

DISCOVERY UNIT 11 TEACHER'S GUIDE

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Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

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Discovery is a Bible study course for the high school and adult levels. Bible references are taken from the King James Version. The companion to these Sunday school lessons is Daybreak, a daily devotional and personal Bible study continuum. All of the material is available on our website, as well as in printed form. The print version is designed to be stored in a binder; subsequent modules can then be easily inserted. Discovery is an official publication of the Apostolic Faith Church. All rights are reserved.

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Genealogies and David's Reign, Part 1

SOURCE FOR QUESTIONS

1 Chronicles 1:1 through 12:40

KEY VERSE FOR MEMORIZATION

“Therefore came all the elders of Israel to the king to Hebron; and David made a covenant with them in Hebron before the LORD; and they anointed David king over Israel, according to the word of the LORD by Samuel.” (1 Chronicles 11:3)

BACKGROUND

The purpose of Chronicles was to emphasize the Jews' heritage. The writer recounted Israel's history for the Jews who were attempting to resettle the Promised Land after seventy years in Babylonian captivity. God's people needed encouragement to reestablish their patterns of worship, and assurance that the God of their fathers had not forsaken them. The author clearly felt that the evidence of God's involvement in Israel's past would provide the current generation with a reliable basis for rebuilding. By charting both the good and evil reigns of their nation's kings, he reminded the people of the character of God, of worship that pleases Him, and of God's covenant with them.

The Book of 1 Chronicles begins with a genealogy—an official record of the families of Israel and Judah prior to the captivity. In the post-exilic era, genealogical records ensured that rightful heirs could demonstrate legitimate ownership and thus repossess their inheritances in established tribal areas. In addition, the records would provide a framework for reinstating assigned roles in the Levitical worship system, thus preserving the priesthood and the structure for worship.

The genealogical record also has theological significance. For Jesus to be the Messiah, He had to be a descendant of David. The record found in 1 Chronicles, along with Jesus' lineage given in the New Testament, confirms that Jesus did descend from the line of David. Thus, the genealogy of 1 Chronicles was used centuries later to substantiate that Jesus Christ was indeed the Promised One.

SUGGESTED RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS

1. The years the Jews had spent in Babylonian exile had been some of the darkest in their nation's history. Their capital city had been destroyed, their Temple burned, and their people slain or taken into captivity. Although the people had returned to their land when the Books of Chronicles were written, David's

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before the Lord. As we too come in humility, acceptance, and thanksgiving, we too will have God's blessing.

CONCLUSION

David began his reign with a desire to serve and honor God. His transfer of the Ark of the Covenant from Kirjath-jearim to Jerusalem, his Levitical appointments, and his desire to build a Temple for God all reflect his purpose of re-establishing and strengthening the worship of God in Israel.

who served in David's time help us understand that God knows every individual and takes note of each task that is done for Him. The most effective servants of God will possess a deep conviction that the only way to find one's life is to lose it in service to God and people.

CONCLUSION

These chapters in 1 Chronicles reminded the returned exiles of the importance of making proper worship a priority, and encouraged them to believe that God's promises to the descendants of David would one day be fulfilled.

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the people of Judah together, and they were joined by some from the northern tribes who wanted to be part of a committed return to God. The people renewed their covenant with God, pledging to seek Him with all their hearts. Sadly, after God had given Asa great victories, he stopped trusting the Lord, became resistant to God, and suffered from disease.

Chapters 17 through 20 record the reign of Jehoshaphat, who succeeded his father Asa. Because he sought God and followed the Lord's commandments, God established the kingdom in his hand, and "he had riches and honour in abundance" (2 Chronicles 17:5). God brought mighty deliverances when Jehoshaphat looked to the Lord for help. However, later in his life he made an unwise military alliance with the wicked King Ahab of Israel, and this led to Judah's involvement in a conflict with Syria in which Ahab was killed. Jehoshaphat's life was spared and he returned safely to Jerusalem, but he was rebuked by Jehu the prophet for his alliance with Ahab. The final chapter of today's text relates the invasion of Judah by the combined forces of the Moabites, Ammonites, and other allies, Jehoshaphat's prayer, and the subsequent deliverance of Judah and defeat of her enemies.

