

AN OUTLINED COMMENTARY ON

1 SAMUEL

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**GOSPEL
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Preface and Acknowledgment

These various commentaries and other Biblical studies were developed through many years of hard and close study of the Bible. I have had an insatiable appetite to learn all of God's Word possible. I grew up in the Beans Creek Community of Coffee County Tennessee. My family started attending the Lord's church at Beans Creek in 1949, where I was privileged to have sister Ethel Croft as an outstanding Bible class teacher. All seven member of my father's family were baptized into Christ, plus my wife, Marie. Each of our five children also obeyed the gospel.

Sister Croft greatly encouraged me to study the Bible and to become a good worker for the Lord. I tried not to cause her any disappointment. In 1978, after preaching for many years, the brethren at Beans Creek invited me to conduct a gospel meeting. Sister Croft, though she was in advanced years and had to drive a good distance, did not miss any of the services.

Since first becoming acquainted with the gospel more than seventy years ago, I have had the honor to hear some of the greatest gospel preachers of the time. Some of these well-known to most members of the Lord's church, but some of them labored in the shadows, learning and dispensing the truth of God quietly and effectively. Not so many people in the brotherhood today knew such preachers as Luke Gibbs. I have learned much and have been profited greatly from many gospel preachers and teachers through these many years. I am fully appreciative also to those many sound brethren who have published books which I have had the privilege to study. I began preaching in July of 1961 in Italy.

A debt of gratitude is owed by many to the instructors of Memphis School of Preaching for the tremendous work they did through the years, patiently teaching their students the wonderful word of life. I am especially grateful to these great men who were serving in this capacity during 1970-72, when I attended the school: Roy Hearn

Frank Young, Richard Curry, Charles Pledge, and E.L. Whitaker.

I claim no originality for all of the material presented in the material included in my books. There is no way to give proper credit to all who have contributed to the information I have learned, but in every case possible, acknowledgment is cited. I have attempted to be as accurate, clear and concise as my finite knowledge allows, but, as with all human productions, there will doubtless be imperfections. Our grasp of the infinite will of God is not absolute in every detail, despite the diligence of our efforts; there is always more to learn.

Some have incorrectly thought that my books are merely expansions of the notes I took while studying at MSOP. But those notes were skimpy at best, and were not in my possession when I wrote my material. The notes were put together in connection with Bible classes I have taught over much time. For several years, a hundred or more hours weekly were required as I prepared to teach two different Bible books each week, Sunday morning and Wednesday evening, while at the same time, during full-time work as a gospel preacher. These notes became the "Outlined Bible Commentaries" that have been made available to countless people.

It has not been my aim to make money through these efforts—indeed, we barely cover our expenses. Many of my books have been given away without charge to the recipients. An uncounted numbers of books and compact discs were ordered and shipped out, for which no payment was ever received. A good many of these non-paying costumers were gospel preachers. I have learned from brethren who operated Bible Bookstores that they have had the same problem. One of these brethren reported that he had to secure his supply of Bibles, in locked cases, to prevent their being stolen by preachers. How sad! "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth" (Eph. 4:28). *Don't steal but give!*

The Bible quotations in my books are from the King James Version, unless noted otherwise. These books were intentionally put on 8.5 by 11 inch pages, to make the outline format easier to view. A normal hardback book contains about 800 words per page; my pages contain twice that number of words. The spiral-bound or wire-bound books are much less expensive to produce. My wife and I have done all the manual labor required to produce the books. The supplies, software and equipment are very costly. Marie still helps as much as she can despite the dementia she has had for several years— and her many surgeries and broken bones and heartaches. *I thank God whenever I think of her.*"

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INTRODUCTION TO 1 SAMUEL

A. Author and Date of Writing.

1. Jewish tradition assigned the material of the books of Samuel to the great judge and prophet whose name the books bear. However, since Samuel died at the time described in 1 Samuel 25, he could not have written the details of history prior to their occurrence. Many particulars are given about events and people who lived after the death of Samuel.
2. It is likely that Samuel penned the books of Judges and Ruth, plus the events of 1 Samuel up to the time of his death, and later prophets completed the writing of 1 and 2 Samuel.
 - a. 1 Chronicles 29:29-30: "Now the acts of David the king, first and last, behold, they *are* written in the book of Samuel the seer, and in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the book of Gad the seer, With all his reign and his might, and the times that went over him, and over Israel, and over all the kingdoms of the countries."
 - b. It certainly appears this passage identifies the writers of the two books of Samuel as Samuel, Nathan, and Gad. Gad the prophet is named in 1 Samuel 22:5 and 24:11-19. Nathan was the prophet who worked closely with David; he is named thirteen times in 2 Samuel.
3. Samuel was a great man, serving his people both as a judge and a prophet.
 - a. 1 Samuel 7:6: "And they gathered together to Mizpeh, and drew water, and poured it out before the LORD, and fasted on that day, and said there, We have sinned against the LORD. And Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpeh."
 - b. 1 Samuel 7:15-1: "And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life. And he went from year to year in circuit to Beth-el, and Gilgal, and Mizpeh, and judged Israel in all those places. And his return was to Ramah; for there was his house; and there he judged Israel; and there he built an altar unto the LORD."
 - c. 1 Samuel 3:21: "And the LORD appeared again in Shiloh: for the LORD revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the LORD."
4. He is considered to be the most important man in Israel between Moses and David. Moses was the founder of the nation, and Samuel was its savior.
 - a. His work bridged the time between the judges and the kings. He served Israel as its last judge and anointed its first two kings.
 - b. Samuel "was the son of Elkanah and Hannah, and was born at Ramathaim-zophim, among the hills of Ephraim. [RAMAH No. 2] (B.C. 1171.) Before his birth he was dedicated by his mother to the office of a Nazarite and when a young child, 12 years old according to Josephus he was placed in the temple, and ministered unto the Lord before Eli." It was while here that he received his first prophetic call. 1 Sam 3:1-18.
 - 1) "He next appears, probably twenty years afterward, suddenly among the people, warning them against their idolatrous practices. 1 Sam 7:3,4. Then followed Samuel's first and, as far as we know, only military achievement, ch. 7:5-12, but it was apparently this which raised him to the office of "judge."
 - 2) "He visited, in the discharge of his duties as ruler, the three chief sanctuaries on the west of Jordan — Bethel, Gilgal and Mizpeh. ch. 7:16. His own residence was still native city, Ramah, where he married, and two sons grew up to repeat under his eyes the same perversion of high office that he had himself witnessed in his childhood in the case of the two sons of Eli. In his old age he shared his power with them, 1 Sam 8:1-4, but the people dissatisfied, demanded a king, and finally anointed under God's direction, and Samuel surrendered to him his authority, 1 Sam 12:1, though

still remaining judge. ch. 7:15.

- 3) "He was consulted far and near on the small affairs of life. 1 Sam 9:7,8. From this fact, combined with his office of ruler, an awful reverence grew up around him. No sacrificial feast was thought complete without his blessing. Ibid. 1 Sam 9:13. A peculiar virtue was believed to reside in his intercession. After Saul was rejected by God, Samuel anointed David in his place and Samuel became the spiritual father of the psalmist-king.
- 4) "The death of Samuel is described as taking place in the year of the close of David's wanderings. It is said with peculiar emphasis, as if to mark the loss, that 'all the Israelites were gathered together' from all parts of this hitherto-divided country, and 'lamented him,' and 'buried him' within his own house, thus in a manner consecrated by being turned into his tomb. 1 Sam 25:1.
- 5) "Samuel represents the independence of the moral law, of the divine will, as distinct from legal or sacerdotal enactments, which is so remarkable a characteristic of all the later prophets. He is also the founder of the first regular institutions of religious instructions and communities for the purposes of education" (Smith's Bible Dictionary, PC Study Bible formatted electronic database Copyright © 2003, 2006 by Biblesoft, Inc. All rights reserved.)

B. The Purpose of First and Second Samuel.

1. "The purpose of the books of Samuel is to relate the account of the establishment of the monarchy, and of Samuel's part therein. Samuel was both a judge (1 Sa. 7:6, 15-17) and a prophet (1 Sa. 3:20). He serves, therefore, to connect the period of the Judges with the early monarchy" (Young, p.179).
2. Charles Pledge gives the following as some of the purposes served by the book of Samuel (p.47):
 - a. To describe the founding of the Hebrew monarchy.
 - b. Serves as the connecting link between the period of the judges and the early monarchy.
 - c. Tells us that the gloom of despair characteristic of the book of Judges is not rectified by the ministry of Samuel but that Israel is still a rebellious son who must be chastened for his own welfare.
 - d. Shows that the monarchy was contrary to the desire of God but that he overruled the sinful actions of men to his own glory and to accomplish his purpose on earth—the redemption of man (Gen. 3:15).

C. The Arrangement of First and Second Samuel.

1. "The Books of Samuel naturally arrange themselves into four parts according to the chief actors. In Part I., consisting of chs. 1-7., we have the history of Samuel as the restorer of Israel. This again divides itself into two portions, of which the former, consisting of chs. 1-3., gives us the details of Samuel's birth and early life up to the time when he was acknowledged by all Israel as a prophet; while the latter, chs. 4-7., gives us Samuel as judge. With this the period of the Judges closes, and in Part II., chs. 8-15., we have the history of the first king, Saul, including the preparation for his appointment, his establishment as king, and his final rejection.
 2. "In Part III., chs. 16-31., David is the chief actor, but side by side with Saul, and we see the one daily declining in moral worth and external prosperity, while the other is ripening into the full stature of a theocratic king. During most of this period Samuel lived on no unconcerned spectator of the development of Jehovah's purpose, though devoting his own time to the training of the young men who came to his schools. Finally Saul falls so low as to become the dupe of a wicked charlatan, and dies by his own hand in battle.
 3. "In Part IV., 2 Sam., David is the sole hero of the narrative. In the first section, chs. 1-10., we see him made king, and reigning in glory. In the second, chs. 11-17., his glory is tarnished by personal vices, imitated too readily by his sons; upon these follow bloodshed in his family, rebellion, and the loss of the royal power. In the third section, chs. 19., 20., we see him restored to his throne. In the last, chs. 21-24., we have an appendix, the contents of which have been already described. Naturally we long to know how
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David reigned after so severe a punishment, and would gladly have seen how he retrieved in his later years the crimes of his passion fraught manhood. But the ways of God are not as the ways of man. A veil is thrown over this portion of David's reign, but we may gather from his last words, and from his psalm of thanksgiving, that he returned to Jerusalem a changed man, and that his last years rivalled in piety his early promise"[Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright © 2001, 2003, 2005, 2006 by Biblesoft].

D. Outline of 1 Samuel.

1. Israel under Samuel: 1 Samuel 1-7.
 - a. Samuel's birth and Hannah's song: 1:1—2:10.
 - b. Samuel's apprenticeship under Eli and the promise of judgment on Eli: 2:11-36.
 - c. Samuel called to the prophetic work: 3:1-21.
 - d. The Philistines overcome Israel, capture the ark, and death of Eli: 4:1-22.
 - e. The ark in Philistia: 5:1—6:21.
 - f. Israel sets their house in order and subdues the Philistines: 7:1-17.
 2. The reign of Saul: 1 Samuel 8-13.
 - a. Israel demands a king: 8:1-22.
 - b. Saul is anointed king: 9:1—10:27.
 - c. Saul's victory over the Ammonites: 11:1-15.
 - d. Samuel speaks to the people: 12:1-25.
 - e. Saul's war with the Philistines: 13:1—14:52.
 - f. Saul's rejection by the Lord: 15:1-34.
 - g. David anointed king: 16:1-23.
 - h. Saul's last days and his death: 17:1—31:13.
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1 SAMUEL 1

A. 1 Samuel 1:1-8: Hannah and Elkanah.

1. Verses 1-2: "Now there was a certain man of Ramathaimzophim, of mount Ephraim, and his name *was* Elkanah, the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph, an Ephrathite: And he had two wives; the name of the one *was* Hannah, and the name of the other Peninnah: and Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children."
 - a. Elkanah, who became the father of Samuel, dwelled at Ramathaimzophim in Ephraim. He was of the tribe of Levi: "The sons of Kohath; Amminadab his son, Korah his son, Assir his son, Elkanah his son, and Ebiasaph his son, and Assir his son" (1 Chron. 6:22-23).
 - b. His place of residence was Ramah; the name as given in the text has a plural number connected to it, indicating "the old and new town of Ramah" (JFB, p.135).
 - c. Elkanah had two wives, one named Hannah and the other Peninnah. Hannah was barren, but Peninnah had children. One of the things that God overlooked during that ancient period was polygamy (cf. Acts 17:30: "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent"). There was dissension in those families where two wives were present. Even the two sisters who had married Jacob could not get along; there were problems between Peninnah and Hannah, with the former being the instigator.
 - d. God did not condone sinful conduct, but was able to work out his great plan (Gen. 3:15; 12:1-3; 22:15-18; Gal. 4:4).
2. Verse 3: "And this man went up out of his city yearly to worship and to sacrifice unto the LORD of hosts in Shiloh. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, the priests of the LORD, *were* there."
 - a. The tabernacle was located at Shiloh for many years. Elkanah went to Shiloh each year to worship God and offer sacrifices. The sacrifices to be offered were part of the worship that was given. This is the first place in the scriptures of the use of the phrase, "the Lord of hosts."
 - b. Three times annually, Israelite men were required to assemble at the site of the tabernacle to worship. These three occasions were Passover, Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles.
 - 1) Exodus 23:14-17: "Three times thou shalt keep a feast unto me in the year. Thou shalt keep the feast of unleavened bread: (thou shalt eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded thee, in the time appointed of the month Abib; for in it thou camest out from Egypt: and none shall appear before me empty:) And the feast of harvest, the firstfruits of thy labours, which thou hast sown in the field: and the feast of ingathering, *which is* in the end of the year, when thou hast gathered in thy labours out of the field. Three times in the year all thy males shall appear before the Lord GOD."
 - 2) Exodus 34:23-24: "Thrice in the year shall all your menchildren appear before the Lord GOD, the God of Israel. For I will cast out the nations before thee, and enlarge thy borders: neither shall any man desire thy land, when thou shalt go up to appear before the LORD thy God thrice in the year."
 - 3) Deuteronomy 16:16: "Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the LORD thy God in the place which he shall choose; in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles: and they shall not appear before the LORD empty."
 - c. Mention is made in the text of the presence at these feast days of Hophni and Phinehas, the sons of Eli who served as priests. The moral and spiritual corruption of these two men is depicted in chapter two (see 2:12ff).
3. Verses 4-5: "And when the time was that Elkanah offered, he gave to Peninnah his wife, and to all her sons and her daughters, portions: But unto Hannah he gave a worthy portion; for he loved Hannah: but

the LORD had shut up her womb."

- a. Those who offered peace sacrifices to the Lord received back the greater portion of the animal offered, which was eaten by the man's family, friends, and others (Lev. 3; Lev. 7-8; Deut. 12).
 - b. Elkanah had his family with him at Shiloh. He gave to Peninnah and her children regular portions, but to Hannah he gave a "worthy portion" (a greater portion; cf. Gen. 43:34).
 - 1) Genesis 43:34: "And he took and sent messes unto them from before him: but Benjamin's mess was five times so much as any of theirs. And they drank, and were merry with him."
 - 2) This action showed his love was greater for Hannah. However, the author reports that God had caused Hannah to be barren.
4. Verses 6-7: "And her adversary also provoked her sore, for to make her fret, because the LORD had shut up her womb. And *as* he did so year by year, when she went up to the house of the LORD, so she provoked her; therefore she wept, and did not eat."
- a. Peninnah is described as Hannah's adversary. She constantly assailed Hannah on account of her barrenness; this was her way of avenging her own hurt feelings because Hannah was more greatly loved by Elkanah than was she. The family was not a congenial, friendly situation.
 - b. The attacks continued yearly, as Elkanah regularly gave greater portions to Hannah. The result of the vicious remarks was to so upset Hannah that she fretted, wept, and did not eat. The harshness of the words and actions of Peninnah brought a painful distress upon Hannah. The Golden Rule had not yet been announced, but Hannah should have been better treated:
 - 1) Matthew 7:12: "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets."
 - 2) Luke 6:31: "And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise."
 - c. Elkanah ought not to have shown partiality toward Hannah. Peninnah ought not to have afflicted Hannah. But the outcome of these events was to produce the tearful prayer to God, which resulted in the birth of Samuel, one of the greatest men of Old Testament times. This is one of those sad cases where good things developed from evil events.
5. Verse 8: "Then said Elkanah her husband to her, Hannah, why weepest thou? and why eatest thou not? and why is thy heart grieved? *am* not I better to thee than ten sons?"
- a. Elkanah observed Hannah's tears and lack of appetite, and inquired why she was in this state of mind.
 - b. He was aware of the fact that she was sorely distressed over not having any sons. Elkanah, therefore, asked her if he was not better to her than ten sons could have been.

B. Samuel 1:9-18: Hannah and Eli.

1. Verses 9-11: " So Hannah rose up after they had eaten in Shiloh, and after they had drunk. Now Eli the priest sat upon a seat by a post of the temple of the LORD. And she *was* in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the LORD, and wept sore. And she vowed a vow, and said, O LORD of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the LORD all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head."
 - a. After the feast partaken of on the present occasion, they arose to go about other activities. Eli had taken a seat by a post at the tabernacle. It is called "temple" here, but the reference is to the moveable structure Moses had constructed according to the Lord's blueprint. When the tabernacle was replaced by the permanent building erected by Solomon, the term "temple" was the term used to identify God's house (1 Kings 8). "The word [*temple*] occurs 78 times from First Samuel to Malachi, most frequently in Ezekiel. The first usage pertains to the tabernacle at Shiloh (1 Sam. 1:9)" [Vine's Expository

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- b. Hannah was near the place where Eli was seated, and in the bitterness of her soul, poured out her tearful appeal unto the Lord. In the prayer she offered, Hannah vowed to the Lord if she were to be blessed with a son, she would prepare him for service to the Lord all the days of his life. She meant that he would be brought up as a Nazarite, with no razor ever coming upon his head.
 - c. Her prayer included a request that God should take notice of her affliction. Little did Peninnah know of the consequences of her vicious assaults on Hannah. Peninnah's offspring were of the common variety, but Hannah's son would be the greatest man in the nation of Israel in his generation, and would achieve the status of one of Israel's greatest citizens. If Peninnah had not dealt so harshly with Hannah, perhaps Hannah would never have offered her prayer, and perhaps Samuel would not have been born. Great and good things can grow out of hardships.
2. Verses 12-14: "And it came to pass, as she continued praying before the LORD, that Eli marked her mouth. Now Hannah, she spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard: therefore Eli thought she had been drunken. And Eli said unto her, How long wilt thou be drunken? put away thy wine from thee."
- a. As Hannah continued her prayer, Eli took notice of her mouth; he could see her lips move but he heard no words. He jumped to the conclusion that she was drunken, and accused her of that sin. He charged her to put away her wine.
 - b. It is dangerous to make such a judgment. "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment" (John 7:24). Things are not always what they seem to be. Judging according to outward appearance can be dangerous and hurtful.
 - c. We are taught in the context that God hears silent prayers. He does not depend on audible tones to know the desires of our hearts. A more sincere prayer than Hannah's has never been offered. God both heard and answered her prayer.
3. Verses 15-16: "And Hannah answered and said, No, my lord, I *am* a woman of a sorrowful spirit: I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the LORD. Count not thine handmaid for a daughter of Belial: for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I spoken hitherto."
- a. Stung by Eli's wrongful charge, Hannah responded by stating the real situation. She had consumed no wine or strong drink; she was filled with sorrow and had poured out her soul before the Lord.
 - b. She pleaded that Eli should not consider her to be a "daughter of Belial." Eli was both unjust and hypocritical in his charge; his own sons were later exposed to be "sons of Belial" (2:12).
 - c. Matthew 7:1-6: "Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye. Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you."
 - 1) The general rule is, the judgment we unleash on others is the kind we ourselves will receive from men and God.
 - 2) James 2:13: "For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath showed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment."
 - 3) Ecclesiastes 10:8: "He that diggeth a pit shall fall into it; and whoso breaketh an hedge, a serpent shall bite him."

- 4) Haman was hanged on the gallows he had constructed for Mordecai (Esther 7).
 - 5) "Do not cultivate a harsh, bitter, faultfinding spirit that looks on the ill side of persons and actions and that seeks to see evil in others so they can find fault and complain" (Boles, p.172f). Harsh, unfair, unkind, censorious judgment is forbidden.
4. Verses 17-18: "Then Eli answered and said, Go in peace: and the God of Israel grant *thee* thy petition that thou hast asked of him. And she said, Let thine handmaid find grace in thy sight. So the woman went her way, and did eat, and her countenance was no more *sad*."
- a. Eli, humbled by his error, joined his desire with Hannah's, requesting her to depart in peace, stating his wish that she receive her petition. Hannah expressed her hope that she might find grace in Eli's sight.
 - b. She went her way, partook of food, and was no longer sad of countenance. It is amazing how quickly one's heart can be uplifted by praying to God and by receiving kind words from another person. While it is easy for many people to speak quickly and harshly to others, it is far greater to offer encouraging and helpful words and acts.

C. 1 Samuel 1:19-28: Hannah and Samuel.

1. Verses 19-20: "And they rose up in the morning early, and worshipped before the LORD, and returned, and came to their house to Ramah: and Elkanah knew Hannah his wife; and the LORD remembered her. Wherefore it came to pass, when the time was come about after Hannah had conceived, that she bare a son, and called his name Samuel, *saying*, Because I have asked him of the LORD."
 - a. Early the next morning, Elkanah and his family returned home, after first worshipping before the Lord. Many Bible characters were early risers. Consider Abraham in Genesis 22.
 - b. Hannah conceived and bore a son. The process of conception, pregnancy, and birth was entirely natural. The details of the time of her pregnancy are not given; she would have experienced the side effects common to that period of time. A study of those many things which are not included in the Bible is an eye-opening effort.
 - c. She named him *Samuel* which means "Asked of God" (margin). She had asked God for him, and named him accordingly. There are many today who are unhappy to conceive a child; such a child is unwelcome and unwanted, and is unlikely to be well treated.
 2. Verses 21-23: "And the man Elkanah, and all his house, went up to offer unto the LORD the yearly sacrifice, and his vow. But Hannah went not up; for she said unto her husband, *I will not go up* until the child be weaned, and *then* I will bring him, that he may appear before the LORD, and there abide for ever. And Elkanah her husband said unto her, Do what seemeth thee good; tarry until thou have weaned him; only the LORD establish his word. So the woman abode, and gave her son suck until she weaned him."
 - a. The women were not required by God's decree to assemble at the feast days (Ex. 34:23-24). It was her choice to go or stay, depending on the family's needs. Hannah did not go with her husband when the time for the next feast day came; she determined that she would stay home with Samuel.
 - b. Her plan was to refrain from going to the tabernacle until such time that Samuel was weaned, when she would take him there to be turned over to Eli's care. It was her aim for her son to spend the rest of his life in God's service at the tabernacle.
 - c. "Weaning took place very late among the Israelites. According to 2 Macc. 7:27, the Hebrew mothers were in the habit of suckling their children for three years. When the weaning had taken place, Hannah would bring her son up to the sanctuary, to appear before the face of the Lord, and remain there for ever, *i.e.*, his whole life long" (Keil, p.26). "But she bowing herself toward him, laughing the cruel tyrant to scorn, spake in her country language on this manner; O my son, have pity upon me that bare thee nine months in my womb, and gave thee such three years, and nourished thee, and brought
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thee up unto this age, and endured the troubles of education” [2 Macc. 7:27].

- d. The weaning was not necessarily from the mother's milk, but from the mother herself; that is, he was old enough to take care of his own needs. “‘To wean’ in English Versions of the Bible is always the translation of (*gamal*), but *gamal* has a much wider force than merely ‘to wean,’ signifying ‘to deal fully with,’ as in Ps 13:6, etc. Hence, as applied to a child, *gamal* covers the whole period of nursing and care until the weaning is complete (1 Kings 11:20). This period in ancient Israel extended to about 3 years, and when it was finished the child was mature enough to be intrusted to strangers (1 Sam 1:24). And, as the completion of the period marked the end of the most critical stage of the child's life, it was celebrated with a feast (Gen 21:8), a custom still observed in the Orient. The weaned child, no longer fretting for the breast and satisfied with its mother's affection, is used in Ps 131:2 as a figure for Israel's contentment with God's care, despite the smallness of earthly possessions. In Isa 28:9 there is an ironical question, 'Is God to teach you knowledge as if you were children? You should have learned His will long ago!’” [International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, Electronic Database Copyright (c)1996 by Biblesoft].
3. Verse 24: "And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with three bullocks, and one ephah of flour, and a bottle of wine, and brought him unto the house of the LORD in Shiloh: and the child *was* young."
 - a. When Samuel had been weaned, Hannah took him with her, along with the items for sacrifice, and went to Shiloh. Obviously, this was at one of the annual feasts; her husband and other members of the family would have been in the company.
 - b. This was both a glorious and a heart-rending occasion for Hannah; she would have been happy that her son was now in the Lord's service, but a mother's love would naturally seek to keep him near.
 - c. The original can signify a bullock of three years instead of three bullocks. The animal was intended as a sacrifice. Only one bullock is said to have been slain (verse 25).
 4. Verses 25-28: "And they slew a bullock, and brought the child to Eli. And she said, Oh my lord, *as* thy soul liveth, my lord, I *am* the woman that stood by thee here, praying unto the LORD. For this child I prayed; and the LORD hath given me my petition which I asked of him: Therefore also I have lent him to the LORD; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the LORD. And he worshipped the LORD there."
 - a. A bullock was slain and the child was taken to Eli. Eli had likely forgotten about his encounter with Hannah; at least, the episode had been so far in the past (several years) that he had not thought of it for a long time. Hannah identified herself, and indicated her son as the answer to her prayer.
 - b. She stated that she had *lent* Samuel to the Lord for the rest of his life. The meaning of *lent* is not to be understood in its usual import: the fact is that she gave her son to the Lord for all of his days. God had given Samuel to her, and she was devoting him to God's service for as long as he lived. Samuel, though a lad, worshiped the Lord there; that was the purpose of his mother's plan; he fulfilled it.
 - 1) “The word *lent* spoils the meaning: Hannah really in these two verses uses the same verb four times, though in different conjugations, and the same sense must be maintained throughout. Her words are, ‘For this child I prayed, and Jehovah hath given me my asking which I asked of him: and I also have given back what was asked to Jehovah; as long as he liveth he is asked for Jehovah.’ The conjugation translated to give back what was asked literally means to make to ask, and so to give or lend anything asked. The sense here requires the restoration by Hannah of what she had prayed for (comp. Ex 12:35,36), but which she had asked not for herself, but that she might devote it to Jehovah's service’ [Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright (c)2001 by Biblesoft].
 - 2) When the Israelites left Egypt, they were given certain items by the Egyptians which partially compensated them for their long servitude: “And the children of Israel did according to the word

of Moses; and they borrowed of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: And the LORD gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent unto them such things as they required. And they spoiled the Egyptians. And the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand on foot that were men, beside children” (Ex. 12:35-37). “The word [*lent*] in the Hebrew means simply ‘granted their request.’ Whether the grant is made as a loan, or as a gift, depends in every instance upon the context. Here the word ‘spoiled’ ought to be regarded as conclusive that the grant was a gift, a moderate remuneration for long service, and a compensation for cruel wrongs” [Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by Biblesoft].

- 3) It used to be common for parents in the Lord’s church to want their sons to become preachers. Many lads early developed an earnest desire to be proclaimers of the gospel. We frequently learn today that young boys are encouraged to prepare themselves to pursue education and training to have a life of financial, social and professional success. Love for the Lord and his truth, and for lost souls, is requisite to becoming faithful preachers.
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1 SAMUEL 2

A. 1 Samuel 2:1-11: Hannah's Prayer.

1. Verses 1-2: "And Hannah prayed, and said, My heart rejoiceth in the LORD, mine horn is exalted in the LORD: my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies; because I rejoice in thy salvation. *There is none holy as the LORD: for there is none beside thee: neither is there any rock like our God.*"
 - a. Her prayer was an inspired declaration of praise toward God for his goodness; but even an inspired expression of gratitude can also express the individual's heartfelt thanksgiving.
 - b. The first two expressions are connected: She states that her heart is joyful and her horn is exalted in the Lord. "Horn" is used in the Scriptures to denote power (cf. Deut. 33:17). "The horn is the symbol of strength, and is taken from oxen those strength is in their horns" (Keil, p.30). She had been strengthened by the Lord's gift of her son; her heart was filled with joy on account of Samuel and her salvation. The fact that her prayer for a son had been answered was proof of her acceptability with the Lord.
 - c. The third and fourth expressions go together: Since she was able to rejoice in the deliverance God gave her, she was able to gain ascendance over her enemies. She was a child of God by virtue of her birth into God's holy nation (Israel). As an Israelite, she followed the law God gave through Moses.
 - 1) She had been ridiculed by her husband's other wife (Peninnah) because she had been unable to have a child. Hannah's prayer to God resulted in her conceiving a son, as she had requested.
 - 2) The birth of Samuel delivered Hannah from the shame of barrenness and Peninnah's scornful words. But more importantly, the answered prayer was positive proof that she was well-pleasing unto God.
 - a) "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear *me*" (Psa. 66:18).
 - b) "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer *shall be* abomination" (Prov. 28:9).
 - 3) Convinced that she had God's approval, there was none who could move her; this gave her great confidence to face the turmoils of life.
 - d. "Deborah, and the Virgin Mary, as well as those of Moses, David, Hezekiah, and other Psalmists and prophets whose inspired odes have been preserved in the Bible. The special feature which these songs have in common is, that springing from, and in their first conception relating to, incidents in the lives of the individuals who composed them, they branch out into magnificent descriptions of the Kingdom and glory of Christ, and the triumphs of the Church, of which those incidents were providentially designed to be the types. The perception of this is essential to the understanding of Hannah's song. Compare the marginal references throughout" (Barnes).
2. Verses 3-5: "Talk no more so exceeding proudly; let *not* arrogance come out of your mouth: for the LORD is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed. The bows of the mighty men *are* broken, and they that stumbled are girded with strength. *They that were* full have hired out themselves for bread; and *they that were* hungry ceased: so that the barren hath born seven; and she that hath many children is waxed feeble."
 - a. Other versions:
 - 1) ASV: "Talk no more so exceeding proudly; Let not arrogancy come out of your mouth; For Jehovah is a God of knowledge, And by him actions are weighed. The bows of the mighty men are broken; And they that stumbled are girded with strength. They that were full have hired out themselves for bread; And they that were hungry have ceased to hunger: Yea, the barren hath borne seven; And she that hath many children languisheth."
 - 2) NKJ: "Talk no more so very proudly; Let no arrogance come from your mouth, For the Lord is the

- God of knowledge; And by Him actions are weighed. The bows of the mighty men are broken, And those who stumbled are girded with strength. Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread, And the hungry have ceased to hunger. Even the barren has borne seven, And she who has many children has become feeble.”
- b. Arrogance is foolhardy, since God takes note of it, and condemns it. Peninnah had boasted on account of having borne children, and scorned Hannah for being barren. God enabled Hannah to conceive and bring forth a son; that Samuel was destined to become great was an added blessing to his mother.
 - 1) God weighed the two women, and blessed Hannah exceedingly; he also weighs the ungodly, and gives to them their due as he sees fit.
 - 2) The passage teaches the timeless truth that each individual reaps according to the seed he has sown in life.
 - a) "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (Gal. 6:7-8).
 - b) "Whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein: and he that rolleth a stone, it will return upon him" (Prov. 26:27).
 - c. God is able to reverse the fortunes of individuals. The bow of the strong man can be broken, and the one who stumbles in his weakness can be strengthened. The one who was well-fed can be caused to hire himself out for bread, and those who were hungry can have their needs satisfied.
 - d. Hannah then speaks of the subject that was close to her heart: One who was barren can be enabled to bear children, and one who has borne many children can lose her ability to conceive. This may have happened to Peninnah.
 - e. The point in this passage is a warning against arrogant boasting such as Peninnah had done when she gloated over her progeny and scorned Hannah's inability to conceive.
3. Verses 6-8: "The LORD killeth, and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up. The LORD maketh poor, and maketh rich: he bringeth low, and lifteth up. He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, *and* lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set *them* among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth *are* the Lord's, and he hath set the world upon them."
 - a. Continuing the same point, Hannah gives several more illustrations of the same principle. God, she affirms, is able to kill and make alive; he is able to bring one to the grave, and bring him forth again. This seems clearly to be a reference to the Messiah who would be slain, but raised to life again. Her words fit the general resurrection: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (John 5:28-29).
 - b. Hannah speaks of the Lord's ability to give poverty or riches; he can bring one low and lift him up. He can raise the poor man from the dust and lift up the beggar from the refuse heap, and elevate him to be among princes and to mount the throne of glory. This happened to Joseph and Esther. In a much grander realm, it happened to Christ (Isa. 53; Acts 2:29-36; Heb. 12:1-3; Phil. 2:1-11).
 - 1) Acts 2:29-36: "Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."

- 2) Hebrews 12:1-2: "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."
- c. These activities are possible because the earth is God's. The pillars of the earth are the great men thereof. God raised them up to sit on their thrones; they rule because of God's sufferance.
 - 1) Daniel 4:32: "And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling *shall be* with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.
 - 2) The government rests upon these *pillars*. "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour" (Rom. 13:1-7).
 - 3) Hannah is not succumbing to the pagan philosophers' view that the material earth rests upon literal supports.
 - a) "He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, *and* hangeth the earth upon nothing" (Job 26:7).
 - b) "*It is* he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof *are* as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in" (Isa. 40:22).
 - c) The Bible is always consistent with itself; it affirms that the earth is a *circle* and that it is suspended *upon nothing*.
- d. "He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill. This alludes to a form of wretchedness known in the East, and indicating the lowest degree of poverty and humiliation. The dunghill—a pile of horse, cow, or camel offal, heaped up to dry in the sun, and serve as fuel—was and is piled up in the huts of the poor; and sometimes, from necessity, is the haunt of wandering mendicants, who, finding it in some outhouse out of the city, lodge there for want of better accommodation: so that the change that had been made in the social position of Hannah appeared to her grateful heart as auspicious and as great as the elevation of a poor despised beggar to the highest and most dignified rank (see Harmer, i., p. 515)" (Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright © 1997, 2003, 2005, 2006 by BibleSoft, Inc. All rights reserved)."
4. Verses 9-10: "He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness; for by strength shall no man prevail. The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken to pieces; out of heaven shall he thunder upon them: the LORD shall judge the ends of the earth; and he shall give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed."
 - a. The providential help and protection the Lord gives his people is affirmed in the first statement; even in death, saints will be blessed. Concerning Christ, God promised: "For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in *their* hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone" (Ps. 91:11-12; cf. Matt. 4:6-7).
 - 1) However, the wicked will be silenced in the darkness of their fate; no longer will they be able to rail against the righteous; they are pictured in the statement as silently enduring their punishment,

- aware of their guilt.
- 2) "For if God spared not angels when they sinned, but cast them down to hell, and committed them to pits of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment" (2 Pet. 2:4, ASV).
 - 3) "And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. 25:30).
- b. No one can prevail in a battle against God! The mightiest of men and nations are helpless before the might of the Almighty!
- 1) Hebrews 12:18-21: "For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which *voice* they that heard entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: (For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart: And so terrible was the sight, *that* Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake)."
 - 2) The greatest strength of humanity cannot obtain salvation or other blessings from God by its own power. "O LORD, I know that the way of man *is* not in himself: *it is* not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jer. 10:23).
 - 3) Isaiah 37:33-38: "Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shields, nor cast a bank against it. By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and shall not come into this city, saith the LORD. For I will defend this city to save it for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake. Then the angel of the LORD went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses. So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh. And it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword; and they escaped into the land of Armenia: and Esarhaddon his son reigned in his stead."
- c. The enemies of God will all "be broken to pieces." There is no hope of victory for them. God is depicted as emitting his judgment as thunder from heaven (cf. Heb. 12:18-21). He is said to judge "the ends of the earth." His authority extends to everyone on earth, for all time. The earth and everything on it are his.
- 1) Psalms 24:1: "The earth *is* the LORD'S, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein."
 - 2) Romans 14:10-12: "But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, *As* I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God."
 - 3) 2 Corinthians 5:10-11: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men...."
- d. God, in his might and mercy, is able to give strength to his king and to exalt the strength of his anointed.
- 1) Does this refer to the future Israelite monarch? Does it refer to Christ, the anointed one of God? This is the word which is used in reference to the Messiah; *Messiah* is the Old Testament word for *Christ*.
 - 2) "This is the first place in Scripture where the word 'anointed,' or Messiah, occurs; and as there was no king in Israel at the time, it seems the best interpretation to refer it as pointing prophetically to Christ. There is, indeed, a remarkable resemblance between the song of Hannah and that of Mary (Luke 1:46)" (JFB, p.138). "And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord" (Luke 1:46).
5. Verse 11: "And Elkanah went to Ramah to his house. And the child did minister unto the LORD before

Eli the priest."

- a. Leaving Samuel with Eli, the child ministered unto the Lord under the direction of Eli. The nature of the work he performed is not specified. His age is not given, although he was obviously more than a toddler.
- b. "Left by his parents at Shiloh, Samuel ministered unto the Lord; that is, certain duties were allotted him to perform suited to his age; but few at first but increasing in importance as time went on; for the words refer to the whole period of his service, until Eli's death. At first Samuel would be but a scholar, for, as we have mentioned on 1 Sam 1:21, there were, no doubt, regulations for the training of children devoted to the service of the sanctuary. The peculiarity about Samuel was that he was devoted for life, for possibly it was a not uncommon practice for young persons to receive some training at Shiloh; just as we find that Samuel himself subsequently gathered youths round him at Naioth in Ramah for educational purposes. Learning practically was confined to the priesthood, and we can scarcely imagine that the knowledge which Phinehas and the family of Aaron brought with them out of Egypt would be allowed to perish. Samuel certainly had himself received careful instruction (see on 1 Sam 10:25), and this could scarcely have happened if the training of young persons had not been part of the priests' duties at Shiloh. This then explains why Samuel was brought to Eli at so tender an age, and why the charge of so young a child was undertaken without a murmur. Before Eli means under his general superintendence. Everything done at Shiloh was done before Eli, as being the chief ruler there" (The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright © 2001, 2003, 2005, 2006 by BibleSoft, Inc. All rights reserved).

B. 1 Samuel 2:12-17: The Sons of Eli.

1. Verse 12: "Now the sons of Eli *were* sons of Belial; they knew not the LORD."
 - a. *Belial* means "worthless." *Sons of Belial* is an expression meaning that the ones described are of no spiritual value. "*Certain* men, the children of Belial, are gone out from among you, and have withdrawn the inhabitants of their city, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which ye have not known" (Deut. 13:13).
 - b. It is a strange statement, but so often true, that men who are in the work of serving God sometimes are disobedient to God's word. These two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas (verse 34), occupied the position of priests, but their conduct was extremely unbecoming of the calling.
 - c. They did not know the Lord in the sense of obeying his will. They knew as much about God as any of the time, but they were not reverent toward him, and they did not live in obedience to him.
 - 1) 1 John 2:3-5 "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him."
 - 2) Compare: "Yet I *am* the LORD thy God from the land of Egypt, and thou shalt know no god but me: for *there is* no saviour beside me" (Hos. 13:4).
2. Verses 13-16: "And the priests' custom with the people *was, that*, when any man offered sacrifice, the priest's servant came, while the flesh was in seething, with a fleshhook of three teeth in his hand; And he struck *it* into the pan, or kettle, or caldron, or pot; all that the fleshhook brought up the priest took for himself. So they did in Shiloh, unto all the Israelites that came thither. Also before they burnt the fat, the priest's servant came, and said to the man that sacrificed, Give flesh to roast for the priest; for he will not have sodden flesh of thee, but raw. And *if* any man said unto him, Let them not fail to burn the fat presently, and *then* take *as much* as thy soul desireth; then he would answer him, *Nay*; but thou shalt give *it me* now: and if not, I will take *it* by force."
 - a. "When persons wished to present a sacrifice of peace offering on the altar...the offering was brought in the first instance to the priest; and as the Lord's part was burnt, the parts appropriated respectively to the priests and offenders were to be sodden. But Eli's sons, unsatisfied with the breast and shoulder, which were the perquisites appointed to them by the divine law (Exod. 29:27; Lev. 7:31,32), not only

- claimed part of the offender's share, but rapaciously seized them previous to the sacred ceremony of heaving or waving (see on Lev. 7:34); and, moreover, committed the additional injustice of taking up with their fork those portions which they preferred, whilst raw, in order to their being roasted" (JFB, p.139).
- b. "These abuses were practised by the priests in connection with the thank-offerings, with which a sacrificial meal was associated. Of these offerings, the portion which legally fell to the priest as his share was the heave-leg and wave-breast. And this he was to receive after the fat portions of the sacrifice had been burned upon the altar (see Lev. 7:30-34). To take the flesh of the sacrificial animal and roast it before this offering had been made, was a crime which was equivalent to a robbery of God ...Moreover, the priests could not claim any of the flesh which the offerer of the sacrifice boiled for the sacrificial meal, after burning the fat portions upon the altar and giving up the portions which belonged to them, to say nothing of their taking it forcibly out of the pots while it was being boiled" (Keil, pp.35f).
 - c. The sons of Eli sent a servant to take from the vessel in which the meat was being cooked, whatever portion that the three-pronged fork would catch. They did this to everyone who offered sacrifice, and thus obtained a far greater portion than that to which they were allowed.
 - 1) Exodus 29:27: "And thou shalt sanctify the breast of the wave offering, and the shoulder of the heave offering, which is waved, and which is heaved up, of the ram of the consecration, *even of that which is* for Aaron, and of *that which is* for his sons."
 - 2) Leviticus 7:31-32: "And the priest shall burn the fat upon the altar: but the breast shall be Aaron's and his sons'. And the right shoulder shall ye give unto the priest *for* an heave offering of the sacrifices of your peace offerings."
 - 3) Leviticus 7:34: "For the wave breast and the heave shoulder have I taken of the children of Israel from off the sacrifices of their peace offerings, and have given them unto Aaron the priest and unto his sons by a statute for ever from among the children of Israel."
 - d. "Pious people were revolted by such rapacious and profane encroachments on the dues of the altar, as well as what should have gone to constitute the family and social feast of the offer. The truth is, the priests having become haughty, and unwilling in many instances to accept invitation to those feasts, presents of meat were sent to them; and this, though done in courtesy at first, being in course of time established into a right, gave rise to all the rapacious keenness of Eli's sons" (JFB, p.139).
3. Verse 17: "Wherefore the sin of the young men was very great before the LORD: for men abhorred the offering of the LORD."
 - a. The young men of the verse are probably Hophni and Phinehas; Keil thought the reference was to the servants of the priests. The servants were only following the instructions of Eli's sons. Since the young men identified are said to have committed very great sin in the transactions described, and the context emphasizes the perversity of Hophni and Phinehas, these two must be the *young men* meant.
 - b. The severity of their sin was increased by their having *abhorred the offering of the Lord*. They held the sacrifices in contempt. Their sinful acts and dispositions were communicated to the citizenry. In time, the population in general had a low regard for the services of God. Compare: "And there shall be, like people, like priest: and I will punish them for their ways, and reward them their doings" (Hos. 4:9).
 4. The offerings under the Mosaic Law included several kinds. The difference between an offering and a sacrifice is that the latter is an example of the former. "All sacrifices are offerings; but all offerings are not sacrifices" (Milligan, p.137). The following information is gleaned from Milligan's *The Scheme of Redemption*, pp.137-149.
 - a. Burnt offerings: Leviticus 1:1-17; 6:8-13; Exodus 29:38-46.
 - 1) The victim could be a bullock, a ram, a goat, a dove, or a pigeon; it had to be a male without blemish.
 - 2) The burnt offering could be either voluntary or required.
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- 3) The priest sprinkled all the blood around the altar and burned the whole victim on the altar, except for the skin, which was the portion given to the priest.
 - b. Sin offerings: Leviticus 4; 5:13; 6:24-30.
 - 1) This offering was made at the consecration of priests: Exodus 29:10-14.
 - 2) It was made for mothers at childbirth: Leviticus 12.
 - 3) It was made of lepers when they were healed: Leviticus 14:1-32.
 - 4) It was made of Nazarites who were unexpectedly contaminated: Numbers 6:1-21.
 - 5) The victim might be a young bullock, a male kid, a female kid, a dove, or a pigeon; when the individual was very poor, a tenth part of an ephah or flour could substituted.
 - 6) The one making the offering placed his hand on the head of the victim, confessed his sins, and slew the animal. The High Priest sprinkled the blood seven times before the inner veil of the sanctuary, and put some on the golden altar. The fat was then burned on the altar of burnt offerings, and the flesh was either wholly consumed by fire without the camp, or was eaten by the priests. Compare: "For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp" (Heb. 13:11).
 - c. Trespass offerings: Leviticus 5:14—6:7; 7:6.
 - 1) This was connected with the sin offering, and was a supplement to it. This offering had reference to civil matters.
 - 2) The victim was a ram or male lamb without blemish. Cf. Leviticus 5:15-16.
 - 3) The blood was sprinkled around and upon the altar, the fat was burned on the altar, and the flesh was eaten by the priests in the Holy Place.
 - d. Peace offerings: Leviticus 3:1-17; 7:11-36; 22:21-25.
 - 1) A peace offering was made at the consecration of the priests (Ex. 29:1; 37; Lev. 5:14—6:7; 7:6); at the expiration of the Nazarite's vow (Num. 6:13-231); at any solemn dedication (Num. 7:10-88); at the Feast of Pentecost (Lev. 23:19); on voluntary occasions (Lev. 19:5; 22:21-25).
 - 2) The victim might be either male or female, from the herd or from the flock; it had to be without blemish except in the case of a freewill offering (Lev. 22:21-23).
 - 3) The individual killed the animal; the priests sprinkled the blood on the altar and burned all the fat on the altar.
 - 4) The breast was the wave offering; the right shoulder was the heave offering; these two parts were the portion allotted to the priests. The rest of the animal was eaten by the owner and his family and friends (Lev. 7:28-36).
 - 5) This was the only sacrifice of which the people were permitted to partake.
 - e. Meat [meal] offering: Leviticus 2; 6:14-23.
 - 1) It was a bloodless offering, consisting of three materials, to which salt and oil were added. The first consisted of fine flour and frankincense; the second of unleavened cakes; the third of parched corn and frankincense.
 - 2) The High Priest burned a part on the altar; the rest was eaten by the priests as a most holy thing.
 - f. Subsidiary meat offerings: Numbers 15:1-16; 28-29.
 - g. Drink offerings: Exodus 29:38-46; Numbers 15:1-16; 28:7-29. Compare:
 - 1) Philippians 2:17: "Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all."
 - 2) 2 Timothy 4:6: "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand."
- C. 1 Samuel 2:18-26: Samuel Increases in Favor with God and Man.
1. Verses 18-10: "But Samuel ministered before the LORD, *being* a child, girded with a linen ephod. Moreover his mother made him a little coat, and brought *it* to him from year to year, when she came up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice."
 - a. Even as a child, Samuel served God in certain activities which are unspecified by the text. In doing his work, he was clothed with a linen ephod. This garment was "a small shoulder-garment or apron,

- used in the sacred service" (JFB, p.139) which resembled the high priest's in shape (Keil, p.36). In 1 Samuel 22:18, other priests wore linen ephods. In 2 Samuel 6:14, David had on a similar garment the occasion described: "And David danced before the LORD with all his might; and David was girded with a linen ephod."
- b. From boyhood, Samuel was schooled to serve God throughout his life.
 - c. Each year, Hannah made her son a little coat and brought it to him when she and her husband made the trip to the tabernacle to offer the annual sacrifice. This garment was no doubt intended keep him warm during the winter.
2. Verses 20-21: "And Eli blessed Elkanah and his wife, and said, The LORD give thee seed of this woman for the loan which is lent to the LORD. And they went unto their own home. And the LORD visited Hannah, so that she conceived, and bare three sons and two daughters. And the child Samuel grew before the LORD."
- a. Eli blessed Elkanah and Hannah for their having given Samuel to the service of the Lord, and stated his desire that God might give them other offspring to replace Samuel.
 - b. In fulfillment of Eli's wish, the Lord enabled Hannah to conceive and bear three more sons and two daughters. The word *visit* is used in a special sense; God brought his power to bear upon Hannah, giving her the ability to conceive five more children. For other uses of the word *visit*, see:
 - 1) Genesis 21:1: "And the LORD visited Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did unto Sarah as he had spoken."
 - 2) Exodus 13:19: "And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him: for he had straitly sworn the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you; and ye shall carry up my bones away hence with you."
 - 3) Jeremiah 15:15: "O LORD, thou knowest: remember me, and visit me, and revenge me of my persecutors; take me not away in thy longsuffering: know that for thy sake I have suffered rebuke."
 - 4) James 1:27: "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, *and* to keep himself unspotted from the world."
 - c. In the meanwhile, Samuel was growing to manhood, under the Lord's direction and protection. Whether intended or not, his faithfulness and purity stand in stark contrast to the corruption of Eli's sons.
3. Verse 22: "Now Eli was very old, and heard all that his sons did unto all Israel; and how they lay with the women that assembled *at* the door of the tabernacle of the congregation."
- a. As Samuel grew toward adulthood, Eli grew old. He learned of the iniquity of his two sons. We are told in the following verses of his unsuccessful attempts to correct them.
 - b. In addition to the other sins they committed, this verse reports that they lay with certain women. These women assembled [*by troops*, margin] at the door of the tabernacle. The ASV describes them as "the women that did service at the door of the tent of meeting."
 - 1) Exodus 38:8: "And he made the laver *of* brass, and the foot of it *of* brass, of the lookingglasses of *the women* assembling, which assembled *at* the door of the tabernacle of the congregation." The ASV again speaks of these women as doing service before the tabernacle.
 - 2) From these references, it appears that there were certain women who were assigned duties in the tabernacle's operations. Perhaps it was in the ranks of these selected women that the daughter of Jephthah found service (Judges 11:34-40).
 - c. Hophni and Phinehas found other uses for some of these women. Their fornication was known to Eli and to the people.
4. Verses 23-25: "And he said unto them, Why do ye such things? for I hear of your evil dealings by all this people. Nay, my sons; for *it is* no good report that I hear: ye make the Lord's people to transgress. If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him: but if a man sin against the LORD, who shall entreat for him? Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto the voice of their father, because the LORD would slay them."
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- a. Eli confronted his sons on account of their sinful conduct. He had learned of their vile activities from the people. The report was one which brought no favor upon the two sons, but shame. Those who lead others into sin have a strong woe pronounced against them. "But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and *that* he were drowned in the depth of the sea. Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!" (Matt. 18:6-7).
 - b. Their conduct was such that the people were encouraged to commit sin themselves. A corrupt king or government cannot promote godliness among the citizens.
 - c. In the case of one man doing evil against another man under civil jurisdiction, the duly-appointed judge will decide the case. In the case at hand, it was the father of the offenders who was to pass judgment; he had natural feelings which could get in the way of his decree. Eli possessed authority as High Priest, Judge, and parent. In either of these roles, he could have addressed the sins of his sons. As High Priest, he had authority in the religious realm; as Judge, he had authority in the civil realm; as parent, he had authority over all in his family.
 - d. "Eli was on the whole a good man, but unhappy in the moral and religious training of his family. He erred on the side of parental indulgence; and though he reprimanded them...yet, from fear or indolence, shrunk from laying on them the restraints, or subjecting them to the discipline their gross delinquencies called for. In his judicial capacity he winked at their flagrant acts of maladministration, and suffered them to make reckless encroachments on the constitution, by which the most serious injuries were inflicted both on the rights of the people and the laws of God" (JFB, p.140).
 - e. In the situation wherein a man sins against God, it is the Lord who will pass the verdict. Neither Hophni and Phinehas, nor any other man, could expect to induce God to forego the punishment he has decided to mete out to the guilty.
 - 1) Hebrews 2:1-3: "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let *them* slip. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard *him*."
 - 2) Isaiah 58:1: "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins."
 - f. Hophni and Phinehas refused to heed the warnings their father gave them. God had already decided that they were to receive divine retribution; there was no hope for them as long as they maintained their impenitence.
 - 1) "It was not God's pre-ordination, but their own wilful and impenitent disobedience, which was the cause of their destruction" (JFB, p.140).
 - 2) Romans 2:5-6: "But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; Who will render to every man according to his deeds."
5. Verse 26: "And the child Samuel grew on, and was in favour both with the LORD, and also with men."
- a. Young Samuel, however, increased not only in stature and maturity, but also in favor with God and men. We would be surprised if he should turn out to be anything but a stalwart man of God.
 - b. The statement about Samuel is very much akin to the description of youthful Jesus. "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man" (Luke 2:52).
- D. 1 Samuel 2:27-36: A Man of God Speaks to Eli.
1. Verses 27-28: "And there came a man of God unto Eli, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Did I plainly appear unto the house of thy father, when they were in Egypt in Pharaoh's house? And did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel *to be* my priest, to offer upon mine altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before me? and did I give unto the house of thy father all the offerings made by fire of the children of Israel?"
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- a. An unidentified man of God, a prophet, was sent by the Almighty to Eli with a message concerning Hophni and Phinehas. But first, the prophet, using a common approach in such matters, sketched a part of Hebrew history in order to address the problem.
 - b. God, speaking through the prophet, reminded Eli that he had openly revealed himself to Aaron (Eli's ancestor) when the Israelites were servants to Pharaoh in Egypt. God chose Aaron from all the tribes of Israel to serve in the priestly office; that calling included tending to the altar, burning incense, and wearing the priestly ephod.
 - c. "The priests the Levites, *and* all the tribe of Levi, shall have no part nor inheritance with Israel: they shall eat the offerings of the LORD made by fire, and his inheritance" (Deut. 18:1). To Aaron and the Levites was given the honor and responsibility of taking charge of the burnt offerings that were to be made by the children of Israel. The Israelites were unable to make their own offerings without the services of the priests, and the priests were to subsist in part on the portions they were to obtain from the various sacrifices they offered for the people [Cf. Exodus 28].
2. Verses 29-30: "Wherefore kick ye at my sacrifice and at mine offering, which I have commanded *in my* habitation; and honourest thy sons above me, to make yourselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of Israel my people? Wherefore the LORD God of Israel saith, I said indeed *that* thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me for ever: but now the LORD saith, Be it far from me; for them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed."
 - a. God then asked Eli why he had kicked at the sacrifices and offerings which God had commanded to be made at the tabernacle. By tolerating the sinful conduct of Hophni and Phinehas, Eli shared in their corrupted priestly service. "The well-fed beast becomes unmanageable and refractory, and refuses the yoke, and bursts the bonds (Jer. 5:5). So the priests, instead of being grateful for the provision made for them, in their pampered pride became dissatisfied, wantonly broke the laws of God which regulated their share of the offerings, and gave themselves up to an unbridled indulgence of their passions and their covetousness" [Barnes' Notes, *ibid.*].
 - b. When Eli condoned the evil of his sons, he showed them greater honor than he showed to the Lord of Heaven! Apparently, Eli received some of the illegal portions taken from the people who sacrificed. He and the other priests had grown fat (prosperous and corpulent) by these excessive portions.
 - 1) By allowing this evil practice to go unchecked, and taking no action to stop the moral misconduct of his sons, Eli bore a measure of their guilt. He was the High Priest as well as judge; he had the power and authority to put a stop to the evil being practiced by his sons.
 - 2) 2 John 9-11: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into *your* house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds."
 - c. The Lord stated further that, although he had decreed that the house of Aaron should walk before him in the priestly office for ever, yet there was a limit to divine patience. God shows honor to those who show honor to him. "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all *them that are* about him" (Ps. 89:7).
 - 1) Eli's sons had shown dishonor to God by their unholy conduct; and Eli was partially at fault, since he did not put a stop to their wickedness.
 - 2) They had not shown God the honor due him, so God would withdraw the honor he had bestowed upon them in giving them the priestly office. Because they had shown despite to God, he would now show despite toward them.
 3. Verses 31-33: "Behold, the days come, that I will cut off thine arm, and the arm of thy father's house, that there shall not be an old man in thine house. And thou shalt see an enemy *in my* habitation, in all *the wealth* which God shall give Israel: and there shall not be an old man in thine house for ever. And the man of thine, *whom* I shall not cut off from mine altar, *shall be* to consume thine eyes, and to grieve thine heart: and all the increase of thine house shall die in the flower of their age."
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- a. The *arm* is symbolic of power and strength; to cut off or break the arm signifies to remove the power and strength; it is equivalent to removal from office or authority.
 - 1) Job 22:9: "Thou hast sent widows away empty, and the arms of the fatherless have been broken."
 - 2) Psalms 37:17: "For the arms of the wicked shall be broken: but the LORD upholdeth the righteous."
 - b. Subsequent verses predict the death of Hophni and Phinehas, hence the priestly line of Eli would come to an end. "Eli's family were not thrust out from the priesthood till the accession of Solomon, which he did not live to see" (JFB, p.141).
 - c. "The prophet predicted the destruction of the priestly family of Eli (2:31-34). That judgment was partially fulfilled in the massacre of the priests of Nob (cf. 1 Sam. 22:11-19) and ultimately fulfilled in the transfer of the priesthood to the family of Zadok in the time of Solomon (1 Kings 2:26-27,35). The death of Eli's two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, on the same day would serve as a sign to validate the prophecy" (Laney, p.22).
 - 1) 1 Samuel 2:31-34: "Behold, the days come, that I will cut off thine arm, and the arm of thy father's house, that there shall not be an old man in thy house. And thou shalt behold the affliction of my habitation, in all the wealth which God shall give Israel; and there shall not be an old man in thy house for ever. And the man of thine, whom I shall not cut off from mine altar, shall be to consume thine eyes, and to grieve thy heart; and all the increase of thy house shall die in the flower of their age. And this shall be the sign unto thee, that shall come upon thy two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas: in one day they shall die both of them" (ASV).
 - 2) 1 Kings 2:26-27: "And unto Abiathar the priest said the king, Get thee to Anathoth, unto thine own fields; for thou art worthy of death: but I will not at this time put thee to death, because thou barest the ark of the Lord GOD before David my father, and because thou hast been afflicted in all wherein my father was afflicted. So Solomon thrust out Abiathar from being priest unto the LORD; that he might fulfil the word of the LORD, which he spake concerning the house of Eli in Shiloh."
 - 3) 1 Kings 2:35: "And the king put Benaiah the son of Jehoiada in his room over the host: and Zadok the priest did the king put in the room of Abiathar."
 - d. The strength of the stock of a family is seen in the long lives of its members. If they generally die at a young age, weakness of the stock is seen. Weakness would characterize the family of Eli. There would be no old men for they would die young.
 - e. Concerning verse thirty-two, Keil offers the following view: "In all the benefits which the Lord would confer upon his people, Eli would see only distress for the dwelling of God, inasmuch as the tabernacle would fall more and more into decay" (p.43).
 - f. Eli's last moments on earth were consumed with the horrible news that the ark of the covenant had been taken by the Philistines and that his two sons had been slain in the battle (1 Sam. 4:12-18). They died *in the flower of their age*; they did not live to be old men, but died before their father. Dying young would be common to the future generations of Eli.
4. Verse 34: "And this *shall be* a sign unto thee, that shall come upon thy two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas; in one day they shall die both of them."
- a. Plainly stating the unhappy prediction, the prophet affirms that Hophni and Phinehas would both die on the same day. This was very specific; it is undeniably an inspired utterance for no mere man could have foreseen the end of Eli's two sons.
 - b. Predictive prophecy is an extremely powerful proof of Biblical inspiration. For a prophecy to have this evidential value, certain factors must be present.
 - 1) The event predicted must plainly be beyond the power of man to foreknow. Since men cannot know the future, when the Bible accurately predicted a future event, its claims to inspiration are verified.
 - 2) The evidence must be present to show that the prediction preceded the event predicted. Ellen G.
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- White said she had a "vision" beforehand of the great California earthquake of 1906 and the famous Chicago fire, but she did not tell anyone until after these disasters occurred! Anyone could make such claims. One failed prophecy marks the prophet as false.
- 3) The prophecy must be free of error. If the prediction states that a Chinaman would go on a rampage, shooting a thousand people to death, the "prophecy" is not fulfilled in the case of an Italian who poisons five hundred.
 - 4) The prophecy must have sufficient detail to be clear.
 - 5) There must be a definite fulfillment, not some mere assertion that the event was fulfilled. Evidence must exist to clearly link the prophecy and the fulfillment.
5. Verses 35-36 "And I will raise me up a faithful priest, *that* shall do according to *that* which *is* in mine heart and in my mind: and I will build him a sure house; and he shall walk before mine anointed for ever. And it shall come to pass, *that* every one that is left in thine house shall come *and* crouch to him for a piece of silver and a morsel of bread, and shall say, Put me, I pray thee, into one of the priests' offices, that I may eat a piece of bread."
- a. "Although not expressed, it is plainly implied that this priest should be in another line, which was fulfilled in the person of Zadok, who was eminent for his fidelity both to God and to the king (1 Ki. 2:27,35; 1 Chr. 34:22)" (JFB, p.141).
 - b. The prediction evidently includes each of the faithful priests who would henceforth serve God under the Mosaic System, with Christ being the ultimate fulfillment. "But this *man*, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. For such an high priest became us, *who is* holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself" (Heb. 7:24-27).
 - c. The sure house God promised to build for this future High Priest refers to the temple Solomon built, over which Zadok presided (if Zadok was the one in mind). If Christ is the one in mind, the sure house is the church of Christ.
 - 1) Isaiah 2:2-4: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, *that* the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."
 - 2) Matthew 16:16-19: "And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed *it* unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."
 - 3) Ephesians 1:22-23: "And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."
 - 4) 1 Timothy 3:15: "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."
 - d. The descendants of Eli's family would beg for handouts. Eli and his sons had prospered richly due especially to the criminal conduct of the sons. These descendants would have to beg to be put into the priestly office so that they would be able to eat. Jamieson states that there would be "a deep-seated
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feeling of jealousy and rancour, as appears both from the sacred history and that of *Josephus*, long existed between the rival houses of Eleazar and Ithamar; so that, when the elder branch was restored to the ascendancy, some of the high priests of that line might exercise such tyranny and violence toward those who had been so long their competitors as to deprive them of the offices they held; or they might exhibit such a spirit of insubordination and enmity to the occupiers of the high priesthood that they forfeited their privileges. In either case they might be compelled by the pressure of poverty to 'crouch for a piece of silver and a morsel of bread'" (pp.141f).

1 SAMUEL 3

A. 1 Samuel 3:1-10: Samuel's Vision.

1. Verse 1: "And the child Samuel ministered unto the LORD before Eli. And the word of the LORD was precious in those days; *there was* no open vision."
 - a. ASV: "And the child Samuel ministered unto Jehovah before Eli. And the word of Jehovah was precious in those days; there was no frequent vision."
 - b. NKJ: "Now the boy Samuel ministered to the Lord before Eli. And the word of the Lord was rare in those days; there was no widespread revelation."
 - c. Samuel is described as a "child," which is from a Hebrew term that refers to a baby in one case (1 Sam. 4:21), or to an older person in another (2 Chron. 13:7). The same word is used to describe David at the time he slew Goliath (1 Sam. 17:33, 42, 55).
 - 1) 1 Samuel 4:21: "And she named the child Ichabod, saying, The glory is departed from Israel: because the ark of God was taken, and because of her father in law and her husband."
 - 2) 2 Chronicles 13:7: "And there are gathered unto him vain men, the children of Belial, and have strengthened themselves against Rehoboam the son of Solomon, when Rehoboam was young and tenderhearted, and could not withstand them."
 - 3) 1 Samuel 17:33: "And Saul said to David, Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him: for thou art but a youth, and he a man of war from his youth."
 - 4) 1 Samuel 17:42: "And when the Philistine looked about, and saw David, he disdained him: for he was but a youth, and ruddy, and of a fair countenance."
 - 5) 1 Samuel 17:55: "And when Saul saw David go forth against the Philistine, he said unto Abner, the captain of the host, Abner, whose son is this youth? And Abner said, As thy soul liveth, O king, I cannot tell."
 - d. From the earliest time in his life, Samuel ministered unto the Lord under the guidance of Eli; throughout his life, he remained a servant of God.
 - e. The final thought of this verse appropriately introduces the narrative to follow. During the time frame being described, the word of God was *precious*. Since Moses, the presence of a prophet was indeed rare, making God's word very precious.
 - 1) Deborah, Hannah, and the unnamed prophet of 1 Samuel 2:27-36 may be the only ones specifically identified, but others are referred to in Acts 3:24: "Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days."
 - 2) Acts 3:22-23 gives Moses' prediction of the Messiah who would be like Moses in some ways: "For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, *that* every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people." Verse 24 then speaks of Samuel, who stood at the head of all the prophets who followed him. None are named in the context for the time between Moses and Samuel.
 - 3) Moses had recorded the Pentateuch; the book of Joshua had been written; Judges and Ruth had not likely been penned as yet, since Samuel is probably the inspired author. Since the time of Moses, very few prophets had been sent to Israel; certain Judges had been sent to assist the nation in their struggles against their war-loving neighbors, but these were primarily civil leaders.
 - 4) That the written word was not highly exalted in Israel during the time period indicated is seen by their frequent departures: "In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Judg. 21:25). This is likely one good reason why there were few *open visions*; there would be few who were usable by the Almighty for this purpose. There were those, however, who loved God's word, such as Naomi, Ruth, and Boaz; to this class of people, God's word would be highly valued.
 - 5) Centuries later, about 755 B.C., Amos predicted a future time when God would not send prophets:

- "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD" (Amos 8:11). This time was the four hundred years between Malachi and John the Immerser.
2. Verses 2-5: "And it came to pass at that time, when Eli *was* laid down in his place, and his eyes began to wax dim, *that* he could not see; And ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God *was*, and Samuel was laid down *to sleep*; That the LORD called Samuel: and he answered, Here *am* I. And he ran unto Eli, and said, Here *am* I; for thou calledst me. And he said, I called not; lie down again. And he went and lay down."
 - a. The RSV rearranges the text to teach that Samuel was sleeping within the temple (tabernacle). This was not possible, for only priests could enter the holy place, and only then in the performance of their duties; only the high priest could enter the most holy place, and then only once a year (on the day of Atonement). No one had the right to sleep within the tabernacle.
 - b. The time factor of the event described in the text is placed between the time Eli and Samuel had gone to bed and the time when the lamp in the temple went out (or was extinguished). The scholars differ concerning whether the lamp (the candlestick) was allowed to burn out overnight, was extinguished in the morning, or whether it was kept burning constantly. We are told that it was relighted each evening, which may imply that it was not burned during the day, or that it was refilled and relighted in the evening. It seems most probable that the lamps were lighted each evening and burned until the morning, or until such time in the early hours when they ran out of oil.
 - 1) Exodus 27:20-21: "And thou shalt command the children of Israel, that they bring thee pure oil olive beaten for the light, to cause the lamp to burn always. In the tabernacle of the congregation without the veil, which *is* before the testimony, Aaron and his sons shall order it from evening to morning before the LORD: *it shall be* a statute for ever unto their generations on the behalf of the children of Israel."
 - 2) Exodus 30:8: "And when Aaron lighteth the lamps at even, he shall burn incense upon it, a perpetual incense before the LORD throughout your generations."
 - 3) Leviticus 24:3: "Without the veil of the testimony, in the tabernacle of the congregation, shall Aaron order it from the evening unto the morning before the LORD continually: *it shall be* a statute for ever in your generations."
 - c. Eli's eyes were already growing dim with blindness; by the time he died at the age of ninety-eight, he was without sight. "Now Eli was ninety and eight years old; and his eyes were dim, that he could not see" (1 Sam. 4:15). His inability to see properly was likely the reason that Samuel was quick to think that the voice he heard during the night was Eli calling for help (cf. verse five).
 - d. Sometime during the night, possibly in the early hours of the morning, Samuel heard a voice calling to him. The lad arose and ran to Eli, thinking it was he who called. However, as the narrative shows, the voice was the Lord's.
 3. Verses 6-7: "And the LORD called yet again, Samuel. And Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, Here *am* I; for thou didst call me. And he answered, I called not, my son; lie down again. Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, neither was the word of the LORD yet revealed unto him."
 - a. Lying down again, Samuel soon heard the voice calling his name again. Once more he ran to Eli to see what he wanted.
 - b. Samuel had not heard the voice of the Lord before this time; this was the Lord's initial conversation with the lad, but there were to be many other occasions in which he would communicate with him. At this time, however, Samuel did not know the Lord in this miraculous way.
 4. Verses 8-10: "And the LORD called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli, and said, Here *am* I; for thou didst call me. And Eli perceived that the LORD had called the child. Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down: and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, LORD; for thy servant heareth. So Samuel went and lay down in his place. And the LORD came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for thy servant heareth."
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- a. After returning to his bed, the Lord called a third time, and once more, the lad went to Eli, still thinking that it was his voice. Eli, finally perceiving the reality of the case, realized that it was the Lord who called. Evidently, he had not heard the voice; perhaps he was deeply asleep, or maybe the voice was soft.
- b. He instructed Samuel to go back to bed, and if the voice came again, to answer, "Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth." When the voice came again, the Lord stood near his bed, and called Samuel's name twice. Nothing is said in the previous instances of the Lord being present in any material form. "A personal presence, not a mere voice, or impression upon Samuel's mind, is here distinctly indicated (Compare Gen 12:7 note; Rev 1:1; 22:16)" [Barnes' Notes].
 - 1) Genesis 12:7: "And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him."
 - 2) Exodus 3:2-6: "And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I. And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God."
 - 3) Revelation 1:1: "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John."
 - 4) Revelation 22:16: "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star."
 - 5) As in the above instances, the presence of the God in standing near Samuel is to be understood as being an angelic appearance.
- c. When the call was spoken this last time, Samuel responded with the very words Eli had given him to use. The word *heareth* includes the idea of obedience, and could be correctly translated *obey* (Laney, p.23).

