

Episode 2: The Power of the Word

II-1 Near East: 586 BCE

The southern tribes, including Judah, Benjamin, and part of the Levites, saw their monarchy destroyed, their beloved land ravished by the Babylonians and their own neighbors, the city of Jerusalem devastated, and the great four-hundred--year-old temple of Solomon burnt to the ground.

Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians continued the Assyrian policy of mass deportations of conquered peoples, but the Babylonians tended to keep the exiled populations together as work-groups to develop the agricultural hinterlands of the empire.

Forcibly relocated to Babylonia in groups, this remnant of Israel had little hope of preserving its national, religious, and ethnic identity. And yet, they did, thanks to the writings that they carried off to exile.

- Point out the following places of interest:
 - Jerusalem
 - Babylon
 - Extent of the Babylonian Empire
 - Ur and Haran (vis a vis Abraham)
- Click the Map Legend tab at the bottom, to show the distances involved on the mileage scale. Click again to make the Map Legend go away.
- Click the Modern View tab at the bottom to show the current map of the area. Then, click the Historic View tab (which replaced the Modern View tab at the bottom) to return to the map, circa 586 BCE.

II-2 Mediterranean: 260 BCE

In the Ptolemaic capital, Alexandria, hundreds of thousands of Jews constituted a major component of the city: their cultural and demographic influence has been likened to that of New York City Jewry in modern times.

- Discuss the extent of Ptolemaic Egypt in 260 BCE.
- Point out Alexandria in Egypt, and Jerusalem.

II-3 Mediterranean, 260 BCE

- Point out the Ptolemaic-Seleucid border of 260 BCE
- Then, time-progress to 165 BCE by clicking on the time-scale on the left, and point out the absorption of Judea into the Seleucid Empire.
- Zoom-in, by clicking with the magnifying glass just above Samaria, to provide more

detail on the area of Judea.

II-4 Mediterranean, 63 BCE

Judea was a special place in a special location.....especially for Roman imperial designs.

- Point out Judah and Rome on the map.
- Click the Map Legend tab at the bottom to show the distances involved on the mileage scale. Click again to make the map legend go away.
- Grab the slider on the thumbnail map and move the map easterly, pointing out the Parthian Empire as the principal threat to Roman expansion eastward. Emphasize the strategic position of Judah/Judea.

II-5 Israel-Palestine: 4 BCE

Herod's spectacular projects dotted his Kingdom of Judea. When he died an anguished death in 4 bce, Judea's borders had been re-extended to Biblical and early-Hasmonean proportions. His heirs did not have his capabilities or connections in Rome, and his kingdom was divided into four parts by the Romans and given to his family members as their realms.

- Show the extent to Herod's empire, and point out its key components, including Judea, Samaria, Galilee, Idumea (in the south), Perea (east of the Dead Sea and Jordan River), the region known as Gilead (not thus labeled on the map, but including much of southern Syria on the east side of the Jordan River and Sea of Galilee), using the thumbnail map slider where needed.
- Also point out the locations of Jerusalem, Caesarea, Herodion and Masada, sites of major Herodian building projects.

II-6 Mediterranean: 4 BCE

As has been true throughout history, the specific location of Judea was pivotal in the story of its people. The commerce of the Roman empire had a nexus in Judea, which provided the land-connection between the African and Asian parts of the empire.

- Point out Judea (Jerusalem and Caesarea), and its critical location for keeping the Roman empire contiguous.
- Note the "boot" of Italy on the left, and the Parthian empire on the right, using the thumbnail map slider as needed.