

## David – A Man After My Own Heart

©2022 Mike Whyte

**Copyright Notice:** this document may be used freely for personal study, preaching, and teaching. No part of it may be used under any circumstances for commercial purposes or to attain personal gain or advantage.

Then [Israel] asked for a king, and God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin ... when he had removed him, **he raised up David to be their king**, of whom he testified and said, ‘I have found in **David the son of Jesse a man after my heart, who will do all my will.**’ Of this man’s offspring God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus, as he promised. (Acts 13:21-23 ESV)

For thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: **“I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit,** to revive<sup>1</sup> the spirit of the lowly, and to revive the heart of the contrite.” (Isaiah 57:15 ESV)

King David of Israel was a very complicated personality. Clearly, no higher accolade could be given to a human being than for God to affirm that he is **“a man after my own heart”**. What exactly does God mean by this statement? How is God so sure that David **“will do all of my will”**? Isaiah gives us the answer, which only raises more questions. What does it mean to be **“contrite and lowly in spirit”**? Was David, in fact, “contrite and lowly in spirit”? What exactly does it mean “to DO all of God’s will”? And, the big question, why was David identified as the prototype of the King of kings? Why was he given **the Promise of Messianic Descent**?<sup>2</sup> Why did Jesus, the Messiah, look back with honour to David as his forebearer?

To answer these questions, this paper examines the life of David as recorded in the Bible and also the paper considers what can be learned about David from the **Amarna Letters**. Some of the most important episodes in David’s life are analyzed in detail. Most importantly, the actual words of David, as recorded in the Davidic Psalms, are analyzed.

## Contents

1. The Life of David .....	2
1.2 The Early Years .....	2
1.2 The Wandering Years .....	4
1.3 King in Hebron .....	8
1.4 King in Jerusalem .....	10
1.5 The Refining Years .....	12
2. David in the Amarna Letters .....	14
3. Analysis .....	18
3.1 The Early Years .....	18
3.2 In Saul’s Service .....	18
3.3 The Wandering Years .....	18
3.4 King in Hebron .....	20
3.5 King in Jerusalem .....	21
4. The Historic David .....	24
5. The Davidic Psalms .....	24

<sup>1</sup> The Hebrew word is הַיְיָוֹת - haḥayoth, “to make live”, hiphil, infinitive construct of הָיָה - ḥayah, “be alive”. This is a prophecy of the resurrection.

<sup>2</sup> For a discussion of this promise and its context, please see the paper **“Covenants of Grace”** located at [www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca)

5.1 The Nature of God .....	25
5.2 The Human Condition .....	29
5.3 The Plan of God .....	33
5.4 The Enemies of God .....	39
Excursus 1 – The Habiru .....	41
Excursus 2 – The Amalekites .....	42
Excursus 3 – The Genealogies of Christ .....	44
Excursus 4 – David’s Use of mish <sup>e</sup> pat .....	45
Excursus 5 – Notes on the Davidic Psalms .....	47
Bibliography .....	59
Appendix .....	60

## 1. The Life of David

David was born in 1041BC. His father was Jesse, an Ephrathite.<sup>3</sup> The family was well-established in the area of Bethlehem.<sup>4</sup> David was the youngest of eight brothers<sup>5</sup> – Jesse was old when David was born: Now David was the son of an Ephrathite of Bethlehem in Judah, named Jesse, who had eight sons. In the days of Saul the man was already old and advanced in years. ... David was the youngest. (1 Samuel 17:12,14 ESV)

### 1.2 The Early Years

David spent his youth as a shepherd tending his father’s flocks. Clearly, however, his formal education was not neglected. Some **seventy-three Psalms** are attributed to him – they **reflect the mind of a well-educated person**. His years as a shepherd provided him ample solitude to reflect on the great covenant God of Israel, YHWH, and history of Israel since the time of Moses. The vocation of a shepherd taught him many lessons which prepared him to be the prototype of the Shepherd of all mankind, Jesus Christ:

Then Samuel said to Jesse, “Are all your sons here?” And he said, “There remains yet **the youngest, but behold, he is keeping the sheep.**” ... But David said to Saul, “Your servant used to keep sheep for his father. And **when there came a lion, or a bear, and took a lamb from the flock**, I went after him and struck him and **delivered it out of his mouth**. And if he arose against me, I caught him by his beard and struck him and killed him. Your servant has struck down both lions and bears, and this uncircumcised **Philistine** shall be like one of them, for **he has defied the armies of the living God.**” And David said, “**The LORD who delivered me** from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear **will deliver me** from the hand of this Philistine.” (1 Samuel 16:11, 17:34-37a ESV)

At this time, Israel was confined to the back country mountainous areas of Canaan. The period of the Judges had been a failure. After initial success at conquering the land under Joshua, there was a brief period during which Israel was faithful to the Sinai covenant.<sup>6</sup> During the period of the Judges, Israel repeatedly fell into idolatry and the period ended in chaos:

In those days there was no king in Israel. **Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.** (Judges 17:6 ESV)

This statement is reiterated three more times<sup>7</sup> in the Appendix Section<sup>8</sup> of the Book of Judges. The purpose of the appendix is to demonstrate the state of chaos of the nation. This chaos left Israel in a very vulnerable state. The Eighteenth Dynasty in Egypt had established a strong presence in Canaan

<sup>3</sup> An Ephrathite is either a person of the tribe of Ephraim or a person from the area of Bethlehem. (See Tsumura, *First Book of Samuel*, pages 107 and 447)

<sup>4</sup> See the Book of Ruth

<sup>5</sup> Note that the Chronicler lists David as the “seventh” son (1 Chronicles 2:15). This is probably an idealization on the part of the Chronicler.

<sup>6</sup> See Jeremiah 2:2-3a and Joshua 24:31

<sup>7</sup> See Judges 18:1, 19:1, and 21:25

<sup>8</sup> Judges chapters 17, 18, 19, 20, 21

during the Judges period.<sup>9</sup> Egyptian control was slipping away under the religious revolution of Akhenaten,<sup>10</sup> but the Philistines remained Egypt's proxy in the area.<sup>11</sup> Israel had fallen under severe oppression from the Philistines:

Now there was **no blacksmith to be found throughout all the land of Israel**, for the Philistines said, "**Lest the Hebrews make themselves swords or spears.**" But every one of the Israelites went down to the Philistines to sharpen his plowshare, his mattock, his axe, or his sickle, and the charge was two-thirds of a shekel for the plowshares and for the mattocks, and a third of a shekel for sharpening the axes and for setting the goads. (1 Samuel 13:19-21 ESV)

At the **Battle of Ebenezer**, some ten years before the birth of David, the Philistines had severely beaten Israel, even **capturing the Ark of the Covenant**.<sup>12</sup> God sent **Samuel as Judge and Prophet**<sup>13</sup> to deliver Israel. Samuel had considerable success,<sup>14</sup> but when he was old, he appointed his sons as judges. They were NOT successful, and the people of Israel requested a king. God acquiesced, and **King Saul was enthroned**.<sup>15</sup> This occurred at just about the time that David was born, around 1040BC. At first Saul was successful in fighting the Philistines,<sup>16</sup> but through two serious errors of judgement he was rejected by God as king of Israel.<sup>17</sup> This gets us to the **Battle of Elah in about 1023BC**. David is about eighteen and Israel is being challenged by the Philistine champion Goliath of Gath:

Now the Philistines gathered their armies for battle ... in **the Valley of Elah** ... And the Philistines stood on the mountain on the one side, and Israel stood on the mountain on the other side ... And there came out from the camp of the Philistines a champion named **Goliath of Gath** ... He stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel, "Why have you come out to draw up for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and are you not servants of Saul? Choose a man for yourselves, and let him come down to me. If he is able to fight with me and kill me, then we will be your servants. But if I prevail against him and kill him, then you shall be our servants and serve us." And the Philistine said, "**I defy the ranks of Israel this day**. Give me a man, that we may fight together." When Saul and **all Israel** heard these words of the Philistine, they **were dismayed and greatly afraid**. (1 Samuel 17:1-11 ESV)

The famous encounter in which David kills Goliath ensues.<sup>18</sup> After this initial success of David, he is conscripted by Saul:

As soon as Saul saw David go out against the Philistine, he said to Abner, the commander of the army, "Abner, **whose son is this youth?**" And Abner said, "... O king, I do not know." And the king said, "Inquire whose son the boy is." And as soon as David returned from the striking down of the Philistine, Abner took him, and brought him before Saul with the head of the Philistine in his hand. And Saul said to him, "Whose son are you, young man?" And David answered, "I am the son of your servant Jesse the Bethlehemite." ... And **Saul took him that day and would not let him return to his father's house**. (1 Samuel 17:55-58, 18:2 ESV)

The initial conscription was not fulltime<sup>19</sup> because David is able to return to his shepherding duties. This is where Samuel finds him and anoints him king:

The LORD said to Samuel, "... Fill your horn with oil, and go. I will send you to **Jesse the Bethlehemite**, for **I have provided for myself a king among his sons**." ... And Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. And Samuel said to Jesse, "The LORD has not chosen these." Then Samuel said to Jesse, "Are all your sons here?" And he said, "**There remains yet the youngest, but behold, he is keeping the sheep.**" And Samuel said to Jesse, "Send and get him, for we will not sit down till he comes here." And he sent and brought him in. ... And **the LORD said, "Arise, anoint him, for this is he."** Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him **in the midst of his brothers**. And **the Spirit of the LORD rushed upon David from that day forward**. (1 Samuel 16:1, 10-13 ESV)

<sup>9</sup> See Rohl EE pages 265-268, 273-277, 286-291

<sup>10</sup> See Rohl EE pages 300-303, 316-317, 351-355, TT pages 227-230

<sup>11</sup> See Rohl EE page 282

<sup>12</sup> See 1 Samuel 4:1b-11

<sup>13</sup> See 1 Samuel 3:20, 7:15-17

<sup>14</sup> See 1 Samuel 7:3-14

<sup>15</sup> See 1 Samuel 8:1-9, 22, 9:17, 10:1, 24

<sup>16</sup> See 1 Samuel 13:2-4, 14:1-23

<sup>17</sup> See 1 Samuel 13:8-14, 15:8-28

<sup>18</sup> See 1 Samuel 17:40-54

<sup>19</sup> Note that Eliab severely castigates David when he expresses contempt for Goliath (1 Samuel 17:28-29). This is inconsistent with his having been previously anointed by Samuel.

Immediately after this, the text recounts **David's recruitment into Saul's service** as a lyre player:

Now the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and a harmful spirit from the LORD tormented him. And Saul's servants said to him, "... Let our lord now command your servants who are before you to seek out a man who is skillful in playing the lyre, and when the harmful spirit from God is upon you, he will play it, and you will be well." So Saul said to his servants, "Provide for me a man who can play well and bring him to me." One of the young men answered, "Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, who is **skillful in playing, a man of valor, a man of war, prudent in speech, and a man of good presence**, and the LORD is with him." Therefore Saul sent messengers to Jesse and said, "**Send me David your son, who is with the sheep.**" ... And **David came to Saul** and **entered his service**. And Saul loved him greatly, and he became his **armor-bearer**. And Saul sent to Jesse, saying, "**Let David remain in my service**, for he has found favor in my sight." (1 Samuel 16:14-23 ESV)

Notice **David's qualifications**: "skillful in playing", "a man of valour", "a man of war", "prudent in speech", and "a man of good presence". His skill in playing was likely a natural ability self-taught during his time alone with the sheep. His valour and ability in war had been demonstrated at the Battle of Elah. To be "**prudent in speech**" and "**of good presence**" require **formal instruction**. David quickly advanced to the full-time position of "armour-bearer" and was eminently successful in Saul's service.<sup>20</sup> David and **Jonathan**, Saul's oldest son,<sup>21</sup> quickly became fast friends and established a **covenant of friendship**.<sup>22</sup> **Jonathan was likely something of a mentor to David.**

The hand of God was evident in David's life from the beginning. David acknowledged God's deliverance during his shepherding experiences: "**The LORD who delivered me** from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear **will deliver me** ...". When he was anointed king, "**the Spirit of the LORD rushed upon David from that day forward.**" Even King Saul could not avoid recognition that David's success came from God:

**Saul was afraid of David because the LORD was with him** but had departed from Saul. So Saul removed him from his presence and made him a commander of a thousand. And he went out and came in before the people. And **David had success in all his undertakings, for the LORD was with him**. And when Saul saw that he had great success, he stood in fearful awe of him. But **all Israel and Judah loved David**, for he went out and came in before them. (1 Samuel 18:12-16 ESV)

Although he had ulterior motives<sup>23</sup>, Saul's recognition of David's status is clearly demonstrated by Saul's making him his son-in-law:

Now Saul's daughter Michal loved David. And they told Saul, and the thing pleased him. Saul thought, "Let me give her to him, that she may be a snare for him and **that the hand of the Philistines may be against him**." Therefore Saul said to David a second time, "**You shall now be my son-in-law.**" And Saul commanded his servants, "Speak to David in private and say, 'Behold, the king has delight in you, and all his servants love you. Now then become the king's son-in-law.'" (1 Samuel 18:20-22 ESV)

Even in this, the hand of God was working to establish David, and David recognized the significance of being made part of the royal family:

And David said to Saul, "**Who am I**, and who are my relatives, my father's clan in Israel, **that I should be son-in-law to the king?**" ... And David said, "Does it seem to you a little thing to become the king's son-in-law, since I am a poor man and have no reputation?" ... **it pleased David well to be the king's son-in-law**. (1 Samuel 18:18, 23, 26b ESV)

Later, the fact that **David had a legitimate claim to the throne** became important in his actual accession to the kingship of Israel.

## 1.2 The Wandering Years

Sadly, Saul's jealousy got the better of him:

And the women sang to one another as they celebrated,  
"Saul has struck down his thousands, and David his ten thousands."

**And Saul was very angry, and this saying displeased him**. He said, "They have ascribed to David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed thousands, and **what more can he have but the kingdom?**" And Saul eyed David from that day on. The next day a harmful spirit from God rushed upon Saul, and he raved within his house while David was playing the lyre, as he did day by day. Saul had his spear in his hand.

---

<sup>20</sup> See 1 Samuel 18:5-7

<sup>21</sup> The oldest is normally listed first: see 1 Samuel 31:2, 1 Chronicles 8:33, 9:39. Jonathan is probably 10-15 years older than David.

<sup>22</sup> See 1 Samuel 18:1b, 3-4, 20:1-42

<sup>23</sup> See 1 Samuel 18:17b, 25b

And **Saul hurled the spear**, for he thought, “I will pin David to the wall.” (1 Samuel 18:7-11 ESV)

This was the beginning of the end of David’s relationship with Saul. David continued as long as possible in Saul’s service and was successful:

Then the princes of the Philistines came out to battle, and **as often as they came out David had more success than all the servants of Saul**, so that his name was highly esteemed. (1 Samuel 18:30 ESV)

David’s friendship with Jonathan proved useful as Jonathan was able to broker a reconciliation between Saul and David:

And Saul spoke to Jonathan his son and to all his servants, that they should kill David. But **Jonathan, Saul’s son, delighted much in David**. And Jonathan told David, “Saul my father seeks to kill you. ... I will go out and stand beside my father in the field where you are, and I will speak to my father about you. And if I learn anything I will tell you.”

And **Jonathan spoke well of David to Saul his father** and said to him, “**Let not the king sin against his servant David**, because **he has not sinned against you**, and because his deeds have brought good to you. For he took his life in his hand and he struck down the Philistine, and the LORD worked a great salvation for all Israel. You saw it, and rejoiced. Why then will you sin against innocent blood by killing David without cause?”

And **Saul listened to the voice of Jonathan**. Saul swore, “As the LORD lives, he shall not be put to death.” And Jonathan called David, and Jonathan reported to him all these things. And **Jonathan brought David to Saul, and he was in his presence as before**. (1 Samuel 19:1-7 ESV)

The peace did not last. Saul tried to have David killed in his house, but with the help of his wife, Saul’s daughter, Michal, David escaped.<sup>24</sup> David first of all fled to Samuel in Ramah,<sup>25</sup> then he secretly returned to Jonathan in Gibeah/Geba, Saul’s capital city. Jonathan tried once more to broker a reconciliation,<sup>26</sup> but Saul remained incaltrant. By this time Saul was aware that David had been anointed by Samuel and that it was God’s will to make David king. He severely castigated Jonathan for cooperating with David:

Then **Saul’s anger was kindled against Jonathan**, and he said to him, “You son of a perverse, rebellious woman, do I not know that you have chosen the son of Jesse to your own shame, and to the shame of your mother’s nakedness? For **as long as the son of Jesse lives on the earth, neither you nor your kingdom shall be established**. Therefore send and bring him to me, for he shall surely die.” Then Jonathan answered Saul his father, “Why should he be put to death? What has he done?” But Saul hurled his spear at him to strike him. So, Jonathan knew that his father was determined to put David to death. (1 Samuel 20:30-33 ESV)

David headed south from Gibeah/Geba to the small town of Nob where the Tabernacle was located.<sup>27</sup> He was able to obtain some provisions from Ahimelech, the priest, and then he continued southwest to the Philistine city of Gath.<sup>28</sup> In Gath, David was not well received: he was seized by the king’s agents and had to feign madness to escape. The Superscriptions of Psalms 34 and 56 allude to this incident:

... when he changed his behavior before Abimelech, so that he drove him out, and he went away. (ESV)  
... when the Philistines seized him in Gath. (ESV)

By this time, Saul’s determination to kill David had taken on new dimensions, he had turned on the aged father of David, Jesse, and David’s brothers:

David departed from there and escaped to **the cave of Adullam**. And when **his brothers and all his father’s house** heard it, they went down there to him. And everyone who was in distress, and everyone who was in debt, and everyone who was bitter in [life], gathered to him. And he became commander over them. And **there were with him about four hundred men**. And David went from there to Mizpeh of Moab. And he said to the king of Moab, “**Please let my father and my mother stay with you**, till I know what God will do for me.” And he left them with the king of Moab ... (1 Samuel 22:1-4a ESV)

This is **the beginning of David’s army** – four hundred men, including his brothers, were gathered to him. Adullam is in the wilderness of Judea to the east of Gath, just out of Philistine territory.<sup>29</sup> Over the next few years, David came to control the area of the Judean Wilderness. It was not of interest to Egypt, so

<sup>24</sup> See 1 Samuel 19:11-17, Psalm 59 Superscription

<sup>25</sup> See 1 Samuel 19:18, 20:1

<sup>26</sup> See 1 Samuel 20:1-29

<sup>27</sup> See 1 Samuel 21:1-6

<sup>28</sup> See 1 Samuel 21:10-15

<sup>29</sup> See the Superscriptions of Psalms 57, 63, and 142

the Philistines left him alone. Saul was more concerned with territory to the north, in particular the Valley of Jezreel so that he could control the access to the Northern Tribes around the Sea of Galilee. Saul's only interest in the Judean Wilderness was to search for David. David took his parents to the protection of the King of Moab and we never hear of them again.

Next David establishes a base in "the stronghold",<sup>30</sup> likely Masada, five miles south of Engedi, near the southeastern shore of the Dead Sea. The text now introduces the Prophet Gad<sup>31</sup> who directs David to go to the open country, the Forest of Hereth, northwest of Hebron.<sup>32</sup>

The city of Keilah is just south of Adullam, near Philistine territory. The Philistines were raiding the threshing floors, which would lead to starvation. The text now introduces Abiathar the Priest, who has "an ehpod", presumably with the pouch containing "Urim and Thummim".<sup>33</sup> From this point on, David frequently makes requests of YHWH which are answered by "yes" and "no" responses as would be done with "Urim and Thummim".<sup>34</sup> David and his men rescue Keilah and stay in the city, but word of the situation got to Saul and he sent his army. Psalm

31:21 may be an allusion to this:

Blessed be the LORD,  
for he has wondrously shown his [hesed] to me  
**when I was in a besieged city.** (ESV)

David and his growing army then escape going some ten or twelve miles southeast to the Wilderness of Ziph, southeast of Hebron.<sup>35</sup> In the Wilderness of Ziph, Jonathan connects with David:

David was in the **wilderness of Ziph** at Horesh. And **Jonathan**, Saul's son, rose and **went to David** at Horesh, and strengthened his hand in God. And he said to him, "Do not fear, for the hand of Saul my father shall not find you. **You shall be king over Israel**, and I shall be next to you. **Saul my father also knows this.**" And **the two of them made a covenant** before the LORD. David remained at Horesh, and Jonathan went home. (1 Samuel 23:15-18 ESV)

This encounter is significant because it affirms that both Jonathan and Saul knew that David had been anointed king and that it was God's will that he would be king. The terms of the covenant between David and Jonathan are not specified, but the Hebrew is "karath", to cut a covenant. It is therefore a new and distinct covenant from the previous covenant of friendship between David and Jonathan. The result of this covenant is clear when David becomes king of all Israel. Jonathan has a son, Merib-baal (Mephiboseth), who survives.<sup>36</sup> David brings him into his court:

And David said, "**Is there still anyone left of the house of Saul, that I may show him [hesed]**<sup>37</sup> **for Jonathan's sake?**" Now there was a servant of the house of Saul whose name was Ziba, and they called him to David. And the king said to him, "Are you Ziba?" And he said, "I am your servant." And the king said, "Is there not still someone of the house of Saul, that I may show the [hesed] of God to him?" Ziba said to the king, "**There is still a son of Jonathan** ..." Then King David sent and brought him ... And Mephiboseth the son of Jonathan, son of Saul, came to David ... So **Mephiboseth lived in Jerusalem, for he ate always at the king's table.** (2 Samuel 9:1-6a, 13a ESV see also 2 Samuel 21:7)



<sup>30</sup> See 1 Samuel 22:4b

<sup>31</sup> Gad was likely from one of the schools of Samuel (see 1 Samuel 9:19, 10:10, 19:20)

<sup>32</sup> See 1 Samuel 22:5

<sup>33</sup> See 1 Samuel 23:6

<sup>34</sup> See, for example, 1 Samuel 23:2, 9-12

<sup>35</sup> See 1 Samuel 23:13-14

<sup>36</sup> See 2 Samuel 4:4, 1 Chronicles 8:34

<sup>37</sup> The **ESV** has "kindness" which is a very weak translation of *hesed*. *hesed* means "covenant love", an unflinching commitment to a covenant.



Some of the people in the town of Ziph reported David's presence to Saul,<sup>38</sup> so David moved seven or eight miles south to the area of Maon.<sup>39</sup> Saul continued to pursue him, so David moved on to Engedi<sup>40</sup> on the shore of the Dead Sea north of Masada. In this area the famous incident in the cave occurs. David has clear opportunity to kill Saul but does not.<sup>41</sup> Notice Saul's reaction:

As soon as David had finished speaking these words to Saul, Saul said, "Is this your voice, my son David?" And Saul lifted up his voice and wept. ... And now, behold, I know that you shall surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in your hand. (1 Samuel 24:16, 20 ESV)

**Saul acknowledges David's status as his "son" and that David, according to God's will, will be king.**

David wisely continues to mistrust Saul and returns to "the stronghold", either Masada or Engedi.<sup>42</sup> From there David and his men move south of Maon and Carmel<sup>43</sup> where they protect the sheep of Nabal, but he refuses to acknowledge their efforts:

But one of the young men told Abigail, Nabal's wife, "Behold, David sent messengers out of the wilderness to greet our master, and he railed at them. Yet the men were very good to us, and we suffered no harm, and we did not miss anything when we were in the fields, as long as we went with them. They were a wall to us both by night and by day, all the while we were with them keeping the sheep. ..." Now David had said, "Surely in vain have I guarded all that this fellow has in the wilderness, so that nothing was missed of all that belonged to him, and he has returned me evil for good. ..." (1 Samuel 25:14-16, 21 ESV)

This incident demonstrates David's position as protector of the people in the Judean Wilderness. But it was also a very important object lesson from which David did NOT learn. Soon after this Nabal died and Abigail became David's wife. God managed circumstances according to his plan. Later in life, it was clearly God's plan that Bathsheba would be the mother of Solomon, but David took matters into his own hands instead of trusting God. He took Bathsheba illegally and murdered her husband Uriah. This is discussed later in this paper.

Saul continued to hunt for David. Once again, the people of Ziph provided information to Saul. David surreptitiously approached the camp of Saul and removed his spear and water bottle in the night, but again David refused to kill Saul.<sup>44</sup> This the last recorded interaction between David and Saul. David is clearly discouraged and tired of running. David's last speech to Saul betrays his feelings:

... David said ... "Why does my lord pursue after his servant? For what have I done? What evil is on my hands? Now therefore let my lord the king hear the words of his servant. If it is the LORD who has stirred you up against me, may he accept an offering, but if it is men, may they be cursed before the LORD, for they have driven me out this day that I should have no share in the heritage of the LORD, saying, 'Go, serve other gods.' Now therefore, let not my blood fall to the earth away from the presence of the LORD, for the king of Israel has come out to seek a single flea like one who hunts a partridge in the mountains." (1 Samuel 26:17-20 ESV)

This is clearly a low point in David's life because he next takes a very desperate step to avoid being hunted by Saul. He commits himself and his men as mercenaries to Achish, the king of Gath:

Then David said in his heart, "Now I shall perish one day by the hand of Saul. There is nothing better for me than that I should escape to the land of the Philistines. Then Saul will despair of seeking me any longer within the borders of Israel, and I shall escape out of his hand." So David arose and went over, he and the six hundred men who were with him, to Achish the son of Maoch, king of Gath. And David lived with Achish at Gath ... And when it was told Saul that David had fled to Gath, he no longer sought him. (1 Samuel 27:1-4 ESV)

David faith seems to be wavering as he may have lost sight of God's promise that he would be king of Israel. The life of a mercenary for Israel's mortal enemy seems entirely inconsistent with David's becoming the progenitor of the future dynasty of Israelite kings. However, even in this God worked out circumstances to accomplish his plan and prepare David for his future role.

---

<sup>38</sup> See 1 Samuel 23:19-24a; Psalm 54 Superscription alludes to this

<sup>39</sup> See 1 Samuel 19:24b-28

<sup>40</sup> See 1 Samuel 19:29

<sup>41</sup> See 1 Samuel 24:1-15 and Psalms 57 and 142 Superscription

<sup>42</sup> See 1 Samuel 24:22, 22:4-5, 23:29

<sup>43</sup> See 1 Samuel 25:1b-2

<sup>44</sup> See 1 Samuel 26:1-16

Achish gives David the remote town of Ziklag, about ten miles southwest of Hebron, as a base of operations.<sup>45</sup> **David then gained the trust of Achish through subterfuge:**

Now **David and his men went up and made raids** against the Geshurites, the Girzites, and the Amalekites, for these were the inhabitants of the land from of old, as far as Shur, to the land of Egypt. And David would strike the land and would leave neither man nor woman alive, but would take away the sheep, the oxen, the donkeys, the camels, and the garments, and come back to Achish. When Achish asked, "Where have you made a raid today?" David would say, "Against the Negeb of Judah," or, "Against the Negeb of the Jerahmeelites," or, "Against the Negeb of the Kenites." And **David would leave neither man nor woman alive to bring news to Gath**, thinking, "lest they should tell about us and say, 'So David has done.'"

Such was his custom all the while he lived in the country of the Philistines. And **Achish trusted David**, thinking, "**He has made himself an utter stench to his people Israel**"; therefore he shall always be my servant." (1 Samuel 27:8-12 ESV)

Geshurites and Girzites appear to be Canaanite tribes affiliated with the Philistines. Amalekites were Israel's perennial enemy. They were generally nomadic. The southern groups ranged from Shur in the east to Egypt in the west. We will come across Amalekites again.<sup>46</sup> The Jerahmeelites and the Kenites were tribes living in the Judean Wilderness which were generally friendly to Israel. David was actually exterminating enemies of Israel who had been designated for destruction at the conquest of Canaan. While doing this, he was able to convince Achish that he had turned against his own people.

David's service to Achish continued for about sixteen months.<sup>47</sup> Then the Philistines are massing at Aphek<sup>48</sup> for war against Israel. Achish wants David and his men as his personal bodyguard. David has no choice but to agree.<sup>49</sup> It is not clear what David's intentions are. Perhaps he hoped to avoid actual combat. Perhaps he actually planned to turn on the Philistines as the other Philistine Kings suspect:

... **the lords of the Philistines said, "What are these Hebrews doing here?"** And Achish said to the commanders of the Philistines, "Is this not David, the servant of Saul, king of Israel, who has been with me now for days and years, and since he deserted to me I have found no fault in him to this day." But the commanders of the Philistines were angry with him. And the commanders of the Philistines said to him, "**Send the man back**, that he may return to the place to which you have assigned him. He shall not go down with us to battle, **lest in the battle he become an adversary to us**. For how could this fellow reconcile himself to his lord? Would it not be with the heads of the men here? (1 Samuel 29:3-4 ESV)

David and his men return to Ziklag, and the famous [Battle of Mount Gilboa](#) ensues. Saul, Jonathan, and Saul's other sons are killed.<sup>50</sup> Clearly, it was not God's intention for David to participate in the battle. The death of Saul opened the door for David to assume the position of king.

### [1.3 King in Hebron](#)

During the wandering years David had carefully cultivated the trust of the tribe of Judah, especially the people around Hebron and to the south of Hebron. We saw this demonstrated in the [Nabal incident](#). It is again explicitly demonstrated in First Samuel chapter thirty. After returning from Aphek, David found that an Amalekite raiding party had sacked Ziklag. David and his men went after the Amalekites, destroyed them, and took much booty.<sup>51</sup> The author of First Samuel is very clear that David used the opportunity to further his political agenda:

When David came to Ziklag, **he sent part of the spoil to his friends, the elders of Judah**, saying, "Here is a present for you from the spoil of the enemies of the LORD." It was for those in Bethel, in Ramoth of the Negeb, in Jattir, in Aroer, in Siphmoth, in Eshtemoa, in Racal, in the cities of the Jerahmeelites, in the cities of the Kenites, in Hormah, in Bor-ashan, in Athach, **in Hebron**, for **all the places where David and his men had roamed**. (1 Samuel 30:26-30 ESV)

---

<sup>45</sup> See 1 Samuel 27:5-7

<sup>46</sup> See [Excursus 2 – The Amalekites](#)

<sup>47</sup> See 1 Samuel 27:7

<sup>48</sup> Aphek is in the extreme north of Philistine territory, near the Valley of Jezreel.

<sup>49</sup> See 1 Samuel 28:1-2

<sup>50</sup> See 1 Samuel 31:1-6

<sup>51</sup> See 1 Samuel 30:1-20



This was no doubt a common practice of David. On the death of Saul, the tribe of Judah immediately made David king in Hebron:

After this **David inquired of the LORD**, “Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah?” And the LORD said to him, “Go up.” David said, “To which shall I go up?” And he said, “**To Hebron.**” So David went up there, and his two wives also, Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail the widow of Nabal of Carmel. And David brought up his men who were with him, everyone with his household, and they lived in the towns of Hebron. **And the men of Judah came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah.** (2 Samuel 2:1-4 ESV)

In the North, Abner, the commander of Saul’s army, was in control.<sup>52</sup> After five years, he made Saul’s one remaining son, Eshbaal<sup>53</sup> (Ish-bosheth), king:

But **Abner** the son of Ner, commander of Saul’s army, took Ish-bosheth the son of Saul and brought him over to Mahanaim, and **he made him king over** Gilead and the Ashurites and Jezreel and Ephraim and Benjamin and **all Israel**. Ish-bosheth, Saul’s son, was forty years old when he began to reign over Israel, and **he reigned two years**. But the house of Judah followed David. And **the time that David was king in Hebron over the house of Judah was seven years and six months.** (2 Samuel 2:8-11 ESV)

Notice that the period of time of David’s kingship in Hebron is seven and a half years. The author of Second Samuel records only two incidents during this period: a battle at Gibeon between David’s men and Abner’s men.<sup>54</sup> Following the battle there is a pursuit of Abner by Asahel, the brother of Joab, resulting in Abner’s killing Asahel.<sup>55</sup> The period is summed up with the following statement:

**There was a long war between the house of Saul and the house of David.** And David grew stronger and stronger, while the house of Saul became weaker and weaker. (2 Samuel 3:1 ESV)

In the section **2. David in the Amarna Letters**, we learn a lot more about this period. In particular, the relationship between David and Eshbaal. At least at the beginning of the period, they cooperated to try to punish the people who were responsible for Saul’s death. The Hebron period ended with Abner colluding with the elders of Israel and going over to David:

And **Abner sent messengers to David** on his behalf, saying, “To whom does the land belong? Make your covenant with me, and behold, my hand shall be with you to bring over all Israel to you.” ... And **Abner conferred with the elders of Israel**, saying, “For some time past **you have been seeking David as king** over you. Now then bring it about, for the LORD has promised David, saying, ‘By the hand of my servant David I will save my people Israel from the hand of the Philistines, and from the hand of all their enemies.’” Abner also spoke to Benjamin. And then **Abner went to tell David at Hebron** all that Israel and the whole house of Benjamin thought good to do. (2 Samuel 3:12, 17-19 ESV)

Abner was received in peace by David at Hebron,<sup>56</sup> but Joab, in retaliation for the death of his brother Asahel, murders Abner.<sup>57</sup> This results in the murder of Eshbaal.<sup>58</sup> At which point, David is made king of all Israel:

Then **all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron** and said, “Behold, we are your bone and flesh. In times past, when Saul was king over us, it was you who led out and brought in Israel. And the LORD said to you, ‘You shall be shepherd of my people Israel, and you shall be prince over Israel.’”