B. 1 Samuel 3:11-18: God Speaks to Samuel in the Vision.

1. Verses 11-12: "And the LORD said to Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle. In that day I will perform against Eli all *things* which I have spoken concerning his house: when I begin, I will also make an end."
 - a. The Lord announced in unminced words that what he was about to do in Israel would make the ears of everyone who heard it to tingle. We sometimes use *tingle* to describe a thrilling sensation, but the Lord uses it with a different meaning; he uses it in the same way it is used in 2 Kings 21:12 and Jeremiah 19:3, where it describes the destruction of Jerusalem.
 - 1) 2 Kings 21:12: "Therefore thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Behold, I *am* bringing *such* evil upon Jerusalem and Judah, that whosoever heareth of it, both his ears shall tingle."
 - 2) Jeremiah 19:3: "And say, Hear ye the word of the LORD, O kings of Judah, and inhabitants of Jerusalem; Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, the which whosoever heareth, his ears shall tingle."
 - b. Barnes: "More accurately, 'the which whosoever heareth both his ears shall tingle.' This expressive phrase occurs again twice (marginal references) with reference to the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. It is remarkable that Jeremiah repeatedly compares the destruction of Jerusalem with the destruction of Shiloh."
 - 1) Jeremiah 7:12: "But go ye now unto my place which was in Shiloh, where I set my name at the first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of my people Israel."
 - 2) Jeremiah 7:14: "Therefore will I do unto this house, which is called by my name, wherein ye trust,

- and unto the place which I gave to you and to your fathers, as I have done to Shiloh.”
- 3) Jeremiah 26:6: “Then will I make this house like Shiloh, and will make this city a curse to all the nations of the earth.”
 - 4) Jeremiah 26:9: “Why hast thou prophesied in the name of the LORD, saying, This house shall be like Shiloh, and this city shall be desolate without an inhabitant? And all the people were gathered against Jeremiah in the house of the LORD.”
 - 5) Psalm 78:60-64: “So that he forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent which he placed among men; And delivered his strength into captivity, and his glory into the enemy's hand. He gave his people over also unto the sword; and was wroth with his inheritance. The fire consumed their young men; and their maidens were not given to marriage. Their priests fell by the sword; and their widows made no lamentation.”
- c. Here, the Lord is speaking of the punishment he will bring upon the house of Eli. The purpose of this message is to inform Eli that what he had spoken to him by the unnamed prophet (2:27-36) was about to be fulfilled. The house (family) of Eli would be removed from the priesthood; and the penalties identified earlier would be brought to bear upon them.
2. Verses 13-14: "For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not. And therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever."
 - a. The cause of the punishment was the sinful conduct of Hophni and Phinehas, and Eli's unwillingness to put a stop to their iniquities.
 - b. Eli was their father, and thus had parental authority to restrain them; he was high priest, and could have disciplined them for their priestly misconduct; he was the Judge of Israel, and possessed civil authority which empowered him to use the power of state to discipline their violations. He did not restrain them in any of these ways.
 - c. The guilt of Hophni and Phinehas could not be removed by the ordinary means of sacrifice and offering. Although they had as much access to God's forgiveness as any other offending Israelite, the penalty of their sinful conduct could not be removed by sacrifice and offering. Their guilt was exposed and they must meet the infinite Justice of God! They had not repented, therefore punishment was imminent.
 - d. God's longsufferance had a limit (cf. 2 Pet. 3:9; Rom. 2:4). When he began to execute his righteous wrath upon the offenders, he would make an end to Eli's priestly lineage.
 - 1) 2 Peter 3:9: “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”
 - 2) Romans 2:4: “Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?”
 3. Verses 15-18: "And Samuel lay until the morning, and opened the doors of the house of the LORD. And Samuel feared to show Eli the vision. Then Eli called Samuel, and said, Samuel, my son. And he answered, Here *am* I. And he said, What *is* the thing that *the* LORD hath said unto thee? I pray thee hide *it* not from me: God do so to thee, and more also, if thou *hide any* thing from me of all the things that he said unto thee. And Samuel told him every whit, and hid nothing from him. And he said, It *is* the LORD: let him do what seemeth him good."
 - a. Samuel lay in bed until morning, perhaps unable to return to sleep. How could anyone sleep after having such an experience! Rising in the morning, he proceeded to do his chores, which included opening the doors of the temple. Perhaps this is a reference to the enclosure around the tabernacle.
 - b. He was afraid to give a full report of the communication to Eli, because of what it portended for him. It is difficult for anyone today who proclaims God's word to boldly give the full truth to men; much of the Bible is negative; it very frequently denounces the actions of men. A strong faith and a stout heart are necessities for any preacher or teacher of the word!
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- 1) Acts 20:20,27: "*And* how I kept back nothing that was profitable *unto you*, but have showed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house....For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God."
 - 2) 1 Timothy 4:6,13,15-16: "If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained....Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine....Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee."
 - 3) 2 Timothy 2:2-4: "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of *this* life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier."
 - 4) 2 Timothy 4:1-5: "I charge *thee* therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away *their* ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry."
 - 5) 1 Timothy 1:3: "As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine."
 - 6) 1 Timothy 6:20: "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane *and* vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called:"
 - 7) Ezekiel 3:17-19: "Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked *man* shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul."
 - c. Eli was well aware of the fact that God had spoken with his young assistant; he strongly requested that Samuel repeat the message to him, without hiding any particle of it.
 - 1) "God do so to thee, and more also" is a warning that if he did not reveal the message, a heavy penalty would befall the young prophet.
 - a) Ruth 1:16-17: "And Ruth said, Entreat me not to leave thee, *or* to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people *shall be* my people, and thy God my God: Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the LORD do so to me, and more also, *if ought* but death part thee and me."
 - b) 1 Kings 19:2: "Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let the gods do *to me*, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to morrow about this time."
 - 2) Being enjoined to reveal the matter, Samuel repeated the message. It was not his desire to hurt Eli, but he could not change or soften the message without destroying his own standing with God.
 - d. Eli's attitude was admirable. He stated that the message was indeed from the Lord; what had been said was God's decree; Eli was resolved that the will of God should be done, even if the action to be wrought was to his own hurt. God's will is perfect; it is intended for the best good of mankind. If he had not taken action against the wicked sons of Eli, the nation of Israel would have become grossly corrupted, in their development, from which it might not be possible for them to be reclaimed.
- C. 1 Samuel 3:19-21: Samuel Established as God's Prophet.
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1. Verse 19: "And Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground."
 - a. Samuel grew to adulthood, increasing in stature, wisdom and spirituality. God was with him, making known his will through him. All the prophecies that God revealed by Samuel were fulfilled; none of them "fell to the ground."
 - b. God was able to fulfill every promise he had made in giving Israel possession of Canaan.
 - 1) Joshua 21:43,45: "And the LORD gave unto Israel all the land which he swore to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein....There failed not ought of any good thing which the LORD had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass."
 - 2) Joshua 23:14: "And, behold, this day I *am* going the way of all the earth: and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, *and* not one thing hath failed thereof."
 - c. To let something fall to the ground is allow it to be lost, unheeded or destroyed; God would not allow such to happen to his word. Samuel, being the spiritual giant that he was, would not allow God's word to be wasted or to be impeded.
2. Verse 20: "And all Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel *was* established *to be* a prophet of the LORD."
 - a. From Dan in the north to Beersheba in the south, all Israel recognized Samuel as a prophet of God. His prophecies did not fail, his teachings were true, and his conduct was entirely in keeping with his work.
 - b. A false prophet is identifiable by his teachings and predictions.
 - 1) Matthew 7:20: "Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them."
 - 2) 1 John 4:1: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world."
 - 3) Deuteronomy 18:22: "When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, *but* the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him."
3. Verse 21: "And the LORD appeared again in Shiloh: for the LORD revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the LORD."
 - a. God had revealed his will to Samuel at Shiloh, where the tabernacle was erected after Israel's entry into Canaan, and where it remained for many years. God continued to reveal his will to Samuel at this place.
 - b. The revelation was in the form of the inspired message which he delivered to Samuel. The prophet, in keeping with his calling as God's spokesman, taught it to Israel.
 - c. Compare:
 - 1) 2 Samuel 23:2: "The spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word *was* in my tongue."
 - 2) Acts 1:16: "Men *and* brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus."
 - 3) 2 Peter 1:19-21: "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake *as they were* moved by the Holy Ghost."

1 SAMUEL 4

A. 1 Samuel 4: 1-6: The Ark of the Covenant Brought Out to the Battlefield.

1. Verses 1-2: "And the word of Samuel came to all Israel. Now Israel went out against the Philistines to battle, and pitched beside Ebenezer: and the Philistines pitched in Aphek. And the Philistines put themselves in array against Israel: and when they joined battle, Israel was smitten before the Philistines: and they slew of the army in the field about four thousand men."
 - a. Continuing the thought with which the previous chapter closed, we are told that the word of God came through Samuel to all Israel. A prophecy, God's word, is of no use unless it is delivered to those to whom it is intended to profit. The gospel, hidden in a dark corner, benefits no one.
 - b. At the time of the events of this chapter, Philistia entered Israelite territory; Israel went out to meet them, and preparatory to battle, set up camp at Ebenezer. *Ebenezer* is used three times in the Bible.
 - 1) 1 Samuel 5:1: "And the Philistines took the ark of God, and brought it from Ebenezer unto Ashdod."
 - 2) 1 Samuel 7:12: "Then Samuel took a stone, and set *it* between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Ebenezer, saying, Hitherto hath the LORD helped us."
 - c. The Philistines set up their encampment at Aphek. There are several places known by the name; this Aphek was in the plain of Esdraelon (also called the valley of Jezreel), "near the western entrance of the pass of Bethhoron, and consequently on the borders of the Philistine territory" (JFB, p.144).
 - d. Without inquiring of God through Samuel, Israel foolishly entered the battle against the Philistines, and suffered a severe defeat, losing four thousand men. If the Philistines used chariots in the fighting, Israel was at a distinct disadvantage, meeting the enemy on level ground where chariots could be used to their full advantage.
2. Verses 3-4: "And when the people were come into the camp, the elders of Israel said, Wherefore hath the LORD smitten us to day before the Philistines? Let us fetch the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of Shiloh unto us, that, when it cometh among us, it may save us out of the hand of our enemies. So the people sent to Shiloh, that they might bring from thence the ark of the covenant of the LORD of hosts, which dwelleth *between* the cherubims: and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, *were* there with the ark of the covenant of God."
 - a. The foolishness of the Israelites reaches its zenith in the proceedings following the defeat. They could not understand why God had allowed them to be smitten. Obviously, there was some problem for which they needed to be punished. "Strange that they were so blind to the real cause of the disaster and that they did not discern, in the great and general corruption of religion and morals (ch. 2; 7:3; Ps:78:58), the reason why the presence and aid of God were not extended to them" (JFB, p.144).
 - b. Their folly reached maturity with the proposal to bring the ark of the covenant so that, somehow, its supposed magical powers could effect the defeat of the Philistines. Hophni and Phinehas accompanied the ark from Shiloh to the battlefield, evincing their approval of the plan. The ark had been present when Israel defeated Jericho (Josh. 6), but the plan for its use was God's. There was no power that derived from the ark itself.
 - c. The ark is described as being situated, in the most holy place, between the cherubims. The mercy seat which covered the ark had two angelic forms attached to it.
3. Verses 5-6: "And when the ark of the covenant of the LORD came into the camp, all Israel shouted with a great shout, so that the earth rang again. And when the Philistines heard the noise of the shout, they said, What *meaneth* the noise of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews? And they understood that the ark of the LORD was come into the camp."
 - a. The ark's entry into Israel's camp elicited a mighty shout from the Israelites; so great was this cry that the Philistines in Aphek heard its ringing tone. Israel felt that their troubles were now over and that success in the coming engagement with the Philistines was bound to be certain.

- b. Hearing the great shout from Israel's camp, the Philistines wondered at the cause. They soon learned, perhaps by their lookouts, that the ark of God had entered Israel's encampment. They knew enough to know about the ark of the covenant, perhaps even to know of its part in Jericho's downfall.

B. 1 Samuel 4:7-11: The Ark of the Covenant Taken by the Philistines.

1. Verses 7-8: "And the Philistines were afraid, for they said, God is come into the camp. And they said, Woe unto us! for there hath not been such a thing heretofore. Woe unto us! who shall deliver us out of the hand of these mighty Gods? these *are* the Gods that smote the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness."
 - a. The presence of the ark in Israel's war camp incited tremendous anxiety and fear in the hearts of the Philistines. They had never had to face the ark in such a confrontation; their fear destroyed their usual courage.
 - b. They recalled the stories of how Israel's God had smitten the Egyptians. They thought of God in terms of idolatry, referring to him in the plural. They despaired of deliverance from the power of the mighty "Gods" of Israel.
2. Verse 9: "Be strong, and quit yourselves like men, O ye Philistines, that ye be not servants unto the Hebrews, as they have been to you: quit yourselves like men, and fight."
 - a. The leaders among the Philistines encouraged their troops with the words of the passage. They were called on to be strong, and to acquit themselves like men, so that they would not become servants to the Hebrews. The Philistines obviously had subjugated Israel.
 - b. With these strengthening words, the pagans from Philistia had their courage restored. They now had the will to fight and win; of course, God was allowing his people to be defeated so as to be punished.
3. Verses 10-11: "And the Philistines fought, and Israel was smitten, and they fled every man into his tent: and there was a very great slaughter; for there fell of Israel thirty thousand footmen. And the ark of God was taken; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain."
 - a. The Philistines fought wildly and well, smiting Israel with a great slaughter. Thirty thousand footmen fell on the battlefield.
 - b. The Israelites fled to their tents, the ark of the covenant was captured, and the two sons of Eli were slain in the fighting. Did they die while defending the ark? Or were they slain in fleeing from the Philistines?
 - c. When the Philistines heard the noise, and learned on inquiry that the ark of Jehovah had come into the camp, they were thrown into alarm, for "they thought (lit. said), God (Elohim) is come into the camp, and said, 'Woe unto us! For such a thing has not happened yesterday and the day before (i.e., never till now). Woe to us! Who will deliver us from the hand of these mighty gods? These are the very gods that smote Egypt with all kinds of plagues in the wilderness.' " The Philistines spoke of the God of Israel in the plural as heathen who only knew of gods, and not of one Almighty God. Just as all the heathen feared the might of the gods of other nations in a certain degree, so the Philistines also were alarmed at the might of the God of the Israelites, and that all the more because the report of His deeds in the olden time had reached their ears (see Ex 15:14-15). The expression "in the wilderness" does not compel us to refer the words "smote with all the plagues" exclusively to the destruction of Pharaoh and his army in the Red Sea (Ex 14:23 ff.). "All the plagues" include the rest of the plagues which God inflicted upon Egypt, without there being any necessity to supply the copula before as in the LXX and Syriac. By this addition an antithesis is introduced into the words, which, if it really were intended, would require to be indicated by a previous. According to the notions of the Philistines, all the wonders of God for the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt took place in the desert, because even when Israel was in Goshen they dwelt on the border of the desert, and were conducted thence to Canaan. (Keil and Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament: New Updated Edition, Electronic Database. Copyright © 1996 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc. All rights reserved.)

C. 1 Samuel 4:12-18: Death of Eli.

1. Verses 12-13: "And there ran a man of Benjamin out of the army, and came to Shiloh the same day with his clothes rent, and with earth upon his head. And when he came, lo, Eli sat upon a seat by the wayside watching: for his heart trembled for the ark of God. And when the man came into the city, and told *it*, all the city cried out."
 - a. Following the debacle, a Benjamite fled the battlefield and came to Shiloh the same day; his clothes were torn and he had earth on his head (signs of mourning). The distance he traveled is put at eighteen miles, a considerable distance for most men to cover in part of one day.
 - b. The man came to Shiloh and he gave the sorrowful report. Eli was sitting on a roadside seat, anxiously awaiting news of the anticipated battle, greatly fearing the fate of the ark. The news caused a woeful cry to spread over the city.
 - c. Coffman:
 - 1) "A man of Benjamin ran from the battle line, and came to Shiloh the same day, with his clothes rent and with earth upon his head. When he arrived, Eli was sitting upon his seat by the road watching, for his heart was troubled for the ark of God. And when the man came into the city and told the news, all the city cried out. When Eli heard the sound of the outcry, he said, "what is this uproar"?"
 - 2) Then the man hastened and came and told Eli. Now Eli was ninety-eight years old, and his eyes were set, so that he could not see. And the man said to Eli, "I am he who has come from the battle; I fled from the battle today." And he said, "How did it go, my son"? He who brought the tidings answered and said, "Israel has fled before the Philistines, and there has also been a great slaughter among the people; your two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God has been captured." When he mentioned the ark of God, Eli fell over backward from his seat by the side of the gate; and his neck was broken, and he died, for he was an old man, and heavy. He had judged Israel forty years."
 - 3) "A man ... ran from the battle ... came to Shiloh the same day ... clothes rent ... earth on his head" (1 Samuel 4:12). This quick news of the disaster was possible because the battle occurred only about eighteen miles from Shiloh.
2. Verses 14-16: "And when Eli heard the noise of the crying, he said, What *meaneth* the noise of this tumult? And the man came in hastily, and told Eli. Now Eli was ninety and eight years old; and his eyes were dim, that he could not see. And the man said unto Eli, I *am* he that came out of the army, and I fled to day out of the army. And he said, What is there done, my son?"
 - a. Eli heard the great tumult in the city, and inquired as to its meaning. The man who brought the news ran to him and gave him the report.
 - b. We are told that Eli was ninety-eight years old and was blind. Undoubtedly, this was the worst news he had ever heard. His last day on earth was the hardest of all his life—his two sons were slain and the ark of the covenant was captured by the enemy.
 - c. Jamieson:
 - 1) "The aged priest, as a public magistrate, used, in dispensing justice, to seat himself daily in a spacious recess at the entrance gate of the city; and in his intense anxiety to learn the issue of the battle, he took up his usual place as the most convenient for meeting with passers-by. His seat was an official chair, similar to those of the ancient Egyptian judges, richly carved, superbly ornamented, high, and without a back.
 - 2) "The calamities announced to Samuel as about to fall upon the family of Eli were now inflicted by the death of his two sons, and after his own death, by that of his daughter-in-law, whose infant son received a name that perpetuated the fallen glory of the ... nation. The public disaster was completed by the capture of the ark, which made God, according to pagan nations, the captive of the victorious Philistines (cf. 2 Chron 25:14).

- 3) "The images of the pagan gods were in the portable shrines they carried with them to the battle: and although the ark had no image, yet God was believed peculiarly to inhabit it, so that the capture of the ark was regarded as the conquest of Him.
 - 4) "Poor Eli! he was a good man, in spite of his unhappy weaknesses. So strongly were his sensibilities enlisted on the side of religion, that the news of the capture of the ark proved to him a knell of death; and yet his over-indulgence or sad neglect of his family—the main cause of all the evils that led to its fall—has been recorded as a beacon to warn all heads of Christian families against making shipwreck on the same rock" (Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright © 1997, 2003, 2005, 2006 by BibleSoft, Inc. All rights reserved).
3. Verses 17-18: "And the messenger answered and said, Israel is fled before the Philistines, and there hath been also a great slaughter among the people, and thy two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God is taken. And it came to pass, when he made mention of the ark of God, that he fell from off the seat backward by the side of the gate, and his neck brake, and he died: for he was an old man, and heavy. And he had judged Israel forty years."
- a. The man stated that he had come from the army that very day, that Israel had been defeated with a great slaughter, that Hophni and Phinehas had been slain, and that the ark of God had been taken by the Philistines.
 - b. When the fate of the ark was given, Eli was so shocked that he fell backwards off the seat and broke his neck. He is described as being an old man and very heavy. He had judged Israel forty years. The fall was fatal.

D. 1 Samuel 4:19-22: Phinehas's Wife Delivers.

1. Verse 19: "And his daughter in law, Phinehas' wife, was with child, *near* to be delivered: and when she heard the tidings that the ark of God was taken, and that her father in law and her husband were dead, she bowed herself and travailed; for her pains came upon her."
 - a. The wife of Phinehas was with child; the news of the catastrophe induced labor. She "bowed herself and travailed...her pains came upon her."
 - b. "While in some parts of the East parturient women anciently gave birth to their offspring in a standing posture (see on Gen. 25:26), in others they are accustomed to bring forth kneeling..." (JFB, p.146).
2. Verse 20: "And about the time of her death the women that stood by her said unto her, Fear not; for thou hast borne a son. But she answered not, neither did she regard *it*."
 - a. She died in childbirth. Perceiving her peril, the midwives tried to reassure her, by telling her that her baby was a son; this was good news to the ancients.
 - b. She did not respond in the expected way, being overwhelmed by the awful news of the loss of the ark and the deaths of her husband and father-in-law.
3. Verses 21-22: "And she named the child Ichabod, saying, The glory is departed from Israel: because the ark of God was taken, and because of her father in law and her husband. And she said, The glory is departed from Israel: for the ark of God is taken."
 - a. Before her death, she gave the name *Ichabod* to the son she bore. The name means "Where is the glory?" or "There is no glory." She discerned that the glory had departed Israel with the loss of the ark of God.
 - b. Her last day on earth was the most sorrowful of all her days: she gave birth to a son, but the awful news of the ark's capture by the dreaded Philistines, plus the violent deaths of Phinehas and Eli [her husband and father-in-law], were too much for this lady.
4. Coffman (pp.52f) reports that excavations conducted in 1926-1932 revealed that Shiloh was violently destroyed about 1100 B.C., which corresponds to the time of the disaster recorded in this chapter. The core of Israel's religious life was decimated, and the Philistines were the undisputed masters of Israel.
 - a. "Contrary to what any uninspired writer would have done, the author (whom we believe to have been Samuel) says nothing at all...concerning the Israelites and their reaction to the terrible defeat they had just suffered. He gives us not a single word about the terrible destruction of Shiloh by the Philistine

army; and we are able to know about that only from the later references to it in the Bible" (Coffman, p.55).

- b. "From Psalm 78:60-64, and from Jeremiah 7:12 and 26:9, it is clear enough that Shiloh was brutally and thoroughly destroyed, remaining a total ruin for centuries afterwards. All of the buildings were demolished; the inhabitants were put to the sword, men and women and children alike; and the priests, especially, were butchered. This extremely severe destruction was apparently brought about by the injection of the ark of God into the battle plans by the Israelites, thus endowing the struggle with significant religious overtones and endowing the conflict with all of the savage frenzy of religious fanaticism" (*ibid.*).
 - 1) Psalms 78:60-66: "So that he forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent *which* he placed among men; And delivered his strength into captivity, and his glory into the enemy's hand. He gave his people over also unto the sword; and was wroth with his inheritance. The fire consumed their young men; and their maidens were not given to marriage. Their priests fell by the sword; and their widows made no lamentation. Then the Lord awaked as one out of sleep, *and* like a mighty man that shouteth by reason of wine. And he smote his enemies in the hinder parts: he put them to a perpetual reproach."
 - 2) Jeremiah 7:12: "But go ye now unto my place which *was* in Shiloh, where I set my name at the first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of my people Israel."
 - 3) Jeremiah 26:9: "Why hast thou prophesied in the name of the LORD, saying, This house shall be like Shiloh, and this city shall be desolate without an inhabitant? And all the people were gathered against Jeremiah in the house of the LORD."
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1 SAMUEL 5

A. 1 Samuel 5:1-9: The Ark of the Covenant in Philistia.

1. Verses 1-2: "And the Philistines took the ark of God, and brought it from Ebenezer unto Ashdod. When the Philistines took the ark of God, they brought it into the house of Dagon, and set it by Dagon."
 - a. In the view of the Philistines, their god had defeated the God of Israel in the foregoing battle. In keeping with ancient practice, the ark of the covenant was taken as a trophy of war, and installed in the temple of the Philistine god at Ashdod.
 - b. Ashdod was located about three miles from the Mediterranean Sea, about thirty-three miles west of Jerusalem. It was known as Azotus in the New Testament (Acts 8:40). Anciently, Ashdod was known as a fortified city, which is indicated in the meaning of its name [*stronghold* or *fortress*—Coffman, pp.56f]. During the period of the Maccabees, the Jews destroyed Ashdod: "But Jonathan set fire on Azotus, and the cities round about it, and took their spoils; and the temple of Dagon, with them that were fled into it, he burned with fire" (1 Macc. 10:84). [Note: Maccabees is part of the apocrypha, a series of ancient uninspired Jewish writings].
 - c. Dagon, described by his followers as the father of Baal, was the fish-god of the Philistines. They had entered Canaan from Crete [Caphtor: Unger, pp.192f; cf. Jer. 47:4; Amos 9:7], and had developed into a powerful enemy to Israel. Dagon is represented as having the body of a fish, with the head and hands of a man.
 - 1) Jeremiah 47:4: "Because of the day that cometh to spoil all the Philistines, and to cut off from Tyrus and Zidon every helper that remaineth: for the LORD will spoil the Philistines, the remnant of the country of Caphtor."
 - 2) Amos 9:7: "Are ye not as children of the Ethiopians unto me, O children of Israel? saith the LORD. Have not I brought up Israel out of the land of Egypt? and the Philistines from Caphtor, and the Syrians from Kir?"
 - d. Jamieson:
 - 1) "Stately temples were erected in honour of this idol, who was the principal deity of the Philistines, but whose worship extended over all Syria, as well as Mesopotamia and Chaldea, his name being found among the Assyrian gods on the cuneiform inscriptions (Rawlinson). He was represented under a monstrous combination of a human head, breast, and arms, joined to the belly and tail of a fish.
 - 2) "The captured ark was placed in the temple of Dagon, right before this image of the idol. 'Dagon' [*Daagown*], from *daag*, a fish, and *own*, the abbreviated form of the name of the god] — the maritime, Aon, or Oannes, as he was called in Chaldean. 'There is in the British museum an ancient coin which represents Dagon on one side, and a ship on the other. The god has a human head and arms, and the tail of a dolphin. In his right hand he holds a fish, with its head upwards; in his left another, with its head downward.'
 - 3) "This ingenious hieroglyphic signifies that in the land over which Aon, the enlightener of men, ruled and guided the sun, it began its course on land in the east (the front), figured by the human forepart, and ended it in the sea in the west (the back), figured by the hind part of a maritime creature. It reaches its greatest elevation at the right hand of the god—i.e., the south; this is implied by the fish looking upward: and it sank below the horizon at his left, the north; this is expressed by the fish going down. Such an emblem must have been designed in a country of which it accurately described the geographical bearings—one with the continent eastward, and a western sea; and, moreover, for the emblem to be intelligible, it requires that the Oriental mode of reckoning, and which refers the east to the front, the west to the back, etc., should be customary in the language of the country. These conditions are fulfilled in Palestine alone, in the region of the maritime proto-Phoenicians, where we find the Scriptural Philistines, worshippers of Dagon'

(Corboux, 'Journal of Sacred Literature,' Oct., 1852, p. 114). [Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary, Electronic Database.]

2. Verses 3-4: "And when they of Ashdod arose early on the morrow, behold, Dagon *was* fallen upon his face to the earth before the ark of the LORD. And they took Dagon, and set him in his place again. And when they arose early on the morrow morning, behold, Dagon *was* fallen upon his face to the ground before the ark of the LORD; and the head of Dagon and both the palms of his hands *were* cut off upon the threshold; only *the stump of Dagon* was left to him."
 - a. The capture of the ark did not suggest any weakness on God's part, but rather stood as a rebuke to the sinfulness of Israel, who considered the ark to be hardly more than a mere fetish. But the Philistines had earned the wrath of the Almighty because of their antagonism toward God and his people. God often used pagan nations to punish Israel, but they received divine retribution in due course.
 - b. Early the next morning, the Philistines assembled at the temple; during the night, through no natural force, their god Dagon was prostrate on his face as though paying homage to the ark of God. The significance of his prostrate form before the ark should have been obvious to anyone. It may be that some special ceremony was scheduled for that morning; at least, this suggests a reason for the statement that the Philistines had arisen early on that morning.
 - c. The priests, attributing Dagon's prostrate position to some vagary of nature, set their idol upright again. However, the next morning, they found him once more prostrate on the floor before the ark, with his head and hands broken off; these parts had fallen at the threshold of the temple, evidently at no small distance from the usual position the idol occupied.
 - d. Only the "stump of Dagon" was left intact; his human parts were broken off, leaving only the fish representation. Keil speaks of "a bas relief from Khorsabad, in which 'a figure is seen swimming in the sea, with the upper part of the body resembling a bearded man, wearing the ordinary conical tiara of royalty, adorned with elephants' tusks, and the lower part resembling the body of a fish'" (p.57). This Assyrian idol probably represents a likeness to Dagon.
3. Verses 5-6: "Therefore neither the priests of Dagon, nor any that come into Dagon's house, tread on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod unto this day. But the hand of the LORD was heavy upon them of Ashdod, and he destroyed them, and smote them with emerods, *even* Ashdod and the coasts thereof."
 - a. The presence of these fragments of Dagon on the threshold gave rise to a peculiar custom on the part of the Philistines: from that time forward, when they entered the temple, they stepped over the place where the head and hands of Dagon came to rest. This custom was still in vogue at the time the book of Samuel was composed.
 - b. God's wrath was not limited to the idol of Philistia, but extended to the people. He smote the citizens of Ashdod and its outlying villages with *emerods*.
 - c. The ASV has *tumors* in place of *emerods*. The Hebrew term speaks of a swelling (Keil, p.59). This can fit hemorrhoids, which is indicated by the rendering of the KJV.
 - 1) Some scholars allege that the affliction was the bubonic plague. The evidence advanced is taken from the text which speaks of rodents which *mar the land* (6:5). The rats ravaged the crops, adding more misery and loss to the Philistines. In the bubonic plague, fleas infest the rat population; the rodents contract the disease and die; the fleas begin to bite the human population; humans contract the disease and die. As much as one third of humanity [in Europe] perished during the 14th century due to *the black death*.
 - 2) A great number of people in Philistia died due to the affliction which God sent upon them, whether it was *emerods* or some other scourge.
 - d. "A question here arises whether, as the Septuagint affirms, besides the scourge of emerods, their land was desolated by swarms of field mice. It is certain that they sent as votive offerings golden images of 'the mice that mar the land' (1 Sam 6:5); but the translators of the Septuagint too often attempt to make all things easy by unauthorised additions, suggested by the context; and so probably here it was the wish to explain why mice were sent which made them add, 'and mice were produced in the land.'

- 1) “Really the mouse was a symbol of pestilence (Herod., 2:141), and appears as such in hieroglyphics; and by sending golden mice with golden emerods the lords of the Philistines expressed very clearly that the emerods had been epidemic. This word, more correctly spelt haemorrhoids, has this in its favour, that the noun used here, *ophalim*, is never read in the synagogue. Wherever the word occurs the reader was instructed to say *tehorim*, the vowels of which are actually attached to the consonants of *ophalim* in the text of our Hebrew Bibles.
 - 2) “In Deut 28:9.7 *tehorim* is mentioned as one of the loathsome skin diseases of Egypt, and though rendered ‘emerods’ in the A.V., is possibly, as translated by Aquila, ‘an eating ulcer.’ *Ophalim* need only mean turnouts, swellings, its original signification being ‘a hill’ (2 Chron 27:3); yet as the word was not thought fit for public reading in the synagogue, we may feel sure that it means some such tumours as the A.V. describes” [The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 2001 by Biblesoft].
4. Verses 7-8: "And when the men of Ashdod saw that *it was* so, they said, The ark of the God of Israel shall not abide with us: for his hand is sore upon us, and upon Dagon our god. They sent therefore and gathered all the lords of the Philistines unto them, and said, What shall we do with the ark of the God of Israel? And they answered, Let the ark of the God of Israel be carried about unto Gath. And they carried the ark of the God of Israel about thither."
 - a. The Philistines correctly perceived that their affliction came from the hand of Israel's God, because they had taken the ark of the covenant. The source of the problem was obvious, and the solution was equally clear: remove the ark from their midst.
 - b. All of the lords of the Philistines were gathered to resolve the problem. Apparently, the rulers of the five major cities of Philistia are meant. The men of Ashdod did not want the ark any more, but those of Gath evidently thought there was no inherent danger posed by the ark, that the Ashdodites were over-reacting. The ark was transported to Gath, a Philistine city situated twelve miles southeast of Ashdod.
 5. Verse 9: "And it was *so*, that, after they had carried it about, the hand of the LORD was against the city with a very great destruction: and he smote the men of the city, both small and great, and they had emerods in their secret parts."
 - a. God's hand was raised against the people of Gath, smiting them with *emerods in their secret parts*. The affliction was impartial, assaulting the great and the small of society.
 - b. Whatever the affliction, the *swelling* (tumors or boils) destroyed a very great number of the people. The plague followed the ark; the ark itself did not cause the plague. God's power wrought this great destruction as punishment on the Philistine idolaters.
- B. 1 Samuel 5:10-12: The Philistines Decide to Send the Ark of God Back to Israel.
1. Verse 10: "Therefore they sent the ark of God to Ekron. And it came to pass, as the ark of God came to Ekron, that the Ekronites cried out, saying, They have brought about the ark of the God of Israel to us, to slay us and our people."
 - a. The men of Ekron soon decided that they did not want the ark in their midst; they sent it on to Ekron, another Philistine city, six miles north of Gath. The Ekronites likewise perceived that the presence of the ark of God was the cause of their calamity.
 - b. “The Ekronites cried out. Convinced by this second and more fatal plague that the ark was the cause of their punishment, the people of Ekron, when it was passed on to them from Gath, protested loudly against its presence. Compelled to receive it until the lords of the Philistines could be convened in council to decide upon its ultimate destination, the plague broke out so heavily among them that they were in utter dismay....In the next verse we learn that many did die, but the words used here describe the mental agony and despair of the people as they saw the ark, which had wrought elsewhere so great misery, brought unto them” (Pulpit Commentary).
 2. Verses 11-12: "So they sent and gathered together all the lords of the Philistines, and said, Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and let it go again to his own place, that it slay us not, and our people: for there

was a deadly destruction throughout all the city; the hand of God was very heavy there. And the men that died not were smitten with the emerods: and the cry of the city went up to heaven."

- a. The lords of the Philistines were convened; the people of Ekron demanded that the ark of Israel's God be returned to its rightful owners, so that the great destruction they were enduring might be ended. The city was terribly smitten so that a great many died; those who survived were afflicted also.
 - b. The cry of these pagans "went up to heaven," however, this does not necessarily mean that their cries were accepted as prayers; it is not likely that these idolaters would be praying to Israel's God. The cries were expressions of pain and fear. God was surely aware of their troubles and cries.
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1 SAMUEL 6

A. 1 Samuel 6:1-9: The Philistines Send the Ark Back to Israel.

1. Verses 1-2: "And the ark of the LORD was in the country of the Philistines seven months. And the Philistines called for the priests and the diviners, saying, What shall we do to the ark of the LORD? tell us wherewith we shall send it to his place."
 - a. The total time the Philistines held the ark of the covenant was seven months. In this relatively short period of time, a large number of their citizens suffered and died due to the scourge God sent.
 - b. The people demanded that the *priests and the diviners* give them a plan by which they could send the ark back to Israel. They had captured something which was too powerful to contain, much like having a tiger by the tail—a ten-year-old boy taking a big, mean goat by the horns!
2. Verses 3-5: "And they said, If ye send away the ark of the God of Israel, send it not empty; but in any wise return him a trespass offering: then ye shall be healed, and it shall be known to you why his hand is not removed from you. Then said they, What *shall be* the trespass offering which we shall return to him? They answered, Five golden emerods, and five golden mice, *according to* the number of the lords of the Philistines: for one plague *was* on you all, and on your lords. Wherefore ye shall make images of your emerods, and images of your mice that mar the land; and ye shall give glory unto the God of Israel: peradventure he will lighten his hand from off you, and from off your gods, and from off your land."
 - a. The counsel given by these *theologians* was to send it back, accompanied by a trespass offering to appease the mighty wrath of Israel's God. They thought that those who were still afflicted with the emerods might be healed; if so, then they would know for sure the cause of the scourge. Not everyone believed that the ark was the cause of the problems, but if the ailments ceased when the ark was returned along with the trespass offering, they would know.
 - b. What should be sent as a proper trespass offering? The answer: five golden emerods and five golden mice. There were five major cities in Philistia, with each having its own great leader; one each of these items was to be sent in the name of each of the five rulers.
 - c. There was one plague, which consisted of the mice and emerods; this may lend credence to the view that the affliction was the bubonic plague.
 - d. By sending this trespass offering, the Philistines would be tendering glory to the God of Israel, with the hope that he would remove his heavy hand from the Philistines, their lands, and their gods. This was a tacit admission of the supremacy of God.
 - e. "The trespass offering was to consist of five golden emerods, and five golden mice, it being an old heathen custom, still constantly practised abroad, of presenting to the deity tokens representing the deliverance wrought for such as had implored his aid. Thus Horace ('Carm.,' 1:5) speaks of the custom of hanging up in the temple of Neptune the clothes in which a man had escaped from shipwreck. Slaves when manumitted offered their chains to the Lares; and the idea is so natural that we cannot wonder at its prevalence" [Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 2001 by BibleSoft].
 - f. Coffman:
 - 1) "So you must make images of your tumors and images of your mice that ravage the land, and give glory to the God of Israel; perhaps he will lighten his hand from off you and your gods and your land. Why should you harden your hearts as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? After he had made sport of them, did not they let the people go, and they departed?"
 - 2) "Now then, take and prepare a new cart and two milch cows upon which there has never come a yoke, and yoke the cows to the cart, but take their calves home, away from them. And take the ark of the Lord and place it on the cart, and put in a box at its side the figures of gold, which you are returning to him as a guilt offering. Then send it off, and let it go its way. And watch; if it goes up on the way to its own land, to Beth-shemesh, then it is he who has done all this great harm; but if not, then we shall know that it is not his hand that struck us; it happened to us by chance."
 - g. Jamieson:

- 1) "This animal is supposed by some to be the jerboa, or jumping mouse of Syria and Egypt (Bochart); by others, to be the short-tailed field-mouse, which often swarms in prodigious numbers, and commits great ravages in the cultivated fields of Palestine. Images of the destroyers were also formed to protect against the thing injuring; just as may be seen in Palestine at the present day, images of the eye to protect against 'the evil eye.' For the same reason, images of emeralds and mice were made by the Philistines and sent with the ark.
 - 2) "Apollonius ('Tyanaeus') is said to have swept off the flies from Antioch and storks from Byzantium by figures (images) of these objects made while certain constellations were in the ascendant. In many cases Pliny ('Maimonides,' translated by Townley, p. 118) notices the images of eagles and beetles carved on emeralds; and Marcellus Empiricus ('Maimonides,' translated by Townley, p. 118) speaks of the virtue of these beetles for diseases of the eye ('Palestine, Past and Present,' p. 261). [Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright © 1997, 2003, 2005, 2006 by Biblesoft, Inc.] .
3. Verse 6: "Wherefore then do ye harden your hearts, as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? when he had wrought wonderfully among them, did they not let the people go, and they departed?"
 - a. Although Israel's departure from Egypt lay more than three centuries in the past, yet the Philistines still recalled the event; it was a fact of history which they did not deny.
 - b. In view of the fact that God had delivered Israel from powerful Egypt by the imposition of plagues, let the Philistines take knowledge of that reality, and thus avoid a similar penalty! They had only felt the blow of one plague; would they be able to sustain nine more?
 - c. The Philistines believed the story of Exodus which reported how God released Israel from Egyptian slavery; they had greater faith in this matter than many modernistic theologians who assert that one cannot believe the Bible until he denies the information given in the Bible!
 4. Verses 7-9: "Now therefore make a new cart, and take two milch kine, on which there hath come no yoke, and tie the kine to the cart, and bring their calves home from them: And take the ark of the LORD, and lay it upon the cart; and put the jewels of gold, which ye return him *for* a trespass offering, in a coffer by the side thereof; and send it away, that it may go. And see, if it goeth up by the way of his own coast to Bethshemesh, *then* he hath done us this great evil: but if not, then we shall know that *it is* not his hand *that* smote us: *it was* a chance *that* happened to us."
 - a. The Philistine priests and diviners further counseled that a new cart was to be provided on which the ark was to be placed; it was to be pulled by two milch cows which had never borne a yoke; the calves belonging to these cows were to remain at home. Placing the trespass offerings on the cart alongside the ark, the cows were to be released and sent on the way.
 - b. The plan was shrewdly devised. No driver was to guide the cows. The only way the cows would take the ark back to Israel was if God guided their journey. Anyone knowing the nature of cows with calves knows that they will do everything within their power to remain near their offspring. To leave their calves behind would be unnatural; for them to follow the right route back to Israel was highly unlikely under any circumstance; and for cows which had never worn a yoke to calmly pull a cart anywhere was beyond expectation.
 - c. But if the cows did the unexpected, and pulled the cart to Bethshemesh, then the Philistines could know with certainty that the God of Israel was behind the operation!
 - d. Keil:
 - 1) "The new cart and the young cows, which had never worn a yoke, corresponded to the holiness of the ark of God. To place it upon an old cart, which had already been used for all kinds of earthly purposes, would have been an offence against the holy thing; and it would have been just the same to yoke to the cart animals that had already been used for drawing, and had had their strength impaired by the yoke (see Deut 21:3).
 - 2) "The reason for selecting cows, however, instead of male oxen, was no doubt to be found in the further object which they hoped to attain. It was certainly to be expected, that if suckling cows,

whose calves had been kept back from them, followed their own instincts, without any drivers, they would not go away, but would come back to their young ones in the stall. And if the very opposite should take place, this would be a sure sign that they were driven and guided by a divine power, and in fact by the God whose ark they were to draw into His own land.

- 3) "From this they would be able to draw the conclusion, that the plagues which had fallen upon the Philistines were also sent by this God. There was no special sagacity in this advice of the priests; it was nothing more than a cleverly devised attempt to put the power of the God of the Israelites to the test, though they thereby unconsciously and against their will furnished the occasion for the living God to display His divine glory before those who did not know Him. [Keil and Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament: New Updated Edition, Electronic Database. Copyright © 1996 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc. All rights reserved].

B. 1 Samuel 6:10-18: The Ark Arrives at Bethshemesh.

1. Verses 10-12: "And the men did so; and took two milch kine, and tied them to the cart, and shut up their calves at home: And they laid the ark of the LORD upon the cart, and the coffer with the mice of gold and the images of their emerods. And the kine took the straight way to the way of Bethshemesh, *and* went along the highway, lowing as they went, and turned not aside *to* the right hand or *to* the left; and the lords of the Philistines went after them unto the border of Bethshemesh."
 - a. The calves were shut up at home, the cows were hitched to the cart, and the cart was loaded. When the cows were released, they proceeded directly along the road to Bethshemesh, lowing as they went. The distance between Ekron and Bethshemesh was about twelve miles.
 - b. They did not turn away to either side, nor did they stop. The Philistine lords followed them to the outskirts of town, thus could give an accurate report of the trip.
 - c. Nothing like this had been done before; God's hand truly was behind the events of the report. It could not be explained logically in any other way.
 - d. How could the historian know the details of the Philistine part of this story? He was inspired.
 - e. Henry:
 - 1) The kine "took the straight way to Beth-shemesh, the next city of the land of Israel, and a priests' city, and turned not aside. This was a wonderful instance of the power of God over the brute-creatures, and, all things considered, no less than a miracle, that cattle unaccustomed to the yoke should draw so even, so orderly, and still go forward,—that, without any driver, they should go from home, to which all tame creatures have a natural inclination, and from their own calves, to which they had a natural affection,—that, without any director, they should go the straight road to Beth-shemesh, a city eight or ten miles off, never miss the way, never turn aside into the fields to feed themselves, nor turn back home to feed their calves.
 - 2) "They went on lowing for their young ones, by which it appeared that they had not forgotten them, but that nature was sensible of the grievance of going from them; the power of the God of nature therefore appeared so much the greater, in overruling one of the strongest instincts of nature. These two kine, says Dr. Lightfoot, knew their owner, their great owner (Isa 1:3), whom Hophni and Phinehas knew not, to which I may add they brought home the ark to shame the stupidity of Israel, that made no attempt to fetch it home.
 - 3) "God's providence is conversant about the motions even of brute-creatures, and serves its own purposes by them. The lords of the Philistines, with a suitable retinue no doubt, went after them, wondering at the power of the God of Israel; and thus those who thought to triumph over the ark were made to go like menial servants after it" [Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible, PC Study Bible Formatted Electronic Database Copyright © 2006 by Biblesoft].
2. Verses 13-14: "And *they of* Bethshemesh *were* reaping their wheat harvest in the valley: and they lifted up their eyes, and saw the ark, and rejoiced to see *it*. And the cart came into the field of Joshua, a Bethshemite, and stood there, where *there was* a great stone: and they clave the wood of the cart, and offered the kine a burnt offering unto the LORD."

- a. "It was in the time of harvest that the ark was restored to Israel. Whilst the cornfields of the Philistines were wasted by an extraordinary plague, the valley of Beth-shemesh was covered with golden grain, and the men of that city were busily occupied in gathering it in (Ruth 1:6). But at the sight of the sacred symbol they left their secular occupation, gathered around it with great joy, and spent the day in 'offering burnt offerings and sacrificing sacrifices to the Lord' (ver. 15). We may regard the harvest as representing material blessings, which are more richly bestowed at this season of the year than any other; the ark as representing spiritual blessings: 'the law which came by Moses,' and 'the grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ;' the throne of grace, and the mercy and grace which are there obtained. And the fact just mentioned suggests a comparison between the former and the latter. Both come from the same hand; but spiritual are superior to material blessings..." [*op cit*].
 - b. Bethshemesh was a Levitical city (Josh. 21:16). The people were reaping in their wheat fields when the ox cart came into view. Naturally, they rejoiced with great happiness when they saw it! Think of their curiosity about how the ark came to be returned.
 - c. The cattle drew the cart to the field of Joshua, a man of the city; they stopped there. Again, only the hand of God could have brought them to that point.
 - d. Nearby, was a great rock. At this point, the men of the city cut up the wooden cart, and offered the cattle as a burnt offering to the Lord. The Philistines had attacked and destroyed Shiloh seven months earlier (1 Sam. 4). It was no longer used as the place of worship.
 - 1) Psalms 78:60-68: "So that he forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent *which* he placed among men; And delivered his strength into captivity, and his glory into the enemy's hand. He gave his people over also unto the sword; and was wroth with his inheritance. The fire consumed their young men; and their maidens were not given to marriage. Their priests fell by the sword; and their widows made no lamentation. Then the Lord awaked as one out of sleep, *and* like a mighty man that shouteth by reason of wine. And he smote his enemies in the hinder parts: he put them to a perpetual reproach. Moreover he refused the tabernacle of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim: But chose the tribe of Judah, the mount Zion which he loved."
 - 2) Jeremiah 7:12: "But go ye now unto my place which *was* in Shiloh, where I set my name at the first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of my people Israel."
 - e. Coffman:
 - 1) "Furthermore, this offering of sacrifices at Beth-shemesh was no offense against the commandment to make sacrifices to the Lord only at the place of his sanctuary. The ark of the covenant was the throne of the gracious presence of God, before whom the sacrifices were offered, even when offered in the tabernacle. Also, another consideration in this connection is that, 'As there was no central sanctuary, the law of Deuteronomy 12:10ff was temporarily suspended, as various Jewish commentators have stated.'
 - 2) "They split up the wood of the cart and offered the cows as a burnt offering to the Lord (1 Samuel 6:14). George DeHoff has a remarkably excellent comment on this: 'Everything connected with the false method of transporting the ark of the covenant was destroyed.' The Lord's instructions for moving the ark were specific; It was to be carried on poles resting upon the shoulders of priests (Deuteronomy 31:9).' Later on in Jewish history, David himself tried to move the ark of the covenant on a new cart; but that also ended in a disaster.
 3. Verses 15-16: "And the Levites took down the ark of the LORD, and the coffer that *was* with it, wherein the jewels of gold *were*, and put *them* on the great stone: and the men of Bethshemesh offered burnt offerings and sacrificed sacrifices the same day unto the LORD. And when the five lords of the Philistines had seen *it*, they returned to Ekron the same day."
 - a. The proper method of transportation for the ark was prescribed to be the use of poles which were passed through the rings attached to the sides of the ark. On arrival at the great stone, everything that was connected with the transportation method designed by the Philistines was destroyed: the wood of the cart was used in the sacrifice of the two cows (verse 14).
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- b. The Levites placed the ark on the great rock; the coffer in which the five golden emerods and mice were stored was also removed from the cart. Burnt offerings and sacrifices were offered by the men of the city. Remember that the city was inhabited by Levites, the priestly tribe. Were these offerings and sacrifices in addition to the offering of verse fourteen? Probably so.
 - c. "The offering of these sacrifices at Bethshemesh was no offence against the commandment, to sacrifice to the Lord at the place of his sanctuary alone. The ark of the covenant was the throne of the gracious presence of God, before which the sacrifices were really offered at the tabernacle" (Keil, p.67).
 - d. The five lords of the Philistines had accompanied the ark far enough to see that it had been received by the Israelites. They returned to Ekron the same day.
4. Verses 17-18: "And these *are* the golden emerods which the Philistines returned *for* a trespass offering unto the LORD; for Ashdod one, for Gaza one, for Askelon one, for Gath one, for Ekron one; And the golden mice, *according to* the number of all the cities of the Philistines *belonging to* the five lords, *both* of fenced cities, and of country villages, even unto the great *stone of* Abel, whereon they set down the ark of the LORD: *which stone remaineth* unto this day in the field of Joshua, the Bethshemite."
- a. We are told in this passage that the five golden emerods were from the five cities of the Philistines.
 - b. At the time of the writing of this history, the great stone remained in the field of Joshua. The ASV omits *of Abel*; the marginal rendering of the KJV agrees.
 - c. "Abel or Aben means 'stone;' so that, without resorting to italics, the reading should be, 'the great stone' [Septuagint, *lithos megalos*]. 'We may understand,' says Taylor, editor of Calmet, 'the passage as implying that the ark was placed on a spare piece of ground, on a rising unproductive (waste) of grain. To this agree the circumstances of the story:—The men of Beth-shemesh were reaping in the grain-fields; they therefore took the ark aside to a place not occupied by growing grain, but where the surface was bare—that is, a rock; and this height, thus sanctified by the reception of the ark, was easily distinguished by future generations, because it formed no part of the cultivated land'" [Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by BibleSoft].
- C. 1 Samuel 6:19-21: The Citizens of Bethshemesh are Punished for Looking into the Ark.
1. Verse 19: "And he smote the men of Bethshemesh, because they had looked into the ark of the LORD, even he smote of the people fifty thousand and threescore and ten men: and the people lamented, because the LORD had smitten *many* of the people with a great slaughter." "Then He struck the men of Beth Shemesh, because they had looked into the ark of the Lord. He struck fifty thousand and seventy men of the people, and the people lamented because the Lord had struck the people with a great slaughter" (NKJ).
 - a. The men of Bethshemesh committed an offense against God in that they *looked into the ark of the Lord*. This was not their prerogative. Later, Uzzah was slain when he touched the ark: "And when they came to Nachon's threshingfloor, Uzzah put forth *his hand* to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen shook *it*. And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for *his error*; and there he died by the ark of God" (2 Sam. 6:6-7).
 - b. In the present instance, God slew 50,070 offenders. We are not told the method of their execution, but the fact of their punishment is certain.
 - c. "Bethshemesh being only a village, this translation *must* be erroneous, and should be, 'he smote fifty out of a thousand,' being only 1,400 in all who indulged this curiosity. God, instead of decimating, according to an ancient usage, slew only a twentieth part—*i.e.*, according to *Josephus*, 70 out of 1,400 (see on Num. 4:18-22)" (JFB, pp.149f).
 - d. The Pulpit Commentary agrees with Jamieson: "We must add that the Hebrew is not fifty thousand and threescore and ten men, but 'seventy men, fifty thousand men,' without any article between, and with the smaller number first, contrary to Hebrew rule. The occasion of the calamity was probably as follows:—As the news of the return of the ark spread from mouth to mouth, the people flocked together to take part in the sacrifice. which would of course be followed by a feast. Heated thereat by

wine, perhaps, and merriment, they lost all sense of reverence, and encouraged one another to look into the ark and examine its contents....

- 1) "Even so the men of Beth-shemesh, as a city of priests, must have known that death was the penalty of unhallowed gazing at holy things (Num 4:20), and it is more than probable that those who were smitten were priests, because in them it would be a heinous sin; for it was a repetition of that contempt for religion and its symbols which had been condemned so sternly in Eli's sons. The mere seeing of the ark was no sin, and had given the people only joy (ver. 13), but as soon as they had received it the priests ought to have covered it with a vail (Num 4:5). To leave it without a vail was neglectful, to pry into it was sacrilege. Because Jehovah had smitten many of the people....
 - 2) "The sudden death even of seventy men in an agricultural district, especially if they were the heads of the priestly families there, would be a great and terrible calamity, enough to fill the whole place with grief" [Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 2001 by BibleSoft].
- e. The figure of 50,070 seems highly unlikely to be the number slain, since Bethshemesh could not be thought of as having nearly that many residents. However, those being highly troubled times, no one today can know how many people might have been in and around the city. How many may have come to this place from the general area, after hearing of the great news about the return of the ark.
- f. Other translations of the text:
- 1) 1 Samuel 6:19: "And he smote of the men of Beth-shemesh, because they had looked into the ark of Jehovah, he smote of the people seventy men, and fifty thousand men; and the people mourned, because Jehovah had smitten the people with a great slaughter" (ASV).
 - 2) 1 Samuel 6:19: "Then He struck the men of Beth Shemesh, because they had looked into the ark of the LORD. He struck fifty thousand and seventy men of the people, and the people lamented because the LORD had struck the people with a great slaughter" (NKJV).
 - 3) 1 Samuel 6:19: "And he smote among the men of Beth-shemesh, because they had looked into the ark of Jehovah, and smote of the people seventy men; and the people lamented, because Jehovah had smitten the people with a great slaughter" (Darby).
 - 4) 1 Samuel 6:19: "And He smiteth among the men of Beth-Shemesh, for they looked into the ark of Jehovah, yea, He smiteth among the people seventy men — fifty chief men; and the people mourn, because Jehovah smote among the people — a great smiting" (Young's Literal Translation).
 - 5) 1 Samuel 6:19: "And he struck some of the men of Beth-shemesh, because they looked upon the ark of the Lord. He struck seventy men of them, and the people mourned because the Lord had struck the people with a great blow" (ESV).
- g. Barnes also takes the loose view of the text: "[Fifty thousand and three score and ten]. Read 'three' score and 'ten', omitting 'fifty thousand', which appears to have crept into the text from the margin. It is not improbable that in their festive rejoicing priests, Levites, and people may have fallen into intemperance, and hence, into presumptuous irreverence (compare Lev 10:1,9). God had just vindicated His own honor against the Philistines; it must now be seen that He would be sanctified in them that come near Him (Lev 10:3). It is obvious to observe how the doctrine of atonement, and its necessity in the case of sinners, is taught in this and similar lessons as to the awesome HOLINESS of God" (Barnes, BibleSoft).
- h. Jamieson opined: "Smote of the people fifty thousand and threescore and ten men. Beth-shemesh being only a village, this translation must be erroneous, and should be, 'he smote fifty out of a thousand,' being only 1,400 in all who indulged this curiosity. God, instead of decimating, according to an ancient usage, slew only a twentieth part - i.e., according to Josephus, 70 out of 1,400 (see the note at Num 4:18-22)" [Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary, BibleSoft].
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2. Verses 20-21: "And the men of Bethshemesh said, Who is able to stand before this holy LORD God? and to whom shall he go up from us? And they sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kirjathjearim, saying, The Philistines have brought again the ark of the LORD; come ye down, *and* fetch it up to you."
 - a. They inquired among themselves, on seeing the punishment God brought to bear upon their neighbors, as to where the ark might be sent. The penalty was due to their violation of the law (cf. Num. 4).
 - b. They sent messengers to the people of Kirjathjearim, reporting the return of the ark, and requesting that they come down to get it. The next verse shows that the request was honored.
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1 SAMUEL 7

A. 1 Samuel 7:1-8: Samuel Intercedes for Israel at Mizpeh.

1. Verses 1-2: "And the men of Kirjathjearim came, and fetched up the ark of the LORD, and brought it into the house of Abinadab in the hill, and sanctified Eleazar his son to keep the ark of the LORD. And it came to pass, while the ark abode in Kirjathjearim, that the time was long; for it was twenty years: and all the house of Israel lamented after the LORD."
 - a. Coffman:
 - 1) "This chapter is not written after the manner of modern dissertations. As a result of the peculiarities that are frequently found in Biblical books, some scholars have great difficulty in reading it. So they regale us with learned talk about editors, redactors, interpolators, and some other things concerning which they have no authentic information whatever! This writer finds the chapter absolutely clear and understandable exactly as it has come down to us...."
 - 2) "'From the day that the ark was lodged at Kiriath-jearim, a long time passed, some twenty years, and all the house of Israel lamented after the Lord.'" This verse has the nature of a parenthesis, the purpose of which is to reveal how long the ark stayed at its new location. Therefore, Caird's allegation that, 'This verse gives the impression that 20 years have elapsed between the return of the ark to Beth-shemesh and the battle about to be described,' is not accurate. Such an impression is made only upon persons who fail to see the parenthetical nature of the verse. This type of writing is often found in Scripture.
 - 3) "In 1Sam. 7:2-4, 1 Samuel 7:13-17, the author does not intend to relate specific events, but to give a panoramic view of high points connected with Samuel." "And all the house of Israel lamented after the Lord" (1 Samuel 7:2). This speaks of the grief and anxiety of Israel following the defeat at Ebenezer, especially of their sorrow that the Lord was not blessing them. 'It means that they sought him with great humility.'"
 - b. Responding to the call from the citizens of Bethshemesh, the men of Kirjathjearim brought the ark of the covenant to their own city. They placed it in the house of Abinadab, setting him apart to keep the sacred ark.
 - c. Kirjathjearim was a city that belonged to Judah (Josh. 18:14). The ark reposed safely at this city for twenty years. The time was actually much longer since it was after David became king that it was moved from Abinadab's house and Saul's reign covered forty years. The twenty years of the text may only bring the reader up to the time of the events next reported by the historian.
 - d. "The occupation of the country about Shiloh by the Philistines (1 Sam 7:3) was partly the reason for the ark being kept so long at Kirjath-jearim. But another reason seems to have been the fall of the Israelites into idolatry, which made them neglect the ark, and brought upon them this Philistine servitude; probably the last 20 years of the Philistine oppression described in Judg 13:1, which is there expressly connected with Israelite idolatry. Now, probably, through the exhortations of Samuel, coupled with the chastening of the Philistine yoke, the Israelites repented and turned again to the God of their fathers" [Barnes' Notes].
 - e. "Israel was in a state of subjection to the Philistines, with its national life crushed to the ground, and its strength wasted by unjust exactions and misrule. For though the Philistines gave up the ark, there was no restoration of the national worship, nor did they abandon the political fruits of their victory at Eben-ezer. But quietly and calmly Samuel was labouring to put all things right. It was the principle of the theocracy that Jehovah punished his subjects for their sins by withdrawing his protection, and that on their repentance he took again his place at their head as their king, and delivered them."
 - 1) "Samuel's whole effort, therefore, was directed to bringing the people to repentance. What means he used we are not told, nor what was his mode of life; but probably it was that of a fugitive, going stealthily from place to place that he might teach and preach, hiding in the caverns in the limestone range of Judaea, emerging thence to visit now one quarter of the country and now another, ever

- in danger, but gradually awakening, not merely those districts which were contiguous to the Philistines, but all Israel to a sense of the greatness of their sins, and the necessity of renewed trust and love to their God. And so a fresh spiritual life sprang up among the people, and with it came the certainty of the restoration of their national independence.
- 2) "All the house of Israel lamented after Jehovah. The word used here is rare, and the versions all differ in their translation of it. Really it is a happy one, embracing the two ideas of sorrow for sin, and also of returning to and gathering themselves round Jehovah. The Syriac alone retains this double meaning, by saying that '**they all cast themselves down after Jehovah,**' i.e. that they sought him with deep humility.
 - 3) "Gradually, then, a change of heart came over the people; but the removal of the ark to a more fit place, and the restoration of Divine service with ministering priests and Levites, could take place only after the Philistine yoke had been broken. From 1 Sam 13:19-22 we learn how vigilant and oppressive that tyranny was; and the heart of the writer, in inditing this verse, was full of sorrow at the thought that the repentance of Israel was so slow and unready, and that therefore it had to wait twenty years before deliverance came" [The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 2001 by BibleSoft].
- f. David transported the ark from Abinadab's house later on, intending to bring it to his own city (2 Sam. 6:1-11; 1 Chron. 13).
- 1) Jerusalem is referred to in these passages as "the city of David" (2 Sam. 5:6-7). Bethlehem is also called "the city of David" because this was the ancestral home of his fathers (Luke 2:4; 1 Sam. 16:1).
 - 2) Alma 7:10, in the *Book of Mormon*, falsely asserts that Christ was to be born in Jerusalem, a plain denial of the sacred text (Mic. 5:2; Luke 2:4).
 - a) Micah 5:2: "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting."
 - b) Luke 2:4: "And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David)."
- g. During the days of Saul, Israel had not inquired at the ark. "And let us bring again the ark of our God to us: for we inquired not at it in the days of Saul" (1 Chron. 13:3).
- h. Despite no plain statement, it appears that Shiloh was destroyed by the Philistines when they defeated the Israelites (1 Sam. 4) and captured the ark. The tabernacle was kept from destruction and capture, for it is later identified as being at Nob (1 Sam. 21:1-6) and at Gibeon (2 Chron. 1:3).
- 1) 1 Samuel 21:1-6: "Then came David to Nob to Ahimelech the priest: and Ahimelech was afraid at the meeting of David, and said unto him, Why art thou alone, and no man with thee? And David said unto Ahimelech the priest, The king hath commanded me a business, and hath said unto me, Let no man know any thing of the business whereabout I send thee, and what I have commanded thee: and I have appointed my servants to such and such a place. Now therefore what is under thine hand? give me five loaves of bread in mine hand, or what there is present. And the priest answered David, and said, There is no common bread under mine hand, but there is hallowed bread; if the young men have kept themselves at least from women. And David answered the priest, and said unto him, Of a truth women have been kept from us about these three days, since I came out, and the vessels of the young men are holy, and the bread is in a manner common, yea, though it were sanctified this day in the vessel. So the priest gave him hallowed bread: for there was no bread there but the shewbread, that was taken from before the LORD, to put hot bread in the day when it was taken away."
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- 2) 2 Chronicles 1:3: "So Solomon, and all the congregation with him, went to the high place that was at Gibeon; for there was the tabernacle of the congregation of God, which Moses the servant of the LORD had made in the wilderness."
2. Verses 3-4: "And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto the LORD with all your hearts, *then* put away the strange gods and Ashtaroath from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the LORD, and serve him only: and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines. Then the children of Israel did put away Baalim and Ashtaroath, and served the LORD only."
- a. Samuel addressed the people with a timely message, calling on them to forsake the false gods they had been serving, and to serve only God. The promise held out before them was the offer of deliverance from the oppression of the Philistines. The Israelites put away their false gods, and turned to the Lord exclusively.
- b. Their history is one of departure from God, punishment for their rebellion, and a return to God. The book of Judges repeats this pattern several times.
3. Verses 5-6: "And Samuel said, Gather all Israel to Mizpeh, and I will pray for you unto the LORD. And they gathered together to Mizpeh, and drew water, and poured *it* out before the LORD, and fasted on that day, and said there, We have sinned against the LORD. And Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpeh."
- a. Mizpeh was situated a few miles north of Jerusalem. Samuel summoned a national gathering at Mizpeh, where he promised to pray to God in their behalf.
- b. They fasted on that day and poured out water before the Lord, confessing their sins against him. The act of pouring out water is an unusual act: this is the only such occasion where it was done by Israel. This was possibly a symbolic act, to be understood as representing their pouring out their hearts in penitence (cf. Kiel, p.72).
- c. Coffman stated that the only other similar instance was when David poured out the water his men had gotten for him to drink. "And David longed, and said, Oh that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, which *is* by the gate! And the three mighty men brake through the host of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well of Bethlehem, that *was* by the gate, and took *it*, and brought *it* to David: nevertheless he would not drink thereof, but poured it out unto the LORD" (2 Sam. 23:15-16).
4. Verses 7-8: "And when the Philistines heard that the children of Israel were gathered together to Mizpeh, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the children of Israel heard *it*, they were afraid of the Philistines. And the children of Israel said to Samuel, Cease not to cry unto the LORD our God for us, that he will save us out of the hand of the Philistines."
- a. The dreaded Philistines learned of the Israelite gathering, and mustered their forces to put down this rebellion against their oppression.
- b. Israel was filled with fear when they heard that the Philistines had marshalled their army. However, they did not flee to their houses in terror, but asked Samuel to keep praying that God would deliver them from their repression.
- B. 1 Samuel 7:9-17: Israel Subdues the Philistines.
1. Verses 9-10: "And Samuel took a sucking lamb, and offered *it for* a burnt offering wholly unto the LORD: and Samuel cried unto the LORD for Israel; and the LORD heard him. And as Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel: but the LORD thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them; and they were smitten before Israel."
- a. Samuel offered a lamb as a burnt offering to the Lord, and accompanied this act of devotion with a fervent prayer, which was heard.
- b. As Samuel was offering this worship to God, the Philistines drew near to attack Israel. God *thundered a great thunder* against the oppressors, discomfiting them before Israel. There is nothing in the verse that demands this to be taken as a figure of speech; evidently God caused some great crashing sound to perplex the enemy, enabling Israel to smite them.
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- c. Verse eleven shows that Israel pursued the fleeing Philistines, smiting them until they came to Bethcar. Josephus alleges that Israel had no weapons with them at Mizpeh, but that is shown to be inaccurate by the fact that they smote the enemy, something that was not likely done with bare hands or stones. They could have obtained weapons from the fleeing Philistines.
- d. Jamieson:
- 1) "Samuel was not a priest, nor of the priestly tribe; yet, as the priesthood lay at that time prostrate, he offered sacrifices, no doubt with the divine sanction: the sacrifices were not offered at the altar of the tabernacle, but at Mizpeh, in that as in other things exempting himself from the law in a troublous and corrupt age (Delitzsch).
 - 2) "This fact will serve to explain several anomalies in the life of Samuel—not only his offering sacrifices, but his wearing an ephod, consecrating kings, and being classed (Ps 99:6) with persons of the priestly order. He was only a Levite, and therefore, by an unalterable statute in the divine law, which guaranteed the priesthood to Aaron's family, incapable of being appointed to the sacerdotal office, as there was probably no need—for Hophni and Phinehas might have sons old enough to enter upon the priestly function. The other acts, such as sacrificing away from the sanctuary, wearing an ephod, and anointing kings, were performed by other commissioned servants of God (Judg 8:27; 1 Sam 6:14; 1 Kings 18:1; 19:16; 2 Kings 9:6); while the association of his name with those of Moses and Aaron, by the Psalmist, is done in a manner that shows him to have been only in the common order of the Levites.
 - 3) "The prophet's prayers and sacrifice were answered by such a tremendous storm of thunder and lightning that the assailants, panic-struck, were disordered, and fled. The Israelites, recognizing the hand of God, rushed courageously on the foe they had so much dreaded, and committed such immense havoc that the Philistines did not recover for long from this disastrous blow. This brilliant victory secured peace and independence to Israel for twenty years, as well as the restitution of the usurped territory. [*op cit*].
2. Verses 11-12: "And the men of Israel went out of Mizpeh, and pursued the Philistines, and smote them, until *they came* under Bethcar. Then Samuel took a stone, and set *it* between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Ebenezer, saying, Hitherto hath the LORD helped us."
- a. God's action put the Philistines into a headlong flight in terror; Israel quickly left Mizpeh in pursuit, killing the enemy as they fled.
 - b. At the site of the victory, between Mizpeh and Shen, Samuel set up a stone memorial which he named *Ebenezer*, which means "The Stone of Help" (margin). The references to this name in 1 Samuel 4:1 and 5:1 were used in anticipation of a place which afterward received special significance. At the time of the events of these two references, Ebenezer had not yet been erected, but the writer, giving his history some years after the events, could identify the place by the later name.
3. Verses 13-14: "So the Philistines were subdued, and they came no more into the coast of Israel: and the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel. And the cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron even unto Gath; and the coasts thereof did Israel deliver out of the hands of the Philistines. And there was peace between Israel and the Amorites."
- a. During the rest of Samuel's life, the Philistines posed no threat to Israel; they did not invade Israel's territory as they had been doing for many years. The hardships inflicted on Israel by these pagans could have been avoided if Israel had remained faithful to God; and they could have been removed much earlier if Israel had only repented. They were their own worst enemies.
 - b. This great victory over Philistia returned into Israel's control a sizeable territory which the Philistines had taken. Those cities lying between Ekron and Gath were restored to Israel, but apparently those two centers of Philistine power were not liberated. Or, the line between Ekron and Gath was the limit of Israel's present conquest.
 - c. The victory gave Israel rest from the Philistines only until the death of Samuel. During the reigns of Saul and David, there were troubles and wars with them.
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4. Verses 15-17: "And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life. And he went from year to year in circuit to Bethel, and Gilgal, and Mizpeh, and judged Israel in all those places. And his return *was* to Ramah; for there *was* his house; and there he judged Israel; and there he built an altar unto the LORD."
- a. Samuel exercised his civil authority as judge all the days of his life, from the time he assembled the nation at Mizpeh. We are not given the length of his rule or his age at death.
 - b. Yearly, Samuel made a circuit which included Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpeh where he conducted his work as judge. He lived at Ramah, and spend the principal part of his time there, with annual visits to the other cities.
 - c. At Ramah, he erected an altar unto the Lord.
 - 1) Deuteronomy 12:5: "But unto the place which the LORD your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put his name there, *even* unto his habitation shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come."
 - 2) Deuteronomy 12:13: "Take heed to thyself that thou offer not thy burnt offerings in every place that thou seest."
 - d. Samuel's altar was not at the prescribed place; it was a deviation which was required by the current chaos in the land, occasioned by the capture of the ark and the removal of the tabernacle from Shiloh. Jamieson thought that the original tabernacle and altar at Shiloh had been destroyed by the enemy. However, it may only be that they were removed and secreted from the invaders. Later passages indicate that the tabernacle which Moses had constructed in the wilderness still survived. "So Solomon, and all the congregation with him, went to the high place that *was* at Gibeon; for there was the tabernacle of the congregation of God, which Moses the servant of the LORD had made in the wilderness. But the ark of God had David brought up from Kirjathjearim to *the place which* David had prepared for it: for he had pitched a tent for it at Jerusalem" (2 Chron. 1:3-4). Could it be that David had made another tabernacle, using the original plan given to Moses?
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1 SAMUEL 8

A. 1 Samuel 8:1-5: Samuel's Sons Rebel.

1. Verses 1-2: "And it came to pass, when Samuel was old, that he made his sons judges over Israel. Now the name of his firstborn was Joel; and the name of his second, Abiah: *they were* judges in Beersheba."
 - a. When Samuel reached old age and was unable to conduct all his work personally, he appointed his two sons to serve as deputies. Since a judge retained that position for life and was still in authority afterwards (verses 3ff), the rule of Samuel and his sons was joint.
 - b. Their names were Joel and Abiah. They conducted their affairs at Beersheba. This is the first mention of the fact that Samuel had any offspring.
 - c. "The devotion of their godly father is evident in the names bestowed upon his sons. Joel means 'The Lord is God,' and Abijah (or Abiah) means 'God is father' The statement here that they performed their judgeship in Beersheba emphasizes the extension of Israel's authority under Samuel to that southern landmark. Josephus states that one of Samuel's sons judged at Bethel, but this presents no difficulty. As Samuel's judgeships were performed at a number of different cities, his sons probably, at one time or another judged at all of them. The narrative here and that of Josephus do not necessarily refer to exactly the same time periods. We receive both accounts as true" (Coffman).
 - d. Jamieson: "Unable, from growing infirmities to prosecute his circuit journeys through the country, he at length confined his magisterial duties to Ramah and its neighbourhood (1 Sam 7:15-17), delegating to his sons as his deputies the administration of justice in the southern districts of Palestine, their provincial court being held at Beer-sheba. He appointed them to this high and responsible office, not like Eli, from the fondness of doating partiality, but, from the careful training they had received under his direction, as well as from the paternal authority and the good example he had set them, he hoped and believed that they would prove faithful and impartial in the execution of their trust. The arrangement was a good one; and, considering the distance of Beer-sheba from Ramah, where Samuel still exercised the office of judge, it might have been expected to conduce to the convenience and comfort of the people. [*op cit*].
 2. Verse 3: "And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment."
 - a. Great men often have mediocre sons. This principle was true with Jacob (except for Joseph), Eli, and Samuel. Eli's sons were corrupt; they brought much evil upon Israel. Jacob's ten older sons were reconciled to Joseph after their experiences in Egypt, but back home, they hated Joseph and dealt with him harshly.
 - b. Samuel's sons had corrupted themselves by taking bribes and perverting judgment. This was a very common problem in later generations, during the period of the divided kingdom.
 - c. If Joel and Abiah had followed the ways of their father, they would have been blessed and the nation would have prospered. "A godly father knows best."
 3. Verses 4-5: "Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah, And said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations."
 - a. The Israelite elders recognized the problem and set about to do something about it. Their solution was extremely faulty. Before one disposes of the dirty bath water, he had better make sure the baby is not still in the tub!
 - b. They clearly and correctly identified the problem: "Your sons do not walk in your ways." Samuel was too advanced in age to superintend the minute details of his sons' activities; perhaps he had good reason to believe they would conduct themselves properly.
 - c. The solution the elders suggested was for Samuel to set up a king to tend to the affairs of state. They reasoned that this system worked for the other nations around them, and that it would surely be a good system for them.
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- 1) They failed to realize that the system of the judges had been inaugurated by the God of heaven; it was the best arrangement. God selected the judges, and used them to rule in Israel. To select a royal system was, therefore, a rejection of God's rule. The judges operated in the military and civil areas.
- 2) The sectarian religious world of our time has developed a one-man pastor rule in local churches; authority to run the affairs of the congregation is vested in this one person. It has some advantages, or so many think, but God's system of having two or more elders (pastors; bishops) is far safer; it is more difficult to corrupt a group of men than to soil one man. Further, a group of wise and experienced elders has much more wisdom than one man, who might be a mere novice.
- 3) Of course, denominations are man-made organizations and operate by their own rules; they can only make weak claims to be serving God. How could they be servants of God when they make up their own rules and disregard, repudiate or pervert God's truth? The following are from ASV:
 - a) 1 Corinthians 4:6: "Now these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes; that in us ye might learn not to go beyond the things which are written; that no one of you be puffed up for the one against the other."
 - b) 2 John 9-11: "Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son. If any one cometh unto you, and bringeth not this teaching, receive him not into your house, and give him no greeting: for he that giveth him greeting partaketh in his evil works."
 - c) Revelation 22:18-19: "I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto them, God shall add unto him the plagues which are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life, and out of the holy city, which are written in this book."
 - d) Luke 6:46: "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"

B. 1 Samuel 8:6-9: Israel Demands a King.

1. Verse 6: "But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the LORD."
 - a. The demand was displeasing to Samuel, but not on account of the evil report concerning his sons. He was a mature man spiritually and in wisdom; he knew that their plan would lead to God's authority being usurped by human kings.
 - b. It had never been God's plan for Israel to have an earthly king.
 - 1) "When thou art come unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein, and shalt say, I will set a king over me, like as all the nations that *are* about me; Thou shalt in any wise set *him* king over thee, whom the LORD thy God shall choose: *one* from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee: thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which *is* not thy brother. But he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses: forasmuch as the LORD hath said unto you, Ye shall henceforth return no more that way. Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away: neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold. And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of *that which is* before the priests the Levites: And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them: That his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, *to* the right hand, or *to* the left: to the end that he may prolong *his* days in his kingdom, he, and his children, in the midst of Israel" (Deut. 17:14-20).

