

What God is Doing



Act I: The Foundation of the Gospel

(Genesis 1-John 21)

Scene Two: The Nation Is Scattered

Step One: A Divided Kingdom (Israel and Judah)

Step Two: The Assyrian Crisis (Israel Destroyed)

Step Three: The Babylonian Crisis (Judah in Captivity)

Act One, Scene Two
Step One: A Divided Kingdom
(Israel and Judah)

Suggested reading: Nehemiah 13:22 - 28;
13:22-28; 17 - 18



The “Great Nation” begins to dissolve!

“King Solomon... loved many foreign women besides Pharaoh’s daughter—Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, and Hittites. They were from nations about which the Lord had told the Israelites, “You must not intermarry with them, it will surely turn your heart after their gods.” Nevertheless, Solomon held fast to them in love... 700 wives... and 300 concubines, and his wives lead him astray. As Solomon grew old, his wives tafter other urned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the Lord his God, as the heart of David his father had been. He followed Ashthoreth the goddess of the Sidonians and Molech the the detestable God of the Ammonites. So Solomon did evil in the eyes of the Lord... [HE] built a high place for Chemosh... and for Molech... He did the same for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and offer sacrifices to their gods.”

1 Kings 11:1-7

FlashForward –the lingering effects of Solomons sin

300 years later, during a revival under Josiah, is noted that:”Josiah destroyed the high places that Solomon had built for Ashteroth.” 2 Kings 23:13

500 years later while instituting reforms Nehemiah said:

“I rebuke them and call curses down on them. I beat some of the men and pulled their hair. I made them take an oath in God’s name and said, “You are not to give your daughters in marriage to their sons, nor are you to take their daughters in marriage for your sons or for yourselves.

Was it not because of marriages like these that Solomon king of Israel sinned? Among the many nations there was no king like him. He was loved by his God, and God made him king over all Israel, but even he was led into sin by foreign women.

Must we hear now that you too are doing all this terrible wickedness and are being unfaithful to our God by marrying foreign women?”

Nehemiah 13:25-26

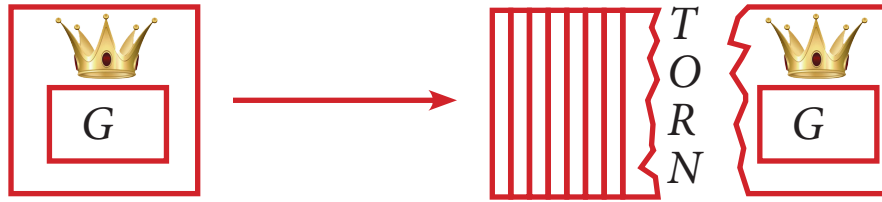
God’s response to Solomon’s sin

Some terrible “I will”s” (I Kings 11: 9-13)

“The Lord became angry with Solomon because his heart had turned away from the LROD, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice. Although he had forbidden Solomon to follow other gods, Solomon did not keep the Lord’s command.

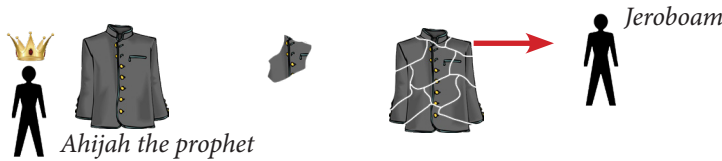
So the Lord said to Solomon, ‘Since this is your attitude and you have not kept my covenant and my decrees... “I will most certainly tear your kingdom from you... I will not do it doing your lifetime. I will tear it out of the hand of your son.

Yet I will not tear the whole kingdom from him, but will give him one tribe for the sake of David my servant and for the sake of Jerusalem, which I have chosen.”



The fulfillment of the terrible “I Wills”

