

Conquest to Monarchy

I. The Story So Far

II. Tribal Federation: Joshua to Judges

III. United Monarchy: Saul to Solomon

IV. God

V. Gospel

VI. People

VII. Mission

The Story So Far

■ Creation

- Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.” ... God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.” (Gen1:26-28)

■ Fall

■ The Promise to Abraham

- The LORD had said to Abram, “Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing.” (Gen12:1-2)
- “All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever. I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust, then your offspring could be counted.” (Gen13:15-16)

■ Egypt

- “But the Israelites were exceedingly fruitful; they multiplied greatly, increased in numbers and became so numerous that the land was filled with them.” (Ex 1:7)
- “So they ruthlessly made the people of Israel work as slaves.” (Ex 1:13)

■ Exodus

- “I have come to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians” (Ex 3:8)

■ Failure to Enter Under Moses

Big Motifs – Land, Leadership and Life

■ Land

- Promised to Abraham
- The journey back
- The commission to fully possess the Land
- From invasion to occupation to domination
- The promise of the Land is tied to obedience to the covenant (Deut 28-29). Obedience → blessing, but disobedience → curse

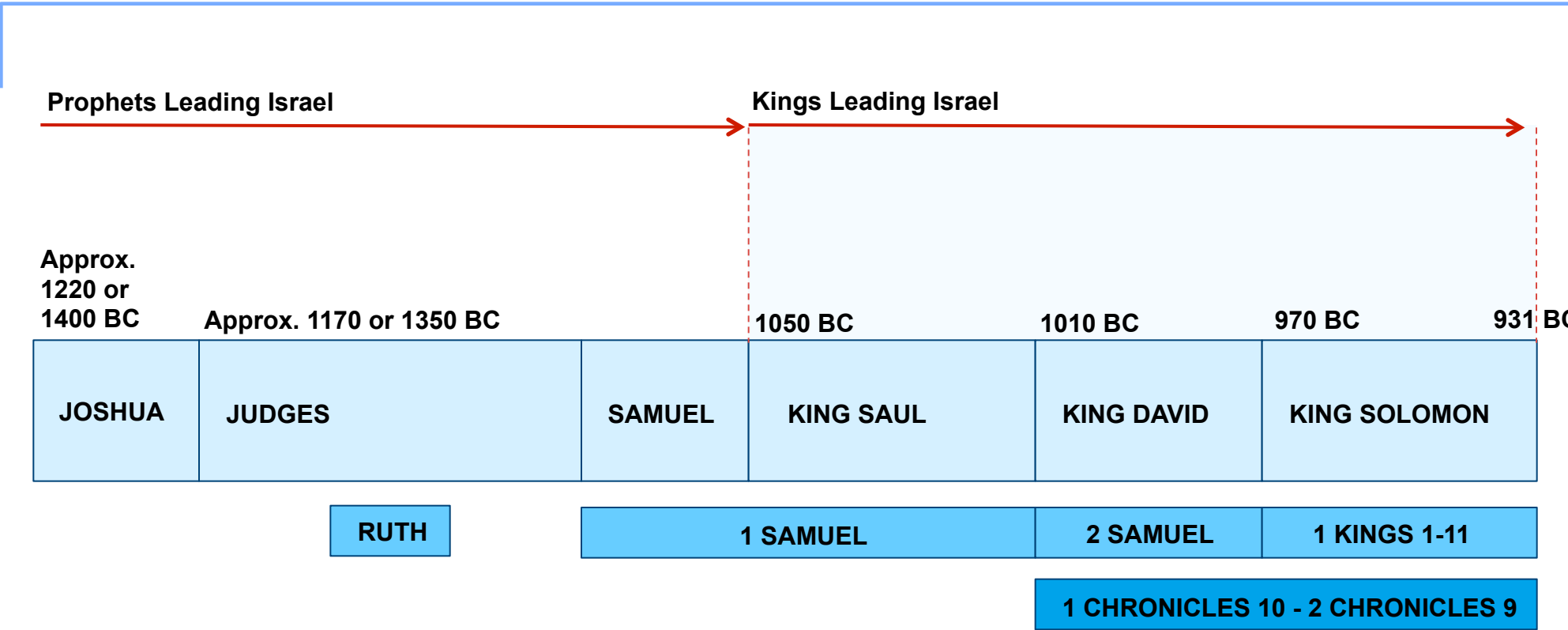
■ Leadership

- “Moses is dead”
- The absence of leadership causes chaos in Judges
- The people ask for a king, and Samuel institutes the monarchy
- Saul, David Solomon
- The developing expectation for an ideal, future king

■ Life

- Meaning (e.g. Ecclesiastes)
- Suffering (e.g. Job)
- Sex (e.g. Song of Songs)
- Worship (e.g. Psalms)
- Daily Life (e.g. Proverbs)

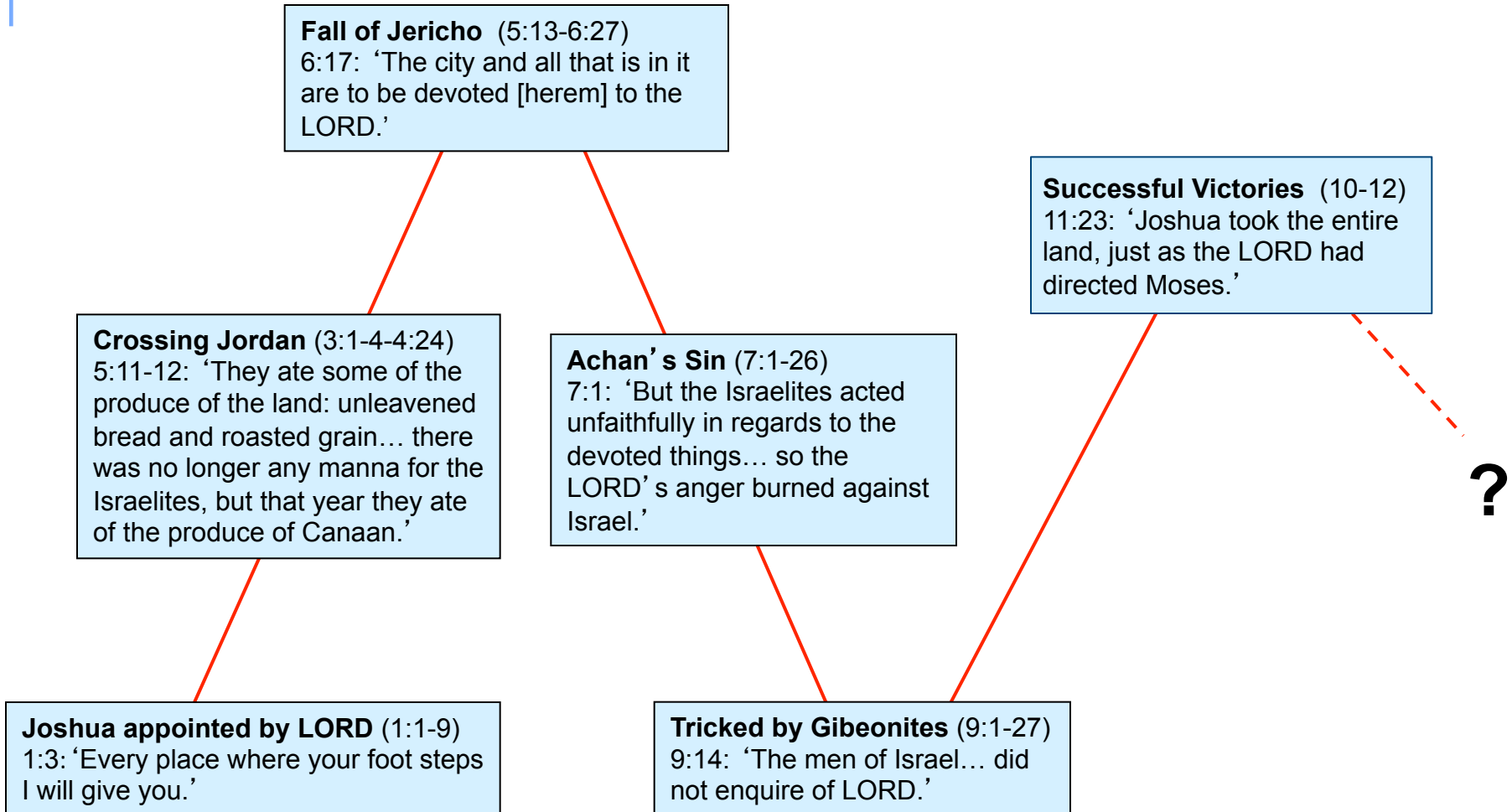
Timeline



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The Conquest of Canaan: Progress and Setbacks in Joshua



Was the Conquest of Canaan Total or Partial?

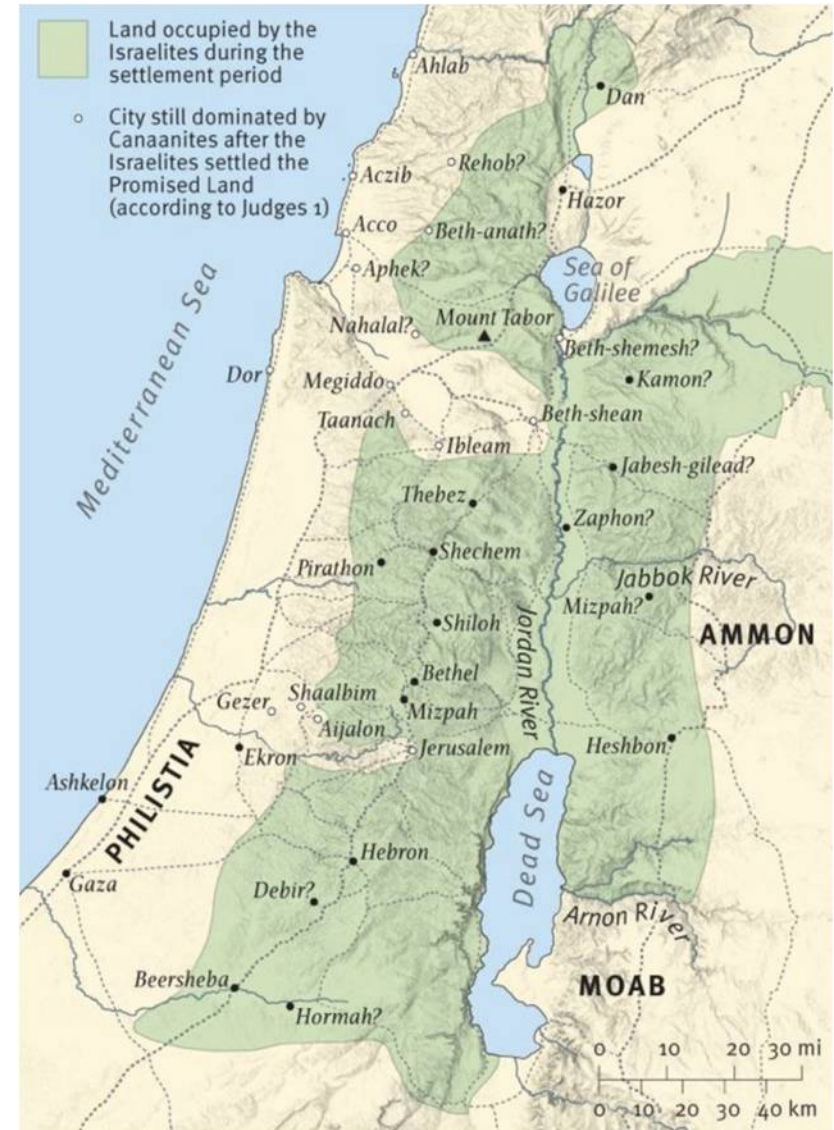
Indications of Total Victory

- “So Joshua took the entire land, just as the LORD had directed Moses, and he gave it as an inheritance to Israel according to their tribal divisions.” (11:23)
- Northern Victory: “So Joshua took this entire land: the hill country, all the Negev, the whole region of Goshen, the western foothills, the Arabah and the mountains of Israel with their foothills, from Mount Halak, which rises towards Seir, to Baal Gad in the Valley of Lebanon below Mount Hermon.” (11:16; cf. 10:40)
- “So the LORD gave Israel all the land he had sworn to give their forefathers, and they took possession of it and settled there. The LORD gave them rest on every side, just as he had sworn to their forefathers. Not one of their enemies withstood them; the LORD handed all their enemies over to them. Not one of all the LORD's good promises to the house of Israel failed; every one was fulfilled.” (21:43-45; cf. 23:14)

