

# Introduction to Sacred Scripture: The Old Testament





# Outline

- † Introduction
- † Revelation: Scripture and Tradition
- † Canon of Sacred Scripture
- † Historical Divisions & Books of the Old Testament
- † Biblical Inspiration & Interpretation
- † Inerrancy & Literary Genres
- † Covenant



# Getting the Message

**“Every happening, great or small, is a miracle by which God speaks to us, and the art of life is to get the message.” *[Malcolm Muggeridge]***

**The study of Sacred Scripture is all about “getting the message”!**



# Introduction to Sacred Scripture

Whenever and wherever we encounter the words of Scripture, we come in contact with God's self-disclosure.

The first step in understanding this revelation is to understand exactly what the Bible is, how it was formed, and what types of literature it contains.

These understandings are an important foundation for discerning the message of the Bible, particularly that of the Old Testament.



# Introduction

“God wants nothing less than we come to know God fully: to know God's constant love, to understand God's unfathomable faithfulness, to experience God right down to the marrow.” *[Bill Huebsch, Vatican II in Plain English]*

“In times past, God spoke in partial and various ways to our ancestors through the prophets...”  
*[Heb 1:1]*





**“Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ.” [St. Jerome – 331-420 A.D.]**

**St. Jerome, Father and Doctor of the Church and perhaps our greatest biblical scholar, insisted that ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ because he knew that, as Christians, we can never come to know and love Jesus - *the Living Word of God Incarnate* - unless we also know and love Holy Scripture - *the Living Word of God Inspired*.**

**The study of Sacred Scripture, therefore, is not a luxury, one of those optional, “nice to do,” Christian things; rather, it is a necessity.**



# Considerations

"In the sacred books, the Father who is in heaven comes lovingly to meet his children and talks with them."  
[*Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation (Dei Verbum) 21*]

The Old Testament is an indispensable part of Sacred Scripture. As Christians we venerate these books as the true Word of God.

The books of the Old Testament are sacred and canonical in their entirety, with all their parts, because they were written at the prompting of the Holy Spirit, and have God for their author.

The Early Church Fathers were unanimous in their teachings that the entire Old Testament pointed only to Jesus Christ.



# Considerations

“All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for refutation, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that one who belongs to God may be competent, equipped for every good work.” [2 Tim 3:16-17]

It's important to realize that when St. Paul wrote the above, there was no New Testament. For St. Paul, at that time, Scripture consisted entirely of the Old Testament.

And as we shall see, because the New Testament is the fulfillment of the Old Testament, the two cannot be separated.

As Christians, therefore, we must read and pray over *all* of Sacred Scripture, not just the New Testament. For without the Old Testament, there would be no New Testament.





# Considerations

“The Spirit of God, who spoke through the divine authors, was unwilling to teach men things of no profit for salvation.”  
*[St. Augustine, On Genesis, Bk 2 Ch 9]*

If, as St. Augustine wrote, all of Holy Scripture relates to our salvation, then we must also conclude that all of Scripture - both the Old and New Testaments - is essentially about Jesus Christ; for it is through Jesus Christ and only through Jesus that salvation is possible.

“Amen, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or the smallest part of a letter will pass from the law, until all things have taken place.” *[Matt 5:18]*



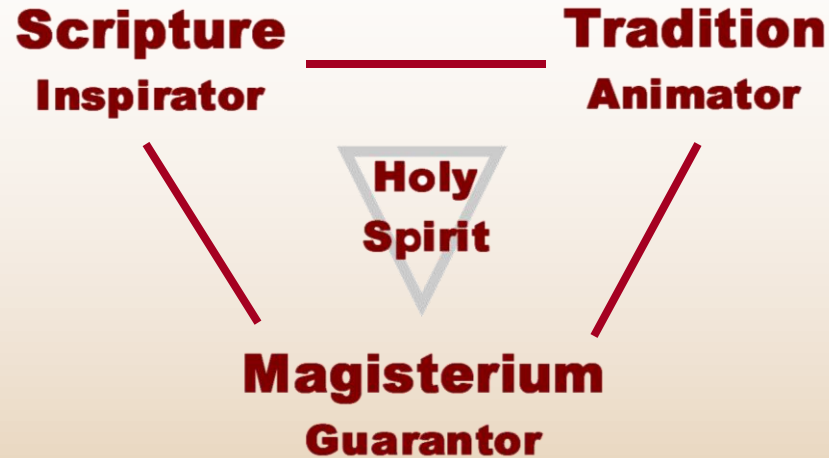
# God's Revelation

As Catholics, we believe God's revelation of Himself and His plan for us comes to us in three ways:

- † Sacred Scripture - Old & New Testaments
- † Apostolic Tradition - especially through the liturgy of the Church - the Mass and the sacraments
- † The Magisterium - the Church's teaching authority, given to it by Jesus Christ and expressed in its dogmas and creeds



# God's Revelation



The Holy Spirit is at work through all three channels. He inspires Scripture, animates the Church's living Tradition, and guarantees the teaching of the Church's Magisterium (Catechism, 81-82).

The three never contradict, but always support, each other. It can never be otherwise since the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, is the source of all.

# God's Revelation



“So, then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught by us, either by word of mouth or by letter.” [2 Thes 2:15]

Tertullian, (160-220 A.D.) stated that the sole criterion for canonicity is Catholic tradition, which has its foundation in apostolic tradition.

# The Bible Is the Word of God



**"The force and power in the Word of God is so great that it remains the support and energy of the Church, the strength of faith for the faithful, the food of the soul, the pure and perennial source of spiritual life."**

**[Dogmatic Constitution - Dei Verbum, 21]**





# The Word in the Word

"The Sacred Scriptures contain the Word of God, and, because they are inspired, they are truly the Word of God." [*Dei Verbum* 24]

- † Christianity is a religion of the Word, not of a book!
- † The Word is a Person: Jesus Christ. He is God's "final word" on everything



# The Word in the Word

- † Through Jesus, God has revealed everything He wanted to reveal to us about who He is and what He intends for our lives
- † *The Word Incarnate* takes on the weakness of human nature, becoming like us in all things except sin
- † *The Word of God Inspired* expressed in every way like human language (cf. DV 12)



# What is the Bible, specifically the Old Testament?

- † Bible from the Greek, *ta biblia*, means books or scrolls - many books, not just one
- † Consists of two parts: Old Testament and New Testament
- † OT books date from the 13<sup>th</sup> century BC to approx. 100 BC
- † OT reveals the story of a people who discovered God acting in their history, responded to Him, and then struggled to answer His call
- † OT also partly reveals God's plan for humanity, a plan realized and fulfilled in Jesus Christ



# Why Old & New Testaments?

- † *Testament* is another word for *covenant*
- † Salvation history begins with Creation in *Genesis* and progresses through a series of Old Testament covenants
- † The division of the Bible into Old and New Testaments is much more than a literary or historical marker
- † The Old Testament is all about preparing the way for and announcing what will happen in the New Testament



# Why Old & New Testaments?


- ✚ All the OT covenants that God made find their fulfillment - their full meaning and purpose - in Jesus, in His "New Covenant"
- ✚ Christ and His Cross, are the "hinge" between the Old and the New Testaments
- ✚ With the NT, Christ fulfills all of history in Himself; He arrives and transforms the world; time and history are taken up into the eternal.
- ✚ The New Covenant, sealed in eternity, will never get "old," since Christ has shattered the boundaries of time.

David's last words: "Is not my house firm before God? He has made an eternal covenant with me, set forth in detail and secured. Will he not bring to fruition all my salvation and my every desire?" [2 Sam 23:5]



**"Were not our hearts burning  
(within us) while he spoke to us  
on the way and opened the  
scriptures to us?" [Luke 24:32]**

**The Scriptures that Jesus opened to Cleopas and his companion on the road to Emmaus were all from the Old Testament. As we read in Luke's Gospel: "beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them what referred to him in all the scriptures." [See Luke 24:27]**

A painting depicting three men in a landscape, likely representing Jesus and his companions on the road to Emmaus. The scene is set in a lush, green environment with a large tree on the left and a path leading into the distance. The men are dressed in traditional robes, and the overall atmosphere is serene and contemplative.