- 2) From the time they demanded and received a king, their fortunes began to fall. God's warnings through Moses and Samuel came to pass, even though they enjoyed great prosperity and success under the rule of David and Solomon.
2. Verse 7: "And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them."
- a. Samuel prayed to the Lord to obtain guidance in this matter. God replied that he was to give them what they demanded. When a man decides what he wants to do, any prayer for guidance is merely perfunctory; he is only going through the motions. Israel was determined to have a king; nothing else would be considered.
 - 1) God told Balaam that he must not go to Balak who had sought him to pronounce a curse upon Israel (Num. 22:12). When the messengers of Balak offered him a reward if he would go, Balaam approached God for guidance.
 - 2) He was told to go: "And they came to Balaam, and said to him, Thus saith Balak the son of Zippor, Let nothing, I pray thee, hinder thee from coming unto me: For I will promote thee unto very great honour, and I will do whatsoever thou sayest unto me: come therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people. And Balaam answered and said unto the servants of Balak, If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the LORD my God, to do less or more. Now therefore, I pray you, tarry ye also here this night, that I may know what the LORD will say unto me more. And God came unto Balaam at night, and said unto him, If the men come to call thee, rise up, and go with them; but yet the word which I shall say unto thee, that shalt thou do. And Balaam rose up in the morning, and saddled his ass, and went with the princes of Moab. And God's anger was kindled because he went: and the angel of the LORD stood in the way for an adversary against him. Now he was riding upon his ass, and his two servants were with him" (Num. 22:16-22).
 - 3) The Lord had already expressed his will; there was no need for Balaam to ask a second time. God merely gave him the opportunity to do what he wanted to do—to his own dismay. When God saw that Balaam was determined to accept Balak's offer, He told him to go ahead—in much the same way a parent may accede to a stubborn child's demands. Some people have to learn hard lessons painfully.
 - 4) God does not have to say a thing more than once to make it binding. When a man decides what he wants to do, God does not override his right to make the choice; however, the man must face the consequences of his decision. Israel decided what they wanted; God allowed them to have their desire.
 - b. God told Samuel that their demand was not merely a rejection of Samuel's authority; it was a rejection of God. This statement shows that it was not God's will that they have a human king. God had known all along that they would make this demand, hence he gave them warning that the king would have to meet with his approval (Deut. 17:14-20); this would ameliorate the evil effects of the plan.
 - c. No one can estimate the amount of suffering and sin this demand had on Israel and the world, directly and indirectly. A seemingly small decision can have disastrous results. Israel's demand was to have a lasting and very harmful effect on the nation.
 - d. The system of government God instituted in the Law of Moses was both civil and religious. Elders were appointed in each tribe to tend to internal matters of a civic nature. A high priest and other priests were to tend to religious affairs, and teach the people God's law. If his arrangement had been followed properly, troubles would have been minimal and prosperity would have been usual.
 - 1) The sins of Samuel's evil sons did not obviate God's system. These miscreants would have been removed from office; their father had the power to attend to this.
 - 2) Pagan nations were not the pattern for God's people to imitate. A nation ruled by a king is only as prosperous, free and safe as the king permits. A wicked king will exert wicked influences. Through the centuries, honest men have turned from sectarian religions to restore New Testament

Christianity. We have been the happy recipients of such a restoration. But in our lifetime, many in the brotherhood have compromised with sectarian errorists, and are trying to lead the Lord's church back into human religions.

3. Verses 8-9: "According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken me, and served other gods, so do they also unto thee. Now therefore hearken unto their voice: howbeit yet protest solemnly unto them, and show them the manner of the king that shall reign over them."
 - a. God shows here that the history of Israel has been one which is spotted by rebellion. He had brought them forth from their Egyptian bondage, but they had turned to other gods. And as they had forsaken God, they also were now rejecting Samuel.
 - b. Men cannot reject one who teaches God's word faithfully without rejecting God. That was true then; it is true today. "He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me" (Luke 10:16).
 - c. Samuel was instructed to show the Israelites what they could expect from their human king. They were to be given a clear warning; if they insisted on the king, their choice would be made in the clear light of what the consequences of their demand would be. In verses ten through eighteen, Samuel spells out the evils of their plan.
- C. 1 Samuel 8:10-18: Samuel Describes the Evils of Having a King.
 1. Verse 10: "And Samuel told all the words of the LORD unto the people that asked of him a king."
 - a. The details the prophet begins to give here are not of his own invention; being a prophet, he was giving them information which God gave him.
 - b. Deuteronomy 18:19-22: "And it shall come to pass, *that* whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require *it* of him. But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die. And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the LORD hath not spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that *is* the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, *but* the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him."
 - c. Ezekiel 3:17-19: "Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked *man* shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul."
 - d. Taxes are a necessary evil of government; to get the benefits of civil order, there is a price to be paid. But the things named in this passage go beyond the price of government; these things represent payment to the king's servants for services they rendered him, as well as to supply the king with the bounties and respect his office demanded.
 2. Verses 11-12: "And he said, This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you: He will take your sons, and appoint *them* for himself, for his chariots, and *to be* his horsemen; and *some* shall run before his chariots. And he will appoint him captains over thousands, and captains over fifties; and *will set them* to ear his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and instruments of his chariots."
 - a. The king would take their sons to serve him in various capacities. He would make some of them serve in his chariot forces; others would be horsemen; some would run before his chariots. An ancient king would have young men to run before his chariot as he traveled, announcing the arrival of his royal personage and to clear the way. The activities included menial tasks as well as dangerous functions. Some scholars have suggested that young men were sometimes used to pull chariots.

- b. Others who were qualified, by the king's good pleasure or by natural talents, would be elevated to serve as captains over the various levels of the military forces.
 - c. Others would be required to till the king's land and reap his harvests for him. Others would make the weapons of war and the equipment for his chariots.
3. Verse 13: "And he will take your daughters *to be* confectionaries, and *to be* cooks, and *to be* bakers."
- a. The daughters of the Israelites would also be required to serve as confectionaries (perfumers), cooks, and bakers.
 - 1) ASV: "And he will take your daughters to be perfumers, and to be cooks, and to be bakers."
 - 2) NKJ: "He will take your daughters to be perfumers, cooks, and bakers."
 - b. Pulpit Commentary: Confectionaries. Rather, "perfumers," makers of ointments and scents, of which Orientals are excessively fond. It is remarkable that Samuel does not mention the far worse use to which Solomon put their daughters (1 Kings 11:3), and to a less extent David and some other kings.
 - c. Henry:
 - 1) He must keep a great table; he will not be content to dine with his neighbours upon a sacrifice, as Samuel used to do (ch. 9:13); but he must have a variety of dainty dishes, forced meats, and sweet-meats, and delicate sauces; and who must prepare him these? "Why, he will take your daughters, the most ingenious and handy of them, whom you hoped to prefer to houses and tables of their own; and, whether you be willing or no, they must be his confectioners, and cooks, and bakers, and the like."
 - 2) "He must needs have a standing army, for guards and garrisons; and your sons, instead of being elders of your cities, and living in quiet and honour at home, must be captains over thousands and captains over fifties, and must be disposed of at the pleasure of the sovereign."
 - 3) "You may expect that he will have great favourites, whom, having dignified and ennobled, he must enrich, and give them estates suitable to their honour; and which way can he do that, but out of your inheritances?"
4. Verses 14-15: "And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your oliveyards, *even the best of them*, and give *them* to his servants. And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his officers, and to his servants."
- a. The king would confiscate their fields, vineyards, and oliveyards, and give them to his servants. His authority would be unlimited by human power, thus he could do anything he chose to do, and there would be nothing the people could do to prevent it. Our nation today [2021] appears to be on the brink of such thievery.
 - b. He would take ten percent of their seed and the produce of their vineyards, and give these to his servants. These levies would be official, backed by the power of his administration. To resist was to fight the authority of the state—backed by the military forces. Military leaders in our nation have been corrupted to the will of the Statists who control our nation.
5. Verses 16-17: "And he will take your menservants, and your maidservants, and your goodliest young men, and your asses, and put *them* to his work. He will take the tenth of your sheep: and ye shall be his servants."
- a. The king would appropriate the servants who served the citizens, as well as their beasts of burden, and put them to his own service.
 - b. Their flocks would not avoid the king's attention; he would take ten percent of them for his own use. The citizens themselves would be servants to the king, required to do his bidding without their desires in the matter being considered. Notice, this ten percent was for the king; another ten percent was to be paid for the upkeep of religion.
6. Verse 18: "And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen you; and the LORD will not hear you in that day."
- a. When it was too late to effect a change, they would realize their foolishness. They would cry out to the Lord for help, but his ear would not hear.
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- b. God gave Noah's generation ample information, time, and opportunity to avoid the destruction of the flood. For a century, Noah told them what was to come. They refused to take heed and had to take the penalty. The same would be true for Israel.
 - 1) Genesis 6:3: "And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also *is* flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years."
 - 2) 2 Peter 2:5: "And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth *person*, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly."
 - c. We have here a case of the leaders of one generation making a decision that would bear evil effects on future generations. In the nineteenth century, modernists in Germany sought to destroy confidence people had in the Bible; because they met with success in this evil work, the nation suffered two of the greatest defeats ever to fall upon any nation in history (the two world wars). Also, the unbelief they fostered spread around the earth, to afflict many "Christian" nations.
 - d. As the Bible's influence on the people weakened, morality plummeted. A similar problem is seen in America today.
 - e. Which kings were being described? Some were far more wicked than others; some were godly; but none was without fault. Even David committed adultery and murder. Solomon married pagan princesses by the hundred; he even became an idolater.
 - 1) God did not want Israel to have a king; it was only after they had rebelled against God in their minds that they demanded a king. God acquiesced to their demands—and they paid the penalty.
 - 2) Hosea 13:10-11: "I will be thy king: where *is any other* that may save thee in all thy cities? and thy judges of whom thou saidst, Give me a king and princes? I gave thee a king in mine anger, and took *him* away in my wrath."
- D. 1 Samuel 8:19-22: Israel Insists on a King.
1. Verses 19-20: "Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay; but we will have a king over us; That we also may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles."
 - a. The people would not take the warning Samuel issued. Despite the plain and emphatic descriptions of what would happen, they still demanded a king. Their hearts' desire was to be like the heathen nations around them.
 - b. The glitter of the world kept them from beholding the evils lying underneath the facade. They also failed to take into consideration the great blessings they had which no other nation possessed. Their God was the only True and Living God; their Law was the Word of Almighty God; their promises were upheld by the unlimited power of heaven. "Blessed *is* the nation whose God *is* the LORD; *and* the people *whom* he hath chosen for his own inheritance" (Ps. 33:12).
 - c. They could only envision a powerful king who would take their best interests to heart, who would rule over them with consideration, who would judge them fairly, who would lead them gently, and who would fight their battles for them. It seems that these leaders did not want to accept the responsibility that fell to them.
 2. Verses 21-22: "And Samuel heard all the words of the people, and he rehearsed them in the ears of the LORD. And the LORD said to Samuel, Hearken unto their voice, and make them a king. And Samuel said unto the men of Israel, Go ye every man unto his city."
 - a. Samuel returned to the Lord to deliver their reply to his message. Of course, there was no need for the prophet to inform God of the proceedings; he knew full well what their response would be before the conversation; and he knew what they had said.
 - 1) Hebrews 4:13: "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things *are* naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do."
 - 2) Proverbs 15:3: "The eyes of the LORD *are* in every place, beholding the evil and the good."
 - b. Samuel approached the Lord to learn what the Lord's response would now be. God's instruction to Samuel was to give them what they demanded.
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- c. In preparation for the selection and anointing process, Samuel instructed the Israelites to return to their homes.
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1 SAMUEL 9

A. 1 Samuel 9:1-10: Saul, Son of Kish.

1. Verses 1-2: "Now there was a man of Benjamin, whose name *was* Kish, the son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Bechorath, the son of Aphiah, a Benjamite, a mighty man of power. And he had a son, whose name *was* Saul, a choice young man, and a goodly: and *there was* not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he: from his shoulders and upward *he was* higher than any of the people."
 - a. We are first introduced to Saul's father, Kish. His forebears included Abiel, Zeror, Bechorath, and Aphiah.
 - 1) 1 Chronicles 8:33 (and 9:39) reports that Ner begot Kish; in the text, Abiel is listed as the father of Kish. This can be satisfactorily explained by assuming that one or more generations are omitted from one of the accounts. Jesus is said to be the son of David, but the meaning is that David was his ancestor, not that David literally begot Jesus (Matt. 1:1).
 - 2) Kish is described as a *mighty man of power*, suggesting that he was wealthy and influential, perhaps further implying military prowess and strength.
 - b. Saul, next introduced, is described as a goodly person, that he was head and shoulders taller than any of the people. One goodly trait he had at this point in his life was humility: "When he had caused the tribe of Benjamin to come near by their families, the family of Matri was taken, and Saul the son of Kish was taken: and when they sought him, he could not be found. Therefore they enquired of the LORD further, if the man should yet come thither. And the LORD answered, Behold, he hath hid himself among the stuff. And they ran and fetched him thence: and when he stood among the people, he was higher than any of the people from his shoulders and upward" (1 Sam. 10:21-23).
 - 1) The text states that he was a choice young man, evidently denoting that he was handsome. He was a young man only in a relative sense, for he had a son (Jonathan) who was already grown (1 Sam. 13:1-2). We should not be surprised if Saul was about 40 years of age at this time.
 - 2) Saul was a large man, standing head and shoulders above his fellowcitizens. Being handsome, tall, and strong, he had the physical traits to commend himself to Israel as a leader of men. "And Samuel said to all the people, See ye him whom the LORD hath chosen, that *there is* none like him among all the people? And all the people shouted, and said, God save the king" (1 Sam. 10:24). Size, strength, and comeliness were especially desirable in ancient kings, who often personally led their armies on the battlefield.
 - c. The choice of Saul to be their first king was based on sound logic. He had the physical qualifications to serve in that capacity, but he was not of the two leading tribes: Judah and Ephraim. To have been from one or the other might have added to the greatness of that tribe, perhaps precipitating ill-timed animosity between these two populous clans. Instead, Saul was from Benjamin, the smallest of the tribes. The tribe of Benjamin had almost been annihilated in a civil war (Judg. 19-21).
 2. Verses 3-5: "And the asses of Kish Saul's father were lost. And Kish said to Saul his son, Take now one of the servants with thee, and arise, go seek the asses. And he passed through mount Ephraim, and passed through the land of Shalisha, but they found *them* not: then they passed through the land of Shalim, and *there they were* not: and he passed through the land of the Benjamites, but they found *them* not. *And* when they were come to the land of Zuph, Saul said to his servant that *was* with him, Come, and let us return; lest my father leave *caring* for the asses, and take thought for us."
 - a. "What a marvel is this! God used a search for lost donkeys to bring the divine designate face to face with the prophet Samuel..." (Coffman, p.101). Israel had demanded a king; their future king was in search of lost donkeys when he met the prophet who anointed him to be king. Their demand for a king was fulfilled in the man who was seeking for donkeys!
 - b. In those times, the father was highly respected and held as a patriarch by his family. Saul seems to have remained closely connected with his father in their work. Following the instructions given him by Kish, Saul took a servant and went far afield in search of some donkeys which were lost.
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- c. Saul and the servant searched in the territory of Ephraim, in the land of Shalisha and Shalim, and on through the land of Benjamin, and came to the land of Zuph. Some of these places are unknown to us, but obviously a wide search was conducted, without locating the missing animals.
 - d. Saul decided to return home lest his father should have greater anxiety over the safety of his son than over the lost donkeys. *Take thought* in the KJV means "to be anxious" about something. Matthew six uses this expression to describe anxiety (6:25-34).
3. Verses 6-7: "And he said unto him, Behold now, *there is* in this city a man of God, and *he is* an honourable man; all that he saith cometh surely to pass: now let us go thither; peradventure he can show us our way that we should go. Then said Saul to his servant, But, behold, *if* we go, what shall we bring the man? for the bread is spent in our vessels, and *there is* not a present to bring to the man of God: what have we?"
- a. The servant told Saul about the presence in the nearby city of a certain seer (prophet), an honorable man whose predictions did not fail to come to pass. He suggested that they talk with the prophet and perhaps learn from him the whereabouts of the lost animals. Why was it that the servant knew about the prophet and Saul did not? It might have been that Saul knew about him, but did not think about making an inquiry of him. Common people are usually more aware of such things than those of a higher station in life. Compare: "David therefore himself calleth him Lord; and whence is he then his son? And the common people heard him gladly" (Mark 12:37).
 - b. Saul realized that they did not have any food to bring to the prophet, without which he did not expect to get him to reveal to him anything. He had no idea of what had already been done behind the scenes, to bring Saul into the presence of the prophet Samuel! He was innocently searching for donkeys, but God was guiding the events.
4. Verses 8-10: "And the servant answered Saul again, and said, Behold, I have here at hand the fourth part of a shekel of silver: *that* will I give to the man of God, to tell us our way. (Beforetime in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, thus he spake, Come, and let us go to the seer: for *he that is* now *called* a Prophet was beforetime called a Seer.) Then said Saul to his servant, Well said; come, let us go. So they went unto the city where the man of God *was*."
- a. The servant had a fourth of a silver shekel which he offered to Saul for the seer. Parenthetically, the historian noted that *seer* was the term then used in reference to one who was presently called a *prophet*.
 - b. The offer pleased Saul, who complimented the servant for his generous offer. They entered the city. To this point we are not told who the prophet was or the name of the city. We learn in verse fourteen that it was the prophet Samuel; earlier information has shown us that Samuel resided in the city of Ramah. Hence, both the prophet and the city are identified.
- B. 1 Samuel 9:11-14: Saul Meets Samuel.
1. Verses 11-10: "And as they went up the hill to the city, they found young maidens going out to draw water, and said unto them, Is the seer here? And they answered them, and said, He is; behold, *he is* before you: make haste now, for he came to day to the city; for *there is* a sacrifice of the people to day in the high place."
 - a. Ramah was situated on a hill. As they made their way up to the city, they met a group of young girls who were going out to draw water. They inquired of these maidens whether the seer was in town.
 - b. They reported that the seer had only that day arrived in the city, and that he was to offer a sacrifice in the high place; if Saul hastened, he could get there in time for the event. From other chapters, we have learned about the feasts that followed certain sacrifices. Such a feast was in the offing now.
 2. Verses 13-14: "As soon as ye be come into the city, ye shall straightway find him, before he go up to the high place to eat: for the people will not eat until he come, because he doth bless the sacrifice; *and* afterwards they eat that be bidden. Now therefore get you up; for about this time ye shall find him. And they went up into the city: *and* when they were come into the city, behold, Samuel came out against them, for to go up to the high place."
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- a. The girls, probably impressed by Saul's comeliness and size, urged him to hurry into the city so he could find Samuel before he went to the high place. Certain ones were invited to eat with Samuel. There was a chance that Saul might be given an invitation.
- b. As Saul and his servant entered the city, God's providence had so timed the events that Samuel came out and met them as he went forth to the high place.
- c. God's providence is able to do many wonderful things, of which we are mostly unaware. Joseph was led to the second highest position in Egypt by it; Esther arose to a queenly throne in Persia by means of it. Our prayers are able to tap the great resources of his providence. "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen" (Eph. 3:20-21).

C. 1 Samuel 9:15-24: Saul Eats With Samuel.

1. Verses 15-16: "Now the LORD had told Samuel in his ear a day before Saul came, saying, To morrow about this time I will send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin, and thou shalt anoint him *to be* captain over my people Israel, that he may save my people out of the hand of the Philistines: for I have looked upon my people, because their cry is come unto me."
 - a. Samuel had received a message from the Lord the day before, in which he was told that a man from Benjamin would come to him about that same time the next day. God knew what he was doing! Even though Saul and Samuel retained their individual power of choice, God was able to bring the two of them together at a certain time as if they had themselves agreed on a time to meet.
 - b. Samuel was instructed in the message God gave him to anoint Saul to be captain over Israel; it was his plan to deliver his people from the oppression of the Philistines by means of Saul. We should remember the earlier statement that said the Philistines did not enter Israel's territory during the rest of Samuel's life (7:13). They still occupied several cities in Palestine, and remained a problem to Israel, a problem which Saul was to be instrumental in removing. In some way, the Philistines were still oppressing them, and the cries of the people had come before God.
 - c. Jamieson: "The description of Saul, the time of his arrival, and the high office to which he was destined, had been secretly to Samuel from heaven. The future king of Israel was to fight the battles of the Lord, and protect His people. It would appear that they were at this time suffering great molestation from the Philistines, and that this was an additional reason of their urgent demands for the appointment of a king (see the note at 1 Sam 10:5 1 Sam 13:13).
 - d. Coffman: So there was nothing whatever "accidental" about Saul's arrival before Samuel. The providence of God foretold it and then brought it to pass.
 - 1) "The Lord told Samuel" (1 Samuel 9:15). God, having created the universe and everything within it, might have communicated this information to Samuel in several different ways; but exactly how he did so is not revealed. As DeHoff said, "In view of the fact that men have almost unlimited means of communication, it is a little ridiculous for critics to argue about how God communicated with Samuel." [15]
 - 2) "The Lord revealed to Samuel" (1 Samuel 9:15). "The Hebrew words from which this statement comes is literally, had uncovered his ear, a figure of speech said to be derived from the practice of one's pushing aside another's hair or the corner of his turban to whisper something in his ear." [16]
2. Verses 17-18: "And when Samuel saw Saul, the LORD said unto him, Behold the man whom I spake to thee of! this same shall reign over my people. Then Saul drew near to Samuel in the gate, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, where the seer's house *is*."
 - a. Saul had never met Samuel, and seeing a man he did not know, he inquired the location of the "seer's house."
 - b. As Saul drew near to Samuel to make this inquiry, God told Samuel that this was the man he had told him of the previous day. This was the man whom God had selected to reign over Israel.

- c. Barnes: These words are not very easily reconcileable with 1 Sam 7:13. It is possible that the aggressive movements of the Philistines, after the long cessation indicated by 1 Sam 7:13, coupled with Samuel's old age and consequent inability to lead them to victory as before, were among the chief causes which led to the cry for a king. If this were so the Philistine oppression glanced at in this verse might in a general survey be rather connected with Saul's times than with Samuel's.
3. Verses 19-20: "And Samuel answered Saul, and said, I *am* the seer: go up before me unto the high place; for ye shall eat with me to day, and to morrow I will let thee go, and will tell thee all that *is* in thine heart. And as for thine asses that were lost three days ago, set not thy mind on them; for they are found. And on whom *is* all the desire of Israel? *Is it* not on thee, and on all thy father's house?"
- a. Samuel identified himself to Saul, and told him to go up to the high place, and that he would eat with him at the feast. He was to stay with the prophet until the next day.
- b. With nothing having been said in their conversation about the subject, Samuel told him that the lost animals that had been gone for three days, had now been found; he was not to be troubled with that problem any longer.
- c. Directing his attention to something of greater moment, Samuel showed him that the desire of all the nation was on Saul and on his father's house. Saul had not been announced publicly as God's choice for king, but the nation had fully set its collective heart on having a king; Saul knew about this, but neither he nor the nation had had any inkling of the new king's identity. Samuel was telling Saul in these words that he was the man.
4. Verse 21: "And Saul answered and said, *Am* not I a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? wherefore then speakest thou so to me?"
- a. Although Samuel's words may seem somewhat obscure, Saul understood their import: he knew that Samuel was telling him that he was to be the new king of Israel.
- b. This knowledge immediately led to Saul's disavowal of his rightness for the position. He stated that his was a member of the tribe of Benjamin, the smallest tribe of Israel, and that his family was an unimportant part of that small tribe. We have no reason to doubt his sincerity; we have evidence he was sincere in the fact that on the day he was brought before the nation, he tried to hide himself (10:21-23).
- c. Saul's response reminds us of Gideon's statement when he was selected to deliver Israel from the Midianites and Amalekites: "And he said unto him, Oh my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family *is* poor in Manasseh, and I *am* the least in my father's house" (Judg. 6:15). Real humility is the way to raise oneself in the esteem of the Almighty.
- 1) Matthew 23:12: "And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted."
- 2) Luke 14:11: "For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."
- 3) Luke 18:14: "I tell you, this man went down to his house justified *rather* than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."
- 4) Psalm 34:18: "The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit."
- 5) Psalm 51:17: "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."
- 6) Isaiah 57:15: "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."
5. Verses 22-24: "And Samuel took Saul and his servant, and brought them into the parlour, and made them sit in the chiefest place among them that were bidden, which *were* about thirty persons. And Samuel said unto the cook, Bring the portion which I gave thee, of which I said unto thee, Set it by thee. And the cook took up the shoulder, and *that* which *was* upon it, and set *it* before Saul. And *Samuel* said, Behold that
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which is left! set *it* before thee, *and* eat: for unto this time hath it been kept for thee since I said, I have invited the people. So Saul did eat with Samuel that day."

- a. Since it is unlikely that Samuel would have a house at any place other than at his hometown of Ramah, the location of these events is undoubtedly there. Samuel brought Saul and his servant into his parlor, and gave them the best seats among those who had been invited to eat with him; there were about thirty guests.
- b. The *parlour* is identified as *the guest-chamber* in the ASV: "And Samuel took Saul and his servant, and brought them into the guest-chamber, and made them sit in the chiefest place among them that were bidden, who were about thirty persons" (ASV).
- c. The shoulder was the portion of the sacrificial animal that was reserved for the priests. Samuel gave directions that this share be placed before Saul. The prophet called his attention to the fact that this portion had been reserved (see margin) for Saul, and invited him to partake. The shoulder rightfully belonged to Samuel, but he graciously gave it to Saul.

D. 1 Samuel 9:25-27: Samuel Communes with Saul.

1. Verse 25: "And when they were come down from the high place into the city, *Samuel* communed with Saul upon the top of the house."
 - a. The next verse shows that Saul spent the night with the prophet, but before retiring, they communed on the top of the house. The houses in Palestine had flat roofs. This furnished a convenient and cool place for entertaining guests in the evening.
 - b. No details are given concerning their conversation, but doubtless included was specific information about his selection as king, as well as instructions on his responsibilities to God and the nation.
 2. Verses 26-27: "And they arose early: and it came to pass about the spring of the day, that Samuel called Saul to the top of the house, saying, Up, that I may send thee away. And Saul arose, and they went out both of them, he and Samuel, abroad. *And* as they were going down to the end of the city, Samuel said to Saul, Bid the servant pass on before us, (and he passed on,) but stand thou still a while, that I may show thee the word of God."
 - a. Early the next morning, about sunrise, they arose. Samuel called Saul to the top of the house again, and they both went out. It is likely that Samuel was following the age-old custom of "bringing the guest on his way," that is, to travel a little ways with the departing guest.
 - b. As they came to the outskirts of the city, Samuel asked Saul to send the servant on ahead, so that the prophet could reveal to him the word of God. There was some information which God had revealed to Samuel which he needed to pass on to the man who was to be king. Also, as we learn in the next chapter, Saul was to receive a private anointing from the prophet before being introduced to Israel.
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1 SAMUEL 10

A. 1 Samuel 10:1-8: Samuel Anoints Saul and Gives Instructions to Him.

1. Verse 1: "Then Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured *it* upon his head, and kissed him, and said, *Is it not because the LORD hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance?*"
 - a. In a private ceremony, Samuel took a vial of oil and poured it upon Saul's head, and kissed him. In this simple but profound act, Saul was given assurance that he was indeed God's choice to serve as king. The very act of anointing was highly significant and special; it would not have been done by the prophet without it being an official, meaningful act.
 - b. Making a plain statement to that effect, Samuel stated by a rhetorical question that this anointing truly meant that God had anointed Saul to be captain over his people.
 2. Verse 2: "When thou art departed from me to day, then thou shalt find two men by Rachel's sepulchre in the border of Benjamin at Zelzah; and they will say unto thee, The asses which thou wentest to seek are found: and, lo, thy father hath left the care of the asses, and sorroweth for you, saying, What shall I do for my son?"
 - a. As further proof that Saul had been chosen by the Lord to be king, Samuel told him that he would meet two men by Rachel's tomb, who would tell him that the lost donkeys had been found, and that Kish had left off worrying about the animals, and now was concerned about Saul.
 - b. This specific information could only have been known by Samuel through revelation. How could Samuel have known about the two men, what they would say to Saul, and that Kish was worried about his son, except by divine revelation? This would convince Saul that he really was to be king of Israel.
 - c. In the New Testament, miraculous acts were done for the principal purpose of confirming the spoken word of the inspired spokesmen. Christ stated to a certain palsied man that his sins were forgiven, which caused consternation in the hearts of the Jews who heard it. In order to prove to them that he had authority to forgive sins, he miraculously healed the invalid man. "But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house. And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion" (Mark 2:10-12).
 3. Verses 3-4: "Then shalt thou go on forward from thence, and thou shalt come to the plain of Tabor, and there shall meet thee three men going up to God to Bethel, one carrying three kids, and another carrying three loaves of bread, and another carrying a bottle of wine: And they will salute thee, and give thee two loaves of bread; which thou shalt receive of their hands."
 - a. There were other signs which Samuel reported to Saul. When he came to the plain of Tabor, he would meet three men who were enroute to Bethel; one would have three kids, another three loaves of bread, and the third would have a bottle of wine. These men would salute Saul, and give him two loaves of bread, which he was to take.
 - b. Again, these details could only have been known by Samuel ahead of time by divine revelation. The obvious purpose of his telling these things to Saul was to convince him of the truth which Samuel had told him that he was God's choice to be king.
 - c. Coffman: This was a providential supply of provisions for Saul and his servant, because they had already exhausted their food supply (1 Samuel 9:7). There were two things indicated by this gift of bread which evidently had been intended as a sacrifice at Bethel. (1) It was a token of the tribute which all Israel would pay to their king, and (2) it indicated that, "Henceforth Saul would share with the sanctuary the offerings of the people."
 4. Verse 5-6: "After that thou shalt come to the hill of God, where *is* the garrison of the Philistines: and it shall come to pass, when thou art come thither to the city, that thou shalt meet a company of prophets coming down from the high place with a psaltery, and a tabret, and a pipe, and a harp, before them; and
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they shall prophesy: And the spirit of the LORD will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man."

- a. As Saul continued his journey home, he would meet a company of prophets coming down from the high place at *the hill of God*. This place is said by some scholars to be Gibeah, Saul's hometown.
- b. The prophets would have instruments of music, specifically a psaltery, a tabret, a pipe, and a harp; and they would prophesy. Again, Samuel could know this only by inspiration.
- c. But further, when Saul met this company of prophets, the spirit of the Lord would come upon him, causing him to prophesy, and become a different man. "This would follow upon the coming of the Spirit of God mightily upon Saul. Just as Samson was endowed with supernatural strength, so Saul was endowed with all of the qualities that fitted him to be king of Israel, a mighty leader of armies, and a ruler who would rule Israel for forty years" (Coffman, p.115).
- d. The spiritual gift that Saul received on the occasion would not keep him from committing sin any more than the gift David was given (2 Sam. 23:1-2) kept him from violations of God's will. Even the apostles of Christ were not immune to sin (1 John 1:7-10; Gal. 2:11-14).
 - 1) 2 Samuel 23:1-2: "Now these *be* the last words of David. David the son of Jesse said, and the man *who was* raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel, said, The spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word *was* in my tongue."
 - 2) Galatians 2:11-14: "But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before *them* all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?"
 - 3) 1 John 1:7-10: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."
 - 4) David greatly erred in the episode involving Bathsheba and Uriah (2 Sam. 11-12). Inspiration insured accuracy in the message delivered; inspiration did not make the individual to be perfect in life. The prophet and apostle had to apply the word of God to their own lives, just as does everyone else.
- e. He was a different man in the sense that he could now prophesy (at least on this occasion). Also, he would now know he was to be king, which would give him greater hope and confidence.
- f. Saul performed a prophetic work in prophesying.
 - 1) A prophet's "most essential characteristic is that they were instruments of revealing God's will to man, as in other ways, so specially by predicting future events, and in particular foretelling the incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ and the redemption effected by him. We have a series of prophecies which are so applicable to the person and earthly life of Jesus Christ as to be thereby shown to have been designed to apply to him. And if they were designed to apply to him, prophetic prediction is proved. Objections have, been urged. We notice only one, vis., vagueness. It has been said that the prophecies are too darkly and vaguely worded to be proved predictive by the events which they are alleged to foretell" (Smith's Bible Dictionary, PC Study Bible formatted electronic database Copyright © 2003, 2006 by Biblesoft).
 - 2) The revelation made through a prophet might relate to some past event, to some current issue, or to some future matter. We are not told the subject of Saul's prophesy.

5. Verse 7: "And let it be, when these signs are come unto thee, *that* thou do as occasion serve thee; for God *is* with thee."
 - a. Plainly declaring that the foregoing experiences which Samuel had foretold were signs, the prophet affirms that these signs were proof that God was with Saul, and that he could do whatever an occasion required. This statement was intended to give him the encouragement and confidence to wield the scepter of the kingdom as he ought.
 - b. It was incumbent upon Saul to maintain obedience to the Law of God. The fact that he was enabled to prophesy (at least in this instance) did not of itself insure his personal faithfulness to Jehovah.
 6. Verse 8: "And thou shalt go down before me to Gilgal; and, behold, I will come down unto thee, to offer burnt offerings, *and* to sacrifice sacrifices of peace offerings: seven days shalt thou tarry, till I come to thee, and show thee what thou shalt do."
 - a. "This, according to *Josephus*, was to be a standing rule for the observance of Saul while the prophet and he lived, that in every great crisis, as a hostile incursion on the country, he should repair to Gilgal, where he was to remain seven days, to afford time for the tribes on both sides Jordan to assemble, and Samuel to reach it" (JFB, p.157).
 - b. Gilgal was situated on the east side of Jericho, just west of Jordan (Josh. 4:19-20). No mention is made in the context of Samuel and Saul meeting at Gilgal. It may be, therefore, that Josephus is correct, and that this was a plan for future reference, in times of national crises. Such a meeting is reported in 1 Samuel 15:12-13: "And when Samuel rose early to meet Saul in the morning, it was told Samuel, saying, Saul came to Carmel, and, behold, he set him up a place, and is gone about, and passed on, and gone down to Gilgal. And Samuel came to Saul...."
 - 1) 1 Samuel 11:12-15: "And the people said unto Samuel, Who *is* he that said, Shall Saul reign over us? bring the men, that we may put them to death. And Saul said, There shall not a man be put to death this day: for to day the LORD hath wrought salvation in Israel. Then said Samuel to the people, Come, and let us go to Gilgal, and renew the kingdom there. And all the people went to Gilgal; and there they made Saul king before the LORD in Gilgal; and there they sacrificed sacrifices of peace offerings before the LORD; and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly."
 - 2) 1 Samuel 13:8-10: "And he tarried seven days, according to the set time that Samuel *had appointed*: but Samuel came not to Gilgal; and the people were scattered from him. And Saul said, Bring hither a burnt offering to me, and peace offerings. And he offered the burnt offering. And it came to pass, that as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came; and Saul went out to meet him, that he might salute him."
- B. 1 Samuel 10:9-13: The Spirit of God Comes Upon Saul.
1. Verse 9: "And it was *so*, that when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, God gave him another heart: and all those signs came to pass that day."
 - a. In what sense did God give him this different heart? And how was it done? Whatever the meaning, Saul's power to choose was not ignored. If God rebuilt Saul's heart in such a way that it became impossible for that man to err, then why did he err (1 Sam. 15)? If God miraculously changed his heart to bring him into harmony with God's standard for moral and spiritual purity, why does he not do the same for us? And why did Saul subsequently try to kill David?
 - b. Whatever the meaning, it does not teach that God miraculously changed Saul's heart to make him become a child of God. He was already a child of God by virtue of his physical birth into the nation of Israel.
 - c. The text teaches that God's activities in preparing and convincing Saul to take the throne in Israel brought about a change in Saul's disposition. He did not believe that he was qualified for the work, and was, up until the signs were presented, unconvinced that God intended for him to become king. There was no miraculous operation on his heart to save him or give him ascendancy over temptation.
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- d. The signs that Samuel had predicted took place that very day, just as he had foretold them. It was after Saul had departed for Samuel that the events of the verse occurred. From that day forward, Saul believed that God had indeed selected him to be king. However, his natural shyness overcame him on the day of his presentation to Israel (10:21-23).
 - e. When Saul met the company of priests (verse ten), the spirit of God came upon him, and he began to prophesy; this was something entirely new; it made him into a prophet, at least for a short time.
2. Verses 10-11: "And when they came thither to the hill, behold, a company of prophets met him; and the spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them. And it came to pass, when all that knew him beforetime saw that, behold, he prophesied among the prophets, then the people said one to another, What *is* this *that* is come unto the son of Kish? *Is* Saul also among the prophets?"
- a. The text does not report the fulfillment of the first two signs in detail; it only states in verse nine that all of the signs came to pass. In this passage, we are told of his meeting the company of prophets, and his prophesying among them.
 - b. As Saul continued his journey, he came to the hill mentioned in verse five. He there met a company of priests, descending from the high place of the city. It was then that the spirit of God came upon him and he began to prophesy. This is the only way anyone ever could prophesy. A prophet was one who spoke for God, which required supernatural power to reveal the message to the prophet and control his presentation of the revelation.
 - 1) 2 Samuel 23:2: "The spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word *was* in my tongue."
 - 2) Acts 1:16: "Men *and* brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus."
 - 3) Nehemiah 9:20,30: "Thou gavest also thy good spirit to instruct them, and withheldest not thy manna from their mouth, and gavest them water for their thirst....Yet many years didst thou forbear them, and testifiedst against them by thy spirit in thy prophets: yet would they not give ear: therefore gavest thou them into the hand of the people of the lands."
 - 4) Acts 2:1-4: "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."
 - c. The people of that place, which evidently was Saul's hometown of Gibeah, were astonished at the sight of this young man in the midst of the prophets. "How could this be?"
 - d. Coffman: "Is Saul among the prophets?" (1 Samuel 10:12). Some scholars view the remarks of the citizens of Saul's home town as complimentary, and they might well have been so intended. However, it seems to this writer that there is pure derision and bitter criticism in what they said. The key to this impression is that question asked by one of the men of that place, "And who is their father"? This is a sneering remark carrying the implication that the band of prophets was a group of nobodies and that Saul, the son of a wealthy and respectable citizen had lowered himself socially by associating with them. Payne received the same impression. "The twin proverbs were plainly discourteous to Saul. What was he, a respectable citizen, doing in the presence of these roaming madmen of unknown and dubious antecedents"?
 - e. Keil:
 - 1) The third sign is the only one which is minutely described, because this caused a great sensation at Gibeah, Saul's home. "And they (Saul and his attendant) came thither to Gibeah." "Thither" points back to "thither to the city" in v. 5, and is defined by the further expression "to Gibeah" (Eng. version, "to the hill:" Tr.)....
 - 2) When those who had known Saul of old saw that he prophesied with the prophets, the people said one to another, "What has happened to the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?" This
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expression presupposes that Saul's previous life was altogether different from that of the disciples of the prophets.

3. Verse 12: "And one of the same place answered and said, But who *is* their father? Therefore it became a proverb, *Is* Saul also among the prophets?"
 - a. Others of that place inquired, "But who is their father?" Coffman suggests that this question was raised in derision (p.117). However, it is more likely that it was asked out of an honest desire to know.
 - b. The question he sought to know, "Have they the prophetic spirit by virtue of their birth? Understood in this way, the retort forms a very appropriate 'answer' to the expression of surprise and the inquiry, how it came to pass that Saul was among the prophets. If those prophets had not obtained the gift of prophecy by inheritance, but as a free gift of the Lord, it was equally possible for the Lord to communicate the same gift to Saul" (Keil, pp.104f).
 - c. The question ["Is Saul among the prophets?"] became a proverb, "a proverb which was used to express astonishment at the appearance of any man in a sphere of life which had hitherto been altogether strange to him" (Keil, p.105).
 - d. "The meaning rather must be, You ask about the son of Kish; but what has birth to do with prophecy? None of these young men have inherited these gifts, and if Saul can take part in their prophesyings, why should he not? Kish, his father, is no worse than theirs. Is Saul also among the prophets? Under very different circumstances Saul once again took part in the exercises of these youthful prophets (1 Sam 19:24), and evidently on both occasions with such skill and success as prove the readiness of his genius; and so struck were the people at the strange power which he thus evinced, that their expression of wonder became fixed in the national mind as a proverb. Saul was a man of great natural ability, and yet not the sort of person whom the people expected would be made king. He probably could neither read nor write, and from his extreme height was perhaps awkward and bashful; as he suffered afterwards from fits of insanity (1 Sam 16:14), he may always have been flighty and wilful; and altogether, though possessed of marvellous gifts, was certainly the very opposite of Samuel's well trained and orderly scholars" [Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 2001 by Biblesoft].
 4. Verse 13: "And when he had made an end of prophesying, he came to the high place."
 - a. We are not told what the information was that came through Saul's prophesying, or for how long he was among the prophets. From verse nine, we conclude that the entire event took place in one day.
 - b. That his prophesying was not *ecstatic utterances* is obvious from the fact that there is no such practice in the Bible.
 - 1) The so-called "tongue-speaking" practiced by the modern day Pentecostals and others grows out of misdirected emotions which are aroused to a fever pitch by highly agitated circumstances.
 - 2) God never acted or spoke without some proper result to be obtained; he never did anything that was meaningless. *Ecstatic utterance* would have no logical or proper end to be accomplished.
 - c. When this experience was concluded, Saul came to a certain high place where he met with his uncle (verse fourteen).
- C. 1 Samuel 10:14-16: Saul Talks with his Uncle.
1. Verse 14: "And Saul's uncle said unto him and to his servant, Whither went ye? And he said, To seek the asses: and when we saw that *they were* no where, we came to Samuel."
 - a. Saul's uncle asked him where he had been. He had been gone four days. He had searched for the animals for three days, and the present day had been spent on the return home from Samuel.
 - b. Saul told his uncle that he had been searching for the lost donkeys, and having no success, he and his servant went to ask Samuel for assistance.
 2. Verses 15-16: "And Saul's uncle said, Tell me, I pray thee, what Samuel said unto you. And Saul said unto his uncle, He told us plainly that the asses were found. But of the matter of the kingdom, whereof Samuel spake, he told him not."
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- a. The uncle was interested to hear what Samuel had told him. Saul stated that the prophet had told them that the animals had been found.
- b. Saul understood that he ought not report the information about his being chosen to be king. The secret anointing he received, with even his servant being sent on ahead, showed him that great care must be exercised in announcing him to the nation. He was not being deceitful by omitting this information. It would have caused unnecessary trouble if it had been revealed prematurely.

D. 1 Samuel 10:17-25: Samuel Presents Saul to Israel.

1. Verses 17-19: "And Samuel called the people together unto the LORD to Mizpeh; And said unto the children of Israel, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I brought up Israel out of Egypt, and delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all kingdoms, *and* of them that oppressed you: And ye have this day rejected your God, who himself saved you out of all your adversities and your tribulations; and ye have said unto him, *Nay*, but set a king over us. Now therefore present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes, and by your thousands."
 - a. Mizpeh had been the site where Samuel had prayed to God, and obtained his help in defeating the Philistines (1 Sam. 7:3-14). It was to this place that Samuel called on Israel to assemble. At their earlier gathering, in 1 Samuel 8:10-22, the people had been dismissed to their own cities, until such time that the details for selecting a king could be accomplished. The Israelites would be aware that the present gathering was to fulfill their demand for a king.
 - b. Before entering into the primary cause for the assembly, Samuel issued a warning to them regarding their demand. He reminded them that God had graciously delivered their forbears from Egyptian bondage and from the oppression that other kingdoms had brought upon them. Despite all his kind dealings with them, they had rejected God by their demand for a human king. This strong warning gave them a last chance to change their minds, but they were fully set to have a king.
 - c. Samuel directed them to present themselves before the Lord by tribal divisions. We are not told whether the women and children were present.
2. Verses 20-21: "And when Samuel had caused all the tribes of Israel to come near, the tribe of Benjamin was taken. When he had caused the tribe of Benjamin to come near by their families, the family of Matri was taken, and Saul the son of Kish was taken: and when they sought him, he could not be found."
 - a. God had already revealed to Samuel the identity of the man he wanted to be king. The man (Saul) had been informed of the choice. The selection process now to be entered was for the purpose of identifying Saul to the nation. If Samuel had simply announced the choice without any public process of selection, the people would likely have rebelled, thinking that the prophet was trying to impose upon them a man they should not accept.
 - b. The mechanics of the selection process are not revealed. Perhaps each tribe was brought to a position near to Samuel, and thus near to the Lord. It may be that lots were cast to pick out the tribe; or it may be that the Urim and Thummim were used to enable Samuel to show which tribe God chose [see the article at the end of this chapter for some information about the Urim and Thummim]. Whatever the method, it was by such a means as to convince the people that God did the selecting.
 - 1) Exodus 28:30: "And thou shalt put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim; and they shall be upon Aaron's heart, when he goeth in before the LORD: and Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart before the LORD continually."
 - 2) Numbers 27:21: "And he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall ask *counsel* for him after the judgment of Urim before the LORD: at his word shall they go out, and at his word they shall come in, *both* he, and all the children of Israel with him, even all the congregation."
 - 3) Proverbs 16:33: "The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof *is* of the LORD."
 - c. The tribe of Benjamin was selected as the tribe from which the king was to be chosen. The Family of Matri was chosen, and Saul the son of Kish was then selected from that family. However, Saul could not be found!

3. Verses 22-23: "Therefore they inquired of the LORD further, if the man should yet come thither. And the LORD answered, Behold, he hath hid himself among the stuff. And they ran and fetched him thence: and when he stood among the people, he was higher than any of the people from his shoulders and upward."
 - a. Since Saul was not present, further inquiry was made of the Lord, seeking to know whether Saul was still the choice or whether they should look for another man.
 - b. In response, the Lord reported that Saul had hidden himself in the midst of the *stuff*. The Israelites had assembled from the farthest reaches of their country, and perhaps came prepared to stay at Mizpeh for several days. This would require a sizeable amount of baggage. Among this collection of tents, equipment, and supplies, Saul had concealed himself.
 - c. Perhaps spontaneously, certain ones ran to get him and bring him to Samuel. They were impressed with Saul's stature, for he stood head and shoulders above the others.
4. Verse 24: "And Samuel said to all the people, See ye him whom the LORD hath chosen, that *there is* none like him among all the people? And all the people shouted, and said, God save the king."
 - a. The prophet presented Saul to the people, describing the young man as the one "whom the Lord hath chosen," one who has no peer among the nation. God retained all legislative power, and committed only limited civil authority to the king. It is clear from the statement that God intended to remain on his throne.
 - b. The people responded with a great shout, "God save the king." This expression is also found in 2 Samuel 16:16, 2 Kings 11:17, and 2 Chronicles 23:11. Our text is the origination of the expression, which is a prominent phrase in Great Britain, and has had its counterparts in other monarchies. The statement expresses the desire that God would preserve and help the king.
5. Verse 25: "Then Samuel told the people the manner of the kingdom, and wrote *it* in a book, and laid *it* up before the LORD. And Samuel sent all the people away, every man to his house."
 - a. "In the midst of the national enthusiasm, however, the prophet's deep piety and genuine patriotism took care to explain 'the manner of the kingdom'—*i.e.*, the royal rights and privileges, together with the limitations to which they were to be subjected; and in order that the constitution might be ratified with all due solemnity, the charter of this constitutional monarch was recorded and laid up "before the Lord"—*i.e.*, deposited in the custody of the priests, along with the most sacred archives of the nation" (JFB, p.158). The ultimate fate of this book is unrevealed. Perhaps it was destroyed by later kings who did not wish to be hampered by its restrictions and requirements.
 - b. Being a prophet, Samuel could receive, present, and record God's will on this matter. The details of the subject were presented to the people, and duly recorded and stored for future use. God had spoken on the subject in Deuteronomy 17:14ff.
 - c. The purpose for the assembly having been accomplished, Samuel dismissed the people to return to their homes.

E. 1 Samuel 10:26-27: Saul Returns Home.

1. Verse 26: "And Saul also went home to Gibeah; and there went with him a band of men, whose hearts God had touched."
 - a. Saul returned to his home at Gibeah. Excavations on the site have revealed a two-story house which was likely used by Saul; it had at least one tower, possibly one at each corner (Coffman, p.122).
 - b. A company of men accompanied him, serving as a sort of royal escort. In some unexplained way, God had influenced these men. The influence of his word could have developed in the hearts of these individuals this dedication to the new king.
 2. Verse 27: "But the children of Belial said, How shall this man save us? And they despised him, and brought him no presents. But he held his peace."
 - a. As usually is the case, there was another group who had derided the belief that Saul could deliver them from their enemies. These people are styled "the children of Belial."
 - b. They despised Saul, and expressed their hatred by their words and by a refusal to give him presents, an act of respect which others readily extended. Saul did not respond to the hatred of his enemies.
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Urim and Thummim

(See HIGH PRIEST and EPHOD). Meaning lights and perfections. The article "the" before each shows their distinctness. In Deut 33:8 the order is reversed "thy Thummim and thy Urim." Urim is alone in Num 27:21; 1 Sam 28:6 Saul is answered neither by dreams nor by Urim. Thummim is never by itself. Inside the high priest's breastplate were placed the Urim and Thummim when he went in before the Lord (Ex 28:15-30; Lev 8:8). Mentioned as already familiar to Moses and the people. Joshua, when desiring counsel to guide Israel, was to "stand before Eleazar the priest, who should ask it for him after the judgment of Urim before Jehovah" (Num 27:21). Levi's glory was "thy Thummim and thy Urim are with thy Holy One," i.e. with Levi as representing, the whole priestly and Levitical stock sprung from him (Deut 33:8-9). In Ezra 2:63 finally those who could not prove their priestly descent were excluded from the priesthood "till there should stand up a priest with Urim and Thummim." The teraphim apparently were in Hos 3:4; Judg 17:5; 18:14,20,30, the unlawful substitute for Urim (compare 1 Sam 15:23 "idolatry," Hebrew teraphim; and 2 Kings 23:24, margin). Speaker's Commentary thinks that lots were the mode of consultation, as in Acts 1:26; Prov 16:33. More probably stones with Jehovah's name and attributes, "lights" and "perfections," engraven on them were folded within the ephod....The Urim and Thummim were distinct from the 12 stones, and were placed within the folds of the double choshen....Never after David are the ephod and its Urim and Thummim and breastplate used in consulting Jehovah. Abiathar is the last priest who uses it (1 Sam 23:6-9; 28:6; 2 Sam 21:1). The higher revelation by prophets superseded the Urim and Thummim...). [Fausset's Bible Dictionary, Electronic Database Copyright (c)1998 by BibleSoft].

When the Jewish exiles were met on their return from Babylon by a question which they had no data for answering, they agreed to postpone the settlement of the difficulty till there should rise up "a priest with Urim and Thummim." Ezra 2:63; Neh 7:65. The inquiry what those Urim and Thummim themselves were seems likely to wait as long for a final and satisfying answer. On every side we meet with confessions of ignorance. Urim means "light," and Thummim "perfection." Scriptural statements. — The mysterious words meet us for the first time, as if they needed no explanation, in the description of the high Priest's apparel. Over the ephod there is to be a "breastplate of judgment" of gold, scarlet, purple and fine linen, folded square and doubled, a "span" in length and width. In it are to be set four rows of precious stones, each stone with the name of a tribe of Israel engraved on it, that Aaron "may bear them on his heart." Then comes a further order. In side the breastplate, as the tables of the covenant were placed inside the ark, Ex 25:16; 28:30, are to be placed "the Urim and the Thummim," the light and the perfection; and they too are to be on Aaron's heart when he goes in before the Lord. Ex 28:15-30. Not a word describes them. They are mentioned as things—already familiar both to Moses and the people, connected naturally with the functions of the high priest as mediating between Jehovah and his people. The command is fulfilled. Lev 8:8. They pass from Aaron to Eleazar with the sacred ephod and other pontificalia. Num 20:28. When Joshua is solemnly appointed to succeed the great hero-law-giver he is bidden to stand before Eleazar, the priest, "who shall ask counsel for him after the judgment of Urim," and this counsel is to determine the movements of the host of Israel. Num 27:21. In the blessings of Moses they appear as the crowning glory of the tribe of Levi: "thy Thummim and thy Urim are with thy Holy One." Deut 33:8,9. In what way the Urim and Thummim were consulted is quite uncertain. Josephus and the rabbins supposed that the stones gave out the oracular answer by preternatural illumination; but it seems to be far simpler and more in agreement with the different accounts of inquiries made by Urim and Thummim, 1 Sam 14:3,18,19; 23:2,4,9,11,12; 28:6; Judg 20:28; 2 Sam 5:23, etc., to suppose that the answer was given simply by the word of the Lord to the high priest comp. John 11:51, when, clothed with the ephod and the breastplate, he had inquired of the Lord. Such a view agrees with the true notion of the breastplate. [Smith's Bible Dictionary, PC Study Bible].

1 SAMUEL 11

A. 1 Samuel 11:1-3: The Attack of Nahash the Ammonite.

1. Verse 1: "Then Nahash the Ammonite came up, and encamped against Jabeshgilead: and all the men of Jabesh said unto Nahash, Make a covenant with us, and we will serve thee."
 - a. Saul had not as yet taken the reins of government, but returned to his place at Gibeah. Nahash the Ammonite invaded, putting the new king to his first real test. He attacked Jabeshgilead.
 - b. "The Ammonites had long claimed the right of original possession in Gilead. Though repressed by Jephthah (Judg. 11:33), they now, after ninety years, renew their pretensions..." (JFB, p.159).
 - c. The inhabitants sought to establish a treaty with Nahash, agreeing to serve him if he would consent to a peace.
2. Verse 2: "And Nahash the Ammonite answered them, On this *condition* will I make a *covenant* with you, that I may thrust out all your right eyes, and lay it *for* a reproach upon all Israel."
 - a. Nahash gave a harsh condition: they had to agree to let him gouge out their right eyes, which action he would use as a reproach to the whole nation of Israel.
 - b. This severe punishment would be less than death. The national shame would be equally cruel. He had the upper hand and thus thought he could set whatever conditions he pleased. His purpose was to insult Israel and challenge their new king to oppose him.
 - c. Jamieson: "This barbarous mutilation is the usual punishment of usurpers in the East-inflicted on chiefs; sometimes also, even in modern history, on the whole male population of a town. Nahash meant to keep the Jabeshites useful as tributaries, whence he did not wish to render them wholly blind, but only to deprive them of their right eye, which would disqualify them for war. Besides, his object was, through the people of Jabesh-gilead, to insult the Israelite nation. "
3. Verse 3: "And the elders of Jabesh said unto him, Give us seven days' respite, that we may send messengers unto all the coasts of Israel: and then, if *there be* no man to save us, we will come out to thee."
 - a. The elders of Jabesh requested seven days in which to try to locate someone who would attempt their deliverance. If no one was found, they would come out to him, and submit to his conditions.
 - b. "The elders who govern the town know nothing of a king having been appointed, nor do they send to Samuel to ask him, as the judge, to protect them; but they request a seven days' respite, that they may send messengers unto all the coasts of Israel, and Nahash, feeling sure that no combined action would be the result, grants their request, that so Israel far and wide might know of his triumph" (Pulpit Commentary).

B. 1 Samuel 11:4-11: Saul's Reaction to the Invasion.

1. Verses 4-5: "Then came the messengers to Gibeah of Saul, and told the tidings in the ears of the people: and all the people lifted up their voices, and wept. And, behold, Saul came after the herd out of the field; and Saul said, What *aieth* the people that they weep? And they told him the tidings of the men of Jabesh."
 - a. The messengers came to Gibeah where Saul was situated, and reported the news to the people of the nation. The Israelites wailed in despair.
 - b. Saul was in the field, working with or tending to the herd. The ASV says that he came out of the field behind the oxen, indicating that he had been working with them. Learning of the development, Saul was incensed against Nahash.
 - c. "Among other places the messengers came to Gibeah of Saul, where they make no appeal to him, but tell their sad tidings in the ears of all the people. Powerless to help, they can only weep; but in the midst of their lamentation Saul came after the herd (Hebrew, following the oxen) out of the field. Saul was not driving a herd of cattle home, but had been ploughing, and, labour being over, was returning with the team of oxen" (*ibid*).
 2. Verses 6-8: "And the spirit of God came upon Saul when he heard those tidings, and his anger was kindled greatly. And he took a yoke of oxen, and hewed them in pieces, and sent *them* throughout all the coasts of Israel by the hands of messengers, saying, Whosoever cometh not forth after Saul and after
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Samuel, so shall it be done unto his oxen. And the fear of the LORD fell on the people, and they came out with one consent. And when he numbered them in Bezek, the children of Israel were three hundred thousand, and the men of Judah thirty thousand."

- a. His coming under the influence of the Holy Spirit, led him to do what follows. He cut a yoke of oxen into pieces, and sent these portions of flesh throughout Israel. The oral message attending the grisly presents affirmed that those who did not rally in support of Saul and Samuel would have done to them what had been done to the oxen.
- b. The reaction on the part of the Israelites was that which was intended. Their fear of the Lord was such that they responded with one consent to the call to arms. In Judges 19, the body of the slain concubine was cut into pieces, and sent out as a call to arms; it met with success also.
- c. When the nation's fighters assembled at Bezek, there were three hundred thousand from Israel, and thirty thousand from Judah. This represented only about half of the number of soldiers the nation could put in the field during Moses' time. "So were all those that were numbered of the children of Israel, by the house of their fathers, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war in Israel; Even all they that were numbered were six hundred thousand and three thousand and five hundred and fifty" (Num. 1:45-46).
- d. Keil:
 - 1) He took a yoke of oxen, cut them in pieces, and sent (the pieces) into every possession of Israel by messengers, and said, "Whoever cometh not forth after Saul and Samuel, so shall it be done unto his oxen." The introduction of Samuel's name after that of Saul, is a proof that Saul even as king still recognised the authority which Samuel possessed in Israel as the prophet of Jehovah. This symbolical act, like the cutting up of the woman in Judg 19:29, made a deep impression.
 - 2) "The fear of Jehovah fell upon the people, so that they went out as one man." By "the fear of Jehovah" we are not to understand[fear] for Jehovah is not equivalent to Elohim, nor the fear of Jehovah in the sense of fear of His punishment, but a fear inspired by Jehovah. In Saul's energetic appeal the people discerned the power of Jehovah, which inspired them with fear, and impelled them to immediate obedience.
 - 3) Saul held a muster of the people of war, who had gathered together at (or near) Bezek, a place which was situated, according to the Onom. (s. v. Bezek), about seven hours to the north of Nabulus towards Beisan (see at Judg 1:4). The number assembled were 300,000 men of Israel, and 30,000 of Judah. These numbers will not appear too large, if we bear in mind that the allusion is not to a regular army, but that Saul had summoned all the people to a general levy. In the distinction drawn between the children of Judah and the children of Israel we may already discern a trace of that separation of Judah from the rest of the tribes, which eventually led to a formal secession on the part of the latter.
3. Verse 9-10: "And they said unto the messengers that came, Thus shall ye say unto the men of Jabeshgilead, To morrow, by *that time* the sun be hot, ye shall have help. And the messengers came and showed *it* to the men of Jabesh; and they were glad. Therefore the men of Jabesh said, To morrow we will come out unto you, and ye shall do with us all that seemeth good unto you."
 - a. Saul sent word back to Jabesh that by the time the sun got hot the next day, he would be there with sufficient forces to deal with Nahash.
 - b. Getting this good news, they told Nahash that they would come out of the city by the time the sun got hot the next day, to submit to his demands. This information would convince Nahash that they had been unable to find any support from their brethren.
4. Verse 11: "And it was *so* on the morrow, that Saul put the people in three companies; and they came into the midst of the host in the morning watch, and slew the Ammonites until the heat of the day: and it came to pass, that they which remained were scattered, so that two of them were not left together."
 - a. Saul approached the city and, dividing his forces into three companies, he attacked the Ammonites during the morning watch. The morning watch was between three and six o'clock. By the time the sun

had heated the earth, many of the invaders had been slain and the rest put to flight. So great was the victory, that two Ammonites were not left together.

- b. The people of Jabesh-gilead did not forget this deliverance. Later, when Saul was slain in the war with the Philistines, they rescued his body. "And when the inhabitants of Jabeshgilead heard of that which the Philistines had done to Saul; All the valiant men arose, and went all night, and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Bethshan, and came to Jabesh, and burnt them there. And they took their bones, and buried *them* under a tree at Jabesh, and fasted seven days" (1 Sam. 31:11-13).
- c. Jamieson: "On the morrow ... Saul put the people in three companies — and marched them down the same pass by which Joshua had penetrated into the interior of the country. Crossing the Jordan — probably by the upper ford opposite Wady Yabes, which comes down from the east into the Jordan opposite Beisan (Beth-shan) — in the evening, Saul marched his army all night, according to Josephus ('Antiquities,' b. vi., ch. v., sec. 3), 30 furlongs, and came by daybreak on the camp of the Ammonites, who were surprised in three different parts, and totally routed. This happened before the seven days' truce expired. Josephus adds that they made a great slaughter—Nahash, the Ammonite sheikh, being among the number of the slain-and pursued the fugitives in a complete rout across the desert."

C. 1 Samuel 11:12-15: Saul Accepted as King.

1. Verse 12: "And the people said unto Samuel, Who *is* he that said, Shall Saul reign over us? bring the men, that we may put them to death."
 - a. The people of Israel were enthralled with their new king. Seeking to exalt him before the entire nation, they asked for those who had opposed Saul, intending to put them to death.
 - b. To this point, Saul had shown himself to be the kind of man that God wanted. He had demonstrated great humility, had submitted to the guidance God gave him through the Spirit, and had courageously battled the Ammonites.
 - c. Israel was now firmly behind him. If he had only remained under the control of God's will, he would have gone down in history as one of the nation's best kings.
 2. Verse 13: "And Saul said, There shall not a man be put to death this day: for to day the LORD hath wrought salvation in Israel."
 - a. Again, Saul showed his greatness. This time, he denied his supporters the right to put any of his Israelite opponents to death. He added magnanimity to his courage, piety, and humility. So far, Saul had not manifested any defect of character.
 - b. He rightly understood that the Lord had been behind his great victory, and to put his opponents to death would have been to gloat. He would not destroy his enemies after God had graciously given him the triumph.
 - c. Jamieson: "The enthusiastic admiration of the people, under the impulse of grateful and generous feelings, would have dealt summary vengeance on the minority who opposed Saul, had not he, either from principle or policy, shown himself as great in clemency as in valour. The calm and sagacious counsel of Samuel directed the popular feelings into a right channel, by appointing a general assembly of the militia, the really effective force of the nation, at Gilgal, where, amid great pomp and religious solemnities, the victorious leader was confirmed in his kingdom."
 3. Verses 14-15: "Then said Samuel to the people, Come, and let us go to Gilgal, and renew the kingdom there. And all the people went to Gilgal; and there they made Saul king before the LORD in Gilgal; and there they sacrificed sacrifices of peace offerings before the LORD; and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly."
 - a. Samuel invited the people to go with him to Gilgal and renew the kingdom there. In what way the renewal was to be made we are not told. There had been a rift after the events at Mizpeh (10:17ff). Following the recent victory, the means for healing the rift and establishing Saul's reign was given.
 - b. It was on this occasion that Saul became king of Israel in the real sense. The national morale was at one of its peaks. All was well; Israel was united; success was presently theirs.
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c. Jamieson:

- 1) "Peace offerings could be offered only at the sanctuary (see the note at 1 Sam 13:9 2 Sam 24:25). On the occasion of the election of a king, there was a general convention of the nation through its representatives.
 - 2) "It was a solemn festival of the people, and it is probable that the tabernacle was at hand; because, since it was moveable, and in point of fact had many temporary stations (Josh 18:1; 24:25-26; 1 Sam 1:9; 7:2; 15:24; 21; 1 Chron 21:29); and, moreover, as David in his disastrous flight was accompanied by the ark (see the note at Josh 24:1 2 Sam 15:24), it is probable that the tabernacle had its place in later times at the official abode of the chief magistrate; and consequently that Gilgal was in all probability chosen as the scene of Saul's inauguration, and the place of peace (i.e., federal) offerings, in consequence of the tabernacle being there (see 'Israel after the Flesh,' p. 147). 'The late period at which the regal form of government was established in Israel is an evidence of the divine origin of the law, which in a certain degree provides for it, yet disapproves of and restrains it.
 - 3) "It was not unproductive of advantage to the permanent interests of religion that this great change was delayed by Providence until the Mosaic law had subsisted long enough to prove that its first establishment had not originated in any human policy, and that its subsequent support was independent of any human power' (Graves, ii., pp. 161, 162)."
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1 SAMUEL 12

A. 1 Samuel 12:1-5: Samuel Affirms his Innocence Before Israel.

1. Verses 1-2: "And Samuel said unto all Israel, Behold, I have hearkened unto your voice in all that ye said unto me, and have made a king over you. And now, behold, the king walketh before you: and I am old and grayheaded; and, behold, my sons *are* with you: and I have walked before you from my childhood unto this day."
 - a. This speech by Samuel amounts to his resignation as judge over Israel. He still retained his position as prophet, and it was by this prophetic office that he now spoke. Samuel was now old and gray; he had walked before Israel since his childhood, and his sons were still in the midst of the nation.
 - b. First, he states that he had listened to their demands for a king and had supplied one for them. He is not taking credit for the operation, but is stating the fact that he had a hand in bringing Saul to the throne; in verse thirteen, he affirmed that it was God who appointed and empowered the king. It was Israel who had demanded the king; they now had the desire of their heart; their king now walked before them.
 - c. Coffman:
 - 1) Some have called this, 'Samuel's Farewell Address,'[1] but that is an error. Samuel by no means retired from his ministry of guiding Israel into the new system of government, as subsequent chapters of First Samuel abundantly prove. "This speech has a defense of Samuel's administrative leadership, which he is now relinquishing to Saul; but he is not laying down his priestly functions nor his office as the first of the great prophets of God after Moses."
 - 2) The placement of this chapter is exactly correct, the events reported happening very probably, as admitted by many scholars, upon the occasion at Gilgal when Saul was finally actually acclaimed King of Israel. The fact of this address by Samuel coming just here strongly indicates, as we pointed out earlier, that there were three definite phases in the process of making Saul king, culminating in his popular acceptance at Gilgal.
 - 3) "There are several particulars in this chapter which assume a knowledge of what was presented in previous chapters or point forward to events in subsequent chapters, indicating that 1 Samuel 12 cannot be isolated from surrounding material."
2. Verse 3: "Behold, here I *am*: witness against me before the LORD, and before his anointed: whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I received *any* bribe to blind mine eyes therewith? and I will restore it you."
 - a. In tendering his resignation from the judgeship, the prophet calls on the people to testify against him before the Lord and the new king if they had found any fault in his work.
 - b. He asked them to identify any case in which he had taken for his own any man's ox or ass, defrauded or oppressed anyone, or taken a bribe from anyone to pervert justice. If such a case could be found, Samuel vowed to restore it.
 - c. The prophet had so conducted himself as judge that he could confidently make this offer. He is not claiming sinless perfection, but knows that he has discharged his duties in an upright and unblamable manner. Christ could make such a claim without reservation: "Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?" (John 8:46).
 - d. "The venerable judge, in resigning his magisterial authority, challenged the most minute inquiry into every act of his administration. He called upon any one who had ever brought a cause for decision before him, to state whether he felt that injustice had been done him, or any abuse had been committed of the public interests confided to his care. Standing in an open assembly, he took God to witness that his hands were pure, and that uprightness and integrity had guided the whole course of his official life" (JFB, pp.160f).

3. Verses 4-5: “And they said, Thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken ought of any man's hand. And he said unto them, The LORD *is* witness against you, and his anointed is witness this day, that ye have not found ought in my hand. And they answered, *He is* witness.”
 - a. The Israelites answered honestly: Samuel had not defrauded, oppressed, or taken a bribe from any man. They did not fully comprehend the consequences of their demand for a king. Only time and future events would reveal the dire results of their insistence on the change in government.
 - b. By this “declaration which the people had made concerning Samuel’s judicial labours they had condemned themselves, inasmuch as they had thereby acknowledged on oath that there was no ground for their dissatisfaction with Samuel’s administration, and consequently no well-founded reason for their request for a king” (Keil, p.116).
 - c. “By their own acknowledgment, he had given them no cause to weary of the Divine government by judges, and that, therefore, the blame of desiring a change of government rested with themselves” (JFB, p.161).

