

The Didache

[DID-uh-kay]

The *Didache* is the first known Christian catechesis. Written in the first century, the *Didache* is the earliest known Christian writing outside of Scripture. The name of the work, "*Didache*," is indeed appropriate for such a catechesis because it comes from the Greek word for "teaching," and indicates that this writing contains the teaching of the Apostles.

The *Didache* is a catechetical summary of Christian sacraments, practices, and morality. Though written in the first century, its teaching is timeless. The *Didache* was probably written by the disciples of the Twelve Apostles, and it presents the Apostolic Faith as taught by those closest to Jesus Christ. This series of books takes the name of this early catechesis because it shares in the Church's mission of passing on that same Faith, in its rich entirety, to new generations.

Below is an excerpt from the *Didache* in which we see a clear example of its lasting message, a message that speaks to Christians of today as much as it did to the first generations of the Church. The world is different, but the struggle for holiness is the same. In the *Didache*, we are instructed to embrace virtue, to avoid sin, and to live the Beatitudes of our Lord.

My child, flee from everything that is evil and everything that is like it. Do not be wrathful, for wrath leads to murder, nor jealous nor contentious nor quarrelsome, for from all these murder ensues.

My child, do not be lustful, for lust leads to fornication, nor a filthy-talker nor a lewd-looker, for from all these adulteries ensue.

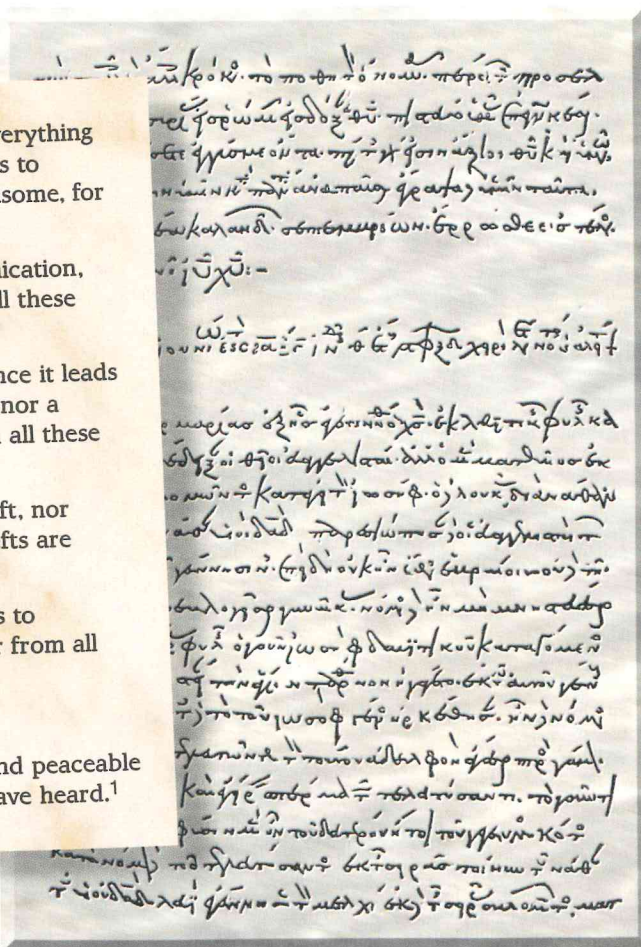
My child, do not be an interpreter of omens, since it leads to idolatry, nor an enchanter nor an astrologer nor a magical purifier, nor wish to see them, for from all these idolatry arises.

My child, do not be a liar, for lying leads to theft, nor avaricious nor conceited, for from all these thefts are produced.

My child, do not be a complainer, since it leads to blasphemy, nor self-willed nor evil-minded, for from all these blasphemies are produced.

Be meek, for the meek will inherit the earth.

Be long-suffering and merciful and guileless and peaceable and good, and revere always the words you have heard.¹



The *Didache* is the teaching of the Apostles and, as such, it is the teaching of the Church. Accordingly, this book series makes extensive use of the most recent comprehensive catechesis provided to us, *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*. The *Didache* series also relies heavily on Sacred Scripture, the lives of the saints, the Fathers of the Church, and the teaching of Vatican II as witnessed by the pontificate of John Paul II.

1. Swett, Ben H. "The Didache (The Teaching)." © January 30, 1998. <http://bswett.com/1998-01Didache.html>

Understanding The Scriptures

A Complete Course On Bible Study



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MIDWEST THEOLOGICAL FORUM

Woodridge, Illinois

FROM THE CATECHISM

62 After the patriarchs, God formed Israel as his people by freeing them from slavery in Egypt. He established with them the covenant of Mount Sinai and, through Moses, gave them his law so that they would recognize him and serve him as the one living and true God, the provident Father and just judge, and so that they would look for the promised Savior (cf. DV 3).

1975 According to Scripture the Law is a fatherly instruction by God which prescribes for man the ways that lead to the promised beatitude, and proscribes the ways of evil.

1981 The Law of Moses contains many truths naturally accessible to reason. God has revealed them because men did not read them in their hearts.

2112 The first commandment condemns *polytheism*. It requires man neither to believe in, nor to venerate, other divinities than the one true God. Scripture constantly recalls this rejection of “idols, [of] silver and gold, the work of men’s hands. They have mouths, but do not speak; eyes, but do not see.” These empty idols make their worshipers empty: “Those who make them are like them; so are all who trust in them” (Ps 115: 4-5, 8; cf. Is 44: 9-20; Jer 10: 1-16; Dn 14: 1-30; Bar 6; Wis 13: 1-15; 19). God, however, is the “living God” (Jos 3: 10; Ps 42: 3; etc.) who gives life and intervenes in history.

2114 Human life finds its unity in the adoration of the one God. The commandment to worship the Lord alone integrates man and saves him from an endless disintegration. Idolatry is a perversion of man’s innate religious sense. An idolater is someone who “transfers his indestructible notion of God to anything other than God” (Origen, *Contra Celsum* 2, 40: PG 11, 861).

2132 The Christian veneration of images is not contrary to the first commandment which proscribes idols. Indeed, “the honor rendered to an image passes to its prototype,” and “whoever venerates an image venerates the person portrayed in it” (St. Basil, *De Spiritu Sancto* 18, 45: PG 32, 149C; Council of Nicaea II: DS 601; cf. Council of Trent: DS 1821-1825; Vatican Council II: *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 126; LG 67). The honor paid to sacred images is a “respectful veneration,” not the adoration due to God alone:

Religious worship is not directed to images in themselves, considered as mere things, but under their distinctive aspect as images leading us on to God incarnate. The movement toward the image does not terminate in it as image, but tends toward that whose image it is (St. Thomas Aquinas, *STh* II-II, 81, 3 ad 3).

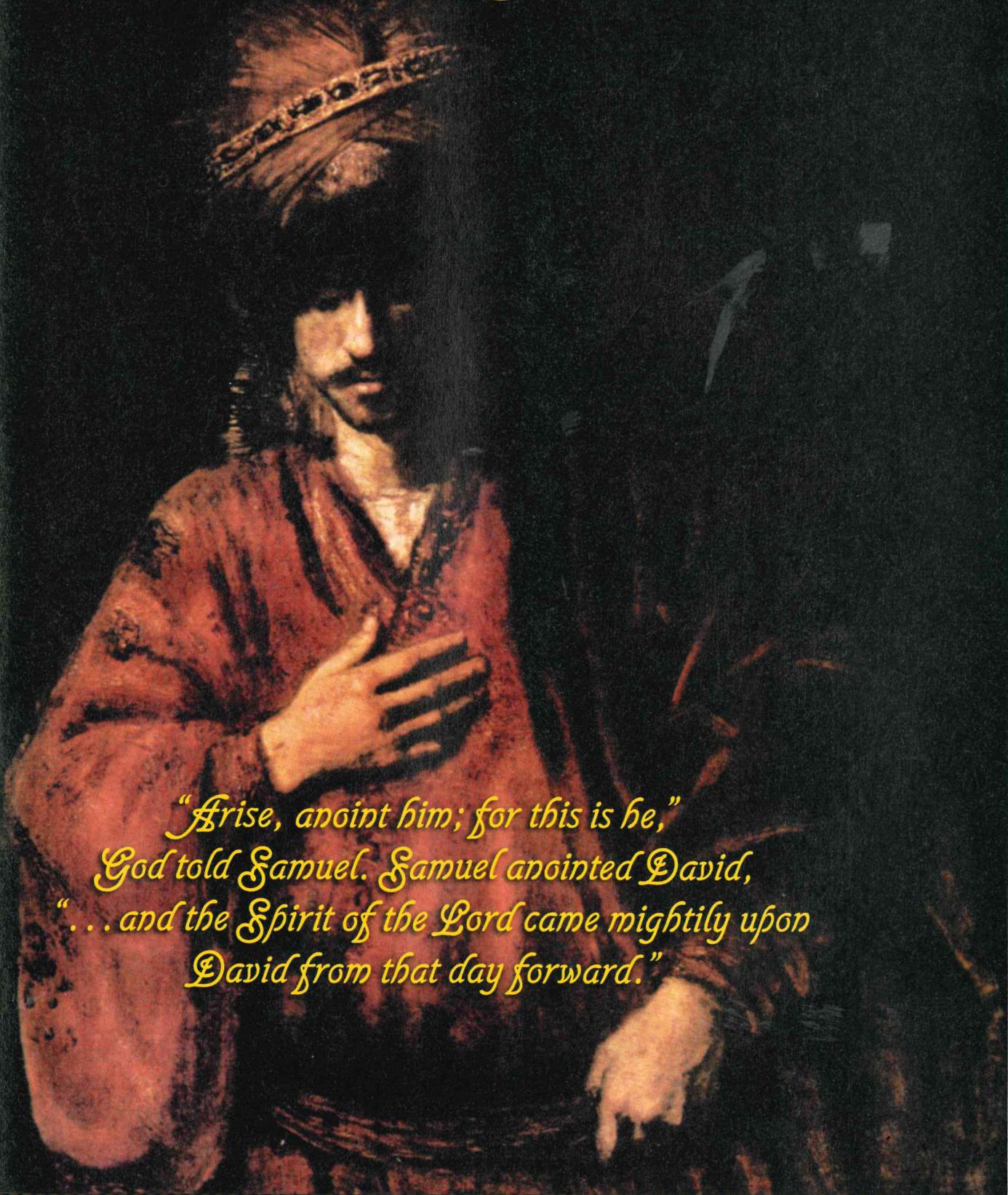


Endnotes

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|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| 1. Lv 10: 1. | 6. Nm 14: 2-3. | 11. Nm 25: 1-3. |
| 2. Nm 13. | 7. Nm 14: 8-9. | 12. Nm 25: 7-13. |
| 3. Nm 13: 23. | 8. Nm 20: 5. | 13. Mt 19: 8. |
| 4. Nm 13: 28. | 9. Nm 20: 10. | 14. Ez 20: 25. |
| 5. Nm 13: 31. | 10. Nm 20: 12. | 15. Dt 12: 1. |

Chapter 9

The Rise of The Kingdom



“Arise, anoint him; for this is he,”
God told Samuel. Samuel anointed David,
“... and the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon
David from that day forward.”

Chapter 9

The Rise of The Kingdom



Read

Joshua 3: 9 - 17
5: 2 - 9; 6: 1 - 21
24: 14 - 25

Judges 2: 11 - 23

1 Samuel 8: 4 - 22
15: 13 - 23
16: 1 - 13

Israel was a nation set apart—a nation governed not by human laws, but by God himself through his prophets. But the attraction of worldly ways would prove too much. Seduced by the religions of the Canaanites, God's people would fall into idolatry and anarchy. At last they would give up on the idea of being a nation set apart. They would want to be governed like every other nation.

