

A Cultural Introduction to the Book of Daniel

The Rev. Dr. Cameron J. Scalera

Daniel 1:1-3

In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with some of the vessels of the house of God. And he brought them to the land of Shinar, to the house of his god, and placed the vessels in the treasury of his god.

In this Session

Why study culture?

The Culture of Babylon

The Culture of Daniel/Israel

Our Culture Today

Why Study Culture?

“Given culture’s ability to orient us and reproduce itself, we must acknowledge culture itself a means of spiritual formation, a process that shapes our spirits, or “hearts” (Vanhoozer, *Everyday Theology* 31).



Why Study Culture?

Artifacts (Physical Objects)

Rituals

Stories/Myths

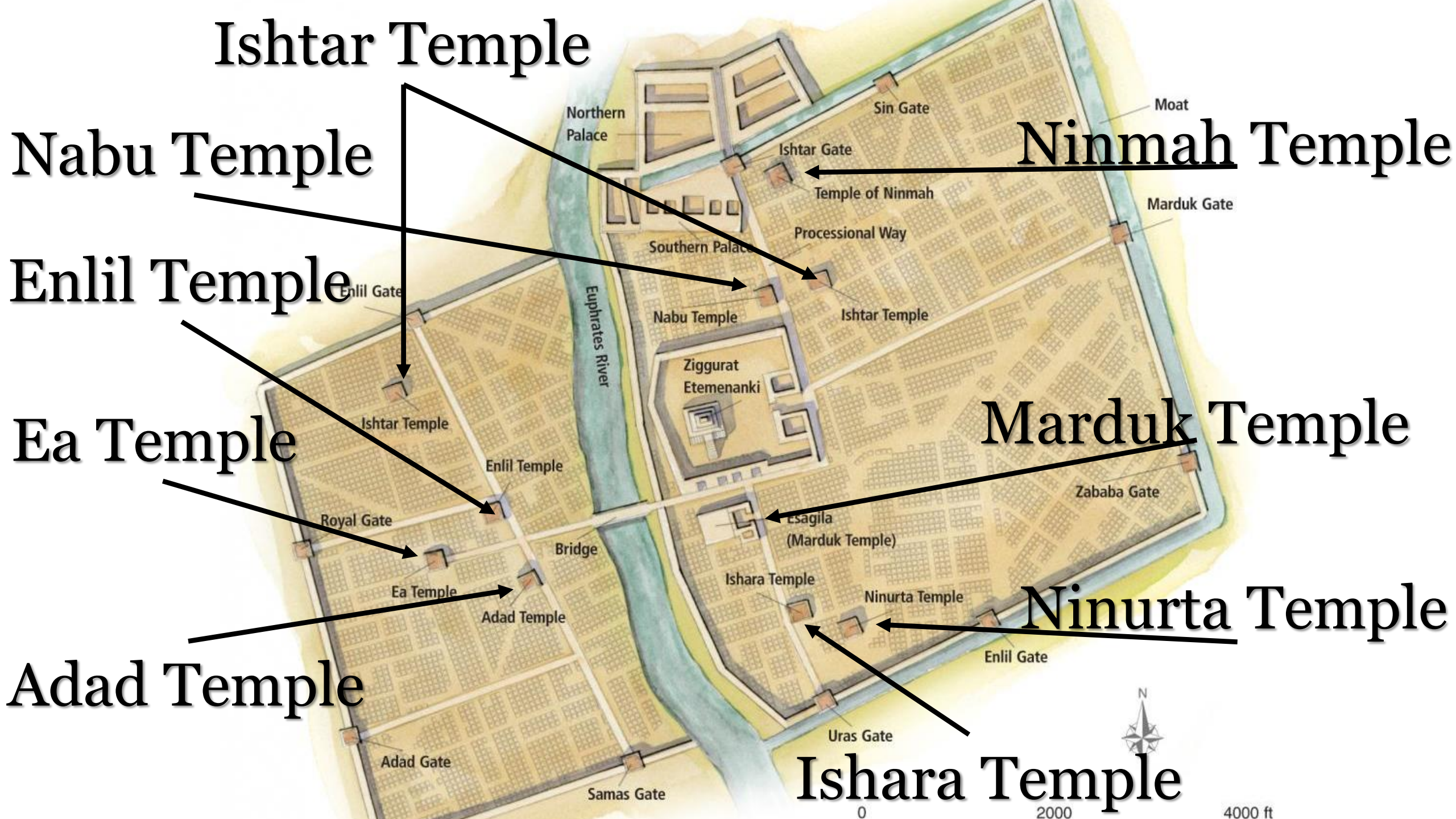
“Cosmological Ideology”
Beliefs about the Divine,
Humanity, Life



