

Welcome to Calvary Church, Brighton



Today 12th May 2018 speaker Philip Wells, Full-time Elder.
This morning - "God and the nations"

www.calvary-brighton.org.uk

Sermons and talks - calvary-brighton.sermon.net

What sort of person are you?

- *We are known by our actions*
- *And by our reactions*
- *e.g. to real life crisis (big or small), to stress, to the unexpected*
- *N.B. God does not shield us from these, but is with us in these, and uses them for our good*
- *Jesus' question: faith or little-faith?*
- *Turn to God? Or away from God?*

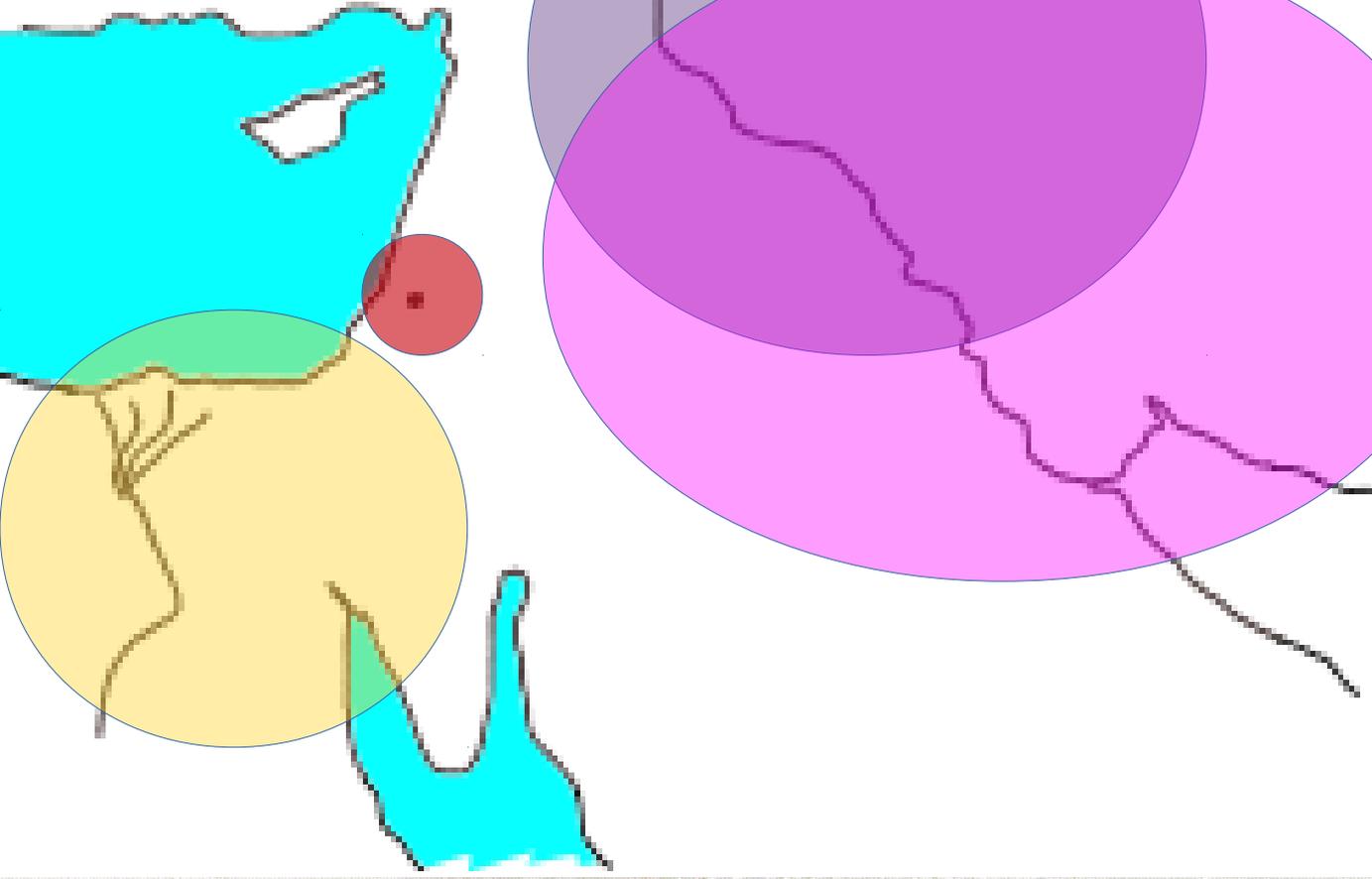
Isaiah 13-39

Is about the stress produced on the old nation of Israel by the surrounding nations

