

Empire: When a ruler takes over other areas and rules over people that are not his own.

Sumerian Government

- City states ruled over small populations. They had their own kings but they weren't empires.

Sargon

- Lived in 2300 BCE and he united all of the Sumerian City states under his rule

Hammurabi

- Lived in 1800 BCE and also united all of the Sumerian City states

Hammurabi's Code

- Hammurabi wrote one code of law for all of the city states. He chose the laws that the majority of the city states already held.

Jewish History vs. World History

- The Torah is recording events to create a nation with morals and a connection to Israel. So it is not solely for recording events, it teaches a lesson with every recorded story because they have a purpose.
- World history is strictly for recording events.

Historical Memory

- The remembered event. It might differ from the actual event but this is the one that lives on in other religious works.

Phoenicians

- The Phoenicians were extremely wealthy sea traders from lebanon.
- They had huge and plentiful trade routes across the whole mediterranean
- Their initial wealth came from the purple dye they made from snails for the techelet.

Royal Colors

- Purple and blue got the names “Royal Blue” and “Royal Purple” because only the rich could afford it

Military vs. Commercial Empire

- The Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, and Hammurabi were **Military Empires**
- A **Commercial Empire** controls trade routes, ports, and access to goods. The Phoenicians were a Commercial Empire.

The Alphabet

- The Phoenicians invented the phonetic alphabet.

Shlomo and the Phoenicians

- Shlomo gets the building materials for the Beit Hamikdash from the Phoenicians
- Solomon got labor for the temple from the other nations living in the land David conquered

The Split

- After Shlomo builds the Beit Hamikdash, he dies and his son, Rehoboam, takes over and does a bad job to the 10 tribes seceded.
- Judah, Benjamin - Kingdom of Judah
- The other 10 - Kingdom of Israel

Everybody wants Sumer and Egypt because they are fertile

Hittites

- Developed a cool new chariot
- Iron
- Because of iron, they conquered most of the “world” at that time
 - Ruled from 1400 BCE to 1100 BCE

Assyrians

- 1100 BCE
- From Syria
- Take over Sumer, Israel, Egypt, and others.
- Establish the capital in Ninveh (It used to be in Syria but they moved it to the fertile crescent)
- Ruthless warriors, and used torture and propaganda
 - They’re very proud of this

What do empires want?

Money (taxes)

Labor

Land

The Assyrian Plan

- Ruthless warriors that conquered a few kingdoms horribly, then the other kingdoms were just intimidated.
- The easiest thing to do is to leave their money-producing farms and buildings intact so they can give you taxes
- Make **Vassal States**
 - A king remains in his rule over his own people
 - He still feels very subordinated and bad.
 - But you still pay taxes (from the people) & tribute (from the ruler's own treasury, presented to the Assyrian king by the Vassal State king in a subordinating way)
 - Still "independent"
 - They are intimidated by their ruthless warriors into complying.

Assyrian Reputation

- They were ruthless warriors who devastated a few places, and then the rest of the vassal states were just intimidated
- They had huge statues and reliefs depicting their ruthlessness in the palaces

Rebellion

- Some kings rebel and stop paying the taxes.
- So they attack those people and kill the king

Seige

- The kings tried protecting themselves with walls.
- Bring everyone, all the food, all the animals, all the water inside the walls and hunker down.

- The point of a siege (because you can't win) is to be in a better situation than the soldiers attacking you. (Because you have houses, food, water). And who will give up faster.
 - But it's still horrible in the city because disease spreads, and most people die from disease.

The Battering Ram

- To get inside the walls, the Assyrians invent the battering ram.

Israel in the Empire

This is the standard turn of events in their strategy

1. Israel becomes a Vassal State in 738 BCE
 - a. Israel rebels in 724 BCE - stops paying taxes, builds walls around cities, starts stockpiling.
2. King Hoshea (the king of Israel) rebelled, and the Assyrians kill and torture *just him*. They appoint a puppet king in 724 BCE
3. The new puppet king rebels in 722 BCE
 - a. Then they devastate your kingdom, sell you into slavery, the usual.
 - b. They turn Israel into a province

Province - The *land* of a people that have been transmigrated. An official part of the empire, ruled by an Assyrian.

