

# TANAK

**TORAH:** The Torah is comprised of five books including Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

**NEVI'IM:** The Nevi'im consists of two groups, the Former Prophets and the Latter Prophets. The Former Prophets include the narrative books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings. The Latter Prophets include Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Twelve Minor Prophets.

**KETUVIM:** The Ketuvim consists of writings. The writings include 1 Chronicles and 2 Chronicles as one book and Ezra and Nehemiah as one book.

# Comparison of Old Testament Canons

Hebrew Bible (Tanakh)	Roman Catholic and Orthodox Canons	Protestant Canon
<b>Torah</b> Bereshith - Genesis Shemot - Exodus Vayikra - Leviticus Bamidbar - Numbers Devarim - Deuteronomy	<b>Pentateuch</b> Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy	<b>Pentateuch</b> Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy
<b>Nevi'im</b> Y'hoshua - Joshua Shophetim - Judges Sh'muel - Samuel (I & II) M'lakhim - Kings (I & II) Y'shayahu - Isaiah Yir'mi'yahu - Jeremiah Y'khezqel - Ezekiel  <b>The Twelve Prophets</b> Hoshea - Hosea Yo'el - Joel Amos - Amos Ovadyah - Obadiah Yonah - Jonah Mikhah - Micah Nakhum - Nahum Havakuk - Habakkuk Ts'phanyah - Zephaniah Khagai - Haggai Z'kharyah - Zechariah Mal'akhi - Malachi	<b>History</b> Joshua Judges Ruth Samuel Kings Chronicles Ezra and Nehemiah Tobit* Judith* Esther + Additions to Esther  <b>Poetry &amp; Wisdom</b> Job Psalms Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Solomon Wisdom of Solomon* Ecclesiasticus (Wisdom of ben Sirach)*	<b>History</b> Joshua Judges Ruth 1-2 Samuel 1-2 Kings 1-2 Chronicles Ezra and Nehemiah Esther  <b>Poetry &amp; Wisdom</b> Job Psalms Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Solomon
<b>Ketuvim</b>  <b>The "Sifrei Emet," "Books of Truth"</b> Tehillim - Psalms Mishlei - Proverbs Iyov - Job  <b>The "Five Megilot" or "Five Scrolls"</b> Shir Hashirim - Song of Songs Rut - Ruth Eikhah - Lamentations Kohelet - Ecclesiastes Esther - Esther  <b>The rest of the "Writings"</b> Dani'el - Daniel Ezra v'Nechemia - Ezra-Nehemiah Divrei Hayamim - Chronicles (I & II)	<b>Prophets</b> Isaiah Jeremiah Lamentations Baruch, + The Letter of Jeremiah (Roman Catholic Only) Ezekiel Daniel, + Additions to Daniel (Prayer of Azariah; Song of the Three Young Men; Susanna; Bel and the Dragon)* Osee (Hosea) Joel Amos Abidas (Obadiah) Jonas (Jonah) Micheas (Micah) Nahum Habucuc (Habakkuk) Sophonias (Zephaniah) Aggeus (Haggai) Zacharias (Zechariah) Malachias (Malachi) 1 Maccabees* 2 Maccabees* (Roman Catholic Only)	<b>Prophets</b> Isaiah Jeremiah Lamentations Ezekiel Daniel Hosea Joel Amos Obadiah Jonah Micah Nahum Habakkuk Zephaniah Haggai Zechariah Malachi
	*Apocryphal in the Protestant Canon	



# GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION REVEALED



## **Genesis 3:15 - Prophecy of Calvary**

The very first prophecy was given by God showing that Jesus was going to be crucified to pay the penalty for our sins and redeem us.

## **Genesis 7/1 Peter 3:20-21 - The Flood Is A Type Of Baptism**

God saved Noah by water. This is a type of the baptism we experience when we get baptized in Jesus Name. Baptism saves just like it did for Noah.

## **1 Corinthians 10:2/ Exodus 14:16 - Crossing Of The Red Sea Is A Type Of Baptism**

Israel was leaving Egypt, which is a type of sin. Israel experienced a baptism when they crossed through the red sea. Israel was saved from the pursuing Egyptians. Paul shows us in 1 Corinthians 10 that Israel was baptized into Moses passing through the sea. Moses is a type of Christ leading them out of bondage.

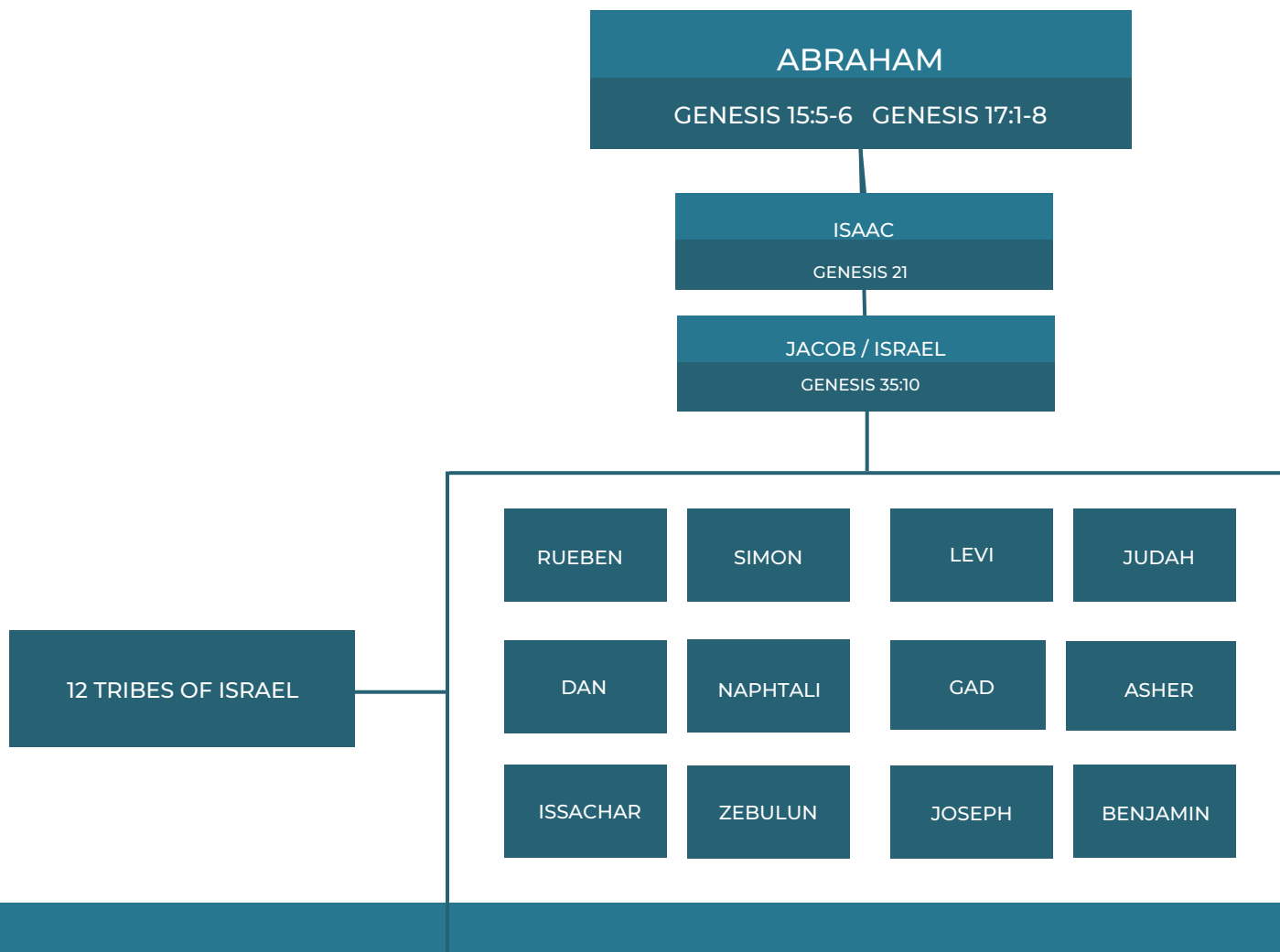


## **Exodus 29: 43-46/ Hebrews 10:19 - God's Spirit With Us**

After Israel was delivered from their sins and went through baptism, God had them build a Tabernacle where His Spirit would dwell. We are now that Tabernacle and He dwells in us when we receive the Holy Ghost.



