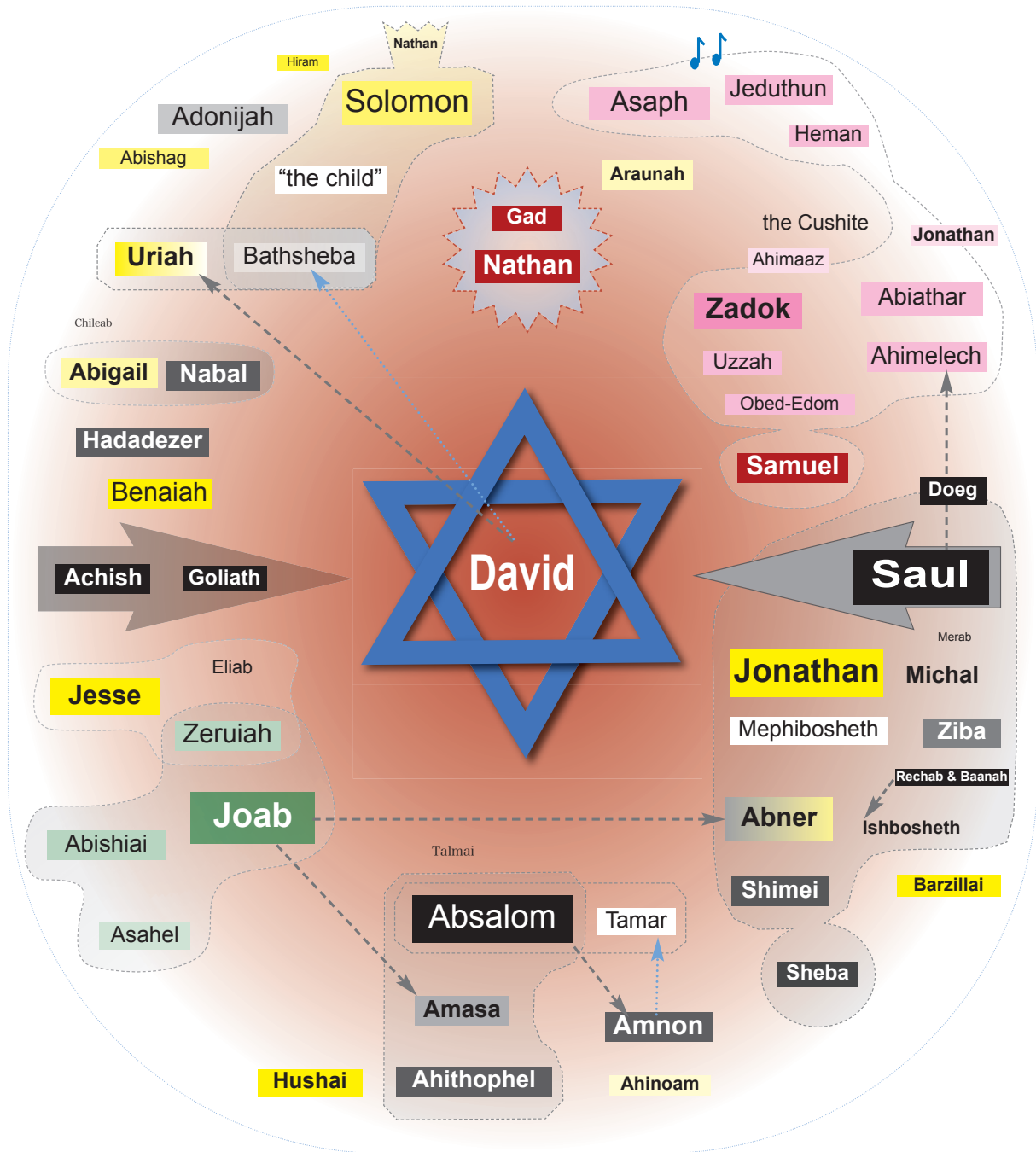


surrounded



people in the life of David

about God's promises to David

1.) This time we will focus on the most important Person in the life of David, God, Himself. The Lord called David when he was still a lowly shepherd (2 Sam. 7:8) and it was the Lord, again, who decades later promised King David great things through Nathan, the prophet (2 Sam. 4-17).

2.) Attempting to make themselves great, modern politicians make many promises which they can not keep. David, however, became great because the God of Israel made him so (7:9). Moreover after establishing David as King the Lord gave him great promises concerning his descendants for many years to come (7:12-16, 19). "Great" is a key word in Second Samuel seven.

