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FOURTH EDITION

# How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth

*"A practical approach  
to Bible study in an  
easy-to-understand style."*

—Bookstore Journal



Gordon D. Fee  
Douglas Stuart

There's  
Obadiah and  
Zechariah comin'  
out of Daniel's  
store, Amos.

Your eyes are  
bad, Ezekiel.  
That's Jonah &  
Zephaniah.

By the look of that  
dust swirl kickin' up, I  
reckon Habakkuk and  
Nahum must be drivin'  
Isaiah's hay wagon in.

Jeremiah, you know darned well that's  
Micah's mare pullin' out front. Besides, I heard tell  
from Hosea that Joel and Haggai got to fightin' over the  
sale of their bay. Seems they saw Malachi sportin' around in  
one of them new 'auto-mo-biles'. Got themselves a real  
bad case of the 'envies'. Well, as the Good Book says,  
ain't no profit in brotherly discord.

Made with FUMATIC



# How to Read the Bible For All Its Worth

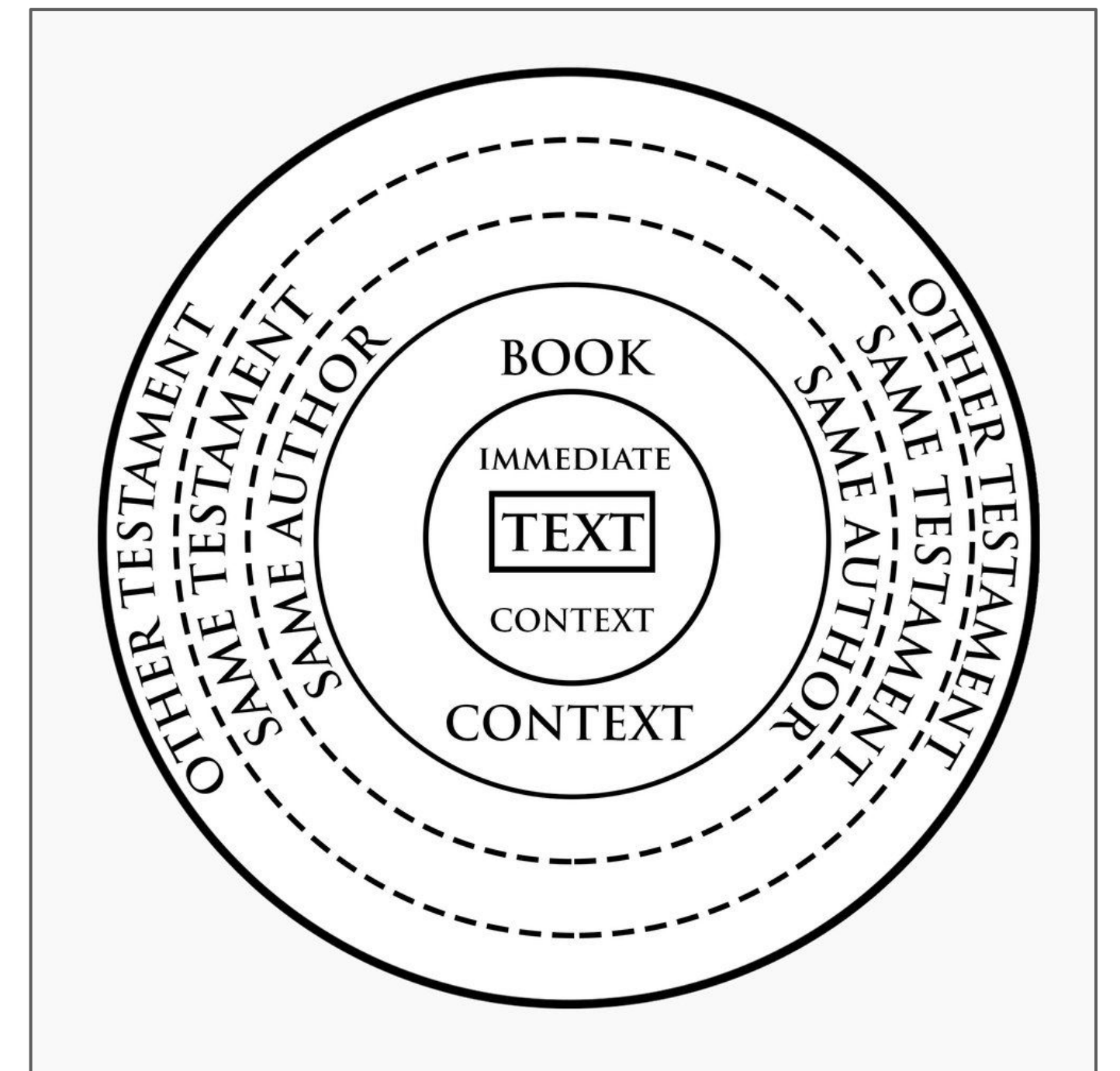
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An 8 week introductory study with  
classroom participation

