

# The Philistines



**O**RIGINS

**F**EATURES

• **CITIES**

• **RELIGION**

• **CULTURE**

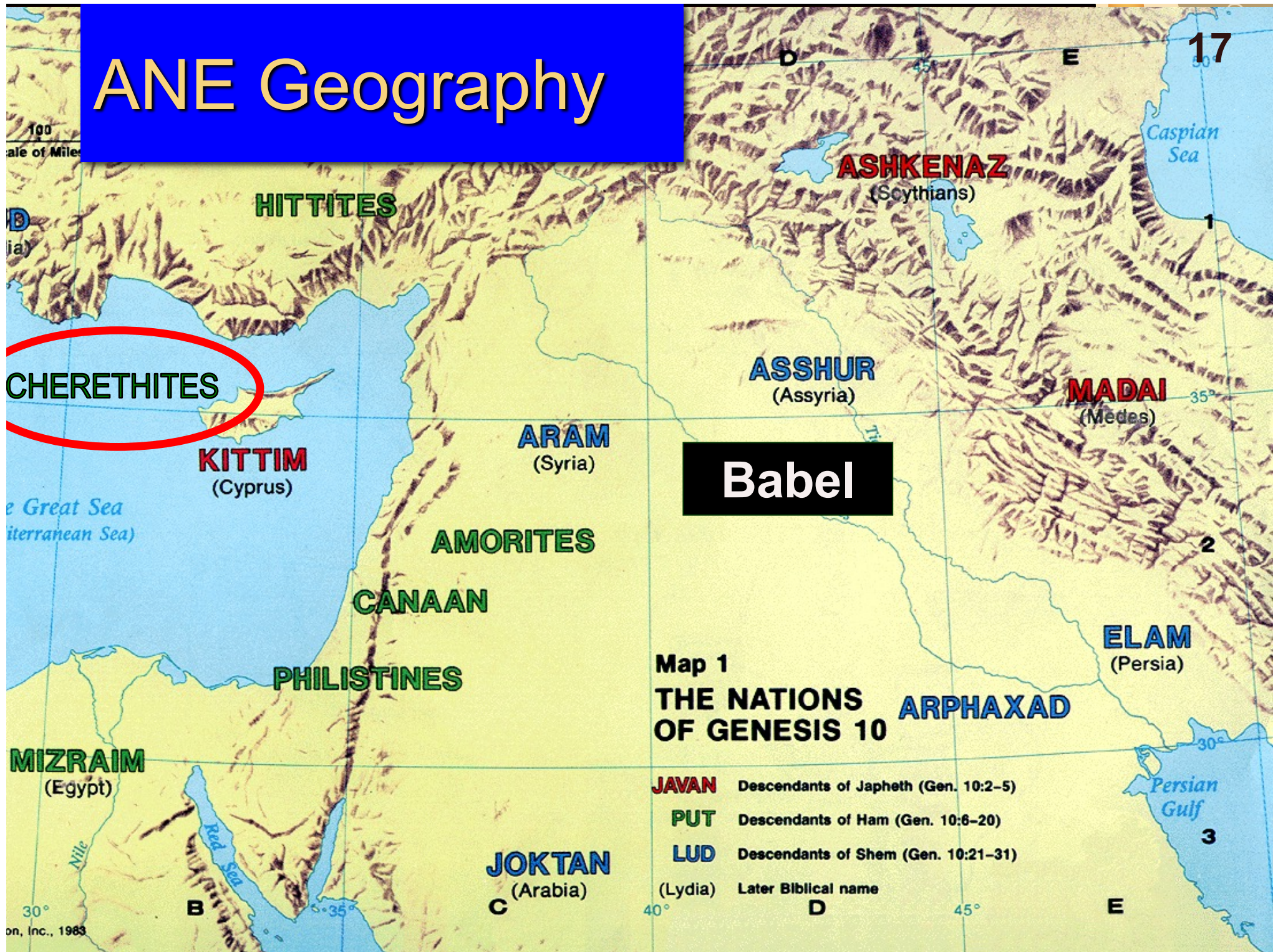
• **MILITARY**

**I**MPLICATIONS

# The Ancient Near East



# ANE Geography



# ORIGINS

Jer. 47:4  
Amos 9:7

For the LORD is going to destroy the Philistines,  
The remnant of the coastland of Caphtor  
(Jer. 47:4 NAU)



Crete  
(Captor)

Cyprus

Philistines

Egypt

I brought Israel out of Egypt,  
but I also brought the Philistines from Crete  
(Amos 9:7 NLT)

# ORIGINS

Jer. 47:4

114b

Amos 9:7



# Elevations in North-South Divisions



Coastal Plain

Eleva  
North  
Div

nean Sea  
(at Sea)

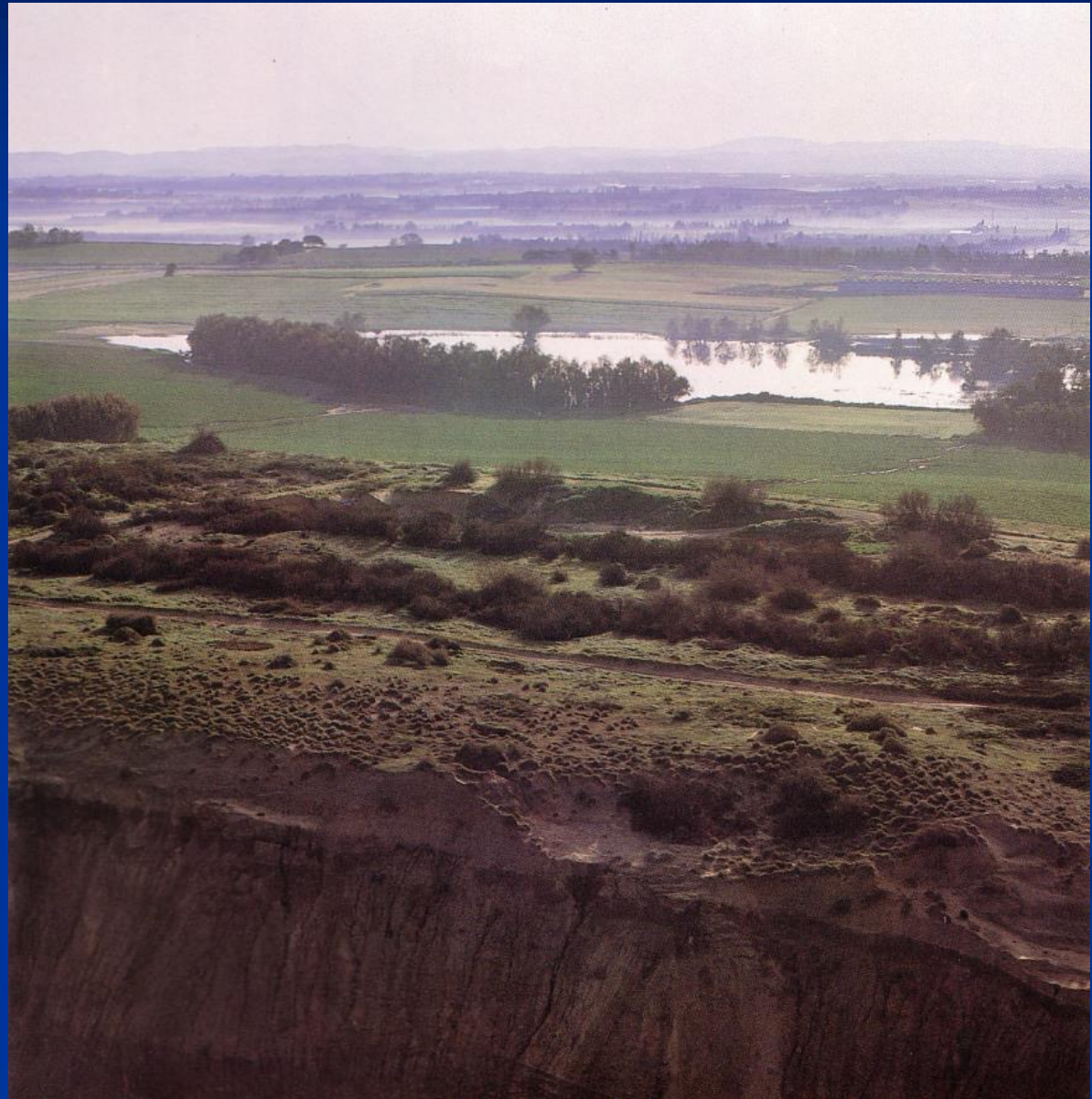


Coastal Plain



# Coastal Plain

- **Kurkar**  
(sandstone)  
ridges in the  
foreground  
while looking  
east to the  
foothills