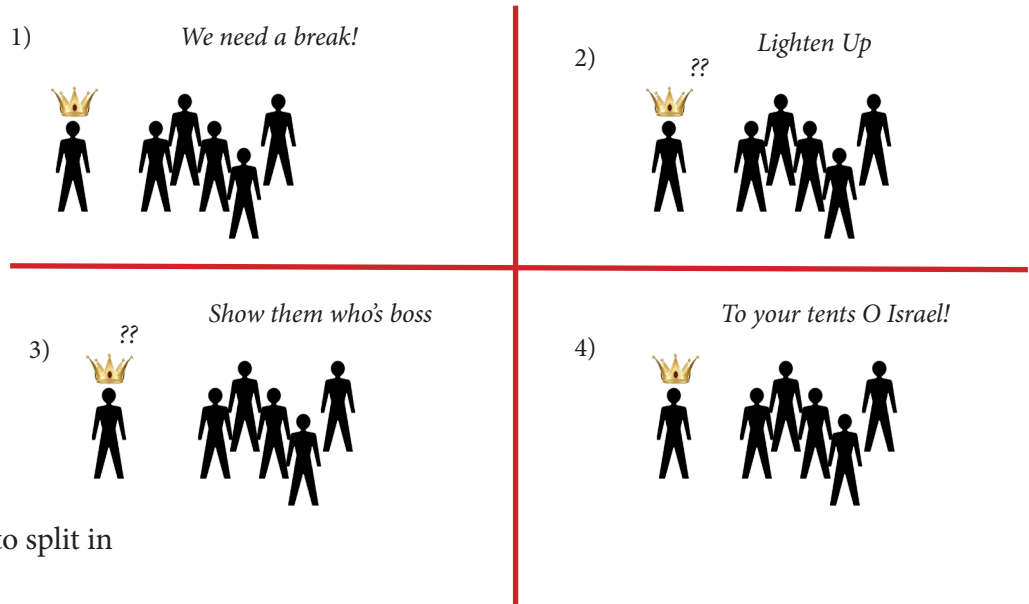
Jeroboam’s opportunity (1 Kings 11: 26-43)



“Then [the LORD] said to Jeroboam, “Take ten pieces for yourself, for this is what the LROD, the God of Israel, says: See I am going to tear the kingdom out of Solomon’s hand and give you ten tribes... I will do this because they have forsaken me and worshiped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians... and have not walked in my ways, nor done what is right in my eyes...”

If you do whatever I command you and walk in my ways and do what is right in my eyes... I will be with you. I will build you a dynasty as endearing as the one I built for David and will give Israel to you...” (11: 31-38)

Rehoboam’s folly (1 Kings 12: 1-24)



*Note the tendency to split in
Judges 5: 14-18;
2 Samuel 2:1-4, 19: 41-20:2

Finally, the “Great nation” reaches the point of civil war... but God said:

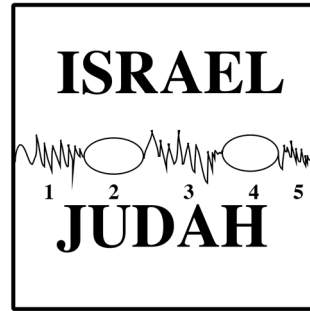
“Do not go up to fight against your brothers, the Israelites.
Go home, every one of you for this is

_____!”
So they obeyed the word of the Lord and wen home again
as the Lord has ordered.” (1 Kings 12:24)

A Divided Kingdom (Israel & Judah)

Israel splits from Judah (^^^ = war = peace)

Began war and conflict.
Then peace and alliance.
But war and conflict again.
Then peace and prosperity.
War-Judah vs. Israel and Syria.



10 tribes
211 years
19 Kings

2 tribes
347 years
20 Kings

International relationships deteriorate.

