

# The People of God and the State in the Old Testament





“Your kingdom come, your will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.”

Matthew 6:10



# What is the Role of the Old Testament?



“These things happened to them to serve as an example, and they were written down to instruct us, on whom the ends of the ages have come.”

1 Corinthians 10:11



# Definitions: People of God

Now the Lord said to Abram, “*Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house* to the land that I will show you. I will make of you *a great nation*, and *I will bless you*, and make your *name great*, so that *you will be a blessing*. I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you *all the families of the earth shall be blessed*.” Genesis 12:1-3

The descendants of Abraham and those God has included among them



## Definition: The State

A political structure *governing* the people living in a *territory* by imposing and enforcing rules that are recognized by the population.



# Examples of People and State in the Old Testament Story

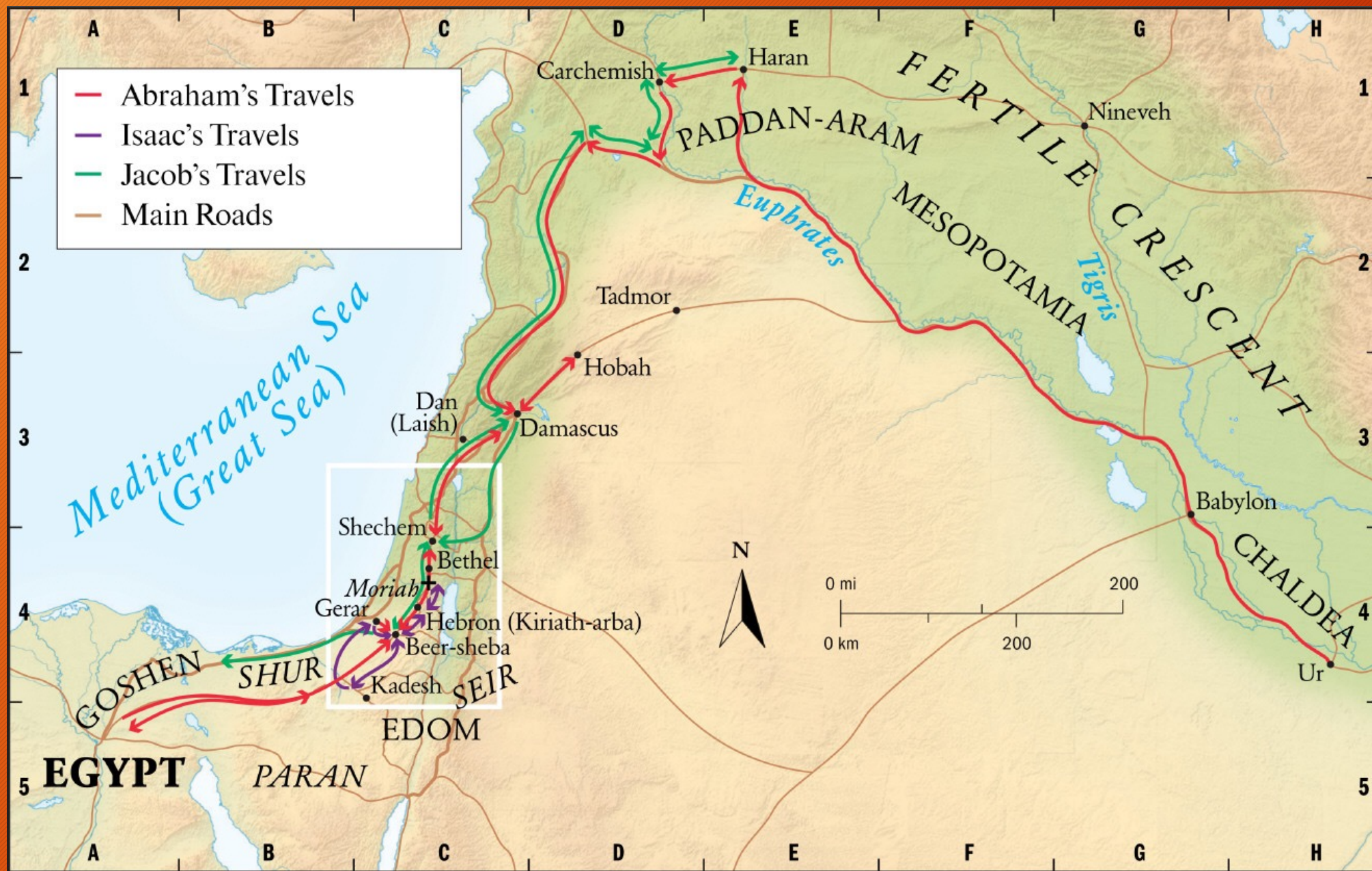


# Beginnings

Family-based Community under God  
Sojourning among and under  
Other Peoples and States

(Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy)







# Beginnings





# Beginnings

“A wandering Aramean was my ancestor; he went down into Egypt and lived there as an alien, few in number, and there he became a great nation, mighty and populous.” Deuteronomy 26:1

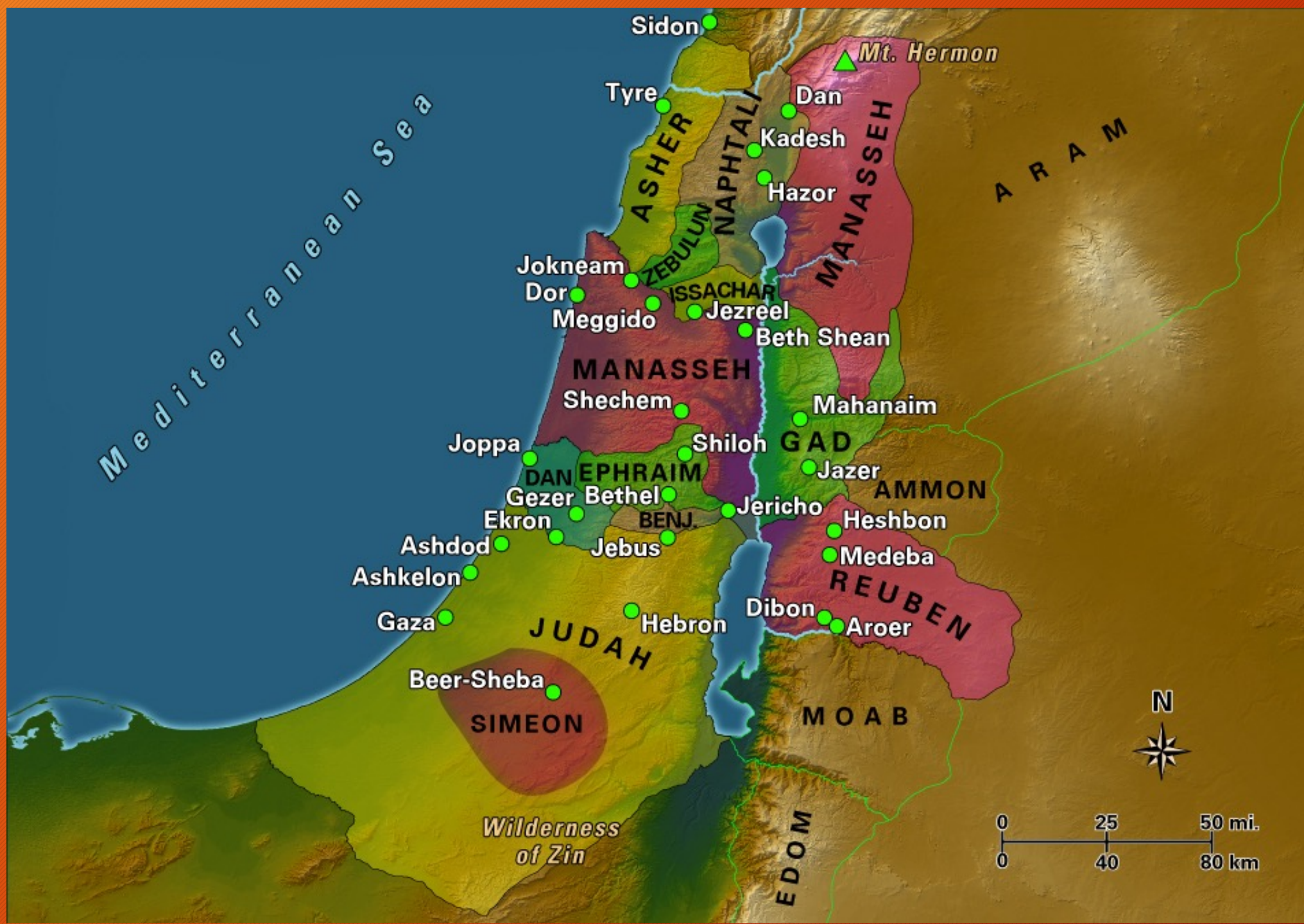
“You shall not wrong or oppress a resident alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt.” Exodus 22:21 (23:9; Lev 19:33; Deut 10:18-19; 24:17)



