

23.13 Jeremiah Preaches against Babylon and Zedekiah; Is Put in Prison (Jeremiah 50; 51; Ezekiel 29; 26; 27; 28; 30:20–26; 31; 2 Kings 25:1, 2; Jeremiah 52:1–5, 29; 32:1–5; 34:8–22; 37)

✓ “*Check*” it out; opinion, inference, supposed conversation, or fact one can verify follows.

[. .] Brackets indicate a remark to the teacher that will not be read aloud; they also show answers to questions.

Visuals and Tools:

- Pictures and other visuals found at the end of this lesson. Check “Activities” and “Handwork” below for additional materials needed. The teacher may wish to color the black and white pictures.
- Scroll with a beanbag (a pretend stone) tied to it
- Optional: Fish with a simulated hook (or hooks) in its jaw. The fish is made from a magnetized sheet used by some businesses for advertising. Make little fish from this magnet, being careful to cut in the direction of the magnetism. These small fish will attach to the larger magnet fish to illustrate Egypt’s multiple fish sticking to the larger fish’s scales.
- Hollow stick or a hollow reed from a water area (Perhaps the stem of an iris plant or a dead tall weed would work if long and stiff enough.) If possible, get enough reeds for the whole class.
- A net about 4x5 feet
- A bread roll or a piece of bread

Bible Time Tips and Terms to Teach: Vocabulary words are enlarged for flashcards at the end of this lesson. Print on colorful cardstock and cut apart.

- *Tyre/Tyrus*: a city and nation north of Israel built on an island [locate]. It was called the “Queen of the Seas” because of its vast trade. Hiram, king of Tyre, a friend of King David, supplied materials and craftsmen to build the Temple. Also, wicked Queen Jezebel from Tyre married Israel’s King Ahab.
- *seventh year*: Sometimes people get in debt—they owe people lots of money. Back when God gave the Law to Israel, if a person owed money and became his creditor’s servant/slave until he could repay, God stipulated that every seven years all servant/slaves must be freed and debts canceled.
- *dungeon*: an underground jail or prison. It was probably damp and cold, a miserable place to stay.
- *sword, famine, pestilence*: war, hunger and starvation, and sickness, all of which cause death

Scripture: ESV; Selected portions; prophecies about foreign countries are omitted.

Jeremiah 52:1 Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Hamutal the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah. 2 And he did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, according to all that Jehoiakim had done. 3 For because of the anger of the Lord it came to the point in Jerusalem and Judah that he cast them out from his presence.

And Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon. 4. . . Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came with all his army against Jerusalem, and laid siege to it. And they built siegeworks all around it. 5 So the city was besieged till the eleventh year of King Zedekiah. . . . 29 in the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar he carried away captive from Jerusalem 832 persons;

32:1 The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord in the tenth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, which was the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar. 2 At that time the army of the king of Babylon was besieging Jerusalem, and Jeremiah the prophet was shut up in the court of the guard that was in the palace of the king of Judah. 3 For Zedekiah king of Judah had imprisoned him, saying, “Why do you prophesy and say, ‘Thus says the Lord: Behold, I am giving this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall capture it; 4 Zedekiah king of Judah shall not escape out of the hand of the Chaldeans, but shall surely be given into the hand of the king of Babylon, and shall speak with him face to face and see him eye to eye. 5 And he shall take Zedekiah to Babylon, and there he shall remain until I visit him, declares the Lord. Though you fight against the Chaldeans, you shall not succeed’?”

8 The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord, after King Zedekiah had made a covenant with all the people in Jerusalem to make a proclamation of liberty to them, 9 that everyone should set free his Hebrew slaves, male and female, so that no one should enslave a Jew, his brother. 10 And they obeyed, all the officials and all the people who had entered into the covenant that everyone would set free his slave, male or female, so that they would not be enslaved again. They obeyed and set them free. 11 But afterward they turned around and took back the male and female slaves they had set free, and brought them into subjection as slaves. 12 The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah from the Lord: 13 “Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: . . . 15 You recently repented and did what was right in my eyes by proclaiming liberty, each to his neighbor, and you made a covenant before me in the house that is called by my name, 16 but then you turned around and profaned my name when each of you took back his male and female slaves, whom you had set free according to their desire, and you brought them into subjection to be your slaves.

17 “Therefore, thus says the Lord: You have not obeyed me by proclaiming liberty, every one to his brother and to his neighbor; behold, I proclaim to you liberty to the sword, to pestilence, and to famine, declares the Lord. I will make you a horror to all the kingdoms of the earth. 18 And the men who transgressed my covenant and did not keep the terms of the covenant that they made before me, I will make them like the calf that they cut in two and passed between its parts— . . . 20 And I will give them into the hand of their enemies and into the hand of those who seek their lives. Their dead bodies shall be food for the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth. 21 And Zedekiah king of Judah and his officials I will give into the hand of their enemies . . . into the hand of the army of the king of Babylon which has withdrawn from you. 22 Behold, I will command, declares the Lord, and will bring them back to this city. And they will fight against it and take it and burn it with fire. I will make the cities of Judah a desolation without inhabitant.”

37:1 Zedekiah the son of Josiah, whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon made king in the land of Judah, reigned. . . . 2 But neither he nor his servants nor the people of the land listened to the words of the Lord that he spoke through Jeremiah the prophet.

3 King Zedekiah sent Jehucal the son of Shelemiah, and Zephaniah the priest, the son of Maaseiah, to Jeremiah the prophet, saying, “Please pray for us to the Lord our God.” 4 Now Jeremiah was still going in and out among the people, for he had not yet been put in prison. 5 The army of Pharaoh had come out of Egypt. And when the Chaldeans who were besieging Jerusalem heard news about them, they withdrew from Jerusalem.