Today, God is still willing to "show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him" (2 Chronicles 16:9). We can learn from the example of the kings of Judah how important it is to avail ourselves of that promise.

SUGGESTED RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS

1. When Rehoboam was made king, the people of Israel (led by Jeroboam) requested that the "heavy yoke" put upon them by Solomon be reduced. What did Rehoboam's two groups of counselors suggest his response should be? Whose advice did he follow? 2 Chronicles 10:6-11

The older advisors suggested Rehoboam be kind to the people by reducing the heavy taxation and forced service. The younger counselors said he should be more harsh and demanding than Solomon had been. Rehoboam chose to listen to his peers. Point out to your group that as a result, the ten northern tribes seceded and formed the nation of Israel (see verses 16-19).

You might ask your class where we should go when we need advice. Their answers may include: to God, to those with knowledge about related matters (i.e. an auto mechanic for car trouble), and to godly people. In spiritual matters it is particularly important to consult God, His Word, and people with spiritual understanding and experience.

2. As the Northern Kingdom of Israel plunged into idolatry, some of the Levites and other true worshippers of God migrated to Judah. These people "set their hearts to seek the Lord God of Israel"

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Kings of Judah, Part 2

SOURCE FOR QUESTIONS

2 Chronicles 21:1 through 32:33

KEY VERSE FOR MEMORIZATION

“Wherefore the wrath of the LORD was upon Judah and Jerusalem, and he hath delivered them to trouble, to astonishment, and to hissing, as ye see with your eyes.” (2 Chronicles 29:8)

BACKGROUND

In this portion of 2 Chronicles, the author continues his history of the kings of Judah. He traced the achievements and failures of nine rulers, beginning with King Jehoram in 848 B.C. and continuing through the reign of King Hezekiah, which ended with his death in 687 B.C. Of these rulers, only four—Joash, Amaziah, Jotham, and Hezekiah—followed God and led the people in renewing their commitment to Him. Although not perfect in every regard, those four attempted to obey God’s laws, did away with the places of idol worship, refrained from alliances with ungodly nations, and generally encouraged the people in the worship of the one true God. One other king, Uzziah, had a positive beginning and accomplished much good for Judah, but pride was his downfall near the end of his rule.

Today’s text reveals that throughout the history of Judah, the nation fluctuated between obedience to God and apostasy. The reigning king’s response to God affected the spiritual condition of the people and determined whether or not God would send judgment upon the nation. When David’s descendants on Judah’s throne were faithful to God, Judah experienced victory in battle, success in government, and peace with other nations. Conversely, when the rulers led the people into idolatry, the nation suffered.

Just as Judah’s faithfulness to God was key to her peace and survival as a nation, so our obedience to God as individuals is vital to our peace and spiritual survival today. If we forget that all our blessings and benefits come from God, we are in danger of the same spiritual and moral collapse that Judah ultimately experienced.

SUGGESTED RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS

1. Chapter 21 describes the reign of King Jehoram, who succeeded his father Jehoshaphat on the throne of Judah. He was married to Athaliah, the idolatrous daughter of Israel’s wicked King Ahab and his wife Jezebel. Verse 6 of chapter 21 notes that Jehoram “walked in the way of the kings of Israel.” This was a negative evaluation, because while the Southern

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- *2 Chronicles 29:20-21—He re-established the Temple sacrifices.*
- *2 Chronicles 30:1—He re-instituted the Passover observance.*
- *2 Chronicles 31:2—He organized the priests and resumed the work of the Temple according to the plan originally set up by David.*

You may wish to follow up by asking your group how Hezekiah's actions can serve as a model for us, particularly when we are seeking for spiritual renewal or revival.

10. In Hezekiah's time, the Assyrian Empire was the superpower that controlled most of the Middle East. Chapter 32 records how Sennacherib tried to overthrow Judah in order to force the people to pay tribute. Hezekiah made diligent efforts to fortify Jerusalem against the expected assault: he strengthened the city walls, added another wall around the city, and prepared armament. He also diverted the spring outside the city that provided Jerusalem with water, channeling the water through an underground tunnel to provide a water supply in event of a siege. Based on 2 Chronicles 32:6-8 and 20, what other and even more important actions did Hezekiah take to prepare for the assault?