Indications of Partial Victory

- “When Joshua was old and well advanced in years, the LORD said to him, ‘You are very old, and there are still very large areas of land to be taken over.’ ” (13:1; see 2-7 for details)
- Many tribes fail to take their allotted land (13:13; 15:63; etc) or drive out other peoples, putting them to work instead. “They did not dislodge the Canaanites living in Gezer; to this day the Canaanites live among the people of Ephraim but are required to do forced labour.” (16:10)
- Chapters 13-19 are allocating land, rather than describing land being taken (cf. 18:3)
- Joshua ends with clear indications of other nations in the land. “The LORD your God himself will drive them out of your way. He will push them out before you, and you will take possession of their land, as the LORD your God promised you.” (23:5; cf. v7)
- Judges begins in this sort of context (Jdg 2:21)

The Land Allocated ... But Not Fully Possessed



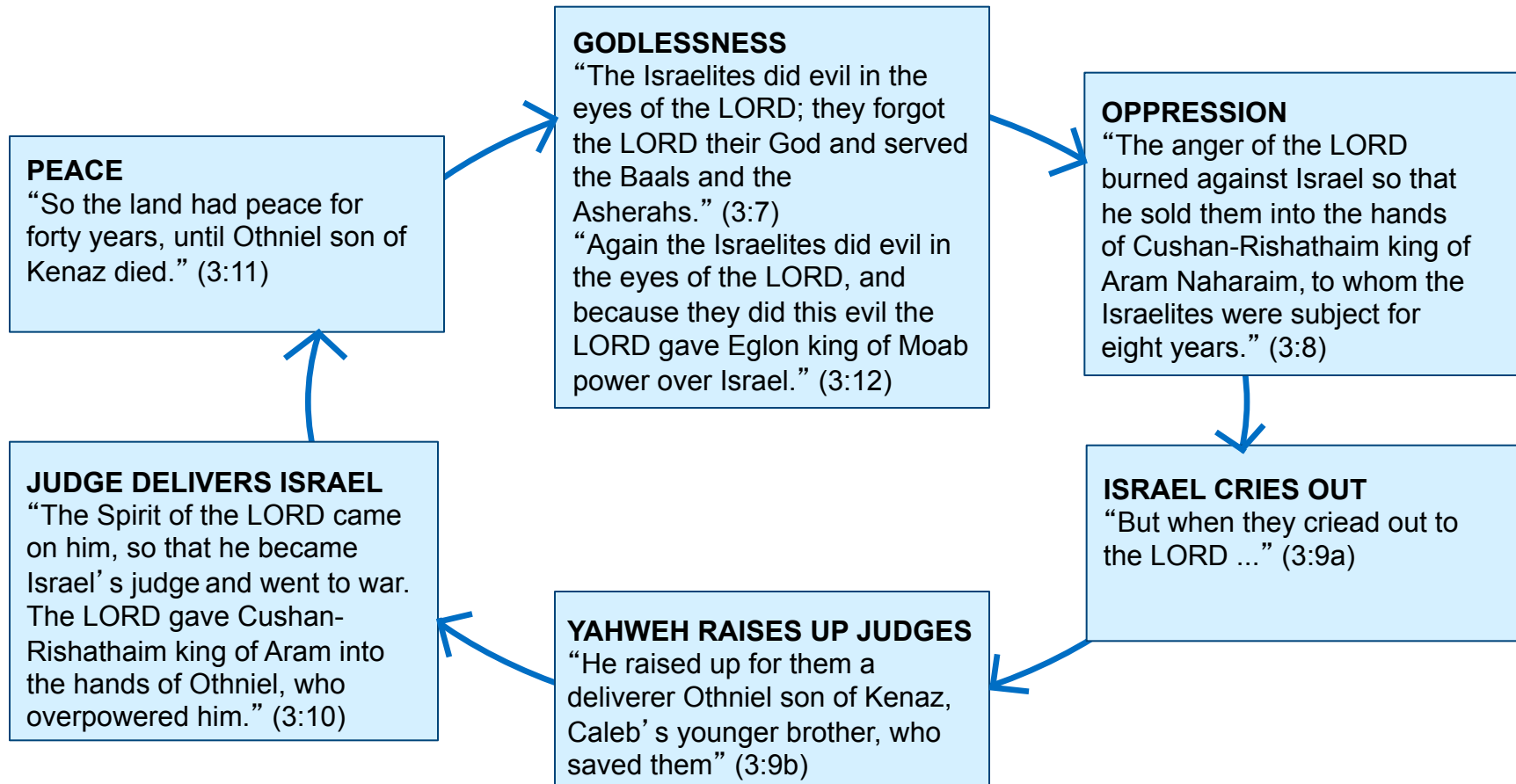
Holy War? Ethnic Cleansing?

- In Deuteronomy, God commands Israel to “destroy...totally’ ”(7:2) the nations already in the promised land. They are to “not leave alive anything that breathes” (20:16) and “completely destroy them” (20:17). This is the Hebrew verb *haram*, which “refers to the irrevocable giving over of things or persons to the Lord, often by totally destroying them” (NIV footnote)
 - This raises the uncomfortable concept of *haram* warfare – a Judeo-Christian version of Islamic Jihad – in which no one associated with the enemy is spared, not even non-combatants or PoWs
 - Joshua is recorded as carrying out this herem warfare as commanded. “They devoted the city to the LORD and destroyed with the sword every living thing in it - men and women, young and old, cattle, sheep and donkeys” (6:21). Or: “he left no survivors. He totally destroyed all who breathed, just as the LORD had commanded” (10:40)
- However, a strong case can be made for understanding statements about herem warfare as hyperbolic and rhetorical. Firstly, there is internal evidence – clues within Joshua and Judges that these statements are not to be taken ‘literally’
 - Joshua notes several specific places where Joshua exterminated everyone and left no survivors: Hebron (10:36-37), Debir (10:38), the hill country and the Negev and the western foothills (10:40)
 - Yet in Judges 1, we find that there are Canaanites in the Negev, in the hill country (1:9), in Debir (1:11), in Hebron (1:10) and in the western foothills (1:9), in such numbers that they had to be driven out by force
 - Consequently, “leaving no survivors” would apparently have been taken as hyperbole, like a rugby team saying “we massacred them”. Elsewhere, the language of “driving out” or “dispossessing” is used (e.g. Deut 33:27; Josh 3:10)
- There is also external evidence concerning the conquest of Canaan, all of which indicates a gradualist entry into the Land rather than the complete destruction of the existing tribes. Comparisons with other Ancient Near Eastern texts indicate that the rhetorical hyperbole of Joshua is paralleled in contemporary literature – that was simply how battles were described
- So, since Joshua is said to have done “just as the LORD had commanded” (10:40), we should also understand God’s *herem* command in the same way, rather than as a command to execute every human being Israel found
 - “The best one can conclude from the accounts of “killing everyone that breathed” is that Israel scored a decisive victory, and once you recognize the presence of hyperbole it is not even clear how decisive the victories were” (Copan, Thomas & Evans, *Holy War in the Bible*)

The Setting of Judges

- Despite ongoing attempts, Israel fails to consolidate all the initial victories of Joshua and eventually settles for living together with other peoples and their gods. Why?
 - A lack of leadership, after the death of Joshua
 - Military difficulty: “The LORD was with the men of Judah. They took possession of the hill country, but they were unable to drive the people from the plains, because they had chariots fitted with iron” (Jdg 1:19)
 - Faithlessness: “You have disobeyed me ... Now therefore I tell you that I will not drive them out before you: they will be thorns in your side & their gods will be a snare to you” (2:1-3)
 - A test of obedience: “Because this nation has violated the covenant I ordained for their ancestors and has not listened to me, I will no longer drive out before them any of the nations Joshua left when he died. I will use them to test Israel and see whether they will keep the way of the LORD and walk in it as their ancestors did” (2:20-22)
- As such, we do not have a united Israelite nation living in an entirely Israelite land
 - Israel is in the Promised Land, but not in exclusive occupancy. The Canaanites, in particular, continue to live there
 - Furthermore, Israel is a loose federation of tribes, rather than a unified nation. There is no central government or leadership at all. The tribes are sometimes virtually independent, sometimes fighting each other and sometimes cooperating against common enemies
 - Jerusalem is still in enemy hands (in 1:8 it is attacked and burnt, but not occupied. By David's time it belongs to the Jebusites, and the corridor separating north from south becomes a fault line in Israel that breaks open later
- So judges are raised up by God, to provide leadership at specific times. These judges are more tribal heroes than national rulers, and they rescue Israel from outside threats
 - The period of Judges begins after the death of Joshua (1:1), and covers several generations after Joshua, lasting either c.120 or c.300 years (depending on the date of the exodus, and whether the judges are consecutive or sometimes simultaneous in different parts of the country)

The Downward Spiral

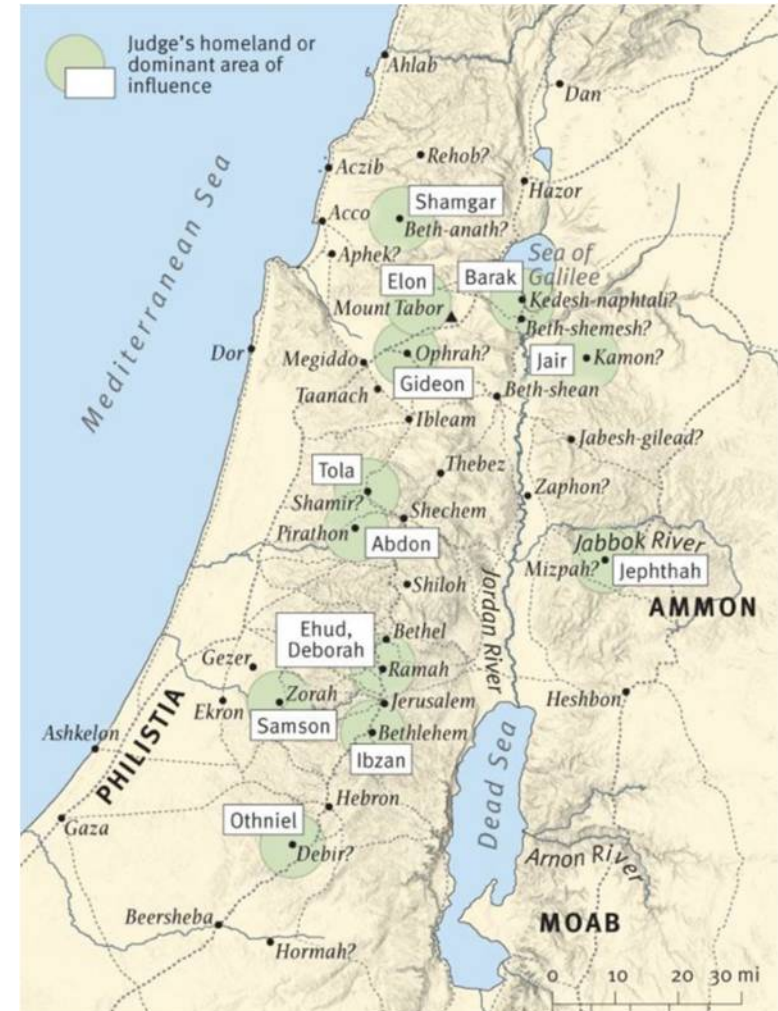


"But when the judge died, the people returned to ways even more corrupt than those of their ancestors, following other gods and serving and worshipping them. They refused to give up their evil practices and stubborn ways." (2:19)

"In those days Israel had no king; everyone did what was right in his own eyes." (17:6)

The Table of Judges

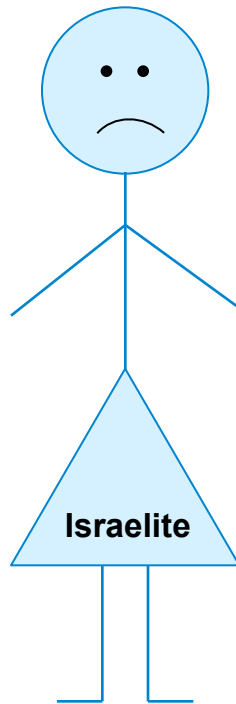
Judge	Bible Ref	Tribe	Enemy	Period of oppression	Period of rest
Othniel	3:7-11	Judah	Mesopotamians	8 years	40 years
Ehud	3:12-30	Benjamin	Moabites	18 years	80 years
Shamgar	3:31		Philistines		
Deborah	Chs. 4-5	Ephraim	Canaanites	20 years	40 years
Gideon	Chs. 6-8	Manasseh	Midianites	7 years	40 years
Tola	10:1-2	Issachar			23 years
Jair	10:3-5	Gilead-Manasseh			22 years
Jephthah	10:6 - 12:7	Gilead-Manasseh	Ammonites		24 years
Ibzan	12:8-10	Judah or Zebulun?			7 years
Elon	12:11-12	Zebulun			10 years
Abdon	12:13-15	Ephaim			8 years
Samson	Chs.13-16	Dan	Philistines	40 years	20 years



NB: Many of the episodes in Judges overlap each other, unfolding in different parts of the land