- *e.g. to real life crisis (big!), to stress, to the unexpected*
- *N.B. God did not shield them from these, but used them for his own purposes*
- *Jesus' question: faith or little-faith?*
- *Turn to God? Or away from God?*

The nations - 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 = God's HQ

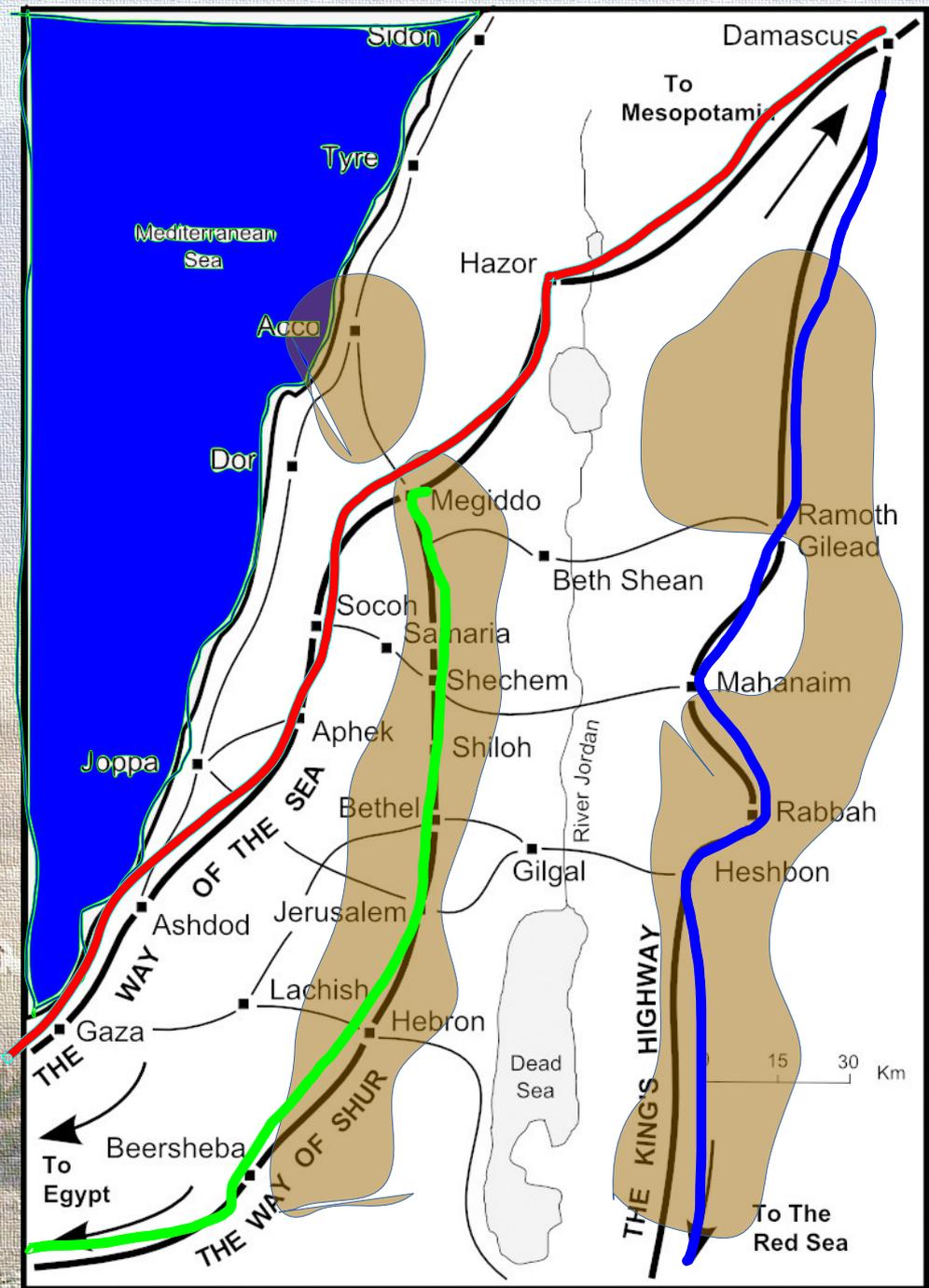
Egypt = Exodus rescue from slavery, and possible current ally

