

israel

A Study of the Land

THE HISTORY



Israel Timeline.

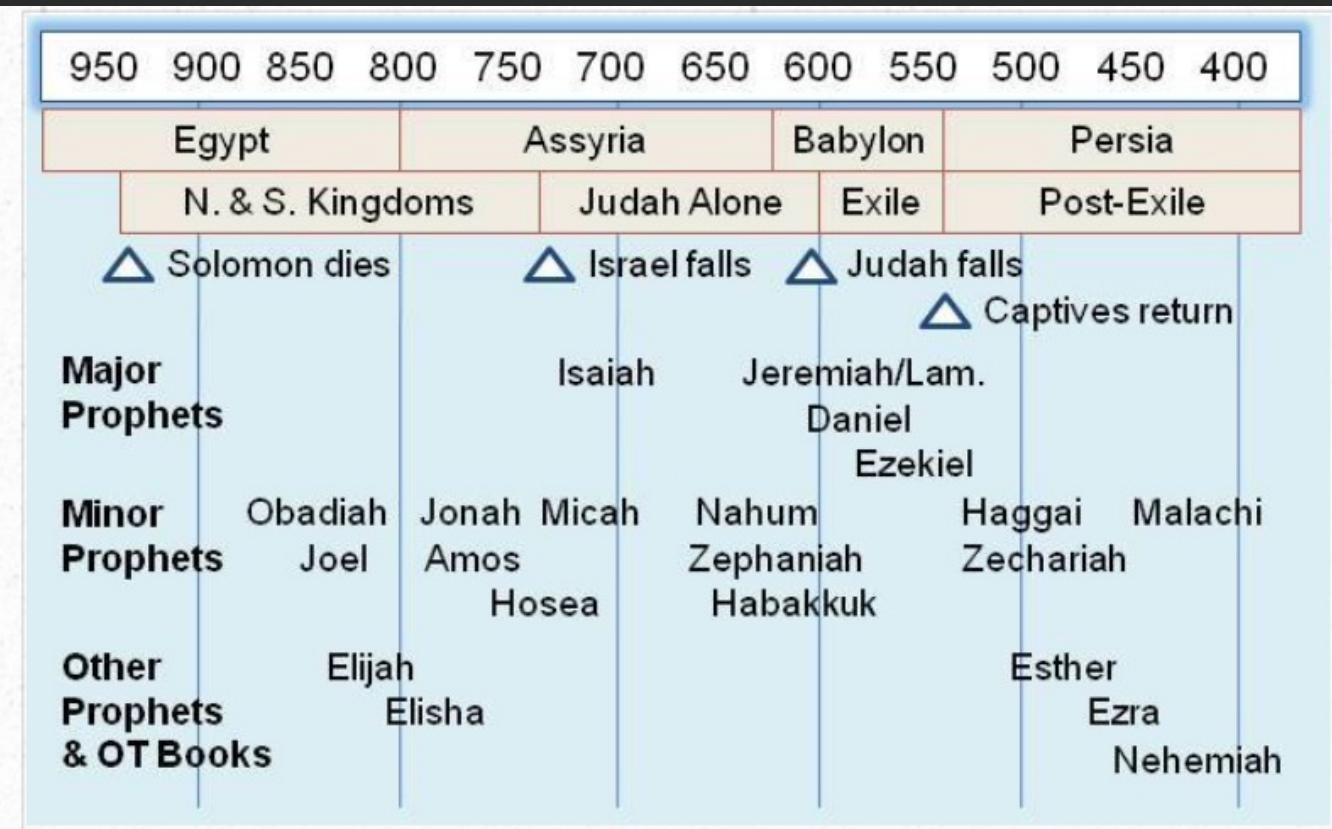
By Ariel Fogelman

Iron Age – The Israelite Period	Approximately 1200 BCE / 1400 BCE *	Iron I – Settlement Period Entry of the Israelites led by Joshua; Period of the Judges and King Saul <i>* Many scholars cite biblical and archeological evidence to indicate that the Israelites did not emerge in the land of Canaan, until about 1200 BCE. However, assuming that the genealogies in the Bible are literal and complete, approx. 1400 BCE would be the actual time of the conquest of Canaan. Several archeological lines of evidence support this conclusion. It is highly recommended to study the timeline of the Old Testament. (http://timeline.biblehistory.com/, https://biblehub.com/timeline/ and others)</i>
	1175 BCE	Entry of the Philistines to the land, following the battle of Raamses III and the Sea Peoples
	1010	King David rules over Judah in Hebron
	Approximately 1004 BCE	Unified Kingdom Headed by David in Jerusalem Iron II Beginning of First Temple Period
	970 BCE	Beginning of King Solomon's reign
	959 BCE	Building of First Temple (11th year of Solomon's reign)
	930 BCE	Division of the kingdom into Israel (King Jeroboam) and Judah (King Rehoboam)
	925 BCE	Shishak's campaign
	9th century	Dynasty of Omri and Ahab and activity of the prophets Elijah and Elisha
	853 BCE	Battle of Qarqar – Shalmaneser III against a coalition of 12 kings including Ahab King of Israel

	720-733 BCE	Destruction of Samaria – conquest of Israel by Assyria and the exile of the ten tribes
	701 BCE	Campaign of Sennacherib, King of Assyria against Hezekiah King of Judah in the times of the prophet Isaiah.
	622 BCE	Josiah's reforms
	609 BCE	Josiah killed in battle against Egyptian Pharaoh Necho at Megiddo
	605 BCE	Battle of Carchemish – Assyria beaten by Babylon
	604 BCE	Nebuchadnezzar destroys Philistines
	597 BCE	Exile of Yehoyachin to Babylon
	586 BCE 9th of AV	Destruction of First Temple by Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon End of First Temple Period
Babylonia n Period	586 BCE – 538 BCE	The exile in Babylon. The prophets Ezekiel and Jeremiah
The Persian Period The Return to Zion and Beginning of The Second	538 BCE	Declaration of Cyrus and return to Zion headed by Zerubbabel and Yeshua
	516 BCE	Building of the Second Temple
	458 BCE	Arrival of Ezra the Scribe to Jerusalem
	445 BCE	Arrival Nehemiah to Jerusalem and the rebuilding of its walls