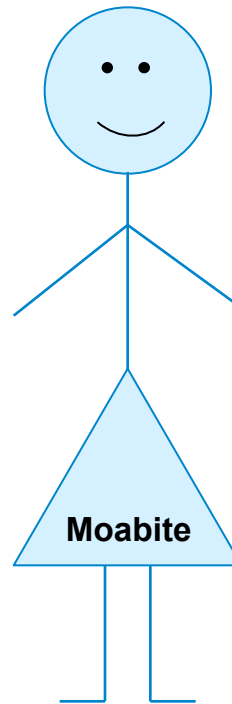
Ruth – A Story of Love and Redemption

“Blessed be the LORD, who has not left you this day without a redeemer!” (Ruth 4:14)



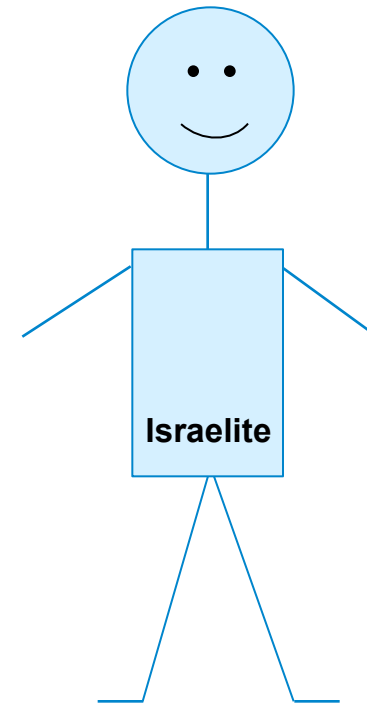
Naomi

“Don’t call me Naomi,” she told them. “Call me bitter, because the Almighty has made my life very bitter.” (1:20)



Ruth

But Ruth replied, “Don’t urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God.” (1:16)



Boaz

“Boaz the father of Obed, Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David.” (4:21-22)

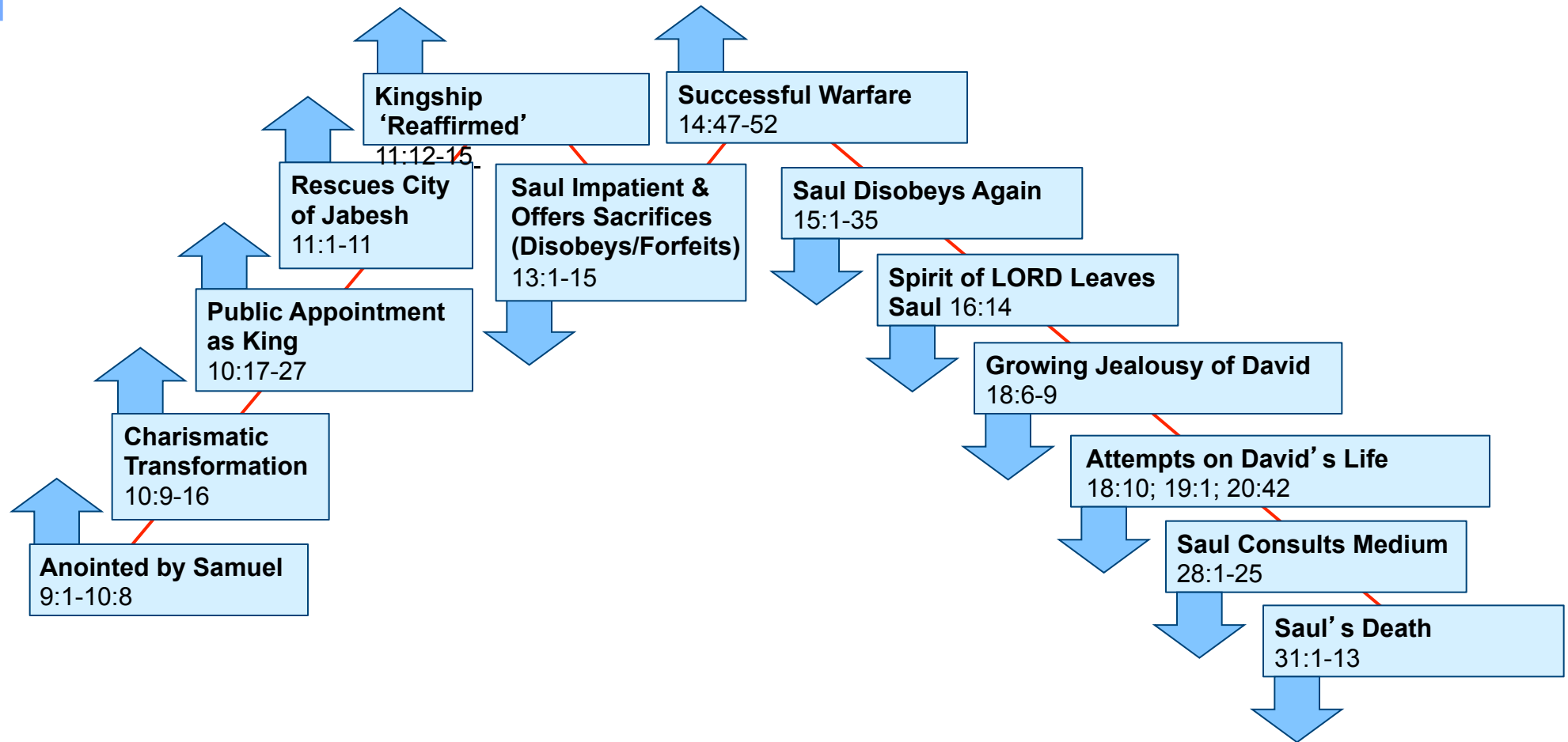
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Israel Demands a King (1 Samuel 8)

- Previous leadership in Israel had been of various kinds. Patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob) → theocracy via Moses → Joshua the prophet → tribal elders locally → military judges regionally or nationally → Eli the priest → Samuel the prophet (who travels on a “judging circuit”)
 - In other nations, kings range from local rulers of small towns or city-states (e.g. the king of Salem, the king of Sodom, etc, in Gen 14), to national rulers (e.g. Sihon, king of the Amorites in Num 24), to empire rulers (e.g. Pharaoh in Gen 40)
- God knew that Israel would demand a king, and gave regulations for what to do when they did (Deut 17:14-20)
 - v15 He cannot be a non-Israelite
 - v16 He cannot amass military power (horses, esp. from Egypt)
 - v17a He cannot have many wives, since they will lead his heart astray
 - v17b He cannot amass great wealth (gold, silver, etc)
 - v18,19 He must not depart from God’s law
 - v20 He must not become proud
 - v20 If he rules like this, according to the law, he and his descendants will reign a long time
- God sees their demand for a king both positively and negatively
 - They want strong and godly leadership (8:4-5a, 20b), which in principle is good ...
 - ... but they also want to be like other nations (8:5b, 20a), which is not so good
 - God regards them as rejecting the LORD, rejecting Samuel, and choosing their own king (8:7; 12:17-19)
 - Yet at the same time, he identifies Saul as the man he has chosen (9:16-17; 10:1, 24)

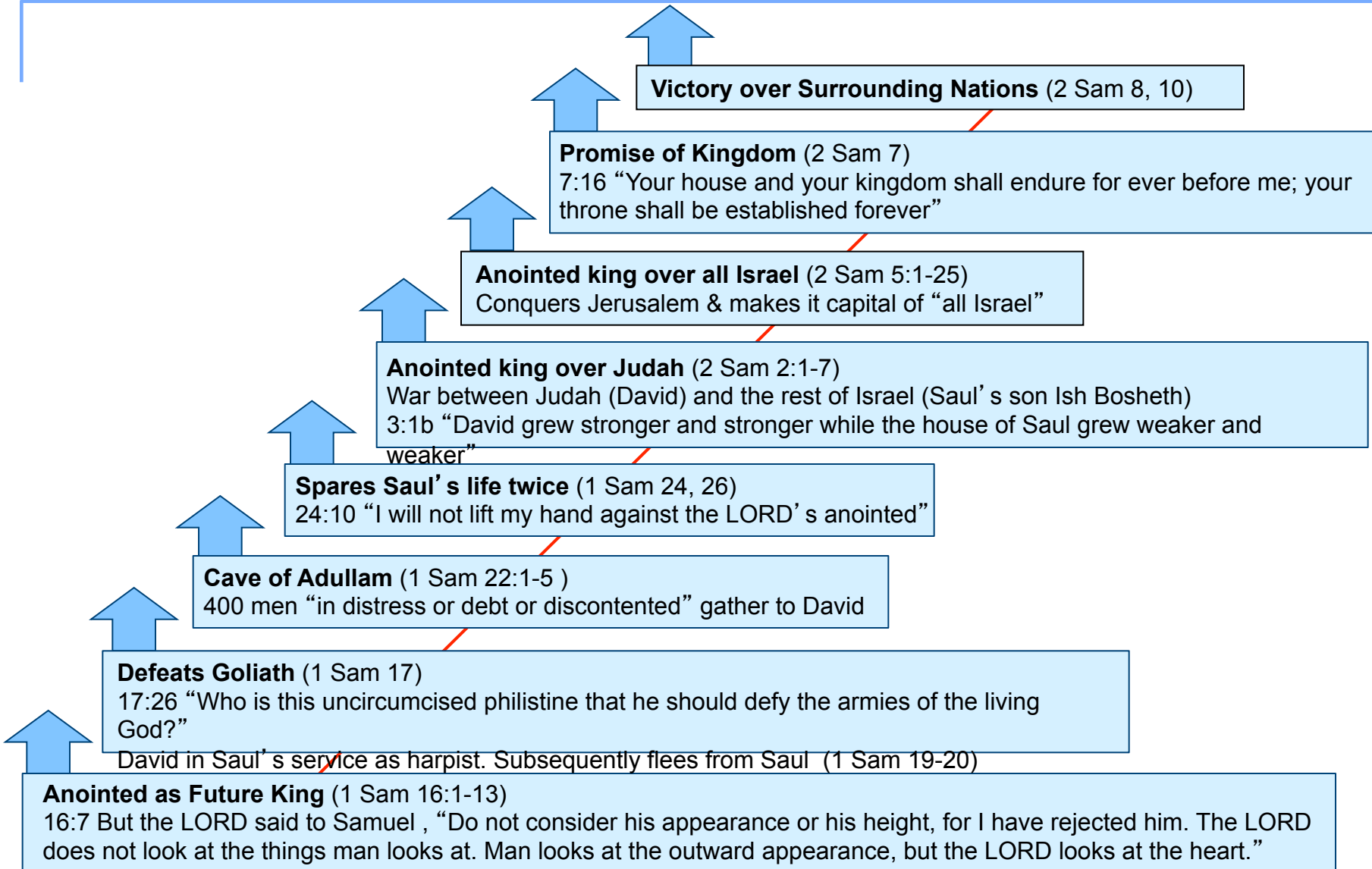
The Rise and Fall of King Saul (1 Samuel 9-31)



