

The Book of Ezekiel

Lesson 2-Preliminary Information

Historical and Theological Foundations of the Book of Ezekiel

I. Thematic Structure of the Book of Ezekiel

The prophetic content of Ezekiel is categorized into three distinct areas of focus, addressing both immediate historical realities and future eschatological events:

- **Judgment of Israel (Present and Future):** Proclamations of judgment based upon the active character and activity of the nation of Israel.
- **Judgment of Nations (Present and Future):** Proclamations based upon the conduct and attitude of foreign nations toward Israel.
- **Future Deliverance and Kingdom:** Beyond judgment, Ezekiel emphasizes the restoration of Israel as a nation and the eventual establishment of the Kingdom of God.

The Cyclical Message Framework

The delivery of Ezekiel's message follows a specific literary and physical progression:

1. **Divine Call:** "The word of the Lord came to..." (e.g., Ezekiel 6:1), accompanied by visions (Ezekiel Ch. 1-3).
2. **Demonstration:** A physical or literary demonstration of the message (e.g., Ezekiel 5:1-4, 24:15-27).
3. **Declaration:** The formal announcement of judgment to Israel or the nations (e.g., Ezekiel 12:1-6, 22:1-31).
4. **Actualization:** Specific actions occurring as a direct result of the judgment (e.g., Ezekiel 14:12-23, 25:1-17).
5. **Restoration:** The certainty of forgiveness and the restoration of ethnic Israel (e.g., Ezekiel 37:1-28, 40-48).

II. The Historical Root of Judgment

A central tension in the historical context is why judgment continued despite the righteous reforms of King Josiah (640–609 BC). While Josiah tore down idols, restored the temple, and reinstated the Passover, the "fierceness of [God's] great wrath" remained.

The Legacy of King Manasseh (697–642 BC)

The inevitability of Judah's destruction is attributed to the 14th ruler, Manasseh, who ruled for 55 years. His actions established a precedent of evil that surpassed all other kings:

- **Idolatry:** Established idols in the high places of Jerusalem.
- **Human Sacrifice:** Murdered his own son as an offering to false deities.
- **Influence:** Led the nation into greater evil than any surrounding people.
- **Violence:** Engaged in the unprecedented murder of children and others.

Because of these provocations, God declared the removal of Judah from His sight, mirroring the earlier removal of the northern kingdom of Israel.

The Book of Ezekiel

Lesson 2-Preliminary Information

III. Chronology of Israel's Captivity and Decline

The decline of the Kingdom of Judah occurred under the reigns of Josiah's successors, characterized by "evil in the sight of the Lord," specifically idolatry, violence, and lewdness.

Timeline of the Final Kings of Judah

King	Reign Duration	Key Historical Events
Josiah	31 Years	Instituted reforms but died in battle against Pharaoh Neco at Megiddo.
Jehoahaz	3 Months (609 BC)	Captured and imprisoned in Egypt by Pharaoh Neco; a tax of 100 talents was imposed.
Jehoiakim	11 Years (598 BC)	Reigned from age 25; rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar; Temple effects were seized.
Jehoiachin	3 Months, 10 Days (587 BC)	Reigned from age 18; captured by Nebuchadnezzar and exiled to Babylon with his officials.
Zedekiah	11 Years (576 BC)	Reigned from age 21, Nebuchadnezzar's uncle. Disregarded the prophet, Jeremiah; his sons were killed before him, his eyes were gouged out, and the Temple was destroyed.

The Three Captivities

The transition into exile was not a single event but a series of raids and deportations by King Nebuchadnezzar:

1. **First Captivity (605 BC):** Occurred during the reign of King Jehoiakim; included the deportation of Daniel.
2. **Second Captivity (600/597 BC):** Occurred during the exile of King Jehoiachin; included the deportation of Ezekiel.
3. **Third Captivity (586/576 BC):** Occurred during the reign of King Zedekiah; resulted in the destruction of the city and the Temple.

IV. Prophetic Overlap and Interconnectivity

The ministry of Ezekiel is described as being "sandwiched" between the work of Daniel and Jeremiah, creating a comprehensive prophetic witness across different locations:

- **Daniel:** Located in Babylon; his captivity began in 605 BC during Jehoiakim's reign. He is noted for reading the scrolls of the prophet Jeremiah while in Babylon (Daniel 9:11).
- **Ezekiel:** Located in Babylon; his ministry and captivity began around 600 BC during Jehoiachin's exile. His writings cover judgments occurring during the invasions of Judah.
- **Jeremiah:** Located in Jerusalem; his ministry (597–586 BC) occurred primarily during the reign of King Zedekiah.

This overlap ensures that the word of God reached the exiles in Babylon (through Daniel and Ezekiel) as well as those remaining in Jerusalem (through Jeremiah) during the final years of the kingdom.