B. 1 Samuel 12:6-15: Samuel Rehearses God’s Dealings With Israel Through the Years.

1. Verses 6-7: “And Samuel said unto the people, *It is* the LORD that advanced Moses and Aaron, and that brought your fathers up out of the land of Egypt. Now therefore stand still, that I may reason with you before the LORD of all the righteous acts of the LORD, which he did to you and to your fathers.”
 - a. Samuel mentions Moses and Aaron, stating that God had *advanced* them, calling them to the work of leading Israel from Egypt to Canaan. If God had not taken the initiative to select, empower, and guide these two great men, they never would have taken the leadership of the fledgling nation.
 - b. Since God had selected the kind of rulers he wanted in Israel, then the present generation of Israelites had greatly erred in demanding a change in government.
 - c. The prophet calls on Israel to take heed while he reasoned with them, in the sight of God, concerning the righteous deeds which the Lord had done for them and their predecessors. That the government God had originated was effective was demonstrated by the facts of the case. As God had aided and guided his people through Moses, Joshua, and the later judges, so he intended to continue to aid and guide them.
 2. Verse 8: “When Jacob was come into Egypt, and your fathers cried unto the LORD, then the LORD sent Moses and Aaron, which brought forth your fathers out of Egypt, and made them dwell in this place.”
 - a. He reminds them that Jacob had taken up residence in Egypt, a story with which they were quite familiar. In time, after the Egyptians had enslaved Jacob’s descendants, Israel cried out to the Lord for deliverance.
 - b. In response to their cries, God had sent Moses and Aaron to lead them to freedom. That arrangement was one of God’s choice.
 - c. Through his wisdom and power, Jehovah had brought them into Canaan, helped them to conquer the pagan population, and had led them safely to the present moment.
 - d. “The first proof of this was furnished by the deliverance of the children of Israel out of Egypt, and their safe guidance into Canaan ("this place" is the land of Canaan). The second was to be found in the deliverance of the people out of the power of their foes, to whom the Lord had been obliged to give them up on account of their apostasy from Him, through the judges whom He had raised up for them, as often as they turned to Him with penitence and cried to Him for help. Of the hostile oppressions which overtook the Israelites during this period of the judges...” (Keil and Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament: New Updated Edition, Electronic Database. Copyright © 1996 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc. All rights reserved).
 3. Verses 9-11: “And when they forgot the LORD their God, he sold them into the hand of Sisera, captain of the host of Hazor, and into the hand of the Philistines, and into the hand of the king of Moab, and they fought against them. And they cried unto the LORD, and said, We have sinned, because we have forsaken the LORD, and have served Baalim and Ashtaroth: but now deliver us out of the hand of our enemies,
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and we will serve thee. And the LORD sent Jerubbaal, and Bedan, and Jephthah, and Samuel, and delivered you out of the hand of your enemies on every side, and ye dwelled safe.”

- a. After entering Canaan, the nation fell away from God, and he allowed them to fall unto the hand of Sisera, captain of the army of Hazor (Judges 4). He also allowed them later, when they sinned again, to fall into the hand of the Philistines and of the Moabites.
 - b. When they cried unto the Lord when they fell into the oppressions of these pagan powers, God delivered them by means of the various judges he empowered. They brought the punishment upon themselves by turning to idolatry.
 - c. The judges named include Jerubbaal, Bedan, Jephthah, and Samuel. Three of these great men are familiar to us, but Bedan is a strange name. Some ancient versions has *Barak* instead of Bedan.
4. Verses 12-13: “And when ye saw that Nahash the king of the children of Ammon came against you, ye said unto me, Nay; but a king shall reign over us: when the LORD your God *was* your king. Now therefore behold the king whom ye have chosen, *and* whom ye have desired! and, behold, the LORD hath set a king over you.”
- a. In their more recent history, Nahash the Ammonite had come against Israel, which precipitated their cries for a king to lead them. God was their king, but they demanded a human monarch—a mighty poor exchange!
 - b. Acquiescing to their demand, God had selected and appointed the best available man, and here he stands! “In concluding his address to the assembled heads of the nation, he presents to them Saul, whom in Jehovah’s name he had previously anointed to be king; but while stating that they had obtained the object of their ardent desire, he reminded them that the ‘Lord had set a king over them’—*i.e.*, that he was, in the theocratic government of the Hebrews, the representative and viceregent of Jehovah” (JFB, p.161).
5. Verses 14-15: “If ye will fear the LORD, and serve him, and obey his voice, and not rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then shall both ye and also the king that reigneth over you continue following the LORD your God: But if ye will not obey the voice of the LORD, but rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then shall the hand of the LORD be against you, as *it was* against your fathers.”
- a. Samuel advises them that if they fear, serve, and obey God, then both they and their king will remain on the Lord’s side. That being true, of course they could expect to retain the help of God.
 - b. But if they did not obey, but rebelled against the will of God, then the Lord would be opposed to them. Not only would they lose the help of the Lord, they would obtain his opposition.
 - c. This is the way it always is.
 - 1) Ecclesiastes 12:13: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this *is* the whole *duty* of man."
 - 2) 1 Peter 3:8-12: "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, *be* pitiful, *be* courteous: Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing. For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it. For the eyes of the Lord *are* over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord *is* against them that do evil."
- C. 1 Samuel 12:16-19: The Miraculous Thunderstorm in the Time of Wheat Harvest.
1. Verses 16-17: “Now therefore stand and see this great thing, which the LORD will do before your eyes. *Is it* not wheat harvest to day? I will call unto the LORD, and he shall send thunder and rain; that ye may perceive and see that your wickedness *is* great, which ye have done in the sight of the LORD, in asking you a king.”
 - a. It was important that they understand the dire nature of their demand for a king. To them, it appeared to be a simple request which Samuel ought to have accepted as such.
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- 1) But their desire represented an act of open rebellion against God; it was a declaration of their strong wish to be like the other nations and to be out from under the direct control of the Lord.
- 2) Even today, seemingly small matters can signify great changes. The modern demand for instrumental music in worship is an open proclamation that those involved are unwilling to abide by the word of God. One cannot operate by the authority of Christ and use instrumental music in worship—the New Testament does not authorize instrumental music in our worship.
- b. In order to prove to them that their demand was an act of rebellion, Samuel proposed to produce a miraculous sign. It was the time of wheat harvest, when the weather was clear and rain was not to be expected. If a thunderstorm occurred, obviously a supernatural action was required.
 - 1) “The wheat harvest occurs in Palestine between the middle of May and the middle of June....And during this time it scarcely ever rains” (Keil, p.120).
 - 2) “There could not, therefore, have been a stronger or more appropriate proof of a divine mission than the phenomenon of rain and thunder happening, without any prognostics of its approach, upon the prediction of a person professing himself to be a prophet of the Lord, and giving it as an attestation of his words being true” (JFB, p.162).
- c. Miracles were worked only on special occasions for the specific purpose of confirming the message of an inspired spokesman of God.
 - 1) Mark 16:20: "And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with *them*, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen."
 - 2) Hebrews 2:3-4: "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard *him*; God also bearing *them* witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?"
 - 3) Compare Mark 2:1-12: "And again he entered into Capernaum after *some* days; and it was noised that he was in the house. And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive *them*, no, not so much as about the door: and he preached the word unto them. And they come unto him, bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four. And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press, they uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken *it* up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay. When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee. But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts, Why doth this *man* thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only? And immediately when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts? Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, *Thy* sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house. And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion."
- d. Coffman:
 - 1) The great miracle here was in the timing of the thunderstorm, which came directly and immediately upon Samuel's praying for it in the presence of all the people. Such a thing as a rain during the wheat harvest was about as unusual as anything that could have happened, just like snow in July or August! In fact, the author of Proverbs gives us this: Like snow in summer, or rain in harvest, or honor is not fitting for a fool. (Proverbs 26:1).
 - 2) "You shall know and see that your wickedness is great ... in asking for yourselves a king" (1 Samuel 12:17). Some very excellent scholars suppose that Israel's wickedness consisted not in their asking for a king, but in their sinful motives in so doing. The Bible does not justify that distinction. Their sin consisted in rejecting the government of God by their demand for an earthly

ruler instead. God would never have abolished the kingship of Israel nor have twice destroyed their temple if either one of them had been according to God's will. The passage in Deuteronomy which speaks of Israel's kings is not divine permission for their demanding a king, but a prophecy of what the people would eventually do, along with instructions applicable at the time foretold when they would commit that sin of demanding a king.

2. Verse 18: "So Samuel called unto the LORD; and the LORD sent thunder and rain that day: and all the people greatly feared the LORD and Samuel."
 - a. Samuel prayed unto the Lord for the thunderstorm which was speedily given. When the people saw the rain and heard the thunder, they perceived that Samuel's words of warning were true. Great fear developed within their hearts.
 - b. The Israelites who witnessed this great display comprehended its miraculous nature; they knew full well that this was an awesome demonstration of supernatural power. They were now in a position to see that they had earned the displeasure of God by their foolish demand for an earthly king.
3. Verse 19: "And all the people said unto Samuel, Pray for thy servants unto the LORD thy God, that we die not: for we have added unto all our sins *this* evil, to ask us a king."
 - a. The people now saw that their demand for a king truly was a sinful act. Filled with fear at this awesome display of God's power, they asked Samuel to implead the Lord in their behalf that they be not slain by divine wrath.
 - b. The rebellion had been done, and it was too late to undo what had been done; all that was left was to beseech God for his indulgence. Such errors can be avoided today if we will learn from the errors of others who have gone before. We can also avoid such trouble if we will fill our minds with a good measure of God's word.
 - 1) Psalms 119:11: "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee."
 - 2) John 2:1: "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

D. 1 Samuel 12:20-25: Israel is Admonished to Obey God.

1. Verses 20-21: "And Samuel said unto the people, Fear not: ye have done all this wickedness: yet turn not aside from following the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your heart; And turn ye not aside: for *then should ye go* after vain *things*, which cannot profit nor deliver; for they *are* vain."
 - a. Samuel reassured them by saying that if they turned not aside from following God's will, but serve him with all their heart, then they could expect his help (see verse twenty-two).
 - b. However, if they turned aside for vain things, the disfavor of God could be expected (see verse twenty-five).
 - c. The prophet affirms that the vain things, to which they were minded to turn, were without profit. Vain things are empty and worthless. Worldly powers and influences can have no profit for the soul. A human king had no special influence with the Lord or any special powers and knowledge with which to effect deliverance from powerful enemies.
 - d. Brethren today are equally foolish to think that the church can prosper and God can be honored by turning to worldly methods to build up the church. Entertainment will attract large crowds of people to the services of the church, but such an agenda cannot glorify God or save souls. If people are not interested in the gospel, there is no hope for their salvation. Compare: "And with all deceit of unrighteousness for them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God sendeth them a working of error, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be judged who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." (2 Thess. 2:10-12, ASV).
2. Verse 22: "For the LORD will not forsake his people for his great name's sake: because it hath pleased the LORD to make you his people."
 - a. God would not forsake his people. But they were truly his people only if they followed his will. God had obtained a great reputation among the pagan nations of the area on account of the tremendous

- miracles he had done in bringing Israel out of Egypt and into Palestine. With his power, Israel had been able to dispossess the grossly sinful Canaanite nations.
- b. For this cause, he would not forsake his people. It was his good pleasure to produce a great nation from Abraham and Sarah, who were too old to bear children naturally. He was able to develop their descendants into a numerous nation even though there were many things to oppose it.
 - c. There was no reason for Israel to think that they had been adopted by God due to their own goodness or strength. "For thou *art* an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that *are* upon the face of the earth. The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye *were* the fewest of all people: But because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he *is* God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations; And repayeth them that hate him to their face, to destroy them: he will not be slack to him that hateth him, he will repay him to his face. Thou shalt therefore keep the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments, which I command thee this day, to do them" (Deut. 7:6-11).
 - d. The same promise belongs to faithful Christians. "*Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me*" (Heb. 13:5-6).
3. Verse 23: "Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way."
- a. Samuel shows his magnanimous spirit by this statement. He did not hold any malice in his heart toward the Israelites. By demanding a king, they had shown their disregard for Samuel. His feelings might easily have been wounded by their rejection, but he had too much spirituality to show such a small spirit.
 - b. His statement shows that one commits an act of sin if he refuses to pray for those who need the intercession of God's people. Although Israel was weak and sinful, he resolved to teach them the good and right way. He was unwilling to give up on them.
 - c. Romans 2:4: "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?"
 - d. 2 Peter 3:9: "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."
4. Verses 24-25: "Only fear the LORD, and serve him in truth with all your heart; for consider how great *things* he hath done for you. But if ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king."
- a. Showing the importance of the subject, Samuel repeats the statement that they must continue to fear and obey God. This was one of their greatest needs, and it is no less important for men today, in and out of the church.
 - b. Joshua 24:14-15: "Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the LORD. And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that *were* on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."
 - c. The only way to obey God is to learn and follow his revealed truth. One cannot obey God by following a doctrine or method of his own choosing. The only acceptable life is the one which God has ordained.
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- 1) Ecclesiastes 12:13-14: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."
 - 2) Jeremiah 10:23: "O LORD, I know that the way of man *is* not in himself: *it is* not in man that walketh to direct his steps."
 - 3) Ephesians 4:17-18: "This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart."
- d. One motivation Samuel used to convince them of the need to obey God in truth was to remind them of the great things God had done for them in the past. Another motivation was purely negative: if they did not obey his will, he would see to it that both they and their king were consumed.
- e. An important feature which was in favor of Israel's continuance was the plan he was working out to send the Messiah into the world. Israel was a highly significant component in this eternal plan. God had promised to bless the world through the special seed of Abraham.
- 1) Genesis 22:18: "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice."
 - 2) Galatians 3:16: "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ."
 - 3) Ephesians 3:8-11: "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; And to make all *men* see what *is* the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly *places* might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."
- f. Israel eventually rebelled to such a degree that it was incumbent upon God to punish them by a long captivity. He was still able to work out his plan through them, but they nevertheless suffered a heavy penalty for their apostasy.
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1 SAMUEL 13

A. 1 Samuel 13:1-4: Saul Defeats the Philistines at Gibeah.

1. Verses 1-2: "Saul reigned one year; and when he had reigned two years over Israel, Saul chose him three thousand *men* of Israel; *whereof* two thousand were with Saul in Michmash and in mount Bethel, and a thousand were with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin: and the rest of the people he sent every man to his tent."
 - a. There is a major controversy among the scholars over verse one. The versions give conflicting renditions of the verse.
 - 1) 1 Samuel 13:1: "Saul was [forty] years old when he began to reign; and when he had reigned two years over Israel" (ASV).
 - 2) The Catholic Douay version translates it to say that, "Saul was a child of one year when he began to reign, and he reigned two years over Israel" (Quoted by Coffman, p.145).
 - 3) "A son of a year [is] Saul in his reigning, yea, two years he hath reigned over Israel" (Young's Literal Translation).
 - 4) "Saul reigned one year; and when he had reigned two years over Israel, 2 Saul chose for himself three thousand men of Israel. Two thousand were with Saul in Michmash and in the mountains of Bethel, and a thousand were with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin. The rest of the people he sent away, every man to his tent" (NKJV).
 - b. "The transactions recorded in the eleventh and twelfth chapters were the principal incidents comprised in the first year of Saul's reign; and the events about to be described in this passage happened in the second year" (JFB, p.162).
 - 1) The marginal rendering of the first clause uses the expression "the son of one year in his reigning." Clearly, he was not one year old when he became king; the narrative shows that he is a grown man. This alternate rendering is a unique way of referring to Saul's first year on the throne.
 - 2) The first clause of verse one is taken, therefore, to refer to the activities of the preceding chapters as taking place during Saul's first year, with the following events occupying his second year as king.
 - c. Coffman:
 - 1) We do not know what interval of time elapsed between this chapter and the preceding one. The scholars disagree, assigning the interval anywhere between a day or two and ten or fifteen years. A complicating factor is the appearance of Jonathan here as a competent military commander in charge of a thousand men.
 - 2) "Michmash ... and Bethel" (1 Samuel 13:2). "Michmash is the modern Mukhmas, located about seven miles northeast of Jerusalem; and Bethel is the modern Beitin four and one half miles northwest of Mukhmas."
 - 3) Jonathan defeated the garrison of the Philistines at Geba (1 Samuel 13:3). This poses a problem for some who point out that the garrison of the Philistines was actually at Gibeah (1 Samuel 10:2); but there is no problem at all. The Philistines had garrisons at both places and in all probability at a number of other places also.
 - 4) We noted earlier that the word rendered "garrison" is the same word also translated as prefect, commander, pillar or governor. Some critics have used this to deny that Jonathan defeated a garrison, affirming that he assassinated the commander of the garrison. It is noteworthy that the RSV retains the rendition "garrison," which was defeated by Jonathan and his one thousand soldiers. [Note: The RSV was the darling of the liberals until the arrival of the NIV—Author].
 - d. We have an indisputable affirmation by the apostle Paul that Saul's total time as king was forty years. "And afterward they desired a king: and God gave unto them Saul the son of Cis, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by the space of forty years" (Acts 13:21). Josephus states that Saul reigned for eighteen

years before Samuel died, and twenty-two years after the prophet died (*Antiquities*, Book VI, Chapter XIV, Section 9, page 146).

- e. Verse two reports that after two years, he selected three thousand fighting men, two thousand of them were with Saul in Michmash and the other thousand with Jonathan in Gibeah. The rest of the men who were involved in the victory over the Ammonites (chapter 11), were sent home. Following that great battle, the nation had been assembled at Gilgal (1 Sam. 11:14-15), where the events of chapter twelve occurred.
 - f. At the time of this present chapter, Saul had been king for a year. The ancient Hebrews counted a part of a day or year as a whole. It was during the second year of Saul's reign that the present events took place. Notice that at this time, Jonathan was already a grown man, sufficiently old and seasoned to take charge of a company of one thousand men. Saul was probably about forty years old when he became king.
2. Verse 3: "And Jonathan smote the garrison of the Philistines that *was* in Geba, and the Philistines heard *of it*. And Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land, saying, Let the Hebrews hear."
 - a. With his military force, Jonathan attacked and defeated the Philistine garrison which was located at Geba. Geba and Gibeah were two distinct cities, located in the territory of Benjamin (cf. Josh. 18:24,28; JFB, p.163).
 - b. 1 Samuel 10:5 speaks of this garrison, located on "the hill of God." There may have been several of these Philistine outposts in Israel, for the nation was under the yoke of Philistia at the time.
 - c. This attack was tantamount to a declaration of war against the Philistines. Saul caused the trumpet of war to be sounded throughout the land, to summon Israel's fighting men. The message which was broadcast with the announcement included the strong admonition that the Hebrews should *hear*, i.e., respond to the call. The name *Hebrew* was used in reference to Abraham (Gen. 14:13), and Joseph spoke of his native land as the land of the Hebrews (Gen. 40:15).
 3. Verse 4: "And all Israel heard say *that* Saul had smitten a garrison of the Philistines, and *that* Israel also was had in abomination with the Philistines. And the people were called together after Saul to Gilgal."
 - a. The report of the defeat of the Philistine garrison was circulated through the nation, with the call for the soldiers to assemble with Saul at Gilgal. This place was situated in the valley of the Jordan, near to the site of Jericho.
 - b. The message included information about the Philistine attitude toward Israel, that they were held in abomination. This would tend to rile the Israelites into a fighting spirit.
 - c. Pulpit Commentary:
 - 1) Though the achievement was actually Jonathan's, yet it belonged to Saul as the commander-in-chief, and probably had been done under his instructions. Israel was had in abomination with the Philistines. They must have viewed with grave displeasure Israel's gathering together to choose a king, and Saul's subsequent defeat of the Ammonites, and retention with him of a large body of men, and so probably they had been for some time making preparations for war.
 - 2) Saul, therefore, knowing that they were collecting their forces, does the same, and the people were called together after Saul. Literally, "were cried after him," i.e. were summoned by proclamation (comp. Judg 7:23,24; 10:17, where see margin). For Gilgal see 1 Sam 7:16; 11:14. This place had been selected because, as the valley opens there into the plain of Jordan it was a fit spot for the assembling of a large host.
- B. 1 Samuel 13:5-10: Israel is Confronted by a Large Philistine Force.
1. Verse 5: "And the Philistines gathered themselves together to fight with Israel, thirty thousand chariots, and six thousand horsemen, and people as the sand which *is* on the sea shore in multitude: and they came up, and pitched in Michmash, eastward from Bethaven."
 - a. Some scholars have difficulty in accepting the large number of chariots which the text reports. Judah was able to put 30,000 men under arms and the rest of the nation mustered 300,000 (11:8). This
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number of Philistines, 30,000 chariots, 6,000 horsemen, and an innumerable host, is not to be taken as an exaggeration or to be a corruption of the text.

- b. The enemy assembled their forces at Michmash, east of Bethaven. Bethaven was situated to the east of Bethel and to the west of Michmash. Compare: “And Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which *is* beside Bethaven, on the east side of Bethel, and spake unto them, saying, Go up and view the country. And the men went up and viewed Ai” (Josh. 7:2).
 2. Verses 6-7: “When the men of Israel saw that they were in a strait, (for the people were distressed,) then the people did hide themselves in caves, and in thickets, and in rocks, and in high places, and in pits. And *some of* the Hebrews went over Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. As for Saul, he *was* yet in Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling.”
 - a. The presence of such a vast army which now threatened Saul’s small force was enough to terrify the Israelites. These fainthearted men of Israel fled from Saul, taking refuge in caves, thickets, and other such places. Others went over Jordan to seek safety in the land of Gad and Gilead.
 - b. Deserted by much of his army, Saul remained at Gilgal, and those with him were filled with terror. The battle had not yet been joined, and Israel’s strength was already dissipated. Many battles are won by psychological pressures before the fighting begins. This was taking place here.
 3. Verse 8: “And he tarried seven days, according to the set time that Samuel *had appointed*: but Samuel came not to Gilgal; and the people were scattered from him.”
 - a. In keeping with the previous arrangement with Samuel, Saul remained at Gilgal for seven days, waiting for the prophet’s arrival.
 - 1) 1 Samuel 10:8: "And thou shalt go down before me to Gilgal; and, behold, I will come down unto thee, to offer burnt offerings, *and* to sacrifice sacrifices of peace offerings: seven days shalt thou tarry, till I come to thee, and show thee what thou shalt do."
 - 2) The plan apparently was set up for national emergencies; when some problem arose, Saul and Samuel were to meet at Gilgal, with a seven-day span of time set up within which both parties were to arrive.
 - b. The majority of his soldiers had scattered when the Philistines came on the scene at Michmash. Saul faithfully awaited Samuel’s arrival, but the prophet had not come by the end of the prescribed waiting time. Naturally, he would have felt an increasing degree of pressure and anxiety. He did not realize it, but Samuel’s delay in arriving was a test for Saul, an examination which he failed.
 4. Verses 9-10: “And Saul said, Bring hither a burnt offering to me, and peace offerings. And he offered the burnt offering. And it came to pass, that as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came; and Saul went out to meet him, that he might salute him.”
 - a. Saul’s first serious blunder occurs here. Having waited the prescribed time, he thought he had the right to offer the sacrifice himself. He understood that a sacrifice was to be offered, but only certain ones were allowed to do so, and even then certain other requisites were to be met.
 - b. Leviticus 17:8-9: "And thou shalt say unto them, Whatsoever man *there be* of the house of Israel, or of the strangers which sojourn among you, that offereth a burnt offering or sacrifice, And bringeth it not unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, to offer it unto the LORD; even that man shall be cut off from among his people."
 - c. The king took this precipitous action to keep more of his followers from deserting him. Also, his faith in Samuel’s promise to meet him was weak, and his patience was infirm. But even under the very trying circumstances of the case, Saul was held responsible for his violation of God’s will; the great pressures of the present emergency did not permit him to violate God’s Law.
 - d. At this inopportune time [for Saul], the prophet arrived. Saul went out to greet Samuel.
- C. 1 Samuel 13:11-16: Saul’s Sinful Sacrifice is Exposed by Samuel.
1. Verses 11-12: “And Samuel said, What hast thou done? And Saul said, Because I saw that the people were scattered from me, and *that* thou camest not within the days appointed, and *that* the Philistines gathered themselves together at Michmash; Therefore said I, The Philistines will come down now upon

me to Gilgal, and I have not made supplication unto the LORD: I forced myself therefore, and offered a burnt offering.”

- a. The prophet immediately knew what Saul had done, and called attention to it by asking the king, “What have you done?” This was more of a rebuke than a question.
 - b. Saul’s response would have been acceptable to many religionists of our day, who weakly excuse their own departures which have no semblance of proper cause. What about using watermelon juice in the Lord’s Supper if grape juice is unavailable? That still does not give us the right to substitute! If it is not possible to comply with a required item, is there any responsibility to do the requirement? All Christians are required to sing, but there are some who have no voice box. We are commanded to confess Christ with our mouth, but there are some who cannot speak. [Note: Grape juice is available almost everywhere].
 - c. The king explained that the people were deserting him, Samuel had not come within the appointed time, and the Philistines were on the verge of launching an attack. Expecting to have to do battle at any time, and knowing that he needed to make supplication unto the Lord for his help, Saul stated that he had forced himself to offer a sacrifice. However, the emergency did not give him authority to disregard God’s word.
2. Verses 13-14: “And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the LORD thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the LORD have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever. But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the LORD hath commanded him *to be* captain over his people, because thou hast not kept *that* which the LORD commanded thee.”
- a. Saul’s actions, which he thought were fully justified by the circumstances, were foolish. There are many actions which God calls foolish, but which men think to be right and proper.
 - 1) Psalms 14:1: "The fool hath said in his heart, *There is* no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, *there is* none that doeth good."
 - 2) Isaiah 55:8-9: "For my thoughts *are* not your thoughts, neither *are* your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."
 - 3) Matthew 7:21-27: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it."
 - 4) Luke 12:15-21: "And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, *and* be merry. But God said unto him, *Thou* fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So *is* he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."
 - 5) Romans 1:22: "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools."
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- 6) 2 Timothy 3:5-7: "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth."
- b. The king had acted foolishly by disobeying the commandment of God. What was the precept which Saul violated? By offering the sacrifice of verse nine without authority.
- 1) Leviticus 17:8-9: "And thou shalt say unto them, Whatsoever man *there be* of the house of Israel, or of the strangers which sojourn among you, that offereth a burnt offering or sacrifice, And bringeth it not unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, to offer it unto the LORD; even that man shall be cut off from among his people."
 - 2) Deuteronomy 4:2: "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish *ought* from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you."
 - 3) 2 John 1:9: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son."
 - 4) Colossians 3:17: "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."
 - 5) 2 Samuel 6:6-7: "And when they came to Nachon's threshingfloor, Uzzah put forth his hand to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen shook it. And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for his error; and there he died by the ark of God."
 - 6) 2 Chronicles 26:19: "Then Uzziah was wroth, and had a censer in his hand to burn incense: and while he was wroth with the priests, the leprosy even rose up in his forehead before the priests in the house of the LORD, from beside the incense altar."
- c. This transgression cost Saul dearly. His kingdom would have continued with God's blessings if he had not committed the trespass, but now he would lose his throne to another man God would anoint. "We are not compelled to assume an immediate rejection of Saul...for these words merely announce the purpose of God, without defining the time of its actual realization. Whether it would take place during Saul's reign, or not till after his death, was known only to God, and was made contingent upon Saul's further behaviour" (Keil, p.129).
- d. God had already chosen a man, one after his own heart, to replace Saul. This man, of course, was David. "And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the *son* of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will" (Acts 13:22). This description of David was given of him in his condition before his rebellion in the case of Bathsheba and Uriah (2 Sam. 11).
3. Verses 15-16: "And Samuel arose, and gat him up from Gilgal unto Gibeah of Benjamin. And Saul numbered the people *that were* present with him, about six hundred men. And Saul, and Jonathan his son, and the people *that were* present with them, abode in Gibeah of Benjamin: but the Philistines encamped in Michmash."
- a. Following the unfortunate episode just concluded, Samuel went to Gibeah, leaving Saul and his few followers at Gilgal.
 - b. Saul numbered his army, and found only about six hundred fighting men. He removed from Gilgal to Geba (margin), while the Philistines were encamped at Michmash.
 - c. "Samuel would pass by Gibeah on his way to his own home at Ramah; but he seems to have tarried there to encourage the people; and probably he carried instructions from Saul to Jonathan to unite his forces with him, as we next find the father and son there in company.
 - a) 'Even if this be not so, yet friendly relations must have continued between Saul and Samuel, as the latter would otherwise certainly not have chosen Saul's home for his halting place; nor would he go thither without seeing Jonathan, and giving him aid and counsel. Saul numbered.
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See on 1 Sam 11:8. After summoning the whole nation there did not remain with him even as many as a third of his selected band. In Gibeah of Benjamin....

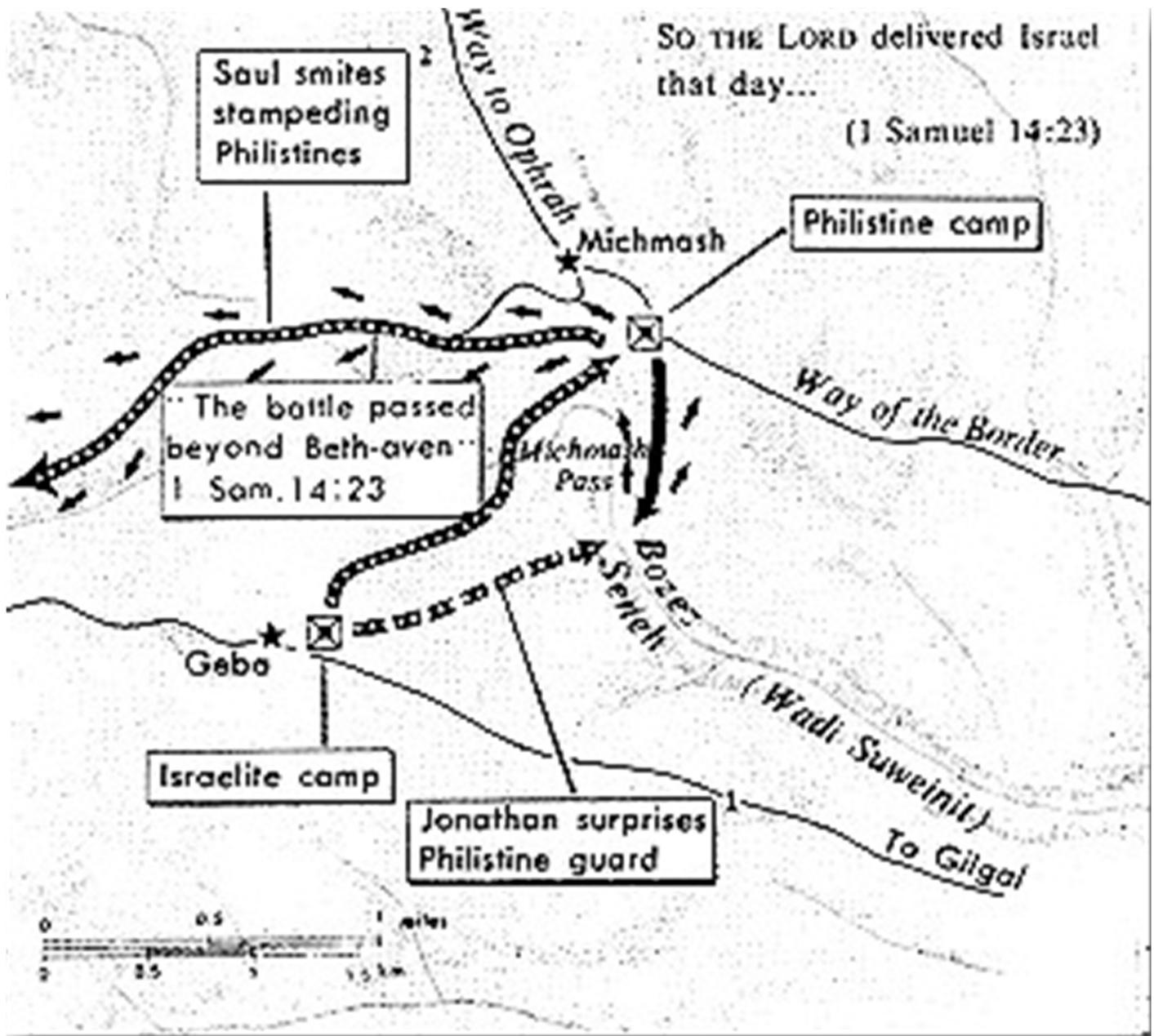
- b) “Our translators no doubt considered that as Gibeah of Benjamin occurs in the previous verse, this must be the same place. But our greater knowledge of the geography of the Holy Land enables us to say that Geba is right; for, as we have seen, it was at one end of the defile, at the other end of which was Michmash; and here alone could the small army of Saul have any chance of defending itself against the vast host of the Philistines.
- c) “However much we may blame Saul's disobedience, he was a skilful soldier and a brave man, and his going with his little band to the end of the pass to make a last desperate stand was an act worthy of a king” [The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 2001 by Biblesoft].

D. 1 Samuel 13:17-23: Israel's Lack of Weapons.

1. Verses 17-18: “And the spoilers came out of the camp of the Philistines in three companies: one company turned unto the way *that leadeth to* Ophrah, unto the land of Shual: And another company turned the way *to* Bethhoron: and another company turned *to* the way of the border that looketh to the valley of Zeboim toward the wilderness.”
 - a. The Philistines sent out raiders, divided into three groups, into Israel's territory. “The intention of the Philistines in carrying out these devastating expeditions, was no doubt to entice the men who were gathered round Saul and Jonathan out of their secure positions at Gibeah and Geba, and force them to fight” (Keil, p.133).
 - b. “The Israelites could not offer a successful resistance to these devastating raids, as there was no smith to be found in the whole land...Consequently (as the words clearly imply) when they proceeded to occupy the land of Israel as described in ver. 5, they disarmed the people throughout, *i.e.*, as far as they penetrated, and carried off the smiths, who might have been able to forge weapons...” (Keil, p.133, commenting on verse nineteen).
 - c. “The conduct of the Philistines is that of men over confident in their strength. They ought to have pounced at once upon Saul in the plain of Jordan, where their cavalry would have secured for them the victory, and then, following Samuel's and Saul's route, have seized the other end of the defile, and overpowered Jonathan.
 - 1) “But they despised them both, and regarding the country as conquered, proceed to punish it, as probably they had done on previous occasions, when no one had dared to make resistance.
 - 2) “Leaving then the main army to guard the camp at Michmash, they sent out light armed troops to plunder the whole land. One company turned unto the way...to Ophrah, unto the land of Shual. This company went northward, towards Ophrah, a place five miles east of Bethel. The land of Shual, *i.e.* fox land, was probably the same as the land of Shalim in 1 Sam 9:4. Another company, etc. This went eastward, towards Beth-heron, for which see Josh 10:11.
 - 3) “The third went to the south east, towards the wilderness of Judaea. Zeboim, and all the places mentioned, are in the tribe of Benjamin, which had committed the offence of making for itself a king. To the south Saul held the mountain fastnesses towards Jerusalem” [Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 2001 by Biblesoft].
2. Verses 19-20: “Now there was no smith found throughout all the land of Israel: for the Philistines said, Lest the Hebrews make *them* swords or spears: But all the Israelites went down to the Philistines, to sharpen every man his share, and his coulter, and his ax, and his mattock.”
 - a. The word *now*, with which this passage begins, may indicate that after the Philistine raiders passed through the land, the Israelites were left with no weapons or smiths. However, this may have taken place earlier, during the time when they captured the ark of the covenant (1 Sam. 4).
 - b. The Philistines had a monopoly on iron, forcing the Israelites to go to them if they had some tool that needed to be sharpened. The implements referred to were the plowshare, the hoe, the ax, and the sickle. Keil describes them as edge-tool, ploughshare, axe, and chopper, in that order (p.133).

- c. Israel had no means of making spears and swords, leaving them seemingly defenseless against their powerful adversary.
3. Verses 21-22: "Yet they had a file for the mattocks, and for the coulter, and for the forks, and for the axes, and to sharpen the goads. So it came to pass in the day of battle, that there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people that *were* with Saul and Jonathan: but with Saul and with Jonathan his son was there found."
 - a. The exact tools may be obscure to us, but the meaning of the statement is clear. The implements could not be sharpened by the Israelites; they had to go to the Philistines for that necessary service.
 - b. Consequently, in the absence of smiths and the other means, Israel could not manufacture weapons of war. Saul's little band of soldiers was without these weapons; only Saul and Jonathan were equipped with the customary arms.
 - c. However, they could arm themselves with agricultural tools. The victory, if such was to be had, must come from God.
4. Verse 23: "And the garrison of the Philistines went out to the passage of Michmash."
 - a. This move may have been intended to cut off all avenues for Saul to use in any attack on their position at Michmash. The pass is said to be about a half-mile from Michmash (JFB, p.165).
 - b. Keil quotes Robinson's *Biblical Researches*, p.289, giving this description of the pass: "The way was so steep, and the rocky steps so high, that we were compelled to dismount; while the baggage mules got along with great difficulty. Here, where we crossed, several short side wadys came in from the south-west and north-west. The ridges between these terminate in elevating points projecting into the great wady; and the most easterly of these bluffs on each side were probably the outposts of the two garrisons of Israel and the Philistines. The road passes around the eastern side of the southern hill, the post of Israel, and then strikes up over the western part of the northern one, the post of the Philistines, and the scene of Jonathan's adventure" (Keil, pp.135f).





1 SAMUEL 14

A. 1 Samuel 14:1-15: Jonathan Attacks a Band of Philistines.

1. Verses 1-3: "Now it came to pass upon a day, that Jonathan the son of Saul said unto the young man that bare his armour, Come, and let us go over to the Philistines' garrison, that *is* on the other side. But he told not his father. And Saul tarried in the uttermost part of Gibeah under a pomegranate tree which *is* in Migron: and the people that *were* with him *were* about six hundred men; And Ahiah, the son of Ahitub, Ichabod's brother, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eli, the LORD'S priest in Shiloh, wearing an ephod. And the people knew not that Jonathan was gone."
 - a. During the standoff detailed in the preceding chapter, Jonathan decided to slip into the Philistine area to see what might be done to alleviate the present situation. He said nothing to his father about the plan. No one knew that Jonathan left the camp.
 - b. Saul was located in the outskirts of Gibeah at present, stationing himself under a pomegranate tree. He still had the six hundred men with him.
 - c. Ahiah, who was the high priest, was present with Saul's company. Ahiah was the son of Ahitub, who was the son of Phinehas, who was the son of Eli. Ahitub and Ichabod were brothers.
 2. Verses 4-5: "And between the passages, by which Jonathan sought to go over unto the Philistines' garrison, *there was* a sharp rock on the one side, and a sharp rock on the other side: and the name of the one *was* Bozez, and the name of the other Seneh. The forefront of the one *was* situate northward over against Michmash, and the other southward over against Gibeah."
 - a. The inspired historian gives a rather close description of the place where Jonathan planned to cross the narrow pass over to the side occupied by the enemy. There were two rocky crags, one on each side; one was on the Michmash side and the other on the side nearer Gibeah.
 - b. J.W. McGarvey visited this site in 1979, and gave this description of place:
 - 1) "Looking north, and a little east from Jeba, we see Michmash, a similar village, about two miles distant, with a deep valley called Wady Suwei'nit lying between. The side of this wady next to Jeba can barely be descended on horseback, and about a mile eastward of the line between the two villages it becomes so narrow and deep that the opposite heights are not a mile apart in an air-line, though the gorge between them is nearly 1000 feet deep.
 - 2) "At this point must have been stationed the armies of Saul and the Philistines previous to the famous feat of Jonathan and his armor-bearer, which resulted in a disastrous rout of the Philistines. Saul, with his 600 men, was on the south side of the valley, with Geba on his left, while the Philistines were on the north side, with Michmash on their right.
 - 3) "The author descended the valley in front of Geba, and then rode along its crooked torrent-bed, covered with large rounded boulders, until he came between the positions of the two armies, and found that the locality corresponds precisely to the description given in the text of Scripture. It is said that 'between the passages by which Jonathan sought to go over to the Philistine garrison there was a sharp rock on the one side and a sharp rock on the other side; and the name of the one was Bozez, and name of the other Seneh. There they were—a precipice corresponding to Seneh, about 100 feet perpendicular, surmounted by the slope of 800 or 900 feet more, rising up to Saul's position, and one corresponding to Bozez, on the opposite side, about 50 feet high.
 - 4) "A little west of the southern precipice, about where the left flank of Saul's little army would be posted, is a descent sufficiently gradual for a man to come down, and it might possibly be descended on horseback. There Jonathan must have come down into the deep, narrow bed of the gorge, where he would be invisible to both armies.
 - 5) "Then, moving 100 or more yards down the gorge, there is a break in the precipitous face of Bozez, up which he could climb on his hands and feet, as he did, to the line of the Philistine sentinels. There are many excavations, either natural or artificial, in the face of the cliffs, and
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- probably these suggested to the Philistines, when they saw the two men climbing up, the remark, 'Behold, the Hebrews come forth out of the holes where they had hid themselves.'
- 6) "When the retreat of the Philistines began they must have fled westward past Michmash, while Saul's army, in pursuit, rushed westward past Geba, headed the valley, and fell into the rear of the retreating Philistines" (McGarvey, *Lands of the Bible*, pp.236f).
- c. "The ridges on each side of the valley exhibit two elevated points which project into the great wady; and the easternmost of these bluffs on each side probably the outposts of the two garrisons of the Israelites and the Philistines. The road passes around the eastern side of the southern hill, the post of Israel, and then strikes up over the western part of the northern one, the post of the Philistines, and the scene of Jonathan's adventure....The two camps were in sight of each other; and it was up the steep rocky sides of this isolated eminence that Jonathan and his armour-bearer (v.6) made their adventurous approach. This enterprise is one of the most gallant and romantic that history records" (JFB, p.166).
3. Verses 6-10: "And Jonathan said to the young man that bare his armour, Come, and let us go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcised: it may be that the LORD will work for us: for *there is* no restraint to the LORD to save by many or by few. And his armourbearer said unto him, Do all that *is* in thine heart: turn thee; behold, *I am* with thee according to thy heart. Then said Jonathan, Behold, we will pass over unto *these* men, and we will discover ourselves unto them. If they say thus unto us, Tarry until we come to you; then we will stand still in our place, and will not go up unto them. But if they say thus, Come up unto us; then we will go up: for the LORD hath delivered them into our hand: and this *shall be* a sign unto us."
- a. Jonathan told his armor bearer of his intention to go over to the garrison of the Philistines, with the hope that God would aid them in overcoming the enemy. He stated the proposition that God could deliver with a small number or by many. This young man had tremendous faith in God; he was willing to risk his life on the premise that God would assist his efforts to defeat God's enemies.
- b. The armorbearer stated his willingness to follow Jonathan without hesitation, in whatever venture he decided to do. Jonathan revealed his plan to cross into enemy territory, and expose himself to the Philistines. If they told them to hold their position, then Jonathan would interpret that to mean that they would wait there for the enemy to come to them; if they were invited to come on up, they would do so, for that would mean that God had delivered them into Jonathan's hands.
- c. Was this merely blind faith or had God given this young man some information? "It was not tempting God for Jonathan to fix upon such a sign by which to determine the success of his enterprise; for he did it in the exercise of his calling, when fighting not for personal objects, but for the kingdom of God, which the uncircumcised were threatening to annihilate, and in the most confident belief that the Lord would deliver and preserve his people. Such faith as this God would not put to shame"(Keil, pp.138f). A similar case is recorded in Genesis 24:1-60.
4. Verses 11-13: "And both of them discovered themselves unto the garrison of the Philistines: and the Philistines said, Behold, the Hebrews come forth out of the holes where they had hid themselves. And the men of the garrison answered Jonathan and his armourbearer, and said, Come up to us, and we will show you a thing. And Jonathan said unto his armourbearer, Come up after me: for the LORD hath delivered them into the hand of Israel. And Jonathan climbed up upon his hands and upon his feet, and his armourbearer after him: and they fell before Jonathan; and his armourbearer slew after him."
- a. They exposed themselves to the sight of the Philistines, who spoke disparagingly of the Israelites, saying something about the Hebrews having come out of their holes where they had hidden themselves.
- b. Jonathan told his servant that that was a sign God had given them the victory. He confidently went forward and smote the Philistines to the ground; his armorbearer followed him, slaying those who were struck down.
5. Verses 14-15: "And that first slaughter, which Jonathan and his armourbearer made, was about twenty men, within as it were an half acre of land, *which* a yoke of oxen might plow. And there was trembling
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in the host, in the field, and among all the people: the garrison, and the spoilers, they also trembled, and the earth quaked: so it was a very great trembling.”

- a. They slew about twenty men in this skirmish. The bodies were strewn over a relatively small area of land: about a half-acre, according to the KJV.
- b. “The men who saw them scrambling up the rock had been surprized and killed; and the spectacle of twenty corpses would suggest to others that they were attacked by a numerous force. The success of the adventure was aided by a panic that struck the enemy, produced both by the sudden surprise and the shock of an earthquake. The feat was begun and achieved by the faith of Jonathan, and the issue was of God” (JFB, p.167).
- c. The host of the Philistines, including the garrison on guard at this place and the spoilers who were also present, trembled; to their alarm was the added effect of a great earthquake which God sent.

B. 1 Samuel 14:16-23: Israel Routs the Philistines.

1. Verses 16-17: “And the watchmen of Saul in Gibeah of Benjamin looked; and, behold, the multitude melted away, and they went on beating down *one another*. Then said Saul unto the people that *were* with him, Number now, and see who is gone from us. And when they had numbered, behold, Jonathan and his armourbearer *were* not there.”
 - a. Saul, in Gibeah, saw the tumult in the camp of the enemy. The Philistine host was melting away, running hither and yon in their confusion.
 - b. He knew that there had to be some explanation for this confusion among the enemy, and gave order that his little army be counted to see if anyone was missing. The only two missing were Jonathan and his armorbearer.
2. Verse 18: “And Saul said unto Ahiah, Bring hither the ark of God. For the ark of God was at that time with the children of Israel.”
 - a. Saul instructed Ahiah, the high priest, to bring the ark of God forward, for it was presently in their midst. Some scholars think that the ark was not present, but that is a plain repudiation of the text.
 - b. It was his intention, evidently, to make inquiry through the high priest as to what God wanted him to do.
3. Verses 19-20: “And it came to pass, while Saul talked unto the priest, that the noise that *was* in the host of the Philistines went on and increased: and Saul said unto the priest, Withdraw thine hand. And Saul and all the people that *were* with him assembled themselves, and they came to the battle: and, behold, every man's sword was against his fellow, *and there was* a very great discomfiture.”
 - a. In the midst of Ahiah’s activity of making inquiry of the Lord, Saul discerned that immediate action was called for, so he told Ahiah to withdraw his hand [stop his request for guidance from God].
 - b. The uproar in the Philistine camp told Saul that he must quickly enter the fray which Jonathan had initiated. The Philistines were in such a turmoil that they were assaulting each other with their swords; there was “a very great discomfiture.” This happened also when Gideon and his three hundred men put the great host of Midianites to flight (Judg. 7).
4. Verses 21-23: “Moreover the Hebrews *that were* with the Philistines before that time, which went up with them into the camp *from the country* round about, even they also *turned* to be with the Israelites that *were* with Saul and Jonathan. Likewise all the men of Israel which had hid themselves in mount Ephraim, *when* they heard that the Philistines fled, even they also followed hard after them in the battle. So the LORD saved Israel that day: and the battle passed over unto Bethaven.”
 - a. When Saul and his band entered the battle, the Hebrews who were with the Philistines, turned against their erstwhile masters, and joined their brethren in slaughtering the enemy.
 - b. Further adding to the problems of the Philistines, those Israelites, who had concealed themselves in the rocks and caves of mount Ephraim, entered the fight. The enemy fled before Israel, pressing on to Bethaven. Thus did God deliver Israel that day.

C. 1 Samuel 14:24-35: Saul Forbids the Army to Eat Food During the Day of Battle.

1. Verse 24: “And the men of Israel were distressed that day: for Saul had adjured the people, saying, Cursed *be* the man that eateth *any* food until evening, that I may be avenged on mine enemies. So none of the people tasted *any* food.”
 - a. “Afraid lest so precious an opportunity of effectually humbling the Philistine power might be lost, the impetuous king laid an anathema on any one who should taste food until the evening. This rash and foolish denunciation distressed the people, by preventing them taking such refreshments as they might get on the march, and materially hindered the successful attainment of his own patriotic object” (JFB, p.168).
 - b. The men of Saul were so in awe of him that they dared not violate this edict, for they feared the wrath that could come from him. “It was a despotic measure which not only failed to accomplish its object (see vers. 30,31), but brought Saul into the unfortunate position of being unable to carry out the oath ...” (Keil, pp.142f).
 2. Verses 25-26: “And all *they* of the land came to a wood; and there was honey upon the ground. And when the people were come into the wood, behold, the honey dropped; but no man put his hand to his mouth: for the people feared the oath.”
 - a. When Saul’s men came to a forested area, they found a place where honey dripped down to the ground, but their fear of their king was so great, no man would taste it on account of the oath.
 - b. Despite their present hunger for having not taken any food and weakness of body from the fighting, they did not eat. Ancient despotic kings maintained their authority because of harsh measures
 - c. "The honey was dropping" (1 Samuel 14:26). This does not mean that the honey was dropping out of the trees, but that it was being dropped by the Philistines in their headlong flight, as explained by the words, "the spoil of their enemies which they (the Israelites) found" (1 Samuel 14:30) [Coffman].
 3. Verses 27-28: “But Jonathan heard not when his father charged the people with the oath: wherefore he put forth the end of the rod that *was* in his hand, and dipped it in an honeycomb, and put his hand to his mouth; and his eyes were enlightened. Then answered one of the people, and said, Thy father straitly charged the people with an oath, saying, Cursed *be* the man that eateth *any* food this day. And the people were faint.”
 - a. Jonathan was unaware of his father’s charge. Seeing the honey, he did what any hungry and weary man would have done: he ate and was refreshed.
 - b. Those around him told him of the oath which pronounced a curse upon any man who ate any food that day. None but Jonathan ate even though they all were hungry and tired.
 4. Verses 29-30: “Then said Jonathan, My father hath troubled the land: see, I pray you, how mine eyes have been enlightened, because I tasted a little of this honey. How much more, if haply the people had eaten freely to day of the spoil of their enemies which they found? for had there not been now a much greater slaughter among the Philistines?”
 - a. Jonathan saw the folly of Saul’s oath. If the Israelite soldiers had been allowed to eat, they would have greater strength; with greater strength, more of the enemy would have been slain.
 - b. When they overran the enemy encampment, there was food available for them there, but they had not taken any. Foolish oaths ought not to be made.
 5. Verses 31-32: “And they smote the Philistines that day from Michmash to Aijalon: and the people were very faint. And the people flew upon the spoil, and took sheep, and oxen, and calves, and slew *them* on the ground: and the people did eat *them* with the blood.”
 - a. When the day’s fighting was over, the Israelites had pursued and slaughtered the Philistines from Michmash to Aijalon, said to be fifteen to twenty miles from Michmash (Coffman, p.168). They were exhausted from the great struggle and the long distance traveled.
 - b. It was then, after the fighting was over, that they flew upon the spoils captured from the enemy. They killed sheep, oxen, and calves, and ate them without first ridding the flesh of the blood. This constituted a sin, for God had strictly forbidden the consumption of blood:
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- c. "And whatsoever man *there be* of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, that eateth any manner of blood; I will even set my face against that soul that eateth blood, and will cut him off from among his people. For the life of the flesh *is* in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it *is* the blood *that* maketh an atonement for the soul. Therefore I said unto the children of Israel, No soul of you shall eat blood, neither shall any stranger that sojourneth among you eat blood. And whatsoever man *there be* of the children of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, which hunteth and catcheth any beast or fowl that may be eaten; he shall even pour out the blood thereof, and cover it with dust. For *it is* the life of all flesh; the blood of it *is* for the life thereof: therefore I said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall eat the blood of no manner of flesh: for the life of all flesh *is* the blood thereof: whosoever eateth it shall be cut off. And every soul that eateth that which died *of itself*, or that which was torn *with beasts*, *whether it be* one of your own country, or a stranger, he shall both wash his clothes, and bathe *himself* in water, and be unclean until the even: then shall he be clean. But if he wash *them* not, nor bathe his flesh; then he shall bear his iniquity" (Lev. 17:10-16).
- d. Saul was responsible for this transgression in that he forbade their eating during the day.
6. Verses 33-35: "Then they told Saul, saying, Behold, the people sin against the LORD, in that they eat with the blood. And he said, Ye have transgressed: roll a great stone unto me this day. And Saul said, Disperse yourselves among the people, and say unto them, Bring me hither every man his ox, and every man his sheep, and slay *them* here, and eat; and sin not against the LORD in eating with the blood. And all the people brought every man his ox with him that night, and slew *them* there. And Saul built an altar unto the LORD: the same was the first altar that he built unto the LORD."
- a. News reached the king of their transgression. He ordered that a large stone be placed before him, the object being to place the animals to be slain upon the stone, which would permit the blood to drain away from the flesh.
- b. Saul erected an altar unto the Lord at that place; he may have used this great stone as part of the altar. "This altar was probably not intended to serve as a place of sacrifice, but simply to be a memorial of the presence of God, or the revelation of God which Saul had received in the marvellous victory" (Keil p.144).
- c. "The purpose of this stone was to raise up the carcases of the slaughtered animals from the ground, so that the blood might drain away from them. On tidings of this arrangement being dispersed throughout the army, the people obey Saul with the same unquestioning devotion as they had shown to his command to abstain from food" [Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 2001 by Biblesoft].
- D. 1 Samuel 14:36-46: Jonathan is Delivered from Execution.
1. Verses 36-37: "And Saul said, Let us go down after the Philistines by night, and spoil them until the morning light, and let us not leave a man of them. And they said, Do whatsoever seemeth good unto thee. Then said the priest, Let us draw near hither unto God. And Saul asked counsel of God, Shall I go down after the Philistines? wilt thou deliver them into the hand of Israel? But he answered him not that day."
- a. After eating, Saul and his men were refreshed. He had the notion of continuing the battle during the night so as to utterly destroy the Philistine army. His men expressed willingness to follow him.
- b. The high priest interrupted the deliberations with the request that God's counsel be sought. Saul asked God through the high priest whether he would be granted victory if he fought more that night.
- c. The Lord gave him no reply. He had ignored God's law in offering the sacrifice at Gilgal (chapter 13), and had not waited for God's answer earlier on this day (verses 18ff). The violated oath was also a matter of concern to Saul.
2. Verses 38-39: "And Saul said, Draw ye near hither, all the chief of the people: and know and see wherein this sin hath been this day. For, *as* the LORD liveth, which saveth Israel, though it be in Jonathan my son, he shall surely die. But *there was* not a man among all the people *that* answered him."

- a. The king assembled the chief men of the people, and broached the subject of the oath he had sworn earlier. He figured that someone had violated the injunction, which resulted in the failure of God to give answer to his request.
 - b. Saul asserted that the one who violated the charge by taking food would be surely put to death, even if the culprit turned out to be his son Jonathan. No one said anything to this, although there were some of those in the ranks who knew of Jonathan's act.
3. Verses 40-41: "Then said he unto all Israel, Be ye on one side, and I and Jonathan my son will be on the other side. And the people said unto Saul, Do what seemeth good unto thee. Therefore Saul said unto the LORD God of Israel, Give a perfect *lot*. And Saul and Jonathan were taken: but the people escaped."
- a. Separating himself and Jonathan from the people, Saul called for the lot to be cast to determine the guilty party. He and Jonathan were taken.
 - b. He knew of his own innocence and believed his son was guiltless. He was no doubt greatly shocked to learn that no one on the other side of the line was guilty. It could only be his son!
4. Verses 42-44: "And Saul said, Cast *lots* between me and Jonathan my son. And Jonathan was taken. Then Saul said to Jonathan, Tell me what thou hast done. And Jonathan told him, and said, I did but taste a little honey with the end of the rod that *was* in mine hand, *and*, lo, I must die. And Saul answered, God do so and more also: for thou shalt surely die, Jonathan."
- a. Jonathan was chosen when the lot was cast to decide between the two. He asked Jonathan to give a report of what he had done. It will be remembered that Jonathan and his servant were not even in camp when the charge against eating food was given.
 - b. Saul was as good as his word in pronouncing the penalty of death against his son. He thought that if he did not follow through with his threat, he would be punished by the Lord for this error.
5. Verses 45-46: And the people said unto Saul, Shall Jonathan die, who hath wrought this great salvation in Israel? God forbid: *as* the LORD liveth, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground; for he hath wrought with God this day. So the people rescued Jonathan, that he died not. Then Saul went up from following the Philistines: and the Philistines went to their own place."
- a. The people cried out in defense of Jonathan. They understood correctly that God had worked with this young man in effecting the victory over the Philistine, and that it would be a great miscarriage of justice to execute him for violating a charge which he had never heard. Saul would naturally have been easily persuaded to spare his son.
 - b. He and his men returned to their place and the Philistine went back home. The battle was over.
- E. 1 Samuel 14:47-52: Further Activities of Saul.
1. Verses 47-48: "So Saul took the kingdom over Israel, and fought against all his enemies on every side, against Moab, and against the children of Ammon, and against Edom, and against the kings of Zobah, and against the Philistines: and whithersoever he turned himself, he vexed *them*. And he gathered an host, and smote the Amalekites, and delivered Israel out of the hands of them that spoiled them."
 - a. A report is here given in summary form of the exploits of Saul in fighting against the enemies of Israel. He successfully fought against the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, the army of Zobah, the Philistines, and the Amalekites. In each of these cases, he was able to vex the enemy.
 - b. Obviously, God was giving Saul an opportunity to make amends for his error at Gilgal. At the same time, he aided Saul in throwing off the oppression the enemies of Israel sought to bring upon them.
 - c. The long-time enemies of Israel, the Amalekites, are mentioned. These people were to furnish the major opportunity for Saul to gain God's ultimate approval or lose it altogether. 2. Verses 50-51: "Now the sons of Saul were Jonathan, and Ishui, and Melchishua: and the names of his two daughters *were these*; the name of the firstborn Merab, and the name of the younger Michal: And the name of Saul's wife *was* Ahinoam, the daughter of Ahimaaz: and the name of the captain of his host was Abner the son of Ner, Saul's uncle. And Kish *was* the father of Saul; and Ner the father of Abner was the son of Abiel."
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- a. Saul's sons are identified as Jonathan, Ishui, and Malchishua; his two daughters are Merab and Michal. His wife was named Ahinoam; she was the daughter of Ahimaaz. The captain of his army was Abner, who was the son of Ner, Saul's uncle.
 - b. Saul's father was Kish; Ner was the brother of Kish; their father's name was Abiel.
3. Verse 52: "And there was sore war against the Philistines all the days of Saul: and when Saul saw any strong man, or any valiant man, he took him unto him."
- a. Throughout the reign of Saul, the Philistines remained a strong enemy. Great animosity existed between these two nations. Think of the trouble and heartache that could have been avoided if Israel had been faithful enough to eradicate this nation when they first conquered Canaan.
 - b. Saul was ever on the lookout for some strong, valiant man to aid him in his wars.
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1 SAMUEL 15

A. 1 Samuel 15:1-5: Amalek's Treachery Remembered.

1. Verse 1: "Samuel also said unto Saul, The LORD sent me to anoint thee *to be* king over his people, over Israel: now therefore hearken thou unto the voice of the words of the LORD."
 - a. The prophet, before giving the following instructions to Saul, called the king's attention to the fact that God had given Samuel the privilege of anointing him Israel's first monarch.
 - b. Samuel identified the source of the instructions as the Lord, and charged Saul to take serious heed to what the Lord is about to command him to do.
 - c. The king had failed an earlier test (1 Sam. 13). The present test would determine Saul's future. Since he failed this test also, from this time onward, his experiences were dismal and bleak.
2. Verse 2: "Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I remember *that* which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid *wait* for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt."
 - a. Israel had experienced a bitter encounter with the Amalekites during their days in the wilderness. God was reminded of their treachery, and would use Saul as his chastening rod.
 - b. "Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim. And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek: to morrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in mine hand. So Joshua did as Moses had said to him, and fought with Amalek: and Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed: and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. But Moses' hands *were* heavy; and they took a stone, and put *it* under him, and he sat thereon; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword" (Ex. 17:8-13).
 - c. There was no miraculous power in the fact of Moses' arms being raised. The point was to show that Moses was connected with the victory which God was accomplishing on the field of battle. When the Israelites saw that Moses was directly involved in the outcome, they perceived his union with the God of Heaven! In the near future, he would receive the Law of Moses, delivered through their leader Moses, to Israel. Without that Law, it would have been pointless for the Almighty to have brought the nation out of Egypt.
 - d. "The lifting up of the staff secured to the warriors the strength needed to obtain the victory, from the fact that by means of the staff Moses brought down this strength from above, *i.e.*, from the Almighty God in heaven; not indeed by a merely spiritless and unthinking elevation of the staff, but by the power of his prayer, which was embodied in the lifting up of his hands with the staff, and was so far strengthened thereby, that God had chosen and already employed this staff as the medium of the saving manifestation of His almighty power.
 - 1) "There is no other way in which we can explain the effect produced upon the battle by the raising and dropping...of the staff in his hands. As long as Moses held up the staff, he drew down from God victorious powers for the Israelites by means of his prayer; but when he let it fall through the exhaustion of the strength of his hands, he ceased to draw down the power of God, and Amalek gained the upper hand.
 - 2) "The staff, therefore, as it was stretched out on high, was not a sign to the Israelites that were fighting, for it is by no means certain that they could see it in the heat of the battle; but it was a sign to Jehovah, carrying up, as it were, to God the wishes and prayers of Moses, and bringing down from God victorious powers for Israel" (Keil, p.80).
 - e. Aaron and Hur each held up one of Moses' arms and thus Israel was able to defeat the enemy. Where did Israel get the weapons? They either brought them from Egypt, or what is more likely, obtained them from the dead Egyptian soldiers whose bodies washed up upon the seashore (14:30).
 - f. Josephus describes the details of this victory:

- 1) "So the armies joined battle; and it came to a close fight, hand to hand, both sides showing great alacrity, and encouraging one another. And indeed while Moses stretched out his hand towards heaven the Hebrews were too hard for the Amalekites: but Moses not being able to sustain his hands thus stretched out, (for as often as he let down his hands, so often were his own people worsted,) he bade his brother Aaron, and Hur their sister Miriam's husband, to stand on each side of him, and take hold of his hands, and not permit his weariness to prevent it, but to assist him in the extension of his hands.
 - 2) "When this was done, the Hebrews conquered the Amalekites by main force; and indeed they had all perished, unless the approach of the night had obliged the Hebrews to desist from killing any more. So our forefathers obtained a most signal and most seasonable victory; for they not only overcame those that fought against them, but terrified also the neighboring nations, and got great and splendid advantages, which they obtained of their enemies by their hard pains in this battle: for when they had taken the enemy's camp, they got ready booty for the public, and for their own private families, whereas till then they had not any sort of plenty, of even necessary food.
 - 3) "The forementioned battle, when they had once got it, was also the occasion of their prosperity, not only for the present, but for the future ages also; for they not only made slaves of the bodies of their enemies, but subdued their minds also, and after this battle, became terrible to all that dwelt round about them.
 - 4) "Moreover, they acquired a vast quantity of riches; for a great deal of silver and gold was left in the enemy's camp; as also brazen vessels, which they made common use of in their families; many utensils also that were embroidered there were of both sorts, that is, of what were weaved, and what were the ornaments of their armor, and other things that served for use in the family, and for the furniture of their rooms; they got also the prey of their cattle, and of whatsoever uses to follow camps, when they remove from one place to another.
 - 5) "So the Hebrews now valued themselves upon their courage, and claimed great merit for their valor; and they perpetually inured themselves to take pains, by which they deemed every difficulty might be surmounted. Such were the consequences of this battle" [Josephus: Antiquities of the Jews, PC Study Bible formatted electronic database Copyright © 2003 by Biblsoft, Inc. All rights reserved].
- g. For the evil that Amalek wrought on Israel, God committed himself to punish these wicked people.
- 1) "And the LORD said unto Moses, Write this *for* a memorial in a book, and rehearse *it* in the ears of Joshua: for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovahnissi: For he said, Because the LORD hath sworn *that* the LORD *will have* war with Amalek from generation to generation" (Ex. 17:14-16).
 - 2) Moses is instructed to record this information in a (the Hebrew text says *the*) book, and tell Joshua the details. The book is doubtless the Pentateuch. God stated his intention to destroy Amalek, which was done more than 400 years later (1 Sam. 15).
 - 3) A few hundred years had passed since the wilderness battle with Amalek to the time of Saul, but God had not forgotten his promise to punish them. Centuries may pass, but his promises will be kept. The wheels of God's justice grind slowly, but they surely grind.
 - a) Galatians 6:7-8: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."
 - b) 2 Peter 3:8-9: "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day *is* with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."
3. Verse 3: "Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass."
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- a. Amalek was “the powerful tribe which inhabited the country immediately to the eastward of the northern Cushites. Their territory extended over the whole of the eastern portion of the desert of Sinai to Rephidim. They were the earliest opponents (Deut. 25:18; Exod. 17:8-16), the hereditary and restless enemy of Israel (Num. 14:45; Judg. 3:13; 6:3), and had not repented (ch. 14:48) of their bitter and sleepless hatred during the 500 years that had elapsed since their doom was pronounced”(JFB, p.170).
 - b. Amalek: “A semi-nomadic people who ranged over a wide area south of Palestine, including the Sinai and Arabian peninsulas (Gen. 14:7; 1 Sam. 15:7). They were the first enemies to attack Israelites under Moses at the battle of Rephidim (Ex. 17:8-14). Because they attacked without provocation, God promised to have them completely destroyed some day in the future (later fulfilled by King Saul, 1 Sam. 15:2-9). In Gideon's day, the Amalekites dominated at least part of Israel's heartland (Judg. 6:3; Judg. 6:33), and even in David's time, Amalekite forces or raiding parties were capable of penetrating Philistine territory (2 Sam. 27:8,9). Genesis 36:15,16 identifies the Amalekites as a clan descending from Esau. At the time of the Exodus (about 1450 B.C.), the Amalekites and the Canaanites attacked Israel as they retreated toward the desert after refusing to obey God at Kadesh (Num. 14:45). In Deut. 25:17-19, the Lord reminded Israel of the guerrilla tactics the Amalekites had used”(PC Bible Atlas).
 - c. Saul was commanded to smite and utterly destroy the whole Amalekite nation, both men and animals. No plunder was to be taken. Only God has the right to exterminate a nation. Some have tried to find justification in Saul's sparing of Agag, implying that he was more charitable than was God. Such a notion fails to take into account the sovereignty and infinite wisdom of God.
 - 1) When a man commits sin, he forfeits his right to live; if God executes a sinner, he is only fulfilling the death warrant which was issued in Eden (Gen. 2:16-17). It is only by his grace that any sinner is allowed to live.
 - 2) By executing the corrupted nation of Amalek, God was sparing the world the evil influence of that wicked society. If they had continued, they would have spread death, misery, and sin to countless other people. The accountable Amalekites simply met with justice; the unaccountable ones were spared the condemnation of their souls, for they would have become just as wicked as their parents and peers. Which of these two alternatives is more charitable—for the people at the time?
4. Verses 4-5: “And Saul gathered the people together, and numbered them in Telaim, two hundred thousand footmen, and ten thousand men of Judah. And Saul came to a city of Amalek, and laid wait in the valley.”
- a. The number of the assembled fighting men was considerably less than those gathered for an earlier battle. When Saul went to the aid of Jabeshgilead, three hundred thousand soldiers from Israel and thirty thousand from Judah were counted (11:9).
 - b. Saul mustered his forces at Telaim. This may be the same as Telem (Josh. 15:21,24), situated near the border of Edom. This was a good place for the army to gather, preparatory to invading Amalek.
 - c. He led his army into the territory of Amalek, and approached a certain prominent city. Possibly the city was Amalek (Clarke, p.255).
- B. 1 Samuel 15:6-9: Saul Smites Amalek.
1. Verse 6: “And Saul said unto the Kenites, Go, depart, get you down from among the Amalekites, lest I destroy you with them: for ye showed kindness to all the children of Israel, when they came up out of Egypt. So the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites.”
 - a. The Kenites were long-time friends and allies to Israel.
 - 1) Numbers 10:29: "And Moses said unto Hobab, the son of Raguel the Midianite, Moses' father in law, We are journeying unto the place of which the LORD said, I will give it you: come thou with us, and we will do thee good: for the LORD hath spoken good concerning Israel."
 - 2) Judges 1:16: "And the children of the Kenite, Moses' father in law, went up out of the city of palm trees with the children of Judah into the wilderness of Judah, which *lieth* in the south of Arad; and they went and dwelt among the people."
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- b. Not wanting to bring any hardship upon the Kenites, Saul gave them time to remove themselves from among the Amalekites before the attack was launched. The Kenites complied.
 - c. “KE’NITES (ke’nits; ‘pertaining to copper-smiths’). A group of metalsmiths who traveled throughout the mineral-bearing region in the Wadi Arabah. They are first mentioned in Gen 15:19 as one of the nations to be ‘given’ to Israel. They descended from the Midianites and developed extraordinary skill in metalwork. They settled down early along the SW shore of the Dead Sea, SE of Hebron (Judg 1:16). Hobab, the son of Reuel, was a Kenite and acted as a guide to Israel in the wilderness (1:16; 4:11). Their nomadism is suggested in the OT by numerous individual Kenites described as living in various places. Besides their residence SE of Hebron, they were found in the Wadi Arabah (Num 24:21), in Naphtali (Judg 4:11) and in the Davidic-Solomonic era they are mentioned in southern Judah (1 Sam 15:6; 27:10). Heber, mentioned in Judg 4:11 and 5:24, was a Kenite, and the ascetic Rechabites mentioned in 1 Chron 2:55 were also of Kenite extraction” [The New Unger's Bible Dictionary. Originally published by Moody Press of Chicago, Illinois. Copyright (c) 1988].
2. Verses 7-8: “And Saul smote the Amalekites from Havilah *until* thou comest to Shur, that *is* over against Egypt. And he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword.”
 - a. Saul put the Amalekites to the sword, killing the whole population with the single exception of King Agag. The victory was complete.
 - b. These people were nomadic, which may mean that not all of the nation was located in this one place. Later, we find Amalekites still creating a problem in Israel during Hezekiah’s time. "And they smote the rest of the Amalekites that were escaped, and dwelt there unto this day" (1 Chron. 4:43).
 3. Verse 9: “But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all *that was* good, and would not utterly destroy them: but every thing *that was* vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly.”
 - a. Saul and his men are linked together as equally responsible in sparing Agag and the best of the flocks and herds. They destroyed all the animals that were imperfect in any way.
 - b. Partial obedience is not obedience at all. Preachers of earlier generations used to use the illustration of a settler giving his sons instructions to build a cabin and barn, and dig a well for the homestead, while he fetched the rest of the family to their new home.
 - 1) He told them exactly where to place the house and barn, and where he wanted the well to be dug. Returning later, he found the house and barn where he had ordered, but the well was sunk at a different location. The preachers would then raise the question: “In how many of these three cases did the sons obey the father?”
 - 2) The answer was then given: “In neither of the cases did they obey! Their father’s plan coincided with their thoughts in the first two cases; in the third, there was disagreement, so they put the well where they wanted it. In the first instance where their wisdom differed with their father’s, they did according to their will; when their faith in their father was tested, they did what they wished.” So it is with many in regards to the will of God.
 - c. Saul carried out the Lord’s plan perfectly except in the case of Agag and the best of the livestock. His actions were defined as disobedience.
- C. 1 Samuel 15:10-23: Saul’s Sin Exposed by Samuel.
1. Verses 10-11: “Then came the word of the LORD unto Samuel, saying, It repenteth me that I have set up Saul *to be* king: for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments. And it grieved Samuel; and he cried unto the LORD all night.”
 - a. God revealed a message to the prophet Samuel, stating that he had changed his mind regarding Saul’s appointment as king. He also reported to the prophet that Saul had ceased to follow the will of God and had not performed the mission on which he had been sent.
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- b. Although the Bible speaks of God repenting, it is clear that he does not repent in the same way that men repent. "God *is* not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do *it*? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" (Num. 23:19).
 - 1) Our repentance is produced by godly sorrow over our sins, which leads us to make the necessary changes in the way we live (2 Cor. 7:10; Acts 26:20). Repentance is a change of mind, a commitment to re-order our lives. Since God cannot commit sin, there is never a need for him to repent of some wickedness.
 - a) 2 Corinthians 7:10: "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death."
 - b) Acts 26:20: "But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance."
 - 2) God repents in that he changes his mind regarding some plan of action he has undertaken.
 - a) 1 Samuel 15:29: "And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for he *is* not a man, that he should repent."
 - b) Genesis 6:6: "And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart."
 - c. Being infinite in knowledge, God can know the future as perfectly as he knows the present and the past; he could know beforehand of Saul's disobedience.
 - d. Samuel grieved over the fate that had befallen Saul; he cried to the Lord over this sad affair all night. Both David and Christ prayed all night on certain occasions.
 - 1) 2 Samuel 12:16: "David therefore besought God for the child; and David fasted, and went in, and lay all night upon the earth."
 - 2) Luke 6:12: "And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God."
 - 2. Verse 12: "And when Samuel rose early to meet Saul in the morning, it was told Samuel, saying, Saul came to Carmel, and, behold, he set him up a place, and is gone about, and passed on, and gone down to Gilgal."
 - a. NKJ: So when Samuel rose early in the morning to meet Saul, it was told Samuel, saying, "Saul went to Carmel, and indeed, he set up a monument for himself; and he has gone on around, passed by, and gone down to Gilgal" (1 Sam. 15:12).
 - b. Being appraised of Saul's disobedience, Samuel arose early the next morning to meet the king as he returned from his mission.
 - c. Information was given to Samuel that Saul had been to Carmel, had set up a place, and had gone on to Gilgal. This Carmel was not Mount Carmel, but a place by that name in southern Palestine, thought to be about 7-10 miles south of Hebron (Josh. 15:55).
 - d. The place Saul had set up was a monument, possibly like the one Absalom later erected: "Now Absalom in his lifetime had taken and reared up for himself a pillar, which *is* in the king's dale: for he said, I have no son to keep my name in remembrance: and he called the pillar after his own name: and it is called unto this day, Absalom's place" (2 Sam. 18:18).
 - e. Saul's monument (see ASV) was a tribute to himself. He actually thought he had fulfilled the will of God. "And Samuel rose early to meet Saul in the morning; and it was told Samuel, saying, Saul came to Carmel, and, behold, he set him up a monument, and turned, and passed on, and went down to Gilgal" (1 Sam. 15:12, ASV).
 - f. "If Samuel was at home at Ramah, he would have a journey of several days before reaching Carmel, the city mentioned in Josh 15:55, on the road from Arad, on the borders of the wilderness of Judah, about ten miles southeast of Hebron. The words 'in the morning' should be joined with rose early. Before setting out, however, Samuel learned that Saul had already marched northward towards Gilgal, having first set him up a place—Hebrew, 'a hand,' i.e. a monument, something to call attention to his
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- victory. In 2 Sam 18:18 Absalom's pillar is styled 'Absalom's hand.' A Hebrew trophy in honour of a victory possibly had a hand carved upon it. Gilgal was the city in the Jordan valley near Jericho, whither Samuel now followed Saul" [The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 2001 by Biblesoft].
3. Verses 13-14: "And Samuel came to Saul: and Saul said unto him, Blessed *be* thou of the LORD: I have performed the commandment of the LORD. And Samuel said, What *meaneth* then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?"
 - a. Saul warmly greeted his old mentor, declaring as he did so that he had performed the commandment of the Lord.
 - b. Samuel's penetrating reply exposed the claim as false. If he had been obedient to God's commands, how could Saul explain the bleating of the sheep and the lowing of the oxen which they both could hear? The sheep and cattle called him a liar! If he had been obedient, there would have been none of these animals still surviving. Samuel had been the instrument through whom the instructions to destroy Amalek had been delivered to Saul (cf. verses 1-3).
 4. Verses 15-16: "And Saul said, They have brought them from the Amalekites: for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed. Then Samuel said unto Saul, Stay, and I will tell thee what the LORD hath said to me this night. And he said unto him, Say on."
 - a. Having his false claim exposed, Saul next tried to place the blame for sparing the animals on the men who were with him: "**They** have brought them from the Amalekites." However, Saul was king and could have overridden any demands of the people.
 - b. Adding to that, Saul sought to explain away the guilt of his men on the basis that they had spared the best animals to use as a sacrifice to God. In other words, although they had not fulfilled the letter of the command, the omission was justified by the end object intended.
 - c. Directing Saul to be quiet and listen, and he would reveal to him what the Lord had revealed to him the preceding night. Saul bade him to tell him.
 5. Verse 17: "And Samuel said, When thou *wast* little in thine own sight, *wast* thou not *made* the head of the tribes of Israel, and the LORD anointed thee king over Israel?"
 - a. When Saul was humble, thinking himself to be of little value and strength, God had exalted him to the throne. He was not given this great honor and authority because he possessed great powers, but because of his humility.
 - b. Humility is of greater esteem in God's sight than the greatest of natural talent and skill. "For all those *things* hath mine hand made, and all those *things* have been, saith the LORD: but to this *man* will I look, *even to him that is* poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word" (Isa. 66:20).
 - c. Hosea 13:1: "When Ephraim spake trembling, he exalted himself in Israel; but when he offended in Baal, he died."
 6. Verses 18-19: "And the LORD sent thee on a journey, and said, Go and utterly destroy the sinners the Amalekites, and fight against them until they be consumed. Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the LORD, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst evil in the sight of the LORD?"
 - a. Samuel reminded the king that God had sent him on a mission to destroy the Amalekites, and to continue the battle until all of that corrupt nation had been consumed.
 - b. He asked, Why did you not obey the voice of the Lord? He had fallen upon the spoil and did evil in God's sight. Why? The omission of part of his duty was an act of evil.
 - 1) James 4:17: "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth *it* not, to him it is sin."
 - 2) 1 John 3:4: "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law."
 - 3) 1 John 5:17: "All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death."
 7. Verses 20-21: "And Saul said unto Samuel, Yea, I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, and have gone the way which the LORD sent me, and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed

the Amalekites. But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God in Gilgal.”