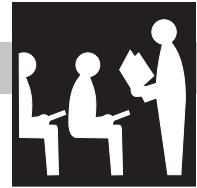
Verses 6-8 record that Hezekiah encouraged the people by reminding them that the Lord would help them and fight their battle. Hezekiah understood that the defense of Judah did not depend only on walls, towers, shields, and water but on the courage and determination of the soldiers fortified by confidence in God.

Verse 20 indicates that he prayed. (The words of his prayer are recorded in 2 Kings 19:15-19.) Point out to your group that when Hezekiah became aware of the threat against Judah, he did not lose hope or give up. While he knew how serious their predicament was, he also knew that God could save them and he trusted God to do so. The number of their opponents was immaterial with God on their side.

Discussion should bring out that at times we may face battles in life in which no solution is apparent. However, we serve a God who is unlimited in resources and power. He can work for us in ways we cannot even imagine. An amazing example of this is found in our text: verse 21 of chapter 32 records that the Lord sent an angel, which "cut off all the mighty men of valour, and the leaders and captains in the camp of the king of Assyria." The parallel text in 2 Kings 19 records that the angel smote 185,000 men in the camp of Assyria that night, and Sennacherib departed.

CONCLUSION

The history recorded for us by the author of Chronicles teaches that a nation that does not follow God and abide by His instructions will never be successful.

**The Book of Ezra****SOURCE FOR QUESTIONS**

Ezra 1:1 through 10:44

KEY VERSE FOR MEMORIZATION

“And the children of Israel, which were come again out of captivity, and all such as had separated themselves unto them from the filthiness of the heathen of the land, to seek the Lord God of Israel, did eat, and kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with joy: for the Lord had made them joyful, and turned the heart of the king of Assyria unto them, to strengthen their hands in the work of the house of God, the God of Israel.”

(Ezra 6:21-22)

BACKGROUND

The Book of Ezra provides a vital link in the historical record of the Jewish people. In 722 B.C., the Assyrians conquered the Northern Kingdom of Israel. When the Southern Kingdom of Judah was overthrown by Nebuchadnezzar’s armies in 586 B.C. and the people were carried away to Babylon, Israel ceased to exist as an independent nation. Ezra records how the Jews returned to their homeland, their struggle to survive, and their efforts to rebuild what had been destroyed.

Restoration is a main theme of the book: not only restoration of the exiles to their homeland, but also restoration of the proper worship of God after years of captivity. Ezra reminded the people that despite their failure to obey God and abide by their covenant with Him, He had not forgotten them.

The Book of Ezra can be divided into two sections. Chapters 1-6 document the first return of exiles under the leadership of Zerubbabel, the people’s rebuilding of the Temple despite opposition to their efforts, and the eventual completion and dedication of the Temple. Chapters 7-10 record Ezra’s journey to Jerusalem about fifty-eight years later with a second group of returnees, and his efforts to bring about spiritual reformation.

Both sections offer hope for every generation. Those who are serving God can be encouraged by how He enables His people to overcome challenges and accomplish His will. Those who are bound by sin can learn that God offers deliverance and will accept and restore those who seek Him in true repentance.

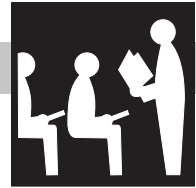
SUGGESTED RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS

1. The prophet Jeremiah had foretold that Babylon would be punished for their iniquity. He also prophesied that after the people of Judah spent seventy years of captivity in Babylon, God would bring them back to their homeland (see Jeremiah 25:12 and 29:10). Isaiah

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The Book of Nehemiah

SOURCE FOR QUESTIONS

Nehemiah 1:1 through 13:31

KEY VERSE FOR MEMORIZATION

“So the wall was finished in the twenty and fifth day of the month Elul, in fifty and two days. And it came to pass, that when all our enemies heard thereof, and all the heathen that were about us saw these things, they were much cast down in their own eyes: for they perceived that this work was wrought of our God.” (Nehemiah 6:15-16)

BACKGROUND

When the Israelites returned to Jerusalem after their seventy-year captivity in Babylon, they found their city in ruins and its protective wall reduced to rubble, leaving the people vulnerable to attacks by their enemies. In 445 B.C., messengers carried distressing news about conditions in Jerusalem to Nehemiah, a cupbearer of the Persian King Artaxerxes. In response, Nehemiah fasted and prayed for some days, and then requested permission to go back to his homeland to rebuild the city wall.

