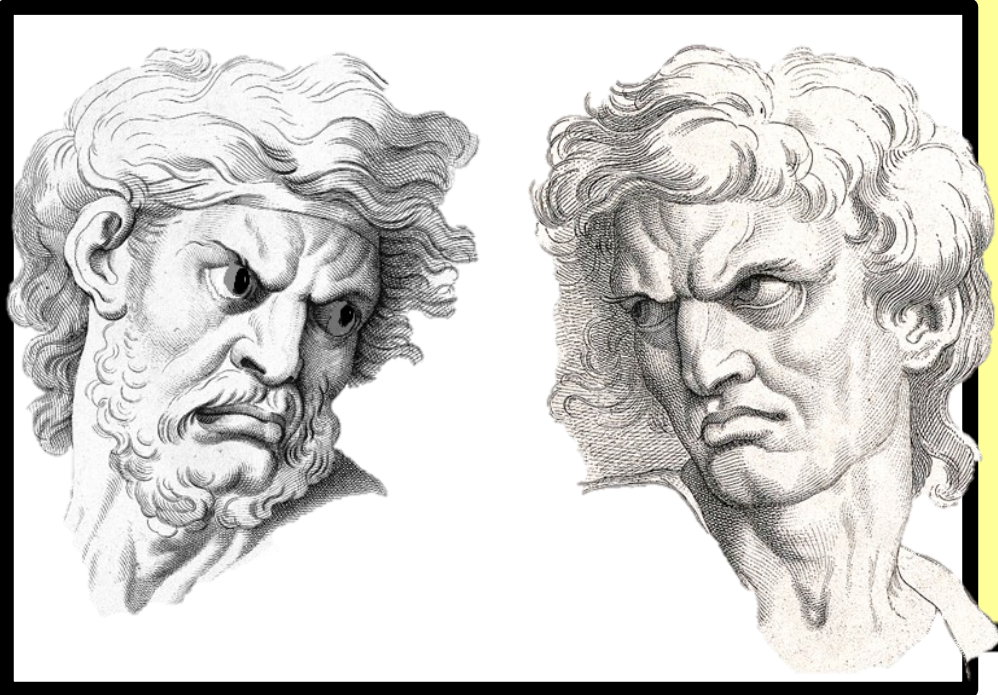
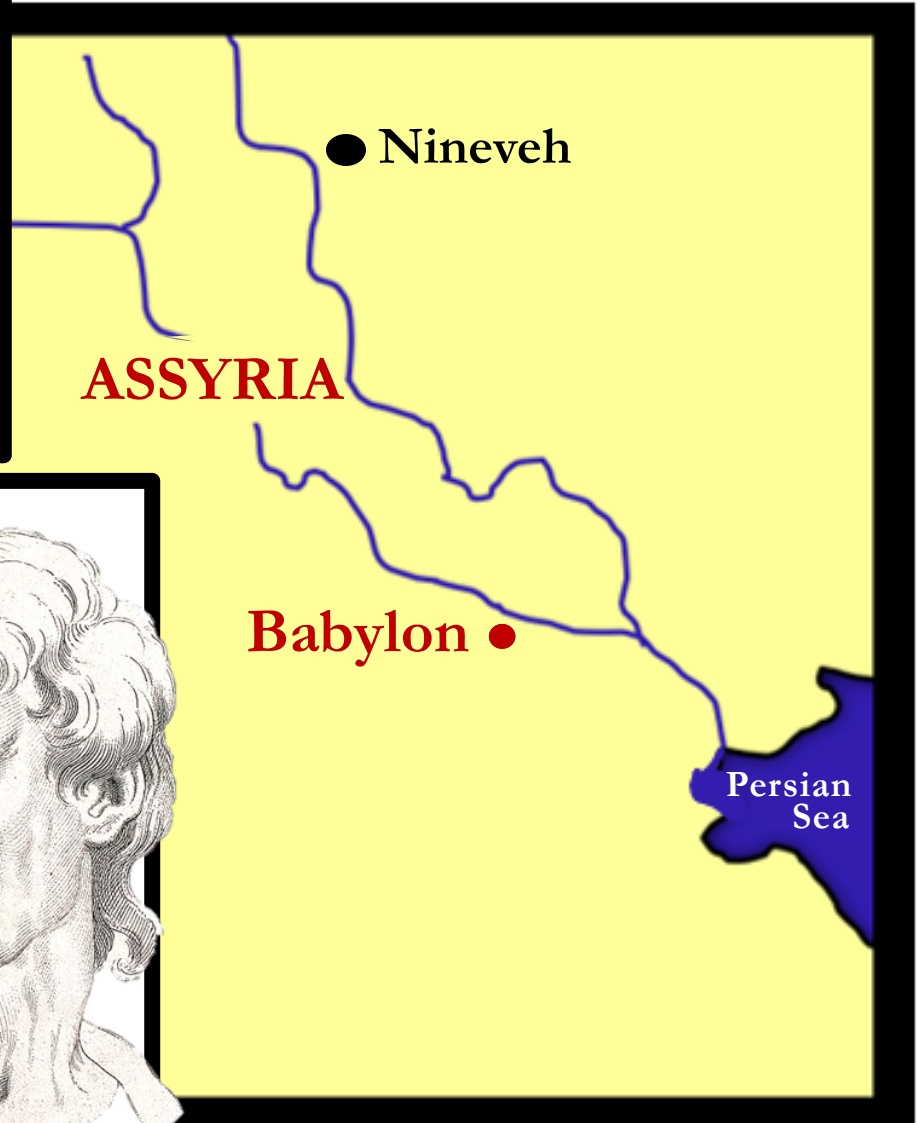
**Babylon** became as magnificent (and wicked) as **Nineveh** the capital of Assyria and was regarded as a kind of second capital.



Esarhaddon was ambitious about being a world power and strove to enlarge his borders. He was even successful against Egypt to a large extent though his death occurred when he was on his way to put down an Egyptian revolt.



Two of Esarhaddon's sons ruled after him; one as **King of Assyria** and the other **King of Babylon**. Both brothers wanted to rid themselves of their sibling and be the only king.





A civil war dragged on for years which was detrimental to both of them. Finally, Esarhaddon's grandsons were the last Assyrian Kings, for the empire effectively disintegrated when its allies betrayed them.





Assyria's magnificent capital, **Nineveh**, was destroyed as predicted by Nahum the prophet. Babylon pushed Assyria aside and became the world power.



Babylon reveled in its new independence and under the reign of Nabopolassar the city began enormous architectural activity.

When Nabopolassar's son, Nebuchadnezzar, inherited the throne he made Babylon into not only a beautiful city but the most populated ever to have existed.





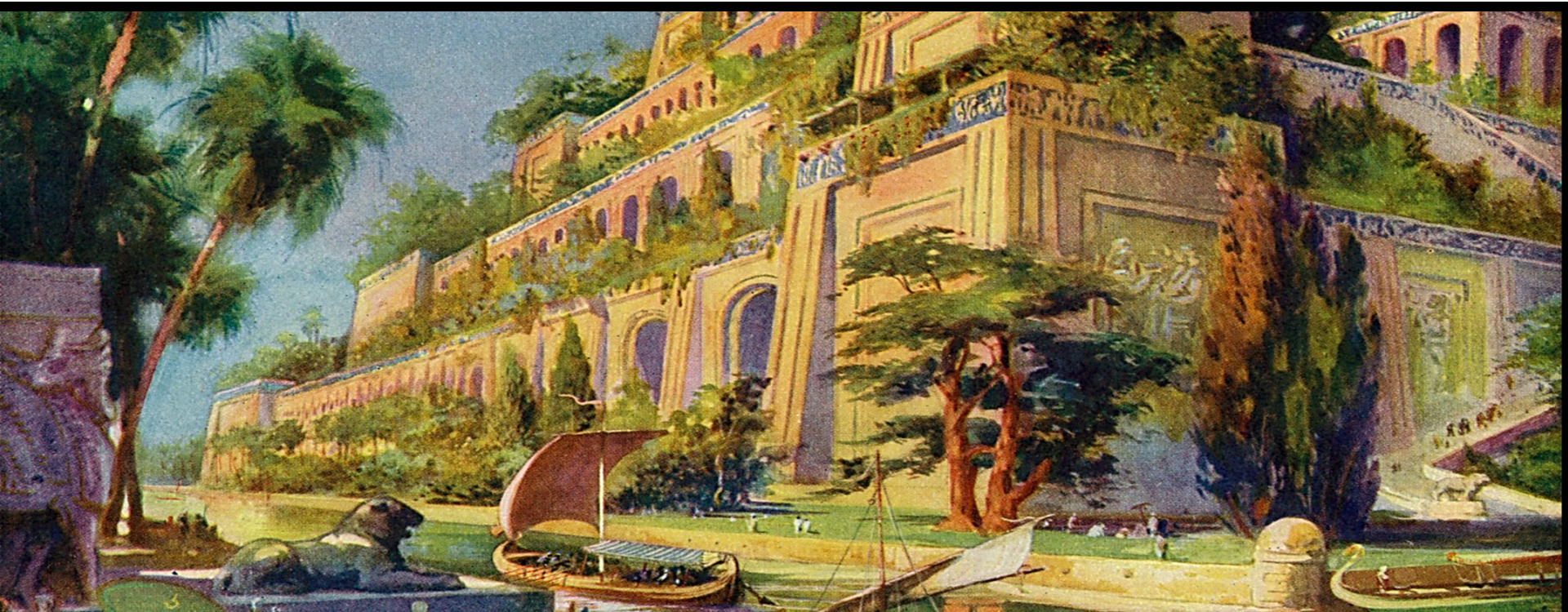
There is a legend about a  
*Hanging Garden*  
that was designed by  
Nebuchadnezzar.