# Old & New Testaments

- ✝ At Emmaus Jesus established that what He said and did, the meaning of His life, death and Resurrection, can't be understood apart from what was written beforehand in the Old Testament.
- ✝ God had foretold His coming in every part of the Old Testament, and explained to them "everything written about Me in the Law of Moses and in the prophets and in the Psalms" [Lk 24:44].
- ✝ Jesus taught His Apostles how to interpret Scripture and, as promised, sent them "the Spirit of truth" to guide them "to all truth" [Jn 16:13].
- ✝ What they learned and continued to have revealed to them "in the breaking of the bread" is inscribed on every page of the New Testament and in the Liturgy of the Church.



# Old & New Testaments

- ✚ Indeed, every page of the New Testament is infused with Old Testament quotations or allusions. Even relatively minor Epistles, like that of Jude, contain lessons drawn from the Old Testament.
- ✚ You will hear repeated echoes of salvation history as you read the New Testament.
- ✚ You will hear the Apostles doing just what Jesus taught them to do - interpreting the Old Testament, explaining how all the great words and events of the past pointed to Jesus, the Messiah, the Word of God come in the flesh [Acts 8:26-39; John 1:14].
- ✚ All of this stresses the need for believing Christians to study, understand and pray the Old Testament as well as the New. They are inseparable.





This, then, is our challenge as Christians called to evangelize: to instill in others a burning desire to know the Lord through their study of the Bible.



You are to be like Jesus on the road to Emmaus, so that those you encounter will respond *with burning hearts* as did Cleopas and his companion.



# Formation of the Scriptures

There are periods of time (specific steps) involved in the process of scriptural formation:

- † *The human event*
- † *Collection of oral and written storytelling and traditions*
- † *Collection of different writings*
- † *Editing and redacting the final writings*
- † *Acceptance and incorporation into the official canon*





# Content of the Old Testament

- † Pentateuch - 1<sup>st</sup> five books - Torah - the Book of Moses - stories of creation and the nation of Israel; the Law
- † Historical Books - tell the story of the Israelites from their entry into the Promised Land until the Exile
- † Wisdom Books - Israelites' reflections on faith and God's relationship with humanity
- † Prophets - writings of those inspired to counsel and confront the people and their leaders



# Canon of Sacred Scripture

- † Catholic OT Canon contains 46 books - 39 canonical books plus seven deuterocanonical books
- † Protestant & Jewish OT contains only the 39 canonical books
- † Catholic & Protestant NT both contain the same 27 books



# Canon of Sacred Scripture

- † Refers to those texts considered by the Church to be sacred or inspired
- † Official Catholic canon set definitively by Council of Trent in 1546
- † But prior to Trent the Church had long held only the current canon as inspired
- † Until the Reformation there was little need to define the canon since it was generally accepted throughout Western Christendom



# Differences

## Between Protestant & Catholic Bibles

- † Protestant Bibles have 39 OT books, while Catholic Bibles have 46 books.
- † The seven additional books are called *deuterocanonical* (2<sup>nd</sup> canon) books and include:

Tobit	Wisdom
Judith	Sirach
1 & 2 Maccabees	Baruch
- † Catholic Bibles also include additions to the Books of Esther and Daniel
- † The Church considers all of these books to be inspired by the Holy Spirit

# Old Testament Canon (46 Books)



## Historical books

Genesis  
Exodus  
Leviticus  
Numbers  
Deuteronomy  
Joshua  
Judges  
Ruth  
1 & 2 Samuel  
1 & 2 Kings  
1 & 2 Chronicles  
Ezra  
Nehemiah  
\*Tobit  
\*Judith  
†Esther  
\*1 & 2 Maccabees

## Wisdom Books

Job  
Psalms  
Proverbs  
Ecclesiastes  
Song of Songs  
\*Wisdom (of Solomon)  
\*Sirach  
(Ecclesiasticus)

## Prophetic Books

Isaiah  
Jeremiah  
Lamentations  
\*Baruch  
Ezekiel  
†Daniel  
Hosea  
Joel  
Amos  
Obadiah  
Jonah  
Micah  
Nahum  
Habakkuk  
Zephaniah  
Haggai  
Zechariah  
Malachi

\* Deuterocanonical book

† Some parts of book only in Catholic canon



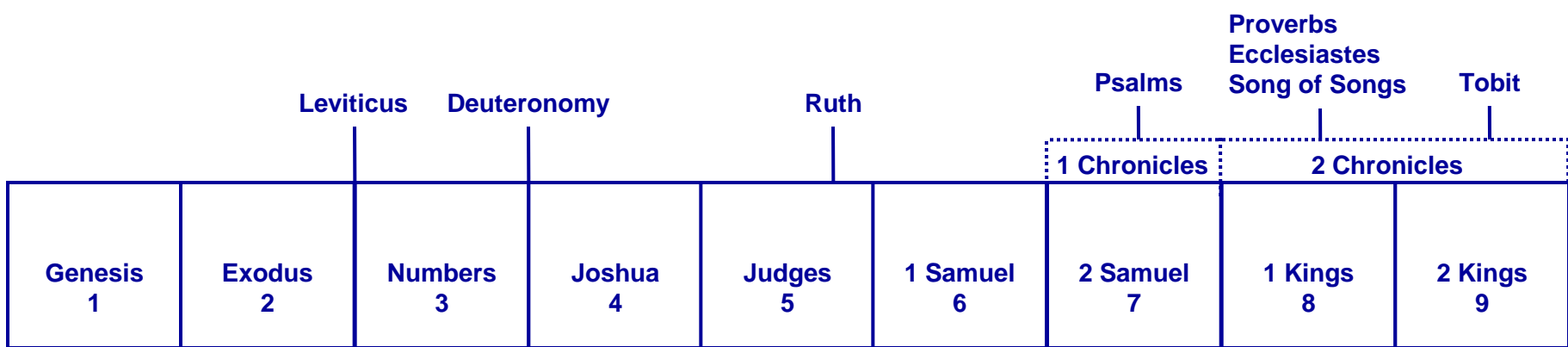


# God's Word in human words

## Divine & Human

- † Simultaneous divine and human authorship
- † Human writers were "true authors" of Scripture, and so was God (authors inspired by the Holy Spirit)

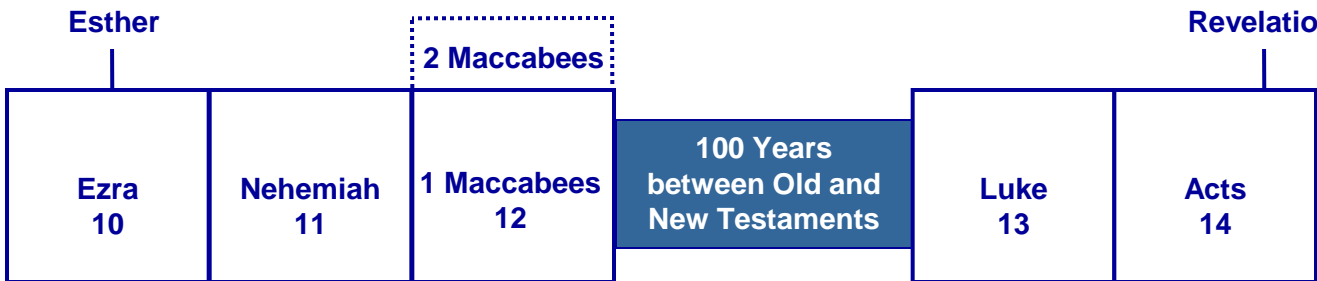
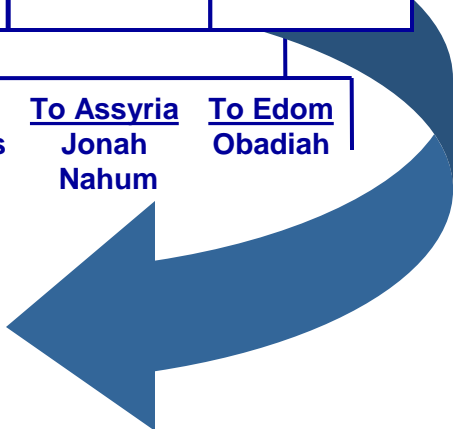
Those divinely revealed realities which are contained and presented in Sacred Scripture have been committed to writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.  
[Dogmatic Constitution - Dei Verbum, 11]



