IV
History of
Old Testament Times, Part I

FROM ABRAHAM TO SOLOMON

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Any researcher who has attempted to reconstruct the history of the ancient Near Eastern world during the period covered by the movements and individuals mentioned in the text of the OT realizes his inadequacy for the task. Archeological and linguistic discoveries are being made continually, and their results are being published in a large number of journals and books in various modern languages. It is impossible to stay abreast of the latest find and to assimilate its significance for a better comprehension of the world of the Bible. Undoubtedly some (if not many) of the observations offered in the present chapter will be out of date by the time the present volume is published. Yet this is to be expected in a field as rich and exciting as that of the biblical world.

FROM THE PATRIARCHS TO THE EXODUS
(2000–1290 B.C.)

The World of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (2000–1720 B.C.)

   Mesopotamia. Since Abram and his family migrated from Ur (in southern Mesopotamia) to Haran (in northern Mesopotamia) and thence to Palestine (Gen. 11:31–12:3; Josh. 24:2–3;

Neh. 9:7-8; Acts 7:2-4), it seems logical to begin a survey of ancient history with observations concerning important information about Mesopotamia. At the beginning of the Middle Bronze Age (2050–1950 B.C.), Ur-Nammu initiated the Third Dynasty of Ur (2060–1950 B.C.). His reign was characterized by the erection of fine buildings and much literary activity. His law code is the oldest known. In spite of his efforts to revive the ancient Sumerian culture (2800–2360 B.C.), its destiny was sealed, the Sumerian language fast gave way to Akkadian, and Semites were gaining the upper hand.

The OT Amorites (Gen. 14:13; 15:21; etc.), Semitic invaders from the Arabian Desert whom the Mesopotamians called "Westerners," swept into the Fertile Crescent and by 1700 B.C. controlled the main cities from Syria to Babylon. A power struggle emerged among Assyria, Mari, and Babylon. For a brief period (1750–1730 B.C.) Assyria held the upper hand.

Then Mari gained control of the major portion of the land (1730–1700 B.C.). Its most outstanding king was Zimri-Lim, who had a magnificent palace covering over fifteen acres and containing almost three hundred rooms. In excavations at Mari from 1933 to 1939 under A. Parrot and from 1951 to 1956 under other archeologists, approximately twenty thousand cuneiform tablets have been unearthed. Around five thousand of these were written to Zimri-Lim by kings, officials, and common people throughout the region from Syria to Mesopotamia. Two letters sent to Zimri-Lim have to do with prophetic oracles in the name of the god Adad or Hadad of Aleppo, which contain many elements that call to mind utterances by OT prophets and the Mesopotamian prophet Balaam, whom the king of Moab hired to curse Israel (Deut. 23:4). The Mari tablets frequently mention a tribe ruled by chieftains and elders, which largely had given up a nomadic way of life to settle in towns and villages, the names of whose individual members are West Semitic. The Akkadian name given to this tribe seems to indicate that it was related in some way to the Israelite tribe of Benjamin.

It was not long until the great Babylonian monarch Hammurabi (1728–1686 B.C. according to Albright,

1792–1750 B.C. according to Oppenheim); overran Mari and established a strong Babylonian rule over the territory. Copies of earlier Babylonian accounts of creation and the flood were made during his reign. The form and subject matter of his famous law code, which contains some 282 articles, indicate that the law of Moses was typical for its day (this is not to imply that the law of Moses is a wholesale borrowing from the code of Hammurabi).

During Hammurabi's reign, Hurrians began pushing into the Fertile Crescent from the north and establishing themselves throughout the region. Soon they founded the kingdom of Mitanni and gradually transmitted the culture of the Sumerians and Akkadians to the Hittites in Asia Minor. In excavations at the Hurrian city of Nuzi between 1925 and 1931, archeologists discovered thousands of cuneiform tablets dating from the fifteenth and fourteenth centuries B.C. Many of these tablets help explain customs reflected in the OT patriachal narratives but previously obscure for lack of information.

A few specific examples may be cited. At Nuzi, if a prominent man and wife had no children, their possessions became the inheritance of their chief servant. Thus it was natural for Abram to conclude that since he had no son, Eliezer of Damascus would be his heir (Gen. 15:2). According to Nuzi law, an upper-class wife who had borne her husband no sons was supposed to give him a slave girl as a concubine, and any child born to this girl was regarded as the wife's own child. Sarai's proposal to give Hagar to Abram (16:2) corresponds to this custom. In Nuzi, a slave girl was occasionally given to a new bride. This agrees with Laban giving Zilpah to Leah (19:24) and Bilhah to Rachel (29:29). (Note that Laban lived in Paddan-aram, Gen. 28:2, which was in the Mesopotamian region.)

At Nuzi, the birthright was not determined by the sequence of births of a man's sons, but by the father's decree, and the most binding decree was given in the form of a deathbed proclamation which contained the introductory formula "Now that I have grown old." This helps one understand the significance of Isaac's blessing Jacob above

Esau (Gen. 27:18-41), which is introduced in just this way (27:2). Nuzi law decreed that a man's property could be deeded over to his son-in-law only if he gave his son-in-law the household gods. This would explain why Rachel stole Laban's household gods or teraphim when she fled with Jacob from her father (31:19; see vss. 14-16) and why Laban pursued Jacob and his family in search of them (31:22-35).

When Abram and his family left Ur of the Chaldees, they settled in Haran in the north until Abram's father, Terah, died (Gen. 11:32–12:3). Later, when they moved to Canaan, they still considered Haran and its surrounding region as their home. (See 24:3-4, 10.) Haran was the main town in the region called Paddan-aram (see 28:2; 29:4; etc.), which was a strong Amorite center. There is good evidence, therefore, that Abram's movement into Canaan was connected with the Amorite migrations that were taking place in his day. Some of the names of Abram's ancestors and relatives, such as Peleg, Serug, Nahor, and Terah (11:16-31), were also names of towns in the vicinity of Haran. The names Abram and Jacob have been found among the personal names of the Amorites. The Hebrew expression for the name by which Abram knew God is *El Shaddai* (RSV, "God Almighty," see Gen. 17:1; Exod. 6:2-3), but "Shaddai" is a Mesopotamian word meaning "the mountain one."

Egypt. The patriarchs also had interesting connections with Egypt. Both Abram (Gen. 12:10) and Jacob's sons (41:53–42:5) went there for food when a severe famine drove them out of Canaan. The time of Abram overlapped with the Middle Kingdom in Egypt (twenty-first to eighteenth centuries B.C.), which was predominantly ruled by the Pharaohs of the Twelfth Dynasty (1991–1778 B.C.). The Egyptian story of Sinuhe (ca. 1900 B.C.) tells how a high Egyptian official named Sinuhe fled from Egypt for political reasons and settled in the country of the East, the same territory as "the land of the people of the east" where Jacob came (29:1). He learned to live a seminomadic life, tending flocks and herds and following occasional agricultural pursuits like the partriarchs (13:2-12; 30:14-43).

Asia Minor. The patriarchs had a number of contacts with Hittites living in Palestine. Abraham purchased the cave of Machpelah from Ephron the Hittite (Gen. 23:1-20; 25:9-10; 49:29-30; 50:13), Esau married Hittite women (26:34; 36:2), and Ezekiel says to the city of Jerusalem, "Your mother was a Hittite" (Ezek. 16:3, 45). The discovery of numerous Hittite documents at Boghazköy in Turkey, which began to be unearthed by B. Winckler in 1906 and deciphered by B. Hrozny in 1915, has revealed a veritable wealth of information for modern scholarship. There is good reason to believe that Hittites began moving into the Fertile Crescent and the Palestinian area ca. 2000 B.C. By the middle of the sixteenth century B.C. they were pressing into Syria in large numbers, and ca. 1530 B.C. they overran Babylon.

Palestine. Canaan or Palestine was a rather unsettled, disorganized region in the patriarchal age. Various tribes or groups from differing origins had settled there. (See Gen. 15:18-21.) City states began to spring up. Many of them were protected by strong walls to guard the inhabitants from possible invasion from other city states in the region or from foreign invaders. There were also large tracts of land, particularly in the central highlands, that were thinly populated or not populated at all.

