

After this for a good many centuries we have little contact ~~with~~ between Biblical events and the great empires of the day. At about 1000 B.C. we find a real empire established in Palestine and vicinity by David and continued by Solomon. This is the time of greatest material greatness of Israel. It is also a ~~de~~ time of the decline of both the Egyptian power and the powers of Mesopotamia. In fact, it is one of the few times in ancient history when such an empire could have been established without coming into conflict with one or the other of these two great empires. After this ~~period~~ period, the power of Egypt, which was even then far inferior ~~to~~ ~~what~~ what it had been a few centuries before, is on a general decline, but in the East the Assyrian empire, centering in Northern Mesopotamia, is rising ever higher toward a great ascendancy. In the latter period of the divided kingdom, We find ~~this~~ ^{ever} Assyrian empire/becoming a greater menace and being reflected in the politics of the Israelite and Judean kings. Before this Assyrian power, Syria to the north falls a prey and Israel itself in 721. The Assyrian power continues to be a constant threat to Judah, but is itself wiped out before the end of the kingdom of Judah. It is replaced by the power of Babylon, which during the previous centuries had been of little ^{political} importance. Babylon succeeds to an empire and as powerful as widespread/as that of Assyria had been before, but this empire is short-lived. Before it falls the kingdom of Judah. It in turn falls before the power of Persia, and it is the Persian empire which is reflected in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, with their accounts of the return of the Jews to Jerusalem. Thus, the general historical framework of the Old Testament with varying ascendancies of the great empires corresponds with the general framework of history as shown from archaeology and provides strong general corroboration of the factual nature of the Old Testament. It is not a book of myths, but a book of accounts written at various times, but fitting in in general to the historical situation of their days.