It was a direct rejection of God. Yet God would use that rejection to bring about the right conditions for another covenant with his people—a covenant that would partially restore the relationship that Adam's sin had destroyed. It would also pave the way for the New Covenant in Jesus Christ, through which all the people of the earth would be restored to their right relationship with God.



God told Joshua the time had come to cross the river Jordan into Canaan. For Christians, the crossing of the Jordan is another type of baptism.



View over Jericho and the Jordan Valley.

The Conquest Begins

At the age of 120, Moses passed away, leaving his faithful servant Joshua to take over the leadership of Israel. At last it was time to begin the conquest of Canaan.

In spite of Israel's faithlessness, God once again fought for Israel. But it would be a long and bloody struggle. Although the people of Israel would ultimately conquer Canaan, they would never completely drive out their Canaanite enemies. Those Canaanites would be thorns in their sides, constantly tempting God's people away from the true faith and toward the wicked idols of Canaan.

The book of Joshua describes the beginning of the conquest of Canaan. The first target was Jericho. Some archaeologists call Jericho the oldest city in the world. Settlement there goes back to the Stone Age. In the time of Joshua, Jericho was already thousands of years old.

It was also the strategic key to Palestine, a strong and important city right in the middle of the Promised Land. If Israel could take Jericho, it would be a crushing blow to the Canaanites.

When God told Joshua the time had come to cross the river Jordan into Canaan,¹ Joshua's sensible first step was to send two spies to look over the city. They stayed with a woman named Rahab, described as a "harlot" (which might mean only that she ran an inn). Rahab believed in the God of Israel, and she knew that Israel would conquer. When the king of Jericho found out about the spies, Rahab hid them. Then she made a deal with them: she and her family would be saved when Israel destroyed Jericho, as long as they stayed in their house. A scarlet cord tied in her window would be the sign to the Israelites that Rahab's house was to be left untouched.²

After a hair-raising escape through a window, the spies made it back to camp and told Joshua what they had found out: everyone in the land was already afraid of Israel. "Truly the LORD has given all the land into our hands."³

The time was right. "Sanctify yourselves," Joshua warned the people, "for tomorrow the LORD will do wonders among you."



Then he told the Levite priests to take up the Ark of the Covenant and walk to the Jordan. As soon as their feet touched the water, the river dried up. Once again, the people walked through the water on dry land. For Christians, the crossing of the Jordan is another type of baptism, in which we, the new Israel, pass through the water to the Promised Land.

Renewing the covenant with God, Joshua had all the men of Israel circumcised. (The generation that grew up in the wilderness had not been circumcised yet.) Then he began the siege of Jericho.



The Israelites did not attack the city in any conventional way. Following God's instructions, they simply marched silently all the way around the city once each day, while priests blew trumpets. For six days they repeated their silent march.

On the seventh day, the people marched around the city not once but seven times. Then the people gave a mighty shout, and the walls came tumbling down by themselves. The army of Israel marched right up over the rubble and destroyed the city.⁴

But they saved Rahab and her family, just as they had promised. Rahab is very important for Christian history: Rahab later married an Israelite, and St. Matthew tells us⁵ that she was one of the ancestors of David, and thus ultimately one of the human ancestors of Jesus Christ.

A stone tower in the ancient city of Jericho, ca. 7,000 B.C.
Jericho is the oldest continuously inhabited city in the world dating to 8,000 B.C.

Canaan At The Time Of The Conquest ca. 1406 B.C.



Jericho

Is the story of the conquest of Jericho historically accurate? Although some archaeologists disagree, many see signs of a catastrophic earthquake that toppled the walls of Jericho just about the time Joshua and the Israelites would have been besieging the city. A layer of charred remains tells of a great fire about the same time. ("And they burned the city with fire, and all within it," says Jos 6: 24.)

According to some archaeologists, one small section of the city walls seems to have been left standing—a section that had small houses built into it. Now, in the book of Joshua, the house of Rahab "was built into the city wall, so that she dwelt in the wall" (Jos 2: 15). The Bible says that Rahab and all her family were spared when Jericho was destroyed. Could that one small section of wall that didn't come down have been Rahab's house?



The Route Of The Spies



Jericho ("moon city," a city where the moon god was worshiped) is 17 miles northeast of Jerusalem and 5 miles west of the Jordan. The record conquest of Jericho makes it clear that God gave the city into the hands of the Israelites (Jos 6). The contents of Jericho were burned as a "first fruits" offering in which everything was devoted to the LORD.

Joshua's Covenant With Israel

As long as Joshua was their leader, the people of Israel were mostly faithful to God. They conquered city after city and tribe after tribe of the Canaanites. When he was 110 years old, and he knew that he was dying, Joshua called all the heads of the tribes together at Shechem—the very place where God had promised to give the land to Abraham,⁶ and where Joshua (Jos 24: 32) was buried.⁷ There all the tribes swore to serve God faithfully.

Joshua gave them a chance to back out. He suggested that serving God would be too hard for them. "You cannot serve the LORD; for he is a holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions or your sins. If you forsake the LORD and serve foreign gods, then he will turn and do you harm, and consume you, after having done you good."⁸

But the people insisted that they would serve God. "Nay, but we will serve the LORD," they assured him.

Then Joshua said to the people, "You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen the LORD, to serve him." And they said, "We are witnesses." He said, "Then put away the foreign gods which are among you, and incline your heart to the LORD, the God of Israel." And the people said to Joshua, "The LORD our God we will serve, and his voice we will obey." So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and made statutes and ordinances for them at Shechem. (Jos 24: 22-25)

Then Joshua died. The book of Joshua tells us that all the heads of the tribes who had made that covenant with Joshua were faithful to it. Israel served the True God as long as they were alive.⁹

Once they died, however, Israel began to lapse again.



The ancient remains of the Baal-Berith Temple in Shechem, Samaria. A prominent Biblical city which occupied a strategic position in the pass between Mt. Gerizim and Mt. Ebal. In Rabbinical literature, the idol Baal-berith, which the Jews worshiped after the death of Gideon, was identical, according to the Rabbis, with Baal-zebub, "the ba'al of flies," the god of Ekron (2 Kings 1: 2). He was worshiped in the shape of a fly; and so addicted were the Jews to his cult that they would carry an image of him in their pockets, producing it, and kissing it from time to time.

The Right Time To Attack

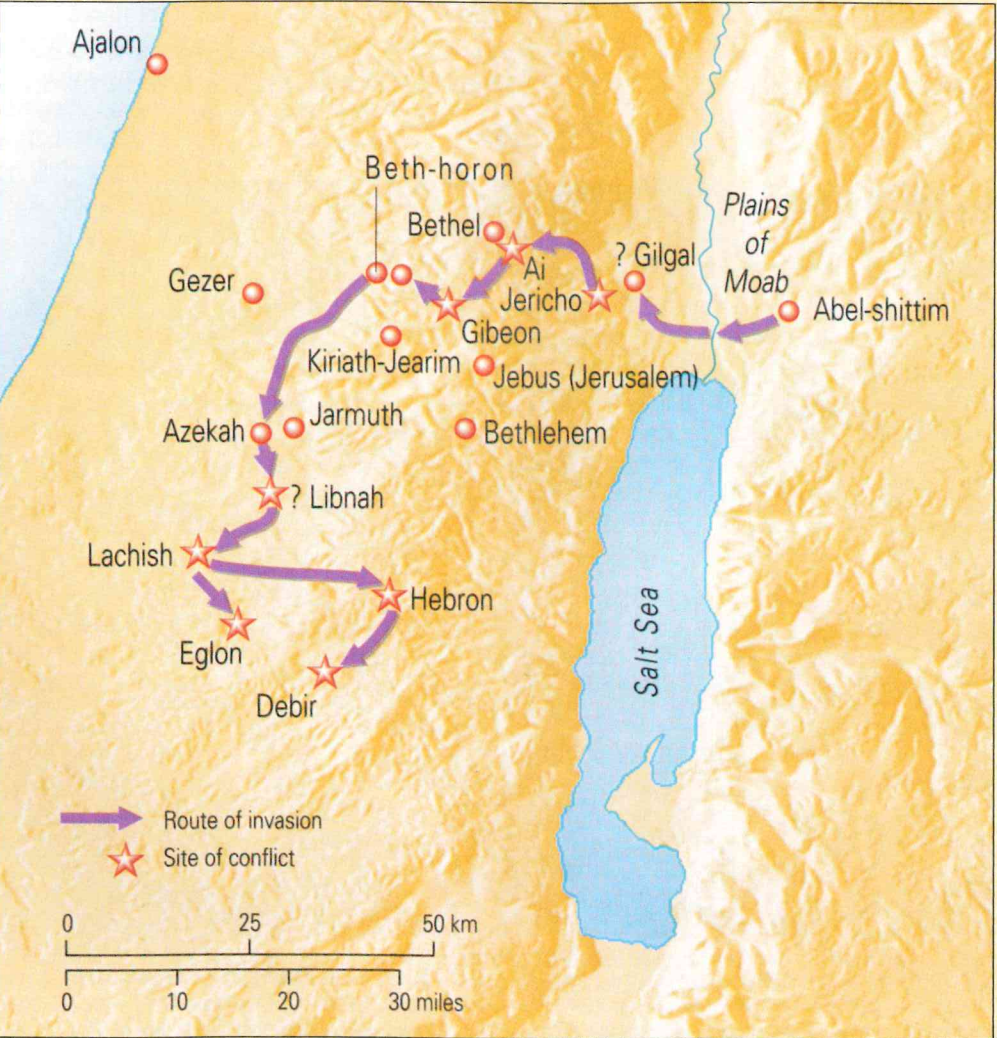
God promised to send “hornets” before Israel to help drive the Canaanites out of the Promised Land (see Ex 23: 28). He kept his promise—not by sending a literal plague of hornets, but by plaguing the Canaanites with civil wars and difficult times.

For a long time before the Israelites arrived, Canaan had been under the influence of Egypt. The Canaanite tribes had been more or less united, and they could count on strong Egyptian armies to defend them.

But by the time Israel was ready to begin the conquest of the Promised Land, Egypt had pulled back. With no great power to keep them in line, the Canaanite cities and tribes started fighting with one another. Instead of uniting against the Israelite invaders, the Canaanites kept up their petty civil wars.

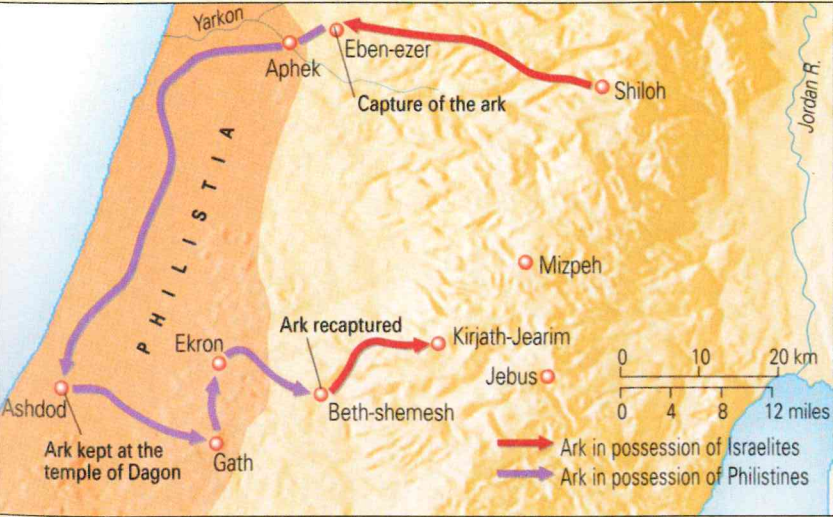
With no united opposition, the Israelites were able to take town after town. They still had to fight for every inch of territory, but the Canaanites’ difficulties made the conquest possible. Once again, God had kept his promise to his people.

