

9 Judah and its Prophets



Josiah reads the book of the Law

In the kingdom of Judah, as in the northern kingdom of Israel, kings and people failed to live up to God's standards. However, they were shaken when the kingdom of Israel was destroyed by the armies of Assyria. The disaster made the Judeans listen to the warnings of their prophets, including Isaiah and Micah. Isaiah advised King Hezekiah of Judah what to do when the Assyrian army came and camped outside Jerusalem. Together they trusted God to keep the city safe. One night, thousands of Assyrian soldiers died and the army went away without attacking.

Some time later, around 622 BCE, an ancient book of the Law was found in the Temple in Jerusalem. The king, Josiah, was dismayed to learn how much it had been ignored. He gave orders for the Temple to be put to rights and for the people to remember all that it meant to live as God's people.

Even so, there was trouble ahead for Judah. Rival nations were fighting for power: Egypt to the south, Assyria to the north and, east of Assyria, another superpower: Babylon.

The kings who came after Josiah did not listen to



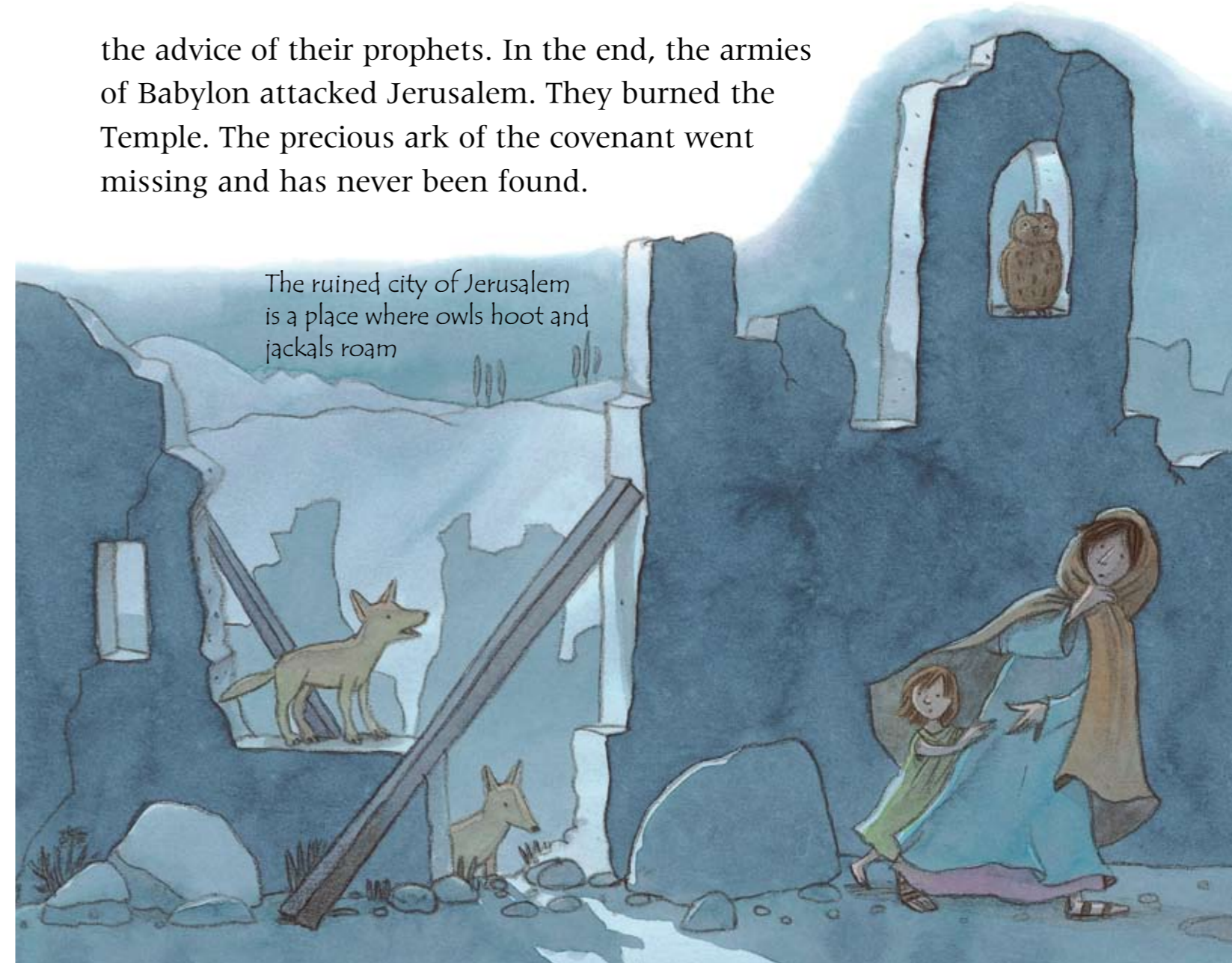
PROPHETS OF JUDAH

The books of the prophets **Isaiah** and **Micah** deal with the time when Judah was threatened by Assyria. The book of the prophet **Nahum** gives thanks for the defeat of the Assyrians by the armies of Babylon.

However, those same armies eventually threatened Judah. **Jeremiah**, **Zephaniah** and **Habakkuk** warned the kings of Judah about the threat.

A poem called **Lamentations** describes the horror of Jerusalem after the defeat, and the prophet **Obadiah** predicted disaster for the Edomites who came looting.

the advice of their prophets. In the end, the armies of Babylon attacked Jerusalem. They burned the Temple. The precious ark of the covenant went missing and has never been found.



The ruined city of Jerusalem is a place where owls hoot and jackals roam

A COLLECTION OF WRITINGS

During the reign of King Josiah, scholars began to pay attention to all the important books written about the nation. The followers of the prophets began to write down the prophets' teachings. More books that eventually became part of the Bible were begun in this way.