- a. “Excusing himself by blaming the people, he explained that the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the devoted things, to sacrifice unto Jehovah, thy God. The thought conveyed is that the people, not Saul, had transgressed the commandment of Jehovah, but inadvertently, for they had the very highest and most laudable intentions! They intended to offer to Jehovah the very best of the animals which they had spared” (ALC, 1975, p.149).
 - b. Saul claimed again that he had done the Lord’s will, he had destroyed all of the Amalekites except their king, whom he had brought back as a prisoner. Regarding the animals that were spared, he blamed that on the people, but asserted that even that omission was justified in that only the best of the sheep and cattle had been spared—for the purpose of sacrificing unto God. But the truth remained painfully clear: Saul had not done what God commanded!
8. Verse 22: “And Samuel said, Hath the LORD *as great* delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey *is* better than sacrifice, *and* to hearken than the fat of rams.”
- a. “The question was cutting to the mark, and certainly deserved. It was calculated to strip Saul of his window-dressed innocency. Samuel did not, by his question, reject sacrifices as if they were worthless or that Jehovah took no delight in them; but sacrifices, in the absence of faith and obedience on the part of the one who offered them, were worthless. The sum of the whole matter is that acceptable worship then began with a spirit of full obedience to the divine command, and just so is the case for Christian worship today” (ALC, 1975, p.1949).
 - b. The proposed sacrifice Saul had mentioned was possible only after he and his soldiers had violated the will of God by failing to slaughter them. Such a sacrifice would have been a stench before the Lord; it would have grown out of disobedience, not obedience.
 - c. To obey the will of God is of paramount importance, then and now! Worship that springs from the heart of one who is living in disobedience is unacceptable.
 - 1) This is true in the case of worship in prayer.
 - a) Psalms 66:18: "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear *me*."
 - b) Proverbs 28:9: "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer *shall be* abomination."
 - 2) It is true in any avenue of worship. "Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, *as* the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition" (Mark 7:7-9).
 - d. Obedience is better than sacrifice; to hearken is better than the fat of rams. The two statements are parallel. The sacrifice these men intended was not one which God had commanded; he had ordered that these very animals be destroyed; to sacrifice these animals would have been an exercise in futility since they had disobeyed in order to have the animals available for sacrifice. The truth is, no doubt, that there was no plan to sacrifice the animals; they were spared for the gain of the soldiers.
9. Verse 23: “For rebellion *is as* the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness *is as* iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from *being* king.”
- a. “The point of emphasis was and is that any conscious disregard for Jehovah’s commands, or any conscious and deliberate refusal to obey, or any conscious and willful substitution was idolatry” (ALC, 1975, p.149).
 - b. Witchcraft is a system that was invented to replace God’s arrangement. Stubbornness equals iniquity [lawlessness] and idolatry. One who is stubborn lives in open disregard to the law of God. Idolatry is a religious system which operates in competition with God’s order. In each of these cases, which are used as parallel with each other, God’s will is shunned and despised.
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- c. Bringing his charges to a point, Samuel declares that since Saul had rejected the word of God, the Lord had rejected him as king. His rebellion brought a penalty, which included the loss of his throne. This did not mean that Saul was immediately to be removed as king, but that his regal prerogatives were numbered. As soon as the replacement was ready, and the situation had developed, a new king would be put forth. David was thirty [2 Sam. 5:4] when he began to reign and Christ was thirty [Luke 3:21-23] when he began his public ministry—which seems to be more than a mere coincidence. It is likely, therefore, that God was waiting until David reached this age before bringing down Saul's reign.

D. 1 Samuel 15:24-31: Saul Confesses His Sin.

1. Verses 24-25: "And Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned: for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD, and thy words: because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice. Now therefore, I pray thee, pardon my sin, and turn again with me, that I may worship the LORD."
 - a. Saul's spurious excuses had been exposed for what they were; his guilt was established. He changed his argument. He admitted his culpability but claimed that he transgressed God's command because he feared his soldiers. The change in his defense was an abandonment of his former claims.
 - b. He besought Samuel to obtain forgiveness for his sin, and to let them worship together as they had in former days.
2. Verse 26: "And Samuel said unto Saul, I will not return with thee: for thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD hath rejected thee from being king over Israel."
 - a. At this point, apparently Saul's penitence was not sincere. Samuel declared that he would not return with Saul on account of his rejection of God's word. The king wanted Samuel to remain with him that they might participate in public worship together as before.
 - b. Saul's repudiation of God's word by his flagrant disobedience meant that Saul had been dethroned by the Lord.
 - c. Keil:
 - 1) This request Samuel refused, repeating at the same time the sentence of rejection, and turned to depart. "Then Saul laid hold of the lappet of his mantle (i.e., his upper garment), and it tore" (lit. was torn off). That the Niphal *wayiqara* is correct, and is not to be altered into *otaah wayiq-ra*, "Saul tore off the lappet," according to the rendering of the LXX, as Thenius supposes, is evident from the explanation which Samuel gave of the occurrence (v. 28): "Jehovah hath torn the sovereignty of Israel from thee to-day, and given it to thy neighbour, who is better than thou."
 - 2) As Saul was about to hold back the prophet by force, that he might obtain from him a revocation of the divine sentence, the tearing of the mantle, which took place accidentally, and evidently without any such intention on the part of Saul, was to serve as a sign of the rending away of the sovereignty from him.
3. Verses 27-28: "And as Samuel turned about to go away, he laid hold upon the skirt of his mantle, and it rent. And Samuel said unto him, The LORD hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbour of thine, *that is* better than thou."
 - a. Other versions:
 - 1) ASV: "And Samuel said, Though thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel? And Jehovah anointed thee king over Israel; and Jehovah sent thee on a journey, and said, Go, and utterly destroy the sinners the Amalekites, and fight against them until they be consumed."
 - 2) NKJ: And as Samuel turned around to go away, Saul seized the edge of his robe, and it tore. So Samuel said to him, "The Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today, and has given it to a neighbor of yours, who is better than you."
 - b. When Samuel turned away from Saul, the king laid hold on the prophet's clothing, causing a rent in the garment. Using the torn garment as an illustration, Samuel stated that the Lord had torn the kingdom from Saul that day, and had given it to another, more deserving Israelite. This new king was not identified by name at this point.

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- c. “The verses that precede and follow this statement demonstrate that the demeanour of Saul toward the prophet was full of submission and humility. The separation between Samuel and Saul was an impassioned scene, each being overcome by the force of strong though different emotions. In an agony of mental excitement Saul took hold of the prophet's dress, while he was hurrying away in vehement anger, to detain him. The rending of the mantle was adroitly pointed to as a significant and mysterious representation of his severance from the throne” (Jamieson).
4. Verse 29: “And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for he *is* not a man, that he should repent.”
 - a. This decision God had made about replacing Saul was not subject to change. He was determined to remove Saul from the throne. God is described as *the Strength of Israel*, which suggests the firmness of the decree.
 - b. Men often declare their intention of doing a certain thing, but lose their commitment and fail to do what they have vowed. God will not lie about this or any other matter. God will not change his mind. He is not like men who repent; he has no sin of which to repent, and he is not so shallow that he will repudiate his promises.
 - c. 2 Peter 3:8-9: “But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”
 5. Verses 30-31: “Then he said, I have sinned: *yet* honour me now, I pray thee, before the elders of my people, and before Israel, and turn again with me, that I may worship the LORD thy God. So Samuel turned again after Saul; and Saul worshipped the LORD.”
 - a. Once more Saul admits his guilt; it seems that he is now sincere, which Samuel recognizes as such, for he agrees to the request.
 - b. Saul was aware that he was to be replaced on the throne, but is now concerned about his standing before God and with his ability to lead the nation until the new king came on the scene. He wanted Samuel to allow him to have the respect of the elders and the nation. He would need to have this respect in order to operate as chief of state.
 - c. “Some have wondered what caused Samuel to go with Saul after his initial refusal to do so. There were several possibilities.
 - 1) “Samuel sincerely desired to help Saul in the presence of the people, for he dearly loved the man. ‘Had Samuel refused the honor due to Saul’s rank, it would have given an occasion of intrigue and resistance against Saul’s government and could well have been a step towards bringing back the old anarchy.’
 - 2) “Another possibility is that Saul might have threatened to take Samuel’s life if he refused. His seizing Samuel’s robe was in itself an act of violence; and Saul was certainly capable of killing anyone whom he considered to be a threat to himself.
 - 3) “The third alternative is that Samuel’s action here constituted a sin on the prophet’s part. We consider this to be the least likely of the reasons cited here, and that the first reason is probably correct” (Coffman, p.186).
 - d. Another possible reason might be that Samuel saw true penitence in Saul, and went with him so as to enable him to be acceptable to God, even though his throne was irrevocably lost. We are plainly told that Saul worshipped the Lord, which would not have been so-stated if the devotion was false.
- E. 1 Samuel 15:32-33: Samuel Slays Agag.
1. Verse 32: “Then said Samuel, Bring ye hither to me Agag the king of the Amalekites. And Agag came unto him delicately. And Agag said, Surely the bitterness of death is past.”
 - a. The prophet called for the Amalekite king to be brought before him. Agag approached Samuel cheerfully (ASV) or trembling (LXX).
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- b. Whatever the best rendering of the word, he approached the prophet, thinking that the bitterness of death was past. He may have thought that, since he was not executed immediately, that his life was to be spared. Perhaps he had reconciled himself to dying, and was able to face death without great fear or remorse.
2. Verse 33: "And Samuel said, As thy sword hath made women childless, so shall thy mother be childless among women. And Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the LORD in Gilgal."
 - a. If he expected clemency from Samuel, he was soon to be disappointed. Stating that Agag had been the cause of many women becoming childless, the prophet vowed that Agag's mother was about to become childless. This was a not-so-subtle statement that the Amalekite king was to be executed.
 - b. Taking a sword, the aged prophet proceeded to cut Agag into pieces. The location of the execution was Gilgal.
 - c. The age-old principle of reaping what is sown is again demonstrated.
 - 1) Galatians 6:7-8: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."
 - 2) Judges 1:5-8: "And they found Adonibezek in Bezek: and they fought against him, and they slew the Canaanites and the Perizzites. But Adonibezek fled; and they pursued after him, and caught him, and cut off his thumbs and his great toes. And Adonibezek said, Threescore and ten kings, having their thumbs and their great toes cut off, gathered their meat under my table: as I have done, so God hath requited me. And they brought him to Jerusalem, and there he died. Now the children of Judah had fought against Jerusalem, and had taken it, and smitten it with the edge of the sword, and set the city on fire."
 - d. "This cruel tyrant met the retribution of a righteous Providence. Never has it been unusual for great or official personages in the East to perform executions with their own hands (cf. Judg 8:21). Samuel did it 'before the Lord in Gilgal,' appointing that same mode of punishment (hitherto unknown in Israel) to be used toward him, which he had formerly used toward others" (Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright © 1997, 2003, 2005, 2006 by Biblesoft, Inc.).
- F. 1 Samuel 15:34-35: Samuel Departs from Saul.
 1. Verse 34: "Then Samuel went to Ramah; and Saul went up to his house to Gibeah of Saul."
 - a. Samuel returned to his home in Ramah, where he continued his usual activities. Saul went to his house at Gibeah, retaining his authority as king until such time that God intervened to bring another man to the throne.
 - b. "After the prophet had thus maintained the rights of Jehovah in the presence of Saul, and carried out the ban upon Agag, he returned to his own home at Ramah; and Saul went to his house at Gibeah" (Keil, p.159).
 2. Verse 35: "And Samuel came no more to see Saul until the day of his death: nevertheless Samuel mourned for Saul: and the LORD repented that he had made Saul king over Israel."
 - a. Samuel broke off his usual communication with Saul, but he nevertheless grieved over the king. He would not interfere, awaiting the proper time for God to take action to replace the king.
 - b. The statement does not mean that Samuel never entered Saul's presence again, for we are told about just such an occurrence in 1 Samuel 19:22-24: "Then went he also to Ramah, and came to a great well that *is* in Sechu: and he asked and said, Where *are* Samuel and David? And *one* said, Behold, *they be* at Naioth in Ramah. And he went thither to Naioth in Ramah: and the spirit of God was upon him also, and he went on, and prophesied, until he came to Naioth in Ramah. And he stripped off his clothes also, and prophesied before Samuel in like manner, and lay down naked all that day and all that night. Wherefore they say, *Is* Saul also among the prophets?"
 - c. "From this time Samuel had no connection with Saul; he never more acknowledged him as king; he mourned and prayed for him, and continued to perform his prophetic functions at Ramah, and at Naioth..." (Clarke, p.257).

1 SAMUEL 16

A. 1 Samuel 16:1-5: God Sends Samuel to Bethlehem to Anoint a New King.

1. Verse 1: "And the LORD said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite: for I have provided me a king among his sons."
 - a. Having anointed Saul as king, and having stood at his side through many years and many troubles, Samuel had genuine affection for Saul. Many mournful prayers and bitter tears had the prophet offered in the king's behalf.
 - b. God mildly rebukes Samuel, showing that since he had rejected Saul, Samuel was to accept this new development. He announced to the prophet that he had determined to exalt one of the sons of Jesse of Bethlehem to be king. He directed Samuel to go and anoint as king the one he had chosen. David's name was not yet revealed.
 - c. For the good of the nation, it was necessary for Saul to be removed, but God did not directly remove him; he remained in office for a number of years following David's anointment. For the good of the nation, God decreed that Saul's successor be anointed secretly, and that he would not take the reins of government until Saul's demise.
 - d. "The genealogy of Jesse is traced (Ruth 4:18-21) to Boaz. But the object was merely to prove that he was a link in the Messianic chain of descent; and it is left quite unknown whether Jesse was the oldest of Obed and Boaz's family, the heir of that wealthy proprietor, or a younger son. That he was a comparatively poor man has been inferred from his having a small flock, under the care of one shepherd only, his youngest son. At the same time, he seems to have been a man of note in the village, esteemed for his piety and general worth of character (cf. Isa 11:1)" (Jamieson).



The Genealogy Given by Matthew 1:3-6 Corresponds Precisely with Ruth 4:18-22

RUTH 4:18-22	MATTHEW 1:3-6
Pharez	Phares
Hezron	Esrom
Ram	Aram
Amminadab	Aminadab
Nahshon	Naasson
Salmon	Salmon
Boaz	Booz
Obed	Obed
Jesse	Jesse
David	David

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2. Verses 2-3: “And Samuel said, How can I go? if Saul hear *it*, he will kill me. And the LORD said, Take an heifer with thee, and say, I am come to sacrifice to the LORD. And call Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show thee what thou shalt do: and thou shalt anoint unto me *him* whom I name unto thee.”
 - a. Samuel showed his human frailty by expressing fear that Saul would kill him if he should learn the object of his mission. That the prophet’s fear rested on a solid foundation is shown by Saul’s slaughter of the priests of Nob (1 Sam. 22:11-19).
 - b. God instructed Samuel to take with him to Bethlehem a heifer which was to be sacrificed unto the Lord there. The animal was to be sacrificed, but more was involved in his mission than this act of devotion. It was not necessary for the prophet to publicly state the full purpose of his visit; it was sufficient that the public understand that his visit was to offer a sacrifice, an act which he commonly did.
 - c. God was using good wisdom in covering up the primary purpose of Samuel’s visit to Bethlehem. He was not guilty of chicanery or falsehood. Nothing good could come from an open declaration of his plan to replace Saul with David; open rebellion might arise in Saul’s favor, or David’s, leading to a destructive civil war, which would be an invitation to the Philistines to subdue the whole nation. God never condones or encourages lying, not even in the most acute of circumstances. There are situations, however, which demand discretion and secrecy, for the good of those affected.
 - d. On arrival at Bethlehem, Samuel was to invite Jesse to the sacrifice. God would reveal to the prophet the one he intended to bring to the throne when it was vacated by Saul.
 - e. Coffman:
 - 1) “Take a heifer with you, and say, I am come to sacrifice to the Lord’ (1 Samuel 16:2) This was God's requirement that the mission be conducted secretly. This was neither duplicity nor falsehood, but discretion and concealment, both of which are honorable.
 - 2) "You shall anoint for me him whom I name to you" (1 Samuel 16:3). Many have been impressed with the skill of the author here in the concealment of David's name until the very last.”
 3. Verse 4: “And Samuel did that which the LORD spake, and came to Bethlehem. And the elders of the town trembled at his coming, and said, Comest thou peaceably?”
 - a. “Bethlehem was an obscure town, and not within the usual circuit of the judge. The elders were naturally apprehensive, therefore, that his arrival was occasioned by some extraordinary reason, and that it might entail evil upon their town, in consequence of the estrangement between Samuel and the king” (JFB, p.174).
 - b. The elders of Bethlehem knew of Saul’s errors, and that Samuel had rebuked him for those departures. Knowing also somewhat of the king’s vengeful nature, they feared that Samuel’s presence in their little city might precipitate trouble for them, either from the prophet or the king. They did not anticipate anything good coming from Samuel’s presence.
 4. Verse 5: “And he said, Peaceably: I am come to sacrifice unto the LORD: sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice. And he sanctified Jesse and his sons, and called them to the sacrifice.”
 - a. Having asked the prophet whether he had come peaceably, Samuel responded affirmatively. He stated that he had come to sacrifice unto the Lord. This was a statement of fact, although he had another purpose to accomplish while there.
 - b. He directed them to sanctify themselves and attend the sacrifice with him. To sanctify is to set apart for a holy purpose. In their case, various provisions of the Mosaic Law were given to this end. Compare: “And Moses went down from the mount unto the people, and sanctified the people; and they washed their clothes. And he said unto the people, Be ready against the third day: come not at your wives” (Ex. 19:14-15).
 - c. Samuel sanctified Jesse and his sons, inviting them to the sacrifice. We are not told how he did this; it may simply mean that he selected this family specifically to attend the sacrifice.
- B. 1 Samuel 16:6-13: David is Anointed to be King.
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1. Verses 6-7: “And it came to pass, when they were come, that he looked on Eliab, and said, Surely the Lord's anointed *is* before him. But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for *the LORD seeth* not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.”
 - a. During the proceedings of the day, the sons of Jesse were presented to Samuel, with Eliab the eldest being the first. There was something about this man which impressed the prophet with the thought this must be the intended king.
 - b. However, God quickly removed that belief from his mind by telling the prophet that the selection was not to be on the basis of outward appearance. The countenance and the height of Eliab did not qualify him for the office. The implication is that Eliab was tall in stature and handsome.
 - c. The Lord stated that he does not judge men by their physical beauty and size, but by what is in the individual's heart. Men, in their shallowness of wisdom, look on the outward more than the inward; they place greater value on physical beauty and size than on the spiritual qualities of the soul. This is a very common practice in our world; it is manifest in virtually every relationship and activity.
 2. Verses 8-10: “Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, Neither hath the LORD chosen this. Then Jesse made Shammah to pass by. And he said, Neither hath the LORD chosen this. Again, Jesse made seven of his sons to pass before Samuel. And Samuel said unto Jesse, The LORD hath not chosen these.”
 - a. One after the other, the sons of Jesse passed before Samuel, but none of these seven sons was God's selection for king.
 - b. Samuel may have been wondering about God's announced choice of one of Jesse's sons to replace Saul. The list of sons given in 1 Chronicles 2:13-15 includes only seven sons, with David being listed as the seventh. By the time the record of Chronicles was given, evidently one of the other sons had died. 1 Samuel 17:12 plainly states that Jesse had eight sons.
 3. Verse 11: “And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all *thy* children? And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Send and fetch him: for we will not sit down till he come hither.”
 - a. Samuel inquired whether there was yet another son not present. Jesse, being urged, admitted that there was one more, the youngest, who was assigned the task of tending to the sheep.
 - b. The prophet requested that he be summoned, for they would not be able to sit down for the meal until this had been done. “The ancient Hebrews sat round a low table, with their legs crossed, as the modern Orientals do; for the luxurious practice of reclining was not introduced into Judea till a late period in the Old Testament history” (JFB, p.175).
 4. Verse 12: “And he sent, and brought him in. Now he *was* ruddy, *and* withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to. And the LORD said, Arise, anoint him: for this *is* he.”
 - a. “It will be observed that although his physical qualities and external attractions are so minutely specified as engaging the notice and admiration of beholders, the circumstance of his being selected for the regal office implies that he possessed the right state and dispositions of mind” (JFB, p.175).
 - b. David was *ruddy*, was of a *beautiful countenance*, and *goodly to look upon*. *Ruddy* has reference to red, which scholars suggest has reference to the color of his hair, and *beautiful countenance* speaks the fairness of his complexion. His physical appearance was pleasing to the eye.
 - c. *Ruddy*: “A healthy, reddish color. In two places in the Bible the word refers to the rosy complexion of vigorous health (Song 5:10; Lam 4:7). As a boy, David was also described as ruddy (1 Sam 16:12; 17:42). Some scholars believe the word in this case may mean that David had red hair” [Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary, Copyright (c)1986, Thomas Nelson Publishers].
 - d. David had all the outward attributes desirable in a leader, and also possessed the inward qualities that were especially valuable in God's estimation.
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- 1) 1 Samuel 16:7: “But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.”
 - 2) Acts 13:22: “And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will.”
 - e. “At the prophet's command David is fetched from the flock, which was probably near the house, and on his arrival the prophet sees a ruddy boy, i.e. red-haired, correctly rendered in the Vulgate rufus, the colour loved by all painters of manly beauty, and, from the delicacy of complexion which accompanies it, especially admired in the East, where men are generally dark-haired and sallow-faced. Moreover, he was of a beautiful countenance. The Hebrew says, ‘with beautiful eyes,’ and so the Syriac and Septuagint rightly. He was also goodly to look to, i.e. to look at. These last words give the general idea of the beauty of his face and person, while his bright hair and delicate complexion and the beauty of his eyes are specially noticed in the Hebrew” [Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 2001 by Biblesoft].
 - f. We are not told his age at this time. The Lord ordered Samuel to anoint David.
 5. Verse 13: “Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah.”
 - a. Samuel anointed David in the midst of his brethren, in a private setting. Following this episode, we are told that the prophet returned to his home in Ramah.
 - b. The spirit of the Lord came upon David from this day forward. This endowment has reference to the inspiration and supernatural guidance which God granted him. This miraculous benefaction included the power to meet Goliath, and probably was present when he slew the lion and bear which attacked his flock (17:34-36).
 - 1) 2 Samuel 23:2: "The spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word *was* in my tongue."
 - 2) Acts 1:16: "Men *and* brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus."
 - c. Jamieson:
 - 1) “Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him. This transaction must have been strictly private, according to Josephus, who states that Samuel whispered the object of it in his ear. But the sacred historian says expressly that it was done ‘in the midst of his brethren.’ Whether the elders of Beth-lehem were present or not, Jesse and all his sons were witnesses of the ceremony, and cognizant of its import, (see the notes at the end of 1 Sam 17.)
 - 2) “And the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward — (see the note at 1 Sam 10:1.) 'The anointing is placed in causal connection with the communication of the Spirit, the former typifying what the latter secured....”
- C. 1 Samuel 16:14-23: David Becomes Saul’s Servant.
1. Verse 14: “But the spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD troubled him.”
 - a. Saul lost the divine help God had formerly given him (cf. 10:9-13). It was withdrawn after he transgressed God’s law (13:5-14; 15:1-23).
 - b. In what sense did God send an evil spirit upon Saul? "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man" (Jas. 1:13). God will have nothing to do with anything that is wicked.
 - c. Pulpit Commentary:
 - 1) “From this time forward David is the central figure of the history. Saul has been rejected, and though, as being the actual king, he must still play his part, more especially as his decline goes on side by side with David’s growth in every kingly quality, yet the record of it is no longer given on Saul's account. Interesting, then, as may be the information concerning the mental malady with

- which Saul was visited, yet the object of this section is to acquaint us with the manner in which David was first brought into connection with him. From the description given of David in ver. 18 it is evident that there has been a considerable interval of time between this and the previous section. David is no longer a child, but a 'mighty valiant man.' The connection is ethical, and lies in the contrasted moral state of the two men, as shown in the two parallel statements: 'the Spirit of Jehovah came upon David;' 'the Spirit of Jehovah departed from Saul.'
- 2) "There was a gradual decline and debasement of his character; and as David grew from a child into a hero in war and a scholar in peace, so Saul, from being a hero, degenerated into a moody and resentful tyrant. An evil spirit from Jehovah troubled him. Really, as in the margin, terrified him; that is, Saul became subject to fits of intense mental agony, under which his reason gave way, and temporary insanity, accompanied by outbreaks of violence, came on."
- d. "And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did *it* not" (Jonah 3:10). God had intended to bring upon the wicked Ninevites a penalty for their sins. They had done evil; God planned a punishment for their evil. There was nothing sinful or wicked in God's judgment, but from the viewpoint of Nineveh, what God intended was evil: it was a severe penalty which they had deserved. — But they repented!
- 1) Matthew 12:41: "The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here." The repentance they wrought brought them into conformance to the preaching Jonah did. "Preaching" (as used by the Lord in Matthew 12:41) is put for the manner of life required by Jonah's preaching. Their repentance brought them into the course of life which Jonah's preaching demanded.
- 2) God saw that the people truly turned from their evil ways; he saw their works which demonstrated their repentance; he turned from bringing the punishment upon them which he had intended.
- a) Matthew 3:8: "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance."
- b) Acts 26:20: "But showed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and *then* to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance."
- c) 2 Corinthians 7:10: "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death."
- d) The repentance they wrought brought them into conformance to the preaching Jonah did. "Preaching" (as used by the Lord in Matthew 12:41) is put for the manner of life required by Jonah's preaching. Their repentance brought them into the course of life which Jonah's preaching demanded.
- e. Saul had knowingly intruded into the duties assigned to the priests when he took upon himself the right to offer sacrifice (1 Sam. 13:12-13); he violated his God-given orders when he spared Agag (1 Sam. 15:20-23). These violations deprived him of the heavenly guidance and strength he had earlier enjoyed. At the same time, he was deprived of God's protection, leaving him vulnerable to the malignant depression and intense jealousy that drove him to commit certain outrages which he would not have done in his earlier days.
- f. Coffman and others think that the evil spirit was a demon. If this is so, it cannot be said that God *sent* the demon, but that he be permitted such to happen. God is not to be blamed for the Devil's work! "That Saul had fallen into a deep melancholy, there is little doubt; that the devil might work more effectually on such a state of mind, there can be but little question. There is an old proverb, Satan delights to fish in troubled waters; and Saul's situation of mind gave him many advantages" (Clarke, p.259).
- g. Saul repeatedly showed his rebellious attitude toward God's will. There is a limit to God's patience. The time came when God would no longer be longsuffering to him, and allowed him to obtain a strong delusion. Compare: "And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they
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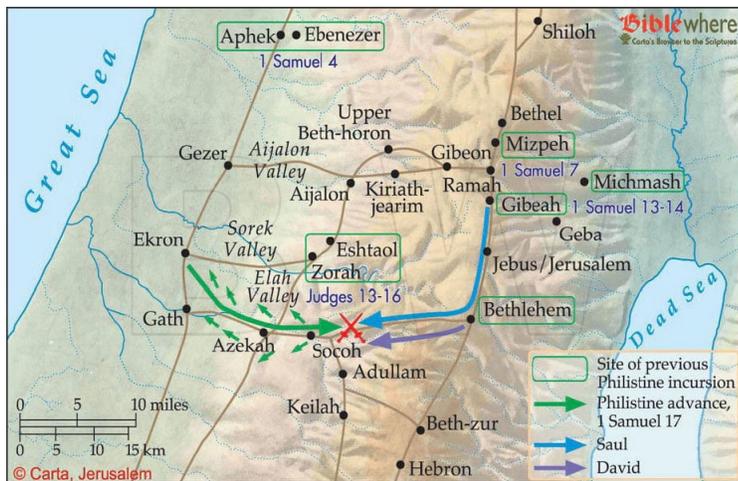
- received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thess. 2:10-12).
2. Verses 15-16: "And Saul's servants said unto him, Behold now, an evil spirit from God troubleth thee. Let our lord now command thy servants, *which are* before thee, to seek out a man, *who is* a cunning player on an harp: and it shall come to pass, when the evil spirit from God is upon thee, that he shall play with his hand, and thou shalt be well."
 - a. The servants of the king observed his troubled heart, and suggested that he allow them to seek out a man who was skilled in playing the harp, to soothe him when he was troubled.
 - b. "This has been literally proved: a musician was brought to play on his instrument while they were feeding a savage lion in the tower of London; the beast immediately left his food, came towards the grating of his den, and began to move in such a way as to show himself affected by the music. The musician ceased, and the lion returned to his food; he recommenced, and the lion left off his prey, and was so affected as to seem by his motions to dance with delight. This was repeatedly tried, and the effects were still the same" (Clarke, p.259).
 - c. If the *evil spirit* was a demon, it seems strange that music from a harp could give Saul relief. It seems more likely that the king's malady was a deep depression, a melancholy grief which permeated his heart, and brought on a morose, vindictive state of mind.
 3. Verses 17-18: "And Saul said unto his servants, Provide me now a man that can play well, and bring *him* to me. Then answered one of the servants, and said, Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, *that is* cunning in playing, and a mighty valiant man, and a man of war, and prudent in matters, and a comely person, and the LORD *is* with him."
 - a. Saul consented to the plan. One of the servants had seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite who was very skilled in playing the harp; in addition, he was a mighty valiant man, a man of war, a wise man, and handsome.
 - b. Unless the record here given is not chronologically arranged, David was already a mighty valiant man, a man of war, and a wise man. This seems to be correct for it would take more than a mere boy to seize a lion by the beard and slay him (17:34-36).
 - c. Some have tried to explain the text by having it describe David at a later time in life. At the time he slew Goliath, he was still a *youth* (17:33). A similar description if given of Saul when he was anointed king (9:2); at that time Saul had a grown son (13:1 ff). It is evident that David was more than a little boy when he slew Goliath, which took place after his killing the lion and bear: "And David said unto Saul, Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock: And I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him. Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God" (1 Sam. 17:34-36).
 - d. Keil:
 - 1) When Saul commanded them to seek out a good player upon a stringed instrument in accordance with this advice, one of the youths (n-aariym), a lower class of court servants) said, 'I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, skilled in laying, and a brave man, and a man of war, eloquent, and a handsome man, and Jehovah is with him.'
 - 2) "The description of David is 'a mighty man' and 'a man of war' does not presuppose that David had already fought bravely in war, but may be perfectly explained from what David himself afterwards affirmed respecting his conflicts with lions and bears (1 Sam 17:34-35). The courage and strength which he had then displayed furnished sufficient proofs of heroism for any one to discern in him the future warrior.

4. Verses 19-20: "Wherefore Saul sent messengers unto Jesse, and said, Send me David thy son, which *is* with the sheep. And Jesse took an ass *laden* with bread, and a bottle of wine, and a kid, and sent *them* by David his son unto Saul."
 - a. Saul sent messengers to Jesse, requesting that David be sent to the king. Saul knew the name of David and that he be assigned the job of tending sheep.
 - b. Jesse quickly complied with the request, sending David to Saul. He sent a gift of bread, wine, and a kid.
 5. Verses 21-22: "And David came to Saul, and stood before him: and he loved him greatly; and he became his armourbearer. And Saul sent to Jesse, saying, Let David, I pray thee, stand before me; for he hath found favour in my sight."
 - a. God's providence had brought David to stand before Saul, where he could become acquainted with that regal office, and develop a background which would help equip him for that work later.
 - b. Saul took an instant liking for David; he appointed him to be his armor bearer. Further to show his love for David, the king sent a message to Jesse requesting that David be allowed to continue in the service of the king.
 6. Verse 23: "And it came to pass, when the *evil* spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him."
 - a. Jameison says that the harp [*kinnor*] was not the large instrument we call by that name, but a lyre, a smaller portable instrument resembling a bow in shape.
 - b. When Saul was afflicted with the spirit which troubled him at times, he would summon David, who would play the instrument, bringing refreshing relief to the king.
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1 SAMUEL 17

A. 1 Samuel 17:1-3: The Philistine Bring War to Israel.

1. Verse 1: “Now the Philistines gathered together their armies to battle, and were gathered together at Shochoh, which *belongeth* to Judah, and pitched between Shochoh and Azekah, in Ephesdammin.”
 - a. Throughout the reign of Saul, there was a continuing war with the Philistines (14:52). The statement in chapter fourteen does not mean that there were daily battles, but that Saul was unable to subdue the Philistines, and that martial encounters were regular features of this period.
 - b. Without citing evidence for the figure, Jameison states (p.170) that twenty-seven years had passed since the victory over Philistia at Michmash (chapters 13-14).
 - c. Now the Philistines had recouped their strength, and assembled their army against Israel at Shochoh, setting up their camp between Shochoh and Azekah in Ephesdammin. This place was in the hills of Judah, between the mountains and the plain of Philistia (cf. Josh. 15:35).
2. Verse 2: “And Saul and the men of Israel were gathered together, and pitched by the valley of Elah, and set the battle in array against the Philistines.”
 - a. Saul assembled his army in the valley of Elah. This valley was “a long, depressed plain, lying between two parallel ranges of hills” (JFB, p.177).



- b. “Elah [EE-luh. A valley that provided passage from the plain of Philistia into the hill country of Judah. David slew Goliath here. Generally identified with the Wadi es-Sant, along which the probable sites of Gath and Azekah are situated. 1 Samuel 17:2; 17:19; 21:9” (PC Bible Atlas).
- c. McGarvey has a detailed and interesting description of the valley of Elah:
- 1) “The Valley of Elah, now called *Wady es Sunt*, heads a few miles northwest of Hebron...and runs in a northerly direction between the mountains of Judah and the lower hills of the Shephelah which border the Philistine Plain....About three miles farther down the valley from Adullam, bearing a little west of north is the ancient Shochoh, now called *Suweikeh*, a very small village, between which and Azekah, still farther down, was the camp of the Philistines when David killed Goliath.
 - 2) “The positions of the two armies are described as follows: ‘The Philistines gathered together their armies, and were gathered together at Shochoh, which belongeth to Judah, and pitched between Shochoh and Azekah.’ (This was on their own side of the valley—the western side.) ‘And Saul and the men of Israel were gathered together and pitched by the Valley of Elah, and set the battle in array against the Philistines. And the Philistines stood on a mountain on the one side, and Israel stood on a mountain on the other side; and there was a valley between them.’
 - 3) “To meet this description, a place in the Valley of Elah must be found, below Shochoh, which has on each side a mountain slope suitable for the camp of an army. Again, it must be where the valley is wide enough to admit of Goliath’s daily advance into it with his challenge. And finally, it must be where a brook flows along the valley—a brook with smooth, round stones in its bed, and nearer Saul’s side of the valley, so that David would cross it in starting to meet the giant. Now, precisely such a place is found a short distance north of Shochoh, and nowhere else in this valley. Above and below, the valley is too narrow and the hills too steep, while the brook, which flows all along the valley, is either in the middle or too near the western side. But at the point referred to the western hills have a moderate slope; they recede in a kind of amphitheatre; a sloping ridge stands on the opposite side, with a valley on each side of it; and here were stationed the two armies, with something more than a quarter of a mile of space between them.
 - 4) “The brook, which is a torrent in winter, but dry in summer, flows within about 60 or 70 yards of Saul’s side of the valley, and David, in advancing, was compelled to cross it. Its bed is full of smooth, round stones, from one inch to six inches in diameter, and with scarcely a moment’s hesitation David could have picked up the five to suit his purpose. The author and his companions picked up five apiece with would be the very thing with which to knock down a giant” (pp.259f).
3. Verse 3: “And the Philistines stood on a mountain on the one side, and Israel stood on a mountain on the other side: and *there was* a valley between them.”
- a. The opposing armies were situated on opposite sides of the valley, on the slopes of the mountains that formed the lateral limits of the narrow valley. There was a ravine in the midst of the valley.
 - b. The text later shows that they were close enough to each other that they could be heard as they shouted back and forth.
 - c. Keil: “Saul and the Israelites encamped opposite to them in the terebinth valley (Emek ha-Elah), i.e., a plain by the Wady Musur, and stood in battle array opposite to the Philistines, in such order that the latter stood on that side against the mountain (on the slope of the mountain), and the Israelites on this side against the mountain; and the valley (*hagay*), the deeper cutting made by the brook in the plain) was between them.”
- B. 1 Samuel 17:4-11: Goliath the Giant Challenges Israel.
1. Verse 4: “And there went out a champion out of the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, of Gath, whose height *was* six cubits and a span.”
 - a. Goliath from the city of Gath came out of the camp of the Philistines to insult Israel, and to challenge someone from them to fight him man-to-man. "There was none of the Anakims left in the land of the children of Israel: only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod, there remained" (Josh. 11:22).
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- b. His height is placed at six cubits and a span. A cubit was the measurement from a man's elbow to the end of his middle finger, generally regarded to be eighteen inches; a span was the distance between the tip of the thumb and the tip of the little finger of a man's hand spread out, and is still counted to be about six inches. Goliath was about nine and one-half feet tall.
- c. There are a good many men playing basketball today who are seven feet tall. This writer once met a giant-sized man who was doing promotional work for a major company; his height was given as eight feet and five inches.
2. Verses 5-7: "And *he had* an helmet of brass upon his head, and he *was* armed with a coat of mail; and the weight of the coat *was* five thousand shekels of brass. And *he had* greaves of brass upon his legs, and a target of brass between his shoulders. And the staff of his spear *was* like a weaver's beam; and his spear's head *weighed* six hundred shekels of iron: and one bearing a shield went before him."
- a. Goliath's armament included a helmet made of brass. "The Philistine helmet had the appearance of a row of feathers set in a tiara, or metal band, to which were attached scales of the same material for the defence of the neck and the sides of the face" (JFB, p.177).
- b. The giant also had a coat of mail that weighed five thousands shekels of brass. This device protected the chest and loins; it was attached at the shoulders but leaving the arms and hands unhindered. The weight of this coat of mail is given as 156 pounds and four ounces (Clarke, p.261).
- c. He had greaves of brass on his legs. These metal plates were strapped to the legs, giving protection from the knee to the foot.
- d. Goliath wore a *target* of brass between his shoulders. This item is called a *javelin* by the ASV. The differing views held by the scholars concerning this item illustrates the difficulty of translating the original text at this place. The Hebrew word is *kidon*, which is translated *lance* once, *shield* twice, *spear* five times, and *target* once (Young's Concordance, index, p.21).
- 1) Some writers argue that the *target* was a small shield which was strapped to the shoulders and configured to protect the back. Others argue that the term refers to a javelin or lance which was hung over the shoulder by a strap.
- 2) It may be impossible for us to know with certainty which of these items is intended by the text, but this detail is not essential to our general understanding of the passage. Goliath had the full complement of equipment—that is the point of the text.
- e. The staff of his spear was comparable to the length of a weaver's beam, which Jameison gives as a little under five feet in length (p.177). The weight of the iron head of the spear is placed at 600 shekels (about 18 pounds).
- f. A servant carried the great shield ahead of Goliath. It seems that the giant had his sword in one hand and his spear in the other, and for protection against missiles thrown by the enemy, the servant would raise the shield.
3. Verses 8-9: "And he stood and cried unto the armies of Israel, and said unto them, Why are ye come out to set *your* battle in array? *am* not I a Philistine, and ye servants to Saul? choose you a man for you, and let him come down to me. If he be able to fight with me, and to kill me, then will we be your servants: but if I prevail against him, and kill him, then shall ye be our servants, and serve us."
- a. Standing forth from the Philistine camp, Goliath issued his mocking challenge to Israel. He describes the Israelites as the servants of Saul, while he was a Philistine. He called on them to select a man from their ranks, if one could be found, to engage in mortal combat with him.
- b. If the Israelites could produce a warrior who could kill Goliath, the giant promised that the Philistines would become servants of Israel; if he won, the Israelites would serve the Philistines.
- c. The *Targum* [Jewish paraphrases and commentaries of the Old Testament] asserts that Goliath claimed to have been responsible for killing Hophni and Phinehas, the sons of Eli, and having captured the ark of the covenant (see Clarke, p.262).

4. Verses 10-11: “And the Philistine said, I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together. When Saul and all Israel heard those words of the Philistine, they were dismayed, and greatly afraid.”
 - a. Goliath dared Israel to send someone to fight with him; his challenge defied Israel, disdaining their ability to find anyone who would be willing to stand up against him. The contempt he expressed for Israel, was directed against Israel’s God.
 - b. The effect of his challenge was to produce dismay and terror in the ranks of the Israelite army, from the king to the lowest private.
 - c. Ultimately, why did not Saul accept the challenge? Was he too old? Was he fearful? Did he fear the humiliation of individual combat?
- C. 1 Samuel 17:12-19: Jesse Sends David With Food to his Three Oldest Sons.
 1. Verse 12: “Now David *was* the son of that Ephrathite of Bethlehemjudah, whose name *was* Jesse; and he had eight sons: and the man went among men *for* an old man in the days of Saul.”
 - a. David is now about to enter the story again. His father is named and described first, with the fact stated that he had eight sons.
 - b. Jesse is described as a man who was an old man during the days of Saul. “Now David was the son of that Ephrathite of Beth-lehem-judah, whose name was Jesse; and he had eight sons: and the man was an old man in the days of Saul, stricken in years among men” (1 Sam. 17:22, ASV).
 2. Verses 13-14: “And the three eldest sons of Jesse went *and* followed Saul to the battle: and the names of his three sons that went to the battle *were* Eliab the firstborn, and next unto him Abinadab, and the third Shammah. And David *was* the youngest: and the three eldest followed Saul.”
 - a. Jesse’s three oldest sons were with Saul’s army. Their names were Eliab, Abinadab, and Shammah. David is again stated to be the youngest of the family.
 - b. Later in the chapter, David affirms that he slew a lion and a bear which had attacked his father’s sheep. This indicates that he was old and strong enough to do a man’s job. He was assigned the duty of keeping his father’s flock, which explains one reason why he was not with his three older brothers; we are not told why any of the other four brothers were not with the army. Probably, they were needed at home, and the three oldest sons were sufficient to fill the family’s national responsibility.
 3. Verses 15-16: “But David went and returned from Saul to feed his father's sheep at Bethlehem. And the Philistine drew near morning and evening, and presented himself forty days.”
 - a. David had been with King Saul for some unspecified period of time. He had since returned home and had taken up his family duties again. 1 Samuel 16:21 speaks of David becoming Saul’s armor bearer; this responsibility had not yet been given to him, evidently, for he was not with the king on the present campaign.
 - b. Connecting the two story lines, the inspired historian reports that the Philistine (Goliath) came before Israel morning and evening, for forty days, issuing his challenge. It seems strange that this plan would be followed for so long, but it seems the valley of Elah was not suitable for chariot warfare, having the ravine in its midst. The two armies may have been of a comparable size. Perhaps the Philistines thought that Israel would eventually give in to the challenge, which the Philistines were certain would give them victory.
 4. Verses 17-18: “And Jesse said unto David his son, Take now for thy brethren an ephah of this parched *corn*, and these ten loaves, and run to the camp to thy brethren; And carry these ten cheeses unto the captain of *their* thousand, and look how thy brethren fare, and take their pledge.”
 - a. Jesse had a chore for David. He directed him to take an ephah of parched corn (grain), ten loaves of bread, and ten cheeses, and hurry to the valley of Elah. The cheeses were to be given to the captain over the thousand-man group to which Jesse’s sons were assigned. This was a token of respect and a means of obtaining the help of the captain in learning the state of the three sons.
 - b. The primary purpose of the mission was to learn how his brothers were faring. Jesse wanted David to “take their pledge.” “Tokens of the soldiers’ health and safety were sent home in the convenient

form of a lock of their hair, a piece of their nail, or such like” (JFB, p.178). In modern times, this information is obtained by means of letters the serviceman writes.

5. Verse 19: “Now Saul, and they, and all the men of Israel, *were* in the valley of Elah, fighting with the Philistines.”
 - a. David would be told where to find his brothers, and directions as to how to get to the valley of Elah would be included, if he did not already know its location.
 - b. Fighting may have been going on between the two armies, although we are not given any details about it up to this point. It would be strange indeed if the two military forces had been in such close proximity to each other for this considerable period of time without a skirmish being entered.

D. 1 Samuel 17:20-31: David Learns About Goliath.

1. Verses 20-22: “And David rose up early in the morning, and left the sheep with a keeper, and took, and went, as Jesse had commanded him; and he came to the trench, as the host was going forth to the fight, and shouted for the battle. For Israel and the Philistines had put the battle in array, army against army. And David left his carriage in the hand of the keeper of the carriage, and ran into the army, and came and saluted his brethren.”
 - a. “And David rose up early in the morning, and left the sheep with a keeper, and took, and went, as Jesse had commanded him; and he came to the place of the wagons, as the host which was going forth to the fight shouted for the battle. And Israel and the Philistines put the battle in array, army against army. And David left his baggage in the hand of the keeper of the baggage, and ran to the army, and came and saluted his brethren” (1 Sam. 17:20-22, ASV).
 - b. David left the sheep in the care of someone else, probably a servant, and made his way to the valley of Elah, taking the items of food his father had specified.
 - c. He arrived on the scene just as the host was going forth to do battle with the Philistines. He left his carriage [the supplies he had brought] with the one in charge of the supplies. Instead of *trench*, the ASV has “the place of the wagons” [the place where the supplies were being stored].
 - d. The soldiers were in their battle formation, about to engage the enemy. David exuberantly ran into the formation to salute his brothers.
 2. Verse 23-24: “And as he talked with them, behold, there came up the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name, out of the armies of the Philistines, and spake according to the same words: and David heard *them*. And all the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him, and were sore afraid.”
 - a. Before the armies could clash, Goliath stepped forth as on other days, and issued his usual challenge. David heard this arrogant invitation for the first time.
 - b. The men of Israel were terrified by the size and aggressiveness of Goliath; none of them wanted anything to do with this terrible giant. They fled from before him.
 3. Verses 25-27: “And the men of Israel said, Have ye seen this man that is come up? surely to defy Israel is he come up: and it shall be, *that* the man who killeth him, the king will enrich him with great riches, and will give him his daughter, and make his father's house free in Israel. And David spake to the men that stood by him, saying, What shall be done to the man that killeth this Philistine, and taketh away the reproach from Israel? for who *is* this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God? And the people answered him after this manner, saying, So shall it be done to the man that killeth him.”
 - a. David heard the soldiers of Israel talking among themselves about the giant. They perceived that his purpose was to defy Israel.
 - b. The men stated that the Israelite who slew Goliath would be blessed with riches, with the gift of Saul’s daughter as his wife, and his family would be free in Israel. The freedom involved release from taxes and other public demands.
 - c. David, in the fire of youth, wanted to know who this uncircumcised Philistine was, who thought he could defy God’s army. He asked what would be the reward given one who would slay this enemy. The soldiers verified what had been stated in verse 25. It is likely that Saul had made this promise.
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d. Coffman:

- 1) "Who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God"? "Here David injected the first theological note in the whole narrative." [13] How strange it is, that up to this point, the knowledge on Israel's part of the loving protection of God seems to have been forgotten altogether.
- 2) After forty days of those continued insults from Goliath, this seems even more incredible. Evidently there burned in the heart of David a most unusual and confident faith in God; and that certainly must have been the secret of God's special blessing in that terrible encounter with Goliath.

e. Pulpit Commentary:

- 1) "Many years must have elapsed before Saul could thus have developed the powers of the crown, and the last words show that contributions were levied from all the households in Israel for the support of the king and his retinue. There had manifestly been a great advance since the day when Jesse sent the king a few loaves of bread, a skin of wine, and a kid (1 Sam 16:20)....
 - 2) "David, like Jonathan, sees a ground of confidence in the uncovenanted relation of the Philistine towards God. The living God.
 - 3) "A second ground of confidence. The god of the Philistines was a lifeless idol; Jehovah a Being who proved his existence by his acts. So shall it be done. As the people all answer David's inquiries in the same way, Saul had evidently made a proclamation to this effect, which we may suppose he fulfilled, though not in the frankest manner (1 Sam 18:17,27)."
4. Verses 28-29: "And Eliab his eldest brother heard when he spake unto the men; and Eliab's anger was kindled against David, and he said, Why camest thou down hither? and with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thine heart; for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle. And David said, What have I now done? *Is there* not a cause?"
- a. Eliab heard David's conversation, and chastised him verbally. He accused his youngest brother of having abandoned the few sheep in the wilderness, and had come to Elah out of pride and naughtiness of heart to watch the fighting.
 - b. David replied that there was sufficient reason for his presence. Of course, his father had sent him, to bring supplies to his brothers and to inquire of their welfare. But the arrogant challenge of Goliath was enough to bring his patriotism and faith to the forefront. We remember that from the time Samuel anointed him, the spirit of God resided with David: "Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah" (1 Sam. 16:13).
5. Verses 30-31: "And he turned from him toward another, and spake after the same manner: and the people answered him again after the former manner. And when the words were heard which David spake, they rehearsed *them* before Saul: and he sent for him."
- a. David turned from Eliab, and inquired of another man concerning the reward offered to the man who would slay Goliath. The same answer was given as before.
 - b. Someone brought to Saul a report of David's words. The king sent for the young man. There was something in what David had been saying that indicated his willingness to meet Goliath.

E. 1 Samuel 17:32-37: David Volunteers to Fight Goliath.

1. Verse 32: "And David said to Saul, Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine."
 - a. The historian goes to the heart of the conversation that passed between Saul and David, bypassing the initial words of greeting.
 - b. David stated that there was no need for any man's heart to fail on Goliath's account, that he was ready and willing to do battle with this enemy. David's words were not the empty speech of a braggart. He was being guided by God in volunteering for the mission.
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- c. “Then Saul clothed David with his armor; he put a helmet of bronze on his head, and clothed him with a coat of mail. And David girded his sword over his armor, and he tried in vain to go, for he was not used to them. Then David said to Saul, ‘I cannot go with these, for I am not used to them.’ And David put them off. Then he took his staff in his hand, and chose five smooth stones from the brook, and put them in his shepherd's bag, or wallet; his sling was in his hand, and he drew near to the Philistine” (Coffman).
2. Verse 33: “And Saul said to David, Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him: for thou *art but* a youth, and he a man of war from his youth.”
- a. Saul politely declines David’s offer, referring to David’s youth and apparent lack of experience to meet one who had been a man of war from his youth. Goliath had built up a great reputation over a period of several, perhaps many, years.
- b. We are told in verses thirty-eight and thirty-nine that David put on Saul’s armor. We remember that Saul was a large man, standing head and shoulders above the average Israelite. David must have been a sizeable man for the armor to fit him. Hence, David was not a little boy.
- c. Saul makes no reference to David’s size in this verse; he only speaks of David’s inexperience in battle in comparison with Goliath.
3. Verses 34-36: “And David said unto Saul, Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock: And I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered *it* out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught *him* by his beard, and smote him, and slew him. Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God.”
- a. To show the king that he was not as inexperienced as it was thought, David relates the story of killing a lion and a bear which attacked his father’s sheep.
- b. “The constant use of the *singular* suffix is sufficient to show, that when David speaks of the lion and the bear, he connects together two different events, which took place at different times, and then proceeds to state how he smote both the one and the other of the two beasts of prey” (Keil, p.182).
- c. These beasts each took a lamb from the flock under David’s protection. David pursued each of them, and slew them. In the case of the lion, when it arose against him, he took it by the beard and slew it. Nothing is said about the type of weapon he used. The beard he mentions is probably the mane. Strictly speaking, neither a bear nor a lion has a beard.
4. Verse 37: “David said moreover, The LORD that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said unto David, Go, and the LORD be with thee.”
- a. With these experiences behind him, David affirms to the king that he is well-prepared to meet the giant. Since God gave him victory over the lion and the bear, the Philistine would likewise be given into his hand.
- b. David did not lay claim to any inherent power of his own by which he won the fight with the beasts; he does not assert that he would be able to kill the Philistine by his own power. It was God who gave him the victories, and who would deliver Goliath into David’s control.
- c. Saul was too desperate to rid himself of Goliath to deny David’s request. For too long the giant had been a great embarrassment. Also, Saul was well enough acquainted with Israel’s history to know that God had often given his people victory and success in the face of superior strength, using some person or group which seemingly had no chance. Perhaps it would be so again.
- F. 1 Samuel 17:38-54: David Slays Goliath.
1. Verses 38-39: “And Saul armed David with his armour, and he put an helmet of brass upon his head; also he armed him with a coat of mail. And David girded his sword upon his armour, and he assayed to go; for he had not proved *it*. And David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these; for I have not proved *them*. And David put them off him.”
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- a. 1 Samuel 17:38-39: “And Saul clad David with his apparel, and he put a helmet of brass upon his head, and he clad him with a coat of mail. And David girded his sword upon his apparel, and he assayed to go; for he had not proved it. And David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these; for I have not proved them. And David put them off him” (ASV).
 - b. Saul thought that David needed the usual armor if he was to be successful against Goliath. He put his own armor on him, which required that David be of a comparable size with the king. David was no little boy! He was a grown man, possibly in his twenties.
 - c. After he was fully dressed in the armor, and having strapped on the sword, David began to have second thoughts about wearing Saul’s equipment. He removed all of these items, stating that he had not proved them.
 - d. “In ancient times it required considerable exercise and training to make a man expert in the use of such heavy armour; armour which in the present day scarcely a man is to be found who is able to carry; and so it must have been then, until that practice which arises from frequent use had made the proprietor perfect. I have not proved them says David: I am wholly unaccustomed to such armour and it would be an incumbrance to me” (Clarke, p.264).
 - e. “If David had worn the armor of Saul, the king could have claimed a vital share of the glory of the victory; but the essential common sense of David frustrated that maneuver on Saul’s part” (Coffman, p.209).
2. Verse 40: “And he took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had, even in a scrip; and his sling *was* in his hand: and he drew near to the Philistine.”
 - a. Taking his shepherd’s staff, he chose five smooth stones from the brook, and went forth with his sling in his hand to meet the Philistine. Smooth stones would pass through the air faster and straighter than those which were irregular in shape.
 - b. David placed the stones in his shepherd’s bag, which is also called a scrip. This bag was ordinarily used by the shepherd to hold his food and other supplies.
 - c. The sling was used with great effect in ancient days as an offensive weapon. In the civil war between Israel and rebellious Benjamin, there were seven hundred left-handed sling throwers who were able to wreak havoc on Israel. "Among all this people *there were* seven hundred chosen men lefthanded; every one could sling stones at an hair *breadth*, and not miss" (Judges 20:16).
 - d. The sling “is composed of two strings and a leathern strap; the strap is in the middle, and is the place where the stone or bullet lies. The string on the right end of the strap is firmly fastened to the hand; that on the left is held between the thumb and middle joint of the fore finger. It is then whirled two or three times round the head; and when discharged, the finger and thumb let go their hold of the left end string. The velocity and force of the sling are in proportion to the distance of the strap, where the bullet lies, from the shoulder joint. Hence the ancient *Baleares*, or inhabitants of *Majorca* and *Minorea*, are said to have had three slings of different lengths, the longest they used when the enemy was at the greatest distance; the middle one, on their nearer approach; and the shortest, when they came into the ordinary fighting distance in the field. The shortest is the most certain, though not the most powerful” (Clarke, p.264).
 3. Verses 41-44: “And the Philistine came on and drew near unto David; and the man that bare the shield *went* before him. And when the Philistine looked about, and saw David, he disdained him: for he was *but* a youth, and ruddy, and of a fair countenance. And the Philistine said unto David, *Am* I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves? And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. And the Philistine said to *Da*id, Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field.”
 - a. As Goliath and David drew nearer to each other, the Philistine could not believe his eyes; the *worthy* enemy was a young man, ruddy and of a fair countenance.
 - b. The giant disdained David. He wondered aloud whether he was a dog that David had come against him with a stick. He cursed the son of Jesse by his gods.
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- c. Goliath invited his smaller adversary to come nearer and he would feed his flesh to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field.
 - d. Keil: "When David had crossed the ravine, Goliath and his armour bearer advanced towards him; and when he saw that the Israelite champion was but a lad (see ver. 33), with red hair, which added to his youthful appearance, and handsome, but with nothing more than a staff in his hand, he regarded this light equipment as an insult, and asks, Am I a dog — an animal held in great aversion in the East — that thou comest to me with staves? The plural is used as a contemptuous generalisation, but the Septuagint is offended at it, and with amusing matter of fact exactness translates, "With a staff and stones." And the Philistine cursed David by his gods."
4. Verses 45-47: "Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. This day will the LORD deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. And all this assembly shall know that the LORD saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle *is* the Lord's, and he will give you into our hands."
- a. "While Goliath boasted of his strength, David founded his own assurance of victory upon the Almighty God of Israel, whom the Philistine had defied" (Keil, p.183).
 - b. David calmly stated that the giant had come out against him with a sword, a spear, and a shield; all he had with him was the name of God. "What shall we then say to these things? If God *be* for us, who *can be* against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" (Rom. 8:31-32).
 - c. David stated that God would deliver Goliath into his hand, and that he would smite him, and remove his head from his body, and that his great carcass would be food for the birds and beasts, and the bodies of the Philistine host would likewise be consumed by them. Then would others know that there is a God in Israel. Wherever this story is read or recited, people learn this great truth.
 - d. Another great lesson that would grow out of their encounter would be the truth that Israel's God is able to give victory without sword and spear.
5. Verses 48-50: "And it came to pass, when the Philistine arose, and came and drew nigh to meet David, that David hasted, and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine. And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang *it*, and smote the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sunk into his forehead; and he fell upon his face to the earth. So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and smote the Philistine, and slew him; but *there was* no sword in the hand of David."
- a. The details of David's victory are reported simply with only a few, well-chosen words. He ran toward the giant and his army, without any apparent concern; he took one of the stone from his bag, fitted it into his sling, and loosed the stone.
 - b. With unerring flight, the stone smote Goliath in his forehead with killing force. It penetrated the head and the giant fell on his face upon the ground.
 - c. Without a sword in his hand, the young man of Israel, a man after God's own heart, slew the giant, and God's cause prevailed over the pagan Philistines.
6. Verses 51-52: "Therefore David ran, and stood upon the Philistine, and took his sword, and drew it out of the sheath thereof, and slew him, and cut off his head therewith. And when the Philistines saw their champion was dead, they fled. And the men of Israel and of Judah arose, and shouted, and pursued the Philistines, until thou come to the valley, and to the gates of Ekron. And the wounded of the Philistines fell down by the way to Shaaraim, even unto Gath, and unto Ekron."
- a. David stood upon the body of Goliath, and removing the giant's sword from its sheath, he cut off the great head of the dead foe. "The heads of slain enemies are always regarded in the East as the most welcome tokens of victory. But the Israelites were not in the habit of mutilating the corpses of their slain enemies; and there is no evidence that they did so on this occasion to the other soldiers of the
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Philistines. But Goliath was not an ordinary enemy, nor did he fall in the ordinary fight. He fell by Jehovah's special interposition; and the head of the Philistine giant was to be kept, doubtless after embalment, as a memento of a great national deliverance, as well as a memorial to David of God's favour to him " (JFB, p.182).

- b. The Philistine army was filled with terror over the sudden and unexpected demise of their champion; they fled from the field with the Israelites close behind, slaying them at will. The rout lasted all the way to Gath and Ekron, principal cities of Philistia.
- c. Coffman:
 - 1) "After that smooth stone hurled from David's sling 'sank into the forehead' of Goliath, he was as dead as if he had been shot between the eyes with a deer rifle! Subsequent references to David's "killing" Goliath are merely repetitions for the sake of emphasis.
 - 2) "Still another so-called problem regards the statement that David took the head of Goliath to Jerusalem. There is no problem when it is remembered that when David did this is not mentioned. Also, David, at that time, did not have a tent, and the tent where Goliath's armor was placed was evidently the tabernacle where the ark of God was kept. It would seem that David's recovering the sword of Goliath from that tabernacle at a later time should be accepted as sufficient proof of this (1 Samuel 21:8,9)."
7. Verses 53-54: "And the children of Israel returned from chasing after the Philistines, and they spoiled their tents. And David took the head of the Philistine, and brought it to Jerusalem; but he put his armour in his tent."
 - a. The Israelites returned from the pursuit of the enemy, and spoiled the tents the Philistines had left at the valley of Elah.
 - b. David took the head of Goliath to Jerusalem; he kept the giant's armor in his own tent. The time that Goliath's head was taken to Jerusalem is not stated; that would have been after the capture of the city.

G. 1 Samuel 17:55-58: Saul Inquires of David's Lineage.

1. Verses 55-56: "And when Saul saw David go forth against the Philistine, he said unto Abner, the captain of the host, Abner, whose son *is* this youth? And Abner said, *As thy soul liveth*, O king, I cannot tell. And the king said, Inquire thou whose son the stripling is."
 - a. As David went forth against the giant, Saul inquired as to the identity of David; Abner did not know. Abner was the general of Saul's army.
 - b. It is obvious that Saul knew David; we are told earlier that he had been in the king's presence, playing his harp to give Saul relief from the tormenting *spirit* which afflicted him.
 - c. It is not likely that the king would have forgotten David in the short period of intervening time; there must be another explanation for his inquiry. However, in a short time a man can grow a beard, or wear different apparel, and not be recognized. This is the explanation given by Jamieson and Coffman, but there seems to be a better interpretation.
2. Verses 57-58: "And as David returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, Abner took him, and brought him before Saul with the head of the Philistine in his hand. And Saul said to him, Whose son *art* thou, *thou* young man? And David answered, I *am* the son of thy servant Jesse the Bethlehemite."
 - a. When David came back from the battle, Abner took him into the king's presence. David was still carrying the head of his enemy.
 - b. Saul asked David whose son he was. David answered by reporting that he was the son of Jesse, the Bethlehemite.
 - c. This may very well have been a security check, an inquiry into the lineage of this young man. Before he permitted David into his inner circle, he would need to know more details of his background. Also, if this young man could accomplish such a feat, there might be others of his family who could be added to Saul's army. "And there was sore war against the Philistines all the days of Saul: and when Saul saw any strong man, or any valiant man, he took him unto him" (1 Sam. 14:52).

1 SAMUEL 18

A. 1 Samuel 18:1-4: Jonathan and David.

1. Verse 1: "And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul."
 - a. After the conversation reported in the previous verses, Jonathan took special notice of David, and there developed within him a strong attachment for this one who had slain Goliath.
 - b. "The prince had taken little interest in David as a minstrel; but his heroism, and modest, manly bearing, his piety and high endowments, kindled the flame, not of admiration only, but of affection in the congenial mind of Jonathan" (JFB, p.183).
 - c. As long as Jonathan lived, David had a good friend. Later, when he was being pursued by Saul, he penned the lament of Psalm 142:4: "I looked on *my* right hand, and beheld, but *there was* no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul."
2. Verse 2: "And Saul took him that day, and would let him go no more home to his father's house."
 - a. From that day forward, Saul took David into full-time service to the throne, and would not allow him to return to his father's house. The young man was too valuable to spend his time herding sheep.
 - b. Now he was established as a permanent member of Saul's court. He could there develop the knowledge he would need later when he ascended the throne himself, and was hereby given many opportunities to mix with the nation to form an enduring bond which would carry over into his reign.
3. Verses 3-4: "Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul. And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that *was* upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle."
 - a. Jonathan was so devoted to David that he made a covenant with David, binding himself to him for life. He sealed the covenant by giving David his robe, his sword, his bow, and his girdle.
 - b. From this symbolic action of devotion, it may be that Jonathan was renouncing any desire to mount Saul's throne, and that he was pledging his full support to David. Subsequent events show that he was David's staunch supporter and friend, helping him to escape his father's evil intentions.
 - c. Could it be that David told him about his being anointed by Samuel to replace Saul as king? It is clear that David's effortless victory over Goliath was evidence of God's help. Jonathan was doubtless aware of his father's difficulties with the Lord; together with the knowledge that the Lord was with David, Jonathan could perceive that David's future was bright.

B. 1 Samuel 18:5-9: Saul Exalts David.

1. Verse 5: "And David went out whithersoever Saul sent him, *and* behaved himself wisely: and Saul set him over the men of war, and he was accepted in the sight of all the people, and also in the sight of Saul's servants."
 - a. Recognizing his abilities, Saul gave David various assignments. When his young aide conducted himself wisely, the king gave him charge over the men of war. Abner was Saul's general, so David's position was under Abner. David was probably placed in charge of some unit of the army.
 - b. He was well-received by the people. His men accepted him, and even the servants of Saul approved of him. David was well on the way to obtaining the devotion of the whole nation.
 2. Verses 6-7: "And it came to pass as they came, when David was returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, that the women came out of all cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet king Saul, with tabrets, with joy, and with instruments of music. And the women answered *one another* as they played, and said, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands."
 - a. When David returned from the campaign in which he slew Goliath, the women from various cities of Israel came forth with a new song on their lips, singing the praises of the hero.
 - b. They sang of Saul having slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands. While they sang a tribute to Saul, the greater glory was given to David.
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- c. The people were overjoyed at the great success and victory which David had effected; they did not intend any disrespect toward Saul, but sought to exalt their young champion.
3. Verses 8-9: "And Saul was very wroth, and the saying displeased him; and he said, They have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed *but* thousands: and *what* can he have more but the kingdom? And Saul eyed David from that day and forward."
- a. Saul was aware his reign was not to continue; he feared that someone would arise to take the throne from him. He was very angry over David's popularity and his own apparent loss of appeal. With David riding the crest of fame, he lacked only the kingdom to fulfill his fate.
- b. There was much cause for Saul to be fearful; God had already determined that he was to lose his throne to another who was better favored than was he. However, he ought not to have been filled with such bitterness and hatred which led him to try to kill his rival.
- c. If Saul had used David's strengths and talents as he had in the matter with Goliath, continuing success might have crowned his reign. But his jealous rage led him to alienate David and Jehovah, and to bring about his own bitter end.
- d. From this time forward, Saul watched David with a suspicious and jealous eye. If one is looking for a *booger*, he will find one, whether or not it is real.
- C. 1 Samuel 18:10-16: Saul's Jealousy of David.
1. Verses 10-11: "And it came to pass on the morrow, that the evil spirit from God came upon Saul, and he prophesied in the midst of the house: and David played with his hand, as at other times: and *there was* a javelin in Saul's hand. And Saul cast the javelin; for he said, I will smite David even to the wall *with it*. And David avoided out of his presence twice."
- a. Saul was again visited by the *evil spirit*, which caused him to *prophesy* within his house. Instead of *prophesied*, the ASV margin gives *raved*. This translation seems to be the better of the two options, for if a real demon controlled him, Saul would not have been able to prophesy.
- 1) The young girl Paul encountered at Philippi was cursed by such a demon; this girl knew that Paul and his companions were servants of God. "And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying: The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation. And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour" (Acts 16:16-18).
- a) This is another case of demon possession. "Luke's identification of this girl with that pagan establishment contains no suggestion whatever of any validity in their outlandish claims. Rather, Paul's addressing the 'spirit' in her clearly indicates exactly the same kind of demon possession so often healed by our Lord" (Burton Coffman, *Commentary on Acts*, p.316).
- b) Demons knew the true identity of Jesus and his work: "And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God" (Mark 1:23-24; cf. 3:11-12; Matt. 8:28-29). Being inhabitants of the eternal realm, their awareness of the Lord's identity would be common knowledge to them.
- c) The demon in this slave girl brought her owners much money by "soothsaying." "But there is no evidence known to me that they could foretell future events, though it was believed by the heathen generally that they could. It was the prevalent confidence in the vaticinations [foretelling or prophesying] of persons possessed by them that enabled this girl to bring her owners much gain" (J. W. McGarvey, *Original Commentary on Acts*, p.206).
- b. If the Spirit of prophesy controlled Saul, he would not have thrown the spear. If Saul's problem was demon-possession, it seems strange that the music David played could have any effect on such a being. Rather, as earlier noted, the evil spirit is more likely to have been an evil disposition which God permitted the king to develop after he rebelled. Compare: "And with all deceivableness of

unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness” (2 Thess. 2:10-12).