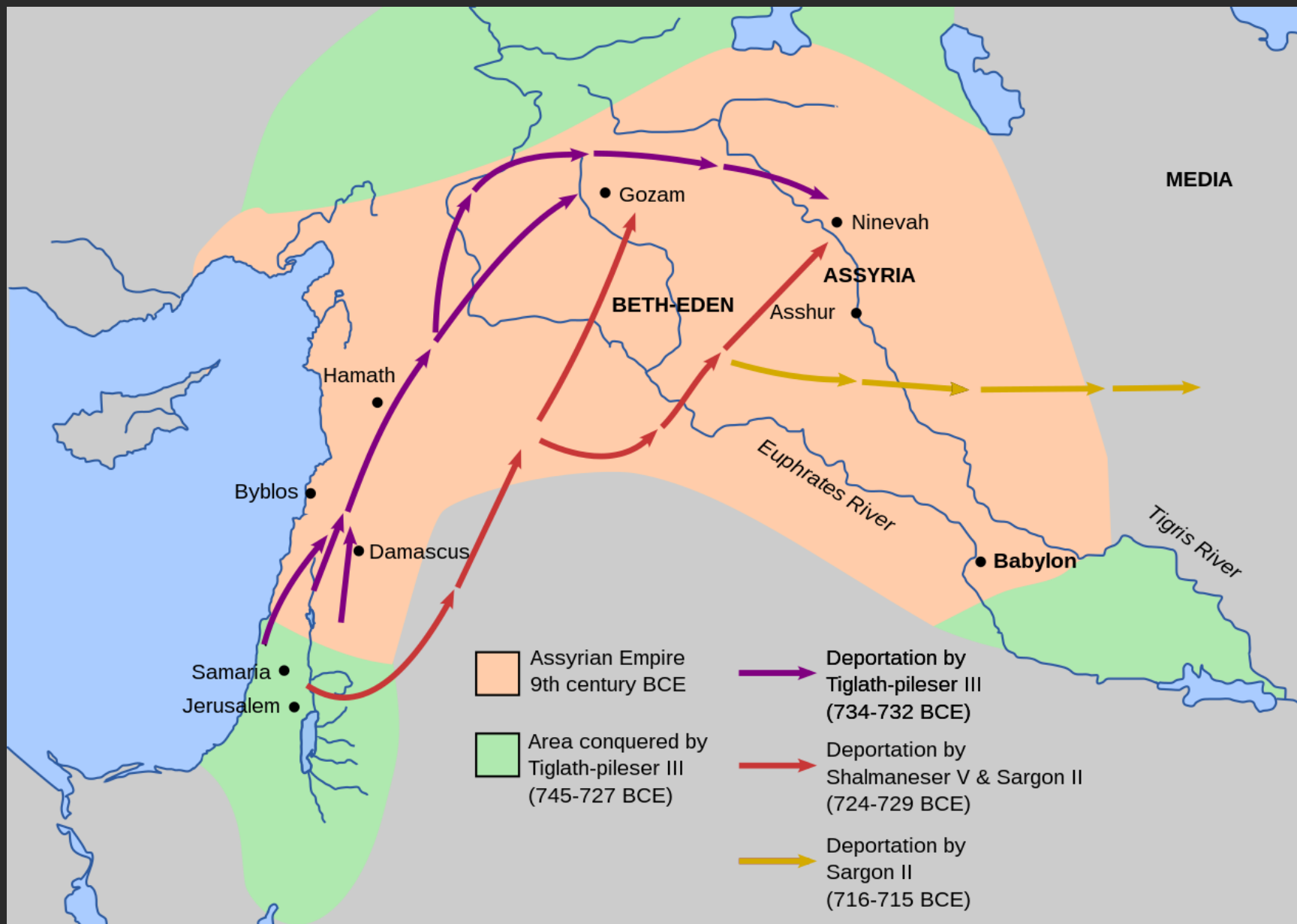
Israel *A Study of the Land*

The Assyrian captivity, also called the Assyrian exile, is the period in the history of ancient Israel and Judah during which several thousand Israelites from the Kingdom of Israel were dispossessed and forcibly relocated by the Neo-Assyrian Empire. One of many instances attesting Assyrian resettlement policy, this mass deportation of the Israelite nation began immediately after the Assyrian conquest of Israel, which was overseen by the Assyrian kings Tiglath-Pileser III and Shalmaneser V. The later Assyrian kings Sargon II and Sennacherib also managed to subjugate the Israelites in the neighboring Kingdom of Judah following the Assyrian siege of Jerusalem in 701 BC, but were unable to annex their territory outright. The Assyrian captivity's victims are known as the Ten Lost Tribes, and Judah was left as the sole Israelite kingdom until the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem in 586 BC, which resulted in the Babylonian captivity of the Jewish people. Not all of Israel's populace was deported by the Assyrians; those who were not expelled from the former kingdom's territory eventually became known as the Samaritan people. – Wikipedia



The Major and Minor Prophets cover over a 400 year span from roughly 850 B.C. to 425 B.C.:

- Five written between the death of Solomon and the fall of the Northern Kingdom
- Eight written prior to the fall of the Southern Kingdom
- Four written after the return from Babylonian captivity



The Assyrian captivity (or Assyrian exile) is the period in Jewish history during which a number of Israelites of the Northern Kingdom of Israel were captives in Assyria, after deportation to upper Mesopotamia, today modern Syria and Iraq. The Northern Kingdom of Israel was the first of the two kingdoms (Israel and Judah) to fall, when it was conquered by the Assyrian monarchs, Tiglath-Pileser III (Pul) and Shalmaneser V. The captivity began in approximately 734-732 BC. The later Assyrian kings Sargon II and his son and successor, Sennacherib, finished the demise of Israel's northern ten-tribe kingdom. In 724 BC, nearly ten years after the initial deportations, the capital city of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, Samaria, was finally taken by Sargon II. The tribes exiled by Assyria later became known as the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel, as, unlike the Kingdom of Judah, which was able to return from its Babylonian Captivity, the ten tribes of the Northern Kingdom never had a foreign edict granting permission to return to Israel and rebuild their homeland. The Assyrians brought Gentiles to live in the land of Israel and fill it.