The World of Babylon



Source: <https://www.dkfindout.com/us/history/mesopotamia/babylon/>



Ishtar Temple

Nabu Temple

Enlil Temple

Ea Temple

Adad Temple

Ninmah Temple

Marduk Temple

Ninurta Temple

Ishara Temple

Northern Palace

Sin Gate

Moat

Ishtar Gate

Temple of Ninmah

Marduk Gate

Processional Way

Southern Palace

Nabu Temple

Ishtar Temple

Euphrates River

Enlil Gate

Ishtar Temple

Enlil Temple

Marduk Temple

Zababa Gate

Royal Gate

Bridge

Esagila (Marduk Temple)

Ea Temple

Ishara Temple

Ninurta Temple

Enlil Gate

Adad Temple

Uras Gate

Adad Gate

Samas Gate



0

2000

4000 ft



Babylonian Cosmological Ideology

The Nature of the Divine?

The Nature of the World?

The Nature and Role of Humanity?

The End/Purpose/Meaning of Life?

The Culture of Daniel/Israel

Solomon's Temple

Western Hill

Solomon's Temple

House of the Forest of Lebanon

Solomon's Palace

Royal Complex

Solomon's Palace

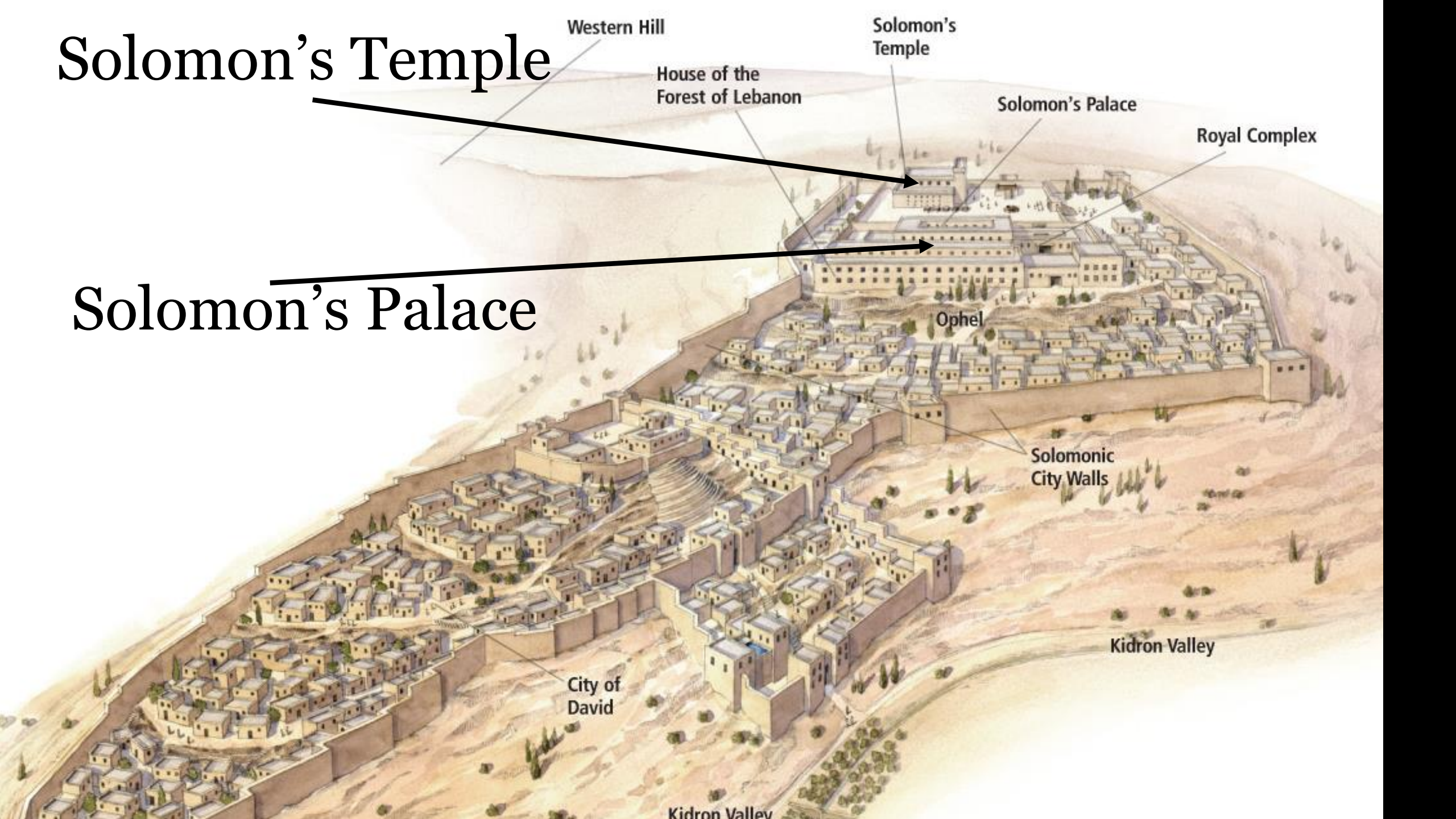
Ophel

Solomonic City Walls

Kidron Valley

City of David

Kidron Valley



Hebrew Cosmological Ideology

The Nature of the Divine?

The Nature of the World?

The Nature and Role of Humanity?

The End/Purpose/Meaning of Life?

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1 Peter 5:6-14

⁶ Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, ⁷ casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. ⁸ Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. ⁹ Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.

1 Peter 5:6-14

¹⁰ And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. ¹¹ To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen. ¹² By Silvanus, a faithful brother as I regard him, I have written briefly to you, exhorting and declaring that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it. ¹³ *She who is at Babylon*, who is likewise chosen, sends you greetings, and so does Mark, my son. ¹⁴ Greet one another with the kiss of love. Peace to all of you who are in Christ.

Our Culture Today

Christendom



Post-Christendom

Christendom

A society that produces citizens that have generic religious beliefs in common with the Judeo-Christian worldview.

