

Welcome to Calvary Church, Brighton



Today 29th April 2018 speaker Philip Wells, Full-time Elder.
This morning - "Babylon"

www.calvary-brighton.org.uk

calvary-brighton.sermon.net

There are just two cities to belong to

Where is home?

Where do you belong?

- e.g. Maria's father - lived in Wood Green, but home was always Paphos, Cyprus
- e.g. Rhodri Thomas - lived in Patcham, but his heart was always in Wales
- Hiraeth = Welsh word, untranslatable, meaning deep, longing for home
- Where is your home ... the place you will never forget? Will you remain true to that place?
- In the Bible there are only two cities ...
- Zion (the city where God reigns and Jesus is King)
- and Babylon (the other place)

There are just two cities to belong to

In Isaiah 13-20 + 21-35

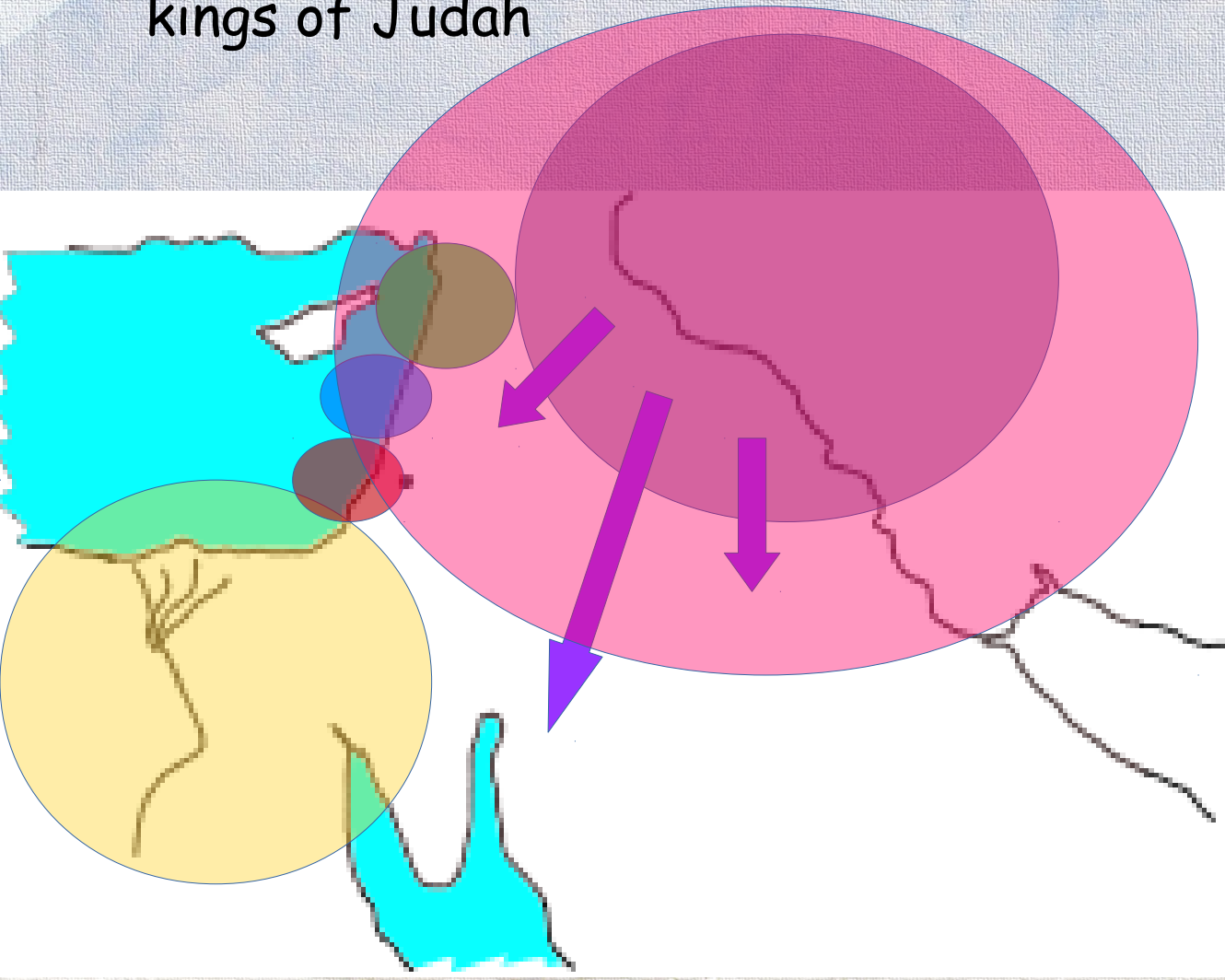
- All about the nations
- Babylon, [Assyria], Philistines, Moab, Syria, Egypt (Cush), Tyre
- And Zion/Jerusalem

Why?