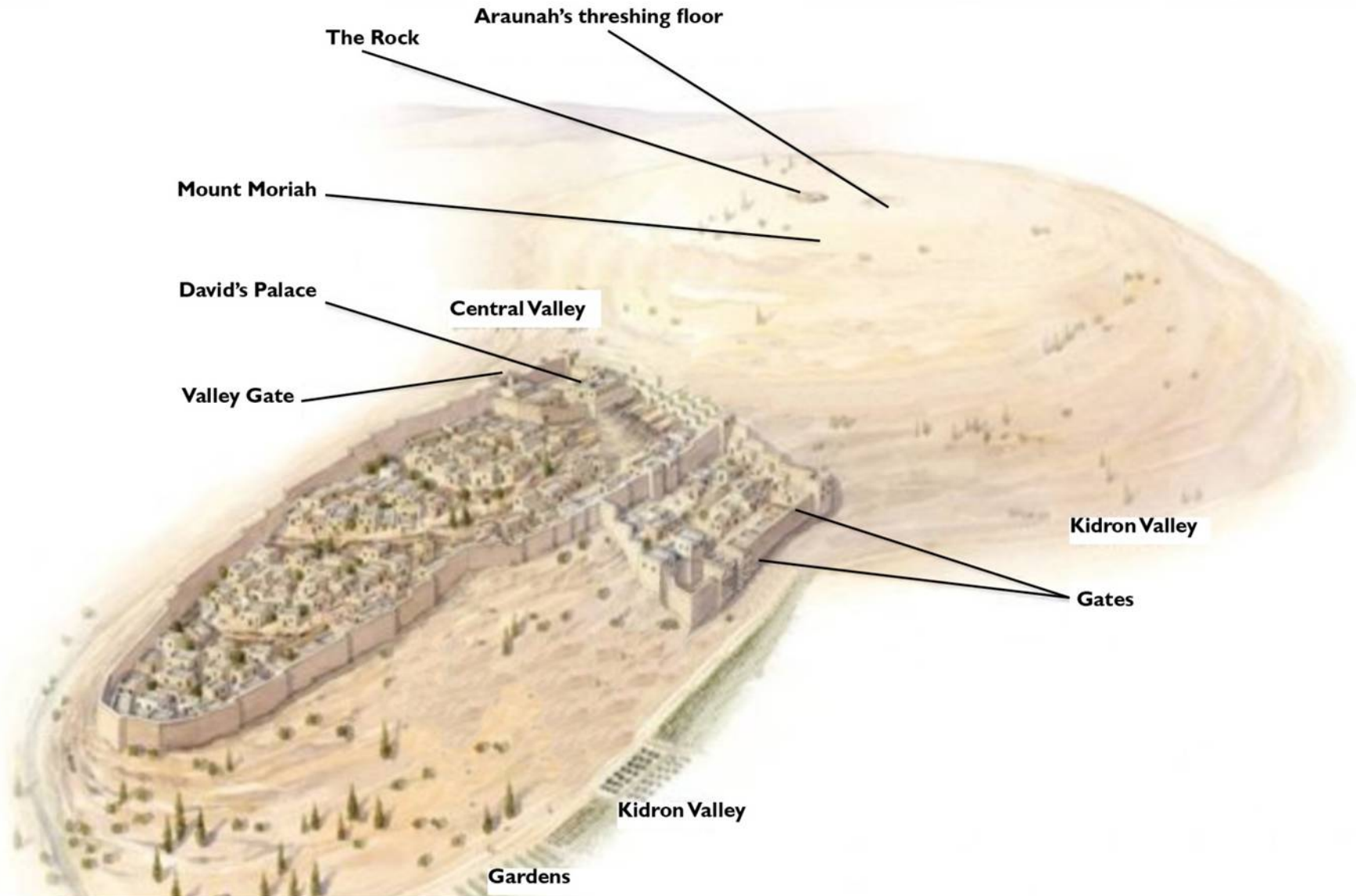
Obedience is Better than Sacrifice

- In chapters 8-12 Samuel has appointed and re-confirmed Saul as King over Israel. Samuel is not in favour of a king but appoints Saul in response to God's instruction. This section ends with Samuel's abdication speech, and the warning in 12:25: "Yet if you persist in doing evil, both you and your king will be swept away"
 - In chapters 13-16 Saul is rejected as King and David chosen in his place. Two incidents are key to Saul's forfeiture of the kingship
 - In 13:1-15, impatient Saul offers burnt offerings (*olah*) and fellowship offerings (*shelem*) instead of waiting for Samuel. V14: "But now your kingdom will not endure; the LORD has sought out a man after his own heart and appointed him ruler of his people, because you have not kept the LORD's command"
 - In 15:1-35, greedy Saul keeps the best of the *herem* instead of destroying them as instructed. v23b: "Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, he has rejected you as king"
 - Thus, Saul will be replaced by David. "The LORD has sought out a man after his own heart and appointed him ruler" (13:14)
 - In 16:1-13, David is chosen by the LORD, despite being the youngest and least significant of the sons of Jesse. Samuel is clear that "the LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart" (16:7)
 - David goes on to become the archetypal king of Israel, despite sinning in seemingly worse ways than Saul. 16:13-14 formalise this switch of kingship, although for several years there is an overlap of kingdoms, with Saul still reigning and actively persecuting David.
- QUESTIONS:**
- Why is God so displeased with Saul in these incidents? What evidence is there that Saul's heart is far from God?
 - Why does God favour David over Saul despite his 'worse sins' later?
 - How does chapter 13 help us correctly understand the nature of sacrifices and offerings under the Old Covenant?
 - What about Christ's sacrifice in the New Covenant? What about evidence of true salvation in the New Covenant?
 - How might the concept of overlapping kingdoms feature in both our understanding of Jesus' life and our life in "the present evil age" (Gal 1:4)?

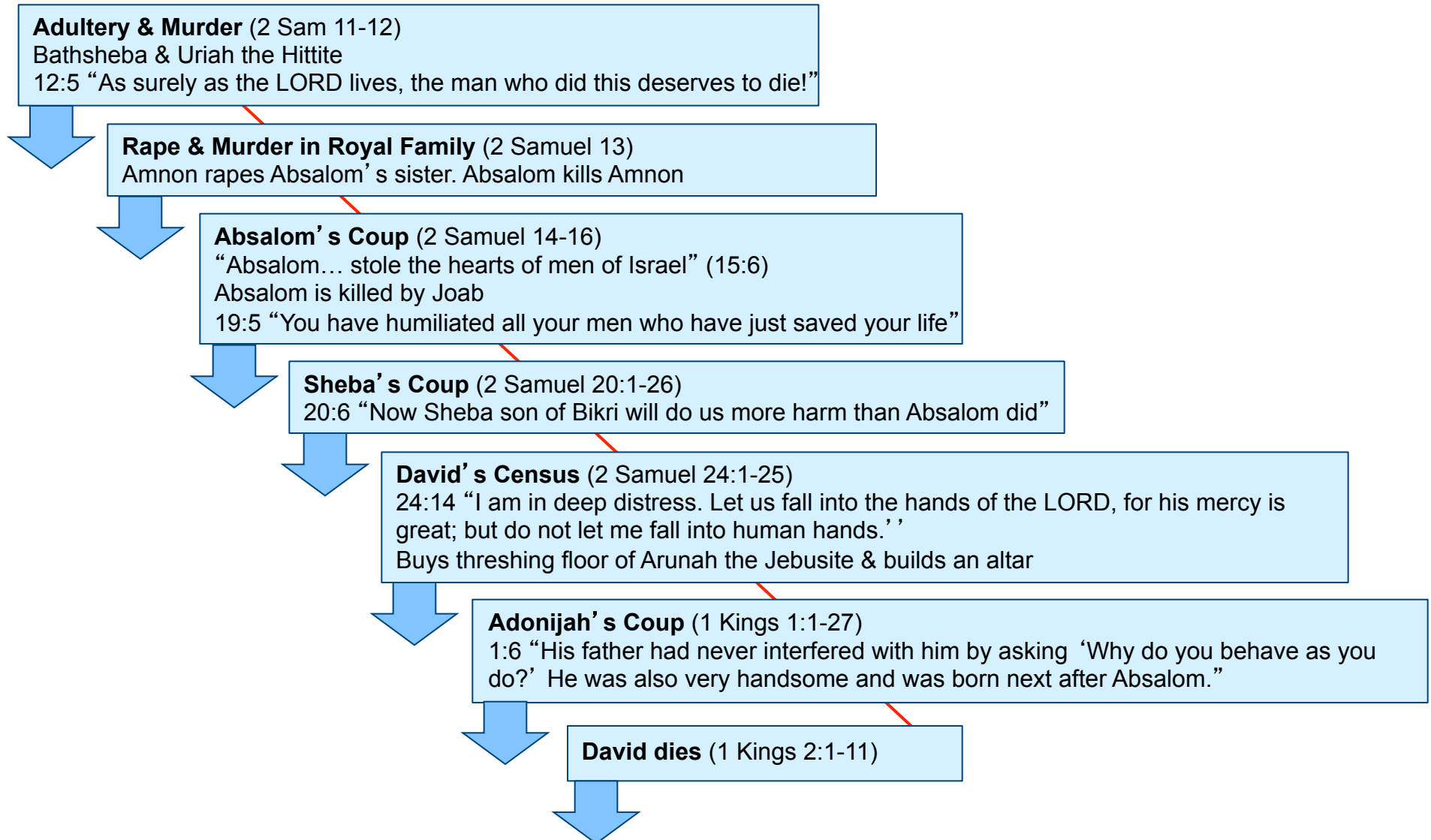
King David: Successes and Victories (1 Samuel 16 – 2 Samuel 10)



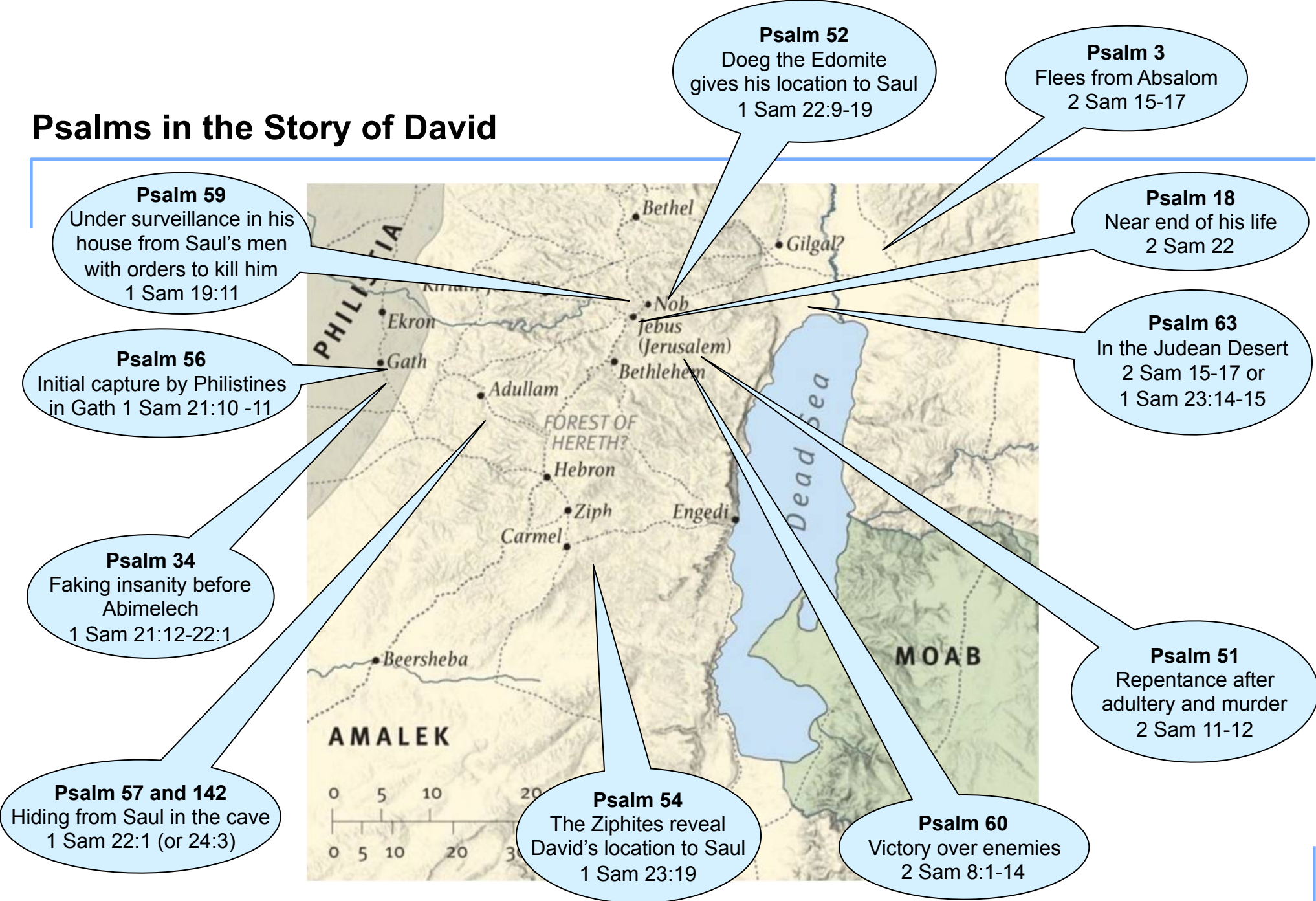
Jerusalem in the Time of David (c.1010–970 BC)