A man with a long grey beard and hair, wearing a dark robe and a striped shawl, sits on a stone ledge. He points his right hand towards the left. The background shows a desert landscape with a river, palm trees, and mountains under a dramatic, cloudy sky at sunset or sunrise. The overall tone is somber and contemplative.

Ezekiel: Preliminary Historical Information

Dr. Luther Ray Smith



The Book of Ezekiel

Judgment of Israel (Present and future)

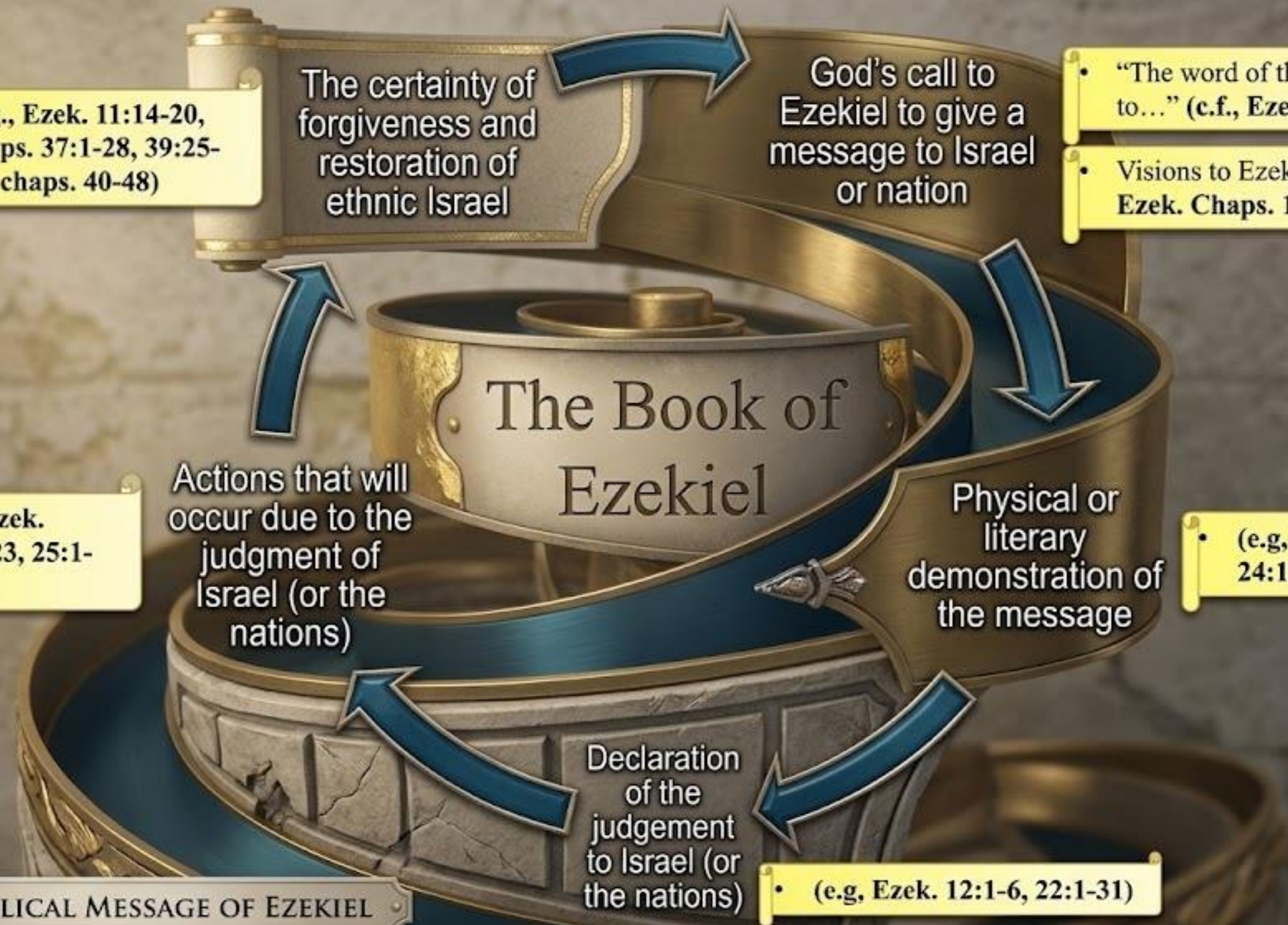
God through the
Ezekiel gave a
proclamation of
judgment based upon
the active character
and activity of Israel.

Judgment of Nations (Present and Future)

God through the
Ezekiel gave a
proclamation of
judgment based upon
the active character
and activity of the
nations activity and
conduct, and attitude
with respect to Israel's
conduct.