The Kingdom of Northern Israel fall to Assyria due to their lack of faithfulness to God. The kings sinned and led the people into sin and idolatry, as well. As soon as the United Kingdom of Israel was divided, King Jeroboam, first king of the rebellious northern kingdom, made two calves of gold and set them up in Bethel and Dan in northern Israel. He also instituted a feast on the fifteenth day of the eighth month to replace and in imitation of the Feast of Sukkot held in Judah, in the Temple of the Lord at Jerusalem (1 Kings 12:32-33).

1 Kings 12:28 "The king (Jeroboam) asked advice, made two calves of gold, and said to the people: 'It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Here are your gods, O Israel, which brought you up from the land of Egypt!'" So, the people of the ten tribes of the north went to Bethel and Dan, in northern Israel, to worship the two golden calves instead of God in the Temple at Jerusalem.

BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY AND FALL OF THE KINGDOM OF JUDAH

The Babylonian exile is the period in Jewish history during which a number of Jews of the Kingdom of Judah were captives in Babylon, after deportation to lower Mesopotamia, today modern Iran and Iraq. In the late 7th century BC, the Kingdom of Judah was a client state of the Assyrian empire. In the last decades of the century, Assyria was overthrown by Babylon, an Assyrian province. Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, plundered Jerusalem and its Temple and took king Jehoiachin (also called Jeconiah), his court and other prominent citizens (including the prophet Ezekiel) back to Babylon. Jehoiakim's uncle Zedekiah was appointed king in his place. Despite God's warnings and call to repentance through His prophet Jeremiah, Zedekiah revolted against Babylon, to which Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, returned and besieged Jerusalem, exhausted it by sword, famine, and plague, resulting in the city's destruction in 586 BC. Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the city wall and the Temple, along with the houses of the most prominent citizens. King Zedekiah was blinded and taken to Babylon with many others to live out the remainder of his life.

Jeremiah 32:36 - "Now therefore, thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, concerning this city... 'It shall be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon, by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence'."

Judah became a Babylonian province, called Yehud Medinata (Judah Province), putting an end to the independent Kingdom of Judah. Judah fell to Babylon for the same reasons that Israel in the north fell, due to their lack of faithfulness to God. The kings sinned and led the people into sin and idolatry, as well.



Babylonian History

The events recorded in Daniel 1–4 pertained to the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, who expanded and united the Babylonian Empire. Nebuchadnezzar died in 562 BC after ruling 43 years. The ensuing years of Babylonian history till its overthrow by Cyrus in 539 BC were marked by progressive deterioration, intrigue, and murder.

Nebuchadnezzar was succeeded by his son Evil-Merodach who ruled for two years (562–560 BC, 2 Kings 25:27–30; Jer. 52:31–34). Evil-Merodach was murdered in August 560 by Neriglissar, Nebuchadnezzar's son-in-law and Evil-Merodach's own brother-in-law. Neriglissar then ruled four years (560–556 BC). He is the Nergal-Sharezer mentioned in Jeremiah 39:3, 13. At his death, he was succeeded by his young son Labashi-Marduk, who ruled only two months (May and June 556) before he was assassinated and succeeded by Nabonidus, who reigned 17 years (556–539 BC). Nabonidus did much to restore the glory that had belonged to Babylon under the reign of Nebuchadnezzar. Belshazzar was Nabonidus' eldest son and was appointed by his father as his coregent. -Bible Knowledge Commentary

Babylon during Nebuchadnezzar's reign undoubtedly was the most magnificent (and probably the largest) city on earth. Babylon was a rectangularly shaped city surrounded by a water-filled moat and double walls. The first double-wall system encompassed the main city. Its inner wall was 21 feet thick and reinforced with defense towers at 60-foot intervals while the outer wall was 11 feet in width and also had watchtowers. Nebuchadnezzar added another defensive double-wall system (an outer wall 25 feet thick and an inner wall 23 feet thick) east of the Euphrates that ran the incredible distance of 17 miles and was wide enough at the top for chariots to pass. Eight gates provided access to the city. Ishtar Gate on the north side was a massive double tower rising to a height of 40 feet and decorated with dragons of Marduk and bulls of Hadad. A bridge (400 feet long) spanned the Euphrates River and connected the east and west parts of the city. Fifty-three temples are said to have been present within Babylon.

Nebuchadnezzar had at least three palaces at Babylon, the principal residence being located in the southern citadel and covering about 350 by 200 yards. This palace included a beautifully decorated throne room. Babylon also boasted the famous “hanging gardens,” which the ancient Greeks considered one of the seven wonders of the world. According to the Babylonian historian Berosus, Nebuchadnezzar constructed these for his wife (Amytis) who had left the mountains of her native Media for the alluvial plains of Babylonia. Her husband, in effect, built a mountain in the city to remind his wife of her homeland. “These were elevated gardens, high enough to be seen beyond the city walls. They boasted many different kinds of plants and palm trees. Ingenious hoists had been contrived by which to raise water to the high terraces from the Euphrates River.” -New American Commentary

Hanging Gardens of Babylon

They were described as a remarkable feat of engineering with an ascending series of tiered gardens containing a wide variety of trees, shrubs, and vines, resembling a large green mountain constructed of mud bricks. It was said to have been built in the ancient city of Babylon, near present-day Hillah in Iraq. The name is derived from the Greek word κρεμαστός (*kremastós*, lit. 'overhanging'), which refers to trees being planted on a raised structure such as a terrace. According to one legend, the Hanging Gardens were built alongside a grand palace known as *The Marvel of Mankind*, by the Neo-Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar II (who ruled between 605 and 562 BC), for his Median wife Queen Amytis, because she missed the green hills and valleys of her homeland. - Wikipedia



Daniel 1

In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. The Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, along with some of the vessels of the house of God; and he brought them to the land of Shinar, to the house of his god, and he brought the vessels into the treasury of his god. Daniel 1:1-2

