

Session 5: More kings, prophets and the divided kingdom

The session started with another recap of the story so far – <https://youtu.be/JCP2zWajGc>

We looked briefly at some of the stories of the early kings – Saul, David and Samuel:

Saul chosen, anointed and appointed king (1Sam8-10)

God rejects Saul (1Sam15), Samuel anoints David (1Sam16)

David & Solomon (c1400-931)

David & Goliath (1Sam17)

Saul, David & Jonathan (1Sam1-20)

‘the cave’ 1Sam24 – where Saul goes to ‘cover his feet’ – see earlier session – either have a nap or to relieve himself But David and his men were in the cave and could have killed Saul but chose not to

Saul’s death (1Sam31)

David becomes king (2Sam5 & 1Ch11)

David restores the Ark (2Sam6 & 1Ch13-15)

God’s covenant with David (1 Ch 17 & 2Sam7 esp v12-13) – renewal of the Abraham-Moses-Joshua line of covenant

military victories (2Sam8-10 & 1 Ch 18)

David & Bathsheba (2Sam11)

David plans the temple (1Ch22)

Solomon (1Kgs2-3)

Solomon asks for wisdom (1Kgs3 & 2Ch1)

the judgement over the 2 women and baby (1Kgs3)

Building the Temple (1Kgs5-6, 2Ch2-8)

Queen of Sheba (2Ch9),

the roots of where it all goes wrong for Solomon (1Kgs6.38 & 1Kgs7.1)

remember the Tabernacle? What had happened to it?

Tabernacle – in the desert during the exodus,



After the conquest of Canaan, the tabernacle was placed in Shiloh (in the area given to Joshua's tribe).

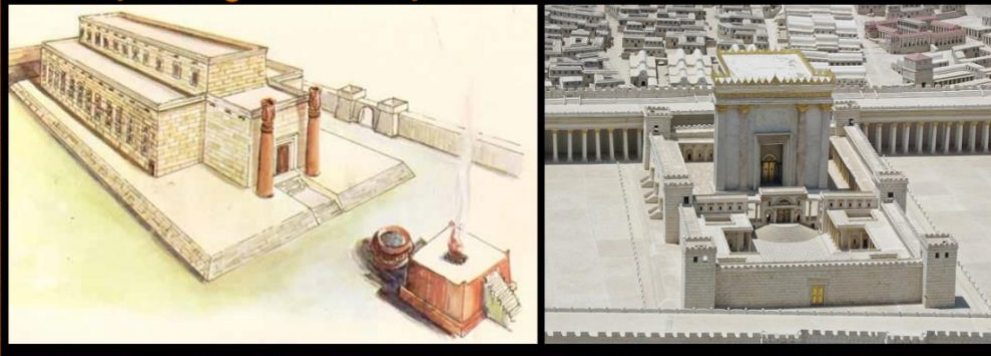
Remained there for c300 years until Saul moved it to the town of Nob in his ancestral territory. Then to Gibeon, then Solomon finally brought it to incorporate somehow into the temple he had built.