The Israelites in Egyptian Bondage (1720–1290 B.C.)

The Hyksos invasion of Egypt. About 1720 B.C., invaders from Asia Minor called Hyksos (a word meaning "rulers of foreign lands") swept through the regions of Syria and Palestine and gained control over Egypt. They made their capital in the Delta region of Egypt at Avaris (or Tanis; OT Zoan, see Ps. 78:12, 43), near the land of Goshen, where the Israelites settled (Gen. 46:28-34), and controlled Egypt until ca. 1550 B.C.

This would have been an ideal time for foreigners like Jacob's family to be welcomed into Egypt and for an outsider like Joseph to rise to a significant position in the government. Exodus 12:40-41 states that the Israelites dwelt in Egypt 430 years (cf. Gen. 15:13, which rounds this off to 400 years). If the exodus took place ca. 1290 B.C., the date of the migration

of Jacob's family to Egypt would fall ca. 1720 B.C.

Many details in the story of Joseph (Gen. 37–50) agree admirably with data gleaned from Egyptian sources. The title "overseer of the house" (39:4; 41:40) is a legitimate Egyptian official title. The gifts of the Pharaoh and the customs described in connection with Joseph's induction to the office of second in command in Egypt (41:42-43) correspond to Egyptian practices. Egyptian writings speak of palace officials with the titles "chief of the butlers" and "chief of the bakers" (40:2). The Pharaoh's birthday was an occasion of much joy, and on this day prisoners possibly were released each year (40:20). Magicians are often mentioned in Egyptian texts (cf. 41:8). Egyptians considered shepherds an abomination (43:32; 46:34). Famines are frequently mentioned on Egyptian inscriptions. An inscription from ca. 100 B.C. tells of a seven-year famine during the reign of Pharaoh Zoser (ca. 2700 B.C.), and of storehouses where grain had been kept to feed the people (cf. 41:46-49). Egyptian writings state that the length of a happy and prosperous life is 110 years, and Joseph lived to be 110 (50:22). The Egyptians embalmed or mummified important people, and both Jacob (50:2) and Joseph (50:26) were embalmed.

Egyptian control of Palestine. The Egyptians successfully drove out the Hyksos ca. 1550 B.C. and gained a rather loose control over Syria and Palestine. It was probably early in this period that "there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph" (Exod. 1:8). The Israelites were put under heavy bondage and were forced to help in building the store cities of Pithom and Raamses (1:11). Scholars generally agree that the Bible here alludes to the building projects of Pharaoh Seti I (1308–1290 B.C.) and Pharaoh Ramses II (1290–1224 B.C.).

In 1887 some Egyptian peasants discovered approximately three hundred tablets, written primarily in Babylonian cuneiform, in the archives of Pharaoh Amen-hotep IV or Akh-en-Aton (1370–1353 B.C.) at the ancient city of Akhetaton, the modern Tell el-Amarna, about two hundred miles south of Cairo. Amen-hotep IV had moved the capital from Thebes to

Akhetaton in protest against the worship of Amon and other Egyptian gods and as a devout worshiper of the god Aton, the sun disk. The majority of the Amarna letters were sent to the Egyptian court by local Canaanite kings and princes. They are filled with claims of fidelity to their Egyptian overlords and with complaints that other Canaanite rulers in the area were unfaithful to Egypt and had tried to attack them. Amen-hotep IV was not concerned with politics nearly as much as he was with religion, and thus he was willing for the Canaanite princes to fight among themselves as long as they continued to send their annual tributes and taxes to Egypt. In Canaan, there was a constant struggle among the local rulers called "governors" internally and between these governors and Egyptian officials called "inspectors." As time went on, the situation became more and more chaotic, so that the country was in an ideal condition to be overrun by foreign invaders when the Israelites entered the land.

In 1929, archeologists began to unearth hundreds of cuneiform tablets at Ugarit (Ras Shamra) on the Phoenician coast in Syria, dating from the fifteenth and fourteenth centuries B.C. Ugarit was a Canaanite city, and these tablets therefore shed a great deal of light on the religion and culture of Canaan when the Israelites entered the land. El was the name of the chief god in the Ugaritic pantheon. He and his wife Asherah gave birth to approximately seventy gods and goddesses, one of whom was Hadad or Baal (a word meaning "lord" or "owner"). According to the Baal Epic in the Ras Shamra tablets, Baal defeats the god Yamm (Sea) and confines him to his proper habitation (the sea). But then the god Mot (Death) kills Baal and he is carried into the underworld. Since Baal is a god of rain and vegetation, the rains cease and all vegetation dies. Baal's consort, Anat, forces Mot to revive Baal during half of each year. When this happens, the rains come again and vegetation springs forth. In order to "help" Baal revive vegetation and breeding among animals, as a sort of ancient "sympathetic magic," the Canaanites practiced a number of religious rites which are repulsive to Christianity, such as drunken orgies, sacred prostitution, snake worship, and

child sacrifice. (See Hos. 4:11-14.)

In the Ugaritic legend of King Keret, Keret's wife and children die in a severe calamity. Keret takes another wife by defeating her father in battle, and El blesses the new couple with many children. When Keret becomes very sick in his old age, El restores his health in reply to a prayer of one of Keret's daughters. Later one of Keret's sons rebels against him for judging unrighteously.

The Ras Shamra tablets also contain the story of a certain Danel, to whom the gods gave a son named Aqhat. When the gods give Aqhat a bow, the goddess Anat kills him to get it.

Many details in the Ugaritic literature give insight into the meaning of the OT text. There was a feast of the first sheaves of the grain harvest at Ugarit, very much like that described in Leviticus 23:10. The prohibition against Israelites boiling a kid in its mother's milk (Exod. 23:19; 34:26; Deut. 14:21) is a polemic against this Canaanite practice reflected in the Ugaritic materials. The Ras Shamra texts describe Lotan (Leviathan) in terms strikingly similar to Job 3:8; 26:12-13 (where Rahab is used instead of Leviathan); 41:1ff.; Pss. 74:13-14; 104:26; Isa. 27:1. Old Testament references to the mountain in the far north where the gods assemble (Pss. 48:2; 82:1; Isa. 14:12-14; Ezek. 28:14) find close parallels in Ugaritic language and thought.

The Hebrews. One of the most vexing questions in OT study today is the meaning of the term "Hebrew" or "Hebrews" when it is applied to the Israelites and their ancestors. Genesis 14:13 refers to Abram as "the Hebrew," and Potiphar's wife calls Joseph "a Hebrew" (Gen. 39:14, 17), apparently in a derogatory sense. The Egyptians refer to Shiphrah and Puah as "Hebrew midwives" to the "Hebrew women" (Exod. 1:15-16), and the Philistines used the term "Hebrews" in speaking of the Israelites at Aphek (1 Sam. 4:6), etc. During the last several decades of archeological discovery, scholars have found numerous references to Habiru or Hapiru people during the reign of Hammurabi of Babylon, in the Mari texts, in texts from

Alalakh, in the Nuzi materials, at Boghazköy in Turkey among the Hittite literature, and in the Tell el-Amarna tablets sent from Syria and Palestine to Egypt. When one views all the references to the Habiru from these various places, it appears that sometimes they are an ethnic group, but sometimes they are a certain social class including a variety of ethnic groups. As a social class, they seem to stand between the free citizens and the slaves and often appear as mercenary soldiers in some army. Whether the Habiru are connected with the OT Hebrews has not yet been determined with certainty. It seems most likely at the present time that the OT Hebrews were a smaller group of (or within) the much larger ancient Near Eastern social class or ethnic group called Habiru.

THE EXODUS AND THE WILDERNESS WANDERINGS (1290–1250 B.C.)

The Exodus

The date of the exodus. A great deal of effort has been expended by many scholars in an attempt to determine the date of the Israelite exodus from Egypt. Four theories have emerged, which can be outlined only briefly here.

