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Dramatis Personae: The World of Lehi (ca. 700-562 B.C.)

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Chapter 2

DRAMATIS PERSONAE: THE WORLD OF LEHI (CA. 700–562 B.C.)

David Rolph Seely and Robert D. Hunt

The following kings, pharaohs, and prophets are listed in chronological order.¹ Lehi could well have known or known of these people.

Kings of the Neo-Assyrian Empire

Sennacherib (704–681 B.C.). Son of Sargon II. Sennacherib was a powerful king who subdued revolts in Babylon and in the west, including Judah. In 701 he invaded and decimated Judah during the reign of Hezekiah; the destruction of Lachish is depicted in his palace reliefs. He besieged Jerusalem, but, miraculously, his army was destroyed (2 Kings 18:13–19:36). He claimed to have deported many Judahites to Assyria. Eventually he was murdered by two of his sons (2 Kings 19:37).

Esarhaddon (680–669 B.C.). Son and successor of Sennacherib. He put down a rebellion and consolidated his father's kingdom by continuing to collect heavy tribute from the west (including Judah) and from Egypt. The Israelite king Manasseh

may have been transported to Babylon during his reign (2 Chronicles 33:11). He conquered Egypt and looted Memphis.

Assurbanipal (668–627 B.C.). Son and successor of Esarhaddon and last of the great Neo-Assyrian kings. He inherited a relatively peaceful empire except for Egypt, which he invaded to put down a rebellion. He captured and utterly destroyed the great city of Thebes. His brother Shamash-shuma-ukin sat on the throne of Babylon and eventually led the Babylonians in a bloody revolt that was resolved with the victory of Assurbanipal. No record remains of the last twelve years of his forty-one-year-long reign. Assurbanipal is the only Assyrian king that claimed to be literate. His library at Nineveh was discovered in A.D. 1852, and its wealth of historical, economic, religious, and literary texts was instrumental in the decipherment of the Akkadian language and in the reconstruction of Assyrian history, culture, and thought.

After the reign of Assurbanipal, the Assyrian empire quickly disintegrated under the rule of several kings. A resurgent Babylon, led by Nabopolassar, declared independence and led the revolt that finally toppled Assyria. The Medes destroyed Assur in 614, and in 612 Nineveh fell. A small Assyrian contingent held out in Haran until 609, and the final remnants of the Assyrian army, along with their Egyptian allies, were defeated by Nebuchadnezzar's Babylonian forces at Carchemish in 605.

Kings of the Babylonian/Chaldean Empire

Nabopolassar (626–605 B.C.). The first king of the Chaldean dynasty. A Babylonian general in the Assyrian army, he rebelled against Assyria and led his armies, allied with the Medes, in a series of battles against Assyria that led to the independence of Babylon and the eventual downfall of the Assyrian empire in 609 B.C.

Nebuchadnezzar (605–562 B.C.). Son and successor of Nabopolassar, he was the greatest of the Babylonian kings, ruling for forty-three years. He consolidated and expanded his father's empire following the final destruction of the Assyrian empire at the battle of Carchemish, where he defeated the Assyrians and the Egyptians. He campaigned in Syria and Palestine in 597 and sent a large contingent of Judahites to exile in Babylon (2 Kings 24). In 586, after laying siege and capturing Jerusalem, he destroyed the temple and deported another group of Judahites into captivity in Babylon (2 Kings 25; Jeremiah 52). During his reign, Babylon, renowned for its extravagance, became the economic and administrative center and showpiece of the ancient world—and hence a symbol of worldliness in the scriptures.

Evil-merodach (562–560 B.C.). Son and successor of Nebuchadnezzar. At the death of his father, he released the king of Judah, Jehoiachin, from prison and gave him an allowance (2 Kings 25:27–30; Jeremiah 52:31–34). Eventually the Babylonian empire would be conquered by the Persians under King Cyrus in 539 B.C.

Pharaohs of Egypt

Dynasty 25: The Nubian/Kushite Dynasty (747–656 B.C.)

Pianki (747–716 B.C.). Reestablished the Nubian dynasty over the Libyan dynasty.

Shabaka (716–701 B.C.). Brother of Pianki. Monuments copied from the past and erected during his reign include the famous Memphite Theology (or Shabako Stone), containing one of the oldest known texts of temple dedications.

Shabataka (701–689 B.C.). Son of Pianki and nephew to Shabaka. He sided with the Palestinian/Phoenician revolt

against Assyria. In 701 Sennacherib came west to put down the uprising and destroyed many cities in Judah, including Lachish.

Taharqa (689–664 B.C.). Son of Pianki and nephew to Shabaka. During his reign, the Assyrian king Esarhaddon invaded Egypt and destroyed Memphis. Taharqa took it back, but shortly thereafter Assurbanipal defeated him and drove him to the Sudan.

Tanutamani (664–656 B.C.). Taharqa's cousin, heir, and for a time coregent. He envisioned a resurgence of the Nubian dynasty and recaptured Aswan, Thebes, and Memphis from the Assyrians before Assurbanipal reacted and captured Memphis and destroyed and sacked Thebes. Tanutamani fled to the south and died in 656 after the Assyrian-appointed Psammetichus had begun the Saite dynasty.