The Invasion Of Canaan



Time-Line Of Early Israel And Her Neighbors

Date	Early Israel	Egypt	Mesopotamia	Asia Minor
3000 B.C.		Old Kingdom 29th-23rd centuries Pyramid Age 26th-25th centuries	Early Sumerians 2800-2360	
2500			Sargon of Akkad Dynasty ca. 2360-2180 Ur III	
2000	Abraham leaves Ur	Middle Kingdom 21st-18th centuries Syria-Palestine		
1750		Hyksos ca. 1720-1550 New Kingdom ca. 1570-1310 Amarna Letters ca. 1400-1350 Exodus of Hebrews ca. 1280 (?) Rameses II End of Egyptian Empire ca. 1100		Old Hittite Empire 1740-1460
1500	Ugaritic Texts 14th Century			New Hittite Empire 1460-1200
1250	Hebrew Conquest 1250-1200 Judges 1200-1020 Saul 1020-1000 David 1000-961 Solomon 961-922		Assyria strong under Tiglath-pileser I 1118-1078	
1000			Ashur-dan II 934-912	



The Capture Of The Ark By The Philistines And The Return Of The Ark To The Israelites

In a battle (ca.1050 B.C.) to protect Shiloh from the threatening Philistines, the Israelites suffered a crushing defeat by the Philistines at Eben-ezer. The Philistines captured the Ark, which the Israelites had brought to the battlefield hoping it would make them victorious. The plagues and calamities that were wrought upon the Philistines by God forced them to return the Ark by ox-cart to Beth-shemesh.

The Judges

After the book of Joshua comes the book of Judges. In Judges we read how, over and over, Israel fell away from God into idolatry—and then into anarchy and even civil war. But at the darkest hours, God raised up “judges”—soldier-prophets who rescued the people of Israel from their enemies. But as soon as they were safe, they forgot about God again, and the cycle started all over. Why did Israel fall away so easily? The book of Judges gives a simple answer: Israel failed to drive out the Canaanites. It was much easier for the people of Israel just to settle down in the land they had already conquered and ignore the Canaanites who were too hard to conquer. The first chapter of Judges gives a long list of Canaanite tribes and cities that the Israelites left alone.

The Canaanites were city-dwellers, people who built temples of stone and lived in comfortable brick houses. They must have seemed very sophisticated to the nomadic Israelites, who were used to living in tents. Whenever the people of Israel settled close to the Canaanites, the Canaanite civilization always started to attract them. And, of course, the Canaanite religions went with that civilization. Soon the Canaanite cities would be full of Israelites admiring the magnificent temples and their impressive ceremonies.

Meanwhile, Israel was falling apart. The tribes were acting as separate units, not as a unified nation. Once they even fell into a sordid civil war, in which the tribe of Benjamin was nearly exterminated. Disunited and squabbling, the tribes of Israel were easy prey for stronger powers—like the newly arrived Philistines on the coast, who would be Israel’s most hated enemies for a very long time. (The name “Palestine” comes from the Philistines who settled there.) God brought them champions to redeem them from their enemies, but all too often the people of Israel would simply turn back to God for a little while and then lapse back into idolatry. Then, as punishment for their sins, God would allow them to fall into the hands of another conqueror.



“And the Lord said to Gideon, ‘The people are still too many; take them down to the water and I will test them for you there;’...and the Lord said to Gideon, ‘Every one that laps the water with his tongue, as a dog laps, you shall set by himself; likewise every one that kneels down to drink.’” (Jgs 7: 4-5)

The Judges Of Israel:
Deliverers Of Law-Freedom Fighters-Champions

JUDGE	Years of Service	Oppressor	Years of Oppression	Years of Peace	Biblical Reference	Province or Tribe
OTHNIEL		Cushan-Rishathaim Of Mesopotamia	8	40	Judges 3: 8-11	Judah
EHUD		Eglon, King of Moab	18	80	Judges 3: 12-30	Benjamin
SHAMGAR		Philistines			Judges 3: 31	Son of Anath (non-Israelite?)
DEBORAH with BARAK		Canaanites led by King Jabin and Sisera his general	20	40	Judges 4: 1-5: 31	Deborah-Ephraim Barak-Naphtali
GIDEON		Midianites and Amalekites	7	40	Judges 6: 1-8: 27	Manasseh
TOLA	23				Judges 10: 1-2	Issachar
JAIR				22	Judges 10: 3-5	Gilead
JEPHTHAH	6	Ammonites and Philistines	18		Judges 10: 6-12: 7	Gilead
IBZAN	7				Judges 12: 8-10	Bethlehem
ELON	10				Judges 12: 11-12	Zebulun
ABDON	8				Judges 12: 13-15	Ephraim
SAMSON	20	Philistines	40		Judges 13-16	Dan
SAMUEL	Last of the Judges – First of the Prophets – The “bridge” between judges and kings				1 and 2 Samuel	Benjamin



Mount Tabor and the Jezreel Plain is the site of the defeat of the Canaanite army by Deborah and Barak.

Deborah was the only woman among the judges of Israel. Along with Barak, she defeated the Canaanites, King Jabin and his general, Sisera.

The “Song of Deborah” (Jgs 5) celebrates this victory. This victory allowed the Israelites to settle in the plain without fear of Canaanite attacks for 40 years.

Samuel The King-Maker



Finally Israel was in a state of anarchy. "Every man did what was right in his own eyes," Judges 21: 25 tells us. Even the Levite priests of the True God had become mercenaries, making themselves rich on the sacrifices of the poor people of Israel.

The Israelites themselves knew that something radical had to be done to change the situation. Instead of turning humbly back to God, however, they decided they wanted a king. If they had a king to unite them, they thought, he might solve all their problems.

Samuel, the last of the Judges, had been the leader of Israel for a long time. He had won great victories over the Philistines, but in his old age he had made the mistake of setting his sons up to succeed him. It was a mistake because his sons were not like him: they were greedy men who "took bribes and perverted justice."¹⁰

All the leaders of the Israelites confronted Samuel at his home. "Behold," they said, "you are old and your sons do not walk in your ways; now appoint for us a king to govern us like all the nations."¹¹

Samuel was personally insulted. Hadn't he been a good leader? So he prayed, and God answered his prayer.

And the LORD said to Samuel, "Hearken to the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them. According to all the deeds which they have done to me, from the day I brought them up out of Egypt even to this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are also doing to you. Now then, hearken to their voice; only, you shall solemnly warn them, and show them the ways of the king who shall reign over them." (1 Sm 8: 7-9)

The people were not rejecting Samuel; they were rejecting the idea of being a nation set apart. They wanted to be like every other nation. It was exactly as Moses had prophesied, and the Book of the Law, Deuteronomy, had provided for this occasion.

So Samuel warned the people what they could expect from a king.

So Samuel told all the words of the LORD to the people who were asking a king from him. He said, "These will be the ways of the king who will reign over you: he will take your sons and appoint them to his chariots and to be his horsemen, and to run before his chariots; and he will appoint for himself commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties, and some to plow his ground and to reap his harvest, and to make his implements of war and the equipment of his chariots. He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers. He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive orchards and give them to his servants. He will take the tenth of your grain and of your vineyards and give it to his officers and to his servants. He will take your menservants and maidservants, and the best of your cattle and your asses, and put them to his work. He will take the tenth of your flocks, and you shall be his slaves. And in that day you will cry out because of your king, whom you have chosen for yourselves; but the LORD will not answer you in that day."

But the people refused to listen to the voice of Samuel; and they said, "No! but we will have a king over us, that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may govern us and go out before us and fight our battles." (1 Sm 8: 10-20)

Samuel told the people exactly what they could expect from a king: taxes, military service, and oppression. But the people insisted. Samuel obeyed their wishes and God's word. He agreed to find a king for them, no matter how much he hated the idea himself. But all his predictions would come true.

On a high hill overlooking Jerusalem from the north is a mosque covering one traditional site of Samuel's tomb. In Arabic it is called Nebi Samwil. A few miles east is Er Ram thought to be ancient Ramah, Samuel's birthplace and home. 1 Sm 25: 1 states that Samuel was buried at Ramah. Like many places in Bible lands, exact locations can remain controversial.



Saul, The Anointed One

God led Samuel to a man named Saul from the tiny tribe of Benjamin. Saul certainly looked like a king. He was the handsomest man anyone in Israel had seen, and he was taller by a head than anyone else. Still, he had no idea that he was about to be chosen to rule Israel. Saul had to see Samuel to ask about some lost livestock; imagine his surprise when he found that Samuel had an expensive dinner prepared for him.

Saul must have been even more surprised by what Samuel did next. "Then Samuel took a vial of oil and poured it on his head, and kissed him and said, 'Has not the LORD anointed you to be prince over his people Israel?'"¹²

To "anoint" means to put oil on something as a sign of consecration. The oil was a visible sign that Saul had been chosen by God. Once he was anointed by God's prophet, Saul became the *anointed one*—"messiah" in Hebrew, or "christ" in Greek. That is what "christ" means: the anointed one, someone chosen by God and anointed to be the leader and savior of God's people.

Until this time, only priests had been anointed. But after Saul had been anointed, he began to prophesy. The Spirit of God had come upon him. The people might have rejected God from being king over them, but God was showing them that he would still rule them through their king. Saul would be king not because the people had chosen him, but because God himself had chosen him.

Saul's First Big Mistake

At first, things went very well under the new king. He defeated the Ammonites gloriously, and the people began to congratulate themselves on having made the right choice.

But power quickly went to Saul's head. "If both you and the king who reigns over you will follow the LORD your God, it will be well," Samuel warned the people; "but if you will not hearken to the voice of the LORD, but rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then the hand of the LORD will be against you and your king."¹³

Saul wanted to lead, not follow. He was king now, wasn't he? It was time for him to start showing a little authority.

His new attitude showed itself when a new war began with the Philistines. At first things went well, but then the Philistines put together a huge army at Michmash—"troops like the sand on the seashore in multitude,"¹⁴ the sacred author tells us.

The people of Israel didn't know what to do. Most of them seem to have been certain that the Philistines would win. Many hid out in caves or tombs; many more crossed the Jordan as refugees into neighboring countries. Even the small number—about 600 soldiers—who stayed with Saul were "trembling."¹⁵

In such desperate straits, the right thing to do was to ask for God's help, and that was what Saul did. Samuel told Saul to wait at Gilgal for seven days, and then Samuel would come and offer sacrifices.

But Samuel was a little bit late. When he didn't show up right on time, even the few remaining loyal soldiers started to wander away. Saul decided to take things into his own hands. He had the sacrifices brought to him and offered them himself.

Just as he finished, Samuel showed up. "What have you done?" Samuel demanded.

