

# The Bible FOR DUMMIES

February 19, 2008



## **Week 5 Review**

### *800 Years of History*

- ◆ From death of Moses (1250 BC) through Rebuilding of Temple (Ezra and Nehemiah), 550 BC
- ◆ Period of Judges (Military Leaders) to the Kings to the Defeat.
  - ◆ 722 BC Fall of Israel – by Assyrians (Iraq)
  - ◆ 587 BC Fall of Judah – by Persians (Iran)
- ◆ Problem of Assimilation is constant – by 550 BC Torah.
- ◆ Passover and rituals are established

# ***“The Prophets”***



## ***Isaiah and Friends***

### **Today's Outline**

- 1. Prophets and Prophecy**
- 2. Prophets of the Two Kingdoms: Israel (North) and Judah (South)**
- 3. Introducing the Prophets – the 4 Scrolls**

# Prophets and Prophecy

**“Prophecy...an exegesis of existence  
from a divine perspective.”**

**“Indeed, the main task is to  
bring the world into divine focus.”**

*Abraham Herschel*

## **Characteristics of the Prophet** *An individual who said NO to his society.*

- ◆ **Ancient man cherished above all else wisdom, wealth and might. To the prophet, however, such infatuation was ludicrous and idolatrous.**
- ◆ **Sensitivity to evil – prophet felt fiercely about the poor. Prophets’ words burn where conscience ends.**
- ◆ **The moral state of the people - few are guilty, all are responsible. Purpose of prophecy is to conquer callousness.**

## BACKGROUND

### ISRAEL

The Best of Times  
God is good!

Why is God good?  
Because of our  
extravagant support  
of the official shrines.

The Worst of Times

Absence of loyalty  
Absence of pity



## Kings and Prophets of Israel and Judah

Northern Kingdom (Israel)	Southern Kingdom (Judah)
810 BCE AMOS HOSEA	ISAIAH (I) MICAH
722 Fall of the northern kingdom	JEREMIAH ZEPHANIAH HABAKKUK
586	Fall of Judah OBADIAH EZEKIEL ISAIAH (II)
538	HAGGAI ZECHARIAH
432	ISAIAH (III) MALACHI
No dates confirmed for: JOEL, JONAH, NAHUM	

## **The Prophets:**

***The First Scroll:***                    **Isaiah**

***The Second Scroll:***                **Jeremiah**

***The Third Scroll:***                   **Ezekiel**

***The Fourth Scroll:***                **The Twelve**  
(sometimes referred to as the 'minor prophets')

### ***Chronologically***

***Hosea - 8<sup>th</sup> Century***

***Amos - 8<sup>th</sup>***

***Micah - 8<sup>th</sup>***

***Nahum - 7<sup>th</sup> Century***

***Habakkuk***

***Zephaniah***

***Haggai -The Persian period***

***Zechariah***

***Malachi***

***Joel - no particular historical placement,  
later books***

***Jonah***

***Obadiah***

## Prophets Placed in Canon

### *To Reflect Death & Rebirth of Israel*

“Rather we must see that prophecy is a collection of collections, and that ultimately the final result in the prophetic corpus of the canon formed a recognizable unity not entirely dissimilar from that of the Pentateuch. As this was made up from various sources and collections, so also the Former and Latter Prophets, comprising the various preserved prophecies of a whole series of inspired individuals, acquired an overarching thematic unity. This centered on the death and rebirth of Israel, interpreted theologically as acts of divine judgment and salvation.”