And then came the Temple – designed by David, built by Solomon

Temple – designed by David, built by Solomon

1st temple built c1000 BC, destroyed 587/586 BC

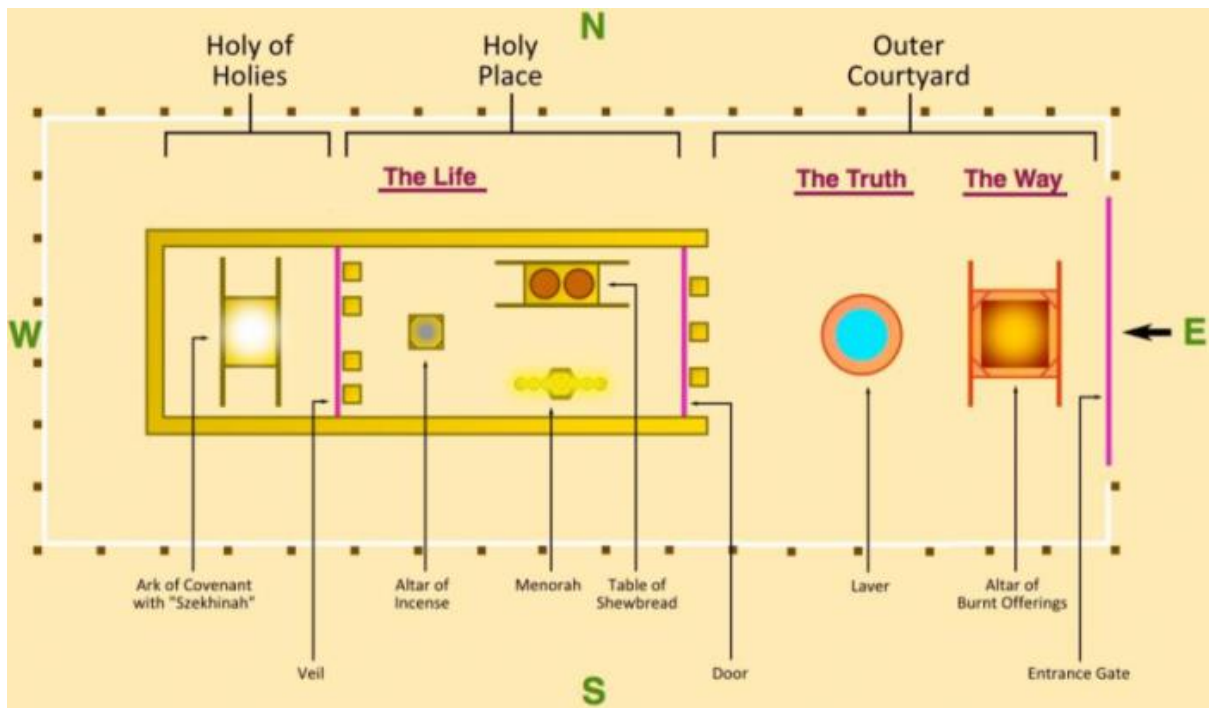
2nd temple built c516 BC, expanded by Herod c20-11 BC,
destroyed August 70 AD by the Romans



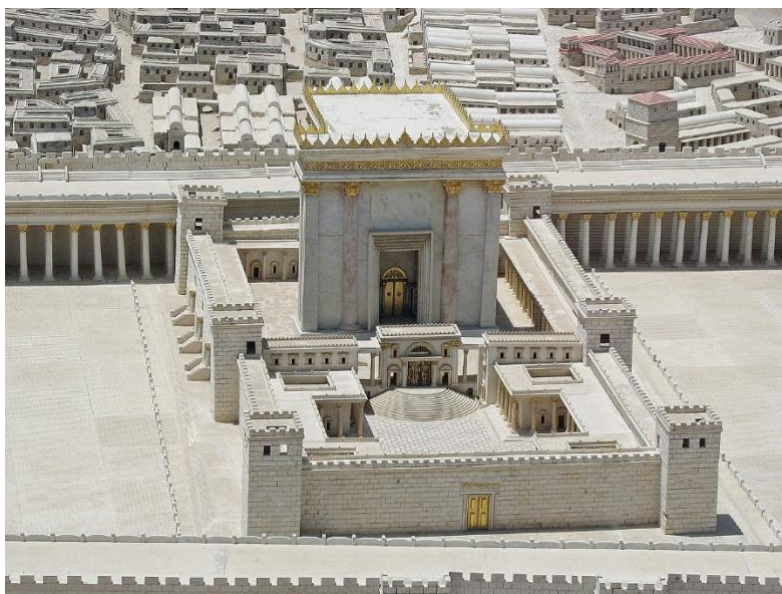
On the Monday evening we then had several groups building the temple – working out where each part went:

Holy of Holies, the Holy place, the altar of incense, table of showbread, menorah