Week 4: Literary Genre: **Hebrew Prophecy**

Week 3: *RECAP: Hebrew Narrative*

- 3 levels of narrative. God is the ultimate hero
- Select stories retelling the *historical* events to provide meaning & direction to present generation
- Not intended to explicitly teach moral lessons
- Author expects us to be familiar with Scripture



Prepared by Pastor Ted Rathman and Todd Frehafer  
with the grateful assistance of Table Group Leaders

# Prophecy - Old Testament

## 4 Major Prophets

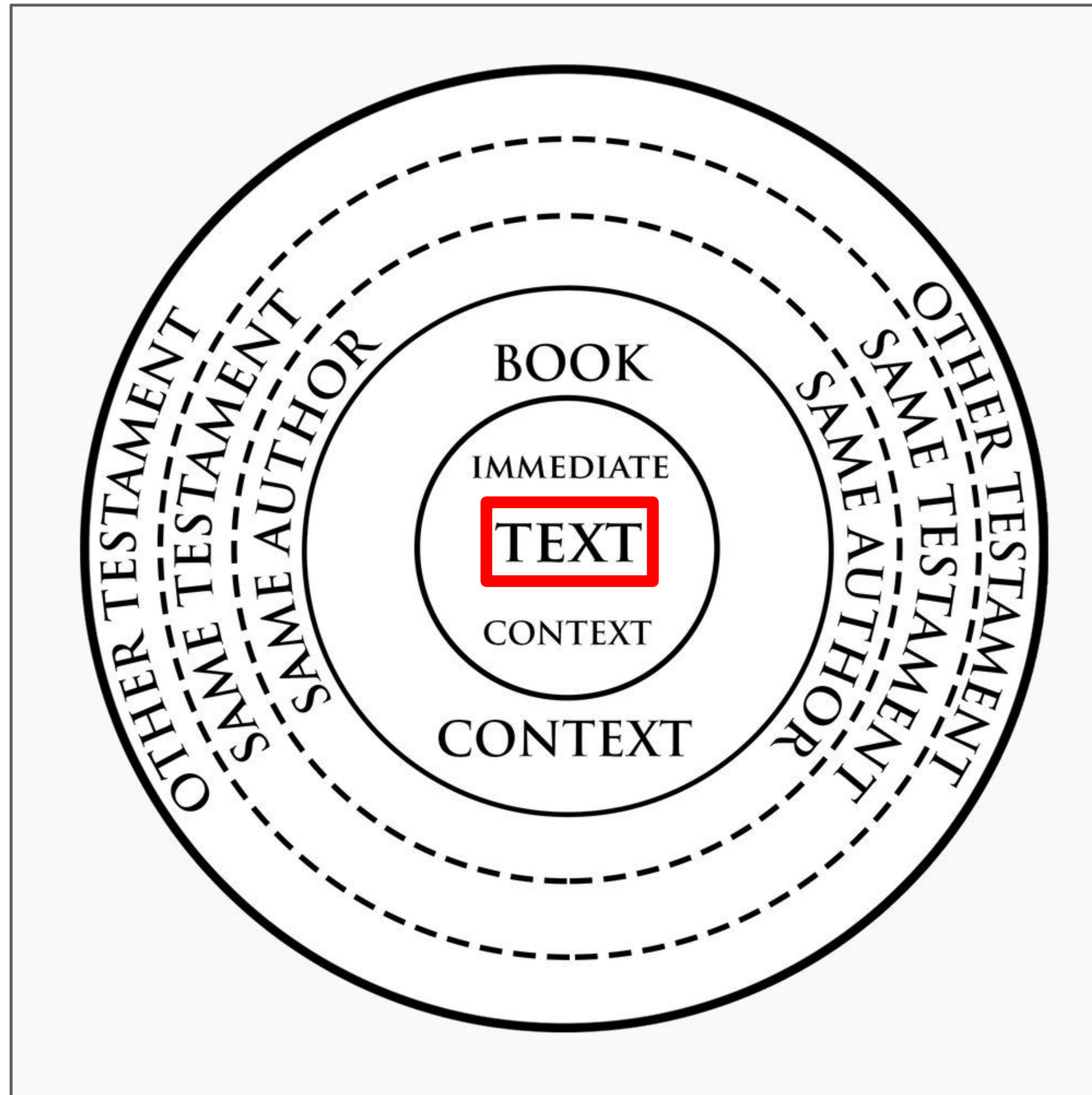
- Prophecy is as much *forth*-telling as *fore*-telling.
- Most oracles concerned the immediate future of Israel and surrounding nations than our own time.
- Interpret at oracle (smallest literary unit) level. Look for changes in subject, time, topic, location, style, etc.

