

Welcome to Calvary Church, Brighton



Today's speaker Philip Wells, Full-time Elder.

This morning and this evening will be hearing what God says through the book of the prophet Isaiah.

This morning - "God and the nations"
This evening a study-session / discussion.

www.calvary-brighton.org.uk

Sermons and talks - calvary-brighton.sermon.net

Introduction

Do you think God subscribes to Twitter?

Does he keep up with the news?

Is he interested in what Donald Trump says?

Does he know where Afghanistan is? (Do we?)

Does he know about Brexit?

- ... about immigration policy

- ... about North Korea, people, leaders, weapons, food

= is God interested in the nations

Answer is ...

YES! Definitely - as we shall see from Isaiah

Approaching the big book of Isaiah

The book of Isaiah is like a tiny mouse trying to eat a huge but nourishing cheese! [Motyer]

1. the end (56-66 = "Anointed Conqueror" [Motyer])
2. the middle (40-55 = "book of Servant" [Motyer])
3. the beginning (1-39 = "book of the King" [Motyer])
4. the second part of the beginning (12-39)

Today we are nibbling #4





Today

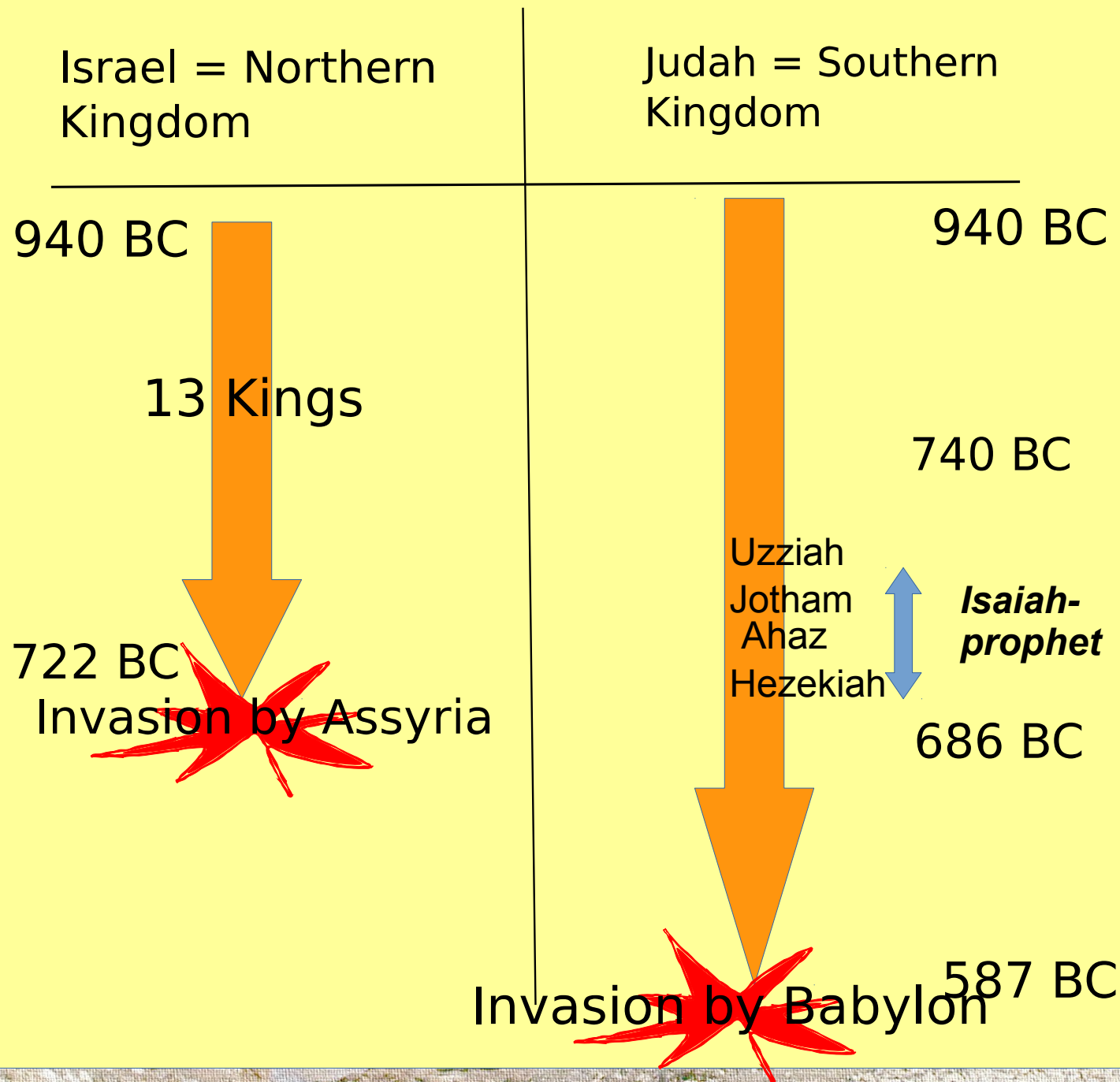
A. Remind us of context

- *Apologies you may have heard it before, but without it we can't understand what God is saying!*