A bit more about the Temple the 1st temple, built by Solomon, was fairly basic and was destroyed by the Babylonians. Zerubbabel (as we shall see next week) built the 2nd temple, but it was also quite basic. However, Herod, to ingratiate himself to the Jews spent a HUGE amount of money upgrading the temple and turning it into a huge architectural masterpiece which the Jews could be proud of. So, at the time of Jesus, it looked like



Flavius Josephus, *The Wars of the Jews* 5.207 has a long description of much of the temple But read what he wrote about the doors:

“But that gate which was at this end of the first part of the house was, as we have already observed, all over covered with gold, as was its whole wall about it; it had also golden vines above it, from which clusters of grapes hung as tall as a man's height.”

So the doors ... had huge embossed VINES on or above them.

What would have been in the disciples minds when in John ch 15 Jesus said 'I am the TRUE vine'?

If Jesus is the TRUE vine, what's the FALSE vine? – the temple – which is prominent in Mark's and John's gospels. Looking at the plan of the temple on the previous page, 'walk' through the temple from the entrance on the right of the diagram (East) and move inwards (West):

You pass the vine embossed doors – **I AM THE TRUE VINE**

You go through the entrance – **I AM THE GATE/DOOR/ENTRANCE**

On your left you see the menorah (multiple stemmed lampstand) – **I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD**

On your right there is the table of showbread – **I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE**

You then see the alter of incense which is where the Priests would be working offering incense sacrifices – priests were known as shepherds – see Ezekiel 34 – where they are called BAD shepherds:

²“Son of man, **speak against the shepherds of Israel**. Speak in My name and tell those shepherds, ‘The Lord God says, “It is bad for the shepherds of Israel who have been feeding themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flock? ³You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool. You kill the fat sheep without feeding the flock. ⁴You have not given strength to the weak ones. You have not healed the sick. You have not helped the ones that are hurt. You have not brought back those that have gone away. And you have not looked for the lost. But you have ruled them with power and without pity. ⁵They went everywhere because they had no shepherd. And they became food for every animal of the field. ⁶My flock went many different ways through all the mountains and on every high hill. My sheep were spread over all the earth, and there was no one looking for them.””

⁷So, you shepherds, hear the Word of the Lord. ⁸“As I live,” says the Lord God, “My flock has been killed and become food for wild animals because they had no shepherd. My shepherds did not look for My flock. They fed themselves, but have not fed My flock.” ⁹So, you shepherds, hear the Word of the Lord. ¹⁰The Lord God says, “**I am against the shepherds, and I will ask them for My sheep. I will stop them from feeding the sheep, so they will no longer be able to feed themselves. I will save my sheep from their mouths, so that they will no longer be food for them.**”

Note how Jesus specifically did the opposite of the BAD shepherds actions in Ezekiel 34..... he fed people physically and spiritually, he raised up the weak and vulnerable (eg the woman caught in adultery), he healed the sick, he sought those who were far off ('have gone away') such as tax collector collaborators, Samaritans, Legion in Mark 5, and a zealot terrorist (Simon the zealot – one of the disciples) ... he told parables about looking for the lost and said 'I have come to seek and to save the lost' He systematically undid the wrongs of the Priests as exposed in Ezekiel 34 and declared **I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD**

In the diagram of the Temple on the previous page, note how the author has placed 'way, truth, life'. An alternative (which I would lean towards) is that 'Way' is the entrance of the temple and possibly the menorah and showbread too, 'Truth' is the alter of incense and 'Life' is in the Most Holy Place / Holy of Holies behind the curtain – either way we have John 14 **I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE'**

There is also a strong argument for '**I am the Resurrection and the life'**, John ch 11 to be a furtherance of this temple analogy as 'life' and giving life is a sovereign act of God alone – so could

possibly refer to inside the Holy of Holies, behind the curtain where God symbolically 'lived' (whilst also being omnipresent).