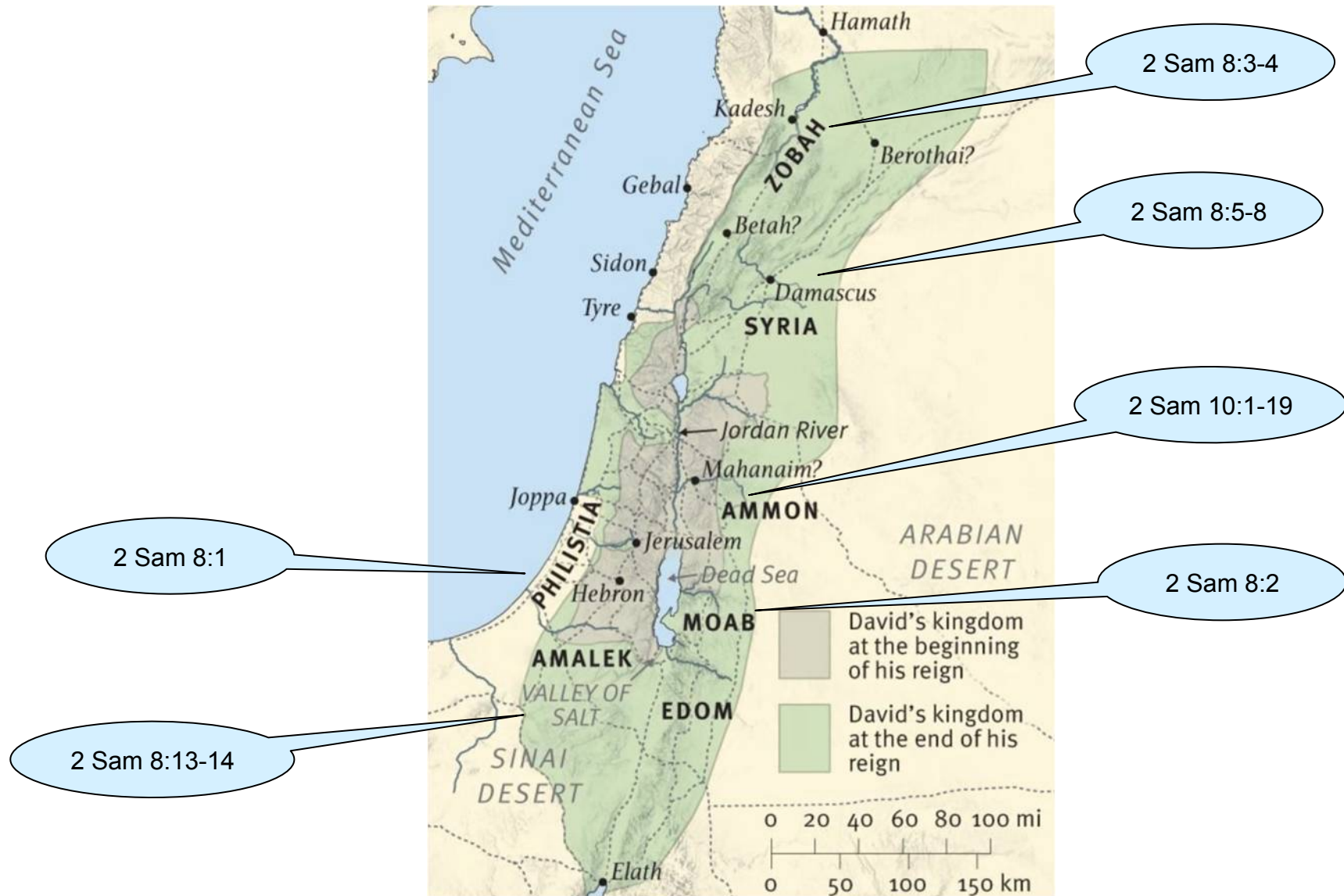
King David: Problems and Failures (2 Samuel 11 – 1 Kings 2)



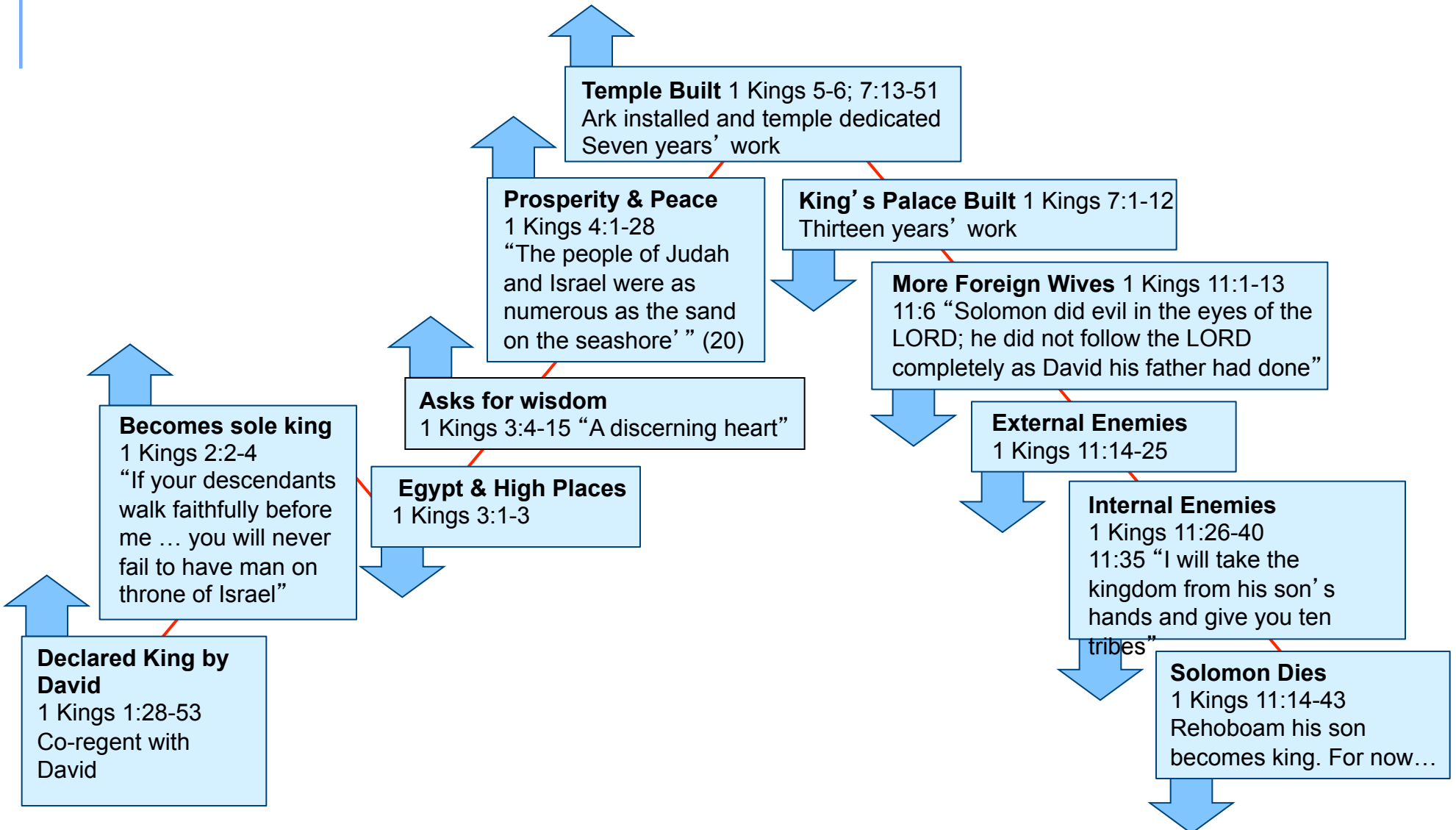
Psalms in the Story of David



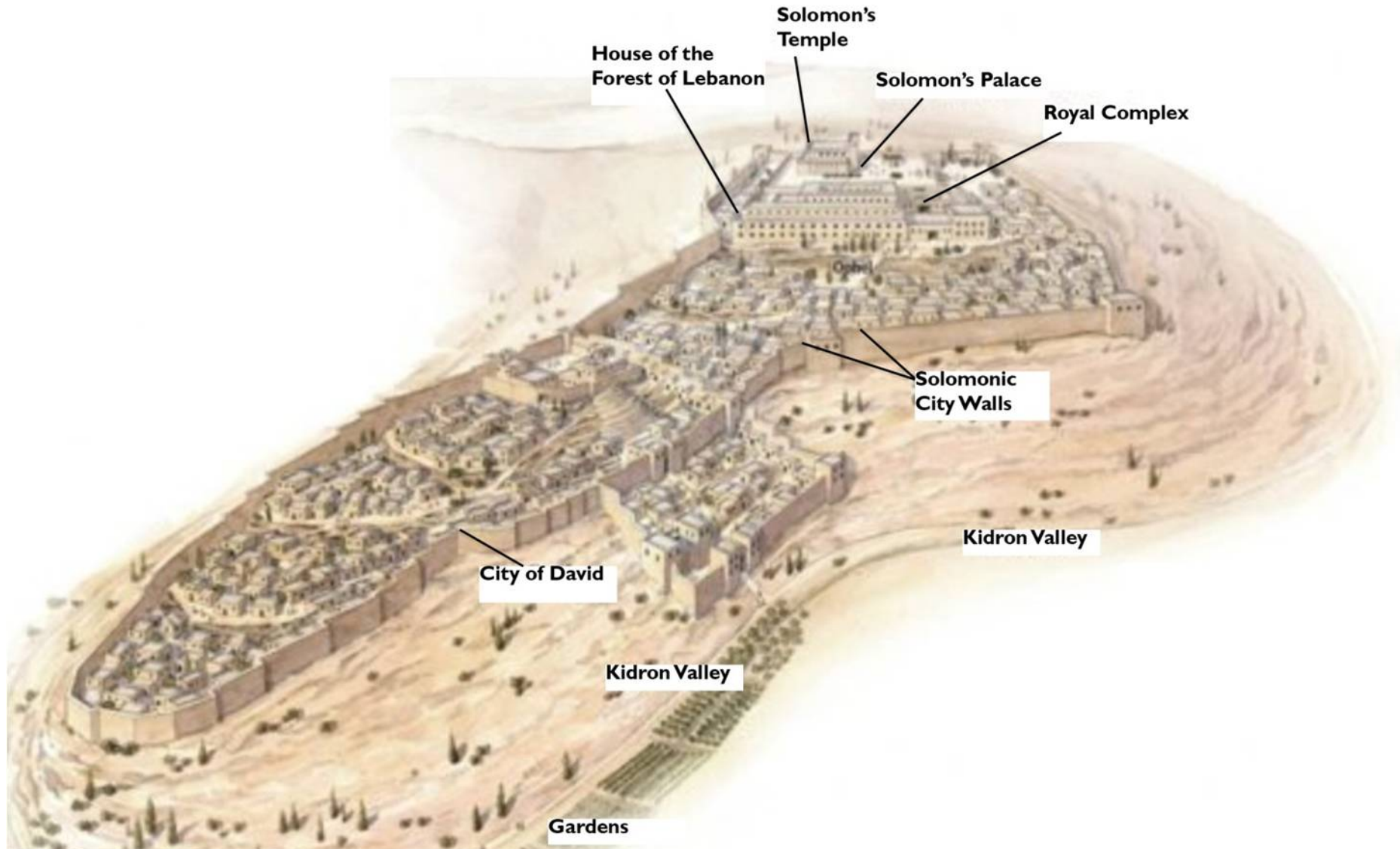
The Extent of David's Kingdom



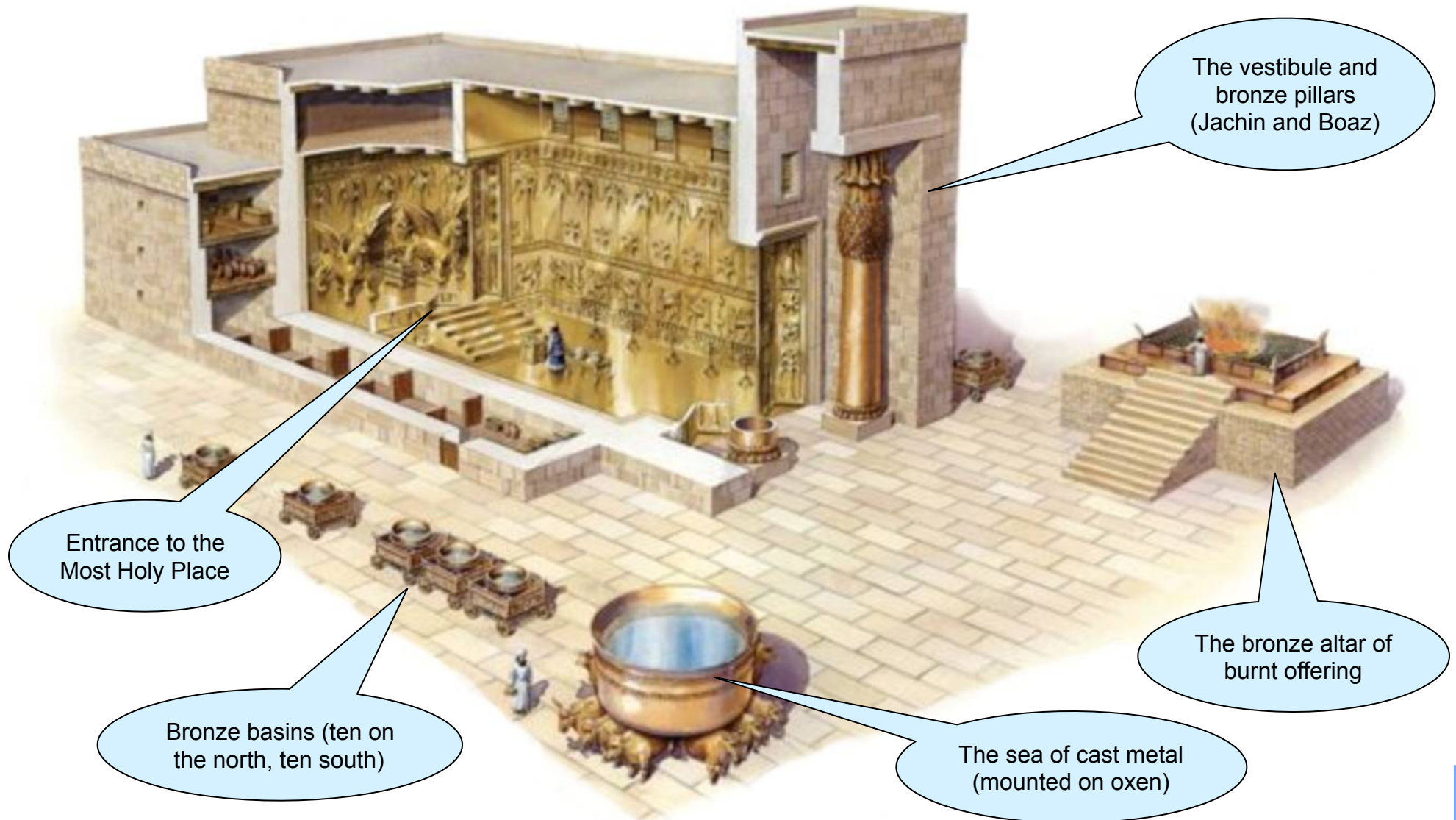
The Kingdom of Solomon (1 Kings 1–11)



