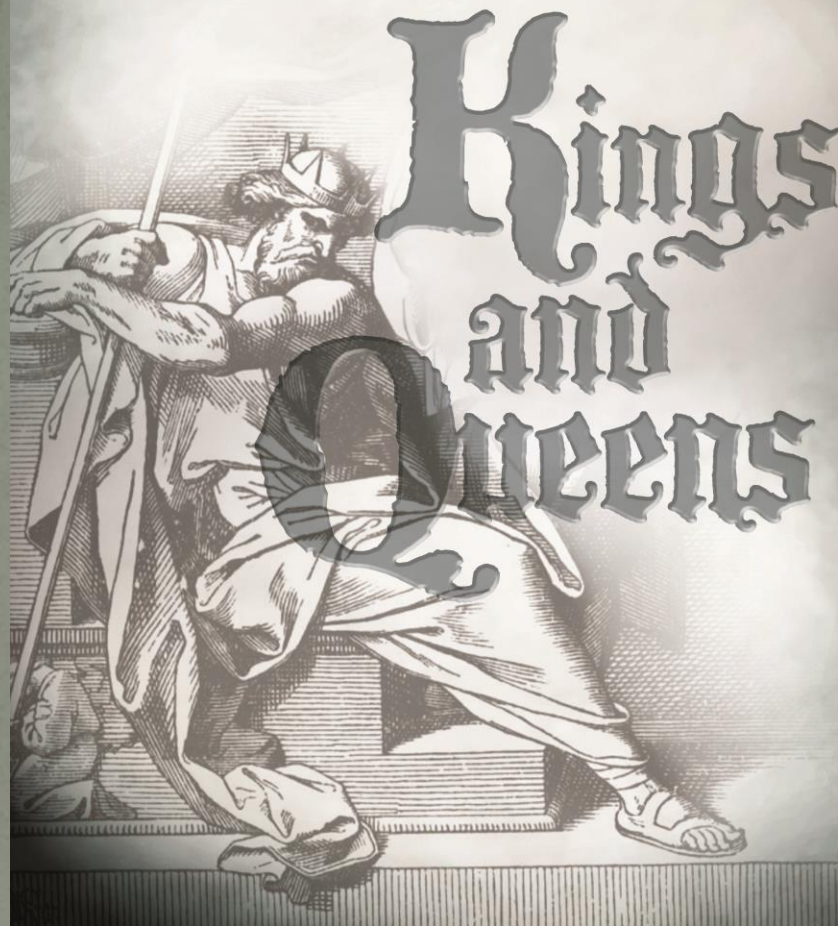


The Rise and Fall of Israel's Monarchs



<http://goodnewsbiblestudies.com>

The Kings of Judah

Selected Scriptures

“Indeed this city has been to Me a provocation of My anger and My wrath from the day that they built it, even to this day, so that it should be removed from before My face, because of all the evil of the sons of Israel and the sons of Judah which they have done to provoke Me to anger—they, their kings, their leaders, their priests, their prophets, the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. They have turned their back to Me and not their face; though I taught them, teaching again and again, they would not listen and receive instruction. But they put their detestable things in the house which is called by My name, to defile it.” (Jeremiah 32:31-34)

The Kings of Judah

King Jotham
(750-735 B.C.)

1. King Jotham reigned over the Southern Kingdom of Judah for 16 year
 - He co-reigned with his father Uzziah for about 11 years – a good portion of that was when Uzziah was incapacitated during the last years of his life due to leprosy.
 - He was sole ruler for about 4 years
 - He also co-reigned with his son (Ahaz) but that is not included in the recorded 16 year reign mentioned in II Kings 15:33.

2. “He did what was right in the sight of the Lord; he did according to all that his father Uzziah had done. Only the high places were not taken away; the people still sacrificed and burned incense on the high places. He built the upper gate of the house of the Lord.” (II Kings 15:34-35)

- Jotham was considered a good king and he pretty much followed in the spiritual footsteps of his father Uzziah.
- It was the people of Judah who continued in their improper worship by offering sacrifices and burning incense at locations other than the Temple. In most cases these sacrifices that they were making were made to false gods or idols.
- King Jotham continued with the fortification of the Temple and outer walls of the city of Jerusalem as well as fortifying the outlying areas in the hills and forests.