(1) Some critics believe the exodus occurred ca. 1440 B.C. They interpret literally the 480 years from the exodus to the fourth year of Solomon's reign (ca. 958 B.C.), when the temple was begun (1 Kings 6:1). They appeal to Jephthah's statement (ca. 1100 B.C.) that the period of time that elapsed from the conquest of the territory east of Jordan under Moses to his day was 300 years (Judg. 11:26). And they espouse Garstang's view (1930–1936) that since imported Mycenaean pottery is found throughout Palestine after 1400 B.C. and since no Mycenaean pottery has been found at Jericho, that town must have fallen before 1400 B.C., thus corroborating the date 1440 B.C.

(2) Because of the allusions to Habiru troublemakers in Palestine in the Tell el-Amarna tablets dating from the reign of Amen-hotep IV (1370–1353 B.C.), others have concluded that the exodus took place ca. 1370 B.C.

(3) The most widely held view is that the exodus took place ca. 1290 B.C. Several arguments support this view. First, if Jacob's family moved into Egypt contemporaneously with the Hyksos invasion in 1720 B.C., and the period of Israel's sojourn in Egypt was 430 years (Exod. 12:40-41; Gal. 3:17; cf. Gen. 15:13; Acts 7:6), the date of the exodus would be 1290 B.C. Second, the number 480 in 1 Kings 6:1 may be interpreted as twelve generations (assuming that "forty years" can sometimes be a Hebrew idiom meaning "generation"). Computing a generation as approximately twenty-five years, the length of time from the exodus to the fourth year of Solomon's reign is satisfied. The 300 years in Judges 11:26 can be explained in a similar way. Third, the building of the store cities of Pithom and Raamses just before the exodus evidently is to be equated with the building programs in these cities by the Egyptian Pharaohs Seti I (1308-1290 B.C.) and Ramses II (1290-1224 B.C.). Fourth, the Merneptah (or Marniptah) stele (1220 B.C.), which contains the first extrabiblical mention of "Israel," speaks of Israelites as being in Palestine, but refers to them in a way indicating that they were a people in the land of Palestine, and not that they were the dominant power in the land. Fifth, Numbers 20-21 states that on their way to Canaan the Israelites went around Edom and Moab because these nations would not allow them to pass through their lands. But the kingdoms of Moab and Edom were not established east of the Jordan until the thirteenth century B.C. Sixth, over the past several years, archeologists have discovered that the towns of Lachish, Bethel, Eglon, Debir, and Succoth in central and southern Palestine, and Hazor in northern Palestine, were violently destroyed and burned during the last half of the thirteenth century B.C. Since the exodus occurred forty years before this, the evidence points to a date ca. 1290 B.C. Seventh, in excavations at Jericho beginning in 1952, Kathleen Kenyon discovered that Garstang's position on Jericho was far from conclusive. Archeological evidence shows that this location was inhabited off and on from 6800 B.C. It was destroyed ca. 1500 B.C. and not inhabited again in large numbers until

ca. 800 B.C. It is generally agreed, however, that Jericho had a small population ca. 1250 B.C. when Joshua and the Israelites probably began their invasion. In other words, there is no real evidence that Jericho was violently destroyed by invaders in the fifteenth century B.C.

(4) Some scholars feel that there were several Israelite migrations from Egypt to Canaan over a period of 300 years and that the Bible either records one of these or combines and compresses them into brief narratives. The first wave was driven out of Egypt with the Hyksos ca. 1550 B.C. The second is to be equated with part of the Habiru movement reflected in the Tell el-Amarna tablets ca. 1370 B.C. And the third consists of those who served under Moses and Joshua and overran Canaanite towns and cities by force.

It must be admitted that all these views have good arguments for and against them, and they all have been defended by liberal and conservative scholars alike. Viewed on the whole, the evidence seems to indicate that the exodus occurred ca. 1290 B.C., but the present writer offers this only as a tentative position.

The route of the exodus. It is most difficult to reconstruct the route that the Israelites followed when they fled from Egypt, because some of the places mentioned in the Bible have not been identified with certainty. The Israelites went from Rameses to Succoth to Etham on the edge of the wilderness, then turned back to Pi-hahiroth, encamped before Migdol, and crossed the Reed Sea (Exod. 12:37; 13:20; 14:2, 9, 21-22; Num. 33:5-8). In 1929, P. Montet excavated Rameses and discovered it was to be identified with Tanis (biblical Zoan). Succoth is the modern Tell el-Mashkutah near the Wadi Tumilat south of Rameses. So the Israelites at Rameses must have travelled south to the interior of the land of Goshen to gather their fellows to go with them if they wished, intending to leave Egypt along the course of the Wadi Tumilat in the region of Lake Timsaḥ. Now the Karnak Inscription of Seti I (1304-1290 B.C.) states that the Egyptians had built fortresses all along their eastern frontier. Unfortunately, Pi-hahiroth and Migdol have not been identified. The Reed Sea (Hebrew *yam suph*; not "Red

Sea" as many Bibles have it) must be a region where "reeds" or "papyrus plants" grow (which in itself rules out the Red Sea).

Scholars have proposed three theories as to the place where the Israelites crossed the Reed Sea. One is that they journeyed from Rameses south to Succoth, then from Succoth on south to a point not far from the northern tip of the Gulf of Suez, so that the Reed Sea is the Bitter Lakes. A second hypothesis is that when they came to Succoth they turned east and crossed Lake Timsah, which is the Reed Sea. The third view (which seems most likely) is that after the Israelites left Succoth they moved on south a bit until they came to Etham (Exod. 13:20). Here they "turned back" (Exod. 14:2) north, perhaps because Etham was one of the Egyptian frontier fortresses that they felt unable to pass. As this would take them back in the direction of Rameses, the Reed Sea should probably be located in this region. Archeologists have discovered an Egyptian text that mentions two bodies of water near Rameses: "the water of Horus," which is the Shihor of Isaiah 23:3, and "the Papyrus Marsh." Thus the Reed Sea may be Lake Sirbonis, or more likely the southern extension of Lake Menzaleh (Manzala).

The Wilderness Wanderings

From the Reed Sea to Mount Sinai. The Bible names five places where the Israelites encamped between the Reed Sea and Mount Sinai: Marah, Elim, Dophkah, Alush, and Rephidim (Exod. 15:22-23, 27; 17:1; Num. 33:8-15). None of these places has been identified with certainty, and the location of Mount Sinai itself is not sure. Marah could be 'Ain Hawarah, 'Ain Musa, or some unknown spring near the Bitter Lakes. Since Elim has many springs and trees, it could be the Wadi Gharandel. Dophkah might be the Egyptian mining town of Serabit el-Khadim, and Rephaim the Wadi Rafayid. Mount Sinai is frequently identified with Jebel Musa near ancient copper and turquoise mines. The tradition that this is the location of Mount Sinai is about fifteen hundred years old. This identification would help explain why Midianites and

Kenites (metal smiths) were there, because they had interest in copper mining and smelting available in this region. Moses' father-in-law, Jethro (Reuel), lived in this area (Exod. 2:15-22; 18:1-27; Num. 10:29; Judg. 4:11).

Two other sites have been suggested as the location of Mount Sinai. Some think it is located in Arabia east of the Gulf of Aqabah, because the description of Mount Sinai in Exodus 19 would seem to fit volcanic action and some mountains in this territory are volcanic. Others want to place it near Kadesh-barnea, because Mount Sinai and Kadesh-barnea are closely associated in the OT. The problem with both of these views is that they are hard to square with possible locations of other sites mentioned in the biblical texts where the Israelites camped.

From Mount Sinai to Kadesh-barnea. Some forty campsites of the Israelites between Mount Sinai and Kadesh-barnea are mentioned in Numbers 33:16-36, only a very few of which can be identified. Evidently the Israelites passed through a number of interlocking valleys between Mount Sinai and Ezion-geber (Num. 33:35), located on the northern tip of the Gulf of Aqabah. Then they moved inland over high ridges until they reached Kadesh-barnea in the wilderness of Zin (Num. 20:1; 33:36). This wilderness must have been a portion of the wilderness of Paran, because Kadesh-barnea is also located in this wilderness (Num. 13:26). The distance between Mount Sinai and Kadesh-barnea could be covered on foot in eleven days (Deut. 1:2), but the Israelites took almost thirty-nine years in their wanderings to do it. (See Num. 10:11; 20:22-29; 33:38-39.)

THE BEGINNING OF THE CONQUEST AND SETTLEMENT OF CANAAN (1250–1200 B.C.)