Dynasty 26: Saite Renaissance (664–525 B.C.)

Psammetichus (also Psamtik) I (664–610 B.C.). Confirmed by Assurbanipal and ruled with Assyrian approval. Psammetichus consolidated his rule throughout Egypt.

Necho II (610–595 B.C.). After the fall of Nineveh, Necho led an army through Palestine and Syria to aid the remnant of the Assyrian armies against the Babylonians, headed by Nabopolassar. Josiah, king of Judah, decided to attempt to stop the Egyptian forces and was killed (2 Kings 23:28–30; 2 Chronicles 35:20–24). Presumably the Egyptians preferred the survival of the weakened Assyrian empire to the Babylonian empire and perhaps thought that they would achieve supremacy of the west with an Assyrian victory. After Josiah was killed, Necho and Egypt ruled Palestine from 609 to 605. In 605, at the battle of Carchemish, Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians defeated the Assyrians and the Egyptians (under the command of Necho) and eventually conquered

Syria and Palestine. Necho retreated to Egypt and successfully repelled Nebuchadnezzar at the border of Egypt.

Psammetichus II (595–589 B.C.). In connection with a brief incursion into southern Palestine against the Babylonians, Psamtik II encouraged a Judean revolt against the Babylonian rule, culminating in the eventual destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. and the exile of many of the people.

Apries (589–570 B.C.). He encouraged Palestinian revolt against Babylon. His reign ended in civil war.

Amasis (570–526 B.C.). He was a general on the winning side of the civil war. Amasis established extensive trade with the Greeks.

Psammetichus III (526–525 B.C.). He lost his rule to the invasion of the Persians under the command of Cambyses in the battle of Pelusium in 525.

Kings of Judah

Hezekiah (715–687 B.C.). Son of Ahaz and Abi, daughter of Zechariah. Hezekiah was judged by the author of the books of Kings to be one of the most righteous kings of Judah and reigned as king during most of the ministry of Isaiah. His reign is recounted in 2 Kings 18–20, Isaiah 36–39, and 2 Chronicles 29–32. He was a religious king and was remembered for his construction projects fortifying Jerusalem against the Assyrian siege in 701 B.C. He initiated religious reform in an attempt to reverse the importation of Assyrian religious practices and the idolatry of his father, Ahaz. Hezekiah purified the temple at Jerusalem, began to remove the Israelite and Canaanite high places, and renewed the celebration of Passover. Eventually Hezekiah revolted against Assyria, leading to Sennacherib's invasion of Judah and the siege of Jerusalem in 701 B.C. The Assyrian army was miraculously destroyed and Jerusalem delivered. At the

trial of Jeremiah, the fact that King Hezekiah allowed Micah to prophesy of the destruction of Jerusalem without executing him is given as legal precedent for not sentencing Jeremiah to death for similar prophecies (Jeremiah 26:18–19).

Manasseh (687–642 B.C.). Son of Hezekiah and Hephzibah. Manasseh was judged by the author of Kings to be the most wicked king of Judah. His reign was characterized by idolatry, pagan worship, child sacrifice, and witchcraft, as recounted in 2 Kings 21:1–17; 23:26–27; 24:3–4; and 2 Chronicles 33:1–20. According to Chronicles, he was exiled to Babylon where he repented and then returned to Judah and initiated religious reform (2 Chronicles 33). The abominations of his reign are remembered by Jeremiah as the reason for the eventual destruction of Jerusalem (Jeremiah 15:4; cf. 2 Kings 21:12–16). Lehi was probably born in the last years of the reign of Manasseh.

Amon (642–640 B.C.). Son of Manasseh and Meshullemeth, daughter of Haruz of Jotbah. Amon reigned for only two years, as recounted in 2 Kings 21:19–25 and 2 Chronicles 33:21–25. The author of Kings judged him to be a wicked king who continued in the idolatrous practices of his father. He was assassinated as a result of a conspiracy by his officials, who in turn were executed by the people. His young son Josiah was put on the throne in his place.

Josiah (640–609 B.C.). Son of Amon and Jedidah, daughter of Adaiah of Boscath. Josiah was eight when he was put on the throne. His reign is recorded in 2 Kings 21:26–23:30 and 2 Chronicles 34–35. According to the author of Kings, he was a righteous king following in the ways of his ancestor David (2 Kings 22:2). His long reign of thirty-one years coincided with the fall of the Assyrian empire, a time full of internal and external turmoil in Judah. The most noteworthy event of his reign was his so-called reform of Judah in which the temple in Jerusalem became the only accepted site of worship and sacrifice

(as recorded in Deuteronomy 12) and the idolatrous worship of other deities throughout the land was forbidden.² The evidence suggests that his reforms were instituted in conjunction with a nationalistic revival declaring independence from Assyria and an attempt to reestablish the Davidic empire. In conjunction with this reform (either before or after its commencement), a book of the law was discovered in the temple, which many scholars believe was some form of the book of Deuteronomy. The prophetess Huldah was consulted as to the authenticity of this book. For some reason Josiah chose to lead his armies to Megiddo, where he attempted to block the advance of Pharaoh Necho II, who was going to deliver a remnant of Assyrians from the Babylonians in 609. Perhaps he preferred the Babylonians over the Assyrians, or else he was attempting to solidify his independence against both by defeating the Egyptians. He was killed in battle. Upon his death, the Egyptians essentially gained control over Judah. Jeremiah remembered Josiah as a righteous king who cared for the poor (Jeremiah 22:15–16). After his death he was succeeded by two of his sons: Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim.

