



OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY III

POETS & PROPHETS



PROPHETIC LITERATURE

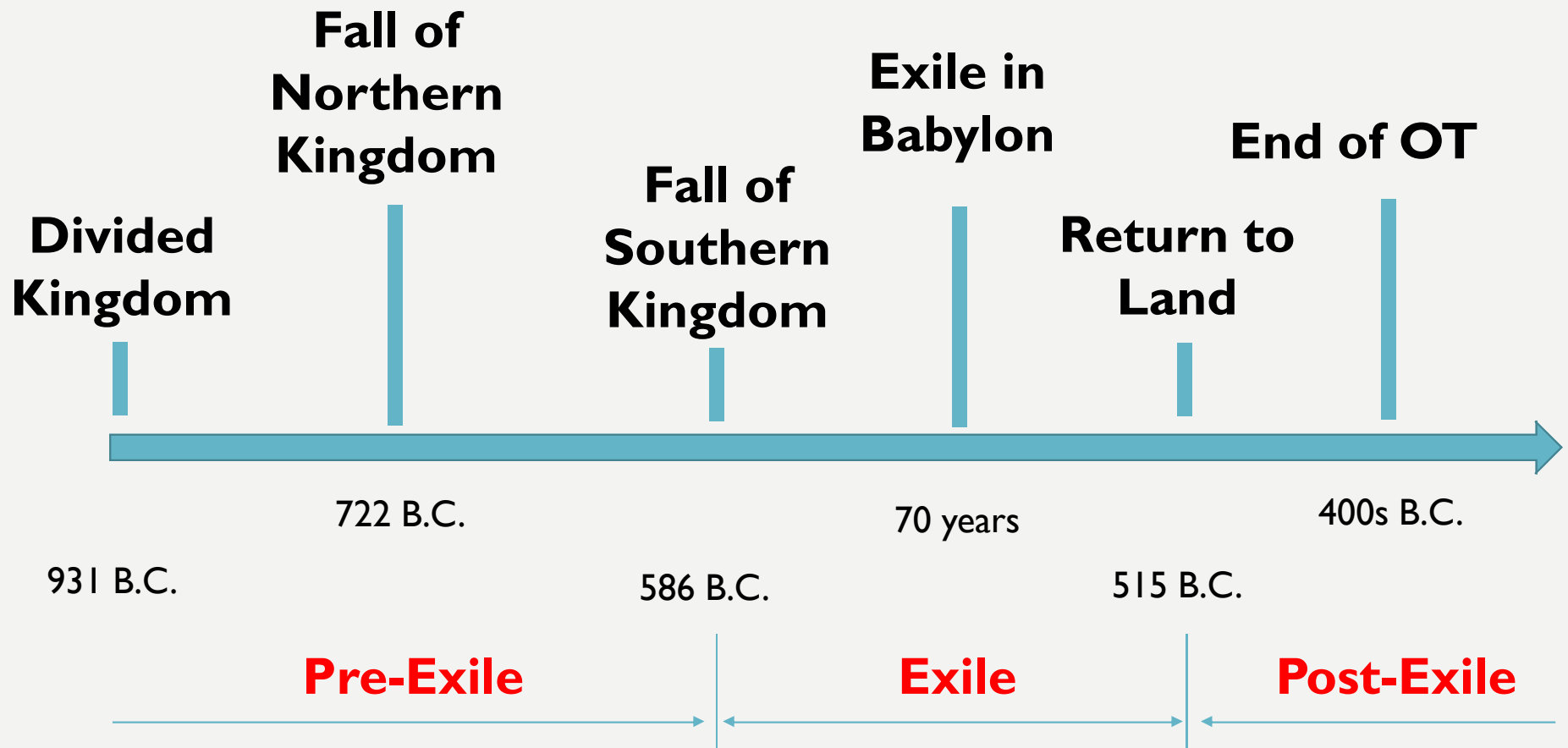
WEEK 7: PRE-EXILIC PROPHETS – MICAH,
ZEPHANIAH, & NAHUM

PROTESTANT ENGLISH BIBLES

LAW	HISTORY	POETRY	PROPHETS	
Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy	Joshua Judges Ruth 1 Samuel 2 Samuel 1 Kings 2 Kings 1 Chronicles 2 Chronicles Ezra Nehemiah Esther	Job Psalms Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Solomon	MAJOR	MINOR
			Isaiah Jeremiah Lamentations Ezekiel Daniel	Hosea Joel Amos Obadiah Jonah Micah Nahum Habakkuk Zephaniah Haggai Zechariah Malachi

The Twelve
(their combined length is about equal to Isaiah)

Old Testament Timeline



OLD TESTAMENT PROPHETS

- The seventeen prophetic books (Isaiah thru Malachi) comprise about one-fourth of Scripture and are crucial from a theological and historical point of view.
- There were several kinds of prophets:
 - Oral prophets:

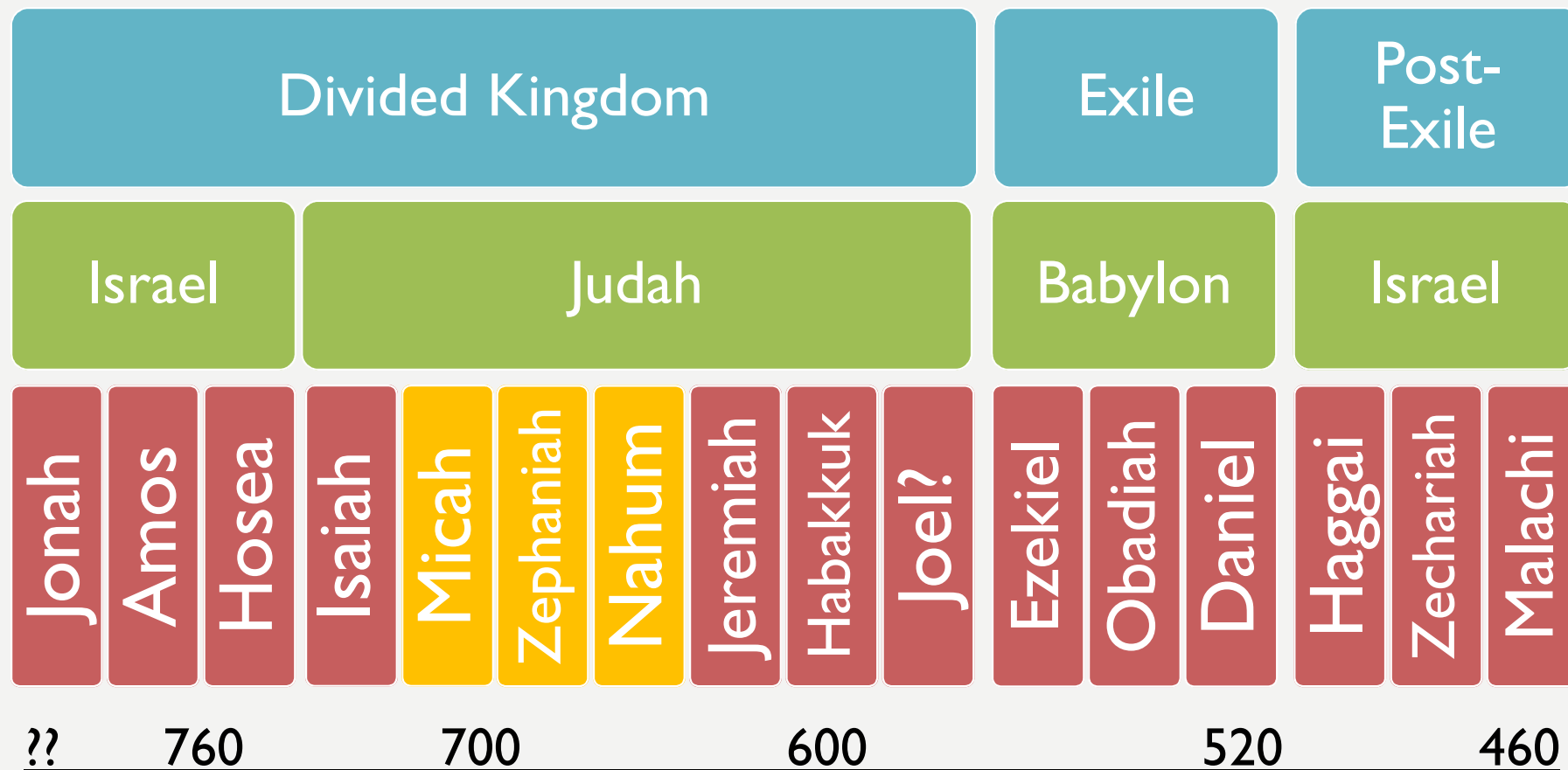
*Tore his garment
into twelve pieces
for Jeroboam to
indicate
Israel/Judah split (1
Kings 11:29-39)*

Oral Prophets To Israel (Northern Kingdom)	Oral Prophets To Judah (Southern Kingdom)
Ahijah (931-906 BC)	Shemaiah (931-901 NC)
Iddo (921-902 BC)	Azariah (900-875 BC)
Jehu (891-865 BC)	Hanani (895-870 BC)
Elijah (876-852 BC)	Jahaziel (865-835 BC)
Micaiah (860-847 BC)	Eliezer (857-847 BC)
Elisha (852-796 BC)	Oded (725-715 BC)

*Told army from
Israel to return
captives to Judah (2
Chronicles 28:8-11)*

- Writing prophets:
 - Major prophets – so designated because of their greater length
 - Minor prophets – so designated because of their shorter length