*Ronald E. Clements, Canon and Authority: Essays In Old Testament Religion and Theology, 1977*

## The First Scroll:

The  
Prophet  
Isaiah



# **Isaiah**

3 Distinct Periods

(Reflected in Dead Sea Scrolls as 'separate' writings)

## **Isaiah Part I — Chapters 1-39 Before the Exile**

Isaiah receives his call in 742BC – year King Uzziah dies

Critical time in life of Judah (south) for this had been their zenith – now they are about to decline

“Tremble, you women who are at ease,  
Shudder, you complacent ones;  
Strip yourselves and make yourselves bare,  
Gird sackcloth upon your loins.” (*Isaiah 32.11*)

## **Overwhelmed by the Majesty of God**

Chapter 6: 1-8 The Call of Isaiah/the Vision

- ◆ **Theme: Majesty of God and sinfulness of man**
- ◆ **Angel took a live coal from an altar and touched Isaiah's lips—'your guilt is taken away and your sin is atoned'**
- ◆ **With this Isaiah responds, "Here am I. Send me"**

## **Hymns:**

**“Here I am Lord... it is I Lord... I have heard you calling in the night.”**

**“Holy, Holy, Holy”** – only mention of seraphs/seraphim in Bible – angels with 6 wings who burned; 2 wings covered their eyes, 2 covered their feet and 2 allowed them to fly...

**They burned because they had a passion for God – part of vision.**

## **From Gloom and Doom to Hope**

**Prophets begin in gloom and doom (people have sinned and condemnation is coming) and end in hope.**

### **From gloom**

**Isaiah 9.2 “The people who walked in darkness...”**

### **To hope – the Messianic King**

**9.6 “For unto us a child is born...”**

### ***and later (40.28-31)***

**28**Have you not known? Have you not heard?  
The Lord is the everlasting God,  
the Creator of the ends of the earth.  
He does not faint or grow weary;  
his understanding is unsearchable.

**29**He gives power to the faint,  
and strengthens the powerless.

**30**Even youths will faint and be weary,  
and the young will fall exhausted;

**31**but those who wait for the Lord  
shall renew their strength,  
they shall mount up with wings like eagles,  
they shall run and not be weary,  
they shall walk and not faint.

### ***Isaiah, Israel and The Messiah***

**“What is the difference between Jews and Christians? We all await the Messiah. You believe he has already come and gone, while we do not. I propose that we await Him together. And when He appears, we can ask Him: “Were you here before” ... And I hope that at the moment I will be close enough to whisper in his ear, “For the love of heaven, don’t answer.”**

***Elie Wiesel, Memoirs: All Rivers Run to the Sea***

## **Isaiah and the Wrath of God**

**Wrath:** God walks away because of sin.

The One who is Holy must retreat in the face of sin.

Thus God is in exile (galut) – the sins of the people have exiled God.

**With God in exile** – all manner of evil may and does befall the nation.

Because you/Israel have not kept the covenant, and because God is in exile, other nations shall rise up against you and destroy you.



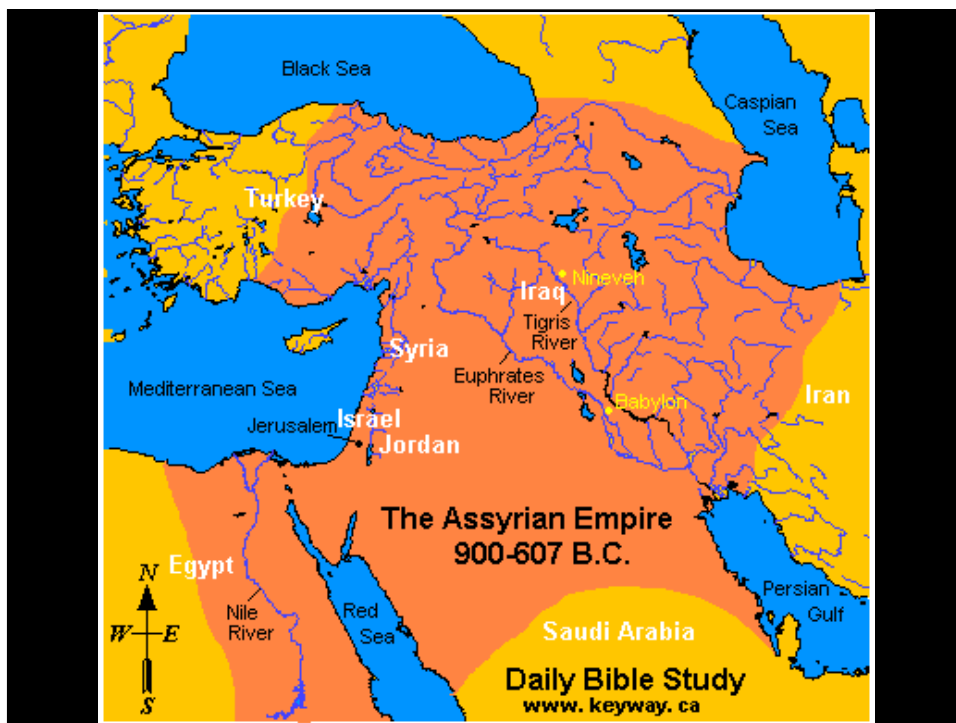
**Galut – God Withdraws the “defense shield”**