So **all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron, and King David made a covenant with them at Hebron** before the LORD, and **they anointed David king over Israel**. David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years. At Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months, and at Jerusalem he reigned over all Israel and Judah thirty-three years. (2 Samuel 5:1-5 ESV)

The Chronicler provides lists of some of the men who joined David in the wilderness.<sup>59</sup> Then he gives the number of men from each tribe who came to Hebron to make David king over all Israel.<sup>60</sup> Then the Chronicler provides some more information on the event:

**All these, men of war**, arrayed in battle order, **came to Hebron** with a whole heart **to make David king over all Israel**. Likewise, all the rest of Israel were of a single mind to make David king. And **they were**

---

<sup>52</sup> See 2 Samuel 3:6

<sup>53</sup> See 1 Chronicles 8:33

<sup>54</sup> See 2 Samuel 2:12-17

<sup>55</sup> See 2 Samuel 2:19-23

<sup>56</sup> See 2 Samuel 3:20-21

<sup>57</sup> See 2 Samuel 3:26-30

<sup>58</sup> See 2 Samuel 4:5-7

<sup>59</sup> See 1 Chronicles 11:10-47, 12:1-22

<sup>60</sup> See 1 Chronicles 12:23-37

**there with David for three days, eating and drinking**, for their brothers had made preparation for them. And also their relatives, from as far as Issachar and Zebulun and Naphtali, came bringing food on donkeys and on camels and on mules and on oxen, abundant provisions of flour, cakes of figs, clusters of raisins, and wine and oil, oxen and sheep, for **there was joy in Israel**. (1 Chronicles 12:38-40 ESV)

## 1.4 King in Jerusalem

**Once established as king, David's first priority is to capture "Jebus",<sup>61</sup> Jerusalem.** The city had been known as Jerusalem in ancient times,<sup>62</sup> at times this was shortened to "Salem".<sup>63</sup> The Jebusites were listed as one of the Canaanite tribes inhabiting the land as early as the time of Abraham.<sup>64</sup> In the early stages of the conquest under Joshua, an "Adonai-Zedek" is identified as the king of Jerusalem.<sup>65</sup> This appears to be the same naming convention as "Melchizedek", probably a title like "Pharaoh".<sup>66</sup> This king is part of the southern coalition defeated early in the conquest by Joshua,<sup>67</sup> but it is NOT stated that the city of Jerusalem was taken by Joshua. It is explicitly stated that at the time of the initial conquest, "the people of Judah could not drive out" the inhabitants of Jerusalem.<sup>68</sup> Later, they did take the city and destroy it.<sup>69</sup> Jerusalem was in the territory assigned to the tribe of Benjamin,<sup>70</sup> but they could not drive out the Jebusites.<sup>71</sup> Clearly, Jerusalem had been much contested and had changed hands on more than one occasion. When David took the city, it appears to have been little more than a citadel at the north end of southern hill, Zion. When he had control, David rebuilt the city putting a wall all around the hill of Zion, the City of David.<sup>72</sup>

David had much early success. He established a relationship with Hiram, King of Tyre, who provided skilled labour for the construction of David's palace.<sup>73</sup> Twice he defeated the Philistines, but he was careful NOT to encroach on their territory – in order to avoid a direct confrontation with Egypt.<sup>74</sup>

At the Battle of Ebenezer in about 1050BC, the Ark of the Covenant had been captured by the Philistines.<sup>75</sup> It was in the hands of the Philistines for about seven months during which time it was located in Ashdod, Gath, and Ekron. At each location, God cursed the people of the city,<sup>76</sup> so they returned the Ark to Israel, and it spent some twenty years in Balle-judah (Kiriath-jearim) under the care of Eleazer ben Abinadab.<sup>77</sup> It appears that although the Ark remained housed in Kiriath-jearim, Saul took it with him periodically from there on expeditions.<sup>78</sup> **David's first attempt to get the Ark to Jerusalem starts in Kiriath-jearim:**

And David arose and went with all the people who were with him from Baale-judah to bring up from there the ark of God ... And **they carried the ark of God on a new cart** and brought it out of the house of Abinadab... Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, were driving the new cart, with the ark of God, and Ahio went before the ark. And when they came to the threshing floor of Nacon, Uzzah put out his hand to the ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen stumbled. And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah, and God struck him down there because of his error, and he died there beside the ark of God.

And **David was angry because the LORD had broken out against Uzzah**. ... And **David was afraid of the LORD that day**, and he said, "How can the ark of the LORD come to me?" So David was not willing to take the ark of the LORD into the city of David. But David took it aside to the house of Obed-edom the Gittite.

---

<sup>61</sup> See Rohl LA page 114 for a discussion of the identity of the "Jebusites".

<sup>62</sup> See IDB 2 page 843

<sup>63</sup> See Genesis 14:18

<sup>64</sup> See Genesis 10:16, 15:21

<sup>65</sup> See Joshua 10:1

<sup>66</sup> A similarly named "Adoni-bezek" is listed later in the conquest (Judges 1:7).

<sup>67</sup> See Joshua 10:3, 5, 23, 12:10

<sup>68</sup> See Joshua 15:63

<sup>69</sup> See Judges 1:8

<sup>70</sup> See Joshua 18:28

<sup>71</sup> See Judges 1:21

<sup>72</sup> See 2 Samuel 5:6-9, 1 Chronicles 11:4-8

<sup>73</sup> See 2 Samuel 5:11-12, 1 Chronicles 14:1-2

<sup>74</sup> See 2 Samuel 5:17-25, 1 Chronicles 14:8-17

<sup>75</sup> See 1 Samuel 4:1b-11

<sup>76</sup> See 1 Samuel 5:1-12

<sup>77</sup> See 1 Samuel 6:19-21, 7:1-2, 2 Samuel 6:2

<sup>78</sup> See 1 Samuel 14:3, 18

And the ark of the LORD remained in the house of Obed-edom the Gittite three months, and the LORD blessed Obed-edom and all his household. (2 Samuel 6:2-11 ESV)

**This was an important object lesson for David.** He tried to move the Ark the “easy way”, on a cart, rather than the proper way prescribed in the Book of Exodus, carrying on foot with two poles.<sup>79</sup> David apparently got good advice and learned that he must do things God’s way:

David ... prepared **a place for the ark of God and pitched a tent for it.** Then David said that no one but the Levites may carry the ark of God, for the LORD had chosen them to carry the ark of the LORD and to minister to him forever. And David assembled all Israel at Jerusalem to bring up the ark of the LORD to its place, which he had prepared for it. And David gathered together **the sons of Aaron and the Levites:** ... and said to them, “... **Consecrate yourselves,** you and your brothers, so that you may bring up the ark of the LORD, the God of Israel, to the place that I have prepared for it. Because you did not carry it the first time, the LORD our God broke out against us, **because we did not seek him according to the [mish\*pat].**”<sup>80</sup>

So the priests and the Levites consecrated themselves to bring up the ark of the LORD, the God of Israel. And the **Levites carried the ark of God on their shoulders with the poles, as Moses had commanded** according to the word of the LORD. ... from the house of Obed-edom with rejoicing. And because God helped the Levites who were carrying the ark of the covenant of the LORD ... (1 Chronicles 15:1-4, 12-15, 25-26 ESV, see also Psalm 68<sup>81</sup>)

At this time the Tabernacle was set up at Gibeon,<sup>82</sup> but it was God’s intention to transfer the center of his worship to the Temple that Solomon would build in Jerusalem; which is probably why David did not put the Ark back into the Tabernacle. The Ark was taken into Jerusalem so that when the Temple was built, it could be moved into the Temple, and the Tabernacle would be decommissioned.<sup>83</sup> Having brought the Ark to Jerusalem, **David is now moved with desire to build the Temple:**

Now when the king lived in his house and the LORD had given him rest from all his surrounding enemies, **the king said to Nathan the prophet,** “See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells in a tent.” And Nathan said to the king, **“Go, do all that is in your heart, for the LORD is with you.”** (2 Samuel 7:1-3 ESV, see also 1 Chronicles 17:1-2)

God immediately corrects Nathan and gives him a message for David. **David is NOT to build the Temple,** but he is given a promise from God:

... the LORD declares to you that **the LORD will make you a house.** When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, **I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body,** and I will establish his kingdom. **He shall build a house for my name,** and **I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.** ... my steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. And **your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.** (2 Samuel 7:11b-16 ESV see also 1 Chronicles 17:10-14)

The promise has four parts:

- First, **a physical son of David will be king after David:** “I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body”
- Secondly, **this son will build the Temple:** “He shall build a house for my name”
- Thirdly, **this son will establish a dynasty:** “the LORD will make you a house”
- Fourthly, **the dynasty will continue in perpetuity:** “I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever”, “your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me”, “Your throne shall be established forever”

The fourth part is the **Promise of Messianic Descent,**<sup>84</sup> which came to be regarded as a covenant. This is the most important event of David’s life. **God has affirmed to him his status as “a man after my own heart”.** God at this point had seen enough growth in David that he knew David would “do all his will”. God accepted his conversion and saw in him a person **“of a contrite and lowly spirit”.** But David still had

<sup>79</sup> See Exodus 25:13-14

<sup>80</sup> ESV has “rule” which is never a good translation for mish\*pat; here a better translation would be “understanding”, “comprehension”, “the right way”. See *Excursus 4 – David’s Use of mish\*pat*

<sup>81</sup> See the discussion of Psalm 68 in *Excursus 5 – Notes on the Davidic Psalms*

<sup>82</sup> See 1 Chronicles 16:39-40, 6:31-32, 21:29, 1 Kings 3:4-5, 2 Chronicles 1:3, 13

<sup>83</sup> See 1 Kings 8:1-4, 2 Chronicles 5:2-5

<sup>84</sup> For a discussion of this promise in the context of God’s covenants, see section 7. *The Covenant of Descent* in the paper “Covenants of Grace” located at [www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca)

plenty to learn. He is a relatively young man at this point – probably not yet forty-five. The rest of the material recorded in the Bible is about the life lessons which David still had to learn. God had made a promise to Israel, which all True Worshipers can claim:

**... you will seek the LORD your God and you will find him, if you search after him with all your heart and with all your [being].** When you are in tribulation, and all these things come upon you ... you will return to the LORD your God and obey his voice. For **the LORD your God is a merciful God. He will not leave you or destroy you or forget the covenant** ... (Deuteronomy 4:29-31 ESV)

#### **David came to plead with God to fulfill this promise:**

Hear, O LORD, when I cry aloud; be gracious to me and answer me!

You have said, "Seek my face."

**My heart says to you, "Your face, LORD, do I seek."**

Hide not your face from me.

Turn not your servant away in anger, O you who have been my help.

Cast me not off; **forsake me not, O God of my salvation!** (Psalm 27:7-9 ESV)

### 1.5 The Refining Years

**David had defeated all the nations around Israel.** In some cases, conquered territories and cities were incorporated into Israel; others were left with tributary local rulers.<sup>85</sup> One incident is given particular attention:

After this **the king of the Ammonites died**, and Hanun his son reigned in his place. And David said, "I will deal [hesed]<sup>86</sup> with Hanun the son of Nahash, as his father dealt [hesed]<sup>87</sup> with me." So David sent by his servants to console him concerning his father. ... But **the princes of the Ammonites said to Hanun** their lord, "Do you think, because David has sent comforters to you, that he is honoring your father? Has not David sent his servants to you to search the city and to spy it out and to overthrow it?" (2 Samuel 10:1-3 ESV see also 1 Chronicles 19:1-3)

There is no other record of it, but **clearly David had had a covenant agreement with Nahash.** Hanun's refusal to honour the agreement resulted in large war. Hanun recruited assistance from the growing Aramean kingdom of Hadadezer<sup>88</sup> to the north of Israel. When they were defeated by Joab and Abishai, they recruited further help from Arameans beyond the Euphrates.<sup>89</sup> The result of the war was decisive:

And **the [Arameans]<sup>90</sup> fled before Israel**, and David killed of the [Arameans]<sup>91</sup> the men of 700 chariots, and 40,000 horsemen, and wounded Shobach the commander of their army, so that he died there. And when **all the kings who were servants of Hadadezer** saw that they had been defeated by Israel, **they made peace with Israel and became subject to them.** So the [Arameans]<sup>92</sup> were afraid to save the Ammonites anymore. (2 Samuel 10:18-19 ESV see also 1 Chronicles 19:18-19)

However, **the war with Ammon is not over.** The Chronicler summarizes as follows:

**In the spring of the year**, the time when kings go out to battle, **Joab led out the army** and ravaged the country of the Ammonites and came **and besieged Rabbah.** But **David remained at Jerusalem. And Joab struck down Rabbah and overthrew it.** And David took the crown of their king from his head.<sup>93</sup> He found that it weighed a talent of gold, and in it was a precious stone. And it was placed on David's head. And he brought out the spoil of the city, a very great amount. And he brought out the people who were in it and set them to labor with saws and iron picks and axes. And thus David did to all the cities of the Ammonites. Then David and all the people returned to Jerusalem. (1 Chronicles 20:1-3 ESV see also 2 Samuel 11:1, 12:26-31)

David was probably around fifty at this time which would place the incident around 990BC. The Chronicler omits the defining event of the final twenty years of David's life – **the Bathsheba/Uriah incident.** This incident is discussed again later in this paper. The events are well known. David makes Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, pregnant. David attempts to cover it up by bringing Uriah home from the battle. In loyalty to David and the troops still fighting, Uriah refuses to take leave, so David instructs

<sup>85</sup> See 2 Samuel 8:1-14, 1 Chronicles 18:1-12

<sup>86</sup> The **ESV** has "loyally" which is a very weak translation of *hesed*. *hesed* means "covenant love", an unfailing commitment to a covenant.

<sup>87</sup> See previous footnote

<sup>88</sup> Aziru, son of Abdi-ashirta, king of Aram-zobah, see Moran EA116, Rohl **TT** pages 235-238, **EE** pages 338, 342

<sup>89</sup> See 2 Samuel 10:6-17, 1 Chronicles 19:6-17

<sup>90</sup> **ESV** has "Syrians" which is an anachronism. The Hebrew is "*aram*".

<sup>91</sup> See previous footnote

<sup>92</sup> See previous footnote

<sup>93</sup> See Psalm 21:3 – this Psalm contains NO hint of remorse, but it is possible David was too interested in physical trappings at this time.

Joab to have Uriah killed in the battle. David takes Bathsheba as a wife, but the child dies. Soon after this Bathsheba has another child, Solomon.<sup>94</sup> **The significance of this incident is God's judgement:**

**'Why have you despised the word of the LORD, to do what is evil in his sight? You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and have taken his wife ('ishshah)<sup>95</sup> to be your [woman] ('ishshah) and have killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. Now therefore the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised me and have taken the wife ('ishshah) of Uriah the Hittite to be your [woman] ('ishshah).'** Thus says the LORD, **'Behold, I will raise up evil against you out of your own house.'** (2 Samuel 12:9-11a ESV)

The Chronicler does not record this judgement or the events which result from it. **The next eleven years of David's life are dominated by the rebellion of his third son, Absalom.**<sup>96</sup> Absalom's sister, Tamar, is raped by David's oldest son Amnon.<sup>97</sup> **After two years,** Absalom takes revenge and kills Amnon.<sup>98</sup> Absalom's mother was Maacah the daughter of the King Geshur.<sup>99</sup> Geshur was a kingdom tributary to David, situated to the northeast of the Sea of Galilee. Absalom flees to Geshur **for three years.**<sup>100</sup> Joab then manipulates David into bringing Absalom back to Jerusalem. But David will not give Absalom an audience.<sup>101</sup> This state of affairs went on **for two years** until Absalom put pressure on Joab to get him an audience with David.<sup>102</sup> David is unwisely reconciled with Absalom who now proceeds with his conspiracy to overthrow David. Over **the next four years,** Absalom wins sufficient support among the peoples to stage a rebellion.<sup>103</sup>

**Eleven years have passed since the Bathsheba/Uriah incident.** It is about 980BC and David is probably over sixty. David wisely flees from Jerusalem so that the city is not engulfed in fighting. He leaves agents in Jerusalem to feed him information and flees to Mahanaim east of the Jordan.<sup>104</sup> Absalom establishes himself in Jerusalem and plans his next move.<sup>105</sup> David musters his forces in Mahanaim. Absalom comes after him with his forces and the battle is fought. David's forces prevail and Joab personally kills Absalom.<sup>106</sup> David returns to Jerusalem and cleans up the aftermath of the rebellion.<sup>107</sup> **These years were probably the worst years of David's life.**

The final major event of David's life recorded by the author of Second Samuel is his census of the military strength of Israel.<sup>108</sup> The Chronicler records:

Then **Satan stood against Israel and incited David to number Israel.** So David said to Joab and the commanders of the army, "Go, number Israel, from Beersheba to Dan, and bring me a report, that I may know their number." But **Joab said,** "May the LORD add to his people a hundred times as many as they are! Are they not, my lord the king, all of them my lord's servants? Why then should my lord require this? **Why should it be a cause of guilt for Israel?**" But the king's word prevailed against Joab. So Joab departed and went throughout all Israel and came back to Jerusalem. (1 Chronicles 21:1-4 ESV)

The author of Second Samuel omits "Satan" in verse one. Clearly David is still at a low ebb. He is trusting in military strength rather than God. **This is a great sin and David quickly repents but there are, once again, consequences:**

But **God was displeased** with this thing, and **he struck Israel.** And **David said to God, "I have sinned greatly** in that I have done this thing. But now, **please take away the iniquity of your servant,** for I have acted very foolishly."

---

<sup>94</sup> See 2 Samuel 11:2-27, 12:15b-25

<sup>95</sup> The Hebrew word **אִשְׁשָׁה** - 'ishshah, is used for any woman who is in a sexual relationship with a man: wife, surrogate, concubine, slave; or in the case of Bathsheba while Uriah was a live, an adulterous relationship. David was never censured for taking Bathsheba as a "wife" after Uriah was dead. This topic is discussed in detail in the paper "**The Human Condition**", located at [www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca)

<sup>96</sup> See 1 Chronicles 3:2

<sup>97</sup> See 1 Chronicles 3:1, 9, 2 Samuel 13:1-14

<sup>98</sup> See 2 Samuel 13:23-33

<sup>99</sup> See 1 Chronicles 3:2

<sup>100</sup> See 2 Samuel 13:34-38

<sup>101</sup> See 2 Samuel 14:1-24

<sup>102</sup> See 2 Samuel 14:28-33

<sup>103</sup> See 2 Samuel 15:1-12

<sup>104</sup> See 2 Samuel 15:13-37, 16:14, 17:24a

<sup>105</sup> See 2 Samuel 16:15-23, 17:1-14

<sup>106</sup> See 2 Samuel 18:1-18

<sup>107</sup> See 2 Samuel 19:1-43

<sup>108</sup> See 2 Samuel 24:1-9



And the LORD spoke to Gad, David's seer, saying, "Go and say to David, 'Thus says the LORD, **Three things I offer you; choose one of them**, that I may do it to you.'" So Gad came to David and said to him, "Thus says the LORD, 'Choose what you will: either three years of famine, or three months of devastation by your foes while the sword of your enemies overtakes you, or else **three days of the sword of the LORD, pestilence on the land**, with the angel of the LORD destroying throughout all the territory of Israel.' Now decide what answer I shall return to him who sent me." Then David said to Gad, "I am in great distress. **Let me fall into the hand of the LORD**, for his mercy is very great, but do not let me fall into the hand of man." (1 Chronicles 21:7-13 ESV see also 2 Samuel 24:10-14)

The pestilence ensues and many die in Israel. The final stroke is about to be delivered in Jerusalem, with the destroying angel at the threshing floor of Ornan (Arunah), the Jebusite, when David's final plea of repentance allows God to relent.<sup>109</sup> Gad the Prophet then informs David that Ornan's threshing floor is to be the site of the Temple. David purchases the site and an altar is erected.<sup>110</sup> The author of Second Samuel terminates his narrative at this point.

**The last days of David are recorded in the First Book of Kings.** As David is dying, his oldest surviving son, Adonijah,<sup>111</sup> prepared to make himself king.<sup>112</sup> David knew God's plan was for Solomon to be king, so with the help of Nathan the Prophet, his wife, Bathsheba, Zadok, the Priest, and Benaiah, the head of his personal bodyguard,<sup>113</sup> David essentially abdicates and Solomon is made king.<sup>114</sup> The author of First Kings briefly records instruction to Solomon from David.<sup>115</sup> He then records the death of David at age 70 in 971BC and the accession of Solomon:

Then **David slept with his fathers** and was buried in the city of David. And the time that David reigned over Israel was forty years. He reigned seven years in Hebron and thirty-three years in Jerusalem. So **Solomon sat on the throne of David his father, and his kingdom was firmly established**.  
(1 Kings 2:10-12 ESV)

The Chronicler records much more detailed instructions from David to Solomon.<sup>116</sup> The Chronicler also records a charge to Israel to support Solomon.<sup>117</sup> He also records details of an assembly related to Solomon's accession.<sup>118</sup> These instructions were probably given at some time prior to David's death bed. The Chronicler also records the details of David's provisions for the Temple<sup>119</sup> which no doubt commenced as soon as he was told he could not build the Temple.

## 2. David in the Amarna Letters

The Amarna Letters are a collection of cuneiform tablets found in the ruins of **Akhetaten, the capital city of Pharaoh Akhenaten**.<sup>120</sup> Most of the letters contain correspondence from the city state rulers of Canaan with the Pharaoh – Akhenaten and his father Amenhotep III. Akhenaten was the tenth Pharaoh of the Eighteenth Dynasty – Egypt's most powerful and wealthiest dynasty. His father, Amenhotep III, was perhaps Egypt's wealthiest Pharaoh.<sup>121</sup> Akhenaten is famous for his religious and cultural revolution. He attempted to suppress all the traditional gods of Egypt in favour of "Aten". This led to his more or less ignoring foreign affairs. During the reign of his grandfather, Thutmose IV, the powerful nations of the time had embarked on a period of international cooperation marked by treaties and exchange of royal princesses. In the words of Rohl:

First Thutmose IV, then his son Amenhotep III, married foreign princesses, turning the royal palaces of Egypt into truly cosmopolitan courts. ... Within a few decades, some of the world's most powerful kingdoms, including Mittanni, Babylonia, Hatti, and Arzawa, had sealed peace and trading treaties with

<sup>109</sup> See 1 Chronicles 21:14-17, 2 Samuel 24:15-17

<sup>110</sup> See 1 Chronicles 21:18-27, 22:1, 2 Samuel 24:18-25

<sup>111</sup> See 1 Chronicles 3:2

<sup>112</sup> See 1 Kings 1:5-9

<sup>113</sup> See 2 Samuel 8:18, 1 Chronicles 18:17

<sup>114</sup> See 1 Kings 1:11-40; note that Solomon had been previously made co-regent, see 1 Chronicles 29:22b

<sup>115</sup> See 1 Kings 2:1-9

<sup>116</sup> See 1 Chronicles 22:6-19, 28:9-21

<sup>117</sup> See 1 Chronicles 28:1-8

<sup>118</sup> See 1 Chronicles 23:1-32

<sup>119</sup> See 1 Chronicles 22:2-5, 23:1-32, 24:1-31, 25:1-30, 26:1-32, 29:1-9

<sup>120</sup> For a technical introduction to the Amarna Letters, see Moran pages XIII through XXXIX. Rohl (TT pages 225-230, EE pages 300-305) has a simpler, more focussed introduction.

<sup>121</sup> Rohl EE page 301



the land of the pharaohs ... turning Pharaoh's royal residences into vast international complexes of harems and ambassadorial offices. **Peace had broken out all over the ancient near east** ... (Rohl EE pages 300-301)

This is the environment in which Akhenaten grew up – **the Amarna Age**. The vassal city states of Canaan were policed by the Egyptian proxy, the Philistines. There was no reason to expect that things would not be as they had been for generations; hence, Akhenaten had no interest in foreign policy.

The traditional chronology of the ancient world places the Amarna Age in the fourteenth Century BC, with a date of 1337-1326 for Akhenaten. This traditional chronology is based on fallacious assumptions and specious logic. The New Chronology presented by Rohl in TT and LG is based on verifiable astronomical calculations and analysis of synchronisms among historic documents and archaeological artifacts. **In the New Chronology, Akhenaten's dates are 1023-1007 – contemporary with Saul and David.**

Rohl has done an excellent analysis of the Amarna Letters in relation to the historic accounts in the Bible of the lives of Saul and David.<sup>122</sup> This paper focuses on some of the results of this analysis related primarily to David. This extra-biblical material sheds significant light on the events and persons. Rohl has made the following identifications of names in the Amarna Letters with the actual persons found in the Bible:

Labayu: EA237, EA244, EA245, EA246, EA249, EA250, EA252, EA253, EA255, EA263, EA280, EA287, EA289 <sup>123</sup>	Saul: TT 238-256, EE 296-300, 303-305, 308-309, 311-315, 317-319
"king's son" EA254	Jonathan: TT 252-253
"The two sons of Labayu" EA246, EA250, EA287, EA289	Eshbaal and David TT 257, 260, 263, EE323-324, 327
Mutbaal EA255, EA256	Eshbaal TT 259, 261, 269
Ayab EA256	Joab TT 261-262, 269-271
Shurwardata EA271, EA366, EA280, EA284	Achish, king of Gath, TT 262-265, 268, EE310-311, 321-324
Abdiheba EA288, EA289, EA290, EA366	"Jebusite, king of Jerusalem" TT 257, 262-265, EE 327-328
Milkilu EA271, EA287	"King of Gezer" TT 262-263, 265, EE 330
Addadanu, son of Milkilu EA292, EA293	"King of Gezer" TT 266-267, EE 331-332
Dadua (Tadua) EA256	David TT 269-271, EE311
Yishuya EA256	Jesse, father of David TT 269-271
Aziru, son of Abdi-ashirta EA116	Hadadezer, king of Aram-zobah TT 235-238, EE338, 342
Biridiya EA242, EA244, EA246	"King of Megiddo" TT 255, EE310, 313-314

**The Philistines and the Egyptians knew the Israelites as "Hebrews"**. Throughout the Amarna Letters there are references to the "apiru". There has been a debate lasting several generations as to whether or not the 'apiru or **Habiru** are **equivalent** with "**Hebrews**". Please see **Excursus 1 – The Habiru** for a discussion of this issue. With the New Chronology, it is clear that in fact **Habiru and Hebrews are synonymous terms**. What is important is that "**Hebrews**" are **NOT synonymous with "Israelites"** – all Israelites are Hebrews but NOT all Hebrews are Israelites. The author of First Samuel uses the word "Hebrews" eight times – all are discussed in the excursus. One of these instances makes it abundantly clear that "Hebrews" are NOT equivalent to "Israelites":

Now while Saul was talking to the priest, the tumult in the camp of the Philistines increased more and more. So Saul said to the priest, "Withdraw your hand." Then Saul and all the people who were with him rallied and went into the battle. And behold, every Philistine's sword was against his fellow, and there was very great confusion. Now **the Hebrews who had been with the Philistines** before that time and who had gone up with them into the camp, even they **also turned to be with the Israelites** who were with Saul and Jonathan. Likewise, when all the men of Israel who had hidden themselves in the hill country of

<sup>122</sup> See Rohl TT pages 225-275, EE pages 295-355

<sup>123</sup> In Moran, each letter is designated by EAxxx.

Ephraim heard that the Philistines were fleeing, they too followed hard after them in the battle. So the LORD saved Israel that day. (1 Samuel 14:19-23a ESV)

This is **The Battle of Michmash** when Jonathan and his armour bearer led a surprise attack on the Philistine outpost which resulted in a general rout of the Philistines. Clearly **“Hebrews” were functioning as mercenaries for the Philistines**. They joined the “Israelites” as the battle went the way of Israel. In the Amarna Letters, the Habiru are loosely affiliated groups many of which came to be associated with Israel. **To the Philistines and Egyptians, the Israelites were indistinguishable from the Habiru.**

We have previously discussed the close relationship between David and Saul’s son, Jonathan. Saul severely castigated Jonathan for cooperating with David:

Then **Saul’s anger was kindled against Jonathan**, and he said to him, “You son of a perverse, rebellious woman, do I not know that you have chosen the son of Jesse to your own shame, and to the shame of your mother’s nakedness? For **as long as the son of Jesse lives on the earth, neither you nor your kingdom shall be established.** (1 Samuel 20:30-31a ESV)

There is a possible allusion to this in EA254:

To the King, my lord and my Sun [Pharaoh Akhenaten]: Thus Lab’ayu [Saul], your servant ... I am a loyal servant of the king ... Moreover, the king wrote for my son [Jonathan]. **I did not know that my son was consorting with the ‘Apiru [David]** ... (Moran, page 307)

The Amarna Letters shed considerable light on the death of Saul at [Mount Gilboa](#). The account in First Samuel is extremely brief:

Now the Philistines were fighting against Israel, and the men of Israel fled before the Philistines and fell slain on Mount Gilboa. And the **Philistines overtook Saul and his sons**, and the Philistines struck down Jonathan and Abinadab and Malchi-shua, the sons of Saul. **The battle pressed hard against Saul, and the archers found him**, and he was badly wounded by the archers. ... Therefore Saul took his own sword and fell upon it. (1 Samuel 31:1-4 ESV)

The **topography of Mount Gilboa** is shown in Figures 1, 2, and 3 in the [Appendix](#). Note the north face looking into the Jezreel Valley is precipitous – easily defended. This was Saul’s position – the Philistines were in the valley. The south approach to the mountain is gradual, easily ascended. The little town of En-gannim (Gina) is strategically located to protect the southern approach.

After the death of Saul, David laments:

**Your glory, O Israel, is slain on your high places!**

How the mighty have fallen!

Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Ashkelon,

lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised exult.

You mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew or rain upon you,

[Oh treacherous fields!]<sup>124</sup>

For there the **shield of the mighty was defiled**, the shield of Saul, not anointed with oil.

(2 Samuel 1:19-21 ESV)

Amarna Letters EA245 and EA250 provide information on the treachery:

Moreover, I urged my brothers, “If the god [Aten] of the king, our Lord [Akhenaten] brings it about that **we overcome Lab’ayu [Saul]**, then we must bring him alive to our lord.” ... I ... rode with Yashdata [unknown]. But **before my arrival they [the archers] had struck him down.** (Moran, page 299)

... the two sons of Lab’ayu [Eshbaal and David] have made their purpose the loss of the land of the king [Akhenaten], my lord, over and above the loss that their father [Saul] caused. ... And the two sons of Lab’ayu [Eshbaal and David] keep taking to me like this, **“Wage war against the people of Gina [En-gannim] for having killed our father** ... (Moran, page 303)

From this, it is clear that the Philistines acquired the cooperation of the people of En-gannim – they betrayed Saul who had entrusted them as his rear guard. The archers approached within striking distance and killed Saul’s sons and mortally wounded Saul. Saul, knowing what happen if they took him

---

<sup>124</sup> **ESV** has “nor fields of offerings”. Rohl has “Oh treacherous fields” (TT page 254). The Hebrew is “*us<sup>c</sup>de th<sup>e</sup>rumoth ki*”, literally “not fields of contributions for” – “not for fields of contributions”. The last line clearly implies there was “treachery” involved.

alive and sent him to Egypt, killed himself. For a discussion of how the betrayal may have happened, please see *Excursus 2 – The Amalekites*.

With the death of Saul, David was anointed King of Judah in Hebron:

After this David inquired of the LORD, “Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah?” And the LORD said to him, “Go up.” David said, “To which shall I go up?” And he said, “To Hebron.” So David went up there, and his two wives also, Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail the widow of Nabal of Carmel. And David brought up his men who were with him, everyone with his household, and they lived in the towns of Hebron. And the men of Judah came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah. (2 Samuel 2:1-4 ESV)

**The relationships among the city states of Canaan were very unstable.** David had been in the employ of Shurwardata [Achish] of Gath, a Philistine city. Gezer, a Canaanite city, was under Milkilu; and the Jebusites were in control of Jerusalem. These were three very different ethnic groups who competed with each other for control of territory, all the while paying lip-service to the authority of Egypt. David cleverly worked these rivalries to his own advantage. He did not play all his cards at once – he pretended friendship with Achish as long as possible. Achish and Milkilu had designs on territory controlled by Abdiheba, Jebusite King of Jerusalem:

Say to the king [Akhenaten], my lord: **Message of Abdiheba**, your servant. ... **Here is the deed against the land Milkilu and Shurwardata [Achish] did:** against the land of the king, my lord, they ordered troops from [Gezer], troops from [Gath], troops from [Keilah]. They seized Rubutu [unidentified town between Gezer and Jerusalem]. **The land of the king deserted to the [Habiru]**. And now, besides this, **a town belonging to Jerusalem** ... a city of the king, **has gone over to the side of the men of [Keilah]**. May the king give heed to Abdiheba your servant and send archers ... if there are no archers, **the land of the king will desert to the [Habiru]** ... (EA290, Moran, page 334)

Keilah was located very close to Gath. David had provided support to Keilah during the wandering years,<sup>125</sup> so the city had an affinity with David. It is clear that David was working with Milkilu and Shurwardata against Abdiheba:

... Message of Abdiheba ... I am at war ... consider Jerusalem! ... This is the deed of Milkilu and **the two sons of Lab'ayu** [Eshbaal and David], who have **given the land of the king to the [Habiru]** ... (EA287, Moran, page 328)

The reference to the Habiru taking the king's land is perhaps an allusion to David's men taking up residence in the towns of Hebron. Soon after this Abdiheba is silent – David has taken Jerusalem. Now, David could no longer feign cooperation with Milkilu and Shurwardata:

Say to the king [Akhenaten] ... **Message of Milkilu** ... May the king, my lord, know that the **war against me and against Shurwardata is severe**. So **may the king**, my lord, **save his land from the power of the [Habiru]**. ... (EA271, Moran, page 317)

At this point the Philistines and Canaanites mount a concerted effort to defeat David.<sup>126</sup>

... Message of Addadanu [king of Gezer, son of Milkilu] ... **there being war against me from the mountains**, I built a house [a fortress] its name is Manhatu – to make preparations ... (EA292, Moran, page 335)

“Manhatu” is Manahath<sup>127</sup> in the Valley of Rephaim where David fights the Philistines.<sup>128</sup> There are many more synchronisms between the Amarna Letters and the Biblical account. The few that are examined here provide a glimpse into the politics and relationships that existed in the world in which David forged the Kingdom of Israel.