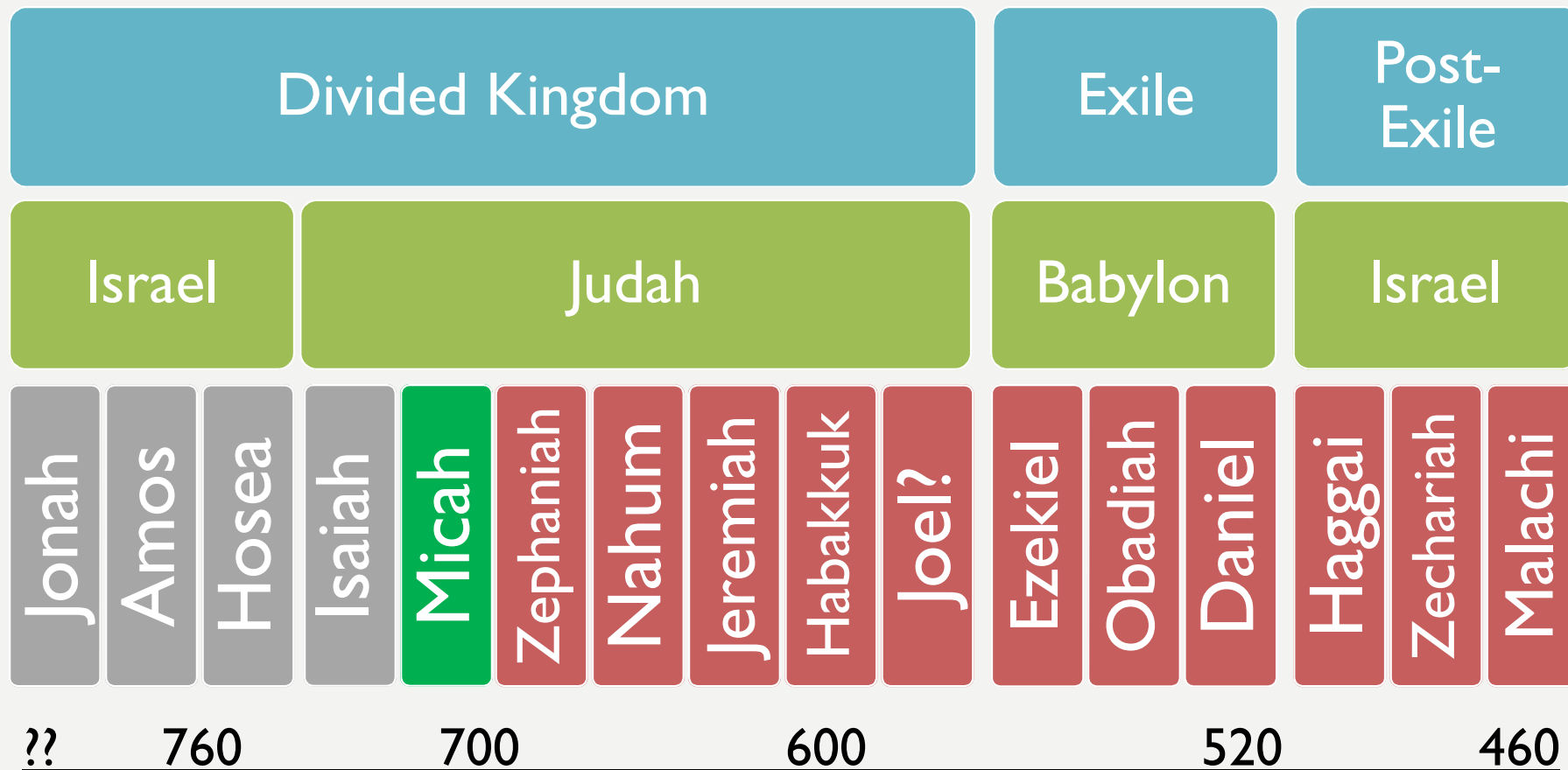
CHRONOLOGY OF PROPHETIC LITERATURE



MICAH

JUDGMENT & FORGIVENESS

CHRONOLOGY OF PROPHETIC LITERATURE



MICAH: BACKGROUND

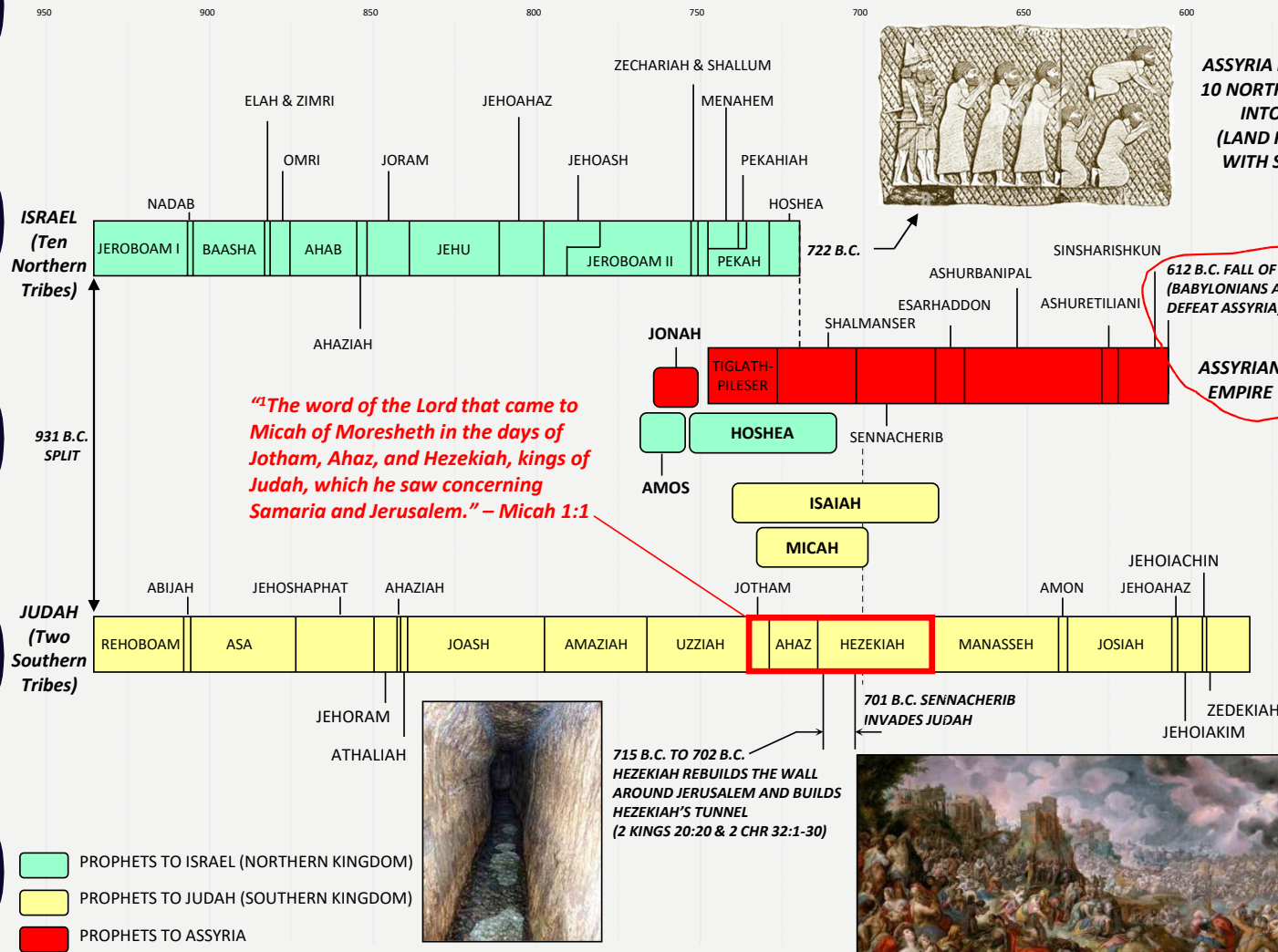
- **Author** ~ Micah from Moresheth-Gath, an agricultural area 25 miles SW of Jerusalem
- **Key term** ~ The word “**hear.**” Micah’s message of judgment & hope requires the people to *listen & respond* to his warnings.
- **Location** ~ Judah (primarily)
- **Date** ~ Micah was a contemporary of Isaiah & Hosea. He prophesied during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, & Hezekiah (735-700 BC).
- **Key Event** ~ Micah *probably* lived through the siege of Jerusalem by the Assyrians and the Lord’s dramatic rescue by an Angel of the Lord

Background Reading
for Micah¹

2 Kings 15:8 – 20:21
2 Chronicles 27 – 32
Isaiah 7 – 8
Jeremiah 26:17-19

¹Exploring the Minor Prophets, The John Phillips Commentary Series, p. 14

TIME OF MICAH



MICAH: CONTEXT

“Micah prophesied during a period of intense social injustice in Judah. False prophets preached for riches, not for righteousness. Princes thrived on cruelty, violence, and corruption. Priests ministered more for greed than for God. Landlords stole from the poor and evicted widows. Judges lusted after bribes. Businessmen used deceitful scales and weights. Sin infiltrated every segment of society.”

(Wilkinson & Boa, *Talk Thru The Bible*, p. 261)

MICAH: THEME

The theme of Micah is judgment and forgiveness. The Lord, the Judge who scatters his people for their transgressions and sins, is also the Shepherd-King who in covenant faithfulness gathers, protects, and forgives them.

