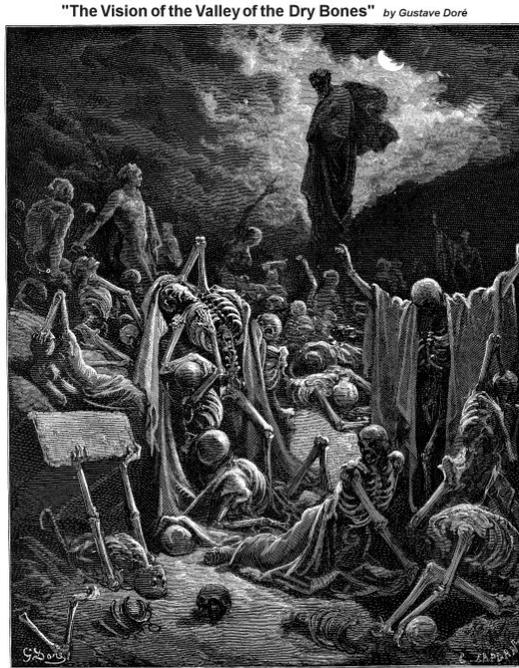


The Weekly Haftorah

By: Reuben Ebrahimoff - The Haftorahman

The Haftorah for Shabbat Chol Hamoed Pesach

The Haftorah is read from the book of Yechezkel (Ezekiel), 36:37- 37:14.



The connection of the Haftorah to Pesach: An ancient Jewish tradition contends that the future *Techiyat Hamaitim* (resurrection of the dead) will take place during the month of Nissan when Passover occurs. That is why we read this Haftarah dealing with this subject during this season. The Prophet Ezekiel has a vision in which he revives the dry bones. Resurrection of the dead is one of the 13 principals listed the R'abbi M'oshe b'en M'aïmon - Rambam's "*Ani Ma'amin Be'emunah Shelaimah.*" "I believe in full faith." The second blessing of the Amidah - Standing Prayer, acknowledges Hashem as the resurrector of the dead.

The storyline of this week's Haftorah: The image of the resurrection of the dead appears for the first time in the Book of Ezekiel, which dates from the early sixth century b.c.e. In the well known passage, Ezekiel envisions a valley of dry dismembered bones being transformed into animated life filled, human bodies. Here Ezekiel's vision of a resurrection is a national and collective event.

Written after the Babylonian exile, what was envisioned is the total revival of the fallen Israelite nation. No doubt this is the redemption of the fallen dead, which provided a sense of hope and vision to the dispirited exiles.