Jehoahaz (609 B.C.). Son of Josiah and Hamutal, daughter of Jeremiah (not the prophet) of Libnah. Also known as Shallum, Jehoahaz was only twenty-three years old when he was proclaimed king. His reign, characterized by wickedness, is recorded in 2 Kings 23:31–34 and 2 Chronicles 36:1–4. The Egyptians removed Jehoahaz from the throne in favor of his older brother, who was deemed to be more pro-Egyptian. Jehoahaz was taken to Egypt in chains, where he died. Jeremiah composed a lament on the occasion of his deportation in which he predicted that Jehoahaz would never return to his native land (Jeremiah 22:10–12).

Jehoiakim (609–598 B.C.). Son of Josiah and Zebidah, daughter of Pedaiah of Rumah in Galilee. Jehoiakim's given name was Eliakim. His reign is recorded in 2 Kings 23:36–24:7 and

2 Chronicles 36:5–8. At the age of twenty-five, he was placed on the throne by Pharaoh Necho to replace his brother Jehoahaz. Jehoiakim was a faithful vassal to Egypt until 605, at which time Syria and Palestine came under Babylonian rule following Nebuchadnezzar's victory over the Assyrians and the Egyptians at Carchemish. Jehoiakim served Babylon for three years (2 Kings 24:1) and then led a revolt—probably encouraged by a series of Babylonian military setbacks in Egypt. Nebuchadnezzar responded by besieging and capturing Jerusalem in 597. Jehoiakim was taken to Babylon (2 Chronicles 36:6) where, according to Jewish tradition, he was executed. He was replaced by his eight-year-old son Jehoiachin. Jehoiakim was judged as a wicked king by the writer of the book of Kings. Jeremiah was an outspoken critic of conditions in Jerusalem and Judah during Jehoiakim's reign. It would seem that the positive results of Josiah's reforms did not continue. Jeremiah depicts Jehoiakim as a corrupt king and condemned him for his "covetousness, and for to shed innocent blood, and for oppression, and for violence" (Jeremiah 22:17), while Josiah was just and righteous (Jeremiah 22:15). Additionally, Jeremiah opposed Jehoiakim's pro-Egyptian stance and advocated obedience to the Lord's plea to submit to Babylon. Jeremiah experienced constant conflict with King Jehoiakim, which came to a climax in Jeremiah 36: Jehoiakim, after hearing the word of the Lord read to him from Jeremiah's scroll, had the scroll burned.

Jehoiachin (598 B.C.). Son of Jehoiakim and Nehushta, daughter of Elnathan of Jerusalem. Also called Coniah. Jehoiachin's short reign is recounted in 2 Kings 24:6–16 and 2 Chronicles 36:9–10. He came to the throne after his father's death during the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem and reigned only three months before he was taken to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar and replaced on the throne by his uncle Zedekiah. He was considered a wicked

king by the author of Kings in that he continued in the ways of his father. Upon the death of Nebuchadnezzar in 562 B.C., Jehoiachin, the crown prince of Judah, was released from prison in Babylon (2 Kings 25:27–30). Jeremiah likened his short reign to a signet ring pulled from a hand and given to Babylon as well as to a broken pot hurled into exile (Jeremiah 22:24–30).

Zedekiah (597–586 B.C.). Son of Josiah and Hamutal, daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah, half brother of Jehoiakim, and therefore Jehoiachin's uncle. His original name was Mattaniah. After Nebuchadnezzar captured Jerusalem, he put Mattaniah on the throne and changed his name to Zedekiah. He was twenty-one. His reign is recounted in 2 Kings 24:17–25:7 and 2 Chronicles 36:11–21. The situation in the opening chapters of the Book of Mormon in which the prophet Lehi describes the Lord sending prophets to his people during the reign of Zedekiah is reflected in 2 Chronicles 36:15–16: “And the Lord God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place; But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy.” Jeremiah was one of these prophets. Zedekiah was weak and vacillating, on the one hand consulting Jeremiah for the will of the Lord and on the other having him thrown into prison for revealing the Lord's will. Eventually, contrary to the word of the Lord that was delivered to him on numerous occasions, Zedekiah chose to trust in the Egyptians and revolted against the Babylonians. This resulted in the catastrophic siege and destruction of Jerusalem and its temple in 586 and in the exile of many more Judahites to Babylon. Zedekiah was taken to Riblah (in modern Syria), where he was forced to watch the execution of all of his sons except Mulek. He then had his eyes put out and was taken into exile in Babylon, where he died.