**Left Stage**

**Life in Ancient Israel**

**Right Stage**

**Phoenicians**

**Syrians**

**Sea Peoples,  
The "ians" (mostly)**

**Desert Peoples**

**Canaanites**

**The "ites"**

**Gileadites**

**Romans**

**Amorites**

**Babylonians**

**Israelites**

**Ammonites**

**Assyrians**

**Jebusites**

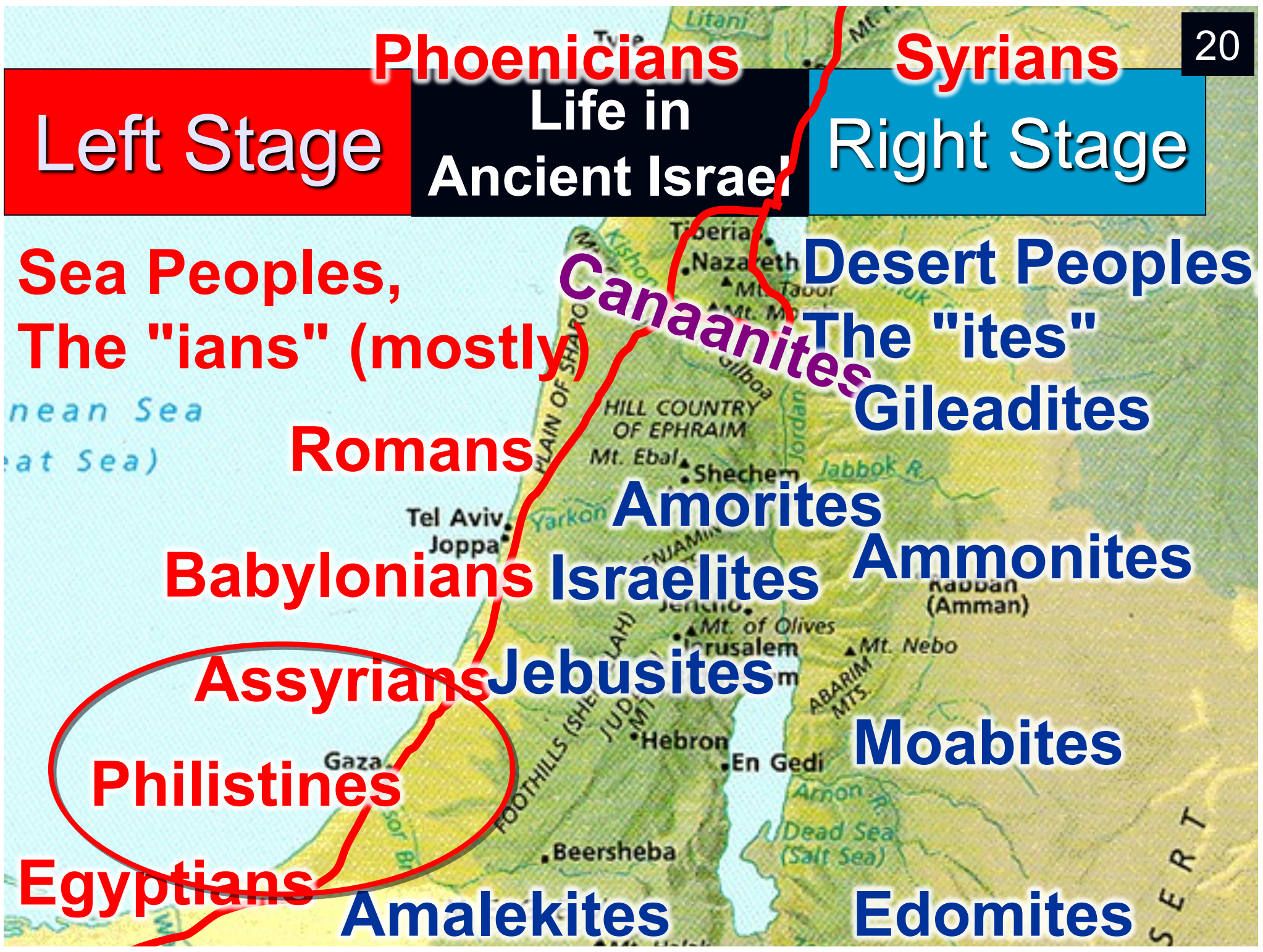
**Moabites**

**Philistines**

**Egyptians**

**Amalekites**

**Edomites**



# FEATURES

## CITIES

**The Philistines developed into 5 major cities.**  
**These cities are called a Pentapolis.**  
**Each was controlled by a *seren* (lord).**

**A**

**G**

**E**



**Ashkelon**  
**Ashdod**

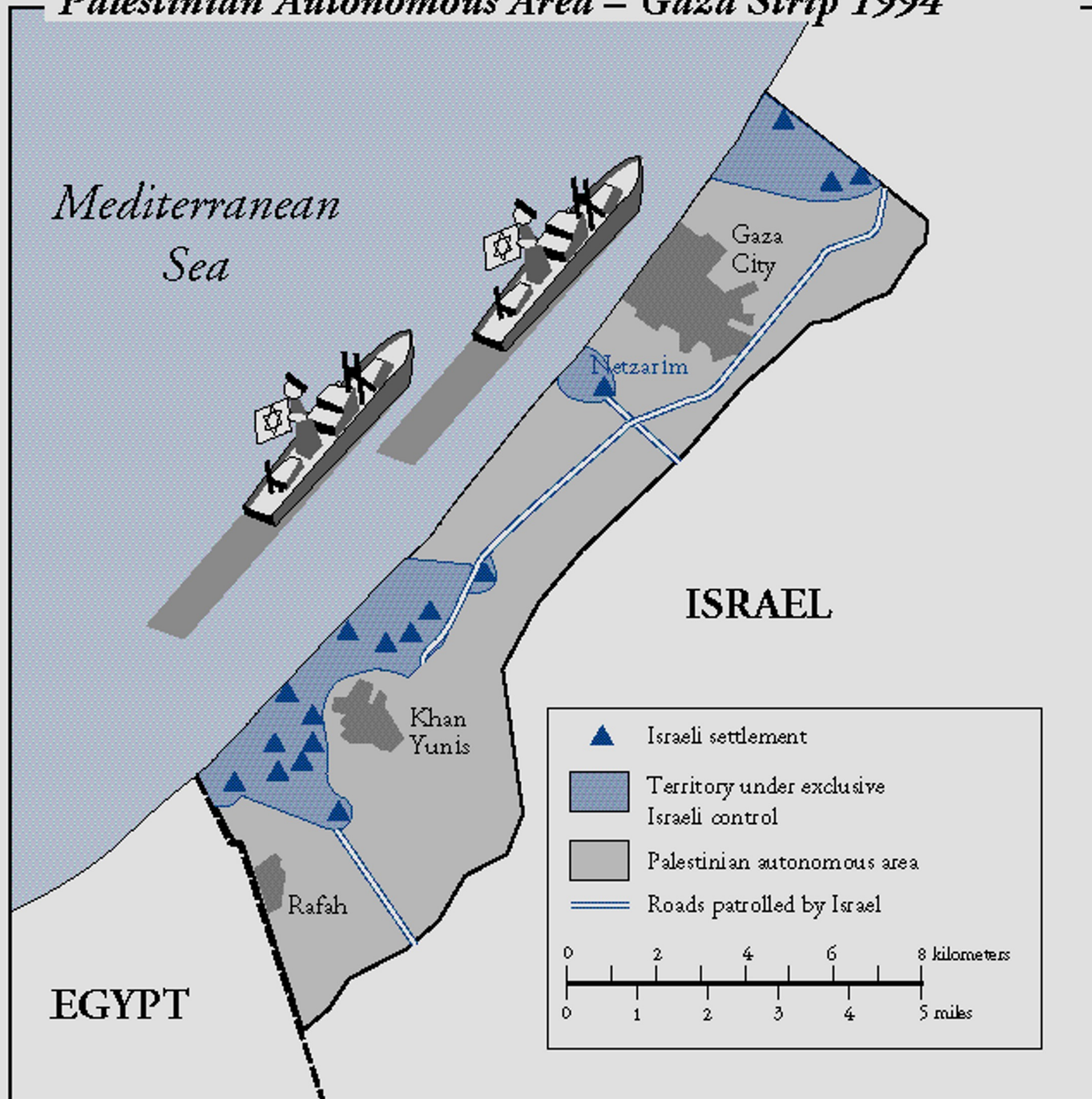
**Gaza**  
**Gath**

**Ekron**






## *Palestinian Autonomous Area – Gaza Strip 1994*



**Israel  
later  
gave  
up the  
Gaza  
Strip**

# GAZA STRIP

March 1999

- |   |   |
|---|---|
|  Built-up area   |  Yellow area (Israeli security control, Palestinian civil control) |
|  Actual Israeli-developed area (civilian) beyond the 1950 Armistice Line |  Oslo-defined Israeli settlement area                              |
|  Oslo-defined military installation area                                 |  UNRWA refugee camp  |
|  Major road  |  International boundary  |
|  Regional road   |  1950 Armistice Line   |
|  Local, access, or main urban road                                       |  Israeli security perimeter  |