Job

Ezekiel  
Daniel  
Baruch  
Judith

<u>To Israel</u> Hosea Amos	<u>To Judah</u> Habakkuk Isaiah Jeremiah Zephaniah	<u>To Assyria</u> Lamentations Joel Micah	<u>To Edom</u> Jonah Nahum	<u>To Edom</u> Obadiah
-----------------------------------	--	--	----------------------------------	---------------------------



Haggai  
Zechariah

Malachi

Sirach  
Wisdom

Matthew  
Mark  
John

Romans  
1 Cor  
2 Cor  
Galatians  
Ephesians  
Phil  
Col

1 Thes  
2 Thes  
1 Tim  
2 Tim  
Titus  
Philemon  
Hebrews

James  
1 Peter  
2 Peter  
1 John  
2 John  
3 John  
Jude



# God's Word in human words

## Catholic understanding

- † God communicated a message to individuals - the human authors
- † Guided by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, they used their capacities to convey it in a manner comprehensible in a time-conditioned (historical) and a timeless sense.

## Others

- † Understanding ranges from *fundamentalism* (literal words of God mechanically transcribed by human authors) to *rationalism* (denial of the divine dimension)



# Inspiration

“Know this first of all, that there is no prophecy of scripture that is a matter of personal interpretation, for no prophecy ever came through human will; but rather human beings moved by the holy Spirit spoke under the influence of God. .” [2 Pet 1:20-21]

- † The human authors used their literary skills, ideas and other talents in writing the pages of the Bible.
- † While they wrote, God acted in them so that what they wrote was exactly what He wanted them to write.



# Inspiration

“The sacred writers, or better, the Holy Spirit who speaks through them, do not seek to teach men these things [purely scientific matters], for these things are of no avail as far as their salvation is concerned.” [St. Augustine]

- † God chose to do the work of revelation through the medium of human experience: our languages, histories, and cultural expressions.
- † By the inspiration of Scripture we mean that the books of the Bible reliably contain the information that God wanted to disclose for the sake of human salvation.





# Inspiration

"Inspired" - from the Greek - literally means "God-breathed," a good way to think about Scriptural inspiration

*Just as God fashioned Adam out of the earth's clay and blew the breath of life into him (Gen 2:7), God breathes His Spirit into the words of the human authors of Scripture and makes them the Living Word of God.*



# Interpreting Scripture

"The New Testament is concealed in the Old, and the Old Testament is revealed in the New." [St. Augustine]

## Content & Unity of Scripture

- † There is a unity in God's plan for the world, as that plan is revealed in Scripture.
- † Read each book in light of the others
- † The Bible is *Christocentric* - it's all about Jesus.



# Interpreting Scripture

## The Church's Living Tradition

- † Read Scripture within the context of the Church's Tradition.

## Analogy of Faith

- † The same Holy Spirit who inspired the Scriptures also safeguards the Church's teaching authority.
- † No interpretation should contradict the Church's creed and doctrine.



# Interpreting Scripture

## What the Second Vatican Council had to say...

“Since Sacred Scripture must be read and interpreted with its divine authorship in mind, no less attention must be devoted to the content and unity of the whole of Scripture, taking into account the tradition of the entire Church and the analogy of faith, if we are to derive their true meaning from the sacred texts.”

*[Dei Verbum 5]*



# Context of Sacred Scripture

- † Scriptural texts are best understood when placed in their social and historical context.
- † Although written to people of another culture and time, its divine origin gives Scripture a timeless depth of meaning.
- † Scripture was written from the experience of faith.
- † The authority of Scripture is rooted in the Magisterial teaching of the Church.
- † Biblical interpretation considers the original social and historical context, and relates the passage or issue to the whole body of the revelation of God.





# Inerrancy of Scripture

- ✝ Because God is the Bible's co-author and He cannot err, whatever we read in the Bible is true, free from "error" and has been put there for our salvation.
- ✝ This concept of inerrancy can be a difficult and complex, particularly if it is misunderstood. The following should help us understand the Church's teaching...
- ✝ Just as the Holy Father speaks infallibly only when he teaches on faith and morals *ex cathedra* [from the *chair of St. Peter*], the Bible's inerrancy is limited to its central objectives.



# Inerrancy of Scripture

The fathers of Vatican Council II, in their document on divine revelation, defined scriptural inerrancy as follows:

“Therefore, since everything asserted by the inspired authors or sacred writers must be held to be asserted by the Holy Spirit, it follows that the books of Scripture must be acknowledged as teaching solidly, faithfully and without error that truth which God wanted to put into sacred writings for the sake of salvation. [Dei Verbum, 11]



# Inerrancy of Scripture

Historical, literary or scientific discrepancies are peripheral to the Bible's purpose, and don't detract from its efficacy. As the Council Fathers stated, Catholics believe that the Bible is completely true with respect to its teaching on matters related to salvation, including:

- † **Morality** - right and wrong
- † **Theology** - about God
- † **Spirituality** - how moral and theological principles translate into practice; e.g., worship, prayer, study, evangelization...)



# Inerrancy of Scripture

The Bible will never lead us astray, if we interpret it responsibly.

We must understand that it gives us history and natural events from a "religious" and divine perspective, often using symbolic language.



# Inerrancy of Scripture

Always read the Bible on its own terms. The Bible doesn't set out to teach modern history, science, geography, or biography, so don't try to compare what it says about the creation of the world, for instance, to what modern science teaches us.

This doesn't mean the Bible is ever wrong. The Bible, entire and whole, is true and without error - not only in what it teaches about faith and morals, but also what it says about historical events and personages.





# Studying Sacred Scripture

"No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who had made him known." - John 1:18

- † Begin your study with two basic understandings:
  - † The Bible is the Word of God
  - † Jesus is God's Word made flesh
- † It's our duty to continue Jesus' ministry - to become God's Word made flesh today
- † Through Sacred Scripture we hear God's call to go forth as the disciples did to prepare the world for the reign of God.



# When reading the Bible...

## *Remember, it is Literature*

- † It uses literary forms, devices, structures, figures...
- † Look for the “literary” clues that convey a meaning

## *It is Ancient*

- † Its meaning is wrapped up in how the ancients viewed the world and history
- † Although interested in recording history, they were uninterested in “pure history”
- † History was more than politics and wars; it had a deeper, religious significance



# 7 Main Pillars of Ancient Judaism

## Monotheism

- There is only One God YHWH
- See the "Shema" prayer (Dt 6:4).
- Developed from earlier stage of Henotheism in which Yahweh was greatest among the gods, the king of gods

## Election

- God's Chosen People are to be Holy, set apart; different from other nations

## Land

- Promised by God to be their land forever; a "land flowing with milk and honey"

## Law

- Core in Decalogue, more in the rest of the Torah and ultimately in the whole Bible

## Monarchy

- Davidic dynasty ("Son of David") is supposed to rule over Israel forever

## Temple

- God's "House" will be in Jerusalem; i.e., God will dwell in the midst of his people

## Messiah

- God will raise up an "anointed" leader to restore the nation and its covenants with God



# Covenant

- † Hebrew *berith*, Greek *diatheke*, Latin *testamentum*
- † Used 285 times in the Hebrew Bible (first in Gen 6:18) and 33 times in the New Testament
- † A covenant is not a contract. It is a sacred family bond, sealed in God's name by oaths. Because they are sealed in God's name, oaths invoke blessings and curses.
- † Covenants are ratified formally, usually sealed with blood, and thus often involve animal sacrifices -- concrete symbols or "signs" often exchanged to remind the two parties of their agreement.



