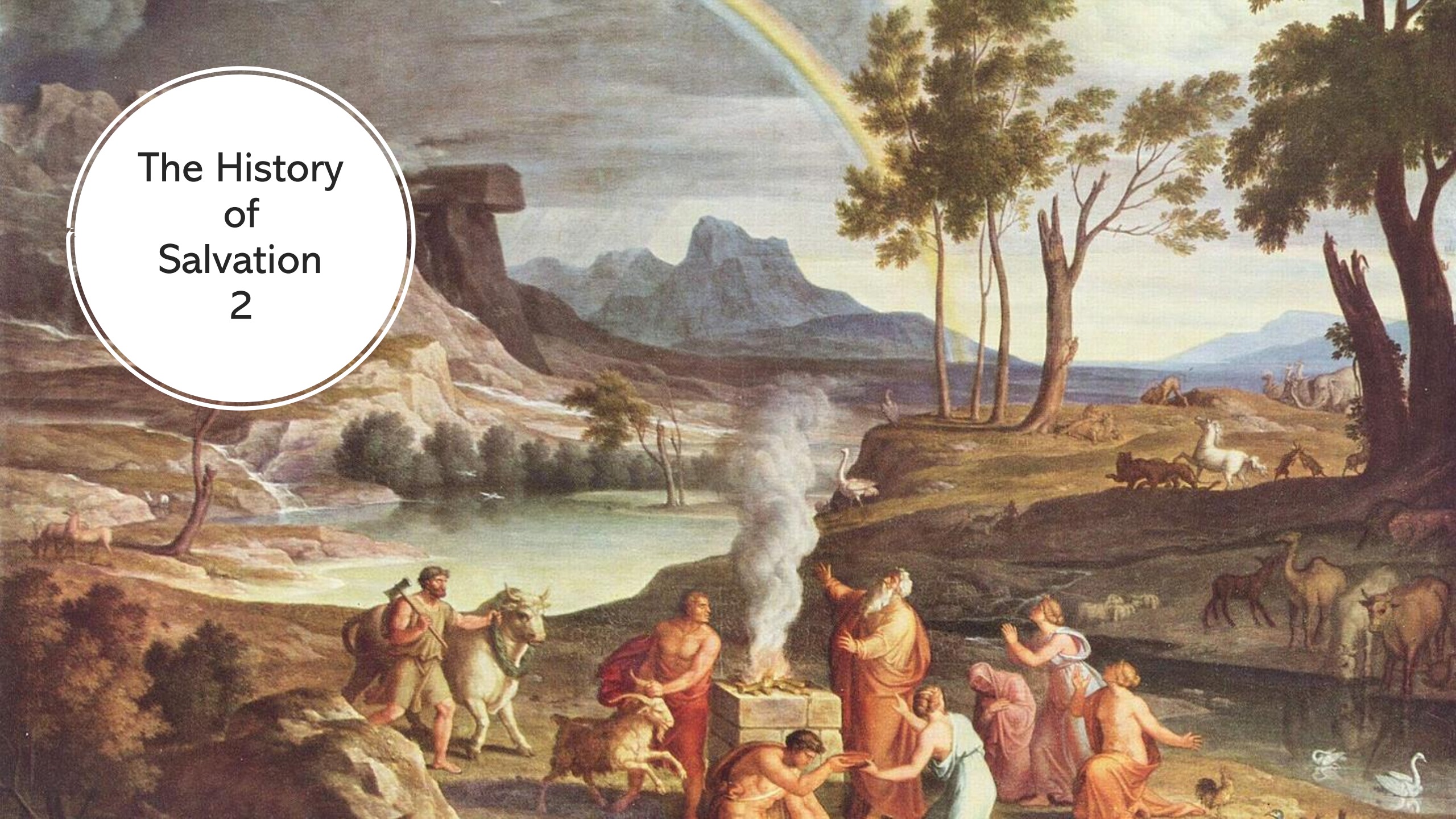


The History  
of  
Salvation  
2

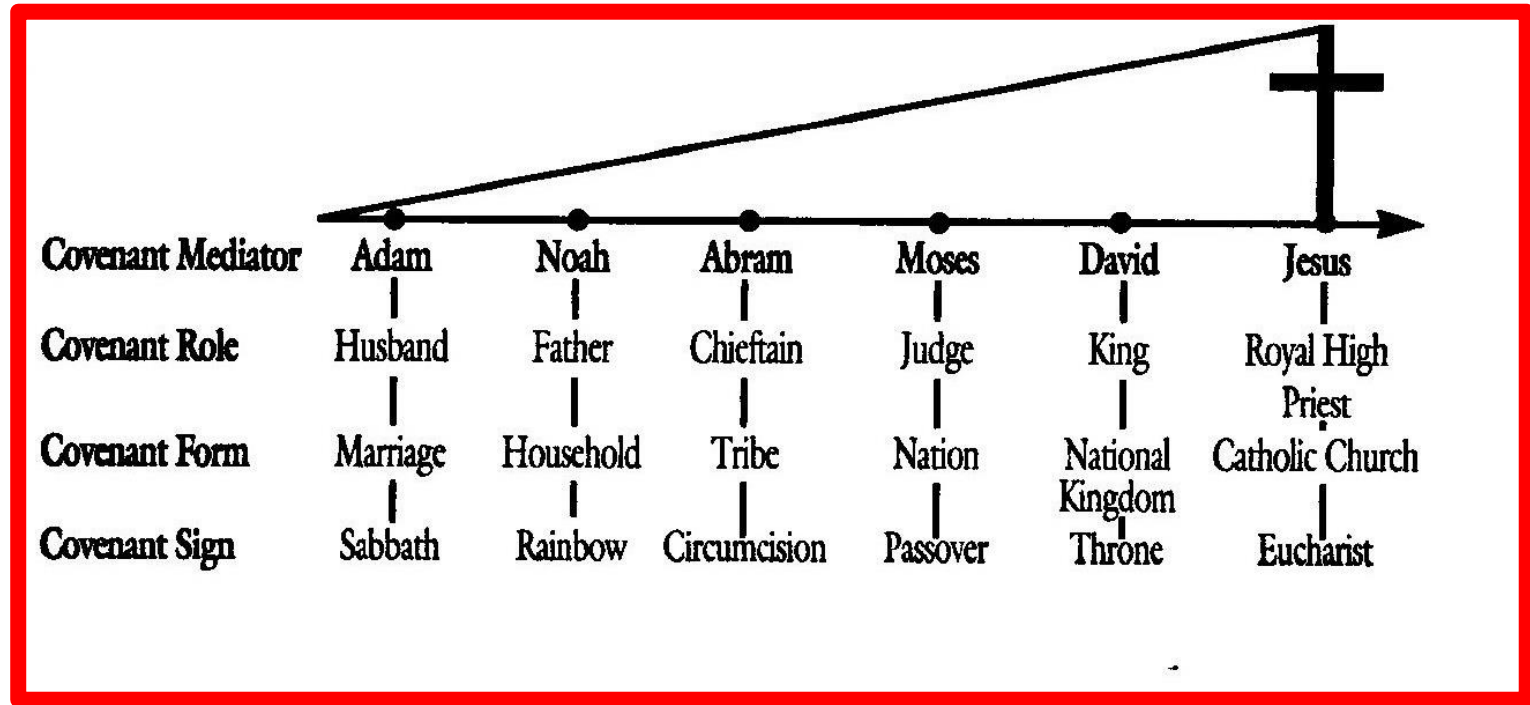


# Biblical Covenants: God Unfolds His Plan

## Promises and Requirements

### Five special features:

1. Covenant Mediator (the person God makes the covenant with)
2. Covenant Role (who the mediator is representing)
3. Promises & Conditions of the covenant (blessings & curses)
4. "Sign" by which the covenant will be celebrated and remembered.
5. "Form" that God's family has as a result of the covenant with them.



