

The Prophets of the Old Testament

We Are Starting a Study of ISAIAH

- To grasp Isaiah, we should know his context and contemporaries.
- We are told the four kings of his ministry for historical context.
- We are told of other prophets at that time for contemporaries.
- Prophets used similitudes, so we need the two helpers above.
- Isaiah ranges widely in events – 800 years of Israel is important.

We want more than sound bites
from Isaiah, which is how
most use it, if they use it
at all outside Isaiah 53.

For example, millions have used
though your sins be as scarlet,
they shall be as white as snow,
for Jesus washing away sins, but
the Spirit intended no such thing.

So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.

Nehemiah 8:8

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a
workman that needeth not to be ashamed,
rightly dividing the word of truth.

II Timothy 2:15

The Prophets of the Old Testament

- The Old Testament ends with 17 books we call *The Prophets*.
- They confuse and intimidate most Christians due to ignorance.
- Do you know them by name? ... in order? ... do your children?
- They are 26% of your Bible ... (17 out of a total of 66 books).
- They are 21% of your Bible ... (250 out of a total 1189 chapters).

Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto
them that put their trust in him.

Proverbs 30:5

And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written,
That man shall not live by bread alone, but by
every word of God.

Luke 4:4

Do these two verses about every word of God apply to the last 17 books of the Old Testament?

Prophet = Divine Messenger

Prophet = Ambassador of Heaven

Prophet = Revealer of God

Prophet = Man of God

Prophet = Warning Watchman

Prophet = Barking Watchdog

Therefore, they speak on behalf of God, often in the first person for God, as in Isaiah 1:2, as ten times in Isaiah 1, and as about 350 times in the book of Isaiah!

Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the LORD hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.

Isaiah 1:2

They Warned Repeatedly of God's Judgment

- God is fair and merciful – He sent warnings over and over again.
- But Israel rarely listened; they rejected message and messenger.
- So God justly and righteously afflicted them with horrible pain.
- Eventually He gave them up as captive slaves into foreign lands.
- He brought back Jews from Babylon for His Name ... His Son ... you!

These Men Wrote Books for Your Profit

- God sent these special men with special messages to His church.
- You should learn them and love them for their particular value.
- They were not politically correct – they blasted sin like no others.
- They have some of the Bible's most dramatic, graphic language.
- Their praise of God and promises of good are second to none.

MAJOR PROPHETS

Isaiah

Jeremiah

Lamentations

Ezekiel

Daniel

MINOR PROPHETS

Hosea

Joel

Amos

Obadiah

Jonah

Micah

Nahum

Habakkuk

Zephaniah

Haggai

Zechariah

Malachi

Major vs. Minor does not mean anything about value of a book, but rather the size of the books.

God chose Jewish scribes to keep
the Old Testament: they call
the minors *The Twelve*.

The books are in time order ...
within the two categories ...
also distinguishing them.

For example, Isaiah and Hosea are perfect contemporaries, the first prophets in their categories.

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The time of each prophet shows
that most (9) minor prophets
were well before Daniel.

The Spirit used *former* prophets
by Zechariah (1:4; 7:7,12) for
those before and after
Jerusalem's fall.

This label – *former prophets* – is
important when deciphering
Matthew 27:9.

The main tool of this study is a timeline to reconcile kings and events of Judah, Israel, and their enemies with the 16 prophets.

A Corrected Timeline of the O.T. Prophets

- We mainly use Martin Anstey (1913) and Philip Mauro (1859-1952).
- They trusted the Bible over outside sources like pagan Ptolemy.
- They made the Bible fit the Bible with laborious efforts and zeal.
- They put Cyrus where God put him, unlike other chronologers.
- Study Bible dates make the Persian Empire 82 years too long.

Ptolemy's error of 82 years has been incorporated into all other Bible chronologies forcing the rejection of Cyrus as God's man.

They corrupt Daniel 9:24-27 and
his prophecy of 70 weeks and
then they neglect the value
of Cyrus in Isaiah 44-45.

Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.

Daniel 9:25

That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.

Isaiah 44:28

Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying,

II Chronicles 36:22

Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath the LORD God of heaven given me; and he hath charged me to build him an house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? The LORD his God be with him, and let him go up.

II Chronicles 36:23

Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying,

Ezra 1:1

2 Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah.