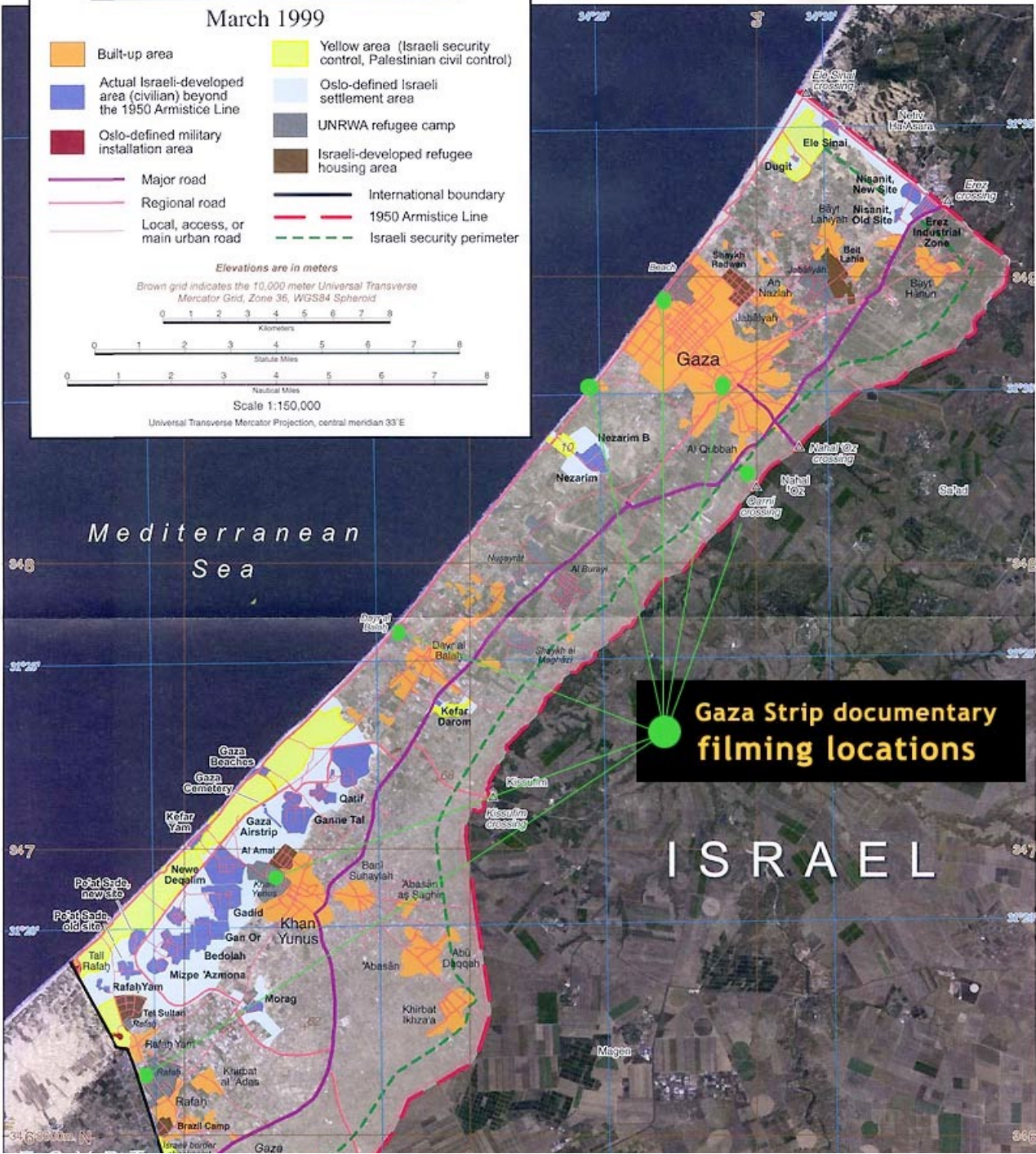
Elevations are in meters

Brown grid indicates the 10,000 meter Universal Transverse Mercator Grid, Zone 36, WGS84 Spheroid



Scale 1:150,000

Universal Transverse Mercator Projection, central meridian 33° E



# Gaza Up Close in 1999

Gaza Strip documentary  
filming locations

ISRAEL

# Geography of Philistia

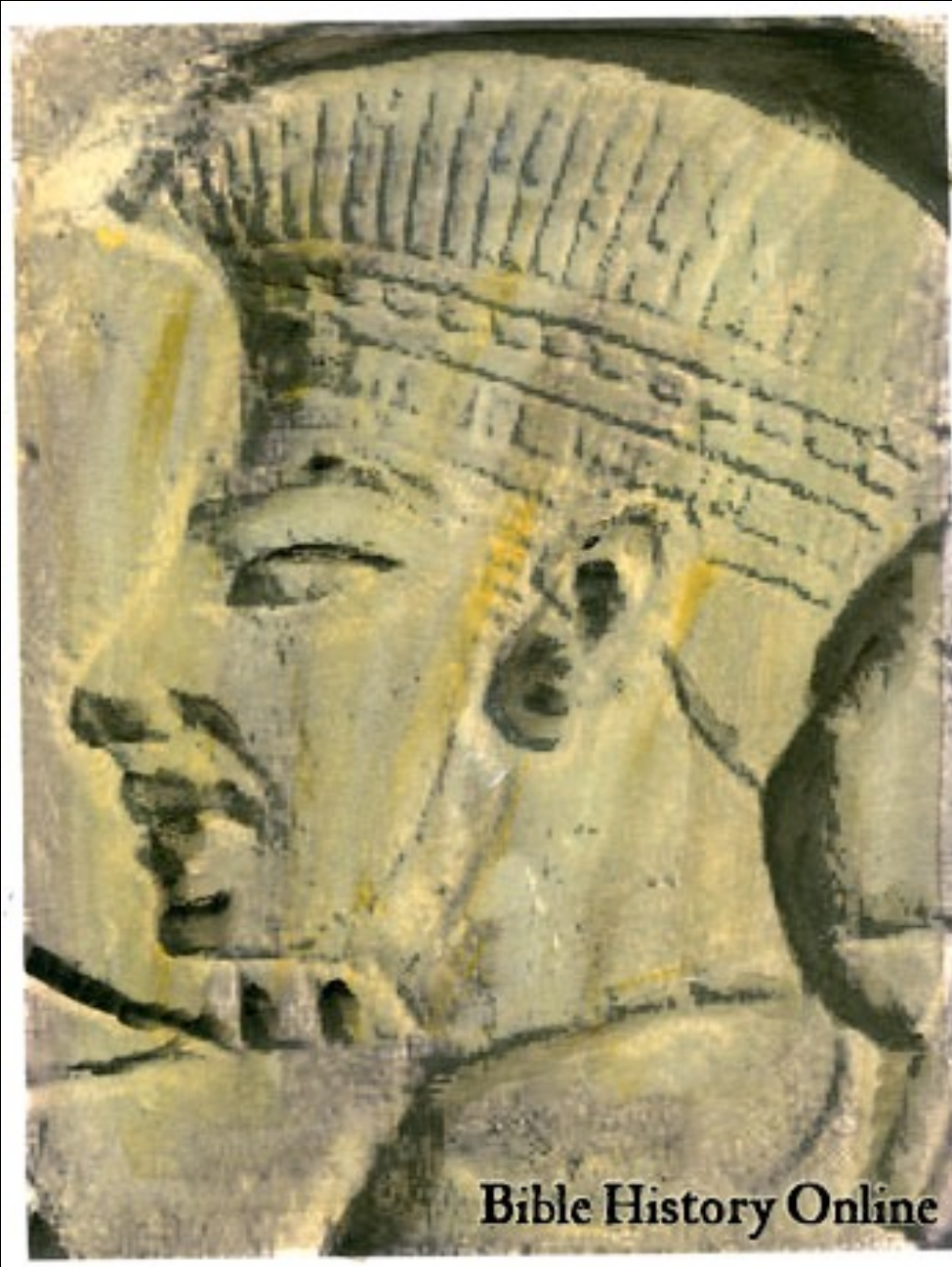
1. The first three – Ashkelon, Ashdod, Gaza – were all situated on or beside the sea-coast, straddling the line of the Via Maris (Way of the Sea).

2. The other two – Gath and Ekron – were inland cities on the plain somewhere east of the three coastal cities; but archaeologists have not agreed on the original location of these two cities.



# Major Archaeological Discoveries

1. Philistine **pottery** with its distinctive and elegantly stylized bird motif and statues
2. Many types of **weapons**
3. Philistine god/goddess **temples**



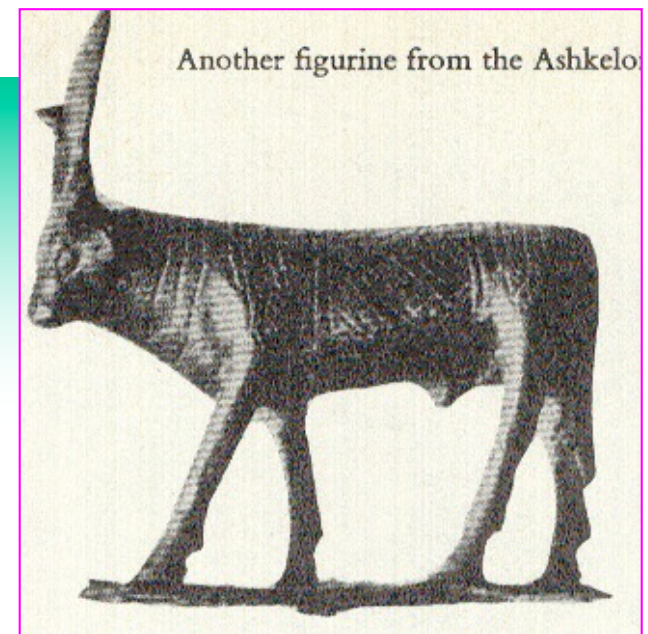
**A key city throughout the second millennium BC (middle and late Bronze Age).**

**Biblical records:**

- **Once this city was occupied by Judah (Judg. 1:18)**
- **In Samson's day it reverted to Philistine rule (Judg. 14:19)**



**Statue from  
Ashkelon  
(probably 4<sup>th</sup>  
century BC)**





**An interesting  
sculptured figure**

**The Winged Goddess of  
Victory – Nike**

**She is standing upon a  
globe of the world  
which rests upon the  
shoulders of Atlas**

- Ugarit texts noted Ashdod as an important trading city in the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC: "traders from Ashdod" are specifically mentioned.
- **Biblical record:**  
In 1 Samuel 5, when Philistines captured the Ark of God, the people of this city suffered a lot.