	CLASSICAL WORLD		ISRAEL		
750	ROME	GREECE/ ASIA MINOR	EGYPT	JUDAH	ISRAEL
	Traditional founding of Rome by Romulus (753)	P=Poet Ph=Philosopher L=Lawgiver		Ahaz (735-715)	Pekah (735-732) Hoshea (732-724) ← INVASION 732 B.C.
725			DYNASTY 25 Shabaka (716-701)	Isaiah Hezekiah (715-687)	← Fall of Samaria 722 B.C.
700					← INVASION (Jerusalem Preserved) 701 B.C.
			Shabataka (701-689) Taharqa (689-664)	Manasseh (687-642)	
675					← SACK OF MEMPHIS 671 B.C.
			Tanutamani (664-656)		← SACK OF THEBES 663 B.C.
650			DYNASTY 26 Saite Renaissance (716-701) Psammetichus I (664-609)		
		Archilochus of Paros (P, 650) Solon of Athens (L, 630-560) Thales of Miletus (Ph, 624-545)		Amon (642-640) Josiah (640-609) Zephaniah Jeremiah Nahum	
625					
		Draco of Athens (L, 621) Alcaeus of Mytilene (P, 620-580) Sappho of Lesbos (P, 610-550)	Necho II (609-594)	Habakkuk Huldah Jehoahaz (609) Jehoiakim (609-598) Lehi, Urijah Daniel	
600					
		Anaximander of Miletus (Ph, 610-546) Peisistratus of Athens (L, 600-527) Pythagoras of Samos (Ph, 582-500)	Psammetichus II (594-588) Apries (588-568)	Jehoiachin (598) Zedekiah (597-586) Lehi leaves Ezekiel Jerusalem Destroyed	← JERUSALEM CAPTURED 597 B.C. ← 586 B.C.
575		Cleisthenes of Athens (L, 570-508)			
550					
525	Prepared by David Rolph Seely				← EGYPT CONQUERED 525 B.C.

MESOPOTAMIA

FAR EAST

	ASSYRIA	BABYLON	PERSIA	INDIA	CHINA
750	Tiglath-pileser III (745-727)				
725	Shalmaneser V (726-722)				
	Sargon II (721-705)				
700	Sennacherib (704-681)				
	Esarhaddon (680-669)	Assur-nadin-shumi (699-694) Nergal-ushezib (693) Mushezib-Marduk (692-691)			
675	Assurbanipal (668-627)	Shamash-shuma-ukin (667-648)			
650		Kandalanu (647-627) Neo-Babylonian Empire			
625		Nabopolassar (626-605)	Zoroaster (628-551)		
	Fall of Assur (614) Fall of Nineveh (612) Fall of Haran (609) Assur-uballit II (611-605) Fall of Assyria				
600	605 B.C.	Nebuchadnezzar (605-562)		Upanishads composed (ca. 600)	
575					
			Persian Empire	Gautama Buddha (ca. 563-483)	Lao Tsu (ca. 6th century)
550			Cyrus (558-530)		Confucius (ca. 551-479)
		Fall of Babylon 539 B.C.		Vardhamana Mahavira Jina (ca. 540-468)	
525			Cambyses (529-522)		

Prophets

And in that same year there came many prophets, prophesying unto the people that they must repent, or the great city of Jerusalem be destroyed. (1 Nephi 1:4)

Isaiah (740–701 B.C.). Son of Amoz. Isaiah’s prophecies for which we have a date range from 740 to 701 B.C., during the reigns of Kings Uzziah, Ahaz, Hezekiah, and possibly Manasseh. They deal with the destruction of the north and the south, the scattering and gathering of Israel, the coming of the Messiah, the restoration of the covenant in the latter days and the second coming, the millennium, and the end of time. According to Jewish tradition, Isaiah was killed by Manasseh (687–640). Isaiah’s prophecies were preserved on the brass plates, and Nephi quoted them to his brothers in order to “more fully persuade them to believe in the Lord their Redeemer” (1 Nephi 19:23; cf. 5:13). Passages from Isaiah (including 2–14 and portions of 29, 48–49, and 52–54, as quoted by Nephi, Jacob, and the Savior) figure prominently in the Book of Mormon.

Zephaniah (ca. 640–609 B.C.). “The son of Cushi, the son of Gedaliah, the son of Amariah, the son of Hizkiah” (Zephaniah 1:1). A prophet during the reign of Josiah (640–609). Because of his references to idolatrous worship in Jerusalem, which was abandoned through Josiah’s reforms, some argue that he had an influence for good on King Josiah.

Jeremiah (626–580 B.C.). Son of Hilkiah the priest. Throughout his forty-year ministry, Jeremiah was called to deliver the word of the Lord during the reigns of the Judahite kings Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah. The Old Testament book contains the history of his times and many of his writings, and his prophecies are also contained on the brass plates (1 Nephi 5:13). Biographical details about the prophet’s life are found throughout the book of Jeremiah, but particularly in chap-

ters 34–45. Though King Jehoiakim and King Zedekiah sought his counsel, they opposed the Lord’s advice to submit to Babylon; they thus rejected Jeremiah as a prophet and his attempts to call them to repentance. Jeremiah’s unsuccessful attempts to get Judah to repent resulted in his prophecy of the imminent destruction of Jerusalem and the temple and the scattering of his people. Jeremiah declined an invitation from the Babylonians to go to Babylon and remained with his people in Judah to witness the fulfillment of his prophecies. When the Babylonian-appointed governor Gedaliah was killed by Ishmael and his conspirators, a group of Judahites, fearing retribution by the Babylonians, fled to Egypt and forced Jeremiah and his scribe Baruch to accompany them (Jeremiah 41–43). Jeremiah probably died in Egypt.