However – what no-one has cracked is the structure of how John places these I AM statements in his gospel – nothing else in his gospel is random, so there must be an order or structure to where the 'I AM's are placed So, if you want to do a PhD ... there's one waiting for you!

Leaving the temple we looked at the Old Testament Prophets. https://youtu.be/edcqUu_BtNO

Our observation is that Old testament prophets and prophecy is quite different from what we often call prophesy in the modern church:

The image shows two slides from a video presentation. The top slide is titled "What was biblical Old Testament prophecy?" and lists four points: "Calling Israel back to the terms of the covenant", "Declaring 'this is not right and this is what needs to happen'", "Declaring the consequences, good and bad, of doing or not doing the 'what needs to happen'", and "Plus a some bits which are focussed on the future – the Messiah or 'the day of the Lord'". The bottom slide is also titled "What was biblical Old Testament prophecy?" and contains two columns of text. The left column includes Micah 5:2 and Zechariah 12:10. The right column includes Isaiah 7:14 and Isaiah 53:5. Below the text is the note "And a Psalm we looked at in an earlier session – Psalm 22" and "Sample from over 300 !!". At the bottom of the slide is a white box with the text "Plus a some bits which are focussed on the future – the Messiah or 'the day of the Lord'".

What was biblical Old Testament prophecy?

- Calling Israel back to the terms of the covenant
- Declaring 'this is not right and this is what needs to happen'
- Declaring the consequences, good and bad, of doing or not doing the 'what needs to happen'
- Plus a some bits which are focussed on the future – the Messiah or 'the day of the Lord'

What was biblical Old Testament prophecy?

Micah 5:2 – "But you, O **Bethlehem** Ephrathah, are only a small village among all the people of Judah. Yet **a ruler of Israel will come from you, one whose origins are from the distant past.**"

Zechariah 12:10 – "...the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me **whom they have pierced**; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn."

Isaiah 7:14 – "...the Lord himself will give you the sign. Look! **The virgin will conceive a child!** She will give birth to a son and will call him Immanuel."

Isaiah 53:5 – But he was **pierced** for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and **by his wounds we are healed.**" (and the rest of Isaiah 53 !!)

And a Psalm we looked at in an earlier session – Psalm 22 Sample from over 300 !!

Plus a some bits which are focussed on the future – the Messiah or 'the day of the Lord'

So we started to unpack some elements of prophesy. We are often told that prophesy is any element where God is speaking to someone through someone else – but that does not fit the pattern or example of prophesy in the Old Testament. Have we, the modern church, cheapened prophesy? – have we 'sold out' calling whole nations to repent for 'I have a picture of a waterfall / flower / mountain / whatever'?

What is prophecy now?

1 Corinthians 14:

²For anyone who **speaks in a tongue** does not speak to people but to God. Indeed, **no one understands** them; they utter mysteries by the Spirit. ³But the one who **prophesies** speaks to people for their **strengthening, encouraging and comfort**. ⁴Anyone who speaks in a tongue **edifies themselves**, but the one who prophesies **edifies the church**. ⁵I would like every one of you to speak in tongues, but I would rather have you prophesy.

Andrew Newberg University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine "Glossolalia produced a significantly different pattern of brain activity than singing decreased activity in the frontal lobes, an area of the brain associated with being in control of one's self" **Psychiatry Research: Neuroimaging.**

A quick look at tongues Then ... back to prophecy

What is prophecy now?

"miracle of knowledge, a declaration or description or representation of something future, beyond the power of human sagacity to foresee, discern, or conjecture."



Old testament prophets- the gold standard

e.g. a specific narrative, usually requiring action

Interpretation of knowledge

e.g. Steve's 'green box' example

Disconnected word or picture

e.g. 'I've got a picture of a waterfall'

Statement of comfort

e.g. 'God loves you'

I cannot trace the original source of that quote defining prophecy – but several people seem to quote/use it. It seems to be a good starting place to explore what prophecy is in today's church.