3 Who is there among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem....

Ezra 1:2-3

We Reject with Disdain:

1. Any start date other than Cyrus.
2. Any 483-year event but baptism.
3. Any mid-70th event but Calvary.
4. Any male subject but Jesus Christ.

We thank God for tying the OT to the NT ... the history of Israel and the 17 prophets, including Isaiah, to Jesus ... by 70 weeks of Daniel.

Timeline of 70 Weeks



Timeline of 70 Weeks



Timeline of 7 Weeks

Decree of Cyrus to
Rebuild Jerusalem

Jerusalem the City
Finally Finished



“Troublous Times”

Zerubbabel ... Ezra ... Haggai ... Zechariah ... Nehemiah

Timeline of 62 Weeks

Jerusalem the City
Finally Finished

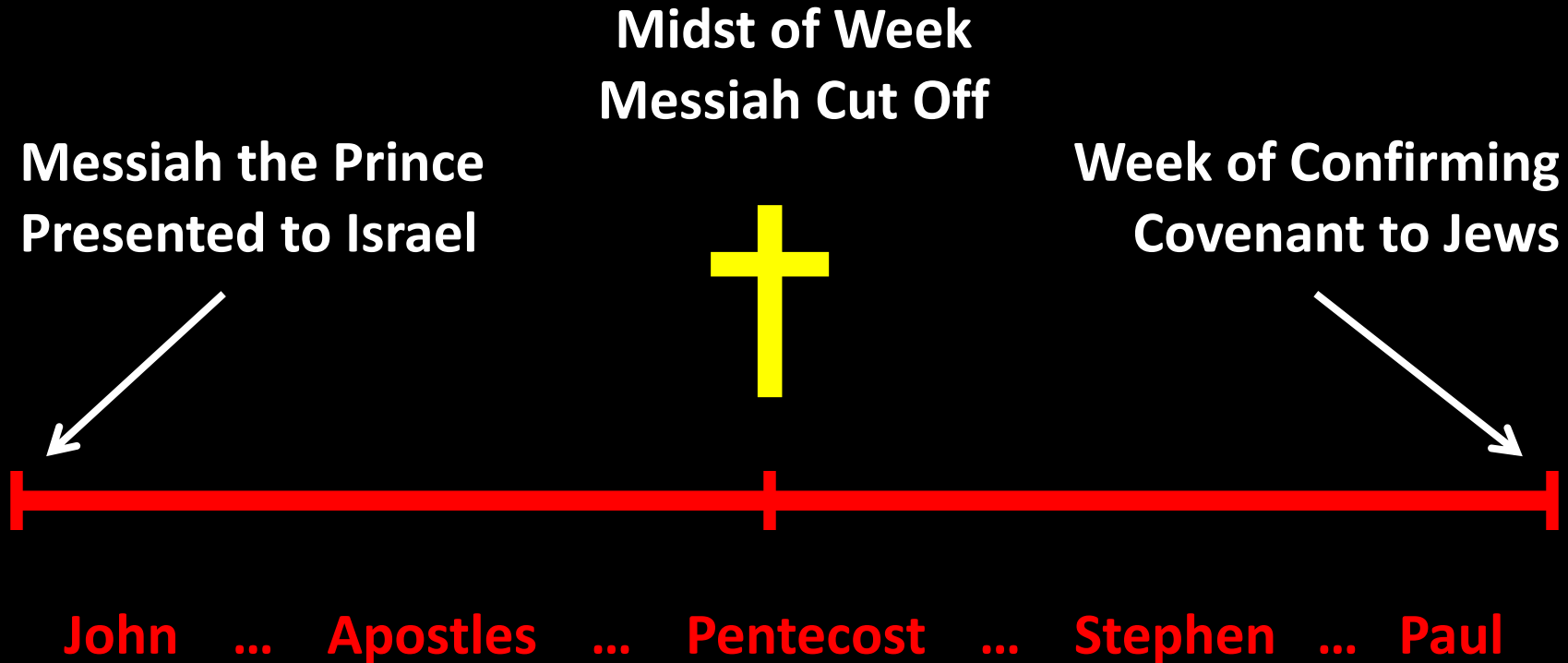
Messiah the Prince
Presented to Israel



Jesus born in 5 BC

Malachi ... Alexander ... Antiochus ... Maccabees ... Augustus ... Herod

Timeline of 70th Week



We also thank God for tying the chronology of Judah's kings and prophets to the chronology of the kings of Babylon.