Huldah (ca. 621 B.C.). A prophetess and wife of Shallum “the keeper of the wardrobe.” Huldah lived in Jerusalem in the quarter called the Mishneh (Heb. “second”; KJV “college”).³ When the book of the law was discovered in the temple during Josiah’s reforms, Josiah sent the priest Hilkiah and four others to Huldah to ascertain the authenticity of the book as well as to receive a prophecy from the prophetess. She affirmed that the book came from the Lord and pronounced a prophecy of judgment against Judah detailing the destruction that would come after the death of Josiah (2 Kings 22:14–20; 2 Chronicles 34:22–28).

Nahum (ca. 630–612 B.C.). Nahum was a prophet from the village of Elkosh in southern Judah. He prophesied the destruction of the Assyrian city of Nineveh, which took place in 612 B.C.; thus his prophecies must be dated to some time before then.

Habakkuk (ca. 622–605 B.C.). While the book of Habakkuk in the Old Testament is undated, mention is made of “the Chaldeans” (Habakkuk 1:6); thus most scholars believe that he prophesied in Jerusalem during the tumultuous period of the fall of the Assyrian empire and the rise of the Babylonians.

Daniel (ca. 606–536 B.C.). A prophet in exile in Babylon noted for his righteousness and wisdom. Daniel 1:1 records that he went into exile in 606 B.C., though some scholars believe this exile occurred in 597 B.C.⁴ The stories of his life are an example to covenant people of how to live in exile: observe dietary laws, pray, and avoid idolatry. In addition, Daniel prophesied the future history of the world, including the changing empires and eventually the restoration, the second coming, and the end of the world.

Ezekiel (ca. 594–574 B.C.). Son of Buzi. A prophet of Judah called to minister to the people in exile in Babylon. He was a priest and prophesied in vision the idolatry in Jerusalem, the destruction in 586 B.C., and the scattering of Israel (Ezekiel 8–11). He also prophesied about the future coming of a Messiah, the gathering of Israel, and the restoration of the temple.

Urijah (ca. 609 B.C.). Son of Shemaiah from Kiriath Jearim. A prophet in Jerusalem at the time of Jeremiah. After escaping from Jerusalem to Egypt, Urijah was captured by the king, brought back to Jerusalem, and killed for his prophecy against Judah and Jerusalem (Jeremiah 26:20–23). Although Jeremiah delivered the same message as Urijah, Jeremiah was preserved through the influence of his friends at the royal court. The story of Urijah illustrates the real danger to Lehi's life as recorded in the Book of Mormon (1 Nephi 1:19–20).

Other People Whom Lehi May Have Known

These people are arranged in alphabetical order. An indication is made at the beginning of the entries of those who figure prominently in Jeremiah's story. A plus sign (+) means they were supportive of Jeremiah, and a minus sign (–) means they were opposed to him.

Abdon son of Micah. One of the group of messengers to whom Josiah gave the book of the law to take to Huldah (2 Chronicles 34:20; cf. list in 2 Kings 22:12).

Achbor son of Micaiah. One of the officials sent by Josiah to consult the prophetess Huldah on the occasion of the finding of the book of the law (2 Kings 22:12; cf. list in 2 Chronicles 34:20).

– **Ahab son of Kolaiah.** A false prophet in Babylon. Jeremiah wrote a letter to the exiles there condemning Ahab and Zedekiah (another false prophet) for immoral behavior and false prophecy (Jeremiah 29:21).

+ **Ahikam son of Shaphan.** One of the group of messengers to whom Josiah gave the book of the law to take to Huldah (2 Kings 22:12; 2 Chronicles 34:20). Ahikam gave Jeremiah protection following his famous temple sermon and trial of 609 (Jeremiah 26:24).

Asahiah (Asaiah). A servant to the king. One of the group of messengers to whom Josiah gave the book of the law to take to Huldah (2 Kings 22:12; 2 Chronicles 34:20).

Asaph. A member of a guild of singers put in charge of the singing at Josiah's Passover (2 Chronicles 35:15).

+ **Baruch son of Neriah son of Maaseiah.** Baruch was a faithful friend and scribe to Jeremiah. He is a prominent character in Jeremiah 32, 36, 43, and 45. He wrote Jeremiah's prophecies (Jeremiah 36:4, 32), and he was a witness to Jeremiah's purchase of the family land in Anathoth (Jeremiah 32:11–15). Following the destruction of Jerusalem, he remained with Jeremiah and was eventually taken with him to Egypt (Jeremiah 43:6).

+ **Delaiah son of Shemaiah.** A member of Jehoiakim's royal cabinet and one of the three who unsuccessfully attempted to get King Jehoiakim not to burn Jeremiah's scroll (Jeremiah 36:12, 25).

+ **Ebed-melech.** His name means "servant of the king." Ebed-melech was an Ethiopian servant of Zedekiah who rescued Jeremiah from a cistern used as a dungeon (Jeremiah 38:7–13). As a reward for his service, Jeremiah promised him that his life would be spared at the destruction of Jerusalem (Jeremiah 39:15–18).

