

JESUS - THE CONSUMMATE BRIDEGROOM

Christ Prefigured in the OT

Introduction

- ▣ Scholars use the term “type-scene” to refer to narrative scenes that occur multiple times.
- ▣ **Robert Alter:** “The type-scene is not merely a way of formally recognizing a particular kind of narrative moment; it is also a means of attaching that moment to a larger pattern of historical and theological meaning.” (60).

Old Testament Betrothal Stories

- ***Isaac & Rebekah (Genesis 24)***



51.9 miles from Beersheba to Bethel, 402.85 miles from Bethel to Haran.
Total Distance 454.75 miles according to Google maps.



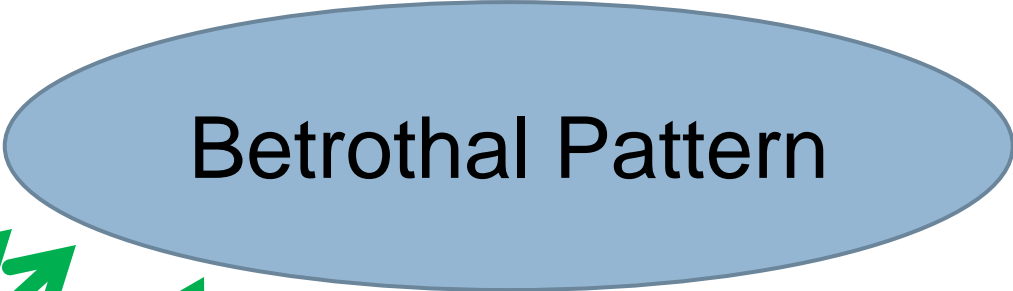
Old Testament Betrothal Stories

□ *Features of the betrothal story*

- **Travel:** The protagonist (leading character of the story) or a representative travels to a foreign country.
- **Woman at well:** He encounters a woman at a well.
- **Water:** Either the man or woman draws water from the well.
- **Report:** The girl rushes home to bring news of the stranger's arrival (look for words like "run" or "hurry").
- **Hospitality:** The stranger is invited to the girl's home and shown hospitality (often a meal accompanies the scene).
- **Betrothal:** A betrothal and marriage immediately follows.

Old Testament Betrothal Stories

- ***Jacob & Rachel (Genesis 29:1-20)***
- ***Moses & Zipporah (Exodus 2:15-22)***
- ***Ruth & Boaz (Ruth 1-4)***