# Covenant

- † Parties involved might be individuals, families, states, kings...even God
- † Parties might be on the same level (two families, two kings) with mutual obligations agreed upon freely
- † Parties might be on different levels (God and humans; a large empire and a smaller nation) with the stronger party imposing the conditions on the weaker party (obedience, taxes, tribute) in exchange for certain benefits (protection)



# Covenant



## **Contract**

*Promise*

*Sealed in your name*

*Exchange goods & services*

*Temporary*

*~ Prostitution*

## **Covenant**

*Oath*

*Sealed in God's Name*

*Exchange of Persons*

*Extend family bonds*

*~ Marriage*



# Salvation History & Covenants

*"Understanding...consists in showing why there are a number of covenants with mankind and in teaching what is the character of those covenants" - Irenaeus, Adversus Heresies, Bk. 10; Ch. 3*

- † St. Irenaeus, early Church father, recognized the need to study salvation history in terms of the covenants.
- † The Bible gives us history from God's perspective. It shows us that throughout all time, God works to bring us salvation. *The Bible is salvation history.*
- † The covenants are the hinges upon which salvation history turns.

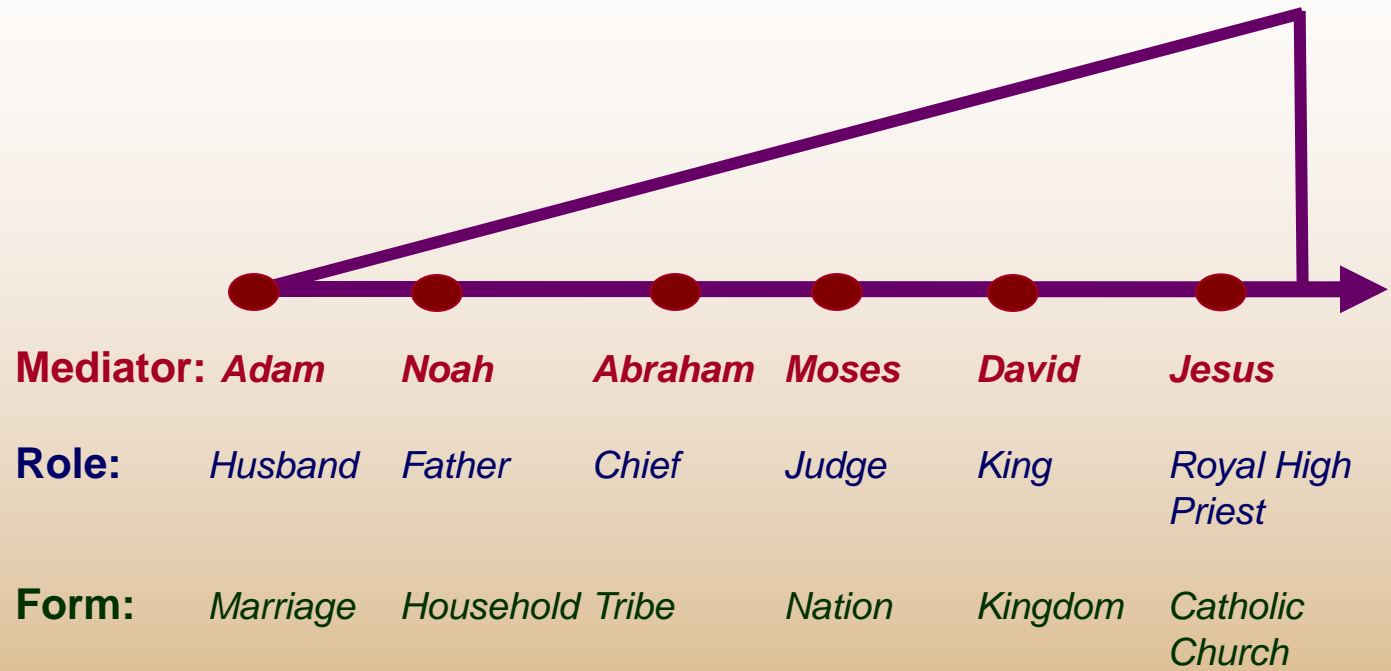


# Salvation History & Covenants

- † Throughout salvation history, God acts through His covenants to extend the Family of God. He starts with just two people, Adam and Eve, and proceeds through Noah, Abraham, Moses, and David until finally all nations are brought into the covenant through Jesus Christ
- † God's plan was always to make all men and women His sons and daughters through the covenants, summed up in Jesus' *New Covenant*, where God sends us "a Spirit of adoption, through which we can cry, Abba, 'Father!'"



# God's Covenants with His People



*These key covenants serve as the outline for reading the whole Bible. If we know them and understand them, we'll have a good working understanding of the "plot" of the Bible.*



# The Books of the Bible

## A Brief Overview

Let's start at the beginning, with the Pentateuch (or Torah). Five books:

- † Genesis
- † Exodus
- † Leviticus
- † Numbers
- † Deuteronomy





# In the beginning...

## Genesis

- † Creation stories
- † The Fall - consequences
- † God reveals Himself to Abraham
- † Covenants and promises
- † The patriarchs



# Covenant: Adam & Eve (Gn 1-3)

- † "Covenant" is not used, but divine promises are made; apply to all human beings
- † *Life on Earth*: "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it..." (1:28)
- † *Vegetarian Diet*: "I have given you every plant... and every tree with seed in its fruit... for food" (1:29)
- † *Male and Female*: "It is not good that the man should be alone" (2:18; cf. 1:27)
- † *Disobedience and Death*: "...but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat" (2:17)
- † *Promise*: "...between your seed and her seed" (3:15)



## Covenant: Noah and family (Gen 6-9)

- † Applies to all human beings
- † *Life*: God saves the family of Noah (6:18); *be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth* (9:1,7)
- † *Diet*: They may now also eat animals, but may not eat/drink their *blood*, and may not shed human *blood* (9:2-6)
- † *Covenant*: God promises *not to destroy* the whole human race again through a flood (9:8-11)
- † "*Sign*" of this covenant: The rainbow set in the clouds when it rains (9:12-17)



## Covenant: Abraham and his descendants (Gen 12,15,17)

- † *Descendants*: Abraham's descendants will be numerous and will become a great nation (12:2; 15:5; 17:20; 18:18; etc.)
- † *Inheritance*: Descendants will inherit the "promised land," later called the land of Israel (12:1; 15:18-21; 17:8; etc.)
- † *All other nations*: All nations shall be blessed in him (12:3; 18:18) or through his offspring (22:18; 26:4)
- † *"Sign" of covenant*: Circumcision of male descendants (17:9-14,23-27;21:4;etc.)