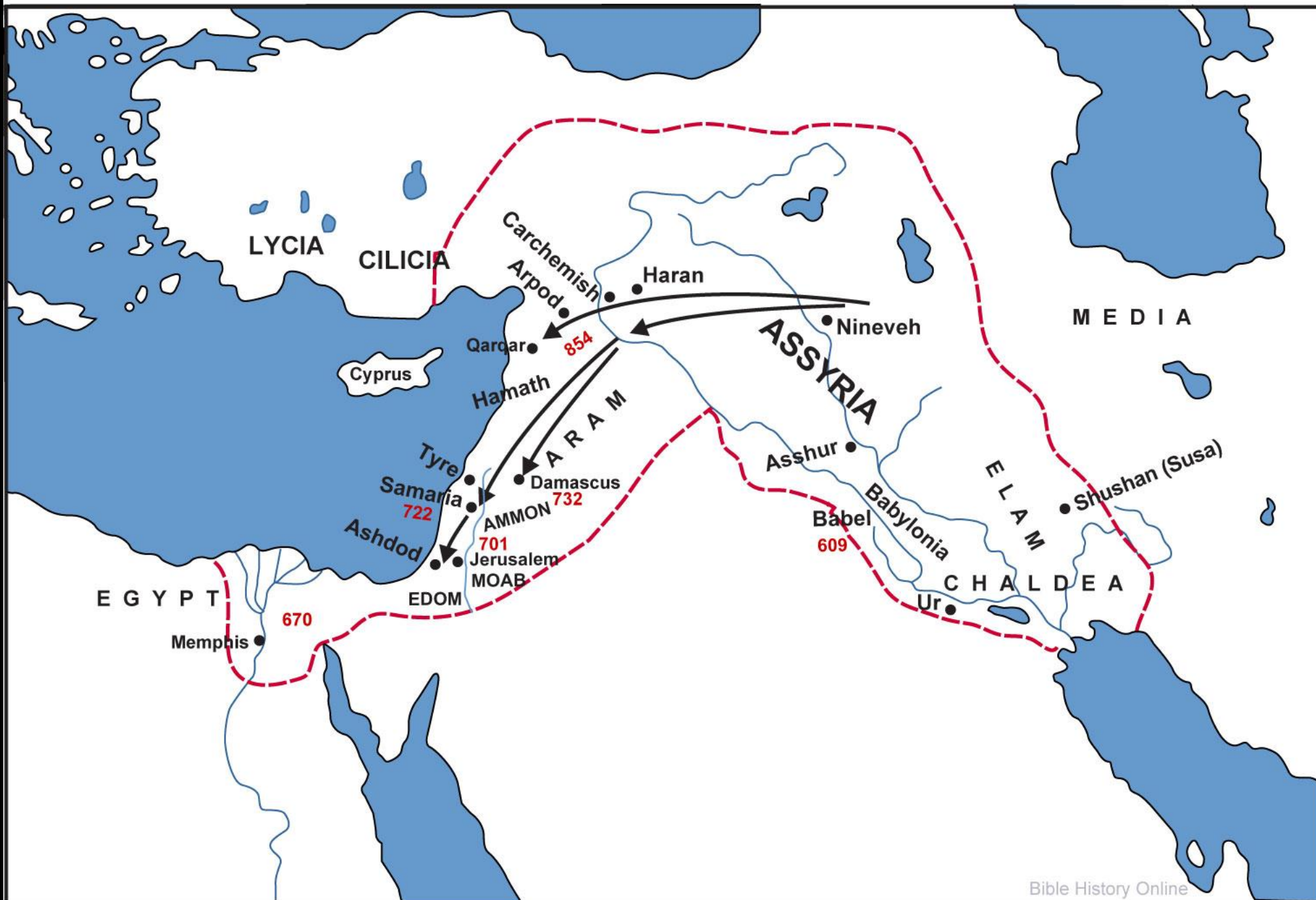
The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, that was the first year of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon;

