

# Habakkuk 1:12-17

Habakkuk 1:12 – “Are you not from everlasting, O Lord my God, my Holy One? We shall not die. O Lord, you have ordained them as a judgment, and you, O Rock, have established them for reproof.”

3069 [e]	4191 [e]	3808 [e]	6918 [e]	430 [e]	3069 [e]	6924 [e]	859 [e]	3808 [e]
Yah·weh	nā·mūt;	lō	qə·dō·šî	'ē·lō·hay	Yah·weh	miq·qe·dem,	'at·tāh	hā·lō·w
יְהוָה	נָמוּת	לֹא	קְדוֹשִׁי	אֱלֹהֵי	יְהוָה	מִקְדָּם	אַתָּה	הֲלוֹא
Yahweh	we shall die	not	my Holy one	my God	Yahweh	from everlasting	You	Are not
N-proper-ms	V-Qal-Imperf-1cp	Adv-NegPrt	Adj-msc   1cs	N-mpc   1cs	N-proper-ms	Prep-m   N-ms	Pro-2ms	Adv-NegPrt

3245 [e]	3198 [e]	6697 [e]	7760 [e]	4941 [e]
yə·saḡ·tōw.	lə·hō·w·kî·ah	wə·šūr	šam·tōw,	lə·miš·pāṭ
יִסְדַּתְּוּ	לְהוֹכִיחַ	וְצוּר	שָׁמַתּוּ	לְמִשְׁפָּט
You have marked them	for correction	and Rock	You have appointed them	for judgment
V-Qal-Perf-2ms   3ms	Prep-I   V-Hifil-Inf	Conj-w   N-ms	V-Qal-Perf-2ms   3ms	Prep-I   N-ms

1. Habakkuk challenges God’s plan for punishment of Judah
2. Habakkuk knew Judah was wicked and had asked God how long before punishment to correct the evil society. God replied it would be soon and explained how he would do it. But, the extreme level of discipline confused Habakkuk. It even upset him more than his original concern.
3. Originally Habakkuk’s complaint concerned Judah’s evil. Now Habakkuk does not understand why God would take such drastic and “unholy” actions to correct Judah’s sin.
4. Habakkuk has faith, but it is confused. God is going to destroy Judah just like he had Northern Israel a century before. How does this fit with God’s plan for history? Or, with his covenant with Israel?
5. In verse 12 Habakkuk first addresses:
  - a. God is from eternity, and so his plan is not recently made up. His plan is eternal also.
    - i. Isaiah used a similar approach to strengthen Hezekiah’s faith in 2 Kings 19:25 and Isaiah 37:26:
 

““Have you not heard that I determined it long ago? I planned from days of old what now I bring to pass, that you should turn fortified cities into heaps of ruins.”
    - ii. Micah 5:1 – the rule will come through the line of David who is from eternity
  - b. “We (Israel) shall not die” because they are the covenant people with promise of the Davidic line. And more.
6. The second half of the verse divides into three parts:
  - a. Yahweh and Rock
  - b. Purpose: for Justice and for Rebuke
  - c. Who caused it: God set him and established him (Babylon)
7. Habakkuk has made the case that his faith is based in and expresses his understanding in God’s last message which was the eternal God’s plan from the beginning to send the Babylonians to utterly destroy the chosen people in order to establish justice and rebuke wickedness.

1:13 – “You who are of purer eyes than to see evil and cannot look at wrong, why do you idly look at traitors and remain silent when the wicked swallows up the man more righteous than he?”

5027 [e]	4100 [e]	3201 [e]	3808 [e]	5999 [e]	413 [e]	5027 [e]	7451 [e]	7200 [e]	5869 [e]	2890 [e]		
ṭab·bīt	lām·māh	tū·kāl;	lō	'ā·māl	'el-	wə·hab·bīt	rā',	mē·rə·'ō·wī	'ê·na·yim	ṭə·hō·wr		
תְּבִיטַ	לָמָּה	תֹּכַל	לֹא	—	עַמָּל	אֶל־	וְהִבִּיט	רָע	מֵרְאוֹת	עֵינַיִם	טְהוֹר	13
do You look	why	cannot	not	wickedness	on	and look	evil	than to behold	eyes	[You are] of purer		
V-Hifil-Imperf-2ms	Interrog	V-Qal-Imperf-2ms	Adv-NegPrt	N-ms	Prep	Conj-w   V-Hifil-Inf	Adj-ms	Prep-m   V-Qal-Inf	N-cd	Adj-msc		