10 Lost Tribes

- After the puppet king rebels, the Assyrians turn Israel into a province (722 BCE)
- The 10 tribes of Israel are then "lost", assimilated.
 - Some might have managed to flee to Judah, still a vassal state.
 - In 586 BCE, the First Temple is destroyed by the Babylonians, and Judah becomes a province also.

- Some old Jews remain in Israel (because they're old) and teach the new, transmigrated people, about Judaism and make a pseudo-Jewish religion called Samaritans.

Assyrian Strategy

1. Make **Vassal States** - Get intimidated into paying taxes
 - a. A king remains in his rule over his own people
 - i. He still feels very subordinated and bad.
 - b. But you still pay taxes (from the people) & tribute (from the ruler's own treasury, presented to the Assyrian king by the Vassal State king in a subordinating way)
 - c. Still "independent"
 - d. They are intimidated by their ruthless warriors into complying.
2. Puppet King - You rebel, so we kill your king and replace it with ours
 - a. They kill the current king of a rebelling kingdom, and replace him with a pathetic nobody who will do anything the Assyrians tell him to do.
3. Re-rebellion - The puppet king rebelled? Okay, say your prayers!
 - a. The puppet king rebels, so the Assyrians go full force.
 - i. Destroy the land, the buildings
 - ii. Kill / torture the puppet king, the elite, and the soldiers
 - iii. Able-bodied men become slaves, everyone else gets transmigrated.

Transmigration

- Taking people out from their homeland and scattering them throughout your kingdom.
- Not exiling everyone together, it is too dangerous to keep alike people together. They disperse everyone so they assimilate.
- Split families, tribes, etc.

Judah in the Empire

- Judah also becomes a vassal state in 738 BCE
- Israel tries to get Judah to rebel with them in 724 BCE, but they didn't.
- King Hezekiah (of Judah) in 701 BCE rebels with Egypt and Ekron.

The Siege of 701 BCE

- The Characters:

Egypt	Judah	Assyria
Pharaoh	Hezekiah	Sennacherib
Egyptian Source	Tanakh	Sennacherib's Prism - Royal Record

- How can you tell that Sennacherib's prism is false?
 - Because it says that after the Jews rebel for the *first time*, they besiege the city and as a result of that, Hezekiah sees the error of his ways and submits. This goes against the usual Assyrian way of killing the king and the elite and appointing a puppet king.

Sennacherib's Prism	Tanach	Egyptian Record
Siege other cities	Siege other cities	Siege of Egypt
Other cities are destroyed	Other cities are destroyed	
Jerusalem is besieged	Jerusalem is besieged	
Hezekiah submits	God sends a plague and the Assyrians retreat	Gods send mice to destroy weapons and the Assyrians retreat

Sennacherib doesn't really conflict with the Tanach, he just "accidentally" leaves out the part about how the siege of Jerusalem ends

The religious sources are for teaching a lesson, the royal texts are for making the king look good

The Babylonians

- After Sennacherib dies, Assyria falls apart. This leaves a void for a new Empire to take control.
- Enter the Babylonians! Led by Nebucadnezzar, they are run from Babylon in the fertile crescent.

Nebucadnezzar

- Nebucadnezzar conquers the kingdom of Judah (there's no kingdom of Israel anymore) and get rid of King Jeconiah and appoint a puppet king out the gate.
 - He exiles King Jeconiah and 400 elites (Prophets, Priests, Artisans, Military) to Babylon (the capital city) and keep an eye on them.

Jeremiah

- Jeremiah sends a letter to Babylon with his prophecy (597 BCE):
 - "Live there and multiply. God has sent you there, and if Babylon succeeds, then you will too. Pray for the welfare of Babylon (Why? Because they are their hosts). Find spouses for your children, plant trees (these things show that you're gonna be there for a long time), set yourselves up. Don't listen to the prophets that are with you, they are fake. In 70 years, Hashem will bring you back. Have a relationship with God, still. Talk to Him. (This is really weird, because at that time, personal prayer was unheard of) Hashem will send Babylon to destroy Judah, because they did not listen. (They weren't supposed to rebel against Babylon)

- Lots of these things are weird to them, but not to us. Because the idea of praying for your hosts and davening outside of Israel, were not normal back then.
- They *want* to hear that they're gonna go back because they want Nebucadnezzar to die.