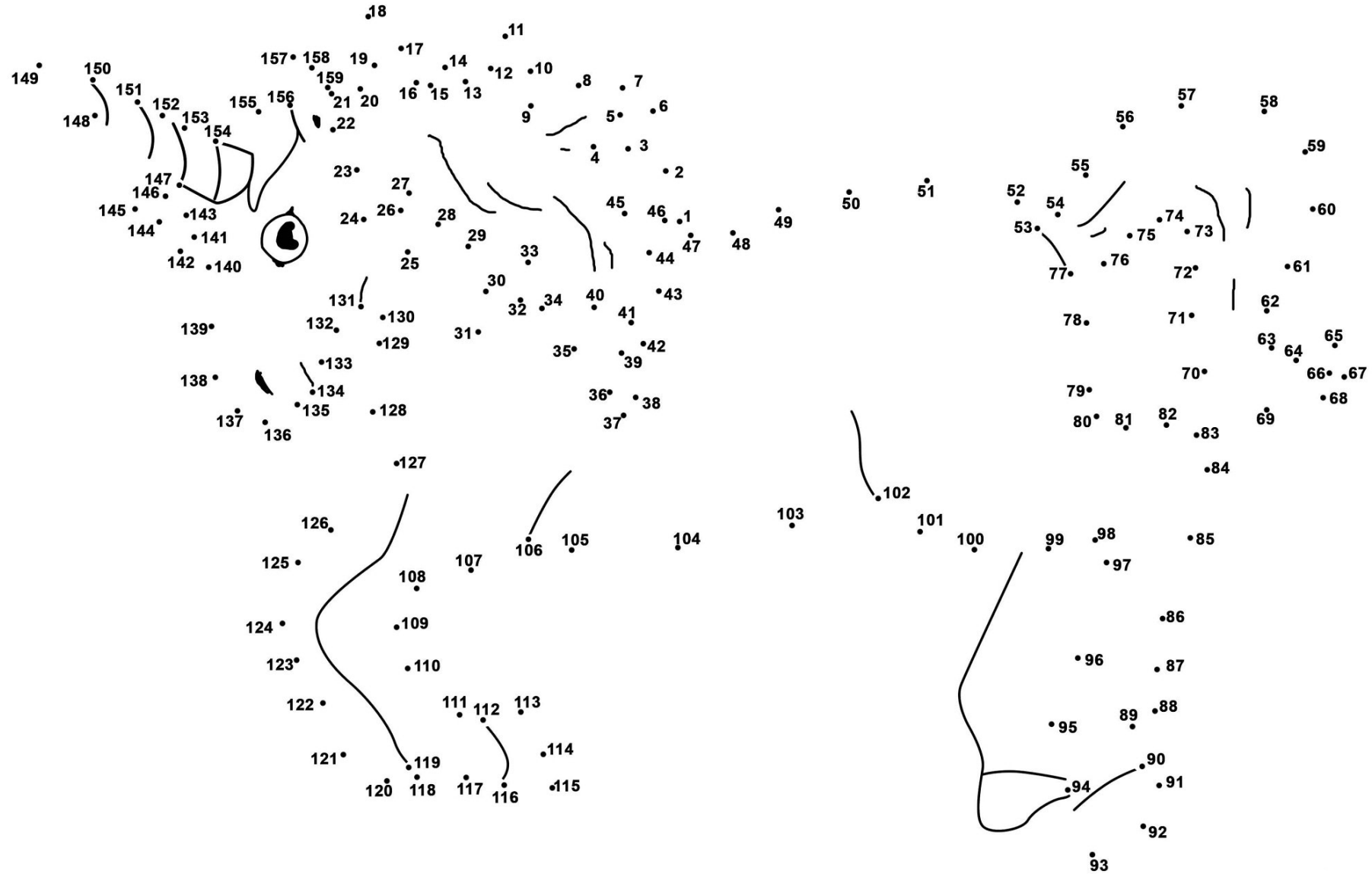
Christendom

Belief in a Creator/God

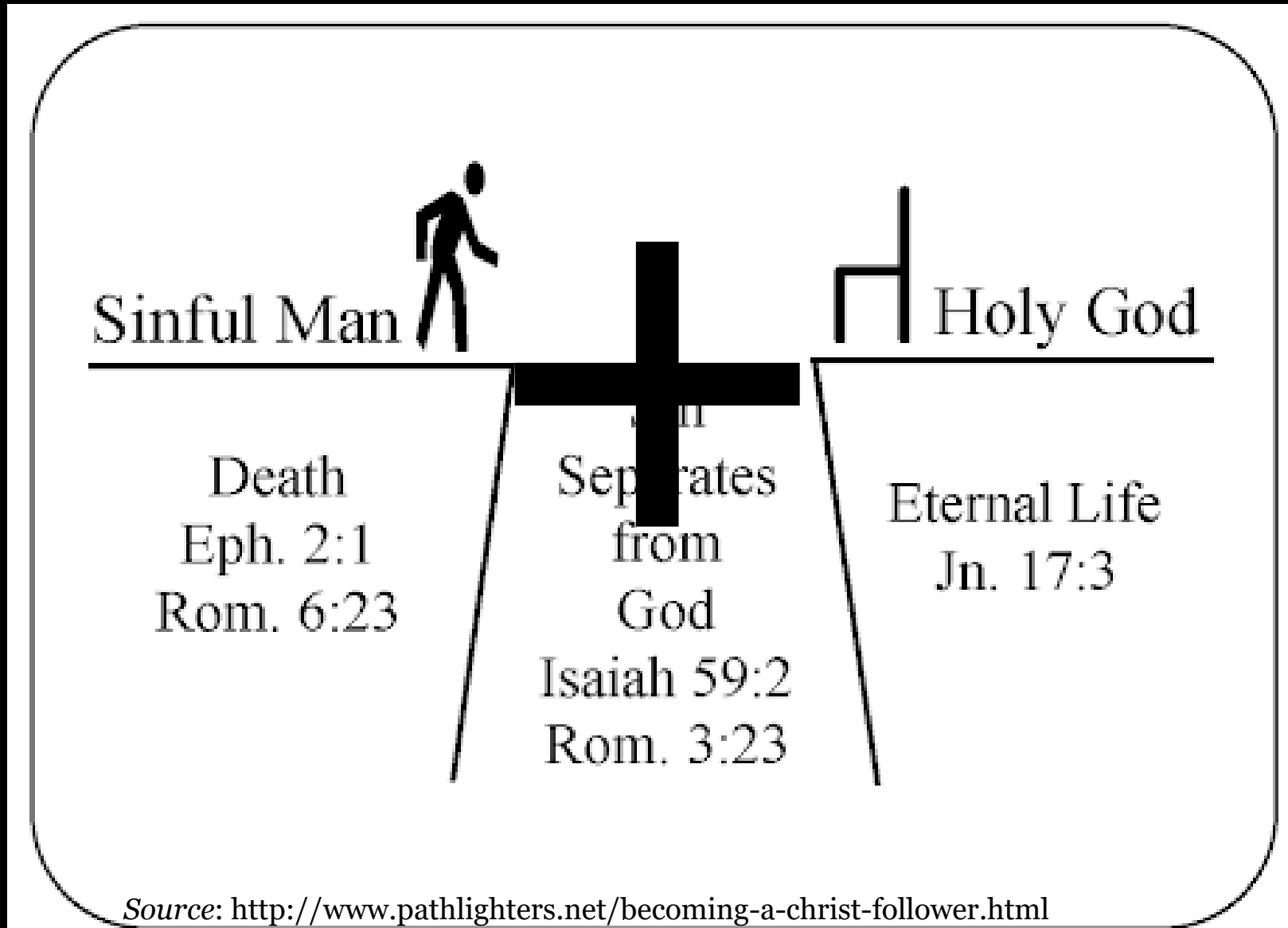
Belief in an objective Moral Reality

Belief in the duty to do the right
thing/be right with God

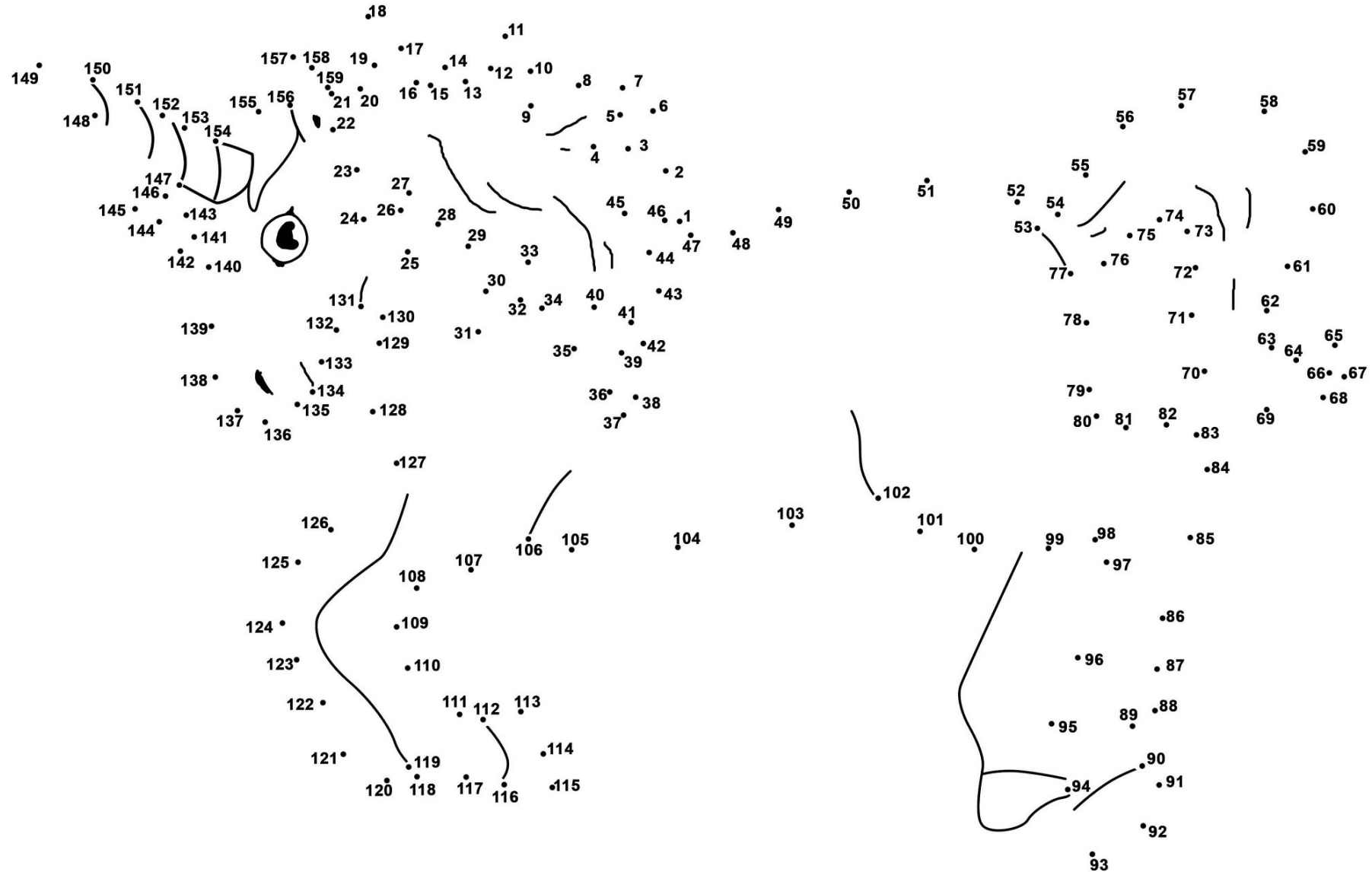
Draw the Unicorn



Evangelism that Connects the Dots



Draw the Unicorn



Understanding Post-Christendom



Post-Christendom & Truth

2020 Barna Study revealed that 65% of teens and young adults agree that “many religions can lead to eternal life.”

31% of teens and young adults “strongly agree” that what is “morally right and wrong changes over time, based on society.” Another 43% agree “somewhat.”

(74% of teens and young adults agree to some degree with moral relativism.)

Post-Christendom & Truth

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Daniel 1:1-3

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Questions for Discussion/Reflection

1. How have you seen culture shifting away from Christendom to Post-Christendom?
2. As you consider the reality of our shifting culture, what is your attitude/emotional reaction?
3. What meaningful actions are you taking to grow as a follower of Jesus?