# Covenants in the Ancient World

## Form Kinship Bonds

- Obligations of the parties
- Blessings and curses for upholding or breaking the covenant.
- Solemn ratification ceremony where the covenant is read/recited & eating & drinking.
- People stray and break the agreement, but God remains faithful & reaches out to call them back, to form them as the people of God.
- In the Bible we see the Patriarchs do things that are wrong or scandalous. Why does it record these events? They show us God being faithful to his promises even when men turn away.
- A pattern of alliance, infidelity, repentance, reunion runs through the Old Testament.





**Asia Minor**

**Armenia**

**Syria**

**Mesopotamia**

**Assyria**

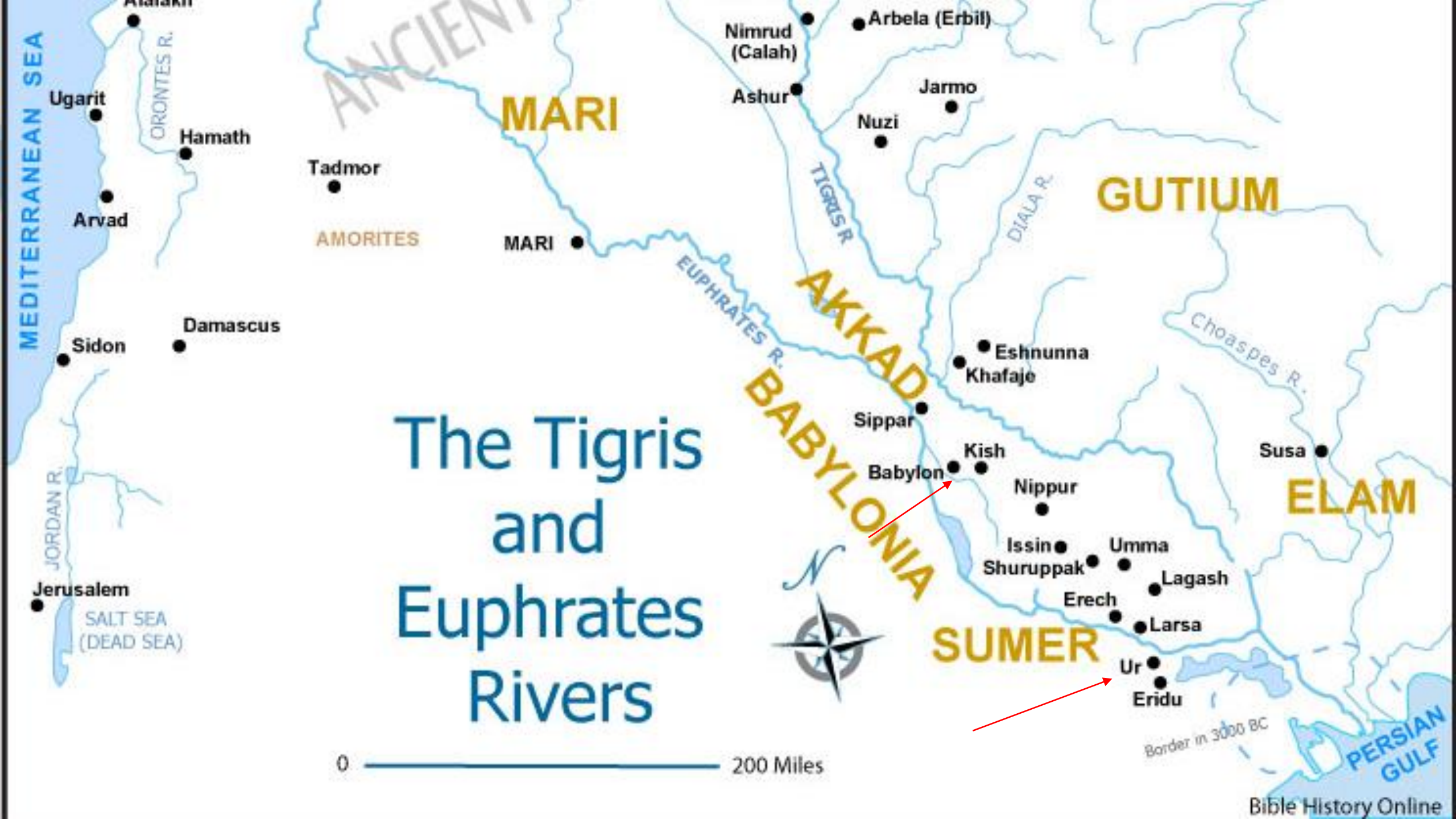
**Media**

**Elam**

**Persia**

**Egypt**

**The  
Old Testament  
World**



MEDITERRANEAN SEA

ORONTES R.