## The legend of the Hanging Gardens of Babylon—

Archaeological artifacts of Nebuchadnezzar's inscriptions do not mention any garden, yet a legend was begun about a beautiful *hanging garden* by a Babylonian named Berossus in about 290 B.C. The gardens were said to still exist at the time that later writers described them, and some of these accounts are regarded as deriving from people who had visited Babylon. Berossus was later quoted by the historian Josephus who obviously believed the legend. Its splendor was described to be so magnificent that it was called one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.





**Nebuchadnezzar** was the king that conquered Judah, destroyed Jerusalem, and carried the Jews captive to Babylon.

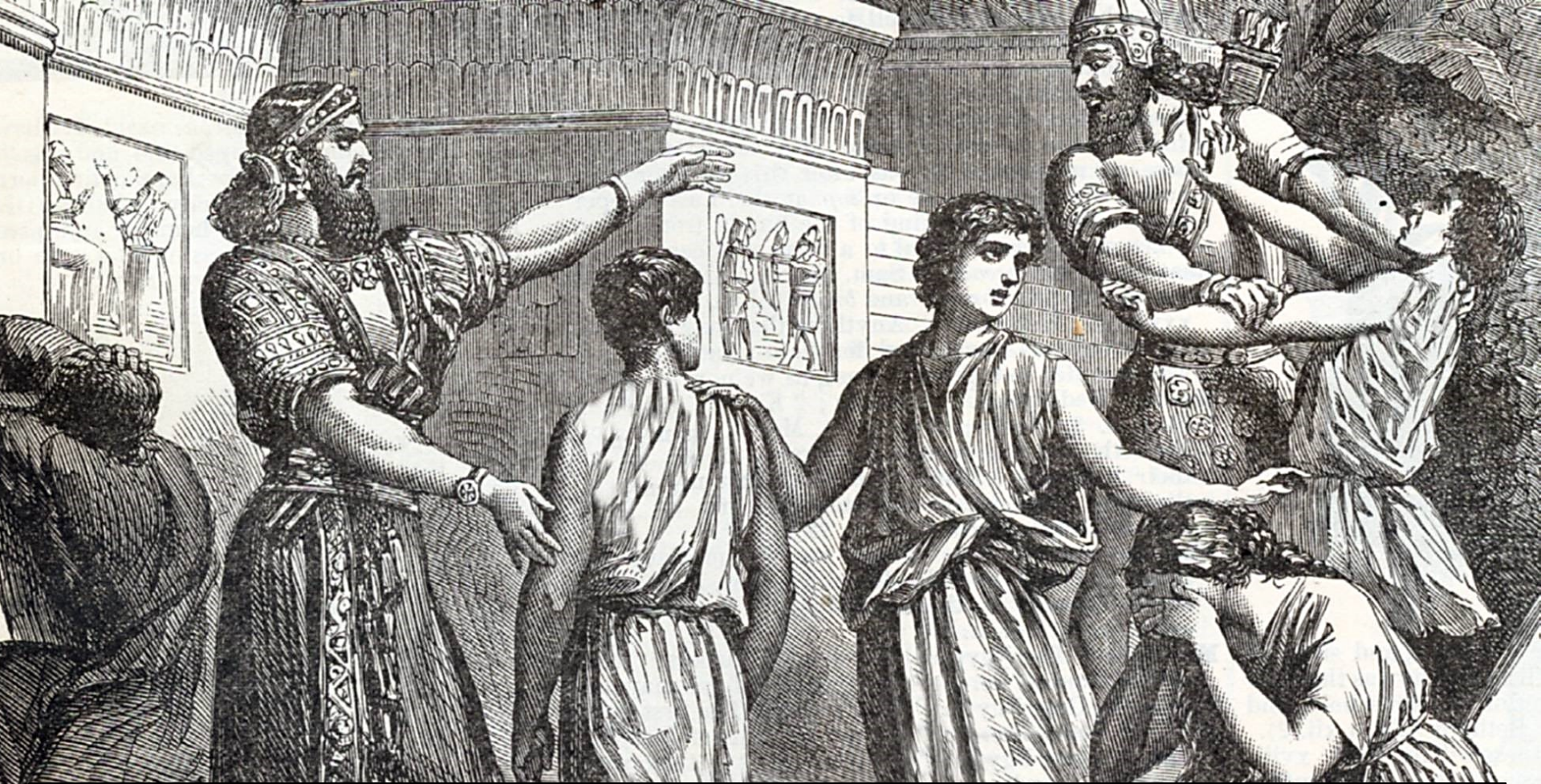
## II Kings 24

“<sup>11</sup>And **Nebuchadnezzar** king of Babylon came against the city, and his servants did besiege it . . .

<sup>14</sup>And he carried away all Jerusalem, and all the princes, and all the mighty men of valor, even ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and smiths: none remained, save the poorest sort of the people of the land.”







Nebuchadnezzar took his captives in three major waves. The first was when **Jehoiakim** was King of Judah (Daniel 1:1-17). Daniel was in this first group of captives along with King Jehoiakim himself. Ezekiel was taken in the second wave during the reign of **Jehoiachin**.





# Nebuchadnezzar's Three Waves Of Capture.

Daniel taken captive during  
the reign of **Jehoiakim**

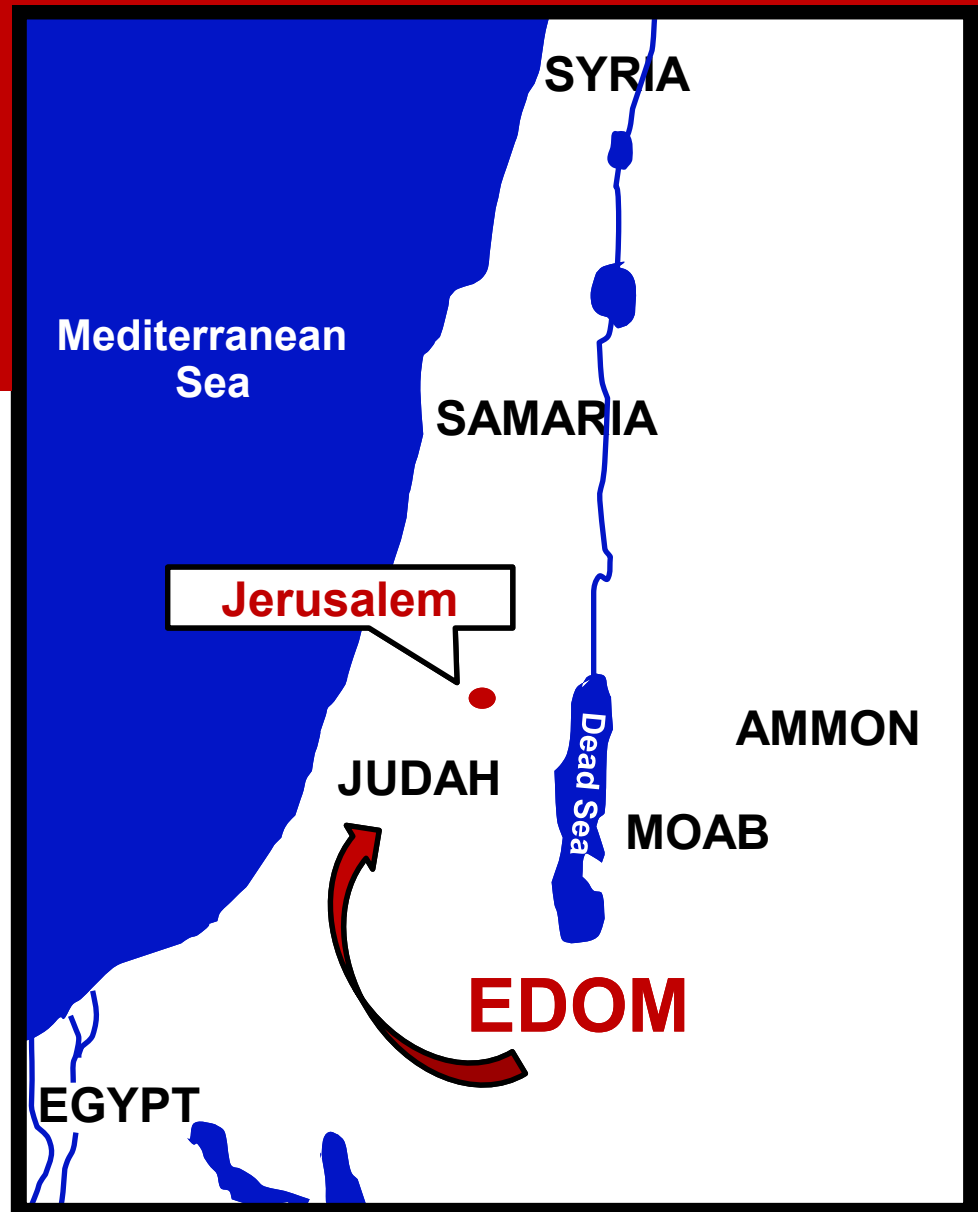
Ezekiel taken captive during  
the reign of **Jehoiachin**

