

Reigns of the Southern Kings

	King	Good kings	Began	Ended	Years
7	Joash (aka Jehoash)		835	796	40
8	Amaziah		796	767	29
9	Uzziah (aka Azariah)		767	740	52
10	Jotham	Like Uzziah but better	740	731	16
11	Ahaz		731	715	16
12	Hezekiah	Like David	715	686	29
13	Manasseh		686	642	55
14	Amon		642	640	2
15	Josiah	Like David	640	609	31

Verse 2

**² Hear, you peoples, all of you;
Listen carefully, earth and all it contains,
And may the Lord God be a witness against you,
The Lord from His holy temple.**

Micah was sent to Israel with a message of judgment but the judgment that will come to Israel (the Northern Kingdom) and then to Judah (the Southern Kingdom) will also come to all of the nations of the world. The world powers that will soon arise, Assyria, Babylon, Medo Persians and Rome will bring judgment to all of the earth not just Israel.

The holy temple that is mentioned here is not Jerusalem, but heaven. The God of Israel is no local deity but the Lord of heaven and earth to whom all nations are accountable.

Verses 3 - 4

**³ For behold, the Lord is coming forth from His place.
He will come down and tread on the high places of the earth.**

**⁴ The mountains will melt under Him
And the valleys will be split,
Like wax before the fire,
Like water poured down a steep place.**

The figurative language used in these verses is a good indication that this prophesy has a dual fulfillment. The first fulfillment will take place in the near future while the second one concerns the end times.

1. The judgment coming upon the Northern and Southern Kingdoms will come with great destruction.
2. On the last day when Christ appears to judge all of mankind, the earth and the heavens will be destroyed.

See Rev. 6:13 - 14

¹³ and the stars of the sky fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its unripe figs when shaken by a great wind. ¹⁴ The sky was split apart like a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place.

See Rev. 16:20

²⁰ And every island fled, and no mountains were found.

The Book of Revelations contains a lot of figurative language and one must be careful not to take some of it too literally or we would have to explain how the stars (suns) could fall to the earth. Having said that, we can easily understand the bigger picture presented in the book of Revelations which states that the universe will be destroyed and all of mankind will be judged.

Verse 5

⁵ All this is due to the wrongdoing of Jacob

And the sins of the house of Israel.

What is the wrongdoing of Jacob?

Is it not Samaria?

What is the high place of Judah?

Is it not Jerusalem?

The judgment about to be executed on the Northern Kingdom is due to their rejection of God and His law. All of Israel was in a covenant relationship with God and this required them to keep the Law or they would suffer the curses described in Leviticus 26. The first king of northern Israel, Jeroboam, had set up golden calves in Dan and Bethel to compete with the true temple in Jerusalem and this sin was never overturned (repented of) during the 200 year history of that kingdom. A more complete list of their sins is covered in the 5th chapter of Hosea.

The Southern Kingdom had the proper temple and priesthood but many of the priests had become corrupt and God was not being glorified. In addition, there were many high places in Jerusalem that were just like the pagan temples found in the Northern Kingdom.

See 2 Kings 16:2 - 4

² Ahaz was twenty years old when he became king, and he reigned for sixteen years in Jerusalem; and he did not do what was right in the sight of the Lord his God, as his father David had done. ³ But he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, and he even made his son pass through the fire, in accordance with the abominations of the nations whom the Lord had driven out before the sons of Israel. ⁴ And he sacrificed and burned incense on the high places, on the hills, and under every green tree.

Both of the capital cities, Samaria and Jerusalem, had become centers of idol worship.

Verse 6

**⁶ For I will make Samaria a heap of ruins in the open country,
Planting places for a vineyard.
I will hurl her stones down into the valley,
And lay bare her foundations.**

Samaria was built by King Omri around 876 BC on a steep hill that he bought for 2 talents of silver, and it remained the capital of the Northern Kingdom for nearly 160 years. It was completely destroyed by the King of Assyria in 722 BC and nearly 2,750 years later it is still just a heap of stones.

See video 115 8.48 Samaria

<https://www.levickfamily.com/8.48.html>

Verse 7

**⁷ All of her idols will be crushed,
All of her earnings will be burned with fire,
And all of her images I will make desolate;
For she collected *them* from a prostitute's earnings,
And to the earnings of a prostitute they will return.**

Beginning with the crowning of their first king, the Northern Kingdom agreed to break the first three commandments of the Lord by worshipping the golden calves at Bethel and Dan that were set up by Jeroboam.