4480 [e]	6662 [e]	7563 [e]	1104 [e]	2790 [e]	898 [e]
mim·men·nū.	ṣad·dīq	rā·šā'	bə·ḅal·la'	ta·ḥā·rīš	bō·wəḡ·dīm,
מִמְּנִי	צַדִּיק	רָשָׁע	בֹּבֵלַע	תַּחֲרִישׁ	בוֹגְדִים
than he	a [person] more righteous	the wicked	when devours	[And] hold Your tongue	on those who deal treacherously
Prep   3ms	Adj-ms	Adj-ms	Prep-b   V-Piel-Inf	V-Hifil-Imperf-2ms	V-Qal-Prtcpl-mp

1. Habakkuk does not question the Lord’s plan to judge and punish Judah. Habakkuk’s original complaint involved the fact that Judah was not being corrected by the Lord.
  - a. Habakkuk accepts (even requests) judgment of Judah
  - b. Habakkuk understands the Lord’s plan to destroy Judah with Babylon
2. In 1:13 Habakkuk first identifies the Lord’s character, before he asks a question concerning the inconsistency of the Lord’s actions with his nature.
3. Habakkuk identifies the Lord as:
  - a. Pure
    - i. Everything representing God or associated with God’s presence in the Tabernacle was pure gold
    - ii. Rituals and people around the Lord had to be pure for worship
  - b. Eyes to pure to see evil
    - i. This does not mean God cannot see or recognize evil since God is omniscient. But, God does not allow evil or wrong in his presence
  - c. Eyes cannot look at wrong
    - i. Wrong contradicts the essence of God
4. The problem is the Babylonian leaders, culture, religion and attitude is both evil and wrong. So, God is going to now see and look evil Babylon to do the work of the Lord? This is Habakkuk’s problem. And, it is a justified theological and ethical challenge that cannot be dismissed with a shallow answer. Some answers that are too simple would be:
  - a. Judah is really bad
  - b. God’s ways are mysterious
  - c. Everything works out in the end
5. Habakkuk identifies the apparent inconsistent action (plans, behavior) of the Lord as:
  - a. Idly look at traitors
    - i. The justice of God would require he rebuke the traitor, not watch idly as though he is unconcerned.
    - ii. Here God’s justice is questioned
  - b. Remain silent when wicked swallow those more righteous

- i. For example, in Leviticus 5:1,  
*“If anyone sins because they do not speak up when they hear a public charge to testify regarding something they have seen or learned about, they will be held responsible.”*

Here the Lord appears to see the guilty, but not testify against them.

- ii. “Swallow up” refers to total annihilation.  
Here God’s punishment seems too severe for the Israel, the covenant people of God

**1:14 – “You make mankind like the fish of the sea, like crawling things that have no ruler.”**

	4910 [e]	3808 [e]		7431 [e]	3220 [e]	1709 [e]	120 [e]	6213 [e]	
bōw.	mō-šél	lō-		kə-re-meś	hay-yām;	kiq-gê	'ā-dām	wat-ta·'ā-šeh	
בּוֹ:	מֹשֶׁל	לֹא	׃	כְּרֹמֵשׁ	הַיָּם	כַּדְּגֵי	אָדָם	וַתַּעֲשֶׂה	14
over them	ruler	[that have] no		Like creeping things	of the sea	like fish	men	And [Why] do You make	
Prep   3ms	V-Qal-Prtcpl-ms	Adv-NegPrt		Prep-k   N-ms	Art   N-ms	Prep-k   N-mpc	N-ms	Conj-w   V-Qal-ConseclImperf-2ms	