Smaller vassal states rebel
Large nations begin to dominate

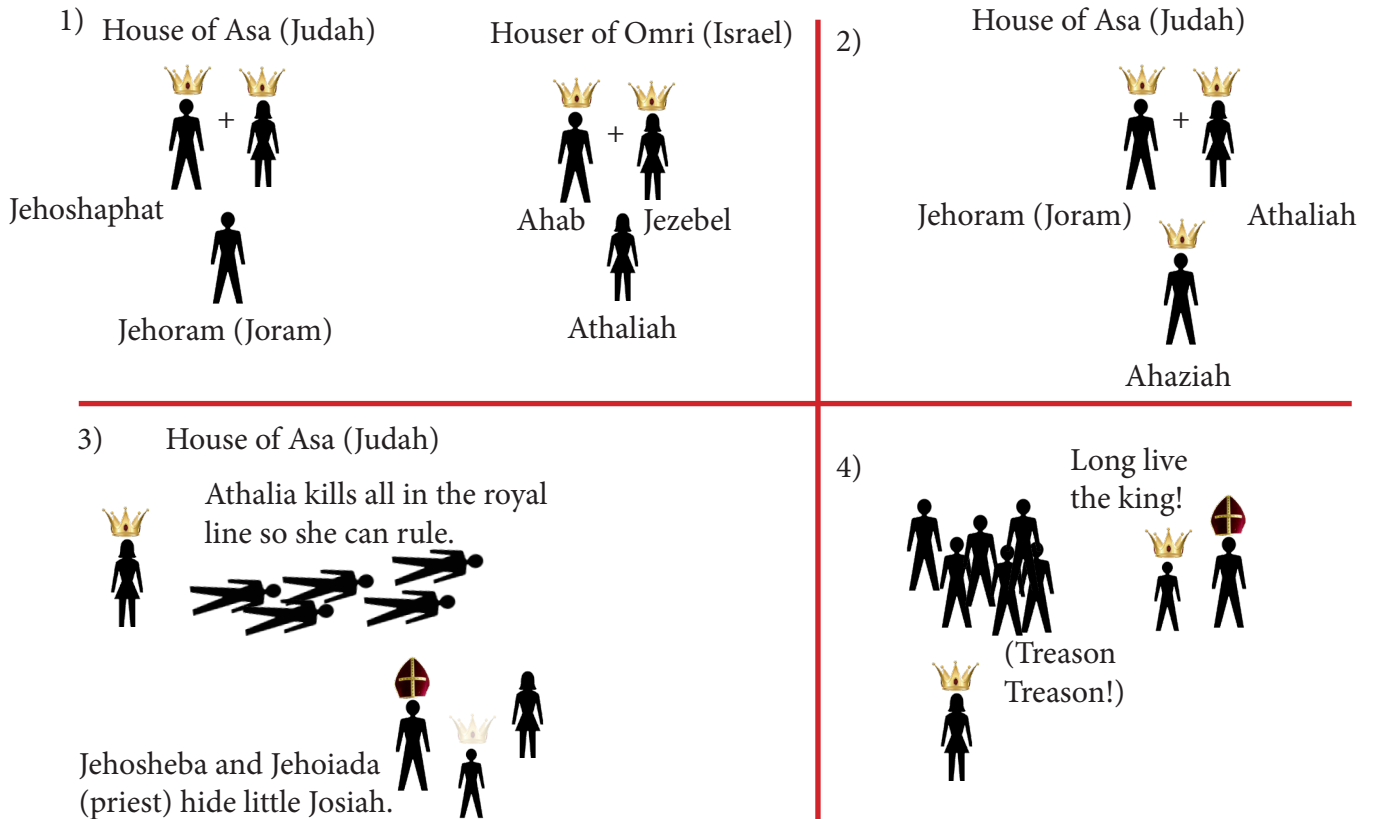
Israel and Judah experience a “religious invasion”.

Ethbaal, Jezebel and the Missionaries (1 Kings 16:31; 18:19)

Two key players who fought the rising tide of Baal worship:

_____ & _____ (1 Kings 17 - 2 Kings 8)

Baal-worshippers nearly take Judah through royal intermarriage. (2 Kings 8:16-11:21)



Postscript: “And Jehoram beget Uzziah” (Matthew 1:8)

How did this happen?

1. Israel's sin began with their first king: Jereboam.

"...the king made two golden calves. He said to the people, 'It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Here are your gods, O Israel, who brought you out of Egypt.' One he set up in Bethel, and the other in Dan." (1 Kings 12:28-29)

2. God (through Ahijah, his prophet) announced His response to Israel's sin.

"The Lord will raise up for himself a king over Israel who will cut off the family of Jeroboam... The Lord will strike Israel... He will uproot Israel from this good land that he gave to their forefathers and scatter them beyond the river... And he will give Israel up because of the sins Jeroboam has committed and has caused Israel to commit." (1 Kings 14: 14-16)

3. 2 Kings 17: 14-17 summarizes how far Israel actually fell.

"But they would not listen and were as stiff-necked as their fathers, who did not trust in the Lord their God.

They rejected his decrees and the covenant he had made with their father and the warnings he had given them.

They followed worthless idols and themselves became worthless. They imitated the nations around them although the Lord had ordered them. 'Do not do as they do,' and they did the things the Lord had forbidden them to do.

They forsook all the commands of the Lord their God and made for themselves two idols cast in the shape of calves, and an Ashrah pole. They bowed down to all the starry host, and they worshipped Baal. They sacrificed their sons and daughters in the fire. They practiced divination and sorcery and sold themselves to do evil in the eyes of the Lord, provoking him to anger."

Review Questions and Concepts: Step: 1 The Divided kingdom

Explain what constitutes unity and progress from Genesis 12 - 1 Kings 10

How did the "foreign women" effect Solomon (Nehemiah's "even he") and Israel (and why was that not true of the marriage off Boaz to the Moabitess Ruth)?