- 1. You shall have no other gods before Me.**
- 2. You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath, or in the water under the earth.**
- 3. You shall not worship them nor serve them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God...**

To make things worse they also worshipped Baal and supported a system of worship that was largely supported by sacred prostitution.

The punishment for rejecting God and His law was the total destruction of the Northern Kingdom. The idols and images that Israel loved were crushed to pieces and left as debris.

Verse 8

⁸ Because of this I must mourn and wail,
I must go barefoot and naked;
I must do mourning like the jackals,
And a mourning like the ostriches.

The approaching disaster broke the prophet's heart; so he used some symbolic methods to get the people's attention in order to warn them. Going barefoot and naked signified how the captives would be led back to Assyria and mourning like the jackals and ostriches was a dramatic way to express the grief and horror that the people would experience on their day of judgment.

Verse 9

⁹ For her wound is incurable,
For it has come to Judah;
It has reached the gate of my people,
Even to Jerusalem.

The false worship of the Northern Kingdom had spread to Jerusalem so the downfall of the North was necessary to stop any further degradation of the Southern Kingdom.

The fall of Samaria in 722 BC extended the life of the Southern Kingdom by 136 years, 722 to 586 BC, but even the judgment of the Northern Kingdom did not stop the gradual decline of the south. Several good kings brought reforms to the Southern Kingdom, but the people of Judah quickly returned to the sin of Idolatry when a bad king came to the throne.

Verse 10

¹⁰ **Do not tell *it* in Gath,**

Do not weep at all.

At Beth-le-aphrah roll yourself in the dust in mourning.

In this and the next few verses, there are a number of puns.

1. Gath means "Tell-town".

For most of its history, Gath was a major Philistine city along with Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, and Ekron. It was situated on the border with Judah, which made it a focal point of conflict and territorial changes. It is famous as the home of Goliath and the city where David sought refuge from Saul.

See map 120



However, the city of Gath was captured and later occupied by the Kingdom of Judah.

See 2 Chronicles 26:6

6 Now he went out and fought against the Philistines, and broke down the wall of Gath, the wall of Jabneh, and the wall of Ashdod; and he built cities in the area of Ashdod and among the Philistines.

This took place during the reign of Uzziah, 791 to 740 BC. This means that Micah is referring to a town of the Southern Kingdom.

See map 125



The pun that Micah is using means, "Tell it not in Tell-Town."

2. Beth-le-aphrah means "Dust-town".

The location of this town is not known but it is likely that it is a town in Judah or Philistia since many of the 11 towns mentioned in these verses are found in Judah or Philistia. The towns in Philistia would suffer the same judgment that Judah would face.

Micah is saying, "roll in the dust at Dust-town". This symbolized humiliation and defeat.

Verses 11-12

¹¹ Go on your way, inhabitant of Shaphir, in shameful nakedness.
The inhabitant of Zaanan does not escape.

The mourning of Beth-ezel: “He will take from you its support.”