+ **Elasah son of Shaphan.** A messenger sent by Zedekiah to Babylon carrying with him a letter written by Jeremiah to the exiles (Jeremiah 29:3).

Elishama. A secretary, or scribe, during the reign of Jehoiakim (Jeremiah 36:12, 20–21).

Elnathan son of Achbor. A royal official during the reign of Jehoiakim. He was sent by the king to capture and bring back the fugitive prophet Urijah, who had fled to Egypt (Jeremiah 26:22). He was among the Judahite officials who unsuccessfully attempted to dissuade King Jehoiakim from burning the scroll dictated by Jeremiah (Jeremiah 36:12, 25). This Elnathan may be the one whose daughter married Jehoiakim (2 Kings 24:8).

+ **Gedaliah son of Ahikam.** A royal official. Gedaliah was appointed governor of Judah by the Babylonians after the destruction of Jerusalem (2 Kings 25:22–26; Jeremiah 40:6–41:18). He was aided in his rule by Jeremiah but was assassinated after only two or three months by a group of Judahite nationalists. After his death his supporters fled to Egypt, forcing Jeremiah and Baruch to go with them.

– **Gedaliah son of Pashur.** One of the four officials of King Zedekiah who demanded that Jeremiah be put to death for the treasonable content of his prophecies urging surrender to the Babylonians. Zedekiah granted their demand and gave Jeremiah over to them to be cast into a dry cistern to die (Jeremiah 38:1–6). Jeremiah was saved by Ebed-melech (Jeremiah 38:7–13).

+ **Gemariah son of Hilkiyah.** Zedekiah sent Gemariah with Elasah as messengers to Nebuchadnezzar. They carried a letter from Jeremiah to the exiles (Jeremiah 29:1–3).

+ **Gemariah son of Shaphan the scribe.** Son of the royal secretary and brother of Ahikam. Gemariah had a chamber in the temple complex where Baruch read Jeremiah's prophecies. He was among the officials who urged Jeremiah and Baruch

to hide and urged King Jehoiakim not to burn the scroll (Jeremiah 36:10–26).

Hanameel son of Shallum. The cousin of Jeremiah whose field at Anathoth the prophet purchased as a symbol of the future return of Israel to their land (Jeremiah 32:7–15).

– **Hananiah son of Azur.** A false prophet from Gibeon who prophesied the imminent liberation of the Judahites from Babylonian rule and the return of the temple vessels from Babylon within two years (Jeremiah 28). This was in contrast to Jeremiah’s warning that Judah should accept the rule of the Babylonians. Jeremiah accused him of false prophecies and correctly foretold Hananiah’s death within a year (Jeremiah 28:17).

Heman. A member of a guild of singers put in charge of the singing at Josiah’s Passover (2 Chronicles 35:15).

Hilkiah. A Levitical priest from Anathoth and the father of Jeremiah (Jeremiah 1:1). Possibly he was a descendant of Bather, the last high priest of the house of Eli, who was exiled to Anathoth at the time of Solomon (1 Kings 2:26–27).

Hilkiah son of Shallum. A Levitical high priest who was active during the reign of King Josiah. It was Hilkiah who found the book of the law in the temple. He played a role in Josiah’s reforms (2 Kings 22–23; 2 Chronicles 34–35) and provided the sacrifices for Josiah’s Passover celebration (2 Chronicles 35:8). Hilkiah was one of the group of messengers to whom Josiah gave the book of the law to take to Huldah (2 Kings 22:12; 2 Chronicles 34:20). He gave a Passover offering to the priests and Levites (2 Chronicles 35:8).

– **Irijah son of Shelemiah.** A sentry at the Benjamin Gate in Jerusalem who arrested Jeremiah and had him thrown in prison when he was accused of deserting to the Babylonians (Jeremiah 37:13–14).

– **Ishmael son of Nethaniah.** A member of the royal family who went to Gedaliah at Mizpah after the destruction of Jerusalem (Jeremiah 40:8–41:18; 2 Kings 25:23–25). He betrayed Judah by organizing a conspiracy to assassinate the governor, Gedaliah, along with other supporters. He captured the residents of Mizpah, including Jeremiah, but was driven off by others loyal to Gedaliah. He escaped to live among the Ammonites.

Jaazaniah son of Jeremiah (not the prophet). Presumably the head of the Rechabite community (Jeremiah 35). During the reign of King Jehoiakim, the prophet Jeremiah tested Jaazaniah and the Rechabites before the people of Judah by asking them to drink wine, which they would not do because it was against their beliefs. Jeremiah used the Rechabites as an example of obedience and faithfulness in contrast to the Judahites, who did not always live according to their beliefs.

Jaazaniah (Jezaniah) son of a Maachathite. A commander of the troops under the governor Gedaliah at Mizpah (2 Kings 25:23; cf. Jeremiah 40:8).

Jahath son of Merari. A Levite who oversaw the work on the temple during the reign of Josiah (2 Chronicles 34:12).

Jeduthun. The king's seer and a member of a guild of singers put in charge of the singing at Josiah's Passover (2 Chronicles 35:15).

Jehiel. A ruler at the temple at the time of Josiah who gave a Passover offering to the priests and Levites (2 Chronicles 35:8).