- c. It is likely, therefore, that Saul went about his house in a demented rage, which led him to throw the javelin (spear) at David in an attempt to pin him to the wall. The music had no soothing, quieting effect on the king this time.
 - d. If the effort had succeeded, Saul would have been guilty of murder. He would not have been able to plead innocence before God on the basis of insanity. He would have been personally responsible, for his intention was to pin his rival to the wall with the weapon. The people might have attributed the act to an irresponsible madman, but God knew the real situation.
 - e. David was not slain. If the spear was actually thrown, David avoided it. Keil suggested the idea that perhaps Saul only tried to throw it twice, and that David moved to cause the king to hold back from the cast. Whichever the case, two times did the future king avoid the spear.
2. Verses 12-13: “And Saul was afraid of David, because the LORD was with him, and was departed from Saul. Therefore Saul removed him from him, and made him his captain over a thousand; and he went out and came in before the people.”
 - a. Aware that the Lord was with David, and had withdrawn his help from Saul, the king assigned David duties with a force of a thousand men elsewhere.
 - b. Saul was hoping, as he indicated in verse seventeen, that the Philistines would be able to kill David. In the many battles that might be entered in a short period of time, it might be possible that the enemy would find a way to kill David; at least, that was a possibility.
 - c. In saner moments, Saul knew that if he murdered David, he would have to face the wrath of the nation which had taken David to its heart.
 3. Verses 14-15: “And David behaved himself wisely in all his ways; and the LORD *was* with him. Wherefore when Saul saw that he behaved himself very wisely, he was afraid of him.”
 - a. The future king conducted himself with prudence in all his activities; the Lord was with him in various significant, and perhaps visible, ways.
 - b. King Saul recognized the importance of David’s conduct. He realized that this wise behavior could only increase the influence and popularity of the young man.
 4. Verse 16: “But all Israel and Judah loved David, because he went out and came in before them.”
 - a. No division had yet occurred in the nation, so the separate mention of Israel and Judah must be understood in another light. David was a member of the tribe of Judah; Judah was a member of the nation of Israel. At home and across the nation, David was popular.
 - b. The statement simply states that David’s wide acceptance was not limited to his home tribe, but had extended throughout the nation. This was the most popular man who had come along in a long time. He was destined to be one of the most popular and beloved figures in Israel’s long history.
- D. 1 Samuel 18:17-21: David Marries Michal.
1. Verse 17: “And Saul said to David, Behold my elder daughter Merab, her will I give thee to wife: only be thou valiant for me, and fight the LORD'S battles. For Saul said, Let not mine hand be upon him, but let the hand of the Philistines be upon him.”
 - a. In giving David charge of the thousand soldiers, Saul urged him to be valiant in the king’s service, in fighting the Lord’s battles, and he would give him his elder daughter as wife. The information that had been reported at the valley of Elah (chapter 17) evidently was correct; the one slaying Goliath would be allowed the king’s daughter. There were certain advantages from such an arrangement.
 - b. However, Saul was a wily individual who was not going to do his rival any favor. By giving David charge of the military unit known as *a thousand*, Saul expected him to be slain in battle, sooner or later. The Philistines were a powerful, warlike nation; they were fully able to overwhelm their foes in battle at any time.
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- c. The offer of his daughter as a bribe was intended to motivate David on the battlefield. It was not the king's plan to fulfill the promise, for he expected David to be slain in the fighting.
 2. Verses 18-19: "And David said unto Saul, Who *am* I? and what *is* my life, *or* my father's family in Israel, that I should be son in law to the king? But it came to pass at the time when Merab Saul's daughter should have been given to David, that she was given unto Adriel the Meholathite to wife."
 - a. David's inherent modesty and humility led him to state that he was unworthy of being son-in-law to the king. His statement did not mean he was declining the offer; it was a humble statement of acceptance. The next verse draws a contrast between what Saul offered and what he gave.
 - b. He had promised his daughter Merab to David; the son of Jesse expected to have the promise fulfilled. But when the time came, Saul gave Merab to Adriel.
 - c. Jamieson points out that "the fickle and perfidious monarch broke his pledge at the time when the marriage was on the eve of being celebrated, and bestowed Merab on another man...an indignity as well as a wrong, which was calculated deeply to wound the feelings and provoke the resentment of David. Perhaps it was intended to do so, that advantage might be taken of his indiscretion. But David was preserved from this snare" (JFB, p.184).
 3. Verses 20-21: "And Michal Saul's daughter loved David: and they told Saul, and the thing pleased him. And Saul said, I will give him her, that she may be a snare to him, and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him. Wherefore Saul said to David, Thou shalt this day be my son in law in *the one of* the twain."
 - a. Now Michal, Saul's daughter, loved David. And they told Saul, and the thing pleased him. 21 So Saul said, "I will give her to him, that she may be a snare to him, and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him." Therefore Saul said to David a second time, "You shall be my son-in-law today" (1 Sam. 18:20-21, NKJ).
 - b. It may be that some unspecified amount of time had passed between this passage and the time of the previous event. Saul's daughter Michal loved David. Saul was pleased to hear of it, for he thought this development might be used to his own advantage against David.
 - c. He gave David a second promise of his becoming his son-in-law. "And Saul said, I will give him her, that she may be a snare to him, and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him. Wherefore Saul said to David, Thou shalt this day be my son-in-law a second time" (1 Sam. 18:21, ASV).
 - d. Saul's plan was not to give David any benefit, but to use the occasion to bring about his death at the hands of the Philistines. The following verses point out the evil plan Saul had devised.
- E. 1 Samuel 18:22-27: Saul Directs his Servants to Speak With David.
1. Verse 22: "And Saul commanded his servants, *saying*, Commune with David secretly, and say, Behold, the king hath delight in thee, and all his servants love thee: now therefore be the king's son in law."
 - a. Saul's servants were directed to approach David in secret, telling him that the king was well-pleased with him, and that the affection of all the king's servants was with him.
 - b. Their immediate purpose was to convince David that he ought to marry Michal, and become part of his family.
 2. Verses 23-24: "And Saul's servants spake those words in the ears of David. And David said, Seemeth it to you *a light thing* to be a king's son in law, seeing that I *am* a poor man, and lightly esteemed? And the servants of Saul told him, saying, On this manner spake David."
 - a. These servants approached David just as the king had commanded. They urged him to become Saul's son-in-law. Again, David stated his unworthiness to receive this advantage.
 - b. David described himself as a poor man and was lightly esteemed; that the offer was not one to be taken lightly or entered into thoughtlessly. Being a poor man, he would be unable to give a proper present to the father, as was the custom. His humble response was conveyed to Saul.
 - c. Keil: David replied to the courtiers, "Does it seem to you a little thing to become son-in-law to the king, seeing that I am a poor and humble man?" "Poor," i.e., utterly unable to offer anything like a
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suitable dowry to the king. This reply was given by David in perfect sincerity, since he could not possibly suppose that the king would give him his daughter without a considerable marriage portion.

3. Verse 25: "And Saul said, Thus shall ye say to David, The king desireth not any dowry, but an hundred foreskins of the Philistines, to be avenged of the king's enemies. But Saul thought to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines."
 - a. Saul's cunning is seen in the way he turned David's reply to advantage. He sent word that the only present he desired were a hundred foreskins from the Philistines.
 - b. The foreskin was the part of the body removed in circumcision. The Philistines were uncircumcised; the only way to obtain these body parts would be to first kill them. But to kill a hundred Philistines was a dangerous undertaking, one which might very well bring about the death of David.
4. Verses 26-27: "And when his servants told David these words, it pleased David well to be the king's son in law: and the days were not expired. Wherefore David arose and went, he and his men, and slew of the Philistines two hundred men; and David brought their foreskins, and they gave them in full tale to the king, that he might be the king's son in law. And Saul gave him Michal his daughter to wife."
 - a. David was happy to hear the king's offer, and accepted the condition. Before the time appointed had expired, he set forth with his men to "fill the order."
 - b. They slew two hundred Philistines, obtained the foreskins, and brought them to Saul. They brought double the number Saul had requested. One cannot help but be repulsed by the awful price the king had set for his daughter! Michal was given to David in keeping with the promise.
 - c. Coffman:
 - 1) "Before the time expired" (1 Samuel 18:26). This indicates that Saul, at the last minute, had changed the proposition by placing a deadline upon it, requiring that it be done in a specified length of time, thus increasing the danger to David, and increasing the possibility that David might be tempted into doing something rash.
 - 2) "'David ... killed two hundred Philistines ... and brought their foreskins ... in full number to the king' (1 Samuel 18:27). One cannot help wondering what emotion must have swept over Saul when he received the filthy garbage which was, in a sense, his sale price for the precious Michal."

F. 1 Samuel 18:28-30: Israel's Love for David.

1. Verse 28: "And Saul saw and knew that the LORD *was* with David, and *that* Michal Saul's daughter loved him."
 - a. Saul wisely saw that the Lord truly was with David. David had provided the one hundred grisly items the king had required, plus a hundred more. Compare: "And David sent messengers to Ishbosheth Saul's son, saying, Deliver *me* my wife Michal, which I espoused to me for an hundred foreskins of the Philistines" (2 Sam. 3:14).
 - b. David having met the condition, and with the knowledge that Michal loved him, Saul gave her to David. Since the Lord was with David, it would be fruitless for the king to oppose the wedding.
2. Verse 29: "And Saul was yet the more afraid of David; and Saul became David's enemy continually."
 - a. The king was filled with fear toward David; because the Lord was with the young man, and because of his ability to meet the Philistines and come out unscathed.
 - b. Saul set himself in more adamant opposition to David, continually.
3. Verse 30: "Then the princes of the Philistines went forth: and it came to pass, after they went forth, *that* David behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul; so that his name was much set by."
 - a. Clarke said regarding these Philistine: "Probably to avenge themselves on David and the Israelites: but of this war we know no more than that David was more skilful and successful in it than any of the other officers of Saul. His military skill was greater, and his success was proportionate to his skill and courage; hence it is said, he behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul" (p.272).
 - b. Whenever the Philistines came out against him, David met the challenge with wisdom and skill.

1 SAMUEL 19

A. 1 Samuel 19:1-7: Jonathan Reconciles Saul to David.

1. Verses 1-2: “And Saul spake to Jonathan his son, and to all his servants, that they should kill David. But Jonathan Saul's son delighted much in David: and Jonathan told David, saying, Saul my father seeketh to kill thee: now therefore, I pray thee, take heed to thyself until the morning, and abide in a secret *place*, and hide thyself.”
 - a. In the preceding chapter, Saul sent David out to fight the Philistines, hoping that these enemies would kill his young rival in the ensuing battles. This indirect method of removing David having failed, Saul gave orders to Jonathan and his other followers to kill him. His animosity against David had been kept secret until this time when he openly called for his death.
 - b. Jonathan and David were close friends. It appears that Jonathan understood that the Lord was with David; he threw his support behind this young man, supporting him above his father, the king. He advised David of Saul’s plan to have him killed. He cautioned him to take particular care until such time that he could get his father to relent from this evil purpose.
2. Verses 3: “And I will go out and stand beside my father in the field where thou *art*, and I will commune with my father of thee; and what I see, that I will tell thee.”
 - a. Jonathan had to operate with great care lest his father suspect him of being in league with David, so he made arrangements to conceal David near a place where he would be speaking with Saul the next morning. David could hear the conversation and take appropriate action without Jonathan having to communicate with him directly again before he could get his father to change his mind.
 - b. We are not told how he arranged to know where to position David so he could overhear the talk with Saul.
3. Verses 4-5: “And Jonathan spake good of David unto Saul his father, and said unto him, Let not the king sin against his servant, against David; because he hath not sinned against thee, and because his works *have been* to thee-ward very good: For he did put his life in his hand, and slew the Philistine, and the LORD wrought a great salvation for all Israel: thou sawest *it*, and didst rejoice: wherefore then wilt thou sin against innocent blood, to slay David without a cause?”
 - a. Speaking with Saul near to the place where his friend was concealed, Jonathan told his father that David was a loyal servant and had not done anything against the king. He reminded Saul that David had risked his life when he slew Goliath, and how God had then given a great victory to Israel over the Philistines.
 - b. Saul had seen these things and had rejoiced over them. It would be a great sin if he had David slain, for he would be shedding innocent blood; David had done nothing against Saul.
4. Verses 6-7: “And Saul hearkened unto the voice of Jonathan: and Saul sware, *As* the LORD liveth, he shall not be slain. And Jonathan called David, and Jonathan showed him all those things. And Jonathan brought David to Saul, and he was in his presence, as in times past.”
 - a. “The strong remonstrances of Jonathan produced an effect on the impulsive mind of his father. As he was still susceptible of good and honest impressions, he bound himself by an oath to relinquish his hostile purpose, and thus, through the intervention of the noble-minded prince, a temporary reconciliation was effected, in consequence of which David was again employed in the public service” (JFB, p.185).
 - b. Saul was an impulsive individual; he was guided by sudden emotional urges [whims] more than by sound wisdom and righteous counsel. Earlier, he rashly offered a sacrifice when he decided that Samuel was not going to meet him on time (1 Sam. 13). The commitment of impetuous people is often based only on shallow emotions, and has no staying power.

B. 1 Samuel 19:8-17: Michal Helps David to Escape from Saul.

1. Verse 8: “And there was war again: and David went out, and fought with the Philistines, and slew them with a great slaughter; and they fled from him.”
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- a. Presumably, the Philistines fomented another war, and into battle went David. The Lord was with him, and soon a great victory was won.
 - b. “A brilliant victory was gained over the public enemy. But these fresh laurels of David re-awakened in the moody breast of Saul the former spirit of envy and melancholy. On David’s return to court, the temper of Saul became more fiendish than ever—the melodious strains of the harp had lost all their power to charm; and, in a paroxysm of uncontrollable frenzy, he aimed a javelin at the person of David, the missile having been thrown with such force that it pierced the chamber wall. David providentially escaped; but the king having now thrown off the mask, and being bent on aggressive measures, made his son-in-law’s situation everywhere perilous” (JFB, p.186).
2. Verses 9-10: “And the evil spirit from the LORD was upon Saul, as he sat in his house with his javelin in his hand: and David played with *his* hand. And Saul sought to smite David even to the wall with the javelin; but he slipped away out of Saul's presence, and he smote the javelin into the wall: and David fled, and escaped that night.”
 - a. Following the most recent victory over the Philistines, David returned to Saul’s house, resuming his former role. When the evil spirit took hold of the king again, David’s playing on the harp did nothing to alleviate his torment.
 - b. Instead of easing his agony, the king flew into a rage, and once again tried to kill David with a spear. The younger man was able to avoid the assault; the spear pierced the wall; David fled into the night.
 3. Verses 11-12: “Saul also sent messengers unto David's house, to watch him, and to slay him in the morning: and Michal David's wife told him, saying, If thou save not thy life to night, to morrow thou shalt be slain. So Michal let David down through a window: and he went, and fled, and escaped.”
 - a. Fleeing from Saul, David went to his own house. Saul knew where to find him, and sent messengers to his house to watch for him, intending to slay him in the morning.
 - b. Michal, Saul’s daughter and David’s wife, pleaded with him to make good his escape during the night or else lose his life when morning came. She persuaded her husband to leave, and lowered him through a window, enabling him to elude the king’s men.
 4. Verses 13-14: “And Michal took an image, and laid *it* in the bed, and put a pillow of goats' *hair* for his bolster, and covered *it* with a cloth. And when Saul sent messengers to take David, she said, He *is* sick.”
 - a. Knowing that Saul’s men would enter the house the next morning, Michal placed an image on the bed, put a pillow of goats’ hair under the image, and covered it with a cloth; this was to trick the soldiers into thinking that David was in bed. Images were found among the Israelites until the time of Josiah (2 Kings 23:24).
 - b. When Saul’s men entered the house the next morning, Michal told them that David was in bed with a sickness. They were gullible enough to believe her without checking, and kind enough not to arrest him anyway. It is likely that they did not want to harm him. They returned to Saul empty-handed.
 5. Verses 15-16: “And Saul sent the messengers *again* to see David, saying, Bring him up to me in the bed, that I may slay him. And when the messengers were come in, behold, *there was* an image in the bed, with a pillow of goats' *hair* for his bolster.”
 - a. Saul must have been infuriated with their not having arrested David. He ordered them to go back and bring him, bed and all, to Saul so that he could be slain.
 - b. It was then that they discovered how they had been deceived by Michal. David was gone; his wife had deluded them. But what could or would Saul do against his own daughter?
 6. Verse 17: “And Saul said unto Michal, Why hast thou deceived me so, and sent away mine enemy, that he is escaped? And Michal answered Saul, He said unto me, Let me go; why should I kill thee?”
 - a. Saul confronted his daughter with the demand to know why she had deceived her own father in helping his enemy to escape.
 - b. Michal showed her love for David and her disregard for truth by asserting that David threatened to kill her if she interfered with his escape. The inspired author gave no such report; this was her way of avoiding Saul’s wrath upon herself.
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- c. “When, after waiting till the usual hour for David's appearance, he came not, the watchers send and inform Saul, who now orders his open arrest. But Michal despatches a messenger to tell her father that he is sick. Upon this Saul orders bed and all to be brought, that he may slay him.
 - 1) “As an Oriental bed is usually a mere strip of carpet, this would be easy enough. But when the messengers force their way through, in spite of every obstruction which Michal can devise to waste time, and come up close to the sleeping figure, ‘Lo, teraphim in the bed, and a goatskin at its head.’ They carry the news to Saul, who sends for Michal, and reproaches her for letting his enemy go. And she, afraid of bringing her father's anger upon herself, answers with a falsehood ... for she tells Saul that his flight was David's own doing, and that she had taken part in it only to save her life. Why should I kill thee?
 - 2) “She pretends that David had told her not to force him to kill her by refusing to give her aid in his escape. Saul, no doubt, saw that she had been a willing agent; but as she professed to have been driven to do what she had done by David's threats, he could say no more” [The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database].

C. 1 Samuel 19:18-24: David Flees to Samuel.

1. Verse 18: “So David fled, and escaped, and came to Samuel to Ramah, and told him all that Saul had done to him. And he and Samuel went and dwelt in Naioth.”
 - a. Using good wisdom, David went to Samuel at Ramah, reporting all that had happened to bring him there. He recognized Samuel as a true prophet of God, and knew that from him he could obtain help, protection, and counsel. Saul would hardly dare to harm anyone under Samuel's protection.
 - b. Samuel and David took up residence in Naioth. “Naioth [NAY-yahth; "habitation"] A place in or near Ramah of Benjamin, where David sought sanctuary from Saul. It may have been the domicile of Samuel, who lived in Ramah. 1 Sam. 19:18-1 Sam. 20:1" (PC Bible Atlas).
 - c. Some scholars assert that Naioth was the name of the dwelling place for the “school of prophets” over which Samuel presided. This would have been tantamount to a holy place, which could have been deemed off-limits to secular powers.
 - d. “David was in a terrifying position. Although innocent of any wrong-doing, Saul had designated him as an outlaw and devoted the resources of the whole kingdom of Israel to the task of hunting David down and killing him. Samuel was a true prophet of God, and David sought him out for advice and protection. ‘In flying to Samuel, David made God his refuge, trusting in the shadow of his wings. Where else can a good man go and feel himself safe’?” (Coffman).
2. Verses 19-21: “And it was told Saul, saying, Behold, David *is* at Naioth in Ramah. And Saul sent messengers to take David: and when they saw the company of the prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing *as* appointed over them, the spirit of God was upon the messengers of Saul, and they also prophesied. And when it was told Saul, he sent other messengers, and they prophesied likewise. And Saul sent messengers again the third time, and they prophesied also.”
 - a. That God was protecting David is obvious by the facts related here. When Saul learned that David was at Naioth in Ramah, he sent men to arrest him. On arrival, when the posse saw the company of prophets prophesying, with Samuel standing at their head, the spirit of God overwhelmed them and caused them to prophesy also.
 - b. None of these was speaking gibberish in the modern Pentecostal sense; there is no such thing as their so-called “ecstatic utterances” in the Bible. This modern nonsense is induced by self- or group- frenzy; it has been known to occur among rank unbelievers. When someone in the Bible received prophetic power, what they spoke were sensible messages which brought glory to God.
 - 1) Acts 2:11: “...We do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.”
 - 2) Acts 10:46: “For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God....”
 - c. When word came back to Saul about his men, he sent another group to apprehend David. These men also were given the spirit to prophesy. A third group was sent, with the same result. God protected the “man after his own heart” in this most wonderful way.

3. Verses 22-24: "Then went he also to Ramah, and came to a great well that *is* in Sechu: and he asked and said, Where *are* Samuel and David? And *one* said, Behold, *they be* at Naioth in Ramah. And he went thither to Naioth in Ramah: and the spirit of God was upon him also, and he went on, and prophesied, until he came to Naioth in Ramah. And he stripped off his clothes also, and prophesied before Samuel in like manner, and lay down naked all that day and all that night. Wherefore they say, *Is* Saul also among the prophets?"
- a. Finally, Saul went himself to take David. When he came to a great well located at Sechu, he inquired about the location of Samuel and David. He was plainly told they were at Naioth in Ramah.
 - b. As he made his way to Ramah, the prophetic spirit came upon him, and he prophesied. Years earlier, he had had a similar experience (1 Sam. 10:9-13). This latest episode had no lasting effect on the evil intentions of Saul.
 - c. He stripped off his clothes and prophesied before Samuel, and lay down naked all that day and night. Surely, God would not have caused him to strip off all his clothing so as to be stark naked! That is contrary to what the Bible reveals about God's nature. The most likely explanation of this is to limit it to the laying aside of his armor and his royal apparel. One is naked (unclothed) if he divests himself of his outer garments. Compare: "Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher's coat unto him, (for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea" (John 21:7).
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1 SAMUEL 20

A. 1 Samuel 20:1-10: David and Jonathan Talk.

1. Verse 1: "And David fled from Naioth in Ramah, and came and said before Jonathan, What have I done? what *is* mine iniquity? and what *is* my sin before thy father, that he seeketh my life?"
 - a. With Saul divested of his royal robes for the time, and lying in a trance-like state on the floor for hours, David left Naioth in Ramah and returned to Gibeah to talk with Jonathan. He needed to know why the king was seeking to kill him. If anyone knew, David thought Jonathan would know.
 - b. Why did David return to Gibeah, Saul's hometown, since the king was trying to kill him? He wanted to know why he was being pursued. Also, he was expected to be at the upcoming feast of the new moon. Since Saul had been overwhelmed with the prophetic spirit (19:22-24), it might be that this experience would change the king.
 2. Verse 2: "And he said unto him, God forbid; thou shalt not die: behold, my father will do nothing either great or small, but that he will show it me: and why should my father hide this thing from me? *it is not so.*"
 - a. Jonathan was shocked to hear David claim his life was being sought by Saul. He did not think that God would permit such a miscarriage of justice; he denied that the charge was true.
 - b. Furthermore, Jonathan was certain that his father would not undertake any significant enterprise without first consulting with him. He was convinced that his father was not seeking David's life. Saul had taken an oath (19:6) that he had no intention of slaying David. "Filial attachment naturally blinded the prince to defects in the parental character, and made him reluctant to believe his father capable of such atrocity" (JFB, p.187).
 3. Verses 3-4: "And David sware moreover, and said, Thy father certainly knoweth that I have found grace in thine eyes; and he saith, Let not Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved: but truly *as* the LORD liveth, and *as* thy soul liveth, *there is* but a step between me and death. Then said Jonathan unto David, Whatsoever thy soul desireth, I will even do *it* for thee."
 - a. David affirmed that Saul knew that Jonathan and David were close friends, and had therefore kept his son in the dark regarding his attempts to kill David.
 - b. He further asserted that there was only "a step between me and death." As certain as the truths that the Lord lives and Jonathan's soul was alive, just that sure was David that his own life was in great jeopardy.
 - c. Seeing his friend's sincerity, Jonathan told David that anything that he wanted, he would provide it. He was asking David to tell him what he could do to help him.
 4. Verses 5-7: "And David said unto Jonathan, Behold, to morrow *is* the new moon, and I should not fail to sit with the king at meat: but let me go, that I may hide myself in the field unto the third *day* at even. If thy father at all miss me, then say, David earnestly asked *leave* of me that he might run to Bethlehem his city: for *there is* a yearly sacrifice there for all the family. If he say thus, *It is* well; thy servant shall have peace: but if he be very wroth, *then* be sure that evil is determined by him."
 - a. David proposes a plan by which he could learn of Saul's present attitude toward him. The feast of the new moon was to be held the next day; David was expected to be present at the king's table to eat this important meal, since he was still a member of Saul's court. Details concerning the observance of this feast are given in Numbers:
 - 1) Numbers 10:10: "Also in the day of your gladness, and in your solemn days, and in the beginnings of your months, ye shall blow with the trumpets over your burnt offerings, and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings; that they may be to you for a memorial before your God: I *am* the LORD your God."
 - 2) Numbers 28:11-15: "And in the beginnings of your months ye shall offer a burnt offering unto the LORD; two young bullocks, and one ram, seven lambs of the first year without spot; And three tenth deals of flour *for* a meat offering, mingled with oil, for one bullock; and two tenth deals of
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flour *for* a meat offering, mingled with oil, for one ram; And a several tenth deal of flour mingled with oil *for* a meat offering unto one lamb; *for* a burnt offering of a sweet savour, a sacrifice made by fire unto the LORD. And their drink offerings shall be half an hin of wine unto a bullock, and the third *part* of an hin unto a ram, and a fourth *part* of an hin unto a lamb: this *is* the burnt offering of every month throughout the months of the year. And one kid of the goats for a sin offering unto the LORD shall be offered, beside the continual burnt offering, and his drink offering."

- b. He asked Jonathan to permit him to conceal himself in the field until the third day at evening. If Saul inquired of David's absence, to tell him that he had gone to Bethlehem to partake of the new moon feast with his family; Jonathan was to say that David had asked him for permission to make the trip. It is apparent that this was not a mere ploy, but that he was going to Bethlehem for the feast; verse nineteen shows that when David returned, he was to be at the place near the stone Ezel where Jonathan and Saul had formerly held a conversation (19:1-7).
 - c. If Saul replied, "It is well," then David would know that the king no longer had plans to kill him. But if the king showed great anger, then they could know that evil was still intended against David.
5. Verse 8: "Therefore thou shalt deal kindly with thy servant; for thou hast brought thy servant into a covenant of the LORD with thee: notwithstanding, if there be in me iniquity, slay me thyself; for why shouldest thou bring me to thy father?"
- a. David called attention to the fact that Jonathan had initiated an agreement between himself and David in the Lord's sight. Appealing to this covenant, David called on Jonathan to deal kindly with him.
 - b. However, David admonished Jonathan to slay him personally if he should find any iniquity in him. This was Jonathan's prerogative as a prince and member of the royal court. This statement reveals David's sincerity.
6. Verses 9-10: "And Jonathan said, Far be it from thee: for if I knew certainly that evil were determined by my father to come upon thee, then would not I tell it thee? Then said David to Jonathan, Who shall tell me? or what *if* thy father answer thee roughly?"
- a. Jonathan denied the possibility that any iniquity could be found in David. Moreover, he affirmed that if he knew that evil was being planned against David, he would tell him about it.
 - b. David draws his friend's attention back to the plan he had suggested. How could he learn of Saul's reaction on perceiving his absence from the feast? Who would tell him if Saul answered kindly or with wrath?
- B. 1 Samuel 20:11-17: Jonathan Pledges Himself to David.
1. Verse 11: "And Jonathan said unto David, Come, and let us go out into the field. And they went out both of them into the field."
 - a. Jonathan invited David to go with him out into the field to make the arrangements for conveying the information about the king's response to David's absence from the feast.
 - b. At the time, Saul had not returned from Ramah where he had lain on the floor all the previous day and night. David had left Ramah after Saul's arrival. The distance between Ramah and Gibeah could be covered in a few hours of walking.
 2. Verses 12-13: "And Jonathan said unto David, O LORD God of Israel, when I have sounded my father about to morrow any time, *or* the third *day*, and, behold, *if there be* good toward David, and I then send not unto thee, and show it thee; The LORD do so and much more to Jonathan: but if it please my father *to do* thee evil, then I will show it thee, and send thee away, that thou mayest go in peace: and the LORD be with thee, as he hath been with my father."
 - a. The ASV gives this rendering: "And Jonathan said unto David, Jehovah, the God of Israel, be witness: when I have sounded my father about this time to-morrow, or the third day, behold, if there be good toward David, shall I not then send unto thee, and disclose it unto thee? Jehovah do so to Jonathan, and more also, should it please my father to do thee evil, if I disclose it not unto thee, and
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send thee away, that thou mayest go in peace: and Jehovah be with thee, as he hath been with my father” (1 Sam. 20:12-13, ASV).

- b. The promise Jonathan makes to David is a vow made with an invocation for God’s help. He states that after he has searched out his father’s intentions on the morrow, he would surely provide David with that information.
 - c. Regardless of what he found out concerning Saul’s disposition toward David, whether he had warmed toward him or sought to do evil to him, Jonathan vowed to make it known to his friend. He also pronounced God’s blessings upon David, desiring God’s good pleasure to be upon David as it had been upon Saul.
3. Verses 14-15: “And thou shalt not only while yet I live show me the kindness of the LORD, that I die not: But *also* thou shalt not cut off thy kindness from my house for ever: no, not when the LORD hath cut off the enemies of David every one from the face of the earth.”
- a. NKJ: “And you shall not only show me the kindness of the Lord while I still live, that I may not die; but you shall not cut off your kindness from my house forever, no, not when the Lord has cut off every one of the enemies of David from the face of the earth.”
 - b. Jonathan here requests that David would show kindness to his family, not only while Jonathan lived but also after his death. Even after David’s enemies had all been cut off from the earth, he wanted his friend to offer kindness to his family. Cf. 2 Samuel 9.
 - c. Implied in this request is Jonathan’s belief that David would replace Saul as king in Israel. He realized that he might himself be slain when God punished the enemies of David. Jonathan was so committed to David that he sided with him against his father, and was so committed to his father that he willingly entered the battle with the Philistines in which both he and his father were slain (1 Sam. 31). He was so committed to God’s will that he risked his life for David and gave it for the people of God.
4. Verses 16-17: “So Jonathan made *a covenant* with the house of David, *saying*, Let the LORD even require *it* at the hand of David's enemies. And Jonathan caused David to swear again, because he loved him: for he loved him as he loved his own soul.”
- a. NKJ: So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, "Let the Lord require it at the hand of David's enemies." Now Jonathan again caused David to vow, because he loved him; for he loved him as he loved his own soul.
 - b. The former agreement (18:1-4) was renewed. The covenant committed Jonathan to David’s cause, and called for David to show kindness to Jonathan and his family.
 - c. Jonathan expressed his desire that the Lord would take vengeance on David’s enemies, which turned out to include Saul.
 - d. Verse seventeen states the great love that existed between these two friends. The text affirms that the love Jonathan had for David equaled the love he had for himself.
- C. 1 Samuel 20:18-26: David Misses the Feast of the New Moon.
1. Verses 18-19: “Then Jonathan said to David, To morrow *is* the new moon: and thou shalt be missed, because thy seat will be empty. And *when* thou hast stayed three days, *then* thou shalt go down quickly, and come to the place where thou didst hide thyself when the business was *in hand*, and shalt remain by the stone Ezel”
 - a. Referring to the feast of the new moon which was to be held the next day, knowing that David would be absent, Jonathan states his sorrow that David would not be there.
 - b. David was to be gone for three days, to partake of the feast with his family at Bethlehem. That he did so may be implied in verse nineteen. The three days involved would include the present day to travel to Bethlehem, the feast would occupy the morrow, and the third day would give David time to return to Gibeah in time to be at the appointed place by the evening.
 - c. When he returned, David was to conceal himself in the same place where he had hidden on the earlier occasion when Jonathan and Saul conversed in the field (19:3-7), which was near the stone Ezel.
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2. Verses 20-22: “And I will shoot three arrows on the side *thereof*, as though I shot at a mark. And, behold, I will send a lad, *saying*, Go, find out the arrows. If I expressly say unto the lad, Behold, the arrows *are* on this side of thee, take them; then come thou: for *there is* peace to thee, and no hurt; *as* the LORD liveth. But if I say thus unto the young man, Behold, the arrows *are* beyond thee; go thy way: for the LORD hath sent thee away.”
 - a. Jonathan would come forth and shoot some arrows as though at some target. The report he was to give to David would be given by what he would say to the lad searching for the arrows.
 - b. If he told the boy that the arrows were on this side of him, that would mean for David to come to Jonathan’s side, for there was no danger from Saul. But if he told the young man that the arrows were beyond him, that would mean that David was to go away, for Saul intended to do him harm.
3. Verse 23: “And *as touching* the matter which thou and I have spoken of, behold, the LORD *be* between thee and me for ever.”
 - a. “The plan being concerted, the friends separated for a time, and the amiable character of Jonathan again peers out in his parting allusion to their covenant of friendship” (JFB, p.189).
 - b. Concerning the covenant that they had made, Jonathan expressed his desire that it should always be honored, that the Lord should always bind the two friends together.
4. Verses 24-26: “So David hid himself in the field: and when the new moon was come, the king sat him down to eat meat. And the king sat upon his seat, as at other times, *even* upon a seat by the wall: and Jonathan arose, and Abner sat by Saul's side, and David's place was empty. Nevertheless Saul spake not any thing that day: for he thought, Something hath befallen him, he *is* not clean; surely he *is* not clean.”
 - a. Other versions:
 - 1) ASV: “So David hid himself in the field: and when the new moon was come, the king sat him down to eat food. And the king sat upon his seat, as at other times, even upon the seat by the wall; and Jonathan stood up, and Abner sat by Saul's side: but David's place was empty. Nevertheless Saul spake not anything that day: for he thought, Something hath befallen him, he is not clean; surely he is not clean.”
 - 2) NKJ: “When David hid in the field. And when the New Moon had come, the king sat down to eat the feast. Now the king sat on his seat, as at other times, on a seat by the wall. And Jonathan arose, and Abner sat by Saul's side, but David's place was empty. Nevertheless Saul did not say anything that day, for he thought, "Something has happened to him; he is unclean, surely he is unclean."
 - b. This passage seems to say that David hid himself in the field for the three days, but it could only mean that he concealed himself on the third day. If he never went to Bethlehem as he had Jonathan tell Saul, then we have both David and Jonathan telling a falsehood, a violation of Exodus 20:16. Nothing is said to him about a transgression.
 - c. Saul and his cohorts came together for the feast. Saul sat against the wall, apparently a safer or more honorable place. Jonathan arose and Abner sat by Saul’s side. This may mean that Jonathan was at his father’s side until Abner arrived, and gave him this place. David usual place was empty.
 - d. Saul missed David, but gave no special consideration to his absence, supposing that something had befallen him to make him unclean. The feast was a religious exercise, requiring the participants to observe the rules of cleanness.

D. 1 Samuel 20:27-34: Saul Tries to Kill Jonathan.

1. Verse 27: “And it came to pass on the morrow, *which was* the second *day* of the month, that David's place was empty: and Saul said unto Jonathan his son, Wherefore cometh not the son of Jesse to meat, neither yesterday, nor to day?”
 - a. The next day, David’s place was unoccupied again, prompting Saul to inquire of Jonathan as to his whereabouts.
 - b. To be gone for uncleanness would account for his absence on the feast day, but he should be present on this day.

- c. "Saul said unto Jonathan ... Wherefore cometh not the son of Jesse? The question was asked, as it were, casually, and with as great an air of indifference as he could assume. And Jonathan having replied that David had asked and obtained his permission to attend a family anniversary at Beth-lehem, the pent-up passions of the king, who penetrated the prince's policy, burst out in a most violent storm of rage and invective against his son" (Jamieson).
2. Verses 28-29: "And Jonathan answered Saul, David earnestly asked *leave of me to go* to Bethlehem: And he said, Let me go, I pray thee; for our family hath a sacrifice in the city; and my brother, he hath commanded me *to be there*: and now, if I have found favour in thine eyes, let me get away, I pray thee, and see my brethren. Therefore he cometh not unto the king's table."
- a. The prince related the story as stated by David. He had requested permission to go to Bethlehem to be with his family for the celebration of the feast. His brother had commanded his presence. The feast was associated with certain offerings.
- 1) Numbers 28:11-15: "And in the beginnings of your months ye shall offer a burnt offering unto the LORD; two young bullocks, and one ram, seven lambs of the first year without spot; And three tenth deals of flour for a meat offering, mingled with oil, for one bullock; and two tenth deals of flour for a meat offering, mingled with oil, for one ram; And a several tenth deal of flour mingled with oil for a meat offering unto one lamb; for a burnt offering of a sweet savour, a sacrifice made by fire unto the LORD. And their drink offerings shall be half an hin of wine unto a bullock, and the third part of an hin unto a ram, and a fourth part of an hin unto a lamb: this is the burnt offering of every month throughout the months of the year. And one kid of the goats for a sin offering unto the LORD shall be offered, beside the continual burnt offering, and his drink offering."
 - 2) Numbers 10:10: "Also in the day of your gladness, and in your solemn days, and in the beginnings of your months, ye shall blow with the trumpets over your burnt offerings, and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings; that they may be to you for a memorial before your God: I am the LORD your God."
- b. David had put the request on a conciliatory basis: If I have found favor in your eyes, permit me to go see my brethren.
3. Verses 30-31: "Then Saul's anger was kindled against Jonathan, and he said unto him, Thou son of the perverse rebellious *woman*, do not I know that thou hast chosen the son of Jesse to thine own confusion, and unto the confusion of thy mother's nakedness? For as long as the son of Jesse liveth upon the ground, thou shalt not be established, nor thy kingdom. Wherefore now send and fetch him unto me, for he shall surely die."
- a. Other versions:
- 1) ASV: "Then Saul's anger was kindled against Jonathan, and he said unto him, Thou son of a perverse rebellious woman, do not I know that thou hast chosen the son of Jesse to thine own shame, and unto the shame of thy mother's nakedness? For as long as the son of Jesse liveth upon the ground, thou shalt not be established, nor thy kingdom. Wherefore now send and fetch him unto me, for he shall surely die."
 - 2) NKJ: Then Saul's anger was aroused against Jonathan, and he said to him, "You son of a perverse, rebellious woman! Do I not know that you have chosen the son of Jesse to your own shame and to the shame of your mother's nakedness? 31 For as long as the son of Jesse lives on the earth, you shall not be established, nor your kingdom. Now therefore, send and bring him to me, for he shall surely die."
- b. Saul was filled with wrath at this explanation. He spoke harshly to Jonathan by denigrating his mother. The *Living Bible* gives a perverted *translation* so as to turn it into gutter speech: "Saul boiled with rage. 'You ____!' he yelled at him. 'Do you think that you want this son of a nobody to be king in your place, shaming yourself and your mother?'"
- c. "Saul was not angry with his wife; it was the son alone upon whom he meant, by this style of address, to discharge his resentment; and the principle on which it is founded seems to be, that to a genuine
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filial instinct it is a more inexpiable offence to hear the name or character of a parent traduced than any personal reproach” (JFB, p.190).

- d. Saul intended that he should be the first in a long line of kings over Israel; he thought that he was establishing a dynasty. He understood that if David was successful, he would mount the throne at Saul’s death, which would leave Jonathan and his descendants without any claims to it.
 - e. With these words, Saul thought to stir up his son to oppose David. He ordered Jonathan to apprehend David and bring him to Saul, that he could be executed.
4. Verses 32-33: “And Jonathan answered Saul his father, and said unto him, Wherefore shall he be slain? what hath he done? And Saul cast a javelin at him to smite him: whereby Jonathan knew that it was determined of his father to slay David.”
 - a. Jonathan, knowing the fidelity of David, asked his father to identify the sin of which he was guilty. What evil thing had David done to deserve death?
 - b. In his rage, Saul was past the stage where reasoning could move him. Instead of giving Jonathan a reasonable answer to a reasonable question, he threw a javelin at his son, trying to kill him.
 - c. This was more than sufficient proof that Saul intended to kill David. He had plainly stated his intention to kill David, and had shown his willingness to do so with his own hand, for if he could attempt to murder his own son in a fit of anger, he would surely have no difficulty in murdering one he thought was a rival for his throne.
 5. Verse 34: “So Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger, and did eat no meat the second day of the month: for he was grieved for David, because his father had done him shame.”
 - a. Rising from the table in a fierce anger of his own, Jonathan left the table without eating. Such a show of anger and hatred on the part of the king would destroy hunger.
 - b. Some scholars suppose that Saul did not cast a spear at Jonathan, but that the prince remembered the occasion when the king tried to kill David in that manner. They further postulate that Jonathan did not experience anger, but grief, which drove him from his father’s table. But the text is too clear and definite to admit such arguments.
- E. 1 Samuel 20:35-42: Jonathan and David Speak Again.
1. Verses 35-36: “And it came to pass in the morning, that Jonathan went out into the field at the time appointed with David, and a little lad with him. And he said unto his lad, Run, find out now the arrows which I shoot. *And* as the lad ran, he shot an arrow beyond him.”
 - a. The next day, Jonathan went out of Gibeah into the field where he and David had arranged to meet. He had a young boy with him to fetch the arrows he planned to shoot.
 - b. He shot the arrows as the lad went forth. At least one of the arrows went beyond the servant. David was concealed in the rocks nearby, seeing and hearing Jonathan.
 2. Verses 37-38: “And when the lad was come to the place of the arrow which Jonathan had shot, Jonathan cried after the lad, and said, *Is* not the arrow beyond thee? And Jonathan cried after the lad, Make speed, haste, stay not. And Jonathan's lad gathered up the arrows, and came to his master.”
 - a. When the boy got to the area where the arrow had fallen, Jonathan shouted that the arrow was beyond him, that he would have to go further to find it.
 - b. The lad ran forth and gathered the arrows, and returned to Jonathan as he was directed.
 3. Verses 39-40: “But the lad knew not any thing: only Jonathan and David knew the matter. And Jonathan gave his artillery unto his lad, and said unto him, Go, carry *them* to the city.”
 - a. The boy did not perceive what was being done. David heard and saw the transaction, and perceived that Saul intended harm to him.
 - b. Jonathan gave the bow and arrow to the lad, and sent him back into the city. Apparently, there was no imminent danger in his meeting and talking with David.
 4. Verses 41-42: “*And* as soon as the lad was gone, David arose out of *a place* toward the south, and fell on his face to the ground, and bowed himself three times: and they kissed one another, and wept one with another, until David exceeded. And Jonathan said to David, Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn
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both of us in the name of the LORD, saying, The LORD be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed for ever. And he arose and departed: and Jonathan went into the city."

- a. When the boy was gone, David arose from his place of concealment to the south, and approached his friend, bowing himself three times before Jonathan as he drew near.
 - b. They exchanged holy kisses and wept one with the other until David's lamentations exceeded those of Jonathan. Some Bible critics find in the relationship of Jonathan and David something unholy, but such was not the case.
 - c. Jonathan sent David away, knowing the grave danger to which he was being exposed this close to the king. He reminded his friend of the oath they had sworn to each other, that the Lord was between them, binding them together in peace and love, and that neither would ever be a danger to the other's family. In 2 Samuel 9, David showed great kindness to Jonathan's son, Mephibosheth
 - d. David departed and Jonathan entered the city.
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1 SAMUEL 21

A. 1 Samuel 21: 1-9: David Eats the Shewbread.

1. Verse 1: “Then came David to Nob to Ahimelech the priest: and Ahimelech was afraid at the meeting of David, and said unto him, Why *art* thou alone, and no man with thee?”
 - a. After meeting with Jonathan in the field, and receiving confirmation from his friend of Saul’s commitment to killing David, David went to Nob and presented himself to Ahimelech the priest.
 - b. Nob is said to have been situated a few miles to the northeast of Jerusalem, near Anathoth (Coffman, p.255; cf. Isa. 10:30-32). His purpose in going to Nob, as suggested in 22:10, was to make inquiry of the Lord through Ahimelech. The account given in this chapter shows that the tabernacle was now set up at Nob; it was here that David ate the shewbread, a feature of the tabernacle.
 - c. “Ahimelech, the son of Ahitub, most probably the same as Ahiah (ch. 14:3), was ‘*the priest*,’ i.e, the high priest...” (Keil, p.217). "How he went into the house of God in the days of Abiathar the high priest, and did eat the shewbread, which is not lawful to eat but for the priests, and gave also to them which were with him?" (Mark 2:26). In Mark’s account of this episode, Christ said that it was during the days of Abiathar that the event occurred. Notice that he did not state that Abiathar was high priest on that very occasion. Abiathar escaped Saul’s attacks on the priesthood, and later became high priest.
 - d. Ahimelech was frightened by the unexpected appearance of David, knowing that there was friction between him and the king. He demanded to know why David had come alone, without a company of soldiers with him. David had been in command of a sizeable troop of soldiers; his presence without these men was an indication to Ahimelech that something was wrong.
 2. Verse 2: “And David said unto Ahimelech the priest, The king hath commanded me a business, and hath said unto me, Let no man know any thing of the business whereabout I send thee, and what I have commanded thee: and I have appointed *my* servants to such and such a place.”
 - a. David’s answer “was a direct falsehood, extorted through fear. David probably supposed, like many other persons, that a lie is quite excusable which is told for the sole purpose of saving the speaker’s life; or perhaps it was for the preservation of Ahimelech; for, as David saw Doeg there, who he was sure would inform Saul, he might wish to furnish the high priest with some reasonable excuse for the assistance rendered to the fugitive...” (JFB, p.191).
 - b. Lying is sinful, regardless of the circumstances. There were certain things which God overlooked in ancient days (Acts 17:30), but he now requires all men everywhere to repent. David later repented and asked God’s forgiveness for the sin of lying. "Remove from me the way of lying: and grant me thy law graciously" (Ps. 119:29).
 - c. Evidently David approached Ahimelech alone (verse 1), leaving his men at some distance away. There were some men with him, plainly shown in the Lord’s reference to this event in Matthew 12:3-4: "But he said unto them, Have ye not read what David did, when he was an hungred, and they that were with him; How he entered into the house of God, and did eat the shewbread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests?"
 3. Verses 3-4: “Now therefore what is under thine hand? *give me five loaves of bread* in mine hand, or what there is present. And the priest answered David, and said, *There is* no common bread under mine hand, but there is hallowed bread; if the young men have kept themselves at least from women.”
 - a. David asks that Ahimelech give him whatever kind of food he had to offer. He specifically asked for five loaves of bread. Perhaps this implies that he had four men with him.
 - b. The priest stated that there was no common bread at hand, that only the sacred shewbread was there. Fresh bread was placed in the tabernacle each week (Ex. 24:5-9); the old bread was given to the priests for food.
 - 1) Others were not to eat this hallowed bread, but some scholars think that in an emergency situation, such at the present case, David could eat it without offense.
 - 2) However, consider J.W. McGarvey’s incisive comment under Matthew 12:3-4:
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- a) “Jesus expressly admits that what David did was unlawful; and some have supposed that he here intends to justify it on the ground of necessity, and then to argue that his disciples, though guilty of violating the law of the Sabbath, are justifiable on the same ground. There is no doubt that on this ground David excused himself for eating the showbread, and that the Pharisees did the same for him.
 - b) “But it can not be that he who refused to turn stones into bread when tortured by a forty days’ fast, and who said, ‘Whosoever shall break one of these least commandments, and teach men so, shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven,’ would approve such a violation of law as David was guilty of. Neither can it be that he allowed his own disciples while under the law to break the Sabbath. If Christians may violate law when its observance would involve hardship or suffering, then there is an end of suffering for the name of Christ, and an end even of self-denial. But it is clear that by the Pharisees David’s act was thought excusable; otherwise they could have retorted on Jesus thus: Out of your own mouth we condemn you: you class your act with David’s; but David sinned, and so do you.
 - c) “Now the real argument of Jesus is this: David, when hungry, ate the show-bread, which it was confessedly unlawful for him to eat, yet you justify him: my disciples pluck grain and eat it on the Sabbath, an act which the law does not forbid, and yet you condemn them” (*Commentary on Matthew and Mark*, p.104).
- c. Ahimelech was willing to give David this bread if the young men with him had at least kept themselves from women. Compare: "And he said unto the people, Be ready against the third day: come not at *your* wives" (Ex. 19:15).
4. Verses 5-6: “And David answered the priest, and said unto him, Of a truth women *have been* kept from us about these three days, since I came out, and the vessels of the young men are holy, and *the bread is* in a manner common, yea, though it were sanctified this day in the vessel. So the priest gave him hallowed *bread*: for there was no bread there but the shewbread, that was taken from before the LORD, to put hot bread in the day when it was taken away.”
- a. 1 Samuel 21:5-6: “And David answered the priest, and said unto him, Of a truth women have been kept from us about these three days; when I came out, the vessels of the young men were holy, though it was but a common journey; how much more then to-day shall their vessels be holy? So the priest gave him holy bread; for there was no bread there but the shewbread, that was taken from before Jehovah, to put hot bread in the day when it was taken away” (ASV).
 - b. 1 Samuel 21:5-6: When David answered the priest, and said to him, "Truly, women have been kept from us about three days since I came out. And the vessels of the young men are holy, and the bread is in effect common, even though it was consecrated in the vessel this day." So the priest gave him holy bread; for there was no bread there but the showbread which had been taken from before the Lord, in order to put hot bread in its place on the day when it was taken away. (NKJ).
- c. David affirms that he and his company had been separated from women for three days (cf. Exodus 19:15). “David and his attendants seem to have been during this interval lurking in some of the adjoining caves to avoid pursuit, and to have been consequently reduced to great extremities of hunger” (JFB, p.191). David was married, and it is possible that some or all of his men were married. There is no reason for us to suppose that these men had been consorting with loose women prior to the three-day period.
- d. The clothing and other items on the persons of David and his men were all ceremonially clean. The vessels in the second part of the verse were the sachels in which food and other items were carried. For this reason, the shewbread was not to be eaten by contaminated persons. In addition to this, as he asserted in his claim to be on the king’s business, the mission he was engaged in would be enough to make it right for them to receive the bread. David had been anointed to serve Israel as king; his
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- present flight from Saul was for the purpose of securing his life for the day he would mount the throne; his mission, in a broad sense, was in keeping with God's overall plan.
- e. "This exactly agrees with the time during which David had lain concealed (1 Sam 20:24,27,35), and explains the hunger under which he was suffering, as he had no doubt taken with him only food sufficient for his immediate wants, he wishes, however, the high priest to believe that he had been engaged with his men during this time on public business, whereas they had been at home and some of them possibly were unclean. The whole chapter sets David before us in a very humiliating light.... The determined hatred of Saul seems to have thrown him off his balance, and it was not till he got among the hills of Judah, wherein was the cave of Adullam, that he recovered his serenity.
 - 1) "The vessels of the young men. Their scribes, in which they would carry the bread, and their baggage generally. The bread is in a manner common, etc. The word bread is supplied by the translators, to give some sense to this most difficult passage. Literally translated, the two last clauses are, 'And the way is profane, although it be sanctified today in the vessel.'
 - 2) "Among the numerous interpretations of these words the following seems the best: 'And though our journey be not connected with a religious object, yet it (the bread) will be kept holy in the vessel (in which it will be carried).' There is no difficulty in supplying bread in the last clause, as the shewbread was the subject of the conversation, and a nominative is constantly supplied by the mind from the principal matter that is occupying the thoughts of the speakers.
 - 3) "David's argument, therefore, is that both his attendants and their wallets were free from legal defilement, and that though their expedition was on some secular business, yet that at all events the bread would be secure from pollution.
 - 4) "The shewbread that was taken from before Jehovah. The Talmud ('Menach.,' 92, 2) points out that this bread was not newly taken out of the sanctuary, but, as the last clause shows, had been removed on some previous day. As after a week's exposure it was stale and dry, the priests, we are told, ate but little of it, and the rest was left (see Talmud, 'Tract. Yom.,' 39, 1). It also points out that, had such violations of the Levitical law been common, so much importance would not have been attached to this incident" [Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 2001 by BibleSoft].
 - f. Ahimelech reckoned that an emergency situation would override a ceremonial restriction. He gave David the bread.
5. Verse 7: "Now a certain man of the servants of Saul *was* there that day, detained before the LORD; and his name *was* Doeg, an Edomite, the chiefest of the herdmen that *belonged* to Saul." "Now a certain man of the servants of Saul was there that day, detained before Jehovah; and his name was Doeg the Edomite, the chiefest of the herdsmen that belonged to Saul" (ASV).
 - a. A certain Edomite, in charge of the herdmen of Saul, was present at the tabernacle. We are told that he was detained there, which seems to imply that he was being held there until some disciplinary action could be brought to bear upon him. This comports with his active hatred of the priests of Nob which he evinced in the next chapter by agreeing to kill them for Saul. It is possible that he was a proselyte, and was detained at the tabernacle until he could go through some prescribed ceremony.
 - b. Doeg was an evil man. He came from a nation which was a constant enemy to Israel. David saw and recognized him; he knew that Doeg would be swift to report his presence to Saul, hence there was a great need for him to secure food for his company, and flee.
 6. Verses 8-9: "And David said unto Ahimelech, And is there not here under thine hand spear or sword? for I have neither brought my sword nor my weapons with me, because the king's business required haste. And the priest said, The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom thou slewest in the valley of Elah, behold, it *is here* wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod: if thou wilt take that, take *it*: for *there is* no other save that here. And David said, *There is* none like that; give it me."
 - a. David had fled hastily from Gibeah without proper weapons. He asked Ahimelech whether there was some sword or spear there that he might have.
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- b. Ahimelech told David that Goliath's sword was there, wrapped in a cloth, and stored where the ephod and other vestments were kept. It was safely stored at the tabernacle as a memorial to the help God had given Israel through David in the slaying of the giant and their deliverance from the Philistines.
- c. David said that there was no other sword like it, and happily accepted it. Goliath's spear and the other items he carried into battle were immense in size; so also must have been this sword. That David could wield it is an indication that he was a powerful man.

B. 1 Samuel 21:10-15: David Pretends Madness in Gath.

1. Verses 10-11: "And David arose, and fled that day for fear of Saul, and went to Achish the king of Gath. And the servants of Achish said unto him, *Is not this David the king of the land? did they not sing one to another of him in dances, saying, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands?"*
 - a. David left his own people, and fled to Gath to obtain the protection of Achish the king. It seems odd that he would seek refuge in the very city from which Goliath had come. Also, he would have had to conceal Goliath's sword, for surely the people of Gath would recognize it. Since no mention is made here of his men being present, perhaps he left them outside of Gath, awaiting word as to whether they could stay there.
 - b. The people of Gath recognized David, and even remembered the song sung by the Israelite women in his honor.
 2. Verses 12-13: "And David laid up these words in his heart, and was sore afraid of Achish the king of Gath. And he changed his behaviour before them, and feigned himself mad in their hands, and scabbled on the doors of the gate, and let his spittle fall down upon his beard."
 - a. This information aroused David's concern. He knew that he was in grave danger. He had escaped from Saul only to face another deadly enemy.
 - b. He was in their hands, and had to think quickly to avoid death. He pretended to be mad, scribbled on the doors of the gate, and let spittle run down on his beard.
 - c. Some ancient societies had a somewhat religious awe of mad men, and would do them no harm. A few generations ago, the deranged were sometimes chained in close confinement, in terrible places and terrible circumstances.
 3. Verses 14-15: "Then said Achish unto his servants, Lo, ye see the man is mad: wherefore *then* have ye brought him to me? Have I need of mad men, that ye have brought this *fellow* to play the mad man in my presence? shall this *fellow* come into my house?"
 - a. Achish rebuked his men for bringing David before him, since he was plainly a madman. It seems that these ancient people were unsophisticated and easily deceived.
 - b. The king stated that he did not need to have mad men in his house. Obviously, David was seeking refuge at Gath, and evidently had already stated his intention to the men of Gath. But when he was recognized, apprehended, and brought before Achish, he put on the crazy-man act to avoid death at the hands of these Philistines.
 - c. Later, in chapter 27, David was allowed to stay at Gath. The situation had changed by that time. David had a band of 600 men then, and it was widely known to the Philistines that Saul was trying to kill him.
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1 SAMUEL 22

A. 1 Samuel 22:1-5: David Flees to the Cave Adullam.

1. Verse 1: "David therefore departed thence, and escaped to the cave Adullam: and when his brethren and all his father's house heard *it*, they went down thither to him."
 - a. Being refused asylum in Gath, David fled to take refuge in the cave Adullam. "Adullam ['refuge']. An ancient Canaanite royal city midway between Jerusalem and Lachish. With Socoh, it controlled a principal pass into the hill country of Judah, and thus was fortified by Rehoboam. Destroyed by Sennacherib, Adullam was again occupied after the Exile. Shortly after leaving Gath, David hid with his men in one of the limestone caves near the city. Gen. 38:1; Josh. 12:15; 1 Sam. 22:1; 2 Sam. 23:13; Neh. 11:30" (*PC Bible Atlas*). Hundreds of caves are located in this area, which was near the border of Philistia and Judah.
 - 1) Genesis 38:1: "And it came to pass at that time, that Judah went down from his brethren, and turned in to a certain Adullamite, whose name was Hirah."
 - 2) Joshua 12:15: "The king of Libnah, one; the king of Adullam, one."
 - 3) 1 Samuel 22:1: "David therefore departed thence, and escaped to the cave Adullam: and when his brethren and all his father's house heard it, they went down thither to him."
 - 4) 2 Samuel 23:13: "And three of the thirty chief went down, and came to David in the harvest time unto the cave of Adullam: and the troop of the Philistines pitched in the valley of Rephaim."
 - 5) Nehemiah 11:30: "Zanoah, Adullam, and in their villages, at Lachish, and the fields thereof, at Azekah, and in the villages thereof. And they dwelt from Beersheba unto the valley of Hinnom."
 - b. "The Valley of Elah, now called *Wady es Sunt*, heads a few miles northwest of Hebron, on the way to Bet Jibrin', and runs in a northerly direction between the mountains of Judah and the lower hills of the Shephelah which border the Philistine Plain. Along its course are a number of interesting Scripture localities. First in order is the place identified as Adullam. About six miles from the head of the valley, and on its western side, is a hill about 500 feet high, crowned with a ruined fortress and a small dome-covered building sacred to the memory of some Mohammedan sheikh. Near its brow is an inhabited cavern answering well to the cave of Adullam, in which David and his men took refuge, while various other inhabited caves are in the vicinity, and at the northern foot of the hill are two ancient wells similar to those at Beersheba. By all these circumstances, by its present name (*Aid el Ma*), and by its relative position toward the other places mentioned with it in Joshua's list of the cities of Judah, it is identified as the site of Adullam" (McGarvey, *Lands of the Bible*, p.259).
 - c. "While lurking in the caverns of those rocky fastnesses, they were on the confines of extensive pasture lands, over which were spread the vast flocks of the neighbouring proprietors. David rendered useful service in protecting these from the Bedouins of the desert, and in return received from the shepherds supplies of food, as well as seasonable intelligence of the movements of the roving government spies sent to search for them" (JFB, p.193).
 - d. Learning that he had taken up residence in Adullam, David's father and his entire household went down to be with him. Even these innocent relatives were in danger to Saul's demented hatred.
2. Verse 2: "And every one *that was* in distress, and every one *that was* in debt, and every one *that was* discontented, gathered themselves unto him; and he became a captain over them: and there were with him about four hundred men."
 - a. There were many desperate men who were in debt, in some distress, or discontented, who left Israel to join themselves with David. His reputation drew to him an army of about 400 men, which later increased to 600.
 - b. Some of his prominent men are listed in 1 Chronicles 12. These men became a force to be reckoned with, and included some ferocious warriors. Abishai and Benaiah were two outstanding examples.

- 1) 1 Samuel 26:6: "Then answered David and said to Ahimelech the Hittite, and to Abishai the son of Zeruiah, brother to Joab, saying, Who will go down with me to Saul to the camp? And Abishai said, I will go down with thee."
- 2) 2 Samuel 23:20: "And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, the son of a valiant man, of Kabzeel, who had done many acts, he slew two lionlike men of Moab: he went down also and slew a lion in the midst of a pit in time of snow."
- c. There were three others who were even more outstanding:
 - 1) 2 Samuel 23:8: "These be the names of the mighty men whom David had: The Tachmonite that sat in the seat, chief among the captains; the same was Adino the Eznite: he lift up his spear against eight hundred, whom he slew at one time."
 - 2) 2 Samuel 23:9-10: "And after him was Eleazar the son of Dodo the Ahohite, one of the three mighty men with David, when they defied the Philistines that were there gathered together to battle, and the men of Israel were gone away: He arose, and smote the Philistines until his hand was weary, and his hand clave unto the sword: and the LORD wrought a great victory that day; and the people returned after him only to spoil."
 - 3) 2 Samuel 23:11-12: "And after him was Shammah the son of Agee the Hararite. And the Philistines were gathered together into a troop, where was a piece of ground full of lentiles: and the people fled from the Philistines. But he stood in the midst of the ground, and defended it, and slew the Philistines: and the LORD wrought a great victory."
3. Verses 3-4: "And David went thence to Mizpeh of Moab: and he said unto the king of Moab, Let my father and my mother, I pray thee, come forth, *and be* with you, till I know what God will do for me. And he brought them before the king of Moab: and they dwelt with him all the while that David was in the hold."
 - a. The arrangement of having his relatives with him in the cave was temporary. David went to Mizpeh of Moab and requested permission to dwell in that territory until such time that he could learn what God's plans for him were. He received approval.
 - b. David's father (Jesse) was a grandson of Ruth the Moabitess, which would give the family a connection with Moab. Also, Saul had earlier waged war against the Moabites, which would endear Saul's enemies in their sight.
 - c. The location of Mizpeh is uncertain, although we know it was in Moab's control, if not in the land of Moab itself. The name means "watch-tower," and is doubtless the place intended by the reference to "the hold" where David remained in hiding from Saul. Moab was situated on the eastern side of the Dead Sea; Adullam was on the western side of this sea, not far from Bethlehem.
4. Verse 5: "And the prophet Gad said unto David, Abide not in the hold; depart, and get thee into the land of Judah. Then David departed, and came into the forest of Hareth."
 - a. While David awaited some word from God, the prophet Gad came to him with a message that he was to return into the land of Judah. The message was obviously the will of God.
 - b. David could do his country little good while hiding out among the Moabites, and possibly would have been contaminated by the abominations of this idolatrous people. Heeding the word of Gad, David left Mizpeh and journeyed to the forest of Hareth. This place is not mentioned again in the Bible, and its exact location is unknown, except that it was a woody region in the mountains of Judah (Keil, p.224).
 - c. "The prophet *Gad* had probably come to David from Samuel's school of prophets; but whether he remained with David from that time forward to assist him with his counsel in his several undertakings, cannot be determined, on account of our want of information. In 1 Chron. 21:9 he is called David's seer. In the last year of David's reign he announced to him the punishment which would fall upon him from God on account of his sin in numbering the people (2 Sam. 24:11 sq.); and according to 1 Chron. 29:29 he also wrote the acts of David" (Keil, p.224).

B. 1 Samuel 22:6-16: Saul Summons Ahimelech the Priest.

1. Verse 6: “When Saul heard that David was discovered, and the men that *were* with him, (now Saul abode in Gibeah under a tree in Ramah, having his spear in his hand, and all his servants *were* standing about him).”
 - a. Other versions:
 - 1) ASV: “And Saul heard that David was discovered, and the men that were with him: now Saul was sitting in Gibeah, under the tamarisk-tree in Ramah, with his spear in his hand, and all his servants were standing about him.”
 - 2) NKJ: “When Saul heard that David and the men who were with him had been discovered — now Saul was staying in Gibeah under a tamarisk tree in Ramah, with his spear in his hand, and all his servants standing about him —.”
 - b. Word was brought to Saul that David and his men had been located. At the time the news came, the king was sitting under a tree (a tamarisk tree—ASV), and had a spear in his hand. The place is stated to have been at Gibeah, where the king lived.
 - c. The name *Ramah* appears in the verse, but the margin of the ASV gives *height* instead a proper name.
 - d. The more exact meaning of the verse seems to be that Saul was at Gibeah, under a tree situated on a high point. Gibeah was Saul’s home town; Ramah [“height”] was the name of the town where Samuel lived.
 - e. Saul had his spear in his hand, as a token of his authority or readiness to fight; his men were standing around him.
 2. Verses 7-8: “Then Saul said unto his servants that stood about him, Hear now, ye Benjamites; will the son of Jesse give every one of you fields and vineyards, *and* make you all captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds; That all of you have conspired against me, and *there is* none that showeth me that my son hath made a league with the son of Jesse, and *there is* none of you that is sorry for me, or showeth unto me that my son hath stirred up my servant against me, to lie in wait, as at this day?”
 - a. By addressing the men around him as “Benjamites,” it appears that Saul had surrounded himself with men from his own tribe; if so, he had made no manifest effort to unite the entire nation. No doubt he had greater trust in members of his own tribe than in other Israelites.
 - b. He demanded to know whether they thought that David would reward each of them with wealth and military rank. Saul’s point is, if David is successful in wresting the kingdom from him, did they think they would be richly rewarded for betraying the present king?
 - c. Saul bluntly accused his men of having entered into a conspiracy against him by hiding from the king information regarding Jonathan’s covenant with David. He accused Jonathan by his remarks of having stirred up David to try to ambush the king. The news of David and his men hiding in the forest of Hareth bespoke to Saul of an ambush.
 - d. Subsequent events show that David meant no harm to Saul, and that Saul’s fears were imaginary. We can see his twisted emotional state in his statement that no one “is sorry for me.” This seems to make it all but certain that the “evil spirit” he had was one of his own making.
 3. Verses 9-10: “Then answered Doeg the Edomite, which was set over the servants of Saul, and said, I saw the son of Jesse coming to Nob, to Ahimelech the son of Ahitub. And he inquired of the LORD for him, and gave him victuals, and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine.”
 - a. Doeg the Edomite reported to Saul of having seen David at Nob, consorting with the priests there, and that Ahimelech the priest had inquired of the Lord in David’s behalf. Doeg left the impression that the priest was in league with David against Saul. But neither David nor Ahimelech was an enemy to Saul.
 - b. Doeg further related that the priest had given David the sword of Goliath and food. We remember that David had told Ahimelech that he was on a mission for Saul, thus the priest thought he was aiding the king by helping David. He certainly intended no harm to Saul.
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- c. This Edomite was setting in motion a chain of events that would lead to the death of 85 priests and a host of other innocent men, women, and children. The tongue indeed is a powerful instrument, fully capable of destroying lives and souls.
4. Verses 11-12: "Then the king sent to call Ahimelech the priest, the son of Ahitub, and all his father's house, the priests that *were* in Nob: and they came all of them to the king. And Saul said, Hear now, thou son of Ahitub. And he answered, Here I *am*, my lord."
 - a. Sending to Nob, Saul called for Ahimelech, his family, and the priests of Nob to come to Saul. They obeyed without any indication of delay.
 - b. Saul addressed the priest by name, to which Ahimelech quickly responded. He acknowledged Saul's authority and prestige by addressing the king as "my lord." There is no hint of rebellion in his actions or words.
 - c. "Doeg's suggestion that the priests were David's allies at once arouses all Saul's worst passions. As if he had determined from the first upon the massacre of the whole body, he sends not merely for Ahimelech, but for every priest at Nob. Shortly afterwards they arrived, for Nob was close to Gibeah, and Saul himself arraigns them before the court for treason, and recapitulates the three points mentioned by Doeg as conclusive proofs of their guilt" [The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 2001 by BibleSoft].
5. Verse 13: "And Saul said unto him, Why have ye conspired against me, thou and the son of Jesse, in that thou hast given him bread, and a sword, and hast inquired of God for him, that he should rise against me, to lie in wait, as at this day?"
 - a. Assuming the guilt of the priest, Saul demanded to know why he had entered into a conspiracy against the king with David, and why he had given David food and a sword, and why had he inquired of the Lord for him.
 - b. He had taken Doeg's accusation as truth, while in fact the report was a mixture of truth and error. The priest was not Saul's enemy any more than David was. But balanced reasoning and wisdom were not currently being exercised by Saul.
6. Verses 14-15: "Then Ahimelech answered the king, and said, And who *is so* faithful among all thy servants as David, which is the king's son in law, and goeth at thy bidding, and is honourable in thine house? Did I then begin to inquire of God for him? be it far from me: let not the king impute *any* thing unto his servant, *nor* to all the house of my father: for thy servant knew nothing of all this, less or more."
 - a. Ahimelech first affirmed David's loyalty to Saul, stating that there was no one in the kingdom as faithful to him as was David. The very basis of the charge was faulty. He described David as the king's son-in-law, and that he willingly obeys the king's bidding, and is an honorable part of the king's house.
 - b. Next, Ahimelech denies that he has just now begun to make inquiry of the Lord for David; this had been his long practice. He further denies that he has had knowledge of any conspiracy by David against the king. He urges the king not to make such a charge against him or his father's house.
 - c. "Ahimelech's answers are those of an innocent man who had supposed that what he did was a matter of course. But his enumeration of David's privileges of rank and station probably only embittered the king. In his eyes David was of all Saul's officers the most faithful, both trusty and trusted (see on 1 Sam 2:35). He was, moreover, the king's son-in-law; but the next words, he goeth at thy bidding, more probably mean, 'has admission to thy audience,' i.e. is thy privy councillor, with the right of entering unbidden the royal presence (comp. 2 Sam 23:23, margin; 1 Chron 11:25).
 - 1) "Did I then begin to enquire of God for him? Though the meaning of these words is disputed, yet there seems no sufficient reason for taking them in any other than their natural sense. It was probably usual to consult God by the Urim and Thummim on all matters of importance, and David, as a high officer of Saul's court, must often have done so before starting on such expeditions as are referred to in 1 Sam 18:13. But the Bible is singularly reticent in such matters, and it is only incidentally that we learn how fully the Mosaic law entered into the daily life of the people. But

for this frightful crime we should not even have known that Saul had brought the ark into his own neighbourhood, and restored the services of the sanctuary.