Jerusalem in the Time of Solomon (c.970–930 BC)



Solomon's Temple (1 Kings 6–7)



The Queen of Sheba (1 Kings 10)

- Solomon's reign raised Jewish expectations that finally God was going to establish them as a significant nation. "The sceptre will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs and the obedience of the nations is his" (Gen 49:10)
- Solomon, David's son from the tribe of Judah ruled and reigned from Jerusalem having built the temple and having established peace and prosperity in the land and exercising rule beyond Israel itself
 - In the Queen of Sheba's visit, the Biblical authors see a foretaste of ultimate Jewish eschatological and messianic expectation (later developed further by the prophets e.g. in Isaiah 2:2-5)
 - In Matt 12:42 Jesus refers to this event, but declares that now, "one greater than Solomon is here"

Solomon

- Son of David but lesser than David
- Great wealth
- Micro-empire
- Built temple
- Wisdom to rule
- National peace and security
- Kingdom didn't last
- Queen of Sheba visits

Jesus

- Son of David but greater than David (Matt 22:41-46)
- Became poor to make others rich (2 Cor 8:9)
- World-wide kingdom
- Replaced temple and "rebuilt" it in 3 days
- Wisdom of God (1 Cor 1:24)
- Universal peace with God (Rom 5:1; Eph 2:14)
- Eternal kingdom
- Gospel to ends of the earth (Matt 28; Acts 1)

Solomon's Failure: 1 Kings 10:14–11:8

Prohibitions in Deuteronomy 17

- “One from among your brothers you shall set as king over you. You may not put a foreigner over you, who is not your brother” (15)
- “Only he must not acquire many horses for himself or cause the people to return to Egypt in order to acquire many horses, since the LORD has said to you, ‘You shall never return that way again’ ” (16)
- “And he shall not acquire many wives for himself, lest his heart turn away ...” (17a)
- “... nor shall he acquire for himself excessive silver and gold” (17b)
- “And when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write for himself in a book a copy of this law, approved by the Levitical priests. And it shall be with him, and he shall read in it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God by keeping all the words of this law and these statutes, and doing them, that his heart may not be lifted up above his brothers ... so that he may continue long in his kingdom, he and his children, in Israel” (18-20)

Solomon's “Prosperity” in 1 Kings 10-11

- Solomon received 666 talents of gold in a year, which he used to make 500 gold shields in the House of the Forest of Lebanon (10:14-17)
- He made an ivory throne overlaid with gold (10:18-20), and made so much of gold that “silver was considered as nothing” (10:18-25)
- He gathered 1400 chariots and 12,000 horsemen, importing specifically from Egypt and Kue, and exporting on to Syria (10:26-29). This is not the last time that Middle Eastern regimes would be armed by their future enemies by mistake ...
- “He had 700 wives, who were princesses, and 300 concubines. And his wives turned away his heart” (11:3)
- “For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites ... Therefore the LORD said to Solomon, “Since this has been your practice and you have not kept my covenant and my statutes that I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom from you and will give it to your servant” (11:5, 11)

What's the Point of 1 Chronicles?

- Chronicles covers much of the same period and many of the same events as Samuel and Kings. Why do we have a seeming duplication of accounts?
 - Chronicles was written much later, looking back on events in Samuel and Kings from a post-exile view point (e.g. 3:17-24). Samuel and Kings (and other OT books) were probably used as source material
 - Chronicles is almost exclusively interested in the Southern Kingdom of Judah vs the “apostate” Northern Kingdom
 - The Chronicler's main interest appears to be with the temple priesthood and the kingship
 - Much of the negative material concerning David and Solomon is omitted (e.g. his adultery with Bathsheba, Absalom's coup, Solomon's apostasy, etc)
 - Samuel and Kings focus more on the establishing of the Kingdom and self-revelation of God as he relates to his flawed people
 - Chronicles focuses more on God continuing to work his purposes out for his glory
 - Chronicles aims to bolster confidence in national identity as people of God and continuity with glory of David's throne and Solomon's temple
- Chronicles appears to start with a long and tedious collection of genealogies (chapters 1-9) before finally beginning the narrative with the death of Saul. Why does the author begin his work this way?
 - Genealogies in Chapters 1-9 stress that despite Israel's sin and exile they have not their place in God's purposes
 - There is continuity with God's original plan to have a people for himself from Genesis 2 onwards. Even after the exile the line of David still continues and God's promises still stand
 - There is still an expectation for an Ultimate Davidic King to arise and fully bring in Messianic kingdom

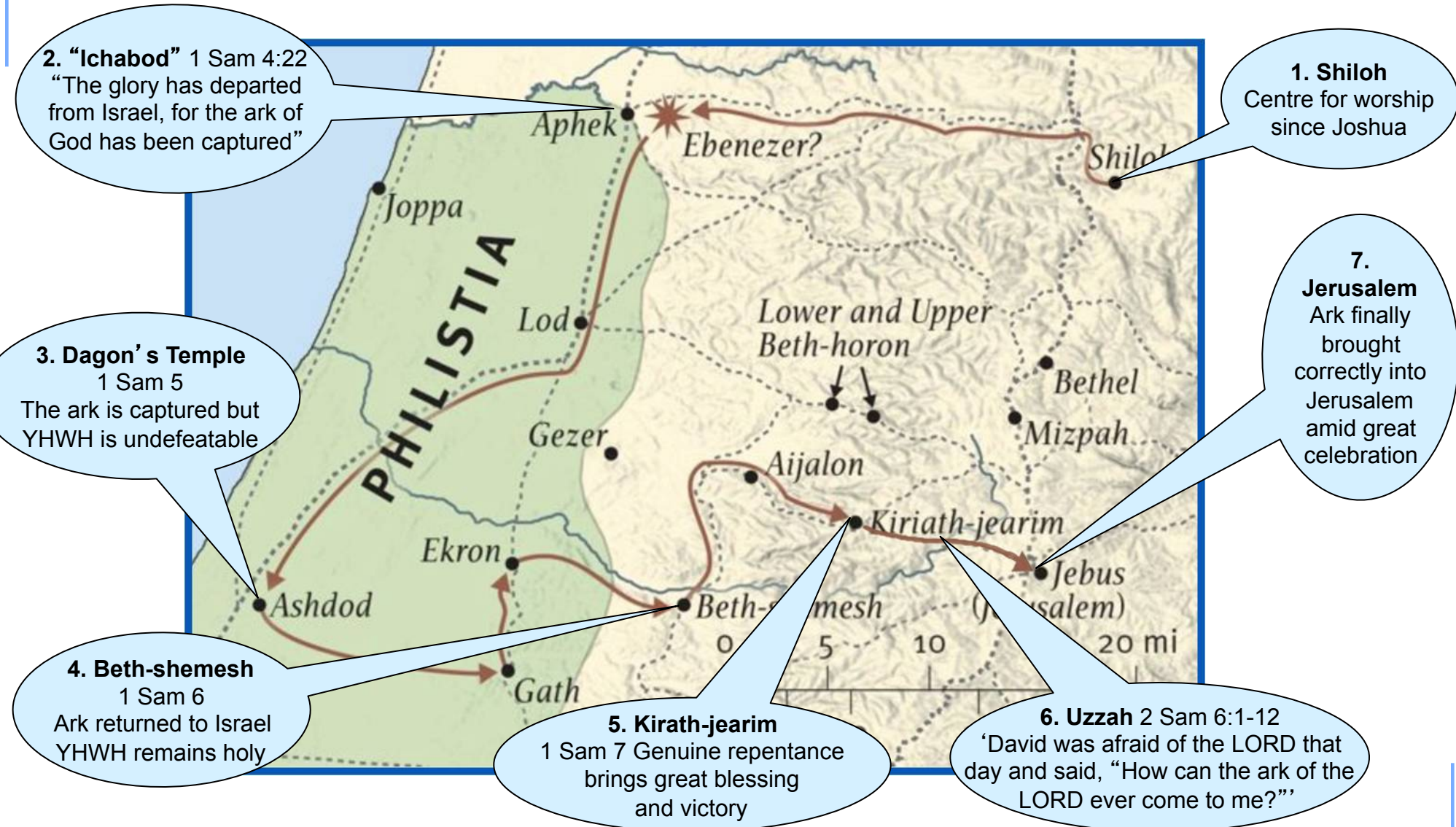
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Is God Too Harsh?

- Yahweh is consistently presented as holy and righteous, and calls his people to be also. Nevertheless, here are two occasions which often trouble people, because they appear to present God as overreacting to relatively “minor” offences
- Achan’s sin (Joshua 7:1-26)
 - Corporate responsibility (7:11). “Israel has sinned, they have violated my covenant... they have taken... they have stolen... they have lied”, yet it is also clear that just one man had disobeyed (20-26)
 - Unavoidable consequences (7:13). “That which is devoted [Achan] is among you, O Israel. You cannot stand against your enemies until you remove it”
 - Inevitable exposure (7:18). “Achan son of Carmi, the son of Zimri, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was taken”
 - Disproportionate response? (7:25). “Then all Israel stoned him, and after they had stoned the rest, they burned them.” Includes his sons and daughters (24)
 - Wrath averted (7:26). “Then the LORD turned from his fierce anger”
- Uzzah and the ark (2 Samuel 6:1-23)
 - God’s presence (6:2). “The ark of God, which is called by the name of the LORD of hosts who sits enthroned on the cherubim”
 - Disproportionate response? (6:6-7). “When they came to the threshing-floor of Nacon, Uzzah reached out and took hold of the ark of God, because the oxen stumbled. The LORD’s anger burned against Uzzah because of his irreverent act; therefore God struck him down, and he died there beside the ark of God”
 - Anger and fear (6:8-9). “David was angry ... David was afraid of the LORD”
 - Unmerited favour (6:11). “The ark of the LORD remained in the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite for three months, and the LORD blessed him and his entire household”
- So: is the LORD’s response really disproportionate? Why?
 - How can we reconcile the “angry, short tempered deity” in these passages with the God who is “slow to anger and abounding in love and faithfulness” (Psalm 86:15)?
 - How would you handle these passages in an apologetic context? How would you preach on them?

“Who Can Stand Before the LORD, this Holy God?”



Is God Too Compassionate?

Psalm 51

For the director of music. A psalm of David. When the prophet Nathan came to him after David had committed adultery with Bathsheba.

- ¹ Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your unfailing love;
according to your great compassion
blot out my transgressions.
- ² Wash away all my iniquity
and cleanse me from my sin.
- ³ For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is always before me.
- ⁴ Against you, you only, have I sinned
and done what is evil in your sight;
so you are right in your verdict
and justified when you judge.
- ⁵ Surely I was sinful at birth,
sinful from the time my mother conceived me.
- ⁶ Yet you desired faithfulness even in the womb;
you taught me wisdom in that secret place.
- ⁷ Cleanse me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
- ⁸ Let me hear joy and gladness;
let the bones you have crushed rejoice.
- ⁹ Hide your face from my sins
and blot out all my iniquity.

What about Bathsheba,
Uriah and David's
other wives and others?

What provision under
Torah was there for what
David had done?

What is hyssop?
Why whiter than snow?

- ¹⁰ Create in me a pure heart, O God,
and renew a steadfast spirit within me.
- ¹¹ Do not cast me from your presence
or take your Holy Spirit from me.
- ¹² Restore to me the joy of your salvation
and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.
- ¹³ Then I will teach transgressors your ways,
so that sinners will turn back to you.
- ¹⁴ Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God,
you who are God my Saviour,
and my tongue will sing of your righteousness.
- ¹⁵ Open my lips, Lord,
and my mouth will declare your praise.
- ¹⁶ You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it;
you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings.
- ¹⁷ My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart
you, God, will not despise.
- ¹⁸ May it please you to prosper Zion,
to build up the walls of Jerusalem.
- ¹⁹ Then you will delight in the sacrifices of the righteous,
in burnt offerings offered whole;
then bulls will be offered on your altar

Compare with
Deut 30:6

What is he worried
about here?

