

The UNITED KINGDOM *of* ISRAEL

**SAUL, DAVID & SOLOMON
FORESHADOW CHRIST THE KING**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

THE UNITED KINGDOM OF ISRAEL: SAUL, DAVID & SOLOMON FORESHADOW CHRIST THE KING

LESSON 1	<i>God's people ask for a king</i>	5
LESSON 2	<i>Samuel anoints Saul</i>	12
LESSON 3	<i>Saul displeases the LORD</i>	18
LESSON 4	<i>God regrets making Saul king</i>	24
LESSON 5	<i>David is anointed by Samuel</i>	31
LESSON 6	<i>David & Jonathan: two best friends</i>	38
LESSON 7	<i>the priest Ahimelech helps David flee from Saul</i>	43
LESSON 8	<i>David eludes Saul in the wilderness</i>	50
LESSON 9	<i>David & Abigail; David again spares Saul's life</i>	55
LESSON 10	<i>Saul consults a medium at En-Dor</i>	62
LESSON 11	<i>David mourns the deaths of Saul & Jonathan</i>	67
LESSON 12	<i>David is acclaimed king of Judah & king of Israel</i>	73
LESSON 13	<i>David brings the ark to Jerusalem</i>	80
LESSON 14	<i>God's promise to David</i>	85
LESSON 15	<i>David's sin & the birth of Solomon</i>	92
LESSON 16	<i>Amnon, Tamar & Absalom: David's children</i>	98
LESSON 17	<i>Absalom usurps the throne</i>	104
LESSON 18	<i>good & bad counsel: problems for Absalom</i>	109
LESSON 19	<i>David mourns the death of Absalom</i>	114
LESSON 20	<i>dissension: Jacob's descendants disagree</i>	120
LESSON 21	<i>the sweet Psalmist of Israel</i>	126
LESSON 22	<i>David sins by numbering the people</i>	131
LESSON 23	<i>Solomon's struggle for succession</i>	136
LESSON 24	<i>the wisdom of Solomon</i>	144
LESSON 25	<i>Solomon builds the Temple</i>	149
LESSON 26	<i>Solomon dedicates the Temple</i>	157
LESSON 27	<i>God appears again to Solomon</i>	163
LESSON 28	<i>the united kingdom dies with Solomon</i>	169
	INDEX OF SCRIPTURE CITATIONS	176
	INDEX OF TOPICS	182
	RELATED CHURCH TEACHING	184
	RELIGIOUS SYMBOLS IN THE TEMPLE	186

WHEN YOUR DAYS ARE FULFILLED
and you lie down with your fathers,
I will raise up your offspring after you,
who shall come forth 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 for ever.
—*Second Book of Samuel* 7:12–13



The UNITED KINGDOM of ISRAEL

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1 SAMUEL 7:3–9:25

7 [...] ³Then Samuel said to all the house of Israel, “If you are returning to the LORD with all your heart, then put away the foreign gods and the Ashtaroath from among you, and direct your heart to the LORD, and serve him only, and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines.” ⁴So Israel put away the Baals and the Ashtaroath, and they served the LORD only.

⁵Then Samuel said, “Gather all Israel at Mizpah, and I will pray to the Lord for you.” ⁶So they gathered at Mizpah, and drew water and poured it out before the Lord, and fasted on that day, and said there, “We have sinned against the Lord.” And Samuel judged the sons of Israel at Mizpah. ⁷Now when the Philistines heard that the sons of Israel had gathered at Mizpah, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the sons of Israel heard of it they were afraid of the Philistines. ⁸And the sons of Israel said to Samuel, “Do not cease to cry to the Lord our God for us, that he may save us from the hand of the Philistines.” ⁹So Samuel took a suckling lamb and offered it as a whole burnt offering to the Lord; and Samuel cried to the Lord for Israel, and the Lord answered him. ¹⁰As Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to attack Israel; but the Lord thundered with a mighty voice that day against the Philistines and threw them into confusion; and they were routed before Israel. ¹¹And the men of Israel went out of Mizpah and pursued the Philistines, and struck them, as far as below Beth-car.

¹²Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Jeshanah, and called its name Ebenezer, for he said, “Hitherto the LORD has helped us.” ¹³So the Philistines were subdued and did not again enter the territory of Israel. And the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel. ¹⁴The cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron to Gath; and Israel rescued their territory from the hand of the Philistines. There was peace also between Israel and the Amorites.

¹⁵ Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life. ¹⁶ And he went on a circuit year by year to Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpah; and he judged Israel in all these places. ¹⁷ Then he would come back to Ramah, for his home was there, and there also he administered justice to Israel. And he built there an altar to the LORD.

8 ¹ When Samuel became old, he made his sons judges over Israel. ² The name of his first-born son was Joel, and the name of his second, Abijah; they were judges in Beer-sheba. ³ Yet his sons did not walk in his ways, but turned aside after gain; they took bribes and perverted justice.

⁴ Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah, ⁵ and said to him, “Behold, you are old and your sons do not walk in your ways; now appoint for us a king to govern us like all the nations.” ⁶ But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, “Give us a king to govern us.” And Samuel prayed to the LORD. ⁷ And the LORD said to Samuel, “Listen to the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them. ⁸ According to all the deeds which they have done to me, from the day I brought them up out of Egypt even to this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are also doing to you. ⁹ Now then, listen to their voice; only, you shall solemnly warn them, and show them the ways of the king who shall reign over them.”

¹⁰ So Samuel told all the words of the LORD to the people who were asking a king from him. ¹¹ He said, “These will be the ways of the king who will reign over you: he will take your sons and appoint them to his chariots and to be his horsemen, and to run before his chariots; ¹² and he will appoint for himself commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties, and some to plow his ground and to reap his harvest, and to make his implements of war and the equipment of his chariots. ¹³ He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers. ¹⁴ He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive orchards and give them to his servants. ¹⁵ He will take the tenth of your grain and of your vineyards and give it to his officers and to his servants. ¹⁶ He will take your menservants and maidservants, and the best of your cattle and your donkeys, and put them to his work. ¹⁷ He will take the tenth of your flocks, and you shall be his slaves. ¹⁸ 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.”

¹⁹ But the people refused to listen to the voice of Samuel; and they said, “No! but we will have a king over us, ²⁰ that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may govern us and go out before us and fight our battles.” ²¹ And when Samuel heard all the words of the people, he repeated them in the ears of the LORD. ²² And the LORD said to Samuel, “Listen to their voice, and make them a king.” Samuel then said to the men of Israel, “Go every man to his city.”

9 ¹ There was a man of Benjamin whose name was Kish, the son of Abiel, son of Zeror, son of Becorath, son of Aphiah, a Benjaminite, a man of wealth; ² and he had a son whose name was Saul, a handsome young man. There was not a man among the sons of Israel more handsome than he; from his shoulders upward he was taller than any of the people.

³ Now the donkeys of Kish, Saul’s father, were lost. So Kish said to Saul his son, “Take one

of the servants with you, and arise, go and look for the donkeys.”⁴ And they passed through the hill country of Ephraim and passed through the land of Shalishah, but they did not find them. And they passed through the land of Shaalim, but they were not there. Then they passed through the land of Benjamin, but did not find them.