B. Survey the chapters 12-39

C. Draw 4 conclusions

A. Context 1. the big history

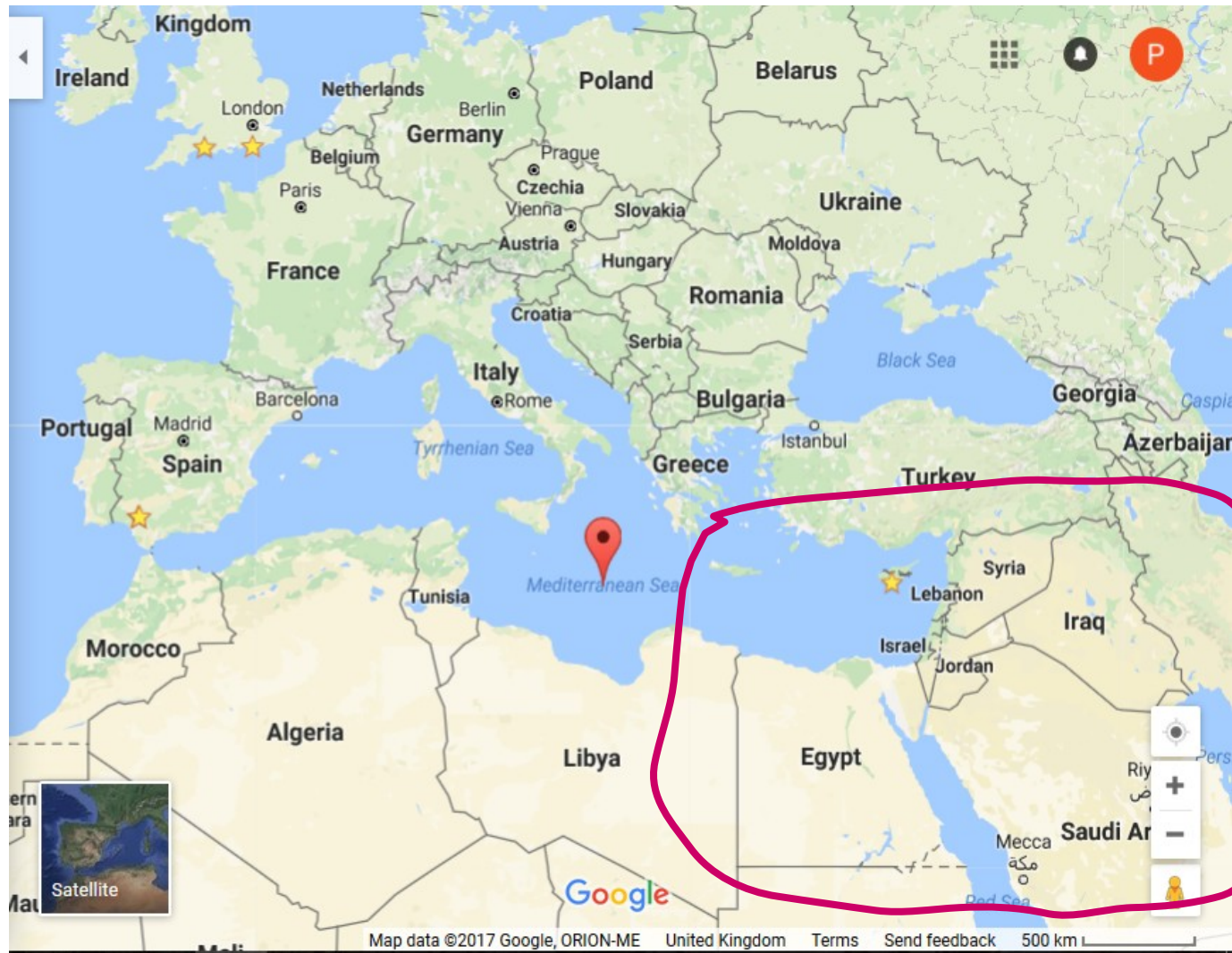


Isaiah 1:1 "the vision concerning Judah and Jerusalem that Isaiah son of Amoz saw during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Hezekiah, kings of Judah"

- the North and South kingdoms were split
the dates are approximate!