**One of the Ashdod findings (a chair for a Philistine goddess)**

# *Philistines made beautiful pots!*

P  
O  
T  
T  
E  
R  
Y



# The Pottery

**Distinctive type of Philistine pottery  
(influenced by Mycenaean, Cyprus,  
Egypt and Palestine)**

**Closely related to the Rhodes and  
Cyprus**

**Buff-colored beer jar (heavy  
drinkers), craters, cup, jar, etc**

**Typically painted in black and red**



# Gaza

- **Gaza was a centre of busy caravan routes which led to Egypt.**
- **Gaza served as an administrative centre for protecting Egyptian interests in Canaan.**
- **One of the most important stories about Gaza is Judges 16 where Samson died.**



# Coastal Plain

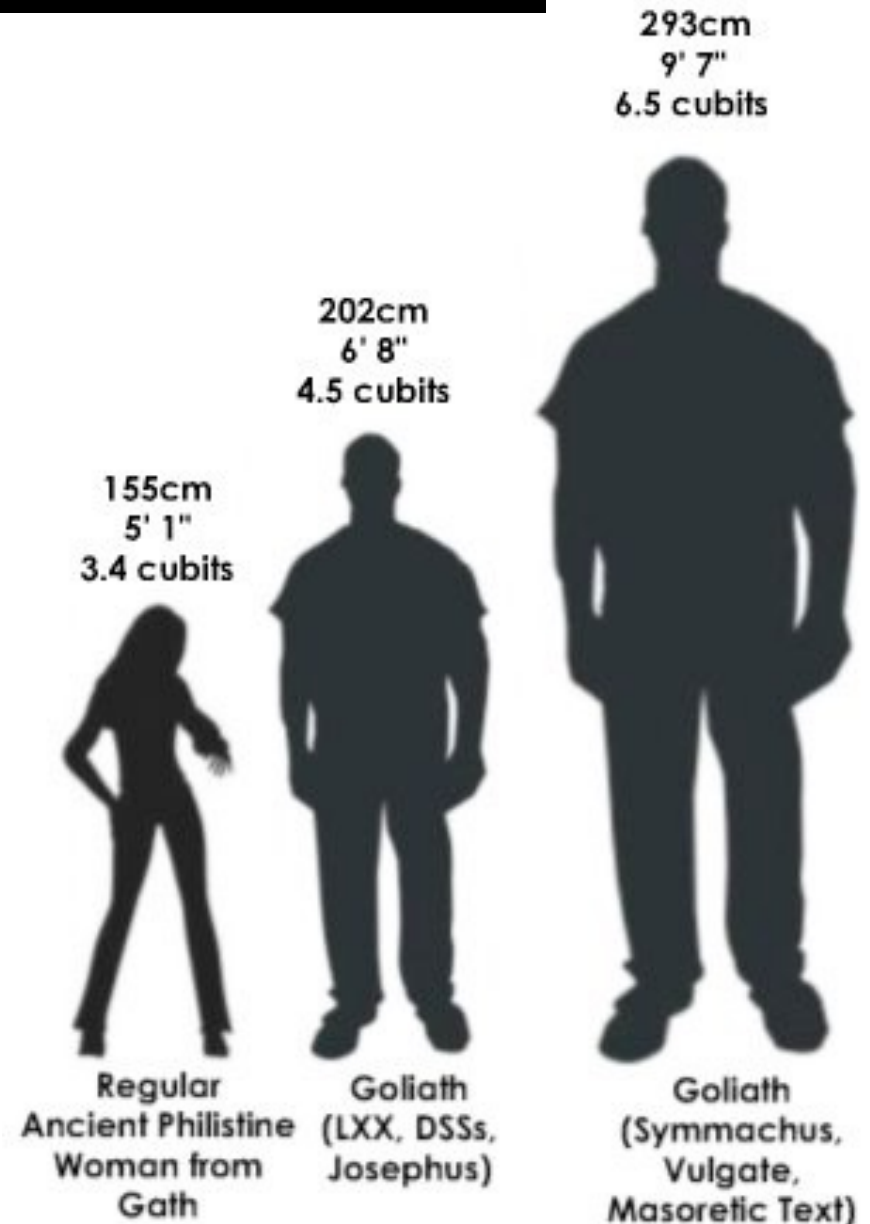
- Gaza



# Gath

108

- The ark of God moved to Gath from Ashdod; God gave them a plague of tumors (1 Sam. 5:6-10).
- Gath was the city of Goliath (1 Sam. 18).
- David ran away from Saul to Gath and he met Achish the King of Gath (1 Sam. 21:10-15).



# Samson in Gath

What was his weakness?

Her?

Hair?

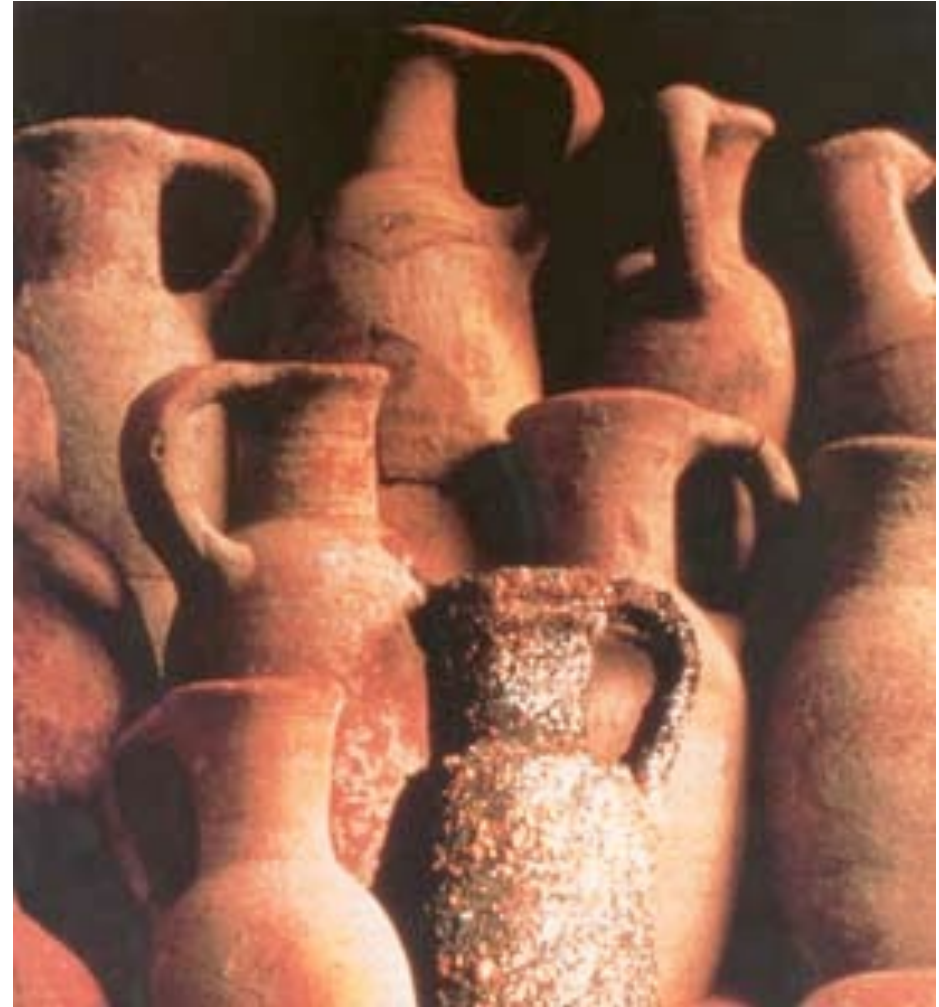
Heart?

*“Samson... the **he man**  
with a **she weakness**”*

*-Chuck Swindoll*

# Ekron

- It was between Judah and Dan and it remained unpossessed.
- Joshua 15:14-46 indicates that Ekron was a fairly substantial city, having villages dependent upon it.
- 1 Samuel 5:10-6:12 record about the Ekronites who were afraid of the ark of God from Israel would kill them.



# Language

111

**Little is known about their language but there is no indication of language problems between Philistines and Israelites**

**They might have adapted the local Semitic language soon after they came**

**Their names are usually Semitic (Ahimelek, Mitinti, Dagon) but some are Asianic (Achish and Goliath)**

- **Some Hebrew words are from Philistines**
- **The Hebrew word for helmet (*qoba*) is a foreign word attributed to the Philistines**



# Iron Smiths

**They controlled the smelting of iron (and kept Israel from having even one ironsmith – 1 Sam 13:19-22)**



**Their material culture was far superior to that of Israel**

**Philistines were actually the main civilizing influence on Palestine**

**Their superior culture & political organization gave them dominance over all of Palestine**



## Three famous Philistine gods in the Bible:

1. ASHTAROTH (1 Kings 11:5)

2. BAAL – ZEBUB (2 Kings 1:1-16)

3. DAGON (Judges 16:2; 1 Sam. 5:17)

# ASTAROTH / ASHTORETH

**A common Semitic deity**

**Other names: Attart, `Attartu (Ugarit), Ashtart (Phoenicia), Astarte (Greek), Ishtar (Mesopotamia).**

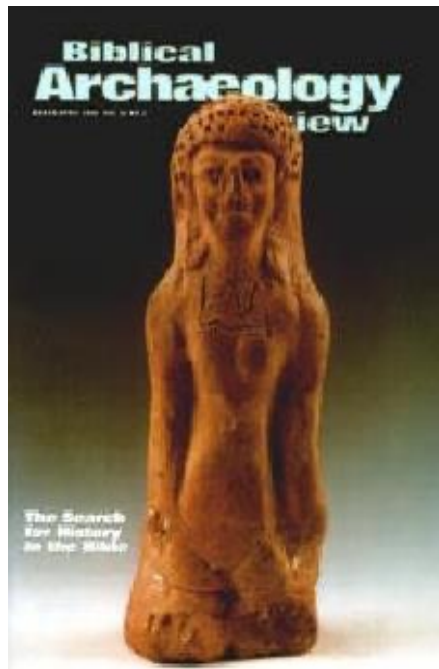
**Meaning : shame**

**The mother goddess, the goddess of fertility, love and war (introduced to the Israelites by Canaanites)**



**Israel worshipped Ashtoreth soon after the people arrived in the Promised Land (Judg. 2:13)**

**Saul's body was placed in the Astaroth temple (1 Sam. 31:10)**



**Ashera/  
Astarte**  
(from Tel Rehov  
excavations in  
the Jordan  
Valley)



**Qadash/Asherah**  
(goddess in fine  
gold foil pendant)



**Ashtoreth**  
(golden plaque of 4  
winged goddess)



# BAAL ZEBUB ...BAAL WHAT?

109

**Baal = Master, Lord**  
**Zebub = ???**



**Baal – Zebub :**

**The lord of the fly...?**



# Some suggestions:

- The omnipresence of flies?
- The god who guards them from flies?
- A mockery from the Israelites?