(ESV Study Bible, *Introduction to Micah*)

MICAH: OVERVIEW

Punishment			Promise	Pardon	
1-3			4-5	6-7	
Announcement of Judgment			Future Hope	Indictment & Restoration of People	
Samaria & Judah	Specific Abuses	Leaders	Restoration Promised	Covenant Violated	Repentance & Restoration

Based on: ESV Study Bible Introduction to Micah and David Needham, *Isaiah-Malachi Class Notes*, p. 71

MICAH: ANNOUCEMENT OF JUDGMENT

“Micah made puns out of the names of towns, and each pun was a pungent prophecy.”¹

Verse	Town	Pun
1:10a	Gath	Tell it not in Tell-town
1:10b	Beth-le-aprah (Acco)	Weep not in Weep-town
1:10c	Aphrah	Roll in dust at Dust-town
1:11a	Saphir	Beauty-shamed at Beauty-town
1:11b	Zaanan	No going out from Out-town
1:11c	Beth-ezel	No neighborliness at Neighbor-town
1:12a	Maroth	Bitter tears at Bitter-town
1:12b	Jerusalem	No peace at Peace-town
1:13	Lachish	Horsepower gone from Horse-town
1:14b	Achzib	Falsehood reigns at False-town
1:15a	Mareshah	No possessions left at Possession-town
1:15b	Adullan	No testimony in Testimony-town

¹Exploring the Minor Prophets, The John Phillips Commentary Series, p. 164

MICAH: ANNOUNCEMENT OF JUDGMENT

“Thus says the LORD concerning the **prophets**
who lead my people astray,
who cry “Peace”
when they have something to eat,
but declare war against him
who puts nothing into their mouths.”

– Micah 3:5



“⁹ Hear this, you heads of the house of Jacob
and **rulers of the house of Israel**,
who detest justice

and make crooked all that is straight,
¹⁰ who build Zion with blood
and Jerusalem with iniquity.

¹¹ Its heads give judgment for a bribe;
its priests teach for a price;
its prophets practice divination for money;
yet they lean on the LORD and say,
“Is not the LORD in the midst of us?
No disaster shall come upon us.”

**¹² Therefore because of you
Zion shall be plowed as a field;
Jerusalem shall become a heap of ruins,
and the mountain of the house a wooded height.”**

– Micah 3:9-12

MICAH: KEY VERSE

He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?



(Micah 6:8 ESV)

MICAH: A MINIATURE ISAIAH

Emphasis	Isaiah	Micah
Courtroom Scene	1:2	1:2; 6:1-6
Woe to greedy landowners	5:8-9	2:1-4
Oppression of widows & orphans	1:17, 23	2:9
Judgment of false prophets	8:20-22; 29:10-12	3:6-7
Babylonian Captivity	48:20; 52:9-10	4:10
Promise of Messiah	7-12	5:2-4

Based on: David Needham, *Isaiah-Malachi Class Notes*, p. 71

WHO QUOTED WHO?

¹ It shall come to pass in the latter days
that the mountain of the house of the Lord
shall be established as the highest of the mountains,
and it shall be lifted up above the hills;
and **peoples** shall flow to it,

² and many **nations** shall come, and say:
“Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,
to the house of the God of Jacob,
that he may teach us his ways
and that we may walk in his paths.”
For out of Zion shall go forth the law,
and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

³ He shall judge between **many peoples**,
and shall decide disputes for **strong nations** far away;
and they shall beat their swords into plowshares,
and their spears into pruning hooks;
nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
neither shall they learn war anymore.

- Micah 4:1-3

¹ The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning
Judah and Jerusalem.

² It shall come to pass in the latter days
that the mountain of the house of the Lord
shall be established as the highest of the mountains,
and shall be lifted up above the hills;
and **all the nations** shall flow to it,

³ and many **peoples** shall come, and say:
“Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,
to the house of the God of Jacob,
that he may teach us his ways
and that we may walk in his paths.”
For out of Zion shall go forth the law,
and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

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and shall decide disputes for **many peoples**;
and they shall beat their swords into plowshares,
and their spears into pruning hooks;
nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
neither shall they learn war anymore.

- Isaiah 2:2-4

MICAH: HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

God's Steadfast Love and Compassion

¹⁸ Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity
and passing over transgression
for the **remnant** of his inheritance?

He does not retain his anger forever,
because he delights in steadfast love.

¹⁹ He will again have compassion on us;
he will tread our iniquities underfoot.

You will cast all our sins
into the depths of the sea.

²⁰ You will show faithfulness to Jacob
and steadfast love to Abraham,
as you have sworn to our fathers
from the days of old.

– Micah 7:18-20

*Remnant appears 5x in Micah
(2:12, 4:7, 5:7, 5:8, 7:18)*

*These are the final words of the book, and
they're an allusion to God's covenant
promises to Abraham's family all the way
back in Genesis 12, Genesis 15, and 17 –
that all nations will find God's blessing
through Abraham and his family.*

