

HABAKKUK

UNDERSTANDING THE BOTTOM LINE

THE PROPHETS SPEAK OF JESUS

Approximately 60 years after Isaiah and Hezekiah . . .

EMPIRES

KINGS OF JUDAH

PROPHETS

ASSYRIAN

BABYLONIAN

JOSIAH

ZEPHANIAH

NAHUM

Jehoahaz

JEHOIAKIM

HABAKKUK

Jehoiachin

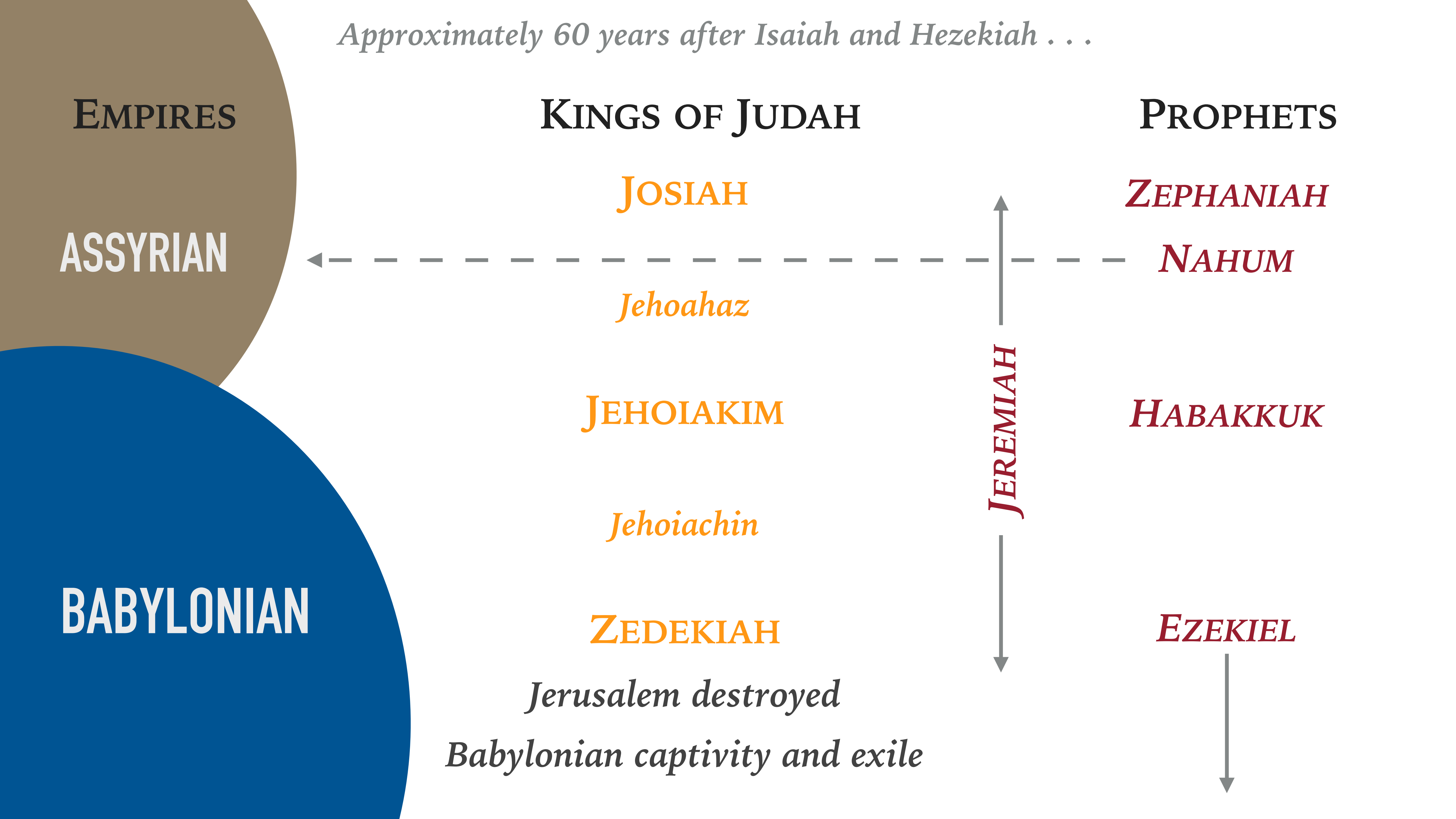
JEREMIAH

ZEDEKIAH

EZEKIEL

Jerusalem destroyed

Babylonian captivity and exile



WHAT IN THE WORLD IS GOING ON?

- ▶ Habakkuk laments the sinful behavior of the people and egregious manner in which the Law of God is ignored without concern for the consequences and with disregard of previous warnings.
- ▶ When God revealed to Habakkuk that He is bringing the Babylonians in judgment against His people, Habakkuk did not plead for reprieve or call the people to repent; he knew that the time to do so had expired; judgment was irrevocable. He couldn't, however, understand how a holy God would choose to use a people who were so godless.

- ▶ When God replies, he instructs Habakkuk to transcribe His answer so that it is legible, documentable, and transferable.

*“Write My answer plainly on tablets,
so that a runner can carry the correct message to others.*

This vision is for a future time.

It describes the end, and it will be fulfilled.

*If it seems slow in coming, wait patiently,
for it will surely take place.*

It will not be delayed.

- ▶ Human history is moving on a continuum toward an end which God himself has predetermined: *“the Day of the LORD”*.

- ▶ Nations will always be in conflict, pursuing regional and global influence, wealth, and dominance. The fact that God will use their agendas to discipline other nations is not an affirmation, for those nations will themselves (in Habakkuk's case, the Babylonians) be held accountable for their actions and judged by God.
- ▶ Within the macro agenda of nations is the micro context of personal agendas and to these God also applies His standards and exercises accountability. He warns that it is foolish to pursue wealth as security for your family; it is foolish to trust in your own work and ingenuity. Nations, families, and individuals will all "*drink from the cup of the Lord's judgment.*"

THE RIGHTEOUS WILL LIVE BY FAITH.

- ▶ Here is God's "gold standard"—the bottom line for every person in every era of history: *“but the righteous will live by faith”* (2.4).

Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for.

By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him.

► This “bottom line” is referenced three times in the New Testament:

(1) The gospel presents the only way that one can *accountably* be right with God: *righteous* through faith in Jesus Christ.

For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: “The righteous will live by faith.”

ROMANS 1.17

The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands. Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains on them.

JOHN 3.35-36

(2) This bottom line also determines the only life agenda that has value to God: *the righteous shall live by faith.*

Clearly no one who relies on the law is justified before God, because “the righteous will live by faith.”

GALATIANS 3.11

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

GALATIANS 2.20

(3) This bottom line “life agenda” of “righteous by faith” must be our tenacious perspective—a life lived toward the return of Jesus Christ, regardless of whatever is happening around us.

*For, “In just a little while, he who is coming will come and will not delay.”
And, “But my righteous one will live by faith. And I take no pleasure in the one who shrinks back.”*

HEBREWS 10.38

But you, dear friends, by building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in God’s love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life.

JUDE 20-21

Even though the fig trees have no blossoms,
and there are no grapes on the vines;
even though the olive crop fails,
and the fields lie empty and barren;
even though the flocks die in the fields,
and the cattle barns are empty—

Yet I will rejoice in the LORD!

I will be joyful in the God of my salvation!
The Sovereign LORD is my strength!
He makes me as surefooted as a deer,
able to tread upon the heights.

(For the choir director: This prayer is to be accompanied by stringed instruments.)