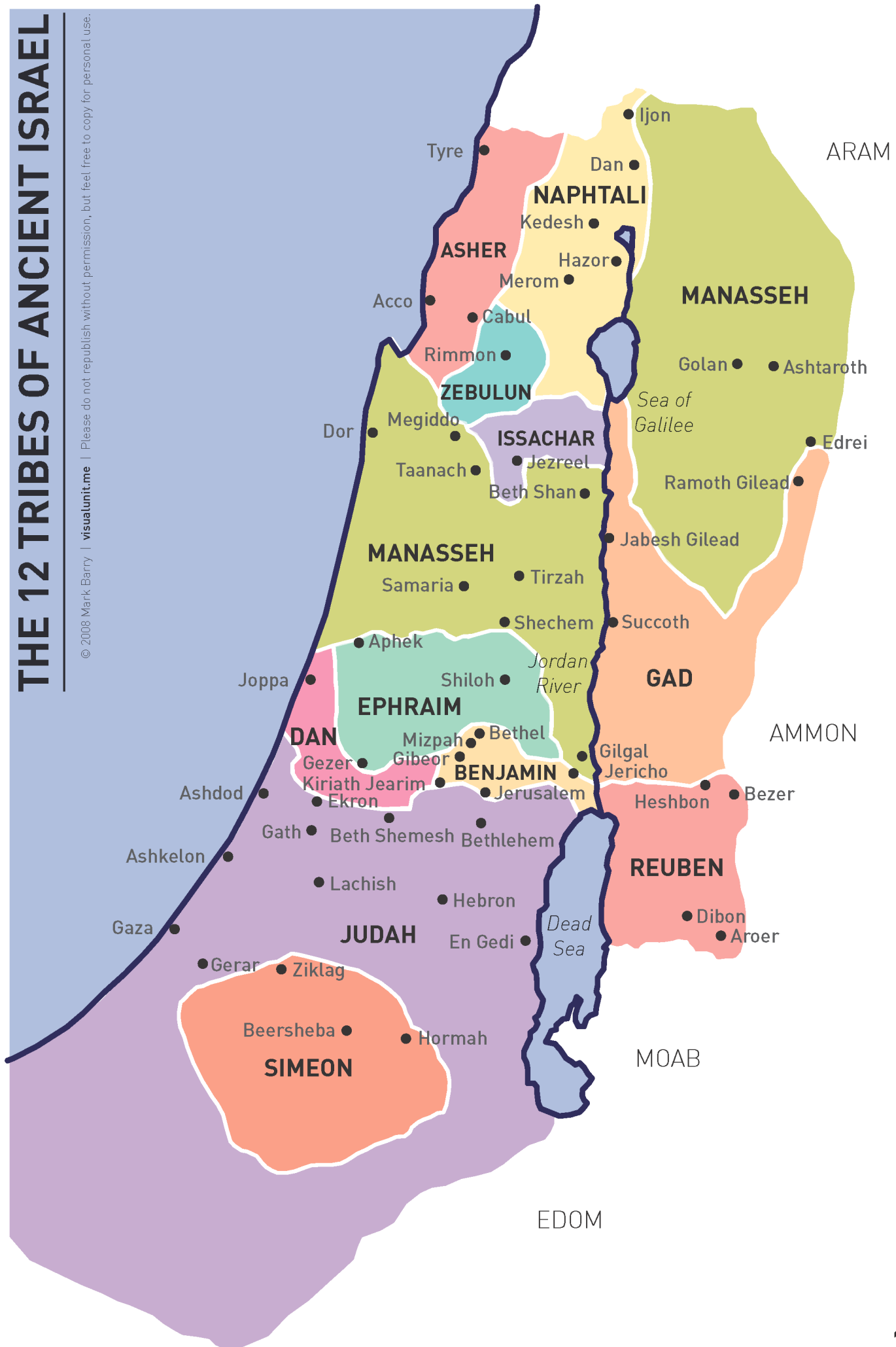
# LINEAGE OF ISRAEL





# THE 12 TRIBES OF ANCIENT ISRAEL

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**LAW IN THE HEBREW BIBLE** Serves as a key element of God's covenant with His people, a formative part of Israelite culture, and the primary description of the earliest sections of the Hebrew Bible. Provides instruction for avoiding idolatry and injustice.

### Major Precepts in the Law

The law provides instruction for avoiding two sins:

1. Idolatry (or “covenant breaking”)—refers to forsaking God for idols. The law emphasizes keeping covenant with God and not forsaking Him or His instruction. The Decalogue begins with a command prohibiting idolatry: “You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them” (Exod 20:3–5).
2. Injustice—Refers to rejecting God by mistreating His image bearers. People commit injustice when they ignore God's instruction.

### Law in the Minds of the Biblical Authors and Their Audiences

The Hebrew term *torah*, which is often translated as “law,” means “instruction.” The English term “law” connotes rules and norms that are typically enforced by the state. However, the Old Testament concept of law is broader, and goes beyond this meaning. Old Testament law includes:

- Moral admonishments (e.g., Lev 19:18)
- Commands without any means of enforcement (e.g., Exod 21:2)
- Commands where God, not the state, is the enforcer (e.g., Deut 30)
- Ceremonial instructions (e.g., Exod 25:10)

An exclusively judicial understanding of law can be misleading. For example, the *lex talionis*—“life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth” (Exod 21:22–25; Lev 24:19–20; Deut 19:15–21)—is a key concept in the law. From a legal vantage point, this could be construed as a form of harsh enforcement for rule breaking. In reality, however, this is not a rule about enforcement but instruction about justice: there should be proportionality between crime and punishment.

Another difficulty in understanding law in the Old Testament is that *torah* is used in multiple ways without clear distinction. In addition to carrying the meaning “instruction” or “command,” it is also used as a designation for a portion of Scripture—specifically Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy—the Pentateuch (Wegner, *Journey*, 42). Thus the entire Pentateuch is labeled *torah* even though a large portion is narrative or poetry without legal or judicial application.

The Psalms provide a description of *torah* that is much broader than mere rules or commands, calling it:

- A delight (Psa 119:92)
- Something to be loved (Psa 119:97)
- A treasure (Psa 119:72)

These descriptions fit well with the scriptural concept of law, which includes instruction, ethics, and wisdom in a relational covenant context. In the Bible, law and ethics are intertwined. As Waltke notes, “Implicitly, the Pentateuch unites creation and ethics; the order of creation supports the order of redemption. Moderns are accustomed to considering the ‘laws’ in creation (i.e., the consistent natural phenomenon they observe) as inviolable ... But moderns consider a system of ethics as *evaluations*—what people at a given time and place may think ... The biblical narrative forbids this kind of dualistic thinking; the ethical and the natural realms are united” (Waltke, *Old Testament Theology*, 205). Accordingly, the concept of law in the Hebrew Bible should

not be removed from its relational and covenantal setting. Law in the Hebrew Bible can be understood as relational, grace dependent, and far broader in meaning than the English term “law.”

This is not to say, however, that there are no judicial or legal nuances to the term; rather, our understanding must not be limited to law as rules, but also embrace law as cherished instruction for covenant living.

Rather than providing detailed rules covering every contingency, the Old Testament presents a form of case law. These laws fall into two general types:

1. Apodictic Law states an unconditional command or prohibition, such as “You shall have no other gods before me” (Exod 20:3).
2. Casuistic Law states a conditional command or prohibition: in the event that “X” happens, you must do “Y” (e.g., Exod 22:25; 23:4).

Viewed from within a covenant relationship where an individual is seeking wisdom, these laws provide the needed instruction for right living.

## **Analogs in the Ancient Near Eastern World**

The ancient Near East provides several examples of law codes that provide insights into the concept of law in the Hebrew Bible.

### ***Archaeology***

Archaeology has provided several examples of legal material from surrounding cultures. These texts provide a shared cultural backdrop for Old Testament law and highlight the unique aspects of biblical law.