Saul tried to explain. "When I saw that the people were scattering from me, and that you did not come within the days appointed, and that the Philistines had mustered at Michmash, I said, 'Now the Philistines will come down upon me at Gilgal, and I have not entreated the favor of the LORD'; so I forced myself, and offered the burnt offering."

The Kingdom of Saul, ca. 1050 B.C.



The answer made some sense: after all, it was a time of crisis. But Saul's answer showed where his heart really was. He offered sacrifices not out of love for God, but rather because he wanted God to do something for him, and thought a sacrifice would be God's price. Saul had crossed an important line—the same line Aaron's sons had crossed when they “offered unholy fire before the LORD” (see Lv 10). He had decided to worship God his way, not God's way. It was the Golden Calf again.

“You have done foolishly,” Samuel told Saul; “you have not kept the commandment of the LORD your God, which he commanded you; for now the LORD would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. But now your kingdom shall not continue; the LORD has sought out a man after his own heart; and the LORD has appointed him to be prince over his people, because you have not kept what the LORD commanded you.”

Then Samuel turned around and walked away.

Now, Saul was still king. God had not deposed him. But his son would not be king after him: that was his punishment so far. He would not found a dynasty. Instead, some unrelated person would succeed him.

Saul's Second Big Mistake

Saul's next big mistake came when God, through Samuel the prophet, told Israel to destroy Amalek completely. The Amalekites were some of Israel's most dangerous enemies; they had often made horrible and bloody raids on peaceful Israelite towns. God told Saul to destroy everything not only because the Amalekites were evil, but also so that the lure of loot and booty would not become an excuse for making war on Israel's neighbors.

But Saul and his soldiers kept “the best of the sheep and of the oxen and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them; all that was despised and worthless they utterly destroyed.”¹⁶ They kept what was valuable and destroyed what was worthless.

God told Samuel what Saul had done, and Samuel, furious, went off to see for himself.

And Samuel came to Saul, and Saul said to him, “Blessed be you to the LORD; I have performed the commandment of the LORD.” And Samuel said, “What then is this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?” Saul said, “They have brought them from the Amalekites; for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice to the LORD your God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed.” (1 Sm 15:13-15)

Saul can hardly have missed the bitter sarcasm in Samuel's question about the animal noises. He knew he had been caught red-handed, and Samuel did not accept his feeble excuse. “Why did you swoop on the spoil, and do what was evil in the sight of the LORD?”¹⁷ Samuel demanded. Once again Saul tried the excuse that the animals were saved for sacrifices, but Samuel did not believe it. Even if that were true, Saul was missing the point.

And Samuel said,
“Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices,
as in obeying the voice of the LORD?
Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice,
and to hearken than the fat of rams.” (1 Sm 15:22)

Saul had been trying to buy God's favor with sacrifices, not with obedience. In doing so, Saul had shown that he was the wrong sort of man to be king, and Samuel pronounced his final sentence:

Because you have rejected the word of the LORD,
He has rejected you from being king. (1 Sm 15:23)

Now at last Saul seemed to grasp that he had done wrong. “I have sinned,” he admitted; “for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD and your words, because I feared the people and obeyed their voice.” (Notice that Saul is still trying to lay at least part of the blame on his soldiers, not on himself.) “Now therefore, I pray, pardon my sin, and return with me, that I may worship the LORD.”¹⁸

When Samuel refused and turned to go, Saul grabbed the hem of Samuel's mantle—a traditional gesture of pleading. But Samuel must have been walking away briskly. The mantle tore, leaving Saul kneeling, with a shred of fabric dangling from his hand.

Samuel saw the accident as a powerful symbol. “The LORD has torn the kingdom of Israel from you this day,” Samuel declared, “and has given it to a neighbor of yours, who is better than you.”¹⁹

There was Saul's final sentence. For his first offense he had lost his dynasty; now he lost the kingdom itself. In the very next chapter of the book, we read how God sent Samuel to Bethlehem to anoint another king to replace Saul—a young man from the neighboring tribe of Judah who seemed like a very unlikely choice for a king.

The cliffs of Michmash. In 1020 B.C., the Philistines invaded Israel and camped in force at Michmash, threatening King Saul's capital at Gibeah. Jonathan and his armour-bearer surprised the Philistine garrison by climbing across from Geba at a steep place down the valley, and in the panic that followed, Saul defeated the Philistines chasing them back to their own borders.



The Man After God's Own Heart

When God told Samuel to go to the house of Jesse and anoint one of Jesse's sons, Samuel might have expected to find another regal-looking prince like Saul. There were many stately young men among Jesse's large family. But one by one Jesse's sons appeared before Samuel, and no matter how kingly they might have looked, not one of them was God's choice. "Do not look on his appearance or the height of his stature," God told Samuel as Samuel admired Jesse's eldest son, "because I have rejected him; for the LORD sees not as man sees; man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart."²⁰

In fact, the choice turned out to be Jesse's youngest son David. Jesse had not even called David in to meet Samuel. David was a shepherd, and he was out tending the sheep—which was all Jesse thought he was good for. But God saw David's heart "Arise, anoint him; for this is he," God told Samuel. Samuel anointed David, and "the spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David from that day forward."²¹

Then, in the very next verse, we find that "the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul." There could be only one Messiah, one Anointed One. Although Saul still possessed the kingdom, his special status as the Lord's Anointed was gone. Instead, an evil spirit came to torment him.

Now comes an ironic twist in the story. Saul's ministers decided that music would be good for him. And where would they find a good musician? "Behold," one of them began, "I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite..."

David—the young shepherd whom Samuel had just anointed to replace Saul—was also the best musician in the kingdom. Completely unaware that David was God's choice to replace him, Saul took David into his court. Whenever the evil spirit came on Saul, David would play his lyre, and Saul felt better. Christian readers will be reminded of how, in the Gospels, evil spirits fled the presence of Jesus Christ, the heir of David's kingdom (see, for example, Luke 4:41, where the demons "knew that he was the Christ"—that is, the Anointed One).

"And David came to Saul, and entered his service. And Saul loved him greatly, and he became his armour-bearer.... And whenever the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, David took the lyre and played it with his hand; so Saul was refreshed,... and the evil spirit departed from him." (1 Sm 16: 21-23)



SUPPLEMENTARY READING

Augustine, *City of God*, Book XVII From Chapter 6

In this way, too, the kingdom of Saul himself, who certainly was reprobated and rejected, was the shadow of a kingdom yet to come which should remain to eternity. For, indeed, the oil with which he was anointed, and from that chrism he is called Christ, is to be taken in a mystical sense, and is to be understood as a great mystery; which David himself venerated so much in him, that he trembled with smitten heart when, being hid in a dark cave, which Saul also entered when pressed by the necessity of nature, he had come secretly behind him and cut off a small piece of his robe, that he might be able to prove how he had spared him when he could have killed him, and might thus remove from his mind the suspicion through which he had vehemently persecuted the holy David, thinking him his enemy. Therefore he was much afraid lest he should be accused of violating so great a mystery in Saul, because he had thus meddled even his clothes. For thus it is written: "And David's heart smote him because he had taken away the skirt of his cloak." But to the men with him, who advised him to destroy Saul thus delivered up into his hands, he saith, "The LORD forbid that I should do this thing to my

lord, the LORD's Christ, to lay my hand upon him, because he is the LORD's Christ." Therefore he showed so great reverence to this shadow of what was to come, not for its own sake, but for the sake of what it prefigured. Whence also that which Samuel says to Saul, "Since thou hast not kept my commandment which the LORD commanded thee, whereas now the LORD would have prepared thy kingdom over Israel for ever, yet now thy kingdom shall not continue for thee; and the LORD will seek Him a man after His own heart, and the LORD will command him to be prince over His people, because thou hast not kept that which the LORD commanded thee," is not to be taken as if God had settled that Saul himself should reign for ever, and afterwards, on his sinning, would not keep this promise; nor was He ignorant that he would sin, but He had established his kingdom that it might be a figure of the eternal kingdom. Therefore he added, "Yet now thy kingdom shall not continue for thee." Therefore what it signified has stood and shall stand; but it shall not stand for this man, because he himself was not to reign for ever, nor his offspring; so that at least that word "for ever" might seem to be fulfilled through his posterity one to another.



"He (David) said to his men, 'The Lord forbid that I should do this thing to my lord, the Lord's anointed, to put forth my hand against him, seeing he is the Lord's anointed.' So David persuaded his men with these words, and did not permit them to attack Saul." (1 Sm 24: 6-7)

VOCABULARY

CHRIST

Greek for “messiah.” See Messiah.

DAVID

The second king of Israel, a “man after God’s own heart.” God made a new covenant with all the nations through David.

JERICHO

An ancient and strategically vital city in Canaan, the first major city to be captured by the Israelites.

JORDAN

The river that formed the eastern border of Canaan. Many, including Jesus, were baptized here by St. John the Baptist.

JUDGES

Temporary leaders appointed by God to lead the people of Israel when enemies oppressed them.

MANTLE

An outer garment that was also the symbol of the wearer’s office.



“And David said, ‘The Lord who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.’ And Saul said to David, ‘Go, and the Lord be with you!’” (1 Sm 17:37)

MESSIAH

Hebrew for “Anointed One,” a title of the kings of Israel.

PALESTINE

Another name for the land of Canaan. Named for the Philistines who settled there.

PHILISTINES

A powerful nation that invaded Canaan from the sea and became the most hated enemies of Israel.

RAHAB

A Canaanite woman of Jericho who helped the Israelite spies escape. She later married an Israelite and became one of the human ancestors of Jesus Christ.

SAMUEL

A Levite priest, the last of the Judges, and the man chosen by God to anoint a king for Israel.

SAUL

The first king of Israel, anointed by Samuel. Later rejected by God.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What was the first target of the Israelites in Canaan?
2. Who succeeded Moses as leader of Israel?
3. With whom did Joshua’s spies stay in Canaan?
4. What happened when the Levite priests reached the river Jordan with the Ark?
5. What important ceremony did the Israelites perform before beginning the conquest of Jericho?
6. How did the army of Israel defeat the city of Jericho?
7. Name two important descendants of Rahab.
8. Why did Israel need God to send them “judges”?
9. Why was the tribe of Benjamin nearly exterminated?
10. Why did the people of Israel want a king so badly?
11. What did God tell Samuel was the real reason they desired a king?
12. What did Samuel prophesy about the king who would rule over Israel?
13. What ceremony did Samuel perform to show that Saul had been chosen by God as king of Israel?
14. What does “anointed” mean?
15. What two mistakes did Saul make that cost him his dynasty and his kingdom?
16. Where did God send Samuel to find Saul’s successor?
17. Who was chosen by God to succeed Saul as king of Israel?



“... an evil spirit from God rushed upon Saul, and he raved within his house,... and Saul cast the spear, for he thought, ‘I will pin David to the wall.’ But David evaded him twice.” (1 Sm 18: 10-11)

PRACTICAL EXERCISES

- 1. The Israelites went about conquering Jericho in a very interesting way. God used this event to show that the conquest of the Promised Land would be a gift from him, and not gained by the merits of Israel or its military prowess. All the people of Israel had to do was to follow God's orders and he led them to victory, even though it seemed the orders were not very oriented toward military strategy. What important lesson is God giving the people of Israel? What gift does God want to give everyone on earth in the same way he gave Israel the Promised Land? How might this affect the way we look at our daily lives and our obedience to God's Word?
- 2. The most important figures in Israelite history were descended from Rahab, a Canaanite woman of Jericho. What lesson about God's plan are we able to learn from that fact?
- 3. Saul acted foolishly when he made the sacrifice to God without waiting for

Samuel because he was acting with the wrong intention. He offered sacrifices not out of love for God, but rather because he wanted God to do something for him. Because of this, Saul was punished with the loss of his future dynasty. What important lesson does this teach us? What should we be ultimately concerned about in our relationship with God?