Assyria = Rising aggressive super power - attacker - who himself is destroyed

Babylon = Future enemy, who will take ALL people into exile

N.B. Trade routes military routes

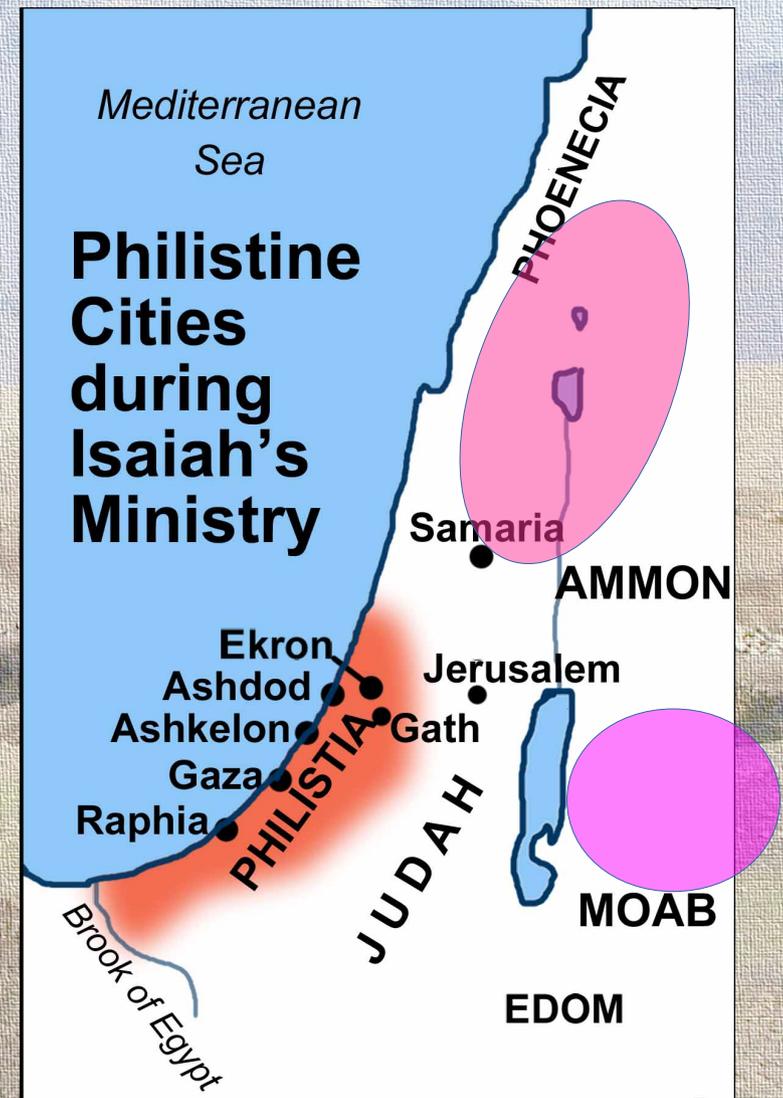
- N.B. no 747s yet
- N.B. high ground
- Routes from Africa, Egypt to Europe, East, Asia x3
- Bring wealth
- Give cities significance
- Same routes bring invading armies!
 - e.g. battle of mountain of Meggido



Chapters 14-17 Three "oracles" /10

To 3 nations

- Philistia (14:28-32)
 - Come with messages
- Moab (15:1-16:13)
 - Seek refuge
- Syria (Damascus) + Northern Kingdom ("Jacob") 17:1-11
 - Had joined together against Jerusalem
- → "all nations" 17:12-14