- Middle Assyrian Laws (ca. 1100 BC)—Laws composed in the cuneiform writing system of ancient Mesopotamia. The documents were written in the Middle Assyrian dialect of Akkadian. The existing copies were apparently edited during the reign of the Assyrian king Tiglath-pileser I (ca. 1115–1077 BC).
- Code of Hammurabi (ca. 1700 BC)—Attributed to King Hammurabi of Babylonia and carved onto a stela made of diorite. About half of the code deals with contracts, establishing wages, transaction terms, and liability. About a third of the code addresses household and family issues like inheritance, divorce, and sexual behavior.
- Laws of Eshnunna (ca. 1800 BC)—Contains the first exact parallel to any early biblical law. This parallel concerns the division of oxen after a fatal combat between animals (Exod 21:35). This law code is highly structured, with a “If A then B” pattern. The code breaks down into five subcategories (Yaron, *The Laws of Eshnunna*):
  - Theft and related offenses
  - False distress
  - Sexual offenses
  - Bodily injuries
  - Damages caused by a goring ox and comparable cases

### ***Similarities***

The Old Testament law is similar in subject matter and formulation to the laws of its historical and cultural neighbors because Israel lived in a similar cultural, political, and economic context. For example:

- HL 17, the Sumerian Laws 1–2, LH 209–214, MAL A 21, 50–52, and Exod 21:22–25 all discuss cases of striking pregnant women and causing a miscarriage.
- Laws on slaves and goring oxen are common to both.
- Several ancient Near Eastern laws agree with Biblical law condemning murder, adultery, and incest (LH 1, 129, 157).

The orientation of law toward practical problems is common to both the Bible and the laws of their surrounding culture. As both groups experienced common crises, they understandably share common laws for dealing with those situations. Examples of similarity between biblical law and the laws of the ancient Near East include:

- Exodus 21:24 matches sections 196, 197, and 200 of the Hammurabi code.
- Both Exod 21:28–36 and the Eshnunna code contain similar material about an ox that gores.
- Deuteronomy 22:23–27 and the Hittite code (section 197) are similar in their laws regarding rape.

### ***Differences***

While there are similarities between the laws of the ancient Near East and biblical laws, there are also key differences. For example, in the Torah an ox goring a slave differs from an ox goring an ox (Exod 21:28–31; 35–36). In other ancient Near Eastern law codes (LE 53–55), both oxen and slaves are simply property. Additional differences include:

- Biblical law imposes limitations on kings (Deut 17:14–20), the laws of the surrounding nations do not—they foster support for the unlimited authority of their kings.
- Biblical laws value human life over property. While surrounding nations might require restitution of thirtyfold for theft (and even execution), biblical law limits restitution to fivefold and spares the thief (Exod 22:1–4).
- Biblical law places a much higher value on women. For example, an unloved wife (even a slave) still had to be given the full rights of a wife.

The main aspects of biblical law that is absent from the laws of other ancient Near Eastern communities are the two underlying themes:

1. Loving God (Deut 6:5)
2. Loving neighbor (Lev 19:18)

This absence is fitting because law in the Hebrew Bible is more than just a law code; it is part of a covenant governing relationships between people and their Creator.

### ***Significance of Ancient Near Eastern Law***

The significance of the similarities between the ancient Near Eastern laws and the Old Testament law is debated. Some argue that these similarities indicate that Moses was not inspired—just well read. Others argue that it is fitting that the laws given to Moses would be culturally relevant to his setting (and therefore similar, but not identical, to the laws of the neighboring nations). One value of these other law codes is that they highlight (by way of contrast) the unique covenantal and relational aspects of the biblical law.

Additionally, new studies in ancient Near Eastern law have discredited the 19th century critical view that codes of laws like the Pentateuch must be anachronistic. Since other nations had advanced legal and ethical law codes like these, it is reasonable to assume that Israel might have as well.

### **Law and Covenant**

The Law exists in the context of God's covenant with Israel; covenant, not law-keeping, is the basis of this relationship. The role of law is to administrate the covenant. The Law provides instruction for things that ruin relationship with God (e.g., idolatry and injustice). It also shows what loving God and others looks like.

### **Legal Corpora in the Hebrew Bible**

Legal material in the Pentateuch is concentrated in several distinct sections. Jewish tradition identifies 613 laws in the *Torah*, interwoven with the other narrative material.

### ***The Decalogue***

The Decalogue is found in Exod 20:1–17 and in Deut 5:6–21. God gave the Decalogue to the people at Mount Sinai (Exod 20:1–17); Moses then repeated it in his sermon over 40 years later (Deut 5:6–21). The formulation in the Decalogue is apodictic (unqualified): God as king imposes demands in a “thou shalt/shalt not” form upon His subjects. These commandments represent the minimum moral and religious requirements for those in covenant relationship with God. These laws are directed at individuals as members of the covenant. Furthermore, these laws do not present particular consequences or rewards.

### ***Covenant Code***

The Covenant Code (or Book of the Covenant) is found in Exod 20:22–23:33. The Book of the Covenant (Exod 20:22–23:33; partially repeated in 34:10–26) consists of religious, humanitarian, and civil regulations. Most of its civil regulations follow the casuistic formulation of cuneiform laws: “If X (offense), then Y (legal consequences).” In general, these laws interpret the Decalogue or provide insight into its application in specific circumstances. This section also establishes rights for slaves (Exod 21:1–11) and establishes the calendar for Israel (Exod 23:10–19).

### ***Priestly Code***

The Priestly Code, found in Exod 25–Lev 16, is a large collection of laws (approximately 1/3 of the total) focused primarily on the priests and worship. Major topics covered include:

- circumcision
- the Passover meal
- keeping of the Sabbath
- inappropriate behavior for priests
- clean and unclean animals
- purification and atonement
- redeeming property
- oaths
- cleansing lepers
- keeping Yom Kippur and Sukkot
- Nazirite vows
- consecration of priests
- ritual of the Red Heifer

### ***Holiness Code***

The Holiness Code is found in Lev 17–26. While the Priestly Code concentrates on the priesthood and worship, the Holiness Code is concerned with personal holiness. This section distinguishes between clean and unclean. It discusses:

- sacrificial law (Lev 17)
- ethics (Lev 18–22)
- holy days and occasions (Lev 23, 25)
- blessings and curses (Lev 26)

### ***The Significance of the Legal Corpora***

Opinions regarding the significance of various law sections within the Pentateuch vary. Wellhausen and Harnack consider the differences between these sections and their apparently haphazard structure as evidence of redactional activity or development of religious thought over time. Much effort has been spent attempting to reconstruct the sources from which these various legal corpora may have come and the circumstances which prompted them to be included in the canon.

Sailhamer emphasizes the importance of considering “the purpose of these various collections in *the final arrangement of the text*” (Sailhamer, *Meaning of the Pentateuch*, 357). He suggests that “one way to get at

this question is to ask what each collection of laws contributes to the sense of the whole Pentateuch” (Sailhamer, *Meaning of the Pentateuch*, 357). Sailhamer argues that the legal codes in the Pentateuch “make good sense,” considering that the “author has a story to tell that involves both the interweaving of these events within the narratives and the specific laws to which they are connected” (Sailhamer, *Meaning of the Pentateuch*, 361). In this scheme, the author is highlighting the changes that occur in Israel’s relationship with God: as Israel fails to respond, additional laws are given. In contrast with those who follow a more critical view, this strategy focuses on the text as it stands and how the different parts contribute to the message of the whole. In this view, all three of the major law collections are intentionally embedded within the Sinai narratives:

- The simple laws of the Decalogue, Covenant Code, and the construction of the tabernacle are given first as “instruction” for covenant living.
- At Sinai, Israel fails to respond to God and forsakes Him, turning to the golden calf. At this time, the more elaborate laws of the Priestly Code are given.
- Israel sins again by making sacrifices to goat idols (Lev 17:1–9), and once again additional laws are given (Holiness Code).

Thus, Sailhamer sees neither the development of religious thought nor redactional activity within the legal corpora of the Pentateuch. Instead, he asserts that there is an intentional message made up of laws and narrative working together to provide instruction.

### **Selected Resources for Further Study**

Bradley, Carol. “Women in Hebrew and Ancient Near Eastern Law.” *Studia Antiqua* 3, no. 1 (2003).

Richardson, M. E. J. *Hammurabi’s Laws: Text, Translation, and Glossary*. London: T&T Clark, 2004.

Sailhamer, John. *The Meaning of the Pentateuch: Revelation, Composition and Interpretation*. Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Academic, 2009.

Waltke, Bruce. *An Old Testament Theology: An Exegetical, Canonical, and Thematic Approach*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007.