¹² For the inhabitant of Maroth

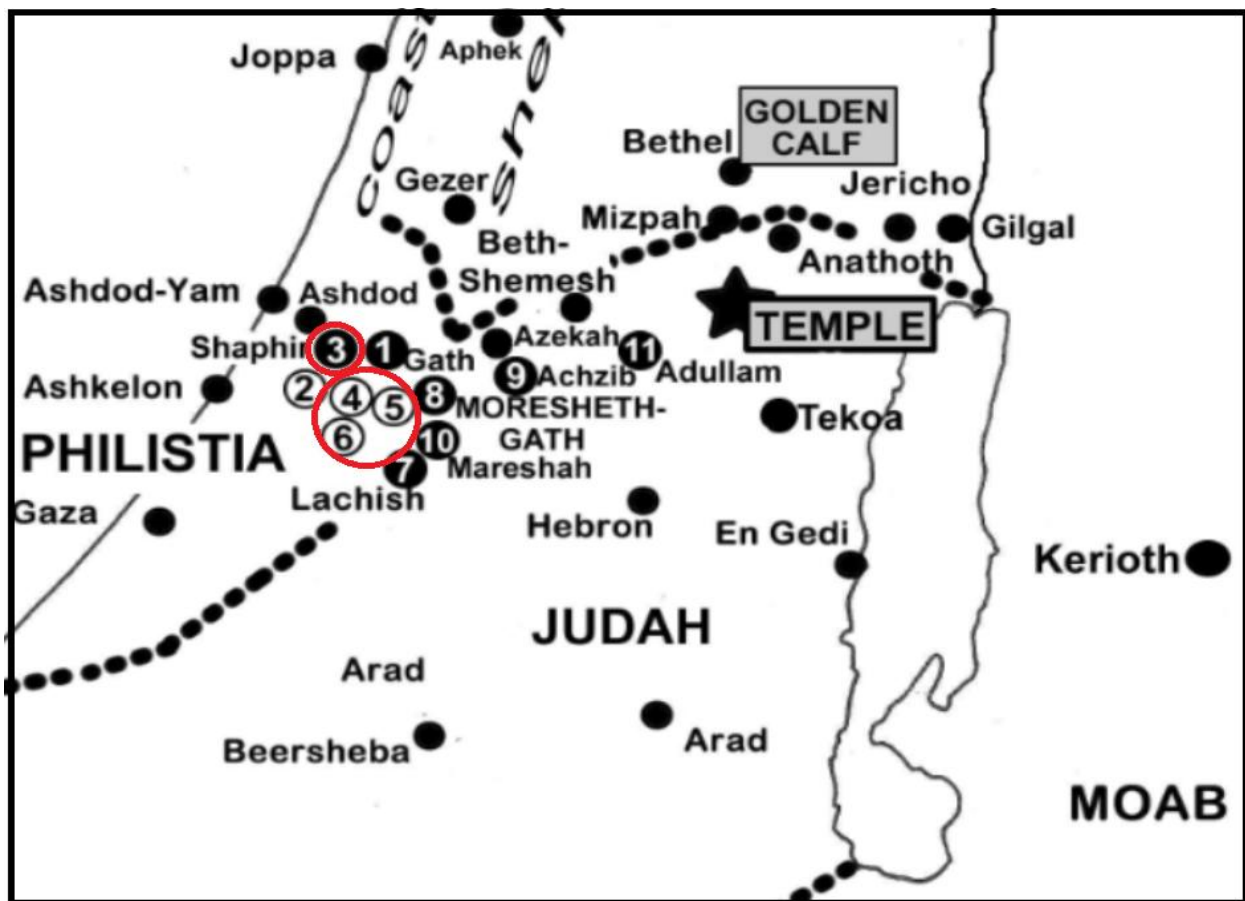
Waits for *something* good,

Because a disaster has come down from the Lord

To the gate of Jerusalem.

It is believed that all four of these towns or cities were located in Philistia.

See map 130



3. Shaphir means “pass away”.

4. Zaanan means “come out” or “to go forth”.

5. Beth-ezel means “house of taking away”.

6. Maroth means “bitter”

Shaphir, Zaanan and Beth-ezel, all convey the idea of being deported and Maroth expresses the feelings of a people being deported by the enemy. In 722 BC, Assyria conquered the Northern Kingdom and deported its people, but most of the Southern Kingdom was spared. However, just 20 years later during Sennacherib's campaign in 701 BC, the Assyrians captured many cities in Judah and deported a significant part of the population, especially in the lowlands (Shephelah). Jerusalem and its immediate vicinity were the only parts of the kingdom that remained under Judean control.

Verse 13

¹³ **Harness the chariot to the team of horses,
You inhabitant of Lachish—
She was the beginning of sin
To the daughter of Zion—
Because in you were found
The rebellious acts of Israel.**