*God's ultimate purpose is not to destroy
but to save and redeem.¹*

¹<https://bibleproject.com/guides/book-of-micah/>

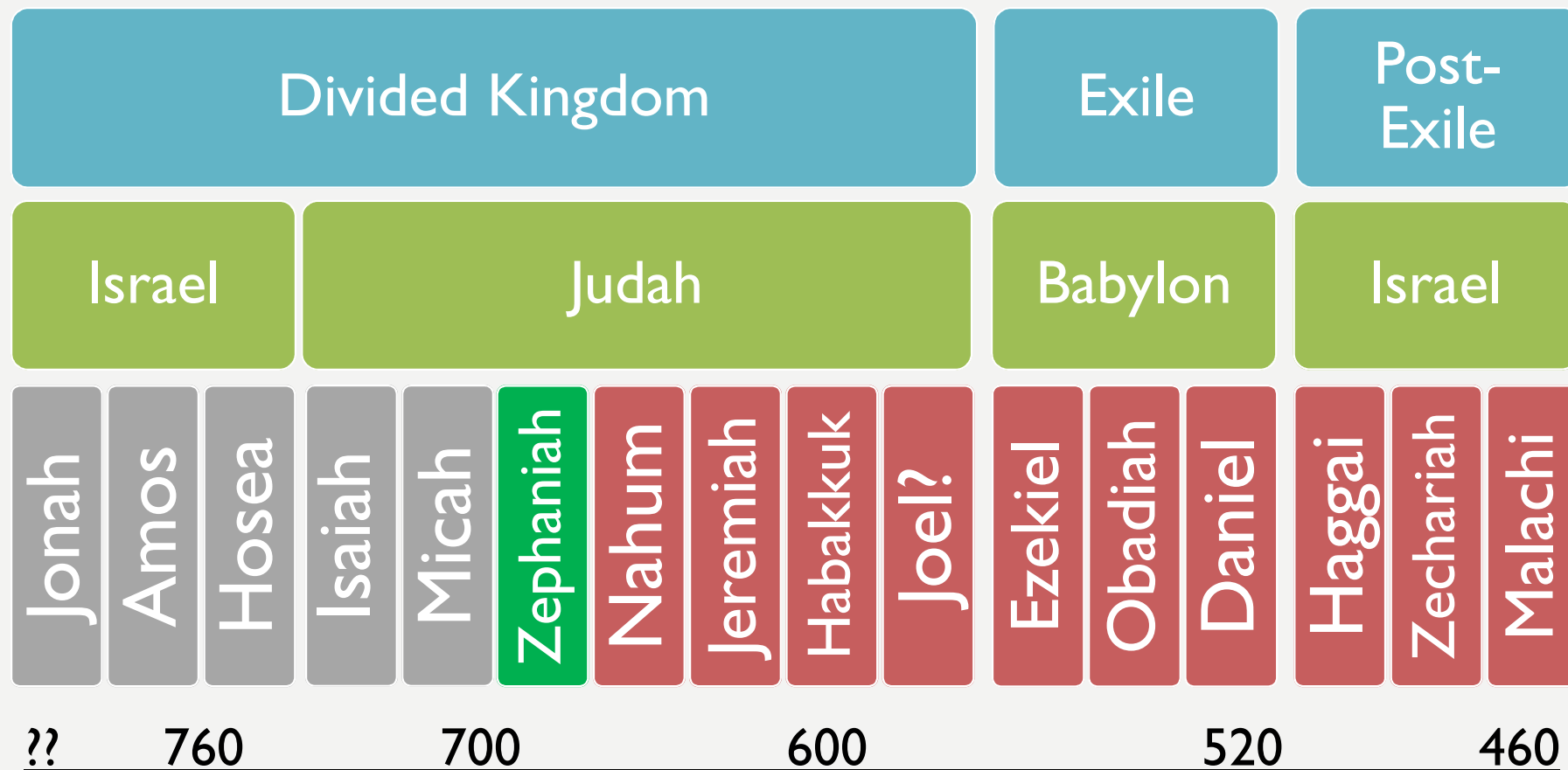
NEW TESTAMENT CONNECTIONS

Emphasis	Micah		NT
The Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem	5:2	But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days	Matthew 2:6
Allusion to show the Messiah may divide people	7:6	For the son treats the father with contempt, the daughter rises up against her mother, the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; a man's enemies are the men of his own house	Matthew 10:35-36
Confirm God's promise to remember the covenant	7:20	You will show faithfulness to Jacob and steadfast love to Abraham, as you have sworn to our fathers from the days of old	Luke 1:71-73

ZEPHANIAH

THE DAY OF THE LORD

CHRONOLOGY OF PROPHETIC LITERATURE



ZEPHANIAH: BACKGROUND

- **Author** ~ Zephaniah; potential great-great-grandson of King Hezekiah
- **Key term** ~ Zephaniah, like several other prophets, focus on judgment of Judah and points to, “**The Day of the Lord**”

Phrase	Occurrences	Verse
Day of the Lord	3x	1:7, 1:8, 1:14
That day	5x	1:9, 1:10, 1:15, 3:11, 3:16
Day of Wrath/Anger	4x	1:15, 1:18, 2:2, 2:3

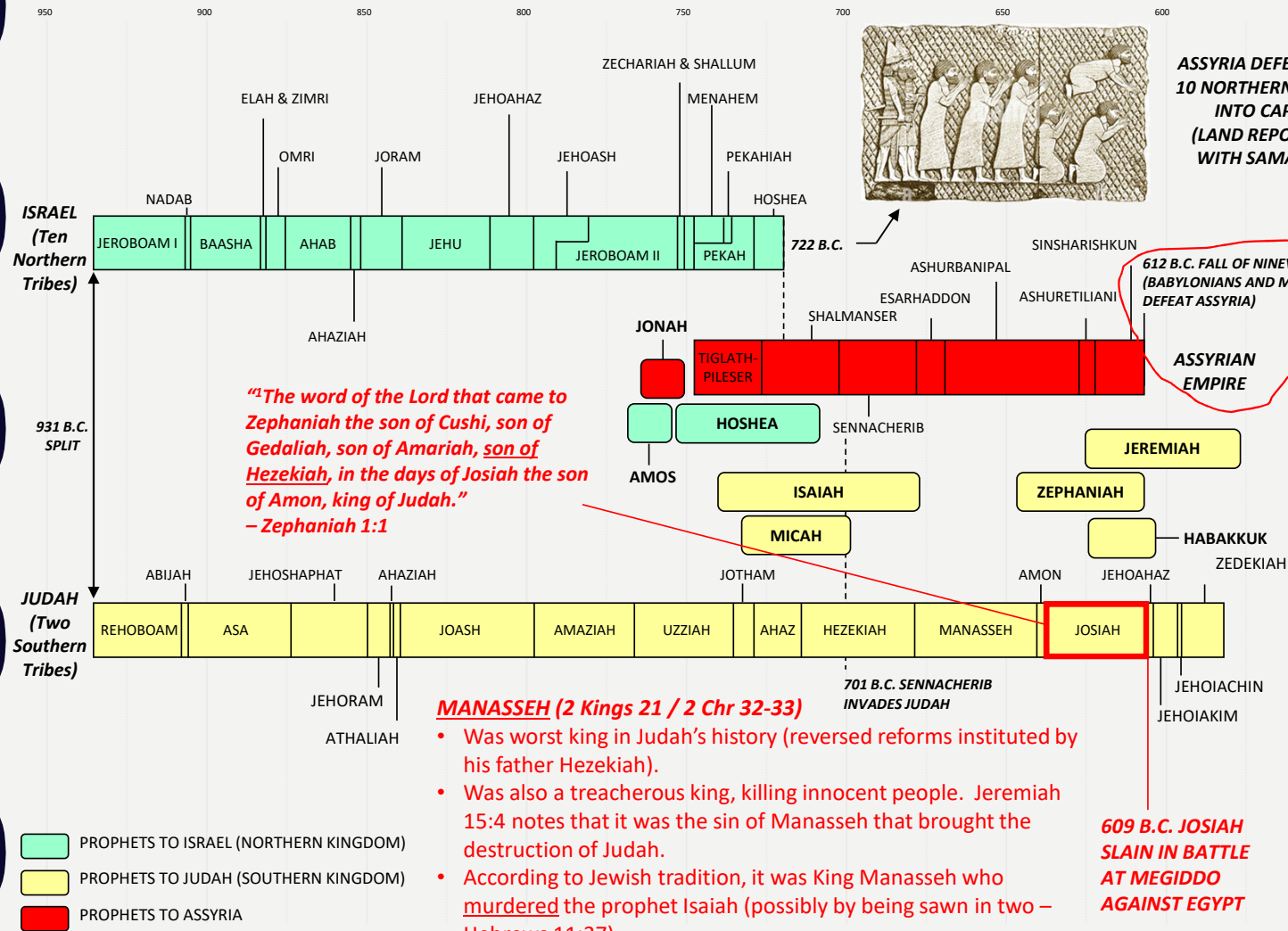
- **Context** ~ Prophetic ministry during the reign of King Josiah in the Southern Kingdom (640-609 BC). His ministry may have contributed to Josiah’s (short-lived) reforms.