6 Then the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet: 7 “Thus says the Lord, God of Israel: Thus shall you say to the king of Judah who sent you to me to inquire of me, ‘Behold, Pharaoh’s army that came to help you is about to return to Egypt, to its own land. 8 And the Chaldeans shall come back and fight against this city. They shall capture it and burn it with fire.’ 9 Thus says the Lord, ‘Do not deceive yourselves, saying, The Chaldeans will surely go away from us, for they will not go away. 10 For even if you should defeat the whole army of Chaldeans who are fighting against you, and there remained of them only wounded men, every man in his tent, they would rise up and burn this city with fire.’”

11 Now when the Chaldean army had withdrawn from Jerusalem at the approach of Pharaoh’s army, 12 Jeremiah set out from Jerusalem to go to the land of Benjamin to receive his portion there among the people. 13 When he was at the Benjamin Gate, a sentry there named Irijah the son of Shelemiah, son of Hananiah, seized Jeremiah the prophet, saying, “You are deserting to the Chaldeans.” 14 And Jeremiah said, “It is a lie; I am not deserting to the Chaldeans.” But Irijah would not listen to him, and seized Jeremiah and brought him to the officials. 15 And the officials were enraged at Jeremiah, and they beat him and imprisoned him in the house of Jonathan the secretary, for it had been made a prison.

16 When Jeremiah had come to the dungeon cells and remained there many days, 17 King Zedekiah sent for him and received him. The king questioned him secretly in his house and said, “Is there any word from the Lord?” Jeremiah said, “There is.” Then he said, “You shall be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon.” 18 Jeremiah also said to King Zedekiah, “What wrong have I done to you or your servants or this people, that you have put me in prison? 19 Where are your prophets who prophesied to you, saying, ‘The king of Babylon will not come against you and against this land’? 20 Now hear, please, O my lord the king: let my humble plea come before you and do not send me back to the house of Jonathan the secretary, lest I die there.” 21 So King

Zedekiah gave orders, and they committed Jeremiah to the court of the guard. And a loaf of bread was given him daily from the bakers' street, until all the bread of the city was gone.

Introduction/Review:

While Ezekiel was prophesying in Babylon to God's people there, Jeremiah prophesied in Jerusalem. What was his message? [That Babylon would capture Jerusalem; that Nebuchadnezzar would take away captives and all the bronze items from the Temple. (They had already taken the gold and silver.)]

Story: [Teacher, Note: Since Jeremiah is not written in chronological order, this story was difficult to put together. I have followed Jameson, Faucett, and Brown's order, leaving Jeremiah 21 for next week.]

Before we get into today's main story, I want to tell you about some more prophecies that Jeremiah and Ezekiel were proclaiming.

Jeremiah's prophecies against other nations

Jeremiah did not preach against Jerusalem only. He prophesied also against the surrounding nations and even against Babylon itself. God had raised up Babylon to punish the nations, including Judah, but one day He would destroy the city because of its wickedness.

Here are two things God said would happen to Babylon in later years: (1) Nations from the north would overtake Babylon. (2) Babylon would be utterly destroyed—become a wilderness, a dry land, and a desert. No one would ever live there but wild beasts, hyenas, and ostriches. We see from pictures of the area today what a dry deserted place that whole area is; so we know Jeremiah's prophecy has been fulfilled.

About six years before today's story, Judah's King Zedekiah had visited Babylon in the fourth year of his reign. A man named Seraiah had gone with him. Jeremiah had written in a scroll all the prophecies against Babylon that we find in Jeremiah 50 and 51 and had given the scroll to Seraiah with this command: "When you get to Babylon, read all these words and say, 'O Lord, you have said concerning this place that you will cut it off so that nothing shall live in it, neither man nor beast, and it shall be desolate forever.'

"Now, Seraiah," Jeremiah instructed, "when you finish reading this scroll, tie a stone to it and throw it into the middle of the Euphrates River." What would happen to the rock and scroll? [It would sink.] Jeremiah further instructed Seraiah: "Say, 'Thus shall Babylon sink to rise no more because of the disaster that I am bringing upon her.'"

✓I think Zedekiah came back from this visit, jealous of all the beauty of Nebuchadnezzar's palace and kingdom. That's when he remodeled and improved his own palace at the expense of the people, and he began to rebel against King Nebuchadnezzar. In spite of Jeremiah's warnings, he defied Nebuchadnezzar and thought he could get by with his rebellion.

Ezekiel's prophecies about Egypt

Back in Babylon, with his picture prophecies Ezekiel preached against Egypt. [Locate Egypt and the Nile River]. Egypt was dependent upon this river, the Nile River, for its supply of water and for its fish. This is what God said about Egypt: "I am against you. I will put hooks in your jaws [show your magnetic fish], and I will cause the fish of your rivers to stick to your scales. I will leave you in the wilderness, and the land of Egypt shall be utterly waste and desolate for forty years. You will never again be the great kingdom that you once were. You shall know that I am the Lord. Israel trusted in you, and it did them as much good as leaning on a reed for a cane. You, Egypt, will be scattered among the nations." [Take time now—or later—to have students "lean on a reed," showing how it breaks and hurts one's hand.]

Ezekiel's prophecies about Tyre

We told you about Tyre [locate]. Ezekiel devoted three chapters of his book to prophecies against Tyre. "Instead of being a great seaport," God said, "you will be like a big rock to spread nets on to dry. Your downfall will come because in your time of great success, you said, 'I am a God.' Now you will be

broken—you'll be just a rock for nets to dry on." [Spread your net on the floor.]