1. It may be the Babylonians who are coming, but ultimately it is God who is responsible. Thus, Habakkuk says, “YOU make mankind like fish of the sea.”
  - a. Sure, it is going to be the Babylonians who go fishing for men, but the Lord
    - i. empowered the Babylonians,
    - ii. refuses to punish the Babylonians and then
    - iii. puts a target on the back of Judah
  - b. God is ultimately behind histories mistreatment of humanity
2. “Fish of the Sea” and “crawling things”
  - a. This may be Habakkuk pointed out the absolute reversal of the created order of Genesis:
    - i. First, man was created to have dominion over the whole earth and all that is in it. But, here, man is the one dominated
    - ii. Second, man is the crowning creation made in God’s image, but here all “MANKIND” (not just Judah) is treated just like the masses of the lowest created things that are a mass of creatures in the ocean and a countless swarming
      1. Fish day five: “So God created the great sea creatures and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.” – Genesis 1:21
      2. “crawling things that have no ruler” - Solomon addressed this concerning the laboring ant: “Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise! It has no commander, no overseer or ruler.”
3. Man’s rightful place of rulership, has been reduced to the level of the things he was to rule:

“Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and **over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.**”  
 – Genesis 1:26

1:15 – “He brings all of them up with a hook; he drags them out with his net; he gathers them in his dragnet; so he rejoices and is glad.”

622 [e]	2764 [e]	1641 [e]	5927 [e]	2443 [e]	3605 [e]
wə·ya·'as·pê·hū	bə·ḥer·mōw,	yə·gō·rê·hū	hê·'ă·lāh,	bə·ḥak·kāh	kul·lōh
וַיִּאַסְפֵּהוּ	בְּחַרְמוֹ	יִגְרֵהוּ	הֵעֲלָהּ	בְּחַכָּה	כֻּלָּהּ 15
and gather them	in their net	they catch them	they take up	with a hook	All of them
Conj-w   V-Qal-ConjImperf-3ms   3ms	Prep-b   N-msc   3ms	V-Qal-Imperf-3ms   3ms	V-Hifil-Perf-3ms	Prep-b   N-fs	N-msc   3ms

1523 [e]	8055 [e]	3651 [e]	5921 [e]	4365 [e]
wə·yā·gīl.	yis·mah	kēn	'al-	bə·miḵ·mar·tōw;
וַיִּגִּיל:	יִשְׂמַח	כֵּן	עַל-	בְּמַכְמַרְתּוֹ
and are glad	they rejoice	thus	upon	in their dragnet
Conj-w   V-Qal-ConjImperf-3ms	V-Qal-Imperf-3ms	Adv	Prep	Prep-b   N-fsc   3ms

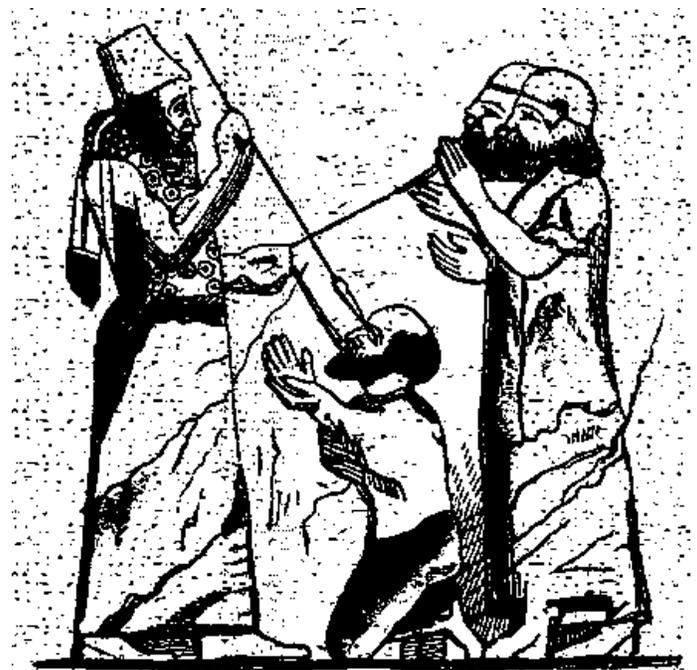
1. In 1:14 Habakkuk is concerned about God’s dehumanization of mankind by making him like the fish and the insects.
2. In 1:15-17 Habakkuk is concerned about God allowing the vicious character of the Babylonians to treat dehumanized mankind so inhumane as if mankind were fish and insects:
  - a. 1:15 – Babylon is brutal
  - b. 1:16 – Babylon is sensual
  - c. 1:17 – Babylon is relentless
3. “He brings all of them up with a hook”