**NT (Jesus) : Beelzeboul – Lord Prince / Lord Baal / lord of the heavenly dwelling (Matt. 10:25; 12:24, 27, etc...)**



**DAGON...  
guess?**



**Half fish and half human ...**

**Hebrew**

**Dag = fish**





**What some believe as the  
Philistine's DAGON**

Another suggestion:

It might derived from the word:

*dagan* = grain, corn  
so he was a vegetation god



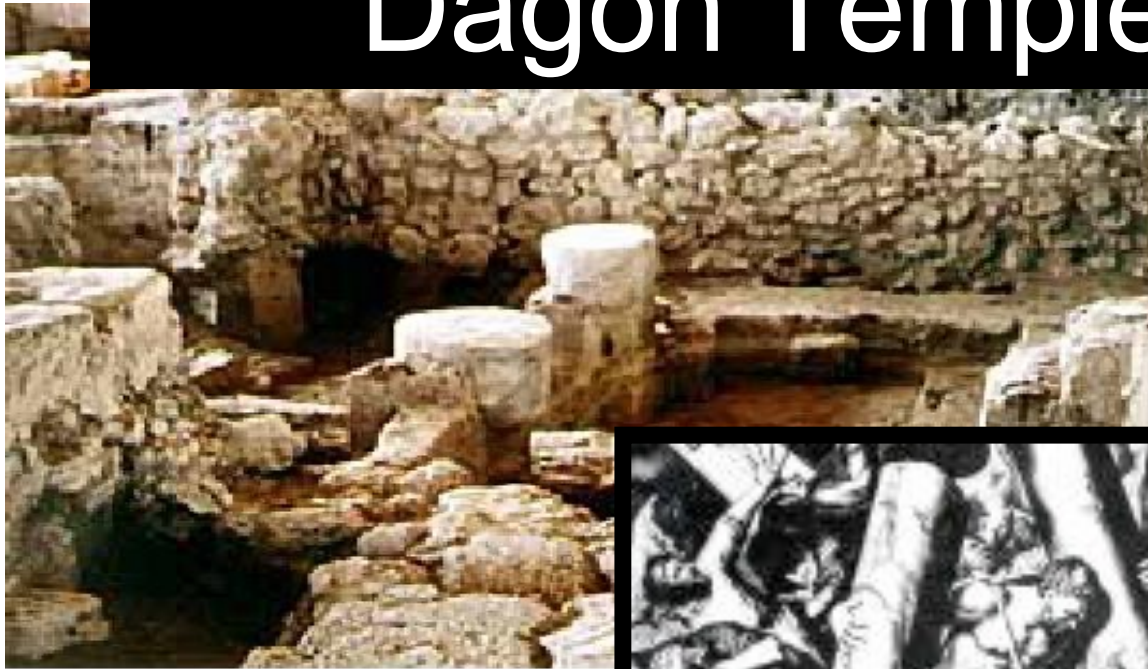
**Dagon:**

The principal deity of the Philistines during Samson's time at Gaza (Judg. 10:21-23) and during Saul & David's time (1 Sam. 5:2-3; 1 Chron. 10:10)