Nebuchadnezzar and Pharaoh

Last week we learned that God told Ezekiel, the exact date when Nebuchadnezzar began his siege on Jerusalem. It was the ninth year of Zedekiah's reign, the tenth month and the tenth day of the month. ✓That date is probably January 10, 589 B. C.¹ What did Nebuchadnezzar do as he surrounded the city, besieging it? [Built forts and ramps up to the city walls.] Nebuchadnezzar captured 832 people at this time and sent them back to Babylon. ✓It looked as if he would soon be successful in completely taking Jerusalem.

However, the pharaoh of Egypt, ✓having heard about the approach of Nebuchadnezzar and probably being in league with Zedekiah, sent some troops to help Zedekiah at Jerusalem. Nebuchadnezzar heard those Egyptian forces were coming and left off his siege of Jerusalem to drive out the Egyptian soldiers. While Nebuchadnezzar was gone from Jerusalem, people there were able to go in and out of the city again.

Slaves freed—or not?

King Zedekiah, ✓perhaps relieved that the king of Babylon had left him, went to the Temple and announced a covenant in God's name, saying, "All the servant/slaves shall be freed. You can leave your masters and work for yourselves again."

Yes! Zedekiah was doing something right! That must have been a happy day for a lot of people. However, after freeing all these servants, the masters and princes changed their minds about what they had done. ✓"We need those servant-slaves," they might have said. "Let's get them back." So they broke their covenant with God and made the free people slaves again.

You can be sure Jeremiah had a word from God about this injustice! God said, "Way back when you were all slaves in Egypt, I told you to free the slaves every seven years. You recently made a promise before Me in the Temple that you would free these people. Now you have polluted My name by making them slaves again. Thus says the Lord: 'You have not obeyed me by proclaiming liberty to your servants. (1) Now I proclaim "liberty" to you—liberty to the sword, to pestilence, and to famine. Furthermore, (2) Zedekiah king of Judah, and his princes I will give into the hand of the king of Babylon who has gone away from you. (3) I will command and will bring that king and his army back to this city. They will fight against it, take it, and burn it with fire. (4) I will make the cities of Judah a desolation without anyone living there.'"

My, oh, my! What a judgment! What were the four parts of it? [(1) They would have sword, famine, and pestilence; (2) Babylon's king would take King Zedekiah and princes captives; (3) Babylon's king would come back, fight against Jerusalem, and burn it with fire. (4) No one would live in Judah.]

Jeremiah arrested by Irijah in Benjamin

Jeremiah took the opportunity of Nebuchadnezzar's being gone for a while to go to his family home in Benjamin ✓just a couple of miles from the Jerusalem.² But when Jeremiah arrived at the gate of his hometown, he met Irijah, ✓the grandson of Hananiah, the false prophet who had broken Jeremiah's yoke.³ "You are surrendering to the Chaldeans!" Irijah accused.

"No, that's not true," answered Jeremiah. But Irijah would not listen to nor believe Jeremiah. Instead, he took him back to Jerusalem to the princes. Already despising this true prophet of God, those princes became very angry with Jeremiah. They beat him and put him in a special prison—a dungeon with ✓cells so small that a man could hardly sit, stand, or lie down.⁴ Jeremiah stayed there many days.

Zedekiah sends for Jeremiah

After a while for some unwritten reason (✓perhaps because Nebuchadnezzar had returned from chasing the Egyptians and was again besieging Jerusalem), King Zedekiah took Jeremiah out of prison, brought him to his palace, and secretly asked him a question in his house: [Teacher, say this quietly as if you want no one else to hear.] "Is there any word from the Lord?" Zedekiah asked.

“Yes, there is. God says you shall be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon. Now, what have I done against you or your people that you have put me in prison? Where are your prophets who prophesied, saying, ‘The king of Babylon shall not come against you?’ Please, King, I humbly beg of you. Please do not make me go back to that cell in the dungeon or I will die there.”

“Okay,” answered Zedekiah. (✓This is probably only the second kind thing we read about this wicked king.) “You don’t have to go back to the dungeon, but you must stay in the (above-ground) court of the prison. I’ll see to it that you have a piece of bread to eat each day until there is no more bread in the city.”

All of the things we talked about today took place within the ninth and tenth years of Zedekiah’s rule. We know Zedekiah reigned eleven years. He had less than one more year to rule. What would happen to him? We already know because of Jeremiah’s prophecies.

¹*The Reese Chronological Bible*, p. 1072.

²One commentary says the distance was 20 furlongs. If a furlong equals about 607 feet, then 20 x 607 is about 12,140 feet, less than two and half miles away.

³This relationship is disputable, but Irijah’s grandfather’s name was indeed Hananiah, possibly the false prophet.

⁴John Gill

Lessons from this lesson:

- We see Jesus. [Share this portion after reading Ezekiel 18:13–19 found in “Activities” below.]
Even though Satan is strong, believers are safe in Jesus.
- Zedekiah disregarded and rebelled against God’s word, but when he got into trouble, he wanted God to show mercy. God did not show mercy. Although God is merciful, He does not always show mercy. There is a time for judgment and punishment.
- Depend on the Lord and not on people. Zedekiah had depended on help from Egypt. God said that was like using a hollow reed for a cane: it would hurt the hand of Judah and not hold up Jerusalem.

Activities:

- Play dough: fish; piece of bread
- Snack: a slice of bread
- Play act being in a dungeon, unable to stand or sit, being cold, not getting much food. Imagine being in this condition “many days.”
- Read Ezekiel 18:13–19 (ESV) and ask the children who the king of Tyre was like. Explain that some scriptures have double meaning, and here the king of Tyre is representative of Lucifer (Satan).