Summarize the relationship between Ahijah and Jeroboam.

How did Rehoboam's folly contribute to the secession of the northern tribes?

How and why were times of peace between Israel and Judah particularly dangerous?

Summarize God's response to the northern Kingdom of Israel.

Scene Two Step One (A Divided Kingdom) Concepts

- | | | | |
|--------------|--------------------|--------------|---------------|
| 1. "Even he" | 5. "To your tents" | 9. Baal | 13. Jehosheba |
| 2. Ahijah | 6. 10/211/19 | 10. Elijah | 14. Jehoiada |
| 3. Jeroboam | 7. 2/347/20 | 11. Elisha | |
| 4. Rehoboam | 8. Jezebel | 12. Athaliah | |

Act I, Scene Two

Step 2: The Assyrian Crisis
(Israel Destroyed)

Suggested Reading: Isaiah 10; 2 Kings 17

Israel Destroyed



The results of (Israel's) rebellion

“So the Lord was very angry with Israel and removed them from his presence. Only the tribe of Judah was left, and even Judah did not keep the commands of the Lord their God...

When he tore Israel away from the house of David, they made Jeroboam son of Nebat their king. Jeroboam enticed Israel away from following the Lord and caused them to commit a great sin. The Israelites persisted in all the sins of Jeroboam and did not turn away from them until the Lord removed them from his presence, as he had warned through all his servants the prophets.” (2 Kings 17: 18-23)

The Lord chose _____ as “the rod of my anger”. (Isaiah 10:5)

Context for the Assyrian crisis:

Nineteen wicked kings and national decline

A brief economic and military revival

Pekah (king Israel) and Rezin (Syria) form an alliance against Ahaz (Judah)

Ahaz makes a counter-alliance with _____ (the pit bull!)

Assyria, “like a river in flood,” is used by God to accomplish His purpose.

**“Woe to the Assyrian, the rod of my anger,
in whose hand is the club of my wrath!
I send him against a godless nation,
I dispatch him against a people who anger me,
to seize loot and snatch plunder,
and
to trample them down in the streets. (Isaiah 10:5-6)**

Of course, the Assyrian king thinks he is accomplishing his own purposes:

**“As one reaches into a nest, so my hand reached for the wealth of the nations;
as men gathered abandoned eggs, so I gathered all the countries;
not one flapped a wing,
or opened its mouth to chirp.” Isaiah 10:14**

However, Isaiah makes it clear that God is totally in control:

“Does the ax raise itself above him who swings it...?” Isaiah 10:15

Eventually, Assyria invades Syria, then Israel, and deports the Israelites. (2 Kings 17)

“The king of Assyria invaded the entire land, marched against Samaria and laid siege to it for three years. In the ninth year of Hosea, the king of Assyria captured Samaria and deported the Israelites to Assyria. He settled them to Halah, in Gozan on the Habor River and in the towns of the Medes. (2 Kings 17:5-6)

“The king of Assyria brought people from Babylon, Cuthah, Avva, Hamath and Sepharvaim and settled them in the town of Samaria to replace the Israelites. They took over Samaria and lived in its towns.” (2 Kings 17:24)

But, Assyria keeps going and invades Judah! (2 Kings 18, 19)

Assyria captured seventy walled cities and laid siege to Jerusalem! (2 Kings 18)

God saves Judah by sending a “wasting disease” on the Assyrians. (2 Kings 19)

It would be nice to know that Judah learned its lesson, but Scripture says otherwise.

“The Lord, the God of their fathers, sent word to them [to Judah] through his messengers again and again, because he had pity on his people and on his dwelling place. But they mocked God’s messengers, despised his words and scoffed at his prophets until the wrath of the Lord was aroused against his people and there was no remedy. (2 Chronicles 36)

Review Questions and Concepts: Step 2, the Assyrian Crisis

The Assyrians worked for God. Explain.

What was the nature of the relationship of Israel, Syria, Judah, and Assyria?

Explain the relationship between the “ten lost tribes” of Israel and the Samaritans.