Canaan at the Time of the Conquest

The Tell el-Amarna tablets, the Ras Shamra materials, and the Bible show that when the Israelites began the conquest and settlement of Canaan, the country was inhabited by a variety of peoples who were not united, who

lived in isolation from each other, and who themselves were often hostile to each other. Deuteronomy 7:1 and Joshua 3:10 and 24:11 mention seven nations that lived there. The stories of the people of Gibeon (Josh. 9) and Laish (Judg. 18:27-28) show how poor communication was between the different peoples and cities. West of the Jordan it was common for each city state to have its own king (see Josh. 2:2; 6:2; 8:1-2; 10:1-4, 28-39; 11:1; 12:13-24; etc.) and its own god, usually some Baal, so that frequently the books of Joshua, Judges, and Samuel refer to the "Baals" and the "Asherim" or "Ashtaroth" (Asherah was the consort of Baal) or to a plurality of gods (Josh. 23:7-8, 16; 24:15-18, 20, 23; Judg. 2:3, 11-13; 3:7; 6:25; 8:33; 10:6; 1 Sam. 7:3-4; etc.). Large areas of Canaan were thinly populated or not populated at all.

The Course of the Conquest and Settlement of Canaan

The overthrow of the land east of Jordan. When the Israelites under Moses had gone around Edom and Moab to reach the region east of the Jordan just north of the Dead Sea at Shittim or Baal-peor (Num. 25:1-2; 33:49; Mic. 6:5), they entered into military conflict with two Amorite kings who governed small nations there. One was Sihon, the king of Heshbon in the south, and the other, Og, the king of Bashan in the north (Num. 21:21-35). When these kings had been defeated, Moses gave this region to the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh (Num. 32:33-42; Deut. 2:26–3:17; etc.) with the understanding that their men of war would help the other tribes seize the land west of Jordan.

Conquests and settlements in central Canaan. After Moses died, Joshua led the Israelites across the Jordan to the west and set up headquarters at Gilgal, an unoccupied region. They overran and/or made alliances with various central Palestinian peoples, including Jericho (Josh. 6), Ai (Josh. 7-8), Gibeon, Beeroth, Chephirah, Kiriath-jearim (Josh. 9, especially vss. 17-18), and Debir (Josh. 10:38-39).

Conquests and settlements in southern Canaan. After making inroads into central Palestine, the Israelites

moved southward. Here they overran such strategic towns as Makkedah, Libnah, Lachish, Eglon, and Hebron (Josh. 10:28-37) and began to settle in this region.

Conquests in northern Canaan. After several successful campaigns in central and southern Palestine, the Israelites apparently engaged in a series of wars against Hazor and surrounding cities in the region around the Sea of Galilee in northern Canaan (Josh. 11, especially vss. 10-14, 18).

The Speed and Nature of Israel's Possession of Canaan

On the basis of Joshua 10:40-43; 11:15-17, 23; 18:1; 21:43-45; and 23:14-15, it might be concluded that the OT contains affirmations that the Israelites completely conquered Canaan during Joshua's lifetime. However, this is clearly not the picture painted in other texts, nor is it historically accurate. When Joshua was an old man, there was "very much land" yet to be possessed by the Israelites (Josh. 13:1-7; 18:3-7). Joshua had "allotted" or "apportioned" the land to the various tribes, but when he died by no means had they already "possessed" it (Josh. 13:6-7; 18:2-3, 10). Judges 1 describes many Israelite conquests of Canaanite cities and towns "after the death of Joshua" (Judg. 1:1) and tells how Israelites and Canaanites lived side by side in the land long after Joshua's death. The tribe of Dan did not seize its territory in the north until late in the period of the Judges (Judg. 18). And it was not until the time of David (ca. 1000 B.C. or later) that the Jebusites were dislodged from Jerusalem (2 Sam. 5:6-8) and the Israelite possession of Canaan completed.

Israel's possession of the land of Canaan was very irregular. They settled in regions that were not populated or thinly populated; they made leagues with peoples living in the land and coexisted with them (Josh. 9; 11:19; Judg. 1:27-36); they burned and overran certain city states. It seems that after the Israelites defeated some city states they did not inhabit them or, if they did, their enemies later drove them out because they had to conquer some towns more than once, such as Hebron (Josh. 10:36-37; 14:13-15; 15:13-14; Judg. 1:10), Debir (Josh. 10:38-39; 15:15-19; Judg. 1:11-15), Jerusalem

(Judg. 1:8-9; 2 Sam 5:6-8), and Hazor (Josh. 11:1-15; Judg. 4–5). This agrees with the repeated statement that they returned to Gilgal after defeating certain Canaanite cities.

In view of these facts, certain comments may be in order with regard to the above-mentioned passages that at first sight might be taken to mean that the Israelites under Joshua quickly and completely subdued the land of Canaan. (1) Joshua 10:40-43 has reference only to southern and central Palestine, as a simple reading of this text shows. (2) In the other passages, the word "all"is not to be taken in an absolute sense. Paul says: "from Jerusalem and as far round as Illyricum I have *fully* preached the gospel of Christ" (Rom. 15:19), and again: "the gospel . . . has been preached to *every creature* under heaven" (Col. 1:23). Yet it is quite clear that there were many people in the Roman Empire in Paul's day who had never seen or heard him and who had never heard about Christ. He means that the disciples had carried the gospel to the main cities of the world at that time. (3) Joshua 11:15-17, 23; 18:1; 21:43-45; 23:14-15 mean that Joshua had led Israel in enough military victories so that when he died the land that had been under the control of the Canaanites was now under Israelite control. Israel was now the dominant power in the land, and the individual tribes could begin trying to take possession of the territories allotted to them.

THE PERIOD OF THE JUDGES (1200–1020 B.C.)

Israel's Instability in Canaan

Although the Israelites had gained the upper hand in the land of Canaan by the time of Joshua's death, surrounding nations continued to give them trouble, and the tribes were not solidly united, but often fought with one another.

Israel was subdued by Mesopotamian peoples from the north (Judg. 3:8), Canaanites in the northern part of Palestine (Judg. 4:2), Midianites in the south (Judg. 6:1), Moabites (Judg. 3:14) and Ammonites (Judg. 10:8; 1 Sam 11:1-11; 12:12) from the east, Philistines from the west (Judg. 13:1; 1 Sam. 4–7; 13–14; 29–31; 2 Sam. 5:17-25),

and probably other peoples not mentioned in the biblical text. The Philistines were a sea-going people who swept into Egypt in the eighth year of Ramses III (ca. 1188 B.C.). The Egyptians were able to drive them out ca. 1180 B.C., and thus they moved into Canaan. Archeological excavations by Danish specialists at Shiloh in 1926–1932 and in more recent days indicate that this town was violently destroyed by invading forces ca. 1050 B.C. It is generally agreed that this is to be correlated with the Philistine battles against Israel in the days of Samuel (1 Sam. 4:1-22; Jer. 7:14; 26:6, 9; Ps. 78:59-66). They were a constant threat to the Israelites until David finally defeated them soundly (2 Sam. 5:17-25) and even after this continued to be a menace. It is from them that the word "Palestine" came to be used of the land of Canaan.

The Israelite tribes were poorly organized until David solidified them. They had to be specially convened to take care of important matters, and even then many times only designated tribal officials attended. To cite only a few examples, they were called together at Mount Ebal so that the law could be read to them (Josh. 8:30-35), at Shiloh to set up the tent of meeting (Josh. 18:1), at Shechem to make or renew the covenant with Yahweh (Josh. 24:1, 25-28), and at Gilgal to renew the kingdom (1 Sam. 11:14-15). But more than this, when a common enemy attacked or threatened to attack, the fighting men of the pertinent tribes had to be convened, as when Deborah and Barak summoned certain tribes to help fight against Jabin (Judg. 4:10; 5:12-18) or when Israel determined to punish the Benjaminites for raping and killing the Levite's concubine (Judg. 10:1-2, 8-11; 21:5, 8; etc.) or when Saul called the tribes to help defend Jabesh-gilead against Nahash (1 Sam. 11:7-8).