## 12 Minor (Shorter) Prophets

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



# The Concentric Circles of Bible Interpretation



Identify smallest (minor) literary units  
Paragraphing is already provided in most translations.

- Epistles and Hebrew Narrative: paragraph
- Poetry: strophe or stanza
- Proverb: overall theme encircling individual proverb
- Prophecy: entire oracle
- Gospel: paragraph (narrative); elsewhere one teaching session, parable, theme

# Basic Prophetic Pattern

- An identification of Israel's sin *or* of God's love for His people
- A prediction of a curse or a blessing, depending upon the circumstance
- Blessings for Obedience
  - Leviticus 26:1-13
  - Deuteronomy 4:32-40; 28:1-14
- Curses for Disobedience
  - Leviticus 26:14-39
  - Deuteronomy 4:15-28; 28:15-32:42

# Two Major Invasions Dominate Prophetic Books

1. Following death of Solomon (c. 930 BC), the Kingdom is split in civil war
  - a. “Israel” or “Ephraim”: 10 Northern Tribes (Reuben, Simeon, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Issachar, Zebulun, Manasseh, and Ephraim)
  - b. “Judah”: 2 Southern Tribes (Judah, Benjamin)
  - c. Each new nation has its own line of kings
2. Apostasy and wicked kings in both kingdoms
3. **Assyria** invades and completes conquest of Israel c. **722 BC**. Exile.
4. **Babylon** invades and completes conquest of Judah c. **586 BC**. Exile.

# The Function of Prophecy

1. The prophets were Mosaic covenant enforcement mediators.
  - a. God's direct representatives (ambassadors) to the nation
  - b. Not societal reformers and they suffered greatly for being covenant spokesmen
2. Announced God's blessings and curses for covenant obedience (Leviticus, Deuteronomy)
  - a. Blessings include: life, health, prosperity, agricultural abundance, respect, safety
  - b. Curses include: death, disease, draught, dearth, danger, destruction, defeat, deportation, destitution, disgrace
3. Blessings and curses were NOT specific to any individual, but corporate (nation)
4. The prophets' message was not their own, but God's
  - a. "This what the LORD says" or "declares the LORD"
  - b. Many prophecies relayed directly in first-person "I", but it is God who speaks
5. The prophets message is unoriginal
  - a. Inspired by God in their generation not to teach (priests), but to remind and warn nation



# The Forms of Prophetic Utterance

## 1. The Messenger Speech

- a. **Most common.** “This is what the LORD says” or “says the LORD”, etc.
- b. e.g., Jeremiah 35:17-19, “Therefore *thus says the Lord*, the God of hosts, the God of Israel”

## 2. The Lawsuit

- a. A summons, a charge, evidence, and a verdict (implicit or explicit)
- b. e.g., Isaiah 3:13-26, “The Lord arises to *contend*, And stands to *judge* the people”

## 3. The Woe

- a. An announcement of distress, the reason for distress, and a prediction of doom
- b. e.g. Micah 2:1-5, “*Woe* to those who scheme iniquity”

## 4. The Promise

- a. Reference to the future, mention of radical change, and mention of the blessing
- b. e.g., Amos 9:11-15, “In that day *I will raise up the fallen* booth of David”

## 5. The Enactment Prophecy

- a. Accompany oracles with symbolic acts to vividly reinforce divine prophetic message
- b. e.g., Isaiah 20, “Even as My servant Isaiah has gone *naked and barefoot three years*”