Future Deliverance & Kingdom (Present and Future)

God through the
Ezekiel mentioned not
only the judgment of
Israel but the
restoration of Israel as
a nation and the
kingdom of God.



(e.g., Ezek. 11:14-20, chaps. 37:1-28, 39:25-29, chaps. 40-48)

The certainty of forgiveness and restoration of ethnic Israel

God's call to Ezekiel to give a message to Israel or nation

• "The word of the Lord came to..." (c.f., Ezek 6:1).

• Visions to Ezekiel (c.f., Ezek. Chaps. 1-3).

The Book of Ezekiel

• (e.g., Ezek. 14:12-23, 25:1-17)

Actions that will occur due to the judgment of Israel (or the nations)

Physical or literary demonstration of the message

• (e.g, Ezek. 5:1-4, 24:15-27).

Declaration of the judgement to Israel (or the nations)

• (e.g, Ezek. 12:1-6, 22:1-31)



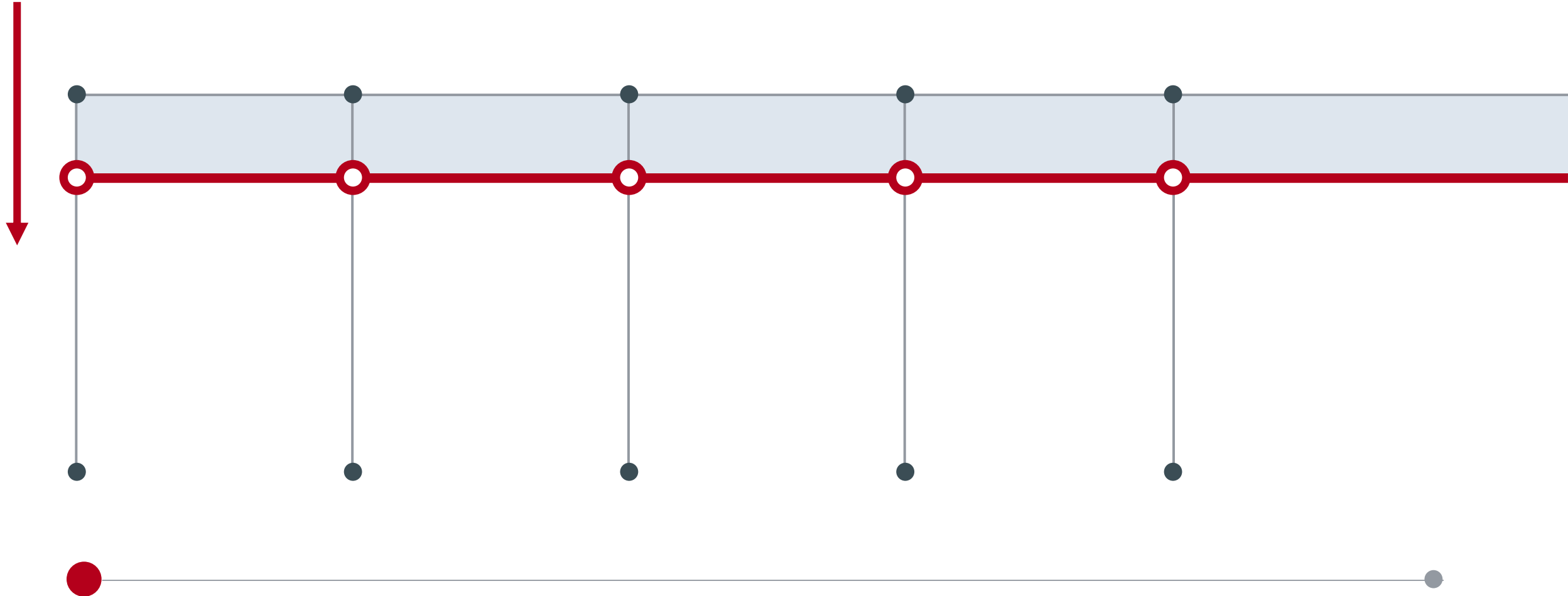
Review From Last Week

In order for us to understand some of the aspects of the book of Ezekiel it is important to understand some of the historical context that may give us a greater understanding of this book and its overall message.



Historical Timeline of Israel's Captivity

Prejudgment and Captivity



King Josiah

- King Josiah was the 16th king of Israel (i.e., Judah).
- He was the king from approximately 640 BC-609 BC, reigning in Jerusalem for 31 years.
- He was the king from approximately 640 BC-609 BC.
- King Josiah, when he was instituted king made a covenant before the LORD to walk in His statutes and commands (c.f., 2 Kings 23:1-3, 2 Chronicles 34:1)

King Josiah

- King Josiah in the 8th year of his reign tore down the idols that were on the high places. Additionally, he also removed the priests that were sacrificing to these false deities (2 Kings 23:5-15, 2 Chronicles 34:3-7).
- King Josiah, in the 18th year of his reign purged and restored the temple and the priesthood (2 Chronicles 34:9-13).
- King Josiah, removed all of the mediums and spiritualist from the land of Jerusalem (2 Kings 23:24).