When the last wave against Judah  
took place Ezekiel had been  
captive in Babylon for about 11  
years. **Zedekiah** was king; the last  
King of Judah. Jerusalem was  
completely destroyed.

## KINGS OF JUDAH

Rehoboam  
Abijah  
Asa  
Jehoshaphat  
Jehoram  
Ahaziah  
Athaliah  
Joash  
Amaziah  
Uzziah  
Jotham  
Ahaz  
Hezekiah  
Manasseh  
Amon  
Josiah  
Jehoahaz  
**Jehoiakim**  
**Jehoiachin**  
**Zedekiah**

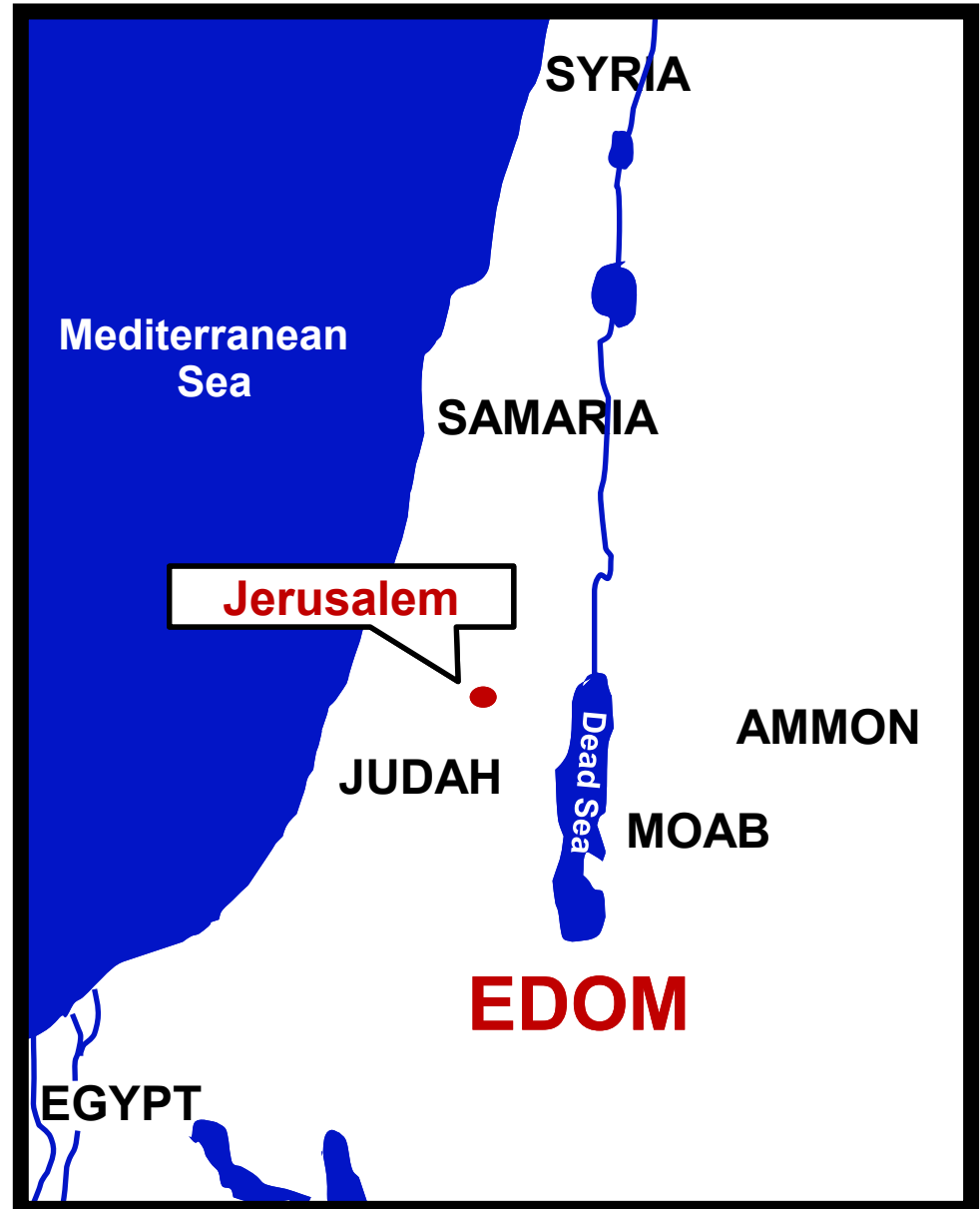
**Edom**, to the south of the Dead Sea, had been a constant enemy of Judah's. They delighted in the destruction of Jerusalem, participated in the violence, and took much of the vacated land for themselves.



# PROPHETS

## Ezekiel & Obadiah

**Ezekiel** prophesied that **Edom's** cruelty and hatred would be dealt with (Ezekiel 25:12; 35:3 ff.), and the book of **Obadiah** is the prediction of the fall of the **Edomites**. “For thy violence against thy brother Jacob shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off forever” (Obadiah 1:10).