This may be helpful – empirically we seem to move from right to left on the above diagram – often people start giving relevant statements of comfort. Often this progresses to a fairly inspecific 'word' or 'picture' ... but sometimes we then encounter some specific word often with some knowledge which could not have been known naturally – the example Steve gave was where someone had become a Christian and another said 'there's a green box under your bed and the contents need to be burned as they are not helpful to you' – there was such a box and it included this person's ouija board and tarot cards (which the speaker did not know about – just knew that the box was under the bed, green and contained something which needed to be destroyed).

Finally to the left, the OT prophets – the gold standard of prophecy who called out whole nations!

2 points:

1. In the charismatic church we tend to see all 4 as 'prophesy'. In many other churches they would say that the 2 on the right are NOT prophesy, just a 'word/picture' only the 2 on the left would actually be prophesy
2. We all start on the right and the encouragement is NOT to be stuck with vague pictures of waterfalls – move further left and keep moving left.

We can also often be careless with our use of the word 'prophesy' – are we cheapening it? I've heard people say 'that worship was really prophetic' my counter what would NON-prophetic worship look like????

My personal bias is to have a HIGH view of prophesy – so focus on the two examples on the left. The 2 on the right can be important, but often are mere generalities rather than a specific word of God speaking into a situation. However, as always with God sometimes they are really useful and helpful and personally relevant!

So what happened to the prophets and Solomon and the later kings?

The prophets gave warnings to Israel. After Solomon ended his rule disastrously – the clue about why is in 1Kgs6.38 & 1Kgs7.1. These would have been following verses – the chapters didn't arrive until the late 1100s AD – one of our British heroes of faith – Stephen Langton, then a Cardinal, put the chapters in to help us navigate the Bible better. He later went on to challenge the King (John) and when he was appointed Archbishop of Canterbury things got very awkward for the king – which led to the Magna Carta in 1215 of which Stephen Langton was a signatory. Probably the most famous legal document in the world, it was signed in Runnymede, about 8 miles from Riverside and Archbishop Stephen Langton almost certainly stayed the night before in Ankerwyke Priory which was just across the river Thames from Runnymede – and a small amount of wall still remains – a Grade II listed building – a good place for a Sunday after church walk.

The verses did not arrive until quite a bit later – Rabbi Robert Estienne put the Old Testament into verses in 1448 and the first English New Testament to have verses was Whittingham's translation in 1557.

So, what do the verses say?

1 Kings 6.38 '.... Solomon spent 7 years building the temple'

NEXT SENTENCE

1 Kings 7.1 'It took Solomon thirteen years, however, to complete the construction of his palace.'

7 years for God's temple, 13 years for my palace ! Which is where Solomon went wrong and in fairness, where most of us go wrong too.

He was also a poor father – his son Rehoboam was a disaster. When R was appointed king after Solomon he oppressed the people and the nation split into civil war. The 10 Northernmost tribes

split and appointed an army commander Jeroboam, as their king. The 2 southernmost tribes, including the city of Jerusalem stayed with Rehoboam.

Some prophets prophesied to both kingdoms, some to the Northern, some to the Southern