Biography of Nebuchadnezzar

- Son and successor of Nabopolassar, who delivered Babylon from its dependence on Assyria and laid Nineveh in ruins.
- Greatest and most powerful of all the Babylonian kings. He married the daughter of Cyaxares, and thus the Median and Babylonian dynasties were united.
- Nebuchadnezzar subdued the whole of Israel, and took Jerusalem, carrying away captive a great multitude of the Jews, among whom were Daniel and his companions. Three years after this, Jehoiakim, who had reigned in Jerusalem as a Babylonian vassal, rebelled against the oppressor, trusting to help from Egypt (2 Kings 24:1).
- This led Nebuchadnezzar to march an army again to the conquest of Jerusalem, which at once yielded to him (BC 598). A third time he came against it, and deposed Jehoiachin, whom he carried into Babylon, with a large portion of the population of the city, and the sacred vessels of the temple, placing Zedekiah on the throne of Judah in his stead. Zedekiah also entered into an alliance with Egypt, and rebelled against Babylon. This brought about the final siege of the city, which was at length taken and utterly destroyed (BC 586).
- Nebuchadnezzar died in BC 562, in the eighty-third or eighty-fourth year of his age, after a reign of forty-three years, and was succeeded by his son Evil-merodach, who, after a reign of two years, was succeeded by Neriglissar (559–555), who was succeeded by Nabonadius (555–538), at the close of whose reign (less than a quarter of a century after the death of Nebuchadnezzar) Babylon fell under Cyrus at the head of the combined armies of Media and Persia.

An engraving on an eye stone of onyx with an inscription of Nebuchadnezzar II.



Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, the chief of his officials, to bring in some of the sons of Israel, including some of the royal family and of the nobles, youths in whom was no defect, who were good-looking, showing intelligence in every branch of wisdom, endowed with understanding and discerning knowledge, and who had ability for serving in the king's court; and he ordered him to teach them the literature and language of the Chaldeans. Daniel 1:3-4

The king appointed for them a daily ration from the king's choice food and from the wine which he drank, and appointed that they should be educated three years, at the end of which they were to enter the king's personal service. Daniel 1:5

Now among them from the sons of Judah were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. Then the commander of the officials assigned new names to them; and to Daniel he assigned the name Belteshazzar, to Hananiah Shadrach, to Mishael Meshach and to Azariah Abed-nego. Daniel 1:6-7

Change of Names

Daniel - Hebrew “my judge is God”

Belteshazzar - Akkadian “protect the king”

Hananiah - Hebrew “Yahweh has favored me”

Shadrach - Akkadian “I am fearful (of a god)”

Mishael - Hebrew “who is what El is?”

Meshach - Akkadian “I am humbled (before my god)”

Azariah - Hebrew “Yahweh has helped”

Abed-nego – Akkadian “servant of Nebo” (a Babylonian god of wisdom)

But Daniel made up his mind [resolved] that he would not defile himself with the king's choice food or with the wine which he drank; so he sought permission from the commander of the officials that he might not defile himself. Daniel 1:8

*What is your spiritual resolution?

Daniel 1:8

וַיַּשֵּׁם דָּנִיֵּאל עַל-לִבּוֹ

way·yā·śem dā·nî·yêl ‘al- lib·bōw

Daniel resolved in his heart

Daniel made up his mind

Daniel purposed in his heart

Daniel determined

Now God granted Daniel favor and compassion in the sight of the commander of the officials, and the commander of the officials said to Daniel, “I am afraid of my lord the king, who has appointed your food and your drink; for why should he see your faces looking more haggard than the youths who are your own age? Then you would make me forfeit my head to the king.” Daniel 1:9-10

But Daniel said to the overseer whom the commander of the officials had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, “Please test your servants for ten days, and let us be given some vegetables to eat and water to drink. Then let our appearance be observed in your presence and the appearance of the youths who are eating the king’s choice food; and deal with your servants according to what you see.” So he listened to them in this matter and tested them for ten days. Daniel 1:11-14

At the end of ten days their appearance seemed better and they were fatter than all the youths who had been eating the king's choice food. So the overseer continued to withhold their choice food and the wine they were to drink, and kept giving them vegetables. Daniel 1:15-16

As for these four youths, God gave them knowledge and intelligence in every branch of literature and wisdom; Daniel even understood all kinds of visions and dreams. Then at the end of the days which the king had specified for presenting them, the commander of the officials presented them before Nebuchadnezzar. The king talked with them, and out of them all not one was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah; so they entered the king's personal service.

Daniel 1:17-19

As for every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king consulted them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and conjurers who were in all his realm. And Daniel continued until the first year of Cyrus the king.

Daniel 1:20-21

*Daniel's ministry in the royal court of Babylon continued until the overthrow of the Babylonian Empire by Cyrus of Persia in 539 BC.

Daniel 3



Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, the height of which was sixty cubits [90 feet] and its width six cubits [9 feet]; he set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon.

Daniel 3:1

*The Statue of Liberty in New York harbor is 151 feet tall from its base to the top of the torch.

Then Nebuchadnezzar the king sent word to assemble the satraps, the prefects and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates and all the rulers of the provinces to come to the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up. Daniel 3:2

Then the satraps, the prefects and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates and all the rulers of the provinces were assembled for the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up. Daniel 3:3

Then the herald loudly proclaimed: “To you the command is given, O peoples, nations and men of every language, that at the moment you hear the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery, bagpipe and all kinds of music, you are to fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king has set up. Daniel 3:4-5

*Nebuchadnezzar purposed to establish a unified government and also a unified religion. The king constituted himself as both head of state and head of religion. All who served under him were to recognize both his political and religious authority.

Notice the verbs:

Come (Daniel 3:2)

Stand (3:3)

Fall down (3:5)

Worship (3:5)

How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers! Psalm 1:1

Then the herald loudly proclaimed: “But whoever does not fall down and worship shall immediately be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire.” Therefore at that time, when all the peoples heard the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery, bagpipe and all kinds of music, all the peoples, nations and men of every language fell down and worshiped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.