11 Moreover, the word of the Lord came to me: 12 “Son of man, raise a lamentation over the king of Tyre, and say to him, Thus says the Lord God:

“You were the signet of perfection,
full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. 13
You were in Eden, the garden of God;
. . . 14

You were an anointed guardian cherub.
I placed you; you were on the holy mountain of God;
in the midst of the stones of fire you walked. 15

You were blameless in your ways
from the day you were created,
till unrighteousness was found in you.
. . . 16

[Y]ou were filled with violence in your midst, and you sinned;
so I cast you as a profane thing from the mountain of God,
and I destroyed you, O guardian cherub,
from the midst of the stones of fire. 17

Your heart was proud because of your beauty;
you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor.
I cast you to the ground.”

- Review questions: (Game: Cut a 10-inch diameter hole in a large box. Paint the hole side of the box blue to look like water. Place the box on its side with the hole facing the students. Tie a “scroll” to a bean bag. A student who answers a question correctly may throw the bean bag/scroll one time per question, trying to get the scroll through the hole—“into the water.”)
 1. Name and locate on the map two cities or countries in today’s lesson. [Jerusalem, Babylon, Egypt, Tyre.]
 2. Who lived and prophesied in Jerusalem? [Jeremiah.]
 3. Who lived and prophesied in Babylon? [Ezekiel.]
 4. After God’s judgment on Tyre, the “Queen of the Seas,” what would it be like? [A rock to dry nets.]
 5. The army of what country caused Nebuchadnezzar to leave Jerusalem for a while? [Egypt.]
 6. What happened when Jeremiah went to his hometown in the tribe of Benjamin? [He was arrested.]
 7. What terrible thing had the princes done to their slaves after freeing them? [Enslaved them again.]
 8. Why did King Zedekiah secretly send for Jeremiah? [He wanted a word from God but didn’t want anyone to know he was asking Jeremiah.]

Memory Verse[s]: (ESV)

- Psalm 1 (The KJV has visuals at [psalm 1 - Bing images](#) words only, and [Tree & Psalm 1 - Openclipart](#) with a tree in the picture. The ESV has one at [\(840\) Pinterest](#) with a lamp and a Bible in the picture.)
 - 1 Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked,
nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers;
 - 2 but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night.
 - 3 He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season,
and its leaf does not wither.
In all that he does, he prospers.
 - 4 The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away.
 - 5 Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;
 - 6 for the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

Handwork:

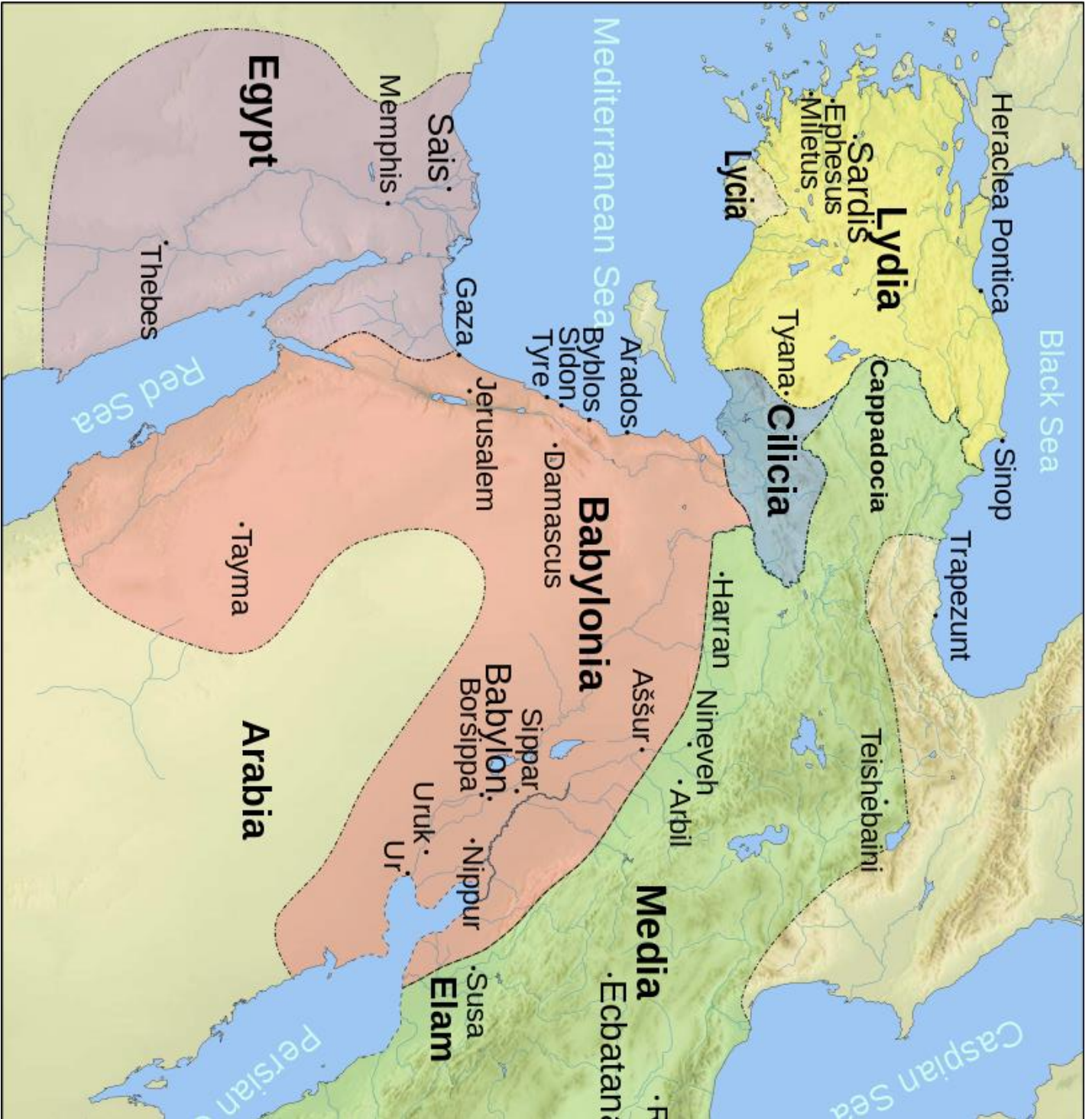
- Print a fish with accompanying text (found below) for each student (one-half page). Cut out 1-to 2-inch fish from strips of yellow paper. Students will glue 6 or more small fish to the printed one. (clip art at [www.businesscliparts.com.](#))