# Inheriting the Land

Tribal States under God  
Settling Territories  
Among other Peoples and States  
  
(Joshua, Judges, Ruth)







# Inheriting the Land

- “Thus the Lord gave to Israel all the land that he swore to their ancestors that he would give them; and having taken possession of it, they settled there. And the Lord gave them rest on every side just as he had sworn to their ancestors.” Joshua 21:43-44
- “In those days there was no king in Israel; all the people did what was right in their own eyes.” Judges 17:6

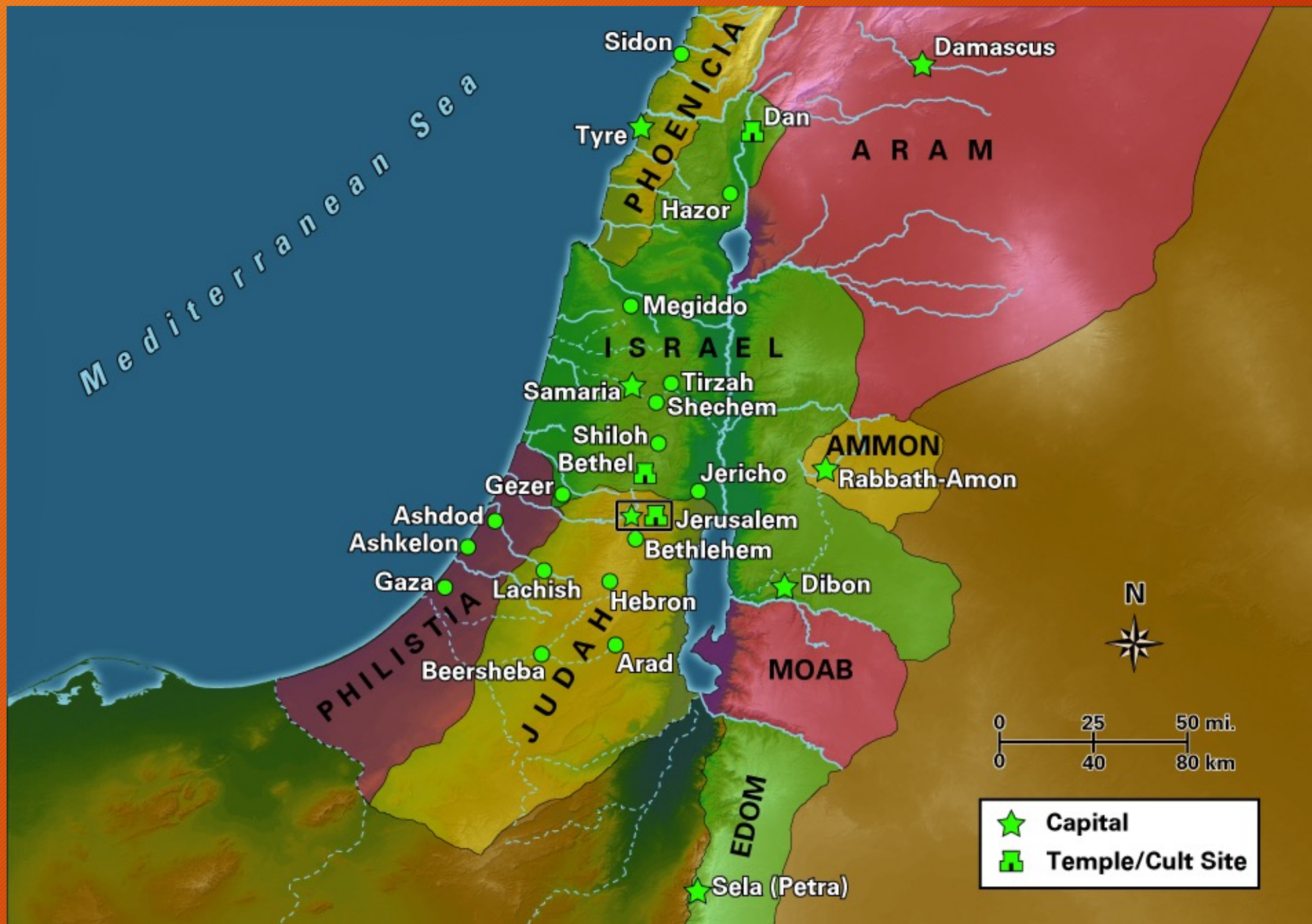


# Ruling the Land

Kingdom(s) under God  
Governing Territory  
Among Kingdoms and Empires

(1-2 Samuel, 1-2 Kings, 1-2 Chronicles, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Amos,  
Hosea, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah)







# Ruling the Land

And in that day you will cry out because of your king, whom you “have chosen for yourselves; but the Lord will not answer you in that day.”

But the people refused to listen to the voice of Samuel; they said, “No! but we are determined to have a king over us, so that we also may be like other nations, and that our king may govern us and go out before us and fight our battles.” When Samuel had heard all the words of the people, he repeated them in the ears of the Lord. The Lord said to Samuel, “Listen to their voice and set a king over them.” 1 Samuel 8:18-22



# Ruling the Land

“When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come forth from your body, and I will establish his kingdom... .

Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever.” (2 Samuel 7:11-2, 16)