<sup>125</sup> See 1 Samuel 23:1-13

<sup>126</sup> See 2 Samuel 5:17-25, 1 Chronicles 14:8-17

<sup>127</sup> See Rohl **TT** page 266, 1 Chronicles 8:6

<sup>128</sup> See 2 Samuel 5:17-25, 1 Chronicles 14:8-17

### 3. Analysis

#### 3.1 The Early Years

Although we can only speculate at the details, **David's early life was a period of preparation.** As a shepherd alone in the fields, David developed a relationship with God as a youth:

“... Your servant has struck down both lions and bears, and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be like one of them, for **he has defied the armies of the living God.**” And David said, “**The LORD who delivered me** from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear **will deliver me** from the hand of this Philistine.” (1 Samuel 17:36-37a ESV)

**David learned not to let his limitations stand in the way of serving God.** He knew he was young and inexperienced, but had faith in God to accomplish what God required:

And David said to Saul, “**Let no man's heart fail** because of him. **Your servant will go and fight with this Philistine.**” (1 Samuel 17:32 ESV)

We have no information on how **formal education** was conducted in David's day, but clearly David knew how to read and write. He knew the history of Israel. He was skilled in music. When he was recruited to Saul's service, he was a man “**prudent of speech**” and “**of good presence**”.<sup>129</sup> As his life progressed, he wrote many Psalms which reflect his conversion. The Davidic Psalms are discussed later in this paper.

#### 3.2 In Saul's Service

After the Battle of Elah, David was temporarily recruited to the service of Saul.<sup>130</sup> Sometime later, he entered Saul's service fulltime.<sup>131</sup> David was eminently successful in Saul's service. He quickly became his armour bearer.<sup>132</sup> He was given a position as an officer in the army,<sup>133</sup> and was very successful with it.<sup>134</sup> He quickly developed a fast friendship with Jonathan, Saul's son,<sup>135</sup> which lasted throughout their lives.<sup>136</sup> These events demonstrate David's ability and his personality; but more importantly they are a reflection of his conversion – the day that he was anointed to be king by Samuel:

**And the Spirit of the LORD rushed upon David from that day forward.** (1 Samuel 16:13 ESV)

**David was not unaware of the significance of his calling,** yet he always looked up to Saul as God's chosen king while he was alive. When Saul made him a son-in-law by giving him Michal in marriage, **David understood that this position would give him a legitimate claim to the throne:**

And David said to Saul, “Who am I, and who are my relatives, my father's clan in Israel, that I should be son-in-law to the king?” ... And David said, “**Does it seem to you a little thing to become the king's son-in-law,** since I am a poor man and have no reputation?” ... And when his servants told David these words, **it pleased David well to be the king's son-in-law.** (1 Samuel 18:18, 23b, 26 ESV)

In spite of Saul's growing jealousy, David provided faithful service for as long as possible.<sup>137</sup> Throughout this period, as Saul even recognized,<sup>138</sup> David grew in grace and knowledge:<sup>139</sup>

**And David had success in all his undertakings, for the LORD was with him.** (1 Samuel 18:14 ESV)

#### 3.3 The Wandering Years

**These were hard years for David.** He goes first to Samuel; but realizing that he is endangering Samuel, he sets out on his own.<sup>140</sup> David quickly attracts a small group of followers, for whom he must provide.<sup>141</sup> The assistance of Ahimelech teaches David a very bitter lesson about the depravity of Saul<sup>142</sup> – the depth to which one can sink if God's Spirit is rejected:

---

<sup>129</sup> See 1 Samuel 16:18

<sup>130</sup> See 1 Samuel 17:55-58, 18:1a, 2, 5

<sup>131</sup> See 1 Samuel 16:16-22

<sup>132</sup> See 1 Samuel 16:21b

<sup>133</sup> See 1 Samuel 18:5, 13

<sup>134</sup> See 1 Samuel 18:6-7, 30

<sup>135</sup> See 1 Samuel 18:1b, 3-4

<sup>136</sup> See 1 Samuel 19:1-7, 20:1-42, 2 Samuel 1:22-27

<sup>137</sup> See 1 Samuel 18:10, 27, 19:8-9

<sup>138</sup> See 1 Samuel 18:12, 28

<sup>139</sup> See 2 Peter 3:18

<sup>140</sup> See 1 Samuel 19:18-20a

<sup>141</sup> See 1 Samuel 21:1-6

<sup>142</sup> See 1 Samuel 22:6-19

See the man who would not make God his refuge,

but trusted in the abundance of his riches and sought refuge in his own destruction! (Psalm 52:7 ESV)

Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. (Psalm 51:11 ESV)

Next, David makes an initial contact with Achish, King of Gath. Why he did this is unclear, but he was recognized as the son-in-law of Saul by the people of Achish and apprehended.<sup>143</sup> He came away learning some lessons:

Be gracious to me, O God, for man tramples on me; all day long an attacker oppresses me; my enemies trample on me all day long, for many attack me proudly.

When I am afraid, I put my trust in you.

In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I shall not be afraid.

What can flesh do to me? (Psalm 56:1-4 ESV)

The eyes of the LORD are toward the righteous and his ears toward their cry.

The face of the LORD is against those who do evil, to cut off the memory of them from the earth.

When the righteous cry for help, the LORD hears and delivers them out of all their troubles.

The LORD is near to the broken-hearted and saves the crushed in spirit. (Psalm 34:15-18 ESV)

David is further made aware of the depth to which Saul had sunk by the act of Saul in turning on David's family. His brothers have come to join his growing army, and his elderly father and mother have had to flee from Saul.<sup>144</sup> The gravity of this situation weighed on David's mind. His elder brother, Eliab, who had castigated him at the battle of Elah,<sup>145</sup> now had to look up to him as a stranger:

Let not those who hope in you be put to shame through me, O Lord GOD of hosts;

let not those who seek you be brought to dishonor through me, O God of Israel.

For it is for your sake that I have borne reproach, that dishonor has covered my face.

I have become a stranger to my brothers, an alien to my mother's sons. (Psalm 69:6-8 ESV)

Whether or not David at first fully recognized his situation, God, through circumstances, forced David into a position of protecting the people in the tribal territories of Judah and Simeon. The first indication of this is the Keilah incident.<sup>146</sup> Abiathar, the priest, had escaped the slaughter at Nob and joined David. Abiathar had an ephod,<sup>147</sup> and apparently also the pouch containing the Urim and Thummim. David learns to trust Abiathar to provide answers from YHWH using Urim and Thummim. After saving Keilah, word from there got to Saul, and he sent an army to besiege the city. Through Abiathar, God informed David to flee.<sup>148</sup> David recognized this as a manifestation God's "covenant love", *hesed*:

Oh, how abundant is your goodness, which you have stored up for those who fear you

and worked for those who take refuge in you, in the sight of the children of mankind!

In the cover of your presence you hide them from the plots of men;

you store them in your shelter from the strife of tongues.

Blessed be the LORD, for he has wondrously shown his [hesed] to me when I was in a besieged city.

I had said in my alarm, "I am cut off from your sight."

But you heard the voice of my pleas for mercy when I cried to you for help. (Psalm 31:19-22 ESV)

David's protectorate role is more fully exemplified in the Nabal incident.<sup>149</sup> David and his men had protected Nabal,<sup>150</sup> but when they requested some provisions, Nabal refused.<sup>151</sup> The protection of Nabal was clearly exemplary of David's policy. Nabal's wife, Abigail, states the common understanding:

... when the LORD has done to my lord according to all the good that he has spoken concerning you and has appointed you prince over Israel ... (1 Samuel 25:30 ESV)

The end results of David's actions were recognized. But again, David learned from the situation – Abigail's intervention prevented him from slaughtering the very people he was protecting,<sup>152</sup> and David learned that good deeds are NOT always required:

<sup>143</sup> See 1 Samuel 21:10-15 – the text does not explicate that he was apprehended; but it is implied by the need for David's subterfuge.

<sup>144</sup> See 1 Samuel 22:1-4

<sup>145</sup> See 1 Samuel 17:28

<sup>146</sup> See 1 Samuel 23:1-5

<sup>147</sup> See 1 Samuel 22:20, 23:6

<sup>148</sup> See 1 Samuel 23:6-13

<sup>149</sup> See 1 Samuel 25:1b-42

<sup>150</sup> See 1 Samuel 25:7, 15-16, 21

<sup>151</sup> See 1 Samuel 25:8-12

<sup>152</sup> See 1 Samuel 25:32-34

Be not silent, O God of my praise!  
For wicked and deceitful mouths are opened against me, speaking against me with lying tongues.  
They encircle me with words of hate, and attack me without cause.  
**In return for my love they accuse me,** but I give myself to prayer.  
**So they reward me evil for good, and hatred for my love.** (Psalm 109:1-5 ESV)

David and his men spent considerable time in the forested area of Hereth near the town of Ziph.<sup>153</sup> Saul had informants in Ziph.<sup>154</sup> David composed a Psalm based on this experience:

O God, **save me by your name,** and vindicate me by your might.  
O God, hear my prayer; give ear to the words of my mouth.  
For **strangers have risen against me;** ruthless men seek my life;  
they do not set God before themselves. Selah  
Behold, God is my helper; the Lord is the upholder of my life.  
**He will return the evil to my enemies;** in your faithfulness put an end to them.  
With a freewill offering I will sacrifice to you;  
I will give thanks to your name, O LORD, for it is good.  
For **he has delivered me from every trouble,** and my eye has looked in triumph on my enemies.  
(Psalm 54:1-7 ESV)

During the Wandering Years, two **personal encounters between David and Saul** are recorded.<sup>155</sup> Both encounters follow a similar pattern. Saul gets very close to David but is unaware of his presence. David is in a clear position to kill Saul, but because of his respect for him as God's chosen king, he spares him. Each time, he takes a personal effect of Saul to prove that he could have killed him. When confronted with the situation, Saul acknowledges David and expresses grief over the situation and their relationship. Each time David expresses grief that he has belittled Saul, but he is smart enough to continue avoiding Saul.

### 3.4 King in Hebron

David's **political astuteness** was demonstrated in the Wandering Years by his careful cultivation of the trust of the people of Judah. The author of the Books of Samuel is careful to point out David's leadership of the disaffected who gathered to him.<sup>156</sup> Other examples of **political astuteness** include David's assistance to the city of Keilah;<sup>157</sup> David's protection of the shepherds and flocks of Nabal;<sup>158</sup> and, his sharing of the Amalekite booty with the people.<sup>159</sup> **David was especially careful to incur no guilt in the death of Saul.**<sup>160</sup> When Saul was killed at the Battle of Gilboa, and an Amalekite, thinking to curry favour with David, claimed to have finished Saul, David immediately absolved himself from any complicity by executing the Amalekite.<sup>161</sup> Under similar circumstances, David also executes the murders of Eshbaal.<sup>162</sup>

David was also careful to ensure he was acting according to God's will:

After this **David inquired of the LORD,** "Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah?" And **the LORD said to him, "Go up."** David said, "To which shall I go up?" And he said, "**To Hebron.**" So David went up there, and his two wives also, Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail the widow of Nabal of Carmel. And David brought up his men who were with him, everyone with his household, and **they lived in the towns of Hebron.** And the men of Judah came, and **there they anointed David king over the house of Judah.**  
(2 Samuel 2:1-4a ESV)

**David continued to win favour with the northern tribes** by thanking the people of Jabesh-gilead:

When they told David, "It was **the men of Jabesh-gilead who buried Saul,**" David sent messengers to the men of Jabesh-gilead and said to them, "May you be blessed by the LORD, because you showed this [hesed] to Saul your lord and buried him. Now may the LORD show [hesed] and faithfulness to you. And **I will do good to you because you have done this thing.** Now therefore let your hands be strong,

---

<sup>153</sup> See 1 Samuel 22:5, 23:14, 26:1

<sup>154</sup> See 1 Samuel 23:19-23, 26:1

<sup>155</sup> See 1 Samuel 24:1-22, 26:1-25

<sup>156</sup> See 1 Samuel 22:1-2, 30:21-25

<sup>157</sup> See 1 Samuel 23:1-5

<sup>158</sup> See 1 Samuel 25:2-35

<sup>159</sup> See 1 Samuel 30:26-31

<sup>160</sup> See 1 Samuel 24:8-15, 26:6-13

<sup>161</sup> 2 Samuel 1:2-16

<sup>162</sup> 2 Samuel 4:1-12



and be valiant, for Saul your lord is dead, and the house of Judah has anointed me king over them.”  
(2 Samuel 2:4b-7 ESV)

It was indeed God’s will for David to be king over all Israel, but he was wise enough to consider the political realities of his circumstances.

### 3.5 King in Jerusalem

The early years of David’s reign in Jerusalem are characterized by his **prayer of gratitude** to YHWH following Nathan’s communication of the Promise of Messianic Descent:

Then **King David went** in and sat **before the LORD and said**, “Who am I, O Lord GOD, and what is my house, that you have brought me thus far? And yet this was a small thing in your eyes, O Lord GOD. **You have spoken also of your servant’s house for a great while to come**, and this is **instruction for mankind**, O Lord GOD! And what more can David say to you? For **you know your servant**, O Lord GOD! **Because of your promise**, and according to your own heart, you have brought about all this greatness, **to make your servant know it**. **Therefore you are great, O LORD God**. For there is none like you, and there is no God besides you, according to all that we have heard with our ears.  
(2 Samuel 7:18-22 ESV see also 1 Chronicles 17:16-20)

The **location of the prayer** is most likely the tent in which the Ark of the Covenant had been placed. **David is in awe of the magnitude of God’s promise**: “your servant’s house for a great while to come”. He understands the words of the promise: “your throne shall be established forever”, but no doubt is struggling to understand how it will occur. David recognizes that the promise is not for Israel alone, but is also **“instruction for mankind”**<sup>163</sup> – of universal significance. David expresses humility in that YHWH “knows” him well enough to give him the Promise of Messianic Descent. David alludes to **the promise given to Abraham**, “because of your promise”, of universal blessing through a descendant,<sup>164</sup> now particularized to David’s descendant. David extolls Adonai YHWH for making all this known to him.

David continues his prayer by recounting YHWH’s saving acts for the nation of Israel:

“And **who is like your people Israel**, the one nation on earth whom **God went to redeem to be his people**, making himself a name and doing for them great and awesome things by driving out before your people, **whom you redeemed for yourself from Egypt**, a nation and its gods? And you established for yourself your people Israel to be your people forever. And **you, O LORD, became their God**.  
(2 Samuel 7:23-24 ESV see also 1 Chronicles 17:21-22)

David finishes by imploring God to fulfill his word:

“And now, O LORD God, **confirm forever the word that you have spoken** concerning your servant and concerning his house, and **do as you have spoken**. And **your name will be magnified forever**, saying, ‘The LORD of hosts is God over Israel,’ and the house of your servant David will be established before you. For **you, O LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, have made this revelation to your servant**, saying, ‘I will build you a house.’ Therefore your servant has found courage to pray this prayer to you.  
And now, O Lord GOD, you are God, and **your words are true**, and **you have promised** this good thing **to your servant**. Now therefore may it please you to **bless the house of your servant**, so **that it may continue forever** before you. For **you, O Lord GOD, have spoken**, and with your blessing shall the house of your servant be blessed forever.” (2 Samuel 7:25-29 ESV see also 1 Chronicles 17:23-27)

Of course, David could not understand how the promise would be fulfilled, but like Abraham,<sup>165</sup> David went on in faith knowing that God would fulfill his word. We have some **three thousand years of history**, since the time of David, **demonstrating how God has fulfilled his word**. God makes the same requirement of Christians today, **to proceed in faith**, as the prophecies of the end-time unfold.

---

<sup>163</sup> This phrase is the one significant difference between the text of Samuel and the text of First Chronicles. The Hebrew of Samuel is “w<sup>e</sup>zo’t<sup>h</sup> torah ha’adam”, literally “and this instruction of the mankind”. The Hebrew of First Chronicles is “ur<sup>e</sup>ithani k<sup>e</sup>thor ha’adam hamma’alah”, literally “and you have shown me with sequence of the mankind the ascending procession”. The **ESV** translates this as “and have shown me future generations” with a footnote of “and you look upon me as a man of high rank”. RSV is the same as the **ESV**. NKJV and NRSV are the same as the **ESV** footnote. Clearly the phrase in Chronicles is difficult. **BDB**, page 1064, states that “k<sup>e</sup>thor” is corrupt. Keil (**KB** page 522) suggests “thor” is actually a contraction of “torah”. The Chronicler’s use of the verb “ur<sup>e</sup>ithani”, “you have shown me”, is not inconsistent with the tenor of David’s prayer. This leaves obscurity only in “ma’alah”. **BDB**, page 751, gives a general sense of “higher and higher” for “ma’alah”. Thus, the sense of the phrase in Chronicles would be “you have shown me with instruction of the mankind the increasing” – “you have shown me the increasing instruction of mankind”.

<sup>164</sup> See Genesis 12:3

<sup>165</sup> See Genesis 15:1-6

The last twenty odd years of David's life were far less pleasant than his first twenty years as king. **David had an impetuous side to him.** We saw that in the Nabal incident. David was prepared to kill the very people he had been protecting. Only the intercession of Abigail prevented the tragedy. God worked circumstances to David's benefit as Nabal soon died and Abigail became his wife. Similarly, God would have worked out circumstances for Bathsheba to become David's wife. Instead of waiting on God to work out circumstances, **David impetuously took matters into his own hand.** David made the same mistake that Jacob and Rebekah made in their deception of Isaac: **God will work circumstances out so that his plan is accomplished.** Because of this sin of David, he suffered untold misery in his family life during his later years.

In spite of David's taking Bathsheba illegally and murdering her husband Uriah, God chose Bathsheba to be the mother of Solomon through whom the Dynasty of David was established. Matthew traces the descent of Jesus, via Solomon, through the kings of Israel.<sup>166</sup> Bathsheba had other sons; one was named Nathan<sup>167</sup> – Luke traces the descent of Jesus through Nathan.<sup>168</sup> Clearly, it was God's intent that Bathsheba would be David's wife.

The real significance of the Bathsheba/Uriah incident is David's reaction when confronted by the prophet, Nathan. Nathan uses a clever storey to convict David:

And **the LORD sent Nathan to David.** He came to him and said to him, "There were two men in a certain city, the one rich and the other poor. **The rich man had very many** flocks and herds, but **the poor man had nothing but one** little ewe lamb ... Now there came a traveler to the rich man, and he was unwilling to take one of his own flock or herd to prepare for the guest who had come to him, but **he took the poor man's lamb** and prepared it for the man who had come to him." (2 Samuel 12:1-4 ESV)

David correctly recognizes the injustice of the rich man:

Then **David's anger was greatly kindled** against the man, and he said to Nathan, "As the LORD lives, **the man who has done this deserves to die**, and he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity." **Nathan said to David, "You are the man!"** ... (2 Samuel 12:5-7a ESV)

David's reaction was immediate:

David said to Nathan, "**I have sinned against the LORD.**" And Nathan said to David, "**The LORD also has put away your sin;** you shall not die. Nevertheless, because by this deed **you have utterly scorned the LORD,** the child who is born to you shall die." (2 Samuel 12:13-14 ESV)

Have **mercy on me, O God,** according to your [hesed];

according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.

**Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,** and cleanse me from my sin!

For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.

**Against you, you only, have I sinned** and done what is evil in your sight ... (Psalm 51:1-4a ESV)

YHWH accepted David's repentance, but **there were consequences:** the child died and the "sword shall never depart your house".<sup>169</sup> David spent the next dozen years dealing with this curse. **David's deep and sincere repentance** is in marked contrast with King Saul:

He waited seven days, the time appointed by Samuel. But **Samuel did not come to Gilgal,** and the people were scattering from him. **So Saul said,** "Bring the burnt offering here to me, and the peace offerings." And he **offered the burnt offering.** As soon as he had finished offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came. And Saul went out to meet him and greet him. **Samuel said, "What have you done?"** And Saul said, "When I saw that the people were scattering from me, and that you did not come within the days appointed, and that the Philistines had mustered at Michmash, I said, 'Now the Philistines will come down against me at Gilgal, and **I have not sought the favor of the LORD.**' **So I forced myself, and offered the burnt offering.**" (1 Samuel 13:8-12 ESV)

In the face of obvious sin, Saul attempted to justify himself rather than recognize the sin and repent. For this reason, **God recognized that Saul could NOT be the prototypical "shepherd of Israel" – Saul was NOT "a man after his own heart"; but David was:**

And Samuel said to Saul, "You have done foolishly. You have not kept the command of the LORD your God, with which he commanded you. For then **the LORD would have established your kingdom over**

<sup>166</sup> See Matthew 1:6-16, See also *Excursus 3 – The Genealogies of Christ*

<sup>167</sup> See 1 Chronicle 3:5

<sup>168</sup> See Luke 3:23-31, See also *Excursus 3 – The Genealogies of Christ*

<sup>169</sup> See 2 Samuel 12:10

**Israel forever.** But now your kingdom shall not continue. **The LORD has sought out a man after his own heart,** and the LORD has commanded him to be prince over his people, because you have not kept what the LORD commanded you.” (1 Samuel 13:13-14 ESV)

**David** had another serious character flaw – he **was too trusting of those close to him.** This opened him up to manipulation. This is **most obvious in his dealings with Joab.** David had a sister, Zeruiah, who was the mother of Joab.<sup>170</sup> If Zeruiah was significantly older than David, Joab could easily have been about the same age as David – perhaps they developed a strong friendship in their youth. Joab first appears in the Battle of Gibeon<sup>171</sup> where he is commander of David’s forces. Joab’s propensity to do things his own way first comes out in the murder of Abner.<sup>172</sup> David censures Joab but Joab continues unconstrained in his position as head of the army.<sup>173</sup> Joab proved his worth in war in the taking of Jerusalem,<sup>174</sup> and in other battles.<sup>175</sup> Joab had no problem doing David’s dirty work when Uriah arrived carrying the letter with his own death sentence:

In the morning **David wrote a letter to Joab** and sent it by the hand of Uriah. In the letter he wrote, **“Set Uriah in the forefront of the hardest fighting,** and then draw back from him, **that he may be struck down, and die.”** And as Joab was besieging the city, he assigned Uriah to the place where he knew there were valiant men. And the men of the city came out and fought with Joab, and some of the servants of David among the people fell. **Uriah the Hittite also died.** (2 Samuel 11:14-17 ESV)

**The Tamar incident** occurred because David did NOT see through a nefarious palace intrigue:

Now **Absalom,** David’s son, **had a beautiful sister,** whose name was **Tamar.** And after a time Amnon, David’s son, loved her. And **Amnon was so tormented that he made himself ill because of his sister Tamar,** for she was a virgin, and it seemed impossible to Amnon to do anything to her.

But **Amnon had a friend, whose name was Jonadab,** the son of Shimeah, David’s brother. And **Jonadab was a very crafty man.** ... Jonadab said to him, “Lie down on your bed and pretend to be ill. And when your father comes to see you, say to him, ‘Let my sister Tamar come and give me bread to eat, and prepare the food in my sight, that I may see it and eat it from her hand.’”

So **Amnon lay down and pretended to be ill.** And when the king came to see him, Amnon said to the king, “Please let my sister Tamar come and make a couple of cakes in my sight, that I may eat from her hand.” Then **David sent home to Tamar, saying, “Go to your brother Amnon’s house ...”** (2 Samuel 13:1-7 ESV)

**This incident was the trigger that led to Absalom’s rebellion.** But again, we find **the fingerprints of Joab** on the whole affair. Through a subterfuge, Joab convinced David to allow Absalom back into Jerusalem,<sup>176</sup> but David refused to give Absalom an audience until Joab again intervened.<sup>177</sup> Joab had proven valuable to David, but David trusted him too much. At the end of Absalom’s rebellion, David specifically wanted Absalom alive, but Joab personally executed him.<sup>178</sup> David grieved for Absalom but did not censure Joab,<sup>179</sup> in fact, Joab exerted his influence on David to cease grieving.<sup>180</sup>

Later David did try to put some restraint on Joab by placing Amasa in charge of the army. Amasa was a cousin of Joab, a son of David’s other sister, Abigail.<sup>181</sup> Joab simply murdered Amasa and resumed command of the army.<sup>182</sup> Clearly **David had no control over Joab,** but David remained under Joab’s influence until the end. On his death-bed David warned Solomon about Joab.<sup>183</sup> Joab had been involved in the conspiracy to usurp Solomon in favour of Adonijah;<sup>184</sup> for this, Solomon had him executed.<sup>185</sup>

---

<sup>170</sup> See 1 Chronicles 2:15

<sup>171</sup> See 2 Samuel 2:12-28

<sup>172</sup> See 2 Samuel 3:26-30

<sup>173</sup> See 2 Samuel 3:31-39, 8:16

<sup>174</sup> See 1 Chronicles 11:6

<sup>175</sup> See 2 Samuel 10:6-14, 11:1, 12:26, 1 Chronicles 19:6-15, 20:1

<sup>176</sup> See 2 Samuel 14:1-21

<sup>177</sup> See 2 Samuel 14:28-33

<sup>178</sup> See 2 Samuel 18:5, 14-15

<sup>179</sup> See 2 Samuel 18:33, 19:1-4

<sup>180</sup> See 2 Samuel 19:5-8

<sup>181</sup> See 1 Chronicles 2:15-17

<sup>182</sup> See 2 Samuel 20:4-13

<sup>183</sup> See 1 Kings 2:5-6

<sup>184</sup> See 1 Kings 1:5-7

<sup>185</sup> See 1 Kings 2:28-34

## 4. The Historic David

**David became to God “a man after my own heart” through much trial and tribulation.** The hand of God is clearly visible working with David from his earliest youth. David affirmed that God had worked with him from birth.<sup>186</sup> As a youth, David developed a relationship with God that lasted all his life. David became educated as a youth so that when opportunity arose, he could serve God. Opportunity came at the Battle of Elah. Here David displayed a characteristic which demonstrated the correctness of God’s assessment of him – **he did not allow his limitations to prevent him from serving God.**<sup>187</sup>

In Saul’s service, **David never let his potential go to his head.** Although he had been identified by God and anointed by Samuel to be King of Israel, he was always aware that Saul had been made king by God’s hand and only God could remove him. This **respect for Saul** lasted all through the wandering years – even as Saul tried desperately to kill him. David learned many lessons during the wandering years which he needed later as king. **He learned to be politically astute,** but he also fell to **one of the lowest points in his life** when he hired himself and his men as mercenaries to Achish, King of Gath. God had to bail him out of the situation.

**The hand of God is clear** in the end of Saul’s life on Mount Gilboa. This allowed David to become king in Hebron. The Amarna letters give further information on **David’s loyalty to Saul and his remaining son, Eshbaal.** David’s political astuteness is further attested in the Amarna Letters by his manipulation of the Kings of Gath and Gezer to assist him in taking Jebus. After establishing his capital in Jerusalem, David moved as quickly as possible to establish security for Israel. Then **David proceeded to reciprocate the hesed of YHWH** by establishing the worship of YHWH in Jerusalem.

David’s first action was to get the **Ark of the Covenant** into Jerusalem. Then he wanted to build a temple but was prevented. At this point God gave him the **Promise of Messianic Descent** – God was convinced that David was “a man after my own heart” and that he “will do all of my will”. David became the prototype of the King of kings. David, the shepherd boy, became the prototype of the Shepherd of all humanity. **This is the high point in David’s life.**

The promise to David included **dynastic longevity** – his son would build a Temple and establish a dynasty that would last until God was ready to move on to **the One who would inherit the throne forever.** David made fervent preparations for the building of the Temple and for the establishment of worship in the Temple.

Still David had many life lessons to learn. **The two darkest chapters in his life** were yet to come: the Bathsheba/Uriah incident, and its aftermath; and, the final census of Israel. In both situations, David demonstrated to God that he was “a man after my own heart” – **his repentance was swift and deep.** This brings us to **the actual words of David** that we have recorded in the Davidic Psalms. The next sections explore these Psalms, where we discover the depths of David’s conversion; his commitment to serving God; and, his understanding of who and what God is.

## 5. The Davidic Psalms

In the Masoretic Text, the headings of some seventy-three Psalms contain לְדָוִד - lēdavid. The Hebrew preposition לְ - lē, can be translated as “by”, “for”, “according to”, “of”, “with regard to”, among other words. It is a preposition showing a relationship between two things, in these cases, a literary entity, a “Psalm”, and a person, “David”. For this reason, some commentators ignore this phrase as an indicator of authorship. However, to quote from the ESV introduction to Psalms:

**Davidic authorship corresponds well with biblical testimony.** David was “skillful in playing the lyre” (1 Sam. 16:16–23) and an accomplished songwriter (2 Sam. 1:17–27; 22:1–23:7); his reputation as “the

---

<sup>186</sup> See Psalm 22:9-10, 139:13-15

<sup>187</sup> Contrast Moses, Isaiah, and Jeremiah who all expressed feelings of inadequacy regarding their ability to serve God (Exodus 3:11-12, 4:1-16, Isaiah 6:5-7, Jeremiah 1:6-8). No such expressions of inadequacy are recorded for Noah, Abraham, Ezekiel, Daniel, and John the Baptist.

sweet psalmist of Israel” (2 Sam. 23:1) is highly credible, as is the way 1 Chronicles presents him as taking an active role in developing Israel’s worship (e.g., 1 Chron. 16:4–7, 37–42; 23:2–6; 25:1–7).

Clearly, it is possible that some of the “*l<sup>e</sup>dawid*” Psalms were NOT written by David;<sup>188</sup> but also, it is very possible some of the un-ascribed Psalms were, in fact, written by David.<sup>189</sup> Using the “*l<sup>e</sup>dawid*” Psalms as an approximation of the extant literary corpus of David is therefore a reasonable assumption. On this basis, we proceed with a thematic analysis of the “*l<sup>e</sup>dawid*” Psalms. Please see the chart, ***Thematic Analysis of Davidic Psalms***, in the [Appendix](#) for a summary of this analysis. Also see ***Excursus 5 – Notes on the Davidic Psalms*** for a brief comment on each Davidic Psalm.

**Life Situation:** the “sitz-im-leben”, as it is called, is very difficult to determine for most Psalms. A small number of Psalms contain an expanded title which provides some information as to the life situation. For all other Psalms, the life situation must be inferred from allusions in the text – this is of course speculative and subjective.

**Poetry:** Psalms are perhaps the purest examples of Hebrew poetry in existence. As with all poetry, they use many literary devices and figures of speech. Poetry can be understood at “face value” – what do the words say? But, very often the poet tries to imply a deeper or symbolic meaning, this makes understanding Hebrew poetry that much harder. Finally, with the Psalms, because they are inspired by God, there is occasionally a still deeper meaning which the psalmist may not have even understood, but which can be determined based on other information in the Bible.

## 5.1 The Nature of God

That David had a clear understanding of God’s nature is demonstrated by the many places in the Psalms where he extolls God using the fundamental words describing God’s nature:

Your **[hesed]**, O LORD, extends to the heavens, your **[faithfulness]** to the clouds.

Your **[righteousness]** is like the mountains of God;

your **[mish<sup>e</sup>patim]** is like the great deep; man and beast **[you save]**, O LORD.

How precious is your **[hesed]**, O God! (Psalm 36:5-7a ESV)

David uses the word *hesed* many times – it occurs 128 times in the Psalms. ***hesed is the most important word in the Bible for understanding the Nature of God***. There is no English word which corresponds to *hesed* – with respect to God’s relationship with man, an adequate translation is “**covenant love**”.<sup>190</sup> In Psalm 36, David acknowledges that God’s *hesed* knows no bounds, “**extends to the heavens**”.<sup>191</sup> The *hesed* of God is “**precious**” to “**man and beast**” because without it, salvation, “**you save**”, would not be possible.

**The second most important word describing the nature of God is *mish<sup>e</sup>pat*** – it occurs 64 times in the Psalms. It also has no English word which adequately translates it, but it has a much broader range of meaning than *hesed*. **As an attribute of God’s nature**, the only English word that comes close is “**justness**”, the quality of being just in all doings, complete fairness. We will discuss other nuances of meaning as we come to them.<sup>192</sup> The plural, *mish<sup>e</sup>patim*, generally implies the “wisdom”, “discernment”, and “understanding” that can only be acquired by living by the Way of God. In Psalm 36, David recognizes how enormous is the *mish<sup>e</sup>patim* of God – it is “**like the great deep**”. In this Psalm, David identifies two other extremely important attributes of God’s nature:

- **Faithfulness:** from אֱמוּנָה - ‘emunah, “faithfulness” is an adequate translation<sup>193</sup>

<sup>188</sup> Psalm 122 is a *l<sup>e</sup>dawid* Psalm, but verse 5 seems to clearly indicate that this is a Psalm which written when the Davidic dynasty was well established; hence, David could NOT be the author.

<sup>189</sup> Acts 4:25 suggests Davidic authorship for Psalm 2; and Hebrews 4:7, for Psalm 95; the Chronicler may be suggesting Davidic authorship for Psalms 96 and 105 – see 1 Chronicles 16:8-34

<sup>190</sup> For a more complete discussion of the meaning of *hesed* see the paper “Covenants of Grace” on [www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca) – see especially ***Excursus 2 – hesed***. ESV and most modern translations use “steadfast love”.