3. During his reign King Jotham was at war with the Ammonites and he successfully defeated them. (II Chronicles 27:5)
4. There is nothing negative said about King Jotham and he ended his life and reign with no apparent regret; “So Jotham became mighty because he ordered his ways before the Lord his God. Now the rest of the acts of Jotham, even all his wars and his acts, behold, they are written in the Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah. He was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. And Jotham slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the city of David; and Ahaz his son became king in his place.” (II Chronicles 27:6-9)

The Kings of Judah

King Ahaz
(732-715 B.C.)

1. King Ahaz reigned over the Southern Kingdom of Judah for 16 year
2. Ahaz was twenty years old when he became king, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem; and he did not do right in the sight of the Lord as David his father had done. But he walked in the ways of the kings of Israel; **he also made molten images for the Baal's.** Moreover, **he burned incense** in the valley of Ben-hinnom and **burned his sons in fire,** according to the abominations of the nations whom the Lord had driven out before the sons of Israel. **He sacrificed and burned incense** on the high places, on the hills and under every green tree. (II Chronicles 28:1-4)

- King Ahaz reigned over the Southern Kingdom of Judah for 16 year
 - 1) He made idols in the form of the pagan god Baal
 - 2) He offered sacrifices to these pagan gods and he even made human sacrifices (including his own sons) to these pagan gods
- He followed the evil practices of the kings of the Northern Kingdom of Israel

3. “Wherefore, the Lord his God delivered him into the hand of the king of Aram; and they defeated him and carried away from him a great number of captives and brought them to Damascus. And he was also delivered into the hand of the king of Israel, who inflicted him with heavy casualties.”
(II Chronicles 28:5)

- His first major defeat came at the hands of the Arameans
- His second major defeat came at the hands of the armies of Israel

4. Things went from bad to worse as King Ahaz made an *alliance* with the king of Assyria (Tiglath-Pileser III) that brought about his demise. (II Chronicles 28:16-21)
5. Ahaz *robbed* from the Temple, continued with his sacrifices to *false* gods and provoked the *anger* of the Lord against him. Upon his death he was buried in Jerusalem but not in the *tomb* of the kings. (II Chronicles 28:22-27)

The Kings of Judah

King Hezekiah

(715-686 B.C.)

1. King Hezekiah reigned over the Southern Kingdom of Judah for 29 year
 - “Now it came about ~~in~~ the third year of Hoshea, the son of Elah king of Israel that Hezekiah the son of Ahaz king of Judah became king.” (II Kings 18:1)
 - Hezekiah began his reign during the third year of King Hoshea of the Northern Kingdom of Israel. It would be during the reign of King Hoshea that the Northern Kingdom of Israel is completely defeated by the Assyrians in 722 B.C.
 - “He was ~~at~~ twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem; and his mother’s name was Abi the daughter of Zechariah.” (II Kings 18:2)

2. The prophets *Micah* and *Isaiah* began their ministry during the reign of Uzziah (Hezekiah's great-grandfather), continued through the reign of Jotham and Ahaz, and completed their ministry during the reign of Hezekiah.

3. Hezekiah was considered as one of the good kings of Judah
- “He did right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his father David had done.” (II Kings 18:3)
 - “He removed the high places and broke down the sacred pillars and cut down the Asherah. He also broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made, for until those days the sons of Israel burned incense to it; and it was called Nehushtan.” (II Kings 18:4)
 - “He trusted in the Lord, the God of Israel; so that after him there was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor among those who were before him. For he clung to the Lord; he did not depart from following Him, but kept His commandments, which the Lord had commanded Moses.” (II Kings 18:5-6)
 - There were three other kings who were noted with this same commendation as Hezekiah and they were; Asa, Jehoshaphat, Josiah (Hezekiah’s great grandson).

4. Hezekiah's Accomplishments:

- Hezekiah was successful in defeating the Philistines (II Kings 18:8)
- Hezekiah stood up to the Assyrian's (who had or were in the process of conquering the entire Northern Kingdom of Israel) and completely opposed them in their attempted bid to take over all of the Kingdom of Judah.