Background Reading
for Zephaniah¹

2 Kings 22 – 25
2 Chronicles 34:1 – 36:4

¹Exploring the Minor Prophets, The John Phillips Commentary Series, p. 14

TIME OF ZEPHANIAH



"And he will stretch out his hand against the north and destroy Assyria, and he will make Nineveh a desolation, a dry waste like the desert."

– Zephaniah 2:13

JOSIAH (2 Kings 22–23 / 2 Chr 34–35)

- Began his reign at age 8 after his father was assassinated. Rediscovered the Law of the Lord and called for a time of national repentance. Renewed covenant made between the people and the Lord.
- Many reforms followed and the Temple was cleansed from all objects of pagan worship, and the idolatrous high places in the land were demolished.
- Josiah restored the observance of the Passover and removed mediums and witches from the land.

MANASSEH (2 Kings 21 / 2 Chr 32–33)

- Was worst king in Judah's history (reversed reforms instituted by his father Hezekiah).
- Was also a treacherous king, killing innocent people. Jeremiah 15:4 notes that it was the sin of Manasseh that brought the destruction of Judah.
- According to Jewish tradition, it was King Manasseh who murdered the prophet Isaiah (possibly by being sawn in two – Hebrews 11:37).

609 B.C. JOSIAH SLAIN IN BATTLE AT MEGIDDO AGAINST EGYPT

ZEPHANIAH: BACKGROUND

Before him [Josiah] there was no king like him, who turned to the LORD with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his might, according to all the Law of Moses, nor did any like him arise after him. Still the LORD did not turn from the burning of his great wrath, by which his anger was kindled against Judah...

(2 Kings 23:25–27 ESV)

ZEPHANIAH: BACKGROUND

...because of all the provocations with which Manasseh had provoked him. And the LORD said, “I will remove Judah also out of my sight, as I have removed Israel, and I will cast off this city that I have chosen, Jerusalem, and the house of which I said, My name shall be there.”

(2 Kings 23:25–27 ESV)

ZEPHANIAH: BACKGROUND

“The evil reigns of Manasseh and Amon (a total of fifty-five years) had such a profound effect upon Judah that it never recovered. Josiah’s reforms were too little and too late, and the people reverted to their crass idolatry and teaching soon after Josiah was gone.”

(Boa & Wilkinson, Walk Thru The Bible, p. 278-279)

ZEPHANIAH: THEME

“The theme of Zephaniah, one preached more consistently by him than by any other prophet, is the “day of the LORD.” This approaching day shows two faces: one of judgment against those who sin against God, and one of blessing for those who follow him. God will show himself just in both punishment and praise.”

(ESV Study Bible, *Introduction to Zephaniah*)

ZEPHANIAH: OVERVIEW

Judgment in the Day of the Lord					Salvation in the Day of the Lord	
1:1-3	1:4-2:3	2:4-2:15	3:1-7	3:8	3:9-13	3:14-3:20
Whole Earth Judged	Judah Judged	Nations around Judah Judged	Jerusalem Judged	Whole Earth Judged	Promise of Conversion	Promise of Restoration
Day of Wrath					Day of Joy	

Based on Walk Thru the Bible, Wilkinson & Boa

ZEPHANIAH: THE DAY OF THE LORD

“The Day of the Lord” refers to a time of judgement:

Sometimes it seems near
586 B.C.?

¹⁴ The **great day of the Lord is near**,
near and hastening fast;
the sound of the day of the Lord is bitter;
the mighty man cries aloud there.

¹⁵ A day of wrath is that day,
a day of distress and anguish,
a day of ruin and devastation,
a day of darkness and gloom,
a day of clouds and thick darkness,
¹⁶ a day of trumpet blast and battle cry
against the fortified cities
and against the lofty battlements.

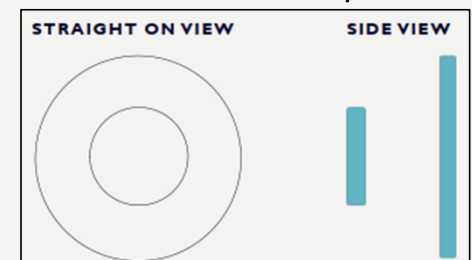
- Zephaniah 1:14-16

Sometimes it seems far away
End Times?

⁸ “**Therefore wait for me**,” declares the Lord,
“for the day when I rise up to seize the prey.
For my decision is to gather nations,
to assemble kingdoms,
to pour out upon them my indignation,
all my burning anger;
for in the fire of my jealousy
all the earth shall be consumed.

- Zephaniah 3:8

From “Intro to the Prophets”



HOPE OF A REMNANT

But I will leave in your midst a people
humble and lowly. They shall seek refuge in
the name of the LORD

(Zephaniah 3:12 ESV)

HOPE OF RESTORATION

The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing.

(Zephaniah 3:17 ESV)

NEW TESTAMENT CONNECTIONS

- Revelation 14:5 appears to be a reference to Zephaniah 3:13, when describing the spiritual purity of the 144,000 (“in their mouth no lie was found, for they are blameless.”)
- Much of Zephaniah 3:11-20 appears to be a reference to Christ’s 2nd coming (the final blessings on Zion are largely unfulfilled).

