
a *Grace Notes* course

History I

by Warren Doud

Lesson 4

Old Testament History (Part 4 of 4)

History I

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Lesson 4 Quiz 5

Instructions for Completing the Lesson

Begin each study session with prayer. It is the Holy Spirit who makes spiritual things discernable to Christians, so it is essential to be in fellowship with the Lord during Bible study.

Instructions

1. Read the lesson notes carefully.
 2. Look up and study each passage of the Bible that is mentioned.
 3. Complete the answers to the Questions and send your response to *Grace Notes*.
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History I - Lesson 4

The Campaigns of Sennacherib in Palestine (2 Kings 18; Isa. 10; Micah 1; 2 Chron. 32)

Sennacherib attacked Palestine in 701 B.C., after putting down several rebellions in Mesopotamia and areas east of Assyria. He advanced along the Phoenician coast, dethroned the king of Tyre ("the king of the Sidonians"), defeated the Egyptians in the battle of the Valley of Eltekeh, accepted the surrender of Philistia and Ekron, and turned to Judah. The conquest of Lachish is described in reliefs found at Nineveh which show the breaking down of the double walls and the attack of the main gate by siege rams. The inscriptions of Sennacherib describe the capture of 46 cities in Judah, some of which are referred to by Isaiah and Micah. Sennacherib demanded the complete surrender of Jerusalem, even though Hezekiah had been paying him heavy tribute.

In this fateful hour, Isaiah, who had opposed the rebellion from the beginning, now revived the spirit of the besieged by his preaching and foretold the salvation of the city. The miracle took place and the Assyrians retreated. Judah was able, in consequence, to endure for more than a century longer; and its miraculous salvation left an indelible impression upon the people.

The Days of Manasseh

There is little definite information about the reign of Manasseh, the son of Hezekiah, who reigned for 45 years while Judah was under the shadow of Assyria. This was a period of quiet prosperity and healing of wounds left by Sennacherib's campaigns. Judah was bordered by Philistia on the west and Ammon, Moab, and Edom on the south and east.

About 639 B.C., Ashurbanipal carried out a punitive expedition against Arabians who had revolted against Assyria. During this time a drastic decline in population began which is unaccounted for except in the prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah.

The Conquest of Esarhaddon

The expansion of Assyria reached its peak during the first half of the seventh century. In 669 B.C.

Esarhaddon conquered Lower Egypt. On a second campaign to Egypt Esarhaddon died and his son, Ashurbanipal, put down the insurrection in Egypt and established control of Upper Egypt, putting an end to the 25th Dynasty in Egypt. The Assyrian sphere of control now reached its furthest extension, over the entire Fertile Crescent, from Upper Egypt to the Persian Gulf and Elam. All of the other vassal kingdoms paid tribute, among them Judah under King Manasseh.

The Destruction of Assyria

Assyria's decline and fall came with great rapidity. Egypt freed itself from Assyria, even under the reign of Ashurbanipal. Two emerging rivals, Babylon and the Medes, contributed to the process of internal disintegration within the extensive Assyrian Empire. In 626 B.C., Babylon revolted and defeated the Assyrians at the borders of Babylonia. Surprisingly, Egypt came to Assyria's aid against Babylon, probably so that they could renew their rule over Palestine and Syria. But this did not hold the tide for long.

In 614 B.C., the army of the Medes conquered the city of Asshur; and two years later Nineveh fell before a combined attack of Medes and Babylonians. In 610 Haran was also captured, and Assyria ceased to exist.

The Kingdom of Josiah - 628 to 609

Josiah's reign was the last period of greatness in the history of Judah. He began his reign as a boy of eight, and ruled for thirty-one years. He took advantage of Assyria's decline and worked to renew the kingdom of the House of David in all of Palestine. Political and national restoration were encouraged through extensive religious reformation. Josiah had the Law read to the people and made a covenant, ratified by the people, to keep the Lord's commandments and to walk in the way of the Lord. (2 Kings 23) He commanded the people to keep the Passover, which had not been kept formally during all the period of the judges or kings.