See map 135



7. Lachish means "to the steeds" (warhorses).

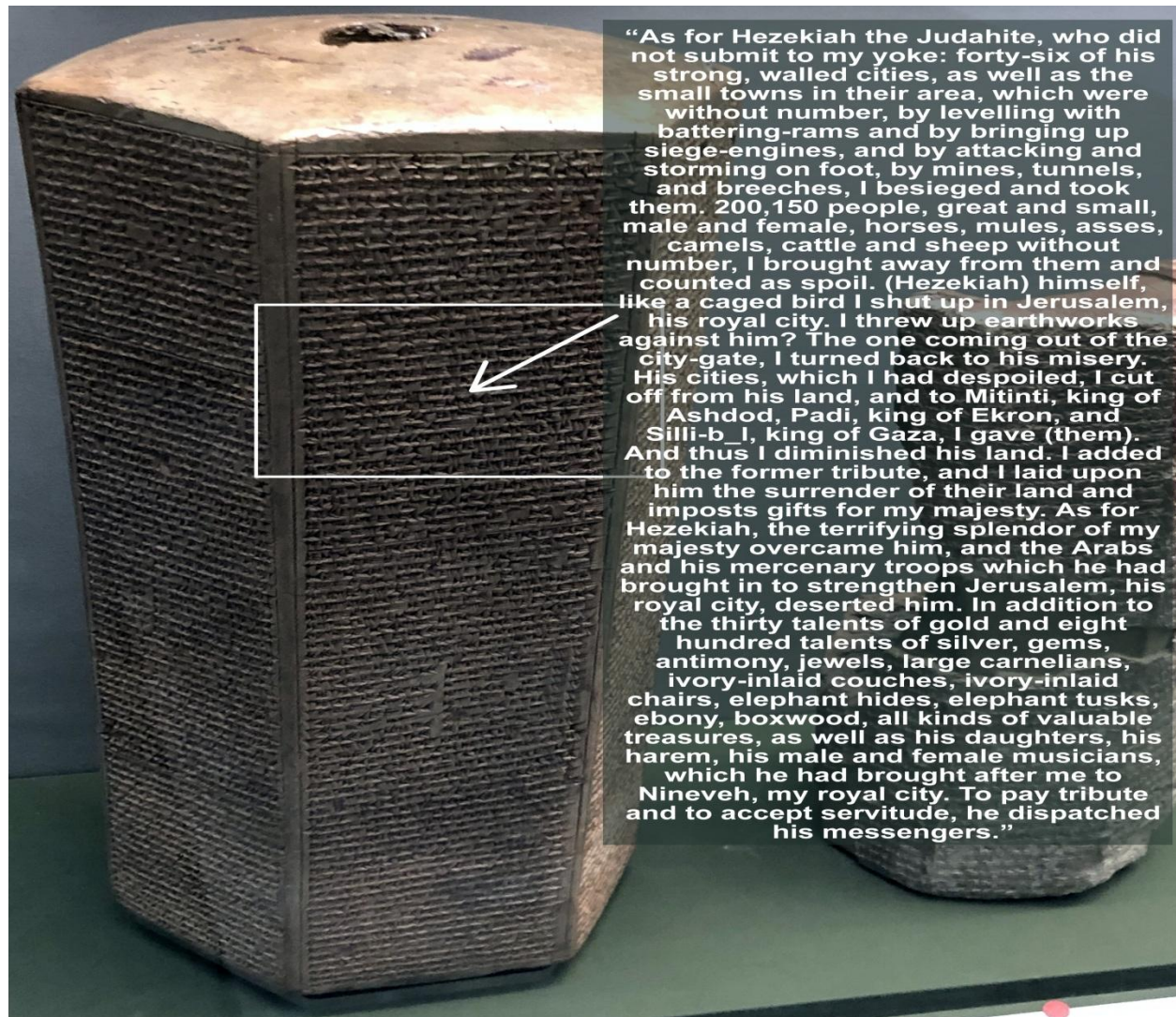
The text says that Lachish was the beginning of the sin of the Southern Kingdom. Apparently, Lachish must have been the first city to permit the Northern Israelite cults to be established in it. This sin then spread throughout Judah and because of this Lachish and 45 other towns and villages near Jerusalem were destroyed by Sennacherib in 701 BC.