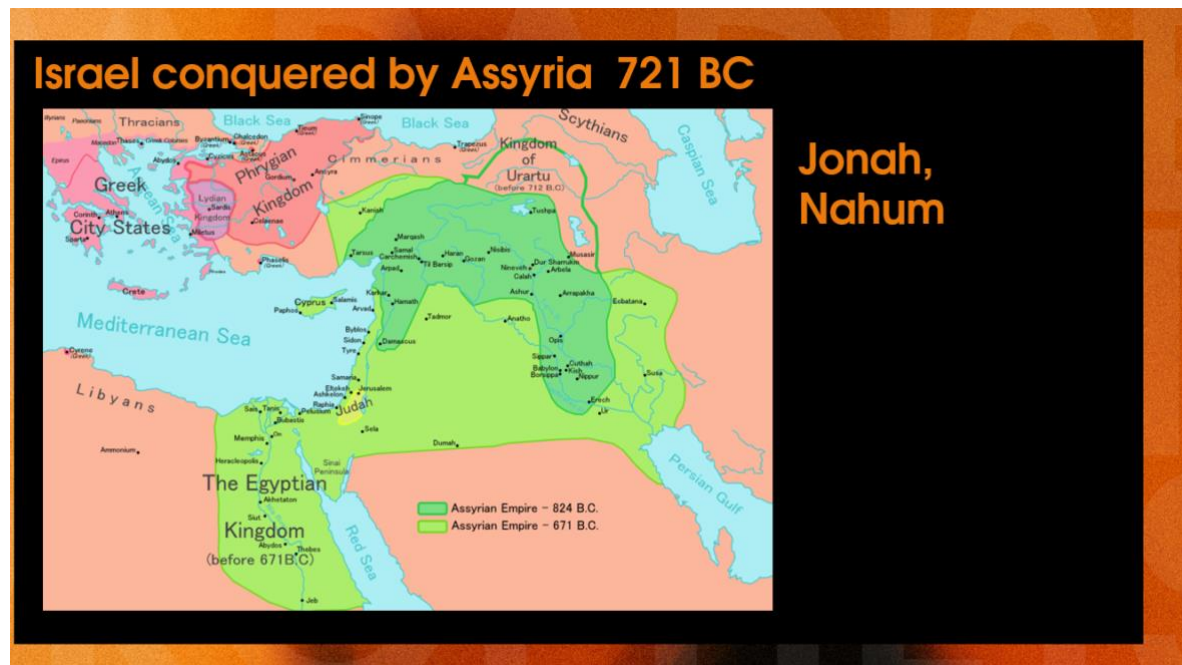
Obadiah prophesied to a non-Jewish Kingdom – Edom



And all warned the kingdoms that if they didn't follow God, disaster would result. They were very specific – the Northern Kingdom would be defeated by Assyria and carried away into exile, the Southern kingdom would be defeated and carried into exile by Babylon.

And it happened. Both kingdoms (N & S) had 20 kings – but the North got through their 20 a bit quicker. In 721 BC Assyria attacked, conquered and carried the Jewish tribes away distributing them throughout the Assyrian empire and repopulating the land of Israel with other conquered people from other areas – a standard tactic to prevent nationalistic rebellion by diluting all nations and having small amounts of people everywhere rather than strong concentrations of specific nations to potentially rebel in nationalistic fervour. Throughout history many have done this – and Russia are doing it in Eastern Ukraine at the moment.. However (see the map next page) Assyria conquered

huge swathes of territory – but not Judah and Jerusalem (the small yellow ‘island’ is Judah and Jerusalem) on the map with the dark green being the early Assyrian empire, and the lighter green being the Assyrian empire at its zenith.



Jonah and Nahum prophesied after the conquering of the Northern Kingdom.

Jonah was famously reluctant to obey God and bring his warnings to Nineveh (the Assyrian capital), but eventually did and Jonah’s story tells us that Nineveh repented and turned to God.

Assyria was a ‘normal’ polytheistic state with a wide range of gods, as were the Babylonians, Egyptians and later the Greeks. However, there is evidence that for some time they became monotheistic – which fits with Jonah’s story. Christian scholars tend to accept this as proof of the accuracy of Jonah’s story, those opposed to the Christian or Jewish versions tend to argue that the Assyrians had many gods but also had a belief in one overall all supreme god. It’s a matter of timing which the archaeology cannot clear up for us – was the one overall god at the same time as the other gods OR was it a specific period where they believed in one overall God as Jonah tells us – we’ll have to ask them in heaven as no-one can get a definitive answer from the archaeological evidence. The written name of the one God was, in Assyrian, ‘Assur’ or ‘Ansar’ or ‘Gabbu-ilani-Assur’ – they don’t use the Jewish names of Yahweh or Elohim But neither do we – we tend to say ‘God’ rather than Yahweh or Elohim !