4. Of all Jesse's sons, the one picked as the next king of Israel was David. David was the youngest of the sons and a shepherd. Jesse hadn't even called David in to meet Samuel because he didn't think he was good for anything but watching the sheep. God, however, chose David as the next king and told Samuel to anoint him. Reread the section titled "The man after God's own heart." How did God's way of choosing the next Anointed One differ from human ways? What quality did David have that allowed God to make him a great leader?



Endnotes

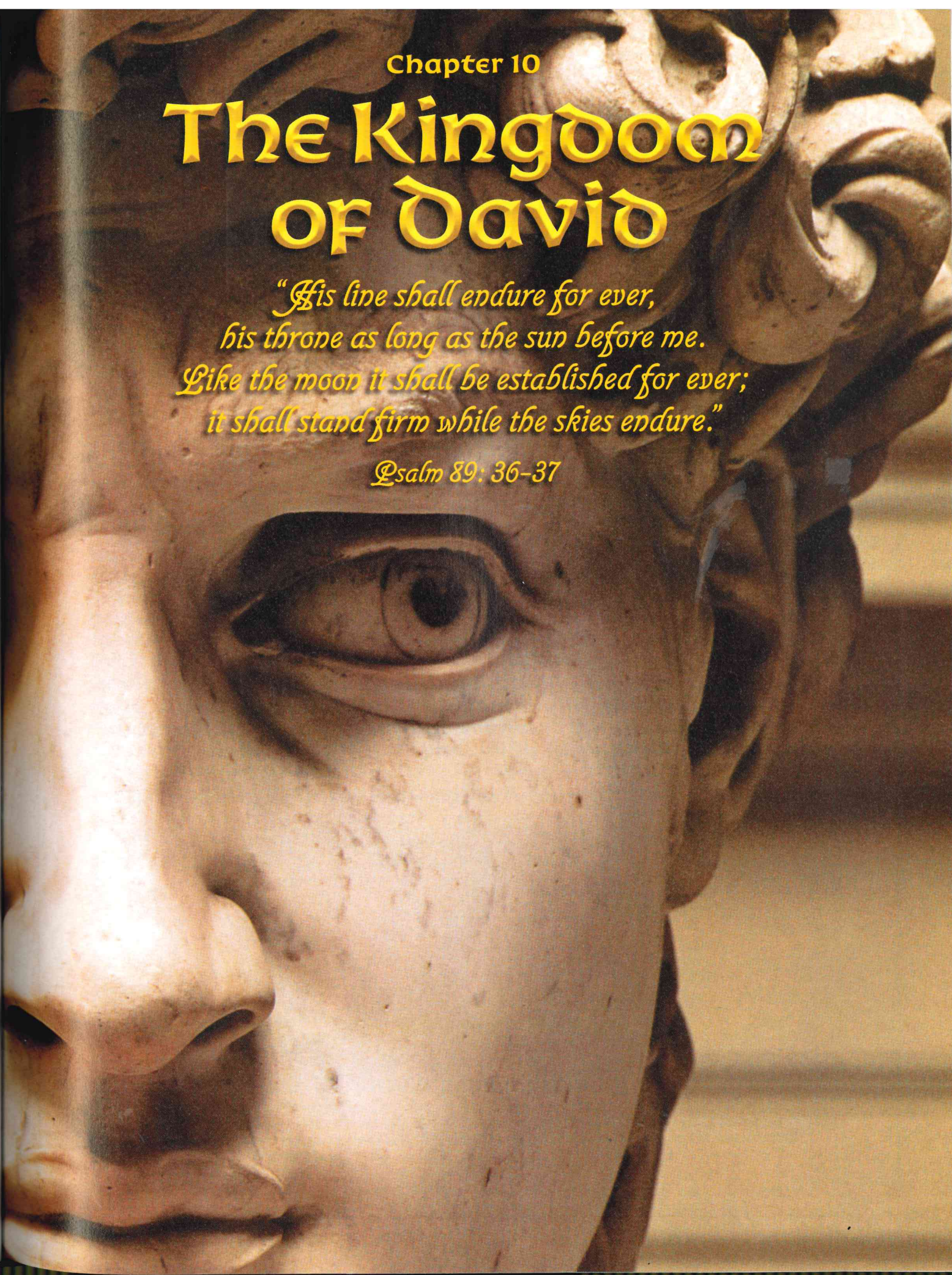
- | | | |
|-----------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Jos 1:2. | 8. Jos 24:19-20. | 15. 1 Sm 13:7. |
| 2. Jos 2:18-20. | 9. Jos 24:31. | 16. 1 Sm 15:9. |
| 3. Jos 2:24. | 10. 1 Sm 8:3. | 17. 1 Sm 15:19. |
| 4. Jos 6. | 11. 1 Sm 8:5. | 18. 1 Sm 15:24-25. |
| 5. Mt 1:5. | 12. 1 Sm 10:1. | 19. 1 Sm 15:27-28. |
| 6. Gn 12:6-7. | 13. 1 Sm 12:14-15. | 20. 1 Sm 16:7. |
| 7. Gn 50:13. | 14. 1 Sm 13:5. | 21. 1 Sm 16:12-13. |

Chapter 10

The Kingdom of David

*"His line shall endure for ever,
his throne as long as the sun before me.
Like the moon it shall be established for ever;
it shall stand firm while the skies endure."*

Psalms 89:36-37



Chapter 10

The Kingdom of David



Read

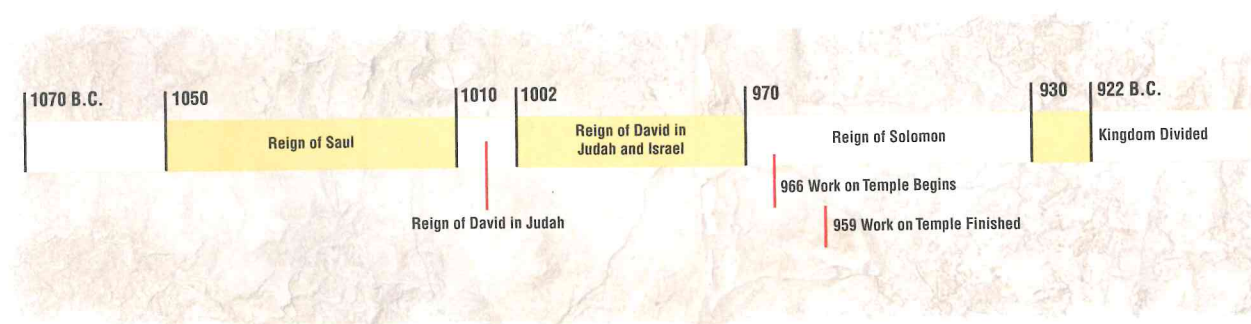
1 Samuel
26:6 - 11

2 Samuel
6:1 - 7:29
11:1 - 12:14

Psalms 89

With Saul dead, David was free to take over the kingdom. But it didn't just fall into his hands. The tribe of Judah followed him, but the northern part of Israel chose to follow Ishbaal, one of Saul's sons.¹ (His name is given as Ishbosheth in 2 Samuel. The word "bosheth" means "shame;" the writer wrote that instead of "baal" so that readers would not have to speak the name of a horrible Canaanite false god.)

Only after a long civil war did David finally wear down Ishbaal's armies. In the end, two of Ishbaal's own generals, seeing that the situation was hopeless, assassinated Ishbaal and brought his head to David. They thought they would get a reward. Instead, David had them executed as murderers, saying they had "slain a righteous man."² Unlike most rulers, David could distinguish between the character of Ishbaal and the unfortunate circumstances that made Ishbaal his enemy.



Jerusalem, David's New Capital

When the founders of the United States were deciding where to put the capital of the new country, they faced a serious problem. Whatever city they chose, it would make one state seem more important than the others. In the beginning, it was hard to hold the states together, and more regional jealousy was the last thing the new nation needed. So the national government finally decided to build a new city, one that would not be in any state. Even today, the District of Columbia is governed directly by Congress.

David had exactly the same problem. It was hard to hold the twelve tribes together. If David put his capital in his own homeland, Judah, the northern tribes—already rebellious—might think he wanted nothing to do with them. But if David put his capital somewhere in the north, it would seem as though he was turning his back on his faithful followers in Judah.

But there was an ancient city right on the border between Judah and the other tribes, a city that belonged to none of the tribes.

Jerusalem was one of those Canaanite cities that the Israelites had failed to destroy during the conquest. "But the people of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites who dwelt in Jerusalem; so the Jebusites have dwelt with the people of Benjamin in Jerusalem to this day," says Judges 1:21. Joshua 15:63 says that Judah failed to drive out the Jebusites, and that the Jebusites are still dwelling with the people of Judah. Evidently Jerusalem was right on the border between Judah and Benjamin.

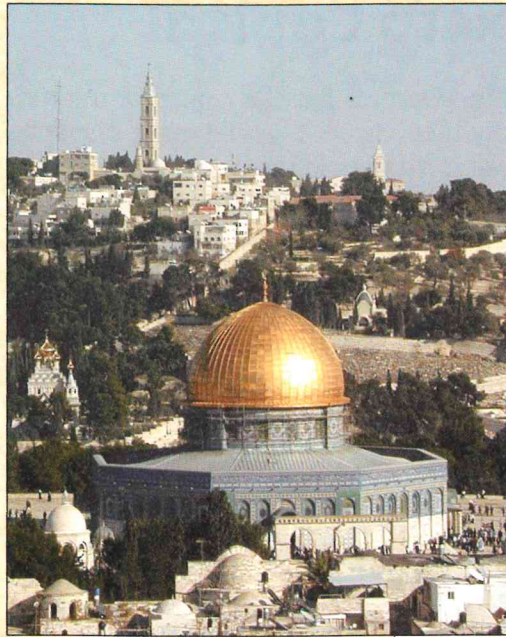
Finishing the job that ought to have been done generations before, David finally attacked the proud and wicked Jebusites. The Jebusites thought Jerusalem could never be taken. They heaped insults on David, telling him that even the blind and the lame in their city could turn back his puny army.³ So David offered his generals an incentive: "Whoever shall smite the Jebusites first shall be chief and commander."⁴ His general Joab made the first strike, so Joab became David's right-hand man—his prime minister, so to speak. We'll hear a lot more about Joab later. David's army drove out the Jebusites, and David immediately made his home in Jerusalem.

From that time on, Jerusalem was David's capital. It even became known as the City of David—a name the old part of the city still bears today. David built up the city, and his new ally King Hiram of Tyre sent Phoenician craftsmen to build a palace for King David. We know from other historical sources that Tyre was just entering a golden age of prosperity under King Hiram, and this would not be the last time in his long reign that Hiram would prove a friend to Israel.



The City of David from the southwest. The earliest city of Jerusalem is the City of David on a smaller hill south of and lower than the Temple Mount. Jerusalem stands high in the Judean hills with no access by sea or river. The ground drops steeply away on all sides except to the north. To the east, between Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives is the Kidron Valley. The Hinnom Valley curves around the city to the south and west. The Central or Tyropoean Valley cuts through the ancient city.

