

Portrayals of the kingdom of God and God's kingship use a variety of devices to portray and project the kingdom into different contexts. A film that blends ancient and contemporary is DeMille's silent film, *The King of Kings* (1927, US). As the title of the film foreshadows, the story, otherwise set in ancient Israel, culminates with the image of gigantic Jesus, resurrected king, arms outstretched reigning over images of 1927 American agricultural and industrial capitalist enterprise and the text, "Lo, I am with you always" (Matt 28:20). DeMille's projection of Jesus the king and his kingdom is a confluence of Jesus' kingship and the American doctrine of Manifest Destiny. As DeMille's film ends with a vision of Jesus reigning over "today," recontextualization of Jesus' story in effect projects the kingdom of God and Jesus' kingship into new space. In David Greene's *Godspell: A Musical Based on the Gospel according to St. Matthew* (1973, US), Jesus' story is set in New York City. God's kingship is clear from the beginning of the film, when against shots of the city the Divine Narrator says: "My name is known – God and king, the most in majesty in whom no beginning can be and no end..." As the disciples are drawn from their lives by a Pied Piper-like John the Baptist, the life of the city is suspended while Jesus and his disciples enact the kingdom of God as a troupe of clowns throughout the otherwise empty city. The impact of the kingdom of God, however, is unclear as the film ends with the disciples carrying Jesus' body and melting back into the city's bustling life. In Mark Dornford-May's *Son of Man/Jezile* (2006, ZA), a recontextualization of the Jesus story in contemporary South Africa, this world is claimed by Jesus in tension with both God and Satan. In the immediate wake of the slaughter of the innocents, God's archangel Gabriel invites the boy Jesus to come with him. The child, refusing to go, replies, "This is my world!" Likewise, when the adult Jesus is being tempted by Satan in the desert, Jesus (Andile Kosi) pushes Satan down a sand dune as he declares, "This is my world!" In this recontextualization, Jesus pushes against both God and Satan for rule over the present. Also, in relation to DeMille's casting of Jesus' reign over 1927 America, in *Son of Man* the image of Jesus' reign is a brightly colored mural on the side of a building in a contemporary township. In this mural Jesus hangs on the cross, which in *Son of Man* is an unmasking of the evil powers of the present. Other films which recontextualize the kingdom of God and God's kingship in Christ are: *Jesus Christ Superstar* (dir. Norman Jewison, 1973, US), *Babette's Feast* (dir. Gabriel Axel, 1987, DK), *Jésus de Montréal* (dir. Denys Arcand, 1989, CA/FR), and *Still Crazy* (dir. Brian Gibson, 1998, UK).

The image of God's kingdom/kingship also plays a prominent role in both Jewish and Christian piety, as depicted in a number of films. From the

prayerful use of "Blessed are You, O Lord, Our God, King of the Universe," introducing the table grace in *Unstrung Heroes* (dir. Diane Keaton, 1995, US) and within the lighting of the Shabbat candles at the outset of *Schindler's List* (dir. Steven Spielberg, 1993, US), to *Joyeux Noël* (dir. Christian Carion, 2005, FR/DE/UK/BE/RO/NO) wherein a subversive Christmas Eve peace on "no man's land" is initiated with the singing of "Stille Nacht/Silent Night" and crowned with "Adeste Fideles/O Come, All Ye Faithful," which hails Jesus' birth as the birth of a king.

**Bibliography:** ■ Griere, S., "Mark Dornford May: Transposing the Classic," in *The Bible in Motion: A Handbook of the Bible and Its Reception in Film*, pt. 2 (ed. R. Burnette-Bletsch; HBR 2; Berlin 2016) 721–28.