Ugarit

Hamath

Arvad

Sidon

Damascus

Nimrud (Calah)

Arbela (Erbil)

Ashur

Jarmo

Nuzi

Tadmor

MARI

TIGRIS R.

DIALA R.

EUPHRATES R.

Eshnunna

Khafaje

Sippar

Kish

Babylon

Nippur

Issin

Shuruppak

Umma

Lagash

Erech

Larsa

Ur

Eridu

Susa

Choaspes R.

Border in 3000 BC

PERSIAN GULF

# The Tigris and Euphrates Rivers



0 200 Miles

# Consequences of Original Sin

- Lose grace of original holiness & preternatural gifts
- Become afraid of God (have a distorted image of Him)
- Harmony destroyed - of self-mastery, between men and women, with creation
- The serpent: humiliation and destruction
- Enmity between the serpent's seed and the woman's
- Childbirth will be painful
- Relationships will be marred by sin, including inequality
- Work will be toil.
- Suffering & death
- Intellect is darkened
- Will is weakened
- Concupiscence (unruly desires)
- The Sin of Adam & Eve becomes the sin of their descendants. CCC, 404
- The Protogospel – 'Happy Fault'



# The Descendants of Adam & Eve: Cain & Abel

- The first child born of original sin, Cain, becomes the world's first murderer.
  - *Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, & Cain a tiller of the ground. In the course of time Cain brought to the LORD an offering of the fruit of the ground, & Abel brought of the firstlings of his flock & of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel & his offering, but for Cain & his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, & his countenance fell. The LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry, & why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is couching at the door; its desire is for you, but you must master it."*
  - *Cain said to Abel his brother, "Let us go out to the field." And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel, & killed him. (Gn 4: 6-9)*
- Cain is punished by being made a wanderer, but God protects him. CCC, 407.
- Cainites. Build city to 'make a name' for self.



*The Sacrifice of Cain & Abel, Albertinelli, c. 1510.*



# Seth

*Adam knew his wife again, & she bore a son & called his name Seth, for she said, "God has appointed for me another child instead of Abel, for Cain slew him." To Seth also a son was born, & he called his name Enosh. At that time men began to call upon the name of the LORD. (Gn 4:25-26)*

*When Adam had lived a hundred & thirty years, he became the father of a son in his own likeness, after his image, & named him Seth. (Gn 5:3)*

- Seth's descendants begin to worship God, to "invoke the Lord by name" (Gen 4:26).
- The alliance with Adam & Eve is continued through Seth. Genesis records the genealogy from Adam & Eve, through Seth, to Noah.
- Cain's descendants practice violence, polygamy & immorality until finally it infects the children of Seth when they intermarry with Cain's descendants (Gen 6:1-4). They violate the sanctity of the marriage covenant instituted by God in the garden. The descendants of the sons of Seth & the daughters of Cain were men of even more violence & wickedness. 'The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, & that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord was sorry that he had made man on the earth, & it grieved him to his heart.' (Gn 6: 5-6) 'The earth was filled with violence'. (Gn 6:11)