Wegner, Paul D. *The Journey from Texts to Translations: The Origin and Development of the Bible*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004.

Yaron, Reuven. *The Laws of Eshnunna*. Jerusalem: Magnes, 1988.

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<sup>1</sup> Brian Johnson, [“Law in the Hebrew Bible,”](#) ed. John D. Barry et al., *The Lexham Bible Dictionary* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).



## INSIDE THE TEMPLE

(Cutaway view)

1. Holy of Holies
2. Ark
3. Veil
4. Altar of Incense
5. Lampstand (Menorah)
6. Holy Place
7. Table of Shewbread
8. Outer Veil

## TEMPLE COVERINGS AND CURTAINS

9. Outer covering of badger skins
10. Covering of Ram's skin dyed red
11. Curtain of goat's hair
12. Curtain of fine linen

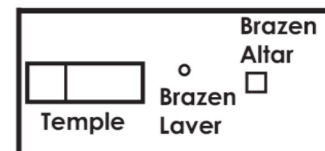
Pillar of Smoke

The Temple

Pillar

American Football Field

Size comparison  
(approximate):



Court of the Tabernacle

Brazen Laver

Court of the Tabernacle

Brazen Altar

Slaughter Tables

Curtain enclosure

Entrance Curtain

# The Tabernacle

This portable temple was built in the wilderness by the Israelites circa 1450 BC after they were freed from Egyptian slavery. The Tabernacle was the first temple dedicated to God and the first resting place of the Ark of the Covenant. It served as a place of worship and sacrifices during the Israelites' 40 years in the desert while conquering the land of Canaan.

# TABERNACLE FURNISHINGS

## Outer Court Furnishings



*Bronze Altar*  
Ex. 27:1-8; 38:1-7



*Bronze Laver*  
Ex. 38:8

## Holy Place Furnishings



*Golden Lampstand*  
Ex. 25:31-40; 37:17-24



*Gold Altar of Incense*  
Ex. 37:25-28



*Table of Showbread*  
Ex. 25:23-30; 37:10-16

## Holy of Holies Furnishings



*Ark and the Mercy Seat*  
Ex. 25:10-22; 37:1-9

## The Judges of Israel from the time after Joshua to the time of Samuel

	Judges/Leaders	Dates* (BCE)	Notes	Deliver?
1	Othniel	1373-1334*		Yes
2	Ehud	1316-1237	Partially concurrent with Shamgar	Yes
3	Shamgar	1265-1252	Judgeship fell within Ehud's period as judge	Yes
4	Barak	1237-1198	Concurrent with Deborah	Yes
5	Deborah	1237-1198	Concurrent with Barak	Yes
6	Gideon	1198-1151		Yes
7	Abimelech	1151-1149	Self-appointed; not actually a judge	N/A
8	Tola	1149-1126		No
9	Jair	1126-1105		No
10	Eli	1107-1067	Not named in the book of Judges but identified as a judge in 1 Samuel 4:18	N/A
11	Jephthah	1087-1081		Yes
12	Ibzan	1081-1075		No
13	Elon	1075-1065		No
14	Samson	1069-1049	Judgeship overlapped with those of Eli, Elon, Samuel and Abdon	Yes
15	Samuel	1067-1020	Not named in the book of Judges but identified as a judge in Samuel 7:15-17	N/A
16	Abdon	1065-1058	Judgeship fell within Samuel's period as judge	No

\*Dates are approximate.

Adapted from *Ariel's Bible Commentary: The Books of Judges and Ruth*, by Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum.

**SAUL, KING OF ISRAEL** (שָׁאֻל, *sha'ul*). First king of Israel; reigned around 1050–1010 BC (1 Sam 9:1–11:15).

### **Biblical Relevance**

Saul was the son of Kish, a wealthy Benjaminite, and known for being tall and handsome (1 Sam 9:1–3). He initially was chosen to be king by God through the prophet Samuel and divine lot (1 Sam 9–10), and he was reconfirmed as king after a successful battle against the Ammonites at Jabesh-Gilead (1 Sam 11:14–15). His primary action as king was fighting against the Philistines and Amalekites (1 Sam 13–15).

Saul was a loyal worshiper of God. He instructed Israelites in aspects of the correct ritual for worship (e.g., 1 Sam 14:32–34)—a manner reminiscent of the Mosaic law (Lev 17:10–16; Deut 12:16–25); he also built altars to God (1 Sam 14:35) and removed spiritual practitioners (1 Sam 28:3).

As a result of once taking the role of priest (1 Sam 13:8–9) and disobeying Samuel's instructions to destroy all Amalekites and their livestock (1 Sam 15:3, 9), God rejected Saul as king (1 Sam 13:10–14; 15:10–29) in favor of David (1 Sam 16). When David is anointed as king-to-be by Samuel, the focus of 1 Samuel changes to portray Saul as wishing to kill David and establish his own dynasty (1 Sam 18–27) despite God's word that this would not happen. Saul dies in battle along with his sons, abandoned by God (1 Sam 28, 31).

After his death, Saul fades quickly from the Old Testament narratives. In 2 Samuel, he is mentioned only in connection with the dealings of his descendants and David: warring against Ish-bosheth, Saul's son and successor (2 Sam 2–4); favoring Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, Saul's heir apparent (2 Sam 9, 19); and allowing other descendants to be massacred as atonement for a sin of Saul not included in 1 Samuel (2 Sam 21:1–14). In Psalms, Saul also is portrayed as David's antagonist in the titles of Pss 18, 52, 54, 57, 59. Gibeah was remembered by later Israelites as Saul's hometown and capital (Isa 10:29; see 1 Sam 10:26). His rule is briefly mentioned in Stephen's review of Israel's history in Acts 7.

### **Rationale for Saul's Downfall**

Saul was a loyal worshiper of God on one hand, but disobedient to God on the other; chosen by God, yet rejected by Him. The beginning of his reign is marked by controversy, with Samuel and God opposed to Israel's request for a king on the one hand (1 Sam 8, 12), yet granting that request with God's choosing of Saul (1 Sam 9–11). The end of Saul's reign has him tragically abandoned by God and reduced to consulting a medium in an attempt to find guidance (1 Sam 28).

The reason why God rejected Saul once he was king is unclear. David, Saul's successor, also committed major sins—adultery and murder (2 Sam 11–12), but David was not rejected by God. One plausible explanation is derived from a motif in Joshua–2 Kings (the so-called “Deuteronomistic History”): Faithfulness (or the lack of it) to God's covenant determines God's response to Israel. This motif also applied to individuals—for example, in God's emphasis on obedience when He restates the Davidic covenant to Solomon (1 Kgs 3; 9; 11). Saul failed in his covenant responsibilities in two key areas:

- Saul did not respect God's transcendent holiness (despite a concern for ritual holiness); he usurped the role of the priests (1 Sam 13:8–14).
- Saul did not respect God's moral holiness; he disobeyed God's clear commands (1 Sam 15).

David, in contrast, respected both aspects of God's holiness. He never took the role of priest and did not disobey any clear directives from God.

The punishment of Saul has a parallel in Eli (1 Sam 1–4). Eli, the high priest, sinned against God when he did not discipline his sons, who disrespected tabernacle ritual (1 Sam 2:12–17) and committed immorality with female tabernacle servants (1 Sam 2:22). Eli's punishment was the loss of hereditary high priesthood—a clear parallel to Saul's loss of his royal dynasty. The same motif is found in Num 20:12, in which Moses is punished by God (barred from entering the promised land) for disobeying God's clear directive.



## 1–2 Samuel as Propaganda

One area of Saul scholarship focuses on the nature of 1–2 Samuel as literature, along with Judges–2 Kings (the “Deuteronomistic History”). Generally, 1–2 Samuel are viewed as propaganda to defend the Davidic kingship. This view commonly asserts that David used murder and intrigue to gain the throne and keep it, with Saul and his heir, Ish-bosheth, both falling victim to David’s ambition (see 2 Sam 4 for the assassination of Ish-bosheth and 2 Sam 3 for the assassination of Saul’s army chief Abner by Joab; VanderKam, “Davidic Complicity,” 521–39; Lemche, “David’s Rise,” 2–15; Halpern, *David’s Secret Demons*; Steussy, *David: Biblical Portraits of Power*; Isser, *Sword of Goliath*). In line with this interpretation, Saul is interpreted as a tragic hero (Edelman, *King Saul*; Sanford, *King Saul*). Alternatively, V. P. Long argues that Saul was not a victim of either Davidic or Deuteronomistic propaganda (Long, *Reign and Rejection*).