⁵ When they came to the land of Zuph, Saul said to his servant who was with him, “Come, let us go back, lest my father cease to care about the donkeys and become anxious about us.”⁶ But he said to him, “Behold, there is a man of God in this city, and he is a man that is held in honor; all that he says comes true. Let us go there; perhaps he can tell us about the journey on which we have set out.”⁷ Then Saul said to his servant, “But if we go, what can we bring the man? For the bread in our sacks is gone, and there is no present to bring to the man of God. What have we?”⁸ The servant answered Saul again, “Here, I have with me the fourth part of a shekel of silver, and I will give it to the man of God, to tell us our way.”⁹ (Formerly in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, he said, “Come, let us go to the seer”; for he who is now called a prophet was formerly called a seer.)¹⁰ And Saul said to his servant, “Well said; come, let us go.” So they went to the city where the man of God was.

¹¹ As they went up the hill to the city, they met young maidens coming out to draw water, and said to them, “Is the seer here?”¹² They answered, “He is; behold, he is just ahead of you. Make haste; he has come just now to the city, because the people have a sacrifice today on the high place.”¹³ As soon as you enter the city, you will find him, before he goes up to the high place to eat; for the people will not eat till he comes, since he must bless the sacrifice; afterward those eat who are invited. Now go up, for you will meet him immediately.”¹⁴ So they went up to the city. As they were entering the city, they saw Samuel coming out toward them on his way up to the high place.

¹⁵ Now the day before Saul came, the LORD had revealed to Samuel:¹⁶ “Tomorrow about this time I will send to you a man from the land of Benjamin, and you shall anoint him to be prince over my people Israel. He shall save my people from the hand of the Philistines; for I have seen the affliction of my people, because their cry has come to me.”¹⁷ When Samuel saw Saul, the LORD told him, “Here is the man of whom I spoke to you! He it is who shall rule over my people.”¹⁸ Then Saul approached Samuel in the gate, and said, “Tell me where is the house of the seer?”¹⁹ Samuel answered Saul, “I am the seer; go up before me to the high place, for today you shall eat with me, and in the morning I will let you go and will tell you all that is on your mind.”²⁰ As for your donkeys that were lost three days ago, do not set your mind on them, for they have been found. And for whom is all that is desirable in Israel? Is it not for you and for all your father’s house?”²¹ Saul answered, “Am I not a Benjaminite, from the least of the tribes of Israel? And is not my family the humblest of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? Why then have you spoken to me in this way?”

²² Then Samuel took Saul and his servant and brought them into the hall and gave them a place at the head of those who had been invited, who were about thirty persons.²³ And Samuel said to the cook, “Bring the portion I gave you, of which I said to you, ‘Put it aside.’”²⁴ So the

cook took up the leg and the upper portion and set them before Saul; and Samuel said, “See, what was kept is set before you. Eat, because it was kept for you until the hour appointed, that you might eat with the guests.”

So Saul ate with Samuel that day. ²⁵ And when they came down from the high place into the city, a bed was spread for Saul upon the roof, and he lay down to sleep.



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GOD’S PEOPLE ASK FOR A KING

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The *First* and *Second Books of Samuel* and the first 12 chapters in the *First Book of the Kings* are historical books written with a theological purpose. They provide an account of the time a thousand years prior to Jesus when God’s people made the transition from a theocracy directly under God’s rule and protection to a monarchy headed by an earthly ruler. The king was to serve as God’s representative in political matters, and he was expected to be obedient to God.

This did not always happen, which led to development of the office of prophet as a corrective measure. The prophet prayed and interceded for the people, spoke for the LORD in counseling and admonishing the king and the people to do right, and issued warnings from God about punishment the king and people could expect when they disobeyed God’s commandments.

The kingdom ruled by Saul, David, and Solomon represents a critical time in the development of prophecy, which builds a foundation that foreshadows the coming of the Messiah. David’s genius is that he unites the political and religious aspirations of the people of God in his own person. His kingdom is an Old Testament type of the kingdom established by Jesus.

All Christians are called to share in Jesus’ roles of priest, prophet, and king. We can learn much by studying the kingship of David as a foreshadowing of the kingship of Jesus. The reigns of Saul and Solomon are significant primarily because of these rulers’ relationship to David, who is described in the *First Book of Samuel* 13:14 as a man after God’s own heart. It is well worth reflecting on what specific qualities David shares with God, and on how we can become more like God ourselves.

1 Read the *First Book of Samuel* 7:3–17, which describes the relationship between God and his people prior to establishment of the united kingdom of Israel. What might be the most important characteristic of that relationship? Who has been threatening the descendants of Jacob? How do God’s people deal with the threat? What is unexpected about the part that Samuel plays? Consider what has been included in the job description of a judge of God’s people.

2 Read the *First Book of Samuel* 8:1–5, in which the people ask Samuel to appoint a king to rule over them. What three concerns are prompting the people’s request? Which concern might best justify their request? How are kings usually chosen? What might be motivating the people approach Samuel to appoint a king?

ISRAEL’S ENEMIES ARE RELATIVE

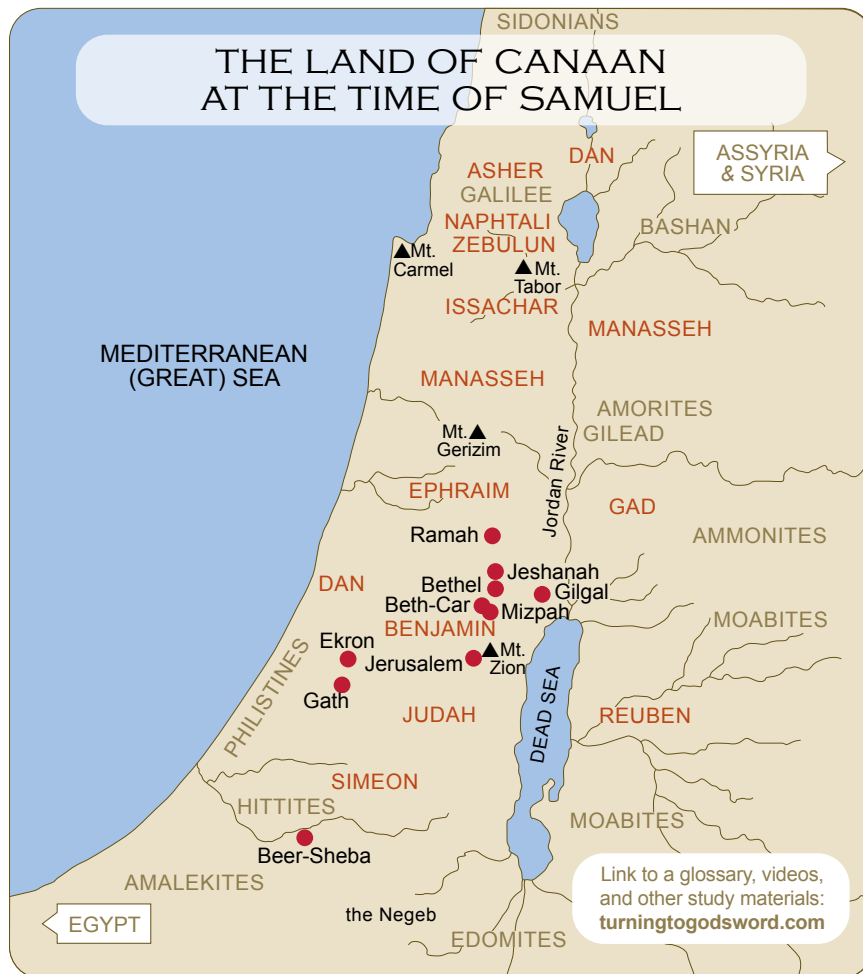
The *First Book of Samuel* 7:3–17 identifies two primary enemies of the descendants of Jacob. The Philistines and the Amorites both are descended from Noah through Ham’s sons Egypt and Canaan, respectively, as recorded in the book of *Genesis* 10:1–20.