“Now in the fourth year of King Hezekiah, which was the seventh year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel, Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up against Samaria and besieged it. At the end of three years they captured it; in the sixth year of Hezekiah, which was the ninth year of Hoshea king of Israel, Samaria was captured. Then the king of Assyria carried Israel away into exile to Assyria, and put them in Halah and on the Habor, the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes, because they did not obey the voice of the Lord their God, but transgressed His covenant, even all that Moses the servant of the Lord commanded; they would neither listen nor do it.” (II Kings 18:9-12)

“Then Rabshakeh stood and cried with a loud voice in Judean, saying, hear the word of the great king, the king of Assyria. **Thus says the king, do not let Hezekiah deceive you, for he will not be able to deliver you from my hand; nor let Hezekiah make you trust in the Lord, saying, the Lord will surely deliver us, and this city will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria.”** (II Kings 18:28-30)

And when King Hezekiah heard it, he tore his clothes, covered himself with sackcloth and entered the house of the Lord. Then he sent Eliakim who was over the household with Shebna the scribe and the elders of the priests, covered with sackcloth, to Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz. They said to him, thus says Hezekiah, ‘This day is a day of distress, rebuke, and rejection; for children have come to birth and there is no strength to deliver. Perhaps the Lord your God will hear all the words of Rabshakeh, whom his master the king of Assyria has sent to reproach the living God, and will rebuke the words which the Lord your God has heard. Therefore, offer a prayer for the remnant that is left’ (II Kings 19:1-4)

Hezekiah's prayer and his
consultation with Isaiah the
prophet

“Then Hezekiah took the letter from the hand of the messengers and read it, and he went up to the house of the Lord and spread it out before the Lord. Hezekiah prayed before the Lord and said, O Lord, the God of Israel, who are enthroned above the cherubim, You are the God, You alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth. Incline Your ear, O Lord, and hear; open Your eyes, O Lord, and see; and listen to the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to reproach the living God. Truly, O Lord, the kings of Assyria have devastated the nations and their lands and have cast their gods into the fire, for they were not gods but the work of men’s hands, wood and stone. So they have destroyed them. Now, O Lord our God, I pray, deliver us from his hand that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You alone, O Lord, are God. (II Kings 19:14-19)

- 2) “Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah saying, thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, because you have prayed to Me about Sennacherib king of Assyria, I have heard you.” (II Kings 19:20)
- 3) “Then this shall be the sign for you: You will eat this year what grows of itself, in the second year what springs from the same, and in the third year sow, reap, plant vineyards, and eat their fruit. The surviving remnant of the house of Judah will again take root downward and bear fruit upward. For out of Jerusalem will go forth a remnant, and out of Mount Zion survivors. The zeal of the Lord will perform this.” (II Kings 19:29-31)

- 4) “Therefore thus says the Lord concerning the king of Assyria, he will not come to this city or shoot an arrow there; and he will not come before it with a shield or throw up a siege ramp against it. By the way that he came, by the same he will return, and he shall not come to this city, declares the Lord. For I will defend this city to save it for My own sake and for My servant David’s sake.” (II Kings 19:32-34)
- 5) “Then it happened that night that the angel of the Lord went out and struck 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians; and when men rose early in the morning, behold, all of them were dead. So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and returned home, and lived at Nineveh. (II Kings 19:35-36)

5. Hezekiah becomes deathly ill (II Kings 20:1-11)

- ¶ In those days Hezekiah became mortally ill. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came to him and said to him thus says the Lord, set your house in order, for you shall die and not live.” (II Kings 20:1)
- This illness (probably some type of cancer, ulcer or boil) prompted Hezekiah to pray to the Lord and ask for healing and the Lord not only granted his request but gave him an additional 15 years to live. (II Kings 2:4-6)

- 1) Hezekiah fervently prayed to the Lord with an appeal that expressed his favorable position with the Lord; “Remember now, O Lord, I beseech You, ¶How I have walked before You in truth and with a whole heart and have done what is good in Your sight. And Hezekiah wept bitterly. (II Kings 20:3)
- 2) “Return and say to ¶Hezekiah the leader of My people, “Thus says the Lord, the God of your father David, I have heard your prayer, ¶I have seen your tears; behold, I will heal you. On the third day you shall go up to the house of the Lord. I will add fifteen years to your life, and I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city for My own sake and for My servant David’s sake.” (II Kings 20:5-6)