King Josiah

- King Josiah reinstated the Passover for the nation (2 Kings 23:21-23, 2 Chronicles 35:1-19).

However, even though Josiah reinstated these reforms God's wrath was still destined to be poured out on the nation of Israel!

A Question: *Why* is God continuing to judge the nation?

2 Kings 23:26-27 NASB95

“...However, the LORD did not turn from the fierceness of His great wrath with which His anger burned against Judah, because of all the provocations with which *Manasseh* had provoked Him. The LORD said, “I will remove Judah also from My sight, as I have removed Israel. And I will cast off Jerusalem, this city which I have chosen, and the temple of which I said, ‘My name shall be there.’” ...”

Detour-Who was Manasseh?

- King Manasseh, who was the 14th ruler of Judah ruled for 55 years (697 BC-642 BC) (2 Kings 21:3-5).
- King Manasseh established idols in the high places in Jerusalem (2 Kings 21:3-5).
- King Manasseh murdered his son to the false deities, essentially worshipping them (2 Kings 21:6-7).
- King Manasseh influenced the nation to do more evil than any other king within Israel (2 Kings 21:9).

Detour-Who was Manasseh?

- Due to the human sacrifices of the nation of Israel their murder of their children and other was unprecedented (c.f., 2 Kings 21:16).
- Because of these actions of Manasseh judgment of Judah (i.e. Israel was inevitable (2 Kings 21:11-15)).

2 Kings 23:26-27 NASB95

“...But to the king of Judah who sent you to inquire of the LORD, thus you will say to him, ‘Thus says the LORD God of Israel regarding the words which you have heard, Because your heart was tender and you humbled yourself before God when you heard His words against this place and against its inhabitants, and because you humbled yourself before Me, tore your clothes and wept before Me, I truly have heard you,’ declares the LORD. Behold, I will gather you to your fathers and you shall be gathered to your grave in peace, so your eyes will not see all the evil which I will bring on this place and on its inhabitants.”” And they brought back word to the king.

King Josiah

- King Josiah reinstated the Passover for the nation (2 Kings 23:21-23, 2 Chronicles 35:1-19).

However, even though Josiah reinstated these reforms God's wrath was still destined to be poured out on the nation of Israel!

- King Josiah goes to battle and gets in the way of the Lord's call on Neco and ultimately loses his life on the battlefield of Megiddo (2 Chronicles 35:20-25).

A Poignant Statement

At this point in the history when it came to the rulers of Judah (i.e., Israel) the phrase that is used to justify the punishment of the Israelite people.

“Did evil in the sight of the LORD”

idolatry

violence

Lewdness
/immorality

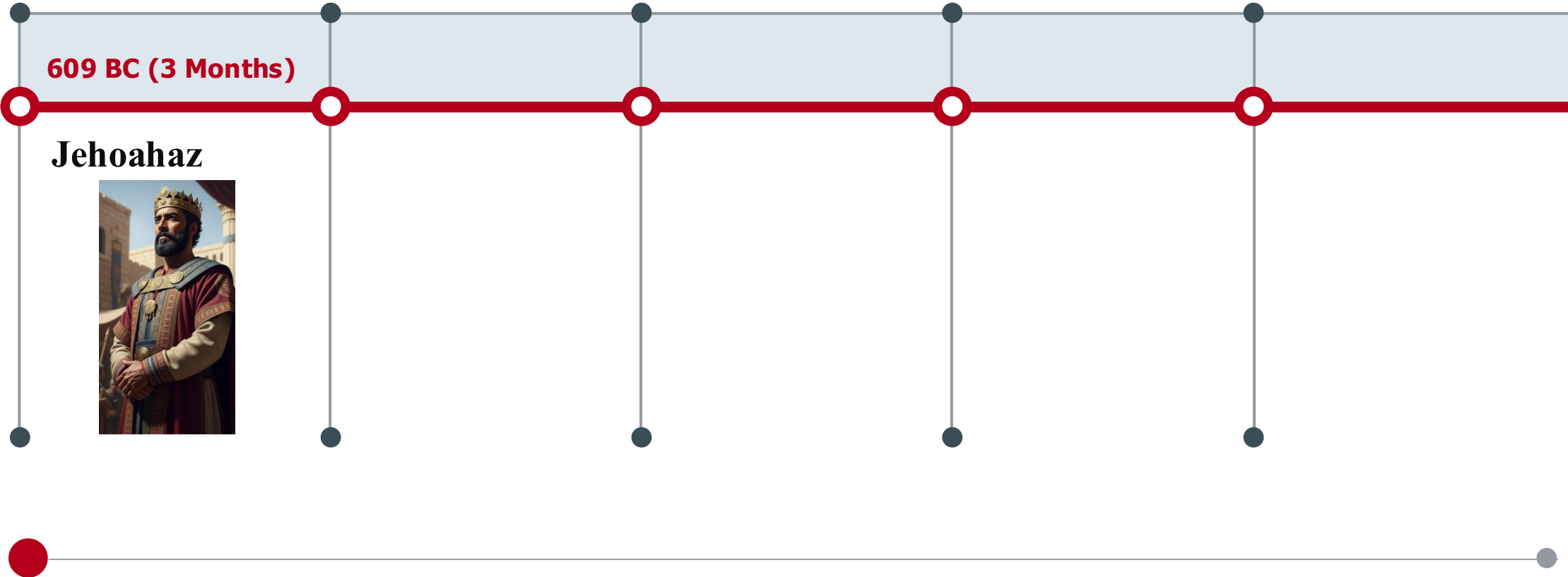
Historical Timeline of Israel's Captivity

