



THE END OF JUDAH

Week 22: The Single Kingdom, Judah, Falls (2 Chronicles 36; Jeremiah; Habakkuk; Daniel; Ezekiel)

The last four kings of Judah were vassals of either Egypt or of Babylon. Three were Josiah's sons, and one was his grandson. None followed the way of the Lord. This last period, lasting less than twenty-five years, is told in 2 Kings 23-25 and 2 Chronicles 36. Supplementary details are included in the book of Jeremiah.

Jehoahaz (609BC)

Josiah's son Jehoahaz (also called Shallum) was not the oldest, but the people of Judah chose him to become king after Josiah was killed in battle. Three months later he was taken as Pharaoh Neco's prisoner. Neco levied a huge tribute from Judah and installed Jehoahaz's older brother Jehoiakim as his vassal in Jerusalem.

Jehoiakim (609-598BC)

This son of Josiah was two years older than Jehoahaz. He ruled for eleven years and was known for his vicious persecution of Jeremiah. After the Babylonian army defeated the Egyptians in 605, it attacked Jerusalem (Dan. 1:1-2). Jehoiakim shifted his loyalty to Babylon, and a number of the upper-class members of Jerusalem were taken to Babylon. It was at this time that Daniel was deported as an exile, and his interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream took place the following year (Dan. 2:1). In the meantime, however, Jehoiakim, was allowed to continue reigning as Nebuchadnezzar's vassal.

After three years, Jehoiakim foolishly tried to shake off the Babylonian yoke (2 Kings 24:1), believing that re-alliance with Egypt would provide a better opportunity for Judah. Nebuchadnezzar retaliated by sending an army against Jerusalem again. Jehoiakim died at age thirty-six and his eighteen-year-old son Jehoiachin was left to deal with the Babylonian crisis.

Jeremiah's Ministry (627-585BC)

More is known about Jeremiah than any of the other writing prophets. God called him to ministry during the rule of Josiah and he remained single and childless as a symbol of the desperate times he lived through. He faced calamity during the reigns of Jehoiakim and Zedekiah. Because he exposed his inner feelings in his writings, he is called "the Weeping Prophet."

During Jehoiakim's reign Jeremiah was almost put to death because of his prophecy that Judah would be destroyed (Jer. 26). During Zedekiah's reign, Jeremiah prophesied again that Jerusalem would be destroyed. This resulted in imprisonment in a muddy pit (Jer. 37-38). He predicted the seventy years of captivity for the Jews, the time between the destruction of Solomon's temple and the dedication of the second temple (586-516BC). Jeremiah is also the one who prophesied the coming of God's new covenant that would surpass the old covenant. Jesus established the new covenant with His death.

Jehoiachin (598BC)

Jehoiakim's son Jehoiachin, also known as Coniah or Jeconiah, ruled in Jerusalem for a hundred days while he was 18 years old until he surrendered to Nebuchadnezzar. Jerusalem had been besieged once more; this time Nebuchadnezzar took the king, the queen mother, and 10,000 people (including the Prophet Ezekiel) away as captives. The temple was stripped of anything of value. Nebuchadnezzar installed the king's uncle, Zedekiah, as the vassal in Jerusalem.

Zedekiah (597-586BC)

Josiah's third son to be king was Zedekiah who ruled for 11 years. For four years Zedekiah submitted to the Babylonians, even visiting the city of Babylon. Later, however, he rebelled. In retaliation Nebuchadnezzar came against Jerusalem for the third time, arriving with his army in Zedekiah's ninth year (January 588). The city was besieged and held out for two years until Zedekiah's eleventh year (August 586). This time the Babylonians took no chances and torched the temple, the palace, and all important buildings while the walls of the city were pulled down. An even larger number of citizens was taken away into captivity. Judah was no more. The Babylonian captivity had at last begun as Jeremiah had foretold.