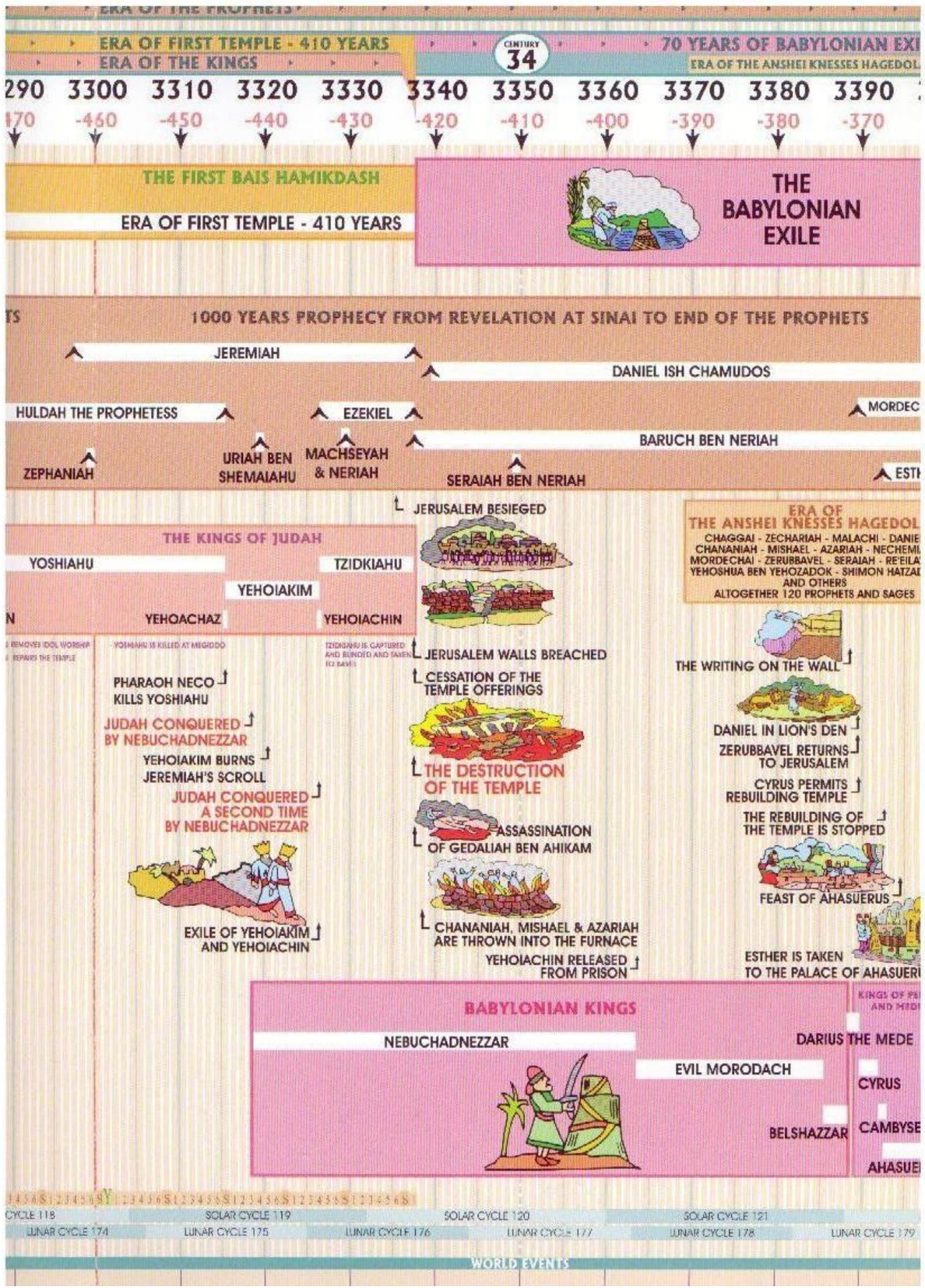
Was this a prophetic vision or an actual experience? Both sides are represented. Hashem holds three keys in his hand. They are 1) Childbirth 2) Rain 3) Techiyat Hamaitim (resurrection of the dead). Hashem handed over the keys for Techiyat Hamaitim 3 times: to Eliyahu Hanavi, to his disciple Elisha and finally, for Ezekiel. What valley was Ezekiel led to? The Valley of Dura in Babylon. Remember that Ezekiel was a Cohen and he was not permitted to go into the valley. He just saw it from a distance. Whose bones were they? They were the remains of the Jews massacred in the Valley of Dura by the Emperor Nebuchadnezzar. He demanded that they bow down in front of an enormous statue; whoever refused was to be burned. Three people refused: Chananya, Mishael and Azaria, who were thrown into a burning furnace but were miraculously spared. Nebuchadnezzar then used this as an opportunity to massacre 600,000 Jews. There are four explanations as to whose bones were they. The most plausible is that the bones belonged to the Jews from the tribe of Ephraim, who left Egypt before the appointed time of the Exodus.

Yechezkel ben Buzi's Biography:

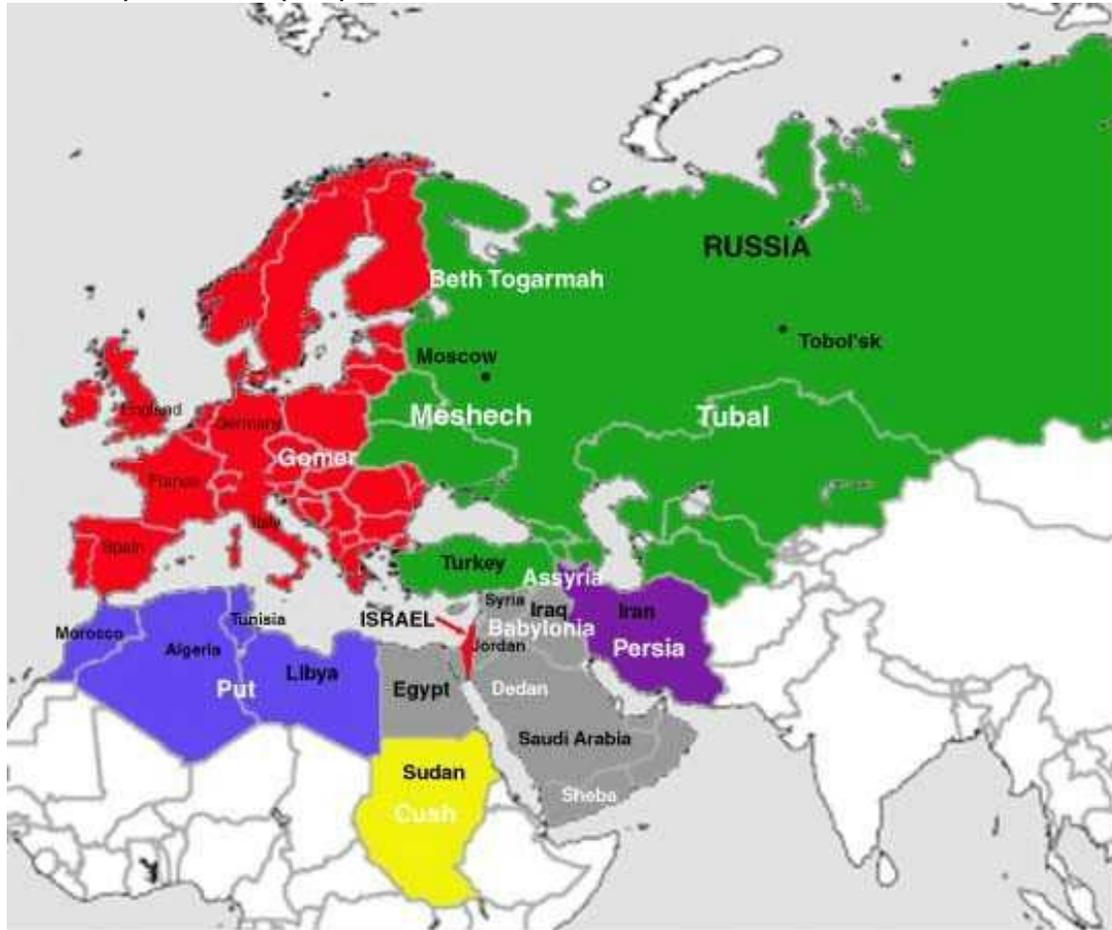
- The meaning of his name is "Hashem will strengthen."
- Was a Kohen, born in the village of Anatot surrounding Jerusalem. His wife died suddenly before his prophecies began.
- He prophesied just before the destruction of Jerusalem on Tishah Be'av (The 9th of Av). He was exiled in 597 B.C.E. Some of his visions were while he was in exile. He was a major prophet that recorded the warnings to the Jewish captives of Babylon. He was among 8000 exiles taken to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon soldiers. He died in Bavel.
- He saw the divine vision of the Ma'aseh Hamerkavah (Hashem's Throne).
- He was the only person in the Tanach (Bible) to be called "Ben Adam", Son of Man.
- Yechezkel wrote his own 48 chapter book; his prophetic ministry lasted 20 years.
- Was one of three prophets granted the key to resurrection of the dead. (The others were Eliyahu and Elisha)

Famous Phrases: Ezekiel 3:12, "*Vatesaeni ruach va'eshma kol raash gadol*" "And a spirit lifted me and I heard a great sound." This passage is included in the Uvah L'tzion Goel prayer. The men of the great assembly included chose this passage from Ezekiel in our prayers of hope. Ezekiel said these words upon seeing a vision of Hashem's throne leaving the Bait Hamikdash and going into exile. We are reminded that it doesn't matter where Hashem is or where we are, for we're always united when we pray.

Timeline: This Haftorah occurred about 2600 years ago.



Map: This Haftorah took place in Bavel (Babylonia). Ezekiel was one of the only prophets to experience prophecies outside of the Land of Israel.



- Meshech, Tubal, Beth Togarmah (Ezekiel 38:2-3, 6 & 39:2)
- Persia (Ezekiel 38:5)
- Cush (Ezekiel 38:5)
- Put (Ezekiel 38:5)
- Gomer (Ezekiel 38:6)
- Other nations mentioned elsewhere in last days Bible prophecy

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