Treatment of Judah’s Royalty by Nebuchadnezzar:

“The army of the Chaldeans pursued the king and overtook him in the plains of Jericho, and all his army was scattered from him. Then they captured the king and brought him up to the king of Babylon at Riblah, and they passed sentence on him. They slaughtered the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, and put out the eyes of Zedekiah and bound him in chains and took him to Babylon.” – 2 Kings 25:5-7

Treatment of Judah’s Priesthood by Nebuchadnezzar:

“The captain of the guard (*Nebuzaradan*) took Seraiah the chief priest and Zephaniah the second priest and the three keepers of the threshold; and from the city he took an officer who had been in command of the men of war, and five men of the king’s council who were found in the city; and the secretary of the commander of the army, who mustered the people of the land; and sixty men of



**Wood engraving from the 1800’s of a inscription from the ruins of the city of Dur Sarrukin Assyria from 600’s BC**

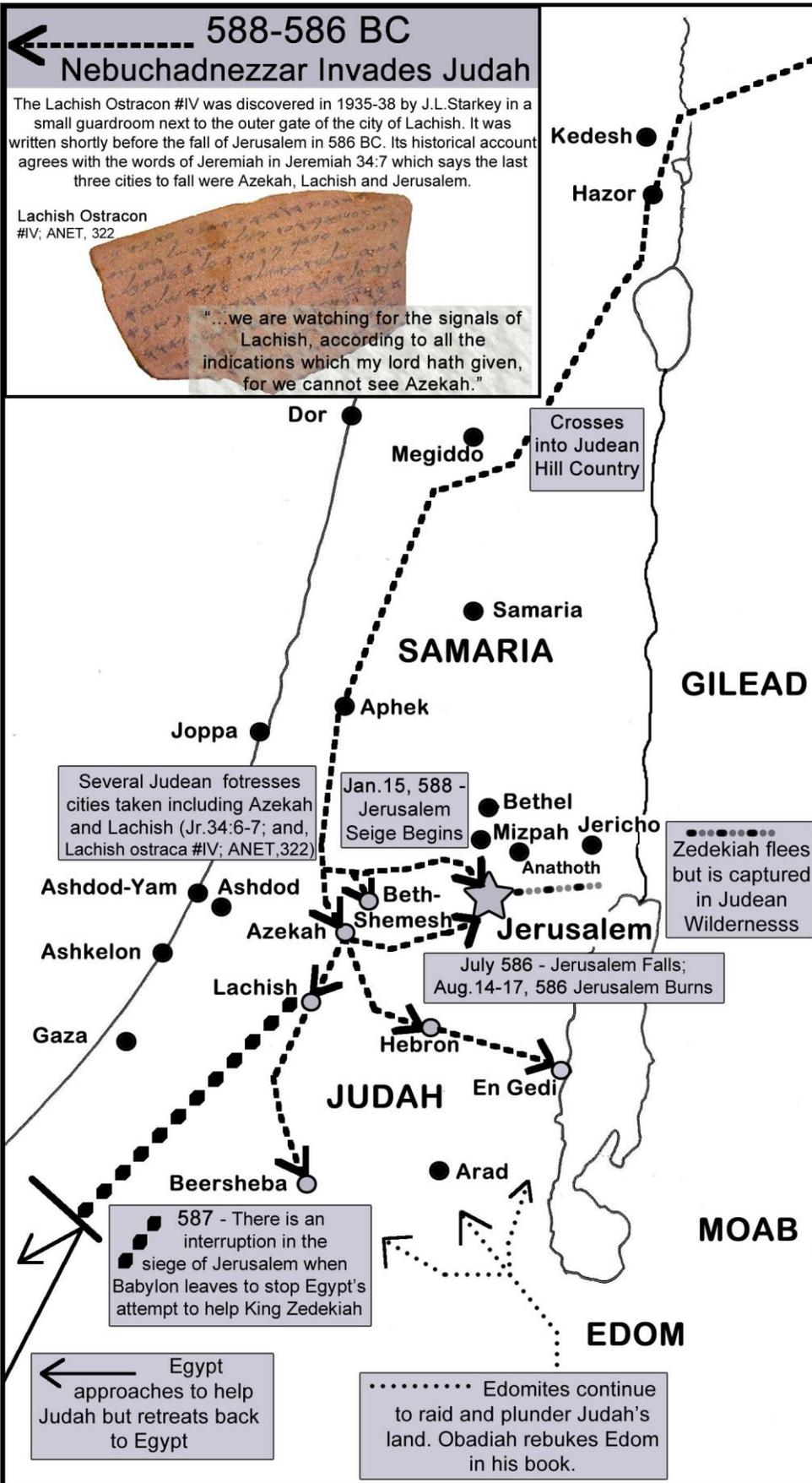
the people of the land, who were found in the city. And Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard took them and brought them to the king of Babylon at Riblah. And the king of Babylon struck them down and put them to death at Riblah in the land of Hamath. So Judah was taken into exile out of its land.”  
– 2 Kings 25:18-21