Isaac & Rebekah
Jacob & Rachel

Moses & Zepporah

Ruth & Boaz



2000 BC

1000 BC

0

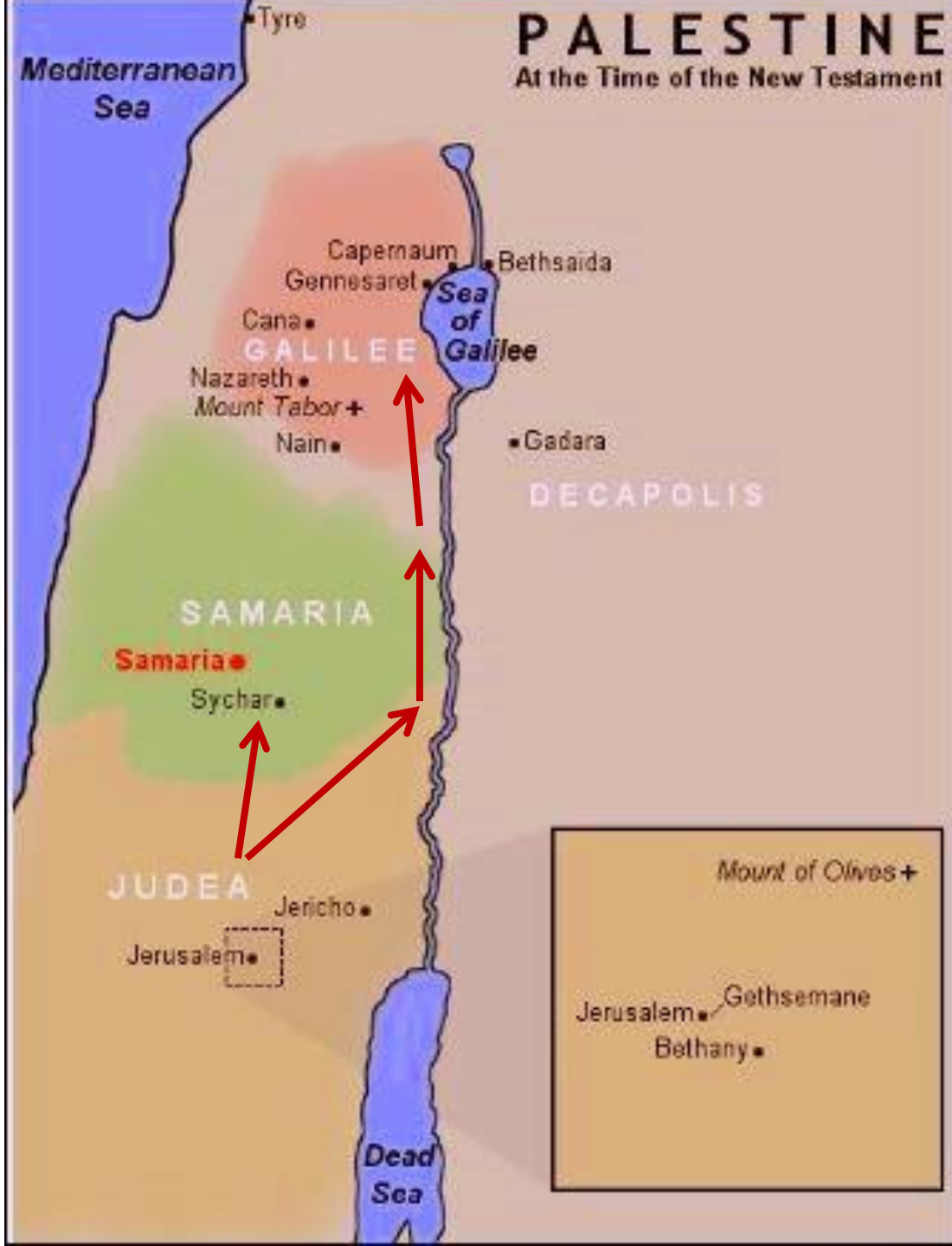
Jesus and the Samaritan Woman

□ *Betrothal Features (John 4)*

- **Travel:** Jesus, the protagonist, is on a journey from Judea to Galilee and instead of skirting Samaria, as most Jews would do, he determines to pass through this foreign land. He is on a mission.