High places and altars in rural places were destroyed. Purified Israelite worship was concentrated entirely in the temple at Jerusalem.

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The purification was carried out not only in Jerusalem and Judah, but also in "...the cities of Manasseh and Ephraim and Simeon, even unto Naphtali...throughout the land of Israel." (2 Chron. 34:6,7) Josiah even expanded his kingdom at the expenses of the Philistines, according to a Hebrew letter found in a fortress built on the coast between the cities of Jabneh and Ashdod.

The Death of Josiah

The kingdom of Josiah fell apart upon his tragic death near Megiddo where he was slain by the Egyptian pharaoh Necho. (2 Kings 23:39) Necho had led his forces to Carchemish to aid the Assyrians against the Babylonians in 610 B.C.

It is probable that Josiah met his death trying to halt Necho's attempt to reestablish control over Judea. Although the Assyrian-Egyptian alliance failed to subdue Babylon, Necho controlled Palestine and Syria for several years. Upon Necho's return from his campaigns, Josiah's son Jehoahaz hastened to greet him at Riblah in the land of Hamath; but his brother Jehoiakim was placed on the throne of Judah instead. Jehoahaz had reigned for only three months.

The Campaigns of Nebuchadnezzar

In the fourth year of Jehoiakim (606 B.C.), Nebuchadnezzar defeated an Egyptian army at Carchemish (Jer. 46:2) and again at Hamath. A year later he marched through the Holy Land, conquered Ashkelon, and reached the brook of Egypt (2 Kings 24:7). Judah became a small vassal kingdom of Babylon, soon to be ground down in the wars between Babylon and Egypt.

Babylon reached its zenith under Nebuchadnezzar. In the east and north, it bordered on the kingdom of the Medes; in the south was Egypt. Three years after his surrender to Nebuchadnezzar, Jehoiakim felt ready to revolt. The reaction was swift; first, the Babylonians directed the unrest of Judah's neighbors against her, mainly in the east. Then, the Chaldean army came up against Jerusalem in 598 B.C., besieging it. Jehoiakim died at the start of the siege; he may have been murdered (Jer. 22:18,19; 36:30). His son Jehoiachin surrendered

and was exiled to Babylon along with many of his family and notables of the kingdom (2 Kings 24).

Nebuchadnezzar put Zedekiah, the son of Josiah, on the throne, a man who had a weak character and was unsuited for rule, especially in troubled times. In 589 B.C., with the feeble assistance of Egypt, Zedekiah was drawn into a new rebellion against Babylon, on the advice of other states in Palestine. When Nebuchadnezzar's punitive army approached Jerusalem, Zedekiah was abandoned by his "allies" to face the battle alone. The Edomites took advantage also by invading Judah at this time (Obad. 1:10-14; Ps. 137:7; Lam. 4:21,22).

This time the Babylonians had no pity. The cities of Judah were destroyed one after another. Finally, Jerusalem was besieged. The siege was lifted for a short time because the Egyptians were rumored to be approaching; but it was reimposed. In the summer of 587 B.C. the walls of the city were breached and Jerusalem was captured. A month later, the Babylonians burned the entire city, including the Temple, and took many of the survivors into exile. More people were exiled in 582 B.C. Most of the exiles were settled in various villages on the Chebar River near Nippur and Babylon. The number of exiles is given in Jer. 52:28-30, although this may include only the important families.

Judah Under Babylonian Rule

The Babylonians left the internal rule of Judah in the hands of Gedaliah, the son of Ahikam, who ruled from Mizpeh. He was murdered, however, by hotheads; and out of fear of Babylonian reprisals, many families fled to Egypt (2 Kings 25: Jer. 40-44). Here they founded Jewish military colonies which are known through Persian archives of the period.

In Judah, the lands and destroyed settlements were quickly occupied by the Jews who were left in the land (Jer. 40:10), causing much resentment among the captive exiles (Eze. 33:21-27). The central highlands of Judah, however, were not reoccupied, and the Babylonians did not bring settlers in. These areas were gradually seized by the

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Edomites, and the southern Judean hills to the region of Beth-zur now became known as "Idumea".