Jeremiah 25:1

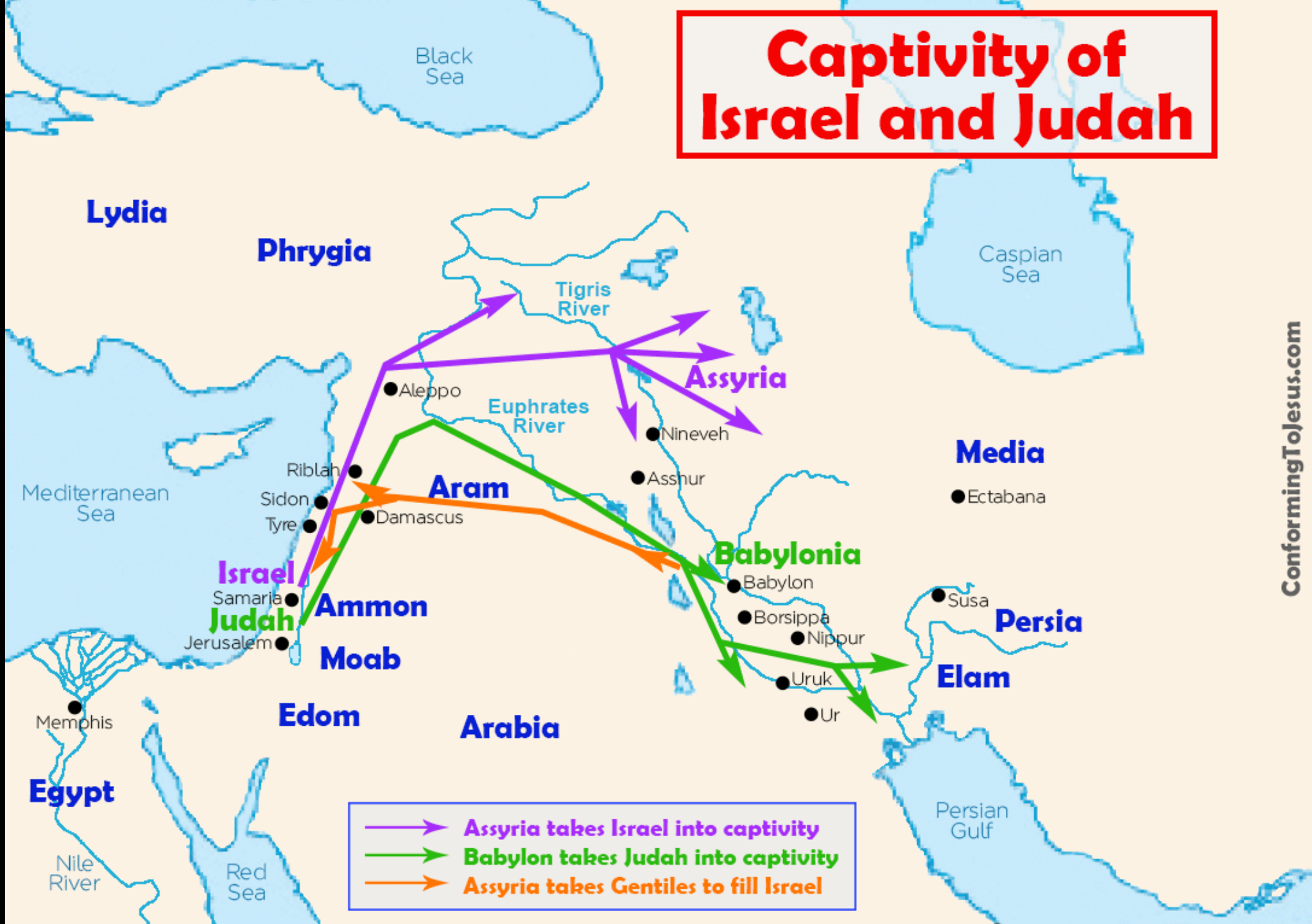
Understanding maps of the nations at that time will assist understanding Isaiah and his prophecies using directions.



MAP OF ASSYRIAN CONQUESTS



Captivity of Israel and Judah



Let's use a timeline to tie Isaiah
and the prophets to major O.T.
events and the greater N.T.
events of Messiah.

