

Story of the Bible

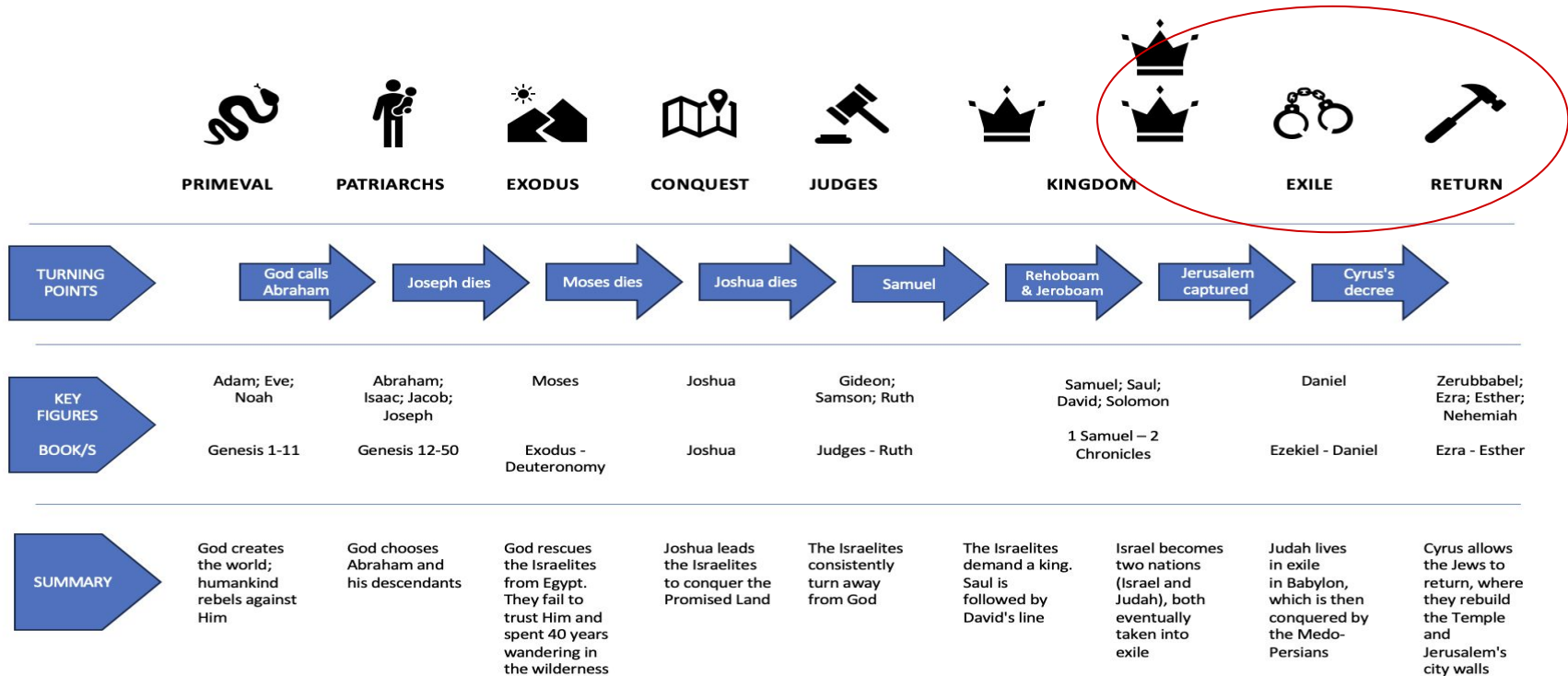
NIGHT SCHOOL

Week Eight



Where are we in the story?

Kingdom, Exile, Return



Reign of Solomon

- Solomon begins imperfectly but seeks God and asks for wisdom (**1 Kings 3:1–15**)
- He mixes true worship with cultural practices (offering at high places) but later corrects himself
- He disobeys God by marrying Pharaoh's daughter, foreshadowing further sin

***Deuteronomy 17:16–17** The king, moreover, must not acquire great numbers of horses for himself or make the people return to Egypt to get more of them, for the Lord has told you, "You are not to go back that way again." 17 He must not take many wives, or his heart will be led astray. He must not accumulate large amounts of silver and gold. Precursor to many wives.*

- God blesses Solomon with wisdom, prosperity, and enables him to build the temple

The Temple

- The temple replaces the tabernacle as God's dwelling place, housing the ark in Jerusalem
- It becomes the centre of worship, with festivals and sacrifices commanded

Deuteronomy 16:16 *"Each year every man in Israel must celebrate these three festivals: the Festival of Unleavened Bread, the Festival of Harvest, and the Festival of Shelters. On each of these occasions, all men must appear before the Lord your God at the place he chooses, but they must not appear before the Lord without a gift for him."*

- The temple continues what God established through Moses, now in a permanent form
- God's glory fills the temple, showing His presence

1 Kings 8:10–11 *"When the priests came out of the Holy Place, a thick cloud filled the Temple of the Lord. The priests could not continue their service because of the cloud, for the glorious presence of the Lord filled the Temple of the Lord."*

Exodus 40:34–35 *"Then the cloud covered the Tabernacle, and the glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle. Moses could no longer enter the Tabernacle because the cloud had settled down over it, and the glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle."*

Solomon's kingdom prospers

- Solomon's kingdom prospers, though he uses forced labour to build the temple and his palace
- Surrounding nations seek peace, and the queen of Sheba praises God for Solomon's wisdom