From at least 2500 BC onward, Dagon received worship throughout Mesopotamia

# Dagon Temple Pillars

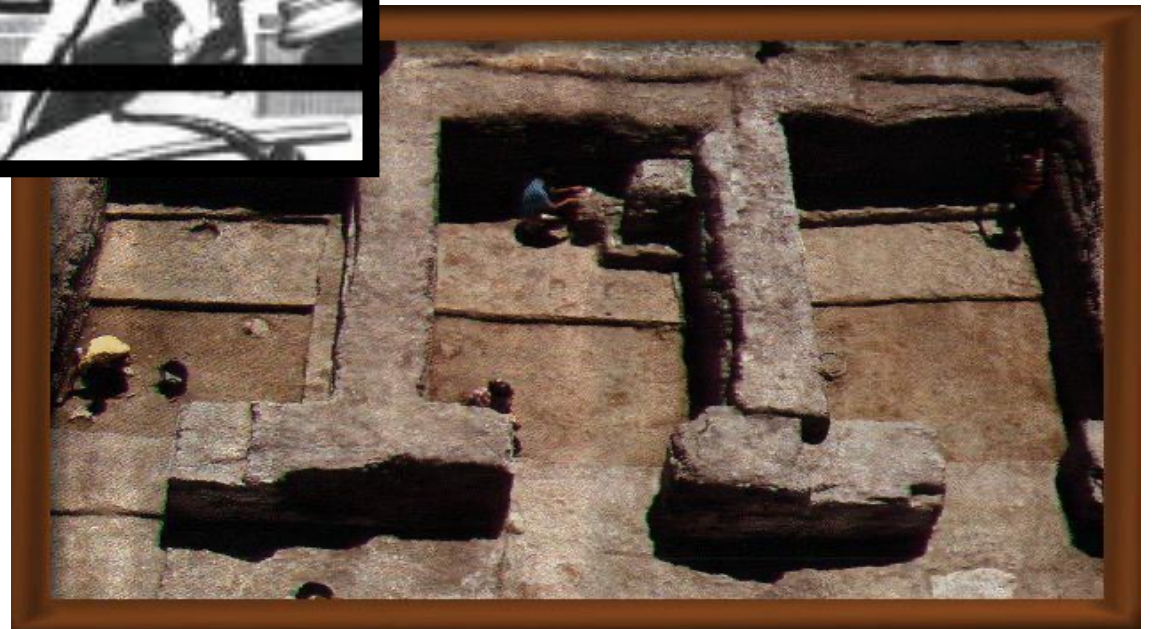
111



**Some ruins of the  
Philistine temple in  
Tell Qasile temple  
(above)**



**and Beth-Shean  
(right)**

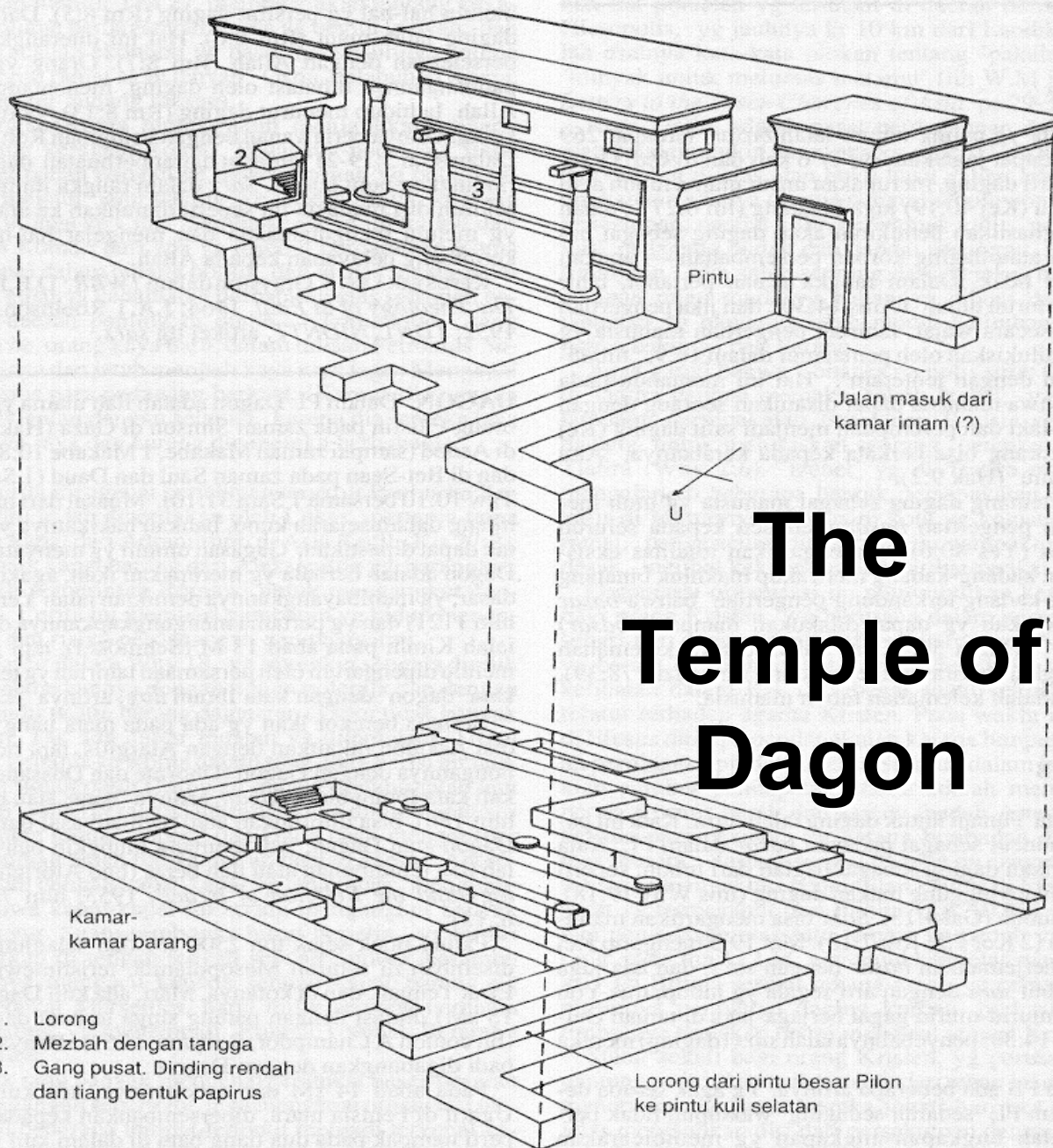


**See the two pillars?**

**Remember Samson's  
last hours in the  
temple of Dagon?**

**What did he do?**

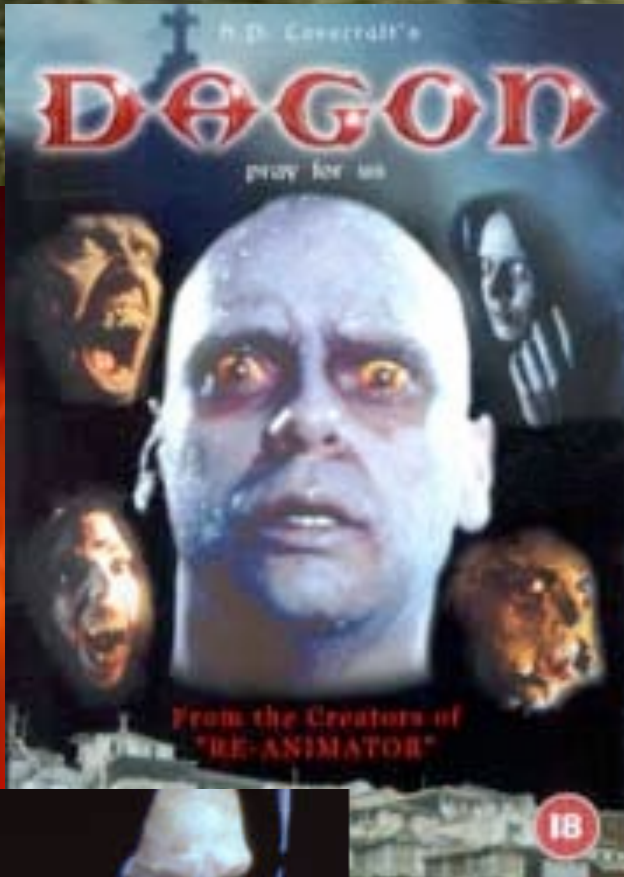
**(Judges 16:23-31)**



## The Temple of Dagon

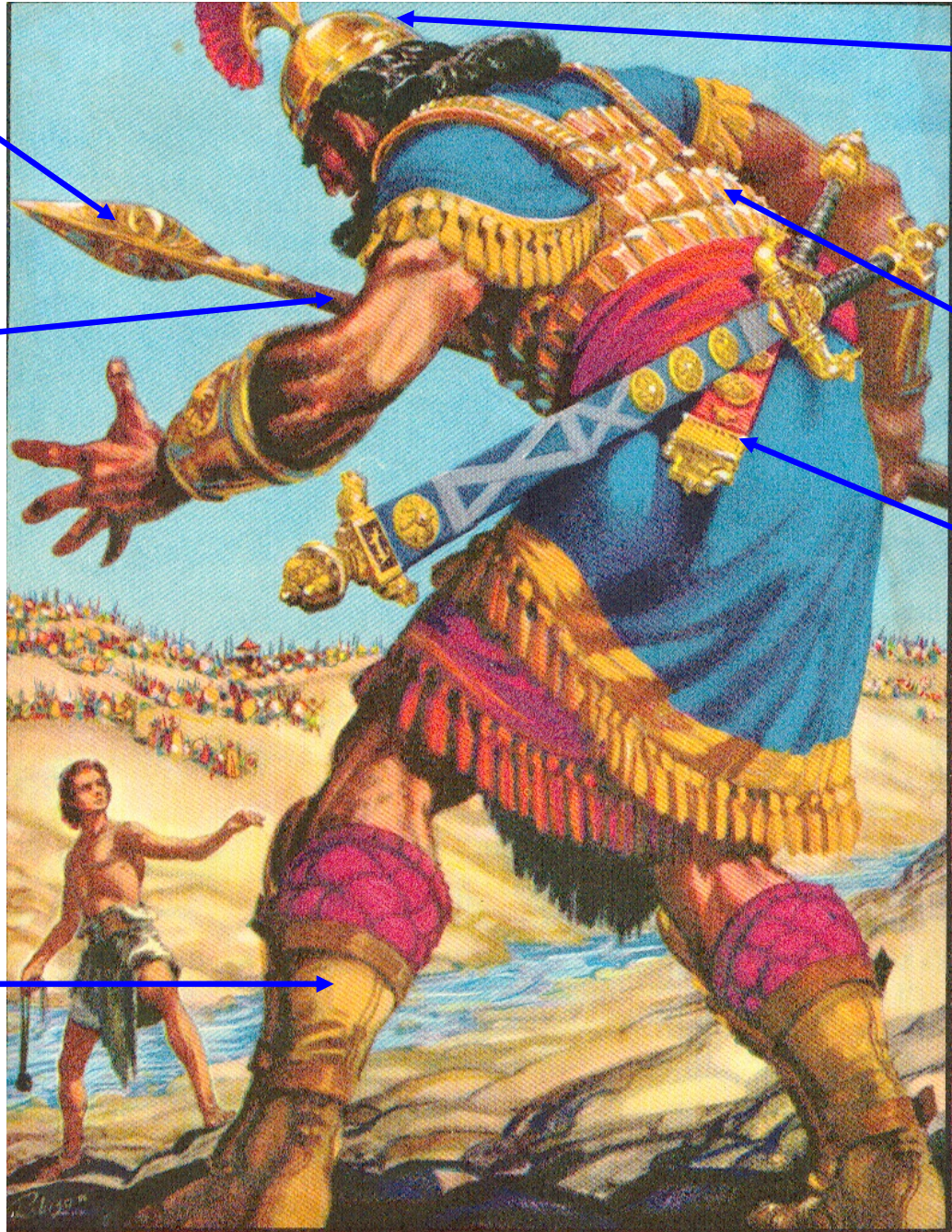
**Dagon was the main Philistine god**

# 21st Century Dagon



**Philistines  
were a  
fearsome  
people**





Iron point

[Wood]  
Spear  
Shaft

Bronze  
Greaves

Bronze  
Helmet

Bronze Armor

Bronze  
Javelin

**Goliath's  
Armor**

# The Philistine Military Capacities

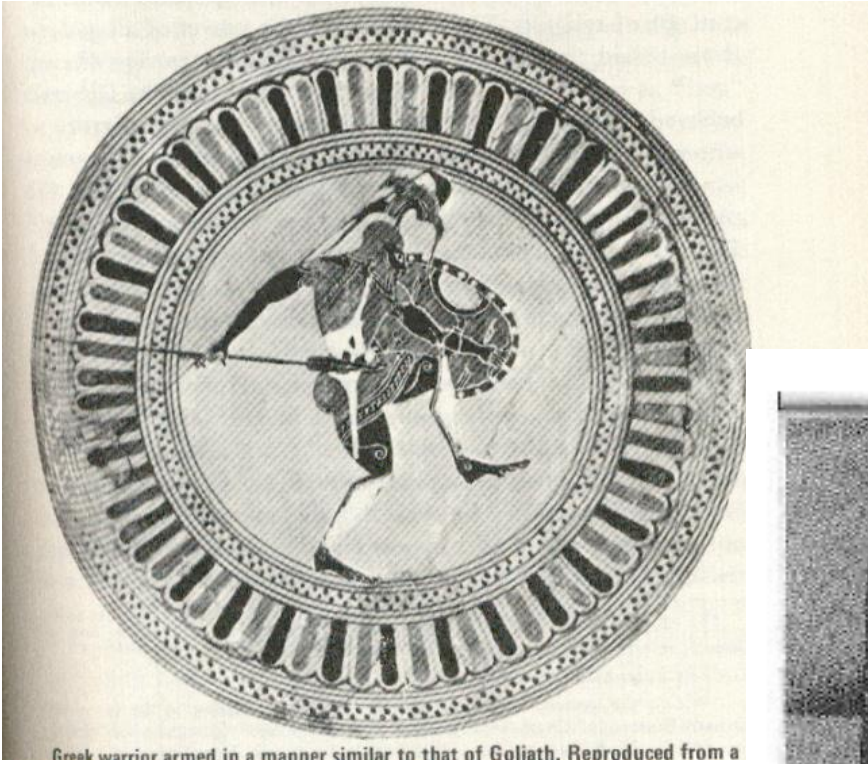
## (1 Sam 17:5-7)