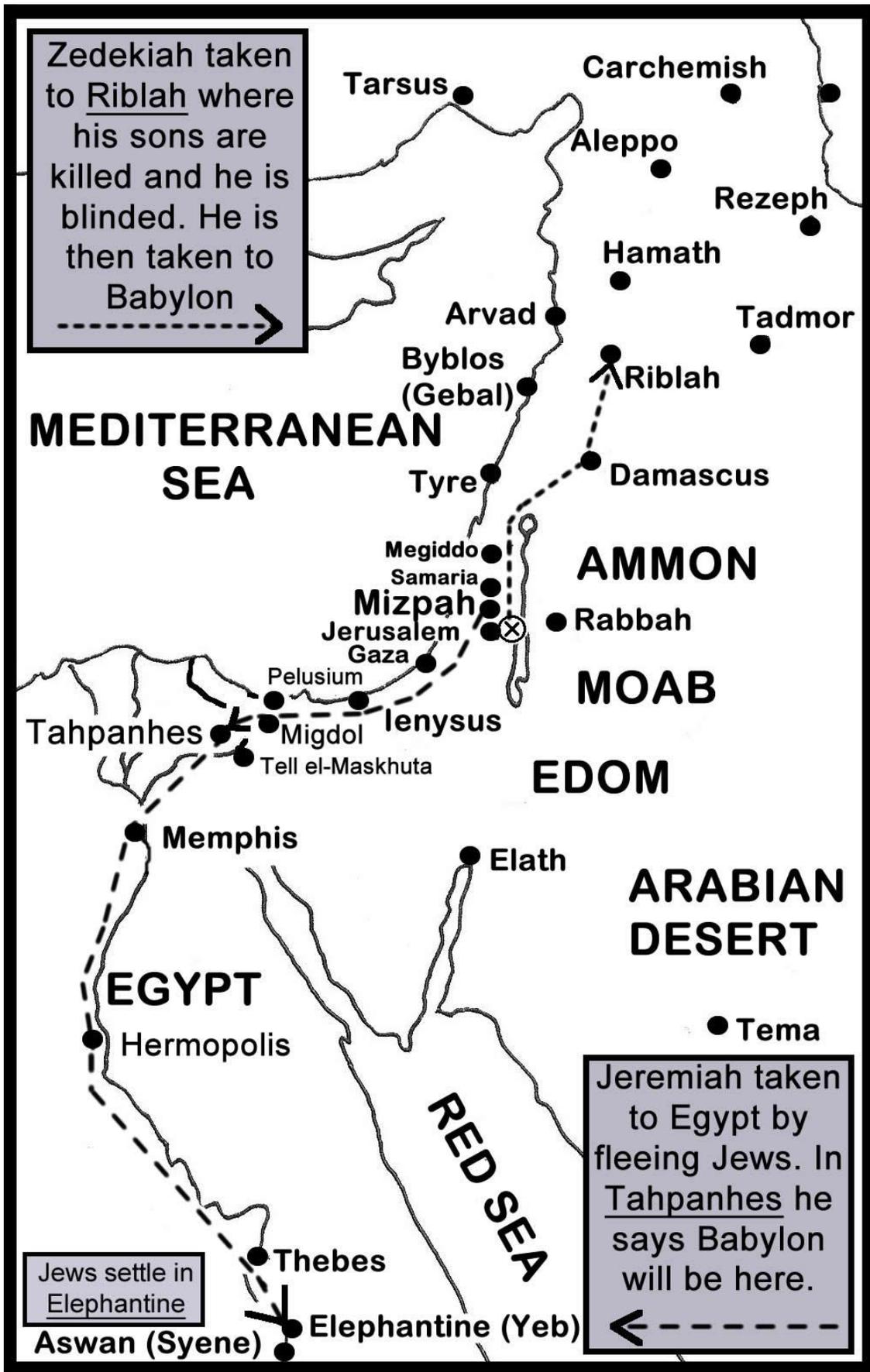


Amos 4:2-3 says concerning the women in Northern Israel when the Assyrians arrive in  
722 BC -

*“The Lord GOD has sworn by his holiness  
that, behold, the days are coming upon you,  
when they shall take you away with hooks,  
even the last of you with fishhooks.” – Amos 4:2-3*

4. “he drags them out with his net”
5. “he gathers them in his dragnet”
  - a. Dragnet is a net drawn through water to trap fish
6. “so he rejoices and is glad”
  - a. No purpose and no specific goal, just catch and conquer
  - b. No regard for human suffering and loss of civilizations, just glad they gained more stuff





1:16 – “Therefore he sacrifices to his net and makes offerings to his dragnet; for by them he lives in luxury, and his food is rich.”

3588 [e]	4365 [e]	6999 [e]	2764 [e]	2076 [e]	3651 [e]	5921 [e]
kî	lə·miḵ·mar·tōw;	wī·qaṭ·têr	lə·ḥer·mōw,	yə·zab·bê·aḥ	kên	‘al-
כי	למַכְמַרְתּוֹ	וַיִּקְטֹר	לְחַרְמוֹ	יִזְבֵּחַ	כֵּן	עַל-
because	to their dragnet	and burn incense	to their net	they sacrifice	thus	Upon
Conj	Prep-I   N-fsc   3ms	Conj-w   V-Piel-Conj Imperf-3ms	Prep-I   N-msc   3ms	V-Piel-Imperf-3ms	Adv	Prep

1277 [e]	3978 [e]	2506 [e]	8082 [e]	1992 [e]
bə·ri·‘āh.	ū·ma·‘ā·kā·lōw	ḥel·qōw,	šā·mên	bā·hêm·māh
בְּרִיאָה:	וּמֵאֲכָלוֹ	חֶלְקוֹ	שָׂמַן	בְּהֵמָה
fat	and their food	their share [is]	sumptuous	by them