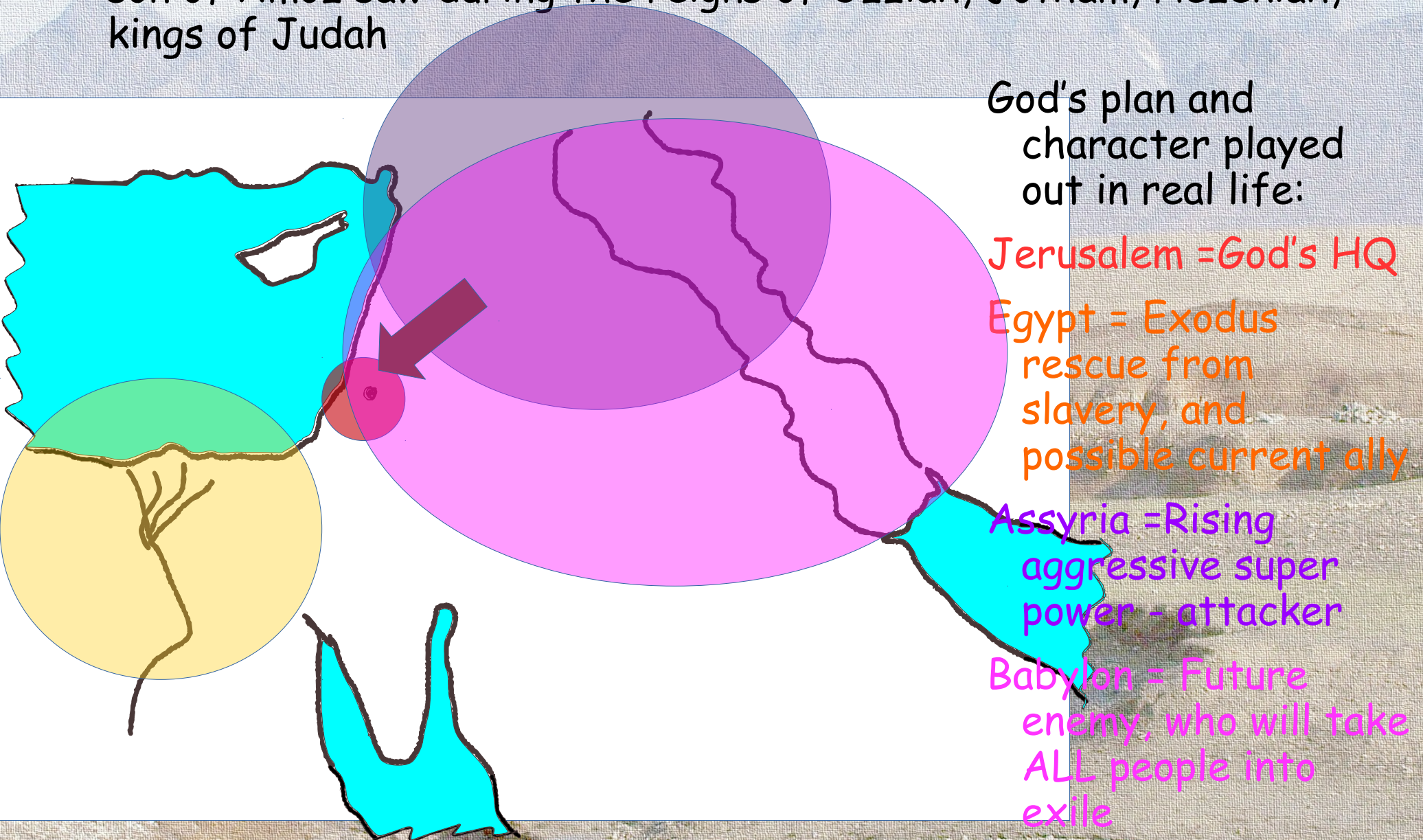
A. Context 2: geography - zoomed out

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==> implications so far

The God of the Bible =

The God of the big picture

The God of the long view

The God of here and now

= the God who is too great to fail!