PALESTINE

At the Time of the New Testament



Jesus and the Samaritan Woman

□ *Betrothal Features (John 4)*

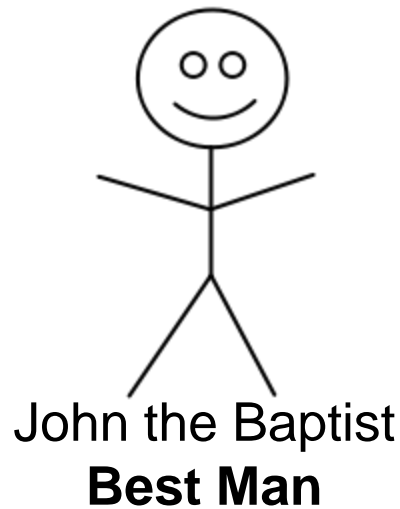
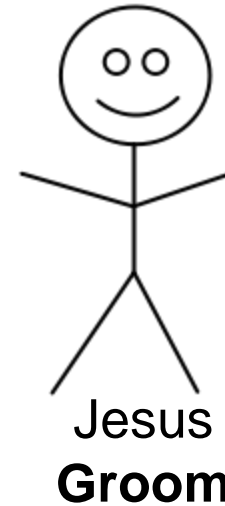
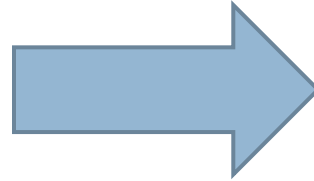
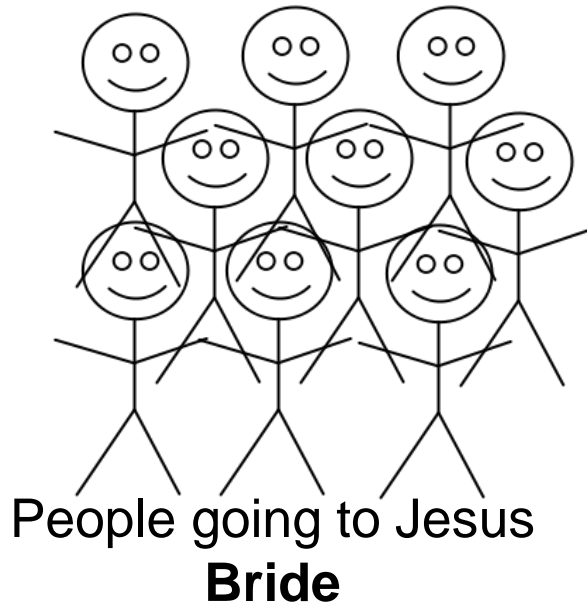
- **Woman at well:** He sits down by a well being tired from his journey and a woman of Samaria comes to the well to draw water.
- **Water:** Jesus asks for a drink and then offers the woman a superior drink.
- **Report:** After a short conversation, the woman leaves Jesus, goes into the city and tells the men what has just happened.
- **Hospitality:** The Samaritans come out and invite Jesus and his disciples to stay with them, showing them hospitality. For two days, the city hosts Jesus and his disciples.
- **Betrothal:** Everything in the story is shouting “betrothal”. It all leads up to a betrothal and yet none apparently follows. Instead, what is offered to the woman at the well is also offered to the whole city. What is going on?

Jesus and the Samaritan Woman

□ **Context**

- Is Jesus self-consciously portraying himself as a bridegroom and is John, the author, seeking to highlight this? I believe that a look at the paragraph immediately preceding the story of Jesus and the woman at the well will answer this question plainly.
- **Question:** John, what do you think about your competition? Jesus is outperforming you. He is more popular than you. Everyone is going to him (John 3:26).
- **Answer:** It's the groom who gets the bride, not the best man. Therefore it is normal that the people should flock to Jesus because he is the groom. I, John the Baptist, am the friend or best man. It is my joy to bear witness to the union between bride and groom (John 3:29).

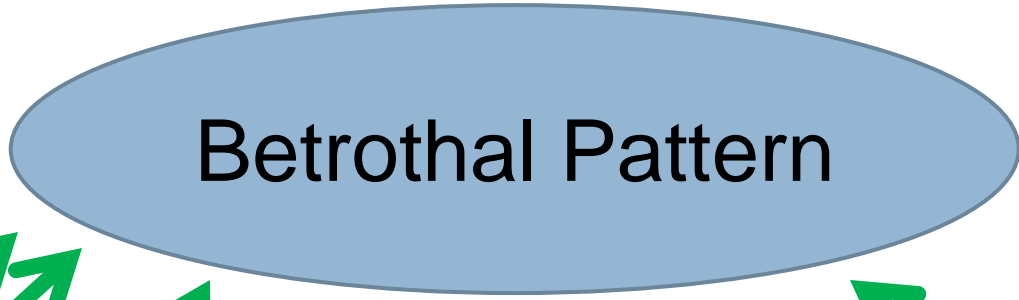
Not Competition but Celebration



Jesus and the Samaritan Woman

□ **Context**

- **Conclusion:** So just before a story that includes almost every feature of an OT betrothal story, John the Baptist clearly tells us that the reason people are flocking to Jesus is because he is the bridegroom receiving his bride.