Does God like
burnt offerings or not?

Does God like
burnt offerings or not?

The Messiah

■ מָשִׁיחַ = Lit: Anointed one מָשַׁח = Anoint/ smear

- Anointing signifies **commissioning** for the role and **conferring** holiness (set-apart-for-God-ness) in a variety of roles. As such, the concept of Messiah is (from the NT point of view) Trinitarian: a King, set apart for God, by anointing with the Spirit
- The OT recognises many “Messiahs” (“anointed ones”) but expectation crystallised around hope of The Messiah – the one Francis Spufford calls “Mr Royal Oil”

■ Priests and Prophets

- Priests: Lev 4:3; Ex 28:41 (verb)
- Prophets: 1 Kings 19:16 (verb)

■ Kings

- Saul: 1Sam 15:1; 24:6, “the LORD’s Anointed”
- David: 1Sam 16:13 (in private), 2Sam 2:4 (over Judah), 2Sam 5:3 (over Israel). David is the King with whom all subsequent Kings are compared (e.g. 1 Kings 11:4-6; 2 Kings 18:3)
- The Son of David: 2 Sam 7:12-16: “When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son. When he does wrong, I will punish him with the rod of men, with floggings inflicted by men. But my love will never be taken away from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. Your house and your kingdom shall endure for ever before me; your throne shall be established for ever”
- Solomon: 1Kings 1:34. As Solomon drifted from the ideal to which God had called him, and from devotion to the LORD – and as Israel declined in consequence – Israel began to hope that the new “Son of David” would arise

■ **QUESTION:** Why are all subsequent kings measured by David? Why do people ask, “is this the one?”

The LORD and his Messiah

Some Psalms speak both descriptively of the current king and prophetically of the idealised King (e.g. Psa 2; 45; 72; 89; 110)

Psalm 2

goyim = Gentiles
(LXX = *ethnē*)

Why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain?

War between two kingdoms (Rev 1:5 etc)

² The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the LORD and against his Anointed One.

³ "Let us break their chains," they say, "and throw off their fetters."

⁴ The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them.

Unchangeable sovereignty, through human choices (Acts 4:28)

⁵ Then he rebukes them in his anger and terrifies them in his wrath, saying,

⁶ "I have installed my King on Zion, my holy hill."

⁷ I will proclaim the decree of the LORD: He said to me, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father.

Worldwide kingdom ruled by Messiah

⁸ Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession.

Installation as king (2 Sam 7:14) and resurrection (Acts 13:33)

⁹ You will rule them with an iron sceptre; you will dash them to pieces like pottery."

¹⁰ Therefore, you kings, be wise; be warned, you rulers of the earth.

¹¹ Serve the LORD with fear and rejoice with trembling.

Destroyed by him or saved in him?

¹² Kiss the Son, lest he be angry and you be destroyed in your way, for his wrath can flare up in a moment. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.

Shepherd or destroy?
(Rev 2:27; 19:15)

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The Problem of Meaninglessness (Ecclesiastes)

God-Substitutes: What God-substitutes do people in our culture use? What God-substitutes do you use? How do you need to deal with them?

Gospel: How does gospel rescue us from each of these meaningless things? How does it redeem them? What positives can we take away to help us enjoy living a satisfying life?

Apologetics: How can Ecclesiastes help us in our evangelistic presentation of the gospel?

Wealth (5:8-6:9)

Problems:

Insights:

How can I find meaning
in a world that is *hevel*
(vapour, vanity)?

Wisdom (1:12-18; 2:12-16)

Problems:

Insights:

Social Mobility (4:4-16)

Problems:

Insights:

Work (2:17-26; 3:9-14)

Problems:

Insights:

Pleasure (2:1-11)

Problems:

Insights:

How Good is Good Enough? (Psalm 1)

Walk, stand, sit,
getting comfortable
in sin

Parallelism

Who are the
wicked?

- ¹ Blessed is the one
who does not walk in step with the wicked
or stand in the way that sinners take
or sit in the company of mockers,
² but whose delight is in the law of the LORD,
and who meditates on his law day and night.
³ That person is like a tree planted by streams of water,
which yields its fruit in season
and whose leaf does not wither –
whatever they do prospers.
- ⁴ Not so the wicked!
They are like chaff
that the wind blows away.
⁵ Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,
nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.
- ⁶ For the LORD watches over the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked leads to destruction.

How is the law
viewed in the OT?
(& in the NT?)

Continual attention
to law (cf Josh 1:8)

Guarantee of success
in everything
(cf. Josh 1:3)

Eschatological
judgement and reward?
(Chaff & destruction)

Who is 'righteous'
and how?

The Gospel in the Messianic Psalms (2, 22, 45, 72, 89, 110)

■ The work of the Messiah in the Psalms

- The heir of the Davidic covenant. “I will establish his line for ever, his throne as long as the heavens endure” (89:29)
- The heir of the Abrahamic covenant. “Then all nations will be blessed through him, and they will call him blessed” (72:17)
- A priest like Melchizedek. “The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind: ‘You are a priest for ever, in the order of Melchizedek’ ” (110:4)
- Concerned for morality & justice. “You love righteousness and hate wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy” (45:7)
- Faces world opposition. “Why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth rise up and the rulers band together against the LORD and against his anointed” (2:1-2)
- Ultimately victorious. “I will crush his foes before him and strike down his adversaries” (89:23)
- Brings peace and prosperity. “In his days may the righteous flourish and prosperity abound till the moon is no more” (72:7)
- Establishes an everlasting Kingdom. “Your throne will last forever and ever” (45:6)

■ The identity of the Messiah in the Psalms

- The Messiah will be at Yahweh’s right hand, greater than David (110:4). This is why Jesus asked, “If then David calls him ‘Lord’, how can he be his son?” (Matt 22:45)
- The Messiah is described as being begotten by Yahweh (2:7)
- Most puzzlingly of all, Psalm 45 is addressed to a king who is referred to as “God” (*elohim*): “Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever ... Therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions” (45:6-7; cf. Heb 1:8-9)

■ The suffering of the Messiah in the Psalms

- Psalm 22 gives a very different presentation of the Messiah, which would not be recognised as Messianic until the NT (although it coheres well with the Servant songs of Isaiah)
- Several Davidic Psalms are explicitly cited in the NT in connection with the Messiah’s suffering (22:1 etc; 31:5; 109:8)

Psalm 22 and Mark 15

Psalm 22:1-31

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning? O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer, and by night, but I find no rest ... All who see me mock me; they make mouths at me; they wag their heads; "He trusts in the LORD; let him deliver him; let him rescue him, for he delights in him!" ...

I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted within my breast; my strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to my jaws; you lay me in the dust of death. For dogs encompass me; a company of evildoers encircles me; they have pierced my hands and feet—I can count all my bones—they stare and gloat over me; they divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots.

You who fear the LORD, praise him! All you offspring of Jacob, glorify him, and stand in awe of him, all you offspring of Israel! ...

For he has not despised or abhorred the affliction of the afflicted, and he has not hidden his face from him, but has heard, when he cried to him. From you comes my praise in the great congregation; my vows I will perform before those who fear him ...

For kingship belongs to the LORD, and he rules over the nations. Posterity shall serve him; it shall be told of the Lord to the coming generation; they shall come and proclaim his righteousness to a people yet unborn, that he has done it.

Mark 15:24-39

And they crucified him and divided his garments among them, casting lots for them, to decide what each should take. And it was the third hour when they crucified him. And the inscription of the charge against him read, "The King of the Jews." And with him they crucified two robbers, one on his right and one on his left.

And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads and saying, "Aha! You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself, and come down from the cross!" So also the chief priests with the scribes mocked him to one another, saying, "He saved others; he cannot save himself. Let the Christ, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross that we may see and believe." Those who were crucified with him also reviled him ...

And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" And some of the bystanders hearing it said, "Behold, he is calling Elijah." And someone ran and filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink, saying, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down."

And Jesus uttered a loud cry and breathed his last. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, "Truly this man was the Son of God!"

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Sung Worship, Music and the Psalms

- Israelite worship always contained an element of sung praise
 - The song of Moses (Ex 15)
 - Deborah's song (Judges 5)
 - Hannah's prayer (1 Sam 2)
- However, David is credited with bringing corporate singing into the heart of Jewish worship
 - In 1 Chr 16, David appoints Levites at the tabernacle at Gibeon, to praise God with music and singing (4-6, 41-42), then appoints Asaph as the chief "worship leader" and entrusts a psalm to him (7-36)
 - The official collection of psalms grows and eventually becomes the songbook of Israel
- The Book of Psalms is arranged in five books, which are believed to have been from 5 separate collections
 - There are numerous authors: David (73), Solomon, Asaph, Heman, the Sons of Korah, Moses ...
 - There are also a variety of forms
 - Praise songs, lament, thanksgiving, cries from trouble, repentance prayers, denunciations of injustice, teaching ... Luther called the Psalms "a Bible in miniature"
 - Obviously, the Psalms are poems and songs rather than doctrinal statements, and they express feelings and emotions more than abstract truths
 - This is not just true of the "negative" Psalms (e.g. 137), but the "positive" ones as well (e.g. 91)
 - They have the distinctive Hebrew form of rhyming meanings (parallelism), which – beautifully – means their poetic form can be translated into any language
 - They also express both personal (7) and corporate (8) worship in their original settings, and can and should be used today to do both (cf. Eph 5:19)

The Problem of Suffering: An Overview of Job

■ Job's Suffering (1-3)

- Satan's Challenge & God's Response (1:1-12; 2:1-6)
- Loss of Children, Wealth & Health (1:13-19; 2:7-8)
- Job's Godly Response (1:20-22; 2:9-10)
- The Comforter's Godly Response (2:11-13)
- Job's Lament (3:1-26)

■ Job's Comforters (4-37)

- First Cycle (4-14): Eliphaz → Job → Bildad → Job → Zophar → Job. "Behold, blessed is the one whom God reproves; therefore despise not the discipline of the Almighty" (5:17)
- Second Cycle (15-21): Eliphaz → Job → Bildad → Job → Zophar → Job. "Indeed, the light of the wicked is put out, and the flame of his fire does not shine" (18:5)
- Third Cycle (22-26): Eliphaz → Job → Bildad → Job. "Is not your evil abundant? There is no end to your iniquities" (22:5)
- Job's Speech (27-31). "Oh, that I had one to hear me!" (31:35)
- Elihu's Speech (32-37). "Hear this, O Job; stop and consider the wondrous works of God" (37:14)

■ God's Appearance (38-42:6)

- God's Speech (38-41). "Who is this that obscures my plans with words without knowledge? Brace yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer me"
- Job's Repentance (42:1-6). "Surely I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know ... My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you. Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes"

■ Job's Vindication (42:7-16). Health restored, more children, more wealth, long life. "The LORD blessed the latter part of Job's life more than the former part" (42:12)

Perspectives on Suffering from Job

There is often more going on behind the scenes than we are aware of, as shown by the scenes with the satan (and the heavy dramatic irony involved)

In attributing the suffering to the LORD, Job did not sin with his lips (1:22; 2:10)

God's response is entirely concerned with his sovereignty and knowledge as creator (38-41)

We look forward to Jesus, who alone can represent us to God (9:32-33; 19:25-27; cf. 1 Tim 2:5) and whose victory casts the accuser out of heaven (Rev 12:9-12)

What do we do with suffering?