First Samuel’s focus on David makes it customary to view much, if not all, of 1 Sam 8–31 as fictitious, written much later by people associated with the Deuteronomistic school (Blenkinsopp, “Did Saul,” 1–7). In contrast, a number of scholars argue that 1–2 Samuel contains material that people in a much later time simply would not have known. C. Schäfer-Lichtenberger draws attention to 1–2 Samuel’s witness to the bureaucracy of Saul and David, arguing that it is different from the later kings (Schäfer-Lichtenberger, “Sociological,” 78–105). Z. Kallai asserts that the battles of Saul reflect real circumstances (Kallai, “Wars of Saul,” 134–44). Moshe Garsiel points out that later Judahites would not have been able to travel to the northern kingdom of Israel after the Assyrians destroyed it in 722 bc (Garsiel, “Samuel”).

Related to the nature of 1 Samuel as literature is the view that the contradiction between the appointment of Saul and Samuel’s dislike of kingship, as well as the contrast between the positive (1 Sam 9–10, 13–14) and negative views of Saul (1 Sam 12, 15), are results of later editing (Jobling, “Saul’s Fall,” 367–76; Rudman, “Commissioning Stories,” 519–30). Miller and Hayes, for example, claim that the positive portrayal of Saul comes from one source and the negative portrayal comes from another (Miller and Hayes, *History*, 126–29). Against this view, 1 Samuel 8–15 is sometimes used to deny that Saul failed as king (Brooks, *Saul*, chapter 3). Although First Samuel is “a royal apology for David,” it nevertheless is regarded as a fair depiction of Saul (Provan, Long, and Longman, *Biblical History*, 214).

## The Nature of Saul’s Kingship

A second area of focus in scholarship is the emergence of Israel as a distinct people in the archaeological record. Saul’s kingdom is commonly described as resembling a chieftainship (Frick, *Formation*; Na’aman, “Contribution,” 17–27; Miller and Hayes, *History*, 135–43):

- a very small administration with key posts kept within the family or among loyal supporters (1 Sam 14:49–51);
- minimal building activity;
- a small permanent army (1 Sam 14:52).

This interpretation of Saul’s kingship relies on two things.

- archaeological evidence, which shows that in the 11th and 10th centuries bc, few inhabited cities existed, but an increase in village settlement in the Israelite highlands occurred (Brooks, *Saul and the Monarchy*, 41–67; Faust, “Abandonment,” 147–61; Herr, “Iron Age II,” 120–32).
- anthropological studies of the leadership structures in traditional societies in the present-day world (Flanagan, “Chiefs,” 47–73).

Raz Kletter argues that the anthropological models used are too simplistic, and Daniel Master contends that modern-day understandings of a “king” cannot be applied to ancient societies in the Levant; consequently, the “king vs. chief” debate is a false one (Kletter, “Chronology,” 13–21; Master, “State Formation Theory,” 117–31). Master also concludes that family-based kinship remained the predominant means of social organization in ancient Israel. Niels Lemche argues that Israelite kingship, along with kingship in the wider ancient Near

East, developed from (and remained as) kin-based structures (Lemche, "From Patronage," 106–20). In other words, there is no essential difference between Saul's kingship and later Israelite kingships, even if Saul's kingship was not centered on a city, as was David's and that of previous Canaanite rulers. Texts such as 2 Sam 8:15–18, 1 Kgs 4:1–19, and 2 Chr 11:23 show the continuing practice of keeping power within the royal family, or among people connected by marriage to the royal family.

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<sup>1</sup> Edward Bridge, "[Saul, King of Israel](#)," ed. John D. Barry et al., *The Lexham Bible Dictionary* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

**DAVID, KING OF ISRAEL** (דָּוִד, *dawid*). Second king of Israel, after Saul. Reigned ca. 1010–970 BC. Brought Israel to a position of power. In some ways, became the ideal for his people's future messianic leader.

### **Biblical Importance**

God raised David from humble origins as a shepherd from Bethlehem to rule as Israel's second king. David led Israel to its pinnacle of power and glory, and became the ideal for a future messianic leader that ultimately found fulfillment in David's descendant—Jesus. He showed success in various roles, including:

- Shepherd
- Military leader
- King
- Covenantal recipient
- Poet
- Musician
- Religious example

David's failures as a father and king present him as an imperfect human whom God both chastened and blessed.

#### *Shepherd and Military Leader*

A summary of David's rise from shepherd to king:

1. Tended father's flocks near Bethlehem (1 Sam 16:11)
2. Anointed by Samuel as Saul's eventual replacement (1 Sam 16:12–13)
3. Served at Saul's court playing harp and caring for Saul's military equipment (1 Sam 16:17–23)
4. Defeated Philistine champion Goliath (1 Sam 17)
5. Won respect from Jonathan and nation, but suspicion and jealousy from Saul (1 Sam 18:1–16)
6. Married Saul's daughter (1 Sam 18:17)
7. Fled, gathered a private army, spared Saul (1 Sam 19–27)
8. Ruled Judah, then all Israel after Saul's death (1 Sam 31:2–5)

#### *King of Israel and Covenantal Recipient*

After assuming the throne, David launched a swift and effective campaign that raised Israel from the threat of extinction to the pinnacle of ancient Near Eastern power. A weakened Egypt to the southwest and still coalescing Mesopotamian powers in the northeast offered a window of opportunity for a smaller nation like Israel to dominate.

- David conquered Jerusalem, and made it royal rather than tribal property ("the city of David").
- David moved the capital from Hebron in the southern hills to the more central, neutral, and strategically located Jerusalem, from which he could launch his international expansion. The Philistines reacted to David's move, and he inflicted decisive defeat on Israel's long-standing nemesis (2 Sam 5).
- David expanded west and east, taking sections of the coastal highway near the Mediterranean and the Transjordanian highway. This increased Israel's land holdings and enabled it to profit from the international trade flowing along these two major arteries.
- David also expanded south and well to the north, conquering nearly all of the neighboring nations (2 Sam 8; Lancaster and Monson, *Regional Study Guide*, 15–17).
- He enriched Israel with plunder from his victories, labor and annual tribute from the nations he made vassals, and income from a vast trade network.

In addition to making Israel a great political power, David also developed its religious practice. He brought the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem, and made extensive preparations to build a temple to Israel's God—a task and honor that God would reserve for David's son, Solomon. Yahweh promised David a “house”—or line of perpetual succession—in what is often called the Davidic Covenant (2 Sam 7). God had not granted such a blessing to David's predecessor, Saul. God would keep this promise despite David's numerous failures.

### *Failures as Father and King*

The account of David's positive, dramatic rise pivots with the story of David's sin with Bathsheba (2 Sam 11:1–12:27). Through the prophet Nathan, God rebuked David and showed that He valued character more than competence (2 Sam 12:1–15). David's humble response led God to promise forgiveness. However, God also promised continual trouble in David's own family; these troubles dominated the remainder of his reign.

- David's eldest son, Amnon, raped his half-sister, Tamar (2 Sam 13). David failed to take action.
- Tamar's brother, Absalom, killed Amnon in retribution and fled north to Geshur, the neighboring kingdom from which his mother had come. David again failed to take action.
- After Joab rebuked David through a wise woman, David recalled his son, but refused to meet with him until again prompted by Joab.

David's failures and inability to take proper action within his family contributed to greater problems within the kingdom. His son, Absalom, rebelled (2 Sam 15–19). David survived the attempted coup, but Absalom did not. Other troubles followed, including a rebellion by a relative of Saul (2 Sam 20). In a final error, David ordered a census of the Israelite men available for military service. This brought on God's judgment, and David saw thousands of his subjects die in a plague (2 Sam 24). David ended this disaster by buying property that became the site of the temple.

### *Poet and Religious Exemplar*

In addition to his influence in biblical poetry and in Israel's early monarchy, David—or the promise of him—is found in more than 1,000 places throughout the Bible. In Genesis 49:10, Jacob prophesied that “the scepter 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” (NIV). This promise reflects David's royal and messianic roles. David and his line of royal descendants partially fulfilled the prophecy by ruling over God's kingdom, and, at times, over other kingdoms. The later promises to David gave exilic and postexilic Israelites hope that God would restore them through a future ideal king like David (Jer 23:5; 30:9). David's later Judean descendant, Jesus, fulfilled these prophecies about David.