Moreover, the Israelite tribes were constantly bickering and fighting with each other. Deborah chided the clans and tribes of Reuben, Gilead, Manasseh, Dan, Asher, and Meroz for not helping their brethren in war against the Canaanites (Judg. 5:15-17, 23). Ephraim was jealous when Gideon defeated the Midianites (8:1-3), and the men of Succoth and Penuel refused to help Gideon against Zebah

and Zalmunna (8:4-9, 13-17). There was strife between Abimelech and Jotham (9:5-21), Abimelech and the men of Shechem (9:23, 26-49), and Abimelech and the men of Thebez (9:50-55). Jephthah's brothers bitterly opposed him and drove him away (11:1-3), and Ephraim was jealous of his victory over the Ammonites (12:1-6). The Israelites were divided over Saul's selection as king (1 Sam. 10:25-27; 11:12-13). Saul and David were enemies several years during Saul's reign (1 Sam. 17ff.). It is not surprising, therefore, that after the reigns of David and Solomon the kingdom was divided.

The Chronological Problem of the Period of the Judges

If one were to interpret the chronological data in the book of Judges sequentially, he would conclude that the period in which judges governed Israel covered 410 years, as Chart 1 shows.

Chart 1

Chronology of the Book of Judges

Text in Book of Judges	Event	Number of Years Involved
3:8	Israel subject to Mesopotamia	8
3:11	Peace under Othniel	40
3:14	Israel subject to Moab	18
3:30	Peace under Ehud	80
4:3	Israel oppressed by Jabin	20
5:31	Peace under Deborah and Barak	40
6:1	Israel subject to Midian	7
8:28	Peace under Gideon	40
9:22	Rule of Abimelech	3
10:2	Rule of Tola	23
10:3	Rule of Jair	22
10:8	Israel oppressed by Ammonites	18
12:7	Peace under Jephthah	6
12:9	Rule of Ibzan	7
12:11	Rule of Elon	10
12:14	Rule of Abdon	8
13:1	Israel dominated by Philistines	40
15:20 (16:31)	Peace under Samson	20
	Total	410

Now 1 Kings 6:1 states that there were 480 years from the exodus to the beginning of the building of the temple in the fourth year of Solomon's reign. However, if the biblical data pertaining to the time covered between these two events is taken sequentially, the number of years involved would be over six hundred years, as Chart 2 demonstrates.

Chart 2

Hypothetical Sequential Chronology from the Exodus to the Beginning of the Building of the Temple

Biblical Text	Event	Number of Years Years Involved
Num. 14:34		
Deut. 1:3	Wilderness Wanderings	40
Josh. 24:31	Joshua's Leadership	x
Texts in	Period of the Judges	
Chart 1	through Samson	410
1 Sam. 4:18	Eli's judgeship	40
1 Sam. 7:15	Samuel's judgeship	y
Acts 13:21	Saul's kingship	40
2 Sam. 5:4-5		
1 Kings 2:11	David's kingship	40
1 Kings 6:1	Beginning of building of temple in 4th year of Solomon's reign	4
	Total	$574 + x + y$

Even if Eli's judgeship is reduced to twenty years (following the LXX) and Saul's kingship is reduced to twenty years (because of the textual problem in 1 Sam. 13:1), the number still must be near six hundred years (including the unspecified time that Joshua led Israel and that Samuel judged—x and y on the chart).

Although the Bible does not give enough information to help one solve this problem in all its details, two general considerations point toward a solution. First, the number forty (with its multiples and fractions) may be a Hebrew idiom for a generation in a number of cases and need not be taken literally each time it occurs. The biblical breakdown of the wilderness wanderings (the second year, Num. 1:1; 10:11; the fortieth year, Num. 33:38; Deut. 1:3) and of David's reign (seven and one-half years over Judah at Hebron and thirty-three years over all Israel at Jerusalem,

2 Sam. 5:4-5) would suggest that the number forty should be taken literally in these two cases, but this would not necessarily be true in all instances. Second, there is no reason that different alien oppressions and Israelite judges could not have overlapped one another. In most cases, the OT takes care to specify the tribe from which a certain judge comes (Ehud from Benjamin, Judg. 3:15; Gideon from Manasseh, Judg. 6:15; Tola from Issachar, Judg. 10:1; Jair from Gilead east of the Jordan, Judg. 10:3; etc.). Possibly only his tribe was affected by the hostile attack described in the biblical text. (Deborah's summoning of several tribes, Judg. 4:6, 10; 5:12-18,~23, seems to have been the exception rather than the rule.) Then the word "Israel" in the book of Judges may be a case in which the more comprehensive term is used for a part of the whole.

The Work of Judges

It would be a grave mistake to think of the "judges" in the book of Judges in the modern sense of this word. The word "judge" is used of at least three functions in the OT. First and foremost, the judge was a military leader guided by God (his spirit or angel) to deliver the Israelites from foreign oppression (Judg. 2:16, 18; 3:9, 10, 15, 31; 6:36, 37; 7:2; 8:22; 10:1; 1 Sam. 8:20). Second, he was a man who heard court cases between tribes or individuals and decided how the problem was to be resolved on the basis of the law (Judg. 10:1-5; 12:8-15; 1 Sam. 7:15–8:3). Third, he was a teacher of the people, who encouraged them to be faithful to Yahweh and his law and warned them not to serve other gods (Judg. 2:17; 1 Sam. 12). Some of the judges may have discharged all of these functions, but most of them seem to have done only one of them.

THE REIGN OF SAUL (1020–1000 B.C.)

Change in Israel's Government

The transition from a disorganized tribal system under judges to an organized monarchical system under a king in Israel took place very slowly. On the one hand, there were

several attempts to institute some sort of monarchical government in Israel before this was finally accomplished with Saul. After Gideon defeated the Midianites, the men of Israel said to him: "Rule over us, you and your son and your grandson also" (Judg. 8:22). This language suggests that they were asking him to establish a dynasty. Gideon's wicked son, Abimelech, became king over the citizens of Shechem (9:6-22). The elders of Gilead urged Jephthah to become their "leader" or "head" (11:5-11), probably suggesting some sort of kingship. Now it may very well be that what the people wanted was a king over a certain city state or district like the Canaanites had, but such requests indicate that they were unhappy with existing conditions and yearned for a more stable government. On the other hand, in the early years of Saul's rule, he functioned much more like a judge than a king. The spirit of God came mightily upon him (1 Sam. 10:6, 9-10; 11:6) as on the judges (Judg. 13:25; 14:6, 19). When Israel was attacked by an invading force (the Ammonites), Saul had to gather an army from the various tribes (1 Sam. 11:5-11) just like the judges (Judg. 4:6, 10). When the elders of Israel asked Samuel for a king, they used the verb "judge" (Hebrew *shaphat;* RSV, "govern") to describe the work that they wanted him to do (1 Sam. 8:5-6, 20). They wanted a leader, they said, to "go out before us and fight our battles" (1 Sam. 8:20), which was the primary function of a judge (Judg. 2:16, 18; etc.).

When Israel's monarchy began, at least three views of kingship existed. (1) The popular feeling apparently was that stability and security could be gained only by organizing the people under one earthly head, like the nations (1 Sam. 8:5, 19-20). The ultimate implication of such thinking is that Yahweh's leadership was not sufficient to deliver Israel from her enemies and that rule by charismatic judges was very unsatisfactory. (2) The view of Gideon (Judg. 8:23) and Samuel (1 Sam. 8:6-7) was that God alone should be recognized as king and that no earthly leader was necessary until God raised him up when the need required. (3) Yahweh's view seems to have been that it was best under the circumstances to give Israel a king, as long as he was the kind of

man who would subject his will to God's will as his representative and let God rule through him (1 Sam. 8:7-9, 22). When Samuel anointed Saul, Saul possessed that type of humble spirit which would lend itself to such a philosophy (9:21; 15:17), although his attitude changed later. Possibly the statements that David was a man after God's own heart (13:14) and "better than" Saul (15:28) are to be understood in this context. (See 28:17-18.) Unlike Saul, he strove to allow God to be the real king in Israel's governmental system. It is this kind of king that the author of the book of Judges envisioned with his statement "In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did what was right in his own eyes" (Judg. 17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25).