# The Prophets As Poets

## 1. Synonymous Parallelism

- The second or subsequent line reinforces the sense of the first line
  - “I have wiped out your transgressions like a thick cloud // and your sins like a heavy mist” *Isa. 44:12 (NASB95)*

## 2. Antithetical Parallelism

- The second or subsequent line contrasts the thought of the first, often reinforcing the thought of the first line through contrast
  - “They did not cry out to Me with their heart // when they wailed upon their beds” *Hos. 7:14 (NKJV)*

## 3. Synthetic Parallelism

- The second or subsequent line adds to the first line in any manner that provides additional information
  - “The deliverers will ascend Mount Zion to judge the mountain of Esau // and the kingdom will be the LORD’s” *Obad. 1:21 (NASB95)*

# Some Exegetical Tips For Prophetic Books

1. Historical setting is paramount - context, context, context
  - a. Pre-exile (586BC) or post-exile prophet?
  - b. Who is the reigning King?
  - c. Major characters/nations?
2. Oracle Form (Messenger, Lawsuit, Woe, Promise, Enactment)
3. Nearly all oracles of coming judgment or salvation were intended for the immediate future of Israel (now past) and not for our future
4. Eschatological ('last times') language is often metaphorical, not literal



# Closing thoughts

- Less than 5% of OT prophecy specifically mentions new covenant age
- Less than 2% of OT prophecy is Messianic
- Less than 1% of OT prophecy concerns events yet to come in our time

# Assignment for Week 5

Read at least one Psalm every day including Psalm 27  
(Old Testament Poetry)