JERUSALEM HAS FALLEN

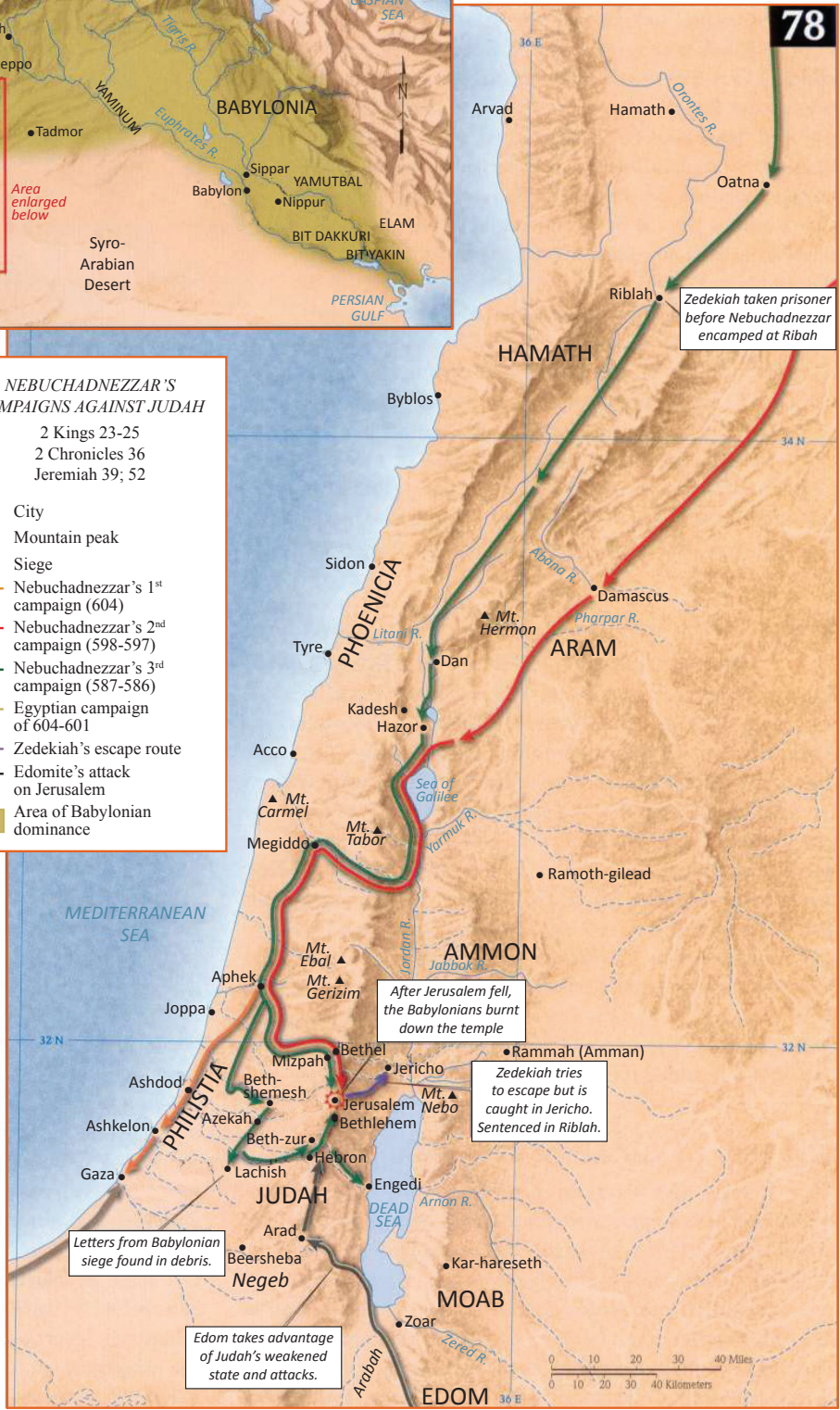
The Babylonian empire comprised of modern-day western Iran, Iraq, southern Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Israel.



NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S CAMPAIGNS AGAINST JUDAH
 2 Kings 23-25
 2 Chronicles 36
 Jeremiah 39; 52

- City
- ▲ Mountain peak
- ☉ Siege
- Nebuchadnezzar's 1st campaign (604)
- Nebuchadnezzar's 2nd campaign (598-597)
- Nebuchadnezzar's 3rd campaign (587-586)
- Egyptian campaign of 604-601
- Zedekiah's escape route
- Edomite's attack on Jerusalem
- Area of Babylonian dominance

- Week Twenty-Two Reading Plan**
- Habakkuk 3:1-19
Habakkuk's Dialogue with God
 - Daniel 1:1-21
Daniel's Wise Decision
 - Daniel 3:1-30
The Blazing Furnace and the Three Hebrew Children
 - Ezekiel 1:1-2:10
Ezekiel's Vision and Call
 - Jeremiah 37:1-38:28
Jeremiah is Imprisoned
 - 2 Chronicles 36:1-21
The End of Judah
 - Jeremiah 52:1-34
The Fall of Jerusalem into Babylonian Captivity



After Jerusalem fell, the Babylonians burnt down the temple

Zedekiah tries to escape but is caught in Jericho. Sentenced in Riblah.

Edom takes advantage of Judah's weakened state and attacks.

Letters from Babylonian siege found in debris.

Easley, Kendell H., *The Illustrated Guide to Biblical History*, Nashville: Holman, 2003, p. 116.