Isaac & Rebekah
Jacob & Rachel

Moses & Zepporah

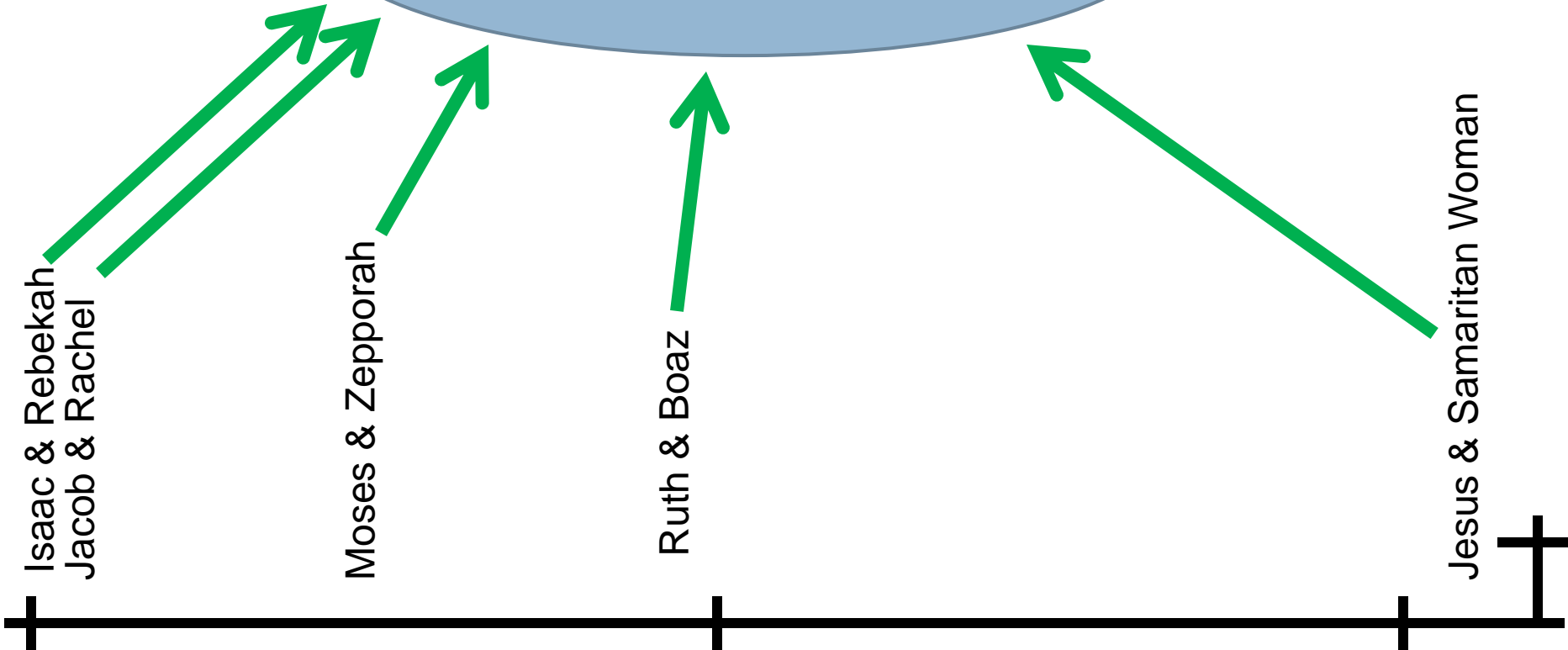
Ruth & Boaz

Jesus & Samaritan Woman

2000 BC

1000 BC

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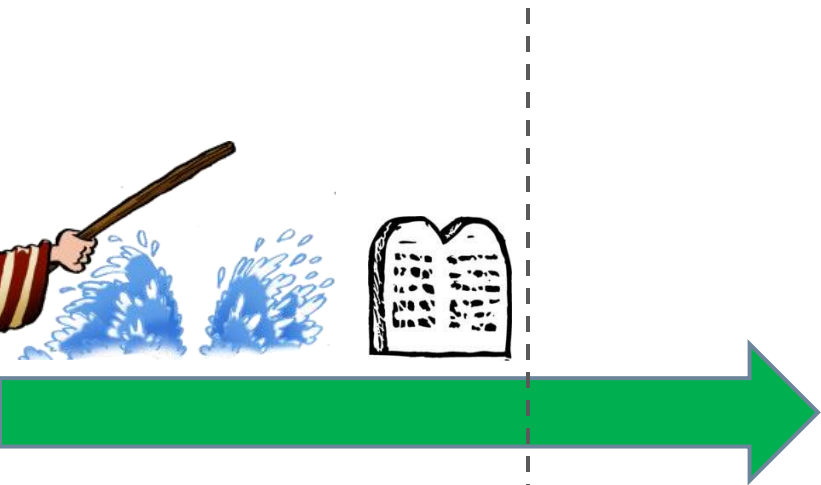


Jesus and the Samaritan Woman

- On what basis can Jesus claim to be the husband of his people? On the basis of the OT!

God as Husband in Jeremiah

- ***The Exodus & Sinai: The Betrothal & Marriage***
 - **Jeremiah 2:1-3** The LORD gave me another message. He said, ² "Go and shout in Jerusalem's streets: 'This is what the LORD says: I remember how eager you were to please me as a young bride long ago, how you loved me and followed me even through the barren wilderness. ³ In those days Israel was holy to the LORD, the first of my children. All who harmed my people were considered guilty, and disaster fell upon them. I, the LORD, have spoken!' "
 - The exodus out of Egypt is described as God wooing Israel, his bride, out into the wilderness and bringing her to Mt. Sinai where she enters into a marriage covenant with him (Ezek 16:8).



Betrothal &
Marriage



God as Husband in Jeremiah

- *Idolatry: Israel's adultery*
 - **Jeremiah 2:13-19** "My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water.

God as Husband in Jeremiah

□ *Idolatry: Israel's adultery*