## ***Assyria and Troubled Alliances***

**Background: Assyria is threatening both Israel and Judah.**

**However, Assyria is diverted on their eastern front and an pro-Assyrian military becomes head of Israel who in turn now threatens to dominate Judah.**

**Meanwhile, Judah is also being threatened by Syria.**



**Isaiah pleads with King Ahaz (Judah) not to make a pact (an agreement) with Assyria in order to be protected from both Syria and Israel. King Ahaz must choose – does he trust God to protect Judah or does he trust the power and might of Assyria? You know the answer!**

**Ahaz is so taken by Assyria that he goes to Damascus and sees their throne –and comes back and has one identical to it built and placed in the Temple. Isaiah sees this as blasphemy.**

**With the new pact, Jerusalem loses its independence and becomes a vassal state of Assyria.**

**Assyria now turns on Israel and rapes and pillages up north to ‘teach them a lesson’.**

## ***Isaiah Part II - Chapters 40-55***

**Written while the people were in exile in Babylon.**

**Theme is hope for a new day, a day of return, a day when God would re-establish the nation of Israel.**

**In this section are the 4 'servant songs' identified with the Messiah/Jesus who would come to fulfill the role of suffering servant**

## ***Isaiah Part III - Chapters 56-66***

**Written from the perspective of the people who have resettled in Judah and Jerusalem after the exile in Babylon.**

**61.4 shows a major theme: work of restoring the Temple and re-establishing worship.**

## ***The Second Scroll : Jeremiah***



## ***Jeremiah***

***Literally-“The Lord hurls”***

***Jeremiah-“Hurled the word of the Lord”***

**Between Isaiah I (the impending doom) and Isaiah II (the Fall) appears this boy who says that “I am too young” to serve. The Lord touches his lips and tells him to serve and gives him the word to “hurl” into the world, and he is a prophet for 40 years.**

## **586 BC – Jerusalem/Judah Falls**

Jeremiah called the “weeping prophet” because he saw so much pain and suffering.

Jeremiah says it is obvious: God brought you out of Egypt, but you have forgotten God and no longer keep the commandments and no longer care for the poor. “Therefore you will fall”... God’s plan is redemption through suffering – in this case, Babylonian conquest and captivity.

For his efforts, Jeremiah is arrested, jailed and sentenced to death. Yet God sustains him. When the Assyrians finally come, Jeremiah does not go to Babylon but goes to Egypt where he dies.

## ***Christian Supersessionism***

In Latin the word ‘covenant’ is translated as ‘testamentum’ – hence the New Testament. This understanding is further influenced by Hebrews.

“God speaks of a ‘new covenant’ He has made the first one obsolete. Jeremiah is saying that what is obsolete and growing old will soon disappear.” (Hebrews 8.13)

## ***Christian Supersessionism (cont.)***

### ***Jeremiah 31.31-34***

“<sup>31</sup>The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. <sup>32</sup>It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord. <sup>33</sup>But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they

### **Christian Supersessionism (cont.)**

shall be my people. <sup>34</sup>No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, 'Know the Lord', for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more."