The Emergence of Prophetism

It seems to be no accident that the prophetic movement in Israel began about the same time as the monarchy. (Peter traces its origins back to Samuel, Acts 3:24, while recognizing that Moses also performed prophetic functions, Acts 3:22-23.) If God was to be the real king and the earthly king his representative, it was necessary for him to speak to the king and the people and to have a way to let it be known publicly that he was in charge. The prophets discharged these tasks.

The manner in which God designated a certain man as king was to have his prophet *anoint* him. Thus, Samuel anointed Saul (1 Sam. 9:16), but when he did so he said: "Has not *the Lord* anointed you to be prince over his people Israel?" (10:1). After this, Saul is called "the Lord's anointed" (24:6; 26:11; 2 Sam. 1:14). Samuel anointed David after the Lord had rejected Saul (1 Sam. 16:12-13), Nathan anointed Solomon (1 Kings 1:34), and one of the sons of the prophets anointed Jehu at the commission of Elisha (2 Kings 9:1-6). Hittite documents discovered at Boghazköy indicate that it was customary for a suzerain to have vassal kings subject to him anointed as a sign of their subjection and fidelity to him. The OT clearly indicates that at least one idea connected with anointing kings is that the king was thereby subject to God and set apart in a special way to be

faithful to him. The Hebrew word for "anoint" is *mashach*, whence comes the noun *meshiach*, "anointed one" (the Greek word that translates this noun is *christos*, and from these two words come the English "messiah" and "christ"). All kings of Israel were the Lord's messiahs, or christs, or anointed ones. This language provided an excellent background for terminology already familiar to the people to be applied to Jesus. In a fuller sense than any OT personality, Jesus is the Lord's Messiah or Christ (Matt. 16:13-19; John 1:41).

The prophets also reproached and condemned kings when they acted in a way contrary to God's will. Samuel rebuked Saul for offering the burnt offering at Gilgal before he arrived (1 Sam. 10:8; 13:8-13a); Nathan reproached David for committing adultery with Bathsheba and having Uriah killed on the battlefield at Rabbah (2 Sam. 12:1-15); God offered David three alternate divine punishments when he numbered the people (2 Sam. 24:1-14); etc. The prophets also announced God's rejection of a king, as when Samuel declared that the Lord had rejected Saul (1 Sam. 13:13b-14; 15:26, 28; 28:16-18).

It was customary throughout the ancient Near East for a messenger of a king to introduce his message with the formula "Thus says . . . ." Accordingly, when the Rabshakeh conveys Sennacherib's message to Hezekiah, he introduces it with the words "Thus says the great king, the king of Assyria" (2 Kings 18:19; Isa. 36:4) or "Thus says Sennacherib king of Assyria" (2 Chron. 32:10). Again, the messengers of Ben-hadad introduced his words to Ahab by saying "Thus says Ben-hadad" (1 Kings 20:2, 5). In view of this, it seems clear that when the prophets used the formula "Thus says Yahweh (the Lord)," they assume that he is the real king over Israel.

Major Developments during Saul's Reign

Although Saul's kingdom never attained the power and glory that characterized the empire of David and Solomon, he was able to lift Israel somewhat above conditions that had prevailed previously. In 1922–1923 and 1933, excavators of the American School of Oriental Research unearthed

a portion of a fortress or citadel at Gibeah (modern Tell el-Ful) dating from the end of the eleventh century B.C., which now is generally acknowledged to be Saul's stronghold in his capital city. The OT suggests that Saul made his home town (1 Sam. 10:5, 10, 26) his governmental center (14:2, 16; 15:34; 22:6; 23:19; 26:1). To be sure, this location and Saul's fortress were not nearly so imposing as those of David and Solomon later in Jerusalem, but Saul's work was a beginning in that direction.

Saul led Israel in a number of successful military campaigns against the Moabites, the Ammonites, the Edomites, the kings of Zobah, the Philistines, and the Amalekites (1 Sam. 11:1-11; 13–14; 15:1-9). This enabled the Israelites to secure greater control of the land of Canaan than they had ever enjoyed. However, the Philistines were determined to gain control of Canaan if they could. First Samuel 16–2 Samuel 1 alludes to numerous encounters between the Israelites and the Philistines. In time, Saul and Jonathan were killed while fighting against the Philistines on Mount Gilboa (1 Sam. 31).

In a rather crude way Saul began an organized military and political system among the Israelites. When he found any strong or brave man, he enlisted him in his army (1 Sam. 14:52). One of his most promising soldiers was David (16:21; 18:2). Evidently he hired foreign mercenaries who were especially skilled in warfare, such as Doeg the Edomite (22:9, 18), the chief of Saul's herdsmen (21:7). The commander of his army was Abner the Son of Ner, Saul's uncle (14:50). Under him were commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds (22:7). Saul had personal armorbearers (16:21; 31:4-6), a bodyguard (22:14, 17), a three-man cabinet or council consisting of Abner, Jonathan, and David (20:25; cf. vss. 5, 18, 27), and a corps of eighty-five priests under Ahimelech (22:11-19, especially vs. 18).

Saul's failure in his personal life and as a national leader was due largely to great fear of his enemies and constant suspicion of his own men. His fear of the Philistines motivated him to offer the burnt offering before Samuel

arrived at Gilgal (1 Sam. 13:11-12) and to consult the medium at Enzor (28:7-25, especially vs. 15). His suspicion of David led him to try to kill him in various ways on different occasions, as demanding that he kill 100 Philistines to qualify to marry Michal (18:25), trying to kill him with his spear several times (18:10-11; 19:9-10), etc. His suspicion of Ahimelech made him command that he and the eighty-five priests of Nob be killed (22:11-19). His suspicion of Jonathan moved him to try to kill him with his spear (20:30-33).

THE REIGN OF DAVID (1000–961 B.C.)

David's Rise to Israel's Throne

The OT emphasizes that David's successful rise to the throne (like that of Saul's) was due first and foremost to the intervention and continual working of the living God. Yahweh sought out, appointed, and provided David to be king (1 Sam. 13:14; 16:1) and gave the kingdom to him (15:28). He sent Samuel to anoint David for this work (16:1, 12-13). He was with David in all his undertakings (18:12, 14, 28; 2 Sam. 5:10), would not give him into Saul's hand (1 Sam. 23:14), and gave him victory over his enemies wherever he went (2 Sam. 8:6, 14). Under this large umbrella of divine intervention, many other factors worked together in bringing about David's elevation to Israel's throne.

First, David enjoyed the support of Israel's most influential religious leaders, namely, Samuel and the prophets under his charge (1 Sam. 16:1-13; 19:18-24), and Ahimelech and the priests of Nob (21:1-9; 22:7-19). Both of these groups had undoubtedly watched Saul's spiritual decline with deep regrets and looked for the day when Saul could be replaced by a man who would function more adequately as Yahweh's anointed one and representative (see 15:17-35; 22:14-15). When Saul killed the priests of Nob, it was only natural for Abiathar, one of Ahimelech's sons, to flee to David for refuge (22:20-23; 23:6).

Second, David frequently demonstrated his military skill

as a soldier in Saul's army. In keeping with the military custom of his day, he frequently engaged Philistines in single combats and defeated them (1 Sam. 17:48-51; 18:30 —"The Philistine officers used to come out to offer single combat; and whenever they did, David had more success against them than all the rest of Saul's men, and he won a name for himself," NEB). Saul made him one of his armor-bearers (16:21; 18:2), set him over the men of war (18:5), elevated him to the rank of commander of a thousand (18:13), made him one of his three personal confidants (along with Jonathan and Abner—20:25), and appointed him captain over his bodyguard (22:14). It is not clear whether this is the order in which David held these posts or whether he held some of them simultaneously. David steadily attracted mighty warriors to himself, men whom Saul repulsed by his general attitude and, particularly, by his negative attitude toward David. These included members of David's own family (22:1), fellow Judeans who were not happy with Saul's rule (22:2) and eventually joined David at the stronghold to help him take the throne from the house of Saul (1 Chron. 11:10), prominent North Israelite soldiers, Saul's own relatives, and foreign mercenaries. Of the thirty-seven heroes of David listed in 2 Samuel 23:8-37, twenty-one were Judeans, nine were North Israelites, and seven were foreigners. Other than Jonathan, perhaps the most impressive member of Saul's family that defected to David was Ishmaiah (1 Chron. 12:2-4).