Jehucal son of Shelemiah. Royal official sent by King Zedekiah to Jeremiah to get the prophet to pray to the Lord for Judah (Jeremiah 37:3).

Jehudi son of Nethaniah. A royal official sent to summon Baruch to bring Jeremiah's prophecies before King Jehoiakim (Jeremiah 36:14). Later he brought the scroll, read portions of

it to the king, and cut off and burned portions of it (Jeremiah 36:12–23).

Jerahmeel son of Hammelech (“son of the king”). A royal official assigned police duties under King Jehoiakim sent to seize Jeremiah and Baruch after the scroll containing Jeremiah’s prophecies was burned (Jeremiah 36:26). It is not certain if “son of the king” is an honorary title or a designation of actual relationship to the royal family. He may have been the son of King Jehoiakim or of another one of the kings of Judah. See Malchiah son of Hammelech (below).

– **Jezeiah son of Hashanah.** A military commander (Jeremiah 42:1). Probably the same person as Azariah who opposed Jeremiah’s advice not to flee to Egypt (Jeremiah 43:2).

Joah son of Joahaz the recorder. One of the messengers sent by Josiah to repair the temple (2 Chronicles 34:8).

– **Johanan and Jonathan sons of Kareah.** Judahite commanders who joined Gedaliah in Mizpah (Jeremiah 40:8) and later, against the advice of Jeremiah, led a group of people to Egypt, taking Jeremiah and Baruch with them (Jeremiah 42:1–43:7).

Jonathan. A royal official who held the position of scribe. His house was used as a temporary prison for Jeremiah (Jeremiah 37:15, 20; 38:26).

– **Jucal/Jehucal son of Shelemiah.** One of the four officials of King Zedekiah who demanded Jeremiah be put to death for the treasonable content of his prophecies advocating surrender to the Babylonians (Jeremiah 38:1–6). Zedekiah granted their demand and gave Jeremiah over to them to be cast into a dry cistern to die. He was saved by Ebed-melech (Jeremiah 38:7–13).

Maaseiah. A governor of Jerusalem during the reign of Josiah who was assigned to repair the temple (2 Chronicles 34:8).

+ **Maaseiah son of Shallum.** A doorkeeper of the temple at the time of Jeremiah (Jeremiah 35:4).

Malchiah son of Hammelech. A member of the royal family and owner of the cistern in which Jeremiah was imprisoned (Jeremiah 38:6). The word *hammelek* in Hebrew means “the king”; thus Malchiah son of Hammelech can be translated as “Malchiah the son of the king” (NRSV “the king’s son”). The name Malchiah means “Jehovah is king.” Latter-day Saint scholars have argued that the shortened form of this name may be Mulek and that Malchiah the son of Hammelech may be a reference to Mulek son of King Zedekiah (Helaman 6:10; 8:21).⁵

Meshullam. One of the overseers of the work on the temple during the reign of Josiah (2 Chronicles 34:12).

Michaiah son of Gemariah. He reported the reading of Jeremiah’s scroll to the court officials of King Jehoiakim in 605 B.C. (Jeremiah 36:11–13).

Nathan-melech. A chamberlain (eunuch) at the time of Josiah. Josiah had the horses dedicated to the sun removed from their quarters near Nathan-melech’s room (2 Kings 23:11).

Obadiah son of Merari. A Levite who oversaw the work on the temple during the reign of Josiah (2 Chronicles 34:12).

Offerers of gifts at Passover. A passage in 2 Chronicles 35:9 lists several individuals who offered gifts to the Levites at the Passover of Josiah, including Cononiah, Shemaiah, Nethaneel, Hashabiah, Jeiel, and Jozabad.

– **Pashur son of Immer.** A priest and official in the temple (Jeremiah 20:1–6). After hearing Jeremiah’s prophecy of destruction, Pashur had Jeremiah beaten, put in stocks, and imprisoned overnight. The next day Jeremiah prophesied that Pashur and his family and friends would be taken to Babylon, where they would spend the rest of their lives.

– **Pashur son of Malchiah.** One of the four officials of King Zedekiah who demanded that Jeremiah be put to death for the treasonable content of his prophecies to surrender to the

Babylonians (Jeremiah 38:1–6). Zedekiah granted their demand and gave Jeremiah over to them to be cast into a dry cistern to die. He was saved by Ebed-melech (Jeremiah 38:7–13).

Seraiah son of Azariah. High priest of Jerusalem, and one of the Judahite royal officials put to death in Riblah by Nebuchadnezzar after the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. (Jeremiah 52:24–27; 2 Kings 25:18–21).

Seraiah son of Azriel. A royal officer under King Jehoiakim sent to seize Jeremiah and Baruch after the scroll containing Jeremiah’s prophecies was burned (Jeremiah 36:26).

+ **Seraiah son of Neriah and brother of Baruch.** A high official in the court of King Zedekiah and a friend and protector of Jeremiah and supporter of his ministry (see Jeremiah 50–51). Seraiah accompanied Zedekiah in his visit to Babylon in the fourth year of his reign. On this occasion Jeremiah instructed him to take a scroll containing the prophecies of destruction against Babylon, read them to the people there, and then throw the scroll into the Euphrates with a stone tied to it, also uttering the words of a curse (Jeremiah 51:59–64).