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## **PUBLICATIONS**

### **HOW TO READ THE BIBLE FOR ALL ITS WORTH**

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Session 1

Session 2

# Today's Table Group Discussion-**Hebrew Prophecy**

The Promise of the Spirit and  
The Day of the LORD  
Joel 2:28-32



# **Week 4**

**SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL**

# Fitting Prophetic Books into the Storyline

1 Samuel

2 Samuel

1 Kings

2 Kings

Exile

**AMOS**  
**HOSEA**

**JOEL**  
**MICAH**  
**ISAIAH**

**JONAH**  
**NAHUM**  
**OBADIAH**

**DANIEL**  
**EZEKIEL**

Ezra

Nehemiah

**HAGGAI**  
**ZACHARIAH**  
**MALACHI**

**ZEPHANIAH**  
**HABAKKUK**  
**JEREMIAH**

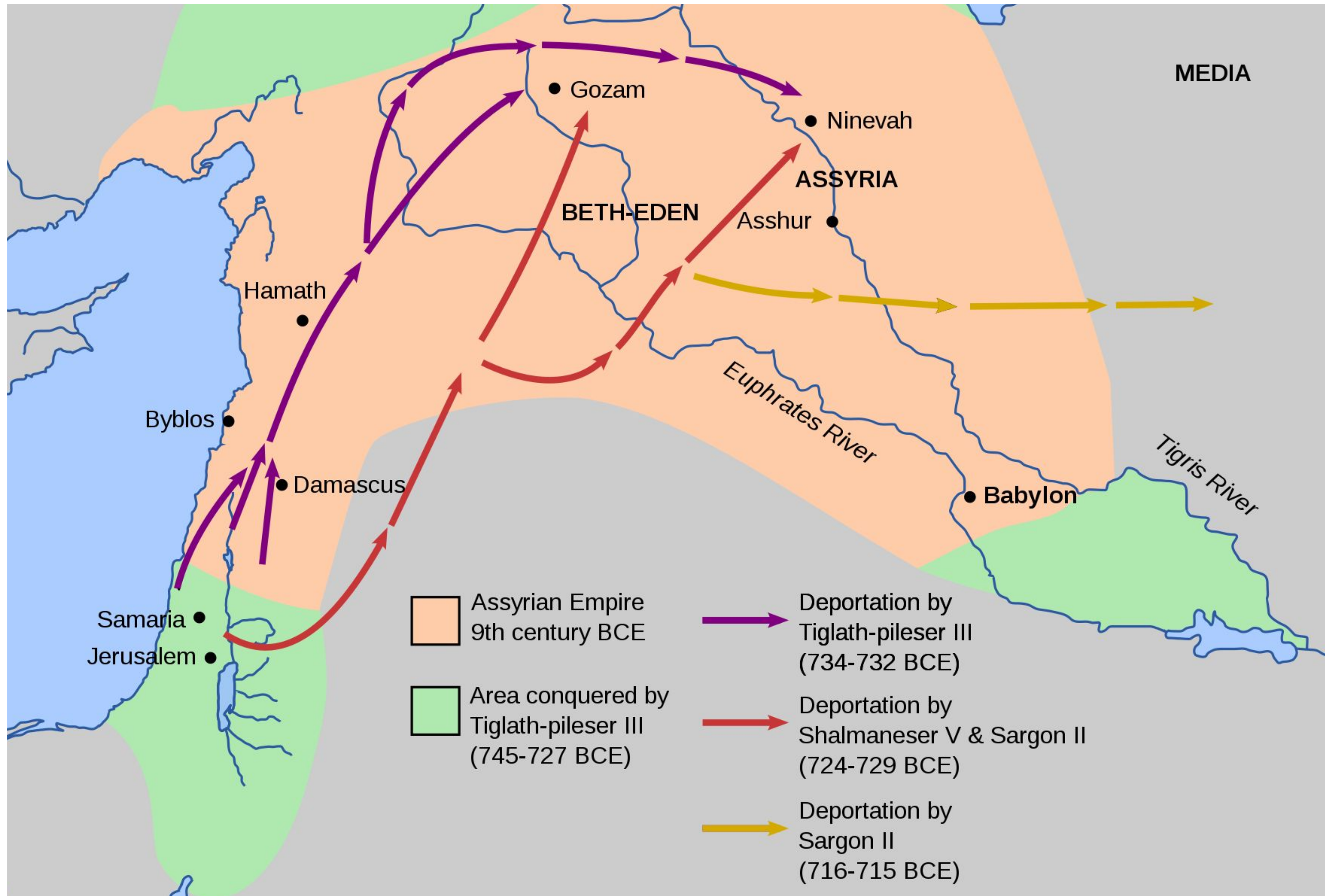


# The Divided Kingdoms before the Invasions, c. 800 BC



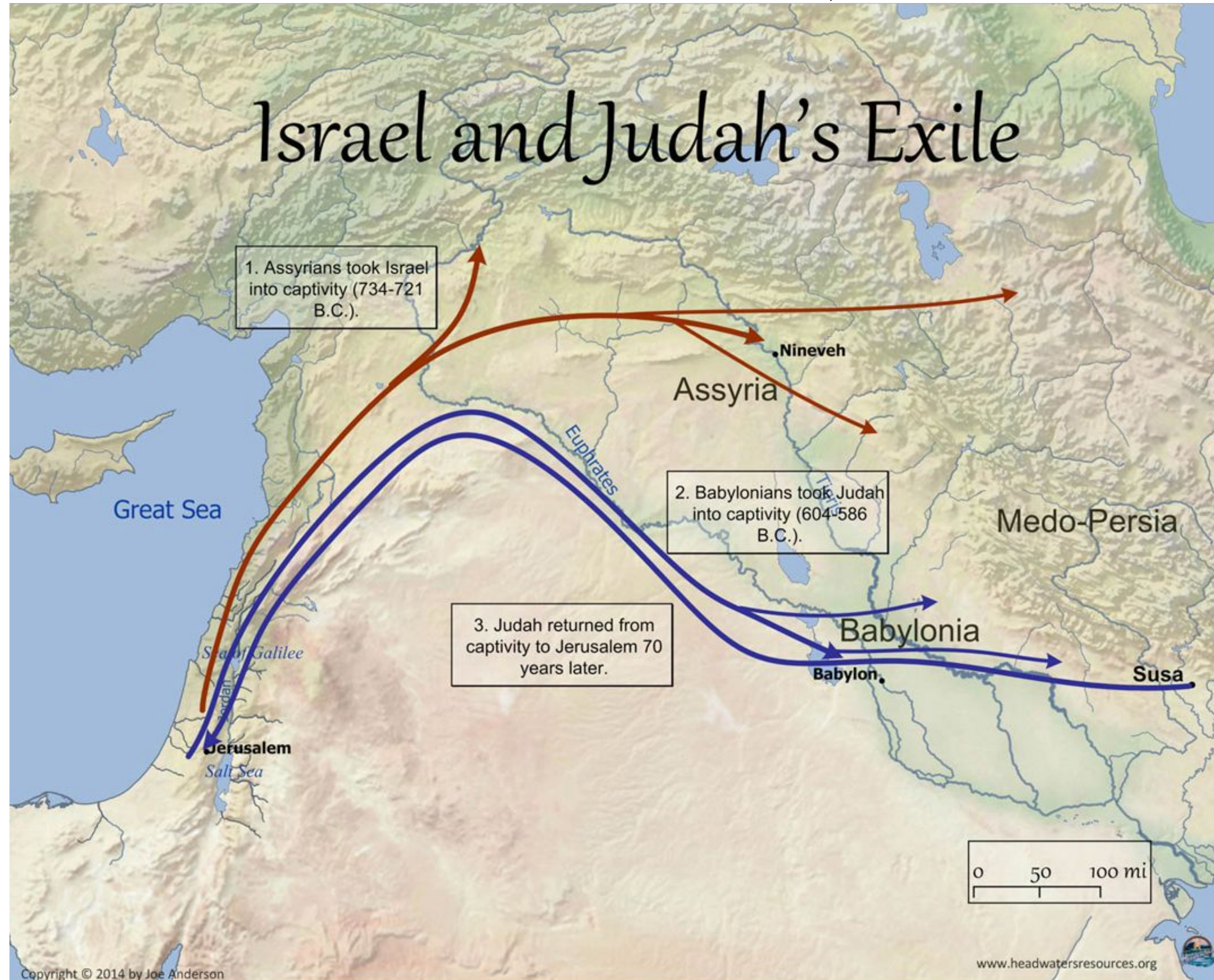


# Assyrian Invasion of Israel, 722 BC



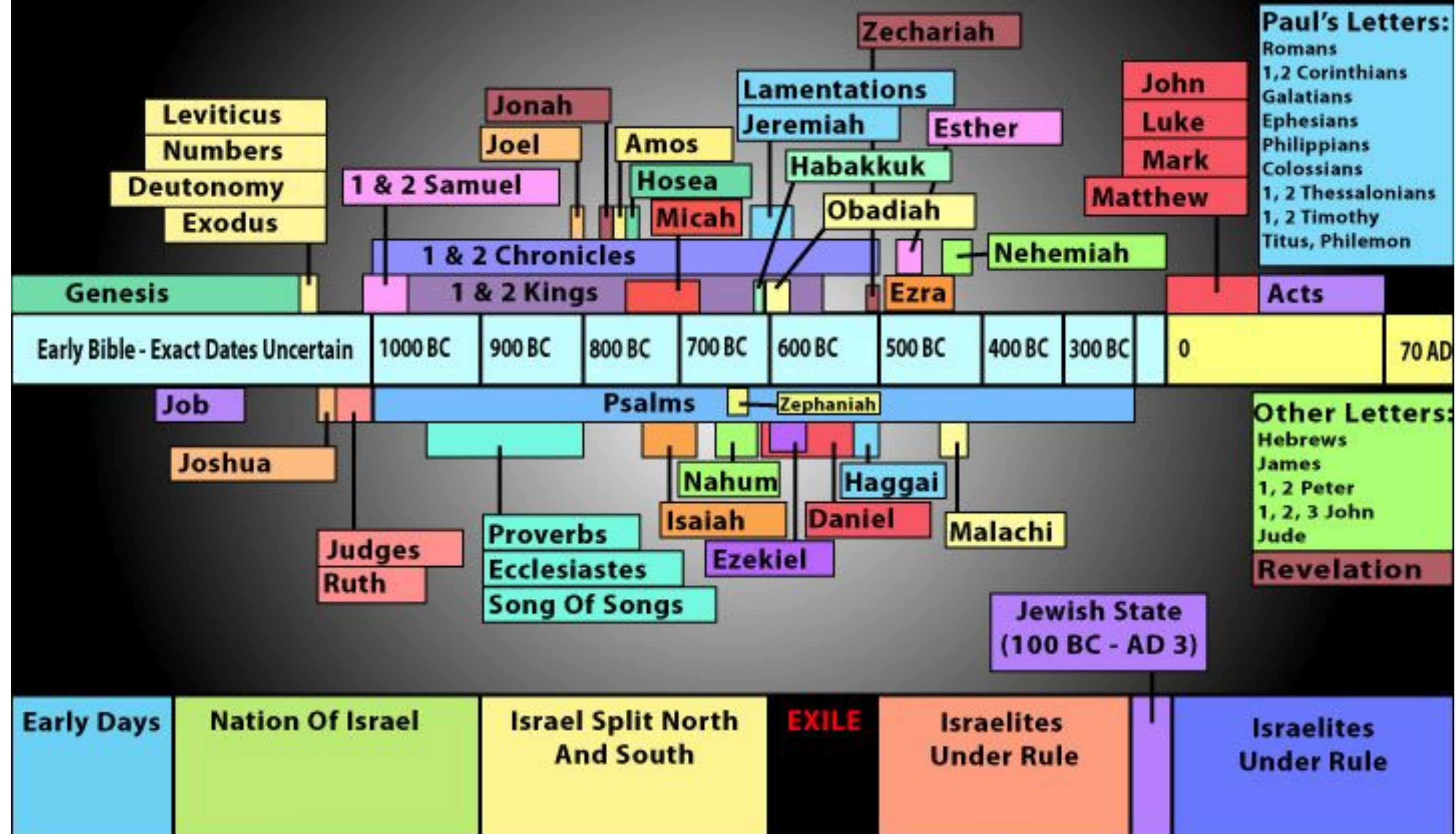


# Babylonian Invasion of Israel, 607-586 BC





# BIBLE TIMELINE





## The Chronology of the Kings of Judah and Israel

### The United Monarchy

Saul	c. 1020-1004 BC