The Exiles Reaction to Jeremiah

- They don't listen to Jeremiah, because the false prophets are saying the opposite.
- They also don't listen to Jeremiah because, historically (701 Assyrians), Judah hasn't been destroyed when they rebel
 - Also, they think God won't let His own temple be destroyed.
 - They don't think that *their* God would turn on *them* and side with the Babylonians.

Rebellion of 587 BCE

- In 587 BCE, Zedekiah rebels
 - 10 Tevet - Siege starts
 - 17 Tamuz - Can't bring any korbanot anymore, no animals left.
 - 9 Av (586) - Temple burned down
- In 586 BCE, the rest of the Jews are exiled

Persia

- Came out of Iran
 - Iranians are not Arabs, they are not from the Arabian peninsula
 - But they are Muslim, and Arabic is the language of their religious text.

Cyrus

- Cyrus is great.
- His empire is larger than the Assyrians or Babylonians.

- Is nice to people
 - Lets them practice their religions
 - Lets the Jews go back to Israel
- Moves his capital to Babylon

Cyrus's Strategy

- Cyrus viewed himself as a very benevolent, tolerant king.
- Instead of being feared, Cyrus wants to be loved.
 - That is why he is "Great"
 - Everyone keeps their religion, culture, and gods.
 - Cyrus believes in all the gods of everyone he conquers.
 - He prays to all of their gods, and rebuilds all of the people's temples (because the Assyrians and Babylonians destroyed them). He believes that all of the Gods will help him so he has to have all the temples.
- He lets everyone go back to their homelands.
 - Very dangerous, because this is the path to nations wanting independence.
- He thinks the best way to avoid rebellion is to make them not want to rebel in the 1st place.
- But he doesn't collect as much taxes, because he lowers them.
 - But, he can still make a profit because he can lower the budget on domestic troops keeping people in check. And will spend less money stopping rebellions.
- But he and the Assyrians or Babylonians all have the same goal, power.
 - They want to be seen in different lights.
 - He still uses force, he still kills people, but he wants to be seen in a kind light. Which is what he records in his cylinder.



Ezra

Ezra says that Cyrus:

- Allows the Jews to return to Israel to rebuild
- Provides them with vessels
- Appoints Ezra as governor

According to Tanach, why does Cyrus do this?

Because God told him to, just like Nebucadnezzar only destroyed the temple because God told him to.

Returning to Jerusalem

- Only the Jews who weren't doing so well came back to Jerusalem.
 - Babylon is the financial capital of the world. If they went back, they would have to start over from scratch.
- Cyrus appoints Ezra over Israel.

Diaspora Judaism

- The Jews that *chose* not to go back to Israel
- What we do now (b/c we can live in Israel if we want to)

Darius

- After Cyrus dies, his son Cambyses takes over. Then his bodyguard Darius overthrows him.
- Darius appoints Nechemia over Israel in addition to Ezra.

Darius's Strategy

- He divides the kingdom up and appoints governors (who are usually Persian) to be "The king's eyes and ears"
 - Satrap - The province/governor.

- He builds a royal road for fast relay of information
 - Every 15 miles, there were relay stations to refresh your horse and supplies

Ezra and Nechemia

- The Jews, when they go back, don't have an independent state. It is still part of Persia.
- At this time, the Jewish community who returns to Judah:
 - Don't like the Samaritans
 - Intermarry
- The Jewish community who stayed in Babylon:
 - Are very assimilated
 - Have made a good life for themselves, so they don't want to go back.
 - Intermarried
- All the Jews:
 - Had never seen a sefer torah
 - Don't know what is in the torah
 - Aren't very religious
 - Because of the lack of torah knowledge

Ezra

- Appointed by Cyrus
- Ezra wants to stop intermarriage.
 - So he fasted
- He wants to make laws based on the Torah
 - He makes public readings of the Torah (because most people don't know what was in it)
 - Tries to promote halachic observance
 - He kicked out the non-Jews

Nechemiah

- Appointed by Darius
- Focuses on Physical livelihood
 - Builds walls, the new temple, etc.

The Great Assembly

- 120 people
- Gathered rabbinical figures to decide on observance laws
 - Made the siddur
 - Established Shacharit, Mincha, Maariv
- Spiritual successor to the Sanhedrin
- Have a Beit Din
- Canonize the Torah
 - Formally establish what is part of Tanakh and what isn't.
- Now everyone knows what it means to be Jewish.