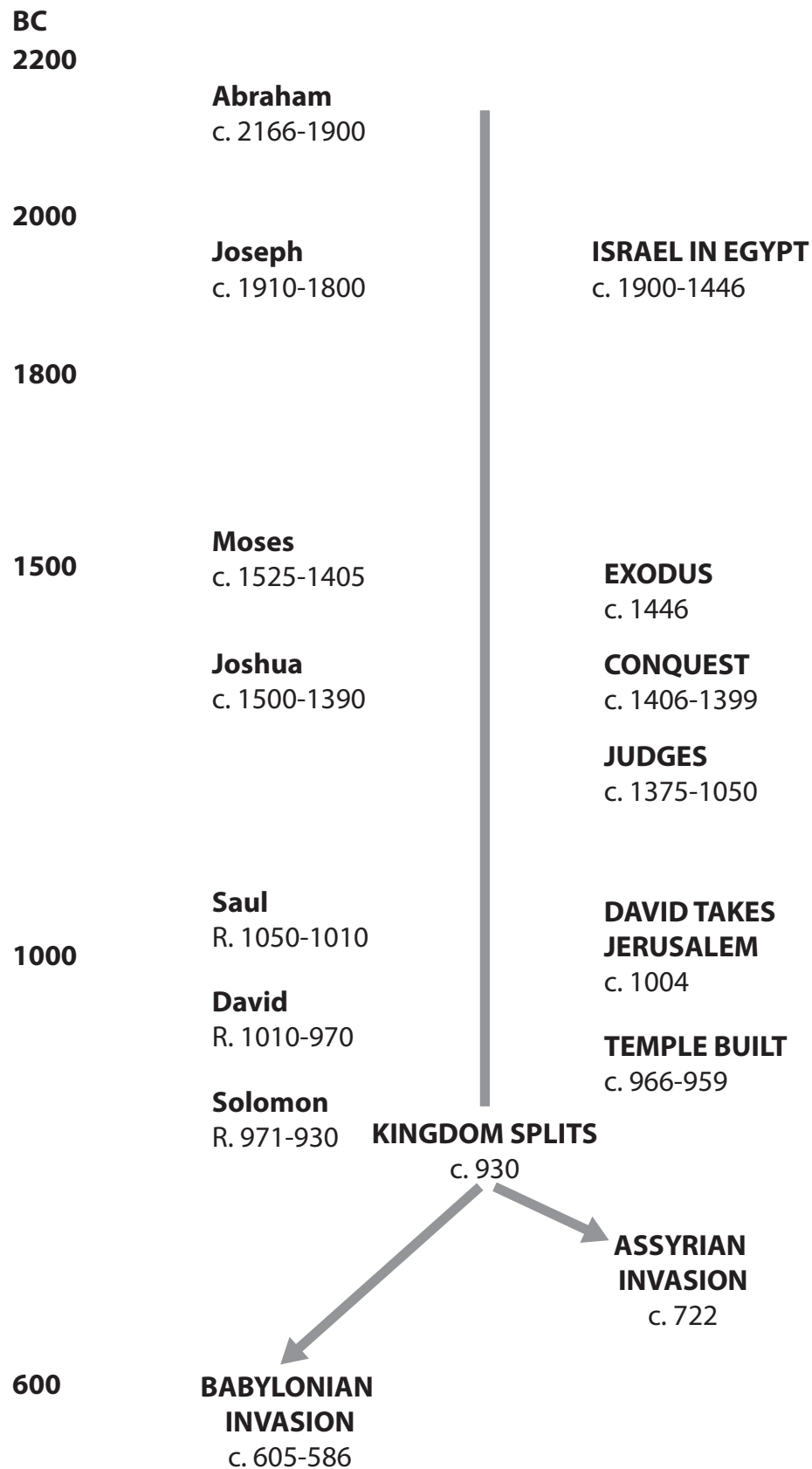




Basic TimeLine From Abraham to Exile



3. The Downfall of Eli's House and The Ark Among the Philistines.

(1 Samuel 41b-7:17)

1.4 Israel is Defeated and The Ark Is Captured (1 Samuel 4:1b–22)

1.4.1 Israel is defeated and The Ark is captured (4:1b-11)

Judges 3 3:1

Now these are the nations that the Lord left, **to test Israel by them**, that is, all in Israel who had not experienced all the wars in Canaan. 3:2 It was only in order that the generations of the people of Israel might know war, to teach war to those who had not known it before. 3:3 These are the nations: the five lords of the Philistines and all the Canaanites and the Sidonians and the Hivites who lived on Mount Lebanon, from Mount Baal-hermon as far as Lebo-hamath. 3:4 ***They were for the testing of Israel, to know whether Israel would obey the commandments of the Lord, which he commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses.***

- **The Philistines:** are generally associated with the Sea Peoples, groups that migrated from the Aegean region (possibly Crete or other parts of the Mediterranean) around the 12th century BC. Genesis 10:13–14 says that they are part of the descendants of Casluim, son of Mizraim (the name of Egypt in the OT). Abimelech in the Abraham narrative (Genesis 21-22) is identified as a Philistine. Egyptian records from the reign of Ramses III (c. 1175 BC) mention a people called the *Peleset*, widely identified with the biblical Philistines.

After being repelled from Egypt, they settled along the southern coastal plain of Canaan. Archaeology shows they brought distinct pottery styles, architecture, and possibly new technologies (like ironworking), marking them as culturally different and more advanced than the Canaanites and Israelites. They worshiped deities like Dagon, Baal-zebub, and Astarte (Ashtoreth?).