Third, Saul's suspicion of those around him and especially of David caused many to become disenchanted with Saul and to turn to David. Samuel hesitated to go to Bethlehem because he knew Saul would suspect his intentions (1 Sam. 16:2). Saul sharply rebuked Jonathan for his friendship with David (20:30-31). He chastised the most trusted members of his army because they looked favorably on David (22:7-8). It is human nature to sympathize with the oppressed. The more Saul attacked David, the more popular David became, especially among those whom Saul harassed.

Fourth, David's relationship with Saul's family put him in a good position for the throne in the eyes of the people.

Jonathan could probably see his father's faults very clearly, realized that he was not cut out to be king of Israel, and really believed that David was the man for the job. Jonathan's dream seems to have been that David be the next king of Israel and that he be "next to him" (1 Sam. 23:17), (i.e., second in command). As the husband of Michal (Saul's daughter), David was son-in-law of the king (18:23); and, since Saul came from Gibeah in North Israel, this put David in a favorable light in the eyes of the people living in northern Palestine. It is politically significant that when David sought to bring the northern tribes under his rule after Saul and Jonathan were killed at Mount Gilboa, he demanded that Michal be returned to him as his wife (2 Sam. 3:13-16—while David was a fugitive in the latter part of Saul's reign, Saul had given Michal to Palti, 1 Sam. 25:44).

Fifth, David's unique ability to deal with the northern tribes played an important role in his accession to the throne. Although he had several opportunities to kill Saul, David refused to do so because Saul was the Lord's anointed (1 Sam. 24:6; 26:11, 23). Undoubtedly this put David in a favorable position with Saul's soldiers and followers. When David learned that Saul and Jonathan had been killed by the Philistines, he killed the Amalekite who claimed to have killed Saul (2 Sam. 1:14-16) and publicly mourned their loss (1:11-12, 17-27). His first public act when he was made king over Judah at Hebron was to send an official embassy to Jabesh-gilead in North Israel east of the Jordan, commending the men of that city for giving Saul and Jonathan a proper burial (2:4-7; cf. 1 Sam. 31:11-13). When David discovered that Joab had murdered Abner (who had been commander-in-chief of the armies of Saul and his son Ish-baal or Ish-bosheth), he publicly cursed the house of Joab (2 Sam. 3:28-29, 39), lamented Abner's loss to Israel, and gave him an honorable burial at Hebron (3:31-38). Similarly, when he learned that two of his own men had murdered Ish-bosheth, he had them killed and buried Ish-bosheth's head in Abner's tomb (4:9-12). Perhaps one of David's most spectacular political maneuvers was to select the neutral city of Jerusalem as his capital (5:6-8). It lay in

the borderland between Israel and Judah and since it had
been under Jebusite control could not be said to be either
uniquely Israelite or uniquely Judean. His transfer of the ark
of the covenant to Jerusalem (2 Sam. 6) must have made a
great positive impression on the North Israelites, because
the previous location where it had actually been used to any
extent at all was Shiloh in North Israel (1 Sam. 1–4).

Sixth, David had an uncanny ability to deal with for-
eign nations to Israel's advantage. His dealings with the
Philistines are a good example of this. Early in his career he
killed many Philistines in single combats and in battles.
When he first became a fugitive from Saul, he seems to have
been on unfriendly terms with Saul and the Philistines alike.
He was driven out of Gath by the men of Achish because
they thought he was "the king of the land" of Israel
(1 Sam. 21:11).

However, later David was able to convince the
Philistines that Saul had banished him, and thus he was
Saul's enemy. The Philistines gave David asylum in their
land, and he became their vassal with his own city for him-
self and his men at Ziklag (1 Sam. 27:5-6). Ultimately David
defeated the Philistines and made them special soldiers in
his army. Many scholars believe that the Cherethites and
Pelethites who fought in David's army (2 Sam. 8:18; 20:23;
1 Chron. 18:17) were Cretans and Philistines.

David's Achievements

David was a great, magnetic personality who welded
Israel into a unified state and provided her with sufficient
strength to continue as the controlling force in Palestine
for several succeeding decades (even after the tribes
split again). He captured Jerusalem from the Jebusites
(2 Sam. 5:6-8) and made it a strong, fortified city, able to
resist powerful military attacks by Israel's enemies (5:9).
Here he had an impressive royal palace built for himself and
his successors (5:11), and to the six wives he had married
earlier (3:2-5) he added several wives and concubines in
Jerusalem (5:13), some undoubtedly as a result of political
marriages. These gave birth to several sons, who became

princes under David, and ultimately contenders for the throne.

David defeated Israel's enemies and thus prepared the way for Solomon's peaceful rule. He defeated the Philistines on the west (2 Sam. 5:17-25; 8:1, 12), the Edomites on the south (8:12-14), the Moabites and Ammonites on the east (8:12; 10:1-19), and the Syrians or Arameans on the north (8:3-8; 10:1-19), and made peaceful alliances with Phoenicia on the west (5:11) and with Hamath on the north (8:9-10). During his reign, Israel actually came to possess and control the land of Canaan for the first time.

David made significant advances on Saul's governmental organization. His cabinet consisted of a commander of the army (Joab, the son of David's sister Zeruiah, 2 Sam. 8:16; 20:23; 1 Chron. 2:15-16; 27:34), a recorder (Jehoshaphat, 2 Sam. 8:16; 20:24), two high priests (Abiathar and Zadok, 8:17; 20:25), a secretary (Seraiah, 8:17; Sheva, 20:25), two counselors (Ahithophel and Hushai, 15:32-37; 16:15–17:23; 1 Chron. 27:33), court prophets (Nathan, 2 Sam. 7:1-17; 12:1-15, 24-25; 1 Kings 1:22-27, 32-40; Gad, 2 Sam. 24), a leader of the Cherethites and Pelethites (Benaiah, 2 Sam. 8:18; 20:23), and a leader of his forced labor gangs (Adoram, 20:24). He had a group of three mighty men (23:8-17) and thirty valiant men (23:18-39), who apparently were willing to give their very lives for him if necessary, even to satisfy his smallest desire (23:13-17). He also had overseers of the various works that were being done throughout the kingdom (1 Chron. 27:2-32).

David also made great contributions to Israel's religious activities. He brought the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem and temporarily housed it in a tent (2 Sam. 6). The ark was the throne-chariot of Yahweh and symbolized his presence with his people as king (1 Sam. 4:3-4; 2 Sam. 6:2). David longed to build a temple for the ark but could not do so because he was so involved in withstanding and overrunning Israel's enemies (2 Sam. 7; 1 Kings 5:3-4). Therefore, he drew up an architectural plan of the temple for Solomon to follow (1 Chron. 28:11-19) and had his servants gather many materials in preparation for the building of the temple

(22:2-5). Furthermore, he organized the priests and Levites in divisions (23–24), designated certain men and their descendants to be responsible for the instrumental and vocal music to be used in the temple (1 Chron. 25) according to the commandment from the Lord through his prophets (2 Chron. 29:25-26), and appointed gatekeepers, treasurers, officers, judges, and various other leaders (1 Chron. 26–27) so that the temple work and worship could begin smoothly and effectively. He appreciated and practiced animal sacrifice as a vital part of OT worship (2 Sam. 5:12-19; 24:18-25; 1 Chron. 23:13, 26-32).

David's Sins and Their Consequences

With all his good qualities, like all men David was a sinner. He committed adultery with Bathsheba, the wife of one of his hired foreign mercenaries, Uriah the Hittite (2 Sam. 11:1-5; cf. 23:39), had Uriah murdered on the battlefield at Rabbah (11:14-25), and (apparently from egotistical motives) took a count of his fighting men (2 Sam. 24:1-9; 1 Chron. 21:1-6).