112

- **Bronze helmet**
- **Bronze coat of scale armor**  
(5000 shekels = 57.5 kgs)
- **Bronze greaves (7 kgs)**
- **Bronze javelin**
- **Spear shaft with iron point**  
(600 shekels = 11.5 kgs)
- **Shield**

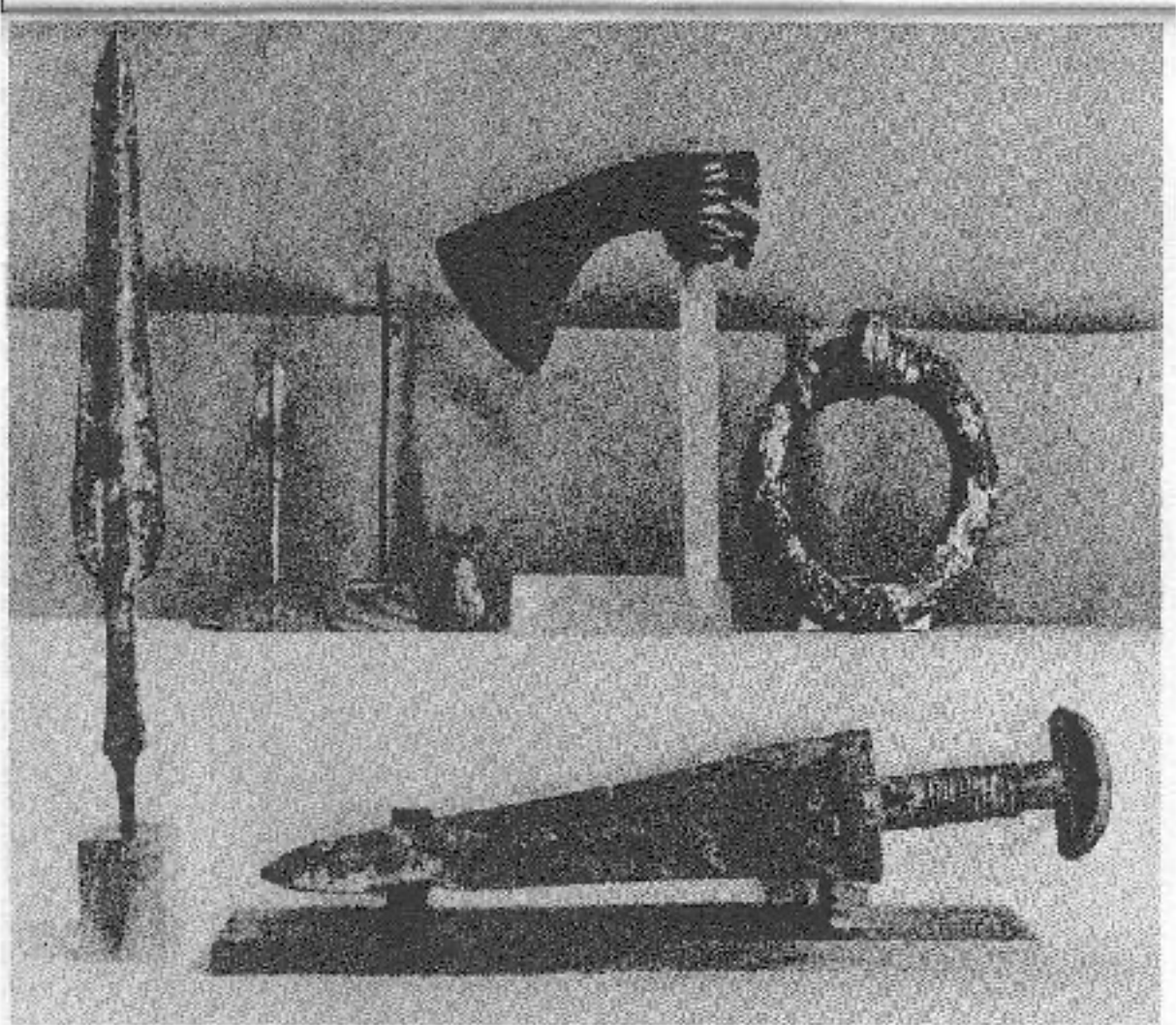


# Weapons



Greek warrior armed in a manner similar to that of Goliath. Reproduced from a

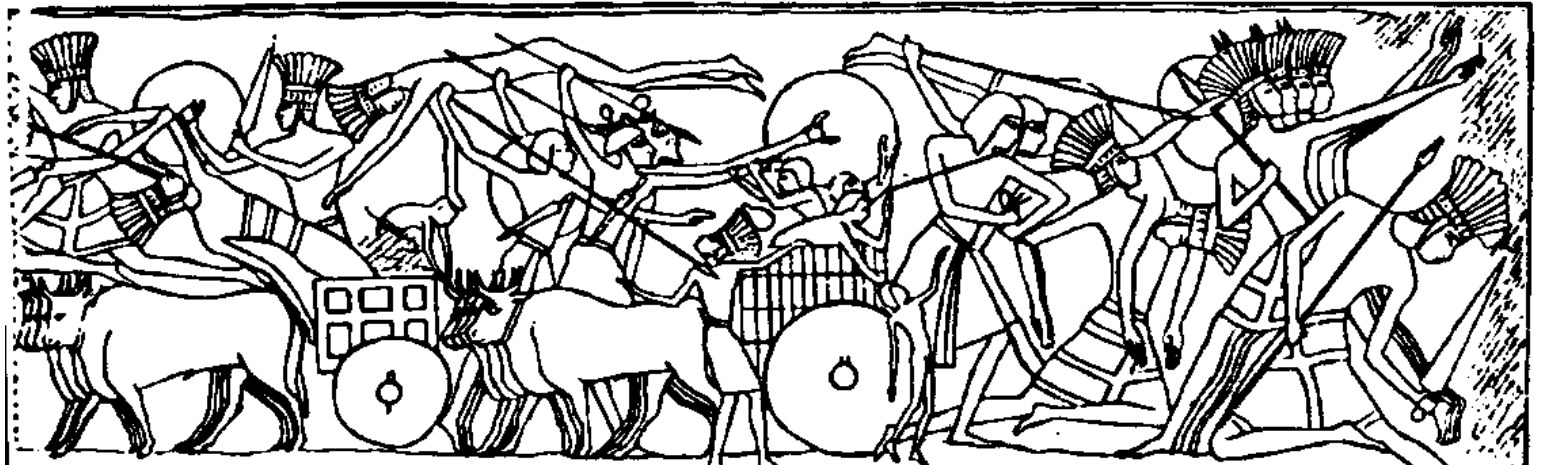
# Shield



# Philistine Military Organization

113

- ◆ Chariotry
- ◆ Cavalry
- ◆ Infantry
- ◆ Archers



(1 Sam. 13:5; 31:3)

**P**entapolis: Ashkelon, Ashdod, Gaza, Gath, Ekron

**H**am's descendant

**I**srael's enemy

**L**arge scale migration

**I** Samuel 17 (David & Goliath)

**S**ea People

**T**echnology & temples

**I**ron spear

Dago**N** was one of their deities

(2) AG**E**

(Ashkelon, Ashdod, Gaza, Gath and Ekron)



Summary

# The Importance of Technology



*“But we just don’t have the technology to carry it out.”*

# Philistines Noted Very Early

**Gen. 21:34** Abraham lived as a foreigner in **Philistine** country for a long time.


**Ex. 13:17** When Pharaoh finally let the people go, God did not lead them along the main road that runs through **Philistine** territory, even though that was the shortest route to the Promised Land. God said, “If the people are faced with a battle, they might change their minds and return to Egypt.”

**Josh. 13:3** and the larger territory of the Canaanites, extending from the stream of Shihor on the border of Egypt, northward to the boundary of Ekron. It includes the territory of the five **Philistine** rulers of Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron. The land of the Avvites

**Judg. 3:3** These are the nations: the Philistines (those living under the five **Philistine** rulers), all the Canaanites, the Sidonians, and the Hivites living in the mountains of Lebanon from Mount Baal-hermon to Lebo-hamath.

**"This is what the Sovereign LORD says: The people of Philistia have **acted against Judah out of bitter revenge and long-standing contempt.** <sup>16</sup> Therefore... <sup>17</sup> I will execute terrible vengeance against them to punish them for what they have done. And when I have inflicted my revenge, they will know that I am the LORD."**

*Philistia*  
*(25:15-17)*





# 1 Samuel 17 Thought Questions

- a) How did David's view of the Philistines differ from that of the Israelites?
- b) Why was his view different?
- c) Why do non-Christians often have superior technology to Christians?
- d) Or do they?