Christians have 'misread' Jeremiah to say that the Messiah/Jesus makes Judaism obsolete/useless. This text does not say this but says that a 'new covenant' will be made with the House of Israel and Judah.

### **Jews and Christians Together A New Ecumenism?**

"I lean therefore to a one-covenant theory, which however embraces Jews and Christians, whatever their differences in the one covenant, and that means Jews and Christians of today. This is "ecumenism" at its most basic, to introduce the word so often used today. One is thus very close to the biblical view, for all the variety of biblical language, especially in the matter of 'covenant'.

*Norbert Lohfink, The Covenant Never Revoked*

## **Christians and Jews The People of God**

### **7 Affirmations—Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) 1987**

---

- 1. We affirm that the living God whom Christians worship is the same God who is worshipped and served by Jews. We bear witness that the God revealed in Jesus, a Jew, to be the Triune Lord of all, is the same one disclosed in the life and worship of Israel.**

### **7 Affirmations—Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) 1987**

---

- 2. We affirm that the church, elected in Jesus Christ, has been engrafted into the people of God established by the covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Therefore, Christians have not replaced Jews.**
- 3. We affirm that both the church and the Jewish people are elected by God for witness to the world and that the relationship of the church to contemporary Jews is based on that gracious and irrevocable election of both.**

***7 Affirmations—Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) 1987***

---

- 4. We affirm that the reign of God is attested both by the continuing existence of the Jewish people and by the church's proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Hence, when speaking with Jews about matters of faith, we must always acknowledge that Jews are already in a covenantal relationship with God.**

***7 Affirmations—Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) 1987***

---

- 5. We acknowledge in repentance the church's long and deep complicity in the proliferation of anti-Jewish attitudes and actions through its "teaching of contempt" for the Jews. Such teaching we now repudiate, together with the acts and attitudes which it generates.**
- 6. We affirm the continuity of God's promise of land with the obligations of that promise to the people of Israel.**

## **7 Affirmations—Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) 1987**

**7. We affirm that Jews and Christians are partners in waiting. Christians see in Christ the redemption not yet fully visible in the world, and the Jews await the messianic redemption. Christians and Jews together await the final manifestation of God's promise of the peaceable kingdom.**

### ***The Book of Lamentations***

**Long believed that Jeremiah wrote these 5 dirges/laments (funeral poems) over the death of Jerusalem.**

*“How deserted looks the city  
Once so full of people!  
How like a widow she is,  
Who once was great among the nations!  
She who was a queen among the provinces,  
Has now become a slave.”*

**It was so bad (people trapped in the city without food) that (Chapter 2) they turned to cannibalism.**

## ***From Gloom to Hope***

**Even after the horror (women raped, rulers hung by their hands and people forced into slavery) Jeremiah writes in Lamentations:**