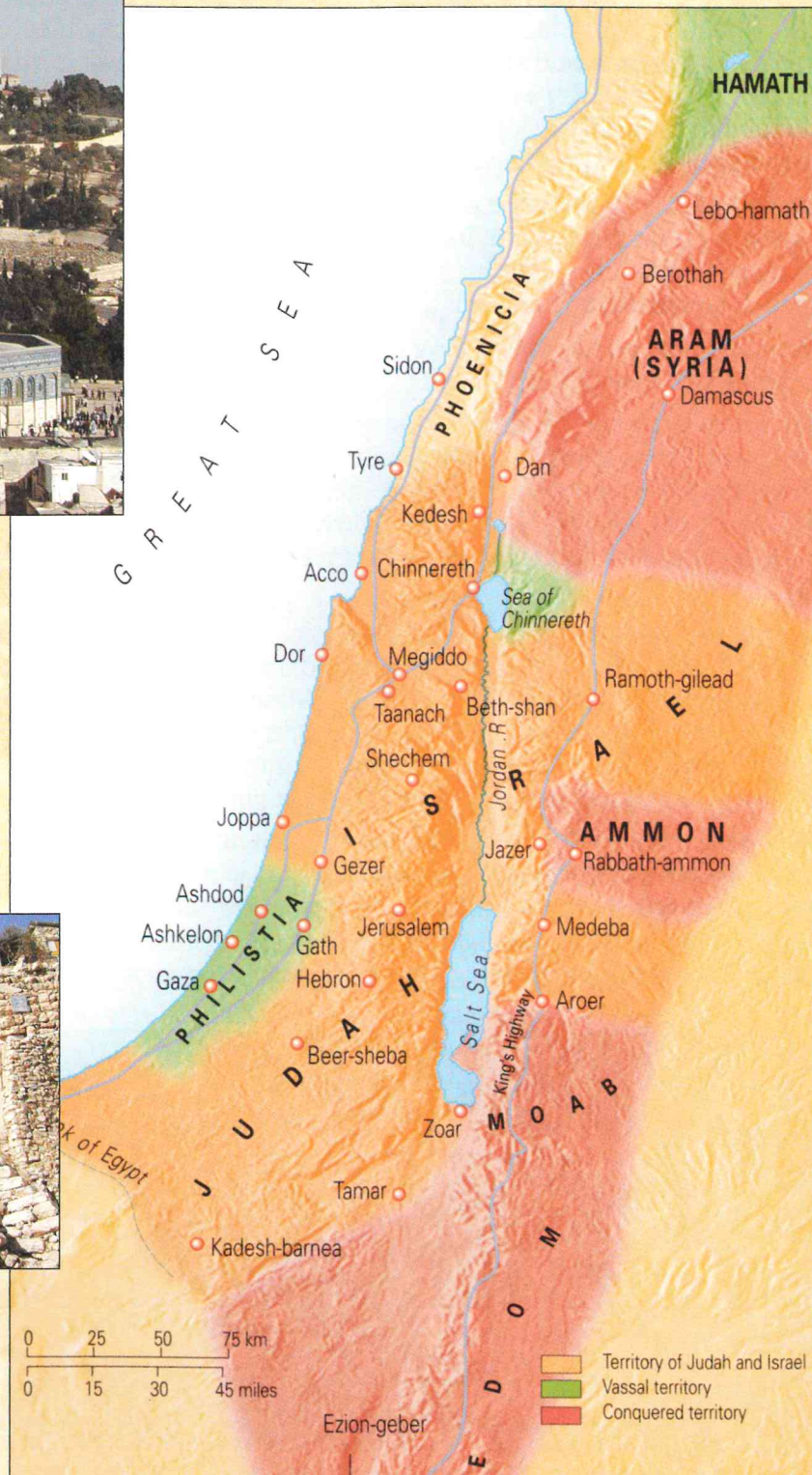
David's Kingdom



The Dome of the Rock mosque built upon the Sacred Stone of Abraham on Mount Moriah (Temple Mount) is where Solomon's Temple first stood. Planned by David and built by Solomon, the Temple was the worship focal point for Israelites until its destruction by Babylonians in 587 B.C. Three times the Temple was built or rebuilt: Solomon's Temple, the Second Temple and Herod's Temple. All three were destroyed. The mosque was built over the Temple ruins in 691 A.D. by caliph Omar.



The upper portion of this excavation in the City of David is thought to be where the palace and citadel of David may have been located. The stepped stone structure dates to about 1000 B.C. (the time of David). This area was inside the city walls when the Temple was built.



Bringing The Ark To Jerusalem

Once David had firmly established himself at Jerusalem, he decided to bring the Ark of the Covenant there. That would make Jerusalem not just the political center of Israel, but the religious center as well.

David's first try at bringing the ark was a dismal failure. He brought a brand-new cart to carry it, but the cart rocked back and forth. When one of the procession reached out to steady the ark, he was struck dead on the spot. David was so afraid of God's wrath that he refused to go any farther. He stopped and left the ark in the care of Obed-edom, whose house was nearby.

What went wrong? David had not followed the law. The instructions for carrying the ark were very specific: it had to be borne on the shoulders of Levite priests.⁵ And no one could ever touch the ark itself.⁶ As the sign of God's presence among his people, it was a holy thing. David himself understood exactly what went wrong: "we did not care for it in the way that is ordained."⁷



David didn't try bringing the ark to Jerusalem again for three months, and he spent those months making preparations. This time, he would do everything right. He prepared a place for the ark and pitched a tent there. He told the Levites who would carry it to sanctify themselves. He arranged for a magnificent procession, with music and sacrifices.⁸

**Thy solemn processions are seen, O God,
the processions of my God, my King, into the sanctuary —
the singers in front, the minstrels last,
between them maidens playing timbrels ... (Ps 68: 24-25)**

This time, everything did go right. David himself led the parade, dressed not as a king but as a priest, in a linen ephod. He leaped and danced for joy "with all his might."⁹ And when the ark reached its place, David himself offered the sacrifices.

Why was it all right for David to act as a priest? He was not a Levite. When Saul tried offering sacrifices, he was severely punished.

But there was a huge difference between David and Saul. David was a man after God's own heart. Saul's sacrifices were just a business transaction with God. David danced and made offerings out of love and joy, not because he wanted something from God. And God had chosen David for a new covenant that would begin to erase some of the distinctions made by the law.

Saul's daughter Michal, David's wife, understood the difference, too. She watched David from her window and thought he looked ridiculous. When she came out to meet him, she was dripping with sarcasm. "How the king of Israel has honored himself today," she said with a sneer, "uncovering himself before the eyes of his servants' maids, as one of the vulgar fellows shamelessly uncovers himself!"¹⁰

For Michal, royal dignity was the important thing. She could not understand the sincere love and joy that David had felt. Like Saul, she had never felt it herself.

"I will make merry before the LORD," David told her. "I will make myself yet more contemptible than this, and I will be abased in your eyes; but by the maids of whom you have spoken, by them I shall be held in honor."¹¹

The Liturgy Of The Ark

What was that grand procession like when David brought the Ark to Jerusalem? Many scholars believe that the actual liturgy David used is preserved for us in Psalm 24. We can imagine what the scene must have been like.

As the Ark slowly moves toward Jerusalem, hundreds of voices sing a hymn of praise:

The earth is the LORD's, and the fullness thereof,
the world and those who dwell therein;
for he has founded it upon the seas,
and established it upon the rivers.

Then the procession reaches the base of Mount Zion, and the choir sings a new hymn:

Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD?
And who shall stand in his holy place?
He who has clean hands and a pure heart,
who does not lift up his soul to what is false,
and does not swear deceitfully.
He will receive blessing from the LORD,
and vindication from the God of his salvation.
Such is the generation of those who seek him,
who seek the face of the God of Jacob.

Now a huge orchestra of every kind of instrument makes a joyful noise,²² and to the sound of drums and harps and cymbals and lyres, the Ark makes its way up the hill to the gates of the city. Finally, the procession reaches the gate. The music stops, and the choir sings out,

Lift up your heads, O gates!
and be lifted up, O ancient doors!
that the King of glory may come in.

On cue, the people inside the gates call out,
Who is this King of glory?

From the choir outside comes the answer,
The LORD, strong and mighty,
the LORD, mighty in battle!

Then again the choir sings out,
Lift up your heads, O gates!
and be lifted up, O ancient doors!
that the King of glory may come in.

Once again, the people inside the gates call out,
Who is this King of glory?

From the choir outside comes the answer,
The LORD of hosts,
he is the King of glory!

Then the orchestra strikes up again, and to thunderous cheers and shouts of joy, the Ark enters the city, with King David himself leaping and dancing at the head of the procession.

All this is guessing, of course. But it is a well-educated guess. David wrote Psalm 24, and we know from 1 Chronicles 15 that he himself prepared the music for the procession. It is not unreasonable to assume that he wrote the words and music for the occasion himself. Even if Psalm 24 is not exactly the liturgy used on that occasion, it gives us a good idea of the sort of thing David would have written.



The Covenant With David

Now Jerusalem was the political and spiritual capital of Israel, and Israel had become a power to reckon with in the region. David's conquests had built Israel into a small empire. After a while, Jerusalem had grown to reflect the new status of David and Israel. The crowning glory of the city was David's palace, built of cedar wood imported from Lebanon. The City of David had begun to look like an imperial capital.

But the Ark of the Covenant was still in a tent. It was probably a richly decorated tent, but it was still only a tent.

"See now," David said to the prophet Nathan, "I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells in a tent."

Nathan understood what David had in mind right away: a temple, a real building where for the first time the True God could be worshiped as magnificently as the false gods of the Canaanites. "Go, do all that is in your heart," Nathan replied, "for the LORD is with you."¹²

But that night Nathan had a vision from God. "Go and tell my servant David, 'Thus says the LORD: Would you build me a house to dwell in? I have not dwelt in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day...'"¹³

David will not build a temple, God told Nathan. Instead, God had something much more important for him.

"...Moreover the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house. When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come forth from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall 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 commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men; but I will not take my steadfast love from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure for ever before me; your throne shall be established forever.'" (2 Sm 7: 11-16)

Nathan went to David the next morning and told him everything God had promised. And God was giving David a lot.

- *The Lord will make you a house:* David will be the founder of a **dynasty**.
- *I will establish his kingdom:* The son of David will be ruler of a **kingdom**.
- *He shall build a house for my name:* David's son will build the **temple** that David had planned to build.
- *I will be his father, and he shall be my son:* David's son would be adopted as **God's own son**. This is the first time the idea of divine sonship is applied to one individual. Before this, the whole people of Israel had been called God's first-born son, but no single person had ever been "son of God."
- *I will chasten him... but I will not take my steadfast love from him:* God would **never disown** David's line the way he disowned Saul, no matter how much his descendants might sin. The covenant would be permanent. Like a loving father, God would punish his son, but only for his own good. Nothing could change the father-son relationship.
- *Your throne shall be established for ever:* The dynasty of David would **never end**. Dynasties rise and fall in all other earthly monarchies, but the throne of David would always be occupied by a descendant of David himself.

Even David, one of the great poets of all time, had trouble finding words to express his feelings. He ran to the tent where the Ark was kept, sat down in front of it, and poured out his heart.