= the God who (for a Christian) is my heavenly
Father

B. Survey Isaiah 13-39

This bit of Isaiah contains:

Speeches to/about the surrounding nations

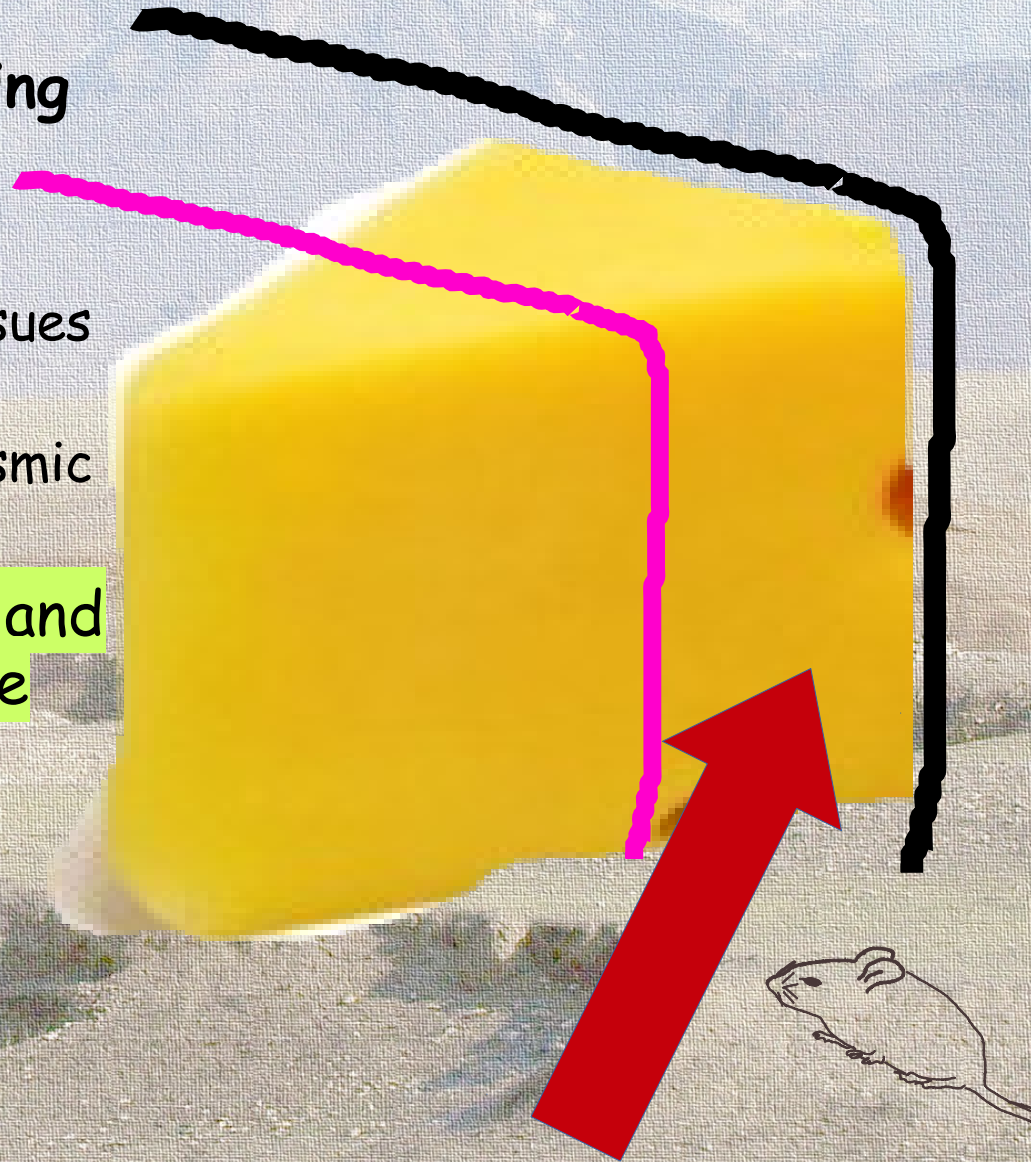
- Twice round
- 13-20 Babylon → Egypt (local issues route)
- 21-35 Babylon → Jerusalem (cosmic issues route)