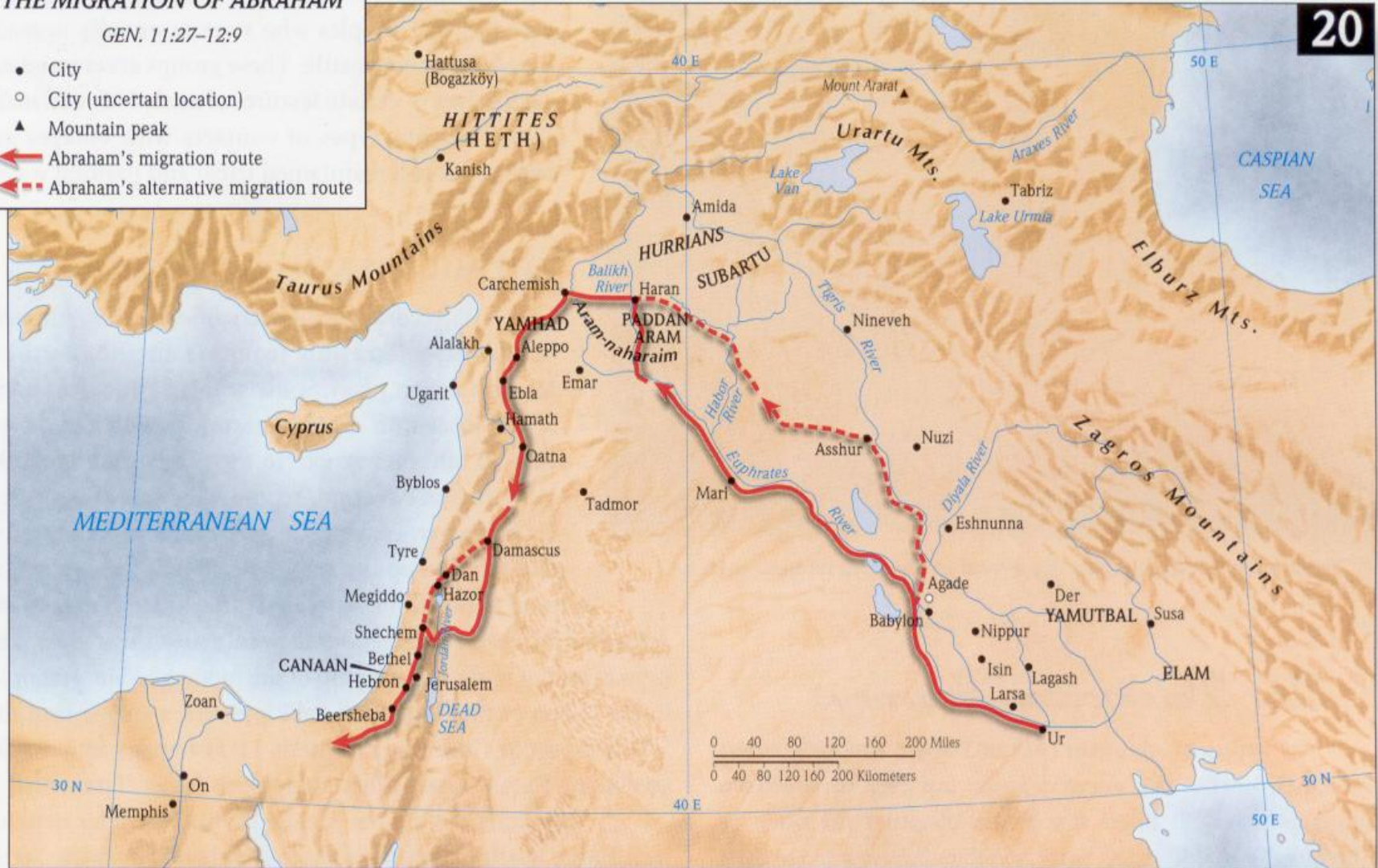


# Abraham's Journey

## THE MIGRATION OF ABRAHAM

GEN. 11:27-12:9

- City
- City (uncertain location)
- ▲ Mountain peak
- ← Abraham's migration route
- ←- - Abraham's alternative migration route





# Covenantal Structure of Salvation History



1. Three-fold  
Promise to Abraham

**Abraham**  
Gen 12:1-3

2. Promise upgraded  
to Covenants

1. Land Promise  
(Gen 15)

2. Royal Dynasty  
Promise (Gen 17)

3. Worldwide Blessing  
Promise (Gen 22)

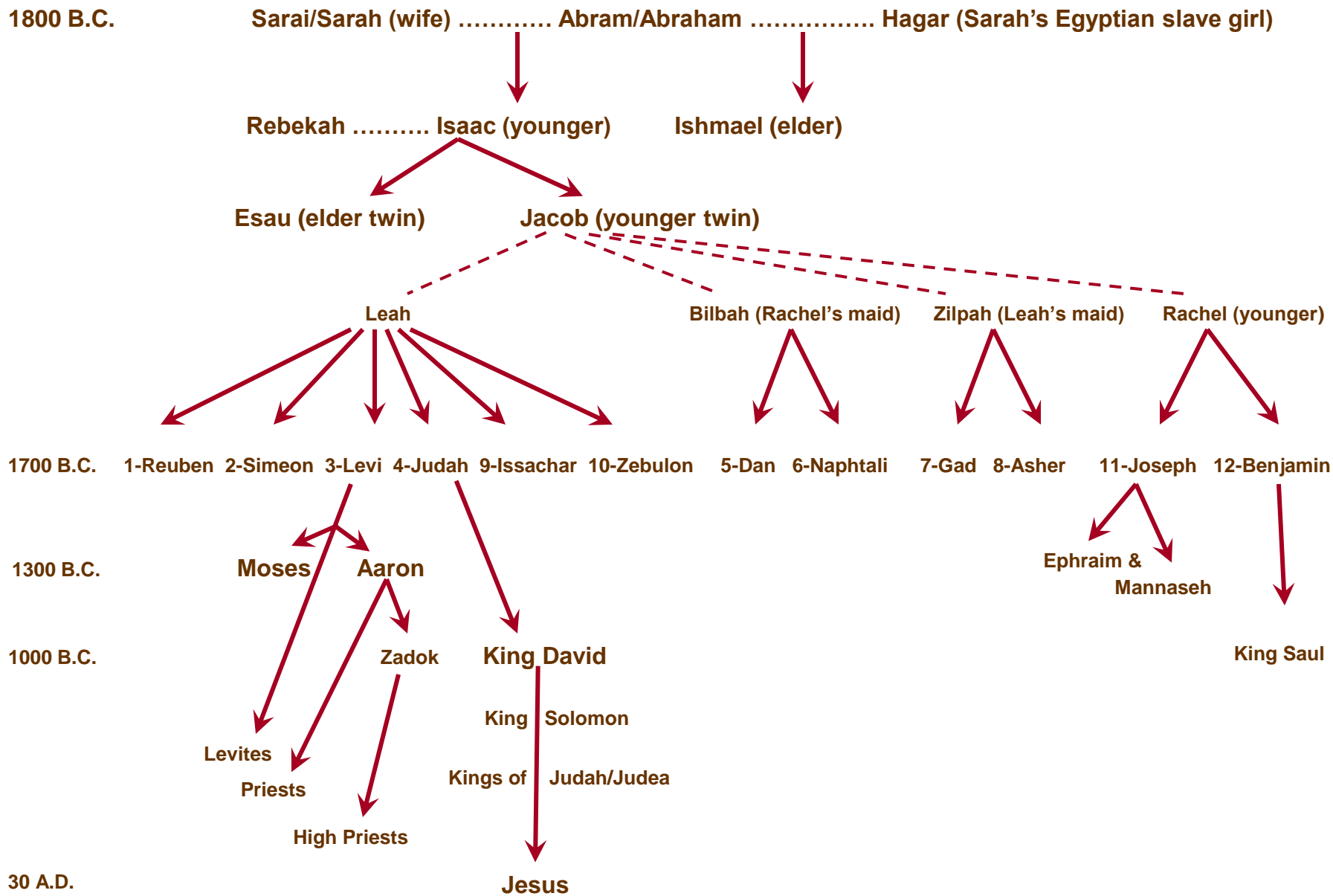
3. Three Covenants  
fulfilled in Moses,  
David and Jesus