## **Biblical Portrayal of David**

Although the Bible largely portrays David in a positive light, there are differences within various biblical accounts. Chronicles omits numerous negative elements included in the portrayal found in Samuel. The chronicler skips most of the stories from David's long wait to secure the Israelite throne, as well as nearly all of his failures as father and king. For example, 1 Chr 11:1–3 describes that “all Israel” made David king at Hebron following Saul's death rather than just the tribe of Judah. Chronicles' account of the conquest of Rabbah avoids David's sin with Bathsheba entirely (1 Chr 20:1–3). The chronicler portrays a godly David who enjoyed almost unanimous support throughout his reign.

The Hebrew version of Samuel contains many significant textual problems (McCarter, *1 Samuel*; Ulrich, *Qumran Text of Samuel*). The oldest translation of Samuel, the “Old Greek” version of the Septuagint, omits much of the story of David and Goliath (Tov, “Composition of 1 Samuel 16–18,” 97–130). It also omits the initial account of the friendship between David and his potential rival, Jonathan (1 Sam 18:1–5). This lessens the positive portrayal of Israel's future king.

These issues have inspired a dissection and analysis of the positive biblical portrayal, resulting in a different picture of Israel's second king. David's reign is viewed as a compilation of distinct sources with varying viewpoints, including (Gordon, *1 & 2 Samuel*, 30–91):

- “Ark Narrative” (1 Sam 4–6; 2 Sam 6)
- “History of David's Rise” (1 Sam 16:14–2 Sam 5)
- “Succession Narrative” (2 Sam 9–20; 1 Kgs 1–2).

These differing viewpoints emphasize darker aspects of David, including lust, cruelty, and vengeance.

Halpern argues that the portrait in Samuel presents David as “a ruler altogether too good to be true” (Halpern, *David's Secret Demons*, xvi). Samuel's account would have been sponsored by David's line (perhaps Solomon), and served as the official history of the line's founder, as well as an apologetic against the accusations of his foes. David likely had contemporary critics who charged him with usurping Saul's reign and doubted David's innocence (2 Sam 16). David benefited from many events that helped advance his career, such as the deaths of key enemies like Saul, Nabal, Abner, and Ishbaal. He may have also cast blame on his military leader, Joab, for several of these deaths. McKenzie argues that David gave the order that wiped out most of Saul's line (2 Sam 21). Numerous uprisings—including one led by his own son—show that some were displeased with David as king (McKenzie, *King David*, 35). David may also be portrayed as “a complex, very human character” in biblical narratives (Provan, Long, and Longman, *Biblical History*, 217–21).

## Scholastic Issues

Despite the biblical testimony about David's greatness, very little extrabiblical evidence can be found about David. This results in questions of whether the biblical accounts are historically accurate.

### *Appearance in Extrabiblical Sources*

Prior to the mid-1990s recovery of an Aramaic inscription at Tel Dan, no extrabiblical sources supported the existence of David. Fragments discovered near Israel's northern border show that an Aramean king (ninth–eighth centuries BC) erected a monument boasting about his victory over the kings of Israel and “the house of David” (Ahituv, *Echoes*, 466–73). This may demonstrate that David lived and founded a dynasty which was referred to by one foreign king more than a century after David's reign. However, Lemche challenges the reconstruction and authenticity of the inscription (Lemche, *Israelites in History and Tradition*, 39–43). He suggests that since “House of David” (*Bēt Davīd*) has no word dividers, it is better understood as a place name like Bethlehem or Beth-shean.

The discovery at Tel Dan led to the reexamination of other inscriptions with possible references to David. By restoring a missing letter in the Mesha Inscription (ninth century BC), it also includes “house of [D]avid” (Ahituv, *Echoes*, 389–418). Kitchen notes that an Egyptian list of places conquered in 926/925 BC includes “The heights of *Dwt*,” perhaps another reference to David (substituting “t” for “d” as was sometimes done) less than 50 years after David's lifetime (Kitchen, *Reliability*, 93).

Mazar notes that some destruction levels at sites like Megiddo, Tel Qasile, and Rehov may reflect some of David's conquests (Mazar, *Archaeology*, 371–75, 389–96). The substantial remains at Bethsaida, the capital of the lesser neighboring kingdom of Geshur, suggests a more substantial Israel (2 Sam 3:3). Recent excavations at Khirbet Qeiyafa (possibly Shaaraim—1 Sam 17:52) may portray a substantial Israelite settlement from the time of David along the Philistine border. Barkay notes how Israelite culture transitioned during the monarchy to an urban culture with a capital city and royal cities (Barkay, “The Iron Age II—III,” 304).

The scarcity of remains from Israel's capital during its supposed time of glory under David and Solomon argues against the biblical accounts. However, Jerusalem has been destroyed and rebuilt many times, and continuing habitation up to the present would naturally reduce the chances of finding remains from 3,000 years ago (Provan, Long, and Longman, *Biblical History*, 228–32). Mazar's recent finds in the City of David, including a possible palace from the time of David, have renewed the debate (“King David's Palace”).

## Historicity

Some archaeologists and historians argue strongly against the idea that such data supports the biblical accounts of David:

- Finkelstein proposes lowering the previously accepted dates for remains dated to the early monarchy by nearly a century (Finkelstein, "United Monarchy," 177–85; Silberman, *Bible Unearthed*, 340–44). This would effectively remove much of the archaeological support for the biblical accounts of David and Solomon.
- Davies argues that the stories of David were written during a much later period, largely to support the needs of a government long after the time of David (Davies, *In Search*, 72–90).
- Dever questions whether archaeology allows for a history of Israel at all (Dever, "Archaeology and the Age of Solomon," 217).

Such challenges promote investigation and debate about the life and rule of David.

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<sup>1</sup> Boyd Seevers, [“David, King of Israel,”](#) ed. John D. Barry et al., *The Lexham Bible Dictionary* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).



**SOLOMON, KING OF ISRAEL** (שְׁלֹמֹה, *shelomoh*). Son of David and Bathsheba. King of Israel. Reigned in the 10th century BC (ca. 970/60–930/20).

## Overview

Solomon was the third king of the Israelite monarchy, after Saul and David. His reign probably began in approximately 960 BC (Sweeney, *1 & 2 Kings*, 1). Second Samuel 12:24–25 indicates that he is the son of Bathsheba, though she is not mentioned by this name in Chronicles (1 Chr 3:5 lists a Bathshua, who was likely the same person). In 1 Chr 22:9, Solomon's name is said to have derived from שָׁלוֹם (*shalom*), translated as "peace." However, this is not mentioned in the account of Solomon's birth in 2 Sam. Solomon's name may have derived instead from שִׁלְמִי (*shillem*), meaning "to replace, restore," indicating that Solomon is a replacement for the child David and Bathsheba lost (McCarter, *2 Samuel*, 303).

Solomon is introduced briefly in the list of David's children in 2 Sam 5:14; his birth account is found in 2 Sam 12:24–25. His accession to the throne is recounted in 1 Kgs 1, with his reign occurring in 1 Kgs 2–11. A parallel account is found in 2 Chr 1–9. The major accomplishments of his reign include the construction of the temple in Jerusalem and the establishment of relations with foreign nations. However, current archaeological findings have led some to doubt the historical accuracy of the biblical record. According to Van Seters's summary of the literature, "All signs of a large and prosperous capital of the Davidic—Solomonic era are completely missing" (Van Seters, *The Biblical Saga of King David*, 69). Van Seters argues that the state of Judah "did not begin to develop as a state until the late ninth and early eighth centuries BC," after Solomon's reign (Van Seters, *The Biblical Saga of King David*, 88).

## Solomon's Rise to the Throne

The story of Solomon's accession to the throne begins with the notice of David's impending death (1 Kgs 1:1–4) and concludes with David's death and Solomon's ascension (1 Kgs 2:12). The story is the longest in the book of Kings, and is unusually complex for the Hebrew Bible (Walsh, *1 Kings*, 3).