Daniel 3:6-7

For this reason at that time certain Chaldeans came forward and brought charges against the Jews. They responded and said to Nebuchadnezzar the king: “O king, live forever! You, O king, have made a decree that every man who hears the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery, and bagpipe and all kinds of music, is to fall down and worship the golden image.” Daniel 3:8-10

“But whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire. There are certain Jews whom you have appointed over the administration of the province of Babylon, namely Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego. These men, O king, have disregarded you; they do not serve your gods or worship the golden image which you have set up.” Daniel 3:11-12

Then Nebuchadnezzar in rage and anger gave orders to bring Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego; then these men were brought before the king. Nebuchadnezzar responded and said to them, “Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the golden image that I have set up?” Daniel 3:13-14

*The forces of evil cannot stand being rejected.

*When confronted, will we admit to resisting evil?

Nebuchadnezzar said, “Now if you are ready, at the moment you hear the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery and bagpipe and all kinds of music, to fall down and worship the image that I have made, very well. But if you do not worship, you will immediately be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire; and what god is there who can deliver you out of my hands?”

Daniel 3:13-16

*Evil will always give you another chance to join in.

Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego replied to the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to give you an answer concerning this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king.” Daniel 3:17

*Obeying God was more important than life to these three, so if God chose not to deliver them, they would still obey Him. – Bible Knowledge Commentary

Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego replied, “But even if He does not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.”
Daniel 3:18

Job said, “Though He slay me, I will hope in Him.” Job 13:15

“But even if He does not”

Even if I don't get this job

Even if I don't receive good news from the doctor

Even if my spouse leaves

Even if I can't pay my bills

Even if they won't accept me

Even if the pain never stops

Do we have this much faith?

Then Nebuchadnezzar was filled with wrath, and his facial expression was altered toward Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego. He answered by giving orders to heat the furnace seven times more than it was usually heated. He commanded certain valiant warriors who were in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego in order to cast them into the furnace of blazing fire. Daniel 3:19-20

Then these men were tied up in their trousers, their coats, their caps and their other clothes, and were cast into the midst of the furnace of blazing fire. For this reason, because the king's command was urgent and the furnace had been made extremely hot, the flame of the fire slew those men who carried up Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego. But these three men, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, fell into the midst of the furnace of blazing fire still tied up. Daniel 3:21-23

Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astounded and stood up in haste; he said to his high officials, “Was it not three men we cast bound into the midst of the fire?” They replied to the king, “Certainly, O king.” He said, “Look! I see four men loosed and walking about in the midst of the fire without harm, and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods!” Daniel 3:24-25

“Another in the fire”



Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the door of the furnace of blazing fire; he responded and said, “Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, come out, you servants of the Most High God, and come here!” Then Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego came out of the midst of the fire. The satraps, the prefects, the governors and the king’s high officials gathered around and saw in regard to these men that the fire had no effect on the bodies of these men nor was the hair of their head singed, nor were their trousers damaged, nor had the smell of fire even come upon them. Daniel 3:26-27

Nebuchadnezzar responded and said, “Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, who has sent His angel and delivered His servants who put their trust in Him, violating the king’s command, and yielded up their bodies so as not to serve or worship any god except their own God.” Daniel 3:28

*The world will notice when believers are different

Nebuchadnezzar said, “Therefore I make a decree that any people, nation or tongue that speaks anything offensive against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego shall be torn limb from limb and their houses reduced to a rubbish heap, inasmuch as there is no other god who is able to deliver in this way.” Then the king caused Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego to prosper in the province of Babylon. Daniel 3:29-30

This historical incident seems to have prophetic significance as well. In the Tribulation a Gentile ruler (7:8) will demand for himself the worship that belongs to God (2 Thess. 2:4; Rev. 13:8). Any who refuse to acknowledge his right to receive worship will be killed (Rev. 13:15). Assuming political and religious power, he will oppress Israel (Rev. 13:7). Most people in the world will submit to and worship him. But a small remnant, like the three in Daniel's day, will refuse. Many who will not worship the Antichrist will be severely punished; some will be martyred for their faithfulness to Jesus. But a few will be delivered from those persecutions by Jesus at His second coming.

In the Tribulation period God will do for this believing remnant what He did for Daniel's three companions. They withstood the decree of the king, and though they were not exempted from suffering and oppression they were delivered out of it by the God they trusted. No doubt the remnant of believers in that coming day will find great comfort, consolation, and instruction from this incident in the lives of Daniel's three companions.

The Prayers of the Exiles

By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down and wept, when we remembered Zion. Upon the willows in the midst of it we hung our harps. For there our captors demanded of us songs, and our tormentors mirth, saying, “Sing us one of the songs of Zion.” How can we sing the Lord’s song in a foreign land? If I forget you, O Jerusalem, may my right hand forget her skill. May my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth If I do not remember you, if I do not exalt Jerusalem above my chief joy. Remember, O Lord, against the sons of Edom the day of Jerusalem, who said, “Raze it, raze it to its very foundation.” O daughter of Babylon, you devastated one, how blessed will be the one who repays you with the recompense with which you have repaid us. How blessed will be the one who seizes and dashes your little ones against the rock. Psalm 137:1-9

RETURN OF THE EXILES TO ISRAEL

After the fall of Babylon to the Persian king Cyrus the Great in 538 BC, exiled Jews began to return to the land of Judah. King Cyrus the Great ended the exile of the Jewish people in 537 BC, the year after he conquered Babylonia, issuing a decree and granting them permission to return to the land of Israel and rebuild the Temple (Second Temple 521-516 BC) under Zerubbabel. The ten Northern Tribes exiled by Assyria never received a decree to return to their land, only the two Southern Tribes of Judah (Judahites, Benjamites and a few Levites) received such a decree. The return of the exiles of Judah was a gradual process rather than a single event and many of the deportees and their descendants decided not to return. The books of Ezra and Nehemiah (one book in the Hebrew Bible) trace the story of the return of the exiled Jewish people to the land of Israel after the 70-year exile in Babylonia. Zerubbabel (Ezra chapters 1-6) led the earliest return, dated approximately 537 BC, and Ezra and Nehemiah led later returns (Ezra chapters 7-10). The book of Ezra divides into the ministries of Zerubbabel and Ezra. Both of these men led expeditions of Hebrew captives back to the Holy Land from Babylon. Zerubbabel was from the tribe of Judah and a descendant of King David and thus of the royal line. Ezra descended from the tribe of Levi and was therefore a priest. This implies that in the work of any restoration both a king and a priest are needed. The work of the king is to build, or in this case, to rebuild and the work of the priest is to cleanse.