WHO IS SAMUEL?

Many Catholics are familiar with Samuel's call to serve the LORD, described in detail in the third chapter in the *First Book of Samuel*. The Philistines' capture and return of the ark of the covenant is recounted in the *First Book of Samuel* 4:1—7:2. The *First Book of Samuel* 7:13 records that "the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel," though Saul's later battles suggest that the depiction of Samuel as an undefeated military leader is somewhat of an exaggeration.

Samuel nevertheless holds a unique position in the salvation history of the Old Testament, serving a dual role as prophet and judge for the 12 tribes of Israel.

Although Abraham is called a prophet in the book of *Genesis* 20:7, and Moses refers to himself as a prophet in the book of *Deuteronomy* 18:15, Samuel is the first to hold the office of prophet and to advise Israel's kings. Samuel's significance lies in the role he plays in anointing the first two kings to rule over all of the descendants of Jacob, and in counseling them—particularly Saul—on behalf of the LORD.



3 Read the *First Book of Samuel* 8:6. Why might Samuel be displeased by the people's request for a king? Consider whether his concerns are more political or more religious. Who has been governing Israel? With whom does Samuel discuss his concerns?

4 Read the *First Book of Samuel* 8:7–9. What is implied by God twice instructing Samuel to listen to the people? If necessary, refer to paragraph 144 in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. What has God determined to be the reason that the people want a king? What does this suggest about their relationship with God?

Is•ra•el 12 tribes composed of descendants of the 12 sons of Jacob

In the *First Book of Samuel* 8:4–5, the elders of **Israel** are representative descendants of the 12 sons of Jacob (renamed Israel in the book of *Genesis* 32:28*). These descendants are called tribes of **Israel** or sons of **Israel**. Saul, David, and Solomon are anointed to rule the united kingdom, which consists of all of **Israel's** descendants. At Solomon's death, 10 of the tribes will consolidate to form the northern kingdom of **Israel**, while two will remain under the rule of David's descendants in the southern kingdom of Judah.

*See the **Index of Scripture Citations** beginning on page 176 for different verse numbering in the New American Bible Revised Edition (NABRE).

5 Read the *First Book of Samuel* 8:10–18, in which Samuel solemnly warns the people about what to expect if they insist on having a king to rule over them. What about this warning suggests that the people are looking for a king to replace God in protecting their interests? What does Samuel predict the people will do when they realize that they have become enslaved to their king? What will be the LORD’S response to their predicament at that time?

6 Read the *First Book of Samuel* 8:19–22. What might explain why the people have asked Samuel to appoint a king for them when they are unwilling to listen to his warning from the LORD about the negative consequences of such a plan? What two things do the people expect that a king will provide for them in respect to other neighboring peoples? What does the LORD instruct Samuel to do?

7 Read the *First Book of Samuel* 9:1–10, which introduces Saul. From which of the 12 tribes of Israel is Saul descended? For what characteristics is he praised? Why is Saul traveling the countryside? What does Saul’s servant suggest that they can learn if they visit the city of a nearby man of God? What concern does Saul raise? How does the servant solve this problem? What does the biblical text disclose about the role of the man of God?

CHRISTIAN CONNECTION

WORDS OF CAUTION

The warning in the *First Book of Samuel* 8:10–18 can seem irrelevant. Most of us are not concerned about the possibility that our children will be drafted to drive chariots or to work as perfumers. How then can we interpret this passage? Though God had been acting as king over his people, they decide they prefer an earthly king. The LORD’S message is clear: Abandoning our trust in God in order to behave as our secular neighbors do can carry with it serious consequences.



WHO IS TALKING & WHO IS LISTENING?

Voices are strikingly emphasized in the biblical account of events leading to the establishment of an earthly monarchy for God’s people. In the *First Book of Samuel* 7:8, the sons of Israel beg Samuel to speak to the LORD in order to ward off an attack by the Philistines. Samuel does so, and God’s thundering response determines a favorable outcome.

The *First Book of Samuel* 8:1–3 strongly suggests that although Samuel is a man of God, his own sons have not listened to him and are engaging in corrupt behavior, reflecting the way that the rest of God’s children are behaving.

The LORD listens to the people’s request and encourages Samuel to do likewise, explaining that it is not Samuel who is being rejected as ruler. Samuel is instructed to issue a solemn warning about what the people can expect from an earthly king. Samuel is listening, and he does what God has asked of him. Samuel cautions the people that if they later change their mind about wanting a king, God will not respond; God will not listen.

Not surprisingly, the people refuse to listen to Samuel’s warning. God instructs Samuel to listen and to provide them with the king that they desire. God continues to talk with Samuel about the choice of a king, and Samuel continues to listen.

Communication is at the heart of Samuel’s relationship with God. The LORD talks, and Samuel listens—the core definition of a prophet. We know that Samuel is listening because he obeys God.

Repeated references to voices and listening in this section of the *First Book of Samuel* call attention to the much overlooked virtue of obedience. Paragraph 144 in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* explains the critical connection between listening and obedience in regard to religious faith.

The point seems to be that Samuel’s close relationship with the LORD is dependent on the fact that Samuel listens when God speaks, and vice versa. The evidence is seen in Samuel’s obedience. He does what God asks. This offers practical application for anyone desiring to know God better.



A SOLEMN WARNING

In the *First Book of Samuel* 8:15–17, tied up in Samuel’s cautionary words about the dangers of following an earthly monarch is the idea that a king will require a tenth of the people’s material goods. The implication seems to be that since the king will be taking God’s place in fighting the people’s battles, the king also now will be entitled to claim the best offerings formerly reserved for God alone.

8 Read the *First Book of Samuel* 9:11–14. As they enter the city, Saul and his servant encounter some maidens. What do the maidens tell them? Saul and his servant then meet Samuel. What is Samuel’s home city? If necessary, refer to the *First Book of Samuel* 7:17. For what purpose is Samuel going to the high place?

9 Read the *First Book of Samuel* 9:15–19. Who has the LORD told Samuel to expect to encounter? What is suggested by the detail that God instructs Samuel to anoint a prince instead of a king to rule over God’s people? What reason does the LORD give for why he is sending Saul to Samuel? What invitation does Samuel issue to Saul? What does Samuel promise to tell Saul the next day?

10 Read the *First Book of Samuel* 9:20–25. After Samuel tells Saul that the donkeys for which he has been searching have been found, Samuel makes a cryptic statement concerning Saul. What is Samuel implying about Saul’s future? How does Saul respond? What reason might Saul have for mentioning that as a Benjaminite he is from the least of the tribes of Israel? Consider what point the biblical author might be trying to make.

se•er a person with insight to look into the future

Samuel is described as a man of God, a **seer** known for being able to predict the future accurately as a result of his close relationship with the LORD. The ninth chapter in the *First Book of Samuel* equates a **seer** with a prophet, firmly establishing Samuel’s relationship with the LORD and shedding light upon his role in establishing a king for God’s people.

A PROMISE OF KINGS

It is easy to fault God’s people for clamoring for a king to rule over them, but no one should lose sight of God’s ultimate control over all of history. The covenant promises made to Abraham in the book of *Genesis* 17:6 indicate that providing his chosen people with an earthly monarchy is not outside of God’s long-range plan: “I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come forth from you.”