- **Jeremiah 2:13-19** "Is Israel a servant, a slave by birth? Why then has he become plunder? ¹⁵ Lions have roared; they have growled at him. They have laid waste his land; his towns are burned and deserted. ¹⁶ Also, the men of Memphis and Tahpanhes have shaved the crown of your head. ¹⁷ Have you not brought this on yourselves by forsaking the LORD your God when he led you in the way?"

God as Husband in Jeremiah

□ *Idolatry: Israel's adultery*

□ **Jeremiah 2:13-19** "18 Now why go to Egypt to drink water from the Shihor (Nile)? And why go to Assyria to drink water from the River (Euphrates)? 19 Your wickedness will punish you; your backsliding will rebuke you. Consider then and realize how evil and bitter it is for you when you forsake the LORD your God and have no awe of me," declares the Lord, the LORD Almighty.

God as Husband in Jeremiah

□ *Idolatry: Israel's adultery*

- Almost as soon as they become husband and wife, Israel acts unfaithfully. This unfaithfulness becomes a pattern from which this bride cannot break free.
 - Note how water imagery is closely connected to the marriage relationship.
 - Water is basic to life and thus water speaks of life. To have water is to have your most basic needs met. To have our thirst quenched is to be refreshed, satisfied, fulfilled at the most basic level.