- N.B. the nations probably never heard!
- The LORD, the God of Israel, is God of all the nations
- They are all accountable to ~~Bel, Ishtar, Molech~~ HIM
- In whom will Israel trust ... the nations are just human
- The LORD has a secret plan for their salvation

the history and geography

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"



Jerusalem = Zion, God's HQ
= Judah, royal family of King David

Egypt = Exodus rescued from slavery here, and tempting ally

Assyria = Rising aggressive super power – helper or attacker? – Tiglath-Pileser iii

Israel = Ephraim = Jacob: northern Kingdom

Aram/Syria

Babylon – the all-conquering enemy!

=> In the end history comes down to these 2 cities – Zion -versus Babylon

Babylon - a brief history

N.B. the patterns/types/themes of God's word

Should we explain scripture people by saying
"the king of Tyre is a bit like Donald Trump"

= Donald Trump is the real original Person, by
whom we understand Scripture

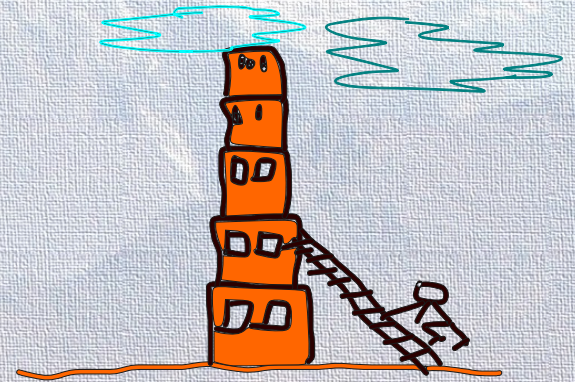
OR

Should we explain the world by saying "Donald
Trump is a bit like the King of Tyre"

=> the Scripture Person is the real original by
which we understand the world

THUS - Babylon is THE REAL ORIGINAL
THING by which we understand what's going
on in the world ...

=> the Bible shows us "the Babylon principle"
which is there in many different times in
different civilisations, in different ways



Babylon - a brief history - its mindset

Genesis 11 - after the flood

- When humankind was looking for expansion and direction
- = "a name"
- v.3 technology
- v.4 to reach heaven, make a name for ourselves
- v.4 power of unity

=> human quest for dominion without God

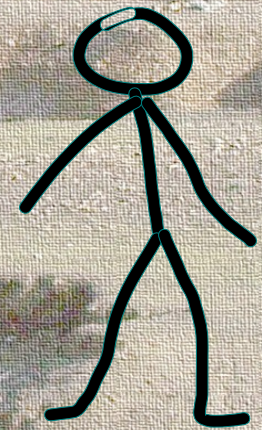
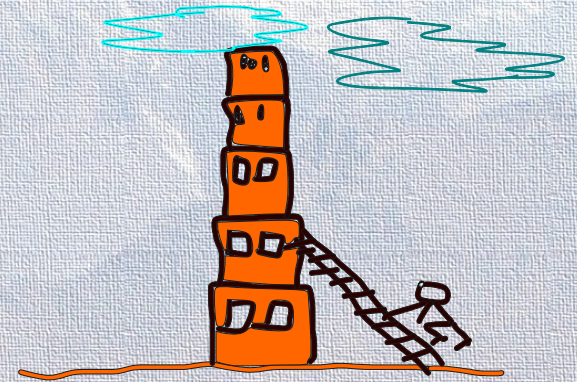
- v.5 LORD has to come down to see it
- v.7 he "disintegrated" humankind
- v.7 he scattered humankind

=> Babel / Babylon is the icon of human power/glory

=> the LORD confounds and confuses human hubris / vanity / conceit

Genesis 12:1 - Abraham

- LORD says
- I will make you a great nation
- I will make your name great
- All peoples on earth will be blessed through you
- that's the promise, by faith, that leads to Jesus himself



Babylon - a brief history - its threat

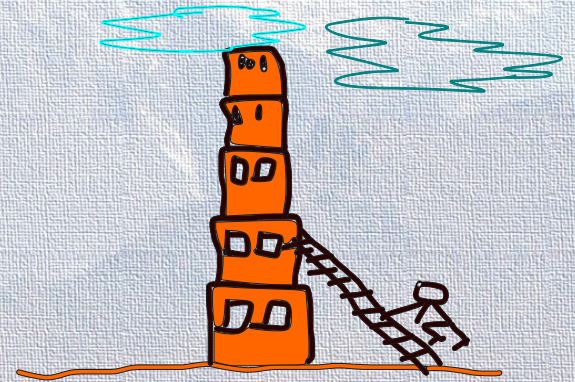
Isaiah 39:1 - the threat of Babylon

- The place which Hezekiah foolishly and proudly tried to impress (v.2,4)
- He had trusted, but imperfectly
- He under-estimated the threat
- He was comfortable with friendship with "the anti-God world"
- He forgot to care about his people
- He forgot to think about the future after him
- He stopped living by faith (in his old age)

=> beware being sucked in by the values and promises of our culture (hippy, yuppy, millenial, immigrant)

