

## Celebrating Christmas

- **What makes a wonderful Christmas?**
- **What ruins Christmas?**
- **What does God think of the things that ruin Christmas?**
  - **Prayer: *God, help us see you and hear you this Christmas...***

**A Shepherd from Bethlehem:  
God's Promise, Our Peace**

**Micah 5:1-5a**

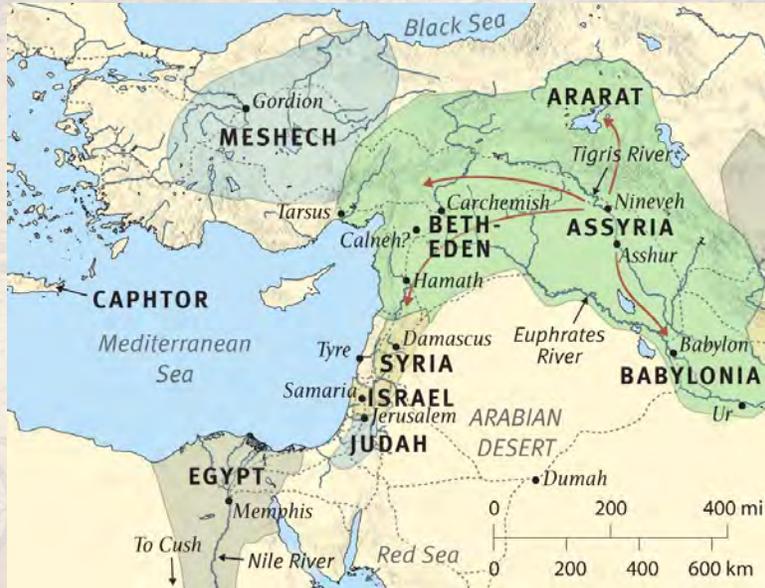


BOOKS OF THE BIBLE					
OLD TESTAMENT - 39 Books			NEW TESTAMENT - 27 Books		
<b>LAW - 5</b>	<b>POETRY - 5</b>	<b>MAJOR PROPHETS - 5</b>	<b>GOSPELS - 4</b>	<b>PAUL'S LETTERS TO FRIENDS - 4</b>	
GENESIS	JOB	ISAIAH	MATTHEW	1 TIMOTHY	
EXODUS	PSALMS	JEREMIAH	MARK	2 TIMOTHY	
LEVITICUS	PROVERBS	LAMENTATIONS	LUKE	TITUS	
NUMBERS	ECCLESIASTES	EZEKIEL	JOHN	PHILEMON	
DEUTERONOMY	SONG OF SLOMON	DANIEL			
<b>HISTORY - 12</b>		<b>MINOR PROPHETS - 12</b>	<b>HISTORY - 1</b>	<b>PAUL'S LETTERS TO CHURCHES - 9</b>	
JOSHUA		HOSEA	ACTS	ROMANS	
JUDGES		JOEL		1 CORINTHIANS	
RUTH		AMOS		2 CORINTHIANS	
1 SAMUEL		OBADIAH		GALATIANS	
2 SAMUEL		JONAH		EPHESIANS	
1 KINGS		MICAH		PHILIPPIANS	
2 KINGS		NAHUM		COLOSSIANS	
1 CHRONICLES		HABAKKUK		1 THESSALONIANS	
2 CHRONICLES		ZEPHANIAH		2 THESSALONIANS	
EZRA		HAGGAI		<b>GENERAL LETTERS - 8</b>	
NEHEMIAH		ZECHARIAH		HEBREWS	
ESTHER		MALACHI		JAMES	
				1 PETER	
				2 PETER	
				1 JOHN	
				2 JOHN	
				3 JOHN	
				JUDE	
				REVELATION	

## Introduction to Micah

- Author: Micah of Moresheth
- Date: about 740-710 B.C. (with Hosea and Isaiah)
- Audience: Judah
- Themes: Judgment/Doom -- Forgiveness/Hope
- Purposes:
  - Brings God's 'lawsuit' against Samaria & Jerusalem for covenant violations
  - Warns of Assyria and Babylon, instruments of God's looming judgment
  - Promises God's faithfulness to restore his people through Shepherd-King
- Why part of advent preaching series?
  - Prediction of messiah's birth in Bethlehem: Micah 5 – Matthew 2