THE LORD REIGNS

“ Say to the nations,
“The LORD is king.” This exhortation in *Psalms* 96:10 sets the tone that colors the whole hymn. Today we would like to make room for the Christian re-reading of this *Psalms* by the Fathers of the Church, who saw in it a prefiguration of the Incarnation and Crucifixion, a sign of the paradoxical lordship of Jesus Christ.

Thus at the beginning of his address in Constantinople on Christmas Day in 379 or 380, St. Gregory Nazianzen uses some expressions of *Psalms* 96: “Christ is born: Glorify him! Christ comes down from heaven: Go to meet him! Christ is on earth: Be exalted! Sing to the LORD, all the earth!” and, to combine the concepts, “Let the heavens rejoice and the earth be glad” because of him who is of heaven and then of earth.

In this way the mystery of the divine lordship is manifested in the Incarnation. Indeed, he who reigns by becoming earthly, reigns precisely in humiliation on the Cross. It is significant that many of the ancients interpreted *Psalms* 96:10 with this thought-provoking Christological integration: The Lord reigned from the tree. ”

—Pope St. John Paul II
18 September 2002

INDEX OF SCRIPTURE CITATIONS

OLD TESTAMENT				
Genesis 1:1—50:26		<i>Numbers</i> 17:1–11	160	<i>1 Samuel</i> 8:10–18
1:1–2:3	35	18:1–32	124	8:15–17
1:1–2:25	59	18:20	15	8:19–22
1:26–31	168	28:11–15	47	9:1–2
2:4–3:19	144,147,148	35:33	125	9:1–10
3:24	155	Deuteronomy 1:1—34:12		9:1–27
4:10	125	5:33	17	9:2
10:1–6	172	17:14–17	142,148	9:11–14
10:1–20	8	17:14–20		9:15–19
14:17–20	82		142,154,166,168,173	9:20–25
14:18–20	84	17:18–20	142	9:26–10:1
17:1–27	48	18:15	9	9:26–11:15
17:6	11	21:22–23	125	10:1
19:1–29	17	22:22	95,97	10:1
20:7	9	Joshua 1:1—24:33		10:1–6
22:15–18	162	6:17–18	29	10:1–9
31:17–35	41	9:1–27	124,125	10:1–27
*32:28	9	21:13–18	125	10:2–7
35:29–36:1	48,172	Judges 1:1—21:25		10:6
36:15–16	29	9:1–57	95	10:8
45:1–11	174	11:29–40	29	10:8–9
46:8–27	174	19:1–21:25	17,72	10:9
48:1–20	174	21:1–25	17,71	10:10–12
48:1–22	15	21:25	54	10:10–16
Exodus 1:1—40:38		Ruth 1:1—4:22		10:17–21
3:13–14	155	1:1–5	48	10:20–21
14:1–31	154	4:13–17	48	10:22–27
16:1–15	160	1 Samuel 1:1—31:13		10:23
17:8–14	29	1:3	36	10:24
20:3	173	2:27–33	48,143	11:1–2
20:5	98	2:27–36	28	11:1–5
25:16	83	3:1–18	9	11:1–11
25:17–22	154,155	4:1–7:2	9,82,83	11:1–15
25:21–22	88	7:3–17	8	11:6–7
28:30	28	7:3—9:25	(5–11)	11:7
30:17–21	155	7:8	10	11:8–11
31:1–5	154	7:13	9	11:12–15
32:1–20	168	7:15	21	12:1–5
33:7–10	160	7:17	11	12:1–25
Leviticus 1:1—27:34		8:1–3	10,20	12:1—13:23
17:10–11	28,30	8:1–5	8	(18–23)
24:5–9	48	8:3	21	12:6–13
Numbers 1:1—36:13		8:4–5	9,49	12:11
10:10	154	8:6	9	12:14
		8:7–9	9	12:14–18
				12:16–18
				12:19

| *Genesis 32:28 (RSV2CE) = Genesis 32:29 (NABRE)

<i>1 Samuel</i> 12:19–25	21	<i>1 Samuel</i> 16:13	37	<i>1 Samuel</i> 22:1–23	48
12:21	22	16:14–23	35,37	22:3–4	47
13:1–4	22	16:21	35	22:6–10	49
13:1–23	22,23	16:23	40	22:11–19	49
13:2–3	22	17:1–11	36	22:20–23	49
13:5–7	22	17:1–58	31,35	23:1–5	52,53
13:8–9	18,23	17:12–15	35	23:1–29	50
13:8–10	22	17:12–18	36	23:1—24:22	(50–54)
3:8–14	49	17:19–27	36	23:6–14	52
13:11–15	23	17:28–30	37	23:9–11	84
13:14		117:31–40	37	23:15–18	52
8,15,23,35,37,42,84,92		17:41–47	37	23:17	52
13:16	22	17:45	36,37	23:19–24	53
13:16–18	23	17:45–47	35	23:25–29	53
13:19–22	23	17:48–58	37	24:1–3	53
13:19–23	23	17:54	35	24:1–22	50,54,59,60
13:22	23	17:55–58	35	24:4	54
14:1–23	28	18:1–4	42	24:4–7	54
14:1–52	24,38,42	18:1–5	40	24:8–11	54
14:1—15:35	(24–30)	18:1—19:24	(38–42)	24:12–15	54
14:3	28	18:6–11	40	24:13	54
14:24	29	18:12–16	40	24:16–21	60
14:24–30	28	18:17	42	24:16–22	54
14:29–30	29,42	18:17–19	41	24:17	53
14:31–33	30	18:20–29	42	24:20	52
14:31–35	28	18:20–30	41	25:1	65
14:36–46	28	19:1–3	41	25:1–8	59
14:41	28	19:4–7	42	25:1–44	55,60,61
14:43	42	19:8–10	42	25:1—27:12	(55–61)
14:47–52	29	19:11–17	42,60	25:3	59,61
15:1–9	29,71	19:13	41	25:9–17	59
15:1–35	24	19:18–24	42	25:18–22	59
15:2–3	29	19:24	41	25:23–31	59
15:10–11	66	20:1–17	47	25:32–38	59
15:10–19	29	20:1–42	47,154	25:39–44	60
15:20–25	30	20:1—22:23	(43–49)	25:44	61
15:22	30,84	20:8	47,48	26:1–12	60
15:26–29	65	20:14–16	47	26:1–25	59
15:26–31	30	20:18–23	47	26:6–9	134
15:32–35	30	20:24–34	47	26:13–25	60
15:35	42	20:35–42	47	27:1	60
16:1	66	21:1–9	47,48	27:1–7	61
16:1–5	35	21:1–15	43	27:8–12	61,66
16:1–12	73	21:10	61	28:1–3	64
16:1–23	31,35	21:10–15	48	28:1–25	62
16:1—17:58	(31–37)	22:1	47	28:1—29:11	(62–66)
16:6–13	35	22:1–2	47,53	28:3	64,65,66
16:7	31	22:1–5	48	28:4–7	64