Then King David went in and sat before the LORD, and said, "Who am I, O LORD God, and what is my house, that thou hast brought me thus far? And yet this was a small thing in thy eyes, O LORD God; thou hast spoken also of thy servant's house for a great while to come; this is the law for man,¹⁴ O LORD God! And what more can David say to thee? For thou knowest thy servant, O LORD God! Because of thy promise, and according to thy own



heart, thou hast wrought all this greatness, to make thy servant know it. Therefore thou art great, O LORD God; for there is none like thee, and there is no God besides thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears. What other nation on earth is like thy people Israel, whom God went to redeem to be his people, making himself a name, and doing for them great and terrible things, by driving out before his people a nation and its gods? And thou didst establish for thyself thy people Israel to be thy people for ever; and thou, O LORD, didst become their God. And now, O LORD God, confirm for ever the word which thou hast spoken concerning thy servant and concerning his house, and do as thou hast spoken; and thy name will be magnified for ever, saying, 'The LORD of hosts is God over Israel,' and the house of thy servant David will be established before thee. For thou, O LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, hast made this revelation to thy servant, saying, 'I will build you a house'; therefore thy servant has found courage to pray this prayer to thee. And now, O LORD God, thou art God, and thy words are true, and thou hast promised this good thing to thy servant;

now therefore may it please thee to bless the house of thy servant, that it may continue for ever before thee; for thou, O LORD God, hast spoken, and with thy blessing shall the house of thy servant be blessed for ever." (2 Sm 7:18-29)

David is par excellence the king "after God's own heart," the shepherd who prays for his people and prays in their name. His submission to the will of God, his praise, and his repentance, will be a model for the prayer of the people. His prayer, the prayer of God's Anointed, is a faithful adherence to the divine promise and expresses a loving and joyful trust in God, the only King and Lord (cf. 2 Sm 7:18-29). In the Psalms, David, inspired by the Holy Spirit, is the first prophet of Jewish and Christian prayer. The prayer of Christ, the true Messiah and Son of David, will reveal and fulfill the meaning of this prayer. (CCC 2579)

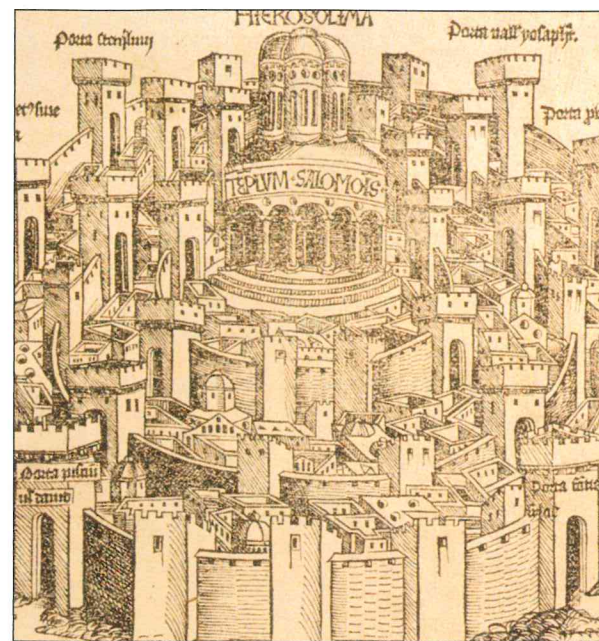
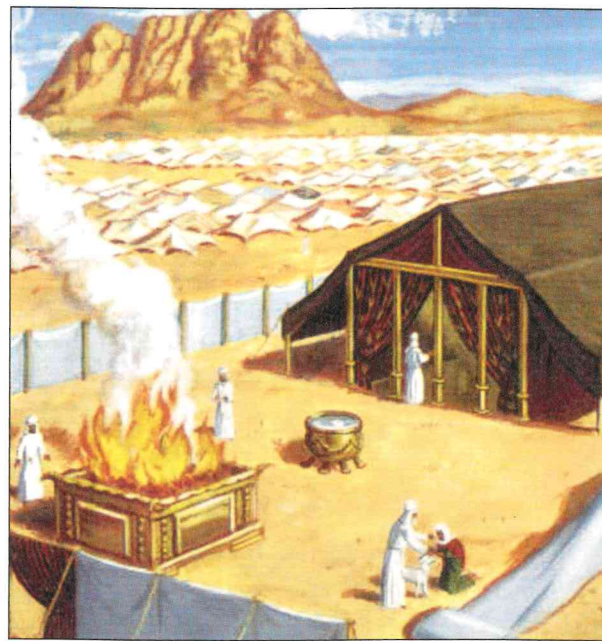


A page from 1 Chronicles shows King David placing the Ark of the Covenant in the Tabernacle. From The Wenceslas Bible, Prague, ca. 1389-1395

Beyond Sinai To Zion

From the moment David learned of God's covenant with him, Jerusalem replaced Sinai as the center of Israel's religion. At Sinai, God had given the people of Israel a law designed to set them apart from the other nations and keep them separate. Now the time had come for the Israelites to begin the mission that God had always planned for them: to be a nation of priests, leading the other nations of the world to God.

The Sinai Covenant	The Zion Covenant
Tent: the center of worship is a temporary shelter that can be moved with nomadic tribes	Temple: the center of worship is a permanent structure that draws all people to Jerusalem
National: the covenant is with Israel only	International: the covenant reaches to all nations through Israel
Exclusive: designed to keep the nations out	Inclusive: designed to invite the nations in
Torah: a law designed to keep the Israelites separate from the nations	Wisdom literature: a new Torah designed to speak to all mankind
Sin offering: the most important religious ceremony is an offering to atone for sins	Todah: the most important religious ceremony is the thank offering (in Greek, "eucharist") in thanksgiving for God's deliverance



The Davidic Covenant: Seven Primary Features

When we look at how the history of David's dynasty developed, we can point out seven primary features of the Davidic covenant:

1. David's line will have a **kingdom**. A kingdom is more than just a nation. The difference between a kingdom and a nation is like the difference between England and Wales, or the United States and Iowa. And David and his descendants will be more than kings; they will be *great* kings.

*And I will make him the first-born,
the highest of the kings of the earth. (Ps 89: 27)*

2. The covenant is made with David's whole **dynasty**.

Moreover the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house [that is, a dynasty]. When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come forth out of your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house [that is, the Temple] for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. (2 Sm 7: 11-13)

3. When the son of David is anointed, he is adopted as **God's own son**.

I will be his father, and he shall be my son. (2 Sm 7: 14)

*I will tell of the decree of the LORD:
He said to me, "You are my son,
today I have begotten you." (Ps 2: 7)*

Anointing with oil makes the Son of David "messiah" in Hebrew or "Christ" in Greek—that is, the Anointed One. Psalm 110 calls him a priest as well as king: "You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek."¹⁵ (Melchizedek was king and priest in the Jerusalem of Abraham's time.)

4. The covenant is **unlimited** in time and space. David's throne will be everlasting, and "the ends of the earth" (Ps 2: 8; Ps 72: 8) his kingdom's boundaries.

*"...His line shall endure for ever,
his throne as long as the sun before me.
Like the moon it shall be established for ever;
it shall stand firm while the skies endure." (Ps 89: 36-37)*

*Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage,
and the ends of the earth your possession. (Ps 2: 8)*

*May he have dominion from sea to sea,
and from the River to the ends of the earth! (Ps 72: 8)*

When Jesus tells his disciples to be his witnesses "in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth,"¹⁶ he draws a kind of concentric map of David's kingdom, showing that Jesus is the new heir of the Davidic covenant.

5. **Jerusalem** becomes the spiritual center of the world. Zion, the central mountain of Jerusalem, eclipses Sinai. Now Zion is the holy mountain of God.

*I have set my king
on Zion, my holy hill. (Ps 2: 6)*

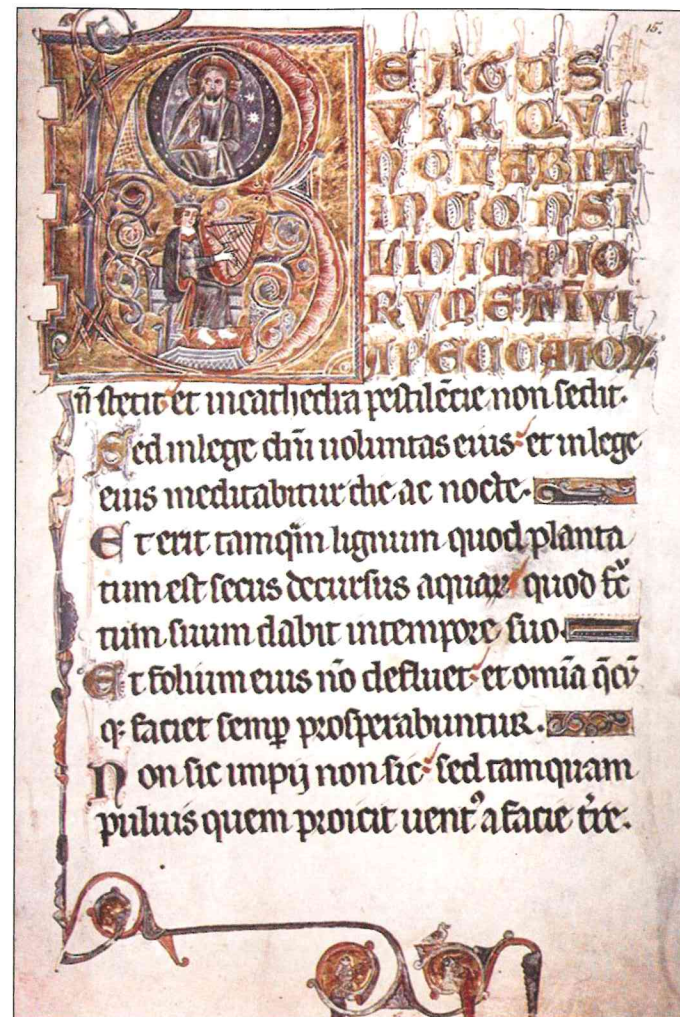
*For out of Zion shall go forth the law,
and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. (Is 2: 3)*

The prophets foretold a time when all nations would flock to Zion (see Is 2). In Sirach 24, Wisdom searches the universe for a resting place, but finally rests at Zion by the commandment of God.

In the New Testament, Zion takes on even more meaning. The Temple would be built on the next hill over, but Zion is where the Upper Room was—the room where Christ's Church was born. And the New Testament writers would speak of a new Mount Zion as a "heavenly Jerusalem"¹⁷ welcoming all believers.

6. The Temple is the architectural sign of the Davidic covenant, a building where all people of the earth were invited to worship the God of Israel. It is a place of international family reunion. As we'll see in the next chapter, it was even built by Gentiles: the talented Phoenician artists and craftsmen sent by King Hiram of Tyre.

7. Wisdom is the new law of the Davidic covenant. Solomon, David's son, would be given wisdom to govern. Wisdom literature is to the Davidic covenant what the Pentateuch was to the Mosaic covenant. "Thou hast shown me the law for man," David says in 2 Samuel 7: 19.¹⁸ "Law" is "Torah"—the name Jewish tradition gave to the five books of Moses. And "Adam" is used to mean all mankind. In other words, God has revealed to David a Torah for Adam—a law for all mankind. David's son is going to get something more than Moses got: a law for every nation, not just for the people of Israel. We'll read more about that new law in the next chapter of this book.



*"Blessed is the man who
walks not in the counsel of
the wicked..." (Ps 1: 1f.)*

An illuminated page from the Psalter of St. Margaret of Hungary, ca. 1261, open to Psalm 1. The first initial B of the text is the most beautifully decorated letter in the manuscript showing Christ in the upper half and King David playing his harp in the lower half.