3.) Another key term and phrase in this chapter is "Israel" and "my people Israel" (7:7, 10, 11), for God's promises to David were not for the king alone. As David, himself, said in 7:23-24 the people of Israel are God's people in a special way forever. Despite their present unbelief, the Lord is not through with Israel. (See Rom. 11:26-27.)

4.) The Davidic Covenant, with its many promises, is the subject in 2 Samuel seven, but it's significant that the word promise only appears in the second half of the chapter, in 7:21, 25, 28, and 29 (in Japanese), when David recalled the things the Lord had said through Nathan. God, himself, never said "I promise..." Rather, he said "I will..." using mostly action verbs which are translated in future tense.

5. Did God promise David in 7:13-16 that there would be an unbroken line of kings in Israel from his time forward, forever? Obviously not, for there has not been a Jewish king reigning in Israel for more than two thousand years and the Jewish state which was established in 1948 is a democracy.

6. Scholars agree that the eternal promises to David have to do with the Messiah who shall reign forever. Theologians, however, disagree about the nature of Christ's kingdom. Some say that Jesus' heavenly reign over the church is the only kingdom of God. Others argue that there must also be a literal kingdom on earth involving Israel as promised in Eze. 37:24-25, Rev. chs. 20-21, and other texts.

7. Israel which is so prominent in Second Samuel seven and other Old Testament prophetic passages does not disappear in the New Testament. Some believe that the church has replaced Israel, forever, but the twelve tribes of Israel are still prominently mentioned in Revelation in which Jesus is proclaimed to be the King of Kings and Lord of Lords over the nations (See Rev. 7:4-8 and 19:16.) For this reason and others it is best to say that there will be a literal millennial kingdom on earth in the future involving Israel (Rev. 20:4), as well as Jesus' reign from heaven in this present age.

Biblical prophecy, including some aspects of Second Samuel seven, is difficult to fully understand, but God's promises are encouraging and should not be despised or neglected.

Is Second Samuel seven too long and difficult?

There is a school of thought in art, music, architecture, and literature called *minimalism* which advocates making everything as simply as possible. Those who hold to this theory have a legitimate point, for there are many “simple” passages in Scripture, like Psalm 23, the Lord’s prayer, John 3:16, and 1 Tim. 3:16, which say much with only a few words. If God were a consistent minimalist, however, Second Samuel seven would be very different! The 29 verses in the chapter could be reduced to just two or three.

In the first verse David might say that he wants to build a temple to house the ark of the covenant and in the second verse God could refuse his request. If building the temple was all that really mattered, David’s lengthy prayer in 7:18-29 could be totally eliminated. A verse like 7:13 might be needed, however, to say that David’s son would build the temple, resulting in a chapter with three verses. Of course, we would, then, know little or nothing about David’s humility, faith, thankfulness, and heart for God; but who cares?

If emphasis is not important, all repetition could be eliminative, such as about the eternal nature of God’s kingdom in 7:13 and 7:16. Similarly some might object to David repeatedly referring to himself as “your servant” in 7:19, 21, 25, 26, 27, 28, and 29. All these verses would be shorter if he just used simple pronouns. And, of course, the chapter would be shorter if God didn’t keep referring to the Jews as “my people Israel” (7:7, 10, and 11). All of these objections would be correct, if God’s people, serving God, and God’s eternal kingdom are trivial subjects.

If it were unnecessary for the God of Israel to differentiate himself from other gods there would probably be no need for 7:5-7. Likewise, if being brief is all that matters, there would be no need to say anything about David’s past and how the Lord graciously raised him up to rule over Israel (7:8-9). Moreover, since the main characters in the chapter are David and God, himself, some would say there is no need to mention Nathan, the prophet, who is named first in 7:2. “Who cares about an obscure O.T. prophet and David’s past, anyway?” some may ask.

Who cares? God cares — about Israel, about the coming of the Messiah, about the millennial kingdom, and, most of all in this context, about David’s heart. Chapter seven shows more about his relationship to God and God’s relationship with him than any other. So abridging ch. seven would be a great sin and loss. That’s obvious. However, the trend toward less Bible content in many churches today is easily overlooked. Naturally we don’t like to study long and difficult chapters. We prefer simple ones and expect speakers to make everything easy. That’s helpful and necessary, of course, but sadly Bible truth is often lost in the process. Excessive minimalism is destroying churches today, especially some of the larger ones.