INDEX OF SCRIPTURE CITATIONS CONTINUED

<i>1 Samuel</i> 28:6	62,64,66	<i>2 Samuel</i> 2:8–10	113	<i>2 Samuel</i> 2:7:1–29	85,89,117,157,161
28:8–10	64	2:8–17	77	7:1—10:19	(85–91)
28:11–14	64	2:14	77	7:2	91
28:15–18	65	2:18	77	7:4–11	89
28:15–19	66	2:18–32	77	7:5–16	91,154
28:19	71	3:1–11	77	7:8–16	130
28:19–20	65	3:1–39	108	7:11	89,146
28:20–25	65	3:12–19	78	7:12–13	4,114
28:21–25	65	3:17	79	7:12–16	174,175
29:1–5	66	3:20–27	78	7:12–17	89
29:6–8	66	3:28–39	78	7:14	85,124,162
29:9	64	3:31–39	78	7:14–15	89,142
29:9–11	66	3:39	78	7:16	168
30:1–6	70	4:1	79	7:18–29	89
30:1—2 Samuel 1:27 (67–72)		4:1–4	79	8:1–14	90
30:7–8	84	4:1–12	117	8:1–18	90
30:7–15	70	4:5–12	79	8:6	90
30:16–20	70	4:9–12	77	8:14	90
30:20–25	70	5:1	79	8:15–18	90,124
30:21–25	71	5:1–3	73	8:18	126,134
30:22	71	5:1–5	79	9:1–13	91
30:26–31	70,71	5:2	79	10:1–2	91
31:1–6	67	5:6–10	82	10:1–6	91
31:1–7	71	5:6—6:23	(80–84)	10:7–14	91
31:8–13	72	5:9	83	10:15–19	91
31:11–13	71	5:11–16	82	11:1–5	95
2 Samuel 1:1—24:25		5:17–21	82	11:1–27	95,103
1:1–10	67,72	5:22–25	82	11:1—12:31	(92–97)
1:11–16	72	6:1–5	83	11:6–13	95
1:13–15	77,117	6:6–7	84	11:14–21	95
1:17–27	72	6:6–11	83	11:22–27	96
1:19	72	6:9–10	80	11:27	97
1:19–27	71	6:12–15	83	12:1–4	96
1:23	71	6:12–19	126	12:1–6	96
1:25	72	6:14	84	12:1–7	103
1:27	72	6:16–19	84	12:1–31	95,97,135
2:1–4	79	6:17–18	84	12:7–12	96
2:1–7	77	6:20	84	12:10	114
2:1—5:5	(73–79)	6:21–23	84	12:10–11	98
2:4	73	7:1–3	88		

all Scripture is inspired by God

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

—2 Timothy 3:16–17

<i>2 Samuel</i> 12:11	102,112	<i>2 Samuel</i> 16:11–12	108	<i>2 Samuel</i> 21:10–14	125
12:13	92,96,97	16:15–23	112	21:15–17	134
12:13–18	96	16:15—18:18	(109–113)	21:15–22	125
12:19–23	97	16:21	112	22:1–7	129
12:24–25	97	17:1–4	112	22:1—23:7	(126–130)
12:26–31	97	17:5–13	112	22:5–6	143
13:1–6	101	17:14–16	112	22:7	156
13:1–39	101,103,118	17:17–22	113	22:8–16	129
13:1—14:33	(98–103)	17:23	113	22:17–20	129
13:3	125	17:24–29	113	22:21–25	129
13:7–19	101	17:25	123	22:26–31	129
13:20–29	101	18:1–8	113	22:32–39	129
13:28–29	103	18:1–33	113	22:40–46	130
13:30–33	102	18:9	113	22:47–51	130
13:34–39	102	18:9–15	113	23:1–2	126,130
13:39	103	18:14	113	23:1–4	130
14:1–3	102	18:16–18	113	23:1–38	130,131,134
14:4	103	18:19–23	117	23:2	130
14:4–11	103	18:19—19:40	(114–119)	23:2–7	130
14:12–20	103	18:24–30	117	23:5	157
14:21–27	103	18:31–33	117	23:5–7	130
14:22	103	19:1–4	117	23:8–12	133
14:25	108	19:1–43	114	23:8—24:25	(131–135)
14:26	113	19:5–7	117,118,123	23:13–17	133
14:27	113	19:8–10	118	23:18–19	134
14:28–33	103	19:9	119	23:20–23	134
14:33	103	19:9–10	118	23:24–38	134
15:1	108	19:11–15	118	24:1–2	134
15:1–6	106	19:14	118	24:1–9	134
15:1–12	108	19:16–23	118	24:1–25	131,135
15:1–37	104,107	19:24	116	24:3–9	135
15:1—16:14	(104–108)	19:24–30	119	24:10–13	135
15:7–10	106	19:31–40	119	24:14–17	135
15:7–12	106	19:41–43	123,125	24:17	133
15:13–18	106	19:41—21:22	(120–125)	24:18–25	135
15:18	108	20:1–3	123	1 Kings 1:1—22:53	
15:19–23	107	20:1–25	124	1:1–14	141
15:24–29	107,108	20:4–10	123	1:1–53	136
15:25–26	104,107	20:8–10	123	1:1—2:46	(136–143)
15:30–31	107	20:11–15	124	1:1—12:33	8
15:32–36	108	20:16–22	124	1:15–27	141
15:32–37	107,109	20:23–26	124	1:28–40	141
16:1–4	108	20:25–26	124	1:32	142
16:1–23	107	21:1	125	1:41–48	142
16:5–8	108,143	21:1–6	124	1:49–53	142
16:5–12	134	21:1–14	146	1:52	142
16:9–14	108	21:1–22	124,129	2:1–12	142
16:11	107	21:7–9	125	2:1–46	136

INDEX OF SCRIPTURE CITATIONS CONTINUED*

<i>1 Kings</i> 2:2–4	142	<i>1 Kings</i> 7:1–51	149,156	<i>1 Kings</i> 11:1–43	166,174,175
2:4	142	7:13–22	154	11:9–13	172
2:6	143	7:23–39	155	11:9–12:24	(169–175)
2:9	143	7:40–47	155	11:14	174
2:11	169	7:48–51	155	11:14–22	172
2:13–22	143	8:1–8	160	11:23–25	172
2:13–25	143	8:1–66	(157–162)	11:26–32	174
2:23–27	143	8:9–13	160	11:33–39	174
2:28–35	143	8:14–24	160	11:38	173
2:36–46	143	8:25–26	161	11:39	172
3:1–2	146	8:27	161	11:40—12:5	174
3:1–28	144	8:27–30	161	11:42	169
**3:1—4:34	(144–148)	8:30	162	12:1–33	174,175
3:3–9	146	8:31–40	161	12:6–11	174
3:3–15	163	8:41–45	162	12:12–17	175
3:9	147	8:46–53	162	12:18–20	175
3:10–14	148	8:54–61	162	12:21–24	175
3:14	148	8:62–66	162	12:25–33	174
3:15	148	8:64	162	2 Kings 1:1—25:30	
3:16–28	147,148	9:1–9	163,166	1 Chronicles 1:1—29:30	
4:1–6	148	9:1—11:8	(163–168)	2:13	125
4:7–19	148	9:3	168	2:13–17	77,91,97,103,108
**4:20–21	148	9:6–9	168	11:4–9	82
**4:22–28	148	9:10–13	167,174	21:1–2	134
**4:24	146	9:10–14	166	28:3	154
**4:29–34	148	9:15–19	83	2 Chronicles 1:1—36:23	
**4:31	148	9:15–23	166	8:1–2	166,167
**5:1–11	154	9:24–25	167	8:11	167
**5:1—7:51	(149–156)	9:26–28	167	32:5	83
**5:12–18	154	10:1–10	167	Ezra 1:1—10:44	
6:1	160	10:1–29	166	Nehemiah 1:1—13:31	
6:1–10	154	10:5	167	Tobit 1:1—14:15	
6:1–38	149,154	10:11–17	168	Judith 1:1—16:25	
6:11–22	154	10:14	168	Esther 1:1—11:1	
6:23–28	155	10:18–25	168	Job 1:1—42:17	
6:23–36	154	10:26–29	168	*Psalms 1:1—150:6	
6:37—7:12	154	11:1–8	168	2:7	129

**Psalms* reflect the numbering system followed in *The Abbey Psalms and Canticles*. Numbering in other translations may vary.