Prejudgment and
Captivity: King Josiah
(Ruled 31 years)



609 BC (3 Months)

Jehoahaz



King Jehoahaz

- King Jehoahaz came to rule at 23 years of age (2 King 23:31).
- King Jehoahaz only ruled for three months in Jerusalem after Josiah (2 King 23:31, 2 Chronicles 36:1).
- Because he “did evil in the sight of the Lord.” Pharoah Neco from Egypt captured and imprisoned Jehoahaz in Egypt (2 Kings 23:33, 2 Chronicles 36:3-4).
- Pharoah Neco from Egypt taxed silver and gold (100 talents) from the Israelite people(2 Kings 23:33, 2 Chronicles 36:3).

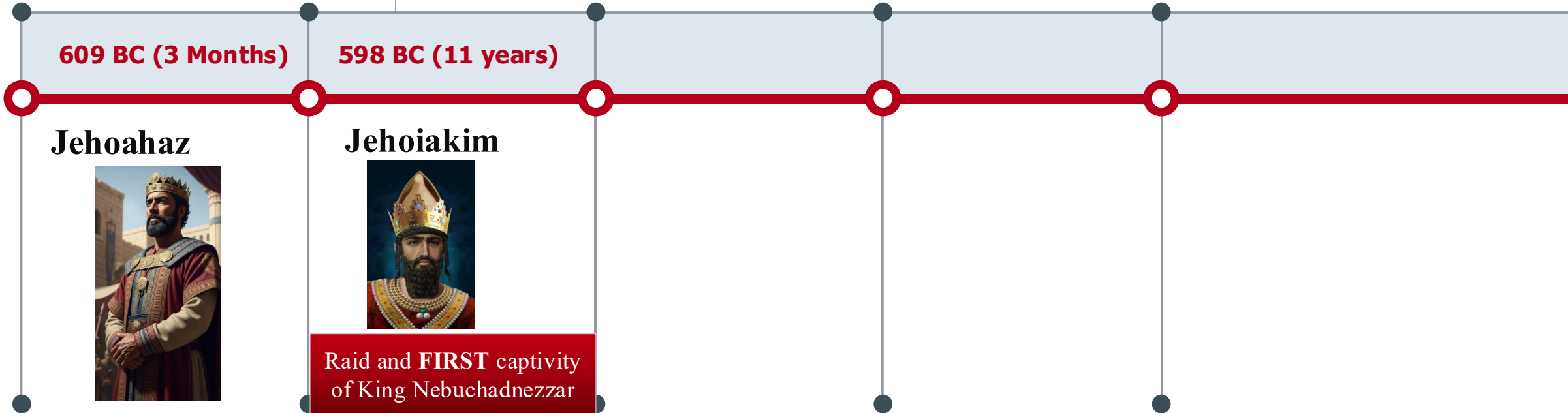
King Jehoahaz

- He made his brother king over Jerusalem and changed his name to Jehoiakim (2 Chronicles 36:1).

Historical Timeline of Israel's Captivity

Prejudgment and
Captivity: Josiah
(Ruled 31 years)

Deportation to Babylon
w/Daniel
(3rd year)
(c.f., Dan. 1:1)



King Jehoiakim

- King Jehoiakim came to rule at 25 years of age when he became ruler of Judah (2 King 23:36).
- King Jehoiakim ruled for eleven years in Jerusalem (2 King 23:31).
- King Jehoiakim “did evil in the sight of the Lord.” (2 Kings 23:37).
- King Nebuchadnezzar arises and rules over him for three years. Jehoiakim rebels against him and imprisons King Jehoiakim (2 Kings 24:1, 2 Chronicles 36:5-6).