<sup>191</sup> See also Psalm 57:10, 108:4

<sup>192</sup> For a more complete discussion of the meaning of *mish<sup>e</sup>pat* see the paper “Covenants of Grace” on [www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca) – see especially ***Excursus 1 – mish<sup>e</sup>pat***. ESV along and other translations seldom come close – occasionally “justice” is the best they can do. The translations “judgements” and “rules” are not even in the ballpark. See also in this paper ***Excursus 4 – David’s Use of mish<sup>e</sup>pat***.

<sup>193</sup> See Holladay, page 19; **TWOT** article 116, page 51



- **Righteousness:** from צְדָקָה - tz'daqah, "righteousness" is an adequate translation<sup>194</sup>

Faithfulness is frequently used in **hendiadys relationship** with *hesed* to encompass the whole **spectrum of God's nature**. *hesed* indicates God's unfailing commitment to a covenant relationship; **faithfulness** stresses that God will tend the relationship and do everything in his power to make it succeed. David says there is no bound to God's *hesed*; his faithfulness is similarly unbounded, "**to the clouds**".

**Righteousness is fundamental to God's being.** God is right in every aspect. There is no hint of sin, wrongdoing, or corruption in God. Righteousness is the **antithesis of human nature**: we are inherently sinful, deserving death.<sup>195</sup> **God requires Christians to replace sinful human nature with divine righteous nature.** Righteousness is inextricably linked to "holiness" – God is "holy", and he **requires Christians to be "holy"**<sup>196</sup> – this can only happen at the resurrection. There is nothing a human being can do to become "righteous". God provides **the gift of faith**<sup>197</sup> to those he calls, and this he counts as "righteousness" as a Christian grows until God can grant the gift of eternal life, "holiness", at the resurrection.<sup>198</sup> David acknowledges that God's righteousness is permanent, solid, reliable, "**like the mountains**".

In Psalms 29, 62, and 68, David identifies another important character attribute of God:

Ascribe to the LORD, O **[sons of God]**,<sup>199</sup> ascribe to the LORD glory and **strength**. (Psalm 29:1 ESV)

Once God has spoken; twice have I heard this:

that **power** belongs to God, and that to you, O Lord, belongs [*hesed*]. (Psalm 62:11-12a ESV)

Ascribe **power** to God, whose majesty is over **Israel**,

and whose **power** is **in the skies**.

Awesome is God from **his sanctuary**; (Psalm 68:34-35a ESV)

In the above quotations, "strength" and "power" are translated from צֶלַע - `oz; both "strength" and "power" are good translations.<sup>200</sup> The word, `oz, is used 45 times in Psalms – many times by David.

**God's power and strength are immediately obvious to his people**, "sons of God", "Israel", Christians.

God's power is manifested in the creation, "the skies"; God's power emanates from "**his sanctuary**" in eternity. **God uses his power only in *hesed***. In Psalm 59, David uses **`oz as an epithet for God**:

**O my Strength**, I will watch for you, for you, **O God**, are my fortress.

**O my Strength**, I will sing praises to you, for you, **O God**, are my fortress ... (Psalm 59:9, 17 ESV)

In Psalms 86 and 103, David recognizes five other character attributes of God:

For you, O Lord, are **good** and **forgiving**, abounding in [*hesed*] to all who call upon you.

But you, O Lord, are a God **merciful** and **gracious**,

**slow to anger** and abounding in [*hesed*] and faithfulness. (Psalm 86:5, 15 ESV)

The LORD is **merciful** and **gracious**, **slow to anger** and abounding in [*hesed*]. (Psalm 103:8 ESV)

Note that the wording in Psalms 86:15 and 103:8 is almost identical<sup>201</sup> – both allude to Exodus 34:6.

Exodus 33:17-22 and 34:1-9 are two of the most important scriptures regarding the nature of God. In

Psalm 86:5, "**good**" is translated from טוֹב - tov, which carries the same range of meaning as the

English word "good".<sup>202</sup> The word "**forgiving**" is translated from סָלַח - sallah. This is the only

occurrence of the word as an adjective. The verb form occurs 45 times with a meaning of "to pardon", "to forgive";<sup>203</sup> so, "forgiving" is a good translation of the adjective. The word "**merciful**" is translated

from רַחֻם - raḥum, an adjective derived from the verb רָחַם - raḥam, "to be merciful", "to be

<sup>194</sup> See Holladay, page 303; TWOT article 1879, page 752

<sup>195</sup> See Romans 3:23, 6:23

<sup>196</sup> See 1 Peter 1:15-16

<sup>197</sup> See for example 1 Timothy 1:13-14, 3:13, Hebrews 12:1-2, Galatians 5:22; see also the paper "**The Inner Workings of Faith**" on [www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca)

<sup>198</sup> See Romans 4:13-25, 5:1-5

<sup>199</sup> See **ESV** footnote – "sons of God" are "Christians", people God is preparing to become part of his family.

<sup>200</sup> See Holladay, page 269

<sup>201</sup> See also Psalm 145:8

<sup>202</sup> See Holladay, page 122

<sup>203</sup> See Holladay, page 256-257



compassionate”.<sup>204</sup> The word “**gracious**” is translated from חַנּוּן - ḥannun, an adjective derived from the verb חָנַן - ḥanan, “to be gracious”.<sup>205</sup> The phrase “**slow to anger**” is from the Hebrew idiom אֶרֶךְ אַפַּיִם - ‘erek ‘apayim, literally “long of nostrils” – this idiomatic expression is the standard way of expressing anger in Hebrew.

Not only was David very aware of God’s fundamental nature, but he was also very careful to identify the impact of God’s nature on himself as a converted individual and on Israel as his called-out people. For example, in Psalm 5 David acknowledges that it is only through **the grace of God** that he is able to stand before God, to worship:

**Give ear to my words**, O LORD; consider my groaning.  
Give attention to the sound of my cry, my King and my God, for **to you do I pray**.  
But I, **through the abundance of your [hesed]**, will **enter your house**.  
**I will bow down** toward your **holy temple** in the **fear** of you.  
**Lead me**, O LORD, in **your righteousness** because of my enemies;  
make **your way** straight before me. (Psalm 5:1-2, 7-8 ESV)

In his prayer, David acknowledges that it is a manifestation of the **hesed** of YHWH that he is able to come before him.<sup>206</sup> The location of the prayer must be **the tent containing the Ark of the Covenant, “your house”**. David worships, “**I will bow down**”, in deep respect of God, “**in the fear of you**”, and he prays for YHWH to **lead** him making clear “**your way**”, i.e., the path to properly follow God. David acknowledges danger from “**enemies**” and implores YHWH to show him how to deal with the situation according to “**your righteousness**”.

David enters the בַּיִת - bayith, “house”, but he “bows toward” the הֵיכָל - hekal, “temple”. If David is the author of the Psalm, the physical temple in Jerusalem does yet exist, so **David must be looking to the spiritual temple in eternity**:

The **LORD is in his holy temple**; the **LORD’s throne is in heaven**; (Psalm 11:4a ESV, see also Psalm 103:19)

David also uses the term *hekal* for the spiritual temple in eternity in Psalm 18:6, 27:4, 29:9, 65:4, and 138:2. In Psalm 68:29 David is looking forward to the temple that he has been promised his son will build – note the future tense of the verb “shall bear gifts”. In Psalm 144:12 *hekal* is used metaphorically for “daughters” being pillars of a “palace”.

David recognized that God’s dealings with him were predicated upon God’s **hesed**. He repeatedly asks God to deal with him according to **hesed**. For example:

For **the king** trusts in the LORD, and through the **[hesed]** of the Most High he shall not be moved. (Psalm 21:7 ESV)

Surely goodness and **[hesed]** shall follow me all the days of my life ... (Psalm 23:6a ESV)

For your **[hesed]** is before my eyes, and I walk in your faithfulness. (Psalm 26:3 ESV)

I will rejoice and be glad in your **[hesed]** ...

Make your face shine on your servant; save me in your **[hesed]**! (Psalm 31:7a, 16 ESV)

As for you, O LORD, you will not restrain your mercy from me;  
your **[hesed]** and your faithfulness will ever preserve me! (Psalm 40:11 ESV)

I trust in the **[hesed]** of God forever and ever. (Psalm 52:8b ESV)

O my Strength, I will watch for you, for you, O God, are my fortress.

My God in his **[hesed]** will meet me; God will let me look in triumph on my enemies. (Psalm 59:9-10 ESV)

Because your **[hesed]** is better than life, my lips will praise you. (Psalm 63:3 ESV)

For great is your **[hesed]** toward me; you have delivered my [life] from the depths of [the grave]. (Psalm 86:13 ESV)

<sup>204</sup> See Holladay, page 337; **TWOT** article 2146, page 841

<sup>205</sup> See Holladay, page 110; **TWOT** article 694, page 302

<sup>206</sup> See also Psalm 69:13, 16, 86:13

David was very aware of Israel's position as the **"treasured possession"**<sup>207</sup> of YHWH – the **"holy nation"**<sup>208</sup> through whom **God intended to bring true worship to the whole world.**<sup>209</sup> David forged the Kingdom of Israel out of extremely difficult circumstances. His desire was to set the nation in the right path to accomplish the purpose of YHWH. David recognized the need for YHWH's grace to accomplish this goal:

Yet you are holy, **enthroned on the praises of Israel.**

**In you our fathers trusted;** they trusted, and you delivered them.

To you they cried and were rescued; in you they trusted **and were not put to shame.**

**You who fear the LORD,** praise him!

All you offspring of Jacob, glorify him, and stand in awe of him, **all you offspring of Israel!**

**For he has not despised** or abhorred the affliction of **the afflicted,**

and he has not hidden his face from him, **but has heard,** when he cried to him. (Psalm 22:3-5, 23-24 ESV)

Indeed, **none who wait for you shall be put to shame** ...

Remember your **mercy,** O LORD, and your **[hesed],** for they have been from of old.

The **friendship of the LORD** is for those who **fear him,** and **he makes known to them his covenant.**

**Redeem Israel,** O God, out of all his troubles. (Psalm 25:3a, 6, 14, 22 ESV)

Indeed, **God was patient with the Israel.** He watched the entire **Exodus Generation** die in the desert so he could proceed with the **Wilderness Generation**<sup>210</sup> to conquer the land of Canaan. They were faithful for one generation, then the debacle of the **Judges Period** ensued. God saved the fledgling nation through **Samuel,** establishing the Schools of the Prophets to teach the people, where the Priests and Levites had failed, and establishing **David as king.** This was the **last chance for the Nation** to fulfill the role that God intended. David did everything he could to set the nation in the right direction, but he clearly recognized that **God was also working** within the nation **with certain individuals** with whom God had a special relationship. David uses two terms for these people:

- חַסִּיד - *hasid*, a masculine adjective, related to *hesed*, BDB defines *hasid* as "the active practice of *hesed*";<sup>211</sup> used of persons it is usually translated "saints" or "the godly".
- קָדוֹשׁ - *qadosh*, a masculine adjective, related to *qodesh*, "holiness", used of persons it is usually translated "saints" or "the godly".

David recognizes these individuals as the ones with whom God is working. God has revealed his nature through his Holy Spirit to this group. It is this group which David hopes will lead the nation to accomplish God's purpose. **This group has a clear analogy in True Christians today:**

But know that the LORD has set apart the **[hasid]** for himself ... (Psalm 4:3 ESV)

With the **[hasid]** you show yourself merciful (tith<sup>e</sup>hassad);

with the blameless (tamim) man you show yourself blameless (titammam);

with the purified (navar) you show yourself pure (tith<sup>e</sup>barar)<sup>212</sup> ... (Psalm 18:25-26a ESV)

Turn away from evil and do good; **so shall you dwell forever.**

For the LORD loves [mish<sup>e</sup>pat]; he will not forsake his **[hasid].**

They are **preserved forever** ... (Psalm 37:27-28 ESV)

All your works shall give thanks to you, O LORD, and all your **[hasid]** shall bless you!

They shall speak of the **glory of your kingdom** and tell of your power,

to **make known to the children of man** your mighty deeds, and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.

The LORD is **righteous** in all his ways and **[hasid]** in all his works.

The LORD is near to all **who call on him,** to all who call on him **in truth.**

He fulfills the desire of **those who fear him;** he also hears their cry and **saves them.**

(Psalm 145:10-12, 17-19 ESV)

As for the **[qadosh]** in the land, they are the excellent ones, **in whom is all my delight.** (Psalm 16:3 ESV)

Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him!

Oh, fear the LORD, you his **[qadosh],** for **those who fear him** have no lack! (Psalm 34:9 ESV)

<sup>207</sup> See Exodus 19:5

<sup>208</sup> See Exodus 19:6

<sup>209</sup> See Exodus 34:10

<sup>210</sup> See the Bible Study Notes "The Wilderness Generation" on [www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca)

<sup>211</sup> See BDB page 339, also Holladay page 111

<sup>212</sup> Note the extended wordplay in these lines – the point being that God reveals his nature to those he calls.

In order to accomplish God's purpose for human beings, we must come to an understanding of the nature of God. **The Christian life is all about becoming like God** – replacing human sinful nature with God's righteous nature. David understood the nature of God – his Psalms are some of the most valuable material we have to help us understand the nature of God.

## 5.2 The Human Condition

**Not only did David have clear conception of who God was**, his power, his fundamental nature, what his purpose was for Israel, and what his purpose was for called-out individuals, but **David also had a clear conception of where he stood before God**. David well understood the vast gulf that exists between we, sinning human beings, and the eternal divine Being, YHWH, who revealed himself to Israel and to David. YHWH later revealed himself as Jesus Christ, at which time he revealed the understanding of God the Father to True Christians. David also had been given some understanding of God the Father.<sup>213</sup>

In his Psalms, David exemplifies the words of Isaiah:

For thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy:  
**"I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit,**  
to revive the spirit of the lowly, and to revive the heart of the contrite. (Isaiah 57:15 ESV)

David uses three words to describe what it means to be **"of a contrite and lowly spirit"**:

- אָבְיוֹן - 'ev<sup>yon</sup>, an adjective, "needy", "poor"<sup>214</sup>
- נָאָו - 'anaw, a verb, frequently a participle, "one who understands himself go be low, humble"<sup>215</sup>
- אָנִי - 'ani, an adjective, "poor", "unfortunate", "wretched"<sup>216</sup>, ESV frequently uses "affliction" / "afflicted"

Be gracious to me, O LORD! See my [**'ani**] from those who hate me ...  
For the [**'ev<sup>yon</sup>**] shall not always be forgotten,  
and the hope of the [**'anaw**] shall not perish forever. (Psalm 9:13a, 18 ESV)

Good and upright is the LORD; therefore he instructs sinners in the way.  
He leads the [**'anaw**] in [mish<sup>pat</sup>], and teaches the [**'anaw**] his way.  
Turn to me and be gracious to me, for I am lonely and [**'ani**].  
The troubles of my heart are enlarged; bring me out of my distresses.  
Consider my [**'ani**] and my trouble, and forgive all my sins. (Psalm 25:8-9, 16-18 ESV)

But may all who seek you rejoice and be glad in you;  
may **those who love your salvation** say continually, "Great is the LORD!"  
As for me, I am [**'ani**] and [**'ev<sup>yon</sup>**], but the Lord takes thought for me.  
You are my help and my deliverer; do not delay, O my God! (Psalm 40:16-17 ESV see also Psalm 70:4-5)

But you, O GOD my Lord, deal on my behalf **for your name's sake**;  
because your [hesed] is good, deliver me!  
For I am [**'ani**] and [**'ev<sup>yon</sup>**], and my heart is stricken within me.  
I am gone like a shadow at evening; I am shaken off like a locust.  
My knees are weak through fasting; my body has become gaunt, with no fat. (Psalm 109:21-24 ESV)

David expresses his gratitude for the grace of YHWH:

**The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.** (Psalm 34:18 ESV)

But, how does one become be **"of a contrite and lowly spirit"**? It starts with the calling from God.<sup>217</sup>

When David was selected by YHWH, identified to Samuel, and anointed,<sup>218</sup> he received the indwelling of the Holy Spirit:

And **the Spirit of the LORD rushed upon David** from that day forward. (1 Samuel 16:13b ESV)

<sup>213</sup> See Psalm 110 where YHWH speaks on behalf of the God Family, i.e., representing God the Father. David alludes to the God Family in Psalms 8:5, 29:1, 86:8, and 138:1. Of course, all uses of אֱלֹהִים - 'elohim imply the God Family including God the Father.

<sup>214</sup> See Holladay page 2

<sup>215</sup> See Holladay page 278

<sup>216</sup> Ibid.

<sup>217</sup> See Romans 11:29, Ephesians 4:1, 2 Thessalonians 1:11, 2 Timothy 1:9, Hebrews 3:1, 2 Peter 1:10

<sup>218</sup> See 1 Samuel 16:11-13a

David had the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, as True Christians do today.<sup>219</sup> The key to maintaining a converted relationship with God is **repentance**. David was well aware of his status as sinner.<sup>220</sup> When Nathan confronted David over the Bathsheba/Uriah incident, he immediately repented,<sup>221</sup> and God accepted the repentance. This caused David to compose **Psalm 51**, which is universally recognized as the **classic expression of repentance**. This was NOT a one-time occurrence – **David repeatedly recognized his inherent sinfulness and consequent need for God's grace**:

For my life is spent with sorrow, and my years with sighing;  
**my strength fails because of my iniquity**, and my bones waste away. (Psalm 31:10 ESV)  
For **my iniquities have gone over my head**; like a heavy burden, they are too heavy for me.  
For I am ready to fall, and my pain is ever before me.  
**I confess my iniquity**; I am sorry for **my sin**. (Psalm 38:4, 17-18 ESV)  
O LORD, rebuke me not in your anger, nor discipline me in your wrath.  
**Be gracious to me, O LORD**, for I am languishing; (Psalm 6:1-2a ESV)  
As for me, I said, "**O LORD, be gracious to me**; heal me, for **I have sinned** against you!" (Psalm 41:4 ESV)  
**If a man does not repent**, God will whet his sword; he has bent and readied his bow;  
he has prepared for him his deadly weapons, making his arrows fiery shafts. (Psalm 7:12-13 ESV)  
Remember not **the sins of my youth or my transgressions**;  
**according to your [hesed]** remember me, **for the sake of your goodness**, O LORD! . (Psalm 25:7 ESV)  
Blessed is the one whose **transgression is forgiven**, whose **sin is covered**.  
Blessed is the man against whom **the LORD counts no iniquity**, and in whose spirit there is no deceit.  
For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long.  
For day and night your hand was heavy upon me;  
my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer. Selah  
**I acknowledged my sin** to you, and I did **not cover my iniquity**;  
I said, "I will confess **my transgressions** to the LORD," and **you forgave the iniquity of my sin**.  
(Psalm 32:1-5 ESV)  
And now, O Lord, for what do I wait?  
My hope is in you. **Deliver me from all my transgressions**. (Psalm 39:7-8a ESV)  
**Search me, O God, and know my heart!** Try me and know my thoughts!  
And see if there be any grievous way in me, and **lead me in the way everlasting!** (Psalm 139:23-24 ESV)

David recognized that he was NOT alone, that he was among other individuals with whom God was working, other **True Worshipers of YHWH**. David identified this group as the *hasid* and the *qadosh*. David frequently beseeched God on their behalf – **these prayers speak directly to Christians**:

Be exalted, O LORD, in your strength! **We** will sing and praise your power. (Psalm 21:13 ESV)  
Praise is due to you, O God, in Zion, and to you shall vows be performed.  
**O you who hear prayer**, to you shall all flesh come.  
When iniquities prevail against me, **you atone for our transgressions**.  
Blessed is **the one you choose** and bring near, to dwell in your courts!  
**We shall be satisfied** with the goodness of your house, the holiness of your temple!  
By awesome deeds **you answer us with righteousness**, O God of **our salvation** ... (Psalm 65:1-5a ESV)  
Let not **those who hope in you** be put to shame through me, O Lord GOD of hosts;  
let not **those who seek you** be brought to dishonor through me, O God of Israel. (Psalm 69:6 ESV)  
He does not deal with **us** according to **our** sins, nor repay **us** according to **our** iniquities.  
For as high as the heavens are above the earth, **so great is his [hesed] toward those who fear him**;  
as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove **our** transgressions from **us**.  
As a father shows compassion to his children, **so the LORD shows compassion to those who fear him**.  
For he knows **our** frame; he remembers that **we** are dust. (Psalm 103:10-14 ESV)

David specifically promised YHWH he would share with others the learning he had acquired from God – specifically with the *hasid* and the *qadosh*, but also with "the nations" / "the peoples": he would **"preach the gospel"**. This may, in fact, be what **motivated David to compose his Psalms**:  
Sing praises to the LORD, who sits enthroned in Zion! **Tell among the peoples** his deeds!  
(Psalm 9:11 ESV)

<sup>219</sup> See Mark 1:8, John 14:16-17, 26, Acts 1:5, 8, 2:4, 38, Romans 5:5, 1 Corinthians 6:19, Ephesians 1:13, 2 Timothy 1:14, Hebrews 6:4

<sup>220</sup> See Romans 3:23, 6:23

<sup>221</sup> See 2 Samuel 12:7-13

For this I will praise you, O LORD, **among the nations**, and sing to your name. (Psalm 18:49 ESV)  
I will give thanks to you, O LORD, **among the peoples**; I will sing praises to you **among the nations**.  
(Psalm 108:3 ESV)

Come, O children, listen to me; **I will teach you the fear of the LORD**. (Psalm 34:11 ESV)

**I will tell of your name** to my brothers; in the midst of the **congregation**<sup>222</sup> I will praise you:  
From you comes my praise in the great **congregation**; **my vows I will perform** before those who fear him.  
(Psalm 22:22, 25 ESV)

You have multiplied, O LORD my God, **your wondrous deeds** and **your thoughts** toward **us**;  
none can compare with you!

**I will proclaim and tell of them**, yet they are more than can be told.

In sacrifice and offering you have not delighted, but **you have given me an open ear**.

Burnt offering and sin offering you have not required.

Then I said, "Behold, I have come; in the scroll of the book it is written of me:

I delight to do your will, O my God; **your [torah] is within my heart**."

**I have told the glad news** of deliverance **in the great congregation**;

behold, **I have not restrained my lips**, as you know, O LORD.

I have not hidden your deliverance within my heart;

**I have spoken of your faithfulness and your salvation**;

I have not concealed **your [hesed]** and **your faithfulness** from **the great congregation**.

(Psalm 40:5-10 ESV)

With my mouth **I will give great thanks to the LORD**; I will praise him in the midst of the throng.

For **he stands at the right hand of the needy one**,

to save him from those who condemn his [life] to death. (Psalm 109:30-31 ESV)

**How precious to me are your thoughts**, O God! **How vast is the sum of them!**

If I would count them, they are more than the sand. (Psalm 139:17-18a ESV)

**I remember the days of old**;

**I meditate on all that you have done**; **I ponder the work of your hands**. (Psalm 143:5 ESV)

Repeatedly, David commits himself to have confidence in YHWH, to trust him; and he implores all True Worshipers to do the same:

**The LORD is my rock** and my fortress and **my deliverer**,

my God, my rock, **in whom I take refuge**, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.

**I call upon the LORD**, who is worthy to be praised, **and I am saved** from my enemies.

The [waves]<sup>223</sup> of death encompassed me; the torrents of destruction assailed me;

the cords of [the grave] entangled me; the snares of death confronted me.

**In my distress I called upon the LORD**; to my God I cried for help.

He sent from on high, he took me; **he drew me out of many waters**.

He rescued me from my strong enemy and from those who hated me,

for they were too mighty for me. (Psalm 18:2-6a, 16-17 ESV)

**The LORD is my shepherd**; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures.

He leads me beside still waters. **He restores my [life]**.

He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, **I will fear no evil**,

for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;

you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

**Surely goodness and [hesed] shall follow me all the days of my life**,

and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever. (Psalm 23:1-6 ESV)

**The LORD is my light** and my salvation; whom shall I fear?

**The LORD is the stronghold** of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

When evildoers assail me to eat up my flesh, my adversaries and foes, it is they who stumble and fall.

Though an army encamp against me, **my heart shall not fear**;

though war arise against me, yet **I will be confident**. (Psalm 27:1-3 ESV)

---

<sup>222</sup> The word "congregation" is translated from קָהָל - qahal. It generally means any kind of an assembly, but frequently it is used for a "religious gathering" – David uses it in this way in Psalm 22:22, 25, 35:18, 40:9, 10. In Psalm 26:12 and 68:26, David uses plural forms of the related word, מִקְהָל - maq'hel. See TWOT article 1991 page 789, BDB page 874. The synonymous word, עֵדָה - 'edah, is not used by David for a "religious gathering" – he uses it only of ad hoc assemblies: Psalm 7:7, 22:16, 68:30, and 86:14.

<sup>223</sup> See 2 Samuel 22:5, note the parallelism with "torrents"

**The LORD is a stronghold** for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble.  
 And **those who know your name put their trust in you**,  
 for you, O LORD, have not forsaken those who seek you. (Psalm 9:9-10 ESV)  
 May the LORD answer **you** in the day of trouble!  
 May the name of the God of Jacob protect **you**!  
 May he send **you** help from the sanctuary and give **you** support from Zion!  
 May he remember all **your** offerings and regard with favor **your** burnt sacrifices!  
 May he grant **you your** heart's desire and fulfill all **your** plans!  
 May **we** shout for joy over **your** salvation, and in the name of **our** God set up **our** banners!  
 May the LORD fulfill all **your** petitions! (Psalm 20:1-5 ESV)  
 Love the LORD, all you his [hasid]! **The LORD preserves the faithful ...**  
**Be strong, and let your heart take courage**, all you who wait for the LORD! (Psalm 31:23-24 ESV)

David was a soldier, a warrior. With his own hand he had killed many people. David was familiar with the rigors of training for war, with the heat of a battle, with the constant danger of death. But David recognized it was God who gave him the ability to be successful in battle:

For **by you I can run against a troop**, and by my God I can leap over a wall.  
 This God—his way is perfect; the word of the LORD proves true;  
**he is a shield for all those who take refuge in him.**  
 For who is God, but the LORD? And who is a rock, except our God?—  
 the **God who equipped me with strength** and made my way blameless.  
 He made my feet like the feet of a deer and set me secure on the heights.  
**He trains my hands for war**, so that my arms can bend a bow of bronze.  
**You have given me the shield of your salvation**,  
 and your right hand supported me, and your gentleness made me great.  
 You gave a wide place for my steps under me, and **my feet did not slip**.  
**I pursued my enemies** and overtook them, and did not turn back till they were consumed.  
**I thrust them through**, so that they were not able to rise; they fell under my feet. (Psalm 18:29-38 ESV)

The metaphor of God's protection being a shield goes back to the promises to Abraham:

After these things **the word of the LORD** came to Abram in a vision: "Fear not, Abram, **I am your shield**; your reward shall be very great." (Genesis 15:1 ESV)

The metaphor was picked up by Moses and expanded to include an offensive weapon, the sword:

Happy are you, O Israel! Who is like you, **a people saved by the LORD, the shield of your help, and the sword of your triumph**! (Deuteronomy 33:29 ESV)

The metaphor saw its full development under the apostle Paul:

Finally, **be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might**. Put on the **whole armor of God**, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the **whole armor of God**, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. Stand therefore, having fastened on the **belt of truth**, and having put on the **breastplate of righteousness**, and, as **shoes for your feet**, having put on the readiness given by **the gospel of peace**. In all circumstances take up the **shield of faith**, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; and take the **helmet of salvation**, and the **sword of the Spirit**, which is **the word of God** ... (Ephesians 6:10-17 ESV)

However, David recognized the metaphor and expanded it in anticipation of Paul:

Contend, O LORD, with those who contend with me; **fight against those who fight against me!**  
 Take hold of **shield** and **buckler** and rise for my help!  
 Draw the **spear** and **javelin** against my pursuers!  
 Say to my [life], "I am your salvation!" (Psalm 35:1-3 ESV)<sup>224</sup>

Jesus provides the ultimate expression of the metaphor in his endorsement of John the Baptist:<sup>225</sup>

**From the days of John the Baptist** until now **the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence**, and **the violent take it by force**. For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John ...  
 (Matthew 11:12-13 ESV)

<sup>224</sup> See also Psalm 3:3, 5:12, 7:10, 18:2, 28:7, 33:20, 59:11, and 144:2

<sup>225</sup> For a discussion of John the Baptist and his work, see the paper "John the Baptist – More Than a Prophet" on [www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca)



The Law and the Prophets were until John; since then the good news of the kingdom of God is preached, and everyone forces his way into it. (Luke 16:16)

This is one of many parables Jesus used about John the Baptist:<sup>226</sup>

- **The Parable of Violence and the Kingdom:** a simple statement with implied comparison
  - Point of comparison: John the Baptist's role
  - Known quantity: John's zeal for The Kingdom of God
  - Unknown quantity: violence required to attain the kingdom
  - Meaning: John's attitude of zeal is required of anyone aspiring to the gift of admission to the Kingdom of God<sup>227</sup>

David expresses his understanding of the necessity for this zeal through the metaphor of the armour of God protecting in battle:

Now I know that the LORD saves his anointed;<sup>228</sup>

he will answer him from his holy heaven with the saving might of his right hand.

Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God.

They collapse and fall, but we rise and stand upright. (Psalm 20:6-8 ESV)

But I call to God, and the LORD will save me.

Evening and morning and at noon I utter my complaint and moan, and he hears my voice.

He redeems my [life] in safety from the battle that I wage, for many are arrayed against me.

(Psalm 55:16-18 ESV)

Blessed be the LORD, my rock, who trains my hands for war, and my fingers for battle;

he is my [hesed] and my fortress, my stronghold and my deliverer,

my shield and he in whom I take refuge, who subdues peoples under me. (Psalm 144:1-2 ESV)

On the glorious splendor of your majesty, and on your wondrous works, I will meditate.

They shall speak of the might of your awesome deeds, and I will declare your greatness.

(Psalm 145:5-6 ESV)

The Christian life is a long-protracted battle, as Paul said "... we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places ...". We desperately require God's armour as we fight the battle to proclaim the gospel – we require David's prowess in war and John the Baptist's zeal for the work of God!

Remedying the "human condition", our sinful nature, is predicated on repentance – coming to God with recognition that indeed "we are poor and needy" and require his forgiveness and deliverance to stand before him. In God's grace he will grant forgiveness and allow us the privilege of walking in his way and participating in his work, as David said "I have spoken of your faithfulness and your salvation". Through the power of the Holy Spirit Christians can have absolute confidence in God and fight the battle to bring the gospel to the world.

### 5.3 The Plan of God

God is the Creator of the vast unfathomable universe – the enormity and complexity of which we, puny human beings, can only begin to understand.<sup>229</sup> God inhabits eternity.<sup>230</sup> The universe is simply an object in eternity that God can hold in the palm of his hand:

Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand and marked off the heavens with a span, enclosed the dust of the earth in a measure

and weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance?

Who has measured the Spirit of the LORD, or what man shows him his counsel?

Whom did he consult, and who made him understand?

<sup>226</sup> For a discussion of the parables, see the paper "John the Baptist – More Than a Prophet" on [www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca)

<sup>227</sup> There are many Old Testament passages which use the metaphor of violence for the spreading of the gospel: see, for example, Numbers 23:23-24, Isaiah 11:14-15, 26:4-6, Micah 5:8-9.

<sup>228</sup> David is referring to himself here as the "anointed" king of Israel; but, since Christian Baptism includes "anointing" into the Family of God (2 Corinthians 1:21, 1 John 2:20, 27), the passage can be applied to True Christians. The "anointed" may also be an allusion to the Messiah.

<sup>229</sup> See John 1:1-3, Genesis 1:1, Job 38:4-7

<sup>230</sup> See Isaiah 57:15, 33:5, 41:4, 26, 46:10, Jeremiah 23:24, 25:30, Zechariah 2:13, 2 Chronicles 30:27

**Who taught him** the path of [mish<sup>e</sup>pat],  
and taught him knowledge, and showed him the way of understanding? (Isaiah 40:12-14 ESV)

**Why did God do this?** What is the purpose of the universe? Why did God create man? God's plan of salvation answers these questions. David repeatedly explored these questions in his Psalms:

O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

**You have set your glory above the heavens.**

Out of the mouth of babies and infants,

you have established strength because of your foes, to still the enemy and the avenger.

When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers,

the moon and the stars, which you have set in place,

**what is man that you are mindful of him**, and the son of man that you care for him?

Yet you have made him a little lower than [ʿelohim]<sup>231</sup> and crowned him with glory and honor.

You have given him dominion over the works of your hands ... (Psalm 8:1-6a ESV)

**The heavens declare the glory of God**, and **the sky above proclaims his handiwork**.

Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge.

There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard.

**Their voice goes out through all the earth**, and their words to the end of the world. (Psalm 19:1-4 ESV)

David is clear on the universal nature of God's dominion – all the creation belongs to him, he is in control, and all things unfold according to his plan:

Our help is in the name of the LORD, **who made heaven and earth**. (Psalm 124:8 ESV)

**The earth is the LORD's** and the fullness thereof, **the world and those who dwell therein** ...  
(Psalm 24:1 ESV)

The LORD has established his throne in the heavens, and **his kingdom rules over all**.

**Bless the LORD, all his works, in all places of his dominion**. (Psalm 103:19, 22 ESV)

**Be exalted, O God, above the heavens! Let your glory be over all the earth!**

(Psalm 57:5 & 11 ESV see also Psalm 108:5)

**All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD**,

and all the families of the nations shall worship before you.