Adj-fs	Conj-w   N-msc   3ms	N-msc   3ms	Adj-ms	Prep-b   Pro-3mp

1. The Babylonians justify their behavior and attitude because it gives them good material things
2. “he sacrifices to his net”
  - a. They worship the things that crush humanity and bring Babylon the good things
3. “makes offerings to his dragnet”
4. “by them (net, dragnet) he lives in luxury”
5. “by them...his food is rich”

1:17 – “Is he then to keep on emptying his net and mercilessly killing nations forever?”

2550 [e]	3808 [e]	1471 [e]	2026 [e]	8548 [e]	2764 [e]	7324 [e]	3651 [e]	5921 [e]	
s	yah·mō·wl.	lō	gō·w·yim	la·hā·rōḡ	wə·tā·mīd	ḥer·mōw;	yā·rīq	kên	ha·‘al
ס	יְהַמּוֹל:	לֹא	גוֹיִם	לְהַרְג	וְתָמִיד	חַרְמוֹ	יִרְיק	כֵּן	הָעַל
-	pity	without	nations	to slay	and continue	their net	they empty	therefore	Shall
Punc	V-Qal-Imperf-3ms	Adv-NegPrt	N-mp	Prep-I   V-Qal-Inf	Conj-w   Adv	N-msc   3ms	V-Hifil-Imperf-3ms	Adv	Prep

1. “keep emptying his net” in order to get more.
  - a. There is no end and no satisfying the Babylonian hunger to conquer
  - b. Atrocities to the dehumanized man are endless
2. “mercilessly killing nations forever”
  - a. Killing men like insects
  - b. And, not merely men, but entire NATIONS
  - c. If the Lord is going to allow this, then there is no end in sight. When Babylon wears out there will be another beast (Persia) and then another (Greece) and on and on...