The Book of Nehemiah records how God equipped and enabled this courageous leader to deal with monumental challenges and crisis after crisis as he proceeded with this endeavor. Nehemiah led by personal example. He prayed frequently, organized carefully, and successfully rallied the people to participate in the mammoth job of rebuilding. He persevered despite opposition and the threat of death, and under his leadership, the wall was completed in just fifty-two days.

Along with rebuilding walls of stone around the nation’s capital city, Nehemiah recognized the vital necessity of rebuilding the Law of God in the hearts of the people. After the completed wall was dedicated, he served as governor in Jerusalem two times and instituted many important religious reforms.

Over the centuries, Nehemiah’s resourceful leadership has been an inspiration to countless Christians who have been called to major tasks for the glory of God. The Book of Nehemiah teaches us that every assignment from God, whether large or small, should be undertaken with prayer and completed with faithfulness.

SUGGESTED RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS

1. The Book of Nehemiah opens with a description of when and how Nehemiah heard that the city walls and gates of Jerusalem were broken down and burned with

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The Book of Haggai

SOURCE FOR QUESTIONS

Haggai 1:1 through 2:23

KEY VERSE FOR MEMORIZATION

“Then spake Haggai the LORD’s messenger in the LORD’s message unto the people, saying, I am with you, saith the LORD. And the LORD stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and they came and did work in the house of the LORD of hosts, their God” (Haggai 1:13-14).

BACKGROUND

The Persian King Cyrus’ decree in 538 B.C. gave permission for the captive Jewish exiles in Babylon to return to Judah and restore their Temple. However, it appears that many of the Jews were so rooted in Babylon after seventy years of captivity that they did not want to relocate. Bible scholars estimate that the first group of returnees, led by Zerubbabel, numbered only about fifty thousand, including women and children—a fraction of the over one million who had been exiled.

When the returning exiles arrived in Jerusalem, they were confronted with the devastation left by the armies of King Nebuchadnezzar. The city was in ruins and the glorious structure that once was Solomon’s Temple had been demolished. The people began rebuilding the Temple soon after their arrival in 536 B.C., but when they faced opposition from hostile neighbors, they discontinued the work (see Ezra 4:4-5, 24). Because they neglected the rebuilding of God’s house, His blessing upon them was withdrawn and the people suffered.

While the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah give accounts of the Jewish nation after the restoration from the Babylonian exile, the Book of Haggai describes a series of four messages. These were delivered by Haggai to the returned exiles in 520 B.C., about ten years after they had stopped building. With simple and direct words, he rebuked the people for their failure to finish the Temple, challenged them regarding their priorities, and called for them to obey God by renewing their efforts and completing the task.

SUGGESTED RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS

- Each of Haggai’s four brief but powerful messages from God was precisely dated, and all were delivered within a period of four months. A review of the two short chapters that make up this Old Testament book

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The Book of Zechariah

SOURCE FOR QUESTIONS

Zechariah 1:1 through 14:21

KEY VERSE FOR MEMORIZATION

“Therefore say thou unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Turn ye unto me, saith the LORD of hosts, and I will turn unto you, saith the LORD of hosts.”
(Zechariah 1:3)

BACKGROUND

The Book of Zechariah contains messages delivered by the prophet Zechariah to the people of Judah. Beginning in 520 B.C., Zechariah joined the prophet Haggai in urging the post-exilic Jerusalem community to continue their task of rebuilding the Temple. However, the prophet’s messages went far beyond the importance of physical rebuilding. He reminded the people of their previous spiritual failures and called them to repentance, and also affirmed God’s continued commitment to them.

Several Messianic prophecies are found in the Book of Zechariah. Zechariah’s inspired messages included that God would deliver and bless His people in a future kingdom in which the Messiah would reign throughout the world. Like many of his fellow prophets, Zechariah saw isolated glimpses of the future, so some events that were revealed to him in close succession (particularly those related to the Messiah) would actually occur thousands of years apart.