# Diaspora

Communities of Families under God  
Scattered abroad and in the former homeland  
Among Peoples and Kingdoms and Under Empires

(Ezekiel, Daniel, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, Joel, Ezra, Nehemiah,  
Esther)



# THE PERSIAN EMPIRE (CA. 538-332 B.C.E.)





# Diaspora

“Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.”

Jeremiah 29:4-7



# Diaspora

“You have been just in all that has come upon us, for you have dealt faithfully and we have acted wickedly; our kings, our officials, our priests, and our ancestors have not kept your law or heeded the commandments and the warnings that you gave them. Even in their own kingdom, and in the great goodness you bestowed on them, and in the large and rich land that you set before them, they did not serve you and did not turn from their wicked works. Here we are, slaves to this day—slaves in the land that you gave to our ancestors to enjoy its fruit and its good gifts.”

Nehemiah 9:33-36



# Diaspora

“In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshipped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.”

Daniel 7:13-14



# Examples written down for us instruction

- The people of God under, as, with, and without a state of their own
- Different examples for different circumstances
- Look back for wisdom but not for return
- Look ahead in hope for the kingdom of God



# Next week

- What are some important lessons from each example?
- How does the Old Testament prepare us to look at the New Testament?
- What are your questions? [jonesb@campbell.edu](mailto:jonesb@campbell.edu)