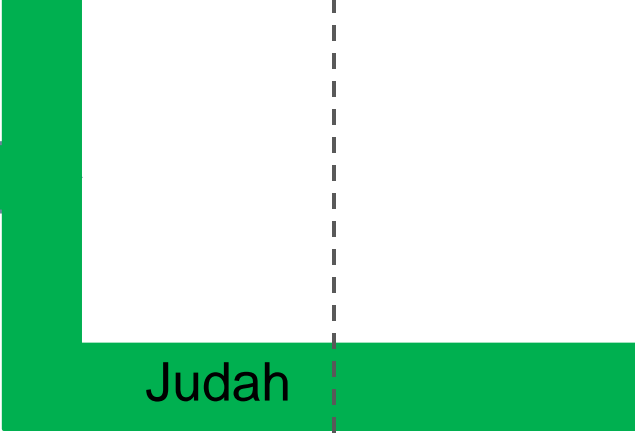




God as Husband in Jeremiah

□ *Idolatry: Israel's adultery*

- **Jeremiah 2:31-32** "You of this generation, consider the word of the LORD: "Have I been a desert to Israel or a land of great darkness? Why do my people say, 'We are free to roam; we will come to you no more'? ³² Does a maiden forget her jewelry, a bride her wedding ornaments? Yet my people have forgotten me, days without number.



Betrothal & Marriage

Adultery



God as Husband in Jeremiah

□ *The exile: Israel's divorce*

- **Jeremiah 3:6-8** During the reign of King Josiah, the LORD said to me, "Have you seen what faithless Israel has done? She has gone up on every high hill and under every spreading tree and has committed adultery there. ⁷ I thought that after she had done all this she would return to me but she did not, and her unfaithful sister Judah saw it. ⁸ I gave faithless Israel her certificate of divorce and sent her away because of all her adulteries. Yet I saw that her unfaithful sister Judah had no fear; she also went out and committed adultery.
- God divorces his wife because of her continual acts of adultery. That is quite astonishing.