Prophecies Fulfilled

Israel to be scattered into all nations and to live in fear and persecution

- One prophecy that occurs again and again in the Old Testament is the prophecy of the people of Israel being scattered to all nations. Certainly this has happened. The northern ten tribes were taken into captivity by Assyrians around 722 BC. The other two tribes were taken captive by the Babylonians around 586 BC. Only a small fraction of the Jews returned from Babylon to resettle the land of Israel in 536 BC. But the biggest blow came in 70 AD when Titus of Rome attacked Jerusalem, destroying the city and the temple. The Jews that were not killed were scattered into all nations.
- Leviticus 26:33-38 says, "And **I will scatter you among the heathen**, and will **draw out a sword after you**: and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste. Then shall the land enjoy her sabbaths, as long as it lieth desolate, and ye be in your enemies' land; even then shall the land rest, and enjoy her sabbaths. As long as it lieth desolate it shall rest; because it did not rest in your sabbaths, when ye dwelt upon it. And **upon them that are left alive of you** I will send a **faintness into their hearts** in the lands of their enemies; and **the sound of a shaken leaf shall chase them; and they shall flee, as fleeing from a sword**; and they shall fall when none pursueth. And they shall fall one upon another, as it were before a sword, when none pursueth: and ye shall have no power to stand before your enemies. And **ye shall perish among the heathen, and the land of your enemies shall eat you up.**"

Israel to be scattered into all nations and to live in fear and persecution

- Deuteronomy 28:64-67 says, "And the LORD shall **scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other**; and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even wood and stone. And **among these nations shalt thou find no ease**, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: but the LORD shall give thee there a **trembling heart**, and **failing of eyes**, and **sorrow of mind**: And **thy life shall hang in doubt** before thee; and **thou shalt fear day and night**, and shalt have none assurance of thy life: In the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were even! and at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning! for the fear of thine heart wherewith thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see."
- One only needs to look up "Jews" in any encyclopedia for details the long history of persecution, massacre, and expulsion from various countries. Hitler's murder of 6,000,000 was not an isolated event, but part of a 2,000 year trend. For example, thousands of Jews were massacred during the time of the Crusades (1000-1300 AD). Persecution of Jews was the norm as all Jews were considered partakers in the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. In the 14th century the plague known as the Black Death swept through Europe killing about one fourth of the population. Jews were often massacred as a result of the accusation that they spread the disease by poisoning water supplies. In 1492, all Jews were expelled from Spain, as was the case in Portugal just five years later.

Jerusalem to be a burdensome stone for all people

- In 520 BC, more than 500 years before the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ, God said in Zechariah 12:2-3, "Behold, **I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling** unto all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem. And in that day will I make **Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people**: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though **all the people of the earth be gathered together against it.**"
- There was no political or religious contention over the city of Jerusalem at the time. 500 years before Christianity and 1200 years before Islam, the tiny nation of Israel had just rebuilt Jerusalem from the ruins of the Babylonian conquest. Israel was a tiny nation of less than 50,000 men who had returned from Babylon (Ezra 2:64), a mere remnant of the ancient glory days. Since then Jerusalem has been conquered and has changed hands more than 30 times. Jerusalem has been swapped between the Medo-Persians, Greeks, Romans, Turks, Egyptians, Moslems, European Crusaders, and others repeatedly over the last 2500 years.
- Much of the warring over Jerusalem has been provoked by two errant theologies that came into being around 1000 years after the prophecy above was given. One came from the Moslems who claim that Mohammed ascended to heaven from the temple mount in Jerusalem, which they now claim as an Islamic holy site. That is where they built the Dome of the Rock. The other is replacement theology, a doctrine teaching that the Gentile Christian churches have forever replaced Israel in God's eyes. This teaching was used to fuel the crusades and much anti-Semitism.

Jerusalem to be a burdensome stone for all people

- In 1996, Israel made plans to proceed with building a new housing subdivision on a barren hillside in East Jerusalem. The Palestinians and Moslem nations were outraged. The European Union wanted in on the negotiations, and updates were broadcast on worldwide television every day. How incredible! Virtually anywhere else in the world, the addition of a new subdivision would do good to get an occasional mention in the local paper. This is not an isolated incident, when Israel broke through an 18 inch wall of rock to create a doorway at the end of a tunnel near the Wailing Wall, it made headlines worldwide. It produced a severe outcry from the Palestinians, and was followed shortly by a retaliatory bombing that killed more than 50 people. Just try to imagine the fury that will be unleashed if Israel were to attempt to rebuild the temple on the same hill as the Islamic Dome of the Rock! But God knew all of this would come to pass and said of Jerusalem, "**all the people of the earth be gathered together against it.**"
- Another interesting note is found in Zechariah 14:1-3, "Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For **I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken**, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle." Note that prior to 1967, this prophecy could not have been fulfilled, since Israel did not have possession of the city of Jerusalem. In the 1967 war with the Arab nations, Israel took back Jerusalem for the first time in nearly 2000 years. So now we see Zechariah 14:1-3 set up for fulfillment.