- 2) "But just as he took care to have Ahiah in attendance upon him in war, so we cannot doubt but that his main object in placing the priests at Nob was to have the benefit of the Divine counsel in his wars. It would be quite unreasonable to suppose that such consultations required the king's personal attendance. Thy servant knew nothing of all this, less or more. Whatever Ahimelech had done had been in perfect good faith, and though David's conduct must have seemed to him suspicious, yet there was nothing that would have justified him in acting differently.
- 3) "Nevertheless, in spite of his transparent innocence, Saul orders the slaughter not only of God's high priest, but of the whole body of the priesthood whom he had placed at Nob, and now had summoned for this ferocious purpose into his presence" [Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 2001 by Biblesoft].

7. Verse 16: "And the king said, Thou shalt surely die, Ahimelech, thou, and all thy father's house."
 - a. If Saul had operated by righteous judgment, he would have dismissed the charges which Doeg had given. Ahimelech had given a logical explanation of the events, denying any wrong-doing on either his part or David's.
 - b. But Saul was beyond the point of no return. He pronounced the death sentence upon Ahimelech and his father's entire house. He was too filled with hatred, fear, and frustration to give a reasonable hearing to the defense.

C. 1 Samuel 22:17-19: Saul Slays the Priests of Nob.

1. Verse 17: "And the king said unto the footmen that stood about him, Turn, and slay the priests of the LORD; because their hand also *is* with David, and because they knew when he fled, and did not show it to me. But the servants of the king would not put forth their hand to fall upon the priests of the LORD."
 - a. Showing that they better understood the situation than did the king, the guard refused to heed the king's command to slay the priests of the Lord. These men knew that such an action was uncalled-for and wrong. To their credit, they risked their own lives in refusing the order. Members of the Third Reich [Hitler's Germany] made the unsuccessful plea that their atrocities were committed because they were obedient to higher authority. Wrong is wrong regardless of the source.
 - b. Saul specified the charges as to why the priests were to be executed: they were in league with David; they did not report his presence at Nob.
2. Verse 18: "And the king said to Doeg, Turn thou, and fall upon the priests. And Doeg the Edomite turned, and he fell upon the priests, and slew on that day fourscore and five persons that did wear a linen ephod."
 - a. Knowing the kind of man Doeg was, Saul instructed him to "fall upon the priests." This expression, of course, means to launch an attack.
 - b. Doeg fell upon the priests, and slew on that very occasion 85 of them. Those who "wear a linen ephod" is a reference to priests, whose official garb included an ephod (a sort of vest).
 - c. "He ordered Doeg (the accuser) to be the executioner, and he obeyed. One would have thought that the footmen's refusal would awaken Saul's conscience, and that he would not insist upon the doing of a thing so barbarous as that his footmen startled at the thought of it. But his mind was blinded and his heart hardened, and, if they will not do it, the hands of the witness shall be upon the victims, Deut 17:7. The most bloody tyrants have found out instruments of their cruelty as barbarous as themselves. Doeg is no sooner commanded to fall upon the priests than he does it willingly enough, and, meeting with no resistance, slays with his own hand (for aught that appears) on that same day eighty-five priests that were of the age of ministration, between twenty and fifty, for they wore a linen ephod (v. 18), and perhaps appeared at this time before Saul in their habits, and were slain in them. This (one would think) was enough to satiate the most blood-thirsty; but the horseleech of persecution still cries, 'Give, give.' Doeg, by Saul's order no doubt, having murdered the priests, went to their city Nob, and put all to the sword there (v. 19), men, women, and children, and the cattle too. Barbarous cruelty, and

such as one cannot think of without horror! ...!" [Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: New Modern Edition, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1991 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.].

- d. Compare: "Then a man of God came to Eli and said to him, "Thus says the Lord: 'Did I not clearly reveal Myself to the house of your father when they were in Egypt in Pharaoh's house?

Did I not choose him out of all the tribes of Israel *to be* My priest, to offer upon My altar, to burn incense, and to wear an ephod before Me? And did I not give to the house of your father all the offerings of the children of Israel made by fire? Why do you kick at My sacrifice and My offering which I have commanded *in My* dwelling place, and honor your sons more than Me, to make yourselves fat with the best of all the offerings of Israel My people?' Therefore the Lord God of Israel says: 'I said indeed *that* your house and the house of your father would walk before Me forever.' But now the Lord says: 'Far be it from Me; for those who honor Me I will honor, and those who despise Me shall be lightly esteemed. Behold, the days are coming that I will cut off your arm and the arm of your father's house, so that there will not be an old man in your house. And you will see an enemy *in My* dwelling place, *despite* all the good which God does for Israel. And there shall not be an old man in your house forever. But any of your men *whom* I do not cut off from My altar shall consume your eyes and grieve your heart. And all the descendants of your house shall die in the flower of their age. Now this *shall be* a sign to you that will come upon your two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas: in one day they shall die, both of them. Then I will raise up for Myself a faithful priest *who* shall do according to what *is* in My heart and in My mind. I will build him a sure house, and he shall walk before My anointed forever. And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left in your house will come *and* bow down to him for a piece of silver and a morsel of bread, and say, "Please, put me in one of the priestly positions, that I may eat a piece of bread. and shall say, Put me, I pray thee, into one of the priests' offices, that I may eat a piece of bread" (1 Samuel 2:27-36, NKJ).

3. Verse 19: "And Nob, the city of the priests, smote he with the edge of the sword, both men and women, children and sucklings, and oxen, and asses, and sheep, with the edge of the sword."
- a. Saul's hatred was not satisfied with the death of the 85 priests; he had the whole city of Nob wiped out, including men, women, children, babies, and animals.
- b. Doeg was Saul's instrument in killing the priests, and this same man appears to have served in this destruction of Nob. No doubt others were involved in the slaughter, for it would be unrealistic to think that one man alone was capable of killing perhaps several hundred people and animals.
- c. "The barbarous atrocities perpetrated against the city seem to have been designed to terrify all the subjects of Saul from affording either aid or an asylum to David. But they proved ruinous to Saul's own interests, as they alienated the priesthood, and disgusted all good men in the kingdom" (JFB, p.195). Cf. 2 Samuel 21.

D. 1 Samuel 22:20-23: Abiathar Escapes from Saul.

1. Verses 20-21: "And one of the sons of Ahimelech the son of Ahitub, named Abiathar, escaped, and fled after David. And Abiathar showed David that Saul had slain the LORD'S priests."
- a. Abiathar, one of Ahimelech's sons, escaped the slaughter and fled to David. He reported to David what had happened at Nob.
- b. We can only wonder about how he was able to avoid the treachery of Saul! His story would indeed make for interesting reading, but God never used valuable space in the Bible to satisfy idle curiosity.
2. Verse 22: "And David said unto Abiathar, I knew *it* that day, when Doeg the Edomite *was* there, that he would surely tell Saul: I have occasioned *the death* of all the persons of thy father's house."
- a. When David saw Doeg at Nob, he had good reason to suspect treachery. He knew that he would tell Saul. It is clear that the true nature of Doeg was well-known to those who were acquainted with him.
- b. "And David greatly lamented the calamity itself, but especially his being accessory to it: I have occasioned the death of all the persons of thy father's house, v. 22.
- 1) "Note, It is a great trouble to a good man to find himself in any way an occasion of the calamities of the church and ministry.

- 2) “David knew Doeg's character so well that he feared he would do some such mischief as this when he saw him at the sanctuary: I knew he would tell Saul. He calls him Doeg the Edomite, because he retained the heart of an Edomite, though, by embracing the profession of the Jewish religion, he had put on the mask of an Israelite” [Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: New Modern Edition, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1991 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.].
 3. Verse 23: “Abide thou with me, fear not: for he that seeketh my life seeketh thy life: but with me thou *shalt be* in safeguard.”
 - a. Keil gives this paraphrase of David’s words: “As no other is seeking thy life than Saul, who also wants to kill me, thou mayest stay with me without fear, as I am sure of divine protection. David spoke thus in the firm belief that the Lord would deliver him from his foe, and give him the kingdom. The action of Saul, which had just been reported to him, could only strengthen him in this belief, as it was a sign of the growing hardness of Saul, which must accelerate his destruction.”
 - b. Because David was being protected by God’s power, so Abiathar would be protected if he remained with David.
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1 SAMUEL 23

A. 1 Samuel 23:1-6: David Defeats the Philistines at Keilah.

1. Verse 1: "Then they told David, saying, Behold, the Philistines fight against Keilah, and they rob the threshingfloors."
 - a. Keilah was located near the territory occupied by the Philistines, and belonged to Judah (Josh. 15:44). It was about eight miles northwest of Hebron, near the road that led to the valley of Elah (Coffman).
 - b. The people of Keilah were harvesting their crops when the Philistines invaded to confiscate the grain from the threshingfloors. These threshing places were situated in the fields, in the open where the wind could be used in separating the grain from the chaff. Compare:
 - 1) Judges 6:11: "And there came an angel of the LORD, and sat under an oak which was in Ophrah, that pertained unto Joash the Abiezrite: and his son Gideon threshed wheat by the winepress, to hide it from the Midianites."
 - 2) Ruth 3:2: "And now is not Boaz of our kindred, with whose maidens thou wast? Behold, he winnoweth barley to night in the threshingfloor."
 - c. David learned about this latest Philistine incursion. The people of Keilah obviously needed his help; it is likely that they sent word to David concerning the problem.
2. Verse 2: "Therefore David inquired of the LORD, saying, Shall I go and smite these Philistines? And the LORD said unto David, Go, and smite the Philistines, and save Keilah."
 - a. Having established his practice already of asking for God's guidance, he inquired of him whether he should attack the Philistines.
 - b. The Lord's reply was in the affirmative. David was instructed to go against the Philistine, and save the city.
3. Verse 3: "And David's men said unto him, Behold, we be afraid here in Judah: how much more then if we come to Keilah against the armies of the Philistines?"
 - a. David's men did not have the faith in God that their leader possessed. They reasoned that since they were living in fear within Judah, how much more danger would they face if they attacked the Philistines!
 - b. They were having to flee from Saul in order to stay alive; if they also incurred the animosity of the fierce Philistines, they would have even greater cause to live in fear.
4. Verses 4-5: "Then David inquired of the LORD yet again. And the LORD answered him and said, Arise, go down to Keilah: for I will deliver the Philistines into thine hand. So David and his men went to Keilah, and fought with the Philistines, and brought away their cattle, and smote them with a great slaughter. So David saved the inhabitants of Keilah."
 - a. In convincing his followers that they would have God's assistance, he approached the Lord again with a plea for guidance. God affirmed that they would have God's help in the battle.
 - b. David led his men in an attack against the invaders, and dealt a severe defeat upon them. Evidently, the Philistines had brought cattle with them, perhaps to carry away the grain. The livestock fell into David's hands after the victory.
5. Verse 6: "And it came to pass, when Abiathar the son of Ahimelech fled to David to Keilah, *that* he came down *with* an ephod in his hand."
 - a. Apparently, Abiathar reached David when the latter was at Keilah or about to march against the enemy there.
 - b. It may have been the case that David was enabled to approach God by means of this priest. Abiathar had the ephod. Exodus 28:30 relates that the high priest's garb was so constructed as to have a place for the Urim and Thummim. "And thou shalt put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim; and they shall be upon Aaron's heart, when he goeth in before the LORD: and Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart before the LORD continually" (Ex. 28:30).

B. 1 Samuel 23:7-12: Saul Learns of David's Presence at Keilah.

1. Verses 7-8: "And it was told Saul that David was come to Keilah. And Saul said, God hath delivered him into mine hand; for he is shut in, by entering into a town that hath gates and bars. And Saul called all the people together to war, to go down to Keilah, to besiege David and his men."
 - a. Saul had spies who brought reports to the king when David was sighted or his activities learned. Saul learned that David was at Keilah.
 - b. The king was elated to learn that his adversary was within the walls of Keilah for he felt sure he could surround the city, shutting up David inside, and thus to lay siege to the place, and capture him.
 2. Verse 9: "And David knew that Saul secretly practiced mischief against him; and he said to Abiathar the priest, Bring hither the ephod."
 - a. Somehow David learned of Saul's plan. He called for Abiathar to bring the ephod so that he could make inquiry of the Lord what he should do.
 - b. It is providential that God had preserved Abiathar, during Doeg's murderous spree against the priests at Nob, and had led him into David's company. With him being present with the ephod, he was able to assist David in this crucial matter.
 3. Verses 10-11: "Then said David, O LORD God of Israel, thy servant hath certainly heard that Saul seeketh to come to Keilah, to destroy the city for my sake. Will the men of Keilah deliver me up into his hand? will Saul come down, as thy servant hath heard? O LORD God of Israel, I beseech thee, tell thy servant. And the LORD said, He will come down."
 - a. Other versions:
 - 1) ASV: "Then said David, O Jehovah, the God of Israel, thy servant hath surely heard that Saul seeketh to come to Keilah, to destroy the city for my sake. Will the men of Keilah deliver me up into his hand? will Saul come down, as thy servant hath heard? O Jehovah, the God of Israel, I beseech thee, tell thy servant. And Jehovah said, He will come down."
 - 2) NKJ: When David said, "O Lord God of Israel, Your servant has certainly heard that Saul seeks to come to Keilah to destroy the city for my sake. Will the men of Keilah deliver me into his hand? Will Saul come down, as Your servant has heard? O Lord God of Israel, I pray, tell Your servant." And the Lord said, "He will come down."
 - b. David simply stated the problem unto the Lord, reporting the information that Saul sought to destroy Keilah because David was there. We may be sure that David's report was not to give God the news; the Lord already knew of the events.
 - 1) Proverbs 15:3: "The eyes of the LORD *are* in every place, beholding the evil and the good."
 - 2) Hebrews 4:13: "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things *are* naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do."
 - c. The question he asked was whether the men of Keilah would turn him over to Saul. He further asked if Saul would march against Keilah. Answering the second question first, God affirmed that Saul would come against the city.
 4. Verse 12: "Then said David, Will the men of Keilah deliver me and my men into the hand of Saul? And the LORD said, They will deliver *thee* up."
 - a. David asked the Lord whether the men of Keilah would betray him into Saul's hands. The Lord said that they would.
 - b. Saul's slaughter of the priests in the previous chapter would naturally create great fear on those who might contemplate opposing the king. The inhabitants of Keilah had been generously delivered from the Philistines by David, but since they feared Saul, their terror of the king would override their gratitude to David.
- C. 1 Samuel 23:13-18: David and Jonathan Meet in the Wilderness of Ziph.
1. Verse 13: "When David and his men, *which were* about six hundred, arose and departed out of Keilah, and went whithersoever they could go. And it was told Saul that David was escaped from Keilah; and he forbore to go forth."
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- a. David led his men away from Keilah, to any place of safety they might find. At this time, he had about six hundred men, a little more than a modern battalion.
 - b. Learning about David's escape, Saul did not sally forth against Keilah. His intelligence network seems to be very efficient.
 2. Verses 14-15: "And David abode in the wilderness in strong holds, and remained in a mountain in the wilderness of Ziph. And Saul sought him every day, but God delivered him not into his hand. And David saw that Saul was come out to seek his life: and David *was* in the wilderness of Ziph in a wood."
 - a. David found refuge in the wilderness of Ziph. Ziph was a town located about five miles south-southeast of Hebron, in the territory pertaining to Judah.
 - b. Saul came out against David, but the Lord provided protection for the fugitive. Using his providence, God is able to do more for us than we may give him credit for doing.
 3. Verse 16: "And Jonathan Saul's son arose, and went to David into the wood, and strengthened his hand in God."
 - a. Somehow Jonathan learned of David's place of concealment, and came to him. Although Saul knew the general area of David's refuge the exact place was undiscovered; also, it may have been the case, that because of the security of the stronghold, he may not have been able to take it. David may have permitted Jonathan to learn of the place. Being a devout friend to David, Jonathan would be allowed to find him.
 - b. Coming to David, Jonathan "strengthened his hand in God." Living under the constant threat of being discovered by Saul, David needed encouragement. Jonathan's coming to him may have been brought about by God's providence. Their meeting was a source of encouragement and comfort to the future king. These two men loved each other with strong brotherly devotion. The renewal of their covenant would also give consolation to David.
 - c. There are many occasions when a kind word or statement of support can give great encouragement to those who are facing the struggles of life.
 4. Verses 17-18: "And he said unto him, Fear not: for the hand of Saul my father shall not find thee; and thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee; and that also Saul my father knoweth. And they two made a covenant before the LORD: and David abode in the wood, and Jonathan went to his house."
 - a. Jonathan comforted David by stating his firm conviction that Saul would not be able to apprehend him, and that David would indeed live to become king; he stated his desire to be at David's side when his friend received the crown. This conviction grew out of the fact that God had given David the promise of the throne.
 - b. It seems quite clear that Jonathan had learned some time earlier of Samuel's anointing of David. This information would prompt him to align himself with David. That Saul also knew of David's status is clear; it stirred the king to his furious attempts to kill him.
 - c. Jonathan and David renewed their agreement. David remained in his place of refuge; Jonathan returned to his house.
 - 1) 1 Samuel 18:3: "Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul."
 - 2) 1 Samuel 20:8: "Therefore thou shalt deal kindly with thy servant; for thou hast brought thy servant into a covenant of the LORD with thee: notwithstanding, if there be in me iniquity, slay me thyself; for why shouldest thou bring me to thy father?"
- D. 1 Samuel 23:19-26: Saul Pursues David to the Wilderness of Maon.
1. Verses 19-20: "Then came up the Ziphites to Saul to Gibeah, saying, Doth not David hide himself with us in strong holds in the wood, in the hill of Hachilah, which *is* on the south of Jeshimon? Now therefore, O king, come down according to all the desire of thy soul to come down; and our part *shall be* to deliver him into the king's hand."
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- a. “When about 5½ miles southeast of Hebron we come to the hill called Tel Zif, the site of the city of the Ziphites, who revealed to Saul the hiding-places of David. [1 Sam. 23:19; 26:1]. It is a conical hill about 300 feet high above the rich and beautiful valleys which surround it on every side. It is terraced from its base to its summit, and its light, rich soil is very cultivated in grain. Its level, circular summit, about 100 yards in diameter, is also well cultivated. There is nothing left of the town, except a few of its cisterns and sepulchres and the broken pieces of pottery that are thickly intermixed with the soil. The view to the south and the southeast is widespread, and stretches over a rich and beautiful country, with the barren hills of the desert in the horizon. Ziph is one of the fifteen places in Judah that were fortified by Rehoboam after the rebellion of the ten tribes” (McGarvey, *Lands of the Bible*, p.255).
 - b. McGarvey further stated, as he viewed the ruins of the ancient town, “As I stood there and looked around where the dust of David’s betrayers had enriched the soil, I felt like saying, ‘You Ziphites, you were a mean set, and you deserved the fate which has befallen you; for you betrayed the innocent to make favor with the powerful. May such be the fate of all who follow your detestable example!’” (p. 493, *ibid.*).
 - c. The inhabitants of Ziph felt no loyalty to David and sought to curry favor with the king; they brought a report to Saul that they could deliver David into his hands.
 - d. They reported that his hiding place was in the woods in the hill of Hachilah. “From the Tell of Ziph a panorama of the whole surrounding district is to be seen. No wonder, then, that the Ziphites saw David and his men passing to and from in the mountains of the wilderness, and spying him at a distance, when he ventured to show himself on the hill of Hachilah...” (JFB, p.197).
2. Verses 21-22: “And Saul said, Blessed *be* ye of the LORD; for ye have compassion on me. Go, I pray you, prepare yet, and know and see his place where his haunt is, *and* who hath seen him there: for it is told me *that* he dealeth very subtly.”
 - a. Saul and David ostensibly served the God of Heaven. David was faithful and was in good standing with the Lord. Saul had disobeyed Jehovah on various occasions, and had incurred his disfavor.
 - b. Saul was genuinely grateful for the information. It is more likely that the Ziphites came forward, not from any sense of devotion to Saul, but out of fear for what he might do to them if they failed to report the presence of David in their area.
 - 1) The priests of Nob had been ruthlessly slain at Saul’s command. A man who was willing to destroy 85 priests, plus many others of their city, would not hesitate to wipe out the people of Ziph.
 - 2) The Mongols operated on the terror principle. When Genghis Khan swept into Islam territory, they “burned Bokhara to the ground, raped thousands of women, and massacred 30,000 men. Samarkand and Balkh surrendered at his coming, but suffered pillage and wholesale slaughterMerv was captured by treachery, and was burned to the ground; its libraries, the glory of Islam, were consumed in the conflagration; its inhabitants were allowed to march out through the gates with their treasures, only to be massacred and robbed in detail; this slaughter (the Moslem historians aver) occupied thirteen days, and took, 1,300,000 lives. Nishapur resisted long and bravely, but succumbed (1221); every man, woman, and child there was killed, except 400 artisan-artists who were sent to Mongolia; and the heads of the slain were piled up in a ghastly pyramid....This ferocity was part of the military science of the Mongols; it sought to strike a paralyzing terror into the hearts of later opponents, and to leave no possibility of revolt among the defeated. The policy succeeded” (Durant, *The Age of Faith*, pp.339f). On a smaller scale, Saul used the same tactic.
 - c. Saul directed the Ziphites to pinpoint David’s lair, and find those who had seen it; he was aware that David was very subtle, and may have only pretended to reside at the suspected place.
 3. Verse 23: “See therefore, and take knowledge of all the lurking places where he hideth himself, and come ye again to me with the certainty, and I will go with you: and it shall come to pass, if he be in the land, that I will search him out throughout all the thousands of Judah. And they arose, and went to Ziph before Saul: but David and his men *were* in the wilderness of Maon, in the plain on the south of Jeshimon.”

- a. Saul instructs the betrayers to learn more certainly the hiding places David used; and when they had this information, he would come to apprehend him.
 - b. The area of David's refuge was within Judah's territory, one of the most populous tribes. Although the size of territory and the number of the people were great, Saul commits himself to finding David.
 - c. The men of Ziph returned home; Saul and his company were to follow. Meanwhile, David remained in hiding, proceeding deeper into the wilderness to Maon. Maon is a short distance south-southeast of Hebron (cf. Josh.15:55).
 - d. "This is the *Arabah* or steppe on the right of the wilderness"(Keil, pp.232f). *Arabah* "was the name of that great geological rift that includes the Sea of Galilee, the Jordan river and the Dead Sea. Biblical mention of it sometimes refers to the northern part of that great valley and sometimes to the southern part....The Arabah here is in the vicinity of the Dead Sea" (Coffman, p.280).
4. Verses 25-26: "Saul also and his men went to seek *him*. And they told David: wherefore he came down into a rock, and abode in the wilderness of Maon. And when Saul heard *that*, he pursued after David in the wilderness of Maon. And Saul went on this side of the mountain, and David and his men on that side of the mountain: and David made haste to get away for fear of Saul; for Saul and his men compassed David and his men round about to take them."
- a. Maon: "A town in the mountain of Judah named along with Carmel and Ziph (Josh 15:55). It appears again as the home of Nabal, the great flockmaster (1 Sam 25:2). In the genealogical list of 1 Chron 2, Maon stands as the 'son' of Shammai and the 'father' of Beth-zur (verses 44,45).
 - 1) "This evidently means that Shammai was the founder of Maon. About a mile South of el-Karmil, the ancient Carmel, lies Tell Ma'in. This may be confidently identified with Maon, the radicals of the names being the same.
 - 2) "It suits the requirements of the narratives in other respects, being near to Carmel, while the surrounding wilderness is still used as the wide pasture land for multitudinous flocks. In this district, the wilderness of Maon, David was hiding when his whereabouts was betrayed to Saul by the men of Ziph (1 Sam 23:24f), and only a timely raid by the Philistines delivered him out of that monarch's hands (verses 27ff)" [International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, Electronic Database Copyright (c)1996 by Biblesoft].
 - b. Saul and his army entered the area, which soon became known to David, who went down the rock and remained in the desert of Maon. Keil says that "the rock" is probably the conical mountain of Maon the top of which is now surrounded with ruins, probably the remains of a tower (p.233).
 - c. As Saul and his men climbed the mountain on one side, David and his men were descending the other side. Saul was in the process of closing with David, having surrounded his company, when a message came to Saul which enabled the fugitives to make good their escape.
- E. 1 Samuel 23:27-29: David Escapes When Saul has to go Fight the Philistines.
1. Verse 27: "But there came a messenger unto Saul, saying, Haste thee, and come; for the Philistines have invaded the land."
 - a. An urgent message came to Saul reporting that the Philistines had invaded the land. David posed no immediate threat to Saul, but the Philistines did.
 - b. The timing of the message is providential. Without it, David and his men could have been captured and slain; with it, they were able to escape. The outcome of many battles has been determined by similar developments.
 2. Verse 28: "Wherefore Saul returned from pursuing after David, and went against the Philistines: therefore they called that place *Selahammahlekoth*."
 - a. Saul must have been extremely frustrated! He had his enemy in his hands! The Philistines had to come into the picture just now!
 - b. The name given that place was *Selahammahlekoth*, which means "The Rock of Escape." This marvelous escape became part of the epic story of David. It is no wonder that this man became one of the greatest heroes of Israelite history.
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3. Verse 29: "And David went up from thence, and dwelt in strong holds at Engedi."
- Having providentially been delivered from Saul's grasp, David now dwelt in the strongholds at Engedi. "En Gedi: ["spring of the goat"]: A town of Judah, located near the W coast of the Dead Sea, about 35 miles (56 km) SE of Jerusalem, near modern Ain Jidi. An oasis fed by warm springs, David and his men took refuge there while fleeing Saul. Called Hazon Tamar in Genesis 14:7. Joshua 15:62; 1 Samuel 24:1; 2 Chronicles 20:2; Song 1:14; Genesis 14:7" (*PC Bible Atlas*).
 - "In the terrain overlooking the Dead Sea, there is a freshwater spring, a marvelous oasis in the midst of some of the most desolate country on earth. In ancient times, there were groves of date palm trees here..." (Coffman, p.282).



1 SAMUEL 24**A. 1 Samuel 24:1-8: David Cuts off Saul's Skirt While the King Slept in a Cave.**

1. Verses 1-2: "And it came to pass, when Saul was returned from following the Philistines, that it was told him, saying, Behold, David *is* in the wilderness of Engedi. Then Saul took three thousand chosen men out of all Israel, and went to seek David and his men upon the rocks of the wild goats."
 - a. The previous chapter related the story of David's providential escape when Saul had him surrounded at the mountain in the wilderness of Maon. Just as the king was about to capture David, news came that the Philistines had invaded the land.
 - b. After tending to the problem of the invading Philistines, Saul returned to the pursuit of David. He learned that his quarry was in the wilderness of Engedi. Taking three thousand chosen men with him, the king went to the "rocks of the wild goats."
 - c. "Nothing but the blind infatuation of fiendish rage could have led the king to pursue his outlawed son-in-law among those craggy and perpendicular precipices, where were inaccessible hiding-places. The large force he took with him seemed to give him every prospect of succeeding. But the overruling providence of God frustrated all his vigilance" (JFB, p.198).
 2. Verse 3: "And he came to the sheepcotes by the way, where *was* a cave; and Saul went in to cover his feet: and David and his men remained in the sides of the cave."
 - a. In an area where sheepfolds were located, there was a cave which Saul used "to cover his feet." The sheepfolds themselves were probably caves, for it is reported that many caves are there (see JFB). One cave is large enough, according to Keil, to conceal thousands of people, and its entrance is so inconspicuous on the outside as to give no idea of its inner dimensions.
 - b. Unbeknownst to Saul and his men, David and his cohorts were even then hiding in a side cavern of the same cave.
 - c. To "cover the feet" is evidently a reference to "taking a nap" [or to go to bed]. Compare: "Now when he was gone out, his servants came; and they saw, and, behold, the doors of the upper room were locked; and they said, Surely he is covering his feet in the upper chamber" (Judg. 3:24, ASV). [Some scholars assert that the phrase is a euphemism for responding to a call of nature. But how could David have cut off part of the king's garment without the king seeing him? Of course, the garment could have been laid aside for a few moments].
 - d. "Such sheepcotes were common in Palestine; for Thomson (p. 603) says, 'I have seen hundreds of these sheepcotes around the mouth of caverns, and indeed there is scarcely a cave in the land, whose location will admit of being thus occupied (i.e. by the flocks), but has such a 'cote' in front of it, generally made by piling up loose stones into a circular wall, which is covered with thorns, as a further protection against robbers and wild beasts."
 - 1) During cold storms, and in the night, the flocks retreat into the cave, but at other times they remain in this enclosed cote.....These caverns are as dark as midnight, and the keenest eye cannot see five paces inward; but one who has been long within, and is looking outward toward the entrance, can observe with perfect distinctness all that takes place in that direction.
 - 2) "David, therefore, could watch Saul as he came in, and notice the exact place where he 'covered his feet,' while Saul could see nothing but 'impenetrable darkness'" [Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 2001 by Biblesoft].
 3. Verse 4: "And the men of David said unto him, Behold the day of which the LORD said unto thee, Behold, will deliver thine enemy into thine hand, that thou mayest do to him as it shall seem good unto thee. Then David arose, and cut off the skirt of Saul's robe privily."
 - a. David's men were elated to learn that Saul was so exposed to them that they could only conclude that this was the Lord's doing. They assumed that God had given David some promise that Saul would be delivered into his hands.
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- b. Saul's vulnerability seemed to have been arranged by God's design, but David knew he must not do the king harm; after all, he had been anointed by divine decree to be king. David was promised the royal position, but it was not his right to assume the throne by killing "God's anointed."
 - c. God could have ended Saul's reign in an instant, if that had been his desire, but it was his plan to give Saul every opportunity to repent. Also, his slide into sin and rebellion is so clearly chronicled by the inspired historians to make his story an object lesson to all others. "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" (Rom. 15:4).
 - d. David cut off the skirt of Saul's robe secretly while the king was otherwise occupied. David's men wanted him to slay the king. "A revengeful heart would have followed their advice; but David rather wished to overcome evil with good, and heap coals of fire upon his head: he, however, cut a fragment from the skirt of the royal robe" (JFB, p.198).
4. Verses 5-6: "And it came to pass afterward, that David's heart smote him, because he had cut off Saul's skirt. And he said unto his men, The LORD forbid that I should do this thing unto my master, the LORD'S anointed, to stretch forth mine hand against him, seeing he *is* the anointed of the LORD."
- a. David was determined to do no harm to the king's person, thus he secretly cut off Saul's skirt. But even this act became a blow to the young man's sense of rightness. His heart smote him. This means that his conscience reproached him for this deed. Although he had done no harm to the king, yet it did represent a lack of respect for the man God had appointed to the throne. "And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling *shall be* with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will" (Dan. 4:32).
 - b. He said to his men that he ought not to have done it. God had caused Saul to be anointed and exalted to Israel's throne; it was God who must bring him down from that throne. In the meantime, David did not have the right to dishonor or destroy Saul. David's actions and words show that he had been given no instructions to kill the king.
 - c. This is a remarkable disposition! It is one that well illustrates what our attitude and conduct must be toward our enemies. If we should ever have our enemy in a position of vulnerability, we must not use that advantage to hurt or destroy him; the command to love our enemy forbids it.
5. Verses 7-8: "So David stayed his servants with these words, and suffered them not to rise against Saul. But Saul rose up out of the cave, and went on *his* way. David also arose afterward, and went out of the cave, and cried after Saul, saying, My lord the king. And when Saul looked behind him, David stooped with his face to the earth, and bowed himself."
- a. With the foregoing words, David prevented his men from attacking Saul. Later Saul arose and left the cave. When he had gotten a short distance away, David exited the cave also, and called out to his father-in-law, the king.
 - b. His call arrested the king's attention. When he looked around, David bowed himself on his face to the ground. Despite Saul's hatred toward David, the young man had no malice toward the king. His prostrating himself upon the ground should have shown Saul that he was still a faithful servant.
- B. 1 Samuel 24:9-15: David Speaks with Saul.
1. Verse 9: "And David said to Saul, Wherefore hearest thou men's words, saying, Behold, David seeketh thy hurt?"
 - a. David asked Saul why he had listened to the counsel of those men who had told him that David was planning the king's hurt. It is easy to convince some people that others are enemies. Rabble-rousers in street gangs, political gatherings, and labor discussions have excited unthinking people to violence. If you can convince someone that a third party is their enemy, having gained control of his emotions, you could lead him wherever you wish, and he will not even be aware of being manipulated.
 - b. By bowing before the king, David displayed his loyalty to the king. By describing to him what had happened in the cave, he proved to Saul that he had nothing to fear from David.
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2. Verses 10-11: "Behold, this day thine eyes have seen how that the LORD had delivered thee to day into mine hand in the cave: and *some* bade *me* kill thee: but *mine eye* spared thee; and I said, I will not put forth mine hand against my lord; for he *is* the LORD'S anointed. Moreover, my father, see, yea, see the skirt of thy robe in my hand: for in that I cut off the skirt of thy robe, and killed thee not, know thou and see that *there is* neither evil nor transgression in mine hand, and I have not sinned against thee; yet thou huntest my soul to take it."
 - a. In this statement, David shows the king that God had given him an advantage over him, and that he could have slain him if that had been his desire. In fact, he was encouraged to kill Saul, but David refused; he would not put forth his hand against the Lord's anointed. He still considered Saul to be his lord in earthly matters.
 - b. To prove his statements, David directed the king's attention to the skirt of the royal robe which he had cut from Saul's garment. The fact that he had it proved that he could have slain the king.
 - c. Saul had been so incensed against David that he had hounded him throughout the land, seeking to take his life. The word *soul* is frequently used in the Scriptures in reference to the life of a man or a beast.
 - d. David addressed Saul as "my father." In reality, Saul was his father-in-law. Also, being king, Saul had authority over David, just as a father in a family has authority over his son.
 - 1) Compare: "And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, *if* the prophet had bid thee *do some* great thing, wouldest thou not have done *it*? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean?" (2 Kings 5:13).
 - 2) In spiritual concerns, we are not to acknowledge any man as our father in the sense that he possesses any authority to dictate to us: "But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, *even* Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no *man* your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, *even* Christ" (Matt. 23:8-10).
 3. Verses 12-13: "The LORD judge between me and thee, and the LORD avenge me of thee: but mine hand shall not be upon thee. As saith the proverb of the ancients, Wickedness proceedeth from the wicked: but mine hand shall not be upon thee."
 - a. Having proved to the king that he intended no harm to him, David invoked the Lord's name, calling on the Almighty to be the judge between David and Saul. David affirmed that his hand would not be raised against the king. We might greatly wonder why God did not immediately bring Saul's reign to an end, but obviously his infinite wisdom determined otherwise.
 - b. David cited an ancient proverb to illustrate his point. "Wickedness proceeds from the wicked, but my hand shall not be upon you." Only a wicked man would lift up his hand against another person; he not being a wicked man, would not raise his hand against Saul.
 4. Verses 14-15: "After whom is the king of Israel come out? after whom dost thou pursue? after a dead dog, after a flea. The LORD therefore be judge, and judge between me and thee, and see, and plead my cause, and deliver me out of thine hand."
 - a. David concluded his appeal to Saul in a very logical manner. He asked the king to think about the one he was seeking to kill; this one was no more than a dead dog or a flea. He was emphasizing his own insignificance before the king. Why should the king of Israel, the people of God, spend his time and energy pursuing a dead dog or a flea? After catching a dead dog or a flea, what is the advantage? What has been done? The time and effort were not worthwhile.
 - b. David then ended his statement by placing his safety in the hands of God. God would determine the outcome of Saul's futile effort. God would take David's case, and would deliver him from Saul.
- C. 1 Samuel 24:16-22: Saul and David are Reconciled Temporarily.
1. Verses 16-17: "And it came to pass, when David had made an end of speaking these words unto Saul, that Saul said, *Is* this thy voice, my son David? And Saul lifted up his voice, and wept. And he said to David, Thou *art* more righteous than I: for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil."
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- a. It seems that Saul responded more to emotional appeals than to sound reasoning. David's plea had both features, which got through to the king. He cried out loudly and wept. Can anyone doubt his sincerity? Emotional responses are sincere, but often short-lived.
 - b. Saul confessed in his weeping cry that David had been more righteous than he. David had done only good things for Saul, but Saul had done evil to David. One of the sons of Jacob had a similar experience and expressed a similar thought: "And Judah acknowledged *them*, and said, She hath been more righteous than I; because that I gave her not to Shelah my son. And he knew her again no more" (Gen. 38:26).
2. Verse 18-19: "And thou hast showed this day how that thou hast dealt well with me: forasmuch as when the LORD had delivered me into thine hand, thou killedst me not. For if a man find his enemy, will he let him go well away? wherefore the LORD reward thee good for that thou hast done unto me this day."
 - a. Saul perceived that he had experienced a close brush with death. If David had been an ordinary foe, the king would have been certainly slain. Saul rightly discerned how vulnerable he had been, and said as much.
 - b. He also admitted that the Lord had brought about the situation in which David could have killed him. Not only did Saul have a lesson to learn from the encounter, but David was put to the test. If he had slain Saul, he would have harmed himself in the sight of God, and his own conscience would have bitterly denounced him.
 3. Verses 20-21: "And now, behold, I know well that thou shalt surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in thine hand. Swear now therefore unto me by the LORD, that thou wilt not cut off my seed after me, and that thou wilt not destroy my name out of my father's house."
 - a. Concluding his reply to David, the king stated that he now fully perceived that David was to become king in Israel; since God had delivered him into David's hands as he had, he now saw that his reign would not be prolonged. Again, we have no reason to doubt his sincerity. By openly examining the events of the past several years, Saul could see that God was no longer with him, but was with David.
 - b. Saul asked David to promise that he would not destroy his offspring when he came to power; he did not want his name to perish from his father's house.
 4. Verse 22: "And David sware unto Saul. And Saul went home; but David and his men gat them up unto the hold."
 - a. David committed himself to the promise which Saul had requested. He would not destroy Saul's family. Cf. 2 Samuel 9.
 - b. Following this encounter, Saul returned to his home. David and his men went into the hold. The fact that David did not return to his home shows how little trust he placed in Saul. He judged Saul to be subject to various impulses which would arouse him against David. If not by the *evil spirit*, then by some man arousing his suspicions.
 - c. David wisely did not trust Saul. While he was willing to give him the benefit of the doubt, he also made sure that he did not foolishly expose himself to Saul in the future.
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1 SAMUEL 25

A. 1 Samuel 25:1: The Death of Samuel.

1. Verse 1: “And Samuel died; and all the Israelites were gathered together, and lamented him, and buried him in his house at Ramah. And David arose, and went down to the wilderness of Paran.”
 - a. The prophet Samuel died at this point in Israel’s history. The critics of the inspired text assert that some unnamed source later inserted this report of Samuel’s death at this place. However the account is given at this place because it occurred at this time.
 - b. The Israelites gathered together and lamented Samuel. He was buried in his own city of Ramah (cf. 1 Sam. 28:3). Our text says he was buried in his house, but the later reference places the interment in the city of Ramah. It is possible that the grave was in a garden on his own property adjacent to his dwelling.
 - c. David perceived that this would be a good time to change his place of concealment, hence he moved to the wilderness of Paran. Paran is described as “A desert region of uncertain boundaries, located in the E central part of the Sinai Peninsula. It was bounded on the E by the Arabah and the Gulf of Aqabah. At its N extreme, it overlapped the Wilderness of Zin, and Kadesh Barnea was included within both regions. During the Exodus, the Israelites twice camped in this wilderness after leaving Mt. Sinai. Genesis 21:21; Numbers 10:12; 12:16; 1 Kings 11:18” (*PC Bible Atlas*). The wilderness of Maon was adjacent to the larger wilderness of Paran.
 - 1) Genesis 21:21: “And he dwelt in the wilderness of Paran: and his mother took him a wife out of the land of Egypt.” [This is what Hagar did for her son, Ishmael].
 - 2) Numbers 10:12: “And the children of Israel took their journeys out of the wilderness of Sinai; and the cloud rested in the wilderness of Paran.”
 - 3) Numbers 12:16: “And afterward the people removed from Hazeroth, and pitched in the wilderness of Paran.”
 - 4) 1 Kings 11:18: “And they arose out of Midian, and came to Paran: and they took men with them out of Paran, and they came to Egypt, unto Pharaoh king of Egypt; which gave him an house, and appointed him victuals, and gave him land.” [This speaks of Hadad the Edomite, who was an enemy of Solomon].
2. Samuel’s age at the time of his death is not given in the text. Josephus alleges that his rule in Israel overlapped the first eighteen years of Saul’s reign: “Now he governed and presided over the people alone, after the death of Eli the high priest, twelve years, and eighteen years together with Saul the king” (p.141). This would place the prophet’s death at about the year 1036 B.C. Jamieson calculates Samuel’s age to have been 70 (p.200).

B. 1 Samuel 25:2-9: Nabal.

1. Verse 2: “And *there was* a man in Maon, whose possessions *were* in Carmel; and the man *was* very great, and he had three thousand sheep, and a thousand goats: and he was shearing his sheep in Carmel.”
 - a. We are now introduced to Nabal, a very rich and influential man whose property was located at Carmel. The area where he lived was in the wilderness of Maon, where David had taken refuge. The wilderness of Paran extended from Sinai to the southern borders of Palestine, where Maon was situated. The Carmel of the text is not Mt. Carmel, which is located in northern Palestine, but a town or area within the district known as Maon. Carmel corresponds to the modern Kermel; its location is placed between Ziph and Maon.
 - b. Nabal’s possessions included 3,000 sheep and 1,000 goats. At the time of the incident of the chapter, he was at Carmel shearing his sheep.
 2. Verse 3: “Now the name of the man *was* Nabal; and the name of his wife Abigail: and *she was* a woman of good understanding, and of a beautiful countenance: but the man *was* churlish and evil in his doings; and he *was* of the house of Caleb.”
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- a. The inspired historian draws a stark contrast between Nabal and his wife Abigail. She is described as a woman with a beautiful countenance and of a good understanding. Her name is defined to mean “joy of her father.”
 - b. On the other hand, Nabal is said to be churlish and evil in his doings. His conduct and name were not such as to endear him to anyone. He was a harsh (churlish) and evil man. His name means “fool.” It is unlikely that any right-thinking father would call his son by a such name, so either his father was also a harsh and evil man, or else Nabal earned his name by his life. "Let not my lord, I pray thee, regard this man of Belial, *even* Nabal: for as his name *is*, so *is* he; Nabal *is* his name, and folly *is* with him: but I thine handmaid saw not the young men of my lord, whom thou didst send" (1 Sam. 25:25).
 - c. The fact that he was of the house of Caleb is added to the description of Nabal.
3. Verses 4-5: “And David heard in the wilderness that Nabal did shear his sheep. And David sent out ten young men, and David said unto the young men, Get you up to Carmel, and go to Nabal, and greet him in my name.”
- a. Learning that Nabal was shearing sheep at Carmel, and unaware of the man’s true nature, David sent ten of his young men to Nabal.
 - b. Having a sizeable army of fighting men, David needed a reliable source of supplies. Apparently he had offered protection to his neighbors in exchange for food. To make just such an arrangement was the purpose for sending these ten men to greet Nabal.
4. Verses 6-7: “And thus shall ye say to him that liveth *in prosperity*, Peace *be* both to thee, and peace *be* to thine house, and peace *be* unto all that thou hast. And now I have heard that thou hast shearers: now thy shepherds which were with us, we hurt them not, neither was there ought missing unto them, all the while they were in Carmel.”
- a. The ambassage was to greet Nabal with the expression of peace to him, to all his house, and to all that he possessed. David referred to the man as “one who lives in prosperity.”
 - b. The young men were to state the fact that his shepherds had dwelled by David and his men, and that they had not been harmed and nothing was taken from them the whole while. The area under consideration was a pasture land in southern Palestine, an area exposed to the raids of various pagan groups. David and his men provided protection against the raids by these vicious brigands.
5. Verses 8-9: “Ask thy young men, and they will show thee. Wherefore let the young men find favour in thine eyes: for we come in a good day: give, I pray thee, whatsoever cometh to thine hand unto thy servants, and to thy son David. And when David's young men came, they spake to Nabal according to all those words in the name of David, and ceased.”
- a. David’s men called on Nabal to verify their story with his own shepherds. They then requested that he provide them with whatever he had in his hand to give them.
 - b. They described themselves as servants to Nabal and David as his son. These descriptions were not intended to be taken as literally true. That they were willing to submit to Nabal’s authority is clear, and that David’s attitude toward Nabal was like that of a son is also true.
 - c. The ten young men came to Nabal and delivered the message David had directed them to speak. They spoke the words and waited for Nabal’s response.
- C. 1 Samuel 25:10-13: Nabal Refuses to Help David.
1. Verse 10: “And Nabal answered David's servants, and said, Who *is* David? and who *is* the son of Jesse? there be many servants now a days that break away every man from his master.”
 - a. Nabal was ill-disposed to grant the request. He demeaned the name of David, alleging that since there were many servants who fled from their masters, it might be that David was no more than a runaway slave.
 - b. It is unlikely that Nabal was totally unaware of David’s identity. He was a miserly individual, and unwilling to share his bounty with those in need.
 2. Verse 11: “Shall I then take my bread, and my water, and my flesh that I have killed for my shearers, and give *it* unto men, whom I know not whence they be?”
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- a. Nabal demanded to know if they thought he should take the bread and meat, which he had prepared for his own men, and give it to those who were strangers to him.
 - b. One can easily imagine the rancor with which these words were spoken! He could have quickly verified the claims David's men made by questioning his own men.
 3. Verses 12-13: "So David's young men turned their way, and went again, and came and told him all those sayings. And David said unto his men, Gird ye on every man his sword. And they girded on every man his sword; and David also girded on his sword: and there went up after David about four hundred men; and two hundred abode by the stuff."
 - a. Returning to their camp, the young men reported to David the response of Nabal. Nabal had violated a practice of long usage, which even in modern times has been practiced in that part of the world. In exchange for supplies, David and his men had protected Nabal's possessions from the raiders.
 - b. David's plan was a natural result of the harsh reply Nabal had given to his request for food. He asked his men to gird on their swords. He left two hundred of his men to guard the camp, and he took the other four hundred to make a call on Nabal.
- D. 1 Samuel 25:14-17: A Report is Given to Abigail about Nabal's Refusal.
1. Verse 14: "But one of the young men told Abigail, Nabal's wife, saying, Behold, David sent messengers out of the wilderness to salute our master; and he railed on them."
 - a. One of Nabal's young workers brought word to Abigail of recent events. He related how David had sent some men to her husband to salute him.
 - b. Nabal's reply was to "rail on" the messengers. The young man and Abigail both understood Nabal's action to be wrong.
 2. Verses 15-16: "But the men *were* very good unto us, and we were not hurt, neither missed we any thing, as long as we were conversant with them, when we were in the fields: They were a wall unto us both by night and day, all the while we were with them keeping the sheep."
 - a. The young man continued his report by telling how David and his men had protected them when they were in the pasture land; no raider set on them to rob or harm them.
 - b. He reported that David was like a protective wall around them day and night, during the whole time they were tending the sheep. This is the report that Nabal refused to solicit.
 3. Verse 17: "Now therefore know and consider what thou wilt do; for evil is determined against our master, and against all his household: for he *is such* a son of Belial, that *a man* cannot speak to him."
 - a. The young worker concluded his report to Abigail by stating that David and his men would naturally retaliate against Nabal for this evil treatment.
 - b. He placed the blame solidly upon Nabal, stating that he was such a son of Belial that a man could not even speak to him. There are men who are so bitter and mean-spirited that they can scarcely speak a peaceable word to anyone else or permit a pleasant word to be spoken to them.
- E. 1 Samuel 25:18-31: Abigail Makes Amends.
1. Verses 18-20: "Then Abigail made haste, and took two hundred loaves, and two bottles of wine, and five sheep ready dressed, and five measures of parched *corn*, and an hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs, and laid *them* on asses. And she said unto her servants, Go on before me; behold, I come after you. But she told not her husband Nabal. And it was *so, as* she rode on the ass, that she came down by the covert on the hill, and, behold, David and his men came down against her; and she met them."
 - a. To stave off the attack David was preparing, Abigail acted quickly to put together a good supply of food to take to David. The food included 200 loaves of bread, 2 bottles of wine, 5 dressed sheep, 5 measures of parched grain, 100 clusters of raisins, and 200 fig cakes. These were loaded on asses.
 - b. Directing her servants to precede her, she rode on an ass and went out to intercept David. Naturally she did not tell her husband her plan.
 2. Verses 21-22: "Now David had said, Surely in vain have I kept all that this fellow hath in the wilderness, so that nothing was missed of all that pertained unto him: and he hath returned me evil for good. God do
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- so unto the enemies of David, and more also, if I leave of all that pertain to him by the morning light so much as one man-child" (ASV).
- a. David contemplated mayhem on Nabal and all the male members of his house. This action seems very harsh in view of his willingness to spare Saul a few days before in the cave. Although David became a spiritual giant, he was now subject to harsh passions.
 - b. 1 Samuel 25:22: "God do so unto the enemies of David, and more also, if I leave of all that pertain to him by the morning light so much as one man-child" (ASV). The rendition given in the KJV was not considered vulgar when that translation was produced, but in the intervening years, the word used here has taken on an uncouth meaning. The ASV presents the thought in a much nicer way to our modern ear.
 - c. 1 Samuel 25:21-22: "Now David had said, "Surely in vain I have protected all that this fellow has in the wilderness, so that nothing was missed of all that belongs to him. And he has repaid me evil for good. May God do so, and more also, to the enemies of David, if I leave one male of all who belong to him by morning light" (NKJV).
3. Verses 23-24: "And when Abigail saw David, she hasted, and lighted off the ass, and fell before David on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, And fell at his feet, and said, Upon me, my lord, *upon me let this iniquity be:* and let thine handmaid, I pray thee, speak in thine audience, and hear the words of thine handmaid."
- a. Seeing David, Abigail dismounted from her animal and fell on her face before David. She pleaded with him in behalf of her husband's house; she was willing for David's anger to be vented upon her instead of the innocent men of the family. Her action became a rebuke to David's vengeful plan.
 - b. Abigail pleaded with David that he give attention to her appeal.
4. Verse 25: "Let not my lord, I pray thee, regard this man of Belial, *even* Nabal: for as his name *is*, so *is* he; Nabal *is* his name, and folly *is* with him: but I thine handmaid saw not the young men of my lord, whom thou didst send."
- a. Abigail continued by asking David not to regard the actions and words of her husband. She said that he was well-named *Nabal* ["fool"], for folly is always his companion. She used the same argument here as David had used in trying to dissuade Saul from seeking his life: "After whom is the king of Israel come out? after whom dost thou pursue? after a dead dog, after a flea" (1 Sam. 22:14).
 - b. She also used the term the servant had used in depicting the nature of Nabal: he was a son of Belial. That expression was used in reference to one who was useless or evil. Those perverts who assaulted the Levite's concubine were described by the same word (Judges 19:22ff).
 - c. She further stated that she was unaware of the young men David had sent to her husband; the food she brought showed her willingness to do what was right, despite the evil disposition of her husband.
5. Verses 26-27: "Now therefore, my lord, *as* the LORD liveth, and *as* thy soul liveth, seeing the LORD hath withholden thee from coming to *shed* blood, and from avenging thyself with thine own hand, now let thine enemies, and they that seek evil to my lord, be as Nabal. And now this blessing which thine handmaid hath brought unto my lord, let it even be given unto the young men that follow my lord."
- a. As certainly as God lives and David's soul lived, may the enemies of David be as Nabal: as foolish and contemptible as he. This was Abigail's statement of desire.
 - b. She also, in making the statement, attributed the interruption of David's plans to the Lord. It was God who interfered to keep him from avenging himself on Nabal. Of course, it was Abigail who took action to keep David from making the attack, but she had acted in harmony with God's will.
 - c. Perceiving that she had been successful, Abigail directed David's attention to the provisions she had brought, and asked that these supplies be given to his men.
 - d. The historian introduced this lady as a woman with good understanding. Her actions and her words are more than sufficient to prove his description correct.
6. Verses 28-29: "I pray thee, forgive the trespass of thine handmaid: for the LORD will certainly make my lord a sure house; because my lord fighteth the battles of the LORD, and evil hath not been found in thee
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*all thy days. Yet a man is risen to pursue thee, and to seek thy soul: but **the soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of life with the LORD thy God**; and the souls of thine enemies, them shall he sling out, as out of the middle of a sling."*

- a. Abigail continued her wise counsel to David. She asked David to forgive her for not more quickly fulfilling his request for food. There was no error on her part; she was willing, however, to accept the blame for the evil her husband had done. "A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger. The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright: but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness" (Prov. 15:1-2).
 - b. She recognized that David was fighting the battles of the Lord, and that King Saul, who should have been doing so instead of seeking David's life, had shunned his obligations. She stated that God had preserved David from the king's evil plans.
 - c. Abigail refers to the one who has been pursuing David, but does not call him by name. She gives David a reassuring hope that his soul was bound "in the bundle of life with the Lord thy God." This is a unique statement which describes the perfect security which David enjoys under the providential hand of the Almighty.
 - d. On the other hand, the enemies of David would be cast forth as though from a sling. As surely as the stone speeds forth from the sling of an expert, so would David's enemies be thrown out.
7. Verses 30-31: "And it shall come to pass, when the LORD shall have done to my lord according to all the good that he hath spoken concerning thee, and shall have appointed thee ruler over Israel; That this shall be no grief unto thee, nor offence of heart unto my lord, either that thou hast shed blood causeless, or that my lord hath avenged himself: but when the LORD shall have dealt well with my lord, then remember thine handmaid."
- a. She speaks of the promises the Lord had made concerning David, stating that these would all come to pass. How did she know of these things? It is clear that what she was saying was not of her own invention, but that she was speaking under the power of inspiration. So had Hannah earlier in the book.
 - b. The point she is making here is that if David did not follow through with his plan to attack and kill Nabal and the other men of his household, then David would have no pang of conscience over this deed when he had mounted the throne of Israel. He would be free from the guilt of killing innocent men and would not have the weight of fulfilled vengeance on his heart.
 - c. When these things had come to pass, Abigail requests David then to remember her. Again, her words were the inspired counsel of God, for she was not in a position to know (on her own) what God had promised to David or that this fugitive would ever be made king.
 - d. The gospel calls forth from its adherents a more gentle manner of life than did the Mosaic Law. We have a better covenant, which offers better promises, and demands an exceedingly high moral tone.

F. 1 Samuel 25:32-38: The Death of Nabal.

1. Verses 32-33: "And David said to Abigail, Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me: And blessed *be* thy advice, and blessed *be* thou, which hast kept me this day from coming to *shed* blood, and from avenging myself with mine own hand."
- a. The wise words of this good lady kept David from executing the vengeful plan he had devised. He showed his own wisdom in discerning the wisdom of her counsel.
- b. David pronounced a blessing upon Abigail; her counsel had been wise; she had prevented David from shedding innocent blood; and had kept him from avenging himself with his own hand. He learned an important lesson.
- c. For us to wreak our own vengeance against our enemies is foolish and wrong. God is far better at exacting vengeance than we are. David left vengeance in God's hands, and in his own way, the Lord brought justice to the case.
- d. Romans 12:17-21: "Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not

- yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.”
2. Verse 34: “For in very deed, as Jehovah, the God of Israel, liveth, who hath withholden me from hurting thee, except thou hadst hastened and come to meet me, surely there had not been left unto Nabal by the morning light so much as one man-child” (ASV).
 - a. “For indeed, as the Lord God of Israel lives, who has kept me back from hurting you, unless you had hastened and come to meet me, surely by morning light no males would have been left to Nabal!” (NKJV).
 - b. David understood that Abigail had prevented his executing the unwise plan, and that without her good intervention, he would have done something that he would have regretted the rest of his life.
 - c. His plan would have hurt Abigail if he had fulfilled it. Her husband would have been slain, and so also would others for whom she doubtless felt great concern.
 3. Verse 35: “So David received of her hand *that* which she had brought him, and said unto her, Go up in peace to thine house; see, I have hearkened to thy voice, and have accepted thy person.”
 - a. David accepted the gift Abigail brought, and promised peace to her house on account of the goodness of her actions.
 - b. He humbly accepted the gentle rebuke that she delivered, and was grateful for her interposition. She had saved them both from unnecessary heartache.
 4. Verse 36: “And Abigail came to Nabal; and, behold, he held a feast in his house, like the feast of a king; and Nabal's heart *was* merry within him, for he *was* very drunken: wherefore she told him nothing, less or more, until the morning light.”
 - a. When Abigail returned home, she found that her husband was enjoying a kingly feast, and was very drunken.
 - b. This godly woman spoke nothing to him until the next day. She knew that one cannot reason with someone who is under the influence of alcohol.
 5. Verses 37-38: “But it came to pass in the morning, when the wine was gone out of Nabal, and his wife had told him these things, that his heart died within him, and he became *as* a stone. And it came to pass about ten days *after*, that the LORD smote Nabal, that he died.”
 - a. “So it was, in the morning, when the wine had gone from Nabal, and his wife had told him these things, that his heart died within him, and he became like a stone. 38 Then it happened, after about ten days, that the Lord struck Nabal, and he died” (NKJ).
 - b. The next day, when Nabal had sobered up, Abigail reported to him what she had done. She could have kept quiet about the experience, but she decided to act openly about it.
 - c. The news dealt him a harsh blow. “He probably fainted, from horror at the perilous situation in which he had unconsciously placed himself; and such a shock had been given by the fright to his whole system, that he rapidly pined and died” (JFB, p.203).
 - d. Coffman suggested that a stroke of paralysis hit him. “When Abigail informed Nabal of what she had done, it is easy to suppose that he flew into a violent rage and that the initial stroke of paralysis put him into a coma for ten days, at the expiration of which the final stroke ended his life” (p.305).
 - e. Keil suggested: “The cause of it was not his anger at the loss he had sustained, or merely his alarm at the danger to which he had been exposed, and which he did not believe to be over yet, but also his vexation that his wife should have made him humble himself in such a manner; for he is described as a hard, *i.e.*, an unbending, self-willed man” (p.246).
 - f. “When Abigail came back he was stupefied by drink, and it was not until the next day, when his debauch was passing off, that he was capable of being told what his wife had done. And when Abigail recounted to him David's fierce resolve, and how she had pacified him, he seems to have given way to a fit of violent indignation, flying out possibly at her as he had at David's messengers (ver. 14), the
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result of which was an attack of apoplexy, and after lying in a state of insensibility for ten days, he died" [Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 2001 by BibleSoft].

- g. Whatever the meaning and cause of his heart dying within him and his becoming as a stone, in some way he was smitten by the hand of God so that he died.

G. 1 Samuel 25:39-44: David Marries Abigail.

1. Verse 39: "And when David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, Blessed *be* the LORD, that hath pleaded the cause of my reproach from the hand of Nabal, and hath kept his servant from evil: for the LORD hath returned the wickedness of Nabal upon his own head. And David sent and communed with Abigail, to take her to him to wife."
 - a. David learned of Nabal's death. He pronounced a blessing upon Abigail through whom God had acted to turn him from his evil plan to smite Nabal. He now realized that God's vengeance is more just and severe.
 - b. He recognized the great worth of Abigail, and communed with her to take her as his wife. "His marriage with Abigail brought him a rich estate; and the fact of a woman in her wealthy circumstances so willingly forming a matrimonial relation with David, shows that the position he occupied, while expatriated in the wilderness, was far more elevated and comfortable than is generally imagined" (JFB,p.203).
 2. Verses 40-41: "And when the servants of David were come to Abigail to Carmel, they spake unto her, saying, David sent us unto thee, to take thee to him to wife. And she arose, and bowed herself on *her* face to the earth, and said, Behold, *let* thine handmaid *be* a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord."
 - a. David sent servants to speak with Abigail concerning marriage. He expressed his desire for her to become his wife, and she quickly accepted the proposal. We are not told how much time was involved in the entire transaction.
 - b. She bowed to the earth as she expressed her desire to serve David; she showed her humility by saying she would be pleased to wash his feet.
 3. Verse 42: "And Abigail hasted, and arose, and rode upon an ass, with five damsels of hers that went after her; and she went after the messengers of David, and became his wife."
 - a. Taking five of her maidens, she arose and went with David's men to become the wife of David. Again, we are not told how much time was involved in concluding the arrangements, but seemingly they were quickly accomplished.
 - b. According to ancient practice, the property of the wife came under the control of the husband. No plain statement is given, but we may fairly conclude that the vast property that belonged to Nabal came into David's hands. Nothing is said in the text about any sons of Nabal.
 4. Verses 43-44: "David also took Ahinoam of Jezreel; and they were also both of them his wives. But Saul had given Michal his daughter, David's wife, to Phalti the son of Laish, which *was* of Gallim."
 - a. At some other time, David also took Ahinoam of Jezreel as wife. This was a time when God winked at polygamy. "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by *that* man whom he hath ordained; *whereof* he hath given assurance unto all *men*, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts 17:30-31).
 - b. Saul's vindictiveness and universal authority he had assumed are seen in his giving Michal, David's other wife, to another man.
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1 SAMUEL 26

A. 1 Samuel 26:1-4: Saul Pursues David Again.

1. Verse 1: "And the Ziphites came unto Saul to Gibeah, saying, Doth not David hide himself in the hill of Hachilah, *which is* before Jeshimon?"
 - a. In 1 Samuel 23:19, the men of Ziph had first approached Saul with a report of David's presence in their territory. They feared the king, in view of what he had done to the priests of Nob (chapter 22), and knew that he was trying to apprehend David.
 - b. With an eye toward currying favor with Saul, and knowing how vicious he could be to those who gave his enemy shelter, the Ziphites returned to the king with a report of David being in their area. David had eluded his pursuer on the previous occasion; the Ziphites were simply giving Saul a more recent report of David's location.
 - c. Biblical critics decry this report as a duplication of the former, and have sought to establish certain discrepancies between the two accounts. There are differences in the accounts because they report two separate episodes! As Coffman noted, these reports are as identical as the Battle of New Orleans and the Battle of Waterloo (p.309).
2. Verses 2-3: "Then Saul arose, and went down to the wilderness of Ziph, having three thousand chosen men of Israel with him, to seek David in the wilderness of Ziph. And Saul pitched in the hill of Hachilah, *which is* before Jeshimon, by the way. But David abode in the wilderness, and he saw that Saul came after him into the wilderness."
 - a. Saul frequently had this body of three thousand chosen warriors with him (see 13:2; 24:2). This contingent of fighting men was sufficient for his usual needs, and was certainly large enough to capture a common fugitive. But David was no common man, and he had the Lord helping him.
 - b. David learned of Saul's presence, and continued to abide in his wilderness refuge. The next verse tells us that David sent out spies to verify Saul's presence. This action shows that he had not actually seen Saul and his company, but that he had heard they were present.
3. Verse 4: "David therefore sent out spies, and understood that Saul was come in very deed."
 - a. The spies were dispatched to learn if Saul was truly after him again. In chapter 24, David had found Saul in a cave.
 - b. He spared the king's life, for which Saul was deeply impressed. He separated from David on that occasion in peace, leaving the notion that he would no longer seek to kill David. However, David knew enough about the king to remain in hiding in his stronghold: "And David swore unto Saul. And Saul went home; but David and his men gat them up unto the hold" (1 Sam. 24:22).
 - c. Hearing that Saul had returned to the hunt, David sent the spies to determine if this was indeed true. It was an accurate report! Saul had returned to his old ways.

B. 1 Samuel 26:5-12: David Enters Saul's Camp at Night.

1. Verse 5: "And David arose, and came to the place where Saul had pitched: and David beheld the place where Saul lay, and Abner the son of Ner, the captain of his host: and Saul lay in the trench, and the people pitched round about him."
 - a. "So David arose and came to the place where Saul had encamped. And David saw the place where Saul lay, and Abner the son of Ner, the commander of his army. Now Saul lay within the camp, with the people encamped all around him" (NKJ).
 - b. The spies having located Saul's camp, David and some of his men came to the place, lying hidden until after the encampment had fallen asleep.
 - c. Saul was sleeping in "the trench" ["in the midst of his carriages"—margin]. "Among the nomad people of the East the encampments are usually made in a circular form; the circumference is lined by the baggage and the men, while the chief's station is in the centre, whether he occupied a tent or not. His spear, stuck in the ground at his bolster head, indicates his position..." (JFB, p.204).

- d. “It seems as if David could scarcely believe that Saul would thus a second time pursue him; but when the scouts informed him that it was really so, he went in person to reconnoitre Saul's camp. From the opposite hill he was able to see that he lay in the trench, i.e. the barricade formed by the wagons. At night Saul's place would be in the centre, with Abner near him, while the rest would lie sleeping around, but all of them within the rampart. When David reconnoitred them they would probably be arranging their wagons to form this barricade” [The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 2001 by BibleSoft].
- e. The ASV gives this rendition of the verse: “And David arose, and came to the place where Saul had encamped; and David beheld the place where Saul lay, and Abner the son of Ner, the captain of his host: and Saul lay within the place of the wagons, and the people were encamped round about him.”
2. Verse 6: “Then answered David and said to Ahimelech the Hittite, and to Abishai the son of Zeruah, brother to Joab, saying, Who will go down with me to Saul to the camp? And Abishai said, I will go down with thee.”
- a. From their place of concealment, David could look down into Saul's camp. He decided to invade the camp under the cover of darkness, while the enemy was asleep. It seems highly unlikely that Saul did not have any guards out to watch over the sleeping camp. But we are told in verse 12 that God had caused a deep sleep to fall upon the entire camp, allowing David to enter without risk.
- b. David asked for a volunteer to go with him into Saul's camp. Only Ahimelech and Abishai were included in the request; Abishai volunteered to go with David. We are not told what David's purpose was for entering the camp; it may have been for the very thing he did (verse 12). It is clear that he intended no harm to come upon his enemy.
- c. Abishai was brother to Joab, who would later earn a reputation for service to David. Abishai was one of the bravest fighting men of that violent age.
- 1) 2 Samuel 2:18,24: "And there were three sons of Zeruah there, Joab, and Abishai, and Asahel: and Asahel *was as* light of foot as a wild roe....Joab also and Abishai pursued after Abner: and the sun went down when they were come to the hill of Ammah, that *lieth* before Giah by the way of the wilderness of Gibeon."
 - 2) 2 Samuel 3:30: "So Joab and Abishai his brother slew Abner, because he had slain their brother Asahel at Gibeon in the battle."
 - 3) 2 Samuel 10:10: "And the rest of the people he delivered into the hand of Abishai his brother, that he might put *them* in array against the children of Ammon."
 - 4) 2 Samuel 10:14: "And when the children of Ammon saw that the Syrians were fled, then fled they also before Abishai, and entered into the city. So Joab returned from the children of Ammon, and came to Jerusalem."
 - 5) 1 Chronicles 18:12: "Moreover Abishai the son of Zeruah slew of the Edomites in the valley of salt eighteen thousand."
3. Verses 7-8: “So David and Abishai came to the people by night: and, behold, Saul lay sleeping within the trench, and his spear stuck in the ground at his bolster: but Abner and the people lay round about him. Then said Abishai to David, God hath delivered thine enemy into thine hand this day: now therefore let me smite him, I pray thee, with the spear even to the earth at once, and I will not *smite* him the second time.”
- a. Saul's position was easily discerned because his spear was stuck in the ground at his bolster (pillow; beside his head). His men were all lying on the ground around him. It would seem that he was safe from any harm. No one suspected that David would try to enter the king's camp, even at night.
- b. Abishai, showing his devotion to David and his strong opposition to David's enemies, requested that he be allowed to use the spear to pin Saul to the ground; he declared that there would be no need for a second thrust. He would have thought that this was the very reason for entering the camp.
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4. Verses 9-10: "And David said to Abishai, Destroy him not: for who can stretch forth his hand against the LORD'S anointed, and be guiltless? David said furthermore, *As* the LORD liveth, the LORD shall smite him; or his day shall come to die; or he shall descend into battle, and perish."
 - a. David rejected the request, stating that no one could attack the one God had anointed and remain free of guilt. He understood that Saul was to be removed from the royal throne by God's decree, but that the Lord would tend to the removal.
 - b. David told Abishai that God would either smite Saul himself, or he would meet with a natural death, or else he would die in battle. But it was not David's prerogative to slay Saul.
 - c. There is a strong lesson in David's statement for us. As much as we would like to take matters into our own hands in opposing evil in some physical way, that is not the Lord's will. The battle against evil is a spiritual warfare, and only spiritual weapons are to be used.
 - 1) To burn down an abortion clinic is not the way to oppose that evil industry. To blow up the meeting places of false teachers is not God's appointed way for us to oppose their wickedness. Rather, we are to oppose them by exposing their evil practices and beliefs by preaching the truth. Good does not result from evil actions.
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 10:4-5: "For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."
 - 3) Through preaching the truth and exposing error we give men the information they need to make an intelligent decision regarding sin and error. We allow God to bring about the destruction of evil institutions and practices in his own way.
 5. Verses 11-12: "The LORD forbid that I should stretch forth mine hand against the LORD'S anointed: but, I pray thee, take thou now the spear that *is* at his bolster, and the cruse of water, and let us go. So David took the spear and the cruse of water from Saul's bolster; and they gat them away, and no man saw *it*, nor knew *it*, neither awaked: for they *were* all asleep; because a deep sleep from the LORD was fallen upon them."
 - a. David refused Abishai's offer to slay King Saul, but he was directed to take the king's spear and a container of water as they left the camp. The absence of these two items, located so close to the sleeping king, would let Saul know how vulnerable he was to David; he could have been slain easily, without any danger to David. This should tell Saul that God was with David, and that there was no safe hiding place if the Lord was to slay him.
 - b. David and Abishai left the camp without anyone knowing of their presence at the time. God had caused a deep sleep to fall upon Saul and his 3,000 chosen warriors.
 - c. Truly, the hand of the Lord is with the righteous and is opposed to the adversary! If we walk in the light of God's word blamelessly, there are uncountable and unfathomable blessings available to us! We must learn to trust God to do what we cannot accomplish with our own strength.
 - d. Another meaningful lesson is to be learned from David's actions. He had every human reason to hate Saul, and might even have thanked God for giving him an opportunity to slay his foe. He chose to repay evil with good.
 - 1) "Though Saul's cruelty and perfidy, and general want of right principle, had sunk him to a low pitch of degradation, yet that was no reason for David imitating him in doing wrong. Besides, he was the sovereign; David was a subject; and though God had rejected him from the kingdom, it was every way the best and most dutiful course, instead of precipitating his fall by imbruing their hands in his blood, and thereby contracting the guilt of a great crime, to await the awards of that retributive Providence which sooner or later would take him off by some sudden and mortal blow. He who with impetuous haste was going to exterminate Nabal, meekly spared Saul. But Nabal refused to give a tribute to which justice and gratitude, no less than custom, entitled David. Saul
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was under the judicial infatuation of heaven.... Thus he [David] obtained the best of victories over him [Saul], by heaping coals of fire on his head” (JFB, p.204).

- 2) Romans 12:17-21: "Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but *rather* give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance *is* mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."