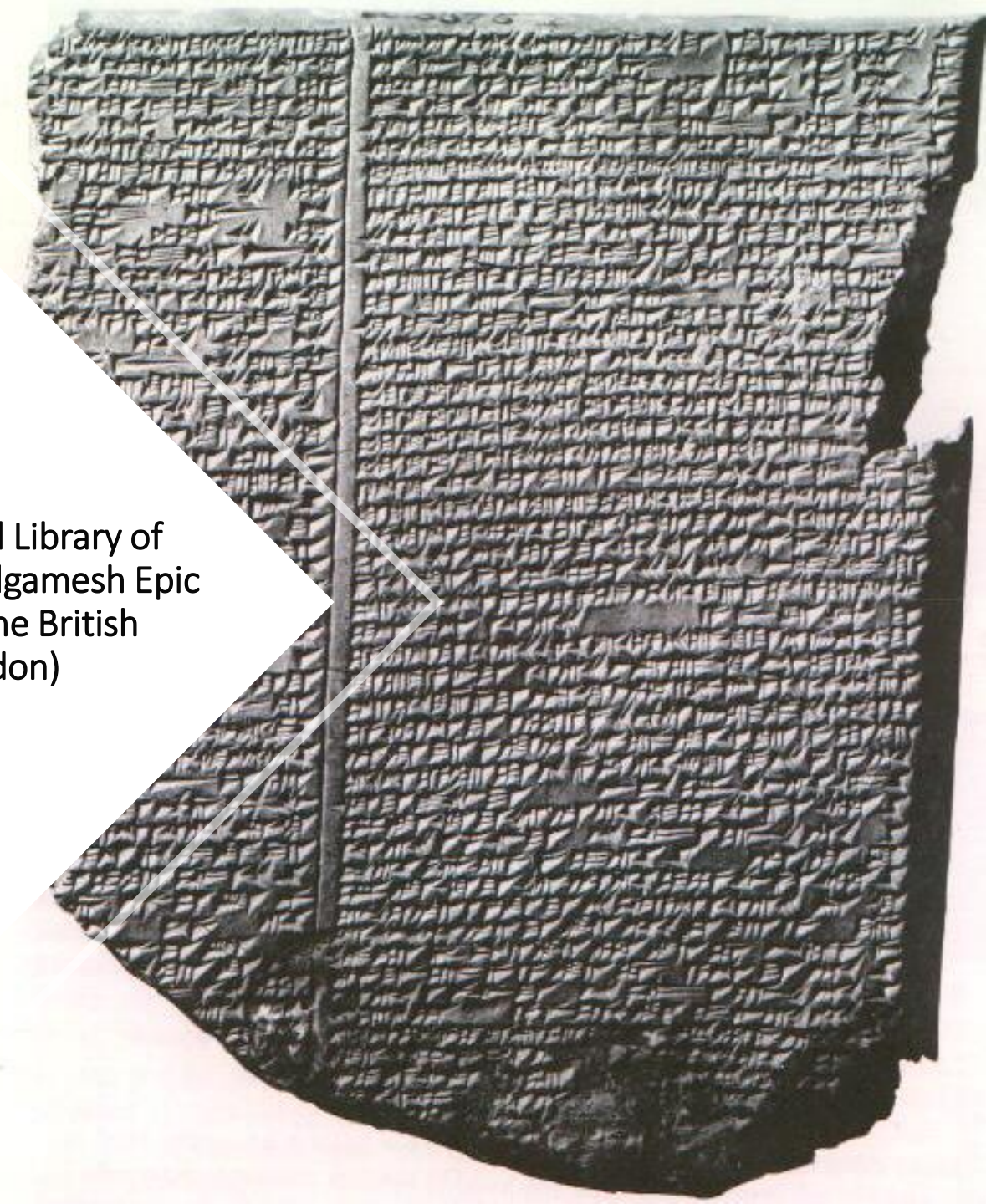