The satan is unable to act without permission from God. We do not solve the problem of suffering by having two rival gods, one good and one bad

Suffering does not always correspond to righteous or unrighteous behaviour; bad things do happen to good people (this is the main thrust of the friends' speeches). There's an important tension here with e.g. Deuteronomy and Proverbs

When faced with the suffering of others, sitting in silence and weeping with them is far better than processing grief, confusion, doubt or theodicy out loud

Suffering does not have the last word. When you play the tape forward to the end, Job's prosperity is greater than it was before

Handling Ordinary Life in Proverbs

- The book of Proverbs is a compilation of collections of proverbs, mainly by Solomon (1Kings 4:29-34), but including other authors. Further additions and editing took place from Solomon's time onwards, until at least Hezekiah's time (25:1)
 - The book is a seemingly random collection of pithy proverbs and aphorisms, as well as some longer sections of poetry
 - Proverbs is a guide book for successful living. "Wisdom is competence with complex realities of life" (Tim Keller)
- The book juxtaposes two approaches to life (Wisdom and Folly) lived out by various characters
 - The wise
 - The scoffer / mocker
 - The diligent
 - The rich man
 - The fool
 - The sluggard
 - Lady Wisdom
 - The poor man
 - The simple
 - The adulteress
 - A father addressing his son
 - The good wife
- Topics include life, death, sex, faithfulness, money, friendships, parenting, work, speech, and so on
 - Religious themes are not prominent, but neither are they absent. The question behind much of the book is, how does faith in God affect normal life?
 - "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding" (9:10)
- A key question (particularly in pastoral ministry) concerns how we understand and apply Proverbs
 - It is not a collection of promises from God that will always "work", and nor is it a collection of statements which are individually always true (cf. Proverbs 26:4 and 26:5!)
 - To benefit from the book of proverbs we need to understand both the genre of the book (general principles of what is true in life, rather than guarantees), and the book as a whole (as it describes a life of Wisdom, rather than mining it for tweet-length bumper stickers)
 - A good example, which has probably bamboozled a fair number of parents, is 22:6: "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it"
- **EXERCISE:** Using the whole of chapter 13, produce contrasting descriptions of a Wise person and a Fool. Remember to include factors such as their speech, work, money, family, attitudes, friends, expectations and outcomes

Responses to Enemies

- Several of the “imprecatory” Psalms involve the writer imploring God to punish his enemies in ways that seem shockingly harsh to Christians (e.g. 69, 109, 137)
- Some of these “outbursts” sit in the midst of otherwise “lovely” Psalms; others would, if written today, render the author liable to prosecution under the Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006
 - “O LORD, you have searched me and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar ... I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well ... How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them! Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand. When I awake, I am still with you. **If only you would slay the wicked, O God! Away from me, you bloodthirsty men!** They speak of you with evil intent; your adversaries misuse your name. **Do I not hate those who hate you, O LORD,** and abhor those who rise up against you? **I have nothing but hatred for them;** I count them my enemies. Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting” (Ps 139)
 - “O Daughter of Babylon, doomed to destruction, happy is he who repays you for what you have done to us – **he who seizes your infants and dashes them against the rocks!**” (Psalm 137:8-9)
- Several questions emerge from Psalms like these
 - How are we to handle these psalms without undermining their canonicity?
 - Is there something to learn about expressing emotion and being real with God?
 - Are the Psalmists speaking hyperbolically, literally, or something else?
 - Do they express mere personal animosity, or do they also show God’s righteousness (e.g. 139:21)?
 - Do they seem harsh merely because we are out of touch with future judgment (hell etc)?
 - How are such Psalms to be interpreted in the new covenant age (cf. Matt 5:21-26, 38-42, 43-48)?
 - What can we learn from them about facing injustice and oppression in our own day?
 - How can we as Christians beneficially use these Psalms?

Reading Song of Songs Literally ...



... and Poetically



Sex in the Song of Solomon

- The Song of Solomon, or ‘Song of Songs’ (Hebrew idiom for ‘the best song’), is well-known for its beautiful poetry and depiction of romantic love. “The power of the poetry lies in the intensity of love and devotion expressed and especially in the rich imagery which permeates the descriptions of the lovers and their love” (Hubbard, *NBD*)
- Interpreting the book poses several challenges
 - Detailed erotic imagery
 - Lack of religious theme
 - Vagueness of plot
 - Myriad of interpretations
- There are three main ways of reading the text
 - Allegorically: “It’s all a picture of God and his people” (e.g. Bickle – “let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth” in 1:2 is a reference to the Word of God)
 - Typically: “It is both a love poem, and a description of Christ and the church” (e.g. Virgo – “your name is like perfume poured out” in 1:2 is the name of Jesus; the lover’s search in ch.2 depicts God’s love for us; Stuart Townend’s song *From the Sleep of Ages*)
 - Erotically: “It’s just an erotic love poem” (e.g. Driscoll – “I delight to sit in his shade, and his fruit is sweet to my taste” in 2:3 is a reference to oral sex, and so on)
 - An adapted version of the last approach is probably best (e.g. Wilson ☺ – “the Song of Songs is mainly about sex and marriage; but then, sex and marriage is mainly about Christ and the church”)
- Pastorally and missionally, the application (surely!) must be to encourage happy, healthy sex lives amongst married couples
 - Many preachers avoid it like the plague. But this misses the opportunity to pastor married couples, and to speak positively about sex from a Christian perspective into a culture which has cheapened sex

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- VI. People: Community and Ethics
- VII. Mission: Kingdom and Eschatology**

The Extent of Solomon's Kingdom and the Boundaries of The Promised Land



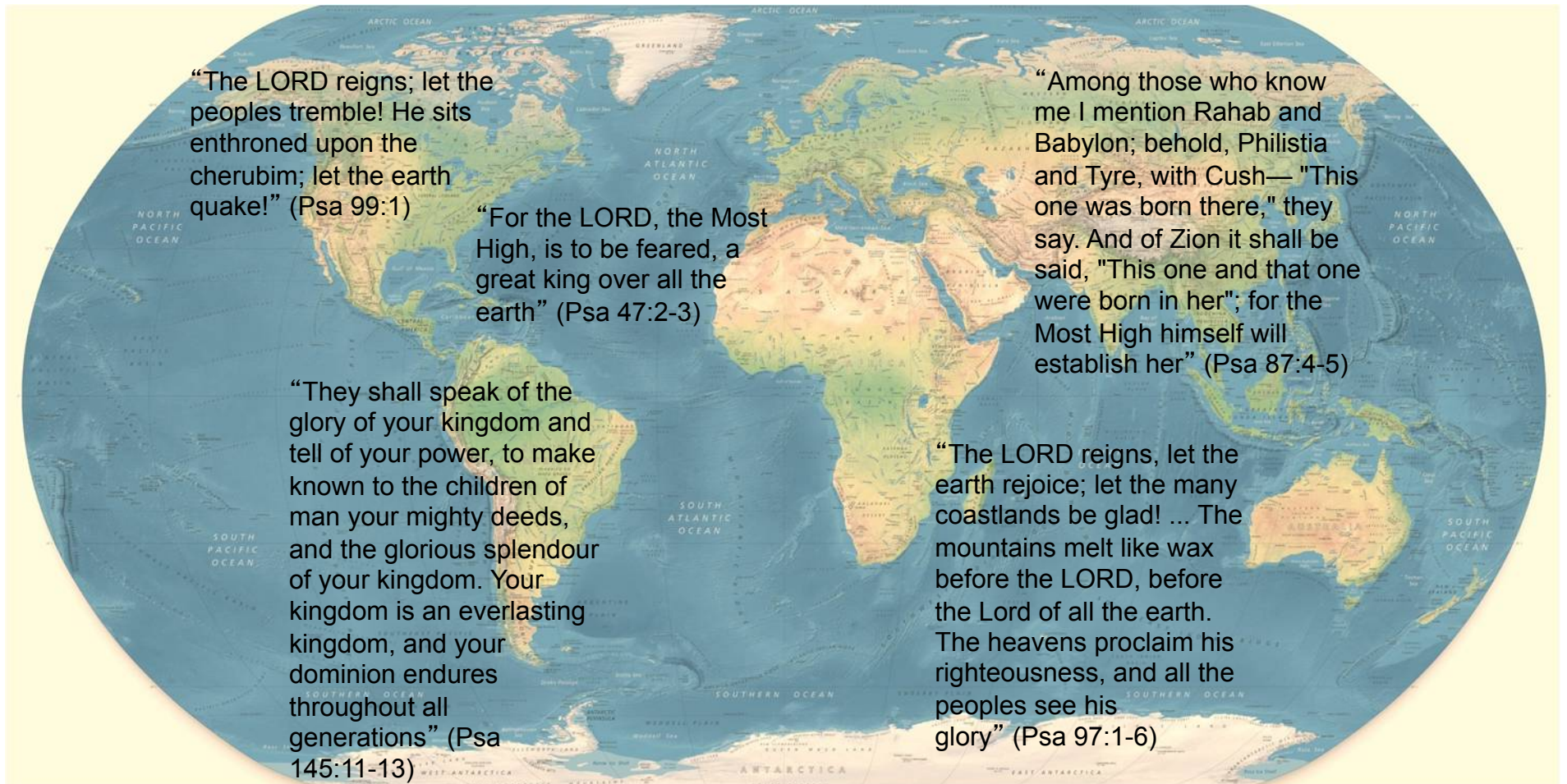
Genesis 15:18-21

“From the River of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates - the land of the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites, Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites and Jebusites”

Exodus 23:31

“From the Red Sea to the Sea of the Philistines (Mediterranean) and from the desert to the River (Euphrates)”

A Global, Eternal Kingdom



The Developing Theology of Death

- Human death is the inevitable consequence of the fall of humanity in Adam. “But you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die” (Gen 2:17)
- There is no clear distinction in the OT between physical and spiritual death. Their conception of a human being is as a unity instead of a body and a soul/spirit (the bipartite view)
 - *Nephesh* is sometimes translated soul (Josh 22:5), and simply carries idea of being alive: “a living being” rather than “an immaterial part of me.” It often appears in the text without being translated as “soul” (e.g. Gen 36:6)
 - Often, *nephesh* is used as a synonym for my desire or emotion (Psa 6:3, where “my soul” is synonymous with “me”; Psa 35:9; etc)
 - Occasionally *nephesh* is used with reference to God (Isa 42:1) and animals (Gen 1:20)
 - There is no real similarity with Greek thought, in which death separates the soul from the body – but Adam & Eve’s continued survival after the Fall does raise questions on the exact nature of death
- In most of the OT, there is no clear distinction between what happens to the righteous and the wicked in death
 - “All share a common destiny--the righteous and the wicked, the good and the bad, the clean and the unclean, those who offer sacrifices and those who do not. As it is with the good man, so with the sinner; as it is with those who take oaths, so with those who are afraid to take them. This is the evil in everything that happens under the sun: The same destiny overtakes all. The hearts of men, moreover, are full of evil and there is madness in their hearts while they live, and afterwards they join the dead” (Ecc 9:2-3)
 - On the other hand, some texts begin to display hope of being ransomed from Sheol (Psa 49:15)
- Death is sometimes described in terms sleeping or being at rest
 - “Why did I not perish at birth, and die as I came from the womb? Why were there knees to receive me and breasts that I might be nursed? For now I would be lying down in peace; I would be asleep and at rest with kings and counsellors of the earth, who built for themselves places now lying in ruins” (Job 3:11-14)
 - “Look on me and answer, O LORD my God. Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death” (Psa 13:1-3)
 - “Then David rested with his fathers and was buried in the City of David” (1 Kings 2:10). “Rested with his fathers” is a standard expression used of the death of the Jewish Kings, used indiscriminately of good and bad kings

Sheol

- Many Ancient Near Eastern cultures had a concept of a shadowy “underworld” where people went when they died. In the Hebrew Bible, the word was *Sheol*, usually left untranslated (ESV, NASB) or rendered “grave”, “pit” or “death” (NIV, NLT)
 - Sheol is often synonymous with death (e.g. 1 Sam 2:6, and in many of the Psalms). As such, it is morally neutral, but still viewed as negative
 - In many ways, it is a broad concept rather than a precise destination – closer to the phrase “she’ ll carry it with her to the grave” than to any subsequent Christian “place” (heaven, paradise, hell, etc)
- **EXERCISE:** What does Wisdom literature tell us about Sheol? How would you fit it all together?
 - Psa 86:13
 - Job 11:8
 - Eccl 9:5, 10
 - Psa 6:5
 - Psa 88:3-5
 - Job 7:9
 - Psa 9:17
 - Job 24:19
 - Psa 49:13-14
 - Psa 89:48
 - Psa 139:8
 - Psa 16:10
- What implications does the Hebrew phrase “the gates of Sheol” (Job 17:16; Psa 9:13; 107:18) have for our understanding of “the gates of Hades” in Matthew 16:18?

The Future Hope

- When it comes to the future hope, there is a range of different views on the OT evidence, from a clear post-death expectation of fellowship with God, through to no expectation beyond a common destiny in Sheol (except Dan 12:2)
- We must beware both back-reading NT eschatology into OT verses, and forcing “rogue verses” into our theological model
- **EXERCISE:** What does the Wisdom literature have to say about possible life beyond death? Is the case for future hope beyond death for the righteous convincing or unconvincing? Is this clear enough to build a theology on?
 - Prov 15:24 – Psa 56:13 – Psa 49:15 – Psalm 73:24
 - Psa 86:13 – 1 Sam 2:6 – Prov 14:32 – Psalm 16:10-11
 - Psa 30:3 – Job 19:26 – Prov 11:19 – 2 Sam 12:23
- The standard antonym for death, or Sheol, is simply “life”
 - “Whoever is steadfast in righteousness will live, but he who pursues evil will die” (Prov 11:19). Compare this with the covenant at Moab: “This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live” (Dt 30:19)
 - Arguably, the concept of personal resurrection does not clearly appear until later in the OT (Isa 25:6-8; Dan 12:2), although some see it in the verses above
 - Resurrection, of course, was not universally accepted even in Jesus’ day (Sadducees vs Martha)
 - At this stage of the OT, the hope of the righteous seems to be to continue to live and hence to relate to God. It may be that brief glimpses of a happy life beyond death are visible, but they are not yet clear and unambiguous enough to bear weight of a fully developed Christian eschatology
 - “Nowhere in the Old Testament is death simply a door to paradise. Its character as enemy is everywhere evident” (W A Dyrness)