Tyre/Tyrus

seventh year

dungeon

sword, famine, pestilence



map ancient middle east - Search Images (bing.com)



Babylon's Ishtar Gate at the Pergamum Museum in Berlin



[present day babylon - Search Images \(bing.com\)](#)

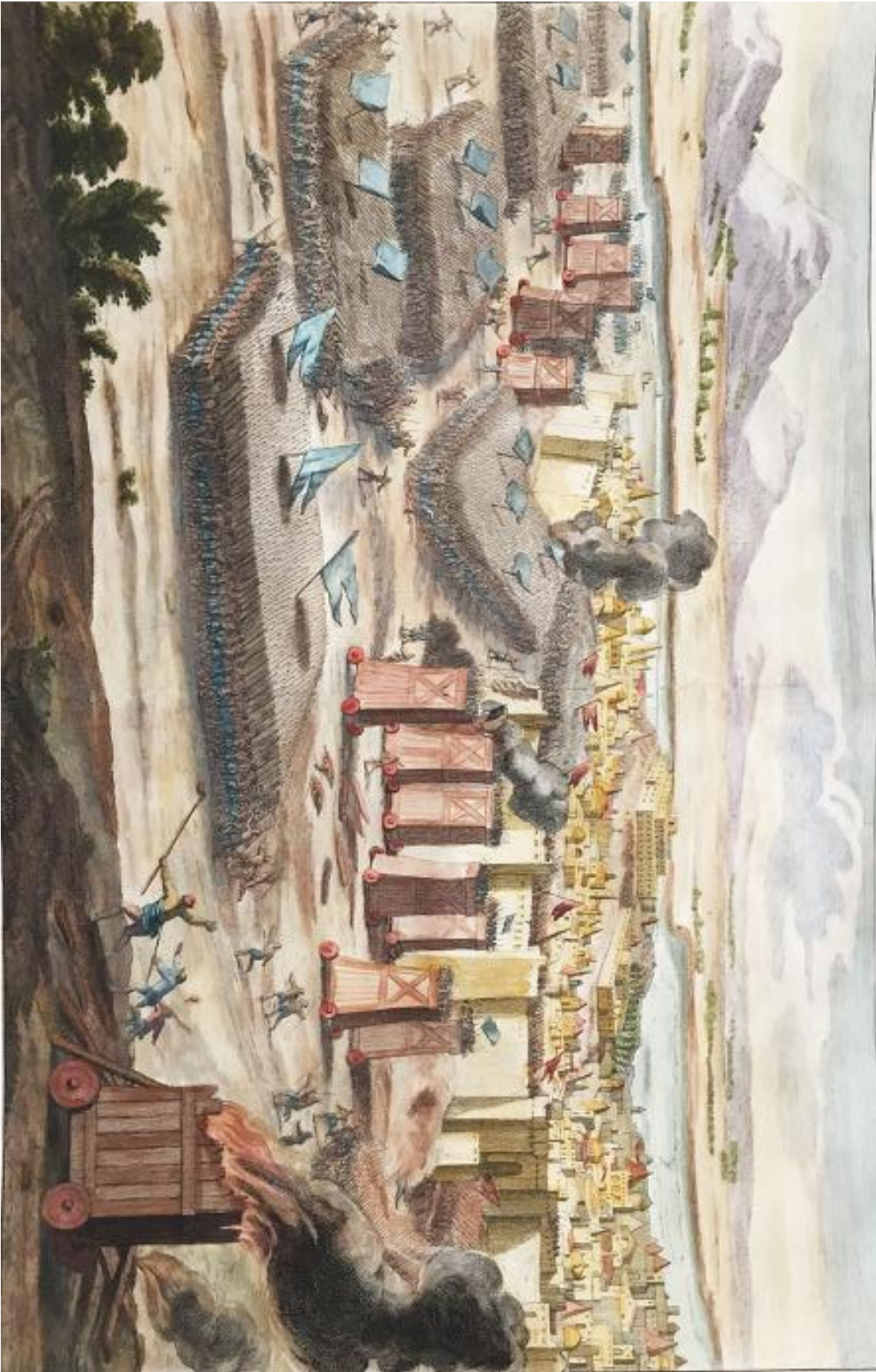


"Thou shalt bind a stone to it, and cast it into the midst of Euphrates."—*Jer.* ii. 63.