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See also → Afterlife; → Heaven; → Heaven, Gates of; → Key, Keys; → Paradise

## Kingdoms of Israel and Judah

- I. History and Archaeology
- II. Judaism
- III. Film

### I. History and Archaeology

**1. The Early Monarchy.** There is very little concrete archaeological evidence for the early stages of the Israelite/Judahite monarchy(ies). While it has been suggested to identify the formation of a polity in the region north of Jerusalem in the late Iron I/early IIA (ca. 11th/10th cent. BCE), mirroring the biblical tradition of the kingdom of Saul, this is somewhat hard to prove. Even more so, the very of the existence of archaeological evidence (and evidence or lack thereof) of the "United Monarchy" has been, extensively discussed.

While most scholarship in the mid-to-late 20th century CE believed that concrete evidence of the "United Monarchy" could be identified (such as the so-called "Solomonic gates" at Hazor, Gezer and Megiddo), at present, this is a highly contested topic and many question whether there is any substantial archaeological evidence of the United Monarchy. Positions on this differ considerably, from those who believe that the United Monarchy was a large and prosperous kingdom, mirroring to a large extent the image portrayed in the biblical text, those who suggest that there was a kingdom of David and Solomon but of a minor scale, and those who question the very existence of this early kingdom and see it instead as a literary creation of either the later Judahite kingdom or of post-Iron Age times. By and large, these positions are related to the various approaches on the understanding of the rise of the early Israelite/Judahite kingdoms, whether in fact that of the biblical narrative of an initial "United Monarchy" followed by a northern

and southern kingdom, or whether the Northern (Israelite) Kingdom was the first substantial polity, and only later, with its weakening and destruction, did the Southern (Judahite) Kingdom create a narrative – claiming earlier primacy.

In any case, the lack of substantive epigraphic materials from the early Iron Age II, along with additional explicit and extensive archaeological evidence, indicates that even if an early United Monarchy existed, it lacked a high level of political and bureaucratic complexity. The mention of the “House of David” in the Tel Dan inscription (and possibly in the Mesha inscription as well), dating to the mid 9th century BCE, is seen by many as an indication that even if the size of the Judahite monarchy during the 10th century was not as large as depicted in the biblical text, there was some sort of Judahite polity already during the 10th century BCE. Some also see the archaeological finds from Iron IIA levels in the City of David in Jerusalem, and Khirbet Qeiyafa in the Shephelah, as evidence of this early polity.

The Sheshonq/Shishaq campaign of ca. 925 BCE, in which this Egyptian Pharaoh of the 22nd Dynasty (Sheshonq I) campaigned to the Levant, is an important interface between the archaeological remains, and biblical and non-biblical records. Over the years, destruction levels at various sites have been connected to this campaign, as well as a fragment of the Sheshonq stela at Megiddo, and most recently, a Sheshonq scarab at Faynan. Apparent changes in settlement patterns in some areas may reflect this event as well. Some scholars believe that the supposedly clear cut archaeological evidence can only be explained as a) evidence of a clear biblical memory of this event; b) that this reflects an Egyptian attempt to curtail the geopolitical status “United Monarchy” and its immediate aftermath. On the other hand, others have suggested that this campaign is not to be related to the United Monarchy, as they are not convinced that the various destruction levels relate to this campaign – and even that such a campaign would result in destroyed cities throughout the land. In addition, the very dating of specific archaeological strata to the late 10th century BCE is highly debated (see below).

**2. The 9th Century BCE.** Ample archaeological evidence of a substantial rise in the level of socio-political complexity can be seen during the 9th century BCE in the northern, Israelite kingdom. Developed urbanism and related facets (e.g., fortifications, palaces, water systems, stables, socio-economic hierarchy) along with evidence of international trade and the beginning of more extensive literacy, indicate the substantial change that occurred during this period. This evidence fits in well with the Assyrian textual evidence on the role that the Kingdom of Israel (the Omride Dynasty in particular), played in Levantine region politics from