# IMPLICATIONS

- a) **Philistines were more technologically advanced than Israel. God used them to teach warfare to Israel (Judg. 3:1-3) as well as farming.**
- b) **The Israelites also adopted their gods and religions (Judges 10:6-7). This always made God angry and jealous.**
- c) **God used the Philistines to chastise his people.**
- d) **The continuing pressure from the Philistines triggered the Israelites to have a strong military leader (king).**
- e) **Israel was privileged to be a chosen people. Whatever the Philistines did to Israel, God still controlled every event that happened between the two nations.**

# Israel's Early Western Neighbors

114a

John H. Walton, *Chronological and Background Charts of the OT*, 2d ed., 71

|                   | <b>PHOENICIA</b>   | <b>PHILISTIA</b>  |
|-------------------|--|---|
| <b>ORIGINS</b>    | Semitic Amorites   | Aegean Sea people   |
| <b>PRE-JUDGES</b> | c. 1500<br>Territory was divided between Hittite & Egyptian domination   | Not yet in Palestine  |
| <b>JUDGES</b>     | <p>1400–Began slow rebellion, first against Egypt</p> <p>1380-1287–Mostly controlled by Hittites; control diminished until 1190</p> <p>1190–Invasion by sea peoples. Independent city-states established</p> <p>1100–Some control exercised by Tiglath-Pileser I</p> | <p>1190–Defeated Hittites, destroyed capital. Defeated by Rameses III, settled on coast of Palestine. 5 major cities: Ashkelon, Ashdod, Gath, Gaza, Ekron (A-A-G-G-E).</p> <p>11th cent–Controlled parts of at least Dan &amp; Judah (Jud. 14:4; 15:11). Samson held somewhat in control.</p> <p>1060–Captured Israel's ark (1 Sam. 4)</p> <p>1050–Israel subdued Philistia at Ebenezer (1 Sam. 7:7-14)</p> |

# Israel's Early Western Neighbors

114a

John H. Walton, *Chronological and Background Charts of the OT*, 2d ed., 71

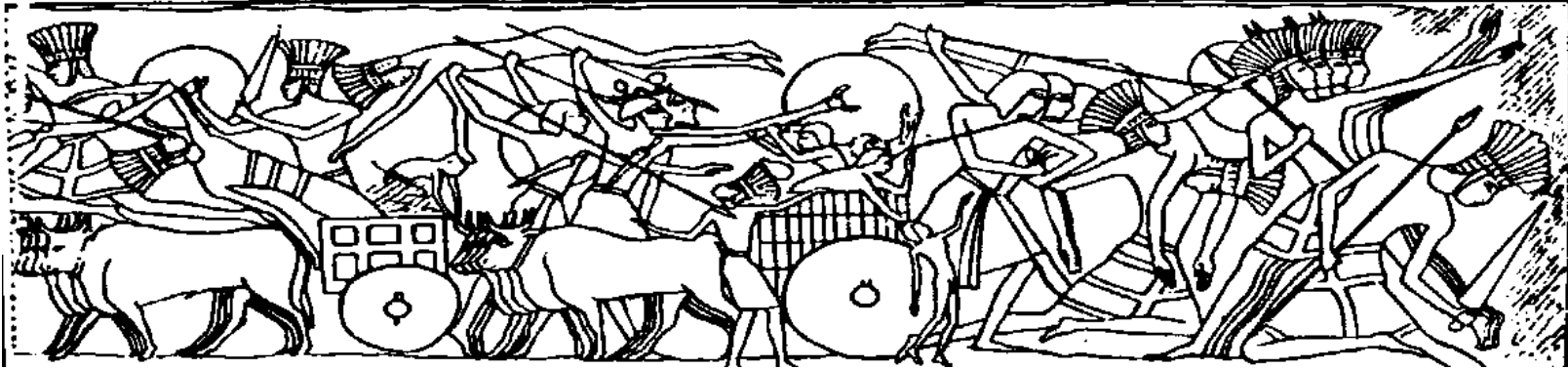
|                    | <b>PHOENICIA</b>  | <b>PHILISTIA</b>   |
|--------------------|---|--|
| <b>SAUL</b>        | Political independence;<br>cultural development   | Philistines held in check through most of this period. They were defeated at Michmash by Jonathan & at Elah through David. Overran country at end after defeating and killing Saul at Mt. Gilboa |
| <b>1000–900 BC</b> | Golden Age<br>981-942–Hiram I of Tyre;<br>alliance with Israel.<br>Expansion of sea trade &<br>exploration; colonies in N.<br>Africa, Spain, Asia Minor, &<br>Mediterranean | David defeated & subdued the Philistines (2 Sam. 5:17-25)  |

# Israel's Early Western Neighbors

John H. Walton, *Chronological and Background Charts of the OT*, 2d ed., 71

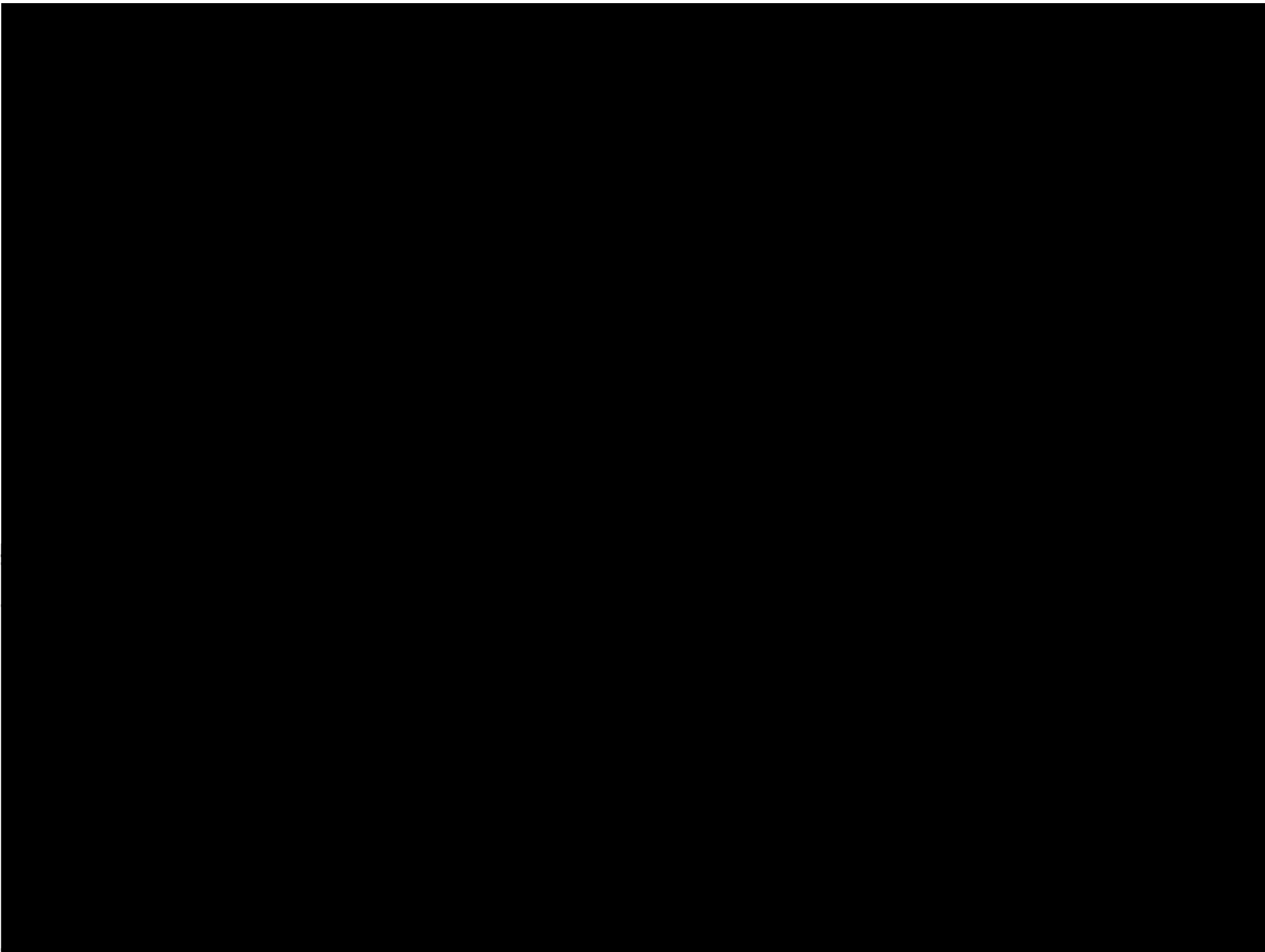
|                   | <b>PHOENICIA</b>  | <b>PHILISTIA</b>   |
|-------------------|---|--|
| <b>900-722 BC</b> | <p>890–High Priest Ethbaal gains throne.<br/>Alliance with Israel continues with marriage of his daughter Jezebel to Ahab</p> <p>865–Tribute to Assyria's Ashurnasirpal II</p> <p>853–Joined 12-nation alliance against Shalmaneser III at Qarqar</p> <p>841–Shalmaneser III takes some cities.<br/>Assyrian tributary through end of period</p>          | <p>Paid tribute to Jehoshaphat (2 Chron. 17:11)</p> <p>Raided Judah during the reign of Jehoram (2 Chron. 21:16-17)</p> <p>805–Assyrian Adad-nirari III collected tribute; subjugated by Uzziah but invaded Judah during reign of Ahaz (2 Chron. 28:18); subdued by Tiglath-pileser III of Assyria</p> |
| <b>722-570 BC</b> | <p>725–During reign of Shalmaneser V, Luli of Sidon tried to unite Phoenicia in revolt</p> <p>701–Sennacherib responded by invasion–many cities taken, deportation, puppet ruler</p> <p>677–Revolt crushed by Esarhaddon–Sidon destroyed</p> <p>665–Baalit of Tyre revolted–suppressed by Assurbanipal</p> <p>584-571–Nebuchadnezzar siege--took Tyre</p> | <p>Country subjugated &amp; Gaza captured by Hezekiah (2 Kings 18:8)</p> <p>People captured &amp; deported by Nebuchadnezzar</p>   |

# Presenters



*Adapted from Dany, Chandra, Budianto*

*Singapore Bible College 2001*



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