Bible Date	Judah King	Israel King	Bible Event	Foreign King	Major Prophet	Minor Prophet
753 B.C.		Jeroboam II				
727 B.C.	Uzziah		Earthquake		Isaiah	Hosea; Joel; Amos; Obadiah; Jonah
712 B.C.			Jeroboam II died		Isaiah	Hosea;
690 B.C.		Zachariah			Isaiah	Hosea;
689 B.C.		Shallum			Isaiah	Hosea;
689 B.C.		Menahem			Isaiah	Hosea;
678 B.C.		Pekahiah			Isaiah	Hosea;
676 B.C.		Pekah			Isaiah	Hosea;
675 B.C.	Jotham			Tiglathpileser	Isaiah	Hosea; Micah
660 B.C.	Ahaz				Isaiah	Hosea; Micah
648 B.C.		Hoshea		Shalmaneser	Isaiah	Hosea; Micah
645 B.C.	Hezekiah				Isaiah	Hosea; Micah
640 B.C.			End of Israel		Isaiah	Micah
631 B.C.			Hezekiah's Sickness	Sennacherib	Isaiah	Micah
617 B.C.	Manasseh					
562 B.C.	Amon					
560 B.C.	Josiah				Jeremiah	Nahum; Habakkuk; Zephaniah
546 B.C.			Fall of Assyria		Jeremiah	
529 B.C.	Jehoahaz				Jeremiah	
529 B.C.	Jehoiakim				Jeremiah	
526 B.C.			To Babylon (70)	Nebuchadnezzar	Jeremiah; Daniel	
518 B.C.	Jehoiachin				Jeremiah; Daniel	
518 B.C.	Zedekiah				Jeremiah; Ezekiel; Daniel	
507 B.C.			End of Judah		Jeremiah; Lam; Ezekiel; Daniel	
457 B.C.	Zerubbabel		From Babylon (70)	Cyrus	Daniel	
442 B.C.				Darius		Haggai; Zechariah
423 B.C.	Nehemiah					
408 B.C.			Temple/City Rebuilt			Malachi
331 B.C.				Alexander		
30 B.C.				Augustus		
5 B.C.			Jesus Born		Angelic Announcements	
26 A.D.			Jesus Baptized		John the Baptist & Jesus	
30 A.D.			Jesus Crucified		Apostles of Jesus	
70 A.D.			Jerusalem Destroyed		Sure Word of Prophecy	

Did you see four waves of prophets, if you will allow your pastor to give you yet another helpful measure?

Four Waves of Prophets:

1. Isaiah-Micah before fall of Israel.
2. Jer-Zep before fall of Jerusalem.
3. Hag-Mal after back from Babylon.
4. Angels-Revelation last prophecies.

How can I get you to love these
17 books and their messages?

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The DIVINE LIBRARY of the Bible
is a fantastic place to sit down,
put your feet up, and feast on
the words of the living God.



ISAIAH

- The largest book (bigger than twelve minors) with 66 chapters.
- It has 39 chapters of mostly warnings + 27 of mostly blessings.
- It is favorite of the 17 of most with glorious language throughout.
- Do you have a favorite in each decade? ... 6? ... 26? ... 40? ... 53?
- You are mentioned many times in this prophecy ... *Hallelujah!*

JEREMIAH

- The largest book by verses (1364/1292 verses) with 52 chapters.
- He is second wave and very historical about Judah and Babylon.
- It includes much political intrigue of final days of the kingdom.
- It includes God's mercy to Jeremiah through Nebuchadnezzar.
- It has the 70-year prophecy Daniel found and added 70-weeks!

LAMENTATIONS

- The shortest major (epilogue for Jeremiah) with only 5 chapters.
- It is what its title declares – Jeremiah lamenting Jerusalem’s ruin.
- He details the horrible overthrow and the present circumstances.
- He blames the true culprits – not the Babylonians but sinful Jews.
- Learn what God can and will do to His own – when they disobey.

EZEKIEL

- The most difficult of the major prophets with 48 long chapters.
- Ezekiel was among the captives, thus had a unique perspective.
- Though distressing in Babylon, Ezekiel has Messianic promises.
- Ezekiel blasts hypocritical religion as graphic spiritual adultery.
- His last ten chapters or so are difficult and metaphorical of us.

DANIEL

- Daniel is a major prophet by many more verses than the minors.
- Daniel has six chapters of stories and six chapters of prophecies.
- He was in the first captives taken to start the 70-years captivity.
- His prophecies are precious from Babylon to 70 A.D. desolation.
- He saw world history of 2500 years in advance right down to us.