6. Hezekiah's pride (II Kings 20:12-21, Isaiah 39, II Chronicles 32:25-33)

- Sometime after Hezekiah's recovery from his illness he became prideful in his own personal accomplishments and the successes of the kingdom.
- In an effort to shore up his defenses against the continual Assyrian attacks, Hezekiah forms a loose alliance with the Babylonians. Part of that alliance involves a meeting in which Hezekiah shows off the wealth of the kingdom which at the very least was a prideful move, but it also invites a future invasion by the Babylonians who will conquer the Southern Kingdom and take those treasures.

7. Hezekiah repents of his actions but that moment of weakness and compromise (II Kings 20:12-13) brings about serious consequences. (II Kings 20:17-18)
8. Hezekiah passes away and will be laid to rest with honor (II Chronicles 32:32-33)

The Kings of Judah

King Manasseh

(697-642 B.C.)

1. King Manasseh reigned over the Southern Kingdom of Judah for **55** years
 - Manasseh was actually **12 years old** when he began his reign but 11 of those years he co-reigned with his father Hezekiah.
 - *Isaiah* continued his ministry during this time and also the prophet *Nahum* spoke to the people of Judah announcing the eventual judgment and subsequent fall of Nineveh (The Assyrians) during the reign of Manasseh.
2. Instead of following in his father's (Hezekiah) footsteps, Manasseh will reinstitute the worship of pagan gods just like his grandfather Ahaz.

3. Manasseh's wickedness was probably the most vile of all the kings (II Kings 21:1-9):
- He rebuilt the high places to allow free worship to the Canaanite gods
 - He made or allowed to be made those objects, idols and statues that honored the pagan gods of Baal and Asherah.
 - He even built pagan idols and statues and allowed them to be placed in the courtyard of the temple which was reserved for the worship of the One True God.
 - He practiced witchcraft, participated in human sacrifices and offered his son to the pagan god Molech.
 - He completely disregarded the Law of Moses and led the people of God away from those commandments.

4. The prophet Isaiah spoke against these atrocities which (according to Jewish tradition) infuriated Manasseh so much that he had him sawed in two. (Heb. 11:37)
5. Manasseh was taken captive by the king of Assyria and deported to Babylon where he repents and is allowed to return to Jerusalem. (II Chron. 33:12-18)
6. Manasseh makes changes but it's too little too late (II Chronicles 33:12-20)

The Kings of Judah

King Amon
(642-640 B.C.)

1. King Amon reigned over the Southern Kingdom of Judah for 2 years
2. Instead of following in his father's (Hezekiah) footsteps, Manasseh will reinstitute the worship of pagan gods just like his grandfather Ahaz.

3. There is nothing good noted about King Amon in the Scriptures and all we are told is that he completely forsook the Lord:
 - “He did evil in the sight of the Lord as Manasseh his father had done, and Amon sacrificed to all the carved images which his father Manasseh had made, and he served them.” (II Chronicles 33:22)
 - “Moreover, he did not humble himself before the Lord as his father Manasseh had done, but Amon multiplied guilt.” (II Chronicles 33:23)
4. King Amon was assassinated by some of his ranking leaders and he was not buried with the rest of the kings of Judah. (II Kings 21:23-26)

The Kings of Judah

King Josiah
(640-609)

1. King Josiah reigned over the Southern Kingdom of Judah for 31 years
 - He was 8 years old when he began his reign
 - He was noted as one of the Kingdom of Judah's best kings
 - During his reign the prophet Jeremiah will begin his ministry as the Lord's primary spokesman to the people of the Southern Kingdom. In addition, the prophet Zephaniah will also speak to the people of Judah about future judgment.
 - During his reign; Babylon will replace Assyria as the dominant world Empire

“Josiah was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem; and his mother’s name was Jedidah the daughter of Adaiah of Bozkath. He did right in the sight of the Lord and walked in all the way of his father David, nor did he turn aside to the right or to the left.” (II Kings 2:1-2)

3. Josiah never deviated from his sincere wholehearted devotion to the Lord

- He began to seek after the Lord at the age of 16 and he began his religious reforms at the age of 20.