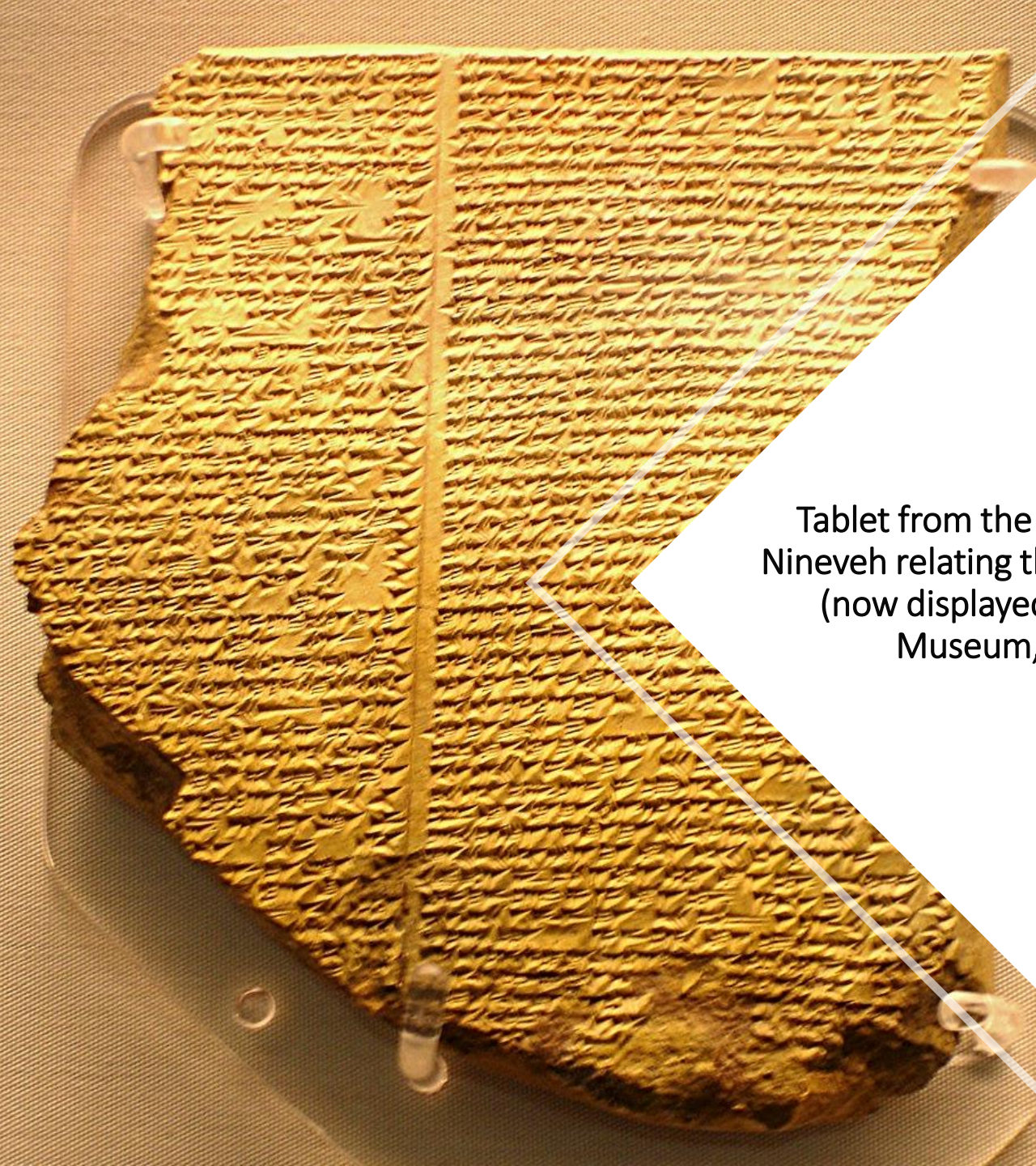