C. 1 Samuel 26:13-20: David Speaks to Abner and Saul.

1. Verses 13-14: “Then David went over to the other side, and stood on the top of an hill afar off; a great space *being* between them: And David cried to the people, and to Abner the son of Ner, saying, Answerest thou not, Abner? Then Abner answered and said, Who *art* thou *that* criest to the king?”
 - a. Later, after escaping from the camp, David called out to Saul and Abner from a safe distance, from the top of a hill.
 - b. He got Abner’s attention. Abner demanded to know who it was that was disturbing the king. The distance and light may not have enabled him to recognize David, although he may have been asking to get him to verify his identify; it would seem incredible for David to be this close to the king.
2. Verses 15-16: “And David said to Abner, *Art* not thou a *valiant* man? and who *is* like to thee in Israel? wherefore then hast thou not kept thy lord the king? for there came one of the people in to destroy the king thy lord. This thing *is* not good that thou hast done. *As* the LORD liveth, ye *are* worthy to die, because ye have not kept your master, the LORD’S anointed. And now see where the king’s spear *is*, and the cruse of water that *was* at his bolster.”
 - a. David taunted Abner for not living up to his reputation for valor. He accused him of not having guarded the king closely enough, for someone had entered into the camp during the night and could have slain Saul. He upbraided Abner further by saying that his dereliction of duty warranted his execution. David may have known that Abner could not have stayed awake since the Lord had caused the deep sleep to take the entire force out of action. His purpose for the talk was to call the king’s attention to the fact that David was not his enemy for he could have slain him.
 - b. To verify his claim that someone had entered the camp, he asked Abner to look for the king’s spear and the cruse of water that were at Saul’s head. The fact that David knew that these items had been at Saul’s bed and were now missing would prove his assertion.
 - c. It seems that this shouted conversation took place before daylight, for no indication is given that the spear and container of water David held could be seen from the camp.
3. Verses 17-18: “And Saul knew David’s voice, and said, *Is* this thy voice, my son David? And David said, *It is* my voice, my lord, O king. And he said, Wherefore doth my lord thus pursue after his servant? for what have I done? or what evil *is* in mine hand?”
 - a. Saul entered into the conversation. He recognized David’s voice, and asked incredulously if it truly was David. He spoke of David as his son, indicating his former attachment to the young man.
 - b. David admitted that it was indeed he, and asked why the king was pursuing after him. He demanded to know the cause for this animosity on Saul’s part; he asked what evil had he done. He had given Saul no cause for his hatred toward him; he did not seek to depose the king; he now had had two good occasions to kill him, but had not done so. His faithfulness and innocence were clearly established.
4. Verse 19: “Now therefore, I pray thee, let my lord the king hear the words of his servant. If the LORD have stirred thee up against me, let him accept an offering: but if *they be* the children of men, cursed *be* they before the LORD; for they have driven me out this day from abiding in the inheritance of the LORD, saying, Go, serve other gods.”
 - a. David stated that if it was the Lord who had caused Saul to seek David’s life, then he was willing to offer the appropriate sacrifice to be reconciled with God. David was willing to accept the situation

as just if God had indeed sent Saul out after him; but he was willing to do the right thing to appease the Lord's wrath, if that was the problem.

- b. On the other hand, as David believed, evil men had stirred up Saul against David, then let those men be cursed. They had in reality driven David from his God-given inheritance in the land, and caused him to go forth into pagan lands where he would be tempted to serve idols. It may be the case that the men who had stirred up Saul against David were the king's advisors, and that if David replaced Saul, they would undoubtedly lose their exalted positions.
 - c. These men deserved to be cursed because of what they had done to David, whose innocence was proved by the fact that he had done no evil to Saul although he could have slain him without any danger to himself.
5. Verse 20: "Now therefore, let not my blood fall to the earth before the face of the LORD: for the king of Israel is come out to seek a flea, as when one doth hunt a partridge in the mountains."
- a. David called on Saul to not let his blood be shed on the earth in the sight of God; it would be wrong, and God would be aware of it. The implication is that God, seeing the injustice, would right this wrong, which would be to Saul's hurt.
 - b. He described Saul's relentless pursuit of David as one going out to hunt down a flea; the effort was not justified due to the smallness of the prey.
 - c. He described the pursuit further as being like a man who hunts a partridge in the mountains. "As to fowls, people in the East, in hunting the partridge and other game birds, pursue them till observing them becoming languid and fatigued; after they are been put up two or three times, they rush upon the birds stealthily, and knock them down with bludgeons....It was exactly in this manner that Saul was pursuing David: he drove him from time to time from his hiding-place, hoping to render him weary of his life, or obtain an opportunity of accomplishing his destruction" (JFB, p.205).

D. 1 Samuel 26:21-25: Saul Addresses David.

1. Verse 21: "Then said Saul, I have sinned: return, my son David: for I will no more do thee harm, because my soul was precious in thine eyes this day: behold, I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly."
 - a. Saul plainly stated his guilt. "I have sinned." He asked that David return to his old position with the king, and pledged that he would no more seek to do him harm. He stated further that he had played the fool for David had spared his life, and that he had erred exceedingly.
 - b. The words Saul used were the right ones to give us the impression of sincerity. However, David did not believe him. "And David said in his heart, I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul: *there is* nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape into the land of the Philistines; and Saul shall despair of me, to seek me any more in any coast of Israel: so shall I escape out of his hand" (1 Sam. 27:1).
 - c. Saul had shown his duplicity on other occasions. David would have been foolish to trust a man who was so subject to passions as was Saul.
2. Verses 22-23: "And David answered and said, Behold the king's spear! and let one of the young men come over and fetch it. The LORD render to every man his righteousness and his faithfulness: for the LORD delivered thee into *my* hand to day, but I would not stretch forth mine hand against the LORD'S anointed."
 - a. David was unwilling even to keep Saul's spear, which could have been considered to be a lawful acquisition of warfare. He invited the king to send one of his young men to fetch the spear and return it to the king. This generous act should have further convinced Saul of David's loyalty. But it also shows that David did not trust Saul sufficiently to return the spear personally!
 - b. David called on the Lord to render to every man according to the individual's righteousness and faithfulness, or lack thereof. Rather than return to Saul's service, David was quite willing to let the Lord bless him.
 - c. That the Lord was with David was obvious for he had put Saul into David's hands that very night, but he would not do him any harm. His sparing the life of the king was not due to any virtue within Saul,

but rather was on account of his having been anointed by the Lord to serve as king. God had made him king, and only God had the right to depose him.

3. Verse 24: "And, behold, as thy life was much set by this day in mine eyes, so let my life be much set by in the eyes of the LORD, and let him deliver me out of all tribulation."
 - a. Saul's life had been esteemed in David's eyes as worth sparing; he asked that God so esteem his life so as to deliver him out of the tribulation which lay in store for him in the future.
 - b. David believed that the Lord would spare him and bless him; he would not commit himself into the unreliable hands of Saul.
 - c. Note also that David was tested on the two occasions when he could have slain Saul. He knew that God had selected and appointed Saul to the throne, and that only God could remove him.
 4. Verse 25: "Then Saul said to David, Blessed *be* thou, my son David: thou shalt both do great *things*, and also shalt still prevail. So David went on his way, and Saul returned to his place."
 - a. Saul's parting words expressed his belief that David would do great things and would enjoy success in his future undertakings.
 - b. That David did not trust him is seen in the fact that he went on his own way; he did not place himself under Saul's control.
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1 SAMUEL 27

A. 1 Samuel 27:1-4: David Seeks Refuge at Gath.

1. Verse 1: "And David said in his heart, I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul: *there is* nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape into the land of the Philistines; and Saul shall despair of me, to seek me any more in any coast of Israel: so shall I escape out of his hand."
 - a. David was astute enough to understand that he could never trust his life to Saul, despite the king's kind words on the present occasion. Saul had made a similar statement to him earlier, when David had spared his life in the cave (1 Sam. 24).
 - b. He knew in his heart that Saul would continue to pursue him to kill him, as long as he considered David a threat to his reign. He resolved, therefore, to take up residence among the Philistines, the determined enemies of Saul. Saul would not dare to invade Philistia, so David, his men, and their families would be safe there. The Philistines reckoned that David might be a good ally against Saul, and David's little band did not represent a significant threat to them.
 - c. David's flight to Philistia would convince Saul that he had given up his position and citizenship in Israel, and would no longer be a threat to his throne. Saul could never understand that David did not seek to overthrow him; he represented no additional danger to the king. It was God who had decided to bring Saul down and replace him with David, but it was not God's plan to have David lead an insurrection against Saul.
 - d. "David had been warned upon another occasion when he was in Moab to return to Judah (22:5), and it does not appear that it was God's will for David to dwell in Philistia at this time. There is no mention of him having consulted the sacred ephod or having sought the will of God in this matter. David's character during this sojourn in Philistia did not measure up to the high standard that would have pleased God" (Coffman, p.322).
 2. Verse 2: "And David arose, and he passed over with the six hundred men that *were* with him unto Achish, the son of Maach, king of Gath."
 - a. David arose and led his men to Gath, to seek refuge with Achish, the king of that Philistine city. He had sought safety in the same city once before, but had been turned down after his identity was made known (1 Sam. 21:10-15). He had to resort to pretending insanity to escape being killed on that occasion.
 - b. David had slain Goliath, the giant champion of Gath. "This act of David was not forgotten by the Philistines even now. But as David had been pursued by Saul for many years, Achish did not hesitate to give a place of refuge in his land to the fugitive who had been outlawed by the king of Israel, the arch-enemy of the Philistines, possibly with the hope that if a fresh war with Saul should break out, he should be able to reap some advantage from David's friendship" (Keil, p.255).
 - c. "The particular description of this king's family creates a presumption that he was a different king from the reigning sovereign on David's first visit to Gath" (JFB, p.206).
 3. Verse 3: "And David dwelt with Achish at Gath, he and his men, every man with his household, *even* David with his two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the Carmelitess, Nabal's wife."
 - a. "He was now in very different circumstances from those of his first arrival in the Philistine country. Then he was a lonely fugitive; now he had the prestige of a great name, and was the head of an organized band, all the soldiers of which, as well as their leader, transported their families along with them. In numbers they were sufficient to form a little colony" (JFB, p.206).
 - b. Having their families along, the move had a strong flavor of permanence about it. This migration was not intended to be a mere momentary flight from Saul. There was no plan for an immediate return to Israel. However, from the events which are related later, it seems clear that David did not intend to spend the rest of his life away from Israel. He remembered God's promise to place him on the throne,
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but in the meantime, he thought it necessary to put himself out of Saul's reach. It may be that this move was one entirely of his own choosing, that it was not God's plan that he live in Gath.

- c. David's two wives, Ahinoam and Abigail, were with him. He had married Michal, Saul's daughter, but her father had given her to another man (25:44).
4. Verse 4: "And it was told Saul that David was fled to Gath: and he sought no more again for him."
 - a. When Saul learned that David had taken refuge at Gath, he gave up his pursuit of David. Notice that the reason he ceased to actively seek David's life was the fact that he was in Gath, not on account of the promise he had made to David (26:17-25). Some old men who have lived lust-filled lives have been known to glory in their cessation from these wicked practices; however, as a philosopher mused, it was not they who left their vices, but their vices deserted them, when they were too old to continue the practices.
 - b. David had correctly discerned the character of King Saul, that his penitence was only temporary. True repentance is the determination of the individual's will to make a change; it is not a shallow outburst of his emotions.
 - 1) Repentance is produced by godly sorrow. "Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death" (2 Cor. 7:9-10).
 - 2) Repentance is followed by a reformed life.
 - a) Matthew 3:8: "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance."
 - b) Acts 26:20: "But showed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and *then* to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance."
 - 3) Repentance therefore is not sorrow or a reformed life; it is the decision (the firm commitment) one makes to change his ways; this decision is produced by godly sorrow over the wrongs he has done; the decision is shown by the fact that he changes his life; the decision itself is repentance.
 - 4) Saul was merely overcome by shallow emotions when he admitted his sin; he was not firmly convinced that he had violated God's word in seeking to kill David, or else he would have ceased his evil pursuit immediately.

B. 1 Samuel 27:5-7: Achish Gives Ziklag to David.

1. Verse 5: "And David said unto Achish, If I have now found grace in thine eyes, let them give me a place in some town in the country, that I may dwell there: for why should thy servant dwell in the royal city with thee?"
 - a. After showing Achish his intention of staying in Philistia, David requested that the king provide a place in some town for him and his men. He based his appeal on the question of whether he had found favor in the sight of the king.
 - b. The request shows that David was exercising wisdom. To live separate from the Philistines would separate the enclave from the major influences of their idolatrous neighbors. It would also provide them with a better measure of defense if the Philistines should turn against them. Further, living in a place of their own would keep the Philistines from discovering the operations which David had envisioned.
 - c. David gave a compliment to Achish in making the request: it was not suitable for him and his men to live in the same city with the king.
2. Verse 6: "Then Achish gave him Ziklag that day: wherefore Ziklag pertaineth unto the kings of Judah unto this day."
 - a. Achish decided to let his Israelite guests dwell in Ziklag. "Though originally assigned to Judah (Josh. 15:31), and subsequently to Simeon (Josh. 19:5; cf. 1 Chron. 4:30), this town had never been possessed by the Israelites. It belonged to the Philistines, who gave it to David. It remained ever after a private possession of the kings of Judah" (JFB, p.206). Other scholars say that Simeon had occupied

the city, which they later lost to the Philistines. Simeon's inheritance was taken out of that which was originally given to Judah (Josh. 19:5).

- b. Ziklag was an ideal headquarters for David. It was a fortress on the border of Israel and their foes to the south. It would serve as an excellent place from which to launch attacks against some of the southern enemies of his nation.
 - c. The inspired historian notes that the city had belonged to the kings of Judah "unto this day." We do not know the identity of the one who recorded this chapter, or the time in which it was written. In the introduction of our notes (page 1), we learned that Samuel, Nathan, and Gad were the ones who set the story into print. The latter two writers lived on beyond the time of Saul, for they made this statement here, and also reported the details of Saul's demise, as well as the subsequent history of David.
 - d. "David's presence with so large a following must in many ways have been inconvenient as well as expensive to Achish. In some small country town David and his men would maintain themselves. Achish accordingly gives him Ziklag, a small place assigned first of all to Judah (Josh 15:31), but subsequently to Simeon (*ibid.* 19:5). Its exact position is not known. It seems to have been valued by David's successors, as it is noted that it still belonged unto the kings of Judah. This phrase proves that the Book of Samuel must have been compiled at a date subsequent to the revolt of Jeroboam, while the concluding words, unto this day, equally plainly indicate a date prior to the Babylonian exile" [The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 2001 by BibleSoft].
3. Verse 7: "And the time that David dwelt in the country of the Philistines was a full year and four months."
- a. David and his men dwelled in Philistia for one year and four months. Some scholars, especially those critical of the Biblical text, allege that the time factor is an interpretation amounting to little more than a guess.
 - 1) "The statement that David remained a year and four months in the land of the Philistines, is a proof of the historical character of the whole narrative" (Keil, p.256). Keil also noted that the term translated "year" is "a term of days which amounted to a full year" (*ibid.*).
 - 2) Compare: "And if a man sell a dwelling house in a walled city, then he may redeem it within a whole year after it is sold; *within* a full year may he redeem it" (Lev. 25:29; cf. 1 Sam. 1:3,20; 2:19).
 - b. The time period indicated measures the time between David's arrival at Gath and the events which are next related.

C. 1 Samuel 27:8-12: David Raids the Amalekites and Others.

1. Verse 8: "And David and his men went up, and invaded the Geshurites, and the Gezrites, and the Amalekites: for those *nations were* of old the inhabitants of the land, as thou goest to Shur, even unto the land of Egypt."
 - a. The various people named are described as being long-time inhabitants of the land. Speaking of the Amalakites, Jamieson said: "Part of the district occupied by them lay on the south of the land of Israel (Judg. 5:14; 12:15); but after the overthrow of their national strength by Saul (ch. 15) they dispersed and became a horde of desert marauders" (JFB, p.206).
 - b. The direction of the attack David launched on these people is described as *up*. "...The tribes which he attacked may have had their seat upon the mountain plateau in the northern portion of the desert of Paran, so that David was obliged to march *up* to reach them" (Keil, p.256).
 - c. Shur was the name of a deserted region to the south of Palestine, adjacent to Egypt.
2. Verse 9: "And David smote the land, and left neither man nor woman alive, and took away the sheep, and the oxen, and the asses, and the camels, and the apparel, and returned, and came to Achish."
 - a. David violently assaulted these people, killing the entire populations, and taking their livestock and apparel. In ancient times, wealth was in various forms, including clothing. Compare: "And Achan answered Joshua, and said, Indeed I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done: When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of

- silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it” (Josh. 7:20-21).
- b. How could David justify such harsh conduct? Doubtless on the basis of the original command of God for Israel to take the land, leaving none of the inhabitants alive. This decree was just, for the people of that area had corrupted themselves with idolatry, and had withstood God’s purposes for Israel. It may have been the case that these pagan groups represented a threat to David in his refuge of Ziklag.
 - c. Following these successful raids, David returned and gave a report of his activities to King Achish. Evidently, he shared the spoils of his attacks with him; this may have been part of the agreement he had with Achish.
3. Verse 10: “And Achish said, Whither have ye made a road to day? And David said, Against the south of Judah, and against the south of the Jerahmeelites, and against the south of the Kenites.”
- a. Achish inquired as to where David had “made a road” in taking the spoils at hand. His question asks in which direction did David spread himself out; and against whom did he go.
 - b. “This reply shows that...David was able to represent the march against these tribes to Achish as a march against the south of Judah, to make him believe that he had been making an attack upon the southern territory of Judah and its dependencies” (Keil, p.257).
4. Verse 11: “And David saved neither man nor woman alive, to bring *tidings* to Gath, saying, Lest they should tell on us, saying, So did David, and so *will be* his manner all the while he dwelleth in the country of the Philistines.”
- a. David slew the whole population of the places he attacked lest any survivor should bring information to Achish about where he had done this vicious work. Survivors might have given warning to the Philistines that he represented a danger to them.
 - b. It appears that David was using his Philistine base to carry out operations against various enemies of Israel, but leading Achish to believe that his assaults had been against Israel itself. The future king of Israel could not ignore that he was an Israelite, that the Philistines were enemies to his people, and that he had God’s promise to mount Israel’s throne. By weakening the adversaries of Israel, David was strengthening his own reign.
 - c. David had been a man after God’s own heart, but there were later occasions (including this one) in which he twisted the truth to fit his own needs. We remember that these were times in which God overlooked certain things: “And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent” (Acts 17:30).
5. Verse 12: “And Achish believed David, saying, He hath made his people Israel utterly to abhor him; therefore he shall be my servant for ever.”
- a. This information pleased Achish greatly. He accepted David’s statement without question. Believing that David had attacked his own people, he knew that this would make David an outcast from his own nation forever, and that he would be forced to be an ally to Achish from now on.
 - b. “Achish was deceived by the tale, and considered that, as so great an outrage upon his countrymen would alienate all Israel from David, he might now employ him as a useful auxiliary in the expeditionary enterprise he had been meditating against the kingdom of Saul. The gross deception practised upon his royal host, and the indiscriminate slaughter which David had committed, lest any one should escape to tell the real truth, exhibit an unfavorable view of his integrity and uprightness at this period” (JFB, p.207).
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1 SAMUEL 28

A. 1 Samuel 28:1-2: The Philistines Mount an Attack against Israel.

1. Verse 1: "And it came to pass in those days, that the Philistines gathered their armies together for warfare, to fight with Israel. And Achish said unto David, Know thou assuredly, that thou shalt go out with me to battle, thou and thy men."
 - a. "The death of Samuel, the general dissatisfaction with Saul, and the absence of David, instigated the cupidity of those restless enemies of Israel, and they prepared to invade the kingdom" (JFB, p.207).
 - b. This was a general war, not a mere incursion into Israelite territory. The armies of the various city-states which comprised Philistia were marshaled.
 - c. Achish directed David and his men to join the Philistines in the invasion. Since David had refused to do Saul any harm when he had the means and opportunity to kill him, we may be sure he would be unwilling to join with the Philistines in attacking Israel.
 - d. "This order from the king of Gath was addressed to David, whose duplicity and deception finally caught up with him; and he found himself in the position of being ordered to go to war against Israel" (Coffman, p.329).
2. Verse 2: "And David said to Achish, Surely thou shalt know what thy servant can do. And Achish said to David, Therefore will I make thee keeper of mine head for ever."
 - a. David's response was one of ambiguous generality, without any genuine commitment to Achish. He simply stated that the king knew what David was capable of doing in battle.
 - b. Taking David's reply as a full commitment to assist the Philistines in their invasion of Israel, Achish pledged to him that he would be made "keeper of mine head" (body guard) following the successful war against Saul. The position promised was one of great trust and honor.
 - c. "The rendering of the A.V. makes David repeat the words of Achish, which literally are, 'knowing thou shalt know,' the Hebrew way of making a strong affirmation. David's reply is really ambiguous, but is understood by Achish as a boastful assent, and he thereupon promises, Therefore will I make thee keeper of mine head, i.e. captain of my bodyguard, forever" [The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 2001 by Biblesoft].

B. 1 Samuel 28:3-6: Saul is Fearful of the Invading Philistines.

1. Verse 3: "Now Samuel was dead, and all Israel had lamented him, and buried him in Ramah, even in his own city. And Saul had put away those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land."
 - a. The information given here is essential in order for the reader to grasp the significance of the story that is to follow. Samuel had died, which had led to great lamentation throughout Israel. His body had been interred in his hometown of Ramah.
 - b. Further, we are told that Saul had cast out all those who claimed to possess familiar spirits and those who claimed to be wizards. This was something required by the Lord. "When thou art come into the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you *any one* that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, *or* that useth divination, *or* an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things *are* an abomination unto the LORD: and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee. Thou shalt be perfect with the LORD thy God. For these nations, which thou shalt possess, hearkened unto observers of times, and unto diviners: but as for thee, the LORD thy God hath not suffered thee so *to do*" (Deut. 18:9-14).
 - c. "We are not told when Saul did this; but at the commencement of his reign, when he brought the ark to Nob, he was probably earnest generally in his observance of the precepts of the Mosaic law. Familiar spirits. Hebrew, *oboth*, the plural of *ob*, a leathern bottle. It is generally taken to refer to the distended belly of the conjurer, into which the summoned spirit of the dead was supposed to enter, and

thence speak; for which reason the Septuagint renders the word ‘ventriloquist,’ and is followed by most modern commentators. Wizards. Hebrew, ‘knowing ones,’ from the verb to know; just as wizard comes from the old verb *to wiss*. With ignorant people unusual knowledge is always looked upon with suspicion; but these supposed magicians professed a knowledge to which they had no claim” [The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 2001 by Biblesoft].

2. Verses 4-5: “And the Philistines gathered themselves together, and came and pitched in Shunem: and Saul gathered all Israel together, and they pitched in Gilboa. And when Saul saw the host of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart greatly trembled.”
 - a. “The spot on which their encampment was fixed was Shunem (Josh. 19:18), now Solam, a village which is situated on the slope of a range called ‘little Hermon.’ On the opposite side, on the rise of mount Gilboa, hard by ‘the spring of Jezreel,’ was Saul’s army.
 - 1) “The Philistines clung, as usual, to the plain, which was most suitable for those war chariots of which their military armament principally consisted, and they took up an advantageous position for the free and effective use of that force in action.
 - 2) “That of the Hebrews was badly selected. ‘The ground slopes down gradually from Shunem to the very base of Gilboa at the fountain, while the hillside rises steeply from the plain.
 - 3) “The Philistines had all the advantage of the gentle descent in their attack; both front and flanks of the Israelites were exposed to their onset, and the prospect of flight almost completely cut off by the steep hill behind’ (*Porter’s Handbook*, p.355)” (JFB, p.208).
 - b. The invasion of the Philistines was no small raid, but a full-scale war. The sight of the massive army of the invaders sent fear through the heart of Saul. He needed the support and guidance of God, but his rebellion had separated him from the Lord.
 3. Verse 6: “And when Saul inquired of the LORD, the LORD answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets.”
 - a. He had cut himself off from God. The full import of this separation came home to him now, in this hour of deep need. The Lord gave no answer to Saul’s entreaties, not by dreams, by Urim, or by prophet. How could he expect God to come to his aid when he had viciously slaughtered a great number of priests? (1 Sam. 22).
 - b. What an awful situation! If genuine repentance had been present within Saul, perhaps God would have come to his aid. But he had become hardened in his rebellion. Like many today, in prosperous times the Lord is far from them; only in times of hardship and need do they consider him. Our Creator will not be used merely as an emergency technician! To have God’s help in the troubles of life, he must have our devoted service in the prosperous times.
- C. 1 Samuel 28:7-14: Saul and the Witch of Endor.
1. Verse 7: “Then said Saul unto his servants, Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and inquire of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, *there is* a woman that hath a familiar spirit at Endor.”
 - a. The king showed his desperate state, as well as his inconsistency, by seeking out a woman who had a familiar spirit. He had earlier tried to dispose of all such charlatans (verse 3); now he needed some counsel so urgently that he was willing to turn to anyone. He should have known better.
 - b. “*Baalath-ob*: the mistress (or possessor) of a conjuring spirit, *i.e.* of a spirit with which the dead were conjured up, for the purpose of making inquiry concerning the future” (Keil, p.261). “*Ob* signifies properly a *lethern bottle*, and is applied in several passages of Scripture to magicians because, being possessed with an evil spirit, and swollen by the inhalation of some gaseous substances, which made them pant and heave, they spoke with a soft hollow voice, as out of a bottle” (JFB, p.208).
 - c. Such a woman was known by Saul’s servants to dwell at Endor. He sought a woman because women have been known to follow such things more than men. In our own day, fortune-tellers and other such people are mostly females, or so it seems.
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2. Verse 8: “And Saul disguised himself, and put on other raiment, and he went, and two men with him, and they came to the woman by night: and he said, I pray thee, divine unto me by the familiar spirit, and bring me *him* up, whom I shall name unto thee.”
 - a. “Between Nain and Endor two miles farther east, there is a gap in the mountain which passes entirely through it, although it rises to a considerable height midway. By this King Saul came over from his camp near Jezreel the night before the battle to visit the Witch of Endor. As the Philistine army was immediately north of him, he had to pass by its left flank in order to make the perilous excursion—a venture which he would scarcely have made had he not felt himself in a very great strait.
 - 1) “The village still wears its original name, pronounced by the Arabs *Endur*, and it is perched on a steep rocky slope pierced by many caverns, at least one of which is inhabited. The population numbers about 150 persons, and the supply of water is from a feeble spring in a cave above the village.
 - 2) “It was nearly dry when the author saw it [1879], and it was kept in so filthy a condition that, although thirsty, we did not try the quality of its water” (McGarvey, *Lands of the Bible*, pp.303f).
 - b. Disguising himself, he took two men with him and went at night to Endor. He asked her to bring up a certain spirit with whom he wanted to talk. These so-called mediums assert the power to speak with the dead.
 - c. He wanted her to agree to the proposition before he named the person, lest she should discover his identity.
 - d. In his search for counsel, he violated God’s law against consulting such people. By his own order, most of these people had been put away. “When thou art come into the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you *any one* that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, *or* that useth divination, *or* an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch” (Deut. 18:9-10).
3. Verses 9-10: “And the woman said unto him, Behold, thou knowest what Saul hath done, how he hath cut off those that have familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land: wherefore then layest thou a snare for my life, to cause me to die? And Saul sware to her by the LORD, saying, *As* the LORD liveth, there shall no punishment happen to thee for this thing.”
 - a. The woman was suspicious. She objected to the request, stating that Saul had put away all who had familiar spirits. She accused her visitor of laying a trap for her. To quiet her uneasiness, Saul swore by the Lord that no punishment would be given her if she would honor his demand.
 - b. “Though she at first refused to listen to his request, she accepted his pledge that no risk would be incurred by her compliance. And it is probable that his extraordinary stature, the deference paid him by his attendants, the easy distance of his camp from En-dor, and the proposal to call up the great prophet and first magistrate in Israel—a proposal which no private individual would venture to make had awakened her suspicions as to the true character and rank of her visitor” (JFB, p.209).
4. Verses 11-12: “Then said the woman, Whom shall I bring up unto thee? And he said, Bring me up Samuel. And when the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice: and the woman spake to Saul, saying, Why hast thou deceived me? for thou *art* Saul.”
 - a. Acquiescing to his assurance, she asked whom he sought. He wanted to speak with Samuel. Nothing is said in the inspired record that the woman entered into any of her usual *hocus pocus*, although that could have been omitted by the writer. It is possible that as soon as Saul identified the one he wanted to see, that Samuel immediately appeared, before she entered into her usual routine.
 - b. The woman saw Samuel, and emitted a loud cry. This indicates that she had not expected to see such a sight. It is clear that her practice was one of delusion, and therefore never having had such an experience before, she was so shocked that the cry of fear was immediate and real.
 - c. Coffman said he considered this passage one of the most difficult in the Bible. There are some hard questions the episode poses. Since God would not speak to Saul through the Urim, dream, or prophet,

why did he give a statement to him through Samuel? Did the woman actually conjure up Samuel by her powers? Was the message really from Samuel, or was the entire event one of deception?

- 1) The woman was a fake; she could not have produced anything like that portrayed in the record. Her surprise was genuine; she was terrified by what she saw. God is the source of miracles.
- 2) The message issued by Samuel was true, and the predictions he gave were fulfilled. We have good reason to understand, therefore, that it really was Samuel. Only God had the power to bring him forth to deliver the message he spoke. And only God could know the future events revealed.
- 3) For reasons best known to himself, God produced Samuel to present the message he was given. The purpose of speaking to Saul in this fashion may be discerned by the effects it produced. The woman was taught a lesson regarding her foolish profession. All who read the story are taught the same lesson. Saul was shown that his rebellion against the Lord was fruitless, for God could bring forth one from Sheol to speak to him. We are shown that truth is unchangeable: Samuel had rebuked the king's actions as sinful while he was on earth; and now that he had died, the prophet continued to oppose Saul's sinful conduct.
- d. For the reasons we noted earlier, the woman perceived Saul's true identity. Only Saul would ask for Samuel; Saul was often seen in company with Samuel, before the death of the prophet. We have the incongruous situation of the deceiver (the witch-woman) complaining about being deceived!
5. Verses 13-14: "And the king said unto her, Be not afraid: for what sawest thou? And the woman said unto Saul, I saw gods ascending out of the earth. And he said unto her, What form *is* he of? And she said, An old man cometh up; and he *is* covered with a mantle. And Saul perceived that it *was* Samuel, and he stooped with *his* face to the ground, and bowed himself."
 - a. Saul assured her again that she had no reason to be afraid of any punishment from him. He was sincerely wanting to communicate with Samuel. He was unconcerned about her activity.
 - b. Quieting her fears, Saul asked what she had seen. She replied that she had seen "gods ascending out of the earth." Obviously, Saul was unable to see this. Although she said she saw "gods" coming forth from the earth, it was Samuel (singular) that she actually saw. Saul asked, "What form is he of?"
 - c. The woman said that the one she saw was an old man, and was covered with a mantle—an outer garment; in this case, a prophet's mantle (Keil). Compare: "And as Samuel turned about to go away, he laid hold upon the skirt of his mantle, and it rent" (1 Sam. 15:27).
 - d. Saul perceived that this old man was Samuel. He stooped with his face toward the ground, bowing before the revered prophet. "Saul does not appear to have seen the apparition itself. But it does not follow from this that there was no such apparition at all, and the whole was an invention on the part of the witch" (Keil, p.263).

D. 1 Samuel 28:15-20: Saul speaks with Samuel.

1. Verse 15: "And Samuel said to Saul, Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up? And Saul answered, I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams: therefore I have called thee, that thou mayest make known unto me what I shall do."
 - a. If the episode is only make-believe, the Bible misleads us; it reports Samuel's words which perfectly fit the situation as it purports to be. The deceased prophet asks why he has been disquieted by Saul's request. Of course, neither Saul nor the woman could have reached Samuel; it was God's power that accomplished this supernatural operation. In Sheol the soul of Samuel was at rest. Compare: "But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented" (Luke 16:25).
 - b. Saul told Samuel that he was sorely distressed because the Philistines had invaded the land and God had departed from him. It seems that Saul could hear and speak with Samuel, even though he could not see him. It is possible that the woman passed the conversation between the two. Coffman and others allege that the entire speech attributed to Samuel was the production of the witch; and that in this way, she wreaked vengeance on Saul for his assault on her profession.

- c. Since God would not speak to him through the usual means, Saul said he figured he might be able to learn something from Samuel in the fashion herein described. God used wicked people in the past to reveal certain information.
- 1) He used Balaam, the evil seer, to pronounce a blessing on Israel (Num.22-24), and spoke to Balaam by means of an animal: "Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam *the son* of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; But was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbad the madness of the prophet" (2 Pet. 2:15-16).
 - 2) He used Caiaphas, the evil high priest. "And one of them, *named* Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad" (John 11:49-52).
- d. It is entirely possible, therefore, that God chose the present means to give to Saul the unpleasant message he delivered through the apparition of Samuel. The clear and obvious intent of the text is to present a straightforward report of an actual conversation between Samuel and Saul. The witch was only an unimportant side note of the episode.
2. Verse 16: "Then said Samuel, Wherefore then dost thou ask of me, seeing the LORD is departed from thee, and is become thine enemy?"
 - a. Saul's statement in the previous verse contains an inconsistency. He admits that God had departed from him to the extent that he would not speak to him by the usual means. Yet he sought to obtain information through Samuel, which only God could know and reveal.
 - b. Samuel pointed out the discrepancy by asking why he thought he could learn something from him, since "the Lord is departed from thee, and is become thine enemy." Of course, God was not Saul's enemy in the sense that he hated him. He was his enemy in that he would not support him in his sins, and in the fact that he would remove him from the throne and give the reign to a more worthy man.
 3. Verses 17-18: "And the LORD hath done to him, as he spake by me: for the LORD hath rent the kingdom out of thine hand, and given it to thy neighbour, *even* to David: Because thou obeyedst not the voice of the LORD, nor executedst his fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore hath the LORD done this thing unto thee this day."
 - a. Samuel's speech continued to say that God had done to Saul just as he had promised to do by the prophecy he gave through Samuel. He had revealed that the kingdom would be taken from Saul and given to David because Saul had disobeyed God's command in regards to Amalek.
 - b. If the speech originated with the witch, how could she have known all the minute details of the facts as stated in Samuel's speech? It could be claimed that this story was commonly known in Israel, but not all the details were on the public record. God did not identify to Saul the name of his successor. That information was revealed to Samuel privately (1 Sam. 16). The witch could not have known this information to put into Samuel's mouth.
 - 1) 1 Samuel 15:28: "And Samuel said unto him, The LORD hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbour of thine, *that is* better than thou."
 - 2) Saul later came to believe that David was the man God intended to bring to the throne in Saul's place. However, David showed Saul on at least two occasions that he did not intend to usurp his authority as king; rather, he was willing to serve him faithfully.
 - c. 1 Samuel 15:28: "And Samuel said unto him, The LORD hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbour of thine, *that is* better than thou." "See 1 Sam 15:28. Saul's rebellion is there said, in ver. 23, to be a crime as great as the witchcraft which he was at that time so zealously punishing; here, where the sentence is being carried into execution, Saul has himself become
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guilty of what in his better hours he so abominated” [The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 2001 by BibleSoft].

4. Verse 19: “Moreover the LORD will also deliver Israel with thee into the hand of the Philistines: and to morrow *shalt* thou and thy sons *be* with me: the LORD also shall deliver the host of Israel into the hand of the Philistines.”
 - a. Samuel further said that God would deliver Israel into the hands of the Philistines, and that tomorrow Saul and his sons would be with him. “Thus was the last hope taken from Saul. His day of grace was gone, and judgment was now to burst upon him without delay” (Keil, p.264).
 - b. This specific prophecy, which was fulfilled in all its details, shows conclusively that the speech was not the woman’s, but came through Samuel.
 5. Verse 20: “Then Saul fell straightway all along on the earth, and was sore afraid, because of the words of Samuel: and there was no strength in him; for he had eaten no bread all the day, nor all the night.”
 - a. Saul’s wretchedness touches our sympathy, but we know that he deserved what he was getting. He fell on his face upon the ground, terrified by the words of Samuel. This was an awesome, dreadful message, but it was accurate.
 - b. His condition was made worse by having taken no food for many hours. The distress he suffered had probably destroyed his appetite for food. When the full import of the message sunk in, he was not physically able to absorb it. He collapsed on the ground out of fear and physical exhaustion.
 - c. While we sympathize with Saul in his present condition, we are reminded of the biblical precept of sowing and reaping. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (Gal.6:7-8).
- E. 1 Samuel 28:21-25: The Witch of Endor Feeds Saul.
1. Verses 21-22: “And the woman came unto Saul, and saw that he was sore troubled, and said unto him, Behold, thine handmaid hath obeyed thy voice, and I have put my life in my hand, and have hearkened unto thy words which thou spakest unto me. Now therefore, I pray thee, hearken thou also unto the voice of thine handmaid, and let me set a morsel of bread before thee; and eat, that thou mayest have strength, when thou goest on thy way.”
 - a. Referring to herself as his handmaid, she says that she had risked her life in obeying him. She was willing to do as he requested by agreeing to go through her act of necromancy. We recall her terror, however, when Samuel first appeared. She had never had such an experience before.
 - b. Even the witch was touched by the king’s pitiful condition. She pleaded with the king to let her prepare him some food so that he could go on about his affairs.
 2. Verses 23-24: “But he refused, and said, I will not eat. But his servants, together with the woman, compelled him; and he hearkened unto their voice. So he arose from the earth, and sat upon the bed. And the woman had a fat calf in the house; and she hasted, and killed it, and took flour, and kneaded *it*, and did bake unleavened bread thereof.”
 - a. At first, Saul refused to take any food, but his servants persuaded him to eat. He got up from the ground and sat on the bed.
 - b. The woman had a fattened calf, which she quickly killed and prepared. She took flour, kneaded it, and baked unleavened bread. There was not enough time for her to leaven the bread
 3. Verse 25: “And she brought *it* before Saul, and before his servants; and they did eat. Then they rose up, and went away that night.”
 - a. The preparations would have required a considerable amount of time. Saul and his men would have need of food for the struggles that lay ahead. She served the food to Saul and his servants.
 - b. After eating, they went on their way. We must admire Saul’s manliness; he did not give up, and go into hiding, but went forth to meet the Philistines the best way he could.
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1 SAMUEL 29

A. 1 Samuel 29:1-5: The Other Philistines Refuse to Let David Enter the Battle with Them.

1. Verse 1: “Now the Philistines gathered together all their armies to Aphek; and the Israelites pitched by a fountain which *is* in Jezreel.”
 - a. Sooner or later, it was bound to happen that the Philistines and Israelites would have another war, which would present a major dilemma to David. To fight alongside the Philistines against his own people would have been impossible for him; but how could he avoid such a battle without being set upon by his erstwhile allies? This chapter tells how David was delivered from this quandary.
 - b. Jameison, who wrote more than a hundred years ago, said: “Gilboa, Jezreel, Shunem, En-dor, are all found still bearing the same name. They lie within sight of each other. Aphek is the only one of the cluster not yet identified. Jezreel is on the northern slope of Gilboa; and at the distance of twenty minutes to the east is a large fountain, and a smaller one still nearer—just the position which a chieftain would select, both on account of its elevation and the supply of water needed for his troops” (p.211).
 - c. Possibly tension between the two nations had mounted, thus precipitating these military operations. Or perhaps the time was one in which the Philistines usually launched an attack against Israel. The stage was being set for Saul’s final encounter with his persistent enemy.
2. Verse 2: “And the lords of the Philistines passed on by hundreds, and by thousands: but David and his men passed on in the rearward with Achish.”
 - a. The Philistine forces were gathering for the invasion. There were five major cities among them, each of which had its own king and army. The cities were Gath, Ekron, Ashdod, Ashkelon, and Gaza.
 - b. The armies marched out in formations of hundreds and thousands, with David’s little band following in the rear. The army of Gath, under King Achish, evidently was just ahead of David.
3. Verse 3: “Then said the princes of the Philistines, What *do* these Hebrews *here*? And Achish said unto the princes of the Philistines, *Is* not this David, the servant of Saul the king of Israel, which hath been with me these days, or these years, and I have found no fault in him since he fell *unto me* unto this day?”
 - a. The chiefs of the other armies took exception to the presence of “these Hebrews.” They knew of the presence of David and his men, that they had taken up residence in the territory of Achish. That was the concern of Gath, but now that an active war with Israel was at hand, the Philistines who did not know David, did not trust him.
 - b. Achish, king of Gath, affirmed his complete trust in David: he had been with him for many days, even years, and had been guilty of no transgression against the Philistines. David had spent more than a year and four months there (27:7).
4. Verses 4-5: “And the princes of the Philistines were wroth with him; and the princes of the Philistines said unto him, Make this fellow return, that he may go again to his place which thou hast appointed him, and let him not go down with us to battle, lest in the battle he be an adversary to us: for wherewith should he reconcile himself unto his master? *should it* not *be* with the heads of these men? *Is* not this David, of whom they sang one to another in dances, saying, Saul slew his thousands, and David his ten thousands?”
 - a. The other kings, not having the emotional attachment to David that Achish had, realized that even David’s little army could wreak havoc among the Philistines during the heat of battle by attacking them from the rear. All of David’s six hundred men apparently were with him (cf. 30:1 ff).
 - b. They knew, as does any military man, that a small, concerted effort made at the right time can rout a much larger force. Using a brilliant stratagem, Gideon and his three hundred men defeated the vast army of the Midianites—with the help of Heaven (Judges 7).
 - c. The Philistine leaders demanded that Achish order David to return to his place of residence at Ziklag, lest he seek to be reconciled to his former master Saul by betraying his Philistine hosts.

- d. They further reasoned that this man was *David*, the one the Israelites had praised in song, singing that Saul had slain his thousands, but David had slain ten thousands. The song was composed as a tribute to David following his fight with Goliath, the giant from Gath.

B. 1 Samuel 29:6-11: David Leaves the Philistine Camp.

1. Verses 6-7: "Then Achish called David, and said unto him, Surely, *as* the LORD liveth, thou hast been upright, and thy going out and thy coming in with me in the host *is* good in my sight: for I have not found evil in thee since the day of thy coming unto me unto this day: nevertheless the lords favour thee not. Wherefore now return, and go in peace, that thou displease not the lords of the Philistines."
 - a. Achish called David to tell him that he could not accompany the host in the battle. He assumes that he must choose his words carefully lest he offend his young cohort. He explained that he was well satisfied with David's loyalty, and that he had found no evil in him during his lengthy stay in the land.
 - b. Nevertheless, the other Philistine leaders did not have that confidence in David, hence he must return to his home and avoid displeasing the other leaders.
 - c. The text attributes to Achish a lofty reference to Jehovah, the God of Israel. "Were these phrases actually used by Achish, or are they to be considered as translations from the Philistine dialect? These questions are more easily asked than answered" (JFB, p.212).
 - d. "These words are strange in the mouth of a Philistine, nor can we suppose that out of respect to David he would thus swear by David's God. Probably they are the equivalent of the oath which Achish really used. He sends, however, David away with the utmost courtesy, assuring him that his own wish had been that he should remain with him, because all his conduct had been upright since he had come to him at Gath" [The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 2001 by Biblesoft].
2. Verse 8: "And David said unto Achish, But what have I done? and what hast thou found in thy servant so long as I have been with thee unto this day, that I may not go fight against the enemies of my lord the king?"
 - a. David's response may be somewhat ambiguous. First, we may be sure that David had no desire to fight against his own people, despite the troubles Saul had caused him. If David was unwilling to kill Saul privately, he would not try to do so publicly (in battle). Since he refused to kill Israel's king, it is not likely that he would be willing to kill his fellow Israelites.
 - b. Therefore, David would not find the instructions of Achish for him to go back home as a blow to him. Doubtless, he had been wondering how he could avoid doing battle against Israel. That the providence of God was involved somehow in this development is not to be doubted.
 - c. "Partly for the sake of vindicating himself against this suspicion, and partly to put the sincerity of Achish's words to the test, David replied, '*What have I done, and what hast thou found in thy servant, since I was with thee till this day, that I am not to come and fight against the enemies of my lord the king?*' These last words are also ambiguous, since the king whom David calls his lord might be understood as meaning either Achish or Saul. Achish, in his goodness of heart, applies them without suspicion to himself; for he assures David still more earnestly (ver. 9), that he is firmly convinced of his uprightness" (Keil, pp.271f).
3. Verses 9-10: "And Achish answered and said to David, I know that thou *art* good in my sight, as an angel of God: notwithstanding the princes of the Philistines have said, He shall not go up with us to the battle. Wherefore now rise up early in the morning with thy master's servants that are come with thee: and as soon as ye be up early in the morning, and have light, depart."
 - a. Achish likens David to an angel of God. He has the strongest confidence in David's loyalty, however since the other Philistine lords had opposed his presence in the army, it was necessary for him to go back to Ziklag.
 - b. He directs David to arise early the next morning, as soon as there was enough light to see to travel, and return home.
 - c. "The clue to this may be found in 1 Chron 12:19-21, where it appears that a considerable number of Manassites 'fell' to David just at this time, and went back with him to Ziklag. It is therefore to these

new comers that Achish applies the expression. It is impossible not to recognize here a merciful interposition of Providence, by which David was not only saved from fighting against his king and country, but sent home just in time to recover his wives and property from the Amalekites (1 Sam 30). That David maintained his position by subtlety and falsehood, which were the invariable characteristics of his age and nation, is not in the least to be wondered at. No sanction is given by this narrative to the use of falsehood" [Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by BibleSoft].

4. Verse 11: "So David and his men rose up early to depart in the morning, to return into the land of the Philistines. And the Philistines went up to Jezreel."
 - a. "In accordance with this admonition, David returned the next morning into the land of the Philistines, *i.e.*, to Ziklag; no doubt very light of heart, and praising God for having so graciously rescued him out of the disastrous situation into which he had been brought and not altogether without some fault of his own, rejoicing that 'he had not committed either sin, *i.e.*, had neither violated the fidelity which he owed to Achish, nor had to fight against the Israelites" (Keil, p.272).
 - b. The Philistines went up to Jezreel to do battle with Israel, and David returned to Ziklag.
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1 SAMUEL 30

A. 1 Samuel 30:1-10: The Amalekites Attack Ziklag.

1. Verses 1-2: “And it came to pass, when David and his men were come to Ziklag on the third day, that the Amalekites had invaded the south, and Ziklag, and smitten Ziklag, and burned it with fire; And had taken the women captives, that *were* therein: they slew not any, either great or small, but carried *them* away, and went on their way.”
 - a. Knowing of the absence of the Philistine warriors, the Amalekites invaded the land, including a major assault against David’s city of Ziklag. They burned the town and took away the women and children as prisoners, to be used as slaves.
 - b. “Their conduct seems to stand in favourable contrast to that of David (ch. 27:11). But their apparent clemency did not arise from humane considerations. It is traceable to the ancient war usages of the East, where the men of war, on the capture of a city, were unsparingly put to death; but there were no warriors in Ziklag at the time, and the women and boys were reserved for slaves, and the old people were spared out of respect to age” (JFB, p.212).
 - c. It took David three days to travel from Aphek to Ziklag. The distance between these two places is said to be about 70 miles, about a three-days journey on foot (cf. Coffman, p.351).
 2. Verse 3: “So David and his men came to the city, and, behold, *it was* burned with fire; and their wives, and their sons, and their daughters, were taken captives.”
 - a. What a terrible shock it must have been to David and his men to return home only to find their city had been burned and their wives and families taken captive by a barbarous enemy. They had a ready market for excess slaves in Egypt.
 - b. “The language implies that the smoke of the conflagration was still visible, and the sacking very recent” (JFB, p.212).
 3. Verses 4-6: “Then David and the people that *were* with him lifted up their voice and wept, until they had no more power to weep. And David's two wives were taken captives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite. And David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters: but David encouraged himself in the LORD his God.”
 - a. The whole band of men with David wept until they had no more strength to weep. David was filled with great anguish of heart; his two wives had been captured, and he was likewise dismayed over the losses his men had suffered.
 - b. The distress was so great that David’s men talked of stoning him. Not all of his men were fully supportive of David, and we are told later (vs. 22) there were “wicked men and men of Belial” among his band. These would have been ringleaders in the short-lived insurrection.
 - c. David found comfort and strength in the Lord his God. The verses that follow show the means by which he found consolation was prayer and guidance from God.
 4. Verses 7-8: “And David said to Abiathar the priest, Ahimelech's son, I pray thee, bring me hither the ephod. And Abiathar brought thither the ephod to David. And David inquired at the LORD, saying, Shall I pursue after this troop? shall I overtake them? And he answered him, Pursue: for thou shalt surely overtake *them*, and without fail recover *all*.”
 - a. David called for Abiathar the priest to bring the sacred ephod so that he could make an appeal unto God. The Urim and Thummim were kept in the high priest’s garb (Ex. 28:30-31). To call for the ephod was, in effect, to call for the Urim and Thummim.
 - b. David inquired of the Lord whether he should pursue after the band of men who had sacked Ziklag, and overtake them. The reply was that he should pursue them, that he would surely overtake them, and that he would certainly recover all those people and possessions stolen away by the Amalekites.
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- c. His was a venture that could not fail! All he needed to do was to do what he and his men were well prepared to do, and God would take care of the other details.
5. Verses 9-10: "So David went, he and the six hundred men that *were* with him, and came to the brook Besor, where those that were left behind stayed. But David pursued, he and four hundred men: for two hundred abode behind, which were so faint that they could not go over the brook Besor."
 - a. Since their city had been ravaged and burned by the Amalekites, David and his men would not have been able to replenish their supplies. Having traveled for at least three days already, and further weakened by the emotional blow of finding their wives and families taken captive, many of his men were ill-prepared to endure the rigors of the pursuit of the invaders.
 - b. But David had been assured by the Lord that the pursuit would end in perfect success. He and four hundred of his men were able to continue, while the other two hundred were so weary they were unable to cross over the brook Besor. These men stayed behind at this point. This must have been a trial to David; if six hundred men might not be enough to rescue their families, the loss of one third of that force would seem to make the effort foolhardy, except for God's promise.
 - c. "The brook *Besor* is supposed to be the Wady *Sheriah*, which enters the sea below Ashkelon..." (Keil, p.274). Besor is "the deep bed of a winter torrent, which is distinctly traceable from the adjoining heights, in its sinuous course up to its source, far away in the distant hills of Judah. It is about thirty yards in width, and is flanked on both sides by a range of steep precipitous banks, pouring in the raining season a copious volume of muddy water to the sea; but with the return of spring this full current dwindles down to a few stagnant pools, and the wady becomes entirely dry. The verdant bank of a stream naturally offered a convenient rest to the soldiers, who, through fatigue, were unable to continue the pursuit. But the torrent was probably full, and from the impetuosity of its swollen current difficult to be forded..." (JFB, p.213).
- B. 1 Samuel 30:11-15: The Egyptian Slave.
1. Verses 11-12: "And they found an Egyptian in the field, and brought him to David, and gave him bread, and he did eat; and they made him drink water; And they gave him a piece of a cake of figs, and two clusters of raisins: and when he had eaten, his spirit came again to him: for he had eaten no bread, nor drunk *any* water, three days and three nights."
 - a. Continuing the pursuit, an Egyptian was found and brought to David. He had taken neither food nor water for three days and nights.
 - b. They fed him a part of a cake of figs and two clusters of raisins, and gave him water. Not only was this a good humanitarian gesture, but it also made good military sense. The man might be able to furnish useful information.
 2. Verse 13: "And David said unto him, To whom *belongest* thou? and whence *art* thou? And he said, I *am* a young man of Egypt, servant to an Amalekite; and my master left me, because three days ago I fell sick."
 - a. They were able to communicate with the man. David questioned the young man to see if he could give him some useful information. It may have been apparent to David that this man was someone's slave.
 - b. The young man stated that he was an Egyptian who was a servant to an Amalekite. His master had abandoned him in the desert when the young man became ill. This gives us a good picture of the kind of people the Amalekites were. They had no mercy on others, and deserved no mercy from others.
 - c. The discovery of this young slave was fortuitous. It was doubtless an act of providence that enabled the man to survive and for David to find him. He had been with the very band of Amalekites which had attacked Ziklag. He knew right where the raiders could be found.
 3. Verse 14: "We made an invasion *upon* the south of the Cherethites, and upon *the coast* which *belongeth* to Judah, and upon the south of Caleb; and we burned Ziklag with fire."
 - a. The Egyptian stated that he had been with the Amalekites who had invaded the territory that belonged to the Cherethites which adjoined Judah's domain. He admitted that they had burned Ziklag.
 - b. *Cherethites* is a reference to the Philistines.
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- 1) Ezekiel 25:16: "Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will stretch out mine hand upon the Philistines, and I will cut off the Cherethims, and destroy the remnant of the sea coast."
 - 2) Zephaniah 2:5: "Woe unto the inhabitants of the sea coast, the nation of the Cherethites! the word of the LORD *is* against you; O Canaan, the land of the Philistines, I will even destroy thee, that there shall be no inhabitant."
4. Verse 15: "And David said to him, Canst thou bring me down to this company? And he said, Swear unto me by God, that thou wilt neither kill me, nor deliver me into the hands of my master, and I will bring thee down to this company."
- a. David asked the Egyptian if he could lead them to the Amalekites. The invaders would want to get a safe distance away before they stopped to enjoy the fruit of their success. They would have decided ahead of time where they would stop. This abandoned slave knew where this place was.
 - b. Before he agreed to guide David to the site, he first elicited a promise from David that he would neither kill him nor return him to his former master. The conditions were met.
 - c. Did the Egyptian refer to the Living God, or was he using the term loosely? Probably the latter. All the various tribes and nations of that time had a concept of God, but their view was along idolatrous conceptions.
- C. 1 Samuel 30:16-20: David Rescues the Captives.
1. Verse 16: "And when he had brought him down, behold, *they were* spread abroad upon all the earth, eating and drinking, and dancing, because of all the great spoil that they had taken out of the land of the Philistines, and out of the land of Judah."
 - a. The Egyptian slave led David's party to the place where the Amalekites had camped. They found them eating, drinking, and dancing.
 - b. The spoils of the Amalekite victory were plentiful. The camp was spread out over the whole area, completely vulnerable to attack. They knew the Philistines were up in Israel, fighting with Saul; they believed that they were perfectly safe.
 2. Verse 17: "And David smote them from the twilight even unto the evening of the next day: and there escaped not a man of them, save four hundred young men, which rode upon camels, and fled."
 - a. David attacked the Amalekites, beginning at twilight and continued the assault until the evening of the next day.
 - b. Although he was outnumbered greatly, the advantage lay with him, and he slaughtered all the invaders except for the four hundred young men who escaped on camels. The ones who escaped were equal in number to David's attacking force, indicating that the Amalekites may have had a force of perhaps two thousand men.
 3. Verses 18-19: "And David recovered all that the Amalekites had carried away: and David rescued his two wives. And there was nothing lacking to them, neither small nor great, neither sons nor daughters, neither spoil, nor any *thing* that they had taken to them: David recovered all."
 - a. The Amalekites had attacked not only Ziklag, but Philistine cities as well. There was a tremendous amount of booty. David recovered it all.
 - b. He rescued his two wives, and the families of all his men; he recovered everything and everyone. The victory was so complete that only God's providence could have provided it. It also shows the usefulness of surprise in launching an attack.
 4. Verse 20: "And David took all the flocks and the herds, *which* they drave before those *other* cattle, and said, This *is* David's spoil."
 - a. "He and his men not only recovered all their own property, but they recovered all the spoil which these Amalekites had taken from the south of Judah, the Cherethites, and the south of Caleb. When this was separated from the rest, it was given to David, and called *David's spoil*" (Clarke, p.302).
 - b. "In order to obtain any meaning whatever from this literal rendering of the words, we must understand by the sheep and oxen those which belonged to the Amalekites, and the flocks taken from them as booty; and by '*those cattle*,' the cattle belonging to David and his men, which the Amalekites had
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driven away, the Israelites had now recovered from them: so that David had the sheep and oxen which he had taken from the Amalekites as booty driven in front of the rest of the cattle which the Israelites had recovered; whereupon the drovers exclaimed, '*This (the sheep and oxen) is David's booty*'" (Keil, p.275).

D. 1 Samuel 30:21-25: Some in David's Company Want to Keep the Spoils.

1. Verse 21: "And David came to the two hundred men, which were so faint that they could not follow David, whom they had made also to abide at the brook Besor: and they went forth to meet David, and to meet the people that *were* with him: and when David came near to the people, he saluted them."
 - a. Returning to the brook Besor, David found the two hundred men who were too faint to continue with the rest of the company.
 - b. David greeted these men heartily when they came forth to meet him. He had been willing to let them rest at that place, knowing that they were unable to keep up the fast pace needed to overtake the enemy.
2. Verse 22: "Then answered all the wicked men and *men* of Belial, of those that went with David, and said, Because they went not with us, we will not give them *ought* of the spoil that we have recovered, save to every man his wife and his children, that they may lead *them* away, and depart."
 - a. There were certain men among David's followers who had little regard for the two hundred men. They were willing only to return to them their wives and children, apparently wanting them to take their families and leave David's camp.
 - b. These objectors resented the fact that these two hundred men had not taken part in the fighting, and therefore did not deserve any of the spoils taken from the Amalekites. These men were doubtless in the minority, but their emotional argument would carry weight with others of the band who were also filled with covetousness.
3. Verses 23-24: "Then said David, Ye shall not do so, my brethren, with that which the LORD hath given us, who hath preserved us, and delivered the company that came against us into our hand. For who will hearken unto you in this matter? but as his part *is* that goeth down to the battle, so *shall* his part *be* that tarrieth by the stuff: they shall part alike."
 - a. David knew that God had given them this victory; they did not achieve this success by their own hand. If God had not providentially provided the Ethiopian slave who led them to the enemy's camp, they might not have found it at all.
 - b. It would have been wrong to deny the other men a share in the spoils, for they had protected the supplies pertaining to the company, although they were unable to go to the battle. David ruled that the two hundred who stayed behind were to be given an equal share with the others.
4. Verse 25: "And it was *so* from that day forward, that he made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel unto this day."
 - a. This ruling was established as a constant precept in Israel which was still in practice at the time this record was made.
 - b. "Nothing could be more just and proper than this law: he who stays at home to defend house and property, has an equal right to the booty taken by those who go out to war" (Clarke, p.302f).
 - 1) Numbers 31:27: "And divide the prey into two parts; between them that took the war upon them, who went out to battle, and between all the congregation."
 - 2) Joshua 22:8: "And he spake unto them, saying, Return with much riches unto your tents, and with very much cattle, with silver, and with gold, and with brass, and with iron, and with very much raiment: divide the spoil of your enemies with your brethren."

E. 1 Samuel 30:26-31: David Sends Presents to Certain Ones in Judah.

1. Verse 26: "And when David came to Ziklag, he sent of the spoil unto the elders of Judah, *even* to his friends, saying, Behold a present for you of the spoil of the enemies of the LORD."
 - a. David determined to send gifts to the elders of Judah who lived in the area of his operations. The gifts described in the following verses indicate the enormous amount of the spoils taken from Amalek.

- b. "This was intended as an acknowledgment to the leading men in those towns and villages of Judah which had ministered to his necessities in the course of his various wanderings. It was a dictate of an amiable and grateful heart; and the effect of this well-timed liberality was to bring a large accession of numbers to his camp (1 Chr. 12:22)" (JFB, p.214).
2. Verses 27-31: "To *them* which were in Bethel, and to *them* which were in south Ramoth, and to *them* which were in Jattir, And to *them* which were in Aroer, and to *them* which were in Siphmoth, and to *them* which were in Eshtemoa, And to *them* which were in Rachal, and to *them* which were in the cities of the Jerahmeelites, and to *them* which were in the cities of the Kenites, And to *them* which were in Hormah, and to *them* which were in Chorashan, and to *them* which were in Athach, And to *them* which were in Hebron, and to all the places where David himself and his men were wont to haunt."
- a. Bethel: This is not the more famous city of this name which was farther north. Joshua 19:4.
 - b. Ramoth: A city allotted to Simeon. Joshua 19:8.
 - c. Jattir: "*Jattir* has been preserved in the ruins of *Attir*, on the southern portion of the mountains of Judah" (Keil, p.277). Joshua 15:48.
 - d. Aroer: "*Aroer* is still to be seen in ruins, viz. in the foundations of the walls built of enormous stones in Wady Arara, where there are many cavities for holding water...twenty miles to the south of Hebron" (Keil, p.277).
 - e. Siphmoth: The location of this place has not been identified.
 - f. Eshtemoa: "*Esthemoa* has been preserved in the village of *Semua*, with ancient ruins, on the southwestern portion of the mountains of Judah" (Keil, p.277). Joshua 15:50.
 - g. Rachal: This city is not mentioned elsewhere, and its location has not been discovered.
 - h. The cities of the Jerahmeelites: 1 Samuel 27:10.
 - i. The cities of the Kenites: "A very small tract on the southern coast of the Dead Sea" (Clarke, p.303).
 - j. Hormah: "A Canaanite royal city near Ziklag in the S of Judah, and closely associated with Canaanite Arad. Originally called Zephath, its name was changed to Hormah after its destruction by the Israelites. It apparently changed hands more than once between Judah and Simeon. Probably to be identified with a site located about 8 miles (13 km) SE of Beersheba. Num 21:3; Josh 12:14; Josh 15:30; Josh 19:4; Judg 1:17; Num 14:45; Deut 1:44" (*PC Bible Atlas*).
 - k. Chorashan: "Probably the same as *Ashan* in the tribe of Judah: See Josh. 15:42. It was afterwards ceded to Simeon, Josh. 19:7" (Clarke, p.303).
 - l. Athach: It is only mentioned here, and its location has not been determined.
 - m. Hebron: "An important city in S Palestine, located in the hill country of Judah about 19 miles (31km) S of Jerusalem. The city is near the ridge of the hills, and at an altitude of 3040 ft. (927 m) above sea level, Hebron is the highest town in Palestine.
 - 1) "The archaeological record shows almost continuous occupation at Hebron from the Early Bronze Age to modern times. It may be the oldest unwalled city in the world to possess that distinction. According to tradition, it was founded seven years before Zoan (that is, Tanis) in Egypt (Num. 13:22).
 - 2) "It became a campsite of Abram, who lived at the oaks of Mamre near the city. The cave of Machpelah at Mamre became the patriarchal burial place. At the time of the conquest, it was a royal city of the Anakites, known as Kiriath Arba. Joshua took the city, but prior to his death, it had reverted to the Anakites.
 - 3) "Caleb recaptured Hebron, which was designated a city of refuge. Its inhabitants aided David while he was a fugitive, and after Saul's death, David was anointed king of Judah in Hebron. David reigned here for seven years until the transfer of the capital to Jerusalem.
 - 4) "Later, Absalom engineered his rebellion from Hebron. During the reign of Rehoboam, it was refortified as a S defense of Jerusalem. Hebron appears among the cities named on royal jar-handle stamps of Judah, suggesting its importance as an administrative center during the OT kingdom period. It was resettled after the Exile, and later became a city of the Edomites, within

the province of Idumea. Gen 13:18; Gen 13:23; Num 13:22; Josh 10; 2 Sam. 2:1-11; 2 Sam 3:27; 2 Sam 15:7-10" (*PC Bible Atlas*).

- n. And to all the places where David himself and his men found refuge. "David's having sent presents to all these places, not only shows his sense of gratitude, but that the booty which he took from the Amalekites must have been exceedingly great. And we learn from this also that David sojourned in many places which are not mentioned in the preceding history; for these are all said to be places where David and his men were wont to haunt" (Clarke, p.303).
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1 SAMUEL 31

A. 1 Samuel 31:1-6: The Death of Saul.

1. Verse 1: "Now the Philistines fought against Israel: and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell down slain in mount Gilboa."
 - a. The historian now returns, almost reluctantly, to the story of Saul's demise. It is a fitting conclusion to the book, which has shown the rise of Saul, and now must finish with his fall.
 - b. The Philistines had invaded Israel and were camped at Aphek, facing Saul's army. "The battle probably began upon the great plain, the south-eastern extremity of which is bisected by the low range of mount Gilboa; but in the course of the conflict the scene was shifted to the hill" (JFB, p.215).
 - c. Using the archers to great advantage (verse 3), the Philistines slew many of the Israelites, forcing the rest into flight.
 2. Verse 2: "And the Philistines followed hard upon Saul and upon his sons; and the Philistines slew Jonathan, and Abinadab, and Melchishua, Saul's sons."
 - a. The Philistines pressed their advantage, with special attention being shown to Saul and his sons. This strong family likely were together in the battle.
 - b. Saul's sons, Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malchishua, were slain. Their deaths would have been a terrible blow to Saul. Years later, when the Babylonians captured the king of Judah, they put his sons to death in his sight, then put out his eyes; the last thing he saw on earth was this horror. "And the city was broken up, and all the men of war *fled* by night by the way of the gate between two walls, which *is* by the king's garden: (now the Chaldees *were* against the city round about:) and *the king* went the way toward the plain. And the army of the Chaldees pursued after the king, and overtook him in the plains of Jericho: and all his army were scattered from him. So they took the king, and brought him up to the king of Babylon to Riblah; and they gave judgment upon him. And they slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, and put out the eyes of Zedekiah, and bound him with fetters of brass, and carried him to Babylon" (2 Kings 25:4-7).
 3. Verse 3: "And the battle went sore against Saul, and the archers hit him; and he was sore wounded of the archers."
 - a. Saul probably held off the enemies for a good while, but he had been sorely wounded by the archers, and his end was imminent.
 - b. However weak he had been on several occasions, yet his bravery in battle was never doubted. His great size and strength made him a powerful fighting man. What great things he might have done if he had kept himself loyal to God! His history might have become even more glorious than that of David.
 4. Verses 4-5: "Then said Saul unto his armourbearer, Draw thy sword, and thrust me through therewith; lest these uncircumcised come and thrust me through, and abuse me. But his armourbearer would not; for he was sore afraid. Therefore Saul took a sword, and fell upon it. And when his armourbearer saw that Saul was dead, he fell likewise upon his sword, and died with him."
 - a. Being sorely wounded and weakened by the fierce struggle and loss of blood, and fearing lest he should be taken alive by the Philistines, Saul asked his armor bearer to thrust him through with his sword. He knew the cruel treatment prominent men were forced to endure who were captured by an enemy.
 - 1) Joshua 8:29: "And the king of Ai he hanged on a tree until eventide: and as soon as the sun was down, Joshua commanded that they should take his carcase down from the tree, and cast it at the entering of the gate of the city, and raise thereon a great heap of stones, *that remaineth* unto this day."
 - 2) Joshua 10:24-26: "And it came to pass, when they brought out those kings unto Joshua, that Joshua called for all the men of Israel, and said unto the captains of the men of war which went with him,
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Come near, put your feet upon the necks of these kings. And they came near, and put their feet upon the necks of them. And Joshua said unto them, Fear not, nor be dismayed, be strong and of good courage: for thus shall the LORD do to all your enemies against whom ye fight. And afterward Joshua smote them, and slew them, and hanged them on five trees: and they were hanging upon the trees until the evening."

- 3) Judges 8:21: "Then Zebah and Zalmunna said, Rise thou, and fall upon us: for as the man *is*, so *is* his strength. And Gideon arose, and slew Zebah and Zalmunna, and took away the ornaments that *were* on their camels' necks."
 - 4) Judges 1:6-7: "But Adonibezek fled; and they pursued after him, and caught him, and cut off his thumbs and his great toes. And Adonibezek said, Threescore and ten kings, having their thumbs and their great toes cut off, gathered *their meat* under my table: as I have done, so God hath requited me. And they brought him to Jerusalem, and there he died."
 - b. Saul knew that the Philistines were about to seize him; he did not want to be abused by these pagans. His armor bearer was afraid to kill his master, so Saul took a sword and fell upon it, thus killing himself. His death was certain; it was either die in this fashion or by allowing the Philistines to make sport of him and eventually kill him.
 - c. He armorbearer saw that Saul was dead, and likewise took his own life by falling on his sword. The Amalekite who told David that he had killed Saul (2 Sam. 1:1-16) was lying; the text here states very plainly that Saul died by his own hand.
 5. Verse 6: "So Saul died, and his three sons, and his armourbearer, and all his men, that same day together."
 - a. "Thus ended the troubled reign of Saul, who was elected to be the first king of Israel by a wisdom superior to human (2 Sam. 21:6); and in the wayward exercise of his untheocratic government he fulfilled the special purposes of his appointment (Hos. 13:11)" (JFB, p.215).
 - b. The sons of Saul died in the same battle as their father. If one of these had survived Saul, he could have made a disturbing demand to ascend his father's throne, thus creating additional problems for David. But three of Saul's sons were dead, and his dynasty never survived the first generation. Later, another son, Ishbosheth, was put forth as David's rival; he was slain and beheaded (2 Sam. 3-4).
- B. 1 Samuel 31:7-10: Saul's Body is Beheaded.
1. Verse 7: "And when the men of Israel that *were* on the other side of the valley, and *they* that *were* on the other side Jordan, saw that the men of Israel fled, and that Saul and his sons were dead, they forsook the cities, and fled; and the Philistines came and dwelt in them."
 - a. The Israelites saw the outcome of the battle, and thinking there was no hope, they abandoned their cities in the area and fled. The Philistines took over those cities.
 - b. From the vicinity of the fighting, in the area of Jezreel, Israel fled. "It was very natural for the people in the towns and villages there to take fright and flee; for had they waited the arrival of the victors, they must, according to the war usages of the time, have been deprived either of their liberty or their lives" (JFB, p.215).
 2. Verses 8-9: "And it came to pass on the morrow, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, that they found Saul and his three sons fallen in mount Gilboa. And they cut off his head, and stripped off his armour, and sent into the land of the Philistines round about, to publish *it in* the house of their idols, and among the people."
 - a. The next day, when they had rested from the battle and had time, the Philistines found the bodies of Saul and his sons on Gilboa. 2 Samuel 1 shows that the young Amalekite had already taken Saul's crown and armllet.
 - b. They cut off Saul's head and took his armor; these they sent back to Philistia. "And it came to pass on the morrow, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, that they found Saul and his sons fallen in mount Gilboa. And when they had stripped him, they took his head, and his armour, and sent into the land of the Philistines round about, to carry tidings unto their idols, and to the people. And they
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put his armour in the house of their gods, and fastened his head in the temple of Dagon" (1 Chron. 10:8-10).

c. "It is possible that they cut off the heads of his three sons likewise; for although only *his head* is said to be cut off, and *his body* only to be fastened to the walls of Beth-shan, yet we find that the men of Jabesh-gilead found both *his body* and the *bodies of his three sons*, fastened to the walls, ver. 12" (Clarke, p.304).

3. Verse 10: "And they put his armour in the house of Ashtaroth: and they fastened his body to the wall of Bethshan."

a. Saul's armor was placed in the temple of Ashtaroth as a token of their victory over Israel. David had done some similar things to Goliath.

b. The bodies of Saul and his sons were fastened to the wall of Bethshan. These gruesome practices were common in that cruel time.

C. 1 Samuel 31:11-13: The Men of Jabeshgilead Repay an Old Debt of Gratitude.

1. Verse 11: "And when the inhabitants of Jabeshgilead heard of that which the Philistines had done to Saul."

a. This three-verse passage is included as part of the inspired text to show the actions of the men of the city of Jabesh-gilead who had been aided by Saul (1 Sam. 11:1-11).

b. "This city was situated nearly opposite Beth-shan, on the other side of Jordan; and its people, mindful of the important services which Saul had rendered them, gratefully and heroically resolved not to suffer such indignities to be inflicted on the royal family" (JFB, p.216).

2. Verse 12: "All the valiant men arose, and went all night, and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Bethshan, and came to Jabesh, and burnt them there."

a. The brave men of Jabesh removed the bodies from the wall, and brought them to their city, where they burned the bodies.

b. They traveled all night to accomplish this mission of gratitude. Although Saul had done many things of which we cannot approve, yet there were some worthy deeds in his life. These men were determined to repay their moral debt to their dead king.

3. Verse 13: "And they took their bones, and buried *them* under a tree at Jabesh, and fasted seven days."

a. The remains of the bodies they buried under a tree at Jabesh, and the citizens of that place entered into a week-long fast in honor of their memory.

b. "The reason for the burning of the bodies in the case of Saul and his sons is to be sought for in the peculiarity of the circumstances; viz. partly in the fact that the bodies were mutilated by the removal of the heads, and therefore a regular burial of the dead was impossible, and partly in their anxiety lest, if the Philistines followed up their victory and came to Jabesh, they should desecrate the bodies still further" (Keil, pp.281f).

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