** <i>1 Kings</i> 3:1—4:34 (RSV2CE) = <i>1 Kings</i> 3:1—5:14 (NABRE)	(144–148)
** <i>1 Kings</i> 4:20–21 (RSV2CE) = <i>1 Kings</i> 4:20—5:1 (NABRE)	148
** <i>1 Kings</i> 4:22–28 (RSV2CE) = <i>1 Kings</i> 5:2–8 (NABRE)	148
** <i>1 Kings</i> 4:24 (RSV2CE) = <i>1 Kings</i> 5:4 (NABRE)	146
** <i>1 Kings</i> 4:29–34 (RSV2CE) = <i>1 Kings</i> 5:9–14 (NABRE)	148
** <i>1 Kings</i> 4:31 (RSV2CE) = <i>1 Kings</i> 5:11 (NABRE)	148
** <i>1 Kings</i> 5:1–11 (RSV2CE) = <i>1 Kings</i> 5:15–25 (NABRE)	154
** <i>1 Kings</i> 5:1—7:51 (RSV2CE) = <i>1 Kings</i> 5:15—7:51 (NABRE)	(149–155)
** <i>1 Kings</i> 5:12–18 (RSV2CE) = <i>1 Kings</i> 5:26–32 (NABRE)	154

***Psalm 6:1–11	96	Isaiah 1:1—66:24	<i>Luke 6:45</i>	54
16:8–11	129	Jeremiah 1:1—52:34	John 1:1–21:25	
16:10	129	Lamentations 1:1—5:22	1:14	91
***18:2–6	129	Baruch 1:1—6:73	2:19	149,168
***18:1–51	129	Ezekiel 1:1—48:35	4:21	161
***22:1–32	126,129,130	Daniel 1:1—14:42	12:12–16	141
27:1–14	36	Hosea 1:1—14:9	18:36	168
32:1–11	96	6:6		
***36:6–7	142	11:1	30	
***38:1–23	96	Joel 1:1—3:21	174	
***51:3–21	95,96,129	Amos 1:1—9:15	Acts 1:1—28:31	
***51:18–19	30	Obadiah 1:1–21	1:15–26	16
***77:8–11	64	Jonah 1:1—4:11	2:25–28	129
***77:14	64	Micah 1:1—7:20	2:34–35	129
90:1–17	72,119	Nahum 1:1—3:19	13:21	22,142,169
90:12	72	Habakkuk 1:1—3:19	Romans 1:1—16:27	
90:17	72	Zephaniah 1:1—3:20	6:8	154
92:6–7	175	Haggai 1:1—2:23	8:31	36
96:1–13	11	Zechariah 1:1—14:21	1 Corinthians 1:1—16:24	
96:10	11	9:9	6:19	161
***102:1–29	96	Malachi 1:1—4:6	2 Corinthians 1:1—13:14	
110:1	82,129	1 Maccabees 1:1—16:24	Galatians 1:1—6:18	
110:1–7	82,141	2 Maccabees 1:1—15:39	3:13	125
110:4	82,129		5:22–23	22
110:4–7	82		Ephesians 1:1—6:24	
130:1–8	96		Philippians 1:1—4:23	
132:1–18	129,136,172,173		4:13	37
143:1–12	96		Colossians 1:1—4:18	
Proverbs 1:1—31:31			1 Thessalonians 1:1—5:28	
9:10	83		2 Thessalonians 1:1—3:17	
16:18	134		1 Timothy 1:1—6:21	
16:33	16		2 Timothy 1:1—4:22	
Ecclesiastes 1:1—12:14			3:16–17	178
Song of Solomon 1:1—8:14			Titus 1:1—3:15	
Wisdom 1:1—19:20			Hebrews 1:1—13:25	
Sirach 1:1—51:30			5:5–6	129
			5:6	82
			9:4	160
			11:39–40	91
			13:16	30
			James 1:1—5:20	
			1 Peter 1:1—5:14	
			2 Peter 1:1—3:18	
			1 John 1:1—5:21	
			2 John 1:1–13	
			3 John 1:1–15	
			Jude 1:1–25	
			Revelation 1:1—22:21	
			11:7–8	174
			13:18	168
***Psalm 6:1–11 (<i>The Abbey Psalms & NABRE</i>) = Psalm 6:1–10 (RSV2CE)	96			
***Psalm 18:2–6 (<i>The Abbey Psalms & NABRE</i>) = Psalm 18:1–5 (RSV2CE)	129			
***Psalm 18:1–51 (<i>The Abbey Psalms & NABRE</i>) = Psalm 18:1–50 (RSV2CE)	129			
***Psalm 22:1–32 (<i>The Abbey Psalms & NABRE</i>) = Psalm 22:1–31 (RSV2CE)	126,129,130			
***Psalm 36:6–7 (<i>The Abbey Psalms & NABRE</i>) = Psalm 36:5–6 (RSV2CE)	142			
***Psalm 38:1–23 (<i>The Abbey Psalms & NABRE</i>) = Psalm 38:1–22 (RSV2CE)	96			
***Psalm 51:3–21 (<i>The Abbey Psalms & NABRE</i>) = Psalm 51:1–19 (RSV2CE)	95,96,129			
***Psalm 51:18–19 (<i>The Abbey Psalms & NABRE</i>) = Psalm 51:16–17 (RSV2CE)	30			
***Psalm 77:8–11 (<i>The Abbey Psalms & NABRE</i>) = Psalm 77:7–10 (RSV2CE)	64			
***Psalm 77:14 (<i>The Abbey Psalms & NABRE</i>) = Psalm 77:13 (RSV2CE)	64			
***Psalm 102:1–29 (<i>The Abbey Psalms & NABRE</i>) = Psalm 102:1–28 (RSV2CE)	96			

INDEX OF TOPICS

Abigail: A Woman of Good Understanding—61
 Absalom Is King at Hebron!—106
 Absalom’s Ignoble Death—113
Absalom Usurps the Throne (104–108)
Amnon, Tamar & Absalom: David’s Children (98–103)
 And the LORD Gave Victory—90
 And the LORD Loved Solomon—97
 Anoint—15
 Arise & Play—77
 At the Heart of History—16
 A Baptismal Reminder—154
 Be Generous with Wealth—60
 The Beginning of Two Kingdoms—173
 Between Good & Evil—141
 Blurring the Line Between King & Priest—84
 Brothers & Sister—101
 Cherubim—155
 Classifying the Prophets—16
 A Complex Personality—118
 A Confusing Timeline—35
 Consecrate—162
 Conspiracy & Intrigue—108
 Coping with the Consequences of Sin—97
 Coping with Treachery—107
 Courage—107
 Covenant—48
David & Abigail; David Again Spares Saul’s Life (55–61)
David Jonathan: Two Best Friends (38–42)
David Brings the Ark to Jerusalem (80–84)
David Eludes Saul in the Wilderness (50–54)
David Is Acclaimed King of Judah & King of Israel (73–79)
David Is Anointed by Samuel (31–37)
 David Is Rejected by the Philistines—64
 David Marries Saul’s Daughter—42
 David Mourns Abner’s Death—78
David Mourns the Death of Absalom (114–119)
David Mourns the Deaths of Saul & Jonathan (67–72)
 David Practices Discernment—53
 David’s Deathbed Instructions to His Son—143
 David Shares—70
David Sins by Numbering the People (131–135)
 David’s Psalms Foreshadow Christ—129
David’s Sin & the Birth of Solomon (92–97)
 David the Prophet—130