The book’s fourteen chapters divide naturally into two sections. Chapters 1-8 describe eight visions that came to the prophet by night, followed by messages about the crowning of Joshua the high priest and answers to various questions; this portion was written while the rebuilding of the Temple was taking place. The second section, chapters 9-14, are messages delivered much later, after the Temple rebuilding was complete. These chapters contain multiple references to events beyond Zechariah’s day, including the first and second comings of Christ and His Messianic reign.

The Book of Zechariah reminds us that while troubling circumstances exist in the world around us, God knows and controls the future. We cannot see even a moment ahead, but we can be sure that God keeps His promises, and He will never forsake His own.

SUGGESTED RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS

1. Zechariah delivered his first pronouncement to the apathetic and spiritually discouraged people of Jerusalem whose initial attempts to rebuild the Temple had been stalled for about ten years. What were the

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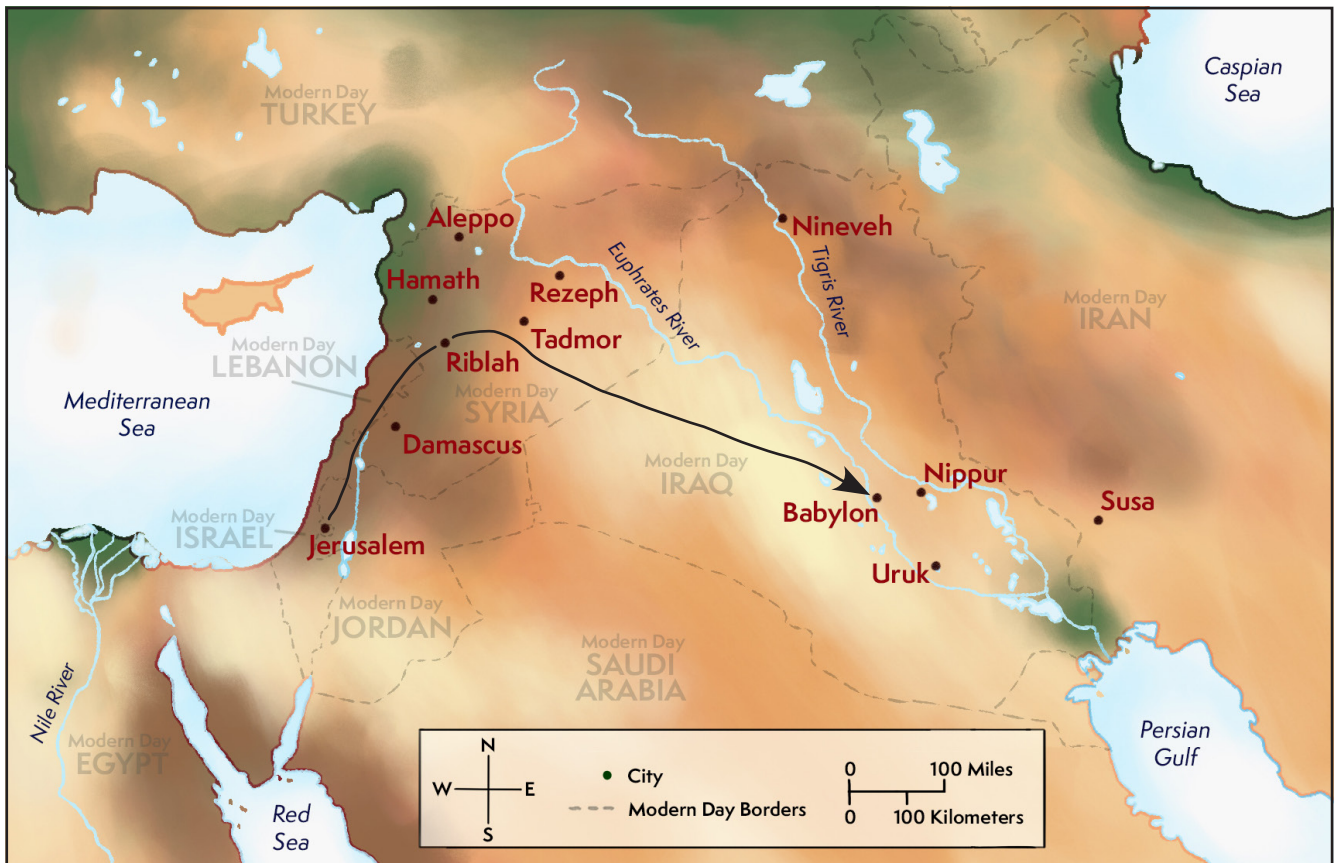
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Key Locations in 1 & 2 Chronicles

