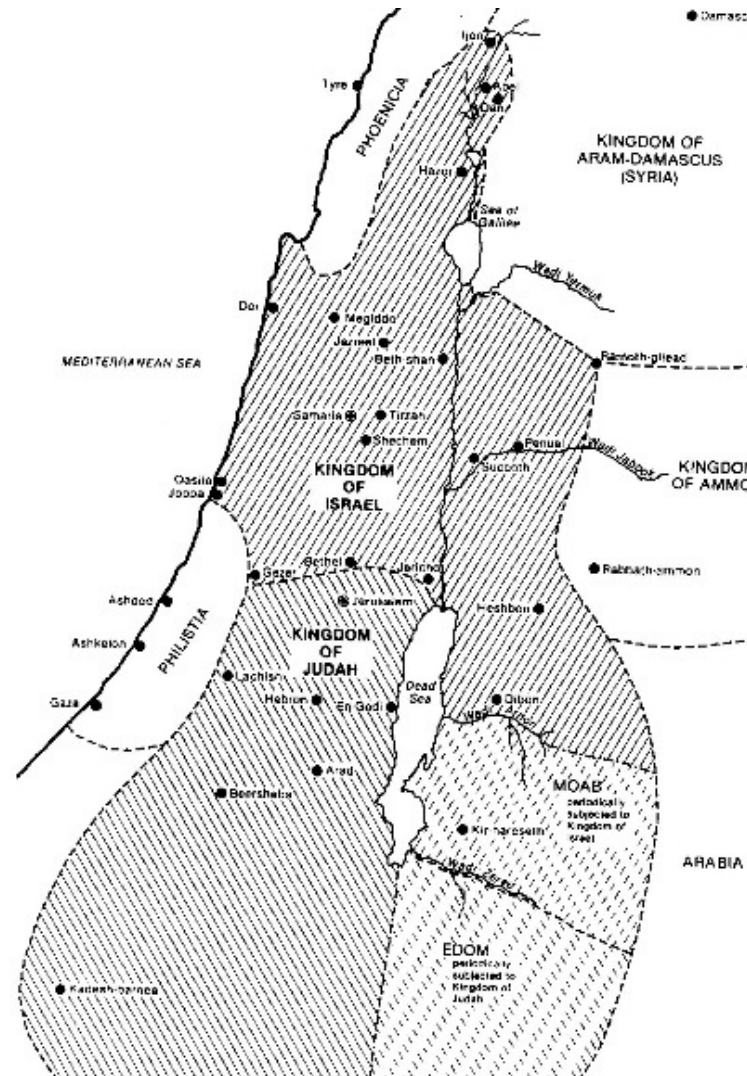


Psalm 114:

Judah is God's sanctuary, Israel God's dominion



Psalm 114 (113 Part 1) (Mode 3. 3....12 / 4.....271)

This is a joyful, festive hymn in praise of God for liberating them from Egypt and marvellously caring for them as they journeyed. It has a special quality of concentrated, lyrical energy. We might reflect on the final words of the Book of Wisdom:

‘For in everything, O Lord, you have exalted and glorified your people, and you have not neglected to help them at all times and in all places’(Wisdom 19:22).