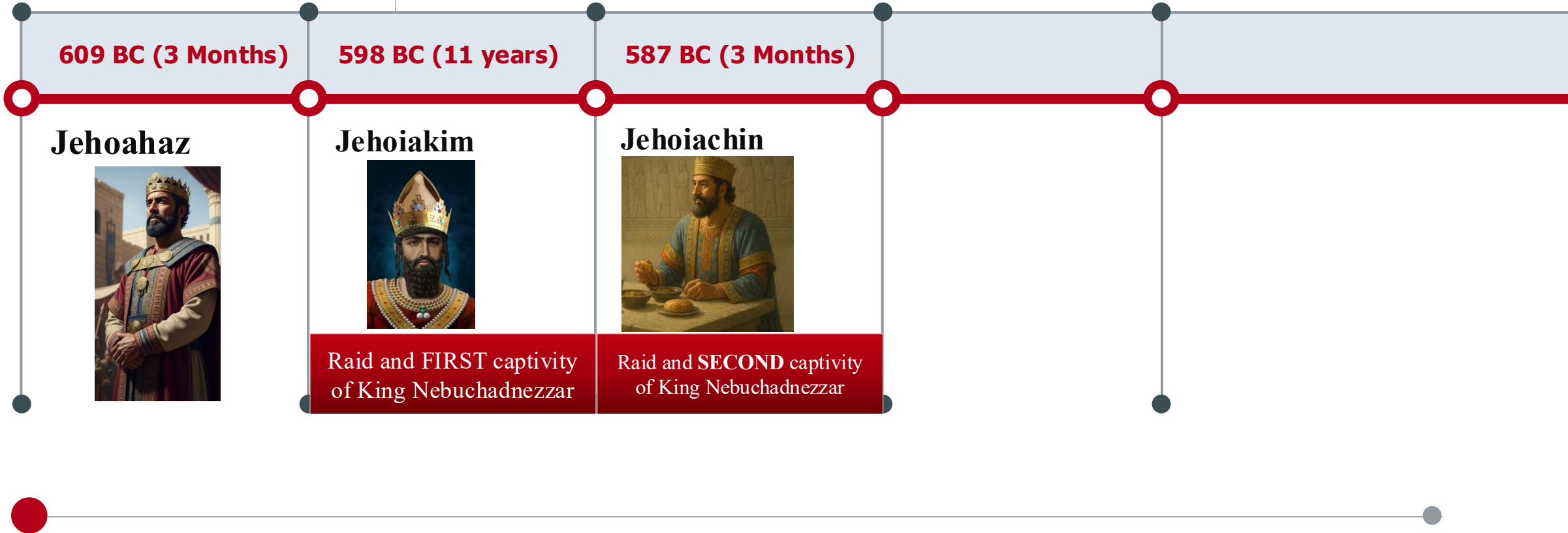
King Jehoiakim

- King Nebuchadnezzar seizes the effects from the temple of God, and God raises other armies to dispossess Jerusalem (2 Kings 24:2, 2 Chronicles 36:6).

Historical Timeline of Israel's Captivity

Deportation to Babylon
w/Daniel
(3rd year)
(c.f., Dan. 1:1)

Prejudgment and
Captivity: Josiah
(Ruled 31 years)



609 BC (3 Months)

Jehoahaz



598 BC (11 years)

Jehoiakim



Raid and **FIRST** captivity
of King Nebuchadnezzar

587 BC (3 Months)

Jehoiachin



Raid and **SECOND** captivity
of King Nebuchadnezzar

King Jehoiachin

- King Jehoiachin was 18 years of age when he came to the throne (2 King 24:8, 2 Chronicles 36:9).
- King Jehoiachin ruled for three months and ten days in Jerusalem (2 King 24:8, 2 Chronicles 36:9).
- King Jehoiachin “did evil in the sight of the Lord.” (2 King 24:9, 2 Chronicles 36:9).
- King Nebuchadnezzar arises and captures him and brings him to Babylon (2 Kings 24:15, 2 Chronicles 36:10).

King Jehoiachin

- All of King Jehoiachin man and officials and leaders were taken into Babylon (2 King 24:16).

Historical Timeline of Israel's Captivity

Prejudgment and
Captivity: Josiah
(Ruled 31 years)

Deportation to Babylon
w/Daniel
(3rd year)
(c.f., Dan. 1:1)

Exiled in Babylon
w/Ezekiel
(5th year)
(c.f., Ezek. 1:1)

609 BC (3 Months)

598 BC (11 years)

587 BC (3 Months)

Jehoahaz



Jehoiakim



Raid and **FIRST** captivity
of King Nebuchadnezzar

Jehoiachin



Raid and **SECOND** captivity
of King Nebuchadnezzar

Zedekiah

King Zedekiah

- King Zedekiah, who was Nebuchadnezzar's uncle (Mattaniah) was 21 years of age when he came to the throne of Judah (2 King 24:17, 2 Chronicles 36:11).
- King Zedekiah ruled for 11 years in Jerusalem (2 King 24:18, 2 Chronicles 36:11).
- King Zedekiah "did evil in the sight of the Lord." (2 King 24:19, 2 Chronicles 36:12).
- King Zedekiah did not recognize the word of God through the prophet Jeremiah (2 Chronicles 36:12).