[country and city of Tyre - Search Images \(bing.com\)](#)



[siege works around Jerusalem in Jeremiah's time - Search Images \(bing.com\)](#)

January 589 D.C.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
DECEMBER/89 S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	1 New Year's Day	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15 Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday	16	17	18	26	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31		First Quarter 4th Full Moon 11th Last Quarter 18th New Moon 26th	FEBRUARY/90 S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28

*Nebuchadnezzar to
Loy's Jerusalem!*



“That every man should let his man-servant and . . . his maid-servant . . . go free.”— *Jer.* xxxiv, 9.

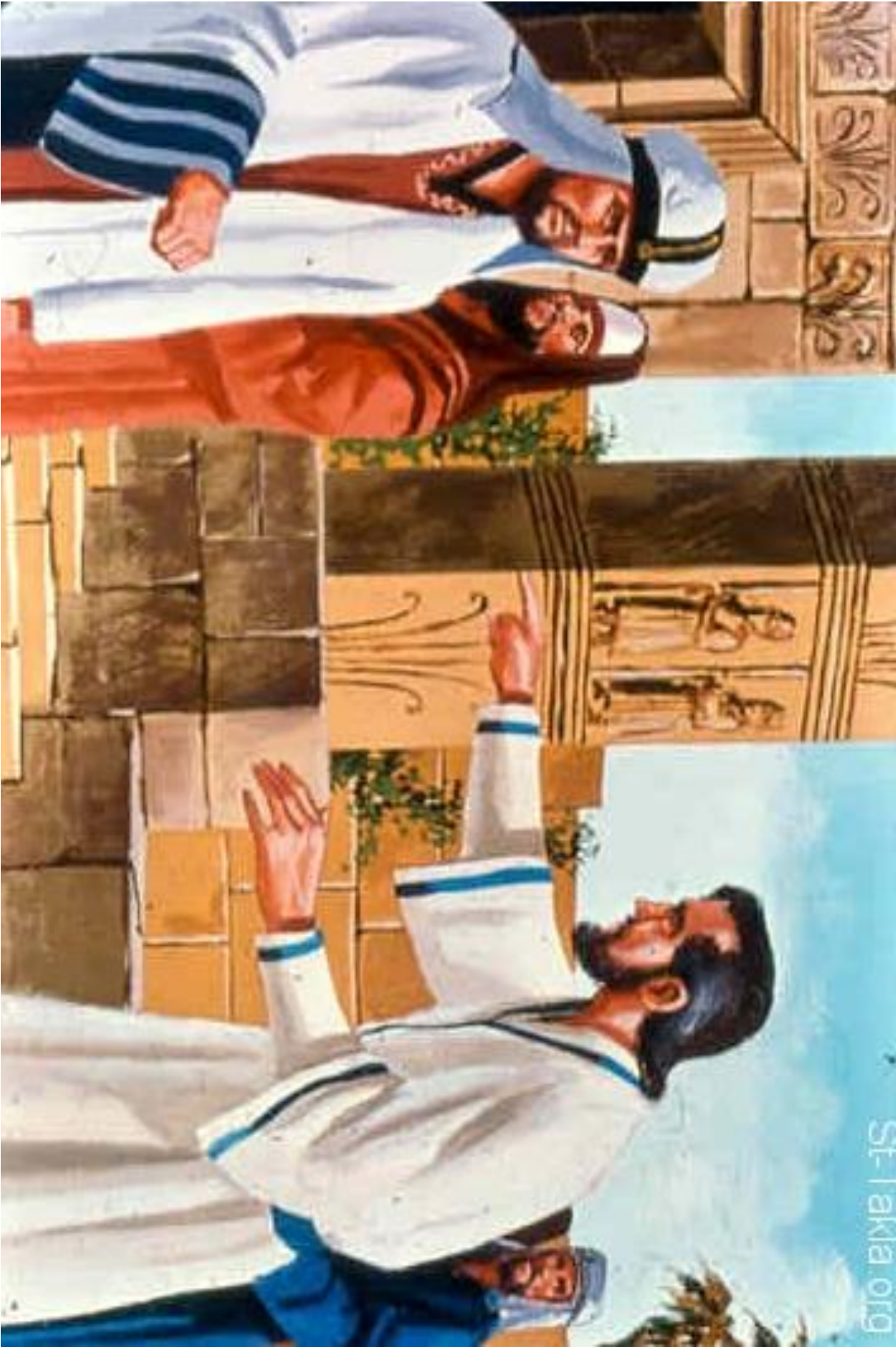
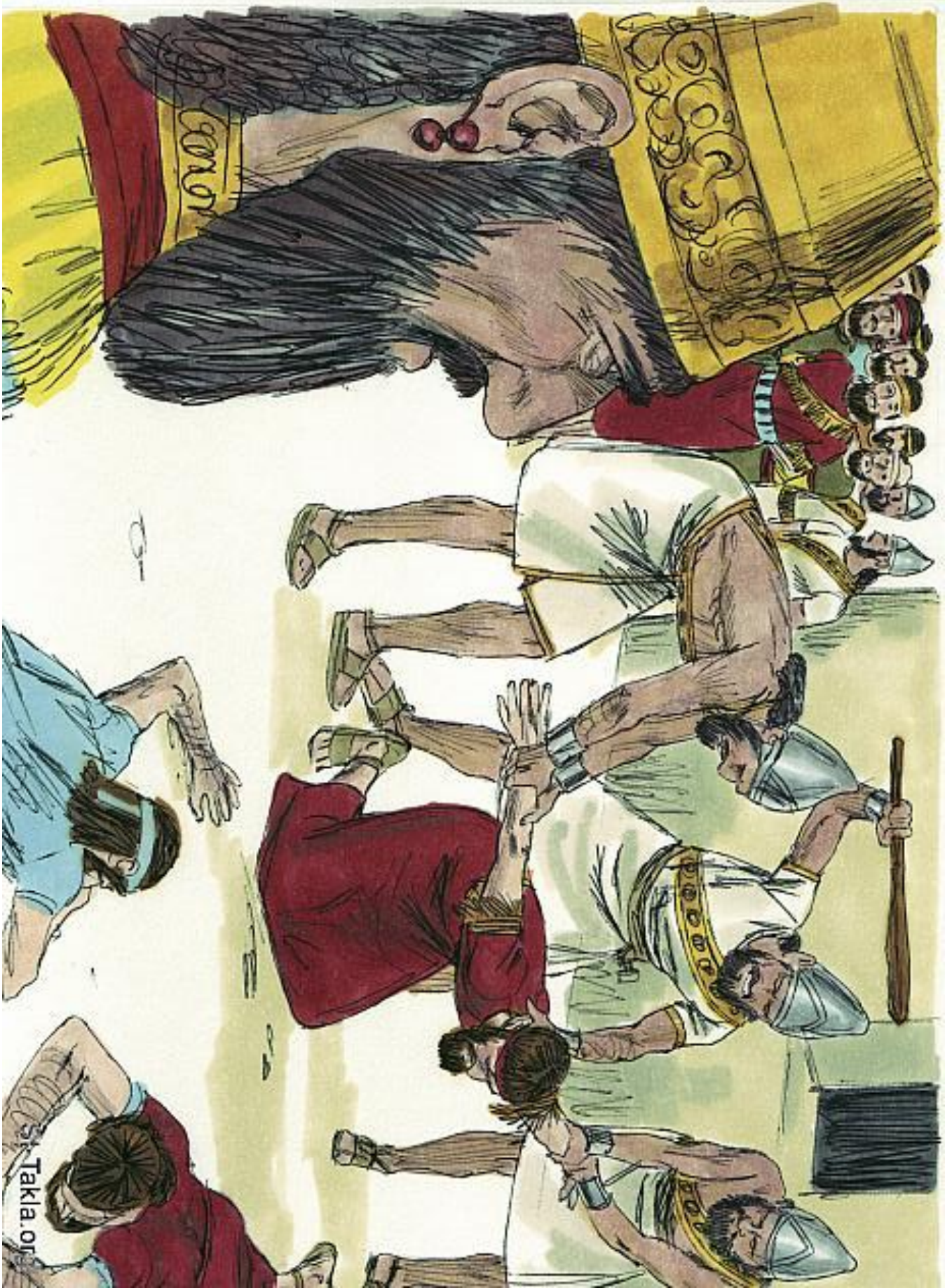