***“Because of the Lord’s great love we are not consumed,  
For his compassions never fail...***

***They are new every morning***

***Great is thy Faithfulness...***

***The Lord is good to those who hope in him...”***

***Lamentations 3.22-26***

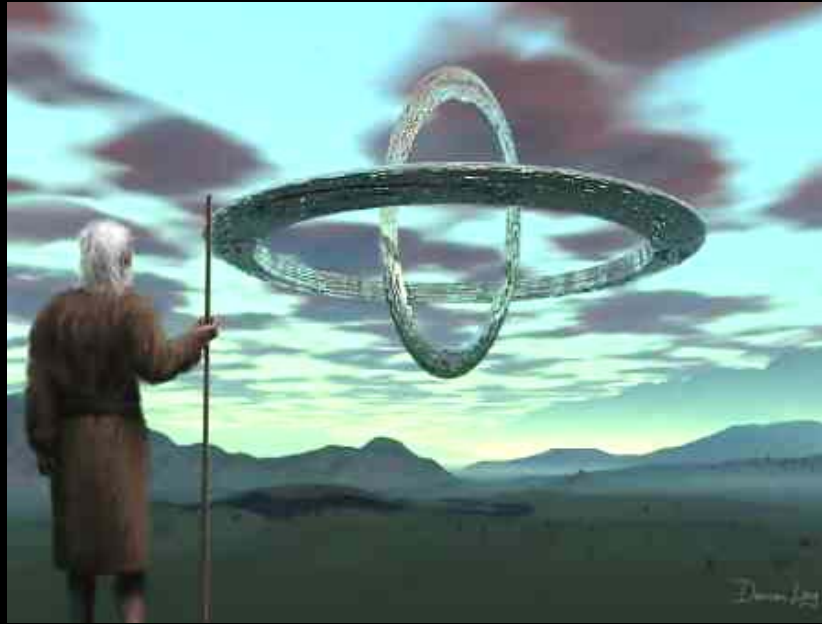
## ***Gloom to Hope***

### **Jeremiah 31.31-34**

**The Lord will give you a new covenant...  
write it on your hearts...forgive your iniquity  
and remember your sins no more.**

**And then – to show his audacious hope – he  
buys real-estate at market value when there  
is no market, when the city is about to fall  
(Chapter 32...Remember Leon’s sermon in  
January on this passage?)**

## **The Third Scroll: Ezekiel**



**Ezekiel is a difficult book to comprehend – oracles, symbolic actions, visions, allegories, prophetic proclamations.**

**It is difficult enough that the Jews had a tradition that only a mature person (only a person 30 years old or older) could read it!**

### ***Some facts...***

- ◆ **Only prophecy to be written entirely in the first person**
- ◆ **First 34 chapters are ‘gloom’... people are messed up and deserve judgment**
- ◆ **Adam (which means “the human”) is used 93 times; Adam is representative of humanity**
- ◆ **Opening verses tell us that Ezekiel is a priest living in Exile – one of the 10,000 to be deported to Babylon in 597 BC**

### ***Some facts...(cont.)***

- ◆ **Ezekiel’s answer to the question of theodicy (the problem of good and evil) is patience—people must be patient because in the end everything is measured out by God and evil will be punished**
- ◆ **Ezekiel is a priest living in exile and among the first to be deported from Jerusalem in 597 BC with King Jehoiachin and other prominent citizens of Judah. In Chapter 24 when his wife dies, God tells him not to mourn, but to act normal as a sign of how God would respond to the “death” of the holy city and temple and the people of the covenant**

### ***Some facts...(cont.)***

- ◆ In Martin Luther's translation of the Bible the only woodcut picturing the nativity of Jesus appears on the title page of Ezekiel; the term 'son of man' is used 93 times in this book
- ◆ Ezekiel is the setting for several great spirituals ("Ezekiel saw da wheel, way in middle of da sky" and "dem bones, dem bones, dem dry bones...")
- ◆ Ezekiel believed that Jerusalem was at the center of all nations and at the center of the world (5.5)

### ***Some facts...(cont.)***

- ◆ Chapters 1-32 explain that the reason for the destruction of their nation is because they disobeyed God and lived apart from the Covenant. The book ends with a promise, however, that God will restore them – the famous passage about 'dry bones' is that God will again breathe life into them.
- ◆ During the exile people do not 'feel God's presence' – this is God's punishment; a Holy God retreats (Hebrew term is 'galut')
- ◆ Ezekiel (is perhaps the first) argues for personal responsibility both for actions and for one's relationship with God

## ***Some facts...(cont.)***

**Ezekiel 18.19-20**

**<sup>19</sup>Yet you say, ‘Why should not the son suffer for the iniquity of the father?’ When the son has done what is lawful and right, and has been careful to observe all my statutes, he shall surely live. <sup>20</sup>The person who sins shall die. A child shall not suffer for the iniquity of a parent, nor a parent suffer for the iniquity of a child; the righteousness of the righteous shall be his own, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be his own.**

## ***The Vision***

**Ezekiel sees a wheel ‘way up in the middle of the sky’.**

**It is a windstorm with flashing lightning, and in the center he sees what appears to be a fire “like glowing metal” that is surrounded by 4 living creatures – man, ox, lion, and eagle.**

**Creatures had wings – could move back and forth like lightning. HE saw an expanse of ice – then in the middle saw a throne and a creature in the middle of the throne that looked like glowing metal.**

## ***The Vision (cont.)***

Ezekiel was handed a scroll on which were written words of lament and sorrow – told to eat it – he did and it tasted sweet, like honey, and he was transfixed for 7 days.