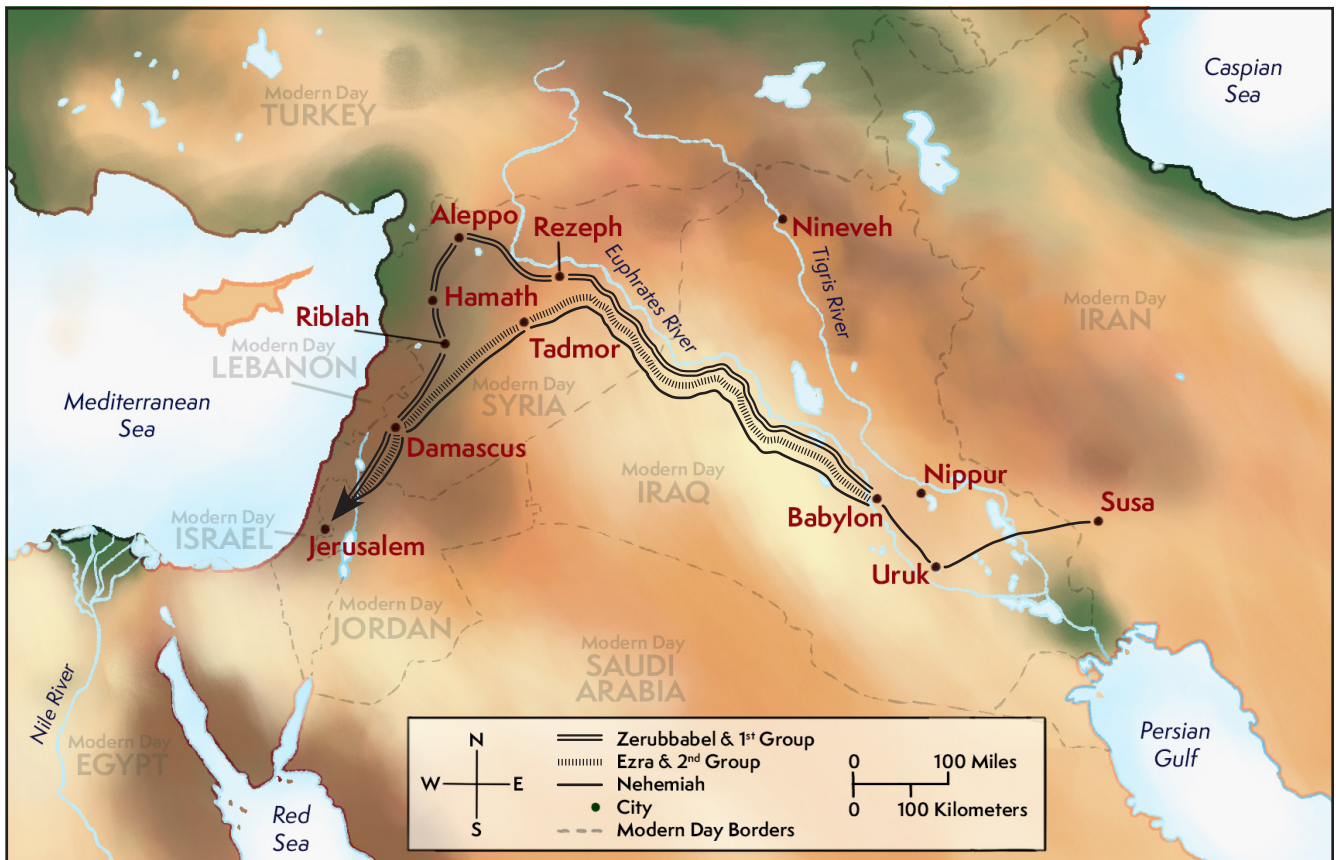


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The Exiles' Journey to Babylon



The Exiles' Journey Home



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