**Jeremiah chapters 39 through 43  
tell the story of how it came about that  
Jeremiah went to Egypt after the fall.**







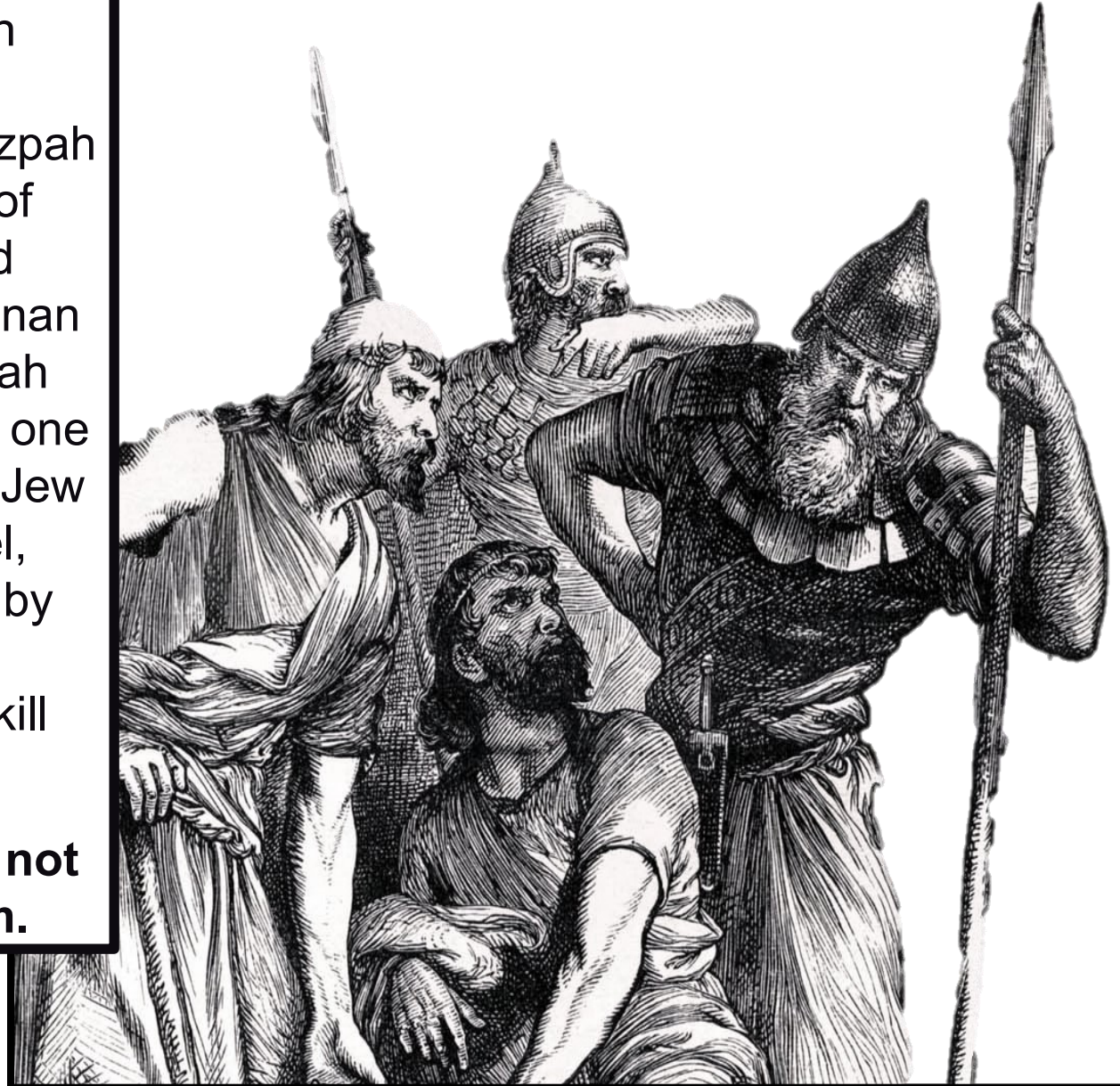
There were still Jews scattered about the land of Judah after Babylon destroyed Jerusalem. **I Kings 25** and **Jeremiah 40** tell about the remaining Jews. Jeremiah the prophet was among those left behind.



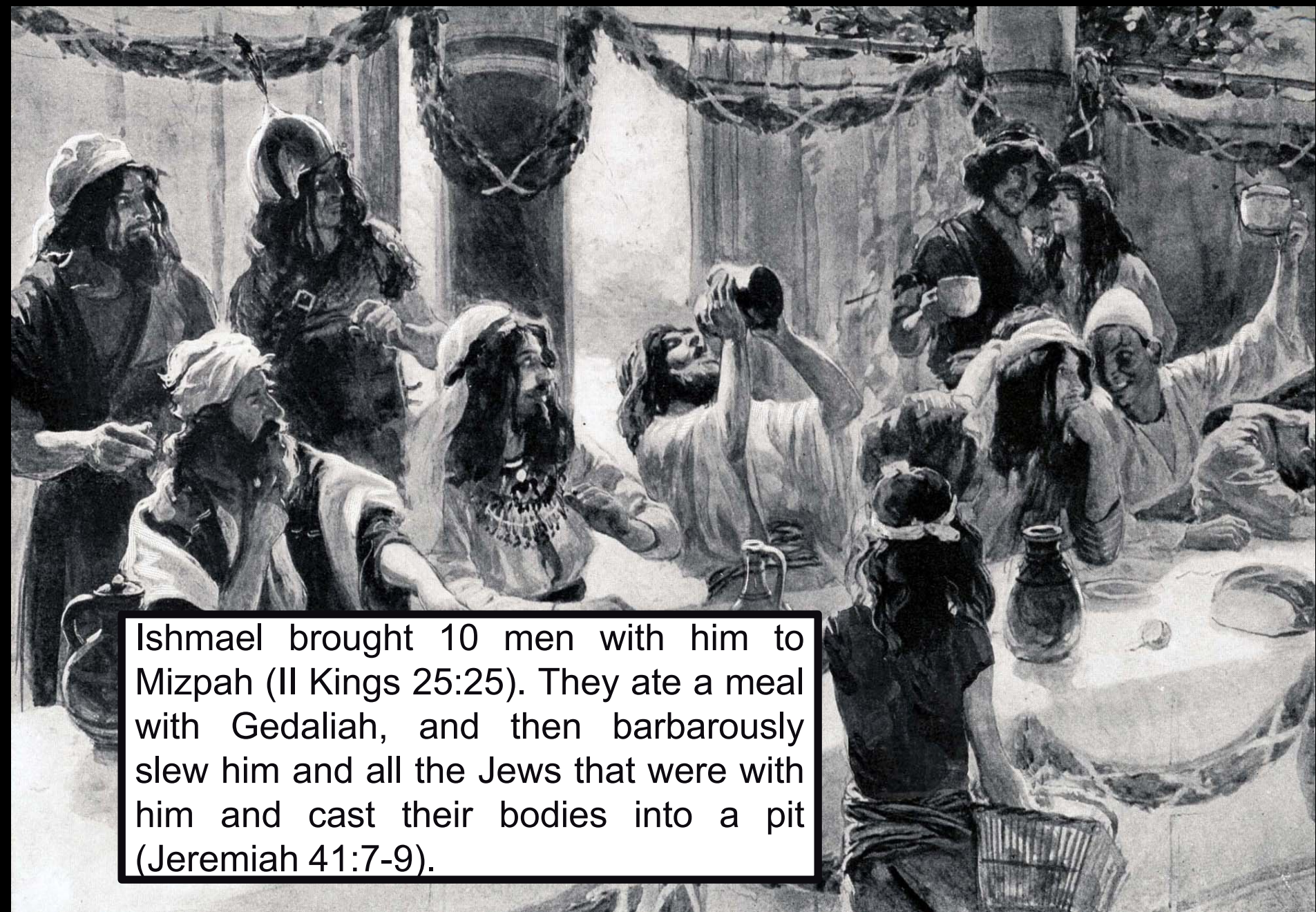
Nebuchadnezzar appointed Gedaliah, one of the Jews left behind, to be their governor (II Kings 25:22). He was a good man. His father Ahikam was one that had protected Jeremiah when he was threatened. Gedaliah was in Mizpah in the land of Benjamin, and Jeremiah along with the other Jews gathered in Mizpah to be under Gedaliah's protection.

One of the men that joined Gedaliah in Mizpah was a captain of the field named Johanan. Johanan warned Gedaliah of a report that one of their own, a Jew named Ishmael, had been sent by the King of the Ammonites to kill Gedaliah.