King Zedekiah

- King Nebuchadnezzar in the ninth year of King Zedekiah's reign entered into Jerusalem, destroys the city and the temple of God (2 King 25:8-18, 2 Chronicles 36:15-19).
- King Zedekiah's sons are killed before him, and his eyes are gouged out (2 King 25:7).

Historical Timeline of Israel's Captivity

Prejudgment and Captivity: Josiah (Ruled 31 years)

Deportation to Babylon w/Daniel (3rd year) (c.f., Dan. 1:1)

Exiled in Babylon w/Ezekiel (5th year) (c.f., Ezek. 1:1)

609 BC (3 Months)

598 BC (11 years)

587 BC (3 Months)

576 BC (11 years)

Jehoahaz



Jehoiakim



Raid and FIRST captivity of King Nebuchadnezzar

Jehoiachin



Raid and SECOND captivity of King Nebuchadnezzar

Zedekiah



Raid and THIRD captivity of King Nebuchadnezzar

The prophet Jeremiah

Overlap W/Other Sources

- The mentioning of King Jehoiakim (concerning the book of Daniel).

Timeline of Other Sources

Daniel's captivity In Babylon during the time of King Jehoiakim's reign



605 BC

A horizontal grey bar with a gradient from light to dark grey. The text '605 BC' is centered on the bar. A vertical line with a small diamond at the top extends from the center of the bar to the text 'Daniel's captivity In Babylon during the time of King Jehoiakim's reign' above it.

Overlap W/Other Sources

- The mentioning of King Jehoiakim (concerning the book of Daniel).
- The ministry of Ezekiel in Babylon during King Jehoiachin's exile (concerning the book of Ezekiel).

Overlap W/Other Sources

Daniel's captivity In Babylon during the time of King
Jehoiakim's reign



Ezekiel's captivity In Babylon during the time of King
Jehoiachin's exile

Overlap W/Other Sources

- The mentioning of King Jehoiakim (concerning the book of Daniel).
- The ministry of Ezekiel in Babylon during King Jehoiachin's exile (concerning the book of Ezekiel).
- The ministry of Jeremiah in Jerusalem during King Zedekiah rule (concerning the book of Jeremiah).

Overlap W/Other Sources

Daniel's captivity In Babylon during
the time of King Jehoiakim's reign

Jeremiah's ministry in Jerusalem during
the time of King Zedekiah's reign

605 BC

600 BC

597-586 BC

Ezekiel's captivity In Babylon during
the time of King Jehoiachin's exile

Overlap W/Other Sources

- The reading of Jeremiah the prophet by Daniel.

Overlap W/Other Sources

Daniel's captivity In
Babylon during the time of
King Jehoiakim's reign

605 BC

600 BC

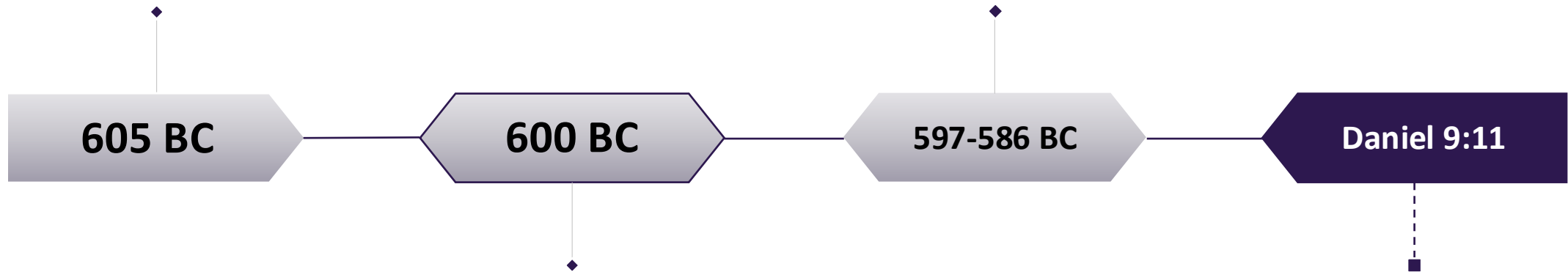
Ezekiel's captivity In
Babylon during the time of
King Jehoiachin's exile