# The Flood

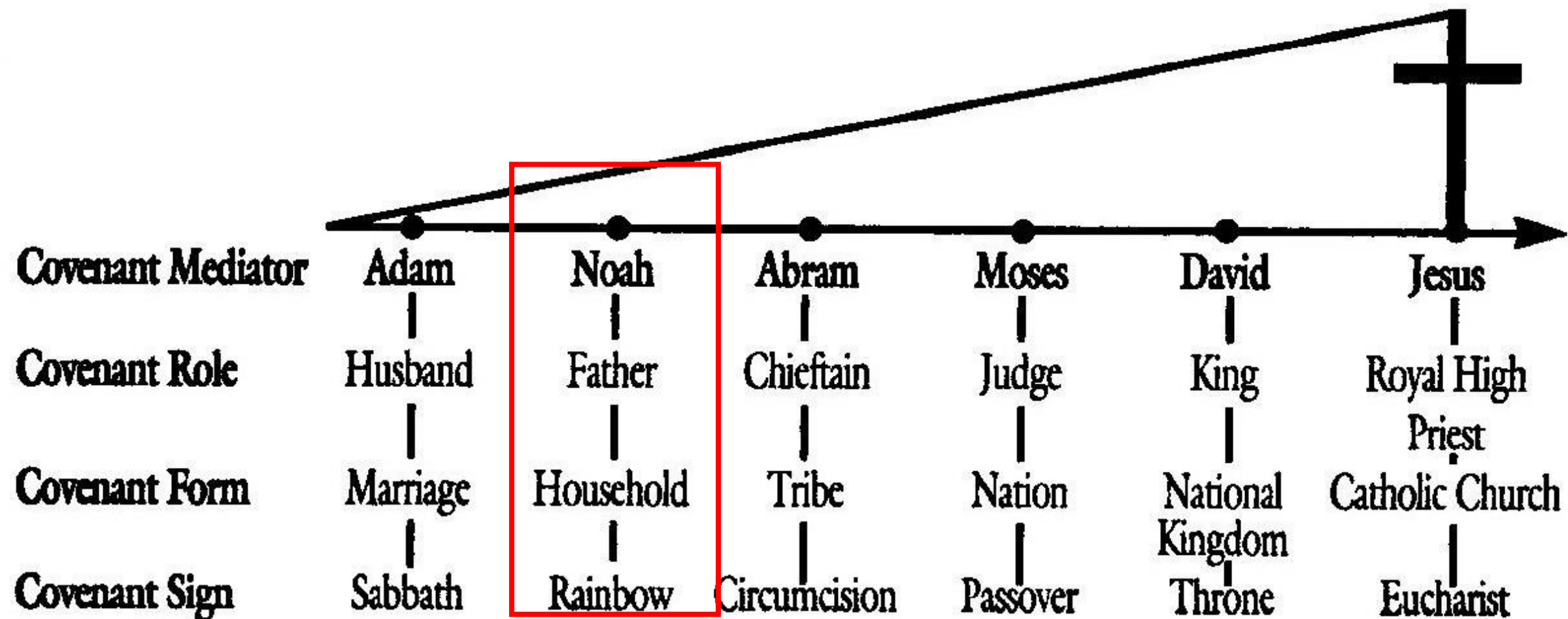


- Extra-Biblical accounts: Eg *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, Ur (later home of Abraham) modern Iraq
- Archaeological data: Archaeology does not prove or disprove the Bible. But it is consistent.
- 2,800-3,000 BC: discoveries at Ur & Babylonian region. Evidence that 1 level of water for a long period & evidence of earlier civilisation below it. But that does not mean that this was *the* Flood.
- Nineveh – Clay Tablet c. 1600BC. Records a king-list interrupted by ‘Then came the great flood’ around 2,800BC.
- The Ark is supposed to have come to rest at Ararat, believed to be in modern-day Turkey.





Tablet from the Royal Library of Nineveh relating the Gilgamesh Epic  
(now displayed in the British Museum, London)



# The Covenant with Noah



*Noah built an altar to the LORD, & took of every clean animal & of every clean bird, & offered burnt offerings on the altar ... And God blessed Noah & his sons, & said to them, “Be fruitful & multiply, & fill the earth. ... Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you; & as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything. Only you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood. For your lifeblood I will surely require a reckoning; of every beast I will require it & of man; of every man’s brother I will require the life of man. Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for God made man in his own image. And you, be fruitful & multiply, bring forth abundantly on the earth & multiply in it.”*

*Then God said to Noah & to his sons with him, “Behold, I establish my covenant with you & your descendants after you, & with every living creature that is with you ... that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, & never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.”*

*And God said, “This is the sign of the covenant which I make between me & you & every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: set my bow in the cloud, & it shall be a sign of the covenant between me & the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth & the bow is seen in the clouds, I will remember my covenant ... & the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. When the bow is in the clouds, I will look upon it & remember the everlasting covenant between God & every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth.” God said to Noah, “This is the sign of the covenant which I have established between me & all flesh that is upon the earth.” (Gen 8:20-9:17).*

# *The Covenant with Noah (Gn 9:8-17)*



The Flood sets the stage for God's 2<sup>nd</sup> covenant - the covenant made with Noah.