the 9th century BCE onwards, which is mirrored as well in the regional role of this kingdom in the biblical text. It is at this time that the Kingdom of Israel is embroiled in a geopolitical struggle with the Aramaeans, in particular under the reign of Hazael of Damascus. Various destruction layers at sites in the north and south of the Levant have been related to these events (e.g., Rehov, Jezreel, Aphek, Gath, Zayit and others), and events during this period are most likely the background for the so-called “House of David” inscription from Tel Dan. Due to the fact that the material remains of the northern Kingdom during the 9th century are more impressive and extensive than those found at most contemporaneous southern, Judahite sites, some believe that the Israelite kingdom of the 9th century BCE was the first, and original, kingdom of the Israelite/Judahite cultures, and the biblical description of the earlier “United Monarchy” is a later ideologically driven narrative, with little basis.

From this it is suggested that during the 9th century BCE, the Judahite monarchy was subservient to the Israelite Kingdom, only slowly rising to importance in the 8th century BCE and in particular, after the fall of the Samaria to the Assyrians in 722 BCE. Archaeological evidence of a substantial southern, Judahite Kingdom, is as stated above, somewhat minimal during the 9th century BCE. Nevertheless, at sites such as Jerusalem, Lachish and Beth Shemesh, there appears to be evidence relating to this period (and without a doubt towards the end of the 9th cent.), most probably indicating the existence of a small kingdom at first, expanding during the 9th century BCE, and becoming more dominant during the 8th century. Both in the northern and southern kingdoms there is very little evidence of literacy during the 9th and early 8th century, save for a small corpus of mostly non-literary texts, most likely indicating the small scale character of state level bureaucracy in both kingdoms during this time.

**3. The 8th century BCE.** In the 8th century BCE, and in particular during its second half, both the Israelite and Judahite kingdoms become much more visible, from archaeological and historical perspectives. This is due to several reasons. Both kingdoms reach a higher level of socio-political complexity, leaving much more solid archaeological evidence on the one hand in many urban and rural contexts, and from this, their expanding role in regional geopolitics, and in particular as reflected in their relationship with the Neo-Assyrian Empire.

Various events and processes are reflected in the archaeological record. To start with, both in Israel and Judah there is evidence of expanded cities with evidence of various manifestations of socio-economic complexity, foreign trade and other facets. Examples of this can be seen in the northern Kingdom at sites such as Samaria, Megiddo, Hazor, and

Dor, and in the southern Kingdom in Jerusalem, Beth Shemesh, Lachish, and Tel Sheva. Another event which appears to have left a clear archaeological imprint at several sites is the earthquake mentioned in Amos 1:1, dating to ca. 760 BCE, of which evidence has been reported at various sites, such as Hazor, Gezer and Tell es-Safi/Gath. In the second half of the 8th century BCE noteworthy historical events occur are explicitly reflected in the archaeological record. As the Neo-Assyrian Empire closes in on this region, evidence of destructions relating to this can be seen. Destruction levels relating to the 733 BCE campaign of Tiglath-Pileser III are seen at e.g., Dan, Hazor, Kinrot, and the final destruction of the northern Kingdom in 722/20 is evidenced at Samaria. These campaigns adversely affected the rural settlement in the northern kingdom. It has been suggested that the fall of Samaria had a direct influence on the southern kingdom as well, due to the influx of refugees from the northern kingdom.

Following the destruction of Samaria by the Assyrians, the Northern Kingdom ceases to exist. Some of the population is exiled to Mesopotamia, while some may have escaped to Judah. A clear change in the settlement pattern in the region of the northern Kingdom can be seen, with much fewer settled sites. Some have also suggested that there is evidence of the influx of populations who were transferred by the Assyrians to the region of Samaria.