Dealing with Bloodguilt—125
 Death Is Transformed—117
 Destroy Sinful Influences—29
 Diptych—59
 Discernment—112
 Discord in the House of David—102
Dissension: Jacob’s Descendants Disagree (120–125)
 Divination—65
 Egypt Symbolizes Opposing Ideas—174
 An Emotional Call to Arms—17
 Ephod—28
 Establishing a Holy Site—135
 Family Feud—102
 A Father Who Loves—113
 Fear of the LORD—23
 Fierce Words—125
 Final Thoughts—175
 Generational Effects—49
God Appears Again to Solomon (163–168)
 God Is Behind the Kingdom Being Torn Apart—175
 God Is Both Merciful & Just—142
 God Levels the Playing Field—37
God Regrets Making Saul King (24–30)
 God’s Anointed—172
 God’s Greatest Blessing—173
 God’s Kingdom Promotes Unity—79
God’s People Ask for a King (5–11)
 God’s People Choose Sides—108
God’s Promise to David (85–91)
Good & Bad Counsel: Problems for Absalom (109–113)
 Have Mercy on Me, O God—96
 The Hebrew Lunar Calendar—154
 Hiram Rejects Solomon’s Cities—167
 Honorable & Dishonorable—124
 Hospitality—61
 House—89
 A House for the LORD’s Name—156
 How Are the Mighty Fallen!—72
 Human Life Is Limited—119
 Humble Truth—23
 Idolatry—173
Illustration:
 Solomon’s Temple—156
 Image—41
 Israel—9

Israel's Enemies Are Relative—8

Is Saul a Prophet?—41

Joab Perceives That the King's Heart Has Gone

Out to Absalom—103

Joy in the Presence of God—83

A Key Way That David & Saul Differ—37

The King Gets to Decide What Is Right—54

Kingship & Priesthood—82

The King's Inner Circle—90

Lament—71

Let Him Curse; for the LORD Has Bidden Him—108

Long Live Biblical Phrases—17

The LORD Institutes a Significant Change—35

The LORD Is a Stronghold—36

The LORD Is a Transcendent Deity—155

The LORD of Hosts—36

The LORD Reigns—11

The LORD Will Hear in Heaven & Forgive—162

Loyalty—78

Making the Best of a Bad Situation—60

A Man of Prayer—21

Many People Help David—47

Maps:

Abigail Offers Hospitality to David & His Men—60

Absalom Stages a Coup to Overthrow His Father—107

The Ark of the Covenant Is Brought to Jerusalem—83

David Begins His Reign over All 12 Tribes—78

David Dies & Solomon Is Anointed King—141

David Flees from Saul & Goes to Samuel at Ramah—41

David's Sin Indicates Failure to Trust God—134

God Gives Solomon Wisdom Beyond Measure—147

God Swears an Oath Regarding David's Kingdom—90

The King Grieves Over the Loss of His Son—119

The Land of Canaan at the Time of Samuel—9

Political Intrigue Leads to Absalom's Death—112

Political Turmoil Sweeps Through David's Kingdom—123

Priests at Nob Are Killed for Helping David—48

Problems Beset David & the Royal Children—102

Samuel Secretly Anoints David As King—36

Saul Attempts to Find David in the Wilderness—53

Saul & Jonathan Both Die in Battle—71

Saul Is Desperate to Learn His Future—65

Saul Overreaches in His Role As King—21

Saul Proves His Worth As a Military Leader—15

Saul Tries to Spare the King of the Amalekites—29

Solomon Dies, Leaving His Kingdom in Turmoil—173

Solomon Is Born to David & Bathsheba—95

Solomon's Wives Turn His Heart Away from God—167

The Temple in Jerusalem Is Dedicated to the LORD—161

Mediums & Wizards—65

Mephibosheth: Son of Saul—116

Mighty / Almighty—134

The Millo—83

A Misunderstood Covenant—168

Nepotism Is Nothing New—124

A Noble Bond of Friendship—42

A Notorious Number—168

Oath—29

Obeisance—103

Oracle—130

Peace on All Sides Round About—146

People of Jabesh Recover Saul's Body—71

The People Sin by Consuming Blood—30

A Predictable Response to Sin—172

Predicting the Next Monarch—52

Pride Precedes Destruction—134

The Priest Ahimelech Helps David Flee from Saul (43–49)

A Problem with Timing in the Biblical Text—23

Pro-Dynastic Propaganda—161

A Promise of Kings—11

A Promising Start to Solomon's Reign—142

Prophecy Fulfilled—112

Prophet—16

The Prophet Speaks Obscurely—96

The Psalms Teach Us To Pray—129

The Queen Mother Sits on the King's Right—143

The Queen of Sheba Drops By—167

Rehoboam Inherits a Problem—174

Religious Symbols in the Temple—186

Respect Gifts Given by God—148

Respect Those Anointed by God—54

INDEX OF TOPICS CONTINUED

- Righteousness—53
Samuel Anoints Saul (12–17)
 Samuel's Spirit Confirms Saul's Fears—66
 Saul Considers Himself Above the LORD—49
Saul Consults a Medium at En-Dor (62–66)
Saul Displeases the LORD (18–23)
 Saul Is Chosen by Lot—16
 Saul Pays a Price for His Impatience—22
 Saul's Despair—65
Seer—11
 Separation of Church & State—23
 Shekel / Talent—166
 Sheol—143
 Shepherd & Sheep—133
 Signs of Change—14
 Sin—96
 A Singular Commandment—20
 Sin Piled on Sin—95
A Solemn Warning—11
Solomon Builds the Temple (149–156)
Solomon Dedicates the Temple (157–162)
 Solomon's Serious Errors—166
Solomon's Struggle for Succession (136–143)
 Something Better—91
 Spirit of Kinship—40
 Strife—119
 Stronghold—47
 Supporters Line Up Behind David—118
The Sweet Psalmist of Israel (126–130)
 Tabernacle—91
 Teach Us To Number Our Days—72
 Temptation To Sin Does Not Disappear—135
 Theological Reality of Sin—95
 A Throne To Be Established For Ever—89
 To Obey Is Better Than Sacrifice—30
 Trouble in the Military—123
 Trouble with the Ammonites—91
 12 Territories—15
The United Kingdom Dies with Solomon (169–175)
 Urim & Thummim—28
 Vain—22
 Vulgar—84
 Was Solomon a Biblical Author?—147
 Weapons Are in Short Supply—23
 We Are Your Bone & Flesh—79
 What Is Going on with Michal?—61
 What Motivates Joab?—117
 When God Does Not Respond—64
 Where Exactly Is Aram?—90
 Where Has the Ark Been?—82
 Who Is Doeg the Edomite?—48
Who Is Samuel?—9
Who Is Talking & Who Is Listening?—10
 Who Is Zeruiah?—77
 Will God Indeed Dwell on Earth?—161
 Wisdom—148
The Wisdom of Solomon (144–148)
 Wisdom To Render Justice—147
 Witness—21
Words of Caution—10
 Yearning for Unity—175

RELATED CHURCH TEACHING

- CCC 26:** The Church's definition of what it means to believe or to have faith.
CCC 37: Difficulties encountered by those attempting to know God by reason alone.
CCC 144 (pages 9 & 10): An explanation of the link between listening and obedience of faith.
CCC 147: The difference between Old and New Testament witnesses of the faith.
 CCC 239 (page 113): About addressing God as father; the human experience of parents.
CCC 302: The unexpected teaching that the world wasn't created in a state of perfection.
CCC 310: Teaching regarding God's creation of a world in which evil is allowed to exist.
CCC 370: That humanity was created in the image of God and not the other way around.
CCC 404: An explanation of how original sin is transmitted to all humanity.
 CCC 425 (page 83): That transmission of Christian faith occurs primarily through proclamation.