See 2 Kings 18:13

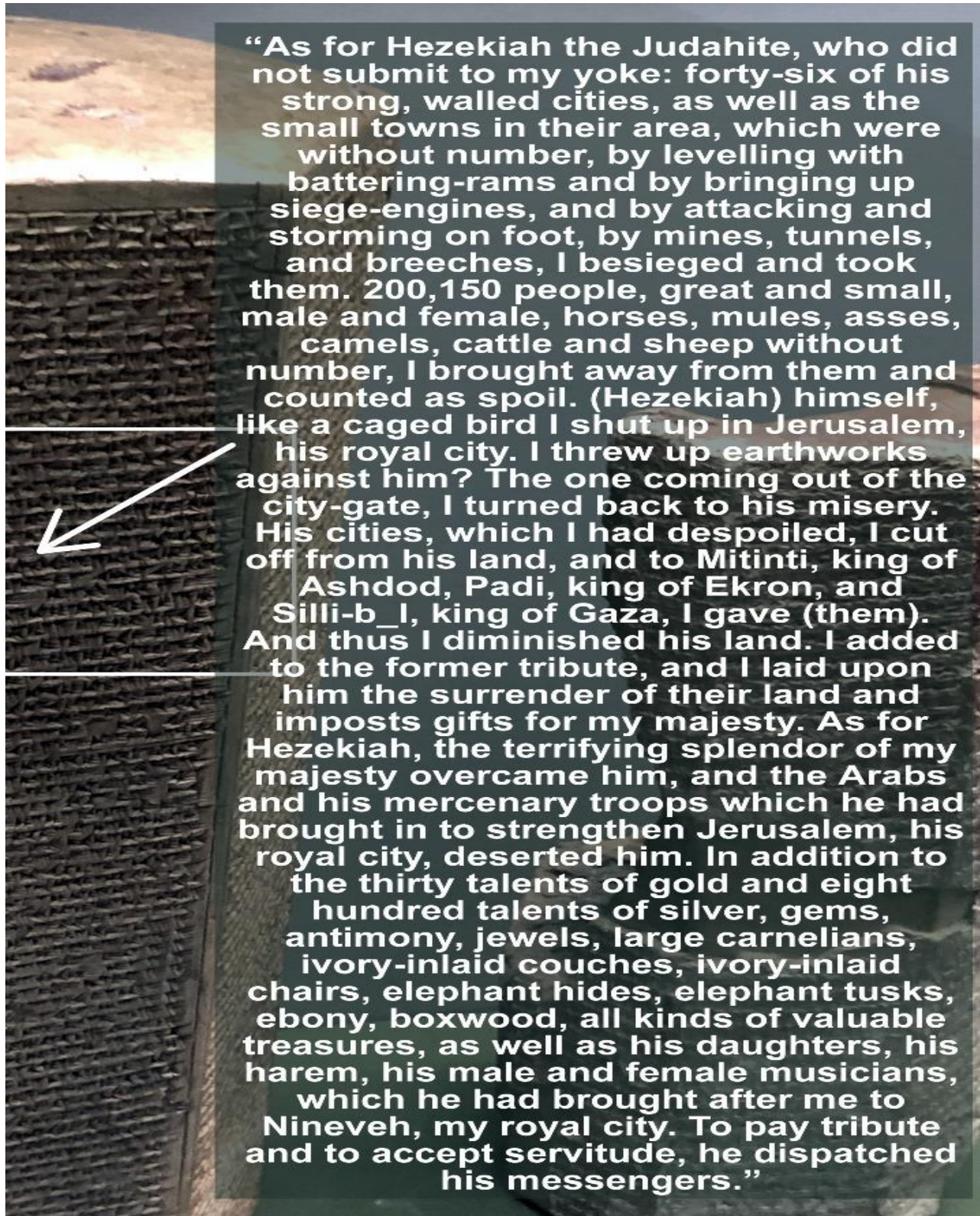
¹³ Now in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, Sennacherib king of Assyria marched against all the fortified cities of Judah and seized them.

Sennacherib himself took part in the siege of Lachish; and excavations of his palace reliefs depict him receiving the spoils of Lachish. Archaeological records, specifically the Taylor Prism, state that the Assyrians deported 200,150 people from Judah.