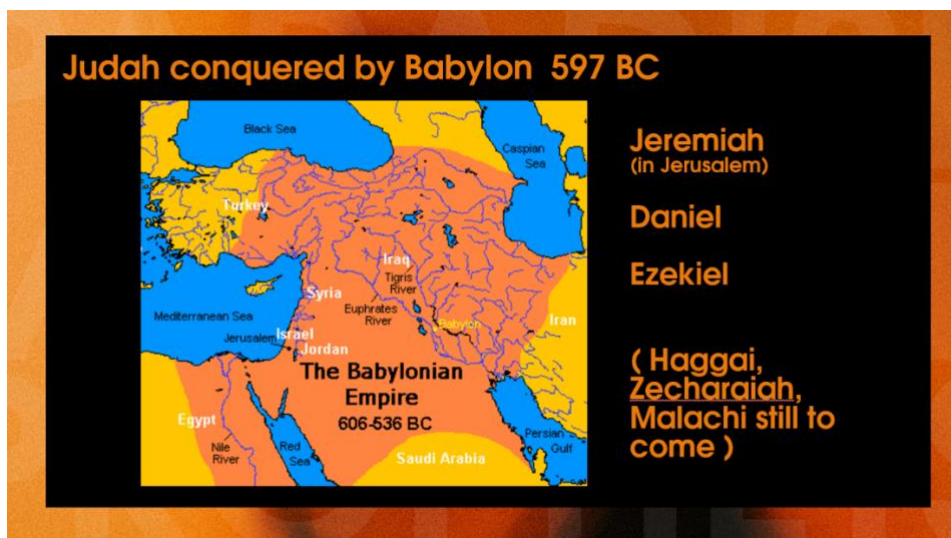
Completely useless fact – Assyria would appear to be the only civilization which punished bad parking by a death sentence. One Assyrian king was so annoyed by the young rich leaving their chariots carelessly on the King’s highway that obstructing the highway was punishable by impalement outside the offenders own house.

About 125 years later, the Babylonians has gained supremacy, had conquered all the land which the Assyrian empire had ruled, plus a bit more. This included Judah, the Southern kingdom, and they carried away much of the population including most if not all of the elite and educated to Babylon.

The route from Jerusalem to Babylon would not have been simply moving Eastwards – that would have been through the desert which would likely not have been survivable. They would have travelled the reverse of Abraham’s route – so up through Lebanon and Syria, across to the Euphrates river and then follow that South East to Babylon. The symbolism of being descendants of Abraham travelling Abraham’s journey in defeat and in reverse would not have been lost on them.

It's also the route which the Magi would have travelled to see Jesus. They would not have crossed the desert, they would have followed the main trade route from Babylon to Jerusalem – retracing Abraham’s route when he was following God who had said, in Genesis 12.1 *“The LORD had said to Abram, “Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you.....”*. So, he obediently set out with no idea where he was being led. This was the start of the Covenant between God and Abraham, and his family and descendants And the magi followed the same steps.

That also means they would not have ridden camels as we see on Christmas cards – magi were important people – a cross between doctors, astronomers, astrologers and ambassadors – hence why Herod was keen to be hospitable to them – insulting them would have been tantamount to insulting the Babylonians – and he would not want to be responsible for starting a Rome-Babylon war! Such important people would have ridden horses. They would most likely have had a large entourage, including soldiers and they may well have had camels to carry their tents, equipment etc – but camels were more like we would see Heavy Goods Vehicles – and ambassadors today don’t arrive in 18 wheeler lorries.



So, the session ends The Northern 10 tribes are distributed throughout the Assyrian empire which is then captured by the Babylonians, the 2 Southern tribes have had most of their people taken away to exile in Babylon and so this is a low point in Israel’s history.

Next week what happens next? – return of the nation!