Assyrian activity is seen in and around the southern Kingdom as well, both in Philistia (such as the destruction of Ashdod relating to Sargon II's campaign of 713 BCE), and most noteworthy in the campaign of Sennacherib in 701 BCE. Archaeological evidence of this campaign is seen at several sites, the most impressive being at Lachish, Level III, at which there is evidence of the Assyrian siege and conquest of the city, which dovetails nicely with the Assyrian reliefs in the palace of Sennacherib, and the biblical and Assyrian textual evidence. While the biblical and Assyrian texts mention the Assyrian siege of Jerusalem, very little, if any, archaeological evidence of this can be found. Prior to this campaign, several important developments can be seen in the Judahite Kingdom. To start with, there is evidence of the expansion of the city of Jerusalem during this period, including the apparent first settling of the "Western Hill" at this time. In addition, both in the hinterland of Jerusalem but also in the Judean Hills and the Judean Shephelah, there is evidence of a substantial expansion of the urban and rural settlement of the Judahite Kingdom, including material evidence that various sites and regions (such as the western Shephelah and eastern Philistia, including sites such as Tell es-Safi/Gath), were taken over by the Judahites. These processes are often related both to the expansionist policies of King

Hezekiah of Judah, and to the overflow of refugees from the northern kingdom to the south. Important evidence of the Judahite preparations for the Sennacherib campaign can be seen in the appearance of fortifications and supplies sent out before the campaign. Best known of these are the so-called "LMLK" stamped jars. Even if, as recently argued, some of these jars are from the 7th century BCE as well, the first stage of their appearance is evidence of these preparations. Following the 701 campaign, the expansion of the Judahite territory to the west seems to be reversed, and the Judahite settlements in the Shephelah, and perhaps in other regions as well, were severely curtailed, and many sites that were occupied before the campaign are abandoned subsequently.

**4. The 7th-6th century BCE.** Throughout most of the 7th century BCE, but in fact already in the late 8th century as well, the Assyrian influence and subsequent conquests in the Southern Levant in general and the regions of Phoenicia, Israel, Judah, and Philistia is strongly felt. Assyrian textual evidence informs us of this, and archaeological evidence of this is seen at various sites, such as at Samaria, Ashdod, Jemmeh, and Sera. Similarly, economic developments in Phoenicia and Philistia, most clearly seen at Philistine Ekron, reflect the strong economic and political influence of the Assyrians in the region.

During the 7th century BCE, the Judahite kingdom flourished as well, even if its expansion to the west was curtailed by the Assyrians. Both in the heartland of Judah, in and around Jerusalem, but also in the northern Negev and the Judean desert, settlement activities can be seen. Large scale building in Jerusalem, along with that at many rural sites, are indicative of this prosperity, mirroring the Assyrian evidence that the Judahite kingdom was a loyal Assyrian vassal at the time. This evidence for a flourishing 7th century BCE Judah fits in well with the commonly held view of this period, and in particular, the second half of this century, as a period of cultural "renaissance" – a time to which many scholars would date various biblical texts (in particular, those related to the so-called "Deuteronomist"). Only towards the end of the 7th century BCE, when the Assyrian control of the Levant waned, and the Babylonian and Egyptian kingdoms vied for control of this region (with the eventual conquest of the region by the Babylonians) is this growth and flourishing curtailed. This change can be seen in the death of King Josiah of Judah at Megiddo in 609 BCE, and the following period of political instability and rapid changes in the Judahite Kingdom. 7th-century BCE archaeological finds provide extensive evidence of writing and literacy in the Judahite kingdom, with well-known examples such as the Arad letters, the Lachish letters, and many inscribed bulla – including several which

may reference figures mentioned in the biblical text. Most importantly, according to most scholars, the Hebrew language used in these texts is virtually identical to the “Classical Biblical Hebrew” seen in biblical texts that are usually dated to the late Iron Age – providing circumstantial evidence for the dating of these biblical texts.

The Assyrian, Babylonian and biblical sources inform us that during the late 7th and early 6th century BCE, the Judahite kingdom was caught in a “maelstrom” of geopolitical interests, particular those of the Babylonians and the Egyptians. While there is little archaeological evidence of the dramatic political events depicted in the Bible, clear cut evidence of the final destruction of the kingdom at the hands of the Babylonian in and around 586 BCE, is seen at many sites, such as at Jerusalem and Lachish, and at other small sites throughout the kingdom.