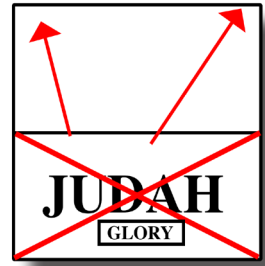
Scene two, Step Two (the Assyrian destruction of Israel) concepts

- | | |
|----------|---------------------|
| 1. Pekah | 4. Assyria |
| 2. Resin | 5. Samaritans |
| 3. Aha | 6. 70 Walled Cities |

Act I, Scene Two

Step 3: The Babylonian Crisis (Judah in Captivity)

Suggested Reading: 2 Kings 21 & 25;
2 Chronicles 36; Psalm 137



“The Lord, the God of their fathers, sent word to them [to Judah] through his messengers again and again, because he had pity on his people and on his dwelling place. But they mocked God’s messengers, despised his words and scoffed at his prophets until the wrath of the Lord was aroused against his people and there was no remedy. (2 Chronicles 36)

The Lord kept calling to His people - “again and again” “rising up early” — But...

Hezekiah (29 years): Deliverance, revival and the Babylonians (2 Kings 18-20)

Manassah (55 years) and Amon (2 Years): A revival of evil (2 Kings 21)

Josiah (31 Years): Revival and restoration (2 Kings 22-23:30)

The last days of Judah

Full of idols, on the high places and in the temple of the Lord; the worship of the sun and moon and constellations; horses (and chariots) quartered in the temple; dedicated to the sun; male prostitutes - in the temple; human sacrifices (“his own son”); sorcery and divination; consulting mediums and spiritists; “abominations” and “detestable practices.” (2 Kings 21 & 23)

The glory of God, which had once filled the temple, departed (“Ichabod”). *“Do you see what they are doing - the utterly detestable things... that will drive me far from my sanctuary?” (Ezekiel 8:6) “The glory of the Lord went up from... the city.” (9:3; 10:4, 19; 11:23)*

In those last pathetic years; four frantic, futile kings ignore the reality of the situation:

a. Jehoahaz (3 months)

c. Jehoiachin (3 months)

b. Jehoiakim (11 years)

d. Zedekiah (11 Years)

God’s Judgement:

“The Lord, the God of their fathers, sent word to them through his messengers again and again (“rising up early”), because he had pity on his people and on his dwelling place. But they mocked God’s messengers, despised his words and scoffed at his prophets until the wrath of the Lord was aroused against his people and there was no remedy.”

12 Therefore this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: I am going to bring such disaster on Jerusalem and Judah that the ears of everyone who hears of it will tingle. 13 I will stretch out over Jerusalem the measuring line used against Samaria and the plumb line used against the house of Ahab. I will wipe out Jerusalem as one wipes a dish, wiping it and turning it upside down. 14 I will forsake the remnant of my inheritance and hand them over to their enemies. They will be looted and plundered by all their foes, 15 because they have done evil in my eyes and have provoked me to anger from the day their forefathers came out of Egypt until this day.” (2 Kings 21: 12-15)

God uses Babylon to bring down Judah (c.a. 586 BC)

“He brought up against them the king of the Babylonians, who killed their young men with the sword in the sanctuary, spared neither young man nor young woman, old man or aged. God handed all of them over to Nebuchadnezzar. He carried to Babylon all the articles from the temple of God, both large and small, and the treasures of the Lord’s temple and broke down the wall of Jerusalem (and) burned the palaces and destroyed everything of value. 2 Chronicles 36:17-20

“He carried into exile to Babylon the remnant, who escaped from the sword, and they became servants to him and his sons until the kingdom of Persia came to power.”

“So in the ninth year of Zedekiah’s reign, on the tenth day of the tenth month, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon marched against Jerusalem with his whole army. He encamped outside the city and built siege works all around it. The city was kept under siege until the eleventh year of King Zedekiah. By the ninth day of the fourth month the famine in the city had become so severe that there was no food for the people to eat. Then the city wall was broken through, and the whole army fled at night through the gate between the two walls near the king’s garden, though the Babylonians were surrounding the city. . . . They killed the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes. Then they put out his eyes, bound him with bronze shackles and took him to Babylon.” (2 Kings 25: 1-7)

“Nebuzaradan commander of the imperial guard, an official of the king of Babylon . . . set fire to the temple of the Lord, the royal palace [and] carried into exile the people who remained in the city, [leaving] behind some of the poorest people of the land to work the vineyards and field. So Judah went into captivity, away from her land.” (2 Kings 25: 8-12; 21b)

**“Zion will be plowed like a field, Jerusalem will become a heap of rubble,
The temple hill a mound overgrown with thickets.” Jeremiah 26:18**

The exile: Seventy terrible years

1 By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept
when we remembered Zion.

2 There on the poplars
we hung our harps,

3 for there our captors asked us for songs,
our tormentors demanded songs of joy;
they said, “Sing us one of the songs of Zion!”