*\*You guessed it, if you are under 30 and you read it, you think it is a space ship!*

## ***Valley of Dry Bones***

Ezekiel's most famous vision was that he saw a valley of dry bones and wondered if these dry bones could live.

God said to speak to them and he did....and they started coming back together again as skeletons and then with flesh and skin.

He spoke again and breath entered their bodies and they became a vast army.

Moral of the story – the nation is never too dead that God cannot breathe life back into it.

## **The Fourth Scroll: The Twelve**

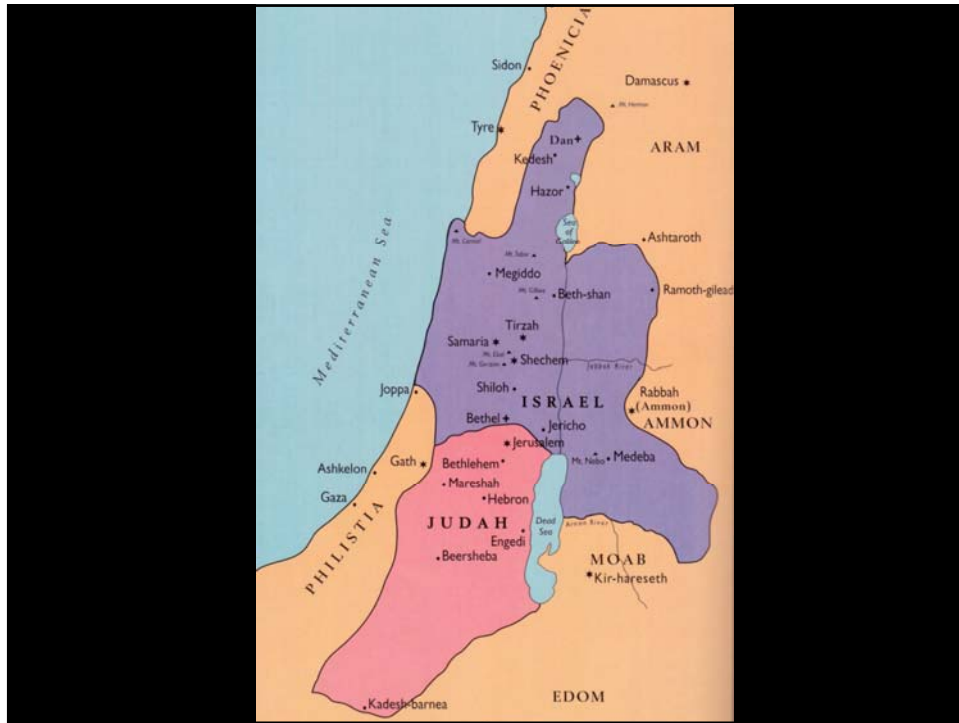
**Choose 3: Hosea, Jonah, and Micah**

**Last Fall I did a series on The Prophet Amos – you can access the notes and video on Faith’s website [www.faithcapecoral.org](http://www.faithcapecoral.org) on the Tuesdays Together page.**

### **Hosea**

**He is to the North (Israel) during their decline and fall what Jeremiah is a century and a half later to Judah. This is a pivotal time!**