When Israel came out from Egypt,
the house of Jacob from an alien people

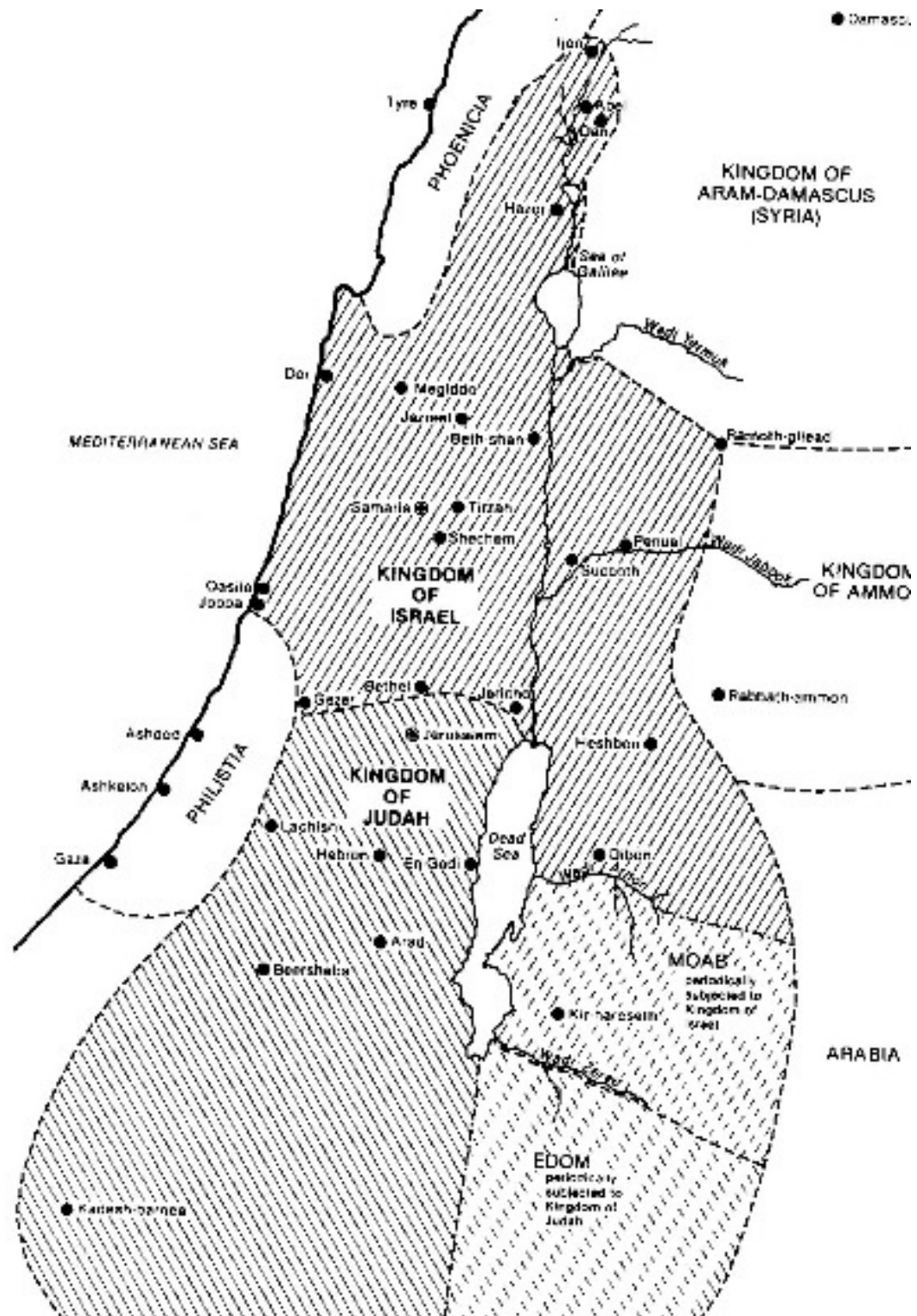
‘No longer will you see the insolent people, the people of an obscure speech that you cannot comprehend, stammering in a language that you cannot understand’(Isaiah 33:19).

Judah became
your sanctuary,
Israel, your
dominion.

Israel

—Divided Kingdom—

Judah



After the collapse of the northern kingdom of Israel in 721BC, Judah, the home of God's temple, was left alone to continue carrying on God's mission. They considered that the north was still under God's dominion and in the last decades of the seventh century, king Josiah was determined to reconquer the north.

The sea pulls back before them,
the Jordan retreats.

The Red Sea flees like an enemy. The Jordan is a protective frontier and retreats to allow entrance.

The mountains leap like rams,
the hills like yearling sheep.

‘He makes Lebanon skip like a calf,
and Sirion like a young wild ox’(Psalm 29:6).

Jordan, why do you retreat?

Mountains, why is it that you leap like rams,
you hills, like yearling sheep?’

Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the Lord,
at the sight of the God of Jacob,
who turns rock into a pool,
flint into a spring of water.

God who causes nature to ‘turn back’ can also
bring about conversion in the human heart:

‘Wisdom renews all things. In every generation she
passes into holy souls and makes them friends of
God and prophets’(Wisdom 7:27)

‘You have turned my mourning into dancing’(Psalm 30:11).

‘I will turn the darkness before them into light,
the rough places into level ground’(Isaiah 42:16).

‘I will turn their mourning into joy, I will comfort them,
and give them gladness for sorrow’(Jeremiah 31:13).

‘The Lord your God turned the curse into a blessing for
you, because the Lord your God loved you.’

(Deuteronomy 23:5)

‘God gave him another heart’(1Samuel 10:9).