

Bible Definitions from The Jewish Study Bible Glossary

Assyria, a Mesopotamian world power, in addition to Babylonia. Its capital cities included Ashur and Ninevah. The Assyrian empire conquered the Northern Kingdom of Israel in 722 and exiled its people. The Assyrians were well-known for their massive building projects and for their cruelty in war.

Babylonia, a Mesopotamian world power. It often competed against Assyria, which it conquered in 612 BCE. Its major city was Babylon....Its main god became Marduk, and its religion and literature were extremely influential, even on its arch-rival Assyria. Babylonia destroyed the First Temple in 586, and was conquered by Cyrus the Great in 539.

Babylonian exile the forced relocation of some of the population of Judah, perhaps the ruling portion of it, after the conquest by Babylonia in 597-586 BCE. the exile ended with the permitted return to the land under Cyrus (beginning ca. 538 BCE).

Cyrus king of Persia (559-530 BCE). He defeated Media in 550 and conquered most of the ancient Near East, including Babylonia, allowing the Jewish exiles in Babylonia to return to the land beginning ca. 538.

Deutero-Isaiah (Second Isaiah) the general term for the portion of Isaiah beginning with chapter 40. Most scholars consider Deutero-Isaiah to consist of chapters 40-55 (or 40-54). These chapters are primarily concerned with the promise of return from exile and the events leading up to the decree of Cyrus (538 BCE) permitting the exiles to return to Judah and rebuild their city and Temple.

Essenes a Jewish group that flourished from around the 1st century BCE to the 1st century CE. They kept the Jewish law with utmost rigor, living apart from other Jews in their own communities. Most scholars believe that the members of the Qumran community (where the Dead Sea scrolls were discovered) were Essenes.

Exodus the journey that Israel took from Egypt toward the land of Israel, according to the book of Exodus.

Messiah (Heb *mashiah*, “anointed one”) a title for the king or other servant or agent of God (priest, prophet, or even non-Israelite Cyrus...). In the Tanakh, *mashiah* never refers to the future king of Israel.

Persian period ca. 539-333 BCE, from the time of Cyrus the Great until the Greek conquest by Alexander.

Qumran community the settlement near Wadi Qumran at the Dead Sea, most likely composed of Essenes. The Qumran group was a sectarian Jewish community that kept its own practices in opposition to the established community in Jerusalem and Judea; the library of this group was discovered in 1947 and is known as the Dead Sea scrolls.

Trito-Isaiah (Third Isaiah) the scholarly term for cha 56-66 (or 55-66) of Isaiah. These chapters are primarily concerned with the life of the returned exiles in the province of...Judah after 538 BCE. Some scholars doubt the separate existence of Trito-Isaiah; others maintain that it is not the product of one author, but a collection of diverse oracles by different members of a “school of Isaiah” collected during the Persian period.