David	1004-965
Solomon	965-928

### Judah

Rehoboam	928-911
Abijam	911-908
Asa	908-867
Jehoshaphat	867-846
Jehoram	846-843
Ahaziah	843-842
Athaliah	842-836
Joash	836-798
Amaziah	798-769
Uzziah	769-733
Jotham	758-743
Ahaz	733-727
Hezekiah	727-698
Manasseh	698-642
Amon	641-640
Josiah	639-609
Jehoahaz	609
Jehoiakim	608-598
Jehoiachin	597
Zedekiah	596-586

### Israel

Jeroboam	928-907
Nadab	907-906
Baasha	906-883
Elah	883-882
Zimri	882
Timri	882-878
Omri	882-871
Ahab	871-852
Ahaziah	852-851
Jehoram	851-842
Jehu	842-814
Jehoahaz	814-800
Jehoash	800-784
Jeroboam	784-748
Zechariah	748-747
Shallum	748-747
Menahem	747-737
Pekahiah	737-735
Pekah	735-733
Hoshea	733-724

## Prophets Preceding the Fall of Samaria

Date	Prophet	Prophe­sied to:	Israel	Contemporary Rulers in: Judah	Assyria
845	Obadiah	Edom	Joram	Ahaziah	Shalmanezzer III
835	Joel	Judah	Jehu	Athaliah	Shalmanezzer III
782	Jonah	Nineveh	Jeroboam II	Amaziah	Shalmanezzer IV
760-720	Hosea	Israel	Jeroboam II to Hoshea	Uzziah to Hezekiah	Tiglath-pileser III & Ashur-dan