2 Chronicles 36:15-21

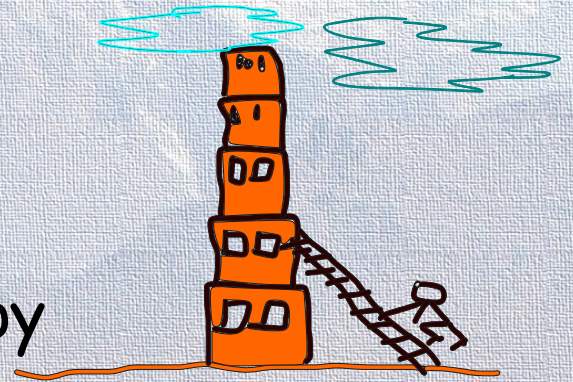
- Babylon = the agent of Judgment sent by God



Babylon - a brief history - the people of God in the midst of the city of the world

Psalms 137

- The place of lament
- "this world is **not** my home, it is under future judgment, I can't be fully happy here"



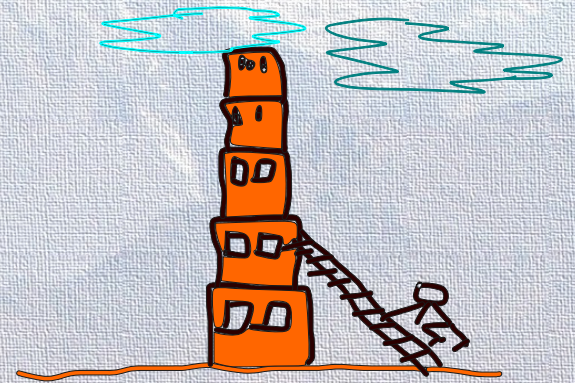
Jeremiah 29:7

- The place of *temporary* involvement
- v.5 Build houses - for the interim
- v.6 [don't live in hatred] pray for the peace of the city
- v.10 but be ready to leave and go home
- ==> rather like Christians in this world ... pray for it, but don't be so attached that you can't leave it

Babylon - a brief history - from which there is a way home

Isaiah 49:8 there is a way home!

- v.9 captives will be free
- v.10 refugees coming home
- v.13 a scene of great joy
- ==> [return from exile(s) is still highly incomplete]
- ==> we're marching to Zion
- ==> universe sings songs of redemption ... and so do we!



Isaiah 52:8 the LORD returns to
Zion

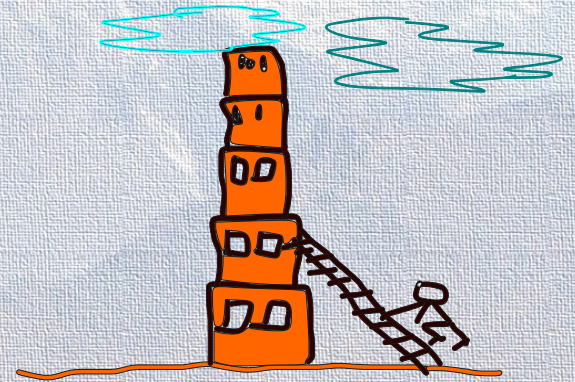
- As the captives leave [Babylon] v.11
- Exit Babylon with holiness ... back to Zion (v.11)

Babylon - a brief history

New testament - in and through
Jesus Christ, by faith in him

2 Corinthians 6:17 ff

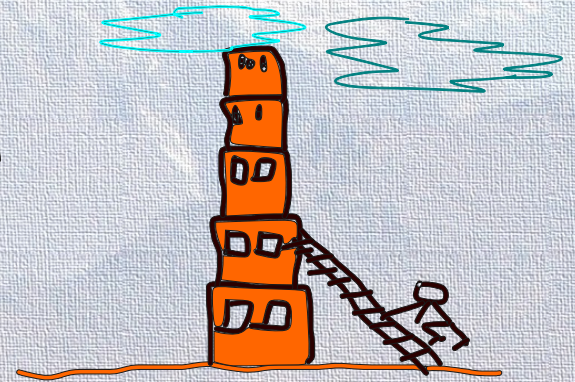
- Christians live like those departing exiles
- v.14 do not join in at the pagan temple
- v.14 do not think that your deep allegiance and the deep allegiance of the world is the same
- Not primarily about marriage partner ... but it applies
- Deeply about everything that contaminates ... body / thinking / spirit / respect (7:1)



Babylon - a brief history - the end of Babylon

Revelation 18

- v.1 fallen (apparently Babylon had been going strong up to this point = Roman Empire)
- v.3 her excessive luxury
- v.4 come out of her my people
- v.7 she gave herself glory and luxury
- v.10 woe to the city
- ==> there is a city whose ultimate destiny is NOT salvation but destruction! GET OUT OF IT!



3:12 to him who overcomes ... I will write on him the name of the city of my God

Babylon - a brief history - the end of Babylon

The Babylon principle ... alive and well in West, in Brighton

- In the Bible there are only two cities
- Zion (the city where God reigns and Jesus is King)
- and Babylon (the other place.
- No one gets to Zion except through Jesus!!!
- Where is your home ... the place you will never forget?
- Where is your longing .. hiraeth?
- Will you remain true to that place?