Israel to be regathered

- Just as the scattering of the people of Israel was prophesied, the Bible also prophesied that the people of Israel would be regathered to the land of Israel.
- "... the LORD thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and **gather thee from all the nations**, whither the LORD thy God hath **scattered** thee" (Deuteronomy 30:3).
- "... Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will even **gather you** from the people, and assemble you **out of the countries where ye have been scattered**, and I will **give you the land of Israel**" (Ezekiel 17:11).
- In 1948, Israel became an independent nation for the first time since the Babylonian takeover in 606 BC (more than 2500 years). In the 1990's around half a million Jews have returned to Israel from the former Soviet Union. Hebrew, the language of the Old Testament has been revived. By 300 BC the language of the Jews had changed from Hebrew to Aramaic and Greek. Hebrew had remained an unspoken and dead language until recently. Dead for about 2200 years, in 1948, it was proclaimed the national language of Israel.
- Today there are around 6 million Jews in the land of Israel, about one third of the estimated total number in the world. There are still about 6 million in the United States and about another 5 million scattered around the rest of the world, but mostly in the former Soviet Union, where there is still of steady stream of Russian Jews returning to Israel.

Prophecies fulfilled in 1948



THE DECLARATION OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL
May 14, 1948

3000
YEARS OLD,
76
YEARS YOUNG

Happy Birthday Israel



Jacob's descendants would regain control of Israel

- **Written:** about 750 BC **Fulfilled:** Since 1948
- In Amos 9:14-15, the prophet said that there would come a time when the exiles of Israel would again have Israel as their own land and that they would never be uprooted again. Amos lived about 2700 years ago, during a time when the people of Israel were being forced out of their homeland by a succession of foreign invasions. Despite many centuries of exile, many Jews returned to Israel and reclaimed sovereignty over a portion of their ancient homeland. This declaration of independence, in 1948, triggered a war with the surrounding countries, which objected to the presence of a Jewish state. On May 15, 1948, the day that armies from the surrounding countries invaded, Azzam Pasha, the Secretary General of the Arab League, said "This will be a war of extermination and a momentous massacre which will be spoken of like the Mongolian massacres and the Crusades." Similar quotes were uttered by others during the war of 1948-49 and during the two major wars that followed. Despite its tiny size, Israel prevailed in these wars, preventing its people from being uprooted again, as they had been in ancient times.
- Amos 9:14-15
I will bring back my exiled people Israel; they will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them. They will plant vineyards and drink their wine; they will make gardens and eat their fruit. I will plant Israel in their own land, never again to be uprooted from the land I have given them," says the Lord your God.

Israel would be brought back to life

- **Written:** between 593-571 BC **Fulfilled:** 1948
- In Ezekiel 37:10-14, the prophet receives a vision in which Israel was seen as a scattering of dried-up bones. In this vision, God tells Ezekiel that the bones (Israel) would be brought back to life. Just as Ezekiel had prophesied about 2600 years ago, the Jews were brought back to the land, and the country of Israel was brought back to life. Israel re-established sovereignty in 1948, a mere three years after the end of the Holocaust, during which the Nazis killed about one-third of the world's Jewish population.
- Ezekiel 37:10-14
So I prophesied as he commanded me, and breath entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet--a vast army. Then he said to me: "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, 'Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off.' Therefore prophesy and say to them: 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: O my people, I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them; I will bring you back to the land of Israel. Then you, my people, will know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves and bring you up from them. I will put my Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I the Lord have spoken, and I have done it, declares the Lord.'"

Isaiah spoke of Israel being reborn in one day

- **Written:** perhaps between 701-681 BC **Fulfilled:** 1948
- In Isaiah 66:7-8, the prophet foreshadowed the re-birth of Israel in 1948. Isaiah describes a woman giving birth before going into labor, and he speaks of a country being born in one day. This accurately describes what happened on May 14, 1948 - when the Jews declared independence for Israel as a united and sovereign nation for the first time in 2900 years.
- During that same day, the United States issued a statement recognizing Israel's sovereignty. And, only hours beforehand, a United Nations mandate expired, ending British control of the land. During a 24-hour span of time, foreign control of the land of Israel had formally ceased, and Israel had declared its independence, and its independence was acknowledged by other nations. Modern Israel was literally was born in a single day.
- Isaiah said the birth would take place before there would be labor pains. And that too is precisely what happened. A movement called Zionism began in the 1800s to encourage Jews worldwide to move to Israel, which at that time was called Palestine. Within hours of the declaration of independence in 1948, Israel was attacked by the surrounding countries of Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and Saudi Arabia.
- When reading Isaiah 66:7-8, keep in mind that Israel's status as a sovereign nation was established and reaffirmed during the course of a single day, and that it was born of a movement called Zionism, and that its declaration of independence was not the result of a war but rather the cause of one.
- Isaiah 66:7-8
"Before she goes into labor, she gives birth; before the pains come upon her, she delivers a son. Who has ever heard of such a thing? Who has ever seen such things? Can a country be born in a day or a nation be brought forth in a moment? Yet no sooner is Zion in labor than she gives birth to her children."

Israel would be re-established as a united nation

- **Written:** between 593-571 BC **Fulfilled:** 1948
- In Ezekiel 37:21-22, the prophet said that God would one day bring the people of Israel back to Israel, as a united nation. This might have been a shock for Ezekiel. He lived about 2600 years ago. At that time, the people of Israel had already divided themselves into two separate kingdoms. And, both kingdoms had been conquered by foreign invaders, who forced many of the people, including Ezekiel, into exile. But, when Jews reclaimed sovereignty in 1948, they did so as a united people, creating one nation - Israel.
- Ezekiel 37:21-22
and say to them, 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: I will take the Israelites out of the nations where they have gone. I will gather them from all around and bring them back into their own land. I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel. There will be one king over all of them and they will never again be two nations or be divided into two kingdoms.'

The second Israel would be more impressive than the first

- **Written:** sometime from 626 to about 586 BC **Fulfilled:** 1948
- In Jeremiah 16:14-15, the prophet said the second Israel would be more impressive than the first. In many regards, it is. The first time that Israel was established as a country was after Moses led the descendants of Jacob (typically referred to today as Jews) out of Egypt, where they had been enslaved for 400 years. They then conquered Canaan and established Israel about 3400 years ago. But the second time that Israel was established was after the Jews had been scattered far and wide for a few thousand years. This time the Jews had to return from as far away as the United States, China, Russia and South Africa.
- Jeremiah 16:14-15
“However, the days are coming,” declares the Lord, “when men will no longer say, ‘As surely as the Lord lives, who brought the Israelites up out of Egypt,’ but they will say, ‘As surely as the Lord lives, who brought the Israelites up out of the land of the north and out of all the countries where he had banished them.’ For I will restore them to the land I gave their forefathers.”