1. Philistia - a kind invitation to wrongly placed trust

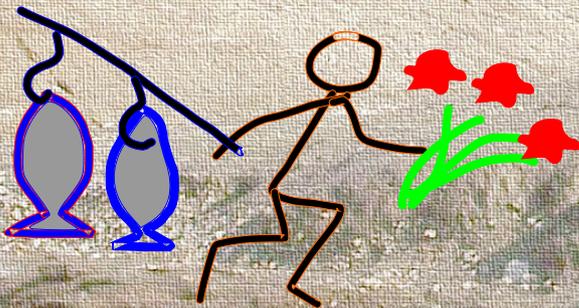
Philistines - ancient enemies

Five cities along the sea coast
(Ashdod, Gath, Ekron ...)

v.28 "When Ahaz died"

Ahaz ... failed in faith, feared
Aram/Jacob ... trusted in the
Assyrians

- Maybe the Philistines thoughtfully came to the funeral - with messages
- Philistines teamed up with Egypt
- "now is the [God-given] opportunity to join us"
- ==> opportunity <> proof of God!



1. Philistia - a kind invitation to wrongly placed trust



v.29 Assyria (or David?) has gone quiet

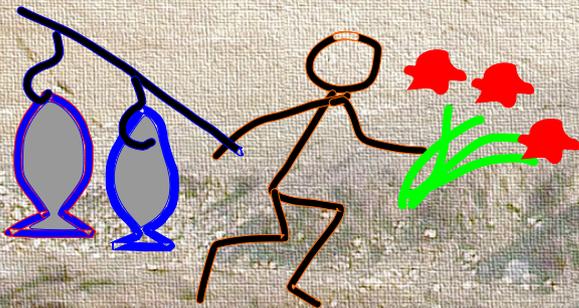
v.31 But they are not deeply & permanently safe

v.32 the LORD's Zion is the only safe place

=> "Do not fear what they fear, do not be frightened" But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord 1 Peter 3:15

- in sickness, in loneliness, in failure, in disappointment, in stress, in worry

- the opportunity <> God's endorsement



2. Moab - pity for wrong-headed suffering neighbours

- Moab
 - Sort of cousins (via Lot's incest)
 - Near neighbours, Ruth - Moabitess (N.B. David's family)
- 15:1-14 sudden calamity
 - Can be God's megaphone
 - *Puritan: "blessed storm to drive us into such a harbour"*
- 15:5 My (=God's) sorrow
 - *You cannot tell God's heart from his hand*
 - e.g. a caring surgeon will "attack" his patient
- Her poignant request 16:3 "let us in, hide us"
 - = Ruth: take refuge under the wings of the LORD God



2. Moab - pity for wrong-headed suffering neighbours

- Moab
- Her true hope is in the throne of David
- Love, faithfulness, justice, righteousness
 - ==> seek this kingdom ... and everything else will be added to you
- **BUT Moab's pride, 16:6 ... unwilling to submit to Another?**
 - Her misplaced confidence 16:8 N.B. former economic prosperity
 - 16:8,9,10 - vines, orchards, harvests v.13 splendour
- v.12 Her wrong prayers
 - Not all prayers are offered to the LORD
 - e.g. to Mary, to the saints
- ==> a family member ... saying a lot of the right things, but not getting to the King, because of self-centred pride
- ==> a sad story ... repeated down the centuries!



3. Aram/Syrian - Ephraim/Jacob alliance - another chance

Damascus (Syria/Aram) allied with
Ephraim/Jacob

- N.B. 7:2 "shaking like a leaf"
- = using human power / alliances
instead of trusting God
- N.B. good for God's people to live and
work together ... but in Christ, by
faith!
- Cities → rubble
- Glory → gleanings (small remnants)

3. Aram/Syrian - Ephraim/Jacob alliance - another chance

"the remnant [by grace]" v.3, v.6

- Says the LORD: not completely obliterated & hopeless
- ==> saved by grace ... not by deserving ... but surprisingly
- "consider the kindness and sternness of God" Romans 11:22

"Look to"

- Man made religion (v.8) instead of their Maker (v.7)
- = summary of human sin: worship created things rather than the Creator = irreverence
- "just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert ... so that Son of man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life" John 3:14,15

"Not remember" v.10

- Importance of remembering the past rather than focus on self/feeling/present experience
- Psalm 78:11,42 the men of Ephraim turned back .. they forgot what he had done and the wonders he had showed them
- ==> let us be God's people = people who listen, remember and walk by faith

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