**Gedaliah did not believe him.**



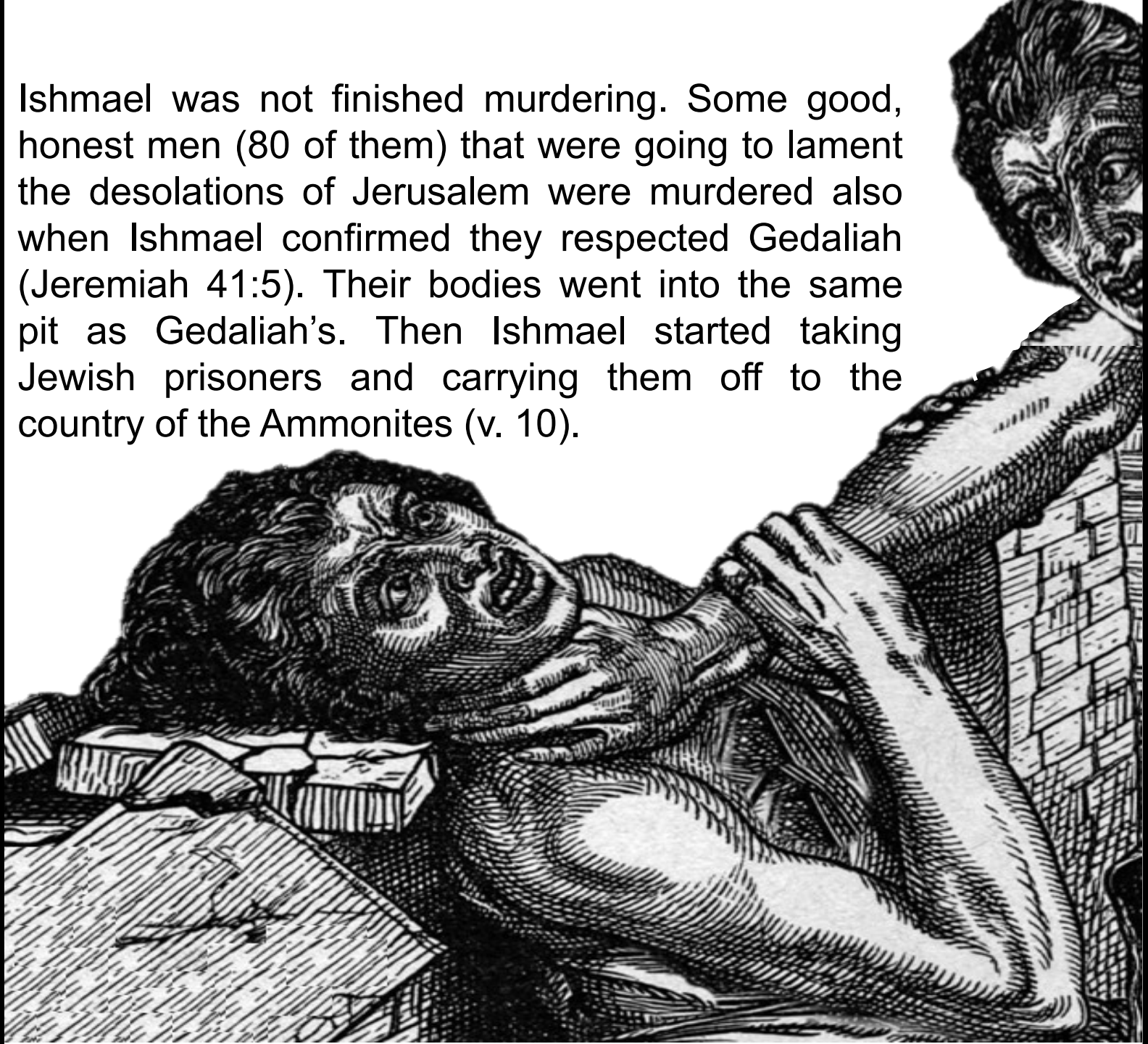




Ishmael brought 10 men with him to Mizpah (II Kings 25:25). They ate a meal with Gedaliah, and then barbarously slew him and all the Jews that were with him and cast their bodies into a pit (Jeremiah 41:7-9).



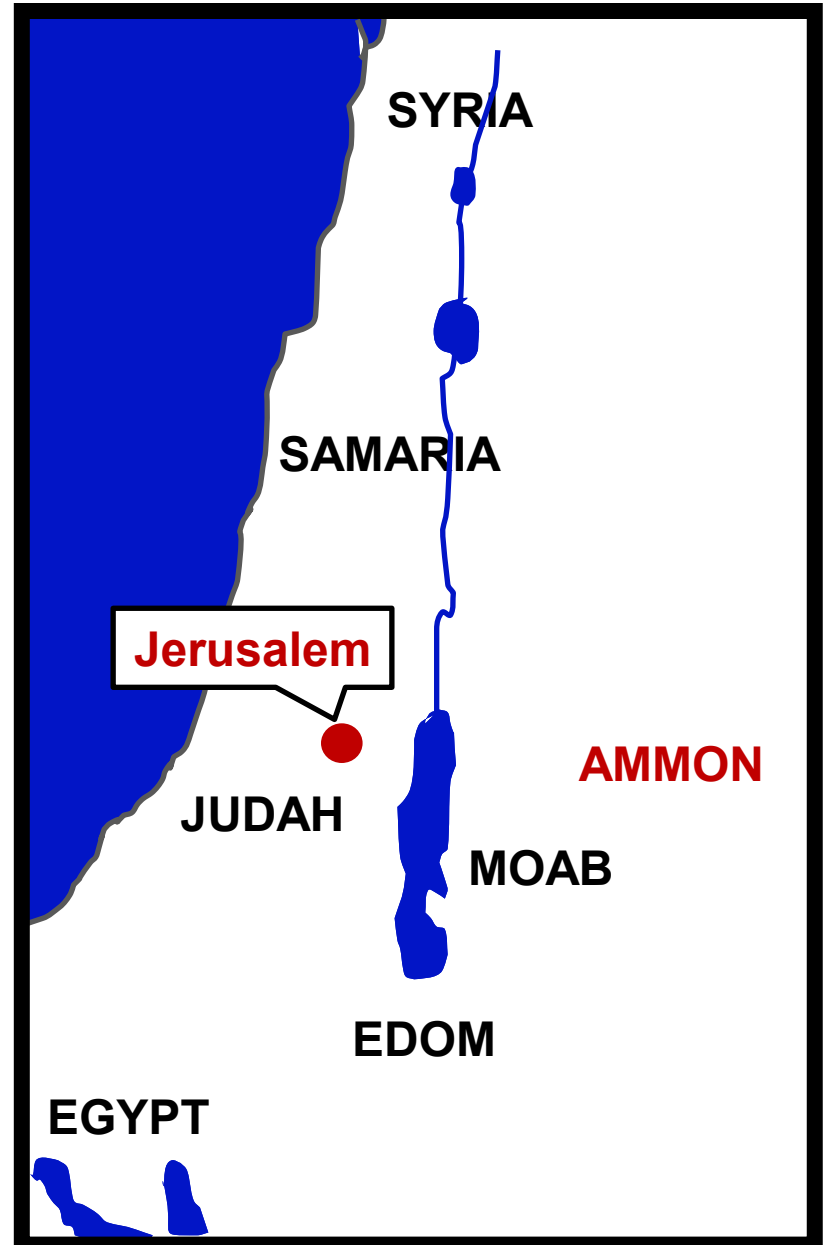
Ishmael was not finished murdering. Some good, honest men (80 of them) that were going to lament the desolations of Jerusalem were murdered also when Ishmael confirmed they respected Gedaliah (Jeremiah 41:5). Their bodies went into the same pit as Gedaliah's. Then Ishmael started taking Jewish prisoners and carrying them off to the country of the Ammonites (v. 10).



## **Jeremiah 41:11-18**

When captain Johanan heard about these events [that his warning was valid] he sought Ishmael to rescue the captives and repay him for his evil deeds.

Ishmael could not stand his ground against Johanan. He left his prisoners and escaped with only 8 of his men. He made his way to the Ammonites where we hear no more of him.





After rescuing Ishmael's captives Johanan led them along with others that had joined his leadership to Chimham a small place near Bethlehem. This was his headquarters as he devised a plan to flee to Egypt, for he was afraid of the Babylonians now that Gedaliah was dead.





Johanan wanted God to advise the Jews to escape to Egypt, but in the entire 42<sup>nd</sup> chapter Jeremiah clearly warns them of failure if they go to Egypt.

Jeremiah told them God said they should not be afraid of the King of Babylon.





Johanan and much of the people had contempt for Jeremiah's message and denied it was from God.

They forced those who did not want to go—men, women, children, and even Jeremiah and Baruch his scribe—to leave Judah and go to Tahpanhes, Egypt the idolatrous city of Pharaoh.



## Jeremiah 43

“<sup>7</sup>So they came into the land of Egypt: for they obeyed not the voice of the LORD: thus came they even to Tahpanhes.”



Jeremiah prophesied while he was in Egypt that Nebuchadnezzar would attack the Egyptians and Jews there; tear down and burn, kill and take captives. There would be no escape for the Jews who had taken refuge at Tahpanhes (Jeremiah 43 & 44).

The Scriptures do not tell of the fulfilment of this prophecy, but Jeremiah was a TRUE prophet and there is no doubt his prophecy was fulfilled.







**At least five ancient writers:**

Elmakin, Epiphanius, Abulpharagius,  
Jerome, and Tertullian,  
are quoted by later historians, stating  
Jeremiah died in Egypt and that the  
Jews stoned him to death at Tahpanhes.

# Babylon Empire

## Jews in captivity



● Tahpanhes

Meanwhile, the Jews that had been taken to Babylon were realizing the error of their ways.