Betrothal & Marriage

Adultery

Divorce

Israel

Exile =
Divorce
722 BC

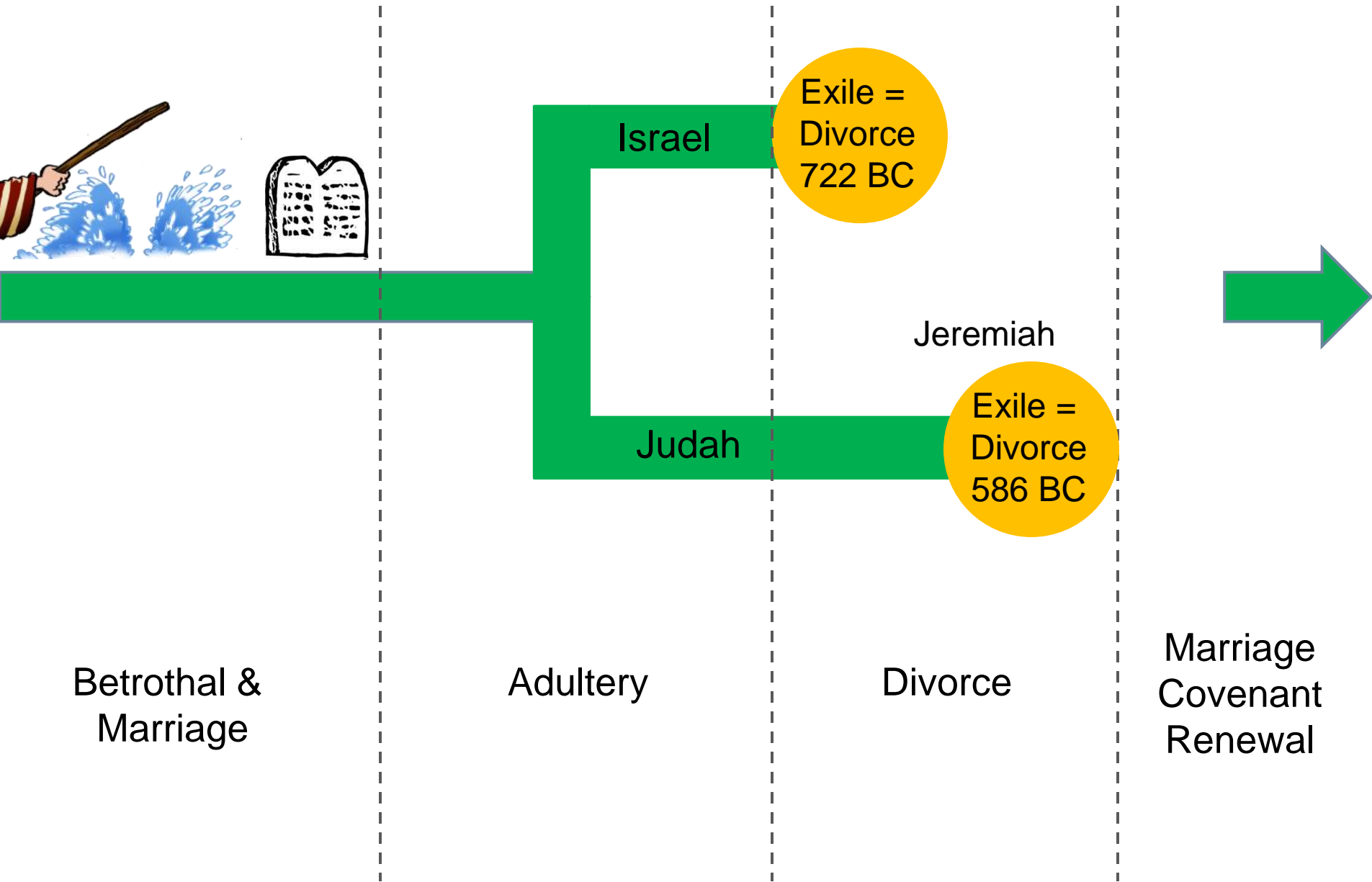
Jeremiah

Judah

Exile =
Divorce
586 BC

God as Husband in Jeremiah

- ***Call for Israel to return to her faithful husband***
 - **Jeremiah 3:14** "Return, faithless people," declares the LORD, "for I am your husband. I will choose you-- one from a town and two from a clan-- and bring you to Zion."
 - God has not given up on his wife. Even though he has sent her away, he will come after her and bring her back to himself.



Betrothal & Marriage

Adultery

Divorce

Marriage Covenant Renewal

Israel

Judah

Exile = Divorce 722 BC

Jeremiah

Exile = Divorce 586 BC

Significance and Application

- ***Jesus is the ultimate bridegroom who has travelled into a far country to secure for himself a bride.***
 - ▣ Jesus is identifying himself as the Yahweh of the OT who has come to renew a marriage covenant with his people. The God who has written a certificate of divorce is now calling his people back to himself.

Significance and Application

- ***We are not individually brides of Christ; We are collectively the bride of Christ.***

Significance and Application

- ***Jesus as bridegroom reminds us of the depth of personal relationship God is seeking with his people as well as the seriousness of betrayal.***
 - ▣ Jesus commits himself exclusively to his bride, the church. The church commits herself exclusively to Christ, her husband.
 - ▣ Scripture makes it clear that idolatry is a spiritual act of adultery in God's eyes. How can we define idolatry?
 - **Martin Luther:** "Whatever your heart clings to and relies upon, that is your God;"
 - **Tim Keller:** An idol is something you rely on instead of God for your salvation.
 - **Brian Rosner:** "A god is that which one loves, trusts and serves above all else."
 - ▣ Is Jesus Christ the one we love, trust, and serve above all else?

Significance and Application

- ***The marriage covenant relationship provides the only proper context in which human life can flourish.***
 - ▣ Only an exclusive lifelong commitment to love another person can lay a foundation which makes fulfilling, satisfying, and life-give intimacy possible.

Significance and Application

- ▣ **Edmund Clowney:** “It is not that God looks down from heaven to discern some human relationship that might prove to be a fitting symbol of His love. The reality is the other way around. When God formed Eve from the body of Adam, he was providing the means by which we might be prepared to understand the **joy of an exclusive love**. Only in that way could we be prepared to grasp something of the burning intensity of the divine love: love that bears no **rival**, because God is a personal God, and His love for His people is personal” (26).

Significance and Application

- **Do we have any rivals to Jesus Christ in our life?**
- **Do we understand the joy of an exclusive love?**