760	Amos	Israel	Jeroboam II	Uzziah	Ashur-dan III
739-685	Isaiah	Judah	Pekah to Hoshea	Uzziah to Manasseh	Tiglath-pileser III, Shalmanezzer V, Sargon, Sen- nacherib
737-690	Micah	Judah	Pekah to Hoshea	Jotham to Hezekiah	Same as Isaiah



<b>Date</b> <i>(pre-exilic)</i>	<b>Prophet</b>	<b>Prophesied to</b>	<b>Historical Setting</b>
650 B.C.	Nahum	Nineveh	Manasseh in Judah; Ashur-banipal in Assyria
640	Zephaniah	Judah	Josiah in Judah
627-580	Jeremiah	Judah	Josiah to Zedekiah, kings; and Gedaliah, governor in Judah Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon
609	Habakkuk	Judah	Josiah and Jehoahaz, Judah Necho (Egypt) defeated by Assyria
<i>(exilic)</i> 605-536	Daniel	Babylonian kings	Nebuchadnezzar to Cyrus the Persian
597-570	Ezekiel	Jews in exile	Jehoiachin and Zedekiah in Judah Nebuchadnezzar in Babylon
<i>(post-exilic)</i> 520	Haggai	Returned exiles	Zerubbabel, governor of Judah Darius I of Persia
520	Zechariah	'' ''	Same as above
432-400	Malachi	'' ''	Probably Nehemiah, governor of Judah, and Darius II of Persia



# Kings - of Israel and Judah