36-39 crisis tackled via prayer to and faith in the God who controls the nations - Assyrian threat

N.B. difficult for us to read

- *Obscure*
- *Remote*
- *Much is unhappy*

But surely God is saying something vitally important!



Survey Chapters 13-35 - the nations

Babylon - final enemy (13)

Assyria - the present enemy
(14:24)

Philistia (14:28)

Moab (15,16)

Damascus = Syria (17)

Cush (18)

Egypt - the useless help (19,20)

+

Babylon (21)

Edom (21:11)

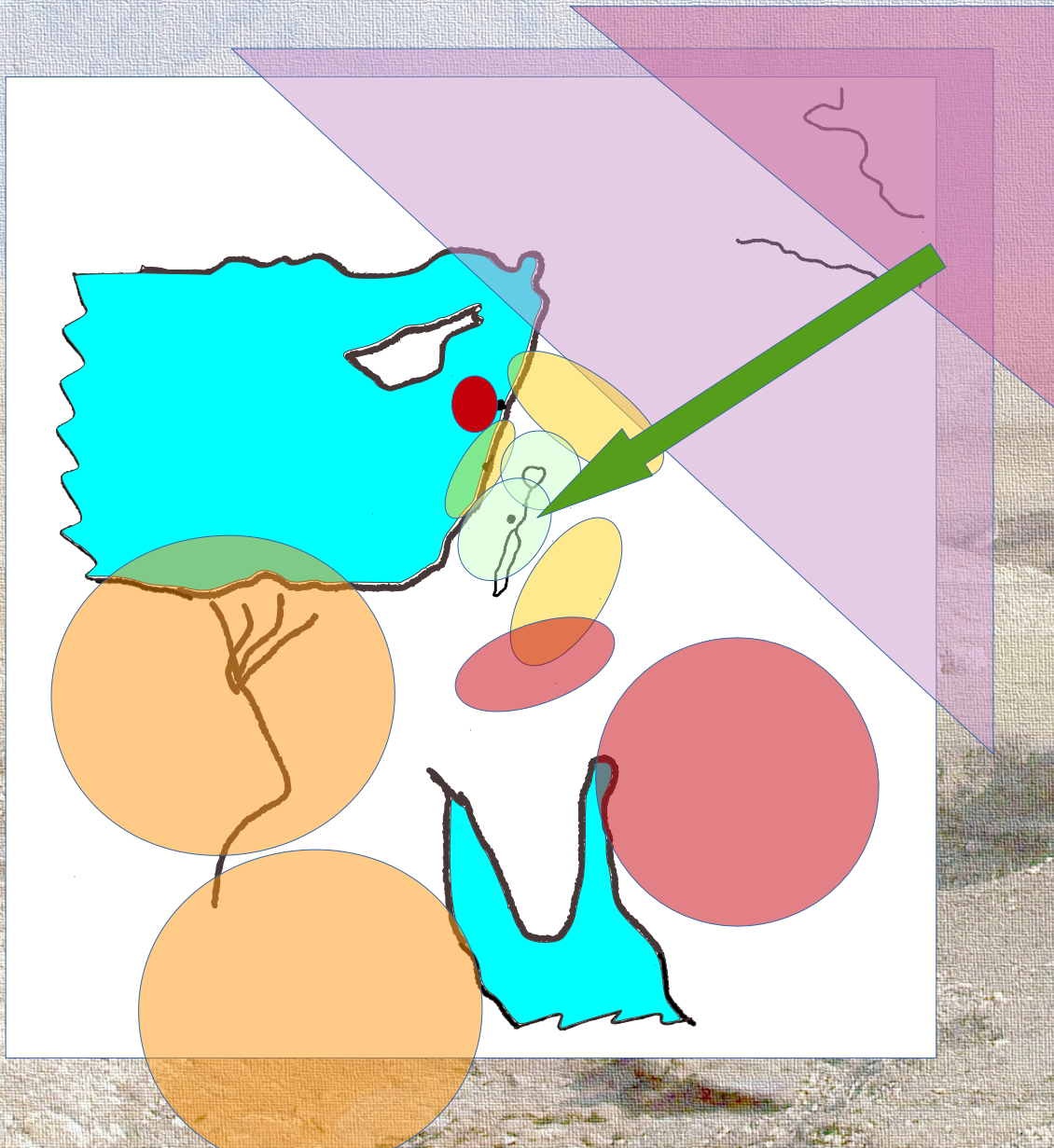
Arabia (21:13)

