

# The Story

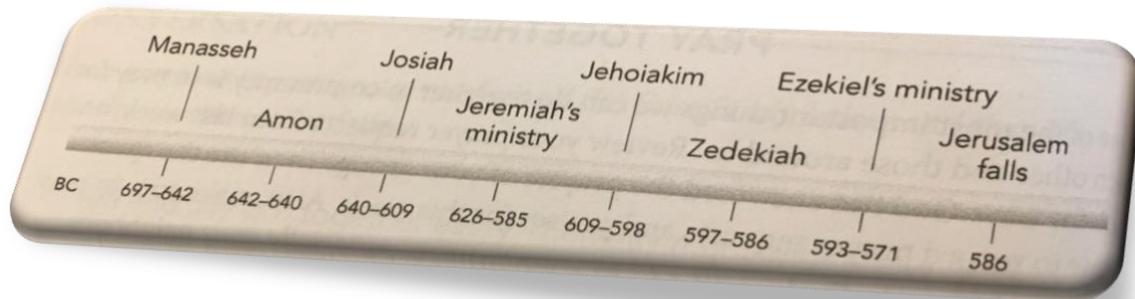
## Session 18: "The Kingdoms' Fall"

Buhler Mennonite Church Sanctuary (and BMC YouTube live-stream) – April 28, 2021

*"The LORD is good to those whose hope is in the him, to the one who seeks the LORD;  
it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD"*

LAMENTATIONS 3:25-26 (NIV)

### 1. Opening & Praying



2. **Review:** As we go through *The Story* together, we want to learn how to tell the story. Commit this "elevator speech" of the Story to memory.

**MOVEMENT 1:** *"In the UPPER STORY, God creates the LOWER STORY. God's vision is to come down and be with us in a beautiful garden. The first two people reject God's vision and are escorted from paradise. Their decision introduces sin into the human race and keeps us from community with God. At this moment God gives a promise and launches a plan to get us back. The rest of the Bible is God's story of how God kept that promise and made it possible for us to enter a loving relationship with God."*

**MOVEMENT 2:** *"God builds a brand-new nation called Israel. Through this nation, God will reveal his presence, power, and plan to get us back. Every story of Israel will point to the first coming of Jesus --the One who will provide the way back to God."*

**MOVEMENT 3:** *"Jesus left the UPPER STORY to come down into our LOWER STORY to be with us and to provide the way for us to be made right with God. Through faith in Christ's work on the cross, we can now overturn Adam's choice and have a personal relationship with God."*

**MOVEMENT 4:** *Everyone who comes into a relationship with God through faith in Christ belongs to the new community God is building called the church. The church is commissioned to be the presence of Christ in the LOWER STORY--telling his story by the way we live and the words we speak. Every story of the church points people to the second coming of Christ, when Christ will return to restore God's original vision."*

### 3. Introduction: WATCH THE SCRIPTURE VIDEO

*"Jeremiah had good reason to weep, but God has the remedy to wipe tears away!"*

- **Reflect on it/Talk About It:** Tell about a movie you saw or a book you read in which you neared the end and things seemed to be concluding all wrong. *How did things actually turn out?*

#### 4. Know the Story: Pop Quiz

- Which of the following is a good description of King Manasseh?
  - a. He shed so much innocent blood that he filled Jerusalem.
  - b. Manasseh sacrificed his own son in the fire, practiced divination, sought omens, and consulted mediums and spiritists.
  - c. He humbled himself and knew the the LORD is God.
  - d. All of the above.
  
- Who is described as the "weeping prophet"?
  - a. Ezekiel
  - b. Jeremiah
  - c. Josiah
  - d. Manasseh
  
- Why did Zedekiah ask for more inquiry from the LORD?
  - a. He was hoping for the LORD to perform wonders as in the past.
  - b. He was trying to determine the timing of their attack.
  - c. He wanted to know with certainty the plans the LORD had given him.
  - d. This was Zedekiah's normal practice prior to entering a battle.
  
- In one of Ezekiel's final prophesies, to what was he called to prophesy?
  - a. A broken spear.
  - b. A ruined temple.
  - c. A valley of dry bones.
  - d. An empty tomb.

#### 5. Understand the Story: Video with Randy Frazee

**Video Guide:** As you watch the video use the following outline to record anything that stands out to you.

- How Israel go to their "no remedy" moment:
  - \* *People would see how life in \_\_\_\_\_ works.*
  
- Jeremiah's assignment in God's UPPER STORY:
  - \* *The Story tells us King Manasseh did \_\_\_\_\_ evil.*
  
- Ezekiel and Jeremiah speak:
  - \* *"... when I am proved \_\_\_\_\_ through you before their eyes."*
  
- The bright spot in a dark time of history ... there is still hope!:
  - \* *He already has things in mind for you if you will \_\_\_\_\_ your life to the UPPER STORY of God.*
  
  - \* \_\_\_\_\_ *is faithfulness to God, not results.*

**6. Video Discussion/Journaling:** Write down your answers.

- What part of Randy's teaching encouraged or challenged you the most? Why? Did anything jump out, calling you to action? Did anyone have an "aha!" moment?
- What are common characteristics of the Kings of the Northern (Israel) and Southern (Judah) Kingdoms?

The BAD kings?:

The GOOD kings?:

With God's people there is never a strong, truthful bout of loving discipline without God's grace following right behind it. It was true for Judah.  
It is true for us.

- As you read/hear about the fall of Jerusalem and Judah's exile, provide a two or three-sentence summary for what happened to this nation.
- As with many of the people God calls (in the Bible and in the world today), Jeremiah had his list of excuses.  
*What are Jeremiah's excuses (Jeremiah 1)?*  
*What excuses do you use to try to get out of following God?*  
*How can we encourage each other to stop making excuses and boldly follow God's leading?*
- Respond to this statement: "*In God's employment contract God does not ask us to be successful (by the world's standards) but faithful. Success is based on faithfulness to God ... not results!*"

**7. Personal Reflection:**

Jeremiah knew that God had a plan for him, even when he was in his mother's womb. The apostle Paul assured all believers that God has prepared good works for each of us to do. In the coming week ask God to help you see God's plans for your life. If there is an action, commitment, or adventure that you have been resisting, surrender, and follow God!

*"For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."* EPHESIANS 2:10

**8. Personal Action:**

Hezekiah had children who were not faithful and so did Josiah. We see this pattern throughout THE STORY with some very godly leaders, including Eli and Samuel. Identify people in your own family system who have wandered from God. Pray for them. As appropriate, consider giving them a call, sending a note of encouragement, or spending time with them. Ask God to use you to extend Christ's message of Grace.

**9. Double Check Your Pop Quiz** [d/b/a/c]

**Video Notes Answer Key:** community / much / holy / align / Success

**10. Next Week:** Session 19: "Daniel in Exile" (Daniel 6:26-27).