The Israelites did not encounter the Philistines during the early Conquest under Joshua, but at the end of his life, they were established in the five cities of Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Ekron and Gath - the Philistine *Pentapolis* (Joshua 13:2–3). The Philistines are portrayed as one of Israel's chief adversaries during the period of the Judges and the early monarchy. They controlled strategic coastal trade routes and posed a constant military threat.

Samson (Judges 13–16) fought repeatedly against the

Philistines. Eli, Samuel, and Saul dealt with their military pressure (1 Samuel 4–15). David and Goliath (1 Samuel 17) symbolizes the larger struggle between Israel and Philistia. David later subdued them but never eliminated them entirely.

The Philistines fade from history after the Babylonian conquests (6th century BC). Interestingly, the name *Palestine* derives from the Latin *Philistia*, reflecting the enduring association of this people with the land.

- **Shiloh was most likely destroyed at this time** for the following reasons: “(1) never again in 1, 2 Samuel is the city mentioned as a worship center for Israel; (2) the ark was not returned to Shiloh following its reacquisition by Israel (cf. 7:1–2); (3) Samuel moved the center of his activities back to his hometown of Ramah (cf. 7:17); and (4) references in the Books of Psalms (78:60) and Jeremiah (7:12–14; 26:6, 9) explicitly mention its destruction.
[Robert D. Bergen, 1, 2 Samuel, 92]
- 4:6-8 - Although the Philistines had heard what had happened to Egypt, they assume the Israelites are poly-theists: “Who can deliver us from **the power of these mighty gods!**?”
- 4:11 - Hophi and Phineas are killed fulfilling part of the prophecy from Chapter 2.

1.4.2 **Eli Dies and his daughter-in-law mourns (4:12-22)**

- The fall and death of old, “heavy,” (*kavod*) blind Eli parallel’s the falling of Dagon in the next chapter.
- 4:18, 21- the word-play on **kavod**:
the term can mean, “heavy, weighty, burdensome, honor, glory.” Eli is physically “heavy” but he also carries the “honor” of the Priesthood and the social “weight, significance” that role implied. The name *Ichabod* means “Where is the glory?” The assumed answer is, “It has departed.” After the death of Hophni, Phineas, and Eli the “burden” they had put on Israel through their failures had departed. But with the capture of the Ark, the “glory” of the LORD had also departed.

1.5 **The Ark is Moved Among the Philistines** (1 Samuel 5:1–7:17)

1.4.3 **The Ark goes to the Temple of Dagon in Ashdod (5:1-5)**

- **Dagon** was a Canaanite deity that the Philistines had apparently assimilated into their worship. In **Judges 16:23** the Philistines give sacrifices to Dagon because they believe he has delivered **Samson** into their hands. Dagon was the father of Baal

1.4.4 **The Ark is moved from Ashdod to Gath to Ekron (5:6-12)**

1.4.5 **The Philistines plan to send the Ark back to Israel (6:1-9)**

- **The Priests and Diviners** - things detestable to the LORD - rats and tumors. Numbers 7:7-9 implies forbidding the transportation of The Ark on a cart; it was to be carried on the shoulders by poles.
- 6:5 - **Tumors and Mice?**

1.4.6 **The Ark arrives at Beth-shemesh (6:10-18)**

- **Beth Shemesh** was a Levitical city set aside for the clan of Kohath, the Levitical family charged with responsibility of **caring for the ark of the covenant** (Num 4:4, 15) and was also a designated home for the descendants of Aaron (cf. Josh 21:13–16). [Robert D. Bergen, 1, 2 Samuel, 10]
- **Violations of the Law:** Using the female cows as a burnt offering violated the Law; only male cows were to be used according to Leviticus 1:3. Also, only the Aaronic priests were allowed to look at the exterior of the Ark, much less the interior according to Numbers 4:5-6

1.4.7 **The Ark is moved from Beth-shemesh to Kiriath-jearim (6:19-7:2)**

- **Kiriath-jearim** is also called Baalah (Joshua 15:9) and Kiriath-baal (Joshua 15:60) - a former center of Baal worship.

1.6 **Samuel Judges Israel (7:3-17)**

- It is the moving of Israel's heart - turning back to the LORD - not the moving of the Ark that brings deliverance.
- 7:3-4 - **Baal** and **Ashtareth** (when plural, *Baalim*, *Ashtaroth* it refers to places of worship). These are principle deities in Canaanite mythology. **Baal** was the storm and fertility god, associated with rain, thunder, and agricultural productivity. In myth, he fought against the forces of chaos (like Yam, the sea god, and Mot, the god of death). **Ashtoreth** was a goddess of fertility, sexuality, and war. She was linked with the cycles of reproduction and the heavens (sometimes associated with the moon or Venus as the "morning star").
- 7:6 - pouring out of water
"When Israel "drew water and poured it out before the LORD" (v. 6), **an action unparalleled in the Old Testament** in an Israelite religious convocation, they evidently were denying themselves liquids as a symbolic confession that the Lord's favor was more important to them than life-sustaining water (cf. Jonah 3:7; 2 Sam 23:16)." [Robert D. Bergen, 1, 2 Samuel, 107]
- 7:10 "**the LORD thundered...**" parallels Hannah's prayer in 2:10: The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken to pieces; against them He will thunder in heaven. The Lord will judge the ends of the earth; he will give strength to his king and exalt the horn of his anointed."
- 7:12 - **Eben-ezer** - "the stone helper" or "The Helper is a Stone"
The Psalms frequently praise the LORD as a Helper (cf. 10:14; 33:20; 40:17; 46:1; 63:7; 115:9-11; 118:7; 146:5).