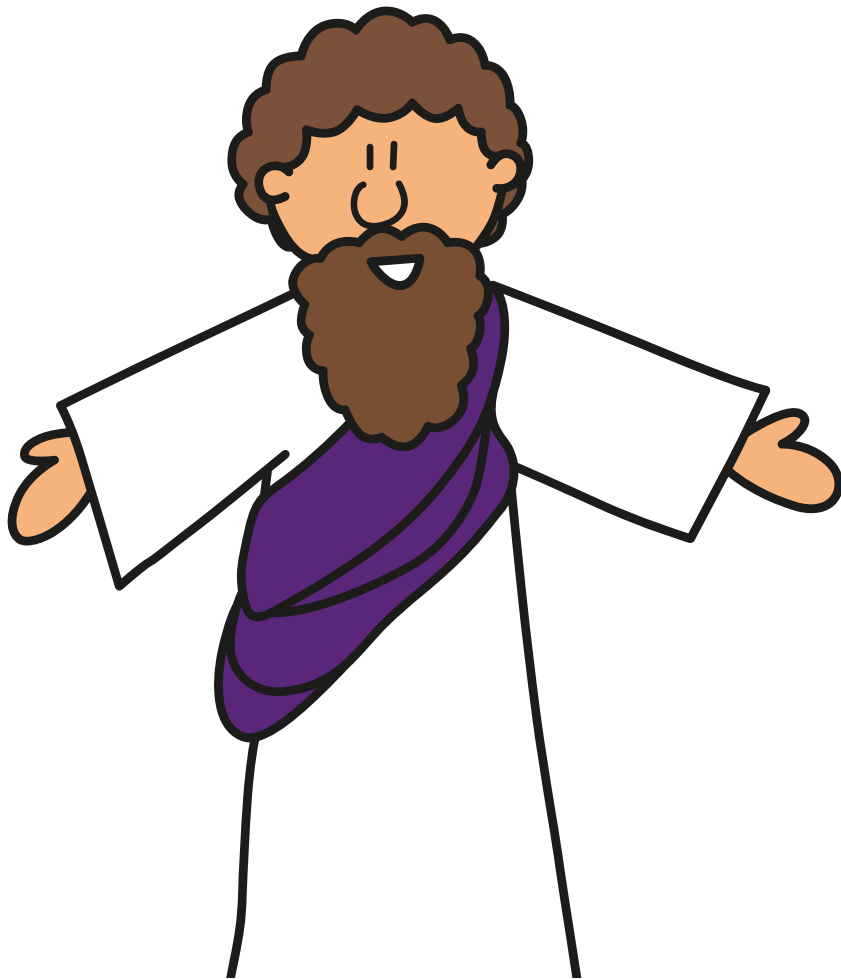


God's Promise and the Exile of Judah



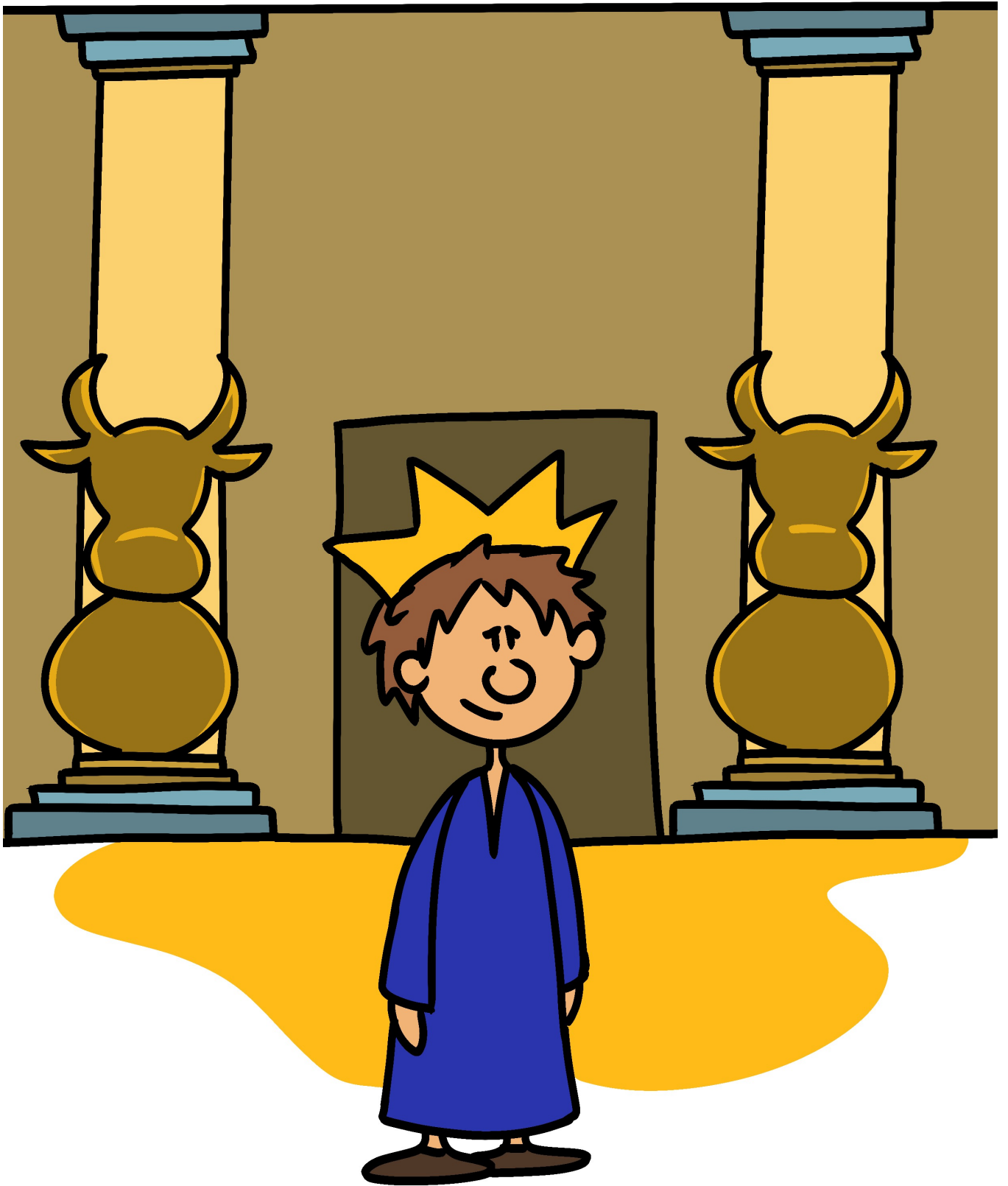
597 and 586 BC

Zedekiah was 21 years old when he became king of Judah.

As many of the kings before him had done, he did evil in the eyes of the LORD.

He hardened his heart and would not turn to the LORD, the God of Israel.

During King Zedekiah's reign, the people and priests became more unfaithful and misused the temple in Jerusalem.



Because the LORD had pity on his people, he sent prophets to warn them about the consequences of their disobedience.

Prophet Jeremiah said to King Zedekiah, "The Babylonians will attack this city. They will capture it and burn it down. You will be handed over to the king of Babylon."

But they mocked God's messengers and scoffed at his prophets until the wrath of the LORD was aroused against his people and there was no remedy.



King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, and his army, marched against Jerusalem.

They broke through the city wall and carried to Babylon all the valuables from the temple of God.

The Babylonians set fire to the temple and broke down the wall of Jerusalem.

They carried the people of Judah into exile to Babylon where they became their servants.

But the commander did leave behind a remnant in the land of Judah, some of the poorest people who owned nothing. He gave them vineyards and fields.



Later the LORD spoke to the people living in exile in Babylon through the prophet Ezekiel.

He said, "I will search for my sheep and look after them. I will rescue them from all the places where they were scattered. I will bring them back to their own land. I will place over them one shepherd, my servant David. He will be their prince forever. I will make an everlasting promise of peace with them. I will be their God, and they will be my people. I the LORD have spoken."

2 Chronicles 36, Jeremiah 37-39 and Ezekiel 34

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