Most of the exiles in Babylon, who were settled in scattered agricultural communities, preserved their spiritual and religious heritage and cultivated the vision of the "return to the promised land." This found expression in the visions of Ezekiel who was exiled to Babylon along with Jehoiachin. In chapters 47 and 48 appear his view of the redistribution of the Holy Land among the twelve tribes (during the Millennial Kingdom).

The Fall of Babylon

The hopes of the exiles rose with the rapid disintegration of the kingdom of Babylon. After the death of Nebuchadnezzar in 562 B.C., three successors followed over the next seven years. The first was Evil-Merodach, who freed Jehoiachin from prison (2 Kings 25:27-30).

Nabonidus of Haran seized the throne of Babylon in 556 B.C. His goal was to weaken the power of the priests of Marduk, but he busied himself more

with archaeological excavations than with affairs of state. When the threat from Cyrus the Persian became apparent, Nabonidus moved his capital to the relative safety of the Oasis of Tema on the Arabian border, leaving the administration of Babylon in the hands of his son, Belshazzar.

The end of the kingdom came quickly. In 550 B.C., Cyrus inherited the vast kingdom of the Medes through conquest. Four years later, he conquered Croesus, King of Lydia, and captured his capital of Sardis. In 539 B.C. he entered Babylon without a fight (Daniel 8).

Cyrus was the founder of the largest empire the Ancient East had ever seen. His son, Cambyses, conquered Egypt, and his successor, Darius I, reached India. The immense empire was divided into provinces (satrapies) ruled by "satraps and the governors and the princes of the provinces from India to Ethiopia, a hundred twenty and seven provinces" (Esther 8:9). The fifth satrapy was Abar Nahara ("beyond the river Euphrates"), and one of its lands was "Yehud" - Judah.

History I, Lesson 4 Questions

Instructions

The following questions relate to your study of this lesson.

Respond to the questions as required.

You have choices about sending the quiz back to Grace Notes.

- If you received an email file containing the questions, you can use the REPLY feature of your e-mail application to open the file. Enter your responses in the reply message. Then SEND the message to Grace Notes.
- You can enter your answers on these pages, then send the whole file back to Grace Notes as a file attachment. This is handy, but these lessons will average 100K to 200K in size. As an alternative,
- After you answer the questions here, copy and paste the whole list of questions into a new MS Word document; then, send the new file to Grace Notes as an attachment. The new file will, of course, be much smaller than this main file.
- Finally, you can print the Quiz pages on your printer and send your response back to Grace Notes in the regular mail. If you do this, send the mail to:

Grace Notes

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1705 Aggie Lane
Austin, Texas 78757 USA

Whichever transmission method you use, when Grace Notes receives your response, we will send you the next lesson in the series.

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Questions on History I, Lesson 4

1. Sennacherib was a king of _____.

Answer:

2. When Assyria's power waned, two other powers, _____ and _____ emerged.

Answer:

3. Assyria was no longer a force to contend with after the year _____ BC.

Answer:

4. Josiah brought extensive religious reform during his reign. [True/False]

Answer:

5. Please describe, from 2 Chronicles 34, the geographical extent of the reforms and purifications which Josiah carried out.

Answer:

6. Josiah died in Jerusalem at the end of a long life. [True/False]

Answer:

7. The Babylonian king [A. Jehoiakim; B. Nebuchadnezzar; C. Necho; D. Hamath] defeated the Egyptians in the battle of Carchemish.

Answer:

8. There were no Jewish people left in Judah after the Babylonians had taken captives to Babylon. [True/False]

Answer:

9. The Babylonian Empire of the 6th Century BC quickly deteriorated and was itself conquered by the _____ Empire.

Answer:

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10. _____ was the founder of the Persian Empire, having conquered the Medes and the Lydians.

Answer:

End of Quiz