**Moses**  
Mosaic Covenant - Ex 24  
Deuteronomic Covenant  
(with Moses) – Deut 29

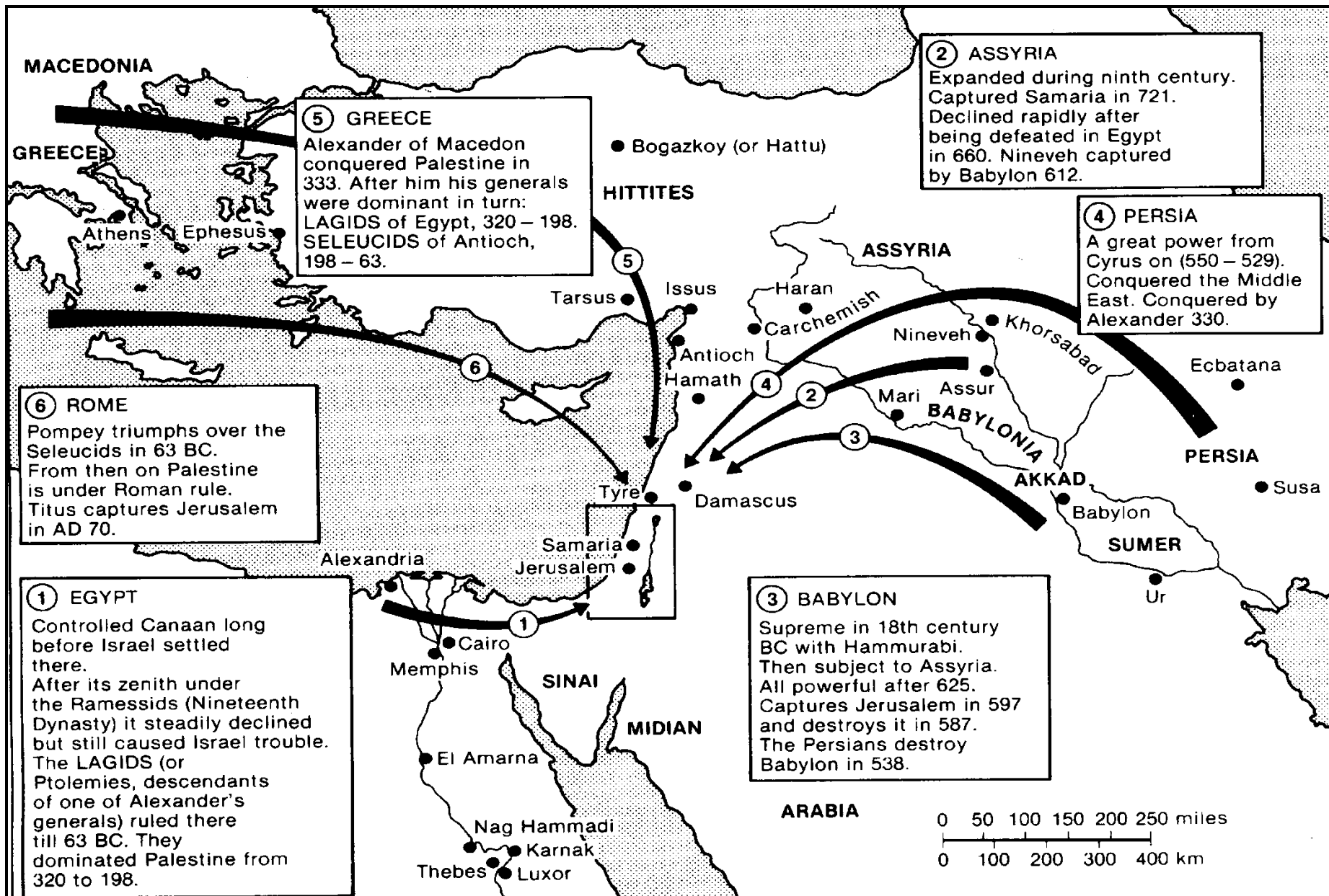
**David**  
Davidic Covenant  
2 Sam 7

**Jesus**  
New Covenant in Jesus  
Christ – Mark 14

# Descendants of Abraham: Tribal and Priestly Focus



# Israel and the Nations





## Covenant: Moses and the Israelites (Ex 20-34; Dt 5-11)

- † ***Monotheism:** "Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone" (Dt 6:4; cf. Ex 20:1-3)*
- † ***Torah:** The Law given on Mount Sinai, or Mount Horeb (esp. Ten Commandments: Ex 20:1-17; Dt 5:1-21)*
- † ***Reciprocity of relationship:** "I will be your God, you will be my people" (esp. Ex 6:7; Lv 26:12)*
- † ***"Sign" of this covenant:** Stone tablets on which the Law is written (Ex 24:12; 31:18; etc.)*



# Exodus

From Slavery to Liberation

- † **Moses' faith, God's Power**
- † **God reveals Himself and tells us His Name**
- † **Moses - a type of Christ**
- † **Christ in Exodus**
- † **The Law**





# Exodus and Exile

- † A series of readings telling the story of salvation history is proclaimed at the Easter Vigil.
- † The Book of Exodus tells the story of God's liberation of His people from slavery in Egypt.
- † God's covenant is a bond by which He freely chooses a relationship of constant and saving love with humanity.
- † Through God's covenant with the Hebrew people we learn that He chooses to set us free from slavery of every kind.
- † Moses led the Hebrew people from Egypt through the desert to the land God promised.



# Exodus and Exile

- † Christians understand that the story of God's deliverance of the people reaches its deepest meaning in the story of Jesus' death and resurrection, which frees us from the slavery of sin.
- † The Exodus shows that God has preferential love for those at the margins of society.
- † The story of the exile of the Hebrew people in Babylon reveals to us God's abiding presence with us in times of difficulty.
- † The stories of exodus and exile offer us a model for understanding our own experiences.



# Law, Wandering, Farewell

Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy

- † Leviticus - the book of laws
- † Numbers - Israel wandering in the wilderness - pain and optimism
- † Deuteronomy - Moses preaches to *all* the People of God
- † Shema - Deut 6:4-5
- † Choose Life - Deut 30:19-20



# Conquest to Chaos

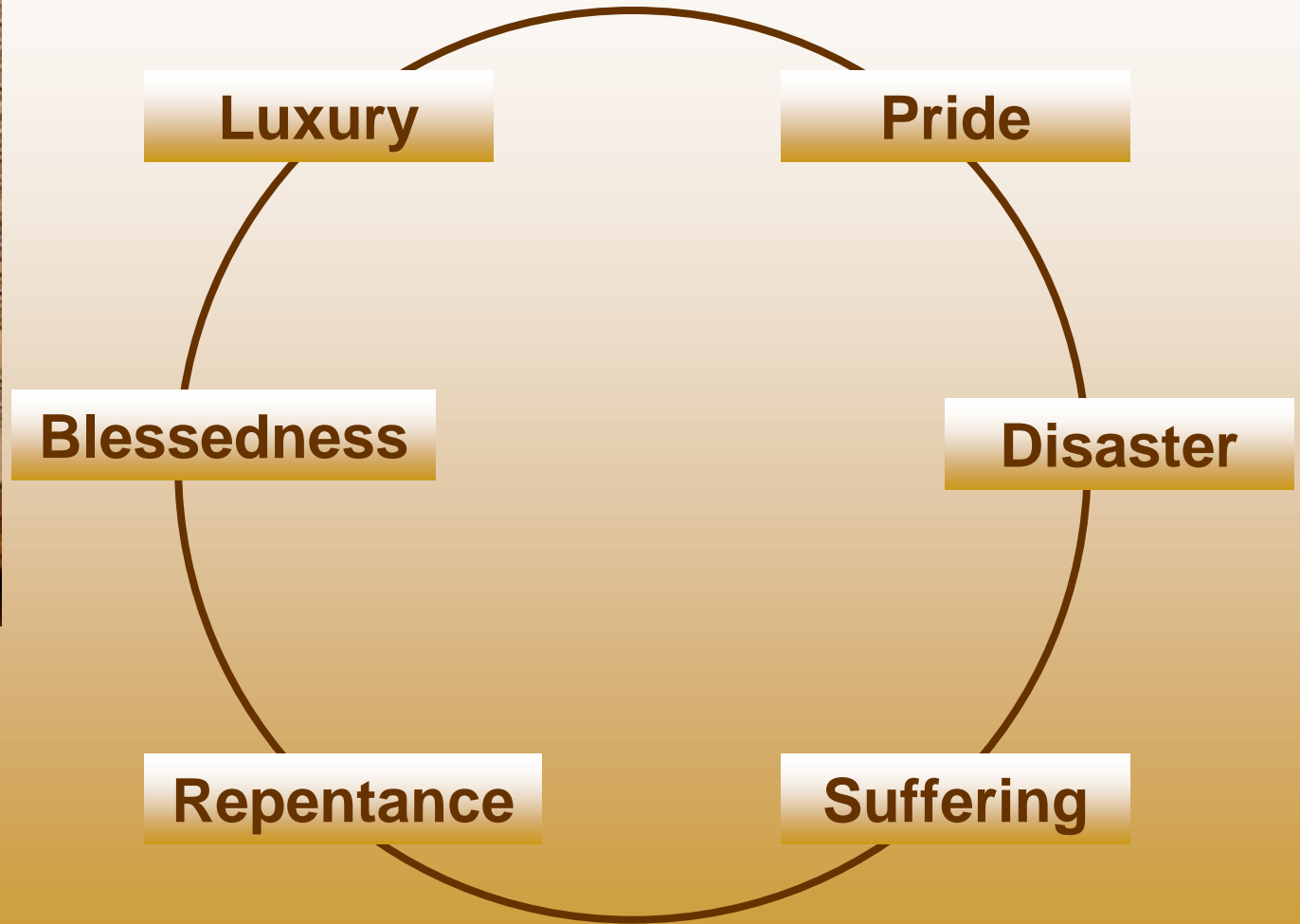
Joshua and Judges

- † The Call to Follow - Spiritual Warfare
- † Joshua - a *type* of Jesus
- † Judges - repeated failures and repeated deliverances
- † The cycle of human history



