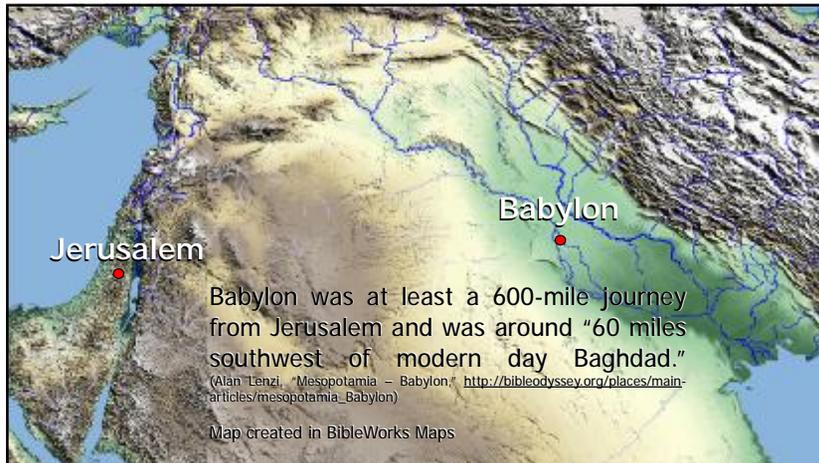


1

### Exile in the Bible and Today

- ˆ 587/6 BCE
  - ˆ Destruction of temple and Jerusalem and exile of many Judeans
  - ˆ 80% of Judah's cities and towns destroyed or abandoned
    - Daniel L. Smith-Christopher, *A Biblical Theology of Exile* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002), 47.
- ˆ How are biblical responses to exile relevant to our world today?
  - ˆ "70.8 million forcibly displaced people worldwide" in June 2019
    - The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/figures-at-a-glance.html>
  - ˆ Day of "Prayer for Humanity"

2



3

### Genesis 1:1-2:3 as a Response to Exile

- ˆ Likely written in the 6<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE as a response to Babylonian exile
- ˆ "the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep" (Gen 1:2 NRSV)
- ˆ God's world-creating word

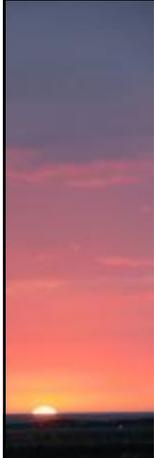
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ˆ Please read and ponder Gen 1:26-28 from the perspective of Jewish exiles in Babylon who have been uprooted from their homeland.

ˆ “God said, ‘Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness: and let them have dominion...’ God blessed them, and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion...’” (Gen 1:26, 28 NRSV).

5



### Historical Context of Gen 1:26-28

ˆ Brueggemann argues that the five verbs in Gen 1:28 counter the hopelessness of exile with a vision of God’s great purposes for human life:

- ˆ “be fruitful=no more barrenness
- ˆ multiply=no more lack of heirs
- ˆ fill the earth=no more being crowded out
- ˆ subdue=no more subservience
- ˆ have dominion=no more being dominated.”

- Walter Brueggemann, *The Vitality of Old Testament Traditions* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1975), 103-104.

6

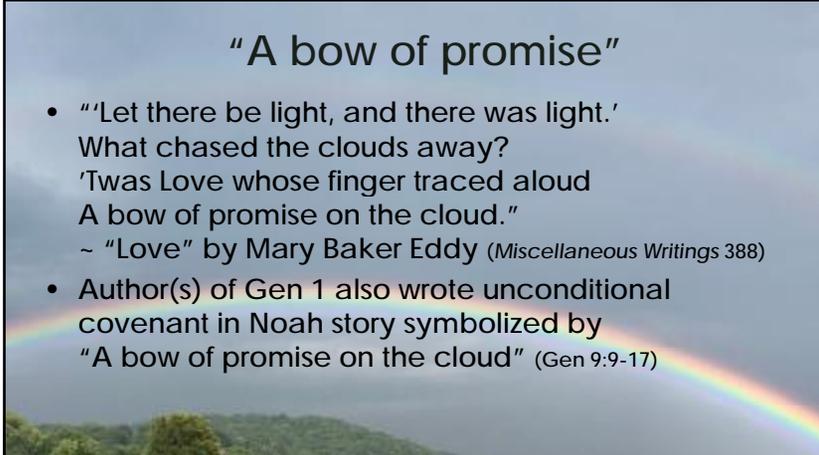


### Image of God

ˆ Mesopotamian texts describe the king as the image of a god to designate the king as “a special representative of the god or gods, possessing a divine mandate to rule” and divine power. - Phyllis A. Bird, “‘Male and Female He Created Them’: Gen 1:27b in the Context of the Priestly Account of Creation.” *Harvard Theological Review* 74.2 (1981): 143.

ˆ Not just the Davidic monarchy but all humans are created as “the kings and queens of God’s estate, his agents in charge of the world.” - Ralph Klein, *Israel in Exile* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 127.