The Davidic Covenant In Psalm 89

Of old thou didst speak in a vision to thy faithful one, and say:
 "I have set the crown upon one who is mighty.
 I have exalted one chosen from the people.
 I have found David, my servant;
 with my holy oil I have anointed him;
 so that my hand shall ever abide with him,
 my arm also shall strengthen him.
 The enemy shall not outwit him,
 the wicked shall not humble him.
 I will crush his foes before him
 and strike down those who hate him.
 My faithfulness and my steadfast love shall be with him,
 and in my name shall his horn be exalted.
 I will set his hand on the sea
 and his right hand on the rivers.
 He shall cry to me, 'Thou art my Father,
 My God, and the Rock of my salvation.'
 And I will make him the first-born,
 the highest of the kings of the earth.
 My steadfast love I will keep for him for ever,
 and my covenant will stand firm for him.
 I will establish his line for ever
 and his throne as the days of the heavens.
 If his children forsake my law
 and do not walk according to my ordinances,
 if they violate my statutes
 and do not keep my commandments,
 then I will punish their transgression with the rod
 and their iniquity with scourges;
 but I will not remove from him my steadfast love,
 or be false to my faithfulness.
 I will not violate my covenant,
 or alter the word that went forth from my lips.
 Once for all I have sworn by my holiness;
 I will not lie to David.
 His line shall endure for ever,
 his throne as long as the sun before me.
 Like the moon it shall be established for ever;
 it shall stand firm while the skies endure."
 (Ps 89: 19-37)

The Davidic Covenant: Three Secondary Features

Besides those seven primary features of the Davidic Covenant, we can also see three secondary features that will become very important under the New Covenant.

1. The **Queen Mother** becomes an important part of the royal government. It starts with King Solomon in 1 Kings 2:19:

So Bathsheba went to King Solomon, to speak to him on behalf of Adonijah. And the king rose to meet her, and bowed down to her; then he sat on his throne, and had a seat brought for the king's mother; and she sat on his right.

Everyone bows before Solomon, but Solomon bows before his mother. From that point on, the Queen Mother becomes a permanent fixture, a symbol of the continuity of David's royal line. She is also one of the king's most important advisers. Proverbs 31 is identified as the advice of the queen mother of King Lemuel: "The words of Lemuel, king of Massa, which his mother taught him." (One Jewish tradition has it that Lemuel was a pseudonym for Solomon himself, in which case these are really the teachings of Bathsheba.)

Of course, the role of Queen Mother will take on much more meaning in the New Testament, when the heir to the throne of David is Jesus Christ, whose mother is **Mary**.

2. The "**prime minister**" or chief steward becomes a distinct office in the royal government. The king has many servants, but one man is chief among them and stands between the king and his other ministers. Almost two centuries after David, Isaiah prophesied a transition in the royal government in which one prime minister would be replaced by another (see Is 22:15-25). From his prophecy, we can tell that everyone in the kingdom could identify the prime minister: "he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the house of Judah."¹⁹



The sign of the prime minister's office is the *keys of the kingdom*. "And I will place on his shoulder the key of the house of David; he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open."²⁰ Compare that to Jesus' words to **Peter**: "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."²¹

The Davidic Covenant establishes the *Queen Mother* as a symbol of the continuity of David's royal lineage from Bathsheba to Mary.

3. The **thank offering** or "sacrifice of thanksgiving" becomes the primary liturgy celebrated at Temple, rather than the sin offering.

*Do I eat the flesh of bulls,
or drink the blood of goats?
Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving,
and pay your vows to the Most High;
and call upon me in the day of trouble;
I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me. (Ps 50:13-15)*

*For thou hast delivered my soul from death,
my eyes from tears,
my feet from stumbling...
I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving
and call on the name of the LORD.
I will pay my vows to the LORD
in the presence of all his people,
in the courts of the house of the LORD,
in your midst, O Jerusalem. (Ps 116:8, 17-19)*

The thank offering is unleavened bread and wine freely offered to God in gratitude for deliverance. Ancient Jewish teachers predicted that, when the Messiah came, no other sacrifice would be offered: the thank offering alone would continue.

The word for "thank offering" is "**todah**" in Hebrew, which was later translated as "**eucharistia**" by Greek-speaking Jews.

Summary: The Main Features of the Davidic Covenant

Seven Primary Features:

1. God gives David a **kingdom**.
2. God promises David a **dynasty**.
3. The king becomes **God's adopted son** when he is anointed.
4. The covenant is **unlimited** in time and space.
5. **Jerusalem** is the spiritual center of the world.
6. The **Temple** is the architectural sign of the covenant.
7. **Wisdom** literature is the new Torah.

Three Secondary Features:

1. The **Queen Mother** becomes an important figure.
2. The **prime minister** is a permanent feature of the government.
3. The **thank offering** becomes the primary liturgy celebrated at the Temple.



The Davidic Covenant establishes the *prime minister* to stand between the King and the other ministers. The sign of the office is the *keys of the kingdom*.

SUPPLEMENTARY READING

Augustine, *City of God*, Book XVII

He who thinks this grand promise was fulfilled in Solomon greatly errs; for he attends to the saying, "He shall build me a house," but he does not attend to the saying, "His house shall be faithful, and his kingdom for evermore before me." Let him therefore attend and behold the house of Solomon full of strange women worshiping false gods, and the king himself, aforetime wise, seduced by them, and cast down into the same idolatry; and let him not dare to think that God either promised this falsely, or was unable to foreknow that Solomon and his house would become what they did. But we ought not to be in doubt here, or to see the fulfillment of these things save in Christ our Lord, who was made of the seed of David according to the flesh, lest we should vainly and uselessly look for some other here, like the carnal Jews. For even they understand this much, that the son whom they read of in that place as promised to David was not

Solomon; so that, with wonderful blindness to Him who was promised and is now declared with so great manifestation, they say they hope for another. Indeed, even in Solomon there appeared some image of the future event, in that he built the temple, and had peace according to his name (for Solomon means "peace"), and in the beginning of his reign was wonderfully praiseworthy; but while, as a shadow of Him that should come, he foreshadowed Christ our Lord, he did not also in his own person resemble Him. Whence some things concerning him are so written as if they were prophesied of himself, while the Holy Scripture, prophesying even by events, somehow delineates in him the figure of things to come. For, besides the books of divine history, in which his reign is narrated, the 72nd Psalm also is inscribed in the title with his name, in which so many things are said which cannot at all apply to him, but which apply to the Lord Christ with such evident fitness as makes it quite apparent that in the one the figure is in some way shadowed forth, but in the other the truth itself is presented. For it is known within what bounds the kingdom of Solomon was enclosed; and yet in that Psalm, not to speak of other things, we read, "He shall have dominion from sea even to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth," which we see fulfilled in Christ. Truly he took the beginning of His reigning from the river where John baptized; for, when pointed out by him, He began to be acknowledged by the disciples, who called Him not only Master, but also Lord.



A page from the Duc de Berry's Psalter, 1402, painted by the Flemish artist, Beauneveu. The illustration shows King David on a great throne playing his harp.

VOCABULARY

CHASTEN

To punish for the purpose of correcting. God promised that he would chasten David's successors when they needed it, but never abandon them.

EUCCHARIST

Greek for "thank offering." See Thank Offering.

JEBUSITES

The Canaanite inhabitants of Jerusalem, whom the Israelites had not conquered up to the time of David.

JERUSALEM

A Canaanite city conquered by David that became the capital and religious center of Israel.

JOAB

An Israelite general who became David's prime minister by being the first to strike the Jebusites in Jerusalem.

NATHAN

A prophet. One of David's chief advisors.

PRIME MINISTER

A servant of the king who oversees all the affairs of the kingdom; the king's most trusted advisor.

QUEEN MOTHER

The mother of the reigning king. Under David and his successors, the Queen Mother was a very influential figure in the kingdom.

THANK OFFERING

A sacrifice made in thanksgiving for God's deliverance. Under David and his successors, it became the primary liturgy of the Temple.

ZION

The hill on which the oldest part of Jerusalem was built. A poetic name for the city of Jerusalem.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Who was Ishbaal?
2. Why did David decide to live in Jerusalem?
3. Why did David fail to bring the Ark of the Covenant into Jerusalem the first time?
4. Why was David able to perform sacrifices and dress like a priest when his predecessor Saul had been punished for sacrificing?
5. Why did David want to build a temple?
6. Who was Nathan?
7. List the six promises God made in his covenant with David.
8. According to point 2579 of the CCC, how was David's prayer a model for the prayer of his people?
9. Study the chart comparing the Sinai covenant and the Zion covenant found in this chapter. List three ways in which the Zion covenant is more universal than the Sinai covenant.
10. List the primary features of the Davidic covenant.
11. List its secondary features.
12. What was the sign of the prime minister's office under the Davidic covenant?
13. What is the Thank offering?
14. What is the difference between a kingdom and a nation?
15. What important New Testament event takes place on Mount Zion?
16. How does this sign help us to recognize Peter as Christ's "prime minister"?

PRACTICAL EXERCISES

1. When David first tried to have the Ark of the Covenant brought to Jerusalem he did not prepare properly and disaster resulted. A man was killed when he disrespectfully reached out to touch the ark. As the sign of God's presence among the chosen people, the ark needed to be treated with a great respect. What sacrament did Jesus Christ give the Church in order that we might have God's presence with us today? Whenever we enter a church or attend Mass, what signs of respect should we show toward our Lord in the Precious Sacrament in the tabernacle or on the altar? What are some ways in which the tabernacle is like the Ark of the Covenant?

2. One of the three secondary features of the Davidic covenant is that the Queen Mother becomes an important part of the royal government. In the New Testament, Jesus is the heir to David's throne and Mary is his Queen Mother. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states: "'The Church's devotion to the Blessed Virgin is intrinsic to Christian worship' (Lk 1: 48; Paul VI, MC 56). 'The Church rightly honors the Blessed Virgin with special devotion'" (LG 66) (CCC 971). What are some ways you can increase your devotion to Mary? Find a book of prayers and learn a new prayer to Mary such as "Hail Holy Queen" or the "Memorare."



This miniature of King David praying is from the Gradual of the Archbishop of Esztergom, Hungary, ca. 1520.

Endnotes

1. 2 Sm 2: 8-10.
2. 2 Sm 4: 5-12.
3. 2 Sm 5: 6.
4. 1 Chr 11: 6.
5. Ex 25: 13-15; 1 Chr 15: 15.
6. Nm 4: 15.
7. 1 Chr 15: 13.
8. 1 Chr 15.
9. 2 Sm 6: 14.
10. 2 Sm 6: 20.
11. 2 Sm 6: 21-22.
12. 2 Sm 7: 2-3.
13. 2 Sm 7: 5-6.
14. We have preferred the translators' alternate reading, rather than the hypothetical correction of the Hebrew text.
15. Ps 110: 4.
16. Acts 1: 8.
17. Heb 12: 22.
18. See the footnote reading in the RSV. The translators' preferred reading, "thou... hast shown me future generations," is based on a hypothetical correction of the Hebrew text.
19. Is 22: 21.
20. Is 22: 22.
21. Mt 16: 19.
22. Many scholars believe that the direction "Selah," which appears here in the psalm, indicates an instrumental interlude.

Chapter 11

Wise King Solomon

"And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding beyond measure, and largeness of mind like the sand on the seashore, so that Solomon's wisdom surpassed the wisdom of all the people of the east, and all the wisdom of Egypt."

1 Kings 4: 29-30