1 Kings 10:6–9 *She exclaimed to the king, "Everything I heard in my country about your achievements and wisdom is true! I didn't believe what was said until I arrived here and saw it with my own eyes. In fact, I had not heard the half of it! Your wisdom and prosperity are far beyond what I was told. How happy your people must be! What a privilege for your officials to stand here day after day, listening to your wisdom! Praise the Lord your God, who delights in you and has placed you on the throne of Israel. Because of the Lord's eternal love for Israel, he has made you king so you can rule with justice and righteousness."*

- Israel's territory expands, fulfilling God's promise to Abraham

1 Kings 4:21 *Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms from the Euphrates River in the north to the land of the Philistines and the border of Egypt in the south. The conquered peoples of those lands sent tribute money to Solomon and continued to serve him throughout his lifetime.*

Genesis 15:18 *So the Lord made a covenant with Abram that day and said, "I have given this land to your descendants, all the way from the border of Egypt to the great Euphrates River—"*

- God's covenant faithfulness remains despite human sin and ongoing rebellion

Solomon 's downfall

- Solomon's downfall came from marrying many women, including foreigners, leading him to idol worship (**1 Kings 11:1–13**)
- His first marriage to Pharaoh's daughter shows reliance on political alliances instead of trusting God
- Sin of leaders affects the whole nation; pride, wealth, and power do not bring fulfillment

Proverbs 9:10 *"The fear of the Lord is the foundation of wisdom. Knowledge of the Holy One results in good judgment."*

1 Peter 5:8 *"Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour."*

- By his death, Solomon resembled Pharaoh more than David, with riches, armies, and foreign wives shaping his legacy

God chooses Jeroboam

- God chooses Jeroboam, Solomon's administrator, to become King
- Prophet Ahijah delivers God's message by tearing his cloak into twelve pieces as a sign
- Jeroboam is promised a dynasty like David's if he obeys God, showing a conditional covenant
- God's loyal love remains unchanging and available, but humans must choose to follow Him and make wise decisions

Rehoboam succession

- Solomon dies and Rehoboam succeeds him as king of Judah
- The people ask him to lighten their burdens, but he ignores wise counsel and follows his friends' advice to assert dominance
- The northern tribes reject Rehoboam and make Jeroboam king, fulfilling God's prophecy
- Only Judah and Benjamin remain loyal; God sends the prophet Shemaiah to prevent civil war

Kingdom is divided

- The kingdom is divided: Israel (north, 10 tribes, capital Samaria) and Judah (south, 2 tribes, capital Jerusalem)
- Jeroboam builds golden calves and new worship practices to keep people from returning to Jerusalem, showing fear and distrust of God
- Idol worship spreads in both kingdoms, including Baal, Ashtoreth, Molech, and Chemosh, reversing God's commands from Joshua and Abraham
- Northern Israel has no good kings; Judah has only a few faithful rulers (8 out of 20)

God doesn 't give up

- God continually sends prophets to call His people back to Him, showing His patience and mercy
- He is slow to anger, offering opportunities for repentance despite repeated disobedience
- Many ignore the prophets' warnings, facing hardship as a result of their choices
- God also sends messages to foreign nations, like Jonah to the Ninevites, pointing toward inclusion of Gentiles in His plan (**Galatians 3:15–29**)

Captivity

- After generations of disobedience, Israel is taken into captivity by Assyria in 722 BC
- Judah is temporarily rescued under King Hezekiah, but later suffers under Manasseh's evil reign, including idolatry and child sacrifice
- Josiah reforms the nation after rediscovering the Torah, yet his sons continue evil, leading to Babylonian captivity (605 BC) and the temple's destruction (587 BC)
- God's actions show He is slow to anger, just, and opposes evil while remaining faithful to His covenant

BREAK TIME

The Exile Stage

Message delivered to those in exile in Babylon:

Jeremiah 29:10–14 *This is what the LORD says: “When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my good promise to bring you back to this place. For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you,” declares the LORD, “and will bring you back from captivity.[b] I will gather you from all the nations and places where I have banished you,” declares the LORD, “and will bring you back to the place from which I carried you into exile.”*

- This message wasn't given to people who had done everything right, but to people who had been unfaithful to him consistently.
- The people forgot the promise, but God did not.

God chooses Daniel

- God chooses a faithful remnant in exile, including Daniel and his friends, who resist Babylonian indoctrination and honor God
- Through them, God reveals His power to King Nebuchadnezzar, interprets dreams, and rescues Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from the fiery furnace
- Belshazzar desecrates temple vessels; Daniel interprets the writing on the wall, and God brings judgment, leading to Babylon's fall
- Babylon is conquered by the Medo-Persians under Cyrus, who allows the Jews to return to their land

The Return Stage

The captives from Judah return in three major movements under the leadership of

- Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel (537BC) (**Rebuilt the temple**)
- Ezra (458BC) (**Taught the Torah and urged the people to keep covenant**)
- Nehemiah (445BC) (**Rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem**)

Exile

The Old Testament ends with an incomplete picture

Kingdom, Exile, Return

- The people return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple, but God's presence is not fully restored; a future temple is prophesied (**Ezekiel**)
- They repent and return to the Torah, yet continue to fall into sin; God promises to put His law on their hearts (**Jeremiah 31:33**)
- God's promise to bless all nations through Abraham remains; prophets Isaiah and Zechariah foresee many coming to God's temple (**Isaiah 2:2–3; Zechariah 8:20–23**)
- God promised David an enduring throne (**2 Samuel 7:16**), yet no descendant reigns; the Messiah is still to come

Discussion

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- Illuminate the problem of sin?
- Call us to reflect God's holiness?
- Demonstrate God's patience and faithfulness?
- Show us how to live by faith?

**THANKS FOR YOUR
TIME!**

See you next week!