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## II. Judaism

■ Second Temple and Hellenistic Judaism ■ Rabbinic Judaism ■ Medieval Judaism ■ Modern Judaism

### A. Second Temple and Hellenistic Judaism

After the Babylonian exile in 586 BCE, the kingdom of Judah ceased to exist as an independent entity. A series of colonial powers controlled the area, which meant that the nation inaugurated by David existed in cultural memory rather than territorial reality. The northern kingdom of Israel had already fallen to the Assyrians in 722 BCE. Under these circumstances, restoration was a prominent theme throughout the Second Temple period, and many of the extant sources employ nationalistic terminology as a means of instilling solidarity and hope.

The term, Judah (Heb. *Yehudah*), and its Hellenistic form, Judea (Gk. *Ἰουδαία*), generally describes a geographic region that includes Jerusalem and surrounding areas but can also indicate a much broader swath. The boundaries of Judah frequently include the hill country on all sides of Jerusalem and the remote areas on the eastward shore of the Dead Sea. During the Persian period, “Judah” appears in many texts as *Yehud*, the Aramaic name for the satrapy also known as “Beyond the River” (e.g., Ezra 6:6–7). Local and colonial authorities further divided the area into administrative districts, known as toparchies. These districts seem to be

more clearly defined during the Roman period by sources such as Pliny (*Nat.* 5.70).

Extant texts demonstrate that Israel and Judah persisted during this period in the collective imagination. The continuation of national identity is an important motif in Second Temple literature, even as the notion of which group(s) carries/carry the promise is disputed. For example, there is a clear distinction in Ezra-Nehemiah between “the people of the land” and the exilic community (Heb. *golah*), with the authors of these texts privileging the latter as the true inheritors of Israel.

The development of cultic institutions also worked to preserve the heritage of Israel and Judah. The rebuilding of the Jerusalem temple with the assent and encouragement of the Persian authorities constituted a major development, as did the growing authority of the priestly office. The high priest in particular became a figure of political and religious authority, as did the regional governors under a succession of imperial powers.

When speaking of Israel, Judah, and Judea in reference to the Second Temple period, one critical question is when and whether to refer to “Jews” and “Jewish” identity. The Greek word, *Ἰουδαῖος* comes from Hebrew *Yehudi* (pl. *Yehudim*), which describes a resident of Judah/Judea, or someone who is to be identified with that group (i.e., a “Judean”). Some commentators argue that only with the Maccabean revolt (167–160 BCE) does Greek *Ἰουδαῖος* (usually translated as “Jewish”) have a more cultural and religious connotation. (e.g., 2 Macc 2:21; 8:1; 14:38). A complicating factor when posing this question is the diaspora context of many people who would have identified as “Judean.” For example, the colony at Elephantine in Egypt reflects Jewish/Judean practices during the Persian period, making it difficult to categorize this and other groups. This is not an incidental or settled matter: certain scholars argue that “Judahite” and “Jewish” can be used interchangeably as early as the Persian period, while others claim that it is best to speak of “Jewish” identity only when referring to the era of the rabbis and beyond (2nd cent. CE).

Some of the literature from the Second Temple period longs for national revivification and is apocalyptic in orientation, and these texts often employ “Israel” as the restored kingdom. In this type of text, which frequently draws upon the Torah and the Prophets, such revival will usually take place at the “end of days.” For example, Daniel confesses his own sin “and the sin of my people, Israel” (Dan 9:20), but then he promises eventual restoration after the persecutions of the Seleucid king, Antiochus IV Epiphanes (r. 167–164 BCE).

“Kingdoms” can also have a negative connotation, especially in apocalyptic texts that offer predictions about the downfall of foreign powers. For example, the visions in Dan 2 and 7 use the sym-