7



### “A bow of promise”

- “‘Let there be light, and there was light.’ What chased the clouds away? ‘Twas Love whose finger traced aloud A bow of promise on the cloud.” ~ “Love” by Mary Baker Eddy (*Miscellaneous Writings* 388)
- Author(s) of Gen 1 also wrote unconditional covenant in Noah story symbolized by “A bow of promise on the cloud” (Gen 9:9-17)

8

## More Priestly Responses to Exile

- ˆ Sabbath
- ˆ Genealogies
- ˆ Torah ending on border of promised land



9

## Jeremiah's Pre-Exilic Message

- ˆ Repent from idolatry and injustice
  - ˆ People have forsaken God, "the fountain of living water," for "cracked cisterns that can hold no water" (Jer 2:13 NRSV)
  - ˆ Defending "the rights of the poor" = knowing God (Jer 22:16 CEB)
  - ˆ Only if people "treat each other justly" will God dwell in the temple (Jer 7:3-7 CEB).



10

## Hope in the Face of Exile

- ˆ From prison, buys field for family near Jerusalem
- ˆ "The LORD proclaims: When Babylon's seventy years are up, I will come and fulfill my gracious promise to bring you back to this place. I know the plans I have in mind for you, declares the LORD; they are plans for peace, not disaster, to give you a future filled with hope" (Jer 29:10-11 CEB).
- ˆ Urges exiles: bloom where you're planted (Jer 29)



11

## New Covenant

- ˆ After Jerusalem is destroyed, God promises a new covenant:
  - ˆ "I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, 'Know the LORD,' for they shall all know me..." (Jer 31:33-34 NRSV).



12

### Ezekiel & Jeremiah

- ˆ Shared Messages
  - ˆ Before exile: repent or destruction
  - ˆ After exile: God renews and restores
  - ˆ Ban proverb that "The parents have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge" (Ezek 18:2 NRSV).
- ˆ Different Locations
  - ˆ Jeremiah in Jerusalem
  - ˆ Ezekiel in Babylon (deported in 597)



13

### Ezekiel's Third Vision (Ezek 37)

- ˆ God breathing new life in the dry bones of exilic Judah
- ˆ Turned to for inspiration in the face of later crises
  - ˆ Scroll fragments including this vision were discovered at Masada
  - ˆ Text featured when exiting Yad Vashem (World Holocaust Remembrance Center in Jerusalem)

I WILL PUT MY SPIRIT INTO YOU AND YOU SHALL LIVE AGAIN; AND I WILL SET YOU UPON YOUR OWN SOIL ... (EZEKIEL 37)

14

What similarities and differences do you see between these visions?  
 How do these visions apply to our world today?

"water was flowing from below the threshold of the temple toward the east...everything will live where the river goes...On the banks, on both sides of the river, there will grow all kinds of trees for food. Their leaves will not wither nor their fruit fail, but they will bear fresh fruit every month, because the water for them flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for healing." (Ezekiel 47:1, 7, 9, 12 NRSV)

"Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city. On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations" (Revelation 22:1-4 NRSV).

15

### Timeline of Book of Isaiah (approximate BCE dates)

- Late 8<sup>th</sup> century Isaiah (1-39) prophesies in Jerusalem
- 587/6 Babylonian Exile begins
- 540s Second Isaiah (40-55) prophesies in Babylon
- 539 Persia conquers Babylon
- Late 6<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> century Third Isaiah (56-66) prophesies



16

### Comforting the Exiles

- ˆ Lamentations 1: Jerusalem has “none to comfort her. . . . she had no comforter” (Lam 1:2, 9 KJV).
- ˆ Second Isaiah's opening words: “Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God” (Isa 40:1 KJV). “A voice is crying out: “Clear the Lord's way in the desert! Make a level highway in the wilderness for our God!” (Isa 40:3 CEB).



17

### Second Isaiah's New Views of God

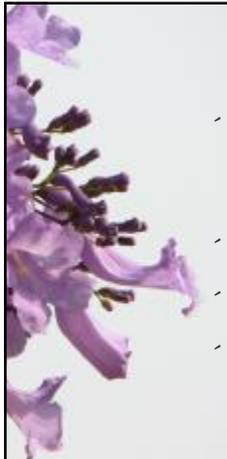
- ˆ Monotheism: “I am God, and there is no other” (Isa 45:22 NRSV)
- ˆ Motherhood: “Can a woman forget her nursing child, or show no compassion for the child of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you. See, I have inscribed you on the palms of my hands” (Isa 49:15-16 NRSV).



18

### Major Prophets' Messages

- ˆ Exile will end because God is sovereign and cares about exiles (II Isaiah & Jeremiah) or about God's holy name (Ezekiel)
- ˆ Babylon & its “gods” not sovereign
- ˆ Confront denial with message of destruction
- ˆ Confront hopelessness with message of hope



19

### Second Isaiah's Finale

“so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and succeed in the thing for which I sent it. For you shall go out in joy, and be led back in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall burst into song, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands” (Isa 55:11-12 NRSV).



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22

"Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior. . . you are precious in my sight, and honored, and I love you . . . Do not fear, for I am with you" (Isa 43:1-5 NRSV).

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