ZEPHANIAH: THE ROYAL PROPHET

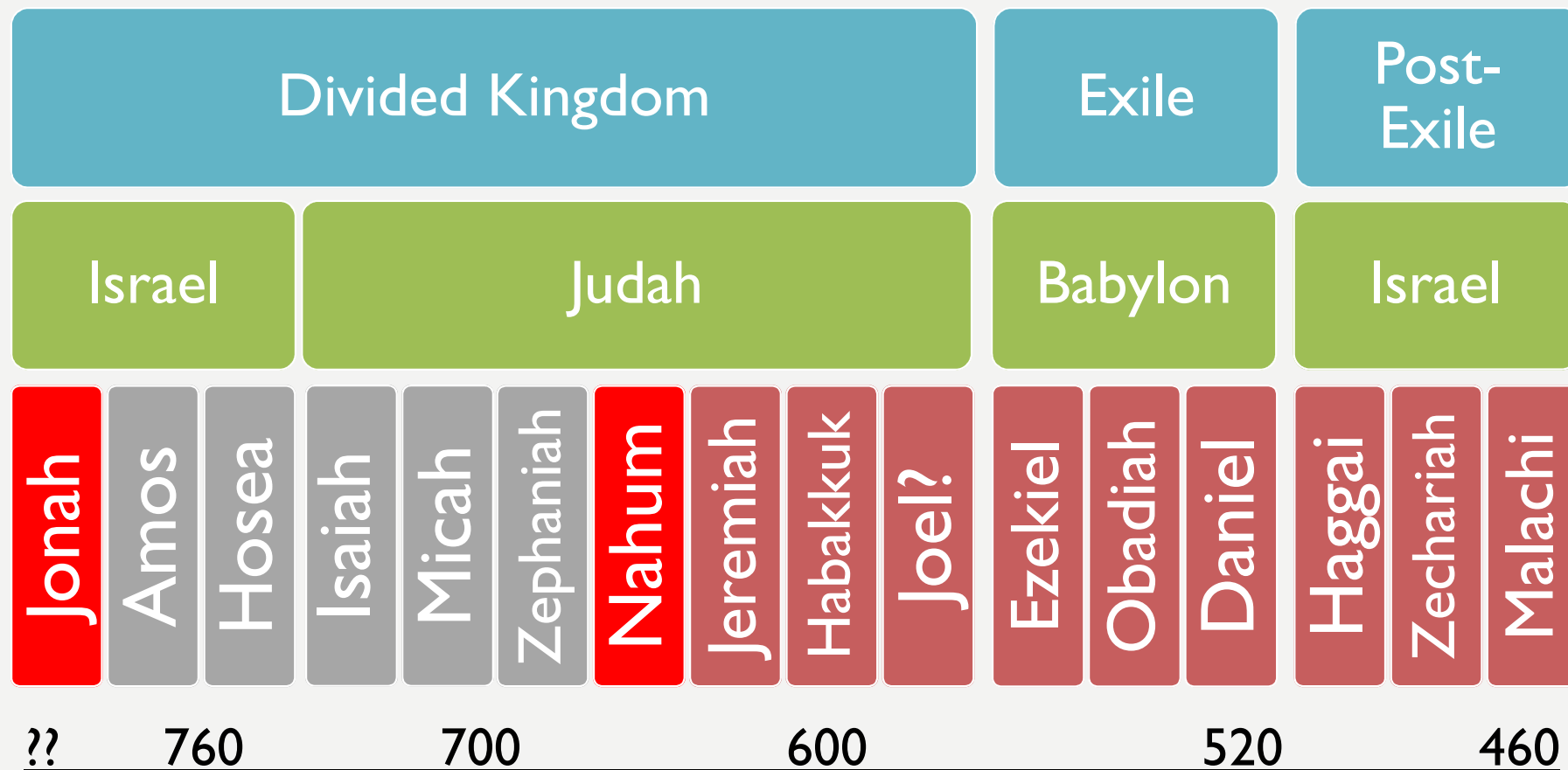
“The book of Zephaniah begins with a king and ends with a King. The prophet referred to a past king (his kinsman Hezekiah), a present king (his distant cousin Josiah), and a promised King (a King of Kings).”

(John Phillips, *Exploring the Minor Prophets*, p. 241)

NAHUM

JUDGMENT FOR NINEVEH

CHRONOLOGY OF PROPHETIC LITERATURE



Jonah & Nahum = focus on Nineveh

NAHUM: BACKGROUND

- **Author** ~ Nahum (means “comfort”)
- **Key term(s)** ~ “Nineveh,” “judgment,” & “I will”
- **Date** ~ Nahum prophesied between the fall of Thebes (663 BC) and the fall of Nineveh (612 BC).
- **Context** ~ The revival in Nineveh in response to Jonah’s preaching (760 BC) was short-lived. Assyria had destroyed the Northern Kingdom (722 BC) and were now facing God’s judgment.

Background Reading
for Nahum¹

Jonah
Isaiah 10
Zephaniah 2:13-15

¹Exploring the Minor Prophets, The John Phillips Commentary Series, p. 14

TIME OF NAHUM

The Tigris River is mentioned twice in the Bible:

*Genesis 2:10-14 “¹⁰A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden, and there it divided and became four rivers ... ¹⁴And the name of the third river is the **Tigris**, which flows east of **Assyria**.”*

*Daniel 10:4 “On the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was standing on the bank of the great river (that is, the **Tigris**).”*