Ezekiel predicted when Israel would be re-established

- **Written:** between 593-571 BC **Fulfilled:** 1948
- In Ezekiel 4:3-6, the prophet said the Jews, who had lost control of their homeland, would be punished for 430 years. This prophecy, according to Bible scholar Grant Jeffrey, pinpointed the 1948 rebirth of Israel. Here's a summary of Jeffrey's theory:
- 1. Ezekiel said the Jews were to be punished for 430 years because they had turned away from God. As part of the punishment, the Jews lost control of their homeland to Babylon. Many Jews were taken as captives to Babylon.
- 2. Babylon was later conquered by Cyrus in 539 BC. Cyrus allowed the Jews to leave Babylon and to return to their homeland. But, only a small number returned. The return had taken place sometime around 536 BC, about 70 years after Judah lost independence to Babylon.
- 3. Because most of the exiles chose to stay in pagan Babylon rather than return to the Holy Land, the remaining 360 years of their punishment was multiplied by 7. The reason is explained in Bible's book of Leviticus. (Leviticus 26:18, Leviticus 26:21, Leviticus 26:24 and Leviticus 26:28). In Leviticus, it says that if the people did not repent while being punished, the punishment would be multiplied by 7. And, by staying in pagan Babylon, most exiles were refusing to repent.
- 4. So, if you take the remaining 360 years of punishment and multiply by 7, you get 2,520 years. But, Jeffrey says those years are based on an ancient 360-day lunar calendar. If those years are adjusted to the modern solar calendar, the result is 2,484 years.
- 5. And, there were exactly 2,484 years from 536 BC to 1948, which is the year that Israel regained independence.
- Ezekiel 4:3-6
... Then take an iron pan, place it as an iron wall between you and the city and turn your face toward it. It will be under siege, and you shall besiege it. This will be a sign to the house of Israel. "Then lie on your left side and put the sin of the house of Israel upon yourself. You are to bear their sin for the number of days you lie on your side. I have assigned you the same number of days as the years of their sin. So for 390 days you will bear the sin of the house of Israel. "After you have finished this, lie down again, this time on your right side, and bear the sin of the house of Judah. I have assigned you 40 days, a day for each year.

The people of Israel would return to “their own land”

- **Written:** between 593-571 BC **Fulfilled:** after May 14, 1948
- In Ezekiel 34:13, the prophet said that God would gather the people of Israel scattered throughout the world and bring them back to “their own land.” After many centuries of dispersion, hundreds of thousands of Jews returned to their ancient homeland beginning in the late 1800s. But, millions more returned after Israel declared independence in 1948. In other words, millions of exiles returned to their ancient homeland which was now truly “their own land” in the sense that it was now a sovereign Jewish state.
- Ezekiel 34:13
I will bring them out from the nations and gather them from the countries, and I will bring them into their own land. I will pasture them on the mountains of Israel, in the ravines and in all the settlements in the land.

God would watch over the people of Israel

- **Written:** sometime from 626 to about 586 BC **Fulfilled:** 1948, etc.
- In Jeremiah 31:10, the prophet said that God would one day gather the Jews back to Israel and that He would watch over them like a shepherd. Believe what you wish, but there is evidence that God indeed has watched over the re-established nation of Israel. Hours after Israel declared independence in 1948, the surrounding countries attacked, hoping to replace the Jewish state with an Arab state. These countries are much larger than Israel. But tiny Israel prevailed in that war and was able to capture additional land, increasing the land size of Israel by 50 percent. Israel also prevailed in the two other major wars that followed.
- Jeremiah 31:10
“Hear the word of the Lord, O nations; proclaim it in distant coastlands: ‘He who scattered Israel will gather them and will watch over his flock like a shepherd.’

Israel's army would be disproportionately powerful

- **Written:** perhaps around 1400 BC **Fulfilled:** 1948-49, 1967, etc.
- In Leviticus 26:3, 7-8, the Bible says that the army of Israel would have a supernatural power to prevail during times of conflict, if the people are obedient to the Lord. This Bible passage says that 5 people would be able to chase away 100 people, and that 100 would be able to chase away 10,000. Is there any proof to this incredible claim? Judge for yourself:
- **Example 1:** Within hours of Israel's declaration of independence in 1948, Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Iraq, and Lebanon invaded Israel. The combined population of those countries was at least 20 million at that time. Israel had fewer than 1 million Jews. Even so, the Jews won the war and expanded the size of Israel by 50 percent.
- **Example 2:** During the War of 1967, Israel attacked the air force bases of the surrounding countries and took control of Jerusalem for the first time in about 2000 years. They also seized additional territory. That war lasted a mere 6 days.
- **Example 3:** On Oct. 6, 1973, Israel was attacked by Egypt and Syria. Other countries later joined the attack. But the Jews were able to push back the attacking armies and occupy land outside of Israel's borders.
- Leviticus 26:3, 7-8
"If you follow my decrees and are careful to obey my commands, ... You will pursue your enemies, and they will fall by the sword before you. Five of you will chase a hundred, and a hundred of you will chase ten thousand, and your enemies will fall by the sword before you."

The fortunes of the people of Israel would be restored

Written: perhaps 1400 BC

Fulfilled: 1948, etc.

- In Deuteronomy 30:3-5, the Bible said the Jews would be scattered worldwide and that they later would return to their homeland and have their fortunes restored. This prophecy began to be fulfilled in modern times during the late 1800s when many Jews returned to Israel, from as far away as China and the United States, Russia and South Africa. Israel declared independence in 1948. Today, Israel is among the world's most prosperous countries.
- Deuteronomy 30:3-5
then the Lord your God will restore your fortunes and have compassion on you and gather you again from all the nations where he scattered you. Even if you have been banished to the most distant land under the heavens, from there the Lord your God will gather you and bring you back. He will bring you to the land that belonged to your fathers, and you will take possession of it. He will make you more prosperous and numerous than your fathers.