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HOSEA

- The longest of the minors with 14 chapters along with Zechariah.
- He prophesied very early at the same time as Isaiah's ministry.
- He ministered to Israel – the ten tribes – as Isaiah was in Judah.
- He prophesied Israel's ruin but held out hope of future recovery.
- He illustrated God's judgment and love by marrying a whore!

JOEL

- A true minor in size, Joel has only three chapters of his ministry.
- He was early with Isaiah and Hosea by placement and Amos 1:1.
- He warned of Judah's judgment by locusts and then a recovery.
- He prophesied a great recovery and the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.
- His third chapter includes vengeance on all the Jews' enemies.

AMOS

- Amos has nine chapters about Israel along with Isaiah and Hosea.
- He was a simple herdsman and fruit-gatherer, but a man of God.
- He starts by blasting all nations that partook in afflicting Israel.
- He lists Israel's various sins and God's efforts they have rejected.
- He is opposed by a priest (Amaziah) but foretold his judgment.

OBADIAH

- This is the shortest book in the Old Testament – only 21 verses.
- What a name! Obadiah! *Servant of the LORD!* Read and rejoice!
- He blasts Edom – the neighbor descendants of the hated Esau.
- He lists Edom's sins, loving Judah's chastening. Learn for Isaiah.
- He promises God's vengeance on them. Learn vengeance is His!

JONAH

- This book reveals God's ordinary kindness and a wild prophet.
- When God calls you to do a thing, do not run away to Tarshish.
- Jonah was an early prophet (II Kgs 14:25), but not only to Israel.
- The great city of Nineveh was capital of Assyria. See also Nahum.
- God's practical mercy is that. He crushed Nineveh 160 years later.

MICAH

- Micah is last of early prophets (Isaiah, Hosea) with 7 chapters.
- His ministry is dated very similarly to Isaiah and Hosea (Mic 1:1).
- He preached to both Judah and Israel, an unusual dual ministry.
- He promised judgment on both but a remnant would be saved.
- Micah foretold the village where Jesus was born – Bethlehem.

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NAHUM

- Nahum is second wave with his three chapters against Nineveh.
- Nineveh was capital of Assyria – a terrible enemy of both nations.
- His opening chapter is a glorious blast about God's vengeance.
- The ruins of this great city were not found until the last 150 yrs.
- Nahum detailed total destruction by a Babylonian confederation.

HABAKKUK

- Habakkuk has three chapters asking God about His judgment.
- He summarizes Isaiah and Jeremiah about Judah and Babylon.
- He saw Judah's sin, but did not understand God using Chaldeans
- God responded by blasting Babylon for their sins and their ruin.
- Habakkuk prays and sings of his trust in God's sovereign ways.

ZEPHANIAH

- Zephaniah, great-great grandson of Hezekiah, wrote 3 chapters.
- He preached against Judah about 25 yrs. before Nebuchadnezzar.
- He warned and threatened them to repent before destruction.
- He foretold the ruin of neighboring nations to get Judah's heart.
- As we see many times, he concluded with hope for the future.

Haggai

- One of three prophets of the third wave; he wrote 2 chapters.
- God sent him and Zechariah to help rebuilding (Ezra 5:1; 6:14).
- He told the Jews to consider their finances due to their priorities.
- He said the second temple would be more glorious by Messiah.
- He warned them that good conduct does not cover bad conduct.

Zechariah

- One of three prophets of the third wave; he wrote 14 chapters.
- God sent him and Haggai to help the rebuilding (Ezra 5:1; 6:14).
- A much larger book than Haggai, it has many prophecies of Jesus.
- He has a number of obscure visions of events in Israel's future.
- Do you remember the recent explanation of fasts = feasts? Here!

Malachi

- The last prophet of the third wave and O.T. then 400 yrs. silence.
- Ezra and Nehemiah purified the people, but they backslid again.
- Backslid in faith, worship, priests, marriages, evil, giving, etc., etc.
- Malachi has a two promises of John the Baptist before our Lord.
- This prophet and the O.T. ends with a threatened curse of 70 A.D.

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Despise not prophesyings.

I Thessalonians 5:20

We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:

II Peter 1:19

For Further Study

**** Chronology Table of O.T. Prophets ****

<http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/prophets-table-with-notes.pdf>

Check many links for further study at the end of this document.