RELATED CHURCH TEACHING CONTINUED

CCC 457–460: The four positive effects for humanity that result from Jesus’ Incarnation.

CCC 475: Church teaching regarding Jesus’ human will and his divine will.

CCC 544 (page 60): That Jesus shares the life of the poor leading faith to belong to the lowly.

CCC 582 (page 48): That Jesus divinely interprets and perfects the meaning of Jewish dietary laws.

CCC 598: Regarding the responsibility of all sinners for Jesus’ death.

CCC 669 (page 79): That Christ dwells in the Church, over which he exercises divine authority.

CCC 677: An explanation of how God’s final triumph over evil will occur.

CCC 680 (page 175): That Christ reigns, though not everything on earth is yet subjected to him.

CCC 705: Church teaching that Jesus restores humanity’s likeness to God.

CCC 760: The startling teaching that the world was created for the sake of the Church.

CCC 811: The four characteristic marks that distinguish the Church.

CCC 817 (page 175): Teaching that ruptures in the Church do not occur without human sin.

CCC 900: Church teaching about the divine message that is entrusted to the laity.

CCC 901: Regarding lay participation in Christ’s priestly office and consecrate the world to God.

CCC 1008 (page 97): Teaching that the covenant stipulates death as a consequence of sin.

CCC 1010 (page 117): A discussion of how death takes on positive meaning for Christians.

CCC 1013: Church teaching that there is no reincarnation after death.

CCC 1021: An explanation of Church teaching regarding the particular judgment.

CCC 1022: About the particular judgment for each person at the moment of death.

CCC 1033 (page 21): Consequences of self-exclusion that occur through sin and lead to hell.

CCC 1123: The threefold purpose of the sacraments of the Church.

CCC 1241 (page 15): The significance of anointing newly baptized with sacred chrism.

CCC 1262: The two effects that occur as a result of the sacrament of Baptism.

CCC 1263: Regarding the link between original sin and Baptism.

CCC 1274: The benefits of being sealed or marked as belonging to God

CCC 1426 (page 135): A caution that life received in Baptism does not abolish tendency to sin.

CCC 1813: Teaching that the theological virtues are the foundation of Christian moral activity.

CCC 1831 (pages 83,107, 147 & 148): The Church’s list of gifts given to humanity by the Holy Spirit.

CCC 1832 (page 22): The traditional list of the 12 fruits of the Holy Spirit.

CCC 1849: A definition of sin as something contrary to eternal law.

CCC 1850 (page 96): An explanation of how it is that Jesus is able to overcome sin.

CCC 1857–1859: Paragraphs that explain the three conditions of mortal sin.

CCC 1866 (page 134): A list of the seven traditional vices that pair with the seven capital virtues.

CCC 1933: About hatred of an enemy’s evil actions as opposed to hatred of the enemy as a person.

CCC 1954: Natural law and original moral ability that enable man to discern good from evil.

CCC 2015 (page 129): Regarding how renunciation and spiritual battle are essential to holiness.

CCC 2089: Definitions of incredulity, heresy, and apostasy.

CCC 2115 (page 65): Regarding how renunciation and spiritual battle are essential to holiness.

CCC 2116 (pages 65 & 66): That the Church rejects all forms of divination to reveal the future.

CCC 2181: Church teaching that failing to observe the Sunday obligation is a grave sin.

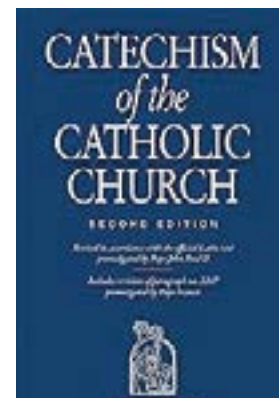
CCC 2340: The things Christians have at their disposal as means for resisting temptation.

CCC 2443–2447: Preferential love for the poor; the spiritual and corporal works of mercy.

CCC 2472: That Christians have a duty to act as witnesses of the Gospel.

CCC 2573: A discussion of prayer as a symbol of the ongoing battle of faith.

CCC 2690 (page 53): That the Holy Spirit endows certain gifts for the sake of the common good.



RELIGIOUS SYMBOLS IN THE TEMPLE



The **lily's** beauty and fragrance make it a fitting symbol for the preciousness of the peoples' relationship with God. Lily was the general name for many flowering plants native to the land of Canaan. Scholars believe the lily that served as a model for Temple ornaments probably was white with streaks of pink, and may have been a water lily or lotus. Christians traditionally have viewed white lilies as a Marian symbol and also associate them with Easter.

The **pomegranate** is a symbol of fertility based on its many seeds. Jewish tradition teaches that it symbolizes righteousness because its seeds are said to number 613, corresponding to the 613 commandments of the Torah. Many scholars believe that the pomegranate was the forbidden fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the Garden of Eden, and so it also represents knowledge, learning, and wisdom.

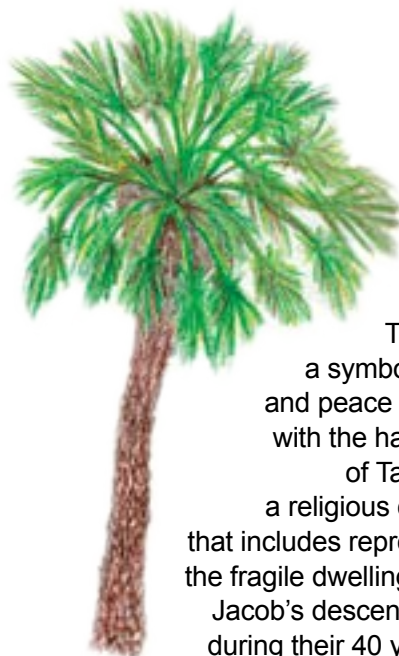


Cherubim are celestial beings associated with the presence of God. They appear in New and Old Testament visions of the LORD's heavenly throne.



The **ox** is associated with production and wealth. As a religious symbol, the ox represents zeal in the service of God.

The **lion** symbolizes nobility and power, and represents the strength of the LORD and his people.



The **palm** is a symbol of victory and peace associated with the harvest feast of Tabernacles, a religious celebration that includes reproduction of the fragile dwellings in which Jacob's descendants lived during their 40 years in the wilderness after God delivered them from slavery in Egypt.



The **gourd**, an ancient symbol for the sun, represents new life and is a symbol of salvation. In Christian art, the gourd represents Resurrection.