

## An Introduction

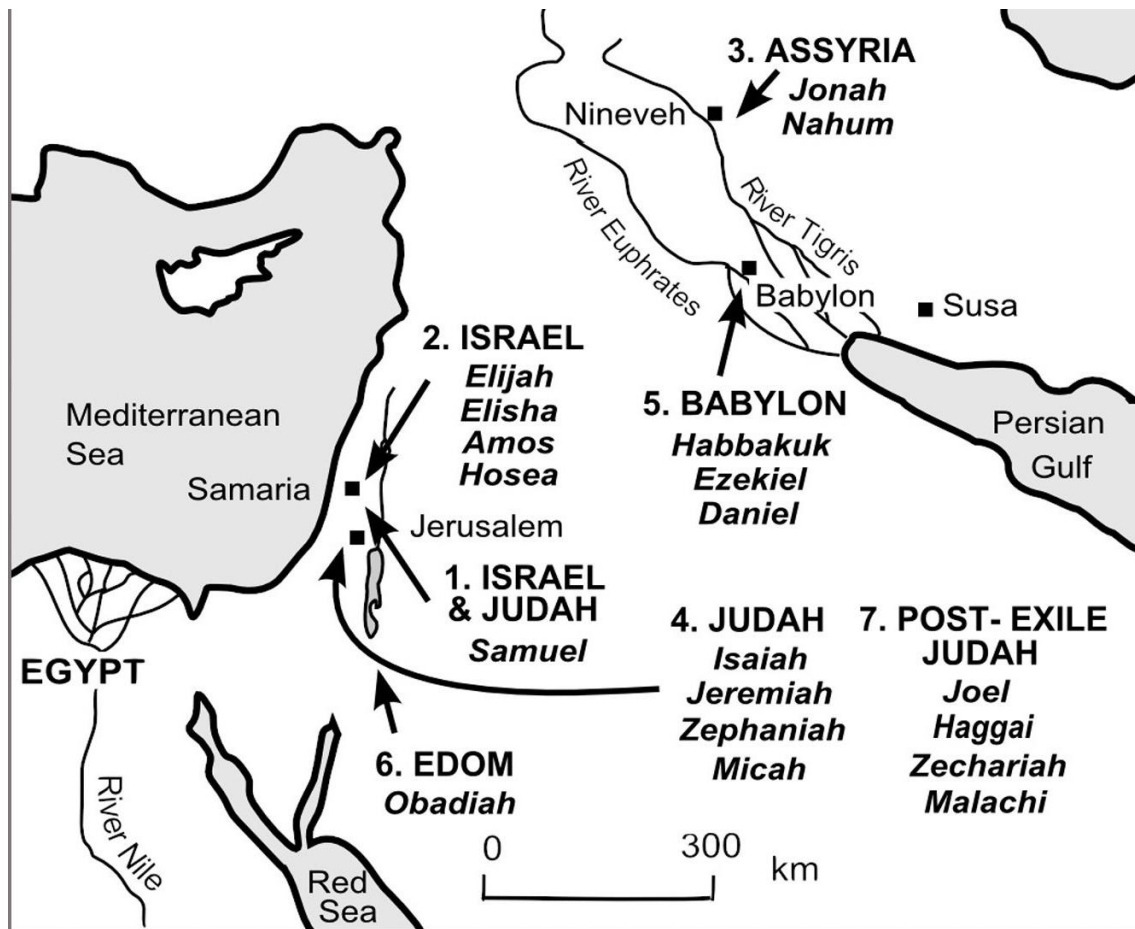
Solomon's fall into idolatry and Rehoboam's tyranny caused the ten northern tribes to break away and form their own kingdom. The northern kingdom retained the name Israel, while the southern was called Judah.

The mighty Assyrian Empire rose to power in 911 BC, about twenty years after Israel divided. It remained the biggest threat to both kingdoms until its subjects, led by Babylon and Media, rebelled and eventually overthrew Assyria in a series of battles from 626 to 605 BC.

All the kings of Israel were evil. Jeroboam feared his people would return to the house of David (Judah's king) when they journeyed to Jerusalem for worship. He set up altars in northern and southern Israel, appointed priests from every tribe, and created new feast days. Israel continued in Jeroboam's sins until its fall. Ahab brought Baal worship into Israel. Assyria conquered Israel in 721 BC. The Israelites were scattered and mixed religiously and ethnically with other peoples conquered by Assyria. They became known as the Samaritans.

Judah had a mix of good and evil kings. Asa led reforms and fended off a massive Ethiopian army and a threat from Israel. During his reign, some from Israel deserted to Judah. Hezekiah, who worked with Isaiah, led great reforms. After conquering Israel and Syria, Assyria threatened Judah, but Hezekiah trusted God, and Judah was miraculously spared. Josiah also led great reforms, but Judah immediately fell back into sin following his death. When Babylon and its allies overthrew Assyria in 605 BC, it battled Egypt for control over Judah and its neighbors. Despite Jeremiah's warnings, Judah tried to resist Babylonian rule, leading to the destruction of Jerusalem and exile in 586 BC. The temple and city walls were demolished in the attack.

### Map of the Prophets' subjects



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### Timeline of Major Events

- |                                       |                                  |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 960 – Solomon finishes temple         | 721 – Assyria conquers Israel    |
| 930 – Israel divides                  | 716 – Hezekiah rules Judah       |
| 911 – Rise of Assyrian Empire         | 640 – Josiah rules Judah         |
| 911 – Asa rules Judah                 | 605 – Rise of Babylonian Empire  |
| 896 – Some Israelites desert to Judah | 605 – Babylon subjects Judah     |
| 874 – Ahab rules Israel               | 597 – Babylon attacks Judah      |
| 735 – Syro-Ephraimite War             | 586 – Babylon destroys Jerusalem |