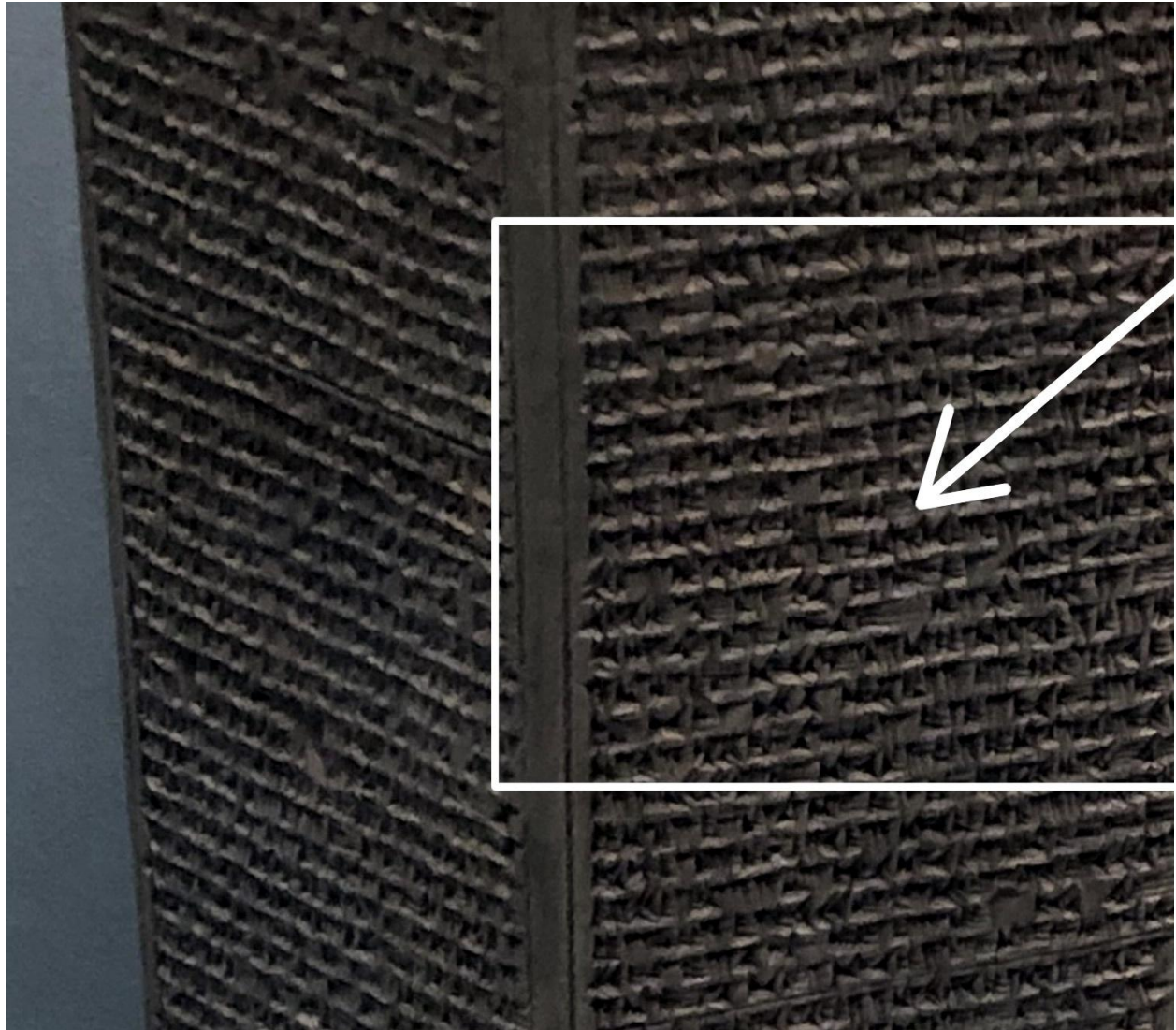
See Pic 140 Two close up pics are provided below.



See pic 145



See pic 150



Verse 14

**¹⁴ Therefore you will give parting gifts
In behalf of Moresbeth-gath;
The houses of Achzib *will* become a deception
To the kings of Israel.**