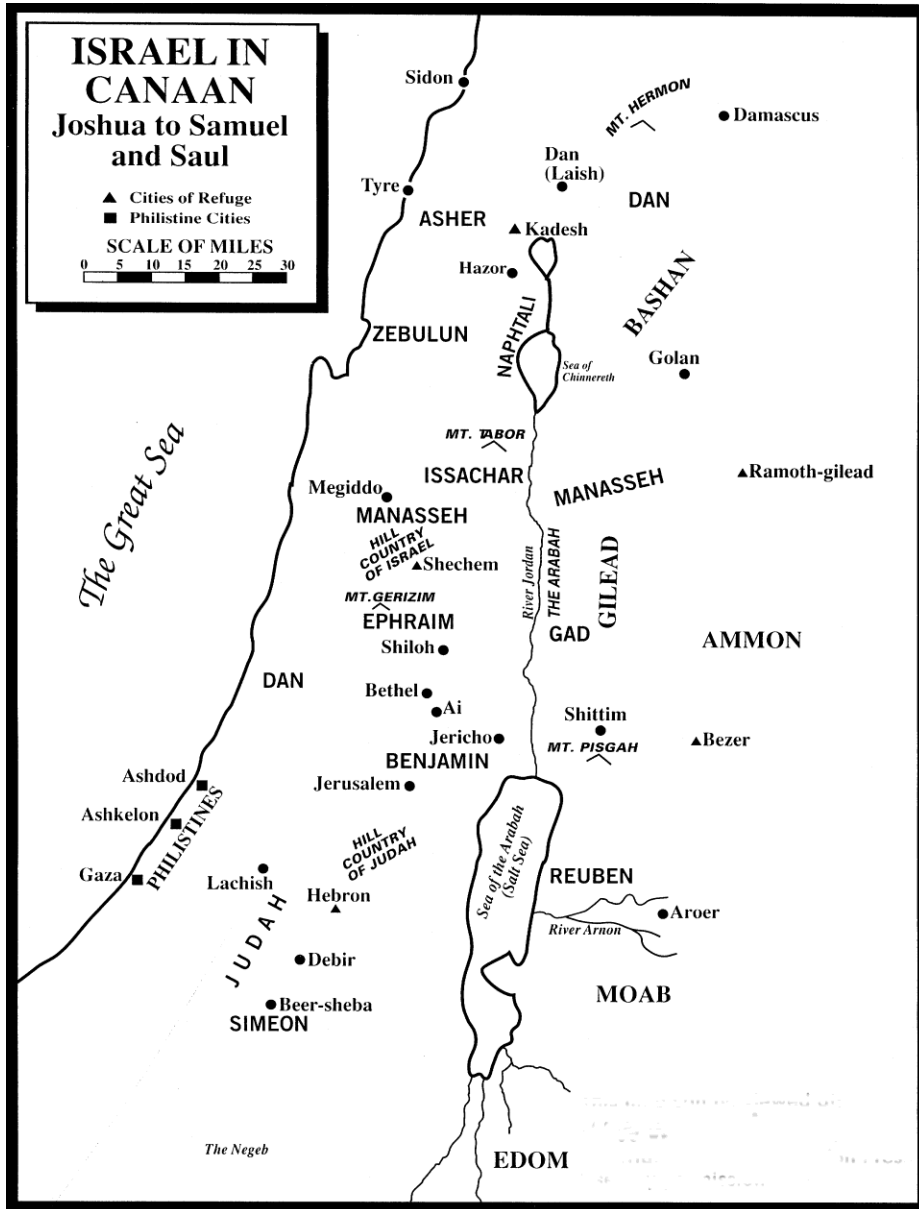
# Judges

## Cycle of Human History

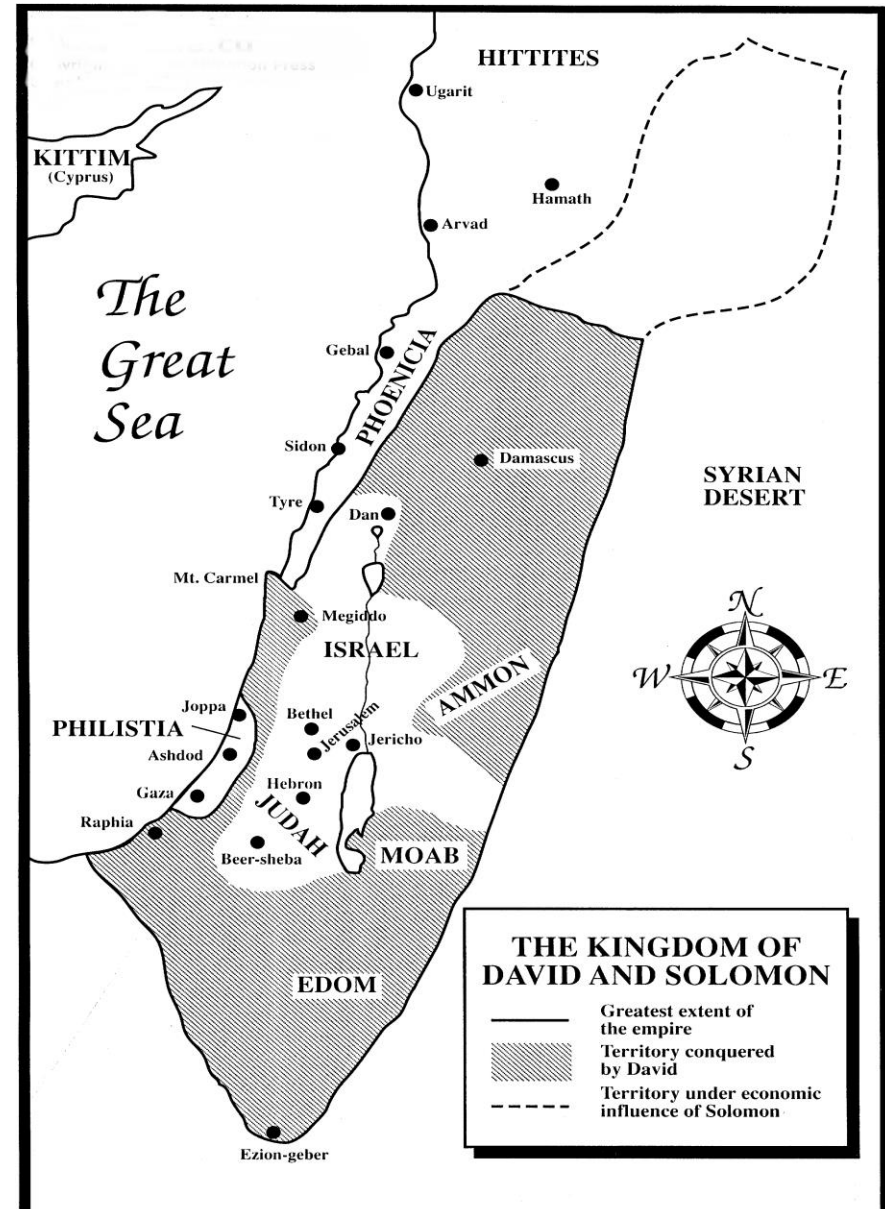




# Joshua to Samuel



# United Kingdom





# National Happiness from Personal Holiness

1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel

- † From weakness (Eli) to strength (Samuel)
- † We want a king!
- † Saul - all image, corrupt
- † David - a story of glory
- † David - a *type* of Christ
- † Lessons for our time