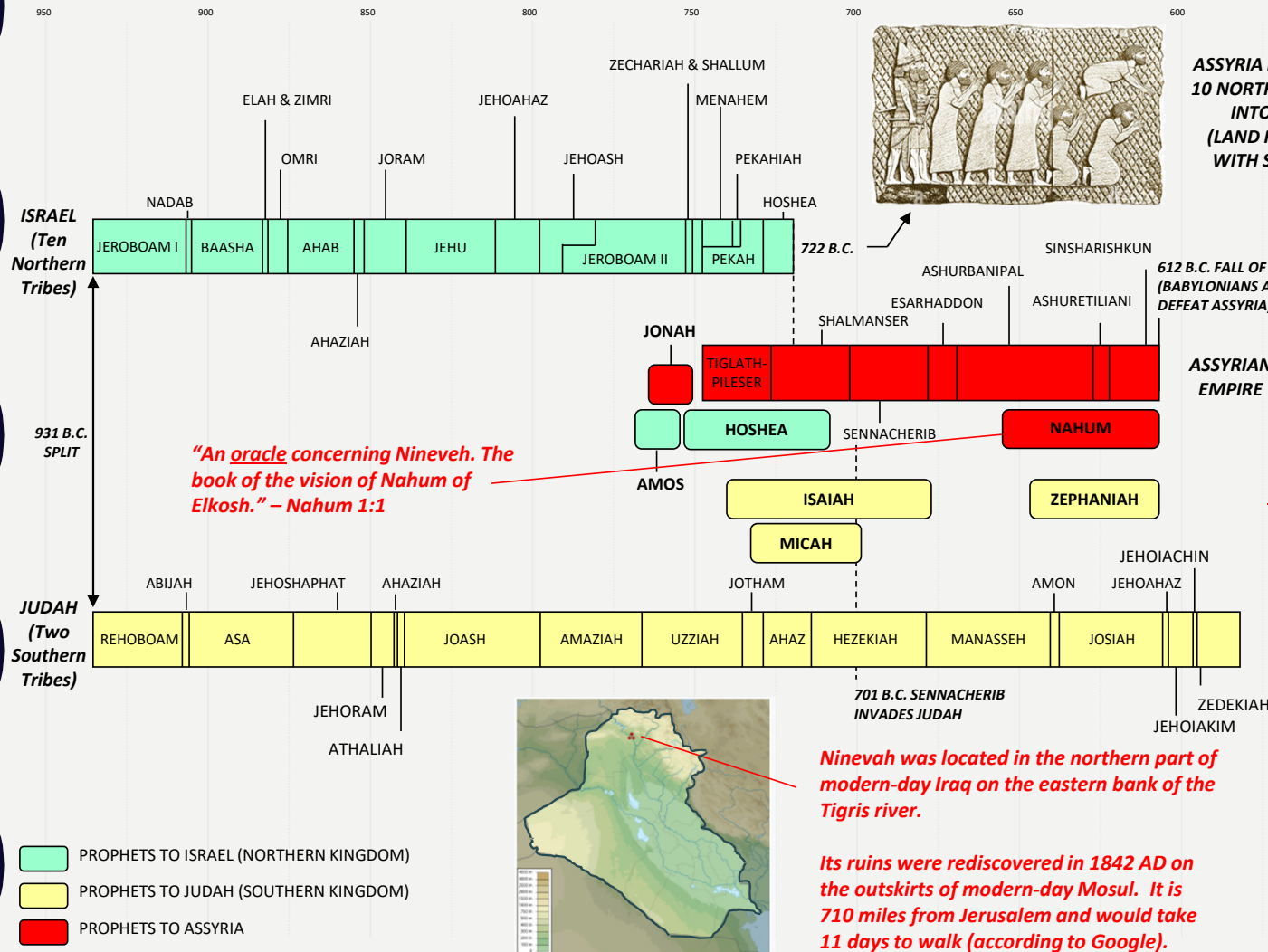
**ASSYRIA DEFEATS ISRAEL
10 NORTHERN TRIBES GO
INTO CAPTIVITY
(LAND REPOPULATED
WITH SAMARITANS)**



**ASSYRIAN
EMPIRE**

3 Options on location of Elkosh (Elkoshee)

1. Some scholars think it is a small village 24 miles north of Ninevah where a tomb exists that is claimed to be Nahum's. If true it is possible that Nahum was originally part of the 10 northern tribes that was re-populated to Assyria.
2. Others believe it is a village east of Ramah (about 5 miles north of Jerusalem).
3. Others believe it is a village near Capernaum on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee.



NAHUM: OVERVIEW

“The Lord is slow to anger and great in power, and the Lord will by no means clear the guilty” (Nahum 1:3, Ex 34:6-7)

1:1-8	1:9-15	2:1-13	3:1-19
God Appears	Fate of Nations vs Fate of God's Faithful Remnant	Fall of Ninevah (in detail)	Assyria's Downfall

**God Orchestrates the Downfall of Oppressive Nations
and Won't Allow Violent Empires to Endure**

Based on BibleProject, Book of Nahum Summary

NINEVEH: AN IMPENETRABLE CITY?

“Nineveh became the mightiest city on earth with walls 100 feet high and wide enough to accommodate three chariots riding abreast. Dotted around the walls were huge towers that stretched an additional 100 feet above the top of the walls. In addition, the walls were surrounded by a moat 150 feet wide and 60 feet deep.”

(Wilkinson & Boa, *Talk Thru the Bible*, p. 268)

ASSYRIAN EMPIRE

- The Assyrians were a fierce and cruel nation who showed little mercy to those they conquered



- 100 years before, Sennacherib and his Rabshakeh mocked God:

"So he sent messengers again to Hezekiah, saying, ¹⁰Thus shall you speak to Hezekiah king of Judah: 'Do not let your God in whom you trust deceive you by promising that Jerusalem will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria. ¹¹Behold, you have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands, devoting them to destruction. And shall you be delivered? ¹²Have the gods of the nations delivered them, the nations that my fathers destroyed, Gozan, Haran, Rezeph, and the people of Eden who were in Telassar? ¹³Where is the king of Hamath, the king of Arpad, the king of the city of Sepharvaim, the king of Hena, or the king of Ivvah?'" – 2 Kings 19:9-13



Nineveh was one of the greatest cities of ancient times

- The Assyrians built their empire with a combination of terrorizing methods for conquest, humiliation and subjugation:
 - They would cut out the tongues and eyes of captives and stack dismembered corpses at the gates of conquered cities.
 - As Nahum wrote, "heaps of corpses, dead bodies without end, they stumble over the bodies!" – Nahum 3:3

NAHUM: KEY VERSES

Who can stand before his indignation? Who can endure the heat of his anger? His wrath is poured out like fire, and the rocks are broken into pieces by him. The LORD is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; he knows those who take refuge in him. But with an overflowing flood he will make a complete end of the adversaries, and will pursue his enemies into darkness.

(Nahum 1:6–8 ESV)

NINEVEH'S DESTRUCTION

- Destroyed by flood (1:8; 2:6) & fire (1:10; 2:13; 3:13)
- Profaning of city's temples (1:14)
- Never to be rebuilt (1:14; 2:11, 13)
- Leaders will flee (2:9; 3:17)
- Easy capture of the fortresses around city (3:12)
- Destruction of the gates (3:13)
- Lengthy siege & frantic efforts to defend (3:14)

(Wilkinson & Boa, Talk Thru The Bible, p. 269)

CONTRAST OF JONAH & NAHUM

Jonah	Nahum
The Mercy of God	The Judgment of God
760 BC	660-612 BC
Emphasis on the Prophet	Emphasis on the Prophecy
Disobedient Prophet	Obedient Prophet
Repentance of Nineveh	Rebellion of Nineveh
Nineveh Saved	Nineveh Destroyed

Based on: Boa & Wilkinson, Walk Thru the Bible, p. 269

CHARACTER OF GOD

God's Character	Implications in Nahum
God is Sovereign	He is in control of both nature and the nations. He used the Babylonians to bring judgment on the Assyrians. He also used a flood to help the Babylonians.
God is Just	Assyria's judgment was well deserved. Although God used them to destroy Israel, they became proud and attributed their success to their own power.
God Protects His People	Although God used Assyria to discipline Israel, He would take notice of those who were faithful.



OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY III

POETS & PROPHETS