1) “For in the **eighth year of his reign** while he was still a youth, **he began to seek the God of his father David**” (II Chronicles 34:3a)

2) “And in the **twelfth year he began to purge** Judah and Jerusalem of the high places, the Asherim, the carved images and the molten images.” (34:3b)

3. Josiah never deviated from his sincere wholehearted *devotion* to the Lord
- Josiah's passion was so strong that he completely *destroyed* anything associated with pagan worship throughout the Kingdom of Judah (including those lands in the north).
 - During Josiah's reign the temple fell into *disrepair* and he put a team together to restore and refurbish those areas that had deteriorated. (II Chron. 34:8-13)

4. At some point during the repair of the temple; the High Priest (Hilkiah) discovers the Book of the Law. (II Chronicles 34:14-30)
- It may have been just the book of Deuteronomy or possibly the entire Pentateuch (First 5 Books of the Bible)
 - It's amazing how far the people and the kings (more specifically Manasseh and Amon) had drifted from the true worship of Jehovah.
 - King Josiah reads the Book of the Covenant (Law) that had been found and does so in the presence of everyone with the intent of following its instructions.

5. Josiah removed idolatry from the land and re-instituted true worship of the Lord
6. “Josiah removed all the abominations from all the lands belonging to the sons of Israel, and made all who were present in Israel to serve the Lord their God. Throughout his lifetime they did not turn from following the Lord God of their fathers.” (II Chronicles 34:33)
7. Josiah reinstitutes the Passover feast (II Kings 23:21-23)
 - It was a very important feast that commemorated their deliverance from Egyptian bondage and the redemption of the Lord’s people (The Israelites).
 - This was their oldest feast and it had not been observed since the days of Samuel

8. “Moreover, Josiah removed the mediums and the spiritists and the teraphim and the idols and all the abominations that were seen in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem that he might confirm the words of the law which were written in the book that Hilkiah the priest found in the house of the Lord. **Before him 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.**” (II Kings 23:24-25)
9. The **reforms** established by Josiah go a long way to **prepared** the Priests to help guide the people of Israel during their days of future captivity, the days of rebuilding the temple and especially the dark days when the voice of the prophets go **silent**.

10. Josiah dies in battle

- After the fall of Nineveh (capital of the Assyrian Empire) in 612 B.C. the Assyrians were at their weakest point and the Babylonians were beginning to make a move in to take over their territory.
 - 1) In the year 609 B.C. the Egyptians planned to come to the aid of the Assyrians in the hopes of keeping the Babylonians from gaining control of their lands.
 - 2) In route to Carchemish (where the battle between Egypt, Assyria and Babylon was to take place), Pharaoh Neco of Egypt will be confronted by Joash (near Megiddo) in battle and Joash is fatally wounded. (II Chron. 35:20-23)

10. Josiah dies in *battle*

- Joash is taken back to Jerusalem where he succumbs to his wounds and eventually dies. He is given a *royal* burial in the tombs of his fathers.
(Vs. 24-27)
- Josiah never faltered from his wholehearted devotion to the Lord and the reforms made by Josiah remained his greatest *legacy*.

The Kings of Judah

King Jehoahaz
(609 B.C.)

1. King Jehoahaz reigned over the Southern Kingdom of Judah for 3 months
 - He was Josiah's middle son (age wise) and was chosen by the people to succeed Josiah to rule over the Southern Kingdom of Judah.
 - He was 23 years old when he began his reign and he is noted for doing evil in the sight of the Lord (II Kings 23:32)
2. He is deposed by Pharaoh Neco of Egypt (who temporarily controlled Judah after the death of Josiah) and is replaced by his brother Jehoiakim - Eliakim (II Kings 23:34)

The Kings of Judah

King Jehoiakim
(609-598 B.C.)