### *Accession in 1 Kings*

Solomon's main rival for the throne was Adonijah, David's son by Haggith. As Adonijah was David's oldest surviving son, he was the natural successor (Seow, *First and Second Kings*, 17–18). When Adonijah held a banquet to declare his kingship, he did not invite those who did not support him—including Nathan, David's court prophet (1 Kgs 1:9–10). Nathan asked Bathsheba to remind David that he had promised the throne to Solomon, though there is no biblical record of such a promise (Seow, *First and Second Kings*, 18–19). Nathan and Bathsheba convinced David to give his blessing to Solomon's kingship (1 Kgs 1:30). The story of Solomon's accession ends with a "bloodbath," during which Solomon has Adonijah and Joab executed and Abiathar exiled (Sweeney, *1 & 2 Kings*, 47). Gray sees Solomon's purging of the opposition as an addendum or epilogue to this story, viewed as the culmination of Solomon's accession (1 Kgs 2:13–46; Gray, *1 & 2 Kings*, 102).

### *Accession in 1 Chronicles*

The accession narrative of 1 Chronicles is very different. In a speech in 1 Chr 28–29, David recounts his plans for Solomon to assume the throne to the “officials of Israel” (1 Chr 28:1). He claims that Solomon has been “chosen” by God (1 Chr 28:5; 29:1; Knoppers, *1 Chronicles 10–29*, 927–28). First Chronicles mentions no rival for the throne. In contrast with 1 Kings, the succession in 1 Chronicles is “smooth, well-planned, and without incident” (Knoppers, *1 Chronicles 1–9*, 133).

## **Solomon’s Reign**

### *Foreshadowing of Trouble*

Solomon’s reign began with his marriage to Pharaoh’s daughter and an alliance with Egypt (1 Kgs 3:1). This act foreshadows the difficulties with foreign wives that will plague Solomon’s reign. First Kings 3:2 also indicates that the people were sacrificing at the “high places”—in violation of Deuteronomic law—since the temple in Jerusalem had not yet been built (1 Kgs 3:2).

### *Building the Temple*

**Preliminary Plans.** Solomon’s reputation for wisdom and fair judgment quickly spread throughout Israel. Emphasis is given to the prosperity and peace Israel and Judah experienced under Solomon’s reign (1 Kgs 4:20, 25). In the biblical account, the construction of the temple serves as the crowning accomplishment of Solomon’s reign. Whether the temple is an historical accomplishment of Solomon or a later project attributed to Solomon is debated by archaeologists and historians (see Van Seters, “Solomon’s Temple,” 45–47).

Kings and Chronicles provide different reasons for David not having built the temple himself. In 1 Kgs 5:17 (ET 5:3), Solomon notes that Yahweh did not allow David to build the temple because David’s enemies had not yet been subdued. This is contrary to the report in 2 Sam 7:1 (Fretheim, *First and Second Kings*, 38). In 1 Chr 22:8 and 28:3, the stated reason is that David had “shed too much blood,” and the temple must be built by someone who was not a man of war. This explanation serves as an attempt to solve the problem of why David did not build the temple if he was Yahweh’s chosen king. Knoppers suggests that this is a “deficiency” in the portrayal of David in Samuel—Kings, and that the Chronicler attempts to account for it by “explaining first to [Solomon] and then to Israel’s elite his plans for the future in 1 Chr 22:2–19” (Knoppers, *1 Chronicles 10–29*, 787). Since David did not build the temple, the task fell to Solomon.

**The Temple’s Construction.** Solomon employed King Hiram of Tyre to bring timber from Lebanon (1 Kgs 5:20; ET 5:6). He also conscripted laborers from “all of Israel,” rotating the labor between working in the forests of Lebanon and working on the temple in Jerusalem (1 Kgs 5:27–28; ET 5:13–14). First Kings 6:1–9:10 details the construction and dedication of the temple. The account is interrupted in 1 Kgs 7:1–12 by a description of the building of Solomon’s palace. According to Walsh, this interruption—together with the fact that Solomon spent 13 years building his palace (1 Kgs 7:1) and seven building the temple (1 Kgs 6:38)—“invites us to infer that the governmental buildings are far more important to Solomon than the religious

one" (Walsh, *1 Kings*, 106). Commentators such as Seow suggest that this is one of many subtle clues that offer a negative evaluation of Solomon's reign (see Seow, "1 and 2 Kings," 67).

**The Temple's Dedication.** The temple is declared finished in 1 Kgs 7:51, and all of the vessels stored in David's treasury are brought in. The ark of the covenant is also brought into the temple in a grand ceremony, described in 1 Kgs 8:3–11. The remainder of this chapter recounts the prayer of blessing Solomon presents to the people, followed by a further description of the sacrifices. Yahweh appears again to Solomon in 1 Kgs 9:1–9, reminding him of the promises that He made to David. Walsh notes that the tone of the address shifts in 1 Kgs 9:6, "from conditional promise to conditional threat" (Walsh, *1 Kings*, 118). In addition, the form of address shifts from second-person singular to plural, indicating that all of Israel is now being warned to adhere to Yahweh's commandments (DeVries, *1 Kings*, 127). While Yahweh's promises to David had been unconditional, in Yahweh's address to Solomon, Israel must uphold its obligations to continue to find God's favor.

### *Israel's Economy under Solomon*

First Kings 9:10–14 details a transaction between Solomon and Hiram in which Solomon sells some of Israel's cities. Usually, the sale of territory would be an indication of a nation's poor economic situation. First Chronicles seems to understand the situation this way, and presents Hiram as selling the cities to Solomon to avoid the implication of financial hardships under Solomon's reign. First Kings, however, turns this passage "into an illustration of Solomon's financial acumen," by revealing the extraordinary purchase price at the very end of the narrative (Nelson, *First and Second Kings*, 63–64). While the historical account may have been about economic distress, the biblical account turns this into a story of Solomon's wisdom. First Kings 10 details the diplomatic and financial successes of Solomon's reign, including developing relations with the Queen of Sheba.

Though both Kings and Chronicles note explicitly that Solomon did not make slaves of the Israelites (1 Kgs 9:22; 2 Chr 8:9), he did subject them to forced labor (1 Kgs 5:13–14).

### *Solomon and Foreign Gods*

First Kings 11 describes Solomon's foreign wives and reminds readers of the Deuteronomic prohibition against mixed marriage (Deut 7:1–5) and the king acquiring many wives (Deut 17:14–17). First Kings 11:4 outlines the problem with these marriages: "For when Solomon was old, his wives turned away his heart after other gods, and his heart was not true to the Lord his God, as was the heart of his father David" (NRSV). As a consequence of Solomon's idolatry, the kingdom will be torn from Solomon (1 Kgs 11:9–13). Out of respect for David, Yahweh will take the kingdom from Solomon's son. This judgment will be only partial, as He will still leave one tribe for Solomon's son to rule. This begins the divided monarchy recorded in the rest of the book of Kings. The account in 2 Chronicles does not mention this incident.

### **Solomon and Wisdom**

Literary and cultural traditions have long associated Solomon with wisdom. This connection with wisdom begins in 1 Kgs 3:4–15, when Solomon meets Yahweh in a dream. When Yahweh asks what He should give Solomon, Solomon responds that he is overwhelmed by the responsibilities of his kingship, and asks for God to give him "an understanding mind to govern

your people, able to discern between good and evil” (1 Kgs 3:9 NRSV). Yahweh, pleased with this response, gives Solomon a “wise and discerning mind” (וְנָבוֹן, *wenavon*; חָכָם לֵב, *chakham lev*) along with great riches and power.

In the next passage, Solomon demonstrates his newly granted wisdom. First Kings 3:16–28 recounts the story of two women who ask Solomon to settle their dispute. Both were mothers of babies, one of whom had died in the night. Both claimed to be the mother of the living child. Solomon proposed cutting the baby in half and giving half to each mother. When one of the women offered to give the baby to the other woman rather than have it killed, Solomon recognized her as the true mother. This judgment became famous throughout Israel, with the people recognizing that the “wisdom of God (חֹכְמַת אֱלֹהִים, *chokhmah elohim*) was in him” (1 Kgs 3:28).

Solomon’s reputation for wisdom is noted again in 1 Kgs 4:29, 34; 5:12; 10:23, along with 2 Chr 9:22. This reputation spread far enough that the Queen of Sheba heard of it. When she came to test Solomon’s wisdom, he was able to answer all of her questions (1 Kgs 10:1–4). This brief episode was the subject of embellishment by later rabbinical writings. It is also included in the Qur’an (27:22–44; Elias, “Prophecy, Power and Propriety,” 57).