For **kingship belongs to the LORD**, and he rules over the nations.

All the prosperous of the earth eat and worship;

**before him shall bow all who go down to the dust**,

even the one who could not keep himself alive.

**Posterity shall serve him**; it shall be told of the Lord to the coming generation;

they shall come and proclaim his righteousness to a people yet unborn, that he has done it.

(Psalm 22:27-31 ESV)

**All the nations you have made shall come and worship before you, O Lord**, and shall glorify your name.  
(Psalm 86:9 ESV)

I cry out to God Most High, to **God who fulfills his purpose for me**. (Psalm 57:2 ESV see also Psalm 138:8)

All your works shall give thanks to you, O LORD, and **all your saints shall bless you!**

**They shall speak of the glory of your kingdom** and tell of your power,

to make known to the children of man your mighty deeds, and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.

**Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom**, and your dominion endures throughout all generations.

(Psalm 145:10-13 ESV)

**God's dominion over the nations of the world is absolute** – God is in control. Yet we find the current evil world under the sway of Satan – the god of this world.<sup>232</sup> Satan has been given a limited, temporary, dominion over the world.<sup>233</sup> When Satan tempted Jesus, he was able to offer Jesus the whole world because it was his to give. Jesus, of course, rejected Satan's offer and qualified to replace him.<sup>234</sup> At the Second Advent, Jesus will assume his Kingship and Satan will be put away.<sup>235</sup> This will **inaugurate the Kingdom of God** on the earth with the resurrected Saints being given the gift of eternal life and full entry into the Family of God.<sup>236</sup> David prophesized about this event:

---

<sup>231</sup> This is an allusion to members of the God Family, to which God is calling human beings to participate through conversion and the gift of eternal life at the resurrection.

<sup>232</sup> See 2 Corinthians 4:4, Revelation 12:9, John 12:31, 14:30, 1 John 5:19, Matthew 13:19

<sup>233</sup> See Genesis 3:15, Job 1:6-7, Ezekiel 28:12-16, John 8:44, 1 John 3:8

<sup>234</sup> See Matthew 4:1-11, Luke 4:1-13, John 12:31, 14:30

<sup>235</sup> See Revelation 19:11-16, 20:1-3

<sup>236</sup> See Mark 13:26-27, Matthew 24:30-31, Revelation 10:7, 11:4, 20:4-6

Lift up your heads, O gates!  
 And be lifted up, O ancient doors, **that the King of glory may come in.**  
**Who is this King of glory?**  
**The LORD, strong and mighty,** the LORD, mighty in battle!  
 Lift up your heads, O gates!  
 And lift them up, O ancient doors, **that the King of glory may come in.**  
**Who is this King of glory?**  
**The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory!** (Psalm 24:7-10 ESV)

The foundation of the Plan of God is **salvation for human beings**<sup>237</sup> – the gift of eternal life and entry into the Family of God.<sup>238</sup> This is the “better promise”<sup>239</sup> of the New Covenant.<sup>240</sup> Exploring this tremendous potential for human beings, David ponders:

O LORD, **what is man that you regard him,** or the son of man that you think of him?  
 Man is like a breath; **his days are like a passing shadow.** (Psalm 144:3-4 ESV)

**David recognized the contradiction between the human condition and God’s Plan of Salvation.** Many Psalms explore the concept of “**salvation**”. The Hebrew verb יָשַׁע - yasha` means “to save”, “to deliver”. Verb forms occur 56 times in the Psalms – David uses it frequently. The noun forms, יְשָׁע - yesha` (masculine, 21 occurrences in the Psalms), יְשׁוּעָה yeshu`ah (feminine, 45 occurrences in the Psalms), and תְּשׁוּעָה teshu`ah (feminine, 13 occurrences in Psalms) all mean “salvation”, “deliverance”. David uses all the noun forms frequently. The general meaning of “salvation” is captured by John Hartley:

... generally in the OT the word has **a strong religious meaning**, for it was Yahweh who wrought deliverance. Thus he is known as “**God of our salvation**”<sup>241</sup> ... In the NT the idea of salvation primarily means forgiveness of sin ... Although the OT begins to point in this direction, the majority of references to salvation speak of **Yahweh granting deliverance from real enemies** and real catastrophes.<sup>242</sup>

To David, YHWH’s salvation was very much a real day-to-day deliverance from very real enemies. In the previous section of this paper, we reviewed many references to David’s implicit trust in YHWH for protection and deliverance. Indeed, **David regarded this as “salvation”:**

O LORD, **how many are my foes!** Many are rising against me;  
**many are saying** of my [life], “**There is no salvation for him in God.**”  
**I will not be afraid of many** thousands of people **who have set themselves against me** all around.  
 Arise, O LORD! **Save me, O my God!**  
 For **you strike all my enemies** on the cheek; you break the teeth of the wicked.  
**Salvation belongs to the LORD** ... (Psalm 3:1-2, 6-8a ESV)  
 My times are in your hand; **rescue me from the hand of my enemies** and from my persecutors!  
 Make your face shine on your servant; **save me** in your [hesed]! (Psalm 31:15-16 ESV)  
 But I call to God, and **the LORD will save me.**  
 He redeems my [life] in safety **from the battle** that I wage,<sup>243</sup>  
 for **many are arrayed against me.** (Psalm 55:16, 18 ESV)  
**Deliver me** from my enemies, O my God; **protect me** from those who rise up against me;  
**deliver me** from those who work evil, and **save me** from bloodthirsty men. (Psalm 59:1-2 ESV)  
 O LORD, my Lord, **the strength of my salvation,** you have covered my head **in the day of battle.**  
 (Psalm 140:7 ESV)

David frequently uses the metaphor of the “lion” to represent his enemy, the physical foe from which he required salvation, for example:

He will send from heaven and **save me**; he will put to shame him who tramples on me.  
 God will send out this [hesed] and his faithfulness!  
**My [life] is in the midst of lions;** I lie down amid fiery beasts— the children of man,  
 whose teeth are spears and arrows, whose tongues are sharp swords. (Psalm 57:3-4 ESV)

<sup>237</sup> See John 3:16, 10:27-28, Romans 6:23, 1 Corinthians 15:50-55, 2 Peter 3:9

<sup>238</sup> See Romans 8:14-17, 20-23, Ephesians 3:14-15, Philippians 2:14-15, 1 John 3:1-3, 9-10

<sup>239</sup> See Hebrews 8:6, 11:13, 2 Timothy 1:1, 2 Peter 1:4, 1 John 2:25

<sup>240</sup> See Jeremiah 31:31-34, 32:38-41, Ezekiel 11:19-20, 36:25-27, Mark 14:24//Matthew 26:28//Luke 22:20, 1 Corinthians 11:25

<sup>241</sup> See Psalm 68:9 NKJV

<sup>242</sup> See TWOT article 929, page 414

<sup>243</sup> Although David was involved in many physical battles, this could also be taken as the spiritual battle that he and all True Worshipers face.

The title of this Psalm, “when he fled from Saul, in the cave” seems to apply to the situation in 1 Samuel 24:1-7 where David spared Saul’s life in the cave near Engedi. Rohl establishes that the name of Saul in the Amarna Letters, Labayu, means “**Great Lion of YHWH**”.<sup>244</sup> In the context of Psalm 57:4, Rohl also discusses an archeological find identifying an elite corps called the “lebaim” – the Hebrew word for “lions” in this verse.<sup>245</sup> This verse seems to be a clear allusion to **Saul’s elite troops**. This is the only time David uses this word, but other words for “lions” are certainly related to this metaphor.<sup>246</sup>

David’s understanding of “salvation” certainly extended beyond physical saving from enemies. David’s perception of salvation was similar to that of Christians today, where we pray for daily protection and deliverance from the evils of this world, and see that as a continuum with the Spiritual Salvation promised by God:

**Save me, O God!** For **the waters**<sup>247</sup> have come up to my neck.  
 I sink in **deep mire**, where there is no foothold;  
 I have come into **deep waters**, and **the flood** sweeps over me.  
 I am weary with my crying out; my throat is parched.  
 My eyes grow dim with **waiting for my God**. (Psalm 69:1-3 ESV)  
 For **without cause** they hid their net for me; **without cause** they dug a pit for my life.  
 Then my [being] will rejoice in the LORD, **exulting in his salvation**.  
 All my bones shall say, “O LORD, who is like you, **delivering the poor** from him who is too strong for him, **the poor and needy** from him who robs him?” (Psalm 35:7, 9-10 ESV)  
 For God alone my [being] waits in silence; **from him comes my salvation**.  
 He alone is **my rock and my salvation**, my fortress; **I shall not be greatly shaken**. (Psalm 62:1-2 ESV)

The allusion to YHWH as the “Rock” looks to Deuteronomy 32:4, 15, 18, 30, and 31. David picks up the metaphor in many Psalms.<sup>248</sup> The point of comparison in the metaphor is the solidness of a “rock” – this is brought out by the word “**shaken**”. It is from מוֹט - mot, it means to stagger, stumble. To be **NOT mot**, implies **spiritual stability**.<sup>249</sup>

David prays for salvation for **True Worshipers**, including himself as one who is “**poor and needy**”:

May **all who seek you** rejoice and be glad in you!  
 May **those who love your salvation** say evermore, “God is great!”  
 But **I am poor and needy**; hasten to me, O God!  
**You are my help and my deliverer**; O LORD, do not delay! (Psalm 70:4-5 ESV)  
 For **you save a humble people**, but the haughty eyes you bring down.  
 For it is you who light my lamp; **the LORD my God lightens my darkness**. (Psalm 18:27-28 ESV)  
**The LORD is my strength and my shield**; in him my heart trusts, and I am helped;  
 my heart exults, and with my song I give thanks to him.  
**The LORD is the strength of his people**; he is **the saving refuge** of his anointed.<sup>250</sup>  
 Oh, **save your people** and bless your heritage!  
**Be their shepherd** and carry them forever.<sup>251</sup> (Psalm 28:7-9 ESV)  
 When **the righteous cry** for help, **the LORD hears and delivers** them out of all their troubles.  
 The LORD is near to **the brokenhearted** and **saves the crushed in spirit**.  
 Many are **the afflictions of the righteous**, but **the LORD delivers** him out of them all.  
 (Psalm 34:17-19 ESV)  
 The **salvation of the righteous** is from the LORD; he is their stronghold in the time of trouble.  
**The LORD helps them and delivers them**;  
 he delivers them from the wicked **and saves them**, because they take refuge in him. (Psalm 37:39-40 ESV)

David clearly understood **the spiritual dimension of salvation**:

Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD? And **who shall stand in his holy place?**  
 He who has **clean hands** and a **pure heart**,

<sup>244</sup> See Rohl TT page 239, see also לֵבַי - leveh, BDB page 522, Holladay page 172

<sup>245</sup> See Rohl TT page 239-242

<sup>246</sup> See Psalms 7:2, 10:9, 17:12, 22:13, 21, 34:10, 35:17, and 58:6; 1 Peter 5:8

<sup>247</sup> The “waters” are a metaphor for the daily troubles of life.

<sup>248</sup> See Psalms 18:2, 31, 19:14, 28:1, 31:2, 3, 61:2, 62:2, 6, 7, and 144:1

<sup>249</sup> See 1 Corinthians 15:58, Psalms 13:4, 15:5, 16:8, 17:5, 21:7, 30:6, 38:16, 55:22, 62:2, 6, and 66:9

<sup>250</sup> David is referring to himself here as the “anointed” king of Israel; but, since Christian Baptism includes “anointing” into the Family of God (2 Corinthians 1:21, 1 John 2:20, 27), the passage can be applied to True Christians.

<sup>251</sup> This is a Messianic prophecy.

who does not lift up his [mind] to what is false and does not swear deceitfully.  
He will receive blessing from the LORD and righteousness from the God of his salvation.  
(Psalm 24:3-5 ESV)

Make me to know your ways, O LORD; teach me your paths.  
Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation;  
for you I wait all the day long. (Psalm 25:4-5 ESV)  
Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.  
Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me.  
Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit. (Psalm 51:10-12 ESV)  
But I am afflicted and in pain; let your salvation, O God, set me on high!  
I will praise the name of God with a song; I will magnify him with thanksgiving.  
This will please the LORD ... (Psalm 69:29-31a ESV)  
The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.  
He fulfills the desire of those who fear him; he also hears their cry and saves them.  
The LORD preserves all who love him ... (Psalm 145:18-20a ESV)

David understood that as human beings we are finite, perishable, consigned to death; yet he was promised a Descendant who would rule on his throne forever:

... I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom.  
He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men, but my [hesed] will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever. (2 Samuel 7:12-16 ESV)  
... I will raise up your offspring after you, one of your own sons, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for me, and I will establish his throne forever. I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. I will not take my [hesed] from him, as I took it from him who was before you, but I will confirm him in my house and in my kingdom forever, and his throne shall be established forever.  
(1 Chronicles 17:11-14 ESV)

Clearly there is duality in this promise – it applies to David’s son Solomon and David’s physical dynasty; but only an eternal being can occupy a throne “established forever”. The New Testament authors make abundantly clear the fulfillment in Jesus of the promise to David:

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David<sup>252</sup> ... (Matthew 1:1 ESV)  
And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”  
(Luke 1:31-33 ESV)  
Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne, he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ ... (Acts 2:29-31a ESV)  
... he raised up David to be their king, of whom he testified and said, ‘I have found in David the son of Jesse a man after my heart, who will do all my will.’ Of this man’s offspring God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus, as he promised. (Acts 13:22-23 ESV)  
... the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord ... (Romans 1:1b-4 ESV)  
Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David, as preached in my gospel ...  
(2 Timothy 2:8 ESV)

Pondering on this promise, David recognized that there had to be a way for human beings to attain to eternal life:

Great salvation he brings to his king, and shows [hesed] to his anointed,  
to David and his offspring forever. (Psalm 18:50 ESV)

---

<sup>252</sup> Both Matthew and Luke explicitly state the given genealogies are of Joseph, Jesus’ legal father (Matthew 1:16, Luke 3:23). The purpose of the genealogies is to demonstrate unbroken descent from David (Jeremiah 33:17-22), and, hence, the transference of the promise of unbroken descent to the Messiah, Jesus Christ – see *Excursus 3 – The Genealogies of Christ*

O LORD, in your strength the king rejoices, and **in your salvation how greatly he exults!**  
He asked life of you; you gave it to him, **length of days forever and ever.**  
His glory is great **through your salvation**; splendor and majesty you bestow on him.  
For **you make him most blessed forever**; you make him glad **with the joy of your presence.**  
For **the king trusts in the LORD**, and through the [hesed] of the Most High **he shall not be moved.**<sup>253</sup>  
(Psalm 21:1, 4-7 ESV)

But I am like a green olive tree **in the house of God.**<sup>254</sup>  
I trust in the [hesed] of God **forever and ever.**  
**I will thank you forever**, because you have done it.  
I will wait for your name, for it is good, **in the presence of the godly.** (Psalm 52:8-9 ESV)  
**Let me dwell in your tent forever!** Let me take refuge under the shelter of your wings!  
**For you, O God, have heard my vows**; you have given me the heritage of those who fear your name.  
**Prolong the life of the king**; may his years endure **to all generations!**  
**May he be enthroned forever before God;**<sup>255</sup> appoint [hesed] and faithfulness to watch over him!  
**So will I ever** sing praises to your name, as I **perform my vows** day after day. (Psalm 61:4-8 ESV)  
Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts!  
And see if there be any grievous way in me, and **lead me in the way everlasting!** (Psalm 139:23-24 ESV)  
I will extol you, **my God and King**, and bless your name **forever and ever.**  
Every day I will bless you and **praise your name forever and ever.** (Psalm 145:1-2 ESV)

David understood that **God exists in “eternity”**<sup>256</sup> – his throne is in “heaven”, his “holy habitation”:

O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!  
**You have set your glory above the heavens.** (Psalm 8:1 ESV)  
The LORD is in his holy temple; **the LORD’s throne is in heaven**; (Psalm 11:4a ESV)  
Now I know that the LORD saves his anointed;<sup>257</sup>  
**he will answer him from his holy heaven** with the saving might of his right hand. (Psalm 20:6 ESV)  
**God looks down from heaven** on the children of man  
to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God. (Psalm 53:2 ESV)  
**He will send from heaven and save me;**  
**Be exalted, O God, above the heavens!** Let your glory be over all the earth! (Psalm 57:3a, 5 ESV)  
Father of the fatherless and protector of widows is **God in his holy habitation.**  
... **who rides in the heavens**, the ancient heavens ... Awesome is **God from his sanctuary** ...  
(Psalm 68:5, 33a, 35a ESV)  
For **as high as the heavens are above the earth**,  
so great is his [hesed] toward those who fear him;  
**The LORD has established his throne in the heavens**, and his kingdom rules over all.  
(Psalm 103:11, 19 ESV)  
**For your [hesed] is great above the heavens**; your faithfulness reaches to the clouds.  
**Be exalted, O God, above the heavens!** Let your glory be over all the earth! (Psalm 108:4-5 ESV)

In order for human beings to inhabit eternity with God, David understood there had to be a **transformation from our perishable physical state to an eternal state.**<sup>258</sup> Clearly the full understanding of the resurrection was NOT made available until the First Advent as recorded in the New Testament; nevertheless, as with Job,<sup>259</sup> David explored the concept of the resurrection:

Consider and answer me, O LORD my God; light up my eyes, **lest I sleep the sleep of death** ...  
(Psalm 13:3 ESV)  
For **you will not abandon my [life] to [the grave]**, or let your holy one see corruption.<sup>260</sup>  
(Psalm 16:10 ESV)

---

<sup>253</sup> “moved” is from מוֹט - mot, it means to stagger, stumble. To be NOT mot, implies spiritual stability. See 1 Corinthians 15:58, Psalms 13:4, 15:5, 16:8, 17:5, 21:7, 30:6, 38:16, 55:22, 62:2, 6, and 66:9

<sup>254</sup> “house” here implies “dynasty” or “family”.

<sup>255</sup> This alludes to the promise of Messianic Descent.

<sup>256</sup> See Isaiah 57:15

<sup>257</sup> David is referring to himself here as the “anointed” king of Israel; but, since Christian Baptism includes “anointing” into the Family of God (2 Corinthians 1:21, 1 John 2:20, 27), the passage can be applied to True Christians. The “anointed” may also be an allusion to the Messiah.

<sup>258</sup> See 1 Corinthians 15:50-55, 1 Thessalonians 4:14-17, John 3:3-8

<sup>259</sup> See Job 14:1-15, 19:23-27

<sup>260</sup> Luke records Paul’s applying this to the resurrection of Jesus (Acts 13:35).



As for me, **I shall behold your face** in righteousness; **when I awake**, I shall be satisfied with your likeness.<sup>261</sup> (Psalm 17:15 ESV)

I believe that I shall look upon the goodness of the LORD **in the land of the living!** (Psalm 27:13 ESV)

O LORD, **you have brought up my [life] from [the grave];**

**you restored me to life** from among those who go down to the pit. (Psalm 30:3 ESV)

Our God is a God of salvation, and **to GOD**, the Lord, **belong deliverances from death**. (Psalm 68:20 ESV)

For great is your [hesed] toward me; **you have delivered my [life] from the depths of [the grave]**. (Psalm 86:13 ESV)

Bless the LORD ... who **redeems your life from the pit** ... (Psalm 103:2a, 4a ESV)

**Understanding the Plan of God starts with a recognition of God as the Creator of the universe.** David inquired as to why had God created the universe. This led to the observation of the omnipresence of God – the universal dominion of God. David’s understanding of the Kingdom of God implies there must be a means of salvation or human beings. God’s salvation is a continuum including physical protection and deliverance in this life leading to spiritual salvation. David was promised that a physical descendant of his would inherit his throne forever – David understood that this requires eternal life. Eternal life is not possible for physical beings, so David explored and came to an understanding of the concept of the resurrection. **All True Christians need to travel this journey of understanding with David** – this is fundamental to being granted the gift of eternal life at the first resurrection.

## 5.4 The Enemies of God

But as for **these enemies of mine**, who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and **slaughter them before me**. (Luke 19:27 ESV)

We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, who is and who was,  
for **you have taken your great power and begun to reign**.

The nations raged, but **your wrath came**, and the time for the dead to be judged,  
and for rewarding your servants, the prophets and saints,  
and those who fear your name, both small and great,  
and **for destroying the destroyers of the earth**. (Revelation 11:17-18 ESV)

Clearly Jesus Christ, the soon coming King of kings, considers a class of people to be his enemies. He makes no bones about it – they will be mercilessly slaughtered at the Second Advent. **David provides clear insight into the characteristics, nature, and identity of these enemies of God:**

**The fool says in his heart, “There is no God.”**

They are **corrupt**, they do **abominable deeds**; there is none who does good.

The LORD looks down from heaven on the children of man,  
to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God.

They have all **turned aside**; together they have **become corrupt**;  
there is **none who does good**, not even one.<sup>262</sup>

**Have they no knowledge**, all **the evildoers** who eat up my people as they eat bread  
and **do not call upon the LORD?** (Psalm 14:1-4 ESV see also Psalm 53:1-4)

**They speak against you** with malicious intent; **your enemies take your name in vain**. (Psalm 139:20 ESV)

For there is **no truth** in their mouth; their **inmost self is destruction**;  
their throat is an **open grave**; they **flatter** with their tongue. (Psalm 5:9 ESV)

Behold, the wicked man **conceives evil** and is **pregnant with mischief** and gives **birth to lies**.  
He **makes a pit**, digging it out ... (Psalm 7:14-15a ESV)

Save, O LORD, for the godly one is gone; for the faithful have vanished from among the children of man.

**Everyone utters lies** to his neighbor; with **flattering lips** and a **double heart** they speak.

May the LORD cut off all flattering lips, the tongue that **makes great boasts**,

those who say, “With our tongue **we will prevail**, our lips are with us; **who is master over us?**”

You, O LORD, will keep them; you will guard us from **this generation** forever.

**On every side the wicked prowl**, as **vileness is exalted among the children of man**.  
(Psalm 12:1-4, 7-8 ESV)

... **the wicked** ... the **workers of evil**, who **speak peace** with their neighbors **while evil is in their hearts**.

... **they do not regard** the works of the LORD or the work of his hands ... (Psalm 28:3, 5a ESV)

---

<sup>261</sup> See 1 John 3:2

<sup>262</sup> This is the state of Western Civilization today: Matthew 24:37-38 // Luke 17:26-27, Genesis 6:5

No, **in your hearts you devise wrongs**; your hands **deal out violence** on earth.  
**The wicked** are estranged from the womb; they go astray from birth, **speaking lies**.  
 They have venom **like the venom of a serpent** ... (Psalm 58:2-4a ESV)

Hide me from **the secret plots of the wicked**, from the throng of evildoers,  
 who **whet their tongues** like swords, who **aim bitter words** like arrows,  
**shooting from ambush** at the blameless, shooting at him suddenly and **without fear**.  
 They hold fast to their **evil purpose**; they talk of **laying snares secretly**, thinking, “Who can see them?”  
 They **search out injustice**, saying, “We have accomplished a diligent search.”  
 For **the inward mind and heart of a man are deep**. (Psalm 64:2-6 ESV)

Deliver me, O LORD, from **evil men**; preserve me from **violent men**,  
**who plan evil** things in their heart **and stir up wars** continually.  
 They make **their tongue** sharp as a serpent’s, and under their lips is **the venom of asps**.  
**The arrogant** have **hidden a trap** for me, and with cords they have **spread a net**;  
 beside the way they have **set snares** for me. (Psalm 140:1-3, 5 ESV)

David’s analysis of the wicked is a perfect description of the **thought leaders of Western Civilization** today<sup>263</sup> – they are surely among the “**destroyers of the earth**”. David vividly depicts their fate:

**God shall arise, his enemies shall be scattered**; and **those who hate him** shall flee before him!  
 As smoke is driven away, so you shall drive them away; as wax melts before fire,  
 so **the wicked shall perish before God**! (Psalm 68:1-2 ESV)

**Your hand will find out all your enemies**; your right hand will find out **those who hate you**.  
 You will make them as a blazing oven **when you appear**.  
 The LORD will swallow them up in **his wrath**, and fire **will consume them**.  
**You will destroy** their **descendants** from the earth,  
 and their **offspring** from among the children of man.<sup>264</sup>  
 Though they plan evil against you, though they devise mischief, **they will not succeed**.  
 For **you will put them to flight**; you will aim at their faces with your bows. (Psalm 21:8-12 ESV)

For you are not a God who delights in wickedness; **evil may not dwell with you**.  
**The boastful** shall not stand before your eyes; **you hate all evildoers**.  
**You destroy** those who speak lies; the LORD abhors **the bloodthirsty and deceitful man**.  
 Make them bear their guilt, O God; let them **fall by their own counsels**;  
 because of the **abundance of their transgressions** cast them out, for **they have rebelled against you**.  
 (Psalm 5:4-6, 10 ESV)

You have rebuked the nations; **you have made the wicked perish**;  
 you have blotted out their name forever and ever.  
**The enemy came to an end in everlasting ruins**;  
 their cities you rooted out; the very memory of them has perished.  
 The nations have **sunk in the pit that they made**;  
**in the net that they hid**, their own foot has been caught.  
**The LORD has made himself known**; he has executed [mish\*pat];  
**the wicked are snared** in the work of their own hands.  
**The wicked shall return to [the grave]**,<sup>265</sup> all the nations that forget God. (Psalm 9:5-6, 15-17 ESV)

**Give to them according to their work** and according to **the evil of their deeds**;  
 give to them according to the work of their hands; render them **their due reward**.  
 Because they do not regard the works of the LORD or the work of his hands,  
 he will **tear them down** and **build them up no more**. (Psalm 28:4-5 ESV)

But **the wicked will perish**; **the enemies of the LORD** are like the glory of the pastures;  
**they vanish**—like smoke they vanish away. (Psalm 37:20 ESV)

The purpose of the destruction of the wicked at the Second Advent is because they are incorrigible in their current state. When the Kingdom of God is established, the only human beings left will be workable – as they are revealed the gospel, they will be given the opportunity to repent. The incorrigible have already set their minds against God. They will come up in the second resurrection<sup>266</sup> if

<sup>263</sup> And the politicians that implement their vile ideas ...

<sup>264</sup> This does not preclude God’s mercy (Exodus 20:5-6, Deuteronomy 5:9-10); “descendants” / “offspring” could be taken as a metaphor for “followers” (Revelation 14:9-11, Daniel 26b-27).

<sup>265</sup> This is ultimately the “second death” (Revelation 20:6, 14-15).

<sup>266</sup> See Revelation 20:5a, 11-12

they have NOT already committed the unpardonable sin, in which case they will be in the “third resurrection” – the lake of fire.<sup>267</sup>

## Excursus 1 – The Habiru

The genealogy of Abraham is given in Genesis 10, 11, and 1 Chronicles 1 as follows:

**The name “Hebrews” is derived from “Eber”:** עֶבֶר - `ever; plural עֶבְרִים - `iv<sup>e</sup>rim; construct (genitive) עֶבְרִי - `iv<sup>e</sup>ri. The general consensus is that the `apiru, Habiru, of the Amarna Letters are `iv<sup>e</sup>ri.<sup>268</sup> From the genealogy, it is clear that Abraham represents only a very small part of the heritage that are legitimately “Hebrews”. From Peleg to Terah we have no information on sons other than the given direct line to Abraham. We also have no information on the many sons of Joktan – presumably there are many branches of “Hebrews” about which we know nothing, until some of them show up as “Habiru” in Canaan.

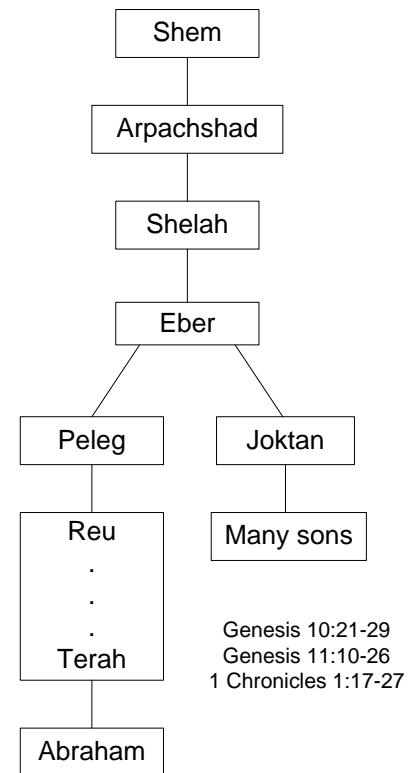
In the Amarna Letters we find Habiru mercenaries selling their services to the Philistines, the Arameans, and the Israelites. The most detailed information we have on a **Habiru mercenary band** is David and his men when they sold their services to King Achish of Gath.

The term “Hebrews” is most often used by foreigners when referring to “Israelites” – to them Israelites were indistinguishable from other “Hebrews”. The first occurrence is Genesis 14:13 where in the context of the Battle of the Kings, Abram is called a “Hebrew”. Then in Genesis 39:14 and 17 Potiphar’s wife calls Joseph a “Hebrew”. In Genesis 40:15, talking to an Egyptian, Joseph identifies his homeland as the “land of the Hebrews”. Later in Genesis 41:12, the Chief Cupbearer refers to Joseph as a “young Hebrew”. When Joseph is entertaining his brothers, the narrator comments, in Genesis 43:32, that “Egyptians could not eat with the Hebrews”. **At the time of all these references there was no such thing as an “Israelite”.**

In Exodus 1:15-22, the term “Hebrews” is applied four times<sup>269</sup> to the enslaved descendants of Jacob. In Exodus 2:6-7 baby Moses is called “one of the Hebrews’ children” and Miriam offers to obtain a nurse “from the Hebrew women”. In Exodus 2:11 and 13 the narrator calls the people “Hebrews”. In Exodus 3:18 in the message Moses is to deliver to Pharaoh, **YHWH calls himself “the God of the Hebrews”.** Moses delivers the message in Exodus 7:16, 9:1, 13, and 10:3. All of these references are concerning descendants of Jacob before the nation of Israel was constituted. The descendants of Jacob are identified as being part of the larger ethnic group known as “Hebrews”. YHWH identifies himself as being the “God” of this ethnic group.

In Exodus 21:2, in the Covenant Code, after the people had agreed to the Sinai Covenant, God makes special provisions for **“Hebrew” slaves**. The provisions are reiterated in Deuteronomy 15:12. The provision is referenced in Jeremiah 34:9 and 14.

In 1 Samuel 4:6 and 9, at the Battle of Ebenezer, the Philistines twice call the Israelites “Hebrews”. When Saul recaptures Gaba / Gibeah in 1 Samuel 13:2-7, the term “Hebrews” occurs twice: in verse 3, **Saul makes a proclamation for the “Hebrews” to join him**; then in verse 7 some of the “Hebrews” desert him. **The “Hebrews” are clearly distinct from the “Israelites”.** Verse 3 is an invitation for the



<sup>267</sup> See Revelation 20:13-15

<sup>268</sup> See Moran page 392-393, Rohl TT pages 231-234, BDB page 720

<sup>269</sup> Only three times in Hebrew, an instance in verse 22 is supplied by context. See ESV footnote.

“Hebrews” to join Israel. In verse 6, the “Israelites” have hidden in caves; while in verse 7, the “Hebrews” desert across the Jordan.

In 1 Samuel 13:19, the narrator quotes the Philistines referring to the Israelites as “Hebrews”. In 1 Samuel 14:11, the Philistines call Jonathan and his armour bearer “Hebrews”. The reference in 1 Samuel 14:21 has already been discussed under the [Battle of Michmash](#). In 1 Samuel 29:3 David and his men as mercenaries in the employ of King Achish are called “Hebrews” by the Philistines. The last use of “Hebrew” is in Jonah 1:9, where Jonah refers to himself as a “Hebrew” in discussion with the ship’s crew.

The Philistines were of Indo-European ethnic descent. They and the Egyptians generally considered Semitic Asiatics to be “Hebrews”. The “Israelites” were part of this general ethnic group.

## Excursus 2 – The Amalekites

**Amalek was the son of Eliphaz the son of Esau – so a second cousin of Jacob’s twelve sons.**<sup>270</sup> In Genesis 14:7, the term is used anachronistically to identify an area later occupied by the Amalekites. If Amalek was born prior to 1700BC, there is at least 250 years between his birth and the Exodus. **By the time of the Exodus, the Amalekites were a significant power in Canaan** – they were found in the Negeb, the valleys, and hill country.<sup>271</sup> Just before the Israelites got to Mount Sinai, when they were in the area of Horeb,<sup>272</sup> a contingent of Amalekites attacked them at Rephidim, and were defeated by Joshua.<sup>273</sup> This resulted in YHWH declaring perpetual war on Amalek.<sup>274</sup> When the Israelites attempted to go into Canaan without God’s blessing, they were defeated by a coalition of Canaanites and Amalekites.<sup>275</sup> After the forty years in the desert, when the Israelites were in the Plains of Moab and Bil’e’am (Balaam) tried to curse Israel, in his final discourse, Bil’e’am pronounces **Amalek** to be **“the first among the nations.”**<sup>276</sup>

There is no mention of the Amalekites during the conquest, but they reappear during the period of the Judges as oppressors of Israel. They were allied with Moab and Ammon during the days of Ehud.<sup>277</sup> During the time of Gideon they were allied with Midianites.<sup>278</sup>

In the time of Saul and David there are two identifiable groups of Amalekites: in the hill country to the west of the territory of Ephraim<sup>279</sup> and in the extreme south of the Negeb.<sup>280</sup> The northern Amalekites appear to have been found as far north as the Carmel area, the Valley of Jezreel.<sup>281</sup> Saul was primarily concerned with the Amalekites near Carmel because he wanted to get control of the Jezreel Valley to link his territory with the territory of the Northern Tribes near the Sea of Galilee:

**When Saul had taken the kingship over Israel, he fought against all his enemies** on every side, against Moab, against the Ammonites, against Edom, against the kings of Zobah, and against the Philistines.