# A Glimpse Into The Hearts Of The Jews In Captivity

## Psalm 137

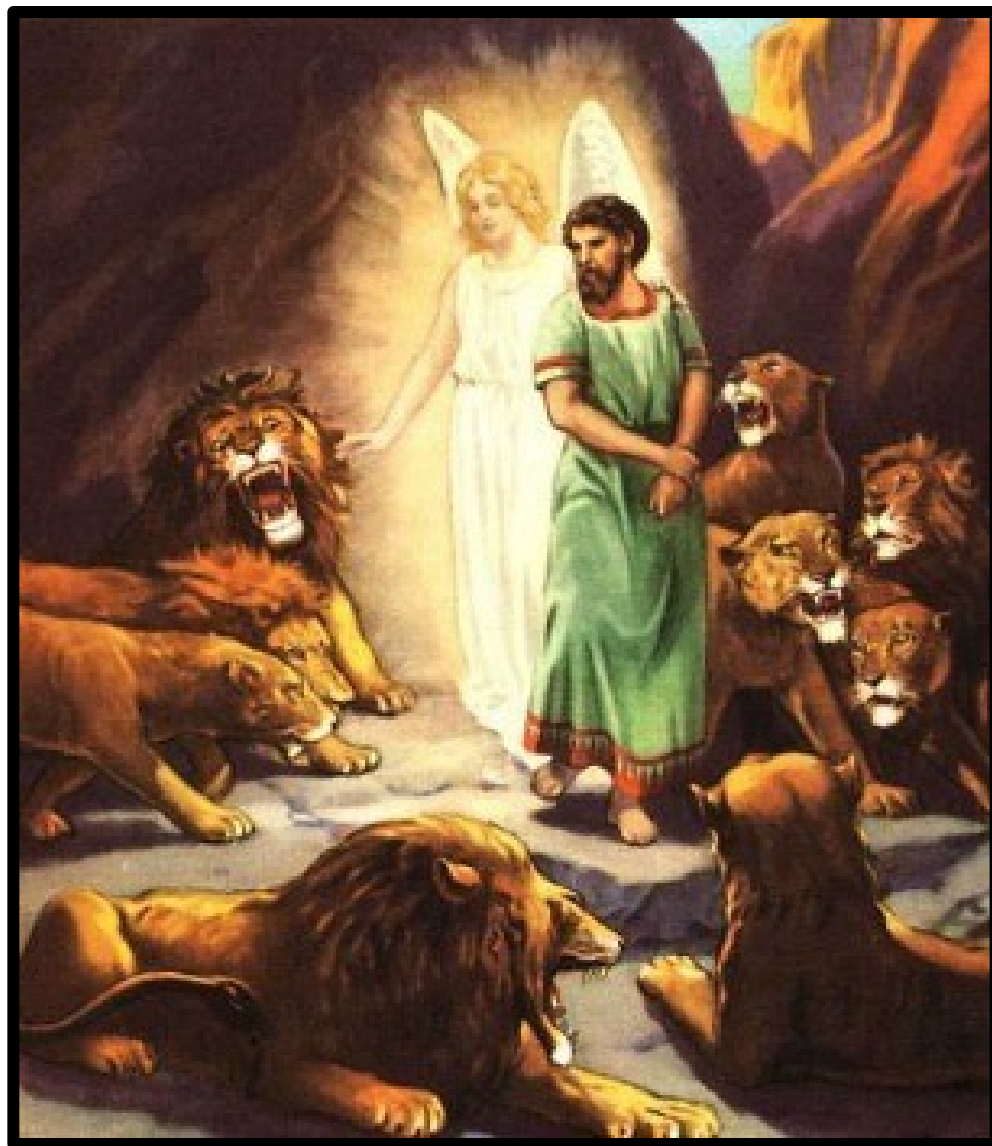
“<sup>1</sup> By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion.  
<sup>2</sup> We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof.  
<sup>3</sup> For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion.  
<sup>4</sup> How shall we sing the LORD’s song in a strange land?  
<sup>5</sup> If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning.  
<sup>6</sup> If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.”



Even in bitter captivity there was hope for God's people. God's promises were being fulfilled, and the Scriptures continued to be written.

The book of Daniel was written from within the walls of Babylon. And though a captive, Daniel advanced not only among the other captives but he was elevated to a political position as one of the princes serving the king.

Daniel's courage even in the face of death is a testimony of his loyalty to God. Daniel prophesied the entire 70 years of Babylonian captivity and on into Persian rule.





Babylon fell to the Persians following Daniel's famous *writing on the wall* prophecy which warned Belshazzar (son of Nebuchadnezzar) of the impending doom. Cyrus the Persian King conquered Babylon and shared the government with Darius the Mede.





After Babylon surrendered to Cyrus, King of Persia, the Jews were treated sympathetically for “The Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, King of Persia.”

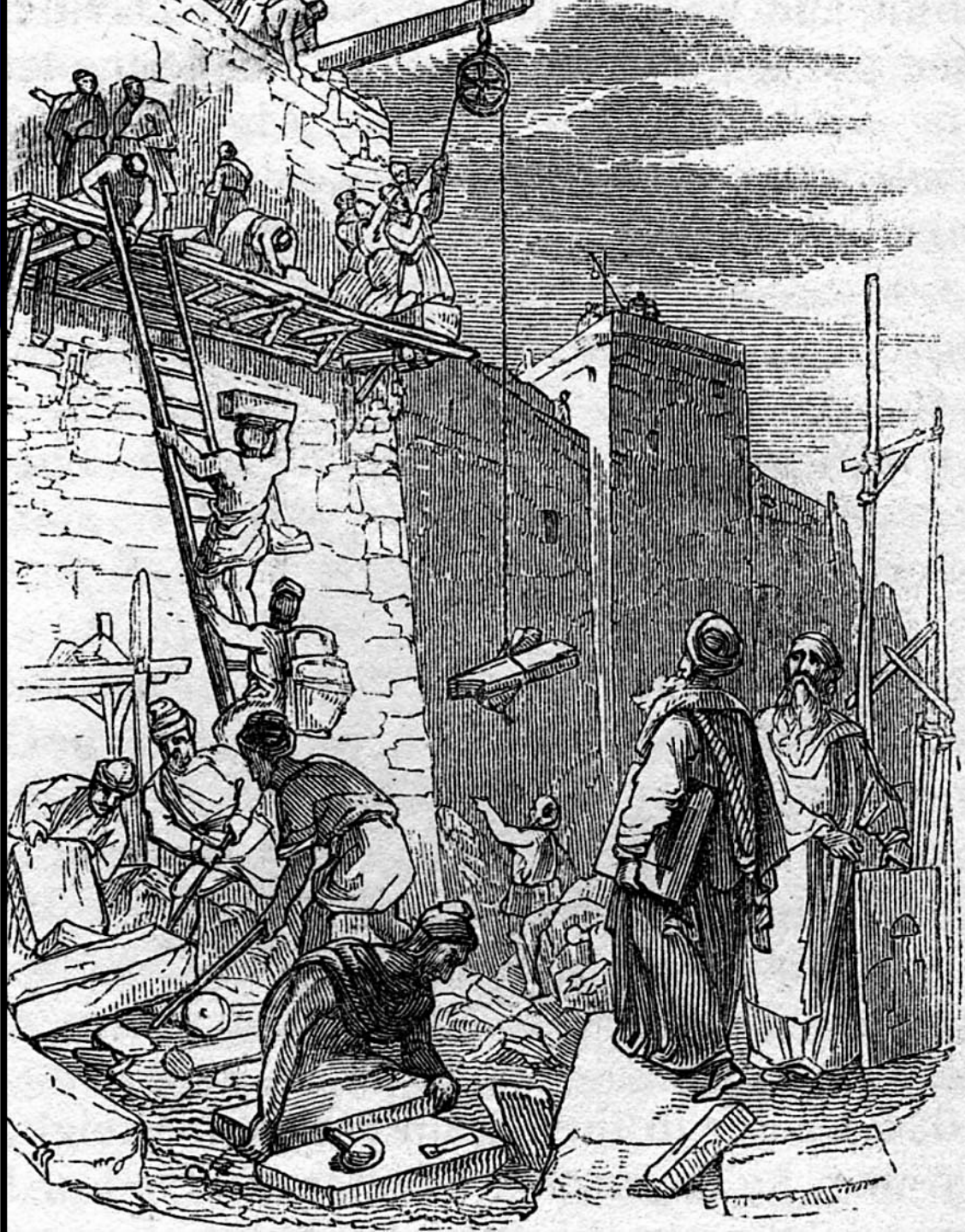
And he proclaimed that the Jews would be released and allowed to go back to their homeland (II Chronicles 36:22-23; Ezra 6:3-5).





Cyrus also gave orders for the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem.

He returned the vessels of the house of the Lord which Nebuchadnezzar had taken, provided funds, and brought cedar trees to Jerusalem from Lebanon (Ezra 3:7).





# Archeology And The Bible



# Archeology And The Bible

The “Cyrus Cylinder” is full of inscriptions regarding Cyrus’ capture of Babylon, and tells how the captives of Babylon were returned to their homelands. The cylinder is now in the British Museum.





# Archeology And The Bible

The **CYRUS CYLINDER** reveals that the Jews were not the only people who benefited by the generous policies of Cyrus. Similar decrees were apparently issued for the benefit of several other nations who had been captured by the Babylonian Kings.