Seraiah son of Tanhumeth. A Judahite military commander who gathered to Gedaliah at Mizpah (Jeremiah 40:8).

Shallum father of Hanameel. Jeremiah’s uncle, whose son Hanameel sold Jeremiah a field in the family hometown of Anathoth during the siege of Jerusalem as a sign of the eventual return of Judah to her land (Jeremiah 32:6–12).

+ **Shaphan son of Aziliah and father of Ahikam, Elasah, and Gemariah.** A prominent scribe to King Josiah who was sent to distribute the wages to the workers on the temple in 622 B.C. when the book of the law was discovered. Shaphan read the book to Josiah and was sent with several others to take it to Huldah to verify its authenticity (2 Kings 22:3–20; 2 Chronicles 34:8–22). His sons Ahikam (Jeremiah 26:24), Elasah (Jeremiah 29:3), and

Gemariah (Jeremiah 36:10–26)—also scribes during the ministry of Jeremiah (2 Kings 22:3, 12; Jeremiah 29:3; 36:10)—helped the prophet. His grandson Gedaliah son of Ahikam was the governor set over Judah by Nebuchadnezzar after the destruction of Jerusalem (2 Kings 25:22–26; Jeremiah 40:6–41:18).

Shelemiah son of Abdeel. A royal official under King Jehoiakim sent to seize Jeremiah and Baruch after the scroll containing Jeremiah’s prophecies was burned (Jeremiah 36:26).

– **Shemaiah a Nehelamite.** A false prophet living among the exiles in Babylon (Jeremiah 29:24–32). Shemaiah prophesied the imminent return of the people to Judah and urged the priests in Jerusalem to rebuke and imprison Jeremiah for prophesying that the exile would last a long time. Jeremiah prophesied that Shemaiah would not have descendants among the people of Judah and would not live long enough to return from exile.

– **Shephatiah son of Mattan.** One of the four officials of King Zedekiah who demanded that Jeremiah be put to death for the treasonable content of his prophecies advocating surrender to the Babylonians (Jeremiah 38:1–6). Zedekiah granted their demand and gave Jeremiah over to them to be cast into a dry cistern to die. He was saved by Ebed-melech (Jeremiah 38:7–13).

Sons of Ephai the Netophathite. Some of the Judahite commanders who gathered to Gedaliah at Mizpah after the destruction of Jerusalem (Jeremiah 40:8).

Sons of Hanan son of Igdaliah, a man of God. The sons of Hanan had a room near the chamber of the princes where Jeremiah brought the Rechabites (Jeremiah 35:4). Their father is called a “man of God,” which may mean he was a prophet.

Uzza. A man who owned a garden in Jerusalem during the reign of Amon. King Amon was buried in a sepulcher in his garden (2 Kings 21:26).

Zechariah. One of the overseers of the work on the temple during the reign of Josiah (2 Chronicles 34:12).

Zechariah. A ruler at the temple at the time of Josiah who gave a Passover offering to the priests and Levites (2 Chronicles 35:8).

Zedekiah. An otherwise unknown son of King Jehoiakim (1 Chronicles 3:16).

Zedekiah son of Hananiah. A royal official in the court of King Jehoiakim who was among those who listened to Michaiah's report of Baruch's reading of Jeremiah's prophecies (Jeremiah 36:12).

– **Zedekiah son of Maaseiah.** A false prophet contemporary with Jeremiah. Jeremiah accused him of false prophecy—of not being sent by the Lord—and immoral behavior and predicted his death (Jeremiah 29:21–23).

+ **Zephaniah son of Maaseiah.** He was the “second priest” in rank to the high priest Seraiah (Jeremiah 52:24). Twice Zephaniah served as an emissary from King Zedekiah to Jeremiah asking him to inquire of the Lord as to what Zedekiah should do (Jeremiah 21:1; 37:3). The false prophet Shemaiah who was exiled to Babylon wrote Zephaniah a letter rebuking him for not having Jeremiah imprisoned (Jeremiah 29:24–28); Zephaniah read the letter to Jeremiah (Jeremiah 24:29).

NOTES

1. The names of the individuals are taken from 2 Kings 21–25; 2 Chronicles 33–36; and the book of Jeremiah. For a more limited list of these names, see “The *Dramatis Personae* in the Book of Jeremiah,” in Jack R. Lundbom, *Jeremiah: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 1999), 882–84. The Mesopotamian rulers and chronologies are found in A. Leo Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia: Portrait of a Dead Civilization*,

rev. ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), 335–40. The Egyptian rulers are found in William W. Hallo and William Kelly Simpson, *The Ancient Near East: A History* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1971), 299–302.

2. See Margaret Barker, “What Did King Josiah Reform?” in this volume, pages 523–42.

3. See Jeffrey R. Chadwick, “Lehi’s House at Jerusalem and the Land of His Inheritance,” in this volume, pages 81–130.

4. This point is covered by Robert F. Smith, “Book of Mormon Event Structure: The Ancient Near East,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 5/2 (1996): 117–18; see John J. Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 130–33.

5. H. Curtis Wright, “Mulek,” in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 2:970.