**Wherever he turned he routed them.** And he did valiantly and **struck the Amalekites** and delivered Israel out of the hands of those who plundered them. (1 Samuel 14:47-48 ESV)

This general summary is elaborated with further details:

And Samuel said to Saul, ... **Thus says the LORD of hosts,** ‘I have noted what Amalek did to Israel in opposing them on the way when they came up out of Egypt. Now **go and strike Amalek and devote to destruction all that they have. Do not spare them, but kill both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.**’ ... Then **Saul said to the Kenites,**<sup>282</sup> “Go, depart; go down from among the Amalekites,

<sup>270</sup> See Genesis 36:9-12, 1 Chronicles 1:35-36

<sup>271</sup> See Numbers 13:29, 14:25, 45

<sup>272</sup> See Exodus 17:6

<sup>273</sup> See Exodus 17:8-13

<sup>274</sup> See Exodus 17:14-16, Deuteronomy 25:17-19

<sup>275</sup> See Numbers 14:39-45

<sup>276</sup> See Numbers 24:20

<sup>277</sup> See Judges 3:12-15

<sup>278</sup> See Judges 6:3, 33, 7:12

<sup>279</sup> See Judges 12:15

<sup>280</sup> See 1 Samuel 15:7

<sup>281</sup> See 2 Samuel 1:6-8, 13

<sup>282</sup> The “Kenites” were an ancient tribe (Genesis 15:19, Numbers 24:21). They were ethnically related to the Midianites of Jethro/Reuel, Moses’ father-in-law (Numbers 10:29, Judges 4:11). They were generally friends of Israel.

lest I destroy you with them. For you showed kindness to all the people of Israel when they came up out of Egypt.” So the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites. (1 Samuel 15:1-6 ESV)

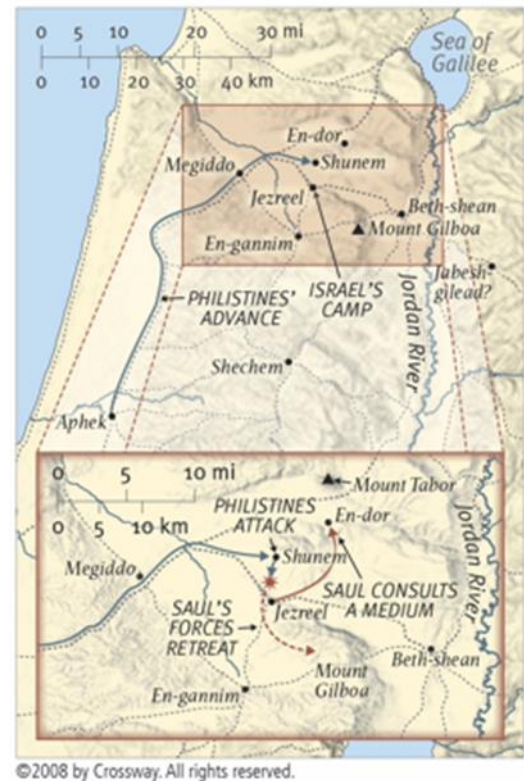
There were Kenites in the general area of Mount Carmel<sup>283</sup> as well as in the south – near both groups of Amalekites. Saul appears to have fought with both groups of Amalekites:

And Saul came to the city of Amalek and lay in wait in the valley. ... Saul came to Carmel, and behold, he set up a monument for himself and turned and passed on and went down to Gilgal.” ... And Saul defeated the Amalekites from Havilah as far as Shur,<sup>284</sup> which is east of Egypt. (1 Samuel 15:5, 12, 7 ESV)

The “city of Amalek” is in the “Carmel” area.<sup>285</sup> Saul’s setting up a “monument” indicated his suzerainty over the conquered Amalekites. The area “from Havilah as far as Shur” is the general area of the southern nomadic Amalekite groups.

**The stage is set for the Battle of Mount Gilboa.**<sup>286</sup> Saul’s objective is to gain control of the Jezreel Valley from the Philistines and Canaanites. Saul’s forces are located near Jezreel. The Philistines are on the opposite side of the Valley with a significant chariot force. Saul retreats up Mount Gilboa to neutralize the chariots, trusting his vassal Amalekites to guard his rear at En-gannim. The Amalekites prove treacherous and allow the Philistine archers to advance up the southern slopes of Mount Gilboa in range of Saul and his sons:

Now the Philistines were fighting against Israel, and the men of Israel fled before the Philistines and fell slain on Mount Gilboa. And the Philistines overtook Saul and his sons, and the Philistines struck down Jonathan and Abinadab and Malchi-shua, the sons of Saul. The battle pressed hard against Saul, and the archers found him, and he was badly wounded by the archers. (1 Samuel 31:1-3 ESV)



The **topography of Mount Gilboa** is shown in Figures 1, 2, and 3 in the [Appendix](#). Note the north face looking into the Jezreel Valley is precipitous – easily defended. This was Saul’s position – the Philistines were in the valley. The southern approach to the mountain is gradual, easily ascended. The little town of En-gannim (Gina) is strategically located to protect the southern approach.

When David was sent back Ziklag by the Philistines prior to the Battle of Mount Gilboa, he found that a group of southern Amalekites had sacked Ziklag. He found them and destroyed them.<sup>287</sup> After the battle when David is made king in Hebron, an Amalekite from the north, not knowing David’s respect for Saul, tries to curry favour with David:

And the young man who told him said, “By chance I happened to be on Mount Gilboa, and there was Saul leaning on his spear, and behold, the chariots and the horsemen were close upon him. And when he looked behind him, he saw me, and called to me. And I answered, ‘Here I am.’ And he said to me, ‘Who are you?’ I answered him, ‘I am an Amalekite.’ And he said to me, ‘Stand beside me and kill me, for anguish has seized me, and yet my life still lingers.’ So I stood beside him and killed him, because I was sure that he could not live after he had fallen. (2 Samuel 1:6-10 ESV)

David’s reaction was immediate:

David said to him, “How is it you were not afraid to put out your hand to destroy the LORD’s anointed?” Then David called one of the young men and said, “Go, execute him.” And he struck him down so that he died. (2 Samuel 1:14-15 ESV)

<sup>283</sup> See Judges 4:17, 5:24

<sup>284</sup> See the discussion of the locations of “Havilah” and “Shur” in Fritz pages 280-289

<sup>285</sup> See “Ginti-kirimil” in EA288, EA289, and EA290, Moran pages 330-334

<sup>286</sup> See Rohl EE pages 311-319

<sup>287</sup> See 1 Samuel 30:1-20



David further subdued the Amalekites in battle.<sup>288</sup> After which there are only two further references to them – in Psalm 83 they are listed as part of a coalition against Israel<sup>289</sup> and in the time of Hezekiah a group of Simeonites defeated a remnant of Amalekites.<sup>290</sup>

### Excursus 3 – The Genealogies of Christ

There is no consensus on how to reconcile the genealogies of Christ given by Matthew and Luke.<sup>291</sup> Matthew traces the genealogy only from Abraham, while Luke goes to Noah and from him to Adam. From Abraham to David, both genealogies are similar. After David, Matthew goes through Solomon and the kings of Israel to Jeconiah, Shealtiel, and Zerubbabel. Luke starts with David's son Nathan<sup>292</sup> and goes through twenty-one unknown names to Neri, Shealtiel, and Zerubbabel. After Zerubbabel, Matthew lists nine unknown names until Joseph; while Luke lists nineteen unknown names until Joseph. Proposed solutions involve levirate marriages and use of personal names. The possibility that Luke is actually giving Mary's descent is a very ancient tradition, but both synoptists clearly state that "Jospheh", Jesus legal father, is the object of the genealogy. Since Luke contains significantly more names than Matthew, it is possible he is giving actual father-son relationships. Matthew clearly follows the practice of skipping generations.

The point of both genealogies is to demonstrate a continuous unbroken line of descent from David to Jesus to fulfill the promises and the prophecies:

... **I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.** I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son.

... **And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.** (2 Samuel 7:13-16 ESV)

You have said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen one; **I have sworn to David my servant:**

**'I will establish your offspring forever, and build your throne for all generations.'**"

My [hesed] I will keep for him forever, and my covenant will stand firm for him.

**I will establish his offspring forever and his throne as the days of the heavens.** (Psalm 89:3-4, 28-29 ESV)

**The LORD swore to David a sure oath from which he will not turn back:**

"One of the sons of your body I will set on your throne.

If your sons keep my covenant and my testimonies that I shall teach them,

their sons also **forever shall sit on your throne.**" (Psalm 132:11-12 ESV)

For thus says the LORD: **David shall never lack a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel** ... The word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: "Thus says the LORD: If you can break my covenant with the day and my covenant with the night, so that day and night will not come at their appointed time, then also my covenant with David my servant may be broken, so that he shall not have a son to reign on his throne ..." (Jeremiah 33:17-21a ESV)

The New Testament authors make clear the Davidic Covenant's fulfillment in Jesus:

The book of the genealogy of **Jesus Christ, the son of David**<sup>293</sup> ... (Matthew 1:1 ESV)

And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and **you shall call his name Jesus.** He will be great and will be called **the Son of the Most High.** And **the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David,** and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end. (Luke 1:31-33 ESV)

Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch **David** that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. **Being therefore a prophet,** and knowing that **God had sworn with an oath** to him **that he would set one of his descendants on his throne,** he foresaw and spoke about the **resurrection of the Christ** ... (Acts 2:29-31a ESV)

... he raised up **David** to be their king, of whom he testified and said, 'I have found in **David** the son of Jesse a man after my heart, who will do all my will.' **Of this man's offspring God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus, as he promised.** (Acts 13:22-23 ESV)

---

<sup>288</sup> See 2 Samuel 8:12, 1 Chronicles 18:11

<sup>289</sup> See Psalm 83:7 this may have been during the time of Jehoshaphat (2 Chronicles 20:1-27)

<sup>290</sup> See 1 Chronicles 4:41-43

<sup>291</sup> See Matthew 1:1-17, Luke 3:23-38, Robertson page 259-262, IDB 2 page 365-366

<sup>292</sup> Note that both Solomon and Nathan were sons of Bathsheba (1 Chronicles 3:5, 2 Samuel 5:14, 11:3)

<sup>293</sup> Both Matthew and Luke explicitly state the given genealogies are of Joseph, Jesus' legal father (Matthew 1:6, Luke 3:23). The purpose of the genealogies is to demonstrate unbroken descent from David (Jeremiah 33:17-22), and, hence, the transference of the promise of unbroken descent to the Messiah, Jesus Christ.



... the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord ... (Romans 1:1b-4 ESV)

Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David, as preached in my gospel ... (2 Timothy 2:8 ESV)

From the above quotations, it is possible that Mary did have Davidic bloodlines, but if Elizabeth was her sister or other blood relative, she also had Aaronic bloodlines:

In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, of the division of Abijah. And he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. ... And Mary said to the angel ... And the angel answered her ... And behold, your relative Elizabeth ... (Luke 1:5, 34-36 ESV)

Jesus was physically a “normal” baby: he got DNA from his mother, “Mary”; but, since his conception was a miracle through the power of the Holy Spirit, his “male” DNA was created. The “male” DNA was “Davidic” – possibly identical to the DNA of his legal father, “Josph”.

Through the genealogies Christ’s role as King, a descendant of David, was confirmed. Through the bloodlines of Mary, Jesus’ mother, his role as High Priest was confirmed. Matthew, writing to Jews, was only interested in descent from Abraham. Luke, writing for Greeks, emphasizes the universal nature of Jesus’ descent.

## Excursus 4 – David’s Use of *mish<sup>e</sup>pat*

David uses the singular, *mish<sup>e</sup>pat*, 13 times and the plural, *mish<sup>e</sup>patim*, 4 times:<sup>294</sup>

Make me to know your ways, O LORD; teach me your paths.  
Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all the day long.  
Remember your mercy, O LORD, and your [hesed], for they have been from of old.  
Remember not the sins of my youth or my transgressions;  
according to your [hesed] remember me, for the sake of your goodness, O LORD!  
Good and upright is the LORD; therefore he instructs sinners in the way.  
He leads the humble in [mish<sup>e</sup>pat], and teaches the humble his way.  
All the paths of the LORD are [hesed] and faithfulness,  
for those who keep his covenant and his testimonies. (Psalm 25:4-10 ESV)

This is the clearest representation of the most important meaning of *mish<sup>e</sup>pat*. David is praying that God will direct him in godly character development. The line with *mish<sup>e</sup>pat* is the climax of the prayer: “He leads the humble in mish<sup>e</sup>pat, and teaches the humble his way” – humility is fundamental to accept God’s teaching. Only True Worshipers of God, “the humble”, can assimilate “his way”, which is in parallel with “*mish<sup>e</sup>pat*”. God’s nature, his character, what he wants True Worshipers to be like is summed up in “*mish<sup>e</sup>pat*”.

The [torah] of the LORD is perfect, reviving the [mind];  
the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple;  
the precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart;  
the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes;  
the fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever;  
the [mish<sup>e</sup>patim] of the LORD are true, and righteous altogether.  
More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold;  
sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb.

Moreover, by them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward. (Psalm 19:7-11 ESV)

This assessment of David makes the same point from a different perspective. David uses the plural, *mish<sup>e</sup>patim*, which carries the sense of the “wisdom”, “discerning”, and “understanding” which can only be acquired by living by the Way of God. David lists three words which encompass the details of God’s teaching: מִצְוָה - mitz<sup>e</sup>wah, “commandment”, this is explicitly the ten commandments; עֲדוּת - `eduth, “testimony”, this is occasionally used synonymously with mitz<sup>e</sup>wah, but it also carries amore

<sup>294</sup> Psalm 122 is a *l<sup>e</sup>dwid* Psalm which contains *mish<sup>e</sup>pat*, but verse 5 seems to clearly indicate that this is a Psalm which written when the Davidic dynasty was well established; hence, David could NOT be the author.

general meaning, like torah; and, פִּקּוּדִים - piqqudim, “precepts”, this is a rare word used only one other time by David:

But [hesed] of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear him, and his righteousness to children’s children, to those who keep his covenant and remember to do his [piqqudim]. (Psalm 103:17-18 ESV)

In these verses, David is clearly addressing True Worshipers – imploring them to remember “*piqqudim*”. The author of Psalm 119 uses *piqqudim* twenty-one times in contexts where it is more or less synonymous with *hoq* and *huqqah*, statutes, the specific prescriptions and proscriptions given by God from which we are to deduce general principals. All of these words are details of the torah, the words of life, God’s instruction on how to become “godly”. David then comes back to the attitude of the True Worshiper: “fear of the LORD”. Again, all of this climaxes in “mish<sup>e</sup>patim” – the nature of God, which he requires True Worshipers to acquire, can only be acquired by living by the Way of God. Indeed, “*mish<sup>e</sup>patim*” is “more to be desired ... than gold”.

David reiterates:

Your [hesed], O LORD, extends to the heavens, your faithfulness to the clouds.  
Your righteousness is like the mountains of God; your [mish<sup>e</sup>patim], are like the great deep;  
man and beast you save, O LORD. (Psalm 36:5-6 ESV)

David is clear that mish<sup>e</sup>pat is an attribute of character that God requires him to attain:

Hear a just cause, O LORD; attend to my cry! Give ear to my prayer from lips free of deceit!  
From your presence let my [mish<sup>e</sup>pat] come! Let your eyes behold the right! (Psalm 17:1-2 ESV)

For I have kept the ways of the LORD, and have not wickedly departed from my God.  
For all his [mish<sup>e</sup>patim] were before me, and his statutes I did not put away from me.  
I was blameless before him, and I kept myself from my guilt. (Psalm 18:21-23 ESV)

Awake and rouse yourself for my [mish<sup>e</sup>pat], for my cause, my God and my Lord!  
Vindicate me, O LORD, my God, according to your righteousness, and let them not rejoice over me!  
(Psalm 35:23-24 ESV)

David made a commitment to God to teach God’s way, to proclaim the gospel – integral to that is *mish<sup>e</sup>pat*:

I will sing of [hesed] and [mish<sup>e</sup>pat]; to you, O LORD, I will make music.  
I will ponder the way that is blameless. Oh when will you come to me?  
I will walk with integrity of heart within my house; (Psalm 101:1-2 ESV)

Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him, and he will act.  
He will bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your [mish<sup>e</sup>pat] as the noonday.  
Turn away from evil and do good; so shall you dwell forever.  
For the LORD loves [mish<sup>e</sup>pat]; he will not forsake his saints.  
They are preserved forever, but the children of the wicked shall be cut off.

The righteous shall inherit the [earth] and dwell upon it forever.  
The mouth of the righteous utters wisdom, and his tongue speaks [mish<sup>e</sup>pat].  
The [torah] of his God is in his heart; his steps do not slip. (Psalm 37:5-6, 27-31 ESV)

The LORD works righteousness and [mish<sup>e</sup>patim] for all who are oppressed.  
He made known his ways to Moses, his acts to the people of Israel.  
The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in [hesed].  
He will not always chide, nor will he keep his anger forever. (Psalm 103:6-9 ESV)

I know that the LORD will maintain the cause of the afflicted, and will execute [mish<sup>e</sup>pat] for the needy.  
Surely the righteous shall give thanks to your name; the upright shall dwell in your presence.  
(Psalm 140:12-13 ESV)

David was aware of the “deciding”, “discerning”, “making a decision” aspect of *mish<sup>e</sup>pat*, as it applied to himself as an individual, but also in relation to God’s Plan, and God’s assessment of the nations:

Hear my prayer, O LORD; give ear to my pleas for mercy!  
In your faithfulness answer me, in your righteousness!  
Enter not into [mish<sup>e</sup>pat] with your servant, for no one living is righteous before you.  
(Psalm 143:1-2 ESV)

Arise, O LORD, in your anger; lift yourself up against the fury of my enemies;  
awake for me; you have appointed [mish<sup>e</sup>pat].  
Let the assembly of the peoples be gathered about you; over it return on high.

**The LORD judges the peoples;** judge me, O LORD,  
according to my righteousness and according to the integrity that is in me. (Psalm 7:6-8 ESV)  
For **you have maintained** my [claim of] **[mish\*pat]**;  
you have sat on the throne, giving righteous judgement.  
But **the LORD sits enthroned forever; he has established his throne for [mish\*pat]**,  
and he judges the world with righteousness; he judges the peoples with uprightness.  
The nations have sunk in the pit that they made; in the net that they hid, their own foot has been caught.  
**The LORD has made himself known; he has executed [mish\*pat]**;  
the wicked are snared in the work of their own hands. (Psalm 9:4, 7-8, 15-16 ESV)

## Excursus 5 – Notes on the Davidic Psalms

Some thirty-six of the *lʿdwid* Psalms<sup>295</sup> contain the word מִזְמוֹר - mizemor, “psalm” in the superscription. The root verb of mizemor is זָמַר - zamar, which in the piel stem means “sing”, “make music”.<sup>296</sup> Some thirty-nine of the *lʿdwid* Psalms contain the phrase לְמִנְצֵחַ - lamnatztzeah, “to the one directing”.<sup>297</sup> Other phrases in the superscriptions which are clearly **musical directions** include:

- בִּנְיָנוֹת - bineginoth, “with stringed instruments”<sup>298</sup>
- עֲלֵ-נִגִּינָת - ‘al neginath, “together with stringed instruments”<sup>299</sup>
- אֶל-הַנְּחִילוֹת - ‘el hannehiloth, “to the flutes”<sup>300</sup>

The following seem to be directions related to how to **perform or accompany** the Psalm:

- עֲלֵ-הַשְּׁמִינִית - ‘al hashshenith, “according to the Sheminith”<sup>301</sup>
- עֲלֵ-הַגִּיטִית - ‘al haggittith, “according to the Gittith”<sup>302</sup>
- עֲלֵמוֹת לִבָּן - ‘al emuth labben, “according to Muth-labben”<sup>303</sup>
- עֲלֵ-אַיֶּלֶת הַשַּׁחַר - ‘al ‘ayelet hashshaḥar, “according to Doe of the Dawn”<sup>304</sup>
- עֲלֵ-מַחֲלָת - ‘al maḥalath, “according to Mahalath”<sup>305</sup>
- עֲלֵ-יוֹנָת אֵלֶם רְחוֹקִים - ‘al yonath ‘elem reḥoqim, “according to Dove of silence far ones”<sup>306</sup>
- עֲלֵ-שׁוּשַׁן עֲדוּת - ‘al shushan ‘eduth, “according to Shushan Eduth”<sup>307</sup>
- עֲלֵ-שׁוֹשָׁנִים - ‘al shoshannim, “according to lilies”<sup>308</sup>
- אֶל-תִּשְׁחָת - ‘al tasheth, “according to Do Not Destroy”<sup>309</sup>

Two more terms which are used on several Psalms requires further discussion:

- מַשְׁכִּיל - masakil, is derived from the root verb שָׁכַל - sakal, “to be wise”, “to understand”. “Some have considered a *maskil* to be a didactic poem which causes consideration or gives insight.”<sup>310</sup>
- מִכְתָּם miketam, the supposed root is כָּתַם - KTM. “if it comes from a root ‘to cover’ (Akkadian *katāmu*), miktan could mean ‘song of covering’ or ‘atonement’”.<sup>311</sup>

<sup>295</sup> Psalms 3,4,5,6,8,9,12,13,15,19,20,21,22,23,24,29,30,31,38,39,40,41,51,62,63,64,65,68,101,108,109,110,139,140,141,143

<sup>296</sup> See **TWOT** article 558 page 245

<sup>297</sup> Psalms 4,5,6,8,9,11,12,13,14,18,19,20,21,22,31,36,39,40,41,51,52,53,54,55,56,57,58,59,60,61,62,64,65,68,69,70,109,139,140

<sup>298</sup> Psalms 4,6,54,55

<sup>299</sup> Psalm 61

<sup>300</sup> Psalm 5

<sup>301</sup> Psalm 6,12

<sup>302</sup> Psalm 8, possibly related to the city of Gath or the “wine press”, both spelled גַּת - gath; see **BDB** pages 387-388, **TWOT** article 841 page 361.

<sup>303</sup> Psalm 9

<sup>304</sup> Psalm 22

<sup>305</sup> Psalm 53

<sup>306</sup> Psalm 56

<sup>307</sup> Psalm 60 the NIV translates this as “Lily of the Covenant”

<sup>308</sup> Psalm 69

<sup>309</sup> Psalm 57,58,59

<sup>310</sup> **TWOT** article 2263 page 877; Psalms 32,52,53,54,55,142

<sup>311</sup> **TWOT** article 1056 page 459; Psalms 16,56,57,58,59,60

There is no way to know when or by whom the superscriptions were written. Some or all of them could have been provided by David. Some or all of them could have been added much later. In addition to the musical directions, other superscriptions seem to relate to the content or the purpose of the Psalm. We deal with these on a case-by-case basis in what follows. Of particular interest are the fourteen Psalms which contain references to an events in David's life.<sup>312</sup>

Many of David's Psalms follow a typical pattern: a **main theme** is introduced; some **instruction** is provided related to the main theme; a **contrast** to the main theme is provided; and, finally there is a **summation** related to the main theme. The longer Psalms and the very short ones generally do NOT use this pattern. Where the pattern is used, it is referred to as the "**typical pattern**". In reading the following comments, reference should be made to the Appendix, "**Thematic Analysis of Davidic Psalms**".

**Psalm 3: typical pattern**; main theme – salvation, deliverance "you, YHWH are a shield about me" (vs 3-7a); contrast – foes, enemies "how many are my foes" (vs 1-2, 7b); instruction – "I will not be afraid" (v 6a); summation (v 8); **superscription**: "when he fled from Absalom his son", see 2 Samuel 15:14-17

**Psalm 4: typical pattern**; main theme – living God's way "put your trust in YHWH" (vs 1, 3, 4b, 5b, 6b-7); contrast – the way of man "how long will you love vain words" (vs2, 6a); instruction – "be angry and do not sin ... offer right sacrifices" (vs 4a, 5a); summation (v 8)

**Psalm 5: typical pattern**; main theme – retributive justice "you hate all evil doers" (vs 4-6, 9-10); contrast – the nature of God "the abundance of your *hesed*" (vs 7-8); instruction – "take refuge, rejoice" (v 11); summation (v 12)

**Psalm 6: typical pattern**; main theme – the human condition "rebuke me not in your anger" (vs 1-7); contrast – the fate of the wicked "depart from me ... workers of evil" (8a, 10); instruction – "the LORD has heard" (vs 8b-9); summation (v 10)

**Psalm 7: typical pattern**; main theme – the only way out of the human condition is to trust in God "YHWH my God, in you do I take refuge" (vs 1, 3-4, 6b-8, 9b-13); contrast – the wicked "save me from all my pursuers" (vs 2, 5-6a, 9a, 14-16); instruction – "God is a righteous judge" (v 11); summation (v 17); **superscription**: "shiggaion" only occurs elsewhere in Habakkuk 3:1 as "according to Siggionoth" – Holladay simply says it is an "obscure superscription".<sup>313</sup> It appears to be directions related to how to perform or accompany the Psalm. The superscription adds "which he sang to the LORD concerning the words of Cush, a Benjaminite" – we have no record in our extant documents of this incident.

**Psalm 8: typical pattern**; main theme – the majesty of God compared to man "what is man that you are mindful of him" (vs 1b-2, 4-6); contrast – general revelation "I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers" (vs 3, 7-8); instruction – "You have given him dominion over the works of your hands" (v 6); summation (vs 1a, 9)

**Psalm 9**: In the Septuagint, Psalms 9 and 10 are combined into a single Psalm.<sup>314</sup> Arguments can be adduced both for and against this arrangement. Psalm 9 is a defective acrostic – some letters are missing; some, are out of order. Psalm 9 follows an alternating pattern of **praise toward God** and **punishment of enemies**: praise in verses 1-2, 4, 7-14, 18; punishment in verses 3, 5-6, 15-17, 19-20. David addresses his personal enemies, verse 3; the nations arrayed against God, verses 5-6, 15, 17, 19-20; and the "wicked", verse 5, 16-17. David praises God on his own behalf, verses 1-2, 4, 13-14; and on behalf of "True Worshipers", "those who know your name", verses 9-12, 18.

**Psalm 11**: this Psalm contrasts the **nature of God** (vs 4, 7) and **trusting in God** (vs 1, 3, 5a) with the **nature of the wicked** (v 2) and commensurate **retributive justice** (vs 5b, 6).

<sup>312</sup> Psalms 3,7,18,30,34,51,52,54,56,57,59,60,63,142

<sup>313</sup> Holladay page 361

<sup>314</sup> See **NETS** pages 550-552, [www.esv.org](http://www.esv.org) Psalm 9 "Notes"

**Psalm 12:** this Psalm is a veritable **prophecy of world conditions today**: David bemoans the disappearance of the “godly”, the “faithful” (v 1);<sup>315</sup> wickedness is ubiquitous (v 2-4, 8); but God will act on behalf of the “poor” and the “needy”, i.e., True Worshipers (v 1, 5-7).<sup>316</sup>

**Psalm 13:** This is prayer of David which can be **taken up daily by all True Worshiper** – David pleads for deliverance from the conditions of this life (vs 1-2); David prays for deliverance from “the enemy”, who would bring us all to eternal death (vs 3-4);<sup>317</sup> finally, he thanks God for the promised salvation (vs 5-6).

**Psalm 14:** This Psalm is a **contrast between the “wicked”** (vs 1, 3-5a) and **the “righteous”** (vs 5b-6); it is debatable whether verse 2 implies God is searching for those he can call; or, it is simply a lament that there are not any “who seek after God”; verse 7 is a prophecy of the second exodus, which would suggest the former meaning for verse 2; Psalm 14 is repeated almost verbatim in Psalm 53 – see also comments there.

**Psalm 15:** this Psalm lists **attributes of a True Worshiper** (v 2-5); verse 1 is a metaphor for “salvation”, “eternal life” – David has installed the Ark of the Covenant in a tent on Mount Zion;<sup>318</sup> he uses God’s presence via the Ark to indicate “holiness”, and asks who can dwell with God in his holiness?<sup>319</sup>

**Psalm 16:** this is the first “*mik<sup>e</sup>tam*” of David, so the theme may be expected to relate to “covering”, “atonement”; the thought flow of the Psalm is difficult: David starts by beseeching God for preservation (vs 1-2), then **he contrasts his delight for the “saints” with his abhorrence for the “wicked”** (vs 3-4), David then praises God for his beneficence and direction (vs 5-9, 11),<sup>320</sup> David expresses confidence in a “resurrection” in verse 10.<sup>321</sup>

**Psalm 17:** the **superscription** calls this Psalm a תְּפִלָּה - t<sup>e</sup>phillah, a prayer;<sup>322</sup> **typical pattern**; main theme – David’s relationship with YHWH “my steps have held fast to your paths” (vs 1-8); contrast – actions of the wicked “the wicked who do me violence” (vs 9-14a); instruction – “O Savior of those who seek refuge” (v 7), summation “when I awake” – clearly alluding to the resurrection (vs 14b-15).<sup>323</sup> Psalm 27 contains very similar content as Psalm 17. Psalm 27:13 is also an allusion to the resurrection.

**Psalm 18:** this Psalm is paralleled in 2 Samuel 22:2-51, just before David’s last words in 2 Samuel 23:1-7; thus, it is a summary of David’s life – his struggles with Saul and many other enemies, as the **superscription** states. The superscription does NOT include *miz<sup>e</sup>mor*, “A Psalm”, although it is supplied in the ESV. The superscription indicates that it is a שִׁיר - shirah, a song.<sup>324</sup> Although this is a fairly long Psalm, it generally follows the **typical pattern**: main theme – trusting in God for deliverance “**YHWH is my rock**” (vs 2-5, 16-19, 28-48); there are two contrasts – living God’s way “I have kept the ways of YHWH” (vs 20-27) and God’s historical dealings with his people “YHWH also thundered in the heavens” (vs 7-15); the instruction – is that “his way is perfect, the word of YHWH proves true” (v 30a); the summation reiterates that it is a song which David intends for instruction of the nations looking to salvation and eternity (vs 49-50). Note the reference to the “temple” in verse 6, is to the actual “temple” of God in eternity.<sup>325</sup> This Psalm is the classic definition of “**The Rock**”, YHWH, Jesus Christ, the Messiah, “**the horn of my salvation**” (v 2).<sup>326</sup>

<sup>315</sup> See 1 Kings 19:10, Isaiah 57:1, Micah 7:2

<sup>316</sup> See Mark 13:20, Matthew 24:22, Psalm 29:11, Revelation 19:11-16

<sup>317</sup> “shaken” is from מָוַל - mot, it means to stagger, stumble. To be “mot”, implies spiritual instability – falling away from God’s grace. See 1 Corinthians 15:58, Psalms 13:4, 15:5, 16:8, 17:5, 21:7, 30:6, 38:16, 55:22, 62:2, 6, and 66:9

<sup>318</sup> See 1 Chronicles 15:1-15, 16:1-6

<sup>319</sup> See Psalm 13:4 for comment on “moved”

<sup>320</sup> For a discussion of “shaken” in verse 8, see the footnote in the discussion of Psalm 13:4

<sup>321</sup> Luke records Paul’s applying this verse to the resurrection of Jesus (Acts 13:35).

<sup>322</sup> See also Psalms 86, 142

<sup>323</sup> See **ESV** footnote

<sup>324</sup> The masculine form שִׁיר - shir is used in superscriptions of Psalms 30,65,68,108,122,124,131,133

<sup>325</sup> See also Psalms 27:4, 28:2

<sup>326</sup> See Deuteronomy 32:4,15,18,30,31, 1 Corinthians 10:4 – two words are used for “rock”: סֶלַע - sela`, and צוּר - tzur; sela` is also used for Jesus Christ in Psalms 18:3, 31:3, 42:9, 71:3, 141:6 (see **ESV** footnote); NOT Messianic: Psalms 40:2, 78:16, 104:18, 137:9; tzur is also used for

**Psalm 19:** This Psalm is the classic expression of General Revelation<sup>327</sup> (vs 1-6) and Special Revelation<sup>328</sup> (vs 7-11). David ends with a prayer that he is able to heed God's revelation (vs 12-14) and that his teaching is acceptable to YHWH, "my rock and my redeemer". "Redeemer" is from גָּאֵל - ga'al, it looks to the First Advent, when YHWH commits himself as Jesus Christ to provide redemption to sinners.<sup>329</sup>

**Psalm 20: typical pattern;** main theme – a prayer on behalf of True Worshipers "may YHWH fulfill all your petitions" (vs 1-5); contrast – human trust in might of arms "some trust in chariots" (vs 7-8); instruction – "I know that YHWH saves his anointed"<sup>330</sup> (v 6); summation (v 9)

**Psalm 21: typical pattern;** main theme – a prayer of thanks for the beneficence of God "you have given him his heart's desire" (vs 1-6); contrast – retributive justice "your hand will find out all your enemies" (vs 8-12); instruction – "through the *hesed* of the Most High" (v 7);<sup>331</sup> summation (v 13)

**Psalm 22:** this is a very important Psalm because of the New Testament quotations linking it to the life and death of Christ.<sup>332</sup> The prophetic nature of the Psalm is undeniable. David is clearly in a state of despair in verses 1-2, but quickly consoles himself with "holiness" of God and his dealings with the Patriarchs in verses 3-5. In verses 6-8 David again laments his current condition but finds encouragement through God's dealings with him (vs 9-11). Verses 12-18 are strongly prophetic but may also allude to David's suffering under the pursuit of Saul. In verses 19-21, David prays for deliverance with a direct allusion to the "Lion Man", Labayu, Saul. In verses 22-26, David resolves his consternation by a commitment to do the work of God, promising "I will tell of your name ...".<sup>333</sup> David closes with clear prophetic vision in verse 27-31, looking to the World Tomorrow when "all the families of the nations shall worship before you".

