



# *Power of the Prophets: from Moses to Jesus*

Week 2

*The Birth of Israel, the Kingdom*

1

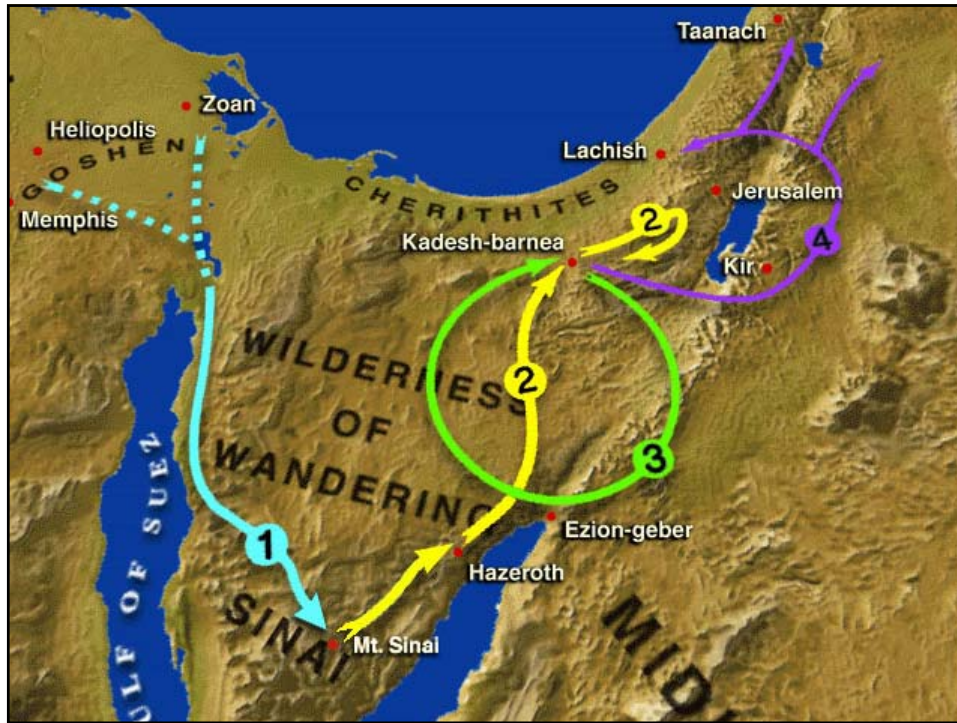


## *Moses and the birth of Israel*

- ❖ The story of Israel's birth really begins with Abraham (see Genesis 12).
- ❖ But it is Moses whom God chooses to form his people. Moses will lead the Hebrews out of Egypt and shape them into God's people.
  - Moses is the law-giver, the prophet who brings God's covenant to the Hebrews, shaping them into the people of Israel. This covenant is what would make them a people and a nation.
  - Moses will lead the people to the Promised Land.
- ❖ Moses' prophetic work is found in his actions and his words.

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2



## *Conquest and Settlement*

- ❖ After Moses' death, Joshua and the people enter Canaan. God leads this conquest; kings lead their people in wars of conquest and Yahweh is to be the king of Israel. This story of conquest is told in the book of Joshua.
- ❖ As the people settle in Canaan and consolidate their conquest, they are ruled by judges, such as Deborah, Samson, and Gideon. This is a time of tragic downward cycles in the peoples' relationship with God, their king.
  - Some judges were minor figures. Others were idealized as saviors who lifted the people up, called them back to God, and defeated Israel's enemies. But no judge is able to fully stem Israel's downward slide. See the last verse of Judges.
  - The books of Samuel (1 & 2) mark Israel's transition from a tribal society to a monarchical society – from judges to kings.



## *Israel (the people) want a king!*

- ❖ A human king was not God's intention. His people were to have no king but God! In the end, he relents and gives them what they want.
  - "No king but God!" was a rallying cry for revolutionary movements in Jesus' day. Consider the power of Jesus' royal entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday.
- ❖ Samuel will be the last of the judges, a great prophet, and a kingmaker.
  - The story of Samuel's birth to the barren Hannah parallels the story of Jesus' birth.



## *Samuel's birth*

- ❖ Hannah can have no children. Her life is made miserable by her husband's other wife (?!). Hannah prays for a son and vows that she will present him for service to God as a *Nazarite* (see Numbers 6:1-21).
  - A Nazarite was consecrated for service to God. They avoided strong drink and did not cut their hair. Samson was a Nazirite. In Hebrew, "nazarite" simply means "dedicated" or "consecrated one."
  - Hannah is from Ephraim, one of the twelve tribes. The names of the tribes will be used often by the "writing prophets." This can get confusing unless you know to look for it.
- ❖ Hannah dedicates her son to God. 1:23 foreshadows Samuel's call as a prophet.





## Israel gets a king

- ❖ Though the Israelites are divided over whether to have a human king, in the end, Samuel anoints Saul as the first king of the united Israel. (1 Sam 9:1-10:16)
  - We need to see the implications of Israel's move from a covenant community to a royal community.
  - Some of this was surely driven by the threat of the Philistines.
  - We'll see that the transition is difficult. Samuel seems to hang on to the past. Saul seems too weak and vacillating to lead Israel forward.
- ❖ 10:1 – Samuel anoints Saul with oil
  - Hebrew for the "anointed one" is *mashiah* (*Messiah* in English and *Christos* in Greek)
  - "Messiah" is a royal term



## A farewell and a rejection

- ❖ 1 Sam 12 is Samuel's "farewell" address
  - Samuel passes the mantle of leadership. See 1 Samuel 12:20-25. Samuel will keep praying for Israel and will continue to teach. But his work is not done.
- ❖ 1 Sam 15 – Saul disobeys God and is rejected.
  - This is another of those difficult passages. God orders the complete destruction of the Amalakites, but Saul disobeys. He kills the people, but spares the king and valuable livestock. The issue here is not the morality of holy war, the issue is obedience. See Jesus' words about obedience in Matthew 7:24-27.
- ❖ The rest of 1 Samuel tells the story of David's rise and Saul's decline. Chapter 16 tells of David's anointing by Samuel. Samuel's time is now over.
  - His death is reported in 1 Sam 25:1. His ghost appears to Saul in 1 Samuel 28! But then there are no more references to Samuel. His successor will be Nathan.



## The Reign of King David (2 Samuel)

- ❖ "David became greater and greater, for the Lord, the God of hosts, was with him (2 Sam 5:10)
  - David is a man of piety and prayer . . . a warrior and leader
  - David first becomes king of the tribe of Judah, than of all Israel. He conquers Jerusalem and makes it his capital.
- ❖ 2 Samuel 7 is one of the most theologically important chapters in all the Old Testament. The prophet Nathan brings the word of the Lord to David.
  - The kingdom is secure. David has built his palace. Now he wishes to build the temple. Instead God will build a house (dynasty) for David. Someone from David's house will forever sit on Israel's throne. It will be David's son, Solomon, who will build the temple.
- ❖ Nathan, as God's prophet, will confront David over his adultery with Bathsheba (2 Sam 12). He will also ensure Solomon's succession after David's death (1 Kings 1).



## Old Testament Timeline