7 Remember, Lord, what the Edomites did
on the day Jerusalem fell.

“Tear it down,” they cried,
“tear it down to its foundations!”

4 How can we sing the songs of the Lord
while in a foreign land?

5 If I forget you, Jerusalem,
may my right hand forget its skill.

6 May my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth
if I do not remember you,
if I do not consider Jerusalem
my highest joy.

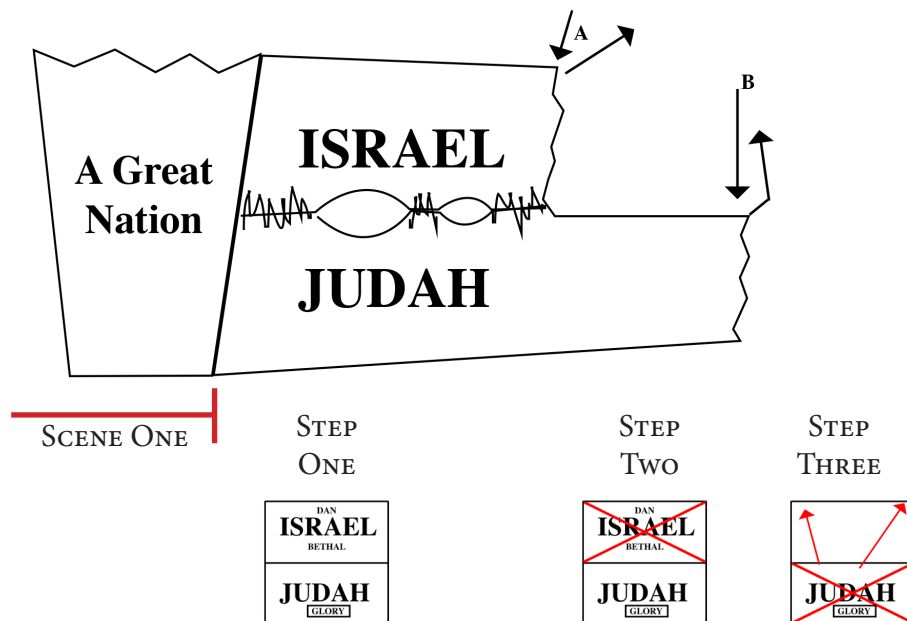
8 Daughter Babylon, doomed to destruction,
happy is the one who repays you
according to what you have done to us.

9 Happy is the one who seizes your infants
and dashes them against the rocks.

Psalm 137

Concluding commentary

Progress and Unity



Edersheim quote

“It were a one-sided view to regard the Babylonian exile as only a punishment for Israel’s sin. There is nothing in all God’s dealing in history exclusively punitive. That were a merely negative element. But there is always a positive element also of actual progress; even though in the taking of it something should have been crushed. And this step forward was... “ ???

Question: What is God Doing?

Answer: Be patient. He is not in a hurry. It may take us some time before it is clear, but in the meantime, hold on to this:

10 This is what the Lord says: “When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my good promise to bring you back to this place. 11 For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. 12 Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. 13 You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. 14 I will be found by you,” declares the Lord, “and will bring you back from captivity.[a] I will gather you from all the nations and places where I have banished you,” declares the Lord, “and will bring you back to the place from which I carried you into exile.”

Jeremiah 29:10-14

Review Questions and Concepts: Step 3, the Babylonian Crisis

1. Describe particular ways in which the Lord, in the period from the Assyrian invasions until the Babylonian captivity, gave Judah opportunities to turn back and walk in His ways.
2. Draft a description of the specific conditions which explains why the LORD destroyed Judah and sent his people into captivity.
3. How does Psalm 137 illustrate how painful it was for the Jews to be exiled from their land?
4. Sketch out and be prepared to identify the specifics of a graphic illustration that covers the three steps of Act I, Scene Two

Scene Two, Step Three (the Babylonian destruction of Judah) Concepts

- | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Hezekiah | 7. Departing glory | 13. Psalm 137 |
| 2. "Rising early" | 8. Ichabod | 14. Songs of Zion |
| 3. Josiah | 9. "Tingling ears" | 15. Edomites |
| 4. Horses | 10. Jeremiah | 16. Edersheim |
| 5. Male Prostitutes | 11. Nebuchadnezzar | 17. 70 Years |
| 6. Ezekiel | 12. Zedekiah | |