1. King Jehoiakim reigned over the Southern Kingdom of Judah for 11 years
 - He was actually the oldest son of King Josiah
 - Initially he was a puppet of the Pharaoh Neco and actually paid tribute (taxes) to him in exchange for protection from Egypt.
2. He is also noted for doing evil in the sight of the Lord (II Kings 23:37)
3. In 605 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar defeats the Egyptians at the battle of Carchemish where Babylon becomes the dominant empire of the Near East.

4. Later in that same year (605 B.C.) Nebuchadnezzar invades the lands of Judah and takes some of the key leaders and others (including Daniel the prophet) back to Babylon. (Daniel 1:1-3)
5. Jehoiakim initially submits to Nebuchadnezzar's rule for 3 years and then revolts in the hopes of gaining military aid from Egypt but that failed.
6. Habakkuk and Jeremiah were the prophet during this time
7. Jehoiakim dies in 598 B.C. and is not given a royal burial (Jeremiah 22:18-19)

The Kings of Judah

King Jehoiachin

1. King Jehoiachin reigned over the Southern Kingdom of Judah for 3 months
 - He was 18 years old when he began his reign
 - He is noted for doing evil in the sight of the Lord (II Kings 24:9)
 - He was the son of Jehoiakim

2. Jehoiachin surrendered to Nebuchadnezzar; and he along with the queen, other nobles, attendees and officials were deported to Babylon.
 - It was during this time that Nebuchadnezzar took all of the treasures of the temple and brought them back to Babylon.
 - Nebuchadnezzar took the soldiers, craftsman, artisans and others (including the prophet Ezekiel), about 10,000 in all back to Babylon. (II Kings 24:16)
3. None of Jehoiachin's sons would sit on the throne (Jeremiah 22:30) and his uncle Mattaniah (Zedekiah) will be appointed by Nebuchadnezzar to rule in his place.

The Kings of Judah

King Zedekiah

(597-586 B.C.)

1. King Zedekiah reigned over the Southern Kingdom of Judah for 11 years
 - He was the youngest of Josiah's three sons who reigned as King of Judah and began his reign at the age of 21.
 - He was personally appointed by Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon

2. He was noted for doing evil in the sight of the Lord (II Kings 24:19)
3. Initially he submitted to the authority of Nebuchadnezzar but after continual pressure from the remaining nationalist at home in the land of Judah (Jeremiah 37-38), he rebelled and made alliances with Pharaoh Hophra of Egypt. This brought on the full wrath of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon.

4. “Now in the ninth year of his reign, on the tenth day of the tenth month, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came, he and all his army, against Jerusalem, camped against it and built a siege wall all around it. **So the city was under siege until the eleventh year of King Zedekiah.** On the ninth day of the fourth month **the famine was so severe in the city that there was no food for the people of the land.**” (II Kings 25:1-3)

- The siege of Jerusalem by the Babylonians began in 588 B.C.
- The siege was so severe that they basically starved the people of Jerusalem and eventually in 586 B.C. (Zedekiah's 11th year) Nebuchadnezzar invaded the city and it was eventually destroyed.

5. Nebuchadnezzar captures Zedekiah (who had fled the city), kills all of his sons, rips his eyes out, places him in shackles and deports him to Babylon. (II Kings 25:4-7)
6. Jerusalem is burned, the Temple is destroyed and most all the remaining leaders who were not already deported to Babylon, or who had chosen to flee to Egypt are executed. (II Kings 25:8-26)

The Kings of Judah

Closing Remarks

1. It is believed that Jeremiah fled to Egypt and was not deported to Babylon
2. The royal lineage does not end with the death of Zedekiah's sons as Jehoiachin (Zedekiah's nephew and Josiah's grandson) will be shown favor by a later Babylonian ruler (Evil-Merodach) who frees him from prison. Some conclude that Jehoiachin repented and followed the Lord (II Kings 25:27-30). Thus the royal lineage continues all the way to **Jesus the Messiah and King.**

3. The Babylonian captivity lasts 70 years and during that time *Daniel* and *Ezekiel* will declare the Word of the Lord to help provide hope to the people in exile.
4. At the conclusion of Babylonian captivity the Jews will be permitted to return with the permission of Cyrus of Persia and this effort will be led by Zerubbabel, Ezra and Nehemiah. The prophets who are active during the period after exile were Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi and the story continues.....