## Solomon as Author

First Kings 4:32 reports that Solomon “composed three thousand proverbs, and his songs numbered a thousand and five.” Psalm 72 and 127 mention Solomon in the title, and 127 shares vocabulary and concepts with the Wisdom books (Crenshaw, *Old Testament Wisdom*, 174).

### *The Wisdom Tradition*

At least part of the books Song of Songs, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes have been ascribed to Solomon. Song of Songs includes Solomon’s name in its superscription (1:1). Proverbs 1:1 describes the book as “The Proverbs of Solomon.” A similar attribution appears in Prov 10:1. Solomon is also invoked in the superscription to Prov 25:1, but the statement is qualified to indicate that these proverbs were copied by “the officials of King Hezekiah.” Ecclesiastes begins by describing the book as “the words of the teacher (קֹהֵלֶת, *qoheleth*), the son of David, king in Jerusalem” (Eccl 1:1). Traditionally this has been identified with Solomon, though Solomon’s name does not appear anywhere in the book.

The authorship of the books traditionally attributed to Solomon—Song of Songs, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes—remains a subject of discussion. The superscription of Song of Songs could be read as “to Solomon” (dedication), “by Solomon” (authorship), “concerning Solomon” (he is the subject), or “Solomonic” (in the tradition of Solomon) (Longman, *Song of Songs*, 2). Fox dates much of Prov 10–29 to the seventh–eighth centuries BC, well after Solomon (Fox, *Proverbs 10–31*, 2.499–506). Seow argues strongly for a dating of Ecclesiastes “no earlier than the mid-fifth century BC” based on the use of Persian loanwords (Seow, *Ecclesiastes*, 36–37). More generally, attributions to Solomon may not have been intended to ascribe authorship as understood in a modern context (Crenshaw, “Studies in Ancient Israelite Wisdom,” 112, citing R. B. Y. Scott).

## Related Article

For further discussion of how Solomon is presented in the Bible, see this article: Solomon, King of Israel, Critical Issues.

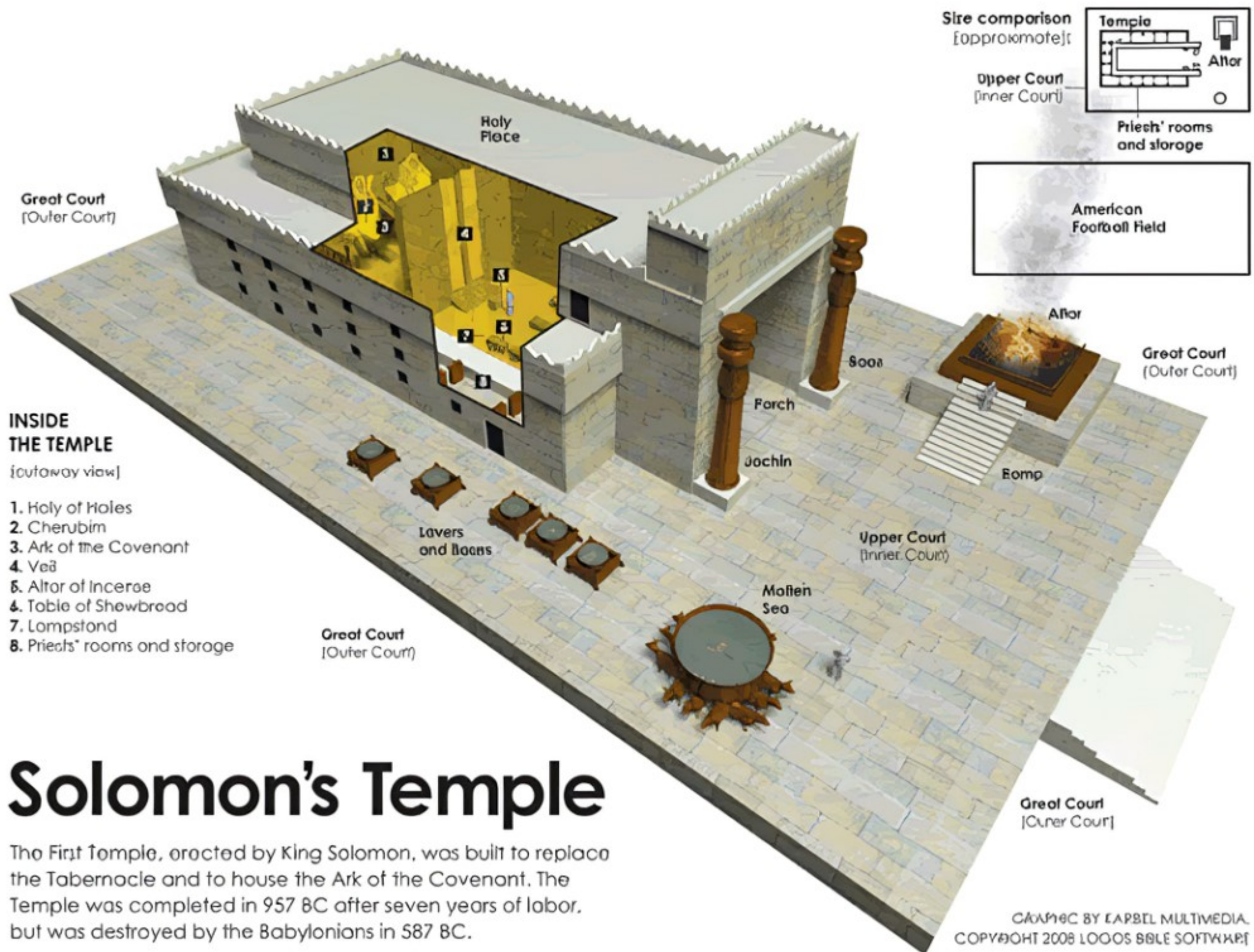
### Selected Resources for Further Study

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<sup>1</sup> Brandon Grafius, "[Solomon, King of Israel](#)," ed. John D. Barry et al., *The Lexham Bible Dictionary* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).





Chronological List of Prophets in the Old Testament			
The Prophets	The Dates	Bible History	Kings and Events
Prophets of Israel			
Jonah	810-790 BC	<a href="#">2 Kings 13-14</a>	Jehoash, Jeroboam II (Amaziah)
Joel	790-760 BC	<a href="#">2 Kings 11-15</a>	Uzziah
Amos	780-760 BC	<a href="#">2 Kings 14-15</a>	Jeroboam II (Uzziah)
Hosea	785-725 BC	<a href="#">2 Kings 15-18</a>	Jeroboam II to Hoshea (Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz)
Isaiah	750-695 BC	<a href="#">2 Kings 15-20</a>	Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah
Micah	745-725 BC	<a href="#">2 Kings 15</a>	Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah
Prophets of Judah			
Nahum	660-630 BC	<a href="#">2 Kings 15-18</a>	Manasseh, Amon, Josiah
Zephaniah	630-620 BC	<a href="#">Isaiah 10</a>	Josiah
Habakkuk	620-610 BC	<a href="#">2 Kings 23</a>	Josiah, Jehoahaz
Jeremiah	628-588 BC	<a href="#">2 Kings 22-25</a>	Josiah to Zedekiah. The Captivity
Prophets of the Captivity			
Daniel	606-534 BC	<a href="#">2 Kings 23-25</a>	The Captivity (Reign of Nebuchadnezzar to Cyrus)
Obadiah	587 BC	<a href="#">2 Kings 25</a>	After Jerusalem's Destruction (Reign of Nebuchadnezzar)
Ezekiel	596-574 BC	<a href="#">2 Kings 24</a>	To the Jews Before and During the Captivity (Reign of Nebuchadnezzar)
Prophets of the Return to Jerusalem			
Haggai	520-518 BC	<a href="#">Ezra 5-6</a>	Rebuilding the Temple in Jerusalem (Reign of Darius I)
Zechariah	520-510 BC	<a href="#">Ezra 5-6</a>	Rebuilding and Dedication of the Temple (Reign of Darius I)
Malachi	420-397 BC	<a href="#">Nehemiah 13</a>	Second Reformation by Nehemiah (Reign of Artaxerxes I)