As a consequence of his adultery with Bathsheba and murder of Uriah, the Lord brought four punishments on David. (1) He decreed that the sword should not depart from David's house (2 Sam. 12:10). Accordingly, Absalom killed Amnon, his half-brother, for committing fornication with Tamar (Absalom's sister—ch. 13), Joab killed Absalom in battle (ch. 18), and Solomon had Adonijah killed when he asked for Abishag to be given to him as a wife (1 Kings 2:13-25). (2) He announced that he would raise up evil against him out of his own house (2 Sam. 12:11). Thus Amnon committed adultery with Tamar (ch. 13); Absalom led a military rebellion against David and tried to usurp the throne (ch. 15), and Adonijah tried to seize the throne in David's old age (1 Kings 1:5-10, 41-53). (3) He stated that he would give David's wives to a neighbor of his, who would commit adultery with them publicly (2 Sam. 12:11). And when Absalom seized Jerusalem, on Ahithophel's advice he pitched a tent on the roof of the royal palace and went in to David's concubines in the sight of all Israel (16:21-22).

(4) He declared that the child born to David's adulterous relationship with Bathsheba would die (12:14), and it did at seven days of age (12:16-18).

As a result of numbering the warriors from Israel and Judah, God gave David the choice of a three-year famine (some ancient manuscripts read "seven years of famine" in 2 Samuel), three months of fleeing before his enemies, or three days of pestilence in the land (2 Sam. 24:13; 1 Chron. 21:12). David put himself into the Lord's hands by asking for the pestilence, because he knew God's mercy is great (2 Sam. 24:14; 1 Chron. 21:13).

THE REIGN OF SOLOMON (961–922 B.C.)

Solomon's Military and Political Achievements

Solomon came to the throne of Israel under tense circumstances. Adonijah, his half-brother, had succeeded in securing a rather strong following in Joab and Abiathar (1 Kings 1:7). But with the public support of David, Bathsheba, Benaiah, Zadok, and Nathan, Solomon was successful in attaining the throne (1:8, 11-40). Early in his reign Solomon got rid of his political rivals. He had Benaiah, the commander of his army, kill Joab (2:28-35), Adonijah (2:13-25), and Shimei, a member of Saul's house (2:36-46; cf. 2 Sam. 16:5-14); he banished Abiathar the priest to Anathoth (1 Kings 2:26-27, 35).

Solomon's governmental organization followed the pattern laid down by David to a large extent, except that it was expanded to care for growing needs in a more effective manner. His cabinet included a chief of district governors (Azariah), two secretaries or scribes (Elihoreph and Ahijah), a recorder (Jehoshaphat), a commander of the army (Benaiah), four priests (Zadok, Abiathar, Azariah, and Zabud), a steward of his royal palace (Ahishar), and a taskmaster over his forced labor gangs (Adoniram; cf. 1 Kings 4:2-6). Solomon divided his empire into twelve districts, each under an officer or prefect (4:7-19). Each district was responsible for providing food for the royal table, feed for the king's livestock, and manual labor for his building projects (4:22-28; 5:13-18;

2 Chron. 2:17-18). The forced labor inaugurated by David and continued by Solomon later proved to be a major cause for the renewed division between North and South Israel after Solomon's death (1 Kings 12:18). Solomon's building projects in Jerusalem included his own palace (7:1-8) with its great ivory throne (10:18-20), a house for Pharaoh's daughter (7:8; 9:24), and the Millo (apparently a stronghold or fortification of some sort—9:15, 24; 11:27).

Solomon also fortified strategic cities throughout his empire in order to protect Israel from possible invasions. In excavations between 1925 and 1939 at Megiddo, archeologists unearthed paved stables, complete with mangers and pillars for tying horses, some of which were undoubtedly built by Solomon (1 Kings 9:15, 19; 10:26), as well as impressive fortifications. Similar stalls and fortresses have been found at Gezer, Taanach, Tell el-Hesi, and perhaps Hazor. Excavators found a well-built governor's palace in Megiddo, which at one time may have been inhabited by Baana, Solomon's prefect in that district (4:12). In digs at the modern Tell el-Khaleifeh between 1938 and 1940, N. Glueck found what he claimed to be a great refinery at Ezion-geber built by Solomon, equipped with holes or flues ingeniously arranged so as to utilize the winds that generally blew from the north and northwest to fan the flames necessary for smelting large quantities of copper and iron. However, more recent work by B. Rothenberg suggests that Ezion-geber may have been located about three miles south of Tell el-Khaleifeh, that what Glueck had thought to be a refinery was actually a storehouse or granary, and that the holes were not flues but places where large, wooden beams were inserted to support the floor and ceiling. In 1965, Glueck himself admitted that he had been wrong on these identifications. Of course, Ezion-geber was an important industrial and trading center at the head of the Gulf of Aqabah during Solomon's reign (1 Kings 9:26-28; 2 Chron. 8:17-18).

Solomon had far-reaching international visions for Israel. Many of his marriages were political, designed to weld Israel into strong military and economic alliances with

foreign nations. He married the daughter of the Pharaoh, who gave him the city of Gezer as a dowry for his daughter (1 Kings 3:1; 9:16). He had a treaty with Hiram the king of Tyre (in Phoenicia) to receive from him materials for his building programs and to trade with other nations (5:1-12; 9:10-14, 26-28; 10:11-12). Solomon's fleet of ships from Tarshish frequently made a round-trip cruise to Ophir, which is probably located on the east coast of Africa, and traded Israel's goods for gold, silver, ivory, apes, and peacocks (9:26-28; 10:11-12, 22; cf. 2 Chron. 9:21. [There is a technical textual problem in some of these passages as to whether Solomon's ships went to Tarshish in Spain or to Ophir in Africa on ships of Tarshish. Because of the products traded, the latter seems to be the case]). He was also engaged in extensive trading with Egypt for horses and chariots (1 Kings 10:28-29).

Solomon's Inconsistent Religion and Its Consequences

Solomon promoted numerous religious activities in Israel that were upbuilding to the people and were destined to have a strong impact on future generations. He erected the temple as the center of Israelite worship (1 Kings 6–7). Archeological discoveries in Ugarit, Qatna, Tainat, and Megiddo show that the pattern of the Solomonic temple is very similar to that of contemporary Syrian temples, although some of the temple decorations are closer to Assyrian and Egyptian parallels. Of course, Solomon knew that God did not dwell in temples made by men's hands (8:27-30), and he certainly did not build the temple to leave such an impression. His primary purposes in building it were to provide a dwelling place for the ark, which was the symbol of God's presence with his people (8:1-21), and to assure the people that when they sinned God would forgive them when they turned to him (8:28-61). Solomon offered animal sacrifices as a manifestation of his love for and loyalty to Yahweh (3:15; 8:62-66). His wisdom was known far and wide. At Gibeon he asked God for an understanding mind to govern the people (3:5-14). His wisdom surpassed the wisdom of all the people of the East and of Egypt, and he uttered many proverbs and songs

(4:29-34). Rulers and peoples from many lands came to Solomon to hear his wisdom, including the Queen of Sheba (10:1-10, 23-25).

But Solomon also adopted and promoted foreign elements in conjunction with Israelite worship. Such a merging is called syncretism. He sacrificed on the Canaanite high places in the land (1 Kings 3:2-4). He married many foreign women (many of his marriages were politically oriented) and built high places for their gods (11:1-4). Out of deference to his wives, he worshiped and sacrificed to such gods as Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Sidonians; Milcom or Molech, the god of the Ammonites; and Chemosh, the god of the Moabites (11:5-8, 33; cf. Neh. 13:23-27).

Because of Solomon's idolatry, God raised up three adversaries against him toward the end of his reign: Hadad the Edomite (1 Kings 11:14-22); Rezon of Zobah, who ruled Syria (11:23-25); and Jeroboam I, an Israelite from the tribe of Ephraim (11:26-28). The prophet Ahijah came to Jeroboam I and performed a symbolic act to indicate what was to happen after Solomon's death. Ahijah tore his own new garment into twelve pieces and gave ten pieces to Jeroboam I, symbolizing that he would rule the ten North Israelite tribes, leaving only one tribe to the Davidic dynasty, viz., the tribe of Judah (11:29-40). First Kings 12–14 tells the tragic story of the new division between North and South Israel after Solomon's death, with Jeroboam I ruling the ten northern tribes and Solomon's son Rehoboam ruling Judah in Jerusalem.

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