Tyre (23) - the trading hub

Ephraim = N.Kingdom) (28)

Ariel = Jerusalem (29)

The redeemed (35) come home!



4 conclusions

1. God knows nations

- so we are not only simply individuals, we are bundled up with other people of our nation, and we can affect other people with whom we are bundled up ... (what is a nation?? - Bible does not give a definition)
- 15:5b and 15:5a
- ==> He knows about ... Donald Trump, bedroom tax, childcare provision, souther rail industrial relations, Brexit, NHS staffing, gig economy, student debt ...
- "Why do you complain O Israel, my way is hidden from the LORD" Is. 40:27
- "the very hairs on your head are numbered" Matt 10:30

4 conclusions

2. God uses the nations - as agents of his sovereign purpose

- 10:5 "Woe to Assyria, the rod of my anger"
 - God used the arrogant, ignorant Assyrians for his own purposes for his people
 - N.B. his sovereignty did not remove their responsibility! (10:12,13)
- Romans 13:4-7 - the state today is God's deacon
- ==> respect and obedience for the office (1 Peter 2:13)
- ==> Christians are to be model citizens
 - No abusing the system
 - e.g. No illegal substances

4 conclusions

3. God judges the nations

- Assyrian (for cruel pride 10:12-13)
- Babylon (for godlike self-divinitisation 14:12-15)
 - ==> emperor worship, state worship
- For ingrained idolatry (17:8)
 - N.B. your god is what gives you meaning, guidance, what you worship as largest – sun worship??
- wisdom that omits God (19:11)

==> star trek NG - "all cultures are equally good" - Bible: all cultures are sinful, each has its own characteristic sins (e.g. "Cretans are liars" - to varying degrees (including white supremacists)

==> beware of the sins of our culture

- the world makes godliness seem odd, and sin seem normal: ingratitude, irreverence to God, sexual sin,

==> every culture and ethnicity must ***humble itself*** to receive forgiveness and redemption through Jesus

4 conclusions

4. God will not stop until he has brought the nations to the King in the heavenly City

- NOT Babylon ... she is the city doomed to destruction. **This is the end for every city and culture that insists on opposing God**
 - Revelation 19:3 "Hallelujah! The smoke from her goes up for ever and ever"
 - ==> that's the mindset, group, culture that you need to be rescued out of!
- 14:32 refuge for Philistia - in Zion
- 16:5 rescue for Moab through the King descended from David
- 18:17 Cushites (= Ethiopians?) will bring gifts to Mount Zion, the place of the LORD Almighty
- 19: 19 an altar to the LORD in the heart of Egypt
- 19:21-25 Egyptians will worship with Assyrians
- 25:6-9 including a feast, and the destruction of death itself

==> the King the son of David is Jesus - Mark 10:47 "Jesus, son of David have mercy on me"

==> great invitation to all nations to come to Jesus ... not a religion for any one class/ age group / Westerners!

==> great impetus to Christian cross-cultural mission!

- To all nations: Italy, Ukraine, Sri Lanka, Peru, Turkey, France, Spain, Sussex

==> great hope to look forward to ... every tribe and tongue and nation!