**Psalm 23:** This is perhaps the most famous Psalm of David. In verse 1-4 David extolls the care of the Good Shepherd, YHWH, Jesus Christ, the soon returning King of kings.<sup>334</sup> Then David extolls the beneficence of God in verse 5-6a; ending, in verse 6b, with confidence in the promise of the New Covenant – eternal life in the Family of God.<sup>335</sup>

**Psalm 24:** this Psalm is about the dominion of God over the creation (vs 1-2). Verse 3-6 are very similar to Psalm 15 – they use the metaphor of the presence of the Ark representing God's holiness with which True Worshipers aspire to "stand". Verses 7-10 appear to be a direct allusion to opening the gates of City of Jerusalem for the procession of the Ark to enter,<sup>336</sup> as well as a prophecy of the Second Advent.

**Psalm 25:** In this Psalm David prays opening up his innermost being – "To you YHWH, I lift up my *nephesh*"<sup>337</sup> (v 1). It seems to be later in life – "Remember not the sins of my youth ... " (v 7). David looks back on a troubled life (vs 2, 15-19) and implores repentance from sinful human nature (vs 7a, 8b, 11, 18b). David implores YHWH for direction in living – "Make me to know your ways ... " (vs 4-5); and, provides one of the most important descriptions of the objective of the "Christian" life (vs 4-15). David

---

Jesus Christ in Psalms 18:3,31,46, 19:14, 28:1, 31:2, 61:2, 62:2,6,7, 71:3, 78:35, 89:26, 92:15, 94:22, 95:1, 144:1; NOT Messianic: Psalms 27:5, 78:15,20, 73:26, 78:15,20, 81:16, 105:41, 114:8

<sup>327</sup> See also Psalms 8:1-4, 65:6-13

<sup>328</sup> Psalm 119 uses Psalm 19:7-11 as a pattern to extoll Special Revelation

<sup>329</sup> See Psalm 78:35, 103:4, Job 19:25, Isaiah 41:14, 43:14, 44:6, 24, 47:4, 48:17, 49:7,26, 54:5,8, 59:20, 60:16, 63:16, Luke 21:28, Romans 3:24, 8:23, 1 Corinthians 1:30, Ephesians 1:7, 4:30, Colossians 1:14, Hebrews 9:12.

See also the Bible Study Notes, "The Redeemer 'goel' in the OT Points to Christ" on [www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca)

<sup>330</sup> David is referring to himself here as the "anointed" king of Israel; but, since Christian Baptism includes "anointing" into the Family of God (2 Corinthians 1:21, 1 John 2:20, 27), the passage can be applied to True Christians. The "anointed" may also be an allusion to the Messiah.

<sup>331</sup> See Psalm 13:4 for comment on "moved"

<sup>332</sup> Hebrews 2:12 quotes Psalm 22:22 applying it to the mission of Jesus. The gospel authors extensively quote from Psalm 22 applying the words to the crucifixion and death of Christ: Mark 15:24, Matthew 27:35, Luke 23:34 John 19:24 quote Psalm 22:18; Mark 15:29, Matthew 27:39, quote Psalm 22:7; Matthew 27:43, quotes Psalm 22:8; Mark 15:34, Matthew 27:46, quote Psalm 22:1.

<sup>333</sup> "congregation" is from קָהָל - qahal, it implies the religious assembly of Israel, including True Worshipers, to whom David pledged to "preach the gospel" – through the Psalms, David's preaching of the gospel is available to us today!

<sup>334</sup> See John 10:1-17, Jeremiah 23:1-4, Ezekiel 34:11-15, 37:23-24

<sup>335</sup> See 1 John 2:25, 2 Timothy 1:1, Titus 1:2, Hebrews 8:6, 9:15 2, James 1:12, 2:5, 1 Peter 1:3-5

<sup>336</sup> See 2 Samuel 6:16-19, 1 Chronicles 15:27-29, 16:1-3

<sup>337</sup> For a discussion of "nephesh", see *Excursus 2 – נֶפֶשׁ and נַפְשָׁא* in the paper "The Transfiguration and the Tabernacle" located at [www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca)



expresses clear understanding of the nature of God – *raḥam* (v 6), *ḥesed* (vs 6, 7, 10), *tov* (v 7), *mishᵉpat* (v 9), *ʿemeth* (v10), and *bᵉrith* (vs 10, 14). David ends the prayer requesting deliverance – “Oh guard my life and deliver me” (v 20); expressing faith – “I wait for you” (v 21); and imploring beneficence for his people “Redeem Israel, O God” (v 22).

**Psalm 26: typical pattern**; main theme – the way of God “I have walked in my integrity” (vs 1-3, 6-8); contrast – avoiding the wicked “I do not sit with men of falsehood” (vs4-5, 9-10); instruction – “proclaiming ... telling all your wondrous deeds” (v 7, 12); summation (v 11). Note that verse 6 is likely an allusion to the altar set up before the tent containing the Ark of the Covenant.<sup>338</sup>

**Psalm 27: typical pattern**; main theme – trust in God “YHWH, my light and my salvation” (vs 1, 4-6, 11, 13); contrast – enemies “evil doers assail me” (vs 2-3, 12) and human failing “turn not your servant away in anger” (vs 7-10); instruction – “I believe ... ” there will be a resurrection (v 13); summation (v 14). Psalm 17 contains very similar content as Psalm 27. Psalm 17:5 is also an allusion to the resurrection. Note the reference to the “temple” in verse 4, is to the actual “temple” of God in eternity.<sup>339</sup>

**Psalm 28: typical pattern**; main theme – trust in God “To you, YHWH, I call ... ” (vs 1-2, 6-7); contrast – the wicked “the workers of evil” (vs 3-5); instruction – “YHWH is the strength ... the saving refuge of his anointed”<sup>340</sup> (v 8); summation (v 9). Note the reference to the “temple” in verse 4, is to the actual “temple” of God in eternity.<sup>341</sup>

**Psalm 29**: The “**seven thunders**” – see Revelation 10:1-4; verses 1-2 – a call to בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים - bᵉne ʿelim, “sons of God”, the God Family, see Psalms 8:5, 89:7, 138:1; verse 3 – see Psalm 18:13, Revelation 17:1, 15, 10:11; verse 4 – see Psalm 68:33-35, 46:6; verse 5 – see Isaiah 2:12-13, Jeremiah 22:7, Ezekiel 31:2-13, Zechariah 11:1-3; verses 6-9 – see 1 Kings 19:11-12; verse 10 – see Genesis 6:17, Psalm 10:16, Exodus 15:18; verse 11 – see Revelation 12:5, 14, 13:10, 14:2, 20:4.

**Psalm 30**: The **superscription** is literally: “psalm song<sup>342</sup> of dedication of the house *lᵉdavid*”. If this was written “at” the dedication of “the Temple”, David could NOT be the author. If David is the author, it was written “for” the dedication of the Temple; or, for some other occasion and used at the “dedication of the house.” This Psalm follows the **typical pattern**; main theme – the human condition “I cried to you for help” (vs 1-2, 4-5, 7-8, 10); contrast – eternal life “you restored me to life” – (vs 3, 9, 12b); instruction – “I shall never be moved”<sup>343</sup> (v 6); summation (vs 11-12a). The meaning of verse 7 is difficult – perhaps David is contrasting YHWH’s provision of abundance, “you made my mountain stand strong”, with times of testing, “you hid your face”.

**Psalm 31**: This is a fairly long and complicated Psalm, but David does seem to use an elaboration of the **typical pattern**; main theme – trusting in God for deliverance based on his divine nature “in your righteousness deliver me” (vs 1-10, 14-17a, 21-22); contrast – is “the wicked” and retributive justice “let the wicked be put to shame ... go silently to the grave” (vs 6a, 8a, 11-13, 15b, 17b-18, 23bβ); instruction – YHWH’s protection of True Worshipers “how abundant is your goodness ... for those who fear you” (vs 19-20). The summation implores True Worshipers to be faithful and take courage (vs 23-24). All through the Psalm, **David speaks “personally”**, except for the instruction and the summation where he **speaks on behalf of True Worshipers**.

**Psalm 32**: This is David’s first *masᵉkil*, a “**wisdom Psalm**”, elaborating the need for repentance: **typical pattern**; main theme – the human condition “I acknowledge my sin to you” (vs 1-5, 8-9); contrast – God’s grace “preserve me from trouble” (vs 6b-7, 10); instruction – “let everyone who is godly offer prayer” (v 6a); summation (v 11)

---

<sup>338</sup> See 2 Samuel 6:17, 1 Chronicles 16:1

<sup>339</sup> See also Psalms 18:6, 28:2

<sup>340</sup> David may be referring to himself here as the “anointed” king of Israel; but, “anointed” is parallel to “his people”; since Christian Baptism includes “anointing” into the Family of God (2 Corinthians 1:21, 1 John 2:20, 27), the passage can be applied to True Christians.

<sup>341</sup> See also Psalms 18:6, 27:4

<sup>342</sup> See Psalm 18, footnote

<sup>343</sup> See Psalm 13:4 footnote on “moved”

**Psalm 34:** The **superscription** relates this Psalm to the Achish incident in 1 Samuel 21:10-15. The superscription of Psalm 56 also alludes to this incident. In the superscription, the title “Abimelech” is actually used instead of the name “Achish”. Both Abraham and Isaac had dealings with Philistine kings using this title.<sup>344</sup> This is a nearly complete acrostic poem. The main theme is **David’s gratitude for deliverance**, “I sought YHWH, and he answered me” (vs 1-4). There is no real contrast in the Psalm – there are brief allusions to the “wicked” (vs 10a, 16, 21), but David passes directly from analysis of the human condition (vs 5-10) to the need for instruction in “the fear of YHWH” (vs 11-14), to the response of YHWH to one who is “crushed in spirit” (vs 15-18). These themes are summarized in verses 19-22.

**Psalm 35:** There is no allusion in the superscription, but this Psalm seems to fit the occasion of the **Absalom rebellion** – David’s own son and many trusted people turned on him.<sup>345</sup> David prays vehemently for deliverance from his enemies, “Contend, YHWH, with those who contend with me” (vs 1-8, 11-12a, 15-16, 19-21, 26). David expresses his unreserved trust in YHWH, “YHWH, who is like you” (vs 9-10, 17, 22-25, 27). Finally, David commits to living God’s way and proclaiming it to others, “I will thank you in the great congregation” (vs 12b-14, 18, 28).

**Psalm 36:** The **superscription** states literally: “to the one directing, to servant of YHWH, *l’edawid*”. The same phrase occurs in the superscription of Psalm 18. The ESV translates both as “David, the servant of the Lord”. It could equally be translated “**to servant of YHWH**”, i.e., David is addressing the Psalm to those who serve YHWH. The Psalm follows the **typical pattern**: main theme – the nature of God “how precious is your *hesed*” (vs 5-8, 10); contrast – the way of the wicked “there is no fear of God before his eyes” (vs 1-4, 12); instruction – “with you is the fountain of life” – eternal life (v 9), summation (vs 11).

**Psalm 37:** This Psalm is NOT designated a *mas’kil*, but it is commonly recognized as a “wisdom Psalm”.<sup>346</sup> The Psalm is an acrostic. It was composed when David was old (v 25). Although it is quite long, this Psalm follows a slightly complicated variation of the **typical pattern**: main theme – living by the way of God “trust in YHWH and do good” (vs 3-8, 16-19, 21b-31, 33-34a, 37); contrast – the way of the wicked results in their destruction “... evildoers ... will soon fade like the grass” (vs 1-2, 9a, 10, 12-15, 20-21a, 22b, 28bβ, 32, 34b-36, 38); instruction – “The righteous will inherit the earth and dwell upon it forever” (vs 9b, 11, 18b, 22a, 27b, 28bα, 29, 34aβ); summation (vs 39-40)

**Psalm 38:** The **superscription** of this Psalm contains לְהַזְכִּיר - *l’azkar*, “verb, hiphil, infinitive construct”, meaning “to cause to remember”.<sup>347</sup> The ESV translates this as “For the Memorial Offering”.<sup>348</sup> The “Memorial Offering” is discussed in Leviticus 2:2,9,16, 5:12, 6:15, 24:7, and Numbers 5:26, where the word is אֶזְכָּרָה - *’azkarah*, a feminine noun. The root of both words is זָכַר - *zakar*, “to remember”.<sup>349</sup> The noun *’azkarah*, is a technical term for the memorial offering. The verb form, *hazkir*, does NOT bear any necessary relationship to the noun; so, a better translation would be “**to cause to remember**”. This translation fits the contents of the Psalm better since its **main theme is “repentance” – “remember the need for repentance”**. This Psalm should be compared to Psalm 51. An interesting feature of the Psalm is the synonymous and interchangeable use of various divine names: YHWH, *adon*, *’elohim*.

**Psalm 39:** The **superscription** contains לִידוּתוֹן - *liyduthon*, “to Jeduthun”.<sup>350</sup> Jeduthun was a singer/musician associated with Asaph and Heman.<sup>351</sup> Asaph was the “chief musician”.<sup>352</sup> Jeduthun may also have been known as “Ethan”.<sup>353</sup> There is no indication as to the sense in which this Psalm is related

<sup>344</sup> See Genesis 20:1-18, 21:22-34, 26:1-33

<sup>345</sup> See 2 Samuel 15:1-37, 16:15-23, 17:1-14

<sup>346</sup> See [www.esv.org](http://www.esv.org) “Psalm 37 notes”: This can be called a wisdom psalm because it is a hymn that reflects on themes normally dealt with in the Wisdom Literature. In particular, it addresses the problem caused when godless people prosper ...

<sup>347</sup> See [www.esv.org](http://www.esv.org), “Hebrew Word Detail”

<sup>348</sup> See also Psalm 70

<sup>349</sup> See TWOT article 551 page 241

<sup>350</sup> See also Psalms 62, 77

<sup>351</sup> See 1 Chronicles 16:41-42, 25:1,6, and 2 Chronicles 5:12, 35:15

<sup>352</sup> See 1 Chronicles 16:5,37

<sup>353</sup> See 1 Chronicles 15:17,19, 6:44; see discussion in IDB volume 2 page 809

to Jeduthun – in 2 Chronicles 35:15 he is called a “seer”; perhaps some revelation or correction from him prompted this Psalm. **The Psalm has a “philosophical” character.** The Psalm commences with an allusion to some unknown situation in which David felt compelled to remain silent (vs 1-3). When he speaks, David explores the insignificance of human life in relation to God (vs 4-6). Then he expresses hope for God’s deliverance (vs 7-8). David then alludes to God’s direction in his life and the potential danger of God’s discipline (vs 9-11). Finally, David prays for God’s indulgence of human weakness (vs 12-13).

**Psalm 40: typical pattern:** main theme – living God’s way “Blessed is the man who makes YHWH his trust” (vs 1-10); contrast – the problems of life “evils have encompassed me” (vs 12-15); instruction – the beneficence of God’s nature “you will not restrain ...” (v 11); summation (vs 16-17)

**Psalm 41:** David would seem to be suffering physical illness (vs 4b, 5b, 8). Verse 9 seems to be an allusion to Ahithophel.<sup>354</sup> John records Jesus’ application of these words to Judas Iscariot.<sup>355</sup> The Psalm basically follows the **typical pattern:** main theme – God cares for the down-trodden “YHWH protects him” (vs 1-4); contrast – the treatment by enemies “my enemies say of me in malice ....” (vs 5-9); instruction – protection from enemies “YHWH ... raise me up” (v 10); summation (vs 11-12). Verse 13 seems to be more a conclusion to Book One of Psalms, rather than part of Psalm 41.

**Psalm 51: Superscription** – “when Nathan the prophet went to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba.”<sup>356</sup> **This Psalm is the classic expression of repentance.** This Psalm should be compared to Psalm 38.

**Psalm 52:** This Psalm is a *mas`kil*. The **superscription** “when Doeg, the Edomite, came and told Saul, ‘David has come to the house of Ahimelech’” relates it Saul’s most despicable action.<sup>357</sup> The Psalm elaborates the superscription using the **typical pattern:** main theme – the futility of wickedness “God will break you down forever” (vs 1a, 2-5, 7); contrast – God is inherently trustworthy “the *hesed* of God endures ....” (vs 1b, 8); instruction – “the righteous will see and fear” (v 6); summation (v 9). Note verse 7 reflects the attitude of the “unpardonable sin” – having the opportunity to “make God his refuge” the sinner arrogantly chooses the way of “riches”.

**Psalm 53:** This Psalm is a *mas`kil*. The **superscription** contains עַל־מַחֲלַת - `al maḥalath, “according to Mahalath”.<sup>358</sup> *Mahalath* appears to be derived from the root חָלָה - “entreat the favour of”.<sup>359</sup> The Psalm is a **lament for those who “have fallen away”** (v 3), implying they knew the way of God. David entreats the favour of God to complete his plan of “salvation for the New Israel” (v 6). Psalm 53 is repeated almost verbatim from Psalm 14 – see also comments there. Note that every instance of YHWH in Psalm 14 is replaced by *’elohim* in Psalm 53.

**Psalm 54:** This Psalm is a *mas`kil*. The **superscription** “when the Ziphites went and told Saul, ‘Is not David hiding among us?’” relates this Psalm to the incident in 1 Samuel 23:19-24 or the incident in 1 Samuel 26:1-25. David prays for deliverance from enemies (vs 1-3), then expresses faith in the deliverance (vs 4-5) and gratitude for it (vs 6-7). **This simple confidence in God is a lesson for all Christians.**

**Psalm 55:** This Psalm is a *mas`kil*. It follows the **typical pattern:** main theme – danger from enemies<sup>360</sup> “they bear a grudge against me” (vs 3, 9-15, 19b-21); contrast – desire for peace “I would fly away and be at rest” (vs 4-8) but trusting in God for deliverance “he will sustain you” (vs 1-2, 22)<sup>361</sup>; instruction “... call to God ... YHWH will save ...” (vs 16-19a); summation (v 23)

<sup>354</sup> See 2 Samuel 15:12, 31, 16:23, Psalms 55:13, 109:4

<sup>355</sup> See John 13:18

<sup>356</sup> See 2 Samuel 12:1-13; this encounter likely took place during the period of mourning, see 2 Samuel 11:26-27

<sup>357</sup> See 1 Samuel 22:9-19

<sup>358</sup> *Mahalath* occurs twice as a woman’s name, see Genesis 28:9, 2 Chronicles 11:18, and also in the superscription of Psalm 88

<sup>359</sup> See BDB page 318

<sup>360</sup> Verse 13 may be an allusion to Ahithophel, see Psalms 41:9, 109:4

<sup>361</sup> See Psalm 13:4 footnote on “moved”

**Psalm 56:** This Psalm is a *mik<sup>e</sup>tam*; so, the theme may be expected to relate to “covering”, “atonement”. The **superscription** relates this Psalm to the Achish incident in 1 Samuel 21:10-15. The superscription of Psalm 34 also alludes to this incident – see the discussion there. The Psalm uses the **typical pattern**: main theme – plea for deliverance “when I am afraid, I put my trust in you” (vs 1a, 3-4, 8-12); contrast – threat from enemies “my enemies trample on me” (vs 1b-2, 5-6); instruction – retributive justice “will they escape (v 7); summation (v 13)

**Psalm 57:** This Psalm is a *mik<sup>e</sup>tam*; so, the theme may be expected to relate to “covering”, “atonement”. The **superscription** “when he fled from Saul, in the cave” is similar to Psalm 142 “when he was in the cave”. There are two incidents where David escaped to a cave: the cave of Adullam,<sup>362</sup> and the cave in the Wilderness of Engedi.<sup>363</sup> If verse 4 is an allusion to [Saul’s elite troops](#), the incident is in Engedi. Psalm 57 uses the **typical pattern**: main theme – it is inherent in God’s nature to provide refuge “in the shadow of your wings I will take refuge” (vs 1-3, 7-10); contrast – threat from enemies “they set a net for my steps” (vs 4, 6); instruction – the Plan of God “God ... fulfills his purpose” (v 2b); summation (v 5, 11)

**Psalm 58:** This Psalm is a *mik<sup>e</sup>tam*; so, the theme may be expected to relate to “covering”, “atonement”. The **superscription** specifies אֶל־תִּשְׁחָת - ‘al tash<sup>e</sup>heth, “not destroy you”, which fits the theme of the Psalm.<sup>364</sup> Verse 1 is very difficult, the Hebrew is:

תִּדְבֹּרֶן	צֶדֶק	אֵלִים	הָאֱמֻנִים
t <sup>e</sup> dabberun	tzedeq	‘elem	ha’um <sup>e</sup> nam
you speak	righteousness	silence of	the indeed

אָדָם	בְּנֵי	תִּשְׁפֹּטוּ	מִישָׁרִים
‘adam	b <sup>e</sup> ne	tish <sup>e</sup> p <sup>e</sup> tu	mesharim
man	sons of	you judge	uprightness

The ESV translation uses a revocalization of אֵלִים to translate “you gods”.<sup>365</sup> Taking the text as it is, a possible translation would be:

Indeed! [Do] you speak silence of righteousness?  
[Indeed! Do] you judge uprightness, sons of man?

The sense being indignation at the arrogance of human beings, “the wicked”, to “speak silence”, to denigrate, righteousness and “to judge”, to condemn, uprightness. This sense is substantiated by verse 2:

No, in your hearts **you devise wrongs**; your hands deal out violence on earth. (ESV)

The Psalm uses the **typical pattern**: main theme – the vileness of the wicked “they have venom like ... a serpent” (vs 1-5); contrast – retributive justice “let them vanish like water” (vs 6-9); instruction – the day of YHWH “the righteous will rejoice” (v 10); summation (v 11)

**Psalm 59:** This Psalm is a *mik<sup>e</sup>tam*; so, the theme may be expected to relate to “covering”, “atonement”. The **superscription** “when Saul sent men to watch his house in order to kill him” relates the Psalm to the incident in 1 Samuel 19:11-17, where David escaped from Saul with the help of David’s wife, Michal. The Psalm uses the **typical pattern**: main theme – trust in God for deliverance “you, O God, are my fortress” (vs 1-2, 8-10); contrast – the wicked will suffer retributive justice “consume them in wrath” (vs 3-7, 11-15); instruction – “I will sing of your strength” (v 16a); summation (vs16b-17)

**Psalm 60:** This Psalm is the last Davidic *mik<sup>e</sup>tam*. The **superscription** contains “**for instruction**; when he strove with Aram-naharaim and with Aram-zobah, and when Joab on his return struck down twelve thousand of Edom in the Valley of Salt.” The phrase “**for instruction**” is from לָלַמַּד - l<sup>e</sup>lammed, “to instruct”. The sits-im-leben is described in 2 Samuel 8:3-14 and 1 Chronicles 18:3-13. A preliminary

<sup>362</sup> See 1 Samuel 22:1-2

<sup>363</sup> See 1 Samuel 24:1-7

<sup>364</sup> See also Psalms 57, 59, 75 (non-Davidic), and Exodus 8:24 “the land was *ruined*”, Deuteronomy 9:26 “do not *destroy* your people”

<sup>365</sup> See **ESV** footnote

defeat, not recorded in Samuel or Chronicles, is alluded to in verses 1-3. Then David pleads for God's deliverance as he has done in the past (vs 4-5). David reports God's words establishing his sovereignty over Israel (vs 6-7) and over surrounding nations (v 8). David then looks to the next battle, Edom, and prays for God's blessing (vs 9-12). The point of the "**instruction**" is that victory comes from God.

**Psalm 61:** This is a **prayer for salvation** (vs 1-4) – "the Rock" in verse 2 is YHWH, a Messianic prophecy. David looks to the resurrection "Let me dwell in your tent forever" (v 4a). David alludes to his commitment to live by God's way, conversion, "For you, O God, have heard my vows ... I perform my vows day after day" (vs 5, 8). He prays for eternal life "may his years endure to all generations" (v 6). David alludes to the promise of Messianic Descent "May he be enthroned forever before God" (v 7).

**Psalm 62:** The **superscription** contains עַל־יְדֻתָּן - al yeduthun, "according to Jeduthun" – see Psalm 39 for discussion. This Psalm uses the **typical pattern**: main theme – trust in God for salvation "he only is my rock" (vs 1-2, 5-7);<sup>366</sup> contrast – enemies will be there "how long will all of you attack" (vs 3-4), and the best of the world is worthless "if riches increase, set not your heart on them" (vs 9-10); instruction – look only to God "trust him at all times" (v 8); summation (vs 11-12)

**Psalm 63:** The **superscription** contains "when he was in the wilderness of Judah" – this seems to be an allusion to either David's time in the southern wilderness,<sup>367</sup> or when he fled from Absalom.<sup>368</sup>

The title links the psalm to David's days as a refugee, but it is not immediately clear whether the reference is to fleeing from Saul or from Absalom. The latter may seem more likely, since the author calls himself a king (Ps. 63:11); cf. also 2 Sam. 16:14 for the term "weary" found in Ps. 63:1. On the other hand, the land through which David fled is not normally counted as part of the wilderness of Judah, and David could have thought of himself as a king even when he was fleeing Saul, since Samuel had already anointed him.<sup>369</sup>

If verse 2 is an allusion to the presence of the Ark in David's tent in Zion, the sitz-im-leben is the flight from Absalom. David laments his current situation (v 1), but reminds himself of God's power and *hesed*, and is encouraged "I will lift up my hands" (vs 2-4). David commits himself to a life of living God's way because "your right hand upholds me" (vs 5-8, 11a). David laments the fate of his enemies "they shall be the portion of jackals" (vs 9-10, 11b).

**Psalm 64:** **typical pattern**: main theme – the wicked "they hold fast to their evil purpose" (vs 1-6); contrast – retributive justice "they are brought to ruin" (vs 7-8); instruction – God will prevail "then all mankind fears" (v 9); summation (v 10)

**Psalm 65:** This Psalm is a **prophecy** of the **accomplishment of the Plan of God**. David starts by praising God on behalf of True Worshipers "to you shall vows be performed" (vs 1-2a), then he looks to the World Tomorrow when "all flesh" will pray to God (v 2b). In verse 3, David laments the human condition of sin but looks to the atoning sacrifice to come. Verse 4 is about God's calling of True Worshipers who will become part of the "house of God", the family of God, and dwell in the holiness of his "temple". Verse 5 looks to salvation spreading to all the earth in the World Tomorrow. Next David commences a metaphoric discussion of General Revelation (vs 6-7a). This is interrupted by another prophecy of the World Tomorrow when the "tumult of the peoples" is stilled and "those that dwell at the ends of the earth" finally live in a state of "joy" (vs 7b-8). Verses 9-13 are an extended metaphor of General Revelation representing the spiritual regeneration to flow from "**the river of God**".<sup>370</sup>

**Psalm 68:** The **superscription** indicates that this is a "song".<sup>371</sup> This is a very long and complicated Psalm. The sitz-im-leben seems to be **the occasion of David's bring the Ark into Jerusalem**.<sup>372</sup> Verse 1 is a quotation from Numbers 10:35 when the Ark first set out from Sinai. Verses 4, 7, and 8 allude to marching in the desert with the Ark.<sup>373</sup> Verses 24-27 comment on the procession bringing the Ark into

<sup>366</sup> On "shaken" see footnote at Psalm 13:4

<sup>367</sup> See 1 Samuel 23:14-28

<sup>368</sup> See 2 Samuel 15:13-14, 23, 16:14

<sup>369</sup> [www.esv.org](http://www.esv.org) Psalm 63 Notes

<sup>370</sup> See Psalms 36:8, 46:4, Ezekiel 47:1-12, Revelation 21:6, 22:1-3, Isaiah 12:3, 33:21, Joel 3:18, Zechariah 13:1, 14:8, John 4:10, 14, 7:37-39

<sup>371</sup> See Psalm 18, footnote

<sup>372</sup> See 2 Samuel 6:1-19, 1 Chronicles 13:1-14, 15:1-29, 16:1-7

<sup>373</sup> See Exodus 13:21-22, Numbers 10:11-12, 33-35

Jerusalem. Verses 9 through 18 summarize the beneficence of God in establishing Israel as a nation in the promised land. Verse 17 is most interesting – the Hebrew is difficult:

שִׁנְאָן	אַלְפֵי	רִבּוֹתִים	אֱלֹהִים	רֶכֶב
shine'an	'al'phe	ribothyim	'elohim	rekev
twice	thousands of	tens	God	chariot of

בַּקֹּדֶשׁ	סִינִי	בָּם	אֲדֹנָי
baqqodesh	sinay	vam	'adonay
in the sanctuary	Sinai	among them	my Lord

A literal translation would be:

Chariot of God, twice tens thousands of [holy ones],  
My Lord among them, Sinai in the sanctuary!

The “**twice tens thousands of**” appears to be an allusion to:

The LORD came from Sinai and dawned from Seir upon us;  
he shone forth from Mount Paran;  
he came from **the ten thousands of holy ones**, with flaming fire at his right hand.  
(Deuteronomy 33:2 ESV)

This is an allusion to the Sinai event where the Ten Commandments were given.<sup>374</sup> The tablets with the written version of the Ten Commandments were later placed in the Ark of the Covenant.<sup>375</sup> David is now bringing the Ark, with the tablets of the Ten Commandments, into the tent in Jerusalem, where it is to be temporarily housed until the Temple is built by Solomon. A more readable translation of Psalm 68:17 would be:

The chariot of God comes with thousands upon thousands of holy ones,  
My Lord is among them; **Sinai is now in the sanctuary!**

**The sense being that God is now present, as symbolized by the Ark, in the tent in Jerusalem,** the temporary sanctuary. Sinai, with all that is symbolized by the tablets of the Ten Commandments, is now in Jerusalem waiting for the Temple construction.

David recognizes that **the transition from the Tabernacle to the Temple is integral to the Plan of God.**

In verses 19-23, David acknowledges that “God is our salvation”. Then he alludes to the first resurrection “to God ... belong deliverances from death” and the second resurrection “I will bring them [enemies] back from the depths of the sea”. In verses 28-31, David prophesizes of the future of the Temple “kings will bear gifts to you”, “nobles shall come from Egypt”. That this is a type of the World Tomorrow is clear “Cush shall hasten to stretch out her hand to God”. David’s summation in verses 32-35 looks to the ultimate fulfillment of the Plan of God “O kingdoms of the earth, sing to God”. David extols the universal dominion and power of God “him who rides in the heavens”, “ascribe power to God”. God rules from his true sanctuary in eternity “awesome is God from his sanctuary”.<sup>376</sup>

**Psalm 69:** There are tantalizing clues as to the sitz-im-leben of this Psalm. Verse 9 seems to be a clear allusion to David’s desire to build the Temple. It is clearly a very dark time in David’s life (vs 1-3, 14-15). Verse 8 is possibly an allusion to the time when David’s family fled to him at the cave of Adullam.<sup>377</sup> David’s family now had to trust him for protection – this may be the allusion in verse 6. David has been brought into a full realization of his human weakness and failings by the words of Nathan.<sup>378</sup> Reflecting on his situation, David remembers his feelings at Adullam and all he has learned in the subsequent years. The Shimei incident exemplifies David’s understanding of **the human condition**:

When King David came to Bahurim, there came out a man of the family of the house of Saul, whose name was Shimei, the son of Gera, and as he came he cursed continually. And he threw stones at David and at all the servants of King David ... And Shimei said as he cursed, “Get out, get out, **you man of blood, you worthless man!** The LORD has avenged on you all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose place you have reigned, and the LORD has given the kingdom into the hand of your son Absalom. See, **your evil is**

<sup>374</sup> See Exodus 19:1-24, 20:1-21

<sup>375</sup> See Exodus 25:16, 1 Kings 8:9

<sup>376</sup> See also verse 5

<sup>377</sup> See 1 Samuel 22:1; note that his family had previously regressed David as a “pesky youngster”, see 1 Samuel 16:11, 17:28-29

<sup>378</sup> See 2 Samuel 7:1-5, 1 Chronicles 17:1-4



**on you, for you are a man of blood.”** Then Abishai the son of Zeruiah said to the king, “Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? Let me go over and take off his head.” But the king said, “What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah? **If he is cursing because the LORD has said to him, ‘Curse David,’ who then shall say, ‘Why have you done so?’**” And David said to Abishai and to all his servants, “Behold, my own son seeks my life; how much more now may this Benjaminite! Leave him alone, and **let him curse, for the LORD has told him to. It may be that the LORD will look on the wrong done to me, and that the LORD will repay me with good for his cursing today.**” (2 Samuel 16:5-12 ESV)

David does not dispute the charge that he is **“a man of blood”** – he fought many battles, killed many people.<sup>379</sup> He acknowledged the cursing as a humbling experience allowed by God. Yet, he trusted God to make things right in the end. These characteristics of David are exemplified in Psalm 69: using the **typical pattern**: main theme – the human condition “O God, you know my folly” (vs 4b-12, 19-21, 29), and trusting in God “Draw near to my [life], redeem me” (vs 1-3, 13-18); contrast – enemies “mighty are those who would destroy me” (vs 4a, 9b, 19b, 22-28); instruction – “I will praise the name of God” (vs 30-33); summation (vs 34-36).