The cylinder also says that Cyrus rebuilt their destroyed sanctuaries and returned to these temples their objects that had been carried away by their former masters.

The Cyrus Cylinder closely parallels the biblical decree of Cyrus and shows that there is no reason to question the reliability of the biblical record.





**About 150 years  
preceding Persian rule**

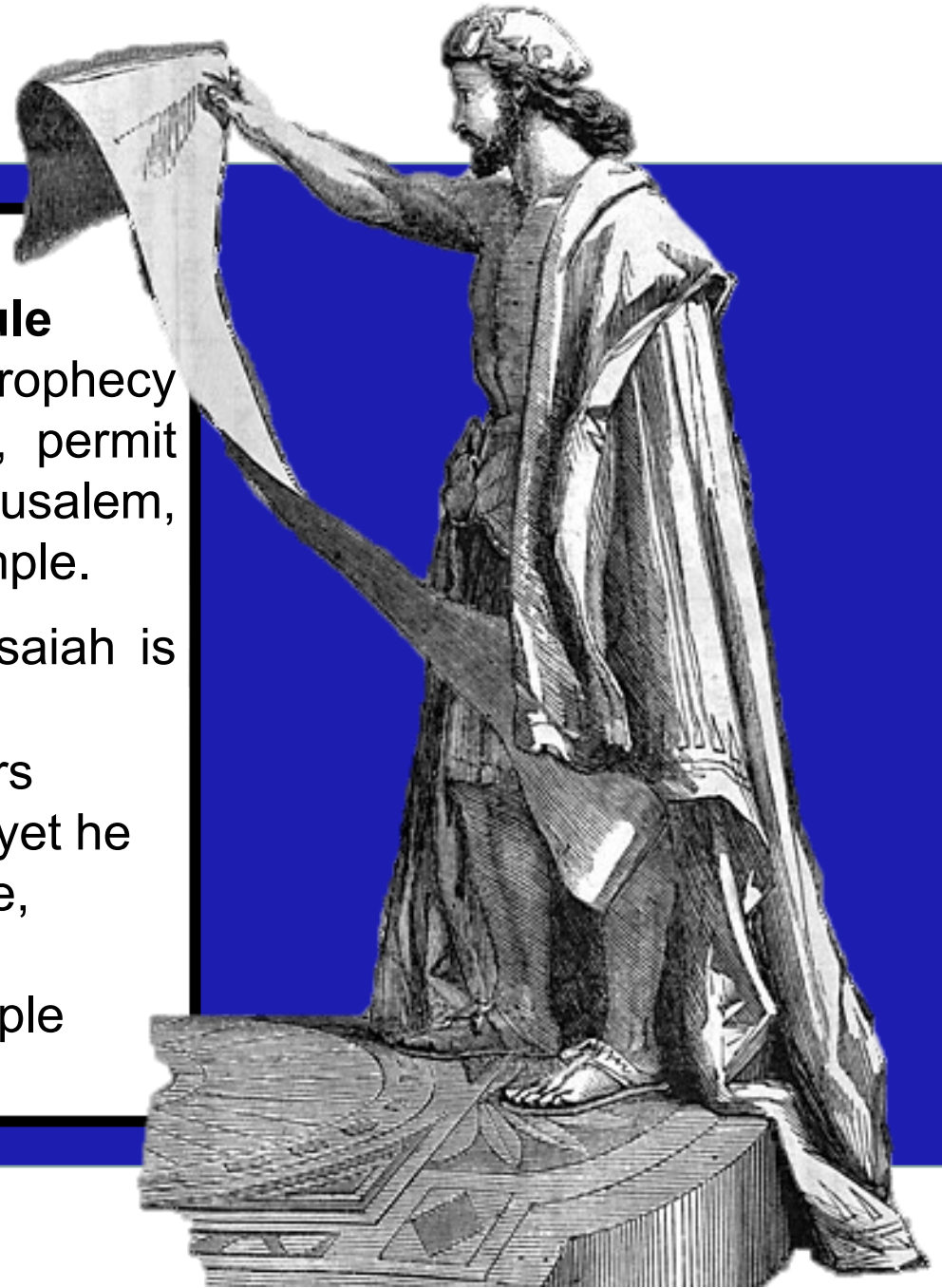
Isaiah made the amazing prophecy that Cyrus would be king, permit the Jews to return to Jerusalem, and let them rebuild the temple.

This fulfilled prophecy of Isaiah is amazing, because—

It was made 150 years  
before the time of Cyrus, yet he  
called Cyrus by name,

**AND**

in Isaiah's day the temple  
had not yet fallen!



After 70 years in captivity, the Jews returned not just from the tribe of Judah but from the other tribes as well. The term “all Israel” is used of those who returned.

**The Jews’ journey to Jerusalem  
was more than 700 miles.**





After the 3rd “*return*” there were still small groups returning in the time of Malachi which was about 100 years after the Jews began to return to Jerusalem.

## Three Returns From Captivity

### The 1st lead by

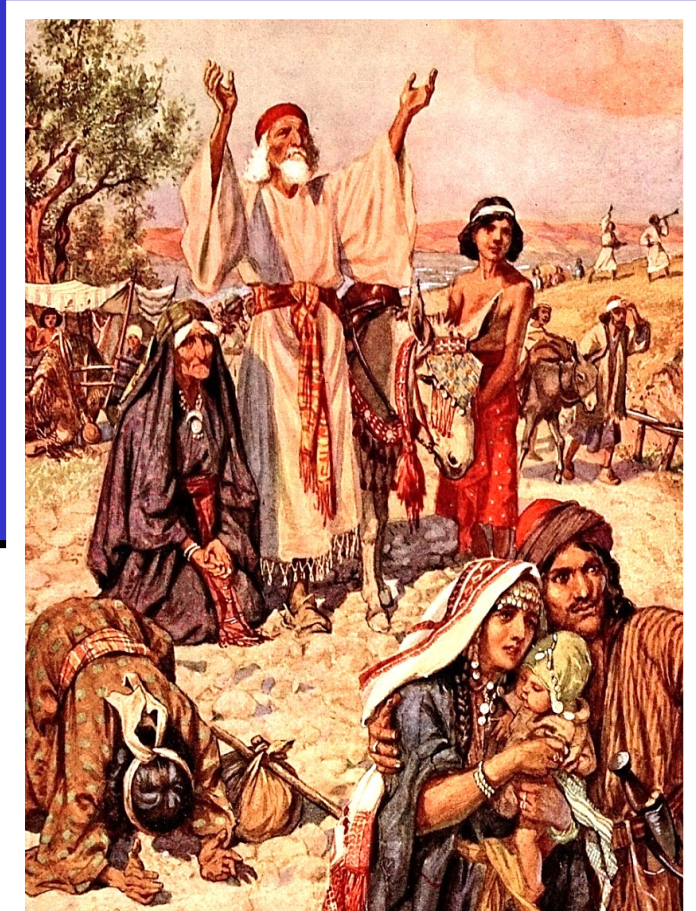
**Zerubbabel** with: 42,360 Jews, 7,337 servants, 200 singers, 736 horses, 245 mules, 435 camels, 6,720 asses, 5,400 gold and silver vessels.

### The 2nd lead by

**Ezra** with: 1,754 men, 100 talents of gold, 750 talents of silver.

### The 3rd lead by

**Nehemiah** with: Army escorts supplied by Artaxerxes I. Nehemiah rebuilt and fortified Jerusalem.





As soon as the Jews arrived in Jerusalem they set up an altar for sacrifice and within a year laid the foundation of the temple (Ezra 3:10).

But, the inhabitants of the land opposed the Jews' returning, fortifying Jerusalem, and building a temple (Ezra 4:1 ff.).