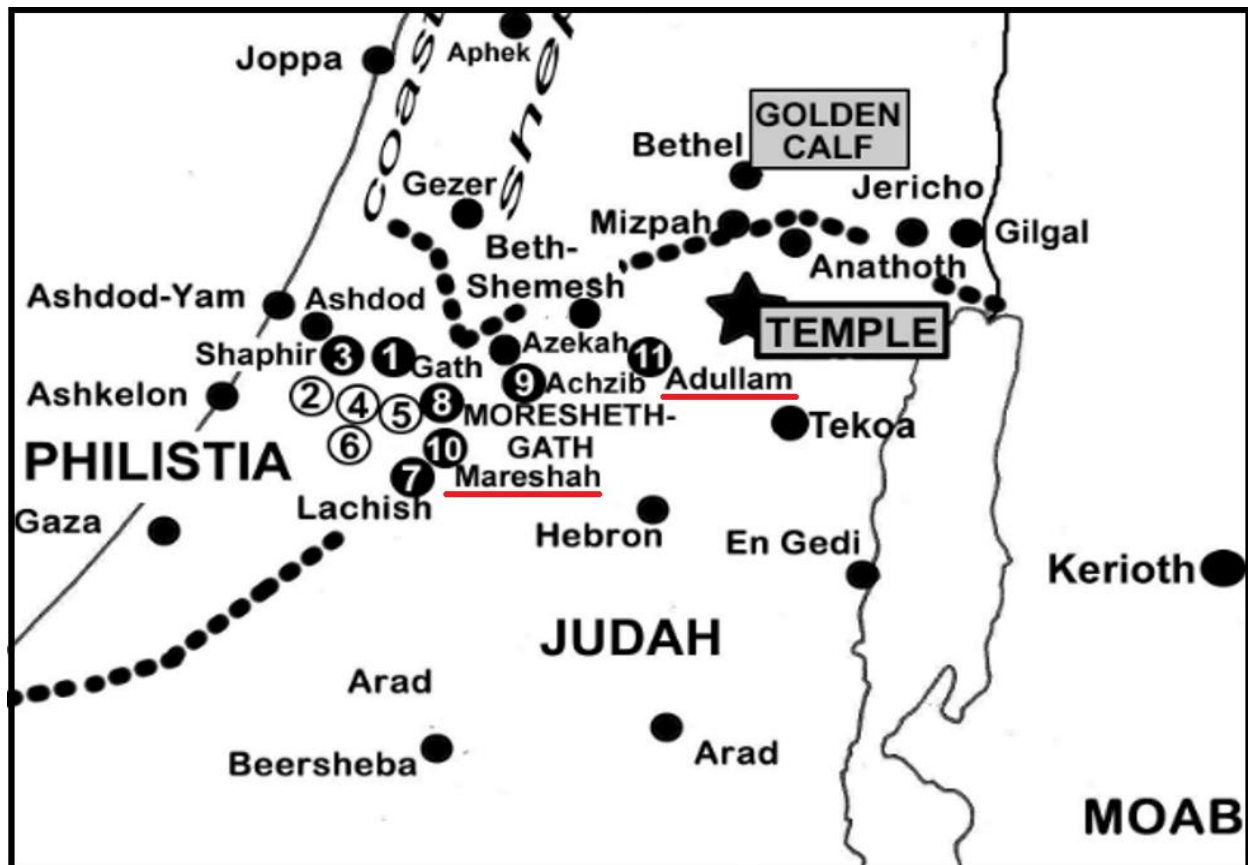
8. Moresbeth-gath means “one who is betrothed”. This was Micah’s home town.

9. Achzib means “deception”. This city would become a "deceitful thing" (a lying hope) to the kings of Israel.

Verse 15

¹⁵ Moreover, I will bring on you
The one who takes possession,
You inhabitant of Mareshah.
The glory of Israel will enter Adullam.

See Map 155



10. Mareshah means “conqueror”. God would bring Assyria (the conqueror) to Israel.

11. Adullam was a name associated with the dark days of distress for King David. David hid in the cave of Adullam to save his life from King Saul.

See 1 Samuel 22:1

So David departed from there and escaped to the cave of Adullam; and when his brothers and all his father’s household heard *about it*, they went down there to him.

Both kingdoms of Israel would come under great stress and find themselves looking for a cave of Adullam to hide in from the enemy.

Verse 16

16 Shave yourself bald, yes, cut off your hair,
Because of the children of your delight;
Extend your baldness like the eagle,
For they will go from you into exile.

Jewish men were not to shave themselves bald when they were mourning.

See Deuteronomy 14:1

“You are sons of the Lord your God; you shall not cut yourselves nor shave a bald spot above your forehead for the dead.

The younger men and woman (their children) were exiled because they brought a higher price at the slave markets or because they would enrich the Assyrian people by being productive members of the new kingdom. In either case the parents of these young adults were unlikely to see their kids or their grandkids. The very young and the older members were often killed or died on the way to their “new home”.

All of this pain and suffering could have been avoided if they had loved the Lord and kept His law. Serving the Lord can be difficult at times but not serving Him leads to much more pain and suffering.