Image: The priest listens to Jeremiah [ارميا يسمع الكاهن صورة \(st-takla.org\)](http://st-takla.org)

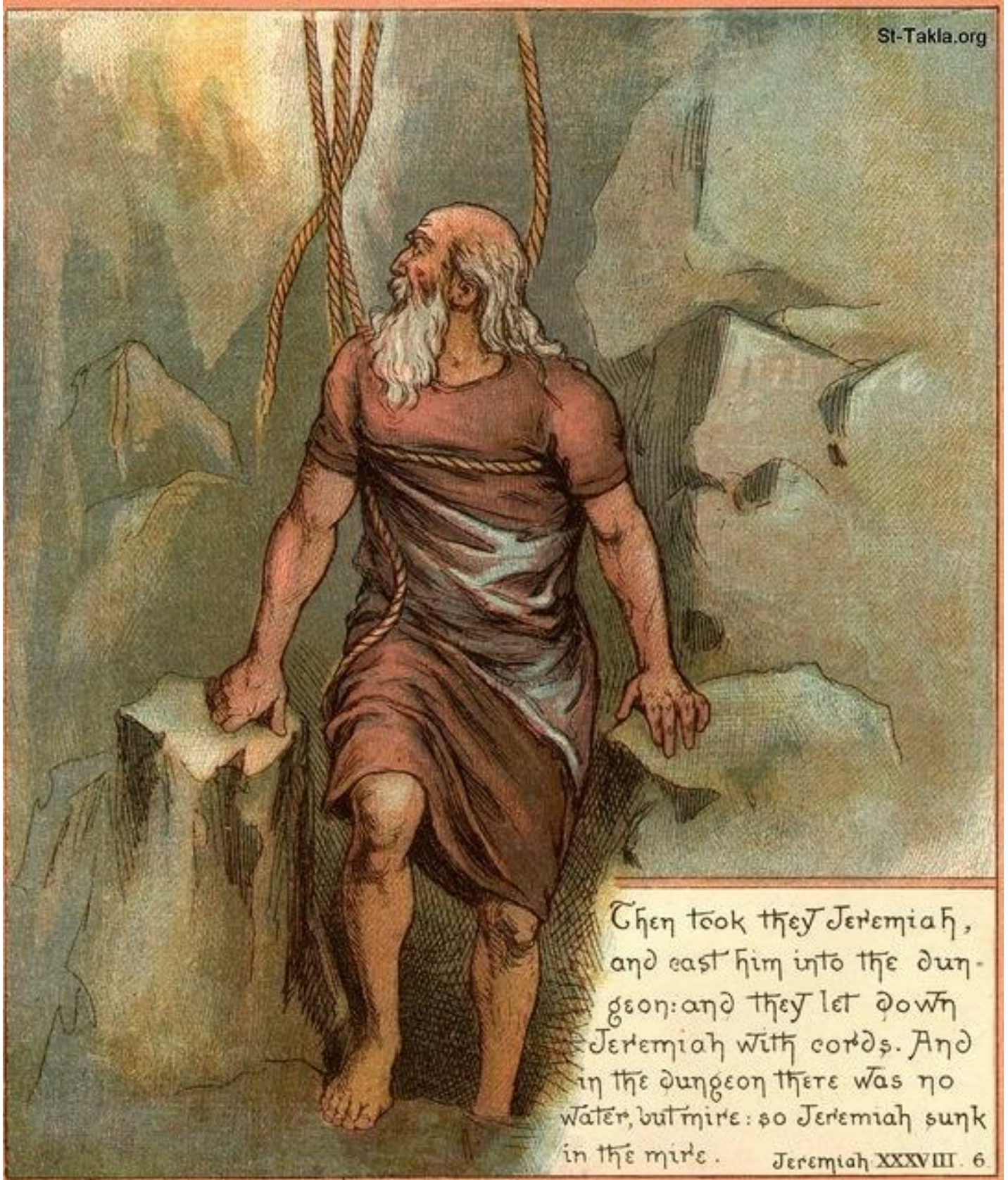


[Image: sweet bible 2Ki 25 06 \(st-takla.org\)](http://sweet-bible.com/2Ki-25-06)

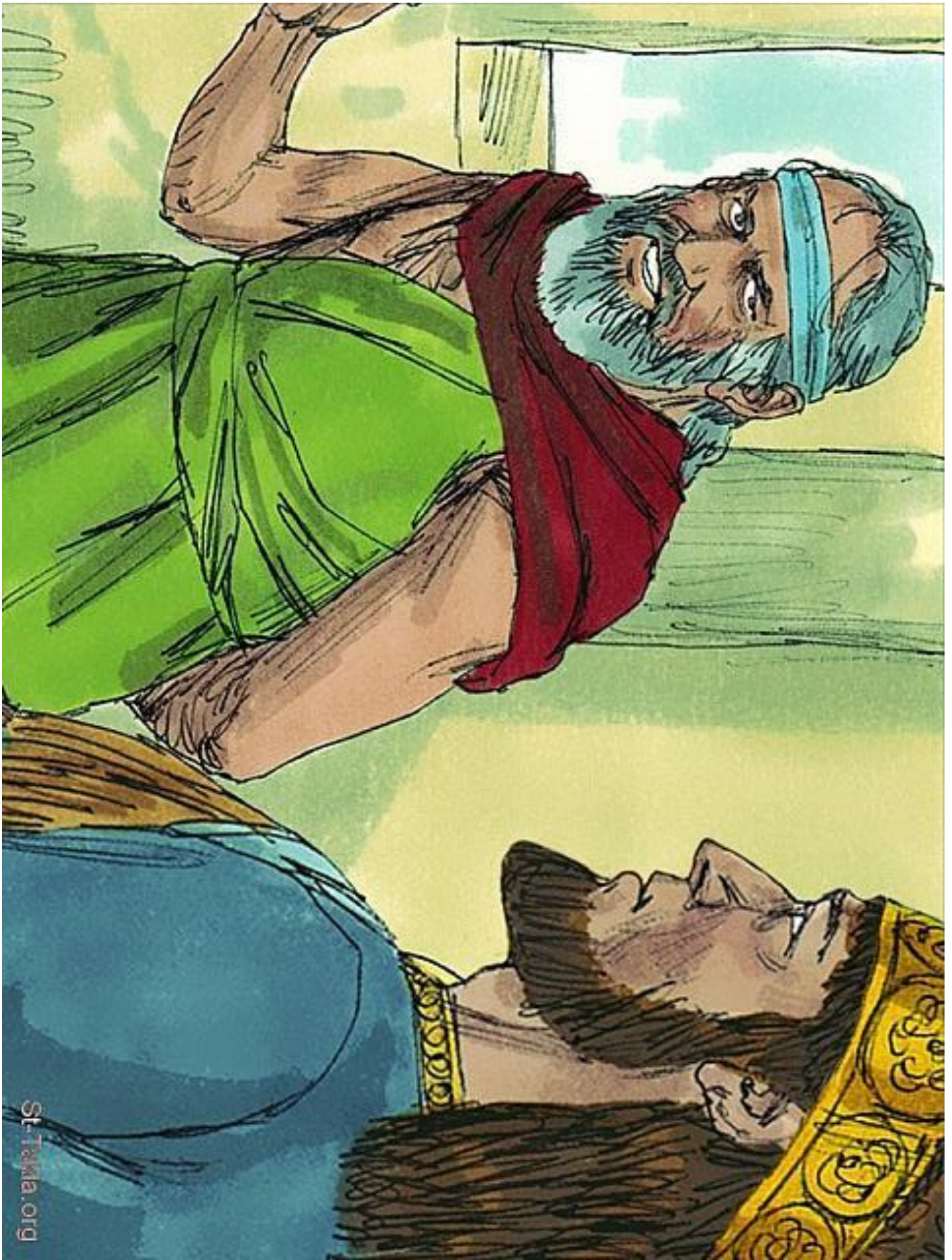


St-Takla.org

Jeremiah arrested



Then took they Jeremiah,
and cast him into the dun-
geon: and they let down
Jeremiah with cords. And
in the dungeon there was no
water, but mire: so Jeremiah sunk
in the mire. Jeremiah XXXVIII. 6



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God's Judgment on Egypt



Ezekiel 29:4, 15— Egypt shall be the most lowly of the kingdoms, and never again exalt itself above the nations; and I will make them so small that they will never again rule over the nations.

God's Judgment on Egypt



Ezekiel 29:4, 15— Egypt shall be the most lowly of the kingdoms, and never again exalt itself above the nations; and I will make them so small that they will never again rule over the nations.



This is the magnet side of my fish with various other small magnet fish.