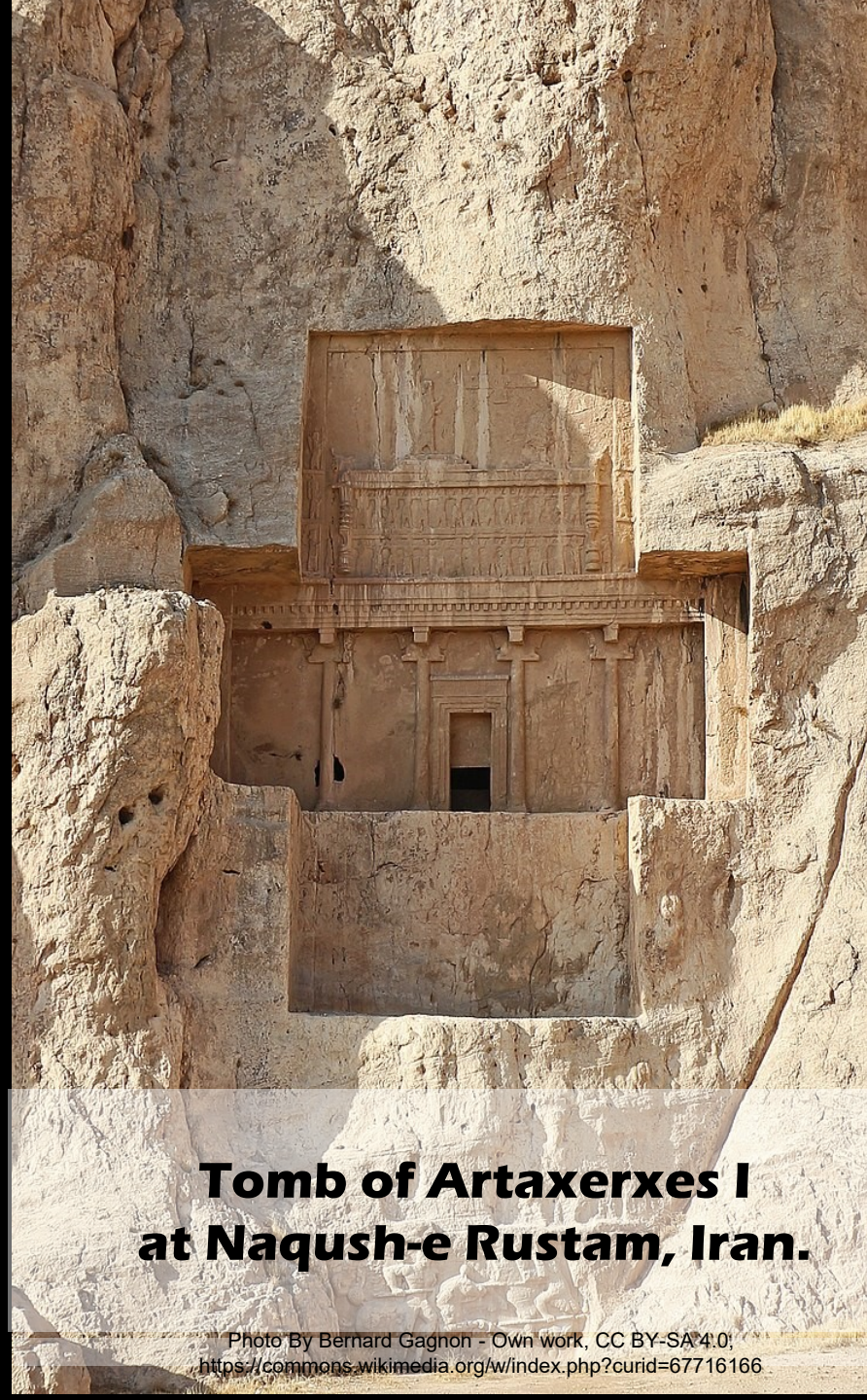




Those who opposed the Jews tried and failed at infiltrating their ranks, so they wrote a dishonest letter to Artaxerxes, the new King of Persia, insinuating the Jews were planning a rebellion.

Artaxerxes was deceived by the letter, and construction of the temple was suspended for fifteen years.

Eventually new permission was received to continue and with the encouragement of Haggai and Zachariah it was finished (Ezra 5:1-17).



**Tomb of Artaxerxes I  
at Naqush-e Rostam, Iran.**



Following this, the Persian Empire experienced conspiracy and corruption.

King Artaxerxes and his son were murdered by an ambitious man named Bagboas who was then murdered by a cousin of Artaxerxes who became the new monarch and called himself, Darius III.

This Darius was King of Persia when the Jews finally finished building the temple (Ezra 6:15).



**Relief of Darius in Persia/Iran**



Following the reign of Darius was King Ahasuerus who is famous for his wife, Esther. Queen Esther appeared on the scene about 40 years after the temple was rebuilt and about 30 years before the wall of Jerusalem was rebuilt. The book of the Bible bearing her name tells of her fearless faith and the providence of God.





# After God's people returned to their land, they no longer had Kings but governed themselves with Governors, Priests, and Prophets.

## Two Periods After The Return

### 1st Period:

Zerubbabel—Governor

Joshua—High Priest

The temple was rebuilt (Ezra 3-6)

Haggai and Zechariah—Prophets

Lasted about 20 years

### **Esther**

### 2nd Period:

Nehemiah—Governor

Ezra—High Priest

Rebuilt the wall; Jerusalem restored

Malachi—Prophet

Lasted about 25 years

To read about these periods  
after the return note that the  
book of—

### **Ezra**

gives an account of both  
periods.

### **Nehemiah**

tells of the 2nd period.

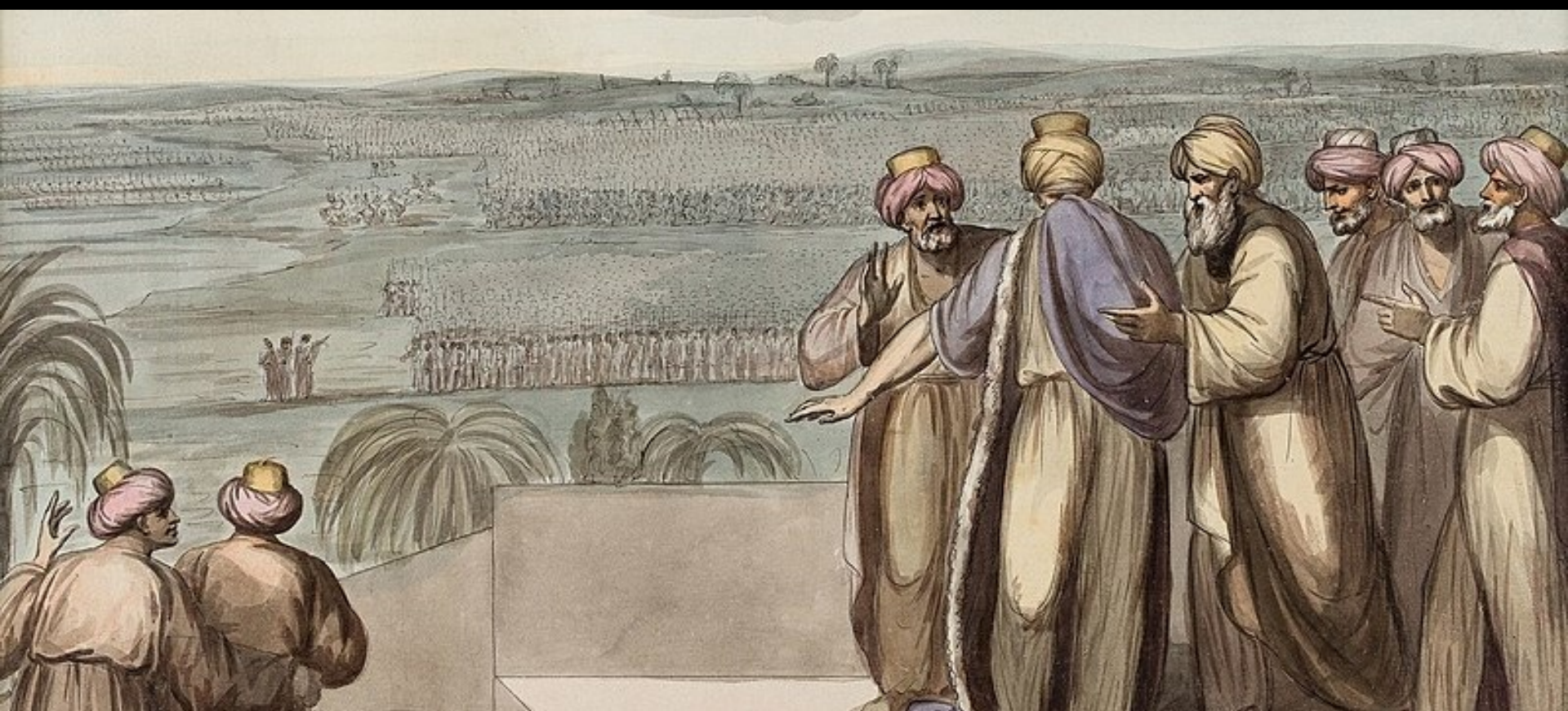
### **Esther**

comes in between the two  
periods.

Before closing this lesson it is significant also to mention that after the years of captivity God's people who had always been called—

## **The Children Of Abraham, The Israelites, The Hebrews**

started being referred to as **Jews**. This began in the books of II Kings, II Chronicles, and Ezra. The name “Jew” originates with the Kingdom of Judah.





**THE END**