## ***Gomer as an Allegory for Israel***

**Hosea marries a prostitute, Gomer, who gives birth to two sons.**

**Gomer is unfaithful....time and time again.**

**The story of Hosea is about his taking her back and forgiving her over and over and over until...**

**God says enough – no more chances. Divorce her.**

***Comes a time when  
God will say Enough!***

**Abraham Heschel believes that it is biography – Hosea really was married to a compulsive woman who could not control her urges and that God uses his biography to tell an allegory...God forgives and forgives up to a point.**

**And you are close to that point.**

**There will be a time when God says “no more” and God will withdraw/wrath and stronger nations will devour you.**

**God, like Hosea, is heartbroken – over and over again.**

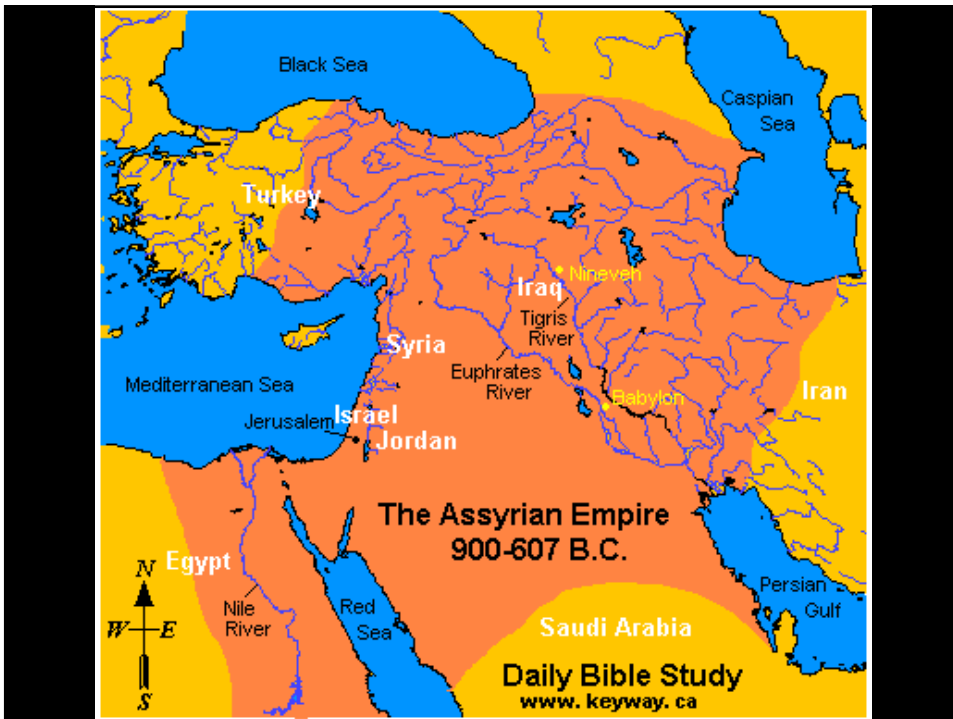
**Marriage is a covenant.**

**God’s relationship with Israel is a covenant.**

**And God is not the one who has broken the vows!**



## Jonah



## **The question**

Jonah ends with a question from God to Jonah:

Shall I not be concerned with Nineveh which is a city that numbers 120,000 people and many animals?

**Moral:** this is not a story about a fish swallowing a man. This is a literary device to tell a story about the power of bigotry and our response to it!

## **Micah**

**Gloom:** change or die....although he lives in the North/Israel, he says that everything that is true for Israel is true for Judah.

**Salvation:** in time, there will come a great peacemaker from the city of Bethlehem and he shall show the people how to live and how to follow God.



### ***Micah 4.3***

**<sup>3</sup>He shall judge between many peoples,  
and shall arbitrate between strong nations  
far away;  
they shall beat their swords into  
ploughshares,  
and their spears into pruning-hooks;  
nation shall not lift up sword against nation,  
neither shall they learn war any more;**

### ***Micah's Valedictory***

#### **Micah 6.8**

**<sup>8</sup>He has told you, O mortal, what is good;  
and what does the Lord require of you  
but to do justice, and to love kindness,  
and to walk humbly with your God?**