**Psalm 70:** The **superscription** of this Psalm contains לְהַזְכִּיר - l<sup>e</sup>hazkir, “to cause to remember”, the same as Psalm 38 – see the discussion there. David prays for deliverance (vs 1, 5b) on behalf of True Worshipers (v 4). He appeals to his state of contrition (v 5a) and requests retributive justice on enemies (vs 2-3). The placement and simplicity of this Psalm bring to mind the lessons of Psalm 69.

**Psalm 86:** the **superscription** calls this Psalm a תְּפִלָּה - t<sup>e</sup>phillah, a prayer;<sup>380</sup> **typical pattern**: main theme – the nature of God “you, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in *hesed* and faithfulness”<sup>381</sup> (vs 3a, 5, 8, 10, 13a, 15-16a); contrast – the need for individual and universal salvation “all the nations you have made shall come and worship before you” (vs 1-2, 3b-4, 6-7, 9, 13b-14, 16b); instruction – “I will glorify your name forever” (vs 11-12); summation (v 17)

**Psalm 101:** David starts by extolling *hesed* and *mish<sup>e</sup>pat* (v 1); then he demonstrates the practical meaning of the words by positive example (vs 2, 6) and by contrast with evil (vs 3-5, 7-8). This Psalm demonstrates the “metaphor of violence”,<sup>382</sup> zeal to eradicate evil.

**Psalm 103: typical pattern**: main theme – the beneficence of God flows from his nature “who crowns you with *hesed* and mercy (vs 1-13, 17-18); contrast – the human condition apart from God “as for man, his days are like grass” (vs 14-16); instruction – the inexorability of the Plan of God “his kingdom rules over all” (v 19); summation “bless the LORD ... in all places of his dominion” (vs 20-22)

**Psalm 108:** The **superscription** indicates that this is a “song”.<sup>383</sup> Verses 7-13 are quoted from Psalm 60:6-12 – see the discussion there. In Psalm 60, David starts out in a “down” mood (vs 1-3); in this Psalm David starts out in an “up” mood: in verses 1-2, he expresses joy by singing; in verse 3, **he commits to proclaim the gospel**; in verses 4-6, he extolls the nature of God, the dominion of God, and the deliverance of God. The quotation from the earlier Psalm is perhaps used to demonstrate his gratitude to God for providing the victory.

**Psalm 109:** The *sitz-im-leben* of this Psalm seems to be the Absalom rebellion.<sup>384</sup> The Psalm follows the **typical pattern**: main theme – a prayer for deliverance from accusers “in return for my love they accuse me, but I give myself to prayer” (vs 1-20, 27-29); contrast – a prayer for deliverance and salvation “Help me, O LORD my God! Save me according to your *hesed*!” (vs 21-26); instruction – “I will praise him in the midst of the throng” (v 30); summation (v 31)

**Psalm 110:** **This Psalm has been made very famous by its use in the Book of Hebrews.** It is a Messianic prophecy. For a detailed discussion of this Psalm see **Excursus 2 – Melchizedek** in the paper “To Be a Priest” located at [www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca)

<sup>379</sup> See Psalm 18:34, 37-42 // 2 Samuel 22:35, 38-43

<sup>380</sup> See also Psalms 17, 142

<sup>381</sup> See Exodus 34:6

<sup>382</sup> See Matthew 11:12, Luke 16:16b

<sup>383</sup> See Psalm 18, footnote

<sup>384</sup> See 2 Samuel 15:1-13, 31, 16:20-23, 17:1-14, 23, Psalms 41:9, 55:13

**Psalm 122:** The **superscription** contains “**A Song of Ascents**”, in common with the Davidic Psalms 124, 131, 133, and eleven other Psalms. The meaning of this title is not clear: some suggest that these Psalms were sung on fifteen steps in Herod’s Temple, which would make the superscriptions a late addition to the Psalms. Others suggest it is fact that Jerusalem is at high elevation, so pilgrims go “up” to Jerusalem and sang these Psalms on the way. Others suggest they were composed by the exiles returning from Babylon, which would render Davidic authorship impossible.<sup>385</sup> **Psalm 122 does fit the theme of going up to Jerusalem** – the psalmist is “in Jerusalem” (v 2). If in verse 5, “the thrones of the house of David”, implies that Davidic Dynasty is established, i.e., there have been thrones of multiple kings, then David is NOT the author of this Psalm.

**Psalm 124:** David seems to be thanking God on behalf of the nation for deliverance from an enemy. The most likely sitz-im-leben for this is the Philistine threat while David was king in Hebron – the threat was removed when David became over all Israel.<sup>386</sup>

**Psalm 131:** David gives thanks for comfort from God and prays for hope for the nation.

**Psalm 133:** David gives thanks for unity among “brothers” – siblings or the nation.

**Psalm 138: typical pattern:** main theme – prayer of thanks for the nature of God “your name” (vs 2-3, 6a), and the plan of God “your word” (vs 4-5); contrast – deliverance from the wicked “you preserve my life” (vs 6b-7); instruction – “before ‘elohim<sup>387</sup> I sing your praise” (v 1); summation (v 8)

**Psalm 139: typical pattern:** main theme – the omnipotence of God in relation to human beings “YHWH you have searched me and known me” (vs 1-16); contrast – deliverance from enemies “Oh that you would slay the wicked, O God!” (vs 19-22); instruction – “how precious to me are your thoughts” (vs 17-18); summation – God’s searching leads to eternal life (vs 23-24)

**Psalm 140: typical pattern:** main theme – deliverance from the wicked “Deliver me ... from evil men” (vs 1, 4a, 6-7); contrast – characteristics of the wicked “who plan evil things in their heart” (vs 2-3, 4b-5), and require retributive justice “let them be cast into fire” (vs 9-11); instruction – “Grant not the desires of the wicked” (v 8); summation – eternal life “the upright shall dwell in your presence” (vs 12-13).

**Psalm 141: typical pattern:** main theme – the human condition “do not let my heart incline to any evil” (vs 1-4); contrast – fate of the wicked “when their judges fall into the hands of the Rock” (vs 5b-7);<sup>388</sup> instruction – the way of God “let a righteous man strike me” (v 5a); summation (vs 8-10)

**Psalm 142:** This is the last *mas`kil* of David. The **superscription** calls this Psalm a תַּפִּלָּה - t<sup>e</sup>phillah, a prayer.<sup>389</sup> The **superscription** “when he was in the cave” is similar to Psalm 57 “when he fled from Saul, in the cave”. There are two incidents where David escaped to a cave: the cave of Adullam,<sup>390</sup> and the cave in the Wilderness of Engedi.<sup>391</sup> There is nothing in this Psalm to suggest a preference for either incident. David starts out praying for mercy (vs 1-2); then acknowledges God’s direction in spite of difficulties of life (vs 3-4); then he prays for deliverance (vs 5-7a); and finally, David ends by expressing hope (v 7b).

**Psalm 143: typical pattern:** main theme – the nature of God “in your faithfulness answer me, in your righteousness” and the beneficence of God “I meditate on all that you have done” (vs 1-2, 5-8); contrast – the enemy “for the enemy has pursued my [life]” (vs 3-4, 9); instruction – “let your good Spirit lead me” (v 10); summation (v 11-12)

<sup>385</sup> See the discussion in **KD5** pages 749-751, **NBC** page 529

<sup>386</sup> See 2 Samuel 5:17-25

<sup>387</sup> See Psalm 110 where YHWH speaks on behalf of the God Family, i.e., representing God the Father. David alludes to the God Family in Psalms 8:5, 29:1, 86:8, and 138:1. Of course, all uses of אֱלֹהִים - ‘elohim imply the God Family including God the Father.

<sup>388</sup> The translation of verses 6 and 7 is difficult – see the **ESV** footnotes

<sup>389</sup> See also Psalms 17, 86

<sup>390</sup> See 1 Samuel 22:1-2

<sup>391</sup> See 1 Samuel 24:1-7

**Psalm 144:** This Psalm is highly prophetic: David looks to a time when he will “sing a new song” (v 9), as the resurrected saints are said to do in Revelation 14:3. David wonders at the awesomeness of the Plan of God to provide such a destiny to human beings who are “like a breath” (vs 3-4). David acknowledges the “enemy” in our spiritual battle (vs 7-8, 11) but trusts God to “train his hands for war” and “give victory” (vs 1-2, 10). David makes allusion to the theophany at Sinai and sees in it a harbinger of the Day of YHWH (vs 5-6). Finally, David ends with a prayer for the outpouring of God’s beneficence – the prayer is certainly valid for David’s people in his own time, but its ultimate fulfillment is clearly in the World Tomorrow (vs 12-15).

**Psalm 145:** The **superscription** calls this Psalm a תְּהִלָּה - t<sup>e</sup>hillah, “praise”, the ESV translates it as “A Song of Praise”.<sup>392</sup> The Psalm flows the **typical pattern**: main theme – David praises God for his plan of salvation “I will ... praise your name forever and ever”, “your saints shall ... shall speak of the glory of your kingdom” (vs 1-12); contrast – the pathetic state of human beings “YHWH upholds all who are falling” (vs 14-20); instruction – “your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures throughout all generations” (v 13a); summation (v 21).

## Bibliography

Blair, T., editor, *The Hebrew-English Interlinear ESV Old Testament*, Crossway, Wheaton, Illinois, 2014

This excellent resource provides the text of the **ESV** beside the Hebrew Old Testament text from Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia. The running interlinear below the Hebrew text comprises literal glosses for each Hebrew word.

Botterweck, G.J., et.al., editors, *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, (TDOT, multiple volumes) William B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1974-

Brown, F., Driver, S., and Briggs, V., *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*, (BDB), Hendrickson Publishers Marketing, Peabody Massachusetts, 2015, originally published by Houghton, Mifflin, and Company, Boston, 1906

Buttrick, G.A., et al, editors, *The Interpreters Dictionary of the Bible*, (IDB 1-4), Abingdon Press, New York, 1962

Dennis, L.T., and Gruden, W., editors, et.al., *English Standard Version*, (ESV), Crossway, Wheaton, Illinois, 2008  
All English Language Bible quotations are taken from the **ESV**, unless other wise specified.

Douglas, J.D., et al, editors, *The New Bible Dictionary*, (NBD), William B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1962

Drayton, C.B., editor, *The Greek-English Interlinear ESV New Testament*, Crossway, Wheaton, Illinois, 2018  
This excellent resource provides the text of the **ESV** beside the Greek New Testament text. The running interlinear below the Greek text comprises literal glosses for each Greek word.

Elliger, K., and Rudolph, W., editors, et.al., *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, (BHS), Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, Stuttgart, 1977.

Fritz, G.A., *The Lost Sea of the Exodus*, GeoTech, San Antonio, Texas, 2016

Guthrie, D., and Motyer, J.A., editors, *The New Bible Commentary Revised*, (NBC) William B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1970

Harris, R.L., Archer, G.L., Waltke, B.K., editors, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, (TWOT), Moody Publishers, Chicago, 1980

Holladay, W.L., *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1971

Keil, C.F., and Delitzsch, F., *Commentary on the Old Testament*, volume 2, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 and 2 Samuel, (KD2), Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, Massachusetts, 2011, originally published by T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1866-1891

Keil, C.F., and Delitzsch, F., *Commentary on the Old Testament*, volume 3, 1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles, (KD3), Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, Massachusetts, 2011, originally published by T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1866-1891

<sup>392</sup> Compare Psalms 34:1 and 109:1

Keil, C.F., and Delitzsch, F., *Commentary on the Old Testament*, volume 5, Psalms, (**KD5**), Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, Massachusetts, 2011, originally published by T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1866-1891.

Kittel, G., et.al., editors, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, (**TDNT** I - X), WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1964-1976

Merrill, E.H., *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Chronicles*, Kregel Academic, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2015

Moran, W.L., *The Amarna Letters*, The John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, Maryland, 1992

Pietersma, A., and Wright B.G., editors, *A New English Translation of the Septuagint*, (**NETS**), Oxford University Press, New York, New York, 2007

Robertson, A.T., *A Harmony of the Gospel*, Harper & Row, 1922, Citizens Fidelity Bank & Trust, 1950

The original edition of Robertson was first published more than a hundred years ago, but it remains an adequate evaluation of the Gospel Material in relation to the life of Christ.

Rohl, D.M., *From Eden to Exile*, (**EE**), Greenleaf Press, Lebanon, Tennessee, 2009

Rohl, D.M., *Legend*, (**LG**), Random House (Arrow Books), London, 1998

Rohl, D.M., *The Lords of Avaris*, (**LA**), Random House, London, 2007

Rohl, D.M., *A Test of Time*, (**TT**), Random House, London, 1995

Thiele, E.R., *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*, William B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1965

Tsumura, D.T., *The First Book of Samuel*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament, (**NICOT**), William B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2007

Tsumura, D.T., *The Second Book of Samuel*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament, (**NICOT**), William B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2019

Whiston, W., translator, *Josephus Complete Works*, Kregal Publications, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1960, originally published by Nimmo, Edinburgh, 1867

[www.esv.org](http://www.esv.org)

This excellent website provides full access to the ESV text, plus many useful tools to work with the text.

[www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca)

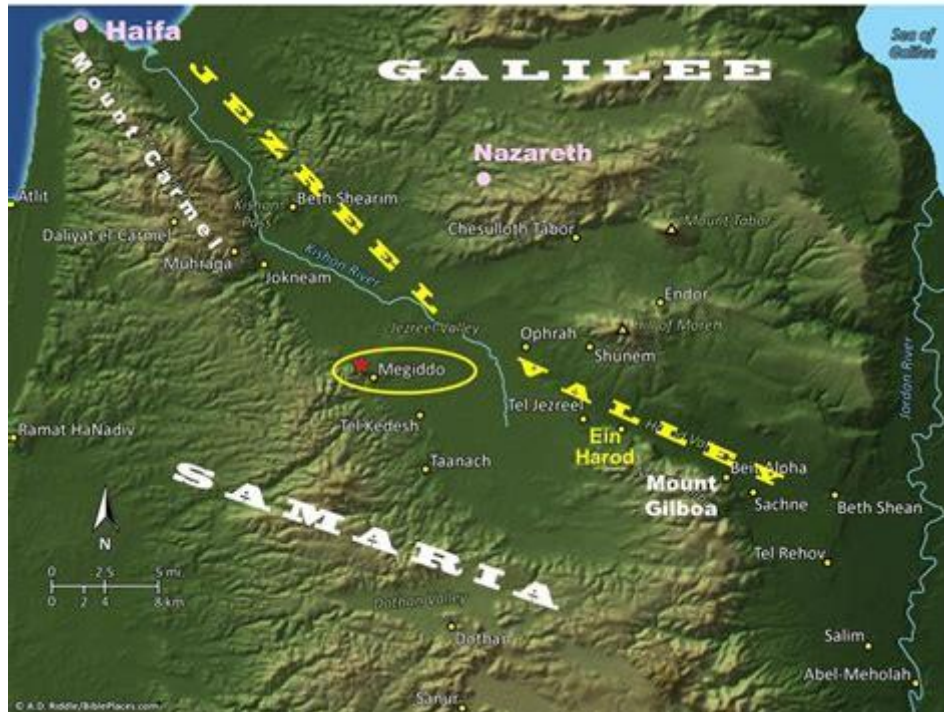
The location of "David – A Man After My Own Heart"

## Appendix





**Figure 1: The Jezreel Valley – looking southeast**



**Figure 2: Map of the Jezreel Valley**



**Figure 3: The North Face of Mount Gilboa**

Return to [Table of Contents](#)

### **Thematic Analysis of Davidic Psalms**

The following table contains a verse-by-verse thematic analysis of all the Davidic Psalms. The table is available as a spread sheet at: [www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca)

The spread sheet is useful for sorting and searching, and it can be copied and customized / modified.



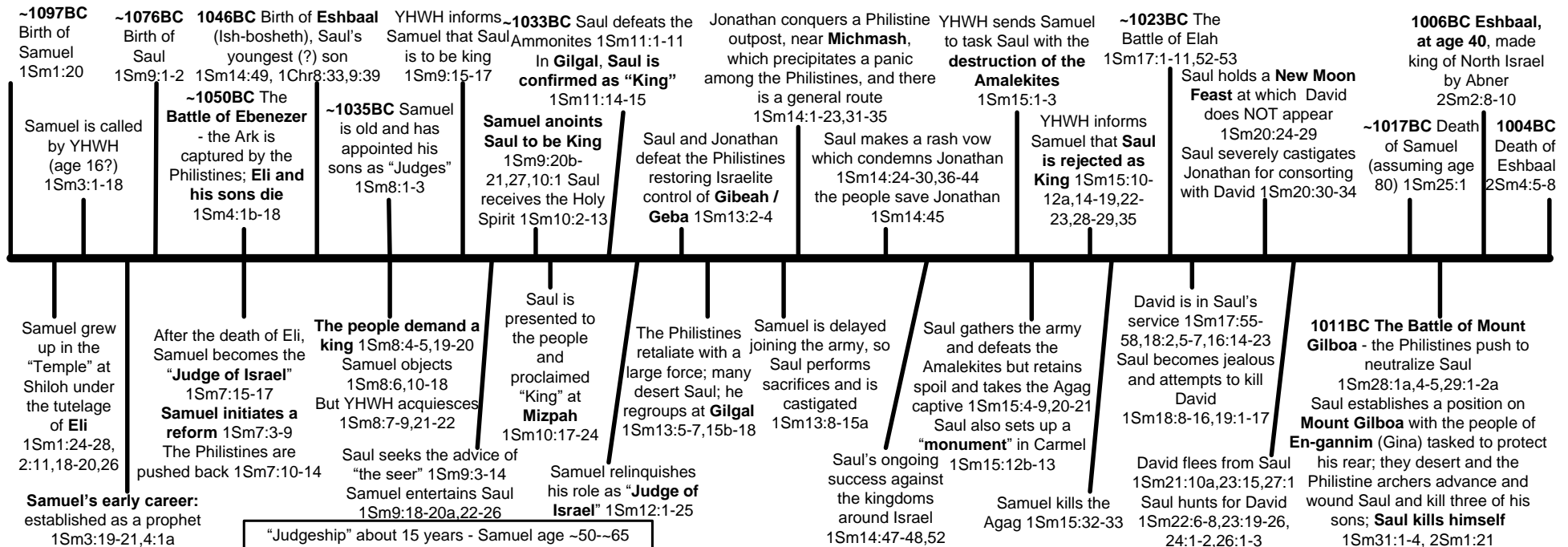
Psalm	Human condition in relation to God - repentance	The Nature of God	The Way of God, teaching it, proclaiming it, living it	Trust in God, deliverance	The universal nature of God's Dominion	Salvation, World Tomorrow	Eternal Life, eternity	The Resurrection	Singing, Praying, Praising God	The "wicked", "enemies"	Retributive Justice	General Revelation	Theophany / Prophecy	Historical Allusion
Ps3				v3-7a		v2,8				v1-2	v7b			
Ps4	v1-2,6a		v3-5	v6b-8					v1					
Ps5		v7a, 8a	v7-8	v11-12					v1-3,11aβ	v8aβ, 9	v4-6,10			
Ps6	v1-7					v4	v5		v8b-9	v7b-8a	v10			
Ps7	v3-4,8b, 12-13	v9b,11		v1,6b,9aβ, 10	7-8a				v17	v2,5,14-16	v6a,9aα			
Ps8	v4-6		v2a		v1a,9		v1b			v2b		v3,7-8		
Ps9	v13,18	v4,16a	v11,14	v9-10,12	v7-8				v1-2		v3,5-6, 15-17, 19-20			
Ps11		v4,7a		v1,3,5a,7b						v2	v5b-6			
Ps12	v1,5		v6	v7						v2-4,8	v3			
Ps13	v1-2			v5		v5		v3-4	v1-2a,6	2b				
Ps14	v1,3		v2b	v5b,6b		v7a	v2a			v1,3-5a,6a			v7b	
Ps15			v2-5			v1,5b	v1							
Ps16			v3,5-9,11	v1-2		v8	v8	v10	v7a	v4				
Ps17		v7a	v2-5	v7b-8		7b		v15	v1,6	v9-12,14	v13			
Ps18	v4-5	v25-27a,50b	v20-24, 30a,49a	v3,16-19, 28-29, 30b-48		v2,35a,46, 50a	v6b,50b		v1,6,46, 49	v17-18a,48	v27b		v2,7-13, 50bβ	v7-15
Ps19	v12-14		v7-11									v1-6		
Ps20	v7-8			v1-5		v6	v6		v1-5,9					
Ps21		v7				v1b,5a	v4-7		v1-3,13		v8-12			
Ps22	v1-3,6-7		v22-26	v4-5,8-11, 19-21	v27-31		v26b		v1-3, 19-23,26b	v12-18			1a,7-8, 12-18, 27-31	v4-5
Ps23		v6a	v2-3	v1-6			v6b						v5	
Ps24			v3-6		v1	v3						v2	v7-10	v7-10
Ps25	v7a,11-18	v6-8	v4-5,9-10	v1-3a, 20-21		v5			v22	v2bβ,3b,19				
Ps26	v2	v3	v6-7,12	v1,11			v8			v4-5,9-10				
Ps27	v8-10		v11	v1-3,5-6a, 14		v1,4	v4b	v13	v6b-7	v2-3,6a,12				
Ps28				v1-2,6-7		v8-9	v2b		v1-2	v3,5a	v4,5b			

Psalm	Human condition in relation to God - repentance	The Nature of God	The Way of God, teaching it, proclaiming it, living it	Trust in God, deliverance	The universal nature of God's Dominion	Salvation, World Tomorrow	Eternal Life, eternity	The Resurrection	Singing, Praying, Praising God	The "wicked", "enemies"	Retributive Justice	General Revelation	Theophany / Prophecy	Historical Allusion
Ps29					v10-11				v1-2				v3-9	
Ps30	v5b,7-8,10	v5a	v6				v3,9,12b		v1-2,4,11-12a					
Ps31	v7b-10	v1bβ,7a,9a,16b,19a,21b		v1-6,14-17a,19b-24		v5,16				v6a,8a,11-13,15b,18b	v17b-18a,23bβ		v5a	
Ps32	v1-5	10b	v8-9	v6b-7					v6a,11	v10a				
Ps34	v4-10,15-18	v8a	v11-14	v7,19-20,22					v1-3	10a	v16,21			
Ps35			v12b-14,18,28	v9-10,17,22-25		v3b,9			v1-8,18,27	v7,11-12a,15-16,19-21	v1-8,26			
Ps36		v5-7a,10		v7b-8,11			v9	v9		v1-4	v12			
Ps37	v16-19		v1,3-8,14b,21b,23-28bα,30-31,34,37	v33-34aα,40		v9b,11,22a,29a,34aβ,39	v18b,27b,28bα,29b,			v12,14a,21a,32	v2,9a,10,13,15,17a,20,22b,28bβ,34b-36,38			
Ps38	v1-11,13-14,17-18			v15-16,21-22a		v22b				v12,19-20				
Ps39	v1-6,9-11			v7-8					v12-13	v1bβ				
Ps40	v12,16-17a	v10-11	v3b-10	v1-2,13,17b		v16			v3a	v4b	v14-15		v7	
Ps41	v1-4			v10-12			v12b	v10	v13	v5-9			v9	
Ps51	v1-10	v1a	v13-17			v11-12			v18-19					
Ps52		v1b,8b	v6,8a				8b		v9	v1a,2-4,7	v5			
Ps53	v1,3		v2b			v6a	v2a			v1,3-5a	v5b		v6b	
Ps54		v5b		v4-5					v1-3,6-7	v3	v5a			
Ps55	v4-8	v19aβ		v16-18,22,23b		v16			v1-2,16-17	v3,9b-14,19b-21	v9a,15,19a,23a			
Ps56	v8,12			v1aα,3-4,9-11,13a				v13b		v1aβ-2,5-6	v7			
Ps57		v3b,10	v7a,9	v1-3a	v5b,9,11b	v3aα	v2b,5a,11a		v5,7b-8,11	v3aβ,4,6				

<b>Psalm</b>	<b>Human condition in relation to God - repentance</b>	<b>The Nature of God</b>	<b>The Way of God, teaching it, proclaiming it, living it</b>	<b>Trust in God, deliverance</b>	<b>The universal nature of God's Dominion</b>	<b>Salvation, World Tomorrow</b>	<b>Eternal Life, eternity</b>	<b>The Resurrection</b>	<b>Singing, Praying, Praising God</b>	<b>The "wicked", "enemies"</b>	<b>Retributive Justice</b>	<b>General Revelation</b>	<b>Theophany / Prophecy</b>	<b>Historical Allusion</b>
Ps58					v11					v1-5	v6-9		v10-11	
Ps59		v8,10a,16-17	16a	v1-2,4b, 9-10,16b	v5b,8, 13b				v16-17	v3-4a,6-7, 12,14-15	v5,11,13a		v13	
Ps60				v1-5a,9-12	v6-8	v5b								
Ps61		v7b	v5,8	v2-3,4b			v6	v4a	v1-8				v7a	
Ps62	v9-10a	v11-12a	v8,10b,12b	v1-2,5-7		v1-2,5-7				v3-4				
Ps63	v1-2a, 5-8	v2b-3a	v3b-4,11a						v3b-4,11a		v9-10,11b			
Ps64			v10	v1-2	v9a	v9				v3-6	v7-8		v9	
Ps65	v3		v1,4		v2,5b, 7b-8	v2b,5,9b	v4		v1			v6-7a, 9-13	v2b,3b,5, 8	
Ps68		v28,33-35	v6a,17b,26 a		v29, 31-32	v19-20a,23	v5,33	v3,20b	v4,24-27, 32-35		v1-2,6b, 21-22,30		v29, 31-32	v1,4,7-18, 24-27
Ps69	v4b-5, 7-12, 19-21, 29a	v13b,16	v6,32	v1-3,13-18, 33	v34	v18,29, 35-36	v28		v13,30-31	v4a,9b,19b, 26	v22-25, 27-28	v34	v9,21	
Ps70	v5a		v4a	v1,5b			v4b				v2-3			
Ps86	v1	v3a,5-6,8,10, 13a, 15-16a, 17a	v11-12	v3b-4,7, 16b, 17b	v9	v9,16b	v2,8a,12	v13b	v1-17	v14	v17b			
Ps101		v1	v2,6						v1	v3-5,7	v8			
Ps103	v2b-5, 9-10, 12,14-16	v6,8,11,13, 17-18	v1-2a		v19b, 20-22	v19b	v19a	v4a	v1-2a, 20-22					v7
Ps108		v4	v3	v6a,10-13	v3,5,7-9	v6b			v1-2					
Ps109	v22-25, 31	v21,26b	v30	v21,26		v26b			v1,30	v2-5,16-18, 25	v6-15, 19-20, 27-29		v8	
Ps110													v1-7	v4b
Ps122						v6-9			v1-9					v5
Ps124				v1-8	v8				v6					
Ps131	v1-2					v3								

<b>Psalm</b>	<b>Human condition in relation to God - repentance</b>	<b>The Nature of God</b>	<b>The Way of God, teaching it, proclaiming it, living it</b>	<b>Trust in God, deliverance</b>	<b>The universal nature of God's Dominion</b>	<b>Salvation, World Tomorrow</b>	<b>Eternal Life, eternity</b>	<b>The Resurrection</b>	<b>Singing, Praying, Praising God</b>	<b>The "wicked", "enemies"</b>	<b>Retributive Justice</b>	<b>General Revelation</b>	<b>Theophany / Prophecy</b>	<b>Historical Allusion</b>
Ps133			v1				v3b					v3a		v2
Ps138	v6a	v2a,8b	v1-2	v3,7	v4-5	v4-5		v8	v1	v6b				
Ps139	v1-11, 13-15, 23-24a	v12	v17-18			v16	v24b			v20-22	v19	v13-15		
Ps140		v12-13		v1,4a,6-7		v7a	v13b		v6-8	v1-5	v8-11			
Ps141	v1-4		v5a,6b	v8-10					v1-2,5b		v5b-6a,7			
Ps142	v3-4		v1-2	v5-7a			v7b		v1-7a					
Ps143	v4	v1-2,8a, 12a	v5,10	v8b-9				v7	v1-12	v3,9a	v12			
Ps144	v3-4, 12-15	v1-2	v9	v7,10-11				v9	v1-2,9	v7b-8,11			v5-6, 12-15	v5-6
Ps145	v14-20a	v3,5-9, 13b,17	v4-7,10-12, 21a	v14,18-20a	v9,13, 16b,21b	v1-13a	v1-2,21b		v1-3,10, 21b		v20b			
<b>count:</b>	44	38	49	51	20	39	32	14	48	46	37	7	20	9

# Samuel and Saul Timeline



**Samuel's background:** Elkanah was of the tribe of Levi (1Chr6:22-28, 33-38). Ramatham-zophim is Ramah, the city in the land of Zuph (1Sm1:1, 19, 2:11, 17, 8:4, 9:5-6, 25:1). The occasion at Shiloh is probably the Feast of Tabernacles. The sacrifice (1Sm1:3-4) is likely a "peace offering" (Lv3:1-17, 7:11-18)  
**Hannah's Prayer:** (1Sm2:1-10) has many themes in common with "Magnificent of Mary" (Lk1:46-55).

**Eli and his sons:** Eli was descended from Phinehas, grandson of Aaron, according to 2 Esdras 1:1-3; or from Ithamar, son of Aaron, according to Josephus Antiquities 5:11:5. 1Chronicles 6:4-8 supports the Phinehas descent. **Eli's sons, Phinehas and Hophni,** were corrupt priests at Shiloh (1Sm1:3, 2:12-17). Eli was warned of the destruction of his house (2Sm2:27-36, 3:11-18), which occurred at the **Battle of Ebenezer**. Phinehas had two descendants - **Zadok** and **Abiathar**: they were priests to David and Solomon.

**The Ark of the Covenant:** the Ark was constructed at Horeb (Ex25:10-15, 37:1-5); resided in the Most Holy Place of the Tabernacle (Ex26:33-34, 40:1-2, 20-21, Nm7:89); led the Israelites in the 38 years of wandering (Nm10:33-35, Jsh3:1-17); led the Israelites in the conquest of Canaan (Jsh6:4-13); placed at Shiloh after the conquest (Jsh18:1); was occasionally moved (Jdg20:26-28); and finally **captured by the Philistines at the Battle of Ebenezer**. The Philistines try to treat it as a trophy of war, but are cursed by YHWH (1Sm5:1-12). **The ark is with the Philistines 7 months** (2Sm6:1). The Ark is returned to Israel at Beth-shemesh (1Sm6:2-18), and then passed on to Kiriath-jareh (Ballah, Balle-judah) (1Sm6:19-21, 7:1-2) **where the Ark remains for about 20 years**. Saul takes it with him to battle (1Sm14:16-18), but apparently returns it to Kiriath-jareh, from where David attempts to fetch it (2Sm6:1-9, 1Chr13:3-12). The Ark is 3 months under the care of Obed-edom (1Sm6:10-12a, 1Chr13:13-14) before **David fetches it to Jerusalem** (1Sm6:12b-15, 1Chr15:1-28).

**Amalekites:** Amalek was the son of Eliphaz the son of Esau – so a **second cousin of Jacob's twelve sons** (Gn36:9-12, 1Chr1:35-36). By the time of the Exodus, the **Amalekites were a significant power in Canaan** – they were found in the Negeb, the valleys, and hill country (Nm13:29, 14:25, 40, 45). Just before the Israelites got to Mount Sinai, when they were in the area of Horeb, **a contingent of Amalekites attacked them at Rephidim**, and were defeated by Joshua (Ex17:8-13). This resulted in **YHWH declaring perpetual war on Amalek** (Ex17:14-16, Dt25:17-19). In the time of Saul and David there are two identifiable groups of Amalekites: in **the hill country to the east of the territory of Ephraim** (Jdg12:15), the Carmel area, and in the extreme south of the Negev (1Sm30:1). Saul was primarily concerned with the Amalekites near Carmel because he wanted to get control of the Jezreel Valley to link his territory with the territory of the Northern Tribes near the Sea of Galilee (1Sm14:48, 15:1-9). Saul appears to have fought with both groups of Amalekites (1Sm15:5, 7, 12). The **"city of Amalek"** is most likely in the "Carmel" area. **Saul's setting up a "monument"** indicated his suzerainty over the conquered Amalekites. At the **Battle of Mount Gilboa**, Saul's forces are located near Jezreel. The Philistines are on the opposite side of the Valley with a significant chariot force. Saul retreats up Mount Gilboa to neutralize the chariots, **trusting his vassal Amalekites to guard his rear at En-gannim**.

**Chronological Data:** Thiele establishes **971BC as the death of Solomon** (Thiele, E.R., *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1965, page 52). Allowing 80 years for David and Solomon (2Sm2:11, 5:4-5, 1Kg2:11, 11:42), gives a date of **1011BC for the Battle of Mount Gilboa**. **Eshbaal was 40 at his accession** and he reigned two years (2Sm2:8-10). At his death, David became King in Jerusalem: 1011BC – 7.5 = 1004BC. Two years prior, 1006BC, he was 40; therefore, he was born in 1046BC. There seems to be no hard evidence to precisely date the **Battle of Ebenezer**; but all sources put it at "around" 1050BC. The **"forty years"** (At13:21) encompass the period of Samuel's judgeship and Saul's kingship – the **"missing digit"** in 1 Samuel 13:1 being a "2".

**Hebrews and Israelites:** The name "Hebrew" is derived from "Eber", great-grandson of Shem. All "Israelites" are "Hebrews"; but NOT all "Hebrews" are "Israelites". From Peleg to Terah we have no information on sons other than the given direct line to Abraham, as well as the many other sons of Joktan – presumably there are many branches of "Hebrews" about which we know nothing, until some of the show up as "Habiru" in Canaan. In the Amarna Letters we find Habiru mercenaries selling their services to the Philistines, the Arameans, and the Israelites (1Sm14:21).

# The Life of David