Jeremiah's ministry in
Jerusalem during the time of
King Zedekiah's reign

597-586 BC

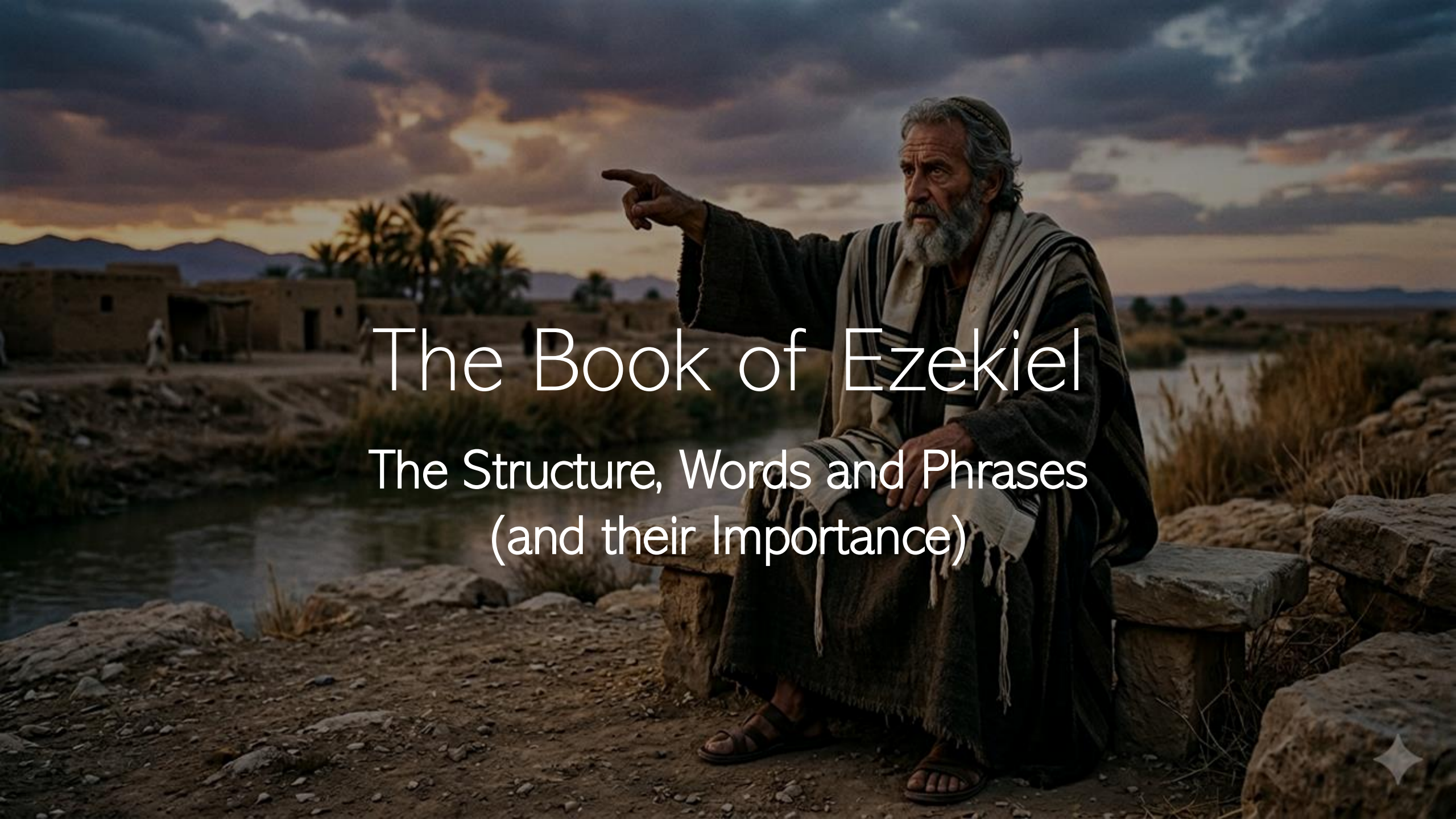
Daniel 9:11

The scroll of Jeremiah read
by Daniel in Babylon.



Sum Up

- The book of Ezekiel was written during the time of the invasions of Judah and Jerusalem.
- The ministry of Israel is “sandwiched” between Daniel’s captivity and Jeremiah’s ministry.
- Ezekiel covers not only the judgments of Israel and the lands presently from the time of Ezekiel, but the judgements to come.

A man with a long grey beard and hair, wearing a dark robe and a striped shawl, sits on a stone ledge. He points his right hand towards the left. The background shows a sunset over a river with some buildings and palm trees in the distance. The sky is filled with dramatic, colorful clouds.

The Book of Ezekiel

The Structure, Words and Phrases (and their Importance)