Noah is described as a new 1<sup>st</sup> man. Like Adam, Noah is

- Given authority over the animals (9:2).
- Given the same command God gave Adam: "be fertile & multiply & fill the earth." (9:1).

God makes a covenant with Noah & through him with all living beings (9:13). God:

- Renews His covenant with creation.
- Expands the "family structure" of His covenant people (from husband & a wife to a family unit – Noah's family is included in the blessings of this covenant).
- 'Seven': indicates completeness or perfection.

God promises never again to destroy the world by flood.

The covenant is made with all humanity.

Mediator: Noah, in his role as the father of his family.

Blessings: Noah & his family to be fruitful & fill the earth

Conditions: Not to drink the blood of any animals, not to shed human blood

Sign: The rainbow in the sky.

Form: By this covenant, God's people assumes the form of a domestic household, an extended family.

# The Sons of Noah

*Noah was the first tiller of the soil. He planted a vineyard; and he drank of the wine, and became drunk, and lay uncovered in his tent. And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside. Then Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it upon both their shoulders, and walked backward and covered the nakedness of their father; their faces were turned away, and they did not see their father's nakedness. When Noah awoke from his wine and knew what his youngest son had done to him, he said, "Cursed be Canaan; a slave of slaves shall he be to his brothers." He also said, "Blessed by the LORD my God be Shem; and let Canaan be his slave. God enlarge Japheth, and let him dwell in the tents of Shem; and let Canaan be his slave." (Gn 9: 18-27)*

The Canaanites: despised enemies. Practice ritual incest, etc.  
Rabbinic tradition & the entitlement to the land of Canaan.

*Noah and His Ark, Peale, 1819.*



# Echoes of Adam



- Noah, like Adam, falls from grace.
- Adam (Hebrew for "ground," *adama*) was given a garden to till; Noah plants a vineyard. The forbidden fruit of the garden is Adam's downfall; the fruit of Noah's vine, wine, becomes his.
- Like Adam's fall, Noah's exposes his sin & nakedness, resulting in a curse.
- In Noah's three sons, Shem, Ham, Japheth, God conserved the family of Noah to pursue his salvific plan, but sin continues.
- Ham "saw his father's nakedness" (incest with his mother, ultimate insult & disrespect). Canaanites, Philistines, Babylonians are descendants of Ham.
- Adam bore both Cain & righteous Seth, Noah too has his firstborn son Shem, who had tried to "cover" his father's nakedness. Shem receives the blessings of Noah. (The firstborn son is not always the one chosen by God). The Semitic people are descended from Shem, the son of the Alliance.

Abraham is a descendant of Shem.



# Babel (*Confusion*)

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*Now the whole earth had one language & few words. And as men migrated from the east, they found a plain in the land of Shinar & settled there. And they said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks, & burn them thoroughly." And they had brick for stone, & bitumen for mortar. Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, & a tower with its top in the heavens, & let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth." And the LORD came down to see the city & the tower, which the sons of men had built. And the LORD said, "Behold, they are one people, & they have all one language; & this is only the beginning of what they will do; & nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. Come, let us go down, & there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech." So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, & they left off building the city. Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth; & from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth. (Gn 11: 1-9)*

Ham's descendants become enemies of the people of God: Egypt, Canaan, Philistia, Assyria & Babylon (Gn 10). From this line, came the nations who tried to build the Tower of Babel in order "to make a name [Hebrew = shem] for themselves", a kind of "counter-kingdom" to stand against the name of God. God defeats them - scatters them in a confusion of languages.

The people try to "make a name for themselves."

As Adam and Eve sought to live without God, to be "like gods" themselves, now men & women acting together as one people have begun to do the same thing.

Punishing the pride of the people. The forming of different nations. Disunion is the fruit of pride. God will not destroy the world again.



Excavations of the ziggurat at Ur, c. 1740BC. Not Babel, but note the form of a brick tower with a stairway, a house of meeting between heaven & earth.