## Covenant: David and the Kingdom (2 Sam 7)

### Royal Dynasty Forever

- † God will establish forever David's "house"
- † Royal Dynasty through his descendants (7:11-16)

### Temple

- † David's son (Solomon) will build God's "house"
- † First temple of Jerusalem (7:4-7, 13)

### "Sign" of this covenant

- † Descendants of David (1 Kings 1-3)
- † The temple itself (1 Kings 5-8)



# From Golden Age to Decline and Fall

1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings

- † Solomon - the gift of wisdom
- † Got wealth? Build God's house
- † Temple as symbol of Christ
- † Solomon's failures
- † Divided kingdom - Israel loses its way
- † The two great prophets: Elijah and Elisha



# Second (& Different) Look

## 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Chronicles

### † Chronicles Approach to History

- † Grand interpretation of Israelite history - from creation to exile
- † More divine, less human (e.g., David as religious leader, Lord's anointed, ideal figure pointing to Messiah)
- † More priestly point of view - less political, more liturgical
- † Focus on genealogies (last book of Jewish Scripture; Matthew's beginning)
- † Idealizes - Solomon as Temple builder
- † Focus on Judah and its kings, not Israel
- † Temple and its Liturgy foreshadow Christ





# Biblical Heroines – Friendship and Courage

Ruth and Esther

† Ruth – the time of Judges

† A woman of faithfulness and  
friendship

† Esther – the time of Exile

† A courageous woman saves her  
people



# God's Mouthpieces

## The Prophets

- † No popular prophets
- † No earthly profit in prophecy
- † The word of the prophet always comes true
- † The prophet tells us God's mind
- † Prophets always show us two ways: the way of life and the way of death
- † Read them in conjunction with the relevant historical books



## The Big Four: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel

**Isaiah "The Lord is salvation" c. 700 B.C.**

- † **Brilliant literary style and imagery**
- † **The call of Isaiah (Is 6) - read first**
- † **Is 1-39: Idolatry, corruption, indifference to the poor, oppression with bring judgment & justice**
  - **Significant teaching on Messiah: 7:14; 9:1-7; 11:1-12:6**
- † **Is 40-55: Mercy and forgiveness**
  - **Servant Songs: 42:1-4; 49:1-6; 50:4-9; 52:13-53:12 (suffering servant)**
- † **Is 56-66: New heaven & earth; hope & restoration; gather the nations**
- † **2 (or 3) Isaiahs? Do you believe in true prophecy...or not?**



## The Big Four: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel

### Jeremiah "The Lord will restore" 600 B.C.

- † Jeremiah - priestly family
- † Repent! Reform; to avoid disaster "trust and obey" - surrender to God's will
- † Persecuted by all sides as Judah rushed to destruction
- † A man of suffering - speaking to unrepentant, arrogant sinners
- † Babylon emerges as superpower - Jerusalem destroyed (586)
- † Direct link between moral decline & political degeneration
- † Jer 31 - the New Covenant
- † Tradition: stoned to death in Egypt

Ark of the  
Covenant (2  
Macc 2:4-8)



# The Big Four: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel

## Ezekiel "God makes strong" 575 B.C.

- † Priest and prophet - before and during the Babylonian captivity
- † Foretold destruction of Jerusalem & Temple
- † Prophesied in Babylon and died there
- † 4-24: Judgment, exile, punishment for infidelity; but God is faithful
  - 11:19-21: Hope - return to Promised Land
  - 8:6-7 Shekinah - God's glory leaving the Temple; 48:35 return of the Lord
- † 25-32: Prophecies against other nations who profited from fall of Judah
- † 33-48
  - 34:1-31 Messianic prophecy; True Shepherd
  - God will purify His people - return to former splendor
- † Filled with symbols and word pictures





# The Big Four: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel

## Daniel "God judges" C. 600 B.C.

- † Hebrew, Aramaic & Greek - 2 theories: 2<sup>nd</sup> century & 6<sup>th</sup> century - again prophecy?
- † Story of young Jewish man's life in exile
- † History from God's perspective - God the Lord of History, planning, directing
- † 1-6 Adventures of Daniel & friends - faith
- † 7-12 Daniel's apocalyptic visions (2:34-35,44)
  - 7: Four kingdoms and the Messiah
  - 8: Gabriel, ram & goats
  - 9: 70 weeks, messianic (9:26 the anointed one shall be cut off & Jerusalem and its Temple destroyed
  - 10-11: conflict of nations
  - 12: great tribulation, end of all things
- † 13-14 Further adventures of Daniel



# The Minor Prophets

Hosea, Joel, Amos, Micah...

- † Hosea: The suffering of love rejected
- † Joel: Judgment or repentance - our choice
- † Amos: Prophet with a modern burden - a sick society
- † Obadiah: Message of crime and punishment
- † Jonah: Reluctant prophet scandalized by God's mercy
- † Micah: "Who is like God?"
- † Nahum: Destruction of Nineveh
- † Habakkuk: God writes straight with crooked lines
- † Zephaniah: The day of wrath
- † Haggai: Call to rebuild the Temple
- † Zechariah: Symbols, visions and messianic prophecies
- † Malachi: God has been neglected and evildoers will not go unpunished



# God Brings His People Home

## Ezra and Nehemiah

- † The “Axial Period” of world history
- † Only a remnant returns
- † 2<sup>nd</sup> Exodus under Cyrus
- † Christ symbolized in Ezra, Nehemiah & Zerubbabel
- † The people rebuild the city wall and bind themselves to the Law
- † Covenant restored



# Encountering God in Darkness

## Job

- † The problem of evil, suffering & injustice
- † Many Layers of Meaning
  - † Problem of evil
  - † Conflict between faith and experience
  - † Meaning and purpose of life
  - † Problem of identity
  - † The problem of God
- † The deep puzzle of Job 42:7



# A Book of Philosophy

## Ecclesiastes

- † Wisdom of human reason: *God is silent*
- † Asks the question the rest of the Bible answers: *Why are we here?*
- † Central point: *vanity*
- † Failed lifestyles: *wisdom, pleasure, wealth and power, honor and prestige, legalistic external religion*
- † *Relevance to today*

# Love Story, God and the Soul

## Song of Songs

- † Allegoric poem where Solomon, the bridegroom, represents God and the bride is the Church, the new Israel.





# Our Prayer and Song Book

## Psalms

- † Psalms are meant to be used, not just read
- † Foundation of daily prayer
- † Overcoming the obstacles in Psalms - curses, hatred
- † Messianic Psalms
- † Favorites
  - † Psalm 23, 42, 51, 95, 115, 118, 139



# Biblical Faith in the Psalms

- † The Psalms held the faith of an entire people.
- † The Psalms were prayed and sung by the people from a deep faith in God's saving presence.
- † The Psalms epitomize why we call the Bible holy.



# The Deuterocanonical Books

Tobit, Judith, Wisdom, Sirach...

- † Tobit: *God's providential care*
- † Judith: *A courageous woman saves her people*
- † Esther (Greek version): *religious interpretation made explicit*
- † Sirach (Ecclesiasticus): *Teachings of a great sage*
- † Baruch: *Speeches given to the exiles in Babylon*
- † Wisdom of Solomon: *The God behind the Law*
- † Daniel: *The song from the fiery furnace; Daniel, Bel and the dragon*
- † 1<sup>st</sup> Maccabees: *Resistance against tyranny*
- † 2<sup>nd</sup> Maccabees: *Praise for martyrs of the faith*



# The New Covenant: Jesus

## Foretold by Jeremiah

- † The Lord will make "a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah" (Jer 31:31)
- † God's Law will be within people, written on their hearts (Jer 31:34)
- † This text is also quoted in the New Testament in Heb 8:8-12

## Instituted by Jesus

- † At the Last Supper: "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood." (Luke 22:20; cf. 1 Cor 11:25)
- † The Letter to the Hebrews calls Jesus "the mediator of the new covenant" (Heb 9:15; 12:24; see also 8:1-13)
- † Paul also speaks of Christian leaders as "ministers of a new covenant" (2 Cor 3:6)