## Micah foretold Jerusalem's fall to Assyrians



### Micah 5:1-5a

- 1: **[doom] Israel's leader will be shamefully defeated, but**  
 → Why? Military judgement for war-like sin - Micah 3
- 2: **[hope] A humble ruler will come from unexpected place.**  
 → 'small' = humility of Bethlehem, David, Messiah

## Bethlehem Ephrathah



- **Meaning:**
  - *Bethlehem* “house of bread”
  - *Ephrathah* = “fruitful”
- **Location:**
  - 10km south of Jerusalem
- **‘Small’ town – huge importance**
  - *Bethlehem*:
    - Not listed in conquest (Joshua)
  - *David*
    - shepherd boy (Jesse’s youngest son)
    - Israel’s King
  - *Messiah*
    - Humble birth
    - Yahweh’s chosen King

## Micah 5:1-5a

- 1: [doom] **Israel’s leader will be shamefully defeated, but**
  - Why? Military judgement for war-like sin - Micah 3
- 2: [hope] **A humble ruler will come from unexpected place.**
  - ‘small’ = humility of Bethlehem, David, Messiah
  - ‘old origins’ = like God
- 3a: [doom] **Israel will be abandoned,**
- 3b: [hope] **until salvation comes**
  - (see Micah 4:9-10)
- 4-5a: [hope] **from a ruler like Yahweh, who rules like Yahweh.**
  - ruler (king) = strong shepherd, majestic God, peace
  - rule (kingdom) = united, secure, global

**Big Idea**  
**in His time**  
**God promises to restore brokenness**  
**in us and our world**  
**through a Shepherd-King**  
**humble human - majestic divinity**  
**who is the source of peace**  
**united, secure, global**  
**everywhere and forever**



## Car mechanics are like prophets:

- **And our response matters!**
  - **Unbelief = stranded**
  - **Faith with opposite action = stranded**
  - **Faith with action = saved**

## God's King and Kingdom

- Already (partly) revealed
- Not yet (fully) revealed

Israel exiled (Micah)      Exiles return (Ezra, Nehemiah)      Christ's birth (Matthew/Luke)      (today)      Christ's 2<sup>nd</sup> coming....heaven (Revelation)

God's progressive revealing his King and Kingdom

-----already/not yet-----

607-586 BC

537 BC

0

10 Dec 2017

??

## Application

- **ABC's of Christmas**
  - **Admit** brokenness in us and our world
  - **Believe** God's promised Shepherd-King has come
  - **Commit** to faithfully follow Christ
- **Memorize (and live) Micah 6:8**
  - He has shown you, O mortal, what is good.  
And what does the Lord require of you?  
To act justly and to love mercy  
and to walk humbly with your God.

## Reflections

1. What parts of our world or situations in your life seemed doomed to you? Do you have hope change will come? If so, what is your hope?
2. Proverbs 13:12 Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life.
  - In what ways are your hopes in God not yet fulfilled?
  - In what ways have your hopes in God already been fulfilled?
  - How are fulfilled promises of hope (e.g. Christ's birth, God's past work in your life) like a 'tree of life'?
3. How does God's determined faithfulness to save his people, inspire you to live faithfully? What will faithful living look like for you in your current circumstances?

## O Little Town of Bethlehem

O little town of Bethlehem  
How still we see thee lie  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep  
The silent stars go by  
Yet in thy dark streets shineth  
The everlasting Light  
The hopes and fears of all the years  
Are met in thee tonight

## Lunch Discussion Questions

- 1. Imagine you are in a foreign country for December. What would you do to celebrate what is most meaningful about Christmas?**  
– *Invite those in US as foreigners to lead, OR those who have experienced displacement in December*
- 2. How do the cultural Christmas traditions that you practice help or hinder your focus on Christ?**
- 3. How could you modify your Christmas traditions to focus more on Christ?**